CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW
Introduction

This chapter has been divided into different divisions and subdivisions. The first portion deals with the theoretical perspective. It discusses political parties from the perspective of structuralism, functionalism, and economic structure. The next section explains the theoretical framework; while the final section gives a brief account of literature being written on the failure of political parties in Iran.

2.1. Theoretical Perspective:

It is not possible to review all theorists and writers who have studied the evolution and functions of political parties; therefore it is better to concentrate on some of the important and selected viewpoints of some significant theorists. In this regard we have, here, scrutinized the approaches related to political parties along with their conceptualization and widening of related paradigms.

Political parties from the perspective of Structuralism

The first studies of political parties were carried out by structuralists. Structuralism emerged in the 1960s, and was based on the work of Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913). Saussure's work was oriented towards understanding the structures underlying languages. Structuralism also influenced anthropology and Marxism. In the former case, the work of Claude Levi-Strauss (1908-2009) exhibits this influence. Levi-Strauss extended structuralism to anthropology, focusing on communication. He reinterpreted social phenomena for their effects on communication. Structural Marxism took from structuralism an interest in the historical origins of structures, but continued to focus on social and economic structures (Ritzer, 2002: 595). In the study of political party from the structuralism perspective, party organization has an important role. The relationship between the party's organization and other systems in the society such as political, economic and social systems has a
great importance. Robert Michels, a German sociologist, is famous for the study of the leadership of left-wing democratic parties. He was interested in the ways in which organizational dynamics inhibit the realization of radical objectives with particular reference to the Social Democratic Party in Germany. He concluded that all organizations have oligarchical tendencies, a proposition which he formulated as an 'iron law of oligarchy', which states that 'it is the organization which gives birth to the domination of the elected over the electors, of the mandatories over the mandators, of the delegates over the delegators. According to Michels (2009: 189), as a political party grows and becomes more bureaucratic, it is increasingly dominated by officials who are committed to internal organizational goals, rather than social change, and by middle-class intellectuals who pursue their own personal objectives which are usually different from those of the party rank-and-file.

**Political parties from the perspective of Functionalism**

Another type of study of political parties was done by researchers who analysed the "role" and "function" of these parties. Functionalism is one of the core perspectives of sociology. The functionalist perspective evolved from the work of Emile Durkheim, though it was shaped by Harvard sociologist Talcott Parsons during the mid-20th Century. According to Bohm & Vogel (2001: 78), functionalism can be explained through one simple premise: "the world is a system of interrelated parts, and each part makes a necessary contribution to the vitality of the system". Functionalism could be explained as the most simplified and unsuccessful of sociological schools and serves as the most conservative of sociological schools of thought.

Functionalists have paid particular attention on to the party's role in society, especially with connection to the political system. These studies include a significant
percentage of existing research about political parties and seek to answer just one question: what is the function of a party in society?

It must be said that the word "function" can be used both specially and generally. According to the first, it only covers party activities, but in the second case, in addition to direct performance, it also includes results and indirect effects of party activities.

**Economic analysis of political parties**

This analysis is more familiar to political theorists. It seeks to explain political parties as a market based fact. Max Weber was the first sociologist who offered economic analysis of political parties. He was much concerned with the power of bureaucracy in modern political parties. Weber discusses political parties in his political writings as well as in his sociology.

Weber defines a party as: "The term party will be employed to designate associations, membership of which rests on formal free recruitment. The goal to which its activities are devoted is to secure power within an organization for its leaders to attain ideal or material advantages for its active members" (Swedberg, 2005: 194).

According to this perspective political parties are always a market based fact. Elections are a type of political market, in which parties offer their candidates and their policies in exchange for the votes needed to gain office. In this market, parties gain what is surely their key resource, control of public office. Just as a business can maintains itself by selling its product at an adequate price, a party able to win office has no difficulty in obtaining all the elements of a vital organization: attractive candidates, willing workers, and money givers. And, just as the economic market sends clear and unambiguous messages to the business firm concerning the success or failure of its product, the political market evaluates openly, automatically, externally, and with
exquisite numerical precision the output of the political party. Political and economic markets are, however, not identical. The political market operates much more discontinuously in accordance with the electoral cycle. The most important difference between the two kinds of markets lies in the character of what is being traded. Elections create an imbalanced market. Parties receive votes and the control of office; these are private benefits, or goods which go only to the party and to its candidates. But, parties also offer to voters, candidates and policies, benefits which reach everyone regardless of the votes cast. Thus they offer collective benefits. This is in sharp contrast to the economic market in which both sides of a transaction give and receive private or selective goods (Schlesinger, 1994: 13).

