

ALTERNATIVE MODES OF PUBLIC SUPPORT

As a public policy principle, the arm's length principle is generally applied to support of the fine arts. The arm's length principle, however, is not the only possible mode of public support to the fine arts. There are four alternative roles for the State: Facilitator, Patron, Architect and Engineer. Furthermore, the State can have two different objectives-to support the process of creativity or to support production of specific types of art such as socialist realism. Roles and objectives are not mutually exclusive, that is, a single government may play more than one role and may seek to achieve more than one objective (Figure 3).

Figure 3 Alternative Modes & Objectives of Public Support to the Fine Arts		
ROLE	OBJECTIVE	
	<i>Process</i>	<i>Product</i>
Facilitator	xxxx	x
Patron	xxx	xx
Architect	xx	xxx
Engineer	x	xxxx

For purposes of demonstration, we will examine the four roles as pure types with respect to the mechanism of funding, policy objectives, standards and dynamics as well as the economic status of artists and artistic enterprise. For each role a short national case study will be presented.

The Facilitator

The Facilitator State funds the fine arts through foregone taxes - so-called tax expenditures-provided according to the wishes of individual and corporate donors; that is, donations are tax deductible. The policy objective of the Facilitator is to promote diversity of activity in the nonprofit amateur and fine arts. The Facilitator supports the process of creativity, rather than specific types or styles of art. Furthermore, no specific standards of art are supported by the Facilitator, which relies on the preferences and tastes of the corporate, foundation and individual donors. The policy dynamics of the Facilitator State are random in that changes in support to the fine arts reflect the changing tastes of private donors. In the Facilitator State the economic status of the fine artist and the artistic enterprise depends on box office appeal and the tastes and financial condition of private patrons.

The strength of the Facilitator lies in the diversity of funding sources it creates. Individuals, corporations and foundations choose which art, artists and arts organizations to support. The Facilitator role also has weaknesses.

First, standards of excellence are not necessarily supported, and the State has no ability to target activities of national importance. Second, difficulties occur with respect to the valuation of private donations in kind, for example, paintings donated to a museum or art gallery. Third, public support of some arts activities may be of questionable benefit to the particular State and its people: the reconstruction of Versailles was funded in large part through tax-exempt contributions made by American taxpayers to the Versailles Foundation in New York City. Fourth, as demonstrated in Canada by the elimination of the scientific research tax credit, it is very difficult to calculate the cost of tax credits and expenditures to government.

In the United States, government plays the role of Facilitator, promoting the fine arts through tax expenditures channeled by donors. The Facilitator role has its origins in three American traditions: the separation of church and state, the competitive market economy, and private philanthropy, which both before and after the imposition of the income tax has represented the most important source of support for the arts. In 1965 the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) was established and shortly thereafter came state arts councils. The development of these national and state arts councils represented a shift toward the role of Patron for government in the United States. However tax expenditures still provide two-thirds of public support to the fine arts. The first Reagan Administration attempted to disband the NEA and return the U.S. government to a strict Facilitator role, but the effort failed.

The Patron

The Patron State funds the fine arts through arm's length arts councils. The government determines how much aggregate support to provide, but not which organizations or artists should receive support. The council is composed of a board of trustees appointed by the government. Having been appointed by the government of the day, trustees are expected to fulfill their grant-giving duties independent of the day-to-day interests of the party in power, much like the trustee of a blind trust. Granting decisions are generally made by the council on the advice of professional artists working through a system of peer evaluation. The arts council supports the process of creativity, but with the objective of promoting standards of professional artistic excellence. The policy dynamic of the Patron State tends to be evolutionary, responding to changing forms and styles of art as expressed by the artistic community. The economic status of the artist and the artistic enterprise depends on a combination of box office appeal, the

taste and preferences of private donors, and grants received from arm's length arts councils.

