

# Legislative Advocacy Under Competitive Authoritarian Regimes: The Case of Civil Society in Jordan

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**Abstract** This article expands the limited literature on civil society legislative advocacy in the Arab world by examining the frequency of Civil Society Institutions' (CSIs) legislative advocacy in Jordan, an Arab competitive authoritarian monarchy. The article explores the impact of authoritarian control and organizational factors on CSIs' legislative advocacy. Based on 82 semi-structured interviews, this qualitative study finds that there is a low frequency of legislative advocacy among Jordanian CSIs. Financial resources, access to legislators, and perceptions of legislators' interest in advocacy affect CSI legislative advocacy. In contrast, public funding and the law governing CSIs do not affect CSI legislative advocacy. The findings add to both the literature on advocacy in general and on legislative advocacy in particular, and open up new areas for research.

**Résumé** Cet article élargit la littérature limitée sur les revendications de la société civile dans le monde arabe en étudiant la fréquence à laquelle les institutions de la société civile exercent des pressions en matière de législation en Jordanie, une monarchie autoritaire Arabe concurrente. L'article étudie l'impact de l'environnement politique et des facteurs organisationnels sur les revendications des institutions de la société civile. S'inspirant de 82 entrevues semi-structurées, cette étude conclut que la fréquence des revendications parmi les institutions de la société civile jordaniennes est faible. Les ressources financières, l'accès aux législateurs et les perceptions de l'intérêt des législateurs pour leur action militante affectent les revendications des institutions de la société civile. En revanche, le financement public et la loi sur les institutions de la société civile n'ont pas de conséquences sur les revendications des institutions de la société civile. Les conclusions alimentent la

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littérature sur les actions militantes en général et sur les revendications en particulier, et offrent de nouveaux domaines de recherche.

**Zusammenfassung** Dieser Beitrag ergänzt die begrenzt vorhandene Literatur zur legislativen Interessenvertretung in der Bürgergesellschaft der arabischen Welt, indem er die Verbreitung der legislativen Interessenvertretung seitens bürgerschaftlicher Institutionen in Jordanien, einer arabischen kompetitiv-autoritären Monarchie, untersucht. Es werden die Auswirkungen des politischen Umfelds und der organisatorischen Faktoren auf die legislative Interessenvertretung seitens der bürgerschaftlichen Institutionen erforscht. Beruhend auf 82 semi-strukturierten Befragungen kommt man in der Studie zu dem Ergebnis, dass die legislative Interessenvertretung seitens jordanischer bürgerschaftlicher Institutionen selten stattfindet. Finanzielle Ressourcen, der Zugang zu den Gesetzgebern und das von den Institutionen wahrgenommene Interesse der Gesetzgeber an einer Interessenvertretung wirken auf die legislative Interessenvertretung der bürgerschaftlichen Institutionen ein. Dagegen haben die öffentliche Finanzierung und die Gesetze zur Regelung der bürgerschaftlichen Institutionen keine Auswirkungen auf eine legislative Interessenvertretung. Die Ergebnisse ergänzen sowohl die Literatur zur Interessenvertretung im Allgemeinen als auch insbesondere die Literatur zur legislativen Interessenvertretung und eröffnen neue Forschungsbereiche.

**Resumen** El presente artículo amplía el limitado material publicado sobre la defensa legislativa de la sociedad civil en el mundo árabe examinando la frecuencia de la defensa legislativa de las instituciones de la sociedad civil (civil society institutions, “CSI”) en Jordania, una monarquía árabe autoritaria competitiva. El artículo explora el impacto del entorno político y los factores organizativos en la defensa legislativa de las CSI. Basándose en 82 entrevistas semiestructuradas, el presente estudio muestra que existe una baja frecuencia de defensa legislativa entre las CSI jordanas. Los recursos financieros, el acceso a los legisladores, y las percepciones del interés de los legisladores en la defensa afectan a la defensa legislativa de las CSI. En cambio, la financiación pública y la ley que rige las CSI no afectan a la defensa legislativa de las CSI. Los hallazgos contribuyen tanto al material publicado como a la defensa en general y la defensa legislativa en particular, y abre nuevas áreas de investigación.

**Keywords** Legislative advocacy · Arab · Authoritarian · Jordan · Middle East

## Introduction

The literature on civil society in the Middle East mainly examines the role of civil society in the democratization process (Carapico 2002; Khrouz 2008; Langohr 2004; Yom 2005; Wiktorowicz 2002). Very little literature addresses Civil Society Institutions (CSIs) legislative advocacy in Arab countries and the obstacles they face. The literature on civil society advocacy has been multiplying (Berry 2001;

Dalrymple 2004; Ezell 2006; Hudson 2002; Leroux and Goerdel 2009; Boris and Steuerle 2006; Schmid et al. 2008). However, most of the research on civil society advocacy has focused on Western democracies (Guo and Zhang 2014). In this article, CSIs are defined as voluntary associations that provide social services and/or engage in political reform. Political parties, unions, media, tribal associations, and youth clubs are not considered in this article's definition of CSIs. International aid investment in CSIs as agents of democratic change (Carothers 1999) assumes that these CSIs will participate in the policy process and/or pressure governments through constituents for political change. This focus on democratization and political reform and the lack of research on civil society legislative advocacy in Arab countries motivated this study to explore the nature of and the factors that affect CSIs' advocacy efforts.

