

## **Explanation of the functions of Iran's buffer status in the past two centuries**

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### **Abstract**

In the past two centuries, Iran as a buffer space, has played multi- functional roles in political and geopolitical arena due to power games of maritime and land empires of Britain and Russia in order to prevent the possibility of direct contact and conflict between rival powers. These functions have been performed sometimes by bilateral powers' agreements, sometimes by one of them and sometimes by Iran's government and nation as a reaction against powers' game. Although Iran has had a weak and neutral presence in these regional and global rivalries, it has had different important functions that can be presented as a model of functions and roles of buffer State. So, this research considers explaining the functions of Iran's Buffer space with a descriptive- analytic methodology. Data gathering procedure is library and field finding. The research findings illuminate 22- functions in two general class of external functions and internal functions of Iran's Buffer location.

**Keywords:** Geopolitics, Buffer Space, Powers Rivalry, Great Game, Iran.

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### **Introduction**

Buffer Space as a competitive space between two powers is a territorial pattern of geopolitical rivalries in a geographical space which demonstrates a dynamic rivalry in political world. In the past two centuries, Iran have been placed in the center of competition and hostility of two Great Powers (Russia & Britain) and both of them have made Iran's people and State to be faced with difficult situations in order to defeat others and invade more territories. Iran is a weak geographical space between these two powers. Two powers are sensitive to this space and counteract each other's actions in relation to this space. They show reactions to each rival's actions and this space is then converted to control, maintenance and sensitivity space. Buffer space cannot defend itself because of weakness. What prevents the collapse of this space is the rivalry between these two powers.

Iran is the subject of this research as a Buffer State. In this research we used library and documentary sources. Also, views of experts in the field of Humanities were used (Iranian and non-Iranian) by means of a designed questionnaire so as to achieve more accurate results. So, the main question of this research is: "what are the functions of Iran's Buffer Status in the past two centuries?". Functional designs can be presented by investigating patterns of Iran's Buffer space status for political management of Buffer spaces. Explaining Iran's Buffer situation amongst great empires is itself a special pattern of Buffer spaces that we investigate in this research which has caused Iran to face political, geopolitics, security, territorial and military problems.

### **Research Methodology**

This research concluded taking advantage of a descriptive and analytical method based on historical, scientific and written texts and documentaries then we completed the research with a survey of field.

In our studies on documents, we used the method of analysis of the

concepts of great powers behavior against Buffers spaces. So we determined the functional characteristics and variant of these areas then addressing Iranian and foreign specialists, we evaluated and analyzed those characteristics.

### **Population and number of samples**

By investigating 22 variables associated with functions of Iran's Buffer Space using library sources 22 questions were designed. Spectrum questions known as attitude-measuring questions were designed in the spectrum range of five choices. 83 experts in the field of Humanities answered the questions with the statistical population of: 54 percent Geographical sciences, 19 percent International Relations, 22 percent Political Sciences (Table 1). Also, investigated cases are based on academic degrees consisting of 65 percent graduate (54 persons) and 35 percent (29 students) Ph.D students. These experts are selected individually and by random sampling and results are used as a part of research findings to analysis and evaluation. In terms of ethnicity, 71 percent of respondents were Iranian and 29 percent were foreigners.

Table 1: Specialties of questionnaire respondents

<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number of samples</b>	<b>Major</b>
54	45	Geographical sciences
22	18	Political sciences
24	20	International relations
<b>100</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>Total</b>

In our Research field findings, the results of questions relating to functions of Iran's buffer space are shown, tested one by one by using T-Test in SPSS software.

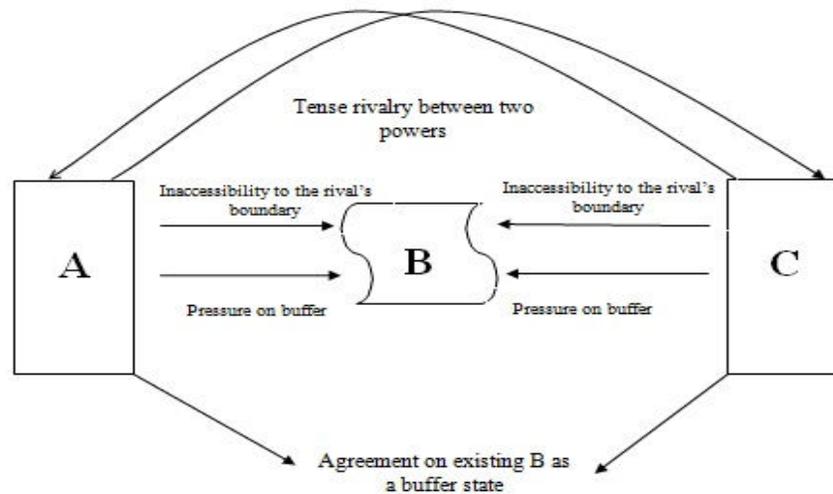
The average of variables of functions of buffer space and the test of these variants in the case study of Iran is sorted in three levels: high importance, average importance and low importance by using test of K- Means Cluster Analyze in SPSS.

