Advocacy Activities in Nonprofit Human Service Organizations

Implications for Policy

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The article describes political and advocacy activity in nonprofit human service organizations for children, elderly people, women, and people with disabilities. On the whole, the level of their political activity was found to be moderate, as perceived by the directors of the organizations. The main findings reveal a significant positive correlation between advocacy and political activity in nonprofit organizations and their perceived influence on setting the public agenda. Analysis of the findings indicates that the larger the number of volunteers in the organization, the greater the organization's political influence. In addition, it was found that the more dependent the organizations were on funding from local authorities, the lower the level of advocacy and political activity. The effectiveness of strategies used to attain political influence was also analyzed. The most effective strategy was exerting pressure on decision makers, both on the national and local levels.

Keywords: *political and advocacy activity; key figures at the national and local authority levels; accessibility to policy makers; setting the public agenda; perceived political influence*

The goal of this article is to present, describe, and analyze findings from a study that explored advocacy and political activity in four different types of nonprofit human service organizations. Although scholars have offered various definitions of advocacy and political activity (Jenkins, 1987; McCarthy & Castelli, 2002; Reid, 1999), we adopted the definition that focuses on attempts to change policies or influence the decisions of any institutional elite, government, and state institutions through enhancement of civic participation to promote a collective goal or interest (Boris & Mosher-Williams, 1998; Jenkins, 1987; Reid, 1999). In the same vein, advocacy and political activity aim to effect changes in existing or future practices for a specific client and/or group of clients with a common interest (Ezell, 2001) as well as to protect basic civil rights (Boris & Krehely, 2003; Frumkin, 2002; Schoff

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& Stevenson, 1998). Some researchers distinguish between different types of advocacy and political activity (McCarthy & Castelli, 2002). One type of activity is programmatic advocacy, and another is legislative advocacy, or efforts to influence processes of legislation on social issues.

The definition adopted for this article encompasses activities aimed at influencing the social and civic agenda and at gaining access to the arena where decisions that affect social and civil life are made, as well as activities aimed at persuading policy makers to support favorable policies. In addition, these activities focus on enhancing citizen involvement and participation in implementation of decisions to influence and change priorities for allocation of resources (Andrews & Edwards, 2004; Imig, 1990; Rees, 2000; Reid, 1999, 2000).

The study was conducted in Israel, where far-reaching changes have occurred in the arena of social services, as reflected in relations between the government and nongovernmental organizations contracted by the government to provide social and human services. There is extensive literature on the relations that have developed between the nongovernmental provider organizations and the government, including studies on impact of government policy on those organizations (Gronbjerg & Smith, 1999; Salamon, 1995b; Smith & Lipsky, 1993). However, there is a lack of research on political activity in nonprofit human service organizations (DeVita, 1999; Salamon, 1995a). The few studies that have been conducted on this topic reveal that political activity and resources for such activity in those organizations are limited and that the level of their effectiveness is low (Barker-Plummer, 2002; Baumgartner & Leech, 1998; Boris & Krehely, 2003; Eisenberg, 2005; Hoefer, 2000; Knoke, 1990; McCarthy & Castelli, 2002; Mosley, 2006; Sosin, 1986; Taylor, Craig, & Wilkinson, 2002). Similarly, findings indicate that in Israel, few organizations engage in advocacy and political activity. Kramer (1981) found that in the 1960s and 1970s, very few of the organizations that provided services to people with disabilities in Israel were involved in promoting legislation on behalf of their clients. Moreover, most of the organizations examined in Kramer's study perceived advocacy and political activity as secondary and as less important than provision of services.

A study conducted in 1998 revealed that 4% of all third sector organizations registered in Israel defined the main function of their activities as "advocacy." Among third sector organizations that provide social services, the percentage that focused on advocacy as their main function was somewhat higher and amounted to 9% of all registered nonprofit organizations (Gidron, Katz, & Bar, 2000). Another study, which examined 55 nonprofit providers of personal and social services to children and youth in Israel, revealed that 16% of the directors of those organizations indicated that their organization's primary activity was "promoting rights" and "advocacy" and one fourth of the directors reported that their organizations invested a relatively high proportion of time and energy (25%) in those activities (Schmid, Bargal, Korazim, Straus, & Hochstedt, 2001). Other studies have revealed that the involvement and influence of third sector organizations in formulating public policy

was relatively limited. Their involvement was reflected mainly in placing issues on the public agenda and less in actual formulation of policies (Aviram, Admon, Eisenstadt, & Kanter, 2000; Yishai, 1990). Yishai (2003) found that third sector organizations operating in the political arena had a high level of access to government ministers and senior officials. Regarding strategies of political activity, exerting pressure on governmental authorities was found to be most effective in most of the organizations examined, although the extent of their influence on processes of policy making was limited.

The present study examined the scope and intensity of political activity and advocacy in human service organizations as well as the extent of the organizations' influence and effectiveness in the political-social arena. The conceptual framework of the study integrates theories that describe and analyze the relationships between organizations and their environments.

