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**Explaining Nonprofit Advocacy:  
An Exploratory Analysis**

by

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# Explaining Nonprofit Advocacy: An Exploratory Analysis

Lester M. Salamon

*"... the search for explicative laws in natural facts proceeds in a tortuous fashion. In the face of some inexplicable facts you must try to imagine many general laws, whose connection with your facts escapes you. Then suddenly, in the unexpected connection of a result, a specific situation, and one of those laws, you perceive a line of reasoning that seems more convincing than the others. You try, in applying it to all similar cases, to use it for making predictions, and you discover that your intuition was right. But, until you reach the end you never know which predicates to introduce into your reasoning and which to omit."*

Umberto Eco, *The Name of the Rose*

## Introduction

Of all the functions of the nonprofit sector, few are more critical than that of advocacy, of representing alternative perspectives and pressing them on public and private decisionmakers. Former Independent Sector President Brian O'Connell has referred to advocacy as "the quintessential function of the voluntary sector."<sup>1</sup> In its 1975 analysis of the nonprofit sector, the private Commission on Private Philanthropy and Public Needs (the Filer Commission) reached a similar conclusion, terming the "monitoring and influencing of government...one of the most important and effective functions of the private nonprofit sector."<sup>2</sup> Indeed, of the nine "underlying functions" of nonprofit organizations identified by the Filer Commission, five pertained directly or indirectly to advocacy ("developing public policy," "supporting minority or local interests," "overseeing government," "bringing the sectors together," and "furthering active citizenship and altruism"). Academic experts as well have stressed the vital importance of the advocacy function of nonprofit organizations. Thus, in his groundbreaking analysis of nonprofit organizations in the early 1980s, sociologist Ralph Kramer identified advocacy, or change agency, as "a unique organizational competence of the voluntary agency."<sup>3</sup> More recently Michael O'Neill pointed to the advocacy function as "the ultimate defining characteristic of the nonprofit sector."<sup>4</sup>

This stress on the advocacy function of nonprofit organizations reflects a belief in the contribution this function is thought to make to the maintenance of democracy. "The very idea of a government, republican in form," the Supreme Court pointed out in 1876, "implies the right on the part of its citizens to meet peaceably for consultation in respect to public affairs and to petition for redress of grievances."<sup>5</sup> Although early American political thinkers warned against the "evils of faction" and, at least by implication, of the voluntary groups through which factions worked, the twentieth century encounters with totalitarianism

produced a new-found faith in the centrality of intermediary institutions as protectors of democratic life. To preserve democratic control, William Kornhauser has thus written, a “wide variety of independent, limited function organizations” is needed, both to prevent the atomization of the masses and to protect elites from mass dominance.<sup>6</sup> Peter Berger and Richard John Neuhaus are even more insistent on this point, identifying nonprofit organizations and other “mediating structures” as “essential for a vital democratic society.”<sup>7</sup>

## The Problem

Despite the importance attached to the advocacy function of nonprofit organizations, precious little is known in solid empirical terms about the extent to which nonprofit organizations actually perform this function. To be sure, the massive proliferation of tax-exempt status and professional associations in the American political process has been well-documented.<sup>8</sup> So, too, professional associations in the American political process have played in the major social movements that have animated the past three decades of American life—the civil rights movement, the women’s movement, the environmental movement, the consumer movement, and the anti-abortion movement. These developments led to the emergence of a veritable nonprofit public-interest “industry” in the 1960s and 1970s which regularly investigates social and environmental problems, issues reports, organizes mass demonstrations, testifies before Congress, and generally stimulates action on a broad range of public issues.<sup>9</sup> Given the visibility of these activities, and the stress that is placed on the centrality of the advocacy function nonprofits are supposed to perform, it is understandable how one prominent textbook could maintain that “virtually all types of nonprofits engage to some extent in lobbying and public information campaigns.”<sup>10</sup>

But how extensively do nonprofit organizations really engage in advocacy? In his study of 20 agencies serving the handicapped in the U.S. in the early 1970s, for example, Ralph Kramer found that only 8 engaged in advocacy activities.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, after examining the listings of 1,250 private social welfare agencies in local social service directories in 12 U.S. counties, Sosin concluded that only 11 percent participate in advocacy.<sup>12</sup> Even the apparent prevalence of recent research, for example, indicated that as of the early 1980s only 4 percent of all organizations with a Washington presence represented consumer, environmental, single-cause, or other similar citizen constituencies.<sup>13</sup> Could it be that our assumptions about the importance of the advocacy function among nonprofits is leading us to exaggerate the extent to which organizations actually engage in this activity? To the extent this is so, moreover, what would it suggest about the theoretical perspectives through which we interpret and understand this sector?

## Approach

To answer these questions, we included questions on advocacy in a survey we conducted of 3,400 nonprofit public-benefit organizations other than hospitals and higher education institutions in sixteen communities scattered widely across the United States in the early 1980s. Two types of questions were directed to agencies to elicit their involvement in advocacy activity: first, responding agencies were asked if they engaged in either or both of two varieties of advocacy activity—“advocacy for particular client groups” and “advocacy for political legislative issues”; second, responding agencies were asked to indicate what share of their

expenditures they devoted to “legal services or advocacy” as one of nine functional areas of activity.

To be sure, these measures did not make it possible to delve into particular forms of advocacy activity (e.g., direct action, grassroots education, publicity, letter-writing campaigns) or to differentiate advocacy for basic social change from advocacy for increased expenditures on programs that benefit an agency. Since the measures involved self-identification, moreover, it is possible that some distortion may have resulted. However, given the stress placed on the importance of the advocacy function, it is likely that this distortion would be in the direction of *overstating* rather than *understating* the advocacy activity that occurs. By including separate questions on the extent of advocacy activity and the extent of resources devoted to advocacy, it should be possible to tap the advocacy behavior even of agencies with limited paid staff involvement, which is particularly important given the voluntary nature of much advocacy activity. For all of these reasons, the data resulting from our survey provide a reasonable first approximation of the extent of advocacy involvement on the part of a broad cross-section of nonprofit public-interest organizations. What is more, the fact that we embraced within our survey sample not only 501 (c)(3) organizations, but also the more specialized 501 (c)(4) organizations that concentrate on lobbying, gives us added confidence in the completeness of the results.

In the discussion that follows, I look first at what our survey shows about the actual extent of advocacy activity on the part of nonprofit public-benefit agencies in our target communities. With this as backdrop, I then examine in Section II a number of possible explanations of the patterns of nonprofit advocacy activity that are apparent. Section III then tests these theories against the data in our survey. In the concluding section, finally, I outline some of the major implications that seem to flow from the results.

## **The Nature and Extent of Nonprofit Advocacy Activity**

Broadly conceived, advocacy is the “active espousal of a position, a point of view, or a course of action.”<sup>14</sup> Applied to the nonprofit, public-benefit service organizations of concern to us here, the concept has a slightly narrower meaning. Instead of any espousal of a position, it refers more specifically to what Craig Jenkins has termed “any attempt to influence the decisions of any institutional elite on behalf of a collective interest.”<sup>15</sup> Two aspects of this definition are particularly noteworthy: first, the emphasis on private, not just governmental, institutions as the objects of advocacy activity; and second, the focus on “collective interest,” on benefits that, in Jeffrey Berry’s terms, “may be shared by all people, independent of their membership or support of a given group,”<sup>16</sup> rather than private benefits, as the principal goal of advocacy activity.

