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## **Seyyed Hassan Taqizadeh: a political biography**

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## *Introduction*

### **Seyyed Hassan Taqizadeh; his Impact and his Legacy**

Taqizadeh lived a long life; 91 years. He began his political and cultural activities in his home town, Tabriz before he was officially elected in December 1906 to represent the people of that city in the First Parliament of Iran. From the age of 29 when he became a member of the First Parliament until he retired from the Iranian Senate shortly before his death in January 1970, he witnessed and played an integral part in the political history of Iran. He was also engaged in numerous cultural activities which were closely interwoven with politics. During Taqizadeh's life important changes took place in Iran and throughout the wider world, including two world wars. Iran's governmental system, affected by the sweeping changes taking place across the globe, moved from a despotic system of governance to one based on a constitution.

Taqizadeh played many different roles throughout the country's political transition. From simply running a small bookshop in his home town and publishing a local newspaper his position shifted to that of a key negotiator and policy maker, dealing face to face with some of the most powerful world leaders. He witnessed the reign of six Shahs; four of whom he had close dealings with. One of these four was Mohammad Ali Shah (reign: 1907 -1909) whom he strongly opposed and, in whose deposition, he was to play a key role. He made it his personal mission to work towards what he saw as the betterment of Iran; the creation of a nation based on a constitution and one which would prosper and become a key player on the world stage. He was to develop and indeed transform his outlook both politically and intellectually. This development happened as he broadened his knowledge and understanding by reading widely, travelling and through intellectual interaction with other thinkers and politicians. From a provincial, turban-wearing young man whose destiny seemed set to become a devout clergyman, he transformed into an experienced, influential political player, dressed in European-style attire; who was determined to modernise Iran and who looked to Europe as his role model. In order to actualise his vision for his country, he would employ various strategies.

Politically, there were two very distinct sides to Taqizadeh's character; one side the theorist, the other the pragmatist. Not only was he a man of ideas but one whose aim was to put those ideas into practice. Beginning from his early writings he expressed his strong belief in the necessity for changes in the cultural, religious and political realms of Iran. But it was not until later that he outlined the nuances of how those changes were to be actualised. He turned the discourse that had been introduced by the previous generation into one which was relevant to the current context in which he lived. Always a pragmatist, he would not act out his plans to achieve his aims until all the details of that plan were established and clearly laid out in his head. Whilst he would have preferred to establish a completely new system of rule based on a pre-set plan, circumstances made it necessary for him to compromise and reform the existing system. Taqizadeh's mind was set on following a European model, though he believed that model should take advantage of local expertise and resources to best fit the local context. He was a well-read man and widely travelled and one who did not miss any opportunity to learn and expand his knowledge. Beside Persian and his mother tongue Turkish he was also familiar with Arabic and spoke German fluently with a more rudimentary knowledge of English and French. Familiar with Iranian culture and religions, Taqizadeh was able to take parts of Iran's vast historical and literary past and adapt them to suit the needs of his contemporary milieu.

Taqizadeh's main aim was to bring about change in a practical way; not simply theorise about it. He believed strongly that the power of human agency was capable of bringing about sweeping changes; that human destiny was not, in fact, tied to divine will, as the religious teaching he had received might suggest. He was convinced that change was inevitable, whether it be sooner or later, driven by the force of history. Nevertheless, he hoped that with active policies a more rapid change could come about. Taqizadeh focused all his political efforts on effecting this rapid change and paving the way for modernity. The ideal road towards modernity, in his view, was one similar to that taken by the Europeans; one that would be the safest and the fastest since there already existed a clearly signposted route. In reality, however, when faced by the obstacles present in the Iranian context, Taqizadeh found that the path he was forced to take was in fact very different from that of the Europeans. This led to the creation of a modernity very particular to Iran. How