The Theoretical Framework

To better understand the political activity of the organizations examined in the study, we propose a framework that combines two main theories for analyzing interorganizational relations: neo-institutional theory and resource dependence theory. Neo-institutional theory assumes that the structure of certain groups of organizations, such as social welfare organizations, voluntary nonprofit organizations, and community organizations, is determined not by the service technologies or organizational strategies they adopt but rather by rules and procedures emanating from the institutional environment (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, 1983). Organizations that wish to survive adjust themselves to the norms, values, standards, and expectations prevailing in their task environment to gain the legitimacy and resources. In that way, the institutional environment creates an "iron cage," which restricts the organizations' autonomy and activities (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). The inevitable result is organizational isomorphism (D'Aunno, Sutton, & Price, 1991), which is expressed by increasing bureaucracy, formalization, and standardization of administrative processes (Edelman & Suchman, 1997; Meyer, Scott, Strang, & Creighton, 1988; Tolbert & Zucker, 1996; Tucker, Baum, & Singh, 1992).

Resource dependence theory (Aldrich & Pfeffer, 1976; Aldrich & Reuf, 2006; Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003) proposes that organizations often become dependent on their environments for resources that are critical for their survival, which generates uncertainty. According to Pfeffer and Salancik (1978), "the underlying premise of the external perspective on organizations is that organizational activities and outcomes are accounted for by the context in which the organization is embedded" (p. 39). The extent of an organization's dependency on the external environment is affected by the importance of a particular resource to the organization and by the extent to which those who control that resource have a monopoly on it, as well as by the discretion they have over its allocation (Frooman, 1999; Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003). Thus,

"organizations will (and should) respond more to the demands of those organizations or groups in the environment that control critical resources" (Pfeffer, 1982, p. 193). Moreover, exchange of resources with the environment enables the organization to acquire the various resources it needs to survive. In this process, organizational directors must manage their environment at least as they manage their organizations to ensure an adequate resource supply.

The integration of the two theories enables a better understanding of organizational behavior in organizations in general (Sherer & Lee, 2002) and in nonprofit human service organizations in particular (Edelman & Suchman, 1997; Oliver, 1997; Scott, 1994; Sutton, Dobbin, Meyer, & Scott, 1994). According to this approach, conformity with state and governmental institutions, which aims at ensuring legitimation and resources, causes organizations to adjust their ideology and espoused goals to the expectations of the institutional environment and the directives of the regulator as expressed in the "iron cage."

Research findings indicate that when provider organizations are highly dependent on governmental resources, they tend to provide services mandated by the law and in accordance with government policy (Davis-Smith & Hedley, 1993; Hoyes & Means, 1991). Adopting conformist behavior may result in the loss of organizational identity and erosion of ideology and values. Such behavior may also inhibit the organization's capacity to protest as well as its capacity for creativity and innovation. Under those conditions, the organizations do not offer new programs or service technologies (Schmid, 2001, 2003; Stone, 1996), and "the penalties for failing to meet standards may inhibit innovation" (Deakin, 1996, p. 119).

This argument applies especially to human service organizations, which do not have their own capital and assets and whose level of dependence on government funding is high. Among some human service organizations, the share of revenue from governmental sources is as high as 80% to 90% of their budget. This is in contrast to other types of nonprofit organizations that are less dependent on government funding.

The conceptual framework proposed for examining political activity in organizations in this study is based on the two theories presented earlier as well as on a combination of those theories. We found this conceptual framework to be most appropriate for analysis of the previously mentioned phenomenon in human service organizations.

The framework assumes that there are relationships between two sets of independent variables on one hand and the scope and intensity of the organization's political activity on the other. The first set of variables includes the organization's size, age, and the strategies for political activity. The second set includes variables related to the extent of the organization's dependence on external funding and whether the funding derives from the government and public sources or from other sources, such as private foundations.

Regarding the first set of variables, it is assumed that the organization's size, which was measured in this study as the number of workers, size of the budget, and number of volunteers, affects the extent of political activity. Research findings have revealed that large organizations are able to raise more funds and that they allocate more resources to political activity than small organizations (Mosely, 2006). Studies also indicate that established and institutionalized procedures are a source of stabilization and that they enable the organization to gain more trust from providers of legitimation and resources (Sine, Mitsuhashi, & Kirsch, 2006; Smith & Lipsky, 1993). Such structural characteristics are found in large and veteran organizations (Ethiraj & Levinthal, 2004).

Accordingly, the scope of advocacy and political activity will be greater in large organizations with larger budgets, more staff members, and more volunteers. Furthermore, it was assumed that larger organizations are less dependent on governmental resources and are therefore less threatened by sanctions against them if they engage in political activity. Larger organizations can also be more effective in changing power-dependence relations and in making the government dependent on their services by employing various strategies and modes of operation (Aldrich & Reuf, 2006).