2.2. Theoretical Framework

This research highlights the reach, utility and inadequacies of the perspectives adopted in the study of political parties. In this research, using the structuralist perspective, a way is found to prove that social, political, economic, and cultural structures during 1942-1954 were the cause of instability of political parties in Iran. Political system in this period of time had a totalitarian or authoritarian structure in Iran.

Authoritarianism is characterized by a highly concentrated and centralized power maintained by political repression and the exclusion of potential challengers. It uses political parties and mass organizations to mobilize people around the goals of the state.

During the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah, significant increases in oil revenues, coincident with the centralization of the economy, compounded societal stress and imbalance. The modernization that continued throughout the Shah's rule affected the economic infrastructure but not the monarchical political structures. In this
period of time Iranian society saw many ups and downs. Emergence of political parties, and their proper behaviour in Iran could have effect on social maturity and cultural expansion, and establish quick development. Some believe that the imbalance between political and economic development is the main cause of political inefficiency of parties in Iran.

2.3. Literature Review

This study is designed to examine the reasons of the failure of political parties in Iran between 1942-1954. A comprehensive review of literature is essential for any good research endeavour as it provides background information to aid in designing and analyzing. A large number of studies have examined various dimensions of political parties in Iran. Previous studies on this issue can be a valuable source of guidance for testing as well as providing probable explanation. A brief account of literature of failure of political parties in Iran is being taken up here.

Alijani (2006) in his study points out some reasons for the lack of development among the parties in Iran:

1) Eastern autocracy and sovereign of absolute rule.
2) Lack of confidence and intention of being away from a group.
3) Lack of persistence, and being unadjusted.
4) Excessive attention to cultural elements, especially religious factors.
5) Overdependence of economy on oil and the dependence of people on the government but not vice versa.

He also believes that dominant political and economical systems in the third world do not intend to share power with institutions such as parties and civic structure. Indeed they regard non-governmental parties and groups as their rivals.
He asserts that the economic system is effective only when parties and civic organizations are formed and empowered. He investigates the internal issues of parties.

Asayesh (2010) in his article says that development of political parties in Iran has exceeded the time limit of almost one century, but these political parties could not perform significant role in Iranian political system. In this article he examines how these hindrances impede the party development process in Iran.

Further, he adds that the availability of funds stands out as one of the crucial factors to improve any political party. Political parties in Iran, however, lack such substantial support. Also the, people are not interested in becoming members of parties because they oblige them to pay subscription fee as there is no public funding for political parties. He says another problem of parties in Iran is the electoral system. Political parties actually are electoral machines in Iran; the electoral system is not dependent on the party system, and the candidates with the highest standings are not considered members of political parties.

His research shows that another problem of political parties in Iran is the lack of publication authority and press. Most presses belong to the government and according to constitution; governance cannot allow establishment of private T.V. Channels.

Finally, he mentions other obstacles such as political culture, rentier state, power centralization, civil society and separation between elite groups and masses.

Agha-Alikhani (2006) discusses important issues. Upside down formation of parties, insufficient education among parties' members, ignorance towards elites, rotation and new individuals in parties are the main reasons which inhibit effective roles of parties. He also mentions other problems faced by parties like the lack of thought among the parties, and paying more attention to individual interests than to group interests.
Another academic work by Bagheri-Khouzani (2005) points out the relationship between power centralization and inefficiency of political parties in Iran. He suggests that when the central government is weak, the development of other political parties can be considerable, but when it gets stronger, it suppresses the other parties. Therefore, they cannot play effective roles in a society. He maintains that the imbalance between political and economic development is the main cause of political inefficiency of parties in Iran.

