

# SANCTIONS WARS AS A TOOL OF GLOBAL COMPETITION AND THEIR REFLECTION IN SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND QUERIES (THE CASE OF RUSSIA AND IRAN)

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**Abstract.** The paper is based on the study of modern sanctions wars as a tool of global competition and attempts to justify the relevance of this scientific issue using bibliometric analysis. The paper uses the Dimensions database for the analysis. The paper examines the dynamics of query popularity according to Google Trends. As part of the study, the authors created a visualization of scientific networks that study the economic sanctions enacted against Iran. The results of the analysis of scientific publications and queries about the economic sanctions against Russia and Iran have shown that they depend on the timing of the introduction of sanctions measures and their transformation.

**Keywords:** global competition, sanctions wars, world economic system, Russia, Iran, bibliometric analysis, scientific publications.

**JEL codes:** F42, F49, H77

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## Introduction

The modern world economic system is largely transformed due to the increasing influence of global competition. The existing relationship between the level of economic development of individual countries and global competition makes it an effective tool for positioning national economies in the global economic space. In addition, global competition is not eliminating but enhancing barriers to national competitiveness for many countries, including Russia and Iran. Numerous works of Russian researchers are dedicated to analysis of this problem [Bocharnikov, Ovsyannikova (2020), Gadjimuradov, Gadirova (2019), Gaidarenko (2020), Gaman-Golutvina, Smorgunov, Timofeeva (2019), Getmanets, Tereschenko (2019), Milovidov, Askerzade (2020), Ovchinnikov (2011), Okunev (2019), and others] .

One of its key tools in recent decades has been the sanctions wars, which have also affected countries such as Russia and Iran. The analysis of common approaches to their research in the theory and practice of international relations showed how many aspects and how large this problem is, as well as the duality of how sanctions are imposed to achieve geo-strategic objectives [Arkhipova (2018), Afontsev (2020), Gurvich, Prilepsky (2016), Zagashvili (2016), Milovidov, Asker-zade (2020), Mitina, Momeni (2020), Nureev (Ed.) (2017), Nureev (Ed.) (2021), Tashtamirov (2018), Telegina, Halova (2019), Fituni (2019), Attia, Crauvogel, von Soest (2020), Bovle (2019), Early, Schulzke (2019), etc.].

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the relevance of the problem of sanctions wars using bibliometric analysis using Russia and Iran as an example. In order to achieve the goal, we have identified the dynamics of publication activity on this issue. Google Trends were used to analyze the dynamics of the query popularity. In addition, we have used the visualization tools such as VOSviewer, which can download and export information from many sources.

### Sources and methods

In addition to empirical, experimental, and theoretical research, we used methods of computational linguistics to solve the problem.

The Dimensions.ai information system was used for this analysis, as it covers a large number of documents and allows easy uploading and analysis of datasets. It also includes more than 90 million publications and over 4 billion references. Moreover, it offers a complete API for querying using its own query language, DSL (Domain Specific Language). The included tools can be divided into three categories: general bibliometric analysis of publications, analysis of queries, analysis of statistical data.

This paper applied the following search terms: «economic sanctions Iran», «economic sanctions Russia», and «economic sanctions Iran+Russia». This data comes from Dimensions.ai provided by Digital Science (<https://www.dimensions.ai>).

### Results and discussion

A study of the total number of publications reflected in Fig. 1 shows an increased interest in the sanctions wars against Iran and Russia which had started in 2000. Note, however, that the shape of the dependencies is repetitive. Google Trends query dynamics show a sharp increase in queries in 2014. This happened due to the introduction of the «third round» of sanctions against Russia by the US and the EU in 2014. That round severely limited the opportunities for companies in several sectors of the economy at once. Another reason was the interim agreement to suspend Iran's nuclear program, which came into force on January 20, 2014. At that time, the US loosened sanctions on Iranian oil exports, suspending a number of other restrictions as well.

