

Resistance Agriculture: The Strategic Driver of Resistance Economy and Production Prosperity

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Abstract

Resistance economy is the main strategy of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the axis of resistance against intentional and unintentional economic fluctuations in the world setting. Like other areas of Jihad and resistance, the resistance economy is formed and will remain stable by relying on the people. The first step in realizing this is to identify the capacities and improve the management of their intelligent exploitation. One of the most important economic capacities of the country is the agricultural sector, which can play a key role in promoting the national economy and accomplishing the resistance economy. Since the agricultural sector possesses all the components of a resistance economy, this sector is considered the most popular economic sector in Iran. As well, it is responsible for the food security of the people and constitutes the basis of health security. Given the important attributes of the agricultural sector, it can be the core of the realization of the resistance economy. In this regard, the present study describes the topics of resistance economy and then the agricultural sector as one of the effective sub-sectors in the realization of the resistance economy and uses policy research and case study (document and library study) to explore the significance of the agricultural sector in accomplishing the goals of the resistance economy and to present some approaches. The results show the significance of paying more attention to investment in this sector as an alternative for oil revenue. The investment should be made in all of its aspects, from the research sector to the support of producers and the motivation of internal investors towards production enhancement.

Keywords: Capacities of the Agricultural Sector; National Development; Policy Recommendations; Resistance Economy

Introduction

The Islamic Republic of Iran is based on religious teachings and since it seeks independence from the global hegemony, its ideology is opposite to the world. As such, new equations have been developed in the political arena of the contemporary world. This conflict of ideology has made the opposing countries resort to any tools they have at their disposal to defy the growth and prosperity of these views. Given the structure of the global economy and the economic interdependence of countries, an instrument by which the dominant system encounters independent countries, like Iran, is economic warfare; a war that has started since the Islamic Revolution and aims to gradually weaken the national economy,

thereby leading the country towards a collapse or transformation. To cope with these conditions and given the studies on the economic system of Iran by the academia, the policies of resistance economy as an engineered map was issued by the Supreme Leader [5]. As the only approach to coping with inhuman sanctions, the resistance economy is not just a material tool to counter invasions, but it is also an approach derived from the spirit of Islam that combines material and economic issues with Jihad and spirituality. Perhaps, the most important component of a resistance economy is its popularity because when people are relied upon, their potentials are realized which are then organized and boosted by relying on the same people. Indeed, unlike austerity measures taken in some western countries whose economies are on the verge of bankrupt-

cy, the resistance economy does not pursue weakening the status of people; rather, this approach is accomplished by people's empowerment. The different economic sectors can each have a special role in the realization of this economy. In this respect, the agricultural sector can be the axis of the resistance economy because it has some advantages and features that are closer to the indices of the resistance economy. For instance, about 20 million people in Iran are directly related to agriculture and the food security and the security of material and spiritual health of the country depend on the safe production of healthy and halal food, and undoubtedly the only way to ensure it is to produce food products domestically. Overall, the agricultural industry has all components of resistance economy and is indeed the most popular economic sector of Iran given that nearly 98% of the activities in this sector are performed by non-governmental authorities. In addition, about four million households in production units are directly employed in crop production. All in all, this sector accounts for 12% of the gross domestic product. In addition to all these potentials, the agricultural sector can lay the ground for swift progress in other industries. On the other hand, when it comes to the issue of resistance economy, all potentials including the potentials of the agricultural sector should be studied, identified, and organized towards solving the problems and weaknesses [2]. In other words, the correct implementation of resistance economy policies and their success in practice requires attention to and exploitation of all potentials and capabilities of the economic and non-economic subsectors, especially the agricultural sector. So, given the key role of the agricultural sector in the economy, it is of significance to study the factors affecting the growth of this sector and their impacts on the general economic growth [10]. Therefore, since the agricultural sector is highly capable of creating and developing food production, employment, and food security of the country, it can be considered the core of the resistance economy. In this respect, the present paper aims to discuss the resistance economy and briefly explore the status and potentials of the agricultural sector as an effective sub-sector in realizing the resistance economy. It is hoped that all subsectors in the Islamic Republic system take practical steps in considering and using their potentials for the accomplishment of this ultimate goal.

Methodology

The present study adopted the policy research method to formulate the policies required and provide the policy approaches about the subject matter. A great part of the work was conducted

by the library and document method. Policy analysis refers to social-applied science that uses information to solve policy problems and analyzes and evaluates public policy options to be selected by policymakers. In fact, a policy paper is a decision tool that defines an immediate policy issue, identifies and evaluates policy options (policy alternatives), and finally recommends a preferred alternative (policy recommendation). In other words, the present policy paper aims to present some policy recommendations. In this regard, the policy analysis steps include (i) defining policy goals, (ii) introducing and selecting policy tools, (iii) designing policy implementation, and (iv) monitoring and evaluating the policy. The key question is whether or not the paper introduces the problem, provides the possible solutions, or evaluates the effectiveness of the alternatives and recommendations according to the action period for follow-up [7].

