

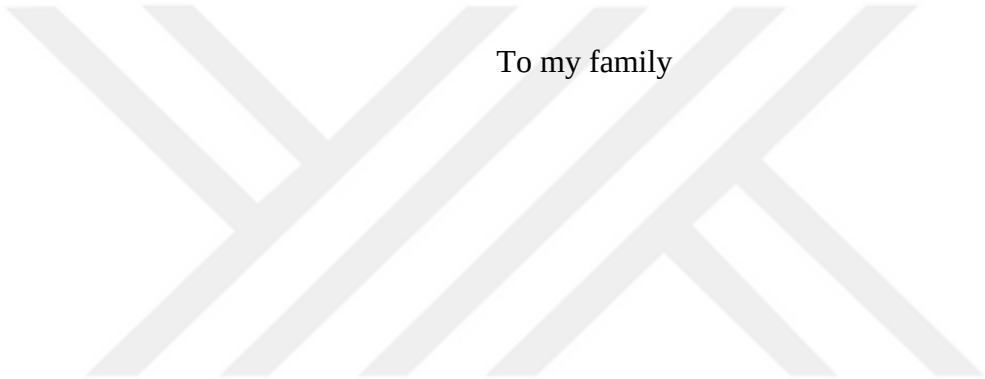
EFFECTS OF ECONOMIC SANCTIONS ON POLITICAL BELIEFS  
OF THE TARGETED COUNTRIES' LEADERS

A Ph. D. Dissertation

by  
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Ankara  
September 2021





To my family

EFFECTS OF ECONOMIC SANCTIONS ON POLITICAL BELIEFS OF THE  
TARGETED COUNTRIES' LEADERS

The Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences  
of

İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **EFFECTS OF ECONOMIC SANCTIONS ON POLITICAL BELIEFS OF THE TARGETED COUNTRIES' LEADERS**

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September 2021

International organizations, individual states, and groups of states increasingly often use economic sanctions as an alternative tool of foreign policy. While there are multiple studies analyzing effectiveness and economic, political, or humanitarian consequences of sanctions, much less attention is given to their psychological impacts. Presenting one of the rare systematic studies of psychological consequences of sanctions, this dissertation aims to analyze the effects of the economic sanctions on the political beliefs of the leaders of targeted states. Using operational code analysis, this research investigates whether economic sanctions lead to a change in operational codes of the leaders of Iran, Russia, and Syria representing the major cases of sanctions in the last two decades. The research demonstrates that while economic sanctions do not correspond to an immediate cognitive change, they are likely to trigger leaders' more gradual learning. The results show that the leaders'

rhetoric after sanctions reflected multiple belief changes, some of which were similar across cases. For example, in five out of six analyzed instances, the targeted leaders started to perceive ‘other’ international actors less friendly than before. Presenting the first systematic analysis of a specific external shock on operational codes of leaders in different geographical, temporal, and political settings, this dissertation contributes to the political belief change literature. At the same time this study fills the gap in the research on psychological consequences of sanctions.

Keywords: Economic Sanctions, Political Beliefs, Political Belief Change, Operational Code Analysis, Foreign Policy Analysis.

## ÖZET

### EKONOMİK YAPTIRIMLARIN HEDEFİ ÜLKE LİDERLERİNİN SİYASİ İNANÇLARINA ETKİLERİ

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Tez Danışmanı: Doçent Dr. Özgür Özdamar

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Uluslararası örgütler, devletler ve devlet grupları, ekonomik yaptırımları alternatif bir dış politika aracı olarak giderek daha sık kullanıyor. Yaptırımların etkinliğini ve ekonomik, politik veya insani sonuçlarını analiz eden çok sayıda çalışma olmasına rağmen, bunların psikolojik etkilerine çok daha az dikkat gösterilmektedir.

Yaptırımların psikolojik sonuçlarına ilişkin ender sistematik çalışmalardan birini sunan bu tez, ekonomik yaptırımların hedefi devletlerin liderlerinin siyasi inançları üzerindeki etkilerini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Operasyonel kod analizini kullanan bu araştırma, ekonomik yaptırımların, son yirmi yıl içerisinde görülen başlıca yaptırım örneklerini temsil eden İran, Rusya ve Suriye liderlerinin operasyonel kodlarında bir değişikliğe yol açıp açmadığını araştırıyor. Araştırma gösteriyor ki, ekonomik yaptırımlar ani bir bilişsel değişime tekabül etmiyorken liderlerin daha kademeli öğrenmesini tetiklemeleri muhtemel. Sonuçlar, liderlerin yaptırımlardan

sonraki konuşmalarının birçok inanç değişimini yansıttığını gösteriyor. Bu değişimlerden bazıları vakalar arasında benzerliğe sahiptir. Örneğin, analiz edilen altı örnekten beşinde, hedeflenen liderler 'diğer' uluslararası aktörleri eskisinden daha az dostane algılamaya başladılar. Farklı coğrafi, zamansal ve siyasi ortamlarda liderlerin operasyonel kodlarına ilişkin belirli bir dış şokun ilk sistematik analizini sunan bu tez, siyasi inanç değişimi literatürüne katkıda bulunmaktadır. Aynı zamanda bu çalışma, yaptırımların psikolojik sonuçlarına ilişkin araştırmalardaki boşluğu doldurmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ekonomik Yaptırımlar, Siyasi İnançlar, Siyasi İnanç Değişimi, Operasyonel Kod Analizi, Dış Politika Analizi.

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## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

In June 2021, Belarus has diverted an international flight, passing over its airspace, to arrest an opposition figure present on that plane. In response the United States, European Union, and some other states imposed economic sanctions on prominent Belarusian figures and “called on Minsk to cooperate with an international probe into the incident, immediately release all political prisoners, and “enter into a comprehensive and genuine political dialogue” with the democratic opposition and civil society” (Cook, 2021). Very often sanctioning states, similarly to the Belarusian case, impose restrictions and call for cooperation of the targeted states with supervisory international entities or other states. But do economic sanctions make targeted states and their leaders more likely to cooperate after sanctions? Or do economic sanctions are more likely to only punish or put some material restrictions on the targeted leaders capabilities or just pursue other symbolic or signaling goals without motivating target’s cooperation? One of the ways to understand whether sanctions are likely to make targeted leaders more or less cooperative is to focus on the effects of economic sanctions on the attitudes of such leaders towards others and their preferences for cooperative or conflictual strategies and tactics.

In the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century economic sanctions were once proclaimed as an “alternative to war” (Hufbauer, Schott, Elliott & Oegg, 2009: 1) and they are still widely used as a tool of foreign policy. In the recent years, use of sanctions is often debated and employed by individual states, group of states and such comprehensive international organizations as the United Nations. However, sanctions not only have not eliminated all wars, but also were often not effective in achieving even lesser goals. While the most optimist estimations of sanctions effectiveness put forward a success rate ranging between 30-40% (Hufbauer, et al., 2009), skeptics sometimes argued that sanctions alone had much more limited effect if any at all (Pape, 1997).

Multiple earlier studies focused on the probability of sanction success ((Allen, 2005, Bapat, Heinrich, Kobayashi & Morgan, 2013, Bonetti, 1998, Dashti-Gibson, Davis & Radcliff, 1997) or economic, political, or humanitarian consequences of sanctions<sup>1</sup>. However, limited attention was given to the psychological effects of sanctions. One of the reasons for this phenomenon is the difficulty of measuring and analyzing such consequences. The rare earlier research related to psychological impacts of sanctions either focused on the direct sanction-related rhetoric (Kim, 2014) or on the level of popular feelings. For example, such research focuses on the ‘rallying around the flag’ effect occurring when the targeted population show higher support to the targeted state leaders (Grauvogel & von Soest, 2014). But little is known about what happens on the individual level of analysis to the political beliefs of the ultimate decision makers. As such beliefs are likely to impact the targeted leaders’ attitudes and tactics towards other international actors, they require further research.

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<sup>1</sup> For reviews of the broad scholarship focusing on various sanction consequences see (Allen, Cilizoglu, Lektzian & Su, 2020, Eriksson, 2016, Özdamar & Shahin, 2021).

Scholars of foreign policy analysis argue that one's behavior often reflects what one thinks. Therefore, political beliefs of country leaders (for example, sets of such beliefs known as "operational code") are thought to be "among the factors" influencing leaders' decision making, acting as a prism for political actors' perception of external events, evaluation and choices of different "courses of actions" (George, 1969: 191). Understanding of changes of such sets of political beliefs, thus, might be necessary to estimate possible behavioral changes of state leaders.

Despite the general assumption of relative stability of one's political beliefs, multiple studies have shown that belief changes occur under such conditions as a 'role change', external shocks (Renshon, 2008, Walker, Schafer & Young, 1998), changing environment (Crichlow, 1998), and other factors. However, most of these findings are a result of individual cases studies using longitudinal analysis and aiming to analyze operational codes of specific leaders (Crichlow, 1998, Dyson & Parent, 2018, Walker, et al., 1998). Even when focusing on the idea of change in operational codes, existing research either looks into the effect of a specific unique event such as end of Cold War (Malici & Malici, 2005) or aims to establish very broad factors able to induce belief change such as a "shock" or a "role change" (Renshon, 2008). In contrast, attempts to study effects of an identifiable non-unique type of foreign policy events, such as imposition of economic sanctions, on different state leaders' political beliefs are lacking.

Existing operational code research acknowledges not only the possibility of change, but also the possibility that while some leaders' beliefs change, beliefs of others' do not (Malici & Malici, 2005). While other approaches to political beliefs, such as cognitive mapping, report differences in the proneness to belief change related to personal traits of the studied leaders (van Esch, 2015), such analysis is lacking in relation to the operational code literature.

Thus, this dissertation aims to bridge these understudied areas of international relations – the research on psychological consequences of economic sanctions and the study of belief change induced by an identifiable type of events analyzed across different settings. For this end, this study analyzes the effect of economic sanctions on the operational codes of the leaders of three states targeted by sanctions. The research argues that economic sanctions and/or their economic, political, and/or humanitarian consequences are likely present new information about international actors to the targeted state. Such effect is more likely when the sanction or its economic or political consequences are not expected or stronger than expected by the target and may depend on whether the sanction is imposed by the target's traditional ally or foe. This study argues that in such circumstances, sanctions act as an external shock providing information about others inconsistent with earlier beliefs of the targeted leaders who in response are likely to update their at least some of their attitudes towards and beliefs about the international political universe.

Besides investigating the presence of any measurable belief changes induced by sanctions, this research tests several hypotheses aiming to analyze the nature of such

change, its consistency across different settings and personalities, and other aspects of the expected changes. One of the most puzzling supplementary questions investigated within this research is whether sanction-related belief changes are likely to make targeted leaders more cooperative or to induce a more confrontational stance of the targeted actors. The selected sanctioned states (Iran, Russia, and Syria) are especially significant because they represent the major sanction cases of the last decade and reflect the increasing trend of usage of multilateral sanctions imposed outside of the United Nations framework by the Western states aiming to bypass the possible veto by other members of the UN Security Council<sup>2</sup>. The results of operational code changes are compared across studied instances according to whether local settings and leadership traits relate to differences between different leaders' belief changes.

This research uses an on-distance analysis of textual data. Using transcripts of the studied leaders' speeches related to foreign policy the researchers conducted Operational Code Analysis in different periods preceding and following sanctions imposition in each country. The analysis was conducted using the automated Profiler Plus software developed by the Social Science Automation Inc. To estimate belief changes in different periods, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted, and its results are checked with T-tests. To understand whether the estimated change occurred in relation to the proposed mechanism of sanction-induced belief change, a qualitative discussion of the processes accompanying such change is presented in each empirical chapter. Finally, to systematically compare the differences and

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<sup>2</sup> The sanctions imposed on Iran combine both the sanctions imposed by United Nations Security Council and several costlier measures imposed unilaterally by different states and groups of states.

similarities between the leaders with different personalities, an additional textual analysis – Leadership Traits Analysis was conducted using the Profiler Plus software allowing to reliably estimate the leaders’ openness towards new information.

This research shows that after the initial sanction imposition (and in many cases during the following sanction extensions or continuous rounds of sanctions) the beliefs of the targeted leaders show some changes similar across different geographic, political, and economic settings. In particular, the results show that in five out of six studied leader-sanction instances the leaders started to perceive others as less friendly than they did before. Moreover, several leaders were found to express less cooperative strategies towards others.

The analysis also demonstrates that sanctions are more likely to contribute to a gradual learning reflected in gradual change of beliefs and not to an immediate and drastic operational code changes. In some cases, the estimated belief changes were statistically significant. The lack of such results in other studied cases (despite similar directions of belief changes) is also discussed in terms of its possible reflection of gradual learning and in terms of the data and method related limitations of on-distance analysis. Moreover, this dissertation finds support to four out of six proposed hypotheses suggesting presence of sanction-induced belief change, higher probability of changes in political beliefs, more hostile (less friendly) perception of others after imposition of sanctions, and the presence of similar effects across cases. At the same time this research highlights some weaknesses of the conceptual and methodological foundations of the remaining two hypotheses. Discussion of these

hypotheses allowed to identify the concepts (such as belief reinforcement or reversal) which need further improvement and theorization. Thus, despite the methodological limitation of textual and statistical analyses, especially in conditions of limited data, this dissertation was able to answer the main research question of the study and to contribute to further development of the research focusing on political beliefs and economic sanctions.

This research aims to contribute to the political beliefs and leadership studies by providing the first systematic analysis of a specific class of external events which are likely to influence political beliefs of leaders. It shows that irrespectively of pre-sanction beliefs of the leaders (being above or below the world averages), the targeted leaders are likely to update their beliefs and especially their perception of ‘others’ towards a less friendly one. Analyzing sanctions as such type of external shocks, this research also contributes to the sanction consequences literature providing one of the first empirical studies of psychological effects of sanctions. Finally, this research provides an insight for the policy makers considering sanction imposition. The results of this analysis show that targeted leaders are likely to begin preferring less cooperative strategies and see others as more hostile after sanction imposition. This observation suggests that contrary to the senders’ demands for cooperation often accompanying sanctions, the likelihood of targets’ cooperation may even decrease after sanction imposition. Moreover, these findings suggest that foreign policy scholars attempting to create psychological profiles of specific leaders may find it beneficial to take into account possible changes in such leaders’ beliefs if they had experience with sanctions during their time in office.

The dissertation consists of eight chapters including introduction. The organization and a brief content of the following chapters are presented below.

The Literature Review chapter presents a theoretical background of operational code analysis and sanctions research. It firstly discusses the existing studies on political beliefs, their change and application in foreign policy analysis. The chapter goes on with discussing different areas of sanction research which can be related to psychological changes of the targeted leaders. Presenting sanction effectiveness research which can relate to decisions of the targets to comply or resist, the studies of broader responses of targets to sanctions which may relate to how the target's beliefs and attitudes are affected, and the research on consequences of sanctions, this chapter shows the very limited presence of psychological studies in any of these areas.

Building upon the existing theories, the following Research Design and Theoretical Framework chapter presents a theoretical framework and a mechanism for the proposed belief change under economic sanctions. Then the chapter presents six theory driven hypotheses related to the main research question of this study. It continues with a presentation of the research design of this study discussing case selection, data collection, and the methods and analytical tools used in this research.

The Chapter 4 focuses on the effects of anti-Russia sanctions of its executives' beliefs and starts with a brief snapshot of Russia's foreign policy. It also discusses

the history of the most recent anti-Russia sanctions and their impacts on the state's economy and politics. This discussion is followed by the biographic descriptions and foreign policy preferences of the two most prominent Russian executives in the studied period of 2012-2019: Vladimir Putin and Dmitriy Medvedev. After offering chapter-specific details on the data collection and methodological details such as periodization of the sanctions episodes, this chapter presents overall results of the leaders' operational code analyses. Besides discussing the leaders' global operational codes (referring to their foreign policy beliefs about foreign political actors in general) and their changes after sanction imposition this chapter adds an analysis of the leaders' targeted operational codes reflecting their preferences and beliefs about only the states that eventually imposed sanctions on Russia. After providing a period-by-period analysis of the changes in master beliefs of the two leaders, this chapter evaluates the six hypotheses of this research in application to the case of Russia. Finally, this chapter discusses limitations and possible alternative explanations to the estimated changes.

The fifth chapter focusing on the sanctions imposed against Iran follows similar structure. It starts with a discussion of Iranian foreign policy and its experience with multiple sanctions imposed by the United Nations Security Council and individual states or group of states. Providing a brief chronology of different sanctions, this chapter goes on with a discussion of their multiple impacts. After presenting biographical backgrounds of the studied Iranian leaders Ali Khamenei and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, this chapter describes some chapter-specific technical choices. The analysis section of this chapter evaluates the changes in the leaders' global political beliefs after the initiation of 2006 sanctions and continues with an analysis of

operational code fluctuations over shorter episodes of sanctions. The chapter concludes with evaluation of the six hypotheses and discussion of its case-specific limitations and conclusions.

The third empirical chapter, focusing on the sanctions imposed on Syria, differently from the previous sections analyzes only one executive: the Syrian president Bashar Al-Assad and his belief changes from 2000 to 2015. The studied period is divided into two separate instances of sanctions: the 2004 unilateral United States (US) sanctions and the multilateral sanctions imposed outside of the United Nations (UN) in 2011 and the consequent years. As a result, this chapter presents an intra-case comparison of two separate episodes of sanctions experienced by the same political leader. Following the general structure established in the Chapters 4 and 5, this section shows the importance of different types of sanctions, their senders and impacts on the scale of the likely change of the targeted leader's beliefs.

The Chapter 7 brings together the main observations from all empirical chapters and presents a discussion of their similarities and differences. The chapter presents a theoretically grounded table of factors likely to influence belief change. Evaluating such factors including sanction characteristics, earlier relations between sanction senders and targets, and the targeted leaders' personal attitude towards new information, this chapter attempts to highlight the main differences between the cases which could influence the observed differences and similarities.

The last chapter of this dissertation summarizes the main findings of this research. It presents a general evaluation of the hypotheses analyzed within this research and discusses limitations of existing theoretical concepts and methodological tools. This chapter concludes with a discussion on theoretical contribution of this dissertation.



## **CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Introduction**

As this research focuses on the effects of economic sanctions on political beliefs of the targeted states' leaders, this section will provide a review of several rarely combined areas of international studies bringing together insights from foreign policy analysis, international political economy and social and political psychology. Besides providing a theoretical background for this research and a review of related literature in the foreign policy analysis field, this section will provide some insights into the foundations of cognitive approaches to foreign policy analysis by referring to existing research in social psychology.

First, this chapter will define the focus of the foreign policy analysis field and locate this research within the cognitive approaches to foreign policy analysis. The review will continue with a discussion of theoretical foundations used by cognitive approaches to social sciences. Having described the main cognitive approaches to foreign policy decision making, this review will present the Operational Code Analysis (OCA) used in this research to analyze belief sets of several state leaders.

Considering that OCA has such advantages over other approaches to analyzing individual beliefs as ‘includ[ing] a wider range of factors’ (Voss & Dorsey, 1992: 15) and is suitable to conduct an on-distance analysis of different individuals with widely accepted standardized measurements, this chapter will present the history of this approach, its application in the field of foreign policy analysis and links with other dimensions of social sciences as well as latest studies of the operational code itself. The latter research area is particularly important as it contributes to further elaboration of this approach and is related to one of the goals of this dissertation which aims not only to provide an insight into the cognitive effects of sanctions but also to contribute to better understanding of transformation and resistance of individual’s belief sets.

To understand the mechanism behind expected effects of economic sanctions on the political belief sets, the fifth section of this chapter reviews existing academic knowledge on economic sanctions, their characteristics and effects on different actors. Acknowledging the wide range of characteristics of different economic sanctions, this section presents their influence on the targeted states and targeted leaders. It also discusses how different interplay of seemingly unrelated factors surrounding sanctions may result in different consequences of sanctions and, potentially, in different effects on political beliefs. Such thorough review aims to help better contextualize the case studies analyzed in this manuscript and to map a mechanism through which sanctions may affect the targeted country leaders.

The last part of this chapter, presents a short review of the most relevant findings of the accumulated knowledge on both economic sanctions and political beliefs and will

outline the theoretical framework of this dissertation. Based on the main theoretical assumptions summarized in this part, the future chapters will develop and present hypotheses, research design, case studies and comparative analysis of the effect of economic sanctions on the political beliefs of executives of Iran, Russia and Syria.

## **2.2. International Relations and Foreign Policy Analysis**

Some international relations theories such as neorealism, neoliberal institutionalism or English school (international society theory) argue that international relations and behavior of states are mostly determined by the international structure, international system, international society or international order (Bull, 1977, Keohane, 1989, Waltz, 1979), all of which require a focus on the phenomena above the state and fall under the system-level of analysis (Singer, 1961). Others argue that such factors are only “constraints” which only sometimes “may be so overriding that other factors become inconsequential” while in the rest of situations “personality of a leader, bureaucratic hierarchy, and/or the beliefs and perceptions of a state’s elite may be more crucial” (Voss & Dorsey, 1992: 8). The latter factors (falling into the state or individual levels of analysis (Singer, 1961)) form a primary research area for the scholars of foreign policy analysis.

Foreign policy analysis (FPA) is a sub-branch of international relations focusing on decision making “with reference to foreign entities” (Hudson, 2005: 2). Developing as an independent sub-field since 1954, FPA focuses on multi-causal explanations, analyzing multiple actors and using multiple levels of analysis (Neack, 2004).

Current FPA research areas include analysis of sub-state level, “build[ing of] actor-

specific theory”, investigating multi-causal phenomena, and “commitment to viewing the process of foreign decision making as important as the output” (Hudson, 2008). The latter is particularly important for the cognitivist – motivational scholars of FPA who studies how cognitive factors such as political beliefs influence decision making. This research uses a framework based on cognitivist studies of FPA some of which are discussed below.

### **2.3. Cognitive Approaches to Foreign Policy Analysis**

Studies combining cognitive psychology and foreign policy analysis (sometimes located in the field of political psychology) focus mostly on the two broader research areas of individual characteristics (personality and perception studies) and group interactions (Hermann, 1992). The former branch of cognitive studies focusing on individual decision making includes studies of personality characteristics of a leader and their effect on such leader’s decisions and the second area of studies on how individual perception of the world differs between different people, what determines a person’s perception and how perception influences behavior.

Perception is defined as a “process by which stimuli become interpreted by the individual, the process taking place via the integration of the stimulus events with the prior knowledge and beliefs of the individual” (Voss & Dorsey, 1992: 8). FPA scholars give importance to studies of perception of state leaders because it may determine whether a state leader would consider another state’s behavior as harmful or friendly, whether a state leader would consider another state’s promises or threats credible and how a leader would respond to different types of behavior of another

state (Jervis, 1982-1983). Perception may be influenced (what occasionally results in misperception) by multiple variables including preexisting beliefs of a person, capacity to integrate new information, reliance on the knowledge acquired from previous experience and many others factors (Jervis, 1976, Jervis, 1982-1983).

To understand personal beliefs and other psychological factors influencing perception and decision making, studies focusing on personal characteristics analyze broadly speaking “motives” or goals, “cognitions and beliefs” and “temperament and interpersonal traits” (Winter, 1992: 87). The latter area of study includes analysis of personal traits such as ‘emotional stability’ or ‘self-esteem’ and other personal characteristics while considering them as factors influencing a leader’s decisions (Winter, 1992: 91-92). The studies focusing on the state leaders’ motives for particular behavior suggest that such motives include “achievement, affiliation, and power” and inclination to any of these motives is related to a specific type of foreign policy (influencing the extend of aggressiveness or cooperation of such leader) (Winter, 1992: 87-88). Finally, research focusing on cognitions proposes that “specific cognitive beliefs” as well as sets of such beliefs (e.g. Operational Code construct bringing several cognitive beliefs into a single set) or cognitive styles (e.g. ‘optimistic explanatory style’) of leaders may affect their evaluations of the world around and their decisions to undertake a particular action (Winter, 1992: 90-91).

While the research focusing on belief sets includes different approaches, all of them have similar focus on “the nature of the filtering device of existing beliefs about empirical and normative issues” (Smith, 1988: 11). Beliefs in this context refer to a person’s factual or opinion-based information about different actors or issues. Such

beliefs influence a person's "perception through their relation to expectations and interpretations" (Voss & Dorsey, 1992: 11) and may change one's response to external events (though, beliefs do not always lead to a particular behavior). One of the most widely used approaches to studying belief sets is Operational Code Analysis used by this research and discussed in the following sections.

## **2.4. Political Beliefs and Operational Code**

### *2.4.1. Early History of the Operational Code Approach*

While some theories might take perceptions and expectations of the state leaders for granted, cognitive approaches to FPA argue that leaders' decisions are in part influenced by an individual's 'image' of the world, cognitive maps, "lessons of the past" (Smith, 1988), political beliefs (George, 1969), or psychological schemas (Larson, 1994). Cognitive approaches to FPA argue that individual level of analysis is important to understand foreign policy and that a priori knowledge and beliefs about world and others can impact individual decision making (Hermann & Hermann, 1989, Jervis, 1976: 28-31). The analysis of political beliefs using the concept of operational code is one of widely used approaches to FPA today.

The operational code concept means a set of general "rules" perceived by their owners as necessary "for effective political conduct" (Leites, 1951: xi). Leites who coined the term of "operational code" aimed to analyze Bolsheviks' conduct by defining their general rules of behavior on the basis of studying writings by Lenin and Stalin (Leites, 1951: xii) in his famous book *The Operational Code of Politburo*.

This approach allowed an analysis of cognitive characteristics of political leaders and proposed how to undertake such research on-distance.

Nevertheless, this method did not gain wide use until Alexander L. George (1969) redefined and simplified the complex analysis of Leites into instrumental and philosophical beliefs which could be analyzed without use of “psychoanalytic hypotheses” (George, 1969: 195). The Table 1 below summarizes the ten beliefs of Operational Code proposed by George (1969).

**Table 1.** Philosophical and Instrumental Beliefs Measured within Operational Code Analysis

| <b>Philosophical Beliefs</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>P-1:</b> What is the essential nature of political life? Is the political universe essentially one of harmony or conflict? What is the fundamental character of one’s political opponents?                                          |
| <b>P-2:</b> What are the prospects for the eventual realization of one’s fundamental political values and aspirations? Can one be optimistic, or must one be pessimistic on this score; and in what respects the one and/or the other? |
| <b>P-3:</b> Is the political future predictable? In what sense and to what extent?                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>P-4:</b> How much control or mastery can one have over historical development? What is one’s role in moving and shaping history in the desired direction?                                                                           |
| <b>P-5:</b> What is the role of chance in human affairs and in historical development?                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Instrumental Beliefs</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>I-1:</b> What is the best approach for selecting goals or objectives for political action?                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>I-2:</b> How are the goals of action pursued most effectively?                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>I-3:</b> How are the risks of political action calculated, controlled, and accepted?                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>I-4:</b> What is the best timing of action to advance one’s interest?                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>I-5:</b> What is the utility and role of different means for advancing one’s interests?                                                                                                                                             |

Source: George (1969).

The term ‘instrumental beliefs’ refers to “end-means relations” in foreign policy describing how a state leader prefers to conduct foreign policy and achieve certain

goals. In contrast, the concept of “philosophical beliefs” refers to the ideas about “the fundamental nature of politics, the nature of political conflict, the role of the individual in history” (George, 1969: 199) meaning an individual’s attitude towards the outside world. The operational code framework covers main beliefs related to foreign policy decisions (George, 1969).

While in total George (1969) defined ten beliefs, three of them are seen as the master beliefs affecting whole mindset of a person. Initially, George (1969) proposed that the first philosophical belief (P1) about the nature of universe (varying between perceptions of a fully hostile to totally friendly universe) is particularly significant as a belief “shaping the character of the belief system as a whole and in regulating its impact on the actor's political behavior” (George, 1969: 217). Later analysis proposed that such ‘master beliefs’ should also include the first instrumental (I1) belief related to the approaches to goal setting which range from cooperation to conflict (Schafer & Walker, 2006b: 33) and the belief about universe (P1), and the preference of approach to selecting political objectives (I1) combined with the fourth philosophical belief (P4) about one’s role in making history (Marfleet & Walker, 2006: 56). The latter belief is important as it reflects the locus of power one perceives to have over environment or attributes to others. Later, based on analysis of such “master beliefs”, leaders’ typologies were created consisting of six (Walker, 1983: with reference to Holsti (1877)) or four different types (Walker, 1983, Walker, 1990). In total, operational code analysis based on the on-distance analysis of political leaders’ beliefs is widely used among scholars of FPA focusing on diverse leaders and topics, including a focus on persistence and change of political beliefs.

#### *2.4.2. Application and Further Development of the Operational Code Approach*

While the first use of operational code was aimed to analyze political beliefs of the leaders of the Communist Party of the USSR (Leites, 1951), this approach, particularly in its version re-designed by George (1969) has been increasingly often used in order to analyze multiple leaders from all over the world. Still, the applications of the operational code approach was rather limited before 1998 when a standardized Verbs-in-Context system measuring the value of different transitional verbs pronounced in regards to foreign states was introduced as a standard method of measurement of operational code (Walker, et al., 1998). (Though, such measurement can still be questioned with regards of use of languages with different sentence structures (Özdamar, 2017)). Before that, authors were codifying leaders' beliefs by looking at the answers provided in the leaders' speeches in regards to the beliefs related questions as defined by George (1969). Sometimes researchers also used a 'holistic' analysis of overall arguments in a speech and were acknowledging the lack of a standardized analysis not only between different researchers but even within a single research in relation to different leaders (Winter, Hermann, Weintraub & Walker, 1991). Such studies can be exemplified by the analysis of the operational code of the US Secretary of State Kissinger (Walker, 1977), the study of a New Zealand MP Beetham's worldview (Davis, 1980) or of Reagan's vision of the Soviet Union and international conflict (Shimko, 1992).

Besides the application of the operational code framework to different leaders, several studies also aimed to test and further improve this approach. Such studies can be illustrated by an analysis of Bush and Gorbachev's personalities which focused on the standardization of this method (Winter, et al., 1991), a study of British Prime-

Ministerial beliefs aiming to enlarge previous emphasis on analysis of presidential beliefs (Kaarbo, 1997) or analysis of Woodrow Wilson's beliefs endeavoring to understand motivational basis for political beliefs (Walker, 1995).

Introduction of the systematic codification scheme focusing only on the verbs used in a speech resolved issues of standardization of coding (Walker, et al., 1998).

Subsequent development of an automated analysis software ProfilerPlus by Social Science Automation allowed faster and easier text processing. As a result, the number of operational code studies experienced a significant increase. The verb-based schema was used in multiple individual and comparative case studies covering leaders from various regions of the world. Such diverse research includes the analyses of the Russia's president Vladimir Putin's beliefs when he was a 'new actor' on the international arena (Dyson, 2001) and years later (Dyson & Parent, 2018); study of China's Xi Jinping (He & Feng, 2013) and Mao Zedong's beliefs with changes reported between war and peace periods (Feng, 2005: 658), an analysis of Fidel Castro and North Korean Kim Il Sung (Malici & Malici, 2005), studies of such Middle Eastern leaders as Israel's Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres (Crichlow, 1998), Iran's Ahmadinejad and Syria's al-Assad (Akan & Allison, 2008), a personality profile of the US president Obama (Winter, 2011), Egypt's Morsi, Tunisia's Ghannouchi, and Meshaal from Gaza (Özdamar & Canbolat, 2017) and many others.

Besides the studies focusing on the general political beliefs of certain leaders, some authors look into the difference between such beliefs regarding different kinds of states. For example, a comparative study of Tony Blair and Bill Clinton shows that

both of them tend to see democracies as more friendly than autocracies and have more cooperative attitude towards the former (Schafer & Walker, 2006a). Similarly, Carter was found to have different beliefs about the Soviet Union and about political universe in general (Walker, et al., 1998). Putin was also found to demonstrate a higher degree of belief change in regards to the Western states than in regards to the whole world (Dyson & Parent, 2018). Such results, suggest that political beliefs can be measured not only in relation to the whole political universe but in relation to narrower groups of states. Moreover, existence of such divergence in political beliefs supports the psychological proposition that any belief consists of different dimensions and may have positive evaluation about some parts of a phenomenon and negative evaluation about other parts (Ajzen, 2011). Thus, any belief measure can only show a degree of that or another attitude (Ajzen, 2011) as it is analyzed in the scores used in the operational code method.

Multiple inquiries aiming to verify relevance of and to improve the verb-in-context-based OCA were undertaken in the last three decades. A comparative study analyzing the US Presidents Bush and Clinton's operational codes proposed that under the conditions when the US is in 'a favorable power position' and the issue is not vital for the US, operational codes were more likely to affect the state's behavior in relation to the war conflicts of early 1990s (Walker, Schafer & Young, 1999). Other studies focusing on the effects of an individual's beliefs on his/her decisions have shown that personal characteristics such as feeling of control, distrust and cognitive complexity (the latter two being personality traits different from OCA) of the US legislature members had an influence on their voting patterns related to international cooperation and trade (Crichlow, 2002). Similarly, personal beliefs are

found to have significant effect on the decisions of the US presidents to impose economic sanctions on other states (Drury, 2006) and to use diversionary force where higher perceived control over events correlates with higher probability to use force (Keller & Foster, 2012). In addition, building upon the OCA-based leadership typology (Walker 1990 with reference to Holsti 1987) some scholars attempt to design interaction models. Using such typology O'Reilly (2012) built a model of decision making regarding nuclear policies and proposed that a 'more conflict-oriented' leader is more likely to prefer to engage in nuclear proliferation while others may prefer different policies even under similar circumstances. While this dissertation does not aim to analyze a causal relation between the belief changes and subsequent behavior, the research showing links between operational codes of state leaders and their decision making shows the significance of understanding of political beliefs and their change.

## **2.5. Change of Political Beliefs**

### *2.5.1. Psychological Explanation of Attitude Change*

Before discussing changes of attitudes and beliefs in foreign policy it is necessary to define the meanings of these concepts. An attitude, broadly speaking, mean a "response favorably or unfavorably to an object, institution or events' and is "evaluative" (Ajzen, 2011: 3). Beliefs in turn can be understood as 'information that a person has about other people, objects and people' and can include both factual information and one's opinion (Voss & Dorsey, 1992: 11) meaning that attitude may constitute a part of personal belief. Cognitive research measures attitudes by looking at 'cognitive' (thought related), 'affective' (related to feelings) and 'conative'

(related to ‘realized or planned actions towards an object’) responses of a person towards an object. The latter measure is particularly close to the measurement type used in current Operational Code research which focuses mostly on verbs in context (Schafer & Walker, 2006b) used by a leader in relation to other countries and actors.

Research in cognitive psychology suggests that attitudes and beliefs are generally stable but sometimes can change. Organization and change of attitudes is explained by several theories including the balance theory, congruity theory, consistency theory (Jervis, 1976: 117) and cognitive dissonance theory (Cohen, 1964). For example, early cognitive scholars theorized that ‘beliefs and behavior are linked’ (though such link does not requires one to act only in accordance with one’s beliefs), and such link was theorized to be based on balance in a person’s cognitive structure (Ajzen, 2011: 25 with reference to Festinger (1957)). Psychologists also suggest that there is a “need for consistency between cognition and affect” (meaning between a person’s ideas about an object and feelings towards it) (Ajzen, 2011: 27).

While such theories imply that attitudes may have an impact on behavior, most psychologists agree that even if theory of behavioral consistency predicts “consistency among different behaviors” related to a specific personal characteristic, an inconsistency may occur due to other personal or external factors (Ajzen, 2011: 31). Alternative explanation of this relation proposes that in order for attitudes to be translated into behavior a person should have both “motivation and opportunity” to do so (Ajzen, 2011: 59-60). Thus, attitudes are more likely to define one’s preferred “course of action” and not a specific behavior (Ajzen, 2011: 93). The decision to act

in a specific way is also related to one's "confidence in their ability to do so" also referred as 'locus of control' in cognitive studies (Ajzen, 2011: 93-94) and measured by the Historical Control instrumental belief (P4) in the OCA approach.

The theories arguing existence of links between thoughts, feelings, and behavior propose that attitude can change due to a discrepancy between incoming information and initial attitudes (Cohen, 1964). However, beliefs tend to be resistant to new and discrepant information. There are eight mechanisms through which a person can dismiss new information without changing own views (Jervis, 1976: 291-297) and assimilate new information into existing beliefs. Jervis (1976) also theorized that if change is to occur, then "less central attitudes" are more likely to change than the central beliefs (Jervis, 1976: 297). In a similar fashion, change of political beliefs can be a product of "experiential learning" as "a result of the observation and interpretation of experience" (Levy, 1994: 283).

Alternatively, a 'theory of enforced discrepant behavior' proposes that when a person is forced to act against his/her beliefs, the resulting cognitive dissonance between enacted behavior and beliefs may produce a change in beliefs (Cohen, 1964).

However, such change is only likely if a stimulus inflicting discrepant behavior is not too high as it would prevent cognitive dissonance by leaving no other options to act.

Dissonance may cause belief change when a dissonant behavior is deliberately chosen by an actor having possibilities to choose alternative courses of actions (Cohen, 1964: 91-96). This theory provides an exciting venue for future research on whether coerced changes in a state's behavior inflict belief shifts in the targeted leaders or it is a belief change that results in modified behavior. While such question

is out scope of this research, this theory provides an insight for this study as it implies that if as actors choose behavior consistent with their primary beliefs (as often occurs under unsuccessful or prolonged sanctions), such beliefs may be less likely to change.

### 2.5.2. *Changes in the Operational Code: Empirical Evidence*

Studying political belief change is important to understand, foresee or bring potential changes of foreign policy behavior, because change of the latter may necessitate prior change of beliefs (Boin *et al.* 2005 cited in Van Esch, 2015) even if belief alteration does not necessary bring change in behavior (Jervis, 1976: 412). Moreover, understanding of belief changes among several actors is important for assessing prospects of their “mutual leadership” (van Esch, 2015).

OCA scholars also found that political belief change is rare but possible and that even change in master beliefs can happen (George, 1969). Leites in his later analysis of Bolshevik beliefs found presence of change in the main philosophical beliefs which came about with passage of time and occurrence of such significant events as the death of Stalin (George, 1969: 218). Later empirical works by various scholars supported this idea of possibility of change with findings related to different leaders in different periods of time (Crichlow, 1998, Dyson & Parent, 2018, Malici & Malici, 2005, Renshon, 2008, Walker & Schafer, 2000, Walker, et al., 1998).

Such studies relate cognitive changes to such external shocks as Cuban Missile Crisis for Kennedy (Marfleet, 2000), 9/11 attack for George Bush (Renshon, 2008) or Soviet invasion to Afghanistan (Walker, et al., 1998) both of whom demonstrated

largest changes in perception of the political universe. Alternatively, recent research points to the possibility of incremental learning that can explain belief changes without presence of significant external shocks (Ziv, 2012); though, at this stage the principles of when such gradual learning is more likely to occur are not defined yet. The most recent research argues that effects of external shocks or “traumas” may be combined with those of “crisis-learning” (van Willigen & Bakker, 2021).

Renshon (2008), focusing on change of operational code, proposed that belief change can be of two types: reversal or reinforcement of the existing beliefs (Renshon, 2008: 826). Later van Esch (2015) added to these types belief reduction and rigidity, where reduction presupposes weakening of belief without major change in its dimension, while rigidity refers to lack of change in response to stimulus.

Cognitivist scholars theorized that while core beliefs are less likely to change than less important beliefs (Jervis, 1976), if a master belief of operational code is changed other beliefs are likely to change as well (George, 1969). Empirical studies support the idea of the general stability of beliefs but also show that master beliefs can significantly change in response to “shocks” (Renshon, 2008, Walker, et al., 1998). Renshon (2008) also proposed that the changes of master beliefs are not necessary in consistency with other beliefs. Despite the general acceptance of the idea that shocks can inflict a belief change, it is not clear as to which events can qualify as shocks, and to what extent or in which direction a change can be induced. Moreover, there is lack of knowledge on the effect on the particular class of events (such as economic sanctions or other alternative types of coercion) on beliefs which makes this research particularly important.

Another study analyzing operational code changes found that such changes are more likely to be captured in spontaneous speeches than in pre-written speeches (Schafer & Crichlow, 2000: 567-570) which suggests possibility of diverging results depending on the analyzed textual source. This was observed in changes of Clinton's attitude toward political universe and political optimism reflected in spontaneous but not pre-written speeches (P1 and P2) (Schafer & Crichlow, 2000: 567-570). Similarly there may be a difference between private and public speeches. For example, Kennedy's perception of world's hostility had larger change reflected in public speeches while changes of his instrumental values were mostly equal across different speech types (Marfleet, 2000), though a similar later study found no such effect (Renshon, 2009). While such 'source effect' should be kept in mind due to possibility of some differences between results derived from each type of texts (Walker, 2000), such effects may also be caused by the too limited number of speeches analyzed or too limited time span. Such findings are important as they highlight the necessity to account for the possible source effects when comparing text samples across time or between individuals (Marfleet, 2000: 557).

To determine the possible variables effecting differences in leaders' reactions to similar events, Keller (2009) proposed that contextual factors such as domestic political pressure or sources of validation, may account for political actors being either flexible or rigid in response to external events. Other attempts to determine the differences in beliefs changes of different actors in response to similar shocks, focus on the personal traits of such actors, in particular on "conceptual complexity" and "openness to information" (van Esch, 2015). Van Esch (2015) proposed that, in

response to an external shock, actors with higher conceptual complexity are more likely to change their secondary beliefs, while higher openness to information may influence alterations of fundamental beliefs. Such covariation between cognitive complexity and likelihood of belief changes is supported by earlier research arguing that ‘cognitive balance is stronger in cognitively simple people’ (Jervis, 1976: 126 with reference to Silverman (1971)). Still, the explanatory power of this variable may be undermined by the possibility of the change of this characteristic as well as was observed by Kesgin (2019). Moreover, such traits may also interact with specific foreign policy preferences as demonstrated by the argument that higher cognitive complexity is likely to correlate with more cooperative behavior (Maoz & Astorino, 1992).

Personal characteristics of leaders are analyzed using the leadership traits analysis (LTA) designed by Hermann (1999). LTA is based on calculation of indices of different traits from the results of content analysis of leaders’ speeches. LTA research shows that analyzing leadership traits is important for FPA. For instance, leaders prone to challenge constraints are found to be more likely to use violence, while ‘constraint respecting’ leaders are more likely to abstain from violence under constraints (Keller, 2005). The importance of the attitude towards constraints for foreign policy decision making is also supported by Cuhadar, Kaarbo, Kesgin and Ozkececi-Taner (2017). Alternatively, British leaders with such personal traits as higher self-confidence and propensity to use ‘conflictual strategies’ tend to engage in ‘policy fiascos’ (Brummer, 2016). Thus, while the personal traits will be used in this dissertation to analyze differences between the leaders’ belief changes, to prevent

misinterpretation this study will also check whether the studied leaders' traits change in the analyzed timespan.

The OCA research discussed above shows that external shocks are likely to be able to inflict changes in the political beliefs of state leaders. However, as there is no existing knowledge on the types of events able to lead to belief changes, this dissertation attempts to analyze economic sanctions as a class of external shocks which may potentially inflict such change. To better theorize the mechanisms of such possible belief change and the conditions under which such change is more likely, the following section presents a review of existing literature on the economic sanctions, their effectiveness and effects on the sanction senders, the targeted states, and the third-party states, and the potential effect of such consequences on the targeted state leaders.

## **2.6. Economic Sanctions: Definition, Types, Characteristics**

### *2.6.1. Type by sender, scope, aim*

If foreign policy can be understood as strategies which government uses to achieve own "goals in its relation to foreign entities" (Hudson, 2008: 12), foreign policy actions can include acts to influence behavior of other states. Economic sanctions, in turn, are one of the tools used to achieve such goal. Sanctions are broadly defined as "actions that one or more countries take to limit or end their economic relations with a target country in an effort to persuade that country to change its policies" (Bapat, et al., 2013: 85) and/or to achieve other goals such as signalling to domestic or international audiences. Such actions can refer to a variety of tactics ranging from

asset freeze of an individual to large scale embargos. This concept usually does not include more aggressive tactics such as blockades (seen as a type of “economic warfare”) (Wallensteen, 1968: 248) or restrictions “of economic relations” for solely domestic reasons of the initiating state (Bapat, et al., 2013: 83). Sanctions differ in scope, ranging from comprehensive sanctions effecting the whole country to targeted sanctions aiming to influence only particular sectors or individuals – the latter can also be called “smart” or “selective” sanctions and aim to reduce negative humanitarian impacts (Lopez & Cortright, 2002, UN, 2017: 1). Sanctions can also be differentiated by the types and numbers of demands posed to the targeted states, relations between the country sending and receiving the sanction, type of the sanction sender, and other contextual factors (Bapat, et al., 2013: 81-83). Understanding of the possible differences between these types is important in order to compare different cases of sanctions, their effects and outcomes and, thus, to better understand the effects of sanctions on the targeted leaders’ beliefs as attempted by this research.

The UN as the largest global norm-setting international institution (IO) envisions and justifies use of sanctions in several situations. The UN can enforce sanctions in response to ‘acts of aggression’, ‘breaches of the peace’, ‘threats to the peace’ where the latter may include multiple issues (Doxey, 1996: 49). However, UN-imposed sanctions are possible only if majority of the members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) authorize such action or authorize a regional IO to impose sanctions on a particular state (Doxey, 1996: 50).

Other regional IOs or military or economic alliances can impose sanctions either with approval or without approval of the UNSC. Such IOs can be exemplified by

African Union (AU), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) actively imposing sanctions in their region (Charron & Portela, 2015), or the European Union (EU) or NATO (Trans-Atlantic Alliance) which often impose sanctions on the states outside of their members. In addition to the IO- initiated sanctions, states lacking broad international support or facing a possibility of veto by even one permanent member at the UNSC, can individually or in groups impose sanctions as was in case of the US sanction against China (Yang, Askari, Forrer & Teegen, 2004) or Cuba. Even China, which usually opposes ve vetoes economic sanctions in the UNSC is said to reconsider its approach to unilateral economic sanctions (Reilly, 2012). However, not only big powers can impose sanctions, even smaller powers can use this policy as exemplified by Greece's sanctions over Macedonia or sanctions of some Arab states against Israel (Wallenstein, 2000).

Besides the comprehensive – targeted sanctions division, the sanctions scope can be differentiated according to whether sanctions limit exports, exports or financial relations (Hufbauer et al. 1990 cited in Zhao 2010). Alternatively, sanctions can be divided as tactical or strategic where the former sanctions aim to bring immediate economic or political benefits to the sender (for symbolic or domestic purposes), and the latter type aims to influence strategic sectors of the targeted country (i.e. its security etc.) (Zhao, 2010: 265-266). Understanding of the type and the scope of sanctions is important to analyze the impacts a sanction has on the targeted states and other affected actors.

### 2.6.2. *Evolution of sanctions*

Early sanctions were imposed during the World War I and later sanctions were formalized under the League of Nations Charter, though this was weakened by the lack of commitment among the League's members (Wallenstein, 2000: 1). After the Second World War and creation of the UN, sanctions were still mostly imposed outside of this institution (with the first UN sanction imposed on Rhodesia in 1965) and mostly in relation to the post-colonial issues (Wallenstein, 2000). Only after 1990s the number of the UNSC-initiated sanctions considerably increased.

Significant changes were introduced over the years in sanction design in terms of issues which can be tackled by sanctions, types of targets and scope of sanctions (Weschler, 2009). In general, the UNSC can impose sanctions mandatory for all UN members in accordance with the UN Charter, Chapter VII allowing coercive actions in case of aggression, "a threat to the peace," or a "breach of the peace" (Charron & Portela, 2015: 1372 with reference to the UN Charter). Implemented narrowly in the beginning, this definition gradually gained a rather broad interpretation of aggression and peace. In practice it started to include inter- and intra-state conflicts, terrorism, non-constitutional changes of government and human rights (Charron & Portela, 2015), possession of weapons of mass destructions, breach of human rights, or threats to democratic governance. (Doxey, 1996: 49). Initially UN sanctions were mostly comprehensive or consisted of arms embargo and were directed against states. However, starting with the sanction which limited diamond trade and targeted the UNITA rebel group in Angola, the UNSC began sanctioning non-state actors and focusing on specific commodities traded by specific actors (Weschler, 2009: 32-33).