For Western countries, Iran has become an example of «successful sanctions,» where regular imposition of tiered restrictions brings the country back to the negotiating table. After the first sanctions lists against Russia, many experts were skeptical about repeating the «Iranian scenario». In 2014, analysts studied the success criteria of sanctions, noting that the probability of creating similar conditions for Russia is extremely low [Makarenko, (2014)].

The dynamics of publications related to the requests for sanctions against Russia and Iran is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1** - Number of publications by year (Russia, Iran, Iran + Russia)

Year	Publications		
	Russia	Iran	Iran + Russia
2000	2000	500	600
2007	5000	3000	2000
2008	4000	3000	1800
2009	6000	3000	2000
2010	6000	3000	2000

Year	Publications		
	Russia	Iran	Iran + Russia
2011	8000	4500	3000
2012	10000	7000	4000
2013	15000	9000	7500
2014	7000	4000	3000
2015	10000	5500	4000
2016	9500	5000	3000
2017	9000	5500	4000
2018	9000	5000	3500

Source: composed by the authors



Figure 1. Number of papers published by year during the 2000-2019 period

Source: composed by the authors

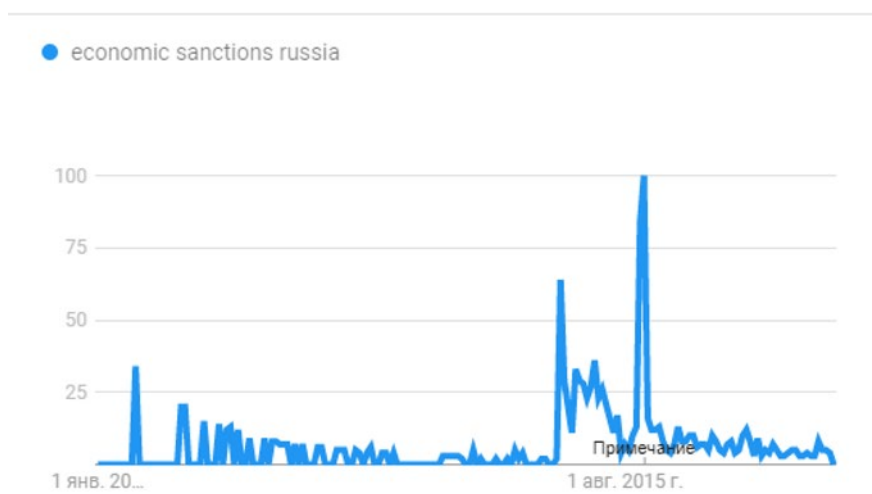


Figure 2. Trends in the popularity of economic sanctions Russia for Google Trends

Source: composed by the authors

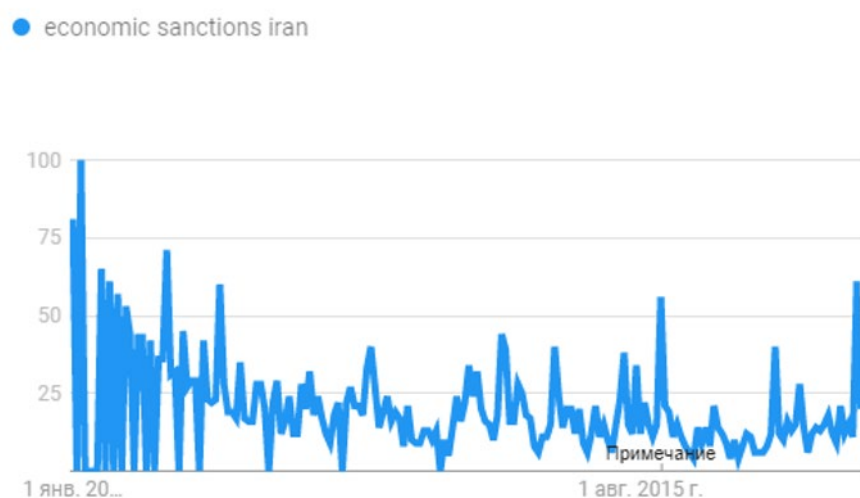
The graphs (Fig. 1) are similar because of a comparative analysis of Russian and Iranian sanctions

scenarios.

