AN INSTITUTIONAL HISTORY OF THE IRANIAN CONSTRUCTION JIHAD: FROM INCEPTION TO INSTITUTIONALIZATION (1979-2011)

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Abstract

Based on one year of interviews, participant-observation, and archival research in Iran and Lebanon, this dissertation addresses the following question: how did the Islamic Republic of Iran instrumentalize rural development to consolidate power at home and to project influence abroad? This dissertation is the first to trace the institutional history of the Iranian Construction Jihad (*jehād-e sāzandegī*) (JS), a post-revolutionary rural development organization, through the lens of revolutions, social movements, bureaucracies, transnationalism, and associational life. In its initial phase, JS constituted a counter-movement that assisted Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini and the Islamic Republican Party (IRP) with consolidating power against competing social movements and invading Iraqi forces along the country’s rural periphery.

JS blurred the distinction between state-society relations as newly-ascendant post-revolutionary elites from above (i.e., Khomeini and the IRP) appropriated a social movement organization (i.e., JS) and harnessed grassroots mobilization from below by leveraging mobilizing structures, political opportunities, and cultural framing. To help Khomeini and the IRP to consolidate power, JS relied on largely non-coercive action repertoire, which it often adopted from its rivals. This repertoire included patronage, indoctrination, cooption, non-routine contention, covert operations, and logistical support.

Following Khomeini and the IRP’s power consolidation, JS underwent demobilization and statist institutionalization by transforming from a revolutionary organization and counter-movement to an official, cabinet-level ministry. This transformation caused fragmentation between coopted pragmatists, who lobbied for and
benefitted from bureaucratization, and disillusioned radicals, who opposed and resisted it. After becoming a full-fledged ministry, JS assisted the Islamic Republic with exporting the revolution to other parts of the Muslim and developing world. In Shiite Lebanon, JS cooperated with the local resistance movement, Hezbollah, to establish a local development organization modeled after itself. While statist institutionalization allowed the Islamic Republic to assert control over and moderate JS, the organization’s former radicals in the bureaucracy and at the grassroots currently engaged in micro-mobilization to challenge the status quo. At the state and societal levels, JS conservatives and other regime supporters countered these reform efforts by similarly employing JS’s original symbols and tactics, revealing the nature of factional politics in Iran.
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Introduction
Introduction

Across the Arab World, popular protest movements are challenging and toppling authoritarian regimes.¹ In 1979, a similar phenomenon occurred in Iran, where a broad-based, popular movement overthrew a Western-backed, monarchical dictator by the name of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi (r. 1941-1979), commonly known as the Shah. In teleological fashion, historians and social scientists write as if the ascendancy of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (r. 1979-1989), the religious-political leader who took the Shah’s place, was a fait accompli. However, as John Foran and Jeff Goodwin (1993), two sociologists who study the Iranian and other revolutions, remind us: The Iranian revolution did not end with the Shah’s demise, but with a four-to-five-year power struggle between Khomeini and his clerical faction, the Islamic Republican Party (IRP), on one side, and an assortment of domestic challengers, not to mention invading Iraqi forces, on the other.

Though revolutions constitute the replacement of one regime by another, the processes behind this outcome are both time-consuming and complex. Through an analysis of the Iranian Construction Jihad (jehād-e sāzandegī) (JS), a post-revolutionary rural development organization, this dissertation examines how newly-ascendant elites consolidate power against internal and external rivals, and the fate of activists who help

¹ To date, popular protest movements have toppled President Zin-el Abidine Ben Ali in Tunisia and President Hosni Mubarak in Egypt, and prompted a changing of the guard between President Ali Abdullah Saleh and Vice President Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi in Yemen. With assistance from NATO, armed rebels have overthrown and executed Libyan leader Moammar al-Gadhafi. In Syria, mass demonstrations, which transformed into armed uprisings, have challenged Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. Outside of Arab republics, popular protests have also tested the monarchies of Bahrain, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia.
elites achieve this objective. These questions are certainly on the minds of analysts as they attempt to make sense of the post Arab Spring order.

In the first section, this introduction discloses this dissertation’s contributions to the scholarship on post-revolutionary Iran and on revolutions and social movements more generally. Second, it describes the methodology I utilized to conduct research in Iran and Lebanon on JS’s history and activities. Third, this introduction unpacks and defines the theoretical concepts that shed light on JS’s institutional trajectory.

Contribution

My research engages and informs three bodies of academic literature: the historical and political literature on post-revolutionary Iran and the social scientific literature on revolutions and social movements. To explain how Khomeini and the IRP consolidated power, scholars of post-revolutionary Iran (Bakhash 1984; Arjomand 1988; Parsa 1989; Moaddel 1993; Moslem 2002) mainly focus on coercive institutions, including revolutionary courts, club-wielding partisans of God, and the infamous Revolutionary Guard, an elite, military force tasked with protecting the revolution from internal and external enemies. Mansur Moaddel (1993: 260) argues that “terror is the essence of the Islamic Republic.” While I do not discount the importance of coercion to explain events and outcomes during the aftermath of the revolution, my research adds nuance to this analysis by shedding light on an organization that was vital to Khomeini and the IRP’s power consolidation through largely non-coercive measures. In essence, JS was a post-revolutionary counter-movement designed to neutralize leftist, ethic, and Sunni movements along Iran’s rural periphery.
My work is the first to utilize JS as a central unit of analysis. In spite of the fact that JS is considered one of the Islamic Republic’s most important revolutionary organizations, accounts of post-revolutionary Iran devote scant attention to the organization and confine it to the socioeconomic and charitable. By contrast, I reveal JS’s political significance and demonstrate how it helped Khomeini and the IRP to consolidate power and to export the revolution to other parts of the Muslim and developing world. While scholars of post-revolutionary Iran primarily concentrate on prominent figures and dominant factions, I disaggregate the Iranian state by tracing the evolution of a specific institution from the revolution until the present day.

In the process, I shed light on an organization that represented a microcosm of political and socioeconomic change in the Islamic Republic. JS members paradoxically went from being idealistic, young activists to hardened, holy warriors to high-level politicians and successful businessmen – the very individuals they initially despised. JS also offers insight into the Iranian bureaucracy, to which the organization became the largest addition as it transformed from a revolutionary organization to an official, cabinet-level ministry.

My research also engages and informs the broader, social scientific literature on revolutions and social movement theory (SMT). Scholars of revolutions (Skocpol 1982, 1988; Farhi 1990; Foran and Goodwin 1993; Goldstone 2001) recognize the high mobilization capacity of revolutionary states, and attribute Khomeini and the IRP’s power consolidation to their effectiveness at mobilizing mass support. However, outside the ambiguous processes of channeling revolutionary fervor and popular energy into new

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2 JS experienced the most overseas success in Lebanon, where, beginning in 1988, it trained the local resistance movement, Hezbollah, on servicing and proselytizing to its constituents.
military and administrative institutions, these scholars do not systemically delineate the mechanisms behind this mobilization. By contrast, social movement theorists (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001; Tarrow 2011) provide concrete mechanisms that account for mobilization; the classic ones being mobilizing structures, political opportunities, and cultural framing which I later apply to the case of JS.

At the same time, my research fills extant lacunae in the SMT literature in two ways. First, SMT depicts the political playing field as polarized between states, on the one side, which vacillate between repression and facilitation or accommodation (i.e., political reform) to suppress and appease social movements, and social movements, on the other side, which interact with states as targets or allies. Moving beyond this dichotomy, I push the boundaries of state-society relations by demonstrating how newly-ascendant elites in Iran harnessed grassroots mobilization to consolidate power at home and to project influence abroad and how societal actors depended on elite support to subvert their competitors and to gain national standing.

Second, once activists fail or succeed to achieve their political goals and their movements or organizations move in a different direction or cease to exist (i.e., demobilization), the interest of SMT scholars wanes. Cognizant of the fact that the story does not end with power consolidation, and, in some respects, becomes more interesting, I examine the causes and outcomes related to JS’s demobilization. By tracing JS’s transformation from a revolutionary organization to an official ministry, I introduce the concept of statist institutionalization or the incorporation of activists into the state. Elaborating upon the concept of micro-mobilization or small-scale campaigns to reform state and society, I demonstrate how, after JS became a ministry, a fragmented network
of former members attempted to challenge and defend the Islamic Republic at the grassroots level.

**Methodology**

Before delving into this dissertation’s theoretical concepts, I will first describe the methodology I used to conduct research on JS’s history and activities. Between 2009 and 2011, I conducted fieldwork in Iran on three separate occasions, each three to four months in duration. During this time, I engaged in participant observation and conducted interviews and archival research in the provinces of Azerbaijan, Bushehr, Fars, Golestan, Isfahan, Khorasan, Semnan, Shiraz, Tehran, and Yazd. I usually traveled to these provinces with graduate students from the University of Tehran’s Department of Social Sciences and Rural Sociology, where I was a visiting scholar during the summer of 2010 and the spring of 2011. Having been born and raised in villages within these provinces, these students were able to introduce me to and help me gain the trust of locals. Before traveling outside of Tehran, I obtained research and travel permits from the Dehkhoda Institute, where I studied the Persian language.

Throughout the course of my fieldwork, I made a concerted effort to focus on geographic regions outside of the capital where JS was particularly active. It was not a coincidence that JS concentrated on regions along the rural periphery that constituted pockets of contention; in other words, where there existed protracted, leftist and ethnic rebels and invading Iraqi forces, sometimes cooperating in unison. These regions included the provinces of Azerbaijan, Golestan, Khuzestan, Kurdistan, and Sistan and Baluchestan. With the exception of Azerbaijan, these provinces contained Sunni
majorities that refused to accept Khomeini’s doctrine of the Guardianship of the Jurist
(velāyat-e faqīh) or the idea that the government should be ruled by a leading, Shiite
cleric (a.k.a. Khomeini) in accordance with Islamic law (sharīʿa). It was in these areas
where unarmed JS members, who had not performed military service and who were
untrained in the use of firearms, were detained and/or killed, and where they relied on
protection from bodyguards and from their brother organization, the Revolutionary
Guard.

During my field research, I interviewed former JS members, rural development
experts, and villagers in Golestan Province in Northern Iran, where the leftist Fedāʾyān-e
Khalq, alongside the Cultural and Political Society of Turkman People, led an uprising
against Khomeini and the IRP. I performed similar fieldwork in East Azerbaijan in
Northwestern Iran, where mass protests erupted after the province’s leading cleric,
Ayatollah Mohammad Kazem Shariatmadari, was placed under house arrest for declaring
the Guardianship of the Jurist to be incompatible with Islam and against the will of the
people. Unfortunately, I was unable to conduct fieldwork in Kurdistan or in Sistan and
Baluchestan because they remained politically sensitive and unstable. To compensate for
this, I interviewed former JS members in Tehran and provincial capitals who had worked
in these locales.

In total, I conducted approximately one hundred semi-structured interviews,
ranging between thirty minutes and three hours, with former JS members, rural experts,
and villagers in the abovementioned provinces (see appendix one). I recorded and
transcribed about half of these interviews. To develop a network of interviewees, I
initially relied on referrals from a librarian at the National Library and from several rural
sociologists at the University of Tehran. In addition to their graduate students, these professors introduced me to former JS members and other rural experts who had been their students. As time went by, I increasingly relied on snowball sampling whereby interviewees introduced me to their friends and associates.

In interviews, I asked subjects about their memories and impressions of JS, how and why it was mobilized, how it helped Khomeini and the IRP consolidate power, its impact on rural development, its activities during the war and post-war reconstruction, its successes and failures, how and why it became a ministry and later merged with the Ministry of Agriculture, and the current status and activities of its former members. Given the highly securitized environment during the presidency of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (r. 2005-2013), I usually began interviews by discussing JS’s rural development activities before delving into more sensitive, political issues. This put interviewees at ease and allowed me to establish and to build rapport with them. The diverse backgrounds and professions of the interviewees rendered the empirical findings more objective.

While acknowledging JS’s motivation and commitment, rural development experts tended to criticize JS for its lack of planning, experience, and expertise, and for wasting state resources on projects that lacked quality and importance. Villagers tended to criticize the organization on similar grounds and on the basis that the organization, for all of its talk about popular participation (moshārekat-e mardomī), imposed a top-down development model, which did not take their knowledge, needs, and preferences into account during decision-making, planning, and implementation. Given their strong sense
of nostalgia and their need to defend JS from criticism, former members tended to praise the organization for its commitment and for its developmental and wartime achievements.

I triangulated interview responses and conducted additional research in the Tehran-based archives of the National and Parliamentary Libraries and in those of the Ministry of Agriculture. In 2001, JS merged with the Ministry of Agriculture to form the Ministry of Agricultural Jihad (MAJ), which still exists and operates today. In these archives, I collected and analyzed reports, legislation, and books and newspaper articles written on JS. While reviewing these sources, I had to sift through a lot of propaganda. After all, most of these sources were published by government-affiliated organizations, including JS’s public relations office. However, these sources also contained golden nuggets and valuable bits of information on the history and activities of JS.

A number of Persian-language sources were particularly useful for the researching and writing of this dissertation. Abbas Akhondi, a founding member of JS and a member of the organization’s central council, penned two recent articles entitled “Memories of Construction Jihad’s Establishment: From Shahid Rajai’s Budget of One and a Half Billion for Construction Jihad to Abadan Road” (2012) and “Construction Jihad: A Looking Glass into the Revolution” (2013). In these articles, an obviously partial Akhondi attempted to deflect criticism that JS lacked experience and expertise, did not improve development, and wasted state resources. At the same time, Akhondi’s articles contained valuable, anecdotal information on the following aspects of JS: the organization’s leftist ideology in contrast to the technocratic worldview; the factional struggles between the IRP (e.g., Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini and Prime Minister/President Mohammad Ali Rajai) and liberals (e.g., Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan and
President Abol-Hassan Bani-Sadr) over the control and financing of JS; the organization’s lack of formal, standard operating procedures (e.g., distributing resources from the center to provinces and townships); the challenge of protecting unarmed and untrained members (and their bodyguards) from armed attacks by the opposition; the launching of JS’s wartime operations; and the unpacking of the concept of “jihadi management”, which the various factions appropriated, including during the 2013 presidential elections, to further their political aims.

In addition to Akhondi’s articles, Issa Salmani Lutf-Abadi’s book entitled The History of JS’s Establishment and Culture as Narrated by Khorasan’s Jihadists (2000) contained a treasure trove of information on JS’s early history. In the book, Lutf-Abadi reconstructed JS’s early history, both nationally and in Khorasan Province, by using an assortment of primary sources, such as member interviews, organizational documents (e.g., charter and memoranda), and government statutes. In appendix three of the dissertation, I translated JS’s official charter from Lutf-Abadi’s book. The charter offered valuable insights into JS’s goals, ideology, structure, responsibilities, and relationship with political elites and state institutions. These insights which appear in various sections of the dissertation. In the future, I intend to include additional data on JS’s early history from Lutf-Abadi’s book in a book manuscript based on this dissertation.

Mohammad Javad Iravani, a former vice minister of JS and minister of economy, published a lengthy book entitled Institutionalism and Jehad-e Sazandegi (1998-1999). Iravani’s book contained a plethora of pedantic, technical details on JS’s rural development portfolio. However, early sections of the book were valuable in that they
included the following: statistics on rural demographic and socioeconomic trends before and after the revolution; the reasons behind JS’s establishment and mobilization; descriptions and organizational charts of JS’s evolving organizational structure (see appendix four); JS’s activities and accomplishments in rural and agricultural development and during the Iran-Iraq war; a list and description of organizations and corporations that JS, after becoming a ministry, established and poached from other ministries, particularly the Ministry of Agriculture; and a brief description and statistical table of the organization’s first overseas operations.

Regarding JS’s overseas operations, the focus of the dissertation’s third chapter, the Ministry of Agricultural Jihad’s “A Brief Report of the Activities of the Office of International Affairs and International and Regional Organizations in the Year 2007-2008 and 2008-2009” contained comprehensive summaries – including descriptions and tables of objectives, accomplishments, and next steps surrounding multi-lateral agreements and services – on a country-by-country basis. These reports allowed me to assess how the transnational activities of the Ministry of Agricultural Jihad (JS’s successor) and its corporations have progressed and expanded since the late eighties and early nineties.

Through filled with political and religious propaganda, the Ministry of Agricultural Jihad’s The Plan of the Construction Mobilization (2003) contained valuable information that I included in chapter four of this dissertation on JS’s securitization by regime conservatives during the reformist era (1997-2005). As its title revealed, this monograph focused on the history and activities of the Construction Mobilization (CM), an organization jointly established in 2000, at the behest of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, by the Ministry of JS, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Revolutionary Guard,
and the Basij. Through CM, these institutions mobilized youth away from the reformists, recruited high school and university graduates into agriculture and the security apparatus, and ingratiated themselves with disadvantaged segments of the rural population. This book contained descriptions and statistics on how CM was established; the number of personnel and youth it recruited and deployed; the organization’s activities and accomplishments in agricultural and rural development; and its various partners and affiliates.

I supplemented this data by asking interviewees about CM and by photographing and analyzing the organization’s recruitment posters, including one in a village outside of Yazd. The websites of the Association of Jihadists (www.kanoonejahadgaran.ir) and the Association of Trench-Builders without Trenches (www.ksb1383.ir), which were established and operated by former JS members and, to varying extents, cooperated with CM, contained quality information on the organization. This especially pertained to hijrah or jihadi camps, through which CM deployed Iranian youth to undertake service projects in underprivileged villages during school vacations and national holidays.

To respectively commemorate its ten and twenty-year anniversary, the Ministry of JS published The Ten-Year Performance Record of the Construction Jihad from 1979 until 1989 (1991) and Twenty Years of Effort for Construction: A Glance at Twenty Years of Construction Jihad’s Operations and Achievements (2001). Both of these volumes contained statements by JS ministers and by prominent elites (e.g., Khamenei and Rafsanjani) about the organization, including Ayatollah Khomeini’s June 16, 1979 speech announcing JS’s official establishment; a speech which I translated and included in chapter one to delineate the cultural framing devices Khomeini employed to help
construct JS’s ideology. These volumes also included a brief history of JS and numerous descriptions and statistics of its rural and agricultural achievements, including comparisons of certain figures with those before the revolution (see appendix five). Additionally, these volumes contained in-depth descriptions of the numerous research centers that JS established or acquired after becoming a ministry – information which appears in the second chapter of this dissertation. The first volume briefly described JS’s overseas activities, the subject of the dissertation’s third chapter.

Throughout JS’s history, statistics surrounding the organization’s performance record remained a controversial issue because they represented the currency through which JS justified and prolonged its existence through the procurement of state budgets. As Akhondi (2012, 2013) wrote in his articles, statistics surrounding JS’s performance was a subject of intense debate among the different factions. From the outset, IRP-affiliated newspapers brandished and lauded JS’s performance record while liberal newspapers disputed it in an attempt to discredit the organization.

In sections of its ten and twenty-year anniversary publications, JS differentiated its achievements from those of other institutions. However, I approached this data with caution, taking into consideration that, when implementing projects, JS relied on assistance and support from other ministries. Apart from JS’s developmental performance, both volumes outlined the organizations and corporations that fell under the organization’s purview. Comparing both volumes demonstrated the high level of professionalization and expansion that JS underwent during its first and second decades of existence. Judging by the twenty-year edition’s abundance of advertisements for JS-affiliated companies, this comparison also revealed the neoliberal values and capitalist
culture that permeated the organization during the early-to-late 1990s with Rafsanjani as Iran’s president.

In the summer of 2012, on a grant from George Washington University’s Project on Middle East Political Science and as a visiting scholar at the French Institute for the Near East (Institut français du Proche-Orient) in Beirut, I conducted similar fieldwork on JS’s transnational activities in Shiite Lebanon. The purpose of this research was to compare the organization’s experiences and evolution in Iran and Lebanon. In Iran, influential, former members cooperated with me to preserve JS’s legacy and to advance their own political agendas. By contrast, the organization’s Lebanese branch, which was affiliated with the local resistance movement Hezbollah, did not permit me to speak with its personnel. However, Hezbollah granted me access to its research institute, the Beirut-based Consultative Center for Studies and Documentation, which yielded limited results. As a consequence, I mainly conducted interviews with JS’s partners and clients, including municipality officials, rural experts, farmers, and villagers. In contrast to Iran, where JS had ceased to be independent since 2001, my field research in Lebanon allowed me to assess the current performance of the organization, which still operated in the country.

**Theory**

The theoretical concepts that frame this analysis correspond to the post-revolutionary organization or counter-movement’s institutional trajectory. Following the revolution, newly-ascendant, political elites, who are already adept at harnessing grassroots mobilization to topple the *ancien régime*, repeat the process of mobilizing
organizations and movements to consolidate power against internal and external challengers. The assumption is that these political elites, like their authoritarian predecessors, do not intend to invite their competitors to participate in a pluralist democracy. To mobilize the organizations and movements that help them consolidate power, political elites rely on classic SMT mechanisms, including mobilizing structures, political opportunities, and cultural framing. Mobilizing structures are the organization’s collective building blocks (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001). To reduce start-up costs, political elites leverage pre-existing networks of activists, who were already politicized and mobilized during the revolution.

Political opportunities are the structural conditions that shape the likelihood and success of mobilization (Ibid). While examining the post-revolutionary counter-movement’s institutional trajectory – that is, its mobilization and subsequent demobilization – it is important to keep in mind that these opportunities, which are historically specific and change over time, have the capacity to both facilitate and constrain mobilization. Cultural framing is the collective process of interpretation that mediates between opportunity and action (Ibid). Political elites and the organization’s cadres utilize cultural framing devices to recruit activists, offer them an identity, and lend meaning to their actions as they join and participate in the counter-movement.

Prior to the power consolidation phase, political elites and the activists who assist them imitate the organizational forms, strategies, and tactics of both the former regime and their current rivals. SMT scholars refer to this phenomenon as “bricolage” or the “innovative recombination of elements that constitutes a new way of configuring organizations, movements, institutions, and other types of social activity” (Campbell
2005: 56). At the same time, elites and activists resort to “boundary activation” by drawing artificial lines between the former regime and their competitors (i.e., the out-group), on one side, and themselves (i.e., the in-group), on the other, in an attempt to establish differentiation.

To help political elites consolidate power, the mobilized, post-revolutionary counter-movement adopts coercive and/or non-coercive action repertoire. Types of non-coercive action repertoire include patronage, indoctrination, cooptation, non-routine contention, covert action, and logistical support. Patronage is the allocation of resources or rents to reward individuals or groups for their political allegiance. This includes the distribution of services, inputs, and credit in exchange for electoral votes or other forms of political support. Referring to Philip Selznick’s (1966: 13-15) definition of the term, cooptation is the absorption of “new elements into the leadership or policy-determining structure… as a means of averting threats to its stability or existence.” The post-revolutionary counter-movement integrates local power brokers, who can contest elites for power (e.g., village elders and tribal chieftains), into formal political institutions, such as municipalities or councils. Cooptation crowds similar institutions established by rival organizations and movements out of the political space.

Outside the realm of prescribed politics or formal political institutions, the mobilized, post-revolutionary counter-movement engages in non-routine contention by organizing demonstrations and rallies in the streets to counter those held by the opposition. Covert action, which straddles the line between coercive and non-coercive action repertoire, “occurs when agents, their actions, or the purposes of their actions are intended to be unknown to the general public” (Earl 2003: 48). In this case, the counter-
movement cooperates with security forces in identifying and denouncing individuals and
groups (e.g., activists, insurgents, and smugglers) deemed a threat to political elites.

During periods of military conflict or if a foreign country invades the unconsolidated,
revolutionary state, the organization provides troops on the front with logistical support.
Logistical support is the provisioning of training, personnel, equipment, and facilities in
support of military campaigns and operations.

Although the post-revolutionary counter-movement adopts largely non-coercive
action repertoire, this repertoire varies along a continuum of coercive/ non-coercive and
routine/ non-routine (see figure 1). While patronage and cooptation fall on the extreme
ends of the routine continuum, patronage is more coercive because it involves the
provision, withholding, or relinquishment of goods and services based on the recipient’s
political behavior (e.g., voting record). Compared to non-routine contention (i.e.,
demonstrations, rallies, and protests in the streets), indoctrination is more routine because
it can take place within public institutions (e.g., schools, libraries, and places of worship),
but outside of formal political institutions. However, non-routine contention does not fall
on the far end of the non-routine continuum because it can be provoked, supported, or
exploited by political elites. While largely non-coercive, both non-routine contention and
indoctrination contain elements of coercion in the sense that cadres and activists attempt
to convince societal actors to participate in a political activity or to accept a religious and/
or political ideology or belief system.

Logistical support is a somewhat routine process because it can take place within
the command structure of or through cooperation with the military. However, like
indoctrination, logistical support can also occur through non-state actors (e.g., terrorists,
militias, irregulars, and guerillas). Compared to the actions of troops on the front lines, logistical support is relatively non-coercive. Yet, it contains an element of coercion because, though it may save lives, it takes place during a conflict with the intent to inflict physical harm and material damage on the enemy. Similar to indoctrination and logistical support, covert action can be routine or non-routine because it can materialize both inside and outside the command structure of a security apparatus. Since JS’s covert activities took place outside the command structure of security forces, covert action, for the purposes of this study, falls closer to the non-routine end of the continuum. Though, whether routine or non-routine, cooperation with the security apparatus is a requisite condition, making it more coercive.
Once the post-revolutionary counter-movement helps political elites consolidate power and no longer serves or even conflicts with their interests, it undergoes demobilization by changing its nature or ceasing to exist entirely. Power consolidation or the state’s monopolization of force within its territorial boundaries represents a political opportunity that constrains mobilization. This dissertation relies on two causal mechanisms to explain this process: First, by applying Hanspeter Kriesi’s (1996) concept of elite dependency, it posits that the organization, which depends on elites rather than on
its own membership for material and symbolic resources, must yield to the preferences and designs of elites when they decide it is time to demobilize. Heeding the advice of Samuel Huntington (1968), elites are aware that for newly-consolidated, revolutionary states popular mobilization can be problematic and destabilizing in the long run. Second, in Western-centric fashion, SMT assumes that activists are demobilized as members of political parties or interest groups, granted in settings where the type of major, systemic transformations associated with a revolutionary situation or regime change does not occur. By contrast, this dissertation examines the post-revolutionary process of statist institutionalization or activists’ complete integration into the state as, for example, a government ministry.

When determining the fate of activists who helped them consolidate power, political elites have three options at their disposal. First, elites can resort to repression, which runs the risk of violent backlash. Second, elites can cut off financial ties, producing the suboptimal outcome of having thousands of activists, who can easily turn against them, outside of their control. Third, elites can opt for statist institutionalization, which reduces the prospects of violence and places activists under their jurisdiction.

Prior to post-revolutionary Iran, historical examples of statist institutionalization certainly existed. Examples included Berlin police chief, Karl von Hinckeldey (r. 1848-1856), integrated unsuccessful revolutionaries into Prussia’s first Bureau of Statistics, or Saudi Arabia’s first king, Muhammad Ibn Saud (r. 1932-1953), incorporated religiously zealous militants (the Ikhwān), who helped him consolidate power, into the National Guard.3

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While historical examples of statist institutionalization may abound, this dissertation is the first to theorize the concept and introduce it to the literature on revolutions and social movements.⁴

In contrast to SMT, which considers activist fatigue, apathy, and disillusionment causes of demobilization, this dissertation demonstrates that these variables can also be outcomes of demobilization. The post-revolutionary counter-movement’s demobilization, triggered by elite dependency and statist institutionalization, leads to fragmentation within the organization between disillusioned radicals, who oppose and resist demobilization and institutionalization, and coopted pragmatists, who simultaneously lobby for and benefit from these outcomes. This conforms to Robert Michels’ (1915) Iron Law of Oligarchy whereby a dominant group within a political organization gives up revolutionary value commitments in favor of professional advancement and material gain.

While even the post-revolutionary counter-movement’s radicals are enticed by the prospect of a government paycheck and political and socioeconomic mobility, the public sector does not have the capacity to absorb them all. As a result, disillusioned radicals spill back into the grassroots, where they challenge political elites who now oversee the newly-consolidated state. This, in turn, creates new cycles of contention. David Strang and Dong-Il Jong (2005: 282) categorize this contestation among the organization’s radicals as “micro-mobilization” or small-scale campaigns to challenge the status quo.

⁴ Without examining statist institutionalization, Sidney Tarrow (2011) defines institutionalization as the incorporation of activists into the routines of organized politics. It should be noted that statist institutionalization falls under the rubric of or is a form of cooptation. Activists can be coopted through political parties, interests groups, councils, and other formal institutions with varying attachments to the state at different points in time. Statist institutionalization refers to activists’ complete integration into the state’s administrative and military institutions and companies.
This dissertation takes the concept of micro-mobilization further. It demonstrates how political elites and regime loyalists respond by launching similar campaigns and, once again, harnessing grassroots mobilization to preserve and expand their power. This outcome corresponds to Amaney Jamal’s (2007) thesis that, depending on the context, grassroots associations harbor both democratic and authoritarian tendencies (see figure 2).

**Figure 2.** Theory Overview.

**Overview**

This dissertation is divided into four chapters. Chapter One examines how and why JS was mobilized and the role it played as a counter-movement in helping newly-ascendant, political elites (i.e., Khomeini and the IRP) to consolidate power. This chapter also demonstrates how the case of JS fills extant lacunae in the scholarship on revolutions and social movements. Chapter Two delineates the causes and outcomes of JS’s statist institutionalization. The chapter does this from a comparative perspective while engaging and contributing to the scholarship on bureaucracies.
Chapter three analyzes JS’s overseas activities in the Muslim and developing world with special emphasis on Shiite Lebanon, where JS established a local development organization modeled after itself. By leveraging the abovementioned SMT mechanisms, this chapter contributes to the literatures on the Iran-Lebanon nexus and on Shiite transnationalism. Chapter four explores the current status and activities of the fragmented network of former JS members. Through the lens of micro-mobilization, the chapter looks at the small-scale campaigns at the state and societal levels of disillusioned radicals to reform the status quo and the efforts of entrenched conservatives to maintain it. The dissertation’s conclusion summarizes the main points and discusses how JS informs events and outcomes related to the Arab Spring.
Chapter One: Mobilization and Consolidation: Activists with a Budget or the Case of a Post-Revolutionary Counter-Movement (1979-1983)

5 The author presented previous versions and sections of this chapter at the American Sociological Association Collective Behavior and Social Movements Workshop on August 18, 2011, the Princeton University Workshop on Arab Political Development on December 13, 2011, the Harvard University Mahindra Humanities Center “How to End a Revolution” Conference on April 13, 2012, the International Society for Iranian Studies’ Ninth Biennial Iranian Studies Conference on August 4, 2012, and the Irmgard Coninx Foundation 16th Berlin Roundtables on Revolutions on October 18, 2012. The author would like to thank Professors Ahmad Ashraf, Amaney Jamal, Cyrus Schayegh, Doug McAdam, Intisar Rabb, Jeff Goodwin, Mirjam Künkler, Sidney Tarrow, Sonja Hegasy, and Ziad Munson for their valuable feedback and support.
**Introduction**

Revolutions constitute transitions from one political regime to another. These transitions are rarely smooth and, in the best cases, can last several years. The Iranian Revolution did not end with the fall of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi and the triumphant return of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini from exile in February 1979, but with a four-to-five year power struggle between Khomeini and his clerical faction, the Islamic Republican Party (IRP), on one side, and an assortment of domestic challengers, not to mention invading Iraqi forces, on the other side (Foran and Goodwin 1993: 214).

Several months after the fall of the Shah, Iran witnessed the birth of a new movement, known as Construction Jihad (jehād-e sāzandegī) (JS). Once considered Iran’s most important revolutionary organization (nehād-e enqelābī), JS consisted of young activists who promoted rural development and spread revolutionary, Islamic ideals to the countryside, where, at the time, nearly half the population resided (Hiro 1985: 254; Azkia 2002: 97). JS helped Khomeini and the IRP consolidate power against a myriad of domestic opponents, namely leftist, ethnic, and Sunni movements along the country’s rural periphery. The organization also played a key logistical role against invading Iraqi forces, and assisted the Islamic Republic with exporting the revolution to other parts of the Middle East and developing world.\(^\text{7}\)

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\(^6\) In English-language sources, Jehād-e Sāzandegī, also transliterated as Jahād-e Sāzandegī, translates to “Reconstruction Crusade,” “Construction Crusade,” “Crusade for Construction,” and “Crusade for Reconstruction.” However, these terms do not adequately capture the true essence of the organization or its varying interpretations of jihad, a uniquely Islamic concept. Ironically, the term “crusade” is a Western construct which denotes strong anti-Muslim sentiments.

\(^7\) As will be described in chapter three, JS experienced the most overseas success in Shiite Lebanon. There, JS assisted the local resistance movement, Hezbollah, with providing services and proselytizing to its constituents. In the late eighties, Hezbollah established an identical organization by the name of Jihād al-Binā’, the Arabic equivalent of Construction Jihad. JS’s replication in Shiite Lebanon represented a classic case of what social movement theorists referred to as transnational diffusion.
In spite of JS’s significance, accounts of Iranian history and politics devote scant attention to the organization. Iran experts who acknowledge that JS was part of the fledgling regime’s designs to penetrate and integrate the rural periphery ascribe the movement secondary political importance, and confine it to the socioeconomic and charitable (see Arjomand 1988: 169-174; Foran and Goodwin 1993: 221). This dissertation is the first to utilize JS as a central unit of analysis and to examine it through the framework of contentious politics, which combines insights from theories on revolutions and social movements (Goldstone 2001: 142). This work is also among the few that disaggregates the Iranian state by tracing the evolution of a specific institution from the end of the Pahlavi monarchy until the present day. Empirically, this research is based on approximately one year of fieldwork in Iran, where I collected and analyzed archival documents and interviewed rural development experts, villagers, and former JS members in different regions of the country.

The central questions this chapter seeks to address are as follows: First, how did newly-ascendant elites in post-revolutionary Iran (i.e., Khomeini and the IRP) – who were already adept at mobilizing activists against the Shah – harness grassroots mobilization from below and convert a social movement into a counter-movement (i.e., JS) to consolidate power against internal and external challengers? Second, what mechanisms did Khomeini and the IRP leverage to mobilize JS against competing movements? Third, what action repertoire, apart from coercion, did JS utilize to help Khomeini and the IRP consolidate power?

Scholars of revolutions recognize the high mobilization capacity of revolutionary states and attribute Khomeini and the IRP’s success at consolidating power to their
effectiveness at mobilizing mass support (see Skocpol 1982: 276-278; Farhi 1990: 106-114; Foran and Goodwin 1993: 217-239). Outside the ambiguous process of channeling revolutionary fervor and popular energy into new military and administrative institutions, these scholars do not systematically examine the mechanisms that newly-ascendant, post-revolutionary elites use to mobilize counter-movements against competing movements.

Iran has long been considered the earliest source of convergence between Middle East area studies and social movement theory (SMT) (Kurzman 2004: 295), and JS’s institutional history perpetuates this trend. In contrast to the scholarship on revolutions, SMT offers tangible mechanisms that account for the mobilization of social movements and counter-movements. Zald and McCarthy (1987: 285) posit that the mobilization of social movements and counter-movements can be analyzed using the same mechanisms. The most prominent and rudimentary of these mechanisms are as follows: First, “mobilizing structures” are the forms of organization, formal as well as informal, available to activists that comprise the collective building blocks of movements (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996: 2-3). Second, “political opportunities” are the structural conditions that encourage, constrain, and otherwise affect movement activity, and that shape the likelihood and success of mobilization (Ibid). Third, “cultural framing” is the collective processes of interpretation, attribution, and social construction that mediate between opportunity and action (Ibid).

With respect to the abovementioned mobilization mechanisms, SMT considers political opportunities the exclusive domain of social movements, which experience higher levels of mobilization, action, and success when structural openings or cracks exist within the regime. However, in this chapter, I argue that newly-ascendant elites, when
mobilizing counter-movements against their rivals, orchestrate and/or take advantage of similar political opportunity structures. Even if we’re dealing with a scenario in which political elites partially mobilize grassroots activists, the structural conditions have to be optimal for counter-movements to succeed against their social-movement adversaries. As I will discuss at greater length below, Khomeini and the IRP both engineered and leveraged political opportunities to maximize JS’s mobilization.

While SMT contains mobilization mechanisms, it often depicts the political playing field as polarized between movements and states. Within this simplistic dichotomy, states vacillate between repression and facilitation or accommodation (i.e., reform) to suppress or appease movements (McAdam et al. 1996: 160; Goldstone 2001: 161-172; Tarrow 2011: 190-210). Counter-movements, which are rarely analyzed in depth, usually represent the byproduct of regime supporters or movements with antithetical claims (e.g., pro-life versus pro-choice).

Analysts identify instances of national elites (i.e., politicians, corporations, or class interests) ideologically, financially, or logistically supporting popular movements (see McAdam et al. 1996: 178-183; Meyer and Staggenborg 1996: 1642-1643; Davis et al. 2005: 96). Examples of such movements in the West included the Catholic Church in the U.S. and Canada backing anti-abortion activists (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996: 1642-1643), and Western European governments recognizing and subsidizing the ecology, peace, solidarity, and gay movements (McAdam et al. 1996: 178-183). A non-Western case involved Philippine businesspeople, who, dissatisfied with the loss of foreign direct investment due to government corruption, supported throngs of protesters and helped
them to stage multiple demonstrations, which led to the 2001 ouster of President Estrada (Davis et al. 2005: 96).

SMT scholars also recognize the role of national elites in the genesis, mobilization, and outcomes of counter-movements designed to thwart challengers (Goldstone 2001: 151-152). Beyond stimulating and facilitating self-organization through public recognition, consultation, and subsidization – a strategy Kriesi refers to as “pillarization” or “informal cooptation” – elites create and direct organizations through which mobilization takes place in response to the success of movements with conflicting claims (see McAdam et al. 1996: 162-165; Meyer and Staggenborg 1996: 1642-1643; Goldstone 2001: 151-152). American examples of such counter-movements included employers forming associations against labor unions, and the nuclear power and tobacco industries establishing counter-movements against grassroots activists (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996: 1642-1643). Western European or, more precisely, French examples of such counter-movements consisted of workers, who were mobilized by the middle-class and who served in National Guard units, fighting against rebellious workers in 1848 revolutionary Paris (Goldstone 2001: 151-152). Other French examples included the Communist Party founding social movements to gain a political edge within the Left (McAdam et al. 1996: 164-165), and socialist governments deploying the solidarity movement to counter the extreme Right (Ibid).

From the standpoint of contentious politics and other social science disciplines, categorizing JS is problematic because it obscures the boundaries between states and movements, specifically, and state-society relations, more generally. The reason for this is that JS was partially mobilized from above and below. In this chapter, I argue that JS,
which briefly existed as a revolutionary/post-revolutionary social movement, was converted into post-revolutionary counter-movement by newly-ascendant elites (i.e., Khomeini, the IRP, and liberals). These elites, in turn, facilitated and maximized JS mobilization to consolidate power against opposing leftist, ethnic, and Sunni movements as well as against invading Iraqi forces along the country’s rural periphery. The case of JS informs our understanding of the post-revolutionary counter-movement, which, as indicated above, remains an understudied in the contentious politics literature.

To explain how Iran’s post-revolutionary elites consolidated power, historians and social scientists chronicle the reign of terror and mass repression that accompanied the revolution (see Skocpol 1982, 1988; Arjomand 1988; Parsa 1989; Farhi 1990; Foran and Goodwin 1993; Goldstone 2001). As mentioned previously, Mansur Moaddel (1993: 260) is particularly adamant in this regard, insisting that “terror is the essence of the Islamic Republic.” These scholars recount how revolutionary courts summarily sentenced dissenters to imprisonment or death, and how the Revolutionary Guard and club-wielding Partisans of God (chomāqdār-e hezbollāhī) forcibly disrupted the political activities of suspected opponents.8

As the case of JS teaches us, coercion is only part of the story concerning the Islamic Republic’s power consolidation. To help Khomeini and the IRP consolidate power, JS employed a diverse set of largely non-coercive action repertoire, which it often appropriated from its challengers. This repertoire included patronage, indoctrination, cooptation, non-routine contention, covert action, and logistical support. “Patronage” is the allocation of state resources or rents to reward individuals or groups for their political

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8 The Iranian hezbollāhī should not be confused with the Lebanese resistance movement, to which, as will be described in chapter three, JS had its own transnational connection.
allegiance and support. “Indoctrination” constitutes the authoritatively imparting of a political and/or religious ideology to members of society. “Cooptation” refers to the absorption of “new elements into the leadership or policy-determining structure of an organization as a means of averting threats to its stability or existence” (Selznick 1966: 13-15). “Covert action” occurs when agents, their actions, or the purposes of their actions are intended to be unknown to the general public (Earle 2003: 48). “Logistical support” is the provisioning of training, personnel, equipment, and facilities in support of military campaigns and operations.

In this chapter, I demonstrate how and why JS was mobilized and how, as social movement-turned-counter-movement, it helped Khomeini and the IRP consolidate power. In the first section, I decipher the motivations and opportunities behind JS’s inception, and delineate the cultural framing devices that Khomeini employed to increase the organization’s recruits, to give them an individual and collective identity, and to lend meaning to their actions. In the second section, I examine JS’s mobilizing structures and explore the multi-faceted action repertoire the organization utilized to subvert Khomeini and the IRP’s internal and external opponents. In the concluding section, I summarize the main points and elaborate upon JS’s theoretical and empirical contribution to our conceptions of post-revolutionary counter-movements.

**Mobilization and Framing (1979-1980)**

The Iranian Revolution unleashed a multitude of political forces against the newly-ascendant, post-revolutionary elites. The fall of the Pahlavi monarchy and the political instability and power vacuum that emerged in its wake encouraged leftist and
ethnic movements on the country’s periphery to advance nationalist claims (Iravani, 1998-1999: 188). These organizations consisted of the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (KDPI) and the Communist Revolutionary Organization of Kurdish Toilers (kūmeh-leh) in Kurdistan; the Cultural and Political Society of Turkman People in Turkman-Sahra; the Islamic Unity Party in Sistan and Baluchestan; and the Cultural, Political, and Tribal Organization of the Arab People in Khuzestan (Hiro 1985: 103). In addition to striving for autonomy, these predominantly Sunni groups were unwilling to accept the religious and political authority of Shiite clerics or Khomeini’s doctrine of the Guardianship of the Jurist or the idea that Islamic government should be ruled by a leading jurist in accordance with Islamic law.

With the aim of maximizing political power and inclusion, the leftist Mojāhedīn-e Khalq (MeK) and Fedā’yān-e Khalq (FeK), which had participated in the coalition against the Shah, maintained a strong presence in cities and villages, and forged alliances with the abovementioned leftist, ethnic, and Sunni movements. Iran specialists exclusively categorize the MeK and FeK as guerilla groups, yet their strategies and tactics were multi-faceted and incorporated a range of prescribed and non-routine forms of contention. They held rallies and demonstrations, fielded and supported candidates in national elections, and established rural councils to distribute land and manage local affairs (Parsa 1989: 258-265; Moaddel 1993: 240-297).

Among the leftists, the MeK posed the largest threat to Khomeini and the IRP because it had a broad base of support, an ability to organize, and a Marxist-Islamist ideology inspired by the popular, revolutionary thinker Dr. Ali Shariati (d. 1977). This made it difficult for Khomeini and the IRP to label the MeK an enemy of Islam as they
did with secular leftists, and explains why they singled out the organization (Farhi 1990: 116-127).

JS initially constituted a social movement that Khomeini, the IRP, and liberals converted into a counter-movement to neutralize the abovementioned leftist, ethnic, and Sunni movements along the country’s rural periphery. Technically, JS comprised a counter-movement organization within a broader network of revolutionary organizations that constituted a counter-movement. JS was conceived and founded around the same time as other notable revolutionary organizations (*neḥād-e engelābī*), including the Revolutionary Guard (*sepāh-e pāsdārān-e engelāb-e eslāmī*), Foundation of the Oppressed and Disabled (*bonyād-e mostaẓʿ afān va jānbāzān*), Imam Khomeini’s Relief Committee (*komīteh ye emdād-e emām khomaynī*), and Housing Foundation (*bonyād-e maskan*).

These revolutionary organizations strongly influenced political and socioeconomic developments in cities and villages across the country. For Khomeini and the IRP, these organizations served as a means to counterbalance *ancien régime* institutions and to thwart opposing movements. As the name suggested, the Housing Foundation, which simultaneously cooperated with and competed against JS, was responsible for overseeing the physical design of villages (*ṭarh-e ḥādī*) and for providing housing assistance in the form of building materials and credit. The Imam Khomeini Relief Committee was a charity that offered financial assistance to needy villagers. Both organizations still exist and operate in Iran today.

In interviews with the author, former members considered JS, in its initial phase, a popular or social movement (*nehžat-e mardomī*) mobilized from the bottom-up (*az pāyīn*
beh bālā). As will be described below, most JS cadres were villagers, who belonged to student associations in Iranian cities and provincial capitals and in foreign countries. ⁹

JS members typically hailed from the rural, middle class, and their petty bourgeoisie grandparents and parents worked as clerics, school teachers, peddlers, shopkeepers, local moneylenders, merchants, and wholesale dealers (Azkia 2002: 102). These young men and women (though more often they were men) represented the first generation to leave their villages and to attend urban universities in Iran and abroad during the wave of pre-revolutionary, rural migration. In the universities, they joined student associations and participated in political activities (e.g., demonstrations) against the Shah.

According to one former JS member: “Students were the founders (bonyān gozārān) of the Islamic councils and revolutionary organizations, like JS.”¹⁰ During the first months after the monarchy’s collapse (i.e., February to June 1979), these university students, with independent agency, engaged in episodic mobilization and eagerly returned to their provinces and villages in order to make a difference. In the words of a JS former member, who founded the organization’s branch in the provincial capital of Kashan and eventually became an ambassador:

[Several] weeks before the collapse of the old regime, I decided not to finish my Bachelor’s degree [in the US] and returned… to my hometown of Kashan to establish the local branch of JS… I did not have employees or personnel.

¹⁰ Ibid.
Everything was based on volunteers. I went to Kashan’s high school to establish a temporary office to recruit volunteers. It was the summer vacation and approximately two hundred people [offered] to sign up each day. Together, we went to the seventy villages surrounding Kashan to deliver public bathrooms, piped water, roads, and electricity.\textsuperscript{11}

Since many of these students originally came from the villages, they leveraged their local connections, knowledge, and, at times, their own resources to recruit new members, to implement projects, and to carry out various activities (e.g., participating in land grabs and helping villagers with menial tasks). Though he represented the exception rather than the norm, the abovementioned former member, who came from a well-to-do family in Kashan, tapped into his personal savings to establish JS’s branch there.\textsuperscript{12}

JS’s preliminary activities occurred before the organization developed a formal structure (\textit{sākhtārī-ye rasmi}) and before Khomeini announced its official establishment on national radio on June 16, 1979. Prior to Khomeini’s speech – in which he gave JS its name – the organization called itself the “jihad for construction” (\textit{jehād berāy-e sāzandegī}) (Akhondi 2012, 2013). On February 11, 1979 – the same day Shapour Bakhtiar (r. January 4-February 11, 1979) resigned as prime minister and Khomeini appointed Mehdi Bazargan (r. February 11-November 6, 1979) to be prime minister – JS’s initial charter was approved (Iravani 1998-1999: 191) (see appendix two). After Khomeini’s speech, JS received funding from and was forced to engage in dialogue with

\footnotetext{11}{Personal interview with a former JS member and ambassador on November 30, 2010.} \footnotetext{12}{Personal interview with a former JS member and Iranian diplomat on November 23, 2010.}
political elites (Ibid). At the same time, many of the organization’s members were reluctant, if not opposed to, obeying or carrying out orders from these officials (Ibid).

According to a former JS member interviewed by the author, Khomeini was advised to back the organization by his “second circle.” By “second circle,” this interviewee referred to clerics who were situated one rung below the likes of Ayatollah Mohammad Hosseini Beheshti (d. 1981), Hojatoleslam Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani (b. 1934), and Hojatoleslam Ali Hoseyni Khamenei (b. 1939) in the ranks of the IRP. This included clerics, such as Mohammad Taghi Falsafi (d. 2006) and Ali Akbar Nateq-Nouri, who served as the Imam’s (i.e., Khomeini’s) first representative to JS in 1979. Falsafi and Nateq-Nouri belonged to or were sympathetic to a religious society called the Hojjatīeḥ, which was vehemently anti-Communist (Moslem 2002: 59).

According to a prominent founding member and current government adviser from Fars Province, “JS was endowed with a clear, political mission: to win the hearts and minds of villagers through rural development and other activities, and to counter similar efforts by leftist and ethnic groups that were against Khomeini and his clerical faction.” Along these lines, another founding member and current agricultural official disclosed that “Khomeini repeatedly told JS members that they had a short timeframe to complete their work and that they had a lot to accomplish (e.g., building roads, bathhouses, mosques, and clinics) because he felt tremendous pressure and a sense of urgency to amass support in the countryside.”

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13 Personal interview with a former JS member in Iran on March 15, 2011.
14 Personal interview with a former JS member and current government advisor on March 15, 2011.
15 Personal interview with a former JS member and current Ministry of Agricultural Jihad official on April 23, 2011.
The abovementioned founding member and government adviser stated that concerns existed that the Left would hijack the revolution, which unfolded at the height of the Cold War. Khomeini’s “second circle” became unsettled by the discovery that the MeK and FeK were delivering services to villagers and amassing support in the countryside. Although, in his speech marking JS’s inception, Khomeini did not refer to the Mek and FeK, which he called hypocrite groups (grūhakhā-ye monāfeqīn), by name, he clearly alluded to his fears over both organizations’ rural activities:

To the entire nation, to all the people who live in these villages. After I pray for all of them and offer [my] devotion, I have one request and that is to pay attention to those who come to the villages for construction, and for construction jihad. The villagers should pay attention lest what God does not deem desirable [happen]: that the villagers take issue with one person among them (those who come to the villages for reconstruction, construction, and construction jihad) who is in violation of the ways of the nation, and in violation against Islam. If the villagers see such people, they should immediately expel them from the village, avoid placing them among our youth, and distribute information [about them] to our villagers (Ministry of Construction Jihad 1991: 6).

During conversations with the author, Iranian sociologist, Ahmad Ashraf, remarked that the Shah and Khomeini, who both ruled over sizeable rural populations, were equally apprehensive about the prospect of a rural-based, leftist-inspired revolution, which had taken place in other parts of the developing world. In 1963, similar concerns had prompted the Shah – under pressure from the Kennedy Administration – to launch the White Revolution, which, among other policies, included sweeping land reform and

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16 Personal interview with a former JS member and current government advisor on March 15, 2011.
17 Personal interview with Ahmad Ashraf in the United States on January 25, 2011.
the deployment of the Literacy, Extension, and Health Corps (*sepāh-e dānesh, tarvīj, va behdāsht*) to villages. Although, in interviews with the author, most former JS members considered such an assertion to be sacrilege, the organization was paradoxically inspired by the Shah’s Literacy, Extension, and Development Corps, and, following the monarchy, by the Ministry of Agriculture’s Service Centers, which, though plagued by shortcomings, were duplicated and undermined by JS (Schirazi 1993: 136-146; Azkia 2002: 118).

