

Working Paper Series, 7



Public Opinion and Political Vulnerability: Why has the National Endowment for the Arts been Such an Attractive Target?

Paul DiMaggio and Becky Pettit
Sociology Department and Center for Arts and Cultural Policy Studies
Princeton University
January 1999

The authors thank the Pew Charitable Trusts for support for the work on which this paper reports and to the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Nathan Cummings Foundation for grants that supported inventorying the data sets used in this study. The views expressed in this paper represent those of the authors alone. Perceptive written comments from Steven Tepper and Lynn Robinson and helpful oral comments on presentations of this and related work at the 3rd Sesquiennial Rutgers/Princeton Culture Conference in November 1997, a Rockefeller College (Princeton) luncheon seminar in April 1998, the Conference on Social Theory, Politics and the Arts in October 1998, and the Princeton Center for Arts and Cultural Policy Studies Affiliates Luncheon in December 1998 are gratefully acknowledged.

Abstract

Federal government arts programs appear to deviate from the rule that legislative behavior closely follows public preferences. Since the early 1970s, public opinion surveys have found stable if modest majorities supporting federal aid to the arts. Yet during that period the National Endowment for the Arts, the agency responsible for federal arts support, has faced volatile legislative treatment: great favor until 1978, budgetary stagnation through the Carter and Reagan administrations, and congressional disfavor, culminating in sharp budget cuts and agency reorganization, after 1989. We inspect 55 items from public opinion surveys and re-analyze data from 2 state and 8 national surveys undertaken between 1975 and 1996 to resolve this puzzle. Our conclusions: (1) Arts support is not a salient issue to most voters, leaving legislators relatively unconstrained. (2) Positive responses to general questions about arts funding often mask complex, ambivalent views. (3) The core constituency for federal arts support – college graduates – is difficult to mobilize because their interest in the arts is balanced by skepticism about federal government programs. (4) Opponents of arts spending successfully built on ties to Christian conservative and Republican loyalists to mobilize the stable minorities opposed to the NEA. As a result, arts politics in the U.S. has consisted of a standoff between a committed minority of 15 to 20 percent of the public that strongly opposes federal support for the arts and a weakly committed majority of about 60 percent that favors the federal role.

Introduction

Americans love the arts: majorities of close to 90 percent routinely agree that the arts are vital to the good life, that they are important to the development of children and that they enhance the quality of communities (Pettit and DiMaggio 1998). What is more, stable if modest majorities have endorsed government support for the arts for the past three decades.

Many political scientists and political sociologists have argued persuasively that legislative action tends to reflect the views of the constituents that congresspersons are elected to represent, and that changes in policy tend to reflect trends in public opinion (Page and Shapiro 1992; Burstein 1998). If so, the rocky career of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), the federal agency with the primary responsibility for financially assisting arts organizations, would appear to pose an exception, for its legislative fortunes have been volatile despite stable and generally positive public attitudes towards arts funding. “The National Endowment for the Arts has been described as ‘embattled’ for so long,” writes one observer, “that it now probably assumes that word is part of its name” (Brenson 1998: 25).

Between the mid-1970s and the late 1980s, despite stability in public opinion, the NEA evolved from Congress’s bipartisan darling to its controversial scapegoat. The agency’s appropriations, which spiraled upward 1970 to 1979, stagnated for sixteen years until they were cut sharply in FY96 (National Endowment for the Arts 1998). Recently, Congress has been divided: in 1997, the House of Representatives voted to abolish the agency at the same time that the Republican chair of the Senate Labor and Human Re-

sources Committee introduced bipartisan legislation to almost double its appropriation. In 1998, once again many Representatives voted to kill the NEA (the House Interior Subcommittee came within a single vote of recommending its elimination), while Senators with whom they shared their constituencies voted to increase its appropriations. (In the end the Agency's budget was unchanged.)

Figure 1 documents an evident disjuncture between public opinion and legislative action towards the NEA. Whereas the NEA budget began a long decline (in real dollars) in 1980, public support for federal arts funding actually increased between 1980 and 1992, only declining slightly in 1996 (National Research Center for the Arts 1980, 1984, 1987, 1992; Americans for the Arts 1996). Throughout this period a majority of survey respondents said they would pay an extra \$10 in taxes so that the federal government could spend more on the arts, with the percentage peaking in 1987.

To be sure, the NEA's changing fortunes demand a multicausal explanation (Wyszomirski 1994). The agency rose on the tide of a Great Society consensus that boosted federal spending in many areas. Its decline was part of a conservative resurgence that called into question most kinds of federal spending. The NEA's misfortunes reflected, as well, both heightened partisan conflict and a division *within* the Republican Party between economic conservatives and social conservatives supported by the religious right.

Nonetheless, the agency's oscillations of fortune --- both its rise in the heyday of federal activism and its decline in the conservative reckoning that followed -- have consistently been more extreme than those of other agencies subject to the same political environment. And the political and social-movement forces that have attacked the NEA

in the past decade would not have done so had the climate of public opinion not rendered such attacks productive of political capital and direct-mail contributions.

Our purpose in this paper is to analyze public opinion to better understand why a once popular federal agency has proven so politically vulnerable. We make no attempt to present a full explanation of the NEA's woes.¹ Rather we want to understand why the public's good will towards the arts in general, and to the principle of federal aid to the arts in particular, failed to prevent them. We do not imagine that what happens on Capitol Hill reflects public preferences in any simple manner (indeed, we show that in the case of the NEA it has *not*). Rather, we view public opinion as a potential constraint upon the exercise of Congressional will and – to the extent that opinion has been organized around significant group affiliations and identities -- as a resource for social-movement entrepreneurs.

We employ two kinds of data in this study. First, we inspected marginals (and in some cases demographic breakdowns) of responses to more than fifty poll questions available through the Roper Center Archive (Public Opinion Online). (Questions were drawn from a keyword search based on the union of “government” and “arts.”) Second, we reanalyzed data from ten national and local surveys (described briefly in Appendix Table 1 and at more length in Pettit [1997]) that contained questions about respondents' attitudes towards government cultural programs.

On the basis of analyses of these data, we conclude that:

¹ For a perceptive analysis of the role of the NEA leadership's strategic miscalculations, see Wyzomirski, 1994.

1. Support for the principle of federal aid for the arts is broad but shallow. The issue is not salient to most Americans, and most people know little about the NEA or its programs. Consequently, many “opinions” are constructed on the spot, and the support for public funding apparent in many well publicized surveys is vulnerable to changes in item wording, questionnaire design, and the latest headlines about NEA grants to objectionable arts projects.

2. The natural constituency for public support for the arts is cross-pressured and therefore difficult to mobilize. To favor federal aid to artists and arts organizations, one must believe that the arts are valuable and be disposed to endorse an activist federal government. But some of the most important predictors of participation in the arts (the best indicator of the value people place on them) also predict conservative views towards the federal role.

3. By contrast to supporters of arts subsidies, a minority of 15 to 20 percent of the public, including both economic conservatives opposed to big government and cultural conservatives suspicious of the arts’ elitist and modernist image, consistently has favored cutting sharply or eliminating federal arts programs. During the late 1980s and early 1990s, this opposition became more effective because it crystallized around the institutional foci of party and church, as the conservative wing of the Republican Party and the Christian right made abolition of federal arts funding a major priority. As is often the case, when a mobilized minority opposes a diffuse and weakly committed majority, the minority exerts a disproportionate influence on policy.

After briefly describing the recent history of the National Endowment for the arts as context, we present results of our analyses in four parts. First, we report attitude trends to demonstrate that public opinion has fluctuated far less than has public policy. Second, we describe the low salience of arts policy, as revealed both by direct questions and by the vulnerability of poll results to design factors; and note several significant qualifications to the public's broad approval of government aid to the arts. Third, we analyze the bases of support for federal arts programs, and find clues as to why such support has been difficult to convert to political advantage. Finally, we explore the bases of opposition to federal arts spending, reporting shifts between 1985 and 1995 that made the NEA's detractors more politically effective, while leaving aggregate opinion largely unchanged.

We focus on the National Endowment for the Arts because it (with its sister agency, the National Endowment for the Humanities) has been the foci of legislative cultural politics for almost thirty years, prospering during periods of congressional favor and suffering during periods of controversy. Legislative appropriations also flow to the arts through direct assistance to specially chartered federal museums (*e.g.*, the National Museum of American Art or the National Gallery) and through grants to arts institutions from domestic programs established to support education, law enforcement, employment training, or community economic development, as well as through a few small, specialized programs such as the National Institute for Museum and Library Services and the General Services Administration's Art-in-Architecture Program. Although the volume of appropriations to federal museums and related agencies for artistic programming and, before the Reagan administration, the volume of grants from non-arts

programs to arts institutions, has equaled or exceeded the grant budget of the Arts Endowment, such funding has produced less controversy (the former because it is more highly institutionalized and the latter because the funds were more difficult to trace).

Because the NEA has employed the most discretion with the least direct control and the greatest public visibility, it has been the point around which the hopes of the “arts community” and the antagonism of opponents of government arts aid have crystallized.

A Brief History of the National Endowment for the Arts

The National Endowment for the Arts (and the Humanities Endowment, to which its fortunes have been joined) are products of the Great Society, created in 1965. Although Lyndon Johnson founded the NEA, Richard Nixon was its unlikely champion, increasing appropriations at a dizzying rate throughout most of his presidency. By FY79, the NEA budget had reached \$150 million (National Endowment for the Arts 1998). Nixon’s appointee as Endowment chairman, Nancy Hanks, was a skilled political strategist, who maintained excellent relations with Congress and the press. When she departed in 1977, the honeymoon ended and for the first time, the NEA fell under widespread attack. The grounds (not always consistent) would become familiar in the ensuing years: excessive elitism (spending too much on “high-culture” institutions in New York and Los Angeles and too little on struggling groups in rural areas and the inner-cities); and too much populism (as grants to organizations with strong ties to rural or inner-city communities were derided as support for “recreational art” or “social work”) (Biddle 1988). In the

face of controversy, the Carter administration permitted the real value of the NEA's appropriation to decline.

