Building an Arts Policy Community

Why and how will building an arts policy community promote more
meaningful support of arts and culture? How can policy research and
analysis help private grantmakers, as well as public arts agencies,
implement funding policies to achieve their purposes? How can
foundation policies appropriately intersect with public policies at
local and national levels? This session sought to demystify policy;
convey ways in which policy action can help achieve foundation goals
and enhance program area funding; and outline practical steps
through which arts funders can engage policy issues.

Moderator: Marian Godfrey,
                The Pew Charitable Trusts

Panelists: James Allen Smith,
                Creative Capital Foundation

                Kevin McCarthy,
                RAND Corporation

                M. Christine Dwyer,
                RMC Research Corporation

                Maria-Rosario Jackson,
                The Urban Institute

Grantmakers in the Arts
Proceedings from the 1999 Conference

Strengthening the Arts through
Policy, Performance and Practice

In 1999 Grantmakers in the Arts celebrated its fifteenth anniversary and, as organizations periodically do, we took this opportunity to stand back, take stock of our work as grantmakers, and look to the future. As part of this process, we surveyed our membership and also asked a number of you to tell us what you were working on, how you were doing, and what was keeping you awake at night.

In fact, we found very few surprises. You talked about the need to sustain arts organizations and leaders, increase public participation, and support individual artists and their work. You also talked about your desire for more informed arts policy, better evaluation, and new linkages to the for-profit sector. These ideas formed the content of the 1999 conference.

But the spirit of the conference came from another place, another vision, that is equally a part of the essential GIA. John Gardner, the founder of Independent Sector, gave a speech in Oakland in 1998, in which he spoke of the immense promise and possibility of the work of philanthropy and the nonprofit sector. He said of our work:

> *We are allowed to pursue truth, even if we are going in the wrong direction – allowed to experiment even if we're bound to fail, to map unknown territory even if we get lost. We are committed to alleviate misery and redress grievances, to give reign to the mind's curiosity and the soul's longing, to seek beauty where we can and defend truth where we must, to honor the worthy and smite the rascals with everyone free to define worthiness and rascality, to find cures and to console the incurable, to deal with the ancient impulse to hate and fear the tribe in the next valley, to prepare for tomorrow's crisis and preserve yesterday's wisdom, and to pursue the questions that others won't because they are too busy or too lazy or fearful or jaded. It is a sector for seed planting and path finding, for lost causes and causes that yet may win. This is the vision.*

Although he wasn't speaking of our work specifically, I have not encountered a more eloquent expression of what it means to be a grantmaker in the arts. The 1999 conference began with its content firmly in hand and with this vision offered as a guide. Hopefully along the way, we explored each other's best funding efforts, shared lessons from our failures, and drew courage from our commitment to artists, art forms, and community.

Cora Mirikitani
1999 GIA Conference Chair

Butler: Good afternoon. I'm Jeanne Butler. I'm from the board of Grantmakers in the Arts, and this session seems very exciting because it combines a subject, building an arts policy community, which is something I'm very passionate about, and also because I have the pleasure of introducing one of my favorite people, Marian Godfrey.

I had the pleasure of meeting Marian about ten years ago at a Grantmakers in the Arts convention in California, and Marian had just come to Pew at that time. In the last ten years that she's been at the Pew Charitable Trusts, she's made a real difference there, not just for the Pew Charitable Trusts, but also for all of us. She's made very wise funding decisions and brought a great deal of intelligence to philanthropy. She is one of the philanthropists that I most admire, so I was very pleased to be asked to introduce her. Marian has led the Pew Trusts in taking risks and initiating research that has informed policy, and commissioned work that has been pivotal to the arts today.

Before she arrived at the Pew Charitable Trusts, Marian Godfrey worked in the arts field. She spent 12 years as a performing arts manager and consultant in New York City, where she was a theater consultant for AT&T. She was the New York representative for La Jolla Playhouse; and a media consultant for the Wooster Group. She received her undergraduate degree from Radcliffe and her MFA in theater administration from the Yale School of Drama.

She serves currently on the board of Grantmakers in the Arts and Theater Communications Group, and on the Mayor's Cultural Advisory Council for the City of Philadelphia and the Arts and Culture Taskforce group of the Delaware Valley Grants Makers. So it's my pleasure to introduce you to Marian Godfrey. [applause]

Godfrey: Thank you very much, Jeanne. I certainly don't deserve that introduction, and I'm going to warn you right now I'm not going to introduce my panelists that extensively because you do have their bios in your materials.

First I'd like to say that what we're going to be talking about, as Jeanne said is not how to create cultural policy but how to build a cultural policy community. I've already been corrected about one lacuna in the brief

description in the schedule. I want to make sure that we all know that we're talking about local and state and national cultural policies and cultural policies writ broadly, both public policies, funding policies and other policies. And also private philanthropic policies dealing with culture.

I'm not going to talk about Pew's program. I will answer questions later on if anybody has them, but I would venture to guess that Pew's broad goal for the cultural policy work that we've embarked on is pretty widely shared among us as a group, and our broad goal is to strengthen financial and policy support for America's cultural resources. Today we're going to discuss how developing better, more reliable and more comprehensive information, data and research can strengthen our ability to advance policy decisions, both with private grantmakers and public policy makers.

First I'd like to read an excerpt from some material that I recently got from the Princeton Center for Arts and Cultural Policy Studies that I think reminds us of the end in view. Why are we doing this? We're certainly not involved with data and research for its own sake. And I think this little excerpt will show how far we need to go in terms of developing our sophistication in responding to policy challenges and crises such as the one we've been watching play out in Brooklyn over the last couple of months.

This Princeton Center excerpt reads: "In our research thus far, we have demonstrated that the press's depiction of the 'culture wars' as indicated by the number of times that term appeared in news articles between the mid-1980s and 1995, spiraled upwards during a period in which our other research demonstrated no increase in polarization of individual opinions on social and cultural issues, and only a mild uptake in the one city examined in depth in actual public controversies. Yet the press's treatment of the culture wars, we believe, was vitally important in shaping the perceptions of much of the public and of many opinion leaders" – and opinion leaders includes us – "in politics and the academy that the nation was indeed torn asunder by cultural dissension."

Princeton also has found that there is little polarization among the general public, that the

controversies erupt when organized religious or political forces, often from outside the original venue of activity, frame a ritualized and simplified version of the actual issue and use it to create a kind of a political agenda. This research looked at cultural values generally, including canon redefinition in universities as well as public conflict over public art installations, so it wasn't just the kind of thing that we're seeing in Brooklyn.

Finally, another quote, "By 1993, the press had begun using the expression 'culture wars' as the Christian Right had used it beginning in 1991." So this really kind of ratifies some other findings from other Princeton research done earlier that basically most Americans feel pretty positively about the arts, and they don't feel that there's a great deal of conflict and dissension. This is not a salient issue for most Americans; it is not something that they feel really strongly about. And what's happened is that between that fact and the fact that we who do care strongly about the arts have not developed a strong and sophisticated capacity to speak out, to marshal our tools and resources including data and research, and to speak out on behalf of the arts, have allowed the dialogue to turn into the kinds of debates that are inflected and driven by a political agenda on the other side.

Our panel today will do a couple of things. First, Jim Smith will basically give us an overview of what policy is, what cultural policy is, how policy communities are formed in other fields, how a cultural policy field might be the same and might be different.

Jim is currently on the board of the Creative Capital Foundation. Jim is really a big co-conspirator of mine in Pew's efforts. He and I kind of started egging each other on at the American Assembly meeting in 1997, and we've both worked very closely since on a lot of these issues.

Kevin McCarthy from Rand will talk about the role of data and research in policy formation and policy analysis and what it takes to build in a systematic fashion a base of information from which you can then start to answer policy questions.

Maria-Rosario Jackson, who's doing some research that she'll tell you about at The Urban Institute, will talk about some of the complexities of getting the art on people's radar who are not in the arts, particularly in terms of the importance of policy questions. And also getting into people's minds the role of art and culture in other policy spheres.

And finally, Chris Dwyer, who's been doing a lot of work for the Knight Foundation and others, will ground this discussion, particularly discussing some research projects that she's doing from a foundation's perspective: how this research can inform and advance a foundation's own grantmaking policy decisions. And again, as I say, please refer to your packages for more extensive biographical information, but please help me welcome this panel, and thank you very much. Jim will start. [applause]

Smith: Marian has given me the professorial role today, which I'll gladly play, but I'm going to have to put on my glasses to do it, hoping that I look suitably studious about this. Part of my task is really definitional, and then to give you a sense of where research matters in the policy process, and then how policy communities matter. And I think the Princeton data that Marian just referred to, is a good case in point. It is evidence that organization matters as much as ideas. But we'll come back to that.

My task, really, is to define policy and cultural policy. It's perhaps safest to define policy simply by relying on what political scientists have talked about for years in any of dozens of poli-sci texts. They mean simply an intended course of action, usually implying governmental action at any level of government, whether it's regulation, a legislative decision, an executive order, intended action towards some policy goal.

