Shifting values and cultural policy in the United States

Margaret Jane Wyszomirsky The values and goals on which cultural policy has been based for decades are shifting. Boekmancahier 36 reflected on these changes as recently advocated by the Council of Europe and Unesco (Mommaas 1998). In the United States, the federal arts policy and its granting institution, the National Endowment for the Arts, have experienced such a shift in values during the last decade.

A decade ago, an American 'culture war' engulfed the National Endowment for the Arts.[1] Initial political battles were sparked by federal grants that supported exhibits of controversial photographs by Robert Mapplethorpe and Andres Serrano. Subsequently, criticism spread from these specific grants to the grantmaking procedures of the National Endowment of the Arts (NEA) and to the agency itself. With hindsight, it now appears that the years between 1989 and 1996 saw the breakdown of the basic policy paradigm that had sustained the NEA, federal arts policy, and the arts policy-making system that had come into existence and stabilized since the 1960s.[2]

To some extent, the shape and dynamics of the former policy paradigm, which will be analysed in this article, have only become apparent to scholarly analysts, constituency advocates, and policymakers in the last few years as they have turned to the task of constructing a new one. This task is multi-faceted: articulating a new set of core values, basic principles, and policy definitions to guide policy development; identifying and legitimating what public purposes will be advanced; devising organizational structures as well as administrative procedures and tools to implement policy; and assessing the outcomes and impacts of policy initiatives.

Although a number of these subjects have begun to attract discussion and a growing body of literature in the United States, relatively little analytical attention has focussed on the character of the core values that undergird this policy system. While many participants and observers have noted the importance of values to both the general culture wars and the specific arts funding battles, the tendency seems to have been either to focus on fundamental ideological dimensions (e.g., liberalism vs conservatism or progressivism vs orthodoxy) (Hunter 1991; Shapiro 1994) or to select a particular value to defend (such as freedom of expression or decency).

Nonetheless, such an effort would seem to be essential to both an analysis of the breakdown of the old paradigm and to an understanding of the emergent one. This article will present a preliminary discussion of the character and shift in core American arts policy values and assumptions. Focussing on the value of excellence, it will then explore how this value has been shifting and the resultant policy implications of these developments in the United States.

Core values, basic ideas, and public policy

Values - both those that are shared and those that are in contention - play a role in shaping all public policies in the United States. Actually, each public policy arena tends to exhibit core values that involve two, intertwined value systems: public values and interest community values. Public values are those held by the general public and the polity at large. Some public policy analysts treat public values as a 'criteria that may influence policy choice' (Anderson 1997, 141). Others have treated such concepts as 'goals', even while acknowledging that they also serve as policy justifications or criteria for evaluating public programs. Furthermore, such values are not static but rather are 'continuously constructed' in the polis (Stone 1988). The most powerful values in the United States - like equity, pluralism, efficiency, due process, liberty, and accountability as well as general (but not unqualified) support for the practices of free market capitalism, representative and limited government, and popular sovereignty - are historically persistent and inherent to American civic culture. Because such public values are so broadly accepted in the polity they cannot be seriously contested (Cobb and Elder 1983; Baumgartner and Jones 1993). Therefore, they are crucial in justifying and legitimating policy decisions and public programs in the United States.

Alternatively, interest community values are consistent with the perspectives and norms of the constituency's members.[3] Such values are particularly important to those individuals and organizations that are most directly affected and have the most tangible interests at stake. For occupationally based groups in the cultural sphere, such as artists, humanists or scholars, a key professional value is freedom of inquiry and expression. Although the particular manifestation of this norm varies from one set of disciplines to another and tends to exhibit some variation in terminology, such professional norms often predate the advent of relevant public policies. In the arts, this value is expressed as artistic freedom, and encompasses creativity and a quest for innovation and individuality. For humanists and scholars, the value is more likely to be referred to as academic freedom and encompasses a concern for the integrity of evidence, a premium on conceptualization, and interpretive sensitivity to context.

