

The Media Concept of Mafia Business in Iran: A Convenience Theory Approach

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Abstract

Convenience exists in the financial motive, the organizational opportunity, and the personal willingness for deviant behavior. These three themes can result in 14 convenience propositions as presented. This article aims to discuss the role of convenience in Iranian mafia and how it affects the perpetration of financially motivated crime. For this purpose, we selected and discuss some of these fourteen propositions that can explain mafia operations in Iran. The media concept of mafia business in Iran is exemplified by the meat mafia, the sugar mafia, the tea mafia, and the steel mafia. The procedure used to collect data in this study is documentation, that is, the guidelines used in the form of notes or citations, the search for legal literature, books and other sources related to the identification of the problems of this study both offline like online.

Keywords: Organized crime; Mafia business; Convenience theory; Media reports.

Introduction

The local media in the Islamic Republic of Iran is using the term mafia to report on misconduct and crime. For example, Anon (2007), Bazar (2022), Etemad (2011), and Moj (2019) reported on the sugar mafia in Iran. Eghtesad (2013) and Tabnak (2010) reported on the tea mafia, while Sooreisrafil (2017) reported on the steel mafia, and Tabnak (2019) wrote about the meat mafia in the country.

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Rooziato (2020) reported on the mafia sultans, while Gyoki (2022) phrased the question: Does everything in the country really have a “mafia”?

Iranian terminology is interesting. For example, “moharebeh” refers to waging war against God that implies criminal acts against the government. Furthermore, “mofsed-fel-arz means spreading corruption on earth, which can be applied for political crime such as treason (Gyoki, 2022).

This article approaches the media concept of mafia business in Iran by application of convenience theory. Convenience was first introduced as a core concept in criminology by Gottschalk (2017). The theory has recently been reviewed (for example, Chan and Gibbs, 2020; Hansen, 2020; Oka, 2021; Vasiu, 2021; Vasiu and Podgor, 2019) and applied by various scholars such as Asting and Gottschalk (2022), Braaten and Vaughn (2021), Dearden and Gottschalk (2020), Desmond et al. (2022), Qu (2021), Stadler and Gottschalk (2022), and Sterri and Borge (2022). The convenience theory suggests 14 propositions related to motive, chance, and will (Gottschalk, 2022).

The research in this paper addresses the following research questions: What propositions in convenience theory can be applied to the media concept of mafia business in Iran? The current research is important as little is published so far about the situation in Iran and because the emerging theory of convenience is a novel approach to study a concept such as mafia business.

The Media Concept

When there is discussion and debate about current issues and social problems, even in the state and quasi-state media in the Islamic republic, it is rare that the word mafia is not mentioned. Today, mafia has become one of the most explanatory terms in the official literature of the Islamic republic. If it is about football, the people involved talk about the football mafia to explain the situation and point to corruption. If it is about publishing problems, the people involved talk about the paper mafia. In the discussion of overdue loans, people talk about the loan mafia. In the case of high prices on meat, they turn to the meat import mafia. At some point, there were 35 meat importers. However, most of them were in the same families and networks, thereby reducing the number of independent importers drastically.

Some of these mafias are better known and are mentioned more frequently in public conversations and in the media (football, sugar, rice, and oil), while some are less known (paper, gold, drugs, land, medicine, meat, saffron, entrance examination schools, corn, cars, and antiques). While scholars who have left Iran may express all kinds of opinions about the country, it is certainly more interesting to notice what scholars inside Iran identify as four issues related to mafias:

- Centralized, exclusive, and anti-competitive system: When the sugar mafia is mentioned, then it means that a significant part of the sugar imported into the country comes through this mafia; or when the car mafia is mentioned, then it means those who control a high percentage of car imports.
- Mass interests concentrated in these groups: In this sense, mafias are groups that take a significant part of the country's resources.
- Government renter and customer-oriented system: Those who use this expression indirectly want to say that there is a rent distribution system in the country that only selects certain people and groups as clients and asks them for support in return. The wheel-and-deal of managers causes preferentially treatment of selected people.
- The secrecy and non-transparency of the people who benefit from the rent system: This is why facts-oriented media constantly want to reveal the names of people who are present in the mafia circles.