Popularity dynamics of «economic sanctions Russia» on Google Trends (Fig. 2) shows a sharp increase in queries between March 2014 and January 2016. All of these requests came from the US.

Particular interest was generated by a new economic «turn» in the global energy sector, and key alliances involving Russian business. However, the sectional moves directed at Russia have diversified the costs of big business. Thus, it created incentives to strengthen positions and international agreements with Eastern partners.

Popularity dynamics of «economic sanctions Iran» on Google Trends (Fig. 3) shows a rather sustained interest in the topic. Moreover, as in the case of the sanctions against Russia, all of these requests originated in the United States.



**Figure 3.** Trends in the popularity of economic sanctions Iran for Google Trends

Source: composed by the authors

Thus, the dynamics of inquiries reflect the relationship between the timing of the introduction of sanctions measures and their transformation.

To visualize the research networks that study economic sanctions against Iran, we considered the co-authorship network by country, authors with at least 5 publications. Of the 3,151 authors from 68 countries, 28 countries are linked in seven clusters (Fig. 4). The two largest clusters included 7 countries each. The first cluster included countries: Canada, France, Italy, Malaysia, Norway, Pakistan, Turkey. The second cluster included countries: Australia, Egypt, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Poland, UK. Cluster 3 — China, Germany, Netherlands, Russia, Singapore. Cluster 4 — Belgium, Iran, Switzerland. Cluster 5 — South Africa, Sweden. Cluster 6 — India, South Korea. Cluster 7 — USA, Israel.

In addition, we examined the co-authorship network by organization (Fig. 5). 657 organizations had at least 5 publications; 35 of the related organizations were categorized in 8 clusters. Figure 5 shows that there is interaction between only a small number of universities.

The largest cluster included 7 universities and organizations: Harvard University (USA), Isfahan University of Medical Sciences (Iran), London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (UK), McMaster University (Canada), Shiraz University (Iran), Shiraz University of Medical Sciences (Iran), UNSW Sydney (Australia).

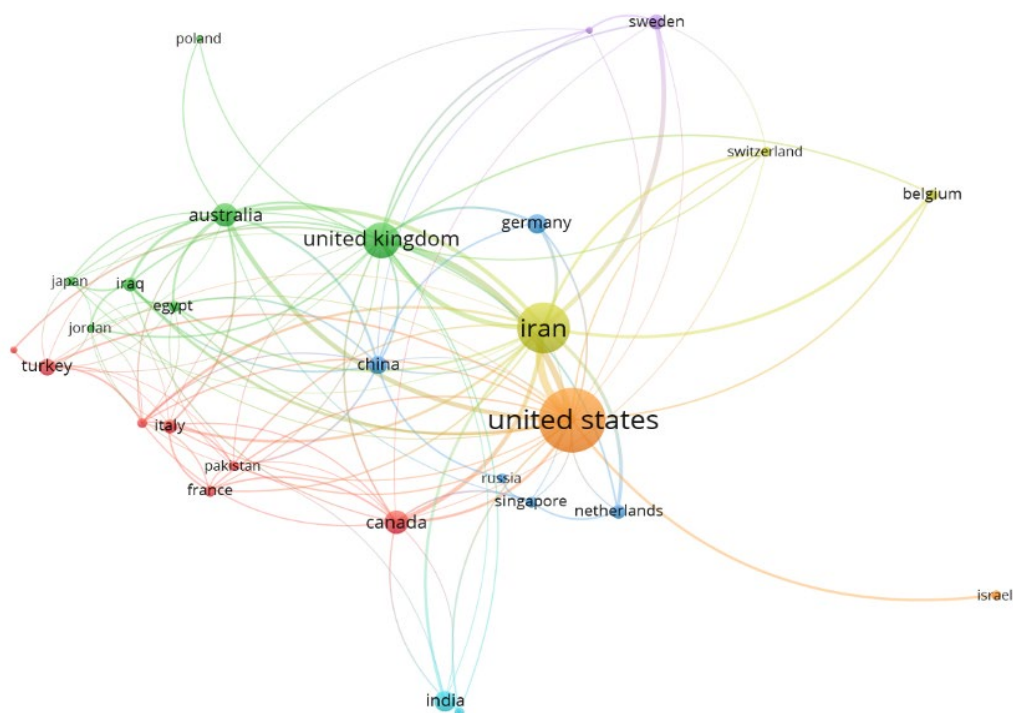
Cluster 2 — Alexandria University (Egypt), Columbia University (USA), Johns Hopkins University (USA), Michigan State University (USA), Ministry of Health (USA).