Although he once argued that Washington had no business in the arts, Ronald Reagan appointed a trusted aide to head (and, as it happened, to protect politically) the NEA. Nonetheless, its appropriations, like those of other domestic programs, stagnated during the Reagan years (Figure 1).² During the Bush presidency, culture warriors of the religious right joined the agency's fiscally conservative opponents: starting in summer 1989, a series of grants to controversial projects were featured in conservative direct-mail campaigns. In 1990, Congress increased from 20 to 27.5 percent the proportion of NEA program funds earmarked for state arts agencies and made other efforts to ensure that the agency would make no more controversial grants (DiMaggio 1991).

Despite these reforms, an alliance of fiscal and social conservatives continued to campaign against the NEA, reducing the agency's budget slightly in 1993 and in 1994. When Republicans assumed control of Congress in 1995, the party's ascendant conservative wing made abolishing the NEA a high priority. In 1995, Congress slashed the Endowment's appropriation from \$162 million (FY95) to \$99 million (FY96). In 1997, the Senate-House conference punished the agency again by raising the percentage of its funds earmarked for the states to 40 percent and placing congressional representatives on its governing council (Wyzomirski 1994; Koch 1998).

² The Reagan administration actually cut back federal support for the arts much more dramatically by eliminating or eviscerating many social programs, of which the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) was the most significant, that by 1980 probably channeled as much federal support to arts organizations as did the NEA.

Trends in Public Opinion towards Government Support for the Arts

What role has public opinion played in the NEA's changing fortunes? Did the public's views of federal arts support change between the agency's heyday in the 1970s and its chronic troubles after 1989? To answer this question we must assemble responses to items that different survey organizations have asked at different times. These responses indicate that public attitudes have been largely stable throughout this period.

The NEA was a by-product of the Great Society, created without benefit of public demand. In 1963, the Opinion Research Corporation included "financial support for artists and arts activities (theatres, orchestras, etc.)" among a set of issues about which a national sample of respondents were asked whether there was a "need for action." Respondents who said that there was at least some need, even if it was "not too urgent," were asked what institutions should "handle primarily" society's efforts. Just over one quarter of respondents indicated that the arts needed action, and of these, only 17 percent felt that the federal government was the appropriate institution to lead the effort. More respondents (21 percent) would have assigned the task to state or local government, the rest choosing voluntary agencies, individuals or business. Thus two years before the NEA's creation, only one in twenty Americans believed that the federal government should take the lead in assisting artists and arts organizations, and a similar number felt that state or local government should take initiative. The other 90 percent preferred private leadership or, more often, saw no need for concerted action at all.³

³ Roper Center Public Opinion On-Line, Acc. No. 0101206, Q 062.

Once the NEA was established, however, the principle of federal support for the arts won relatively rapid acceptance. The only long-term trend data available come from polls conducted for arts advocacy organizations by Louis Harris (through several research organizations) between 1975 and 1996. In 1975, just over half of respondents to a complexly worded question who had an opinion endorsed direct government support to arts organizations. Thereafter, the surveys employed a more straightforward wording: “If arts organizations – such as art museums, dance, opera and theater groups and symphony orchestras – need financial assistance to operate, do you feel that the federal government should provide assistance or not.” Response categories were yes, no, and “not sure” (chosen by 3 to 5 percent of respondents each year). Of respondents who expressed an opinion, the proportion endorsing federal arts support rose from 52 percent in 1980 to 62 percent in 1987, dipping only slightly to 59 percent in 1996 (Figure 1).⁴ In other words, *support for the principal of federal arts aid rose during the Reagan years and held its own during a period in which the NEA faced a series of public relations debacles, lost much of its federal appropriation, and was a constant target of the religious right.*⁵

⁴ Figure 2 tracks the percentage of all respondents favoring federal aid to the arts (i.e., not just the percentage of those with opinions) and therefore reports slightly lower totals.

⁵ The Harris surveys have been justifiably criticized for their pro-arts bias (see Robinson 1989), but there is no reason to believe that the extent of that bias changed over the period reviewed here. Indeed, two other polls that asked national samples whether they favored or opposed federal government financial aid to the arts after the crisis of the late 1980s reported majorities of 69 percent (People for the American Way, a liberal advocacy group, 1990: Roper Center, Public Opinion On-Line, Acc. No. 0108860, Q. 035) and 53 percent (Roper Center for *Readers Digest*, 1995; Roper Center, Public Opinion On-Line, Acc. No. 0247055, Q 028) in favor. Only a 1989 *Newsweek* survey found a majority (57 percent) of those with opinions opposed to federal arts support. But that poll was conducted at the height of the obscenity controversies and asked about support for “selected arts projects” – a phrase that many respondents doubtless took to refer to the specific projects currently in the news. (An unusually high percentage of “don’t know” responses – 18 percent – also suggests that respondents found the question ambiguous.) (Roper Center Public Opinion On-Line, Acc. No. 0197360, Q 003.)

From 1980 to 1986, the Harris surveys also included items comparing current per capita federal spending on defense, education and the arts and asking respondents if they would pay \$25, \$15, \$10, or \$5 more in taxes for arts support. Responses to these items also exhibit much stability, but experience some erosion over the course of the NEA's political travails (Figure 1). Nonetheless, even in 1996 a cunningly designed question series could induce more than half of respondents to say they would pay \$10 more in taxes so that the federal government could spend more money on the arts.

A third item repeated over a decade's span provides further purchase on change in public attitudes towards federal support for the arts during the period during which the NEA was under fire. In 1985, 1990, and 1996, the General Social Survey asked:

Listed below are various areas of government spending. Please indicate whether you would like to see more or less government spending in each area. Remember if you say much more it might require a tax increase to pay for it.

One of the areas listed was "culture and the arts." Again, little change is evident between 1985 to 1996 (Figure 2). To be sure, the proportion preferring "less spending" on the arts rose in 1996 (after declining between 1985 and 1990), but so did the much smaller percentage endorsing "more spending." As with the Harris question on willingness to be taxed, the pattern indicates marginal erosion of support rather than anything resembling the dramatic shift evident in congressional voting patterns.

In short, the decline in the NEA's fortunes occurred without much change in public opinion. Since 1975, Americans have endorsed the principle of federal assistance to the arts by small but durable margins. Depending on question wording, they will al-

ternately volunteer to pay more federal taxes for the arts or opine that federal arts spending should be reduced. But only modest erosion is evident, and only in the 1990s.

Thus we return to our original question. If Americans love the arts and hold stable and moderately positive attitudes towards government assistance to arts organizations, then why has the National Endowment for the Arts experienced such changing fortunes and proven such a serviceable punching bag for political conservatives?

The Low Saliency of Arts Policy

Attitudes are politically important to the extent that they can be transformed into action. If voters are poorly informed about a policy or agency and relatively indifferent to its fate, favorable attitudes will not protect it from political antagonists: Much research demonstrates that the degree to which policy decisions reflect public preferences is conditional upon an issue's saliency (Monroe 1998). Because the federal government provides only a minuscule proportion of the revenues of U.S. arts institutions (relative to its commanding budgetary position in such domains as welfare, education, health, and national defense), it should not surprise us to find that government arts policy is relatively low in saliency even to voters who care about the arts.

When policies lack saliency and respondents lack information, attitudes may be constructed during the survey interview itself (Tourangeau and Rasinski 1988; Zaller 1992: chapter 2). Such "constructedness" (and the low saliency it reflects) is indicated when changes in question wording or context have large effects on responses. This has been the case for public attitudes towards the NEA.

First, consider the direct evidence. In 1981 the *Los Angeles Times* asked a national adult sample “do you approve or disapprove of government funding for the arts?” After they had answered, the interviewer inquired: “do you feel strongly about that or not so strongly?” Half the respondents reported that they did *not* have strong feelings (and another 12 percent could express no opinion at all). The *Times* asked a similar question in 1989, and again fewer than 40 percent of voters described the positions they had expressed as “strong.” More important, respondents were asked (as part of the initial question), “or haven’t you heard enough about that yet to say?” Thus authorized, fully 37 percent – as many as expressed strong views either way – reported that they knew too little to express an opinion. In 1995, as the Republican Congress engaged in an effort, accompanied by a vigorous campaign to sway public opinion, to eliminate the Endowment, 66 percent of respondents to a *Readers Digest* survey about proposed budget cuts reported that they had not “heard or read anything... lately” about the NEA.⁶ These reports suggest that most Americans are uninterested in and ill informed about arts policy and that, for the most part, their attitudes on the topic carry little conviction.

If this is correct, then we would expect the attitudes people express to vary from survey to survey, depending on how questions are worded and the context in which they are asked. This is just what we find. Take for example the trend questions we have already described. When a series of questions about willingness to be taxed is embedded in a survey about the arts and their virtues, more than 60 percent of respondents volunteer

⁶Roper Center Public Opinion On-Line, Acc. No. 0079036, Q021; Acc. No. 0078316, Q040; Acc. No. 0247037, Q010. For trends in press coverage of the NEA see Koch, 1998, fig. 3.

to pay more taxes in order for government to spend more on the arts – a position that presumably implies that one believes that government *should* spend more on the arts and, *a fortiori*, that one supports having a federal arts program. But when the arts are included in a series of questions that focus on whether federal spending in a range of areas should go up or down, 15 percent or fewer advocate increased spending, with larger proportions (37 percent in 1996) wanting spending unchanged.

