

The Arkansas Governor's Role in the Policy Process, 1955-1979

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Abstract: This paper examines gubernatorial influence on public policy in Arkansas. The paper looks at the governor's policy role during the past twenty-five years. The record is sketched of policy activism and the degree of gubernatorial success in obtaining legislative approval. Influences on policy success analyzed include: formal powers, fiscal conditions, staff, tenure, electoral mandate, and partisan margin in legislature.

The multitude of responsibilities and duties carried out by an Arkansas governor places him at the center of the state's policy-making process. As the job of governor has evolved in the century since the state constitution was adopted, the original limited mandate of the governor's office has broadened and new roles have been added to the position. The governor now performs a variety of interrelated and mutually reinforcing roles, including the following: chief of state, chief legislator, chief administrator, military chief, chief of party, leader of public opinion, and ultimate judge.¹

This paper focuses on the governor's role as a policy formulator. Policy formulation involves both policy initiation and policy advocacy. Policy initiation is part of the governor's role as chief legislator. A governor is expected to formulate a legislative program to be considered by the Arkansas General Assembly, that is, to initiate policy proposals. Policy advocacy combines elements of many of the other roles through which the governor is able to mobilize resources to support or oppose policy proposals, both his own and others. Obvious examples of how a governor generates resources for policy advocacy include the use of patronage powers available to a governor (as chief executive) and easy access to the media (as leader of public opinion).

While administering public policies is still of vital concern to a governor, policy formulation has become the prime responsibility of the job. In a recent article, Coleman B. Ransone, Jr., who has written about state government for over two decades, concluded that "the majority of studies over the last 20 years support the view that policy formulation is the governor's principal function and that he is generally successful (in terms of legislation passed or vetoes upheld) in getting his program through the legislature."²

Purpose of the Paper

This paper compares the extent to which Arkansas governors have been both active and successful participants in the policy formulation process during the past twenty-five years. In addition, the paper examines various factors which might determine the extent of the activity and success of the five governors holding office from 1954-1979.

While the paper contains several elements of an empirical study, it is essentially exploratory and suggestive. Quantitative measures of policy initiation activity and policy success are used. These measures can be considered dependent variables. To help explain how these dependent variables differ among the governors, eight independent variables are proposed, and data concerning the variables are provided. However, correlations between the independent and dependent variables are not calculated since it was impossible to adequately quantify the independent variables.

Despite the fact that this model of the governor's role in policy formulation is not completed and tested, the various data do provide some potentially valuable insights into the evolving role of the governor in the policy process and thus are presented in this paper.

Background

Little has been written about Arkansas' governors in recent years. No systematic empirical studies of the roles and functions of the office have been completed.³ Researchers have studied the relationship between budgeting and gubernatorial powers and the use of gubernatorial appointments to influence the General Assembly.⁴ In addition, biographical studies of two recent governors were written in the 1970s.⁵ However, the available materials do not provide clear insight into the role of the governor in the policy process.

The Governor's Policy Role Before 1955

Until the 1950s Arkansas' governors tended to be content to

exercise their few powers sparingly. V.O. Key in 1949 described Arkansas politics as a state with a high degree of homogeneity. He wrote that the result is “a politics in which the debate is over the means of accomplishing what everyone assumes ought to be done and over the choice of personnel to carry out such commonly accepted and often unarticulated programs.”⁶ Key observed that the state had had an unbroken succession of conservative governors. He added, “The only recent governor who distinguished himself by suspecting that anything was wrong with Arkansas and something could be done about it was the late Carl Bailey (1937-1941).”⁷

As might be suspected under the conditions described by Key, Arkansas’ governors were not especially innovative or aggressive in policy formulation. The state performed traditional duties relating to schools, highways, prisons, limited welfare and social services, and law enforcement. Taxes were kept low. Given the “extraordinary consensus” observed by Key, few new policy ideas originated in the governor’s office.

Newly elected governors devoted a large amount of energy and time before their first legislative session to personnel decisions. A first-term governor had little time or money to prepare legislation for his first session since the governor is inaugurated the day after the sixty-day session begins. Henry Alexander described the situation of a governor-elect:

For five months prior to his inauguration the identify of the next governor has been known, since nomination by the Democratic party is tantamount to election. During this period the governor-designate is besieged by officer seekers. Many call on him to enlist support for legislative proposals. Consequently, for several months before assuming office, the new governor must give much attention to public and to political affairs. A new governor usually finds it essential during this period prior to inauguration to maintain a temporary office in the capital city. No funds to defray expense of this temporary office are provided from public sources; donations from private sources during this period can hardly be defined as “campaign contributions.”⁸

Since the end of World War II, however, even conservative states such as Arkansas have found new policy initiatives being thrust upon them by the national government and by demands from its citizens for services.