When the term "mafia" is mentioned, then many people think of Sicily and the criminal families of this Italian island, but the current state of Iran's courts - especially in the field of economy - points out that the mafia in Iran has also shown its ugly and violent face. Although the official view has not shown much interest in addressing the issue of mafia, this neglect has not led to the elimination of such wrongdoing. Mafia in Iran is known as organized crime, where "organized crime is a crime whose preparation and commission is a methodical organization which often provides means of livelihood for its stewards" (Borricand, 1998: 316). Organized crime is "a crime whose benefits do not only accrue to the stewards (the perpetrators of the material element crime), but most of the benefits go to coordinators and so-called white collar crime; often, the perpetrators do not even know enough about them" (Salimi, 2003:177). Organized crime in Iran refers to "criminal group activities with an integrated and united structure, whose main purpose is to get money from these activities, and they often continue to exist by creating fear and corruption" (Ebrahimi Faraniand Seydi, 2021:60). Organized crime is "the illegal and coordinated activities of a coherent group of people who, in collusion with each other and for the purpose of obtaining material benefits and power, engage in serious criminal activity and use any type of criminal means to achieve their goals" (Shams Nateri, 2004:111).

In Iran criminal law, in the context of the concept of organized crime and its examples in codified law, in the fourth chapter of the Islamic Penal Code under the heading of the leadership of the organized criminal group in Article 130 it states:

Whoever is the head of a criminal organization shall be punished with the maximum penalty for the most serious crime committed by members of the organization for the purpose of the same group, unless the crime committed is the cause of retribution (...) In moharebeh and corruption in the land, when the title of moharebeh or Mofsede-fel-arz applies to the category of criminal group, it will be sentenced to the punishment of Mofsed-fel-arz' depending on the case.

A criminal group is a relatively coherent group consisting of three or more people that is formed to commit an offense after its formation, and its purpose is diverted to commit a crime (Gyoki, 2022). Leadership means forming, designing, organizing, or managing a criminal group. In the legal system of the country of Iran, "no definition of organized crime has been provided so far, and only in the article 130 of the Islamic Penal Code refers to 'crime leadership' and predicts the intensification of the punishment in such a case" (Najafi and Rahimi, 2018:99).

Article 130 of the Islamic Penal Code is the only article related to organized crime. This article does not explain organized crime but is related to the leadership of criminal groups. For example, if several people shout and disturb the security of a neighborhood, they will be classified as committing group crime and will be severely punished.

The definition of mafia and white-collar people is more complete in the way that mafias are those who, by force of communication and more awareness, go the way of hundred years overnight and pocketed billions in profit. Examples of these mafias in Iran are referred to in this research. As argued by Esfahani et al. (2022: 595) in the Iranian context, "the most important assets of any organization are employees that are loyal and satisfied". The importance of loyalty and satisfaction is certainly true as well for members of any mafia organization in Iran. Women's role in mafia organizations is usually to be in charge of legitimate activities as exemplified by the classical mafia organizations in Italy where women can be in charge of the legal garbage collection company in the city owned by the mafia, while men can be in charge of arms and drug trade. Very seldom, women in mafia activities can be identified, where an exception is the woman in Iran who led a network that stole sheep and smuggled them to buyers across the Persian Gulf (Bourse and Bazar, 2019).

Iranian Meat Mafia

The existence of a meat mafia in Iran was mentioned in Iranian newspapers and cited by Bourse and Bazaar (2019):

An investigative report via Iran Newspaper, and republished with the aid of the ISNA information company, factors to the life of a "meat mafia"

which has precipitated an awful lot of the turbulence in meat markets. In keeping with documents the paper says it has seen, one of the tycoons acquired over EUR 35.5 million in sponsored currency, but disbursed the product after calculating the charges at the free market alternate charge, which means he inflated fees by 92 percent.

In an interview with ISNA, Afshin Sadr Dadres, chief executive officer (CEO) at the Central Light Livestock Union of the country, commented on the meat mafia (Nikru News, 2022):

He stated that hot meat should reach consumers at a price of 140,000 tomans per kilo, and said: “Meat mafias will not let the price of meat go down so that they can continue importing, and the some will eventually reach the eyes of the consumer”.

The currency in Iran is rial where ten reals are one toman. In 2022, one US dollar had an official exchange rate of 42,000 rials and thus 4,200 tomans. The kilo price cited above of 140,000 Iranian tomans is thus 33 US dollars. Similar to Afshin Sadr Dadres, Jalal Mahmudzadeh, vice chairman of the Agricultural commission had referred to the meat mafia two years earlier (Tabnak, 2019):

After this comment, many media started research on rent in the import and distribution of imported meats, and this story of rent reached its peak in Paish program on Channel One TV on February 28, 2017. In this program, several exemplary entrepreneurs were present, and one of them made a stormy speech about rent the powerful red meat import mafia.

Meat is one of the basic goods that have been captured by the mafia in Iran for several years. When the price of meat became expensive and no institution or official could bring it back to its previous price, the discussion of the meat mafia became more prominent and the traces of the presence of white-collar offenders in the import and distribution of meat were felt more strongly. The first person who disclosed the most about the meat mafia was Nader Ghazipour, a member of parliament. Ghazipour has been a representative of the people of Urmia in the Islamic Council for two terms. He made revelations in the parliament about the increase in the price of chicken and meat. At that time, Ghazipour stated that the identity of the meat mafia is very clear and warned against the importation of flour by these persons, and claimed that he and his family are among the biggest bank debtors of the country and in the Agricultural Bank despite knowing about this matter (Akhbar, 2012).