Delavari (1998) studied and noted problems of political parties before the Islamic Republic of Iran, some of which include:

1) There has been a reverse relationship between authority and consolidation of government and the freedom and activities of political parties.

2) The emergence of a great number of political parties that support a politician, and their activities which ensure their continuation are dependent on that individual.

3) All these parties are supported by a few numbers of intellectual individuals from the capital and some other big cities in Iran.

4) Most of these parties lack internal integration and include many different branches among themselves.

5) There is no friendly relationship between political parties and groups.

A quick look at the problems mentioned by Delavari show that the obstacles mentioned above have hindered the development of political parties after the Islamic Revolution, particularly in the period of Khatami's presidency.

Zibakalam (1997) carried out a study and divided the historical roots of failing parties in Iran into three parts; authority, function of religious institution and, negligible infrastructural changes in Iranian society.
Katoozian (1981) in his study also becomes historical reasons for inconsistency of political parties in Iran. He believes that internal problems such as the limitation of private possession and unsafe economy were among the main obstacles in the development of parties in Iran.

He asserts that capitalism like feudalism is a privilege that government bestows to wealthy people such as owners of big companies. The central government has this power to take these privileges back from them. Therefore, lack of confidence of people in the political system and lack of interest for having a long term schedule for investment in various economical and political dimensions cause inconsistency of political parties.

Bashirieh (1997) believes that the first priority of Iranian society was to bring about drastic changes in governmental structure. In such cases, the people and society were revised automatically. He adds that development of political participation and emergence of parties requires some basic changes in the traditional society, including the appearance of new social groups, the development of public opinion, and other processes related to social and economic renovation. These changes could initiate the condition for the development of parties and political participation.

Amirahmadi (1996) in his study estimates that the earlier relationship between Iranian government and civic society was not transparent and well-developed. Moreover, the government was not responsible for issues of the society. One reason for this was the presence of tyranny in Iran and the lack of intermediate organizations like parties.

From the viewpoint of Irani (1998), establishment of democracy is a long and time consuming process. He says that political power and structure of government in
the Islamic Republic of Iran can be regarded as another obstacle in the way of democratic institutions in Iran.

Badei (1997) argues that one of the problems of political parties in the third world is separation between the elite and the masses. This gap is a huge obstacle in creating political participation, which in turn leads to establishment of an arbitrary government. It is also an obstacle for the formation of civic institutions such as political parties, NGOs etc.

Razzaghi (1996) summarizes preventive factors for political life and condition of parties in Iran. These factors include:

a) Patriarchy  
b) Conspiracy theory  
c) Lack of tolerance  
d) Violence  
e) Political apathy  
f) Political distrust.

Khamaei (2000) conducted a study on "Culture, Politics and Social Transformation" and believes that a major obstacles for parties in Iran was government interference in their affairs.

Rakel (2009) says the Iranian Islamic revolution brought forth a political system based on a combination of institutions that derive their legitimacy from Islamic law and republican institutions legitimized by the people. As there were no legal political parties in the Islamic Republic of Iran, political factions represented varying ideological and material interests of members of the political elite and their supporters. Rakel analyzed the rivalries between political factions and related state institutions and the impact of dynamics of factionalism on domestic (economic and socio-cultural) and
foreign policy formulation. She showed that tensions inherent in the structure of state institutions and factional rivalries slowed down the process of democracy and economic reforms in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Salamati (2005) in his paper "Pathology of Parties Institutions in Iran" states the reason for inconsistency among the political parties as the lack of organization suitable to Iranian society.

Dehghani (2003) discusses electoral problems in Iran. In this article, he explains that the electoral system in Iran did not affect the development of parties. The author mentions that in democratic systems of the world individuals were not able to put up their candidature haphazardly, and they should be introduced by a party or special commission. According to him, there were many parties in Iran which appeared to be somewhat organized, but they lacked the important features of a powerful and true party. Not even one percent of people had heard of their names so far.

Tajik (2008) conducted a study on "Obstacle of parties in Iran" and proposed that autocracy and chaos were two temporary and obstructive elements that caused experiences to be disregarded during political competitions. He added that the lack of developed political culture was a basic element that prohibited political activities and gaining experiences.