Age of organizations goes together with their size. It is assumed that older organizations are larger because of processes of growth, development, and diversification (Hasenfeld & Schmid, 1989). Veteran organizations are also more formalized and institutionalized and therefore enjoy a relatively high level of trust and legitimacy. In that situation, the extent of political activity will be greater than in younger organizations, which have not yet established themselves and still struggle to gain institutional legitimacy (Freeman, Carrol, & Hannan, 1983). The other variable in this group relates to the strategies and modes of operation that organizations employ in their political activity. The basic assumption, which derives from resource dependence theory, is that organizations constantly aspire to change their power- dependence relations vis-à-vis the external environment. Toward that end, they adopt various strategies for reducing their dependence on external funding sources and increasing the dependence of agents in the environment on their distinctive services and/or products. Thus, there are those who argue that managing the external environment may be even more important than managing the organization itself, because the environment controls the resources and legitimacy needed to strengthen the organization's autonomy (Aldrich & Reuf, 2006).

The second set of variables relates to the organizations' dependence on external funding. Notably, very few studies have examined how dependence on external sources affects the political activity of organizations in general and human services in particular. Existing research on the topic has revealed various trends and directions. Some studies indicate that external funding leads to moderation of political and protest activities and that it causes organizations to compromise on effectiveness (Piven

& Cloward, 1977). Findings also indicate that nonprofit human service organizations are reluctant to initiate political activity, because they are afraid that it will harm their income, which largely derives from the government (Boris & Steuerle, 1999; Gronbjerg, 1993; Kramer, 1981; Netting, 1982; Salamon, 1995b; Stone, 1996). A subsequent study revealed a different trend, where government funding does not suppress political activity in religious congregations and nonprofit organizations (Chaves, Stephens, & Galaskiewicz, 2004).

In light of the dearth of research in the field, the current study aimed to broaden knowledge on these issues in human service organizations in Israel. As mentioned, because human service organizations receive most of their funding from governmental and private foundations, it is assumed that these sources affect the scope, level, and intensity of the organization's political activity. The more dependent the organizations are on external funding sources, the greater their tendency to adopt behavior that conforms to government policy and the less they engage in political activities. Thus, they assure the steady flow of resources needed for their continued operation and survival (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003).

The next component of the conceptual framework relates to the scope and intensity of political activity, which is measured according to three dimensions. The first category, "topics," refers to activities such as ensuring the rights of special populations, attaining social goals, initiating changes in legislation, changing public attitudes, educating the public, and enhancing public awareness. The second type of activity includes attempts to influence leaders and key figures in the public arena, including Members of the Knesset (the Israeli Parliament), ministers, senior government officials, heads of local authorities, media personalities, and others. The third type of activity is described as "accessibility" and includes access to policy makers at the levels of the government and local authorities who aim to promote the goals of the organization's political activity. The relationship between the scope and intensity of the political activity and the extent of the organization's perceived influence in the political arena is examined as well.

The proposed conceptual framework, as well as the explanations derived from prior research findings, provided the basis for the following research hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: The older the organization, the greater the scope and intensity of its political activity will be.

Hypothesis 2: The larger the organization, the greater the scope and intensity of its political activity will be.

Hypothesis 3: The more the organization adopts strategies aimed at changing power-dependence relations vis-à-vis the environment, the greater the scope and intensity of political activity will be.

Hypothesis 4: The more dependent the organizations are on funding from the government and municipal authorities, the less the scope and intensity of political activity will be.

Hypothesis 5: The more dependent the organizations are on funding from private foundations, the greater the scope and intensity of political activity will be.

Method

The Research Population

The research population included 1,253 organizations that serve four different target groups: children, elderly people, people with disabilities, and women. Those organizations were chosen because they represent four major areas of social services in Israel, as reflected in the number of organizations operating in each field, as well as in the scope and variety of services that they provide. The sampling frame was provided by the Israel Center for Third Sector Research, which deals with research on the scope, size, and areas of activity of third sector organizations in Israel. Because we know that many of the organizations included in the frame are not active, an initial random sample of approximately one fourth of the organizations was selected within each target group. This resulted in a sample of 294 organizations, of which 267 (90%) were contacted by phone and 10% were not reached. For each of the contacted organizations, we verified whether they were active. Of those that were found to be active (90%), a final random sample of 96 organizations was selected for the study: 18 women's organizations, 27 organizations for people with disabilities, 28 organizations for elderly persons, and 23 organizations for children. Comparison of the final sampling distribution with that of the initial sample revealed that the final sample of organizations was representative with respect to age, size, and geographic location.

Research Instrument

The main research instrument was a questionnaire, which was administered in an interview with the executive director and senior staff of the organization. The questionnaire consisted mainly of closed questions and included a few open questions. The questionnaire encompassed several domains, including questions on the organization's background, income and expenditures, number of paid professional workers and number of volunteers, the organization's geographic distribution, the main spheres of political activity, objectives for change, extent of access to policy makers, the main methods of activity, the extent to which the organizations are proactive versus reactive in their political activity, decision-making processes in the context of political activity, spheres of influence, and the effectiveness of their political activity. Most of the closed questions were based on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*low level*) to 5 (*high level*). The Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the indices topics, key figures, accessibility, influence, and restraint were .72, .69, .85, .89, and .63, respectively. Regarding the indices that describe modes of operation, the Cronbach's alpha values for lobbying in the Knesset (Parliament), government agencies, local authorities, the media, legal and judicial activity, research and dissemination of information, and protest were .93, .85, .75, .84, .74, .60, and .55, respectively. In addition to

the questionnaire, in-depth interviews were conducted with senior directors and staff in the organizations to obtain more detailed information on their evaluations regarding the quality of organization's political activity and their achievements in that area.

