Arts Advocacy Arguments: Navigating the Network

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Abstract

In pursuit of increased public financial support, arts advocates strategically align arts and culture with larger policy issues like economic and community development, academic achievement and social development for youth. Further, these arguments navigate a complicated network of organizations, connected in support of arts and culture, to reach their audiences. Utilizing instrumental collective case study, this study explores how an arts advocacy network of professional non-profit theatre in Oregon contributes to the dissemination of information and arts advocacy efforts; what influences how arts advocacy arguments are framed and articulated and how those arguments move within an arts advocacy network.

Keywords: arts advocacy, arts education, benefits of the arts, cultural policy, arts lobbying

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Thank you.

Resume

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Chapter I: Introduction

What are the value and benefit of the arts? Not long ago the answer could be as simple as, "Art for Art's Sake" [1]. In other words, why analyze it? As competition continues to grow for limited funds, both public and private, as arts education programs repeatedly find themselves threatened by budget cuts, and as audiences choose one leisure activity over another, it becomes increasingly important to communicate the value and benefit of the arts not only on a private level from one individual to the next, but publicly, as something a whole community can enjoy.

How arts advocates and arts and cultural organizations communicate the value and benefit of the arts to policymakers, public funders and the public has expanded. Further, arts advocates are encouraged to utilize every argument in their arsenal, whether particularly strong or appropriate. This positioning is especially relevant as systemic changes in public perception of the value of the arts is revealed in cultural policy, arts education programs and policies, government, private foundation and

[1] While "Art for Art's Sake" encompasses an entire aesthetic philosophy not easily summed up here, what stands at its heart is very simple: art for pleasure, art for beauty, art for art. Guérard (1936) states in his books aptly titled *Art for Art's Sake*, "It is obvious that painting, statues and poems may be produced for many other 'sakes' than that of Art: artists are not wholly impervious to the Profit Motive. On the other hand, whatever we do without any practical purpose, for the sole satisfaction of our inmost sensibility is done 'for Art's Sake." (p. xii). This approach applies as much to the art object itself as to the artist who created it. The Smithsonian Institute states, "Art for Art's Sake rejects the idea that the success of an art object can be measured by its accuracy as a representation or the effectiveness with which it tells a story or suggests a moral. Instead, it implies that an art object is best understood as an autonomous creation to be valued only for the success with which it organizes color and line into a formally satisfying and therefore beautiful whole." (http://www.asia.si.edu/exhibitions/current/artforart.htm).

individual giving to arts and cultural organizations, and finally, in the audiences themselves.

The arts are increasingly advocated from an economic and social standpoint, a view that suggests that the value of the arts is its utility or usefulness to the public in achieving other goals (Cameron, 2005c; Cohen, Schaffer & Davidson, 2003; Ellis, 2003; Geursen & Rentschler, 2003; McCarthy, Ondaatje, Zakaras, & Brooks, 2005; The Final Report of the American Assembly, 1997). In response, arts advocates support this view by touting the arts as transformative, medicinal, or "cultural spinach"[2] (Jensen, 2002). Further, arguments often utilize the language of economics or social work to qualify (and quantify) the aesthetic experience to garner the financial and social support of funders and policy makers who subscribe to this view (Cameron, 2005c; Cohen, Ellis, 2003; Schaffer, & Davidson, 2003). In this way, arts advocates hope to save the arts. However, as Gee (2004) warns:

> Present conditions present serious strategic choices to the art education field. If care is not taken, the field will talk itself out of a place in many schools, either by promoting theories that deny the value of art on its own terms or by embracing the ever changing advocacy agenda that…at base, is not about student art learning at all (p. 19).

Arts advocates present various "strategic choices" to the public which results in a fractured message and further, in fractured efforts that does little to strengthen the fight for the arts as an integral part of human life and a subject worthy of study.

[2] Joli Jensen (2003) uses this term in her book Is Art Good For Us? Beliefs About High Culture in American Life. This terms refers to art used as a 'social medicine'; it is "something we know we should like but that we do not really enjoy".

Economic impact, academic achievement and community development and renewal are just a few of the strategic messages about the benefits of the arts that are utilized by arts advocates to increase and strengthen social and financial support of the arts. In addition, arguments about the benefits of the arts navigate a complicated network in order to gain the proper support, including the public—both arts-engaged types and arts-disengaged types[3], philanthropists (public and private) and finally, federal, state, and local policymakers. What happens to arts advocacy arguments as they move within an arts advocacy networks, how research and information provided by members within a network influence one another, and finally, how that information is communicated by those organizations to their audience—whether the public, public funders or policymakers, is an understudied field. Moreover, as individual states develop cultural advocacy coalitions on state and county levels, arguments communicating the benefits of the arts can become increasingly complex and fractured.

Definitions

The concept of an arts advocacy network generated out of the realization that arts and culture organizations utilized information provided by various key sources. On a national level, such groups include Americans for the Arts, Theatre Communications Group and on the state level, Oregon Arts Commission and the

[3] I borrowed these terms--arts-engaged and arts-disengaged--from Joli Jensen, written in a blog discussion of *Gifts of the Muse*: *Reframing the Debate about the Benefits of the Arts*, a recent study conducted by RAND. I believe these two terms are far more descriptive of the public I am talking about than merely those who participate and those who don't; I believe these terms speak to core values.

Oregon Cultural Trust. Arts advocacy handbooks are increasingly widespread on the Internet, outlining advocacy strategies, language, and data. This study examines such networks as they exist in the state of Oregon.

This research suggests that information follows a path, a network of interconnected lines (or organizations). For the purpose of this study an arts advocacy network refers to a coordinated system of arts leaders, arts and cultural organizations and arts supporters--whether moral, financial or both, who belong to a connected communication system in order to advocate, share information or convene for the purpose of advocating, lobbying or generally seeking public support (moral or financial) for arts and culture. Additionally, the term advocacy should not be considered only to encompass the action of lobbying over a specific piece of legislation, but also includes any form of communication by members of the public and/or arts and cultural organizations who request support from whomever may be in a position to give it. This may include, among others, philanthropists, the public, and of course, policymakers.

An arts advocacy network includes umbrella organizations or national service organizations (NSO) whose work supports a particular field of arts and culture and consists of member organizations with a common organizational purpose. Advocacy is only part of that purpose. For example, Theatre Communications Group (TCG) is the national service organization for professional non-profit theatre. The National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) is the national service organization for State

Arts Agencies, and so on. Organizational membership is contingent on meeting certain criteria, paying annual dues, and is representative of that particular National Service Organization (NSO). While it is understood that, in certain cases, other types of memberships may be purchased (TCG offers memberships to individuals, business affiliates, university affiliates, etc), this research is delimited to organizations which are the direct beneficiaries of the work that the NSO does, more so than individuals or business affiliates, such as professional non-profit theatre or a state arts agency. Individuals, for example, do not have to adhere to strict criteria to become a member beyond having some affiliation with the umbrella organization or NSO and being able to pay the dues. Additionally the benefits they receive are minor in comparison to what constituent (organizational) members receive.

Research Questions

As the public perception of the value of the arts changes, as revealed in cultural policy, public and private funding for the arts, and in the audiences themselves, so do advocacy arguments concerning the benefits of the arts. Given the numerous and fractured nature of these arguments, it is important, then, to explore these arguments, in particular as they relate to an arts advocacy network from a national, state, and local level. This exploratory study, through instrumental collective case study, seeks to determine how leaders of professional non-profit theatre frame their arguments about the benefits of the arts within an arts advocacy network in the state of Oregon. That is, what and who influences how arts advocacy arguments are framed and articulated.

Moreover, this study addresses questions such as what are the relationships between how leaders frame the benefits of the arts and how they communicate them? Does the intended audience hearing the argument change the content of the argument? Finally, how are members using the network, and is it effective? If not, how might an arts advocacy network be created to strengthen arts advocacy efforts?

Delimitations

Because the intent of this study is to look at the arts advocacy network within a professional non-profit theatre context in Oregon, its communication tools and the content of those tools, this study is delimited to members of that network. Sites include Portland Center Stage and Oregon Shakespeare Festival primarily because they are members of TCG, and because of their size and history, it was assumed that they have easier and often direct access to the state and local advocacy network[4]. Further, the Oregon Cultural Advocacy Coalition, the Oregon Cultural Trust, and the Oregon Arts Commission exemplify the network for arts advocacy in the state of Oregon primarily because of their stated mission and purpose. And finally, the national arts advocacy group Americans for the Arts and non-profit professional theater national service organization Theatre Communications Group (TCG) for they are obvious leaders in

[4] Because this study did not focus on smaller arts organizations, it could not, then, confirm or disconfirm the assumption that only larger organizations have direct access to policymakers to a degree unattainable to smaller arts and culture organizations.

national advocacy and advocacy for the professional non-profit theatre field, respectively.

Research Objectives: Relevance to the Field

How an arts advocacy network communicates information about the value and benefits of the arts is understudied. As arts advocacy arguments increasingly become more complex, particularly as the influences of larger policy contexts and issues increase, it is important to study the communication of advocacy arguments to determine the extent to which advocacy messages may be fragmented and therefore not wholly or effectively communicated.

Chapter II: Review of Literature

While the exact definition of "value" has multiple meanings depending on context, there is no standard definition of the value of the arts within the cultural sector. Because value can be quantified to a degree, the debate about the value of the arts debate focuses on its utility; Arts' value, primarily, is determined not by what it is as a stand-alone phenomenon, but as an epiphenomena[5]—that is, what it *does* or produces. This includes the arts' ability to promote economic and community renewal, enhance academic performance, and create personal aesthetic and expressive experiences (Cameron, 2005c; Cameron, 2006; Deasy, 2002; Eisner, 1999; Ellis, 2003; Fiske, 2004; Gee, 2002; Guetzkow, 2002; Geursen & Rentschler, 2003; Jensen, 2003; Kritzmire, 1993; McCarthy, et al, 2004; Strom & Cook, 2004; Winner & Hetland, 2000). Not surprisingly, arts advocates[6] must persistently and adeptly argue the benefits of the arts and its meaning and value to the public in order to gain and maintain necessary support. This is, of course, not new. What *is* new, or at very least shifting, is the tenor of these arguments, that is, what arts advocates communicate as the value and benefits of the arts.

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[5] The idea of art producing epiphenomena was introduced by Adrian Ellis, Managing Consultant for AEA Consulting, in a blog discussion of *Gifts of the Muse*: *Reframing the Debate about the Benefits of the Arts*, a recent study conducted by RAND.

[6] Arts advocates should not be considered solely as those who are paid to lobby over a specific piece of legislation, but should also include members of the public and/or arts and cultural organizations who request support from whomever may be in a position to give it, for example, philanthropists, the public, and of course, policymakers.

Despite the multitude of ways arts advocates talk about the value of the arts, advocates more and more discuss arts and culture as something that creates other non-arts benefits or that has revenue-generating power (Geursen & Rentschler, 2003). Ultimately, the arts are positioned as *adding* value to something else, rather than *possessing* value. Therefore, so long as the arts are instrumental in achieving other phenomena (benefits) for the public, they has public value and are worthy of public dollars.

The instrumental benefits of the arts as justification for public funding is further supported by current research, typically sponsored and published by foundations and government agencies and which boast the correlations between arts and academic performance, but do not offer up statistics or definitive causation, rather provide anecdotal evidence passed off as fact (Eisner, 1999; Gee, 2002; Winner & Hetland, 2000). Additionally, arts advocates liberally utilize economic impact studies as "the tool of choice" (Sterngold, 2004, citing Toepler, p. 168) to persuade skeptical leaders that "public arts dollars [are] worthy investments, not subsidies or entitlements" (Sterngold, 2004, p. 167; Strom & Cook, 2004). Notably absent from these is the assertion that the public should support arts and culture primarily because of what arts and culture is, and secondly, for their intrinsically positive effects on the individual.

A major theme in arts advocacy arguments includes the shift from the intrinsic benefits of the arts to the individual, to its larger, transformative powers to renew urban

communities, boost economies, create smarter students, and increase civic engagement (Cameron, 2005c; Eisner, 1999; Ellis, 2003; Gee, 2002; Guetzkow, 2002; Jensen, 2003; McCarthy, et al, 2004; Sterngold, 2004; Strom & Cook, 2004; Winner & Hetland, 2000). How or where arts advocates position themselves in relation to the value of the arts (in terms of their benefits) is in large part determined by current policy and funding opportunities (Strom & Cook, 2004). As federal and state funding agencies increasingly look for outcome results programming (impacts) when deciding whom to fund, the more likely arts advocates will justify the arts from those perspectives and the less likely they will talk about the arts as aesthetic and expressive experience for the individual (Cameron, 2005a; Cameron, 2005b; Gee, 2002 and 2004; Jensen, 2003; Kritzmire, 1993; Strom & Cook, 2004).

