

## **Evaluation of the Accelerating Factor in the Iranian Oil Nationalization Movement Based on Neil Smelser's Reform Theory**

**Abbas Naeemi Jourshari<sup>1</sup>**

*Department of Sociology, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad university, Tehran, Iran*

**Mansour Vosoughi<sup>2</sup>**

*Department of Sociology, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad university, Tehran, Iran*

**Alireza Kaldi<sup>3</sup>**

*Department of Sociology, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad university, Tehran, Iran*

*Received 7 October 2016*

*Revised 18 November 2016*

*Accepted 22 December 2016*

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**Abstract:** *The main objective of this article is to identify and evaluate the accelerating factor in the Iranian oil nationalization movement. The main question is: what was the accelerating factor that put the Iranian oil nationalization movement into practice? The article relies on the reform movement theory of Neil Smelser. For this purpose, fraud in the 16th national election of the parliament, and establishment of Iranian National Front in objection to it, are studied as the accelerating factors to the Iranian national movement. Research methodology in this study is historical and referential type and the data has been collected through library studies.*

**Keywords:** *Oil National Movement, accelerating factor, Iranian National Front, Parliament election, Neil Smelser.*

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### **Introduction**

The first modernist movements in Iran could be traced back to Abbas Mirza Qajar's period; however, the constitutional revolution has to be considered as an axial point in the Iranian history, so much so that the Iranian modern transitions have been experienced since ever. These transitions have had different forms such as objection, reformation, revolution and coup; so, identifying the modern transitions in Iran is possible by studying these forms of changes. A very important one of these transitions is nationalization of oil. Oil Nationalization Movement is a name given to the struggle of the Iranian people for nationalizing oil in the late 1940s when it reached its culmination. In 1901, a contract was signed in the Qajar court which was known as D'Arcy Contract. For half a century, it opened a new chapter in the British domination over the political, economic, military and cultural existence of Iran. D'Arcy contract was extended in another form in 1933 in the Pahlavi I period (Movahed, 2005. Vol.2: 1307), and very shortly, the colonizing central countries achieved centralized production and accumulation of capital through exploiting resources of their surrounding countries. Then, they joined a competition for winning markets for their jobs, products and capitals.

After decline of Pahlavi I, in September 1941, considering the special domestic and international conditions, oil workers of the south established the syndicate of oil workers of Khuzestan. By receiving directions from the central united council of Iranian Workers Unions, they followed their struggle and went on a public strike in Khuzestan in July 1946. By the British and Iranian Oil Companies' incitement, police and government suppressed workers. It must be mentioned that contrary to the policy of the communist party in handing over northern oil resources to the Russians, nationalists of the 14<sup>th</sup> the parliament led by Dr. Muhammad Musadeq followed the policy of contrary balance (Azghandi, 2010: 133).

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<sup>1</sup> Email: abbasnaeemi.j@gmail.com

<sup>2</sup> Email: vosoughi\_mn@yahoo.com (Corresponding Author)

<sup>3</sup> Email: arkaldi@yahoo.com

Along with formation of mass public objection supported by many political parties and also by members of the legislative assembly of the parliament, the British tried to put an end to the objections by granting some limited privileges so that they could keep and strengthen their dominance over the Iranian oil wells. The most important event in this period was Gass-Golshahian contract also known as oil supplementary bill and the Haji Ali Razm Ara cabinet tried a lot to get the legislative assembly of the parliament pass it. Despite all pressures and threats, the legislative assembly of the parliament rejected it. Shortly after that, the Special Oil Commission in the legislative assembly of the parliament presented a proposal to the members of the parliament to nationalize Iranian oil industry all over the country. After a lot of struggles inside and outside the parliament, this proposal won attention of the members of the parliament, especially shortly after Razm Ara, who was the prime minister of the time, was attempted on his life and assassinated on Wednesday 7th March, 1951 by Khalil Tahmasbi, a member of Devotees of Islam (Azimi, 2008: 446).