Statistical Analysis

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted for selected outcome indices to test the null hypothesis that there will be no mean differences between the four types of organizations. Post hoc tests were based on Tukey's standardized range test. Ordinary least squares regression analyses were carried out to assess the relationships presented in the conceptual model (see Figure 1). Each of the three outcome indices (topics, key figures, and access) was calculated as the mean of five items (each of which had scores ranging from 1 to 5) and thus had a continuous distribution. Because the distribution of the variables "budget" and "number of workers" was right skewed, logarithmic transformation with an appropriate shift from zero was used to linearize the relationship as required. Selection of models was based on an all-subsets analysis (Weisberg, 1980).

Results

In the beginning of this section, we will present some general background data on the characteristics and activities of the organizations, followed by data on the relationships described in the conceptual framework. First, we will present the relationships between various background variables and strategies for activity on one hand and the political activity of the organizations on the other. Afterward, we will present the relationship between the political activity of the organizations and their perceived influence in those areas:

1. The mean age of the organizations was 24 years. The oldest organizations were those that provide services to elderly persons (28 years), and the youngest ones were organizations for children (12 years).
2. Eighty-three percent of the organizations were established by private entrepreneurs. The rest were established by the government, local authorities, or other public entities.
3. The mean overall budget of the organizations was about $8 million. Women's organizations had the largest budgets at $17 million, and organizations for people with disabilities had the smallest budgets at $3.4 million.
4. The average number of workers in the surveyed organizations was 335. Organizations for elderly persons were the largest (680 workers), and organizations for children were the smallest (123 workers).
5. The average number of full-time equivalent positions in the organizations was 55. The largest number was in organizations for people with disabilities (93), and the smallest was in women's organizations (22.5).

Figure 1
Conceptual Framework for Describing Relations Between
Selected Organizational Variables, Scope of Political Activity,
and Extent of Organizations' Influence
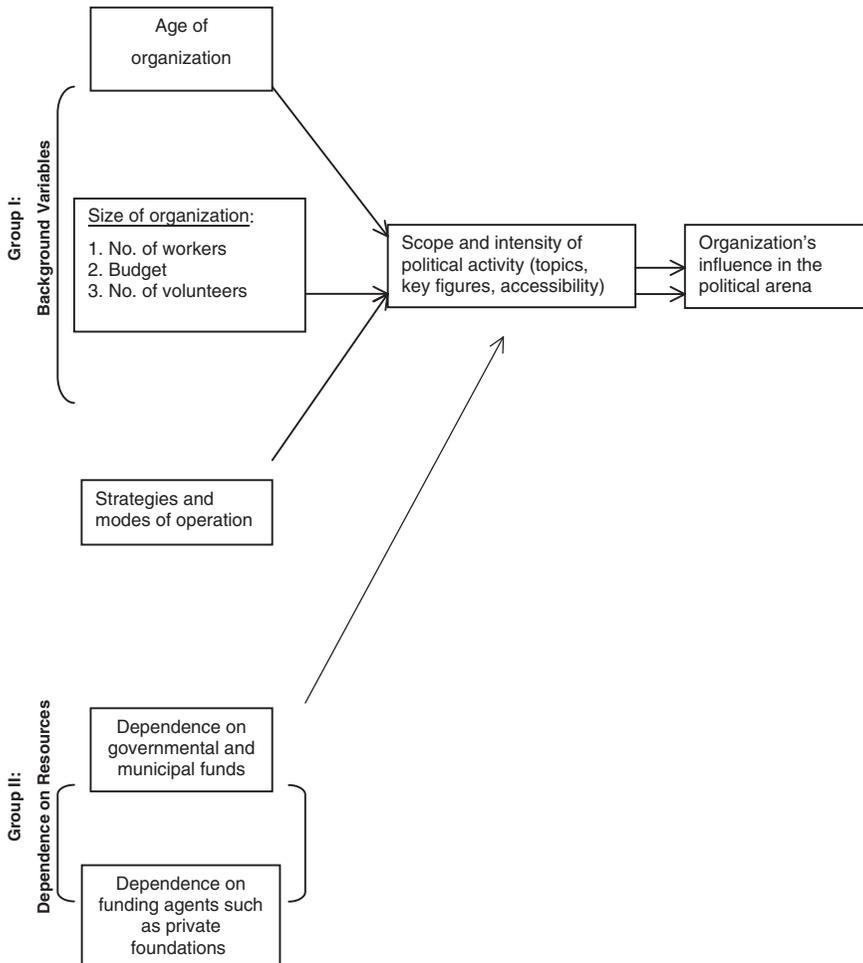
6. The average number of volunteers in the organizations was 209. The largest
    number was in women's organizations (408), and the smallest was in organizations
    for people with disabilities (132).
7. Most of the organizations provided direct care, educational services, counseling
    and support, and extracurricular activities.