Cluster 3 — Philipp University of Marburg (Germany), Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences (Iran), Tarbiat Modares University (Iran), University of Hamburg (Germany), University of Oxford (UK).

Cluster 4 — Hamedan University of Medical Sciences (Iran), Kerman University of Medical Sciences (Iran), Lund University (Sweden), University of Tehran (Iran).

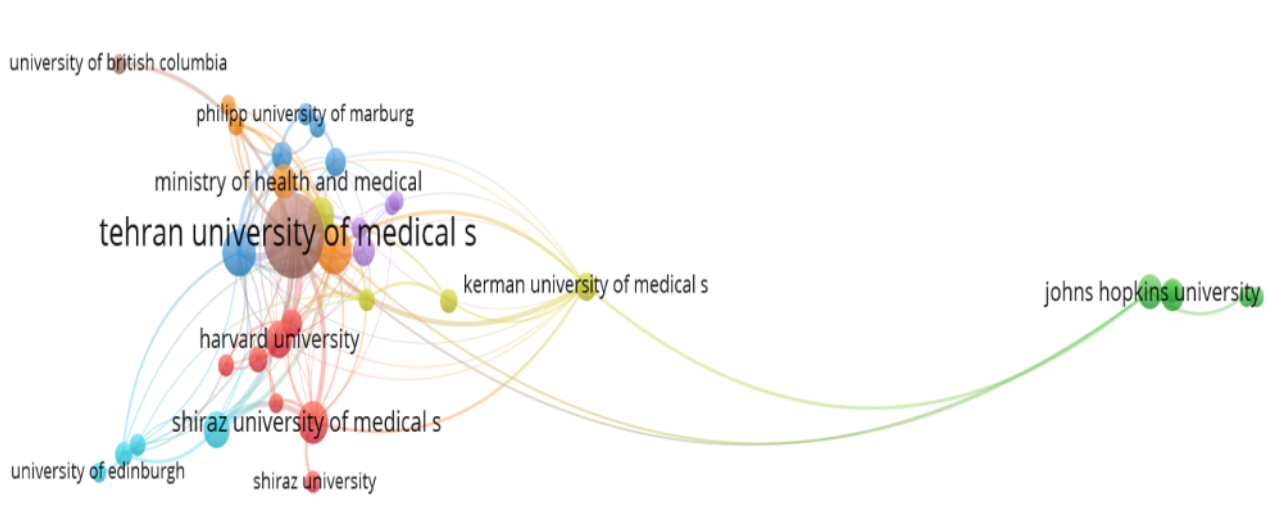
Cluster 5 — Arizona State University (USA), Imperial College London (UK), Sharif University of

Technology (Iran), Tabriz University of Medical Sciences (Iran).