Advocacy thus differs from other service activity. Where service delivery involves the provision of divisible benefits to particular individuals, advocacy involves changing policies and thus the range or quantity of such benefits available to entire classes of individuals.<sup>17</sup> Because of this, advocacy is somewhat more difficult for organizations to support since those who benefit from it do so whether or not they belong to the organization or otherwise contribute to its operations.

## Legal Constraints on Nonprofit Advocacy

Advocacy also differs from other types of nonprofit service activity because of its treatment in law. Under U.S. tax law, public-benefit nonprofit organizations are prohibited from engaging in certain kinds of advocacy activity and limited in the extent to which they can engage in others. The prohibition applies to “political campaign activity,” which involves providing support or engaging in opposition to candidates running for public office.<sup>18</sup> Public-benefit nonprofit organizations are proscribed from taking part in such activity. The limitation also applies to “lobbying,” i.e., to efforts to influence the passage or defeat of particular pieces of legislation.<sup>19</sup> Public-benefit nonprofit organizations are permitted to engage in lobbying, but they risk losing their 501 (c)(3) status if they devote “a substantial part” of their activities to it. As interpreted by the Internal Revenue Service, “substantial part” has come to mean approximately 20 percent of an organization’s expenditures.

Underlying these legal restrictions is the belief that while advocacy is important to democracy, government should not subsidize it, even through favorable tax treatment. Otherwise, government could itself become party to the issues in dispute or be accused of supporting one candidate over another, particularly if one side has greater access to tax deductible gifts, and hence to the implicit tax subsidy such gifts involve. Beyond this, courts have interpreted the limitation on lobbying by charitable nonprofits as desirable to avoid the possible use of such organizations for selfish purposes on the part of individuals who donate to charities in order to secure support for causes in which they have personal financial interests.

While these provisions would seem to limit rather narrowly the range of advocacy activity in which nonprofit charitable organizations can engage and still retain their 501(c)(3) status, the limitations are actually far less confining than they might at first appear. “Lobbying” and “political campaign activity” turn out to be rather technical concepts. Thus, the prohibition on “political campaign activity” does not prevent nonprofit organizations from providing certain kinds of assistance to potential candidates prior to the start of campaigns, especially when such assistance is informational and is provided to other potential candidates as well. Similarly, and more importantly, the limitation on “lobbying” applies only to efforts designed directly to affect the outcome of specific pieces of legislation actively under consideration in the legislative process. It therefore does not apply to the following types of other “advocacy” activity:<sup>20</sup>

- Examining broad social, economic, or political problems;
- Communicating the results of nonpartisan research and analysis to government officials;
- Providing advice to legislators in response to written legislative requests;
- Taking actions to influence decisions that might affect the existence of a nonprofit organization or its power or duties;
- Communicating with an organization’s members about pending legislation, unless the communication urges members to influence the outcome of a legislative vote; or
- Routine communication with government officials.

Nonprofit organizations are thus permitted, without limit, to call attention to overlooked public problems, to engage in grassroots lobbying to generate public interest in these problems, to communicate their concerns to elected officials, and to report to their members on efforts to

generate governmental responses to these problems. It is only when the action moves into the legislative arena and focuses on particular pieces of legislation that the limitations identified above come into effect, and even then they do not prohibit nonprofit involvement, only limit its relative extent. What is more, the limitations only apply to so-called “charitable” nonprofits, i.e. those organized under Section 501 (c)(3) of the tax code. For organizations willing to forego the deductibility of contributions that is the distinguishing feature of the 501 (c)(3) category, even this limitation does not apply and such organizations can qualify for tax exemption under Section 501 (c)(4) of the tax code.<sup>21</sup> In other words, advocacy embraces a wide range of possible activities related to the espousal of a point of view or course of action, and only a very narrow band of these activities is subject to any serious legal limitation. Nevertheless, many nonprofits are unaware of exactly where the line between the permissible and impermissible lies.

### The Extent of Nonprofit Advocacy

Whether for this or for other reasons, advocacy activity among nonprofit public-benefit organizations, as reflected in our survey, turns out to be far less extensive than is commonly assumed. Thus, as shown in Table 1, only 16 percent of all agencies indicated any expenditures on advocacy activity, and for half of these the expenditures were 10 percent or less of total agency spending, well below the 20 percent cutoff for explicit legislative lobbying alone. This is so, moreover, despite the fact that our survey grouped advocacy together with legal services, which means that these data probably *overstate* the extent of advocacy effort that really exists.

**Table 1**  
**Extent of Advocacy Activity by Nonprofit Human Service and Arts Organizations**

<u>Measures</u>	<u>Percent of Agencies</u> (N=3332)
Any expenditures on advocacy	16.0
Advocacy for particular client group	15.2
Advocacy for political/legislative issues	10.4
Advocacy for clients <u>or</u> political/legislative issues	18.0

Source: Salamon Round 1 Nonprofit Survey

That this general picture is not distorted by focusing exclusively on expenditures as a measure of advocacy activity is evident in the additional data provided in Table 1. What these data show is that even when the definition of advocacy is relaxed to embrace purely volunteer activity and not simply activity involving expenditures, fewer than 20 percent of the agencies indicated that they engage in such activity either on behalf of particular client groups or on behalf of a political or legislative issue. Indeed, the proportion that engages in *any* advocacy activity is roughly equivalent to the share that makes expenditures on advocacy.

While the overall level of advocacy activity is considerably lower than classical images of the sector might suggest, this general picture also obscures some important variations among types of agencies. Thus, as Table 2 shows, “multiservice” organizations are proportionally twice as likely to engage in advocacy activity as are public-benefit organizations generally, and arts and culture organizations are one-third as likely to do so.

**Table 2**  
**Extent of Advocacy Activity by Type of Nonprofit Agency**

Type of Agency	% of Agencies With Any Advocacy Activity
Legal Services/Advocacy	78.5
Multiservice	31.0
Housing	22.2
Employment and Training	18.3
Mental Health	17.2
Social Services	16.7
Institutional, residential care	13.7
Education, research	12.5
Health	10.0
Arts, culture	4.9
<b>ALL</b>	<b>18.0</b>

While some of these disparities are understandable (e.g., arts organizations have much less to do with public policy than housing agencies) others are harder to explain (e.g., the limited advocacy activity of health-oriented nonprofits). How, then, can we explain these variations? More generally, what clues can these variations offer about the limited extent of nonprofit advocacy overall?

To answer these questions, it is helpful to identify some of the factors that existing theories suggest might be involved. We can then test these theories against the available evidence to determine what help they can provide us in interpreting the data from our survey.

### **Theoretical Perspectives**

Broadly speaking, four sets of theories are available to help explain the presence or absence of advocacy activity on the part of nonprofit, public-benefit service organizations. Each of these theories identifies a set of factors that may incline nonprofits to engage or not engage in



advocacy activity, or explains why a factor considered by one theory to be negatively related to advocacy might have a positive relationship instead.