Now, the word "policy" is also expansive enough in American society to acknowledge that private institutions can take actions which have broad public consequences, and indeed that public and private sector decisions interact whenever our society pursues its broadest goals. At its core, then, when we talk about policy, we're talking about intentional and purposive action. Not haphazard practice or

habit, although as we learned this morning, practice does inform policy. Historically, policy also means prudence and wisdom.

Now, when the words "culture" and "policy" are joined in the American context, it's best to remember our lessons from the 1950s and duck and cover, as our friends at Pew have certainly learned. Even the most sympathetic people jump to conclusions when those words are conjoined. They jump to conclusions about a national cultural policy somehow shaped at the federal level, or perhaps in Philadelphia… At the Center for Arts and Culture, in fact, some of our allies and supporters have said, simply avoid that term. Find another name for it. We thought about that for a time, but I think we shouldn't run from it.

Now, if our friends are telling us to abandon the concept, the critics are even more severe, suggesting that cultural policy is somehow un-American, Stalinist in all likelihood, although I've suggested that perhaps at best it's French. As one critic this summer responding to the Pew Initiative said, "Cultural policy suggests a bureaucratic behemoth with" – quoting again – "a gruesomely bureaucratic approach engaged in more centralized regulation of the arts and their institutions." Well, what does cultural policy mean in the American context?

Perhaps the phrase should be plural: cultural policies. Or else we should recognize, and this is what I propose, that policy is simply a collective noun. When we talk about foreign policy, when we talk about trade policy, when we talk about environmental policy, we know we're not talking about one thing, one approach or one strategy. Similarly, our cultural life is shaped by many different policies, emanating from many different places in our federal and pluralistic system, and the mix is typically American. Policies are formulated at every level of government; public decisions are profoundly intertwined with private-sector decisions; decisions made by individuals, philanthropic foundations, nonprofit cultural institutions and commercial enterprises. We needn't use the plural. Let's realize that it is a collective noun.

But what policies are at issue? Now, I won't belabor this; I could go on at some length, as I'm sure many in this room could, about what

kinds of policies we're talking about. But let's be clear. Some cultural policies are fundamental, creating a framework not only for the cultural sector, but for other important areas of our national life: tax policies in the form of the charitable deduction from income and state taxes, copyright law, trade policies, and the First Amendment. Other policies are more explicit, more direct, than those indirect policies, providing direct financial support for federal agencies, for state and local arts and humanities councils. Still other policies arise when cultural concerns intersect with other policy fields, whether it's elementary and secondary education, juvenile justice, local and regional development policies, conservation cultural concerns, tourism concerns. And the tools that we use in cultural policy are as varied as the subjects touched upon.

The issue, it seems to me, is not whether we should have a cultural policy, as some this summer responding to the Pew Initiative questioned. We have policies already. We have policies in the plural. The question instead is whether our nation's cultural policy will be grounded in solid research, clearly-articulated goals, well-informed debate.

I've wondered how much we've actually devoted to the study of the cultural sector, and this is a very quick, a very crude survey of the resources that the private foundation sector and government are devoting to projects that gather data on the arts and humanities, that analyze policy ideas and options, that issue reports. The best I've been able to come up with is that in the period between 1995 and 1999 we expended about six million dollars on those kinds of tasks. Much of it has been expended only since 1997.

In 1999 I would estimate that only about $2.5 million is going into cultural policy research in this country. And by whatever standard we measure the size of the cultural sector, whether it's the $11 billion in philanthropic contributions; whether it's the nearly $37 billion in economic activity generated in the nonprofit sector; or whether it's the crudely calculated $444 billion that has been generated by all of our cultural industries, $6 million is not a substantial investment in research.

I can compare it to research in other fields. Actually, it's easier to compare it to research in individual research units in some of our leading think tanks. The budget at Rand is $130 million, at Brookings, $24 million, and at AEI, $18.6 million. In the program budget at Brookings is $7 million a year for economic studies. AEI expends about $3.6 million on economic policy. Cultural policy research is under-funded given the scale and importance of the sector.

But, you might ask, does research make a difference in the policy process? And my honest answer, having looked at think tanks in a number of policy fields is, not always, but often enough it can. Even in this field in the late 1950s and early 1960s, the pioneering economic work of William Baumol and William Bowen, funded by Rockefeller and the Twentieth Century Fund, helped us to understand the need for a wider philanthropic and governmental role in supporting cultural institutions.

Those who study other fields, and the role of research, expertise and ideas in the policy process, know that ideas and research findings can take many forms, from the quantitatively grounded forecast, to indicators, to broad philosophical conceptions of the role of the state. Research can be many things. And it can play a role at many different stages in the policy process.

Let me suggest a handful of places where research, ideas, serious analysis can matter.

First of all, in identifying and defining problems. Secondly, in clarifying policy aims and values and core policy ideas. In helping to set broad agendas. In framing particular issues and policy options. In justifying or exposing the weaknesses of specific policy proposals. In evaluating existing programs. In monitoring the implementation of programs. And in serving as a tool for argument and advocacy. The cumulative effect of research, of a systematic appraisal of ideas, of raising the level of policy debate, is the legitimacy of the choices the public makes.

Now, ideas, research insights, expertise, have force and influence only when they function within an organized policy community. Now, conventionally, we've defined policy communities as networks of specialists: academics, think tank experts, consultants, interest group researchers, congressional staff, executive branch of policy planning and evaluation departments, journalists covering a specialized beat, foundation staff. And they operate at the federal, state and local level, I might add. These networks of specialists in other fields are generally connected through professional associations, policy working groups, think tank and foundation convenings, publications. And these groups, these individuals, play various roles, from supplying very specific technical expertise to propelling big ideas into the policy process.

We can't underestimate too much the role that organized policy communities play. What role do they play over the long term?

The successful policy communities, I think, share several traits. Whether we look at how they've functioned in the environmental movement, the conservative intellectual movement, the movement toward deregulation, I think there are several lessons we can draw. Successful policy communities are first of all capable of intellectual innovation; capable of entertaining new ideas and treating old ideas critically.

Secondly, they're connected at every point along the policy continuum, from the academic engaged in basic research, to the policy maker contemplating options, to advocates constructing their arguments.

Third, policy communities persist over the long term. Sometimes policy moves at a glacial pace, but a policy community, knowing that opportunities arise quickly, that policy windows can open and shut very quickly, is a persistent community that can take advantage as political opportunities arise.

And fourth, policy communities are capable of diffusing and disseminating ideas to the public, conscious that policy successes in a democratic society rest on the understanding and acceptance of those ideas by popular constituencies.

Those, I think, are some of the broad ways of understanding how research functions and what a policy community looks like. I've gone on for 15 minutes, which is my limit. We'll come back, and, after we've seen how specific research plays in, talk a bit more about the needs as we build that community. [applause]

Godfrey: Thank you, Jim. Kevin McCarthy.

McCarthy: Thank you very much. I'm delighted to be here. I think Jim has done an excellent job of describing what policy research is and making a case for why one is needed.

Building a Policy Analytic Capability for the Arts

Kevin F. McCarthy
Grantmakers in the Arts
November 15, 1999
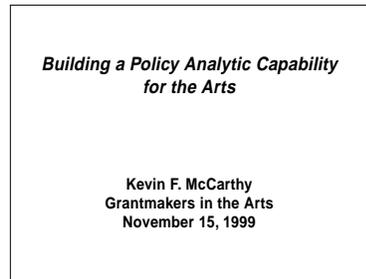
In the interests of truth in advertising, I come to you not as someone with a long or developed background in the arts, but rather as someone who's been doing policy research in a variety of areas for 25 years. So my focus is not going to be *why* we need policy research, but rather how one goes about doing it. What are the requirements? How does that compare with the state of research in the arts today?

The challenge, it seems to me, has been described by Jim, by Marian, by others out there, and it's reflected in the newspaper and other debates that went on earlier this summer. It's clear that there is a new interest in arts policy, defined very broadly as Jim has done, and what that highlights is the need to develop a policy research capability that corresponds to what the need is and meets that need.

The Challenge

• New interest in arts policy highlights need to develop policy research capability

• Central issue is how to proceed
  – Given undeveloped state of arts research
  – Diverse stakeholders and needs
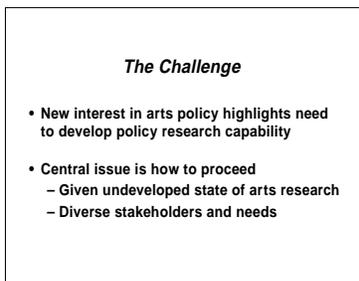
There is, however, a central issue about how do we proceed. There are, in fact, a multitude of stakeholders with very diverse needs, all of which are very real, some of which are directly related to building a policy research capability, others are not. Moreover, we're dealing in a world where the state of research on the arts is relatively undeveloped, and I'll talk about that a little bit more.

So the challenge is, how do we set priorities? How do we go about building this research capability that we believe we need?

Overview

• Background

• Current state of research

• Requirements for policy research

In my presentation – next slide, please – I'm basically going to talk a little bit about what has caused us to focus on the need for policy research. What's the state of the art in the research sector today? And then what I believe are the key steps that are needed to build this research capability.

Let me start just briefly with the background. Why are we interested in all of this?