Policy Formulation Activism and Success: The Dependent Variables

To better understand the scope of a governor's participation in the policy formulation process and the extent to which the participation has differed from governor to governor, one measure of policy activism and two measures of policy advocacy success were used.

Policy activism is defined as the number of policy issue areas for which a governor recommended important legislation. Policy success is measured by (1) the percentage of important legislative policy initiatives of a governor which are adopted by the legislature and (2) the success that a governor has in using his veto power.

An examination of the legislative programs of governors from 1955 to 1979 shows that since 1965 governors have become increasingly active policy initiators. Figure 1 shows a comparison of gubernatorial policy initiatives by subject area during the past twenty-five years.

Figure 1 is based upon information obtained from newspaper articles which provide the following information concerning each legislative session: (a) a summary or the complete text of the governor's inaugural speech, (b) (when different from the inaugural speech) a summary of or the text of the governor's initial speech to the General Assembly, and (c) a "post-mortem" of the legislative session, written by the reporter covering the legislative session for the **Arkansas Gazette**.

Figure 1
Subject Areas of Substantial and Major Policy Initiatives by Governors 1955-1979

	55	57	59	61	63	65	67/68	69/70	71	73	75	77	79
Policy Subjects													
Taxation	M	M	X		X	X		M	M			M	X
Prison System							M	X	X	X			
Economic Dev.	X	X	X	X			X				X		X
Social Services	X	X			X	X				X	X	X	X
Health/Hospital		X	X	X		X		X	X	X			
State Government	X	X	X	X	X	X	M	M	M	X	X		X
Schools	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	M	X	X	X
Higher Education		X				X		X		M	X		
Labor			M			X	M				X	X	
Race Relations			M	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	
Local Government				X	X	X			M		X	M	
Highways				X	X	M	X	X	X				X
Elections						X	X		M		M		
Constitutional Reform						X					X	X	
Environmental Matters							M	X	X	X	X	X	X
Consumer Matters									X		X		X
Energy											X	M	
Judicial Reform							M	M					
Other								M ¹	M ²			X ³	X ⁴
Number of Subject Areas	5	7	7	7	5	10	11	11	12	8	12	10	10

X=One or more substantial policy proposals
(excluding strictly budgetary matters)
M=Major policy initiative

- 1 - Fair Trade Repeal and Legalization of Abortion
- 2 - Fair Trade Repeal
- 3 - Litter Control
- 4 - Establishment of State Office in Washington

To determine the policy areas in which important proposals were made, the newspaper articles described above were examined to find out which proposals met the following criteria:

- The policy was a significant departure from existing policies or was an innovation in state public policy or state government.
- The policy was specifically identified by the governor as an important aspect of his legislative program in the inaugural, or it later became an element of the governor's program as described in the "post-mortem" article(s).
- Some degree of controversy surrounded the policy proposed by the governor.

An additional judgment was made concerning the policy initiatives meeting the criteria described above. A gubernatorial policy proposal was defined to be "major" if it proposed an especially marked departure from the status quo and if it was highly controversial or had been controversial over a period of years. All other policy proposals meeting the three criteria were defined to be "substantial" proposals.

In addition to the substantial and major policy initiatives identified in Figure 1, governors may have made proposals concerning other program areas in each session. However, these were not included because the proposals were either minor (simple adjustments in existing policy) or the governor did not become publicly associated with the measures.

An examination of Figures 1 and 2 shows that 1965 (the last Faubus term) was a turning point in policy initiation by governors. Until that time, the governor tended to concentrate on traditional programs.

Figure 2 Major Policy Proposals by Governors 1975-79

- 1955 Major tax increase - defeated
- 1957 Major tax increase - passed
- 1959 Package of school segregation bills - passed
Minimum wage - defeated
- 1965 Major bond issue for highway constructions - passed
- 1967 Prison reform package - passed
State merit system - defeated
Minimum wage - passed
Jury wheel - passed
Constitutional reform - passed
- 1969 Major tax reform - defeated
Fair trade law repeal - defeated
Merit system - defeated
State classification and compensation plan - passed
Legalization of abortion - passed
Legalization of sale of mixed drinks (local option) - passed
- 1971 Major tax reform - passed
State government reorganization - passed
Merit system proposal - defeated
Limited home rule for local governments - passed
Election expenditure limitation - passed
- 1973 Establishing kindergarten program - passed
Free texts for high schools - passed
Establishing community college system - passed
- 1975 Campaign contribution disclosure act - passed
Constitutional convention - passed
- 1977 "Arkansas Plan" to readjust state-local fiscal relations and
reduce state income tax - defeated
Constitutional convention - passed
- 1979 Creation of Energy Department - passed