Regarding the price of chicken, at the same time as the price of this product increased, it was opened to the hands of the mafia. Ghazipour continued his revelations and explained the story as follows (Quds, 2012):

What I asked from the Ministry of Commerce, they said that they gave the soybean meal to the union instead of giving it directly to the farmers. The union also sold this soybean meal to the factory owners at a free price instead of giving it to the farmers. Previously, this price varied between 600 and 800, which suddenly increased to more than 1,700 and 1,900 tomans. That is, the men earned more than 1000 tomans per kilo.

Bourse and Bazaar (2019) pronounced that “Iranians (were) compelled to forgo meat staples as charges jump”:

running class Iranians could sit up for a hearty meal of meat stew or kabob at the least once per week. However with meat costs hovering to all-time highs, Iranians have to cut returned on their consumption in but every other example of falling living requirements as Iran’s economy falters below the stress of sanctions and mismanagement (...)

The rapid increase in the rate of meat has been blamed on a selection of things, which include from corruption, profiteering, and misuse of hard forex subsidies granted to importers (...)

but extra damagingly, the falling fee of the rial and the provision of foreign money at an artificially low charge lured many importers into smuggling out farm animals or imported meals in widespread portions to neighboring countries, in which they found a rewarding market, inflicting shortages again in Iran. In international locations including Iraq, smugglers could sell farm animals and double their investment.

In the gender perspective, it is interesting to notice that Bourse and Bazaar (2019) mentioned a woman:

In one case that was reported, a group led by a quiet middle-aged woman took sheep from villages in the southwest of the province of Khuzestan, loaded them onto trucks, and smuggled them to slaughterhouses across the Persian Gulf.

Iranian Sugar Mafia

Sugar is one of those products that always has a lot of talk behind it and has also been in front of people. Like other mafias, the sugar mafia is secret, that is, no name of this mafia is published and they are unknown to the public (Quds, 2012). This is because no one has the ability to deal with mafias. But once, the president mentioned the existence of the sugar mafia among the people of Qom. It was on one of the Thursdays of 2017 that 10 traders and importers of raw sugar raised the price of each kilo of sugar by 50 tomans in a meeting held to collude in the hoarding of this product.

At the end of 2021, the trade association of Iranian sugar factories had warned about the efforts of some brokers and middlemen to reduce the sugar import tariff to zero, and despite all these warnings, in the first two months of the year to support national production, the amount of sugar imported into the country was 680 tons. The percentage increased. People were confused.

In recent years, the name of a person named M.Y., or Mohammad Reza Yousefi, was used in circles as the Sugar Sultan of Iran. The case of Sultan sugar can be considered the most famous economic corruption after another 3000 billion tomans corruption case. Some people called him M. It was Mohammad Reza Yousefi who faced serious allegations of rent-seeking, land-grabbing, fraud, and bribery. Due to his major role in the buying and selling of sugar factories, and that he was influential in the import and export of this commodity, he was nicknamed the Sultan of Iran's Sugar by the media. After that, he was known by this name more than his real name. The accused, who was a simple employee of Karaj municipality until sixteen years ago and did not have much property, but according to some, at the time of his arrest, he was the owner of property worth hundreds of billions of tomans.

According to Moj (2019), Mohammad Reza Yousefi was sentenced to 26 years in prison and to repay 73 billion tomans. Some years earlier, Etemad (2011) newspaper had his name with the headline "Sultan Sugar of Iran died before the end of his sentence". He had just been a simple municipal employee, but he succeeded in taking over government lands and lands whose owners lived abroad. He was able to make billions of wealth for himself.

When sugar workers went on strike at an Iranian state-owned company, the workers blamed the sugar mafia (Anon, 2007):

The workers assert that the country is under the control of a "sugar mafia" that has taken advantage of the government. The private sector and the government are making a lot of money by importing sugar, despite the fact that many companies that produce sugar are in danger of going bankrupt.

Bazaar (2022) interviewed one of the major distributors of sugar. He said that dealers and mafia people sometimes cause disturbance in the market, and that the mafia is taken advantage of such situations. The price of sugar could be characterized by ups and downs where fluctuations in the sugar market benefitted the sugar mafia. In the neighboring country Pakistan, "The sugar mafia had made threats to Prime Minister Imran Khan and Wajid Zia, the then-DG FIA and Chair of the Inquiry Commission, to halt the investigation into the sugar scam." (Abassi, 2021).