Well, it seems to me that America's cultural landscape is changing, and moreover, it's not just changing, it's diversifying in

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Background

• America's cultural landscape is changing
  – Decade-long growth in nonprofit sector is ending
  – Commercial sector flourishing
  – Vibrant but little understood grassroots sector

• Reasons for changes complex and not well understood

• Lack of understanding poses serious problems for policymaking community

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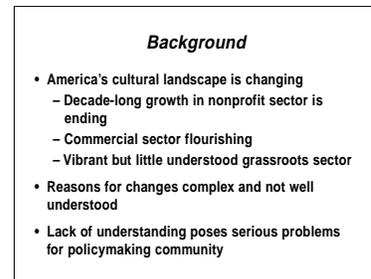
multiple ways, and the different sectors are likely to face new relationships to each other. Think first about the three major sectors of the cultural landscape. The nonprofit sector. After two or three decades of very rapid growth in funding, growth really started to slow down and has really ended in the 1990s.

At the same time, the commercial sector is flourishing, and its audiences are growing. Moreover, the ability to market at reasonable cost to a wide variety of the American public is likely to shift the traditional boundaries between the commercial and the nonprofit and the unincorporated sectors in ways that we really haven't thought very much about, but are likely to have profound implications for the cultural sector in the coming decades.

Finally we know that this grassroots sector is flourishing. Although no doubt the greatest number of participants in American culture are found at the unincorporated or local level, we don't know very much about it. Most of our attention has been focused on the larger, nonprofit sector.

So we have these three sectors changing in various ways and interacting amongst themselves in ways that are likely to produce profound changes for the future, but we don't really know why these changes are occurring. A host of factors have been proposed, including demographics, sociopolitical, technological, etc., but it's very difficult to talk about what we should do about these things if we don't first understand why they're occurring. So without that understanding, it's very difficult to talk about policy at all the levels that Jim talked about.

One thing we can be certain of, however, is that the assumptions that have governed public funding and influenced private giving to the arts since the 1960s seem to be losing their currency, at least in certain segments of the society. And we're talking about not just public but also private policies. What should we do about these things?

> **Current State of Research:
> Inadequacy of Available Data**
>
> • **Data collection focuses on financial condition of established organizations**
>
> • **Data is collected in gross aggregates, obscures trends**
>
> • **Data lacks comparability across organizations, disciplines, and time**

Well, what we'd like to do is look at a body of research that we can base some analysis on. [Next slide please, Jim.] Unfortunately, the research that's out there right now really suffers from two basic problems.

One has to do with something you've all heard about and no doubt many of you have talked about. That's the inadequacy of available data. The second has to do with an organizational framework, an intellectual framework for looking at those issues.

Let's look at the data issue. There are a number of efforts going on in the arts data collection field right now, but they all confront a series of real difficulties in trying to collect information on the diverse sectors. What we've tended to do is focus on the nonprofit sector, and in particular on the financial conditions of established organizations. Moreover, much of the effort that we've had has been focused on national level data, which collects the information in gross aggregates, which obscures trends both at the

local level and in different sectors that are out there, giving us a very incomplete picture of what's going on. Moreover, the data that is being collected is generally collected according to the specific interests or needs of particular groups, thus it lacks comparability across organizations, disciplines, and time. In other words, it's an uncoordinated effort out there.

> **Current State of Research: Lack of
> Systematic Framework**
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> • **Inadequate data collection inhibits systematic description of the field**
>
> • **Absence of systematic framework leads to piecemeal and biased picture of reality**
>
> • **Narrow focus of many research efforts limits utility for broader policy purposes**

Now, in addition to the inadequacy of available data, there's also a real problem in terms of the lack of a systematic framework for interpreting the information that we do have. This selectivity, or this lack of a systematic framework, it seems to me, really inhibits our ability to develop a comprehensive picture of what's going on out there. Moreover, the fact that much of the research that is being done focuses on those areas where we have data, which is again primarily organizations in the nonprofit sector, tends to leave the impression that these are the central concerns. This is what the arts world is all about. It gives a very fragmentary picture of the diversity and the complexity of the art world, and focuses our attention on simply a narrow slice of what's going on out there. And that really limits the utility of the research that's available today for broader policy purposes.

> **Diverse Stakeholders Have Different Needs**
>
> | Stakeholders | Needs |
> |---|---|
> | – Researchers | – Describe and analyze |
> | – Policymakers | – Economic impact |
> | – Funders | – Identify and classify organizations |
> | – Service organizations | – Practical lessons |
> | – Journalists | – Share information |
> | – Practitioners | – Trace funding |
> | – Artists | – Needs assessment |
> | – Public | – Programming information |

Now, what do we do about this? How do we attack this problem? Well, one of the major problems we face is that there are a great diversity of stakeholders with very different needs. So it's difficult to establish priorities as to where we should focus our efforts. After all, regardless of how you evaluate the figures that Jim gave in terms of the total dollars being spent, it's clear that there's a limitation on resources, and we have to spend what we do

wisely, in a coordinated fashion, and leverage on efforts that are out there. With the diversity of stakeholders, and I'm not going to go through all of these, but you should recognize all of them, and the needs, and I don't pretend that the needs correspond necessarily one-to-one to the stakeholders because clearly stakeholders have multiple needs. I'm just trying to say that there are lots of different things we could be collecting information on and building our approach.

But there's a real problem with that, because – and I want to here go back a little bit to some of the issues that Jim raised about the value of policy research. Because it seems to me the underpinning of policy research is really to move beyond anecdote; to build a systematic picture of the world that we're trying to understand; and deal with the problems. There are then, I would argue, at least three different functions that policy research can play in that process.

One, we have to identify what the problems are, the issues, and why they're important. That tends to be a longer-term goal.

Second, we can provide a framework or a way of thinking about that world that shows us not only how things are related, but begins to identify potential solutions to the problems that are out there, and it's important to recognize that not all policy problems have solutions. Indeed, one of the central tasks of policy research is to identify what the feasible options are and what their costs and benefits might be.

Now, in the process, just as a final point here, it's important to distinguish between what research does and what values are. I don't like to claim we're completely separate from values; we all have values built into the way we approach things. But the role of policy research is not to make decisions. It's not to decide, that's the best or some other alternative is the best. Rather, it's to lay out what the costs and benefits of different solutions are so that other folks, the policy makers, bring to bear the values and thus make the decisions. But we're trying to make that happen in a more informed way based on an understanding of the whole situation.

Now, next slide. The central focus here has got to be to move beyond anecdote to look at things in a systematic fashion. There are several steps in that process. And those steps that I would define as central to policy analysis, which is basically steps four and five, cannot happen before we've done some preliminary work. What are those early stages?

Policy Analysis Requires a Sequence of Steps
Step 1: Define populations of interest
Step 2: Focus on key analytical dimensions
Step 3: Describe current state of affairs and trends
Step 4: Identify the explanatory factors behind trends
Step 5: Identify and rank policy issues and feasible options
Can't proceed to steps 4 and 5 without performing previous steps
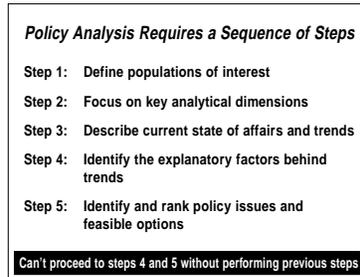
Well, the first thing we have to do is define the populations of interest, and I'll talk about each of these steps in a minute. I'm not sure we've always done that. We have almost by default looked at the nonprofit sector and certain elements of the nonprofit sector rather than looking at the whole world and how it's related.

Second, since the basic task in the early stages is description, we need to identify some key dimensions along which to sort that world and begin to collect information. Not just those that are available, but those that cover the whole terrain out there.

Third, we have to start with the first part absolutely vital to policy analysis. We've got to describe what the current state of affairs are, and what are the trends, and what are the relationships between sectors. This is an area, like many others, where anecdote reigns supreme, which gives us a partial picture. We've got to talk about how all that fits together. What in fact is happening, as opposed to what we believe is happening.

Once you've gotten past description, then you can start to get to the basic steps of policy analysis. First, you have to, once you've described things, identify why they're occurring. If you want to change the world as it is today, you've got to understand why the world is the way it is today. So analysis starts after you've described. And finally, you have to think about what are the potential solutions to the problems that you've identified, and understanding the explanatory factors. So in other words, what solutions, what options, affect these explana-

tory factors, and what are the costs and benefits of those different options, and how feasible are they?

Step 1: Define Populations of Interest

• Which sectors (nonprofit, commercial, unincorporated)?
 – current efforts focus on nonprofit

• How are sectors defined?
 – legal, size, organizational setting

• Enumeration or sample?

• Disciplines?

Let me talk just briefly about each of these different steps. First, define the population of interest. A couple key questions we have to ask. Which sectors are we talking about? The nonprofit, the commercial, the unincorporated. As I've said today, we've mostly focused on the nonprofit world. How do we define those sectors? It may seem simple, but as I look at the work today, we tend to focus too much on legal definitions. What's a 501(c)(3)? It seems to me much of the unincorporated sector, for obvious reasons, are 501(c)(3)s. We need a much better definition that talks not just about legal status, but about size, organizational setting and function.