According to Burnell & Randall (2005), there are a great variety and number of political parties in developing countries but, there has also been a tendency to study them in terms of western experience. By the 1980s the consensus was that their political role was marginal, although since then there has been a growing emphasis on their role in democracy.

This case study considers the main features and sub-types of political parties in developing countries; it explores their interaction in party systems; and examines the
way parties relate to their social base and civil society organizations. It also analyses political role of the parties, in particular their contribution to the building of democracy.

Naghibzade (2008) in his book discusses the history of political parties in Iran. He tries with help of sociological approaches and various theories to discuss the different political parties in Iranian society.

According to him new political parties are distinct with strong elements of the previous one. These new political parties were created during election days and after that, most of them become inactive. These parties in Iran never did anything in transparency of political spaces. They did not perform duties obliged to them such as sovereignty, performance and role in regulating the political system.

The writers of the above mentioned books concentrated on issues such as the development of realistic perception of parties, trend of emergence of political parties and parties in that period besides throwing light on issues such as party class, and ideology, multiparty systems, weak political culture and typology of pressure groups.

Aminzadeh (2008) in his article discusses the victory of the constitutional movement in Iran in the year 1906. He claims that in the history of democratic activities, Iranian constitutional movement can be considered as first of its kind in the Islamic world and Asia. He adds that, today, after a century of the constitutional movement of Iran and thirty years after the Islamic Revolution one of the Greatest Social Revolutions in the World in 1979, there are still serious worries about the level of strong democratic foundations in the country.

According to him, one of the main factors for such worries is the lack of strong civil and political institutions, as well as instability, non professional and weak organization of the political parties.
In this article he tries, to answer the question as to why political parties in Iran were not strongly rooted during the constitutional movement, and the reasons why such a big uprising practically did not find its proper position in the political structure and ended in a dissolution. He says it was an attempt that paved ground for further endeavours and in examining and studying the performance of parties in Iran during the last hundred years.

Rezaei (2006) in his book tries to make the reader familiar with various aspects of a political party. He presents the role, function and behaviour of political parties with documented examples of different communities, and generally focuses on topics such as appearance and development of political parties, position, role and function of parties in political systems, their structure and classification criteria. According to the author political parties were a form of organized social forces and came into existence under certain social conditions. In the traditional political system there is no relevance of parties because in such a society different groups cannot have a role in power and their power are included only in limited areas. A party, basically, is a modern product.

Bahar (1940) was the one of the first writers who wrote a book about political parties in Iran and their role in the political trends of the time. His intention for writing this book was to inform the youth of past events.

The content of this book were limited to 1923-1925 events and probably has some errors. The highlight of his work was accurate analysis and interpretation of the performance of political parties at that time.

Another valuable feature of this book was his proposed to introduce roles of newspapers and journalist on the political scene.
Masoudniya (2007) in his study says increased Iranian contact with the west in the nineteenth century caused some Iranian elites to encourage the renewal of political structure to gain political power.

He considers that, for the first time in the Second Constitutional Assembly, political parties officially began their activities. Despite constitutional continuity in a period of seventy-two years, activities of parties in Iran did not institutionalize before the Islamic revolution and only during the periods of contemporary history were the political parties active.

He says that the twelve-year period (1941-53), of Reza Shah’s regime till the time it collapsed coup was one of the phases when activities of political parties were prosperous. His main focus was on identifying the factors that were the grounds of activity of political parties in Iran during these years and their functions.

The purposes of writing the paper was to answer these two pivotal questions; firstly the general formation and functioning of political parties, and secondly, the problems that faced Esfahan during their twelve years rule. It was based on three components: social gaps, the government (power structure), and analysis of international politics.

Etehadieh (1977) studied the appearance and evolution of political parties that had a parliamentary origin. She discussed factors affecting strength and weakness of political parties. She paid special attention to the role and features of parliament, but did not take into consideration other factors such as socio economic status of parties.