The very strength of the arm's length arts council is often perceived as its principle weakness. Fostering artistic excellence is often seen as promoting elitism, with respect to both type of art work produced and audience served. Support of artistic excellence may thus result in art that is not accessible to, or appreciated by, the general public, or by its democratically elected representatives. In most Patron States there are recurring controversies in which politicians, reflecting popular opinion, express anger and outrage at support for activities that are, for example, perceived as politically unacceptable, pornographic or appealing only to a wealthy minority.

With an arm's length council, however, politicians can claim neither credit for artistic success nor responsibility for failure. Great Britain is the best known example of the Patron State. Government adopted the role of Patron during World War II by creating the Committee for Education, Music and Art for raising morale during the Blitz. After the war it created the Arts Council of Great Britain and its sister agencies in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The role of Patron evolved out of traditional arts patronage by the English aristocracy. The government continues the Patron role, even though various task forces and committees of Parliament have recommended incentives to enhance charitable giving.

The Arts Council of Great Britain has experienced controversy concerning art not acceptable to the general public. Such was the case in 1983 when an irate citizen set fire to the "South Bank submarine" created from used tires by sculptor David Mach. The Arts Council had funded the work to the tune of £50,000.

The Architect

The Architect State funds the fine arts through a Ministry or Department of Culture: Granting decisions concerning artists and arts organizations are generally made by bureaucrats. The Architect tends to support the arts as part of its social welfare objectives. It also tends to support art that meets community rather than professional standards of artistic excellence. The policy dynamic of the Architect tends to be revolutionary. Inertia can result in the entrenchment of community standards developed at a particular point in time, leading to stagnation of contemporary creativity, as recently observed in France. The economic status of artists in the Architect State tends to be determined by membership in official artists' unions. Once an artist gains membership in such a union, he or she becomes, in effect, a civil servant and enjoys some form of income security. The economic status of artistic enterprise is determined almost exclusively by direct government funding. The box office and private donations play a

negligible role in determining their financial status. However, with respect to artistic choice, artistic enterprise generally remains autonomous of government.

The strength of the Architect role lies in the fact that artists and arts organizations are relieved from depending on popular success at the box office, resulting in what has been called an "affluence gap." Moreover the status of the artist is explicitly recognized in social assistance policies. The weakness of the Architect is that long-term, guaranteed direct funding can result in creative stagnation.

Since before World War II the government of the Netherlands has played the role of Architect. The government funds numerous literary, media, performing and visual arts institutions as regular budget items. Furthermore, the government provides a guaranteed annual income to visual artists. In effect, minimum salary and working conditions, are established by the government. The role of Architect originated with the "absolute" monarchies of the seventeenth to late nineteenth centuries. In the twentieth century social democratic and other political parties in most Western European countries assumed the role of Architect after the collapse of active monarchy following World War I.

The "Tomato Revolution" of the 1970s, in which the audience protested the content of Dutch theater, demonstrates the revolutionary policy dynamic that can result from the Architect role.

Dissatisfaction expressed in poor attendance, position papers, meetings and ultimately tomatoes, smoke bombs and invectives, gave government a clear indication that there was a serious gulf between the public's perception of need and what tax money was purchasing Now in a revival of one of the world's fundamental rites, the death/castration of the parent cleared the way for the child's assumption of power and prestige. Mythic relationships prevail even in government support system! [A.S. Keller, Contemporary European Arts Support Systems, National Endowment for the Arts National Partnership Meeting, Marvin Centre, George Washington University, June 1980]

The Engineer

The Engineer State owns all the means of artistic production. The Engineer supports only art that meets political standards of excellence; it does not support the process of creativity. Funding decisions are made by political commissars and are intended to further political education, not artistic excellence. The policy dynamic of the Engineer

State tends to be revisionary; artistic decisions must be revised to reflect the changing official party line. The economic status of the artist is determined by membership in official Party-approved artists' unions. Anyone who does not belong to such a union is, by definition, not an artist. All artistic enterprises are state-owned and operated; that is, all artistic means of production belong to the State.