If a group can link its values with public values, this helps to secure government attention to its issues, attract public acceptance for its policy demands, and to institutionalize a policy system that delivers program benefits. Conversely, if a group can justify its opposition to policy proposals or existing programs with public values, then it may be able to exert a persuasive - albeit negative - political logic. In other words, the establishment of core policy values is a two step process. First, the special interests must agree upon their own core values through community discourse and practice. Then the interest community must link its values to general public values. Actually, both steps are likely to

be interactive rather than strictly sequential.

In the process of value articulation, a policy community is invented (or re-invented) and a policy system is forged that institutionalizes this value consensus and uses it to legitimize policy purposes, to operationalize issue definitions, to implement programs, and to channel policy politics. Once forged, the adherents of a policy system strive to maintain a monopoly over system operations and to discourage the participation of 'outsiders' who may not share their values or interests. If a policy system is successfully established, then it may exercise extensive freedom of action with its accountability to the public sovereignty presumed (Baumgartner and Jones 1993, 7). The older and more stable a policy system is, the more implicit its core values are likely to become and the more purpose and accountability become ingrained in procedure. Such policy consensus and system institutionalization were characteristic of the American arts policy system centered on the NEA between approximately the late 1960s and the late 1980s.

Dissonance between the two sets of values or within each value constituency are likely to destabilize if not undermine the prospects for a working policy consensus. Thus, disputes about basic values within an interest community are likely to lead to policy fragmentation, instability, and political vulnerability (Kingdon 1995, 118-121; Wyszomirski 1995b, 13 and 32). Similarly, periods of rapid and/or significant social change may see considerable debate about the meaning of concepts like liberty, freedom, efficiency and what are acceptable trade-offs between such values. During such times, established policy consensus is likely to be disrupted or require reformulation. Between 1989 and 1996, the level and significance of both internal dissonance and external change seriously disrupted the American arts policy system. A closer look reveals changes have been occurring in the character of the system's core values. This, in turn, has implications for the policy system, its political dynamics, and for cultural policies themselves.

Basic values and assumptions of federal arts policy

A quartet of policy values and three basic assumptions have been inherent to the American arts policy system that centered on the NEA. Essential to the arts community were the values of creativity and artistic freedom. Primary among the general public values were equity and fairness. Each of these were acknowledged in the enabling legislation of the National Endowment for the Arts (NFAH Act)[4], have been touchstones in subsequent policy formulations, and have influenced organizational and operational practices. Both of the arts community's values were, in turn, translated into terms that reflect more generally held public values. Thus creativity took on the character of excellence, while artistic freedom was translated into agency operating principles of non-interference with grantees and a mode of responding to field needs and priorities. Alternatively, both public values acquired specific manifestations within the arts policy community. Thus, equity was translated into access and cultural diversity, while fairness acquired a procedural focus, emphasizing decisionmaking through reliance on 'those most knowledgeable and competent in the specific disciplines' (IC 1990, 28). Reliance on a professional peer panel review process (as the practice became known) was regarded 'as a means of ensuring competence and integrity in grant decisions' and as 'an effective and fair method of recommending Endowment grants' (PTFAH 1981, 2 and 17).

In addition, three basic assumptions were part of the attitudinal foundation of federal arts policy. First, it was assumed that the policy definition of the arts was focussed on professional, nonprofit arts organizations and the artists who worked in and with them. This assumption was inherent to the composition of the arts constituency, in the applicant eligibility provisions of the NFAH Act, and the presumed dynamic of a patronage (rather than a consumer or market) ethos. For example, the NFAH Act limits eligibility for financial assistance only to charitable, nonprofit organizations (as well as grants in aid to the states) (Sec 954 (f and g)).

A second cardinal assumption concerning the provision of federal support for the arts (and humanities) was that the financing of culture was 'primarily a matter for private and local initiative' (Sec 951(2)). This resonated with a systemic preference for limited government and helped attract bipartisan support for the idea of federal cultural funding. Thus it was presumed that the federal role in the financing of culture would be relatively modest. It was also presumed that the federal role in the progress of the cultural affairs of the nation would, in large part, be indirect and contextual: that is, President Lyndon Johnson declared in 1965, 'Government can seek to create conditions under which the arts can flourish' (as quoted in IC 1990, 9).