Policy Formulation Success

For each of the policy areas set out in Figure 1, more than one legislative proposal might have been presented by the governor. Figure 3 shows the total number of legislative proposals (either major or substantial) made by each governor and the success rate for each governor as calculated by the authors. The measure of success rate is subjective since a legislative decision on a proposal does not always result in clear-cut success or failure for the governor's proposal. Compromises often tend to give a governor less than he wanted but more than what he started with. The authors had to make several judgments concerning whether compromise results should be deemed a success or a defeat for a governor.

The percentage of success for major and substantial policy initiatives is quite high and relatively stable for all governors with two exceptions: (a) the first Faubus term and (b) the two Rockefeller terms.

Figure 3
Success in Substantial and Major
Policy Proposals 1955-79

Year	Governor	% Success Rate	# Proposals	# Accepted
1955-56	Faubus	40	5	2
57-58	Faubus	100	10	10
59-60	Faubus	75	16	12
61-62	Faubus	85	14	12
63-64	Faubus	80	10	8
65-66	Faubus	93	14	13
67-68	Rockefeller	63	19	12
69-70	Rockefeller	50	20	10
71-72	Bumpers	80	16	13
73-74	Bumpers	83	12	10
75-76	Pryor	75	20	15
77-78	Pryor	82	17	14
79-80	Clinton	83	24	20
Average		76	15.2	11.6

Independent from this first analysis of the legislative success rates of governors during the past twenty-four years, the authors developed additional index of legislative successes during the last three General Assembly sessions. For the 1975, 1977, and 1979 sessions, lists are available of bills designated as "administration measures."⁹ The overall success rate for all administration bills is lower than the first index of success because a governor uses the administration designation for more than just the major and substantial measures integral to his legislative program. He often "adopts" the bills of legislators whom he wishes to favor. Thus, the technical designation "administration bill" is more inclusive than the proposals described previously as being major or substantial. Figure 4 gives the index of success over the last three sessions for all administration bills.

The authors were relatively close observers of the last three legislative sessions. They expected that the 1977 session would be the least successful of the three. (The legislature opposed several of Governor Pryor's "innovative" proposals, including a drastic revision of local government finance and a litter control program.) The results of this index are surprising because of the relatively high 1977 policy success rate compared to the 1979 session, the first for Bill Clinton. Clinton, a popular governor, had the lowest legislative success rate of the three sessions. An obvious explanation of this is seen in the fact that Clinton designated almost twice as many "administration bills" as Pryor designated during either of the previous two legislative sessions. Apparently, Clinton had a more ambitious legislative program and was more willing to attach the administration label to legislator-originated proposals. While Clinton's strategy increased the number of legislative defeats, the total quantity of successes was also higher.

Figure 4
Gubernatorial Legislative Success Rate 1975-79
(Administration Designated Bills)

	House	Senate
A. 1975		
(Duplicates)	(5)	(7)
Defeated	16	7
Successful	27	15
Success Rate	$\frac{27}{43} = 62.8\%$	$\frac{15}{22} = 68.2\%$
Both Houses	$\frac{42}{65} = 64.6\%$	
B. 1977		
(Duplicates)	(3)	(0)
Defeated	13	16
Successful	25	12
Success Rate	$\frac{25}{38} = 65.8\%$	$\frac{12}{28} = 42.9\%$
Both Houses	$\frac{37}{66} = 56.1\%$	
C. 1979		
(Duplicates)	(8)	(8)
Defeated	30	20
Successful	32	29
Success Rate	$\frac{32}{62} = 51.6\%$	$\frac{29}{49} = 59.2\%$
Both Houses	$\frac{61}{111} = 55.0\%$	

The Governor's Veto: Another Measure of Policy Success

Aside from initiating policy through legislative proposals, a governor is also able to influence the policy process by using his power of veto. The actual percentage of bills vetoed is not an absolute measure of the effectiveness of the veto. Often, the threat of a veto is sufficient to cause a bill to be withdrawn by its sponsor. It is a custom in Arkansas that if the legislature is still in session the governor will inform a bill's

sponsor that a veto is imminent and will permit a bill to be withdrawn to avoid a veto. If a legislator refuses to withdraw the bill and accepts the veto, it is an indication that the legislator thinks the bill will embarrass the governor more than the legislator or the legislator wants to make a statement to constituents or interest groups. (There are apparently instances where a sponsor will solicit a veto from the governor, knowing a bill is bad public policy but feeling committed to support, sponsor, and pass a bill.)