- **The Paradigm of Conflict.** The first of these theories is the paradigm of conflict, which has dominated thinking about the nonprofit sector for much of the past century. Rooted in conservative hostility to the rise of the modern state, but reinforced by the prevailing market failure/government failure theory of the nonprofit sector, which views nonprofit organizations principally as an alternative to the state in the provision of collective goods, this paradigm posits an inherent conflict between the state and the voluntary sector. The growth of the state, in this view, crowds out nonprofit activity and renders it functionally obsolete.<sup>22</sup> State action is viewed from this perspective as particularly hostile to nonprofit advocacy activity, as the state seeks to eliminate potential centers of resistance to its dominant position in society. As government expands its role as a funder of nonprofit activity, therefore, the advocacy role of the nonprofit sector will decline. As the leading textbook in the field puts it: “Government has not been eager to fund some of its sharpest critics.”<sup>23</sup> According to this line of theory, the limited advocacy involvement of nonprofit organizations can be traced to the growth of government funding of nonprofit activity. This is, in fact, perhaps the dominant theoretical perspective on nonprofit advocacy in the United States. As Ralph Kramer has noted: “The dangers of co-optation of voluntary agencies and inhibition of their advocacy because of financial reliance on government” has been “a recurrent theme in the United States”.<sup>24</sup>
- **Organization Theory.** A second potential explanation of the prevailing patterns of advocacy activity on the part of nonprofit public-service agencies focuses not on the source of agency income but on a variety of broader organizational features. According to these theories, organizations have their own maintenance and enhancement needs that come to dominate organizational behavior as the organization grows and matures. In this view, agencies have significant latitude in how they define their relationship with their external environment and they choose the one that is most comfortable for the agency staff and most consistent with the long-term needs of the organization, even when this is not optimal from the perspective of an immediate target population.<sup>25</sup> In the process, goal displacement occurs as the maintenance needs of the organization and the professional demands of its personnel come to take priority over the basic needs of the organization’s clientele.<sup>26</sup> Because of the collective nature of nonprofit advocacy gains, the fact that they are available to those who do not belong to an organization as well as to those who do, advocacy is not terribly supportive of organizational survival and growth. To the contrary, by endangering important sources of financial support and the professional respectability of agency cadre, advocacy can do actual harm. Thus, some analysts have argued that the professionalization of social work in the 1940s and 1950s led many social work agencies to adopt an essentially medicalized pattern of task accomplishment featuring individualized “case work” and to turn away from social change advocacy aimed at the broader social conditions that helped to create poverty and disadvantage in the first place. As one student of the field has put it:

The influence of psychiatry became so pervasive that much of the family service casework became almost exclusively a verbal therapeutic process focusing on intrapsychic factors and interpersonal relationship aspects of individuals...Social advocacy for improvement of the social environment...became much less prominent than it had been in the early days of the movement.<sup>27</sup>

According to this line of theory, therefore, advocacy is at base a volunteer sport that is most likely to take place when agencies are young and volunteer-based. By contrast, as agencies become larger, older, and more professionalized, they will lose their commitment to advocacy.<sup>28</sup> Given this theory, we would expect that the larger, older, and more professionalized the agency, the less likely it will be to engage in advocacy.<sup>29</sup>

- **Resource Mobilization Theory.** A far different conception of the relationship between organizational development and advocacy is evident in a third body of theory known as “resource mobilization theory.” According to this line of argument, advocacy cannot easily be sustained by spontaneous volunteer activity alone. Rather, offices must be set up, press releases prepared, communications links established, and credible information gathered in order to have the influence desired. As a consequence, resources must be mobilized. In this view, social problems are present at all times in virtually all societies. What keeps such problems from being translated into advocacy action is the absence of the human, financial, and organizational resources that effective advocacy requires, particularly in a highly developed society.<sup>30</sup> The availability or unavailability of outside patronage thus significantly determines the extent of advocacy action.<sup>31</sup> So, too, the presence of existing organizational structures, far from impeding advocacy action, can significantly advance it. Under this “resource mobilization theory,” organizational age, resources, and professionalism, far from limiting advocacy action, may actually foster it.
- **Paradigm of Partnership.** The fourth body of theory picks up this insight from resource mobilization theory but adds to it the observation that in a context where private interests may have reasons to shy away from providing the needed patronage for advocacy, such patronage may come, paradoxically enough, from the state. According to the paradigm of partnership conception, the relationship between government and the nonprofit sector is not inherently conflictual, as portrayed in the paradigm of conflict. Rather, these two sets of institutions are highly complementary, creating important potential for cooperation instead.<sup>32</sup> Instead of the all-powerful bureaucratic monolith pictured in the paradigm of conflict, the state as perceived in the paradigm of partnership is highly fragmented, with disparate agencies forced to identify their own sources of outside support to sustain their activities. Thanks to their community roots, nonprofit organizations are often in an excellent position to generate such support and thus help favored agencies in their competition for responsibility and resources. What is more, given their public-benefit orientation, nonprofit organizations may have more in common substantively and programmatically with governmental agencies than with some of the available sources of private charitable support. This is particularly true given the fact that public-interest advocacy often embraces efforts to influence private and not just governmental elites on behalf of various policy outcomes. At the same time, nonprofits need government because of government’s superior ability to raise revenue for the public-benefit purposes that these two sectors often share. Paradoxically, this line of thinking would lead us to expect a higher level of advocacy activity among agencies with a higher level of government funding, and much more constrained ability to engage in advocacy activity on the part of agencies restricted to private sources of support.

## Assessing the Alternative Theories

To what extent do these alternative explanations find support in the data we have assembled on nonprofit human service and arts organizations? Because of limitations of the basic data and the inherent difficulty of translating some of the central concepts into operational form, it is not possible to answer this question definitively. As noted above, for example, our measure of advocacy does not fully capture the rich texturing of alternative styles and forms that this activity can take, nor is it easy to measure empirically in a broad cross-sectional sample a concept as elusive as the degree of professionalization of an agency. Nevertheless, despite these limitations, our data do make it possible to shed at least some potentially useful light on the extent to which these alternative theories account for the variations in advocacy activity we have observed.

To carry out such an analysis, we use as our dependent variables the two measures of advocacy activity described above: first, whether an agency engages in advocacy activity at all, either for particular clientele or for particular causes; and second, the share of agency expenditures going into this advocacy activity.

So far as the *independent variables* are concerned, the revenue variables can be measured fairly straightforwardly in terms of agency income coming from these various sources. In particular:

- **Government revenue** includes all revenue from public agencies, whether federal, state, or local, and whether in the form of grants, contracts, or third-party payments;
- **Private philanthropy** includes gifts and grants from individuals, corporations, foundations, and federated funding organizations;
- **Fees and charges** include income from the sale of agency services and other business income.

Converting the organizational variables into operational form was a bit more complicated. Broadly speaking, we developed several indicators of agency bureaucratization:

- **Agency size**, which was measured in terms of both expenditures and employment;
- **Agency age**, which was measured from the year of formation;
- **Professionalization**, which was measured in two ways: first, as the ratio of volunteers to paid staff in the agency; and second, in terms of the proportion of agency expenditures going into service activities that are generally regarded as more “professionalized” (i.e. health care, institutional care, social services, and arts and culture).

Table 3 summarizes these variables and the relationships that the various theories posit between them and the advocacy behavior of nonprofit public-benefit organizations. Thus, both the paradigm of conflict and the paradigm of partnership identify the source of income as important to the advocacy behavior of nonprofit organizations. However, the conflict theory

posits a positive relationship between advocacy activity and the various sources of private giving, but a negative relationship between advocacy and the percent of income coming from government. By contrast, the partnership theory posits a positive relationship between advocacy and government support and a negative one between advocacy and at least certain types of private giving, especially the extent of reliance on corporate support.