Starting with the UN sanctions against Haiti, sanctions started to target specific individuals among state authorities responsible for the actions the UN wanted to change; while such sanctions could be more effective they were also expected to limit harm to the general population (Weschler, 2009). As such targeted (or sometimes called ‘smart’) sanctions against individuals, groups of individuals, particular economic sectors or regions became much more widespread (Charron, Giumelli & Portela, 2015), new ways of sanctioning such as ‘asset freeze’ or ‘travel bans’ were introduced (Weschler, 2009: 35). While sanctions targeting individuals and groups often cause legal controversies (de Wet, 2013) they are widely used till these days.

While procedures of sanction imposition in and outside the UN differ, the evolution of tactics employed by different senders followed similar paths. Thus, after 1990s actors outside of the UN also started to use the ‘smart sanctions’ approach.

### *2.6.3. Sanction initiation and intentions of sanction senders*

While decision makers may often proclaim justifiable reasons for sanctions, not always similar conditions lead to similar sanctions if to any at all. Even when applied directly in response to, for example, aggression, the type and the scope of sanction is likely to depend on the goals pursued by sanction senders. Sanctions can have such variety of goals as “a) deterrence, b) compliance, c) punishment, d) destabilization, e) limitation of conflict, f) solidarity, g) symbolism, h) signaling” (Doxey, 1996: 54-55). Depending on their goals, sanctions can be seen as ‘instrumental’ or ‘expressive’ (Galtung, 1967) and concern either the target’s behavior or the sender’s position, or international order as a whole (Barber, 1979: 384). Some purposes may be a result of

lack of better policy choices. For example, symbolic purposes may prevail when sanctions cannot inflict meaningful impact on the targeted states as was in the case of Australia and Canada's sanctions against USSR (Nossal, 1991). Use of sanctions for punishment also may be not a product of means-ends calculations or a reflection of a rational behavior while still retaining some effectiveness (Nossal, 1989).

Decisions on imposing sanctions related to different issues may also need different explanations. Sanctions related to humanitarian norms which are sometimes imposed by the "democratic great powers" even on their partners may need activists of such policy using "public opinion or sound information" (Walldorf Jr, 2010: 656). In general, democratic states are less likely to sanction other democracies while they use such instrument more frequently than not democratic states (Cox & Drury, 2006). While such research may suggest that democratic peace applies to economic sanctions, other studies argue that it is relevant only for the issues not related to security (Wallace, 2013). Driscoll, Halcoussis and Lowenberg (2011) also argue that it is not democracy but "cultural ties" (defined as political, economic and social similarities) which make sanctions less likely, but also more successful if sanctions between similar states are imposed (Driscoll, et al., 2011).

#### *2.6.4. Sanction duration*

The duration of economic sanctions is an important factor which can influence the effectiveness of sanctions by demonstrating resolve of the sanction senders. While one may expect sanctions to be a quick tool to influence a state, Bolks and Al-Sowayel (2000) found that average duration of sanctions under their study was 16 years with failed sanctions being 'twice' longer than that of successful cases (Bolks

& Al-Sowayel, 2000: 242). They argued that the characteristics of the targeted state such as “political structure and regime stability” are among the most significant determinants of the sanction length (Bolks & Al-Sowayel, 2000: 261). In particular, states with a “more centralized and concentrated political authority” (i.e. less democratic states) tend to be more successful in resisting sanctions and sanctions upon such states tend to be longer than those imposed on democracies (Bolks & Al-Sowayel, 2000: 261). Similarly, democratization of the targeted state is likely to significantly reduce sanction duration (Bolks & Al-Sowayel, 2000: 259).

Among other issues influencing sanction duration, “financial and export sanctions” tend to correlate with longer sanctions as they may require longer time to influence the targeted state than other “trade sanctions” (Bolks & Al-Sowayel, 2000: 258) despite their being identified among the most effective ones (Dashti-Gibson, et al., 1997). In addition, hostility or threats of sanction senders may prolong sanctions by increasing domestic will to resist (Bolks & Al-Sowayel, 2000: 261) despite the claims that threats of use of force may make sanctions more successful (Pape, 1997).

## **2.7. Effectiveness and Impacts of Economic Sanctions<sup>3</sup>**

Sanctions literature on both effectiveness and consequences of sanctions developed mostly along the historical events and transformation of sanctions in the world.

When in 1980s sanctions against South Africa were of primary concern, multiple works aimed to propose a normative framework for mandatory sanctions (Wright,

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<sup>3</sup> A revised version of the following section was published as analytical essay in the International Studies Review Journal (see Özdamar & Shahin, 2021). The published version expands and builds upon the critical discussion of limitations of the existing literature on sanction consequences and presents an original possible framework to combine the fragmented scholarship and overcome some theoretical, thematic, and methodological issues.

1986). Later in 1990s the sanctions literature shifted its focus to a discussion of advantages and disadvantages of comprehensive and targeted sanctions reflecting on the international discussions of prolonged sanctions against Iraq and Yugoslavia. From 2000s onwards, together with the discussions of targeted/smart sanctions, scholarship increased its focus on the intended and unintended consequences of sanctions to understand their impacts beyond the goals of sanction senders. While some such works were also published earlier, within the last decades the consequences of sanctions started to attract more and more attention.

It is necessary to acknowledge that focus of analysis of research on consequences and effectiveness of sanctions can sometimes coincide because some consequences can represent the intended outcome of a sanctions. However, while effectiveness can be understood as achievement of a specific intended consequence, a lot of sanctions consequences are either unintended or even if they are intended they may produce unexpected secondary effects. Thus, understanding of consequences of economic sanctions presents a broader perspective encompassing much wider aspects of sanction imposition than the analysis of sanction effectiveness alone. Both notions of effectiveness and effects are important for this study, because while it focuses on the impacts of sanctions on beliefs of targeted leaders, results of this research may provide additional insights on the effectiveness of sanctions or its lack.

### *2.7.1. Effectiveness of Economic Sanctions*

#### *2.7.1.1. Definition and measurement of sanction effectiveness*

Neither type or characteristic of sanctions can guarantee success of such policy. In case of sanctions, their success or effectiveness is mostly referred to achievement of

the desired change in behavior of a foreign state or at least their contribution to achievement of the behavioral change or some related concessions agreed upon by the target (Elliott, 1998). Failure of sanctions, in turn means that sanction did not achieve expected goals or produced an opposite outcome (Elliott, 1998). Thus, sanction success is related to the degree of implementation of the demanded behavior and the degree to which sanctions and not another factors contributed to such behavior (Hufbauer, et al., 2009). In fact the latter issue is the cause of disagreements sanction effectiveness, as some suggest that effectiveness is achieved only in presence of threats to use force (Pape, 1997). Despite the relatively commonly accepted definition, effectiveness is often difficult to quantify and measure because of the diversity of initial goals of sanctions some of which can be hidden from the public (Eland, 1995). So, for example, if a sanction has a primarily symbolic goal of signaling a message to other countries, measuring effectiveness of such sanction by looking at the change of the targeted state's behavior may be rather misleading.

#### *2.7.1.2. Factors determining sanction success or failure*

Most studies on the determinants of sanction effectiveness underline that not a single factor but a combination of different factors is likely to increase or decrease the probability of success (Adrian & Dursun, 2007, Bapat, et al., 2013, Bonetti, 1998, Dashti-Gibson, et al., 1997). Moreover, presence or absence of some factors may influence the effectiveness of others (Bapat, et al., 2013). Among the most common factors identified as those increasing probability of sanction success are comprehensiveness of sanction (Allen, 2005) costs of sanctions for the target (Drury, 1998), allied relationship between sender and target (Allen, 2005, Bonetti, 1998) (though this relationship is challenged by Drury (1998)), democratic regime of

targeted state (Allen, 2005), and a context where importance of issues is lower than the sanction cost (Morgan & Schwebach, 1997).

The relationship between sender and target may influence the effectiveness of sanctions as when both states are allies targets are more likely to comply and on the contrary ‘non-allied targets tend to resist’ even despite threats of prolonged sanctions (Whang, 2010: 572). Moreover, ‘strong sanctions’ are also more likely to contribute to sanction success (Whang, 2010). Some argue that sanctions can only be effective if ‘properly implemented’ and include ‘the threat of force’ (Oudraat, 2000).

Alternatively, the cost-benefit approach to sanction effectiveness analysis argues that sanctions are more likely to work in the long run (when they did not succeed in the short run) only if even after adjustments their costs are still higher than advantages of not complying with sanction demands (van Bergeijk & van Marrewijk, 1995).

Finally, when sanctions are imposed in line with the expectations of the targeted leaders and are either mitigated via adjustment measures or a priori ‘discounted’ they are less likely to succeed than those measures which were not anticipated (Chan, 2009). The latter issue in turn can have similar impacts on the leaders’ cognitions as anticipated sanctions and measures are not likely to produce cognitive shock.

Though, most studies focus on the characteristics of the applied sanctions, some scholars analyze the recipient side of the sanction and the constraints which can determine the reaction of the targeted state. For example, Kaempfer and Lowenberg (1988) focus on the public choice and the preferences of domestic groups within the sending and targeted countries, while Allen (2008b) studies the effects of political constraints such those of democratic institutions on the leaders’ freedom to adapt a

particular response to imposed sanctions. The effect of institutional setting within the targeted country is also studied by Brooks (2002) arguing that the target's regime type can determine to which sanction type (comprehensive or selective) the state is more likely to concede. Similarly, democracies are found to be unlikely to concede to sanctions in cases where they do not concede in the short time span and such prolonged sanctions against democracies tend to be lifted without achieving success (Allen, 2005: 133). Alternative typologies of targeted regimes are also important as 'smart' sanctions imposed on 'individualistic' regimes are found to be less effective than those imposed on military regimes (Walldorf, 2014). Finally, regimes of senders also matter as democratic senders are theorized to be more effective because being bound by electoral processes they have more credible signaling (Hart, 2000).

Effects of sanctions on targeted states may also be limited due to 'anticipatory actions', automatic or purposeful 'defense of economy' such as import control, quotas, adjustments, 'finding new trade routes' or evasion), fiscal or monetary changes and alternative relations with states not taking part in the initiated sanctions (Doxey, 1996: 97-100). While the adjustment strategies will be discussed in detail in the following section, sanctions' impacts indeed tend to vary depending on the phase of sanctions and may decrease over time as it happened in cases of sanctions on Liberia and Sierra Leone (Vines & Cargill, 2009: 67). Moreover, a targeted state can even impose such counter-measures as to 'expropriate assets' or 'repudiate debts' (Doxey, 1996: 103). Moreover, even when sanctions are economically effective and influence the targeted state, sanction effectiveness may be undermined by such governmental political moves as use of "political weapons", propaganda and bringing "siege psychosis" (Doxey, 1996: 104). The latter psychological impact can

be further reinforced by the large international support to the sanctions and act as a “hardening stimulus” instead of motivating behavioral change (Galtung, 1967: 411).

Besides the direct relation between targeted and sanctioning states, responses to sanctions shown by third party states may also influence effectiveness of sanctions. Third parties with political motives to support sanctioned state via trade and states with strong commercial interests to continue trade relations with the target can bust sanctions, diminishing their effectiveness and influence on the target (Early, 2011).

Not only sanctions but even threats of using sanctions are considered as an important tool of foreign policy. Research shows that such threats are more likely to be effective when there is a high level of economic interaction between sender and target and the target does not want to risk it (Whang, McLean & Kuberski, 2013: 79). Besides such coercion-based argument, some propose that sanction threats may be effective as a tool to provide better information about sender’s resolve, though other scholars argue that such mechanism does not have empirical support (Whang, et al., 2013: 79). The effect of signaling is challenged for the imposed sanctions as well. Scholars argue that imposition of sanctions does not change target’s “evaluation of the sender state’s resolve” due to mostly low costs of sanctions for senders and, thus, does not provide the expected effective signaling (Whang & Kim, 2015).

In rare attempts to model understand how sanctions and their signals are perceived and responded to, Drezner (1999) models an interaction between a sanction sender and a targeted state. The study argues that the expectations and beliefs of the targeted country leaders about the intentions and characteristics of sanction senders are likely

to influence the degree to which a targeted leader is likely to make concessions to the sanctions-related demands (Drezner, 1999: 4). Similarly, the sanction sender's beliefs about the target are considered important to understand sanction imposition (Lacy & Niou Emerson, 2004: 39). However, while the relation between the sanction sender's beliefs and sanction initiation is reflected in at least one study (Drury, 2006), the expectations of targeted leaders remain are mostly based on theoretic assumptions. Therefore, both beliefs of the actors involved in sanctions and changes of such beliefs under sanctions and their consequences require further research.

#### *2.7.2. Consequences of sanctions*

Economic consequences of sanctions are the most known and expected effects of sanction. They can occur on macro-level as reflected in changes of gross domestic product (GDP), imports or exports and on micro-level as analyzed on sectoral basis (Yang, et al., 2004). Besides economic effects, political, humanitarian, and social outcomes such as higher or lesser domestic support to the targeted regime, changes in levels of social cohesion, health services, education, human rights abuses or violence can also be inflicted by international sanctions. Moreover, sanction impacts can be both intended and unintended and sometimes their outcome can be even the opposite of an expected one. Finally, such various and often unpredicted outcomes influence not only to the targeted states, but also to the sanction senders and even the third party states often not involved in the sanctioning process. The following sections review existing research on sanction consequences for different actors.

#### 2.7.2.1. *Consequences for senders*

While aiming to inflict costs on targeted states, senders also often have to sacrifice some economic benefits when imposing economic sanctions on other states as they have to limit own economic interactions for this aim. In fact, if there are no significant economic relations between the senders and targets, the effect of sanctions would be largely symbolic and less likely to achieve change in targets' behavior or punish it. Thus, the more painful the sanction imposed on a targeted country, the more likely it is to be costly for the sender as well. Effects of the US sanctions on China exemplify, how import limiting sanctions may produce additional costs for local consumers, while sanctions limiting exports are likely to harm sender's economy and cause trade deficit benefiting senders' rivals in niche industries (Yang, et al., 2004: 1078).

Costs for senders may include 'loss of economic efficiency' due to the need to switch to normally less preferable markets, costs associated with probable sectoral disruptions, losses in competition with other markets and 'costs of adjusting to new trade partners' and the value of these costs may vary depending on the type of target and presence of international support (Farmer, 2000). Despite such range of possible costs, Farmer (2000) argues that economic costs of sending sanctions, especially, on unilateral bases for such countries as US are in fact pretty small due to wide possibilities of adjustment of such large senders' economies.

Besides economic costs, senders may face some political consequences as reflected in studies of presidential approval in the US arguing that a limited reduction of such approval is possible due to economic impacts of sanctions (Webb, 2018) though

earlier research by Whang (2011) found an opposite relationship between sanction imposition and domestic support of a sender. Still, in general, consequences faced by sanction senders remain rather limited or understudied yet.

#### 2.7.2.2. *Consequences for targeted states*

As the goals of economic sanctions is often to coerce the targeted state to act in a particular way or to punish (besides other alternative goals), it is usually expected that sanctions would inflict some cost on the targeted states. Such costs may be economic, political, humanitarian, social or psychological, may be intended or even unintended and contrary to the initial objective of sanctions.

Economic costs of sanctions for targets differ according to the size of targeted economy, the scope of sanctions, type of sanction sender, and availability of substitutes for the sanctioned economic relations. For example, it is argued that the US sanctions on China had no ‘significant adverse effect on China’s economic performance’ (Yang, et al., 2004). In contrast, comprehensive sanctions imposed by the UN on Iraq had devastated its economy, significantly reduced GDP and contributed to rapidly increasing poverty across the country. However, even when such large economy as China is targeted by sanctions, it is still likely to experience such negative outcomes as lower foreign investment or lower availability of international financing (Yang, et al., 2004). Moreover, even in cases where target states successfully resist sanctions and find alternative markets for imports and exports, they are likely to incur extra costs for reaching out to such new markets or buying necessary commodities either via third parties or at lower quality (Amuzegar,

1997: 32). Thus, even with effective adjustments target economies are likely to bear some costs.

However, not all economic consequences are negative, as in some cases sanctions leading to ‘siege morality’ may mobilize people and contribute to growth of domestic productive sector as reportedly happened in Iran (Amuzegar, 1997: 35). Similarly, such sanctions are argued to have brought new allies to Iran instead of isolating it (Amuzegar, 1997: 35). The latter finding shows that when sanctions are imposed only by one or a small number of states, the target state may become closer to the rivals of the sanction senders.

Secondary economic effects of sanctions such as change of foreign direct investment inflows in a country may also vary. While private FDI inflows from the US to the states sanctioned by the US are found to decrease under the threat of sanctions, they are likely to ‘return after the sanctions are imposed’ (Biglaiser & Lektzian, 2011).

Economic costs are not necessarily the ultimate goal of a sanction, as sanctions are often designed to politically challenge the targeted leader or at least to produce an impact on the targeted leader. However, such impact may vary greatly from producing just a message to seriously threatening the survival of the targeted regime. Based on a large-N study, Marinov (2005) argues that sanctions are in fact likely to destabilize targeted regimes; though, outliers are not rare and the cost for such effects may be high (Marinov, 2005). In particular, ‘personalist dictators’ are argued to be the most vulnerable to sanctions regime types while military and single-party regimes are less likely to be affected by economic sanctions (Escribà-Folch &

Wright, 2010). However, the additional costs and unintended consequences of such challenging the targeted leaders may limit or even produce an opposite effect of the intended impacts of a sanction.

Some latest research on the outcomes of economic sanctions shows the possibility of unintended outcomes which can contradict the initial goals. Such findings are exemplified by the arguments that sanctions are likely to exacerbate ethnic violence (Lv & Xu, 2017), lead to ethnic discrimination (Peksen, 2016), increase civil conflict intensity (Hultman & Peksen, 2017), worsen women's rights with particular negative effect in poor countries (Drury & Peksen, 2012), be 'positively associated with international terrorism' (Choi & Luo, 2013), undermine media openness (Peksen, 2010) or produce dependencies between sanctioned and sanctioning states (Cranmer, Heinrich & Desmarais, 2014).

Despite the findings regarding increasing levels of violence in conflicts (Hultman & Peksen, 2017), sanctions are also found to correspond with shorter civil conflicts (Escribà-Folch, 2010). Moreover, such effect of sanctions is reported to differ according to sanction type, so that 'sanctions imposed by international institutions increase the likelihood of conflict resolution' where target's being the institution's member further amplifies such effect while other sanctions may contribute to the likelihood of 'military victory' (Escribà-Folch, 2010). While these findings provide some information on the effect of sanctions on conflicts, there is little knowledge on the difference between such effects of targeted and comprehensive sanctions. Even though some sanctions are imposed in response to armed conflicts and are supposed to contribute either to prevention, or to resolution of conflict or to post-conflict

peacebuilding, there is a need for research in these areas in particular, with a focus on the increasingly often used targeted sanctions (Eriksson & Wallensteen, 2015).

In line with the increasing trend of sanction imposition in response to human rights violations, multiple studies have been done to investigate whether sanctions contribute to improved human rights record. However, case studies suggest that level of repression may not decrease in response to threats of economic sanctions and may actually present an opposite effect as exemplified by US sanction threats against China (Drury & Li, 2006). Large-N quantitative study by Wood (2008) argues that sanctions in fact increase rates of repression because under the conditions of worsening economy targeted leaders attempt ‘to prevent the defection of’ their supporters and weaken their opposition (Wood, 2008: 509). Wood (2008) proposes that more severe sanctions with broader international support result in higher probability of increasing repression due to their more threatening nature to the ruling regime while sanctions with lesser domestic influence are less likely to lead to more repression (Wood, 2008: 509).

Similar findings are reported by Peksen (2009) arguing that extensive multilateral sanctions as well as prolonged sanctions are more likely to produce negative effects on peoples physical integrity rights (Peksen, 2009: 74). Moreover, Peksen (2009) shows that such sanctions unintendedly increase the rate of abuse of such rights as “freedom from disappearances, extra-judicial killings, torture and political imprisonment” and reports such effect even in cases where sanction were imposed in order to improve human rights records (Peksen, 2009: 59-60).

Similar adverse effects of human rights (HR)-oriented sanctions are found in regards to infant mortality which increased after minerals export sanctions were imposed on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Parker, Foltz & Elsea, 2016). Furthermore, sanctions are found to effect property rights as well due to ‘predatory policies’ undertaken by the targeted elites (Peksen, 2017). One of the propositions in respond to this argument suggests that human rights violations cannot be tackled by such coercive measures as sanctions unless internal dynamics of ‘political struggles’ and incentives are taken into account and alternative institutional arrangements are proposed (Wisor, 2016).

While the HR studies argue that sanctions are likely to endanger targeted incumbents, analysis of the political cost of sanctions for the targeted leaders shows that due to different mitigation strategies used by the targets, de-facto domestic political costs are not that high (Allen, 2008a). Allen (2008a) argues that ‘antigovernment activity’ may increase due to sanctions, but such increase requires some ‘political openness’ and is less likely in autocratic targets (Allen, 2008a: 939).

Another unintended consequence of sanctions is its reported contribution to the level of corruption in the targeted countries where sanction threats are more likely to increase levels of corruption in relatively more ‘corrupt states’ (Balanov, 2017). Similarly, studies of South African sanctions argued that they could even strengthen capitalists and even increase existing inequality (Cooper, 1989). Later studies also show a positive relation between sanctions and inequality and argue that inequality is likely to increase the most in cases of prolonged sanctions (Afesorghor & Mahadevan, 2016). Moreover, while increase in inequality is less significant in

countries with higher levels of education, on the contrary lack of capital investment is likely to further contribute to the inequality increasing effect of sanctions and to the exploitation of low paid labor force (Afesorgbor & Mahadevan, 2016: 5).

While the consequences discussed above represent only a small share of all impacts of sanctions for targets, they demonstrate that sanctions may influence targeted leaders by endangering their regimes and interactions with domestic public. The reported coercive tactics used by the targeted leaders also identify their changing behavior and possibly beliefs. However, the studies on the latter are yet lacking.

#### 2.7.2.3. *Consequences for the third-party states*

Third-party states are also likely to be influenced and such influence can be both negative or positive. For the purposes of this review, third-party states mean not only countries not taking direct part in the sanction sending process, but also those which are not among the primary initiators of sanctions but have to take part in their enforcement due to mandatory nature of the UN sanctions. Some states may benefit from unilateral sanctions because as a result of unilateral measures by a particular state, a targeted state can turn to other regions for exports or imports thus benefiting markets of those regions. Alternatively, when multilateral sanctions are imposed by the UN and thus require compliance of all UN member states, some states who used to have close economic relations with the targeted state or even depend on such relations are likely to bear large economic costs of such sanctions and may even ask for some compensation from the imposing body (Doxey, 1996).

Even if land neighbors of the targets may often be reluctant to enforce the UN sanctions, they have to comply with the related UNSC resolutions. As a result, such states are likely to be negatively influenced by the UN sanctions and will have their imports and exports decreased (Slavov, 2007: 1722). Such negative impact on the neighbors' trade is related to 'increased transportation costs and trade disruptions' (Slavov, 2007: 1722) occurring due to the prohibitions to trade with the targeted countries and the need to find new markets and trading routes.

Even without mandatory compliance, some countries can limit own interactions with a targeted state to show support to the sender or join senders' sanction even outside of the UN. Such 'network effect' is found to have a significant negative effect on the EU trade with states sanctioned by the US (Yang, Askari, Forrer & Zhu, 2009). However, not all third parties are equally likely to reduce own trade with a targeted state to support sanction senders. States which used to have 'trade relations' with the targeted state before the sanctions and which have 'defense pacts' with the targets are likely to increase their trade with such states once sanctions are imposed (Early, 2012: 568). Even not all allies of a sanction sender are likely to support it, as even some of sanction senders' allies may increase own trade with the sanction recipient if they are "highly dependent upon" such trade relations (Early, 2012: 568). What is more surprising is that allies might be even more likely than other states to 'bust' sanctions due to their firms' preferences (Early, 2009). Particularly in cases of prolonged sanctions, targets are likely to divert their trade to substitute markets and benefit them. For example, the EU markets not rarely acquire trade relations with states targeted by the US (Yang, et al., 2009: 1241) despite their being allies.

Besides such effects, third-party states can also be influenced indirectly due to overall lowering of economic activity in the targeted state because of imposed sanctions (Yang, et al., 2009: 1225). Moreover, some countries having close relations with both senders and targets (for example having producing facilities in a targeted state and selling its production to the sanction sender) may be endangered by the imposition of sanctions threatening their industries (Yang, et al., 2004).

Sanctions may also transfer a message to other states as to what kind of behavior is likely to be sanctioned. Such messages may act as deterrents as supported by the finding that the level HR protection in countries neighboring the targets of the HR-related sanctions are likely to improve after imposition of such sanctions suggesting an effect of deterrence (Carneiro, 2014: 210). Thus, while problem of negative human rights impact of sanctions for the targeted countries remains, it seems that such sanctions may be effective as international messages.

### *2.7.3. Responses to Economic Sanctions*

#### *2.7.3.1. International responses and compliance with mandatory sanctions*

International responses to economic sanctions are crucial for their effectiveness and ability to reach goals irrespective of sender's intentions. International support is necessary for both multilateral and unilateral sanctions because without broad support targeted country can find more easily ways to compensate for sanction impacts, to subvert them and make them fully meaningless. Moreover, the lack of international support may make such sanctions less legitimate in eyes of domestic audience. Finally, international reactions are important for attempts to impose economic sanctions via the UN channels as lack of support among the members of

UNSC would mean failure of such attempts. Regarding the latter issue, the US, Russia and China are among the permanent UNSC members who vetoed most number of sanction attempts at the UN. That is why imposition sanctions outside of UN is not rare.

In order to ensure support by international community for proposed sanctions, the main sanction sender may use some reward or punishment mechanisms (Martin, 2011). While some mechanisms of punishing the third-party states (secondary sanctions) may be implemented in form of threats to sanction entities cooperating with the targets, such measures can lead to retaliation by the affected third parties (Hufbauer, Elliott, Cyrus & Winston, 1997). Moreover, a sanction initiating state needs to demonstrate a credible commitment to the costly sanctions as well as to gain some support of international institutions (Martin, 1992).

There can be many reasons for a lack of international support even when international community agree on the unacceptability of a particular state's behavior (Martin, 1992). Such reasons can range from a "collective action problem" due to the perception of a threat to their own economic interests (high costs of sanctions) (Martin, 1992) to a will to protect own strategic ally as often happened during the Cold War. Alternatively, some countries can have reluctance to economic sanctions imposed regarding a particular issue (such as HR- related sanctions and the opposition to such sanctions not rarely voiced by China or Russia) or a general negative attitude to a particular kind of sanctions.

Lack of support to sanctions may be reflected not only before sanctions are imposed, but also after sanction imposition in terms of busting sanctions taking the sanction senders part in the trade affairs of the targeted countries. Such 'sanction busting' may occur both due to political and commercial reasons and when combined may actually negatively impact the effectiveness of sanctions (Early, 2011). While this sanction subversion may not always fully undermine sanction, it is more likely to subvert the intended effects when targets are import dependent on senders while less impactful for export oriented sanctions (Drury, 1998: 507).

A countries' own experience with sanctions sent and received by that country can also effects its attitude towards other sanctions (Zhao, 2010). Zhao's (2010) analysis of China's experience and perception of economic sanctions, argues that China is more likely to support tactical sanctions and resist strategic sanctions not only because of its national interests but because of its on experience with resisting strategic economic sanctions (Zhao, 2010). While such analysis does not generalize when or which countries are more likely to support strategic or tactical sanctions, it suggests the importance of a country's perception of effectiveness and impacts of sanctions. Perception of third countries also matter in regard to the resolve of the sanction sender. So, the costlier sanctions may signal a higher resolve of the sanction sender and thus lead to larger 'international cooperation' (Martin, 2011).

Based on the type of sanctions, there are several probable scenarios of how a country can react to a sanction effort. If sanction is imposed by the UN, any UN member state has to comply with such sanction or risk punishment by other states. The only was to resist such sanctions is to prevent sanction imposition via veto used by any

permanent UN member or negative vote given by majority of the UNSC. In contrast, when a sanction is imposed by an individual state or a group of states outside of the UN framework, third states have more choices. They can support sanctions by imposing own unilateral measures against the target. Secondly, they can ignore the situation and continue its previous relations with the targeted state. Finally, they can increase cooperation with the targeted states to either offset the sanction for the targeted state or to benefit from the situation by filling the market with own goods or customers thus supplementing the sanction in the long run and benefiting own economy.

#### *2.7.3.2. Targeted state's responses*

Being constrained by the domestic institutions (Allen, 2008b), the leadership of targeted countries have several ways to respond to sanctions. They may comply with demands of the sanction senders, resist sanctions and continue with previous behavior or to take a middle ground complying with some demands and resisting others, and try to resolve the conflict diplomatically. While some propose that partial compliance may be an optimal outcome for both senders and targeted state (Beladi & Oladi, 2009), any cases of resisting sanctions require the targeted leaders to devise strategies to reduce the negative impacts of such sanctions. Such strategies may include using increased levels of repression to ensure control over population (Escriba-Folch, 2012, Wood, 2008), using propaganda tools against foreign imposition of the sanctions (Doxey, 1996: 104), diverting sanctioned imports or exports to new markets (Yang, et al., 2004), developing new sources of revenue where old ones are sanctioned (Weissmann & Hagström, 2016), or devising other

methods to circumvent sanctions or convince states members of the sanctioning IOs to defy such sanctions.

For example, North Korea, despite years of the UN sanctions and even costlier unilateral measures imposed by the US, Japan technology and some other states, managed to sustain its regime intact and to develop nuclear. A case study of this country's strategies to resist sanctions shows that they included finding new partners for supply and encouraging alternative revenues such as remittances and "export of labor", joint ventures with Chinese companies (in 2000s), tourism, illicit trade, semi-official trade and shadow economy (Weissmann & Hagström, 2016: 66-70). Illicit and semi-official trade provides a challenge for sanctions as it may just make the sanctioned trade invisible without necessary achieving the aim of the sanction. Finally, it is argued that less democratic states (with more centralized authority) are likely to be more successful in resisting to sanctions (Bolks & Al-Sowayel, 2000) as they can use additional repressive tactics to control any dissent as discussed above.

The tactics used the by the targeted states to diminish the effects of sanctions are necessary to take into account because understanding of the mitigation strategies may help to understand, whether a particular economic sanction is likely to act as a shock affecting targeted leaders beliefs. Limited existing studies of the leader's verbal responses to sanctions demonstrate sometimes surprising outcomes as in case of North Korean leaders who demonstrated appeasement responses to negative sanctions and backlash rhetoric to positive sanctions (Kim, 2014), what might look counterintuitive from the sanction sender prospective. The latter case, in particular, shows that verbal and cognitive reactions need further study using tools of cognitive

approaches of foreign policy analysis while taking in account the peculiarities of sanction.

## **2.8. Conclusion**

The literature review presented above provides a theoretical background for analyzing sanction-related belief change using operational code approach and comparing different cases taking into account the characteristics and complex effects of economic sanctions. The review of the operational code literature has demonstrated that this method can be applied to the study of the political beliefs of the state leaders and the change in their beliefs. Moreover, the reviewed research has shown that while external shocks are likely to cause belief change, there is lack of knowledge about particular classes of events which can be seen as such shocks. Also, there is not enough knowledge on the conditions which enable belief change in cases of particular external shocks. Considering that sanctions often aim to change state' behavior and that such behavior may be affected by the beliefs of the targeted leaders, this dissertation will fill the gap in the operational code literature on the studying a particular class of events as a belief change inflicting shock. While doing so, this research will take into account that personal traits such as cognitive complexity suggested by previous research may both affect the change of political beliefs but also may be affected by the same external shocks and correlate with political beliefs without helping to understand the differences in such changes.

Moreover, the research of operational code changes will be based on the background information about sanctions impacts provided in the review above. The review has

shown that while the typology of sanctions provides information as to how to meaningfully compare different cases of sanctions, literature on the consequences of sanctions provides an understanding of how different types of sanctions are likely to influence the targeted states. Understanding the different economic and political costs of sanctions would help analyze how such sanctions can be perceived by the targeted leaders. Moreover, understanding of how sanctions change commercial and diplomatic relations between the targeted states and the third states not participating or reluctantly participating in the sanctions is crucial for understanding of how the perception of the world community and of sets of states is likely to change after the sanction imposition. Such different responses of international society to the imposed sanctions is likely to influence the attitudes of the targeted leaders towards third-party states supporting sanctions or increasing their trade with the target. Finally, understanding various impacts of sanctions on the targeted state as well as their ability to resist and adjust to sanctions is necessary to understand whether targeted leaders are more or less likely to feel less control over historical events. While providing the necessary background for the sanctions inflicted belief change research, the review has also demonstrated the insufficient empirical knowledge on the psychological effects of sanctions on targeted leaders and populations.

To sum up, while a broad range of studies of both economic sanctions and political beliefs is present and scholars of economic sanctions acknowledge the importance of beliefs of targeted leaders for explanation of their responses, the relation between the sanctions and targeted leader's beliefs is usually based only on assumptions. Moreover, while political belief theorists agree on the possibility of belief change, there are still many unknowns as to which events induce such change, what kind of

change occur, and which factors influence such change. Thus, this research aims to provide some probable answers for these questions.



## **CHAPTER 3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH DESIGN**

### **3.1. Introduction**

Based on the main existing studies focusing on political beliefs and impacts of sanctions and bringing together this two rarely interacting bodies of scholarship, this chapter will build a theoretical framework for this study. It will present a mechanism of proposed belief changes and discuss probable factors influencing such change. Then it will present the research design adopted for the empirical analyses conducted as a part of this research. In the following sub-section, this chapter will present the cases selected for this research and discuss which data are collected and how. Finally, this chapter will discuss some possible limitations of the chosen approach and the possible implications of such limitations for this research.

### **3.2. Theoretical Framework**

Economic sanctions are designed to restrict or stop economic relations with the targeted states and aim ‘to persuade that country to change its policies’ (Bapat, et al., 2013: 85) or to achieve other goals. However, very often contrary to the aimed cooperation and compliance, relations between the sanction senders and targets

‘harden’ (Fathollah-Nejad, 2014, Galtung, 1967, Weiss, 1999: 502). While some domestic reasons for such reverse reaction to sanctions may relate to the ‘rally-around-the-flag’ effect produced by sanctions when targeted population supports incumbents due to increasing perception of ‘embattled sovereignty’ (Jaeger, 2016: 966), little is known about the psychological effects of sanction on the targeted leaders and their responses to sanctions.

Foreign policy decision making may be influenced by political beliefs of state leaders (George, 1969). Such political beliefs defined as an operational code influence ‘political conduct’ (such as conflict or cooperation) of a leader (Leites, 1951) and consist of philosophical and instrumental beliefs about the world and the means to engage with it (George, 1969). While usually stable (Jervis, 1976), political beliefs of state leaders may change in response to significant external shocks (Marfleet, 2000, Renshon, 2008). In turn, economic sanctions have a capacity to externally inflict serious consequences for the state targeted by sanctions and the targeted leaders. Such consequences may range from economic suffering (such as of losses of economic growth and gross domestic product (Neuenkirch & Neumeier, 2015) or decreasing trade) to political impacts (challenging (Marinov, 2005) or reinforcing (Oechslin, 2014) the targeted leaders) to humanitarian suffering (Weiss, 1999) or other impacts.

Considering that sanctions represent an external influence having potential to inflict an economic or political shock on the targeted political regime, sanctions can be considered as an external shock required for a political beliefs change. Though, such change of political beliefs of the sanctioned leaders may be crucial for understanding

of their responses to sanctions, there is no available to date research on whether such impact of sanctions is present and what kind of change of political beliefs it inflicts. Aiming to determine the impact of economic sanctions on operational codes of the targeted state leaders, this dissertation considers economic sanctions as an external shock likely to influence political beliefs of the targets as shown below.

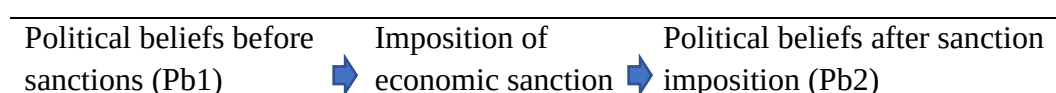


**Figure 1.** Sanction Induced Belief Change

An analysis of the impact of sanctions on beliefs requires assumption of causal relation between the two. A causal relation is supposed to be based on a causal mechanism “explaining how and why a hypothesized cause, in a given context, contributes to a particular outcome” (Falleti & Lynch, 2009: 1143). A causal mechanism is “a pattern of actions” causing specific outcomes under specific contextual conditions which can include various ‘analytical, temporal, spatial and institutional’ factors (Falleti & Lynch, 2009: 1152). Thus, if a sanction imposition represents a causal mechanism with potential to inflict a change in political beliefs of targeted state leaders, local settings and the characteristics of targeted leaders provide a contextual setting for such mechanism. Such theoretical expectation, based on the causal mechanism approach, is supported by the empirical findings of Keller (2009) and van Esch (2015) arguing that belief changes inflicted by any external shocks are likely to be influenced by the contextual variables and personal characteristics of the decision makers. Such contextual variables may include international position of a state and its relations with other countries before sanctions, qualities of the targeted

leaders and domestic conditions in the targeted state which often influence gravity of economic and political costs of sanctions. Besides contextual factors, there is a possibility of some variation within a mechanism due to different intensities or duration of the proposed causal stimulus. Sanction-specific characteristics such as their scope are such factors influencing the strength of the proposed mechanism.

A mere identification of the main trigger causing a particular impact and a context in which such impact is realized may not be enough to understand the process of change caused by a causal mechanism or to identify all causal mechanisms involved in the relation and to eliminate spurious factors. A more detailed examination of the causal relation of psychological impacts of sanction is necessary especially as it has not been studied before. Even if a significant change of beliefs after sanction imposition may be found in some cases, there is no prior understanding of the conditions affecting such change.

A probable causal mechanism between the sanction imposition and change of operational codes of targeted leaders is likely to consist of several causal relations. Firstly, imposition of economic sanctions may by itself may inflict some psychological effects on the targeted leader. Secondly, economic, political and any other consequences brought by the sanctions upon the targeted leader are likely to be perceived as new information (about the sanction and involved actors) and to create a cognitive or emotional response in the targeted leader.

Cognitive research shows that acquiring of new information is likely to “update” existing attitudes (Cohen, 1964). As a result, due to human’s need “for consistency

between cognition and affect” (Ajzen, 2011: 27) general beliefs of the affected person may also be updated if new information and new ideas or attitudes create any inconsistency with previous beliefs. Alternatively, if new information reinforces preexisting ideas and attitudes, one can theorize that related beliefs will also be reinforced. Finally, operational code which represents only a particular policy-oriented set of political beliefs is likely to be updated if political beliefs are changed. Thus, we theorize the process of change of political beliefs caused by economic sanctions to realize according to the following schema where contextual factors may also influence the dimension and scope of change and whether such change occurs.

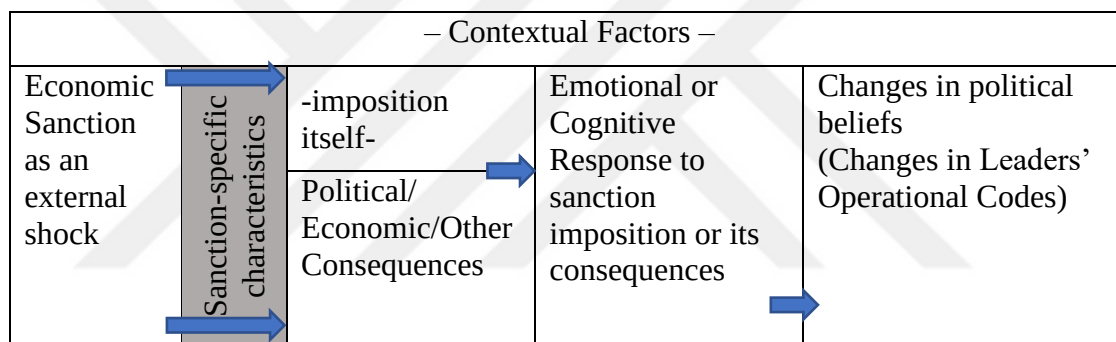


**Figure 2.** Proposed Mechanism of Sanction-Induced Belief Change

Considering this theoretical framework this dissertation aims to provide answer to the following questions:

1. Do economic sanctions inflict political belief changes of the targeted states' leaders and what are these changes?
2. Do leaders with different local contexts and personal characteristics demonstrate similar operational code changes in response to imposed sanctions?
3. Is a sanction-inflicted change of beliefs consistent with more cooperative or conflictual views of the targeted leader?

### 3.3. Hypotheses

Based on the presented above research questions and theoretical framework, this study formulates the following hypotheses. The main hypothesis of this study is based on the main research question about whether sanctions inflict a change in operational codes of targeted executives.

**H1: Sanctions are likely to inflict a change of political beliefs of the targeted states' leaders.**

Existing empirical studies of even very profound external shocks have found change mainly in the strength of belief and not the change of its dimension (reversal). Such changes, some propose, are more likely to direct towards more hostile perception of the world (Malici & Malici, 2005, Renshon, 2008). Alternatively, beliefs may weaken (reduction), strengthen (reinforcement) or persist at the same level despite external shocks (rigidity) (van Esch, 2015). Thus, the second and third hypotheses propose that:

**H2: If a belief change occurs in response to sanctions, reversal of beliefs is less likely than belief reduction, reinforcement, or rigidity** (In other words, the belief indicators may change, but they are not likely to change their direction/sign (i.e., from positive to negative)).

**H3: Sanctions are likely to increase perception of hostility of the external world** (Thus, lower value of P1 – a philosophical belief about the nature of the outside world – is likely to be observed after sanction imposition).

Moreover, the literature review has shown that despite theoretic propositions about lower probability of change in primary beliefs when compared to the secondary belief sets and despite the assumptions on higher probability of instrumental belief change, empirical studies have found that philosophical beliefs demonstrate higher propensity to change than instrumental beliefs (Renshon, 2008). Thus, the fourth hypothesis argues that:

**H4: A change in philosophical beliefs is more likely to occur than a change in instrumental beliefs**

However, even if master beliefs may be less likely to change, the theories of coherence of beliefs proposing that change in master belief is likely to correlate with changes in other beliefs (George, 1969, Jervis, 1976). Moreover, for each political or instrumental belief the Verbs-in-Context-focused content analysis used for the Operational Code research employs a different algorithmic calculation performed with similar sets of analyzed words (Walker & Schafer, 2000). Thus, even on the level of method evaluation there is a non-negligible probability of some correlations between changes in different beliefs. Therefore, the fifth hypothesis presumes that:

**H5: Significant change of at least one master belief is likely to coincide with changes of other philosophical or instrumental beliefs.**

As research shows that political belief changes or resistance in response to external events may depend on the personal or contextual variables (Keller, 2009, van Esch, 2015). Contextual variables are important to understand causal relations as only taking them in consideration one may propose a “credible causal explanation” (Falleti & Lynch, 2009).

**H6: Direction of belief change of different targeted leaders is likely to be similar in similar contexts.**

### **3.4. Methods**

Aiming to analyze change of political beliefs, we acknowledge that both the process of change and political beliefs are complex concepts needing careful and rigorous examination. Acknowledging the complexity of the studied issue as well as considering the novelty of the investigated research question, we use a mixed-method research design to benefit from both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

The **independent variable** of this research is economic sanctions. We use the definition of economic sanctions as “actions that one or more countries take to limit or end their economic relations with a target country in an effort to persuade that country to change its policies” (Bapat, et al., 2013: 85), to punish it ), or to achieve alternative goals (Doxey 1996). Thus, we accept as economic sanction any officially

declared measures restricting financial, commercial or economic relations between the targeted state (and individuals or groups within it) with the sanction sending state. We use it only as a nominal variable meaning we will look only whether there is an imposed sanction or not. The descriptive characteristics of economic sanctions will be used among the control variables for inter-case comparison.

The **dependent variable** of this research is the political beliefs of the leaders of the states targeted by economic sanctions. We use the operational code notion to conceptualize the leaders' political beliefs set regarding the conduct of behavior (Leites, 1951) in foreign policy. This research uses quantitative Verbs-in-Context content analysis (used for Operational Code approach (Walker & Schafer, 2000)) in order to measure the political belief sets of the analyzed leaders in different periods of time (before and after sanction imposition). The concept of political beliefs, methodology used to measure such beliefs and their variations as well as some factors accounting for such change are in detail presented in the literature review. Thus, this concept as well as the use of Operational Code analysis to examine it will be discussed in the current chapter only briefly. The presence or absence of a significant change in political beliefs of the targeted leaders in different periods will be estimated using statistical test ANOVA allowing to estimate differences between categorically divided sets of numerical data.

To understand the process of belief change and the causal mechanism behind it we will briefly discuss each sanction episode qualitatively using some process tracing techniques. It will also enable a deeper investigation of the causal mechanisms behind belief change and analysis of intervening variables as well as an evaluation of

whether there could be other causal mechanisms to account for the estimated change. As process tracing is a method allowing a researcher to tackle the problems of ‘reciprocal causation, spuriousness, and selection bias’ (Collier, 2011), using the techniques of this method will provide a ground for discussing the causal relation between the economic sanctions and the change of political beliefs of the targeted leaders. Thus, combining quantitative and qualitative methods, this research will be able to analyze whether sanctions inflict a statistically significant impact on beliefs and using qualitative methods will trace how such impact is achieved and whether other factors intervene into this process.

Each chapter referring to a particular country experiencing a sanction episode consisting of one or several consequent sanctions will firstly present background information on the studied leader, the state and the sanction; then it will present results of the operational code analysis and evaluate presence of belief change after sanction imposition. Each chapter will also present a method-related sub-section on the case-specific issues of data collection and analysis.

The **control variables**, used to understand inter-case similarities and differences of changes of political beliefs, include the following factors: a) characteristics of sanctions such as the number of sanction senders (unilateral or multilateral sanction), the type of sanction senders (imposed by an international organization or not), the severity of sanctions costs, the type of sanctions (smart or comprehensive, trade-related or financial); b) relations between sanction senders and the targeted state before sanctions: roughly distinguishing between more ally-like/friendly or rival/enemous relations; c) personal leadership traits of the targeted leaders as

conceptualized by the Leadership Traits Analysis (Hermann, 1980, Hermann, 1999) will be measured (via Verbs-in-Context based content analysis) using the ProfilerPlus software designed by Social Science Automation. Each case study will also take into account domestic developments within targeted states, general foreign policy preferences of the targeted state leaders and other contextual factors.

The following section briefly revisits the methods employed to investigate the proposed research questions and hypotheses. Then, it discusses case selection and data collection-related decisions used in this research. Finally, some discussion on limitations and challenges of this research is presented.

#### *3.4.1. Operational Code Analysis*

The dependent variable of this study is political beliefs reflected in operational codes of the leaders of targeted states. The operational codes of targeted leaders are analyzed using quantitative content analysis by using Verbs in Context System. This system is designed for operational code analysis based on transitive verbs used in speeches of studied leaders and assumed to reflect “balance, central tendency, and dispersion” of different types of power associated with self or others (Walker, Schafer and Young 1998, 177). The analysis is implemented using the Profiler Plus software designed by the Social Science Automation and providing computed-based content analysis with reduced risk of “human biases and error” that can happen in case of human coding (Schafer & Walker, 2006b: 38). All ten (five philosophical and five instrumental) beliefs of operational code proposed by George (1969) will be analyzed to analyze the hypotheses about coherence of belief sets.

Operational code of each targeted by sanctions leader will be analyzed in two larger periods: that before the sanctions and at least two years since the initiation of sanctions. The latter minimal period is defined due to the assumption that beliefs do not change momentarily and thus at least one-two years are necessary to capture their change (Renshon, 2008, van Esch, 2015). Moreover, such longer time span is necessary to collect adequate number of speeches. In addition, whenever applicable additional sub-periods (applicable to different stages of extended/added on sanctions) will be used to see a more nuanced picture of belief changes under repeated external stimuli.