this pressing urge for change developed and spread throughout the world has been the subject of much intellectual debate. A full review of the plethora of research and books which discuss this is beyond the scope of what this work here has set out to cover. The aim of this work has been to provide a deep and nuanced assessment of the life of Taqizadeh, and this of course, does necessitate some commentary on the movement towards change as it relates to the biography of Taqizadeh, one of the key intellectuals who played a significant role in developing and shaping the discourse of change in the context of Iran. Taqizadeh was not the only intellectual who was engaged in the discourse of modernity or as it has been referred to in the Iranian context, “Tajaddod”. What gives Taqizadeh particular prominence, however, is the fact that, unlike others, he remained constantly on the scene, rarely veering from the path towards modernity. And, thus, the main questions this research set out to answer were how Taqizadeh’s perception of modernity developed and how he put his ideas into practice. In order to be able to answer those key questions, other points need to be explored. Taqizadeh found himself in many different geographical, political and financial situations throughout his life and career. Whilst following the story of his life, this research has sought to provide answers to the following which guide the main research questions: what were the forces that shaped Taqizadeh’s ideas? What were the changing contexts in which he found himself? Who were the people who influenced his decisions and theories? How did his ideas about the creation of a modernised and modern nation develop and change? How did public opinion towards him change and what were the reactions to his ideas and his deeds? In order to answer these questions, it is necessary to set the events around Taqizadeh’s life in a broader context.

Having begun with colonialist developments in the seventeenth century, the eighteenth century witnessed a gradual deepening of the threat to the Islamic states by European powers. As contact with the world outside the Islamic states’ territory began to be considered increasingly necessary, Islamic countries were forced to seek a solution to prevent the dominating power of Europe. New technologies gave nations the upper hand and those who lagged behind in terms of scientific and technological development were at a distinct disadvantage. These less developed countries had first to try to understand the developments before they could tackle how to stop the spread of this new threat; the threat

from this new kind of power was not based on religious ideology but rather its strength originated from science. It took some time for countries which possessed less of this kind of power to be able to distinguish this power from the religion of those who had developed it and realise that it did not receive its source from supernatural sources or any particular religion but was in fact something which could be accessed, learnt and possessed by all humans regardless of their religion, nationality or race. Development towards modernity was equated with European/Western science which was considered at odds with Islamic or non-European identity.

In the heavily politicised historiography of Iran after the Constitutional Revolution, Taqizadeh has often been looked upon as a political character and his behaviour, influence and political leverage have been mostly analysed from a political standpoint. Those who have steered clear of the political realm have generally focused on Taqizadeh as a scholar and assessed his legacy solely in terms of his cultural and literary achievements. In contrast to that, this research now aims to merge both these aspects and importantly adds details and analysis of the often-overlooked influence of his personal life and external forces on his political and scholarly achievements and intellectual development, thereby providing a more comprehensive and nuanced overview of his life story.

### **A Living Legacy**

Taqizadeh was a politician and intellectual who has left behind many works relating to history, culture and literature. Enough of his writings and records of his thoughts remain to allow his ideas and deeds to have become a living legacy for Iranian intelligentsia. Within the realm of historiography, his writings, public speeches and recorded memoirs are often cited. In a country still largely divided over how best it should be run, Taqizadeh's ideas have become part of the discourse of a desire to modernise the country. Whether or not one supports his outlook, there can be little doubt that he was one of the founding leaders of the movement that believed that western democracy could provide a safe and previously tested foundation for the practising of modernity in Iran. For those who support this approach, Taqizadeh's ideas and thoughts paved the way for this progressive approach; for those who attack western democracy, his ideas are used, in contrast, to exemplify an

approach which ultimately failed. For those who favour political Islam, Taqizadeh is still considered an evil representative of the corrupt West and for the more radical even an agent of the West, whose aim was to ensure the surrender of Iran to the hostile non-Islamic West.

### **Methodology**

Taqizadeh's favourable attitude towards the West has placed him in a controversial position within Iranian historiography and even within everyday public discourse. The dichotomy of how he is viewed began with Taqizadeh's first appearance in the political arena during the First Parliament when it became clear to the conservative clergy that he was advocating for a secular state and for a constitution based on secular rather than Islamic law. As Taqizadeh rose through the hierarchy of politics, opposition against him grew and became more vociferous. Taqizadeh was seen as a threat by the opposition; not only was he a politician, but importantly also a theorist who lay the roadmap for how modernity should be practised according to a western and secular style. Through cultural and journalistic activities, he was successful in promulgating his ideas to an audience much wider than had previously been reached by politicians. With the 1917 Russian Revolution and the subsequent spread of the ideas of socialism in Iran, the modernity Taqizadeh was advocating for was considered by many to be capitalistic and imperialistic. Taqizadeh was attacked and criticised not only by those who wished for a state run according to Islamic laws but now also by those who were sympathetic to communism and who saw the Soviet Union as their role model. Those who supported political Islam likened him to someone who had brought the Trojan horse into Islamic lands. Those who advocated a leftist ideology considered him an agent of the West, sent to stop the inevitable spread of leftist ideologies. Set against this background of controversy, it has been from these two opposing and seemingly black and white perspectives that this research has sought to analyse Taqizadeh's life and acts.