With its similar mission and comparable, yet more comprehensive services, JS comprised what social movement theorists refer to as “bricolage” – the innovative recombination of elements that constitutes a new way of configuring organizations, movements, institutions, and other types of social activity (Davis et al. 2005: 56). Rather than constitute a rupture with the past, JS revealed the continuities that existed in post-revolutionary Iran. It was fitting that JS’s first official building, located on Pastur Street in Tehran, was housed in a foundation connected to the Pahlavi family (Akhondi 2012, 2013). However, from the standpoint of winning rural hearts and minds, JS succeeded where the Shah’s Corps had failed. According to a former member of the Literacy Corps, who is now a rural expert, “We came to the villages with our military uniforms, fancy cologne or perfume, and urban values. For this reason, we had difficulty relating to villagers and earning their trust.”

By contrast, JS members, who were originally villagers, could identify with villagers and understand their mentality, habits, needs, and preferences. As one former member described: “Having come from the countryside ourselves, we showed respect

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18 Personal interview with a former Literacy Corps member and current rural expert on March 13, 2011.
for villagers and understood their values so that we could be like-minded (hamfekr) while coordinating with them.”¹⁹ These young men and women entered the villages with physical appearances and personal demeanors that conveyed simplicity, humility, and piety. As such, these individuals blended into the villages and easily connected to and gained the trust of locals (see figures 3 and 4).

Figure 3. a) Literacy Corps (est. 1963). b) Construction Jihad (est. 1979).

¹⁹ Personal interview with a former JS member and current Ministry of Agriculture official on April 23, 2011.
As Theda Skocpol (1988: 157-158) points out, the Shah and Khomeini’s anxiety over revolutionary or counter-revolutionary stirrings in the countryside was not unwarranted:

With the exception of the Iranian Revolution of 1977-1979, which was primarily carried out through urban demonstrations and strikes, all third-world social revolutions have depended on at least a modicum of peasant support for their success. In most instances, both peasants and city dwellers were mobilized for guerrilla warfare by nationalist revolutionary elites; only in the Mexican and Bolivian revolutions were peasant communities able to rebel on their own as did the French and Russian peasant communities.\(^{20}\)

\(^{20}\) Said Arjomand (1988: 191) insists that the Cuban Revolution, which occurred without a peasant rebellion, represented another exception to this rule.
In the minds of Khomeini and the IRP, the fact that the urban-based, Iranian Revolution represented an exception to the rule increased the probability of their nascent republic being overrun by leftist-led insurgents from the rural periphery. Since the revolution was mainly an urban phenomenon, Khomeini and the IRP’s hold on the countryside was initially tenuous. Their base of support lied predominantly in the mosques, seminaries, working-class neighborhoods, and shantytowns of the cities (Skocpol 1982: 278; Arjomand 1988: 194; Foran and Goodwin 1993: 216). The record of rural participation in anti-Shah demonstrations had been mixed. Some villagers participated in the mass uprising against the monarchy while others remained on the sidelines or opposed it.21

In the spring of 1979, Khomeini, the IRP, and their liberal partners in the provisional government endorsed JS’s inception to curb leftist influence in the countryside. With the intent of bolstering their revolutionary credentials and marginalizing leftists, liberal Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan and his deputy prime minister and son-in-law, Mohammad Bani-Asadi, were involved in and took credit for JS’s official establishment.22 During the provisional government’s brief existence, Bazargan appointed Bani-Asadi as JS’s state representative (Akhondi 2012, 2013). Around the same time, Khomeini appointed Nateq-Nouri as the Imam’s representative to JS (Ibid). The fact that Bazargan and Khomeini simultaneously appointed their own

21 Some Iran experts argue that villagers were apolitical, passive, and, in some cases, against the revolution (Abrahamian and Kazemi 1978; Ashraf 1991) while others insist that they were politically active against the Shah (Hooglund 1982).
22 Personal interviews with Ahmad Ashraf in the United States on January 25, 2011 and December 15, 2011; see also Hiro 1985: 254 and Schirazi 1993: 148. With the transfer of executive power to Bazargan in the provisional government, JS’s establishment was unofficially announced until Khomeini’s speech made it official (Akhondi 2012).
representatives to JS revealed the factional struggles that existed within the provisional government between the IRP and the liberals, and the perceived exigencies of both sides to exert control over an organization or counter-movement as important as JS.

At the same time, a group of JS members, who were close to and sought guidance from Ayatollah Beheshti, determined the initial course of the organization’s work (Ibid). While Bazargan and Bani-Asadi infused JS with a strong, engineering mindset, their age and experience precluded them from accepting and relating to the organization’s inexperienced youth, who sought to rebuild the country (Ibid). The uncertain interaction between JS members and liberal politicians created friction between both sides, and prevented the latter from devising a long-term plan for the organization (Ibid).

Although JS initially fell under the purview of Bani-Asadi and Nateq-Nouri, Ayatollah Khomeini spearheaded JS’s cultural framing when announcing the movement’s (nehžat) official establishment on June 16, 1979. In spite of being a senior cleric, Khomeini adeptly utilized technology to further his political aims. While in exile in Iraq and France, the charismatic and uncompromising Khomeini delivered messages through the cassette tape and international media to inspire, galvanize, and ultimately mobilize a mass movement which overthrew the Shah. After achieving this, Khomeini adopted a similar approach when officially announcing JS’s establishment on Iranian national radio. According to a former JS member and current Ministry of Agricultural Jihad official, “The figure of Imam Khomeini was central to the organization and its
members [eagerly] listened to his speeches on the radio [for professional and personal guidance].”

In his speech, Khomeini utilized a set of highly emotive concepts to give the thousands of Iranians who participated in JS and the villagers who welcomed them meaning behind their actions. With revolutionary victory still in the air and his words resonating with millions of supporters, Khomeini incorporated into his speech familiar cultural framing devices from his previous campaign against the Shah and novel ones to maximize JS recruits and to give them a sense of individual and collective purpose. Khomeini opened his speech or message (payām) – an order (farmān) for Iranians to join JS – by appealing to nationalist and religious sentiments:

> When there are problems, we must turn to the nation, a nation which – praise God – has been and is prepared for help and self-sacrifice. With self-sacrifice of the nation – praise God – we have put phases, which carry a lot of importance, behind us (Ministry of Construction Jihad 1991: 6).

In his message of approximately seven hundred words, Khomeini repeated the terms “nation” (melat) (fifteen times), “help” (komak) (four times), and “brother/brotherhood” (barādar/barādarī) (four times). The latter term likely induced members of JS and other revolutionary organizations to refer to each other as brother (barādar) or sister (khawhar) in an attempt to promote group solidarity. By utilizing the expression “self-sacrifice” (fedākārī) (twice), Khomeini insinuated that for Iran’s majority Twelver Shiite Muslims, participation in JS was akin to the martyrdom experienced by Imam Hossein at Karbala. Finally, Khomeini uttered the unifying catch-phrase “all together

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23 Personal interview with a former JS member and current Ministry of Agricultural Jihad official on April 23, 2011.

24 To enforce gender separation in public transportation and establishments, the Islamic Republic still uses the terms “brother” and “sister” to indicate sections exclusively reserved for males and females.
[toward construction]” (hameh bā ham [beh sāzandegī]) (twice), which JS adopted as its official slogan (Iravani, 1998-1999: 189). To this day, the “all together” slogan adorns the buildings and written materials of the Ministry of Agricultural Jihad (vezārat-e jehād-e keshāvarzī) (MAJ) – the byproduct of the 2001 merger between JS and its long-time rival, the Ministry of Agriculture (vezārat-e keshāvarzī) and a topic to which this dissertation devotes further attention in chapter two.

As previously mentioned, JS represented a similar development model as the Shah’s corps. Nevertheless, in his speech, Khomeini relied on boundary activation to perpetuate the “us-versus-them scenario” between revolutionaries and the former regime, which he characterized as oppressive and unjust (jā’ir):

However, this wall of the Great Satan collapsed and behind that wall, there is much destruction. Through the efforts of the nation, we must repair this destruction. We must be attentive to rebuilding the nation to repair this destruction which occurred in our country during the time of the unjust [and oppressive] Pahlavi rule. Praise God, our nation has declared that it is ready for this rebuilding. Dear university students, experts, engineers, bazaaris, farmers, all strata of the nation are volunteering for this. Those who are Iranian should rebuild this destruction which has befallen us… Rebuild this Iran which has been destroyed. Of course, those places which have been more destroyed, like places where there are villages, nomadic settlements, remote villages; groups from each of them come to complain about their situation. They say we do not have electricity, housing, water, asphalt [roads], or health clinics, and everything that they say is correct. Therefore, they (the Pahlavis) had been destroying Iran in this way, and now – praise God – the dam has collapsed (Ministry of Construction Jihad 1991: 6).
In this excerpt, Khomeini dehumanized the Shah by referring to him as a collapsed dam and wall of the Great Satan, a reference to the United States – a close ally of the deposed monarch and a sworn enemy of the Islamic Republic. This validated the ascendancy of new elites and the existence of revolutionary organizations, which performed the functions of and competed against Pahlavi-era ministries while dismissing them as *ancien régime* and counter-revolutionary. No organization epitomized this more than JS, whose responsibilities overlapped with those of the Ministries of Agriculture, Power, Roads and Transportation, Health, Education, and Culture.  

In his speech, Khomeini framed JS’s mission as the entire nation’s responsibility to repair the destruction (*kharābī*) (a term he repeated seven times) inflicted by the Shah in the form of rural poverty and backwardness, especially compared to the cities (Ministry of Construction Jihad 1991: 6; see also Iravani, 1998-1999: 189). In interviews with the author, former members reported that around the time of Khomeini’s speech, state television broadcasted images of destitute and diseased villagers to shame prospective recruits into joining the cause. This appeal reinforced boundary activation by demonstrating the alleged failures of the Shah’s rural policies – a target of heavy criticism by Khomeini since the 1963 White Revolution.  

Khomeini employed similar boundary activation when speaking about leftist, ethnic, and Sunni movements along the country’s rural periphery. As mentioned previously, Khomeini encouraged villagers, if they “see such people,” to “immediately expel them from the village, avoid placing them among our youth, and distribute information [about them] to our villagers” (Ministry of Construction Jihad 1991: 6).

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25 JS was the last organization in Iran exclusively dedicated to rural development.
Resorting again to boundary activation, Khomeini insisted that, in contrast to JS, these movements were “in violation of the ways of the nation and in violation of Islam” (Ibid), even though the leftist Mojāhedīn-e Khalq were Islamist-Marxists and most of these ethnic movements were Sunni Muslim. While imitating the rural development model of the Shah and the strategies and tactics of leftist, ethnic, and Sunni movements, Khomeini employed boundary activation to differentiate JS from its competitors, both past and present.

The fact that JS was named Construction Jihad and that Khomeini declared it as such in his speech implied that a sacred duty was incumbent upon every Iranian Muslim:

Hence, we must say that there is a construction jihad. We call this jihad construction jihad so that all strata of the nation, women and men, old and young, university students, engineers and experts, urban dweller and villager, must cooperate all together (hameh bā ham)… From the nation, we want everyone to participate in this movement and for everyone to offer the hand of brotherhood and begin this construction and construction jihad… God willing, may God grant success to the entire nation and to everyone who cooperates on this path and executes this moral duty in accordance with Islamic law (Ministry of Construction Jihad 1991: 6).

In his writings, Khomeini distinguished between the lesser jihad (jihād al-aṣghar) or the nation’s struggle to eradicate evil from its borders, and the greater jihad (jihād al-akbar) or the individual pursuit of moral purification and spiritual advancement. In his lectures on the opening chapter of the Qur’an (Sūrat al-Fāṭiḥah) and on the struggle against the self or the greater jihad (mobārarezeh bā nafs yā jihād-i akbar), Khomeini postulated that the lesser jihad must be bound to the greater one to make the former valid
and effective (Algar 1981: 349-429). Thus, Khomeini’s speech presented potential JS recruits with both collective and personal incentives to take part in the organization.

By declaring a jihad for construction, Khomeini assumed the responsibility of and elevated his status to supreme jurist (valī-e faqīh) and imam (emām). In his treatise entitled *Islamic Government*, Khomeini contended that jurists and imams were entrusted with leading the jihad against tyranny and oppression (Algar 1981: 108-162). In addition to being regarded as the supreme jurist, Khomeini was the first and only Iranian cleric to be addressed as "imam," a title hitherto reserved for the twelve infallible leaders of the Shiites (Moin 2000: 201). While Khomeini never proclaimed himself as such, yet never refuted speculation that he was, many considered him the occulted Twelfth Imam (mehdī) or his deputy (nāeb-e emām) (Arjomand 1988: 152; Nasr 2006: 131). In interviews, many former JS members, like many Iranians, referred to Khomeini not as Ayatollah, but as Imam, and insisted that the author do the same.

In addition to reminding Iranian Muslims of their religious obligations, Khomeini offered them tangible spiritual benefits for joining JS:

May everyone who participates in this jihad and rebuilds this destruction be successful, and may their brothers help them for there is no religious devotion greater than this. I want people to want to go on pilgrimages to holy shrines, supreme Mecca, and radiant Medina. However, it is for the sake of being desirable [to God] that they go on these pilgrimages. Those of you, who for spiritual rewards (*thawāb*) want to go to and be in honorable Mecca, radiant Medina, and the honorable, holy shrines of Baghdad, Karbala, and Najaf – I want to request that you help your brothers. Today, there are higher spiritual rewards

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26 By invoking the term “imam,” it was unclear if Khomeini was referring to contemporary religious leaders or the twelve infallible imams of Shiite Islam.
(thawāb) than these. Begin this construction all together (hameh bā ham) so that Iran can be properly built and so that your brothers find salvation (naḥāṭ). May God grant everything to all of you. In this jihad, God will give you the spiritual rewards that you also seek from pilgrimages (Ministry of Construction Jihad 1991: 6).

In this speech, Khomeini boldly declared that participating in JS offered equal, if not more, spiritual rewards (thawāb) compared to those Muslims received for visiting holy shrines or embarking on the pilgrimage to Mecca (hajj) – one of the five pillars of Islam and a duty Muslims, if physically and materially capable, should undertake at least once in their lifetimes. Spiritual rewards are points Shiite Muslims receive for performing good deeds, including those which are not obligatory like visiting a shrine. At the end of their lives on judgment day, Shiites, who earn more positive points than the ones deducted for committing forbidden acts (ḥarām) or for failing to perform rituals (‘ebādāt), go to heaven. A negative point balance assures Shiites a place in hell while an even one puts them in a state of temporary purgatory (barzakh), where they are punished for their sins until deemed worthy of heaven (Momen 1985: 233-234).

Accounts of Iranian history and politics indicate that Khomeini’s propensity for delivering such unorthodox and controversial statements began only during the second-to-last year of his life. In 1988, Khomeini famously asserted that Islamic government could, on the grounds of the public interest (maṣlahat), suspend “secondary rulings,” such as praying, fasting, and performing the hajj” (Moslem 2002: 73-75; Abrahamian 2008: 165-166). However, the above excerpt from Khomeini’s speech announcing JS’s
establishment demonstrates that he was prone to making such brash pronouncements from the beginning of his rule.27

Just as significant as its contents, Khomeini’s speech appeared to have a profound impact on its target audience. Although more than thirty years have passed since JS’s inception, former members interviewed by the author consistently cited the message as their inspiration for joining the organization, and uncannily echoed its cultural framing devices (see also Iravani 1998-1999: 188). Many former JS members stated that they had participated in JS to rebuild (bāzsāzi yā nūsāzi) their nascent republic and to help villagers, who had allegedly been neglected or victimized by the Shah’s policies. In interviews, many former members believed that “JS, which brought justice (ʿedālat) to the villages, contrasted to the Shah, under whose rule the villagers were oppressed (ẓulm shodeh).”28

Even now, former JS members remain highly critical of the ministries for their alleged inaction, reinforcing the effectiveness of Khomeini’s boundary activation. In interviews with the author, some former members attributed their involvement in JS with the two forms of jihad (i.e., the greater and lesser jihad) outlined by Khomeini. Reflecting the opinions of many former JS members, a former member, who is currently a high-ranking official at the Ministry of Agriculture, adamantly asserted, “In the context of JS, the word “jihad” does not mean holy war, as Westerners like to perceive it, but a

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27 Prior to Khomeini’s 1988 speech, Hashemi Rafsanjani, who, in 1982, was speaker of parliament, invoked the concept of “necessity” (żorūrat) to unsuccessfully contest the conservative Guardian Council’s vetoing of the leftist parliament’s land reform and labor legislation based on principles of Islamic law (e.g., the sanctity of private property) (see Mallat 1992).

28 Ibid. This interviewee also believed that “villagers did not like the Shah’s Sepah because they lacked JS’s perspective of devotion (ʿebādat).”
divinely-inspired struggle to better the self (i.e., the greater jihad) and society (i.e., the lesser jihad) through rural development and other positive initiatives.”

Some former JS members admitted they had joined the organization to obtain political and social capital or to receive material benefits, including scholarships and employment. Especially in the beginning, the low-skilled, labor-intensive nature of JS’s activities represented job opportunities for many university graduates who could not find employment with the Shah’s ministries. Like America’s GI Bill, JS offered academic scholarships as an incentive to remain with the organization for a fixed period of time. A number of former members also stressed that JS had enabled them to perform God’s work not for material gain, but for the compensation He would grant them in the afterlife. The term salvation (najāt), which Khomeini used at the end of his speech, carried the double entendre that participation in JS would physically rescue villagers from destitution and spiritually lead members toward salvation.

In interviews with the author, many former members insisted they had strictly volunteered for JS and reluctantly taken funds from a communal pot to cover their living expenses. Their aversion toward materialism underscored the organization’s religiosity as much as its support for radical and populist policies, such as land distribution. To express these values and to solidify their collective identity, members wore simple clothing and had humble demeanors. To emulate their counterparts in the other revolutionary organizations and to differentiate themselves from the “westoxification”

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29 Personal interview with former JS member and current Ministry of Agriculture official on February 12, 2010. Outside of Iran and the Muslim World, the same debate was playing out in the United States, where a Muslim group launched the MyJihad campaign, which consisted of a series of advertisements on public transportation in different cities. Similar to the former JS members I interviewed, the campaign maintained that jihad was not a military struggle, but any effort to better society (e.g., community service) and the self (e.g., studying or fitness). In response, conservative Americans launched a counter-campaign with posters of Osama Bin Laden equating jihad to terrorism and violence.
(gharbzadegī) of the Shah’s bureaucratic elite, male members grew beards and female members wore headscarves (ḥejāb yā rūsarī) to convey their piety.

**Opportunities and Repertoire (1980-1983)**

The government-imposed university closures, which began in April 1980 and lasted three years, represented a political opportunity for JS’s increased mobilization. Contrary to the case of social movements, the university closures constituted a political opportunity engineered by newly-ascendant elites, including Khomeini, the IRP, and liberal politicians, led by President Abol-Hassan Bani-Sadr (r. 1980-1981), who equally feared leftists on university campuses. As was reiterated in interviews with the author, the closures afforded students time to join and participate in the movement (see also Iravani 1998-1999: 190).

As JS had done as a social movement prior to becoming an elite-affiliated counter-movement, the organization, during the university closures, continued to tap into pre-existing, mobilizing structures in the form of student associations in Iranian and foreign universities. Aside from the universities, JS set up branches in high schools to recruit and indoctrinate younger volunteers during vacations and holidays. As was the case with the Revolutionary Guard, this vast network of politicized student associations in universities and high schools proved to be fertile grounds for the recruitment of JS members. After participating in the U.S. embassy take-over, one group of university students – which included names such as Mirdamadi, Bitoraf, and Asghar-Zadeh – joined JS and the Revolutionary Guard and set the tone for the organization’s political behavior (Akondi 2012).
Accounts of Iranian history and politics refer to the university closures as part of the Islamic Republic’s cultural revolution to Islamize curricula and eradicate campuses of leftists and other oppositional elements (see Skocpol 1982: 278; Bakhsh 1984: 122; Arjomand 1988: 142-202; Parsa 1989: 255-297; Foran and Goodwin 1993: 217; Moaddel 1993: 212-263). Khomeini, the IRP, and liberals combated the spread of leftist views and asserted their control over the universities, a vital nexus in the struggle for power. In addition to the closures, these elites accomplished this through another jihad – the University Jihad (jehād-e dāneshgāh) – which was part of the Islamic Association of Students (anjoman-e eslāmī-e dāneshjūyān). Established in June 1980, the University Jihad came into existence approximately two months after the university closures and exactly a year after JS’s establishment (Hiro 1985: 255; Moslem 2002: 113-114).

Beyond the closures rendering campuses more docile, this dissertation is the first to reveal the closures’ mobilization utility and value vis-à-vis JS and other revolutionary organizations. As former members reiterated in interviews, the closures gave students time to join and to participate in JS and other revolutionary organizations. While compelling, these empirical findings did not come as a complete surprise given that students and youth, for demographic reasons, always make up the core of movements, whether they were social movements or counter-movements.

As JS increasingly mobilized with elite support, the organization helped Khomeini and the IRP to garner rural support and to consolidate power through a diverse set of largely non-coercive action repertoire (see table 1) (see appendix five for statistics on some of these activities).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concepts</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patronage</td>
<td>Rural and agricultural services, inputs, and credit for allegiance and votes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indoctrination</td>
<td>Libraries, schools, and mosques; books, film, and radio; prayer, sermons, and study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooptation</td>
<td>Islamic councils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Routine Contention</td>
<td>Demonstrations, rallies, and protests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covert Operations</td>
<td>Cultivating informants; surveilling and denouncing dissidents, insurgents, and smugglers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logistical Support</td>
<td>Engineering; recruits, funds, and supplies; emergency medical; indoctrination and moral support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1.** Construction Jihad’s Action Repertoire

In dilapidated, second-hand vehicles donated by various ministries, JS members initially traveled to the countryside to assist villagers with menial tasks and manual labor, namely the planting and harvesting of wheat and other crops, referred to as the harvest jihad (*jehād-e drū*) (Iravani 1998-1999: 190). As more individuals joined, JS became increasingly specialized. For example, members with engineering backgrounds were responsible for rural infrastructure, those with education and medical degrees respectively set up schools and offered medical services, and individuals with diplomas in agriculture provided extension.

While JS’s division of labor added breadth to the organization’s activities, it also fueled rivalries and stymied cooperation between JS’s disparate units, each with their own distinct esprit de corps. At the expense of coordination and efficiency, competition over state resources not only existed between JS, other revolutionary organizations (e.g., the Housing Foundation and Imam Khomeini Relief Committee), and government

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30 For more on JS’s specialized units, refer to article thirteen of JS’s official charter and to the organizational charts in appendices three and four.
ministries, but among the organization’s geographical and functional branches. Although endowed with a sizeable budget, JS often asked villagers to contribute land, labor, and capital to various projects, even while failing to include villagers in the decision-making and planning processes. JS’s lack of planning, experience, and expertise invited criticism of its low quality and wasteful projects that rarely took into account villagers’ needs and preferences. In interviews with the author, rural development experts, villagers, and former members agreed that JS was highly committed, but prone to making mistakes (see also Ehsani 2006: 89).

Nevertheless, JS’s services enabled Khomeini and the IRP, through patronage, to gain local support by improving rural infrastructure. The organization embarked on an aggressive rural development campaign (see table 2). JS constructed roads, bridges, schools, health clinics, and public baths – built as much for hygienic purposes as for ablutions (wudū’). The organization also supplied villages with electricity, potable water, and medication and vaccinations. Due, in part, to JS’s efforts, rural infrastructure drastically improved. Between 1979 and 1990, rural roads increased from between 4,790 and 8,000 kilometers to 67,046 kilometers of which JS accounted for 36,660 kilometers or fifty-five percent (World Bank 1994: 56-60; Azkia 2002: 105-106; Hooglund 2009), with the Ministry of Roads and Transportation responsible for the rest. During this eleven-year period, electrification expanded from 4,300 or six percent of villages to 27,296 or forty percent of villages of which JS accounted for 15,680 or twenty-three percent of villages. At the same time, the provision of piped, potable water increased from 6,611 villages or 447,000 households to 19,657 villages or more than 850,000

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31 Personal interview with a former JS member in Iran on April 19, 2011.
households of which JS, in cooperation with the Ministry of Power, accounted for 18,039 or twenty-six percent of villages (Ibid).32

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1980</th>
<th>1990</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drinking Water</td>
<td>6,611 villages</td>
<td>18,039 villages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity</td>
<td>5,000 villages</td>
<td>27,296 villages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roads</td>
<td>8,000 km</td>
<td>60,000 km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source</td>
<td>World Bank 1994</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 2. The Islamic Republic of Iran’s Rural Development Performance.*

In addition to developing and improving rural infrastructure, JS members with backgrounds in medicine and education respectively served as physicians and teachers while those with degrees in agriculture provided extension services to villagers, farmers, and livestock holders in the form of manual labor (i.e., planting and harvesting crops), technical training, inputs, and credit. During its first year of operation, JS dedicated $360 million (around $1 billion in 2013 and 0.4% of GDP) of its $690 million (around $2 billion in 2013 and 0.8% of GDP) budget to the distribution of rural credit (Salehi-Isfahani 1983: 12).33 The explicit goal was to increase crop production, bolster rural infrastructure.

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32 By 1990, JS constructed schools and health clinics in 4,900 and 320 villages respectively among a total of between sixty and seventy thousand villages. While, at first glance, these figures seem unimpressive, these schools and clinics were in and around provincial capitals and village centers to serve clusters of nearby, surrounding villages.

33 Between 1980 and 1990, JS’s annual budget consistently hovered around $300 million (the respective 2013 value equivalent of around $500 and $800 million or between .5 and .7% of GDP) (Salehi-Isfahani 1983, Hiro 1985, World Bank 1994). While endowed with considerable resources to perform these activities, JS supplemented its budget by having villagers contribute land, labor, and capital to projects.
industry, and achieve agricultural and economic self-sufficiency, a popular theme in Khomeini’s rhetoric that was written into the new constitution and ingrained in the national psyche. However, JS’s provision of inputs and credit increased the dependence of farmers and villagers on the organization while fostering patronage, clientelism, and corruption.

In the spirit of patronage, JS delivered projects and services in exchange for political allegiance, which most tangibly translated into electoral votes. In 1980 parliamentary elections, JS persuaded villagers privy to its services to vote for candidates affiliated with the IRP and against those backed by liberal president Abol-Hassan Bani-Sadr. Bani-Sadr, a fierce rival to the IRP and an eventual ally of the MeK, was a staunch critic of JS. For example, Bani-Sadr wrote an article in the *Islamic Revolution* newspaper entitled “Construction Jihad: The Giant without Horn and Tail,” in which he questioned all of the organization’s activities (Akondi 2012). He also claimed that the statistics JS prepared for an article in the *Islamic Republic* newspaper were inconsistent (Ibid).

In an interview with the author, an Iranian rural development expert indicated that JS secured seats for the IRP against candidates backed by Bani-Sadr by filling out the ballots of illiterate villagers. In the words of a former JS member and parliamentarian from North Khorasan Province: “During the Islamic Republic’s first parliamentary elections in 1980, we convinced villagers, who had been privy to our services, to vote for IRP candidates, and against those affiliated with liberal President [Abol-Hassan] Bani-

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34 Personal interview with a former JS member and parliamentarian in Iran on June 1, 2011.
35 Personal interview with a rural development expert in Iran on March 5, 2011; see also Skocpol 1982: 278. More than JS’s schools and teachers, the Literacy and Education Movement (*nehzat savād va amūzesh*) affiliated with the Ministry of Education was responsible for the improvement of post-revolutionary Iran’s literacy rates in urban and rural areas.
Sadr (r. 1980-1981), who threatened to cut our budget and those of the other revolutionary organizations.”

Partly as a result of JS’s efforts, the IRP won a majority in the Islamic Republic’s first parliament (*majles-e shūrā-ye eslāmī*) (1980-1984) while Bani-Sadr’s allies took only a handful of seats (Arjomand 1988: 141-203; Parsa 1989: 256; Foran and Goodwin 1993: 216). Of the 241 seats decided in the first parliament, IRP candidates won eighty-five and its affiliates another forty-five (Bakhash 1984: 105). Yet, in practice, a larger number of deputies – unaffiliated representatives with small provincial constituencies among whom JS wielded considerable influence – voted with the IRP on critical issues (Ibid). JS’s role in influencing the outcome of the 1980 parliamentary elections in favor of the IRP and to the detriment of the liberals represented a unique point to emerge from the empirical data and highlighted the early factional struggles that existed in the Islamic Republic.

It should be noted that, in the case of JS, patronage worked both ways. JS distributed and withheld services based on villagers’ voting records and other political behavior. At the same time, the organization wrote reports and kept careful records, much like an accountant, of the individuals and organizations (public and private) that donated money and resources (see JS’s official charter in appendix three). Such donations represented an opportunity for these individuals and organizations to brandish their revolutionary credentials and to place themselves in good standing with political elites, who, in turn, rewarded them with recognition and other favors.

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36 Personal interview with a former JS member and parliamentarian on June 1, 2011; see also Bakhsh 1984: 113).
Beyond patronage and the improvement of rural development and living standards, JS’s electrification projects and the consumption of televisions and radios by villagers enabled the center to transmit political messages to the rural periphery. JS helped Khomeini and the IRP to further indoctrinate villagers by establishing cultural branches that built libraries and disseminated books and films with a mixture of revolutionary and religious content. By coordinating with clerics and Friday prayer leaders (emām jomʿeh) – some of whom also served as Khomeini’s provincial representatives – JS delivered sermons, distributed Qur’ans and other Islamic texts, and organized prayer groups and study sessions.

In the Sunni-majority regions (i.e., Khuzestan, Kurdistan, Sistan and Baluchestan, and Turkmen Sahra), JS educated and trained Shiite minorities and helped them to pass entrance exams to the universities and civil service (Bukhta 1997). The organization also reformed school curricula to place added emphasis on Shiite values and on Khomeini’s Guardianship of the Jurist (Ibid). JS’s efforts to achieve Shiite, religious and intellectual domination in these areas provoked hostility among Sunnis (Ibid).

JS’s cultural branches cooperated with the organization’s engineers in the construction of religious schools, ablution rooms, and mosques. As with the period leading to the Shah’s overthrow, the mosque, which served as village meeting places and distribution centers, occupied a central position in post-revolutionary Iran. A former JS member and current rural expert from Yazd Province stated that: “After two or three years, building religious schools, ablution rooms, and mosques, as opposed to schools and libraries, became the priority to the extent that when clerics and officials conducted

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37 Personal interview with a former JS member in Iran on April 19, 2011; see also Schirazi 1993: 150.
site visits, they exclusively evaluated the performance of JS’s cultural branches, for which I worked, on the completion of these structures.”

The main purpose of JS’s cultural activities was to promote Khomeini’s religious-political doctrine of the Guardianship of the Jurist. As in post-revolutionary Cuba (Morales 1981), boosting rural literacy rates became a national priority. The literacy rate of villagers older than the age of six increased from six percent in 1972 to forty-eight percent in 1986 to sixty-nine percent in 1996 (Azkia 2002: 98-99). In addition to improving human capital, the goal of boosting literacy was to transform villagers into receptors of Khomeini and the IRP’s religious-political messages.

In addition to patronage and indoctrination, JS assisted Khomeini and the IRP with coopting influential villagers, such as village elders (kadkhodā) and nomadic chieftains (khān), who posed a potential threat to elites. With limited success, the Shah and his father, Reza Shah Pahlavi (a.k.a., Reza Khan) (r. 1925-1941) had attempted to control these power brokers. JS incorporated these rural leaders into what, in the spirit of boundary activation, it aptly called Islamic councils (shūrâ-ye eslâmī), and, in the process, displaced similar rural councils set up by leftist, ethnic, and Sunni movements.

Between 1980 and 1983, JS created between 14,000 and 25,000 Islamic councils in approximately half of Iran’s villages (Bakhash 1984: 202-211; Hiro 1985: 254; Moaddel 1993: 229; Schirazi 1993: 150-151). Although these councils were supposed to grant influential villagers increased political participation, they enabled the Khomeini and the IRP to directly administrate the countryside (Schirazi 1993: 268-269). The Islamic

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38 Personal interview with a former JS member and current rural expert on April 19, 2011. By 1990, JS had constructed mosques in 2,700 villages (World Bank 1994: 57).
39 These figures revealed the effectiveness not only of JS, but of the Shah’s Literacy Corps and the Islamic Republic’s Literacy Movement. For more on literacy in post-revolutionary in Iran, see Mehran 1992.
councils, which the government eventually transferred from JS’s purview, did not receive legal backing or hold proper elections until the administration of reformist President Mohammad Khatami (r. 1997-2005).\footnote{Personal interview with a rural development expert in Iran on May 7, 2011.}

Outside the realm of prescribed politics or formal political institutions (i.e., influencing elections and establishing councils), JS engaged in non-routine contention by organizing demonstrations and rallies in the streets to counter those held by leftist, ethnic, and Sunni movements and to rally the rural public to its side (see figure 5).

\begin{figure}[h]
  \centering
  \includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{image.png}
  \caption{Construction Jihad Demonstration (courtesy of the Ministry of Agriculture’s archives).\footnote{Photograph of a JS rally retrieved by the author from the archives of the Ministry of Agricultural Jihad on February 12, 2011; see also Bakhash 1984: 113.}}
\end{figure}

As Khomeini and the IRP solidified their hold on power and further marginalized and repressed leftist, ethnic, and Sunni movements, these movements resorted to armed
attacks against government targets. The turning point occurred in June 1981 when the IRP-dominated parliament impeached Bani-Sadr. This prompted the MeK and other opposition movements to stage mass demonstrations, leading to scores of arrests, injuries, and deaths. Shortly afterward, the bombing of IRP headquarters killed almost one hundred high-ranking officials, notably party secretary and chief justice Ayatollah Beheshti. Two months later, another explosion claimed the lives of Prime Minister Mohammad Javad Bahonar and President Mohammad-Ali Rajai, Bani-Sadr’s successor. This dealt a severe blow to JS because Beheshti and Rajai were important allies for the organization. When the Plan and Budget Organization (PBO), which criticized JS for not having a program, excluded it from its budget, Rajai successfully demanded that the PBO’s vice minister, Mr. Qashqai, grant JS a budget of one and a half billion toman (~$1,500,000), which JS’s central council divided between itself and its provincial offices (Akhondi 2012, 2013).

The escalation of violence between elites and the opposition prompted JS to adopt more coercive action repertoire. The organization engaged in covert activities against the IRP’s opponents – many of whom fled from the cities to the countryside – while, legally, the organization continued to remain unarmed in spite of the security forces’ recommendations (Ibid). Even when Commander Afshar, deputy minister of the interior ministry, along with a number of other officials, proposed that JS receive protection from bodyguards, the government rejected this measure; though, it approved body guards, some of whom had questionable qualifications, to protect JS’s central office building at

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42 At the time, in the early eighties, JS was so un-professionalized that it lacked standard operating procedures at the center to divide and distribute budgetary funds to its provincial branches (Akhondi 2012, 2013).
Revolution Square (maydān-e engelāb) in Tehran, and to accompany members on missions to the countryside in cars as opposed to motorcycles (Ibid). The fact that the state prohibited JS from bearing arms or having bodyguards belied its wariness of the organization, which became increasingly radicalized. This also revealed the Islamic Republic’s rational preference to concentrate the means of coercion exclusively into the hands of the security and military forces.

In interviews with the author, former JS members stated that they were sent to ethnic and Sunni provinces along the rural periphery (i.e., Khuzestan, Kurdistan, Sistan and Baluchestan, and Turkmen Sahra) due to their excessive poverty and underdevelopment. Some former members also confessed that they were deployed to these areas to quell local unrest and to subdue the population (see also Iravani 1998-1999: 189). However, JS was not always successful in this endeavor and endured harsh treatment. Former members, who had operated in these provinces, reported having their cars stoned or burned, prompting them to return in vehicles without government-issued license plates. Others former members recalled instances when they were detained or stumbled upon the bodies of mutilated or decapitated colleagues.43

Former JS members interviewed by the author revealed that when villagers remained unconvinced of their helpful intentions and meant to cause them harm, these members turned to their brothers in the Revolutionary Guard. One former member, who had served in Kurdistan, the site of a bloody and protracted rebellion, recalled recruiting local school teachers to learn the identities of those who waged attacks against JS, and

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43 Personal interviews with former JS members in Iran on March 15, 2011 and April 23, 2011. According to Akhondi (2012), JS members were the target of armed attacks in the cities as well. This included Tehran, specifically Revolution Square (maydān-e engelāb), where JS’s main offices were based (Ibid).
passed this information on to the Revolutionary Guard so that the suspected perpetrators could be dealt with accordingly. JS assisted inexperienced and ill-equipped Revolutionary Guard intelligence units with surveilling armed insurgents and weapons and drug traffickers along the borders. Together, JS and the Revolutionary Guard respectively served as the state’s soft and hard power in the Iranian countryside. However, due to its other responsibilities, JS could not devote sufficient resources to maintain its covert activities. At the height of violent clashes with the opposition in 1982, Khomeini and the IRP established the rural patrol group, Army of God (*Jund Allāh*), to circulate streets, cultivate informants, search homes, and detain and interrogate suspects (Arjomand 1988: 172-173; Moaddel 1993: 259).

Internal political dissidents were not the only actors who sought to take advantage of Iran’s post-revolutionary chaos. Seeking to become the undisputed leader of the Arab World, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein (r. 1979-2003) aspired to seize control of the Shatt al-Arab Waterway, which contained strategic shipping routes and precious oil supplies. He also endeavored to de-legitimize the revolution and to install a client regime in Iran which would refrain from instigating agitators among Iraq’s Shiite majority (Foran and Goodwin 1993: 219).

On September 22, 1980, Iraq invaded Iran by land and air. After several months, Iranian forces repelled Iraqi divisions. The outcome of the conflict inspired Skocpol (1988) to argue that foreign governments, while enticed by post-revolutionary instability, should refrain from attacking these states due to their high capacity to mobilize. However, Iranian forces were unable to deliver a decisive victory. Thus, began an eight-

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44 Personal interview with a former JS member in Iran on April 23, 2011.
For its part, the Islamic Republic suffered at least 160,000 casualties (others estimate 300,000 or more) and approximately $450 billion in damages to cities, villages, ports, and oil facilities. By dedicating a third of it national budget to the war effort, the country set itself back a generation in terms of human and material development (Foran and Goodwin 1993: 219). One factor that aggravated and perpetuated the conflict was financial and military support, including chemical weapons, from the West, the Soviet Union, and other countries to Iraq. However, with the exception of chemical weapons, Iran received similar support from the same and other countries during different stages of the war, including secret arms sales from the US in exchange for American hostages (i.e., the Iran-Contra affair).

Nonetheless, for JS and the Revolutionary Guard, which evolved into an elite force while fighting alongside the Iranian army, the Iran-Iraq war represented a political opportunity of major proportions. This is not to suggest that the Islamic Republic welcomed the war; rather, that the conflict constituted a political opportunity structure that revolutionary organizations, like JS and the Revolutionary Guard, seized to increase mobilization and to improve competency. As he did when announcing JS’s establishment, Khomeini commanded the entire nation to support and to participate in the war effort. Many JS members left the movement to join the Revolutionary Guard or Mobilization of the Oppressed (basīj-e mostaţaʿaʿ afān) (a.k.a., the Basij), a volunteer militia of irregulars renowned for running across minefields and in front of enemy
targets.\footnote{Established during the war, the Basij was frequently the country’s first line of defense (or offense) and put itself in harm’s way to create an opening for Iranian forces. Similar to JS, the organization was largely comprised of young volunteers who became increasingly professionalized both during and after the war (personal interview with a former JS member in Iran on May 28, 2011). With branches throughout the country, it is now responsible for policing morals and suppressing dissent.} Those who remained with JS witnessed a broadening of its responsibilities and a swelling of its ranks. During the first two years of the war, between 1981 and 1983, the estimated number of JS personnel nearly doubled from 19,400 to 35,000 (Hiro 1985: 254).

Since a large part of the conflict took place in rural areas along the Iran-Iraq border, JS was positioned to play a pivotal role. In interviews with the author, former members described being on two or three-week rotations, alternating between their responsibilities in the villages and those on the front (jebheh). The latter included collecting and delivering funds and supplies to troops, and recruiting villagers to enlist. Especially before political elites’ decision to establish rural patrol groups in 1982, JS continued to serve as Khomeini and the IRP’s eyes and ears in the countryside, an important task considering the MeK and other domestic opponents collaborated with the Iraqis. In addition to MeK, the Shah’s former officials, army officers, and secret police (sāvāk) – notably Prime Minister Shahpour Bakhtiyar and General Gholam Ali Oveissi, both of whom were respectively assassinated in 1991 and 1984 – launched invasions against Iranian forces from inside Iraqi territory (Bakhash 1984: 276; Moaddel 1993: 302).

Leveraging the skills it had acquired and replicating the services it offered to villages, JS provided logistical support to Iranian forces. During the war, JS’s physicians served as paramedics and its teachers taught illiterate soldiers how to read. To boost morale and indoctrinate fighters, the organization’s cultural branch distributed
newspapers, books, Qur’ans, and Islamic texts, and, in conjunction with clerics, organized prayer groups and study sessions.\textsuperscript{46} JS’s rural infrastructure personnel formed a corps of combat engineers (\textit{mohandesān-e razmī}) by the name of the war engineering and support staff (\textit{postībānī va mohandesī-ye jang-e jehād}) (PMJJ), which constructed dirt and asphalt roads, conventional and pontoon bridges, and hospitals and morgues. Engineers, who had experience digging wells and irrigation canals and erecting dykes made of soil to protect villages from landslides and floods, built trenches (\textit{sangar}) and dirt levees (\textit{khākrīz}) to shield Iranian forces and to impede Iraqi troop movements. Those who were more educated and possessed higher skills assembled and repaired weapons and equipment, and became increasingly adept at producing military technology. During the war, JS’s PMJJ, along with the Revolutionary Guard and the Basij, reported to the Iranian military’s central command. After the war, JS’s PMJJ merged with the Revolutionary Guard and Basij, and, as will be discussed at greater length in chapter two, the organization’s engineering research centers became part of Iran’s military industrial complex (see also Schirazi 1993 on these activities).

As a result of JS’s wartime activities and achievements and the fact that it suffered approximately 3,100 casualties, the organization received national recognition and praise from Iran’s leadership.\textsuperscript{47} Khomeini devised the phrase “trench-builders without trenches” (\textit{sangarsāzān-e bī sangar}) as a moniker for the bulldozer and loader drivers who risked their lives on the front to dig trenches. The latter constituted an essential component of the conflict, which relied on trench warfare reminiscent of World War II.

\textsuperscript{46} Personal interview with a former JS member in Iran on April 17, 2011.
\textsuperscript{47} Personal interview with a JS war veteran and current member of the Society of Trench Builders without Trenches (\textit{kānūn-e sangarsāzān-e bī sangar}) in Iran on March 16, 2011; see also Kavoshi 2006-2007.
War One (Abrahamian 2008: 171). After the war, JS rebuilt and renovated areas ravaged by the conflict, and performed these activities alongside the ministries of interior, housing, urban planning, and plan and budget.48

Conclusion: Theoretical Reflections and Power Consolidation

From the standpoint of contentious politics and other social science disciplines, categorizing JS is problematic because it obscured the boundaries between states and movements, specifically, and state-society relations, more generally. As indicated above, many JS cadres left their villages as aspiring students and returned in vehicles with government-issued license plates. JS was mobilized first from below and then from above. While the organization initially constituted social movement, several factors precipitated its transition to a counter-movement. These factors included its robust state budget as well as its cooperation with the Revolutionary Guard, other revolutionary organizations, and different ministries.

In the final analysis, JS constituted a counter-movement that was mobilized, in part, by newly ascendant elites (i.e., Khomeini, the IRP, and liberals) with the intent of beating movement challengers at their own game and by crowding them out of the political space. More than to alleviate rural poverty or to improve rural development, the was mobilized, first and foremost, to assist these elites with winning rural hearts and minds, and with consolidating power against opposing leftist, ethnic, and Sunni movements in the countryside, where roughly half the population resided.

48 Plan and Management Organization of Iran. “The Subject Related to the Budgetary Accounts in Connection with the [Ministry of Agricultural Jihad] in Budgetary Laws,” date unknown (provided by an Iranian rural development expert on December 20, 2011).
To expand JS’s ranks, Khomeini and the IRP leveraged SMT’s classic mobilization mechanisms. These mechanisms included mobilizing structures, political opportunities, and cultural framing devices. When announcing JS’s official establishment on national radio, Khomeini employed cultural framing devices that combined nationalism, religion, and boundary activation to recruit new members, to give them a shared identity, and to lend meaning to their actions. With the exception of Skocpol (1985), who identified individual and organizational agency in the shaping of ideology, analysts of revolutions overlooked cultural framing entirely or, like Sewell (1985), emphasized broader, cultural forms and beliefs (e.g., Islam) from which ideologies were derived (Zald and McCarthy 1987: 270).

Experts on the Iranian Revolution focused exclusively on the ideological mobilization of Islamic activism during events leading up to the Shah’s deposal (see Farhi 1990), or completely disregarded ideology, concentrating instead on resources and opportunities for collective action (see Parsa 1989). Although Mansoor Moaddel (1993) contended that Shiite revolutionary discourse conditioned power struggles and class conflict during the post-Pahlavi era, he refrained from delving into the mechanisms behind this phenomenon. While SMT identified activists as framing agents, it downplayed the role of leadership in this process. As this chapter affirmed, Iran’s revolutionary leader, Ayatollah Khomeini, consciously and deliberately constructed JS’s ideology through specific cultural framing mechanisms.

Even before becoming a counter-movement with elite representatives and funds, JS’s mobilizing structures were composed of a pre-existing network of associations made up of highly politicized and committed university students, who had helped topple the
Many of JS’s cadres had rural, middle class backgrounds, and represented the first generation to attend urban universities in Iran and abroad where they participated in mass demonstrations and other political activities against the Shah. After monarchy’s demise, these individuals eagerly joined JS and returned to their home provinces and villages, where they leveraged their local connections, knowledge, and, at times, resources to recruit members, to implement projects, and to engage in various activities.

To maximize JS’s mobilization, Iran’s newly-ascendant, post-revolutionary elites and the organization’s cadres leveraged political opportunities related to the political chaos and uncertainty following the Shah’s overthrow. These opportunities, which were historically specific and changed over time (Davis, McAdam, Scott, and Zald 2005: 48, 102), consisted of the three-year, government-imposed university closures (1980-1983), which were intended to rid campuses of elements deemed hostile to Khomeini and the IRP, and the eight-year military conflict between Iran and Iraq (1980-1988), which largely took place in rural areas along the border where JS had already been deployed. The university closures constituted a political opportunity engineered by political elites while the Iran-Iraq war was an unintended, structural condition that both elites and JS cadres leveraged to expand the organization’s ranks and responsibilities, to cultivate expertise, and to bolster its competency.

To explain how Iran’s newly-ascendant, post-revolutionary elites consolidated power, historians and social scientists chronicled the reign of terror and mass repression that accompanied the revolution. By contrast, this chapter examined an organization that was vital to Khomeini and the IRP’s power consolidation through largely non-coercive action repertoire, including patronage, indoctrination, cooptation, non-routine contention,
covert action, and logistical support. Aware that coercion on its own can be costly, crude, and potentially dangerous, Khomeini and the IRP adopted the social movement form (i.e., the counter-movement), which proved to be a highly effective political tool (Earl 2003: 51).

JS engaged in patronage by implementing rural development projects and by distributing inputs and credit to villagers and farmers in exchange for political allegiance and support, namely in the form of electoral votes. This lends credence to the assertion that, for government authorities, counter-movements offer resistance at the polls (Mottl 1980: 624). In coordination with clerics, JS members indoctrinated villagers by disseminating materials and organizing activities that promoted Khomeini’s political and religious doctrine of the Guardianship of the Jurist. Through JS’s Islamic councils, Khomeini and the IRP, without sharing power, co-opted influential leaders (i.e., village elders and nomadic chieftains), who posed a potential threat. In cooperation with the Revolutionary Guard, JS engaged in covert activities to denounce political dissidents, armed insurgents, and weapons and drug traffickers. During the Iran-Iraq war, JS’s war engineers provided logistical support to troops on the front.

To help Khomeini and the IRP consolidate power, JS adopted action repertoire, which it often appropriated from its challengers, that combined prescribed politics (e.g., influencing elections and establishing rural councils) with non-routine contention (e.g., organizing demonstrations and rallies in the streets). The movement/counter-movement dynamic, which unfolded between JS and its competitors, highlighted two critical points that emerged in the scholarship on counter-movements. First, counter-movements, like JS, oriented themselves toward the actions of rival movements, and adjusted their
repertoire as they elicited responses from or gained the support of key constituencies, won or lost battles, or achieved specific objectives (Mottl 1980: 624; Zald and McCarthy 1987: 248-59). JS responded to the range of actions employed by its challengers by adopting elements of their program. This conformed to the “cascade of tactics” formula in which leftist, ethnic, and Sunni movements and Iraqi forces’ early successes with one tactic were countered by learned responses from JS, followed by a new cycle of tactical innovation and response (Davis et al. 2005: 53).

Second, as JS and its competitors’ diverse action repertoire demonstrated, it was misleading to concentrate on either prescribed politics or non-routine contention as if they were mutually exclusive. This validated criticism of studies that equated mobilization exclusively with protest, that defined organizations that engaged in routine politics as beyond the scope of movement studies, and that minimized the extent to which movements strategically adopted organizational forms or alternated between protest in the streets and lobbying in the legislatures (Ibid: 354-361). The multi-dimensional strategies and tactics of JS and its rivals illustrated that movements and counter-movements clearly confronted and utilized prescribed politics as much as non-routine contention (Ibid: 13).

With JS’s assistance, the Islamic Republic consolidated power in 1983. That year, Khomeini and the IRP foiled any last remaining military plots; solidified control over the armed forces; quelled a series of uprisings by leftist, ethnic, and Sunni movements; dissolved the last remaining leftist party of any consequence (i.e., Tudeh); and remained on the offensive against the Iraqis (Arjomand 1988: 164; Farhi 1990: 217). It was not a coincidence that the university closures, a political opportunity that had
facilitated JS’s mobilization, ended that same year. While JS relied largely on non-coercive action repertoire, it had, in the Weberian sense, assisted Khomeini and the IRP with monopolizing the use of force within their territorial boundaries.

As will be discussed in the next chapter, while JS’s developmental and wartime achievements enhanced its national standing, not all was cordial between the organization and political elites. JS’s increasing radicalization and rapid expansion elicited concerns among the IRP, particularly its conservatives. Although JS contributed to the Islamic Republic’s power consolidation, this outcome, a new political opportunity of sorts, caused the organization’s *raison d’être* to be called into question, precipitating its subsequent demobilization and institutionalization.