The organization theory and resource mobilization theory both view the level of bureaucratization as important to the advocacy involvement of nonprofit organizations. However, where organization theory views age, size, and degree of professionalization as negatively related to advocacy, resource mobilization theory views them as positively related. Generally speaking, moreover, the conflict theory agrees with the organization theory perspective and the partnership theory with the resource mobilization perspective.

**Table 3**  
**Factors Thought to Influence Nonprofit Advocacy Activity**

Dimension Factor	Hypothesized Relationship to Nonprofit Advocacy Under:			
	Conflict Theory	Organization Theory	Resource Mobilization Theory	Partnership Theory
<b>FUNDING SOURCE</b>				
Government	-			+
Philanthropy	+			-
Fees, charges	-			-
<b>BUREAUCRATIZATION</b>				
Size (expenditures)	-	-	+	+
Size (employees)	-	-	+	+
Age				
Volunteer/staff ratio	+	+	-	-
Professionalization	-	-	+	+
<b>CLIENTELE</b>				
% Poor	+	+	+	+

To test these relationships, we proceed in two basic steps: first, we examine the source of support and organizational variables individually, using basic cross-tabulation and correlation analysis; then, because a number of the variables are interrelated, we use regression and analysis to sort out the independent effect of each while holding the others constant.

### Source of Support

As noted earlier, Zald and McCarthy, Jenkins and others have emphasized the important role that financial support plays in creating the opportunity for nonprofit organizations to engage in advocacy activity.<sup>33</sup> Such resources are needed in order to support the “infrastructure” that effective advocacy increasingly requires in a modern society.<sup>34</sup>

Both the paradigm of conflict and the paradigm of partnership theories identified above build on this insight, though in rather different ways. According to the paradigm of conflict, nonprofit

involvement in advocacy is critically related to the availability of private, charitable support since organizations that come to depend on government support are likely to be co-opted and diverted from their advocacy mission. To the extent that nonprofit organizations become dependent on government support, therefore, their active engagement in advocacy will decline. According to the paradigm of partnership theory, by contrast, dependence on private sources of support can be every bit as confining for nonprofit organizations as dependence on government support, and possibly more so, since private-sector organizations are as often the targets of nonprofit advocacy as government agencies. What is more, there are important reasons for cooperation between the voluntary sector and portions of the state in support of public service objectives that both share. Instead of a conflictual relationship between government and the nonprofit sector, therefore, this body of theory suggests the existence of a cooperative one instead. According to this line of thought, therefore, the extent of advocacy activity is likely to *increase*, not decrease, with higher levels of government support.

As reflected in Table 4, both of these theories find some support in the data, though the paradigm of partnership notion gains a clear edge. Thus, as Table 4 shows, the proportion of agencies engaging in advocacy does not decline as reliance on government support increases, as the conflict paradigm would suggest; rather, it increases. Thus, 21 percent of the agencies with most of their support from government report some advocacy activity compared to only 14 percent for agencies with little or no reliance on government support. This is virtually identical to the relationship that holds for the levels of private philanthropic support. Far from reducing nonprofit advocacy, in other words, government support seems as likely to stimulate it as private philanthropy.

**Table 4**  
**Relationship between Source of Funding and Nonprofit Advocacy**

Percent of Revenue from Source	% of Agencies with Any Advocacy Expenditures
<b>GOVERNMENT</b>	
Little (0-20%)	14.1
Some (21-50%)	21.3
Most (51% +)	20.7
<b>PRIVATE GIVING</b>	
Little (0-20%)	14.5
Some (21-50%)	16.9
Most (51% +)	21.4
<b>ALL AGENCIES</b>	<b>16.0</b>

These relationships between funding sources and advocacy activity can be seen even more clearly in Table 5, which records the correlation between the share of agency income coming from each of the various income sources measured in our survey and the share of agency expenditures devoted to advocacy.<sup>35</sup> As this table shows, the correlation between advocacy activity and the government share of nonprofit income is positive and statistically significant at the .01 level, exactly as the paradigm-of-partnership theory posited, but contrary to what the paradigm of conflict theory would predict. At the same time, however, a statistically significant positive relationship also holds between advocacy activity and the share of agency income coming from private giving. As Table 5 also shows, however, not all the components of private

giving operate in this fashion. As it turns out, the positive relationship between private giving and nonprofit advocacy is largely the result of the performance of three sources of private giving—United Way, foundations, and religious federations. All three of these are positively related to advocacy involvement at a statistically significant level, though in the case of religious federation support the relationship appears somewhat weaker. However, these three sources together account for only about 10 percent of nonprofit human service and arts organization income. By contrast, no statistically significant relationship exists between advocacy and the other sources of private giving. Survey responses to an opinion question about the likelihood of receiving corporate support lend credence to the notion that such support may be significantly less conducive to advocacy involvement than government support. In particular, agencies that indicated that corporations in their area do not support organizations such as theirs were considerably more likely to be engaged in advocacy activity and to devote resources to it than were agencies that reported limited access to corporate support.<sup>36</sup>

**Table 5**  
**Correlation between Funding Source and Advocacy Expenditures**

Income Source	Correlation with Share of Agency Income Spent on Advocacy
GOVERNMENT	.0627**
PRIVATE GIVING	.0763**
United Way	.0927**
Foundations	.0592**
Direct Individual	.0056
Corporations	.0071
Religious Federations	.0458*
Other Federated Giving	-.0136
DUES, FEES	-.1391**

\* significant at the .05 level

\*\* significant at the .01 level

The findings reported here seem to offer support as well to the resource mobilization school of thought about the determinants of advocacy activity among nonprofit organizations. The availability of at least certain types of financial support seems to be positively related to nonprofit involvement in advocacy, suggesting that advocacy is not simply a function of pre-existing grievances but also of the availability of resources to act on these grievances. At the same time, these findings cast significant doubt on the negative relationship between government and nonprofit advocacy posited in the paradigm of conflict theory. Rather, government support appears to be one of the major sources of resources that help to encourage nonprofit advocacy, as suggested by the paradigm of partnership theory. What is more, the data also seem to lend credence to the suggestion in the paradigm-of-partnership theory that private support is not automatically associated with greater advocacy activity on the part of nonprofit organizations. Certain types of private giving do seem to contribute significantly to advocacy activity, but others do not. Especially significant in this regard is the lack of a statistically significant relationship between individual giving—the largest component of private giving—and advocacy activity. Evidently, the rise of nonprofit advocacy during the 1960s and 1970s was, to a significant extent, fueled by the growth in availability of government and foundation support. Of the two, moreover, the former was undoubtedly the more substantial. Although foundation giving to nonprofit advocacy organizations grew significantly during the 1960s, it never exceeded 7/10 of 1 percent of all foundation giving at its peak in 1971, and it declined after that

in real dollar terms.<sup>37</sup> By contrast, a considerable infrastructure of government programs emerged in the 1960s and into the 1970s that provided crucial support for nonprofit advocacy. This included direct programs such as the Community Actions Programs of the Office of Economic Opportunity, the Model Cities program, Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), and the legal services program. As McCarthy and Zald point out: "These programs provided the financial resources to support large staffs for social movement organizations at the local level."<sup>38</sup> Beyond this, "citizen participation" requirements built into other government programs helped to stimulate citizen mobilization while purchase-of-service arrangements and grants to nonprofit service organizations could be used in part to sustain advocacy-oriented staff.<sup>39</sup>

## **Bureaucratization and Professionalization**

If external sponsorship helps determine the extent to which nonprofit organizations can engage in advocacy activities, such external influences are mediated through a variety of internal agency features that help shape the extent to which agency cadre take advantage of the opportunities that exist. Given the strains that advocacy can often create within the broader support systems on which nonprofit organizations depend, the organization theories reviewed above suggest that as agencies grow in size and age and become more professionalized and bureaucratized, they are likely to shy away from advocacy activity and settle into an almost exclusively service-providing role more likely to ensure organizational survival. This line of thinking would lead us to expect that the larger and more mature and agency, and the more professionalized, the less likely it will be to engage in advocacy activity. By contrast, as we have seen, resource mobilization theorists argue that it is precisely the absence of resources of personnel and finances that limits nonprofit ability to engage in advocacy.