Biographical writing has often been linked to the dominant ideologies or indigenous cultures of the subject's country. In traditional Iranian literature biographical writing has commonly represented itself in the form of hagiography. This has continued and even in more recent times in the Iranian context has been used to slur the name and character of

those individuals whom the ruling power or opposition has not favoured. Although more recently independent scholarly biographical writing has tried to distance itself from such strong and biased ideological stances against its subjects, basing itself on and benefitting more from the use of remaining historical documents, Taqizadeh is a good example of one such subject who has not always been objectively written about. Despite the existence of numerous articles and monographs based on Taqizadeh's life, there remains a paucity of published research that focuses on and highlights the importance of his life and work in the formation of a national Iranian identity and his crucial role in the narration of modernity in the Iranian context. This research, rather than provide overly generalised and stylised descriptions of the subject independent of key facts and the historical context, endeavours to focus on details of and influences on Taqizadeh's life that may have been previously overlooked and provide an objective and nuanced record of the legacy he has left on Iran and the journey towards modernity in that nation. Whilst acknowledging that 'influence' is a problematic term, difficult to define, the aim of this thesis has been to build a bridge between micro and macro levels of analyses of those details and influences and offer a presentation and interpretation of how these affect each other.

Available sources have been compared and analysed for their consistency and when necessary have been cited to provide varied perspectives and dimensions. When sufficient material and convincing sources have been available, they have been used to support the analysis and to justify an interpretation. At points, however, sources have been cited merely to present facts, events and ideas, allowing the reader to make his or her own interpretation and to draw his or her own conclusions.

Whilst predominantly a biographical work, this study could also fall within the scope of intellectual history since it deals with the presentation of influential ideas and thoughts, their formation and relationship to each other and to history. As John Burrow has described, intellectual history is the process of recovering "what people in the past meant by the things they said and what these things meant".<sup>1</sup> Burrow's 'said' could also encompass 'wrote'; Taqizadeh's words, both spoken and written have been used to exemplify his thoughts and

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Whatmore, quoted in *What is Intellectual History?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016), 13.



ideas and how in turn he was influenced by the thinking of his predecessors and contemporaries.

Despite the fact that deconstructionists have emphasised that texts should not be regarded as ‘transparent reflections’ of the writer’s intentions and thoughts, at points throughout this thesis, efforts have been made to intuit the intentions of the authors, in particular Taqizadeh, when writing their texts. This helps to set this work within the field of intellectual history. What also sets this research under the umbrella of intellectual history, is its heavy focus on the ideas as well as actions of Taqizadeh within the context of his life. The presentation of ideas and facts or events in this thesis should, though, be acknowledged as potentially problematic, a challenge discussed by Suzanne Marchand in relation to intellectual history.<sup>2</sup> Connections between a person’s ideas and thoughts, the ‘texts’ through which those ideas are presented and the context of those texts need to be made with care and caution. Similarly, connections between ideas and events are not straight forward. Whilst ideas can become forces, conversely too, events can transform thought; it is questionable whether ideas and events can ever be disentangled.<sup>3</sup>

There is a need to acknowledge another potential problem when using autobiographical writing, such as Taqizadeh’s, as a source from which to draw assumptions about the writer’s intellectual stance and indeed of making a link between those perceived ideas of a writer and the world of events within which he is writing. Texts are ambiguous and we should be aware of the myriad way that texts, spoken and written, can create meaning. A full exploration of this philosophical issue is beyond the scope of this thesis.

If we accept the premise that events do not happen nor do ideas form in isolation, then they should be set in context. Intellectual history deals with how ideas originated in their historical contexts. Contexts are important for interpretation and reading but, again, it should be noted that contexts are often multiple and at times may be conflicting or problematically related to each another. This thesis explores how Taqizadeh’s ideas formed

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<sup>2</sup> Marchand, Suzanne. “Problems and Prospects for Intellectual History,” in *New German Critique* 65, 1995, 87–96. Accessed 18 October, 2020. [www.jstor.org/stable/488535](http://www.jstor.org/stable/488535).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

and developed and the contexts and societies within which these ideas grew and transformed are also described. Whatmore explored how ideas shape or are shaped by societies.<sup>4</sup> Suggestions are made at points throughout the thesis that at times the ideas helped shape the society and at other times society shaped the ideas. The reader is free to decide which, if any, shaped the other. This seeming ambiguity is part of intellectual history.

