

## **Abstract**

This bachelor's thesis analyses the phenomenon of foundations – *bonyads* in postrevolutionary Iran. The most prominent *bonyads* were founded during the Islamic revolution and were a transformation of already existing foundations that had been set up during the reign of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. Today, they stand on the verge of formal and informal structures of the Iranian state. Based on the study of academic literature and selected sources, the author compares their contradictory roles: charitable activities and substituting of some of the functions of the Iranian welfare state versus informal intervening in politics through a vast network of economic activities outside the control of the Iranian governmental ministries. The thesis is based on a case study of one of the Iran's most important foundation *Bonyad-e Mostaz'afan* (Foundation of the Oppressed) and addresses the question of to what extent are *bonyads* charitable foundations and to what extent they play other, less apparent roles in the context of Iranian political system and structures of power.