Indeed, when the issue is placed into the context of a presumed need to reduce federal spending, public opinion becomes even less sympathetic to arts funding. This was the case in 1981, when the Roper organization described cuts in arts grants as part of “President Reagan’s economic plan...for cuts in federal government spending, and for cuts in taxes,” a framing that elicited support from 59 percent of respondents and clear opposition from just 20 percent. A few weeks earlier, an ABC/*Washington Post* poll that asked simply if “spending ... should be increased, decreased or left about the same” had reported that only 43 percent favored cuts, while 54 percent opposed them.⁷

The same pattern emerged in 1995 when the Republicans’ “Contract with America” came before the nation. Again neutrally phrased questions elicited broad support for the status quo. For example, 58 percent of respondents to a Roper Center poll reported that they wanted federal aid to the arts to stay the same or increase. And, again, questions with budget-cutting frames elicited budget-cutting responses, with between 47 and 69 percent of respondents to several polls fielded between December 1994 and March 1995

⁷ Roper Center Public Opinion On-Line, Acc. No. 0120435, Q002; Acc. No. 0006869, Q048.

supporting reductions in federal assistance to the arts.⁸ We conclude from the variability of results that many people's opinions about government assistance to the arts are ill-formed, weakly held, and therefore up for grabs. This finding in itself helps to explain the volatility of Congress's treatment of the NEA, for policy makers are free to ignore public preferences on issues to the extent that the public is poorly informed and the issues are of low salience (Page and Shapiro 1983).

There is a second reason that support for the arts is less robust than polling results suggest: people who respond positively to broadly worded questions may in fact favor some kinds of arts subsidies but oppose others. If opponents of the NEA can shift the images people have in mind when they think about federal arts programs from the types people favor to the types they oppose, they can influence effective public opinion.

Americans' support for arts funding is qualified in two ways. First, slightly fewer respondents favor federal assistance to arts organizations than support state or local aid. In six surveys conducted between 1980 and 1996, the gap between the percentage of respondents endorsing federal support and the percentage endorsing state or local support ranged from zero to 14 percent, with a median difference of 8 percent. (The gap appears to have diminished slightly since the first term of the Reagan administration.)⁹

⁸ Roper Center Public Opinion Online, Acc. No. 0228755, Q026 (L.A. Times); Acc. No. 0247038, Q011 (Roper Center, Institute for Social Inquiry); Acc. No. 0228388, Q033 (Princeton Survey Research Associates).

⁹ Roper Center Public Opinion Online, Acc. No. 0069536, Q131-33 (American Council for the Arts, 1980), Acc. No. 0121148, Q071 (Roper Organization, 1981), Acc. No. 0071287, Q125-27 (National Research Center of the Arts, 1984) Acc. No. 0072953, Q143-45 (Louis Harris, 1987), Acc. No. 0220081, Q096-98 (Louis Harris, 1992); and *Americans for the Arts* 1996: 28.

Second, respondents consistently have favored public funding of arts organizations more strongly than they have favored government grants to individual artists. In five surveys conducted between 1980 and 1995, the gap between endorsement of federal support for organizations and approval of federal aid to individual artists ranged from 8 percent (1992) to 26 percent (1995), with a median difference of 16 percent.¹⁰

In other words, the public appears to support arts funding most strongly when local governments assist nonprofit arts organizations. Support for federal-government grants to individual professional artists is considerably weaker. Given this, it is no accident that the NEA's antagonists emphasized the results of its artist fellowships and that, even when grants to organizations were at issue, critics focussed public attention upon individual artists whose work those grants purportedly supported. And it is understandable why, lacking the votes to eliminate the agency, the NEA's opponents mandated that ever larger shares of its program funds be passed on to state arts agencies. Unbundling the issue of public arts support in this way has permitted opponents to attack the aspects of the NEA's mission and charter that enjoy the weakest public support.

Why Support for Government Arts Programs is Soft and Opposition Hard

We have explained why some poll results overestimate the depth of public support for federal government arts programs. Even so, it is also clear that the extent of such support

¹⁰ The large gap in 1995 may reflect the fact that a different survey organization conducted that study and used slightly different questions. Roper Center Public Opinion Online, Acc. No. 0069536, Q131, 134 (American Council for the Arts, 1980), Acc. No. 0071287, Q125, 128 (National Research Center of the Arts, 1984) Acc. No. 0072953, Q143, 146 (Louis Harris, 1987), Acc. No. 0220081, Q096, 099 (Louis Harris, 1992); Acc. No. 0247055, Q028, 029 (Reader's Digest, Institute for Social Inquiry, 1995).

is relatively high and has been so since the 1970s. As we have seen, when questions are asked in a consistent manner, stable majorities support the principle of government support for the arts, but few of them want to increase the amount of that support and even fewer want to increase it by very much. Similarly, a much larger group favors reducing federal spending and a small but stable subset of these feel strongly about it. Moreover, these proportions appear to be unaffected by the actual size of the federal arts budget, persisting during good times and bad for the NEA.

In other words, public support for government assistance to the arts is broad but shallow. It is shallow in two senses: federal arts support is not highly salient to even to many people who say they support it; and, given an opportunity, supporters tend to choose moderate over strong positions in its favor. More people say they approve of federal assistance than say they oppose it. But fewer than one in ten of those who approve would increase support levels sharply.

By contrast, opposition is narrow but deep. Many opponents would like to cut subsidies sharply or even do away with them altogether. Moreover, given the propensity of poll respondents to report that they want to increase spending on services that they value (at the same time they indicate in response to other items that they want lower taxes), this pattern shows decided softness in public support for the arts, compared to support for many other government functions (Hansen 1998).¹¹

¹¹The 1996 GSS asked respondents their views of the appropriate level of federal spending on the environment, health, police and other anti-crime programs, education, national defense, retirement benefits, unemployment benefits and the arts. Despite a tradeoff frame (respondents were told that large increases in spending would require paying higher taxes), more than three quarters of respondents supported more spending on education and more than two thirds favored increased spending on health. Indeed, of the eight domains of federal action, fewest people supported

The fact that support for arts spending is weaker than for many other functions and, in particular, the fact that numerous, weakly committed supporters are arrayed against a smaller set of more intensely committed opponents in itself explains much of the NEA's political vulnerability. Strong opponents can mobilize more effectively and apply more credible pressure upon legislators (especially when their preferences are packaged into the agendas of powerful movement groups) than weak supporters (Arnold 1990). But this pattern, which has existed at least since 1985 (when the GSS first asked about attitudes towards federal arts spending), cannot account for the dramatic *shift* in Congress's treatment of the arts in the late 1980s. To explain this, we must examine how the composition of the public most opposed to arts spending changed between 1985 and 1996. In the rest of this paper we explain why support for federal funding is broad but shallow, why opposition is narrow and deep, and why this narrow, deep opposition became more consequential by the late 1980s.

Shallow Support

Support for government assistance to the arts is shallow, in part, because supporters are cross-pressured. The two best predictors of support for government spending on the arts are whether one values the arts highly oneself and whether one believes in active government. People who attend lots of arts events can be expected to support greater arts spending for reasons both public-spirited (they believe more strongly than other people in the arts' value to society) and self-interested (government arts programs may subsidize

increases in support for the arts (15.8 percent, compared to 21.2 percent for national defense), and the greatest percentage favored reductions in support (46 percent, compared to 32.9 percent for defense).

ticket prices). People who believe that government should be expanded and who attend lots of arts events tend to favor more spending on the arts. People who do not, tend to oppose it. Mobilizing support for the arts is difficult because many people who participate actively in the arts (and therefore value them highly) also have reservations about federal government activism.

To explore these relationships one would ideally use recent national data on arts participation, support for government activism, and attitudes towards federal arts spending. As no single data set meets all of these criteria, we draw on several. First we demonstrate the impact of arts participation on support for federal arts programs, using the Americans and the Arts surveys for 1980, 1987, and 1992. Then we demonstrate the effect of support for expansive government on advocacy of increases in federal arts spending, using the General Social Surveys for 1985, 1990, and 1996. Next we analyze one national survey and two state surveys that permit us to examine a full set of predictors of support for increased arts spending.

Arts participation and support of federal subsidies to arts organizations. Table 1 reports two models (one without and one with arts participation included) predicting support for federal subsidies to arts organizations among respondents to the 1980, 1987, and 1992 Americans and the Arts surveys. (We measure arts participation as the sum [standardized to range from 0 to 1] of the types of presentations or exhibits of nonprofit arts organizations [some subset of the following: live plays, classical music performances, opera or musical theatre performances, ballet or dance performances, or exhibits in

art galleries or art museums] in which respondents reported participating in the previous year.) Beginning with the first model, in each year, African-Americans and women were more likely than people of other races and men (respectively) to favor arts subsidies; and age was strongly associated with opposition to federal arts funding. Residents of the northeast (the omitted category to which the regions included in the model are compared) were more likely in each year to favor arts subsidies than otherwise similar people living in the south, midwest and, except for 1992, the western states. In 1980 and 1987, when the survey included a question about religion, Protestants were less likely to endorse government arts assistance than otherwise similar Catholics, Jews, or persons without religious affiliation. Surprisingly, with one unimportant exception, education does not significantly influence views on this issue.¹²

When a scale measuring arts participation is added to the models, in each year it is a very strong predictor of support for federal arts subsidies, dwarfing the effects of other predictors except for age and race (which are probably proxies for attitudes towards active government, with which they are correlated in most surveys). Moreover, the coefficients of other predictors are in almost every case reduced (usually only moderately), indicating that some of their effect reflects differences in patterns of participation in the arts. Entering arts participation also reduces dramatically (1987) or eliminates

¹² The exception, the strong tendency of respondents with less than a high school education to support arts funding in 1980, is inconsistent with the results of all other studies, and may stem either from a statistical fluke or from some unreported aspect of sample design that may have led to an oversampling of middle-class high school students likely to endorse government aid. In any case, we are inclined to discount it.

completely (1980 and 1992) the tendency of college graduates to favor arts subsidies more than persons whose education concluded with graduation from high school.

Support for active government and support for increased spending on the arts.

Because these Americans and the Arts surveys did not include questions about support for increasing the extent of government participation in the arts and other areas, we turn to the General Social Surveys for 1985, 1990, and 1996, which included questions (described in detail earlier) about whether respondents favored increasing or reducing federal government spending on “culture and the arts.” For each data set, two models are presented, one without and one with support for government activism included. Support for government activism is measured as the sum of responses (rescaled to make higher values more supportive) to questions about the desirability of spending less, the same amount, or more on several kinds of government domestic programs (*not* including culture and the arts). (See Appendix Table 1 for details of variable construction.)