Aside from glossing over mobilization mechanisms, the scholarship on revolutions failed to account for the subsequent demobilization of revolutionary actors. By contrast, SMT examined the organizational transformation of movements, including the professionalization, moderation, mobility, and disillusionment that accompany institutionalization (Tarrow 2011: 220-224). As indicated above, political opportunities (e.g., power consolidation) equally encouraged and constrained mobilization (McAdam et al. 1996: 2-3). These structures were not static and, as they changed, so did the movements and organizations embedded within them (Campbell 2005: 46).
Chapter Two: Demobilization and Institutionalization: Fragmentation, Mobility, and Disillusionment (1983-2001)
Introduction

This dissertation is among the few to disaggregate the Islamic Republic of Iran by tracing the institutional history of a specific organization from the end of the Pahlavi dynasty until the present day. This dissertation is also among the first to utilize JS as a central unit of analysis and examine it through the theoretical framework of revolutions, social movements, organizations, and comparative bureaucracy. JS constitutes an ideal entity for analyzing post-revolutionary Iran’s bureaucracy. The same year that Khomeini and the IRP consolidated power in 1983, JS was converted from a revolutionary organization to an official, cabinet-level ministry and, in 2001, merged with its long-time competitor, the Ministry of Agriculture.

Contrary to organizations and movements in the West, JS was not demobilized and institutionalized as a political party or interest group, but as a ministry within an increasingly centralized, post-revolutionary state. JS’s trajectory represents a microcosm of factionalism and political and social change in revolutionary Iran. Paradoxically, many members went from being idealistic, young activists and hardened, holy warriors to high-level politicians, seasoned bureaucrats, and successful businesspeople – the very individuals they initially despised.

Similar to what transpired between the Revolutionary Guard and the military, JS became the largest addition to the Iranian bureaucracy following the Shah’s demise. By the early to mid-nineties, JS as a ministry employed about 80,000 people and its budget ran around $125 million annually for recurrent costs and $400 million for investment. By comparison, the Ministry of Agriculture employed about 68,000 people and had an operating budget of approximately $70 million a year (1% of the government’s total
budget), and an investment budget of around $200 million per year (6% of total public investment) (World Bank 1994).

Analysts recognize the high mobilization capacity of revolutionary states and attribute Khomeini and the IRP’s success at consolidating power to their effectiveness at mobilizing mass support (Skocpol 1982, Farhi 1990, Foran and Goodwin 1993). However, these scholars do not account for the subsequent demobilization of revolutionary actors and their propensity toward eventual institutionalization. The literature on organizations and social movements posits that the latter tend toward bureaucratization, professionalization, and conglomeration, and adjust their goals to better fit their environments and survive (Davis, McAdam, Scott, and Zald 2005, Tarrow 2011).

Yet, all too often, when post-revolutionary organizations and movements routinize, analysts lose interest and refrain from examining the institutionalization of movements in Western, democratic settings much less those in non-Western, authoritarian ones (Davis et al. 2005). In the United States and Western Europe, the institutionalization of movements generally involves the transformation of contentious politics that involve non-routine tactics, such as protest, into more conventional forms of political action or routinized engagement, including electoral competition as political parties or legislative lobbying as interest groups (Ibid). By contrast, JS was institutionalized within the bureaucracy of the newly-consolidated, Iranian state.

The central questions this chapter seeks to address are as follows: How and why did JS become bureaucratized and what does this case reveal about the general conditions regarding the institutionalization of revolutionary movements? Was the Islamic Republic
of Iran’s inability or unwillingness to completely eliminate or replace the ancien régime bureaucracy analogous or exceptional to other countries in the midst of revolutionary transformation or regime change? What impact did JS’s institutionalization and bureaucratization have on its membership, the organization’s efficiency and performance, and Iran’s rural and agricultural development? How are these outcomes instructive to theories of rentierism, public choice, and neo-utilitarianism?

The first section of this chapter delineates the conditions concerning the institutionalization of revolutionary movements, such as JS. It posits that this process occurs after the movement assists the regime with consolidating power, confronts government authorities over issues related to its initial mobilization, and undergoes internal fragmentation between pragmatists and radicals as it is co-opted by the state. This section concludes by applying these conditions to other historical cases in Western Europe and the Middle East, specifically nineteenth century Prussia and twentieth century Saudi Arabia.

The chapter’s second section explores the underlying tensions and indispensable collaboration that existed between JS and various ministries. It also describes the ways in which JS resembled a Weberian-style, legal-rational bureaucracy. Citing other historical examples, this section affirms that, like other transitional governments, the Islamic Republic’s inability or unwillingness to dispense with ancien régime institutions is a common occurrence. The third section outlines the outcomes of JS’s institutionalization and its ramifications for Iranian rural and agricultural development. It recounts how the organization’s membership experienced political and socioeconomic mobility, and
demonstrates how patronage and oil wealth – legacies of the former regime – adversely affected JS’s performance and the country’s development.

**Conditions Regarding the Institutionalization of a Revolutionary Movement**

JS was officially established on June 16, 1979, around the same time as other revolutionary organizations. The organization and its revolutionary kin comprised a parallel structure to the Shah’s ministries. Khomeini, IRP officials, and JS members blamed the ministries for implementing the Shah’s “destructive” policies, which allegedly exacerbated rural backwardness and socioeconomic inequality between cities and villages. While partially valid, such claims served to justify the existence of JS and other revolutionary organizations, which performed overlapping functions and usurped the purviews of various ministries. No organization epitomized this more than JS, which assumed responsibilities that belonged to the ministries of agriculture, power, health, education, roads and transportation, and industry and mines.

JS built roads, health clinics, and public baths, and supplied electricity and water to rural and nomadic areas around the country. Its extension workers dispensed technical advice, inputs, and credit to farmers and livestock owners. The organization’s physicians and veterinarians distributed medication and administered vaccinations to villagers, nomads, and livestock. JS cooperated with the literacy movement (nehžat-e savād-e āmūzī) to set up schools and libraries. As mentioned previously, while these activities constituted part of the organization’s indoctrination efforts, they succeeded in improving rural literacy.

JS’s culture was antithetical to that of the ministries. To express their commitment and piety, the organization’s members wore beards, headscarves, simple
clothing, and humble expressions. Since many of them came from rural, middle class backgrounds, they were able to build trust and forge connections with villagers.

Members worked long hours for meager wages or on a voluntary basis, and withdrew money from a communal pot to cover their living expenses.49 In interviews with the author, former members contrasted themselves to the Shah’s clean-shaven, tie-donning, Western-educated, bureaucratic elite. Some of these interviewees criticized these civil servants for sitting in plush offices and collecting paychecks in Tehran, for their reluctance to venture to the countryside and “get their hands dirty,” and for their inability and unwillingness to relate to villagers. The fact that JS represented an organizational and cultural alternative to the ministries begs the question of why it was bureaucratized.

While a single case study precludes the analyst from crafting a comprehensive theory, the causal mechanisms behind JS’s bureaucratization offer insight into conditions regarding the institutionalization of a revolutionary movement. This process begins after the latter has assisted the burgeoning state with achieving its political objective of power consolidation. Although JS appeared to be a social movement on the surface, it was partially mobilized by government authorities (i.e., Khomeini and the IRP) as a counter-movement against internal and external political opponents.

JS helped the regime win hearts and minds in the countryside through patronage or the distribution of services, inputs, and credit to villagers, nomads, farmers, and livestock owners; indoctrination or the construction of mosques, schools, and libraries, and the dissemination of Qur’ans, Islamic texts, sermons, and books and films with a mixture of religious and revolutionary content; and co-optation or the establishment of

49 In his brief, yet insightful article on JS, Djavad Salehi-Isfahani (1983) – writing under the pseudonym Emad Ferdows – points out that members benefited from free food, housing, and transportation.
rural councils through which to integrate villagers and marginalize leftist, ethnic, and Sunni councils and local authority figures (i.e. village elders (kadkhodā) and tribal chieftains (khān). Through a variety of prescribed and non-routine tactics – which it often appropriated from rival movements – JS assisted the regime with crowding challengers out of the political space. For example, JS persuaded villagers to vote for the IRP during the Islamic Republic’s first parliamentary elections in 1980, and organized demonstrations to counter those held by the opposition.

In addition to its non-coercive repertoire, the movement engaged in covert action to denounce political dissidents, armed insurgents, and weapons and drug traffickers. During the Iran-Iraq war, JS sent recruits, funds, and supplies to the front (jebheh) and formed a corps of combat engineers (mohandesēn-e razmī) to provide logistical support to Iranian troops. Due, in part, to the organization’s efforts, the regime consolidated power in 1983. That year, Khomeini and the IRP foiled any last remaining coup attempts, quelled a series of leftist, ethnic, and Sunni uprisings; dissolved the last leftist party of any consequence (i.e., the Communist Tudeh); and maintained the offensive against Iraqi forces (Arjomand 1988). In the Weberian sense, the Islamic Republic consolidated power by monopolizing the use of force within its territorial boundaries. It is not a coincidence that, during that same year, JS was transformed from a revolutionary counter-movement into an official, cabinet-level ministry. On October 31, 1983, parliament passed a bill establishing the Ministry of JS (Iravani 1998-199: 195).

Another factor that precipitates the institutionalization of a revolutionary movement is its involvement in an issue that directly challenges the interests and legitimacy of the state – even if government authorities initially leveraged the issue to
mobilize the movement and indoctrinate its recruits. JS became embroiled in the Islamic Republic’s most controversial issue: land reform (Bakhash 1984, Moaddel 1991, Mallat 1992, Schirazi 1993). While part of JS’s mission was to eradicate leftists from the countryside, many of its members developed a similar affinity for land reform and other redistributive policies, which remained salient at the height of the Cold War. A similar phenomenon had occurred with the Shah’s Literacy, Hygiene, and Extension Corps, whose members, as a result of exposure to villagers’ destitute living conditions, began to sympathize with leftist, anti-regime activists (Sabahi 2002) – confirming Huntington’s assertion about mobilization’s long-term threat to the state.

In fact, numerous like-minded leftists defected from their respective movements and joined JS to avoid arrest, imprisonment, and execution – although a number of them would later be purged (Salehi-Isfahani 1983, Moslem 2000). Many JS members bought into Khomeini’s message (payām) – a powerful recruitment tool – that they were on a sacred mission to assist the disinherited (mostaṭa‘a ḥāfīn). Beyond ideological considerations, the fact that many members came from rural milieus meant they had a personal interest or stake in helping fellow villagers – including family, friends, and acquaintances – expand their property holdings.

As a consequence, JS championed land reform in several ways. With the exception of Turkman Sahra – the site of a leftist, ethnic, and Sunni uprising – the organization supported land grabs by villagers in different regions of the country (Bakhash 1984: 199). As it had done with the Islamic councils, the organization set up Seven-Member Committees (hayāt-e haft nafareh taqsīm zamīn) to distribute holdings to

50 Personal interview with a former member of JS and the Marxist-Islamist Mojāḥedīn-e Khalq in Iran on March 27, 2011.
low-income and landless villagers, and to trump similar efforts by councils affiliated with leftist, ethnic, and Sunni movements. These activities provoked tensions between JS members and regime conservatives. In response to the latter’s opposition to land reform, JS broadcast a television program entitled “The Leeches,” which referred to exploitative landowners (Ibid).

With backing from the Revolutionary Guard, JS clashed with Khomeini’s provincial representatives who were wealthy landlords (Salehi-Isfahani 1983). In addition to eschewing land reform, some of these clerics disapproved of JS members – most of whom lacked formal religious training – interfering in Islamic propagation (Schirazi 1993). In spite of JS’s efforts and to the dismay of its radical members, the type of widespread land reform implemented by the Shah never came to fruition in the Islamic Republic due to the repeated blocking of proposed legislation by conservative parliamentarians and the Guardian Council (shūrā-ye negāhbān). Compared to the Shah’s land reform, in which fifty-eight percent of rural households were recipients, the Islamic Republic only distributed five percent of total holdings to six percent of rural households (Azkia 2002: 118-119). Regardless of his populist rhetoric, Khomeini refrained from taking a clear stance on the issue (Mallat 1992). It was not a coincidence that during the same year Khomeini and the IRP consolidated power and JS became an official, cabinet-level ministry (i.e., 1983-1984), the conservative Guardian Council rejected the land reform bill, and the Iranian government transferred JS’s Seven-Member Committees to the Ministry of Agriculture in 1984 (Ibid, Azkia 2002: 108-109).

As privileged interests strengthened their position in government and as Khomeini and the IRP backtracked on land reform and other populist promises, concerns over JS’s
growing influence and radical agenda precipitated its subsequent demobilization and institutionalization. In addition to its statist institutionalization, JS’s demobilization was caused by its resource dependency on elites. On the one hand, the organization’s access to the material and symbolic resources of elites gave it a distinct advantage over its competitors. On the other hand, JS’s reliance on elites, as opposed to its own membership, meant that when its existence as a revolutionary organization or counter-movement no longer served or conflicted with elite interests, it was subjected to demobilization.

Another variable that prompts the institutionalization of a revolutionary movement is political and ideological fragmentation between its radicals and pragmatists. The latter are co-opted by the state when they accept political appointments, government positions, salaries, and other material benefits. Pragmatists are also aware that after the organization has helped the state achieve power consolidation, it must adapt and transform to remain relevant and survive.

Some radicals undergo a similar process when they are convinced that integration in the bureaucracy will enable them to pursue revolutionary value commitments. Those who resist co-optation often become further marginalized by the state. The widening rift between pragmatists and radicals makes the movement further vulnerable and susceptible to co-optation and institutionalization. As the revolutionary movement is brought into the bureaucratic fold, its organizational structure becomes more centralized, hierarchical, and rigid. This renders the movement less autonomous and more accountable to the state.

Between 1983 and 1984, JS succumbed to pressure from the conservative Guardian Council that it becomes a ministry (Schirazi 1993). That same year, regime
officials – concerned about the organization’s growing electoral influence and potential to become a state within a state (Ibid) – relied on Friday prayer leaders (emām jomʿeh), instead of JS members, to mobilize rural voters in the Islamic Republic’s second parliamentary elections (see also Arjomand 1988). Since many of these clerics were landowners and closely connected to the bazaar, they helped conservatives increase their representation in parliament (majles). This was a unique point that emerged from the empirical data because it highlighted the factional struggles that existed between IRP radicals, on one side, who relied on JS to mobilize rural voters during the 1980 parliamentary elections, and IRP conservatives, on the other, who turned to Friday prayer leaders to secure rural votes during the 1984 parliamentary elections.

In addition to IRP conservatives, IRP radicals led by Prime Minister Mir Hossein Mousavi (r. 1981-1989) supported JS’s bureaucratization, believing it marked the first step toward converting the organization into a super ministry (Schirazi 1993). Despite many members’ anti-bureaucratic sentiments, JS pragmatists lobbied for the movement’s transformation into a ministry so they would be entitled to the same standing, privileges, and benefits as other ministers and civil servants. As was the case with China’s Red Engineers (Andreas 2009), these individuals displaced ancien régime elites and, in the process, experienced high levels of political and socioeconomic mobility as state officials, bureaucrats, and businessmen.

Moreover, a number of radicals supported institutionalization and joined the new ministry to further the cause of rural development and keep the issue on the national agenda. In the final analysis, JS’s bureaucratization represented an “institutional

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51 Personal interview with a former JS member and parliamentarian in Iran on June 1, 2011.
settlement” or a negotiated agreement that served the interests of dominant factions (Davis et al. 2005). This quid-pro-quo arrangement satisfied regime conservatives by curbing the movement’s autonomy and radical ambitions, and appeased radical politicians, JS pragmatists, and certain radical members by upgrading the movement’s organizational status. The fact that the conservative Guardian Council approved the leftist parliament’s bill to convert JS into a Ministry attested to this institutional settlement between factions.

When deliberating the movement’s future, JS leaders debated whether to convert the organization into a charitable foundation (bonyād) or committee (komīteh) or an official ministry (Iravani 1998-1999). Choosing the latter option proved to be a shrewd decision. While the former would have entitled JS to state subsidies, becoming a ministry enabled it to preserve and expand its budget (even if it was subjected to parliamentary oversight) and to gain deeper access to policymaking circles, opening the door for increased political mobility for JS’s leadership. The case of JS can be contrasted to the Syrian General Federation of Peasants (ittiḥād al-ʾām lil fellāḥīn) (GFP). Like JS, the GFP was responsible for mobilizing and for providing services to villagers following the 1963 “revolution” or military coup that brought the Ba’athists to power. However, in contrast to JS, the GFP remained a union or interest group outside the bureaucracy and, as a result, had little leverage over political and administrative elites. In the rare instances when the GFP won a formal, legislative decision, it had difficulty getting it “translated into practice against bureaucratic obstruction and inertia” (Hinnebusch 1989: 76).
JS’s institutionalization applies to other revolutionary movements, including those existing in the West. European historian Anna Ross describes how Berlin police chief, Karl von Hinckeldey (d. 1856), integrated unsuccessful revolutionaries into 1848 Prussia’s first office for municipal statistics. According to Ross, this outcome comprised a mutually beneficial arrangement for both revolutionaries and the state. Collecting and analyzing statistical data allowed the latter to effectively target the distribution of public goods to cities and mitigate urban unrest in the midst of Europe’s revolutionary upheaval. Co-opted by government posts and gainful employment at the office for municipal statistics, former revolutionaries channeled their energy within the state, rather than against it by monitoring city living standards and keeping the issue of urban deprivation high on the national agenda.52

Within the contemporary Middle East, the case of JS evokes comparisons to the Saudi Ikhwān, the Arabic term for “brethren.” Although, in contrast to JS, the Ikhwān was exclusively a military force, it helped Ibn Saud (r. 1926-1953) – Saudi Arabia’s founder and first king – consolidate power between 1919 and 1926. After 1926, the Ikhwān entangled itself in issues that directly challenged the legitimacy and interests of the monarch, who initially instrumentalized these issues to mobilize the organization. While Ibn Saud utilized the fundamentalist teachings of reformist, Islamic thinker Muhammad Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab (d. 1792) to indoctrinate the Ikhwān, the latter resorted to al-Wahhab’s precepts when censuring the king for modernizing the country (i.e.,

introducing the automobile, telephone, and telegraph) and sending his son to Egypt, a country of “non-believers” (kuffār).\(^{53}\)

The *Ikhwān*’s cross-border raids into Hashemite Iraq – a protectorate of Great Britain – provoked retaliation from and strained Saudi diplomatic relations with the foreign power. With British support, Ibn Saud confronted the organization militarily and dismantled it by force. Due to fragmentation between hardliners and pragmatists, the *Ikhwān* became susceptible to co-optation and institutionalization. During Ibn Saud’s conflict with the organization, he co-opted members who remained loyal to him or defected to his side by inviting them to live in state-sponsored settlements (*hijrah*), which were fully equipped with living quarters, mosques, schools, agricultural equipment and training, and arms and ammunition. In exchange for their political allegiance, the Kingdom provided these individuals with other forms of government support, allowed them to maintain their religious influence, and eventually incorporated them into the Saudi National Guard.\(^{54}\)

**The Futility of Doing Away with Bureaucracy: Validating Weber**

As the Islamic Republic of Iran became increasingly conservative and pragmatic, it shifted its attention from unfulfilled, revolutionary value commitments (e.g., foreign trade nationalization, progressive labor laws, and land reform) toward maintaining social stability through nation-building and economic growth. After encountering formidable domestic and external opposition after the Shah’s demise, the Islamic Republic of Iran utilized the bureaucracy to mitigate social unrest by keeping the state running and

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\(^{54}\) Ibid.
delivering collective goods. In this sense, the Iranian bureaucracy “represented an orderly alternative to the agonies of a social and cultural revolution” (Ayubi 1990: 139).

Following Khomeini’s death and the end of the conflict with Iraq in the late eighties, the Iranian government focused on post-war reconstruction (an initiative in which JS played an important role) and alleviating a national recession caused by declining oil prices and foreign exchange shortages. In the process, the state reintroduced the Shah’s five-year plans, which contained clear economic benchmarks and targets, yet revealed the centralized nature of the Islamic Republic. For the latter, JS and other ministries did not merely represent tools for promoting stability. They constituted instruments of taking power consolidation to its logical conclusion by further penetrating and integrating the rural and nomadic periphery through development and modernization. The image of turbaned clerics spearheading this policy is a paradox modernization theorists are forced to confront.

For JS to feature prominently in the state’s designs, it took the form of a Weberian-style bureaucracy. While many former members interviewed by the author lamented the careerism, red tape, and stagnancy that emerged following JS’s bureaucratization, the process made sense from a rational, administrative standpoint. Although, as a revolutionary organization, JS helped improve rural infrastructure and living standards, its performance record left much to be desired. In interviews with the author, rural development experts, villagers, and some former members described the movement’s membership as highly motivated and committed, yet lacking experience and expertise. As a consequence, JS’s projects were often low-quality, rapidly depreciated, or
remained unfinished – forcing other ministries and agencies to renovate or complete them (Salehi-Isfahani 1983, Ehsani 2006, Salehi-Isfahani 2009).

In an interview with the author, an Iranian rural development expert criticized JS for its inefficient use of materials.\(^{55}\) The organization sometimes undertook projects that were not cost-effective by servicing villages that were under-populated or empty (Schirazi 1993). Moreover, JS did not always provide credit to those worthy of receiving it. In the end, officials grew concerned that the movement – with annual budgets of over half a billion dollars (Salehi-Isfahani 1983) – was wasting state resources.\(^{56}\)

Beyond its inefficiencies, JS was forced to confront accusations of corruption. According to a rural development expert interviewed by the author, some leaders and members allegedly embezzled property, supplies, and funds they were supposed distribute to villagers.\(^{57}\) While addressing this topic, a former member interviewed by the author conceded that “not all individuals joined the organization for altruistic purposes.”\(^{58}\) Considering that over half of JS’s budget was dedicated to the provision of inputs and credit (Salehi-Isfahani 1983), such allegations bolstered the case of officials who demanded greater financial transparency and accountability.

In addition to subjecting its budget to legislative scrutiny, the fledgling Ministry of JS invested considerably in developing the planning and expertise it sorely lacked. It converted its ad-hoc, central council into a formalized, executive committee comprised of the minister and several deputy ministers with their respective staffs and advisors (Iravani 1998-1999). The ministry established training programs and research centers (Iravani

\(^{55}\) Personal interview with a rural development expert in Iran on May 15, 2011.

\(^{56}\) When villagers deemed JS projects worthy of investment, they contributed up to fifty percent of the property, labor, and capital.

\(^{57}\) Personal interview with a rural development expert in Iran on March 5, 2011.

\(^{58}\) Personal interview with a former JS member in Iran on February 14, 2011.
While JS established its first research center during the war in 1981, the organization’s research centers did not gain serious financial support until it became a ministry. In 1989 and 1990, JS respectively obtained funding in the amounts of five billion rials/toman (~$9,400,000) and eight billion rials/toman (~$14 million) to allocate to its research centers, which, by 1991, had total a personnel of 1,500 employees, more than 800 of whom had university degrees (Ministry of Jehad-e Sazandegi 1991). Some of JS’s research centers included the following:  

- Similar to the US Army Corps of Engineers’ research and development centers, JS’s engineering research centers comprised the organization’s first research centers and conducted research related to military and defense engineering and to Iran’s military and industrial complex (Ibid). These research centers were based in Tehran, Esfahan, Shiraz, Tabriz, and Mashhad (Ibid). These centers conducted research on the following military projects: surface-to-surface missiles, tanks and armored vehicles, helicopters, pontoon and other bridges, swamp mats, water pumps, masks and machines against chemical weapons, and mine extractors (Ibid). To a lesser extent, these centers also conducted research for non-military projects, including bridges and lift chairs/telecabin to traverse remote, mountainous regions as well as various tools and machinery (e.g., snowplows) to clear paths in these same areas. These centers also developed tools, equipment, and machinery for agriculture and rural industry (e.g., mines, ceramics, and fisheries) (Ibid).

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• Established in 1986 and based in Tehran, JS’s Agriculture and Animal Husbandry Research Center’s mission was to improve the quality and quantity of Iran’s agricultural and livestock products, and to respond to the scientific needs of cooperatives and organizations related to agriculture and animal husbandry. The research center cooperated with university professors and specialists from the country’s agricultural faculties in the areas of planning and supervising studies. These professors and experts worked for the research center on a part-time basis. The research center also exchanged information with similar research centers outside of Iran. As of 1991, the research center employed approximately one hundred and twenty full-time staff (eighty of whom at least had a BA) and established nine research stations around the country for dry farming, twelve research stations for fodder, and several research stations for animal husbandry. As of 1991, the research center oversaw one hundred and twenty research projects, the most important of which was the development of a comprehensive system for the exploitation and preservation of the country’s pastures and natural resources (Ibid).

• Established in 1986, JS’s Research Center on Water undertook small and large project’s on Iran’s water issues, including reservoirs, diversion dams, network construction, pumping stations, dredging, aqueduct digging and repair, and basin construction (to harness and exploit water underground). The research center’s also provided engineering, technical, and scientific services for the country’s water resources, including hydraulic structures, coasts, harbors, and rivers. As of 1991, the center’s offices and laboratories were based in an undisclosed, temporary location, and employed more than fifty researchers and scientific and service personnel. The
research center received requests from the Ministry of Power and other state organs to conduct research on water issues. In 1990, the center received funding in the amount three hundred million rials/toman (~$540,000) (Ibid).

- Established in 1984, JS’s Research Center for the Study of Rural Issues conducted research on rural infrastructure and production with the aim of promoting rural development. The research center performed studies in Iran’s rural areas and endeavored to learn from the rural development experiences of other countries. As of 1991, the center conducted studies in five provinces, and translated and published books and articles on the rural development experiences of similar countries. The center also helped to organize seminars and conferences on rural growth and development in order to increase the knowledge of JS personnel and other experts. Finally, the center published a volume on the rural culture and socioeconomic conditions of Hamadan Province, with plans to do the same in several other provinces (Ibid).

- Established in 1953, Iran’s Organization for Research on Fisheries focused on the following: learning new fishing methods and to improve fishing techniques (i.e., fishing technology) in the north and south of the country; estimating aquatic life reserves and studying the quantitative and qualitative changes in these reserves (i.e., reserve evaluation); learning about, reproducing, breeding, and improving reserves of new types of aquatic life and fish with economic value (i.e., reproduction and breeding); discovering new production methods (i.e., fishery production technology); and cooperating with JS’s engineering research to produce necessary fishing buoys, equipment, machinery, and tools. In 1953, The organization established a research
station in Bandar Anzali, which conducted research on different issues pertaining to fisheries in Mazandaran Province (i.e., the North). In 1976, the organization established a fisheries research center in Bushehr (i.e., the South). The organization’s primary activities in the North consisted of reproducing fish with economic value, especially caviar and white fish, increasing reserves in surrounding waters, and controlling the quality of caviar and preparing caviar export standards to preserve Iran’s place in the international market. The organization’s primary activities in the South consisted of the following: understanding traditional fishing and giving it a role and place in fish production; cooperating with the FAO’s regional plan and estimating catfish and bottom dweller reserves in the Persian Gulf and the Oman Sea; undertaking different biological studies to designate seasons when fishing and certain fishing methods are forbidden; and farming and promoting the expansion of pearls in the Persian Gulf. As of 1990, the organization had two joint projects with FAO off the coast of Mazandaran and the Persian Gulf. Based in Tehran, the organization’s central office was responsible for making policy and for guiding and supervising projects. The organization had five research centers and four research stations in five provinces in the country’s northern and southern provinces. The organization’s research centers employed three hundred people, more than one hundred and twenty of whom had university degrees. These research centers had their own laboratories and facilities, including three ships and five research boats. Funding for the research center totaled 5.2 billion rials/ toman (~$3,767,000) and $2 million in 1990. As of 1985, the activities of all of the organization’s research centers with 6,700 people per month cost a total of 6,890,000,000 rials/ toman (~$6,062,159) (Ibid).
The ministry of JS also offered academic scholarships to managers and employees so that – like the Shah’s bureaucratic elite – they could pursue advanced degrees at universities in Iran and abroad (i.e., Western Europe and Australia). According to a former JS member from Yazd province:

After spending three years in JS and a few weeks after getting married, I returned to the university and received a scholarship from JS to study geography. I received an eleven-month scholarship at four thousand toman per month, which came out to be forty four thousand toman for the year. After finishing my studies, I was required to work for JS to pay back the scholarship.

In an interview with the author, an Iranian rural development expert estimated that in around 1991, during the Rafsanjani administration, the Ministry of JS awarded scholarships to approximately three thousands of its managers and employees, and sent them to pursue advanced degrees at universities in the West, including Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom. This initiative was part of Rafsanjani’s Thermidor to restore education and expertise to ministries and revolutionary organizations which had undergone extensive purges and lacked basic skills (Arjomand 1988: 144-164; Farhi 1990: 120; Schirazi 1993: 146-147; Moslem 2002: 71).

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60 Personal interview with rural development experts in Iran on April 19, 2011. This fact was confirmed in other interviews with rural development experts and former JS members. JS members and employees, who had dedicated seven years to the organization and ministry, were eligible for scholarships.

61 Personal interview with a former JS member and current rural development expert in Iran on April 19, 2011.

62 Personal interview with a rural development expert in Iran on April 19, 2011.
While acquiring advanced degrees, former JS members developed technocratic mindsets. Suddenly in their thirties with families to support and an array of financial concerns, these individuals strayed from revolutionary value commitments toward commanding higher salaries through professional advancement. At the same time, JS’s revolutionary culture steadily diluted as it employed a new generation of Iranians who were mainly concerned with finding jobs and earning paychecks in the midst of a national recession. These university graduates were less acquainted with JS as a revolutionary organization and further removed from espoused principles of the revolution and the sacrifices of war. As a consequence, these individuals further professionalized the culture of the ministry and moderated its radical impulses.

As a revolutionary organization, JS’s recruitment revolved around informal networks and, as previously mentioned, many of its members participated on a voluntary basis. While the prevalence of volunteers reduced payroll costs, it created organizational instability and incompetence because these individuals possessed a mixed skillset, worked inconsistent hours, and resigned on a whim (Ibid). This partially explained the wide variance in membership statistics, which ranges between 30,000 and 50,000 (Hiro 1984).

Between 1983 and 1984, JS began to do away with volunteerism and offered employees salary packages with health benefits, paid vacations, hardship bonuses, sick leave, disability, and pensions (Schirazi 1993, Iravani 1998-1999, Ministry of Jehad-e Sazandegi 2001). On April 12, 1988, JS was able to finalize such measures with approval of its financial, administrative, employment, and organizational regulations (Iravani 1998-1999: 203) (see appendix two). In addition to promoting organizational
certainty, competitive wages and adequate training, according to Evans (1989), reduce the risks of bureaucrats acting as predators to maintain their standards of living. While the ministry of JS hired its fair share of regime loyalists, war veterans, and, like any organization, well-connected individuals (pārtī-bāzī), it also adopted meritocratic recruitment standards by hiring qualified, university graduates and employment seekers. Meritocratic recruitment by JS and other ministries was aided by former President Hashemi Rafsanjani’s sizeable investment in domestic education, namely the Islamic Free University (dāneshgāh-e āzād-e eslāmī) system, which increased the local pool of qualified candidates. By devising an organizational chart with a clear hierarchy, job titles, and promotions, JS fostered long-term careers and greater certainty (Iravani 1998-1999).

For the regime, JS represented an instrument of taking power consolidation to its logical conclusion. Through roads built by the Ministries of JS and Roads and Transportation, the state penetrated and integrated the rural and nomadic periphery in unprecedented fashion. Through JS, the government extended its control over tribal and pastoral nomads – a goal the Pahlavis failed to achieve through manipulation and coercion (Cronin 2007). JS sedentarized and co-opted large segments of this population by constructing and settling nomads in residences; its Organization of Nomadic Affairs (sāzmān-e āmūr-e ʿashāyer) (ONA) – which it took over from the Ministry of Agriculture – supervised nomadic grazing methods, provided insurance to livestock owners, and purchased and sold animal products through industrial units owned and operated by JS (Tapper 1997, Iravani 1998-1999, Fazeli 2006).
Like other revolutionary states, the Islamic Republic of Iran could not eliminate or replace the *ancien régime* bureaucracy – a point that became increasingly evident following JS’s inception. While the revolutionary movement represented an organizational and cultural foil to the ministries, it was paradoxically inspired by them. Although JS provided more comprehensive services, it was based on the Shah’s Literacy, Extension, and Health Corps and on the Ministry of Agriculture’s Service Centers. Despite JS’s anti-bureaucratic mandate, it cooperated with ministries and relied on them for outside assistance. Similarly, Khomeini and the IRP initially relied on liberal politicians in the provisional government – led by Prime Minister Bazargan and President Bani-Sadr – to familiarize themselves with statecraft. JS members traveled to villages in second-hand vehicles donated by various ministries. The movement distributed medication and administered vaccinations supplied by the Ministry of Health.63 Before and after it became a ministry, JS coordinated with the Ministries of Power and Roads and Transportation and complied with their standards while building roads and delivering electricity and water (Iravani 1998-1999). JS’s organizational charts revealed that, from the beginning, the organization had relationships with various government ministries and organizations (Ibid) (see appendix four). Additionally, JS’s charter (granted the version approved by the revolutionary council and provisional government) stated in several articles (e.g., article three, section four) that the organization intended to cooperate with and to receive funding and resources from state offices and organizations (see appendix three).

63 Personal interview with a former JS member in Iran on April 17, 2011.
When it came to transitional states’ reluctance to completely overhaul ancien régime bureaucracies, the Islamic Republic of Iran represented the norm rather than the exception. Bureaucracy expert Ezra Suleiman (2003: 280) remarked that “although all revolutionary governments plan to overthrow existing bureaucratic structures and replace an ostensibly, hostile personnel with a new partisan elite, radical change rarely occurs and the pace of change is almost always slow.” In contrast to Maoist China, Leninist Russia realized that too much social chaos existed to summarily dismantle the “bourgeois” apparatus of the Czar. Instead, Lenin waited until substantial reforms were implemented and a cadre of loyal civil servants emerged before purging former bureaucrats (Suleiman 2003). In spite of the moral implications, many Nazis and their collaborators in 1945 Europe remained with their respective civil services while their countries embarked upon the daunting task of post-war reconstruction.

Although Great Britain’s 1945 Labor Party, France’s 1981 left-wing government, and Spain’s 1982 socialists did not come to power through popular revolutions, their ascendancy marked a watershed in Europe’s history. The welfare state arose in response to the devastation caused by World War Two and the broadening appeal of communism during the Cold War. Fears that civil servants who had served conservative governments would undermine leftist policies, led to calls for the wholesale restructuring of bureaucracy. However, such proposals never came to fruition as the state’s unprecedented role in promoting social equality required a robust and functional apparatus. The Europeans pragmatically kept their bureaucracies intact to preserve national defense (i.e., army), maintain internal security (i.e., police), collect taxes, prevent capital flight, and provision public goods (e.g., sanitation) (Ibid).
One could argue that exceptions to these historical examples included former Soviet Republics, which dismissed incompetent, old-guard bureaucrats so that governments could become more decentralized and further embedded in the private sector. This was especially the case in 1989 Germany, which possessed the financial means and pre-existing counter-elite (i.e., Bonn technocrats) to replace East Berlin’s communist bureaucracy (Ibid). Nevertheless, according to Suleiman (2003), the recent case of Eastern Europe generally follows the trend of gradual, non-revolutionary change. As the Americans discovered in 2003 Iraq, plans to effect sweeping, bureaucratic transformation carry high costs in the form of social instability. Cognizant of the fact that it instigated and came to power through political and social turmoil, the Islamic Republic of Iran – like other revolutionary regimes and irrespective of slogans to the contrary – ensured it did not fall victim to the same fate by forging a state that was more centralized and bureaucratic than that of its predecessor (Skocpol 1982, 1988, Farhi 1990, Goldstone 2001, Abrahamian 2008).

In spite of JS’s expanding bureaucratic culture, there existed a group of radical former members, who refused to relinquish revolutionary value commitments and experienced high levels of disillusionment. Social movement theorists identify activist fatigue, apathy, and disillusionment as causes of demobilization (Tarrow 2011: 220-224). However, the case of JS also demonstrates that these variables equally constitute outcomes of demobilization.

In interviews with the author, former JS radicals considered the Islamic Revolution a failed social revolution because transformative policies surrounding wealth redistribution and social justice (e.g., land reform) were never fully implemented (Farhi 1990).
1990: 107-118; Moaddel 1993: 199-200; Moslem 2002: 126). These individuals perceived the revolution’s unfulfilled promises as being tied to JS’s demobilization, bureaucratization, and institutionalization. They lamented that, like other ministries, JS became encumbered by red tape, careerism, and individualism; attributes which contradicted JS’s “all together” slogan, rendered the organization stagnant, and prevented it from improving socioeconomic conditions in the countryside. Particularly after the fall of the Soviet Union, many former JS radicals, like other leftists, gave up on statist economic policies. However, as will be described in chapter four, these individuals became reformists by resisting bureaucratic centralization and championing JS’s original spirit of popular participation.

Outcomes and Consequences: Rentierism, Public Choice, and Neo-Utilitarianism

As JS underwent institutionalization, it, in some ways, resembled Weber’s ideal-type, legal-rational bureaucracy, with legislative oversight, professionalized civil servants, meritocratic recruitment, and predictable career paths. Where JS deviated from this model was its lack of autonomy and insularity from revolutionary social forces. The latter shaped the contours of the fledgling regime which was ruled, in large part, by provincial elites (Arjomand 1988). For JS members (especially its pragmatists), the organization in particular and the revolution more generally represented an opportunity to displace the Shah’s urban, bureaucratic and professional elite. Similar to mid-twentieth century Saudi Arabia’s first cohort of civil servants (Hertog 2007), networks of JS members – who came from rural, middle class backgrounds – experienced high levels of political and socioeconomic mobility through both the ministry and its state-owned and
parastatal enterprises. When it came to JS, this mobility was not sui generis, but occurred in the Revolutionary Guard and other revolutionary organizations.

In interviews with the author, former members consistently took pride in the fact that they and their colleagues had reached the highest echelons of the political and economic establishment. JS leaders and members became ministers, deputy ministers, parliamentarians, and government advisors. Ali Akbar Nateq-Nouri – who, alongside Bani-Asadi, served as the Imam’s representative to JS in 1979 – was speaker of the house from 1992 to 2000 before serving as interior minister. He ran for president in 1997 and currently sits on the Expediency Discernment Council (majma‘-e tashkhīs-e maṣlaḥat-e neẓām), which, among other responsibilities, directly advises Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei (r. 1989-present).

Bijan Namdar Zanganeh, a native of Kermanshah and JS’s first minister, was appointed Minister of Energy by Prime Minister Mousavi and by President Hashemi Rafsanjani (r. 1989-1997) (Ministry of Jehad-e Sazandegi 2001). He later served as Minister of Petroleum under President Mohammad Khatami (r. 1997-2005) and, until 2012, sat on the Expediency Council (Ibid). 64 Gholamreza Farouzesh – a JS founder and Zanganeh’s successor as minister until the organization’s 2001 merger with the Ministry of Agriculture – was elected to the City Council of Tehran (shūrā-ye eslāmī-e shahr-e tehrān), which elects the mayor and overseas the capital’s budgets (Ibid).

Muhammad Javad Iravani – who became JS’s deputy minister between 1985 and 1986 – was appointed Minister of Economy and Finance that same year and now sits on

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the Expediency Council (Iravani 1998-1999). Hossein Mousavian – founder of JS’s branch in his hometown of Kashan – served as Iranian ambassador to Germany between 1990 and 1997, and as spokesman of the Iranian nuclear negotiation team with the European Union (EU) and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) between 2003 and 2005. Between 2005 and 2008, he was vice president of the Expediency Council’s Center for Strategic Research (CSR). Although these individuals constitute but a few notable examples, most, if not all, of them are closely connected with former presidents Khatami and Rafsanjani, who has chaired the Expediency Council since 1988.

Aside from receiving prominent political appointments, JS officials – much like the Shah’s bureaucratic elite (Ashraf 1995: 32) – were appointed the heads or deputy ministers of state-owned and parastatal enterprises. For example, under Khatami, former JS minister Farouzesh served as the chairman of the Iran Engineering and Oil Company (IEOC). As was the case with Arab bureaucracies, public posts in the Islamic Republic were indispensable for the conduct of business (Ayubi 1990). Since it was illegal for ministries to establish companies, the regime – beginning in 1986 – leveraged a loophole

through which JS could do so through the quasi-governmental Foundation of the Oppressed and Disabled (bonyād-e mostāţa ’fān va jānbāzān) (Iravani 1998-1999: 198-202). Moreover, JS poached responsibilities and corporations from other ministries, namely the Ministry of Agriculture.

From the Ministry of Agriculture, JS seized control of the national fishery, livestock, meat, poultry, and dairy companies (Iravani 1998-1999; Ministry of Jehad-e Sazandegi 2001). Aside from JS’s political connections and lobbying efforts, the organization’s ability to encroach upon the duties and corporate interests of other ministries was attributable to its favorable reputation among political elites. Beyond rural development, JS received praise for contributing to the war effort and exporting the revolution. As the case of JS demonstrates, reputation not only leads to bureaucratic autonomy, but expansion.

Much like the ones JS founded on its own, these companies monopolized the inputs, machinery, marketing, and processing of key economic sectors. After successfully bidding on government tenders, the organization relied on its own companies to implement projects rather than solicit the cooperation of other ministries or contract the work out to private firms. By using their power and influence to secure government contracts and tenders, Iranian politicians and JS officials could be described as “tenderpreneurs.” As a consequence, JS reaped windfall profits and diverted sizeable revenues from legislative scrutiny (Schirazi 1993) – defeating the original purpose of its institutionalization. This contributed to the country’s bloated public sector and to market inefficiencies and price distortions. Such market inefficiencies and price distortions
make it difficult for local producers of agricultural and rural commodities to compete with foreign imports.

For JS’s ministerial officials and business managers, political power and financial reward superseded organizational performance and the efficient delivery of local services and public goods. Corporate goals of increasing budgets and amassing responsibilities at the expense of other ministries became ends in themselves and trumped social policy objectives related to rural development. Much like Steffen Hertog’s (2007) account of the Saudi bureaucracy, Iranian ministries resembled neo-patrimonial fiefdoms with vertical ties to the state to maximize political concessions and extract unproductive rents. For this reason, competition overshadowed the potential for coordination and cooperation between JS and the Ministry of Agriculture. In interviews with the author, many rural development experts and former JS members insisted on the need for an independent body to coordinate between JS, the Ministry of Agriculture, and other ministries on agricultural and rural development policy.

In an effort to remedy this untenable situation and with outside assistance from international organizations like the World Bank, Rafsanjani pursued neo-liberal, structural-adjustment policies during the 1990s. With limited success, the president privatized a number of companies affiliated with JS and other organizations. Rafsanjani’s privatization efforts met with limited success because they sometimes took the form of crony capitalism and conflicted with the interests of parastatal corporations and charitable foundations (bonyād). Furthermore, these efforts were stymied by a

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68 In addition to Saudi Arabia and Iran, ministerial fiefdoms also exist in the oil-rich states of Venezuela, Kuwait, Qatar, and Libya (Hertog 2007).
radical parliament in the early 1990s, and stalled during a balance of payments crisis that ensued due to an oil price collapse in 1993-1994 (Harris 2013: 12).

In spite of Rafsanjani’s privatization efforts, many JS officials remained in charge of state enterprises and newly parastatal or privatized corporations. In 2011, the author interviewed former JS members in Iran who headed national petroleum companies and banks as well as private consulting firms. In 1990, Rafsanjani approved legislation restricting JS’s ministerial portfolio to the management of fisheries, forests, pastures, and livestock – which comprised lucrative industries. Iran produces meat, poultry, dairy, wool, and leather products, and is among the world’s largest producers of caviar (World Bank 1994). Forestry products are economically important, though strictly controlled by the Iranian government and JS, which runs a reforestation program (Ibid).

When costly redundancies and bureaucratic infighting persisted between the Ministries of Agriculture and JS, Khatami merged both organizations in 2001 to create the Ministry of Agricultural Jihad (\textit{vezārat-e jehād-e keshāvarzī}) (MAJ), which marked the culmination of JS’s institutionalization. While Khatami took the credit and blame for the merger, in reality, he implemented a policy which had been debated in political circles as early as the Iran-Iraq war (Schirazi 1993: 153-155). Between 1986 and 1987, the redundancy of JS’s responsibilities with those of the Ministry of Agriculture prompted Mousavi and his cabinet to propose abolishing the latter and incorporating it into JS (Ibid).\textsuperscript{69} However, the second parliament’s conservative representatives rejected the proposal due to their concerns about JS’s expansion. Follow-up discussions between

\textsuperscript{69} It should be noted that the cabinet, with parliamentary approval, had the power to dissolve JS and confiscate its assets (see article twenty one of JS’s official charter in appendix three).
Mousavi, Minister of Agriculture Dr. Issa Kalantari (1989-1998), and parliament about a potential merger also stalled (Ibid).

Although the Rafsanjani’s 1990 legislation delineated JS and the Ministry of Agriculture’s separate purviews, it did not resolve issues surrounding crop and livestock output. In 1991, the Ministry of JS and the Ministry of Agriculture (i.e., agricultural service centers) competed over government funds for the renovation and dredging of aqueducts (qanāt) in deserts and dry regions (see appendix two). The lack of coordination between both ministries in policy and planning, information sharing, and project implementation impeded sustainable agricultural production and animal husbandry. As separate ministries, neither JS nor the Ministry of Agriculture incentivized farmers to produce and market animal fodder to livestock owners or the latter to convert animal waste into fertilizer (World Bank 1994: i-iii, 48-50). Moreover, mechanization and grain subsidies encouraged farmers to encroach upon quality pastures, which were also in high demand among livestock owners due to feed supports and high meat prices (Ibid). This untenable state of affairs led to the official establishment of the MAJ under Khatami.

Although more than a decade has passed since the merger, most former JS members interviewed by the author disapproved of the merger, and those employed by MAJ tended to look down upon colleagues previously affiliated with the Ministry of Agriculture. At the same time, interviewees conceded that, over time, the merger process became smoother after the two organizations became more closely integrated, after both

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70 Plan and Management Organization of Iran. “The Matter Related to Budgetary Accounts in Connection with the [Ministry of] Agricultural Jihad in Budgetary Laws,” Date Unknown (provided by an Iranian rural development expert on December 20, 2011.)
sets of employees grew accustomed to working together, and after older generations of managers and employees were replaced with new ones further removed from the rivalry. These interviewees claimed that initial tensions were rooted in divergent worldviews between JS’s revolutionary activists and the Ministry of Agriculture’s traditional bureaucrats. Given the formers’ belief in a more holistic approach to rural development beyond agriculture (Schirazi 1993), this explanation is plausible. Nevertheless, considering that JS became a ministry nearly eighteen years before the merger, it is likely that this residual acrimony stems as much from philosophical differences as from a failure to safeguard bureaucratic territory and preserve commercial interests.

Within Peter Evans’ (1989) typology of developing states, the Islamic Republic of Iran is neither fully predatory nor developmental, but rather constitutes an intermediary case. Predatory states, such as Mobuto’s Zaire (presently the Democratic Republic of the Congo), extract “such large amounts of otherwise investable surplus and provide so little in the way of ‘collective goods’ in return that they do indeed impede economic transformation; those who control the state apparatus plunder without any more regard for the welfare of the citizenry than a predator has for the welfare of its prey” (Evans 1989: 562-563). By contrast, developmental states “may not be immune to ‘rent-seeking’ or to using some of the social surplus for the ends of incumbents and their friends rather than the citizenry as a whole, but on balance, the consequences of their actions promote rather than impede transformation” (Ibid).

As the career paths of former JS leaders and members demonstrate, the Iranian state is composed of an oligarchy which – while susceptible to factionalism – colludes to maintain high-level appointments among incumbents and control important economic
interests to recruit allies, cement elite coalitions, and secure the allegiance of supporters. At the same time, the state is not a pure kleptocracy and does not completely plunder from its citizenry. Similar to Evans’ predatory state, a kleptocracy (also spelled cleptocracy) is a government that increases the personal wealth and political power of its officials at the expense of the wider population by embezzling state funds. By contrast the Islamic Republic, through JS and other ministries and organizations, provides social welfare and collective goods to maintain social stability, deliver or appear to deliver on revolutionary promises, and preserve and enhance its political legitimacy.

JS’s mobilization and institutionalization did not merely take place within the context of a revolutionary state, but within that of a “rentier state,” which relies on rents – as opposed to productive wages and profits – from outside its borders. The state controls, distributes, and allocates most of these revenues, which are usually derived from petroleum or other natural resource exports or foreign aid. This concept – which was first introduced by Iranian scholar Hossein Mahdavi – eludes Evan’s taxonomy. Analysts identify bloated, inefficient, and corrupt public sectors and bureaucratic infighting over budgetary allocations – “not as a means to pursue particular programs but as an ongoing test of standing in the bureaucratic pecking order” (Ayubi 1990: 142) – as symptomatic of rentier states.

Such trends are noticeable in the Islamic Republic of Iran, which contains the world’s fourth largest petroleum reserves at ten percent of the international supply, and where oil export revenues in the amount of $47 billion account for about fifty percent of
public revenues.\textsuperscript{71} In his analysis of the Saudi bureaucracy, Hertog (2007) adopts a path dependent approach by arguing that the critical juncture of the Kingdom’s state formation in the 1950s and 1960s and the elite decisions that defined this period determined its current administrative makeup.\textsuperscript{72} Although, Iran, like Saudi Arabia, is a rentier state, it did not build its institutions from scratch; rather, similar to other revolutionary states, its bureaucratic legacy was born from the ancien régime. Nazih Ayubi (1990) draws a similar conclusion about newly-independent, Arab states, which inherited control-oriented administrations from Ottoman and European colonial powers that prioritized power over development. Thus, the Islamic Republic inherited an administrative system infused with patronage and oil wealth that gave ministries like JS their pseudo-bureaucratic, patrimonial character.\textsuperscript{73}

The rentier nature of the Islamic Republic of Iran has important implications for its rural development.\textsuperscript{74} Through JS, the state improved rural infrastructure and living standards, especially in the areas of literacy and health. Although Iran may boast higher income equality, its peculiar blend of welfarism and weakness of formal, representative


\textsuperscript{72} Path-dependency is “the idea that relatively small, early events can have a strong influence on subsequent structural developments” (Hertog 2007: 556). The key aspect of this concept is that past decisions or circumstances leads one down a specific path and closes off alternatives.

\textsuperscript{73} According to Weber, "patrimonialism" occurs when “administrative and military institutions serve as an intermediary between the ruler and the population, but they do not alter the traditional character of political authority or the centrality of patron-client ties to its exercise” (Vali Nasr 2000: 117). “The concept has been used in analysis of non-democratic regimes and states in the Third World – often under the rubric of ‘neo-patrimonialism’ or ‘sultanism’ – to emphasize the personalized character of political authority and its dependence on patron-client ties (i.e., clientelism) despite significant administrative reforms” (Ibid).

\textsuperscript{74} Other factors that impede the development of rentier states include national recessions and disruptions to government planning resulting from international price volatility and shocks, and Dutch Disease or an erosion of export competitiveness due to an appreciation of real exchange rates and wages caused by increases in public spending. Moreover, these states’ reliance on external revenues means they have less of an incentive to develop a tax base from productive industry.
institutions is characteristic of other rentier states in the Gulf, including Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the UAE, and Oman (Delacroix 1980). Unlike the archetypal developmental state, the Iranian rentier state did not autonomously embed itself in the private sector. Rather, as indicated above, the Islamic Republic often assumed the role of and crowded out private interests.