In this way, in the very sensitive political-social environment of that time and eventually on 15th March, 1951, the single article about nationalization of Iranian oil industry that had been proposed by the oil commission was passed by members of national legislative assembly of the parliament and was approved by senate on 20th March (Movahed, 2005, Vol.1: 149). Simultaneously, with the approval of the proposal of nationalization of Iranian oil industry, the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company fired 800 workers, shut a factory in Kermanshah, decreased house-building projects, and refused to pay 30% allowance of oil workers in Mashour Port, Aghajari, Laali and Naftesefid sites. These issues provoked nation-wide strike of oil industry workers. This nation-wide strike which started in March 1951 was like the July 1946 strike. The government imposed a curfew all over Khuzestan and suppressed the strikers with the help of some Oil Company elements. The British government announced that it had sent Ilugus and Flamingo ships to Abadan to provide security of the British industries in the strike regions. These two warships were part of the British navy in the Persian Gulf, and their base was in Bahrain. The third British ship, Vern also entered the Persian Gulf, and another warship, Yuyalus set off from the Mediterranean to join Gambia. The crisis in its climax led to massacre and injury of the protesters, but they continued to protest so much so that over 50,000 people joined the strike in mechanic garages, ports, and most importantly, in the Abadan refinery. The strike continued until 26th April 1951, and ended with the company's backing away from its claims (Ibrahimian, 2013: 110-113). Eventually when Dr. Musadeq became the prime minister, a board namely the Board of Deposition, was sent to the south by the government. This board expelled the highest oil company authority, Derik and ended the crisis so that engineer Mehdi Bazargantakes control of the national oil company (Ashkouri, 1997. Vol.1: 111).

In 1952, following its anti-Iranian foreign policy, Britain sued to the Hague court. It was repulsed by the defense of the Iranian council headed by Dr. Musadeq. On the other hand, Dr. Musadeq couldn't come to agreement with the Iranian king over taking the authority of Ministry of War and resigned, but with people's uprising and clerics' support headed by Ayatollah Kashani, he was re-appointed as the prime minister (Jami, 1983: 632-641). Generally, the years of Dr. Musadeq's national authority were influenced by nationalization of oil industry so much that in the following years after approval of this law, Iran's foreign relationships with Britain and its tributary governments experienced fluctuations and tensions. When it was seen impossible to come to terms with Musadeq, a widespread coup was planned (Toloui, 2002: 200). After the coup, the international consortium dominated Iranian oil industry and started harshly suppressing modernist forces with the help of domestic elements. Although just the word "national" had remained for the oil industry and its income had been added to the exclusions, ideological achievements of nationalization of oil industry, liberalism and social justice became permanent in Iranian social changes. The historical period of Iranian oil nationalization movement started with establishment of the National Front in 1949, reached its climax on 20th March 1951, and ended with the 19th August 1953 coup (Gasiorowski, 2005: 286-287).

A lot of works have been published about the changes in the years of national movement, and they have been evaluated from the domestic and foreign perspectives; however, theoretical understanding of their previous structures has received less consideration. In this article, it is tried to explain the

accelerating factor in advent and happening of such a movement. The article will show that fraud in the 16th national the parliament led to formation of the National Front as the leading and beseeching factor for the nationalization of oil industry. In this article, historical method is applied and Smelser's theory is taken as the base for explaining reform.

### **Theoretical Principles**

Social changes as the visible transitions in the structure or as duties of social organizations, and also using violence for creating such changes have been studied by many philosophers and scientists of social sciences from long ago. Since late 19th century, by formation of sociology or social sciences in the new meaning, scientific studies started on social movements and are still going on (Moshirzade, 1996: 107-108). Neil Smelser in his book, *Theory of Collective Behavior*, has tried to build a massive structural theory so that on its basis all types of collective behaviors including social movements could be explained. Smelser believes in defining collective behavior that collective behavior is beseeched on the basis of beliefs that redefine social acts. Generalized belief is the basis of collective behavior that includes different types of beliefs on special situations, special threats, special expectations, etc. The components or parts of social acts include: social values, social norms, organizing or beseech of individual stimuli, and also facilities such as information, equipments and obstacles of reaching an identified ideal (Panahi, 2012: 202).

Smelser distinguishes between different types of social behavior in this way:

Panic response: is in the form of escaping from an existing situation like what happens when stock market declines; 2. Crazy response: happens in the form of invasion for bringing change for example fashion or some forms of reviving religion; 3. Hostile outburst: means destroying the thing or person identified as the cause of crisis; 4. Norm-oriented movements: aim at redefining or restructuring social norms and include social reform movements like appeal for reforming educational system; 5. Value-oriented movements: aim at redefining or restructuring social values and include political, religious and national revolutions. The first three actions are collective outburst or eruption and the last two are considered as collective movements (Smelser, 2001: 3-4). Smelser counts six stages or conditions in outbreak of collective behavior in this way:

1. Appropriate structural conditions;
2. Structural pressures;
3. Generalized beliefs;
4. Accelerating factors;
5. Beseech;
6. Social control.