**Table 2.** Research Design

| <b>Independent variable</b>                   | <b>Economic Sanction</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <b>Dependent variable</b>                                 | <b>Change of political beliefs</b>                        |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Concepts of interest</b>                   | Pre-Sanction Political Beliefs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Sanction Imposition                                       | Political Beliefs after Sanction Imposition               |
| <b>Operationalization</b>                     | Operational Code (5 instrumental and 5 political beliefs)                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Officially imposed sanction by a state or group of states | Operational Code (5 instrumental and 5 political beliefs) |
| <b>Measurement</b>                            | P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, I1, I2, I3, I4, I5 scores                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | -                                                         | P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, I1, I2, I3, I4, I5 scores             |
| <b>Belief change and its causal mechanism</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ANOVA analysis to measure the significance of change between pre-sanction political beliefs and those after sanction imposition</li> <li>Causal mechanism is additionally evaluated using process tracing techniques</li> </ul> |                                                           |                                                           |

The speeches for this analysis will be collected with two focuses. A larger dataset will focus on the international/foreign policy topics and the unrelated parts of multi-focus speeches will be removed to prevent distortion of the results. If the amount of available data and the case-specific characteristics will provide suitable conditions, subsets of speeches related only to the countries imposing the sanctions will also be

used to analyze changes in such sender-specific targeted operational codes. For this study, English-language speeches and official or otherwise publicly used translation of speeches initially made in foreign languages will be used.

#### 3.4.2. *Statistical Analysis: ANOVA-test*

To compare operational codes of the targeted leaders before and after imposition of sanctions ANOVA statistical test is used. Previous studies focusing on operational code change for this purpose used either T-test (Renshon, 2008) or ANOVA tests (Malici & Malici, 2005, Walker, et al., 1998). While both tests may be used to compare two sets of beliefs for each leader, ANOVA test is preferred for this study because it will additionally provides an opportunity for analysis of overall changes over multiple sub-periods. T-tests will be conducted to verify the estimated results.

#### 3.4.3. *Analysis of Causal Relationships*

Process tracing is a method used ‘for tracing causal mechanisms using detailed, within-case empirical analysis of how a causal process plays out in an actual case’ (Beach, 2017). As this method allows not only for a single case study but also for comparison between similar cases (Beach, 2017), its techniques suits this study aiming to understand a causal relation while focusing on several similar cases.

As process tracing allows for both deductive and inductive approaches and a mix of both (Bennett & Elman, 2007: 183), this study firstly focuses on the deductively proposed conceptualization of the causal mechanism (including control variables) between the sanctions and political beliefs. However, it also uses inductive approach

to analyze whether there could be unexpected alternative causal mechanisms or variables which could not be foreseen during the initial theorization.

The initially proposed causal mechanism of the sanction impact on political beliefs is explained in the previous section. We acknowledge the possibility of alternative interpretations of the causal links within the proposed mechanism and the possibility of alternative explanations for belief change. Such alternative explanations of belief change may include long-term learning (Ziv, 2012) which started before sanctions, socialization (Checkel, 2008: 117), internalization of norms through persuasion, ‘strategic calculation, role playing’ or ‘normative suasion’ as predicted by constructivist approaches (Checkel, 2005) or other mechanisms.

Brief conceptualization of the causal mechanisms supposes that within a particular context sanctions and their consequences may produce a new information about the outside world (international actors) for the targeted leader; and in reaction to such new information the leader may produce an emotional or cognitive response to adapt to new information which may result in political belief change and the change in operational codes. To trace the process of change of political beliefs, firstly an image of the two episodes pre- and post-sanction-imposition is presented providing the OpCode Analysis based evaluations of the political beliefs of the studied leaders. Each empirical chapter also provides a detailed description of the sequence of events within the studied periods. Such description is important as it has a potential provide a ground for a meaningful causal inference (Collier, 2011: 824).

From then on, we attempt to identify some “diagnostic evidence” (Collier, 2011) of the causal mechanism influencing the change by looking both at the links deductively proposed above and by looking at alternative explanations. Among the evidence related to the deductively proposed mechanism, we will look into the contextual factors and sanction-specific characteristics, the reported consequences of sanctions, verbal responses by the targeted leaders directly related to the sanction imposition and its impacts. We also discuss the actors who imposed such sanctions and those who didn’t and look at whether such sanctions and their consequences were perceived as new information about the international actors. If some theorized links may prove difficult to analyze, this research may limit its endeavor towards a “minimalist understanding of process tracing” which may be applicable to cases with “low prior confidence in the existence of a causal relationship” between the variables (Beach, 2017).

To answer the secondary research questions on the similarities and differences between belief changes of different leaders (and thus to see if any generalizations are possible), this dissertation will comparatively analyze the difference and similarities in changes of political beliefs in response to sanctions. For this end, the control variables described above will be compared with the belief changes estimated for each leader. Finally, even if in some of the analyzed sanction cases the change may not be found, process tracing techniques and a comparative analysis will be implemented to understand the contextual variables that prevented such change.

### 3.5. Cases and Data

#### 3.5.1. Case Selection

The literature review above showed that different factors may be important to understand differences between effects of sanctions. However, there is a need to choose cases with enough similarities to make them comparable (Sartori, 1991). Trying to understand the change mechanism by using process tracing techniques with multiple cases also requires similar cases (Beach, 2017). On the other hand, as it is the first study in this area, some differences may be useful to capture the diversity of sanctions.

This study aims to analyze changes in political beliefs of Vladimir Putin and Dmitriy Medvedev for the case of Russia-related sanctions, Sayyid Ali Hosseini Khamenei and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad for the case of the sanctions imposed on Iran and Bashar Hafez al-Assad for the case of sanctions imposed on Syria – who are or were the state leaders Russia, Iran and Syria during the studied periods. While these sanction cases are among the major international sanctions, they also represent a renewed trend of multilateral sanctions imposed outside of the United Nations framework (sanctions related to Russia and Syria) or the UN-imposed sanctions accompanied by other stronger multilateral sanctions (the Iran-related sanctions were imposed by UNSC in 2006 and by the US together with the EU states in 2010).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Before the end of the Cold War sanctions imposed by the UNSC were rare due to frequent use of veto by different UNSC members to prevent sanctions on them or ‘their allies or client states’ (Doxey 1996: 1). 1990s were marked by rapid increase in the UNSC-imposed sanctions; however, this situation changed in 2000s with increasing antagonism between the Western countries and Russia (which is often related to NATO expansion taken place from 1999 onwards (NATO Review 2014)). Such antagonism was reflected in the more frequent use of veto powers by Russia and China (UN, n.d.-c), or threats to use such powers if texts of resolutions are not weakened (i.e., 2003 resolution on Iraq, or Iran sanctions of 2006). Some of the vetoes could be explained by Russian and Chinese resistance to the responsibility to protect doctrine, often seen by them as an interference in domestic affairs of sovereign states. However, even sanctions related to such issues such as development of

The cases were chosen so they would comply with the following minimal conditions necessary to conduct meaningful analysis. Firstly, all studied sanctions are imposed after 2003 (after the apogee of NATO enlargement in 2002 and intervention to Iraq in 2003 and a relative increase in non-UN sanctions). Secondly, sanctions have lasted longer than 2 years and the targeted leaders remained in power for at least 2 years before and after sanctions so that this analysis complies with the argument that belief change requires some time. Thirdly, while we do not select sanctions by a specific cost-related threshold, we consider that at least some reported economic consequences are necessary to consider that a sanction could have any impact on a leader's attitudes. A specific economic cost-related threshold is not defined because lately used targeted sanctions aim to produce smaller effect on the economy in general and instead to harm the perpetrators of an undesired behavior.

The study uses simultaneous multilateral sanctions as a single sanction-leader instance and not as a several different sanctions imposed by different actors to capture the overall impact of such sanctions. Only in the case of Syria this study considers two different sanction-leader instances with the same leader and different sanctions imposed in 2004 by the US and by multiple states in 2011. The reason for such differentiation is that the issues behind those sanctions, their impacts, and timing were very different. Even if US only further extended its anti-Syria sanctions in 2011 that could act as a separate case due to the long inter-sanction interval allowing target to adapt to those sanctions and their impacts.

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weapons of mass destruction (Syria), long range missiles (Iran), or enlargement (Russia-related sanctions) are imposed nowadays mostly outside of the UN framework due to the challenges of veto powers.

**Table 3.** The Major Cases of post-2003 Sanctions Studied in This Research.

| <b>Sanction Case</b>            | <b>Political Leaders</b> | <b>Sanction Period</b>                    | <b>Sanction type</b>                                                            |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Russia-related sanctions</b> | Putin<br>Medvedev        | March 2014 onwards                        | Targeted, multilateral sanction (non-UN)                                        |
| <b>Iran-related sanctions</b>   | Khamenei<br>Ahmadinejad  | 2006 - 2015<br>&<br>2010 – 2015           | Targeted UN-imposed sanction &<br>Comprehensive multilateral sanctions (non-UN) |
| <b>Syria-related sanctions</b>  | Al-Assad                 | May 2004 -onwards<br>April 2011 - onwards | Comprehensive unilateral (US)<br>Comprehensive, multilateral (non-UN)           |

For the cases of Iran and Russia the analysis will be focusing on the combined impact of the sanctions which started from the date of the first imposed sanction (2006 and 2014 respectively). Considering that Iran experience simultaneously the UN-sanctions and multiple unilaterally imposed sanctions both processes will be discussed. Moreover, the analysis will use sub-periods differentiating between the different types of sanctions imposed on Iran as well as different rounds of sanctions. The start dates and the end dates of the analyzed periods before and after the initial sanction imposition will be further discussed in each of the related empirical chapters. In general, the pre-sanction periods will be five at least 2 years or longer as it is commonly used by OpCode scholars assessing long-term political beliefs. If the collected data is sufficient, the pre-sanction period may be additionally divided into sub-periods to analyze pre-sanction belief fluctuations.

### *3.5.2. Data collection*

For the analysis of operational codes, a set of each leader's political speeches including interviews, public talks and other documented utterances will be collected through documentary research. We will collect the English language speeches and translations of speeches in other languages to ensure homogeneous analysis of all three cases using the same coding vocabulary of the related software. For the purposes of this study all speeches will be divided into three groups: spontaneous speeches given by the leader (for Leadership Traits Analysis), foreign policy-oriented prepared and spontaneous speeches (for the assessment of the global operational code of each leader) and, when applicable, the foreign policy related speeches referring to the sanction senders.

For the control variables, data will be collected from secondary and primary sources considering financial and economic indicators, political situations and other contextual variables (excluding leadership traits). Diverging data will be cross-verified with alternative sources.

## **3.6. Limitations, Challenges and Alternative Approaches**

This research possesses some limitations characteristic to small N-studies (in terms of the number of studied cases). While it provides such advantages as the possibility of a in-depth qualitative analysis and, thus, better understanding of causal mechanisms, its results may be less generalizable to a wider population of similar events. Moreover, due to the novelty of this reserch, the analysis of the causal mechanism using process tracing techniques may limit itself to a 'minimalist

understanding' (Beach, 2017) of mechanisms – without opening up all the causal links. However, even in that case it will provide a ground for future research based on this analysis.

As for some of the studied leaders, a sufficient number of foreign policy-related speeches in English might not be available for the planned time intervals and from existing resources. The instances of insufficient data and their implications for this research, if any, will be discussed in the related chapters.

Use OCA analysis will also have some challenges of other types of on-distance content research methods which relate to sometimes rather approximate results due to the impossibility of a verification of the findings via direct contact with studies individuals. Finally, such alternative method of determining belief change as cognitive mapping is not used for this research because the definition of the cognitive schemas for such mapping is developed by the researcher without standardized rules. As such analysis might be less reliable due to possibly more arbitrary judgment required for initial content analysis, we have chosen to use a software-based OCA analysis with standardized content dictionaries.

### **3.7. Conclusion**

This chapter presented the theoretical framework of this research and the causal mechanism of the proposed belief change. Using the theoretical framework presented in this chapter, the following empirical sections will analyze the effects of sanctions on the leaders of Russia, Iran, and Syria. The chapters will firstly conduct the

quantitative part of this research by conducting operational code analyses of the leaders' speeches and statistical analyses aiming to estimate belief changes between the studied periods. Then, each chapter will present a qualitative discussion trying to trace the processes behind the estimated changes (or lack of them) and evaluate the applicability of the proposed causal mechanism and alternative explanations to the observed outcomes. All empirical chapters will also discuss the possible implications for their findings of the data and method-related limitations presented above.



## **CHAPTER 4. EFFECTS OF SANCTIONS ON THE POLITICAL BELIEFS OF STATE LEADERS IN RUSSIA**

### **4.1. Introduction**

Multiple studies demonstrate that personal characteristics of political leaders are crucial for understanding of the foreign policy decision making. Operational Code analysis is one of the most reliable tools used in the foreign policy analysis to describe and measure political beliefs of the state leaders. This approach has been widely used in the literature applied to in different countries and sometimes focused on changes of leaders' political beliefs (Malici & Malici, 2005, Renshon, 2008, Schafer & Crichlow, 2000). However, no research has been done to understand the dynamics of belief changes in response to a specific type of external shocks such as economic sanctions. This, chapter will present the first empirical analysis of this dissertation estimating belief changes of different executives in the same settings of a single country during the same period.

Focusing on the two Russian political leaders Vladimir Putin and Dmitriy Medvedev, this chapter explores the similarities and differences between the operational code changes of these leaders experiencing similar international impacts within the same

domestic and international contexts. In this way, controlling for contextual settings, this chapter provides the first analysis of belief changes in response to external shocks on the example of the economic sanctions imposed against Russia since 2014.

The next two sections of this chapter present a brief historical overview of Russian foreign policy and the sanctions imposed against Russia from 2014 onwards. The chapter continues with short descriptions of Putin and Medvedev's biographical backgrounds and discusses their differences and similarities in foreign policy making. The fifth section presents the data analyzed in this chapter and the results of operational code analyses of the speeches given by both leaders. The section discusses the changes in the operational codes observed over time and evaluates the hypotheses presented in the previous chapter of this dissertation. Finally, the sixth and seventh parts provide a brief discussion of how sanctions could inflict the changes observed in operational code of the leaders and whether alternative explanations need to be also considered.

#### **4.2. Russian Foreign Policy: A Brief Overview**

While Putin first became an acting president of Russia in 1999, the first years of his presidency were marked by multiple economic and political crises in the country devastated by the collapse of the Soviet Union. However, with rising energy prices and, thus, increasing revenues to the state from oil and gas exports as well as with stabilizing political situation, the economy witnessed recovery towards 2008 even despite the global economic crisis. Together with stabilizing economy and politics, Russia started to reclaim the status of a great power and even saw the crisis as a

chance to pursue Russia's own "international leadership" (Johnson & Köstem, 2016: 207). While in 2008 Medvedev took the office and Putin stepped back to the post of prime minister, the following years witnessed continuation of assertive politics on the part of Russia (Tichý, 2018).

While remaining opposed to international sanctions and interventions, Russia took a more active approach towards foreign policy and engaged itself into several overseas military operations. Such operations started with Russian-Georgian conflict in 2010 when Russia's military, intervening on behalf of the two autonomous regions of Georgia, defeated Georgia's troops. Several years later the Crimean crisis happened. At that time, Russia announced Crimea's becoming a Russian territory and claimed to enable rights of self-determination of Crimean people while the state was condemned and sanctioned by many countries supporting Ukraine's sovereign right over the region and arguing that Russia had violated that right (BBC News, 2014a).

In addition, Russia is actively involved in Syrian conflict supporting the incumbent government of Assad while also indirectly engaging in other conflicts in the world. Russian relations with West transformed from ones of a country recipient of development assistance into a relation of multiple confrontations combined with economic dependencies and ongoing cooperation in different spheres including economy, fight against terrorism, and diplomacy.

At the same time Russia deepened its integration with several other post-Soviet states and created new institutions aiming "to bring the post-Soviet republics together" (Saivetz, 2012: 401). Moreover, in the last several years Russia has significantly

strengthened its relations with China and shifted its focus “to the East” (Korosteleva & Paikin, 2020).

### **4.3. Western Sanctions against Russia**

#### *4.3.1. Initiation of Sanctions*

The relations between Russia and Western countries deteriorated due to the Ukrainian political crisis starting in 2013. At the end of 2013, a pro-Russian president of Ukraine Viktor Yanukovich declined signing an association agreement with the European Union (EU) (Wang, 2015). This event triggered a wave of protests across the country. The protests (also called Euromaidan or the Maidan protests/revolution) resulted in subsequent fleeing of Yanukovich to Russia and change of government in Ukraine. Ukraine’s approaching the EU was resisted and criticized in Russia due to the concerns about shared market rules as well as the possibility of Ukraine’s movement towards NATO. The conflict escalated when Russia took control over Crimea as a result of a referendum held on March 16, 2014. The referendum was not recognized by Ukraine or the Western states but was seen by Putin as conducted “full compliance with democratic procedures and international norms” and being of “vital, historic significance” for Russia (Kremlin.ru, 2014a). The significance of such Crimea and Sevastopol in relation to Ukraine’s possible “joining NATO” was explained by Putin in the following way:

“It would have meant that NATO’s navy would be right there in this city of Russia’s military glory, and this would create not an illusory but a perfectly real threat to the whole of southern Russia.”  
(Kremlin.ru, 2014a)

The first sets of sanctions targeting individuals and a bank in Russia were declared after the referendum but were met by Putin's decision to "refrain from taking any countermeasures" (Kremlin.ru, 2014a). Later the situation has further escalated with initiation of military conflict in the east of Ukraine with reported involvement of Russian "volunteers" (BBC News, 2014b), increasingly strong sanctions imposed by the West, and the countersanctions initiated by Russia.

Western states that imposed sanctions against Russia since March 2014 were the US, members of the EU and such additional countries as "Ukraine, Japan, Canada, Switzerland, Norway, Australia, New Zealand, Iceland, and Albania" (Connolly, 2018: 66). These sanctions included restriction of "access to long-term credit for major Russian banks, energy companies and the defense industry, the export of Arctic and offshore energy technology and trade in arms," (Aalto & Forsberg, 2016: 223) and restrictions related to firms working in Crimea. Additionally Russia's participation in G8 was "suspended" and assets of several influential individuals faced asset freezes and travel bans (Aalto & Forsberg, 2016: 223).

According to Connolly (2018: 56) Western sanctions aimed to "express disapproval" of Russian policies towards Ukraine and to signal own support to the latter.

Moreover, they aimed to demonstrate Western "commitment to the geopolitical status quo" and show "unity" of the West (Connolly, 2018: 56-57). Finally, they aimed to cause some "economic pain" for Russia (Connolly, 2018: 58). However, the scope and the targeted areas varied across the sanction senders with the US imposing the broadest in scope sanctions while the EU and Japan avoided targeting some areas such as Russian energy-exports on which these countries depended (Connolly, 2018).

While there were numerous sets of sanctions imposed by different senders, the whole period of sanctions against Russia, starting from March 2014, can be divided into several main stages. The first stage began in March 2014 with rather limited sanction targeting specific individuals or firms and not likely to inflict a serious harm on Russian economy. In August 2014, in aftermath of the MI17 plane catastrophe in Eastern Ukraine for which Russia-supported militant groups were blamed, the first sectoral sanctions targeting wider economic sectors were introduced (Ashford, 2016: 114). In addition, in December of 2014, a ban on “trade and investment in Crimea” and prohibition to “travel agencies doing business with Crimea” was announced (Aalto 2016, 227). While in the 2015, 2016 and 2017 sanctions were mostly extended or some additional individuals or companies were added, a new significant stage of sanctions started in 2018. The triggers for the US and EU sanctions imposed in March 2018 were the poisoning of the Russian former intelligence officer Skripal’s in the United Kingdom and escalation of events in the Sea of Azov (European Council, n.d., Tamkin & Groll, 2018)

#### *4.3.2. Economic and Political Impacts of Western Sanctions against Russia*

Despite some estimations of the impacts of the Russia-related sanctions, some early works argued that the EU sanctions had mostly “symbolic level” being able to assure unity of the EU members but not able to effectively signal to Russia inappropriateness of its behavior (Veebel & Markus, 2018: 139). Moreover, while the effect of sanctions on Russian currency is still debated, an econometric analysis shows that it was the plunging oil prices that reduced Ruble’s positions while ‘unanticipated sanctions’ are found to only increase volatility of the currency related variables (Dreger, Kholodilin, Ulbricht & Fidrmuc, 2016: 307). Sanctions have also

reportedly increased volatility of Russian stock indices (Ankudinov, Ibragimov & Lebedev, 2017) and distancing between the Russian stock market from the global system (Castagneto-Gissey & Nivorozhkin, 2016: 82). Moreover, Western Sanctions are found to cause decrease in incoming foreign direct investment (Gurvich & Prilepskiy, 2015), restricted availability of foreign capital as well as resultant “institutional illiquidity” and growing state financing (Pak & Kretzschmar, 2016: 577).

In 2015 there was also voiced a political recognition of the economic costs of sanctions in Russia:

“There is practically no economic sector that hasn’t been affected by some or other political measures, from the financial sphere and restrictions on access to foreign credit to technology imports. Losses caused by these restrictions are considerable, let’s not conceal them. As estimated by a number of experts, Russia has suffered damage worth about 25 billion euros, or 1.5 percent of the GDP. In 2015, this damage may increase several times over.” (Dmitriy Medvedev, 2015 (Government.ru, 2015))

Similarly in 2016 the then Russian president Medvedev in an interview to Russian news agencies argued that due to the sanctions the country’s economy was “shut off from foreign sources of financing and from a large number of foreign companies that provided our manufacturers with orders” (Government.ru, 2016a). Moreover, due to the restrictions, towards the end of 2014, international firms such Exxon and North Atlantic Drilling had to withdraw from their deals with Rosneft while Gazprom Neft delayed opening of new drills (Aalto & Forsberg, 2016: 228).

However, while acknowledging some hardships, Medvedev in April 2016 also emphasized that, in contrast to predictions, Russia’s economy was “not in tatters”

and the country's contemporary "economic and financial situation [was] much better than it was in other periods in our history" (Government.ru, 2016b). Later analyses have shown that besides economic sanctions, the fall in oil prices witnessed globally after 2014 was among the major causes of the economic wounds and falling currency rates in Russia (Dreger, et al., 2016, Gurvich & Prilepskiy, 2015, Tuzova & Qayum, 2016). Moreover, despite the sanction-related difficulties experienced by Russian energy industry in the early stages of sanctions some corporations including Shell and BP were "considering re-entry" to the oil projects in Russia (Aalto & Forsberg, 2016: 228 with reference to Farchy 2015).

The political impact of sanctions is also not clear. After sanction imposition Russia-EU relations shifted to more bilateral relations between Russia and the EU-member-states (Romanova, 2016) while weakening in general (Scazzieri, 2017). Moreover, both the EU and Russia tried to "diversify" their partners in energy-related trade to reduce their interdependence (Romanova, 2016: 776). Relations with some non-sanctioning countries on the contrary even strengthened (Wang, 2015). On the domestic level, while some suppose that some level of domestic disapproval of economic impacts is possible, in sanctions at the same time could have assisted to "consolidate the regime" (Davis, 2016: 187). Moreover, while there were disruptions in military procurement, they motivated Russia's strive for "self-sufficiency in defense" (Davis, 2016: 187).

Thus, while scholars acknowledge some economic costs especially in the first year of sanctions, most concur that such consequences were either limited compared to the economy in general or compensated by adjustments (Davis, 2016). Scholars explain

such limited impact of sanctions on Russian economy and behavior by the international and Russian domestic factors.

On the domestic side, resilience of Russia to the sanctions could be related to its political economic structure (Connolly, 2018). Russian state has a significant amount of control over economy, international trade relations and a “limited-access system of political economy” based on profits “from competitive sectors of the economy and the subsequent redistribution” of rent-generated wealth (Connolly, 2018: 30). As a result, state is able to redistribute its funds to compensate for sanction costs and adjust its economy to new conditions (Connolly, 2018). To address the challenges caused by sanctions, Russia aimed for diversification of economy and localization of production and even imposed countersanctions to foster domestic food industry.

Some degree of diversification was possible because a number of countries with high GDP and technological expertise did not participated in the sanctioning process (Davis, 2016: 185). This enabled Russia to adjust some of its trade flows and improve its relations with such countries as China, India, and some other Asian countries (Wang, 2015). While the success of diversification is questioned due to still persisting dominance of raw-materials in its exports to new destinations (Johnson & Köstem, 2016: 210) and the adjustments implied some costs, in the long run Russian economy became even “less vulnerable to external pressure” (Connolly, 2018: 199).

Thus, while the sanctions are shown to be unlikely to inflict significant cost for Russian economy and politics, the following sections attempt to estimate whether they led to a change in political beliefs of Russian leaders about the international

actors. Moreover, this chapter will present a discussion of whether such changes (if any) were conducive towards a more cooperative or conflictual relations both with the outside world in general and specifically with sanction senders. The following part first presents the two executives of the Russian Federation serving as presidents and prime ministers in the years preceding sanctions starting from 2012 and covering the period of sanctions up to 2019. Then a discussion on the policy differences between the executives is presented and followed by the operational code analyses of the speeches of the two executives.

#### **4.4. Russian Executives before and during Sanctions**

##### **4.4.1. *Vladimir Putin***

Vladimir Putin born “on October 7, 1952, in Leningrad” (later St. Petersburg) was the only survived child in his family (Ihanus, 2011: 254). “I am from a simple family,” describes Putin his own background (Putin.kremlin.ru, n.d.). He was brought up by a “devout Russian orthodox” mother and a “stern” father who was World War II veteran (Ihanus, 2011). He is said to have a “traumatic personal history,” (Ihanus, 2011: 254) and describes his years in primary school as being a “hooligan” (Putin.kremlin.ru, n.d.). Besides his law degree from the Leningrad State University, Putin completed studies in the high school of KGB (The USSR’s secret service – the Commity of State Security) and then spent about 25 years working in KGB, among which he spent several years in the German Democratic Republic (Putin.kremlin.ru, n.d.). After 1991 Putin entered politics joining St. Petersburg’s mayor Anatoly Sobchak and later in 1999 was appointed as acting president by then resigning Russian president Yeltsin (Ihanus, 2011: 254). Putin won his first

presidential election in 2002 (Putin.kremlin.ru, n.d.), and he remains in power since with the exception of 2008-2012 when he held the post of prime minister and Medvedev was in the presidential office.

Earlier analyses of Putin's overall operational code and political beliefs suggest that he prefers to choose "achievable" goals and acts in accordance with "reciprocal co-operation", following only the rules followed by others (Dyson, 2001: 344). Moreover, he is thought to value "flexibility" and to be not prone to "emotional gestures" (Dyson, 2001: 344). In terms of strategical-tactical behavior, he is thought to be an "opportunist" choosing behavior in accordance with immediate surrounding conditions (Dyson & Parent, 2018: 12). While earlier analysis of Putin's operational code showed that he mostly demonstrates beliefs similar or above average world leaders, in the years of 2014-2016 some of his beliefs related to Western states approximated those of rogue leaders (Dyson & Parent, 2018).

#### 4.4.2. *Dmitriy Medvedev*

Dmitriy Medvedev born in 1965, on September 14, also in Leningrad similarly to Putin was a single child (Ihanus, 2011: 258). However, his childhood experience was rather different from that of Putin. Medvedev was raised in an educated family. He "does not have a background of punitive parenthood" and he had good relations with peers (Ihanus, 2011: 258). Also acquiring a law degree from the Leningrad State University, he continued his studies on doctoral level and started a career in the same university as an "associate professor of civil law" (Ihanus, 2011: 259). His political career also began in the Leningrad mayor's team as an advisor where he worked with Putin (Ihanus, 2011: 259).

In the early days of his presidency Medvedev was seen as a “liberal”, “young lawyer – only 25 years old when the Soviet Union collapsed – with no links to the KGB” (Antonenko, 2008: 25). While later analyses agree that Russia’s general foreign policy strategy remained intact, Medvedev had attempted some steps different from Putin’s policies. Together with Obama he initiated the “reset” of relations with the US with a more cooperative approach (Chollet, 2018) and promoted an idea of a new “European security architecture” (de Haas, 2010). This architecture would include both the EU and Russia into a single system of security framework but exclude NATO from this network’s decision-making processes (de Haas, 2010). Thus, such approach would increase Russia’s influence, reduce threats to Russia from the EU and at the same time decrease the influence of NATO (de Haas, 2010). While the latter proposition was destined to fail due to its little attractiveness to the EU, it signifies a relatively more cooperation-oriented approach of Medvedev and his attempts to create own foreign policy initiatives.

#### *4.4.3. Medvedev vs. Putin in Russian Foreign Policy*

Most observers argue that Vladimir Putin, acting as Russia’s president from 2002 to 2008 and from 2012 onwards, and as a prime minister in 2008-2012 was the main person directing Russia. In contrast, Dmitriy Medvedev who was in the presidential seat in 2008-2012 (and became Russia’s prime minister after that) is often seen as having mostly a secondary role after Putin. In his presidential campaign before the elections he “promised” continuation of “Putin’s legacy” (Antonenko, 2008: 25). Thus, scholars argue that foreign policy of Russia under Medvedev was more of a continuation of Putin’s earlier course of policies and after 2012 Putin just continued

the initial direction (Tichý, 2018). Tichý (2018: 203) argues that Russia's foreign policy under Medvedev, similar to that of Putin, included "promotion of multilateralism" with somewhat emphasis on "militarism, which was characterized by exaggerating threats to national security and emphasizing the possibility of using nuclear weapons and nuclear deterrence". Moreover, energy resources were seen among the main security issues (Tichý, 2014, Tichý, 2018) as export of gas constitutes an important part of the economy's revenue.

Besides such issues the relation between Russia and the Western countries (including mainly the US and the EU members, or, in this case, the NATO member-states) is somewhat ambiguous. On the one hand, official discourses of Russia names NATO's ambition and placement of anti-missile weapons along Russian borders as a potential "danger" for Russia (Tichý, 2018). However, cooperation with the same countries is seen among the main objectives in modernization of Russia's economy, fighting terrorism or ensuring security of energy resources (Tichý, 2018). Finally, Russia's attitude towards military interventions in other countries is also flexible. While usually Russia opposes military interventions and most sanctions against third countries, Tichý (2018: 196) notes that Russia reserves to itself a right of to engage in military actions "to avert aggression against its territory or allies and to protect Russian citizens abroad".

Still some scholars point to differences in Russian foreign policy conducted by the two leaders. Medvedev, seen as more "liberal" and reformist, was "more cooperative with the United States" and engaged with Barack Obama in the "reset" of relations between the two countries (Chollet, 2018: 580). Others also credit Medvedev with a

“multivectorial” foreign policy, “rapprochements” with several countries, and “a new START<sup>5</sup> treaty” (Hahn, 2010: 253) aiming for further reduction of nuclear weapons. In contrast, when Putin returned to the office in 2012, Russia’s relations with the US “quickly soured” with disagreements on both sides starting from 2011 elections in Russia and continuing throughout the years over multiple issues (Chollet, 2018: 580-581). The latter suggests that the two leaders not necessarily had a similar view on Russia’s policy and Putin reportedly was dissatisfied with Medvedev’s policies such as handling of NATO’s intervention to Libya (Chollet, 2018: 581).

A degree of differences between the two executives is also highlighted in domestic politics by scholars who point to the Medvedev’s attempts to restructure Russian bureaucracy and introduce other reforms. However, as Wilson (2015: 145-146) argues, Medvedev’s modernization attempts were limited and did not bring any significant reform “that have weakened the regime or damaged the interests of its ruling elite”. Thus, while there are some differences in policy preferences by both leaders, Russia’s broader course demonstrated continuation under both executives. Thus, it is possible to expect that political beliefs of the leaders will have a degree of similarity with some minor differences related to more personal variations in views.

## **4.5. Operational Codes of Putin and Medvedev**

### *4.5.1. Data and Case-specific Methodological Issues*

This manuscript conducts Operational Code analysis of speeches of Russia’s two executives Vladimir Putin and Dmitriy Medvedev. The analysis is performed using computer based ProfilerPlus software developed to analyze operational codes of state

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<sup>5</sup> Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty

leaders (Levine & Young, 2014). The content analysis focuses transitive verbs (Schafer & Walker, 2006b, Walker, et al., 1998) used by political leaders in relation to international issues and countries as described in detail in the Research Design Chapter.

The data used for this analysis were collected both manually and using automated open-source software packages for R. The speeches included in the analysis were collected in English as presented by the official governmental websites in Russia: kremlin.ru (archiving speeches of the country's presidents) and government.ru (archiving speeches of the prime ministers). The speeches included interviews, prepared remarks, press conferences, and other speeches given for domestic and international audiences. Including different types of speeches (spontaneous and prepared) was likely to reduce bias towards one specific type as the types of speeches were earlier reported to influence the OpCode estimates (Schafer & Crichtlow, 2000).

The collected speeches cover the period from May 2012 (when Medvedev became the prime-minister and Putin the president of Russian Federation after elections) till 2019<sup>6</sup>. The speeches focusing on the foreign policy issues were firstly automatically coded using a custom-built dictionary in R Studio to eliminate speeches not related to foreign policy. Then, all preliminarily selected speeches were further coded manually where only the speeches and fragments of speeches focusing on the foreign policy issues were included. From this dataset, to analyze the operational codes of the

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<sup>6</sup> The period of analysis starts with 2012 because earlier studies have shown that change of office may have its own influence on the political beliefs of political elites.

leaders on global level, only speeches including 20 or more coded verbs were included as suggested by (Schafer & Walker, 2006b: 44)<sup>7</sup>.

The speeches, used in targeted operational code analysis focused on sanction senders, include the speeches and their parts related to the states involved in sanctions against Russia. The categorization of speeches dividing them as those related to sanction senders and those not related to them was performed automatically using a custom-built dictionary in R Studio. All speeches were divided into paragraphs and only paragraphs mentioning at least one of the sanction sending states (or the European Union in general) were included into the subset focusing on sanction senders. As such targeted approach often resulted in relatively short parts of texts (less than 1500 words or including less than 20 coded verbs) the related fragments were combined into unified datapoints for each studied period. Such technique of aggregating shorter texts was suggested by Schafer and Walker (2006b: 44) stating that when necessary speeches can be unified according to specific timeframes. As the distribution of speeches over months was not uniform and the length of periods ranged from four to fourteen months, the highest level of aggregation (by whole periods) was preferred. To control for the variability of the leaders' beliefs in absence of major sanction-induced shocks, the years before sanctions were divided into two periods 2012 and 2013-February 2014. Similarly, the post-March 2018 episode was also divided into two sub-periods. The speeches are divided into several parts covering the following periods:

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<sup>7</sup> Schafer and Walker (2006, 51) also mention that another threshold may be 1500 words in a single speech. This threshold was included into automatic censoring using STATA besides the condition to include 20 or more verbs. However, as the 20 verbs condition seemed to be less strict not additional speeches were eliminated.

**Table 4.** Analyzed Periods and Word counts of the Analyzed Data Subsets

| Period                                                    | <b>Putin</b>    |                            |                     | <b>Medvedev</b> |                            |                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
|                                                           | All FP speeches | FP subset (20 coded verbs) | On sanction senders | All FP speeches | FP subset (20 coded verbs) | On sanction senders |
| 2012 year                                                 | 71154           | 46355                      | 25239               | 44327           | 36143                      | 8351                |
| 2013 year-February 2014                                   | 107884          | 68427                      | 53669               | 64811           | 53725                      | 12447               |
| March 2014-July 2014                                      | 61610           | 50004                      | 33299               | 16005           | 14080                      | 7601                |
| August 2014 – June 2015                                   | 50827           | 37960                      | 25664               | 30165           | 25459                      | 7406                |
| July 2015 – December 2016 (Secondary sanctions)           | 185656          | 128946                     | 73419               | 81203           | 59895                      | 23372               |
| Whole 2017 – February 2018                                | 119570          | 95115                      | 38979               | 22156           | 15543                      | 4062                |
| March-December 2018 (Skrripal and the Sea of Azov events) | 121581          | 99143                      | 48890               | 24644           | 19865                      | 7116                |
| 2019 year                                                 | 95563           | 78647                      | 37048               | 10809           | 8689                       | 4909                |
| <b>Total word count</b>                                   | 813845          | 604597                     | 336207              | 294120          | 233399                     | 75264               |

Finally, to analyze changes in the political beliefs of the leaders, ANOVA tests and two-tailed t-tests were applied to all studied belief shifts. To estimate similarities in belief fluctuations between the leaders, correlation analysis was implemented. The statistical analyses were conducted using Stata software.

#### 4.5.2. Results: Overview of Cumulative Results

The cumulative results of Operational Codes reflected in speeches given by Medvedev and Putin from 2012 to 2019 are presented in the table below (Table 2).

The results of the overall operational codes of the leaders focusing on all international actors (global attitudes) show that both leaders expressed rather cooperative and friendly attitudes.

Among the master beliefs (P1, P4, I1), thought to guide the psychological profiles of country leaders, all scores were estimated as higher (more friendly and more cooperative) than those of average world leaders. The philosophical belief about the nature of political universe (P1) which estimates how friendly (+1) or hostile (-1) a leader sees foreign actors ('others') was estimated as 0,59 for Putin and 0,55 for Medvedev what is well above the world average of 0,301 (Malici & Malici, 2005: 401) and even above the average major power leaders score of 0,48 (Dyson & Parent, 2018). Similarly, their average scores for their approaches to choosing strategies when dealing with foreign actors estimated by the instrumental belief I1 (ranging from 0 to 1 with scores above 0,5 referring to rather cooperative attitudes) were found as 0,75 for Putin and 0,7 for Medvedev. In contrast, world average score of this belief is 0,4 (Malici & Malici, 2005: 401) and an average for major power leaders is 0,6 (Dyson & Parent, 2018).

Finally, both leaders express in their speeches a belief in relatively high influence of other actors rather than their own control over historical developments. The leaders P4 scores measuring such sense of control over history are found as 0,32 and 0,34 which are below the 0,5 threshold for a leader's beliefs about whether s/he controls the history (above 0,5) or 'others' (foreign countries, external forces) do that (scores below 0,5). However, these scores are still higher than the world average of 0,224 (Malici & Malici, 2005: 401) and an average for major powers leaders of 0,26 (Dyson & Parent, 2018), suggesting that their sense of control over historical developments is higher than that of other actors.

Such first glimpse into the operational codes of Russian executives suggests that they see (at least as expressed in their rhetoric) the world as friendly, prefer cooperative strategies over conflictual and have a sense of mutual control over the historical developments with other actors. However, it is necessary to acknowledge that while scores measured from Putin's speeches are similar in general outlook to those reported in earlier analyses of Putin's beliefs, they are higher than found by Dyson and Parent (2018) for all master beliefs. The difference in the reported results, however, could relate to the different timeframes used by the studies as well as different thematic categorization approaches.

More importantly for the purpose of this research, the table below also demonstrates the changes in all philosophical and instrumental beliefs and their sub-types captured by the operational code analysis. The preliminary analysis focuses on analyzing whether there is a change in political beliefs of both leaders over the two larger periods: before sanctions (from 2012 till February 2014) and after sanctions (the whole duration of sanction and sanction threat episodes from March 2014 onwards).

The table shows that Putin's operational code demonstrated statistically significant changes with  $p < 0.05$  in six beliefs including all philosophical beliefs. It is remarkable that even in the global operational code including speeches about all foreign countries the analysis captures a significant decrease in perceived friendliness of the external actors (P1), significant decrease in the leader's optimism about realization of political values (P2), significant reduction of the leader's sense of control over historical developments and attribution of a significantly higher role

to chance in international developments (higher P5) (which is still lower than the world average of 0,97 (Malici & Malici, 2005: 401)).

**Table 5.** Operational Codes of Putin and Medvedev: Global views, changes before and after sanctions, trends, and similarities.

|                                                | Putin   |                  |               |                 |       | Medvedev |                  |               |                 |       | Comp trend |
|------------------------------------------------|---------|------------------|---------------|-----------------|-------|----------|------------------|---------------|-----------------|-------|------------|
|                                                | Overall | Before sanctions | ANO VA /Ttest | After sanctions | Trend | Overall  | Before sanctions | ANO VA /Ttest | After sanctions | Trend |            |
|                                                | n=45    | n=103            |               | n=342           |       | n=156    | n=57             |               | n=99            |       |            |
| <b>P1 Nature of Political Universe</b>         | 0,59    | 0,67             | ***           | 0,57            | ↓     | 0,55     | 0,57             |               | 0,55            | ↓     | =          |
| <b>P2 Realization of political values</b>      | 0,33    | 0,39             | **            | 0,32            | ↓     | 0,27     | 0,27             |               | 0,27            | ↔     |            |
| <b>P3 Political future (predictability)</b>    | 0,20    | 0,23             | **            | 0,20            | ↓     | 0,23     | 0,24             |               | 0,23            | ↓     | =          |
| <b>P4 Historical control</b>                   | 0,32    | 0,37             | ***           | 0,30            | ↓     | 0,34     | 0,36             | °             | 0,32            | ↓     | =          |
| <b>P5 Role of chance</b>                       | 0,93    | 0,92             | ***           | 0,94            | ↑     | 0,92     | 0,91             |               | 0,92            | ↑     | =          |
| <b>I1 Strategy (conf/coop)</b>                 | 0,75    | 0,76             |               | 0,75            | ↓     | 0,70     | 0,67             |               | 0,72            | ↑     |            |
| <b>I2 Intensity of tactics (conf/coop)</b>     | 0,35    | 0,35             |               | 0,35            | ↔     | 0,32     | 0,29             |               | 0,33            | ↑     |            |
| <b>I3 Tactics predictability (risk taking)</b> | 0,41    | 0,44             | 0.102         | 0,40            | ↓     | 0,40     | 0,42             |               | 0,39            | ↓     | =          |
| <b>I4 Tactic flexibility</b>                   |         |                  |               |                 |       |          |                  |               |                 |       |            |
| <b>I4a conf/coop</b>                           | 0,24    | 0,22             |               | 0,24            | ↑     | 0,28     | 0,30             |               | 0,27            | ↓     |            |
| <b>I4b word/deed</b>                           | 0,42    | 0,37             |               | 0,44            | ↑     | 0,41     | 0,37             |               | 0,44            | ↑     | =          |
| <b>I5 Utility of</b>                           |         |                  |               |                 |       |          |                  |               |                 |       |            |
| <b>I5 Appeal</b>                               | 0,63    | 0,66             | °             | 0,62            | ↓     | 0,63     | 0,64             |               | 0,62            | ↓     | =          |
| <b>I5 Promise</b>                              | 0,07    | 0,06             |               | 0,08            | ↑     | 0,06     | 0,06             |               | 0,07            | ↑     | =          |
| <b>I5 Reward</b>                               | 0,17    | 0,15             |               | 0,17            | ↑     | 0,16     | 0,13             | °             | 0,17            | ↑     | =          |
| <b>I5 Oppose</b>                               | 0,05    | 0,06             |               | 0,05            | ↓     | 0,07     | 0,09             | *             | 0,06            | ↓     | =          |
| <b>I5 Threaten</b>                             | 0,02    | 0,03             |               | 0,02            | ↓     | 0,02     | 0,02             |               | 0,02            | ↔     |            |
| <b>I5 Punish</b>                               | 0,05    | 0,03             | *             | 0,06            | ↑     | 0,06     | 0,06             |               | 0,06            | ↔     |            |

Levels of significance for two tailed T-test and ANOVA tests: °  $p \leq 0,1$ , \*  $p \leq 0,05$ , \*\*  $p \leq 0,01$ , \*\*\*  $p \leq 0,001$ . Trend comparison: = indicates that changes in beliefs of both leaders occurred in the same direction.

The analysis has also shown that statistically significantly lower perceived predictability of political future (P3) was estimated while risk acceptance after 2014 became also lower with the level of significance of such change at  $p < 0.102$ . In contrast, Putin's preference for strategies towards others as well as intensity and flexibility of tactics (I1, I2, I4) did not demonstrate a statistically significant change. Among the means mostly referred in his speeches utility of an 'appeal' and 'punish' themed tools significantly increased, that is consistent with the idea of repeated appeals towards sanction senders to abolish sanctions and declaration of countermeasures in response to the sanctions.

The analysis of Medvedev's operational code and changes in the political and philosophical beliefs mostly does not demonstrate statistically significant changes for the combined periods before and after sanctions which can be caused by high volatility of the beliefs expressed in his speeches. Among the philosophical beliefs only his perception of the locus of control over history decreased at the level of significance of  $p < 0.1$ . Among his instrumental beliefs the emphasis on rewards increased with  $p < 0.1$  while his emphasis on opposing others decreased with  $p < 0.05$ , suggesting a more cooperative rhetoric. The estimated shifts in general (even when not significant) are largely similar those in Putin's operational code what may suggest following the similar official rhetoric. In total ten out of sixteen indicators demonstrated shifts (or lack of them) into the same direction (including the master beliefs P1 and P4), thus, suggesting similarity of trends in the fluctuation of operational codes of the leaders.

The second step of the analysis was to analyze targeted operational codes in speeches related to the states involved in sanctions against Russia. As for this analysis shorter parts of speeches were combined into single datapoints for each period, the degrees of freedom were very low which could decrease the probability of significant results of ANOVA and T-test analyses. However, even under these conditions statistically significant changes were estimated for both leaders as shown on the Table 6.

**Table 6.** Medvedev and Putin's Operational Codes regarding Sanction Senders: Overall, changes, trends, similarities

|                                         | Putin   |                  |              |                 |       | Medvedev |                        |       |                 |       | Comp trend |
|-----------------------------------------|---------|------------------|--------------|-----------------|-------|----------|------------------------|-------|-----------------|-------|------------|
|                                         | Overall | Before sanctions | ANOVA /Ttest | After sanctions | Trend | Overall  | Before sanctions/Ttest | ANOVA | After sanctions | Trend |            |
| N of datapoints                         | 8       | 2                |              | 6               |       | 8        | 2                      |       | 6               |       |            |
| Word count                              | 336207  | 78908            |              | 259299          |       | 75264    | 20798                  |       | 54466           |       |            |
| P1 Nature of Political Universe         | 0,51    | 0,62             |              | 0,48            | ↓     | 0,45     | 0,57                   | ***   | 0,41            | ↓     | =          |
| P2 Realization of political values      | 0,27    | 0,34             |              | 0,24            | ↓     | 0,21     | 0,25                   |       | 0,19            | ↓     | =          |
| P3 Political future (predictability)    | 0,14    | 0,16             |              | 0,14            | ↓     | 0,16     | 0,26                   | *     | 0,13            | ↓     | =          |
| P4 Historical control                   | 0,31    | 0,36             | **           | 0,30            | ↓     | 0,31     | 0,37                   | *     | 0,29            | ↓     | =          |
| P5 Role of chance                       | 0,96    | 0,94             | °            | 0,96            | ↑     | 0,95     | 0,91                   | **    | 0,96            | ↑     | =          |
| I1 Strategy (conf./coop.)               | 0,74    | 0,78             |              | 0,73            | ↓     | 0,68     | 0,60                   |       | 0,71            | ↑     |            |
| I2 Intensity of tactics (conf./coop.)   | 0,35    | 0,38             |              | 0,34            | ↓     | 0,31     | 0,28                   |       | 0,32            | ↑     |            |
| I3 Tactics predictability (risk taking) | 0,33    | 0,36             |              | 0,32            | ↓     | 0,32     | 0,28                   |       | 0,33            | ↑     |            |
| I4 Tactic flexibility                   |         |                  |              |                 |       |          |                        |       |                 |       |            |
| I4a conf./coop                          | 0,26    | 0,22             |              | 0,27            | ↑     | 0,32     | 0,40                   |       | 0,29            | ↓     |            |
| I4b word/deed                           | 0,44    | 0,42             |              | 0,45            | ↑     | 0,40     | 0,37                   |       | 0,41            | ↑     | =          |
| I5 Utility of                           |         |                  |              |                 |       |          |                        |       |                 |       |            |
| I5 Appeal                               | 0,63    | 0,65             |              | 0,62            | ↓     | 0,62     | 0,59                   |       | 0,63            | ↑     |            |
| I5 Promise                              | 0,07    | 0,07             |              | 0,07            | ↔     | 0,06     | 0,07                   |       | 0,06            | ↓     | =          |
| I5 Reward                               | 0,17    | 0,18             |              | 0,17            | ↓     | 0,15     | 0,14                   |       | 0,16            | ↑     | =          |
| I5 Oppose                               | 0,06    | 0,06             |              | 0,06            | ↔     | 0,08     | 0,13                   |       | 0,07            | ↓     |            |
| I5 Threaten                             | 0,02    | 0,01             | °            | 0,03            | ↑     | 0,03     | 0,02                   |       | 0,04            | ↑     | =          |
| I5 Punish                               | 0,05    | 0,03             |              | 0,05            | ↑     | 0,04     | 0,04                   |       | 0,04            | ↔     |            |

Levels of significance for two tailed T-test and ANOVA tests: °  $p \leq 0,1$ , \*  $p \leq 0,05$ , \*\*  $p \leq 0,01$ , \*\*\*  $p \leq 0,001$ . Trend comparison: ↔ indicates that changes in beliefs of both leaders occurred in the same direction.

