Why Membership?

Interest Group Associations as Policy Entrepreneurs in Israel

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אודות בית הספר ע"ש פדרמן למדיניות ציבורית וממשל

בית הספר ע"ש פדרמן למדיניות ציבורית וממשל הוקם בעקבות ההחלטה של האוניברסיטה העברית בירושלים להעמיד בראש סדר הקדימויות שלה בעשור הבא את פיתוחה של תכנית עילית שתכשיר את עתודת המנהיגות המקצועית של המגזר הציבורי ותתרום לטיפוחה כאליטה חברתית רחבת אופקים, אחראית ויוצרת. חוסנה של החברה הישראלית, עתידה הכלכלי ואופייה הדמוקרטי תלויים במידה רבה באיכות המקצועית ובמרמה המוסרית של הנבחרת המקצועית המופקדת על ניהול המגזר הציבורי.

ספינת הדגל של בית הספר ע"ש פדרמן למדיניות ציבורית וממשל להגשמת יעד זה היא תכנית המצטיינים לתואר "מוסמך במדיניות ציבורית". מטרת בית הספר היא לתרום להכשרה מקצועית של הסגל הבכיר במגזר הציבורי ולהעשרת הדיון הציבורי בממצאי מחקר, בתובנות וברעיונות לחידושי מדיניות.

סדרת המאמרים לדיון תהיה במה להצגת פרי עבודתם של חוקרי בית הספר, תלמידיו ובוגריו. המאמרים בסדרה יופצו לעיון חברי הקהילה האקדמית ולשותפים בעיצוב מדיניות ציבורית בישראל.

הסדרה הכתומה הנה במה לפרסום מאמרים של מוסמכי בית הספר ומלווה אותם בראשית דרכם כחוקרים. פרסומי הסדרה מאפשרים לציבור להתרשם ממגוון התחומים הנלמדים ונחקרים בבית הספר למדיניות ציבורית.

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על המחברת

גיני אושר היא תלמידת מחקר בבית הספר ע״ש פדרמן למדיניות ולממשל באוניברסיטה העברית. בעשור האחרון, עבדה כמארגנת קהילתית ופוליטית וכיועצת בעמותות בארצות הברית ובישראל. ב-1999, סיימה גיני את לימודי התואר הראשון במדעי החברה ב-Harvard University, וב-2007 סיימה את לימודי התואר השני במדיניות ציבורית באוניברסיטה העברית.

תקציר

על אף היירידה במעורבות הפוליטית המסורתית, אזרחים ישראלים מצהירים על אמון גובר ביכולתם להשפיע על המדיניות הציבורית. המחקר מאשר את ההשערה הכללית כי הפרדוקס הזה נפתר באופן חלקי כתוצאה מהפעילות המוגברת של ארגונים בחברה האזרחית. התרומה התיאורטית של המחקר היא בפיתוח מודל מושגי אשר מעלה שלוש השערות לבחירתם של ארגונים להשקיע בגיוס חברות ארגונית למרות ההשקעה הניכרת הנדרשת באסטרטגיה זו. על בסיס ספרות תיאורטית מגוונת, פותחה סדרת השערות לגבי *מינוף, מנהיגות ולגיטימציה.*

התרומה האמפירית של המחקר היא בהשוואת חקרי אירוע של שלוש קבוצות אינרטס מובילות בישראל – החברה להגנת הטבע, האגודה לזכויות האזרח, והתנועה לאיכות השלטון – מאששת את ההנחה על שימוש מוגבר בחברות בארגון כאסטרטגיה ארגונית המשפיעה על עיצוב המדיניות בישראל. הארגונים מגלים עניין בפיתוח *מינוף* פוליטי כדי להשפיע על תהליכי קביעת המדיניות. ארגון אחד בלבד ראה חברות בארגון כאסטרטגיה *ללגיטימציה* בעיקר, אך אפילו ארגון זה משתמש בה ככלי לגיוס משאבים במובן רחב יותר. עם זאת, ממצאי המחקר אינם מעודדים לגבי יכולתם של ארגונים אלה לפתח *מנהיגות.* המחקר מסתיים בהשלכות מעשיות לגבי המדיניות הציבורית, כולל המלצות למנהיגים חברתיים לגבי פיתוח מנהיגות ורפורמה אלקטורלית.

Acknowledgments

About the Author

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Abstract

Despite declining traditional political participation, Israeli citizens profess an increased belief in their ability to influence policy. This research confirms the general hypothesis that this puzzle can partially be explained by the increased activity of civil society organizations. The theoretical contribution of this research is the development of a conceptual model which posits three main hypotheses for why organizations would choose to invest in a membership-recruiting strategy despite the significant investment this strategy requires. Drawing on a diverse theoretical literature, a set of hypotheses is developed regarding *leverage, leadership,* and *legitimacy*.

The empirical contribution of the case study comparisons of three leading interest group associations – the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel (SPNI), the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI), and the Movement for Quality Government (MQG) – confirms the hypothesis of an increased use of membership as an organizational strategy for building policy influence in Israel. The organizations are shown to be more interested over time in developing political *leverage* for influencing policymaking processes. Only one organization views membership primarily as a strategy for formal *legitimation*, but even this organization uses membership as a tool for gaining greater leverage resources. Yet, the case study findings are not optimistic regarding the capacity for such organizations to develop civic *leadership*. The research concludes with a number of practical policy implications, including suggestions for civic leaders regarding membership development and electoral reform.

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1. Introduction

1.1 The Significance of Civil Society Research in Israel

Civil society is commonly defined as social activities outside of the state's institutional framework and private business sector, and beyond family and primordial relations. In effect, it encompasses the political-social role of the third sector (Kimmerling, 1995; Smith & Lipsky, 1993). The study of civic participation and engagement in civil society has emerged in recent years as a leading field of research which has developed theoretical and empirical insights regarding policy innovation, political power, and public participation in modern democratic life (Dahrendorf, 1997; Putnam, 1993; Skocpol et al., 1999).

Within the realm of civil society, the increased founding and activity of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) has been termed an "associational revolution" and an "advocacy explosion" (Minkoff, 1994; Salamon, 1995). Israel has not been immune to these trends, experiencing significant growth in NGO scope and activity in recent years. Since the institution of the Associations Law in 1980 as the first national legislation governing the third sector[1], an average of 1,600 NGOs have been founded each month with approximately 40,000 NGOs registered in 2004. With educational and religious-oriented organizations topping the list, the Israeli third sector has been documented as one of the largest in the world, per capita (See "Appendix 1: Nonprofit Sector Profile").

The large majority of NGOs in Israel operates primarily as civic organizations, while a smaller proportion is directly integrated into the governmental welfare system. A measure of this distinction in 1998 showed that 83% of all NGOs (25,730) were categorized as "Civil Society Organizations" while the remaining NGOs were categorized as "Integrated within the Welfare State System" (Gidron, Bar, & Katz, 2004). For historical and political reasons, the nonprofit sector in Israel has developed in conjunction with and in close proximity to the state sector, increasing its relevance regarding issues of public policy.

An economic analysis of the nonprofit sector demonstrates a concentration of activity around welfare issues, but an associational examination shows great diversity in terms of the areas around which Israelis organize. Advocacy organizations are a relatively small proportion of NGO activity in Israel, but it is the fastest growing category. In the early 1990s only 3% of all new organizations were registered as advocacy organizations, whereas 9% were registered in this category by the end of the decade (Gidron et al., 2004). In addition to growing in size, there is evidence that the influence of civil society upon political decision-makers is increasing as well, requiring a deeper analysis of the implications of these trends for democratic life in Israel.

In a lecture on the role of the nonprofit sector in Israeli society, Yossi Tamir noted that the most appropriate definition of nongovernmental organizations in general is "public policy

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[1] Until 1980, activity in the third sector was regulated according to the 1909 Ottoman Law, and data regarding the pre-1980 period is not systematic.

entrepreneurs" since their basic objective is to influence policymaking outside of the formal structure of an elected government (2003). This claim is especially pertinent for the associational interest groups that are the focus of this study.

1.2 Research Contribution

Civil society as a whole has been gaining attention in Israel, but research on the political and public policy implications of the growing universe of civil society organizations has not taken center stage. This research aims to make theoretical and empirical contributions to the study of the influence of associational interest groups in Israel in particular, and to the study of civil society in modern democratic life in general.

The **theoretical** contribution is the development of a conceptual model which posits three main hypotheses for why organizations would choose to invest in a membership-recruiting strategy despite the significant investment this decision requires. Advances in international survey data have allowed new research regarding why *individuals* would choose to become members of a variety of organizations, but this data does not focus on understanding why an *organization* would choose to develop and persist in using this seemingly anachronistic approach to social and political change. Drawing on a diverse literature – including theoretical concepts such as resource mobilization, political opportunity structure and mimetic institutionalism – a set of hypotheses are developed regarding *leverage*, *leadership*, and *legitimacy* which provide a conceptual framework for exploring this topic.

A related contribution of this research is the use of a historical and institutional methodology for analyzing trends over time in associational interest group activity in Israel. A great deal of civil society research in Israel has focused on extra-parliamentary protest and civic activity from a birds-eye view without honing in on the organizations that are widely understood to be a significant engine behind successful extra-parliamentary activity.

Specifically, an associational case study model is utilized, building on Theda Skocpol's "Civic Engagement Project" for which I served as a research coordinator between 1997 and 2002 (Skocpol, 2003; Skocpol et al., 1999; Skocpol & Oser, 2004). The "Civic Engagement Project" (CEP) systematically explored Alexis de Tocqueville's classic observation: "In democratic countries, knowledge of how to combine is the mother of all other forms of knowledge; on its progress depends that of all the others" (Tocqueville [1835-1840] 1969, p. 517). The CEP project operationalized and measured "the knowledge of how to combine" in terms of organizational membership. Trends of institutional change and membership levels were traced across the largest voluntary organizations in American history – that is, any organization which had succeeded in recruiting at least 1% of the U.S. population as members for at least one year (See "Appendix 2: U.S. 'Civic Engagement Project' Research Findings"). The three pilot case studies in this research provide a methodological framework for pursuing similar inquiries in the Israeli setting.

Finally, the **empirical contribution** is the analysis of case study comparisons of three leading interest group associations in Israel – the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel (SPNI), the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI), and the Movement for Quality Government (MQG). These case studies test the generalized hypothesis of an increased use of membership as an organizational strategy for building policy influence in Israel, and the specific hypotheses regarding *leverage, leadership and legitimation.*

1.3 Political and Historical Context

1.3.1 Trends in Traditional Political Participation

An up-to-date audit of Israeli democracy presents a central puzzle for understanding patterns of political participation (Arian, Atmor, & Hadar, 2006; Arian, Barnea, Ben-Nun, Ventura, & Shamir 2005). Israelis are historically known to exhibit a high level of interest in politics, coupled with a low belief in their capacity to influence public policy (Ben-Eliezer 1993; Wolfsfeld, 1988). This high level of interest in politics has only increased in recent years; in fact, based on data from the 1999-2003 World Value Survey, Israel ranked first out of 30 developed nations on three different measures of political interest, including degree of interest, amount of media consumption, and level of political conversation with family friends (Arian et al., 2006).

Yet, demonstrating an exaggerated version of the prevailing trend in most modern democracies (Dalton, 2000), Israel has experienced a significant weakening of the party system and traditional forms of political participation with a long, steady decline of party membership from 18% in 1969 to 5% in 2006. In international comparative measures, Israel – once considered a proverbial "party state" (Akzin, 1955) – has declined in party membership rate to the middle of the pack, as demonstrated below.

Chart 1: International Comparison of Party Membership

Arian et al., 2006, p. 82

The chart below documents party support, membership and activism between 1969 and 2006. The lower section of the column indicates the proportion of the population which reported itself as inactive in political party life (i.e. non-members and non-supporters); the upper section indicates the proportion of the population which self-reported as members, active members, and office-holders. This chart demonstrates the widely recognized phenomenon of a slow, steady decline in party membership and activity in Israel over the past four decades.

Chart 2: Support, Membership and Activity in Political Parties 1969-2006

Support, Membership, and Party Activism, 1969-2006
Is not a supporter, a member, or a party activist *
Member, activist, and office holder (Jewish sample only: percentages)

■ Is not an activist, a member, or a supporter   ■ Member

* Data reports the rate of respondents answering as above and proportionately completed to 100%.

Arian et al., 2006, p. 82

The following chart documents the average voting rate by country from 1949-2006 (left-hand column) compared to the voting rate in the most recent elections (right-hand column). While many countries experienced a decline in recent years, Israel's drop-off is sharper than most with a 63.3% voting rate in the most recent elections compared to a 78.6% average voting rate from 1949 to 2006 – a decline rivaled only by Chile and Mexico.

Chart 3: Average Voting Rates in 36 Countries, 1949-2006

Average Voter Turnout in 36 Countries, 1949-2006

Average voter turnout 1949-2006

Voter turnout in the last election

* Compulsory voting (enforced at various levels)
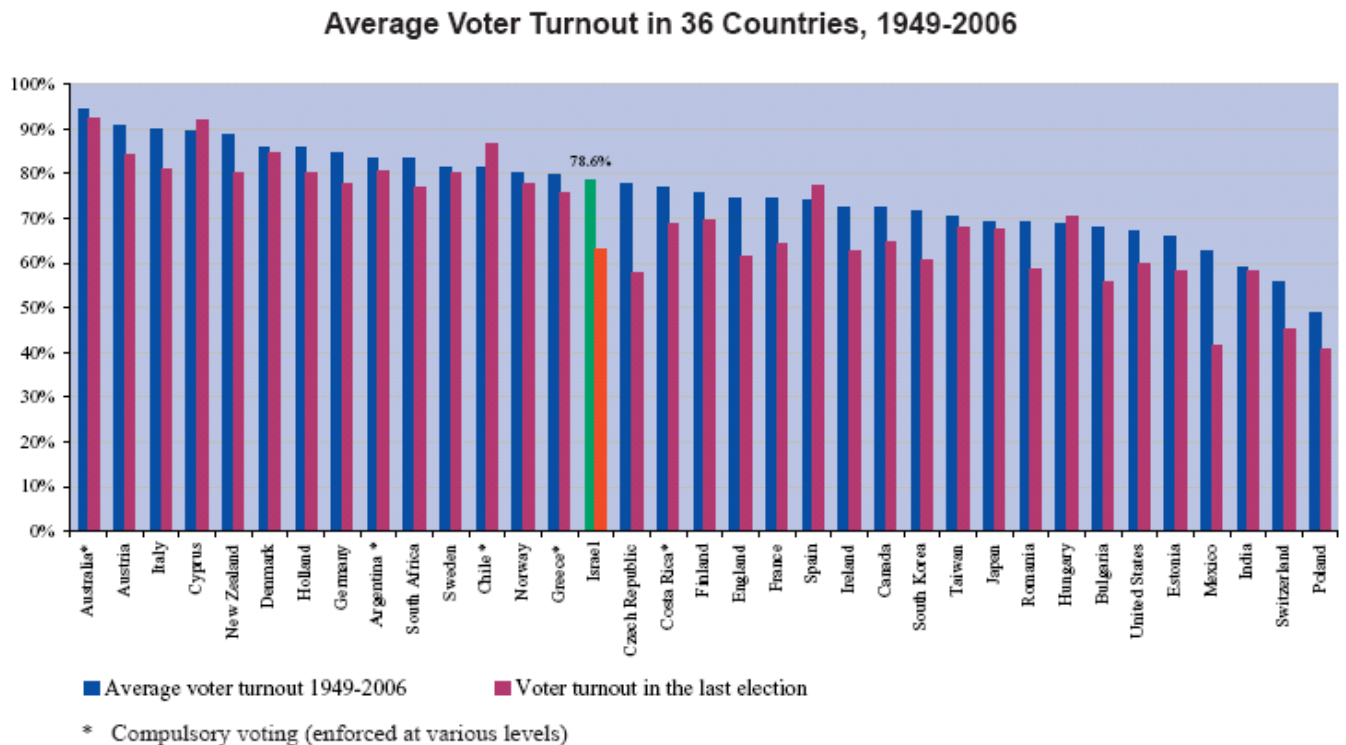
Arian et al., 2006, p. 56

In addition to these downward trends regarding traditional political participation, popular esteem for the Knesset has greatly decreased of late, leading to a decline in the parliament's centrality in the policymaking process (Chazan, 2005). In line with developments in advanced democracies (Putnam, 2004), union participation has decreased as well. These trends are coupled with a loss of belief in the representative capacity of government, and a perception of a higher degree of corruption among public leaders. The findings to this point are quite similar to trends in other advanced democracies; yet, Israelis are seemingly unusual in concurrently professing an increase in their ability to influence policy, as demonstrated in the chart below.

Chart 4: 2006 Democratic Audit

Assessing Democracy's Implementation in the Israeli Public in 2003 and 2006

High score = assessment that this democratic principle prevails in Israel (percentages)
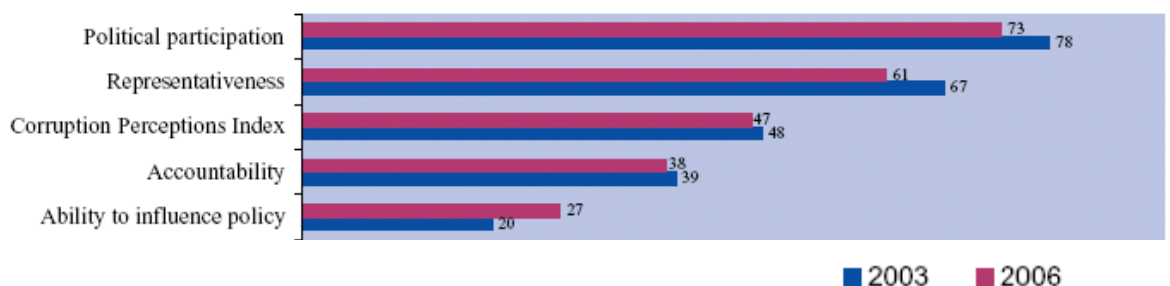
Arian et al., 2006, p. 35

The democratic audit survey upon which this data is based began only in 2003, requiring caution in interpreting the findings. Yet, the data presents an apparent contradiction for which Arian and his colleagues suggest a possible explanation in their discussion of trends regarding voter turnout: the growing inclination of citizens to resort to alternative, extra-parliamentary channels to influence issues of public concern (2006, p. 56). Hence, the assumption is that while traditional political participation is on the decline, Israelis' increased participation in non-traditional and extra-parliamentary political activity has led to an increased belief in their capacity to influence policy. To understand the nature of this supposed increase in organized civic engagement in Israel, we must trace the historical development of Israeli civil society.