The major predictor of support for greater arts spending in all three years is support for more active government in other areas of domestic spending. People who think government should spend more on the environment, health, or aid to the poor also think it should spend more on culture and the arts. The impact of support for more active government on attitudes towards federal arts spending was very strong throughout, although it dipped somewhat in 1990, when press reports of controversial NEA grants were at their peak. The other principal predictor of support for higher arts budgets is formal education. Men and women with college degrees are significantly more likely to support increased arts spending than otherwise similar people with only high school

degrees or less. In the 1990 and 1996 General Social Surveys, respondents with some college were also significantly more favorable to federal arts spending than people with less education.¹³

Finally, African-Americans were more likely to favor increased arts spending than persons of other races (a difference that became insignificant when support for government activism was entered into the model, reflecting the greater propensity of African-Americans to support an active federal government, rather than special support for the arts.)

Other effects were visible only in one of the three years, with Catholics turning against federal arts funding at the height of the controversy over Endowment support for blasphemous artworks, and Evangelicals less likely than others to endorse increases in federal support in 1996. None of these predictors approached the significance of general orientation towards active government, however.

The cross-pressured arts supporter. So far we have established that people's attitudes towards government support for the arts are heavily influenced by how much they personally attend the kinds of arts activities that government subsidizes, and by their general view of government. Support for the arts is blunted and difficult to turn into political capital, we argue, because these two primary predictors work at cross-purposes: some factors that are positively associated with attending lots of arts events are also associated with skepticism about federal spending.

¹³ Why education has a strong effect on support for increased arts spending but weak or nonexistent effects on support for the principle of federal assistance to arts and cultural organizations is an intriguing puzzle beyond the scope of this paper.

We begin by focussing on four surveys that collected data on both arts participation *and* support for active government: Americans and the Arts, 1975; the General Social Survey, 1993; and 1989 state surveys in New Jersey and Kentucky (see Table 3). In all four, the leading predictor of arts participation is having a college degree (with high school completion the omitted education category). In all four surveys, college graduates are less supportive of activist government than high school graduates, with the difference significant in the 1989 Kentucky state survey. Income is positively and significantly related to arts participation in all four surveys, and negatively related to support for activist government (significantly so in the 1975 Americans and the Arts survey). In other words, we observe a tendency for high status people to attend arts events (which tends to increase support for government arts programs) and to oppose activist government (which tends to reduce it).

To some extent this conflict is moderated by the tendency of arts attenders to be more supportive of most kinds of government spending than sociodemographically similar nonattenders. Nonetheless, that even small associations of this kind may erode potential political support for the arts is evident in the coefficients of “Education: BA or greater” in Table 2 before and after one controls for general orientations towards government spending. The difference between the first and second coefficients represents the dampening effect of cross-pressuring on the extent to which the greater tendency of college graduates to attend arts events can be converted into political support for federal and state arts agencies. In 1985 this dampening effect was 34 percent. In 1990, when controversy framed the NEA budget debate as a matter of public morality rather than

public finance, the greater tolerance of the highly educated for sexually explicit and sacrilegious expression counteracted differences in fiscal attitudes, resulting in a decline of just 3 percent when fiscal philosophy is omitted from the model. But in 1996, it was evident again, with 32 percent of the influence of education on support for higher arts budgets suppressed by the relatively conservative fiscal views of the highly educated.

We can illustrate this by using one national survey (Americans and the Arts 1975) and two state-level surveys (New Jersey and Kentucky, both 1989), that include measures of both arts participation and of attitudes towards public expenditures. The data in the two state surveys are different from others we have looked at because respondents were asked about their attitudes towards state (not federal) government spending on the arts and other areas of government responsibility. But the predictors of support for increased state arts spending are similar to those predicting support for more federal arts assistance in surveys that include questions about each, so we believe that the benefits of being able to include both attitudes towards government and arts participation in the same model are sufficient to warrant attending to these data.

The state surveys were conducted by the University of Kentucky Survey Research Center and the Eagleton Institute of Rutgers University in spring of 1989, just before the outbreak of controversy over NEA grants in support of objectionable art works. Each was an omnibus survey that asked respondents about many different behaviors and opinions, but included several questions about the arts. Almost half of respondents in each state wanted arts funding to stay the same. Kentuckians were slightly more likely to favor increasing spending (38 to 35 percent) and more than twice as likely to have no

opinion (9 to 4 percent). New Jerseyans were almost three times as likely to advocate cutting the arts budget (14 to 5 percent). This difference may well be a product of question wording (see Appendix Table 1): the Kentucky survey asked about arts funding as a follow-on to a question about the value of arts education (a popular subject liable to trigger positive associations), whereas the New Jersey survey embedded the question about arts spending in a set of similar items about several types of state spending (invoking a comparative-priorities frame) and explicitly headed the question with a reference to state taxes.

Nonetheless, results of regression analyses reported in Table 4 are strikingly similar in the most important respects. For each survey, three models are presented. The first depicts attitudes towards state arts spending as a function of race, educational attainment, income level, gender, age, party affiliation, religion and (for the national survey) region. The second adds support for more active government to the first model. The third includes arts participation as well.

The first model indicates that higher levels of education are associated with support for federal and state arts spending, even after one controls for income, race, and other factors. In the 1975 national study and in New Jersey (but not in Kentucky), African-Americans were significantly more supportive of public arts support than whites. In the national study and in Kentucky (but not in New Jersey), elderly respondents were less likely to support increased arts funding than others. Women were significantly more supportive of federal funding, and Protestants less so, in the older national survey, but did not differ from other groups in the state polls.

When attitudes towards other government programs are introduced in model 2, they become by far the strongest predictors of support for budget expansion in all three surveys, eliminating the significant impact of race nationally (but not in New Jersey) and reducing the significance of age, especially in the national sample. The respondent's own participation in the arts also proves a strongly significant predictor of attitudes towards arts funding, reducing the effects of higher education without altering the impact of broader attitudes towards government spending. Indeed, after one controls for arts participation, the views of college graduates are not significantly different from those of high school graduates in either of the state surveys, and the national difference also declines. Taken together, the results suggest that between 25 and 40 percent of the tendency of college graduates to support higher arts budgets more than other people reflects the fact that they attend more arts events.

The dampening effect of the tendency of college graduates to be less supportive of higher federal and state budgets can be estimated by comparing the coefficients for "Education: BA or greater" in the first two models. In effect, the coefficient for the second model in each set indicates how much more strongly college graduates would support increased arts spending than high school graduates *if* they were as supportive of government spending increases in general. Calculated this way, the dampening effect of fiscal conservatism reduces the difference between college graduates' and high-school graduates' views by about 25 percent in the 1975 national study and in Kentucky, and by about 15 percent in New Jersey.

Taken together, the analyses we have reviewed suggest that fiscal conservatism notably suppresses the tendency of highly educated people to support increased arts funding. (It has a similar impact on the views of high-income respondents, but the effects of income on attitudes towards arts spending are negligible once we control for the influence of educational attainment.) The problem that arts advocates face is that in the real world of politics, people come with all their variables intact, and particular attributes or political preferences cannot be controlled away.

The different size of the “dampening effect” in different surveys suggests two tentative conclusions. First, questions that referred explicitly to the tax consequences of increased spending revealed stronger dampening effects than those that did not. Second, the one survey in which the dampening effect was trivial was administered at the peak of controversy over NEA grants in support of allegedly pornographic art works. This pattern suggests that the way in which political debates are framed matters. The greater the salience of fiscal considerations, the more cross-pressured will the arts’ constituency be and the less their affection for and interest in the arts will translate into political support. But when the debate over arts funding is shifted to such grounds as freedom of expression, the dampening effect is minimized.

Deep Opposition

We have portrayed support for government arts programs as high, broad, stable and shallow. Moreover, we have identified what we believe is a structural impediment to the success of arts advocacy efforts in the cross-pressuring effects of arts participation and

fiscal conservatism on attitudes towards government arts programs. We used information from surveys undertaken in several places at many times to build this argument, for the condition has been chronic, at least over the past several decades.

If explaining the shallowness of support for government arts programs requires portraiture, explaining the depth of opposition requires narrative, for there is evidence that the nature and effectiveness of opposition has changed over the past fifteen years, and that these changes are at the heart of the NEA's travails. It is not that opposition to federal arts programs has increased very much – we have already demonstrated that the proportion of Americans who advocate dramatic cuts in federal cultural programs has been relatively stable for a long time. Rather the *nature* of the opposition has changed as Republican partisans and social conservatives have made eliminating the Arts Endowment a central item in their political agendas.

In these analyses we will focus on people who took the most negative position on federal spending for the arts in the 1985, 1990, and 1996 General Social Surveys --- men and women who told interviewers that they “would like to see” government “spend much less” on “culture and the arts.” (Using a single survey administered by the same organization over several years enables us to see change most clearly, because it eliminates most of the design, sampling, or other methodological influences that can create artifactual differences in the results of otherwise similar studies.) The proportion of respondents reporting such strongly negative attitudes towards federal arts spending remained stable between the mid-1980s and the mid-1990s: 15 percent in 1985, 16 percent

in 1990, and 18 percent in 1996. These respondents represent the solid core of opposition to the NEA.

Change in the composition of this group is clearly visible both in frequency distributions (Appendix 2) and when we inspect logistic regression models predicting endorsement of “much less” government spending on culture and the arts (Table 5). As the debate over the NEA heated up --- and as opponents shifted the frames of their arguments from public finance to public morality (Moen 1997: 191) --- opposition to cuts came from the most educated respondents, those with college degrees or more. By 1990, as the NEA budget became increasingly politicized, respondents with one to three years of college were also less likely than otherwise similar people to favor sharp reductions in federal spending. The elderly were less likely than others to favor much less federal arts support in 1990 (hewing to the middle of the road rather than supporting increases), but not in other years. Women were significantly less likely to advocate strong cuts in 1996, though coefficients similar to those observed in 1985 suggest that 1990 was the more unusual pattern. (Some women’s support for arts spending appears to have been reduced that year by the attack on the NEA.) Finally, southerners were significantly more likely than northeasterners to support budget cuts in 1996.