The Engineer role is attractive to a "totalist" regime because it focuses the creative energies of artists toward attainment of official political goals. Many Western governments, however, also find the Engineer role attractive in constructing a commercially viable arts industry in which the profit motive, or "capitalist realism," plays an ideological role analogous to "socialist realism." In the West, capitalist realism is generally expressed as "if it does not pay, kill it."

There are several weaknesses associated with the Engineer role. First, all art is subservient to political or commercial objectives. Second, the creative energy of artists cannot be completely channeled. Repressed artistic ambition results in an "underground" subversive of party aesthetics or capitalist values, for example, the phenomenon of the "counterculture."

There is a counterintuitive paradox associated with the Engineer role. With respect to the Soviet Union, it is the works of the Czarist period that receive critical acclaim in the West, not the works of socialist realism. With respect to Western art, it is the popular cultural products; for example, Hollywood movies and rock music-that are eagerly sought after within socialist and communist countries, not the works of socialist realism.

Between the Communist Revolution in 1918 and 1932 the Soviet government played the role of Architect. The arts were viewed by the first "People's Commissar of Enlightenment" as an integral part of human development, but artistic change was seen as evolutionary, not revolutionary. While the workers were considered the owners of the "artistic means of production" they were not considered ready to operate them. First they would have to be educated through access to the capitalist art of the past after which true proletarian art could emerge. Censorship and control over content were relatively rare.

In 1932, with the second Five Year Plan implemented by Joseph Stalin, the costs of industrialization and the need to develop a new socialist society combined to change the role of the State from Architect to Engineer:

This second page in socialist cultural policy saw the rise of the doctrine known as Socialist Realism [that] downplays the notion that the "means of production" in the arts belongs to the masses, substituting the idea that it is the final product, the artwork itself, that is the property of the proletariat. Under this scheme, the social responsibility of the artist lies in "satisfying" the "owners," that is producing works that can be

immediately accepted by the masses. [W.D. Kay, "Toward a Theory of Cultural Policy in Non-Market, Ideological Societies", op. cit.]

Henceforth all art produced in the Soviet Union had to be socialist realist; that is, realist in form and socialist in content. Artistic activity was organized into "creative unions" to monitor new works and ensure conformity with the aesthetic principles of the Communist Party. Artists who produced work that did not conform were expelled and no longer recognized as artists.

Figure 4 provides a schematic summary of the four alternative modes of public support to the fine arts. The Facilitator does not formally use the arm's length principle. Rather, funding decisions are made by corporate, foundation and individual donors according to their tastes, not according to national arts policy objectives or artistic standards of excellence. In the case of the Architect and the Engineer, funding is provided directly by a government department. In the former case, support is provided according to community standards, and in the latter, according to political standards. The Patron is the only role in which the arm's length principle is applied. Funding is provided by government to an arm's length arts council that then makes grants according to professional standards of artistic excellence.

Figure 4							
Models for Supporting the Arts							
ROLE	MODEL COUNTRY	POLICY OBJECTIVE	FUNDING	POLICY DYNAMIC	ARTISTIC STANDARDS	STATUS OF THE ARTIST	STRENGTHS & WEAKNESS
Facilitator	USA	diversity	tax expenditures	random	random	box office appeal & taste; financial condition of private patrons	S: diversity of funding sources W: excellence not necessarily supported; valuation of private donations; question benefits; calculation of tax cost
Patron	United Kingdom	excellence	arm's length arts councils	evolutionary	professional	box office appeal; taste & financial condition of private patrons; grants	S: support of excellence W: elitism
Architect	France	social welfare	ministry of culture	revolutionary	community	membership in artists' union; direct public funding	S: relief from box office dependence; the affluence gap W: creative stagnation
Engineer	Soviet Union	political education	ownership of artistic means of production	revisionary	political	membership in official artists' union; Party approval	S: focus creative energy to attain official political goals W: subservience; underground; counter-intuitive outcomes