Finally, - and quite implicitly - it was presumed that any federal programs and agencies concerned with administering the allocation of federal cultural support would operate in an accountable manner. Most explicitly, this evolved as an accountability to the art fields themselves. Quite early (by the early-mid 1973), this also acquired an expectation of representativeness in panel composition and equity in grant distribution. As controversy buffeted the NEA in the late 1980s and early 1990s, accountability to a broader public became a more explicit expectation and one that sometimes seemed at variance with accountability to the arts community. As the 1990 Independent Commission put it: 'Publicly funded art must be measured (…) against standards of artistic excellence. Publicly funded art must (…) serve the purposes which Congress has determined (…), should be chosen through a process that is accountable and free of conflict of interest (…) [and] selected with an awareness of the geographic and cultural diversity of the United States and with respect for the differing beliefs and values of the American people. (…) It must seek to offer a spacious sense of freedom to the artists and the arts institutions it assists. (…) At the same time, the NEA must, if it is to maintain public confidence in its stewardship of public funds, be accountable to all of the American people' (IC 1990, 2-3).

Over the course of time, these basic values and assumptions became thoroughly intertwined - part of the normative, structural, and operational foundation of the entire arts policy system. Since attempting to unravel and trace each thread tends to encounter 'knots' of interconnection, the analysis of each value or assumption cannot avoid some discussion of the others. Clearly, a fully developed discussion of all of these values and assumptions, their evolution, and their interrelationships is beyond the scope of this article. Instead, let me briefly focus on excellence as a device for exploring the policy implications of this core value.

Artistic excellence and public policy

Excellence seems to have emerged as the combination of creativity, which is a core artistic value, and public expectations of 'quality'. Both the general public and the

artistic community could agree that excellence embraced artistic merit and public notions of quality. Certainly, excellence seemed more intelligible than creativity. Excellence also had a generally positive attitudinal valence - in other words, it was a broadly accepted concept that could help legitimize a relatively new policy commitment. Excellence, in turn, incorporated the basic assumption of a nonprofit definition of the arts and relied on professional certification procedures.

Both publics (arts and general) tacitly assumed that nonprofit arts organizations were more likely to exhibit excellence than commercial entertainment corporations. Remember that at the time when the NEA was coming into being the popular arts were not in high repute: television was being castigated as 'a vast wasteland', popular music (particularly rock and roll) was widely considered to be corrupting, and the movies were being pressed to institute a 'voluntary' rating system in an effort to avoid governmental regulation. As cultural historian Neil Harris has observed, federal subsidies for nonprofit arts organizations and activities were justified, in large part, by a belief that 'The popular and commercial arts in American - especially but not only television - stand in need of reform, uplift, and above all competition; they are variously seen as vulgarizing, corrupting, narcotizing, or hedonistic in the main. Such redemption can only come about (…) through certain kinds of public or nonprofit funding (…)' (Harris 1996, 25). Harris goes on to label this justification as 'the pursuit of artistic excellence' in which public subsidy is 'an instrument to improve the level of artistic production' (Harris 1996, 25). Such a policy stance was of particular concern for artists and implicitly reflects the idea that the goal of federal arts funding was to be of service to artists. As Cummings and Katz point out, a policy designed to be of service to artists will be characterized by programs that emphasize '(…) freeing artists from the restraints of the box office and mass taste and allowing them to do what they want with fewer budgetary strings attached' (Cummings and Katz 1987, 366). In other words, a policy premised upon 'the pursuit of artistic excellence' rejects commercial assumptions and implicitly questions public opinion in the interest of maximizing the freedom and autonomy of the artist as well as the presumed excellence of the resultant artworks.