8. On average, 1.5 workers in the organization dealt with political activity. In women's organizations, about four workers were employed for that purpose, whereas the organizations for the elderly hardly assigned any workers for those activities (1/4 position).

9. The main component of expenses in all of the organizations was wages for workers (67%). The share of wages was highest in organizations for people with disabilities (80%) and lowest in organizations for children (56%).

The following tables present the scope and intensity of political and advocacy activity in the organizations, the mode of operation used in their attempts to influence public policy, and the extent of their influence.

Table 1 presents the means and standard deviations of the main issues that organizations deal with in their political and advocacy activity. The measure reflects the importance of each issue in the organization on a scale ranging from 1 (*no activities in this area*) to 5 (*the area is a major focus of the organization's political activities*). The general index of political activity (topics) in various areas among all of the organizations was moderate and higher. Most of the activities presented in the table take place occasionally. The most salient areas were "ensuring the rights of special populations" (3.83) and "ensuring budgets for the organization" (3.83). In women's organizations, the most salient area was "attaining social goals and social change" (3.78), whereas "ensuring budgets for the organization" (3.06) and "developing new programs" (3.06) were less salient. In organizations for people with disabilities, the most salient areas were "ensuring the rights of special populations" (4.00), "developing new programs" (3.80), and "ensuring budgets for the organization" (3.80). In organizations for elderly people, the areas they highlighted most were "ensuring budgets for the organization" (3.96) and "developing new programs" (3.88). In organizations for children, the most important area was "ensuring the rights of special populations" (4.18). Regarding the general index for all areas of political activity, the highest index was found in organizations for people with disabilities, which reflects the high-level importance attributed to the various issues in those organizations (3.71). The lowest general index was found in organizations for elderly people (3.23). The ANOVA *F* test revealed no significant differences between the means of the different types of organizations with regard to the topics index ($p = .35$).

Table 2 presents the distribution of modes of operation that the organization employs in its attempts to influence public policy. The measure reflects the extent to which the organization uses each of the methods presented in the table on a scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*often*). In addition, the table presents the weighted indices for each of the methods used by the organization (for a detailed description of the components of each index, see the appendix).

The data reveal that the extent of "activity vis-à-vis government agencies" was highest in the analysis of "all organizations" (3.04). The extent of this activity is moderate, whereas the extent of "protest activity" is lowest (1.83). "Activity vis-à-vis government agencies" was highest in women's organizations (3.49) and lowest

Table 1
Means and Standard Deviations of Political Activity

Organizations Issues	Children		Elderly		Disabled		Women		All Organizations	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Ensuring the rights of special populations	4.18	1.14	3.50	1.50	4.00	1.19	3.61	1.42	3.83	1.32
Achieving social goals and social change	3.27	1.45	3.02	1.36	3.52	1.39	3.78	1.52	3.38	1.42
Ensuring budgets for the organization	3.95	1.47	3.96	1.40	3.80	1.22	3.06	1.78	3.73	1.47
Changing social legislation	3.45	1.41	2.38	1.45	3.60	1.44	3.50	1.29	3.21	1.47
Attitude change, education, and public awareness	3.41	1.37	3.38	1.31	3.64	1.11	3.67	1.46	3.52	1.29
Development of new programs	3.48	1.17	3.88	1.08	3.80	1.26	3.06	1.55	3.59	1.27
General topics index*	3.56	0.84	3.23	0.81	3.71	1.01	3.52	1.12	3.51	0.95

*ANOVA F test $p = .35$.

Table 2
Means and Standard Deviations of Strategies and Modes of Operation in the Organization

Organizations Type of Activity	Children		Elderly		Disabled		Women		All Organizations	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Lobbying in the Knesset (Parliament)**	2.54	1.02	1.57	0.69	2.53	1.00	2.60	1.05	2.29	1.02
Activity vis-à-vis government agencies*	3.27	1.07	2.39	1.08	3.49	1.07	2.99	1.11	3.04	1.15
Activity vis-à-vis local authorities	2.55	0.92	2.85	1.30	2.52	0.94	2.22	0.86	2.55	1.04
Activity vis-à-vis the media	2.77	1.00	2.76	0.85	2.53	0.92	3.02	1.06	2.76	0.95
Legal and judicial activity	1.81	1.29	1.83	1.13	1.78	1.15	2.42	1.60	1.93	1.28
Research and dissemination of information	2.93	1.40	2.50	1.07	2.72	1.16	3.03	1.18	2.78	1.20
Protest	1.57	0.71	1.71	1.01	1.94	1.13	2.14	0.82	1.83	0.95

*ANOVA F test $p < .01$. **ANOVA F test $p < .001$.

in organizations for the elderly (2.39). In women's organizations, the level of "activity vis-à-vis the media" was the highest, but it was found to be moderate (3.02), as was "activity in the area of research and dissemination of information" (3.03). Besides these activities, the extent to which different methods of activity are employed to influence policy was low in most cases and low to moderate in a few cases.