There are two advocacy debates that occur simultaneously in support of the arts: the justification as to why public funds should support arts and culture, and secondly, why the arts matter at all; one debate presumes arts and culture possesses value, and seeks to support that presumption with concrete examples. The other debate seeks to defend the position that arts and culture possesses value on a fundamental level, even without those concrete examples. Therefore, one argument connects value to public benefit while the other has a more difficult task of connecting arts and culture to a deeply rooted value, one that not all share nor understand. Whom these arguments will most likely influence differs in each case. For example, public policy makers are not

concerned with why the arts matter in the aesthetic sense, rather in so far as they matter (or have impacts) on the public they serve. The same is true for public (and private) funders. "Leveraging donations" is the new buzz phrase in philanthropy; this refers to funders who want their dollars to have the greatest impact whether through improving organizational capacity or by sponsoring programs to reach a large number of people. These arguments seek to answer: who are arts and culture serving, how many people will they serve and to what degree? However, it is widely agreed that the general public does not necessarily participate in arts and cultural events because doing so might increase their SAT scores or help them build social capital, rather for the experience arts and culture offers. This experience, however, is hardly quantifiable and thus, meaningful to those who can give financial support. Therefore, it is no wonder that arguments have moved away from the value of the aesthetic experience towards the value of skill building and social development, hardly qualities unique to the arts.

While the intrinsic benefits of the arts are outlined in detail in the RAND study *The Gifts of the Muse: Reframing the Debate about the Benefits of the Arts*, the focus of the study is nevertheless on "benefits," or, what an individual will "get out" of the arts. Moreover, McCarthy, et al (2004) suggest that while the arts "fosters a range of intrinsic benefits that are primarily personal, they can also generate private benefits that have indirect, spillover effects on the public sphere, as well as direct effects on the public sphere" (McCarthy, et al, 2004, p. 69). However, they are quick to point out that these

intrinsic benefits accrue over time and are not the result of fleeting arts exposure (McCarthy, et al, 2004; Taylor, 2006). Therefore, sustained exposure to arts experience puts individuals in a greater position to gain from the intrinsic benefits of the arts. As a result, focus and attention should be placed on exposing a "greater number of Americans to engaging arts experiences" by shifting resources toward cultivating demand (p. xvii). In this way, more Americans can reap the benefits—both public and private-- from exposure to the arts, and which, therefore remains a policy concern.

However, Jensen (2003) suggests that policy studies are "mostly instrumental rather than expressive, that is, they are designed to increase arts participation rather than to understand how art is meaningful" (p. 78). These studies are instrumental because they increasingly focus on why art is good for the public and not why art is good. This is evident in how McCarthy et al (2004) point out those intrinsic benefits to the individual have instrumental impacts on the public; in this way, no matter who participates in the arts, the arts are good for *everyone*. However, Jensen (2003) contends that "the arts, as cultural forms, are valuable to us because of the aesthetic experience they offer, and not because they are 'good for us'" (p. 76).

Jensen (2003) suggests arts advocates talk about why art is good by using "an expressive perspective—one that sees the arts as experience" because it more accurately describes how and why art matters (p. 66). While the *Gifts of the Muse* reports the actual arts experience to be the most important aspect of the study, it nevertheless highlights

the public benefit derived from private arts experiences by suggesting that even as an individual receives benefits from arts experiences, these private benefits to the individual will, in some way, ultimately spill over and impact the public sphere in some way (McCarthy et al, 2004). For Jensen (2003), "expressive logic is based not on extrinsic or intrinsic benefits, but on the value of aesthetic experience" (*Is there a better case to be made for the arts?,* 2005, p. 23). And this aesthetic experience, Jensen contends, is available in all levels and kinds of culture: "If what we want is to broaden and deepen the varieties of aesthetic experience for others, then our concerns should be with enhancing access across groups and styles and hierarchies" (*Is there a better case to be made for the arts?,* 2005, p. 15). However, as Bill Ivey, former National Endowment for the Arts Chairman, suggests "it's only possible to 'make the case' for a moral claim on public support or philanthropy if there's general agreement that the sector making the claim serves the public purpose by enhancing quality of life […] most of the gatekeepers are unconvinced" (*Is there a better case to be made about the benefits of the arts?,* 2005, p. 14).

Essentially this means that while not only broadening the notion of how the arts and culture are valuable we must also broaden our notion of how people engage in art. Limiting the scope of interaction to just the schools or community arts programs leaves out myriad opportunities and instances where people are having meaningful arts experiences (TV, film, and fashion) (Lewis, 2000, p. 88). Further, Bill Ivey suggests "if we are going to connect art and art making with quality of life in order to establish

sufficient agreement on value to support our case, we've got to derive meaning from the way citizens really engage in art every day. That's where art connects quality of life and the public interest" (p. 14).

Ultimately, what distinguishes one advocacy argument from another is who the argument hopes to convince. While touting the aesthetic experiences and why art is good may convince some individuals to participate in the arts experience, the reality is that these arguments lack appeal to public policy makers and public funders. Utilizing economic impact studies as a source of justification for public funding is not a new trend but they are currently the most widely used "tool" in the arts advocate's toolbox.

Economic impact studies were more or less fully embraced by the cultural sector by the 1970s. New York was the first city to describe Broadway and the city's myriad cultural offerings as a value-adding industry, thus making an important connection between arts and culture and cultural tourism (Strom & Cook, 2004). Additionally it was the first city to create public arts agencies that then became "among the first arts advocates who needed to find ways to argue regularly for public support" (p. 507). A report studying the impact of a Broadway season on New York's economy further supported a move from the sentimental view of art as the "looking glass of society" towards an "appeal to local economic self-interest" (p. 508), as the cultural sector positioned itself as an industry that "provides jobs, tax revenues, and other economic benefits" (Sterngold, 2004, p. 167), an angle that particularly appealed to public officials.

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) began linking the arts and economic development through economic impact studies increasingly in public statements as a response to ideological attacks on the NEA and the use of public funding to sponsor works thought to be pornographic and obscene (Robert Mapplethorpe and Andres Serrano), which gained in strength and fervor (Final Report of the American Assembly, 1990; Jensen, 2001; Sterngold, 2004; Strom & Cook, 2004). During this tumultuous time, the American Assembly (1990), a national, non-partisan public affairs forum, met to devise a set of guiding principles for the NEA and for arts policy in general to reaffirm the place of the arts in the public sphere and that it does, in fact, serve public purposes. Included in its recommendations was a suggestion that arts advocates "improve communication to the public about ways that government-supported arts programs and projects are benefiting the economies of, and enhancing the quality of life in, cities, towns, and other localities" (p. 263). Bill Ivey, then chair of the NEA, also encouraged arts advocates to "sell themselves as part of the solution" to problems in their respective cities (Strom and Cook, 2004, p. 508); in general, that arts advocates should focus more on the "positive externalities of the arts" rather than arts' more intrinsic, yet intangible, benefits to the individual (p. 509). These positive externalities include community development and urban renewal, for example.

More recently, the cultural sector, as an industry, is said to spur growth in local economies through patronage of local businesses, generation of household income, and support and creation of local jobs (Cameron, 2005c; Cohen, Schaffer & Davidson, 2003; Geursen & Rentschler, 2003; The Final Report of the American Assembly, 1990; Thompson, 1998). The most common approaches that arts and cultural that advocates take with economic impact studies are through the use of "'size', 'flow-on' and 'multiplier' analyses" (Madden, 2001, p. 162). Essentially these seek to measure the impact an industry has on Gross National Product (as a percentage), measure spending that would not likely happen without arts and cultural events, like annual festivals, or measure the spending that occurs in addition to that already spent on a particular arts and cultural activity, coined as multiplier effects (Madden, 2001; Sterngold, 2004). These studies do so by looking at impacts of four key economic indices: number of full-time equivalent jobs supported, amount of household income generated for residents, amount of local government revenue (city and county) generated, and amount of state government revenue generated (Cohen, Schaffer, & Davidson, 2003; Thompson, 1998).

Economic impact studies as justification for public funding is the weakest tool for several reasons. These studies are often widely misinterpreted, confusing net economic impact with gross economic impact which distinguishes between "expenditures that represent true additions to regional demand (i.e. exogenous spending increases) and expenditures that represent diversions of dollars from other regional uses" (Sterngold,

2004, p. 171). Multiplier effects of economic impact studies follow the dollar to see how many times it is re-spent in the local economy before it leaks out. In this way, spending on arts and culture events also impacts other businesses and organizations outside the arts and cultural event. However, economic theorists believe that local spending does not have a significant impact on the economy because it represents a substitution effect: money for one event is diverted from money being spent at another. In this way, "substitute uses produce negative effects that partly or fully offset the positive effects of non-profit arts and cultural organizations (NACO)-related spending" (Sterngold, 2004).

"Substitute uses" are the basis of Sterngold's (2004) assertion that economic impact studies are not convincing justifications for government support. While arts and cultural organization-related spending might create net additions to their local economies, they, in fact, do not have an impact on a national scale, because tourist spending is merely a diversion of dollars from other domestic uses. What this means is that increasing government funding to arts and cultural organizations does not produce growth effects like increased personal income or job growth. While this influx of funding may stimulate some growth, "these gains will be offset by the negative impacts on other sectors and parts of the country. Conversely, reducing government subsidies to non-profit arts and culture organizations is unlikely to negatively affect the nation's overall levels of economic activity, employment, and income" (Sterngold, 2004, 174-

175). In this way, economic impact studies do not reveal an accurate view of arts and cultures impact on the national economy.

Despite these misuses and misinterpretation of data, economic impact studies are still a very powerful tool for the art advocate. However, Madden (2001) cautions that the "generic treatment of 'economic' impact studies invites the government to intervene in the arts and cultural sector for the purpose of financial gain and not because of how it enriches the American public. Comparisons of multiplier effects can be made between incongruous industries such as "art galleries and a casino and weapons trade, without distinguishing between the intrinsic, functional aspects of such diverse options" (Madden, 2001, p. 171). If the government cared about multiplier effects alone, and therefore the financial bottom line, a simple cash transaction might have larger net financial effects than an arts festival but it would not take into account the purpose of the activity (Madden, 2001). By focusing only on the financial contributions arts and cultural organizations may make to the local economy, economic impact studies disallows for the opportunity to talk about why the arts and cultural activity should happen and its unique place in the economy.

The use of economic impact studies may weaken the cultural sector even as they convince policy makers to increase funding. Firstly, they endorse the use of arts and cultural organizations for tourism promotion and economic development policies (Sterngold, 2004). Because of the reality that only "exogenous" expenditures bring

increases (i.e. tourist dollars from outside the economic region), and thus make a larger impact on the economy, this encourages the development of arts and cultural organizations as extensions of the chamber of commerce, for example (Sterngold, 2004). Further, economic impact studies disadvantage smaller arts and cultural organizations as funding opportunities will favor more tourist-oriented NACOs that can attract large amounts of visitor spending" (Sterngold, 2004, p. 184).

This point is all the more evident when looking at the Arts and Economic Prosperity calculator published on the Americans for the Arts website. While it mentions several caveats that are very important to note, the study itself encouraged participation by larger arts and cultural organizations in, perhaps, larger communities by the nature of the cost of participation[7]. As Sterngold suggests, because larger arts and cultural organizations can afford to participate in studies of this magnitude and evaluate their economic impact inherently makes it difficult for smaller organizations in those same communities to accurately determine their economic impact because the calculator is based on participant information that may not prove to be universal models. Secondly, it makes it nearly impossible for smaller arts and culture organizations to raise a voice against the din about the quality of life contributions they may make without having to exchange the currency to do so. These studies fail to

[7] While the website does not give figures from the first study conducted in 2001, a new call for participants for Arts and Economic Prosperity II 2006 lists participation fees at $7500 for non-members and $6500 for select members. For more information see http://www.americansforthearts.org/information_resources/research_information/services/004.asp

recognize the ways the presence of arts and cultural organizations contribute to enhancing quality of life. Even more so, these studies are not designed to measure enhancing social amenities and quality of life and how those increases also contribute to economic growth and vitality (Madden, 2001; Sterngold, 2004).

However, while even those who acknowledge that economic impact studies are the most persuasive message to bring to policy makers, they also acknowledge that it is a message fraught with conflict between the ideal and the pragmatic. As stated by Robert Lynch, President and CEO of Americans for the Arts, in *Arts and Economic Prosperity* (2003): "We must always remember the fundamental value of the arts. They foster beauty, creativity, originality, and vitality […] But not all Americans appreciate this value yet […] It is important that we also be able to articulate the contributions of the arts to our nation's economy" (Cohen, Schaffer & Davidson, 2003, p. 31). Nevertheless, some fear that using economic impact studies relegate arts and culture to being an adjunct to policies aimed at wealth or job creation, which further pushes arts and cultural policies to the very edges of government interests as merely 'policy attachments'[8] (Belfiore, 2006; Madden, 2001; Sterngold, 2004).

[8] Belfiore (2006) cites Clive Gray who defined the phenomenon of 'policy attachment' as "a strategy that allows a 'weak' policy sector with limited political clout to attract enough resources to achieve its policy objectives. This is achieved through the sectors 'attachment' to other policy concerns that appear more worthy, or that occupy a more central position in the political discourse of the time" (p. 21). This evident as arts and cultural organizations offer programs with social service aims or targets, like academic enhancement, at-risk youth, and urban regeneration

Perhaps, as McCarthy et al (2004) suggest, the best efforts combine intrinsic benefits with their instrumental over-flows as a point of justification because it has the potential to appeal to a much larger audience. Understanding that intrinsic benefits alone are not sufficient nor do instrumental benefits hold all the weight they should, a concerted effort to combine language that is both conscious of a skeptical audience yet respectful of the place arts and culture can play in the lives of an individual is not wholly a bad idea.