Previous biographical works based on Taqizadeh have generally failed to apply a perspective of intellectual history and, any that have, have used it to analyse only short periods of his life. This research, on the other hand, has endeavoured to apply the lens of intellectual history more consistently. This approach helps to evaluate better Taqizadeh's thoughts in relation to other Iranian intellectuals and his interactions with contemporary thinkers and politicians. It also helps to highlight how Taqizadeh's ideas were perceived by others during his lifetime and posthumously.

A biographical approach to this research has allowed some focus on the acts of the man which were carried out due to situational circumstances beyond his control, not just actions taken out of an ideological preference. Ignoring these forced acts and structural factors would have led to misleading conclusions. This is particularly important in the specific context of Iranian intellectual history. As described by Afshin Matin-Ashgari, within historiographical research, Iranian intellectual history is still in its infancy.<sup>5</sup> This relatively new area of study has emerged out of the aftermath of the 1979 Revolution and research has tended to concentrate on that period rather than previous historical events and focus on Islamic and, in particular, Shiite ideology. Matin-Ashgari has described Middle-Eastern historiography as 'marginalised'.<sup>6</sup> There is a paucity of research available which deals with Iran and with thinkers influenced more by politics and culture than by religion. With its focus on the intellectual and political life of a particular individual prior to the 1979

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<sup>4</sup> Whatmore.

<sup>5</sup> Afshin Matin-Ashgari, *Both Eastern and Western: An Intellectual History of Iranian Modernity*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 2.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

Revolution, this thesis will help to broaden the scope of this newly developing field of research. It can be helpful for those who want to see Iranian intellectual historiography in a wider context and to compare figures.

Writing a biographical study of a figure from the history of Iran has therefore been challenging. There does not exist a long-standing tradition in historio-biographical writing based on Iran; governments have had and continue to have control over the presentation of political and or religious orientation of any individual and thus what has been allowed to be published. A lack of continuity in biographical research is evident; with changes in government regimes, national figures who may once have been respected have often fallen out of favour and been replaced by others.

I suggest that this study of Taqizadeh's life and thoughts may go some way towards facilitating a better understanding of contemporary Iran. After experiencing two revolutions in one century, the Iran of today is overshadowed by an overriding feeling of disquiet and uncertainty about the future. Scholars and indeed some of the general public are searching for reasons that might account for and explain the current situation that the country finds itself in, particularly following the 1979 Revolution. Much discourse revolves around how the country should be ruled and the best routes for its development. This discourse needs to be analysed in order to provide a clearer understanding of Iran's position and to help provide answers. Whilst Marchand posited that we should not "use the past to work out contemporary anxieties". She goes on to make a point germane to this thesis.<sup>7</sup> "By understanding the process by which ideas become effectual and identifiable elements of national consciousness and institutionalized authority, we can perhaps come to a clearer understanding of the consequences, both intellectual and social, of the specialization and fragmentation of knowledge in the modern world".<sup>8</sup>

Thus, one way to provide answers and a nuanced understanding of the current state of Iran is to study history and in particular, intellectual history. Intellectual history often

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<sup>7</sup> Marchand.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

flourishes in times of uncertainty.<sup>9</sup> Whilst the context of contemporary Iran is in many ways very different to that of Taqizadeh's Iran of a century ago, it could be argued that in both periods a proliferation of ideas, skepticism and questioning can be witnessed and that both ages exemplify periods of conflict between the ideas of tradition and modernity. History and ideas are inextricably entwined. And thus, any study of a historical period should consider the intellectual ideas of that time and the leading figures who advocated those ideas.

### **Review of Early Historiography**

Any contemporary history of Iran would, therefore, be incomplete without the inclusion of Taqizadeh's life and activities. There are several accounts written about Taqizadeh's life and his activities; some of these accounts were written during his life time, most after his death. Taqizadeh himself also contributed in the process of his own writings about his life and career. There are several short accounts about his life written or presented by him in the form of diary entries, letters, testimonies, personal essays, lectures and a long autobiography which was published after his death.