ANOVAs revealed significant differences in means scores for lobbying in the Knesset (Parliament) ($p < .001$), which were accounted for by the differences between organizations for the elderly and the other types of organizations. In addition, significant differences were found in mean scores of activity vis-à-vis government authorities ($p < .01$), which were accounted for by the differences between organizations for the elderly versus organizations for children and people with disabilities.

Table 3 presents the distribution of the organizations' perceived influence in various spheres on a scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*to a great extent*). The overall index of influence among all of the organizations was moderate (2.84). Among women's organizations, the greatest extent of influence was in "empowering clients" (3.88), which was indicated "in most cases." Other salient areas were "placing issues on the public agenda" (3.29), "notifying and informing policymakers" (3.29), and "protesting about social problems" (3.35). The lowest level of influence was found in the area of "policymaking" (2.12). Among organizations for people with disabilities, the greatest extent of influence was in "empowering clients" (3.72), and the lowest level of influence was found in "developing new programs" (3.28). Among organizations for the elderly, the greatest extent of influence was found in "notifying and informing policymakers" (3.02), and the lowest level of influence was found in "legislation" (1.88). Among children's organizations, the greatest extent of influence was found in "empowering clients" (3.62), followed by "notifying and informing policymakers" (3.45). The lowest level of influence was found in "legislation" (2.23). Regarding the general index for areas of influence, the highest level was found among organizations for people with disabilities (3.02). ANOVA *F* tests revealed no significant differences between the different types of organizations with regard to the influence index ($p = .23$).

In the next stage, the study focused on examining the relationships between various factors described in the conceptual framework, as reflected in regression analyses. First, the relationships between background variables and political activity are presented in Table 4.

The table reveals a significant positive relationship between the number of volunteers in the organization and political activity: The larger the number of volunteers, the more intensive the organization's political activity in terms of its impact on policy makers at the levels of the central government and local authority and the greater the organization's access to decision makers. In addition, the organization's budget was found to correlate positively with gaining access to decision makers: The

Table 3
Means and Standard Deviations of Levels of Organizations'
Influence in Various Spheres

Organizations, Spheres	Children		Elderly		Disabled		Women		All Organizations	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Legislation	2.23	1.51	1.86	1.32	2.64	1.15	2.24	1.20	2.26	1.31
Placing issues on the public agenda	3.09	1.38	2.35	1.34	3.32	1.52	3.29	1.31	3.00	1.43
Policy making	2.40	1.31	2.13	1.14	2.52	0.92	2.12	1.17	2.31	1.12
Policy implementation	2.95	1.00	2.43	1.31	2.92	1.12	2.47	1.07	2.71	1.14
Developing new service programs	3.14	1.20	2.83	1.44	3.28	1.31	2.38	1.20	2.95	1.32
Blocking planned policies	2.52	1.44	2.04	1.15	2.67	1.34	2.53	1.07	2.44	1.27
Notifying and informing policy makers	3.45	1.44	3.00	1.28	3.04	1.17	3.29	1.31	3.18	1.29
Protesting about social problems	3.00	1.48	2.74	1.14	3.08	1.22	3.35	1.37	3.02	1.29
Influencing public opinion	3.05	1.28	2.74	1.10	2.96	1.31	3.06	1.09	2.94	1.19
Influence index*	2.97	0.99	2.51	0.85	3.02	0.88	2.86	0.93	2.84	0.94

*ANOVA F test $p = .35$.

Table 4
Coefficients of Multiple Regression Models of
Indices on the Background Variables

		Outcome Variables		
		Topics	Key figures	Access
Intercept		4.05655***	3.06988***	3.36709***
Group type	Women	0.15288	–0.15242	–0.02770
	Disabled	0.33197	0.02796	–0.16311
	Elderly	–0.05201	–0.78757***	–0.93177***
ln_workers		–0.32575***	–0.9448	–0.18517*
ln_budget		0.21097**	0.11063	0.31301***
Volunteers		0.61381**	0.54469**	0.88641***
N		68	68	68
R^2		0.17	0.31	0.44

Note: ln_budget = ln (budget + 0.1); ln_workers = ln (number of workers + 1); volunteers (low = 0 to 150 volunteers, high = more than 150 volunteers).
*$p < .10$. **$p < .05$. ***$p < .01$ (p values for the group/type variable relate to the total contribution of the three dummy variables).

Table 5
Multiple Regression of Indices of Political Activity
on Organizational Strategies

	Outcome Variables		
	Topics	Key Figures	Access
Intercept	2.04542***	1.72900***	2.23385***
Pressure	0.11803*	0.27017***	0.29849***
Quiet	0.0583	0.01355	0.05920
Self	0.16763**	0.12759	0.08123
Cooperation	0.06613	–0.11631	–0.02640
Timing	0.12822*	0.10438	–0.04852
N	75	74[a]	75
R^2	0.38	0.36	0.18

a. One outlying observation was deleted.
*$p < .10$. **$p < .05$. ***$p < .01$.

larger the budget, the greater the organization's access. Age of the organization did not correlate significantly with political activity.