Third, we have to determine whether we are interested in doing an enumeration of the entire population – this is particularly important for data-gathering efforts – or are we talking about sampling? And there are techniques. If you do an enumeration, that is, counting every element that is out there, it's very expensive and very difficult. There are ways of combining sampling to get at the issues much more efficiently.

And finally, what do we do about disciplines? At Rand we are looking at the issue, and find that if one thinks about just the performing arts and thinks about music and dance and dramatic arts, each of those can be subdivided into 50 or 60 different categories. What level of analysis are we talking about there?

Step 2: Focus on Key Dimensions

• Define components of arts world
 – Organizations
 – Products
 – Artists
 – Audiences

So first you've got to define the population.

Second, it seems to me, you need to identify a set of key dimensions on which to focus, to sort the information you're collecting about this world. In our current project we are looking at what we think are four key components of the art world. Organizations, where much of the focus is going right now, is one. Second is the products. What's happening, what's being produced? That may be performances, that may be the works of art, a whole variety of things. Third is artists. We need to know much more about the producers of art. Very little information is being collected on that. And finally audiences. What we have mostly right now are the surveys of public participation in the arts and scattered studies of specific audiences. We really don't know very much in a comprehensive way about audiences. And why this is important is because many of the key issues are concerned with the interrelationships among these various things. You can't identify the problems if you're looking at just one part of the action.

Step 3: Begin Description

Organizations	– Size, composition, finances, functions
Products	– Product mix
Artists	– Number, characteristics and incomes
Audiences	– Size, composition, type of participation
Comparisons	– How do characteristics vary across sectors, disciplines, and locations? Trends over time

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The next step really begins, as I said, with description, and I've just identified some of the potential dimensions. I do not in any sense pretend that this is a comprehensive list, but at least some work is going on in each of these areas that cover the dimensions that I mentioned before.

But the part I really want to focus on is the part at the bottom. Central to the descriptions are comparisons. How do these various characteristics vary across sectors, disciplines, locations, and what are the trends over time? We need to describe what's going on so that we know in fact what it is we're trying to fix.

Step 4: Analyze Trends to Identify Explanatory Factors

• Explore explanatory factors behind trends

• Identify the factors that seem most important and offer greatest policy leverage
 – Effective policies operate by altering dynamic factors

The fourth step is to analyze the trends to identify the explanatory factors. As I said, description is a necessary, a first step, but it's not a sufficient condition. For policy, it's not enough to know

what, we also need to know why. So we need to explain those trends that we're talking about and identify the factors that seem most important and offer the greatest policy leverage, and affect the largest parts of the art world and are the most dynamic.

> **Step 5: Define and Prioritize Policy Issues**
>
> • Based on trend analysis, identify the key policy issues and prioritize in terms of
> – Applicability
> – Importance to key outcomes
> • Identify feasible policy options
> • Assess the costs and benefits of feasible options

Finally, the last step is to define and prioritize policy issues. Based on the trend analysis, we can identify what the key issues are and prioritize them in terms of how important they are for which sector and over what set of issues. Then we have to identify what feasible policy options are and assess the cost and benefits of those options. Thank you.

Godfrey: Thank you. [applause] Maria Jackson.

Jackson: My remarks this afternoon are going to focus on three broad areas. The first is the process of examining the role of arts in culture and community life. The second is the process of redefining a body of stakeholders in the arts. And the third is the process of creating a research framework that takes into account the public's values and priorities as related to arts and culture, and also has the capacity of feeding various types of policy systems that can support arts, culture and creativity in this country.

My remarks are based primarily on the Arts and Culture Indicators Project, which is at The Urban Institute and has been ongoing with the support of the Rockefeller Foundation since 1996. But it also draws on two other projects: the Participation Project, the artist-citizens and cultural citizenship in Los Angeles which is part of the Getty Research Institute and an effort which was undertaken with Urban Institute participation; and also the Community Partnerships for Cultural Participation Project, which is supported by the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund, and that's a project that is also housed at the Institute.

I'll talk initially about the Arts and Culture Indicators Project. It's an effort that's undertaken in tandem with another project at The Urban Institute called the National Neighborhood Indicators Project, which is a longstanding partnership of The Urban Institute, a national policy think-tank, and several local, community-building organizations in different cities around the country. These organizations have been for several years charged with improving quality of life and have used data and the collection and creation of indicators, that is, measures that are recurrently updated. They are measures that people have committed to because they say something about what society cares about – quality of life issues.

In any event, in 1996 the Rockefeller Foundation approached the Institute to add a dimension to the National Neighborhood Indicators Project that focused on arts and culture because it was missing that. The National Neighborhood Indicators Project was focused on health, on housing, on crime, on a number of issues that one very clearly and easily associates with quality of life at the neighborhood level, but it didn't have an arts and culture component. So the Arts and Culture Indicators Project was created.

And the initial challenge that I had in leading this project was trying to figure out how I was going to convince the people who were acting in local policy arenas to take on an arts and culture focus. Why should they care about arts and culture? And this was a tough task. It couldn't compete on equal footing with issues as clearly important, in their terms, as crime, as health, as shelter, and a variety of other areas that they've committed to.

What we did was initially launch a reconnaissance effort that Chris Dwyer was involved in. We were trying to assess the usefulness of existing data for the purposes of saying something about the quality of life in neighborhoods. What we found was that the existing data was of limited utility for some of the reasons that Kevin has already pointed out. But in addition to that, we found that the definitions that under-girded existing data collection practices were too narrow to include a variety of cultural and artistic practices that were present in arts in

communities. Moreover, the information was very focused on organizational health and the health of the nonprofit sector, and there wasn't any theory that guided data collection about the role of arts and culture in society.

I think the two areas that are best developed are education and economic development, so there is some data about the role of arts and culture on school performance in the education field, and some data on economic development and the role of arts and culture in stimulating that. But there's very little systematically documented information about what are some of the other potential benefits or impacts of arts and culture, cultural participation.

The first couple of years of the project we spent a considerable amount of time developing concepts and tools that allowed, (1) for a broader definition and a broader lens to capture the kinds of arts and cultural activity that were taking place in community that were not on the radar; and (2) we were interested in also beginning to identify categories of measurement that people could commit to over time and that could mean something.

What I'm going to go over now is a framework that was developed out of a series of focus group discussions and field work in a variety of neighborhoods around the country. These were focus group discussions and a variety of interviews with artists, residents, community-building practitioners and different kinds of arts administrators. And what we were asking them was what is the presence of arts and culture in neighborhoods and how do people value arts and culture? And what we found out in the pilot focus group discussions was that the language was problematic. We were asking, initially, questions about what kind of art and culture exists in your neighborhood, and people would say, "We don't have any. We don't have any museums. We don't have any theaters. We don't have any concert halls."

In fact, when you really look at the question and the answer, they weren't answering the question "What kind of arts and culture exists in your neighborhood?" They were answering about venues. They were talking about places and physical mechanisms that validate things as arts and culture. When we changed the

question and asked, "What kind of creative expression exists in your neighborhood? What things do you find beautiful? Moving? Emotive?" the conversation was quite rich, and there were lots of practices that were brought into relief, but otherwise… Had we not changed the question, the concept would have continued to be foreign. It would have been something that they continue to feel apart from.

So based on those conversations, we developed the lens that now under-girds the work that we're doing in a variety in different communities around the country in partnership with people who are involved with the National Neighborhood Indicators Project, but also with arts organizations and community organizations that wouldn't call themselves arts organizations but are involved in culturally-based practices.

So consider the following. To capture arts and culture in neighborhoods, these are things to take into consideration.

First, cultural values and preferences of community residents and other stakeholders must be understood and honored. So while most definitions within the mainstream of arts and culture are based on European high art forms, it's important also, particularly as the demographics shift in many urban areas in the United States, to acknowledge that there are other legitimate paradigms of art, culture, and other values that have to be taken into consideration.

Second, arts and culture have multiple meanings when understood as products and processes. An example here is that in a community you can see kids performing, say, dance or drumming, and it could be part of a rites of passage program within a youth organization. And you could take that particular activity and value it as an aesthetic expression, for its technical qualities. But you could also understand it as a youth development mechanism, as a mechanism by which people in communities are brought together. And there are multiple values that can be associated with creative expression and artistic practices. And in order to capture this, you have to understand the practice both as process and as product.

A third piece is that people participate in art and culture in many different ways: as artists, teachers, students, volunteers, supporters, judges. And this is really expanding the definition of cultural participation beyond the traditional audience development.

The Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest project, Community Partnerships for Cultural Participation, is one of the efforts where this concept is being explored in a very applied way through the work of community foundations that have been charged with broadening, deepening and diversifying cultural participation. They have also dealt with some of the language limitations of, how do you make art relevant to folks who feel disassociated from it? When you talk about participation, how can you really get at the various ways in which people engage in cultural practices?

The fourth piece is that art and cultural engagement occurs at various levels ranging from amateur to professional and formal to informal. Again, not necessarily only looking at the star trajectory within arts and culture but the wide diversity of ways in which artists and other participants in cultural activities engage.