The most striking trend, clearly a product of conservative social-movement activity within the Evangelical movement and the Republican Party, was the emergence of political affiliation and religious faith as the major predictors of opposition to federal arts support. By 1996, being a strong Republican or a regularly church-going evangelical Christian overshadowed all other factors but attitudes towards government.

What is so striking about this is the rapidity with which it occurred. In 1985, when the GSS first asked about attitudes towards arts spending --- before the NEA faced accusations of support for pornographic and blasphemous art --- Evangelical Christians were actually somewhat *less* likely than otherwise similar Americans to support sharp reductions in federal arts spending. (They were also disinclined to seek increases, instead tending to support the status quo.) Yet within five years, they were strongly more supportive of steep cuts than non-Evangelicals and their opposition continued to increase through 1996, when 28 percent of regularly church-going Evangelicals called for much less arts spending.

The shift by Republicans was even more dramatic. In 1985 and 1990, self-identified strong Republicans were not significantly more likely (after controlling for income, age, religion and other factors) than anyone else to favor sharp cuts in the NEA budget. In 1985, the right had yet to target the NEA, which was chaired by a Reagan appointee with strong conservative credentials; and even in 1990, the right's attack on the Endowment was viewed as an effort to embarrass the Republican administration. By contrast, by 1996, with a Democrat in the White House, "strong Republicans" were far more likely to endorse sharp federal arts spending cuts than otherwise similar respondents. By that year, 37 percent of such respondents favored sharp reductions, compared to just 16 percent in 1985. This suggests strongly that the Republican right's efforts to politicize the NEA had succeeded in influencing the views of the party faithful.

In sum, the evidence that the conservative offensive succeeded in shaping public opinion is compelling --- but it shaped opinion very selectively. Between 1985 and 1996,

Republican party identification and active membership in an Evangelical Christian religious denomination --- two factors that were not even significantly related to attitudes towards arts spending in 1985 --- became the strongest predictors of support for sharp cuts in government arts and cultural spending. This mobilization succeeded to the extent that it did --- and, we would suggest, was effective in shaping the legislative agenda --- because it was organizationally based in institutions that compelled the active loyalty of the people whose views they shaped.¹⁴

To grasp the importance of this point, consider the changing impact of active membership in the Catholic church on attitudes towards federal arts funding. Catholic lay groups were actively involved in criticism of the NEA for funding Serrano's "Piss Christ" photograph. But the Church as a whole has not been directly involved at the congregational level in the cultural struggles of the Christian Right (except, of course, around opposition to abortion). By contrast, some Evangelical congregations have actively supported Christian conservative groups, providing a strong base for recruitment and communication of ideas and political appeals. As Table 5 indicates, Catholics joined Evangelicals in turning against the NEA in 1990. Whereas in 1985, Catholics were less likely (albeit not significantly) than others to favor cutting the federal arts budget

¹⁴ For an account of this political mobilization, see Koch, 1998. The emergence of strong independent effects of Evangelical religious participation and partisan Republicanism is all the more striking because Evangelical affiliation became a strong predictor of Republican partisanship during the 1980s and early 1990s, thus increasing the correlation between the two predictors (Layman 1997). In analyses not reported here, we tested for the possibility that opposition to arts funding was driven less by Republican partisanship or evangelical Protestantism alone, but by the combination of the two, such that opposition would be concentrated among active participants in the religious right. Curiously, this hypothesis (tested by adding an interaction effect to the second model under each year in Table 5) was rejected, indicating that the effects of religion and partisanship are additive.

substantially, in 1990 their support for sharp reductions was every bit as strong as that of Evangelical Christians. But, lacking an organizational base in the Church for anti-NEA efforts, Catholic opposition ebbed, and in 1996 the views of regularly church-going Catholics were very similar to those of other Americans on this issue.

Similarly, one might have expected that the Maplethorpe exhibit, which graphically depicted sex acts between men, would have turned homophobes against arts programs. But, once again, the absence of a strong social-movement base appears to have deterred such a shift. We examined the relationship between a GSS item measuring attitudes towards homosexuality and the GSS measure of attitudes towards government arts funding in 1985 (before the controversy), 1990 (at the height of it), and 1996. Two findings are striking: First, attitudes towards homosexuality were significantly associated with attitudes towards government arts funding in all three years, with bivariate correlations ranging from .19 to .25, and with partial correlations (controlling for age, education, gender, income, race, and active membership in an Evangelical denomination) ranging from .14 to .19. Second, contrary to our expectation, correlations were actually somewhat *lower* at the height of the Maplethorpe controversy than in 1985 or 1990. These results provide additional support for the view that opinion change requires organization, at least for issues that, like arts funding, are low in salience.¹⁵

¹⁵ As part of a series of questions about sexual behavior, the GSS asked respondents: "What about sexual relations between two adults of the same sex - do you think it is always wrong, almost always wrong, wrong only sometimes, or not wrong at all? Correlations were .249 (.187 partial) in 1985, .190 (.140 partial) in 1990, and .246 (.193) in 1996. One might speculate that the small but counterintuitive decline in 1990 probably reflected the low salience of arts policy to individuals strongly opposed to homosexuality at a time when other groups (especially evangelical Christians, Republican partisans, and Catholics) were unusually attentive.

Note that the transformation in public attitudes toward federal arts funding occurred beneath the surface of survey marginals, which, as we have seen, remained largely stable since at least 1980. What we see in Table 5 is not an increase in opposition to federal arts spending, but rather a consolidation of the base of opposition in an alliance of social conservatives and Republican partisans, identities connected, respectively, to powerful social-movement and political-party organizations.

We suspect that it is this effective articulation of opinion to powerful and organized social identities that has enabled a minority of dedicated opponents to keep the majority of survey respondents who generally support the principle of federal assistance to the arts at a standoff, permitting the NEA's perils to become one of the United States' longest-running political dramas. This articulation raises the potential cost to legislators of support for the NEA by making it easier for their opponents to identify "latent publics" (Arnold 1990) who will punish them for their votes. And the concentration of anti-Endowment sentiment among Republican partisans, especially, explains why the NEA typically has fared much worse in the House, where decisions typically reflect "the vote of the majority party in caucus," than in the Senate since 1995 (Hansen 1998: 520).

Conclusion

In this paper, we have tried to understand why federal arts programs have been so vulnerable despite the fact that public opinion polls generally show that most Americans support federal government assistance to the arts. Although we do not assume that legislative politics reflects public opinion directly, we do assume that opinion constrains

legislative action with enough regularity that apparent exceptions to this rule require explanation.

After reviewing responses to fifty-five opinion questions and undertaking secondary analysis of eight national and two statewide opinion surveys, we conclude that federal arts programs are vulnerable because their support, although broad, is shallow; whereas the opposition, while limited, runs deep. Support is shallow in two senses. First, respondents report having little information about arts policy. The low salience of arts issues is indicated by large effects of relatively small variations in question wording on distributions of responses. Second, supporters of the NEA tend to choose moderate rather than strong positions when given the choice. Support for federal arts spending is dampened because such attributes as high education and high incomes that are associated with attending arts events also tend to be associated with fiscal conservatism.

There is every reason to believe that arts policy has been low in salience and arts supporters have been cross-pressured since the creation of the NEA in 1965. These conditions explain why federal arts programs are potentially vulnerable, but they do not explain why the Endowment's political environment turned so perilous in the late 1980s. The answer lies in change in the composition of the federal program's antagonists. The potential effectiveness of opposition to federal cultural programs grew between 1985 and 1996 due to the articulation of anti-NEA sentiment to organized political actors, specifically conservative religious groups and the Republican Party.

At least two consequences followed from this articulation of opposition to party and church. First, it reduced the cost of rallying opponents of the NEA, who could now

be reached efficiently through specialized channels of communication, such as the media of the religious right. Second, it encouraged both the Christian right and Republican conservatives to keep the controversy alive as a means of rallying their core supporters, even when it appeared that they would not succeed in their policy objectives.

We contend that the climate of opinion we have described tends to make federal arts programs politically vulnerable, *not* that it suffices to account for the National Endowment for the Arts' problems in itself. As Wyzomirski (1994) argues, some blame for the outcome must fall on the strategic ineptness of NEA leadership at the onset of the crisis. Moreover, the Endowment's enemies appear to have gauged public opinion more shrewdly (or perhaps more fortuitously) than its supporters in three ways. First, supporting the redistribution of public money from the NEA to state arts agencies was consistent with the public's stronger support of state and local than of federal arts subsidies. Second, by basing their attacks on the NEA's support for individual artists (even when those artists were in fact assisted indirectly through grants to arts organizations) critics took advantage of the fact that the public favors federal support to artists less strongly than government aid to arts organizations. Finally, by using the organizational muscle of the religious right and conservative Republican groups, opponents built a coalition that could be mobilized more easily than could the federal arts agency's more numerous, but more ambivalent and less organizationally focussed, supporters. Thus, even as the percentage of Americans advocating large cuts in federal arts spending remained stable, change in the composition of that minority increased its potential efficacy.

Given all this, one might well ask why the NEA survived the onslaught at all. Part of the answer lies in the different forms of interest aggregation in the House and the Senate. As Hansen (1998) argues, the House, with its strong party discipline, tends to reflect the opinion of the dominant party (in this case, the Republican partisans eager to eliminate the NEA), whereas Senators tend to represent the views of their states' median voters (who, by and large, favor federal support for the arts). Consistent with this analysis, the Senate repeatedly has rescued the NEA from punitive action by the House. Nonetheless, there is no guarantee that this pattern will continue, because support for federal arts assistance is probably too diffuse to constitute an effective political force. One can well imagine that a Republican President might find termination of the NEA an inexpensive way to shore up his or her standing among the Republican core, and might convince a majority of Senators to accept his or her decision.

To be sure, these explanations rest on considerable interpretation. More research is needed on variation in support for subsidies to different kinds of cultural organizations and practitioners; on beliefs about the NEA and other state and federal arts programs (and on the relationship between perceptions and policy preferences); and on the priority that arts supporters place on cultural programs relative other federal domestic activities. Experimental surveys capable of estimating the impact of different frames on support for arts programs would also be useful in helping us understand the bases of support for and opposition to federal cultural programs among different groups.

