

Sample

Ms. Kelm

ENG 1304

Sample Toulmin Essay

Government Art Funding

Whether or not the government should fund the arts has been a controversial issue for decades and has escalated in the past 30 years with the conception of the National Endowment of the Arts program, which has sparked arguments over the artists it has funded with government money. Should the government be able to spend public tax money on controversial art that may offend a great number of conservative Americans? If not by the government, then how should art be funded? The analysis of the following two sources, the book chapter “Toward a Beautiful and Liberal Future” by Tyler Cowen and the journal article “In Search of True Public Arts Support” by Arthur Brooks, will provide two examples of the claims made by the supporters of the indirect governmental funding of the arts.

In a book published by Princeton University Press, *Good and Plenty: The Creative Successes of American Arts Funding*, the author, Tyler Cowen, presents a number of reasons why the United States should use indirect subsidies and decentralization to fund the arts. In the fifth chapter, “Toward a Beautiful and Liberal Future”, Cowen outlines his points concerning his view of America and the arts. Among his most important points are that indirect funding is the most beneficial to the greatest number of people has created more diversity in American art, direct funding could be enhanced if the National Endowment of the Arts would be given more freedoms, and the United States should decentralize the funding of the arts.

Several elements of the rhetorical situation make up this chapter. The audience is the

general public, as anyone who pays taxes should be interested in how the government is using their money, yet because the current percentage of taxes that goes directly to art funding is almost negligible, the main audience is most likely artists or people personally invested in the matter. Cowen has an extensive view of American economic policy, especially concerning the arts. He is able to address the issue from multiple sides and analyze each argument to determine the most beneficial system. He comprehensively researched his topic before writing and references reputable sources in his bibliography. Cowen is constrained by his own bias. While he is addressing a number of different arguments, he is making a claim that he wishes to convey. This has the potential to make his book appear opinionated. In addition, Cowen is constrained by his limited subject matter. He explains that “the analysis of this book does not allow us to conclude that current tax and university subsidies are good policies” (Cowen 137). Because of the limited ideas in his book, he is unable to completely analyze all aspects of the subject.

Cowen uses several claims to advocate for indirect subsidies and decentralization. The main claim of this chapter is a claim of policy, as Cowen’s main purpose of writing is to create a policy change for the governmental funding of art. The secondary claims include a claim of definition, as Cowen attempts to formulate a definition of art. Is art represented only by paintings and operas, or could art be defined as high fashion clothing or sports? Discovering an agreeable definition of what constitutes as art is essential, as it is impossible to fund the arts without first realizing what exactly art is. Finally, there is a claim of value, as Cowen is describing his own position on the topic because he believes that his view would be the most beneficial for America; he is advocating for what he sees to be good change. The contextual warrant is that art is something that is appreciated in the American culture and therefore it should be funded in some way.

Cowen uses proofs and language to support his claims. Most of the proofs in this book are logic based. It uses inductive reasoning, as it provides examples of different potential policies and proves how they are correct or incorrect to create a final, comprehensive claim. Also, the book uses proofs of definition as it attempts to define art, yet Cowen admits that a broad definition of art could not include objects such as toys or sports to be funded by the government. Cowen uses this to advocate for indirect subsidies, as it would benefit all things creative and beautiful, rather than having to define what counts as art. In addition, Cowen uses an ethos proof, a proof of authority, as he references artists such as Jean Dubuffet, economics professors such as Robert H. Frank, and sociologists such as Pierre Bourdieu in his book to build credibility. In tune with his proofs, Cowen uses largely logos and ethos in his book. Pathos is seen as Cowen is obviously passionate about his topic, but for the vast majority of the chapter Cowen relies on logos to make his claim. This strengthens his claim because he explains them through the uses of reason and credibility rather than emotion.

The journal article published by *Public Budgeting and Finance*, “In Search of True Public Arts Support” by Arthur C. Brooks, advocates for indirect subsidies, similar to Cowen, yet he takes a more analytic approach, using surveys, equations, and demographics to prove his claim. Brooks states that because indirect subsidies already provide more art than direct subsidies, the arts should target private donors in order to receive the greatest amount of funding.