A colleague who's here, Josephine Ramirez, has used a very useful metaphor. Think about baseball, and the spectrum of activity that is viewed as legitimate within that spectrum, from Little League to professional, and all of the points in between are somehow viewed as valuable. I think within the arts perhaps the leagues and the levels have not been articulated as clearly as they have in that sport. But the concept of value and participation along that continuum at all of these different points is a very important one.

Another piece is that arts and cultural venues range from formal to informal, traditional to non-traditional, and explicit to implicit. And again, the Lila Wallace Community Partnerships for Cultural Participation Project bears here. As part of that study, we did a household survey on cultural participation that was based on the SPPA (Survey for Public Participation in the Arts), and was also heavily influenced by the concepts coming out of the Arts and Culture Indicators Project. And what we did was ask questions about cultural participation that went

beyond audience participation and also went beyond traditional venues. And the data suggests that arts and cultural participation occurs as much in non-traditional arts venues as it does in traditional venues; moreover, in some communities, people participate more in non-traditional arts venues than they do in traditional venues.

I think Kevin alluded to the need to have a more comprehensive understanding of what the sector, if you want to call it that, actually looks like. The need to take a look at what we're calling the informal and unincorporated arts sector is especially important. Although the language is a little bit problematic because a lot of the activity that takes place is, in fact, in formal organizations. They are community development corporations or community centers or what have you, so they are formal, and they are also legally incorporated. So again, nomenclature is a bit of a problem, but the need to look in places not typically thought of as cultural venues is certainly clear.

Opportunities for cultural engagement are supported by local systems, and that's the last piece of this lens. In order to understand the presence and role of arts and culture in community, you have to be mindful of the relationships and players involved in bringing cultural opportunities to fruition. And these can build on inherent community assets as well as draw from resources outside of the community. The thought is that these six elements taken together provide you with a much more expansive and comprehensive view of the way in which the cultural sector, very broadly defined at the neighborhood level, can be understood.

Something else that we've moved towards in the Arts and Culture Indicators Project is a commitment to various, what we're calling domains of inquiry or domains of measurement. This is our attempt at developing some kind of a framework that can be responsive to people's values and priorities about arts and culture, and can also feed the various policy infrastructures that can serve to support arts and creativity in American life.

The first piece of this is that the presence of arts and cultural opportunities for engagement have to be better understood. Again, casting a

broader net and better understanding of where there are opportunities for cultural engagement, and how you begin to map them. So when you're trying to get, from the Neighborhood Indicators perspective, a sense of whether this a healthy community, what are you looking for? And what kinds of cultural opportunities do people value? Why do they value them? And what are the mechanisms for doing inventories that in fact can reveal the things that people care about?

Second, we need better measures of cultural participation. We need clearer understandings of how people engage in arts and cultural practices, moving beyond audience participation to include practice as creators, as supporters, as donors, as teachers, as students, in different kinds of disciplines but also at different levels ranging from amateur to professional. Better measures of cultural participation are key.

Third – this is a really critical one – impacts of cultural participation. One of the biggest challenges in getting people at the local level to move forward in taking arts and culture as a serious area of inquiry and commitment is, what do we get out of it? So we need the ability to articulate clearly, theories about the possible impacts of arts and culture, which requires a better understanding of what we mean by cultural participation. Is it collective art-making? Is it passive audience participation? What are the ways in which participation can lead to outcomes that we care about? So some better articulation of these theories of impact are imperative.

And last, we have to better understand the community capacity to create, disseminate and validate art and culture on the community's own terms. So getting back at the systems approach, what are the systems in place that allow for cultural engagement, and how vital are they? How healthy are they at the neighborhood level? That is probably the area where we have at least some data because most of the information has been focused on organizational health and sector health. It's a place where we have some building blocks.

One last thing that I wanted to say in talking about these domains of inquiry, these four areas, is that in order for there to be a policy

framework that moves fairly quickly into something that is mature and viable, these four areas have to be attacked simultaneously. Because what will happen is if you wait to have very clearly specified theories about impacts of cultural participation, five years from now you may have great ideas about how you think things work, but there will be no data to support what you think. On the other hand, if you start collecting data, better data about cultural participation or the presence of arts and cultural opportunities, and you don't have any theories about why it matters or what societal value it can potentially render, you've got data with little meaning. So, again, the need to launch or move forward in all four of these areas is I think very key. And I'll stop there.

Godfrey: Thank you very much. [applause] Chris Dwyer.

Dwyer: After the last three speakers, you'd think that I wouldn't be brave enough to get up here and show data, and wade right in with all the caveats and the lenses and the challenge ahead of us. Somebody's got to get in there and start fooling around with what indicators look like, what's collectible, how it works, what might be possible, and to try to answer the questions which might be in your mind: Is this possible at this stage? And how could it be useful for me?

That's what a little bit of work this year with the Knight Foundation has enabled me to get involved in. I'm going to talk from a more project orientation than the previous speakers to look at what a practical manifestation of using data to inform grantmaking might look like. Especially for those of you who might not be used to collecting data or to using indicators. What might it actually look like for you or in communities?

The Knight Foundation launched a community indicators project last year. John Bare at the Knight Foundation is in charge of a multiphase community indicators project.

What's a little bit different about that project is that it has a local community focus. As some of you know, the Knight Foundation funds in 26 communities, so the community indicators

project is designed to do in a way what Kevin was talking about: a systematic current picture of the community, only it's in 26 communities. It's multi-sectored, not in the way sector has been used here, but in the sense of addressing education and housing and crime and the full range of activity in a community, because those are all the areas in which Knight funds in those communities. The specific point is to develop information for grantmaking. So apart from theory building or scanning the field or other uses of data, the use here is to build indicators that would affect grantmaking policy, that would identify needs, that would help with allocations, that would look at trends, and in the large sense look at change.

> **The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation**
>
> **Community Indicators Project**
>
> > **Local Community Focus**
> >
> > **Multi-Sector**
> >
> > **Information for Grantmaking**

> **Arts and Culture Work Includes:**
>
> **Community Survey of:**
> citizen engagement, attitudes and behaviors
>
> **Administrative Data means:**
> type, variety, size of organizations
>
> **Local Capacity Building to collect:**
> data about a core set of indicators and background information
> plus indicators of local interest

The arts and culture work in the 26 communities includes a community survey which addresses arts, and I'll show you the items in a minute. In large part it addresses citizen engagement, attitudes, and behavior. It includes collecting administrative data, and in the arts, this means type, variety and size of organizations.

The part that I'm involved in, along with Randy Cohen from Americans for the Arts, is local capacity building in those 26 communities to collect data about a core set of indicators and background information, plus the indicators of local interest. In the arts, as all the previous speakers have mentioned, it's not easy to go in and start collecting secondary data and summarize it. So we were faced with the different problem of needing to figure out what the best approach would be, and we've taken two.

We first started by collecting data in a couple of communities, and seeing, as a third party,

what that would look like. We now have a different strategy, which is partnering with local arts service organizations to build an on-the-ground capacity because of course the important thing about having data to inform policy is that you can't just collect it once. That's one of the difficulties with having such a thinly funded field, collecting information once doesn't really inform policy and doesn't tell you much about trends. So part of the idea was to build local capacity, to collect, on an ongoing basis, data that Knight was interested in, but that the community also cares about. So the idea was to have that capacity locally, to have a consistent core, and then, in a more democratic, consensus-building way, to build a set of indicators that would be relevant to each of those communities.

> **Community Survey Includes:**
>
> • number of times attended cultural activities in past 12 months
>
> • if volunteer for an arts or cultural group
>
> • if contributed money/belongings to arts or cultural organization
>
> • perspective on whether or not there are enough arts and cultural activities available in community

Here are the four kinds of questions that are asked within these community surveys. And they might be fairly familiar to you. They're about participation, volunteering, support, and whether there are enough arts and culture activities available. The surveys are being conducted by Princeton Survey Research.

So the way we began the local capacity-building part, the local data part, was to build a framework. A lot of what the previous speakers have been talking about are ways to build a policy framework, lenses to look at a policy framework through, or concepts of a policy framework. In this case, it was actually relatively easy because the framework is the framework that under-girds the Knight Foundation mission. We're not doing this for the whole world, we're only doing it on behalf of those 26 communities in the Knight Foundation. So I looked at Knight's mission in arts and culture and the concept that under-girds it which is both about having a healthy cultural community, and also about arts being considered an important contributor to the life of the full community. This yielded a framework of categories within which to begin collecting data, building indicators.

Framework for Indicators

The Variety and Mix of Cultural Opportunities
Engagement of the Community by Cultural Organizations
The Vitality and Quality of Cultural Offerings

Organizational Stability
Leadership Characteristics of Cultural Organizations
Financial Resources for Culture

Collaboration and Entrepreneurship
Opportunities Targeted at Youth

You can see the first three are about the overall profile. The second one, "Engagement of the Community by Cultural Organizations," is not only about audience participation, but about the degree to which the cultural community is engaged with the rest of the community. The second three are probably the most familiar to everybody: the strength of the cultural community. As Kevin mentioned, those are the kinds of things that are being collected already. And the last two are particular interests of the Knight Foundation: partnership and collaboration, and opportunities for youth.