1.3.2 Historical Development of Israeli Civil Society

Israel lays claim to a unique civic history in that a vibrant civil society preceded the founding of the state, thereby laying an infrastructure for both society and citizenry (Horowitz & Lissak, 1989; Yishai, 2003). From the perspective of participatory democracy, the establishment of the Histadrut Federation in 1920 was one of the most influential factors in the development of Israeli civil society. The organization's pattern of operations – including strong political ties and bureaucratic structure, perception of members as clients, and ideological focus – had great influence on the pattern of relationships between the third sector and the national government.

Membership in the Histadrut was the paradigmatic associational experience for the majority of the Israeli populace in the early years of the state, and is a crucial starting-point for understanding the practice and conception of civic participation in Israel. In 1920, approximately 11% of the adult population belonged to the Histadrut. This proportion steadily increased decade by decade to 62% in 1970 (Galnoor, 1982) and 66% in 1989 (Yishai, 1991). The main function of the union became that of providing access to basic benefits such as employment services and health care. Hence, the Histadrut became a major center of power in the early state.

Similarly, the political parties – particularly Mapai (the forerunner to Labor) – were all-encompassing membership entities that regulated peoples' daily lives. Party membership afforded access to participation in almost every public realm, including sports clubs, labor federations, and youth movements. This penetration of the party into practically every aspect of society took place in a manner which was much more intensive than the accepted norm in most democracies at the time (Akzin, 1955). Israel's party membership rate – estimated to range between 15%-33% of the populace in the 1950s – was significantly higher than that of seven leading Western countries (Galnoor, 1982; Nie & Verba, 1977).

Government resistance to independent extra-parliamentary activity was fierce in the early years of the state. The elite's negative view of mass protest is illustrated in an announcement made by Yosef Sprinzak in 1949, then Speaker of the Knesset, that demonstrations held in front of the Knesset – regardless of the cause they were meant to serve – were totally unacceptable and constituted an

unbearable insult to the institution (Hermann, 1996). Similarly, a historical overview of the thwarted attempts to legislate the Associations Law in 1954 and 1964, and its final successful implementation in 1980, demonstrates the government's effort to use this legislation to subject associational activity to executive control (Hermann, 1996; Yishai, 1991).

Civic associational activity in the early years of the state demonstrated citizens' efforts to advocate on behalf of the freedom of association, in contradistinction to the government's tendency to restrict this right (Kabalo, 2006). This tension is not unique to Israel; rather it is common when a new regime is being formed in an atmosphere of internal strife or on the basis of an oppressive rule, thereby posing the challenge of constructing the regime and civil society at the same time (Foley & Edwards, 1996).[2] While confirming the existence of a "narrow democratic concept" in Israel's early years (Horowitz & Lissak, 1989, pp. 192-193), Kabalo documents the persistent struggle by civic leaders to ensure the right of association in the face of the state's equally persistent suspicion and regulation of such activities. Interestingly, this correspondence includes initiatives in the 1950s on behalf of such efforts as the Jewish Reform Movement and the "Public Committee for Civil Marriage" – efforts that are commonly perceived to have been initiated only in recent years.

These efforts paved the way for ensuring the basic democratic right of association in an emerging state. In addition to a high rate of party membership, the percentage of Israelis who were members of different associations and organizations was also comparatively high (Yishai, 1991). Yet, until the 1970s, this high level of associationalism was largely subordinated to the party and Histadrut organizational structure, and did not translate into independent, group-based political access (Eisenstadt, 1972; Etzioni-Halevy, 1975). The Volunteers' Group (*Shurat Hamitnadvim*) provided a cautionary tale for organizations interested in operating independently from the ruling structure in an effort to influence the public agenda from outside of the establishment. With 500 members at the peak of its activity, it was founded in 1952 with the goals of advancing the integration of new immigrants into Israeli society, and reinforcing the norms of efficiency and good ethics in the public realm. The organization's critique of specific public leaders led to the submission of a defamation suit against it, and the loss of funding and public support just four years after it was founded (Kabalo, 2003).

A number of well-known landmarks are commonly described as marking the path from Israel's 1950s and 1960s party state to today's comparatively vibrant civic life. After the Six Day War in 1967, widespread support for statist ideology began to wane at a time when the Histadrut and political parties were beginning to weaken. These developments led to a greater liberalization toward the regulation of civic associations and their role in Israeli society. Yet, this activity remained significantly less powerful than government institutions, and was largely dependent on government funding or Jewish Agency-controlled foreign aid.

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[2] Even in the U.S. – the supposedly paradigmatic associational state – a restrictive atmosphere towards civic associations prevailed prior to the civil rights movement (Hammack, 2001).

The Black Panthers movement, active between 1971 and 1974, is considered an important turning point for Israeli civil society, shedding light on the rising civil unrest and declining capacity of the regime to quell or co-opt such turmoil before it bubbled to the surface (Bernstein, 1979; Silber & Rosenhek, 2000). Increased acceptance of multicultural identity in Israeli society and decreased government activity on welfare issues have both led to rising levels of civic engagement independent of party and Histadrut membership since the mid-1970s (Gidron et al., 2004).

The internal political divide regarding the peace process and the fate of the occupied territories since 1967 has been a main motive behind civic organizing in Israel. Disillusionment with the political system in the aftermath of the Yom Kippur War in 1973 was a watershed period that began to highlight the tensions between ends of the political spectrum. Moti Ashkenazi, the leader of the ensuing protest movement – a "salt of the earth" citizen and army captain – could not be as easily dismissed from the political arena as were the Black Panthers by Golda Meir's famous quip regarding her distaste for the their "not nice" extra-parliamentary activities (Shiffer, 2003). During this period, an oppositional voice to governmental authority began to gain legitimacy in Israeli political discourse.

Bloc of the Faithful (*Gush Emunim,* founded in 1974) and Peace Now (*Shalom Ahshav,* founded in 1978) have been Israel's social movements *par excellence.* Interestingly, both movements staunchly avoided enlisting official members, largely in an effort to avoid being co-opted into the political party system. Disillusionment with the political system intensified in the 1990s with many citizens feeling powerless in their ability to influence government policy (Arian, 1998). In the relative vacuum left by parties, civic associations have moved significantly towards assuming the role of mediator between society and state. Among the growing body of evidence for this trend is the way in which the Knesset now considers these organizations to play an important role in the policymaking process (Nachmias & Menachem, 1999).

1.3.3 Development of Civic Engagement Strategies in Israel

A number of different strategies have increased citizens' capacity to influence policymaking during this aforementioned "associational revolution" and "advocacy explosion" – including public protest, media use, lobbying, coalitions, international alliances, local and international fundraising, and local and national legal advocacy. This section summarizes the most prominent strategies in the Israeli setting, thereby providing a historical background for understanding membership-based civic associations.

Extra-parliamentary protest has been a main focal point for research on political participation in Israel, relying primarily on media reports, database information, and individual opinion surveys as data sources (Lehman-Wilzig, 1990; Wolfsfeld, 1988, 1993). Yet, the civic and political groups which are known to be responsible for a great deal of this extra-parliamentary activity have gained less attention, despite the recognition that these kinds of organizations play a fundamental role in modern

political systems and policymaking processes (Baumgartner & Leech, 1998; Thomas, 1993). Yael Yishai has led the field in researching the political impact of interest groups in Israel, using survey methodology and in-person interviews (Yishai 1991, 2003). In a similar vein, recent studies have made initial steps toward mapping the activities of Israeli NGOs which are oriented toward policy change (Kaufman & Gidron, 2006).

The research focus on extra-parliamentary protest in Israel is well-justified (Etzioni-Halevy, 1975; Hermann, 1996; Lehman-Wilzig, 1990; Sprinzak, 1984; Wolfsfeld, 1988, 1993): compared to other developed countries, Israeli is the only one in which protest is a first course of political action (Wolfsfeld, 1988). Wolfsfeld coined this proclivity towards protest as "the politics of provocation," and focused on explaining the previously noted paradox: even though Israel has the highest documented level of psychological involvement in politics, Israelis are comparatively cynical about their ability to effect policy change, and about the responsiveness of the government and political parties to meet the needs of its citizens.[3]

No other country reported such a wide gap between these two measures of psychological involvement and perceived level of institutional efficacy. Wolfsfeld develops a theory of "blocked opportunities" based on three basic trends: an increased sense of political discontent; an increased need for political expression; and a decreased sense of institutional efficacy. This situation of "blocked opportunities" reached such magnitude that by 1979, protest was five times more prevalent in Israel than it had been in 1960. Wolfsfeld's research documented the pervasive claim that Israeli groups find it difficult to make their demands through formal channels, such that they quickly turn to the avenue of protest as a convenient substitute. Therefore, protest must be considered as an act of political communication, ironically leading to an institutionalization of protest in which each side plays out a well-known script (1988, pp. 95-96).

Though not a main theoretical focus of his study, Wolfsfeld's research demonstrated the increasingly important role of extra-parliamentary civic associations in general – and membership-based associations in particular – for understanding the dynamics of political protest. During the period for which he gathered systematic newspaper data on the incidence of protest (1979-1984), the centrality of the parties declined while the role of independent interest groups became more significant. Data gained from conducting interviews with organizational leaders only strengthened this finding.[4]

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[3] Wolfsfeld used Barnes & Kaase's 1979 study of eight different countries (Great Britain, Germany, Netherlands, Austria, U.S., Italy, Switzerland and Finland) as baseline data, and 10 years later asked the same questions in Israel. It is noted above that Israelis' belief in their political efficacy has increased somewhat since Wolfsfeld's study. Yet, because Israelis' sense of political efficacy was so low in comparative perspective in this 1988 study, it is reasonable to assume – even without updated comparative data on these measures – that the basic outlines of this paradox hold true to today.

[4] Interviews included leaders from 55 ad hoc groups, 88 community action groups, 44 sects, 215 unions, and 14 movements who had gained mention in the newspaper data.

Wolfsfeld found that organizational membership size is positively and significantly correlated to measures of general success, public success, and success in contacting a public official. The ability of a group to adapt a strategy of "extensiveness"[5] enabled it to achieve both publicity and ultimate success without accompanying costs of repression. Wolfsfeld found that when organized groups turned to direct action around materialist needs, they had a high rate of victory in achieving their protest aims.[6] Lehman-Wilzig also found a high degree of organizational involvement in his analysis of protest events between the years 1949 and 1986 with about half of all documented protest led by organizational efforts (1990).

While Wolfsfeld and Lehman-Wilzig encountered civic organizations primarily through the lens of protest events, Yishai has focused on the organizations themselves through survey and interview data, and secondary source research. In 1991 Yishai found that the density of Israeli interest group membership (i.e. the proportion of members of those eligible to join) is impressive by any international standard: for example, the Histadrut and the Manufacturer's Association both claimed 90% of the eligible Israeli working population as members; the nearly 100% membership density in the farm associations was without precedent in the industrialized world; and membership in professional associations was also high due to an arrangement of automatic dues payment from the salaried worker. Yet, this high level of membership is due to both dependence on the economic benefits that membership provides and categorical membership requirements to join organizations such as professional associations.[7]

The research undertaken by Wolfsfeld and Yishai provides an empirical signpost for the importance of further analysis of membership-based civic associations in Israel. To summarize: Wolfsfeld has found a general correlation between the involvement of organized groups in protest and success in reaching protest goals. He found an additional correlation between the size of the organization's membership-base and mobilization for protest and its capacity to successfully influence decision-makers regarding demands of a material nature. Yishai has documented that membership is a widely-used strategy for civic engagement in Israel with a representative sample survey in 2001 indicating that 74.6% of civic organizations report a membership in the hundreds or more, and 40.9% of civic report a membership in the thousands. These findings indicate the importance of asking "why membership?" in order to understand more about the potential for civil society to influence public policy in Israel.

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[5] Extensiveness is defined as either involving large numbers of people or significant impact on society like strikes on essential services.

[6] An exception to this rule was the findings regarding "ideological groups" – specifically those engaged in advocating for peace – which experienced "a much more difficult journey." For these organizations a strategy of extensiveness increased the sense of threat and decreased the likelihood of organizational success. Yet, the research conclusions regarding direct action notes the following: "Although the journey is more difficult for some groups than others, there is no better route to political influence in Israel" (Wolfsfeld, 1988, p. 162).

[7] An example of a categorical requirement is the 1961 law giving corporate status to the Israeli Bar Association, requiring every practicing lawyer to be registered as a member in the organization (Yishai, 1991).

1.3.4 Assessing Israeli Civil Society Today

This overview of trends in traditional political participation, of the historical development of Israeli civil society, and of the development of civic engagement strategies in Israel demonstrate a general agreement among scholars that civil society activity has increased in size and influence since the founding of the state. This agreement is documented in the following summary of research on different aspects of Israeli civil society, all of which used periodization descriptions to develop their argument.

Chart 5: Civil Society in Israel, Historical Periodization Analyses

Sprinzak, 1984[8]	Lehman-Wilzig, 1990[9]	Hermann, 1996[10]	Yishai, 1998a[11]
1948-1957: Decline of legacies of the past	1949-1954: Age of acculturation of protest (mostly related to immigrant absorption)	1948-mid 1950s: generally unripe political opportunity structure (POS)	Founding to late 1960s: Active inclusion by the state of civil society
1957-1967: Golden age of parliamentarism	1955-1970: Age of extra-parliamentary quiescence (i..e. overall decrease of protest)	Mid-1950s to late 1960s: almost completely unripe POS	Late 1960s to early 1980s: Active exclusion by the state of civil society, de-legitimizing challenging groups
1967-1973: First, unsuccessful revolt of the periphery	1970-1978: Age of renewed mature protest (i.e. 2nd generation immigrants)	Late 1960s to mid-1970s: mellowing era	Late 1980s to 1998: Passive exclusion by the state – optimal balance between state and society, with society maintaining autonomy from the state
1973-1977: Second, successful revolt of the periphery	1979-1986: Age of protest normalization	Mid-1970s to 1996: era of maturation	
1977- 84: Maturation of protest			

Despite the agreement regarding the relative increase of civil society scope and activity, there is no such consensus in research since the early 1990s regarding the ability of civic associations to successfully influence policymaking processes. Some note that success has remained limited (Ben-Eliezer, 1999; Fogel-Bijaoui, 1992; Sasson-Levy, 1995) while others highlight the consistently

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[8] Sprinzak focused on the aspects of legality and legitimacy of extra-parliamentary activity.
[9] Lehman-Wilzig researched the quantitative aspect of protest and categorized different acts according to their core issues.
[10] Hermann analysed the "ripeness" of the political structure of opportunities for protest.
[11] Yishai summarized different stages in the state's relationship to civil society.

increasing ability of civic organizations to impact public policy on a range of issues (Drezon-Tepler, 1990; Tamir, 2003; Yishai, 2003; Zalmanovitch, 1998).

The outlines of this debate come into sharper focus through the comparison of two analyses undertaken in the mid-1990s using the same generalized theoretical model of "political opportunity structure" to investigate the changing nature of Israeli civil society (Arian, 1993, 1998; Hermann, 1996). "Political opportunity structure" (POS) is an explanatory model which posits a connection between changes in exogenous factors (like political structures, demographics, economic shifts, etc.) and the scope and nature of civic mobilization (Meyer & Minkoff, 2004).[12] Arian states that the increase in number and size of voluntary groups in the Israeli setting is irrelevant to policy outcomes; if they are not party-affiliated, they do not have an important role in setting public policy. He concludes that there has been no significant change in the potential for interest groups to influence policymaking, and that the only meaningful target for policy-oriented pressure groups are the few senior civil servants responsible for the relevant policy area.[13]

Hermann would disagree, as indicated in the summary of her analysis of developments over time in Chart 5 above. She concludes that the POS in Israel has matured, such that her response to the rhetorical question asked in the title of the article – "Do They Have a Chance? Protest and Political Structure of Opportunities in Israel" – is a qualified but unequivocal "yes." Hermann states that until the mid-1970s the direction and influence of power was almost exclusively top-to-bottom, but since that time, "a parallel bottom-to-top channel of communications has started to establish itself as a permanent feature of the national political arena" (1996, p. 164).

In light of these different assessments of Israeli civil society today, the next section posits a theoretical framework to advance our current understanding and analysis of associational interest groups as policy entrepreneurs.

1.4 Theoretical Context

1.4.1 Civil Society: Civic Engagement Theories

Aristotle's writings on the relationship between society and state introduced the term "civil society" to Western thought. Our modern usage of the term developed from efforts in the 1900s to create a social space that could operate independently from monarchists and radical republics (Cohen & Arrato, 1992). The concept was revived in the 20th century in an effort to understand challenges facing democratic development in the former communist states, Latin America and Eastern Europe (Foley & Edwards, 1998).

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[12] See "Theory" section ("1.4.3 Membership: A Theoretical Framework") for further clarification of this theoretical model.
[13] In light of the previously noted comments from Arian, et. al's *Auditing Israeli democracy 2006* suggesting the role of civic organizations in increasing Israelis' sense of effectiveness, it is conceivable that he would assess the situation differently today. Yet, his recent writings on the topic generally repeat the argument summarized here.