Examination of the relationships between the organizations' sources of income and political activity was based on multiple regression of the political activity indicators on government sources (three categories), municipal/local authority sources (two categories), and foundation sources (two categories). The results revealed significant negative relationships only between funds from local authorities and political activity, as expressed in the variable "key figures" ($p < .05$) and accessibility ($p < .01$): The more dependent the organizations were on funds from local authorities, the lower the scope and intensity of their political activity. No relationships were found between foundations and political activity.

Regression analysis also reveals that the strongest and most significant correlation is between "pressuring" policy makers and the scope and intensity of political activity. Variables related to the organization itself (e.g., reputation and optimal utilization of resources) as well as the timing of activities were found to be less significant. Analysis of other relationships between different modes of operation and political activity in the organization revealed that "activity vis-à-vis the Knesset (Israeli Parliament)" and "research and dissemination of information" had the highest correlations in all three dimensions of activity (topics, key figures, and accessibility). "Activity vis-à-vis the government" (key figures and accessibility) and activity vis-à-vis the media (topics) had lower correlations (see Table 5).

In addition, we examined the relationship between political and advocacy activity in organizations and their perceptions of their influence in the political arena. This

examination revealed a positive and significant correlation between the various topics that organizations deal with in their activity ("topics") and their perceived influence ($r = .55526$, $p = .00$) as well as the policy makers ("key figures") and perceptions of their influence ($r = .33470$, $p < .05$). That is, the more the organization engages in political activity in a wide range of areas, the greater the organization's perceived influence in the political arena.

Discussion

The scope and intensity of political activity investigated in this study was found to be moderate and limited, as they are perceived by the directors of the organizations. Age of the organization was not found to affect political activity. On the whole, the organizations allocated a limited number of staff positions for that purpose, and most of the workers engaged in provision of services. Another significant finding was that lack of appropriate resources restrains the organization's ability to initiate political activity. The directors expressed their views regarding these constraints and were sure that if more resources were available, they would be more involved in those activities. This argument is supported in other studies, which have found that organizations with large budgets allocate more resources for political activity than do organizations with small budgets (Mosley, 2006).

The organizations use various strategies to influence public policy, which include lobbying in the Parliament; activity vis-à-vis government agencies, local authorities, and the media; initiating legislation; research and dissemination of information; and protest. Despite the relative diversity of their strategies, the level of political and advocacy activity in those organizations is considered to be low to moderate.

Another noteworthy finding is that the strategies of lobbying in Parliament and dissemination of information and knowledge correlated most strongly with political activity. Thus, it appears that pressure is an effective strategy for promoting the organization's goals and interests, whereas moderate and limited activity is less effective.

The findings also reveal that dependence on funding from local authorities has a negative effect on political activity. This result is consistent with neo-institutional and resource dependence theories. It is also supported by other studies, which indicate that dependence on public funding (from governmental and municipal sources) prevents organizations from engaging in political activity that might be perceived as opposing state institutions, in the sense of "don't bite the hand that feeds you" (Korazim-Körösy, Lebovitz, & Schmid, 2005; Kramer, 1981; Schmid, 2003). According to this perspective, the more dependent the organizations are on public funding (in our case from local authorities), the more they are trapped in the iron cage and the more they develop behavior that conforms to the goals, service programs, and standards that the funding institution is interested in promoting (Smith

& Lipsky, 1993; Stone, 1996). By adopting conformist, conservative behavior aimed at meeting the expectations of local policy makers, the organizations ensure and maintain the institutional legitimacy and resources they need for their survival (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, 1983; Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003).

In contrast, Salamon (1995a) found a positive relationship between government support and the extent of political and advocacy activity in nonprofit organizations, where government funding was found to generate resources that increase the scope of political activity. In the same vein, Mosley (2006) concluded that governmental grants and contracts may actually benefit an organization that wishes to be politically active.

These findings deserve further examination, in light of differences in the scope and intensity of political activity among nonprofit organizations in the United Sates and Israel. In contrast to Israel, where organizations are not subject to legal constraints on political activity, there are clear definitions and legal restrictions on such activity in the United States. However, even though organizations in the United States are legally permitted to allocate the budgets at their disposal for advocacy and lobbying activities, they are often cautious about how they define that activity (Reid, 2000). The organizational context examined in this study is much more complex, and human service organizations in Israel are much more vulnerable to changes in government policy. In addition, political activity aimed at promoting the rights of marginalized and disadvantaged people can be construed as opposing the policies of the government or local authorities. Thus, organizations engaging in such activity face a threat to their survival because of sanctions and loss of resources. These findings are supported by previous studies, which have examined social movements and their responses to external funding and support (Piven & Cloward, 1977). Dependence on governmental funding causes social movements to moderate their responses to state institutions and reduces their effectiveness in attaining espoused goals.