So the challenge that we had was to begin figuring out how to track trends within those broad categories; how they can be posed so that you can have some comparability across the communities and over time; and how we can put this on a footing with the other sectors. Because the folks looking at this are not only looking at arts and culture data, they're also looking at education data, housing data, crime data. So that gave a little bit of a shape to how we wanted to think about it.

I will share with you how some indicators are evolving.

From one of the test communities, we developed a summary that shows how some of these indicators add up together to be a picture of a community. One of the things that was important for us to do, and will be important in each of the communities we end up working with, is to give people a little taste of what data might look like, before they launch into collecting a lot of data, to begin to feel what might be useful or what might not be useful. So I thought it might be useful for you as grantmakers to take a look and see if in fact this is the kind of information that would be useful to you to know about a community if it were accurately and regularly collected.

I'd also be interested in people's overall reaction to the concept of collecting data before you set forth a full framework. So, let's look at a few

examples, just to give you a sense. Remember, we're a little bit hampered here because we're trying to look at things that are going to be comparable across all communities and that are fairly straightforwardly expressed. Here are some of the data we started to collect in test communities around the vitality and quality of cultural offerings. Right away you begin to see all the definitional issues that arise.

The first three are about new works, and that's because this happens to be a particular Knight Foundation interest. We wanted to track some information about new works. The support of local artists is here not financial as much as it is


The Vitality and Quality of Cultural Offerings

Number of or ganizations that support new works

Number and nature of ne w works

Long evity of new works

Suppor t of local artists

Touring experience of arts organizations

Amount and quality of impor ts

the degree to which arts organizations include in their mission, support of local artists. And the last two, you can see, are proxies for

beginning to try to get at quality, and to describe in a more comparable way some ideas about quality.

Without paying too much attention to the numbers, and to give you a sense of where this might go in terms of indicators, here is one element in one community: the number of organizations that support new works. And the

Number of organizations that support new works

■ $20,000 or less (XXX)
■ between $20,000 and $100,000 (XXX)
▨ between $100,000 and $500,000 (XXX)
□ between $500,000 and $1,000,000 (XXX)
■ over $1,000,000 (XXX)

• over two-thirds support new work
• 9 organizations offer new works for half or more productions
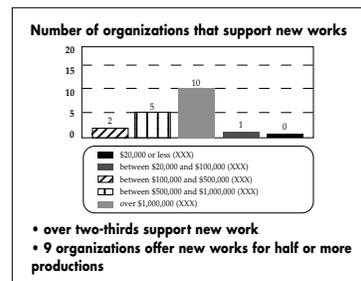
key from left to right is by budget size of organization, from those organizations that have an annual budget size of $25,000 or less to those

that are over $1 million. This is a medium-sized community. We did a sample of 25 organizations plus other data to get some starter data, just to begin seeing how we might express this information in indicators. In this community, over two-thirds of the arts organizations support new works, so you can begin to see how that might work its way into an indicator. We've got a number of performing arts organizations and museums that offer new work or

new exhibits as half or more of what they do. Again, you can begin to see from an analytical perspective how we might take some of that information and think about it as an indicator.

We started this with many, many, many more variables than of course we will actually present as core variables – I think well over a hundred – and tried to figure out what the process of collecting data was like with those hundred or so, and what could be accurately, reasonably, and consistently collected across the different kinds of organizations that are represented in arts and culture. And Knight doesn't make it easy because they fund all kinds of organizations under arts and culture, which means that once this is an expansive activity, it then becomes a winnowing and paring down activity.

Organizational Stability

    Or ganizational longevity

    Cum ulative debt

    Endo wments

    P attern of operating losses/surpluses

    F acility arrangements

Organizational stability – those are probably familiar to you. I'm going to skip through some of these in the interest of time.

Leadership characteristics of cultural organizations: here are some of the elements that we looked at. Again, you can begin to see how some of these might become indicators. If we think of this community just in terms of the paid director, it is very straightforward, but very interesting. Fewer than two thirds of the organizations have paid directors, so you can begin to see some policy intent or implications

Leader ship Characteristics of Cultural Organizations

    Number of organizations with paid directors

    Longevity and age of directors of organizations

    Number of Board vacancies

    Tenure and age of Board chairs

    Ethnic/racial diversity of Board

for this information. Longevity of leadership is also interesting. We looked at a number of things that didn't necessarily pan out here,

Number of organizations with paid directors

    • less than two-thirds have paid directors

Longevity

    • mix of new and established leadership
    • tenure averages 6 years

in addition to tenure: age, the turnover in a five-year period in each organization, and whether organizations had successfully moved past the transition of a founder, since this is a community with lots of small organizations.

So we looked at lots of different variables, and some started to pan out as possibilities for indicators. Financial resources are pretty much what you might expect. Let me show you one that I think is interesting. In this community, we look at financial resources often, but now we begin to think, "Well, how

Financial Resources for Culture

    Total annual expenditures of arts organizations

    Patterns of earned/contributed income of organizations

    Sources of contributed income

    Total public dollars

might we make this into an indicator where we'll not only have comparability across organizations but then across communities?" Here's some beginning thinking. You can see the considerable public contribution to the arts compared to corporate, for example. The median percentage of public dollars in the annual budget is 12 percent across the organizations that we looked at, only four percent for corporate. Another way to look at that same data is on a per-capita basis. That's an error on the bottom, by the way. It should be 75 cents, not seven cents.

Sources/pattern of contributed income
Median % of annual budget

• public $	12%
• individuals	10%
• foundation grants	5%
• corporate	4%
• public $2.62-$3.37 per capita	
• corporate $.075-$1.08 per capita	

We are trying to take the data that we have and put it together in different ways to begin shaping it in the form of indicators that might be meaningful to a wide variety of sectors, not only to arts and culture.

Here were the areas that we looked at within collaboration and entrepreneurship. I'll show you a little data, because again

Collaboration and Entrepreneurship

    Number of umbrella structures

    Organizations engaged in cooperative ventures

    Cooperative marketing and box office

    Sources of common data

Organizations engaged in cooperative ventures

80% engaged with other arts organizations

55% engaged with non-arts organizations

60% involved in cooperative marketing

<20% have cooperative box office arrangements

this is an interesting community. There's a lot of collaborative activity that was fairly easy to collect. You can see for example the third one down, the number involved in cooperative marketing strikes me as fairly high.

Within opportunities targeted at youth, we looked at both the kinds of things that arts organizations might do, as well as some characteristics of the public school system. We collected data in a variety of ways, not only

Opportunities Targeted at Youth

Number of arts organizations that do special youth programming

Number of arts organizations with school partnerships

Arts credit requirements for graduation

Number of arts teachers in public schools

Number of schools with bands/orchestras

from arts organizations, and used this to illustrate how doing this initial activity helped us to become more specific. For example, when telling them that 72 percent have school partnerships, the Knight staff began saying, "Yeah, but what kind of school partnerships?

Number of arts organizations that do special youth programming

• 80% do targeted programming

Number of arts organizations with school partnerships

• 72% have school partnerships

Was it a school partnership with this characteristic and this characteristic?" That's why it's so helpful to start sharing data with people, because you'll see in our final examples how much more refined the data has become. It isn't just a school partnership, it's a particular kind of school partnership

Proposed Core Information

☛ Background information

☛ Indicators

that was of interest.

To recap: what we did with some test balloons was to collect data within a framework of ele-

ments so that the Knight Foundation staff could decide what we would collect in all the communities. We got a little wiser and realized that we're not always collecting indicators, but we need a fair amount of other information to build indicators, information that we would call

Background Information

❋ Total attendance for the performing arts and visual arts

❋ Number of arts organizations by form of organization

❋ Budget size of arts organizations

❋ Total expenditures

❋ Total public dollars

❋ Number of umbrella structures

❋ Availability of local planning data on arts and culture

❋ High school graduation requirements related to arts credits

background information.

We decided that we need eight elements of background information in each community. And ten indicators. Some of those are going to look familiar. I'll call your attention to the fourth one down.

Indicators

❋ Total attendance for the performing arts and visual arts

❋ Number of arts organizations that program/present in non-arts venues

❋ Imports (proportion of activity that is imported from other locations)

❋ The number of performing organizations that support new work that is relevant to the local community and the nature of the relevance

❋ Cumulative debt

We started out being interested in just the number or the proportion of organizations that do new work, now that's become a much more specific indicator. It's whether there's new work that's being developed that's relevant to the local community, and then what the nature of that relevance is. Is it historical? Is it geographic? Is it about a particular group?

Here are the rest of the ten, and the last two are examples of really becoming much more specific about what the interest is. Not any kind of collaboration with other non-arts organizations, but a particular interest in arts

Indicators (continued)

❋ Endowments

❋ Number of organizations with paid directors

❋ Sources of contributed income

❋ Number of organization engaged in collaborative activities with social service organizations

❋ Number of arts organizations that do school programming with particular characteristics: sustained involvement with the school, content or curriculum based and/or relevant and evidence of school buy-in, e.g., programming developed in conjunction with teachers

organizations that are engaged in collaborative activities with social service organizations that continue over time.

The last one is the example of school programming that has particular characteristics, again, considered over time.