This article examines the frequency of CSIs' legislative advocacy in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (hereafter, Jordan), an Arab competitive authoritarian monarchy. This article also explores the impact of authoritarian control and organizational factors on CSIs' legislative advocacy. Based on 82 semi-structured interviews, this study finds that there is a low frequency of legislative advocacy among Jordanian CSIs. Financial resources, access to legislators, and perceptions of legislators' interest in advocacy affect CSI legislative advocacy. In contrast, the law governing CSIs and public funding do not affect CSI legislative advocacy.

This article begins by providing an overview of Jordan's political environment and the role of CSIs in it. Then, the article examines definitions of advocacy in general and legislative advocacy specifically. The article then presents several hypotheses, the methodology used, and the results of the study. The article analyzes the findings in the results section and concludes with the theoretical contributions of the study.

## **Jordan: A Competitive Authoritarian Monarchy**

Although CSIs face many challenges when attempting to realize their potential as policy makers, this potential has been widely touted in international development circles and has become the focus of literature, conferences, funding, and policy initiatives (Pollard and Court 2005). Social theorists such as Foucault, Gramsci, Habermas, and Marx have characterized civil society as being in opposition to the state (Pollard and Court 2005). More recent scholars continue to situate civil society in a confrontation with the state. Rojas (1999) asserts that CSIs' opposition to the state causes them to represent specific political values, whereas Anheier et al. (2005) insist that civil society's strength is rooted in its ability to challenge power-holders. Andrews and Edwards (2004) argues that many civil society organizations avoid politics because of their desire to maintain their independence and ability to provide an alternative to state-led resources.

CSIs in democratic countries have a long history of informing and influencing policy, with many organizations engaging in research, writing, and evaluation that target policymakers (Boris and Steuerle 2006). Many non-profit organizations have a high degree of credibility and provide well-supported information to lawmakers

(Reid 1999). However, relationships between nonprofits and lawmakers are often different in other parts of the world (Clark 1991). Many CSIs in the developing world lack the credibility, expertise, resources, and access to government that are necessary to effectively inform policy (Pollard and Court 2005). Meanwhile, developing country governments are often suspicious of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), which we will call CSIs, and in many countries, authoritarian regimes have restricted the right of CSIs to associate (Salamon 1999; Bebbington and Farrington 1993; Pearce 1997). Smillie (1999) asserts that all governments are wary of organizations that have a proclivity for advocacy and reform.

Jordan is an Arab competitive authoritarian monarchy<sup>1</sup> with a bicameral legislative system where the lower house (also called parliament) is elected by popular vote and the upper-house members are appointed by the king (Lust-Okar 2006). The king's powers are extensive and directed at increasing his control over the political arena. Most spheres in Jordan are controlled directly or indirectly by the state (Wiktorowicz 2000). Jordan lacks real political parties, has faced economic hardship for over a decade, and is under pressure to democratize.

Jordanian civil society operates under this political system. To show that the country is in the process of democratizing, the Jordanian state has allowed CSIs to multiply while it exercises political control. The state regulates access to the civil society arena, so it does not allow institutions whose objectives could threaten the regime or advance democratic changes that could affect the distribution of power and benefits. However, this control does not mean that these institutions cannot participate in legislative advocacy to explain, influence, propose, and change policies that could affect their field or services.

Jordanian civil society has traditionally been weakened by the monarchy and integrated in the political system (Brand 1994), and it has gone through stages of boom and bust (after 1989). During the bust, the state used CSIs as an indicator of political liberalization, but they were restricted, and their involvement in the political process was reduced (Jarrah 2009). However, the efforts of the state do not seem to be the main reason why CSIs have not engaged in advocacy in Jordan.

Jordanian CSIs have a short active history. They became active in 1988/1989 after a devastating economic crisis (Al-Hourani et al. 2011). Jordan had approximately 5718 CSIs in 2010, including cooperatives, social and charity organizations, intellectual/educational organizations, sport clubs, chambers of commerce, unions, women's organizations, non-profit companies, family groups, environmental groups, and human rights groups. The majority of CSIs in Jordan are social and charity organizations (49.5 %), followed by unions (11.2 %), women's organizations (9.1 %), and family groups (6.3 %) (Al-Hourani et al. 2011).