A final point regards the possible generalizability of our findings to other policy issues. Congress's treatment of the NEA has been unusual, but not unique. During the

past decade, a range of issues associated with the putative “culture war” between Americans with secular and orthodox values have generated considerable controversy at the same time that attitude surveys have demonstrated stable or even declining polarization in public opinion (DiMaggio, Evans, and Bryson 1996). Our results suggest the possibility that the processes we identified as dampening support and strengthening the effectiveness of opposition to federal arts funding may prove to be significant in other policy arenas. Certainly, there are other arenas in which fiscal conservatism reduces the strength of support for federal spending for purposes that well-educated and well-to-do voters otherwise would favor.

Similarly, our findings underscore the importance of considering both public opinion and social movement activity in explaining changes in government policies (Burstein 1998). Much social-movement activity aimed at educating and mobilizing a base of institutionally-connected voters may tend to influence the composition of opinion groups without necessarily changing the overall distribution of opinion. The possibility that other cases in which changing policies are unaccompanied by apparent change in public opinion are characterized by some combination of the low salience, cross-pressuring and opinion-focussing that we have seen in the arena of cultural policy appears worthy of investigation.

References

- Americans and the Arts*. 1996. Report of survey conducted by Louis Harris. New York: American Council for the Arts and Washington, D.C.: National Assembly of Local Arts Agencies.
- Arnold, R. Douglas. 1990. *The Logic of Congressional Action*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Biddle, Livingston. 1988. *Our Government and the Arts: A Perspective from the Inside*. New York: ACA Books.
- Brenson, Michael. 1998. "Washington's Stake in the Arts." *New York Times*, April 12, section 2: 1,28.
- Burstein, Paul. 1998. "Bringing the Public Back In: Should Sociologists Consider the Impact of Public Opinion on Public Policy?" *Social Forces* 77: 27-62.
- DiMaggio, Paul. 1991. "Decentralization of Arts Funding from the Federal Government to the States." Pp. 216-52 in *Public Money and the Muse: Essays on Government Funding for the Arts*, edited by Stephen Benedict. New York: Norton.
- DiMaggio, Paul, John Evans and Bethany Bryson. 1996. "Have Americans' Social Attitudes Become More Polarized?" *American Journal of Sociology* 102: 690-755.
- Filicko, Therese. 1996. "In What Spirit Do Americans Cultivate the Arts? A Review of Survey Questions on the Arts." *The Journal of Arts Management, Law and Society* 26: 221-246.
- Hansen, John Mark. 1998. "Individuals, Institutions, and Public Preferences Over Public Finance." *American Political Science Review* 92: 513-31.

- Koch, Cynthia M. 1998. "The Contest for American Culture: A Leadership Case Study on the NEA and NEH Funding Crisis." Manuscript, n.p.
- Layman, Geoffrey C. 1997. "Religion and Political Behavior in the United States: The Impact of Beliefs, Affiliations, and Commitment from 1990 to 1994." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 61: 288-316.
- Moen, Matthew C. 1997. "Congress and the National Endowment for the Arts: Institutional Patterns and Arts Funding, 1965-1994." *The Social Science Journal* 34: 185-200.
- Monroe, Alan D. 1998. "Public Opinion and Public Policy, 1980-1993." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 62: 6-28.
- National Endowment for the Arts. 1998. "Summary of Appropriated Funds 1966-1998." <http://arts.endow.gov/Guide/Facts/Appropriations.html>.
- National Research Center of the Arts. 1973, 1980, 1984, 1987 and 1992. *Americans and the Arts*. N.Y.: National Research Center for the Arts (producer). Chapel Hill, North Carolina: Louis Harris Data Center (distributor).
- Page, Benjamin I. and Robert Y. Shapiro. 1983. "Effects of Public Opinion on Policy." *American Political Science Review* 77: 175-90.
- Page, Benjamin I. and Robert Y. Shapiro. 1992. *The Rational Public: Fifty Years of Trends in Americans' Policy Preferences*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Palumbo, Mary Jo. "Arts Poll Shows Americans Will Pay to Support the Arts." *Boston Herald*, June 12, 1996, p. 5.

- Pettit, Becky. 1997. *Resources for Studying Public Participation in the Arts: An Inventory and Review of Available Survey Data on North American's Participation in and Attitudes Towards the Arts*. Working Paper #2. Princeton: Center for Arts and Cultural Policy Studies, Woodrow Wilson School, Princeton University.
- Pettit, Becky and Paul DiMaggio. 1998. *Public Sentiments Towards the Arts: A Critical Reanalysis of 13 Opinion Surveys*. Working Paper #5. Princeton: Center for Arts and Cultural Policy Studies, Woodrow Wilson School, Princeton University.
- Robinson, John P. 1989. "Survey Organization Differences in Estimating Public Participation in the Arts." *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 53: 397-414.
- Tourangeau, Roger and Kenneth A. Rasinski. 1988. "Cognitive Processes Underlying Context Effects in Attitudes Measurement." *Psychological Bulletin* 10: 299-314.
- Wyszomirski, Margaret. 1994. "From Accord to Discord: Arts Policy During and After the Culture Wars." Pp. 1-46 in *American's Commitment to Culture: Government and the Arts*, ed. Kevin V. Mulcahy and Margaret Jane Wyszomirski. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.
- Zaller, John R. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

**Table 1: Predictors of Support for Federal Assistance to Arts Organizations:
Americans and the Arts, 1980, 1987, and 1992**

	<u>1980</u>		<u>1987</u>		<u>1992</u>	
Race: Black	.638** (.193)	.572** (.196)	.801*** (.230)	.764*** (.230)	.949*** (.265)	.976*** (.266)
Race: Other	-.039 (.306)	-.063 (.307)	.491 (.313)	.508 (.315)	.637 (.314)	.618 (.316)
Education: BA or greater	.232 (.154)	-.071 (.165)	.264 (.153)	.112 (.160)	.039 (.149)	-.155 (.157)
Education: Some college	.117 (.155)	-.050 (.159)	-.074 (.146)	-.156 (.149)	.099 (.156)	-.010 (.159)
Education: Less than high school	.680*** (.175)	.761*** (.178)	.223 (.198)	.259 (.200)	-.298 (.211)	-.272 (.213)
Income (logged)	-.059 (.088)	-.135 (.090)	-.053 (.087)	-.117 (.089)	-.091 (.080)	-.139 (.082)
Gender: Female	.275* (.115)	.243* (.116)	.248* (.117)	.207 (.118)	.280* (.117)	.263* (.118)
Age	-.037*** (.004)	-.036*** (.004)	-.029*** (.004)	-.029*** (.004)	-.033*** (.004)	-.033*** (.004)
Residence: South	-.451** (.158)	-.450** (.160)	-.485** (.162)	-.470** (.162)	-.355* (.159)	-.297 (.161)
Residence: West	-.523** (.182)	-.572** (.185)	-.458* (.180)	-.486** (.181)	-.324 (.179)	-.322 (.180)
Residence: Midwest	-.354* (.159)	-.370* (.161)	-.395* (.167)	-.387* (.168)	-.390* (.168)	-.347* (.169)
Religion: Protestant ¹	-.538*** (.126)	-.494*** (.127)	-.274* (.124)	-.244 (.125)		
Arts Participation		1.231*** (.213)		.707*** (.209)		.859*** (.195)
Intercept	2.366	2.706	2.371	2.803	2.758	3.073
degrees freedom	1393	1393	1389	1389	1348	1348
-2 log likelihood	1783.206	1748.795	1766.641	1755.071	1726.976	1707.157

* p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

¹No question about religion was included in the 1992 survey.

**Table 2: Predictors of Support for Greater Arts Spending:
General Social Survey, 1985, 1990, 1996**

	<u>GSS1985</u>		<u>GSS1990</u>		<u>GSS1996</u>	
Race: Black	1.135** (.391)	.315 (.463)	.727* (.303)	.570 (.317)	.601* (.240)	-.119 (.266)
Race: Other	1.076 (.658)	.441 (.740)	.016 (.572)	-.015 (.589)	.165 (.360)	-.156 (.392)
Education: BA or greater	.951** (.333)	1.439*** (.375)	1.576*** (.274)	1.618*** (.286)	.925*** (.238)	1.366*** (.260)
Education: Some college	-.067 (.368)	-.065 (.405)	.628* (.294)	.616* (.308)	.636** (.246)	.733** (.261)
Education: Less than high school	-.407 (.376)	-.467 (.415)	.164 (.356)	.102 (.367)	.335 (.319)	.225 (.338)
Income (logged)	-.198 (.175)	.016 (.203)	-.219 (.163)	-.021 (.177)	.049 (.147)	.142 (.165)
Gender: Female	.406 (.252)	.476 (.275)	.096 (.196)	.110 (.206)	.070 (.174)	.081 (.188)
Age	-.001 (.008)	-.004 (.009)	-.005 (.006)	-.000 (.006)	-.002 (.006)	.007 (.006)
Residence: South	.273 (.347)	.453 (.382)	-.316 (.288)	-.267 (.302)	-.213 (.256)	-.153 (.274)
Residence: West	-.090 (.393)	.129 (.423)	-.083 (.299)	.070 (.315)	.196 (.258)	.272 (.276)
Residence: Midwest	-.427 (.371)	-.423 (.405)	.136 (.280)	.039 (.295)	-.059 (.264)	.046 (.283)
Strong Republican	-.260 (.397)	.157 (.431)	-.204 (.315)	-.081 (.334)	-.950* (.409)	-.376 (.434)
Religion: Evangelical	-.585 (.344)	-.432 (.378)	-.494 (.265)	-.414 (.278)	-.667** (.251)	-.468 (.265)
Religion: Catholic	.060 (.299)	.015 (.325)	-.550* (.267)	-.596* (.279)	-.372 (.219)	-.354 (.235)
Favors more active government		.419*** (.054)		.305*** (.042)		.356*** (.039)
Intercept	-.088	2.150	.060	-7.901	2.453	-10.605
N	579	576	992	979	1105	1095
-2 log likelihood	457.451	378.590	726.466	657.724	906.217	793.012