Today, the same presumption of comparative excellence over commercial culture continues to run through some policy thinking as can be seen in the NEA's *American Canvas* report. The report comments that after 'three and a half decades (…) the vast wasteland' [of television] (…) has not realized its potential to be (…) more substantive' (NEA 1987, 153). Alternatively, it sees the role of the nonprofit arts as adding 'depth and richness to the content of commercial entertainment', as nurturing its talent pool and - for public arts agencies - as providing seed money and acting as 'talent scouts' for both the art fields and the cultural industries (Ibid, 155). The report also asserted that one of the five public roles of the arts was to encourage active participation, self-expression, and personal achievement 'in the face of a popular culture which tends to reduce all expression to a homogenizing common denominator' (Ibid, 14). Clearly, such sentiments indicate that at least parts of the arts policy world continue to regard the nonprofit arts as intrinsically of higher quality than the commercial arts.

Indeed, events of the 1990s seemed to highlight the failings of popular culture. For example, in 1992, Vice President Dan Quayle generated considerable attention (and approbation) when he criticized a popular television character (Murphy Brown) for setting a bad example of unwed motherhood. During 1993 and 1994, the trio of violence, sex and profanity were factors in calls for the institution of a rating system for video games and in protests against rap lyrics. In 1995, efforts to governmentally require a television rating system and v-chip technology to enable parents to program televisions to block out shows with certain ratings gained policy momentum.

Both Senator Bob Dole - then a leading contender for the 1996 Republican presidential nomination - and President Bill Clinton strongly criticized the entertainment industries. Senator Dole accused Hollywood of marketing evil to American children, and accused television, the movies and popular music of breeding anti-social behavior through 'casual violence and even more casual sex'. From the podium of his State of the Union message, President Clinton called on the entertainment industry to consider the 'damage that comes from the incessant, repetitive, mindless violence and irresponsible conduct that permeate our media all the time' (Kolbert 1995a). Nor were these the views of only a few - however visible - policymakers. A summer 1995 *New York Times* poll reported that 'Americans have a starkly negative view of popular culture' with large proportions 'mentioning too much sex, violence and vulgar language' and some also concerned with bias and 'plain stupidity' (Kolbert 1995b, 1 and 23).

Such public dismay at the state of popular entertainment might have been thought to work to the advantage of the nonprofit arts, burnishing its presumption of excellence and thus maintaining a claim on public support both attitudinally and financially. However, this did not prove to be the case. Instead, an history of public suspicion of the arts resurfaced and seemed to resonate with the public debates about the popular arts. Historian Neil Harris notes that Americans seem to have a persistent 'sense that artistic achievement and activity are, if not actually subversive to consensual opinion, irrelevant to community welfare and self-esteem' (Harris 1996, 25). In 1997, the NEA itself has admitted that '(…) many (…) Americans are apt to look with suspicion at an 'arts world' that seems alternatively intimidating, incomprehensible, expensive, alien, and (…) often disreputable' (NEA 1997, 13). Thus, both the nonprofit arts and the popular culture attracted similar criticisms.

This fundamental suspicion was further provoked by other developments that - in the public mind - undermined the claim of the nonprofit arts to a presumption of excellence. First, the concept of excellence was challenged within the arts community itself as a divisive and repressive term. Second, a reevaluation of the place of excellence in the framework of public arts funding began to take shape within the larger cultural policy community. Third, the nonprofit arts and the federal agency that supported them (the NEA) came to be perceived as exhibiting many of the same characteristics that were deplored in popular culture. And finally, political supporters of the NEA and of federal arts funding began to find flaws in the administrative mechanisms used to guarantee excellence and accountability.

Questioning quality within the arts community

Reporting on the first development and sentiment within the arts community, Michael Brenson noted in *The New York Times* that quality was the most 'divisive word in the art world'. Some artists found it a 'pretext for preserving the authority of the heterosexual white male (…)', a 'symbol of exclusion' standing 'for artistic and cultural repression'. Others regarded quality as standing 'for

everything that is noble and enduring in Western art and culture'. These felt that 'if the word quality is repudiated (…) [then] all judgments will become relative and chaos will prevail (…).' They felt the result would not be 'social justice but (…) second and third-rate art' (Brenson 1990, 1). Clearly, the arts community was divided among itself about the meaning, utility, and acceptability of 'excellence' as a core value.