- **Size.** As a first step in assessing the impact of bureaucratization and professionalization on advocacy behavior, Table 6 reports on the relationship between agency advocacy involvement and agency size, which is one measure of degree of bureaucratization. Surprisingly, as this table shows, small agencies do not turn out to be more likely than medium or large agencies to engage in advocacy activity, as the organization theory view would suggest. To the contrary, they seem *less* likely. Thus 21 percent of the medium and large organizations report some advocacy activity vs. 17 percent of the small agencies. Evidently, the romantic view that advocacy activity is the peculiar preserve of small, grassroots organizations and that agencies lose their ardor for advocacy as they grow in size and become more preoccupied with organizational maintenance fails to find support in the data we have assembled. One possible explanation for this, suggested by the resource mobilization theory, is that whatever greater incentive smaller agencies may have to involve themselves in advocacy is counterbalanced by the significant resources that effective advocacy requires.

**Table 6**  
**Relationship between Nonprofit Advocacy and Agency Size and Age**

	% of Agencies with Any Advocacy Activity
<u>Agency Size (n=2713)</u>	
Small	17
Medium	21
Large	21
<u>Agency Age (n=3389)</u>	
Pre-1931	16
1931-1960	16
1961-1970	19
1971+	18

- Age.** A similar conclusion emerges, moreover, with respect to agency age. As Table 6 also indicates, there is some tendency for younger agencies to be more heavily engaged in advocacy activity, but the tendency is slight. Thus, 15.6 percent of the agencies formed prior to 1931 reported some advocacy activity compared to 18 percent of the agencies formed since 1971. Far from an endorsement of the organization theory perspective, the data on agency age and advocacy in Table 6 provide more support for the paradigm of partnership theory than the organizational theories. This is so because of the non-linear relationship this table reveals between agency age and advocacy. In particular, agencies formed in the 1960s seem to have greater advocacy involvement than those formed either prior to the 1960s or afterward. One plausible explanation of this pattern may be that the apparent growth of advocacy activity among younger nonprofit organizations, particularly those formed in the 1960s, may have more to do with shifts in government policy during this period that made public resources available to support nonprofit advocacy than the maturation and bureaucratization effected posited in the organizational theories.

Supporting this interpretation is the experience of the traditional family-service agencies during the 1960s. Created for the most part in the early part of this century, these agencies apparently lost much of their earlier social reform orientation during the 1940s and 1950s, as the organization theories would predict, and came to focus heavily on individual casework instead. Under the influence of the War on Poverty and the Great Society legislation of the 1960s a shift took place in the orientation of these agencies.<sup>40</sup> In a historic communication sent to all member agencies in 1969, the trade association representing the family service agencies, Family Services Association of America, called on member agencies to revitalize their traditional role as advocates for social reform and to devote professional talent to this function. This was formalized at a 1975 national conference that identified “family advocacy” as one of the three defining activities of a family service agency. By 1977, a significant increase had occurred in the number of family service agencies that reported providing advocacy services and in the number of staff devoted to this function. In short, a change in government policy helped to break the connection between agency age and the erosion of the advocacy function of this set of organizations. This may help to explain the limited connection between agency age and involvement in advocacy activity reported in Table 6. In fact, when we disaggregate the agencies primarily involved in the provision of social services to differentiate the family services agencies from those engaged in the provision of day care or other social services, it turns out that



the more professionalized family services agencies have a *higher* level of involvement in advocacy activity than social service agencies more generally.<sup>41</sup>

- **Volunteer vs. professional staff.** While agency size and age provide some measure of bureaucratization and professionalization, a more direct measure is also available in the ratio of volunteer to paid staff in an agency. A central tenet of the organizational theory view of agency advocacy is that organizational maintenance and enhancement needs to gain the upper hand and drive out advocacy activities as agencies come to depend more heavily on paid, professional staff who seek definitions of their jobs that emphasize specialized professional skills, and who must be supported and maintained. What is more, effective advocacy often requires an active constituency of interested members and supporters who can be mobilized for advocacy action.<sup>42</sup> For both of these reasons, the active involvement of volunteers in the operation of an agency should help to preserve an active advocacy function.

To assess this line of argument, we computed the ratio of volunteer to paid staff in our surveyed agencies and then related this to the likelihood of agency involvement in advocacy activity. The results, reported in Table 7, do appear to support the view that a greater proportion of the voluntary activity is associated with higher levels of advocacy involvement. Thus, 18-19 percent of the agencies with a medium or high ratio of volunteer to paid staff engage in advocacy activity vs. only 7 percent of those with a low volunteer ratio.

**Table 7**  
**Relationship Between Nonprofit Advocacy**  
**and Agency Professionalization**

	% of Agencies with Advocacy Activity
<u>Volunteer/Staff Ratio</u>	
Low	7
Medium	18
High	19
<u>Professionalization*</u>	
High	12
Low	32

\*Percent of expenditures in any of the following service fields: health, institutional care, residential care, education, social services, and culture.

- **Service focus.** A more direct measure of agency professionalization is the service field in which the agency is involved. As we noted earlier, some types of services have become inherently more professionalized than others. While there are non-professional occupations even in the more professionalized fields, (e.g., orderlies in the field of medical care), it seems reasonable that the share of an agency's expenditures that are devoted to the more professionalized fields is a reasonable measure of the agency's degree of professionalization. Given the organization theory arguments presented earlier, moreover, we would expect, other things being equal, that the greater the degree of professionalization the less extensive the involvement in advocacy activity.

As it turns out, this expectation finds considerable support in the data. Thus, as shown in Table 7, among agencies that devote a relatively high share of their total expenditures to the more professionalized services, only 12 percent report any advocacy activity. By contrast,

among the agencies with relatively low expenditures on these professionalized services, a much higher 32 percent reported some advocacy activity.

- **Correlation results.** The relationships between agency advocacy and the various measures of agency bureaucratization and professionalization detailed above can be seen even more clearly when we look at the results of a correlation analysis rather than simple cross-tabulations. Thus, as shown in Table 8, three of the five bureaucratization-professionalization variables we have identified (agency, age, the volunteer/staff ratio, and the share of expenditures going to more “professionalized” services) turn out to be significantly related to advocacy performance in the direction predicted by the organization theory view. Thus, advocacy expenditures increase as the year of formation of the agency and the ratio of volunteers to paid staff increases. By contrast, advocacy expenditures decline as the share of professional services in the agency’s service structure increases, precisely as organization theory would predict.