Nevertheless, while the purpose for arguing the benefits of the arts seems at surface to be entirely about financial support only, from public policy makers and public funders, there is another advocacy effort that must not be abandoned: one that works towards a basic understanding of the value of art; whether it is in the context of varied cultural and social constructs or varied cultural and artistic art forms, we must not bypass the truth that "not all the American public appreciates [the fundamental] value the arts" and move directly to arguments that allows for the possibility that appreciating the value of the arts *is not required* to support the arts.

Arts advocacy networks play an important role in increasing public support of arts and culture, and more importantly, how that arts advocacy network changes or can change the public perception of arts and culture. It is this network that communicates whether arts and culture can ably be used as a tool for other policy goals or whether or not arts and culture possesses value in and of itself. While advocates utilize one

argument over another or whether they use them all, they should make a case for why the public should support arts and culture but they should also make the case for the value of arts and culture.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

The purpose of this critical inquiry is to explore arguments about the benefits of the arts made by the arts advocacy network of two professional non-profit theatres in Oregon. For the purpose of this study, an arts advocacy network is a coordinated system of arts leaders, arts and cultural organizations and arts supporters--whether moral, financial or both, who belong to a connected communication system in order to advocate, share information or convene in regard to advocating, lobbying or generally seeking public support (moral or financial) for arts and culture. This study focuses on an arts advocacy network in the state of Oregon.

This study expects to determine how leaders within a defined arts advocacy network in Oregon frame their arguments about the benefits of the arts, how they are communicated, the underlying assumptions conveyed to the public through these arguments, whether members utilized the network to the fullest extent and finally, where, if any, there might be the points of communication breakdown.

Research Design

This study utilizes instrumental collective case study for it "allows for greater understanding of a phenomenon" (Crudden, 2002, p. 616) within a bounded system (Sarroub, 2001, p. 502). In this study, the bounded system is an arts advocacy network within a professional non-profit theatre context. Looking at multiple members of a particular network will reveal outcomes that occur across the sites and "how such

processes are bent by specific local and contextual variations (Miles & Huberman, as cited by Sarroub, 2001, p. 502). This specific information about the multiple participants, then, will provide for a greater understanding of the phenomena of the arts advocacy network, not necessarily of the participants themselves. (Stake, 1995). Further, by using multiple participants within the same network as well as utilizing multi-method data collection tools, this strategy of inquiry might discover "the multiple realities, the different and even contradictory views of what is happening" (Stake, 1995, p. 12). These different views of the arts advocacy network and the arguments used about the benefits of the arts might reveal why arts advocacy arguments and the efforts to present these messages are fragmented.

Sites and Participant Selection

Discovering the contextual and sub-textual nature of arguments about the benefits of the arts, particularly within a single network of arts advocates requires the study of the members of that network. Because the intent of this study is to look at the arts advocacy network within a professional non-profit theatre context in Oregon, its communication tools and the content of those tools, this study, therefore, is delimited to members of that network. Sites were chosen specifically because of their leadership in the field of arts advocacy and in professional non-profit theatre in particular. Further, the potential of the leadership to influence arts and culture organizations in how they frame and communicate the argument about the benefits of the arts on a grassroots

level is great. This network is composed of on, on the national and federal level, Theatre Communications Group (TCG) and Americans for the Arts (AA). Constituent members of TCG in the state of Oregon include Portland Center Stage (PCS) and Oregon Shakespeare Festival (OSF). Further public funders and advocacy groups in Oregon include Oregon Arts Commission (OAC), the Oregon Cultural Advocacy Coalition (CAC), and the Oregon Cultural Trust (OCT).

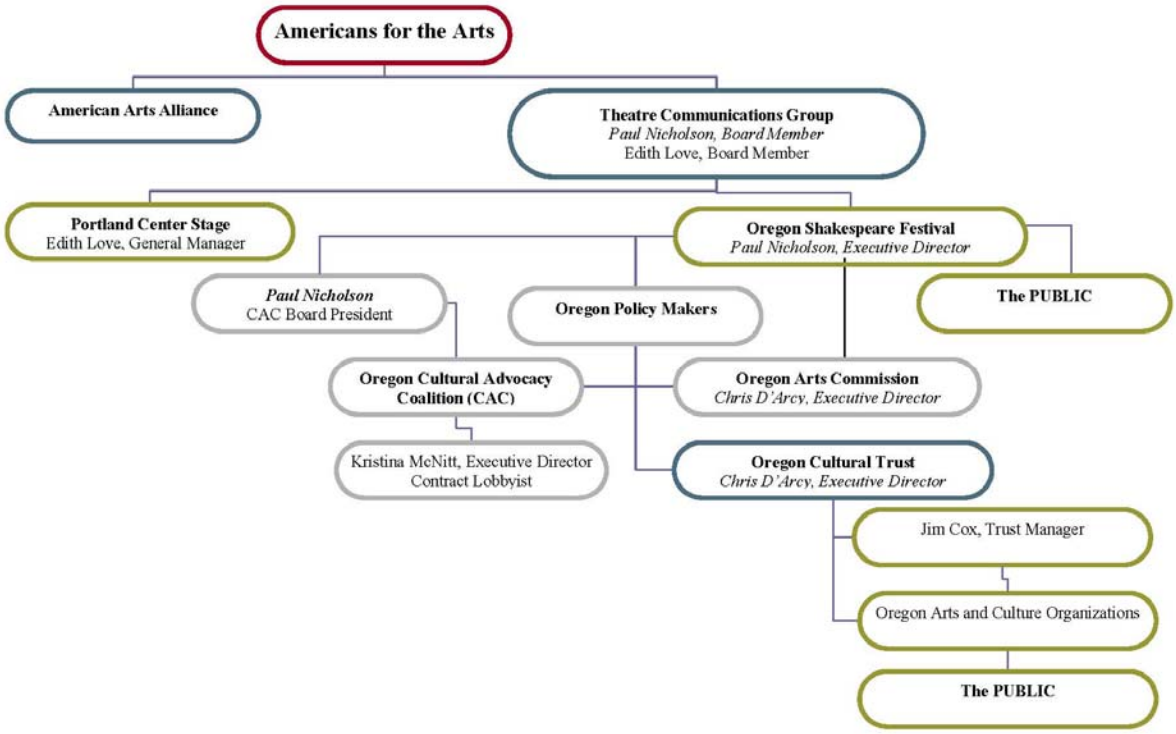

Figure 3.1. Arts Advocacy Network in Oregon, including the specialized network of professional non-profit theatre.

Executive leadership in Oregon Arts Commission, Oregon Cultural Trust, Oregon Cultural Advocacy Coalition, and Oregon Shakespeare Festival meet certain common criteria as follows:

- Members belong to multiple networks (on a local, state, and federal level);
- They have direct access to state legislature;
- They have large organizational memberships of their own and possess the ability to influence and mobilize this constituency; and
- They characterize themselves as being more involved in advocacy than most in similar positions or with similar affiliations.
  (Figure 3.1).

Because of this, these organizations emerged as key organizations within the arts advocacy network in Oregon.

Constituent members of TCG, Portland Center Stage (PCS) and Oregon Shakespeare Festival (OSF), were chosen specifically because of size, years of service in the field and, in particular, their leadership in the field. The Executive Director for OSF, Paul Nicholson, also serves on the board of TCG, and as board president for the Oregon Cultural Advocacy Coalition. Managing Director of PCS serves on the board of TCG and Chris Coleman, Artistic Director, serves on the Multnomah County Cultural Planning Committee, which is part of a county cultural coalition supported by grant funds from the Oregon Cultural Trust. This leadership is in a position to see the advocacy network from several different perspectives.

Throughout January and the early part of February participants at the identified sites were recruited for interviews that took place later in February (see Appendix F: Recruitment Instrument). A document analysis continued during January, February, and March to prepare for the interviews.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

A multi-method data collection strategy includes document analysis and interviews. These tools best uncover the information needed to answer how leaders in an arts advocacy network frame their arguments about the benefits of the arts. Document analysis revealed the overt and hidden messages communicated to the public (see Appendix B: Data Collection Analysis Research Instrument). Additionally, interviews allowed leaders in the field to answer directly what they feel are the value and benefit of the arts. Strategies for validating findings include utilizing at least three data collection tools including literature review, document analysis, and interview, and thorough data and detailed notes. Additionally, the researcher continued to look for disconfirming evidence.

This study took place in the state of Oregon, on-site at Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Oregon Arts Commission, and Oregon Cultural Trust. Participants were recruited via email during the month of February (see Appendix F: Recruitment Letter). Participants were invited to participate in a one-hour interview conducted during the month of February or March and if necessary, a follow-up e-mail questions that required no more than 30 minutes to answer (see Appendix C-E: Interview Protocol Research Instruments). On-site interviews were audio recorded provided consent was given (see Appendix G: Consent Form).

A thorough document analysis of websites and other printed materials made available to the researcher prior to the interview, including mission statements, press releases, marketing materials, transcribed speeches, and other relevant material, was conducted prior to all interviews (Appendix C-E: Interview Protocol Research Instruments). Supplemental materials made available to the researcher during and after the interview were also analyzed. Data retrieved from analysis was kept as field notes, audio tape, and transcribed interviews.

Data was coded based on current art advocacy debates and themes about the benefits of the arts, for example economic impact, scholastic achievement, social capital, and intrinsic benefits. Patterns emerged in regards to which arguments are used most frequently and through which communication tool. This provided the groundwork for interviews. Interview transcriptions provided confirming and disconfirming evidence of data collected from interviews and document analysis provided new clusters of information, and in particular, revealed where the data met and diverged.

Chapter IV: Summary and Findings

The purpose of this critical inquiry is to explore arguments about the benefits of the arts articulated by the arts advocacy network of professional non-profit theatre in Oregon. This study examines how leaders within an arts advocacy network frame their arguments concerning the benefits of the arts, how they are communicated, the underlying assumptions conveyed to the public through these arguments, whether members utilized the network fully and finally, where, if any, there might be the points of communication breakdown.

This inquiry triangulates data collection through literature review, document analysis, and interview. This instrumental collective case study reveals the influences on the content and communication of arts advocacy arguments (tools) and their relationship to larger trends in the arts and culture sector. Further, this study also uncovers the perceptions of an arts advocacy network as described by members of that network.

Defining and Identifying the Arts Advocacy Network

An arts advocacy network represents the connection of many intersecting members. This study began its focus on professional non-profit theatre, specifically. Nationally, this information chain begins with the professional non-profit theatre national service organization Theatre Communications Group (TCG). On a state level,

the information chain includes Oregon Arts Commission (OAC) and Oregon Cultural Advocacy Coalition (CAC).

For the purpose of this study, an arts advocacy network is a coordinated system of arts leaders, arts and cultural organizations and arts supporters--whether moral, financial or both, who belong to a connected communication system in order to share information or convene for the purposes of advocating, lobbying or generally seeking public support (moral or financial) for arts and culture. Therefore, key organizations and key leadership in arts advocacy in the state of Oregon were identified to address what the arts advocacy network is, who belongs to it, and who the leaders are.

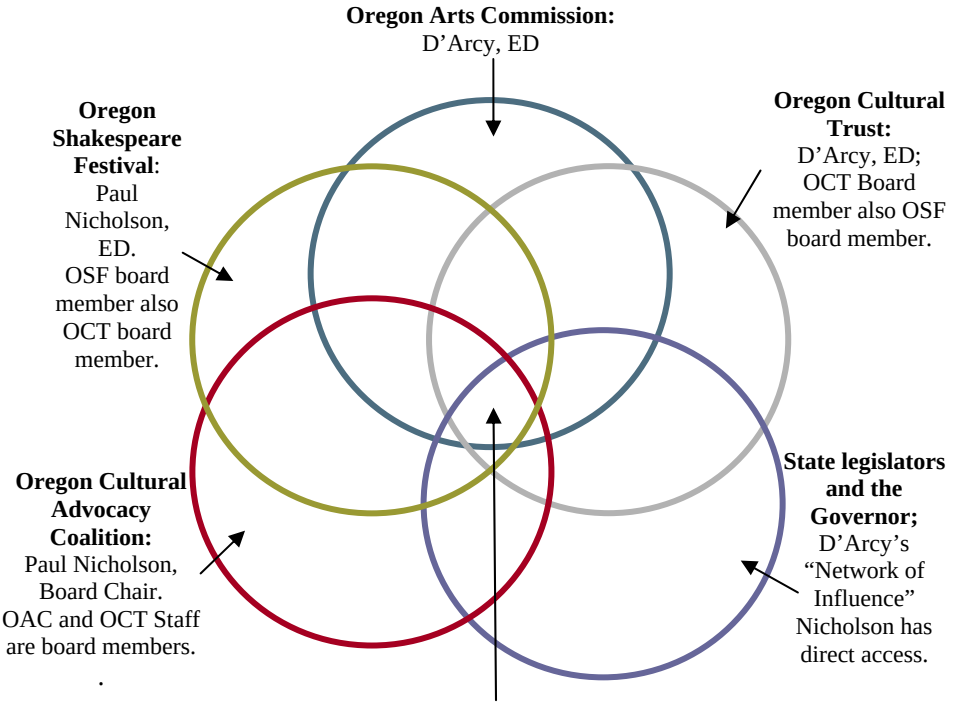

Figure 4.1 This figure represents the relationships between key organizations and leadership.