New provincial elites, including former JS members, displaced those of the ancien régime and captured the state to pursue their interests by maximizing budgets and rents at the expense of efficiency and productive investment. This outcome corresponds with assumptions found in public choice and neo-utilitarian theory. Public choice theory assumes that politicians and bureaucrats behave as rational maximizers or maximize agency budgets and authority in a self-interested manner to accrue political power, economic benefits, and personal wealth (Niskanen 1971). Since this comes at the expense of efficiency, productivity and growth, neo-utilitarian theorists argue that “the sphere of state action should be reduced to a minimum, and bureaucratic control should be replaced by market mechanisms wherever possible” (Evans 1989: 564).

In spite of JS’s rural development achievements, operating within the context of rentierism, public choice, and neo-utilitarianism has led to organizational deficiencies. Notwithstanding JS’s departments and staff dedicated to “popular participation” or the reports they drafted on villagers’ needs (see article fourteen, section “a” of JS’s official charter in appendix three), the organization adopted a centralized, top-down model of development. As a consequence, JS lacked the information to optimize performance in a complex rural environment it perceived as being backwards. This supported the neo-

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75 The idea that successful, developmental states (e.g., Japan) autonomously embed themselves in the private sector gained traction in the works of Chalmers Johnson (1982) and Peter Evans (1989, 1995).
utilitarian argument that government agencies should refrain from intervening in markets and regulating economies due to their lack of information (Lindblom 1977).

In interviews with the author, rural development experts, villagers, and former members complained that JS’s projects did not always meet the needs of villagers and sometimes interfered with their way of life. For example, public bathhouses were frequently used for other purposes (e.g., livestock and fodder storage) and certain structures (e.g., bridges, wells, dams, and aqueducts) disrupted ecosystems and were harmful to the environment. These interviewees faulted JS extension workers for advising farmers and livestock owners on unprofitable business practices. Rather than incorporate indigenous knowledge and tailor programs to local conditions, the organization adopted a cookie-cutter formula that neglected the country’s geographic, demographic, and ecological diversity.

Regardless of JS’s modest investments and programs in local handicrafts and cottage industry, rural development experts, villagers, and former members interviewed by the author criticized the organization for failing to curb rural migration and depopulation by not dedicating adequate attention and resources to boosting local income and employment. Although rural-to-urban migration rates decreased from nearly 3.6 million between 1977 and 1986 to 1.9 million between 1987 and 1996 (Azkia 2002: 101-117), this outcome largely resulted from the end of the war and migration, though

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reduced, still remained high. By 1992, JS only constructed 527 factories out of its target of 6,591; only created 4,877 jobs out of its target of 73,835; and only established 35 industrial estates out of its target of 130 (World Bank 1994: 58). A prominent rural development expert described JS’s mixed performance record as followed: “The paradoxical, unintended consequences of these efforts were that on radios and televisions that ran on electricity supplied by JS, villagers continued to perceive urban life as filled with more opportunities, and migrated to cities on newly-paved roads and bridges built by the organization.”

Although urbanization is a worldwide phenomenon that exists in developed and developing countries alike, some rural development experts and former JS members at the MAJ, private consulting firms, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are attempting to stymie its advance by pushing for a more participatory and bottom-up approach to rural and agricultural development. Some of them advocate a development model that is less distributive or welfare-oriented and more sustainable; in other words, one that prioritizes job creation and income generation as much as charity and public works. While these individuals’ efforts have yielded marginal results, the Iranian rentier state compensates for policy failures and insufficient investment in domestic agriculture and rural development by spending foreign exchange on grain and food imports (see Ehsani 2006).

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77 Personal interview with a rural development expert on February 23, 2011.
78 Personal interview with a rural development expert in Iran on May 4, 2011.
79 As in the case of other Middle Eastern countries, Iran’s agricultural development has suffered from persistent desertification and drought. Due to the personalized nature of politics and the executive appointment of ministers and deputy ministers by successive presidents every four to eight years, policies related to agricultural and rural development and other issues have lacked consistency and continuity.
On the surface, the case of JS and the Islamic Republic of Iran validates neo-utilitarian assertions that the state should play a minimal role in economic development. And yet, as the principle recipient of external rents in the economy and, hence, the primary accumulator of capital, the Iranian government – more so than developing countries without oil – has the capacity to ameliorate its role of developmental state.

With a healthy GINI co-efficient and high human development rates – especially in the areas of health and education – the Islamic Republic has, in many respects, excelled as a developmental state. To further improve development, it should – in the words of a rural development expert and former JS member – “act as facilitator rather than implementer” and loosen its hold on state-owned and parastatal enterprises. According to advocates of state-directed development, such a scenario would relegate the state to allocating subsidies, credit, infrastructure, and expertise to private companies and NGOs more adept at obtaining information and implementing projects (Johnson 1982, Evans 1989, 1995). Achieving this outcome will prove to be difficult as it will require convincing a cartel of enmeshed political and business elites to change the status quo by relinquishing political power and lucrative, commercial interests. Although JS and the Iranian bureaucracy’s efficiency and performance was initially hampered by the infiltration of revolutionary social forces, the principal impediment to effective, state-led

80 During site visits to Iranian farms in the countries’ southern provinces (e.g., Bushehr, Esfahan, Fars, and Yazd) in the spring of 2011 and while attending a May 21, 2011 meeting at Tehran’s Agricultural Association (khāneh-ye keshāvarzī) (a farming and agribusiness interest group headed by former Minister of Agriculture Issa Kalantari), the author noticed that some of Iran’s most successful farmers and livestock holders were those who operated independently of the state. At the same time, these farmers, many of whom were wary of state interference in agriculture, formed an association or interest group to pressure the government for better policies and more support (personal conversation with Agricultural Association members in Tehran on May 21, 2011).

81 After South Korea, Iran showed the biggest improvement in human development index percentage between 1990 and 2012 (“Development Not by Bread Alone,” The Economist, March 16, 2013).

82 Personal interview with a former JS member and rural development expert in Iran on March 15, 2011.
development and greater privatization no longer lies as much with politicians and bureaucrats’ inability to insulate themselves from society, but with the latter’s lack of autonomy from the state.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has traced JS’s institutional trajectory from revolutionary organization to official ministry to merged entity. In the process, it outlines conditions regarding the institutionalization of a revolutionary movement. After the movement assists the nascent state with consolidating power, its political utility diminishes and its existence is called into question. This especially applies to counter-movements, such as JS, which are partially mobilized by elites, command considerable resources from the state, and become entangled in contentious issues that challenge the interests and legitimacy of government authorities – even if the latter initially leveraged the same issues to mobilize the movement.

After revolutionary states consolidate power, they tend to become more conservative and pragmatic and often fail to convert impassioned, utopian rhetoric into tangible policies. This outcome brings the movement or, at least, its more disillusioned, radical elements into direct confrontation with the state. However, because the movement remains dependent on political elites, as opposed to own membership, for symbolic and material resources, it remains at the mercy of elite preferences and designs. While many former members adamantly opposed JS becoming a ministry or merging with the Ministry of Agriculture, their resistance to such measures risked having the organization’s purse strings cut and political support revoked, not to mention incurring their own marginalization. Moreover, their preferences were superseded by the
institutional designs of JS leaders, pragmatists, and even radical officials like Mousavi. This outcome reflects the inherent ambivalence and tensions that exist within a movement that is partially mobilized by elites. While the movement’s access to state resources gives it a distinct advantage over its competitors, its resource dependence on government authorities and integration into established systems of interest intermediation reduce its autonomy and threaten its long-term stability by imposing limits on its mobilization capacity and alienating important parts of its constituency (McAdam et al. 1996: 155-156).

After consolidating power, elites can dissolve the movement by cutting its purse strings or employing military force. However, this course of action is risky as it can unleash radical forces previously harnessed to consolidate power. From the perspective of political control, institutionalization and cooptation comprises an attractive alternative. It brings revolutionaries into the bureaucratic fold and enables them to channel their energy toward serving the interests of the state. From the latter’s perspective, it elicits a favorable, organizational transformation. The movement’s original autonomy and flexibility – which made it responsive to changing political demands and effective against regime challengers – represents a long-term liability for the regime, especially as the movement becomes further emboldened by its achievements and radicalized during the power consolidation phase.

As the movement undergoes institutionalization, its organizational structure becomes more centralized, hierarchical, and rigid – rendering it more accountable to state demands and resolving the principle-agent dilemma. During this process, the state co-opts the movement’s pragmatists, who have an interest in adapting, surviving, and
prospering through political appointments, government positions, salaries, and other material benefits. At the same time, the regime marginalizes radicals who resist institutionalization while offering more malleable ones the opportunity to join the bureaucracy and keep revolutionary value commitments on the national agenda. This divide-and-conquer strategy precipitates and exacerbates the movement’s ideological and political fragmentation, increasing its vulnerability and susceptibility to institutionalization and other state designs. Such trends are not *sui generis* to JS or the Islamic Republic of Iran, but are discernible in other Western and Middle Eastern countries, including nineteenth century Prussia and twentieth century Saudi Arabia.

The institutionalization of JS and other revolutionary movements often accompanies the newly-consolidated regime’s departure from revolutionary value commitments – which it initially used to mobilize the movement and galvanize the masses – toward tending to the complexities of managing a modern state. In order to meet the state’s needs, the movement adopts the form of a Weberian-style bureaucracy by enhancing its transparency, accountability, planning, competency, professionalization, stability, and predictability. JS achieved this by subjecting its budget to legislative review, formalizing internal planning, cultivating in-house expertise, developing meritocratic recruitment, and delineating long-term, career paths. The organization and the Islamic Republic of Iran’s inability or unwillingness to replace or eliminate the *ancien régime* bureaucracy is common for transitional governments in both the East and West.

Although JS adopted certain elements of Weber’s ideal-type bureaucracy, it remained a pseudo-bureaucratic apparatus of the state and, like other ministries, inherited
patrimonial, clientelistic, and rent-seeking tendencies from the former regime. While the organization improved rural infrastructure and living standards, neo-utilitarian and public choice prerogatives superseded the efficient delivery of collective goods. JS expanded its budgets and purview at the expense of other ministries and maximized revenues through the control of public and semi-state enterprises. In the process, its leaders and members experienced high levels of political and socioeconomic mobility. The surpluses of the rentier state induced and exacerbated bureaucratic infighting and costly redundancies between JS and other ministries.

Although JS and the rest of the Iranian bureaucracy contained islands of efficiency (e.g., research centers and specific departments), these ministries represented rent havens, fiefdoms, or small-scale empires through which national elites engaged in horse trading and the settling of political scores. As in modern Saudi Arabia, the Islamic Republic’s institutions constituted flexible tokens in intra-elite balancing games (Hertog 2007), yet such games revolved around political networks and cliques rather than royal nepotism – a phenomenon Iran had already experienced under the Shah.\textsuperscript{83} Moreover, these centralized and segmented institutions were plagued by a lack of information and coordination, along with a myopic focus on distribution rather than sustainability. While Iran has the capacity to further improve as a developmental state, its agricultural and rural development has fallen short of reaching its potential due to society and the private sector’s lack of insulation and autonomy from the state. So long as oil prices remain high, the ruling elite can maintain the status quo and preserve its power and commercial

\textsuperscript{83} Overlapping jurisdictions and areas of authority between ministries endowed with roughly equal power are politically functional for ruling elites in that they ensure competition among their subordinates (Ayubi 1990). At the same time, the absence of clearly defined responsibilities enhances elites’ flexibility to choose among personnel and policies (Ibid).
interests by importing grain and food in order to compensate for inadequate investment and deficient policy.

Empirically, this chapter is based on fieldwork I conducted during the summer of 2012 in Southern Beirut, the Bekaa Valley, and South Lebanon as a visiting scholar at the French Institute of the Near East (Institut français du Proche-Orient) and on a Travel-Research-Engagement (TRE) grant from George Washington University’s Project on Middle East Political Science (POMEPS). During this time, I conducted archival research in Hezbollah’s research center, among others, and interviewed farmers, laborers, residents, experts, and officials in these regions. As beneficiaries and partners of Jihād al-Bināʾ (JB), these interviewees offered insight into the organization’s history and activities. The advantage of conducting research on JB in Lebanon, as opposed to doing so on Jehād-e Sāzandegī (JS) in Iran, was that the organization was still active. As a result, Lebanese Shiites and other informants, without straining their memories, spoke with authority on recent activities and developments surrounding JB. The disadvantage was that, in contrast to JS in Iran, Hezbollah’s media office repeatedly denied my requests to access JB members, even though I unofficially interviewed several Hezbollah members. According to a foreign journalist who had been in Lebanon since the 1990s, Hezbollah refused to speak with foreign researchers and journalists since the beginning of the so-called Arab Spring in 2011. This policy demonstrated that Hezbollah was in the uncomfortable and contradictory position of being a popular resistance movement that was, at once, a client and backer of authoritarian regimes in Damascus and Tehran. This caused Hezbollah, which already faced a legitimacy crisis at home, to lose credibility on the Arab Street. However, in this chapter, I argue that, even as it confronted mounting domestic and regional pressures, Hezbollah remained the dominant actor in Shiite Lebanon.

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Introduction

In the early 1980s, the Islamic Republic of Iran exported the revolution to Muslim countries in the developing world by improving relations with these countries and by supporting national liberation struggles. During this period, the Islamic Republic ideologically framed its efforts to export the revolution as fulfilling the global mission of “recognizing, attracting, educating, and organizing the destitute (mahrūm) and oppressed (mostża’af) masses” to “develop common interests in the fight against the arrogance (estekbārī)” of imperial powers (Ministry of Construction Jihad 1991: 187). After consolidating power in 1984, the Islamic Republic’s foreign policy became less radicalized (Ibid).

To mitigate its isolation, the Islamic Republic improved diplomatic and trade relations with the outside world, and restricted exporting the revolution to neighboring countries (Emadi 1995: 2-3). Such measures were part of the active neutrality foreign policy of the pragmatic Rafsanjani, who became president in 1989, and the Society of Combatant Clergy (jāmeʿ-ye rūḥāniyat-e mobārez), a conservative, right-wing faction opposed to a wholesale export of the revolution to avoid antagonizing potential allies or destabilizing foreign markets (Moslem 2002: 110-111). As such, the ideological discourse of exporting the revolution changed from rescuing the oppressed and fighting imperialism to “restoring [Iran’s] historical presence and authority” in the Muslim world; “recovering lost religious, cultural, and economic relations” with Muslim countries; tapping into the “cultural, social, technical, scientific, and economic potential” of these

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85 In spite of its universal and populist dimension, exporting the Islamic Revolution specifically targeted the Muslim world.
countries; and “introducing [Iran’s] distinct expertise and technical talents beyond its borders” (Iravani 1998-1999: 263).

Beginning in the mid-eighties, the Islamic Republic used Construction Jihad (Jehād-e Sāzandegī) (JS) to establish and improve diplomatic and economic relations with the Muslim and developing world. Lebanon was the only country in which JS established a local branch, and, hence, it is the case study of this chapter. For the Islamic Republic and JS, Shiite Lebanon (i.e., South Beirut, the Bekaa Valley, and South) offered great possibilities for synergy due to deep historical connections, mutual religious and cultural affinities, and overlapping political interests. In 1988, JS founded a nearly identical organization in the country by the name of Jihād al-Bināʾ (JB), the Arabic equivalent of “(re)construction jihad”. In the process, JS provided training and support to the local resistance movement, Hezbollah, in the areas of service provision, indoctrination, and proselytization.

The scholarship on the Iran-Lebanon nexus mainly focused on cooperation between military and security organizations, namely the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps and Hezbollah (Ranstorp 1997, Saad-Ghorayeb 2002, Qassem 2005, Norton 2007). While these scholars acknowledged that Hezbollah’s social welfare and development services were vital to gaining popular support and to attracting recruits, they overlooked the essential training and support that Iran provided in this area. Through the case of JS and JB, this chapter sheds light on the relationship that existed between the Islamic Republic and Hezbollah surrounding social welfare and development. The abovementioned scholars also portrayed Hezbollah-affiliated organizations as Iranian

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86 Whereas the early stages of the revolution prioritized commitment over expertise, reinvigorating and cultivating the latter became a national obsession during the Iran-Iraq war and Rafsanjani administration.
pawns. By contrast, this chapter demonstrates that JB, which, from the standpoint of personnel as opposed to funding, became fully localized in 1992, exhibited its own agency and was equally influenced and shaped by Lebanese politics.

Beyond extant, military and security connections between Hezbollah and Iran, a burgeoning literature emerged on Shiite transnationalism in the Middle East and Muslim World, with the Islamic Republic as its focal point (Louër 2008, 2012; Shaery-Eisenlohr 2008). The literature on Shiite transnationalism was irrelevant to most of JS’s overseas activities, which took place in Sunni-majority countries, including Albania, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Sudan, and Tanzania. However, this literature did apply to JS’s operations in Shiite Lebanon. The literature on Shiite transnationalism heavily focused on clerical sources of emulation (marājaʿ taqlīd), Iranian diplomacy and cultural politics, and Khomeini’s doctrine of the Guardianship of the Jurist (velāyat-e faqīh) or the idea that government should be ruled by a leading jurist in accordance with Islamic law (sharīʿa) (see Louër 2008, Shaery-Eisenlohr 2008).

In conversations with the author, Hezbollah members in the Bekaa Valley revealed that political and religious loyalty to Iran was a complicated matter.87 After Khomeini’s death in 1989, members of the Society of Qom Seminary Teachers (jāmeʿeh ye modarresīn-e howzeh-ye ʿelmiyeh-e qom) controversially conferred Khamenei, who was below the rank of ayatollah (i.e., ḥojjat ol eslām), the status of grand ayatollah (Behrooz 1997); in unorthodox fashion, Khamenei, in 1994, refused this status inside of Iran, but accepted it for Shiites outside of the country (Ibid).88 Although Hezbollah

87 Personal conversations with Hezbollah members in the Bekaa Valley on July 11, 2012.
88 Khamenei’s division of labor between being a marja` inside and outside of Iran lacked precedence in traditional Shiism (Behrooz 1997). With Khamenei exclusively a source of emulation outside of Iran, this alleviated pressure on Iranian Grand Ayatollahs Lotfollah Safi Golpaygani and Naser Makarem Shirazi.
members were required to openly pledge their allegiance to Khamenei (Bakhash 1984: 235), this did not mean much from a de facto standpoint.

Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei commanded political allegiance as supreme jurist (valī-e faqīh). However, like other sources of emulation, he did not possess absolute religious authority. The abovementioned Hezbollah members insisted that, as emulators (muqalidūn) and interpreters (mujtahidūn), they had a personal right and responsibility to assess the writings and opinions of different sources of emulation, and to decide for themselves which one most closely resonated with their logic, values, and sensibilities. Because these decisions were made within the framework of emulation (taqlīd) and interpretation (ijtihād), they revolved around minute, legal technicalities (e.g., fasting requirements) rather than grand, philosophical tenets. While Hezbollah members chose to accept Khamenei, others, even within the same families and friendship circles, followed other sources of emulation, such as Iraqi Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani (b. 1930). Although Shiites were not supposed to emulate deceased sources of emulation, some Hezbollah members and Lebanese Shiites still followed the teachings of the late Lebanese Grand Ayatollah, Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah (d. 2010).

If the literature on Shiite transnationalism did not fully account for JS’s transnational diffusion into Shiite Lebanese, how, then, does one explain this process? This chapter posits that, beyond security and religion, JS’s transnational diffusion and its special connection to JB can be explained with recourse to social movement theory (SMT) mechanisms, including mobilizing structures, political opportunities, and cultural

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89 Personal interview with Hezbollah members in the Bekaa Valley on July 10, 2012. This conflicted with Khamenei’s perception of his role as supreme jurist because he issued juristic rulings (fatwā) both in this capacity and as a marja’.
framing. As a reminder, mobilizing structures are the forms of organization, formal as well as informal, available to activists that comprise the collective building blocks of movements (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996: 2-3). Political opportunities comprise the structural conditions that encourage, constrain, and otherwise affect movement activity and shape the likelihood and success of mobilization (Ibid). Cultural framing is the collective processes of interpretation, attribution, and social construction that mediate between opportunity and action (Ibid).

In the rest of this chapter, I substantiate my argument in three steps. First, I provide an overview of JS’s overseas activities in the Muslim and developing world, and demonstrate that Shiite transnationalism did not apply in this context because the emphasis was on Sunni-majority countries, primarily in Africa. Second, I focus on the Lebanese case and show that, beyond security and religion, the SMT mechanisms of mobilizing structures, political opportunities, and cultural framing accounted for JS’s diffusion into the country. Third, I examine Hezbollah and JB’s statist institutionalization, which, similar to JS, precipitated their internal fragmentation and declining legitimacy. In spite of this outcome, I conclude by arguing that Hezbollah and JB continued to remain dominant actors not because of superior efficiency or performance, but because of a lack of viable alternatives and the shortcomings of domestic, regional, and international competitors.

An Overview of Jehād-e Sāzandegī’s Overseas Activities

During the late eighties and early nineties, the Islamic Republic utilized JS to strengthen its ties with the developing world and to assert its influence in the Middle East
and Muslim World. When describing JS’s overseas activities, former members interviewed by the author conveyed the image of revolutionary activists, similar to Cuban volunteers in Angola,\(^9\) undertaking rural extension and community service projects in developing countries around the Muslim world. To motivate the JS personnel who operated overseas and to lend meaning to their actions, the Iranian regime framed their mission as an attempt to export the Islamic revolution. In reality, the purpose of these activities was to mitigate Iran’s diplomatic and economic isolation and to expand its influence by establishing bilateral relations centered on rural and agricultural development.

JS’s overseas activities did not commence until 1985-1986, two years after the organization became a cabinet-level ministry and fell under the full control and supervision of the state in 1983-1984. Far from being spontaneous, these activities were highly deliberate and coordinated through official protocols and agreements. Before JS surveyed, planned, or implemented projects on the ground, high-level officials from Iran and recipient countries held meetings, negotiated terms of service, and obtained consent through the signing of bilateral memoranda of understanding, agreements, and treaties.

Following a 1985-1986 meeting between Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who, at the time, was president of the Islamic Republic, and [representatives from] several African countries, JS was assigned the mission of surveying and studying rural development plans in Tanzania (Ministry of Construction Jihad 1991: 187). In this capacity, JS dispatched a delegation [to Tanzania] focused expanding mechanized and semi-

mechanized, agricultural development to increase the production of strategic crops (i.e., rice and corn) and to present an appropriate design in this area (Ibid). Following meetings between Hojjat Ol-Eslam Hashemi Rafsanjani, who, at the time, was Speaker of the House and Sierra Leone’s head of parliament and following their approval, JS began preliminary activities in Sierra Leone (Ibid: 188). Prior to undertaking overseas activities, JS, like other ministries, had to secure budgets and other resources from the Iranian Parliament (majles-e shūrá-ye eslāmī) (Ibid: 188). During implementation, Iranian and local officials toured JS’s project sites to evaluate progress and to ensure that commitments were being met (Ibid: 187).

Following its preliminary visits to Tanzania and Ghana, JS was tasked with undertaking agricultural and rural development projects in these countries in 1987 and 1989 respectively. The ministry sent more delegations to expand mechanized agriculture, to improve farming (dry, wet, and integrated), and to increase the production of strategic crops (i.e., rice and corn), livestock, and fish. To achieve these goals, JS donated tractors and fishing equipment, offered training, and opened service and marketing centers. It also provided services related to health and education; as in Iran, the former consisted of distributing and administering medication and vaccinations and the latter aimed to boost educational standards and literacy rates while spreading religious and cultural values. To a lesser extent, JS offered loans, supplied irrigation and drinking water, supported rural industry (e.g., quarries, factories, and processing plants), and constructed roads, dams, clinics, and schools (see table 3).

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91 This corroborated that JS was on the left as rightist organizations could circumvent parliament in asking for money through the Office of the Supreme Leader (daftar-e rahbarī). At the same time, when excluded from five-year plans, JS officials circumvented the Plan and Budget Organization and directly appealed to the Office of the Supreme Leader (personal interviews with a rural development expert in Iran on March 5 and April 16, 2011).
In the late eighties and early nineties, JS focused its overseas activities on Muslim countries, all of which, with the exception of Lebanon and Albania, were located in Africa. When sending delegations to perform preliminary surveys and assessments, JS would select regions within recipient countries that were predominantly Muslim. At least in the beginning, the ministry exclusively serviced Tanzania’s Ikwiriri region, located 175 km south of Dar es Salaam, and Ghana’s Northern Provinces, both of which contained Muslim majorities (Ministry of Construction Jihad 1991: 188). With the exception of Lebanon, which will be discussed at greater length below, the literature on

Table 3. Construction Jihad’s foreign activities from their commencement until March 1993 (Farvardin 1372) (Translated by the author from the Ministry of JS’s Office of Statistics and Information in Iravani 1998-1999: 262) (Note: The symbol “--” above denotes that the data is unavailable).
Shiite transnationalism did not capture JS’s overseas activities, which focused on countries with substantial Sunni Muslim populations, including Albania, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Sudan, and Tanzania.\(^\text{92}\)

Among these countries, only Tanzania contained a substantial Shiite, minority population that included an Ismāʿīlī community under the spiritual leadership of the Aga Khan.\(^\text{93}\) JS’s overseas activities were ideologically portrayed as servicing destitute and oppressed Muslims, and as convincing them, even if most were Sunni, of the merits of Khomeini’s revolutionary message and brand of Shiite Islam. As of this writing, it was not possible to determine where JS fell within the institutional landscape of the Islamic Republic’s foreign policy. It should be noted that this landscape was bifurcated depending on whether Iran undertook foreign activities in Sunni or Shiite countries.

After JS began its overseas operations, the Islamic Republic established the Institute of the World Forum for the Proximity of Islamic Schools [of Thought] (\(mūʿasah al-majmaʿ al-ʿalamī lil taqrīb bayn al-madhāhib al-islāmiyah\)). Similar to the purpose of

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\(^\text{92}\) In the early 21st century about seven-tenths of the Albanian population was nominally Muslim, more than half of them Sunni Muslims and the next largest group being the Bektashi sect, a Sufi order and heterodox Shiite sect. In 1967, the communist party officially proclaimed Albania an atheistic country and commenced to close all places of worship (churches, mosques, and \(zāwiyahs\)), confiscate their property, and ban religious observances. For the whole of its 45 years of absolute rule, the party engaged in large-scale persecution of believers. Only in 1990, when freedom of worship was restored, did churches and mosques begin reopening (Britannica Academic Edition (retrieved on June 23, 2013 at http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/12472/Albania). In Ghana, sixteen percent of the population was made up of Muslims, a majority of whom were Sunnis from the Maliki and Ahmadi branches (Ghana had the largest percentage of Ahmadis in the world) in the Northern Provinces, where JS operated. A small number of Shiites resided in Ghana’s southern cities (U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. “International Religious Freedom Report 2009 - Ghana.” October 26, 2009(http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/2009/127235.htm). Between sixty-to-seventy one percent of Sierra Leone’s population were Muslims, most of whom were Sunni (U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, “Report on International Religious Freedom 2010 - Sierra Leone,” November 17 2010 (http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4cf2d06b43.html). The Sudanese population, which was ninety-seven percent Muslim, adhered entirely to Sunni Islam (“United Nations Development Program – Sudan” (http://www.sd.undp.org/sudan%20overview.htm).  

JS’s overseas activities, the Institute aimed to reverse the trend of Iran’s increasing isolation in the Sunni world following the revolution. Believing that the Institute went too far in fraternizing with the Sunni community, conservative clerics, Ayatollahs Mohammad Ali Tashkiri and Ali Akbar Velayati, established, in 1991, the Institute’s Shiite counterpart, the World Forum for People of the House (i.e., the Prophet Muhammad’s family) (al-majmaʿ al-ʿalamī lil āhl al-bayr). Neither the Institute nor the Forum openly proselytized, especially the former given that it operated in and sought to build bridges with the Sunni world. The Forum, which was funded by the Ministry of Culture and Guidance (vezārat-e farhang va ershād), restricted its activities to persuading Shiites to follow Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei as their source of emulation. In light of this, the possibility existed that the Forum financed JS’s construction of religious schools and seminaries (ḥawzeh), which promoted Khamenei’s status as a source of emulation, in Shiite countries, such as Lebanon.94

Beyond religious proselytization, the primary purpose of JS’s overseas activities, from a pragmatic standpoint and along the lines of Peace Corps or USAID, was to help an increasingly-isolated Islamic Republic, particularly in the midst and aftermath of the Iran-Iraq war, to establish diplomatic and trade relations with, and to expand its sphere of influence in the developing world. Given its developmental challenges, Africa represented the ideal locale for JS to start. JS paved the way for the Ministry of Agricultural Jihad (MAJ), the byproduct of the 2001 merger between JS and the Ministry

of Agriculture, to establish a presence in and build and strengthen bilateral ties with a host of developing countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East.

Continuing where JS left off, MAJ regularly sent delegations to and received high-level officials (i.e., ministers and vice presidents) from Ghana, Sierra Leone, Sudan, and Tanzania. With representatives from these countries, the ministry regularly held joint summits and signed memoranda of understanding and official agreements to provide agricultural and rural development, technical support, economic assistance, and investment in infrastructure (e.g., power plants) and industry (e.g., production and processing units) (see Ministry of Agricultural Jihad 2007-2008: 13-16; Ministry of Agricultural Jihad 2008-2009: 8-16).

In return, between 2007 and 2009, these countries, namely Ghana and Tanzania, allowed Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) (ṣedā va sīmā-e jomhūrī-e eslāmī-e īrān) to broadcast television and radio documentaries within their borders, and granted contracts and favorable terms of trade (i.e., reducing customs duties and other trade barriers) to Iranian state and parastatal companies (Ministry of Agricultural Jihad 2008-2008: 11, 14). During this period, the Tanzanian government purchased tractors from Iran’s national tractor company (sharekat-e tārāctūr-e sāzī-e īrān) and tendered an Iranian company (sharekat-e sārāmjad) to digitize and automate its television and radio networks (Ibid: 8). At the same time, MAJ delivered agricultural and rural development services to Tanzania by subcontracting projects to the Development Jihad Institute (mūa’asate-jehād-e tawse’e), a parastatal company once affiliated with JS (Ibid: 9).

95 The Development Jihad Institute was an engineering holding company founded on August 11, 1986 by the Foundation of the Oppressed and Disabled (bonyād-e mostżā’afān va jānbāzān) and transferred to JS because, as a ministry, it was illegal for it to establish its own companies. Through its subsidiaries, the Institute delivered technical and engineering services related to the construction and development of
These broadcasting and trade agreements constituted a unique point to emerge from the empirical data because they highlighted the extent of the Islamic Republic’s soft power in Africa.

The Case of Jehād-e Sāzandegī in Lebanon: Jihād al-Binā’

On September 12, 1988, JS officially established its Lebanese counterpart, Jihād al-Binā’ (JB), the Arabic equivalent of Construction Jihad. As in Africa, JS did not begin operations in Lebanon until it was a cabinet-level ministry and under the full control and supervision of the state in 1983. This contrasted to the Revolutionary Guard, which the Islamic Republic sent to Lebanon following the 1982 Israeli invasion to train local, Shiite militias that would eventually become the popular resistance movement Hezbollah, officially established in the early to mid-eighties (Bakhash 1984: 235; Harik 2006: 270). Even in this case, Khomeini, the pragmatic Rafsanjani, and the conservative Society of Combatant Clergy showed pause. After a parliamentary vote, the Islamic Republic dispatched approximately three hundred Revolutionary Guards, which amounted to less than what the Syrians and Lebanese Shiites had initially requested.

infrastructure, including irrigation, drainage, aqueducts, dams, ports, piers, roads, silos, and buildings. It also imported the materials, supplies, and machinery necessary to perform these activities (Iravani 1998-99: 199-200).


97 Categorized as both a revolutionary organization and a branch of the armed forces, the Revolutionary Guard had its own ministry until 1989 when the latter integrated into a joint ministry with the regular army (MOFADL). In contrast to JS, the Revolutionary Guard reported directly to the Supreme Leader.

In interviews with the author, formers members asserted that JS experienced the most overseas success in Lebanon, particularly the Shiite enclaves of Southern Beirut, the Bekaa Valley, and the South; in contrast to Africa, these regions shared longstanding historical ties, deep religious and cultural affinities, and common political interests with Iran. The fact that Lebanon was the only country where JS established a franchise attested to its exceptional success there. The mechanisms, which accounted for JS’s cross-regional diffusion into Shiite Lebanon, transcended military and security issues, and were more complex than those prescribed by the literature on Shiite transnationalism.

As with JS in Iran, JB leveraged mobilizing structures in the form of pre-existing networks of Lebanese activists to reduce start-up costs. The same could be said of Hezbollah, which was initially comprised of an amalgamation of Iran-supported, radical groups that undertook military operations and social welfare. Examples included the Association of Muslim Scholars in Lebanon (tajama’a al-‘ulamā’ al-muslimīn fī lubnān) and the Association of Scholars of Jabal Amel (tajama’a ‘ulamā’ jibil ‘āmil), both of which fought in the civil war and against Israel while running educational and charitable organizations, including schools, cultural centers, clinics, and orphanages. These institutions were overseen by local clerics, including Fadlallah, who was a member of the abovementioned associations and would ultimately become Hezbollah’s spiritual guide (Harik 2006: 265-266).

Between 1988 and 1992, Iranian clerics, lay activists, and ministerial employees affiliated with JS opened JB’s headquarters, directed and managed its offices, and trained

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local Shiites associated with Hezbollah in the administration of welfare programs (Ministry of Construction Jihad 1991: 188; Iravani 1998-1999: 263; Danawi 2002: 94).\footnote{As of this writing, it was not possible to get a sense of the number of people JS deployed to Shiite Lebanon. Though it could not be confirmed, it was likely that these individuals were conversant and literate in Arabic.}

The training, material resources, and organizational assistance offered by JS enabled JB to create an “integrated program of social and public services” that was unmatched by other actors in Lebanon (Harik 2006: 266). Just as JS appropriated tactics from ancien régime and leftist challengers, JB did so from the public works committees affiliated with the political parties of other sects and from Hezbollah’s fiercest rival, Amal, a Shiite movement and political party established in 1974.\footnote{During the late eighties, violent confrontations erupted between Amal and Hezbollah over control of Shiite Lebanon. Due to sectarian quotas, Hezbollah exclusively engaged in electoral competition with Amal, the only other Shiite political party of any significance.} This made sense given that Hezbollah, originally known as Islamic Amal, splintered from Amal between 1982 and 1984. Beginning in 1978, after successive Israeli military operations in Southern Lebanon, Amal and its Council of the South, with resources from the state, provided social assistance to the needy, offered medical care to injured fighters and civilians, supplied piped water, and rebuilt roads, bridges, schools, hospitals, and housing (Ibid: 268, 279).

Compared to Amal, JB provided more extensive services, especially in Southern Beirut. The ḍāḥiyah was in dire need of assistance because it was overpopulated by Shiites fleeing the war-torn Bekaa and South, suffered extensive damage during the civil war (e.g., shelling by the Lebanese army in 1983), and was neglected by both the state and Amal, which almost exclusively concentrated its efforts on the Bekaa and South
From the outset of its establishment in 1988, JB collected refuse on a daily basis in Southern Beirut and continued doing so until 1992, the year the state’s Council for Development and Reconstruction, which received international aid, took over managing sanitation and subcontracting public works projects (e.g., road, electricity, and school reconstruction) to local companies. Between 1988 and 1996, JB dug fifty-seven artesian wells fitted with pumps, laid fifteen thousand meters of water pipes, built four water reservoirs, set up four hundred tanks for potable water, and installed five electrical power stations/networks (which included four stabilizers of 100-160 kilowatts, twenty-five generators of 250-500 kilowatts, and 4,100 meters of high voltage wires) in various neighborhoods of Southern Beirut (Harik 2004: 85). At least through the early to mid-2000s, JB still supplied water to and repaired the ḍāhiyah’s electricity, sewage, and drainage systems, helping the Lebanese government avert a social catastrophe there (Harik 2006: 273-275).

Hezbollah and JB’s superior performance in service provision was as much the result of greater financial support from Iran versus Syria as it was the result of Amal’s worldview and institutionalization. According to a Lebanese intellectual and activist:

Service provision was never a major goal or function of Amal. Amal’s founder Musa al-Sadr (d. 1978) advocated communication between the Shiites and the

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102 While Amal’s Council and Ministry of the South took on public works projects (e.g., repairing bridges), Amal leader Nabih Berri’s wife, Randa, opened health clinics and vocational training centers in the South (Nabatiyah) (Harik 2006: 269, 276). For this reason, during 1992 parliamentary elections, Amal swept the South while Hezbollah dominated the Bekaa (Ibid: 278).

103 Amal was initially privy to support from Iran, but this changed after the collapse of the Iranian provisional government in 1979, the death of key ally Mostafa Chamran in 1981, and the power consolidation of elites partial to Hezbollah that same year (Harik 2006: 268-269). Thereafter, Syria became Amal’s main patron which, at times, bred tensions between Damascus and Tehran.
Lebanese state, and that Shiites refrain from placing themselves outside of the state. Al-Sadr’s campaign was aimed at getting Shiites more official recognition and official state provision. During the civil war, Amal leader Nabih Berri (r. 1980-present) was willing to engage in dialogue with Lebanese officials. As speaker of parliament, he did not and could not place a large emphasis on social welfare. This, of course, was contrary to the beliefs and functions of Hezbollah, especially during that time period.104

At the same time, Berri’s wife, Randa, opened health clinics and vocational training centers in the South (Nabatiyah) (Harik 2006: 269, 276). This partially explained why, during 1992 parliamentary elections, Amal swept the South while Hezbollah dominated the Bekaa (Ibid: 278). Similar to JS, Amal’s Council of the South, which undertook public works projects (e.g., repairing bridges), became an official ministry in Lebanon’s administration between 1984 and 1985 before being dissolved in 1989 (Harik 2006: 268-269). While the ministry enhanced Amal’s national and communal status, its bureaucratization rendered the organization less functional and responsive. The Council of the South’s fate, coupled with U.S. sanctions against JB, likely prompted Hezbollah, which was also integrated into the state, to deliberately preserve JB’s status as an independent, charitable foundation.

As with JS during the Iranian revolution and Iran-Iraq war, JB witnessed a swelling of its ranks and a broadening of its responsibilities during periods of political instability and military conflict, namely the fifteen-year civil war and repeated clashes

104 Personal correspondence with a Lebanese intellectual and activist on July 4, 2013.
with Israel. For JB, military conflict particularly represented a political opportunity of major proportions as it allowed the organization to fill a void left by the state by providing services to civilians, many of whom were relatives of fighters (mujāhidīn), caught in the crossfire and subject to property damage. According to Lebanon expert Judith Harik (2006: 284), “no other Lebanese party besides Hezbollah had been able to continue as well as constantly expand the scale and scope of its wartime welfare activities.”

In addition to widespread physical destruction and numerous displaced families, the protracted civil war and continuous conflict with Israel disrupted public services (i.e., sewage, water, electricity, education, and health). This outcome was worsened by the fact that Maronite officials and administrators fled the Shiite regions, and that their positions remained vacant due to legal, sectarian quotas (Ibid: 268). Beyond social services, JB, like JS’s “trench builders without trenches” (sangarsāzān-e bī sangar), provided logistical support to Hezbollah resistance fighters (e.g., engineering, field hospitals, transporting and concealing weapons) during conflicts.105

Considering that an organization like the Iranian Housing Foundation (bonyād-e maskan) did not exist in Lebanon,106 JB assumed a central role in reconstructing homes and other structures (e.g., ports, hospitals, and industrial/commercial units) destroyed by opposing militias or the Israeli military (Danawi 2002: 85-86; Harik 2004: 106). Between 1988 and 1999, the organization allegedly repaired 5,335 damaged houses

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105 Personal interview with a Hezbollah member in the Bekaa Valley on July 9, 2012.
106 Aside from JB, the other notable Iran-sponsored, social service organization affiliated with Hezbollah in the Shiite territories was the Martyrs Foundation (mū′asat al-shahīd), which covered the cost of medical care for wounded fighters and injured civilians (Danawi 2002; Harik 2006).
caused by recurrent Israeli bombing, shelling, and attacks (El-Moubayed 2002: 7). Only two to three months after the Israeli “Grapes of Wrath” operation in 1996, JB announced it had “rehabilitated more than 2,800 structures damaged by the Israelis in 106 locations in the South and would be undertaking reconstruction in the Bekaa and Beirut shortly,” even though the state designated Amal’s Council of the South to “channel government assistance” and “allocate reconstruction funds those displaced in the conflict” (Harik 2004: 124).

Following military conflict or natural disasters (i.e., flooding and heavy snowstorms), approximately three thousands volunteers assisted JB’s core group of salaried engineers and social workers with various projects, illustrating the mobilization capacity of these political opportunities. In an interview with the author, a farmer in the South reported that during the 2006 war between Hezbollah and Israel, JB’s staff and volunteers helped other farmers and him plant, harvest, and transport crops amidst the fighting, shelling, and bombing. According to the interviewee, since end of the conflict, the organization’s presence significantly declined to the point of being “nowhere to be found.”

On the other hand, as indicated above, military conflict, like other political opportunities, equally constrain mobilization. In interviews and conversations with the author, many Lebanese Shiites, who lost homes, businesses, and loved ones in 2006, showed signs of war fatigue and questioned the benefits of resistance against Israel. As a

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107 In the area of housing reconstruction, cooperation existed between Hezbollah, the Martyr’s Foundation, and JB. Whereas Hezbollah “determined the legitimacy of the families’ housing needs and, if required, arranged the necessary property transactions,” “funds from the Martyr’s Foundation were used for the land acquisitions” (Harik 2006: 281). For its part, JB “drew up the plans and built the desired structure” (Ibid).
109 Personal interview with a farmer in South Lebanon on July 19, 2012.
Shiite resident of Southern Beirut aptly stated, “During these sensitive periods, Hezbollah must minimize the havoc that the resistance wreaks, and convince constituents to remain in their territories.”

JB utilized similar cultural framing devices as JS, but with modifications that reflected contextual or environmental differences. For example, JB adopted JS’s “all together toward construction” (hameh bā ham beh sāzandegī) slogan, but with a more militaristic bent: “Together we resist, together we build.” In an interview with the author, a former JS member posited that, compared to JS, JB was more militaristic (versus developmental) because Lebanon was in a perpetual state of war; though, the interviewee conceded that JS was also more militaristic during Iran’s eight-year conflict against Iraq. In contrast to JS, JB invoked more religious symbols than nationalist ones to recruit members and lend meaning to their actions. This was logical given that in Lebanon sectarian identities often trumped nationalist ones.

Of course, JB recruits were motivated by employment opportunities and material gain. Hezbollah and JB-affiliated institutions (e.g., bureaus, clinics, hospitals, and construction or clean-up units) represented employment opportunities for a number of Lebanese Shiites (Harik 2006: 285). However, JB’s staff and volunteers, like those of JS, were also incentivized by spiritual rewards (thawāb) received in the afterlife for “improving the quality of life of the less privileged” (Danawi 2002: 71). Analogous to that of JS, JB’s mission, according to Khomeini, was to “embrace the oppressed” and “to

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110 Personal interview with a resident of Southern Beirut on July 26, 2012.
111 Jihād al-Bināʾ prospectus in Danawi (2002).
112 Personal interview with a former JS member in Iran on May 2, 2012.
lead them to Islam” (Ibid: 94). Consistent with this mandate, Fadlallah and other Lebanese Shiite clerics advocated social welfare and distributive justice for the oppressed (Harik 2006: 265). In fact, the original name of Amal, which Iranian-born cleric Musa al-Sadr (d. 1978) founded, was “Movement of the Dispossessed” (harakat al-mahrūmīn).

As with JS, the term jihad in JB’s name implied that an individual and collective duty was incumbent upon every member. Despite JB’s more militaristic veneer, a Hezbollah member interviewed by the author revealed that Lebanese Shiites, like those in Iran, distinguished between the lesser jihad (jihād al-aṣghar), which included becoming a martyr (shahīd) in battle, and the greater jihad (jihād al-akbar), which consisted of “building the self by, for example, reciting the Qur’an or assisting the poor.” While JB’s employees considered themselves holy warriors (mujāhidīn) (Danawi 2002: 97-98), their collective, non-violent efforts to rebuild and develop society after war (i.e., the lesser jihad) remained contingent upon their personal struggle to improve themselves (i.e., the greater jihad). The phrase “self-sufficiency” (al-iktifāʾ al-dhātī in Arabic and khūd kefāyī in Persian) frequently appeared in JB’s discourse. As exemplified by Khomeini’s famous motto “neither East nor West” (nah sharg va nah gharb), the term signified a desire to rid oneself of foreign dependency.

Nevertheless, JB relied on significant funding from Iran (El-Moubayed 2002: 10; Harik 2004: 87). By considering Iranian funding permissible (ḥalāl), JB interpreted the expression to mean the “self-sufficiency” of the Shiite community or Muslim nation.

113 As in Iran, many Lebanese Shiites joined leftist movements (e.g., the Communist Party and Syrian Socialist Nationalist Party) in the 1970s before the Islamic Revolution (Harik 2006: 263-266). As leftist ideologies become more salient around the globe during the rise of the Soviet Union and the height of the Cold War, they likely gained appeal among Shiites given their focus on liberating the underprivileged and the oppressed.

114 Personal interview in with Hezbollah members in the Bekaa Valley on July 10, 2012.
(umma) from the “party of evil” (ḥizb al-shayṭān) or non-believers (kūfār) (Danawi 2002: 93-94), a form of boundary activation. However, there existed a disparity in the organization’s rhetoric and the reality that, since Hezbollah entered politics in 1992, JB, as will be discussed further below, received funding and support from the Lebanese state, which consisted partly of non-believers (Ibid: 93-94, 100).

As when JS was a movement, JB’s members maintained a distinct physical appearance, followed specific “Islamic” practices, and expected the same from their beneficiaries. Men grew beards, women wore the veil (chādor), and families regularly attended Friday sermons at mosques and rejected Western culture (e.g., music) (Ibid: 91). This reinforced individual identity, promoted group solidarity, and, in the spirit of boundary activation, differentiated Lebanese Shiites from other sects against which Hezbollah was initially at war and later locked in political rivalries. However, as was the case with JS and as will be discussed further below, JB’s institutionalization, culminating with the 2006 post-war reconstruction, routinized and transformed its internal culture, infusing it with elements of Western capitalism and neo-liberalism. During a recent trip to Beirut, the author attended a conference organized by JB at the up-scale Golden Tulip Hotel. At the conference, representatives from JB’s contracting firm, Wa ‘ad (Promise), wore designer suits and, displaying Power point slides, discussed their recent achievements regarding the reconstruction of Beirut’s southern suburbs.

In terms of organizational structure, JS initially had an amorphous structure that rendered it responsive to changing demands in a climate of political instability. This structure became increasingly centralized as the newly-consolidated Islamic Republic swiftly asserted its authority over the organization. By contrast, JB was initially
composed of a well-defined, pyramid-shaped hierarchy with short chains of command, typical of other organizations affiliated with Hezbollah, placing it under the latter’s full control. Hezbollah’s politburo (al-maktab al-siyāsī) “coordinated the work of various committees under JB” and appointed the organization’s director general (mudīr al-ʿām), who was based in Southern Beirut and oversaw the organization’s regional offices in the Bekaa and South (Harik 2004: 54). \(^{115}\) Beginning in 1999 or after more than ten years, JB adopted a flatter hierarchical structure, similar to that of JS in its initial phase or before becoming a ministry, in which regional committees or departments contained “decentralized administrative and financial functions” (El-Moubayed 2002: 9). Each department was fully responsible for the decision-making and implementation of projects while the director general monitored and followed-up on work-plans (Ibid).

Although JB’s director general “enjoyed central decision-making power, short-term decisions and long-term planning, particularly in rural and agricultural development, were forged on the basis of group evaluation and a consultative and consensual approach”; in other words, JS’s original shūrā-based system (Ibid). While it is clear that JS and JB underwent opposite structural trajectories, it is difficult to determine why this was the case. One would have predicted that as Hezbollah increasingly integrated with the state, as JS did in Iran, JB’s organizational structure would have also become more centralized. However, as will be further discussed below, it is possible that JB’s declining organizational efficiency and popular legitimacy in the wake of the 1996 anti-

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\(^{115}\) Harik (2006: 269, 284) credits Hezbollah’s “party discipline and tight organization” for its “programmed approach to social services,” in contrast to Amal which “lacked the administrative structure and manpower necessary to provide basic services.” JB’s regional offices resembled JS’s provincial staff (setād).
drug campaign compelled Hezbollah’s leadership to counteract this outcome through decentralization.

Similar to that of JS, JB’s administrative structure was divided by competency, including agriculture, electricity and water, reconstruction, and technical affairs (Danawi 2002: 71-72). As was the case with JS, JB became more organizationally complex as it assumed a broader array of welfare and developmental responsibilities (Harik 2004: 87). It is difficult to determine if these divisions represented an impediment to organizational cooperation by fostering internal competition over resources and recognition between disparate departments.116 As with JS during its initial phase, JB’s directors and core group of engineers, social workers, and statisticians, numbering around one hundred (all of whom were men), received salaries while remaining personnel worked on a voluntary basis, either full or part-time (El-Moubayed 2002: 7). During periods of relative stability, this employment schema likely resulted in organizational uncertainty as volunteers were less motivated to work consistently and frequently resigned on a whim. However, as previously mentioned, during times of conflict or natural disaster, JB was able to recruit a few thousand volunteers to assist in service provision, housing reconstruction, and agricultural extension.117

JB offered similar services as JS, albeit on a smaller scale, in Southern Beirut, the Bekaa Valley, and South. Compared to other parts of the country, the so-called “misery belts” of the Shiite Bekaa and South, which traditionally relied on feudal sharecropping and tenant farming, constituted the most underdeveloped and destitute regions (Harik

116 Each of these departments was further divided into subsections. For example, the agricultural department was divided among advising, production, and livestock (Danawi 2002: 70-71).
Extended conflict and deteriorating socioeconomic conditions in the Bekaa and South pushed locals to migrate to Southern Beirut and other cities, and outside of the country, notably West Africa (Hourani and Shehadi 1992). Although socioeconomic conditions in Southern Beirut, the Bekaa, and the South steadily improved since the civil war, “days of hardship and uncertainty continued to vex life in the Shiite community and pose huge economic and social problems for the postwar government” (Harik 2006: 286). As the author discovered on a recent trip to the Shiite territories and the country at large, Lebanon was continuously plagued by deficient public services, including water shortages and electricity outages. This took its toll on daily life and general productivity.