The present policy analysis aimed to define and address the agricultural sector as the most important alternative for petroleum and the key driver of the resistance economy in practice. The instrument used here includes the single-purpose research findings, professional/academic journals, and the experiences of other countries that are competent, reliable, simple, and stable. The policy implementation step of the analysis collects multi-task organizations and groups that intend to cooperate. A reason for the failure of policy reforms has been inattention to policy implementation and inattention to the fact that how policy reform is organized. Surveillance allows the collection of data as indicators of progress in using data and achieving outputs and evaluation is an estimation of an undergoing policy in terms of design, implementation, impacts, and consequences. It is hoped that the process defined here for policy formulation is used for policy implementation and it can be a step towards organizing and coordinating target organizations and groups. Also, the process of surveillance and evaluation can be effective in improving policy implementation.

Literature Review

Resistance economy: Concepts, objectives, instances

From the perspective of the Quranic teachings, the economy is the basis of consistency in society, meaning that the survival of a human community depends on a healthy economy. Allah says about the role of the economy in human society, 'Do not give the feeble-minded your property, which Allah has assigned you to manage.' In this verse, Allah perceives assets, i.e., the economy, as the cause of

the social rising. So, the economy in society is the pillar on which the tent of the society rests. If the economy of a society is destroyed or weakened, the society will be hurt. This verse and other verses in the Quran reflect the significance of economy in human life and social survival. Indeed, Allah says that the satisfaction of the real happiness for humans lies on monotheism, a healthy economy, and abstinence from corruption in verses like verse 85 of Al-Araf and verses 84-86 of Hud. He states that the economic and livelihood issues of people have an important place as significant as religious and worshipping issues such as in verses 3, 41, 43, 83, 177, and 277 of Al-Baqarah, verse 39 of Al-Nisa, and Verses 2 and 3 of Al-Anfal. In the view of the Quran, the economy is not only influential in the material issues of humans and societies, but a role beyond it can also be assumed for the economy. Therefore, Allah emphasizes the role of economic benefits on spirituality. Based on the religious teachings, especially the Quranic verses, an Islamic nation should be inherently strong and vigorous and should prioritize the exploitation of anything it has at its disposal. For example, verse 28 of At-Tawbah points to this necessity. In this verse, Allah not only perceives that the economic need of an Islamic nation is the cause of its dependence and its abjection but it also encourages cutting all economic dependence on the foreigners and reminds those who are concerned about the breakdown of the economic system after cutting the relations with polytheists and enemies that not only it will not disrupt the economy but it will also cause economic prosperity and will lead to the growth and progress of the national economy. So, one important requirement for robustness is related to the economy. If this happens, the authority of the Islamic nation will be dreadful for the enemies.

The conceptualization of resistance and resistance economy

The term *resistance* or *resilience* refers to the role of assets in the Islamic view. In Islamic culture, an asset is a tool whose value depends on how it is used. The efficacy of an asset lies in reinforcing human endeavors and his/her movements towards superior goals and empowering him/her to reach more ultimate goals. From another perspective, resilience refers to the potential of returning to the initial state after being shocked. But, this term has various meanings in different literature. For example, resilience in psychology refers to the mental resilience of an individual after a period of depression or disease. In other words, this term is used to measure the mental resilience against stresses or sudden psychic pressure. In physics and engineering, it is defined as the potential of materials in absorbing energy. Resilience in this sense refers

to the physical resilience of materials in conserving their visual form after exposure to pressure or tension (elasticity). Based on this concept, economic resilience discusses the capability of an economy in returning to its normal functioning after exposure to shocks. These shocks may have external causes and/or may originate from internal weaknesses. In this respect, there are two broad approaches to studying and analyzing economic resilience [6].

- Risk management approach: in this approach, the risk of the system's failure is estimated.
- Resilience engineering approach: this approach includes the methods of reinforcing the system's resilience and making more flexibility against pressures.

Some experts define the resistance economy as an institutionalized form of economic warfare by the transitional reorganization of socioeconomic relations. Based on this theory, a transition period should be first defined in socioeconomic relations harmonized with political requirements and the goals based on national independence and freedom. As such, a resistance economy is a policy-based economic development strategy by a series of social norms and values. Therefore, a resistance economy is by nature a social and political strategy that aims to help nations in their fight for the right of self-determination. Some definitions perceive sanctioned economies as belligerent economies or economies in distress. By these definitions, the measurement of economic activities in sanctioned nations requires techniques different from those in other nations. Iran is an example country that is suffering from economic pressure and sanctions. The economy of a country that is subject to sanctions should be measured with specific techniques. This can be divided into domestic and foreign sections because Iran's economy needs to exercise socio-economic reforms to fight economic and political corruptions and rentiers as much as it requires resistance against sanctions. This is based on the Islamic economy and is against the capitalist economy. The Islamic economy has its root in the heart of people and can be accomplished only when the authorities and officials accept it by their heart and turn this thinking into practice in different sectors. The weakness of Iran's economy in its dependence on a single product, i.e., petroleum, granted the West the opportunity of petroleum sanctions. While petroleum could be a tool of Iran's pressure on the West, it has become a tool of the West's pressure on Iran's economy. The resistance economy

seeks a way out of this situation. It is not specific to the period of sanctions or warfare, but it is a long-term perspective for Iran's economy [20].