To analyze this article it is important to identify the audience, author, and constraints. The audience is artists or art organizations because the article is explaining the easiest way to receive the most money in funding. The author is a professor of Public Administration at Syracuse University, therefore he is highly educated about the subject of economic policy. He also references many other reputable sources and incorporates charts, diagrams, and surveys to

strengthen his main points. This article is constrained by its availability for the general public to read. As it is part of an academic journal, the only readers of this article would be a limited range of people interested in economic policy and finance.

Brooks addresses several claims in his article, the main claim being a claim of policy with supplementary claims of fact and value. The major claim of policy is that instead of trying to entice the government to give money to the arts, a more beneficial way would be to target individuals who are most likely demographically to give money to the arts. From his research, Brooks discovered that the demographic most likely to give the greatest amount of funding to the arts is that of “upper-income, educated white women” (Brooks 99). The arts will never receive enough money from the government, but by targeting the likelihood of certain individuals by demographics to give to the arts, the art community will receive more money than if they had badgered the government for direct support. This comes from the claim of fact, which is that private donations provide more money for the arts than direct support from the government. This fact was proven by Brooks in his article when he states that “this giving [the giving by private donations] amounted to a little more than \$11 billion, outweighing total direct government subsidies to the arts by almost \$16 to \$1” (Brooks 92). Similar statistics that come from reputable, government sources are provided throughout the article to prove this point. The claim of value argues that it is better to target individuals who are more likely to donate to the arts than to attempt to receive all of the money needed directly from the government.

These claims would not be supported without the use of warrants and proofs. The contextual warrant is the desire of the reader to want to fund the arts. Most of the types of proofs are logical proofs. This includes inductive reasoning, where Brooks makes the claim that more money is given to the arts by private donors than by direct governmental funding. He supports

this claim by comparing the amount of money in past years given by the government and given by private donors to show that private donors give significantly more. This results in the warrant that individuals give money to fund the arts. This leads to deductive reasoning, where the warrant is that more money is received from private donors than the government, which is proved by the specific numbers Brooks mentions about funding in past years and makes the claim that the numbers provided show that art organizations should target individuals to receive more funding. The most heavily used argument is the argument from statistics, as Brooks uses a number of charts, graphs, and statistics to support his claim. The proof of ethos is that the statistics are from reputable, often governmental, sources. The strength of this article comes from the many statistics and facts used. Logos is the most heavily used strategy, with ethos built in with the reputable sources and little use of pathos. The article does not appeal to emotions, but to logic, and for this reason the claims are convincing.

Both of the articles analyzed use logos and ethos rather than pathos, which presents their claims as more scholarly. Each argues for mostly indirect governmental funding, but through different ways. Cowen makes the claim that indirect subsidies would be agreeable to the largest number of people while Brooks argues that the arts should focus on receiving donations from private investors rather than directly from the government. Both articles are reputable and make strong claims, and because of this I agree that indirect subsidies are the best way to fund the arts. I am more persuaded by Brooks due to the vast research that was used in the writing of the article. While I do believe that some direct government support is necessary, the arts need to focus their efforts on receiving funds from private donors rather than from the government. The issue of government art funding has gone back and forth for decades, and a solution must be found if the arts program in the United States is going to continue to grow.

Works Cited

Brooks, Arthur C. "In Search of True Public Arts Support." *Public Budgeting and Finance* 24.2

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Cowen, Tyler. "Toward a Beautiful and Liberal Future." *Good and Plenty: The Creative Success*

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Ally, really good work! You break these articles down well! Nice identification of the rhetorical elements, as well as the elements of Toulmin. Consider specific warrants for each article, and you get a little unclear about the warrants within the second source. Also, you're not entirely clear about where you stand in relation to the two articles; you seem to contract yourself. Overall, though you do a good job of analyzing these articles. Nice work.