## **Theoretical principles of research**

### **The concept of Geographical Buffer Spaces**

It should be noted that the concept of Buffer space occurs in a systemic look at a geopolitical world. The system is created within a regional and global competition, and suggests the existence of a dynamic competition between powers. Buffer State is used mostly to explain a government which is weak, small in terms of size and without independent foreign policy that is located between two or more greater countries, and its function is the prevention of international invasion (Potter, 1930:45). Buffer States are created with the purpose of reducing conflict between powers. (Wight, 1995:160), and it seems natural to think of it as a sort of political fender serving to reduce the danger of conflict between its greater neighbors (Mathisen, 1971:107). Political neutrality is the main trait of Buffer States (Spykman, 1942:440). So, they have an elaborate identity (Chay, 1986:192). Sometimes Buffer situation forms a country's existence cause, and is formed by foreign powers. The author has presented a new definition of Buffer space in other research: "Geographical space has one or more independent political unit(s), but neutral, that is lying between two or more competing powers or their sphere of influence or between rival or greater power blocks and separates them and reduces the conflict in a way that they have agreed on its buffer condition" (Hafeznia and others, 2013: 6-7).

Figure 1: Pattern of Buffer Space



A & C = Buffered Powers or its sphere of influence; B = Buffer Space

### Explaining the functions of Iran's Buffer Status

In this section functions resulting from Iran's Buffer Status, in the past two centuries and by means of powerful neighbors, i.e. Russia and Britain, and later by Soviet Union and US, are divided into two main sections of external and internal functions.

#### 1- Functions in external dimension

##### 1-1- Peace maintenance (or prevention of conflict between Powers)

We must keep in mind, though, that if the two powers are determined to fight, the buffer system is not an effective deterrent. But if the pressure or shock coming from either side is relatively small and manageable, the buffer state is capable of playing its role and making an important peacekeeping contribution to the region and hence the world. (Chay, 1986:6).

During the Great Game, however, Afghanistan was an effective buffer. For, despite mistrust and misunderstanding, Britain and Russia never fought each other in Central Asia. The buffer state had served its desired purpose (Jenkins, 1986: 186-187)

Britain and Russia have never faced each other, at least in Asia. They were familiar with increasing power and global opinions of each other, and they never wanted to face each other. So, buffer creating strategy was the best option that each power accepted. Buffer creating has caused sustainable peace between them, and peace between two powers was the most important function of Iran's BufferSpace in the last centuries of their intense competition.

### **1-2- Encouraging and persuading Buffer State to participate in alliances that Buffered Powers want**

Buffered Powers, i.e. Britain and Russia, were not satisfied with Iran's buffer situation. They tried to attract Iran to have victory over their opponents in rivalry. For example, the period of ministry of Mirza Aghakhan Nouri lasted from 1889 to 1896, and these years were contemporary with immense events like Kırım wars in Balkan Peninsula and European seashores of Black Sea between Russia on the one hand and Otman, Britain and France on the other. Because great neighbors like Iran, Otman and Britain fought against Russia, each of them tried to attract Iran to their side. Russia gave hopes to Iran in the case of attack to Otman and invasion to Afghanistan, and Otman and Britain gave hopes to Iran in the case of alliance or pursuit of neutral policy (Eghbal Ashtiani, 2005: 773).

The first coalition of Iran with a western country was Britain in 1801, when Britain wanted Iran's help to repel Afghan's invasions to India in the frame of an invasive coalition (Fuler, 1994: 256). During the Second World War Iran was encouraged to adhere to Baghdad treaty that later was known as

CENTO<sup>1</sup>. Later, Soviet Union warned Iran. Based on 1921 treaty, Russian forces could enter Iran and if it was necessary, they could perform military actions. Iran was under the tutelage of US and grew as a region that was the proponent of west (Ziring, 1986:154-155). When British forces exited Persian Gulf region in 1971, US tried to attract Iran and Saudi Arabia as its national alliances. Two Countries, in particular Iran, received military support. Accumulation of weaponry in the back-yard of Soviet Union was stimulating (Drysdale & Blake, 1994: 48).

### **1-3- Negative reaction of Buffered Powers to Buffer Space relations with other Countries and Powers, in particular the third Power.**

According to Ziring, Buffer States show serious reaction against all relations of these states with other powers, they monitor and press the Buffer States (Ziring, 1986:160).

Each time Iran wanted to move to join the third power, it was faced with the worst reactions of Russia and Britain, and sometimes it caused alliance of these powers against the third power. Iran's entrance in the Great Game began with France invitation in 1800 from Iran to fight with Russia and Britain. With the entrance of the third power, Russia and Britain quit rivalry for a period of time, and their agreement could devastate Iran's independence and could end their authority over Iran (Soufi, 2006: 130). Even if this communication was in industry and non-military arena, it would have caused the fear of Buffer powers and their intervention.

Because Russian were opposed to the presence of French in Iran, they exerted pressure on Iran to cancel its decrees, and Russian minister, Graf Modem, threatened that if Iran does not agree with exiling French priests, Russia will do so. For this reason, Mohammad Shah canceled his decree and exiled French priests in January, 1842 (Hushang Mahdavi, 2009: 256).

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1. Central Treaty Organization

Germany was the most important third power that people of Iran government welcomed. Germany and Turkey threats were one of the most important causing factors that brought about 1907 treaty (Ali Soufi, 2002: 76). Even at the time of First World War, it made Iran to be the fight arena where two old rivals had to fight against Germany (Nezio, 1984: 215). In general, two occasions of occupying Iran in the first and second World War illustrated the dislike of buffer creating powers of the existence of the third power in the Buffer Space.

#### **1-4- Sensitivity of Powers to each action and politics of Rival Power in the Buffer Space**

Two buffer creating rivals, i.e Britain and Russia, monitored each other's actions and political motivations in the Buffer Space. Russian were worried about their boundary insecurity because of Britain's intervention, Britain also were worried about Russian expansion (and later Bolshevism) to south (Homayun Katuzian, 2010: 119). Following Russia and Iran treaty in 1828, Britain thought that Russia wanted to join India with the support of Iran. The cynical attitude of Britain toward Russia caused Great Game in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Mojtahedzade, 2007: 60).