Resistance economy in supreme leader's view

Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, perceives the resistance economy as an economy that can drive the growth and prosperity of the nation under the pressure of sanctions and hostilities (Supreme Leader's Speech to Students on August 6, 2012). The Islamic Republic of Iran has always insisted on its principles and aspirations and has always emphasized to its enemies that if they do not stop hostility, everything will change. However, it should be noted that given the persistence of hostilities, the resistance economy is a perpetual strategy for this country because even if sanctions and pressures are withdrawn, hostilities will still continue. The local and global experiences of resistance economies show that this has happened in different countries and still continues. The resistance economy means the management of the country so as to minimize the risks. In other words, an institution is to be built (a series of policies, rules, and administrative arrangements should be adopted) in Iran's economy to minimize its risk-taking against the harmful domestic and foreign shocks and agitations, especially the international sanctions, and to pave the way for Iran to accomplish sustainable economic progress.

Background: Local and global experiences in resistance economy

- Economic resistance in a colonial environment with a special focus on India
- Contemporary forms of economic resistance to neoliberal policies with a focus on Brazil
- Resistance during the First Intifada in Palestine (1987-1993)

India has experienced a resistance economy and Mahatma Gandhi is a symbol of resistance economy during the British colonization of India. In the contemporary world, one can make example of the resistance economy against neoliberal policies in Brazil during which the so-called 'landless farmers' movement was formed based on agriculture.

Resistance economy in first Palestinian intifada

The resistance of Palestinians in the First Intifada against the Zionist regime can be explored from the political, social, and economic aspects.

Political goals

- Challenging the colonial goals of the Zionist regime in expropriating Palestinian lands
- Revising the policy of supporting the resistance of Palestinians in their own lands
- Supporting local products instead of the Zionist products
- Reducing dependence on international aids to reform political decision-making
- Attracting actors with the will and ability to cooperate in the development of new political structures

Social goals

- Promoting social solidarity and cohesion among different social sectors
- Expanding voluntary and collective work of social organizations and related actions
- Establishing a just social system and eradicating class tensions and methods of exploitation
- Increasing a sense of responsibility, commitment, and concern among the members of society
- Reinforcing relations among Palestinians inside and outside the occupied territories
- Involving women and youth in the process of building a resistance economy and their social empowerment (youth, in particular, can be a driving force and main driver of innovation in the process of achieving a resistance economy)

Economic goals

- Creating a significant level of self-sufficiency, especially in long-term food security
- Promoting productive economic activities based on mutual relations, self-confidence, and equitable redistribution
- Focusing on productive activities that prioritize local market needs
- Creating equal job opportunities based on the competencies of individuals instead of unfair recruitments

- Involving victims in the process of building a resistance economy, which may include investment, financial aid, and the supply of expert services
- Involving the labor and middle classes in the leading sectors of the resistance economy and producing sufficient income for economic survival
- Reducing the gap between different classes of people and expanding transparency, accountability, and the fight against corruption

These are the goals that should be accomplished in an economic setting and the realization of the resistance economy will be retarded if any is not accomplished.

Agriculture and its attributes related to accomplishment of resistance economy

Research shows that in countries with a background of resistance economy, e.g., India, Palestine, and Brazil, the focus is on the agricultural sector for more resistance. Even the US and other countries like Australia have expanded their industries and accomplished economic progress in the global setting by concentrating on agriculture. The nature of agriculture and its impacts on various aspects of human communities and on the cultural and economic growth and prosperity cannot be ignored so that it requires special attention. This paper briefly discusses some attributes and advantages of the agricultural sector for the accomplishment of the resistance economy.

Area of fertile arable lands

Official reports show that the agricultural lands of Iran have a high potential, so the land area is not a barrier against agricultural development. Accordingly, the area of the arable lands is estimated to be 50 million ha, but currently, only about 18.5 million ha are partially exploited. The productivity of these lands is also very low. This implies that over 30 million ha of potential agricultural lands have been left unexploited, which can be used by investment and advanced technologies [15]. It should be noted that many other reports corroborate these statistics. Diagram 1 shows these data.

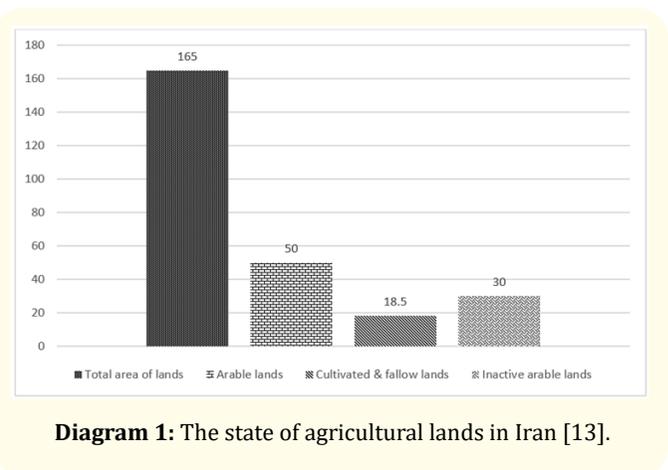


Diagram 1: The state of agricultural lands in Iran [13].