Both Medvedev and Putin's speeches demonstrated a significant decrease in their sense of control over historical international developments (P4). Moreover, their scores for the perception of the role of chance in international relations have meaningfully increased (for this political belief of Putin the level of significance was  $p < 0.1$ ). The analyses also have shown that Medvedev's perception about the nature of political others, covering only the sanction sending states, became significantly less friendly. Moreover, he became significantly less confident in the predictability of political future (P3). Overall, the trajectory of change in the targeted operational code about the sanction senders remained similar to the shifts calculated in global operational codes (even when no statistical significance was found).

Out of sixteen indicators changes in ten were in the same directions for both leaders. In addition, Putin's speeches reflected a decrease in the perception of historical control in both global and targeted operational code analysis as well as increased perception of the role of chance were statistically significant in both analyses suggesting a degree of consistency over analyses including somewhat different subsets of speeches.

Thus, the analyses demonstrate that statistically significant changes in the political beliefs of Putin were estimated in both global and targeted operational codes as well as Medvedev's targeted operational code measured using speeches about sanction senders. The estimated changes as well as high proportion of similarities in even not-statistically significant shifts may suggest a degree of learning and belief change in aftermath of sanction imposition. To understand whether these changes were gradual

or instantly followed a specific date, an analysis of the belief shifts over shorter sanction episodes are presented below.

#### 4.5.3. *Putin's Political Belief Changes over Sanction Episodes*

The statistical analysis of the Putin's speeches on foreign policy in general shows that such beliefs were rather fluctuating both on global level and in relation to the sanctioning states<sup>8</sup>. Table 4 presents results of ANOVA analysis for pairs of consecutive years for master beliefs of the executive.

**Table 7.** Putin's Global Operational Code by Period

| Periods            | P1 Nature of the political universe | I1 Strategies (conf.-coop.) | P4 Historical control |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| 2012               | 0,67                                | 0,76                        | 0,33                  |
| 2013-Feb 2014      | 0,67                                | 0,75                        | <b>0,39*</b>          |
| Mar -Jul 2014      | <b>0,52***</b>                      | 0,68                        | <b>0,28***</b>        |
| Aug 2014-June 2015 | 0,55                                | <b>0,78°</b>                | <b>0,33°</b>          |
| Jul 2015 -Dec 2016 | 0,5                                 | 0,69                        | 0,32                  |
| 2017-Feb 2018      | <b>0,58°</b>                        | <b>0,77°</b>                | <b>0,29°</b>          |
| Mar – Dec 2018     | <b>0,67*</b>                        | 0,76                        | 0,29                  |
| 2019               | <b>0,57*</b>                        | 0,8                         | 0,28                  |

Levels of significance for ANOVA tests between each pair of consequent years: °  $p \leq 0,1$ , \*  $p \leq 0,05$ , \*\*  $p \leq 0,01$ , \*\*\*  $p \leq 0,001$

Table 7 shows that Putin's perception of the universe's friendliness (P1) significantly decreased in the third period of March- July 2014 when the first package of sanctions was announced. Similar significant decrease was witnessed for the same period in case of the leader's perception of historical control (P4). After impositions of sanctions in four out of six periods he perceived that history was shaped by others

<sup>8</sup> Statistical analysis of the shifts in targeted beliefs is not feasible as those speeches were aggregated into unitary datapoints for each period.

more than by himself. It is remarkable, however, that the variations were not limited by this specific period. Putin's sense of historical control significantly increased in 2013, what could have some implications for the controversial Russian policies towards Ukraine and Crimea at the end of that period. His perception of friendliness of the political universe was increasing in March-December 2018 to pre-sanctions levels with statistical significance of  $p < 0.05$ . These findings may suggest that while sanctions were instrumental in influencing some political beliefs of the leader, the change could be somewhat temporary. To compare the long-term difference in the master beliefs, the mean scores for year 2012 (before sanctions and before worsening relations with Ukraine in general) and year 2019 (when no new sanctions were introduced, serving partly as a control period) were statistically compared<sup>9</sup>. The ANOVA test has shown that there was a difference in perception of friendliness of the political universe with the level of significance of  $p < 0.1$ . In case of the sense of historical control (P4) the change between 2012 and 2019 years was statistically significant with  $p < 0.05$  (the same was correct when P4 scores were compared for 2012 and 2018 ( $p < 0.05$ ), 2012-2017 ( $p < 0.1$ )). These finding may suggest a more long-term change in the leader's perception of the locus of control over historical developments towards perceiving higher control by others.

Figure 3 visualizes comparison of Putin's perception of the friendliness of the political universe measured within the global and targeted operational code analysis to the world average leaders and averages of major power leaders. The leader's belief about the nature of political universe was more friendly than that of world averages, his perception of the sanction senders was mostly below pre-sanction levels from

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<sup>9</sup> The idea of comparing a period before external shock with the last control period is based on the research design used by van Willigen and Bakker (2021) analyzing psychological effects of traumatic events.

August 2014 onwards. The shift started with the second part of 2014 and towards 2015 after the imposition of stronger sanctions on Russia's economic sectors by Western states which coincided with additional economic shock inflicted by falling oil prices. More significantly is that in 2014-2016 Putin's perception of sanction senders became less friendly not only in comparison to his earlier beliefs but also in comparison to the average world leaders.

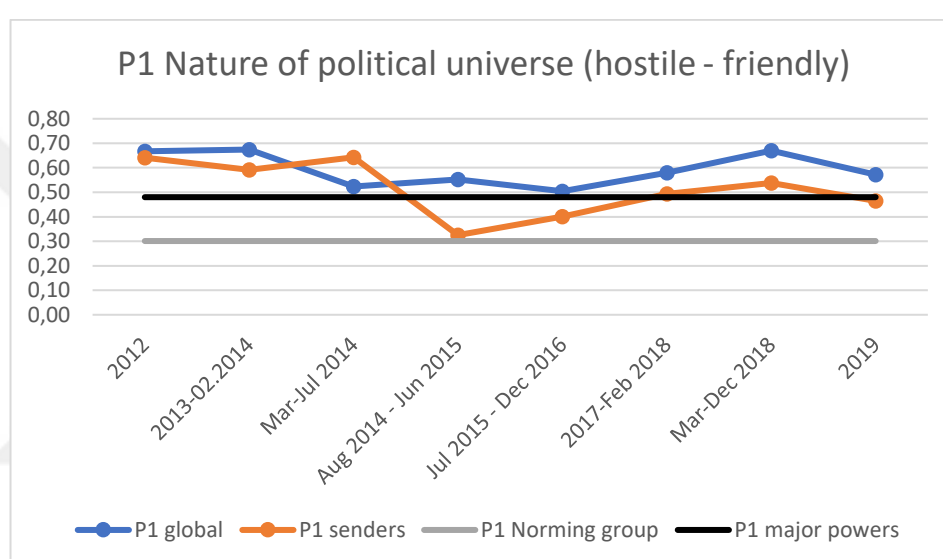


**Figure 3.** Putin's Beliefs about the Nature of Universe: Friendly vs. Hostile

\*Norming group reflect the analysis of 164 speeches of 35 leaders as used by Malici and Malici (2005: 401). Values for “contemporary major power leaders” are taken from Dyson and Parent (2018: 6)

While Dyson and Parent (2018: 11) also highlight the trend of decreasing P1 score of Putin in the aftermath of Ukrainian crisis, they note that his perception of the NATO and Ukraine did not worsen before the conflict as would be predicted by existing theories but rather after it. While expecting a conflict to arise on the bases of negative beliefs could be reasonable, the idea of stability of one's beliefs (Jervis, 1976) would actually suggest that without any external shock such fall of positive

perceptions of the Western states would not be expectable prior to the conflict. Thus, while the decrease of P1 score indeed occurred starting from 2014 onwards, it could occur rather because of the conflict, the following sanctions, the oil shocks, or all events combined. However, considering that even in March-July 2014 just after the Ukrainian crisis and the start of Russian-Ukrainian dispute, Putin's rhetoric about the states that would involve (or already involved) in sanctions against Russia was still on the pre-2014 level. While such rhetoric could reflect attempts to still revert Ukrainian drifting towards the West or any other political goals, even the initial sets of very limited targeted sanctions by the Western countries did not trigger a visible change in Putin's political beliefs. In contrast, it was not before the second part of 2014 when Putin's rhetoric and Russia's policy towards sanctions changed towards further escalation of Russia's relations with the West as will be discussed in detail in the following sections.

Putin's beliefs about the best strategy to achieve goals (instrumental belief I1, Table 4) also demonstrated some fluctuation over the studied years. The lowest scores were measured for the period following August 2014 with the lowest preference for cooperation with sanction-senders reflected in speeches from August 2014 to June 2015 was still positive and on the same level with world average leader's strategies. In contrast, for all other years the scores were above the world averages and on the same levels with pre-sanction periods. The visible fall in the second part of 2014-early 2015 in the targeted score, measuring rhetoric on sanction senders, may be attributed to the introduction of countersanctions by Russia because that was the period when the executives announced that they would reciprocate all restrictions imposed on the state. Still for all other years both targeted and global scores for

strategic approaches to external actors remained very cooperative and higher than world averages which visually supports the presented above statistical results showing absence of statistically significant changes in this instrumental belief.

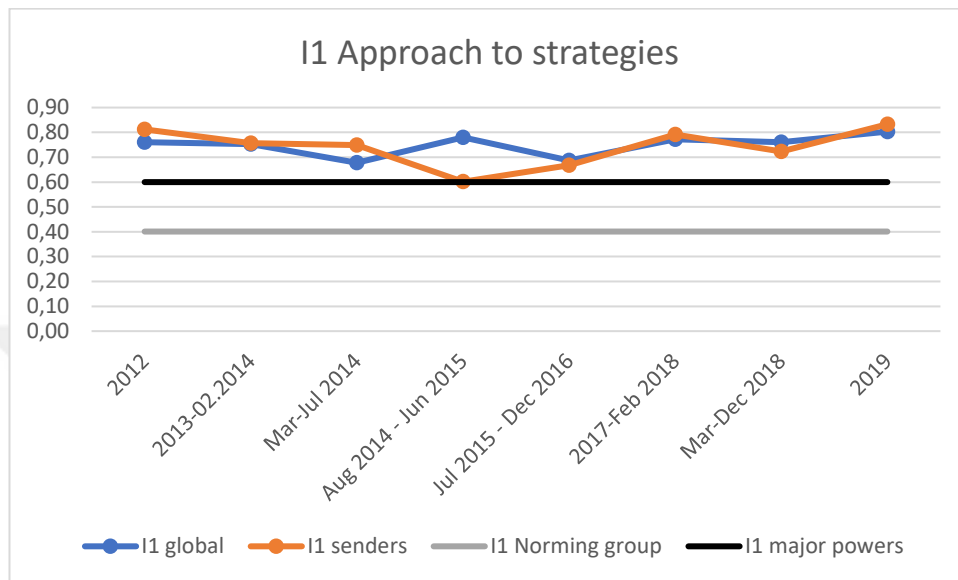


**Figure 4.** Putin: I1 Approaches to strategies - Conflict-Cooperation

\*Norming group reflect the analysis of 164 speeches of 35 leaders as used by Malici and Malici (2005: 401). Values for “contemporary major power leaders” are taken from Dyson and Parent (2018: 6)

Putin’s third master belief P4 related to the leaders’ perception of control over historic developments demonstrated fluctuations and overall decrease over the years while remaining slightly higher than world averages. As demonstrated in Figure 5, this belief on global level also demonstrated decrease after March 2014. Interestingly that especially for the later years of analysis the perception of control over history in rhetoric about world countries in general and specifically about sanction senders was almost identical. This may indicate that the shift in global operational code was not caused only by a reaction-like rhetoric about the sanction senders but represented a broader gradual belief change.

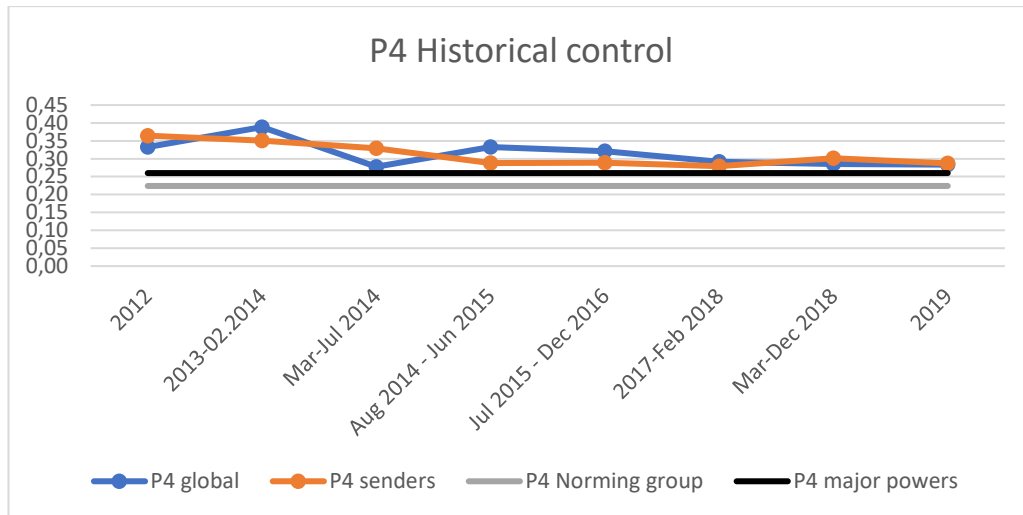


**Figure 5.** Putin's Perception of Control over Historical Developments

\*Norming group reflect the analysis of 164 speeches of 35 leaders as used by Malici and Malici (2005: 401). Values for “contemporary major power leaders” are taken from Dyson and Parent (2018: 6)

#### 4.5.4. Medvedev's Political Belief Changes over Sanction Episodes

Analysis of Medvedev's political beliefs and their changes over the eight periods evaluated in this chapter also shows fluctuation especially following Ukrainian crisis and even more so after August 2014. The Table 5 presents Medvedev's beliefs about the nature of political universe during different episodes of sanctions. While the scores of his master beliefs demonstrate volatility, none of changes across periods was statistically significant at the level of  $p < 0.05$ .

**Table 8.** Medvedev's Global Operational Code by Period

| Period            | P1 Nature of the political universe | I1 Strategies | P4 Historical control |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| 2012              | 0,58                                | 0,76          | 0,36                  |
| 2013              | 0,55                                | <b>0,61°</b>  | 0,35                  |
| March-July 2014   | 0,58                                | 0,61          | 0,31                  |
| Aug 2014-Jun 2016 | 0,52                                | 0,64          | 0,32                  |
| Jul 2015-Dec 2016 | 0,54                                | 0,72          | 0,32                  |
| 2017-Feb 2018     | 0,6                                 | 0,74          | 0,35                  |
| Mar-Dec 2018      | 0,51                                | 0,84          | 0,33                  |
| 2019              | 0,58                                | 0,83          | 0,31                  |

Levels of significance for ANOVA tests between each pair of consequent years: °  $p \leq 0,1$ , \*  $p \leq 0,05$ , \*\*  $p \leq 0,01$ , \*\*\*  $p \leq 0,001$

When visualized in comparison to world averages and the averages for major power leaders, it is clear that while before 2014 Medvedev perceived political universe in a more friendly way than an average world leader, after that mid-2014 his perception about the sanction senders was constantly below the average for major power leaders but still more friendly than that norming group in general. The latter may indicate that the shift in Medvedev’s beliefs were about the West and the Ukraine may be more permanent than just short-term rhetorical reaction.

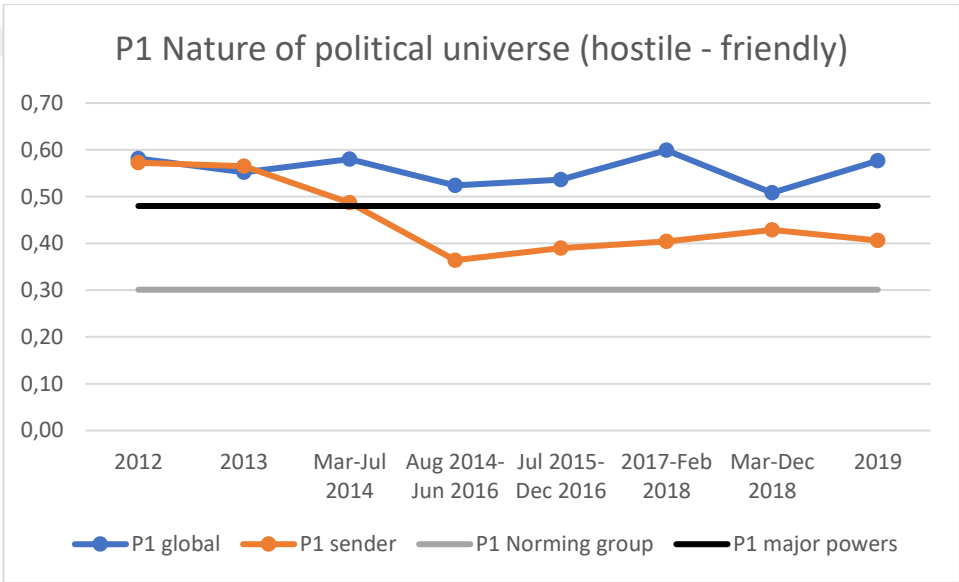


**Figure 6.** Medvedev's view about the nature of political universe (P1)

\*Norming group reflect the analysis of 164 speeches of 35 leaders as used by Malici and Malici (2005: 401). Values for “contemporary major power leaders” are taken from Dyson and Parent (2018: 6)

Visualization of Medvedev’s instrumental beliefs demonstrates that while his strategic approach to interacting with other states was more cooperative than that of an average world leader, it was initially very similar to that of major power leaders. However, from Mid-2014 onwards Medvedev’s rhetoric towards other states was indicating increasingly more cooperative approach.

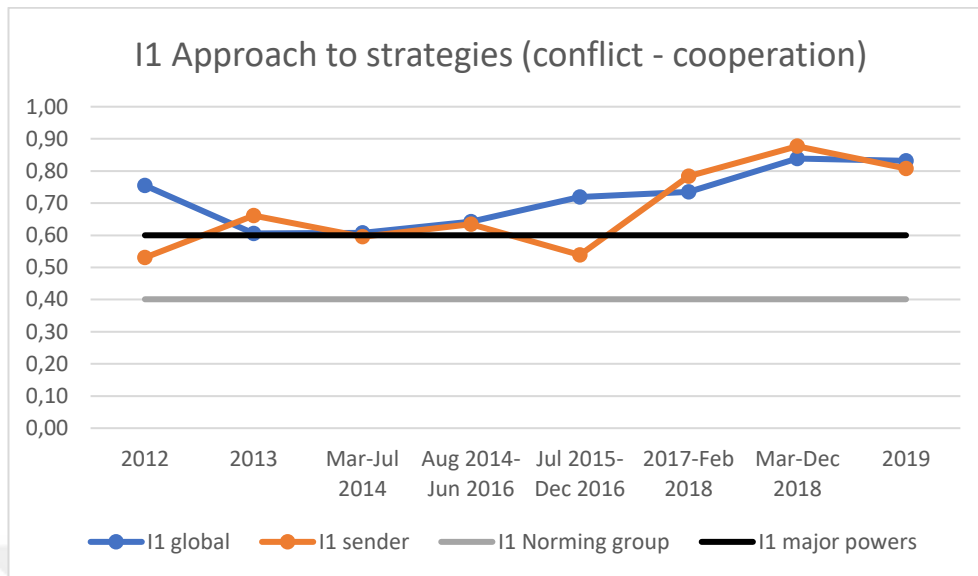


**Figure 7. Medvedev - I1. Conflict-Cooperation Strategies**

\*Norming group reflects the analysis of 164 speeches of 35 leaders as used by Malici and Malici (2005: 401). Values for “contemporary major power leaders” are taken from Dyson and Parent (2018: 6)

Medvedev’s philosophical belief about the control over historical developments similarly have shown changes over years with lowest scores related to Western countries in 2015-2018. Moreover, in 2018 his sense of control over history was below the average for major power leaders. However, during the studied periods he expressed a higher sense of historical control than average world leaders.

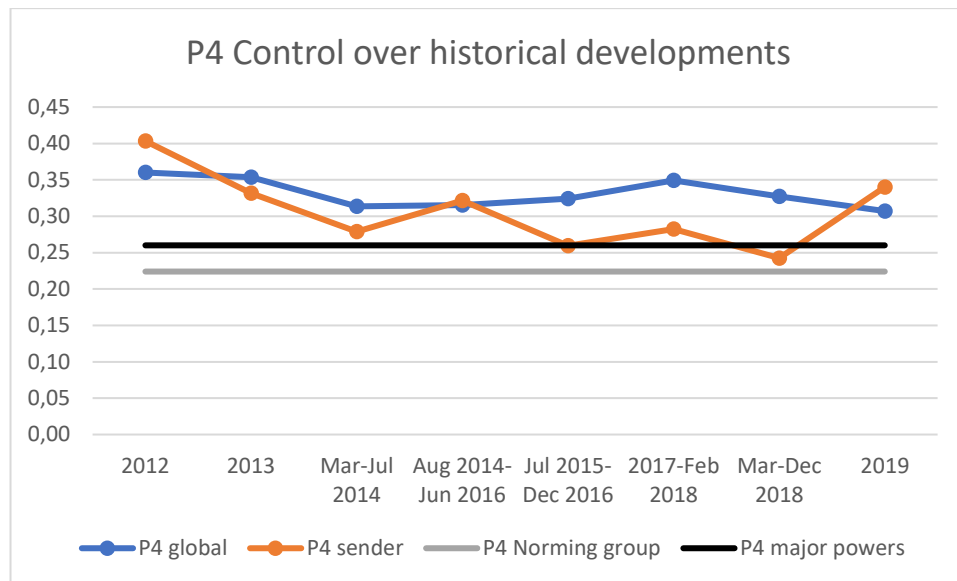


**Figure 8. Medvedev. P4. Control over Historical Developments**

\*Norming group reflects the analysis of 164 speeches of 35 leaders as used by Malici and Malici (2005: 401). Values for “contemporary major power leaders” are taken from Dyson and Parent (2018: 6).

#### 4.5.5. *Evaluation of Hypotheses*

The Chapter 3 of this dissertation presented six hypotheses about the possible effects of sanctions on political beliefs of the targeted states’ leaders. This section evaluates these hypotheses in relation to the operational codes of Putin and Medvedev.

**H1: Sanctions are likely to correspond to changes of political beliefs of the targeted states’ leaders.**

While for both executives shifts in most political and instrumental beliefs were estimated on global level, only in Putin’s global operational code statistically significant changes were found in his political beliefs about the nature of political universe – P1 (reduction), optimism about realization of political values (reduction) – P2, sense of control over historical developments – P4 (significant reduction of the value (suggesting further strengthening) of the perception of historical control by

others from 0,36 to 0,30, meaningful increase was found in the leader's attributing higher role of chance after 2014 (P5) and decreasing risk proneness (I3). While ten of Medvedev's political beliefs about foreign countries in general changed in the same direction with shifts of Putin's operational code, none of the shifts in his master beliefs was statistically significant at level of  $p < 0.05$  (and his sense of historical control (P4) decreased at the level of significance of  $p < 0.1$ ). In contrast, the analysis of the leaders' targeted operational codes focusing on speeches related to sanction sending states shows statistically significant shifts towards reduction of Medvedev's perception of friendliness of the related political universe, lower sense of control over history, lower perception of political predictability and higher attribution to the role of chance. Analysis of Putin's rhetoric related to sanction senders demonstrated significant changes only in the political beliefs P4 – decrease in perceived control over historical development (with  $p < 0.05$ ) and increasing perception of the importance of chance and a increasing belief in role of chance (P5) at  $p < 0.1$ . For both leaders, the change in the P4 indicator of the sense of historical control demonstrated reversal from perceived control by 'self' to attributing more control to political 'others'.

**H2: If a belief change occurs in response to sanctions, belief reversal is less likely than belief reduction, reinforcement, or rigidity.**

Among the statistically significant changes only the perception of control over historical developments of the leaders demonstrated reversal of existing beliefs (though, it may also be interpreted as belief reduction to low sense of control from a high one). Most of the significant changes were in fact related to belief reduction (for example, Putin's perception of friendliness of political universe decreased but

remained very friendly) or belief reinforcement (as happened in case of P5 with increasing attribution of importance to the chance).

### **H3: Sanctions are likely to increase perception of hostility of the external world**

The analysis above has shown that for both leaders, sanctions imposed in 2014 were indeed associated with less friendly (more hostile) perception of the world (significant change in Putin's global operational code and Medvedev's targeted operational code). However, in general perception of both leaders remained on the friendly part of the hostility-friendliness perception continuum of the indicator.

### **H4: Changes in philosophical beliefs are more likely to occur than changes in instrumental beliefs**

This hypothesis was supported to an important extend as majority of the statistically significant changes found in Putin and Medvedev's beliefs indeed occurred in their philosophical beliefs.

### **H5: Significant change of at least one master belief is likely to coincide with changes of other philosophical or instrumental beliefs.**

This analysis has demonstrated that master beliefs do not change simultaneously. It has shown that while some non-master beliefs change other may remain stable. That demonstrates that the indices of the beliefs are not necessarily interdependent. However, when changes were found in related beliefs such as belief about predictability of political universe and the role of

chance (opposite beliefs) the changes (either significant or not) were consistently in opposite directions.

#### **H6: Direction of belief change of different targeted leaders is likely to be similar in similar contexts**

The analysis above has shown that ten out of sixteen operational code indicators on global and targeted levels changed in the same direction for both leaders over the broader before-after sanctions periods. Among the statistically significant shifts, only P4 – sense of control over history and P5 – attitude on the role of chance were both simultaneously statistically significant and having the same direction.

#### **4.6. Tracing Executive Reactions to Sanctions**

The economic sanctions against Russia produced rather limited economic and political outcomes as was discussed in the earlier sections. Moreover, economic effects were largely attributed to the end of 2014 and 2015 and coincided with the later impact of falling oil prices. Later the impacts were also reduced by economic adjustments. Therefore, while belief changes were found in this analysis to coincide with the sanctions and their impacts, it is necessary to discuss whether there were any signs of causality between the two developments. As was discussed in “Chapter 3. Theoretical Framework and Research Design” of this thesis, the mechanism of belief change is likely to result from an emotional or cognitive response to sanction imposition or its effects. To trace whether the sanctions and their impacts were likely to inflict change in preexisting beliefs about the world and sanction senders, there is

a need to see whether sanctions at all were perceived as an important development worthy of discussions, mentioning, or response by the leaders.

While the sanctions imposed in March 2014 were limited and hardly unanticipated, they were discussed by the Russian executives using different approaches to the topic. For example, Putin, rather downplaying the sanctions' significance, tried to meet the sanctions with a humorous attitude reflected in his personal suggestion to open a bank account in the targeted bank while he also warned the cabinet not to use "counter-measures" (Kremlin.ru, 2014a). Use of humor to diminish the seriousness of sanctions indeed is among the tactics targeted leaders use as was also mentioned by Galtung (1967) who suggested that Rhodesian elites referred to jokes and popular emotions to when responding to sanctions. In later months, already knowing about the possible second "package" of sanctions, Putin referred to present sanctions as "ineffective", "unlawful", and "hostile" but likely to have 'boomerang effect', to possibly benefit Russia, and harm only for the relations of Russia with the US and EU (Kremlin.ru, 2014b).

In contrast Medvedev, as a head of cabinet responsible for alleviating possible domestic impacts of sanctions, was much more critical about different actors involved in sanctions. For example, he mentioned the need for law to "protect the interests of Russian businesses violated by illegitimate sanctions" (Government.ru, 2014c). Moreover, talking about the financial firms blocking cards of targeted Russian individuals, Medvedev argued that they [Russia] "should spend time and money to bring our foreign counteragents to their senses" (Government.ru, 2014c). Similarly, in May 2014, Medvedev acknowledged that "none" of sanctions "is

disastrous for our economy, although some restrictions could be rather painful” but argued that the country “will be able to cope with any sanctions, or so-called sanctions” (Government.ru, 2014a). Moreover, in another interview in May 2014, Medvedev called potential sectoral sanctions against Russia as a “threat to some of Russia’s export capabilities”. At the same time in July 2014, Medvedev assessed sanctions a “illegitimate”, “harmful”, increasing “anti-American feelings” and “consolidat[ing]” society and threatened retaliation (Government.ru, 2014d).

Thus, while Putin’s speeches focused mostly on persuading international and domestic audiences about the uselessness and insignificance of the measures (and the need to eliminate them), Medvedev more openly criticized possible domestic effects of sanctions. Such difference between the rhetoric on sanctions of the two executives, could be related to the differences in their roles where Medvedev as prime minister was supposed to work with domestic issues in the country, thus, having to respond to more specific domestic concerns over economy. However, both the tactic of underplaying the importance of sanctions and repeated discussions about the possible effects suggest that that the sanctions were seen as a non-negligible development.

Considering that the first wave of sanctions has already inflicted reaction from both leaders and that the second package of sanctions was known in advance, significant changes in the overall operational code would be unexpected and were not found in the analysis. However, there results present above have shown a drastic fall in perception of friendliness of the sanction senders during that period (P1) in the analysis of targeted operational codes (Figure 3, Figure 6 presented above). The

following quote from Medvedev can probably show that the sanctions imposed in August 2014 could lead to the change in political rhetoric towards sanction senders not only due to economic hardships but also due to initial frustration:

Until the last moment, we hoped that our foreign colleagues would realise that sanctions lead to a blind alley, and that no one benefits from them. But they didn't realise this, and now we have been forced to respond. (Dmitriy Medvedev (Government.ru, 2014b))

Thus, despite the knowledge about the possibility of a new broader package of sanctions, the sanction imposition was still not fully anticipated and could influence beliefs about friendliness of others. In response to the new costlier sanctions, Russia announced with countersanctions. Putin in stronger words as presented argued that Russia was “the target” and victim in the situation also reflecting the perception of others's control over historical developments:

Russia was not responsible for the deterioration in relations between our country and the EU states. This was not our choice; it was dictated to us by our partners. It was not we who introduced restrictions on trade and economic activities. Rather, we were the target and we had to respond with retaliatory, protective measures. (Vladimir Putin, (Kremlin.ru, 2014c))

It is remarkable, however, that while opposing the EU in general, Putin continued to emphasize bilateral cooperation with the separate member-states such as Italy, Russia's relations with which “has, indeed, always been privileged” (Kremlin.ru, 2014c). Medvedev also already in May 2014, was praising “constructive” dialogue with Bulgaria while not willing to “wade into the vicissitudes of our relations with the European Union or discussions of all sorts of sanctions”. Such rhetoric concurs with the later arguments that sanctions negatively influence Russia's relation with the

EU in general but not its specific member-states (Romanova, 2016). However, it is also necessary to note that the fact of imposition of sanctions forced the leaders to reconsider their attitudes even towards such states as Japan which imposed rather limited restrictions (Connolly, 2018). Putin argued that, because Japan participated in the sanctions, it was necessary to consider “how ready is Japan and how can it do that without breaching its commitments to its allies?” when discussing resolution of the existing issues between Russia and Japan (Kremlin.ru, 2016).

The later part of 2014-2016 witnessed similar rhetoric in sanctions and both stable trend in continuation of sanctions and continuation in the reduced perception of friendliness of sanction senders by Russian executives. While periodization used in this chapter assumed that events of 2018 and related sanctions would inflict further changes in political beliefs of targeted state leaders, the analysis presented above did not find statistically significant changes during that period even if some fluctuations were measured. However, a more careful reading of official rhetoric on those later sanctions shows that the sanctions were not resisted, did not lead to calls to eliminate sanctions. This is shown in Putin’s mentioning in November 2018 that he thought “it would be good for us if those who want to impose sanctions would go ahead and impose all the sanctions they can think of as soon as possible. This would free our hands to defend our national interests however we deem most effective for us.” (Kremlin.ru, 2018b). This statement may also suggest the perceived impossibility to change contemporary stance of the sanction sender which could reflect the decreasing sense of control over history found over most periods after 2014.

Moreover, as of 2018 June, Putin already argued that they “are not surprised by any restrictions or sanctions; this does not frighten us and will never force us to abandon our independent, sovereign path of development” (Kremlin.ru, 2018a). Even if Putin a year (and some additional sanctions) later acknowledged that sanctions were interfering with Russia’s activities, he argued it was “not in a critical way” (Kremlin.ru, 2019). Thus, in the context of lack of surprise or a new strong response as well as declaration of resolution of earlier economic problems, any drastic change of political beliefs in those years could no longer be expected.

#### **4.7. Alternative Explanations**

Understanding of the effects of sanctions changes in the measured political beliefs of Russia’s executives cannot be full without considering alternative factors which can inflict changes in the attitudes of the leaders. Among the most significant events occurred within the same period one can cite the events in Ukraine on their own. Ukraine, for a long time was a partner of the Russian Federation and especially under Yanukovich was drifting towards the Russia-headed Eurasian Economic Union. However, after the sudden escalation of protests starting in the end of 2013 led to the change of government in Ukraine and a pro-Western government’s coming to power. The latter could inspire both Russia’s fears for its military base in Ukraine and resentment towards own lack of control of the perceived “sphere of influence”. Prospect in 2013 and finalization of the EU agreement with Ukraine in June 2014 by Poroshenko also contributed to “tougher policies vis-à-vis Ukraine” (Aalto & Forsberg, 2016: 225). In the following years such conflictual relations either persisted or even further escalated. Considering that such events were not expected

and met high level of criticism on part of Russian leaders, it is possible to argue that the drift of Ukraine from Russia to the EU could also trigger changing political beliefs.

Statistically analyzing the differences between the first two months of 2014 with previous and the following period is impossible due to the very limited set of speeches for that period (only one speech by Medvedev about the war in Syria was meeting the criteria of having at least 20 coded verbs and only three speeches by Putin were meeting these conditions). When all available foreign policy-oriented speeches were analyzed for that period, they demonstrated that while P1 (perception of friendliness of the external actors) decreased for that period. In contrast, P4 (sense of control over history) demonstrated significant decrease in Putin's operational code after imposition of sanctions was 0.385 in January-February 2014 what was even higher than in the 2013 year excluding beginning of 2014 ( $P4=0.38$ ) and the following period ( $P4=0.36$ ). When censored by the number of coded verbs this value for that period was even higher. In case of Medvedev, the mean P4 value for all available non-censored by length foreign policy-oriented speeches was estimated as 0.37 what is slightly lower than 0.38 estimated for 2013 but much higher than 0.31 estimated for the first episode of sanctions. Thus, while none of these observations for the first two months of 2014 can be relied upon to create a cognitive profile of a leader (due to insufficient data), especially the high values for P4 suggest that it was not the period when the related belief change (decreasing sense of control over history) occurred or was initially reflected in the rhetoric of the leaders.

The second important external shock occurring during this period is the falling gas and oil prices around the world. The sharp decrease of energy prices endangered Russia's economy which is significantly dependent on its export of oil and gas both in terms of income for state-led and large private companies, for taxation, and for redistribution of the revenues across subsidized sectors as described by Connolly (2018). Moreover, the GDP growth rates in Russia and the fluctuating prices on oil followed rather similar trajectory during those years as can be seen in the figure below.

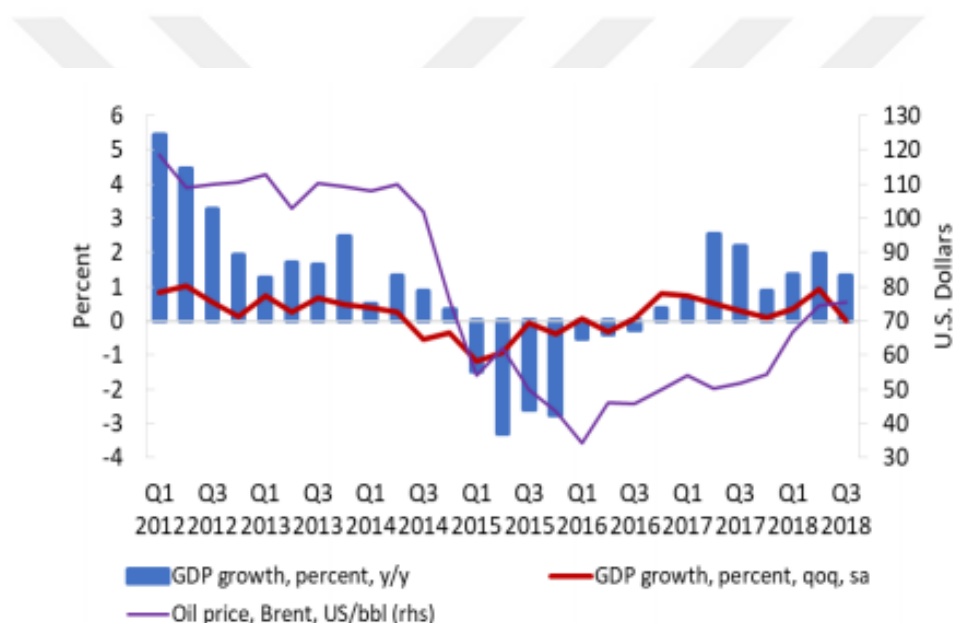


**Figure 9.** Russia's GDP, GDP growth and global oil prices

Source: Report prepared for the World Bank with reference to Rosstat by Sanghi, Emelyanova, Rostovtseva and Levitanskaya (2018).

However, like in the case of Ukraine, such fluctuations could only explain some possible changes such as the perception control over historical developments (P4) of Russian leaders in the second part of 2014-2015. However, together with improving economy and the oil prices increase in such belief-related scores would be expected while the analysis above presented a secondary fall of P4 scores for both leaders after

2017-2018. Moreover, such external shock could hardly explain differences in beliefs about Western countries in by both leaders. Thus, even if both external developments could and probably did influence political beliefs of the Russian leaders, they cannot fully explain the fluctuations found in this study.

#### **4.8. Conclusion**

This chapter studied whether economic sanctions imposed by Western countries against Russia produced any change in political beliefs of Russian state leaders and the characteristics of such changes. First, the results of operational code analysis of speeches of the Russian leaders from 2012 to 2019 were presented in two periods before and after sanctions and then in eight periods capturing different sanction episodes. The results suggested that indeed there were some significant changes in political beliefs in global and targeted operational codes of the leaders. Moreover, the results have shown that significant changes occurred in the political beliefs of Putin about the nature of global external actors, predictability of events, locus of control over historical developments. Similarly, the targeted operational code of both leaders reflected changes in P4 (locus of control over history) and P5 (the role of chance in international relations) after in the broader sanctions period. When the narrower periods were analyzed, the significant changes in P1 and P4 indicators of Putin's global operational code were found for the first period of sanctions in March-July 2014 suggesting that the most drastic changes in those philosophical beliefs occurred during that period.

Based on these observations a further effort was made to trace the mechanism of possible effects of sanctions on political beliefs of the affected leaders by referring to the main economic consequences of sanctions and the leaders' remarks about the sanctions. The related section has shown that both leaders saw this development as worthy a discussion while they also tried to diminish its importance. Moreover, a possible effect of a disappointment due to the second package of sanctions which could invoke an emotional response is presented. Lastly, the lack of further deterioration of political attitudes towards sanction senders in the later years of analysis is explained.

While suggesting a possible mechanism of the sanction effects on political beliefs of affected leaders, this chapter also discussed the possible interference of such alternative external shocks as falling oil prices, Ukrainian crisis, and economic crisis in Russia. While all these alternative explanations cannot be insulated from the total effects on the studied leaders, this manuscript shows that at least some effects of sanctions can be distinguished from other factors.

This chapter presents the first attempt to understand whether leaders within the same context and under similar circumstances are likely to exhibit similar response to the same external shocks. This work shows that Putin and Medvedev being in the same context and facing same sanctions had some similarities in the direction and significance of the changes of their political beliefs but demonstrated differences in other political beliefs. Thus, while personal qualities (such as differences in personalities or pre-existing stability of one's beliefs) could be among the factors

explaining such differences, there is a need for further study and understanding of this topic.

A broader conclusion of this analysis may suggest that imposition of sanctions is likely to influence philosophical beliefs of targeted leaders and may lead to more hostile perception of universe (Putin's global operational code, Medvedev's targeted operation code analysis supports this observation), perception of lower predictability of historical developments and higher role of chance, and lower sense of control over history.

## **CHAPTER 5. EFFECTS OF SANCTIONS ON THE POLITICAL BELIEFS OF STATE LEADERS IN IRAN**

### **5.1. Introduction**

Iran has experienced multiple episodes of sanctions imposed on the Islamic Republic since 1979 till today. During these years, the state was targeted by unilateral and multilateral, targeted and comprehensive sanctions some of which were authorized by the United Nations Security Councils while others were vetoed by some of the UNSC members. Similarly, while some episodes were explicitly tied to specific demands, others were connected to relatively broad and difficult to operationalize sets of goals. Effectiveness of the sanctions and their impacts on Iran's compliance with sanction-related demands, on the state's domestic and foreign politics, economy, and its population's welfare varied as well. Multiple studies were conducted to understand the economic, political, humanitarian, and other effects of different episodes of sanctions against Iran. Similarly, a vibrant research on different dimensions of Iranian policy-making aims to understand and predict reactions of Iran and Iranian executives towards sanctions and the related demands. While one of such areas of existing studies covers analyses of the roles and beliefs of the Iranian executives, little is known on the effect of sanctions on the political beliefs of these leaders. Thus, this chapter aims to fill this gap in the research on Iranian foreign

policy and the sanctions against Iran, by analyzing whether sanctions corresponded to some short- or long-term changes in the operational codes of the state leaders on the example of 2006-2012 episodes of sanctions.

For this end, this chapter will firstly briefly review Iranian foreign policy in the last decades and specifically after 2000s. Then it will present a snapshot of Iran's previous experience with sanctions, followed by a review of the 2008-2012 period of sanctions connected to Iran's nuclear ambitions in evolved from unilateral to multilateral to the UN imposed sanctions with different scopes, changing conditionalities and evolving impacts. In the next part, the chapter will discuss the roles and views of the two main Iranian executives in that period: the Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and the then president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. The section will present their short biographies as well as approaches to foreign policy and the sanctions. The following empirical part of the chapter presents operational code analysis of the speeches of these two leaders. This discussion will be followed by a statistical analysis (based on ANOVA test) of differences in the operational codes measured over different time periods and a discussion of similarities and differences such belief dynamics between the leaders. The chapter will be concluded by an analysis of the hypotheses developed in the Theoretical Framework and Research Design chapter of this dissertation, and a discussion on the link between the operational belief changes and broader impacts of sanctions on the targeted leaders and their populations.

### **5.1. Iranian Foreign Policy: A Brief Overview**

The current regime of the Islamic Republic of Iran was established after the revolution in 1978 and has a history of antagonistic relations with Western countries and the United States in particular. Combined with the grievances over the lack of international support during the eight-year-long Iran-Iraq war which lasted till 1988 (and US backing Iraq (Barzegar, 2010) despite the latter's reported use of chemical weapons), Iran's foreign policy still holds reflections of these protracted antagonisms. The United States' policy towards Iran was similarly antagonistic with frequent hostile statements and multiple sanctions (Takeyh & Maloney, 2011). Even if Takeyh and Maloney (2011: 1297) argue that toward the end of 1990s a more reformist government under then president Khatami could present a chance for transformation of such contentious relations towards a more cooperative relationship, according to the authors that opportunity was not exploited by the Western states. The opportunity had withered away with a more radical fundamentalist president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's coming to power in 2005 (Takeyh & Maloney, 2011).

Besides continuing antagonisms with the West, Iran is deeply involved in the regional entangled conflicts. While after the US invasion in Iraq and fall of Saddam Hussein's regime, the long-lasting rival of Iran stopped posing it a direct threat, the following rise of violence in Iraq and presence of the US troops in the region posed new concerns for Iraq. Adding to this the increasingly complicated relations with regional Arab countries, democratic uprisings in some of the regional states and conflict-turned-war in Yemen created multiple challenges and opportunities for Iran's deeper involvement in the regional politics. Adding to such challenges Shia-Sunni rivalries in Syria and Iraq, Kurdish "empowerment" in Iraq, a complicated

situation in Lebanon, presence of international terrorist groups in the region as well as Iran's relationship with Hezbollah even further add to the security concerns of Iran (Barzegar, 2010: 175-176).

Considering such history of adversarial relations and the legacy of the revolution, (Rakel, 2009: 148) argues that the first decades of the republic were driven mostly by ideology and were characterized by the wish to be free from external impacts and to "export" revolution to other countries with "oppressive and corrupt rulers." 1990s witnessed a turn towards more pragmatic politics with better relationships with regional countries, Russia and some Asian countries with even later rapprochement with some European states (Rakel, 2009: 148). Still even in 1990 under the influence of pragmatic Rafsanjani, the state's policy "remained Islamist-based, non-aligned, and pro-South" (Rakel, 2009: 174). This pragmatic shift ended with Ahmadinejad's electoral victory in 2005 which started a row of escalating antagonisms between the West and Iran over the latter's nuclear activities, leadership's rhetoric (Rakel, 2009) as well as human rights situation and anti-Iranian sanctions.

## **5.2. Sanctions against Iran**

Iran has a long history of being targeted by economic sanctions. After the change of regime in 1979 from a monarchy to a theocracy-based Islamic Republic of Iran (as analyzed under the lens of theocracy by Naghavi and Pignataro (2015)). The earliest sanctions in the form of freezing assets of the Iranian government, some firms, and individuals held in the United States or kept in the USD dollars in the US-affiliated institutions world-wide as well as trade restrictions started in the end of the same

year after fifty American diplomats were taken hostage by the republic (Carswell, 1981). While the total amount of frozen assets was about 12 billion USD with many other interactions hampered both by sanctions and uncertainties due to the regime change, that sanction episode was seen as a success case of sanctions attaining their goals of freeing hostages (Carswell, 1981)<sup>10</sup>. While the resolution of the hostage crisis was directly tied to the US-Iran deal on unfreezing the assets and the agreed sums were indeed released or repaid to lenders (Carswell, 1981), other restrictions and sanctions were prolonged or introduced against Iran for different reasons throughout the following years.

One of the significant episodes of such sanctions was introduced by Bill Clinton's government of the United States which declared the Iran Libya Sanctions Act (ILSA) allowing for secondary/transboundary sanctions targeting third-party states and companies engaging in economic relations with the sanctioned states (Layers, 2001). This act was the first instance of extra-territorial sanctions (Layers, 2001). Its restrictions threatened "litigation and exclusion" and "trade penalties" for those violating the extra-territorial provisions of those sanctions (Layers, 2001).

A new set of sanctions against Iran was introduced in 2000s when Iran's engagement with nuclear development activity raised concern of international community over the possibility of Iran's nuclear proliferation. The discussions and repeated negotiations with Iran continued throughout the early 2000s, starting with the revelation of ongoing construction of an uranium enrichment centrifuge plant in

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<sup>10</sup> Though, Carswell (1981, 247, 260) also acknowledges that besides sanctions other internal needs and priorities of the Iranian government were also likely to motivate their decision to resolve the crisis after 14 months of asset freezes as well as the fact that differently from many other states' debts of Iran to the United States were less than its assets under the US control.

Natanz, Iran disclosed in 2002 by NRCI and later confirmed by Iran's president Khatami (Albright, 2010). While from 2002 onwards international community and the International Agency for Atomic Energy tried to negotiate with Iran and convince it to stop the nuclear program, the situation drastically escalated after 2005 when a conservative president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad won Iranian elections. Ahmadinejad argued in favor of Iran's nuclear activities and had a hostile rhetoric against the United States (BBC News, 2010). In fact in a couple of months after the election Iran announced that "it has resumed uranium conversion" but argued that it was for civilian and not military purposes (BBC News, n.d.).