This article focuses on the first part of Smelser's theory. He states about accelerating factors that: They are events that bring people into action. These events approve of general beliefs and are clear testimonies of their correctness. The first three conditions or stages only create the connection for tendency towards a collective behavior, but the accelerating factor puts the collective behavior into practice. Like firing local workers and keeping foreign workers in a factory (Moshirzade, 2002: 91 and Panahi, 2002: 204).

### **The accelerating factor in the Iranian oil nationalization movement: fraud in the election of legislative assembly of the parliament**

After the 15th period of the parliament ended on 28th July, 1949, the destiny of oil supplementary contract bill remained unclear and the problem of oil and relationships with the British government became two main points in the election. The competition in the election became more intensive after the fraud in the election in Tehran. The opponent forces of Muhammad Saaed's cabinet who were against oil company and against active penetration of Britain in Iran made Saed's cabinet accept people's objection over fraud and invalidate the election. This was the first victory of the opponents (Zabih, 2002: 48).

Since the destiny of oil bill was to be determined in the 16<sup>th</sup> *the parliament*, the British tried to win most influence in this *the parliament*. The king too wanted his own share in the election and was determined to add to his power by sending his own men into *the parliament*. He decided not to oppose to the supplementary contract so that no resistance could be imposed by the British. In this way, the king and Britain had their shared benefits in the election. The king appointed Abdul-Hussein Hajhir, minister of the court, to supervise the election and assigned him two main objectives: to strengthen the position of king, and to get the contract signed by *the parliament* (Elm, 1998: 103). Hajhir selected all members of the Supervision Association on election from the royalists. In addition to that, in order to stabilize his position more, by attributing to the constitution 1907, the king decided to form the senate. Since the composition of constitution 1907, the Iranian parliament included only one *the parliament* (national assembly) whose members were directly selected by people. However, according to the constitution, half of the senate members were to be appointed by the king and the rest were to be appointed through election. This was a privilege that leaders of the Constitutional Movement had given to Muzafaredin Shah to encourage him to sign the constitution. Anyway, in 1949, Muhammad Reza Shah thought that forming the senate was a privilege for him because all the passed rules by the assembly of *the parliament* had to be approved by senate. Therefore, by imposing his influence, the king formed the first *the parliament* of senate in Iran and filled it with his own supporters, although independent senators too were present in it. Musadeq believed that senate was a club of aristocrats that should have no role and importance in the policies of the country. He said: "it is the assembly of *the parliament* that should decide about destiny of the country" (Alam, 1998: 103-104).

Two factors were more influential in formation of a national movement on the issue of oil and consequently formation of National Front. One was the failure and weakening of the Communist Party over the problem of Azerbaijan, boycotting the 15<sup>th</sup> *the parliament* election by that party and internal contradictions that led to separation of some groups from the party in January, 1947, and eventually its illegalization; and the second factor was failure of Ghavam, his resignation from politics, and his return to politics after a short time in July 1952 (Katouzian, 1993: 91). When the 16<sup>th</sup> *the parliament* election and the first senate election started, the peak of king's position seemed unreachable. The constitution had changed to strengthen the government leader. The armed forces had remained under the personal supervision of the king. The royal lands were returned to the royal family. Bureaucracy, especially the election board was in the hands of the royalists. It seemed that king's power had reached the same level it had before 1941.

Nevertheless, the king too had two serious weak points. He gradually lost public support in the second half of 1949 because firstly, he didn't challenge Britain on the issue of oil; and secondly, his more empowerment reminded people more of his dictator father. His second weak point was his dependence on the US not only in terms of counselors and military equipments, but also in receiving economic aids from that country for starting the critical seven-year plan. However, the US, who had not forgotten the Cumin Tang failure, was not ready to grant anything easily. Before offering any help to Iran, they were thinking of land reform. Also the ministry of foreign affairs observed that the king paid no attention to military counselors, changed the constitution hastily, was excessively fond of tanks, and unrealistically, dreamed of a \$ 500 million economic aid and a \$ 200 million military aid to meet the expenses of an army with 300,000 troops. Even the US envoy had suggested that the king should go under war-craft therapy (Ibrahimian, 2000: 309). When the 15<sup>th</sup> *the parliament* ended, the two sides intensified their lines more and the borders between all challenging parties became clarified. In the cities, the power was mostly in the hands of central and local governments like the king, Razm Ara, leaders of the army, aristocrats and the local authorities. However, 12 members of *the parliament* in Tehran enjoyed more validity and authority and were also cautiously careful to stop the government from interfering with the election; and consequently, the results of election in Tehran reflected the national environment better than the results in other places. In addition to that, the candidates of the opposition in this election were outstanding figures and their presence in *the parliament* could be a base of power and also a center of concentration for the wide unorganized mass who had political awareness but was not under the influence of ruling authorities and the communist party, and could turn into the social base of a third force (Katouzian, 1993: 92).