Abundant water resources and ignored potentials for the development of rainfed farming

Official statistics show that a total of about 424 billion m³ of water is supplied to Iran by precipitation and rivers every year. About 30% of the annual water supplies of the country are renewable, but nearly 70% are not managed and are lost by evaporation or transpiration (Diagram 2). The management of these huge water resources for the sake of crop production through the establishment and development of rainfed farming systems will undoubtedly make a decisive revolution in self-sufficiency and food security.

Diagram 2: The status of water resources in Iran (%) [1].

Unfortunately, in the poisoned atmosphere of some media, this part of water resources is ignored, and only by citing to the loss of renewable water resources (which is used in irrigated agriculture), the water situation of the country is depicted to be critical, thereby leading to the adoption of policies that create food dependence. Given the type of water resources available in Iran, it can be said that food production is not confined to renewable water resources because the water resources of Iran are not limited to renewable ones and a large part of water resources are lost by evaporation due to the lack of management. Since rainfed farming systems do not require renewable water resources, they can be developed to use the water resources that would otherwise be evaporated [2]. According to studies conducted by the Dryland Agricultural Research Institute of Iran, about one-third of Iran’s lands have a reliable climate for the development of rainfed farming [9].

Numerous backward and forward linkages of the agricultural sector and its contribution to the prosperity of other industries

One of the scientific ways to identify the key industries of each country is to study the relationships of the industries based on their backward and forward linkages. This method indeed investigates the degree of posterior and anterior dependence of different industries on each other. The results of a study in this field reveal that the agricultural sector is one of the two key sectors of Iran and is capable of stimulating the production of other sectors. In other words, it can be said that, on the one hand, crop production requires production inputs, and these inputs are not solely produced by the sector itself; rather, it needs the products of the other sectors too. The degree of dependence of one sector on other sectors through the consumption of intermediate inputs is measured by the forward linkage. On the other hand, the extent to which other sectors use the products of one sector in their production processes is determined by the backward linkage. A strong forwards linkage of one sector with other economic sectors implies that this sector receives a lot of intermediate inputs to produce its products from other sectors. On the other hand, strong backward linkages of a sector with other economic sectors means that the products of this sector are widely supplied for use in the production processes of other sectors. In other words, more supply of products of one sector leads to the growth and development of production in other economic sectors. Accordingly, the significance of a sector in a development plan or strategy depends on its linkage with

other sectors so that the sectors that have the most links with other economic sectors should be prioritized in an economic program. Studies show that among the various economic sectors in Iran, the agriculture-related industries are in the first rank in terms of forward linkages and the agricultural sector is in the first rank and the agriculture-related industries are in the fourth rank in terms of backward linkages. This points to the importance of the agricultural sector in stimulating the production of other sectors due to its backward and forward linkages with them [19].

Figure 1 displays a production chain in the Iranian economy focusing on the agricultural sector. According to this figure, many industries in Iran are directly or indirectly related to the agricultural sector. This means that the activation of the agricultural sector can be effective in activating other sectors.

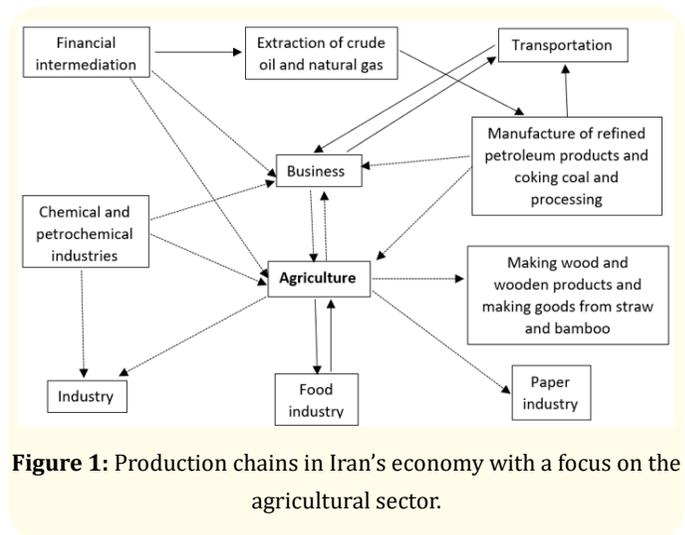


Figure 1: Production chains in Iran’s economy with a focus on the agricultural sector.

Therefore, one of the most important factors involved in achieving the resistance economy is the development of the agricultural sector because the reduction of dependence on oil, as one of the characteristics of the resistance economy, can be realized by developing agricultural production. This issue can be examined from two aspects. First, by strengthening and developing the agricultural sector, the policy of import substitution will be pursued automatically. Second, by strengthening this sector, in addition to achieving self-sufficiency, there will be less or no need to import agricultural commodities and foodstuffs. The crops produced can even be a source of foreign currency for the country. Given Iran’s geographical advantages and crop diversity, agricultural exports

can be used as an instrument for the development of the non-oil export policy. Figure 2 depicts the relationship between agricultural development, resistance economy, and community welfare [11], which indicates the important role of agricultural development in achieving the resistance economy.