While these findings lend considerable credence to the organization theory view of the causes of nonprofit advocacy, or lack of advocacy, however, several caveats must be entered:

- In the first place, perhaps the most basic measure of bureaucratization—agency size—does not seem to be related significantly to advocacy. The expected decline of advocacy involvement as size increases does not seem to occur. This suggests that the insight offered by resource mobilization theory about the need for a minimum level of resources in order to be able to support advocacy effectively may have some empirical basis.
- In the second place, as we have seen, the relationship between age and advocacy may be more complicated than simple correlation analysis can detect. Instead of a linear relationship, what seems to exist in fact is a curvilinear one, with advocacy activity fairly uniform for all age categories except that of the 1960s. What made the 1960s so special, however, were not the dynamics suggested by organization theory, but those suggested by the paradigm-of-partnership. In particular, it was not the absence of bureaucratization but the presence of specialized governmental support programs that may account for the relatively high level of advocacy activity on the part of nonprofit agencies formed during the 1960s. To the extent this is so, the positive correlation here must be read not as support for the organization theory view, but for the paradigm of partnership view.
- In the third place, the negative relationship between professionalization and advocacy recorded in Table 8 does not hold across the board. To the contrary, of the five service fields thought to be more professionalized, only three (health, arts, and institutional care) have a statistically significant negative relationship with advocacy expenditures.<sup>43</sup> For the other two fields, the relationship is either nonexistent (social services) or strongly positive (education). At the other end of the spectrum, a statistically significant positive relationship does seem to exist between advocacy involvement and the extent of agency involvement in the least professionalized service field (housing). But this also happens to be a field where government funding expanded dramatically during the 1960s and 1970s. It is therefore possible that the

results attributed to the degree of professionalization here are really a product of the availability of government funding, as the paradigm of partnership argument would suggest. This interpretation is also consistent with the discussion of the advocacy behavior of the old-line social service agencies above, which indicated that a similar dynamic may have been at work there.

**Table 8**  
**Relationship between Degree of Bureaucratization and Extent of Advocacy Expenditures for Nonprofit Human Service Agencies**

Variable	Correlation Coefficient
Expenditures	-.0192
Employment	-.0260
Age	.0581**
Volunteer/staff ratio	.0376*
% Professional services	-.2547**
Health	-.0670**
Institutional Care	-.0747**
Education	.0813**
Culture, arts	-.1634**
Social services	.0030
Mental health/crisis intervention	-.0073
Employment and training	.0132
Housing	.0572**

\* significant at the .05 level

\*\* significant at the .01 level

How then, can we interpret these results? The answer, it seems, is that professionalization does seem to work in the direction that the organization theories would suggest, to reduce the propensity of nonprofit organizations to engage in advocacy activity. However, this effect can be mediated by external influences, such as the provision of their advocacy roots. In both respects, public policy supportive of advocacy activity can be decisive in overcoming organizational dynamics and freeing nonprofit organizations to be true to their basic character.

### Putting It All Together: The Regression Results

Before we rest content with these conclusions, however, it is important to acknowledge that many of the variables we have been examining may be interrelated. This is the case, for example, with agency size and the extent of reliance on government support as well as agency size and type of service offered. Conceivably, therefore, a result we have attributed to a particular variable may really be a product of another variable with which it is closely interrelated.

To sort out these interacting effects, it is necessary to go beyond the simple correlations and cross-tabulations presented so far and utilize a multiple regression technique. Multiple regression makes it possible to test the relationship between two variables while holding constant the impact of a variety of potentially intervening variables. While such techniques cannot *prove*

cause and effect any more than correlations can, they can at least provide more assurance that a statistically significant relationship is truly at work.

Table 9 reports the results of such a multiple regression analysis for the nonprofit advocacy activity of concern to us here. The dependent variable in this analysis is the percent of nonprofit expenditures devoted to advocacy. The independent variables are the funding source of bureaucratization-professionalization variables that have been our focus throughout. In addition, we introduce a “clientele” variable to test the extent to which agencies have retained a focus on the poor. We hypothesize that agencies retaining such a focus will also be more likely to engage in advocacy activity.

As Table 9 shows, five of the eight variables that our models posit to be relevant to explaining the patterns of nonprofit advocacy activity do turn out to be significantly related to it, even after introducing controls for the other variables. Thus, nonprofit advocacy involvement turns out to be related positively to the levels of both government and private philanthropic support, to the proportion of poor people among an agency’s clientele, and to the ratio of volunteers to paid staff (though in the latter case, it is only at the .05 level of confidence). In addition, advocacy involvement is related negatively to the share of “professionalized” services an agency provides.

**Table 9**  
**Explaining Nonprofit Advocacy: Regression Results**

Independent Variables	Regression Coefficient
<b>FUNDING SOURCE</b>	
Government	+.1082**
Private Giving	+.1716**
<b>BUREAUCRATIZATION</b>	
Expenditures	.0130
Employees	-.0321
Age	.0028
Volunteer/Paid Staff Ratio	.0535
% Professional Services	-.1866**
<b>CLIENTELE</b>	
% Poor	-.0881**

\* significant at the .05 level

\*\* significant at the .01 level

How can we interpret these results? Broadly speaking, several conclusions seem to emerge:

- In the first place, the results seem to lend far more credence to the paradigm of partnership theory of nonprofit advocacy than they do to the paradigm of conflict theory. To be sure, a highly significant positive relationship does emerge between advocacy activity and private giving, even after controlling for the other variables in the model. However, the other variables in the paradigm of conflict model do not turn out to be significantly related to advocacy activity, or are related to it in a direction opposite to that predicted. Most importantly, the central relationship posited in this conflict model that between advocacy and government support turns out not only to

hold, but to operate in exactly the opposite direction from what the conflict model predicts. In particular, not only is there no statistically significant negative relationship between the extent of government funding and the extent of advocacy activity, as the conflict model posits, but there is actually a statistically significant *positive* relationship. While these results may not be sufficient to establish the validity of the alternative partnership model, they certainly challenge the fundamental premise of the conflict theory, at least so far as advocacy is concerned. Far from declining as government support increases, nonprofit advocacy activity *increases*, and this relationship holds even after controlling for other factors that might be polluting the results, such as the fact that agencies with government support also tend to be large.

- In the second place, the results offer only modest support for the organization theory model, to which the paradigm of conflict theory is also related. As reflected in Table 3, this model predicts a significant negative relationship between various measures of agency bureaucratization (age, size, extent of professionalism) and agency involvement in advocacy. As it turns out, however, no statistically significant relationship exists between advocacy and agency age or size once controls are introduced. This is more consistent with the resource mobilization theory than the organization theory view. Agencies do not seem to lose their advocacy edge as they grow in size and age. Although the “share of professionalized services” variable works as predicted in the organization theory model, moreover, this was so in only a few of the professional service fields. Elsewhere, as we have seen, intervening factors, including government support, seem to have gotten in the way. What is more, even the volunteer/paid staff ration variable is somewhat ambiguous. As it turns out, this variable is highly correlated with the size of an agency. In other words, the larger an agency, the more volunteers it seems able to handle. The independent impact of this variable is thus reduced once controls are introduced for agency size. To the extent this is so, it again provides some support for the resource mobilization theory.

## Conclusions

The findings reported here thus raise important challenges to a number of conventional beliefs about the advocacy behavior of nonprofit public-benefit agencies. As it turns out, such activity is far less widespread than widely assumed. Less than one in five agencies reported such involvement as of the early 1980s. While there are significant variations in levels of advocacy activity, these variations do not seem to correspond very well to the explanations posited in a number of the more prominent theories in the field. In particular, agency size, age, and professionalization do not seem as detrimental to agency advocacy activity as classical organization theory would suggest. Nor does government support undermine the advocacy role of nonprofit organizations as many have assumed. To the contrary, large and small agencies engage in advocacy in almost equal measure and the link between professionalization and advocacy holds only in certain fields. More strikingly, government support seems fare more

likely to stimulate nonprofit advocacy activity than to retard it, though the same can be said for private support as well.