Despite Iran's arguments about its peaceful intentions, international community, including the UN Security Council, was suspicious of such activities as uranium enrichment is often considered a milestone in nuclear weapons programs. However, the scope of such Iranian activities was usually unclear. Even when in 2007 Iran claimed to "join the nuclear club of nations" and to start industrial production of enriched uranium, Iran's capacity was estimated much lower by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) (BBC News, 2007). Still, even Iran's being on the initial stages of proliferation-related activities alarmed the UNSC to impose sanctions to prevent Iran's ultimate proliferation. In fact, the head of IAEA reportedly said in 2007 that it was Iran's "motives, rather than its current capability" that alarmed other states (BBC News, 2007). In response to Iran's failure to comply with the initial UNSC and IAEA demands, a set of sanctions against Iran was introduced by the UNSC and other entities between 2006 and 2013.

For the period of interest, the first multilateral sanctions to be imposed by the United Nations Security Council were announced in July 2006 and “were extended and continuously tightened in the succeeding years” (Felbermayr, Syropoulos, Yalcin & Yotov, 2020: 15). In particular, the following sanctions and extensions were introduced in December of the same year, March 2007, March and September 2008, and each June between 2010 and 2014 (Felbermayr, et al., 2020: 15).

Besides more the limited in scope UN-imposed sanctions, several states including the US, the EU and some other countries imposed a series of stricter and costlier sanctions. Among such unilateral sanctions, the costliest measures were introduced by the US and the EU. The US firstly introduced a new set of sanctions in 2007 (BBC News, n.d.). However, a more profound set of restrictions was included in the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010 which widened the definitions of restricted goods and services and the persons to be sanctioned for engaging in the prohibited activities (CONGRESS.GOV, 2010). This act also defined the possibility of naming a country as the “Destination of Possible Diversion Concern” for goods targeted by the US and allowing sanctioning such third countries (CONGRESS.GOV, 2010), thus, further increasing the scope for the US extra-territorial sanctions.

In general, the series of multilateral and unilateral sanctions imposed against Iran between 2005-2010 can be divided into three periods with the main sanction episodes demonstrated on the Table 9 below. The first period starts with the first UNSC imposition of sanctions in December 2006 (Samore, 2015). While there were US sanctions imposed against Iran before this date, they mainly were just an

extension of 1992 ILSA sanctions targeting oil-related investments in Iran by US and foreign companies. Similarly, while the first ultimatum and calls for prevention of nuclear transfers to Iran were made by UNSC in July 2006, the de-facto binding for all members sanctions were imposed only in December that year. This resolution was followed up by several extension by the UNSC and was supported by unilateral US sanctions in 2007 and additional EU sanctions announced in February 2007 (Samore, 2015).

The second period of the sanction-related escalation can be noticed in June-July 2010 when all related entities: the UNSC, the EU and the US (as the largest global economy) introduced additional restrictions on Iran (Samore, 2015). Besides these states such countries as Canada also joined the row of unilateral sanctions. An example, to such third-party states' unilateral sanctions is Canada's SEMA sanction of 2010 targeting trade with Iran and some financial transactions (Government of Canada, 2020).

However, the most dramatic and the most costly for Iran period of sanctions started in the end of 2011-beginning of 2013 when the United States firstly announced an intention to target foreign banks from 2012 onwards for "to process transactions with the Central Bank of Iran" (Arms Control Association, 2020). These efforts were joined by the EU states who banned oil exports from Iran and later banned thirty Iranian banks from the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT) financial messaging system (Recknagel, 2012) which made processing of international money transfers from and to Iran enormously difficult.

**Table 9.** Major Sanctions imposed on Iran between 2005 and 2013.

| Period                           | UN sanctions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | US sanctions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | EU sanctions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>2005-November 2006</b>        | <b>Pre- UN sanction period</b><br><b>July 2006</b> – call to prevent nuclear and missile-related transfers (Samore, 2015)                                                                                                                                          | <b>September 2006</b> ILSA sanctions (from 1992, 2001, targeting oil related investments) are extended (Rakel, 2009: 172).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>December 2006-May 2010</b>    | <b>December 2006</b> – sanctions imposed with resolution 1737 (Samore, 2015)<br><br><b>March 2008</b> – UNSC resolution 1803 – broadens sanctions to prevent technology acquisition and target 13 individual and “seven entities” (Arms Control Association, 2020) | <b>October 2007</b> – first strongest US sanctions in the period (BBC News, n.d.).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <b>February 2007</b> EU adopts sanctions on nuclear transfers and assistance, some individuals and companies (Samore, 2015)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>June 2010 – November 2011</b> | <b>June 2010</b> – financial restrictions and “expanded arms embargo” (BBC News, n.d.).                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>June 2010</b> – Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010 (CONGRESS.GOV, 2010): sale of gasoline or support to Iranian gasoline sector, targets foreign financial institutions related to “WMD or terrorism” (Samore, 2015)                                                                                                                                                     | <b>July 26, 2010.</b> In addition to UNSC measures: EU imposes sanctions including “trade, financial services, energy, transport” and individual targeting. (Arms Control Association, 2020)                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>December 2011 – May 2013</b>  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <b>31 December 2011</b> – US Act for 2012 to target foreign banks “if they continue to process transactions with the Central Bank of Iran” (Arms Control Association, 2020) <sup>11</sup><br><b>February 2012</b> – “blocked all Iranian government property under US jurisdiction” (Samore, 2015: 11)<br><b>April, May, July, August, October 2012; January, July 2013</b> – additional sanctions (Samore, 2015) | <b>January 2012</b> – EU announces Iran oil ban from July (Arms Control Association, 2020)<br><b>March 2012</b> – banning “30 Iranian banks” from SWIFT system (Recknagel, 2012)<br><b>July 2012</b> – EU “boycott of Iranian oil exports” begins (BBC News, n.d.).<br><b>October 2012</b> – banned import of gas from Iran and export of “shipbuilding technology” (Samore, 2015: 9) |

<sup>11</sup> Discussions of the Act for 2012 Fiscal year started on December 1, the act was accepted on December 2013 and the Iran sanctions provisions were to enter into force after 60 days (Congress.gov, 2011: sec. 1245, 125 STAT 1647-8 ).

### **5.3. Economic, Political and Humanitarian Impacts of Sanctions against Iran**

The initial package of the UN-approved sanctions was imposed in December 2006, however, its impacts are often seen as limited. Still even the first period of sanctions, including several rounds of sanction extension by the UNSC and a number of unilateral sanctions by individual countries, imposed some costs on Iranian economy. For example, due to the extraterritorial sanctions threatening financial institutions processing dollar-based transactions with targeted goods, a number of banks stopped working or reduced their cooperation with Iranian companies after 2006 (Jacobson, 2008). Moreover, Jacobson (2008: 76-77) argues that the US sanctions contributed to the increasing inflation to 25 percent and importation costs in Iran as well as threatened sustainability of Iran's banks. Besides the direct economic costs of the US financial sanctions, Jacobson (2008: 77) states that the fact that UNSC imposed the sanctions on Iran with support of "China, Russia, and South Africa," which had a history of cooperative relationships with Iran, is likely to have an important "psychological effect" on Iran and as well as business actors.

The CISADA act of 2010, new black-listings of Iranian companies and ongoing restrictions imposed by other sanction senders further threatened Iran's shipping industry and led to new difficulties with shipments and trade. According to Esfandiary and Fitzpatrick (2011: 145), by 2011 American refinery companies stopped their business with Iran and "several large container ships" also discontinued their work in Iran which threatened not only the targeted sectors but also larger economy of the target. Finally, even if those sanctions were not sufficient to reverse

Iran's policies, they were restricting its capacity to "quickly assemble a nuclear arsenal" (Esfandiary & Fitzpatrick, 2011: 143).

The latest period of financial restrictions and oil-export bans imposed in 2011-2012 led to the most significant costs for Iran's economy. In general Felbermayr, et al. (2020: 22) argue that the 2011 and later sanctions reduced the trade between Iran and the sanction senders "by about 55 percent."

After the EU decided to ban Iran from the SWIFT system and SWIFT agreed to comply with this decision in March 2012, the most important Iranian banks were cut from international financial system. Thus, their ability to process payments for Iranian imports and exports including oil (Recknagel, 2012), which is the main source of revenue for Iran, was crippled. Several months later in October 2012 the economic effects of the strictest sanctions including the SWIFT ban and oil boycott by the EU reflected in the unprecedented fall in Iranian currency which lost "80% of its value since 2011" (BBC News, n.d.).

Bergeijk (2015: 51) argues that the reason for the especially strong economic effect of 2011-2012 sanctions on Iran is that Iran's trade was very linked with the EU and the US (accounting for 18% of Iranian trade and 3.8% of its GDP as of 2010), and "substitution possibilities" for the sanctioned products are scarce. Besides such vulnerability of Iran's economy on trade with sanction senders, Bergeijk (2015: 51) believes that both the "scale of the trade and investment sanctions" and the prohibition to use SWIFT system "were unexpected" for Iran.

Such unexpected nature of these sanctions would make it more difficult for the country to adjust to them post-factum and thus could further contribute to the gravity of resultant costs. Besides the psychological effect of the economic costs of profound sanctions, the unexpectedness of such sanctions would also be likely to create an external (psychological) shock for the decision-makers.

### *Humanitarian effects*

Besides macroeconomic impacts of sanctions, Iran witnessed reduction in available of food and medicine (Moret, 2015: 130). While sanctions did not target medicines and access to health care multiple studies show the sanctions indeed inflicted painful effects on Iranian healthcare. Availability of health services and medicines was reduced because of the rising prices, logistical and funding related difficulties, and risk-aversiveness of the companies not willing to involve in the difficult and lengthy process of providing medical drugs under sanctions (Setayesh & Mackey, 2016: 5-6). In fact, research shows that between 2009 and 2012 there was significant decrease in access to drugs necessary for people with “thalassemia and hemophilia” and that “clinical results” of such patients deteriorated (Karimi & Haghpanah, 2015: 239).

### *Political effects*

Some argue that in theocratic states like Iran sanctions are likely to even strengthen the incumbent regime which uses further emphasis on religion to compensate for economic hardships (Naghavi & Pignataro, 2015). While Naghavi and Pignataro (2015: 1-2) acknowledge that in some cases, where the situation in the targeted country is dire and revenues are significantly impacted by sanctions, the targeted regime may still move towards moderation instead of increasing own emphasis on

religious ideology, they show that in a “good state of nature” sanctions on the contrary stabilize targeted regimes. In contrast, Bergeijk (2015: 53) argues that while the regime-change effect of sanctions is difficult to evaluate, the anti-Iranian sanctions clearly did not increase the popular support for the incumbent government as would be expected by proponents of the ‘rally around the flag effect’.

## **5.4. Iranian Political Elites before and during Sanctions**

### *5.4.1. Khamenei vs. Ahmadinejad as Executive Decision Makers in Iran’s Foreign Policy*

Khamenei is seen as “the ultimate decision-maker in the Islamic Republic” responsible for all “foreign and defense policies” of the country (Khalaji, 2012). Moreover, analyses of foreign policy decision making in Iran suggest that the Supreme leader of the state has a “final say about” all domestic and foreign policies (Rakel, 2009: 149-150). In particular, Rakel (2009: 149) argues that all foreign policy related documents are passed “from foreign minister, to president, to the NSC, and finally to the supreme leader” for the final approval.

However, reports show that Ahmadinejad had a degree of independence over the nuclear policy, his choices for the main negotiators as well as his approach to nuclear negotiations which were criticized by the strict supporters of Khamenei (Khalaji, 2012). Moreover, while the Supreme leader Khamenei is seen as the reason for Ahmadinejad’s rise to presidency in 2005 and repeated win in 2009, towards the end of his second term, Ahmadinejad reportedly became the “scapegoat” for all economic hardships of the country (Khalaji, 2012) which suggests the possibility to

differentiate the policy positions of the two leaders. Malici and Buckner (2008: 784) also argue that despite the limited official role of Ahmadinejad over Iran's foreign policy, "his rhetoric and his actual and symbolic deeds" made him an important agent in the country's foreign policy.

#### *5.4.2. Ayatollah Ali Khamenei*

Ali Khamenei, born in 1939, was a son of "a humble and poor Islamic scholar" (Khamenei.IR, n.d.) with Azerbaijani origins (Kazemzadeh, 2013). After completing primary education in the local Islamic School, he later studied at a "theological seminary" in his home-city Mashhad, "at Soleiman Khan and Nawwab religious schools" and with tutorships of other religious scholars and later took lessons in Najaf, Iraq and Qum, Iran (Khamenei.IR, n.d.). Later he returned to his home-town to look after his father where he also gave religious classes to different student groups (Khamenei.IR, n.d.). His political activities started in 1962 when "he joined the ranks of the revolutionary followers of Imam Khomeini" (Khamenei.IR, n.d.). Due to his revolutionary activities against the Shah's regime and "clandestine" teachings he experienced multiple arrests and detentions, and was sentenced "to exile for three years" (Khamenei.IR, n.d.).

Just before the revolution he became a member of Islamic Revolutionary Council in Tehran, later he became a "founding member of the Islamic Republic Party", and took multiple governmental appointments (Khamenei.IR, n.d.). Khamenei "survived an assassination attempt in 1981" (Forbes, n.d.) and was twice elected as the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1982 and 1986 (Khamenei.IR, n.d.). He himself and his sons participated in the war against Iraq (Kazemzadeh, 2013).

Khamenei became the Leader of the republic after the death of Imam Khomeini (Khamenei.IR, n.d.).

Earlier attempts to analyze Khamenei's personality and foreign policy attitudes, describe him as holding fundamentalist ideology from age of thirteen (Kazemzadeh, 2013: 445). Reportedly, while having fundamentalist beliefs throughout his life, Khamenei is capable of often hiding his more "extreme views and policies" or "real objectives" (Kazemzadeh, 2013: 447-448). Moreover, he is said to be comfortable in expressing rhetoric different from his actions and able to "surprise" even his allies (Kazemzadeh, 2013: 448). His main foreign policy orientations are related to opposition to the United States and Israel and he explicitly opposes any direct negotiation between Iran and the United States instead preferring a policy of "stalling" (Kazemzadeh, 2013: 453). Finally, while his foreign policy goals are mostly ideological, some tactical pragmatism used to attain such long-term goals is seen from his ability to hide his preferences till a more suitable time (Kazemzadeh, 2013: 456).

#### *5.4.3. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad*

Ahmadinejad is known for his "rhetoric against the United States and Israel" and strong support for the local nuclear program (BBC News, 2010). Contrary to many Iran's political elites, Ahmadinejad, a "son of a blacksmith", does not have a clerical background and instead holds a doctorate degree in "traffic and transport from Tehran's University of Science and Technology" (BBC News, 2010). He started his career in academia as a lecturer at the same university. He joined the war against Iraq and afterwards started his political career being an "appointed governor" of Maku,

then the province of Ardabil (Al Jazeera, 2005). In 2003 “he was appointed mayor of Tehran” and already in 2005 he had a “landslide victory” in presidential election of the country (BBC News, 2010). Politically he was described as “populist hard-liner” supported by younger non-cleric politicians as well as conservatives (BBC News, 2010).

Attempts to provide general psychological assessments of Ahmadinejad argued that he is characterized by his “suspicion of the United States and the international community” (Takeyh, 2006: 17, 19-20). Reportedly, he was leaning for reversal of Iranian domestic and foreign policies towards more radical roots of the Islamic republic instead of more reformist/moderate stances of the preceding him politicians (Takeyh, 2006: 17, 19-20). According to Takeyh (2006: 20), Ahmadinejad argued that external coercion is not a measure bound to a specific goal such as non-proliferation but rather to a broader wish to “coerce Iran”. Reportedly he has traits of a “Distrusting/suspicious (paranoid) and Ambitious/exploitative (narcissistic)” personality supplemented by “Dominant/controlling” and “Dauntless/dissenting” characteristics and less profound “aggrieved/unpresuming and contentious/resolute” qualities (Immelman, 2009). According to such assessment, these patterns make Ahmadinejad one of the leaders who perceive themselves as “saviors” of their countries, are “not conflict averse,” and are unlikely to be affected by external influences (Immelman, 2009).

Previous analyses of operational code and traits of Ahmadinejad such as hand-coded analysis by Özdamar (2017: 15) argue that he has a “conflictual worldview” (with  $P1=-0.83$ ) and “perceives historical control as belonging with the other” ( $P4a=0.23$ )

while seeing himself as “cooperative” ( $I1=0.84$ ). Malici and Buckner (2008) using automated software ProfilerPlus to conduct similar analysis found the values for Ahmadinejad’s master believes of somewhat lower amplitudes but pointing in the same direction. Their analysis also show that Ahmadinejad perceives world as “conflictual” ( $P1=0.076$  what is statistically significantly lower than the norming mean of other leaders), sees himself as cooperative ( $I1=0.418$ ) and his control over historical developments as lower than that of others ( $P4a=0.181$ ) (Malici & Buckner, 2008: 793). While such earlier analyses shed light on the general dimensions of Ahmadinejad’s personal traits, they do not provide an analysis on the changes of his rhetoric in response to external influences.

## **5.5. Data and Analysis**

### *5.5.1. Data and Case-specific Methodological Issues*

For the operational code analysis of Khamenei’s rhetoric, 47 of his speeches or their fragments focusing on the foreign policy issues were collected from the official website of the Supreme Leader of Iran <https://english.khamenei.ir/>. The classification and separation of speeches focusing on foreign policy or other topics was done manually. All speeches collected from this website were provided in English and were the official translations of Khamenei’s speeches. In total for the analysis speeches with a total length of 56682 words were collected out of which only 34 speeches consisted of either 1500 or more verbs or included 20 or more coded verbs a – the threshold suggested by (Schafer & Walker, 2006b: 44, 51). The texts collected for the analysis included parts of Khamenei’s speeches towards

governmental officials, parts of Friday sermons, parts of speeches directed to larger portions of populations.

To analyze operational code of Ahmadinejad, his foreign policy-related speeches were collected from multiple online resources. The resultant dataset includes such speeches as interviews given to international news agencies and transcripts from the United Nations General Assembly website featuring presidential speeches during general assembly meetings. The classification and separation of speeches focusing on foreign policy or other topics was done manually. The whole list of speeches used for this analysis is given in the appendix. In total 36 speeches or their fragments focusing on the foreign policy topics and consisting of 71868 words were collected out of which 33 texts fulfilled the criteria of including at least 19 coded verbs.

The collected speeches were analyzed using the computerized software ProfilerPlus provided by the Social Science Automation Inc to estimate philosophical and instrumental beliefs of the Iranian politician. To estimate over-time changes in the master beliefs of the leader, ANOVA and two-tailed T-test analyses were conducted. To conduct the statistical analyses Stata software was used. In order to conduct the statistical tests and evaluate political beliefs of the leaders during each phase of sanctions the whole studied period from 2005 to 2013 was divided into four sub-periods including the pre-United Nations Security Council sanctions, the first period of the UNSC sanctions which also witnessed new Western restrictions, the second period of sanction extensions by Western states and the UNSC, and the last period starting at the end of December 2011 – early 2012 when the United States imposed the strictest sanctions including measures against financial companies cooperating

with Iran and resulting in the SWIFT ban of Iran. For most of the periods the number of words in studied speeches for each leader is above recommended 10000 words with the only exception of the last period for Ahmadinejad where only 7108 words were analyzed due to the limitations of available data. The spread of wordcounts of speeches used for the analysis is given in the table below.

**Table 10.** Analyzed Periods and Wordcounts of the Analyzed Data Subsets

| <b>Period</b>                                     | <b>Khamenei</b>                                | <b>Ahmadinejad</b> |
|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
|                                                   | FP-oriented speeches (at least 20 coded verbs) |                    |
| Pre-UNSC sanctions period:<br>2005- November 2006 | 11103                                          | 10344              |
| December 2006-May 2010                            | 11591                                          | 31296              |
| June 2010 – November 2011                         | 12681                                          | 21605              |
| December 2011 – May 2013                          | 14862                                          | 7108               |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                      | <b>50237</b>                                   | <b>70353</b>       |

The 2005-2013 period was marked by two main episodes of sanctions. First of them is the first UNSC sanctions where not only traditional adversaries of Iran (such as the United States) but all members of the Security Council agreed on the necessity of multilateral sanctions. This episode could be expected to lead to overall revision of the attitudes of the Iranian executives towards foreign countries. The second major episode occurred in the beginning of 2012 when the US imposed extraterritorial sanctions which targeted all financial institutions cooperating with Iran and resulted in the SWIFT ban and following significant economic hardships in the targeted country. As the economic effect of such measures was significant and arguably lead to political unrest as well, one may also expect that such episode could lead to some shifts of perceptions regarding Iran's ability to mitigate others' actions and control the events at home and abroad. Therefore, this analysis primarily focuses on the

Iranian leaders' global operational code which includes attitudes to foreign actors in general (reflecting the global participation in the UN sanctions).

#### *5.5.2. Results: Overview of Cumulative Results*

Before analyzing the narrower rounds of sanctions, an overall analysis of the global operational codes for both leaders was conducted. Then an analysis of the change over the larger periods before and after the UNSC and other sanctions which created an experience for Iran of being ostracized from the whole world where even Russia and China usually opposing such measures did not vetoed the sanction imposition.

The table below summarizes the philosophical and instrumental beliefs of both Iranian executives and demonstrates the trend in their attitudes after the UNSC imposition of sanctions in December 2006. Before discussing the trends occurring after the sanction imposition, it is necessary to highlight that in general (and similarly before the analyzed episodes of sanctions) both leaders perceived international political universe as neither friendly nor hostile (but much below the average P1 score for world leaders of 0.3<sup>12</sup>). Similarly, both leaders are somewhat pessimistic about realization of their political preferences scoring below 0. Both executives see political world as relatively uncertain (P3), locate the locus of control over history with others (P4 less than 0.5), and attribute a very high role to chance (P5 larger than 0.5 and closer to 1 for both leaders). In terms of instrumental beliefs both leaders express an inclination to somewhat cooperative strategies (I1 and I2 are higher than 0). In contrast, the leaders are different in terms of their approaches to risks. While Khamenei' rhetoric portrays him as a more risk-prone leader (I3=0,6 which is higher

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<sup>12</sup> All references to the scores of an average world leader (based on analysis of a norming group including 35 world leaders as used by Malici and Malici (2005: 401).

than the scale's middle point of 0,5), the analysis of Ahmadinejad's speeches showed him as a more risk averse person with  $I3=0,38$ ). A comparison the estimated average scores of Ahmadinejad's master beliefs are similar to those reported by Malici and Buckner (2008: 793) who found  $P1=0.076$ ,  $I1=0.418$ , and  $P4a=0.181$ . While Özdamar (2017) reported much higher scores for  $I1$  and much lower score for  $P1$  (as discussed above), such difference could be caused by manual coding used in the latter study and automated coding used in this manuscript and by Malici and Buckner (2008).

ANOVA and T-test analyses<sup>13</sup> of changes in political beliefs of the leaders for the periods before the end of 2006 and after the UN sanction imposition show that, while some fluctuation was observed in both leaders' operational codes, only several beliefs changed with a significance level of  $p<0.1$ . The overall operational codes of the leaders and the averages for the periods before and after 2006 are presented on the table below.

Khamenei's perception of the nature of international political universe ( $P1$  belief ranging from -1 to +1) changed from 0.03 to -0.1 with a  $p<0.1$  suggesting that while before the UN sanction his perception about others was already almost neutral after the sanctions it shifted towards a perception of hostile counterparts. Similarly, the Supreme leader's perception about the chances of realization of political values ( $P2$ ) decreased towards even more pessimistic perspective with  $p<0.1$ . While a change significant at  $p<0.1$  was also estimated in the executive's belief about the role of

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<sup>13</sup> At this stage every analysis compared differences between only two sets of numerical data. Therefore, while F-score of the ANOVA tests and the T-score of the T-test were expectedly different, their levels of significance were similar. Thus, only one indicator of the level of significance is shown throughout the chapter while mentioning both tests.

change in historical developments (P5) the intensity of the change is remarkably low.

Overall, the leader just continued to attribute high importance to role of chance rather than possibility to control historical developments.

**Table 11.** Operational Codes of Khamenei and Ahmadinejad: Global views, changes before and after sanctions, trends, and similarities

|                                                | Khamenei |                  |                |                 |       | Ahmadinejad |                  |                |                 |       | Comp trend |
|------------------------------------------------|----------|------------------|----------------|-----------------|-------|-------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------|-------|------------|
|                                                | Global   | Before sanctions | ANO VA /T-test | After sanctions | Trend | Global      | Before sanctions | ANO VA /T-test | After sanctions | Trend |            |
|                                                | n=34     | n=9              |                | n=25            |       | n=31        | n=5              |                | n=27            |       |            |
| <b>Word count</b>                              | 50237    | 11103            |                | 39134           |       | 70353       | 10344            |                | 60009           |       |            |
| <b>P1 Nature of Political Universe</b>         | -0,06    | 0,03             | °              | -0,10           | ↓     | 0,06        | 0,03             |                | 0,06            | ↑     |            |
| <b>P2 Realization of political values</b>      | -0,11    | -0,03            | °              | -0,14           | ↓     | -0,08       | -0,10            |                | -0,07           | ↑     |            |
| <b>P3 Political future (predictability)</b>    | 0,12     | 0,09             |                | 0,13            | ↑     | 0,13        | 0,11             |                | 0,13            | ↑     | =          |
| <b>P4 Historical control</b>                   | 0,07     | 0,06             |                | 0,08            | ↑     | 0,16        | 0,16             |                | 0,16            | ↔     |            |
| <b>P5 Role of chance</b>                       | 0,99     | 0,995            | °              | 0,991           | ↔     | 0,98        | 0,98             |                | 0,98            | ↔     | =          |
| <b>I1 Strategy (conf/coop)</b>                 | 0,26     | 0,44             |                | 0,20            | ↓     | 0,48        | 0,69             |                | 0,44            | ↓     | =          |
| <b>I2 Intensity of tactics (conf/coop)</b>     | 0,12     | 0,27             |                | 0,06            | ↓     | 0,20        | 0,26             |                | 0,19            | ↓     | =          |
| <b>I3 Tactics predictability (risk taking)</b> | 0,60     | 0,73             |                | 0,55            | ↓     | 0,38        | 0,42             |                | 0,37            | ↓     | =          |
| <b>I4 Tactic flexibility</b>                   |          |                  |                |                 |       |             |                  |                |                 |       |            |
| <b>I4a conf/coop</b>                           | 0,36     | 0,26             |                | 0,40            | ↑     | 0,45        | 0,31             |                | 0,48            | ↑     | =          |
| <b>I4b word/deed</b>                           | 0,23     | 0,26             |                | 0,22            | ↓     | 0,38        | 0,46             |                | 0,37            | ↓     | =          |
| <b>I5 Utility of</b>                           |          |                  |                |                 |       |             |                  |                |                 |       |            |
| <b>I5 Appeal</b>                               | 0,44     | 0,48             |                | 0,42            | ↓     | 0,55        | 0,66             |                | 0,53            | ↓     | =          |
| <b>I5 Promise</b>                              | 0,05     | 0,11             |                | 0,02            | ↓     | 0,06        | 0,07             |                | 0,05            | ↓     | =          |
| <b>I5 Reward</b>                               | 0,15     | 0,13             |                | 0,16            | ↑     | 0,13        | 0,12             |                | 0,14            | ↑     | =          |
| <b>I5 Oppose</b>                               | 0,21     | 0,28             |                | 0,18            | ↓     | 0,14        | 0,05             | °              | 0,16            | ↑     |            |
| <b>I5 Threaten</b>                             | 0,07     | 0                |                | 0,10            | ↑     | 0,03        | 0,00             |                | 0,03            | ↑     | =          |
| <b>I5 Punish</b>                               | 0,09     | 0                |                | 0,12            | ↑     | 0,09        | 0,11             |                | 0,09            | ↓     |            |

Levels of significance for two tailed T-test and ANOVA tests: °  $p \leq 0,1$ , \*  $p \leq 0,05$ , \*\*  $p \leq 0,01$ , \*\*\*  $p \leq 0,001$ . Trend comparison: = indicates that changes in beliefs of both leaders occurred in the same direction.

Analysis of Ahmadinejad's operational code has demonstrated lack of statistically significant changes in most of his philosophical and instrumental beliefs. While some fluctuation was observed, only the use of 'opposing' as a tactics to deal with international others increased with a significance level of  $p < 0.1$ . In general, however, Ahmadinejad's beliefs remained within the same characteristics of a leader perceiving himself as having little control over history, perceiving others as neither friendly nor unfriendly (with little inclination towards a more friendly outlook), and portraying himself as preferring rather cooperative and risk aversive strategies when dealing with others. Such results are surprisingly different from Khamenei's more risk prone and less cooperative instrumental beliefs.

While the difference may reflect only personal differences in the leaders' attitudes, it can also relate to some contextual factors of the period. The difference may be related to the fact that a large part of the analyzed speeches by Ahmadinejad was taken from his statements given in the United Nations General Assembly meetings or in interviews to Western newspapers so that the rhetoric could be aimed to be more moderate. In contrast, the more domestic audience of Khamenei's statements could motivate more proactive and less restrained rhetoric. Alternatively, such difference can be related to the reported difference in the significance of the executives' roles where most observers attribute Khamenei much broader power over domestic and foreign policy what could translate into more explicit rhetoric than that of Ahmadinejad. The fact that the changes of political beliefs significant at  $p < 0.1$  level of significance were observed in Khamenei's operational code may also relate to different issues. For example, it may suggest Khamenei's higher propensity to learning/adjusting own views, may reflect the discussed above arguments about his

more pragmatic and flexible stance, or less constraints posed by his position and allowing for changes in his rhetoric. Finally, while most belief fluctuations were not statistically significant even at  $p < 0.1$ , in eleven out of sixteen political beliefs the observed insignificant changes for both leaders aimed at the same direction.

### *5.5.3. Changes of Khamenei's Master Beliefs by Periods*

Looking into the narrower stages of sanctions, several ANOVA tests were conducted to estimate changes in the master beliefs of the sanctioned leaders over this period. In contrast to the significant change captured in pre-/post-sanction analysis in the philosophical belief of Khamenei about the nature of political universe, the changes in this belief estimated over shorter periods did not reflect statistically significant change but were moving in the same direction. While the standard deviation was very high in the post-2006 period and from 2012 onwards, in the third period of June 2010-November 2011 the estimated P1 was the lowest and its standard deviation was lower than in other periods. Thus, there was a statistically significant difference ( $p < 0.05$ ) between the pre-UN sanctions period and the third period of sanctions characterized by further prolongations of preexisting sanctions. The lack of statistically significant changes in the consequence periods in contrast to significant overall change may suggest the graduality of related change in beliefs.

Moreover, the high standard deviation in the periods with highest pressure from external actors (such as UN sanctions imposed at the end of 2006 or the SWIFT ban in 2012) may reflect a crisis with a sort of search for the most optimal policies ranging from more confrontational to more conciliatory stances. At the same time as in the third period there were rather limited restrictions which did not cause too much

pain to the Iranian economy, that period could also lead to a sense of successful resistance to external pressures which would also be compatible with more hostile views of outside actors and higher sense of control over historical developments. Indeed, the analysis shows what Khamenei's sense of historical control significantly increased in the third period and decreased to earlier levels after the imposition of US extraterritorial sanctions and following international financial restrictions and economic crisis in Iran. Finally, Khamenei's strategic approach did not change with statistical significance though there was an important fluctuation in his rhetoric with a stronger emphasis on cooperation in pre-sanctions periods and period 3.

**Table 12.** Khamenei's Operational Code by Period

| <b>Periods</b>                                       | <b>P1 Nature of the political universe</b> | <b>I1 Strategies (conf.-coop.)</b> | <b>P4 Historical control</b> |
|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Pre-UNSC sanctions period: 2005-November 2006</b> | 0,03                                       | 0,44                               | 0,06                         |
| <b>December 2006-May 2010</b>                        | -0,07                                      | 0,11                               | 0,05                         |
| <b>June 2010 – November 2011</b>                     | -0,11                                      | 0,39                               | 0,12*                        |
| <b>December 2011 – May 2013</b>                      | -0,09                                      | 0,08                               | 0,06°                        |

Levels of significance for ANOVA tests between each pair of consequent years: °  $p \leq 0,1$ , \*  $p \leq 0,05$ , \*\*  $p \leq 0,01$ , \*\*\*  $p \leq 0,001$ .

Another way to analyze changes in Khamenei's master belief is to compare them to average scores of world leaders, average scores of major powers' leaders and means for the rogues state leaders based on scores provided by Dyson and Parent (2018: 89) and Malici and Malici (2005). The figure below represents a visualization comparing the average scores for different types of world leaders and the scores estimated for Khamenei. The figure demonstrates that his perception of the external political actors was more hostile than that of any of the mentioned groups during all the periods.

Moreover, after the initial UN-sanction imposition his political belief about the political universe suggested that he perceived it more hostile than friendly, and this trend remained throughout the years.

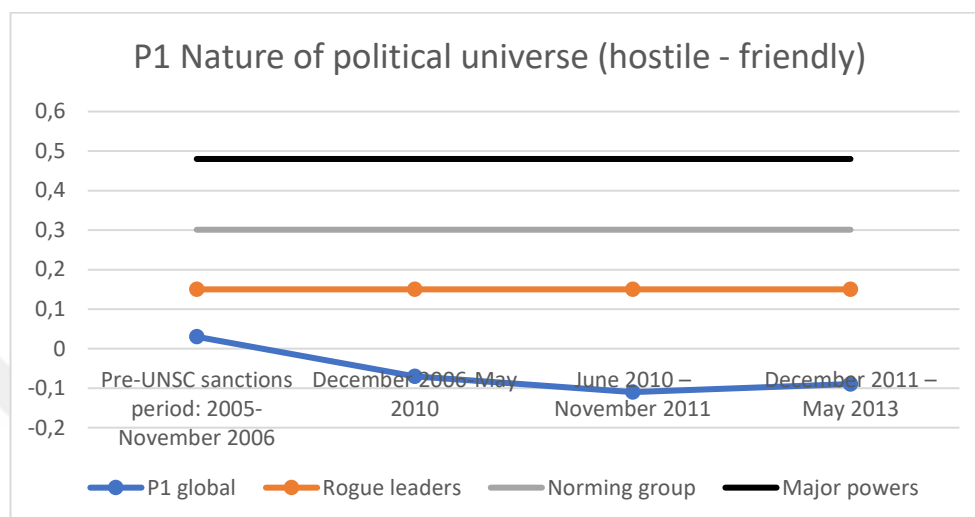


**Figure 10.** Khamenei: Nature of Political Universe

Looking into the results of Khamenei's instrumental belief about the strategies necessary to use towards other actors, one can see that his rhetoric reflected a less cooperative orientation than that of major power leaders. Moreover, initially his approach was a bit more cooperative than that of the norming group and the average rogue leaders with decreasing cooperativeness in the period 2 and period 4 when the strongest external pressure was inflicted upon Iran. While on average Khamenei's strategic approach (overall I1 being 0,26) was also less cooperative than that of all group averages, it remained more cooperative than conflictual over all studied periods of sanctions.

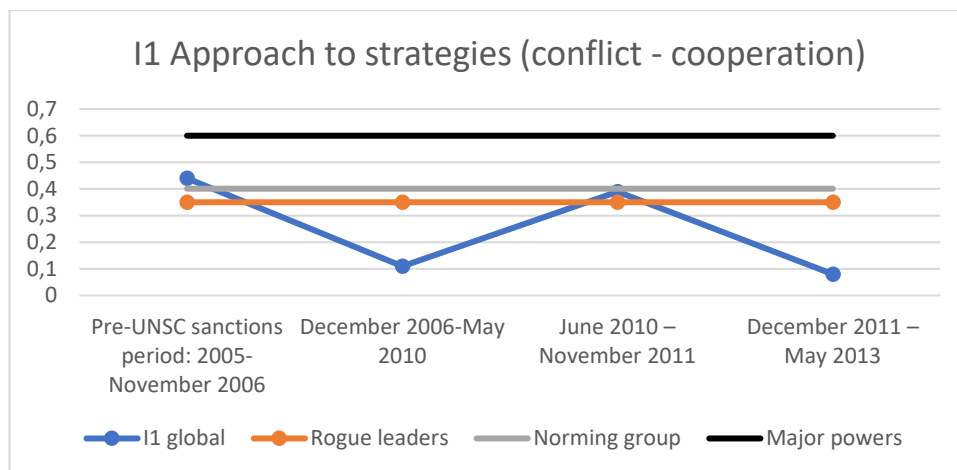


**Figure 11.** Khamenei: Approach to Strategies

Finally, Khamenei's master belief about the locus of control over historical developments (P4) was continuously below the averages for all compared groups including average rogue leaders. While there were statistically significant changes discussed above, his main perception about the predominant influence of political 'others' over history remained stable throughout the studied periods being not only lower than 0,5 (a threshold to distinguish between control possessed by others (less than 0,5) or self (higher than 0,5) but also lower than 0,25 – a median for the belief spectrum about others' control over history and 0,15 – an average for rogue leaders.

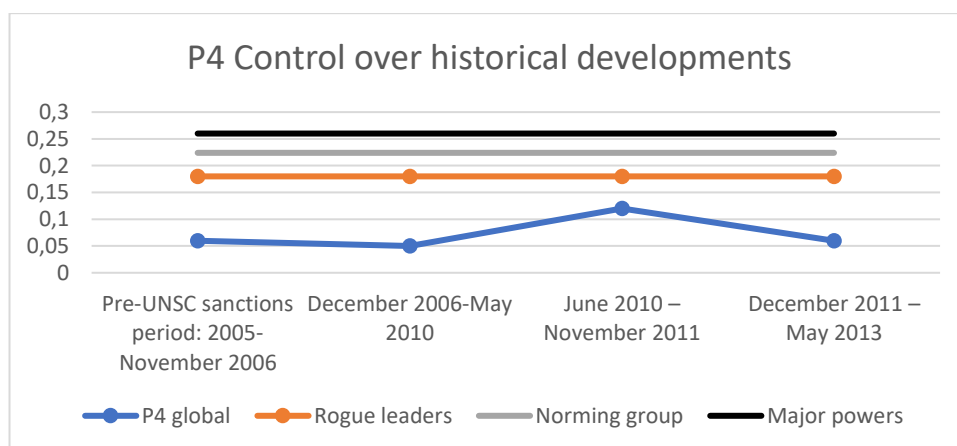


**Figure 12.** Khamenei: Historical Control

#### 5.5.4. Changes of Ahmadinejad's Master Beliefs by Periods

Average scores of Ahmadinejad's political beliefs for each of the studied periods show his master beliefs fluctuated over time. While the first period before sanctions was marked by a relatively more cooperative stance, after the UN-sanctions were imposed his strategic approach became less cooperative but the change was not statistically significant due to high variance of the scores across different speeches made within the same periods of sanctions. Among all beliefs only Ahmadinejad's perception of the nature of universe demonstrated a statistically significant change between consequent 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> periods and across all for periods (the ANOVA tests had significance levels at  $p < 0.01$  and  $0.05$  respectively).

**Table 13.** Ahmadinejad's Operational Code by Period

| <b>Periods</b>                                       | <b>P1 Nature of the political universe</b> | <b>I1 Strategies (conf.-coop.)</b> | <b>P4 Historical control</b> |
|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Pre-UNSC sanctions period: 2005-November 2006</b> | 0,03                                       | 0,69                               | 0,16                         |
| <b>December 2006-May 2010</b>                        | 0,04                                       | 0,35                               | 0,17                         |
| <b>June 2010 – November 2011</b>                     | -0,004                                     | 0,51                               | 0,15                         |
| <b>December 2011 – May 2013</b>                      | <b>0,39**</b>                              | 0,6                                | 0,10                         |

Levels of significance for ANOVA tests between each pair of consequent years: °  $p \leq 0,1$ , \*  $p \leq 0,05$ , \*\*  $p \leq 0,01$ , \*\*\*  $p \leq 0,001$ .

Somewhat surprisingly, in the last period after the most painful for Iran sanctions imposed by the US and the EU in the end of 2011 – 2012, operational code of Ahmadinejad demonstrated some rise in his rhetoric about the universe. While the P1 score for that period is 0,39 what is much higher than if previous periods, the high variation in scores for that period and the small number of speeches available for those years could explain such outlier value in the last period. A change in

Ahmadinejad's perception about the friendliness of external actors towards a more friendly image may look counterintuitive in the period of the strongest economic restrictions imposed by the US secondary sanctions and compliance with them by other states. In contrast, such change may also be based on a more conciliatory rhetoric of Ahmadinejad who would not participate in the following elections but could wish to decrease international pressures by a more reconciliatory rhetoric at international forums such as the UN General Assembly and international news outlets. Finally, a relative scarcity of data for that period could lead to a distorted result as the standard deviation for the score was also unusually high (0.34 comparing to the average score of 0.39).

A comparison of Ahmadinejad's views with the master beliefs of world average leaders, leaders of rogue states and major powers leaders is visualized on the following figures. He perceived the nature of political others as less friendly than the comparison groups for the initial three periods with the only exception of the last period discussed above.

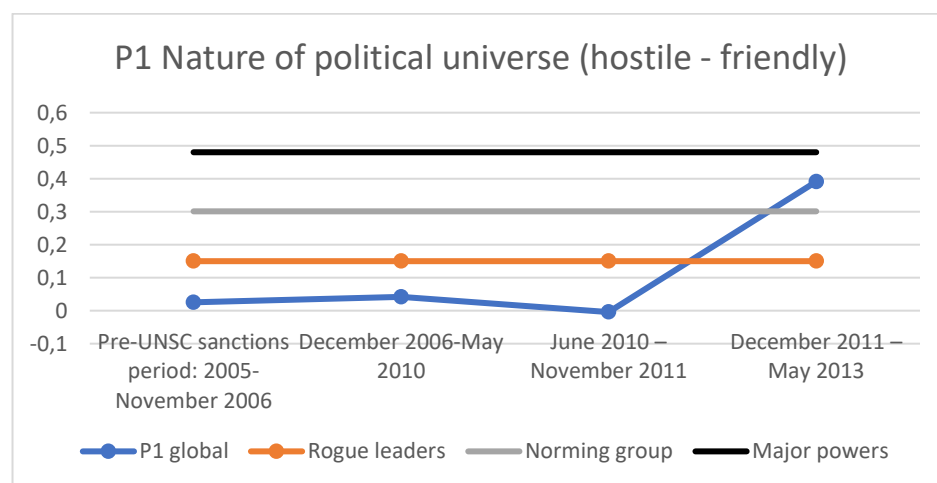


**Figure 13.** Ahmadinejad: Nature of Political Universe

Ahmadinejad's instrumental belief about the most optimal strategies which should be used dealing with others (conflict or cooperation) also demonstrates fluctuation in terms of being more cooperative than all compared groups before the UN sanctions. In contrast, just after the sanction imposition by the UN, Ahmadinejad's strategic approach became less cooperative coming closer to that of rogue state leaders but later bounced back to a more cooperative stance than an average world leader.



**Figure 14.** Ahmadinejad: Approaches to Strategies

In contrast to Ahmadinejad's master beliefs discussed above, his sense of historical control not only reflected little fluctuation but also remained below the average values for all compared groups including the rogue leaders. The figure shows that while he perceived that he was rather strongly convinced that political "others" control historical developments and this conviction even further strengthened after the continuous sanctions.

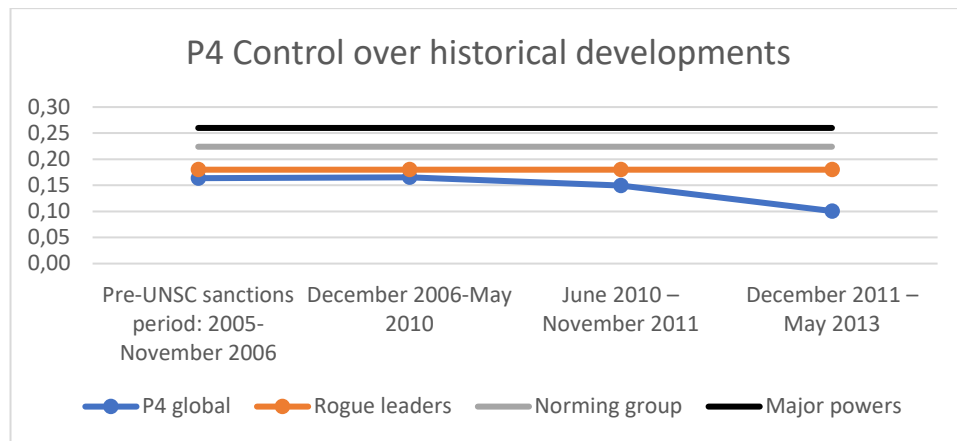


**Figure 15.** Ahmadinejad: Historical control

#### 5.5.5. Evaluation of Hypotheses

The main hypothesis of this study expects that economic sanctions inflict a change in political beliefs of the targeted state leaders. To evaluate this hypothesis it is necessary to calculate whether there was a change in beliefs in the average political beliefs of the leaders before and after sanctions and whether the estimated changes are statistically significant. As the period of Iran's history studied in this chapter was marked by a sequence of multilateral and unilateral sanctions, this study compares the average values broader before and after sanctions periods as well as the values for 4 narrower periods divided by the main turning points in the sanctioning of Iran as described above.

The Chapter 3 of this dissertation presented six hypotheses about the possible effects of sanctions on political beliefs of the targeted states' leaders. This section evaluates these hypotheses in relation to the operational codes of Khamenei and Ahmadinejad.

**H1: Sanctions are likely to correspond to a change of political beliefs of the targeted states' leaders.**

The analysis presented above has demonstrated that even if many sanction senders were already perceived by targets as enemies, sanction imposition corresponded to several belief changes. For example, four of Khamenei's political beliefs changed with a significance level of 0.1 when larger periods before and after UNSC sanctions were analyzed. Similarly, analyses of shorted periods of sanctions have demonstrated a statistically significant change of Khamenei's sense of control over historical developments towards perceiving even less control than initially (given his overall perception that 'others' have more control over history).

**H2: If a belief change occurs in response to sanctions, belief reversal is less likely than belief reduction, reinforcement, or rigidity.**

If reversal is defined as a change of direction of a belief (for example, from perceiving friendly to hostile perception), Khamenei's change of P1 score would constitute a reversal. However, considering that his attitudes were already close to 0 (very low intensity of friendliness perception), and just further reduced to a score of below 0, naming such change a reversal can be seen as overstretching of the concept. Thus, a more robust definition of the term or categorization of the belief spectrum may be necessary to differentiate between belief reversal and reductions and to evaluate this hypothesis based on existing data.

**H3: Sanctions are likely to increase perception of hostility of the external world**

Analysis of Khamenei's operational code supports this hypothesis. However, analysis of Ahmadinejad's operational code by period shows that in the last period his rhetoric reflected significantly higher friendliness of external world which suggests that in specific situations (due to sharp change of a leader's approach to foreign policy or due to specific tactical considerations of the executive) the opposite trend may be observed.

**H4: Change in philosophical beliefs is more likely to occur than change in instrumental beliefs**

The analysis provides support for this hypothesis. While fluctuations were observed in all beliefs, statistically significant changes were estimated mostly in philosophical beliefs of the Iranian leaders. P1, P2, P5 in the global operational code of Khamenei changed with the significance level of  $p < 0.1$  within broader sanction/post-sanction analysis. Moreover, significant changes were found in P4 for the last periods of operational code of Khamenei and P1 in the last studied period in the operational code of Ahmadinejad.

**H5: Significant change of at least one master belief is likely to coincide with changes of other philosophical or instrumental beliefs.**

This analysis has demonstrated that master beliefs do not change simultaneously. It has also shown that while some non-master beliefs change simultaneously with the master beliefs, other may remain stable. That demonstrates that the indices of the beliefs and the beliefs themselves are not fully interdependent and, thus, supports the importance of analyzing non-master beliefs besides the master beliefs.

#### **H6: Direction of belief change of different targeted leaders is likely to be similar in similar contexts**

The analysis above has shown that eleven out of sixteen operational code indicators on global level changed in the same direction for both leaders over the broader before-after sanctions periods, though the changes were not statistically significant. However, when shorter periods of sanctions were studied, the analysis has shown that master beliefs fluctuated not necessarily in the same direction with the leaders demonstrating opposing changes of their political beliefs about the nature of universe (P1) in the last period of analysis. In addition, correlation analysis of the average master beliefs of the Iranian leaders for the four periods show no or negative correlation in the fluctuations in their P1 and P4 beliefs. In contrast, a correlation analysis of their strategic approach (I1) resulted with a correlation coefficient of 0.49, though such correlation was not statistically significant.