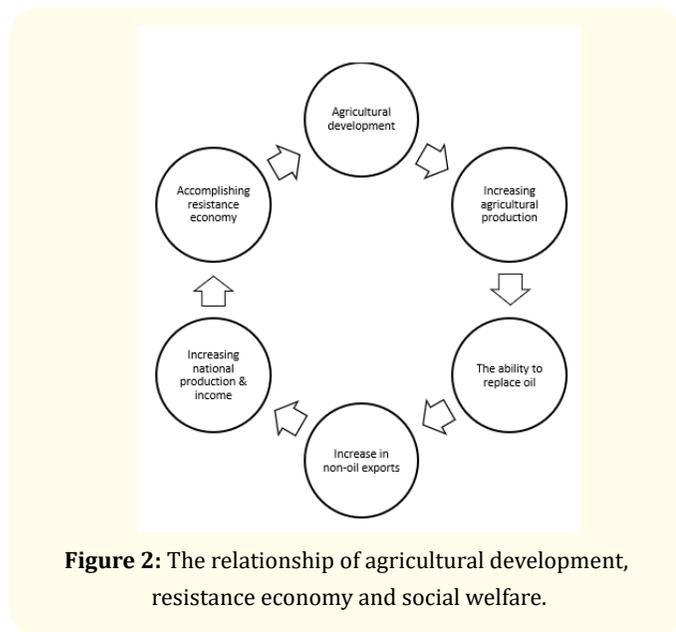


Figure 2: The relationship of agricultural development, resistance economy and social welfare.

Share of agriculture in Iran's gross domestic product (GDP)

As one of the important sectors in the production process, the agricultural sector has always had a special place in the global economy. Given that Iran has a huge potential of natural resources and a wide variety of climates, the agricultural sector can be extremely important in the process of economic development. Although the share of this sector has been variable in GDP, it has always been considered one of the important factors in economic growth and development so that it is well established that there are long-term and short-term relationships between the agricultural sector and other economic sectors. An analysis of the share of the agricultural sector in GDP showed that the average value-added growth of this sector has been 4.55% over the 1971-2000 period so that its share in GDP (at current prices and factors) has increased from 18.79% in 1971 to 19.62 in 2000. The agricultural sector plays a significant role in providing food to the people and preparing raw materials for some industries. Also, the export of the agricultural sector accounts for a significant share of non-oil exports and has

a significant exchange rate. Therefore, the issues raised about the agricultural sector in the Iranian economy are of paramount importance due to the potentials and capabilities of this sector [12]. Most of the current industrialized and so-called developed countries have started their growth and development by using natural resources and related activities. Likewise, in Iran, the agricultural sector accounted for 90% of GDP in 1921, 50% of it in 1950, and 38% in 1964. With the rise of oil revenues, it decreased to about 23% in 1974 and about 8.5% in 1979. As a result, the share of the agricultural sector in GDP has been declining with the increasing dependence on oil revenues.

Some domestic and international challenges of the agricultural sector in Iran

The extent of Iran's dependence on staple food products

Since the most necessary step in the resistance economy is the use of domestic capacities to meet domestic needs, the dependence on food imports should be prioritized in planning as the most important issue and challenge. Although development theories and practices put the heaviest weight on such sectors as industry and finance, the capability of the agricultural sector and related industries in supplying public food is a bottleneck that can radically harm the resistance of society. Hence, even the most developed countries place a special emphasis on strategic crops, providing subsidies and adopting policies to support their commerce. Even when the slogan of tariff liberalization and the elimination of subsidies was the mainstay of neoliberal economic movements, none of the Western countries applied these policies to their strategic crops. Unreasonable dependence on the import of strategic agricultural goods can be a strait by whose closing enemies can endanger the food security of the people and challenge their resistance. Therefore, as far as resistance is concerned, there should be no negligence regarding policies to support agriculture and its industries. Diagram 3 shows the trade balance of Iran's basic crops according to which the balance has always been negative and worsened from 1961 to 2012.

Issues of the global mafia, price control, and so on Global trade market threats

High production costs in developing countries compared to developed countries, the reduction of global prices of agricultural products with the aim of weakening developing countries, the con-



Diagram 3: The amount of import, export of agricultural products (million USD) [18].

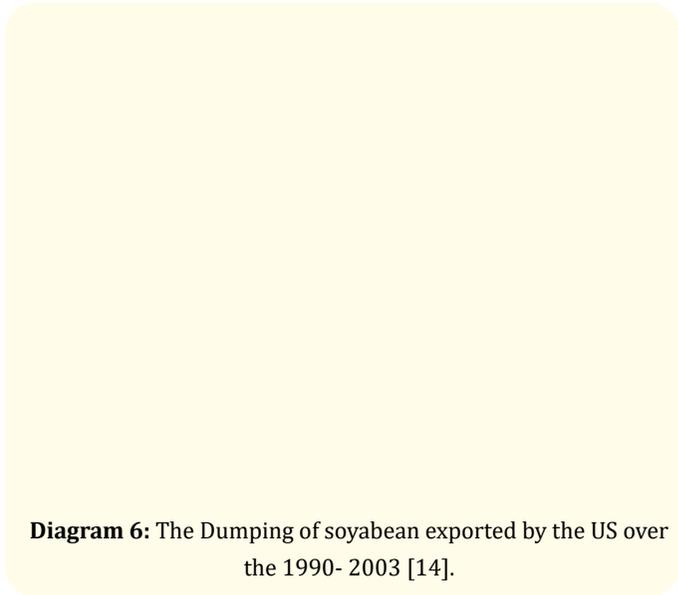


Diagram 6: The Dumping of soyabean exported by the US over the 1990- 2003 [14].