After the developmental stoppage of Buffered Powers, both of them tried to gain economic advantages. Each treaty with a power brought a similar treaty with another power. For example, treaty of passing telegraph lines of India and Europe was signed by Naseraddin Shah in December 17, 1862. Following, Russia signed a treaty that was about constructing telegraph lines between San Petersburg and Tehran by means of Jolfa and Tabriz in August 25, 1864 (Hushang Mahdavi, 2009: 287-289).

#### **1-5- Maintaining interests of Great Powers in the Global arena**

According to Turmanidze, maintaining the interests of the Great Powers in the global arena is the most important functions of Buffer States and if the

Buffer States does not have any strategic value to the belligerent Powers, these Powers show no interest in recognizing it as a buffer and they try to occupy or control it. (Turmanidze,2009:59)

Buffer States are small players placed between powers that have over-ambitious and invasive objectives. Buffer States are formed by these external rivals. Buffer States are victims of an immense rivalry, and their interests are ignored by Great Powers that specify principles, facets and framework of rivalry.

An obvious example occurred in February 1324, in which US government warned Joseph Stalin that if Russia does not evacuate its military forces from Iran, US will act .

## **2- Function in external dimension**

### **2-1- Governmental level**

#### **2-1-1- Continuous intervention in internal affairs of Buffer Space**

The role of Russians and Britains are visible in the advent and collapse of Iranian weak kings in 19th century, in the first experiences of parliamentary government, in political affairs and evolutions. Turkmanchay treaty and its 7<sup>th</sup> article made formal foreign interventions in Iran's internal affairs for the first time, and paved the way for political collapse of Iran. Politicians could not remain in their posts without benefiting from foreign supports, and they were not comfortable about harassment of Ghajar government after getting out of their posts. This situation caused foreigners capitulation in Iran, and in this political situation, territorial collapse of Iran commenced (Mojtahedzade, 1999: 40). Also, Paris treaty (1856) freed Afghanistan from Iran's sovereignty and caused increment in Britain's influence in Iran.

In the end of 19th century and in the beginning of 20 century Russia disagreed with inner development of Iran like construction of railway that could have military utilities. Also, they tried to weaken Iran by giving loans (Elahi, 2012: 309). In march 25, 1889 Naseaddin Shah was forced by

the pressure of two neighbors to announce a decree that Iran should not give the license of contracting railway to foreigners for five years. Ghajar's Shah that was uneasy because of his political defeat, wrote a letter to his minister of international relations: negotiate with Russia and Britain that whether we have independence? Why do you intervene in our affairs? (Hushang Ahmadi, 2009: 303).

In 1911, Russian threatened Iran to performe 1907 treaty and dismissing Shustar group to maintain its markets. They gave a 3-article ultimatum to Iran by occupying Rasht and Anzali: dismissing Shustar, promising that Iran will not take any foreigner consellor without the permission of Russia and Britain, and giving indemnifications of placing Russian forces in Rasht and Anzali. Also, they threatened that if their demands are not met, they will immediately occupy Tehran (Abrahamian, 2005: 136).

In the first Pahlavi era, Britain took itself out from the arena of Iran's politics or took neutrality on the outside, and Russian remember Reza Khan's actions as fight against feudalism and reviving national unity.

### **2-1-2- Political inclination of ellities and political players toward one of Powers**

Iranians have long believed that by cooperating or attracting support from one of the European Countries or a two-side game they can find a solution to their problems (Manshur Gorgani, 1989: 9). In the last two hundred years, the behavior of governments in Iran was not similar with each other, and each government has had its own special behavior. Political players usually had inclination toward one of powers and sometimes they disagreed with them, even some players did not know that in which team they are and acted to the benefit of one of powers, accidently. So, many political occurrences in Iran are not internally caused and resulted from the rivalry of global powers. Buffered Powers, i.e Britain and Russia, and the third powers supported politicians that were their close allies. Political inclinations of parties, persons and political groups can be sorted into five categories:

1. Pattern of concillation behaviour and inclination toward buffered space of Britain (later US) against Russia; Britain had an immense influence on political- economic situation of Iran in the last 150 years (Azghandi, 2012: 46). Meanwhile, we can point out many people who were inclined to Britain and were familiar for this reason, like: Seyyed Zia (Abrahamian, 2005). Sometimes, government accused opponents that they are terrorist spies of Britain.
2. Pattern of concillation behaviour and inclination toward buffered space of Russia (later Soviet Union) against Britain; in principle, Iran's government was under the authority of Russia after 1828 Turkmanchay treaty. Mohammad Shah did not afraid of saying his interests in Russia and hated Britain (nezio, 1984: 52). Mohammad Shah was under the influence of Russian politics because he grew up in Azerbaijan (Zarrin koub, 2004: 828). Supporters of Mozaffaraddin Shah were under the influence of Russia or Britain. Shah was afraid of two governments and he was dependent on Russia' support who did not have any authority (Ibid: 826).
3. Pattern of neutral behaviour in relation to Buffered Powers; in this pattern the government shows a peaceful behaviour to two powers and tries to establish relations with two powers. This pattern is known as positive balance, and politicians like Naseraddin Shah, prime ministers like Teymur Tash, Ghavam, Saed and Mohammad Reza Shah in the years after coup d'état, regulated their internal and foreign policies.
4. Pattern of contrasting behaviour with Buffered Powers and inclination toward the third power; some politicians of Iran had inclination toward the third power to strengthen or to confront Buffered Powers. Reza Khan's inclination toward Germany caused his collapse. Amirkabir who had tendency toward US and Austria, and Fathali Shah who had tendency toward France for a period of time.
5. Pattern of contrasting behaviour with Buffered Powers and the third Power; negative balance is placed within this pattern. For the first time, in the

Mashrute revolution, people wanted to prevent all powers from intervention in Iran's internal affairs.