Since Taqizadeh was such an influential figure in the contemporary history of Iran and particularly during the Constitutional era, writing about him is an inevitable part of the historiography of this period. The atmosphere of contemporary Iranian society charged with suspicion dominated by conspiracy theories has usually been present in the historiography of this time and the image of Taqizadeh in this context in particular has often been tarred with the same brush.<sup>10</sup> The major historians of this period such as Ahmad Kasravi, Mehdi Malekzadeh and Fereydoon Adamiyat, when dealing with Taqizadeh's activities in the context of the Constitutional era (1905-1911), have taken their own stance on him and the activities he was involved in. Kasravi and Adamiyat have been more critical about the motives and intentions of Taqizadeh as a politician and portrayed him as an unreliable politician with a hidden agenda connected to the hostile foreign powers, while

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<sup>9</sup> Whatmore, 25.

<sup>10</sup> To read more about the conspiracy theories in Iran see: Ahmad Ashraf, "Conspiracy Theories," available at *Encyclopaedia Iranica* online edition, 2011, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/conspiracy-theories> (accessed 28 February, 2020).

Malekzadeh considered him a true patriot working for the good of his country. The dominance and popularity of the leftist ideology among many Iranian intellectuals also led to being considered by some, in their writings about the contemporary history of Iran, as an agent of British imperialistic power. Taqizadeh's secular outlook and his desire to exclude religion and the clergy from the politics and other establishments traditionally controlled by the clergy also led this group to join the leftists in considering him to be a tool of the British, some suggesting that he was connected to 'satanic' organisations such as the Freemasons. In contrast to this group who were critical of Taqizadeh, a smaller number of people wrote in support of Taqizadeh and against his critics.

The first monograph in the form of a biography was written by Mehdi Mojtehed, who took a positive stance towards Taqizadeh. This book was written two years after the occupation of Iran by the Allies in 1941 and therefore does not cover the whole of Taqizadeh's life.<sup>11</sup> Mojtehed, a young lawyer from Tabriz when he wrote the book, later outlined his motivation for writing that book: "When the north and south of our dear country was under the occupation of the British and Russian forces and Taqizadeh was the Ambassador in London and under all sort of accusations and slanders, the feeling of a fair judgment and seeking justice or maybe love for a fellow-citizen made me write the book *Tarikh-e Zendegani-e Taqizadeh* [The life History of Taqizadeh]." <sup>12</sup> The writer, himself from Tabriz, had access to some people who knew Taqizadeh well. The book, published after the resignation of Reza Shah and the removal of strict censorship, openly criticises Reza Shah and highlights Taqizadeh's disagreements with him. Despite being only seventy-one pages long, and as the writer himself admits, prepared without access to sufficient sources, this book attempted a biographical approach and was based on chronological events. The book could be categorised as a commemorative biography of Taqizadeh. Few copies of this book remain.

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<sup>11</sup> Mehdi Mojtehed, *Tarikh-e Zendegani-e Taqizadeh* [The Life History of Taqizadeh] (Tehran: Ketabkhaneh-e Tehran, 1943).

<sup>12</sup> Mehdi Mojtehed, *Taqizadeh: Roshangariha dar Mashrutiyat-e Iran* [Taqizadeh: Clarifications of Iran's Constitution] (Tehran: Daneshgah-e Tehran, 1978), 5.

Mojtehedī, who became close to Taqizadeh after his arrival in Iran from London, spent twenty-five years expanding his book and published a more comprehensive biography of Taqizadeh, this time covering his entire life. In this book, Mojtehedī has tried to answer the criticism that Taqizadeh's enemies had directed at him including criticism by Kasravi and Adamiyat. To maintain the balance of the book, he has also included a chapter about what he considered were shortcomings of Taqizadeh. Since Mojtehedī was part of Taqizadeh's inner circle of friends, the book includes some new information. This book also includes many anecdotes about Taqizadeh which helps to familiarise the reader with a more personal side of Taqizadeh. This book is the most complete published biography of Taqizadeh, as far as the researcher is informed, and is often cited by those who have written about Taqizadeh. The publication of this book was concurrent with the 1979 Revolution in Iran and, due to the strong aversion of the new revolutionary government to Taqizadeh, was not officially circulated although it is still available in some libraries.