The Arkansas governor seems to be slightly more active than the typical state governor. Over the last twenty-four years, in regular General Assembly sessions, the Arkansas governor has vetoed 539 of 9260 bills, or 5.8 percent. Comparatively, in 1975-1976 5.0 percent of all bills passed by all state legislatures were vetoed. Thus, the rate of Arkansas vetoes is slightly higher than the average for all states.

The historic pattern of vetoes in Arkansas demonstrates no clear-cut pattern (See Figure 5.) During the past twenty years, there was some decline in the percentage of bills vetoed through the early 1970s and a slight increase since that time.

Arkansas has one of the easiest override provisions of any of the states, requiring the same simple majority (of the total membership of each house) necessary for initial passage. As in other states, overrides are infrequent, illustrating the considerable powers of a governor vis-à-vis the legislature.

Only thirteen overrides of 539 vetoes, 2.4 percent, have occurred in Arkansas during the last twenty-four years. The pattern of overrides is very uneven, with no overrides during the six Faubus terms, a jump in overrides to about 15 percent during the two Rockefeller terms, and only one successful override in each of the two Pryor terms. (See Figure 5.)

Figure 5

Regular Sessions

	# Acts	# Vetos	% Vetoes	Vetoes Overridden	% Vetoes Overridden
1979	889	64	7.2%	0	0
1977	958	37	3.9%	1	2.7%
1975	1238	43	3.5%	1	2.3%
1973	894	28	3.1%	0	0
1971	829	26	3.1%	0	0
1969	669	39	5.8%	6	15.4%
1967	658	36	5.5%	5	13.9%
1965	577	29	5.0%	0	0
1963	559	35	6.3%	0	0
1961	505	42	8.3%	0	0
1959	487	47	9.7%	0	0
1957	568	38	6.7%	0	0
1955	429	75	17.5%	0	0
Total	9260	539	5.8%	13	2.4%

What Causes the Variations in Policy Activism and Success: The Independent Variables

The first part of this paper identified differences in gubernatorial policy activism and success during the thirteen legislative sessions from 1954 to 1979. While the variations were not large, they appear to be significant. In order to determine the likely causes of the differences from governor to governor, independent variables were identified as possible factors influencing policy activism and success. These variables are as follows:

- Formal powers of the office
- Fiscal condition of the state (size of state budget, availability of federal funds, and economic conditions)
- Staff resources available to a governor
- The impact of experience as governor (first term vs. later terms) and the “honeymoon” effect
- The extent of the mandate given to a governor by voters in the previous election
- Partisan relationships between the governor and the Arkansas General Assembly

Although these independent variables will not be rigorously tested to determine their influence on the dependent variables, they will be discussed in an analytic but nonmathematical way. The analysis should help to discover if the variables are associated with variations in policy activism and success.

Formal Powers of the Governor

The formal powers granted the Arkansas governor have changed little during the past twenty-four years. The governor of Arkansas in 1979 had few more formal powers than those granted to the first governor elected under the Arkansas constitution adopted initially in 1874.

The state constitution provides that “the executive power shall be vested in a governor.” However, the constitution sets up six other elective officials who are not subject to the control of the governor. In addition, voters have added amendments which place the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department and the Game and Fish Commission outside of the administrative control of the governor.¹⁰ Varying degrees of power have been granted to about 200 boards and commissions which have been created by the state legislature.¹¹

In addition to the constitutional powers of the office, the governor exercises powers gained through legislation and tradition. While no constitutional changes in recent years have given the governor a bigger role in the policy process, legislation and tradition have given the governor more power.

The following is a compilation of the changes which have affected the power of the governor in the state’s policy process:

- By tradition, as in most other states, Arkansas’ governor proposes a legislative program and uses informal powers of the office to influence the legislature. In 1959, the governor began submitting formal budget recommendations (in the form of a proposed budget) to the Arkansas Legislative Council and the Arkansas General Assembly. This practice extended the influence of the governor in a crucial part of the policy-making process—the budget.
- Up until 1969 the governor drafted the Revenue Stabilization Act for consideration by the Joint Budget Committee and the General Assembly. Usually, the governor’s recommendations played a large role in the final allocation of available funds to the

various programs which had received appropriations. Beginning in 1969 and continuing through the 1977 session, the Joint Budget Committee took over the task of drafting the Revenue Stabilization Act. In 1979 the governor's office again wrote the draft act. Playing a large role in drafting the Revenue Stabilization Act strengthens the governor's role in the policy process.