Key Organizations and Leadership

In this network, four key theatre organizations were identified according to their influence--both with state legislature and on a grassroots level, and several intersections became clear[9]. Primarily, Paul Nicholson is the Executive Director for Oregon Shakespeare Festival (OSF) and serves as Board Chair for the Oregon Cultural Advocacy Coalition (CAC). Further, Nicholson also serves as a board member for Theatre Communications Group (TCG). In addition, Chris D'Arcy is the Executive Director for Oregon Arts Commission (OAC) and the Oregon Cultural Trust (OCT). Figure 4.1 reveals the relationship overlaps between study participants, their staff and board. This is significant because these relationships and intersections play a key role in how the arts advocacy network is described.

Data Analysis Procedures

In addition to document analysis of publicly available material like grant applications, and organizational websites (see Appendix B for data collection protocol), in-depth interviews were conducted with leadership at the four key organizations identified in the state arts advocacy network: Chris D'Arcy, Executive Director of the Oregon Arts Commission and the Oregon Cultural Trust; Jim Cox, Manager of the Oregon Cultural Trust; and Paul Nicholson, Executive Director of the Oregon

[9] Leadership from Portland Center Stage, a constituent member of TCG in Portland, were asked to participate in this study but were unable due to their organization moving into a new venue. At PCS Artistic Director Chris Coleman and Managing Director Edith Love serve on the Multnomah County Cultural Committee and as a board member for TCG, respectively. As such, an important perspective in contrast or comparison with fellow TCG constituent member Oregon Shakespeare Festival is missing.

Shakespeare Festival, Board Chair of the Oregon Cultural Advocacy Coalition and board member of Theatre Communications Group. Interviews were intended to reveal how key leaders and organizations framed their arguments about the benefits of the arts, and how they identified the arts advocacy network in Oregon from their various perspectives.

Questions for interviewees developed based on trends and issues that emerged from the literature review, as well as specific questions generated from document analysis of grant applications, publicly available materials in media, marketing materials, and organizational websites (see Appendices C-E for the lists of interview questions). Questions also emerged regarding the specific role of the organization and organizational leadership in advocacy efforts, their individualized measures of success, and their relationships to other key organizations, leadership, and policy makers and how this influenced advocacy issues. Finally, they were finally asked to reveal their perception and description of the arts advocacy network in Oregon based on a definition provided by the researcher.

The intent of these questions was to determine what influences how leaders frame arguments about the benefits of the arts, the underlying values associated with those arguments and how those arguments, then, are communicated within an arts advocacy network. While a portion of the questions were asked of all participants, it was important to also reveal how arts advocacy arguments change from individual to

individual and what that might say about the arts advocacy network itself. The following section presents a summary of findings.

Summary of Findings

Advocacy on the National Level: The Information Chain

Theatre Communications Group (TCG) is a highly effective and efficient organization in carrying out its mission to "strengthen, nurture, and promote the professional not-for-profit American theatre" (http://www.tcg.org). Advocacy is an inherent part of this mission. The partnerships, affiliations and programs fostered and developed by TCG benefit all constituent members, including Oregon Shakespeare Festival. In terms of advocacy, TCG distributes *Action Alerts* to the field and other efforts to "mobilize theatre leaders to express their support for the NEA and other important issues during the annual appropriations cycle" (*Annual Report*, Para 1). Additionally, TCG is a founding member of the American Arts Alliance, which involves other national service organizations including Association of Performing Arts Presenters, Dance/USA, and OPERA America. Further, TCG also established a partnership with Americans for the Arts which entitles constituent members to a "membership with the *Americans for the Arts* Action Fund, a dynamic new 501(c)(4) membership organization that utilizes state-of-the-art advocacy tools to educate and mobilize thousands of grassroots arts organizations and concerned citizens to advance

arts-friendly legislation and support arts-friendly candidates running for federal office" (*Annual Report*, Para 2).

Arts Advocacy on the State Level: Oregon Arts Commission

Much like TCG, Oregon Arts Commission benefits from membership with other organizations of the arts advocacy network defined by the communication of information for the purposes of seeking public support of arts and culture. Oregon Arts Commission is a key player in the arts advocacy network in Oregon and by virtue of its complex purposes and networks of influence, may in fact lead the network.

The Oregon Arts Commission was established in 1967 to "foster the development of arts across Oregon and assure their excellence in order to enrich the lives of Oregonians" (*Main*, Para 2). It is governed by nine commissioners, appointed by the governor, who review applications to grant programs, determine policies, and establish Long-Range Plans (*About*, Para 1).

In 1993, the Oregon Arts Commission became a division of the Oregon Economic and Community Development Department. Oregon Arts Commission funding is primarily provided by the state of Oregon as well as the National Endowment for the Arts. The Oregon Arts Commission played an integral role in the development of the Oregon Cultural Trust.

Chris D'Arcy, Executive Director of Oregon Arts Commission, started her career as an architectural historian, receiving her B.A. from Skidmore College and later, her

graduate degree from Columbia University in the Historic Preservation Program. She left New York City for Anchorage, Alaska, to work for the Alaska State Council and the Arts managing their Public Art Program during the post-pipeline boom. D'Arcy later became the director, serving in that capacity for close to ten years. She left the Alaska State Council and Arts to do some consulting work, after which she applied for and became the Executive Director of the Oregon Arts Commission (Personal communication, February 14, 2006).

OAC has memberships with Americans for the Arts (AFTA), National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) and the Oregon Cultural Advocacy Coalition (CAC). Further, the information that OAC receives is disseminated throughout the network:

> We give people information and because we belong to different networks, whether it is the Cultural Advocacy Coalition, National Assembly of State Arts Agencies and Americans for the Arts […] we serve as a conduit between the field and these organizations, sharing information, giving people resources, alerting literally when something might be in congress, or something might up with the Oregon legislature. (C. D'Arcy, Personal Communication, February 14, 2006)

Oregon Shakespeare Festival is just one of the many recipients of this information, which includes arts and culture organizations across Oregon.

Information and research produced by Americans for the Arts (AFTA) shapes how OAC positions itself in relation to arts and culture in Oregon. AFTA, in its *Policy and Advocacy* portion of their website under *Arts Research*, provides literature supporting a number of different arguments used by arts advocates. Monographs and special reports on economic impact, cultural tourism, academic enhancement, and

social development for at-risk youth (*Policy and Advocacy*, Para 1) are listed on the website. These topics are also reflected in the Institute of Community Development (under *Field Services*) whose purpose is to foster research-based understanding of how the arts address numerous areas of concerns, i.e. economic development, arts and civic dialogue, at-risk youth, artist training, public housing, and cultural tourism (*Arts Policy Information Center*, Para 1).

Oregon Arts Commission states that its primary goals are to increase cultural participation, promote greater access to cultural assets, and build the capacity of cultural organizations (*About,* Para 3). It also plays a role in developing public policy, particularly arts education, as well as in support of artists' work. OAC plays a strong role in developing policy and infrastructure in order to sustain and support arts and culture, in Oregon, overall. How OAC attempts to position arts and culture, in particular to policymakers, reflects a larger national trend, linking arts and culture and the creative economy to economic and community development.

More and more, arts and culture organizations like OAC find themselves very much in an economic development atmosphere. For example OAC is housed in the Economic and Community Development Department, which influences the types of grant programs offered, and how it develops new grant programs and connects arts and culture to public policy. Further, the current political climate in the state legislature and with the Governor, who oversees the arts commission as a state agency, also

influences the work of the Oregon Arts Commission. For example, OAC plans to strategically "align the goals of the Arts Commission with the Governor's priorities: children, education, economic development, jobs and Brand Oregon (*2005 Town Hall Meetings*, 2005, p.6).

Aligning goals with the Governor is not unheard of for a state arts agency; it is rather illustrative of growing trends connecting arts and culture with economics, particularly as OAC is housed in the state Economic and Community Development department. For instance, this is evident in New York City's Mayor Bloomberg's recent announcement about the creation of a special department that specifically helps non-profits arts organizations and which will be part of the Economic Development Department. This office will offer groups "secure low-interest or tax-exempt loans through the city's Industrial Development Agency" (Chan, 2006, Para 19). D'Arcy believes that the few remaining grant programs available to individual artists and arts and culture organizations are not enough:

> We think that you can't change the world on that level of investment so we're looking at the possibility of creating a revolving loan fund here within the department that would be a permanent source for investment for creative endeavors in Oregon, whether that's for-profit or not-for profit. (Personal communication, February 14, 2006)

Further, in February 2006, OAC announced a new initiative called *Creative Oregon* to create direct links from arts and culture to economic and community development as part of a larger state-wide initiative, including:

- Use the arts and culture of Oregon to make the state competitive through the traded sector;
- Grow Oregon's cultural and creative sector to attract artists and creative workers;
- Take advantage of the increasingly more entrepreneurial arts sector as it crosses nonprofit/for-profit lines;
- Use technology to expand access to the arts and create innovative art products;
- Employ arts and culture as a strategy for rural and community development. (p. 3-4)

OAC is also

> looking at creating a cultural vitality index for Oregon that looks at both rates of arts participation and statistics on arts-related employment so that we look at the numbers of people participating in things and the number of people in Oregon who are literally employed in arts-related fields. Whether that's theatre directors, whether it's the designer at Nike who's doing the shoes, whether it's the people at Columbia Sportswear, whether it's the designers at Weiden and Kennedy; People making arts based products. (C. D'Arcy, Personal Communication, February 14, 2006)

The grant programs of Oregon Arts Commission (OAC) reflect and support linking arts and culture to economic and community development. According to the OAC website, "The Art Commission offers granting opportunities to promote the Arts in Oregon as economic, community development, and vital resources within the state" (*Grant Programs*, Para 3). Through standard final report evaluations and anecdotal evaluations, OAC builds a foundation of evidence to support those linkages.

For example, a grant awarded to the town of Echo, through the OAC's *Arts Build Communities* program, provided technical support to create a visible community identity:

> We provided them, probably with some grant money, but more importantly the technical assistance provided by a visual artists and a graphic artist who drove out there, spent some time with community leaders, folks in the community, learned more about the history and culture of Echo and then a proposed a series of community solutions for them. The town of Echo is actually named for the daughter of one of the founding fathers of the town, Echo Koontz, and so they created a visual image using an old portrait of Echo Koontz and created typography to go with it, what have you. The town adopted all of this and now that is on their city letterhead, and everybody knows about who Echo was. (Personal Communication, February 14, 2006)

D'Arcy states that, "If you look at our *Arts Build Community*, the history of our program, you can see that over the years we've […] changed the culture of some communities through those small grants" (C. D'Arcy, Personal Communication, February 14, 2006).

The town of Echo is one of those communities. Chris D'Arcy explains,

> the mission of the OAC is to really create an environment in Oregon where the arts flourish. So that means we want freedom of speech, freedom of artistic expression, we want a business climate that allows artists to create work, market and sell that work. We want a community and a social environment where there are groups that can do their work successfully. And I would say that all of this is based on the premise that creative expression is a good thing. (Personal communication, February 14, 2006).

Nevertheless, for OAC, the primary granting criteria is artistic excellence[10].

