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Gubernatorial Influence over New York State Appropriations: 1983-2009

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Budget appropriations are one of the most important tasks of state government. Initially proposed by the governor in the executive budget and enacted by the Legislature, appropriations of state funds greatly affect the everyday functioning of hundreds of state agencies. The state budget bills determine "not only how much will be available for state spending, but also which policies will be implemented and which social values will prevail in state governance."[1] It is important to understand which branch of government controls the budget process because it has such broad implications for every policy area. Although many studies have examined differences in gubernatorial influence across multiple states and large spans of time, there are relatively few that focus on individual states. An in-depth case study can explore why some governors are more successful in advancing their preferred appropriation levels than others within the same institutional context.

Gubernatorial influence over agency appropriations in New York State may be influenced by a variety of factors, including the length in office and governing style of individual governors, the election cycle, and solitary events such as court decisions and political disputes between the governor and the Legislature. The level of gubernatorial influence over agency appropriations is observed in this study by computing the percent change between the executive budget amounts and enacted appropriations. Years with fewer changes made to the executive budget correspond to higher gubernatorial influence. Figures were collected for twenty-seven years, from 1983-2009, and involve four governors: Mario Cuomo, George Pataki, Eliot Spitzer, and David Paterson.

New York State has relied on an executive budgeting system since 1929, when Governor Alfred Smith's efforts to expand the governor's budget powers became effective. The governor

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[1] Clynch, Edward J. and Lauth, Thomas P., *Governors, Legislatures, and Budgets*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1991.

receives agency requests for funds and submits his annual proposals in an executive budget by February 1st. The enactment of budget bills is considered late after April 1st, the start of the fiscal year in New York. The governor can amend the executive budget bills for thirty days after submission, and the Legislature cannot consider additional budget bills until the governor's proposals have been acted on.

The constitution directs the governor to give copies of agency requests to the fiscal committees in the Legislature, and allow them access to agency request hearings. The Legislature can reduce or delete items in the executive budget, but it cannot add new items unless they are considered separately. The Legislature cannot alter language in budget bills beyond the proposed amounts, and it cannot completely replace the governor's proposals with its own.[2] In addition to these budget bills, state spending can also be accomplished through enactment of supplemental budgets, off-budget spending, and federal grants-in-aid.

Although the state constitution grants significant budgeting powers to the governor, recent years have seen a great deal of conflict between the chief executive and the Legislature, which leads to the need for compromises. By analyzing trends over the last twenty seven years, some factors which might affect gubernatorial influence over appropriations can be observed. In particular, this study focuses on the success of individual governors in persuading the Legislature to enact their preferred budget bills, both in terms of their length in office and their interactions with the Legislature, as well as the election cycle and important events which add political context to the budget process. These correlations offer some insight on the factors responsible for different levels of gubernatorial influence over appropriations in New York State, and why some governors are more successful than others.

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[2] *Pataki v. New York State Assembly,* 4 N.Y.3d 75, 791 N.Y.S.2d 458 (2004), and *People v. Tremaine,* 281 N.Y. 8, 21 N.E.2d 891 (1939).

Literature Review

Many political scientists have focused on the relationship between the executive and legislative branches of state and federal government over the past few decades with a specific emphasis on the budget process. The majority of the relevant studies have focused on national government. The federal government's budget process is different than state government processes because of the federal government's ability to print money and incur annual deficits. State budgets are also dependent for funds in part on federal grants-in-aid, whose conditions affect spending decisions and budget negotiations.

Nevertheless, the conclusions of some studies on relations between the President and Congress are applicable to executive-legislative interactions on the state level. In 1988, Janet Pack examined the impact of economic and fiscal factors on budget outcomes, and noted that the executive's proposals were followed more closely on revenue proposals than on proposed expenditures.[3] Roderick Kiewiet and Mathew McCubbins modeled executive-legislative budgetary relations as a bargaining game that is influenced by economic and political factors such as the election cycle and political ideology.[4] Federal appropriations decisions also have been described as responses by re-election seeking legislators to economic and political factors in their respective districts, which could be applicable to state legislators.[5]

Some research on the politics of state budgets is available. It is difficult to generalize about state budget processes because each individual state may have different constitutional procedures, such as the extent to which the legislature can amend the governor's proposed appropriations, the provisions that can be vetoed by the governor, and time frames for enacting

[3] Janet Rothenberg Pack, "The Congress and Fiscal Policy," *Public Choice* 58, no. 2, 1988, pp. 101-22.

[4] Roderick Kiewiet and Mathew D. McCubbins, "Appropriations Decisions as a Bilateral Bargaining Game between President and Congress," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 10, no. 2, 1985, pp. 181-201.

[5] Roderick Kiewiet and Mathew D. McCubbins, "Congressional Appropriations and the Electoral Connection," *The Journal of Politics* 47, no. 1, 1985, pp. 59-82.

final budget bills. Edward Clynch and Thomas Lauth wrote that the budget process in some states will be dominated by the governor, who receives and reviews agency requests and submits his or her budget recommendations to the Legislature in the form of budget bills, while in other states the legislative leaders also receive agency requests and can prepare their own proposals.[6] Differences in the role of staff in both branches of government can play a large role in budget outcomes. For instance, it has been noted that the Legislature's ability to independently access budgetary information leads to a decrease in gubernatorial budgetary influence.[7]

It is also important to identify the elements of executive power. One of the earliest indexes of gubernatorial power was created in 1965 by Joseph Schlesinger, who ranked governors based on their powers of tenure, veto, appointment, and budget creation.[8] Thad Beyle followed up on this study by sending out a survey to governors asking what powers they thought they lacked. The majority responded that they wished they could have greater appointment powers, and the lowest percent wished for more budgetary powers.[9] These findings may imply that budgetary powers are viewed as the least important to governors, or simply that most executives were satisfied with their current budgetary powers. Nelson Dometrius, in a later analysis of Schlesinger's index, reinforced the notion that appointment powers were the most important for governors, and dropped tenure powers from his index all together.[10] It is important to note that in each of these studies, budgetary powers remained a crucial aspect of gubernatorial strength. Preparing the executive budget proposal is one of the governor's most important responsibilities, and it is also the most direct way to analyze his or her policy priorities and goals.

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[6] Edward J. Clynch and Thomas P. Lauth, *Budgeting in the States*, Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2006.

[7] Doug Goodman, "Determinants of Perceived Gubernatorial Budgetary Influence among State Executive Budget Analysts and Legislative Fiscal Analysts," *Political Research Quarterly* 60, March 2007, pp. 43-54.

[8] Joseph A. Schlesinger, "The Politics of the Executive," *Politics in the American States*, no. 2, 1965, pp. 210–37.

[9] Thad L. Beyle, "The Governor's Formal Powers: A View from the Governor's Chair," *Public Administration Review* 28, December 1968, pp. 540-45.

[10] Nelson C. Dometrius, "Measuring Gubernatorial Power," *The Journal of Politics*, 1979, pp. 589–610.

Many scholars focused on the question of whether gubernatorial influence over state appropriations has been increasing or decreasing over time. Several early studies concluded that the governor's recommendations were the most important influence for agencies to receive the highest percentage of their requests, and that the governor was perceived to have the most influence by budget officials in both branches.[11] Yet when the same issue was revisited twenty years later, there was a decline in gubernatorial influence in terms of the percentage of the executive budget that was enacted as well as perceived influence.[12] Factors contributing to the decline of gubernatorial influence included reforms such as an increased role of legislative staff in reviewing information and political division.[13] However, a few researchers did not conclude that gubernatorial influence has been declining.[14]

The impact of party control and divided government has been of specific interest to many researchers. It has been found that state legislatures controlled by Democrats or Republicans have very different budget totals, and that when the executive and legislative branches are controlled by the same party, they are able to respond more quickly to sudden changes in revenue.[15] One study pointed to the fact that divided government can have an impact on the number of laws enacted.[16] When the legislature is unified against the party of the governor there

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[11] Glenn Abney and Thomas P. Lauth, "Perceptions of the Impact of Governors and Legislatures in the State Appropriations Process," *The Western Political Quarterly* 40, June 1987, pp. 335-42; and Ira Sharkansky, "Agency Requests, Gubernatorial Support and Budget Success in State Legislatures," *The American Political Science Review* 62, December 1968, pp. 1220-31.

[12] Doug Goodman, "Determinants of Perceived Gubernatorial Budgetary Influence among State Executive Budget Analysts and Legislative Fiscal Analysts," *Political Research Quarterly* 60, 2007, pp. 210-37; and Joel A. Thompson, "Agency Requests, Gubernatorial Support, and Budget Success in State Legislatures Revisited," *The Journal of Politics* 49, August 1987, pp. 756-79.

[13] Glenn Abney and Thomas P. Lauth, "The End of Executive Dominance in State Appropriations," *Public Administration Review* 58, October 1998, pp. 388-94.

[14] Nelson C. Dometrius and Deil S. Wright, "Governors, Legislatures, Partisanship, and State Budget Processes." In *Fourth Annual Meeting of the State Politics and Policy Conference, Kent, OH*, 2004.