### **2-1-3- Political isolation and seclusion of Buffer Government**

Natural inclination of government toward Iran's Buffer Space was political isolation and seclusion from foreign countries, in particular Buffered Powers of Russia and Britain and finally, fears of foreigners. For this reason Iranians were frightful to international arena (Naghizadeh, 2004: 74). It was in this situation that Iran entered the strategic actions of the world, intentional or unintentional, which should have had coherent policies. This political isolation and seclusion was the consequence of military, diplomatic, political, geopolitical and economic defeats that occurred during two centuries associated with powers, and Iran was obviously unable to keep up with its international demands.

### **2-1-4- Instability of political buffer regimes (political, security, social instability and etc.)**

For Maila (the Lebanese researcher): A buffer will always see itself as neutral, and will assert, in all circumstances, its neutrality by words and deeds; it will focus on independence, sovereignty, autonomy, freedom, and the right to exist. Whenever controlled or challenged, it will tend to disentangle itself from its threatening environment and will attempt to stick to its neutral posture, which it considers as its natural state of affairs. (Maila, 1986:38-39) According to Annette Baker Fox, the neutrality of small states may even take the forms of neutral alliance and unnatural neutrality which provides great powers with additional reasons for assaulting them (Fox, 1959). According to Maila buffer states are states in which the issue of sovereignty is at stake. (Maila, 1986:29) because they are constantly under the pressure of buffered States.

Political regims in Iran were unstable; in the 20 century, we witnessed many changes in political regimes, political tensions and etc. The last case

of government transition era in Iran was the Islamic revolution that was along with rebels, strikes, capital punishments, terrors, lootings, clashes of ethnic and religious minorities, conversion of Iran's economy to governmental economy, global reactions to Iran's revolution and removal of rivals from political arena (Rumina, 2005: 121).

#### **2-1-5- Lacking functional solidary of Government**

Iran did not have functional solidary to pursue its objectives, so Iran's contemporary governments have used information and news filtering and suppressing tools. It can be said that strong governments can maintain interests of social groups more than weak governments, but strong governments can devastate interests or suppress some of them to the benefit of others (Bashiriye, 2001: 25). During these two centuries, all political, social, cultural, economic and military tools were in government hands, and when weakened, tried to control the country by giving rise to differences between different groups and petitioners (Ibid: 45). This policy was the most important tool for the survival of Ghajar government (Abrahamian, 2005: 53).

#### **2-1-6- Following de-utilization policies**

Undoubtedly, the only way for a buffer State to confront powers and to extricate itself from buffer situation is to become strong which requires the investment of time, material and spiritual costs. For this reason, one of the ways that Iran government used was following de-utilization policies to maintain buffer situation and agreement of two powers on recognizing Iran's independence, not as a political requirement and as a natural right of Iran's nation, but as a geopolitical agreement to avoid military clashes between Britain and Russia. Based on this policy, Iran government emphasized to sign Golestan Treaty with Russia. Russian have agreed to recognize the succession of Abbas Mirza and to help him to access to the Crown.

### **2-1-7- Reactional policy- makings**

Policy- makings and decision-makings in the buffer space have been done without planing, reactionaly and transiently because of political considerations of powers and their positive and negative actions. It is often the case that buffer space faced a conditional crisis and inevitably had to make a decision that might cause positive and or negative changes.

In Napeleon era in which Britain, Russia and France had signed frequent treaties with each other, Iran was in a situation that had to make proper policies, for this reason we frequently witnessed strategic changes. The main cause that Fathali Shah inclined to france, with regard to this fact that he signed a treaty with Britain, was the lack of Britain's support for Iran in Russia and Iran war. After Tilsit treaty between Russia and France, France left Iran alone (Eghbal Ashtiani, 2005: 721). Iran's foreign policy lost its decision-making ability and effectiveness because of Harat war in Mohammad Shah era and a similar war in Naseraddin Shah era that resulted in Paris 1857 treaty. Occupation of Iran in the First World War can be considered as the end of the effectiveness of Iran foreign policy (Manshur Gorgani, 1989: 14).

### **2-1-8- Boundary disputes with neighbors and regional clashes with neighboring Countries**

Iran, during the period that served as a Buffer State, experienced diverse wars from different directions and in different battlegrounds. These wars were with Buffered Powers (Britain and Russia) that attacked from north, east and south, or with neighbors that Britain and Russia had an obvious hand. Provoking internal powers, ethnicities and minorities, and even neighboring countries against buffer space challenged the security of Iran and the region. From other side, with the independence process of Countries of the region, in particular Iraq and Saudi Arabia, these Countries inclined toward foreign Countries to survival or rivalry and caused their presence in the Region.

The fire of Iran and Russia wars caused Russian intervention in supporting Valiahd besides loosing vast territories in Caucasus and Russia dominating in Caspian Sea. After fighting with Russia, it was the turn of east battleground that Russia stimulated Iran to control the east. It is true that Afghanistan and Harat matters were an internal matter to Iran, but caused Britain's worry. Three of Ghajar Shahes, Fathali Shah, Mohammad Shah and Nasseraddin Shah, decreed deploying the troops to Harat. Britain that could not bear the insecurity in northern and western boundaries of India, interfered in this matter, and in these three cases ended this matter by threatening, deploying troops and occupying southern shores of Iran; finally, Britain imposed Paris treaty in 1856 and based on this treaty Iran recognized Afghanistan's independence.