D'Arcy points out that even for operational support grants the artistic quality of the program is the primary concern of grant panelists. Further, potential economic and

[10]While artistic quality is heavily weighted in choosing a program to grant, measuring its success--how it is evaluated--is still very much centered on the more quantifiable evidence provided by numbers of people, organizations involved and so on. For Nicholson, measuring the success of artistic work is as ephemeral as the work itself and takes into consideration factors such as actual audience numbers, critique from staff, critique from peers in the field. But the worth of those numbers and opinions is never completely understood. As Nicholson states, "the goal is to be the definitive production knowing you're not going to be it but to try to get it as close as you possibly can" (Personal communication, February 17, 2006).

community impacts are important aspects of the programming. The "global view", according to D'Arcy, refers to programming that meets the needs of the community, involves collaborating with others for the greatest impact, and improves the quality of the arts experience and the level of access:

> So, for example, we care about impact in the operating support program because we like to invest in things that make a difference, that have impact, but we provide operating support to a wide range of organizations. But that's where the artistic, the quality of the program really comes into play. Are you paying the artists? Is this a professional caliber performance or exhibition or media piece, whatever it happens to be. (Personal Communication, February 14, 2006)

As part of their own programming, the OAC created a program to build the capacity of teachers who are not arts specialists:

> We actually have partnered with the Department of Education and the Oregon Alliance for Arts Education on a summer teacher arts institute because we realize that most of the arts in the elementary schools will be taught by a classroom teacher and so building the capacity of those teachers and making those teachers more comfortable dealing with arts topics and arts activities was a high priority for us. (Personal Communication, February 14, 2006)

While OAC recognizes the importance of arts education and arts learning, OAC articulates its value in relation to larger policy concerns. Arts learning, according to D'Arcy contributes to the growth of creativity and innovation, which will later have an impact on other industries:

> A kid who might grow up having a sequential arts education could become the next renowned architect, could become the innovator in science, could become the actor on the stage, could become the person who patents some other kind of innovation in another field. (C. D'Arcy, Personal Communication, February 14, 2006)

It is this idea of creativity and its impact on other industries that provides the tools to help policymakers who do not understand the benefits of the arts. D'Arcy attributes lack of understanding about the value and benefit of arts and culture to lack of arts experience:

> The real problem, the challenge with the Oregon legislature is that […] the arts are not part of their background. It may be because the arts are not taught regularly in schools and most of them, I would say, do not attend arts events on a regularly basis or participate in cultural activities on a regular basis. (Personal Communication, February 14, 2006)

A strategy that OAC employs to connect legislators to arts and culture in their district is through an annual panel discussion held at the League of Oregon Cities Annual Conference. None of the people who are on this annual arts panel discussion is from the Arts Commission or any arts organizations. D'Arcy says, "We only invite local electives or city managers to talk about what the arts are doing in their own communities. So it's really a peer panel talking to their peers, and we found that's really, really effective" (Personal communication, February 14, 2006). Likewise, Oregon Arts Commission helps

> facilitate outreach by our grantees to elected officials to help them understand what's going on, to invite them to know more about those local activities. We also know that people are often elected to a school board or a city council and then they might become a county commissioner and then they might run for statewide office. So we try to educate people who are elected on a city level and a county level but working with the League of Oregon cities and the Association of Oregon County. (C. D'Arcy, Personal Communication, February 14, 2006)

Arts Advocacy on the Local Level: Oregon Shakespeare Festival

Founded in 1935, The Oregon Shakespeare Festival (OSF) is one of the oldest and largest professional non-profit theatres in the United States. The term Festival is a bit of a misnomer as the OSF season is eight-and-a-half months long and presents eleven plays in three theatres and has an extensive theatre education program (*About the Festival*, Para 1). OSF presents more than 780 performances each year, attended by approximately 360,000 people, 90% of which are from outside the region (*About the Festival*, Para 1).

The mission of OSF is to "create fresh and bold interpretations of classic and contemporary plays in repertory, shaped by the diversity of our American culture, using Shakespeare as our standard and inspiration" (*Mission*, Para 1). Ultimately, OSF sees itself as a creative environment where "artists and audiences from around the world know they can explore opportunities for transformational experiences through the power of theatre" (*Mission,* Para 2). Guiding values include excellence, learning, collaboration, diversity, company, financial health, and heritage.

Executive Director Paul Nicholson participated in theatre all through his childhood growing up in New Zealand. He received a B.C.A Honors degree (the New Zealand equivalent of an MBA) from Victoria University, Wellington, New Zealand and worked in the corporate world for 10 years. When Nicholson saw an ad in a New Zealand paper advertising for a theatre manager, he decided that was what he wanted

to do. After six years, he decided it was time to move on. Already being the largest and oldest theatre in New Zealand, Nicholson looked to America for new opportunities and soon after became Assistant General Manager at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in 1980. The title was later changed to General Manager, a position Nicholson served in for 16 years. In 1995, Nicholson became Executive Director of OSF. He is responsible for all management aspects of the theatre including "strategic planning, budgeting, fundraising, public relations, marketing, education programs, personnel and Board relations" (*People*, Para 1).

As a constituent member of TCG, Oregon Shakespeare Festival (OSF) has many opportunities to collect and receive information that may shape, not only how OSF frames the value and benefits of the arts, but the strategies used to communicate those values and benefits to policymakers. While Nicholson says TCG's primarily purpose is support for the field of professional non-profit theatre, it does provide some lobbying and advocacy support through strategic partnerships with national advocacy groups like Americans for the Arts and American Arts Alliance and through information sharing (Personal Communication, February 17, 2006). Additionally, Nicholson stated that he is more involved in advocacy than most members of TCG because of his position on the board of TCG. In this way, Nicholson interacts three to four times a year with Laurie Baskin, the Director of Government and Education Programs at TCG, and they talk about advocacy issues (Personal Communication, February 14, 2006).

Nicholson also believes that because of the theatre focus of TCG and its connection to advocacy information and tools, TCG very much influences how theatres and arts supporters can talk about the arts. "Every *Field Letter*[11] from TCG's Ben Cameron is about the arts in various ways and how to frame the argument, whether it is an economic argument, or an impact on self argument, or a communication argument. So to the degree that people read those newsletters they can be very helpful in helping frame the argument" (Personal communication, February 17, 2006).

Nicholson believes that the benefits of the arts are personal: "On a personal level I think the arts can get us in touch with parts of ourselves that we don't normally get in touch with. It's connecting us to a place we don't normally go" (Personal communication, February 17, 2006). Further, "I think also on a personal level the arts give us the ability to see things in a different way. If you go to a play here, and if we do it really, really well, you'll be touched in a different way; you'll see the world a different way" (Personal communication, February 17, 2006). However, when asked how Nicholson communicates these benefits to the public--how the work might affect a potential audience member, he asserts, "I don't think we really communicate about the benefits of the arts in any sort of proactive way. Our role, as an organization, is to provide the arts and to provide the opportunity for people to experience the art" (Personal communication, February 17, 2006). Nevertheless, Nicholson does feel that the

[11] TCG Field Letters, written by the Executive Director Ben Cameron, reflect the concerns of the professional non-profit theatre community, the challenges and successes. Additionally, these concerned are articulated through *American Theatre magazine* in a 'From the Executive Director" column.

benefits of the arts are communicated: "I'm already aware in saying it that it's not actually true because while we're not doing it with an advocacy focus, we're certainly doing it from an arts focus" (Personal communication, February 17, 2006). This arts focus is primarily communicated through marketing materials:

> When we produce a brochure we're really, really focused on letting people know what our work is about, how their lives could be changed as a result of it, what the themes are they would be exploring and so on. It's not quite as in your face as standard lobbying or advocacy, but that's still an element of what we're trying to do. (Personal communication, February 17, 2006)

An as example of this, Nicholson recalls a striking incident that occurred after a performance of Sam Shepherd's *Curse of the Starving Class*:

> At the end of the performance one of the doors opened and this young woman came racing out of the theatre, running down to the Plaza in a state of great agitation and somebody ran after her and said, 'Are you alright?' and she said, 'Yes! But I've got to go and change my life!' So that's sort of, that's the impact we want to strive for all the time. What we want is for people to come out of one of our performances and say, 'Wow! Now I get it, now I see things differently.' So that's what we're looking for—to help people and encourage them to open their eyes and see and experience the world in a different way. (Personal Communication, February 17, 2006)

Nicholson also cites the more instrumental benefits of the arts, in particular, the impact that exposure to and participation in the arts has on youth:

> Kids who are exposed to the arts are more likely to go to university, have fewer teenage pregnancies, are less involved in drugs, are less involved in crime and eventually are more productive members of society. So we know that the arts can significantly impact the lives of students and that's one of the areas, we try to work in. (Personal communication, February 17, 2006)

Currently, OSF is one of the largest theatre education program in the country. Targeted programs reach over 100,000 kids every year as well as over 40,000 youth that come to Ashland to see the work on stage (P. Nicholson, Personal communication, February 17, 2006).

But Nicholson does not believe that only those who come see the plays or participate in their education programs are the only ones who benefit from arts and culture organizations. Just as many large arts organizations attempt to calculate their economic impact on the region in which they reside, so, too, does OSF. Nicholson created an economic model specific to OSF because the Arts and Economic calculator provided on the Americans for the Arts website does not differentiate between exogenous spending (new money to the region, usually, tourist dollars and the substitution affect in resident spending), one of the many cited weaknesses of economic impact studies. This is particularly relevant for OSF as 90% of their audience is from outside the region:

> Only 10% of our audience lives within 100 miles of Ashland. Our patrons have to drive to town; they eat all their meals here; they'll do shopping here; they stay in our motels or hotels. So there's an economic benefit from the fact that people travel to see our work as opposed to going to a theatre where they reside. That model, that Americans for the Arts model, doesn't take any account of that at all. (Personal communication, February 17, 2006)

To further connect OSF with cultural tourism, the OSF website does not leave anything to chance for those tourists looking for a cultural experience. The OSF website presents "The Festival Planner" (*Your Visit*, Para 2). This planner directly links visitors,

after purchasing tickets, to accommodations, attractions, dining and shopping, getting around, weather forecast, directions, childcare and regional tourism information (cite website here). Because spending at OSF ultimately also spills over into the town itself to other related activities, OSF can say they have an impact beyond the work done on stage. Likewise their own spending in the community also spills over into other areas in the community. In this way, through a variety of calculations, Nicholson establishes the economic impact of OSF on the region to be over $100 million based on tourist spending, then the leaking of that spending by tourists, OSF, and OSF employees, coined the multiplier effect, to other parts of the region.

It is this economic impact on the region that proves most influential to policy makers and is often a language they understand best. In this way, personal benefit or personal impact is not necessarily used when talking to policymakers, primarily, as Nicholson states, because not everyone understands the personal value and benefits of the arts:

> I can talk with a legislator from one particular area of the country and she may be totally disinterested in the arts but she may be very concerned what's happening to the kids in her district with the rising crime rates, so if we can make the argument—"Look, the arts is the way to reduce your crime rates, reduce the teenaged pregnancies, reduce the number of drop outs", then that is a powerful argument for her. (Personal communication, February 17, 2006)

For example, Nicholson relates a recent efforts to move a state legislator from his district from a neutral voting position in regards to the arts (historically he does not

vote for decreases or increases in arts funding), to a more positive voting position that includes increased arts funding. Nicholson states:

> We used the OSF as an example of what can happen. We talked about the extent to which our education programs reach out as extensively as they do. We talked about the impact on people's lives from the work. We certainly use the example of the Festival's status in the American Theatre world and arts world, generally to link him emotionally to the organization and the value of the arts. So Libby [Appel, the Artistic Director] appealed very directly to his pride as an Oregonian in having in his district the largest professional theatre in the US. And that he needs to be able to stand up and with pride say, I am voting for increased funding because I believe it benefits organizations like OSF. (Personal communication, February 17, 2006)

For Nicholson, it is not about choosing one argument but having many, whether it be economic impact, impact on youth and education, or community development: "We need a tool box. All those different arguments are various tools in that toolbox. We'll use them shamelessly whatever way we can[12]" (Personal communication, February 17, 2006).

As this language is presented to policymakers to influence and, hopefully reflect, the interests of their publics, it is also given to the policymaker. Policymakers who vote for increased funding to arts and culture then make use of this language to defend or justify their position with their constituents, who may be surprised by their vote or position on a particular piece of legislation (P. Nicholson, Personal Communication,

[12] However, Nicholson, Executive Director of Oregon Shakespeare Festival, suggests that grant makers in the arts already understand the value and benefits of the arts. "As far as funders are concerned we actually do relatively little advocacy, overtly. […] We make the assumption that the funders understand, by and large, the benefits of the arts. Therefore, we need to present to funders material that reveals how we are going about that good work […] we talk about our programming or the quality of the work we do, the scope of the work we do and so on" (Personal communication, February 17, 2006).

February 17, 2006). The ultimate goal is for the policymaker to use that language to advocate for arts and culture to others in the legislature. When this happens, arts and culture finds "Champions". (C. D'Arcy, Personal Communication, February 14, 2006; Nicholson, Personal Communication, February 17, 2006). Nicholson states, "You've got to get champions in the house who will advocate to their colleagues for the support. You can't just rely on a straight up and down vote" (Personal communication, February 17, 2006).

Leading Arts Advocacy Efforts in Oregon: Oregon Cultural Advocacy Coalition

Chris D'Arcy and Paul Nicholson were asked, in follow up interviews, to describe the arts advocacy network in Oregon[13]. Further, they were asked to describe its structure, what efforts were being made, if any, to connect all arts and culture organizations in Oregon with this network, and finally, what constitutes membership. Nicholson, as Board Chair of Oregon Cultural Advocacy Coalition (CAC) was asked additional questions that specifically related to CAC strategies.

The mission of the Oregon Cultural Advocacy Coalition (CAC) is to increase public investment in arts, heritage, and humanities across Oregon to help ensure that all Oregonians have access to meaningful and affordable cultural experiences, and that cultural activities continue to thrive in their communities (*Our Goals*, Para 2). Kristina

[13] Based on a definition provided by the researcher, participants were asked what the arts advocacy network in Oregon consisted of, how it was structured and who lead it.

McNitt[14] is the contract lobbyist for the CAC and serves as the Executive Director. Paul Nicholson of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival serves as Board Chair for the CAC. Two staff members of the Oregon Arts Commission also serve as board members.

D'Arcy identified Oregon Cultural Advocacy Coalition (CAC) as the primary arts advocacy network in Oregon because of its structure and its mission. "The CAC, though its lobbyist and its website, provides information, influence and communication related to cultural and political advocacy on a state of Oregon level" (Personal communication, April 9, 2006). Further, she describes the network as having a central core, implying that CAC is at is center, but that "in practice, decisions and strategies are made by a small board group of several key players/leaders" (Personal Communication, April 9, 2006).