#### *5.5.6. Understanding Change and Lack of It in Operational Codes of Iranian Executives*

Interpreting the changes (and lack of them) in the political beliefs of Iran's executives it is necessary to revise their overall foreign policy approaches. Following an ideological foreign policy often based on the confrontation with the West and the United States in particular, both leaders even before the sanctions would be expected to see a lot of foreign 'others' as unfriendly and controlling historical events. As was

discussed in the profiles of Khamenei and Ahmadinejad such beliefs indeed formed an important part of their foreign policy making and discourse.

While the UN sanctions could be expected to create a change in the leaders' beliefs of other states, Khamenei's description of different countries complying with the sanctions shed a light on his view on this matter. On May 21, 2013 after the effects of the strictest US sanctions and compliance of other states with the sanctions were felt by Iranian state, Khamenei characterized the US as the "center of enmity" towards Iran (Khamenei.IR, 2013). He also defined "other enemies" (less important than "the first row of" Iran's "enemies") to include the "Zionist regime," and underlined a relatively newly "hostile" government of France which according to him acted in a hostile manner under the then-president Sarkozy (Khamenei.IR, 2013). However, regarding most other states Khamenei argued that "the global community is not at all determined to oppose Iran" (Khamenei.IR, 2013).

The latter statement suggests that despite the sanctions imposed by all UNSC members in 2006 and extended since, and despite the most countries which mostly complied with unilaterally imposed by the US restrictions imposing secondary sanctions on those cooperating with Iran, Khamenei did not at least explicitly blame all states but focused mostly on the traditional adversaries of Iran. Moreover, discussing the UNSC members in general, Khamenei argued that they are not unanimous in their views and many states are "reluctant" to sign the West-backed resolutions but are "just forced to do what they do" (Khamenei.IR, 2010b).

He similarly argued in 2010 that even in “the opposing camp” of Iran, which had the US and Israel as “the main axes” of such group of states, “the rest either follow their lead or are too weak to do anything to oppose them” (Khamenei.IR, 2010a). Thus, while especially in 2013 Khamenei acknowledged both sanctions and their impacts, he continued to define as enemies the same states as before just adding to them some “hostile” government but not all international community. Such observation may explain the relatively limited change in Khamenei’s philosophical beliefs about the nature of universe (P1) both in terms of significance and intensity (from slightly friendly to slightly hostile with  $p < 0.1$ ). These statements suggest that only the Western states and the US, in particular, was seen as the main reasons behind UNSC resolutions, sanctions, and consequent economic hardships. Such perception of sanctions would support preexisting beliefs of both executives about the enmity of those states and, thus, the US sanctions would further reinforce preexisting beliefs leading to either lack of significant changes or further strengthening of the executives’ belief in others’ control over history.

Alternative explanations and factors which could have influenced political beliefs of Iranian executives could include the contested re-election of Ahmadinejad in 2009 and protests against the regime and economic hardships. Similarly, additional pressure could have been inflicted by the Arab spring phenomenon in the Middle East and North Africa started in 2010-2011 and resulting in force regime or governmental changes and civil conflicts across the region. While these events could be theorized as creating additional insecurities for the leaders of Iran, the analysis of Ahmadinejad shows that in these periods there was no statistically significant consistent change of his operational code as compared to the preceding period. In

contrast the changes in the philosophical beliefs of Khamenei found over broader periods before and after 2006 (and supported by the review of shorter periods of sanctions), suggest that even if these alternative pressures influenced his perception of ‘others’ towards a less friendly view and of further control by ‘others’ over history, they would constitute only a part of such trend as it started from 2006 onwards. Moreover, political protests in Iran can hardly be seen as separate from sanctions because the economic restrictions and especially those following spring 2012 imposed a significant hardship on the country and in part caused the protests. Therefore, the political unrest can be seen as just another effect of sanctions which further contributed to shifts in the executive’s beliefs.

## **5.6. Conclusion**

The period of Ahmadinejad’s presidency was marked by an escalation in Iran’s relations with the Western states and even whole UN Security Council which led to a series of proliferation and human-rights related sanctions imposed on Iran unilaterally and multilaterally. The analysis of the operational codes of the two Iranian executives of the period demonstrates that while political beliefs of Ahmadinejad and Khamenei were in general volatile, only several beliefs of Khamenei changed with a significance level of  $p < 0.1$  when periods before and after UN-sanctions were compared. In particular, he started to see political others as more hostile than previously, became less optimistic about realization of political values while his attribution of importance to chance decrease but by a very small margin. Moreover, his beliefs about the locus of historical control even further shifted towards the estimation of very low control by the ‘self’ and high control exercised by ‘others’.

In contrast, Ahmadinejad's main political beliefs did not significantly change over the broader pre- and post-UN sanctions periods. While a significant shift was noticed in the last period of sanctions in his view of the nature of political universe, it was not clear if the shift was a result of tactical change in rhetoric, specifics of the data, or indeed a change of beliefs towards being more optimistic about "others". Finally, considering the separation of political "others" by Iranian regime into the "opposing camp" and other states, it is possible that Ahmadinejad's increasingly friendly depiction of others could also relate to his emphasis on other states in international speeches.

## **CHAPTER 6: EFFECTS OF ECONOMIC SANCTIONS AGAINST SYRIA**

### **6.1. Introduction**

Bashar Al-Assad's becoming Syria's president in 2000 led to hopes of reforms and transformations in the country (Zisser, 2005: 115). His own rhetoric of economic liberalization initially suggested integration to global and especially Western markets and, thus, West-oriented policies (Hinnebusch, 2009). However, the following years have demonstrated rather uneasy relationships of Syria with Western and other countries. While there were some attempts of revival of such relationships in late 2000s, they once again ended with the Arab Spring protests in the country and consequent civil war in Syria. While there were multiple external and domestic challenges which could affect political beliefs of the president of Syria, economic sanctions firstly imposed by the US in 2004 and the later sanctions initiated by multiple others states and expanded by the US in 2011-2013 to include much broader measures put an undeniable pressure on Syria's economics and relationships with other states. Thus, despite the initial attempts to improve relations with Western states and to create multiple alliances, both sanctions episodes and the challenges brought by the sanctions could also contribute to the shaping and changing of political beliefs of Syria's executive. Understanding of such impacts can contribute

to understanding of the strategies the president used to deal with external actors and is more likely to employ in future.

This chapter will analyze the effect of economic sanctions on the Syria's President Bashar Al-Assad's operational code focusing on the period from 2000 to 2015. The period allows capturing several pre-sanction years when Al-Assad just became a president, the episode of imposition of the initial unilateral sanctions by the United States, several years of stable or improving international position of Syria and the rapid escalation after 2011 when, in reaction to rising violence in Syria, multiple states had imposed sanctions on the regime. This chapter firstly briefly reviews the general dimensions of Syria's foreign policy right before 2000 and after Bashar Al-Assad came to power. Then it summarizes the main stages of economic sanctions imposed on the state and discusses the economic, political, and other consequences inflicted by the sanctions. The chapter continues to present Bashar Al-Assad's general preferences and involvement in foreign policy and his brief biographic profile based on earlier studies. Finally, the chapter presents the data collected for this study and its analysis focusing on how Al-Assad's beliefs changed (or did not change) in response to the external economic sanctions imposed on Syria in different time-periods.

## **6.2. Syria's Foreign Policy: An Overview**

Syria, which became fully independent from 1946, was under the rule of the Baath Party leader President Hafez Al-Assad from 1970 to 2000 (Zisser, 2005: 116). While under the presidency of Hafez Al-Assad Syria had engaged in war against Israel and

in the Lebanese intra-state conflict, in general, he pursued a pragmatic foreign policy for Syria. He increased Syria's bargaining power by strengthening its military power but kept a deterrence-based rivalry with Israel (including the dispute over the occupied Golan Heights and proxy-wars in Lebanon) (Hinnebusch, 2009: 9). At the same time he maintained multiple alliances with regional states and successfully balancing between the USSR and the US during the Cold War (Hinnebusch, 2009: 9).

Hafez Al-Assad's son, Bashar Al-Assad, became the Syrian President in 2000 upon the death of his father. He reportedly introduced a more "conciliatory" rhetoric and initially favored "dialogue to confrontation" (Hinnebusch, 2009: 10). His background was different from his father's and initially created wide expectations of broad transformations (Zisser, 2005: 115). He also inherited all of the old ministers and other policy makers around him from his father's team and even if reportedly he replaced them by 2005 (Hinnebusch, 2009: 12-13). However, observers argue that his reform initiatives "failed" both domestically and internationally (Zisser, 2005: 116). While he planned to continue liberalization reforms of Syrian economy, the country needed more cooperation with West and Arab states to attract investments and integrate into the global trade networks (Hinnebusch, 2009). However, following the failed peace negotiations with Israel in 2000s lead to closer cooperation with Iraq. Such cooperation resulted in Syria's alleged evasion of anti-Iraq sanctions and subsequent condemnation of the US invasion of Iraq which, coupled with Syria's continuing presence in Lebanon, further escalated Syrian-US relations and led to US sanctions against Syria imposed in 2004 (The White House, 2004). Multiple disagreements between Syria and the US over the US policies in the Middle East

resulted in arguments that its policies were “diametrically opposed to U.S. interests” (Thomas, 2013: 32). The escalation was followed by worsening of relations with the US, and later Europe and Saudi Arabia (Hinnebusch, 2009: 12). Even shifting relations to China, Russia, and other countries did not compensate fully for the need for Western markets (Hinnebusch, 2009: 12).

In 2005 when the death of Lebanese Prime-Minister Hariri was blamed on Syria, the relations with regional powers such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt and the West reached their lowest levels (Hinnebusch, 2009). However, a reset started in 2008 with changing governments in the US and France and Western “a realization that the policy of isolating it was counterproductive” (Hinnebusch, 2009: 24). Similarly a rapprochement between Turkey and Syria started in mid 2000s and resulted in the 2007 Free Trade Agreement between the countries and rise in their trade (Seeberg, 2015). While share of Syrian trade with the EU was declining throughout 2000s, Syria also initiated economic relations with “Ukraine, Russia, Iran and China” (Seeberg, 2015: 22).

After the Arab Spring protests of 2011 and the following civil war in Syria, the regime found itself very isolated regionally and internationally with rare support of such countries as Iran or Russia (Seeberg, 2015). Especially the EU policies (including sanctions) towards Syria are reported to significantly change in contrast to pre-2011 relations (Boogaerts, Portela & Drieskens, 2016). Similarly, Syrian relations with Turkey switched from successful rapprochement of 2007-2010 towards explicit confrontation.

### **6.3. Sanctions against Syria**

Syria has a long experience with economic sanctions which started in 1979 with the US sanctions related imposed after Syria was defined by the US as a “State Sponsor of Terrorism” (U.S. Department of State, n.d.). The country was also under European sanctions in 1986-1994 years though the measures were relatively limited and almost did not target trade (Boogaerts, et al., 2016: 217). After a decade without new sanctions, 2000s witnessed an escalation of relations between Syria and the West. After the start of the presidency of Bashar al-Assad, two different episodes of sanctions can be differentiated. In 2004 the US imposed a new round of sanctions against Syria. In 2011 after the anti-governmental protests started on the wave of Arab Spring in February 2011 and, ignited by initial governmental crackdowns on early protests, turned later into the armed clashes between governmental forces and the protesters (Seeberg, 2015). The opposition group and the anti-Assad protest movement found support in the West and the US and multiple other states<sup>14</sup> imposed several rounds of comprehensive and costly for Syria sanctions.

#### *6.3.1. Targeted sanctions in 2004*

The US continued its sanctions against Syria since 1979. A new series of restrictions was initiated by the US President George W. Bush in 2004 following a related Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Act signed in December 2003 (Nguyen, 2004). The sanctions were imposed “in response to its [Syria’s] occupation of neighboring Lebanon” and alleged support to terrorism and “pursuing clandestine chemical and biological weapons programs” (Nguyen, 2004). The main areas concerning the US were also its grievances with Syria’s providing “safe havens to”

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<sup>14</sup> The main sanctioning states after 2011 included the US, “the EU, the Arab League, Turkey, Switzerland, Canada, Australia, Norway and Japan” (Moret, 2015: 128).

groups related to terror against Israel, Syria's continuing military presence in Lebanon, concerns about its weapons of mass destruction (WMD including chemical weapons such as sarin gas), and a history of such problematic for the US relations with Iraq such a supporting Saddam Hussein, "violation" of the United Nations sanctions against Iraq and so on (The White House, 2004). The sanctions entering into force on May 11, 2004 banned US sales of weapons to Syria, US exports to Syria in general with the exception of "food and medicine," freeze some individuals' assets in the US, and finally ban on Syrian governmental "aircraft" to fly to the US (The White House, 2004).

While the sanctions of 2004 were rather broad not all of them would have large consequences. For example, the ban on aircraft would mean little as no Syrian flights to the US were active at the time (Nguyen, 2004). Moreover, while the trade ban was going to hurt Syria's economy, the larger part of its trade (about 60%) was with the European Union (EU) (Nguyen, 2004).

### *6.3.2. Sanctions after the Arab Spring Protests*

From 2011 onwards the US extended its sanctions imposing comprehensive restrictions on the US citizen's investments and trade with Syria. The new restrictions acting as a reaction "to the Syrian regime's exercise of violence and repression in the region" included such measures as freezing "the property of the Government of Syria" and opening space for additional individual sanctions (U.S. Department of State, n.d.). It also "prohibits new investments in Syria by U.S. persons, prohibits the exportation or sale of services to Syria by U.S. persons, prohibits the importation of petroleum or petroleum products of Syrian origin, and prohibits U.S.

persons from involvement in transactions involving Syrian petroleum or petroleum products” (U.S. Department of State, n.d.). The US sanctions against Syria also targeted those who violates the sanctions-related executive orders and threatened a civil fine of up to 250 thousand USD and criminal penalties of up to one million USD and/or up to 20 years in prison (Office of Foreign Assets Control, 2013).

Besides the US, several other states joined the multilateral and unilateral sanctioning efforts. The European Union (EU) initiated its sanctions against Syria in May 2011 putting pressure on the Al-Assad’s regime (Seeberg, 2015) and condemning human rights violations against anti-regime protests.

On the April 1, 2012, The Friends of the Syrian People International Working Group on Sanctions (IWGS) was established to coordinate international efforts regarding the escalating situation in Syria. Towards 2013 the group included 42 states (such as the US, Canada), the European External Action Service, the League of Arab States etc. (U.S. Department of State, n.d.). The group held periodical meetings which were issuing communiques proposing sanctions and their amendments, calling for other countries and non-state entities to impose anti-Syria sanctions, and condemning violence in that state (IWGS, 2013). In its June 2013 communique the group called all states not to sell arms and not to buy phosphates from Syria and argued that by reducing the country’s export revenues, “freezing the assets of those involved in or supporting the repression of the Syrian people,” and preventing arms supplies to the regime the group intended “to shorten the Syrian people’s suffering” (IWGS, 2013). At the same time some sanctions imposed by the EU were reduced in order to alleviate hardships for civilians and the regime’s opponents while no new sanctions

were imposed by the EU in the second half of that year and the EU stopped requiring absence of Assad in negotiations on Syria's future (Seeberg, 2015: 26)

**Table 14.** Sanctions against Syria after 2000

| <b>Date</b>                            | <b>Sender</b>                            | <b>Scope/Type/Aims</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>May 12, 2004</b>                    | US                                       | The US added “sanctions and restrictions” on trade to those restrictions which were in force since 1979 (U.S. Department of State, n.d.)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>May-August 2011, April-May 2012</b> | US, EU                                   | New sanctions related to “the Government of Syria’s continuing escalation of violence against the people of Syria” – based on the Executive Orders 13572, 13573, and 13582 (U.S. Department of State, n.d.)<br>2012 executive orders added new sanctions and targeted individuals engaging in the human rights violations against “the people of Syria” and evading US sanctions on Syria and Iran (U.S. Department of State, n.d.).<br>EU imposed first sanctions in May 2011 (Seeberg, 2015). |
| <b>April 1, 2012 – onwards</b>         | International Working Group on Sanctions | Series of statements on recommended restrictions and sanctions to be imposed unilaterally by participating countries which amounted to 42 different states.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

#### **6.4. Economic, Political, and Other Impacts of Sanctions against Syria**

While the 2004 US sanctions were initially perceived as rather limited, their impacts were “greater than either the United States or Syria had expected” (Zisser, 2005: 126). Targeting one of Syria’s main banks, the Syrian Trade Bank, entangled the country’s international financial transactions and pushed investments out of the country, thus, preventing its integration to international markets (Zisser, 2005: 126). Moreover, those measures made it impossible for Syrian airlines to buy new aircraft or repair existing planes as the sanctions prohibited sale to Syria of any produce incorporating 10% or higher proportions of US products (Aita, 2020). Due to the

same reason, foreign companies such as Mitsubishi could not participate in tenders for “the construction of electricity plants” in the country in 2007 (Aita, 2020: 16), thus making it more difficult to develop energy projects in Syria.

Still the impact of the 2004 sanctions on Syrian foreign trade was much lower than that of 2011 sanctions which led to significant decrease of exports by 71% and fall of imports by 39% in 2012 as compared to the previous year (Aita, 2020: 13).

Moreover, while due to its market liberalization reforms, Syria tried to become more integrated into global markets throughout 2000s and its trade even with the US increased during the decade despite 2004 measures (Aita, 2020: 15). In contrast, after 2011, Syrian trade with the US, including agricultural products, nearly “collapsed” (Aita, 2020: 15).

Aita (2020) also argues that the 2011-2012 unilateral measures (sanctions) imposed against the Syrian government led to multiple unintended consequences causing difficulties for businesses and population in general. Even access to food and medicines by the population was highly reduced due to the destroyed local production and difficult ties related to imports of such items due to de-risking strategies of foreign banks (Aita, 2020). Similar problems were also reported by Moret (2015: 130) citing deficit of food and medical produce among the multiple humanitarian consequences of sanctions in Syria. Health crisis is also related to a fall “in government provisions” also affecting health services and such vital areas as education or vaccination programs (Moret, 2015). Moret (2015: 129-130) argues that the sanctions led to many additional problems in Syria such as rising unemployment,

falling earnings, hunger, increase in psychological diseases, lack of micro-financing having an additional gendered impacts on women and so on.

Other sanctions-induced problems included lack of refined oil products and, later when other factions took control over the Syrian oil-fields, oil in general. Moreover, the restrictions contributed to inadvertent financing of militias controlling passage between areas controlled by different parties (Syrian government, Armed Opposition Group, Kurdish militias, or ISIS) in different periods of the civil war started also in 2011-2012 (Aita, 2020). Local agricultural production in Syria was also harmed because without oil their capacity to irrigate the fields was much reduced while without fertilizers (which were imported from the US before 2011) even surviving agricultural production was much less efficient (Aita, 2020). Finally, due to the difficulty of imports, which would often pass through the territory controlled by the exempt from sanctions Armed Opposition Group, any imports reaching Syrian population on the territory controlled by Assad was more expensive than before due to multiple additional transaction costs (Aita, 2020).

Besides the direct economic impacts, the sanctions inflicted multiple political consequences within Syria and in the region in general. While sanctions were partly aimed to press Al-Assad to step down, his regime has managed to survive, however, multiple political costs were incurred in the process. Seeberg (2015, 27) argues that only the second phase of the EU sanctions led eventually to some degree of split of Syrian elites so that some of them tried to move outside of the country. However, initial phases of sanctions as well as circumstances of the civil war during the later stages made elite defections highly unlikely (Seeberg, 2015). In addition, public

investment projects were postponed and the regime-related NGOs ceased their activities (Seeberg, 2015: 28), thus limiting the sources for public support to the government.

Regionally, the sanctions, imposed by Syria's neighbors such as Turkey and regional Arab States with the exception of Iraq and Lebanon, further contributed to Syria's regional and international isolation (Seeberg, 2015: 29). Still, besides the mentioned supporters, Iran and Russia<sup>15</sup> also continued their support to Syria throughout these years.

### **6.5. Bashar al-Assad: A Biographical Overview**

Bashar Al-Assad born in 1965 was “the third of five children” of Hafez Al-Assad, a prominent member of “the pan-Arab, socialist Ba’ath party” and a “ruthless” politician (Khalaf, 2012). Al-Assads are members of Alawite religious minority of Syria which was mostly “disadvantaged” and “poor” at the time (Khalaf, 2012). Despite such social background his father was the “defense minister and air force commander” of the country in late 1960s (Khalaf, 2012) and later became the leader of the Baath party and the state. While Bashar Al-Assad described himself as having an ordinary childhood and “caring parents”, his former vice-president Khaddam is reported to refute such idea of normalcy arguing that the children had protection and were “targets, but also felt as if they owned the country” (Khalaf, 2012). As a youth he was also said to be “shy” and less popular than his older brother Bassel (Khalaf, 2012).

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<sup>15</sup> While Russia brought its military troops to Syria upon the request of Al-Assad's government at the end of 2015, its support was already expected in 2015 (Seeberg, 2015: 29) due to the ongoing negotiations and it was opposing UN sanctions against Syria in earlier years.

Having graduated from a private school, Al-Assad received his higher education training in the “Damascus University’s medical school” and his professional career includes working as an ophthalmologist in a local hospital and then in London (Khalaf, 2012). While initially he was not expected to become a political heir of his father, due to the death of his older brother in 1994 he returned to Syria and allegedly was retrained and rebranded to become a successor in line with his father’s plans (Khalaf, 2012).

As a new president, Bashar Al-Assad was initially seen as “an open-minded and intelligent young man with a modern, Western worldview who recognized the need for reform” (Zisser, 2005: 117). He was also often described as a person with a “modernizing” approach, with Western education, and an achievement of “persuasion of his father to start opening Syria to the Internet” (Hinnebusch, 2009: 14). However, such initial perceptions were in sharp contrast with the realities of Syria. For example, despite Al-Assad’s support for Internet introduction, by 2005 only 0.3% of the country had access to Internet which was provided by governmental servers with significant censorship (Zisser, 2005: 121) limiting the country’s integration to the global information networks. Similarly, despite the perceived ‘Western worldview’, some argued that Al-Assad’s foreign policy was aligning more with a “nationalist, pan-Arab, anti-U.S., and anti-Western worldview” (Zisser, 2005: 123). Besides such contradictions, he was also described as “anxious” and lacking confidence partly due to the lack of experience in domestic politics and being overshadowed by his father’s reputation (Khalaf, 2012). While he is said to be more vocal when dealing with his international counterparts, he is also reported to display drastic changes of mood and opinion (Khalaf, 2012).

While Assad was reportedly “hopeful” about the new Obama-led administration in the US and said that they had “the impression that this administration will be different” in contrast to his description of the preceding US President G.W. Bush as the one who “failed in everything” (Black, 2009). However, this hopefulness did not change his generally conflictual view of the West. When Al-Assad was congratulating the Iranian President Ahmadinejad’s re-election in 2009, Al-Assad argued that the post-election protests in Iran were incited by the West and that “the main reason for the West’s interference is to block Iran and Syria’s frequent victories” (France 24, 2009).

#### **6.6.Data and Case-specific Methodological Issues**

To analyze Bashar Al-Assad’s operational code in general and in each of the sanction episodes an original dataset of his speeches focusing on foreign policy was collected. All collected speeches were in English either pre-translated by official services or the media entities which had published the speeches. As no governmental website with the official speech archives in English was available during the data collection process, the speeches were collected using online search engines and search tools within several news publishers’ websites. All collected speeches were manually coded in terms of identifying the parts related to foreign policy issues and those unrelated to international thematic. Only the foreign policy-oriented fragments were included in the dataset. In total, 33 foreign policy-oriented speeches or fragments were collected so that each text would include at least 19 coded-words or 1000 words in total. Due to the specificity of the sources and the lack of speeches given by Al-Assad domestically and translated into English, a large portion of the collected

speeches was based on Bashar Al-Assad's interviews given to the foreign media in different time periods.

The timeframe for the analysis was limited to years 2000-2015 starting with the year when Bashar Al-Assad became the president of Syria for the first time (2000) and ending in 2015 during the ongoing civil war in Syria when Russia brought its military forces into the country.<sup>16</sup> That external support was likely to significantly contribute to the reversal of the military situation on the ground in favor of Al-Assad's forces (Maher & Pieper, 2020: 10). Therefore, as such external intervention was both a "game-changer" on the ground (Maher & Pieper, 2020: 10) and a rare externally initiated event, it could on itself act as an external shock and was likely to influence Al-Assad's attitudes differently from the earlier events. The period of 2000-2015 was further divided into 4 parts. The first part focusing on 2000-April 2004 covered the initial years of Al-Assad's presidency till the first imposition of sanctions by the US against Syria which entered into force with the US presidential decree in 2004.

The second period covers years after the unilateral US measure till 2007 and the third period covers years between the start of 2008 till the new round of anti-Syrian sanctions started in April 2011. The divide of between-the-sanction years (the years between 2004-2011) is based on the need to account for a possible variation within the inter-sanction period and the need to have relatively symmetrical periods (roughly of 4 years each). Finally, the divide was necessary due to the idea that in

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<sup>16</sup> While Russia was providing diplomatic support to Al-Assad's regime throughout the conflict (for example, vetoing UNSC resolutions on anti-Syrian sanctions), the most decisive phase of its support started in September 2015 when "the Russian air force then started to provide cover" to the regime's army (Maher & Pieper, 2020).

2007-2008 Syria's relations with the regional countries (for example, Turkey) and the European Union were witnessing important improvements described above. However, no single event could account for the improving of the relations between Syria and other actors: for example the free-trade agreement with Turkey was signed in 2004 while it entered into force only in 2007. In addition, in 2008 the EU launched The Union for the Mediterranean which was partly a "continuation" of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership started by the EU in 1995 with aims of a "greater dialogue and integration" among Mediterranean countries (Nas, 2019). And Syria was one of the cooperating members in that union<sup>17</sup>. Therefore, a less subjective divide based on the number of years between the two sanction episodes was preferred with the end of 2007 set as a border between the two inter-sanction episodes. The last period starts in April 2011 when the first package of sanctions was introduced by the US against Syria due to the ongoing internal crisis and human rights violations in the latter state. As those unilateral US measures were followed by several continued extensions and new unilateral sanctions imposed by other states during the next years not further sub-categorization was applied. Sub-divisions of the four periods were avoided to ensure availability of a sufficient amount of data for each studied period.

**Table 15.** Analyzed Periods and Wordcounts of the Analyzed Data Subsets of Bashar Al-Assad's Speeches

| <b>Period</b>                                         | <b>FP-oriented speeches<br/>(at least 20 coded verbs or 1000 words per speech)</b> |                 |
|-------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
|                                                       | Number of speeches                                                                 | Total wordcount |
| <b>Pre-2004 sanction period<br/>(2000-April 2004)</b> | 10                                                                                 | 23932           |
| <b>May 2004-2007</b>                                  | 11                                                                                 | 30933           |
| <b>2008-March 2011</b>                                | 6                                                                                  | 7941            |
| <b>April 2011-August 2015</b>                         | 6                                                                                  | 11679           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                          | 33                                                                                 | 74485           |

<sup>17</sup> Syrian membership in the Union for the Mediterranean was suspended in December 2011 (Union for the Mediterranean, n.d.)

As the low number of speeches per studied period could influence the statistical analysis of the difference between the periods (especially considering 6 speeches for periods before and after 2011 sanctions), an additional analysis (aiming for a robustness check) was conducted using data from an external dataset - The Leader Psychological Characteristics dataset published in 2021 (Schafer, Lambert & Kazazis, 2021, Schafer, Walker, Besaw, Gill & Smith, 2021). The dataset includes multiple world leaders in Operational Code and Leadership Trait Analysis indicators. Among other presidents, it provides the scores for Bashar Al-Assad's speeches of different length for years 2000-2012. Most of the speeches are prepared, though some interviews are also included in the set. As the dataset provide insufficient number of observations for the pre-2004 period and post-2011 period, it was not possible to replicate the whole analysis using the external dataset. Therefore, a dataset of coded speeches originally collected for this study was combined with the external dataset using the following rules.

As the original speeches for the dataset were not provided or their sources were not available, only the information provided on the date and type of speech (prepared or interview) could be used to compare the originally created dataset and the external one. All dates of speeches were compared, when dates were different speeches from both datasets were included into a combined one. When speeches from the same date were included in both dataset a decision on which one to include was made. In one case, a speech found for the original dataset was pre-censored by the media outlet and thus lacked in quality. Therefore, the externally provided observation was used instead. In another case a speech scores from the originally prepared dataset were

preferred as it was not possible to verify on the level of foreign-policy orientation of the speeches used in the external dataset. All other speech scores were included in the secondary analysis under the same condition that the speeches have either at least 20 coded verbs or their wordcount is at least 1000 words.

All analyses provide scores only for the global operational code of Al-Assad due to several constraints. In the original dataset it was not feasible to create a separate subset for the targeted operational code focusing only on sanction senders because of the prolific number of the unilateral sanction senders in the second episode of sanctions (about 42 states including the Arab League members and the US, the EU etc.) and only 1 sender in the first episode of 2004 sanctions. Limiting the speeches by the first subset of states would create too little difference from the global operational code, while limiting the speeches only mentioning the US would leave too limited amount of textual data of insufficient wordcounts for each period due to general scarcity of data. As the external dataset provided only speech indicators and not speeches themselves, it was not possible to narrow down them either.

Both primary analysis of the original speech dataset and the supplementary analysis of the combined dataset of Al-Assad's speeches followed the same procedure. The datasets were controlled for the coded verb-count and wordcount requirements, average belief scores for each period were calculated and the ANOVA and T-test analyses for the pre- and post-sanction periods were conducted. The Operational Code analysis, its interpretation, and the hypothesis evaluation were conducted in accordance with the Theoretical Framework and Research Design chapter of this dissertation.

## 6.7. Results

### 6.7.1. Operational code of Bashar al-Assad: An Overview

Before discussing the changes in Al-Assad's political beliefs over the episodes of sanctions, this chapter will present an overall global operational code of this leader. In general, his view of the nature of political universe was somewhat friendly ( $P1 = 0,13$ ) but lower than the world average of 0,30. Moreover, the Syrian president was found to be neither optimistic nor pessimistic about the prospects for realization of his political goals and values with P2 indicator estimated as 0,01 out of the possible range from -1 to +1. Al-Assad was also found to see future as rather unpredictable ( $P3=0,14$  which is lower than the middle value of 0,5) and to see the role of chance in the international history as very high ( $P5=0,97$ ). Moreover, Al-Assad's perception of his ability to control historical events as lower than that of others suggesting that he perceives others as controlling international developments.

In terms of instrumental beliefs Al-Assad prefers cooperative tactics to conflictual ones ( $I1 = 0,33$  which is higher than the middle value 0), however, this cooperativeness of the leader is a bit lower than the world average of about 0,4. Al-Assad's belief about the intensity of tactics to use to achieve one's goals ( $I2=0,11$  out of possible -1 and +1) also suggest his preference to somewhat more cooperative tactic intensity. He was found to be rather risk averse ( $I3=0,3$  out of possible 0 to +1), somewhat flexible in his approach to choosing tactics of conflict or cooperation ( $I4a$ ) and somewhat less flexible in his tactics in words and deeds ( $I4b$ ). Among the indicators showing the leader's view of utility of different tactics, a tactic of appeal or support was found to have higher utility in view of Al-Assad ( $I5_{appeal} = 0,5$ )

while use of promising, rewards, threats, punishment, or opposing others was estimated to have a relatively lower utility.

The table 16 below demonstrates overall scores of Al-Assad's philosophical and instrumental beliefs and presents the findings on how his beliefs changed between the first and second periods (the 2004 sanction) and between the third and forth periods of this study (the 2011-2012 sanctions). The values presented below are based on the analysis of the originally collected set of spontaneous and prepared speeches of the Syrian president.

The ANOVA and T-test analyses conducted using Al-Assad's speeches given before and after the imposition of the US sanctions against Syria in 2004 have not produced any statistically significant results. However, some variation in the estimated scores was observed and the direction of change in some of such beliefs was similar to that estimated in analyses of Iranian and Russian leaders. In particular, Al-Assad's perception of the political universe or political others became somewhat less friendly (P1 decreased from 0,1 to 0,05) and his rhetoric on his strategical preferences reflected higher preference for cooperative strategies (I1 increased from 0,33 to 0,41). Among other beliefs besides the lack of statistically significant changes, even the estimated variation of mean values for the first two periods was remarkably low with only slight changes of 0,01-0,03 which can be rather attributed to a degree of chance or to natural variation of rhetoric across different observations. This finding may suggest that even if the US sanction had some influence, the impact of its imposition did not create an effect of an external shock triggering belief change for Bashar Al-Assad. This may be related to the fact that only one (the US) country had

imposed those sanctions, and this situation would not necessary change the leader's perspective about the whole international world. Moreover, the unilateral measures' rather limited consequences (as was discussed above) could also reduce the likelihood of psychological impacts of the sanction.

**Table 16.** Al-Assad's Operational Code: Overview and the Change over Sanction Episodes. Original Dataset

|                                                | Al-Assad 2004 Sanctions |                  |               |                 |       | Al-Assad 2011 Sanction |               |                 |       |                  |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|---------------|-----------------|-------|------------------------|---------------|-----------------|-------|------------------|
|                                                | Global                  | Before sanctions | ANOVA /T-test | After sanctions | Trend | Before sanctions       | ANOVA /T-test | After sanctions | Trend | Comparison trend |
|                                                | N=33                    | N=10             |               | N=11            |       | N=6                    |               | N=6             |       |                  |
| <b>Wordcount</b>                               | 74485                   | 23932            |               | 30933           |       | 7941                   |               | 11679           |       |                  |
| <b>P1 Nature of Political Universe</b>         | 0,13                    | 0,10             |               | 0,05            | ↓     | 0,27                   |               | 0,18            | ↓     | =                |
| <b>P2 Realization of political values</b>      | 0,01                    | 0,00             |               | -0,01           | ↓     | 0,10                   | 0,14          | -0,03           | ↓     | =                |
| <b>P3 Political future (predictability)</b>    | 0,14                    | 0,11             |               | 0,10            | ↓     | 0,16                   |               | 0,22            | ↑     |                  |
| <b>P4 Historical control</b>                   | 0,19                    | 0,22             |               | 0,20            | ↓     | 0,15                   |               | 0,17            | ↑     |                  |
| <b>P5 Role of chance</b>                       | 0,97                    | 0,98             |               | 0,98            | ↔     | 0,97                   |               | 0,96            | ↓     |                  |
| <b>I1 Strategy (conf./coop.)</b>               | 0,33                    | 0,32             |               | 0,41            | ↑     | 0,29                   |               | 0,27            | ↓     |                  |
| <b>I2 Intensity of tactics (conf./coop.)</b>   | 0,11                    | 0,10             |               | 0,16            | ↑     | 0,12                   |               | 0,04            | ↓     |                  |
| <b>I3 Tactics predictability (risk taking)</b> | 0,33                    | 0,30             |               | 0,34            | ↑     | 0,38                   |               | 0,31            | ↓     |                  |
| <b>I4 Tactic flexibility</b>                   |                         |                  |               |                 |       |                        |               |                 |       |                  |
| <b>I4a conf./coop</b>                          | 0,57                    | 0,57             |               | 0,54            | ↓     | 0,60                   |               | 0,57            | ↓     | =                |
| <b>I4b word/deed</b>                           | 0,43                    | 0,48             |               | 0,38            | ↓     | 0,32                   |               | 0,55            | ↑     |                  |
| <b>I5 Utility of means</b>                     |                         |                  |               |                 |       |                        |               |                 |       |                  |
| <b>I5 Appeal</b>                               | 0,50                    | 0,50             |               | 0,53            | ↓     | 0,45                   |               | 0,50            | ↑     |                  |
| <b>I5 Promise</b>                              | 0,05                    | 0,02             |               | 0,06            | ↓     | 0,10                   |               | 0,05            | ↓     | =                |
| <b>I5 Reward</b>                               | 0,11                    | 0,14             |               | 0,11            | ↓     | 0,09                   |               | 0,09            | ↔     |                  |
| <b>I5 Oppose</b>                               | 0,18                    | 0,17             |               | 0,17            | ↔     | 0,21                   |               | 0,18            | ↓     |                  |
| <b>I5 Threaten</b>                             | 0,03                    | 0,02             |               | 0,01            | ↓     | 0,08                   |               | 0,00            | ↓     | =                |
| <b>I5 Punish</b>                               | 0,13                    | 0,15             |               | 0,11            | ↓     | 0,07                   |               | 0,18            | ↑     |                  |

Levels of significance for two tailed T-test and ANOVA tests: °  $p \leq 0,1$ , \*  $p \leq 0,05$ , \*\*  $p \leq 0,01$ , \*\*\*  $p \leq 0,001$ . Trend comparison: = indicates that changes in beliefs of both leaders occurred in the same direction.

As the next step of this analysis, the change of Al-Assad's political beliefs before and after the sanctions, which were imposed from April 2011-onwards, was examined. The Table 16 demonstrates that the analysis of the impact of these sanctions also did not find statistically significant results. The lowest probability of non-random change was estimated in Al-Assad's perception of the chance of realization of his political preferences (P2) which decreased from 0,10 (somewhat optimistic) to -0,03 (somewhat pessimistic view) with  $p < 0.14$ . While other beliefs also demonstrated some variation, the changes were not statistically significant. However, the direction of change in five of the beliefs was estimated to coincide with the change observed after 2004.

Furthermore, for example, in case of Al-Assad's perception of the political universe (P1), he started to see others as less friendly after 2011 (the indicator's score decreased from 0.27 to 0.18), and this trend mirrored the change observed after 2004. What is more important that the trend was not continuous over the whole presidency of Al-Assad as his perception of external universe actually improved to be more friendly in the third period. While the trends in master beliefs of the leaders will be discussed in further detail below, it is worthy to note that similarly to the 2004 sanction, many changes in the Syrian president's beliefs were of a very low intensity (about 0.01-0.06 points) which can be seen as an indicator of stability of Al-Assad's during the period marked not only by sanctions but also by the initiation of an internal armed conflict and later civil war in the country and significant loss of territory on the part of Syrian regime (period from 2011 to 2015).

As was discussed in the Data and Case-specific Methodological Issues subsection of this chapter, to eliminate limitations of statistical analysis with very low number of observations for each period, a combined dataset was created from the speeches originally collected for this study and the Operational Code scores for speeches coded within an external Psychological Characteristics of Leaders (PsyCL) dataset. The resultant average scores and the analysis of variation of the mean belief indicators for each period are presented in the Table below.

The results indicate that most of the trends in the philosophical beliefs P1 and P2 with the largest estimated changes remained similar to those found in the analysis with the original dataset having less observation. After both 2004-sanctions and the 2011-2012 multiple sanctions Al-Assad's perception of political universe become less friendly and he became less optimistic about the realization of his political preferences. Moreover, the change in Al-Assad's philosophical belief P2 was estimated to be statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ . As the level of significance of changes estimated using the original dataset was the highest for this score after 2011, the finding using combine dataset not only confirms the originally found score but also highlights that the level of significance of the estimated changes is likely to be affected by the limited number of available speeches.

Other trends of belief changes estimated using the combined dataset were mostly similar to those estimated using the original dataset and were not statistically significant. Considering that number of observations especially for the last period remained limited despite the use of the combined dataset, it is necessary to acknowledge that having a larger number of speeches available for analysis could be

more fruitful for estimating presence of statistically significant changes less biased by the small number of observations. However, in general, even if some indicators (such as overall scores) were estimated as slightly different from those based on the original dataset, their direction of change and the overall meaning remained similar.

**Table 17.** Al-Assad's Operational Code: Overview and the Change over Sanction Episodes. Combined Dataset

|                                         | Al-Assad 2004 Sanctions |                  |                 |                 |       | Al-Assad 2011 Sanction |                 |                 |       |            |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------|------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------|------------|
|                                         | Global                  | Before sanctions | ANOVA/<br>Ttest | After sanctions | Trend | Before sanctions       | ANOVA/<br>Ttest | After sanctions | Trend | Comp trend |
|                                         | N=63                    | N=16             |                 | N=15            |       | N=25                   |                 | N=7             |       |            |
| <b>Wordcount</b>                        | 152934                  | 32452            |                 | 49282           |       | 53819                  |                 | 17381           |       |            |
| P1 Nature of Political Universe         | 0,22                    | 0,21             |                 | 0,11            | ↓     | 0,32                   |                 | 0,14            | ↓     | =          |
| P2 Realization of political values      | 0,08                    | 0,08             |                 | 0,05            | ↓     | 0,14                   | *               | -0,05           | ↓     | =          |
| P3 Political future                     | 0,16                    | 0,15             |                 | 0,12            | ↓     | 0,17                   |                 | 0,21            | ↑     |            |
| P4 Historical control                   | 0,19                    | 0,22             |                 | 0,20            | ↓     | 0,17                   |                 | 0,17            | ↓     | =          |
| P5 Role of chance                       | 0,97                    | 0,97             |                 | 0,98            | ↑     | 0,97                   |                 | 0,96            | ↓     |            |
| I1 Strategy (conf/coop)                 | 0,40                    | 0,35             |                 | 0,41            | ↑     | 0,44                   |                 | 0,33            | ↓     |            |
| I2 Intensity of tactics (conf/coop.)    | 0,15                    | 0,09             |                 | 0,19            | ↑     | 0,20                   |                 | 0,10            | ↓     |            |
| I3 Tactics predictability (risk taking) | 0,32                    | 0,33             |                 | 0,29            | ↓     | 0,34                   |                 | 0,31            | ↓     | =          |
| I4 Tactic flexibility                   |                         |                  |                 |                 |       |                        |                 |                 |       |            |
| I4a conf./coop                          | 0,53                    | 0,54             |                 | 0,56            | ↑     | 0,51                   |                 | 0,53            | ↓     |            |
| I4b word/deed                           | 0,47                    | 0,51             |                 | 0,43            | ↓     | 0,45                   |                 | 0,57            | ↑     |            |
| I5 Utility of means                     |                         |                  |                 |                 |       |                        |                 |                 |       |            |
| I5 Appeal                               | 0,51                    | 0,52             |                 | 0,49            | ↓     | 0,52                   |                 | 0,50            | ↓     | =          |
| I5 Promise                              | 0,04                    | 0,02             | 0,13            | 0,05            | ↑     | 0,06                   |                 | 0,04            | ↓     |            |
| I5 Reward                               | 0,14                    | 0,13             |                 | 0,16            | ↑     | 0,14                   |                 | 0,12            | ↓     |            |
| I5 Oppose                               | 0,16                    | 0,14             |                 | 0,17            | ↑     | 0,16                   |                 | 0,17            | ↑     |            |
| I5 Threaten                             | 0,02                    | 0,02             |                 | 0,01            | ↓     | 0,03                   |                 | 0,00            | ↓     | =          |
| I5 Punish                               | 0,12                    | 0,18             |                 | 0,11            | ↓     | 0,08                   | 0,11            | 0,16            | ↑     |            |

Levels of significance for two tailed T-test and ANOVA tests: °  $p \leq 0,1$ , \*  $p \leq 0,05$ , \*\*  $p \leq 0,01$ , \*\*\*  $p \leq 0,001$ . Trend comparison: = indicates that changes in beliefs of both leaders occurred in the same direction.

The differences in the overall scores could be attributed to the nature of speeches included in the analysis where the original dataset included more interviews and the external dataset consisted of a larger number of prepared speeches. While this suggests that a sample of collected speeches may impact the scores estimated by the analysis when the sample selection is based on data availability rather than randomly chosen texts, it also shows that the results remain consistent even despite some variation across different types of speeches or sources.

#### 6.7.2. *Changes in Assad's master beliefs*

As master beliefs P1, P4 and I1 are believed to define the overall strategies a leader would prefer to use in international settings, this sub-section looks closer into how Al-Assad's master beliefs changed over the studied periods. The Table 17. below presents the scores for the leader's perception of the friendliness or hostility of the political universe (P1) and shows that there was fluctuation between all periods with the most significant change during the inter-sanctions period. In fact, both analyses of the original and combined datasets show that there was a change in the leader's belief about the nature of political 'others' after 2008 with a level of significance  $p < 0.1$  and  $p < 0.05$  respectively. The change may reflect that the quick improvement of foreign relations of multiple countries with Syria could have been a more unexpected or influencing development for Al-Assad coming from a tradition of a country following isolationist – embattled state rhetoric.

While there are some differences in the scores estimated from the two datasets, their interpretations are similar. Though, the overall P1 of Al-Assad was estimated as 0.22 compared to the original dataset-based 0.13, both scores suggest that Al-Assad

perceives others as somewhat friendly. Moreover, in both analyses the change of this score was directed towards a less friendly perception after the sanctions and more friendly perception of political universe during the period without sanctions.

**Table 18.** Nature of Universe (P1): Trends over Periods and across Datasets

| Period                                | P1 - original dataset | P1 - combined dataset |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Pre-2004 sanction</b>              | 0,1                   | 0,21                  |
| <b>Post-2004 sanction (2004-2007)</b> | 0,05                  | 0,11                  |
| <b>Pre-2011 (2008-2011)</b>           | 0,27°                 | 0,30*                 |
| <b>Post-April 2011</b>                | 0,18                  | 0,14                  |

Levels of significance for two tailed T-test and ANOVA tests: °  $p \leq 0,1$ , \*  $p \leq 0,05$ , \*\*  $p \leq 0,01$ , \*\*\*  $p \leq 0,001$ . Trend comparison: = indicates that changes in beliefs of both leaders occurred in the same direction.

When the indicators for the P1 philosophical belief were compared to the average scores found for global leaders, leaders of major powers, and leaders of rogue states, the results have shown that across the periods Al-Assad's view of political universe was closer to that of the average scores of rogue leaders and mostly less friendly than the mean of the norming group representing an average world leader.

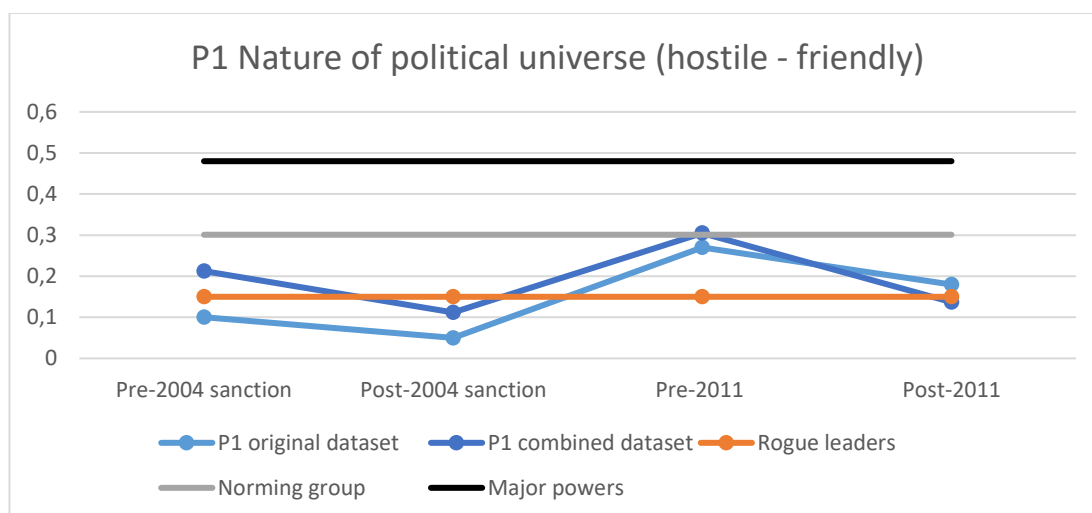


**Figure 16.** Nature of Universe (P1): Trends over Periods and across Datasets

The analysis of the second master philosophical belief P4 measuring the sense of control over historical development has demonstrated less fluctuation both across periods and across the different datasets. As shown in the Table 6.6., almost all scores for both datasets were equal and the score consistently indicated a perception of a low personal control over history attributing such control to others.