* p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

**Table 3: Predictors of Arts Participation and Support for Government Activism:
Americans and the Arts 1975, New Jersey State Poll 1989, Kentucky State Poll 1989, and General Social Survey 1993**

	Americans/Arts 1975		GSS 1993		New Jersey 1989		Kentucky 1989	
	<u>Participation</u>	<u>Activism¹</u>	<u>Participation</u>	<u>Activism¹</u>	<u>Participation</u>	<u>Activism²</u>	<u>Participation</u>	<u>Activism²</u>
Race: Black	.006 (.024)	2.928*** (.489)	-.059* (.028)	1.423*** (.196)	.045 (.036)	.814 (.562)	.081 (.055)	.370 (.268)
Race: Other nonwhite	-.056 (.037)	-.715 (.736)	-.004 (.039)	.503 (.288)	-.007 (.040)	.812 (.636)	.105 (.161)	.373 (.788)
Education: < high school	-.023 (.019)	.514 (.371)	-.060* (.025)	.029 (.184)	.009 (.029)	.594 (.458)	-.092* (.037)	-.119 (.183)
Education: Some college	.149*** (.020)	.119 (.402)	.120*** (.023)	.214 (.161)	.143*** (.031)	-.682 (.488)	.118** (.042)	-.138 (.204)
Education: College graduate	.294*** (.022)	-.460 (.440)	.299*** (.023)	-.218 (.165)	.277*** (.031)	-.963 (.497)	.302*** (.043)	-.452* (.209)
Income (natural logarithm)	.055*** (.010)	-.580** (.190)	.049*** (.013)	-.183 (.100)	.069*** (.018)	-.008 (.287)	.057** (.020)	-.014 (.097)
Gender: Female	.044** (.014)	.274 (.283)	.064*** (.017)	.438*** (.121)	.060** (.022)	-.323 (.346)	.000 (.029)	-.137 (.142)
Age	-.002*** (.000)	-.053*** (.009)	-.000 (.000)	-.028*** (.004)	.000 (.001)	.004 (.011)	-.004*** (.000)	-.010* (.004)
Residence: South	-.031 (.021)	-.070 (.425)	-.027 (.025)	-.578** (.176)				
Residence: West	.050* (.022)	-.065 (.447)	.014 (.026)	-.091 (.188)				
Residence: Midwest	.041* (.019)	-.550 (.388)	-.058* (.026)	-.334 (.183)				
Party Affiliation: Republican	.001 (.001)	-.787* (.367)	.039 (.026)	-1.386*** (.188)				
Religion: Protestant	-.049** (.016)	.011 (.326)						
Religion: Active Evangelical			-.035 (.020)	-.386** (.150)				
Religion: Catholic			.027 (.022)	-.032 (.154)				
Intercept	-.267	33.652	-.285	17.636	-.521	31.433	-.015	16.198
Degrees of Freedom	1472	1454	1460	1157	677	675	635	628
R Squared (adjusted)	.250	.076	.213	.196	.169	.012	.202	.011

¹Federal government activism

²State government activism

*p<.05

**p<.01

***p<.001

Table 4: Predictors of Support for Greater Arts Spending

	Americans/Arts 1975 (more federal spending)			New Jersey 1989 (more state spending)			Kentucky 1989 (more state spending)		
Race: Black	.544** (.191)	.197 (.199)	.200 (.201)	.736** (.269)	.710* (.290)	.677* (.294)	.589 (.319)	.533 (.323)	.469 (.325)
Race: Other	-.350 (.298)	-.397 (.318)	-.319 (.320)	-.169 (.313)	-.232 (.325)	-.210 (.328)	.807 (.941)	.758 (.971)	.677 (.970)
Education: BA or greater	1.062*** (.172)	1.251*** (.185)	.905*** (.196)	.590* (.235)	.791** (.249)	.473 (.264)	.542* (.246)	.629* (.251)	.414 (.262)
Education: Some college	.488** (.256)	.540** (.165)	.345* (.170)	-.018 (.241)	.090 (.251)	-.080 (.258)	.417 (.240)	.484* (.244)	.407 (.247)
Education: Less than high school	-.099 (.150)	-.175 (.158)	-.148 (.160)	.064 (.222)	-.036 (.236)	-.069 (.240)	-.140 (.223)	-.159 (.227)	-.086 (.230)
Income (logged)	.054 (.076)	.148 (.081)	.073 (.083)	-.177 (.138)	-.193 (.148)	-.281 (.151)	-.116 (.116)	-.122 (.118)	-.164 (.120)
Gender: Female	.455*** (.113)	.480*** (.120)	.436*** (.121)	-.121 (.175)	-.197 (.179)	-.197 (.179)	.117 (.170)	.117 (.174)	.118 (.175)
Age	-.014*** (.004)	-.009* (.004)	-.007 (.004)	-.004 (.006)	-.004 (.006)	-.004 (.006)	-.015** (.005)	-.013* (.005)	-.011 (.006)
Residence: South	-.061 (.168)	-.069 (.177)	-.029 (.179)						
Residence: West	.002 (.176)	.010 (.186)	-.051 (.189)						
Residence: Midwest	-.241 (.254)	-.191 (.163)	-.253 (.166)						
Strong Republican	-.125 (.147)	-.041 (.145)	-.060 (.160)	-.149 (.192)	-.015 (.201)	.058 (.204)	.106 (.194)	.172 (.198)	.135 (.200)
Religion: Protestant	-.304* (.129)	-.345* (.136)	-.286* (.139)	-.103 (.194)	-.099 (.202)	-.081 (.205)	.068 (.200)	.039 (.203)	.036 (.204)
Favors more active government		.142*** (.013)	.142*** (.013)		.163*** (.022)	.163*** (.023)		.199*** (.051)	.197*** (.052)
Arts participation			1.311*** (.219)			1.139*** (.310)			.739** (.237)
Intercept	-.623	-5.515	-5.136	1.213	-3.843	-3.186	1.084	-2.032	-1.980
N	1469	1465	1465	687	685	685	634	628	628
-2 log likelihood	1845.509	1691.792	1655.052	851.115	787.016	773.312	823.555	800.854	791.092

* p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

Table 5. Logistic Regression of Support for “Much Less” Federal Arts Spending

	GSS ~ 1985			GSS~1990			GSS~1996		
Race: Black	-1.097 (.623)	-1.241 (.640)	-1.118 (.672)	-.515 (.327)	-.233 (.338)	-.206 (.342)	-.526 (.281)	-.206 (.293)	.278 (.306)
Race: Other	-5.497 (10.307)	-5.445 (10.233)	-5.150 (9.997)	-.276 (.428)	-.345 (.430)	-.261 (.434)	-.169 (.382)	.031 (.386)	.109 (.398)
Education: BA or greater	-1.016** (.378)	-1.100** (.387)	-1.284** (.403)	-.745** (.240)	-.643** (.526)	-.637** (.246)	-.648** (.210)	-.596** (.219)	-.886*** (.233)
Education: Some college	-.228 (.330)	-.204 (.335)	-.273 (.345)	-.870*** (.245)	-.793** (.27)	-.786** (.249)	-.497* (.209)	-.529* (.214)	-.551* (.220)
Education: Less than high school	.146 (.322)	.174 (.325)	-.304 (.355)	.193 (.228)	.192 (.231)	.198 (.234)	-.092 (.251)	-.213 (.258)	-.130 (.266)
Income (logged)	.422 (.220)	.413 (.220)	.252 (.220)	.034 1.035	.004 1.004	-.060 .942	.325 1.384	.284 1.328	.267 1.306
Gender: Female	-.449 (.268)	-.468 (.269)	-.465 (.277)	-.044 (.172)	-.047 (.173)	-.031 (.175)	-.379* (.161)	-.404* (.165)	-.365* (.170)
Age	.003 (.008)	.003 (.008)	-.002 (.008)	-.011* (.005)	-.011* (.005)	-.011* (.005)	.009 (.005)	.009 (.005)	.004 (.005)
Residence: South	.607 (.366)	.612 (.385)	.477 (.395)	.286 (.241)	.264 (.260)	.289 (.265)	.658** (.247)	.436 (.259)	.446 (.267)
Residence: West	.141 (.429)	.081 (.438)	-.120 (.458)	.141 (.278)	.213 (.288)	.207 (.293)	.460 (.258)	.358 (.274)	.399 (.283)
Residence: Midwest	.090 (.389)	.084 (.392)	-.070 (.402)	-.317 (.267)	-.314 (.273)	-.321 (.276)	.377 (.264)	.266 (.272)	.256 (.280)
Strong Republican		.229 (.344)	.030 (.358)		.236 (.261)	.273 (.266)		.983*** (.230)	.578* (.247)
Religion: Evangelical		-.256 (.298)	-.308 (.307)		.621** (.213)	.579** (.217)		.701*** (.198)	.571** (.204)
Religion: Catholic		-.350 (.314)	-.375 (.323)		.633** (.226)	.638** (.229)		.117 (.216)	.094 (.222)
Favors more active government (scale)			-.208** (.044)			-.085** (.033)			-.187*** (.029)
Intercept	-5.789	-5.513	-.107	-1.064	-1.213	.928	-4.956	-4.825	-1.110
N	579	579	576	992	992	979	1105	1105	1095
-2 log likelihood	463.320	461.424	436.970	891.485	878.475	860.711	1015.477	981.263	930.707

Notes: * p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

Appendix Table 1. Surveys and Variable Construction

Survey	Year	Universe	N	Variable Construction Question & Coding
Americans and the Arts	1975	U.S. Population > 16	1555	<p>Spending Questions</p> <p>In the next few years do you feel that federal spending on (The arts) should be increased, should it be decreased or stay about the same? MOREFED = 1 if respondent answered “increased”, else = 0. LESSFED = 1 if respondent answered “decreased”, else = 0.</p> <p>Arts Participation Measures</p> <p>Approximately how many times did you go to live theatre performances in the past 12 months, not counting any performances given by your children in connection with school or classes? Also asked about classical music or opera, and live performances of ballet, modern, folk or ethnic dance. If respondent indicated between once and more than 10 times, measure = 1, else = 0. ARTPART averaged 3 measures.</p> <p>Government Activism Measures</p> <p>In the next few years do you feel that federal spending on (Housing and community development) should be increased, should it be decreased or stay about the same? Also asked about welfare, public transportation, health, highways, education and manpower training, and farm income stabilization. Measures were reverse coded so 1=decreased, 3=stay about the same or not sure, and 5=increased. GOVACT is the sum of the seven measures.</p>
Americans and the Arts	1980	U.S. Population > 16	1501	<p>Spending Questions</p> <p>If arts organizations – such as art museums, dance, opera, and theater groups, and symphony orchestras – need financial assistance to operate, do you feel that (The federal government) should provide</p>

assistance, or not? Also asked about state government and municipal and county government.