Iranian Tea Mafia

From the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, strange things happened in the Iranian tea industry. The tea organisation was dissolved, the smuggling of tea into the country increased, and the changes progressed to such an extent that since then there were whispers about the existence of a tea mafia in the country. The first spark was struck in 1982 by Tahmasab Mazaheri, the then Minister of Economy, when he exposed the 4-person case of the tea import mafia. He even went to Sri Lanka to prevent the illegal import of tea, and an agreement was signed with the authorities of this country regarding the legal import of tea to the country for mixing with domestic tea for consumption or export. But 3 months after returning from this trip, he was dismissed from the position of the Ministry of Economy, and naturally this case was also placed in an aura of uncertainty (Eghtesad, 2013).

However, in an effort to clarify the dimensions of tea smuggling to the country between 1995 and 2004, the Sixth Parliament prepared a research report on the country's tea industry. In this research and investigation, the liberalization of tea, tea smuggling, the quality of smuggled goods entering Iran, the type of processing of Iranian products abroad and its reimport as smuggling, tariff evasion, and dozens of other issues were investigated (GWW, 2009).

IrajNadimi, the then representative of Lahijan in the parliament, who was the designer of this investigation, has interesting words about this after six years have passed. He talks about the pressure of the mafia of power and wealth on the Ministry of Health (Lahig, 2010):

The Ministry of Health used to prevent adding essential oil to tea, which in my opinion is an example of the pressure of the mafia of power and wealth, because under the title that essential oil is carcinogenic, they prevented that. The tea can be processed inside and thus they created two opportunities for themselves. One is the opportunity to sell to foreigners so that they can add essential oil and the second is the opportunity to import the type of tea with essential oil. Abbreviated names such as (A, C) and (A. L) ended well, so that it is not clear what is the matter of the tea mafia? A mafia that, according to Seyed Mohammad Gharavi, is one of the activists of the tea industry makes 250 billion tomans in profit annually.

Unfortunately, as argued by Tabnak (2010), the process of increasing the import of strategic products to the country was such that it set the stage for the increase of game brokers and the formation of large-scale mafias. Tea is another strategic product that was caught by the mafia. The first time was Tahmaseb Mazaheri who brought up the tea import mafia. At that time, Mazaheri disclosed the case of 4

people of the tea import mafia, but after his dismissal, the case of these 4 people is in a halo of ambiguity until now.

Iranian Steel Mafia

Steel is another profitable product that attracts the attention of many people, but currently steel is mostly in the hands of white-collar people who even elect the bosses. There are many economic benefits hidden in the various stages of iron ore extraction and its conversion into steel, and access to the country's virgin mines is one of the rents that the country's steel mafia has planned to dominate these resources in recent years.

Mashreqh news claimed that the violations in the thousand billion tomans tender and the way of selling the country's steel products are the most prominent violations by the steel mafia. It is also said that the violations in the country's steel sector have been supported by certain political currents on the one hand and influence in various departments of the Ministry of Industries on the other hand, so that the people appointed to key positions have a clear track record in financial and economic issues (Afkar, 2012).

However, with the rapid growth of white-collar crime, the millipede of corruption quickly penetrated the large areas of profit and threatened beneficiary's securities; so that generations and decades may have to dissect the dimensions and complexity of white-collar aspects in Iran. However, there will remain unresolved issues, since white-collar crime in the country is not limited to the embezzlement, bribery, fraud, or forgery of documents, as mentioned in classic textbooks. Rather, there is widespread corruption in profitable national resources and other areas such as oil, gold, land grabbing, forestry, seafaring, environmental degradation, food fraud, consumer rights abuses, and employment and customs violations (Sooreisrafil, 2017).

According to the Moj news agency, in late December and early January 2016, the news of the arrest of a super-debtor was reported. At first, the name of this person was mentioned as "R.D", but with a little more detailed investigation, it was found that his exact name is Rasool Daniyalzadeh. After a short period of time, the officials of the judicial system confirmed the arrest of this person, and the spokesperson of the judicial system also stated that the investigation of his case has begun. In this regard, it was found that Daniyalzadeh has a large bank debt in his case, which some estimated to be more than 2600 billion tomans (Moj, 2019). According to the reporter of the legal-judicial field of the social group of the Young Journalists Club Rasool Daniyalzadeh was convicted for the crime of forming a corruption network and was sentenced to 15 years in prison with a reduced sentence due to returning to the country after filing the case (Vic, 2020).