Conversely, Nicholson describes the arts advocacy network in Oregon as being a "loose association of concerned and committed people representing the major arts and culture organizations in the state of Oregon" and agrees with D'Arcy that the central core is comprised of key players/leaders (C. D'Arcy, Personal communication, April 16, 2006). But when asked how arts and culture organizations could become members of this network, both Nicholson and D'Arcy asserted that arts and culture organizations can become members of this network only by becoming paid members of CAC.

[14] The researcher was unable to contact Ms. McNitt for participation in the study, therefore is unable to provide any background information about her. Additionally, there was no background information available on the Oregon Cultural Advocacy Coalition (CAC) website. Paul Nicholson, Board Chair, was the primary source of information about the Oregon Cultural Advocacy Coalition.

Nicholson points out that OSF is a member at the highest organizational level at $6000 (P. Nicholson, Personal Communication, April 16, 2006). CAC is "dependent on dues, i.e., financial support, from cultural groups to maintain its operations, pay its lobbyist and staff the statewide communications network" (C. D'Arcy, Personal Communication, April 9, 2006).

Thus far, the advocacy strategy of the CAC has been to utilize the extensive email lists currently available through OAC, OSF and other major arts and cultural groups in Oregon to communicate important arts advocacy strategies to the grassroots level. For example, at the last legislative session, the strategy based on advice for legislative champions, was to minimize direct advocacy to legislators:

> And over the last two sessions we've consciously not had direct advocacy. The advice we got from the champions we have in the House and the Senate and from our lobbyist was that this was a time to fly under the radar screen. We don't believe that that's the strategy we'll be using this coming session as we believe the time has come where we have to stand up and start beating the drums, so I think that we'll be activating the grassroots in a different way than we have previously. (P. Nicholson, Personal Communication, February 17, 2006)

According to Nicholson, CAC did not do an especially "effective job of communicating the strategy to the network at the grassroots level. We did communicate to the key leaders and funders, and we relied on some of the institutions with significant networks to relay that information to the field, primarily through email" (Personal Communication, April 16, 2006). However, the next legislative session in 2007 will rely heavily on grassroots efforts.

One of the Oregon Cultural Advocacy Coalition key strategies is to make sure that every legislator in the state has an experience with the arts. According to Paul Nicholson, this cannot happen without grassroots efforts:

> That means that every arts organization has to do what they can to go out and make a connection with their legislators. There are some legislators who are hostile to the arts and you're not going to change their minds on anything, but the large majority of them are good people who maybe don't think of the arts in any particular way and if they do, they think of them as being for the elite. The grassroots organizations prove it is not, […] so the involvement of the smaller arts groups is really, very, very important. (Personal Communication, February 17, 2006)

D'Arcy says, "As planning for the 2007 legislative session begins in earnest, an appeal will be made to all cultural groups to join the CAC and to make a financial contribution to support the advocacy effort" (Personal Communication, April 9, 2006). Plans are for the CAC to "communicate with [all the arts and culture institutions in the state] both by snail mail and email; In addition, we will contact the leaders of key institutions directly through a series of face-to-face conversations" (P. Nicholson, Personal Communication, April 16, 2006). Nicholson also plans on being in direct contact with key legislators and supports. In this way the CAC hopes to connect all arts and culture organizations, as well as individuals, to the arts advocacy network. Further, the CAC will work at the Board level to ensure maximum inclusion of people at the grassroots level: "We'll use everybody […] Each cultural coalition has email lists and the larger arts organizations do, the regional arts councils, RACC in Portland and us, and the arts councils throughout the region have theirs so yes, there's a really good web

of people. Email makes an incredible difference" (P. Nicholson, Personal communication, April 16, 2006).

Chapter V: Summary and Discussion

How an arts advocacy network contributes to the dissemination of information and ultimately to arts advocacy efforts is understudied. The purpose of this study is to explore arguments about the benefits of the arts made by leaders within an arts advocacy network in Oregon through comprehensive literature review, document analysis, and in-depth participant interview conducted with three key leaders and organizations in the arts advocacy network in Oregon.

Currently, the value and benefit of the arts is determined not by what it is, but rather by what it does or produces. In pursuit of increased public financial support, arts advocates strategically align arts and culture with larger policy issues like economic and community development, academic achievement and social development for youth. Increasingly, arts advocacy arguments fail to connect the intrinsic, personal, or artistic with the larger concerns policy issues seek to address: quality of life. In this way, arts and culture is not valued as a phenomenon in and of itself, and therefore worthy of public financial support. Further, these arguments navigate a complicated network of organizations, connected in support of arts and culture, to reach their audiences. Quite often, what arguments prove most effective depend entirely on the audience: policymakers, public funders, or the public. Ultimately, however, perpetuating the use of strategic arguments in lieu of the personal or intrinsic fragments the focus and

strategies of the arts advocacy network, and is in danger of fragmenting the message itself.

Research questions and the methods of inquiry

The main research question of this study asks how leaders within an arts advocacy network frame their arguments about the benefits of the arts. Related questions include: What are the underlying assumptions about the value and benefits of the arts that are communicated through these arguments? Do members of the network utilize it to its fullest extent, and where might there be communication breakdowns, if any?

To support this line of inquiry, the study began with a comprehensive literature review focusing on the major trends in arts advocacy arguments, research, and strategies. This provided a platform for document analysis of publicly available material of the organizations who participated in this study. This uncovered which arguments spread throughout the network and the extent to which this information was then utilized by participants.

In order to determine how leaders in the arts advocacy network view the network, how members communicate with one another and what they believe influences the content of that communication, this critical inquiry utilized instrumental collective case study—the study of multiple participants in the same network. This method of inquiry provides for a greater understanding of the arts advocacy network in

general, rather than a specific understanding of participants themselves. The participants were Paul Nicholson, Executive Director of Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Chris D'Arcy, Executive Director of Oregon Arts Commission and the Oregon Cultural Trust, and Jim Cox, Manager of the Oregon Cultural Trust. These organizations were identified as key organizations and leaders of the arts advocacy network in Oregon. Interviews were conducted with these three leaders, and provided a view of the arts advocacy network from their perspective and experience in the field. The instrumental collective case study helped to answer the research questions and to identify and describe the arts advocacy network in Oregon.

Summary of Findings

Four key themes emerged during this study and will now be summarized across the data collected in this study. First, information provided by members in the arts advocacy network influenced how leaders talked about the value and benefits of the arts. Because each leader relied on similar data to justify support of arts and culture in Oregon, this resulted in a common way to talk about arts and culture. Second, what language (or argument) was used to advocate for arts and culture often changed depending on target audience. Third, through analysis of interviews, it became clear that often leaders made a distinction between "advocacy" and "Advocacy"[15], between inviting a legislator to an arts event and talking with legislators about a specific piece of

[15] "advocacy" refers to those efforts directed through an arts focus and "Advocacy" refers to efforts directed towards policymakers regarding specific legislation

legislation, for example, or for increased arts funding. This difference between talking about the arts in general and talking about a specific piece of legislation frames how leadership and the organization describe their activities. For example, this distinction often determined how much information was given to members of the arts advocacy network and when and if they were encouraged to actively and directly Advocate to policymakers. And finally, this distinction also determined how key organizations and leadership viewed and described the arts advocacy network.

Generally, information provided by other members in the arts advocacy network influenced how leaders talked about the value and benefits of the arts. Because leaders and organizations relied on similar data to justify support of arts and culture in Oregon, this resulted in a common way to talk about arts and culture.

Communicating the benefits of the arts: target audience, target argument

What language (or argument) was used to advocate for arts and culture often changed depending on target audience. On the whole, the content of what the key leadership communicates as the benefits of the arts to policymakers more often than not does not include intrinsic, personal, or artistic reasons for public support of arts and culture. While Paul Nicholson, Executive Director of Oregon Shakespeare Festival suggested that Oregon Shakespeare Festival communicates, on a personal level, what an audience member might get out of seeing plays through its brochures and other marketing material, the themes they might encounter, the new perspectives they might

find. He also acknowledges that many public policymakers do not understand the value and benefit of the arts. Additionally, key leadership and organizations of the arts advocacy network in Oregon are, in fact, positioning arts and culture into an economic and community development framework as an "arts-based" economic development strategy that aligns themselves and arts and culture with the interests and concerns of the Governor.

"advocacy" and "Advocacy"

Participants distinguished their activities between advocacy and "Advocacy", that is, between efforts directed through an arts focus and efforts directed towards policymakers regarding specific legislation. The former is generated through marketing materials, for example, or by inviting a legislator to an arts event while the latter is direct communication with legislature through either emails, letters, or office visits that specifically related to increased arts funding, for example, or initiatives that will affect arts and culture activities in some way. This distinction often determined how much information was given to members of the arts advocacy network and when and if they were encouraged to actively and directly advocate to policymakers.

Describing the network

How leaders described the network was based on the distinction between direct advocacy to policymakers and arts advocacy generally. This distinction also determined how key organizations and leadership viewed and described the arts advocacy

network. Overall both Nicholson and D'Arcy describe the network as consisting of key players and organizations with the core of the network being Oregon Cultural Advocacy Coalition, primarily because, as stated in it mission and purpose, it directly advocates and lobbies on behalf of arts and culture in Oregon.

Conclusions

It is impossible to only look at the state or local level when determining how arts advocacy arguments are framed without looking at the national context first. And even so, that alone does not suffice. While individual arts organizations, like Oregon Arts Commission, have resources, including strategic partnerships, to generate research specific to Oregon, what inspires and motivates this research is as much a result of what is happening in state and federal politics as it is about what is happening within an arts advocacy network. This is to say that arts advocacy arguments do not exist in a vacuum. Members of an arts advocacy network influence one another but, more so, so does the policy context that surrounds it. This larger cultural policy context is shifting in response to the continued and embattled need for financial support of arts and culture as well as the changing and broadening definitions and boundaries (Wyszomirski, 2001).

While the functions of Oregon Cultural Advocacy Coalition (CAC) and the Oregon Arts Commission (OAC) are defined primarily by what they can and cannot do—CAC can lobby directly to legislature while OAC cannot, the suggestion by leaders

of the arts advocacy network in Oregon that CAC is the leader of the network is predicated on the idea that financial support is the only way in which to support arts and culture. Further it confines advocacy, not only to a very finite and specific definition, it limits the intended audience of those advocacy efforts as well. From interviews it became obvious that advocacy—the active verbal support for a cause or position, is believed to be effective only when directed to policymakers, that is, those who control the purse strings. However, inherent in that textbook definition is support for a cause or position is through talk; it is about articulating and communicating need, and fostering understanding. Nevertheless Executive Director of Oregon Shakespeare Festival Paul Nicholson admits that without a previous understanding of the arts, however small, talking to policymakers about arts and culture is fruitless insofar as it will only embolden the converted and confound the rest (Personal Communication, February 17, 2006). Therefore, strategic advocacy efforts in Oregon to influence policymakers, in finding and fostering "Champions" for the cause, are through direct experience, not only direct talk; one of the primary strategies of CAC and OAC is to enable and ensure that every state legislator has an experience with arts and culture.

But the gap between talk and experience is widening. Until arts education and arts learning finds it way back into the schools to a significant degree, the less talk can center on arts and culture, its artistic merits and its personal and intrinsic rewards. Attaching arts and culture to more pressing and ultimately, more significant policy

concerns is not an effort to construct a bridge between the two; instead, it bypasses these efforts all together. While experience may bolster the confidence of policymakers, the language provided to talk about it is a small part of a larger and more complex lexicon, a fragment of the whole.

Recently a contract lobbyist for arts and culture was overheard saying, "It tugs at your heart strings, but we aren't going to win there" (K. McNitt, University of Oregon, March 15, 2006). She was referring to the anecdotal and at times, very personal accounts of how people participate in arts and culture and its meaning to them. "There" as it turns out, are stories that have no quantifiable backbone and on surface, have no impact on a wider public. This begs the question, if the "there" is where arts advocates are trying to go, that is, towards widespread support for arts and culture and if we cannot get there by talking about arts and culture and its personal meaning to the public—then where, truly, are we trying to go?

This statement by the contract lobbyist reflects not only what is fundamentally misguided about arts advocacy efforts in Oregon, it reflects what is happening all over the country: a serious dichotomy between language and experience, language and value; between how one talks about arts and culture, how one experiences arts and culture, and the value derived from those experiences. What fosters this growing disparity comes down to the difference between moral support and financial. Not surprisingly, efforts are largely directed towards widespread financial support. Without

financial support of arts and culture, many arts and culture organizations would not be able to provide programs and they would not be able to allow greater access to an even broader public. In this case, arts and culture naturally would have little impact on the public.

The concern to define and categorize the public purposes of arts and culture is engendering an ever widening and ever inclusive understanding of who and what belongs within the purview of the arts and culture sector. However, as focus widens, the roots become less deep, allowing only a rudimentary glance of what arts and culture actually means to the public it serves. Connecting arts and culture with other policy concerns rather than connecting the language with the experience in order to construct value is much like building value from the top down. It represents a missed step rather than collective ingenuity; in this way, value attempts to grow up without first being rooted.