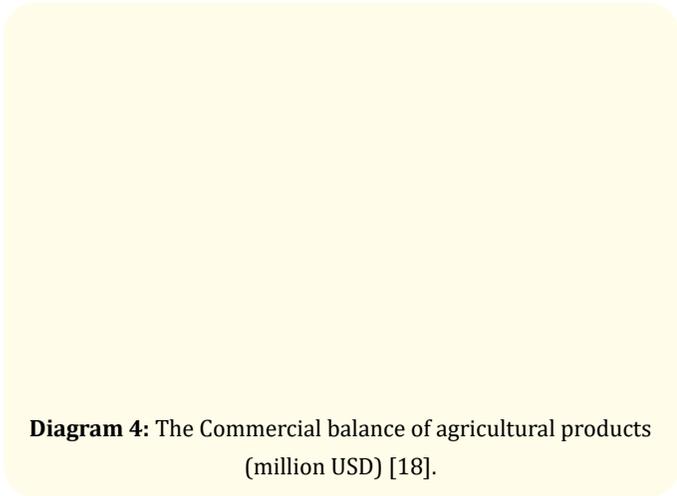


Diagram 4: The Commercial balance of agricultural products (million USD) [18].

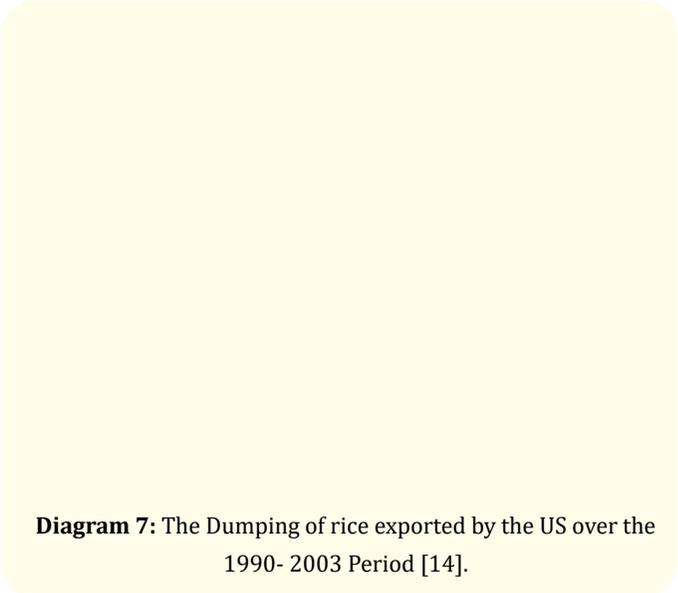


Diagram 7: The Dumping of rice exported by the US over the 1990- 2003 Period [14].

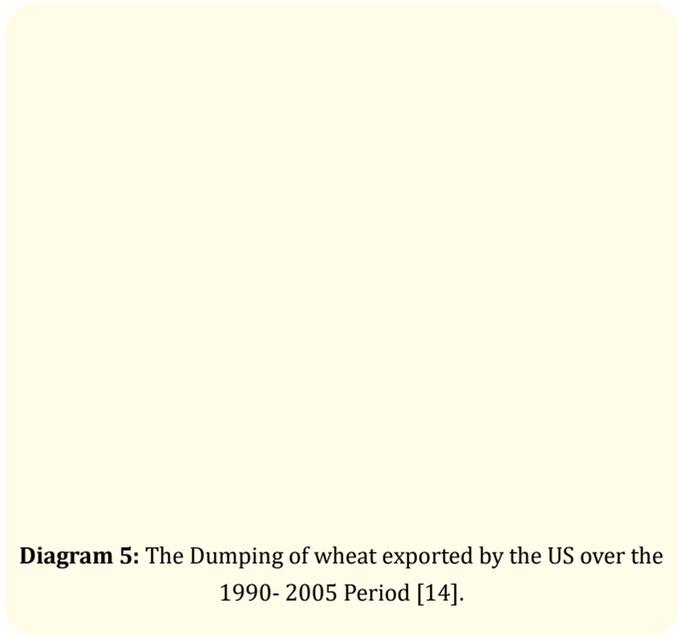


Diagram 5: The Dumping of wheat exported by the US over the 1990- 2005 Period [14].

trol of the food market by some large-scale multinational companies, and the support of European and American countries from the large-scale production units to increase crop production at the expense of their quality and safety are some major threats of the global trade market. These threats result in making the economies of developing countries single product, the lack of support from the agricultural sector in developing countries, and ultimately the dependence of developing countries on developed countries for the main production inputs and the supply of staple foods.