Now, we're not just wading in and collecting data, of course. We're also paying attention to a lot of the other efforts that are going on nationally, so that to the extent possible the work in communities can link to definitions and comparisons that are emerging from other efforts as well. And that's a really critical part of this because so many people are moving forward at the same time.

For me the lesson in all this is that if we want to have information that really does inform policy, somebody has to do a lot of tedious work over a fair amount of time, because we're very behind on this. [applause]

Godfrey: Thank you very much, Chris. It's really refreshing to see how some of these conceptual things that we have been discussing play out with a specific project, and as you can see, as soon as the rubber hits the road with trying to apply research questions to a specific situation, you have to deal with the theoretical questions about what it is that you want to find out and why.

Let me just say before I open the floor for questions, Chris Dwyer prepared a wonderful chart that very briefly capsulizes both some of the projects that were talked about today and several others that were not talked about today but that were represented at a meeting held recently in Washington. This is at the back of the room if you didn't pick it up. It's a good indication of the developing weight of research projects that are happening, although it is not inclusive.

If you would like to have the one-to-three page briefing papers on each of these projects, please come up at the end of the session and just circle your name on the attendance list, and I will prepare a briefing collection of papers and mail them out to you at a later date. So the floor is open for questions. Yes.

Question: One quick question. Given the definitions that we have heard from the first several speakers in terms of cultural policy framework and arts policy framework, and diverse audiences, how can we look at it as a fully integrated sector? I'm concerned that we're going to have multiple sets of data, and

then someone's going to have to say, "What does all of this mean?" How is that addressed?

Dwyer: It's interesting. I, like Kevin, do most of my work not in this sector, but in other fields. The question that you raise is so important when there's such a scarcity of information. It becomes a different question in another field when there's lots of information coming from lots of levels. And then the idea of how it all fits together is interesting and is a place for action and a place for advocacy and a place for people to move.

So I personally would be less worried about how it all fits together and more worried about how we take advantage of the dialogue when that occurs, that we take advantage of the opportunity to make meaning of it. Because the data itself is not the meaning-making part. You know, the meaning-making part comes after.

Comment: I think what we're talking about is the transformation of data into knowledge. What we really have here is bits and pieces of data, and those tell us not a whole lot, in all honesty. It's when you put that into a framework that you begin to understand that there's information there, and it's when you blend those frameworks and look over different dimensions that you begin to transform it into knowledge, and that's really what we're about.

There are not a lot of resources here. We have to leverage. We have to be thinking when we're collecting data, how it fits into some sort of framework and how it relates to what other people are doing so that we can transform it into information. It is going to be a messy process at first. You don't go from lots of anecdotes, little pieces, frameworks, into having fully fleshed out policy research capability. It's not there. But it is critical that when you're doing whatever you're doing, you're trying to see how it relates to something else and how it fits into a framework. That's what builds up.

Dwyer?: And you're being explicit about the framework. I mean I think that's a key part of it, and a framework of values.

Godfrey: I would just add that, even at this early stage of this new cycle of the development of data about culture, it's important for all of the different projects to be talking to each other and to make sure that at the very least with our tiny resources we're not being redundant with each other. It's also important that we develop an understanding of our own and each other's theories about what we're doing and what we're going to do with this information. That's why continued meetings like the one in Washington will also be important.

Question: I'm Charlie Halpern from the Nathan Cummings Foundation. I was involved in helping to establish a Center for Arts and Culture in Washington, DC, which has for the last two years or so been a leading nonprofit group trying to develop an arts policy that would have some real impact. Our experience at the Center for Arts and Culture suggests to me another perspective on arts policy that I just want to put on the floor.

We've had a lot of talk about how foundations can help support the research that builds the data for developing cultural policy and arts policy. I want to suggest other ways that foundations can engage with cultural policy issues.

First and foremost is to participate in those cultural policy issues which are going on now. Nobody is waiting for databases to be developed. For example, in New York City, the Brooklyn Museum of Art is not just about The Saachi Collection. It is now and it will be increasingly over the next six months about cultural policy. We're about to get a major exercise in cultural policy in New York, whether we're ready or not. And it has to do with public dollars for the support of cultural institutions.

We in the foundation world and the nonprofit world at large have got to recognize it as a cultural policy issue and be prepared to play with the best data we've got. I don't want to leave the idea that what foundations have to do to engage in cultural policy is to do more large-scale grant-type research. That's one thing we can do. It would be a great mistake if you did that at the expense of this other task of engag-

ing in arts policy issues as they're now created all around us.

Godfrey: Thank you. I think that's a really important reminder to us all that, just as we heard earlier today, policy needs to be linked with practice. Research also needs to be linked with advocacy, and the long-term enterprise has to be linked with the immediate enterprise. So thank you. Other comments?

Question: We need to make sure that we're understanding the difference between policy research and policy. And I think that goes to your point.

I've been looking at a five-step process, and all but one of them need a lot of work. The first one is research, and that again is a process, we've talked about that.

The second one is the creation of positions. That's before advocacy, which is the third one. But the third step is advocacy, and the resources for it.

The fourth step, and this is the one we have the most control over, is somebody has to make a decision, whether it's Congress or a mayor or the city council or whatever.

And then the fifth one, and this is the one that I think that is the hardest, is monitoring the implementation of those decisions. I'm wondering if there's comment from the panel as to whether they have looked at the coming research and been able to make those other pieces of the policy spectrum work.

McCarthy: First of all, to go back a little bit to the prior comment about advocacy and needing to make decisions before we have all the information. I mean, that's clearly the case. In fact, as someone who's been involved in policy research for a long time, the closer you come to a decision point, the less influential policy research really is, because then you're really talking about battles of values between advocates. Where policy research has the largest payoff is when you're shaping what the options are, and the terms in which they're done. That's really a longer-term process.

However, as you go through your list of research, then creation of positions, then advocacies, I think you're going to have some problems because the creation of positions assumes that there's a unified value structure of all the people that are here. Boy, I don't see that. I haven't been in this for very long, but I don't see that in the arts field. Advocacy, yes, you've got to decide what to advocate, but you have to realize that you may actually get what you want. And that isn't always the best thing because you haven't really seen the unforeseen consequences.

So you've got to pick the kind of issues where you feel you've got the greatest confidence in what you're doing before you go fighting every policy battle. Because you can lose battles or even win battles and wish you hadn't.

Smith: I was going to say in response that if you look at some specific policy fields, such as healthcare, there were at least three Democratic proposals on the table in the early '90s, at least three Republican proposals on the table. They all came from within the same policy community writ large, but from different working groups within those communities.

It is interesting that in robust, well-organized policy communities, you'll have options emanating from a number of different places. As we moved closer to the debate about those options, the numbers of players narrowed. And then as we moved into the process itself, research, expertise, ended up mattering relatively little.

The gist of many of the comments is that we should go back and think of how we build the most robust policy community from basic research and data gathering through the advocacy process, and connect all the points on that continuum. Earlier I laid out the agenda-setting phase to the advocacy phase. We should realize that our greatest impact, as Kevin suggests, is going to be in agenda setting, in setting out the issues and options, and then being prepared to fight the advocacy battles.

Comment: I wanted to respond to this notion of creating a robust community. Because I think there isn't enough attention in this cultural policy discussion, about ways in which arts and culture are relevant in other policy areas. These are not things that we need to invent; I think that there is evidence of arts and cultural practices that play significant roles in health, in education, in housing, in transportation, and the inability to articulate clearly what those connections are, is a real missed opportunity in trying to develop a robust cultural policy field.

As we all think about what kind of research needs to be conducted and what kind of frameworks need to be constructed, we should think beyond a very insular cultural policy bubble, and look to connect to other areas where the connections are in fact there.

Question: For many years, when I was needing information on policy suggestions, the assumption was that you would go to the National Endowment for the Arts or to NASAA or to your state arts council, because the public sector was capable of collecting information and sorting that information in a way that you could make use of.

So my first question is, is that locus of information gathering shifting away from the public sector? I know there are some public sector people here today. And my second question is, as a small foundation, is this an arena where only large foundations can be active? And their activity helps smaller and mid-sized foundations? That is, should we just be thankful that this is being done by somebody who can afford it, or is there a role for small and mid-sized foundations?

Godfrey: I guess I would say in answer to the first question, and maybe the panelists can amplify this, I think that the NEA and NASAA and the state arts agencies are still key collectors of data and perhaps the only ones that have been consistently collecting data over time. In fact they're beginning to work with each other to unify their data sets in helpful ways for the first time. I think what's changed is that the data they've collected is limited; it's addressed to their own frameworks and their own needs and practices. Now there's beginning to be additional kinds of data looked at and collected for different purposes by different actors.

In terms of your second question, I certainly hope that there are ways for small foundations to play in here. I think it's a question of what small foundations need to think about and find out about the communities in which they work. I think you can probably do some pretty interesting research for not very much money, particularly if you work with a key academic in your community who can mobilize some graduate students over the summer. You can get some real cheap dates! With very helpful information resulting. But I think that really speaks to the particular knowledge needs of the small foundation. Other comments?

McCarthy: In terms of the role of small and mid-sized foundations, we need better information about what's going on and what works. Evaluation research about what matters, the stuff that you're doing, what works and what doesn't and why, is something that every foundation should be involved in to some extent. Not on a huge scale. But it's something that you can do without playing on the national stage.