Beyond these explanations, it can also be argued that the executive directors and boards lack awareness and understanding regarding the importance of political activity. Most of the organizations reported that decisions about political and advocacy activity are not made at the highest levels of the organization (by the chairman of the board or by the executive committee) and that they seldom consult with community activists and clients. In our view, this approach is inappropriate, particularly in light of continued cutbacks in budgets for social services and the need to ensure funding for the benefit of clients.

Another possible explanation for the moderate level of political activity relates to the lack of professional knowledge as well as to the lack of appropriate education, skills, and competence to enter the political arena, which is inherently different from the domain of service provision. Political skills include the ability to mobilize support and experience in areas such as influencing the public agenda, representing disadvantaged populations, marketing, and persuading decision makers through the

ideological and political messages of the organization, as well as negotiating with politicians and contact with media figures. Besides the lack of appropriate political skills, most executive directors of nonprofit human service organizations are not aware of the importance of political activity, its contribution to strengthening civil society, and its role in ensuring more resources.

Finally, we argue that despite the major role of human service organizations in providing social services, the problems of social distress, exclusion, marginality, poverty, widening social and economic inequality, violence, and other social problems will not be solved if they limit themselves to the role of service providers. By focusing exclusively on service provision, they cannot effect change, even if the results of their activity are visible in the short run. To achieve their espoused goals, they need to become a major actor in the arena where decisions are made. This kind of involvement requires appropriate skills, patience, tolerance for ambiguity, and perseverance, where the results of such activity are not immediately visible. The organizations have to understand that if they remove themselves from the political arena, their ability to provide services to their clients will also be impaired and they will be the ones to lose.

To initiate social and political changes, nonprofit human service organizations need to improve their technologies and modes of operation, as well as the political skills of their executives. In addition, they need to change their priorities for allocation of resources to political activity. This can be done by broadening the range of funding sources and bolstering the organizations' financial autonomy in an attempt to increase their involvement in policy and decision making. In this connection, special attention should be given to the findings regarding volunteers and their impact on political activity. Volunteers are not trapped in the institutional "iron cage," nor are they subject to the limitations and constraints faced by the directors of the organization. Unlike directors, they can be more assertive and persistent in negotiations with policy makers. Many volunteers also have extensive professional experience and connections with key figures in governmental agencies, which they can use to promote the organization's political activity and espoused goals. Volunteers also subscribe to the values and ideology of citizen involvement in policy making, which facilitates efforts to protect citizens' rights and ensure their well-being. Hence, we argue that organizations should pay more attention to the added value of volunteers and involve them in efforts to promote political activity. In addition, it can be assumed that when organizations form coalitions, they attain more power and resources that enable them to engage in more intensive political activity. It would be worthwhile to conduct further research on this issue, which was not examined in the present study.

Before concluding, it should be emphasized that the findings reported here are based on a relatively small sample of organizations and on the self-reports of directors. To broaden knowledge in the field, future studies should focus on collecting more extensive data, based on qualitative and quantitative research designs. The data not only should be obtained from self-reports of directors but should also include

hard data on the organizations' activities in the areas examined here. The information can be obtained from reports submitted by key persons in the decision-making arena whom the organizations seek to influence. In addition, the data can be obtained from other sources, such as the government and local authorities, as well as from the judicial system and the media. All of this information would allow for a more comprehensive description of political activity in nonprofit human service organizations and sheds light on the extent to which such activity enables those organizations to attain their espoused goals.

Appendix
Detailed List of the Components of the Indices that Reflect the Extent to Which the Organizations Use Each of the Methods

1. Lobbying in the Knesset (Parliament)
    a. Meeting with Knesset members
    b. Sending letters to Knesset members
    c. Making presentations at Knesset committee meetings
    d. Attending Knesset sessions during a vote
    e. Attending meetings of lobby groups
    f. Providing information to Knesset members
    g. Initiating and drafting bills
    h. Maintaining relations with political parties
2. Activity vis-à-vis government agencies
    a. Meeting with a minister/director general/senior official
    b. Following up on policy implementation in a ministry
    c. Involvement in drafting regulations
    d. Transmitting information to a government official orally or in writing
3. Activity vis-à-vis local authorities
    a. Meeting with the head of a local authority or with a senior official
    b. Following up on meetings and policy implementation in a local authority
    c. Involvement in meetings of the council or committees in a local authority
4. Activity vis-à-vis the media
    a. Contacting reporters to initiate publication of an article
    b. Notifying journalists about an activity planned by the organization
    c. Publishing articles related to the problems handled by the organization
    d. Disseminating position papers or press releases from the organization
    e. Publishing paid advertisements in the press
    f. Organizing press conferences.
5. Legal action
    a. Court appeals
    b. Representation of people in personal cases

(continued)

Appendix (continued)

6. Research and information
   a. Conducting surveys/collecting information from the field and sending it to policy makers
   b. Information meetings for members of the organization or for the general public
7. Protest
   a. Initiating or participating in demonstrations, strikes, assemblies, or information meetings; circulating petitions
   b. Initiating disturbances and confrontations

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