JB delivered electricity and water to Southern Beirut, the Bekaa, and South by building electrical networks, setting up generators, digging wells, installing water pipes and tanks, and developing irrigation canals and agricultural roads (eight of which were in the South). While most of JB’s beneficiaries were Shiites, the organization, like Hezbollah’s other social service branches, occasionally serviced Christians. Between 1988 and 1996 (the year of the Israeli “Grapes of Wrath” operation), the organization dug between twenty-five wells (fifteen of which were located in South Lebanon) and seventeen aqueducts (twelve of which were for irrigation and three of which were in the Bekaa Valley); installed twenty-three power stations, along with electrical wires and

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118 A similar comparison could be made to Iran’s ethnic periphery (i.e., Azerbaijan, Khuzestan, Kurdistan, Sistan and Baluchestan, and Turkmen Sahra).
119 Both during times of conflict and peace, similar rural migration trends occurred in rural Iran and the developing world in general.
120 These conditions were exacerbated by repeated strikes by employees of the Lebanese Ministry of Energy and Water during the summer of 2012.
stabilizers in the Bekaa; and opened two veterinary centers in the Bekaa (Sohmur) and South (Nabatiyah), along with seven agricultural extension centers in both regions (Danawi 2002: 70-85). As expected, these figures, after 1996, have increased (see tables 4 and 5).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Constructed</th>
<th>Renovated</th>
<th>Under Construction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Southern Beirut</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bekaa Valley</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Lebanon</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social, Cultural &amp; Educational Centers</th>
<th>Constructed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Southern Beirut</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bekaa Valley</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Lebanon</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Byblos</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hospitals, Health Centers &amp; Clinics</th>
<th>Constructed Hospitals &amp; Centers</th>
<th>Constructed Clinics</th>
<th>Renovated Centers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Southern Beirut</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bekaa Valley</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Lebanon</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Lebanon</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constructed Religious Sites</th>
<th>Mosques</th>
<th>Shrines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Southern Beirut</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bekaa Valley</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Lebanon</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>29</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profession</td>
<td>Courses</td>
<td>Participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Professional Trainer</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrician Trainer</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpenter Trainer</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanic Trainer</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blacksmith Trainer</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cement Worker Trainer</td>
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<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varnishing Trainer</td>
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<td>23</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Type</th>
<th>Construction</th>
<th>Renovation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homes (Martyrs' families and the needy)</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitals</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Centers</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinics</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mosques</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic Halls (al-ḥusayniyāt)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shrines &amp; Seminaries (al-ḥawzāt al-ʿilmiya)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutes/ Academies</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

JB improved health conditions by setting up hospitals and health clinics and by providing health insurance (Danawi 2002: 70-85; Harik 2006: 278). In the Bekaa and South, the organization established health solidarity funds for farmers to compensate for their exclusion from the National Social Security Fund (El-Moubayed 2002: 7; Harik 2004: 88; Harik 2006: 279).122

Like JS, JB attempted to improve educational standards and to boost literacy rates by building and renovating schools and cultural centers (e.g., installing drinking fountains, toilets, lighting fixtures, and desks) (Harik 2004: 84-85). The organization alleviated pressures on Shiite families, particularly those in remote villages, who, in the past, were forced to travel to hospitals or sent their children to schools in the nearest city or town (Danawi 2002: 76-77). At the same time, some families, who depended on their children for labor, were reluctant to enroll them in schools. Fearful of Hezbollah’s Islamist ideology and indoctrination efforts, the Lebanese government, which did not offer free education, prohibited JB from doing the same through its schools, which taught Islamic values (i.e., “the Khomeini tradition of liberation Shi’ism”) at an early age (Harik 2006: 282-283).

This demonstrated that, apart from Iran and Hezbollah, JB was accountable to the state, from which it received legal recognition and financial assistance. Similar to what they had done with agricultural inputs, JB and Hezbollah provided low-cost, primary and secondary education that taught the national curriculum, along with several hours per day

122 JB established two farmers’ health solidarity funds: one in South Lebanon with 3,344 family members (nearly 20,000 beneficiaries), and the second in the Bekaa with 700 family members. Monthly membership fees were set at 10,000 Lebanese Lira (LL). These funds were valued in 1999 at 162 million LL. The funds covered the balance of hospitalization costs that were not covered by the Ministry of Health. Contracts with hospitals (sixteen in the South) were thus managed and a network of 120 contracted doctors (also in the South) provided consultation at reduced costs (cut in fees up to 60%) (El-Moubayed 2002: 7).
of religious study (Harik 2004: 84-85). In interviews with the author, some villagers in the Bekaa and South complained that these schools lacked quality because the curricula did not teach practical skills and disproportionately concentrated on religion. This prompted a local businessman to open centers in the Bekaa and South that provided basic vocational skills (e.g., computer, accounting, and English) to students.

As with JS before it became a ministry, Hezbollah’s focus on proselytization and indoctrination prompted JB to prioritize the construction and renovation of schools, educational centers, and mosques. Between 1988 and 1996, compared to fifteen hospitals and health clinics, the organization constructed or renovated forty one schools and education centers and thirty mosques (Danawi 2002: 77-79). Whereas, before 1982, only three theological seminaries (ḥawzeh or madrasa) existed in the Shiite territories, some of the schools built or refurbished by JB trained clergy (Harik 2004: 84-85). Beyond indoctrination and proselytization, for Hezbollah, JB-constructed or renovated mosques (ḥusayniyāt) constituted a means of appropriating public space and demarcating territorial boundaries from rival sects and the more secular Amal.

According to a Lebanese intellectual and activist interviewed by the author, JB’s water tanks served a similar function in that, in addition to providing potable water, they marked Hezbollah’s territory in Southern Beirut during the civil war. Between 1989 and 1990, while the civil war still raged, JB built and filled more than one hundred water tanks.

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123 Through its Ministry of the South, Amal constructed schools in the Bekaa and South which only taught the national curriculum without religious instruction (Harik 2006: 283).
124 In Iran, JS’s prioritization of mosques prompted more secular members to defect from the organization (personal interview with a former JS member in Iran on April 19, 2011). In the Bekaa, JB also assisted Hezbollah with indoctrination by building “a large complex of resort-like bungalows in the summer of 1992 to house young people taking part in Hezbollah-sponsored cultural and recreational activities” (Harik 2006: 278).
126 Personal interview with a Lebanese intellectual and activist in Beirut on July 13, 2012.
tanks in the ḏāhiyah, where water and electricity services were cut during the Aoun administration (Danawi 2002: 80, 85-86; Harik 2006: 273). From within their zone behind the green line, Amal snipers allegedly targeted the tanks, which contained slogans about Imam Hossein and were still present in many sections of Southern Beirut.

Despite the end of the civil war and cessation of hostilities between Hezbollah and Amal, the demarcation of boundaries remained salient in Lebanon. Upon entering villages, towns, or urban neighborhoods, the author was immediately greeted by flags, emblems, and posters of political and religious leaders of a given political party.

In short, the goals of JB’s services was to curb rural migration from the Bekaa and South to Southern Beirut and other cities; to prevent the depopulation of Shiite territories, often targets of Israeli strikes against Hezbollah, so that the latter could maintain a critical mass of recruits and constituents; and, finally, to gain popular support so that Hezbollah’s military wing could expand its ranks and so that the movement’s political branch could amass votes during local and national elections, in which it began participating in 1992. Similar to how JS helped the Islamic Republican Party (IRP) garner rural votes during Iran’s parliamentary elections, JB distributed services with the *quid pro quo* understanding that recipients, in addition to adhering to the abovementioned “Islamic” norms, would cast ballots for Hezbollah candidates in upcoming elections; failure to do so meant a termination of future services and the risk of social alienation (Danawi 2002: 89-98; Harik 2006: 259-268, 275, 285-286). More auspicious for Lebanon’s future

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127 In addition to water tanks, JB provided electrical generators in the ḏāhiyah until public electricity was partially restored in late 1990 (Harik 2006: 273).
128 Personal interview with a Lebanese intellectual and activist in Beirut on July 13, 2012. While touring Southern Beirut, the author spotted and photographed several of JB’s water tanks.
stability, the country’s post-civil war order was characterized by opposing factions that, having grown weary of fighting each other, continued to compete through social services and electoral campaigns.

Comparable to 1983, the year JS became an official ministry, 1992 marked a watershed for Hezbollah, which for the first time participated in general elections. That same year, the JS cadres, who established JB and trained its personnel, returned to Iran shortly before Hezbollah’s electoral battle (Danawi 2002: 94). As with JS, a split occurred within Hezbollah over whether it should integrate with the state or remain an independent movement. On one side, radicals, led by former secretary general Sheikh Subhi al-Tufayli (r. 1989-1991), opposed participating in a government that was un-Islamic. On the other side, pragmatists, who favored political inclusion irrespective of the state’s religious character, ultimately prevailed after Hezbollah’s consultative council (ṣūrā) obtained consent from Iranian leaders at a 1991 conference (Ibid: 102-104). As with JS in 1983, Hezbollah’s decision to participate in 1992 parliamentary elections not only induced internal factionalism, it caused the movement and its affiliates to institutionalize. As part of Hezbollah’s new electoral machine, JB trained its “salaried employees to abide by governmental laws,” and encouraged beneficiaries, as the new electorate, to “participate as citizens and educate them on their right to vote” (Ibid: 101).

From its five outlets in the Bekaa and three in the South, JB’s agricultural extension centers sold inputs (i.e., pesticides and fertilizers) at competitive rates or between thirty and thirty-five percent less than market prices (El-Moubayed 2002: 7); though, farmers interviewed by the author in the Bekaa insisted that these inputs lacked

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130 For more on Hezbollah’s integration with the state, see Hamzeh, Nizar A. “Lebanon's Hizbullah: From Islamic Revolution to Parliamentary Accommodation.” Third World Quarterly 14.2 (1993), 321-337.
quality. This contrasted to JS, which, endowed with a robust state budget, distributed, rather than sold, subsidized inputs to farmers. As with education, it was likely the Lebanese government legally prohibited JB from undercutting other competitors by distributing inputs free of charge.

JB’s agricultural extension centers also trained farmers on the use of modern equipment and techniques in mechanized farming. JB increased these training seminars in 1992, when Hezbollah first participated in national elections and the Lebanese government decided to curb hashish and heroin farming in the Bekaa. During this period, JB intensified agricultural development efforts because small farmers, those with fifteen to twenty dunams in holdings, no longer received support from wealthy landowners, who had lost parliamentary seats to Hezbollah and Amal (Harik 2004: 86; Harik 2006: 278). The main objective of JB’s training seminars, which continue to operate today, was to assist farmers with substituting hemp and poppy, the raw materials of hashish and heroin, with potatoes, for which the organization provided seeds and technical support (Danawi 2002: 82-83, 102-104). As was the case with land reform for JS in revolutionary Iran, drug production represented the most contentious issue for JB in Lebanon. JB’s training seminars gained prominence in 1996, the second time Hezbollah participated in general elections and the same year the Lebanese government intensified efforts to eradicate drug production. Such efforts were legalized after parliament, with votes from Hezbollah deputies, passed a resolution banning the production of heroin and hashish.

That year, JB organized thirty-five workshops which lasted between seven and ten days, utilized cutting-edge audio-video technology, and were well-attended by farmers, not to mention the Minister of Agriculture, Chawki Fakhouri, a Greek-Orthodox
politician from the Bekaa city of Zahlé. The workshops were so effective they generated a surplus potato supply and a subsequent drop in prices, creating financial hardship for many farmers. Despite JB’s intentions, the unintended consequences of its training program caused the organization to fall out of favor with many locals. The outcome ignited protests among farmers, who blamed their economic misfortunes on Hezbollah and the state, which they viewed as being one and the same. One Bekaa farmer interviewed by the author claimed that the Ministry of Agriculture, in a futile attempt to alleviate farmers, purchased only half the quantity of potatoes to which it had originally committed.131

In the end, the Lebanese government, with backing from the socially-conservative Hezbollah, quelled protestors by force, including the burning of hemp and poppy fields. These attempts to ban drug production encountered limited success. Locals interviewed by the author conceded that farmers continued to grow hemp and poppy because they were resistant to the Bekaa’s harsh climate, did not require sophisticated farming techniques, and yielded high profit margins on the international market. Lebanese forces and Hezbollah also expelled al-Tufayli to his native village of Brita. In spite of drugs being un-Islamic, the sheikh had been at the center of the demonstrations, aptly called the Hunger Revolution of the Hungry (thawrat al-jiyāʿa) because the state’s agricultural policies had caused many farmers to starve.132 Given the critical mass of the protests and the strong reaction they elicited from the government, al-Tufayli’s involvement

131 Personal interview with a farmer in the Bekaa Valley on July 8, 2012.
underscored the effectiveness of elite entrepreneurs in contentious politics, a trend that, as will be described below, persisted in rural Lebanon.

Hezbollah’s integration into the state did not mean the relationship was not fraught with tension. While Hezbollah believed it deserved more gratitude and support for services that should have been provided by the Lebanese government, the latter felt threatened by Hezbollah’s surging popularity and formidable militia. Nevertheless, the difference, since 1992, was that Hezbollah was “no longer an outside entity struggling against the state,” but “an accepted opponent in the political arena” (Danawi 2002: 87-88, 102-104). While JS was initially anti-bureaucratic, it relied on assistance and support from a number of ministries. The same could be said of JB, which, while criticizing the government’s failure to provide adequate services to Shiites, carried out “extensive networking with the “Ministry of Agriculture (even before Hezbollah it took over), Hydraulics and Electrical Resources, Environment, Water Authorities, High Relief Committee, Social Affairs and Public Works, and with local municipalities” (El-Moubayed 2002: 11; Harik 2004: 91).

After Hezbollah’s entry into parliament, it benefitted from financial assistance by the Lebanese and foreign governments (e.g., medicine donated by the Italian government). Hezbollah became “a regular recipient of international aid allocated to the Shiite community” (Harik 2006: 281). With respect to loans received from the Lebanese Ministry of Social Affairs and the international community (i.e., UNIFEM, UNDP, and EU), Hezbollah topped the list of forty Lebanese NGOs with an average of 7,500 loans per year or twenty-five percent of all loans totaling approximately $4.5 million in 2001 (Harik 2004: 92). Additionally, some of the municipal councils, which Hezbollah
partisans often headed or on which they sat, received USAID funds” (Harik 2006: 281). Similarly, JB’s “linkages with bilateral donors resulted in training programs financed by them” (El-Moubayed 2002: 11; Harik 2004: 91).133

In spite of the necessity and laudability of their services, JS and JB resembled each other in that they prioritized distribution over production and sustainability. Contrary to both organizations’ ideological emphasis on “self-sufficiency,” neither promoted or achieved this outcome among their beneficiaries. According to an NGO director in the Bekaa interviewed by the author, the advent of JB’s services, while improving local standards of living, led to rising expectations to the extent that residents constantly sought handouts from Hezbollah or the state.134 Being privy to handouts was predicated on cultivating and maintaining proper connections and working the system to one’s advantage. As a consequence, few recognized the value of or based their success on personal initiative, competency, skill, or merit (e.g., developing an entrepreneurial idea, writing a business plan, securing a private loan, etc.).

Another element JS and JB had in common was that they employed cost-sharing arrangements with locals when undertaking projects. Encouraged by the religious principles of charity (zakāt) and the one-fifth tax (khums), Lebanese Shiites contributed funds and labor to the digging of wells and building of schools, clinics, and mosques (Harik 2004: 90, 93; Harik 2006: 280). However, as was the case with JS in Iran, the purpose of giving recipients a financial stake in projects was to compensate for budgetary constraints rather than to solicit bottom-up participation in decision-making, planning,

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133 Although exact figures remain unavailable, JB received additional financial support from indigenous charitable contributions. On virtually every street corner and in many public establishments of South Beirut, the Bekaa, and South were blue and yellow collection boxes belonging to Hezbollah.
134 Personal interview with the director of an international NGO in the Bekaa Valley on July 11, 2012.
and implementation. According to Harik (2004: 90), “target groups were not actively involved in the definition of needs and prioritization projects; instead, the association had a pre-defined plan, and priorities were defined by field engineers themselves on the basis of needs they perceived during their field visits and upon interaction with the population, especially farmers.” Like JS, JB imposed projects from above that did not always correspond to beneficiaries’ preferences and priorities.135

_Jihād al-Binā’ Today: The Conflict in Syria, the Agricultural Crisis in Lebanon, and Hezbollah’s Eroding Legitimacy_

"Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely.”

- Lord Acton (1834–1902), British historian, politician, and writer

“Lebanese politicians are all liars, even members of Hezbollah.”

- Bekaa Valley farmer

_The Agricultural Export Crisis in the Bekaa Valley and South Lebanon_

Since the outbreak of the conflict in Syria on March 15, 2011, the international and Lebanese media was fixated on the conflict’s potential to exacerbate sectarian tensions within Lebanon. Analysts feared these tensions could plunge the country back into civil war, which it endured between 1975 and 1990. As the conflict intensified, incidents taking place in certain parts of Lebanon validated these concerns. Chief among them were skirmishes in the northern city of Tripoli between Alawite backers of the

135 For more on JB’s top-down planning and implementation, see El-Moubayd 2002: 8.

An equally valid and disconcerting development was the conflict’s negative impact on agriculture in Lebanon’s Shiite territories, which were important farming regions. Shiite farmers in the tropical South grew tobacco, figs, citrus, and bananas, while those in the ecologically-diverse Bekaa produced an assortment of fruits, vegetables, and grains, not to mention hemp and poppy. Since the outbreak of civil strife in Syria, farmers in both regions faced an agricultural, export crisis. On the one hand, the conflict did not disrupt, but rather hastened the flow of low-cost, Syrian labor on which these farmers depended. Since it was apparently illegal for farmers to hire Palestinians from nearby refugee camps, they instead relied on seasonal workers from neighboring Syria.136 Near farms and outside of towns along the main road from Zahlé to Baalbek in the Bekaa, the landscape was dotted with encampments, resembling squatter settlements, where Syrian laborers lived in modest to squalid conditions. Given the devaluation of the Syrian lira in the midst of the conflict, these laborers, a number of whom were of Kurdish descent, eagerly entered Lebanon to find seasonal work at local farms and businesses, to earn salaries in Lebanese pounds, and to transmit remittances back to their families in Syria.

136 Personal interview with a farmer in South Lebanon on July 19, 2012.
In contrast to Syrian laborers, farmers in the Bekaa and South were unwilling to assume the risks associated with crossing the Syrian border – the root cause of the export crisis. Prior to the conflict, they transported crops by truck through Syria into the Gulf, a major market for the consumption of Lebanese produce and a hub for its export outside of the Middle East. Since the beginning of the conflict, fewer farmers were willing to export crops through Syria due to border closures, shipment delays, confiscation and destruction of produce, and abduction, injury, and death of personnel. Aware of these hazards, trucking companies charged farmers a premium for their services or refused to work. As a consequence, farmers now transported their crops by land to the Port of Beirut and then by sea to the Gulf which drastically raised shipping costs and cut into profit margins. The manager of a major storage and shipping company in the Bekaa complained that ninety percent of his drivers were unable to work, and that the remaining few who did reported extended border delays on the border’s Dara’a Bridge ranging from six to twelve days. 137 Whereas these figures used to be the reverse, the company currently exported seventy percent of its produce by sea, and transported the remaining thirty percent through Syria. Prior to the conflict, the company transported produce through Syria into Dubai once a week, and now only did so by sea once a month. This considerably reduced export volume, and made it difficult to estimate demand and calibrate inventory.

In the past, Lebanese farmers could not compete with Syrian farmers, whose production costs were significantly lower due to the availability of cheap labor and state

137 Personal interview with the manager of an agricultural storage and shipping company in the Bekaa Valley on July 17, 2012.
subsidies – though the latter were sharply reduced under Bashar al-Assad. Compared to Syria, the cost of inputs in Lebanon were much higher. For example, to operate a water pump, one liter of diesel fuel (mā zawt) cost approximately $18 in Lebanon versus $7 in Syria. Facing prohibitive export costs and a lack of state support, Lebanese farmers were unable to capitalize on disruptions in Syrian output caused by the conflict. A recent report published by the Lebanese Farmers Association estimated that, compared to 2010, agricultural exports declined 11.3% due to road closures into Syria caused by the continuing conflict and destruction of the Dara’a Bridge. In spite of the dire situation or in response to it, Minister of Agriculture, Hussein Hajj Hassan, recently announced that “agricultural exports by sea were going well and that the government was giving the agricultural sector all of its necessary attention.”

**Rural Actors: The Ministry of Agriculture and Jihād al-Binā’**

Although the Lebanese government was officially responsible for agriculture and the Ministry of Agriculture was involved in setting agricultural policies and regulations, most farmers in the Bekaa and South interviewed by author unabashedly declared that the state was absent (al-dawla ghā iba). In interviews with the author, farmers in the Bekaa

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138 Personal interview with an employee of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) in Beirut on August 1, 2012. See also Harik 2004: 87, 213.
139 Personal interview with a farmer in the Bekaa Valley on July 17, 2012.
140 “Farmer’s Association Report: Agricultural Exports Decline 11.3%,” March 18, 2013 (Arabic). According to the report, compared to 2010, exports of potatoes, citrus, bananas, and onions respectively decreased by 9.6%, 12%, 40.5%, and 32% in 2012. At the same time, compared to 2010, apricot, cherry, and almond exports increased by 26% while lettuce and apple exports respectively increased by 18% and 7.8% in 2012. However, the rise in apricot, cherry, almond, and apple exports resulted from production surpluses and average price drops of fifty percent. This facilitated the purchase of these crops at low prices by traders, who, in turn, sold them to traditional markets. Between 2010 and 2012, tomato imports increased from 22 to 2,281 tons while total agricultural imports increased from 420 to 4,815 tons.
and South complained about the lack state assistance to alleviate them of the export crisis. Some stated that, even in the United States and Europe, agricultural export promotion relied on state intervention in the form of uniform planning, subsidized inputs and credit, and the negotiated purchase of crops at fixed prices.\textsuperscript{142} In the past, the government subsidized the production of sugar beets and purchased them from farmers at fixed prices, but the program has since ended. The lack of state support left farmers at the financial mercy of enterprising middlemen, who, in addition to granting loans at high interest rates, purchased crops at low prices, hoarded produce, and sold it when market conditions became more favorable. To mitigate this exploitation, farmers established cooperatives in which they pooled their resources to purchase containers for storage and transport.\textsuperscript{143}

In interviews with the author, farmers indicated that the support they received from the Lebanese government often came in the form of technical assistance from engineers affiliated with the Ministry of Agriculture’s extension centers. Farmers qualified this by adding that those closely situated to or with personal connections (\textit{wāṣṭa}) to the extension centers usually received the best service. In an interview with the author, an agricultural engineer in the Bekaa admitted that his office was plagued by an expertise deficit due to a dearth in meritocratic recruitment.\textsuperscript{144} He conceded that many employees lacked initiative and refrained from going into the field, preferring instead to remain in the office and collect government paychecks. Some farmers revealed that when agricultural engineers came out to farms, they requested extra money (\textit{baqshīsh}) for

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{142} Personal interview with a group of farmers in the Bekaa Valley on July 16, 2012.
\item \textsuperscript{143} Personal interview with the manager of a storage and shipping company in the Bekaa Valley on July 18, 2012.
\item \textsuperscript{144} Personal interview with an extension engineer from the Ministry of Agriculture in the Bekaa Valley on July 10, 2012.
\end{itemize}
services rendered to supplement their modest incomes; requests these farmers refused to oblige, except under desperate circumstances.¹⁴⁵

As it had so often done, JB filled the void left by the state by offering a variety of agricultural and rural development services. JB’s website (http://www.jihadbinaa.org.lb/) listed an extensive array of services, including sanitation and sewage collection and repair, water and electricity provision, and the construction or renovation of houses, businesses, schools, and medical and veterinary centers. In the realm of agriculture, JB dug wells; supported cooperatives,¹⁴⁶ distributed machinery (e.g. tractors), credit, loans, and health insurance; and, like the Ministry of Agriculture, offered technical assistance.¹⁴⁷

While praising JB’s intentions, farmers in the Bekaa and South interviewed by the author believed the organization’s efforts were modest (mutawādaʿa) and limited to a specific set of activities. JB organized markets where farmers and cooperatives could sell their produce. The organization held seminars on sound farming methods during which it distributed symbolic gifts, including seeds, insecticide, and educational brochures. Recent workshops educated farmers on using less hazardous pesticides, an initiative also undertaken by the Ministry of Agriculture. JB periodically sent farmers to Iran to visit pilgrimage sites and holy shrines and to tour model farms so they could learn advanced

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¹⁴⁵ Personal interview with a group of farmers in the Western Bekaa Valley on July 18, 2012.
¹⁴⁶ With thirty tractors donated from the Iranian JS, the Lebanese JS helped establish agricultural cooperatives in the Bekaa and South since its founding in 1988 (Harik 2004: 87; Harik 2006: 278). Along with a tomato processing and canning plant, JS set up sixteen cooperatives; one for pickles production, one for honeybee keepers, a machinery service cooperative, and thirteen agricultural cooperatives, six of them established during the period 1998-1999 (El-Moubayed 2002: 8).
¹⁴⁷ For more on JB’s portfolio of activities, see Borre Ludvigsen (ed.). “Jehad Al Benaa Developmental Association.” Al Mashriq. Text from a brochure published by JB and provided by Hizbullah’s Foreign Relations Office in May 1998 (http://almashriq.hiof.no/lebanon/300/320/324/324.2/hizballah/jihad-el-binna/).
farming techniques. Finally, the organization sold inputs (seed, fertilizer, and pesticides) at competitive prices.

In the past, beginning in 1997, JB granted credit with ceilings of approximately $3,000, accompanied by technical assistance and loans, to farmers in 190 villages of the Bekaa (El-Moubaïed 2002: 8; Harik 2004: 87-88; Harik 2006: 279). In interviews with the author, farmers in the Bekaa and South indicated that JB’s technical assistance eclipsed its distribution of loans, which it still offered to well-connected locals (e.g., the families of fighters and martyrs) over a three-year period. As in Iran, Shiite Lebanon’s streets and Hezbollah’s media outlets (e.g., al-Manār television) were infused with images of and reverence for martyrs.

Lebanon expert, Dima Danawi (2002: 92), noted that “every teen in this community dreams of becoming a doctor, engineer, or a shahīd (martyr).” Aside from the culture of martyrdom that was perpetuated and the fact that it was socially acceptable, even encouraged, for children to look up to martyrs, in Shiite Lebanon, as in Iran, martyrdom represented a currency and gateway to political and social capital. Through military participation and potential martyrdom, young men not only commanded respect and received spiritual rewards (thawāb), they helped their families secure material benefits from organizations like Hezbollah’s JB and Martyrs Foundation, and, in turn, achieve financial stability.

JB’s contracting credit program likely resulted from American sanctions imposed against the organization since the 2006 war between Hezbollah and Israel. Yet, as

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indicated above, JB still generated revenue by selling inputs. Whereas low income farmers purchased these inputs because they were less expensive, wealthier farmers did not because, compared to other suppliers, JB’s inputs lacked quality. However, as the author discovered, these activities were not immune to corruption. In a Western Bekaa town, a scandal recently occurred whereby a JB representative procured inputs at subsidized rates from a neighboring village and sold them at marked-up or inflated prices. Residents of the town interviewed by the author revealed that the representative was eventually forced to shut down the operation after being unable to purchase a $15,000 “license” from the Ministry of Agriculture. They suggested this outcome was likely the result of pressure exerted by Hezbollah in an attempt to preserve its clean image.

In light of these developments, a rural development expert interviewed by the author in the Bekaa surmised that JB did not step in to help alleviate farmers of the export crisis because it did not want to “get its hands dirty.” In other words, farmers, who would have no way of verifying that JB purchased and sold crops at fair prices, would inevitably become suspicious of the organization in an environment where exploitation and corruption were already rampant. In interviews with the author, farmers in the Bekaa and South asserted that, other than occasional seed and tree donations, they did not receive significant assistance from Iran because there were no formal agreements on agricultural cooperation between Iran and Lebanon. An Iranian Ministry of Agriculture report published between 2008 and 2009 revealed exchanges of agricultural cooperation draft memoranda between both countries (Ministry of Agricultural Jihad, 2008-2009: 13).

149 Personal interview with a farmer in the Bekaa Valley on July 10, 2012.
150 Personal interview with a rural development expert in the Bekaa Valley on July 11, 2012.
However, such steps had yet to yield a formal agreement, and, for the time being, cooperation remained informal. For example, between 2007 and 2008, the Iranian Ministry of Agriculture sent a delegation to Lebanon to explore agricultural cooperation and the purchase of citrus from JB and Hezbollah (Ministry of Agricultural Jihad, 2007-2008: 12-13). The delegation was headed by Hossein Adel, managing director of the Independence Jihad Institute (mīāṣaseh-ye jehād-e esteqlāl), an Iranian state company that spun off from JS in 1986 and was now affiliated with the Ministry of Agriculture. If this cooperation came to fruition, it meant that JB and Hezbollah got involved in purchasing Lebanese crops and exporting them to Iran.

In their writings, Lebanon specialists El-Moubayed (2002) and Harik (2004, 2006) extolled the virtues of JB’s rational and well-established, administrative and operational procedures (i.e., planning, project selection, follow-through, and evaluation), and modern managerial techniques that defied common stereotypes and perceptions of Islamists being “backward” and “ignorant fanatics” (Harik 2004: 91). However, these experts overlooked the fact that while organizational rationalization fostered competence and stability, it also bred red tape and stagnancy. Aside from lamenting the limited nature of JB’s activities, farmers interviewed by the author complained about the organization’s lack of initiative. A farmer in the Bekaa claimed that after repeatedly contacting JB to request advice on how to treat diseased crops, the organization never

151 Established on August 11, 1986, the Institute of Independence Jihad was a state company that spun-off from JS, which, at the time, was an official ministry (Iravani 1998-99: 198, 202-206). The Institute became affiliated with the Iranian Ministry of Agriculture, with which JS merged in 2001 to form the Ministry of Agricultural Jihad. A holding corporation, the Institute was run by a board of directors, who owned and managed a portfolio of companies that undertook research and development and provided consulting and advisory services, including technical support, to the agricultural and rural sectors; constructed water pipes, aqueducts, and irrigation networks; imported and exported agricultural equipment and materials; built and managed rural industrial units; and oversaw the commerce and trade of crops and rural products (Ibid: 200).
sent an engineer to his fields. He added that JB had given him a product to protect potatoes from disease without training him on how to use it.\textsuperscript{152}

El-Moubayed (2002: 9) praised JB for holding regular meetings “on a weekly, monthly, biannual, and yearly” basis “to review progress, revise work plans, exchange information, coordinate, and share decision-making.” This included a four-day, annual retreat in December during which employees reviewed, evaluated, and discussed the year’s activities and expenditures, along with devising a work plan and budget for the coming year. Moreover, JB’s staff was “additionally encouraged to attend and participate in all events, workshops, seminars, etc. organized in Lebanon by the various NGOs, syndicates, and universities.” El-Moubayed also lauded JB for its strong “written communication,” which was “practiced by staff at all levels” (Ibid). According to El-Moubayed, “everyone fills in a weekly report sheet that is submitted to immediate supervisors and others” which are funneled up to the director-general (\textit{mudīr al-ʿām}) “who uses them to set meeting agendas” (Ibid).

While routine meetings and paperwork (\textit{kaghaż bāži}) promoted “strong group interaction” (Ibid), they also, as former members of the Iranian JS and current employees of the Ministry of Agricultural Jihad (JS’s successor, attested, often translated into reduced organizational efficiency, diminished output or projects on the ground, and suboptimal development performance. A telling sign that this applied to JB was that forty percent of the organization’s $5 million annual budget covered employee salaries and other overhead costs (Ibid). This figure contrasted to American non-profit organizations, which were expected to stay within the bounds of a fifteen percent

\textsuperscript{152} Personal interview with a farmer in the Bekaa Valley on July 10, 2012.
administrative cost cap.\textsuperscript{153} It also helped explain why JB employed cost-sharing schemes and why farmers in the Bekaa and South consistently reported that the organization’s efforts were modest.

Another deficiency related to JB that farmers interviewed by the author mentioned and a point El-Moubayed (2002: 10) highlighted in her report was the organization’s tendency to employ and service individuals with a political-religious persuasion that coincided with that of Hezbollah. El-Moubayed was convinced that the “discipline emanating from” JB’s “strong political/religious commitment” made it a recipe for success. However, in interviews with the author, farmers and residents of the Bekaa and South believed this selection bias negatively impacted JB’s effectiveness because the organization did not always employ the most qualified personnel or service farmers who required the most assistance. Similar to their complaints about the Ministry of Agriculture’s extension centers, farmers criticized JB employees for primarily servicing those who were well-connected or who lived in close proximity to the organization’s main offices in South Beirut, the Bekaa (i.e., Baalbek and Hermel), and the South (i.e., Nabatiyeh).

At the managerial level, El-Moubayed praised the “technical, human, and conceptual skills” of JB’s leadership, which represented the “moral and technical reference of the group”; supervisors who possessed knowledge “based on experience and educational achievement,” an “ability to build teamwork,” and an awareness of

“management techniques and processes” (Ibid). At the same time, El-Moubayed acknowledged that JB faced “major internal challenges related to training and to the updating of technical expertise” due to uncompetitive salaries and a “labor pool specific to one political-religious affiliation” (Ibid). To provide its technical staff with training (e.g., engineering, Autocad drawing, computer skills, and management), JB hired the private consulting firm Team International which further increased its operating costs. El-Moubayed also conceded that, like many organizations, JB took on projects “based on political considerations that served the overall objectives of Hezbollah” (Ibid).

Hezbollah, Jihād al-Binā‘, and the State: Obscure Boundaries

On the whole, farmers in the Bekaa and South dismissed JB’s shortcomings on the basis that it had limited resources and was not part of the state. This situation contrasted to JS, which, as previously mentioned, became a cabinet-level ministry merely five years after its inception. However, while it was once possible to draw a distinction between Hezbollah and the state, these lines were becoming increasingly obscure. Since 1992, Hezbollah had been participating in national elections and, as a member of the Resistance and Development bloc, currently held 14 out of 128 parliamentary seats. After a unity government was formed in 2008, Hezbollah and its allies claimed eleven out of thirty cabinet seats, but, since 2009 general elections, this number was reduced to two. In 2009, Hezbollah member, Hussein Hajj Hassan, was appointed Minister of

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154 Danawi (2002: 71) contested this point, contending that JB’s salaries, at least for fulltime employees, were allegedly nearly double those offered by the private sector. However, the fact that JB’s staff received modest salaries was confirmed by El-Moubayed and by personal interviews in the Bekaa Valley and South Lebanon.

Agriculture. Since 1996, he served as MP for the Bekaa Valley’s Baalbek and Hermel provinces and won consecutive elections four times in this capacity.\textsuperscript{156}

Although JB required authorization from the Ministry Agriculture to hold workshops and seminars,\textsuperscript{157} virtually no cooperation existed between them. However, given that Hezbollah now controlled both JB and the Ministry, this scenario appeared to be changing.\textsuperscript{158} In interviews with the author, farmers praised Hajj Hassan for leaving his offices in the capital to come to the Bekaa, where he was born, and meet with farmers to assess their needs. At the same time, these interviewees expressed dissatisfaction that tangible policies to relieve them of the current export crisis failed to materialize from these meetings. Some farmers recognized that Hajj Hassan was trying to sign agreements with other countries to open markets to Lebanese farmers, though this had proven to be difficult given the lack of national standards on food safety requirements. Others appreciated the minister for bringing national attention to the issue of farmer exploitation by middlemen.\textsuperscript{159}

Despite Hajj Hassan’s display of political will, farmers interviewed by the author were dismayed by the state’s disproportionate investment in services and industry at the expense of agriculture, the third largest sector which accounted for approximately eight percent of GDP (Investment Development Authority of Lebanon 2010: 17). Several


\textsuperscript{157} Personal interview with a rural development expert in the Bekaa Valley on July 11, 2012.

\textsuperscript{158} Personal interview with a group of farmers in the Bekaa Valley on July 18, 2012.

farmers insisted that agriculture employed forty percent of the Bekaa, while another estimated that the government allocated less than one percent of the national budget to agriculture, though these figures could not be verified. In terms of foreign direct investment, real estate received the lion’s share at seventy percent, followed by tourism and other services at just over twenty-nine percent, with little being channeled into industry or agriculture (Ibid 2010: 14).

Beyond investment, farmers criticized the Ministry of Agriculture for lacking the capacity to lessen or solve the export crisis. They attributed this outcome to sectarian politics or Maronite and Sunni politicians’ refusal to allocate sufficient resources to a ministry that had long been dominated by Shiites. Since 2000, had been seven different ministers of agriculture, all of whom were from the Bekaa Valley. Four were members of the Shiite party Amal, and two (Trad Hamadé and Hajj Hassan) were connected to Hezbollah.

The lone exception was two-time minister Elias Skaff, a Catholic from Zahlé, who, nevertheless, was aligned with Michel Aoun, an ally of Hezbollah. As was the case with other ministries, this rapid changing of the guard resulted from the collapse of successive governments and, until recently, from the inability of different political factions to form a unity government. With respect to agriculture and other economic sectors, this led to inconsistent and erratic policies, as each minister had a different worldview on rural and agricultural development. 

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160 Citing a JB prospectus on agriculture, Danawi (2002: 80) reported that “sixty percent of the Lebanese population depended on agriculture as their main source of living.
161 Personal interview with a farmer in the Bekaa Valley on July 16, 2012.
162 One example is Hajj Hassan not understanding the necessity of establishing national food safety standards to increase agricultural exports (personal interview with an agricultural expert in Beirut on March 21, 2013).
In interviews with the author, Lebanese farmers maintained they could not defend their interests or apply pressure on the state due to their inability to collectively organize. This contrasted to Syrian farmers, who unionized through the General Federation of Peasants (al-ittiḥād al-aʿām lil fillāḥīn) (GFP). Though the GFP was organized from above and its interests were often superseded by those of bureaucrats and private elites, the union routinely negotiated crop prices, influenced agricultural policy (e.g., land reform and marketing), and helped farmers and villagers access credit, inputs, technical support, rural services, and public goods (e.g., education, health, and communications) (Hinnebush 1989: 69-76).

One Lebanese farmer reported that, several years ago, a conflict erupted between the Ministry of Agriculture and a Bekaa cooperative. Upset that the Ministry was not listening or responding to their demands for greater support, cooperative members staged strikes, threatening to cut the production of wheat and other strategic crops. As it had done in 1996 during the Revolution of the Hungry, the government sent tanks to suppress the strikes and to ensure that production continued unabated. According to this source, this incident represented the last time that farmers in the area resorted to collective action against the state.163

Since farmers received little, if any, assistance from the state, they relied on other sources of support, such as kinship ties. In the Bekaa Valley, several clans collectively owned sizeable holdings and pooled their labor and capital to achieve larger-scale production. In tribal fashion, these clans provided protection to their members, and, on

163 Personal interview with a farmer in the Bekaa Valley on July 17, 2012.
occasion, settled scores with their rivals through blood debts.\textsuperscript{164} Other farmers succeeded through personal initiative, an enterprising spirit, and regional and international connections. In the Bekaa, a cooperative existed in which local women engaged in organic farming and handicraft production from their homes, and received a share of the profit based on the number of hours they worked.\textsuperscript{165} At times, the cooperative sold its goods through markets and fairs organized by JB.

Through his relationship with a European company, a Bekaa farmer supplemented his income by importing seeds and pesticides, and exporting them to Syria and other Arab countries through Lebanon.\textsuperscript{166} He was also entering into a partnership with a businessman from the Gulf who would provide capital, inputs, and access to markets in the Gulf in exchange for the farmer’s land and labor. Although the farmer questioned the seeming contradiction between his partner’s outward religiosity and propensity for womanizing and alcohol consumption, the partnership demonstrated that mutual business interests, when properly aligned, could bridge the so-called Shiite-Sunni divide. Despite these individual success stories, many small farmers in the Bekaa and South struggled to make ends meet, particularly in the midst of the current export crisis. By contrast, large farmers endowed with capital and connections thrived. In this capitalistic context, the Darwinian principal of survival of the fittest remained the dominant norm.

Beyond agriculture, the consensus among residents of Southern Beirut, the Bekaa Valley, and South Lebanon was that JB’s most notable accomplishment was its reconstruction of buildings destroyed by Israeli reprisals throughout the 1990s and 2000s.

\textsuperscript{164} Personal interview with members of a clan in the Bekaa Valley on July 9, 2012.
\textsuperscript{165} Personal interview with the manager of a cooperative in the Bekaa Valley on July 11, 2012.
\textsuperscript{166} Personal interview with a farmer in the Bekaa Valley on July 16, 2012.
The most recent destruction occurred during the 2006 war between Hezbollah and Israel, which left swaths of these regions completely decimated. Soon after the war, in September 2006, the author visited the ḍāḥiya with World Bank officials and Hezbollah representatives to survey the damage, which had been quite extensive, with many structures reduced to rubble. Upon the author’s return in July 2012, these neighborhoods had been completely transformed with wide boulevards lined by high-rise buildings hovering over diverse storefronts. Residents on the streets still spoke about Hezbollah’s festival, held in May, to celebrate the official end of the reconstruction.

In contrast to earlier conflicts with Israel and perhaps as a result of U.S. sanctions, JB did not play a prominent role in the reconstruction. Hezbollah assigned the project to a JB-affiliated construction company, known as Waʿad (the Promise). The company was named after Hezbollah Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah’s promise to rebuild Southern Beirut after the war. In conversations with the author, residents of the ḍāḥiya emphasized that this has been a sensitive time for Hezbollah. They explained that while many locals sympathized with the resistance, they felt that having their homes and businesses destroyed was a high price to pay for the abduction of two Israeli soldiers. Families painfully recounted evacuating to other parts of Beirut or fleeing the country. In July 2006, the author witnessed thousands of Lebanese refugees entering Syria.

One resident of Southern Beirut pointed out that Waʿad exclusively serviced homeowners while excluding renters and business owners. Those who had received housing assistance from Waʿad heaped unadulterated praise upon it. Others criticized it on similar grounds as JB; that the company mainly serviced those closely connected to

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167 Conversations with residents of Southern Beirut on July 14 and July 26, 2012.
168 Personal interview with residents of Southern Beirut on July 26, 2012.
Hezbollah, and that it imposed projects from above without consulting residents’ needs and preferences. This criticism contrasted to Lebanon specialist Mona Harb’s (2006) account of Wa’ad which depicted the company as meticulously collecting and analyzing data when prioritizing projects.

During conversations with the author, residents of Southern Beirut asserted that, even though Hezbollah and Wa’ad had officially ended the reconstruction, much remained to be done. Locals complained about the quality of housing (including units built or renovated by Wa’ad), un-cleared debris, insufficient parking, and the lack of parks and greenery.\textsuperscript{169} In response to the latter, the municipality in Haret Hreik, a Hezbollah stronghold, recently launched a volunteer program in which youth planted trees around the neighborhood.\textsuperscript{170} However, locals complained that this program was merely cosmetic and did not compensate for the shortage of communal or public space, notwithstanding the mosque. To visit a park, ḏāhiya residents, like all Beirutis, had to travel approximately four kilometers or fifteen minutes by car or bus to the eighty-acre Horsh Beirut.

Beyond these complaints, a more serious concern for Hezbollah and Wa’ad was spreading allegations of corruption. Residents of Southern Beirut contended that, following the war, the international community (i.e., the US, EU, and Gulf) pledged or donated hundreds of millions of dollars to the Lebanese government for reconstruction. After stalling, the state eventually transferred these funds to Wa’ad while Hezbollah, with alleged financial assistance from Iran, underwrote the remaining amount required for the

\textsuperscript{169} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{170} Personal interview with a municipality official in Southern Beirut on July 14, 2012. While walking around Haret Hreik, the author witnessed groups of youth volunteers planting trees.
project. While it was not possible to substantiate these claims, perceptions existed among locals that portions of these funds remained unaccounted for and were embezzled by the state, Hezbollah, and \textit{Wa'ad}. According to one \textit{dahiya} resident, during the reconstruction, certain individuals affiliated with Hezbollah suddenly appeared wealthier, driving luxury sedans, brandishing top-of-the-line cellphones, and wearing designer suits.\footnote{Personal interview with a resident of Southern Beirut on July 26, 2012.} At the same time, Lebanese Shiites publicly accused Hezbollah, under Hassan Nasrallah’s direct orders, of favoring Southern Beirut in the reconstruction effort, and of withholding public funds rather than allocating them to JB so that it can rebuild homes South Lebanon.\footnote{“South Lebanon Residents Criticize Hezbollah over Reconstruction Efforts.” \textit{Ya Libnan}, May 11, 2012 (http://www.yalibnan.com/2012/05/11/s-lebanon-residents-criticize-hezbollah-over-reconstruction-efforts/).} 

The post-war financial cooperation that transpired in the name of reconstruction between Hezbollah and the state further blurred the distinction between the two, and made it difficult for Hezbollah to disassociate itself from charges of incompetence and corruption. Perhaps more disconcerting for Hezbollah was that many Lebanese Shiites, particularly since 2006, were rethinking the benefits of resistance against Israel, calling into question the movement’s \textit{raison d’etre}.\footnote{Personal interview with the employee of an international NGO in Beirut on July 12, 2012. See also Danawi 2002: 99-101.} This also posed an existential challenge to JB and \textit{Wa’ad}, both of which were tasked with rebuilding damage sustained during ongoing conflict with Israel. At the same time, both organizations demonstrated an ability to adapt to changing political circumstances.

After the civil war, JB diversified its portfolio from distributing water and electricity during “an acute war-related emergency” in Southern Beirut to new areas of service, such as building new classrooms in the \textit{dahiya} and taking on a range of projects.
in the Bekaa and South (Harik 2006: 275). During times of peace, the organization transitioned from post-war housing reconstruction to the provision of low-cost housing to the general public (Harik 2004: 87-88; Harik 2006: 278). When asked at recent conference what Waʿad would do now that the 2006 reconstruction had officially ended, a representative replied that the company would continue to perform service and maintenance on the buildings it had constructed.¹⁷⁴

**Conclusion: The Limits of Hezbollah and Jihād al-Bināʾ’s Legitimacy Crisis**

Given that the literatures on the Hezbollah-Iran nexus and Shiite transnationalism were insufficient to account for JS’s diffusion into or replication in Lebanon. While acknowledging that the Islamic Republic’s foreign policy considerations represented the underlying cause of JS’s overseas operations, this chapter utilized SMT mechanisms to further explain the organization’s transnational diffusion into Lebanon. As in the case of JS’s initial mobilization in Iran, the mechanisms that SMT posits elucidated the process of JS’s diffusion into Shiite Lebanon. These mechanisms included mobilizing structures (i.e., activist networks), political opportunities (i.e., political instability and military conflict), and cultural framing (i.e., ideology).

In Iran, JS leveraged mobilizing structures in the form of student associations which had been politically active against the Shah. Similarly, in Lebanon, JS leveraged a pre-existing network of clerics and lay activists, who ran social welfare organizations, to reduce start-up costs while establishing JB. As was the case with JS and the Iran-Iraq war, the political opportunity of military conflict in Lebanon (i.e., the fifteen-year civil

¹⁷⁴ Personal interview with a Lebanese architect in Beirut on July 26, 2012.
war and repeated clashes with Israel) breathed life into JB, which witnessed a swelling of its ranks and a broadening of its responsibilities. During periods of conflict, JB filled the void left by the state by distributing basic services, such as electricity and water. Due to the absence of an organization that resembled the Iranian Housing Foundation (*bonyād-e maskan*), JB took the lead on post-war housing reconstruction, which improved the organization’s standing, but also led to greater demands among constituents as well as allegations of favoritism and corruption.

With respect to cultural framing, the term “jihad” in JB’s name represented a powerful recruitment tool because it implied that an individual and collective duty was incumbent upon Lebanese Shiites. JB enticed low-paid recruits and zealous volunteers with promises of spiritual rewards (*thawāb*) and offered them a shared identity by adopting the “all together” (*hameh bā ham*) slogan. This cultural framing very much resembled that of JS in Iran. It had one twist, however: Because Lebanon was in a perpetual state of war, both internally and against Israel, JB’s framing devices took on a more militaristic tone. In lieu of JS’s “all together toward construction,” JB’s official motto was “all together toward resistance.”

JS and JB inhabited polar-opposite environments with Iran being a strong state and Lebanon being a weak one. In spite of these contextual differences, both organizations underwent statist institutionalization to varying degrees. In Iran, JS completely integrated into the state as an official, cabinet-level ministry in 1983. In Lebanon, JB officially remained an independent, charitable association. However, its mother organization, Hezbollah, has participated in parliamentary elections since 1992 and assumed control of the Ministry of Agriculture in 2009. Although JB continued to
receive Iranian funding, it increasingly relied on the Lebanese government for licenses and financing.

As was the case with JS, Hezbollah and JB’s integration into the state led to internal fragmentation between marginalized hardliners, who opposed and resisted institutionalization, and victorious pragmatists, who embraced and benefitted from it through political appointments and access to public funds. While institutionalization created organizational stability, it also fostered careerism, stagnancy, and corruption. As a consequence, Hezbollah and JB steadily lost legitimacy among a constituency whose rising expectations matched or exceeded their improved living standards. This was the case because, as with JS, Hezbollah and JB’s development model prioritized distribution over production and sustainability, and was trumped by political considerations whereby employment and distribution were contingent upon political affiliation and voting behavior.

The prevailing logic was that Hezbollah’s robust services network and squeaky clean image allowed it to preserve and bolster its popular support, which, in turn, translated into electoral votes (Harik 2004, 2006). However, recent ethnographic fieldwork conducted by the author in the Shiite enclaves of Southern Beirut (al-ḍāhiyah al-janūbiya), the Bekaa Valley (wādī al-biqāʿa), and South Lebanon (janūb lubnān) indicated that perceptions surrounding Hezbollah’s ability to distribute services, reduce corruption, and handle crises – already fragile after the 1996 anti-drug campaign and the 2006 post-war reconstruction – were further weakening in the face of the 2011

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175 This outcome was consistent with Robert Michel’s “Iron Law of Oligarchy” which posits that a select group of political actors ultimately relinquishes ideological value commitments in favor of professional advancement and material gain.
agricultural export crisis. Although Hezbollah and JB did not collect taxes and offered or withheld jobs and services according to beneficiaries’ party affiliations and voting records, Hezbollah’s electoral participation and cabinet appointments meant it had entered into a new social contract with constituents. As such, Hezbollah and JB’s performance record would be assessed on similar grounds as the state, and their ability to meet certain standards (i.e., efficiency, transparency, and accountability) would determine, to an extent, the degree to which they remained part of future governments.\footnote{Since the signing of the 1989 Taif Agreement to end the civil war, religious confessions were allocated a certain number of parliamentary seats while also being required to receive a plurality of the total vote. This spawned Shiite-majority, voting districts where Hezbollah and Amal had strong constituencies and competed for votes, though they also entered into an alliance or coalition with the Aounists to form the Free Patriotic Movement.}

As Islamists came to power through popular uprisings and general elections, analysts remained preoccupied with determining the extent that they moderate their stance toward promoting conservative, social mores and standing up to Israel and the West. Less emphasis was placed on the degree to which constituents judged Islamists on their organizational efficiency and internal discipline. Hezbollah and its affiliates’ (e.g., JB and Waʿad) expanding role as political actors and their deepening ties to a state perceived as ineffective and corrupt led to harsher judgment and criticism and an erosion of legitimacy; based less on their promotion of Islamic values or propensity to counter Israeli and Western interests than on their capacity to deliver services, avoid corruption, and manage crises, such as the recent one involving agricultural exports.\footnote{On the contrary, the extensive, physical and economic damage wreaked by the 2006 conflict between Hezbollah and Israel prompted many Lebanese Shiites to question the benefits of resistance against Israel – Hezbollah and JB’s \textit{raison d’être}.} At the moment, it appeared as if Lebanese Shiites’ growing dissatisfaction and skepticism over

\begin{marginnote}
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\begin{enumerate}
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Hezbollah’s ability to adhere to these standards and meet these requirements produced a chink its armor.