Currently, civil society law number 51 of 2008 governs CSIs (Societies Law 2008). The law allows the state to control access to the political arena and provides political and financial oversight to CSIs. The law requires all CSIs to register in specific ministries (Culture, Social Development, and Interior in case of demonstrations) that supervise them (Al-Hourani et al. 2011). In addition to the law, CSIs are members of

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<sup>1</sup> According to Lust-Okar (2006), competitive authoritarian monarchies are monarchies that hold elections and allow for some power contestation in the system.

the General Council of Voluntary Organization, which includes 1087 organizations. The General Council provides self-monitoring and control over CSIs (Wiktorowicz 2000; Yom 2005) and is not engaged in advocacy. In addition, the government has historically tried to limit the action of CSIs by focusing on their ties to foreign entities (Ryan 2010) and questioning these connections.

The demand for democratization in Jordan provided greater opportunities for both CSIs and legislators to maneuver. Although the state attempts to control the rise and challenges of CSIs and legislators, the potential roles that CSIs and legislators (Abdel-Samad 2009; Baaklini et al. 1999) can play in the policy-making process could prove important. Legislators in Jordan are not rubber stamps, and they play a role in the political process. Therefore, CSIs' legislative advocacy could have important implications for policy production.

## Definition of Advocacy

The definition of advocacy has evolved over time (Almog-Bar and Schmid 2013) from championing a cause to working for a cause through a collective action, idea, or policy. As Almog-Bar and Schmid (2013) indicated, Reid's (2000) definition brought political action to the definition of advocacy. Therefore, researchers ascribed to advocacy a focus on actions in "the political arena to influence decision makers, to change future behavior (Ezell 2001), and to protect civil rights (McCarthy and Castelli 2002)" (Almog-bar and Schmid 2013, p. 4). Avner (2002) limits the concept of advocacy to direct and/or indirect communication with policy makers, whereas Hopkins (1992, p. 32) defines advocacy as "the act of pleading for or against a cause, as well as supporting or recommending a position."

Advocacy is divided into several subcategories ranging from case advocacy to general advocacy. As Almog-Bar and Schmid (2013, p. 4) noted, there are "direct and indirect advocacy (Andrews and Edwards 2004; Casey 2011), pragmatic versus legislative advocacy (Kimberlin 2010; Laws 1997), and case advocacy versus policy advocacy" (Mosley 2010).

Legislative advocacy (McCarthy and Castelli 2002) is one example of advocacy in which CSIs directly or indirectly engage legislative entities to affect policy outcomes. CSIs engage with legislators or legislative staff to present their viewpoints and affect the final policy decision. Ezell (2001) explored the different stages in which legislative advocacy can occur. CSIs can influence legislators and their staff during the legislative session, political campaigns, or non-sessions. During legislative sessions, CSIs can conduct one-on-one lobbying, testify in committees for legislators, produce research papers (position papers), alert constituents, and work with legislative staff (Ezell 2001).

In addition to the subcategories of advocacy, there are differences between "advocacy organizations," whose main objective is to engage in advocacy (Kimberlin 2010), and organizations that engage in advocacy in addition to their main mission. McCarthy and Castelli (2002) and Almog-Bar and Schmid (2013) encourage researchers to study advocacy in general and not to focus only on organizations whose main mission is to advocate.

According to the literature, CSIs can influence policy at various stages in traditional models of the policy process, including problem identification and agenda setting, policy formulation and adoption, policy implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. Concerning problem identification and agenda setting, civil society can be an important factor in building awareness, framing the debate, and mobilizing public opinion. CSIs may be formally involved in policy formation or may play a role by mediating between political adversaries or involving local residents in participatory policy making. In Western democracies, CSIs are often directly involved in policy implementation as service providers or provide technical assistance in implementation. CSIs can also increase transparency and engage in monitoring and evaluation.

## Advocacy Literature and Theoretical Background

The lack of research on CSIs' legislative advocacy in competitive authoritarian regimes and developing countries in general makes it imperative to explore the factors that impede or encourage advocacy efforts. Similar to Guo and Saxton (2010) and drawing upon Reid's (1999) legislative advocacy definition, this study explores whether CSIs engage in legislative advocacy and what factors impede or encourage them. In addition, the study uses Avner's (2002) tactics to explore how CSIs involve legislators. The study examines CSIs' advocacy tools, such as direct contact with legislators (lobbying), grassroots lobbying (mobilizing constituents), publishing research, media advocacy, expert testimonies, and direct collaboration with legislators.

Similar to Guo and Saxton (2010), this study defines research as reports from original data generated by CSIs. Expert testimonies refer to legislative invitations for CSIs to present their viewpoints to a committee. Direct lobbying occurs when CSI members meet with legislators or their staff in person to explain and advocate for a certain policy view and to respond to legislators' requests for information. In addition, the study examines other examples of collaboration between CSIs and government officials and legislators (such as social events or when CSIs are sought for their opinions). The study also examines whether CSIs mobilize their constituents to call their representatives and influence the policy-making process.