[15] James E. Alt and Robert C. Lowry, "Divided Government, Fiscal Institutions, and Budget Deficits: Evidence from the States," *The American Political Science Review* 88, December 1994, pp. 811-28.

[16] Sarah A. Binder, "The Dynamics of Legislative Gridlock, 1947-96," *The American Political Science Review* 93, September 1999, pp. 519-33.

is more budget conflict in particular.[17] It has also been observed that the presence of unified government helps the president achieve success in having his legislative program enacted.[18]

When describing the budget process in New York State, Clynch and Lauth explained that "while partisan control of both the executive and legislature does not guarantee cooperation, divided government creates opportunities and incentives for legislative resistance to gubernatorial initiatives."[19] During periods of unified party control, the governor may be able to convince the legislature to enact his or her preferred budget bills and depend on party loyalty. Otherwise, each branch has conflicting party goals and constituency needs that are likely to lead to increased conflict on general legislation and annual budget appropriations. Some studies have cast doubt on this theory, suggesting that party control has little impact on gubernatorial influence because stronger governors develop when there is divided government, and weaker governors develop when there is unified government.[20] Other scholars examined how gubernatorial influence through the veto power is most successful when the legislature is controlled by the opposing party lacking enough votes to overturn the veto.[21] Party control is clearly an important factor in studies regarding executive-legislative conflict.

Other researchers investigated the importance of political factors such as the election cycle and found that the governor is more likely to cooperate with the Legislature when statewide elections for legislators are relatively close but the governor does not have a difficult

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[17] Wes Clarke, "Divided Government and Budget Conflict in the U. S. States," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 23, February 1998, pp. 5-22.
[18] Andrew W. Barrett and Matthew Eshbaugh-Soha, "Presidential Success on the Substance of Legislation," *Political Research Quarterly* 60, March 2007, pp. 100-12.
[19] Edward J. Clynch and Thomas P. Lauth. *Budgeting in the States*, Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2006, p. 58.
[20] Doug Goodman, "Determinants of Perceived Gubernatorial Budgetary Influence among State Executive Budget Analysts and Legislative Fiscal Analysts," *Political Research Quarterly* 60, March 2007, pp. 43-54.
[21] James A. Dearden and Thomas A. Husted, "Do Governors Get What They Want?: An Alternative Examination of the Line-Item Veto," *Public Choice* 77, no. 4, 1993, pp. 707-23.

election to worry about.[22] Without his or her own political security, the governor will focus on a separate agenda at the expense of the Legislature's agenda. It has also been shown that favorable approval ratings help executives achieve enactment of bills they favored.[23]

Another topic that may be relevant is the influence of political culture on individual states. Daniel J. Elazar wrote one of the first studies on this topic in 1976. He defined political culture as "the particular pattern of orientation to political action in which each political system is imbedded."[24] He maintained that political culture needed to be studied in terms of its sources, such as ethnicity and religion, its manifestations in political attitudes and symbols, and its effects on actions, institutions, and policies. Elazar focused on the impact of immigration and generational changes on specific regions of the country as determinants of political culture. He placed the states into three categories, which often overlapped: individualistic, moralistic, and traditionalistic.

Regions with an individualistic culture tend to view democracy as a market place, with government run like a business to address the demands of the people in a utilitarian sense. They favor economic development and limited community intervention into private activities, and individuals often use public service as a means for personal advancement. Regions with a moralistic culture are built upon the assumption that government should provide a "good society." They believe that it is the duty of every citizen to participate, and that public officials should be committed to the promotion of public welfare. They support more intervention into private matters than individualistic culture. Finally, the traditionalistic culture is based on a

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[22] Charles Barrilleaux and Michael Berkman, "Do Governors Matter? Budgeting Rules and the Politics of State Policymaking," *Political Research Quarterly* 56, December 2003, pp. 409-17.
[23] Andrew W. Barrett and Matthew Eshbaugh-Soha, "Presidential Success on the Substance of Legislation," *Political Research Quarterly* 60, March 2007, pp. 100-12.
[24] Daniel J. Elazar, *The American mosaic: The Impact of Space, Time, and Culture on American politics*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1994, p. 9.

paternalistic and elitist idea of a commonwealth. This culture promotes a hierarchical society that maintains the existing social order and opposes bureaucracy. The system is dominated by a few powerful families or elites.

Elazar's study was important because it was one of the first to address culture's affect on government, and it sparked further debate on the subject among political scientists. For instance, Samuel C. Patterson linked differences in political culture to education, social, and economic differences among state populations.[25] A later multi-state survey and quantitative regression analysis showed that geographic location can have an impact on individual ideology and partisanship as well as statewide political culture. These characteristics could then be used to predict voting behavior.[26] Elazar's work was also tested through an examination of the population of every state that adhered to certain religions he had associated with its subculture, as well as factors such as political participation, importance of political parties, and emphasis on social welfare programs to see if his conclusions were accurate.[27] The author of the study found that they were mostly correlated, with some errors that may have been due to overlapping cultures.

It is important to take political culture into account when studying budgetary politics because deep rooted attitudes and cultural norms may influence the process differently in the various regions of the country. Steven Koven performed a quantitative, comparative study of every state's budget in 1999 using Elazar's three political cultures as well as political ideology in

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[25] Samuel C. Patterson, "The Political Cultures of the American States," *The Journal of Politics* 30, February 1968, pp. 187-209.
[26] Robert S. Erikson, John P. McIver, and Gerald C. Wright, "State Political Culture and Public Opinion," *The American Political Science Review* 81, September 1987, pp. 797-813.
[27] Charles A. Johnson, "Political Culture in American States: Elazar's Formulation Examined," *American Journal of Political Science* 20, August 1976, pp. 491-509.

terms of conservative or liberal.[28] His findings suggested that political culture may in fact have some relation to state budgets, as most individualistic states had the highest levels of taxing and spending, while traditionalistic states had the lowest. Moralistic states had relatively high budgetary spending as well due to their attempts to create a "good society" and promote social welfare. There were also differences in spending categories across the three categories, especially for education and interest on debt. The dominant political ideology in a state had less impact on budgetary totals, tax strategies, and revenue sources. The only notable difference in states by ideology was the proportion of the budget dedicated to education spending.

Although there are many studies that focus on why gubernatorial dominance has increased or decreased in comparison to legislative influence over appropriations, most do not discuss why differences exist within specific states. A notable exception to this generalization is James Gosling's case study of the budgetary process in Wisconsin, which determined that the Legislature has been gaining more influence than the governor over appropriations.[29] The Legislature exercised influence through its ability to amend the executive budget and create its own policy initiatives. Gosling's study illustrates the fact that who controls the policy agenda is important and that in-depth case studies can lead to important conclusions about the budget process that might not be apparent in large scale studies.

There is also a lack of information regarding the substantial differences among individuals in specific states. Why are some governors successful in persuading the Legislature to enact their proposed appropriation levels, while others have comparatively less influence over the enacted budget bills in the same state? In addition, the majority of the relevant research has

[28] Steven, G. Koven, *Public Budgeting in the United States: The Cultural and Ideological Setting*. Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 1999.
[29] James J. Gosling, "Patterns of Influence and Choice in the Wisconsin Budgetary Process," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 10, November 1985, pp. 457-82.

focused on broad data sets with information from multiple states. While this approach is useful for observing long term trends, there is a limited amount of in-depth information regarding the processes of particular states.

Hypotheses

The literature on executive-legislative relations suggests that there may be many factors affecting influence over agency appropriations. The three factors explored further in this study are individual governors and their length in office, the election year cycle, and solitary events such as court decisions and major political disputes between the governor and the leadership of the Legislature. Although the budget process is undoubtedly influenced by other factors or combinations of factors, these three were selected because of their relevance in existing literature and news articles on state appropriations in New York. Additional information and historical context will be examined in more depth in the results and analysis section.

Hypothesis 1: Gubernatorial influence over agency appropriations in New York State will vary by individual governor, and increase with length in office.

During the period covered by this study, four different individuals have held the office of governor. The vast majority of the years were under Governors Mario M. Cuomo (1983-1994) and George E. Pataki (1995-2006), with only several of the most recent years under Governors Eliot Spitzer and David Paterson. It is reasonable to assume each governor had a different approach to legislative relations, and brought different experiences to his role. For example, George Pataki served eight years in the Assembly and two years in the Senate, making him the first person in 140 years to be elected governor after serving in the Legislature.[30] He came into office with established relationships with legislators and a clear understanding of their politics. Other governors did not have that experience or a well developed style for interacting with legislators. As a result, individual governors may have noticeably different levels of influence over appropriations.

Individual governors also may see an increase in influence as they serve in office for a longer period of time. Although there is little literature on changes in gubernatorial influence throughout their term, some scholars have studied how the president's length in office affects his ability to persuade Congress to enact his legislative program.[31] Eshbaugh-Soha noted that presidents are especially aware of the opportunity provided by their "honeymoon" period, in which they have goodwill from the public and the media and an increased chance of bipartisan cooperation.[32] But most importantly, he wrote that in their second term they also have more legislative success because as "they become familiar with the intricacies and peculiarities of the office, they learn how to manage more situations effectively."[33] This statement implies that executives who have been in office for longer periods of time may gain skills that are crucial for success on the state level as well. Governors can develop relationships with legislative leaders, leading to more negotiations and compromises, and begin to fully understand the politics of the budget process.