Hezbollah’s increasing vulnerability, at least from the standpoint of public perception, may have tempted analysts to conclude that the time was ripe to challenge its position and to limit its influence in Lebanon’s Shiite territories; something the U.S. and Gulf attempted to do after the 2006 war through the financing and implementation of large-scale development projects. However, the reality remained that, for the time being, there was no viable alternative to Hezbollah. As indicated above, the state possessed little, if any, legitimacy because many Lebanese considered it to be weak, inefficient, sectarian, and corrupt. For this reason, communal identities often trumped national ones in Lebanese society.

As previously mentioned, Hezbollah’s more secular counterpart, Amal and its Council of the South, developed a social welfare network that was less robust. Furthermore, Nabih Berri’s party was equally as entrenched in the state. Amal’s longevity, more so than that of Hezbollah, which maintained closer ties to Iran, rested on al-Assad’s survival. This, among other factors, facilitated rapprochement between Amal and Hezbollah after being entangled in a bloody rivalry during the 1980s.

Outside the domestic scene, international organizations affiliated with the United Nations and European Union appeared unable to satisfy the demands of Lebanese Shiites. Most of these organizations’ employees were Westerners or Arabs from other countries

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178 A visit to the as-Safir newspaper archives revealed that, after the 2006 war, a host of local, regional, and international actors competed for geostrategic influence through the funding and implementation of large-scale, development projects (see Hamieh and Ginty 2009).

179 In 2001, the Lebanese government’s total public debt ($17 billion) was “at the highest per capita level of any emerging market economy” and “interest on the debt absorbed more than eighty percent of state revenue” (Harik 2004: 93). At the same time, “official unemployment soared to sixteen percent, second” in the Middle East “to Yemen’s 16.5 percent” (Ibid).
who could not identify with or understand the needs of the local population. Hence, the latter was often suspicious of these employees’ intentions and resented that they were paid to conduct studies and write reports on issues of which it was already aware. On the occasion that these organizations offered tangible solutions, they did so in the form of modest projects (e.g., seed or tree donations, a canning or processing plant, or microcredit program) that impacted a limited number of people and did not make up for the lack of government support.

In an interview with the author, one such employee, who happened to be from the Bekaa Valley, rejected the notion of state intervention and insisted that capitalism, entrepreneurship, and privatization were the only solution. In the end, as a resident of Southern Beirut confessed to the author, while many Lebanese Shiites did not particularly care for either Hezbollah or Amal, being affiliated with one or the other increased the likelihood of earning a living and educating one’s children. In a country where patron-client ties reigned supreme, it appeared likely that Hezbollah would remain a dominant actor, even as it became susceptible to mounting pressures and legitimacy challenges from domestic constituents and the Arab street.

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180 Personal interview with the director of an international NGO in the Bekaa Valley on July 11, 2012.
181 Personal interview with a resident of Southern Beirut on July 27, 2012.
Introduction

The Islamic Republic of Iran’s consolidation of power and its statist institutionalization of JS did not mark the end of the latter’s involvement in Iranian politics and society. As mentioned previously, the statist institutionalization or bureaucratization of JS led to fragmentation between disillusioned radicals, on one side, and coopted pragmatists, on the other. In its current state, the fragmented network of former JS members represented a microcosm of factional politics in the Islamic Republic. Like other former leftists, many JS radicals went on to support the reformist movement, led by President Mohammad Khatami (r. 1997-2005), which defeated regime conservatives in consecutive presidential elections, secured a parliamentary majority for four years (2000-2004), and challenged conservatives at the grassroots level. While eschewing statism and socialism in favor of neoliberalism and capitalism (e.g., privatization), JS radicals-turned-reformists adopted and framed Khatami’s discourse that revolved less around Western notions of liberal democracy and more around Iranian conceptions of popular participation, a value that JS as an ideal-type, revolutionary organization allegedly embodied.\footnote{JS may have embodied popular participation through its consultative councils (shūrā). However, the organization employed a top-down development model and did not encourage villagers to participate in decision-making and planning.}

Through statist institutionalization and bureaucratization, the Islamic Republic incorporated thousands of JS’s activists into the Ministry of JS and other state institutions. Yet, statist institutionalization had its limits at both the state and societal levels. Former JS members, whether they reformists or conservatives, appropriated a romanticized version of JS’s original symbols and tactics, which were embodied in an
an ambiguous concept known as jihadi culture and management. Although, on the surface, the discourse and activities of these former members appeared to be apolitical or innocuous, these former members appropriated and interpreted jihadi culture and management to further the political aims of the factions with which they were affiliated or represented.

Social movement theorists demonstrated, albeit in Western, democratic settings, that some managers and employees in organizations and bureaucracies acted as political and societal change agents by engaging in micro-mobilization or small-scale campaigns to challenge the status quo (Strang and Jung 2005: 282). With the advent and rise of the reformist movement, a number of JS radicals-turned-reformists engaged in micro-mobilization in the Ministry of Agricultural Jihad (MAJ), the byproduct of the 2001 merger between JS and the Ministry of Agriculture. These JS reformists attempted to alter the status quo by appropriating and interpreting a version of jihadi culture and management that naturally centered on popular participation.

At the same time, JS reformists at the MAJ served the interests of Khamenei and the traditional right. Aside from popular participation, JS reformists’ promoted bureaucratic decentralization and employee initiative, two values with the potential to boost a stagnant bureaucracy’s efficiency and performance. The fact these former activists served the interests of the state while still feeling as though they were part of a larger cause underscored the effectiveness of the Islamic Republic’s statist institutionalization. This outcome was further reinforced by the fact that operating within the state’s confines and being subjected to its supervision limited how far MAJ reformists could push their claims.
Regardless of the Islamic Republic’s vast resources, coercive and coopting capacities, and employment of statist institutionalization, its public sector could not absorb all former JS members nor prevent the spill-over of some back into the grassroots. As was the case at the state level, JS’s original symbols and tactics at the grassroots were up for grabs in the form of jihadi culture and management, which former JS members affiliated with different factions appropriated and interpreted for their own purposes. Whether they were conservatives who supported the regime or radicals who opposed it, former JS activists pooled their resources, established alliances with elites inside the bureaucracy and political establishment, and challenged each other at the grassroots level, initiating new cycles of contention.

Within the context of the authoritarian Middle East, analysts downplayed the presence of associational life. In instances when scholars acknowledged the existence of this phenomenon, they dismissed civic associations merely as objects of state coercion and cooptation. Taking this argument a step further, Amaney Jamal (2007) subverted Tocquevillian conceptions of civil society as the panacea to democratization by demonstrating how Arab regimes leveraged the variables that enabled grassroots associations to thrive, namely social capital and interpersonal trust, in order to perpetuate authoritarian resilience.

In her work on Iranian civil society, Paola Rivetti (2013) chronicled how Khatami and his elite allies founded associations and cooperated with others to solidify their base of support. Rivetti also revealed that, leading up to the reformists’ defeat and the conservatives’ reassertion of supremacy, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad pressured and dissolved many Khatami-affiliated associations, and supported and facilitated the
establishment of associations loyal to him. Rivetti and others classified these associations as government-organized non-governmental organizations (GONGOs), a contradiction in terms. According to Rivetti, while Iranian GONGOs claimed to be financially and politically independent, political elites, who were affiliated with both Khatami and Ahmadinejad, served on the board of founders and/or trustees of these associations.

In her study, Rivetti excluded GONGOs founded and operated by former JS members. One such entity was the Association of Trench-Builders’ without Trenches (kānūn-e sangarsāzān-e bī sangar). Established in 2004, the year leading up to Ahmadinejad’s first presidential victory, the Trench-Builders’ Association was made up of JS war veterans, an important support base for Ahmadinejad, who again prevailed in a controversial presidential election in 2009. While the Trench-Builders’ Association remained adamant that it was fully independent, its mission and activities were highly political.

As Khatami had successfully done with other civil society associations, Ahmadinejad relied on the Trench-Builders’ Association to mobilize constituents, particularly war veterans and youth, by appropriating JS’s original symbols and tactics. Through its publications, events, and programs, the Trench-Builders’ Association advanced Ahmadinejad’s and its own interests by promoting a version of jihadi culture and management that revolved around populism. The Trench-Builders’ Association cooperated with the Construction Mobilization (CM), a conservative organization jointly established by the Ministries of JS and Agriculture and by the security apparatus (i.e., the Revolutionary Guard and Basij), marking JS’s increased securitization. With the intent
of mobilizing youth away from the reformist camp, CM, like JS, deployed university and high schools students to villages, where they undertook rural development projects during school vacations and holidays.

Two years later, another group of former JS members formed the Association of Jihadists (kānūn-e jehādgarān), which engaged in similar activities as the Trench-Builder’s Association, and, excluding Koranic verse, shared an identical logo (see figure 6). Like the Trench-Builder’s Association, the Jihadists Association claimed to be completely independent, yet their aims were highly political. Former JS radicals aligned with the reformists (i.e., Khatami) and the modern right (i.e., Rafsanjani) established the Jihadists’ Association as a response against the conservative Trench-Builders’ Association. Some members of the Jihadists’ Association simultaneously worked as or cooperated with MAJ reformists in their efforts to keep popular participation high on the national agenda. Rivetti argued that Iranian GONGOs’ focus on development instead of politics reduced their threat to the regime. Yet, as this chapter reveals, JS reformists at the MAJ and the Jihadists’ Association advanced their political claims under the guise of development, as they considered popular participation an essential component of development.
At the same time, JS reformists at the Jihadists’ Association, like their counterparts at the MAJ, were monitored by, but also received recognition and support from the traditional right. For Khamenei, the reformist Jihadist Association served as a counterbalance against the Trench-Builder’s Association and Ahmadinejad’s faction, which, at times, challenged the Supreme Leader (i.e., divide and conquer). However, as Rivetti mentioned with respect to other Iranian GONGOs, the Trench-Builders’ and Jihadists’ Association, while serving elite interests, were endowed with agency of their own and simultaneously produced the unintended consequence of mobilizing previously-marginalized groups, aggregating claims from below, and exerting pressure on political elites. Paralleling what social movement theorists predicted about the fate of revolutionary activists, the Trench-Builders’ Association and the Jihadists’ Association comprised interest groups that lobbied the Iranian state for the protection and advancement of their socioeconomic interests, namely the procurement of government
contracts and, in the case of the Trench-Builders’ Association, the improvement of veterans’ compensation. From the perspective of the regime or, at least, certain factions within it, these associations’ lobbying efforts constituted a controlled feedback mechanism or a means of gauging claims from key constituencies to mitigate the risk of non-routine, contentious activities erupting at the grassroots level.

Based on interviews, participant observation, and archival and online research, this chapter examines the current discourse and activities of the fragmented network of former JS members at both the state and societal levels. The chapter’s first section delves into the discourse and activities of the conservative Trench-Builders’ Association, and the second section explores the Association’s connections and cooperation with the MAJ and the security apparatus. The third section traces the micro-mobilization of JS reformists at the MAJ, and the obstacles they confronted while operating within the realm of prescribed politics (i.e., formal political institutions) and being kept in check by regime agents and loyalists. The fourth and final section shifts the lens back to the grassroots by exploring the activities and discourse of the reformist Jihadists’ Association. Like the Trench-Builders’ Association, the Jihadists’ Association harbored elite alliances within the MAJ and political establishment, blurring the distinction between state-society relations. Analyzing the fragmented network of former JS members sheds light on factional politics in the Islamic Republic of Iran, and, more broadly, offers insight into the nature of associational life in authoritarian countries.

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183 I interviewed former JS members who were both MAJ officials and members of the Jihadists’ Association on February 14, February 23, and March 9, 2011. On March 1, 2011, I met with a Jihadists’ Association member who served as a campaign adviser to former prime minister and recent reformist, presidential candidate Mir Hossein Mousavi.
JS Conservatives and the Association of Trench-Builders without Trenches

With the Jihadists my heart has grown accustomed
The scent of love from this garden has emanated
With Jihadists fond are the years
The memory of pain my acquaintance is familiar
With the Jihadists Jihad I learned
Love in this institution I learned
May I never forget him who was the foundation of the institution
The gardener he was and his rose garden was Jihad
May I never forget those days may I never forget
The day of the union of the rosy-cheeked may I never forget
May I never forget the day of the founding of Jihad
The memory of that army of youth may I never forget
The memory of that army of martyrs of Jihad
The memory of the Trench-Builders without Trenches
The martyrs may I never forget

- Kavir Mohammadi, Former Governor General of Yazd

The Association of Trench-Builders without Trenches (kānūn-e sangarsāzān-e bī sangar) was established in 2004 (i.e., 1383), one year before Ahmadinejad’s first presidential victory. The Association approved its charter on October 1, 2009 (i.e., 9th of Mehr 1388), several months after Ahmadinejad’s controversial reelection. In an interview with the author, the Association’s deputy director stated that “following the post-war dissolution of JS’s support staff and combat engineers, many veterans went to work for the military or the Ministry of Power.” In fact, JS’s war engineering and support staff (postībānī va mohandesī-ye jang-e jehād) (PMJJ) merged with the

185 Trench-Builders’ Association website (retrieved at www.ksb1383.ir on May 9, 2013).
186 Ibid.
187 Personal interview with the deputy director of the Association of Trench-Builders without Trenches in Iran on April 12, 2011.
Revolutionary Guard and Basij at the end of the war.\textsuperscript{188} According to the deputy director, “some of these individuals, who prospered as high-level commanders and officials, pooled their resources to establish the Trench-Builders’ Association, which was independent from the state.”\textsuperscript{189} The Association’s “initial assets, whether moveable or fixed, totaled a sum of ten million rials/ toman (~$100,000), which was completely paid by the board of founders and was under the Association’s authority.”\textsuperscript{190}

The Trench-Builders’ Association designated specific membership criteria. The Association’s board of founders initially approved the terms and conditions of membership applications. This responsibility later fell under the purview of the board of trustees, which also gave final approval for accepting members to the Association.\textsuperscript{191} The Association’s board of directors had the authority, with a three-fourths majority vote and with approval from the Association’s licensing committee, to suspend or expel a member deemed ineligible.\textsuperscript{192} In article thirteen of its charter, the Association stipulated that all members must have a “record of volunteering at the warfront for JS’s war engineer and support [staff].”\textsuperscript{193} A family member of a JS war veteran was also eligible to join the Association as a “subordinate member.”\textsuperscript{194} This implied that, compared to a JS war veteran, a family member had a lower-status membership. For a fixed price, the board of directors could also confer the status of “honorary member” to “individuals who

\textsuperscript{188} Trench-Builders’ Association website (retrieved at www.ksb1383.ir on May 9, 2013).
\textsuperscript{189} Personal interview with the deputy director of the Association of Trench-Builders without Trenches in Iran on April 12, 2011.
\textsuperscript{190} The Association’s board of founders appointed the board of trustees, which, in turn, appointed the board of directors to propose policies and make decisions (Trench-Builders’ Association Charter retrieved at www.ksb1383.ir on May 9, 2013).
\textsuperscript{191} Trench-Builders’ Association Charter retrieved at www.ksb1383.ir on May 9, 2013.
\textsuperscript{192} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{193} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{194} Ibid.
[performed] outstanding service during the holy defense (i.e., Iran-Iraq War) or who
[performed] worthy service in achieving the Association’s customary goals.”

On the homepage of its website, next to a photograph of Ayatollah Khomeini, the Trench-Builders’ Association displayed the following quote from the late Iranian leader:

“[Construction] Jihad is a world icon of freedom and independence in the areas of working, struggling, and fighting against poverty, indigence, cruelty, and hardship.”

The Association’s website also stated that JS members “have treated the pain of poverty and indigence in the country, and have saved [those from] the hardship of dependence on others.” Appropriating Khomeini’s populist rhetoric, the Trench-Builders’ Association emphasized eradicating poverty and providing justice to lower-class Iranians. This made sense given that many JS veterans came from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Rather than refer to itself as a group, the Association listed one of its objectives as “preserving the social connection and solidarity of a [social] stratum (qeshr) that served and was resourceful, loyal, and supportive of the revolution.”

Like other lower-class Iranians, members of the Trench-Builders’ Association generally supported the populist-oriented Ahmadinejad. On March 16, 2011, I first visited the Association’s central headquarters, which were located in an unassuming,
threadbare building off of Keshavarz Boulevard in downtown Tehran. Unsure if I had the correct address, I stopped and asked a pedestrian for directions. While pointing out the Association’s location, the pedestrian perplexingly inquired why a foreigner like me would want to visit an organization comprised of Partisans of God (hezbollahi), a term referring to regime loyalists.

In spite of its support to the regime and its cooperation with the Revolutionary Guard and Basij (with which many of its members were once affiliated), the Trench-Builders’ Association described itself as being apolitical and non-governmental. “The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the contents and provisions of [the Association’s] charter declared that all members [of the] Association were required to declare that, on behalf of the Association, they [relinquished] the right to [participate] in political activities for or against political parties or groups.” At the same time, in article eleven of its charter, the Association stated “the implementation of plans, programs, and other measures, forecasted by the charter and somehow related to the duties of a ministry or state organization, would come under the supervision of [that] ministry or state organization after receiving its approval.” This served as a loophole allowing the Association, described in greater detail below, to cooperate with the MAJ, the security apparatus (i.e., the Revolutionary Guard and Basij), and other state

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200 The charter of the Trench-Builders’ Association listed the address of the Association’s central headquarters in Tehran as Keshavarz Boulevard, Shahid Da’emi Street, Plaque 49, which the author confirmed during his two visits on March 16 and April 12, 2011 (Trench-Builders’ Association Charter retrieved at www.ksb1383.ir on May 9, 2013).
201 Trench-Builders’ Association Charter (retrieved at www.ksb1383.ir on May 9, 2013). In personal interviews with the Association’s director and deputy director on March 16 and April 12, 2011 respectively, both emphasized that the Association was apolitical and non-governmental.
203 Ibid. On its website, the Trench-Builders’ Association frequently used the term “movement” even though, in its charter, it claimed not to participate in political activities.
institutions in recruiting and mobilizing youth to volunteer for rural development projects, a seemingly apolitical activity.

Among the Trench-Builders’ Association’s goals were “honoring the memory of JS martyrs [killed during] the holy defense, preserving the history and identity of JS’s war engineering and support staff (to which the late Imam Khomeini [bestowed] the honorable title ‘trench-builders without trenches’), and transmitting jihadi culture and jihadists’ past experiences to current and future generations.”204 Regarding the last objective, the Trench-Builder’s Association was particularly concerned with spreading and “promoting [these values] in society in general and specifically among the families, children, and associates of the trench-builders without trenches” or JS’s war engineering and support staff.205 Toward this end, the Trench-Builders’ Association sought to achieve balance between commitment (ta’ahod) and expertise (takhasos) by promoting jihadi management and culture with its “combination of action, faith, technical knowledge, courage, and sacrifice.”206 According to the Association, this ideal-type, organizational culture represented “one of the highest thought-currents for development and construction in Iran and other Islamic countries”; “a scientific model of organizational structure which different segments of society created in order to respond to new socioeconomic and cultural needs”; and “a source through which to present a successful Islamic model for making strides in technological growth and

204 Personal interview with the deputy director of the Trench-Builders’ Association in Iran on April 12, 2011, and Trench-Builders’ Association website (retrieved at www.ksb1383.ir on May 9, 2013).
205 Trench-Builders’ Association Charter (retrieved at www.ksb1383.ir on May 9, 2013).
206 Trench-Builders’ Association website (retrieved at www.ksb1383.ir on May 9, 2013).
development.” In this sense, the Association attempted to convey the compatibility of Islam and modernity.

The Association compiled a history of JS’s war engineering and support staff by conducting interviews and collecting documents. Using this information, the Association published books on JS’s war engineering and support staff, and aspired to include these publications in teaching or training curricula. The Association proposed dedicating certain weeks of the year to the “theoretical and practical transmission of [JS’s] experiences to current and future generations.” In line with these goals, the Association aspired to establish education, training, and research institutes and centers for high school and university students, and to launch seminars, expositions, museums, and memorials dedicated to JS war veterans. For the state, such initiatives were useful for channeling the energies of former activists toward inculcating current and future generations of Iranians with nationalist and religious values related to wartime martyrdom and sacrifice.

In terms of cultural framing, the Trench-Builders’ Association displayed a logo with JS’s original “all together” (ham-e bā ham) slogan framed by a sickle and stalk. In the spirit of boundary activation, the logo contained Koranic verse to convey the impression of being more pious than competing associations affiliated with JS reformists (i.e., the Association of Jihadists). This was a deliberate response to JS reformists’

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207 Ibid.
208 Trench-Builders’ Association website (retrieved at www.ksb1383.ir on May 9, 2013).
209 Ibid.
210 Ibid.
211 Ibid.
212 The website of the Trench-Builders’ Association stated: “The hope is that, with the Almighty’s help and the Twelfth Imam’s special approval, the Association’s members can take effective steps toward Imam Khomeini’s goals for this organization and toward the Supreme Leader’s expectations for jihadists through the realization, once again, of the “all together” slogan” (Trench-Builders’ Association website retrieved at www.ksb1383.ir on May 9, 2013).
attempts to institute systemic change through what they perceived as Islamic authenticity. As epitomized through JS’s “all together” slogan, which Ayatollah Khomeini introduced, the Trench-Builders’ Association embodied a culture that emphasized collective good over individual interests. According to the Association’s deputy director, JS’s combat engineers displayed this collective spirit during the outbreak of the war by dropping everything and deploying immediately to the front to serve their country. The deputy director added that, during the war, as was common in Eastern and Western countries, there existed high levels of national mobilization and cohesion “because everyone had to help and support each other, and there was no room for arguments or disagreements.”

Inspired by Khomeini’s slogan of “Neither East nor West,” the Trench-Builders’ Association’s deputy director lamented that JS’s unity began to fray and that its culture diluted after the war when Eastern and Western values of individualism, selfishness, and avarice (i.e., interest in money and material objects) permeated Iranian society.

Elaborating upon his point, the deputy director criticized the East and West’s greedy obsession with controlling resources and accumulating power (qodrat) at the expense of other countries. As an example, he recounted a Russian acquaintance’s lack of etiquette (taʿarof) by refusing to share his personal belongings or food with others in contrast to Iranians, who thought of others before themselves.

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213 Personal interview with the deputy director of the Trench-Builders’ Association in Iran on April 12, 2011.
214 In an attempt to further assert the Islamic Republic’s independence from foreign meddling, Khomeini, when announcing the Islamic Republic’s agricultural goals, employed the term “self-sufficiency” (khūdkefāyī).
215 An official from the Ministry of Agricultural Jihad’s division of culture and publicity echoed a similar rhetoric: “Like Imam Khomeini, JS members believed in the central concept of doing their own work and being free and independent from the East and West. For this reason, Imam Khomeini and JS members wanted Iranian agriculture (i.e., wheat production), animal husbandry (i.e., meat and dairy), and industry – sectors, which, in the past, had been dependent on other countries – to become [achieve] economic self-
The deputy director posited that, in contrast to JS’s original culture, the missing component of Eastern and Western values was Islam. He continued: “Those who had faith or belief in God were not afraid to serve their country by, for example, building trenches with bulldozers and loaders on the front lines.”\textsuperscript{216} The reason for this, he surmised, was that Muslims were not afraid to perform their duty because they knew that “the afterlife was the real life and that life on earth was just a test to see who made the proper decisions to go to heaven and hell.”\textsuperscript{217} The deputy director surmised that true Muslims realized that “those who served God and country went to heaven and those who did not went to hell.”\textsuperscript{218}

The deputy director concluded by stating that, by promoting JS’s pre-bureaucratic culture or culture as a revolutionary organization, the Trench-Builders’ Association aspired to “exploit Islam as a belief system of brotherhood” to the country’s advantage, and to foster “unity so the world could become a better place and so development could occur.”\textsuperscript{219} Beyond perpetuating Khomeini’s “neither East nor West” motto, the deputy director’s point about the dissolution of JS’s unity referred to the fragmentation between the organization’s radical-turned-reformists and conservatives who respectively challenged and supported the regime. In essence, the goal of the Trench-Builders’ Association’s discourse and activities was to perpetuate regime discourse and to bolster the state’s legitimacy by “reminding Iranians of the sacrifices that were made for the war sufficiency and independence” (personal interview with a former JS member and current Ministry of Agricultural Jihad official in Iran on April 23, 2011).\textsuperscript{216} Personal interview with the deputy director of the Trench-Builders’ Association in Iran on April 12, 2011.\textsuperscript{217} Ibid.\textsuperscript{218} Ibid.\textsuperscript{219} Ibid.
and of citizens’ religious and patriotic duties to serve God and nation.”

In cities and villages across the country, the regime continuously delivered the same message on streets signs named after martyrs, on murals and posters of the fallen, and in publications and media programs dedicated to the holy defense.

Among JS war veterans, the Trench-Builders’ Association aimed to “maintain social solidarity” and to “solve Jihadists’ problems through direct communication and information exchange with each other.” Toward this end, the Association designed an outreach program for JS veterans and their families. In Tehran and throughout the provinces, the Association organized weekly, monthly, and annual meetings for JS veterans and their families, and for the families of martyrs affiliated with JS’s war engineering and support staff.

The Trench-Builders’ Association organized these meetings according to veterans’ competency or specialization, including drivers, command and support, engineers, research, training, and production. The Association also held meetings between JS veterans and their “brothers” who fought in the Revolutionary Guard, the Basij, and the regular army. During the Iran-Iraq war, commonly referred to as the “holy defense” (defā’a-e moqades) or “imposed war” (jang-e taḥmīlī), JS’s war engineering and support staff primarily supported the Revolutionary Guard and Basij, and merged with both organizations after the war.

220 Personal interview with a JS war veteran and deputy director of the Association of Trench-Builders without Trenches on April 12, 2011.
221 Trench-Builders’ Association website (retrieved at www.ksb1383.ir on May 9, 2013).
222 Ibid.
223 Ibid.
224 Ibid.
225 Ibid. Personal interview with the director of the Trench-Builders’ Association in Iran on March 16, 2011.
Though a non-profit organization, the Trench-Builders’ Association undertook a number of economic activities and sought to protect and advance the financial interests of its members.\textsuperscript{226} The Association “performed activities in production and trade, and in spending revenues to promote the economic conditions of JS veterans and their families.”\textsuperscript{227} The Association also “established, strengthened, and supported private-sector companies [affiliated] with JS veterans.”\textsuperscript{228}

On the investment side, the Trench-Builders’ Association “organized and directed investment and participation in [owning] shares in companies that benefited veterans and were [in line with] the Association’s goals.”\textsuperscript{229} The Association also “pursued establishing a loan fund and connecting it to existing funds.”\textsuperscript{230} In an attempt to maintain its non-profit status and to reduce the risk of corruption, the Association, in article twelve of its charter, stipulated that the “provision of loans to members of the board of founders, the board of directors, the chief operating officer and his deputy, and the Association’s inspectors was forbidden.”\textsuperscript{231}

In its charter, the Trench-Builders’ Association listed “supporting JS war veterans and their families” as one of its main goals.\textsuperscript{232} To this end, the Association “obtained information on the living conditions and problems of JS veterans and their families, and

\textsuperscript{226} Trench-Builders’ Association Charter (retrieved at www.ksb1383.ir on May 9, 2013). In interviews with the Association’s director and deputy director in Iran on March 16 and April 12, 2011 respectively, both emphasized that the Association was a non-profit organization.
\textsuperscript{227} Trench-Builders’ Association Charter (retrieved at www.ksb1383.ir on May 9, 2013).
\textsuperscript{228} Ibid. As of this writing, it was unclear, though possible, that companies affiliated with the Trench-Builders’ Association competed against those affiliated with the Jihadists’ Association for contracts from the MAJ and other ministries and state institutions.
\textsuperscript{229} Trench-Builders’ Association website (retrieved at www.ksb1383.ir on May 9, 2013).
\textsuperscript{230} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{231} Trench-Builders’ Association Charter (retrieved at www.ksb1383.ir on May 9, 2013).
\textsuperscript{232} Ibid.
took steps to resolve these problems.” In essence, the Association acted as an interest group that supported and trained JS veterans and their families in receiving compensation for physical, emotional, and financial damage suffered during the holy defense. To promote JS war veterans’ rights, the Trench-Builders’ Association both lobbied and/or partnered with the Foundation of Veterans Affairs, the Foundation for the Preservation of Relics and the Dissemination of Values of the Holy Defense, various clerics and cultural and publicity organizations, and various state institutions, such as parliament, the judiciary, national broadcasting (ṣedā va sīmā), the Revolutionary Guard and Basij, and the MAJ and its Department of Veterans Affairs.

The Trench-Builders’ Association directed its lobbying efforts toward “seeking the implementation of laws passed by parliament, and the approval of cabinet decrees and general provisions related to JS war veterans and their families.” To help JS veterans obtain compensation, the Association launched a publicity campaign that included advertisements, films, and publications (i.e., books, weekly newsletters, and newspapers) surrounding the issue of veteran compensation. A personal conversation with director of the Trench-Builders’ Association revealed that its “primary function was cultural and that it was responsible for publicity.” Part of the goal of establishing museums, memorials, and research institutes was to raise awareness of the veteran compensation issue.

233 Ibid.
234 Trench-Builders’ Association website (retrieved at www.ksb1383.ir on May 9, 2013).
235 Ibid.
236 Ibid.
237 Ibid.
238 Personal interview with the director of the Trench-Builders’ Association in Iran on March 16, 2011.
239 Ibid.
In article ten of its charter, the Trench-Builders’ Association explicitly stated that one of its aims was “pursuing employment for [former] JS members and war veterans and for their families.” In addition to bringing together JS war veterans and their families, the Association provided JS veterans with employment and a sense of purpose. Upon entering its offices, one immediately noticed veterans with physical disabilities (e.g., blindness, shrapnel wounds, severed limbs, and illnesses from chemical weapons’ exposure) answering telephones and performing other administrative tasks.

The Trench-Builders’ Association’s partnership with MAJ’s Department of Veterans’ Affairs explained why the ministry employed war veterans, who had served in JS war engineering and support staff, the Revolutionary Guard, and the Basij, to work beside its bureaucrats and technocrats. In addition to lobbying for veterans’ compensation and employment, the Association encouraged JS war veterans, who were injured during the war, to pursue therapeutic services. The Association also established a hotel and residence for JS veterans in Tehran and the provinces. Cultural framing aside, the propensity of the Trench-Builders’ Association to adopt a populist discourse stemmed from its mission to help JS war veterans and their families extract rudimentary goods and services from the state.

While, on the surface, the Trench-Builders’ Association appeared uniquely Iranian, a comparison with the United States’ Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) showed that the Association was, in many ways, not sui generis, and that it imported components of its model from the US. Although officially established in 1914, VFW became a

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241 Trench-Builders’ Association website (retrieved at www.ksb1383.ir on May 9, 2013).
government-chartered, non-profit organization in 1936. This meant that it exclusively received donations from charitable donations instead of tax receipts.  

VFW facilitated communication between and organized meetings and events for service members and their families. In contrast to those of the Trench-Builders’ Association, VFW’s communication services and its meetings and events focused on active service members rather than on veterans. Similar to the Trench-Builder’s Association, VFW had a civic education program “designed to stimulate interest in America’s history and traditions and to promote citizenship, civic responsibility, and patriotism.” VFW also opened a home for service members’ children who were orphaned or came from single-parent families. Located in Michigan, the home “emphasized the values of education, good work habits, and sound moral character.”  

Much like the Trench-Builders’ Association, part of VFW’s mission was to lobby Congress for improved health care benefits for veterans. Through its nationwide network of employees and volunteers, VFW assisted veterans with filing, tracking, resubmitting, and disputing disability and compensation claims with the Department of Veterans Affairs. In 2004, the same year the Trench-Builders’ Association was established, VFW launched a corporate partnership program that provided grants of up to $2,500 to alleviate military service members and their families of financial hardship, and to assist them with basic needs, including mortgages and rents, home and auto repairs, insurance,

244 “Veterans of Foreign Wars” (retrieved at www.vfw.org on May 24, 2013).
245 Ibid.
246 “Legislative Victories” (retrieved at www.vfw.org on May 24, 2013).
utilities, food, and clothing. These services were reminiscent of the Trench-Builders’ Association, which aimed to make “securing the basic, material needs [of JS veterans] a priority and commonplace.”

The establishment of the Trench-Builders’ Association enabled Ahmadinejad and his faction to solidify a base of support leading up to consecutive presidential elections. Consisting primarily of lower-class war veterans, the Association’s members believed that, as a result of their wartime sacrifices and support for the populist Ahmadinejad, their time had come for a larger stake in the political establishment and economic system. In post-revolutionary Iran as elsewhere, capital accumulation and the ability to pool resources among constituents, who previously came from humble origins and were once considered political and societal underdogs, led to the emergence of a new, formidable faction.

The Association’s establishment produced the unintended consequence of mobilizing previously-marginalized JS war veterans and their families to aggregate claims from below and to apply pressure to the state. Whether one labeled such an outcome patronage, clientelism, or the semblance of a social contract, this quid pro quo arrangement consisted of constituents providing votes and other forms of political support in exchange for rudimentary, social and economic services and rights, such as wartime compensation, medical treatment, and employment. Despite the authoritarian context in which the Trench-Builders’ Association operated and the extent it could be considered a GONGO, the pressures exerted by the Association and the results it

247 VFW distributed these grants to utilities companies and other creditors as opposed to individual recipients or their families (“VFW National Military Services – Operation Uplink, Unmet Needs, Military Assistance Program” (retrieved at www.vfw.org on May 24, 2013).

248 Trench-Builders’ Association website (retrieved at www.ksb1383.ir on May 9, 2013).
achieved resembled those of other veterans associations (e.g., VFW), lobbyists, and interest groups in Western, democratic settings. Yet, if the main criteria of civic associations were the promotion of political reform and democratization, the Trench-Builders’ Association would fall short of being categorized as such.

**JS Conservatives and the Construction Mobilization**

In its discourse and activities, the Trench-Builders’ Association placed a great deal of emphasis on youth. On its website, the Association asserted that “Jihadist youth gave the highest respect to the Islamic Revolution,” that “with commitment to Islam and with faith in God Almighty, Jihadist youth, on this path, became the best example for young and committed Muslims,” and that the Association, “through its services, has become a source of worldly pride and other-worldly (i.e., the afterlife) hope for jihadists and for Muslim youth.” With its focus on youth and with branches in provinces throughout the country, the Association visited schools and universities for purposes of education, instruction, and training. For example, the Association demonstrated how, “through ingenuity and initiative, JS’s combat engineers overcame limitations on the front to confront the enemy.” Apart from its educational initiatives, the Association also encouraged students to volunteer for the Construction Mobilization (basīj-e sāzandegī) (CM) because, “since the merger between JS and the Ministry of Agriculture,

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249 Ibid.
250 Compared to the Jihadists’ Association, the Trench-Builders’ Association had a similar organizational structure with its central headquarters in Tehran and branches in most provinces of the country. Like JS when it was a revolutionary organization, the Trench-Builders’ Association penetrated more deeply into society with branches at both the provincial (ostān) and township (shahrestān) levels. Yet, article eight of the Association’s charter conflated provincial and township branches (Trench-Builders’ Association Charter retrieved at www.ksb1383.ir on May 9, 2013).
251 Trench-Builders’ Association website (retrieved at www.ksb1383.ir on May 9, 2013).
there no longer existed an organization exclusively dedicated to rural development and to assisting poor villagers.”

Similar to the Trench-Builders’ Association, CM embraced populist rhetoric that centered on “eliminating deprivation.”

CM was inspired by JS’s charter, which the Iranian parliament approved between November and December of 1983, the same year JS became a ministry. JS’s charter stated that part of the organization’s goals and responsibilities was the “mass mobilization of the people for the construction of villages” (Ministry of Agricultural Jihad 2003: 5). Even before parliamentary approval of JS’s charter, plans for CM were already in motion. After parliamentary approval of JS’s charter, plans for CM became more serious and comprehensive. Between 1984 and 1985, CM began undertaking rural construction and development, such as assisting with the building of dams (Ibid: 5-6). With the escalation of the Iran-Iraq war, CM’s activities diminished as the organization diverted its attention toward the war effort.

The end of the Iran-Iraq war marked a new phase for CM’s activities. Between 1990 and 1991, JS’s responsibilities were relegated to the management of fisheries, forests, pastures, and livestock. That year, CM filled the void left by JS by recruiting youth to work on rural development projects. This provided young men and women returning from the front with a sense of purpose, and offered them employment

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252 Ibid. Elaborating on similarities between the Trench-Builders’ Association and VFW, the latter also had community service programs “designed to encourage community service and increase civic pride,” and also partnered with the Boy Scouts of America by sponsoring 1,200 Scouting units with 40,000 members across the nation (“Veterans of Foreign Wars” (retrieved at www.vfw.org on May 24, 2013).


254 Article three of JS’s charter stated that the organization’s goal was to “mobilize the people for the construction of villages and offering possibilities for the committed and selfless of society to exert effort and to grow and spread” (Ministry of Agricultural Jihad 2003: 5). Article six of JS’s charter stated that the organization’s duty was to “mobilize popular forces and facilities to construct and revive villages” (Ibid).
opportunities while the country was in the midst of a recession (Ibid: 10). At the same
time, CM addressed pressing, interrelated demands of contributing to post-war
reconstruction, providing vocational skills to undereducated youth, and absorbing large
numbers of unemployed youth into the workforce. During this period, CM became a
cohesive, independent organization with designated and codified responsibilities.
Appropriating concepts from JS’s original discourse, CM branded itself an organization
that facilitated mobilization, attracted and organized volunteers, and promoted, among
the nation’s youth, a culture of popular participation (farhang-e mosharekat-e mardomi).

In spite of CM’s reformist discourse regarding popular participation, several MAJ
officials and employees, in interviews with the author, disclosed that CM was currently
affiliated with the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corp (IRGC) (sepah-e pasdaran-e
engelab-e eslami), an elite force tasked with defending the regime from internal and
external enemies. During a May 6, 2000 meeting with IRGC commanders and officials,
Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei proposed and requested that Iranian youth dedicate their
free time to rural construction and development with cooperation from the Ministries of
Agriculture and JS (i.e., the MAJ), and the Basij Resistance Force (niru-ye moqavemat-e
basij) (Ibid: 6-7). Responsible for policing morals and suppressing dissent, the Basij was
a paramilitary force and successor to the Iran-Iraq war’s Mobilization of the Oppressed
(basij-e mostazafan). Responsible for policing morals and suppressing dissent, the Basij
Resistance Force eventually came under the IRGC’s command. After the
abovementioned May 6th meeting, the agricultural minister and his vice ministers, JS
officials, and Basij commanders from Tehran and provincial capitals held joint meetings
and signed official agreements, culminating with new plans and designs for CM on August 5, 2000 (Ibid).

As of 2000, part of CM’s mission was to offer training to develop the technical skills of students and graduates in the field of agriculture and to “change the attitude” of youth “toward activities in the agricultural sector” (Ibid: 7-11). Toward this end, CM provided assistance to villagers and farmers who suffered labor shortages due to rural migration and depopulation and an aging workforce. Having partnered with the Ministry of Agriculture and JS, CM sought to funnel university students and graduates into agriculture, which was in competition with industry and services. Furthermore, CM’s youth volunteers, who “offered free services to the people,” comprised low-cost labor, and reduced overhead for the state and parastatal companies affiliated with the Ministry of Agriculture and JS, which, since becoming a ministry, exclusively hired employees with salaries and benefits (Ibid: 10).²⁵⁵

Compared to JS, CM’s projects were on a much smaller scale because “after [JS became a ministry], rural infrastructure and development were assigned to the state.”²⁵⁶ Yet, in remote or destitute villages, where the state remained absent or deficient, CM partially filled a void. Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, JS came to resemble other ministries with bureaucrats who reluctantly left the capital. By contrast, CM’s youth, like JS’s first generation of activists, exuberantly ventured into the countryside.

Before and after CM came under the partial supervision of JS, the former developed a portfolio of activities that overlapped with those of the latter. These

²⁵⁶ Ibid.
activities included natural resource, watershed, and soil management; livestock and veterinary affairs; agriculture, gardening, and plant protection; and rural industry (i.e., carpet production) (Ibid: 8-9). To minimize the waste and inefficiency that had occurred during JS’s early years, CM carried out projects according to strict timelines (Ibid: 11). CM possessed a top-down organizational structure which resembled that of JS when it was a revolutionary organization and which excluded villagers from decision-making and planning. CM’s central office in Tehran determined project goals and standards, procured resources (i.e., labor, inputs, credit, and facilities), and divided responsibilities between the Ministry of Agriculture and JS (the nīrūbar branch), on one side, and the IRGC and Basij (the nīrūdeh branch), on the other (Ibid: 12).

CM’s provincial and township branches assessed local conditions, coordinated with the central office, and cooperated together and with local partners in the selection, planning, and implementation of projects. CM’s township offices were responsible for identifying, registering, and organizing the primary labor force, and for training officials, input liaisons, plan supervisors, and workers (Ibid: 13). Within CM’s cooperative framework, the Ministries of Agriculture and JS (the nīrūbar branch), which would soon merge to become the MAJ, were responsible for the following: designating work sites and required labor; securing the necessary facilities, inputs, and tools; covering costs related to food, entertainment, lodging, and transportation; providing expert training and health coverage to participants; and overseeing project timelines and budgets (Ibid: 17).

As evidenced by its connection to the IRGC and Basij, CM served a clear military and political purpose. CM helped the IRGC and Basij to ingratiate itself with the rural population, which, though on the decline relative to the urban population, constituted an
important support base for the regime. CM also assisted the IRGC and Basij with identifying recruits. Depending on the type of project, CM generally targeted youth between the ages of fifteen and twenty-nine, many of whom came from lower socioeconomic and educational backgrounds (Ibid: 11). One of CM’s stated “social effects” was, “in addition to [generating] employment,” “reinforcing the feeling or spirit of self-confidence among youth” (Ibid: 11).

At the same time, CM sought youth who possessed adequate literacy and technical knowledge, who were capable of implementing projects, and who were affiliated with the IRGC and Basij (Ibid: 11). When registering volunteers, CM had students fill out forms in which they provided the following information: age, skills, education level, interests, and geographic location (Ibid: 13). Part of the reason CM collected this information was to estimate, when planning a project, the daily working capacity of groups based on expertise, age, education, and labor type (Ibid: 15).

However, it should be noted that the Basij (the nīrūdeh branch) was responsible for the “general summoning, registering, recruiting, and organization of the youth labor force” (Ibid 17). The Basij was also responsible for monetarily compensating students who participated in CM, even if the amount comprised a token sum (dahān-e shīrīnī) (Ibid).

CM fell under the partial purview of the IRGC and Basij in 2000, which marked the pinnacle of the reformist threat against regime conservatives. The reformists overwhelmingly defeated conservatives in consecutive, presidential elections and secured a four-year, parliamentary majority. At the grassroots level, the reformists garnered the

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support of student groups, who mobilized voters, organized demonstrations, and engaged in other political activities. As JS had done for Khomeini and the IRP against leftist, ethnic, and Sunni movements along the country’s rural periphery, CM served as a counterweight for the conservatives against the reformists.

A unique point to emerge from the empirical data as that CM’s founding coincided with Khamenei and the conservatives’ attempts, in the late 1990s and early 2000, to Islamize the education system, including expanding “Basiji militia forces in the universities” and establishing “a new council named the Council for Islamizing Educational Institutes (CIEI)” (Golkar 2012: 4-6). The CIEI established committees in the Ministry of Culture and Higher Education and founded a University Cultural Council, which was “responsible for all social and cultural activities at each university, including student publications, meetings, associations, and so on” (Ibid).

On May 13, 2000 – the same month the Supreme Leader convened the abovementioned meeting to establish CM – the CIEI devised a strategy to implement the following: hire university professors “based on their education, belief, and ideological commitment”; “improve Islamic conviction among high school students”; “strengthen Islamic morals and values among university students” (e.g., develop a culture of chastity and defend the values of the Islamic Revolution); “evaluate and strengthen university policies” (e.g., enforce gender segregation, establish mosques and prayer halls, and increase the presence of clergy); and “improve pre-university educational and religious programs” (Ibid). During this time, “the office of the Supreme Leader became responsible for organizing all of the religious activities at universities” (Ibid). Discouraged that the implementation of the CIEI’s strategy was stymied by the reformist-
controlled Ministry of Higher Education, the Supreme Leader, despite having pushed for CM’s establishment, interestingly proposed limiting “cultural activities at universities, including banning student trips and tours” (Ibid).

In addition to infiltrating and raiding schools and universities (particularly during the students demonstrations of July 1999), the IRGC and Basij utilized CM to mobilize segments of the youth population on their side and away from the reformist cause. Between 2000 and 2003, an estimated two million youth took part in CM projects related to rural development (Ibid: 7). Between 1996 and 2003, CM allegedly recruited more than ten million youth to restore 1.2 million hectares of land through natural resource and watershed management, to plant eight million trees, and to create 800,000 square meters of mechanized land (Ibid: 6). During the same period, CM, in cooperation with the National Youth Organization, supposedly recruited 500,000 individuals to carry out rural construction, training, and other projects (Ibid: 6).

For regime conservatives, it was better that youth spent their idle time volunteering for CM than participating in political activities that carried the risk of instability and sedition. CM’s deputy director stated that “the implementation of this plan… was to avoid the risk of social deviance.” For this reason, CM’s main objective was to “optimize the use of the free time of youth” and to “provide appropriate settings and arenas for volunteer activities, particularly among youth” (Ibid: 7-11). Aside from “enriching the free time of youth,” CM was established “based on the Supreme Leader’s plans for harnessing the biddings talents of this organization’s youth with the goal of


259 Ibid.
utilizing active, youth forces for constructing the country."²⁶⁰ Through its partnerships with the Trench-Builder’s Association, National Youth Organization (sāzemān-e melī-e javānān), and other organizations, CM recruited high school and university students to volunteer for rural development projects during vacations and holidays, particularly during summer break and the Persian New Year (eid-e nowrūz) in the spring (see figure 7).²⁶¹ As was the case with JS and the university closures, the disposable time of students represented a political opportunity of major importance.

**Figure 7.** Construction Mobilization Recruitment Poster (photographed by the author in a village outside of Yazd, May 2011).

²⁶⁰ Ibid.
During the summer of 2009, the time of the Iranian election crisis, CM had high school students participate in the beautification and repair of more than ten thousand schools through its jihadi camps (ordūha-yē jehādī) or hijrah camps (ordūha-yē hejrat).\(^{262}\) CM’s deputy director stated that, “until now, they had completed and delivered [work on] 10,051 schools.”\(^{263}\) The name of the hijrah camps equated the Prophet Mohammad’s temporary migration from Mecca to Medina with students’ sojourn to the countryside.

CM’s deputy director claimed that “since the summer of 2007, [CM] was charged with implementing the camps with state sponsorship and credit of fourteen billion rials (~$140,000).”\(^{264}\) According to CM’s deputy director, this allocation from the state “was based on estimates that, until now (i.e., 2009), seven million youth participated in… hijrat camps.”\(^{265}\) CM’s deputy director estimated that, “out of the country’s fifteen million high school students, at least ten million were eligible for CM’s hijrah camps in different areas of renovating and reconstructing schools,” and considered this “an effective step toward occupying the free time of youth and teenagers.”\(^{266}\) The deputy director added that, “coinciding with the beginning of the new school year, five thousand training projects were ready to be delivered to twenty-five thousand classrooms, with more than half a million high schools putting [these projects] in place.”\(^{267}\) In addition to renovating

\(^{262}\) “The Role of the Construction Mobilization and the Construction Jihad in Eliminating Deprivation from the Country,” August 13, 2009 (retrieved on May 9, 2013 at www.kanoonejahadgaran.ir/persian/content-view.asp?id=380). It remained unclear whether the expression “social deviance” referred to politically subversion or to substance abuse and criminal activities.

\(^{263}\) Ibid.

\(^{264}\) Ibid.

\(^{265}\) Ibid.

\(^{266}\) Ibid.

\(^{267}\) Ibid.
schools, camp participants also rebuilt mosques, cemeteries, homes, and other
structures.268

According to CM’s director of natural resources and agriculture, “hijrah camp
participants [underwent] one round of intensive training before being deployed to
destitute regions.”269 There, “the camps’ participants planted crops, trimmed orchards,
sprayed fields, and assisted destitute farmers.”270 The camps’ other main activities
included “watershed affairs, crop production, planting bushes and shrubs in pastures,
constructing aqueducts, and irrigating and harvesting crops.”271

CM’s director of natural resources and agriculture estimated that, between 2000
and 2009, “fifteen million university students [with] majors related to these fields
attended hijrah camps, which elevated the experience of these students and was
considered an effective step toward eliminating deprivation.”272 In the spring of 2013,
during the first two weeks of the Persian New Year (i.e., the first to the fifteenth of the
month of Farvardin or March 22 to April 4, 2013), “close to one hundred male and
female university students in nine jihadi groups were deployed to villages in three
townships (Baft, Rabar, and Arzu’iyeh) [in Kerman province] [through] new year’s jihadi
camps that were held.”273 For three consecutive years (i.e., 2011-2013), during the

268 “Camps in God’s Complexion,” May 8, 2013 (Retrieved on May 9, 2013 at
269 “The Role of the Construction Mobilization and the Construction Jihad in Eliminating Deprivation from
the Country,” August 13, 2009 (retrieved on May 9, 2013 at www.kanoonejahadgaran.ir/persian/content-
view.asp?id=380).
270 Ibid.
271 Ibid.
272 Ibid.
273 These students were from Free University (dāneshgāh āzād), Imam Hussein Technical University
(dāneshgāh fanī emām Ḩosayn), the University of Business Administration and Economics (dāneshgāh
modiriyat va eqteṣād), and Payam-e Noor University (dāneshgāh payām-e nūr). In Kerman province, these
students worked in the model villages of Dehsalar Dehsard, Mahmudabad, and Haydarabad, which were
Persian New Year and summer, CM has organized these jihadi camps in Kerman province where volunteers undertook activities related to “culture, construction, hygiene, education, spirituality, and religion.”

With respect to cultural framing, the leaders and volunteers, who participated in CM’s jihadi or hijrah camps, wore t-shirts with JS’s original “all together” slogan. In contradictory fashion, CM branded the camps as both “spontaneous” (khodjūsh), appropriating JS’s original discourse, and “institutionalized” (nehādīneh); the latter term being more accurate considering the amount of resources, personnel, organization, and state involvement behind the effort. As indicated above, CM, like the Trench-Builders’ Association, adopted a populist rhetoric when describing its main mission as “delivering services to and eliminating destitution from deprived villages and regions.”

When describing its mission, CM utilized other populist expressions, such as “welfare” (ʿāmālmenafʿeh) and “popular assistance” (mardomyārī).