Questioning excellence within the policy community

Within the more extended cultural policy community, policy scholars and historians opened new discussion about the place and operationalization of excellence as a core policy value. On the one hand, historian Michael Kammen points to the similarity and yet different resonance of the terms 'excellence' and 'elitism'. He goes on to note that '(…) many advocates of excellence are essentially elitists in terms of wanting quality control, and many of the so-called elitists are guilty of nothing more than insisting upon rigorous peer review procedures because they believe that taxpayers' money should be used accountability to support those projects most likely to have enduring value' (Kammen 1997, 88). In the process, Kammen both defends and implicitly criticizes excellence as well as suggests that excellence through peer panel review is a way of assuring accountability - but this is accountability to a professional elite.

While criticizing the NEA for elitism and advocating a more populist public policy for support of the arts, Edward Arian argues that 'key words in the elitist position are *quality* and *professionalism*' (Arian 1989, 25). Similarly, political scientist, Kevin Mulcahy notes that '(…) the infusion of public funds into cultural enterprises empowers the taxpayers and their elected representatives to exercise their aesthetic judgment (…). [as a consequence] Public decisions cannot simply be the preserve of professional within arts disciplines' (Mulcahy 1995, 207). And Margaret Wyszomirski has argued that 'excellence is a pre-condition, not the goal, of public support'; to believe otherwise 'is to erroneously presume that the general public regards art, specifically that certified by arts professionals, is a public good and therefore, that excellent art for arts's sake is in the public interest' (Wyszomirski 1995c, 28).

Historically, it had been common practice at the NEA to use the phrase 'excellence, access and vitality' as a virtual mantra in its documents, statements, and publications. The agency now shows signs of moving away from excellence as a core value. In the NEA's 170-page report *American Canvas* references to 'excellence' or 'quality' appear rarely. Conversely, the report decries the 'enshrining [of] art within the temples of culture' and of having 'stressed the specialized, professional aspects of the arts at the expense of their more pervasive, participatory nature' (NEA 1997, 59). In addition, *American Canvas* not only raises the negative specter of elitism but seems to catapult excellence into the realm of the nearly unreachable when it urges a shift away from '(…) the traditional spot-lit close-up of the exceptional and the virtuosic' (Ibid, 63).

Are the nonprofit arts all that different from the popular culture?

Although the majority of the NEA's grants went to artists, arts organizations, and arts projects that enjoyed public appreciation, many of those that rose to notoriety between 1989 and 1992 seemed to raise objections for reasons similar to the criticisms that have long dogged the popular arts. Andres Serrano's photograph of a crucifix immersed in urine and entitled *Piss Christ* was condemned by televangelist Pat Robertson as 'blasphemy paid for by the government' and by Senator Al D'Amato as 'a deplorable despicable display of vulgarity'. An exhibit of the works of photographer Robert Mapplethorpe provoked cries of pornography and child pornography. Scott Tyler's piece entitled *What is the Proper Way to Display the U.S. Flag?* at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago elicited charges of flag-desecration. The works of the performance artists who became known as the 'NEA Four' (Holly Hughes, Karen Finley, Tim Miller, and John Fleck) were challenged as vulgar and obscene. Cincinnati museum director Dennis Barrie was charged (and ultimately acquitted) of obscenity charges stemming from the Mapplethorpe exhibit.[5] Grants for two literary anthologies entitled *Live Sex Acts* and *Queer City* prompted protesting letters and congressional inquiries. A grant for a program on gay black men entitled *Tongues Untied* in the PBS series *Point of View* was used as fodder in the 1992 presidential primaries by conservative challenger Patrick Buchanan against President Bush. Year after year, during annual appropriations deliberations of the Congress, objections were raised and restrictions proposed concerning federal arts support for work that was obscene or indecent, blasphemous, offensive on the basis of race, creed, sex, handicap, age or national origin. Many of the works in question struck their critics as vulgar, a number included depictions of violence.