- In 1971 a reorganization measure passed the Arkansas General Assembly. Major services grouped under fourteen different departments, and the governor was given a stronger authority to appoint directors to the departments. A cabinet was created. Having department directors with personal loyalty to the governor increases the governor's administrative powers and policy powers. The governor has better access to ideas and research generated by the various departments.
- Budget acts in 1955 and 1973 explicitly give the governor a role in recommending a line-item budget and a program budget which relates programs to dollars spent. The governor is given the responsibility to hold budget hearings and make recommendations concerning money and programs.
- In the 1970s the General Assembly began making appropriations to defray the expenses of governors-elect. Paying for office space and professional assistance in the period between the general election and the assumption of office allows an incoming governor to conduct his own budget recommendations, and assemble a legislative package for the General Assembly session starting in early January following his election.
- The adoption of a classification and pay plan for state employees and the creation of a *de facto* merit system from 1967 through 1978 relieved the governor from devoting valuable time to setting individual salaries and from implementing a patronage system. The time could be devoted to policy and administrative matters.
- Major increases in staff levels for the governor's office provided governors with assistance needed to initiate policy research to guide policy initiatives through the General Assembly and to oversee the administration of state programs. The Governor's

Office of Planning was originally designed to be a policy research arm of the governor's office.

One widely used objective measure of a governor's formal power is an index formulated by Joseph Schlesinger in 1971.¹² Schlesinger created the index to "examine the major organization devices which define the strength of the governor. . ."

The authors used the Schlesinger index to measure the comparative formal power of Arkansas' governors between 1954 and 1979. The conclusion of the authors is that the appointive powers of the governor was the same from 1954 until 1971, when a state reorganization plan was adopted by the General Assembly. It appears that the reorganization reduced the formal appointed powers of the governor as defined by Schlesinger. The other factors in the Schlesinger index have remained the same. Total gubernatorial power in Arkansas, according to the Schlesinger index, has thus declined since 1971.

Fiscal Conditions

Increases in gubernatorial policy activism and success may result from increases in state and federal funds. It is reasonable to expect that a growth in the state budget would enable a governor to steer the state into involvement in more policy areas and to have more resources to "trade off" to gain legislative acceptance of his policy proposals.

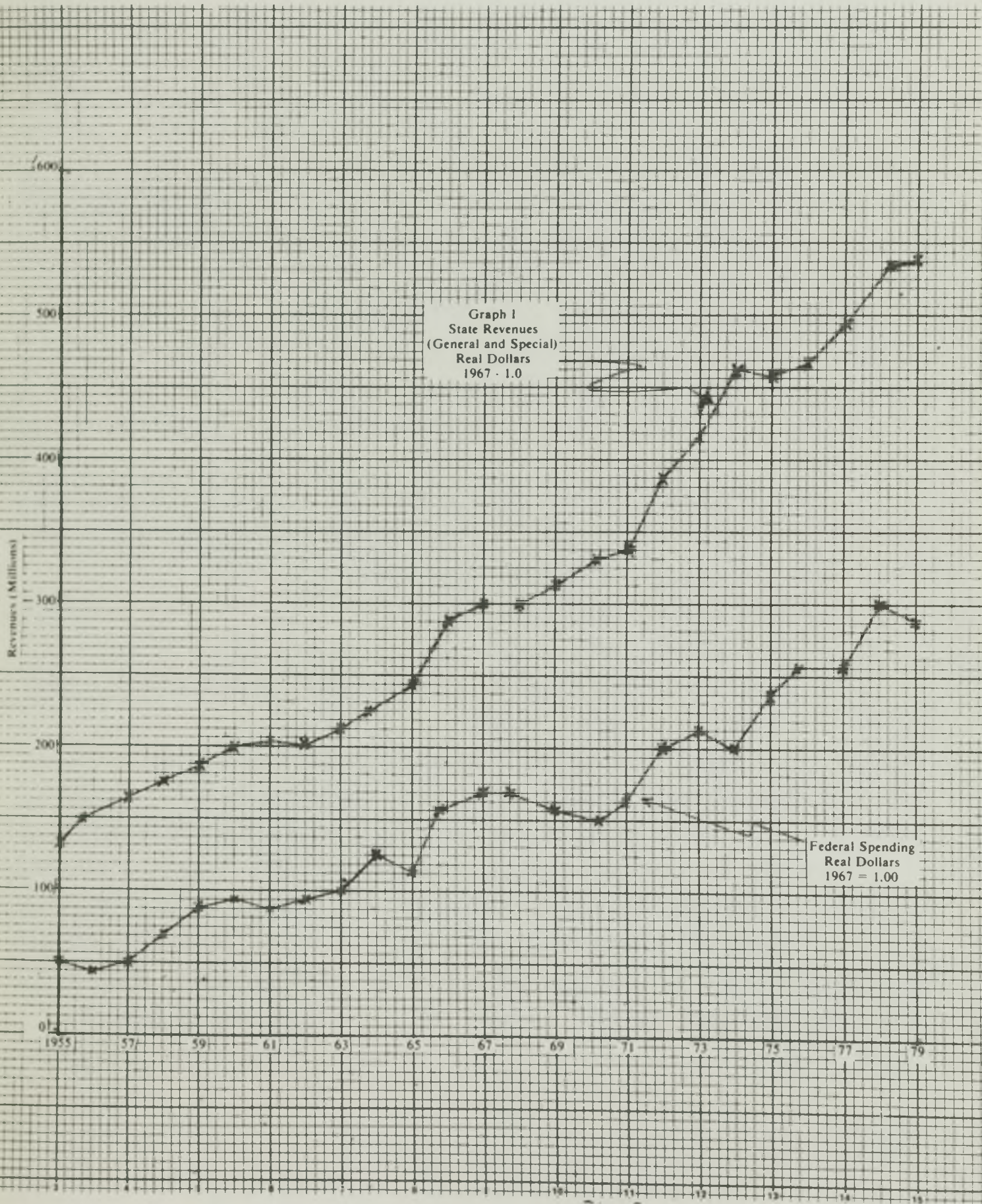
The relationship between policy activism and success and increased funds is not as straightforward as it might initially seem. State budget increases may be partially a **consequence** of gubernatorial activism rather than a cause. Also, an argument could be made that gubernatorial policy activism and success cause an increase of federal funds flowing instead the state.