Iran's affairs did not limit to Russia and Britain. Ottoman Empire in the west had rivalry with Iran and their frontiers were the place of clashes and problems. In 1809, Britain encouraged Iran to sign a treaty of military alliance and the two Muslim governments turned the war with Russia into Jihad (Hushang Mahdavi, 2009: 220-221). In turn, Russia tried to encourage these two Muslim Countries to war, and if one of them defeated, they will follow their plots to occupy territories of Iran and Ottoman.

### **2-1-9- Investing extravagant military expenditure on Buffer State with the conception of confronting neighbors and Powers**

Buffer States are always under the continuous pressure of buffered Powers, so one of ways that Buffer Space can escape from this pressure is self-strengthening and conversion to power. For this reason, they attempt temporary actions and increase their military power, and this matter causes notable increase in military expenditures.

Iran's defeats from Russia and the imposed Britain military predominance from east and south showed Iran's lack in the armed forces in the new world order. In Reza Khan's period, the first and his most costly efforts was to construct national and modern military forces (Kadi, 2006:

143; Abrahamian, 2010: 133). In Mohammad Reza Shah era, the process of modernization and modifying military forces was costly. Achieving the preventive ability and superior military forces in the region were Iran's objectives which were followed with the support of the west (Eftekhari&Bagheri, 2009: 57). Mohammad Reza Shah, by evaluating strategic and geographic situation of Iran and with regard to this point that Iran had been threatened by Soviet Union, Iraq and some Arabic Countries of Persian Gulf, tried to make Iran as a superior military power in the region with the support of US and oil incomes (Azgandi, 2012: 55-56).

## **2-2- Social level**

### **2-2-1- High social, political, economic and cultural vulnerabilities in the Buffer State**

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century Iran certainly was underdeveloped in comparison with Europe social- economic evolution, but it was not unchangeable or static (Homayun Katuzian, 2010: 70). Contemporary Iran has faced many political, social, economic, cultural, military and security defeats. Experiencing two centuries of influence, rivalry, clash and tension of powers in terms of their interests that caused occupation, sanction, intervention in affairs, undevelopment, military defeats, lose of vast section of territories, poverty, famine and etc. paved the way for occurrence of vast vulnerabilities in Iranian's life. Rivalry of powers incited people and caused sentimental and reactional clashes associated with deep changes in society.

It is true that Reza Shah never presented a comprehensive plan or a plot to reform and reforms were not in order, but he considered social reforms after strengthening and stabilizing political power. He wanted a society that was not under the influence of religious and spiritual forces, foreign plots, tribes agitations and ethnic disputes. Also, he wanted a society that has western educational institutions, women that were active in the society and new economic structure which had governmental factories, communication networks, supermarkets and investment banks (Abrahamian, 2005: 174).

### **2-2-2- Expectation of Buffer Space people to solve their problems or to repel the rival Power by other Powers**

The most important wish of buffer people is solving the problems which are the result of endless and costly rivalries of powers in the buffer space. Their inclination sometimes was toward powerful central government, and sometimes toward the third power and sometimes toward one of the buffered Powers during the battle. The first success of Mashrute revolution was the result of weakness of Shah and to some extent Britain's supports from revolutionary groups organized by its representative groups in Tehran and other cities (Hodayun Katuzian, 2010: 104). Britain could adapt its policies with Mashrute movement to beat its rival based on inner instabilities in Iran's society and Iranian dissatisfaction with inner situation of country; freedomfighters accepted this tactical agreement to devastate power balance to the detriment of Ghajar government and to prevent the growing influence of Russia (Ali Soufi, 2006: 136). Central government showed high resistance in front of social forces by leaning to Russia's support. Britain's reputation suddenly lost its value after keeping quiet in Parliament cannonade that had defended Iranian freedom in front of Russia's threatening forces and it caused Germany to be the center of attention (Nezio, 1984: 206).

In the beginning of world war the feelings of Iranian were in favor of Germans and they hoped that they could save themselves from the interventions of Russia and Britain. In the period after occupying Iran in the Second World War, many political and social groups had inclination toward one of powers to achieve their goals and social stability. For example, Azerbaijan fraction was ready to cooperate with Soviet Union because of opposition with Britain and Shah under the condition that it would not support a social revolution in Iran (Abrahamia, 2005: 222).

**2-2-3- Cynical attitude of residents in the Buffer Space toward Greater Powers (xenophobia)**

It seems that natural attitudes and people-belived policies in Iran are instinctively anti- foreign, suspicious of foreign forces and reluctant for alliance with each power (Fuler, 1994: 243). The role of threats in national unity is very important that Bashiriye (2002) and Ashraf (1994: 17) believes that our identity depends on other that in confront of it we undertand and recognize our identity. Even, the role of foreign forces caused the formation of flight of intrigue fancy in Iran (Gaffari, 2003: 22-33). Apprehension presupposition of intrigue blongsto societies that has been damaged under the influence of foreign powers. These societies, because of having knowledge about power of the player and its ability that can do everything and have authority to changesituation, think that each damageis the result of greater power and its tacts. Even though, it sometimes can be near to reality(Hafeznia, 2002: 196).