In the conditions that the supplementary contract in the 15<sup>th</sup> *the parliament* was not passed because of the abstraction method of the opponents, the government and the court were trying to impose their influence over the 16<sup>th</sup> *the parliament* election so that by their entrance into *the parliament*, plans of Saed's government get approval without any problem (Jaami, 1983: 548). Saed's government did not follow a clear policy about the election but generally its objective was to stop "undesirable elements" from winning the election. In mid-August, the king assigned Seyed Muhammad Sadegh Tabatabaee to make preparations for holding the elections of *the parliament* and senate. This decision annoyed Eghbal very much. He complained to the British embassy and stated that Tabatabaee was ethnocentric, disqualified and addicted to opium. He also stated that Reza Hekmat, Tabatabaee's colleague was a criminal. The purpose of selecting Tabatabaee was to give the election a degree of validity and credit. The government too guaranteed freedom of election many times. Nevertheless, vastness of misdeeds and unlawful interferences of officials and military authorities triggered a lot of objections (Azimi, 2008: 382). There was a lot of struggle in the 16<sup>th</sup> *the parliament* election to prevent the dissident members from entering *the parliament*. Two important things had to be done in this period: first, reforming the constitution, a task that had been assigned by the *the parliament* of establishers in 1949 to the 16<sup>th</sup> *the parliament*. The second one was passing of the oil bill. Despite the efforts of the government, the court and the army, the dissidents were getting organized more day by day. The objecting groups to these types of interferences with the election gathered around Dr. Musadeq. On 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 1949, twenty representatives of these groups gathered at Dr. Musadeq's house and decided to form a united front called National Front. It was this front that played important roles in the political future of Iran (Movahed, 2005: 113).

The 16<sup>th</sup> election of assembly of *the parliament* started with the preparations made by Saed's government, regardless of people's objections, in order to get the members who were supposed to pass the contract bill elected. Members without validity were introduced to *the parliament* as representatives of people (Nejati, 1999: 83). Even the complaints made by Supervision Associations over election and their collective resignation couldn't stop illegal acts and interferences of the government (Jaami, 1983: 548). Among them, the head of Supervision Association over election in Tabriz, Ayatollah Seyed Muhammad Ali Angaji said in an interview with the reporter of *Bakhtar Emruz* newspaper: "the 16<sup>th</sup> election in Tabriz was along with luring and imposing and most members of the Supervision Association voted for cancelling of the election" (Bakhtar Emruz, 27<sup>th</sup> November, 1949).

When the voters in villages were used or misused by the elements of candidates who brought them in groups to vote, the urban citizens showed no interest to take part in the election and were doubtful about the influence of their vote on the election. In the first round of the senate election in late August, indifference was even more than what was in *the parliament* election. In Tehran, only 15280 votes were received in the election of senate (BakhtarEmruz, 3<sup>rd</sup> September, 1949). The court, the government and the army were not even ready to change their strategy but were fully aware of the dangers of the present situation. Hajhir tried to organize inauguration of the two *the parliaments* before the king's departure to the US on 14<sup>th</sup> November 1949, but slowness of the pace of election didn't let that happen. The government was unable to come over the situations and since it didn't have an independent existence from the court, its amenity and responsibility was usually attributed to the king who was accused of not listening to the voice of public objection and has shown delinquency in not separating himself from the unfavorable deeds of the government (Azimi, 2008: 386).

Dissidence with the government was not limited to the intellectuals out of the common elites outside the government. Jamal Emami who was in the Saed's cabinet as the counseling minister told to a member of the British embassy that Saed's government was an awkward imitation of their government in which he and his colleagues only carried the name of minister without having any power or opportunity to do anything. In addition to Emami's sayings, in the diary of Loreogtel, there are sayings of Ali Asghar Hekmat, minister of foreign affairs and guarantor of the prime minister who not only complained about the election when he met Loreogtel, but also harshly expressed discontent that the king had taken control of everything without even pretending to counsel to him or let him know of the events. Hekmat believed that the king's behavior in retaking the confiscated properties by his father

has raised a lot of adherence against him and that assigning unqualified individuals around him has added to this disdain. By individuals around the king, he meant the group of Ashraf, especially Hajhir (Azimi, 2008: 387). The government could not put its plan into practice in Tehran and other cities. On 10<sup>th</sup> October, 1949, some of the editors and representatives of the media gathered at Dr. Musadeq's home and after Dr. Musadeq made statements about open interference and imposing of the government officials in the election, the participants selected a seven-member commission to coordinate the due actions to be taken. This commission decided to protest in the royal palace to show objection to the controlled election. The newspaper *Setareh* quoted from the commission: "we decided to gather in front of the gate of His Highness on the 14<sup>th</sup> October. Oh people, do not leave us alone there..." (*Setareh*, 13<sup>th</sup> Oct, 1949) In most sources, it is mentioned to be 14<sup>th</sup> October, but Nejati says it was 15<sup>th</sup> October (Nejati, 1999: 83).