In other words, many of the NEA grants that became cause celebres became controversial, in part, because they were perceived as exhibiting sex, vulgarity, violence, and bias - the very traits that the public had found most objectionable in the popular culture as seen in the 1995 *New York Times* poll referred to earlier. Meanwhile, raps groups like '2 Live Crew' were being brought into court on obscenity charges, television was embroiled in decency regulations with the Federal Communication Commission, the NEA was sued in federal court by artists over its decency requirements for grantees, and television was engaged in a debate over a new ratings system to assess violence, sex, and language. The fact that while the NEA controversies were raging the commercial arts were also engaged with similar issues only served to blur whether the high or popular arts occupied the high ground of excellence.

How to assure excellence and accountability?

Amidst such volatility around the core value of excellence, the policymaking system began to confront emphatic calls for more public accountability. Outspoken NEA critic Senator Jesse Helms declared the NEA procedures for selecting artists and works of art as 'badly, badly flawed' (Bolton 1992, 31) and joined 24 other Senators in asking the Endowment chairman to review and reform his agency's grant-making procedures. Even one of the NEA's staunchest supporters, Senator Claiborne Pell, felt that in some cases 'serious errors in judgement were made (…) by their respective peer panels'.[6]

During contentious efforts to reauthorize the NEA in 1990, Congress created a bipartisan, Independent Commission to review the agency's grant-making procedures (explicitly including its peer panel system) and to consider whether the standard for publicly funded art should be different from the standard for privately funded art. In September 1990, the Independent Commission reported that in terms of aesthetic or artistic quality, the standard of artistic excellence applied equally to publicly and privately funded art. But it also reported that support for 'art from public funds entails considerations that go beyond artistic excellence. Publicly funded art must take into account the conditions that traditionally govern the use of public money (…) [and] (…)

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must, of course, serve the purposes which congress has defined for the National Endowment for the Arts' (IC 1990, 57).

The Report went on in considerable detail to lay out recommendations for how the grantmaking process could be reformed 'in order to assure that the National Endowment for the Arts operate[s] in a manner accountable to the President, Congress and the American people' (Ibid, 61). Subsequently, the de facto grantmaking authority of the peer panels was challenged and laypersons were added to review panels. Eventually, Congressional members were added to the National Council for the Arts. The need to explicitly articulate the public purposes that were advanced through federal funding for the arts became not only more obvious, but a political necessity.

Thus, coming full circle, the breakdown of the core policy value of excellence was instrumental in the destabilization of the arts policy system, in recasting the political dynamics of arts policymaking processes, helped provoke structural reorganization and procedural reform, and contributed to a heightened scrutiny on the impact and outcomes of federal arts policies.

Shifting values and assumptions

If the foregoing, although brief and incomplete, exploration is reasonably accurate in its attempt to map out the shifts in a core policy value and key policy assumption, then where does this leave federal arts policy in America currently? Certainly in a state of flux, ambiguity, and, at times, dissension. Nonetheless, one can discern that two reconceptualizations seem to be in process within the arts policy community. The first involves the attempt to recast the core value of 'excellence' as 'creativity'. The second involves reformulating the assumption of the inherent distinction between the professional nonprofit arts and, on the one hand, the commercial/popular arts and, on the other hand, the amateur/avocational/community-based arts. Let me identify but a few indicators of these developments.

Although creativity was an element in the founding legislation of the NEA over thirty years ago, it was largely superseded in the policy lexicon by the triad of excellence, professionalism and nonprofit status. Recently both government reports and arts community forums have tended to exhibit a preference for the term and the idea of creativity rather than excellence. For example, in the NEA's *American Canvas* report, the terms 'creative' and 'creativity' appear much more frequently than does 'excellence'. Often creativity is paired with 'imagination' thus encompassing the notions of innovation and experimentation that are important to artists and may have been particularly vulnerable to criticism during the 'culture wars' of 1989-1992.

