

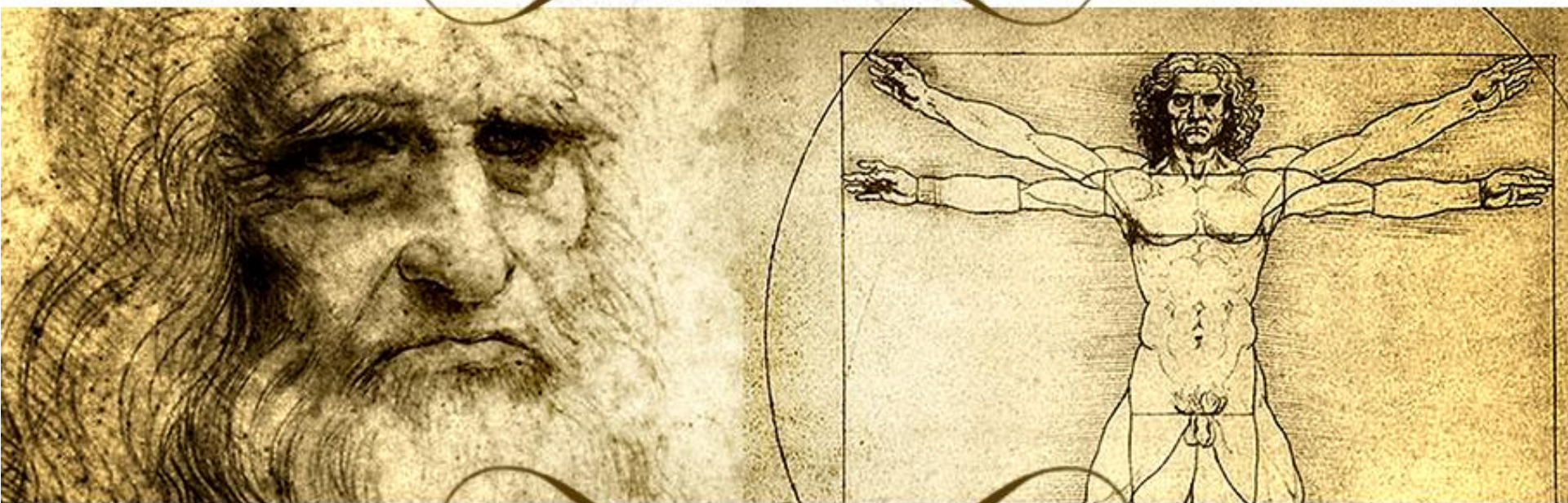
**Social Innovation and Engagement:
Social Challenges, Policy Practice, and Professional Training of
Social Workers**
Working Session II

Social Workers' Engagement in Policy Practice

Individual and Organizational Factors

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“Science is the captain,
And practice the soldiers”