In that gathering, in addition to talking about open interference of the government with the election of the 16<sup>th</sup> legislative assembly of *the parliament* and the harms of increasing the king's authority through the government's decision, it was suggested that a seven-member committee be made to organize the plan of actions to be taken in this regard. This committee included Abbas Khalilieditor of the newspaper *Eghdam*, Ahmad Maleki editor of the *Setareh*, Seyed Muhammad Reza JalaliNaenieditor of *Keshvar*, Dr. Hussein Fatemieditor of *Bakhtar Emruz*, Abulhasan Amidi Nouri editor of *Daad*, Engineer Ahmad Zirak Zadeh editor of *Jebheh* (the Iranian Party organization), and Hussein Maleki (Nejati, 1999: 83). The apparent disability of the government in rejecting the accusations of election gave Musadeq another motivation to struggle and embattle. Along with 19 other politicians and journalists selected from a large group, he resorted to a tactic he had used in the 15<sup>th</sup> election. They announced their intention to protest in the palace and if it was prohibited, in the mosque to show their objection. Musadeq's reputation among the active political figures in Tehran made the objecting individuals an influential group (Azimi, 1998: 383).

On 14<sup>th</sup> October when the king was preparing for his journey to the US, the Minister of the State was about to interfere with the election. One day before the king's departure, a group of politicians, university students, and merchants of the market headed by Musadeq gathered in the yard of the palace to show their objection to lack of a free election. This protest was repetition of the same protest in 1947 with the difference that this time the king was the target (Ibrahimian, 2000: 3120). On 14<sup>th</sup> October, a lot of people welcomed this protest (Jaami, 1983: 549). Thousands of people including university professors and students, lawyers of courts, government officials, merchants of the market, and shopkeepers participated in the protest. Heading a large population, Musadeq came out of his house in the north of the city in Kakh Street 109 and in objection to the fraud in the election marched from Ministry of State and army towards the Marmar royal palace. He declared that this protest had only one slogan of silence and with full awareness followed Gandhi's non-violence principle. According to the dependent newspapers to the government, only 180 people participated in this protest, but the photos show thousands of people (Ibrahimian, 2013: 90). The population that had gathered out of the palace wanted to go inside. When the protesters entered the yard, they selected a twelve-member committee headed by Musadeq so that they talk to Hajhir, Minister of the Court. This committee that became the initial core of the National Front was made of three groups. The first group included anti-court politicians like Amir Alae, Mahmud Nariman, and Yusuf Mashar Azam. The second group included politicians related to the market like Haerizadeh, Baghaee and Makki. The third and most important group included young and educated extremists from the Persian-speaking open thinkers like Karim Sanjabi, Zirak Zadeh, Ali Shaigan, Hussein Fatemi and Ahmad Razavi (Ibrahimian, 2000: 310).

Both Hajhir and the commander of royal guard explained that such a thing was impossible. Hajhir desperately tried to win Lyford's support to harshly repel the protest, but Lyford said that the government should not seem to be afraid of the demagogic public and arresting the protesters might lead to their martyrdom. The king reluctantly accepted their entrance to the palace. However, he rejected their objections to the election. Eventually after paying tribute, commander of the guard authorized Musadeq and 19 other members to enter the palace. These 19 members included the seven

individuals (Shaigan, Sanjabi, Fatemi, Nariman, Amir Alae, Zirakzadeh and Kaviani) who remained loyal to Musadeq until the 1953 coup, 5 persons (Baghaee, Makki, Haerizadeh, Azad and Mashar) who later separated and started to oppose Musadeq, four persons (Seyed Jafar Gharavi, Arsalan Khalatbari, Hussein Sadr and Jalali Naeeni) who either did not join or slightly criticized Musadeq, and three others (Amidi Nouri, Ahmad Maleki and Abbas Khalili) who totally left the movement (Katouzian, 1993: 93). The protestors gave the king a letter written by Musadeq and mentioned apparent unlawful acts and interferences of the government officials in the election, and complained of their ignoring of people's objections in the cities. They asked for cancelling the national election and determining a neutral government to hold the election in full freedom (Nejati, 1999: 84). The objective of the protestors was to turn the incomplete and dramatic democracy to a real one through reinforcement of electoral system, limiting curfews, keeping the military forces away from this process, and through reinforcing independence of the media (Shaigan, 2004: 352).