To be sure, these findings must be considered tentative in view of the limitations on the measures of advocacy and of other critical dimensions of agency operations we have used. It is quite possible, after all, that the advocacy activity we are tapping is limited in scope and constrained in its objectives, focusing on expanding government funding of agency programs rather than broader social change. However, what constitutes “true” social change is itself open to debate. What is more, the large number of agencies through which we have been able to examine these relationships gives us some confidence that the results are generally correct. Beyond this, the results outlined here resonate extraordinarily well with other studies of nonprofit advocacy behavior. Thus, Zald and Ash have challenged the conventional “iron law of oligarchy” contention that agencies inevitably become more conservative and adverse to advocacy as they become more professionalized, pointing out that leaders of organizations are often more committed to social change than are their members.<sup>44</sup> Similarly, Ralph Kramer found in his study of nonprofit agencies serving the handicapped that reliance on public funds did not have the restraining effect on the agency advocacy that is widely assumed. To the contrary Kramer found that “[t]he U.S. agencies that receive the largest amount in public funds are among the most active advocates.”<sup>45</sup> Michael Sosin reached a similar conclusion in his study of agencies providing material assistance in the mid-1980s. If anything, Sosin found, agencies with government support are *more* likely to advocate.<sup>46</sup>

Taken together, the findings here thus give considerable support to the resource mobilization theory of social movements and nonprofit advocacy, and particularly to the paradigm-of-partnership variant of this theory suggested here. Although advocacy may be the “quintessential” function of the nonprofit sector, a surprisingly small proportion of agencies actually engage in it actively despite the resistance of quite significant problems that advocacy could help resolve. One important reason for this is that advocacy has significant costs. It requires professional staff, communications capabilities, information, and the capacity to bring people and information together in the right place at the right time. It thus inevitably competes with other functions that organizations may want to perform. Unlike these other functions, however, advocacy delivers its benefits to everyone rather than restricting them to the organization’s clients or members. This poses challenges to the organization in capturing the organizational benefits that successful advocacy might create (e.g., client gratitude or public recognition). Worse yet, advocacy can challenge important organizational constituencies and thus end up producing more harm than good, at least to the organization. Under these circumstances, what is most difficult to explain is not why so many nonprofit organizations refrain from advocacy activity as why significant numbers still engage in it.

From the evidence at hand, it appears that an important part of this explanation lies in the availability of resources that can support the advocacy function coupled with the presence of a moral and political commitment to keep this function alive. In part, this has been achieved through the creation of specialized advocacy agencies staffed by public-interest entrepreneurs, personnel professionally committed to advocacy activity. Also important, however has been the provision of resources to sustain such advocacy. As paradoxical as it may seem, one of the principal sources of such resources has been the public sector.

If those who celebrate nonprofit advocacy must consequently change their preconceptions about the spontaneous, grassroots character of this activity and its need for independence from the state, they can at least take some comfort in the suggestions that these data provide that the limited involvement of most nonprofit agencies in this critical function may not be as fixed a product of organizational maturation as is sometimes believed. Rather, it can be changed through effective leadership buttressed by specially targeted external resources. For this “quintessential” function of the nonprofit sector to be sustained, therefore, it is important that such leadership and resources be supplied.

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<sup>1</sup> Brian O’Connell, quoted in Ralph Kramer, *Voluntary Agencies in the Welfare State*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), p. 212.

<sup>2</sup> Commission on Private Philanthropy and Public Needs, *Giving in America*, (Washington: U.S. Department of the Treasury, 1975), p. 45.

<sup>3</sup> Ralph Kramer, *Voluntary Agencies in the Welfare State*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), p. 231.

<sup>4</sup> Michael O’Neill, *The Third America: The Emergence of the Nonprofit Sector in the United State*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1989), p. 120.

<sup>5</sup> *United States v. Cruikshank*, 92 U.S. 542, 552 (1876) quoted in Cayolyn C. Zollar, “Lobbying: What It Is and How to Do It,” in Bruce R. Hopkins, *Charity Advocacy and the Law* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1992), p. 101.

<sup>6</sup> William Kornhauser, *The Politics of Mass Society*, (New York: The Free Press, 1959), p. 33, 230.

<sup>7</sup> Peter Berger and Richard John Neuhaus, *To Empower People*, (Washington: The American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1975), p. 6.

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, Kay Lehman Schlozman and John T. Tierney, *Organized Interests and American Democracy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1986).

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, Jeffrey M. Berry, “Citizen Groups and the Changing Nature of Interest Groups in America,” *Annals of the American Academy*, No. 528, (July 1993), pp. 30-41; Jeffrey M. Berry, *Lobbying for the People; The Political Behavior of Public Interest Groups*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977); and J. Craig Jenkins, *The Politics of Insurgency* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985). For an interesting analysis of the impact of this public-interest movement on American politics more generally, see: Hugh Heclo, “Issue Networks and the Executive Establishment,” in Anthony King, ed., *The New American Political System*, (Washington: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1978), pp. 87-124.

<sup>10</sup> Michael O’Neill, *The Third America*, p. 113.

<sup>11</sup> Kramer, *Voluntary Agencies in the Welfare State*, pp. 220-221.

<sup>12</sup> Michael Sosin, *Private Benefits: Material Assistance in the Private Sector*, (Orlando, FL: Academic Press, 1986), pp. 150-151

<sup>13</sup> Kay Lehmann Schlozman and John T. Tierney, *Organized Interests and American Democracy*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1986) pp. 67-69.

<sup>14</sup> Bruce Hopkins, *Charity, Advocacy, and Law*. (New York: Wiley and Sons Inc., 1992), p. 32.

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<sup>15</sup> J. Craig Jenkins, "Nonprofit Organizations and Advocacy," in Walter W. Powell, ed., *The Nonprofit Sector: A Research Handbook*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), p. 297. Jenkins uses the term "public advocacy" to convey a more narrow meaning.

<sup>16</sup> Berry, *Lobbying for the People*, p. 8.

<sup>17</sup> Jenkins, "Nonprofit Organizations and Advocacy," p. 297.

<sup>18</sup> For a thorough discussion of the "political campaign activity" prohibition, see: Bruce R. Hopkins, *Charity, Advocacy, and the Law*, pp. 391-431.

<sup>19</sup> For a detailed statement of federal tax laws as they apply to lobbying by "charitable" organizations, see: Hopkins, *Charity, Advocacy, and the Law*, 1992, pp 130-235.

<sup>20</sup> Bruce R. Hopkins, *Charity, Advocacy, and the Law*, p. 170.

<sup>21</sup> Section 510 (c)(4) organizations are entities that share the same basic purposes as 501(c)(3) organizations, but are more heavily involved in "lobbying" activities. Such organizations retain their tax exemption but they are not eligible to receive tax-deductible gifts, i.e., gifts that donors can deduct from their own income when calculating tax liabilities.

<sup>22</sup> Robert Nisbet, *The Quest for Community* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953); Peter Berger and Richard John Neuhaus, *To Empower People* (Washington; American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Studies).

<sup>23</sup> O'Neill, *The Third America*, 1989, p. 113.