Guo and Zhang (2014) assume that the intensity of advocacy is based on the cause, capacity, and context of CSIs. This article examines the competitive authoritarian monarchy as a political context (as indicated by the law governing CSI activity), organizational capacity in terms of human, financial, and organizational age, and CSIs' perceptions of legislators' interests and power.

Advocacy effort is explained by theories ranging from resource dependency to organizational capacities. The first theory involves conflict between the state and CSIs (nonprofits), the second theory concerns partnership between the two, the third involves the bureaucratization of CSIs, and the fourth involves resource mobilization (Kimberlin 2010).

The first theory presents the relationship between CSIs and the state as adversarial, where authoritarian regimes perceive CSIs as a threat and try to control

and minimize their impact (Salamon 1999; Bebbington and Farrington 1993; Pearce 1997). According to this theory, the state's control over resources allows it to exert pressure on CSIs to engage in fewer advocacy efforts (Chaves et al. 2004; Child and Grønberg 2007). In the United States, CSIs are sometimes afraid to engage in advocacy because of the fear that they may lose their tax-exempt status (Berry and Arons 2003). The literature has focused on the political space where CSIs operate to study their ability to participate and on the relationship between CSIs and the state (Wiktorowicz 2002). To control CSIs, authoritarian governments use legal means to limit their powers (Guo and Zhang 2014). Accordingly, the study assumes that Jordanian civil society law will have a negative impact on legislative advocacy efforts.

**Hypothesis 1** CSIs will not engage in advocacy because legislators and the state view CSIs as competitors.

The second theory of partnership is based on collaboration between CSIs (nonprofits) and the state. CSIs partner with the state to deliver services. CSIs want to provide their constituents with needed services, and working with the state ensures the achievement of this objective. According to Chaves et al. (2004), as nonprofits receive more contracts to provide services on behalf of the state, the dependence of these organizations on state funding increases. Thus, it is in the interest of these organizations to engage in more advocacy to ensure, they will receive funding for their programs (Kimberlin 2010).

In addition to these theories, the resource dependency theory emphasizes the dependence of CSIs on public resources. In Western democracies, research on resource dependency has had conflicting results. Although some researchers have found that public funding impedes advocacy efforts (Child and Grønberg 2007; Guo and Saxton 2010; Schmid et al. 2008), other studies have found no relationship between funding and advocacy (Chaves et al. 2004). Based on the need to control CSIs in authoritarian governments, this study assumes that the state will attempt to use public funding to control the advocacy efforts of CSIs.

**Hypothesis 2** CSIs that receive public funding will not engage in advocacy or their dedication to advocacy will decrease.

The third theory is based on the bureaucratization of institutions (Salamon 2002). This theory asserts that the institutional characteristics of nonprofits affect their degree of advocacy. The age of the organization constitutes a key factor in the theory of bureaucratization of organizations. However, the impact of organizational age on advocacy is not clearly established (Child and Grønberg 2007). The assumption is that as organizations grow older and focus more on processes and rules, they lose interest in serving their constituents and therefore reduce their advocacy efforts (Kimberlin 2010). However, organizations that grow older establish a better, more credible track record, and gain knowledge of the political process, allowing them to engage in advocacy.

**Hypothesis 3** CSIs' advocacy efforts are positively related to human and financial organizational capacity.

Each theory presents certain factors that can affect CSIs' legislative advocacy efforts. However, these theories do not consider factors such as access to legislators and perceptions of legislators' interests. Because most of these theories focus on Western democracies, the assumptions are that CSIs have access to legislators or their staff, and legislators are interested. This study also explores CSIs' perceptions of legislators' interests among other factors that influence legislative advocacy.

**Hypothesis 4** CSIs' advocacy efforts are positively related to organizational age.

The fourth theory examines resource mobilization. This theory involves institutional capacities and their impact on advocacy efforts. Resource mobilization proposes that to participate in advocacy, an organization must have the human and financial capacities to allow them to perform these tasks (Bass et al. 2007). Thus, higher organizational capacity (financial and human resources) improves collective action (Andrews and Edwards 2004; Child and Grønbjerg 2007). In contrast, the absence of financial and human resources reduces advocacy efforts (Bass et al. 2007; Schmid et al. 2008). Research has indicated that organizations with large financial capacities engage in advocacy more frequently (e.g., Bass et al. 2007; Mosley 2010; Nicholson-Crotty 2007). In addition, previous research has shown a strong positive connection between staff size and advocacy (Child and Grønbjerg 2007; Suarez and Hwang 2007). Financial resources are usually measured by a budget, whereas human resources are measured by the number of support staff (Donaldson 2007). Theorists have also examined whether CSIs use lobbyists (Gibelman and Kraft 1996) or have an employee or a board member responsible for advocacy (Guo and Zhang 2014).