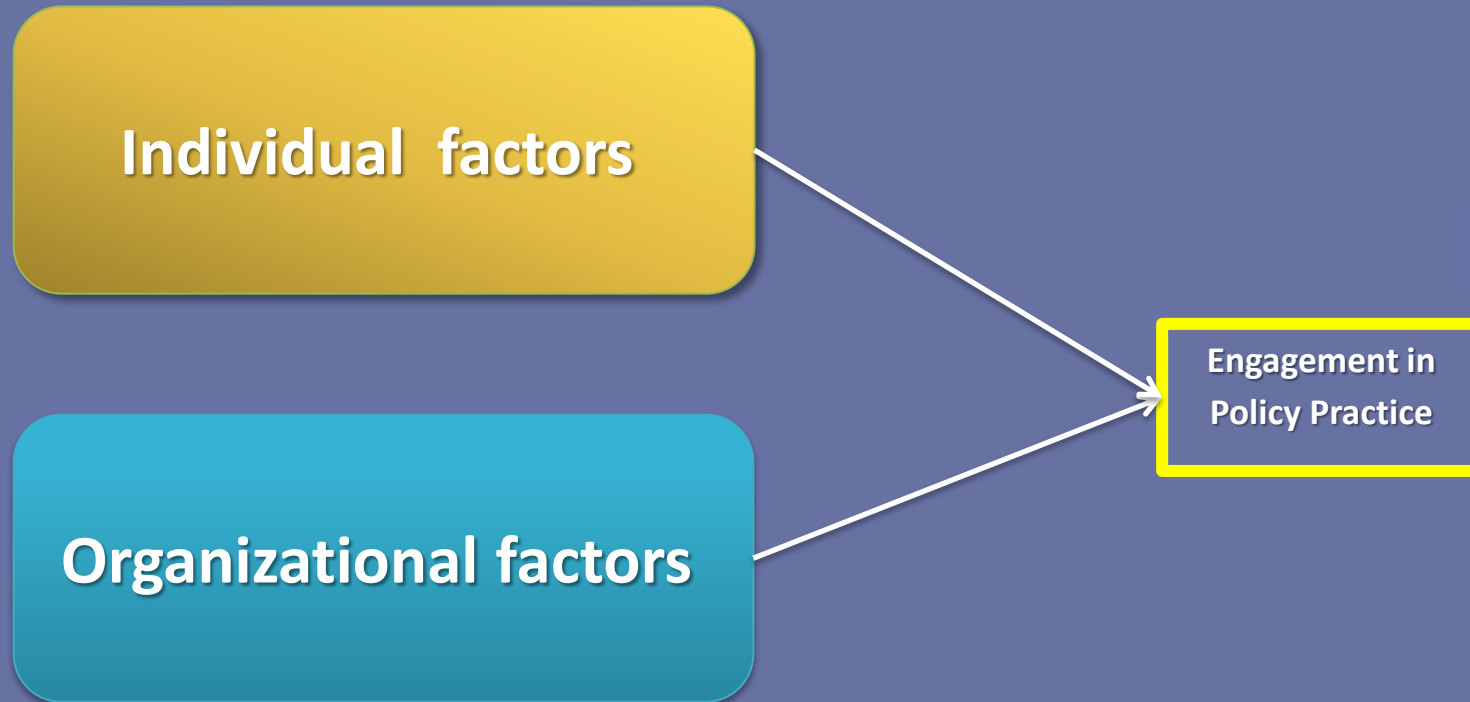
Leonardo Da Vinci

Background

- Social workers were criticized for their low levels of involvement in policy arenas and for the neglect of the profession social goals.
- A growing discourse regarding social workers' involvement in policy arenas and processes.



Hypothesis



Participants and procedure

- Randomly selected sample
- 300 social workers from 22 local welfare departments:

| | n | % |
|-----------------------|-----|----|
| Direct social workers | 234 | 78 |
| Heads of teams | 66 | 22 |

- Questionnaires



Policy Practice



The level of involvement in five strategies at the organizational, local and state policy levels -

- **Social Action** (internal & external strategies)
- **Use of the mass media**
- **Legislative Advocacy** (lobbying & participation of social workers in the deliberations of parliamentary committees)
- **Reform through Litigation**
- **Social Research**

As an integral part of participants' professional activities

The Hypothesized Model

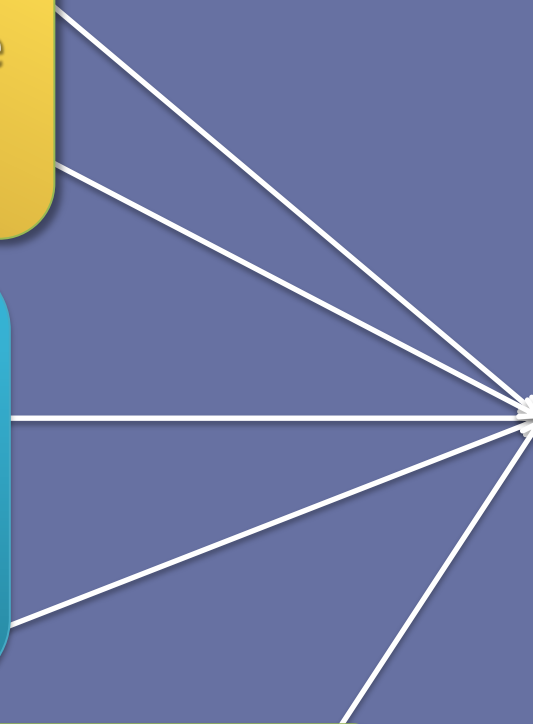


Organizational Culture
(Schein, 2010)

Civic Voluntarism Model
(Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995)

Social Work Scholarship

**Engagement in
Policy Practice**



Results

- Moderate involvement in policy practice ($M=.63$, $SD=0.9$).

(Scale: 0-1, respondents were asked to answer: "yes" or "no" on 29 items representing policy practice's strategies techniques).

| Variable | Mean | SD | Scale |
|--|-------------|------|-------|
| Cumulative Policy Practice Training | 2.58 | .98 | 1-5 |
| Policy Practice Skills | 3.13 | .71 | 1-5 |
| Political Interest | 3.17 | 1.02 | 1-5 |
| Political Efficacy | 2.32 | .75 | 1-5 |
| Involvement in Professional and Social Recruitment Networks | .56 | .92 | 0-1 |
| Organizational Culture <u>towards</u> Workers' Engagement in Policy Practice | 2.75 | 1.23 | 1-7 |
| Organizational Innovativeness | 4 | 1.11 | 1-7 |