Recent civic engagement research has echoed the thesis of classic political theorists such as Alexis de Tocqueville and John Stuart Mill that healthy democracy depends on the active engagement of citizens in community affairs. Tocqueville's compelling quotes regarding the importance of vibrant associational life for the health of democracy are cited in almost every significant investigation of civil society. Robert Putnam notes the often overlooked research question that motivated Tocqueville in this exploration: A Frenchman writing about forty years after the 1789 revolution, Tocqueville was concerned about the tendency for a communally-oriented society like France to become a non-mediated individualistic society (Putnam, 2004).

Concerned about the potential for civic tensions to disintegrate into civil war, Tocqueville suggested that democracy could take two forms: an atomistic despotism where citizens tend to their own self-interests such that rulers are free to centralize their power; or a participatory democracy where public-spirited institutions can serve as a check on the centrifugal forces of democracy (Putnam, 2004; Tocqueville, [1835-1840] 1969). Participatory democracy is understood here not as an enlightened norm or generous value; rather it is a gateway to a more representative democracy in which the needs and interests of all citizens can be expressed and taken into consideration for the purposes of public decision-making. In his explorations of "Democracy in America," Tocqueville saw civic associations as the key for transforming the atomistic form of democracy into the participatory one.

Another important aspect of Tocqueville's conclusions, however, is overlooked in Putnam's research. Tocqueville specifically identified associations involved in political life as the key to the rich democracy that he celebrated in the U.S. in 1832. Putnam's account of social capital, on the other hand, focuses on stocks of "social trust, norms and networks" that are preferably horizontal, local and apolitical (Putnam, 1993, 2001). Thus, Putnam concludes that community participation as seemingly insignificant as joining the bowling league creates sources of trust which in turn produces wise public policies, positive economic development, and efficient public administration. In this account, networks bolster the performance of the state and the economy, rather than the reverse. Yet, the historical record indicates that most democracies grow out of long-term struggles among social groups and between states authorities and their subjects. First liberal-parliamentary regimes and then democracies resulted from organized conflict and *distrust* (Skocpol, 1999). This insight is particularly relevant to understanding civil society in Israel given the complex sets of social and political cleavages that have persisted since the country's founding (Horowitz & Lissak, 1989).

Therefore, the theoretical approach to civic engagement which I propose in this research asserts the importance of specifically political and trans-local associations – such as interest groups and social movements – in fostering aspects of a vibrant civic life (Foley & Edwards, 1996; Minkoff, 1997; Skocpol, Ganz, & Munson, 2000). This approach states that voluntary associations matter not only as facilitators of individual participation and generalized social trust, but rather as sources of popular and political leverage.

1.4.2 A Comparative Analysis: Statism vs. Corporateness

To explain the relative dearth of civic life in Israel compared to other advanced democracies, political scientists often refer to the concept of "liberal democracy." Liberal democracies are constitutionally-based regimes that emphasize individual rights and liberties, such as freedom of speech and the protection of minority rights. The U.S. is considered to be the paradigmatic liberal democracy in which an overlapping multitude of pluralistic interest groups compete to represent the will of the people (Dahl, 1961).

The opposite end of the democratic spectrum is the "collectivist democracy" (also referred to as "non-liberal democracy" or "statist democracy"), as explicated in Jean-Jacques Rousseau's social contract theory ([1762] 2002). A collectivist democracy places greater emphasis on the advancement of shared national values compared to the importance of protecting rights and liberties of the individual citizen. This form of democratic regime has been prevalent in Europe where political society was traditionally organized into larger, more coherent, and often class-based units of "corporatist" social organization (Putnam, 2004). On the spectrum between these two "ideal type" models of democracy, Israel is considered to have been a strongly collectivist state in its early years, with a consistent development over time in the direction of liberal democracy (Ben-Eliezer, 1993; Lehman-Wilzig, 1999).[14]

What impact do these different structural contexts have on civic engagement? A theoretical framework was developed to analyze this question, based on the observation that both the amount and type of voluntary association membership vary dramatically between nations (Schofer & Fourcade-Gourinchas, 2001). Breaking out the "liberal democracy" concept into its constituent parts, two distinctions are considered to be responsible for much of the variation between countries regarding voluntary association membership: the distinction between statist and non-statist societies, and the distinction between corporate versus non-corporate societies. Statism refers to the *location* of political sovereignty, indicating whether the state or society has a more dominate role. Corporateness refers to the *organization* of political life, indicating whether the individual or the collective is considered to be the primary sovereign actor. The ideal types of these concepts are outlined in the following chart.

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[14] The degree to which Israeli democracy conforms to the collectivist model is a matter of dispute. In a comparative analysis of interest group regulation, Israel is analyzed as a non-liberal case study on par with Turkey for purposes of comparison with Australia and Canada as liberal states (Yishai, 1998b). This analysis potentially overemphasizes Israel's non-liberal character, as evidenced by a 1993 ranking of the liberal democratic character of more than 150 countries. This ranking used a variety of empirical indicators to develop a rating for states on a scale of 1 to 100 with the higher score indicating a more liberal democracy. Western, liberal democracies – for example, the U.S., U.K. and Australia – scored 100, while Israel was close behind with a score of 96. In comparison, Turkey merited a score of 11, and the average score for Middle Eastern countries was 27 (Bollen, 1993).

Chart 6: Statism vs. Corporateness

Degree of Corporateness	Degree of Statism	
	Low	High
Low	**United States**, Britain, Canada	**France**, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Latin America
High	**Scandinavian countries**	**Wilhelmine Germany**, postwar Germany, Austria, Central and Eastern Europe, Japan

Source: Adapted from Jepperson (1992, chap. 3).
Note: Countries shown in bold type are closest to the ideal type.

Schofer & Fourcade-Gourinchas, 2001, p. 817

Using data from the World Values Survey on membership in civic associations in 32 countries, results confirmed the authors' hypotheses that statism constrains individual associational activity of all types, especially "new" social movement associations[15]; and that corporateness has a positive effect on membership, particularly for "old" associations like labor unions and political parties. Evidence also confirmed the authors' hypothesis that temporal trends across all countries would indicate some convergence toward Anglo-American patterns of association due to the global tendency of modeling liberal polities.

Although Israel is not included in this study or the sources from which the coding on degree of statism or corporateness are based, it is reasonable to posit that Israel would belong in the right hand column with a relatively high degree of statism, and towards the bottom row between Germany and France with a relatively high degree of corporateness (Lijphart, 1993). The periodization chart developed in the historical section (Chart 5) indicates, however, that the basic trend of Israel's growth is from the lower right (ideal type: Germany) towards the upper left (ideal type: U.S.).

Thus, as an ideal type in comparison to other countries, we would expect that Israel's statism would lead to relatively low levels of individual associational activity of all types, especially new social movement associations; and that its relatively high corporateness would encourage a high level of membership, particularly for "old associations." Yet, we would expect temporal trends to reveal increased levels of associational activity over time particular in new associations, and the reverse in old ones. In essence, we would expect the temporal trends of statism and corporateness to work in opposite directions from the perspective of membership levels.

The authors raise an important question for future research that is particularly germane to countries like Israel in which statism and corporatism act in tension: this model seems to accurately predict trends in membership levels, but the meaning of membership for the organizations, the individuals, and democratic processes is unexplored. They suggest that the encompassing, inclusive

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[15] This refers particularly to "post-materialistic" social movement organizations, such as those concerned with the environment and human rights issues.

nature of corporate institutions might lead to a more automatic and less voluntaristic form of civic engagement. This distinction has important policy implications due to the substantial efforts to revive and support grassroots institutions following the collapse of the Eastern bloc and several Latin American dictatorships. For example, both the World Bank and the United Nations initiated substantial programs for collaboration and financial sponsorship of civil society organizations in the 1980s which are still thriving today.[16] Yet, can increased levels of organizational membership indicate increased civic health and participatory democracy? The following section develops a theoretical model to better understand the implications of the trends of organizational membership over time.

1.4.3 Membership: A Theoretical Framework

In the U.S. scholars have been engaged for decades in debates regarding the strength, structure, and changing nature of civic life in this archetypal "nation of joiners" (Schlesinger, 1944). Membership organizations of all kinds are often studied to explore the dimensions of American civic engagement, but few researchers explicitly ask why membership matters in a given context, meaning why a given organization would choose the strategy of membership recruitment and persist in the use of this strategy over time. More often, research on membership focuses on individual-level characteristics and explanations (i.e. the impact of education, religiosity, ethnicity on membership choices, as in Curtis, Grabb, & Baer, 1992) or posits a certain organizational theory and utilizes a population of membership-based organizations to test this theory (i.e. testing the validity of density-dependency theory, as in Minkoff, 1997).

Based on a review of research regarding membership-based organizations in advanced democracies, I posit a theoretical framework which explicates three main reasons why an organization would adopt a strategy of membership recruitment: **leverage, leadership** and **legitimacy.**

First, an organization would choose to recruit members for reasons of "**leverage**", namely that a membership base would provide desired organizational capacity and political power that would enable it to reach its policy change goals. This concept is related to two main bodies of organizational theory: *resource mobilization* theory and *political opportunity structure* theory. *Resource mobilization* theory arose in response to Mancur Olson's (1965) theory of collective action which stated that rational, self-interested individuals will only contribute to collective action if they receive selective benefits (e.g. membership discounts); otherwise they would be subject to having their good intentions be taken advantage of by "free riders." Resource mobilization theory noted the empirical trend (particularly in the American setting in the 1960's) that movements were overcoming this problem by offering collective incentives of group solidarity and moral purpose, thereby mobilizing a variety of resources to reach their organizational goals. Resource mobilization theory states that the group then

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[16] See http://www.un.org/issues/civilsociety/ and
http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/CSO/0,,pagePK:220469~theSitePK:228717,00.html;
(Last accessed Nov. 4, 2007).

turns these recruited resources – including money, information, skills, and membership – into political power (Jenkins, 1983; Thomas, 1993).

Political opportunity structure theory hones in on how these resources can be parlayed into political power given the opportunities and constraints in a given political environment (Meyer & Minkoff, 2004). The first explicit use of this theoretical framework explained that the outbreak of extensive rioting in American cities during the late 1960s depended on the degree of openness of urban governments to conventional claims-making strategies (Eisinger, 1973). The wide range of potentially relevant external factors examined in political opportunity structure models can be conceptualized as influencing an equally wide range of outcomes.

Second, an organization would choose to recruit members for reasons of "**leadership**" because it aims to increase the Tocqeuvillian "knowledge of how to combine." This choice could be part of a strategic effort to build leverage, but the distinction between the concepts of "leverage" and "leadership" as defined here is clarified by research on social movement organizations (Minkoff, 1997). Even though social movement organizations are committed to advancing participatory democratic principles and policy change goals, they are not necessarily structured as participatory institutions which focus on the systematic development of civic leadership.[17] This distinction can operate in both directions: a membership-based civic association which has a policy change agenda may choose to recruit and develop members because of its interest in developing them as a source of leaders who will advance the organization's agenda in their daily lives – not primarily in order to develop political leverage for policy change *per se.*[18]

Third, an organization would choose to recruit members for reasons of "**legitimacy**" because the organizational form in and of itself provides authority and authenticity which advance the organization's interests. This concept is developed from new institutional theories in sociology that emphasize the cognitive dimension of institutional form. Institutions are defined broadly here as symbolic systems that provide "frames of meaning" in which mimetic practices of diffusion across fields or nations plays an important role (Hall, 1996; Powell & DiMaggio, 1991). This concept is distinct from "leverage" in that members do not provide political power based on their contribution as a resource, either on a financial, skills, or representative level. Rather, the contribution is primarily one of public legitimation, organizational positioning and reputation-building. Hence, the very fact of being an organization with members is more significant than how many members have joined, what

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[17] An example in the U.S. context is the organization "Common Cause." With approximately 300,000 members aimed at "holding governmental power accountable" the organization has been criticized with the claim that it lacks internal democratic practices. Hence, the claim continues, it lacks governing accountability just as much as the public institutions it aims to reform.

[18] An example in the U.S. context is the Boy Scouts, which has almost three million youth members and over a million adult members. The organization has an impressive policy change agenda, including suggestions for the advancement of constitutional rights of young people in their encounters with the government, and a proposal for investing in values-based education in public education frameworks. Yet, the main focus of its membership recruitment is on instilling civic values and developing the leadership skills of its members.

these members contribute to the organization, or what they gain from their participation. One would expect that organizations recruiting members for reasons of legitimacy would place considerable rhetorical emphasis on the existence of members, but will have a relatively small membership base and will not invest significantly from the organization's resources in order to expand the size or skills of this base.

2. Hypotheses

2.1 Why Not Membership?

Despite arguments that Israeli civil society is on the rise, there are a number of convincing reasons why civic associations would not turn to membership development as a key organizational strategy. First, there is a **political culture** bias against the use of membership due to the negative perception in the Israeli populace of its compulsory usage in the past by the Histadrut and political parties. This negative perception is particularly strong amongst the generation that came of age in the early years of the state and experienced firsthand the obligatory membership tactics of these institutions (Yishai, 1991).

Second, the **political opportunity structure** of the governmental system in Israel does not encourage the development of strong local and national membership organizations in civil society. The use of a single nation-wide electoral district mean that there is no geographic constituent medium through which voters can exert influence on their representatives (Rahat & Hazan, 2006). Therefore, the benefit of the painstaking work of developing a rooted membership base that learns how to influence its locally elected leaders – as in the U.S. and British political systems – is not self-evident.[19] In addition, the relatively low threshold of 2% for political party formation encourages civic groups that gain a significant membership to become an official political party instead of continuing to influence the system from the outside, despite the low returns this strategy tends to yield in terms of influence on the policymaking process in the long run (Rahat, 2005; Yishai, 1991).[20]

Third, the increased influence and financial capacities of international **foundation funding** in recent years has been singled out as one of the reasons for the decline in membership-based civic associations internationally (Putnam, 2004; Skocpol, 2003). We would expect this trend to be even more pronounced in Israel due to the relatively late development of civil society, coupled with the relatively high degree of availability of international foundation funding. An initial attempt to quantify this notoriously difficult-to-document resource shows that in 2002 more than $1.5 billion entered Israel though foreign foundations and donors to Israeli foundations. In the Western world, indigenous foundations have become increasingly interested in global activity and investment outside

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[19] Arian uses the example of the petitions on behalf of annexing the Golan as an example of the axiom that "numbers can make a difference, but numbers in and of themselves are not enough" (1993, p. 189). Thus, the hundreds of thousands petition signatures supporting the annexation of the Golan helped the Knesset Members who were leading this legislative process, but the petitions alone did not provide decisive legislative influence. Arian notes that the petitions had circulated for years before the right political and diplomatic conditions serendipitously emerged such that leaders could make effective use of them.

[20] This feature of the electoral system has striking implications for the comparison of Israeli civil society with other advanced democracies, and with the U.S. in particular. For example, the Society of the Protection for Nature in Israel is likely the only non-party or non-labor organization in civil society which has a large enough membership base per capita to qualify to be included in Theda Skocpol's Civic Engagement Project (i.e. had at least 1% of the Israeli population as members for at least one year), compared with more than 60 such organizations in the U.S. setting. Conversely, it is hard to imagine in the U.S. context that the Israeli electoral system would provide financial incentives for an organization like the American Association of Retired People (AARP) to become an independent party, qualified to select legislative representatives.

of their own country while Israel is moving in the opposite direction. "Indeed, Israel is the sole Western country that 'imports' from abroad in such large amounts philanthropic funds in general and foundation funds in particular" (Gidron et al., 2006). This high level of external financial support would be expected to decrease the need for recruiting members as a source of independent financial leverage. This timing is in contrast to the historical development in the U.S. where civic associations were founded before such funding was widely available, and in a political context that afforded almost no government aid to civic activity.

Finally, a **general decline in membership** as an organizational strategy has been documented in developed countries starting in the 1970s. While there is no consensus on the definitive causes for this decline, potential explanations include the increased influence of national media and television, reliance on lobbyists and legal strategies, and changing family structures (Putnam, 2004; Skocpol, 2003). Since these generalized trends emerged contemporaneously with the initial development of Israeli civil society, we would expect a stagnating effect on membership-building as an organizational strategy at a time when Israeli civic organizations were beginning to take their first steps.

Yet, despite these convincing arguments, a number of leading civic associations in Israel have chosen to use the organizational strategy of membership recruitment and development. The following hypotheses re-articulate the theoretical model of "why membership?" in order to posit possible explanations for why organizations might make this seemingly anomalous choice.

2.2 Why Membership?

Hypothesis 1: **Leverage**. Organizations are willing to invest in membership recruitment in order to gain political power for influencing public policy. This use of membership as a source of leverage jives with the standard explanation for the proliferation of membership-based organizations in the U.S. and parts of Europe.

Hypothesis 2: **Leadership.** Membership recruitment is adopted as an organizational strategy in order to develop the leadership skills of the organization's constituency. Distinct from focusing on the "numbers" and "resource" influence of the membership base, the organization has a strategic interest in developing layers of leadership within the organization – from interested citizen to member to active member to leader – and uses organizational membership as a strategy for developing such civic leadership capacity.

Hypothesis 3: **Legitimacy.** Membership as an organizational strategy is based on mimetic influences which lead to importing this pervasive organizational form in the international arena, particularly from the United States and Europe. In a narrow version of resource mobilization theory, organizations recruit members because of financial pressure to do so by their main funding streams or because of

perceived legitimacy gains of demonstrating this organizational form, regardless of the resource or political pay-off of this strategy in the Israeli political arena.

2.3 Whither Membership?

The case study methodology described below is designed primarily to answer the question "why membership?" Yet, the description of statism and corporateness as germane concepts for the comparative analysis of voluntary activity generates an additional hypothesis regarding the overall trend of membership recruitment as a civic practice in Israel.