Similar to JS, CM volunteers (i.e., mobilizing structures) consisted of young men and women, who wore simple clothing and possessed humble and pious demeanors. Their physical appearances were not markedly different from the villagers they serviced. Many of the young men who served as CM leaders and volunteers had beards and regularly engaged in prayer sessions, sometimes with clerics. As was the case with JS

located around the township of Arzu’iyeh (“Camps in God’s Complexion,” May 8, 2013 (Retrieved on May 9, 2013 at www.kanoonejahadgaran.ir/persian/content-view.asp?id=2117)).


Ibid.

Ibid.
members and the incentives of spiritual rewards (thawāb), CM volunteers considered jihadi camps “an opportunity for alms or charitable giving (zakāt)… and an opportunity to think about building oneself and becoming familiar with oneself and with God.”

For this reason, CM framed jihadi camps as an altruistic and spiritual mission designed to bring joy to elderly and poor villagers. According to one participant, “when an elderly villager kisses the face of a youth and blesses him by saying ‘May God keep your father and mother,’ it makes one envious and feel that God will pardon his sins.”

While the Ministry of Agriculture and JS (i.e., MAJ) provided technical training, the Basij Resistance Force offered cultural training to students who participated in CM (Ibid: 17). CM’s deputy director stated that, up until 2009, “more than 1,658,196 individuals, accompanied by 3,171 teachers, cultural coaches, and the Basij’s cultural volunteers, worked on repairing, renovating, and beautifying the country’s schools.”

In comparison to JS, CM’s projects were smaller in scale, and, as rural experts described them, largely symbolic. During the jihadi or hijrah camps, its student participants physically, emotionally, and spiritually reconstructed or replicated the experiences of former JS members in villages or fighters and martyrs on the front. Simulating the experiences of former JS members, “a number of basiji students in the jihadi camps left their homes and families and deployed to deprived places with few facilities and [many] difficulties… to engage in delivering services and eliminating poverty.”

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280 Ibid.
By “constructing or reconstructing the tomb of a martyr in a distant village,” jihadi and hijrah camp participants could physically and emotionally relate to, identify and connect with, and internalize the experiences of former JS members, veterans, and martyrs. According to a CM official, “by bringing joy to and going to deprived regions and villages and by working in different areas (e.g., culture, construction, spirituality, etc.), youth can continue [in] the path of and become jihadis [as] our martyrs were a clear example and symbol of everything that was good.” In the words of a jihadi camp participant: “In my opinion, an Iranian youth can do the work that martyrs did for us. For a person, going to jihadi camps recalls memories of the front and the grounds of construction… For a person, jihadi camps build memories which, with all their simplicity, are very beautiful and enduring.”

The case of CM represented but one example of state institutions appropriating JS’s original symbols and actions at the grassroots level to advance their political interests and preserve the status quo. In March 2011, during his annually televised speech on the Persian New Year, Khamenei declared 1390 (2011-2012) the year of “economic jihad” to prepare the country for subsidy cuts and for intensified, Western sanctions against Iran's nuclear program. To reinforce the message, billboards of the Supreme Leader and his new proclamation appeared throughout the country (see figure 8).

Several weeks earlier, apprehensive about how the so-called Arab Spring might influence the perceptions and actions of anti-regime activists, the state launched the

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283 Ibid.
284 Ibid.
Islamic Awakening campaign. Positioning the regime as a champion of popular uprisings in the Middle East, the campaign attempted to convince Iranians that the Islamic revolution had inspired these events and to encourage citizens to march in support of the Islamic Awakening instead of against the state – a reoccurring trend since the 2009 presidential elections which many Iranians perceived as fraudulent. In May 2011, the University Jihad – an umbrella organization of student associations established one year after JS and aligned with Khamenei and other regime conservatives (Moslem 2002: 116) – invoked JS's "all together" slogan while urging students to participate in rallies in defense of the Islamic Awakening (see figure 9).\textsuperscript{285}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure8.png}
\caption{Billboards of the Supreme Leader’s Economic Jihad Campaign (photographed by the author in the provinces of Azerbaijan, Khorasan, Tehran, and Yazd, May 2011).}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{285} Among the countries undergoing the Islamic Awakening, the campaign conveniently excluded Iran’s ally Syria, which, at the time, faced widespread opposition demonstrations and protests.
JS Reformists at the State Level: The Ministry of Agricultural Jihad

Each year, during the month of June, the annual Jihad Week (*hafte-e jehād*) took place in Tehran to commemorate the legacy of JS. During the week, former members gathered to pay tribute to JS and to reminisce about their time in the organization. They visited Ayatollah Khomeini’s shrine and the graves of prominent JS members who lost their lives in post-revolutionary rebellions and in the Iran-Iraq war.286 Such members included Mohammad Tarajchi, Hussein Nahiyan, Sayed-Mohammad-Taqi Razvi, Sayed-

286 Personal communication with former JS member and current government adviser on June 18, 2012.
Hashem Sahedi, Sayed Mortezi Avini, and Mohammad Shahshahani.\textsuperscript{287} Beyond this, former JS members at the state level routinely undertook formal activities to commemorate JS. For example, a former JS member and current high-level official at the MAJ met with two university professors every week in the upscale Tehran neighborhood of Sa’adat Abad to devise the plans for a new museum. Scheduled for completion in the next five to six years, the museum commemorated JS’s contribution to the Islamic revolution, Iranian rural development, and the Iran-Iraq war.\textsuperscript{288}

Through the distribution of publications and organizing of events, former JS members at the MAJ commemorated JS by producing and perpetuating jihadi management and culture. During one of my first visits to the MAJ on February 12, 2011, the abovementioned former member and official planning the museum sat me down in his office to discuss the meaning of jihad. Before granting me permission to speak with other employees at the MAJ or to access its library and archives, the official wanted to make sure that I fully understood the term.

Borrowing concepts from Ayatollah Khomeini’s writings, the official explained that, “contrary to perceptions in the West, the term did not necessarily equate to holy war; that, in Islam, jihad also referred to a divinely-inspired struggle to better the self (i.e., the greater jihad), which, in turn, enabled one to improve society (i.e., the lesser jihad).”\textsuperscript{289}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{287} Trench-Builders’ Association website (retrieved at www.ksb1383.ir on May 9, 2013). See also Akhondi 2012.
\item \textsuperscript{288} Personal interview with former JS member and current MAJ official in Iran on February 12, 2011.
\item \textsuperscript{289} Although the MAJ official tried to differentiate Persian Shiites from Arab Sunnis (i.e., boundary activation), he overlooked that Sunni Muslims also believe in the concept of the lesser jihad (\textit{jihād al-āṣghar}) and the greater or greatest jihad (\textit{jihād al-nafs}) which are found in hadith. Outside the Middle East, this debate is playing out in the United States, where American Muslims have launched the MyJihad campaign to convince the public that jihad is any struggle that betters society (e.g., community service) or the self (e.g., studying and fitness). In response, a conservative American group has launched a counter-campaign by including posters on public transportation in several cities with pictures of Osama Bin Laden and the message that jihad is exclusively associated with terrorism and violence.
\end{itemize}
He added that “by taking the time and making the effort to come all the way to Iran to learn Persian and to conduct research on JS, I was performing the greatest jihad” – an opinion expressed by other former members during interviews. Perhaps this effort to perpetuate a non-violent interpretation of jihad was a means of minimizing religious fanaticism and violence in society and against the state.

After explaining the meaning of jihad, the MAJ official approved my research for three reasons. First, my research illustrated the broader definition of jihad, which the West stigmatized. Second, my research preserved the legacy of JS, which, in spite of being one of the Islamic Republic’s most important revolutionary organizations, was gradually fading from the collective memory of current and future generations of Iranians. Third, by highlighting the democratic aspects of JS, as embodied by its pre-bureaucratic, consultative councils (shūrā), my research demonstrated the potential for democracy to exist and thrive in Iran and the rest of the Muslim World. With respect to the last point, I had difficulty discerning whether the official was attempting to alter my perceptions of Iran being an authoritarian state or whether he was operating as a reformist inside the bureaucracy. Over time, I uncovered a network of former JS radicals, who attempted to reform state and society while commemorating JS’s legacy.

On April 23, 2011, I visited the offices of and met with officials from the MAJ’s cultural (farhangī) and publicity (tablīghāt) division on Taleqani Street in downtown Tehran. The three officials who I interviewed shared an office in the division, which produced and disseminated publications and organized conferences and seminars on JS. At the beginning of our interview, the officials immediately brandished their revolutionary credentials. The first official mentioned that he had volunteered for JS
before and during the war in the volatile regions of Kurdistan and Khuzestan, where he had seen the “decapitated and mutilated corpses of fellow members.” In both provinces, part of his responsibilities had been to recruit local school teachers to denounce armed insurgents and other dissidents. The second official proudly announced that his brother had been martyred as a Basiji during the Iran-Iraq war. The third official, who was also a professor, had worked in JS during the past thirty years, from the time it was a revolution organization through its merger with the Ministry of Agriculture. At the age of twenty, he joined JS’s cultural section (bakhsh-e farhangī) in Esfahan province, where he “set up libraries to impart knowledge to locals so they could solve their own problems.”

As was common in MAJ offices, the first official was a war veteran, who ensured that the office maintained proper decorum (e.g., praying in the corner several times per day), while the other two officials were technocrats who applied their skills to carrying out projects and to writing reports. The first official attentively listened to the conversation, presumably to monitor it, while the second and third officials highlighted the values that JS allegedly embodied before becoming a ministry and that their division

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290 Personal interview with a former JS member and current Ministry of Agricultural Jihad official in Iran on April 23, 2011 (subject #1). In interviews, several former JS members emphasized that leftist, ethnic, and Sunni insurgents, after killing JS members, decapitated and mutilated their corpses. Whether this was hyperbole, these interviewees intended to vilify JS’s leftist, ethnic, and Sunni opponents by portraying them as inhumane and unconscionable.

291 Personal interview with a former JS member and current Ministry of Agricultural Jihad official in Iran on April 23, 2011 (subject #3). In addition to working in cultural affairs, the official also worked in extension by “assisting villagers, whose wheat revenues were declining, with increasing their local income by planting more vegetables and exporting them to cities like Esfahan and Tehran” (Ibid). In an interview with the author, a former member, who worked in JS’s cultural section in Yazd province, posited that the organization’s libraries, which contained many revolutionary and Islamic books, did not provide sufficient expertise to villagers “on the technical aspect of agriculture and rural development” (personal interview with former JS member in Iran on April 19, 2011).

292 In addition to sharing offices with pious war veterans, MAJ technocrats were required to periodically attend classes on Islam (Conversation with Ministry of Agricultural Jihad employee on February 13, 2011).
sought to promote through its conferences and publications. While outlining JS’s main values, the third official referenced a book written by Ali Reza Zevarah entitled *The Organizational Culture of Jihad (farhang-e sāzemānī-e jehād)*, which his division published between 2006 and 2007 in conjunction with The Center for the Recording and Publishing of the Relics of the Holy Defense (*merkaz-e sabt va nashr-e āsār-e defā’a-e moqades*), an archivist and publisher that focused on the Iran-Iraq war.

The three officials at the MAJ perceived their division’s efforts as a means of reforming the current system through what they called “jihadi culture and management” (*farhang va modīriyat-e jehādī*). In the words of the third official: “In the [same] way that JS [as a revolutionary organization] attempted to change the traditional, [bureaucratic] structure, we promote the following central concepts found in jihadi culture and management: accepting and welcoming change, never being static and always being dynamic, and [establishing] a new community or society.” Since June 16, 2007 (the date JS was officially established in 1979), MAJ’s culture and publicity division held an annual conference in Tehran on jihadi culture and management, and published a volume of lectures and articles from each conference.

Like many other former JS members, the three officials from the MAJ lamented JS’s bureaucratization and contrasted JS’s original culture with that of the ministries. The third MAJ official stated that the bureaucracy’s “organizational framework represented JS’s greatest challenge because it [imposed] restrictions on it and because the organization’s original goal was lost when it became an official ministry.”

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293 Personal interview with a former JS member and current Ministry of Agricultural Jihad official in Iran on April 23, 2011 (subject #3).
imposed on JS was bureaucratic centralization and red tape, leading to the stifling of employee initiative and productivity. The second MAJ official indicated that, before becoming a ministry, “JS did not have a hierarchy which was part of jihadi culture.”

As a consequence, “JS members [displayed initiative] by helping villagers to harvest their crops and by building bridges and public baths… and by looking for trouble.”

Elaborating upon this point, the third official stated that “after an earthquake, flood, or hurricane, JS, which was always active and never static, would be the first group to offer assistance.” The third official added:

> Unlike the bureaucracy, where paperwork (kaghaž bāzī) was more important than the goal, JS did not have set working hours and its members made the best use of their time. They worked all day and night, sometimes around the clock without stopping or taking a break, and slept at work for the love of the goal, the mission, and the work itself. This differed from the Shah’s ministries, which worked slowly and inefficiently.

In contrast to rural development experts, who criticized JS for being inefficient and wasting resources due to lack of planning and expertise, the third official criticized the bureaucracy for “performing its work at high costs.” He insisted that jihadi culture and management emphasized the “central concepts of economic discipline or keeping expenses low while undertaking work.”

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294 Personal interview with a Ministry of Agricultural Jihad official in Iran on April 23, 2011 (subject #2).
295 Ibid.
296 Personal interview with a former JS member and current Ministry of Agricultural Jihad official in Iran on April 23, 2011 (subject #3).
297 Ibid.
298 Ibid.
The second MAJ official contrasted JS as a revolutionary organization to the “ministries, where workers consulted their bosses [before doing anything].” The third official asserted that, in contrast to the ministries, “a central quality of JS [as a revolutionary organization] was its popular participation (moshārekat-e mardomī) combined with its organizational flexibility or the willingness of members to voice, seek, and accept opinions, suggestions, and criticism, even if they were directed by low-level workers to their superiors.” According to the official, jihadi culture and management stressed the need to “support the work of others within a system in which a relationship of mutual confidence existed between managers and workers; that, as in the case of the Prophet Mohammad, management should come from the heart, should not be imposed, and should be accepted by the employees.” In fact, leveling the playing field between managers and workers was a value emphasized in JS’s charter, which stipulated that members of specialized units or groups appointed officials, who, in turn, delegated duties and assigned tasks to members (see appendix three). Yet, it should also be noted that group members’ appointments of officials had to be respectively approved by a representative of the Supreme Leader (i.e., Imam’s representative) and a representative of the prime minister (i.e., state representative).

According to the three MAJ officials, the second set of restrictions the bureaucracy’s organizational cultural imposed on JS was individualism, careerism, and materialism which compromised the organization’s collectiveness, commitment, and piety – values also emphasized by the Trench-Builders’ Association. The second official

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299 Personal interview with a Ministry of Agricultural Jihad official in Iran on April 23, 2011 (subject #2).
300 Personal interview with a former JS member and current Ministry of Agricultural Jihad official in Iran on April 23, 2011 (subject #3).
301 Ibid.
pointed out that “if you look now, former JS members, especially its ministers and vice-ministers, embraced aspirations of professional advancement by obtaining high posts in various ministries.”\textsuperscript{302} The third official contrasted the personal ambition of ministers and civil servants to former JS members “for whom the group and its work, unity, and solidarity were more important than the individual.”\textsuperscript{303} The third official posited that “with money, the ministries accomplished routine work whereas, with the central concept of love of service, JS accomplished big things… in rural development and industry, earthquake assistance, logistical support during the war, and the construction of military facilities and grain silos.”\textsuperscript{304} He continued:

\begin{quote}
In contrast to the ministries, JS’s work was not about money or professional advancement, but about commitment (\textit{ta’ahud}). This meant staying the course and displaying perseverance and endurance, no matter how difficult the obstacles or how great the pressures or dangers, to achieve the goal. JS’s goal was to increase the satisfaction of villagers and to solve their problems, such as eliminating poverty and deprivation – something the Shah never did… JS epitomized the central concept of awareness and knowledge of commitment because its members fulfilled their promises, pacts, and agreements by continuing their work until it was completed… In contrast to ministers and civil servants, who worked for money and fame, JS members were honest, loyal, and sincere in their actions by working for God’s satisfaction… Religion and piety was central to JS, whose members worked for low wages and salaries in the name of
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{302} Personal interview with a Ministry of Agricultural Jihad official in Iran on April 23, 2011 (subject #2).
\textsuperscript{303} Personal interview with a former JS member and current Ministry of Agricultural Jihad official in Iran on April 23, 2011 (subject #3).
\textsuperscript{304} Ibid.
devotion, faith, spirituality, love, service, justice, and helping people – principals found in and emphasized by the Qur’an.”

Reminiscent of Khatami’s discourse regarding the rule of law, the third MAJ official stated that Jihadi management and culture was based on “the central concepts of respecting and obeying the law, setting an example [for others], and preserving absolute values without compromise.” The official insisted that this culture “deemed accepting bribes or doing things based on personal connections (pārtī bāzī) unacceptable.” The official equated this aspect of jihadi culture and management to the Islamic concept of “commanding right and forbidding wrong” (al-amr bi ‘l-maʿruf wa ‘n-nahy ‘an al-munkar); that is, “recognizing good deeds while acknowledging and criticizing bad deeds and mistakes.” Along these lines, the official added that “another central concept of Jihadi culture and management was conscientious work and a feeling of responsibility; that people were recognized, encouraged, and thanked for their own work and not for the work of others.”

As evidenced by the religious references in their discourse, many JS reformists at the MAJ were not simply trying to mold the bureaucracy in the image of an ideal-type, revolutionary organization; they were attempting to infuse state and society with what they perceived to be authentic, Islamic values from the revolution and from which

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305 Ibid.
306 Ibid.
307 Ibid.
308 Ibid.
309 Ibid. This depiction of JS, which often based its recruitment and service distribution on personal affiliations and political preferences, did not entirely conform to reality.
Iranians supposedly strayed. Just as reformist politicians and clerics resorted to traditionalist methodologies to challenge conservative politicians and clerics, JS members at the MAJ packaged their reformist discourse, known as jihadi culture and management, within an Islamic framework. In interviews with the author, JS reformists believed that the values embodied in JS as a revolutionary organization constituted the correct form of Islam as Ayatollah Khomeini had intended it. Just as these former members glorified JS as a revolutionary organization, they revered Khomeini, who they consistently referred to as Imam and, as mentioned above, whose mausoleum they visited. Similar to their outlook of JS, these individuals overlooked Khomeini’s instrumentalization of religion for political gain, and the miscalculations and repression that occurred during his reign.

As indicated above, JS reformists at the MAJ critiqued modern bureaucracy and identified the drawbacks associated with JS’s bureaucratization, including centralization, red tape, stagnancy, inefficiency, individualism, materialism, and careerism, and corruption. While JS reformists criticized JS’s bureaucratization, they overlooked its merits. Such merits, as mentioned in a previous chapter, consisted of organizational stability and financial accountability. With the intent of remedying the MAJ’s bureaucratic deficiencies, JS reformists sought to transform employees into ideal-type jihadists of the past. This strategy of identity politics also applied to JS while it existed and operated as a revolutionary organization. According to one former member, “while we made our fair share of mistakes, we did not build villages as much as we built

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310 Personal interview with a former JS member and current Ministry of Agricultural Jihad official in Iran on May 11, 2011.
311 This strategy was adopted by reformists, who used prominent clerics, such as Ayatollah Hussein-Ali Montazeri (d. 2009), as symbols for the cause by portraying them as more progressive than they actually were.
people.” As described by the abovementioned MAJ officials, attributes of the ideal-type jihadist consisted of motivation, initiative, activity, flexibility, altruism, and self-sacrifice. In the discourse of these officials and of post-revolutionary Iran, these qualities could be summed up in one word: commitment (ta‘ahud).

Although the term “commitment” was salient during the immediate aftermath of the Shah’s downfall, it gradually lost prominence following the Iran-Iraq war during the reconstruction period and the administration of former President Hashemi Rafsanjani (1989-1997). During this time, the term expertise (takhasus) became l’expression du jour as officials and functionaries proved their worth through the discourse and credentials of expertise rather than those of commitment. One need only compare the ten and twenty-year reports of JS to observe this transformation. Compared to JS’s ten-year report, the twenty-year report, which resembled an annual report published by a Western corporation, contained an abundance of technical jargon, statistics, and advertisements for companies affiliated with JS. Using revolutionary or pre-bureaucratic JS as the model, JS reformists at the MAJ attempted to infuse the bureaucracy with a spirit of commitment or, similar to the Trench-Builder’s Association, to create balance or “coordination between expertise and commitment because achievement and progress could not exist without both.”

312 Personal interview with a former JS member and current MAJ official in Iran on May 11, 2011. Objectives regarding the construction of people and society also appeared in article thirteen, section “e” of JS’s charter (see Appendix three).
314 Personal interview with former JS member and current Ministry of Agricultural Jihad official in Iran on April 23, 2011 (subject #3).
The commitment-expertise dichotomy and ideal-type jihadist did not entirely reflect reality. In interviews with the author, rural development experts and even some former members criticized JS for lacking expertise, and, yet, this was not entirely accurate. For example, while JS’s bulldozer and loader drivers, who dug trenches during the Iran-Iraq war, were uneducated and low-skilled, its engineers, who developed military technology (i.e., airboats, tanks, missiles, and ships), were educated and highly skilled, and had their own center for research and development (Iravani 1998-1999: 228). Similarly, while many JS members displayed high-levels of commitment, others were opportunists and corrupt, embezzling materials, inputs, and credit that had been earmarked for villagers. However, JS reformists at the MAJ sought to exploit the partial myth – created, in part, by their efforts – that JS members worked around the clock to help poor villagers for little or no compensation, reluctantly withdrawing money from a communal pot to cover their daily living expenses.

Utilizing a romanticized or glorified portrayal of JS as a revolutionary organization to inject a bureaucracy perceived as stagnant and inefficient with motivation and commitment was an agenda that many conservatives endorsed and supported. As Berlin police chief Karl von Hinckeldey (r. 1848-1856) achieved by incorporating failed revolutionaries into Prussia’s first Bureau of Statistics, the MAJ channeled the residual energy of former JS activists into productive endeavors that served the interests of the state while giving these individuals a sense of purpose and self-worth, and the impression

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315 Personal interview with the director of the Association of Trench-Builders without Trenches in Iran on March 16, 2011.
316 Personal interviews with a JS member in Iran on February 14 and March 9, 2011, and with a rural development expert on in Iran March 5, 2011.
that they were making a difference. Despite the impressive amount of publications and conferences, it remained difficult to discern whether JS reformists had a sweeping effect on MAJ’s organizational culture, and whether they precipitated concrete or tangible, organizational restructuring or policy changes. At the same time, this outcome highlighted the effectiveness of the Islamic Republic’s statist institutionalization of JS.

Paradoxically, JS reformists at the MAJ sought to reinvigorate a bureaucracy they perceived as being inefficient and stagnant through repertoire that reified their status as professionalized agents of the same system. While serving to advance reformist claims, the repertoire of JS reformists was routinized and conformed to modern, bureaucratic standards. This businesslike repertoire included wearing suits (without ties), holding meetings, using flip charts, creating email distribution lists, writing mission statements, forming committees, preparing PowerPoint presentations, sponsoring networking events, defining benchmarks, naming ‘best practices,’ and courting senior allies (Scully and Creed 2005: 320-323).

Although JS reformists’ tactics were locally sensible and legitimate for organizational settings, their institutionalized language, logic, and modus operandi limited how strongly they could state a social justice agenda or how far they could push for radical change (Ibid). While advocating for less bureaucratic centralization and more employee initiative, JS reformists stopped short of demanding increased, political

318 In cooperation with other former JS members, one JS reformist at the MAJ launched a non-governmental initiative through which he established rural councils in needy villages. The purpose of the councils was to provide villagers a venue where they could prioritize their developmental needs and channel their demands up to the government. According to the JS reformist, the goal of this initiative, in contrast to JS and the MAJ, was to allow villagers, who understood their needs best, to participate in decision-making and planning. This initiative demonstrated that meaningful, institutional change occurred outside of the bureaucracy (personal interview with a former JS member and current MAJ official in Iran on May 4, 2011).
decentralization and participation – though there existed a fine line between both agendas. Rather than constituting viable, political and societal change agents, former JS members-turned-bureaucrats became accepted members of the polity with varying residual attachments to activist rhetoric and forms (Useem and Zald 1987: 273-274). This outcome further underscored the effectiveness of the Islamic Republic’s statist institutionalization of JS.

The routinized repertoire utilized by JS reformists at the MAJ reduced the likelihood that contention would spill over into the streets and transform into non-routine contention. Instead of overtly confronting or directly challenging government authorities, JS reformists sought to transform the culture of the MAJ and the identity of its managers and employees through the ideal-type, revolutionary organization and model jihadist.\(^{319}\) The fact that JS reformists at the MAJ operated within the confines of the state, as opposed to outside of it, demonstrated the latter’s power.

At the MAJ, Basij officials and Supreme Leader Representative, Ayatollah Hassan Alemi, respectively monitored and supervised JS reformists to ensure that their discourse and activities stayed within the realm of formal politics and that radical dissent remained tempered.\(^{320}\) As with social movements, the outcomes of struggles in organizations were jointly shaped by pressures exerted by internal actors and the will and capacity of government authorities to resist (Clemens 2005: 357). More worrisome for


\(^{320}\) Personal interview with a rural development expert on April 6, 2011 and with a former JS member ion April 23, 2011. This practice began in the early eighties when the regime established political-ideological bureaus and Islamic societies in the army, police, and various government agencies (Arjomand 1988: 163-170). According to the third official at the MAJ’s division of culture and publicity, “Ayatollah Khomeini appointed Mohammad Beheshti to serve as JS’s first supreme jurist representative, then Ali Akbar Nateq-Nouri, Abdollah Nouri, Rajabali Heidarzadeh, and now Hassan Alemi” (personal interview with former JS member and current Ministry of Agricultural Jihad official in Iran on April 23, 2011 (subject #3).
regime conservatives were the activities of JS reformists at the societal level, beyond the confines of formal, political institutions and further removed from the grasp of the state. The final section of this chapter will analyze and describe the discourse and activities of JS reformists at the grassroots level.

**JS Reformists at the Grassroots Level: The Association of Jihadists**

Established in 2006, one year after Ahmadinejad’s first presidential victory and two years after the founding of the Trench-Builders’ Association, the Jihadists’ Association constituted a response by former JS members aligned with the modern right (i.e., Rafsanjani) and the reformists (i.e., Khatami) to the reassertion of conservative supremacy. The Jihadists’ Association also served as an instrument for the traditional right (i.e., Khamenei) to counterbalance the Trench-Builder’s Association. As indicated above, the Trench-Builder’s Association tended to support Ahmadinejad, who increasingly challenged Khamenei. The Supreme Leader’s representative, Ayatollah Hassan Alemi, who supervised the activities of JS reformists at the MAJ, attended the Jihadists’ Association’s seasonal and annual meetings (see figure 10).
Figure 10.a. Supreme Leader Representative Hassan Alemi addressing attendees at a meeting of the Association of Jihadists (retrieved on the Jihadists’ Association’s website at www.kanoonejahadgaran.ir on May 9, 2011).

Figure 10.b. Supreme Leader Representative Hassan Alemi receiving a gift from attendees at a meeting of the Association of Jihadists (retrieved on the Jihadists’ Association’s website at www.kanoonejahadgaran.ir on May 9, 2011).
The Association of Jihadists of the Construction Jihad (kānūn-e jehādgarān-e jehād-e sāzandegī) was founded on June 17, 2006, the same date that JS was established in 1979. The term “jihadists” (jehādgarān) referred to former members of JS. On its website, the Jihadist Association described its goals as “preserving the acquired values, goals, and prophetic messages of the holy organization of JS, as embodied in its ‘all-together’ slogan; establishing targeted interaction between jihadists, and utilizing their valuable experience to provide more services to the Islamic regime.” Despite its claims to being “independent, apolitical, and non-profit,” the Association, as will be described at greater length below, utilized Khomeini, Khamenei, and JS as symbols to

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321 Association of Jihadists’ website (retrieved on May 9, 2013 at www.kanoonejahadgaran.ir).
322 Ibid. In a personal interview in Iran on May 11, 2011, a former JS member, MAJ official, and Jihadists’ Association member reiterated the importance of “keeping the holy spirit of JS alive as future generations of Iranians were forgetting about the organization and all it had done for the country.”
promote its reformist agenda and to render profit-generating services to the state (e.g., consulting for the MAJ).323

Like JS reformists at the MAJ, members of the Jihadists’ Association emphasized the value of popular participation that JS allegedly epitomized before becoming a ministry. On its website, the Jihadists’ Association listed one of the main reasons for its establishment as the “transformation of JS’s organizational structure (i.e., bureaucratization) and name (i.e., Ministry of JS).”324 Like other former JS members, the Association’s director highlighted JS’s participatory dimensions by pointing out the former revolutionary organization’s “five-person councils (shūrā), which made and recorded decisions.”325

In an effort to preserve JS’s spirit of popular participation, the Jihadists’ Association sought to replicate the organization’s original, council-based structure. According to its website, the Association had “provincial councils (shūrā-ye ostānī) in each province” to pass on “JS’s beneficial experience of welcoming the participation of members and villagers,” and to “institutionalize the principle of consulting on matters (mashvarat-e dar āmūr).”326 To this end, the Association’s provincial councils “participated in policymaking and planning, such as determining the outcome of the board of directors’ provincial regulations.”327

As was the case with JS’s original, organizational structure, the Jihadists’ Association was not completely decentralized, and contained a central authority (i.e.,

323 Association of Jihadists’ website (retrieved on May 9, 2013 at www.kanoonejahadgaran.ir).
324 Ibid.
325 Personal interview with former JS member and current Jihadists’ Association director in Iran on February 14, 2011.
326 Association of Jihadists’ website (retrieved on May 9, 2013 at www.kanoonejahadgaran.ir).
327 Ibid.
board of directors) that was responsible for setting regulations and for “national and regional planning and decision-making.” However, within the framework of the Association’s charter (āsāsnāmeh yā manshūrī-ye kānūn), the provincial councils, which “designed plans and made recommendations,” “participated in national and regional planning and decision-making,” and in “determining the outcome of the board of directors’ provincial regulations.” In addition to having a central body, the Association’s decentralized and participatory structure was limited given that its provincial councils were exclusively comprised of “five individuals with a history and good reputation in JS.” As was the case with JS, the Association’s exclusion of villagers eroded its ethos of popular participation.

At the same time, the Jihadists’ Association’s exclusion of villagers and other non-members appeared to be changing given measures taken by its board of directors to modify its membership criteria. Until 2008, an estimated fourteen thousand individuals registered to become official, card-carrying members of the Jihadists’ Association. The Association’s board of directors “interpreted, approved, and codified its charter,” which constituted the “basis of recruiting and accepting members.” Every year, the Association held a general assembly to “circumvent ambiguities in and reform the charter.”

The charter stipulated that all members must have served in JS or MAJ for [at least] two years. In the 2008 general assembly, the board of directors agreed that membership should not be restricted to former JS members and MAJ employees. Rather,

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328 Ibid.
329 Ibid.
330 Ibid.
331 Ibid.
332 Ibid.
membership should be expanded to include individuals outside of this “vanguard” who “believed in jihadi thinking and culture.” According to the board of directors, this decision would aid in the “preservation, dissemination, and institutionalization of jihadi spirit and culture,” which revolved around the principle of popular participation.

Like the MAJ’s culture and publicity division, the Jihadists’ Association relied on religious and altruistic concepts to frame its reformist agenda. When describing jihadi culture and management, the Association listed the following attributes: “devotion, faith, piety, selflessness, honesty, humbleness, person-ability, and love of service.”

According to the Association’s website, “jihadi culture and management was inspired by the Qur’an and the Prophet’s family (āhl-e bayt), from whom Shiites derived hadith (i.e., sayings and actions of the Prophet Mohammad).”

Similar to the Trench-Builders’ Association, the Jihadists’ Association believed that Islam and modernity were compatible, and that JS “infused traditional culture of Islamic service and management with new elements and components.” As in the case of JS, the Jihadists’ Association considered development a pursuit that was both material and spiritual; that in order for development to have a solid foundation, there must be a connection between material improvement, on one side, and piety, faith, and divine blessings, on the other. Among its goals, the Association prioritized the “elevation of members’ spirituality, purification, and self-improvement.”

333 Ibid.
334 Ibid.
335 Ibid.
336 Ibid.
337 Ibid.
338 Ibid.
The Jihadists’ Association performed several functions that were similar to those of the Trench-Builders’ Association. First, the Jihadists’ Association “studied and compiled JS’s history and transmitted it to future generations.” When I interviewed one of the Association’s directors, the first thing he shared was that he had been “working on a project to record JS’s complete history, both during and after the revolution, until its merger with the Ministry of Agriculture.”\(^{339}\) According to the director, “the project, which was seventy percent completed, consisted of two parts: first, an collection of written sources, including parliamentary laws, governmental records, JS’s council documents, official speeches, and dissertations; second, an oral history comprised of interviews with former JS members to get inside their hearts and minds.”\(^{340}\)

Second, the Jihadists’ Association “honored and exalted the memory of JS’s jihadists and martyrs.”\(^{341}\) As mentioned previously, the Association’s members and other former JS members gathered in mid-June, on the anniversary of JS’s founding, to visit and lay flowers by the graves of prominent members who had been martyred during the war.\(^{342}\) Third, as indicated above, the Association “arranged constructive and targeted interactions and relationships between the country’s jihadists.”\(^{343}\) The Association did this by “holding seasonal and annual assemblies, conferences, and meetings,” the most

\(^{339}\) Personal interview with a former JS member and a current director of the Jihadists’ Association in Iran on February 14, 2011. Pleased with my dissertation topic, the director admitted that “a comprehensive history of JS did not yet exist,” and that, if he died tomorrow, “there would be no one around to record it.”

\(^{340}\) Ibid.

\(^{341}\) Association of Jihadists’ website (retrieved on May 9, 2013 at www.kanoonejahadgaran.ir).

\(^{342}\) Personal communication with a former JS member and current government official on June 18, 2012.

\(^{343}\) Association of Jihadists’ website (retrieved on May 9, 2013 at www.kanoonejahadgaran.ir).
prominent of which took place during the week of June sixteenth, on the anniversary of JS’s official establishment.  

Fourth, “during its establishment, the [Jihadists’] Association approved a youth branch that focused on the affairs of and held jihadi camps (ordū-hā-ye jehādī).”

Through its camps, the Association recruited high school and university students to undertake development projects in destitute and remote villages. In 2011, the Association aimed to hold twenty such camps and allocated two billion rials (~$200,000), or nearly thirty-eight percent of its annual budget, toward these camps (see table 6). However, it remained unclear whether the Jihadists’ Association organized jihadist camps in cooperation with the Trench-Builders’ Association and CM, or whether it ran its own camps with youth of a more reformist bent. It was possible that the Jihadists’ Association’s assistance in organizing and running the camps served as a precondition for regime conservatives consenting to its establishment and receipt of public funds.

Fifth, the Jihadists’ Association performed the following economic activities:

“laying the groundwork for the spreading of jihadi services in the country and the involvement of jihadists in areas required by the country, especially during crises or unforeseen events; taking steps toward planning [in the areas] of consulting, design, and evaluation for different fields related to the members’ guild (i.e., the Association); leveraging the membership’s cultural, scientific, technical, and specialized abilities to solve the problems of and to [fulfill] the needs of jihadists and society; undertaking research and applied projects, and delivering consultative services to [various] fields,

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344 Ibid. Personal communication with a former JS member and current government official on June 18, 2012.
345 Association of Jihadists’ website (retrieved on May 9, 2013 at www.kanoonejahadgaran.ir).
346 Ibid.
especially rural development and agriculture; helping agricultural and rural development officials devise documentation with an eye toward development; and participating in the country’s development and construction programs.”

During my second visit to the Jihadists’ Association, a group of members revealed that they were consulting on rural development and agricultural projects for the MAJ and its corporate affiliates. As indicated in a previous chapter, as a ministry, JS oversaw a number of state companies which had once been under the purview of the Ministry of Agriculture and other ministries. These companies awarded contracts to smaller, subcontracting firms, which specialized in agriculture and rural development, and were owned and operated by former JS members. After the 2001 merger between JS and the Ministry of Agriculture, state companies under the purview of both ministries either consolidated under the MAJ umbrella or spun off from the MAJ. JS subcontractors, who relied on business from companies that were no longer associated with the MAJ, risked losing these contracts and incurring financial setbacks.

For this reason, on its website, the Association listed one of the main reasons for its establishment as JS’s “merger with the Ministry of Agriculture and the detachment of rural development from the new ministry (i.e., the MAJ).” Like the Trench-Builder’s Association, the Jihadists’ Association served as a “guild (ṣanafi)” to protect and advance the economic interests of former JS members’ economic interests. In light of these

347 Ibid.
348 Personal conversation with members of the Jihadists’ Association on March 14, 2011.
349 Personal interviews with a former JS member in Iran on March 14, 2011 and with a rural development expert in Iran on April 12, 2011.
350 Association of Jihadists’ website (retrieved on May 9, 2013 at www.kanoonejahadgaran.ir).
351 Ibid.
developments, former JS members-turned-subcontractors wanted to ensure that they continued to receive contracts through MAJ-affiliated companies.

While largely comprised of former leftists, the Jihadists’ Association’s economic pursuits clearly demonstrated that it operated with neoliberal, capitalist mindsets. The fact that the Jihadists’ Association had strong connections with former JS members at the MAJ and that some of its members worked there allowed it to secure contracts. Economic considerations aside, the Association’s members collaborated with JS reformists at the MAJ (e.g., the cultural and publicity division) to promote their brand of jihadi culture and management, characterized by bureaucratic decentralization and popular participation.

The Jihadists’ Association shared a similar mission and identical logo with the Trench-Builders’ Association. The fact that the Jihadists’ Association framed its reformist efforts through religious discourse resembling that of the Trench-Builders’ Association explained the latter’s inclusion of Koranic verse on its logo in an attempt to bolster its Islamic credentials and differentiate itself from its reformist competitor (i.e., boundary activation). Although, in contrast to the Trench-Builders’ Association, the Trench-Builders’ Association did not contain scripture on its logo, many of its members harbored strong, Islamic identities.

Like JS reformists at the MAJ, Jihadists’ Association members perceived JS in its original form as embodying proper, Islamic values that Khomeini had allegedly personified. For this reason, on its website, the Association listed as one of its objectives “keeping alive the goals and ideas of the big architect of the Islamic

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352 Personal interview with a former JS member and current MAJ employee and Jihadists’ Association member in Iran on May 11, 2011.
Once again, JS reformists relied on nostalgic and glorified perceptions of Khomeini and the ideal-type, revolutionary organization to further their cause.

While members of the Jihadists’ Association and the Trench-Builders’ Association had strong, religious identities, there existed clear class distinctions and political differences between them. In contrast to the lower class and conservative Trench-Builders’ Association, the Jihadists’ Association was made up of higher-class and more educated members, who supported or were affiliated with the modern right and reformists, both of which formed an alliance beginning in the 1990s. Although, compared to the Trench-Builder’s Association, JS reformists at the Jihadists’ Association and MAJ possessed different socioeconomic backgrounds and political leanings; they showed deference to the trench-builders for their heroic efforts and sacrifices during the Iran-Iraq war.

On its website, the Jihadists’ Association acknowledged that JS’s bureaucratization and merger led to the “scattering and dispersal (parākandeh) of jihadists into different organizations.” This demonstrated the effectiveness of the Islamic Republic’s statist institutionalization of JS; a process that divided and weakened thousands of mobilized and radicalized activists, who posed a potential threat to regime conservatives. During the past decade, the fragmentation of former JS members has manifested itself and endured at both the state and grassroots levels. While this outcome

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353 Association of Jihadists’ website (retrieved on May 9, 2013 at www.kanoonejahadgaran.ir).
354 The Jihadists’ Association’s website stated that “during the holy defense, alongside the fighters of Islam, JS created unique, epic poems and received from the nation’s Imam (i.e., Khomeini) the beautiful and honorary expression ‘trench-builders without trenches’” (retrieved at www.kanoonejahadgaran.ir on May 9, 2013). For an example of JS’s epic poems from the Iran-Iraq war, see Schirazi 1993.
355 Ibid.
served the advantage of political elites, who employed a divide and conquer strategy, it unintentionally created new pressures for these elites in the form of disparate, political and socioeconomic claims aggregated from above and below.

Table 6. Jihadists’ Association’s Priority Programs and Budget for 2011 (Translated by the author from the Jihadists’ Association’s website www.kanoonejahadgaran.ir)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Cost (Million Rials)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Holding jihadi camps in center and provinces</td>
<td>20 camps</td>
<td>2000 (~$200,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Launching and updating website (one per province)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>30 (~$3,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publishing monthly news bulletin (center)</td>
<td>12 newsletters</td>
<td>60 (~$6,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commemorating jihadi veterans in each township</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>200 (~$20,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publishing books on jihadi culture (80,000 copies total)</td>
<td>8 books</td>
<td>320 (~$32,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written communication to members</td>
<td>5,000 pieces</td>
<td>50 (~$5,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparing and equipping offices in center and provinces</td>
<td>32 offices</td>
<td>320 (~$32,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holding council sessions in center and provinces (24 sessions each)</td>
<td>768 sessions</td>
<td>76 (~$7,600)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deploying delegations in all townships</td>
<td>72 delegations</td>
<td>720 (~$72,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holding annual meetings in center and provinces</td>
<td>31 meetings</td>
<td>620 (~$62,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying agriculture and rural development</td>
<td>31 commissions</td>
<td>620 (~$62,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recording CJ’s history (center)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>250 (~$25,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>5,266 (~$526,600)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusion**

Based on interviews, participant observation, archival and online research, this chapter examined the discourse and activities of the fragmented network of former JS members at both the state and societal levels. As mentioned previously, the statist institutionalization that followed Khomeini and the IRP’s power consolidation precipitated JS’s fragmentation between coopted pragmatists and disillusioned radicals.

With the advent and rise of the reformist movement, similar fragmentation occurred
between conservatives who supported the state and former radicals who endeavored to reform it. As such, the network of former JS members was currently divided between former leftists aligned with the reformists and modern right, on one side, and conservatives aligned with the traditional right and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s populist, millenarian faction, on the other. In this sense, the fragmented network of former JS members represented a microcosm of factional politics in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

In seemingly innocuous fashion, this network’s discourse and activities, on the surface, constituted a means of commemorating JS by reproducing, disseminating, and perpetuating what was perceived to be the organization’s original values and actions. In spite of its past mistakes and shortcomings, JS, like Khomeini and the Iranian revolution itself, had come to symbolize a utopic ideal. Although the Islamic Republic’s hegemony necessitated the concentration of material and symbolic resources (Arjomand 1988: 193), the state could not monopolize these resources. Hence, JS’s original symbols and actions, referred to as jihadi culture and management, were up for grabs between competing JS reformists and conservatives at both the state and grassroots level. However, rather than being apolitical or innocuous, their discourse and activities commemorating JS served a clear political and economic purpose for both factions.

Established in 2004, one year before Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s first presidential victory, the Association of Trench-Builder’s without Trenches consisted of JS war veterans, an important base of support for Ahmadinejad, who also won a controversial presidential election in 2009. By prioritizing eradicating poverty and assisting the needy, the Trench-Builders’ Association championed a populist version of jihadi management and culture. As Ahmadinejad had done with Khomeini’s discourse, the Association
appropriated JS’s populist dimension to protect and advance its members’ political and socioeconomic interests.\textsuperscript{356} The Association achieved this by distributing publications, organizing meetings and events, and implementing programs.

Although the Trench-Builders’ Association claimed to be independent and apolitical, it lobbied the Iranian government for compensation and other rights for war veterans, and partnered with state-affiliated institutions, including CM. Established at the height of the reformist movement in 2000, CM was affiliated with the MAJ and the security apparatus (i.e., the Revolutionary Guard and Basij). While JS had yet to merge with the Ministry of Agriculture, its partnership with CM marked its increased securitization.

Like the Trench-Builders’ Association, CM adopted the populist rhetoric of eliminating poverty and assisting destitute villagers. Yet, its more concrete goals consisted of mobilizing youth away from the reformist camp, recruiting students into agriculture and security, and ingratiating itself with the rural population, which, though on the decline relative to the urban population, remained an important constituency for the regime. Similar to what JS had initially done, the Trench-Builders’ Association and CM mobilized youth and deployed them to the countryside through what was known as jihadi or hijrah camps to undertake rural development projects during vacations and holidays.

On the reformist side, former JS radicals at the MAJ engaged in micromobilization or small-scale campaigns to challenge the status quo (Strang and Jong 2005:

Through the dissemination of publications and organizing of events, these managers and employees attempted to reform the bureaucracy and society by promoting jihadi culture and management with an emphasis on popular participation and a deliberate avoidance of Western democratic ideals (i.e., Westoxification or *gharbzadegī*). Instead of concentrating exclusively on poverty alleviation, JS reformists, who generally came from higher socioeconomic and educational backgrounds, focused on promoting popular participation (*moshārekat-e mardomī*). Incidentally, the Khatami-led, reformist movement, which consecutively defeated conservatives in presidential elections and secured a parliamentary majority between 2000 and 2004, named its political party the Participation Party (*hezb-e moshārekat*).³⁵⁷

While JS reformists perceived themselves as activists operating inside the MAJ, some of their efforts coincided with conservative interests. JS reformists fostered a jihadi management and culture that emphasized greater bureaucratic decentralization and employee initiative, norms that could enable the MAJ and other ministries to boost their efficiency and performance. The viability and effectiveness of statist institutionalization depended on the state’s capacity to offer former JS revolutionaries and activists an opportunity and venue to channel their energies into activities that were constructive and non-threatening; activities that could give these individuals a sense of purpose and an

³⁵⁷ One member of the Jihadists’ Association, with whom I met, was a university professor and former campaign advisor to former Prime Minister Mir-Hossein Mousavi (r. 1981-1989), who, as a reformist candidate, challenged Ahmadinejad in the 2009 presidential elections and was currently under house arrest. This individual refused to conduct an interview because he was allegedly under surveillance by the regime’s security apparatus (personal interview with rural development expert in Iran on April 20, 2011). If the charter of the Jihadists’ Association resembled that of the Trench-Builders’ Association, it was technically illegal for members of non-governmental organizations to participate in political activities for or against any political parties or groups.
ability to effect limited, desirable change within the bureaucracy without instituting meaningful, political reform.

The fact that JS reformists at the MAJ operated within the realm of prescribed politics or confines of formal political institutions meant that, as agents of the same system, they could only advance their reformist claims through routinized, bureaucratic tactics (e.g., reports, power-point presentations, seminars, and conferences) – an outcome that further demonstrated the effectiveness of statist institutionalization. Former JS members at the MAJ who pushed their reformist claims too far (i.e., conflating bureaucratic decentralization and employee initiative with political decentralization and participation), or who participated in non-routine, contentious politics (e.g., protests, rallies, and demonstrations in the streets), risked being disciplined or dismissed by regime agents and loyalists (i.e., representatives of the Supreme Leader and the Basij) who supervised and monitored them.

Nevertheless, statist institutionalization had its limits as the public sector could not absorb all former JS members or prevent them from spilling back into the grassroots, where the organization’s original symbols and tactics were up for grabs. In 2006, former JS radicals, who were aligned with the modern right and reformist movement, pooled their resources to form the Association of Jihadists. With an identical logo and similar mission as the Trench-Builders’ Association, the Jihadists’ Association was a response by JS reformists to Ahmadinejad’s first presidential victory and to the establishment of the conservative Trench-Builders’ Association. Like the Trench-Builder’s Association, the Jihadists’ Association commemorated JS’s history and legacy by disseminating publications and organizing events.
Like the Trench-Builder’s Association, the Jihadists’ Association also sought to protect and advance the political and economic interests of its members. However, in contrast to the Trench-Builders’ Association, the Jihadists’ Association placed added emphasis on popular participation, imitating and perpetuating the discourse of its MAJ allies, some of whom were also members of the Association. As evidenced by the fact that the Supreme Leader’s representative, Ayatollah Alemi, attended the Jihadists’ Association’s events and functions, the traditional right monitored, but also supported the Association to counterbalance Ahmadinejad’s constituents at the Trench-Builders’ Association.

The case of JS demonstrated that, contrary to common expectations, associational life in authoritarian Iran existed, and that associations were not merely objects of state coercion and cooptation, but could exert agency of their own. Regardless of the extent that the regime monitored and supported it, the Jihadists’ Association and its reformist allies at the MAJ mobilized to protect and advance their economic interests and to keep the reformists’ political claim of popular participation on the national agenda. At the same time, JS reformists’ discourse and activities were countered by those of the conservative Trench-Builders’ Association. Consistent with the analysis of scholars like Amaney Jamal (2007), the Trench-Builders’ Association leveraged variables, namely social capital and interpersonal trust, that civic associations used to promote democracy to reinforce authoritarian tendencies. This outcome revealed that micro-mobilization, when initiated and orchestrated by actors affiliated with the state, had the capacity to maintain the political status quo.
Irrespective of its status as a government-organized non-governmental organization or GONGO, the Trench-Builders’ Association produced the unintended consequence of mobilizing previously-marginalized JS war veterans. These war veterans exerted bottom-up pressure on the government to receive adequate compensation and other rights, and to ensure that the officials who represented their interests (e.g., Ahmadinejad) were elected to and remained in office. Such a consequence conformed to social movement theorists’ prediction that revolutionary activists, albeit in Western, democratic settings, eventually became members of interest groups. Yet, the fact that the activities of JS conservatives and reformists were relegated to lobbying, as opposed to engaging in prescribed politics as political parties, signaled that, rather than undergoing democratization, Iran was likely to remain a factionalized, authoritarian regime for the foreseeable future.
Conclusion
Consisting of thousands of members and employees, JS was once considered the Islamic Republic’s most important revolutionary organizations and ministries. And yet, in spite of this, the literature on post-revolutionary Iran and on revolutions and social movements devoted scant attention to JS. The scholarship on revolutions tended to focus on root causes more than on outcomes. By contrast, this dissertation examined an organization that shed light on numerous aspects of post-revolutionary Iran, including conflict, factionalism, mobilization, consolidation, institutionalization, fragmentation, disillusionment, mobility, micro-mobilization, factionalism, and political and social change.

This dissertation’s first chapter made the following theoretical and empirical contributions: first, it improved our understanding of the post-revolutionary counter-movement, a concept to which the literature on revolutions and social movements dedicated insufficient attention. Chapter one shed light on the post-revolutionary counter-movement by revealing how newly-ascendant elites (i.e., Khomeini and the Islamic Republican Party (IRP), who were already adept at mobilizing a social movement against the ancien régime, harnessed mobilization from below in the form of a pre-existing social movement (i.e., JS) to neutralize and marginalize opposing, internal movements and external forces. In the case of JS, these opponents constituted leftist, ethnic, and Sunni movements and invading Iraqi forces along the country’s rural periphery. Further comparative research should be undertaken to determine the extent that newly-ascendant, post-revolutionary elites outside of Iran appropriated social movements and mobilized counter-movements to undermine competing, domestic movements and foreign forces.
In contrast to the scholarship on revolutions, the literature on social movement theory (SMT) contained concrete, mobilization mechanisms (i.e., mobilizing structures, political opportunities, and cultural framing), which chapter one utilized to unpack JS’s mobilization. Even before it became a counter-movement affiliated with newly-ascendant elites, JS relied on mobilizing structures made up of a pre-existing network of university student, who had participated in political activities against the Shah. While compelling, these findings should not come as a surprise given that students, for demographic reasons, have traditionally comprised the core of movements.