Wyszomirski (2000) created a graphic representation of the decision-making process involved in the creation of public policy as a large tree: roots, trunk, branches and fruit. Figure 5.1 graphically represents this process. The roots represent the values of a particular policy community: "the individuals or organizations most directly involved and with distinct interests at stake" (p. 56). Further, Wyszomirski (2000) writes:

> Public purposes might be considered the trunk of this tree, since they represent broad, sturdy goals that are considered to be appropriate subjects for

> government action. However, these purposes are not the sole foundation for public action. Values constitute a root system that anchors public purposes and nourishes policies that address these purposes. (p. 56)

In this way, the public purposes of arts and culture, for example, cannot grow without a value system (or roots) to feed that purpose. Are arts advocates constructing value with current arguments or distorting it? Are they expanding the public's notion of how arts and culture can be valuable or are they, in fact, diminishing it?

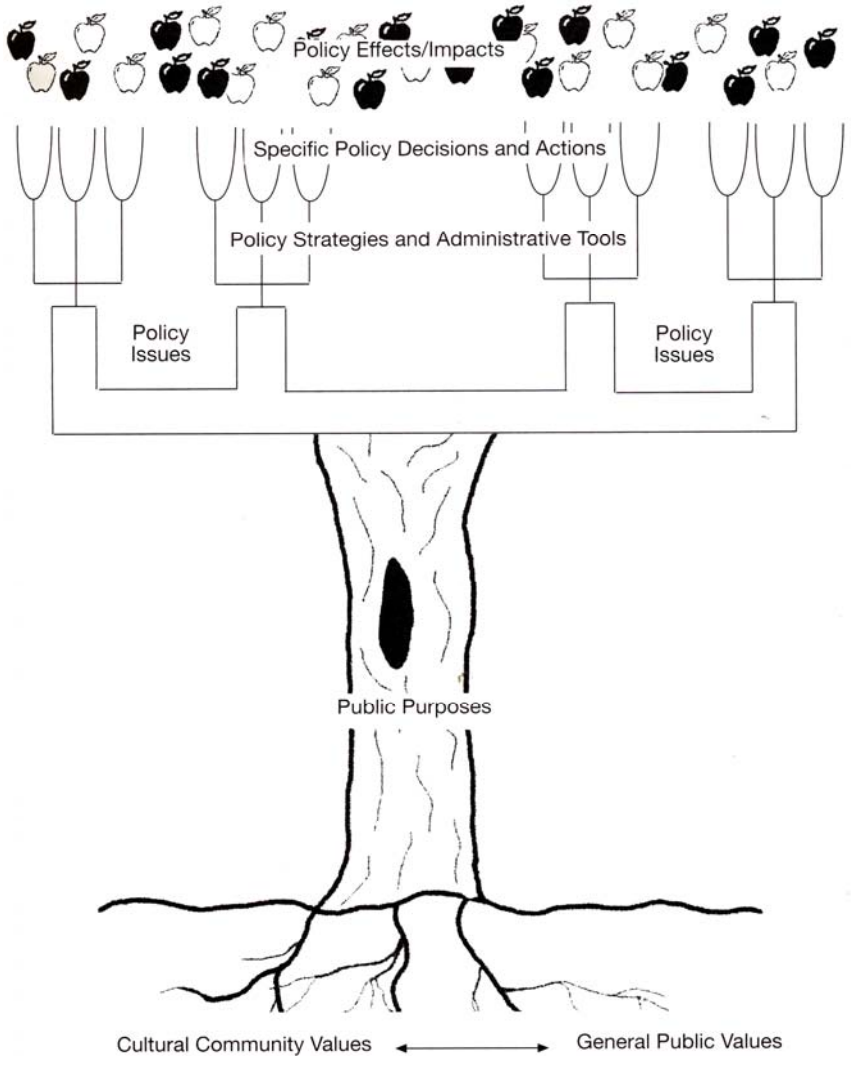

Figure 5.1 Graphic representation of the decision-process for the creation of public policy (Wyszomirski, 2000).

One of the primary features of the changing cultural policy context on the whole, as described by Wyszomirski (2001), includes the "blurring and enlarging of the boundaries of inclusion and concern which, in turn, has led to a focus on redefining key policy terms and assumptions" (p. 11). This refers to "blurring" between non-profit and for-profit arts and culture activities and a broadening of financial and legal concerns to encompass subsidy to include copyright and tax issues, to name a few. One of the significant reconfigurations includes artistic excellence: "The core value of artistic excellence, originally a guiding principle for public subsidies, seems to be transforming into a focus on creativity" (Wyszomirski, 2001, p. 13). This is evident in the new *Creative Oregon* initiative spearheaded by Oregon Arts Commission. While artistic excellence remains an important benchmark in grant programs, creativity is fluid enough to encompass broader policy concerns. For example, how creativity affects workforce Oregon and attract the "creative class[16]"; In other words, agents of economic and community development and renewal.

During interviews Executive Director of Oregon Arts Commission and Oregon Cultural Trust Chris D'Arcy suggested that OAC grant programs are deeply rooted (Personal Communication, February 14, 2006). But given the new initiatives and the moves to align goals with the Governor, have those programs grown from the roots or were they placed, fully-grown, into the soil? Robert Lynch, President of Americans for

[16] This term was coined by Richard Florida in his book *The Rise of the Creative Class* (2002), which examines creativity and its effects on economic development. New York, NY : Basic Books.

the Arts writes in Arts Journal's blog response to *Gifts of the Muse*, "The rise and fall of federal monies has been more ideological and political, and the pretty steady rise of local government funding has been directly linked to issues of community development" (*Is there a better case to be made for the arts?*, 2005, p. 26).

An examination of arts advocacy efforts in Oregon reveal how efforts begin in the branches rather than from the roots. While Paul Nicholson recognizes that previous communication strategies to grassroots arts and culture organizations in Oregon have been ineffective, Chris D'Arcy is more hopeful. However despite new communication strategies to conduct face-to-face conversations with arts leaders and membership drive appeals to arts and culture organizations as mentioned in chapter four, there are nevertheless several communication issues that if not addressed, may hinder a unified advocacy effort. Further, so long as support for arts and culture is viewed solely as financial, with the expectation that CAC leads the charge as lobbyist, then again, advocacy efforts fail to unify the effort just as they fail to unify the message.

OAC recognizes, based on feedback garnered during Town Hall meetings in towns across Oregon, that communication between key organizations and arts and cultural organizations on the grassroots level is often problematic and incomplete. This research suggests that if CAC is the core of the arts advocacy network in Oregon, they are missing key links in their communication strategy; including a wider network of constituents not based on paid membership, basic information channels free and open

to any public that wishes to access the information, as well as links to CAC from key organizations such as Oregon Arts Commission, Oregon Cultural Trust and Regional Arts and Culture Council in Portland.

Lobbying legislature and seeking support for arts and culture is a Sisyphean task; so are the efforts of a contract lobbyist working without the continued support of grassroots efforts. Standing at the top of the hill, the lobbyist advocates to the legislature about why he/she should support arts and culture with public funding, employing personal powers of persuasion and influence to push the efforts over the edge and into practice. Instead, it rolls back to the bottom. To get to the top of the hill, grassroots arts and culture organizations must carry it there. And this is not meant solely as a financial push, because, in the end will more money ensure more effective lobbying? It is clear that with unified efforts to push a measly little rock up and over a hill would be nothing if not a Herculean task: tough but doable.

Returning to Wyszomirski's decision-tree, arts advocacy efforts are very much the same way: value is constructed from the bottom-up. "From the bottom-up" implies policy reflect the roots of the grassroots--the fundamental values. From the bottom-up ensures that arts and culture does not become an attachment to some other concern, but *is* the concern. From the bottom-up means mobilization because of engagement and not without. Strategies to policymakers prove that engagement, understanding, or experience, with arts and culture is half the battle. It is as much true to engage

policymakers as it is to engage grassroots organizations with leaders of the current arts advocacy network. In this way, Oregon Cultural Advocacy Coalition is in service to the cause, and not the cause. Asking CAC to be the leader of the arts advocacy network is an incredible weight to put on one part of the cause—the final push so to speak. It cannot start with them, but it must end with them.

The arts advocacy network in Oregon reflects the top-down approach to arts advocacy where constructing advocacy arguments and coordinating efforts are generated by a few key organizations and key leadership. While grassroots efforts remain integral to the cause, there are few opportunities for smaller arts and culture organizations to help shape and direct those efforts, primarily due to lack of resources. D'Arcy contends that size of organization does not directly relate to level of activism, suggesting that larger arts organizations are not the most passionate advocates, quite often too burdened with pressures of day-to-day operations (Personal Communication, February 14, 2006). In the case of Oregon, however, the largest professional non-profit theatre, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, is in fact, an important presence and supporter of arts advocacy efforts. Unfortunately, this is the exception and not the rule. Nevertheless, OAC strategies involves developing partnerships with major arts organizations and select leadership to help lead the advocacy efforts, if not to capitalize on their presence, than perhaps, because of their extensive email lists.

Nicholson believes that the grassroots efforts are absolutely necessary to arts advocacy efforts in Oregon, if only to prove that arts and culture is not an elitist activity. Ironically, how those grassroots efforts are mobilized is reflected in the top-down, elitist fashion in how information is communicated, how often, and in what instances is communicated to the grassroots arts and culture organizations. They want the grassroots efforts to prove that, while four organizations are key organizations in the advocacy effort (with only two real key leaders), advocacy messages nevertheless are "unified." Further staff and board are shared amongst this leadership, which may contribute to a unified message (whatever that means) but does not necessarily reflect a unified effort (or a diverse one, for that matter).

What would happen if the top down approach was turned on its head, if the grassroots efforts shaped their own arguments, for themselves? If what Bill Ivey says is true, that in order to make the most meaningful arguments to whomever is the position to listen and respond; we must first determine how people actually engage with art everyday? But there is something larger at stake than money. If there is no basic understanding of the fundamental value and benefit of the arts, then no message to policymakers, public funders or the public itself, can be unified, and therefore, wholly meaningful.

Implications

As the division between articulating the value and benefits of arts and culture and experiencing it widens, it is important to realize not only the influence that members of an arts advocacy network exert on one another but also how those influences are, in turn, shaped by the larger cultural policy context. By paying close attention to arts advocacy arguments, how value is articulated and understood, the cracks and fissures in arts advocacy efforts become evident. As arts advocacy efforts direct their concerns and their actions only towards those who can subsidize arts and culture, the larger issue of fostering a broader and more fundamental value in arts and culture is largely ignored.

Avenues for Future Research

- What are the consequences of arts advocacy arguments on the grassroots level: in what ways does top-down arts advocacy strategies influence the work of arts and culture organizations on the grassroots level?
- In what ways could Oregon Cultural Advocacy Coalition learn from similar organizations in the field to increase membership, gain greater visibility in Oregon and improve their communication strategies?

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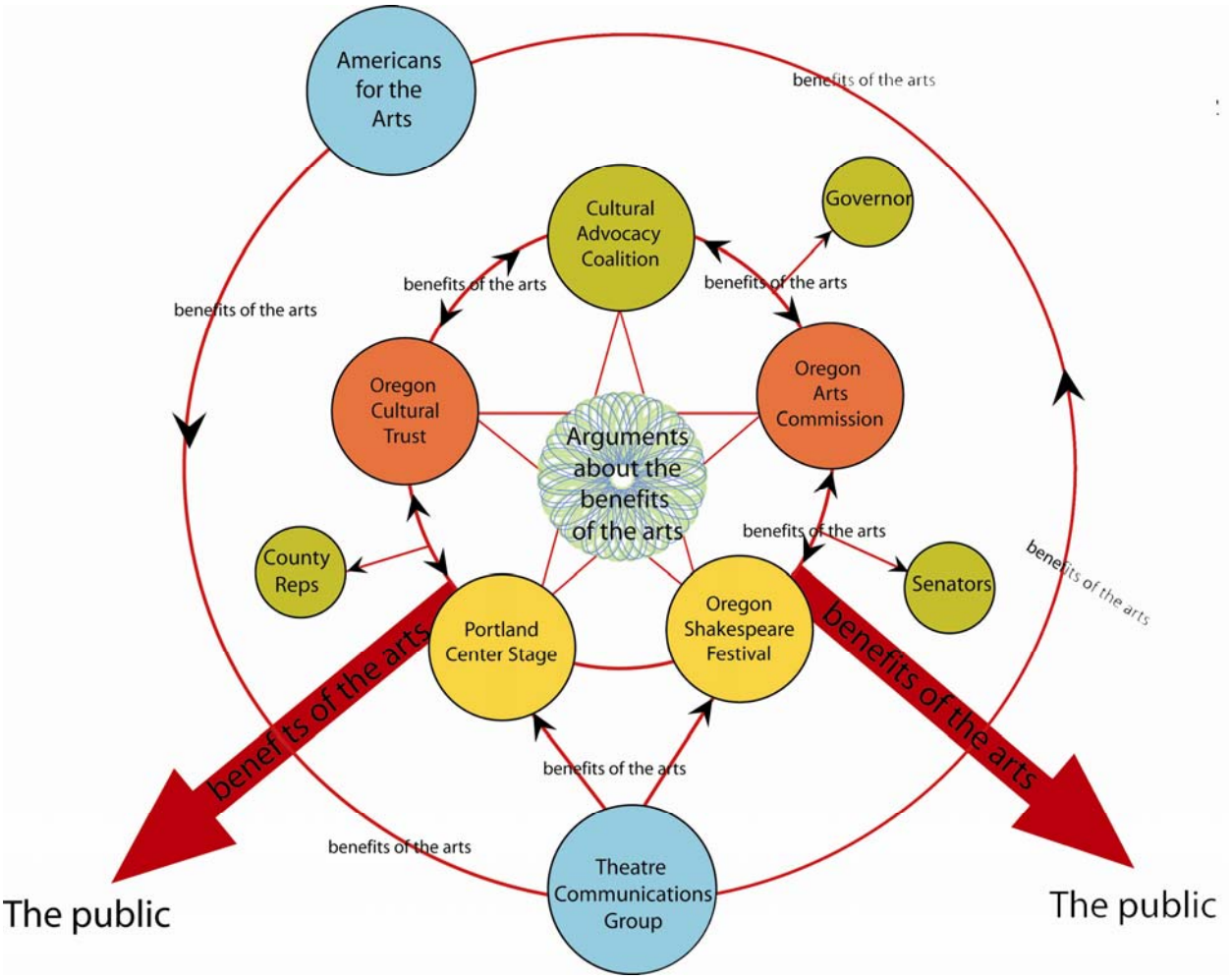
Appendix A: Conceptual Framework