**Figure 4.** Visualization of a country co-authorship network on publications on economic sanctions against Iran

Source: composed by the authors



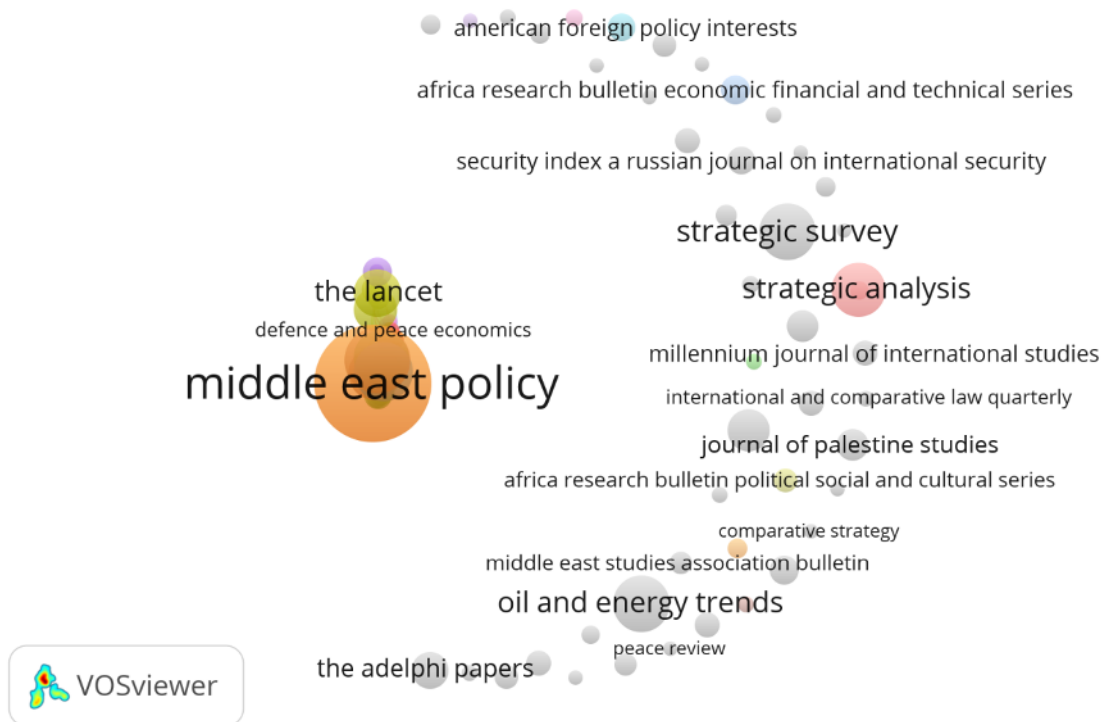
**Figure 5.** Visualization of a network of co-sponsoring publications on economic sanctions against Iran  
 Source: composed by the authors

Cluster 6 — Baqiyatallah University of Medical Sciences (Iran), Erasmus University Rotterdam (the Netherlands), Mashhad University of Medical Sciences (Iran), University of Edinburgh (Scotland).

Cluster 7 — Iran University of Medical Sciences (Iran), Ministry of Health and Medical Education (Iran), «University of California, Los Angeles» (USA), University of Social Welfare and Rehabilitation Sciences (Iran).

Cluster 8 — Tehran University of Medical Sciences (Iran), University of British Columbia (Canada).