[30] James Dao, "New York's New Governor: The Legislature; Open-Door Policy?" *The New York Times*, January 5, 1995.
[31] Andrew Barrett and Matthew Eshbaugh-Soha, "Presidential Success on the Substance of Legislation," *Political Research Quarterly* 60, no. 1, 2007, pp. 100-12.
[32] Matthew Eshbaugh-Soha, "The Politics of Presidential Agendas," *Political Research Quarterly* 58, June 2005, pp. 257-68.
[33] Ibid., p. 263.

Hypothesis 2: Gubernatorial influence over agency appropriations in New York State will be impacted by the election cycle, with less gubernatorial influence in election years.

The New York State Legislature has been governed by divided party control for all but two years during the period covered in this study, with the Assembly controlled by the Democratic Party and the Senate controlled by the Republican Party. Regardless of the governor's political orientation, one branch of the legislature has generally opposed most of his agenda. The governor is elected every four years, and particularly when a governor is seeking re-election, there is a large incentive for the opposing branch of the Legislature to delay action on the budget bills and disagree with the governor's executive budget proposals. Delaying budget bills would not only generate bad publicity for the governor, who is seen as one of main driving forces behind their timeliness, but also distract and frustrate them during election season. As a result, gubernatorial election years may see more budget conflict and larger changes to the appropriations proposed in the executive budget.

It also may be significant to consider the levels of influence over appropriations during election years for members of the Legislature, who are elected every two years. Members of the Assembly and Senate may be eager to add member items to the budget in order to gain favor in their districts and increase their own publicity while seeking re-election. Those in the party opposing the governor also may wish to alter his proposed appropriations in order to portray themselves as a strong party member who is committed to fighting a politician their district does not favor. Partisan election concerns may lead to fluctuations in the governor's influence every other year, with less influence during election years.

Hypothesis 3: Gubernatorial influence over agency appropriations in New York State is impacted by solitary events such as court decisions and major political disputes.

Under hypothesis 3, gubernatorial influence over appropriations would remain relatively constant, only experiencing significant shifts as a result of specific events. For example, a 2004 New York Court of Appeals ruling reaffirmed the Governor's budget authority by opining that it was unconstitutional for the Legislature to alter the language of the provisions in Governor Pataki's budget bills.[34] This decision might have led to more gubernatorial influence over appropriations, simply because legislators did not have the same ability to alter the governor's budget bills.

Notable political disputes may have an influence on budgetary conflict as well. After speculation that Governor Mario M. Cuomo might run for president on the Democratic ticket in 1992, his Republican opponents in the Senate were accused of holding up budget bills in order to distract him from a potential campaign.[35] The resulting bitter and protracted budget process could have diminished Governor Cuomo's influence over agency appropriations and led to more noticeable changes by the Legislature in the enacted budget. The budget process is inherently political in nature, and New York State's history of a divided Legislature means that the process is sensitive to high profile disputes between political leaders. These specific events and court decisions, which are examined more closely in later sections, would cause noticeably high or low levels of gubernatorial influence compared to the majority of the years studied.

Methodology

The relationship between gubernatorial influence over appropriations and the above factors is explored in this study using a mostly quantitative methodology. Executive influence

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[34] Al Baker, "Court Ruling Backs Powers of Governor in Budgeting," *The New York Times*, April 23, 2004.
[35] Kevin Sack, "Budget Showdown with Cuomo Set up by GOP in Albany," *The New York Times*, December 14, 1991.

over state appropriations is operationalized in terms of the percent change from the governor's executive budget to the enacted budget bills, which is a measure used in several other studies.[36] For the purposes of this study, "agency" level appropriations will refer to the appropriations for several types of state institutions, including departments, commissions, and divisions that receive separate appropriations. Budgetary data were gathered from 1983 to 2009, in order to account for the full terms of several governors. The majority of the numbers were gathered from the *Report of the Fiscal Committees on the Executive Budget*, more commonly referred to as the "Green Book," which is a publication issued jointly by the Assembly Committee on Ways and Means and the Senate Finance Committee. The appropriations are divided into funding for State Operations, Aid to Localities, and Capital Projects. These categories were added together to calculate the all-funds totals for each agency. Reappropriations were not included in the totals.

The only year included in this study in which a Green Book was not published is 2006. I gathered numbers for the executive budget from the archives section of the Division of the Budget webpage and the *Statistical and Narrative Summary of the Executive Budget*, or "Yellow Book," published in 2006. [37] Data for the enacted appropriations totals were gathered from the full text bills available online.[38] The difference in source materials for 2006 may lead to some inconsistencies and slight inaccuracies, yet every effort has been made to gather the most complete information available.

For the purposes of consistency, I recorded individual agencies as reported in the Green Book. Versions that included several miscellaneous entries were totaled to match the years that

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[36] Wes Clarke, "Divided Government and Budget Conflict in the U. S. States," *Legislative Studies Quarterly 23*, no. 1, 1998, pp. 5-22; and Ira Sharkansky, "Agency Requests, Gubernatorial Support and Budget Success in State Legislatures," *The American Political Science Review* 62, no. 4, 1968, pp.1220-231.

[37] New York State Division of the Budget, "New York State Division of the Budget: 2006-07 Archive," http://www.budget.state.ny.us/pubs/archive/fy0607archive/0607archive.html. Accessed October 2010.

[38] New York State Legislature, "Legislative Session Information," http://public.leginfo.state.ny.us/menuf.cgi. Accessed October 2010

only have one miscellaneous entry in the Green Book. For instance, more recent versions listed a separate entry for “Miscellaneous: Public Protection and General Government,” “Miscellaneous: Health and Mental Hygiene,” etc. These were added together for one “Miscellaneous” entry, as seen in the older Green Books.

However, using the agencies as listed in the Green Book also creates some inconsistencies in the data set. Older versions of the Green Book included some agencies in the miscellaneous section that were individually entered in others, such as the Legislature and the Office of Public Security. There were also agencies that were merged with others, new agencies created, or agencies with changed names. As a result, the set of agencies itemized in the data set is not identical from year to year. Most of the agencies are the same, with the amount varying from 68 to 81.

Items were removed from the data set and subsequent calculations for several reasons. Some cases could not have a percent change calculated, such as when the governor tried to eliminate or merge agencies but full funding was restored by the Legislature. I also removed items that were outliers and unfairly biasing the calculated results. I used a cutoff of 75% change from the executive budget to determine outliers, as this included no more than one or two items from each year that were the most extreme. For example, Green Books that included appropriations for the Natural Heritage Trust usually were affected by the extremity of that organization’s percent change, which often surpassed 100%. Unusually large changes skewed the results and incorrectly characterized the rest of the numbers, which generally averaged fewer than 7% on an individual agency basis.

The two figures that were ultimately calculated for each budget year were the overall percent change for all appropriations, and the average percent change to individual agencies. It is important to note that my “overall” percent change score is not representative of all state spending. I included only appropriations on the agency level, which were funded from various sources such as the general fund, special revenue, and capital projects fund. I did not include any off-budget spending, reappropriations, debt payments, or funding from supplemental budgets. The term “overall” is used loosely to describe the total of all the appropriations that I included in a given year. The average percent change to individual agencies was calculated from the sum of all individual percent changes divided by the number of entries.

Each measure has its own tradeoffs in terms of validity and analysis. The overall measure offers a general overview of the Legislature’s changes to the executive budget. However, in a situation where the appropriations for one agency were increased and another agency was decreased, the overall total may even out and not be reflective of the changes. The average percent change measure is responsive to both positive and negative changes from the executive budget. The average percent change could also be skewed if the appropriations for many smaller agencies are drastically changed from the executive budget, while the larger agencies that make up the majority of the budget are relatively unchanged. For these reasons, I decided to include both measures. Years in which the two measures are far apart indicate that there were mainly large changes to the appropriations for smaller agencies.

Information regarding the style of individual governors and their interactions with the Legislature was gathered mainly from newspaper articles. The articles helped to shed light on important political disputes and events that may have influenced the budget process in New York over the past twenty seven years. These factors, including relevant court decisions and election years, were used to observe correlations and analyze long term trends in gubernatorial influence over agency appropriations.

The design of this study has some limitations. Beyond the previously noted limitations of an imperfect data set, there is also the potential for human error in data entry. I also am approaching the research within a limited time frame and without a substantial background in statistics or budgetary studies. Finally, the factors analyzed for potential correlations with the budget data are not inclusive of all possible factors. Budgeting in New York State is a complex and highly political process affected by many different variables. Nevertheless, some general conclusions can be drawn from the selected data.

Results and Analysis

All figures and tables in this section were created by the author. Figure 1 and Table 1 depict the final numbers for both sets of values, with the red line representing the average percent change to individual agencies and the blue line representing the overall change to the appropriations for that year. Higher points in the graph represent large changes to the executive budget, and less gubernatorial influence over the final appropriations. On the other hand, low points on the graph indicate high levels of gubernatorial influence over the appropriations because relatively few changes were made from the amounts in the executive budget. It is also important to note that the year 1983, for example, represents the budget for the fiscal year of 1983-1984 that commenced on April 1st.