**2-2-4- Sentiment of people about having no authority and power over their fate**

The experience of the authority of Great Powers in Iran aroused the feeling that they never controlled their fate, and they were under the influence of external forces. Every time, there was a conception that Britain is behind all of the evolutions that has occurred in the region and this conception has dominated daily realities (fouler, 1994: 23). Times Newspaper in political text evaluated the situation of years after Iran's occupation in Second World War as: "Iran's internal tensions- because of ignorance and government underestimates- reached to the degree that is only solved by distorting facts and attracting notions toward this foreign shield –Britain-" (Abrahamian, 2005: 329).Abrahamian, one of the famous historian, noted Iran's people opinions in the beginning of 1940 that: "in the market of Iran it is rumored that all of government persons are conspirators of international Zionism, Baha'is and Britain imperialist relating to freemasonry log of London"(Ibid: 531).

#### **2-2-5- Cynical attitude toward Central Government.**

People of Buffer Space regulate their behaviours unwillingly with regard to central government. Also, central government shows a negative reaction to their agitations. Maybe, deposing Reza Khan from power and political agitation of people show cynical attitudes of Iran society during the years of buffer situation and government's pressures on people. Also, Mohammad Reza Shah suppressed the society (Abrahamian, 2005: 615). It is true that he renewed political- economic structure, but did not do anything to develop political system, permission to organize pressure groups, creating a democratic situation for different social groups, maintaining communication between regime and old classes and expanding social value of kingdom that was alive because of military coup-d'état in 1953. Instead of renewing political system, he tried to place his power on three beams: military forces, supporting the network of kingdom and expansion of governmental bureaucracy (Ibid: 535). Policies of Mohammad Reza Shah were faced with negative reactions of people and inevitably government sought the support of US (Azghandi, 2012: 22).

#### **2-2-6- Growing nationalism and radical movements (mostly supported by one of Powers)**

In the late of 19<sup>th</sup> century, nationalism sentiments were arising; intense hatred of elites and businessmen of Iran from concessions and insulting observation of European government in Iran fed these sentiments. People were angry because of Shah despotism and lack of observation in country that caused country to be the field of action of local feudalism, tribes and foreign consuls (Fouler, 1994: 167). Political players entered into the arena and formed nationalist groups and movements and selected nationalism. Crisis-making problems, unsatisfying elites and freedom fighters and even Ghajar politicians, and lack of parliamentary system and parties to fight with government paved the way for the formation of confidential groups and associations (Musavinia, 2006: 142). The main aim of people was to fight

with the central government. Iranian nationalism was a mixture of xenophobic sentiments, tendency for social reforms and ending despotic government.

#### **2-2-7- Tendency of people for isolation and seclusion in the Buffer Space**

National authority of Iran was harmed because of lacking power- making inner infrastructures, occupation of Iran in the First and Second World War that paved the way for acceleration in the rivalry of powers in the region, domination by the influence of US and becoming one of the developing and third world countries. Power vacuum in Iran suppressed national desire of Iran that wanted to be neutral in the war emanating from Iran's buffer location. So, tendency of people for isolation and seclusion resulted from these defeats.

#### **2-2-8- Growing cynical attitudes toward political Players**

Buffered Powers interventions in internal affairs of Iran, elites and politicians' inclination toward one of Powers and lack of public institutions and parties to direct public thoughts and fights caused people's uncertainty toward the behaviour of players in the political arena of Iran, and people observed their movements in favour of one of powers.

### **3- Research field findings**

The results, from percent and frequency of questions relating to functions of Iran's buffer space, are shown in table 2, and the results of research questions, tested one by one by using T-Test about functions of Iran's buffer space in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, are listed in table 3.

Table 2: Percent and relative frequency of questions (functions of Iran's Buffer Space)

	Questions	5		4		3		2		1	
		frequ	%	frequ	%	frequ	%	frequ	%	frequ	%
	<b>1- Functions in external demension</b>										
1	Iran, by being locating between two Great Powers boundaries, prevented the clashes between powers.	17	20	47	58	7	8	12	14	0	0
2	Powers put pressure on Iran to be a member in their considered regional and global alliances.	16	19	42	51	23	28	2	2	0	0
3	Peripheral Powere showed negative reactions to Iran relations with the third power (US in 19 <sup>th</sup> century, France and Germany).	15	18	55	67	12	14	0	0	1	1
4	Powers react to all actions and politics of rival Powers in Iran.	17	21	56	68	8	9	1	1	1	1
5	Buffer situation causes Iran interests to shift toward preserving interests of Buffered Powers.	12	14	53	64	10	12	7	8	1	1
	<b>2- Functions in internal demension</b>										
	<b>A- governmental level</b>										
6	Powers have had interference in Iran.	23	28	41	49	14	17	1	1	4	5
7	Political orientation of Iran's elites was inclined to the one of Powers (advertent or inadvertent).	14	17	49	59	12	14	4	5	4	5
8	Iran political isolation under the effect of buffer position increased in the last two centuries.	10	12	39	47	14	17	17	20	3	4
9	Political regimes in contemporary Iran confront with instability, political, security and social instability.	24	29	50	60	7	8	1	1	1	1
10	Government in Iran in the last two centuries has not had functional solidarity.	11	13	50	60	19	23	1	1	2	2
11	Powers pressure on Iran's government caused an increase in its effort to weaken itself in the last two last centuries.	7	8	42	51	17	20	13	16	4	5
12	Political decision making in Iran has been reactive in two last centuries, so effective strategies and social, political, economic and cultural planning have not been designed or done.	24	29	42	51	10	12	3	4	4	5
13	More boundary disputes of Iran	14	17	32	38	24	29	10	12	3	4