## Methodology

In the study of Jordanian civil society, legislative advocacy provides the fields of legislative development and civil society engagement with a useful example of the degree of legislative advocacy in a “competitive authoritarian monarchy,” and what affects these efforts. Many countries in North Africa and the Middle East (Morocco, Kuwait, and Bahrain) display characteristics similar to Jordan; thus, understanding CSIs' legislative efforts in Jordan can provide information that may be generalized to similar countries. The case of Jordan will also add to the literature on advocacy in developing and authoritarian countries. Finally, understanding the role civil society plays in policy making at the legislative institutional level can contribute to the development of a more incorporative and democratic system.

## Variables

As this is a qualitative study, the analysis seeks to explore a variety of variables as coded in the oral responses of interview participants. The dependent variable in this study is the extent of CSIs' legislative advocacy. These efforts are defined as the interaction between CSIs and legislators or legislative staff to affect policy. This



**Table 1** CSI distribution based on the number of employees

Employees	Percentage in the sample
20<	87.8
21–50	8.5
51–100	2.4
>100	1.2

study measures this dependent variable by examining the frequency of interaction between CSIs and legislators as reported by CSI organizations in interviews.

In addition to the dependent variable, the study measures several independent variables, such as the age of the organization, human and financial capacities, obstacles to advocacy, means of advocacy, and perceptions of legislators. Each independent variable was measured directly, such as asking the age of the organization and number of employees in the organization, and indirectly, such as asking CSIs about their main obstacles to participating in advocacy.

This paper is based on an empirical study of CSIs in Jordan. For the study, 82 representatives of CSIs were interviewed during the summer of 2013. CSI staff chose the individual they felt was most expert to be interviewed for the study. While organizations' self-selection of interview participants could be seen as a limitation, in this case, it likely provided a more accurate reflection of CSIs' activities since the people chosen presumably have the most overarching view of the organization. The interviewees provided their perception of their CSI's engagement in advocacy in general and in legislative advocacy in particular, the obstacles facing their legislative advocacy efforts, and the form that legislative advocacy takes. The sample of Jordanian CSIs was a stratified random sample, taking into consideration the distribution of CSIs in the different geographical areas of Jordan. A stratified sample was used in hopes of representing CSIs that otherwise would not have been included if the focus were mainly on urban areas of the country. The sample covered a wide range of organizations created between 1954 and 2012, representing a variety of types of service delivery and a spectrum of financial capacities. Having this variation in the sample helped measure the impact of size, age, human, and financial capacity of CSIs. The sample also represented organizations that provide different social services and those that advocate for human rights and democracy (refer to Tables 1, 2, 3).

The CSI sample covered a wide range of services, ranging from agricultural training and assistance to democratic and human rights development (Table 2). Organizations were allowed to choose more than one service that they provided; therefore, the percentages do not equal 100 %. Overall, the majority of services involved non-political issues, such as education, nutrition, employment, and training.

In addition, the sample covered institutions with different financial means, ranging from those with a budget of less than \$5000 to those with a budget of more than \$100,000 (Table 3).

**Table 2** Distribution of CSI services in the sample

Services	Percentage in the sample
Agricultural aid and training	9
Consultation	7
Education	43
Employment and training	25
Family assistance	29
Nutritional services	42
Health services	13
Legal services	28
Psychological	22
Housing	10
Addiction	10
Transportation	15
Democracy and human rights	9
Cultural	12
Media	2

**Table 3** CSI distribution based on budget

Budget in dollars	Percentage
5000<	32
5001–15,000	18
15,001–100,000	7
>100,000	15

To measure the degree of legislative advocacy and the factors that affect these efforts, interviewees were asked who they contacted the most regarding policy making, why, and how often. Then, the study asked how the interviewees interacted with legislators and their perceptions of legislators' interest in their work. This study also explored organizational factors, such as who was responsible for advocacy efforts, their influence, the barriers organizations faced, their motivation, and whether the organization was part of a larger group that was involved in legislative advocacy.

## Results and Analysis

This study finds that Jordanian CSIs have limited legislative advocacy engagement. Furthermore, laws obstructing advocacy and an organization's access to public funding and its institutional age do not affect CSIs' legislative advocacy. However, institutional resources impact legislative advocacy efforts. In addition to these

**Table 4** Entities approached by CSIs to influence policy making

	Percentage (CSIs can choose more than one option)
Legislators	39
Ministers	22
Party leaders	18.3
Civil servants	12.25
Judiciary	8.5

**Table 5** Objectives of interaction with ministers and legislators

CSIs' objectives when interacting with ministers and legislators	State (ministers) (%)	Legislators (%)
Provide services to constituents more easily	78	48.8
Influence policy making	43.9	57.3
Educate policy makers regarding their field	51.2	51.2
Expose problems and find solutions	45.1	42.7

elements, the study finds that access to legislators and CSIs' perceptions of legislators' interests in their opinions limit CSIs' legislative advocacy.