Graph 1 shows the trend of state and federal revenues spent in Arkansas adjusted for inflation (i.e., in real dollars) during the past 24 years. The most obvious observations are that from 1954 to 1965 the growth in state revenues was very stable and then there was a substantial jump in the long-range growth rate from 1965 through 1979. Two short-term peaks are superimposed on the long range trend: one from 1965 to 1967 and the other from 1971 through 1974.

The federal spending in real dollars in Arkansas has been much less consistent. The general trend has been upward with three peaks: 1967, 1973, and 1978.

The major shifts in policy activism occurred first in 1965 when Orval Faubus made policy proposals relating to more policy areas than

he had in his previous five terms and in 1967 when the number of major policy proposals increased drastically. These two dates correspond to jumps in state revenues in 1965 and in federal revenues in 1967. The later sharp increase in state funds following the 1971 income tax reform was also accompanied by a small increase in policy activism.



Staff Resources Available to a Governor

An increase in staff resources should give the governor a greater ability to formulate a more diverse legislative program and to guide it through the General Assembly. Thus, changes in the staff resources available to a governor are another possible cause of the differences in policy activism and success.

Both the size and variety of the gubernatorial staff have increased, beginning in 1959 with the addition of temporary legislative staff in the governor's office during the legislative session. In the Rockefeller era, additional staff members were added for economic development activities using federal funds. In the 1970s a substantial number of gubernatorial staff (e.g., Man-power Council, Economic Development Study Commission, planning, EEOC, etc.) were hired for specialized planning and administration jobs.

While it is debatable whether this "executive office of the governor" is exactly comparable to the personal staff of the governor, it does demonstrate the "institutionalization" of the governor's office, paralleling what has been observed with the institutionalized presidency.