On the surface, Figure 1 suggests that there is some variety in gubernatorial influence over time, with a variation of several percentage points. Some years see a positive or negative spike in influence, but there are recurring fluctuations across periods of time. Specific numerical values for each year can be seen in the corresponding table. To determine the validity of each hypothesis, it is necessary to deconstruct these data into shorter time periods where the political context can be analyzed.

Figure 1: Complete Data Set

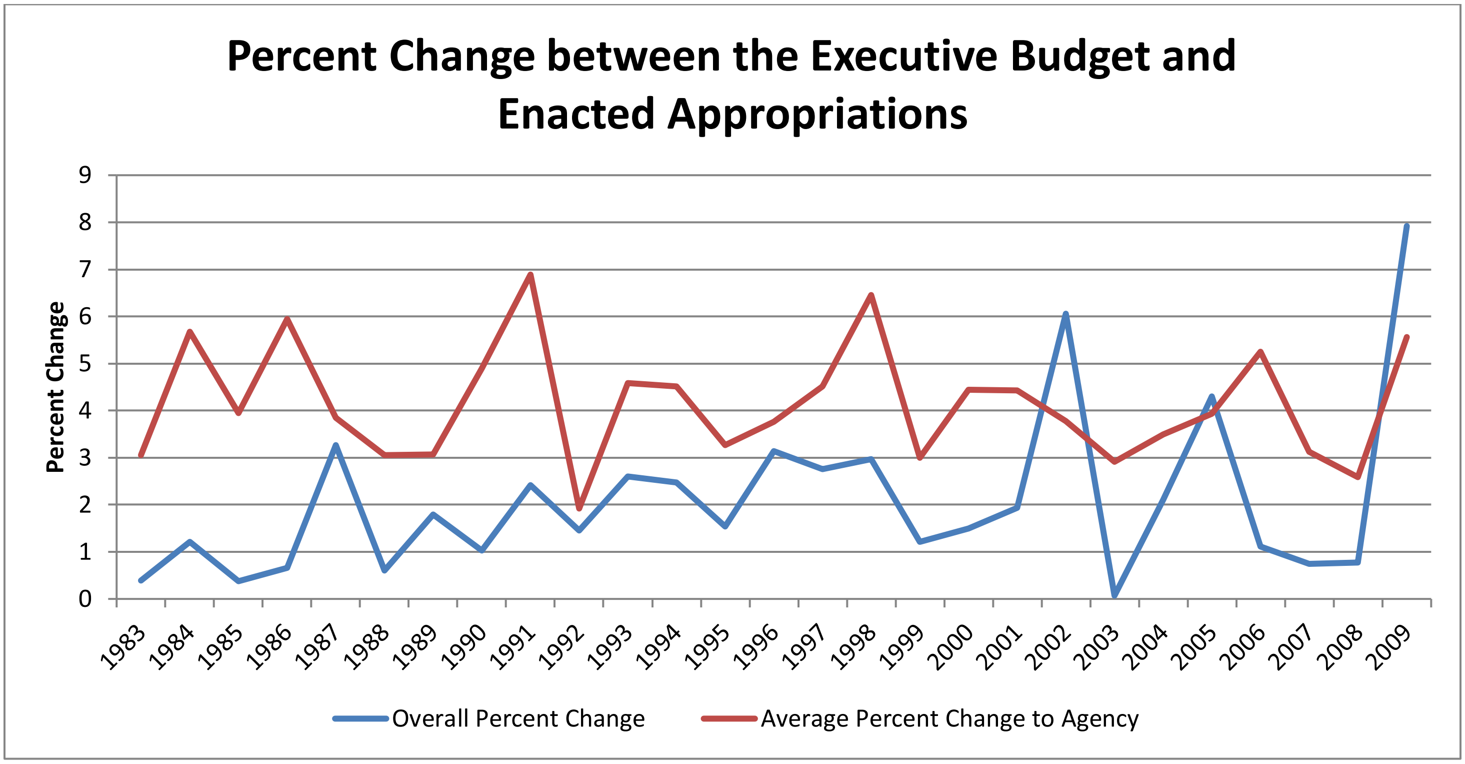


Table 1: Complete Data Set

Year	Overall Change (%)	Average Change to Agency (%)
1983	0.39	3.06
1984	1.21	5.68
1985	0.37	3.95
1986	0.66	5.94
1987	3.27	3.85
1988	0.60	3.06
1989	1.80	3.07
1990	1.03	4.89
1991	2.41	6.89
1992	1.45	1.92
1993	2.60	4.59
1994	2.48	4.52
1995	1.54	3.26

1996	3.14	3.76
1997	2.76	4.52
1998	2.97	6.46
1999	1.21	3.00
2000	1.49	4.45
2001	1.93	4.43
2002	6.06	3.78
2003	0.07	2.91
2004	2.10	3.50
2005	4.30	3.93
2006	1.12	5.25
2007	0.75	3.12
2008	0.78	2.59
2009	7.92	5.56

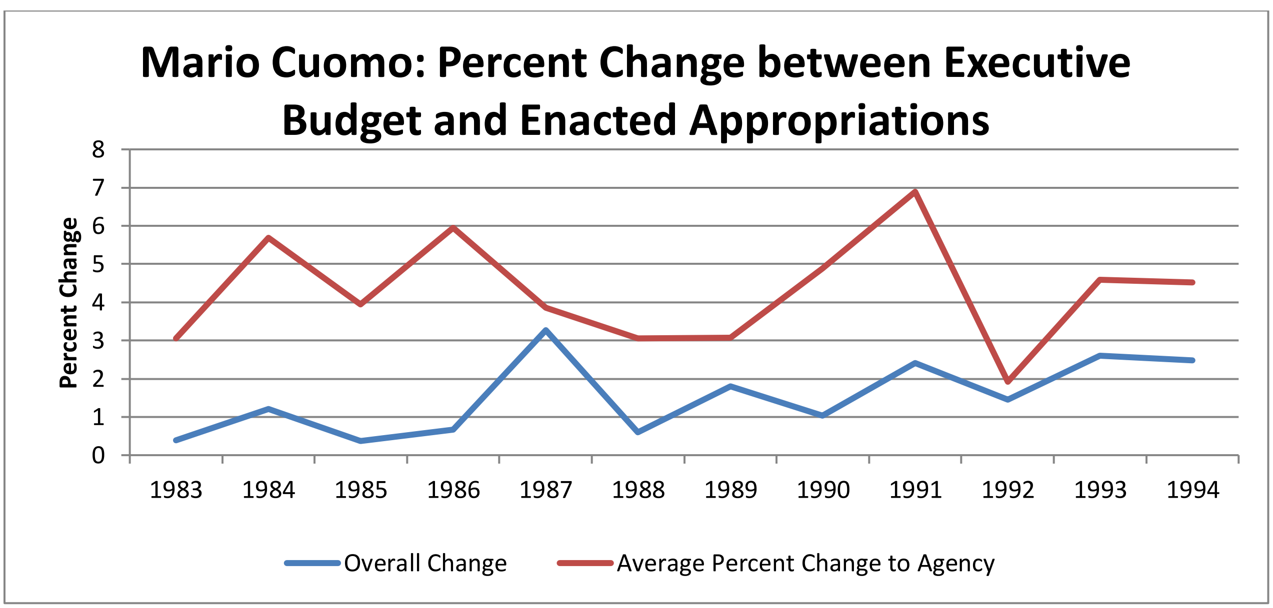
Hypothesis 1: Gubernatorial influence over agency appropriations in New York State will vary by individual governor, and increase with length in office.

For this hypothesis to be true, we would expect to see the percent change decrease over each governor's time in office, and also differ significantly between governors. The figures have been classified by the length in office of each governor, except for Eliot Spitzer, who only served during one full budget year. The data for David Paterson also are limited, as only two years of budgetary figures were available for his time in office. As a result, the hypothesis can be most clearly applied to Governors Mario M. Cuomo and George E. Pataki.

The overall percent change to all appropriations included in the study over Governor Cuomo's gubernatorial tenure does not support the hypothesis. Instead, the overall percent change during his governorship seems to increase over time. The lowest two points occurred during 1983 and 1985, which suggests that Governor Cuomo was more successful at advancing his budgetary agenda during the first three years of his tenure. The overall percent change made by the legislature spiked several percentage points in 1987 to just over 3% and then climbed higher over time, with some fluctuations.

The average percent change to individual agencies for the Cuomo years was higher than the overall change in general and had greater variability, ranging from 2-7%. After some fluctuations in the earlier years, the line decreases in the late 1980s, suggesting greater influence for Governor Cuomo. However, the years 1990 and 1991 saw a significant increase in changes made to the Governor Cuomo's executive budget, and his influence at the end of his tenure averaged out somewhere in the middle. Both measures indicate that Governor Cuomo was not more successful in advancing his preferred budgetary appropriations over time. There were fluctuations in the percent change at various points, and a slight increase in the changes made to his overall appropriations by the Legislature. His point of greatest influence was recorded in 1992, as represented by the lowest point on the graph, which is in the later part of his tenure. Yet the overall numbers do not support the hypothesis of increasing influence over time.