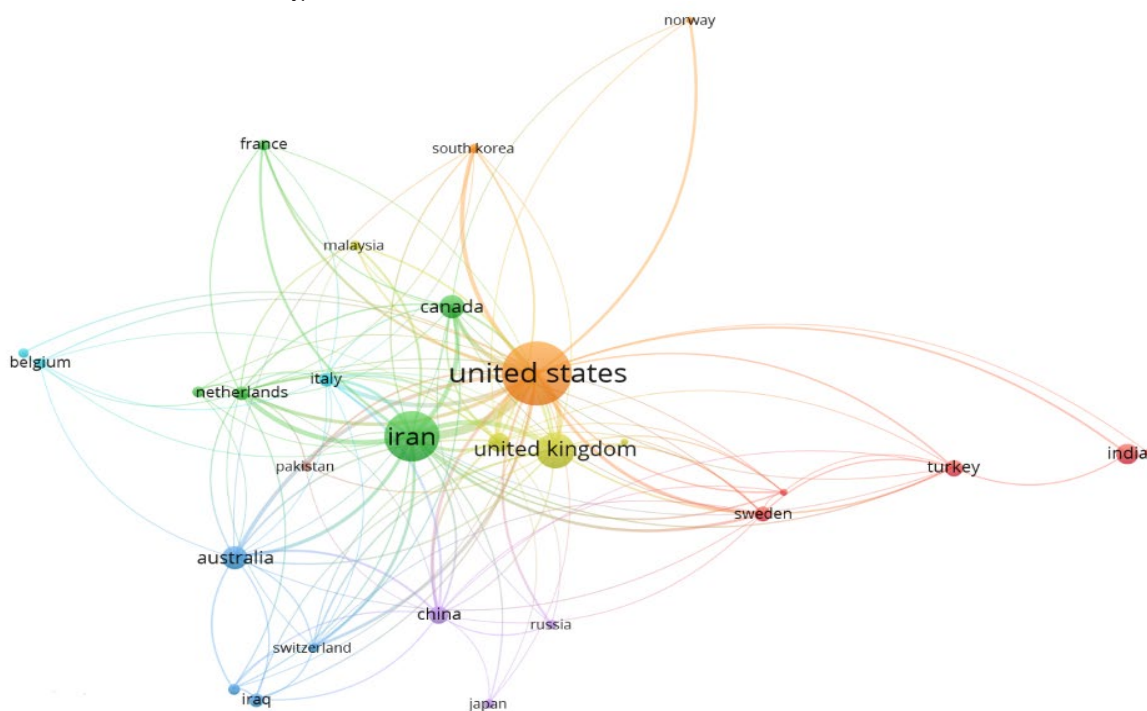
We constructed a citation network by source (Fig. 6). 798 sources had at least 5 source papers; 89 of the related sources were categorized in 55 clusters. Only 9 clusters included more than 2 journals. The cluster with the most pronounced weight is No. 7. It includes three journals: International Business And Management, Middle East Policy, The Muslim World. The most cited journal is Middle East Policy, Weight<Citations> = 357.



**Figure 6.** Visualization of a citation network based on publications on economic sanctions against Iran  
 Source: composed by the authors

Another pronounced cluster in No. 6, which includes journals: BMC Public Health, Iranian Studies, Medicine Conflict & Survival, Plos One, The Lancet, World Economy. The most prominent of these are The Lancet, Iranian Studies.

We also constructed a citation network by country (Fig. 7). 68 countries had at least 5 paper sources, 28 of the related sources were categorized into 8 clusters, 7 of which included at least 2 countries.



**Figure 7.** Visualization of the citation network by country of publications on economic sanctions against Iran

Source: composed by the authors

The most cited countries are the USA (the cluster also includes South Korea and Norway), Iran (the cluster also includes Canada, France, the Netherlands, Singapore), the UK (the cluster also includes Germany, Malaysia, Poland). Russia is in the same cluster as China and Japan.

### Conclusion

Global competition has increased the arsenal of leverage in the global economy. One of the most important tools has been the sanctions wars waged by the United States and the European Union against other countries, particularly Russia and Iran.

The result of the bibliometric analysis and analysis of queries was a confirmation of the scientific hypothesis about the relevance of the problem in the context of global competition.

The visualization of the obtained information reflected the progressive interest of researchers in different aspects of the topic and its dependence on the analyzed time interval.

The graphs built in the VOSviewer system show the results of the study of economic publications on the growing interest of leading journals in the topic of sanctions against Iran.

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