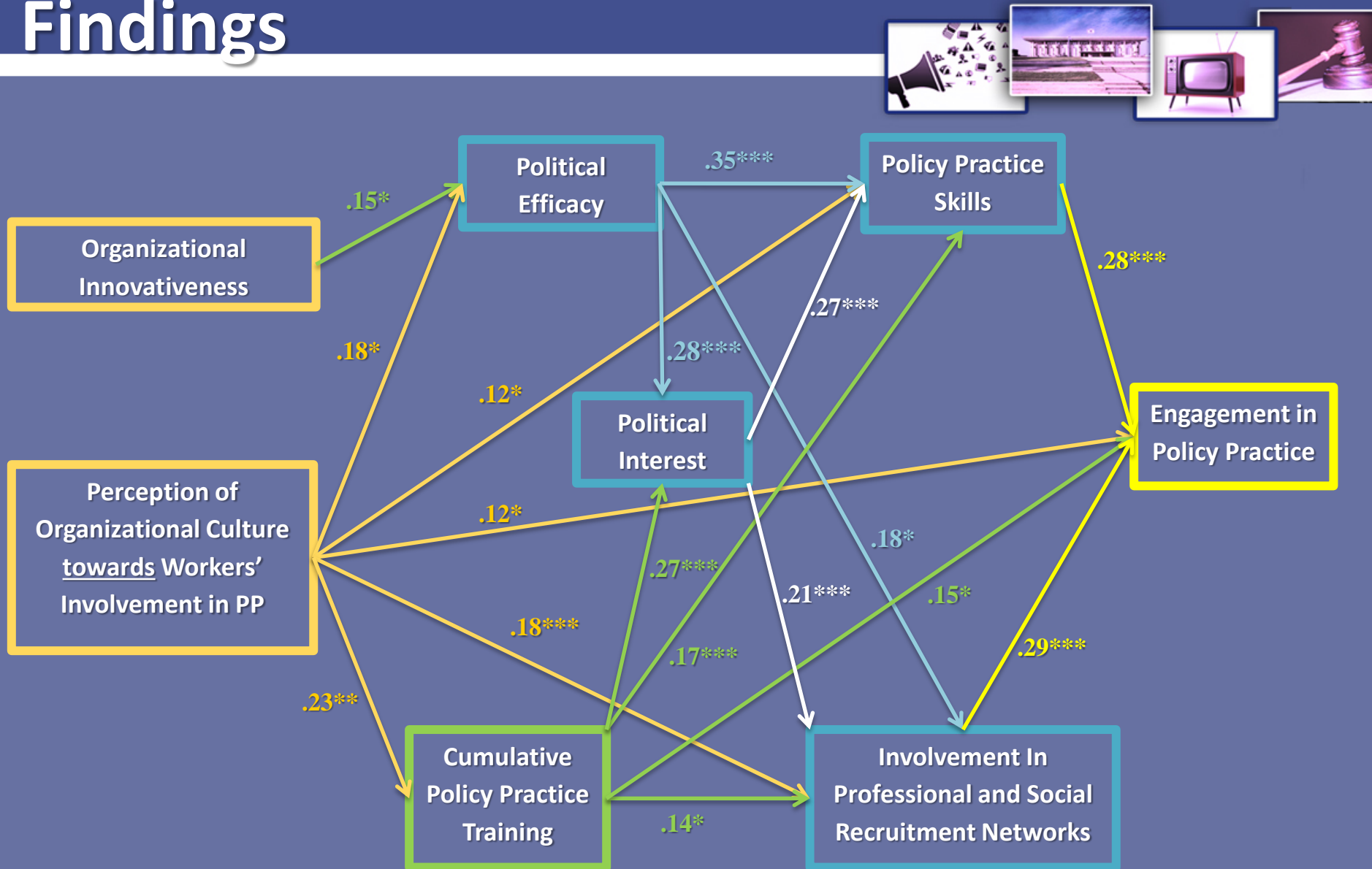


Results

- All factors were positively associated with engagement in policy practice
($r = .22^{**}-.46^{**}$)
- Managers reported higher levels of engagement in Policy Practice



Findings



$p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

MODEL FIT INDICES N=300, df=8, Chi-square=9.70, $p=.29$, NFI=.98, CFI=.99, RMSEA=.03

Conclusions



- A fundamental contribution of organizational culture to the extent of political activities social workers engage in as a part of their professional practices and in political arenas outside the organization they work for.
- Workers undergo a process of re - political - socialization.
- The Civic Voluntarism Model refers to the significant contribution of organizations as a field of individual political learning, and as recruiters to political action.

Conclusions



- Still, psychological political engagement plays a significant independent role in the model.

Implications



- To effectively embed Policy Practice in social workers' praxis - it is necessary to utilize combined strategies with workers, managers and policy makers.

Future questions



- Testing the model's validity in additional fields in which Social Work takes place (e.g. government services, mental health services, NGOs).
- Examining the model in contexts of other welfare regimes could be of interest.

Thank you

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