Hypothesis 4: **Increased Membership over Time**. Decreased statism in Israeli democracy over time is expected to lead to increased membership in associational interest groups. Thus, organizations founded early in the history of the state would be expected to expand their use of membership over time; and organizations founded later would be expected to place a greater emphasis on membership from the founding of the organization.[21]

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[21] Because the data source of this research is limited to "new organizations" as conceptualized by Schofer and Fourcade-Gourinchas (2001), this reasoning does not relate to the authors' hypothesis regarding "corporateness" which is relevant primarily to "old organizations" like labor unions.

3. Research Methodology

The case study methodology is the most appropriate in light of the research question at hand for two main reasons. First, the topic is an under-explored area for which very little operational data exists in the Israeli setting. Second, the case study method allows for the use of rich detail to uncover causal paths and mechanisms that might not be treated as variables in a statistical study. The main disadvantage of case study methodology is the lack of statistical significance and the difficulty of causally substantiating the suggested findings. Hence, this research is conceived of as a pilot project with the goal of pursuing the research questions in a more rigorous quantitative study of a larger sample of organizations and operational variables (Allison & Zelikow, 1999; King, Keohane, & Verba, 1994; Yin, 2003).

The basic unit of analysis is the organization, which provides a link between individual and group behavior, thereby affecting the preferences of actors and the processes of political exchange (Powell & Dimaggio, 1991). In the first data gathering stage of case study selection, the main sources of basic information on registered non-governmental associations in Israel include the Ministry of Justice Office's Non-Governmental Organizations Registrar, the Israeli Center for Third Sector Research at Ben-Gurion University, and third-sector databases at NGOs like those of "Shatil" and "The Voluntary and Nonprofit Sector." Yet none of these sources methodologically gathers data on organizational membership or on generalized patterns of membership in Israeli society over time.[22] Therefore, the first methodological step in this research required generating a list of membership-based associations currently active in Israel based on academic research and on expert advice from those active in the field (See "Bibliography: Interviewees - General"). A number of key categories of membership organizations emerged from this initial list, as outlined below:

Chart 7: Categories of Membership-Based Civic Associations in Israel

Category	Examples
Interest Group Associations[23]	Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel, Association for Civil Rights in Israel, the Movement for Quality Government
Trade Unions	Histadrut, Union of State Employees, Hotel Workers Federation
Political Party Associations	Shas, Islamic Movement
Social Movement Organizations	Black Panthers, Peace Now, Bloc of the Faithful

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[22] Examples of such data sources in the U.S. context include the tracking of organizational membership by the "Encyclopedia of Associations" published by Thomas Gale; and the tracking of generalized patterns of membership in surveys like the General Social Surveys and the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research Surveys.

[23] Interest groups are also called "promotional groups" and are sometimes referred to interchangeably as "social movement organizations." There is no unified conceptual terminology in the academic literature. In general, political scientists use the term "interest groups" and sociologists use the term "social movement organization." The conceptual distinction is that a non-membership based professional advocacy group could be considered an interest group, while a classic social movement organization takes shape in the environment of a larger social movement.

Professional Associations	Israeli Medical Association, Union of Veterans
Fraternal/Sororal Associations	WIZO, Na'amat, Hadassa, B'nai Brith
Immigrant/Ethnic Associations	Union of Ethiopian Immigrants, Association of Americans and Canadian Immigrants in Israel

As evident from Appendix 2, the Civic Engagement Project on which this research is based studied associations from all of these categories, with the single criterion for inclusion being a rigorous test of large membership size. Due to the lack of readily available membership data for use as a criterion for case study selection in the Israeli context, this research was methodologically designed as a pilot exploration of a single category in order to lay the groundwork for further research. As noted in the above discussion on the theoretical underpinnings of civic engagement, this research aims to better understand groups which desire to advance a particular policy agenda, thus relating to questions of an explicitly political nature. Interest group associations were chosen as the appropriate category for these purposes because they meet the standard of being overtly interested in influencing the public policy arena while remaining organizationally distinct from the governmental establishment.[24]

Within the universe of interest group associations, a list of the most prominent membership-based organizations was compiled (See "Appendix 3: Membership-Based Interest Group Associations in Israel"). The following criteria were developed for choosing case studies from this initial list:

- Strive to impact upon Israeli public policy
- Considered to be relatively successful in achieving policy change goals
- Aim to include the whole of the Israeli population (i.e. not explicitly sectoral or regional)
- Display a variety of aims and purposes
- Developed during different time periods of Israeli historical development

There was little hesitation in selecting the three organizations which best meet these criteria: the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel (SPNI), Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI), and the Movement for Quality Government (MQG).

Despite the usefulness of the above criteria for refining the scope of this study, the accompanying drawbacks are worthy of note. First, this approach categorically eliminates the examination of organizations at either end of the political extreme or those which purport to speak for only a certain segment of the citizenry. Given the nature of Israeli political and social cleavages, the case study sample is then inevitably biased towards the liberal or left end of the political spectrum

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[24] It was deemed inappropriate to begin the study with trade unions and quasi-party organizations because the cases would potentially relate more to government and party processes than to civil society *per se*. As noted above, the dominant social movement organizations in Israel pose a central challenge for studying the issue of membership because they opposed the use of recruiting official members. The remaining categories are less specifically focused on policy change, leaving interest group associations as the best methodological choice.

which declares to work on behalf of the whole of the Israeli public.[25] Second, membership-based interest group associations are examined in order to better understand the phenomenon itself without comparing them to other forms of associational life. Third, while this research aims to explore membership associations as policy entrepreneurs, there is no attempt to "prove" that the membership base of these associations is the definitive factor in their successful attempts to influence Israeli public policymaking.[26]

Following the selection of the three associations, a case study model was developed based on two main source of data: primary and secondary documents which flesh out the historical trends of associational membership, along with interviews of key organizational leaders over time to clarify the question of "why membership?" The primary and secondary source documents include annual and financial reports, membership newsletters, internal memos, newspaper articles and academic studies. These sources were gleaned to gather data on membership over time, as well as to cull first-hand declarations and second-hand analyses of the role and meaning of membership to the organization. The three main sources for primary documents are the files located in the Non-Governmental Organization Registrar's Office, documents in the national library system, and documents made available by the organizations themselves. Multiple sources of relationships with organizational leaders and representatives were utilized in order to build trust and gain access to internal organizational information.[27]

The interviews were intended to flesh out the basic question of "why membership?" and to identify reasons for change over time. Specifically, interviewees were asked to explain why their organization seems to invest in building an associational membership base despite the considerable organizational investment this entails. A variety of organizational leaders were interviewed, covering a diversity of time periods, organizational positions, and political and ideological perspectives (See "Bibliography: Interviewees" and "Appendix 4: Interview Schedule").

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[25] These cleavages are relevant on the national (Jewish-Arab), ethnic, religious, socio-economic, and ideological levels (Horowitz & Lissak, 1989). To clarify the pilot nature of this study and the necessary caution against generalizing too broadly from its conclusions, an equivalent case study comparison in the U.S. setting would be the Sierra Club, the American Civil Liberties Union, and Common Cause. While such a study could develop an outline for a generalized methodological approach and draw preliminary conclusions on trends for particular sections of civil society, it would not afford a deeper understanding of important aspects of American society – particularly the political and religious right, and minority populations.

[26] This is a particularly complicated methodological issue; because there is overlap between the factors which give rise to social mobilization and those which give rise to policy change, these variables are not easily distinguishable (Meyer & Minkoff, 2004).

[27] This stage of the research process was more time and energy intensive than expected. In comparison to parallel organizations in the U.S., there were no well-organized archives available for public viewing. A range of concerns were expressed about the researcher's intentions, focusing primarily on the possibility of passing on sensitive internal discussions to the media, organizational competitors, international funders or the NGO Registrar. On the other hand, it was easier to gather comprehensive financial data because of the relatively small size of the organizations and brief organizational histories, along with the generous help provided by the organizations' accountants. Special thanks for opening doors and sharing documents are due to Yoav Ben-Moshe, Momo Mehadav and Naomi Tzur from SPNI; Uri Adika , Yossi Smadga and Eli Sulam of MQG; and Victor Lederfarb, Vered Livne and Hedva Radovnitch from ACRI.

4. Case Study Findings[28]

The research findings are reported using the following uniform structure:

1. Organizational Structure and History: *description of organizational structure and funding base, founding and development over time, and significant events of change or growth.*

2. Why Membership? Data Profile and Analysis: *presentation of membership trends over time including data and interpretation regarding the changing meaning of membership for the organization.*

3. Key Policy Change Victories: *summary of key policy initiatives over and above those documented in the organizational history.*

4. Conclusions Regarding Research Hypotheses: *analysis of research hypotheses regarding **leverage**, **leadership** and **legitimacy** in light of the case study findings.*

For comparative purposes, a summary of key trends elaborated upon in the case studies are found in Appendix 6. A complete record of financial and membership data and data sources upon which charts in this section are based may be found in Appendix 7.[29]

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[28] For primary and secondary sources used for each case study, see "Bibliography: Case Studies."

[29] All charts in this section are based on my gathering of original data. Financial data is reported in NIS unless noted otherwise, and is not standardized across years. This reporting of raw data per year is justified because our interest is in broad trends over time. Although SPNI and ACRI data before 1985 does exist (and is included in Appendix 7), charts in this section include systematic financial data only from 1985 onward. This is due primarily to the lack of standardization of financial reporting until the mid-1980's when the 1980 Association Law began to take hold, and secondarily to reporting challenges of hyperinflation in the early 1980s.

4.1 Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel (SPNI)

4.1.1 Organizational Structure and History

SPNI was founded in 1953 by a handful of nature lovers and university students interested in encouraging Israelis to love and protect the landscape, flora and fauna of the land of Israel. The invitation to participate in SPNI's founding conference in 1954 listed a fairly activist set of official goals: To recruit the largest possible number of members to receive information on nature protection issues; to activate the members of SPNI in their areas to prevent harm to plants and animals; and to run local councils to deal with legislation and public relations in the areas of their jurisdiction (Regev, 1993).

Yet, the founders' interest in membership activation and legislative change was overshadowed by the early struggle for financial and organizational viability. SPNI's early years were focused on public education through field schools and touring services. A signature trait of the organization's founding documents regarding public education is a devotion to mainstream values with Biblical quotes and Zionist overtones of "knowing the land and loving the land." The field schools were developed in close cooperation with government bodies, enabling SPNI to reach out to millions of Israeli youth to share this mission. Yet, the eventual reliance on governmental funding for major portions of the organization's budget meant a decreased focus on legislation and policy change in comparison to the vision of the founders.

In 2006, the organization's budget totaled 136.5 million NIS, funding an estimated 800 full-time-equivalent workforce, over 20 operational departments, 13 regional field schools, and four regional environmental protection branches (SPNI, 2006). This is an impressive scale and scope, not only in comparison to Israeli NGO operations but also by international standards. For example, in 1999 SPNI employed over 600 workers – roughly three times the personnel of the biggest environmental organizations in the U.S. at the time (Tal, 2002, p. 114). In recent years, SPNI documents that 20% of the Israeli public is exposed to the organization through its field school activities and educational programming with the public schools.

As demonstrated in the following chart, the proportion of the budget which is derived from governmental sources has declined significantly since the early years of the organization, constituting approximately 1/5 of its current financial resources. This decline is estimated to be even more pronounced than the data reveals because it is not until the mid-1990s that the NGO Registrar required that income for services provided to the government (like educational activities for the Education Ministry) be considered "income from the government" and not considered as "fee for services" along with private contractors. Income from foundation grants and membership dues are a comparatively minimal source of financial resources for SPNI, and its primary source of funding is from self-generated revenue through its tour-guide and educational programming.

Chart 8: SPNI Budget Trend

Chart 8: SPNI Budget Trend
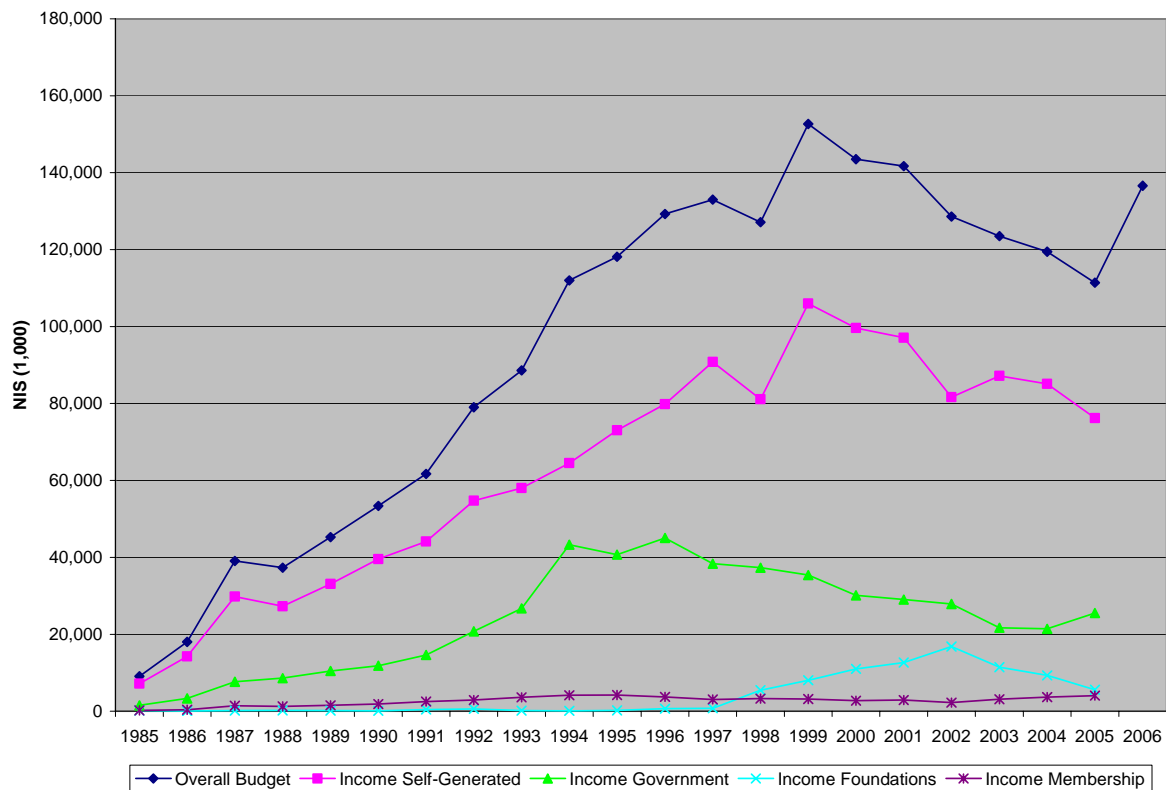
SPNI was founded several years before environmental organizations became prominent on the international scene, underscoring the organization's native-Israeli roots. Organizational leaders and recent publications tend to interpret SPNI's history through the lens of the organization's current activism, going so far as to claim that SPNI can be understood as "just your garden-variety environmental activist organization" (N. Tzur, personal interview, 23.11.2006). Yet, only in the past 15 years has SPNI made a transition to become not only a "nature protection" organization but also a progressive "environmental" organization dealing with issues of urban development and environmental protection in terms of the relationship between people and the environment.

In addition to the conservative influence of the high level of government funding, SPNI has been considered an "establishment" organization because it did not take a principled stand on the political status of the land that Israel conquered and began to occupy in 1967. In contrast to the typically left-wing character of most international environmental organizations, SPNI operates on both sides of the "green line" and through its field school operations has been charged with supporting governmental attempts to place "facts on the ground" in certain areas in the West Bank.[30]

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[30] This critique focuses on SPNI's successful campaign to incorporate the West Bank village of Um Zafah as an official governmental Nature Preserve. Between the competing voices in the organization – those arguing for protection of nature above all else, and those concerned about the political implications of extending and deepening the reach of Israeli governmental rule in the area – the voice of nature won out. Conversely, this "nature protection first and foremost" position is consistent with SPNI's later actions to file a Supreme Court

In 1980, SPNI received the country's highest honor, the Israel Prize, in honor of its public education activities, and until the early 1990s it was Israel's only environmental organization of note. SPNI developed contemporaneously with the governmental offices and ministries regarding nature and environment protection. For example, SPNI drafted a considerable portion of the "Law of Preserving National Parks and Nature" that was submitted in 1963, leading to the establishment of an "Authority for Nature Preservation" under the supervision of the Agriculture Department.

In 1974 the organization commissioned research to evaluate the potential of SPNI's involvement in urban environmental policy advocacy, and recommendations were submitted regarding the organizational changes required in order to for this to take place. These recommended changes were not implemented immediately. Rather, they were initiated gradually beginning in the early 1990s due to external and internal pressures and opportunities. Specifically, SPNI faced decreased government funding along with increased friction with governmental authorities over environmental protection and planning issues.

There is no organizational consensus as to which pressure came first or is most influential – i.e. whether the government decreased funding because of independent considerations of privatization, thereby increasing the organization's willingness to protest governmental actions; or whether the independent increase in SPNI's activism led to decreased governmental financial support. Either way, the clear message to the leadership in the mid-1990s was that SPNI would have to begin to create independent sources of financial support. During the same period, other environmental organizations on the national and local level were founded, challenging SPNI's hegemony in the field. Urban environmental issues that concerned the general public became more prominent in public discourse and the organization began to transition towards emphasizing its environmental activist agenda as a way to win back its defecting membership base. SPNI's annual financial reports demonstrate that investment in its activist Environmental Protection Department subsequently increased from 3.4 million NIS in 1993 (3.9% of overall budget) to 5.6 million NIS in 1997 (4.2%) to more than 11 million NIS in 2006 (8.1%).

More than 20 branches have developed, largely beginning as independent locals with a main focus on traveling and hiking, and not on civic and political involvement *per se*. Over the years, the urban branches became involved with local environmental issues, lead by the Haifa branch in the 1980s acting as a leading player in coalitions advocating for improved air quality. As part of the organizational changes in the mid-1990s, the urban branches of Tel Aviv, Haifa, Jerusalem and Beer Sheva were restructured to focus more explicitly on urban environmental issues and to provide leadership development opportunities for local activists.