Based on the data, CSIs are engaged in a limited level of legislative advocacy. CSIs (19.15 %) that participate in legislative advocacy usually interact with legislators more than twice per month. However, the largest portion of CSIs (51.2 %) interacts with legislators once or less per month, whereas the rest (29.26 %) do not have any interaction with legislators at all.

### Legislators: At the Top of Advocacy Efforts

Although the number of CSIs engaged in legislative advocacy is limited, CSIs in general seem to believe that legislators are the ones to contact to influence policy, followed by ministers (Table 4). These results were reiterated in another question when CSIs ranked legislators (79.3 %) and ministers (75.6 %), the highest when asked about players in the policy process.

CSIs' interactions with the state (e.g., government, civil servants, legislators) reflect the roles CSIs ascribe to these entities. Because ministers control access to public services, they are contacted mainly to provide better services to their constituents. In contrast, CSIs contact legislators mainly to influence policy, educate policy makers regarding their area of expertise, and provide services to their constituents. Because legislators are also in the business of providing services to constituents through casework (Abdel-Samad 2009), it is not surprising that legislators are also approached for services.

Although CSIs have a low level of interaction with legislators and their staff, the results of this study indicate that they know what legislators are capable of and what their objectives are from this interaction (Table 5).

## Obstacles to Legislative Advocacy

According to the interviewees, the main obstacles CSIs confront (Table 6) in order of importance are the following: limited financial resources and lack of communication channels, employees' and the board's view of participation in advocacy, the lack of qualified employees, the institution obtaining funding from the government, and the civil society law that may limit advocacy efforts.

### Authoritarian Control

The first hypothesis this study proposed was that CSIs will not engage in advocacy because legislators and the state view CSIs as competitors. This variable was operationalized by asking whether the law governing CSIs impedes their legislative advocacy and whether legislators actively reject CSIs' efforts. The study finds that the law does not play a role in CSIs' legislative advocacy. The interviewees ranked the law last in the series of obstacles facing their legislative advocacy (Table 6).

The theory of conflict (Kimberlin 2010) between CSIs and the state assumes that authoritarian governments want to control the political field. To control CSIs, the state can create laws and restrict CSIs' political participation. This study finds that the civil society law (No. 55, 2008) does not affect CSIs' legislative advocacy. CSIs that provide social services and those that work for democratic change do not see the law as an obstacle to their legislative advocacy. Thus, the first hypothesis does not prevail in the case of Jordan.

The reasons why CSIs do not see the governing law as an obstacle could be related to the nature of the control mechanism or interviewees' fear of disclosing this information. According to Wiktorowicz (2000, p. 49), "the state depends more on bureaucratic mechanism than direct oppression." The control structure/mechanism that the state uses assigns the implementation of the law to two different entities, controls entrance in the civil society arena, and provides discretion regarding when to use the full force of the law. The first entity is the General Union of Voluntary Association (Wiktorowicz 2000), which exercises financial control and oversight on its members, thus creating a culture with specific political participation norms. However, as Al-Hourani et al. (2011) emphasized, only 1000 CSIs out of 5000 belong to this organization. Thus, the remaining CSIs are not controlled or influenced by this organization. The other entities that implement the law are the various ministries (Social Development, Culture, and Interior regarding demonstrations or rallies). These entities are responsible for access to the arena of civil society and oversight. The division among ministries may lead to a lower level of control over CSIs, especially if ministers do not have antagonistic positions against CSIs.

By dividing and internalizing the implementation of the law, the state does not have to use its punishing power. The discretion the law gives the state allows it to address political participation differently based on timing, demands, and the perception of a threat (ICNL 2014). Thus, the state created a culture of self-control where the use of punishment is not required but is available for extreme cases. In addition, the law gives the state the power to control who can access the field of

civil society; therefore, the state ensures that the different, newly approved CSIs understand and agree to the parameters of political participation and the tenets of the state. This control does not mean that there will not be a confrontation between the state and the CSIs at some point; however, this conflict will not become an existential threat.

## Public Funding

According to the theory of resource dependence, CSIs do not “bite the hand that feeds them” (Pfeffer and Salancik 1978; Froelich 1999; Chaves et al. 2004). The second hypothesis of this study assumes that receiving public funds will reduce advocacy. This study finds that this second hypothesis is also not true in the case of Jordan. According to the interviewees, access to public funding is one of the least important obstacles to their legislative advocacy. The reason why this factor is not important is because very little funding is provided by the state to CSIs.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, the state does not have a financial method to control CSIs. However, the state does have the ability to limit CSIs’ access to collecting funds and foreign funding.

In addition, when asked what CSIs would lobby for if there were no obstacles to legislative advocacy, the majority (52.4 %) answered that access to public funding was important or very important for them. Because public funding is not at issue in Jordan, this factor has little impact.