Dumping and its consequences

By relying on their financial resources, rich countries sell goods that often have no comparative advantage at a price lower than the cost of production. Dumping is one of the policies contraries to the rules of world trade, which is often adopted by the founding countries of this institution. Dumping is often adopted for products that are considered the main source of income in developing countries and often includes raw agricultural products. This provides the preconditions for a country to become dependent on its basic food-stuffs and has countless consequences, such as encouraging developing countries to buy cheap agricultural products from the global market, making governments reluctant to support their products due to high production costs, weakening domestic producers and depriving them of competitiveness with imported products, and rendering the agricultural sector uneconomical due to rising production costs, which have irreparable damage in these countries.

Threats of Agroterrorism and Bioterrorism and the Likely Contamination of Imported Foods

Bioterrorism

Bioterrorism in its classical application is the deliberate release of biological agents to bring about death or terror. These biological agents include bacterial, viral, and toxic agents, which may be naturally occurring or their manipulated forms. The manipulated forms are typically more dangerous for human pathogenesis. Today, the scope of the use of biological agents and the purposes of their use have widened, and new tools have been defined for it, such as the pharmaceutical industry, food industry, and agriculture. In the new definition, bioterrorism is the illegal and covert use of recombinant molecules and recombinant agricultural products by large international companies to perform human testing of their recombinant products and obtain a license to sell them. These are sent in the form of humanitarian aid by European countries and American companies to some undeveloped or developing countries. There are numerous reports of human trials of recombinant medicines and food products by American companies in some Asian countries. Extensive import of agricultural products is of extreme importance in terms of the risk of bioterrorism. Research shows that most imported food products are most likely recombinant and transgenic. These factors are listed in table 1.

Bacterial weapons
Anthraxa
Tularemia
Brucellosis agent
Q fever agent
Viral weapons
Venezuelan equine encephalitis
Yellow fever agent
Antiplant weapons
Rice blast
Wheat stem rust
Rye stem rust

Table 1: A list of biological agents (weapons) in the 1945-1969 program of the US.

Source: Hilleman, 2002: 3057.

Agroterrorism

This is the deliberate spread of biological agents that are pathogenic to plants, which ruin farms, gardens, livestock, and poultry, or they come into the country through imported agricultural products. Table 1 presents some bioterrorism and agroterrorism agents produced by the US government.

Incorrect use of agricultural inputs

Although chemical and organic fertilizers are necessary for improving soil fertility and increasing crop yields, their unplanned and unbalanced consumption in Iran has unfortunately been harmful to the environment and people’s health in addition to wasting resources. According to the statistics, the rate of chemical fertilizer consumption in Iran is about 1.5 times as great as its average global rate. Seeds, seedlings, and pesticides are not used correctly either; or they need to be corrected too [16].

Crop wastage

A major issue regarding crop wastage is the lack of official statistics. Since no official authority is responsible for monitoring crop quality in Iran, there is no correct estimation of their wastage. According to the Research Center of Islamic Legislative Assembly,

the Ministry of Agriculture Jihad estimates agricultural wastage at 18.5%. Indeed, 29% of horticultural products, 18% of agricultural products, 12% of livestock and poultry products, and 7% of fishery products are wasted. The experts of food industries argue that annually about 25% of oil revenue is lost as agricultural wastage. Due to inattention to processing industries, the food of 15 million people is annually wasted. Whereas 70-80% of agricultural products in developed countries are processed, this is less than 40% in Iran [15].

Conclusion

The imposition of unilateral and illegal sanctions has always been one of the weapons of the hegemonic system to put pressure on Iran. Shortly after the victory of the Islamic Revolution and the capture of the American spy den, the US enforced the Iran Sanctions Act, and these sanctions have always been intensifying over the past 30 years. To cope with this approach, the Supreme Leader raised the issue of “resistance economy” and mentioned it as an important way to change the direction of the country’s economic movement – a method that can be effective as a strong barrier against western attacks [8].

The resistance economy is an economic system that can withstand pressures and sanctions while being a prosperous economy, so it is the best solution for the current situation of Iran. A characteristic of the resistance economy is the diversity and flexibility of economic and production activities and non-reliance on one or more sectors. In Iran, over-dependence on oil revenues has led to the dependence of the Iranian political system on foreign powers on the one hand and the creation of a rentier government on the other, which have caused severe backwardness of the industrial and agricultural sectors [11]. In other words, since there are variables in the issue of oil that are out of control and the world oil price is determined by the world’s major companies, some exogenous factors are involved in the oil industry. Therefore, the oil should be used in such a way that the country’s economy is not harmed by the changes that take place in the outside world. Furthermore, oil revenues should be used in such a way that dependence on the outside world is reduced. That is, the oil should be used to develop the national infrastructure to increase domestic production [3]. Also, the economy should be diversified so that a shock in one economic sector cannot influence all economic activities. By this definition,

replacing high-risk sectors with low-risk sectors is one of the principles of resistance economics. For instance, we can consider the replacement of oil with the agricultural sector. Although the risk of the agricultural sector is also high, it has a lower and more controllable risk than petroleum [11].