Appendix B: Document Analysis Research Instrument

Data Collection Sheet for Document Analysis

Date: *Document Location:*

Document Type:

❑ Report, Article, Book, etc ❑ Government Document, Public Policy ❑ Arts Research
❑ Arts Organizations' Website ❑ Arts' Organizations' Written Materials ❑ Notes
❑ Transcribed Interview ❑ Transcribed Speech
❑ Other _____

Reference Citation:

CODING	INFORMATION	NOTES

Appendix C: Interview Questions for Paul Nicholson, Executive Director of Oregon Shakespeare Festival and Board Chair of Oregon Cultural Advocacy Coalition

Background

1. What is your background? When did you start as Executive Director for Oregon Shakespeare Festival?
2. How do you see your role as Executive Director at Oregon Shakespeare Festival?
3. What is the most important aspect of that role?
4. As Executive Director, what do you believe are the benefits of the arts?
5. In what ways does this belief influence your decision-making?

Benefits of the Arts

6. Does Oregon Shakespeare Festival, aside from the mission statement, formalize their position as to the benefits of the arts?
7. How does your organization communicate these benefits to the public?
8. In what ways do you think these benefits are communicated most effectively?
9. What influence do funders (both public and private) have in how you frame the benefits of the arts?

Arts Advocacy/TCG

10. As Executive Director of OSF, how do you advocate for the arts? Is it part of your job description?
11. In what ways does your membership with TCG help you to advocate for the arts/OSF?
12. What influence does TCG have in how you frame your advocacy arguments?
13. How do you utilize information given to you from TCG?
14. Who does it go to next?
15. In what ways does the content change? Or does it?

Arts Advocacy/Oregon Arts Commission

16. In what ways does information received from Oregon Arts Commission help you to advocate for the arts/OSF?
17. How do you utilize information given to you from Oregon Arts Commission (action alerts, etc)?
18. On the American Arts Alliance website, there was a blurb about OSF and how you made the case for culture to Representative Walden and that you used economic impact, educational impact, and its high status as an American theatre. If you had two cases to make—the value of art and culture overall and the value of OSF to Ashland, OR, in what ways would those cases (arguments) be similar and/or different?
19. Why do you think this is?
20. In your opinion, is it better to utilize multiple tools (economic, community) or choose your strongest?

21. On a grant application for Oregon Arts Commission, the grant states that OSF's economic impact on the region exceeds $100 million. Where do you get this figure from? Did you utilize the arts and economic prosperity calculator on the Americans for the Arts website?

Oregon Cultural Advocacy Coalition

22. How did you become Board Chair for the Oregon Cultural Advocacy Coalition?

Appendix D: Interview Questions for Chris D'Arcy, Executive Director of Oregon Arts Commission and Oregon Cultural Trust

Background

1. What is your background?
2. How did you come to work for the Oregon Arts Commission and the Oregon Cultural Trust?
3. Were you involved in getting the Oregon Cultural Trust started? If yes, what was your involvement?

Grant Applications—Oregon Arts Commission

4. How are grant applications questions drafted?
5. Who drafts them?
6. What influences, do you think, the content of grant application questions?
7. How are grant types decided? Who approves them?

Program Evaluations

8. Does the Oregon Arts Commission pay for program evaluations?
9. What tools, if any, does the OAC provide to help organizations perform effective program evaluations?
10. How does the Oregon Arts Commission measure success in funded programs? Does it prefer quantitative measures versus anecdotal evidence?

Benefits of the arts

11. Aside from mission, what is your organization's position regarding the benefits of the arts?
12. How do you think this is reflected in the grant applications questions themselves?
13. What "impact"/outcome has the strongest weight with grant panelists: economic, community, social, academic, artistic?
14. **This is a three-part question:** The Arts Services Grant Final Report asks the org. to outline the economic impact of the program, the impact on the community, in addition to a head counting. Then it asks, how did *the organization* measure success?
    a. Is this (economic and community impact) how the Oregon Arts Commission measures success?
    b. Do you believe that grantee organizations measure success differently than asked by the final reports? Or is this in addition to?
    c. Finally, does the competition for funds and limited resources lead organizations to articulate measures of success (or benefits of the arts) that they aren't necessarily striving for?

Arts Advocacy

15. What is the biggest obstacle, in your opinion, in communicating the benefits of the arts to policymakers and public funders?
16. The Cultural Trust identifies four broad areas within which it will accept funding proposals The final area is "**Capacity:** The strengthening of cultural organizations to build stability and generate public confidence". In your opinion, in what ways are Oregon's arts and culture organizations not generating public confidence? Or do you think they are? And in what ways?
17. Does the Oregon Arts Commission pay to help arts and culture organizations advocate/lobby for the arts?
18. In what other ways does the Oregon Arts Commission encourage grantees to advocate for the arts?

Appendix E: Interview Questions for Jim Cox, Trust Manager, Oregon Cultural Trust

1. What is your background? Including how you came to work for the Oregon Cultural Trust?

2. What do you see as the biggest obstacle to widespread awareness and growth of the Oregon Cultural Trust?

3. What types of organizations fully participate in the advancement of the Oregon Cultural Trust?

4. In what ways do they participate?

5. Are those that participate more successful at receiving public/private funds? In other words, are they making a "better case for culture"? Why or why not, do you think?

6. What part do you play in distribution of grant monies, particularly those that go towards the development of county cultural plans?

7. In your opinion, what are the benefits to creating county cultural plans?

Appendix F: Recruitment Instruments

<Name and Title>
<Organization>
<Address>

<Date>

Dear <Name>,

You are invited to participate in a research project titled *Arts Advocacy Arguments: Navigating the network,* conducted by Kim Mathie from the University of Oregon's Arts and Administration Program. The purpose of this study is to explore how opinion leaders in an arts advocacy network within a non-profit professional theatre context frame the argument about the benefits of the arts.

Currently, those most invested in the arts cannot come to consensus about what to argue as the benefits of the arts. Increasingly, art is advocated from an economic and social standpoint, a view that suggests that the value of art is in its utility or usefulness to the public in achieving other goals. Further, these arguments often utilize the language of economics or social work to qualify the aesthetic experience to garner the financial and social support of funders and policy makers. However, this results in a fractured, rather than unified approach to arts advocacy. It is important, then, to explore these arguments, in particular as they relate to a non-profit professional theatre arts advocacy network from a national, state, and local level, to determine whether a national service organization accurately communicates effective advocacy strategies, including arts benefits arguments, to its constituent members and how that information, in turn, is communicated by those organizations to their audiences. Moreover, as individual states develop cultural advocacy coalitions both on the state and county level, arguments communicating the benefits of the arts can become increasingly complex. This study attempts to address this problem by exploring the arguments being made about the benefits of the arts by an arts advocacy network to 1) determine the elements of an advocacy system within a professional theatre context, 2) the communication tools they use, 3) the content of that communication and finally, 4) how the advocacy network exists as it is now, with the intent of forming stronger, more unified arts advocacy arguments within a particular arts advocacy network.

You were selected to participate in this study because of your leadership position with Theatre Communications Groups and your experiences with and expertise pertinent to professional theatre and arts advocacy on a national scale. If you decide to take part in this research project, you will be asked to provide relevant organizational materials and participate in telephone interview, lasting approximately one hour, during March 2006. If you wish, interview questions will be provided beforehand for your consideration. Interviews will be scheduled at your convenience. In addition to taking handwritten notes, with your permission, I will use an audio tape recorder for transcription and validation purposes. You may also be asked to provide follow-up information through phone calls or email.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 541-513-8393 or kmathie@uoregon.edu or Dr. Lori Hager> at <YOUR ADVISER'S PHONE #>. Any questions regarding your rights as a research participant should be directed to the Office of Human Subjects Compliance, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403, (541) 346-2510.

Thank you in advance for your interest and consideration. I will contact you shortly to speak about your potential involvement in this study.

Sincerely,

Kim Mathie
765 E 18th Ave #5
Eugene, OR 97401

Appendix G: Consent Forms

Arts Advocacy Arguments: Navigating the Network

Kim Mathie, Principal Investigator
University of Oregon Arts and Administration Program

You are invited to participate in a research project titled *Arts Advocacy Arguments: Navigating the network*, conducted by Kim Mathie from the University of Oregon's Arts and Administration Program. The purpose of this study is to explore how opinion leaders in an arts advocacy network within a non-profit professional theatre context frame the argument about the benefits of the arts.

Currently, those most invested in the arts cannot come to consensus about what to argue as the benefits of the arts. Increasingly, art is advocated from an economic and social standpoint, a view that suggests that the value of art is in its utility or usefulness to the public in achieving other goals. Further, these arguments often utilize the language of economics or social work to qualify the aesthetic experience to garner the financial and social support of funders and policy makers. However, this results in a fractured, rather than unified approach to arts advocacy. It is important, then, to explore these arguments, in particular as they relate to a non-profit professional theatre arts advocacy network from a national, state, and local level, to determine whether a national service organization accurately communicates effective advocacy strategies, including arts benefits arguments, to its constituent members and how that information, in turn, is communicated by those organizations to their audiences. Moreover, as individual states develop cultural advocacy coalitions both on the state and county level, arguments communicating the benefits of the arts can become increasingly complex. This study attempts to address this problem by exploring the arguments being made about the benefits of the arts by an arts advocacy network to 1) determine the elements of an advocacy system within a professional theatre context, 2) the communication tools they use, 3) the content of that communication and finally, 4) how the advocacy network exists as it is now, with the intent of forming stronger, more unified arts advocacy arguments within a particular arts advocacy network.

You were selected to participate in this study because of your leadership position <organization name> and your experiences with and expertise pertinent to arts advocacy on a national level. If you decide to take part in this research project, you will be asked to provide relevant organizational materials and participate in a telephone interview, lasting approximately one hour, during March 2006. If you wish, interview questions will be provided beforehand for your consideration. Interviews will be scheduled at your convenience. In addition to taking handwritten notes, with your permission, I will use an audio tape recorder for transcription and validation purposes. You may also be asked to provide follow-up information through phone calls or email. There are minimal risks associated with participating in this study, particularly since this phase of research is exploratory in nature.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study will be carefully and securely maintained. Your consent to participate in this interview, as indicated below, demonstrates your willingness to have your name used in any resulting documents and publications and to relinquish confidentiality. If you wish, a pseudonym may be used with all identifiable data that you provide. It may be advisable to obtain permission to participate in this interview to avoid potential social or economic risks related to speaking as a representative of your institution. Your participation is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time without penalty. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission.

I anticipate that the results of this research project will be of value to the cultural sector as a whole, especially within a professional theatre context. However, I cannot guarantee that you personally will receive any benefits from this research.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 541-513-8393 or kmathie@uroregon.edu, or Dr. Lori Hager at <YOUR ADVISER'S PHONE #>. Any questions regarding your rights as a research participant should be directed to the Office of Human Subjects Compliance, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403, (541) 346-2510.

Please read and initial each of the following statements to indicate your consent:

_____ I consent to the use of audiotapes and note taking during my interview.

_____ I consent to my identification as a participant in this study.

_____ I consent to the potential use of quotations from the interview.

_____ I consent to the use of information I provide regarding the organization with which I am associated.

_____ I wish to have the opportunity to review and possibly revise my comments and the information that I provide prior to these data appearing in the final version of any publications that may result from this study.

_____ I wish to maintain my confidentiality in this study through the use of a pseudonym.

Your signature indicates that you have read and understand the information provided above, that you willingly agree to participate, that you may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty, that you have received a copy of this form, and that you are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies. You have been given a copy of this letter to keep.

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Thank you for your interest and participation in this study.

Sincerely,

Kim Mathie
541.513.8393