Dwyer: And to build on that, I just said a few minutes ago that the building of a robust policy community isn't about those who collect data. It's really about those who use it, talk about it, have that enlightenment function. It's here that small and medium-sized foundations, in addition to what Kevin is saying, really have a role to play: the convening, the discussion, the dialoguing, the making it meaningful because in and of itself it really isn't – the asking that people base their own strategies and requests on some knowledge of what's happened in other areas, for example.

The other point is a really interesting and challenging one. Because if we look in other fields, data has tended to follow funders. I mean, the compliance issues for providing data and presenting information on a systematic, ongoing basis has often followed the funding stream. We're going to have to do something different in this field, apparently. This brings tremendous implementation challenges over time. So much of what's been set up in other fields has to do with providing data as payback for grants that have been given.

We haven't really talked about this, but a large part of what's made data collection work in some other fields is a whole infrastructure of people helping that local person collect, make meaning, be active, figure out how it applies in their areas. Tremendous investment, for example, in education, in technical assistance intermediaries just for that purpose, within single funding streams.

The infrastructure that's behind all of this to make it happen in an ongoing way, in other fields we would think of as federal. And so I think your question is an important one as we think about how to maintain this after a baseline is established.

Comment: In other fields, when I think about the creation of public policy that will produce a desired benefit to whatever advocacy community you're trying to reach, two things that seem to be much in vogue and much in use these days are public opinion research, which no one at the table has talked about in terms of public response and attitude about the arts in general. And secondly, marketing and how we can use marketing to effect public policy outcomes.

If you look at the tobacco industry, for example, the campaign to promote tobacco in this country really was a marketing campaign. There were definite public policy outcomes which seemed to result from marketing campaigns and public opinion polling that had very little to do with the research on the table that indicated that cigarettes kill you. I'd like you to respond to the two issues of public opinion about the arts and the use of marketing to affect the policy and the public policy outcomes for this community.

Jackson: I'll just take a crack at it. With the experience in working with the partners of the National Neighborhood Indicators Project, and also in working with the community foundations that are part of the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Community Partners Initiative, marketing is something that has come up, not explicitly in those terms, but the idea of two things.

One: opening up the box so that people think about the arts in ways that include them, is an

opportunity that needs to be created. It hasn't been talked about as marketing in the Indicators Project, but it has talked about democratizing the definitional process, and providing the venues in which people can register their values and priorities as they relate to the arts. I think it's really important. But I think it gets beyond marketing. It's really democratizing the discussion.

In the Community Partnerships for Cultural Participation Project, there also have been some strides in moving towards democratizing the definitional process, but really getting people to think about arts differently in a very deliberate and proactive way on behalf of the community foundations. So I think it's key.

Dwyer: Two comments. I think one of the issues that comes up sometimes around the public opinion poll and the way it's been used for advocacy, is that it doesn't hold much credibility in this field. Also, when you're polling about an asset rather than a deficit, like with smoking, it takes on a slightly different flavor.

It would be interesting to look at the effectiveness of a number of the more recent general marketing campaigns that you raised. Because a number of states now have invested in that promotional marketing campaign, have really invested a lot of their dollars in that direction from the public side. I don't know if anybody has actually evaluated their effectiveness, but that seems to be a trend within state agency uses of money. I think it would be really worthwhile to take a look at them.

Smith: Two quick comments. I think one of the best things on public opinion surveys is a report that Paul DiMaggio and Becky Pettit at Princeton did, the one that Marian talked about. To take the conclusion from that: while the support is very broad, it's very shallow. It is easily manipulable by the phrasing of the question. And the bottom line is that organization in the end matters as you try to propel ideas, which gets to the marketing point.

But on marketing, and I think any of us in places like RAND or Brookings in the '80s and '90s saw other think tanks begin their marketing strategies. We were on the one hand horrified, on the other amazed at their success. We

were a little reluctant to break with the traditional ethos that had surrounded our research. But I think we can do better on marketing.

But that said, you've got to keep in mind that there are really three things at issue in getting ideas into play. There's the credibility, which comes from research. There's the access, which comes from the consistent presence and engagement with the policy-making process. There is timing. And there is marketing. But all three come into play, and the question is, how much credibility do you sacrifice through the marketing?

One of the studies in the healthcare reform debate indicated that most of the think tanks that invested heavily in marketing were testifying before Congress with other interest groups. The think tanks that didn't market as heavily were showing up with the academics. Their research was deemed more credible.

Godfrey: There's another credibility issue. Another one of the salient findings of the DiMaggio and Becky Pettit work was that most public opinion polls about the arts were themselves not particularly credible because they suffered a great deal from biases built into the design.

And I would definitely agree that really good, credible polling is going to be a major component of robust policy community for culture. But we've learned, I think, that the polling which has been done in the past was easily dismissed by policy makers who were already skeptical of our claims.

Question: I'm one of those public agency people in the room. And I just wanted to respond to an earlier comment. When we in the city gather data, there is always, regardless of how clean we wish to be, there is always an underlying advocacy aspect.

That goes to what Mr. McCarthy was saying about the cart before the horse. We actually have an advocacy position that we believe strongly, and for a lot of very good reasons intuitively, is the right way to go. And then we construct a way of collecting data that will in fact make that the answer. I don't think it's a Machiavellian type of manipulation. Maybe

what we're talking about now is actually getting some cleaner data.

Question: I'm interested in public participation in policy making: How much of participatory methodologies are actually happening in the move from research to meaning-making to action?

Dwyer: Well, that's one reason why in the Knight project we've gone to this local approach to try a variety of consensus-building processes at the local level and to have different stakeholders from a number of sectors involved in defining the areas of interest that they'd like to follow over time. We do this partly because it really isn't possible to define them from afar, and they should be different in different communities. But it's the participation and the investment of interest that we feel is important. It's a huge investment on the part of a lot of partners.

Question: And does this participation go beyond the definition of categories to actually forming policy?

Dwyer: Well, that is going to so much depend on the local community. Hopefully the participation in definition opens up participation in other aspects of the process if it isn't already open. But that has a lot to do with the partnership you start at the beginning. We've been encouraging all of the partners to engage non-arts partners as leads, partly for that purpose.

Comment: One of the problems with the survey of public participation in the arts is that it's national. And talking about 15 percent of the population doing X, Y or Z in terms of policy-making does not have much weight. If you're talking about 25 percent of the citizens of your congressional district, you have a little bit more weight there, okay? So that this national aggregate level thing really fights against you.

I would argue that the key thing about public participation is understanding better how the public participates in the arts themselves and what you can build from that rather than these sort of big survey numbers, which I don't find terribly useful.

Godfrey: And that speaks directly to what Maria's been doing.

Jackson: One thing I wanted to comment on is that in the Arts and Culture Indicators Project, public participation has been the real key operating premise from the very beginning. Again, I keep talking about opening up the definitional process and getting people to talk about the role of arts and culture in their lives, and why is it that anyone would care enough to commit to monitoring something over time? That's an investment of resources, it's a statement of value, and it's moving beyond where we are, I think, in terms of addressing and being responsive to values that the public holds.

In addition to having those definitional conversations or trying to feed them in communities around the country, which we're doing through the Indicators Project, we're also involved in getting practitioners to participate with researchers in creating new kinds of data collection tools that serve them.

There's a lot of wisdom in the field about data collection. Unfortunately, information is not collected consistently enough or in ways that are reliable enough to go beyond anecdote in many cases. But the operating theories that a lot of practitioners have about what is a wise investment – what that they're sponsoring is making a difference – are based on some pretty sound evaluation ideas that can be honed and used in a systematic way across organizations and community if the investment is there. It's something that we're moving towards, and we're working with community organizations on developing those kinds of tools and the capacity.

Question: I'd like to know what are the ways in which the artist can be involved in this discussion.

Jackson: Well, one of the ways that we've been involving artists in the Arts and Culture Indicators Project is again, by getting them to be part of the methodology-building aspect of the work. And one of the inherent challenges, particularly when you start fiddling around trying to figure out possible

impacts of the arts in society, is that with a social service model, it's much easier to predict the outcomes of an intervention. Working with artists or with arts organizations, trying to predict the outcome of some kind of participation in a community oftentimes works against the very creative process.

So those are some of the tensions that you begin to see. I don't think that they are completely insurmountable, but we as researchers and evaluators have to think of tools and methods that are more responsive to the matter that we're interested in understanding, and I think artists play a key role in helping to create those methods.

Comment: I think the kind of discussion we've had today talks to the maturation of our field, but also points to how early we are in that maturation as a learning community.

If you ask what the appropriate role of the public sector is, you're asking a question that should be answered in consortium. And many of these questions are questions that apply to sociological work, political work, different kinds of data analysis, marketing work, and I think that we're asking more sophisticated questions now, and that's what we're seeing here.

Godfrey: I think that's right – we are very young. I'm going to reserve to myself the very last word because we have to stop, and say yes, these are very early days in this process. As I think you've heard over and over again, data and information are necessary, but they are not sufficient to this enterprise. There's a lot of other pieces to this pie.

Thank you for our wonderful panel.

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