Following the 1979 Revolution and the establishment of the Islamic Republic in Iran, Taqizadeh was regarded not only as a statesman who co-operated with the corrupt former regime but was also criticised for being anti-religion and anti-Islam and for being a promoter of the decadent Western culture. The official narrative, therefore, was generally negative. Against this background and in line with this view, many articles and short passages in the newspapers or magazines or academic works were written. The most important monograph of this genre is *Zendegi va Zamaneh Seyyed Hassan Taqizadeh* [The Life and Times of Seyyed Hassan Taqizadeh] by Seyyed Ali 'Alavi.<sup>13</sup> This book ostensibly aims to trace the hostile and anti-Islamic outlook of Taqizadeh and portrays him as a mysterious character, influenced and even controlled by foreign powers, in particular Britain. It uses a number of secondary sources, none written in any other language than Persian.

*Nehzat-e Mashrutīyat va Naqshah Taqizadeh: Social Demokrasi va Jodaei-e Din az Dowlāt* [The Constitutional Movement and the Role of Taqizadeh: Social Democracy and

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<sup>13</sup> Seyyed Ali 'Alavi, *Zendegi va Zamaneh Seyyed Hassan Taqizadeh* [The Life and Times of Seyyed Hassan Taqizadeh] (Tehran: Mo'seseh-e Motale'at va Pazhoeshay-e Siyasi, 2006).

Separation of Religion from Government] by Manoocher Bakhtiyari is the most recently published monograph about Taqizadeh.<sup>14</sup> This book is set out over eight chapters in two volumes, only one volume of which has been released. The book focuses on Taqizadeh during the Constitutional period and his role in introducing secular law to the movement. The writer does not define the book as a personal, political biography of Taqizadeh but only focuses on his life during the Constitutional Period. The first volume of the book which is available explains in detail the early life of Taqizadeh in the context of his birthplace and outlines Taqizadeh's activities until the end of the First Parliament. The writer has benefitted from a wide range of primary and secondary sources in Persian though far fewer in other languages. A large part of the book deals with the ideas of Kasravi and Adamiyat. The writer, believing that the role assigned to Taqizadeh has been underestimated or portrayed in a negative light, has sought to highlight Taqizadeh's role in the process of modernisation of Iran. This publication is well researched but suffers from not setting events in a broader international context. Its biggest shortcoming is the fact that recourse has not been made to works written in English.

There are a number of collections about Taqizadeh, his life and his ideas, probably the most important among them being *Yadnameh-e Taqizadeh* [Reminiscence of Taqizadeh] which is a collection of essays and talks by his friends, colleagues, admirers and followers, compiled in memory of Taqizadeh by Habib Yaghmaei.<sup>15</sup> It provides broad information about different aspects of Taqizadeh's character and personal life.

In addition, there are several scholarly works in the form of Masters or PhD dissertations; those accessible and related to this topic have been cited. Among other scholarly works, a collection of articles dedicated to Taqizadeh in *Iran Nameh*, a Journal of Iranian Studies also contains quality research articles about different periods and aspects of Taqizadeh's life which have been referred to in this research.

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<sup>14</sup> Manoocher Bakhtiyari, *Nezhat-e Mashrutiyat va Naqsh-e Taqizadeh: Social Demokrasi va Jodaiei-e Din az Dowlat* [The Constitutional Movement and the Role of Taqizadeh: Social Democracy and Separation of Religion from Government] (Toronto: Pegah, 2015).

<sup>15</sup> Habib Yaghmaei, ed., *Yadnameh-e Taqizadeh* [Reminiscence of Taqizadeh] (Tehran: Anjoman-e Asar-e Melli, 1970).

Taqizadeh's role in the intellectual history of Iran has also been examined by several scholars in different contexts; Ali Ansari's works on *The Politics of Nationalism in Modern Iran* and *Taqizadeh and European Civilisation* are of the best quality.<sup>16</sup> Matin-Asgari, in *Both Eastern and Western: An Intellectual History of Iranian Modernity* as well as analysing the intellectual history of Iran within a global historical context gives an important account of the Berlin Circle and Taqizadeh's role in it.