The three largest branches – Tel Aviv, Haifa and Jerusalem – have developed locally elected leadership councils since the mid-1990s, a model which the organization is working to replicate

order to stop Jewish settlement in the West Bank when it threatened to compromise ecological interests in the Nofim region in Samaria (Sagi, 1992).

throughout its branch structure. The Jerusalem branch's "Sustainable Jerusalem" coalition has gained national recognition as an example of civic leadership development, and the director of this branch works part time on the national staff to train other branches to develop accordingly. National board elections are independent of those held at the branch level such that locally elected leaders are not automatically linked to a nationwide leadership structure. Yet, a number of the leaders at the local level are also members of the national board, a phenomenon which has become more widespread in recent years.

In the early and mid-1990s, separate mailing lists were maintained by large urban chapters for activist members than for the general membership base, indicating that activist environmentalism was initially viewed as an isolated, "special interest" activity. By the late 1990s, overt political advocacy became mainstream with an organization-wide 1999 campaign called "Find Your Knesset Members" through which the membership base of the whole organization was called upon to cast its vote on the basis of candidates' commitment to environmental issues. Communications once designated only for the activist network became integrated with materials shared with the entire membership base. During this period, green parties were voted into office for the first time in municipal elections in Haifa and Tel Aviv (Ben-Eliezer, 1999). While there is no definitive evidence regarding the degree to which SPNI or other green organizations contributed to this electoral shift, it is clear that the organization did not shy away from participating in and attempting to influence the electoral political landscape.

A vivid example of SPNI's shift toward political activism is its 1999 activist handbook (See "Appendix 5: SPNI's Guide for Public Activity on Behalf of the Environment"). The illustrations on the cover – including an activist carrying a box full of sign-waving activists – show the variety of tools which SPNI aims to impart to its members, leaders and colleagues. The handbook introduces itself as a "handbook for public activism," providing practical advice for advancing planning and building issues, building media support, and dealing with legal aspects of environmental damage.[31] While the average SPNI member may still be more interested in colorful tour-books than this detailed political organizing manual, the membership base is increasingly called upon to sign petitions, work with local political leaders and planners, and mobilize fellow citizens for the occasional rally and demonstration.

4.1.2 Why Membership? Data Profile and Analysis

Providing discounted touring and lodging rates for nature lovers and travelers, SPNI quickly became Israel's largest membership organization outside of the political parties and the Histadrut. In 2006, the main budget items that relate to recruitment, maintenance, and development of members include

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[31] For example: "Tip! A large portion of local council meetings are open to the public who can come and observe their activities regarding planning and building" (p. 60). This tip is followed by detailed guidelines regarding how to protest a planning and building plan, including the necessary governmental forms to submit a formal complaint.

8,013,000 NIS for membership marketing (5.9% of total budget), 7,540,000 NIS for support of the local branches (5.5% of total budget), as well as the 11,181,000 NIS previously noted for environmental protection activities (8.2%). SPNI did not systematically gather membership data until 1989, but based on interview and membership dues data prior to this time, one can assume a steady and gradual increase of membership from the organization's founding until the late 1980s, as outlined below.

Chart 9: SPNI Household Membership Trend[32]
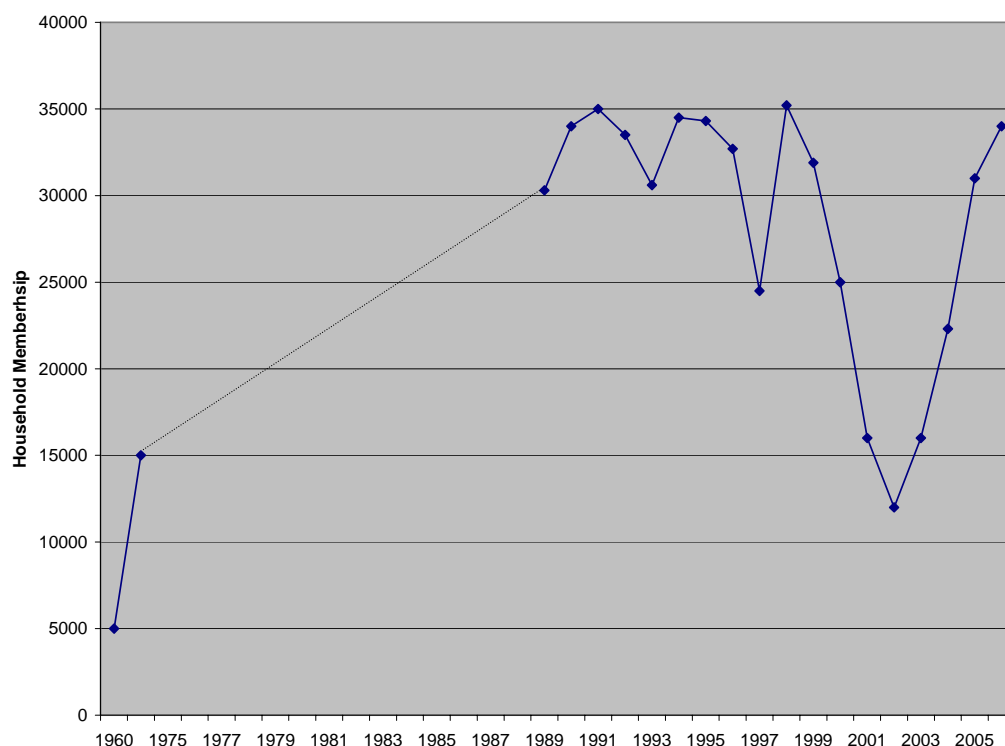
As evident from this chart, membership in SPNI has gone through a series of ups and downs since its founding which correspond with the changing meaning of membership for the organization.

The answer to the question "why membership?" in SPNI's early years was straightforward: to gain financial benefits for SPNI's educational and touring services. While the member could benefit from the feeling of supporting a mainstream organization with a good cause, the cost of membership dues was relatively high at a time when the average Israeli had little disposable income.[33] In a conference report from 1995 it was documented that the majority of SPNI members came from the

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[32] SPNI gathers membership data **by household**, not **by individual** as is the case with ACRI and MQG. When asked to report on total members, they generally multiply these numbers by a factor of three or four, but there is no consistent record regarding the changing proportion of single versus family membership over time. Therefore, I report the more accurate "household membership" in this quantitative analysis.

[33] Until the mid-1990s, membership dues remained the basic equivalent of 120 NIS per year.

middle-class suburbs, voted for left-of-center parties, and enjoyed the practical benefits which membership afforded: discounted park fees, hiking guides, and field school activities (Tal, 2002).

When SPNI began to face competition for membership recruitment from newly founded environmental organizations and private touring and educational sources in the early 1990s, membership began to decrease. In the mid-1990s, tensions rose between SPNI's traditional leaders and the organization's elite education corps, whose leader was the chair of the Israeli Bar Association and was considered to be an aggressive land developer.[34] A concerted membership drive was initiated leading up to the board elections to prevent what was considered to be a potentially hostile takeover of the organization's leadership. On January 13, 1998 buses were chartered from all over the country, bringing an estimated 12,000 SPNI members to a board election vote in Tel Aviv where the traditional leadership prevailed. Some strongly believed there was a genuine threat to SPNI's traditional leadership and the continuity of its organizational values and mission; others claimed this was a convenient way to raise the organization's profile and rally the troops at a time when external factors were leading to decreased organizational membership. This event led to a temporary and artificial upsurge in membership.

During this period, SPNI conducted internal surveys and research to decide whether and how to continue with the membership-building efforts of the organization. In light of the organization's shift towards environmental activism, it was decided to redouble its efforts to build a new kind of membership base for financial and political reasons. Regarding finances, the organization's leadership saw membership dues as an under-exploited source of non-earmarked income for policy change activity. Regarding politics, it was decided that a renewed membership base would be an important source of political leverage in the ongoing and potential campaigns on SPNI's policy change agenda.[35] Hence, beginning in 2000 SPNI redoubled its membership recruiting efforts, which has yielded a consistent increase in membership levels in recent years.

4.1.3 Key Policy Change Victories

The "Save the Wildflower" campaign of 1965 exemplifies SPNI's focus in its early years on public education for nature preservation. Israel's wildflower population began to dwindle in the 1960s due to the widespread practice of selling them for profit, and the lack of cultural norms inhibiting hikers and nature lovers from picking endangered species at will. Though the Council of National Parks and Nature Preservation considered this a "Don Quixote" struggle against the economic interests and

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[34] This education corps consisted primarily of those who came to SPNI as a result of a 1978 merger with the Uri Maimon Association – a small network of high-school nature field groups named after a young nature enthusiast who was killed in the Yom Kippur War.

[35] A number of interviewees noted that this was especially important in light of the increased role of the media, and the decreased importance of mass demonstrations. While 10 years ago the organization would work for three months to plan and recruit for a mass rally, it was claimed that today you could gain more political leverage for your efforts by planning a creative rally which would attract press, during which you emphasize the representative nature of the organization by citing membership support.

cultural norms of flower dealers, school-teachers, parents and nature guides, SPNI persisted in developing one of the first successful public education campaigns in the country. After passing legislation recommending that 10 types of wildflowers be defended by law, SPNI succeeded in raising public awareness of the issue such that the wildflower population quickly recovered and is no longer in danger.

In addition to such public education efforts, relatively early in its history SPNI also proved to be willing and able to use its membership clout to selectively protest government actions that it regarded as principally flawed. A leading example of such protest is the mobilization in 1971 of 10,000 people in resistance to the Nesher Cement Company's push for quarry rights on the northern ridge of the Carmel Mountains in Haifa. This successful campaign led to the creation of Carmel National Park, and is described as a defining moment for SPNI in the recognition of its capacity to take on powerful development interests through the support of its popular membership base. Coinciding with the beginning of the Black Panthers Movement and a few years before the turning point of the Yom Kippur War and the protest in its aftermath, this campaign is celebrated by the organization in retrospect as a turning point in its transition from pure nature protection towards environmental advocacy.

The Nature Preservation Department of the organization was founded in 1974, and a staff member in each field school began to take responsibility for nature preservation in the surrounding area. SPNI experienced a string of nature protection victories in the 1970s against development interests, including the preservation of Nahal Taninim in the face of power station development plans, protection of the Dan streams against excessive tapping, and the establishment of a nature reserve in Hor Har to protect its unique geographic features in light of plans to build railroad tracks in the vicinity.

SPNI has had its share of activist hardships. As the organization gradually became more strident, a group of activists padlocked themselves to bulldozers and construction equipment in a 1990 rally which mobilized 20,000 people to protest the building of a hydroelectric plant on the banks of the Jordan River. Yet, the campaign lost its steam since the organization had not yet begun to frame its efforts in ways that could rally the support of the average citizen concerned about public policy decisions – in addition to the more familiar and easily-organized hard-core nature lover. The organization was also party to many attempts to protest the building of the Trans-Israel Highway in the 1990s, but these efforts were only moderately successful in delaying the plans and introducing minor changes. In 1998, SPNI helped lead a campaign to pass the bottle deposit bill in the Knesset which succeeded formally, but has not been significantly implemented.

Yet, since the re-organization in the mid-1990s, SPNI has also contributed to a number of successful policy change efforts. In 1997 SPNI initiated a broad campaign to protect the coast as a natural resource against planning interests, resulting in protective legislation in 2004 that is widely heralded as a major environmental accomplishment. On the urban planning level, SPNI led the

campaign to create the Ayalon Park in the heart of Tel Aviv, intended to serve as a "green lung" for the region. Despite development interests opposing this initiative, the park was unanimously approved in 2005 by the National Planning Council. SPNI's increased investment in its policy change efforts indicates the likelihood that it will continue to be a significant voice in environmental policymaking issues in the coming years.

4.1.4 Conclusions Regarding Research Hypotheses

In its early years, SPNI membership was consistent with Mancur Olson's theories regarding collective action: members joined largely in order to gain selective benefits. Development over the years, however, has shown that SPNI has gained an interest in developing **leverage** for its policy change efforts. Those involved with policy change in the organization claim that SPNI's successful achievements would not be possible without the political legitimation they gain from representing tens of thousands of voting citizens. The financial contribution of these members has allowed SPNI to increase their investment in policy change work at a time when the organization is receiving fewer government resources, such that the organization has not turned to foundation funding as a significant source of support.

SPNI demonstrates some interest in developing the **leadership** of its constituency, particularly members of its urban branches. While the relationship between the branches and the headquarters have gone through periods of tension due to different interpretations of organizational priorities, SPNI has shown an interest in developing an autonomous leadership base at the local level. Of the tens of thousands of members a few hundred are active enough to consider themselves to be organizational leaders. Finally, there is no indication that **legitimacy** plays an important role in SPNI's strategy of membership recruitment.

4.2 Association for Civil Rights in Israel

4.2.1 Organizational Structure and History

ACRI was founded in 1972 by young lawyers, largely of Anglo-Saxon origin, who became prominent figures in the legal and judicial establishment in Israel. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) was the inspiration and institutional model upon which the organization was founded. ACRI quickly established branches in each of Israel's four major cities (Tel Aviv, Haifa, Jerusalem and Beer Sheva), and showed particularly rapid growth in the late 1980s when its supporters saw the need to act against a deterioration of civil rights in the occupied territories. For the first 15 years, it was the only human rights organization in the field, and continues to be considered the leading human rights organization in Israel (Gordon, 2005).

In 2006 ACRI employed more than a 40-person staff working to develop legal and legislative strategies for advancing human rights, along with educational programming and public activities to educate key sectors in Israeli society. ACRI emphasizes its independence from governing bodies and political parties, noting the freedom this affords the organization in pursuing its goals. While ACRI literature consistently and prominently notes that it raises money from "membership dues, Israeli donations, and international donations," the following chart demonstrates that international foundation funding constitutes the great majority of its financial income.

Chart 10: ACRI Budget Trend[36]

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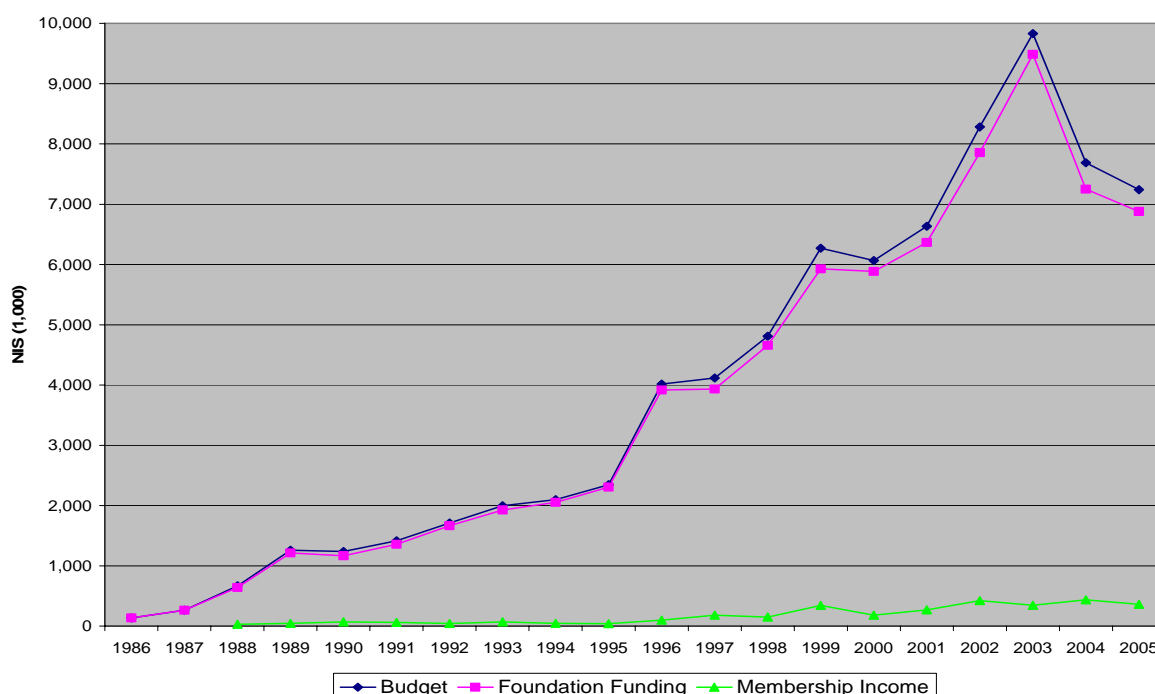
[36] All income which is not accounted for by income from MDE (membership dues, Israeli donations, and fundraising from Israeli events) is derived from international foundation grants. Appendix 7 includes the less commonly available data on membership dues only. Income from membership dues constituted approximately half of the MDE measure in 1998, but has consistently declined in relative importance such that it constituted only 1/6 of the MDE measure by 2005.

In its first decade of operation, ACRI's limited resources were focused almost exclusively on the right to peaceful protest, and its first High Court of Justice case in 1981 dealt with the freedom of expression. In the early 1980s, ACRI was designated as a "flagship" organization of the newly founded New Israel Fund, which became a significant source of independent foundation funding from progressive U.S. donors. Since the receipt of its first major grant in 1982, ACRI has continued to receive significant donations from the NIF. In the 1980s, this source was at times responsible for up to 80% of the operating budget; in the 2006 budget, NIF funding was responsible for approximately 25% of ACRI's income, with other U.S. and European foundations constituting a steadily increasing portion of the operating budget.[37]

In the two decades since its first case in the High Court of Justice, ACRI has built an impressive track record in general, and in comparison to other human rights groups in particular. The first four presidents of the organization – Hans Klinghoffer, Shimon Agranat, Haim Cohen and Ruth Gavison – are amongst the "who's who" of the Israeli legal profession. ACRI's growing self-confidence as a leading legal authority with mainstream respect is evidenced by the fact that its fifth and current president, the prominent Mizrahi novelist Sami Michael, is not a lawyer.