In all the Iranian newspapers cited, people like Rasool Daniyalzadeh (Iran's Steel Sultan) and the late Asadullah Asghar Oladi (Iran's Sultan of Dry Goods), Abbas Irvani (Sultan of Automobile Parts), Seyed Moein Barani Behbahani (Sultan of Porsche and Textiles), Bagheri Dermani (Sultan of Bitumen and Real Estate), Modalelha (Sultan of Sugar), Vahid Mazlounin (Sultan of Currency and Coins), Asadolah Asgaroladi (Sultan of Dry Bars), Khandan Garami (Sultan of Car Imports), Mohsen Ahmadian (Sultan of Petrochemicals), all of them are men and none of the perpetrators are women (Rooziato, 2020). Therefore, most white-collar criminals in Iran are obviously men like in so many other countries (Benson and Gottschalk, 2015).

Theory of Convenience

The theory of convenience suggests that the likelihood of white-collar offenses is dependent on financial motives, organizational opportunities, and personal willingness to commit and conceal financial crime in an occupational setting (Gottschalk, 2022). Convenience was first introduced as a core concept in criminology by Gottschalk (2017). The convenience triangle suggests that opportunities, willingness, and motivations can work together to commit the crime and cover it up. The individual or the organization's possibilities or threats are the source of the motivation. The majority of the opportunity comes from committing or concealing a financial crime. High-status individuals with legitimate access to resources find it convenient to commit crimes. When institutions are deteriorating (decay), there is a lack of oversight and guardianship (chaos), and criminal market forces are collapsing, it is convenient to conceal crime. Identity, rationality, and education can all contribute to a criminal's decision to commit a crime. Justification and neutralization of guilt can lead to crimes based on the belief that the perpetrator is innocent.

The primary motivating factors are possibilities and threats, which are depicted in the central column of Figure 1. Possibilities provide opportunities for exploration and profit, whereas threats symbolize suffering and obstacles that no one wants to face.

White-collar offenders' most common motivation for financial crime is greed at the individual level of possibilities (Bucy et al., 2008; (2006) (Hamilton and Micklethwait). According to Goldstraw-White (2012), greed is defined as socially constructed needs and desires that can never be fully satisfied. Greed can be a strong desire to acquire more of something and a strong preference for wealth maximization. It may seem odd to outsiders that wealthy people are willing to break the law in order to achieve their goal of becoming even wealthier. However, as the definition suggests, greedy people never are content with what they have

because they constantly yearn for more. Greedy individuals view prosperity as a goal rather than a means. Greed can grow when the company doesn't act in the right way.

(Haynes et al., 2015). The following convenience proposition seems relevant for the Iranian mafia as indicated in Figure 1:

Financial crime will appear to be more convenient for a privileged individual in a trusted position as personal greed grows.

An example is Reza Hamzelou, who was officially appointed as the CEO of Petrochemical Trading Company in March 2008. In the same year, he was also appointed as a member of the board of directors of Semga (Cultural Heritage and Tourism Investment of Iran). Among his other jobs, we can mention being a member of the board of directors of companies such as Fam Aluminum Manufacturing and Industrial Group Company, Tehran Silk Corridor Sustainable Development Company, Engineering Design and Supplying Parts and Chemicals Company for Petrochemical Industries, Petrochemical Transportation Company. Mr. Hosseini, representative of the prosecutor said in the court (Moj, 2019a, 2019b):

The performance of the defendants as managers of petrochemical companies indicates that despite the correspondence of the officials and managers of the Ministry of Oil to prevent any interference and seizure of export products, they did not pay attention and tried to take it for their own benefit. In fact, the defendants did not import foreign currency from the sale of petrochemical products into the country, and by confiscating the foreign currency from exports, they deposited it into the accounts of their companies abroad, including Deniz, and their managers received commission or profit from this transfer.

Greed defined by Sajko et al. (2021: 961) as “an excessive materialistic desire to acquire personal wealth”, is clearly seen in this case.