## Sources

In contrast to much traditional historiographical research that was limited by the 'threshold effect' of sticking within the strict boundaries of single disciplines, this thesis, in line with intellectual history, has sought to make full use of the diversity and vastness of interdisciplinary sources available today. This has, I believe, strengthened this research and allowed Taqizadeh's life to be viewed against a broader context, whilst also leading to the difficulty of knowing when and where to draw the line in the search for and incorporation of those sources, or as Marchand described it, writing about the problems of intellectual history, 'the guilty feeling that we have not read enough'.<sup>17</sup>

A broad collection of newspapers, diaries, letters, memoirs, autobiographies and other personal and archival documents have been consulted as part of this research. As noted above, Taqizadeh's own autobiography has been used as the guiding text against which to lay out the chronology of this research text.

In relation to this research, small-scale publications published local to events have been consulted as well as more well-known international ones. Based on information in published articles, secondary sources have also been consulted. Consulting publications from outside Iran has allowed an insight into how events in Iran were perceived by other

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<sup>16</sup> Ali M. Ansari, *The Politics of Nationalism in Modern Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

Ali M. Ansari, "Taqizadeh and European Civilisation," in *Iran: Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies* 54, No.1 (2016), 47-58. DOI: [10.1080/05786967.2016.11882300](https://doi.org/10.1080/05786967.2016.11882300).

<sup>17</sup> Marchand, 87-96.



countries and cultures and in particular foreigners' perceptions of Taqizadeh and his activities.

Newspapers mainly from the Constitutional Revolution period until Taqizadeh's death have been cited widely and incorporated into this research and have been used in conjunction with other sources. These newspapers were mainly published in Persian or English and in a few cases in other languages. The Persian newspapers were accessed from the Iranian Parliament Library in Tehran and the archive of the Tabriz Central Library. Several digitalised versions of historical newspapers both inside and outside Iran have also been consulted online. One of the most important journalistic sources is *Kaveh*, the newspaper of which Taqizadeh was editor and to which he contributed; this publication has been cited extensively and has offered much evidence to elaborate on Taqizadeh's own ideas and thoughts. Written analysis of *Kaveh* as a pioneer in the Iranian press has been produced both in Persian and English and these sources in both languages have been consulted.

Numerous secondary sources detailing Taqizadeh's role during the lead up to the Great War and his connection to repercussions in Iran of the Great War which, when necessary, have also been consulted. A collection of Taqizadeh's writings was published in 10 volumes after his death. More recently, a new collection has been elaborated and extended to 18 volumes. These collections consist of his own writings as well as some further texts and documents related to him. Both collections have been used in this thesis.

Additionally, personal letters written by Taqizadeh himself or letters addressed directly to him or in which he was mentioned have also been heavily cited. Many of these letters are published in collections in different volumes. Some correspondence found in other publications such as varied periodicals, magazines and archives has also been used, notably unpublished correspondence exchanged between Taqizadeh and Edward Browne, accessed in the Cambridge University Library. Documents and correspondence held in the Iranian National Archives and documents in the British National Archives have been used extensively. Published diplomatic correspondence of the British, the Russians and Iranians

has also been consulted as well as the personal file of Taqizadeh from the Oriental School of London. This file contains important information about Taqizadeh's employment in the Oriental School of London and his activities during this period and, as far as I am aware, has previously not been consulted by any other researcher. Books and articles written about Taqizadeh and the period and Taqizadeh's own published works in several volumes have been used throughout. Finally, interviews were also conducted with remaining members of Taqizadeh's family and several others who had known him well.

Taqizadeh was a highly influential and controversial figure in the historiography of Iran; much has been written about him in book passages and memoirs. These sources have often been used by researchers to support their arguments. The same sources have been used and cited by both the leftist sympathisers of the Tudeh Party and the Islamists to bolster their criticism of Taqizadeh and by those who, in contrast, were supportive of Taqizadeh. Since Taqizadeh held important positions throughout his career, he has often been mentioned in the published diaries of statesmen and those who worked with him or had met him. When relevant, these sources have also been referenced in this thesis. Taqizadeh expressed his opinion about many different issues; culture, politics, gender, minorities, language policy, oil and economic issues. Published work dealing individually with these subjects, such as papers, articles or monographs, in which Taqizadeh has been mentioned and his ideas analysed have also been referred to in order to provide evidence of Taqizadeh's views on these particular issues or subjects. Locating these diverse sources has been time consuming but has helped to provide a more multidimensional view of Taqizadeh. Some sources contain information about Taqizadeh written from a neutral stance and focus on a particular memory, his habits or his private life. These, at times seemingly fragmented sources have been incorporated in this thesis with the aim of creating a more vivid image of Taqizadeh, his life and his works.