	with its neighbors are the result of Iran's buffer position.										
14	Iran's buffer status has caused the expansion of extravagant costs in order to confront with regional countries and Buffered Powers.	9	11	47	57	19	23	6	7	2	2
<b>B- Social level</b>											
15	Iran's buffer status has caused more social, political, economical and cultural damage to threaten the country.	14	17	46	55	15	18	7	8	1	1
16	People of Iran expect that other power will solve their problems.	9	11	35	42	25	30	14	17	0	0
17	People of Iran have been holding cynical attitudes toward great and Buffered Powers.	16	19	43	52	11	13	10	12	3	4
18	People of Iran assume that powers decided their fate and this has caused the formation of a flight of intrigue fancy.	11	13	32	38	22	26	15	18	3	4
19	People of Iran have been holding cynical attitudes toward civil, social and political institutions like councils, parliament and etc.	12	14	42	51	21	25	6	7	2	2
20	Nationalism movements have grown in the last two centuries.	13	16	44	53	23	28	1	1	2	2
21	The result of Iran buffer situation is Iran's people inclination to isolation and seclusion.	4	5	16	19	29	35	31	37	3	4
22	People of Iran have been holding cynical attitudes toward native political players and they have thought that these players are puppets.	9	11	31	37	20	24	21	25	2	2

Table 3 shows the average of statistical data of functions of Iran's buffer status. In this relation, experts know the main important function of buffer status in governmental level and its approaching challenges, question 9 that is: "Political regimes in contemporary Iran confront instability, political, security and social instability". So, this variable is located in high position than others with average of 4.14. Question 21 has the low average relating to social dimension of function of buffer status that is: "The result of Iran buffer situation is Iran's people inclination to isolation and seclusion". This

function has the average of 2.84. The difference between low and high averages is 1.3, and it shows that interviewers distinguish between 22 factors associated with the functions of Iran's buffer status.

Table 3: Results from test of functions of Iran's buffer status using T-Test

Questions	Characteristics and functions of Buffer Spaces		
	Mean	Std.Deviation	Level of significance
<b>A- functions in external demension</b>			
Question 1	3.83	0.921	0.000
Question 2	3.87	0.745	0.000
Question 3	4	0.663	0.000
Question 4	4.05	0.679	0.000
Question 5	3.82	0.829	0.000
<b>B- functions in internal demension</b>			
<b>Governmental level</b>			
Question 6	3.94	0.967	0.000
Question 7	3.78	0.950	0.000
Question 8	3.43	1.061	0.000
Question 9	4.14	0.718	0.000
Question 10	3.81	0.772	0.000
Question 11	3.42	1.014	0.000
Question 12	3.95	0.999	0.000
Question 13	3.53	1.028	0.000
Question 14	3.66	0.859	0.000
<b>Social level</b>			
Question 15	3.78	0.870	0.000
Question 16	3.47	0.902	0.000
Question 17	3.74	1.037	0.000
Question 18	3.4	1.047	0.000
Question 19	3.67	0.899	0.000
Question 20	3.81	0.818	0.000
Question 21	2.84	0.943	0.000
Question 22	3.29	1.042	0.000

The average of variables of functions of buffer space and the test of these variants in the case study of Iran is sorted in three levels: high importance, average importance and low importance by using test of K- Means Cluster

Analyze in SPSS. So, the first level has the more impacts on functions of Iran's buffer status.

Table 4 shows the middle of averages and table 5 shows the functions of Iran's buffer status. In table 6, 13 factors that have high importance in functions of Iran's buffer status are from experts' opinions.

Table 4: The middle of averages resulted from functions of Iran's Buffer Status

functions of Iran's buffer status	High importance	Average importance	Low importance
	3.89	3.84	2.84

Table 5: Number of each question based on functions of Iran's Buffer Status

Number	Importance level
13	High
8	Average
1	Low
22	Total

Table 6: Ranking spectrum of functions of Iran's Buffer status, respectively

<b>N</b>	<b>functions of Iran's buffer status</b>	<b>Index</b>	<b>Mean</b>
1	Political regimes in contemporary Iran confront instability, political, security and social instability.	Governmental level	4.14
2	Powers react to all actions and politics of rival Powers in Iran.	External dimension	4.05
3	Peripheral powers showed negative reactions to Iran relations with the third Power (US in 19 <sup>th</sup> century, France and Germany).	External dimension	4
4	Political decision-making in Iran has been reactive in the last two centuries, so effective strategies and social, political, economic and cultural planning have not been designed or done.	Governmental level	3.95
5	Powers have had interference in Iran.	Governmental level	3.94
6	Powers put pressure on Iran to be a member in their considered regional and global alliances.	External dimension	3.87
7	Iran, as a result of lying between two Great Powers, prevented the clashes between powers.	External dimension	3.83
8	The interests of Buffer Space are in the direction of the interests of Buffered Powers.	External dimension	3.82
9	Government in Iran in the last two centuries has not had functional solidarity.	Governmental level	3.81
10	Nationalism movements have grown in the last two centuries.	Social level	3.81
11	Political orientation of Iran's elites was toward one of powers (advertent or inadvertent).	Governmental level	3.78
12	Iran's Buffer Status has caused more social, political, economical and cultural damage to threaten the country.	Social level	3.78
13	People of Iran have been holding cynical attitudes toward Great and Buffered Powers.	Social level	3.74
14	People of Iran have been holding cynical attitudes toward civil, social and political institutions like councils, parliament and etc.	Social level	3.67
15	Iran's Buffer Status has caused the expansion of extravagant costs in order to confront regional countries and Buffered Powers.	Governmental level	3.66
16	More boundary disputes of Iran with its neighbors are the result of Iran's Buffer Status.	Governmental level	3.53
17	People of Iran expect that other powers will solve their problems.	Social level	3.47
18	Iran's political isolation under the influence of buffer position increased in the last two centuries.	Governmental level	3.43
19	Powers' pressure on Iran's government caused an increase in its effort to weaken itself in the last two centuries.	Governmental level	3.42
20	People of Iran assume that powers decided their fate and this has caused the formation of a flight of intrigue fancy.	Social level	3.4
21	People of Iran have been holding cynical attitudes toward native political players and they have thought that these players are puppets.	Social level	3.29
22	As a result of Iran's Buffer Status, people have inclination toward isolation and seclusion.	Social level	2.84