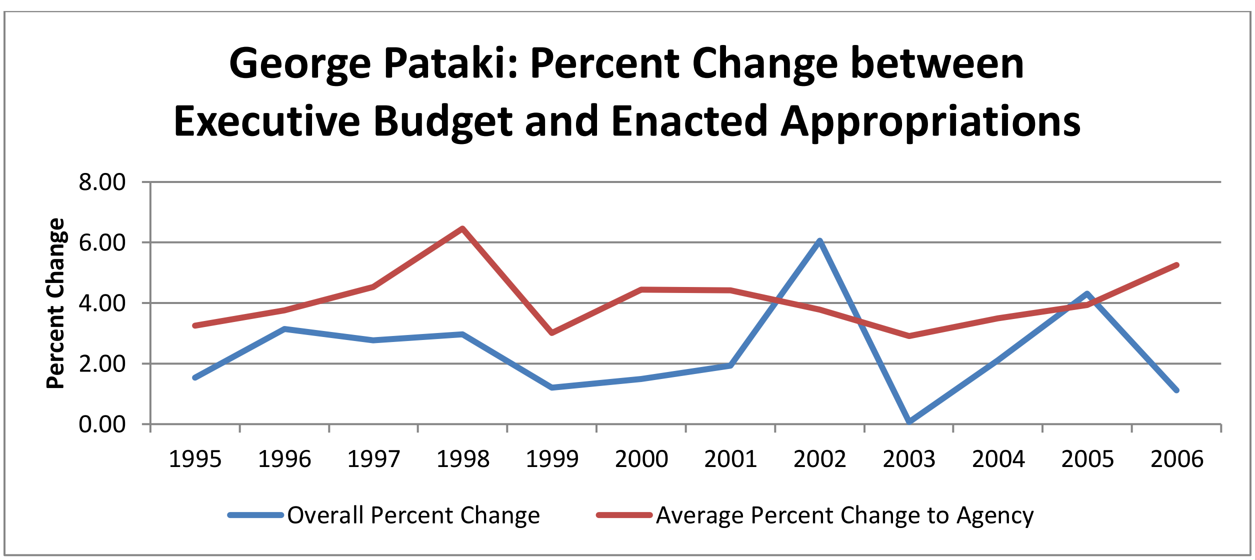
Figure 2



The data can be analyzed in a similar manner for Governor George E. Pataki, who governed from 1995 to 2006. The overall percent change made to appropriations for each fiscal year during his tenure does not show a trend of decreasing over time. There is a slight increase and decrease in his first few years, followed by a two sharp fluctuations in the percent change. The point of greatest gubernatorial influence, which is seen in the graph as the lowest point, does fall in 2003 and the later portion of Pataki's tenure, but the two points of least influence are also in the same period during the years 2002 and 2005.

While the average percent change for individual agencies under Governor Pataki has a different shape than the same graph for Governor Cuomo, it still does not follow the expectations of the hypothesis. There are several periods of increasing and decreasing percent changes, with both the early and later years of his term seeing an increase in the percent change made from the executive budget. The periods of increasing change suggest that Governor Pataki was struggling to maintain influence over agency appropriations at several points in his tenure, and even at the end his influence was still declining. Neither of the measures for percent change during George Pataki's time in office supports the hypothesis.

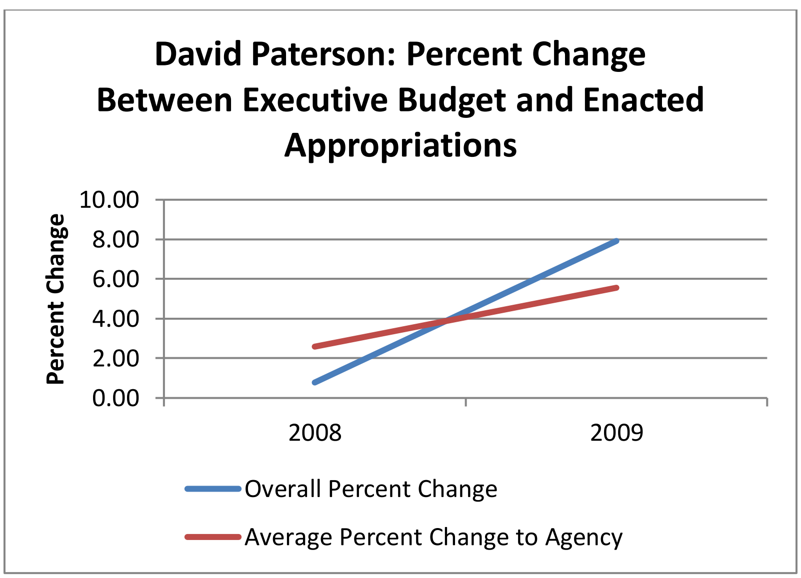
Figure 3



Governor Eliot Spitzer assumed office in 2007 and resigned in March of 2008 following a public scandal. His term cannot be analyzed over time due to the fact that he only presided over the budget year for 2007-08, and was not in office for the complete enactment of the 2008-09 budget. I attributed the 2008-09 budget to Governor David Paterson's term, which gives him two consecutive years of data to be analyzed. Although this time frame is very limited, if the hypothesis were to hold true we would still expect to see a decrease in the percent change from Governor Paterson's first year in office to his second.

The 2008-09 budget was surrounded by the political turmoil from Spitzer's resignation, and Governor Paterson had barely assumed office before the budget bills were enacted. It would be reasonable to assume under this hypothesis that Governor Paterson would have more influence over the budget for the next year. However, as Figure 4 shows, the percent change made by the legislature to Governor Paterson's proposed executive budget increased for the 2009-10 budget, thereby indicating less gubernatorial influence over agency appropriations and again disproving the hypothesis.

Figure 4



The other component of the hypothesis is difference in influence among individual governors, based on their distinct styles and interactions with legislative leaders. For example, Governor Mario Cuomo often struggled to maintain a positive relationship with the Legislature. He came into office with hopes of cooperating with the Senate Republican opposition as well as the difficult task of closing a budget gap due to declining state revenue.[39] At some points during his tenure, budget negotiations resulted in compromises with the opposing party.[40] After a drawn out budget fight in 1991 and 1992, Cuomo was able to draft a compromise budget, which was seen as "a gesture of conciliation to the Senate Republicans" with cuts to Medicaid, welfare, and without any large tax increases.[41] Yet even the fact that the budget negotiations had taken so long was indicative of a difficult relationship with his opponents. At another point in his tenure, Cuomo blamed the late budget acts on the Legislature and referred to the legislators as "fools," "dummies," and "greedy pigs" due to their push for member items.[42] Cuomo had to contend with a strong opposition in the Senate and periods of economic decline across the state, which both contributed to difficult budgetary negotiations throughout his terms in office.

When George E. Pataki came into office in 1995, he tried to contrast his style with that of his predecessor. He described Cuomo's time in office as full of "institutional friction" between the governor and the Legislature, with bitter deadlock that delayed his proposals and held back the budget process.[43] Pataki, who had come into office directly from a position in the Legislature, vowed to make changing the relationship between branches one of his first

[39] Michael Oreskes, "New Governor Has Big Plans but the Deficit Looms Larger," *The New York Times*, January 2, 1983.
[40] Kevin Sack, "A Broad-Stroke Budget," *The New York Times*, April 2, 1993; and James Dao, "Cuomo Details Compromise Proposed in Budget Talks," *The New York Times*, April 5, 1994.
[41] Kevin Sack, "Gesture of Fiscal Conciliation," *The New York Times*, January 22, 1992.
[42] James Dao, "The Governor's Budget Gambit," *The New York Times*, May 20, 1994.
[43] James Dao, "New York's New Governor: The Legislature; Open-Door Policy?" *The New York Times*, January 5, 1995.

initiatives and promised a "warmer approach to politics".[44] It quickly became apparent, however, that his relationship with the Democratic Assembly was just as difficult as Cuomo's had been with the Republican Senate. Many budgets acts during his tenure were severely delayed, a problem that he blamed on the Democrats, and he also complained that their stripped down appropriations were designed to hinder his ability to govern.[45]

The relationship between Pataki and the Legislature also took a negative turn when they began to argue over the constitutionality of their respective budgetary powers. In 2001, Pataki claimed that cuts made to his proposed appropriations were unconstitutional, because the Legislature changed specific portions of the language in budget bills.[46] This debate ended up in the New York Court of Appeals, which reaffirmed the Governor's budgetary powers and the executive budgeting system. Between the years of 2001 and 2006, Governor Pataki vetoed a significant amount of budget bills, and in some years they were largely overridden by the Legislature. The specifics of these political conflicts will be examined in greater depth for Hypothesis #3, which focuses on solitary events. The important point for this section is that despite Pataki's efforts to maintain a positive relationship with the Legislature, he still faced strong opposition and periods of difficult budgetary disputes.