ACRI's education department was founded in 1988 and has facilitated courses for security forces (such as army, border patrol, police and prison services), high school students, social workers, and local and national decision-makers. While the legal department has broadened its work in recent years to include political, economic and social rights, its main focus is still on classic civil rights issues that relate to protecting the minority rights of the Palestinian population in the occupied territories, and the range of minority groups in the state of Israel.

The role and prominence of the branches has gone through several evolutions. They were founded to deal with identifying and addressing human rights issues on the local or regional level, but by the early 1990s they had become centers of volunteer activity of lawyers and community activists who became invested in the organization's operations. Democratic elections were held for leadership boards of the local branches without a direct link to the national organizational structure. This resulted in tension between the national staff and elected board on the one hand, and the leadership of the branches on the other. Due to high turnover of executive directors and persistent budget problems, an outside consultant was hired to give advice on steps for organizational change. In 1993 an Executive Director with private sector experience was hired with a mandate to improve the managerial operations of the organization. Two main organizational changes implemented at this time were to

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[37] In 2000, the funding mix was approximately 70% from North America, 25% from Europe and 5% Israeli. While there has been no change in the proportion of Israeli donations, the proportion of funding received from European donations have increased in comparison to North American sources in recent years: in 2006, approximately 60% of the operating budget was reported to originate from North America and 35% from European sources (G. Orkin, personal interview, 7.1.2007)

cancel elections to boards at the branch level in order to centralize authority with the paid staff of the organization, and to close the Beer Sheva branch's operations.

4.2.2 Why Membership? Data Profile and Analysis

The following chart demonstrates that ACRI membership levels have hovered between 500 and 1,600 official members since the mid-1980s. Members receive newsletters and educational material from ACRI, and are eligible to vote in the national board elections. While financial investment in membership recruitment and development has fluctuated somewhat over time, the 2006 budget devotes one part-time staff position to membership recruitment, and one part-time position to the coordination of membership retention-oriented activities like public lectures and conferences.

Chart 11: ACRI Membership Trend
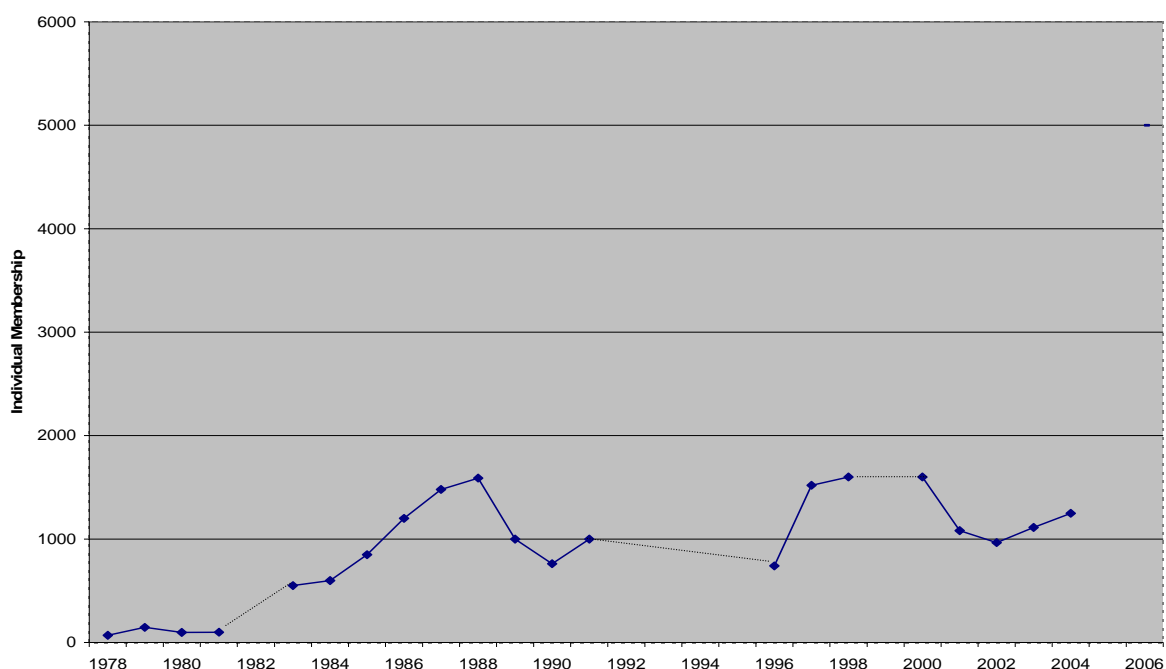
The question of "why membership" seemed a timely one for organizational leaders in 2006 who were in the midst of debating internal proposals regarding the future of ACRI as a membership organization. These proposals ranged the gamut from canceling membership altogether to launching initiatives for operating significant outreach programs to gain a mass membership base. The consistency of ACRI membership levels over time and the intensity of the debate over the issue today might lead one to believe that this is a new issue facing the organization's leadership. Yet, investigation into protocols from the annual General Assemblies since the early 1980s demonstrate that the question of "why membership" – and "how membership" – has been a perennial question for the organization.

There are three main reasons why ACRI was founded as a membership organization, as noted in interviews and archival research. First, ACRI's founding was inspired by the American Civil Liberties Union, and membership recruitment is one of the many organizational practices which were copied from the U.S. model. Second, membership recruitment was a first instinct for founding members regarding how to run a social change organization given their experience in similar organizations in other countries. While these two reasons are related in practice, there is an important theoretical distinction. The first relates to mimetic practices of organizational copying and modeling; the second relates to what is known as the "collective action repertoires" available to organizational leaders themselves (Clemens, 1997). As an example of membership-building as a collective action repertoire of ACRI founders, in response to the question of why ACRI decided to recruit members, Prof. David Kretzmer responded: "It was just a given for us. We were familiar with the practice. We never considered the possibility of *not* having members" (personal interview, 6.12.2006). Third, one of ACRI's founding goals was to challenge the non-democratic nature of the state's functioning, which motivated the organization to serve as an example through demonstrating its own internal democratic practices. The degree to which founding members saw themselves as establishing an enlightened "state within a state" modeled after U.S. democratic practices is evident from the titles assigned to different officeholders (e.g. the "president") and departments (e.g. executive, legislative and judiciary committees).

There are two reasons cited for why ACRI continues to be a membership-based organization today. First, in the Israeli political arena, some claim that the fact that ACRI is a membership organization – regardless of the numbers of people it can claim to represent – continues to be a source of leverage for ACRI as a democratically run and supported body. In fact, even organizational leaders who supported canceling membership in principle have refrained from doing so in practice due to the concern that this step would lead to unnecessary negative publicity regarding the elite nature of the organization. Second, and most significant to those familiar with the financial operations of the organization, the fact that ACRI is a membership organization – again regardless of the numbers of people it can recruit – is important to its international funders.[38]

Members have only rarely been recruited to participate in public demonstrations or to sign petitions. While rhetorical calls have been made to build a mass membership base, such cries have not translated into action steps. General Assembly protocols document this tension: in a ritual-like fashion, the concern is consistently raised regarding the lack of increased membership, and different solutions are proposed for dealing with this concern. For example, a membership drive is proposed that will act voluntarily a few nights a week and ideas are raised for planning high-profile lectures and

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[38] It is worthy of note that the process of building trust and gaining access to organizational material in ACRI was particularly challenging. A number of sources eventually noted that this was influenced by my being an American immigrant, and concerns that my research questions would expose the weakness of the membership base in a way that would damage the organization's reputation in the eyes of its funders.

events. Yet, specific plans for recruiting new members never expands much beyond focusing on university students and faculty members, and lawyers currently practicing in the field of civil rights who have not yet joined the organization.[39] In this sense, ACRI membership serves as somewhat of a professional organization for those who interpret their business in broad terms to be the work of advocating for civil rights.

ACRI's focus on demonstrating its membership base to its foreign donors is evidenced in the emphasis it places on being a membership organization in its English-language annual reports compared to the relative obscurity of this fact in its Hebrew-language material. While listing sources of financial support, the rhetorical phrase has not changed since the early years of the organization: membership dues are always mentioned first, followed by Israeli donations, and concluding with foundation grants. As shown in the budget trend above, this formulation starts with what is most ideologically or rhetorically important, and concludes with what is most practically significant.

4.2.3 Key Policy Change Victories

In 2000, ACRI received the Israel Bar's annual prize for Contribution to Law and Society in Israel. A review of the cases sponsored by ACRI demonstrates the mainstream significance of its achievements in influencing Israeli public policy. For example, three of the six main legal cases taught in a 2005 course on Israeli constitutional law at Hebrew University's Public Policy School – not a course on human rights, but rather a basic introduction to mainstream pubic law in Israel – were initiated by ACRI (Bakri 2003; Committee Against Torture 1994; Beit Sourik 2005). Empirical research on interest group success in litigation demonstrates that of the 70 High Court of Justice cases ACRI submitted by 2000, it won eight of them with a success rate of 11.5%, whereas other human rights organizations have won only 2.8% of their submitted cases (Dotan & Hofnung, 2001).

ACRI has gained standing representation at Knesset committees, and has had a significant impact on more than thirty pieces of legislation, including Basic Laws, anti-harassment laws, equal-opportunity employment laws, the Patients' Rights Law, Alternative Burial Law, Public Counsel Law, and the Freedom of Information Law. ACRI has also been responsible for dozens of key legal precedents protecting fundamental human rights, such as the right of non-Orthodox Jewish representatives to serve on local Religious Councils, the right of women to serve as air force pilots, and the right of security detainees to be represented by legal counsel.

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[39] Ambivalence towards investing in a broader democratic approach was comically highlighted in a debate about voting procedures in the 1997 General Assembly proceedings. The problem is raised that a small number of members voted in the organization's board elections. The example of Haifa is noted, where only one out of 200 members in the area came to the branch to exercise their right to vote. A suggestion is made to allow voting through the mail instead of the voting box at the local ACRI branch in order to reduce the hardship on working people, and the proposal passed 15 to 11. Immediately following this vote, a suggestion was made to delay implementation of the decision of their own vote, which the same members passed by a margin of 13 to nine.

4.2.4 Conclusions Regarding Research Hypotheses

The main importance of membership in ACRI is **legitimacy**. This legitimacy is derived primarily from the authority that membership grants the organization in its international fundraising efforts, but also in terms of the moral authority in Israel provided by the elite individuals who constitute the small cadre of official supporters of the organization. In this context, it is significant to note that ACRI has been successful in creating a public image of being a membership based organization with a large number of supporters, despite the relatively small number of official members in practice

This legitimacy, in turn, provides the organization with a source of **leverage** in the narrow sense through its capacity to mobilize financial resources from abroad in order to carry out its legal and advocacy agenda. Leverage in the broader sense of mobilizing electoral power to influence elected policymakers is not evident. Finally, while there was evidence of the importance of **leadership** development of members in the early years of the organization, the subsequent focus on professionalization and centralization outweighed initial ambitions of educating Israeli citizens on the knowledge of how to combine.

4.3 Movement for Quality Government

4.3.1 Organizational Structure and History

The Movement for Quality Government was founded in the aftermath of the coalition negotiations of the 1988 national elections, and controversial political party maneuvering in 1990 which became known as "the stinking exercise."[40] Considerable public protest followed these events, even considering Israel's relatively high standards of the "politics of provocation."

During this protest period, civic leaders used strategies which had not commonly been used in Israeli public discourse to get out their message, including the use of public relations professionals, celebratory demonstrations with professional musicians, and petition-signing stalls in public squares. Some of these demonstrations drew more than 100,000 participants, with the largest protest reportedly drawing approximately 200,000 people to attendance. The innovation was the general challenging of the basic assumptions of "politics as usual." Yet, there was disagreement amongst the various leaders of the protest which included mayors, the leaders of the "Constitution for Israel" movement, and two different groups of hunger-strikers.

The Movement for Quality Government is one of the organizations that grew out of this period of unrest with the intention of building an ongoing organizational platform for improving the quality of government in Israel. In 2006, MQG employed a staff of more than 20 full time workers, and the 2005 budget totaled 5,303,000 NIS. In addition to its legal department, MQG runs departments for membership recruitment, a research division, and an organizing department which works to activate current members around specific projects and issues. An organizationally distinct "Quality Government Community College" was founded in 2000 to lead the organization's public education efforts. Past and current organizational leaders note that the MQG did not explicitly use any existing organizational model as a guide in developing the organizational model.[41]

The founding documents of the movement demonstrate its initial ambition to reach out to the public, but it was not until an official board decision in 2002 that MQG began to invest significant organizational resources in membership recruitment and development with the declared intention of becoming "a mass movement." As evident in the following chart, membership dues have become an increasingly significant part of the organization's budget, currently providing about 20% of its income.

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[40] Following a dispute regarding possible peace negotiations, a no-confidence vote was passed for the first time ever in Israel. The controversy regarded competing efforts of the two largest parties to build a stable coalition by attempting to recruit the support of Shas and other right wing swing parties. "So ugly were the negotiations between the large and small parties during this dramatic coalition crisis that Rabin himself described the maneuver of his own party as a 'stinking exercise'" (Diskin & Diskin, 1995, p. 40).

[41] A few interview sources noted that this was a result of the relatively unique role of the High Court of Justice in Israeli society, particularly since the Court became more of an activist force in the early 1990s. Hence, the Court is a source of leverage for social and political change, even for organizations with a relatively small budget. This claim is empirically supported by Dotan and Hofnung's finding in 2001 that close to 15% of the caseload of the High Court of Justice consists of petitions by interest groups like ACRI and MQG.

Chart 12: MQG Budget Trend[42]
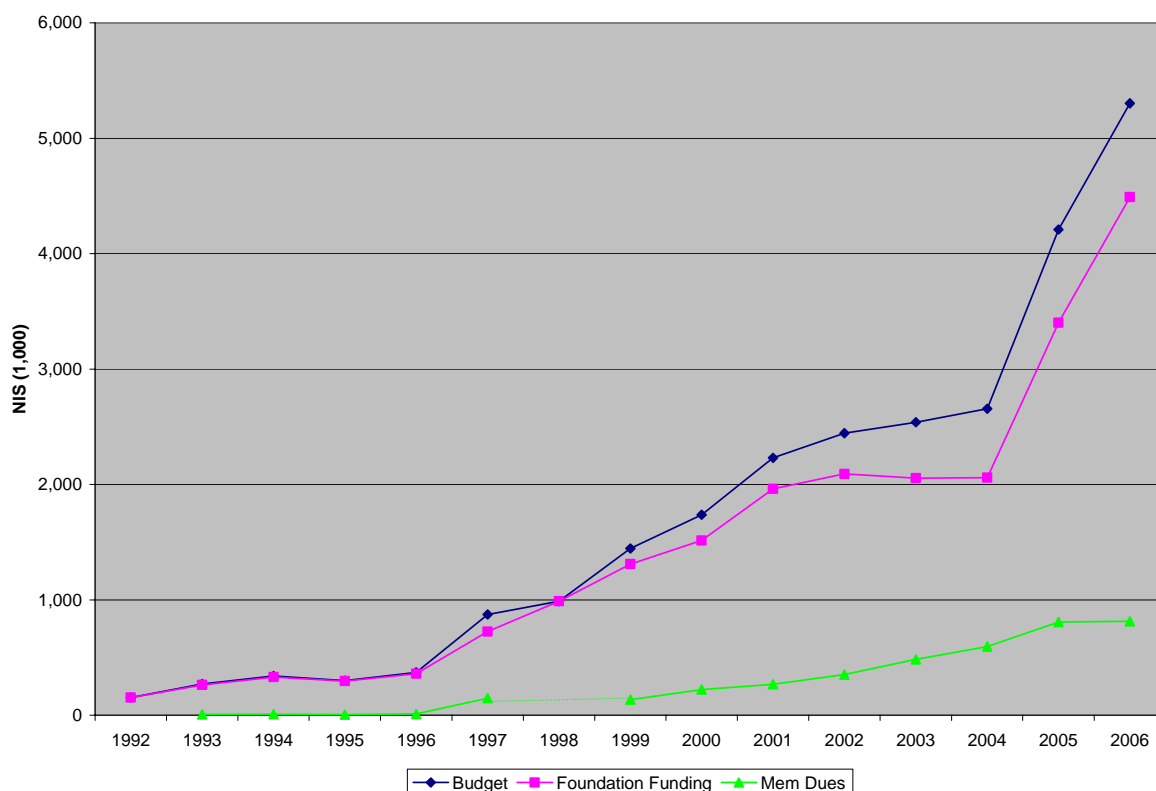
Consistent with its efforts to serve as an independent voice of critique on behalf of quality government, MQG does not accept government funding. Until recently a large portion of its operating budget consisted of donations from wealthy Israeli families and from international foundation funding. In the past five years, MQG has made a strategic decision to limit these sources of income and to develop a more financially contributing membership base for two main reasons. First, MQG has become more outspoken in its critique of the wealthiest families in Israel and their close working relationships with governmental leaders on a range of issues, which decreases the organization's ability to raise money from this population. Second, MQG began to count on certain funding streams from international foundations, and encountered moments of organizational crises when major expected grants did not come through. Sometimes this happened for reasons beyond MQG's capacity to predict or control, but at times this lack of financial support was the direct result of new campaigns initiated by organizational leaders that were not supported by their foundation supporters.

MQG has significantly refined its organizational goals over time. Founding documents indicate the considerable ambitions of the founders following "the huge wave which swept up the whole country." An urgent request was submitted to the NGO Registrar to hasten the formal registration process as much as possible "so that the movement could begin to address the needs of the people" (E. Shraga 8.7.1990). An initial list of goals included working on behalf of a state

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[42] The 2006 membership dues figure is updated only to Dec 1, 2006. MQG accountant Uri Adika noted that this is a significant undercount since many members pay annual dues during the month of December.

constitution, changing the election system and government structure, and implementing a bill of rights. An official amendment was soon requested, taking effect in August of 1991 to change the name to "Quality – The Movement for Quality of Government, Life, Nature, Scenery, and Environment in Israel." The new list of goals outlined in the organization's Certificate of Registration to the NGO Registrar (2.9.1996) included a broad array of ambitions, including:

1) Educate and work for quality environment and water
2) Educate and work for protecting nature and landscapes
3) Educate and work for cultural life
4) Educate and work for to prevent traffic accidents
5) Educate and work for democratic culture of competent management
6) Educate and work for religious tolerance

By the 1993 General Assembly it was decided to return both to the organization's original name and set of goals because of the lack of resources to pursue this broadened agenda (GA Protocol 13.1.93). Today the organization's official mission is to combat corruption, protect democracy and the rule of law, and to promote transparency in government administration.