Two days after the protest in the palace which ended without any tension, the protesters decided to go on a hunger strike to show their objection, but the hunger strike did not last long because the physical conditions of Musadeq and a few others were not satisfactory (Katouzian, 1993: 94). Eventually, on 17<sup>th</sup> October, Hajhir promised to end all present disorganizations in the process of election. By accepting these requests, the king wanted to show himself as a democratic leader-because he had a journey ahead to the US (Elm, 1998: 104). The objection and protest in the royal palace was so effective that the court promised to take care of the disorder in the election (Ibrahimian, 2000: 311). After four days, when they were still declaring their worry about the government's purpose by histrionics and widespread fraud in the election in order to achieve agreement with the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, they left the palace (*Bakhtar Emruz*, 18<sup>th</sup> October, 1949). This new objection was known as the Royal Palace Protest.

Although the complaining committee did not achieve immediate success, unhappiness with the government's election transgressions and especially activities of the army base in imposing the candidates along with the request to change Eghbal started increasing. Countless complaints and objection letters were written, and violent clashes started happening one after another in the cities. These were widely reflected in the media. According to the report of the British consulate, the bloodiest clashes were in the southern city of Laar in which "approximately 14 thousand people" were killed (Azimi, 2008: 385). On 23<sup>rd</sup> October, the same 19 members of the protest in the court called for a meeting at Dr. Musadeq's house and announced that this committee was called the National Front from then onwards (Jaami, 1983: 550 and Maleki, 6<sup>th</sup> March, 1955). They gathered at Dr. Musadeq's house to take a decision which would be more extensive than mere competition for election. Until then, they were a group of well-known politicians who led a large population. By then, they were known as the Nationals, i.e. related to the nation against the autocratic government and its foreign supporters. National was different from nationalist. It meant both related to people, was democratic, and also was Iranian and non-alien. This word very carefully showed the objective of the movement to reach total independence for the country in order to establish and spread a democratic government. They selected Musadeq as the director general and Shaigan, Nariman, Amir Alae and Sanjabi as members of the provisional executive committee. They also formed a propagation committee consisting of Fatemi editor of *Bakhtar Emruz*, Zirakzadeh editor of *Iran*, Iranian Party Organization, Khalili editor of *Eghdam*, Muhammad Reza Jalali Naeeni editor of *Keshvar*, Amedi Nouri editor of *Raad*, Maleki editor of *Setareh*, and Baghaee who started his newspaper *Shahed*. The duty of preparing a statute was given to Fatemi (Ibrahimian, 2013: 91-92). Also other decisions were taken to protect vote boxes of Tehran, to inquire about complaints from other cities, and to prepare complaint forms against unlawful acts of the minor branches (Jaami, 1983: 550). When the National Front was established, the problem of oil was not in their platform. The front was only after the government's reconsideration of the rules of election, media, and curfew. However, later, oil problem became the sole issue followed by the Front (Movahed, 2005: 113).

National Front was not a political party. It was a combination of party leaders, political and religious groups, and some of the newspaper editors with different beliefs and ideas (Nejati, 1999: 86). One of

the members of the twenty-member committee called Hussein Maleki suggested that because the committee members were each one from a different party or group, all these groups establish an extensive united front called National Front. Musadeq welcomed the idea and insisted that instead of addressing a special party or group, he preferred to address all people of Iran (Elm, 1998: 105). Before formation of the front and also after that, Musadeq insisted that forming an open and free coalition made of all organizations with a single general objective is better than forming a political party with disciplined members and compiled plans. He insisted that he wanted to talk not on behalf of a party but on behalf of a nation (*Readable*, 11<sup>th</sup> May, 1948).