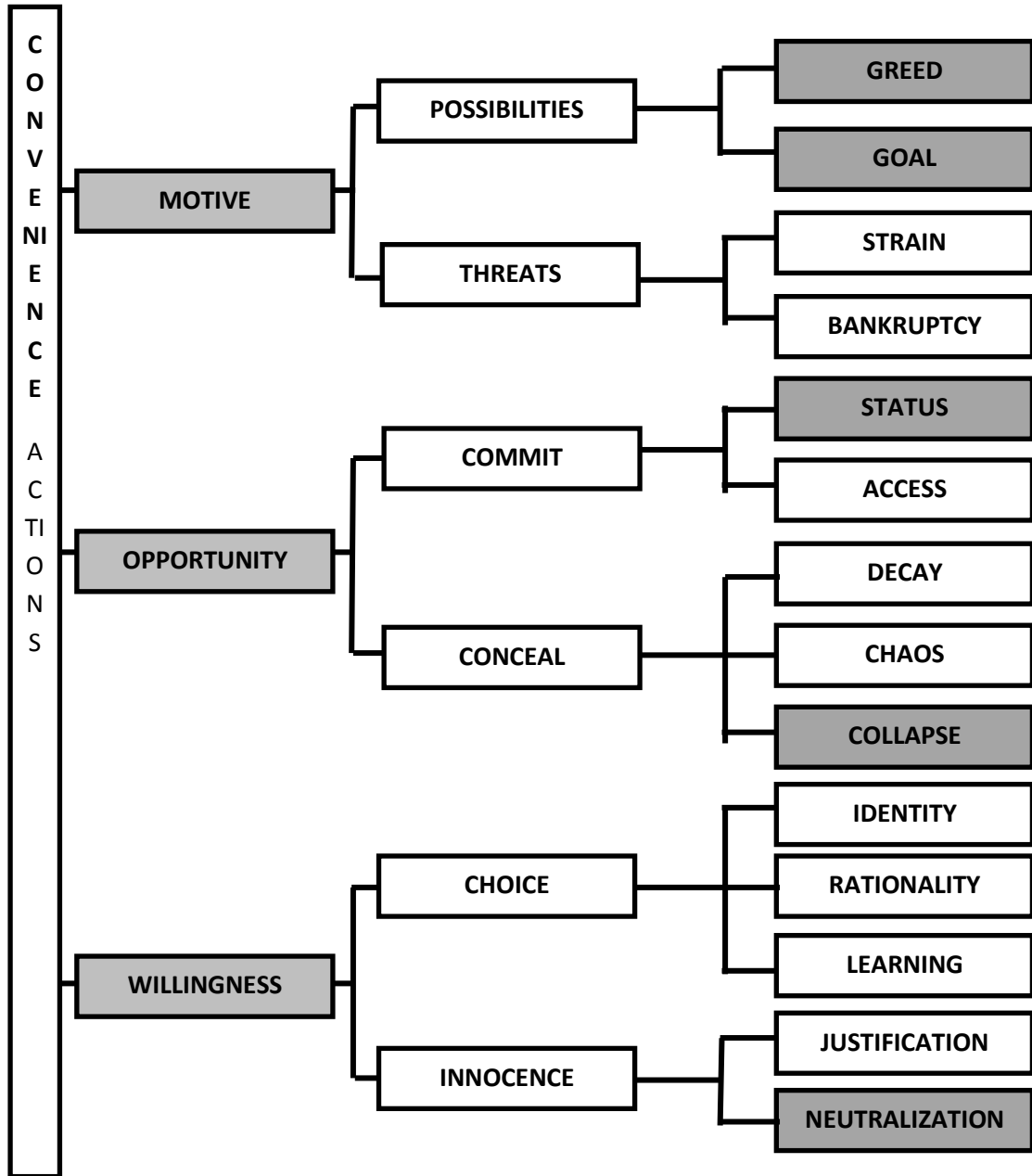


Figure 1 Convenience propositions for the Iranian mafia

By increasing not only the motivation to achieve the goal but also the motivation to justify doing so by any means necessary, high goal commitment

facilitates unethical behavior (Locatelli et al., 2017). A process by which individuals justify unethical behavior and disengage morally (Theoharakis et al., 2021) is referred to as state morale disagreement (Moore, 2015). It is a negative aspect of setting lofty goals. Therefore, the following convenience proposition seems relevant for the Iranian mafia as indicated in Figure 1:

As commitment to ambitious business goals increases, financial crime will seem more convenient for a privileged individual in a trusted position.

The main activity of the 13th tier defendant of the Hadi Talia Sani Petrochemical case was to identify needy and addicted people in order to obtain a full power of attorney from them regarding the identity of these people for company registration and other actions including banking affairs line with the goals and interests of the Hassan Yavari network. The meat, sugar, steel, and tea mafia are among those who have a high social status and are in contact with the government's first-tier people, as they commit their crime through rent. In the petrochemical case, people bypassed the sanctions with the permission of the government, but instead of depositing money at the benefit of the government, they took it for themselves based on greed.

The opportunity to commit and cover up wrongdoing is depicted in the central column of Figure 1 (Gottschalk, 2022). Fukuyama argued that modern economic life, "it requires that there is trust in the society" (Zainabadi, 2008:9). Acceptance of vulnerability to another person's actions is trust. Trust was defined as "a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based on positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of another" (Kim et al. 2009:401). (401). Spiekermann (2018: 291) discovered that a certain degree of trust is necessary for all economic transactions; otherwise, the costs of those transactions would simply be prohibitive to economic activity:

White-collar criminals violate the trust of a variety of stakeholders, including shareholders, the general public, and customers. Therefore, the breach of trust frequently occurs simultaneously with white-collar crime.