4.3.2 Why Membership? Data Profile and Analysis

Efforts were made in the late 1990s to recruit a larger membership base, but initial attempts were fairly similar to ACRI's declarations of the symbolic importance of membership. Ads were placed in *Ha'aretz*, the most elite of Israel's three leading newspapers, and supporters were urged to join the good fight. Yet, MQG has moved towards more substantive efforts to build a membership base following an official board decision in 2002 declaring the organization's intention to transform itself into a social movement. The chart below demonstrates the MQG's success in expanding the number of members since this formal declaration.
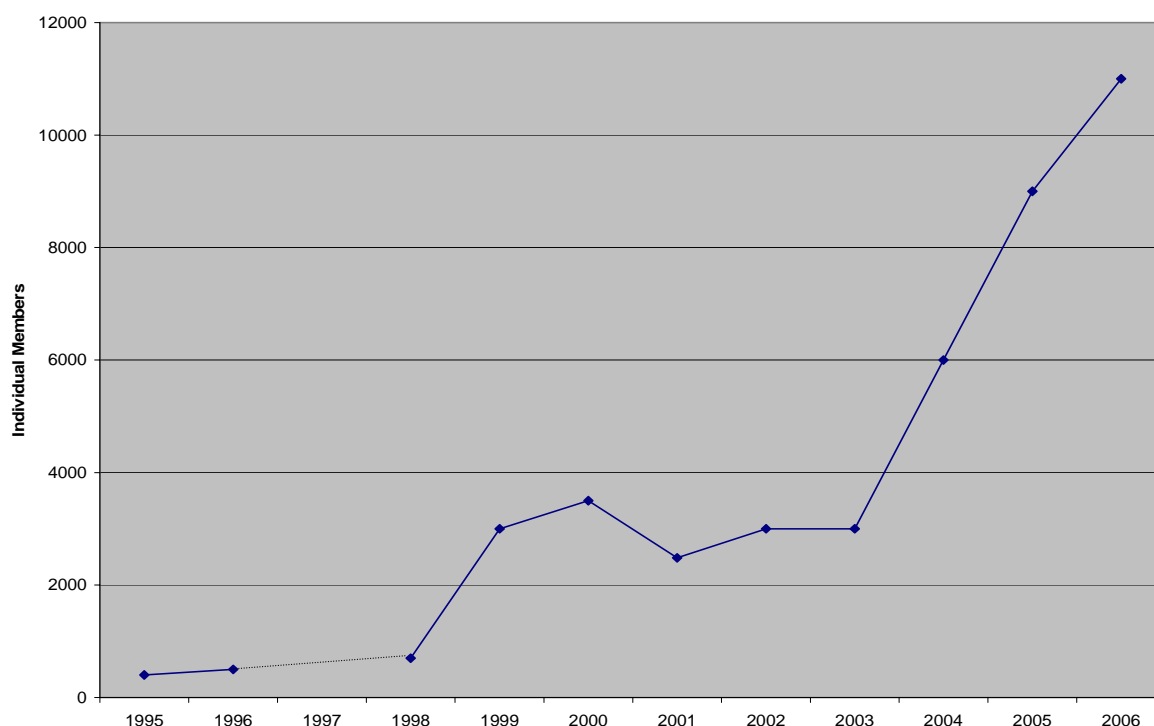
As previously noted, this transition was undertaken because of the perceived need to create a more independent and stable base of financial and political support in light of the organization's increased focus on challenging vested public interests. MQG has set an ambitious goal of reaching financial "self-sufficiency" – i.e. fully funding its operations from membership dues – in the next decade of its activity.

MQG has made strategic organizational decisions to increase its membership base. A membership recruitment department was founded in 2002 which uses a combination of tactics such as recruiting in public squares, telephone follow-up to petition-signers, and expanded media campaigns including Israel's more widely distributed national newspapers, *Ma'ariv* and *Yediot Aharonot*. These efforts have yielded fruit, with a significant increase in membership in recent years to approximately 11,000 paying members in 2006.[43]

The organizing department, also founded in 2002, focuses on encouraging existing members to become actively engaged in a range of activities. Similar to ACRI, the branches of MQG have experienced fluctuating involvement of members over time. In 2006 there were no elected leaders at the local level, and no plan to develop in this direction. The most active members were those who participated in the "municipal monitoring teams" that operated in almost a dozen different localities. These teams receive training from the national staff regarding use of local authority reports and public

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[43] The organization has claimed up to 16,000-18,000 including mailing list members, but this is distinct from dues-paying members who are eligible to vote for board elections.

information in order to monitor the activity of local governmental bodies. The organizing department is the front line for recruiting members to participate in demonstrations and also runs house meetings as a strategy for increasing its membership base and recruiting volunteers to the municipal monitoring teams.

Internal democracy, however, has been less of a focus of the organization. The founding chairperson of the organization remains in the same position today, and is widely regarded as the dominant voice in organizational decision-making. There has been high turnover in board and staff members, and members have little formal opportunity to have a say in setting organizational priorities. In 2006 MQG submitted a foundation grant requesting support to develop regional branches as a tool for reaching its desired financial and political independence. Even if this grant is received, however, it is unclear whether the organization would be capable of successfully incorporating member-led branches into its centralized organizational structure.

4.3.3 Key Policy Change Victories

Examples of successful petitions are numerous and diverse, helping MQG make a name for itself in recent years as an initiator of effective policy change. Such policy changes include: a decree ordering the exposure of coalition agreements which used to be confidential; a ruling regarding inspections of nominations to the public sector to prevent political nomination; and provisions for the protection of whistleblowers. MQG has also succeeded in campaigns to cancel pensions for Knesset Members who did not complete their terms of office, and to require a mandatory provision of legal liability of local authority leaders to combat their lack of accountability regarding the misallocation of funds.

MQG has combined its legal advocacy with the submission of public petitions. For example, in recent efforts to eliminate the discrimination in army recruitment processes, a 25,000 signature petition was submitted to the High Court of Justice. MQG views its membership base as one of the main reasons for its successful policy change activities.

4.3.4 Conclusions Regarding Research Hypotheses

MQG's recruitment of members is focused on **leverage** in both the financial and political realms. Yet, this leverage is one that is largely defined and operated by key board leaders and the paid staff, with the members themselves playing a small role in decision-making processes regarding the organization's agenda. Regarding **leadership,** despite sporadic attempts to develop local chapters, the main achievement in this area has been the development of municipal monitoring teams. While members of these teams are becoming more active in their local communities, they fulfill a primarily practical function for the organization, and are not elected or developed as organizational leaders. **Legitimacy** as defined in the membership hypotheses does not seem to play a significant role for the organization.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Conclusions Regarding Research Hypotheses

In the initial stages of this research, the question was often raised whether membership-based organizations interested in influencing public policy actually exist in the Israeli context. The case study findings indicate that not only do they exist, they seem to be increasingly relevant voices in policymaking processes in Israel.

Regarding the question of "whither membership?" (Hypothesis 4), the hypothesis generally holds true. In comparison to the U.S. context, where membership organizations have steadily decreased in size over the past 20 years, the organizations which are the focus of this research either held steady or increased the number of official organizational members over time. Concomitantly, the meaning of membership for the organizations became increasingly focused on gaining political leverage for policy change goals.

Turning to the hypotheses regarding "why membership," a number of patterns emerge. Regarding **leverage**, SPNI and MQG present clear cases of the use of membership to build political capacity for influencing policymaking processes. ACRI's membership base relates to leverage in a narrower and more indirect fashion, but there is an important connection between its use of a membership recruiting strategy and the organization's ability to influence the policy arena. Without its status as a membership organization, ACRI would have more difficulty recruiting funding sources that allow it to challenge the status quo regarding civil rights in Israel. Hence, ACRI is the only organization in this study which seems to regard **legitimacy** as the primary reason for its membership recruitment.

More surprising – and more concerning for those who care about democratic development in Israeli civil society – is the lack of importance of **leadership** for these membership-based interest groups. Only SPNI operates significant political activities for members on the local level, but even these activities are not institutionally linked to the organization's national decision-making processes. One of the significant findings of the Civic Engagement Project in the U.S. is that translocal chapters of national membership organizations mirrored the U.S. government's formal structure, with constitution-based local chapters electing scores of organizational members into official leadership positions (Skocpol, et al., 1999). These layers were so numerous that in these massive civic organizations there was an elected leader for approximately every 10 members (Skocpol, et al., 1998). This was the kind of civic organization that Tocqueville was referring to in his celebration of the knowledge of how to combine. Basic democratic skills of recruiting support, defining agendas, operating elections, and influencing the next level of the leadership hierarchy were systematically taught to hundreds of thousands of American citizens through the broad network of these classic civic associations.

While much concern is expressed about the relative decline of such opportunities in recent years in the U.S., it is startling to note that such opportunities never truly existed in Israel's civic past, and seem to barely exist today. An informal survey of the occupational history of the organizational leaders in the three organizations in this research indicated that many of the most senior organizational leaders did not grow up through the ranks of civil society organizations, but rather "jumped" into the civic arena after completing senior roles in the army or in the business sector. Recalling the motives of Tocqueville's study of democracy, this finding raises concerns regarding the transition of Israel's collectivist polity toward an atomistic one in which political leaders are capable of concentrating significant power in their hands in the face a quiet, disorganized citizenry.

Similar to the U.S. context, these organizations are mimicking the national governmental structure. While the U.S. Civic Engagement Project gathered hundreds of dog-eared constitution booklets from local chapters, the Israeli organizations copy their government's lack of a constitutional structure, leading to amorphous battles between local and national authority. The lack of opportunity for influencing constituent-based local leaders seems to encourage the centralization of authority with the national staff.

5.2 Future Research

These conclusions point to a number of future areas of research. First, confirmation of the trends noted in this study could be gained by expanding the research to include additional interest-group associations (See Appendix 3) and other categories of membership (See Chart 7). In particular, the scope of the research must be expanded in order to include minority groups, such as the right wing and religious sectors, and the Arab and Palestinian population. Majid Al-Haj's 1993 research indicates that the trends identified here are also present in Arab and Palestinian populations, which have experienced a blossoming of extra-parliamentary constituent-based national organizations in recent years.

Second, a more focused comparative study could be developed between prominent membership organizations compared to similar organizations which do not have a membership base in order to explore the connection between membership and the achievement of policy change goals. For example, SPNI could be compared with an organization like Adam Teva v'Din; ACRI with an organization like B'Tzelem. Such comparative research could focus more specifically on the implications of the use of membership recruitment for organizational effectiveness. A comparative study could also be undertaken between particular Israeli membership organizations and their international counterparts to better understand the influence of political opportunity structure in Israel on civic engagement patterns.

Third, a further avenue of comparative empirical research on the issue of membership has become available in recent years through the World Values Survey (WVS) which began in 1981.[44] Among the many topics covered in this survey are detailed questions regarding individuals' membership and participation in a range of political, labor, and civic organizations. This survey has taken place approximately every five years since 1981, and each year new countries have been included in the project, generating new empirical and theoretical insights regarding civic engagement worldwide. The survey and others like it were first implemented in Israel in 2000 and are a rich source of individual level and country comparison data which has not yet been used for the purpose of studying membership.[45] This is the empirical source of Schofer and Fourcade-Gourinchas's 2001 research on the structural context of civic engagement, and the new data on Israel would allow us to formally develop and test hypotheses regarding Israel's civic engagement in comparison to other advanced democracies. Specifically, this data source would allow the development of a more detailed and explicit model of political opportunity structures with a range of operationalized variables, similar to Meyer and Minkoff's 2004 study of the civil rights and feminist movements in the U.S.

5.3 Organizational and Policy Implications

I will conclude with two practical implications of this research for civic leaders.

The first practical implication is the suggestion for civic organizations to investigate the potential benefits of adopting a membership-based strategy despite the seemingly reasonable arguments for refraining from such an investment. In his study of interest group associations in first world countries, Clive Thomas notes: "Change in group strategy and tactics are almost always an indication, and most often an early warning, of a shift in the power structure and decision-making process in a political system" (1993, p. 30). Initial evidence from these case studies indicates early warnings of a political pay-off to developing and increasing a membership base in Israel, and civic organizations are recommended to take note.

The second practical implication of this research interfaces with proposals for electoral reform that have been advanced recently through the work of the Megidor Committee. Most arguments in support of electoral reform have focused on the need for effective coalition formation and stability, but electoral reform also relates to increasing the accountability of representatives to the electorate (Diskin & Diskin, 1995). The issue of electoral reform does not seem to be on the radar screen of civil society organizations, but two proposed elements for electoral reform could significantly increase the capacity of civic efforts for influencing public policy by opening up the

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[44] See http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/ (Last accessed Nov 4, 2007).

[45] Correspondence with Israel's WVS contact, Prof. Ephraim Yaar of Tel Aviv University indicates that questions regarding membership patterns were not asked in 2000, but are intended to be part of the next survey "wave." Fortunately, however, the B.I. Cohen Institute for Public Opinion Research at Tel Aviv University did ask the exact series of questions asked in the WVS in its first-time execution of the European Social Survey in Israel in 2002. The WVS data is a richer source of potential comparison, but the ESS would be the immediate source of information on Israel at this time.

political opportunity structure: adding a geographic constituent element, and increasing the election threshold for party eligibility.

The benefit of adding a geographic constituent element is fairly straightforward. By definition, it would increase the representative power of those in the geographic and economic periphery of the country, and increase the accountability between voters and their elected representatives. Once implemented, this reform could encourage civil society organizations to develop more effective and active local membership, thus mitigating the lack of formal leadership development opportunities in Israeli civil society found in this research. Experiments with geographic constituent representation have taken place at the party level, but reform at the party level without change in the electoral system overall has been counter-productive (Hazan, 1999).

Raising the political party threshold is less intuitive but potentially just as significant. The threshold was only .83% at the founding of the state, and has since been raised to 2%[46] (Diskin & Diskin, 1995; Rahat & Hazan, 2006). This low threshold encourages the transformation of civic associations which gain large membership into narrow interest parties, a transition that leads to questionable results in terms of the interested constituent group advancing their agendas (Yishai, 1991). This transition takes place both because of the lure of financial and media resources afforded to the new party, and the perceived advantage of becoming part of the official political system. Proposals for raising the election threshold (Lijphart, 1993; Rahat, 2005) could benefit Israeli democracy by encouraging the development of a larger universe of stable civil society organizations.

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[46] It was raised from .83 to 1% in 1951; 1 to 1.5% before 1992 elections; and from 1.5 to 2% in 2004 (Rahat & Hazan 2006).

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3. Interviewees

Epstein, Barbara. Director of Community Advocacy (*Singur Kehilati*)
Heyd, Ronit. Director of Social and Economic Justice Program, Shatil
Katz, Ophir. Attorney specializing in nonprofit legal issues
Kaufman, Roni. Civil Society Researcher, Ben Gurion University's Social Work Department
Styglicz, Carlos. Associate Director of Shatil
Sadan, Elisheva. Lecturer in Hebrew University's School of Social Work and Social Welfare

3.2 Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel
Ben-Moshe, Yoav. SPNI Budgeting Department
Gedalizon, Eitan. SPNI, former Executive Director
Halevy, Dana. SPNI, Coordinator of Tel Aviv Community
Kelem, Tal. SPNI, Director of Membership Recruitment
Levy, Pazit. SPNI, Assistant Director of Jerusalem Branch
Mehadav, Momo. SPNI, former Director of Tel Aviv Branch
Papai, Nir. SPNI, Coordinator of Beachfront Preservation
Peled, Orly. SPNI former Director of Environmental Education Division
Silverman, Emily. SPNI, former Director of Urban Livability Program
Tzur, Naomi. SPNI, Director of Jerusalem Branch

3.3 Movement for Quality Government
Adika, Uri. MQG Accountant.
Bracha, Emek. MQG, Director of Membership Department.
Eitan, David. MQG Chair of the Dan branch
Harel, Tali. MQG, Coordinator of Membership Recruitment
Levanon, Shooky. MQG Spokesperson
Nechushtai, Shai. Director of MQG College
Priel, Dorit. MQG Hod Hasharon Municipal Team member
Smadga, Yossi. MQG Director of the Organization Department
Sulam, Eli. MQG Executive Director

3.4 Association for Civil Rights in Israel
Dahan, Tal. ACRI, Director of ACRI Information Center
Epstein, Barbara. ACRI member
Gil, Amos. ACRI Former Executive Director
Kretzmer, David. ACRI founding member and former Chair of the Board
Lederfarb, Victor. ACRI Accountant.
Lidor, Miriam. ACRI Director of the Department of Public Activities and Relations
Livne, Vered. ACRI Former Executive Director
Orkin, Gila. ACRI Fundraiser
Radovnitch, Hedva. ACRI member, former Tel Aviv Branch Coordinator
Shem-Tov, Orna. ACRI Board Member and former Chair of the Board

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Appendix 1: Nonprofit Sector Profile