Tabrizinya (1992) in a study collected assumptions, discussions, and reasons for the defeat of political parties in Iran; including explanation for each and every factor. In his book, however, he has not considered certain periods. Moreover, he has not
contextualized his study in the socio-political atmosphere of that era, but instead made generalizations on his own part. As a result he has not mentioned the agents or factors that led to the failure of political parties.

The primary purpose of Paulson’s (2005) study is to present the movement frames used by the Tudeh (Masses) and the National Front parties in Iran, which organized the most successful social movement in the post- World War II period (1941-1953). The frames introduced by the Tudeh party were the most innovative during this period. Likewise, frames used by the National Front, a rival of the Tudeh, also had considerable resonance to the Iranian public. Both organizations shared the goal of limiting the authority of the Pahlavi monarchy and the military that supported it.

The Tudeh, the first national communist party in Iran, introduced the concept of class consciousness into the Iranian political discourse. Modern discussions of social class in Iran, now adopted by socialist-oriented Islamic parties, are variations of the themes that the Tudeh introduced.

Zibakalam & Bagheri-Dehabadi (2009) in their study say that in close relation to socio-political parties and functions, the publication and function of different official organs can be regarded as one of the major issues of contemporary Iran which has not received due attention. The publication of such organs, which dates back to Iran's constitutional revolution, has had a number of functions quite distinguishable from those of mainstream journalism in the country.

Knowledge of functions of such publications can efficiently enhance our understanding of current socio-political changes and trends in contemporary Iran. This article, after close consideration of the emergence of "organ publication" both in Iran and abroad presented a survey of the functions of such publication with regard to three major spheres of activity, critical thinking, socio-political issues, and political parties.
Lei (2007) in his study considers that there was close relation between the development and system of political parties and political modernization. Iran's political parties were formed before its political modernization. During the 20th century, the formation, development and evolvement of Iran's political parties and system went through a very flexible course, which became the major embodiment and content of the country's political modernization; and thereby promoted its development. Many parties came into existence in Iran during the phase of dynastic change and social upheaval. This was the period when Kaiserism was undermined, or, interim between two autocracies, when political circumstances were relatively weak. The directions of Iran's parties were in accord with the diversity of the political culture, many of Iran's political parties were influenced by the western bourgeois politics, oriental proletarian politics, Iranian monarchism and Islamism. So far, there has no mature modern political party come forth in Iran. Therefore, we can review the staggering and intricate steps of Iran's political modernization as well.

Naghibzadeh & Soleymani (2010), in their article, explores and access activities of political parties in Iran after the Islamic revolution. It believed that formation of political parties was a result of political modernization in Iran after the revolution. The authors further examined this modernization on the basis of Huntington's theory about modernization, including stages of faction creation (factionalism), polarization, extension and Institutionalization. The development of parties in Iran was in extension stage, and had not yet entered the Institutionalization level. The process of party creation which mostly got no bigger than their primary founders was a proof of this.

Akhavan-Kazemi (2007) in his study says, that political culture includes a set of outlooks and values which shape political processes and life. The type and extent of socialization and political participation varies depending on the subjective and, passive
or civic nature of political culture. On this basis, and significant influence of political culture in the performance and efficiency of political parties and attitudes towards party system, this paper studied the type of interaction between these two variables, particularly the adverse impact of certain parameters of Iranian political culture on the question of party system. The author has addressed the main cause of the inefficiency of Iranian political parties from the perspective of political culture.

Modir-Sanei (2000) in his research, after using a theoretical approach and some definitions about political parties and identification of political groups, says that political parties in Iran, according to classic and formal definitions of political parties, face some problems. In his work, some of these political groups and parties which exist in contemporary Iran are discussed. He studies the four historical periods of party formation in Iran and their effects on the formation and activities of political parties in Iran. Finally, in his research, positive functioning of parties and its effects on political development are explained.

Most findings of this research correspond with the results of the review of literature on the subject of failure of political parties in Iran. Studies carried out by various scholars also established that emergence of political parties and their proper behaviour in political scene in Iran had its effect on the political awareness of the people. The first priority in Iranian society was to bring about a drastic change in government structure and, in such 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, the development of public opinion, and other processes related to social and economic renovation. These changes could initiate the conditions for the development of parties and political participation.
References