<sup>24</sup> R. Kramer, *Voluntary Agencies in the Welfare State*, p. 213.

<sup>25</sup> Amitai Etzioni, *Modern Organization*, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1984); Gregory C. Dess and Donald W. Beard, "Dimensions of Organizational Task Environments," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 29 (March 1984), pp. 52-73; Robert A. Scott, "The Selection of Clients by Social Welfare Agencies: The Case of the Blind" in Yeheskel Hasenfeld and Richard A. English, eds., *Human Service Organizations: A Book of Readings*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1974), pp. 485-498; James Q. Wilson, *Political Organizations*, (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

<sup>26</sup> See, for example: Amitai Etzioni, *Modern Organization*. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1984); Gregory C. Dess and Donald W. Beard. "Dimensions of Organizational Task Environments," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 29 (March 1984), pp. 52-73; Robert A. Scott, "The Selection of Clients by Social Welfare Agencies: The Case of the Blind," in Yeheskel Hasenfeld and Richard A. English, eds., *Human Service Organizations: A Book of Readings*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1974), pp. 485-498; James Q. Wilson, *Political Organizations*, (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

<sup>27</sup> Patrick Riley, "Family Services," in Neil Gilbert and Harry Sprech, eds., *Handbook of the Social Services*, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1981), pp. 85-86.

<sup>28</sup> This line of argument has figured prominently in the analysis of social service agencies, which surrendered much of their social change advocacy mission as the social work profession adopted an essentially medical form of task accomplishment featuring individualized "case work" instead of general advocacy for the poor. See: Roy Lubove, *The Professional Altruist: The Emergence of Social Work as a Career*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965); Cloward and Epstein, "Private Social Welfare's Disengagement from the Poor," 1965; Riley, "Family Services," pp. 85-86.

<sup>29</sup> Reflecting this, Theodore Lowi has charged that "[a]ll of the larger voluntary associations, as well as most of the smaller ones, have given up their spontaneity for a solid administrative core." Notes Lowi:

Life in the cities would be hard to imagine without the congeries of service and charitable agencies that systematically keep our streets clean of human flotsam and jetsam...All such groups naturally



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possess potential political power, but *only occasionally are they politicized. The rest of the time they administer.*

<sup>30</sup> John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory," and John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, "The Trend of Social Movements in America: Professionalization and Resource Mobilization," in Mayer N. Zald and John D. McCarthy, eds., *Social Movements in an Organizational Society: Collected Essays*. (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1987), pp. 15-42, 337-391.

<sup>31</sup> This is the central point that J. Craig Jenkins draws from an analysis of the existing literature on the causes of advocacy activity among nonprofits. See: J. Craig Jenkins, "Nonprofit Organizations and Policy Advocacy," in Walter W. Powell, ed., *The Nonprofit Sector: A Research Handbook*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), p. 299.

<sup>32</sup> For further explanations of this theory, see: Lester M. Salamon, "Of Market Failure, Government Failure, and Third-Party Government: Toward a Theory of Government Nonprofit Relations in the Modern Welfare State," *Journal of Voluntary Action Research* (January-June 1987), pp. 29-49; and Lester M. Salamon, *Partners in Public Service: Government-Nonprofit Relations in the Modern Welfare State*, (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995). This line of thinking finds support in the work of McCarthy and Zald, which documents the significant support that government has provided both directly and indirectly to social movement organizations. See McCarthy and Zald, "The Trend of Social Movements in America," pp. 360-1.

<sup>33</sup> Jenkins, "Nonprofit Organizations and Advocacy," p. 299; McCarthy and Zald, "The Trend of Social Movements in America," p. 337; Jack Walker, "The Origins and Maintenance Interest Groups in America," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 77, (1983), pp 390-406.

<sup>34</sup> McCarthy and Zald, "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements," pp. 18-25.

<sup>35</sup> A similar analysis was conducted of the correlation between income source and the other measure of advocacy—whether an agency engages in advocacy or not, regardless of whether it allocates money to the function. The results, however, were quite similar. Since this is a dichotomous variable, however, it seemed more appropriate to report the correlation results in relation to the continuous variable of advocacy expenditures.

<sup>36</sup> Thus, 25 percent of agencies that strongly agreed with the statement "Corporations in our area do not support organizations such as ours" engaged in advocacy activity, vs. 15 percent of the agencies that disagreed with this statement.

<sup>37</sup> Jenkins, "Nonprofit Organizations and Policy Advocacy," p. 313.

<sup>38</sup> McCarthy and Zald, "the Trend of Social Movements in America," 1986, p. 361.

<sup>39</sup> McCarthy and Zald make a similar point: "[W]henever the government funds a program with a staff likely to have strong commitments to social movement purposes, discretionary time and limited surveillance may lead to a situation in which government resources are diverted to social movement purposes." See McCarthy and Zald, "the Trend of Social Movements in America," p. 361.

<sup>40</sup> Riley, "Family Services," pp. 93-94.

<sup>41</sup> In particular, 23 percent of the agencies involved in family counseling devote expenditures to advocacy compared to only 4 percent of the dare care agencies and 16 percent of the other social service providers.

<sup>42</sup> Berry, *Lobbying for the People*, pp. 231-238.

<sup>43</sup> In calculating these correlations, the percent of expenditures in each service field was computed net of the expenditures on advocacy in order to avoid multi-collinearity problems.

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<sup>44</sup> Mayer N. Zald, and Robert Ash Garner, "Social Movement Organizations: Growth, Decay, and Change," in McCarthy and Zald, eds. *Social Movements in an Organizational Society*: (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1987), pp. 121-142.

<sup>45</sup> Kramer, *Voluntary Agencies in the Welfare State*, p. 229.

<sup>46</sup> Michael Sosin, *Private Benefits: Material Assistance in the Private Sector*, (Orlando, FL: Academic Press, 1986), p. 154.

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Sector: FY 1994*

*The Federal Budget and the Nonprofit  
Sector: FY 1993*

*The Federal Budget and the Nonprofit  
Sector: FY 1992*

# CENTER FOR CIVIL SOCIETY STUDIES

The **Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies** seeks to improve understanding and the effective functioning of not-for-profit, philanthropic, or “civil society” organizations in the United States and throughout the world in order to enhance the contribution these organizations can make to democracy and the quality of human life. The Center is part of the Johns Hopkins Institute for Policy Studies and carries out its work through a combination of research, training, and information-sharing both domestically and internationally.

- *The Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project* is systematically analyzing the scope, structure, financing, and impact of nonprofit activity in more than 40 countries throughout the world.
- *The UN Nonprofit Handbook Project* seeks to improve the visibility of the nonprofit sector in national economic statistics by promoting the global implementation of the United Nations Handbook on Nonprofit Institutions in the System of National Accounts.
- *The Listening Post Project* identifies key trends and challenges facing the U.S. nonprofit sector and the innovative strategies nonprofits have adopted in response.
- *The Nonprofit Employment Data Project* is a systematic effort to document and analyze employment in the private nonprofit sector in the U.S. both nationally and locally.
- *The New Governance Project* has developed a set of materials on the “tools of government” that can help students as well as equip nonprofit, government, and business leaders to operate the many new tools of public action such as grants, contracts, loan guarantees, and vouchers, which are now in widespread use.
- *The International Fellows in Philanthropy Program* provides research and study opportunities at the Johns Hopkins University for researchers in the nonprofit and philanthropic community throughout the world.



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