Figure 1: Registration of Third Sector Organizations in Israel, 1980-2001
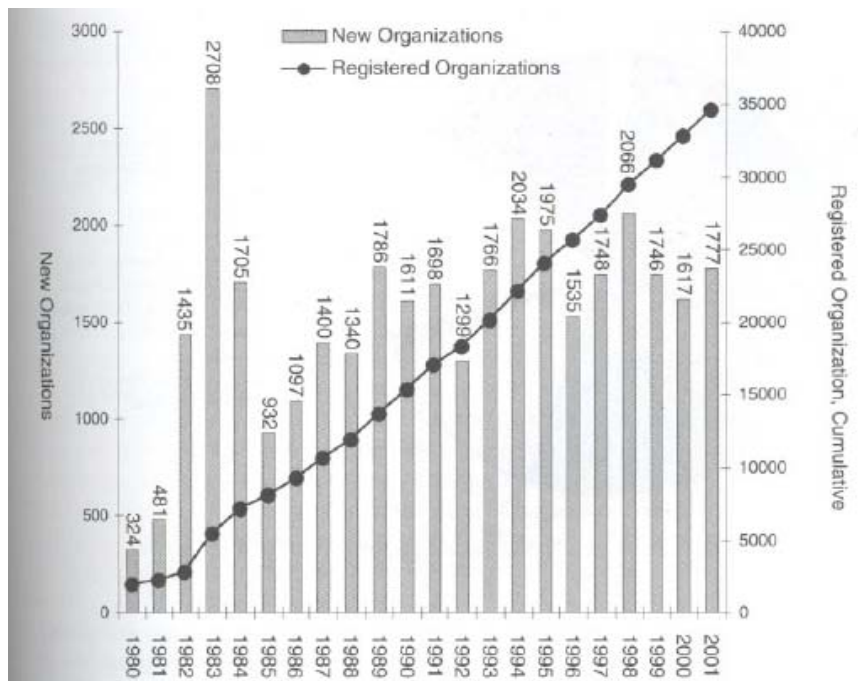
Gidron et al., 2004, p. 23

Figure 2: International Comparison of Third Sector Employment, 1995

Gidron et al., 2004, p. 17

Appendix 2: U.S. "Civic Engagement Project" Research Findings

TABLE 1. Large U.S. Membership Associations: Origins, Structure, and Decades in which More than 1% of Men/Women Were Enrolled

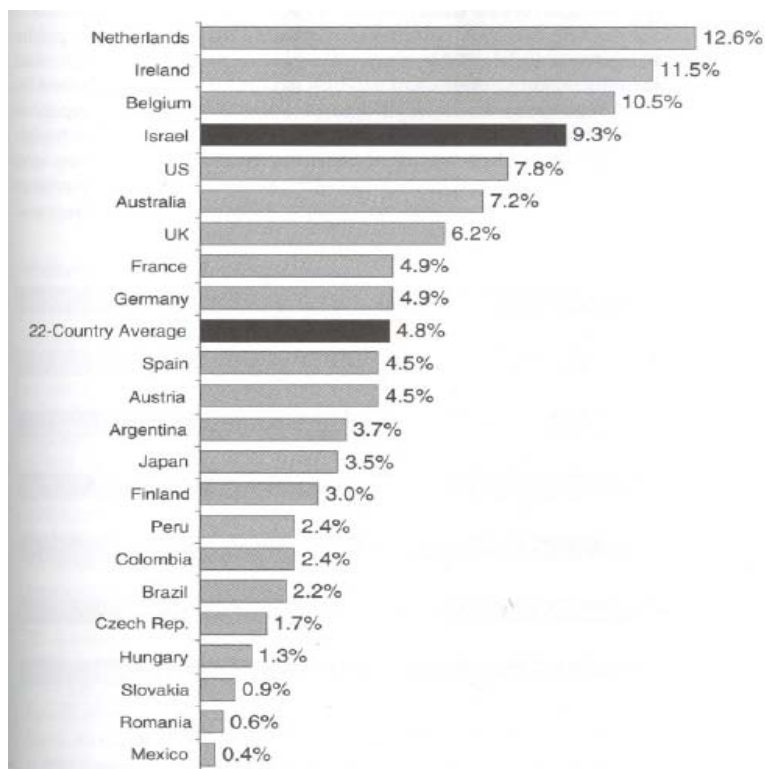| Organization	Duration		Scope at Inception				National Associational Structure			Above 1%
	Founding	Ending	Portal	Local	Nat'l	Comb.	Nat/Loc	Fed/St/Loc	Nat/Mid/Loc	
Ancient and Accepted Free Masons	1733	Boston		X				None	None	None	1810s to present
Independent Order of Odd Fellows	1819	Baltimore		X				None	1825	None	1840s–1950s
American Temperance Society	1826	Boston	1865			X		1828	1826		1830s–1840s
Gen. Union for Promoting the Observance of the Christian Sabbath	1828	New York	1832			X					1830s
American Anti-Slavery Society	1833	Boston	1870			X			1833		1830s
Improved Order of Red Men	1834	Baltimore			X				1847		1900s–1920s
Washington Temperance Societies	1840	Baltimore	c1848			X		None	None	None	1840s
The Order of the Sons of Temperance	1842	New York	c1970			X		None	1844	None	1840s–1850s
Independent Order of Good Templars	1851	Utica, NY			X				1855		1860s–1870s
Young Men's Christian Association	1851	Boston		X				(1855)	1866		1890s to present
Junior Order of United American Mechanics	1853	Philadelphia	c1970		X				1869		1920s–1930s
Knights of Pythias	1864	Washington, DC				X			1868		1870s–1930s
Grand Army of the Republic (GAR)	1866	Decatur, IL	1956			X			1866		1860s–1900s
Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks	1867	New York			X						1900s to present
Patrons of Husbandry (National Grange)	1867	Washington, DC				X		.1871	1873		1870s, 1910s–1920s
Order of the Eastern Star	1868	New York				X			1876		1910s to present
Ancient Order of United Workmen	1868	Meadville, PA				X			1873		1880s–1900s
Knights of Labor	1869	Philadelphia	1917			X					1880s
Nobles of the Mystic Shrine	1872	New York				X		1876		1878	1910s–1980s
Woman's Christian Temperance Union	1874	Cleveland			X	X			1874		1910s–1930s
Royal Arcanum	1877	Boston				X			1877		1900s
Farmers' Alliance	1877	Lampasas, TX	1900		X				1889		1880s–1890s
Maccabees	1878	Port Huron, MI				X			1883		1900s–1910s
Christian Endeavor	1881	Portland, ME			X				1885		1880s–about 1920s
American Red Cross	1881	Washington, DC				X		(1881)	1893	1905	1910s to present
Knights of Columbus	1882	New Haven, CT			X				1890		1910s to present
Modern Woodmen of America	1883	Lyons, IA				X		(1883)	1890		1890s–1930s
Colored Farmers' Alliance	1886	Houston, TX	1892			X			1886		1880s–1890s
American Federation of Labor	1886	Columbus, OH				X			1886	1886	1880s to present
American Protective Association	1887	Clinton, IA	c1911			X			1887		1890s
Woman's Missionary Union	1888	Richmond, VA				X			1888		1920s to present
Loyal Order of Moose	1888	Louisville, KY				X		1889			1910s to present
National American Woman Suffrage Association	1890	Washington, DC	1920				X		1890		1900–1930s
Woodmen of the World	1890	Omaha, NE					X		1890		1900s–1970s
General Federation of Women's Clubs	1890	New York					X	(1890)	1894		1930s to present
American Bowling Congress	1895	New York				X		(1895)	1924		1920s to present
National Congress of Mothers (PTA)	1897	Washington, DC				X			1898		1900s–1980s
Fraternal Order of Eagles	1898	Seattle, WA				X		(1898)	1902		1910s
German-American National Alliance	1901	Philadelphia	1918			X	X		1901		1910s
American Automobile Association	1902	Chicago				X	X	(1902)	1904		1920s to present
Boy Scouts of America	1910	Washington, DC				X		1910			1930s to present
Ku Klux Klan (Second)	1915	Atlanta	1944			X			1915		1920s
American Legion	1919	Minneapolis				X			1919		1920s to present
American Farm Bureau Federation	1919	Chicago					X		1919		1920s, 1940s to present
Old Age Revolving Pensions, Ltd. (Townsend)	1934	Long Beach, CA	1953			X		1934			1930s
Congress of Industrial Organizations	1938	Pittsburgh	1955			X				1938	1930s–1950s
Total Groups: 46			3	9	28	6	(13)6	34	4	

Note: For data sources, see Appendix A. "Duration" gives the date and location from which each named association was launched and indicates an ending date for groups that no longer exist. As further explained in the text, "Scope" refers to the kind of local or national association envisaged by the organizers at inception. "National Associational Structure" gives the date of adoption of the first national constitution and shows that 13 groups started with national/local arrangements, but seven of these later shifted to other structures. "Above 1%" shows all decades in which associational membership (even briefly) exceeded 1% of all U.S. adult men and/or women.

Skocpol et al., 2000, p. 530

Appendix 3: Membership-Based Interest Group Associations in Israel

- Organizations for people with special needs like *Bizchut, Shikum*
- Jewish Reform Movement
- Jewish Conservative Movement
- Community Advocacy (*Singur Kehilati*)
- *Keshet Democrati*
- Women's organizations like *Bat Shalom, Kol Ha'isha, Kolech, Achoti, Isha l'isha* in Haifa, Coalition of Women for Peace
- Bereaved Parents Forum
- Peace organizations like *Tayush*, *Mahsom* Watch, *Yesh Gvul, Ometz Lesarev*
- Right wing organizations like Women in Green
- Doctors for Human Rights
- *B'tzelem*
- Greenpeace
- Amnesty International
- *Shdulat Hanashim*
- Ha'agudah l'tichnun hamishpacha
- Syncopa
- *Ma'aglei tzedek*
- *Shvil – Shkifut Beinleumit* – International Accountability (TAU)
- *Mahapach*
- *Matzpen*
- Open House for Gays and Lesbians
- The Social Greenhouse *(Hachamama hachevratit)*
- Ne'emanei Torah V'Avodah – Liberal Orthodox
- Citizens for the Environment in the Galil *(Ezrahim l'maan hasvivah, "ALAS")*
- *Ruah Hadasha* – Student's Movement in Jerusalem
- Students' Association – *Agudat Hastudentim*

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1. Despite the hard work and investment involved, why does your organization recruit

   members?

2. What does the organization do in order to recruit members? What strategies are used?

3. What are the rights and responsibilities of a member? (dues, time contribution, etc.)

4. Has the organization's concept of membership changed over time? Why and how?

5. What specific achievements, if any, can be contributed to the building of a membership base

   for the organization?

Appendix 6: Summary Table of Case Study Findings

Org.	Founding	Membership Trend	Funding Mix	Internal Democracy
SPNI	1953	Steady increase until oscillations in the early 1990's. Redefinition of membership to more political in nature, steady and significant increase since 2000.	Mixture of government, self-generated, and membership-dues. Government funding has decreased compared to overall budget over the years, while self-generated (and dues to a limited extent) have become more significant.	Institution since late 1990s of election to local councils in three large branches. Many of these leaders are on the national board as well.
ACRI	1972	Strong declarative importance of membership base. Since 1980s numbers have not decreased below 500 or increased above 1,600	Primarily international foundations. Membership dues have rhetoric importance but did not add significantly to financial resources.	Strong focus on democratically elected national board elections. In 1996 canceled elections on the branch level, increased centralization
MQG	1990	Small membership base in early years; but significant increase in number of members, since late 1990s, and some increase in activism of the membership base.	No use of government funding. Operated largely on private foundation funding until recent decision to become more independent from external financial dictates, pointedly building membership dues base.	Experiments at running local branches have not been successful. While competitive national board elections are held, the founding chair remains the dominant voice in organizational decisions.

Appendix 7: Membership and Budget[48] Data

Appendix 7.1 Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel[49]

	Members[50]	Budget	Income Govt	Income Donations	Income Mem Dues[51]
1960	5,000[52]				
1970	15,000[53]				
1975		11,424,000			407,000 *3.5%*
1976		22,268,000			200,000
1977					
1978					
1979					
1980		24,892,000	9,092,000 *36.5%*		944,000 *3.8%*
1981		68,346,000	19,206,000		2,240,000
1982		171,754,000	38,938,000		4,436,000
1983		439,991,000	96,976,000		13,110,000
1984		1,748,955,000	186,687,000		55,467,000
1985		9,070,000	1,522,000 *16.7%*	140,000 *1.5%*	237,000 *2.6%*
1986		18,050,000	3,340,000	81,000	367,000
1987		39,064,000	7,691,000	140,000	1,452,000
1988		37,335,000	8,616,000	211,000	1,236,000
1989	30,300	45,243,000	10,439,000	138,000	1,546,000
1990	34,000	53,353,000	11,836,000 *22.2%*	107,000 *.2%*	1,847,000 *3.5%*
1991	35,000	61,701,000	14,618,000	452,000	2,528,000
1992	33,500	79,009, 000	20,793,000	610,000	2,890,000
1993	30,600	88,593, 000	26,735,000	167,000	3,637,000
1994	34,500	112,019,000	43,284,000	96,000	4,137,000
1995	34,300	118,158,000	40,694,000 *34.4%*	226,000 *.2%*	4,201,000 *3.6%*
1996	32,700	129,259,000	45,061,000	644,000	3,700,000
1997	24,500	132,997,000	38,354,000	781,000	3,058,000
1998	35,200	127,121,000	37,309,000	5,465,000	3,275,000
1999	31,900	152,660,000	35,416,000	8,078,000	3,196,000
2000	25,000	143,508,000	30,126,000 *21%*	11,033,000 *7.7%*	2,726,000 *1.9%*

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[48] Financial data for each organization is derived from end-of-year Annual Financial Reports (not beginning-of-year proposed budgets), unless noted otherwise.

[49] To demarcate budgetary trends, the proportion of income from government, donations and membership dues is noted in **bold italics** at five year intervals.

[50] Membership data is derived from an internal SPNI document summarizing membership trends 1989 to 2006 provided by Yoav Ben-Moshe, Budgeting Department of SPNI, unless noted otherwise.

[51] An accounting shift took place in 1986-1987: until 1986 only membership dues were included; after 1987 income from publications was also included.

[52] Tal, 2002

[53] Tal, 2002

2001	16,000	141,688,000	29,037,000	12,660,000	2,881,000
2002	12,000	128,609,000	27,873,000	16,847,000	2,230,000
2003	16,000	123,484,000	21,712,000	11,449,000	3,122,000
2004	22,300	119,473,000	21,410,000	9,317,000	3,648,000
2005	31,000	111,411,000	25,533,000 *22.9%*	5,596,000 *5%*	4,036,000 *3.6%*
2006	34,000	136,597,000[54]			

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[54] SPNI Proposed Budget 2006

Appendix 7.2 Association for Civil Rights in Israel

Year	Budget	Members[55]	MDE[56]	Dues
1978		~70[57]		
1979		146[58]		
1980		97[59]		
1981	($7,000)[60]	100[61]		
1982				
1983[62]	1,055,000	550		
1984		600[63]		
1985		850[64]		
1986	135,000	1,200		10,804
1987	262,000	1,480		14,623
1988	669,000	1,590	30,161	
1989	1,259,000	~1,000	46,584	
1990	1,237,000	761[65]	71,752	
1991	1,416,030	~1,000	60,421	
1992	1,709,747		42,794	
1993	1,996,218		69,660	
1994	2,099,492		46,476	
1995	2,345,495		40,419	
1996	4,013,881	740	98,426	
1997	4,114,704	1,520	181,343	
1998	4,809,247	1,600[66]	151,236	93,913
1999	6,270,667		344,138	90,907
2000	6,063,796	1,600[67]	180,222	92,868
2001	6,634,619	1,082[68]	270,099	86,495
2002	8,281,279	967[69]	424,247	112,077
2003	9,830,899	1,113[70]	345,183	121,920
2004	7,687,308	1,250[71]	436,259	94,627
2005	7,239,718		359,759	62,285

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[55] Membership data is derived from Annual Reports, unless noted otherwise
[56] Income raised from Israeli Membership dues, Donations, and Events.
[57] General Assembly Protocol, 20/2/1979
[58] General Assembly Protocol, 20/2/1979
[59] ACRI Secretary's Report, December 1980-July 1981
[60] Review Committee Report May 1985, covering period from June 1984-May 1985
[61] Review Committee Report #1, 11/7/81
[62] General Assembly Protocol 10/6/1984
[63] Review Committee Report May 1985, covering period from June 1984-May 1985
[64] Review Committee Report May 1985, covering period from June 1984-May 1985
[65] General Assembly Protocol, 25/6/91
[66] General Assembly Protocol 26/7/01
[67] General Assembly Protocol 26/7/01
[68] Review Committee report 2000 – 2001 in preparation for June 2001 General Assembly
[69] Review Committee Report 2002
[70] Review Committee Report 2002-2003, submitted June 2003
[71] Gordon, 2005

Appendix 7.3 Movement for Quality Government

Year	Budget	Members[72]	Mem Dues
1992	154,000		
1993	270,000		7,000
1994	340,000		9,000
1995	300,000	400[73]	5,000
1996	370,000	500[74]	11,000
1997	873,000		148,000
1998	988,000	700[75]	
1999	1,445,000	3,000[76]	136,000
2000	1,737,000	3,500[77]	223,000
2001	2,231,000	2,483[78]	269,000
2002	2,443,000	3,000	352,000
2003	2,539,000	3,000	484,000
2004	2,655,000	6,000	596,000
2005	4,208,000	9,000	807,000
2006	5,303,000	11,000	814,000[79]

[72] Membership data is derived from the office of the Executive Director, unless noted otherwise
[73] General Assembly Protocol, 14/9/95
[74] General Assembly Protocol, 3/7/96
[75] Interview, Shooki Levanon.
[76] Review Committee Report, 30/12/99
[77] "Quality Time", Newspaper of the MQGI, March 2000 Vol. 3
[78] Letter from Barak Calev, MQG Legal Department Director to NGO Registrar Amiram Bogat, and legal advisor Sarah Ben Shaul-Weiss, 8/7/01.
[79] Updated to Dec 1, 2006 – this is an undercount since many members pay dues during the month of December.