Similarly, the 1997 report of the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities (PCAH) was entitled *Creative America* and seems to deploy creativity as a value that appeals the general public. For example, it asserts that 'The creative force of the arts and humanities strengthens our democracy' and that '(…) participation in the arts and humanities unlocks the human potential for creativity and lifts us beyond our isolated individualism to shared understanding' (PCAH 1997, 1). Rather than asserting a public purpose to foster a climate in which artists and nonprofit arts organizations would thrive, the PCAH report sought 'to foster an environment where Americans can benefit from a variety of creative expressions and thought and from a cultural climate which inspires broad participation' (Ibid, 32). Whether the general public will subscribe to and relate to this value of creativity remains to be seen.

The other development mentioned is the process of reconfiguring the policy definition of the arts. As discussed, federal arts funding policy was premised on the inclusion of the professional nonprofit arts to the exclusion of other types of artistic activity - both commercial, popular arts as well as a variety of either nonprofessional or non-institutional arts activities including amateur, applied, avocational, folk art, community art, traditional and indigenous arts. Both the 1997 American Assembly report (AA 1997) and the PCAH *Creative America* report break out of previous distinctions and argue for a more inclusive policy definition of the arts. The American Assembly puts forward a full spectrum view of an arts sector that includes commercial, nonprofit and (what it called) unincorporated. Collectively, this sector is enormous, involves virtually all Americans, and is capable of addressing a variety of public purposes (Ibid, 5).

Similarly, *Creative America* notes that 'In the United States, amateur, non-profit and commercial creative enterprises all interact and influence each other constantly' and that 'this flowing exchange among the amateur, nonprofit, and commercial segments of culture deserves special attention because it expands our understanding of how culture operates and of the many avenues for participation' (PCAH 1997, 3). It proposes that 'the future vitality of American cultural life will depend on the capacity of our society to nourish amateur participation, to maintain a healthy nonprofit sector, and to encourage innovation in commercial creative industries' (Ibid, 4). Subsequent forums, publications, and research have followed to pursue and develop the the policy and programmatic implications and potential of this new configuration.

Taking an advocacy perspective, the NEA's *American Canvas* calls for replacing '(…) the narrow, professional, institutional definition that we've used in the past (…) with a more expansive view that includes a range of activities - avocational and ethnic, participatory and popular (…).' Such a change is seen as an '(…) opportunity to build a much larger, more inclusive base of support for the arts (…)' (NEA 1997, 162-163).

Values, purpose and policy

Core values are crucial to legitimizing policy purposes, programs, and procedures. Yet the meaning and relative significance of specific values can change as the political and social context evolves. The foregoing discussion has chosen to focus on just one of a constellation of core values that has rooted federal arts policy in the United State for nearly three decades; it has touched on only a few underlying assumptions of this historic policy paradigm. To construct a fuller understanding of the character and influence of values in American federal arts policy would require more extensive explorations of other value clusters: equity, access and cultural diversity; artistic freedom, autonomy and accountability; professionalism and public participation; as well as examination of how the assumption of the primacy of private and local support for the arts has evolved into an intergovernmental and intersectoral support system or how the divide between the fine and popular arts, between art and culture has been blurring. Just as previous value configurations and assumptions provided a foundation for the federal arts policy paradigm of the late 20th century, new value configurations and assumptions are beginning to shape a cultural policy paradigm for the 21st century.

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Notes

1. See, for more information on the NEA and a comparison between the American and the Dutch arts policy system, Boogaarts and Hitters 1993.
2. For explorations of a changing arts policy paradigm, see Wyszomirksi 1995a; and Kreidler 1996.
3. On the idea of core values in general see, Kingdon 1995, 132-137. For a discussion of core values and the arts policy community, see Wyszomirski 1995b, 12-13, 32.
4. The enabling legislation that created the National Endowments for the Arts and the Humanities was titled the National Foundation for the Arts and Humanities Act and was passed as public Law 89-209 in 1965, hereafter referred to as NFAH Act. Specific parts of the law will be referred to parenthetically in-text.
5. For more detail on these controversies see, Bolton 1992; Heins 1993; and Wyszomirski 1995c.
6. See excerpts of Senate debate of 26 July 29, 1989 as found in Ibid, 80, 83.

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