This trust is sometimes in the individual and sometimes in the organization. In the research of Ghorchibeigi (2019) regarding white-collar offenders, many cases have been based on abuse of trust. In one case, a person established an investment company, displayed the company's letterhead and minutes, and performed fraudulent maneuvers to gain public trust. He had attracted people to invest. In another case, a person by creating a fake agency of one of the major domestic automobile companies, because he was a former employee of this company, was able to deliver the car below the official price of the factory and earlier than the scheduled time. In this way, he was able to defraud 33 billion tomans from about 9 people.

But in the case of the Iranian mafia, the core of the trust between the mafia and the government is that the government gave the mafia powers to circumvent international sanctions, but they abused these powers for their own benefit.

This means that the administrative system, due to the existence of defective laws and centralism in government institutions, allows statesmen, politicians, and other power holders to enter into financial corruption relations sometimes legally (rent) and sometimes illegally (Isna, 2018). Therefore, our studies are compatible with the following convenience proposition as illustrated in Figure 1:

Higher social status for a privileged individual in a trusted position is associated with greater convenience of committing financial crime.

According to Nielsen (2003), joining criminal networks can be appealing, particularly if criminogenic market symptoms make markets dominated by criminal forces the norm (Chang et al., 2005). Therefore, Figure 1 indicates support for the following convenience proposition:

The collapse of the market as a result of rule complexity, cartels, criminal networks, and the unwillingness of the state to intervene, among other things, makes it convenient for a wealthy person in a position of trust to conceal financial crime.

The definition of an opportunity to commit white-collar crime can be as follows: Individual and personality factors of the perpetrators and conditions, situations, or in criminological terms, opportunities that lead some people to deceive others or abuse the trust of other people or organizations for their own benefit under the title of internal and external causes in the occurrence of economic crimes in Iran has been explained, economic criminals are very socially compatible with the society and in addition the leaders of organized crime, the most dangerous state in terms of the four standard ranking in criminology is known as "dangerous state" (i.e. the worst state). Among the internal causes, we can mention the weakness of policy making and legislation, the weakness of executive policies and the shaky actions of the executive branch and the weak treatment of the judicial branch in the past years. Also, the most important external influencing factor is sanctions and restrictions on Iran's economy. This factor is important in our research because the public and private sectors are forced to turn the country's economy around by doing things like export and import in different ways, which are of course out of the ordinary. It seems that many cases of economic crime in recent years have been affected by the restrictions created through sanctions. The formation of secret companies and institutions in the name of individuals and even in the name of foreign partners has caused the loss of national capital and the transfer of the country's income to personal accounts. Among the most obvious examples, we can mention the two billion

dollar oil embezzlement cases, the 124 million dollar oil rig and the petrochemical case with more than six billion euros (Hatmi et al.2018:99).If criminogenic market symptoms cause markets with crime forces to be the usual way of doing business (Chang et al., 2005), participation in criminal networks can be attractive (Nielsen, 2003). Therefore, Figure 1 indicates support for the following convenience proposition:

The collapse of the market as a result of rule complexity, cartels, criminal networks, and the unwillingness of the state to intervene, among other things, makes it convenience for a wealthy person in a position of trust to conceal financial crime.

Figure 1's central column demonstrates that innocence and choice can be the foundation of willingness. Choice is the deliberate decision to commit a crime, whereas innocence is the belief that one did not contribute to the wrongdoing (Gottschalk, 2022). The impression that surprisingly few white-collar criminals believe they have done anything wrong is the focus of the personal willingness. Most of them feel innocent and victims of injustice when indicted, prosecuted, convicted, and imprisoned. By application of neutralization techniques (Sykes and Matza, 1957), they deny responsibility, injury, and victim. They condemn the condemners. They claim appeal to higher loyalties and normality of action. They claim entitlement, and they argue the case of legal mistake. They find their own mistakes acceptable. They argue a dilemma arose, whereby they made a reasonable tradeoff before committing the act (Jordanoska, 2018; Kapteinand Helvoort, 2019). These claims make it easier for criminals to commit crimes because they do not see them as crimes and do not feel guilty of them (Cullen et al., 2021). Therefore, the following convenience propositionis supported by Figure 1:

Financial crime is more likely to involve a conveniently oriented, privileged individual in a trusted position who is better able to deny guilt.