FED = 1 if respondent answered “should provide” to federal question, else=0.

NOFED = 1 if respondent answered “should not provide” to federal question, else=0.

Same recodes for STAT, NOSTAT, LOCAL, NOLOCAL.

Arts Participation Measures

Approximately how many times did you go to live theater performances in the past 12 months, not counting any performances given by your children in connection with school or classes? Also asked about classical music or opera, opera or musical theater, ballet, modern, folk or ethnic dance, and art museums. If respondent indicated between once and more than 20 times, measure=1, else=0. ARTPART averaged 5 measures.

Americans and the
Arts

1987

U.S. Population

1501

Spending Measures

If arts organizations—such as art museums, dance, opera, and theater groups, and symphony orchestras—need financial assistance to operate, do you feel that (The federal government) should provide assistance, or not? Also asked about state government.

FED = 1 if respondent answered “should provide” to federal question, else=0.

NOFED = 1 if respondent answered “should not provide” to federal question, else=0.

Same recodes for STAT.

Arts Participation Measures

Approximately how many times did you go to live theater performances in the past 12 months, not counting any performances given by your children in connection with school or classes? Also asked about classical music, opera or musical theater, ballet, modern, folk or ethnic dance, and art museums. If respondent indicated

between once and more than 20 times, measure=1, else=0.
ARTPART averaged 5 measures.

Americans and the Arts	1992	U.S. Population	1005	<p>Spending Measures</p> <p>If arts organizations—such as art museums, dance, opera, and theater groups, and symphony orchestras—need financial assistance to operate, do you feel that (The federal government) should provide assistance, or not? Also asked about state government.</p> <p>FED = 1 if respondent answered “should provide” to federal question, else=0.</p> <p>NOFED = 1 if respondent answered “should not provide” to federal question, else=0.</p> <p>Same recodes for STAT.</p> <p>Arts Participation Measures</p> <p>Approximately how many times did you go to live theater performances in the past 12 months, not counting any performances given by your children in connection with school or classes? Also asked about classical music, opera or musical theater, ballet, modern, folk, ethnic or jazz dance, and art museums or art galleries. If respondent indicated between once and more than 20 times, measure=1, else=0.</p> <p>ARTPART averaged 5 measures.</p>
------------------------	------	-----------------	------	---

General Social Survey	1985	U.S. Population	677	<p>Spending Measures</p> <p>Listed below are various areas of government spending. Please indicate whether you would like to see more or less government spending in each area. Remember that if you say "much more", it might require a tax increase to pay for it. Asked about “Culture and the arts.”</p> <p>MOREFED=1 if respondent answered “more” or “much more” spending, else=0.</p> <p>LESSFED=1 if respondent answered “much less” spending, else=0.</p> <p>Government Activism Measures</p>
-----------------------	------	-----------------	-----	--

Listed below are various areas of government spending. Please indicate whether you would like to see more or less government spending in each area. Remember that if you say "much more", it might require a tax increase to pay for it. Asked about the environment, health, education, retirement benefits, and unemployment benefits. Responses reverse coded so that 5=much more, 3=stay the same, 1=much less.
GOVACT is the sum of the 5 measures.

General Social Survey	1990	U.S. Population	1217	<p>Arts Participation Measures</p> <p>Next I'd like to ask about some leisure or recreational activities that people do during their free time. As I read each activity, can you tell me if it is something you have done in the past twelve months? (Visit an art museum or gallery). Did you do that within the past twelve months? Also asked about classical music or opera performance. If respondent indicated yes, then measure=1, else=0. ARTPART is the average of the two measures.</p> <p>Government Activism Measures</p> <p>We are faced with many problems in this country, none of which can be solved easily or inexpensively. I'm going to name some of these problems, and for each one I'd like you to tell me whether you think we're spending too much money on it, too little money, or about the right amount. Are we spending too much money, too little money, or about the right amount on (Improving the conditions of Blacks). Also asked about health, welfare, the environment, mass transit, education, and social security. Responses reverse coded so that 5=spending too little, 3=about the right amount, 1=spending too much. GOVACT is the sum of the 6 measures.</p>
-----------------------	------	-----------------	------	--

General Social Survey	1993	U.S. Population	1606	<p>Spending Measures</p> <p>Listed below are various areas of government spending. Please indicate whether you would like to see more or less government spending in</p>
-----------------------	------	-----------------	------	--

each area. Remember that if you say "much more", it might require a tax increase to pay for it. Asked about "Culture and the arts."

MOREFED=1 if respondent answered "more" or "much more" spending, else=0.

LESSFED=1 if respondent answered "much less" spending, else=0.

Government Activism Measures

Listed below are various areas of government spending. Please indicate whether you would like to see more or less government spending in each area. Remember that if you say "much more", it might require a tax increase to pay for it. Asked about the environment, health, education, retirement benefits, and unemployment benefits.

Responses reverse coded so that 5=much more, 3=stay the same, 1=much less.

GOVACT is the sum of the 5 measures.

General Social Survey 1996 U.S. Population

1332 Spending Measures

Listed below are various areas of government spending. Please indicate whether you would like to see more or less government spending in each area. Remember that if you say "much more", it might require a tax increase to pay for it. Asked about "Culture and the arts."

MOREFED=1 if respondent answered "more" or "much more" spending, else=0.

LESSFED=1 if respondent answered "much less" spending, else=0.

Government Activism Measures

Listed below are various areas of government spending. Please indicate whether you would like to see more or less government spending in each area. Remember that if you say "much more", it might require a tax increase to pay for it. Asked about the environment, health, education, retirement benefits, and unemployment benefits.

Responses reverse coded so that 5=much more, 3=stay the same, 1=much less.

GOVACT is the sum of the 5 measures.

Kentucky Poll	1989	Kentucky Residents	705	<p>Spending Measures</p> <p>Would you like to see Kentucky state government spend more, less, or about the same to support arts in Kentucky?</p> <p>MORESTAT=1 if respondent answered more, else=0. LESSSTAT=1 if respondent answered less, else=0.</p> <p>Arts Participation Measures</p> <p>About how often do you attend live theater? Would you say you attend once a month or more often, about every two months, about every three to six months, once or twice a year, less often than once a year, or never? Also asked about art exhibits or museums. If respondent indicated at least once a year then measure=1, else=0. ARTPART is the average of the two measures.</p> <p>Government Activism Measures</p> <p>Please tell me whether you think state and local government here in Kentucky should be spending more, less, or about the same as now amount of tax dollars on (environmental programs)(sic)? Also asked about programs for the poor, education, streets and highways, state colleges and universities, and health care hospitals. Responses reverse coded so that 3=more, 2=same, 1=less. GOVACT is the sum of the 6 measures.</p>
New Jersey Poll	1989	New Jersey Residents	798	<p>Spending Measures</p> <p>As you know, most of the money government spends comes from the taxes you and others pay. For each of the following, please tell me whether you think state and local government here in New Jersey should be spending more, less, or about the same as now. How about (cultural programs and the arts)—should more, less, or the same be spent?</p> <p>MORESTAT=1 if respondent answered more, else=0. LESSSTAT=1 if respondent answered less, else=0.</p> <p>Arts Participation Measures</p>

About how many times if any have you been to (a performance of classical music, such as the opera or symphony) in the last 12 months? Also asked about live theater, the ballet, or some other dance performance, and an art gallery, exhibit or museums. If respondent indicated at least once then measure=1, else=0.

ARTPART is the average of the 4 measures.

Government Activism Measures

As you know, most of the money government spends comes from the taxes you and others pay. For each of the following, please tell me whether you think state and local government here in New Jersey should be spending more, less, or about the same as now. How about (environmental programs)—should more, less, or the same be spent? Also asked about programs for the poor, streets and highways, public transportation, programs for the elderly, tourism, toxic waste cleanup, and direct state aid to cities and towns. Responses reverse coded so that 3=more, 2=same, 1=less.

GOVACT is the sum of the 8 measures.

Note: Only half of GSS respondents were asked questions about arts funding in 1985.

Appendix Table 2:
Attitudes towards Government Spending on Culture and the Arts
by Selected Groups: GSS 1985, 1990, 1996

	Favors More Spending			Favors Much Less Spending		
	<u>1985</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>1996</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>1996</u>
<u>Education</u>						
BA or more	24.2	26.4	22.5	10.6	11.5	15.4
1-3 years college	12.1	14.3	15.9	16.1	11.7	16.5
High school graduate	13.9	7.3	9.5	18.9	22.6	22.2
Less than high school	12.1	8.3	15.5	18.5	25.5	18.0
N	614	1072	1234	614	1072	1234
<u>Religion</u>						
Evangelical	10.2	8.6	8.5	18.8	25.5	28.2
Catholic	15.0	9.3	12.8	13.8	21.8	15.5
N	614	1074	1238	614	1074	1238
<u>Women</u>						
Women	18.9	14.3	15.9	12.7	16.9	15.6
N	614	1074	1238	614	1074	1238
<u>Region</u>						
East	19.8	15.0	16.5	13.5	16.3	11.8
South	17.5	11.3	13.8	19.9	22.5	21.5
N	614	1074	1238	614	1074	1238
<u>Party</u>						
Strong Republican	12.0	13.5	7.1	16.0	21.4	37.3
Strong Democrat	26.6	24.2	24.9	11.7	12.1	13.3
N	612	1072	1236	612	1072	1236