#### **4- Conclusion**

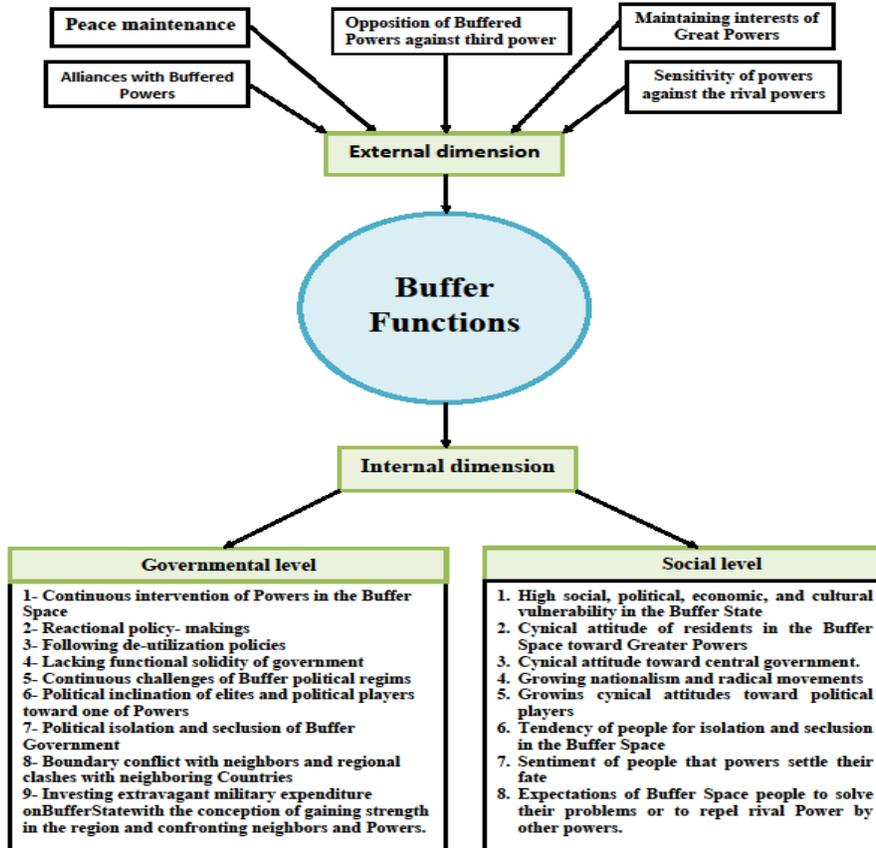
Throughout history, major concurrent powers have always tried to keep away from their borders from attacks of their opponents, so they have created buffer spaces between their borders with its opponents. A Buffer State is the result of competition between the two powers (or more) who wants to be away from their opponent by having a buffer state between their borders. The buffer preserves the peace and acts as a natural barrier between the two belligerents. John Chay and Jenkins recognize the maintenance of peace and preventing clash between powers as the most important function of Buffer States.

The Great Powers competitor trying to infiltrate the geopolitical vacuum that arose between them and force all countries intermittent to ally with them and they recognize it as a neutral Buffer State, when there would be a balance powers in the region. During the past two centuries, the model of competition of the Great Powers in the global arena has been reflected in the interior of Iran and the internal political situation in Iran was always a reflection of the competition from these Powers. During the Cold War as Iran occupied a geopolitical and strategic position for these Powers and was the geostrategic operational complement to Russia and Britain. This is why Iran on one side, was the main point of terrestrial Strategy and positioning across the center of the strategic defense of the maritime Powers. From the political point of view, Iranian governments have suffered extensive damage and problems and to plan strategic and national development always confronted with the obstacle of the Powers. The passive role of Iran in regional and global, territorial and political events, lack of a functional balance (Boshirieh and Abrahamian suggested these problems), regime changes, wars, the occupation of large part of its territory, even two complete occupation, were among the most serious damage and problems arising from his situation of a Buffer State.

The results show that functions of Iran's buffer status have 22 variants and they are not uni-dimensional. These variants have different levels of

importance. In this research, we investigated the qualitative dimensions of functions of Iran's buffer status and each factor was given weight and converted to quantitative dimensions. Then, functions of Iran's buffer status are divided into external and internal functions. Findings of research illuminate the political, geopolitical and social impacts of Great Game of Russia and Britain in Iran in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. Political, security and social challenges of political regimes of Iran; immense rivalry of powers in Iran; lack of governments functional solidarity; lack of functional strategies and social, political, economic and cultural planning; powers' interventions in Iran's internal affairs; being a member in the alliances which were considered important by Buffering Powers; growing nationalist movements and etc are the most important impacts. Recognizing these 22-factors of functions of Iran's buffer status helps us to investigate Iran's status in order to strengthen positive functions and to reduce or to omit negative functions.

Figure 2: functional characteristics of Buffer Space



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