The case of the oil mafia is one of the examples related to the abuse of sanctions in the previous period of American sanctions. Unfortunately, in a situation where the top officials of the Iranian regime and the dear people of Iran were resisting the illegal sanctions of the United States, individuals, along with some bank managers, who based on their powers and permits awarded to them, abused it all.The government had given some people and managers powers to find a solution to circumvent the sanctions, so that they can sell oil and other goods by finding a suitable solution and deposit the proceeds from the sale to the government's account. These privileged individuals had the serious responsibility of dealing with the sanctions, and they were obliged to find a suitable solution for the sale and transfer of Iranian oil and other goods and to transfer the funds from

the export to the country. They have misused the property and assets for themselves or others. Also, the defendants in this case claimed that their actions were aimed at solving the country's problems in order to evade the cruel sanctions, which have been encouraged by the country's security authorities. In the petrochemical case, Reza Hamzelou has repeatedly used the evasion of sanctions as a defense in the court hearings. They deny any crime by justifying that the money was temporarily kept in their company's account and then transferred to the government's account.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this article, convenience theory has been used to study some Iranian mafia cases that link three constructs: motives, opportunities, and willingness. In this article about Iranian mafias, opportunity is given a lot of attention because the Iranian mafia often uses rent-seeking as an excuse to commit crime. Rent is the use of government privileges by a certain person or persons, which makes it easier for the mafia to commit crime and hide their wrongdoing. As long as there is a motivation for and willingness to engage in deviant behavior, offenders carry out their illegal acts in the professional setting.

At the individual level of possibilities, greed is the most recognized motivation for financial crime by white-collar criminals. Greedy people are never happy with what they have. Greed can grow when the organization does not respond appropriately. It seems that with the increase of personal greed, financial crime is committed more easily for a privileged person in a trusted position, which is in line with the theory of convenience. Also, commitment to a high economic goal facilitates unethical behavior by increasing not only the motivation to achieve the goal, but also the motivation to justify doing it by any means necessary. As commitment to ambitious business goals increases, financial crime appears easier for a privileged individual in a trusted position, thereby supporting the relevant proposition in convenience theory.

In terms of opportunities, due to the existence of faulty laws and centralism in government institutions, the administrative system allows statesmen, politicians, and other power holders to enter into financial corruption relations, sometimes legally (rent) and sometimes illegally, as a result of higher social status. For a privileged person in a reliable position, it is associated with greater convenience in committing financial crime. And this proposition is also consistent with the convenience theory in general. Due to the existence of sanctions and the collapse of the market due to the complexity of laws, cartels, and crime networks, crime rates, government reluctance to intervene, and other factors are associated with the greater convenience of concealing financial crime for a

privileged individual in a trusted position, which also supports the theory of convenience.

In the propensity willingness, considering that propensity can be based on choice and innocence, and that choice is a conscious decision to commit a criminal act, while innocence is a perception of a lack of role in committing a crime, our studies show support for the convenience proposition. Then a suitably privileged and well-scored individual in a position of trust with a stronger ability to deny guilt has a higher level of willingness to engage in financial crime. This proposition is clearly visible in the presented examples due to sanctions and the feeling of innocence of the criminals. In general, the media concept of mafia business in Iran can be similar to the general concept of the mafia with theory stated in convenience propositions.

A fascinating direction for future study is to study convenience dynamics for the Iranian mafias. The identified convenience propositions of greed, goal, status, collapse, and neutralization will over time influence each other. Identifying what propositions might be causes and what propositions might be effects are of scholarly as well as practical importance. For example in terms of public policy, it might be interesting to discuss whether reduction in status and avoidance of collapse might influence both motives of greed and goal, as well as willingness by neutralization.

Future research on convenience dynamics might include the convenience triangle that is similar to the fraud triangle (Cressey, 1972; Wells, 1997), which suggests three conditions for fraud: (1) incentives and pressures, (2) opportunities, and (3) attitudes and rationalization. However, there are three distinct differences. First, convenience is a relative concept, indicating that offenders can achieve their goals through non-illegitimate means. While the fraud triangle suggests that opportunities will stimulate crime, the convenience triangle suggests that relative opportunities will stimulate crime. There is no reason to commit crime, even if there are many opportunities, as long as alternative convenient decisions may lead to the same result. It is the extent of relative convenience, and not the extent of opportunity, that determines whether an offense is attractive. A very conveniently oriented decision-maker may resort to illegal activities when legal activities are slightly more stressful. A less conveniently oriented decision-maker may try intensely to solve problems and explore opportunities without violating the law.

Second, it is in the organizational setting where offenders have access to resources so that opportunity arises to commit and conceal crime. The convenience triangle focuses on the privileged position that offenders can abuse to commit and conceal crime, whereas the fraud triangle emphasizes opportunity in general. Obedience and fear, trust and lack of control, create convenient

opportunities. The convenient opportunity arises from legitimate access to resources in a trusted position without guardians, where resources facilitate activities that cannot be performed by others. An organizational structure and culture that gives elites the impression of being above the law create opportunities for convenience.

Third and finally, a white-collar criminal can have an effect on an organization's opportunity over time. Therefore, opportunity in convenience theory is not a static condition but rather a dynamic one. A potential offender creates an opportunity space that expands over time through the collection of decision rights, the control of information flows, and authoritarian leadership styles. The opportunity space changes over time as a result of the potential offender's behavior, whether intentionally or not.

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