CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION
5.1. Conclusion

Prior to the emergence of political parties, people in the 18th century European countries tried to challenge the belief that political authority is given by God. They challenged hereditary rights and the authority of the elite classes. Usually, political parties emerge when various groups of people get aware of their particular interests, and a lot of people of a country want the right to take part in political issues.

Political parties were created in Iran after its political reconstruction. In the twentieth century, the creation and growth of political parties in Iran became the main feature of the country's political modernization; that continued throughout this period and affected economic infrastructure, but not monarchical political structure. In this situation the role of political parties and their durability in the Iranian society faced many ups and downs.

The appearance of the political parties and their proper behavior in political scene in Iran had good effect on social maturity and cultural expansion. The first priority in Iranian society was to bring about drastic change in government structure, and in such a case the people and society got changed automatically. The development of political participation and emergence of parties required some basic changes in the traditional society, including the appearance of new social groups, development of public opinion, and other processes related to social and economic renovation. These changes initiated the condition for the development of parties and political participation.

During the years 1942-1954, as a result of central government's weakness and inefficiency, political parties witnessed vast expansion; however, as Cottam says, the history of Iranian political parties does not begin with the year 1941. Iranians have been talking of their political parties ever since the constitutional revolution of 1906. And
two political groups, the Democrats and Moderates, can lay some claim to the appellation "party" (Cottam, 2007: 84).

Unfortunately, after a coup d'état against Mohammad Mossadegh (Prime Minister) in 1953, authoritarianism was the main affairs in Iran, with little, if any, trace of independent political parties. Even if a party existed, it was by order of the king, and this situation lasted until the Islamic Revolution of Iran.

Discussions in this research work highlight the reach, utility and inadequacies of the approaches adapted to the study of political parties. Using the approach known as structuralism, I have searched a way to prove that social, economic and cultural structures were the causes of instability of political parties in Iran between years 1942-1954.

On the other hand, considering the importance of developing political parties in Iranian history, this research has tried to provide necessary information and discussion which helps to understand the reasons of formation and activities of political parties in order to fill the vacuum, which existed in this domain.

For this purpose, I have tried to analyze four political phases and their relation to the political awareness of Iranian population. Then, utilizing the existing documents and references, I have emphasized the role and aims of the ruling class, intellectuals, foreign powers, and socio economic conditions, in the formation of political parties such as left-wing, right-wing, nationalist and religious parties.

During these years, a large number of parties appeared in Iran; most of them had little permanent effect on the political scene, and quickly disappeared from view. Others have had a deeper influence, both ideologically and organizationally and have contributed to the contemporary Iranian political style. These fewer parties had more long lasting effect on the political scenario, in terms of both ideology and political
administration, and considering only the more permanent aspects of the development of political parties in Iran, I have subdivided it into four groups: on the left were Tudeh Party of Iran and Democratic Party of Azerbaijan, on the right, three types of parties emerged comprising Conservatives, and pro-British notables such as National Will Party, Democratic Party of Iran and Justice Party and the others. There were also nationalist parties such as Pan Iran, Sumka and National Front party of Iran. Finally, there were the religious groups such as Fida'iyan-i- Islam and Warriors of Islam Party.

It is fit to record that the nature of political parties in Iran was different from that of western countries. The most important feature of all the parties in Iran was ideology. Usually this ideology was Marxist, Nationalist and Islamic. Of course sometimes, in special cases political awareness gives birth to political parties.

After mentioning the importance of political parties in helping political structure to sustain and democratic growth, the findings of this study show that the following factors had the greatest impact on the failure of political parties in Iran:

1- The political parties in the west were born and created by its history, and existing theories of political party development in Iran do not take into account this specific historical context and, generally do not pay attention at all to parties and party systems in Western developing countries. Compared to party development in the western world, political parties in regions such as Asia and Iran are of much more recent origin and typically have not benefitted from decades of parliamentary experience. However, in Iran political, economic and socio-cultural context was fundamentally different from western societies.

2- Another problem of political parties in Iran at that time was eastern autocracy and absolute rule of the sovereign. There was a constant tension between the central government and other political parties. For this reason, when the central
government was weak, the political parties had less chance for development, and when it got stronger, it suppressed the political parties. Therefore, parties in such a situation couldn’t play effectual roles in society.

3- Like most third world countries, in Iran also, authority did not distribute power with political parties and other political groups, on the other hand government tried to weaken parties, especially those which opposed them.

4- Another reason for failure of political parties in Iran was that most parties had close association with foreign power doctrinaires. From the left wing, the Tudeh Party openly proclaimed its adherence to communism, this party and also Democrat Party of Azerbaijan was supported by Soviet Union. On the other hand, from the right wing parties, the National Will party with liberal democratic ideas was perceived to be somewhat close to the British.

5- During this time in Iran there was no friendly relationship between political parties, and most of them were competing with each other. For example, all of the right wing parties had their base in response to the growth of the Tudeh party. The Tudeh party was seen as Soviet sponsored, and thus left-wing and right-wing had not only internal clashes but also rivaled in the context of international politics.