For centuries, agriculture has been the mainstay of economic productivity. The importance of agriculture goes beyond a strategic source of economic survival; it also symbolizes the Palestinians’ relationship to their land, identity, culture, and history. Therefore, any attempt to build an alternative economy that embraces the principles of resilience and sustainability must prioritize agriculture. Researchers and development observers, who are concerned about alternative economic models, have also placed great emphasis on the role of agriculture as the backbone of the resistance economy. Hence, it is said that agriculture is the core of the resistance economy, but it should be noted that like all other sectors, this sector is also affected by various factors such as the value of agricultural exports, the labor of the agricultural sector, and gross fixed capital of the agricultural sector [12].

To solve agricultural problems, several policy programs have been proposed and implemented in the form of various projects in recent years. Some of these projects have been successful and some have had flaws. Scientific and managerial experiences in the agricultural sector show that different areas of agriculture are like links in a chain, and one can claim improvement in agricultural problems when all these links have been seen together and a coherent program has been developed for the stability of all these links along with one another.

Summary and Policy Approaches

Long-term perspective

The slogan of the resistance economy is not only confined to the present conditions of Iran as subjected to the sanctions. Indeed, the only economy that can grow and prosper in the contemporary world is the economy that is inherently resilient and dynamic. The resistance economy deals with solving internal weaknesses and strengthening the internal economy in the first place by considering all potentials. On the other hand, this economic paradigm does not resemble a closed economy as it uses internal creative talents and makes wise relationships with the outside world to be dynamic and capable of flourishing.

Short-term perspective

Considering the nuclear negotiations with the sanctioning countries and the special political conditions of Iran, the extension of the negotiations can have many connotations for Iran and due to the arrogant spirit of the western parties, it is not far-fetched for them to take a surprise action for sanctions and economic threats. Therefore, in the current specific political situation, it is imperative to identify weaknesses and vulnerabilities, or in other words, to identify opportunities for enemies. For some of these weaknesses, short-term actions and plans should be developed. Accordingly, the following recommendations can be drawn to accomplish these goals.

Recommendations

Adopting appropriate incentive policies, removing export barriers, and expanding world trade and regional cooperation can contribute to export growth and, consequently, economic growth due to the significant impact of agricultural exports on the value-added of this sector. Given the direct impact of gross fixed investment of the agricultural sector on the value-added of this sector, the adoption of a policy of increasing bank credit can be effective in increasing production and value-added of this sector and in the growth of its surplus exports to global markets.

In another classification, given the challenges of the agricultural sector, recommendations can be divided into long-term and short-term categories as presented below.

Policy recommendations with a short-term view

- Replacing the import of sugarcane, beets, and oilseeds with finished products in order to keep the relevant industries active
- Encouraging and guiding importers towards importing the technologies required for agricultural research and mechanization
- Ensuring statistical transparency, elimination of import monopolies, and confrontation with rentiers and profiteer individuals
- Using people's capacities to increase production in the form of sustainable early-return enterprises
- Establishing early-return enterprises in the form of public-private partnership projects

- Accurately estimating the status and production level and taking timely action for their supply and import
- Avoiding the exportation of some commodities whose exportation is not for the benefit of the economy and water resources
- Avoiding the exportation of agricultural raw materials
- Fighting against monopoly and corruption in agricultural exports
- Producing some products whose export has a higher added value than the export of ordinary commodities
- Establishing processing industries in the form of early-yield enterprises, especially in the field of agricultural waste
- Considering government marketing, solving customs problems, and encouraging exportation

Policy recommendations with a long-term view

- Identifying the potentials of arable lands and entrusting them to agricultural graduates in the form of large fields
- Supplying the domestic market with domestic products with emphasis on strategic crops
- Guaranteed purchase of domestic crops at appropriate prices with emphasis on strategic crops
- Planning for the employment of unemployed graduates
- Importing technologies related to agricultural infrastructure
- Creating the necessary platform to promote agricultural mechanization
- Establishing sustainable early-return enterprises to produce basic inputs such as seeds, chemical and organic fertilizers, and so on
- Improving consumption patterns with emphasis on health issues, not just economic issues
- Fair distribution of agricultural products and inputs
- Identifying the machinery requirements of the agricultural sector and entrusting it to related industries
- Creating the necessary conditions for investment in the production of agricultural inputs, e.g., seeds, pesticides, and fertilizers
- Establishing an organization to monitor the production, distribution, and consumption of agricultural products and inputs

- Defining alternative products with high-consumption food products, such as developing the culture of using olive oil instead of canola oil, using fish instead of chicken, and using milk instead of soda, etc.
- Attention to subsidies and crop insurance
- Establishing a national fund for the protection of oilseeds

Establishing an organization to supervise the production, distribution, and consumption of agricultural products and inputs

- Crops are imported from different sources without any supervision
- Many of the country's genetic resources are exported through illegal exports
- Supervising agricultural wastage as well as the proper distribution of crops
- Due to the lack of standardization, it is not possible to export many products

Agricultural inputs such as pesticides, chemical fertilizers, etc. are consumed without any supervision.

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