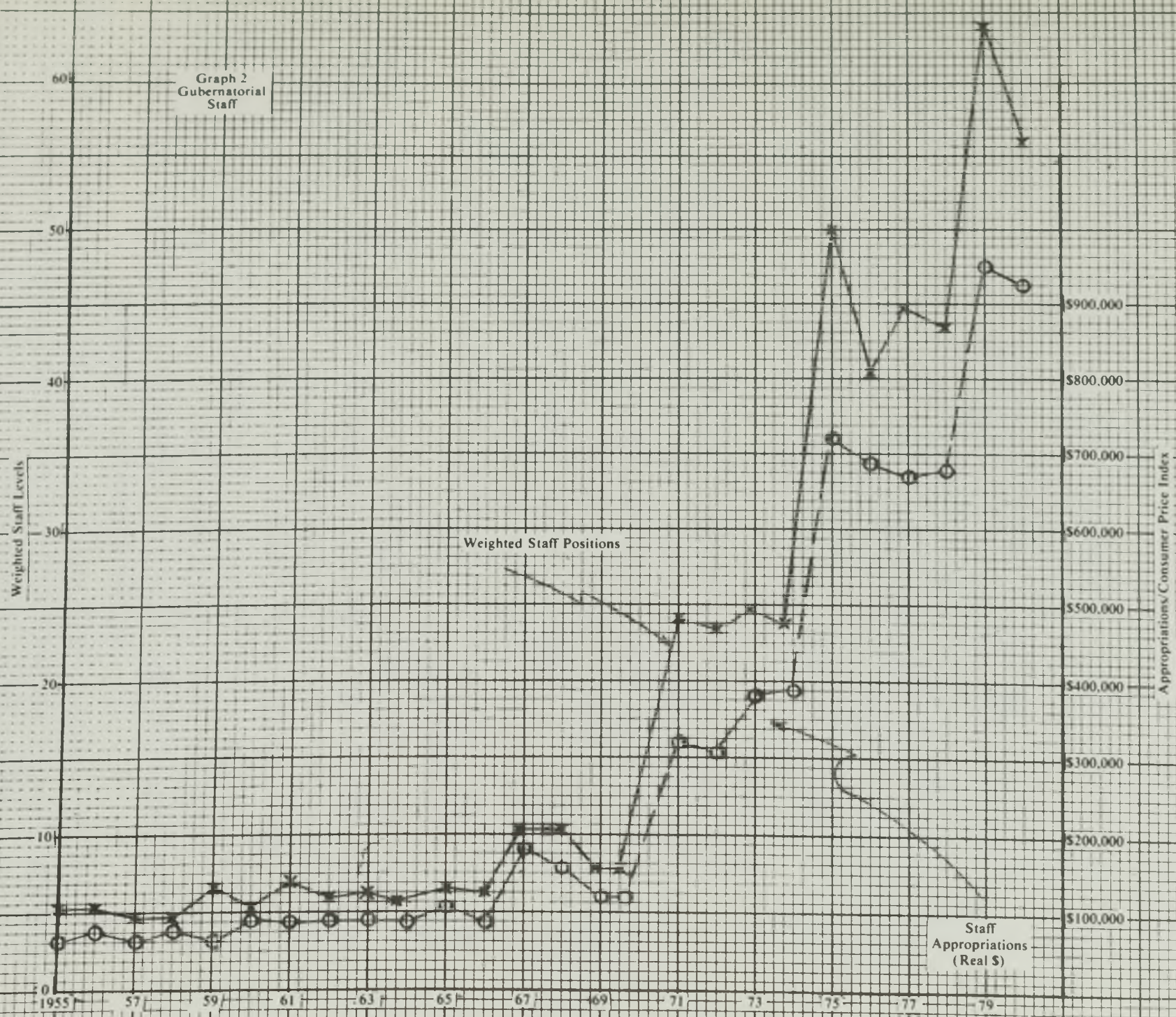
In order to compare the size of the staff for each governor with other governors, a weighted total of personnel for the governor's office was calculated using the following scheme:

- (1) Professional weighted as one
- (2) Clerical weighted as $\frac{1}{2}$
- (3) Legislative staff weighted as $\frac{1}{4}$ (usually professional personnel for about three months)

The weighted total of personnel is charted on Graph 2. A distinct jump and continued upper trend is observed beginning in 1967, although there are peaks and valleys superimposed on the strong upward trend.

Since the increase in staffing occurred at the time of increased policy activism, the increased staff resources may influence gubernatorial activism. The variations in policy success, however, do not appear positively related to staff resources. For example, despite the small Faubus staff, he had a higher than average rate of success.

Graph 2
Gubernatorial
Staff



Weighted Staff Positions

Staff
Appropriations
(Real \$)

The Impact of Experience as Governor (First Term vs. Later Terms) and the Honeymoon Effect

Variations in policy activism and success may result from the experience that a governor has had in office. In his second term, the governor may have a better understanding of the job and therefore have more or fewer policy proposals—as he sees fit. Additional experience may also aid in pushing legislation through the General Assembly. On the other hand, a new governor may enjoy a honeymoon period during his early days in office. During a honeymoon the General Assembly is more likely to pass the governor's legislative proposals.

The only governor who gained extraordinary experience in office as governor was Orval Faubus. Faubus' policy activism was somewhat cyclical, rising to a first peak in 1959 (his third term), dropping to a low in 1963, and then rising again in his last term. His policy success record rose from the record low in this quarter century (40 percent) in 1954 to the two highest success rates during the entire period in 1957 and in 1965. The Faubus average after his first term is higher than that of any other governor.