Eliot Spitzer was elected during a national Democratic landslide in 2006, and came into office as governor in January of 2007 with a drastically different approach. Spitzer, who previously referred to himself as a "steamroller," came into office with a style that was described as "hard-charging" and aggressive.[47] His interactions with the Legislature were not always easy

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[44] Ian Fisher, "Albany Memo; As Pataki Settles in as Governor, His Style Offers Contrasts to Cuomo's," *The New York Times*, January 9, 1995.
[45] James C. McKinley, "Defiant Legislators Proceed on Budget Spurned by Pataki," *The New York Times*, August 3, 2001.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Michael Cooper and Danny Hakim, "Steamroller in Albany Learns How to Concede," *The New York Times*, March 29, 2007.

during the budget process, and as the other governors before him, Spitzer had to learn to compromise. The resulting negotiations were characterized as "behind the scenes deals" lacking transparency.[48] Governor Spitzer only had one attempt to forge budgetary deals with the Legislature, as a 2008 scandal led to his resignation and passed his position onto Liuetentant Governor David Paterson.

Paterson was another former legislator, and in his inaugural speech he reached out to the Legislature and promised a departure from the "politics of confrontation."[49] Amid the political turmoil following Spitzer's resignation, Paterson struggled to gain legislative approval for his first budget bills and held meetings with legislative leaders that were criticized for their secrecy and lack of transparency.[50] The 2010-11 budget bills, which were not included in this paper due to data unavailability, were a surprising 125 days late. It is apparent that Governor Paterson, in common with most of his predecessors, struggled to successfully negotiate with the Legislature on budgetary matters.

To measure the difference in gubernatorial influence over appropriations across individuals, I graphed the average percent change and overall percent change of all four governors on top of each other, with the horizontal axis representing their respective length in office. Eliot Spitzer's one budgetary year is represented by a single data point, and the two years of data for David Paterson means that his line is signficantly shorter than those of Cuomo and Pataki. If this part of the hypothesis were true, we would expect to see some lines that are lower or higher than the others, indicating a different level of influence over agency appropriations.

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[48] James Odato, "Budget Forged in Back Room; Spitzer Assures On-Time Passage After Marathon Deal-Making Session," *The Times Union*, March 30, 2007.
[49] "The Paterson Era," *The Times Union*, March 18, 2008, sec. Main.
[50] Nicholas Confessore, "A Long Night in Albany as a Budget Inches Toward Passage," *The New York Times*, March 31, 2009.

Figure 5

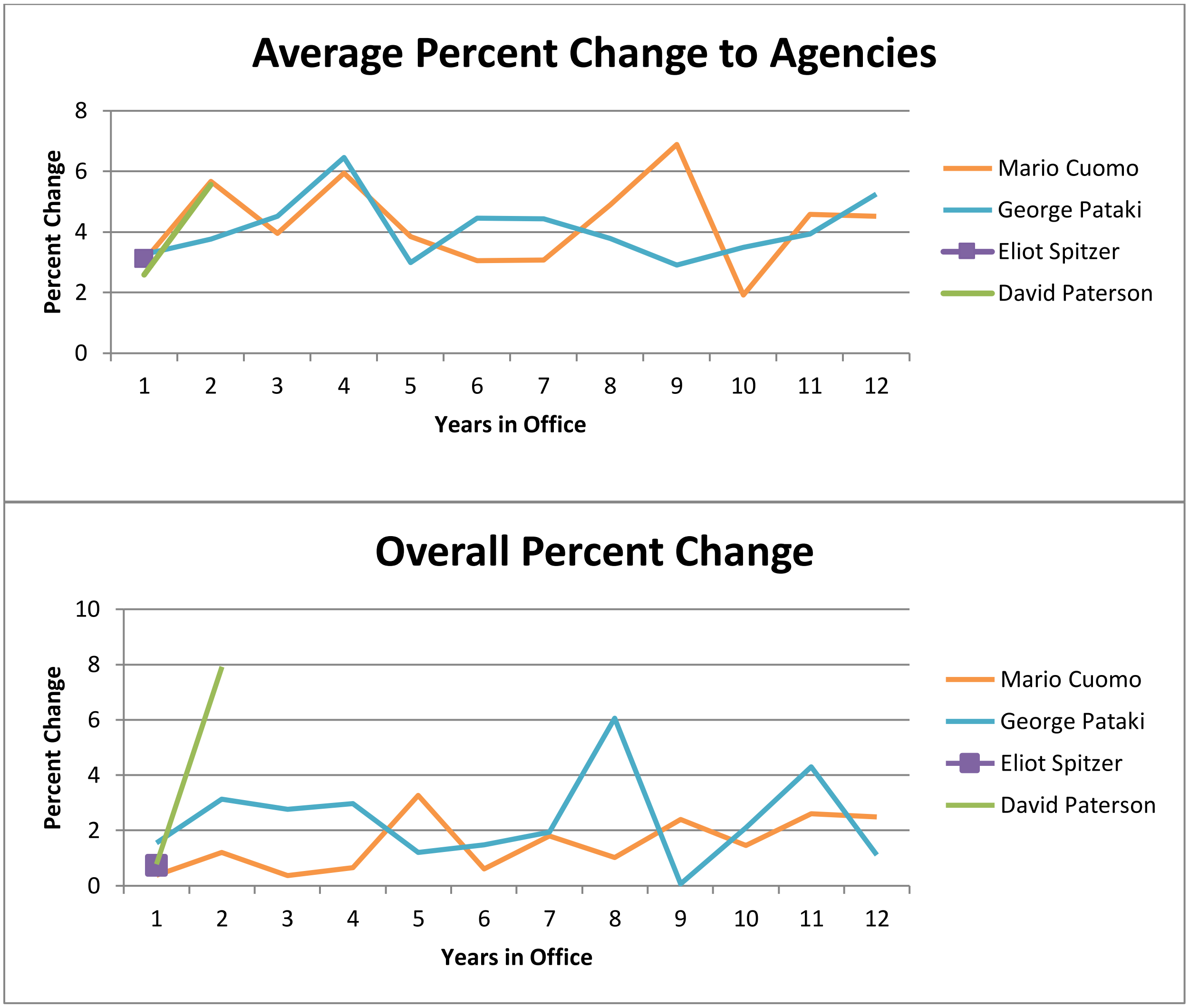

Figure 5 indicates that there was not a substantial difference among the governors. On the average percent change graph, the governors seem to have similar trends. Although Governor Mario Cuomo has one of the lowest percent changes, he also has one of the highest, and the rest of the lines cross back and forth. The overall percent change graph shows slightly more definitive trends, although there are some very similar levels of influence. Governor Paterson has the highest percent change on the entire graph during his second year in office, which represents significant legislative changes to his 2009-10 executive budget proposals. Yet with only two years of data, it is difficult to assume that he had the lowest amount of influence over agency appropriations. Governor Cuomo seems to be the most consistent, and had the least percentage changed from his executive budget at most points. For most of the years studied, the overall percent change to Governor Cuomo's executive budget was a few percentage points lower than Governor Pataki's at similar points in his tenure, indicating that Cuomo was more successful and influential in the budget process. Governor Cuomo's graph was not lower than the others for every year, and the difference was never large.

In general, there was not a large difference in influence between governors, beyond the minor trends in the Overall Percent Change graph, which show marginally higher influence by Governor Mario Cuomo and lower influence by Governor David Paterson. These trends suggest that a governor's individual style and approach to interacting with the legislature has little effect on their actual ability to pass preferred agency appropriations. Regardless of their individual efforts, a certain amount of budgetary conflict is inevitable with New York's highly partisan and divided government. In addition, the fluctuations throughout their terms imply that other factors, rather than length in office, were influencing the percent change made by the Legislature.

Another interesting observation from Figure 5 is that all four governors seemed to have similar levels of influence in their first year, within one percentage point. For the three governors who had subsequent years in office, the next year generally saw an increase in the percent change made by the Legislature, which corresponds to less gubernatorial influence. While there were differences in their relative influence after the first couple of years, this uniformity in the early years suggests that governors might face a "honeymoon" period their first year in office. Relatively few changes were made to the executive budget bills proposed by the governors in their first year in office, but in the second year there was increased resistance and changes made by the Legislature. It may be that the first year in office is the easiest for new governors to pass their preferred budgetary agenda.

Hypothesis 2: Gubernatorial influence over agency appropriations in New York State will be impacted by the election cycle, with less gubernatorial influence in election years.

The impact of election years on gubernatorial influence over agency appropriations must be considered for both gubernatorial election years and legislative election years. The governor is elected every four years, which means that gubernatorial election years within this data set have fallen on 1986, 1990, 1994, 1998, 2002, and 2006. Members of the New York State Assembly and the New York State Senate are elected for two year terms, every even year. Numerous news articles have cited the effect of election year pressures on budget negotiations throughout the tenure of all four governors.