**Table 19.** Sense of Control over History (P4): Trends over Periods and across Datasets

| <b>Period</b>                         | <b>P4 – original dataset</b> | <b>P4 – combined dataset</b> |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Pre-2004 sanction</b>              | 0,22                         | 0,22                         |
| <b>Post-2004 sanction (2004-2007)</b> | 0,20                         | 0,20                         |
| <b>Pre-2011 (2008-2011)</b>           | 0,15                         | 0,17                         |
| <b>Post-April 2011</b>                | 0,17                         | 0,17                         |

Levels of significance for two tailed T-test and ANOVA tests: °  $p \leq 0,1$ , \*  $p \leq 0,05$ , \*\*  $p \leq 0,01$ , \*\*\*  $p \leq 0,001$ . Trend comparison: = indicates that changes in beliefs of both leaders occurred in the same direction.

Bashar Al-Assad's perception of the locus of historical control (P4), similarly to the P1 indicator, was also found to be mostly lower than that of world average leaders and close to the means earlier reported for rogue leaders especially after 2004 onwards. Considering that Syria was becoming more and more isolated in 2003-2004 and it could also suggest that one may be socialized into thinking like a rogue leader even if some initial attitudes of the leader were closer to world averages.

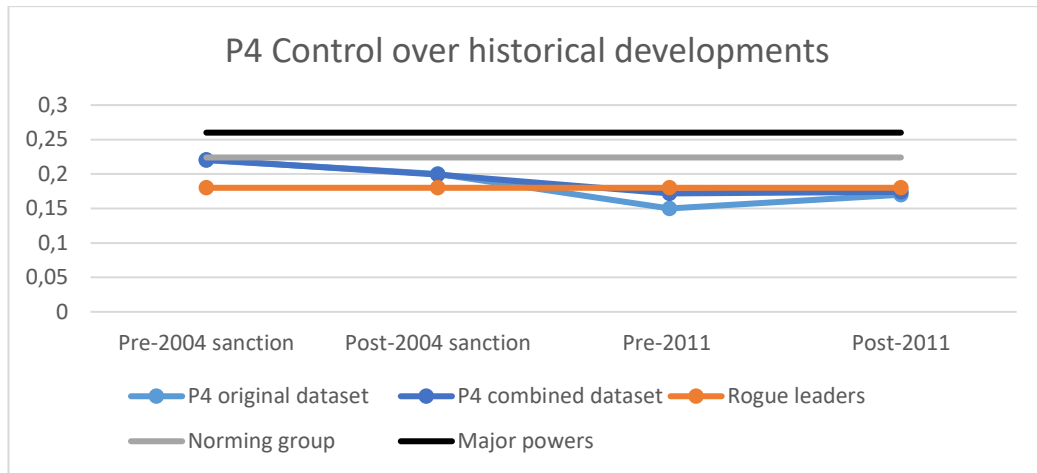


**Figure 17.** Control over History (P4): Trends over Periods and across Datasets

Both datasets show some fluctuation in Al-Assad's strategic approach to dealing with others (I1). However, despite some fluctuation throughout the period his rhetoric reflected a preference towards a more cooperative approach rather than conflictual strategies. The instrumental master belief I1 reflecting a leader's preferences about strategies towards others to attain own goals, shows that in the initial periods results based on both datasets were very close. Only in the third and forth period a large gap in the estimated scores suddenly emerged. Considering that the combined dataset included more prepared speeches, it can be fruitful to study in future whether leaders' rhetoric on their strategies towards others is more likely to be different across different types of speeches while other beliefs are reflected in different speeches in a more consistent manner.

**Table 20.** Strategic Approach (I1): Trends over Periods and across Datasets

| Period                                | I1 – original dataset | I1 – combined dataset |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Pre-2004 sanction</b>              | 0,32                  | 0,35                  |
| <b>Post-2004 sanction (2004-2007)</b> | 0,41                  | 0,41                  |
| <b>Pre-2011 (2008-2011)</b>           | 0,29                  | 0,44                  |
| <b>Post-April 2011</b>                | 0,27                  | 0,33                  |

Levels of significance for two tailed T-test and ANOVA tests: °  $p \leq 0,1$ , \*  $p \leq 0,05$ , \*\*  $p \leq 0,01$ , \*\*\*  $p \leq 0,001$ . Trend comparison: = indicates that changes in beliefs of both leaders occurred in the same direction.

Like other master beliefs, Al-Assad's approach to strategies (I1) was fluctuating around the means scores of average rogue leaders and the norming group of the average world leaders in general. His approach to strategies was found as the only belief moving into different directions after the different sanction episodes suggesting that the leader's strategic preferences could be less dependent on such specific events as sanctions than philosophical beliefs.

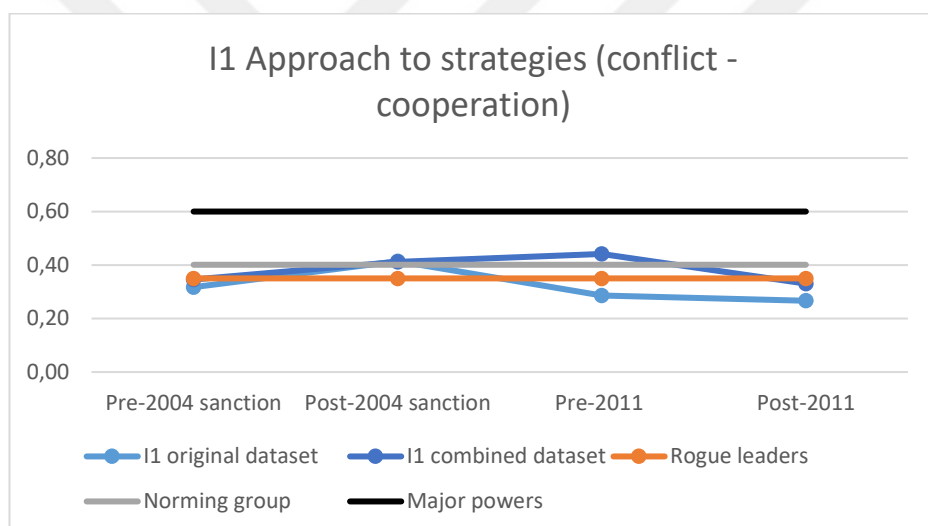


**Figure 18.** Approaches to Strategies (I1): Trends over Periods and across Datasets

### 6.7.3. Evaluation of Hypotheses

To the following section discusses the six hypotheses about the possible impacts of sanctions on philosophical and instrumental beliefs of sanctioned leaders as outlined in the Chapter 3 of this study and evaluates their application to the case of Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad.

**H1: Sanctions are likely to correspond to the change of political beliefs of the targeted states' leaders.**

While the analysis above has demonstrated some fluctuation in especially political beliefs of Al-Assad twice targeted by different sanction episodes, only his belief about the prospects for realization of his political values was estimated to change with a significance level of 0.05 after 2011 sanction episode had started (based on the analysis of the combined dataset). Other changes corresponding to post-sanction periods were not statistically significant when compared to the preceding time-intervals. Moreover, some beliefs such as perception of historical control (P4) demonstrated remarkable stability over time in general having not only insignificant but also very limited in scope fluctuations. Therefore, only a limited support was found for the main hypothesis of this study.

**H2: If belief change occurs in response to sanctions, reversal of belief is less likely than belief reduction, reinforcement, or rigidity.**

The only statistically significant change occurred in Al-Assad's optimism about realization of his political values so that from somewhat optimistic his view became somewhat pessimistic after 2011. However, due to the difficulty of clearly defining a numerical or statistical threshold for arguing a presence of a belief reversal, it is difficult to argue its presence or absence in general. No other reversals of beliefs were observed. All other political beliefs demonstrated either of the three types or change or lack of it (rigidity).

**H3: Sanctions are likely to increase perception of hostility of the external world**

While the post-sanction changes in the perception of the nature of political universe (P1) were not statistically significant, the indicators in cases of both sanction episodes indeed decreased after the initiation of sanction. This observation suggests that perception of 'others' became less friendly than before.

**H4: Change in philosophical beliefs is more likely to occur than change in instrumental beliefs**

The only statistically significant change was estimated in the philosophical belief P2 using combined dataset, thus, this observation has partly supported this hypothesis. However, other belief changes of Al-Assad were both statistically insignificant and demonstrated mostly limited fluctuations.

**H5: Significant change of at least one master belief is likely to coincide with changes of other philosophical or instrumental beliefs.**

This analysis has demonstrated that master beliefs do not change simultaneously and that a statistically significant change in a non-master belief may occur without such statistically significant change in master beliefs.

**H6: Direction of belief change of different targeted leaders is likely to be similar in similar contexts**

The case of Syria analyzed changes in political beliefs of the same leader under different episodes of sanctions to see whether same personality reacts similarly to similar external shock in different time periods. Thus, while this analysis alone cannot provide an answer to this hypothesis, it has shown that five out of sixteen

beliefs of Al-Assad changed into similar direction after different episodes of sanctions. Moreover, the direction of change of his philosophical belief P1 was similar to those of Putin and Khamenei (towards a less friendly perception).

#### *6.7.4. Understanding Trends in Al-Assad's Political Beliefs*

The mechanism envisaged by this thesis assumed that a higher emotional response to sanctions especially when unexpected as well as unexpected (or unexpectedly costly) sanction consequences are more likely to trigger a revision of one's attitudes and beliefs. This chapter compared two sanction episodes with different senders, scopes, and costs. The initial episode of 2004 sanctions was characterized by only one sender which imposed targeted sanctions which imposed some constraints on Syria but did not prevent rising trade volumes between the two countries in the following years. The second episode of sanctions starting in 2011 was characterized by comprehensive and targeted sanctions imposed by more than forty states unilaterally and affecting a large portion of the Syrian trade and official financial transactions. Based on these differences, it would be initially possible to expect a stronger psychological influence of the second episode.

However, besides the proposed mechanism alternative or intervening mechanisms and factors should also be accounted for to understand the processes which could guide Al-Assad's learning and possible updating his political beliefs. This section will attempt to trace the factors which could influence whether a sanction could act as a 'shock' or was more likely to act just an ordinary development in a given situation.

The analysis above has shown that while there were fluctuations in Al-Assad's beliefs throughout the studied period, the first episode of sanctions unilaterally imposed by the United States did not correspond to any significant change in the leader's beliefs. This finding may suggest that even if the US sanction could have some influence, the impact of its imposition did not create an effect of an external shock triggering belief change for Bashar Al-Assad. This may be related to the fact that only one state (the US) had imposed those sanctions, and this situation would not necessarily change one's perspective about the whole international world. Moreover, the unilateral measures' rather limited consequences as discussed above could also reduce the likelihood of psychological impacts of the sanction.

Besides the limited consequences of sanctions, the escalated relationship between Syria and the US before 2004 was making such sanctions less unexpected. As was suggested by earlier scholarship sanctions from allies are likely to be more influential than sanctions from foes (Allen, 2005, Bonetti, 1998) and rivals tend to oppose sanctions (Whang, 2010: 572). The latter case of sanctions may be more expected and expected sanctions are reported to be less likely to witness compliance of the targets (Chan, 2009). As was discussed above, the relationships between two countries significantly deteriorated after the failed peace talks with Israel and the US initiating preparation to and later implementing of intervention in Iraq. Thus, such further worsening of the relations up to sanction imposition could make sanctions a more expected development rather than a shocking event. Moreover, the fact that other states (even the US allies) did not impose such sanctions could also suggest that Al-Assad would not perceive higher hostility of the whole world as those countries kept their relationships with the regime. In fact in 2005 interview with

Italian newspaper *Repubblica*, Al-Assad argued that he did not “feel isolated at all” and that neither recent nor historical US sanctions fully isolated Syria (*Repubblica*, 2005).

Finally, the fact of the failed peace talks, which were among the main goals of Al-Assad when he just came to power, and the intervention to Iraq, which Syria strongly opposed, could also act as a strong external shocks and could impose pressure on Al-Assad’s political beliefs. Therefore, even if the analysis of Al-Assad’s beliefs after 2004 shows a perception of a less friendly world, such change could only partly related to sanctions and partly to the other steps of worsening relations of Syria with the US and other states in early 2000s.

In contrast to this earlier episode, 2011 sanctions were imposed by most of the important regional and global trade partners of Syria with exception of Iran, Iraq, and Lebanon. Moreover, the scope of the unilateral measures imposed by some states (for example, the EU) was amounting to comprehensive sanctions (Boogaerts, et al., 2016). Al-Assad also acknowledged in December 2011 that the sanctions “will hurt us,” though arguing that some positive impacts were also possible, that Syria had a long experience of such measures, and that some sanctions would not be “implement[ed]” (ABC News, 2011). In 2012 Al-Assad reiterated that the sanctions would “undoubtedly affect Syria” while still hoping for some positive consequences as well (Syria Online, 2012). Thus, the 2011 sanction consequences both reported by earlier research and estimated by Al-Assad were likely to inflict pain on the country. Moreover, the acknowledgement of Al-Assad of such costs may suggest the high salience of the issue in his policy making. Finally, the fact that some countries which

were Syrian allies before 2011 (such as Turkey having a free trade agreement with Syria or many other Arab League states) could suggest the need for Al-Assad to reassess his evaluation of his international “others”.

While the analysis shows that his view of “others” once again became less friendly and his optimism about political future significantly declined, lack of significant or at least high intensity changes in many other beliefs (for example, his sense of historical control (P4) may hint to some other factors influencing Al-Assad’s beliefs. The Arab Spring and the Syrian uprising and following international military operations as well as escalating civil war between different factions on Syrian soil itself could impose a not less significant shock on Al-Assad than the sanctions. Al-Assad differently from the leaders like Libyan Muammar Ghadaffy or Egyptian Hosni Mubarak was not toppled during the Arab Spring uprisings and retained control over the government in Damascus and some parts of Syria throughout the years. Moreover, he kept good relations with some of regional countries and managed to find support in Russia who would veto UNSC measures against Syria and later help the regime with military support. Thus, despite multiple setbacks and shocks, such survival of the regime in comparison to the toppled regional regimes during the period could act as an alternative factor influencing the leader’s sense of control.

As a result, such multiple factors as external and internal pressures, or survival of the regime despite external expectations, could have led to either relative rigidity of many of Al-Assad’s beliefs or high fluctuation of those leading to lack of significant differences over the period. Therefore, while this study managed to show some

changes in Al-Assad's beliefs and to trace some of them to Al-Assad's acknowledgment of the impact of the economic measures, the entangled nature of the period made it impossible to trace separate impacts of each specific element of the developments in Syria during the period. Finally, a priori views of Al-Assad about the US could also influence his cognitive response to new information coming with such external shocks as sanctions.

## **6.8. Conclusion**

This chapter has focused on an analysis of sanction impacts on political beliefs of a single leader under two different sanction episodes. It analyzed unilateral US sanctions against Syria implemented in 2004 and multilateral sanctions imposed against Al-Assad's regime from April 2011 onwards. Based on this study, this section has shown that Al-Assad's philosophical and instrumental beliefs demonstrated some similarities in responses to both episodes as well as important differences connected to the scope of sanctions and their consequences.

The analysis has also demonstrated that, similarly to the findings reported in previous chapters on Russia and Iran, Al-Assad in both episodes started to use a rhetoric reflecting a less friendly perception of others. Moreover, the analysis has shown that while only one philosophical belief (P2) significantly changed after the imposition of 2011 sanctions, the change was consistent with an expectation of lower optimism under external pressure and the trends in belief fluctuations in general supported most of the related hypotheses.

## **CHAPTER 7. INTER-CASE COMPARISON AND DISCUSSION**

While the preceding chapters presented three country cases analyzing economic sanction against Russia, Iran, and Syria, this section attempts to bring together the main findings of the empirical case studies and compare their outcomes across cases. This section also presents and discusses the main factors which could influence similarities and differences in sanctions' impacts of the political beliefs of the targeted state leaders. Building upon earlier research on sanction consequences this section takes into account different types of sanction senders, their relationships with sanctioned states, and the types and costs of sanctions. Moreover, considering earlier research on belief change and psychological characteristics which may influence one's ability to learn and perceive information, this chapter presents analysis of two psychological traits of the leaders (their cognitive complexity and self-confidence) which are theorized to influence one's openness to new information. Such evaluation of the personal traits of leaders allows a more reliable comparison of the leaders' attitudes towards incoming information than would be possible if personal differences were derived from the leaders' biographies or external evaluations.

In total, this dissertation focused on three countries and five leaders. In cases of Russia and Iran two main executives' beliefs from each country were analyzed in relationship to a continuous sequence of sanctions imposed on each state in different

time periods. In contrast, in case of Syria only one executive (Bashar Al-Assad) was studied in relation to two relatively separate sanction episodes. The first analyzed instance of sanctions consisted of unilateral measures of the US imposed in 2004 due to Syria's alleged help to Iraqi fighters, Syria's involvement in Lebanese internal conflict, and other disagreements with the US. The second studied instance of anti-Syrian sanctions refers to a separate episode in Syria's domestic and foreign relations when sanctions were imposed by multiple regional and Western states in response to Al-Assad's suppression of the 2011 anti-governmental protests and following civil war. As a result, analysis of these five leaders presents six sanction-leader cases which can be analyzed in terms of political beliefs of the leaders about global political universe before and after imposition of sanctions.

A more detailed analysis of the beliefs' fluctuation over shorter period was conducted in chapters focusing on Iran and Russia, and a more nuanced analysis of targeted operational code of Russian leaders in relation only to the sanction senders were presented in earlier chapters. However, only the overall trends in the post-sanction belief fluctuations across all leaders provide a basis for inter-case comparison across the countries differing in their experience of sanction duration, number of sanction senders, and other characteristics.

The table presented below summarizes the main observed trends of belief changes across all philosophical and instrumental beliefs of the studied leaders observed in the period after the start of sanctions of the studied cases of sanctions (which may consisted of several expanding and adding-on economic measures). The table shows a direction in which a specific belief about the global international relations and

actors has shifted. Moreover, it shows whether such shift was statistically significant and identifies the number of leaders with similar estimated belief shifts after their regimes were targeted by sanctions.

**Table 21.** Post-sanction Belief Change in All Studied Leaders

|                         | Putin    | Medvedev | Khamenei | Ahmadinejad | Al-Assad<br>2004 | Al-Assad<br>2011 | Similarity |
|-------------------------|----------|----------|----------|-------------|------------------|------------------|------------|
| P1                      | ↓***     | ↓        | ↓°       | ↑           | ↓                | ↓                | 5/6        |
| P2                      | ↓**      | ↔        | ↓°       | ↑           | ↓                | ↓*               | 4/6        |
| P3                      | ↓**      | ↓        | ↑        | ↑           | ↓                | ↑                | 3/6        |
| P4                      | ↓***     | ↓°       | ↑        | ↔           | ↓                | /                | 3/6        |
| P5                      | ↑***     | ↑        | ↔°       | ↔           | ↑                | ↓                | 3/6        |
| I1                      | ↓        | ↑        | ↓        | ↓           | ↑                | ↓                | 4/6        |
| I2                      | ↔        | ↑        | ↓        | ↓           | ↑                | ↓                | 3/6        |
| I3                      | ↓(0,102) | ↓        | ↓        | ↓           | ↓                | ↓                | 6/6        |
| I4a                     | ↑        | ↓        | ↑        | ↑           | ↑                | ↓                | 4/6        |
| I4b                     | ↑        | ↑        | ↓        | ↓           | ↓                | ↑                | 3/6        |
| I5 Appeal               | ↓°       | ↓        | ↓        | ↓           | ↓                | ↓                | 6/6        |
| I5 Promise              | ↑        | ↑        | ↓        | ↓           | ↑(0,13)          | ↓                | 3/6        |
| I5 Reward               | ↑        | ↑°       | ↑        | ↑           | ↑                | ↓                | 5/6        |
| I5 Oppose               | ↓        | ↓*       | ↓        | ↑°          | ↑                | ↑                | 3/6        |
| I5 Threaten             | ↓        | ↔        | ↑        | ↑           | ↓                | ↓                | 3/6        |
| I5 Punish               | ↑*       | ↔        | ↑        | ↓           | ↓                | ↑(0,11)          | 3/6        |
| Significant<br>at p<0.1 | 6        | 3        | 3        | 1           | 0                | 1                |            |

Levels of significance for two tailed T-test and ANOVA tests: °  $p \leq 0,1$ , \*  $p \leq 0,05$ , \*\*  $p \leq 0,01$ , \*\*\*  $p \leq 0,001$ . Trend comparison: = indicates that changes in beliefs of both leaders occurred in the same direction. In Al-Assad's trends / sign refers to ambivalent findings with small degrees of change (about 0,01-0,05 points) and different directions estimated using original and combined datasets.

As demonstrated in the table above, seven out of sixteen indicators have changed in the same direction in more than 50% of the studied cases. The rest of observations changed in the same direction in half of the cases while in total there were three possible directions of change (upward, downward, or lack of change). Almost all of the leaders started to see 'others' as less friendly after the sanctions (P1). The importance of this observation is also related to the fact that this change was theorized in this study in of the hypotheses and presence of such change in beliefs of

five out of six leaders provides support for that hypothesis (though not all found changes were statistically significant). In addition, while Ahmadinejad's P1 score demonstrated an upward change in the post-sanction period on average, the closer look into his belief changes after sanctions showed that such trend started only in the last sub-period of sanctions (after 2011) and closer to the end of Ahmadinejad's presidential term as was discussed in the chapter focusing on the case of Iran. In contrast, during the earlier two periods his perception of the political universe was either almost stable (with an increase by 0,01 during the first sub-period) or even decreased by 0,44 in the second sub-period. Finally, the peculiarity of the measured result could also be related to a very scarce data on Ahmadinejad's foreign policy-oriented speeches in that period what could also be related to the end of his stay in office.

Among other beliefs, two instrumental scores displayed similar shifts in rhetoric of all studied cases. All leaders' rhetoric suggested that they became less risk prone in their foreign policy preferences after sanction imposition (I3). In four out of six cases leaders started to see prospects of realization of their political preferences in a less optimistic manner (P2). Moreover, all leaders started to see less utility in tactics of appealing to others (I5 appeal) while in 5 out of 6 cases leaders started to perceive higher utility of rewarding tactics. The latter observation may be also related to the policy of adjustments and refocusing trade and other relations from sanction senders towards third-party states. Considering that after the start of sanctions Russia increased its emphasis on cooperation with China and other Asian countries and strengthened its efforts of regional integration with some post-Soviet states under the

Eurasian Economic Union, rhetoric related to such states could use additional focus on potential benefits or rewards as strategies to motivate their cooperation.

Another important observation is that in four out of six cases the targeted leaders' rhetoric started to reflect a somewhat less cooperative strategic approach (I1).

Decrease of this score is particularly important because this instrumental belief is one of the three master beliefs (P1, P4, I1) which are thought to define leaders' types and influence their foreign policy choices. As discussed above, almost all leaders started to see 'others' less as less friendly and most of them also started to articulate less preferences for cooperation. Thus, it is possible to assume that while sanctions are often imposed to motivate targets' compliance and cooperation, sanctions are likely to trigger an update in targeted leaders' strategic preferences and beliefs about 'others' and, thus, to make most of the targeted leaders less prone to cooperation.

In contrast there is much less clarity in terms of a likely impact of sanctions on the third master belief - the targeted executives' perception of control over international developments (P4). Such variations in post-sanctions trends may suggest that this belief is a more complex one and depends not only on the external shocks but on an interplay of previous beliefs of the targeted leaders, their ability to control the situation of sanctions (or their perceived control of sanction impacts), and other factors. Somewhat surprisingly, the decrease in the sense of control over history was observed in cases with the least economically costly consequences of sanctions (targeted sanctions against Russia and unilateral targeted measures of US against Syria as compared to the UNSC targeted sanctions and multiple unilateral comprehensive sanctions against Iran and comprehensive multilateral sanctions

against Syria which significantly harmed the economy of both countries). However, a commonality between the similar cases may be related to the pre-sanction levels of perception of one's control over history. Both Putin's and Medvedev's P4 scores were estimated to be higher than that of an average world leader. Similarly, Al-Assad's sense of control over history before 2004 was equivalent to the world average while in all other cases leaders' sense of control over international developments was already below world average scores. Thus, it is possible that such limited external shocks as sanctions may negatively influence only relatively high sense of historical control while for leaders already perceiving own control over historical events as considerably low, sanctions may be less likely to influence such belief.

To improve our understanding of the differences between the studied cases it is necessary to revisit the mechanism of and factors influencing belief change. The mechanism of belief change proposed in the Research Design Chapter expected that both sanction imposition and/or the effects of sanctions may present an external shock to a targeted leader by presenting new information about the international political actors. Whenever such new information would not be consistent with prior beliefs of the targeted leaders, a sense of surprise, shock, or another emotional or cognitive response could be inflicted and lead to a shift in beliefs.

As was discussed in the sanction effectiveness literature review, sanctions imposed by allies of the targeted states are likely to be more effective (Allen, 2005, Bonetti, 1998) because they are less expected and create a strong signal for the targeted leader. Moreover, sanctions with consequences, which are costlier than the ones

expected by the target, may also be more likely to influence the targeted leaders' beliefs. Finally, while unexpected imposition and consequences of sanctions are likely to present new information about political universe to the targeted leaders, there is a possibility that not all leaders would perceive such information in the same way due to their cognitive differences.

Cognitive biases such as preexisting images (Jervis, 1976) may prevent a person to perceive incoming information correctly forcing the person to fit the information into his/her existing preconceptions and rationalizing behavior of others who do not fit expected patterns. This ability to perceive new information may be also defined as openness to new information. Such openness depends on a person's conceptual complexity and self-confidence (Hermann, 1999). Conceptual complexity reflects whether a person is able to perceive different gradations between opposite characteristics such as good and bad (Hermann, 1999). Hermann (1999) proposes that if conceptual complexity is higher than one's self-confidence<sup>18</sup> and when both conceptual complexity and self-confidence are high<sup>19</sup>, a person is more open to new information (Hermann, 1999).

Therefore, to understand the difference between the studied leaders it is useful to compare their pre-sanction relationships with sanction senders, the types and costs of sanctions, and openness of these leaders to new information. The table below presents such characteristics for each studied case. The reported in the table conceptual complexity (CC), self-confidence (SC), and openness to information of the leaders is based on the LTA analysis of interviews of all these leaders with the

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<sup>18</sup> Such leaders are also described as pragmatic and resolving issues 'case by case' (Hermann 1999, 18)

<sup>19</sup> Such leaders are also seen as 'strategic' but somewhat 'opportunistic'

exception of Khamenei<sup>20</sup> whose interviews are notoriously not available. The analysis was done using computerized online software Profiler Plus with pre-defined dictionaries (Levine & Young, 2014). The scores for both pre-sanction and overall CC and SC are reported. Almost all scores are based on the necessary minimum amount of data to create a psychological profile of a leader.<sup>21</sup> The only exception to this rule is the score for Ahmadinejad's pre-sanction traits due to insufficiency of interview data for that period. When comparing to the average score of world leaders, the average scores for a norming group of 284 observations reported by Kesgin (2020: 66 with reference to Margaret Hermann) is used.

From this table it is visible that the only case of sanctions imposed only by a rival was 2004 sanction against Syria imposed by the US with whom Assad's relationships were deteriorating for several years and Syria's historic relationships were also contentious since 1980s. Therefore, it is possible to argue that such sanction imposition would not cause a surprise, and given the limited costs inflicted by that measure, its consequences would not be unexpected. As a result lack of significant change of any of Assad's beliefs can show that while he was open to new information and exhibited some response to the sanctions and otherwise worsening relations with other countries, the change was not substantial because this external impact did not constitute an important external shock for Al-Assad's beliefs.

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<sup>20</sup> 17 speeches concerning both domestic and foreign policy matters were included in the LTA analysis for Khamenei from 2004 till 2015.

<sup>21</sup> Herman (1999) proposes that only interviews should be used in estimating leadership traits because such cognitive characteristics may be more explicit in a relatively spontaneous speech and can be masked in a prepared speech which could be edited by someone else. Finally, to estimate a psychological profile Hermann (1999) suggests using at least '50 interview responses of one hundred words or more in length' what would amount to about 5000 words or more. Schafer et al. (2021) also suggest that using less than 4000 words to create a profile of a leader is 'unreliable'.

**Table 22.** Factors Likely to Influence the Probability of Belief Change in Response to Sanctions

|                                 | Putin                            | Medvedev                         | Khamenei                         | Ahmadinejad                      | Al-Assad 2004                    | Al-Assad 2011                    |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Sanction                        | Targeted                         | Targeted                         | Targeted + Comprehensive         | Targeted + Comprehensive         | Targeted                         | Comprehensive                    |
| Cost                            | Negative limited                 | Negative limited                 | Negative costly                  | Negative costly                  | Negative limited                 | Negative costly                  |
| Senders                         | Multilateral non-UN              | Multilateral non-UN              | UNSC + Multilateral non-UN       | UNSC + Multilateral non-UN       | Unilateral (US)                  | Multilateral non-UN              |
| Sender type (ally or foe)       | Allies and rivals                | Allies and rivals                | Allies and rivals                | Allies and rivals                | Rival                            | Allies and rivals                |
| Conceptual Complexity (CC)      | 0,57                             | 0,61                             | 0,57                             | 0,54                             | 0,6                              | 0,6                              |
| CC before Sanctions             | 0,57                             | 0,62                             | 0,55                             | 0,52                             | 0,58                             | 0,57                             |
| World CC (0,59, sd 0,6)         | Below NG                         | Above NG                         | Below NG                         | Below NG                         | Above NG                         | Below NG                         |
| Self-Confidence (SC)            | 0,46                             | 0,43                             | 0,39                             | 0,46                             | 0,33                             | 0,33                             |
| SC before Sanctions             | 0,49                             | 0,48                             | 0,33                             | 0,44                             | 0,35                             | 0,38                             |
| World SC (0,36, sd 10)          | Above NG                         | Above NG                         | Around NG                        | Above NG                         | Below NG                         | Around NG                        |
| Openness                        | CC>SC<br>Relatively open to info | CC>SC<br>Relatively open to info | CC>SC<br>Relatively open to info | CC>SC<br>Relatively open to info | CC>SC<br>Relatively open to info | CC>SC<br>Relatively open to info |
| Significant OpCode change p<0.1 | 6                                | 3                                | 3                                | 1                                |                                  | 1                                |
| Data used for LTA               |                                  |                                  |                                  |                                  |                                  |                                  |
| Total N                         | 29                               | 23                               | 17                               | 19                               | 14                               | 14                               |
| - word count                    | 73355                            | 66403                            | 174512                           | 56395                            | 57026                            | 57026                            |
| Pre-sanction N                  | 5                                | 6                                | 9                                | 1                                | 3                                | 3                                |
| - word count                    | 16853                            | 25864                            | 47279                            | 1405                             | 15393                            | 15393                            |

Finally, as all of the studied the leaders have higher conceptual complexity scores than their self-confidence score, according to Hermann's (1989) definition, all of them are relatively open to new information. While openness to information suggests an ability to adapt one's beliefs, it may also signal that a gradual learning based on different clues is more likely for such leaders than a drastic belief change due to a

wholly unexpected external shock. This argument can be supported by the fact that most external influences in international relations have their preceding clues some of which are recognized and others are misperceived by observers and actors, and especially those who reject information contradicting own images of the world. At the same time, the fact that none of the leaders had a conceptual complexity score above 0,58 (an upper border for the norming group confidence interval) suggests that none of them were too sensitive to incoming information and could still fit external signals to their preexisting cognitive images. Such examples when the targeted leaders were rationalizing or justifying their allies' sanctioning efforts were discussed in the previous chapters and suggest that indeed cognitive frames could impede updating of one's beliefs.

To sum up, while due to the multitude of factors which can influence the psychological impacts of sanctions on targeted leaders it may be difficult to derive definite conclusions, the discussion above has identified some key findings. A number of similarities in belief trends across targeted leaders of different countries were observed irrespectively of differences in sanction design or costs. Moreover, the relations between sanction sender and targets (such as rivalry or alliance) may influence the extend of 'unexpectedness' of such foreign policy tools. Finally, while openness to information of the targeted leaders is theorized to be linked to their ability to learn and update own beliefs, the fact that all studied leaders were estimated as relatively open to new information made it impossible to conduct a meaningful comparison between the cases. Even if there was some difference between how the studied leaders compare to average scores of the conceptual complexity and self-confidence traits, lack of prior theorization on the thresholds in

the difference between leaders above or below world averages makes it similarly impossible to conduct a theoretically grounded discussion of such impacts on leaders' ability to learn and their inclination to change their political beliefs.



## **CHAPTER 8. CONCLUSION**

### **8.1. Overview**

This dissertation aimed to analyze the effects of economic sanctions inflicted on the political beliefs of the executive leaders of the sanctioned states. Bringing together sanction research and cognitive approaches to foreign policy analysis, this study shows that one of the possible and previously untheorized consequences of economic sanctions is a shift in political beliefs of targeted leaders. This research utilizes operational code analysis to estimate, quantify, and estimate changes in philosophical and instrumental beliefs of country leaders about the nature of international actors and developments and the strategies or tactics these leaders prefer in foreign policy making.

This dissertation builds upon earlier scholarship in foreign policy analysis which argues that foreign policy behavior in part is guided by political beliefs or cognitive schemas of political actors and such beliefs can be codified and measured as operational codes. Moreover, earlier research has shown that despite overall stability of one's operational code and other cognitive characteristics, some changes are possible in response to external shocks and as a process of learning. Analyzing

economic sanctions as an instance of such external shocks this work also builds upon earlier sanction research which shows that sanction may inflict different impacts including psychological ones and that sanction consequences may depend on a specific scope, type or sanction sander, or type of targets. Combining these two bodies of literature, this work proposes a mechanism of belief change triggered by economic sanctions.

A belief change is proposed when a relatively unexpected sanction (which may be imposed by unexpected actors) or its unexpected (or unexpectedly costly) consequences lead to a surprise or shock in a targeted leader or at least creates a situation contradictory to prior expectations and beliefs of the leader. When the sanction imposition or its costs are sufficiently surprising or contradictory to the pre-existing beliefs of the targeted leaders, the leaders may be forced to update their beliefs about international actors and issues, and about their own tactics and capacities to deal with foreign affairs. In contrast, when the sanction imposition or its effects are expected or negligible, the targeted leader may confirm own beliefs or try to rationalize slightly contradictory observations to fit to own beliefs. Following the logic of this mechanism, this research analyzed changes in beliefs of five executives of Russia, Iran, and Syria. The research attempted quantification and measuring of global operational code of the studied leaders before and after sanctions (and during sub-periods of multiple sanction episodes when applicable). All estimates of the political beliefs were made using automated Profiler Plus software conducting content analysis of the transitive verbs in the leaders' speeches related to international relations in general. The changes in estimated beliefs between the periods were analyzed statistically using ANOVA tests and qualitatively by

following the changes in beliefs in connection to sanction characteristics, consequences, and the leaders' rhetoric on the sanctions in particular.

Besides presenting quantitative findings of the belief shifts of the targeted leaders, this study also evaluated the six hypotheses developed in regard to the expected belief shifts. Majority of the hypotheses were at least partly supported while evaluations of others suggested areas requiring further theorization of the concepts used in relation to analyses of belief changes. The main hypothesis of this study, proposing that **economic sanctions are likely to inflict change in the political beliefs of the targeted leaders**, was mainly supported. In particular, in five instances out of six studied sanction-leader cases at least one of the political beliefs had changed with a statistical significance while changes in general were estimated in all cases. Moreover, a number of beliefs were observed to change into the same direction across different leaders, countries, and sanction episodes, thus providing partial support for the six hypothesis expecting similarities in the belief changes corresponding to sanctions. This observation was also discussed under the third hypothesis expecting that targeted leaders are likely to perceive "others" as more hostile or less friendly after sanctions referring to decreases in the P1 philosophical belief. It was supported by the observed decrease in the P1 score in five out of six analyzed leader-sanction instances. Moreover, in cases of Putin's and Khamenei's beliefs about the nature of political universe (P1), the decrease was significant at level of 0.05 and 0.1, respectively. The fourth hypothesis expecting changes in philosophical beliefs to be more likely than changes in instrumental beliefs was also somewhat supported with support found in the analyses of Putin's, Khamenei's and Al-Assad's (under the second period of sanctions) operational codes and mixed

results of the analyses of different periods of sanctions for Medvedev and Ahmadinejad.

While the changes were expected in all cases and most of them had at least one statistically significant change of one of philosophical or instrumental beliefs, a closer analysis of sub-periods has demonstrated that many changes were not drastic but occurred gradually over time. Many observed changes were not statistically significant due to high volatility of rhetoric in the studied period with the overall trend to a specific direction. Both observations may suggest that sanctions act not as a drastic external shock forcing a leader to review all existing beliefs, but rather as an external trigger stimulating learning of the leaders targeted by sanctions. It is necessary to acknowledge that such observation may be applicable mostly to the leaders relatively open to new information because all leaders analyzed in this study were somewhat open to information as was discussed in the previous chapter. Moreover, the presence of volatility in operational code scores especially after sanction imposition may suggest that learning does not occur in one day. It also signals that the updated beliefs may be more applicable to some specific issues or actors and not others as was also observed from analysis of targeted operational codes of Russian leaders.

The analysis of targeted operational code (focusing only on sanction senders) which was conducted in case of Russia has shown that sanctions are more likely to influence leaders' beliefs about the sanction senders while at the same time may have a smaller overall effect on general political beliefs. This finding highlights that perceptions about 'others', preferred tactics to deal with other countries and other

philosophical and instrumental beliefs of a state leader have some differentiations depending on the type of actors. This suggests that using targeted operational code analysis may be highly beneficial to understand how a specific leader is likely to cooperate with a specific international group of states or alliance instead of just analyzing the general operational code of that leader.

## **8.2. Limitations and Areas for Future Research**

Evaluation of the remaining two hypotheses has highlighted some limitations of the existing research instruments and the need for further studies of the related issues.

The second hypotheses based on earlier research by Van Esch assumed that **if a belief change occurs in response to sanctions, reversal of belief is less likely than belief reduction, reinforcement or rigidity**. For the purpose of this research reversal was theorized as a change of direction (sign) of a belief indicator. At the same time belief reduction would refer only to a decrease of an indicator while reinforcement would suggest an increase of such score. While the analysis has indeed shown that even when change was estimated, the changes were mostly limited in intensity and reflected a reduction (as exemplified by decreasing P1) or reinforcement of beliefs according to such definitions. However, close evaluation of these types of belief changes indicated a need to redefine almost all of them when applied to operational code analysis. First of all, most of the belief indicators ranging from -1 to +1 or from 0 to 1 do not range from a weak belief towards a stronger one, but actually differ from, for example, from a strong conviction about hostility of others (for example, P1=-1 to a conviction about friendliness of others which would be reflected by P1=+1). So that the most neutral score would mean P1=0. The middle

scores for some other beliefs such as the sense of historical control (P4) would be 0,5 with a total range from 0 to 1. So one interpretation of such typologies would be to assume that belief reduction happens when a score becomes closer to the center of the possible range (most neutral belief) and that belief reinforcement happens when a score moves farer from the center point of the possible range.

However, a direct interpretation of the terms reinforcement or reduction would require a change in belief intensity (in how convinced is a leader about a specific issue) and not a binary scale of belief such as the cooperative – conflictual strategic divid. Because traditional operational code analysis provides only answers about how leaders perceive foreign issues and actors and not how certain they are about their beliefs, interpreting the intensity of such political belief indicators is not feasible. One of the approaches to theorize and operationalize belief intensity (the degree of certainty of a leader's belief in regard to specific types of international issues) could be based on looking at the variation of the expressed beliefs. Higher fluctuation of the scores within a given period (measured as a higher variance / standard deviation of the estimated scores) could in fact suggest a lower certainty of a leader about that belief. Such alternative interpretation of belief uncertainties or belief strength was not used or theorized before and therefore was not applied in the current research. However, while this approach requires further theorization and evaluation in terms of cognitive research appropriateness, but it can provide a novel and fruitful area for future research.

In addition, the issue of belief reversal may look rather intuitive even when applied to operational code analysis as a reversal of a leader's perception of "others" from a

friendly to hostile would indeed suggest a reversal of a belief. However, the question remains about the degrees of changes that should be seen as sufficient to talk about a belief reversal. Considering that for the P1 philosophical belief about the nature (friendliness or hostility) of political universe may range from -1 to +1, one may ask whether a change of this belief's score from 0.01 to -0.01 would constitute a belief reversal or a mere fluctuation around the point of a neutral perception of "others" (assumed to be at 0). Evaluation of this hypothesis in the preceding empirical chapters indeed has shown the difficulty of providing an answer to such concept-based hypothesis. A clear evaluation could not be provided by looking only at changing values or even statistically significant difference between two values without clarity about the degree of change that would be sufficient to present evidence of a belief reversal. Therefore, further theorization of and thinking about ways to reliably operationalize belief reversal in operational code analysis and its meaning for different types of beliefs is necessary.

Finally, the fifth hypothesis of this study expected that a significant change of at least one master belief is likely to be followed by some changes of other philosophical or instrumental beliefs. This hypothesis was supported only in some cases and, for example, in case of anti-Syria sanctions of 2011 a significant change in Al-Assad's operational code was estimated only in one non-master belief P3 referring to the feeling of optimism or pessimism about realization of one's political values. Evaluation of this hypothesis underlined several more general limitations of the operational code analysis approach. Firstly, while the ten operational beliefs are discussed separately and the combinations of the master beliefs are sometimes used to define a specific leadership type, the fact that these belief scores are calculated

using twelve categories of verbs (six related to one's 'self' and six related to 'others'), makes some beliefs inherently connected to each other. For example, instrumental beliefs I1 (identifying approaches to strategies when dealing with others) and I2 (identifying conflictual or cooperative intensity of tactics) are calculated using the same sets of verbs and are based on the share of the difference between conflictual and cooperative 'self' verbs to the total number of verbs. The difference in the scores related to calculating intensity by multiplying the verb counts of different types of verbs by different weights assigned to more or less cooperative/conflictual words. As a result, a change estimated in one of these beliefs is likely to occur in the second score as well. In contrast, other non-master belief scores (such as I3) are calculated using rather different algorithms not necessary leading to interdependent scores. Due to such inherent interdependence in some political and instrumental beliefs making inferences about simultaneous change of beliefs (for example, in terms of rates of changed to non-changed beliefs) would provide little insight without accounting for similarities and differences in their calculations. The problem would arise as some beliefs would change in a similar manner just due to the way they are calculated while simultaneous change in beliefs with non-interdependent formulas may signal an important overall change in a leader's operational code.

In fact, the possibility of interdependency between some belief scores may be thought of as a weakness of the operational code analysis approach in general. However, the empirical analyses conducted within this dissertation have demonstrated that such simultaneous changes are not necessarily observed and that estimated beliefs often change independently. This observation thus provided support

for the validity of this approach and for the idea that, even if calculations are based on a small set of verb categories, the scores of different beliefs indeed measure different attitudes.

Another limitation highlighted by the analysis of this hypothesis relates to the idea of a statistically significant change. While throughout the empirical chapters the change in beliefs was estimated not only in terms of directional change in numbers but also statistically in terms of analysis of variance (ANOVA) between different periods, there is a need to acknowledge some limitations of such statistical analysis. The idea of statistical significance is highly valuable when studying large datasets, however, with relatively small samples there is a possibility that rejection of null hypothesis may depend on the increase in datasets. One of the reasons for such possibility is that in smaller samples an outlier would create much higher distortion. Such distortion would result in a higher standard deviation than the one that would occur if the same outlier was present in a larger sample. Thus, just increasing sample sizes (of relatively small samples) may lead to higher occurrence of statistically significant difference as was demonstrated in the empirical chapter focusing on anti-Syria sanctions. The initial analysis of a limited originally collected set of Al-Assad's speeches (two periods within that set had only 6 texts) did not result in any statistically significant difference. However, when the dataset was combined with an external dataset of operational code scores of Al-Assad increasing the number of observations in all periods, one belief change became statistically significant while its direction remained the same as that estimated in the original dataset.

Moreover, among the three country cases the largest number of speech texts was available in case of Russia due to prolific archiving of the leaders' speeches by the Russian governmental services. While Iranian Supreme leader's speeches were also available in sufficient number from the state's official sources, the number of available speeches of Ahmadinejad and Al-Assad was very limited. Moreover, due to the data limitations there was no possibility to balance prepared and spontaneous speeches or focus only on a specific type of speeches as that would lead to insufficient amount of data to create a profile for the relevant periods. As a result, when comparing the frequency of statistical significant changes estimated in the rhetoric of different leaders, researchers faced a difficulty of interpretation of the reasons behind a higher number of significant changes in Putin's rhetoric as compared to other leaders, the data for whom were more limited.

It is also necessary to acknowledge the general limitation of such on-distance research methods as the operational code analysis. As there is no possibility of conducting psychological tests with the studied leaders and especially doing so over the long period of time, the best possible alternative method for studying psychological characteristics and attitudes of such people is by focusing on their speeches, writings, or other products of communication. Of course, it remains difficult to argue that a prepared speech or even an interview reflects genuine belief of a specific leader and not a specifically designed political program. However, asking the same person directly about her/his beliefs would not necessarily provide a more genuine insight as the problem of misreported opinions in interviews and questionnaires is characteristic not only to leadership studies but also to public opinion research. Therefore, acknowledging such limitations of on-distance research,

one can argue that such analysis still provides the best possible approximation to the studied phenomenon. The implications of such limitations for operational code analysis and for this specific research is that it may be more appropriate to focus on general trends and evaluations estimated using this approach.

Finally, proposing a causal relationship and analyzing it either statistically or qualitatively may prove difficult especially when the dependent variable is a complex phenomenon such as political beliefs. While operational code analysis provides a possibility to estimate average psychological profiles of the studied leaders during a specific period of time, there are many international, domestic, or personal factors which can influence one's beliefs and learning. Therefore, besides testing the main hypothesis statistically, this research attempted to trace the processes which occurred during the the same periods when estimated belief changes were measured. This approach help this research identify whether the processes expected by the proposed mechanism of the sanction induced belief change were in place and whether other intervening processes also occurred and could contribute to the change.

Despite such limitations, this analysis was able to produce some important findings. First, it demonstrated the results consistent with earlier research of the related leaders, thus showing reliability of this method. Secondly, it has shown that there was change of beliefs as was proposed based on existing theories. Moreover, the estimated change of some beliefs was consistent across different cases. Third, even despite the discussed limitations of statistical analysis of small samples, many estimated changes were statistically significant. Finally, when evaluated from the perspective of the proposed mechanism and alternative explanations of the changes,

this research managed to eliminate some of the alternative explanations which could be controlled for by subcategorizing the studied time periods as happened in case of Russia or were discussed in terms of having impacts of the same (or opposite) direction.

As all sanction cases analyzed within this research represented ongoing sanctions, future studies continuing the analysis of psychological consequences of sanctions may find it useful to compare the cases of ongoing, failed, and successful sanctions to understand. Such analysis would allow investigating whether a different pattern of change is possible when a leader decides to comply with sanction demands and to identify the underlying factors behind such different pattern if it exists. Moreover, a more nuanced study of the beliefs towards different sanction senders, for example, focusing separately on the allies and rivals among sanction senders may be beneficial. Finally, future study may further research the targets' attitudes towards involuntary senders which apply only limited sanctions or even try to circumvent some of such secondary sanctions as the CAATSA restrictions which posed difficulties not only for Iran but also for some of the US allies. While such analyses were beyond out of scope of this research limited by data and other resource constraints, focusing on these questions may further improve our understanding of psychological effects of sanctions and the factors influencing belief change.

### **8.3. Contribution**

This dissertation brought together two usually non-communicating subfields of international relations and it makes several theoretical contributions to the area of operational code analysis and sanctions research. Besides identifying the areas of

operational code research requiring additional theorization and improvement, this study makes the following theoretical contributions.

Within the field of operational code analysis, it provides the first systematic study focusing on a specific external shock and its possible impacts on political beliefs of the country leaders targeted by sanctions. Earlier studies analyzing belief changes usually focused on case- or time-specific shocks such as the end of the Cold War and its impact on communist leaders or the start of the USSR intervention in Afghanistan war and its importance for the US president. Therefore, findings of such studies were largely limited to those specific cases and relationships and were difficult to generalize to other settings beyond the idea that external shocks or unexpected events may lead to belief shifts. In contrast, this dissertation focuses on a single type of external shocks in the shape of economic sanctions which are increasingly often applied in international relations. Moreover, this research provides both intra-case comparisons and inter-case comparisons to understand applicability of the same mechanism in different settings.