Therefore, there were some differences about the nature and type of the mentioned political organization. Bakhtari's editorial in *Bakhtar Emruz* showed this difference. He wrote that it was necessary to build a strong party with a powerful coalition front. Eventually, all agreed to form the front. There were some discussions that the front should be made of parties or members. The latter was accepted. In the leadership of the Front, in addition to the founders, there were representatives of the dependent organizations too. Then, these organizations were the Iranian Party, Baghaee's supervising organization over freedom of the election, and Committee of the Market. A little later, the newly founded political parties joined it (Katouzian, 1993: 94). They submitted their request to the court in this type: 1) cancelling the national election 2) assigning a neutral government to hold the election in full freedom. Requests of the protesters were not welcomed. Therefore, they wrote a complaint letter to Minister of the State, Hajhir and ended protest (Jaami, 1983: 549). The first priority of the National Front leaders in 1949 was to win the election and become members of *the parliament* and reach their goals in this way. However, when the election started, it was revealed that the court was about to bring the names of its own elements out of the vote boxes, and that the promises made by Hajhir, Minister of the Court, about guaranteeing the election were not true (Elm, 1998: 107).

On 4<sup>th</sup> November equal to 13<sup>th</sup> Aban, during the directed election, Hajhir, Minister of the Court, was shot in a moaning ceremony near the court in the Sepahsalar Mosque by a member of Devotees of Islam and died a few hours later (Nejati, 1999: 84). In reaction to that event, Saed stopped election and recalled the election in Tehran. These clashes were happening without a legislative sector (Elm, 1998: 107). Hajhir's assassination was made by political motifs. Sepahsalar mosque was the center of reading the election results. Everybody was worried that the boxes might be changed. Some leaders of the National Front such as Nariman and Makki were monitoring all activities of the mosque days and nights. Hajhir was widely included in the interference with the election, although his presence at the mosque at the time of election was for some other purpose. The front leaders did not know about Hussein Emami, member of Devotees of Islam's intention to assassinate Hajhir, but the regime used this opportunity to take operations against the Front and stop its activities. Opposition leaders of the 15<sup>th</sup> *the parliament* including Baghaee, Makki, Haerizadeh and Azad were arrested and Musadeq was exiled to Ahmad Abad (Katouzian, 1993: 95). Hajhir was assassinated one year after the attempt to assassinate the king. In this time, the king had extended his scope of interference in the affairs of the government. King's twin sister, Ashraf, too, kept stepping out of her limits. Saed was a sick old man. Ministers of those times were typically selected out of elderly experienced individuals and were different from the young, fame-seeking and ambitious group around the king and Ashraf. They even sometimes looked disdainfully at them. How could Individuals like Hakim Almalek and Najm Almalek, with their specific backgrounds and ideologies, accept to assign these political writers take care of the destiny of the government in their parties and feasts? The news of Hajhir's assassination was the message of revenge that a lot of people were looking for their comforts in it. It was news that even did not raise much grief among the government officials. It was only the king who was shocked with the news. He who was going to have a trip the US even thought of canceling his trip. Was it the time to take the authority from Saed's government and give it to stronger and more qualified hands? However, there was no such person among the trusted people around the king. So, he had to let the ordinary procedures take place and wait (Movahed, 2005: 114).

Hajhir's assassination blew a hard strike on the court and the king. According to the British ambassador, Saed's cabinet was old and was not qualified enough to take care of issues of Iran, except



for one or two ministers. Anyway, the government utilized Hajhir's assassination to establish its authority by showing its power. Razm Ara, head of the prominent staff of the army made the required predictions to prevent possible unrest. The dissident politicians were arrested. Musadeq was sent on exile out of Tehran to Ahmad Abad. The Tehran election, in which Musadeq and some of his companions had won, was cancelled. This movement of the government was considered as its response to the protests about the fraud in the election, whereas, the real objective was to bring to power the pro-government candidates. In a conciliatory act, the government assigned Major-general Zahedi who was apparently alongside the National Front as the Chief Officer of Police. This conciliatory was probably originated from Zahedi's hostility with Razm Ara (*Bakhtar Emruz*, 13<sup>th</sup> Nov, 1949). He removed limitations imposed over Musadeq; in the meantime, their winning of the election remained unsuccessful (*Bakhtar Emruz*, 8<sup>th</sup> Dec, 1949).