For example, Governor Mario Cuomo claimed that the Legislature was trying to increase budget appropriations during an election year in 1994 to appease their constituents during budget negotiations, while at the same time his legislative opponents argued that he was just trying to improve his image of being fiscally responsible.[51] A year earlier, Cuomo's push for compromises with the Legislature was partially driven by his need for balanced, on-time budget acts as he approached a re-election year.[52] In 1990, the Senate Republicans fought against the governor's budget with a method that was described as "symbolic politics" in an effort to portray themselves as opponents of the tax-and-spend Democrats.[53] In 2006, when Pataki was leaving office but the legislators were still worried about the upcoming election, there was a push to

[51] Kevin Sack, "Cuomo Calls Budget Deal Too Costly," *The New York Times*, May 8, 1994.
[52] Kevin Sack, "A Broad-Stroke Budget," *The New York Times*, April 2, 1993.
[53] Elizabeth Kolbert, "Budget Talks Break Down in Albany," *The New York Times*, April 2, 1990.

spend more and cut taxes to appeal to constituents.[54] The budget process is particularly important for gubernatorial election years because it is often viewed as the governor's responsibility. Late enacted budget bills, or drastic cuts, can negatively affect the public image of the governor. At the same time, legislators are likely to push for their own member items to win favor with their constituents or symbolically fight the governor's agenda.

Figure 1 is most useful for analyzing this section. For the hypothesis of less gubernatorial influence over agency appropriations during election years to be true, we would expect high points on the graph for these years. Greater values for the percent change made by the Legislature to the executive budget would indicate less gubernatorial influence over the appropriations. It is apparent that the values for overall percent change have no correlation with election years. These points, represented by the blue line, tend to peak during odd years and for the majority of the time have only minor fluctuations. The graph for the average percent change to individual agencies, however, may have some relevance for the hypothesis. This finding could be due to the fact that during legislative election years, individual members are eager to add member items for their respective district or publicly oppose the governor. These types of changes would likely be more visible on the individual agency level, and not as likely to affect the overall budgetary totals because of their comparatively low amounts. The graph for average percent change from the complete data set has been reproduced below, with black markers representing the election years.

[54] Michael Cooper, "Saying He Can't be Overridden, Governor Reasserts His Power," *The New York Times*, April 13, 2006.

Figure 6

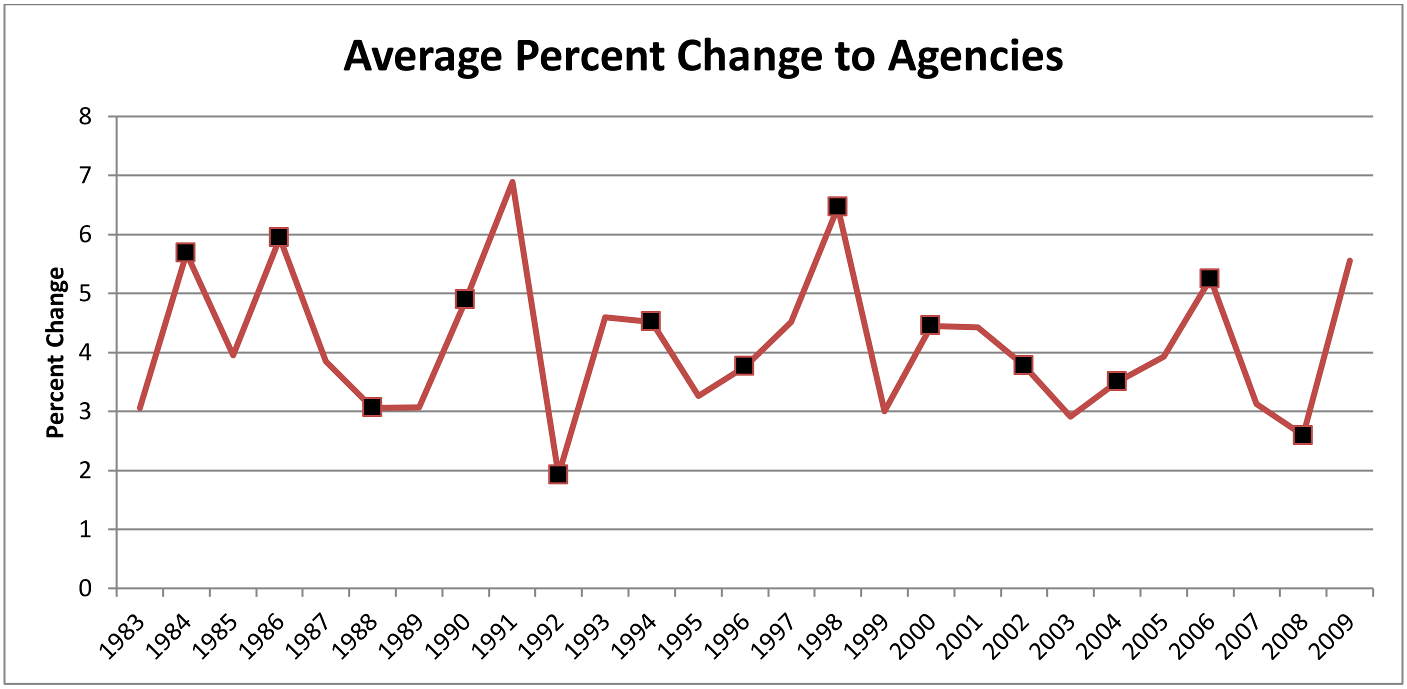

Figure 6 illustrates that not all of the election years corresponded to high percent changes made to individual agencies. Some of the election years are the lowest values on the graph. However, the majority of the high points, except for 1991 and 2009, fall on election years. Both 1991 and 2009 can be explained later by solitary events in hypothesis 3. The points for 1984, 1986, 1998, and 2006 are the other high points on the graph, and they all fall on election years. Three of these high points are also gubernatorial election years. While the findings do not fully support the hypothesis, they do suggest that election years may sometimes drive higher percentage changes to the appropriations for individual agencies.

The average point on Figure 6 is 4.15 percent. All gubernatorial election years except for 2002 are higher than the average, and the majority of non-election years are below the average. This correlation is not as clear for legislative election years, for which only seven of thirteen years were higher than the average. Yet when election years are compared to non-election years in general, there is a slight overall difference. Election years have an average percent change to individual agencies of 4.29 percent, while non-election years have an average percent change to individual agencies of 4.01 percent. The difference is not large, and does not offer definitive support of the hypothesis.

In general, there was limited support for hypothesis 2 among the average percent change values but not among the overall percent change values. Most of the highest points on Figure 6 were election years, which represent large changes made to the executive budget proposals for agencies and less gubernatorial influence. The few high points on the graph that were not election years can be explained further in the next section. Although election years alone cannot determine the percent change made to individual agencies, they may be one driving factor behind years where the Legislature makes large changes to the proposed appropriations. Election years tended to have slightly higher percent changes made by the Legislature than non-election years when considered together.

Hypothesis 3: Gubernatorial influence over agency appropriations in New York State is impacted by solitary events such as court decisions and major political disputes.

It is also possible that solitary events affect the percent change made to the executive budget each fiscal year. Under this scenario, high and low points of influence can be explained by political context rather than regularized patterns such as election years or governors' terms in office. Although it is not possible to consider every event that could impact the budget process in New York State, a few prominent examples that gained publicity in the news during the years covered in this study can help illustrate the basis of the hypothesis.

After giving a well-received speech at the 1984 Democratic National Convention, it was speculated that Governor Mario Cuomo might run for President in 1992. He had gained high name recognition and was considered to be a strong liberal candidate. That year, legislative opposition in New York increased, with some claiming that the Republicans' five month long fight over the budget was one of the key factors that prevented Cuomo from committing to a presidential campaign.[55] The protracted budget fight was likely frustrating and distracting to the governor, who then could not focus his efforts on a presidential campaign. Although Governor Cuomo was ultimately able to reach a budget compromise that year, the process was difficult and unnecessarily drawn out. Cuomo even had to summon the Senate back into a special session in order to close an 875 million deficit.[56]

The graph in Figure 1, which contains the complete data set, shows a large spike in the average percent change made to agencies for the year 1991. The budget for 1991-92 was most likely impacted by partisan opposition to Governor Cuomo in order to prevent him from running for President. He would have needed to start gathering a campaign team, financial resources, and publicity in the year before the election in order to succeed in the Democratic primary. It is possible that partisan motivations due to Governor Cuomo's potential presidential bid caused more budgetary conflict, a larger percent change to the executive budget proposal for individual agencies, and less gubernatorial influence over appropriations for the 1991-92 budget.

The political conflict between Governor Pataki and the Legislature reached a high point during the latter part of Pataki's time in office. In 2003, Pataki vetoed 119 budget items totaling approximately $1.3 billion in spending.[57] Both houses of the Legislature overrode all of the budgetary vetoes, which was the first time that had happened in over twenty years.[58] The veto overrides indicate that there was bipartisan opposition to Governor Pataki, and they also led to

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[55] Sam Howe Verhovek, "Albany's Leaders Announce Accord on State's Budget," *The New York Times*, March 29, 1992.
[56] Sam Howe Verhovek, "No Budget Deal, No Break: Cuomo Orders Senate Back," *The New York Times*, December 27, 1991.
[57] Al Baker, "Governor Vetoes Increase in Taxes," *The New York Times*, May 15, 2003.
[58] Al Baker, "Budgets in Crisis: Overview; State Legislature Overrides Pataki on Budget Vetoes," *The New York Times*, May 16, 2003.

increased friction between the two branches of government and sparked a debate about the constitutional role of the executive budget.