6- Another drawback of most political parties that caused them to be unsuccessful was the lack of internal integration because these parties included many different branches among themselves. For example, the National Will Party disintegrated because of two reasons: first due to Sayyid Ziya's personality, and second lack of ground support. The Third force, a movement group that Maleki formed broke with the Tudeh Party after it supported the movement in Azerbaijan.
Political parties in Iran were not financially supported by the people and government. In the West parties were financially supported by a few merchants, industrial undertakings, and banks; besides that, political parties in western countries were dependent on private contributions to finance their activities. “While the classic mass party secures a structural flow of income from the fees paid by its members and the donations from affiliated trade unions, the cadre party generally relies on contributions from wealthy individuals or donations from private business. Government financing of the political process, if at all, occurs mainly indirectly. Public funding for political parties is a relatively recent phenomenon in European democracies” (Alexander, 1989: 211). In Iran, political parties were not supported by such substantial support sources, because there were no huge private companies here like in the developed countries. There were a few companies and banks, and they were under government control also, they were unwilling to support parties. Like other developing countries, here, people were not interested in becoming members of political parties because they forced them to pay subscription fee, and there was also no public funding for political parties.

Most of those parties had no roots among the people and they were dependent on the individual. The aim of appearance of a lot of political parties was to support a few politicians, and their political activities were good excuse for continuation of these parties. Most of these political parties were mainly dependent upon their founders, and it was obvious that after the death or resignation of their patrons, these political parties would gradually disappear from the political scenario of the country. For example, Democrat Party of Iran was basically a selective party, not rooted another majority of people, whose
rapid development was due to support from Qavam Ulsaltana. Consequently, with Qavam's resignation as Prime Minister, his party disappeared too. Its members realized that Democrat Party of Iran was similar in structure and goals to Sayyid Ziya's National Will Party, faced the same end.

9- Parties had very little activity in small towns, and all were supported by a few intellectual individuals from the capital and some big cities in Iran. Also, most political parties lacked overall organization. The most important political organizations were in Tehran, Azerbaijan, Isfahan, Gilun, Mazandaran and Khorasan.

10- Political parties have often played a marginal role in the decision making process in Iran. One of the reasons for this was the tyranny in Iran, that has a historical background and the lack of intermediate organizations like parties.

11- Political system of the time in Iran had a totalitarian structure; because of a highly centralized power, political repression and exclusion of potential challengers. During this time, relationship between Iranian government and political parties was not well-developed. Sometimes, it is important that political parties and mass organizations help achieve the goals of the state.

12- The Iranian government at that time was not totally independent, and foreign superpowers like Soviet Union, Great Britain and United States had a great influence on the Iranian government. Most times these countries supported some political parties; because the Iranian government always believed that since all parties were made by them, their activities were suspicious. The Iranian government of that time can be regarded as an obstacle in the way of formation and activity of political parties. For these reasons Iranian government tried to interfere in the internal affairs of political parties.
Like other third world countries, in Iran, separation between elite and mass was one of the problems of political parties. While the mass was unaware of the necessity of political parties, increased elite contact with the west in that time caused some Iranian intellectuals to persuade the regeneration of political structure to obtain the political power. This gap between elite and mass was a huge obstacle in creating political participation, and even formation of political parties.

There were also some other preventive factors for the condition of political parties in Iran. These factors included: political apathy, fatalism, lack of tolerance, conspiracy theory, political distrust, patriarchy, self-important ideas, superstition, Absolutism, ambivalence and obedience to their rulers, Mysticism, Sufism etc. although their value and importance according to time and place were different.

The combination of politics and religion has always existed in Iranian history in varying degrees, as religion has usually been the source of legitimacy for political power in this country. While Iranian society was totally religious and traditional, most parties at that time were not believed to be religious and during these years the conflict between westernized parties and traditionalist religious groups increased. Due to this there was no tendency among the Iranian society towards western model political parties.

Another reason of defeated political parties was that religious leaders and intellectuals had serious problems with Marxist parties because these parties, in a totally religious and traditional society, openly proclaimed their adherence to communism, and religious intellectuals were against these kinds of parties.
17- The following factors also had very important role in political parties' inefficiency at that time: insufficient education among the parties members, ignorance towards elite rotation, appearance of a lot of parties during these twelve years, while most of them had no experienced cadres, lack of confidence and intention for being away from group, having a political confusion, lack of persistence and being unadjusted, excessive attention to cultural elements especially religious factors.

18- Characteristics to Iranian elite there were also some preventive factors for the development of political parties in Iran, these factors included: lack of cooperative culture among them, expectation of submission by ordinary people, and conspiracy theory.

19- Lack of strong workers unions, guilds and many other associations which could be considered as cornerstones of political parties were other reasons for the failure of political parties at that time.

20- Finally, one of the most important causes of political parties' inefficiency was the imbalance between the growth of political parties and the growth of political culture in Iran which would cause increase demands from the political system. In addition, party organization could be activated for categorizing of these demands and transferring them to the political system.

This study highlights the importance of developing political parties in Iranian history; and has tried to provide necessary information and discussions which helps in the understanding of the reasons of their formation and activities in order to fill the vacuum, which existed in this domain. This study has tried to cover everything related to the research area but there is still a lot of research going on this topic. New studies can bring out more results and thus, the present research should not be treated as a final
arbiter on the area. The present research is as sociological as much as it is related to the politics of the country. Many new facts and details related to the intentions of the past rulers and politicians may get revealed with the passage of time; therefore the reasons of some events that occurred in the concerned time period of the research may come out of the bosom of the history. There is a lot of scope to conduct research in the related field. Future researchers can conduct more detailed analysis of political parties in Iranian society.

5.2. Limitations

Although this research was carefully prepared, I am still aware of some of the limitations and shortcomings. The present research was both specially and temporally bound to only Iran and a specific period (1942-1954) of time of Iranian social and political history.
References