Hajhir's assassination which happened shortly after the attempt on the king and the public reaction to it made many politicians including Saed reluctant to take or approve policies which were openly against the will and demands of people. Also Saed's need to show himself committed to the constitution as well as his moderate attitude prevented him from apparently taking harsh decisions against the dissidents. Therefore, he followed the strategy of avoidance. In fact, the government was even unable to influence its own followers. The king too was unable to replace Saed with another person who had the ability to solve oil problem (Azimi, 2008: 391). The king supported Saed's government which had friendly ties with Britain and which was included in the interference with the election, but he was afraid of Razm Ara more than Musadeq. In addition to that, he was ready to listen to the US. Razm Ara hoped that by giving activities to the US in the political issues of Iran, Britain's and Soviet Union's roles would be limited; in addition, he could get the helps of US. The US foreign ministry was monitoring the election and a few days after Hajhir's assassination, four American senators visited Tehran (*Bakhtar Emruz*, 10<sup>th</sup> Nov, 1949). After their entrance, Tehran election, which had not still finished, was cancelled. Brigadier-general Saffari, who was Chief Officer of Police, was deposed and Major-general Zahedi, who was close to the king and a rival of Razm Ara, replaced him in the army. Three days later, George McGee, the young and liberalist assistant chief of the American foreign minister visited Tehran. Then, Baghaee and others were released and Musadeq came back from exile. The king's opinion about the National Front and Musadeq changed because he was afraid of Razm Ara and also wanted to listen to the liberalists of the US (Katouzian, 1993, 95-96). The king, who by stating the plan of the threat of communism was trying to attract military and economic help of the US, came back empty-handed. Hutchison, the Foreign Minister had said that to stop the danger of communism, it was better for the king to start economic and social reforms, that if Iran had come to agreement with the oil company, oil income would have been enough to fulfill requirements of this country for reformations (Elm, 1998: 108).

After his return from the US, in a meeting with Musadeq, the king promised him to stop unlawful interference with the election in Tehran. The 16<sup>th</sup> *the parliament* started its work when election in Tehran had not still finished, but still the political balance had sensibly changed in favor of the National Front and its leader. Saed moved away from the election in Tehran and Zahedi did not commit electoral fraud (Katouzian, 1993: 95-96). In late November, the central Supervision Association over election of Tehran, announced invalidity of election in Tehran and suburbs. By re-holding the election of Tehran, candidates of the National Front won the majority of votes. The efforts of the complainants caused that election of Tehran and suburbs was invalidated and the Supervision Association over election invalidated it. Referring to the reports about the malfunctions in the election, the central Supervision Association over election announced invalidation of election in Tehran and suburbs; and in this way, the fight that had started with the public support to provide freedom of election in Tehran ended in favor of the National Front (Jaami, 1983: 551). In the re-holding of the election, eight members of the National Front entered *the parliament*. Ayatollah Kashani, who was in exile, was one of the candidates too. He returned from exile to Tehran on 10<sup>th</sup> June, 1950 with an extraordinary welcome of people (Movahed, 2005: 114). On 8<sup>th</sup> November, a big gathering was called by the National Front at Baharestan Square. Dr. Musadeq, as the leader of the National Front asked people to keep fighting for selecting representatives of the nation and winning their victory, and also

for fighting to take Iran's right over oil. Dr. Musadeq who had become the first representative of people in Tehran, while explaining the platform of representatives of the National Front, told the journalists: "Our platform in *the parliament* is to oppose the Gass-Golshahian Contract and safeguard individual and social freedoms" (Nejati, 1999: 85-86). After Hajhir's death, Ashraf and the mother queen had left the country due to expedience. The situation had cooled down. The underground activities of the communist party had not been controlled and the prohibited newspaper, *Mardom* had been published since 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 1949. Its publication had reached 5000 copies in Tehran and 2000 copies in other cities. The National Front too, along with the increase of its popularity among people, had followed up the fight against fraud in the election, and its success in the Tehran election, despite the government's struggles, was inevitable. In addition, the long period of Saed's authority and its renewal also had added to the separation of groups that had the ambition of coming to power (Azimi, 1949: 397). On the 9<sup>th</sup> February, 1950, on the day of the king's return from the US, the 16<sup>th</sup> *the parliament* was inaugurated. On this date, the representatives of Tehran had not yet been clarified. The government wanted *the parliament* to announce its state of being official before presence of the representatives of the National Front and finish selection of chief and the commissions. According to the parliamentary tradition, Saed's government resigned on 19<sup>th</sup> March and Ali Mansour was assigned to form the new government (Movahed, 2005: 114).

### Conclusion

In late 1940s, a movement was formed in Iran which was known as the National Oil Movement. Apart from the structural factors, pressures and ideology, an event caused the movement to be activated practically. According to Smelser's reform movement theory, this factor is called the accelerating factor. The accelerating factor of the Iranian National Oil Movement was the electoral fraud in the 16<sup>th</sup> election of the legislative assembly of *the parliament*. It was shown in the article that in reaction to this fraud, the opposition forces, headed by Dr. Musadeq, formed a political committee which was called the National Front. In objection to the political and economic situation, this Front started fighting against domestic autocracy and the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company with two main slogans of democracy and nationalizing the oil industry. It is suggested that in other articles, other stages of National Oil Movement be studied on the basis of Smelser's theories.

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