## **Structure**

Besides this introductory chapter, this book consists of three parts. Part one covers Taqizadeh's life from his early years and includes an analysis of the circumstances which shaped his character. It covers his life and political activities in the context of the

Constitutional Movement. Since Taqizadeh was such an influential figure, both as a politician and an intellectual, this part is more detailed in comparison with Part Two which follows Taqizadeh's life as a statesman. Part Two continues Taqizadeh's life until his death. Since he was less influential in the development of the discourse of modernity during this period this part is not as detailed. The division that has been made between these two sections arises from the distinction that the researcher has made between the earlier and later periods of his life and career. During the earlier part of Taqizadeh's life, he was fighting to bring about change, predominantly outside the governing system, considered by many in power as a dangerous trouble-maker and revolutionary, but voicing the aspirations of the common people. In the later period, by contrast, Taqizadeh was working hand in hand with authoritarian modernity and seemingly appeared to lose much of his grass-roots popularity. Although a respected statesman, albeit with a more limited role, his power came not from people's support as it had done before, but from the system within which he held positions. As will be discussed in more detail in the main chapters, during his later life, Taqizadeh, at times, did not take positions for solely political reasons; at times circumstances dictated his choices. The shorter Part Three, or what might be termed an appendix, contains brief information about his death and some personal photographs acquired from his family.

The chapters that follow take a roughly chronological order. The narrative of this research has been led largely by the narrative of Taqizadeh's own autobiography. Other sources have been integrated into the narrative and deeper background has been provided by exploring key political national and global events to more fully contextualise the biographical information. Chapter Two, for example, digresses slightly from Taqizadeh's own life story in order to give a broader overview of and explain in detail the background of the Constitutional Revolution. To correct, expand on or provide further often differing perspectives to the existing narrative of Taqizadeh's life, other sources have been incorporated and these are outlined in this introduction. In brief, the chapters are as follows:

Chapter One aims to represent the context Taqizadeh was born into and demonstrates how this context influenced and shaped Taqizadeh's character and in particular how it

pushed him in the direction of political and cultural activities, forcing him to distance himself from his traditional “self”. Through a micro historical approach, the chapter focuses on Tabriz, his place of birth and the place which most profoundly shaped his ideas.

Chapter Two provides a background to the Constitutional Revolution and its outcomes. In this chapter the development of the idea of modernity (*tajaddod*) and Taqizadeh’s political and intellectual thoughts are explored as Taqizadeh’s life is narrated against a historical background which helped to shape his character as a young, ambitious politician. This chapter covers Taqizadeh’s participation in the First Parliament until its closure and his subsequent stay in the British Legation where he sought refuge. Following the bombardment of the First Parliament, as well as presenting the socio-political situation of Iran, Chapter Three covers Taqizadeh’s activities to restore the Constitution, his exile to Europe and his dealings with the leading academic and political activist Edward Browne. The uprising in Tabriz and Taqizadeh’s return to his home city to carry on his fight against Mohammed Ali Shah is also discussed and analysed. Chapter Four continues a chronological account of events during the Constitutional Revolution up to the overthrow of Mohammed Ali Shah by the constitutionalists. Taqizadeh’s return to Iran from exile and his continuing efforts to restore the Constitution are also narrated. Chapter Five covers Taqizadeh’s activities after the constitutionalists once again took power. It also details the establishment of the Democrat Party by Taqizadeh. Chapter Six examines the period leading up to the Great War of 1914-1918 and how events in Iran were shaped by events between the global powers. Chapter Seven provides information about Iran during the Great War and examines Taqizadeh’s activities both during and after the war, including the publication of *Kaveh*. Chapter Eight covers Taqizadeh’s life as a statesman including his trip to Russia as the representative of the Iranian government, his return to Iran and the events leading to the end of the Qajar dynasty and the coming to power of Reza Shah. Chapter Nine deals with the latter part of Taqizadeh’s life, including his role in the first and second Pahlavi period. This chapter continues to follow Taqizadeh’s life and career from his trip to Philadelphia until his death. It also details Taqizadeh’s life as a scholar in London and his role as Ambassador of Iran in London. It briefly covers his later years in the Senate.