In particular, this dissertation provides two studies for the cases of Russia and Iran of intra-case differences and similarities controlling for the same setting (same country, same time period, same economic sanctions) while analyzing two different leaders of the same country (having variations in positions and backgrounds). Another type of intra-case comparison is provided in the chapter focusing on anti-Syria sanctions and providing a comparison how different sanctions in different time periods are likely to influence the same leader holding the same political post within the same state. The latter analysis allows understanding whether the observed outcomes are dependent

on specific sanction types when mostly controlling for personal characteristics of the leader (while acknowledging that other personal traits could also shift over time). Finally, in the discussion chapter this dissertation provides an inter-case comparison by bringing together results of all analyses conducted within this research and identifying common trends observed under different types of sanctions in different geographical and political contexts as applied to different leaders. The latter chapter, as a result, allows observing that some trends such as a less friendly or more hostile perception of 'others' is likely to occur in most instances of sanctions (in five out of six cases).

By following a design allowing for comparison across leaders and different settings of the same phenomenon of economic sanctions, this research provides the first systematic analysis of the effects of a specific type of external shocks on political beliefs of the targeted executives. This analysis shows that different leaders in different settings are likely to experience an update in beliefs in response to a similar type of shocks in a similar manner. It also shows that while economic sanctions are not likely to act as a drastic external shock which would lead to a sudden drastic belief change as happened in case of Carter (Walker, et al., 1998), the sanctions are more likely to induce learning in targeted leaders and result in their more hostile perception of the external world. Moreover, it demonstrates that even if political beliefs are thought to be stable, even such limited external shocks as sanctions may inflict statistically significant changes in leaders' beliefs while such updates are not necessary long-term and may further change over time. As a result, it is possible to argue that this study has managed to identify sanctions as an external shock of

limited impact which is likely to inflict some short-term or middle-term changes in operational code of targeted leaders.

Considering the economic sanction research, this dissertation provides one of the rare empirical and systematic studies of the psychological impacts of sanctions. While earlier studies of leaders in respect to sanctions focused directly on sanction-related rhetoric, this research provides the first evaluation of a broader impact of sanctions on the general political beliefs of targeted leaders. It demonstrates that while sanctions are often imposed to coerce a leader to cooperate with external powers, the imposition of sanctions and its effects are likely to make the leader to perceive others as more hostile and to start preferring less cooperative tactics when dealing with others. This finding may be important to understand the frequent lack of compliance with external demands or cooperative behavior under sanctions. It also may be important when assessing third country strategies necessary to successfully communicate with executives of sanctioned states.

Finally, the findings of this research are relevant both for scholars evaluating general political beliefs of state leaders and policy makers considering sanction imposition. Policy makers considering sanction imposition may find it beneficial to consider the psychological effects of sanctions when defining their expectations about and goals of sanctions. The results of this analysis show that targeted leaders are likely to begin preferring less cooperative strategies and see others as more hostile after sanction imposition. This observation suggests that contrary to the senders' demands for cooperation often accompanying sanctions, the likelihood of targets' cooperation may actually decrease after the sanctions are imposed. Moreover, these findings

show that the FPA studies attempting to analyze operational codes of state leaders may find it beneficial to take into account possible changes in such leaders' beliefs if they had experience with sanctions during their time in office.



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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's speeches used in the analysis

| Date               | Title                                                                                                                                                                             | Source                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| September 14, 2005 | General Assembly. Sixtieth session. 4 <sup>th</sup> plenary meeting<br>Wednesday, 14 September 2005, 3 p.m. New York                                                              | <a href="http://undocs.org/en/A/60/PV.4">http://undocs.org/en/A/60/PV.4</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| September 15, 2005 | Beginning of the meeting with the President of Iran Mahmoud Ahmadinejad                                                                                                           | <a href="http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/23173">http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/23173</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| September 17, 2005 | Address by H.E. Dr. Mahmood Ahmadinejad President of the Islamic Republic of Iran before the Sixtieth Session of the United Nations General Assembly New York — 17 September 2005 | <a href="https://www.un.org/webcast/ga/60/statements/iran050917eng.pdf">https://www.un.org/webcast/ga/60/statements/iran050917eng.pdf</a>                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| October 28, 2005   | Iran Focus: Transcript of speech by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad at “World Without Zionism” conference in Tehran. Tehran, Iran, Oct. 28                                  | <a href="https://www.iranfocus.com/en/terrorism/4164-transcript-iran-presidents-speech-threatening-israel/">https://www.iranfocus.com/en/terrorism/4164-transcript-iran-presidents-speech-threatening-israel/</a>                                                                                                                   |
| April 12, 2006     | President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad Announces Completion of Uranium Enrichment and the Nuclear Fuel Cycle                                                                               | <a href="https://www.iranwatch.org/library/government/iran/president/president-mahmoud-ahmadinejad-announces-completion-uranium-enrichment-and-nuclear-fuel-cycle">https://www.iranwatch.org/library/government/iran/president/president-mahmoud-ahmadinejad-announces-completion-uranium-enrichment-and-nuclear-fuel-cycle</a>     |
| June 15, 2006      | Beginning of Meeting with the President of Iran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad                                                                                                              | <a href="http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/23645">http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/23645</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| September 19, 2006 | Transcript of Ahmadinejad's U.N. Speech                                                                                                                                           | <a href="https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=6107339">https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=6107339</a>                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| September 20, 2006 | Remarks by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad Before the United States Council on Foreign Relations (Excerpts)                                                                 | <a href="https://www.iranwatch.org/library/government/iran/president/remarks-iranian-president-mahmoud-ahmadinejad-united-states-council-foreign-relations-excerpts">https://www.iranwatch.org/library/government/iran/president/remarks-iranian-president-mahmoud-ahmadinejad-united-states-council-foreign-relations-excerpts</a> |
| January 24, 2007   | Channel 2 Interview with President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (Excerpts)                                                                                                                 | <a href="https://www.iranwatch.org/library/government/iran/president">https://www.iranwatch.org/library/government/iran/president</a>                                                                                                                                                                                               |

|                    |                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                    |                                                                                                                           | ent/channel-2-interview-president-mahmoud-ahmadinejad-excerpts                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| September 21, 2007 | Transcript: Ahmadinejad Interview, Part 1                                                                                 | <a href="https://www.cbsnews.com/news/transcript-ahmadinejad-interview-part-1/">https://www.cbsnews.com/news/transcript-ahmadinejad-interview-part-1/</a>                                                                                                                                     |
| September 21, 2007 | Transcript: Ahmadinejad Interview, Part 2                                                                                 | <a href="https://www.cbsnews.com/news/transcript-ahmadinejad-interview-part-2/">https://www.cbsnews.com/news/transcript-ahmadinejad-interview-part-2/</a>                                                                                                                                     |
| September 24, 2007 | Iranian President Speech – Videolink to NYC journalists                                                                   | <a href="https://www.c-span.org/video/?201135-1/iranian-president-speech&amp;event=201135&amp;playEvent&amp;auto">https://www.c-span.org/video/?201135-1/iranian-president-speech&amp;event=201135&amp;playEvent&amp;auto</a>                                                                 |
| September 24, 2007 | Iranian President Speech At Columbia University                                                                           | <a href="https://www.c-span.org/video/?201143-1/iranian-president-speech">https://www.c-span.org/video/?201143-1/iranian-president-speech</a>                                                                                                                                                 |
| September 25, 2007 | General Assembly. Sixty-second session<br>5 <sup>th</sup> plenary meeting. Tuesday, 25 September 2007, 3 p.m.<br>New York | <a href="http://undocs.org/en/A/62/PV.5">http://undocs.org/en/A/62/PV.5</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| April 8, 2008      | President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's Speech Marking National Nuclear Day (Excerpts)                                            | <a href="https://www.iranwatch.org/library/government/iran/president/president-mahmoud-ahmadinejads-speech-marking-national-nuclear-day-excerpts">https://www.iranwatch.org/library/government/iran/president/president-mahmoud-ahmadinejads-speech-marking-national-nuclear-day-excerpts</a> |
| September 23, 2008 | General Assembly. Sixty-third session<br>6 <sup>th</sup> plenary meeting. Tuesday, 23 September 2008, 3 p.m.<br>New York  | <a href="http://undocs.org/en/A/63/PV.6">http://undocs.org/en/A/63/PV.6</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| September 26, 2008 | An Interview With President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad<br>By The New York Times                                                  | <a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/26/world/middleeast/26iran-transcript.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/26/world/middleeast/26iran-transcript.html</a>                                                                                                                           |
| April 20, 2009     | Ahmadinejad speech: full text                                                                                             | <a href="http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8010747.stm">http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8010747.stm</a>                                                                                                                                                                           |
| September 18, 2009 | NBC. Transcript: Interview with Iran's Ahmadinejad                                                                        | <a href="http://www.nbcnews.com/id/32913296/ns/world_news-mideast_n_africa/t/transcript-interview-irans-ahmadinejad/#.X1ZPfXkzatk">http://www.nbcnews.com/id/32913296/ns/world_news-mideast_n_africa/t/transcript-interview-irans-ahmadinejad/#.X1ZPfXkzatk</a>                               |
| September 23, 2009 | General Assembly Sixty-fourth session<br>4th plenary meeting Wednesday, 23 September 2009, 3 p.m. New York                | <a href="http://undocs.org/en/A/64/PV.4">http://undocs.org/en/A/64/PV.4</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| September 24, 2009 | Transcript: NPR Interviews Mahmoud Ahmadinejad                                                                            | <a href="https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=113175352">https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=113175352</a>                                                                                                                                                 |

|                    |                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| December 23, 2009  | Iran: Jon Snow interviews President Ahmadinejad                                                           | <a href="https://www.channel4.com/news/iran-jon-snow-interviews-president-ahmadinejad">https://www.channel4.com/news/iran-jon-snow-interviews-president-ahmadinejad</a>                                                                                                                           |
| May 3, 2010        | Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's Speech at the United Nations + transcript May 3, 2010                               | <a href="https://dandelionsalad.wordpress.com/2010/05/03/mahmoud-ahmadinejads-speech-at-the-united-nations-transcript/">https://dandelionsalad.wordpress.com/2010/05/03/mahmoud-ahmadinejads-speech-at-the-united-nations-transcript/</a>                                                         |
| September 21, 2010 | General Assembly Sixty-fifth session 5th plenary meeting Tuesday, 21 September 2010, 9 a.m. New York      | <a href="http://undocs.org/en/A/65/PV.5">http://undocs.org/en/A/65/PV.5</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| September 23, 2010 | General Assembly Sixty-fifth session 12th plenary meeting Thursday, 23 September 2010, 3 p.m. New York    | <a href="http://undocs.org/en/A/65/PV.12">http://undocs.org/en/A/65/PV.12</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| September 28, 2010 | Ahmadinejad exclusive to RT: way the world is run must change                                             | <a href="https://www.rt.com/usa/iran-world-run-change/">https://www.rt.com/usa/iran-world-run-change/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| May 15, 2011       | Breaking   Ahmadinejad TV Interview: Khamenei 'Like a Father to Our Society'                              | <a href="https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/tehranbureau/2011/05/breaking-ahmadinejad-in-live-tv-interview-appoints-caretaker-ministers.html">https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/tehranbureau/2011/05/breaking-ahmadinejad-in-live-tv-interview-appoints-caretaker-ministers.html</a> |
| August 4, 2011     | Ahmadinejad - the full exclusive interview                                                                | <a href="https://www.euronews.com/2011/08/04/ahmadinejad---the-full-exclusive-interview">https://www.euronews.com/2011/08/04/ahmadinejad---the-full-exclusive-interview</a>                                                                                                                       |
| August 14, 2011    | Nuclear weapons are the weapons of the previous century - Ahmadinejad to RT                               | <a href="https://www.rt.com/russia/ahmadinejad-exclusive-interview-rt/">https://www.rt.com/russia/ahmadinejad-exclusive-interview-rt/</a>                                                                                                                                                         |
| September 13, 2011 | Transcript of the Ahmadinejad interview (Washington Post)                                                 | <a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/transcript-of-the-ahmadinejad-interview/2011/09/13/gIQA7cF1PK_story.html">https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/transcript-of-the-ahmadinejad-interview/2011/09/13/gIQA7cF1PK_story.html</a>                                 |
| September 21, 2011 | Full Transcript: Interview With President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran                                     | <a href="https://abcnews.go.com/blogs/politics/2011/09/full-transcript-interview-with-president-mahmoud-ahmadinejad-of-iran">https://abcnews.go.com/blogs/politics/2011/09/full-transcript-interview-with-president-mahmoud-ahmadinejad-of-iran</a>                                               |
| September 22, 2011 | General Assembly. Sixty-sixth session 15th plenary meeting. Thursday, 22 September 2011, 11 a.m. New York | <a href="http://undocs.org/en/A/66/PV.15">http://undocs.org/en/A/66/PV.15</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| October 21, 2011   | FAREED ZAKARIA GPS Interview with Mahmoud Ahmadinejad                                                     | <a href="http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/1110/21/fzgps.01.html">http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/1110/21/fzgps.01.html</a>                                                                                                                                                           |
| September 24, 2012 | President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (High-level Meeting on the Rule of                                          | <a href="http://undocs.org/en/A/67/PV.3">http://undocs.org/en/A/67/PV.3</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

|                    |                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                     |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                    | Law at the National and International Levels)                                                                 |                                                                                                                                     |
| September 24, 2012 | PIERS MORGAN TONIGHT. Interview with President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad                                            | <a href="http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/1209/24/pmt.01.html">http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/1209/24/pmt.01.html</a> |
| September 26, 2012 | General Assembly. Sixty-seventh session<br>9th plenary meeting. Wednesday, 26 September 2012, 9 a.m. New York | <a href="http://undocs.org/en/A/67/PV.9">http://undocs.org/en/A/67/PV.9</a>                                                         |



## APPENDIX B. Bashar Al-Assad's speeches used in the analysis

| Date               | Title                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Source                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| June 19, 2000      | An Interview with Bashar Al-Assad                                                                                                                                                                           | <a href="https://www.memri.org/reports/interview-bashar-al-assad">https://www.memri.org/reports/interview-bashar-al-assad</a>                                                                                                                                       |
| 2000 <sup>22</sup> | President Bashar Al-Assad: inaugural address                                                                                                                                                                | <a href="https://al-bab.com/documents-section/president-bashar-al-assad-inaugural-address">https://al-bab.com/documents-section/president-bashar-al-assad-inaugural-address</a>                                                                                     |
| January 16, 2001   | Anti-Israel Statements by the President of Syria                                                                                                                                                            | <a href="https://www.memri.org/reports/anti-israel-statements-president-syria">https://www.memri.org/reports/anti-israel-statements-president-syria</a>                                                                                                             |
| February 8, 2001   | Interview with President Bashar al-Assad                                                                                                                                                                    | <a href="https://al-bab.com/documents-section/interview-president-bashar-al-assad-0">https://al-bab.com/documents-section/interview-president-bashar-al-assad-0</a>                                                                                                 |
|                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <a href="https://al-bab.com/documents-section/interview-president-bashar-al-assad">https://al-bab.com/documents-section/interview-president-bashar-al-assad</a>                                                                                                     |
| April 4, 2001      | Syria's Bashar Assad's Speech at the Arab Summit                                                                                                                                                            | <a href="https://www.memri.org/reports/syria-bashar-assads-speech-arab-summit">https://www.memri.org/reports/syria-bashar-assads-speech-arab-summit</a>                                                                                                             |
| July 23, 2001      | An Interview with Bashar Al-Assad                                                                                                                                                                           | <a href="https://www.memri.org/reports/interview-bashar-al-assad-0">https://www.memri.org/reports/interview-bashar-al-assad-0</a>                                                                                                                                   |
| March 28, 2003     | An Interview with Bashar Al-Assad: 'The Arab Defense Agreement Should Be Implemented'; 'As Long as Israel Exists It Will Constitute a Threat'; 'Israel Will Not Be a Legitimate State Even After the Peace' | <a href="https://www.memri.org/reports/interview-bashar-al-assad-arab-defense-agreement-should-be-implemented-long-israel-exists-it">https://www.memri.org/reports/interview-bashar-al-assad-arab-defense-agreement-should-be-implemented-long-israel-exists-it</a> |
| May 31, 2003       | Kuwaiti Newspaper Interview with Bashar Al-Assad                                                                                                                                                            | <a href="https://www.memri.org/reports/kuwaiti-newspaper-interview-bashar-al-assad">https://www.memri.org/reports/kuwaiti-newspaper-interview-bashar-al-assad</a>                                                                                                   |
| June 22, 2003      | Bashar Al-Assad's Interview with Al-Arabiya                                                                                                                                                                 | <a href="https://www.memri.org/reports/bashar-al-assads-interview-al-arabiya#_edn1">https://www.memri.org/reports/bashar-al-assads-interview-al-arabiya#_edn1</a>                                                                                                   |
| October 15, 2003   | Syrian President Al-Assad Interviewed by Al-Hayat                                                                                                                                                           | <a href="https://www.memri.org/reports/syrian-president-al-assad-interviewed-al-hayat#_edn1">https://www.memri.org/reports/syrian-president-al-assad-interviewed-al-hayat#_edn1</a>                                                                                 |
| January 19, 2004   | Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad: 'Were There Not Forgiveness and Democracy in Syria, There Would be Harsher Measures Against the Opposition'                                                               | <a href="https://www.memri.org/reports/syrian-president-bashar-al-assad-were-there-not-forgiveness-and-democracy-syria-there-would">https://www.memri.org/reports/syrian-president-bashar-al-assad-were-there-not-forgiveness-and-democracy-syria-there-would</a>   |
| May 14, 2004       | Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad on Al-Jazeera                                                                                                                                                              | <a href="https://www.memri.org/reports/syrian-president-bashar-al-assad-al-jazeera">https://www.memri.org/reports/syrian-president-bashar-al-assad-al-jazeera</a>                                                                                                   |

<sup>22</sup> The speech was made around July 17, 2000, as per [https://www.memri.org/reports/acceptance-speech-dr-bashar-al-assad#\\_edn2](https://www.memri.org/reports/acceptance-speech-dr-bashar-al-assad#_edn2)

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|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| October 14, 2004                                 | Syrian President Bashar al-Assad: 'Do Western Countries Want to Fling the Entire Region Into the Volcano? Haven't We Learned From 9/11, From the War in Iraq?... When a Volcano Erupts, its Core Strikes Countries Near and Far, Great and Small, Powerful and We | <a href="https://www.memri.org/reports/syrian-president-bashar-al-assad-do-western-countries-want-fling-entire-region-volcano">https://www.memri.org/reports/syrian-president-bashar-al-assad-do-western-countries-want-fling-entire-region-volcano</a>                                                                                                                   |
| February 28, 2005<br>(published: March 02, 2005) | Asad Interview with Alix Van Buren - Republica                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <a href="http://joshualandis.oucreate.com//syriablog/2005/03/asad-interview-with-alix-van-buren.htm">http://joshualandis.oucreate.com//syriablog/2005/03/asad-interview-with-alix-van-buren.htm</a>                                                                                                                                                                       |
| August 29, 2005                                  | SPIEGEL Interview with Syrian President Assad<br>"Poverty Is a Greater Concern for Most than a Democratic Constitution"                                                                                                                                           | <a href="https://www.spiegel.de/international/spiegel/spiegel-interview-with-syrian-president-assad-poverty-is-a-greater-concern-for-most-than-a-democratic-constitution-a-372131.html">https://www.spiegel.de/international/spiegel/spiegel-interview-with-syrian-president-assad-poverty-is-a-greater-concern-for-most-than-a-democratic-constitution-a-372131.html</a> |
| October 12, 2005                                 | Al-Assad: 'Syria has nothing to do with this crime'                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <a href="https://edition.cnn.com/2005/WORLD/meast/10/12/alassad.transcript/">https://edition.cnn.com/2005/WORLD/meast/10/12/alassad.transcript/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| November 10, 2005                                | Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad: Some Lebanese Are Blood Merchants Who Have Turned the Blood of Al-Hariri into a Stock Exchange that Yields Money and Positions                                                                                                  | <a href="https://www.memri.org/tv/syrian-president-bashar-al-assad-some-lebanese-are-blood-merchants-who-have-turned-blood-al">https://www.memri.org/tv/syrian-president-bashar-al-assad-some-lebanese-are-blood-merchants-who-have-turned-blood-al</a>                                                                                                                   |
| December 5, 2005                                 | Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad: Why Investigate Al-Hariri's Assassination and Not Arafat's Assassination, Arafat Was More Important                                                                                                                             | <a href="https://www.memri.org/tv/syrian-president-bashar-al-assad-why-investigate-al-hariris-assassination-and-not-arafats">https://www.memri.org/tv/syrian-president-bashar-al-assad-why-investigate-al-hariris-assassination-and-not-arafats</a>                                                                                                                       |
| December 11, 2005                                | Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad: If Sanctions Are Imposed on Syria, the Entire World Will Pay the Price                                                                                                                                                          | <a href="https://www.memri.org/tv/syrian-president-bashar-al-assad-if-sanctions-are-imposed-syria-entire-world-will-pay-price">https://www.memri.org/tv/syrian-president-bashar-al-assad-if-sanctions-are-imposed-syria-entire-world-will-pay-price</a>                                                                                                                   |
| August 15, 2006                                  | Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad: Adopting Peace as a Strategic Option Does Not Mean Giving Up Other Options                                                                                                                                                      | <a href="https://www.memri.org/tv/syrian-president-bashar-al-assad-adopting-peace-strategic-option-does-not-mean-giving-other">https://www.memri.org/tv/syrian-president-bashar-al-assad-adopting-peace-strategic-option-does-not-mean-giving-other</a>                                                                                                                   |
| August 15, 2006<br>(published: August 22, 2006)  | Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad Praises the Resistance, Harshly Criticizes Arab Leaders, and Threatens Israel                                                                                                                                                    | <a href="https://www.memri.org/reports/syrian-president-bashar-al-assad-praises-resistance-harshly-criticizes-arab-leaders-and">https://www.memri.org/reports/syrian-president-bashar-al-assad-praises-resistance-harshly-criticizes-arab-leaders-and</a>                                                                                                                 |
| February 6, 2007                                 | Syrian President Says He Can Help Broker Peace                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <a href="https://abcnews.go.com/GMA/story?id=2849435&amp;page=1">https://abcnews.go.com/GMA/story?id=2849435&amp;page=1</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| May 7, 2007                                      | Transcript: Syrian President Bashar Assad (NBC news                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <a href="https://www.today.com/news/transcript-syrian-president-bashar-">https://www.today.com/news/transcript-syrian-president-bashar-</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

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|------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                  | interview)                                                                                                                                                                                               | assad-wbna18535452                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| July 13, 2008    | Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad: Sarkozy Had to Mention Human Rights in Syria for Internal French Reasons; Only When an Agreement with Israel Is Signed Will We Consider a Meeting with Israeli Leaders | <a href="https://www.memri.org/tv/syrian-president-bashar-al-assad-sarkozy-had-mention-human-rights-syria-internal-french-reasons">https://www.memri.org/tv/syrian-president-bashar-al-assad-sarkozy-had-mention-human-rights-syria-internal-french-reasons</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| January 19, 2009 | SPIEGEL Interview with Syrian President Bashar Assad 'Peace without Syria Is Unthinkable'                                                                                                                | <a href="https://www.spiegel.de/international/world/spiegel-interview-with-syrian-president-bashar-assad-peace-without-syria-is-unthinkable-a-602110.html">https://www.spiegel.de/international/world/spiegel-interview-with-syrian-president-bashar-assad-peace-without-syria-is-unthinkable-a-602110.html</a>                                                                                                                                                                |
| March 17, 2009   | “Interview with President Bashar al-Assad” by Alix Van Buren in La Repubblica                                                                                                                            | <a href="https://www.joshualandis.com/blog/interview-with-president-bashar-al-assad-by-alix-van-buren-in-la-repubblica/">https://www.joshualandis.com/blog/interview-with-president-bashar-al-assad-by-alix-van-buren-in-la-repubblica/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| May 25, 2010     | President Assad Interview with La Repubblica Translated in Full                                                                                                                                          | <a href="https://www.joshualandis.com/blog/president-assad-interview-with-la-repubblica-translated-in-full/">https://www.joshualandis.com/blog/president-assad-interview-with-la-repubblica-translated-in-full/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| October 7, 2010  | Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad: ..<br>(Excerpts from a TRT Arabic interview)                                                                                                                           | <a href="https://www.memri.org/tv/syrian-president-bashar-al-assad-i-did-not-promise-conduct-reforms">https://www.memri.org/tv/syrian-president-bashar-al-assad-i-did-not-promise-conduct-reforms</a><br><br><a href="https://www.memri.org/reports/syrian-president-bashar-al-assad-trt-arabic-tv-there-no-choice-conduct-resistance-i-did-not">https://www.memri.org/reports/syrian-president-bashar-al-assad-trt-arabic-tv-there-no-choice-conduct-resistance-i-did-not</a> |
| February 3, 2010 | Direct Quotes: Bashar Assad                                                                                                                                                                              | <a href="https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/direct-quotes-bashar-assad">https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/direct-quotes-bashar-assad</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| March 30, 2011   | Syria: speech by Bashar al-Assad<br><br>Speech by President Bashar al-Assad to the Syrian parliament on 30 March 2011 in response to a wave of protests around the country.                              | <a href="https://al-bab.com/documents-section/syria-speech-bashar-al-assad">https://al-bab.com/documents-section/syria-speech-bashar-al-assad</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| June 20, 2011    | Syria: speech by Bashar al-Assad<br><br>Speech by President Bashar al-Assad at Damascus University, 20 June 2011. This is a translation issued by the official Syrian news agency, Sana.                 | <a href="https://al-bab.com/documents-section/syria-speech-bashar-al-assad-1">https://al-bab.com/documents-section/syria-speech-bashar-al-assad-1</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| August 21, 2011  | Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad to U.S. President Barack Obama: Your Words Are Worthless                                                                                                                | <a href="https://www.memri.org/reports/syrian-president-bashar-al-assad-us-president-barack-obama-your-words-are-worthless">https://www.memri.org/reports/syrian-president-bashar-al-assad-us-president-barack-obama-your-words-are-worthless</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| December         | Interview With Syrian President                                                                                                                                                                          | <a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International">https://abcnews.go.com/International</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

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|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 6, 2011            | Bashar al-Assad                                                                                                                    | <a href="http://al-bab.com/documents-section/syria-speech-bashar-al-assad-3">al/transcript-abcs-barbara-walters-interview-syrian-president-bashar/story?id=15099152</a>                                                         |
| June 4, 2012       | Syria: speech by Bashar al-Assad<br>Speech by President Bashar al-Assad to the newly-elected Syrian parliament on 4 June 2012.     | <a href="https://al-bab.com/documents-section/syria-speech-bashar-al-assad-3">https://al-bab.com/documents-section/syria-speech-bashar-al-assad-3</a>                                                                           |
| August 29, 2012    | Syria: Bashar al-Assad interview<br>President Bashar al-Assad's interview with the Syrian TV station, Addounia, on 29 August 2012. | <a href="https://al-bab.com/documents-section/syria-bashar-al-assad-interview">https://al-bab.com/documents-section/syria-bashar-al-assad-interview</a>                                                                         |
| November 9, 2012   | Assad: Erdogan thinks he's Caliph, new sultan of the Ottoman (EXCLUSIVE)                                                           | <a href="https://www.rt.com/news/assad-interview-exclusive-syria-265/">https://www.rt.com/news/assad-interview-exclusive-syria-265/</a>                                                                                         |
| September 10, 2013 | Transcript of Bashar Al-Assad's interview with CBS                                                                                 | <a href="https://syrianobserver.com/interviews/34692/president_assads_interview_with_american_cbs_news.html">https://syrianobserver.com/interviews/34692/president_assads_interview_with_american_cbs_news.html</a>             |
| November 28, 2014  | Our Full Interview with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad                                                                           | <a href="https://www.parismatch.com/Actu/International/Our-Interview-with-Syrian-President-Bashar-al-Assad-661984">https://www.parismatch.com/Actu/International/Our-Interview-with-Syrian-President-Bashar-al-Assad-661984</a> |
| February 10, 2015  | Assad's BBC interview: Key excerpts                                                                                                | <a href="https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-31311895">https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-31311895</a>                                                                                                           |
| March 29, 2015     | Syrian President Bashar al-Assad on 60 Minutes                                                                                     | <a href="https://www.cbsnews.com/news/syria-president-bashar-al-assad-60-minutes-charlie-rose/">https://www.cbsnews.com/news/syria-president-bashar-al-assad-60-minutes-charlie-rose/</a>                                       |

## APPENDIX C. Ali Khamenei's speeches used in the analysis

| Date              | Title                                                                                                                     | Source                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| May 8, 2005       | Supreme Leader's Speech in Meeting with People of Rafsanjan                                                               | <a href="https://english.khamenei.ir/news/3820/Supreme-Leader-s-Speech-in-Meeting-with-People-of-Rafsanjan">https://english.khamenei.ir/news/3820/Supreme-Leader-s-Speech-in-Meeting-with-People-of-Rafsanjan</a>                     |
| May 9, 2005       | Excerpts from the speech delivered during a meeting with university students in Kerman                                    | <a href="https://english.khamenei.ir/news/5965/Excerpts-from-the-speech-delivered-during-a-meeting-with-university">https://english.khamenei.ir/news/5965/Excerpts-from-the-speech-delivered-during-a-meeting-with-university</a>     |
| May 31, 2005      | Supreme Leader's Speech in Meeting with Officials of 16th Imam Khomeini Demise Anniversary Ceremony                       | <a href="https://english.khamenei.ir/news/3819/Supreme-Leader-s-Speech-in-Meeting-with-Officials-of-16th-Imam">https://english.khamenei.ir/news/3819/Supreme-Leader-s-Speech-in-Meeting-with-Officials-of-16th-Imam</a>               |
| October 21, 2005  | Leader's Friday Prayer Address                                                                                            | <a href="https://english.khamenei.ir/news/3734/Leader-s-Friday-Prayer-Address">https://english.khamenei.ir/news/3734/Leader-s-Friday-Prayer-Address</a>                                                                               |
| October 30, 2005  | Leader's Speech to Government Officials                                                                                   | <a href="https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1789/Leader-s-Speech-to-Government-Officials">https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1789/Leader-s-Speech-to-Government-Officials</a>                                                             |
| November 4, 2005  | Leader's Speech to Government Officials on the Eid-al-Fitr                                                                | <a href="https://english.khamenei.ir/news/73/Leader-s-Speech-to-Government-Officials-on-the-Eid-al-Fitr">https://english.khamenei.ir/news/73/Leader-s-Speech-to-Government-Officials-on-the-Eid-al-Fitr</a>                           |
| February 27, 2006 | Leader's Speech to Governor-Generals                                                                                      | <a href="https://english.khamenei.ir/news/65/Leader-s-Speech-to-Governor-Generals">https://english.khamenei.ir/news/65/Leader-s-Speech-to-Governor-Generals</a>                                                                       |
| February 7, 2006  | Leader's Address to Air Force Servicemen                                                                                  | <a href="https://english.khamenei.ir/news/66/Leader-s-Address-to-Air-Force-Servicemen">https://english.khamenei.ir/news/66/Leader-s-Address-to-Air-Force-Servicemen</a>                                                               |
| March 26, 2006    | Leader's Speech to Basijis                                                                                                | <a href="https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1728/Leader-s-Speech-to-Basijis">https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1728/Leader-s-Speech-to-Basijis</a>                                                                                       |
| October 13, 2006  | Supreme Leader's Friday Prayer Address                                                                                    | <a href="https://english.khamenei.ir/news/7223/Supreme-Leader-s-Friday-Prayer-Address">https://english.khamenei.ir/news/7223/Supreme-Leader-s-Friday-Prayer-Address</a>                                                               |
| February 17, 2007 | Leader's Speech to the Residents of the Eastern Azarbaijan Province                                                       | <a href="https://english.khamenei.ir/news/3/Leader-s-Speech-to-the-Residents-of-the-Eastern-Azarbaijan-Province">https://english.khamenei.ir/news/3/Leader-s-Speech-to-the-Residents-of-the-Eastern-Azarbaijan-Province</a>           |
| February 22, 2007 | We should genuinely believe the people's faith in the Islamic government and appreciate its value                         | <a href="https://english.khamenei.ir/news/7511/We-should-genuinely-believe-the-people-s-faith-in-the-Islamic">https://english.khamenei.ir/news/7511/We-should-genuinely-believe-the-people-s-faith-in-the-Islamic</a>                 |
| April 6, 2007     | Leader's Address to the Officials and Executives of the Islamic Republic                                                  | <a href="https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1/Leader-s-Address-to-the-Officials-and-Executives-of-the-Islamic">https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1/Leader-s-Address-to-the-Officials-and-Executives-of-the-Islamic</a>                   |
| December 14, 2008 | Leader's Speech in Meeting with Professors and Students of University of Science and Technol                              | <a href="https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1899/Leader-s-Speech-in-Meeting-with-Professors-and-Students-of-University">https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1899/Leader-s-Speech-in-Meeting-with-Professors-and-Students-of-University</a> |
| July 27, 2009     | An excerpt of statements made in meeting with members of the Leadership Office and Revolutionary Guards Corps of Wali Amr | <a href="https://english.khamenei.ir/news/6436/An-excerpt-of-statements-made-in-meeting-with-members-of-the">https://english.khamenei.ir/news/6436/An-excerpt-of-statements-made-in-meeting-with-members-of-the</a>                   |
| September         | Leader's Speech to Members of the                                                                                         | <a href="https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1204/">https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1204/</a>                                                                                                                                           |

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| 24, 2009           | Assembly of Experts                                                             | Leader-s-Speech-to-Members-of-the-Assembly-of-Experts                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| March 21, 2009     | Leader's Speech in Mashhad                                                      | <a href="https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1076/Leader-s-Speech-in-Mashhad">https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1076/Leader-s-Speech-in-Mashhad</a>                                                                                                     |
| May 17, 2009       | Leader's Speech to Students and Academics of Kurdistan                          | <a href="https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1221/Leader-s-Speech-to-Students-and-Academics-of-Kurdistan">https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1221/Leader-s-Speech-to-Students-and-Academics-of-Kurdistan</a>                                             |
| January 26, 2010   | Leader's Speech in Meeting with People of Mazandaran                            | <a href="https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1929/Leader-s-Speech-in-Meeting-with-People-of-Mazandaran">https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1929/Leader-s-Speech-in-Meeting-with-People-of-Mazandaran</a>                                                 |
| May 24, 2010       | Leader's Speech to Students of Imam Hussein (a.s.) University                   | <a href="https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1330/Leader-s-Speech-to-Students-of-Imam-Hussein-a-s-University">https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1330/Leader-s-Speech-to-Students-of-Imam-Hussein-a-s-University</a>                                     |
| July 10, 2010      | Leader's Speech in Meeting with Government Officials on the Occasion of Mab'ath | <a href="https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1865/Leader-s-Speech-in-Meeting-with-Government-Officials-on-the-Occasion">https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1865/Leader-s-Speech-in-Meeting-with-Government-Officials-on-the-Occasion</a>                 |
| August 18, 2010    | Leader's Speech to Government Officials                                         | <a href="https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1354/Leader-s-Speech-to-Government-Officials">https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1354/Leader-s-Speech-to-Government-Officials</a>                                                                           |
| September 10, 2010 | Leader's Sermons during Eid ul-Fitr Prayers                                     | <a href="https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1860/Leader-s-Sermons-during-Eid-ul-Fitr-Prayers">https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1860/Leader-s-Sermons-during-Eid-ul-Fitr-Prayers</a>                                                                   |
| September 16, 2010 | Leader's Speech to Members of Assembly of Experts                               | <a href="https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1424/Leader-s-Speech-to-Members-of-Assembly-of-Experts">https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1424/Leader-s-Speech-to-Members-of-Assembly-of-Experts</a>                                                       |
| October 19, 2010   | Leader's Speech on His Arrival in Qom                                           | <a href="https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1369/Leader-s-Speech-on-His-Arrival-in-Qom">https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1369/Leader-s-Speech-on-His-Arrival-in-Qom</a>                                                                               |
| October 24, 2010   | Leader's Speech to Thousands of Basijis from Qom Province                       | <a href="https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1402/Leader-s-Speech-to-Thousands-of-Basijis-from-Qom-Province">https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1402/Leader-s-Speech-to-Thousands-of-Basijis-from-Qom-Province</a>                                       |
| May 29, 2011       | Leader's Speech to MPs                                                          | <a href="https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1470/Leader-s-Speech-to-MPs">https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1470/Leader-s-Speech-to-MPs</a>                                                                                                             |
| June 30, 2011      | Leader's Speech to Government Officials on Mab'ath                              | <a href="https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1483/Leader-s-Speech-to-Government-Officials-on-Mab-ath">https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1483/Leader-s-Speech-to-Government-Officials-on-Mab-ath</a>                                                     |
| August 29, 2011    | Leader's Speech in a Meeting with President Ahmadinejad and Cabinet Members     | <a href="https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1517/Leader-s-Speech-in-a-Meeting-with-President-Ahmadinejad-and-Cabinet-Members">https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1517/Leader-s-Speech-in-a-Meeting-with-President-Ahmadinejad-and-Cabinet-Members</a>   |
| June 18, 2012      | Leader's Speech to Government Officials and Ambassadors of Islamic Countries    | <a href="https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1645/Leader-s-Speech-to-Government-Officials-and-Ambassadors-of-Islamic-Countries">https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1645/Leader-s-Speech-to-Government-Officials-and-Ambassadors-of-Islamic-Countries</a> |
| November 21, 2012  | Leader's Speech to Basijis                                                      | <a href="https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1727/Leader-s-Speech-to-Basijis">https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1727/Leader-s-Speech-to-Basijis</a>                                                                                                     |
| October 31, 2012   | Leader's Speech to Students                                                     | <a href="https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1716/Leader-s-Speech-to-Students">https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1716/Leader-s-Speech-to-Students</a>                                                                                                   |
| June 3, 2012       | Leader's Speech at Imam Khomeini's (r.a.) Shrine                                | <a href="https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1640/Leader-s-Speech-at-Imam-Khomeini-s-r-a-Shrine">https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1640/Leader-s-Speech-at-Imam-Khomeini-s-r-a-Shrine</a>                                                               |

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|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| January 29, 2013  | Leader's Speech to Government Officials and Participants of Conference on Islamic Unity | <a href="https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1739/Leader-s-Speech-to-Government-Officials-and-Participants-of-Conference">https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1739/Leader-s-Speech-to-Government-Officials-and-Participants-of-Conference</a> |
| February 16, 2013 | Leader's Speech to People of East Azerbaijan                                            | <a href="https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1744/Leader-s-Speech-to-People-of-East-Azerbaijan">https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1744/Leader-s-Speech-to-People-of-East-Azerbaijan</a>                                                     |
| March 21, 2013    | Leader's Speech at Imam Ridha's (a.s.) Shrine                                           | <a href="https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1760/Leader-s-Speech-at-Imam-Ridha-s-a-s-Shrine">https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1760/Leader-s-Speech-at-Imam-Ridha-s-a-s-Shrine</a>                                                         |
| April 29, 2013    | Leader's Speech at Inauguration of Islamic Awakening and Ulama Conference               | <a href="https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1772/Leader-s-Speech-at-Inauguration-of-Islamic-Awakening-and-Ulama">https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1772/Leader-s-Speech-at-Inauguration-of-Islamic-Awakening-and-Ulama</a>                 |



## APPENDIX D. Dmitriy Medvedev's Speeches – A Sample of Interviews

In total 771 speeches of Dmitriy Medvedev related were collected. Out of these texts, 156 speeches or combined fragments from a single speech transcript were identified as texts related to foreign policy issues or actors. Due to space constraints, this appendix will present only a sample from this dataset. The table below presents 23 interviews which were used to calculate conceptual complexity and self-confidence scores of the executive following the LTA analysis.

| Date              | Title                                                                                           | Text                                                                                  |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 4 March 2019      | Dmitry Medvedev's interview with Bulgarian newspaper Trud                                       | <a href="http://government.ru/en/news/35903/">http://government.ru/en/news/35903/</a> |
| 2018              | Dmitry Medvedev's interview with Euronews TV channel 18 October                                 | <a href="http://government.ru/en/news/34370/">http://government.ru/en/news/34370/</a> |
| 28 April 2018     | Dmitry Medvedev's Interview with Vesti v Subbotu                                                | <a href="http://government.ru/en/news/32506/">http://government.ru/en/news/32506/</a> |
| 15 February 2018  | Dmitry Medvedev's interview with Rossiya 24 network                                             | <a href="http://government.ru/en/news/31392/">http://government.ru/en/news/31392/</a> |
| 9 October 2017    | Dmitry Medvedev's interview with Algerian news agency APS                                       | <a href="http://government.ru/en/news/29557/">http://government.ru/en/news/29557/</a> |
| 10 September 2016 | Excerpts from Dmitry Medvedev's interview with the Vesti v Subbotu (News on Saturday) programme | <a href="http://government.ru/en/news/24500/">http://government.ru/en/news/24500/</a> |
| 9 April 2016      | Dmitry Medvedev's Interview to Rossiya TV Channel's Vesti v Subbotu                             | <a href="http://government.ru/en/news/22541/">http://government.ru/en/news/22541/</a> |
| 14 February 2016  | Dmitry Medvedev's Interview with Euronews TV channel                                            | <a href="http://government.ru/en/news/21789/">http://government.ru/en/news/21789/</a> |
| 11 February 2016  | Dmitry Medvedev's interview for Handelsblatt Germany                                            | <a href="http://government.ru/en/news/21765/">http://government.ru/en/news/21765/</a> |
| 9 December 2015   | In Conversation with Dmitry Medvedev: Interview with five television channels                   | <a href="http://government.ru/en/news/20945/">http://government.ru/en/news/20945/</a> |
| 9 November 2015   | Excerpts from Dmitry Medvedev's interview with Rossiyskaya Gazeta                               | <a href="http://government.ru/en/news/20456/">http://government.ru/en/news/20456/</a> |
| 3 October 2015    | Dmitry Medvedev's interview with Rossiya 1 TV Channel                                           | <a href="http://government.ru/en/news/19936/">http://government.ru/en/news/19936/</a> |
| 25 July 2015      | Dmitry Medvedev's interview with Slovenian newspaper Delo                                       | <a href="http://government.ru/en/news/19018/">http://government.ru/en/news/19018/</a> |
| 23 May 2015       | Dmitry Medvedev's interview with Rossiya 1 TV network                                           | <a href="http://government.ru/en/news/18220/">http://government.ru/en/news/18220/</a> |
| 5 April 2015      | Dmitry Medvedev's interview with Vietnamese media                                               | <a href="http://government.ru/en/news/17527/">http://government.ru/en/news/17527/</a> |
| 15 October 2014   | Dmitry Medvedev's interview with                                                                | <a href="http://government.ru/en">http://government.ru/en</a>                         |

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|------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                  | CNBC                                                                                                                                                       | /news/15235/                                                                          |
| 24 May 2014      | Dmitry Medvedev's interview with the Rossiya-1 TV channel                                                                                                  | <a href="http://government.ru/en/news/12590/">http://government.ru/en/news/12590/</a> |
| 22 January 2014  | Dmitry Medvedev's interview with CNN                                                                                                                       | <a href="http://government.ru/en/news/9868/">http://government.ru/en/news/9868/</a>   |
| 1 November 2013  | Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev speaks in an interview with Reuters                                                                                         | <a href="http://government.ru/en/news/7914/">http://government.ru/en/news/7914/</a>   |
| 6 August 2013    | Dmitry Medvedev's interview with the Position programme for Georgia's Rustavi 2 TV network                                                                 | <a href="http://government.ru/en/news/3572/">http://government.ru/en/news/3572/</a>   |
| 7 December 2012  | "A Conversation With Dmitry Medvedev." Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev interviewed by five TV channels                                                      | <a href="http://government.ru/en/news/6550">http://government.ru/en/news/6550</a>     |
| 26 November 2012 | Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev gives an interview to France Presse and Le Figaro                                                                           | <a href="http://government.ru/en/news/5919/">http://government.ru/en/news/5919/</a>   |
| 5 November 2012  | Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev's interview with the Vietnam Information Agency, the Vietnam VTV television channel, and The Voice of Vietnam radio station | <a href="http://government.ru/en/news/6334/">http://government.ru/en/news/6334/</a>   |

## APPENDIX E. Vladimir Putin's Speeches – A Sample of Interviews

In total 2847 speeches of Vladimir Putin were collected out of which 445 speeches or combined fragments of a single speech were identified as texts related to foreign policy actors or issues. Due to space constraints, the following table presents a sub-sample of the collected speeches consisting of 29 interviews related to both domestic and foreign issues and used to analyze LTA scores of cognitive complexity and self-confidence.

| Date              | Title                                                                        | Source                                                                                                                        |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| September 2, 2019 | Interview for Mongolian newspaper Udriin Sonin                               | <a href="http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/61414">http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/61414</a> |
| July 4, 2019      | Interview with Italian newspaper Corriere della Sera                         | <a href="http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/60912">http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/60912</a> |
| June 13, 2019     | Vladimir Putin's interview to Mir Interstate Television and Radio Company    | <a href="http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/60741">http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/60741</a> |
| January 16, 2019  | Interviews to Serbian periodicals Politika and Večernje novosti              | <a href="http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/59680">http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/59680</a> |
| July 17, 2018     | Interview to Fox News Channel                                                | <a href="http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/58019">http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/58019</a> |
| June 4, 2018      | Interview with Austrian ORF television channel                               | <a href="http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/57675">http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/57675</a> |
| June 5, 2017      | Interview to NBC                                                             | <a href="http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/54688">http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/54688</a> |
| April 12, 2017    | Interview to Mir broadcasting company                                        | <a href="http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/54271">http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/54271</a> |
| October 13, 2016  | Interview to Rossiya Segodnya International News Agency and IANS News Agency | <a href="http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/53082">http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/53082</a> |
| August 5, 2016    | Interview to Azerbaijan State News Agency AZERTAC                            | <a href="http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/52650">http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/52650</a> |
| January 11, 2016  | Interview to German newspaper Bild. Part 1                                   | <a href="http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/51154">http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/51154</a> |
| November 13, 2015 | Interview to Interfax and Anadolu news agencies                              | <a href="http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/50682">http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/50682</a> |
| January 12, 2016  | Interview to German newspaper Bild. Part 2                                   | <a href="http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/51155">http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/51155</a> |
| July 27, 2015     | Interview with Swiss media                                                   | <a href="http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/50066">http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/50066</a> |
| May 9,            | Interview to Rossiya television                                              | <a href="http://en.kremlin.ru/events/pre">http://en.kremlin.ru/events/pre</a>                                                 |

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|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2015              | channel                                                           | sident/transcripts/49454                                                                                                      |
| February 9, 2015  | Interview to Al-Ahram daily                                       | <a href="http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/47643">http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/47643</a> |
| November 24, 2014 | Interview to TASS News Agency                                     | <a href="http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/47054">http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/47054</a> |
| November 14, 2014 | Interview to TASS News Agency                                     | <a href="http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/47009">http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/47009</a> |
| November 17, 2014 | Interview to German TV channel ARD                                | <a href="http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/47029">http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/47029</a> |
| October 15, 2014  | Interview to Politika newspaper                                   | <a href="http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/46806">http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/46806</a> |
| July 15, 2014     | Interview given to Russian news agency ITAR-TASS                  | <a href="http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/46218">http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/46218</a> |
| June 4, 2014      | Vladimir Putin's interview with Radio Europe 1 and TF1 TV channel | <a href="http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/45832">http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/45832</a> |
| April 19, 2014    | Interview to Vesti v Subbotu programme                            | <a href="http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/20813">http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/20813</a> |
| March 5, 2014     | Interview before the Sochi Paralympics                            | <a href="http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/20374">http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/20374</a> |
| January 19, 2014  | Interview to Russian and foreign media                            | <a href="http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/20080">http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/20080</a> |
| September 4, 2013 | Interview to Channel One and Associated Press news agency         | <a href="http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/19143">http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/19143</a> |
| June 14, 2013     | Interview to RIA Novosti News Agency                              | <a href="http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/18338">http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/18338</a> |
| March 22, 2013    | Interview to the ITAR-TASS news agency                            | <a href="http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/17723">http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/17723</a> |
| September 6, 2012 | Interview to Russia Today TV Channel                              | <a href="http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/16393">http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/16393</a> |