Khomeini’s June 16, 1979 speech announcing JS’s official establishment marked the beginning of the organization’s transition from an independent social movement to a counter-movement affiliated with and sponsored by elites. In his speech, Khomeini employed cultural framing devices, which consisted of a combination of nationalism, religion, and boundary activation. These framing devices gave JS recruits meaning behind their actions and endowed them with a collective identity as epitomized by the “all together” slogan.

After JS became a counter-movement and revolutionary organization, newly-ascendant elites and JS cadres leveraged two political opportunity structures to expand and maximize the organization’s mobilization. First, Khomeini, the IRP, and liberal politicians engineered a political opportunity by closing universities for three years (1980-1983) to Islamize campuses and to eradicate them of leftists and other opponents. Whether this outcome was deliberate or unintended, the closures gave students the time to participate in JS and other revolutionary organizations. Although SMT exclusively reserves political opportunities for social movement activists seeking to take advantage of
state and societal openings, the case of JS demonstrated that newly-ascendant, post-revolutionary elites, when facilitating the mobilization of a counter-movement, must similarly exploit favorable structural conditions to undermine opposing movements.

Although the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988) was not orchestrated or welcomed by Iranian elites, it, nevertheless, comprised a political opportunity structure for JS’s mobilization and expansion. During the conflict, the organization witnessed a swelling of its ranks and a broadening of its responsibilities. JS’s war engineering and support staff (PMJJ), which merged with the Revolutionary Guard and the Basij after the conflict, developed a national reputation for bravery and sacrifice as “Trench-Builders without Trenches.”

To explain how the Islamic Republic consolidated power during the four-to-five year power struggle that ensured after the revolution, the literature on post-revolutionary Iran primarily relied on coercion and repression. By contrast, chapter one demonstrated how JS helped Khomeini and the IRP to consolidate power through largely non-coercive measures. JS’s multi-faceted, non-coercive action repertoire – which varied by levels of routineness and coercion, and which the organization often appropriated from its rivals – comprised the following: first, patronage or the distribution of goods and service in exchange for political allegiance (e.g., votes); second, indoctrination or the dissemination of a political or religious ideology or belief system, in this case the Guardianship of the Jurist; third, cooptation or the incorporation of local power brokers into the political structure (e.g., rural councils); fourth, non-routine contention or the organization of street demonstrations, rallies, and protests against the opposition; fifth, logistical support or the provision of funds, supplies, personnel, and skills to soldiers on the front; and, sixth and
perhaps the most coercive, covert action or the cultivation of informants and the identification and denouncement of dissidents, insurgents, and traffickers.

It should be noted that, in the case of JS, patronage ran both ways. While JS distributed and withheld goods and services based on recipients’ political allegiance, the organization kept track of individuals and organizations (both public and private) that provided it with funding and support. These patrons and supporters, in turn, leveraged their favorable standing with JS to bolster their revolutionary credentials and to receive privileges and benefits from newly-ascendant, political elites.

With respect to patronage, the IRP depended on JS to mobilize rural voters and to secure votes during the Islamic Republic’s first parliamentary elections in 1980. This was a unique point to emerge from the empirical data because it highlighted the early factional struggles that existed between the IRP and liberal politicians (e.g., former president Abol-Hassan Bani-Sadr). Even before the elections, factional struggles between materialized between the IRP and liberals over controlling JS. These struggles were corroborated by each side’s appointment of separate representatives to the organization. As this dissertation’s second chapter demonstrated, the IRP, after consolidating power against liberals and other opponents, became embroiled in its own factional struggles. While IRP radicals continued to depend on JS to mobilize rural voters, IRP conservatives turned to Friday prayer leaders to garner rural votes during the Islamic Republic’s second parliamentary elections in 1984.

SMT assumed that activists (re)joined the mainstream as members of political parties and interest groups. However, this outcome mainly applied to activists in Western, non-revolutionary settings. By contrast, chapter two demonstrated that, as a
post-revolutionary counter-movement, JS integrated into the mainstream by transforming into an official, cabinet-level ministry (i.e., statist institutionalization) in a newly consolidated state that became increasingly centralized. As some scholars of revolutions pointed out, the Islamic Republic’s centralization, which surpassed that of its monarchical predecessor, conformed to the hyper-centralization of other post-revolutionary states.

While JS assisted newly-ascendant elites with consolidating power, this outcome constituted a political opportunity structure for the organization’s subsequent demobilization and institutionalization. Having helped Khomeini and the IRP to achieve their political aims, JS’s raison d’être was called into question and its institutional trajectory redirected. This corresponded to the expectations of social movement theorists, who posited that political opportunities, which were historically-specific and changed over time, altered the organizations embedded within in them.

Political opportunities and structural conditions aside, Iran’s political elites and JS members were endowed with agency of their own, and played a role in determining the organization’s future course. With aspirations of receiving the same standing and privileges as other ministers and civil servants, JS pragmatists lobbied for and benefited from the organization’s demobilization and statist institutionalization; in other words, JS’s conversion from a counter-movement and revolutionary organization to a full-fledged ministry.

In chapter two, this dissertation further borrowed concepts from SMT by attributing JS’s demobilization and institutionalization to the organization’s resource dependency on elites. Because JS primarily depended on elites, as opposed to its own
members, for resources, the organization had no choice but to submit to elite preferences and designs. From a political standpoint, IRP conservatives advocated JS’s demobilization and institutionalization due to their concerns about the organization’s increasing radicalization. From a legal-rational perspective, these elites advocated statist institutionalization to subject the budget JS, which had a mixed performance record, to parliamentary oversight; even if, from the beginning, political elites (i.e., the Imam’s representative and the state representative) appointed an organization to audit JS’s finances, and put in place a system to monitor JS’s expenditures (see article thirteen note and article twenty, section “b” of JS’s official charter in appendix three). To complicate matters, prominent IRP radicals (e.g., former prime minister Mir-Hussein Mousavi) supported JS’s statist institutionalization, assuming that the organization would expand more rapidly as a ministry privy to more resources from the state.

JS’s statist institutionalization led to three outcomes. First, it precipitated internal fragmentation between radicals, who opposed and resisted institutionalization, and pragmatists and conservatives, who, as mentioned above, lobbied for and benefitted from it. Second, statist institutionalization led many JS members, who were staunchly anti-bureaucratic, to experience fatigue, apathy, and disillusionment. This outcome contrasted to SMT, which predicted that fatigue, apathy, and disillusionment constituted causes of institutionalization.

Third, as a result of statist institutionalization, many JS members, particularly pragmatists and conservatives, experienced high levels of political and socioeconomic mobility. This outcome was consistent with other revolutionary activists in Iran (e.g., the Revolutionary Guard) and elsewhere (e.g., China’s Red Engineers). On the economic
front, JS’s mobility was facilitated by its ability, as a ministry, to establish state companies through the Foundation of the Oppressed and Disabled, and by its ability to poach other state companies from competing ministries, namely the Ministry of Agriculture. The organization’s mobility and expansion was also enhanced by its establishment of research centers, a trend which began during the Iran-Iraq war and accelerated during former president Hashemi Rafsanjani’s drive to reinvigorate expertise.

JS’s research centers allowed it to play an important role in various economic sectors, including defense, medicine/pharmaceuticals, rural industry, agriculture, livestock, and fisheries (caviar). Having primarily come from the rural, middle class and having once been confined to the political and socioeconomic margins of the state, JS members emerged to displace many of the Shah’s bureaucratic, dependent-capitalist elite. During the thirty years of the Islamic Republic’s existence, JS members, like other baby boomers around the world, paradoxically evolved from ideological student activists and hardened holy warriors to high-level politicians, seasoned bureaucrats, and successful businessmen – the very individuals they initially despised.

As described in chapter four, the story of JS’s institutional trajectory did not end with demobilization and statist institutionalization, but remained just as, if not more, interesting following these outcomes. Reflecting the nature of factionalized politics in the Islamic Republic, JS’s fragmentation between disillusioned radicals and coopted pragmatists/conservatives fostered contestation between both groups at the state and societal levels. As part of this contestation, formers JS radicals and conservatives appropriated the discourse of jihadi culture and management, an ambiguous concept which portrayed JS in a romanticized light or as an ideal toward which to aspire.
Though, on the surface, these former members’ discourse and activities appeared to be innocuous, they were highly political.

Scholars who married SMT with organizational theory demonstrated that managers and employees in organizations engaged in “micro-mobilization” or small-scale campaigns to challenge the political and social status quo. In the Ministry of Agricultural Jihad (MAJ) (the byproduct of the 2001 merger between JS and its long-time rival, the Ministry of Agriculture), JS radicals-turned-reformists currently organized conferences and disseminated publications in an attempt to promote jihadi culture and management. For these individuals, this concept’s central tenets consisted of bureaucratic decentralization and popular participation, a value emphasized by former reformist president Mohammad Khatami.

While the activities of JS reformists at the MAJ fell under the rubric of micro-mobilization, these activities confronted limitations with regards to changing the status quo. First, the action repertoire of these managers and bureaucrats remained confined to the mainstream and did not enter the realm of the non-routine (i.e., street demonstrations, rallies, or protests). As a consequence, these former activists could only advance claims so far. At the same time, their claims revolved more around bureaucratic and developmental issues than political or social issues, though a fine line existed between them. For example, JS reformists at the MAJ believed that popular participation in decision-making and planning improved development practices.

Second, conservative agents and loyalists at the MAJ (i.e., Supreme Leader and Basij representatives) supervised and monitored JS’s reformists’ claims and activities to make sure that they did not venture beyond the routine. At the same time, conservatives
supported JS reformists, who promoted values (i.e., decentralization and employee initiative) that could bolster the stagnant bureaucracy’s efficiency and performance. By allowing and encouraging JS reformists to undertake their activities, conservatives enabled these former activities to channel their energy into endeavors they perceived as worthwhile and that served the interests of the state. This outcome reinforced the effectiveness of statist institutionalization.

Yet, much like the claims and activities of JS reformists, the Islamic Republic’s strategy and practice of statist institutionalization had its limits as well. In spite of the state’s vast resources and capacities to coopt and coerce, it simply could not absorb the thousands of activists who had participated in JS nor could it prevent their spillover back into the grassroots. In factionalist fashion, former JS members organized two grassroots associations: the conservative Association of Trench-Builders without Trenches and the reformist Association of Jihadists.

As in the case of JS, the Trench-Builders’ Association and the Jihadists’ Association blurred the distinction between state-society relations. Although both associations insisted that they were politically and financially independent (i.e., having pooled their resources to establish themselves), they could also be considered government-organized non-governmental organizations (GONGOs) because they cooperated with state institutions and served the respective interests of conservatives and reformists. In order to determine the extent that these associations were grassroots versus GONGOs, one would need to conduct additional research on the associations’ board members and sources of financing.
Established in 2004, the conservative Trench-Builders’ Association comprised former JS war veterans. Having primarily come from lower educational and socioeconomic backgrounds, these individuals undertook activities (e.g., events, publications, and programs) to promote a jihadi culture and management that revolved around notions of populism. This was not a coincidence given that the populist Mahmoud Ahmadinejad relied on this constituency to secure successive presidential victories in 2005 and 2009.

In addition to helping Ahmadinejad secure votes, the Trench-Builders’ Association mobilized youth by cooperating with the Construction Mobilization (CM), a government organization affiliated with the MAJ and the security apparatus (i.e., the Revolutionary Guard and the Basij). Established in 2000 during the height of the reformist threat and at the behest of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, CM employed JS’s original symbols and tactics by recruiting university and high school students (i.e., mobilizing structures) during school vacations and holidays (i.e., political opportunities). The organization deployed these students to villages, where they undertook rural development projects (i.e., patronage) and engaged in cultural activities (i.e., indoctrination). CM referred to this initiative referred as hijrah or jihadi camps (i.e., cultural framing).

For the MAJ and the security apparatus, these camps, which marked JS’s securitization, served as a way to identify new recruits and personnel. For regime conservatives, the camps represented a way to mobilize youth away from the reformist camp and to ingratiate themselves with rural voters. It was not a coincidence that CM’s
establishment coincided with conservatives’ efforts to Islamize universities, which harbored student movements aligned with the reformists.

Established in 2006, the reformist Jihadists’ Association constituted a response to the establishment of the conservative Trench-Builders’ Association and to Ahmadinejad’s first presidential victory. Compared to the Trench-Builders’ Association, the Jihadists’ Association brandished a nearly identical logo and undertook similar activities, including the hijrah and jihadists camps (though, as of this writing, it was not possible to determine if the Jihadists’ Association ran these camps in cooperation or in competition with CM). Similar to the CJ reformists at the MAJ, the Jihadists’ Association framed its discourse around an interpretation of jihadi culture and management that centered on popular participation. Like the Trench-Builders’ Association, the Jihadists’ Association cooperated with the MAJ. In this case, CJ reformists at the MAJ interacted with the Association as either its members or allies.

In the end, the Trench-Builders’ Association and the Jihadists’ Association served the interests of the disparate, political factions and cooperated with the state. However, as experts have pointed out with respect to other Iranian associations and GONGOs, these associations exhibited agency of their own and their establishment produced the unintended consequence of harnessing claims and exerting pressure on elites from below. In their respective charters, both the Trench-Builders’ Association and Jihadists’ Association emphasized that part of their mission was to protect their members’ economic interests, whether they entailed securing government contracts or improving veterans’ compensation. Although neither association could establish a political party,
both of their lobbying efforts conformed to SMT’s expectations regarding the routinization of movements as interest groups.

The third chapter of this dissertation examined JS’s overseas operations, which were framed as part of the Islamic Republic’s efforts to export the revolution and to help destitute countries. However, in reality, these operations, which began in the late 1980s and early 1990s, served as a way for Iran to establish commercial ties and to expand its sphere of influence, at least from the standpoint of exerting soft power. Such operations were vital given that the Iran-Iraq war had exacted a tremendous economic toll on the country (i.e., resource depletion) and isolated it diplomatically. JS’s overseas operations did not occur spontaneously or episodically. Rather, they unfolded in a highly formalized and routinized manner that encompassed meetings among high-level officials and the signing of official protocols and agreements between the Islamic Republic and recipient countries.

Beyond the Islamic Republic’s foreign policy considerations, the burgeoning literature on Shiite transnationalism did not adequately explain JS’s overseas operations in or transnational diffusion into these countries. With the exception of Lebanon, JS’s target countries (i.e., Albania, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Sudan, and Tanzania) contained Sunni majorities. Within the Islamic Republic’s complex foreign policy landscape, there existed separate organizations dedicated to forging and cultivating relations with Sunni and Shiite countries (i.e., the Sunni-focused World Forum for the Proximity of Islamic Schools [of Thought] and the Shiite-centered World Forum for People of the House (i.e., the Prophet Muhammad’s family). It would be worthwhile to investigate whether JS cooperated with and received financing and other forms of support from these
organizations when operating overseas, particularly when constructing mosques, religious seminaries, and schools (i.e., hawzeh).

In Shiite Lebanon, which comprised chapter three’s case study, JS experienced unusual success by establishing a rural development organization modeled after itself called *Jihād al-Bināʾ* (JB) (the Arabic equivalent of Construction Jihad). JS was affiliated with the local resistance movement Hezbollah. In spite of JS’s success in Shiite Lebanon, the mechanisms contained in the literature on Shiite transnationalism – namely clerical sources of emulation and the Guardianship of the Jurist – were insufficient to account for JS’s transnational diffusion and replication. This was corroborated by the fragmented nature of Khamenei’s religious authority outside of Iran. Although Hezbollah members were required to swear political allegiance to the Supreme Leader, they and other Shiites, both in Lebanon and elsewhere, could make a personal choice – based on the prerogatives of interpretation – to religiously follow Khamenei or another source of emulation.

SMT mechanisms not only explained JS’s initial mobilization as a social movement and counter-movement in Iran, they shed light on the organization’s transnational diffusion into Lebanon. JB’s mobilizing structures consisted of a pre-existing network of charitable associations and social organizations established by local clerics and lay activists. Further research needs to be conducted on the specific individuals who comprised these networks and convinced the Islamic Republic to initially deploy JS personnel to Shiite Lebanon. Additional research should also be undertaken on how closely JS’s diffusion into Shiite Lebanon resembled that of other Iranian institutions, such as the Revolutionary Guard and the Martyrs Foundation.
The political opportunity structure of perpetual, military conflict, in the form of the fifteen-year civil war and repeated Israeli incursions, inflicted substantial damage on Lebanon’s population, infrastructure, and development. At the same time, these conflicts breathed life into JB both in terms of attracting new recruits and expanding the organization’s portfolio of activities. These activities, which resembled those of JS, mainly consisted of construction, services (water, electricity, and health), health (hospitals and clinics), education (schools and vocational training), agricultural extension (inputs and credit), and religion (mosques and seminaries). Like Hezbollah’s other social service organizations, JB initially engaged in patronage and indoctrination to attract recruits, to reward the families of martyrs, and, in the spirit of a counter-movement, to garner local support at the expense of its Shiite rival, Amal. Following Hezbollah’s 1992 decision to participate in national politics, JB’s ability to provide or withhold services based on recipients’ voting records (i.e., patronage) gained particular importance.

Since Lebanon lacked the housing foundation that existed in Iran, JB made its mark by reconstructing homes and structures destroyed during domestic conflict and clashes with Israel. Lebanon’s unstable environment, combined with JB’s affiliation to Hezbollah, caused it to adopt a more militaristic discourse. However, JB leveraged similar cultural framing devices (e.g., “all together” slogan) as JS to give members a collective identity and to lend meaning to their actions.

Although JS and JB operated in different political settings, with Iran and Lebanon respectively constituting strong and weak states, both organizations underwent institutionalization. While JB remained an independent, charitable association, it, nevertheless, underwent institutionalization after its parent, Hezbollah, decided to join the
Lebanese government (though, as SMT predicts, Hezbollah became routinized as a political party rather than a ministry). As such, Hezbollah and JB experienced internal fragmentation between hardliners, who opposed institutionalization, and pragmatists, who advocated it.

After Hezbollah’s integration into the Lebanese government, JB increasingly fell in line with national policy and did the state’s bidding in exchange for funding, licensing, and other types of support. One example comprised the government’s 1996 campaign to eradicate drug production, a major source of income for Lebanese Shiites in the Bekaa Valley. During this period, JB organized state-sponsored workshops to train farmers in substituting hemp and hashish for potatoes. As farmers went bankrupt due potato-surplus induced price drops, they blamed Hezbollah and JB for their misfortune.

Hezbollah and JB’s affiliation with the state led to rising expectations among Lebanese Shiites. After the 2006 war against Israel, JB and its corporate affiliate Wa’ad (the promise) rebuilt numerous destroyed homes, partially with $400 million in financing from the Lebanese government and the international community. While many Lebanese Shiites praised JB and Wa’ad for their efforts, others leveled accusations of favoritism, corruption, and incompetence against them. Regardless of the fairness or accuracy of these charges, the negative perceptions of Lebanese Shiites surrounding the reconstruction, along with the benefits of resistance, remained salient, and, for Hezbollah and JB, difficult to ignore.

As Hezbollah and JB became further integrated into the Lebanese government, their constituents increasingly associated both organizations with a state they perceived as being sectarian, corrupt, and ineffective. Beginning in 2011, these negative
perceptions intensified as neither JB nor the Minister of Agriculture, Hussein Haj Hassan, a Hezbollah member, proved capable of remedying the current agricultural export crisis caused by the conflict in Syria. The erosion of Hezbollah’s domestic legitimacy compounded external pressures on the organization in the form of Western sanctions and a loss of credibility on the Arab Street for being, in contradictory fashion, a popular resistance movement that backed an authoritarian regime (i.e., Syrian president Bashar al-Assad). Any yet, due to Amal’s limited social service network and local suspicions toward foreign NGOs, Hezbollah, spite of its declining legitimacy, has remained a dominant actor in Shiite Lebanon.

As Islamists came to power in the wake of the Arab Spring, analysts remained preoccupied with the extent that these parties and groups moderated in terms of relaxing social restrictions and cooperating with the West. Few analysts examined how Islamists’ integration with the state impacted their ability to deliver services, mitigate corruption, and resolve crises. The case of JS was instructive to understanding, if not predicting, how events would unfold in countries that recently underwent a revolution or regime change in the Middle East and beyond.

Similar to what transpired in 1979 Iran, newly-ascendant elites following the aftermath of the so-called Arab Spring had yet to fully consolidate power as they competed against a myriad of political challengers, including ancien régime loyalists, liberals, leftists, and Salafists. Tunisia and Egypt contained substantial rural populations respectively comprising approximately thirty and fifty percent of their total populations. International media and local experts indicated that, similar to JS and Islamists of the past, Tunisia’s el-Nahda Party and Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood adopted patronage
tactics by deploying individuals to the countryside to distribute basic goods and services in exchange for votes and other forms of political loyalty.

In June 2012, French media reported that el-Nahda offered goods and services to low-income villagers in an attempt to garner political support. In March 2013, at the first inaugural conference of the Arab Council for the Social Sciences in Beirut, Egyptian scholars confirmed that the Muslim Brotherhood was distributing basic goods, including oil and medicine, to villages in an effort to secure votes and other forms of political support. The fact that el-Nahda and Muslim Brotherhood elites predominantly hailed from the cities compelled one to examine their mobilizing structures to determine whether they consisted of activists with urban or rural antecedents. As the Shah’s Corps and JS revealed, the demographic background, physical appearance, and personal demeanors of these individuals made the difference between failure and success.

As JS’s institutional history taught us, the story of social and counter-movement activists did not end after mobilization and power consolidation. If and when these Arab elites consolidate power (assuming they do not intend to establish pluralist democracies), will they repress the numerous activists who helped them achieve their political aims and, in the process, provoke a violent backlash? Will they, instead, completely cut off financial ties with and risk losing control of these activists, who could eventually turn against them? Or will these elites adopt the Islamic Republic’s strategy of statist institutionalization and incorporate these activists into the state? Assuming that elites opt for the latter, will demobilization lead to fragmentation between co-opted pragmatists and disillusioned radicals? Will radical oppositionists and regime supporters compete through micro-mobilization at the grassroots level in an attempt to alter or preserve the
status quo? Answers to these questions will allow analysts to gain a clearer picture of the post Arab Spring order.
Appendices
Appendix One: Interview List

Iran

1. November 23, 2010: Former JS member in the United States
2. February 12, 2011: Former JS member and current MAJ official in Tehran, Iran
3. February 12: Former JS member and current MAJ employee in Tehran
4. February 13: MAJ employee in Tehran
5. February 14: Former JS member and current director of the Association of Jihadists’ Central Office in Tehran
6. February 16: Former JS member and current MAJ employee in Tehran
7. February 16: Former JS member and current MAJ employee in Tehran
8. February 16: Former JS member and current MAJ employee in Tehran
9. February 16: Former JS member and current MAJ employee in Tehran
10. February 19: Former JS member and current MAJ employee in Tehran
11. February 19: Former JS member and current MAJ employee in Tehran
12. February 23: Former JS member and current MAJ employee and Jihadists’ Association member in Tehran
15. March 1: Rural development expert in Tehran
16. March 1: Rural development expert and Jihadists’ Association member
17. March 1: Former JS member and current MAJ official in Tehran
18. March 5: Rural development expert in Tehran
19. March 7: Rural development expert in Tehran
20. March 7: Rural development expert in Tehran
21. March 8: MAJ employee in Tehran
22. March 8: Rural development expert in Tehran
23. March 8: Rural development expert in Tehran
24. March 13: Former Literacy Corps member and current rural development expert in Tehran
25. March 14: Former JS member and current rural development expert and Jihadists’ Association member in Tehran
26. March 14: Rural development expert in Tehran
27. March 15: Former JS member and current businessman in Tehran
28. March 15: Former JS member and current government advisor in Tehran
29. March 15: Former JS member and current businessman in Tehran
30. March 16: Former JS war veteran and current director of the Association of Trench-Builders’ without Trenches in Tehran
31. March 20: Villager and farmer in Fars
32. March 21: Villager in Fars
33. March 22: Villager in Fars
34. March 22: Landowner and farmer in Fars
35. March 26: Former JS member and Basiji and current company employee in Bushehr
36. March 27: Former MeK and JS member in Bushehr
37. March 30: Former JS member and MAJ employee in Bushehr
38. April 2: Landowner and farmer in Fars
39. April 5: Former JS member and current rural development expert in Tehran
40. April 5: Rural development expert in Tehran
41. April 6: Rural development expert and MAJ employee in Tehran
42. April 6: Rural development expert and MAJ employee in Tehran
43. April 6: Former JS member and current MAJ employee in Tehran
44. April 8: Former JS member and current rural development expert in Tehran
45. April 9: Former JS member (Sistan and Baluchestan) and current MAJ employee in Tehran
46. April 10: Former JS member and current MAJ employee in Tehran
47. April 10: Former JS member and current MAJ employee in Tehran
48. April 10: Former JS member and current MAJ employee in Tehran
49. April 11: Former JS member in Tehran
50. April 11: Rural development expert in Tehran
51. April 12: Rural development expert from Sistan and Baluchestan in Tehran
52. April 12: Rural development expert and war veteran from Golestan in Tehran
53. April 12: Former JS war veteran and current assistant director of the Trench-Builders’ Association in Tehran
54. April 13: Rural development expert in Tehran
55. April 14: Former JS war veteran and current businessman in Tehran
56. April 17: Former JS member and Basiji and current MAJ employee in Tehran
57. April 18: Rural development expert from Gilan in Tehran
58. April 19: Rural development expert in Tehran
59. April 19: Rural development expert in Tehran
60. April 19: Former JS member and current rural development expert in Tehran
61. April 20: Rural development expert in Semnan
62. April 20: Rural development expert in Semnan
63. April 20: Rural development expert in Semnan
64. April 22: Rural development expert from Sistan and Baluchestan in Tehran
65. April 23: Former JS member and current MAJ employee in Tehran
66. April 23: MAJ employee in Tehran
67. April 23: Former JS war veteran (Kurdistan and Khuzestan) and current MAJ employee in Tehran
68. April 25: Rural development expert from Hamadan in Tehran
69. April 30: Former JS member and current corporate executive in Tehran
70. May 2: Former JS member and current MAJ employee in Tehran
71. May 2: Former Housing Foundation official and current businessman in Tehran
72. May 3: Former JS member and current corporate executive in Tehran
73. May 4: Former JS member and current MAJ employee and NGO founder in Tehran
74. May 7: Rural development expert in Golestan
75. May 8: Villager in Golestan
76. May 8: Rural development expert in Golestan
77. May 8: Former JS member and current MAJ employee in Golestan
78. May 10: Former JS member and current rural development expert in Tehran
79. May 10: Rural development expert in Tehran
80. May 10: Villager from Kurdistan in Tehran
81. May 11: Former JS member and current businessman in Tehran
82. May 11: Former JS member and current MAJ employee and Jihadists’ Association member
83. May 14: Rural development expert in Tehran
84. May 14: Former JS member in Tehran
85. May 15: Rural development expert in Tehran
86. May 16: Rural development expert in Tehran
87. May 16: Rural development expert in Tehran
88. May 17: MAJ employee in Tehran
89. May 18: Former JS member and current rural development expert in Yazd
90. May 19: Villager in Yazd
91. May 20: Villager in Yazd
92. May 23: Rural development expert in Tehran
93. May 24: MAJ employee in Tehran
94. May 26: Former JS member and current education official in East Azerbaijan
95. May 27: Villager in East Azerbaijan
96. May 28: Former Minister of Agriculture, Dr. Issa Kalantari, in Tehran
97. May 29: Former academic and current government advisor in Tehran
98. May 29: Rural development expert in Tehran
99. May 29: Rural development expert in Tehran
100. May 29: Former JS member and current corporate executive in Tehran
101. May 30: Former JS member and current MAJ employee in Tehran
102. May 30: Former JS member and current MAJ employee in Tehran
103. May 31: Cooperative official in Shahriar
104. June 1: Former JS member and member of parliament and current businessman in Tehran
105. June 2: Villager from Kurdistan in Tehran
106. June 4: Rural development expert in Khorasan
108. June 4: Villager in Khorasan
109. June 5: Rural development expert in Khorasan
110. June 6: Rural development expert in Khorasan
111. June 8: Former JS member and current MAJ employee
112. June 8: Former JS member and current MAJ employee

**Lebanon**

1. July 7, 2012: Villager in Bekaa Valley
2. July 8: Villager in Bekaa Valley
3. July 8: Farmer in Bekaa Valley
4. July 9: Farmer in Bekaa Valley
5. July 9: Farmer in Bekaa Valley
6. July 9: Villager in Bekaa Valley
7. July 10: Municipality official and farmer in Bekaa Valley
8. July 10: Farmer in Bekaa Valley
9. July 10: Hezbollah member in Bekaa Valley
10. July 11: European Union representative in Bekaa Valley
11. July 11: Cooperative owner in Bekaa Valley
12. July 11: Villager in Bekaa Valley
13. July 12: Intellectual and activist in Beirut
14. July 14: Municipal employee in Southern Beirut
15. July 14: Resident in Southern Beirut
16. July 15: Resident in Southern Beirut
17. July 15: Resident in Southern Beirut
18. July 16: Farmer in Bekaa Valley
19. July 16: Farmer in Bekaa Valley
20. July 17: Municipality official in Bekaa Valley
21. July 17: Farmer in Bekaa Valley
22. July 17: Shipping company manager in Bekaa Valley
23. July 18: Farmer in Western Bekaa Valley
24. July 18: Villager in Western Bekaa Valley
25. July 18: Input seller in Western Bekaa Valley
26. July 19: Hezbollah member in South Lebanon
27. July 19: Farmer in South Lebanon
28. July 20: Rural expert in South Lebanon
29. July 23: Resident in Southern Beirut
30. July 25: Journalist in Beirut
31. July 26: Resident in Southern Beirut
32. July 26: Resident in Southern Beirut
33. July 26: Architect in Beirut
34. July 27: Resident in Southern Beirut
35. July 27: Journalist and resident in Southern Beirut
37. August 1: Official from United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) in Beirut
38. March 22, 2013: Agricultural expert in Beirut
Appendix Two: A Brief Timeline of JS’s Institutional History

Phase One (February 11, 1979-October 19, 1979)

Phase Two (1979-1983)
- On February 11, 1979, JS’s charter was approved (Iravani 1998-1999: 191).\(^ {359} \)
- On June 16, 1979, JS was established as a revolutionary organization based on Khomeini’s decree and the presence of the Supreme Leader’s representative from then until now (Ibid).
- On September 18, 1979, JS’s official charter was approved by the revolutionary council after a three-month delay (Lutf-Abadi 2000: 77) (see appendix three for my translation of JS’s official charter).

- Parliament passed a bill establishing the Ministry of JS between October 30th and October 31st, 1983 (Iravani 1998-1999: 195; Plan and Management Organization of Iran (PMO).\(^ {360} \)
- In 1984, the Iranian Organization of Nomadic Affairs merged with JS (Iravani 1998-1999: 196).
- Cabinet approved bylaw dividing duties of Ministry of Industry and Ministry of JS on September 18, 1985 (Ibid).
- Cabinet approved bylaw dividing duties between the Ministry of Heavy Industry and the Ministry of JS in 1985 (Ibid).
- In 1986, the government allocated a minimum of fifteen billion rials (~$320,000) toward the Ministry of JS’s engineering and other military operations during the war (PMO).
- In 1986, the Ministry of JS established its three institutes, Independence, Victory, and Development (Ibid: 202).
- On September 16, 1987, based on the recommendation of JS’s minister and its central council, and with the approval from the heads of the three branches and

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\(^{358}\) I translated this timeline from Persian into English on the first and fourth of August 2013.

\(^{359}\) After Khomeini returned to Iran on February 1, 1979, Shapour Bakhtiar (r. January 4-February 11, 1979) resigned as prime minister brief and Khomeini appointed Mehdi Bazargan as prime minister on February 11.

from Khomeini, the National Fisheries Corporation was transferred from the Ministry of Agriculture to the Ministry of JS (Ibid: 201).

**Phase Four (May 13, 1988-September 2, 1990)**
- On April 12, 1988, JS approved its financial, administrative, employment and organizational regulations (Ibid: 203).

**Phase Five (September 2, 1990-1992)**
- On September 2, 1990, the law dividing duties between the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of JS is approved (Ibid: 206).
- In 1991, the government allocated a maximum of forty billion rials (~$686,000) to the Ministries of JS and Agriculture for provisions and supplies, including seed, sperm (for breeding), gear for fisheries and animal husbandry, medication for livestock, and pesticides (PMO).
- In 1991, the government allocated a minimum of five billion rials (~$86,000) to the Ministry of JS or the [Ministry of Agriculture’s] agricultural service centers for the renovation and dredging of aqueducts (qanāt) in deserts or dry regions (Ibid).
- In 1991, the government allocated six billion rials (~$103,000) to the Ministry of JS for the construction of public baths (ḥamām) to promote hygiene and the securing of drinking water in villages lacking these services (Ibid).
- In 1991, the government allocated $30 million dollars to Ministries of Agriculture, JS, and Commerce for the purpose of supporting domestic animal husbandry and red meat production to counter rising red meat imports. That same year, the government allocated $40 million to the same ministries for the purpose of supporting domestic production of butter and cheese to counter rising dairy imports (Ibid).

**Phase Six (March 18, 1993)**
- On March 18, 1993, the Ministry of JS, for the first time, approves the establishment of a commission of experts at the central, provincial, township, and village level (Iravani 1998-1999: 209).
- In 1996, the government, through the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran, was required to repay funds in the form of loans and other banking system resources to the Agricultural Bank. These funds were used to meet the objectives of the second economic, social, and cultural development plan. These funds were used as capital for the following: members of cooperative companies, production
cooperatives, agricultural corporations/ agribusiness, silk corporation, fishery cooperatives, nomadic cooperatives, unions to preserve forests and pasturelands, rural cooperatives, Mosha and rural production cooperatives, and other individuals in sectors related to agricultural production, including farms, orchards, livestock and poultry, fisheries and aquatic life, watershed management, natural resources, water and soil management, and exploitation systems. These funds were used for the provision, supply, and deployment of organizations and inputs necessary for the production of agricultural products introduced by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of JS. These funds were also used for the provision and supply of materials and equipment necessary for carpet producers in JS’s portfolio and for carpet cooperatives and corporations, the Handicraft Organization, and other supporting institutions and carpet factories under the legal authority of the non-public sector. These funds amounted to three hundred billion rials (~$4,500,000) in loans and one thousand billion rials (~$15,000,000) in other banking system resources (PMO).
Appendix Three: JS’s Official Charter361

JS’s Charter and Organizations (Source: Lutf-Abadi 2000: 77-88)
The Muslim Students [Association] – before establishing the central councils in the provinces – proceeded to prepare the charter and the plan for JS’s organizations. After a three-month delay, this plan was approved by the revolutionary council on September 18, 1979, and was delivered to JS through the provisional government. This charter indicated that the Muslim Students, from the beginning, intended for their movement to exist within the framework of the law and [to be] subordinate to regulations. The charter was approved by the revolutionary council three months after Khomeini’s decree [on June 16, 1979]. However, from the beginning of JS’s establishment, the charter existed as operating instructions under jihadists’ authority. On the basis of the same charter, jihadists managed and operated organizations in each province.

JS’s Charter (Approved on September 18, 1979 by the Islamic Republic of Iran’s Revolutionary Council and signed by Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan)362

Introduction
With the victory of the first phase of Iran’s Islamic revolution, through the determination of Imam Khomeini and the wide participation of the people in abolishing the autocratic regime, began the second phase of the revolution toward creating a unitary (consolidated and/ or monotheistic) regime. In order to accelerate such a movement, JS has begun through the request of the revolutionary groups, the recommendation of the Islamic Republic’s provisional government, the approval of the Islamic revolutionary council, and Imam [Khomeini’s] invitation to different groups of people [to join the movement]. Now, as the nation answers this invitation, the government, with its diligent cooperation toward solving the basic issues of the country’s villages and remote areas, approves and enforces this charter in accordance with the country’s laws.

Article One – Goal
Mobilizing the facilities and talents of the people and the government for cooperation in the effective and rapid preparation and implementation of plans [for] constructing and reviving society in all [of its] spiritual and material dimensions with attention to and emphasis on the country’s villages and remote areas.

361 I translated JS’s charter from Persian to English on August 3, 2013. It should be noted that this version of JS’s charter was subjected to approval by the revolutionary council (i.e., the state). Although I was unable to access JS’s original charter, Iravani (1998-1999: 191) claimed that it was approved on February 11, 1979, the same day Shapour Bakhtiar resigned as prime minister and Khomeini appointed Mehdi Bazargan the new prime minister of the provisional government.

362 Source: Collection of JS’s laws and regulations, published by the [JS’s] undersecretary of legal and parliamentary affairs under the supervision of the legal office – Spring 1997.
Article Two – Method
Achieving JS’s goals through the participation and cooperation of individuals and groups that believe in Iran’s Islamic revolution, through cooperation with relevant offices and voluntary organizations, through the inspiration of Islam’s lofty and noble values, through the employment of simple and rapid regulations and instructions, by [maintaining] a distance from criteria and regulations [associated with] red tape, and by [operating] in a decentralized manner.

Article Three – Duties
1- Emphasize spiritual and material dimensions (“development” (roshd), especially in responding to the needs of villages and deprived areas.
2- Prepare and approve necessary plans independently and/or through the good cooperation of state and private offices and organizations. Implementing these plans will be their responsibility and [will be carried out] through their own funds.
3- Cooperate with offices in implementing plans and performing duties, and generating movement and change through these plans and duties.
4- Prepare and recommend “necessary” plans which are approved by the government. To implement these plans, JS will cooperate with government offices and organizations. The implementation of these plans is the government’s responsibility.

Article Four – Assets and Facilities
JS’s [funds] are [to be] designated from the country’s construction funds, with the cabinet’s approval. [These funds] are to be used [in conjunction] with the people’s voluntary assistance. Funds and facilities that [come] under JS’s authority are to be spent to assist with the implementation of JS’s plans and activities. The [rest of the] country is not entitled to a percentage of these funds.

Article Five – Organization and Administration
JS’s pillars are JS’s central office (in Tehran), JS’s central office in the provinces, and JS’s centers in the townships. Each of JS’s centers has an executive council and board as well as executive and specialized units.

Article Six – The Members of JS’s High Council
a- Prime Minister or State Representative
b- Imam’s Representative
c- Revolutionary Council Representative
d- Six individuals selected by the prime minister from the following ministries: interior, agriculture and rural construction, education, health and welfare, power,
roads and transportation, national defense, industry and mines, and the advising minister and president of the planning and budget organization.
e- Four representatives selected by the provinces’ coordinating council.
f- Two clergy and jurists with the minister’s recommendation and the revolutionary council’s approval.

Note One – Members from category “e” of this esteemed article [serve] until presidential and parliamentary elections. Continuation or cessation of JS’s activities after the Islamic Republic’s provisional government will depend on the opinion of the eternal government and on parliamentary approval.

Note Two – Sessions of JS’s high council, which [take place] periodically, are based on the approval of its council or on an invitation from the organization’s executive board.

Article Seven – The Provincial Coordinating Council’s Members
The members of the provincial coordinating council are:
a- Members of JS’s executive board.
b- One representative selected from each of JS’s provincial councils.

Note – Sessions of the Provinces’ Coordinating Council [take place] periodically and are based on the decision of the aforementioned council or on an invitation from [JS’s] executive board.

Article Eight – The Members of JS’s Provincial Council
The members of JS’s provincial council are:
- One of the governor-general’s representatives.
- The president of the province’s planning and budget office or his representative.
- Three individuals from JS’s provincial council.  

Article Nine – The Members of JS’s Township Council
a- Governor or state representative.
b- Imam’s representative.
c- Three department heads [from the following ministries]: agriculture, rural construction, education, and health and welfare.
d- One individual among the commanders or officers from the local garrison selected by the provincial security council.

363 According to the legal bill regarding the modification of article seven of JS’s charter, this article was also modified. This modification was approved by the Islamic Republic of Iran’s revolutionary council on January 2, 1980.
e- One individual among the local trustees selected by the Imam’s representative, governor, or state representative.
f- Four officials from the townships’ specialized committees.

Note One – The membership terms of the members from category “e” and “c” in this esteemed article in JS’s townships’ council are until the period of government elections in the eternal Islamic Republic.

Note Two – If it is not possible to establish each of the specialized groups in the townships, an official or officials among the local trustees of the abovementioned committees, such as category “e”, are selected in their place and participate in the council.

Note Three – If it is not possible to establish a township council, this council’s duties will be determined and implemented by the provincial council or [its] representatives.

Note Four – Considering that the Imam’s representative is his personal [representative], [the representative] possesses a written decree from the Imam to officially represent him in JS.

Article Ten – Executive Boards
At each level (i.e., center, province, and township), there is an executive board consisting of a state representative, an Imam’s representative, and three individuals recommended by the relevant council and approved by the state representative and the Imam’s representative. According to the criteria to be approved by the high council, these three individuals can receive salaries equivalent to [those] of council officials. The president of the executive board is selected by the relevant council.

Note – The state representative in the provincial executive council is appointed by the governor-general’s recommendation and by approval from the state representative in [JS’s] executive council. The state representative in the township executive council is appointed by the governor’s recommendation and by approval from the state representative in the provincial executive board. Within the hierarchy of the provincial and township councils, these representatives assume the role and rank of the governor-general or governor.

Article Eleven – The Duties of JS’s High Council
a- Examine and prepare construction policies, programs, and plans to create a desired Islamic society.
b- Approve plans adequate for mobilizing the facilities and resources of the people and the state on the path toward implementing plans to construct society.

c- Deliver the resources and secure the funds necessary to implement JS’s plans.

d- Approve plans appropriate for mobilizing government offices and employees to cooperate in the implementation of JS’s plans.

e- Examine, change, modify, and approve the establishment of JS centers and different financial and administrative regulations.

f- Supervise, collect, and record (accounting) all funds related to assistance from the people and the state.

g- Recommend modifications required in this charter to the state.

h- Examine and approve programs recommended by JS’s executive council.

**Article Twelve – The Provincial Coordinating Council’s Duties**

This council undertakes duties and responsibilities assigned to it by JS’s high council. Its most important duties are listed below:

a- Exchange experience acquired through JS’s activities in different provinces.

b- Receive reports on JS’s operations in different provinces and evaluate its activities in order to coordinate affairs.

c- Plan and coordinate affairs shared by the provinces regarding policies and action items designated by JS’s high council.

d- Present recommendations and prepare plans to JS’s high council for approval.

e- Perform other duties delegating by JS’s high council.

**Article Thirteen – The Duties of JS’s Executive Board**

a- Prepare and recommend necessary plans and programs to the high council.

b- Plan for implementing proposals approved by the high council.

c- Receive reports on needs regarding finances, personnel, and equipment from the provincial centers, and assist with securing these needs by mobilizing facilities and resources that exist at [JS’s] central [office], and in [state] organizations and offices.

d- Collect funds related to assistance from the people and the state, keep records of salaries and expenses, prepare financial reports, and conduct administrative affairs at the center (i.e., Tehran).

e- Prepare programs suitable for social media to encourage and inform people about JS’s programs and activities (building people).

f- Prepare necessary guidelines in technical affairs and implementation methods for the provinces.

g- Supervise the effective implementation of plans and programs [associated with] JS’s provincial centers, and evaluate these plans and programs.
Note – The high council will designate an auditing institute to examine JS’s financial reports.

Article Fourteen – The Provincial Council’s Duties
   a- Receive and examine the report on the needs of villages and deprived areas in the province.
   b- Approve JS’s programs and plans in the provinces within the framework of policies and programs determined by the high council and on the basis of programs recommended by the provincial executive board. Establish relationships and cooperation with different offices for the effective implementation of plans.
   c- Approve programs related to Islamic guidance, propagation, and education that the provincial executive board prepared to educate the people and to encourage their participation in JS.
   d- Allocate financial resources, facilities, and equipment toward the plans of JS’s centers in the provinces and townships.
   e- Study and approve the report on JS in the townships, and prepare necessary reports for the high council.
   f- Supervise the activities of the provincial executive board.

Article Fifteen – Provincial Executive Board’s Duties
   a- Collect statistics and data related to the needs of villages and deprived areas. Prepare necessary plans and present them to JS’s provincial council for approval.
   b- Implement the provincial council’s programs and subdivisions according to approved regulations and procedures.
   c- Report implemented activities and plans to the provincial council.
   d- Conduct JS’s administrative and financial affairs according to approved criteria.
   e- Implement publicity programs based on approved policies.
   f- Cooperate with officials and managers from provincial executive offices for improved and more effective implementation of their plans by introducing them to JS volunteers. Assist with stimulating and reviving offices by creating solid cooperation and understanding in the implementation of plans approved [by] each [government] office, and by creating joint commissions between the offices and JS.
   g- Mobilize and dispatch JS volunteers to implement plans in needy areas.
   h- Secure the needs of and respond to the requests of JS in the townships.
   i- [Undertake] research and planning to prepare a program for JS’s activities and present it to the provincial council.
Article Sixteen – The Duties of JS’s Executive Council and Board in the Townships
The duties of the executive council in the townships are similar to the duties of the executive council and board in the provinces. The only difference is that JS’s executive council and board in the townships sends its own reports to JS’s center in the provinces.

Article Seventeen – The Council’s President
Within the relevant councils, the heads of JS’s councils select members to terms of one year.

Article Eighteen – Specialized Groups and Executive Units
At a minimum, the specialized groups are: 1- cultural groups, 2- health and welfare groups, 3- agricultural and economic groups, 4- construction and technical groups.
   a- At each level (i.e., center, province, and township), members of each specialized group are jointly selected by the Imam’s representative and the state representative at that level.
   b- Officials of each specialized group are selected by members of that group with the approval of the Imam’s representative and the state representative. At the relevant level, these officials are the responsibility of JS’s executive board.

Executive units are: volunteer affairs, information and news, publicity and public affairs, finances, administration, and records (supplies), and mobilization of state employees and planning.

Note One – Unit officials are selected by and are the responsibility of the executive board.

Note Two – The group members, who have joined full-time, are required to participate in the groups’ sessions.

Note Three – Members of specialized groups in the center (i.e., Tehran), [which comprise] between eleven and fifteen individuals, are appointed with approval from the Imam’s representative and the state representative.

Note Four – Members of specialized groups in JS’s provincial center, [which comprise] at least five individuals, are appointed with approval from the Imam’s representative and the state representative.

Note Five – Decision-making in affairs related to specialized groups is undertaken by members, and it is their responsibility to make these decisions.
**Note Six** – Officials in each specialized group can designate responsibilities to each member and notify the member of these responsibilities.

**Note Seven** – Organizational change in each of JS’s centers in the provinces and townships is possible through recommendations from the abovementioned councils and with the approval of JS’s high council.

**Article Nineteen – The Specialized Groups’ Duties**

a- Specialized groups and their officials have been put in place [due] to the Imam’s representative and the state representative, who decreed the securing of specialized personnel and necessary supplies from [government] offices and the people. These specialized groups and their officials will absorb the facilities of the offices and the people.

b- Collect statistics and data related to the needs of villages and deprived areas.

c- Implement decisions of the executive boards in accordance with approved regulations and procedures.

d- Report implemented plans and activities to the provincial executive board.

e- Secure provincial requirements and supplies [in] JS’s plans.

**Article Twenty – Financial Criteria**

a- All provincial funds should independently fall under the authority of JS’s provincial council.

b- The provincial council is required to allocate funds to the townships by considering their needs and their implemented programs. These funds will fall under the authority of JS’s relevant township councils and provincial specialized groups.

c- The township council will grant relevant funds on the basis of the program under the authority of executive groups or village councils to implement construction.

d- All mandatory papers of JS’s centers’ expenditures will be valid with signatures from the Imam’s representative and the state’s representative.

**Note** – All executive and financial affairs of the townships, where JS established councils, are not the responsibility of JS’s provincial centers.

**Article Twenty-One – Ending JS’s Activities**

Dissolving each of JS’s centers [falls] under the authority of the high council. With parliamentary approval, the cabinet [can] recommend to dissolve JS. In these cases, all of the assets and funds [belonging to] each center or to the entire organization [would] fall under the state’s authority.
Appendix Four: The Evolution of JS’s Organizational Structure (Source: Iravani 1998-1999: 216-221)\textsuperscript{364}

Phase One (February 11, 1979-October 19, 1979)

\[\text{Diagram of organizational structure}\]

\textsuperscript{364} I reproduced and translated these organizational charters on August 1-2, 2013.
Phase Two (1979-1983)
Phase Three (1983-1987)
Appendix Five: JS’s Ten and Twenty-Year Performance Record (1979-1989)
(Source: Ministry of Construction Jihad 1991; Ministry of Construction Jihad 2000)

### Potable Water

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Results</td>
<td>8,300 villages</td>
<td>11,428/ 29,500 villages</td>
<td>18,826/ 29,500 villages</td>
<td>22,259 villages</td>
<td>5,000 villages</td>
<td>2,200 villages</td>
<td>6,312 wells</td>
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</table>

### Roads

| Category | Five-Yr. plan forecast (’89-’93): built | Five-Yr. plan forecast (’89-’93): maintained | Villages under rural roads portfolio before rev. | Villages under JS's portfolio (’79-’89) | Villages under rural roads portfolio (’79-’89) | Total villages above 20 families (’89) | Rural roads built before rev. | Rural roads built by JS (’79-’89) | Rural roads built by others (’79-’89) | Rural roads in Iran under rural roads port. (’89) | Rural roads needed in Iran (’89) | Rural roads built by JS (’79-’99) | Rural roads renovated and paved by JS (’79-’99) | Rural roads maintained by JS (’79-’99) |
|----------|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Results  | 5,000 km                                 | 43,000 km                                   | 8,000 villages                                  | 9,000 villages                         | 18,430 villages                                 | 36,568 villages                    | 8,000 km                         | 25,000 km                          | 10,000 km                           | 43,000 km                         | 55,000 km                        | 69,963 km                         | 25,721 km                          | 57,711 km                          |

### Electrification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Villages under five yr. plan electr. port. (’89-’93)</th>
<th>Families under five yr. plan electr. port. (’89-’93)</th>
<th>Electrification before revolution</th>
<th>Electrification by JS (villages &gt; 20 families) (’79-’89)</th>
<th>Electrification (villages &gt; 20 families) (’79-’89)</th>
<th>Electrification targets (villages &gt; 20 fam.) (’79-’89)</th>
<th>Electrification by JS (’79-’99)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Results</td>
<td>5,000 villages</td>
<td>300,000 families</td>
<td>4,500 villages</td>
<td>9,050 villages</td>
<td>17,800 villages</td>
<td>36,000 villages</td>
<td>28,674 villages</td>
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</table>
Extension & Popular Participation ('79-'99)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Establish rural libraries</td>
<td>22,000 libraries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribute books to villagers</td>
<td>20,000,000 books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish Islamic councils in villages</td>
<td>28,293 councils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish [religious] classes (aqeedati)</td>
<td>267,478 classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hold lectures</td>
<td>114,259 sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish exhibitions</td>
<td>92,101 exhibitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show films, theater, and videos</td>
<td>133,986 shows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribute publications, posters, photos, placards, tracts</td>
<td>5,011,691,151 units</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Bibliography


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