## Institutional Capacities and Legislative Advocacy

The resource mobilization theory states that the internal institutional capacities of CSIs also play a role in legislative advocacy. Thus, the third hypothesis of the study assumed that institutional capacity has a positive impact on legislative advocacy. The article examined both the number of employees and the budget of the interviewed organization and found that the size of the budget had a positive correlation with the frequency of interaction with legislators and direct meetings with legislators. In addition, both the size of the budget and the number of employees had positive correlations with indirect advocacy efforts, such as joining committees.

According to the results of this study, financial and human resources (institutional capacity) play an important role in affecting legislative advocacy. The interviewed CSIs ranked (in terms of importance) financial and human resources first and fourth, respectively; on the list of obstacles, they confront when engaging in legislative advocacy (Table 6). The study also found that the size of the budget of the organization is an important factor that affects the legislative advocacy frequency of contact. According to Table 6, there is a positive correlation (significant at 95 %) between the size of the budget and the frequency of contacting legislators. Therefore, a larger budget allows the allocation of more resources to lobby legislators.

<sup>2</sup> Based on the published Jordanian budget of 2013 at <http://www.gbd.gov.jo/web/budget/Default.aspx?id=108967e5-a599-417d-b01a-f86cb9059d19&OP=budget&CH=MD>, funds dedicated to CSIs do not exceed one million Jordanian dinar (1.4 million dollars), of which 450,000 are dedicated to CSIs headed by the queen or royal family.

**Table 6** Perceived obstacles to legislative advocacy

	High and very high impact	Moderate impact	No and very little impact
Limited financial resources	35.36	18.29	46.34
Lack of communication channels	35.36	17.07	47.56
Employees' and board's views	25.60	20.73	53.65
Lack of qualified employees	23.17	24.39	52.43
Receive funding from the government	19.15	14.63	65.85
A law limiting advocacy	12.19	3.65	84.14

In addition to the frequency of contacting legislators, there was a positive correlation between the size of the budget and some indirect lobbying tools, such as publishing reports and research and joining committees with officials involved.

These results support the literature (Andrews and Edwards 2004; Child and Grønbjerg 2007) in which the larger the organization's financial abilities, the more likely it is to generate reports and research papers, lobby legislators when joining committees, interact and directly meet with legislators. Larger organizations can dedicate resources to engage in these activities. In addition, the larger the organization, the more recognized it is and the more connected to the political elite its directors may be; therefore, the greater the likelihood that state entities will invite the organization to join committees.

In addition to the size of the budget, the number of employees plays an important role in encouraging direct contact with legislators and joining committees. The number of employees is positively correlated with joining committees with government officials and contacting legislators to encourage the passage of policies advancing their mission. The availability of employees allows CSIs to invest in joining committees and meeting with legislators.

The availability of financial and human resources is shown to positively affect advocacy frequency and indirect lobbying methods. A more capable organization can allocate resources to engage in advocacy and is likely to be more recognized in the community, thus improving its access to legislators, committees, and the media where reports are published.

## Organizational Age

This study hypothesized that the older the organization, the more it would participate in legislative advocacy. However, the results of the interviews indicated that there is no connection between the age of the organization and its legislative advocacy.

The age of the organization was not a factor in encouraging or discouraging advocacy efforts. The results confirm previous studies in which no conclusive impact of age on advocacy was established (Child and Grønbjerg 2007). The two assumptions that age can increase or decrease advocacy are still being explored.

The case of Jordan seems to not fall in either category. Both views are based on the assumption that older organizations will develop organizationally and bureaucratize and that as organizations become older, they become more established and have credibility to advocate. These assumptions do not hold true in Jordan because CSIs in Jordan age but stay the same organizationally and because they may lack the financial backing and leadership needed to grow the organization. In addition, many CSIs operate in specific geographic areas; thus, their mission may only be to support their geographical constituents, therefore reducing the need to grow and bureaucratize.

### **Access to Legislators and Perception of Their Interest**

CSIs' legislative advocacy efforts are affected by their ability to access legislators and their perception of legislators' interest in being lobbied. According to the interviewees, lack of communication channels with legislators is one of the top two greatest obstacles confronting CSIs' legislative advocacy.

The results of the study also showed that when asked about additional factors that impede CSIs' legislative advocacy, the interviewees indicated that a lack of communication channels/access was one of the most important elements that negatively affected their efforts. The lack of communication channels/access to legislators is because legislators spend much of their time in the capital and participate in a large amount of casework (Abdel-Samad 2009). In addition, there is a perception among some legislators that they are trustees and have exclusive responsibility for policy making (Abdel-Samad 2009). Most Jordanian legislators reside in the capital but commute to their districts, have offices, and provide their cell phone numbers to their constituents. However, because legislators in Jordan lack staff, they must address a large amount of calls, personal demands, and electoral activities. Therefore, the lack of access may be because of the workload that legislators experience. In addition, the political system in Jordan encourages legislators to engage in casework that consumes much of their time (Abdel-Samad 2009), leaving them with limited time to connect with CSIs. The lack of communication channels/access reduces the interaction between legislators and CSIs and makes it even more difficult to lobby for policy changes.