Speaker of the Assembly Sheldon Silver filed suit against Governor Pataki in 1998 due to disagreements over the use of item vetoes in the budget process, and this suit was eventually combined with a lawsuit filed by Governor Pataki in 2001 against the Assembly for altering the language of his spending bills.[59] The consolidated *Pataki vs. New York State Assembly* case went before the Court of Appeals in 2004, and resulted in a 5-to-2 decision in favor of the governor's budgeting powers.[60] The ruling reaffirmed Governor Pataki's argument that the Legislature had unconstitutionally rewritten language in some of his appropriations bills.

Amid the struggle that resulted from several years of vetoes and clashes of power between Governor Pataki and the Legislature, the Senate and Assembly worked together in 2004 and 2005 to propose a constitutional amendment that would give the Legislature more power over the budget. The amendment would shift some power from the governor to the Legislature, which felt that it had limited abilities to alter the governor's proposals. One of the main changes in the proposal was a later budget deadline, from April 1st to May 1st, to give the Legislature more time to analyze the requests and respond. If a budget was not approved by May 1st, a contingency budget would kick in and the Legislature could write its own budget.[61] The amendment would also have given the governor less time to amend his budget bills and an earlier date for submission of the executive budget.[62] The bill that would have implemented the amendment was ultimately vetoed by Governor Pataki, the veto was overridden by the Legislature, and the amendment was finally rejected by the public after appearing on the ballot in

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[59] Joseph Zimmerman, *The Government and Politics of New York State*, Second Edition, State University of New York Press, Albany, NY, 2008.
[60] *Pataki v. New York State Assembly*, 4 N.Y.3d 75, 791 N.Y.S.2d 458 (2004)
[61] Al Baker, "Rivals Unite to Fight Change in Albany's Budget Process," *The New York Times*, May 1, 2005.
[62] Zimmerman, *The Government and Politics of New York State*, p. 144

2005. Although the move to change the executive budget process was not successful, it still indicated high levels of tension between political leaders.

In 2006, Pataki vetoed 202 items that totaled approximately $2.9 billion, prompting Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno to refer to him as a "monarch."[63] Pataki had gained more confidence in his budgeting powers through the Court of Appeals decision, and was eager to prove that he still had influence after his vetoes were overridden in 2003. However, a few weeks after issuing the vetoes, almost all were overridden by the Legislature.[64] Although Pataki was near the end of his term, and not planning to seek re-election, the political tension between him and the Legislature was extremely high. Much of the debate over tax rebates and spending was between Governor Pataki and the Senate Republicans, who were the same party and in theory should not have opposed his initiatives.

The numbers gathered for these years in Figure 1 show an increase in the overall percent change to the appropriations for 2005 and an increase in the average percent change to agencies for 2006. The percentage change for both measures was relatively low in 2003. It is possible that as political tensions grew in the years following Pataki's 2003 vetoes, more budgetary conflict between the branches of government led to greater changes to the executive budget appropriations and less gubernatorial influence. The low numbers for 2003 do not support the hypothesis, but the general increase in changes made by the Legislature in 2004 and 2005 do support the hypothesis.

Budget negotiations in 2008 were impacted by two important events. The most obvious was the resignation of Governor Eliot Spitzer in March of 2008 following a high profile

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[63] Michael Cooper, "Saying He Can't be Overridden, Governor Reasserts His Power," *The New York Times*, April 13, 2006

[64] Danny Hakim, "Legislature Overrides Most Budget Vetoes, but Pataki Says He Will Block Some Items," *The New York Times*, April 27, 2006.

scandal.[65] Although the Legislature was under unified Democratic control in 2008, the Governor's resignation catapulted Lieutenant Governor David Paterson into the position of governor in the midst of a difficult budget negotiation process. He had little time to adjust to his new role, learn the intricacies of the budget process, and handle the national political scrutiny that surrounded the scandal. At the same time, the country was experiencing a severe economic recession, which had greatly affected the financial sector and New York's revenue in particular. The limited funding for government programs most likely led to more internal conflict even within the Democratic Party as to how existing resources should be allocated. Governor Paterson was responsible for delivering a budget that could reasonably deal with the declining fiscal situation across the state while also bringing order back to the political environment.

Both the overall percent change and average percent change to agencies for the 2008-09 budget were not unusually high. However, we see the percent change increase drastically for the 2009-10 budget. It appears that Governor Paterson was able to maintain some control over the agency appropriations directly after he took office, but the majority of the budget process for that year was supervised by Governor Spitzer. The first year that Governor Paterson was solely responsible for the budget, which would be represented by the figures for 2009, the percent change made by the Legislature greatly increased. The resignation of Eliot Spitzer and the national recession both could have contributed to budgetary conflict between Governor Paterson and the New York State Legislature.

Republican opposition to Governor Mario Cuomo's potential presidential bid, political conflict and constitutional challenges to executive budgeting under Governor Pataki, and the resignation of Governor Spitzer during a time of economic recession are all examples of solitary

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[65] Keith Richburg and Carrie Johnson, "Spitzer to Step Down as N.Y Governor; Embattled Democrat Apologizes for His 'Private Failings'," *The Washington Post*, March 13, 2008.

events that could impact budgetary conflict. Most of these examples correspond with increasing percent changes made to the executive budget by the Legislature, which suggests less gubernatorial influence over agency appropriations in New York State. However, the events selected are only a sample of all potential influences, and help to illustrate the theory that individual events rather than regularized patterns can determine gubernatorial influence over agency appropriations.

Conclusions

Budget conflict between the executive and legislative branches of government is a topic which is frequently studied by political scientists. New York is an interesting state to examine because of its clearly established constitutional executive budgeting system. By analyzing data from four different governors and twenty seven years, it is possible to obtain a better understanding of why some governors are more successful at advancing their preferred agency appropriations within this system. The factors emphasized in this study were the length in office of individual governors, their governing style and interactions with the Legislature, the election cycle, and solitary events such as court cases and political disputes. Several conclusions can be drawn from the correlations which were observed.

There was no support for the hypothesis that governors gain more influence over agency appropriations over time. Fluctuations persisted throughout each governor's time in office. Individual governors may have been able to develop stronger relationships with legislative leaders and learn how to navigate the budget process, but budgetary conflict was unavoidable. For the majority of the years studied, the Assembly was controlled by the Democratic Party and the Senate was controlled by the Republican Party. Regardless of each governor's political affiliation, one of the houses of the Legislature opposed most of his agenda, which likely contributed to the constant conflict observed. None of the governors studied showed any indication of getting more influence over agency appropriations the longer they were in office.

None of the governors had significantly higher or lower level of influence over appropriations when compared to each other. Governor Cuomo had slightly higher influence than Governor Pataki at similar points in their tenure for a number of years, but the difference was not particularly large. These findings suggest that it may not be possible for one governor to be more successful than others at advancing preferred agency appropriations. Despite efforts to improve the relationship between the executive and legislative branches, or past careers in the Legislature, every governor dealt with consistent changes to their executive budgets. One trend worth noting is that all four governors had very similar percent changes made to their first executive budget, which was followed by even more changes made over the next few years. The decline in influence after the first year in office suggests that governors may face a honeymoon period after being elected, and have the most chance of passing their preferred budget bills in their first year in office.

Limited support was observed for the hypothesis that the election cycle will impact gubernatorial influence over agency appropriations. Although not every election year corresponded with greater changes made to the executive budget, most of the years with the greatest average percent change to agencies fell on election years. The average percent change made during election years was also slightly higher than non-election years in general. The graphs for overall percent change did not show any of these trends.

Finally, the third hypothesis offered support for the notion that individual events affect levels of gubernatorial influence rather than regularized patterns. Many of the years with high percent changes made to the executive budget can be explained by notable events and political context. I analyzed the effect of Governor Cuomo's potential presidential bid in 1991, conflicts between Governor Pataki and the Legislature which resulted in court cases and vetoes, Governor Spitzer's ethics scandal, and the recent national recession. These events are only a small sample of all possible influences on New York State's budget over the past twenty seven years, but they generally corresponded with periods of increasing changes made by the Legislature. The support for this hypothesis suggests that gubernatorial influence over agency appropriations may be predominantly affected by significant events and political disputes rather than predictable trends.

In order to gain a more accurate understanding of the factors which influence the budget process in New York State, the hypotheses examined in this study could be expanded for a longer span of time. Additional factors may be relevant, such as the growth of legislative budgetary staff, the styles of individual legislative leaders, and partisan division. Although this study does not take into account every possible factor or explanation for differences in gubernatorial influence over agency appropriations, the correlations provide some basic observations about budget conflict between the executive and legislative branches in New York State. Control over agency appropriations will continue to be an important part of state politics, and understanding when governors have the most influence over enacted budget bills is crucial for analyzing the success of their policy initiatives.

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