In addition to the limited channels of communication between CSIs and legislators, the interviewed CSIs perceive legislators as uninterested in their input. The results show a strong positive correlation between the frequency of legislative advocacy and how interested legislators are perceived to be by CSIs (Table 7). The results indicate that only 41.4 % of CSIs find legislators interested (interested and very interested) in engaging CSIs. This perception may discourage CSIs from investing time and resources in legislative advocacy. As rational actors, CSIs may perceive that it is a waste of time to invest in lobbying legislators who do not care (Table 8).

### *Impact on Civil Society*

The results of this paper indicate that Jordanian civil society is still struggling with its ability to influence policy at the legislative level. The continuous lack of financial resources reduces the ability of CSIs to generate reports and lobby legislators to

**Table 7** Correlation

	Use reports and research	Join committees with officials	Frequency of interaction with deputies	Contact legislators to encourage policies advancing its mission
Budget	.331*	.243*	.268*	.288*
Number of employees	.113	.226*	.191	.251*

\* Significant at 90 %

**Table 8** Correlation results

	Perception of legislators' interest in CSIs' input
Frequency of interaction with legislators	.415**

\*\* Significant at 95 %

express their constituents' demands and their desire for policy change. In addition, the results also highlight the need for legislators to take steps to help CSIs in their legislative efforts. Since access to legislators is assumed to be a key obstacle, it is up to the legislators and the parliament as an institution to reduce the barriers to contact and to engage civil society more in meaningful ways.

The results provides Jordanian CSIs with an assessment of their weaknesses when it comes to legislative advocacy, hence allowing them to choose to build specific capacities in their organization to increase their effectiveness when it comes to legislative advocacy.

## Conclusion and Theoretical Impact

This study fills a gap in exploring CSIs' legislative advocacy in developing countries, mainly in authoritarian competitive monarchies. The literature on advocacy has focused on Western democracies, and few studies have explored developing countries (Guo and Zhang 2014). This study examines whether the same factors that affect CSIs in Western democracies are applicable to a developing country such as Jordan. This article explores advocacy not only in developing countries but also in an Arab competitive authoritarian system.

CSIs' legislative advocacy is influenced by organizational capacity (human and financial resources), access to legislators, the perception of interest among legislators, and the perception of legislators' power.

This article's results add to the literature on authoritarian control of CSIs, the effect of institutional capacity and organizational age on advocacy, access to legislators, and perceptions of interest. In Jordan, the laws that are supposed to control CSIs do not seem to play an important role in CSIs' decisions to engage in legislative advocacy. Moreover, organizational age is not a factor that affects legislative advocacy, and institutional capacity has an impact on advocacy. Contrary



to the belief that authoritarian regimes want to control CSIs through legal actions, this article finds that CSIs do not consider the law an important obstacle. This result may be because of the nature of the state control mechanism. In contrast, the results of this article strengthen the argument that internal institutional capacity is important for an organization to engage in advocacy. The results concerning organizational capacity mirror previous research on CSIs in Western democracies.

This study also adds to the literature on advocacy in general by examining the demand side of advocacy. Although the assumption in Western democracies is that legislators want to satisfy more constituents to ensure reelection and to be responsive to more constituents, in authoritarian governments, legislators' demand for CSI advocacy is different. Many legislators in Jordan are overburdened (Kilani and Sakija 2002) and do not need to satisfy more constituents to be reelected (Abdel-Samad 2009). The nature of the Jordanian political system encourages legislators' dependency on the executive to exchange votes for favors. Therefore, based on legislators' perceptions, some legislators find themselves with less time to invest in contacting and meeting with CSIs (Abdel-Samad 2009), although meeting with CSIs can provide them with the data they need to make an educated decision on proposed bills. In addition to being overburdened, Jordanian legislators do not have staff to assist them with constituents' and CSI demands, thus reducing access and channels of communication between the two entities. Because access to legislators and the perception of legislators' interest in being lobbied is important to legislative advocacy, this article adds to the literature on legislative advocacy by exposing the importance of studying the demand side of advocacy.

This study's ability to generalize beyond the case of Jordan is limited. However, the similarities between Jordan, Morocco, Kuwait, and Bahrain will allow researchers explore whether the obstacles that were uncovered in this study also impact CSIs in those countries. In addition, future research in the previously mentioned countries can be compared with the findings in Jordan and increase our ability to generalize from these findings. Since few studies, if any, have focused on legislative advocacy in the Arab world, starting with a competitive authoritarian monarchy like Jordan provides researchers and practitioners with a first look of what CSIs are facing in their efforts to influence policy making.

Finally, the examination of legislative advocacy in CSIs and legislators can provide a comprehensive view of the efforts and factors that affect this activity. In addition, this article provides a solid base from which to explore not only legislative advocacy but also advocacy in general in an Arab competitive authoritarian government.

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