The gubernatorial experience of all other governors was either none after their election or two years at the beginning of their second term. There is no discernible pattern in the activism of the two-term governors: (1) Rockefeller was slightly more active in his second term; (2) Bumpers and Pryor were both somewhat less active. The success rate of the two-term governors was the exact inverse: (1) Rockefeller's success rate went down in his second term; (2) Bumpers and Pryor's success rates increased slightly.

On the other side of experience as a contribution to legislative activism and success is the honeymoon effect. Generally the legislature would be expected to be sympathetic to a governor's program in his first term immediately after election. However, as mentioned above, Faubus, Bumpers, and Pryor each had higher policy rates in their latter terms. Thus, the honeymoon effect was absent except for Rockefeller.

The Extent of the Mandate Given to a Governor by Voters in the Previous Election

Policy success and activism may be influenced by electoral margin. Figure 6 shows the electoral margins for both the primaries and general elections from 1954 to 1978. The first and last Faubus terms and the two Rockefeller terms are the low points in electoral mandate, and the second and third Faubus terms plus the second Pryor term are the high points.

Comparison of policy success and mandate suggest that there is some correlation between the two. The small mandate in the 1954 primary and the narrow margins in the 1965 and 1968 general elections were followed by relatively low success rates for Faubus and Rockefeller. The high Faubus success rate in 1957 followed an overwhelming victory in 1956. However, the evidence is ambiguous since Faubus had a higher than average success rate following a smaller mandate in 1964 and had a lower-than-average success rate after receiving a large mandate in 1958.

An increase in two-party competition may also affect policy activism. It is possible that an increase in two-party competition is correlated with greater gubernatorial activism. Following the 1964, 1966, 1968, and 1970 elections, at which active two-party contests were waged, policy activism rose to a high level. However, after the two-party competition declined (beginning with the 1972 election), policy activism still remained at high rates. Thus, extent of the correlation between party competition and policy activism is unclear.

**Figure 6
Electoral Margin**

Year	Eventual Winner	Preferential Primary				Runoff			Gen'l Election		
		Winner %	All Others % (A)	Other highest % (B)	Margin (A) (B)	Winner %	Opponent %	Margin %	Winner %	Loser %	Margin %
1954	Faubus	34	64	48	-30 -14	51	49	2	62	38	24
1956	Faubus	58	42	28	16 30	Nominated 1st Primary*			81	19	62
1958	Faubus	69	31	16	38 53		*		82	18	64
1960	Faubus	59	41	16	18 43		*		69	31	38
1962	Faubus	52	48	21	4 31		*		73	27	46
1964	Faubus	66	34	19	32 47		*		57	43	14
1966	Rockefeller	98	2	2	96 96		*		54	46	6
1968	Rockefeller		No Primary						52	48	4
1970	Bumpers	20	80	36	-60 -60	59	41	18	62	32	30
1972	Bumpers	67	33	16	34 51		*		75	25	50
1974	Pryor	51	49	33	2 16		*		66	34	32
1976	Pryor	60	40	32	20 28		*		83	17	66
1978	Clinton	60	40	22	20 38		*		63	37	26

Partisan Margins in the Legislature

In addition to electoral mandate, an influence on gubernatorial activism and success in the legislature could be the size of the governor's party's delegation in the legislature. The only variation of note in this independent variable is the strong Democratic majority which the sole Republican governor, Rockefeller, faced in his two terms. (See Figure 7.) Rockefeller's proposals were average or above in number, but his success rate was well below the average. His percentage of bills vetoed was in the overall pattern, but overrides of his vetoes were far more numerous.

Figure 7
Partisan Margins in Legislature

	Governor	Party	Legislature (House & Senate Combined)		
			D	R	Indep.
55	Faubus	D	133	3	
57	Faubus	D	133	2	
59	Faubus	D	135	0	
61	Faubus	D	135	0	
63	Faubus	D	134	0	1
65	Faubus	D	135	0	
67	Rockefeller	R	132	3	
69	Rockefeller	R	130	5	
71	Bumpers	D	132	3	
73	Bumpers	D	132	2	
75	Pryor	D	131	4	
77	Pryor	D	130	5	
79	Clinton	D	129	6	

Source: Interview with Bill Bethea, Secretary of State's Office.

Summary of Conclusions

1. Policy activism has increased slightly over the past quarter of a century. The increased activism has been greater in major policies than in substantial policies. The degree of activism varies from governor to governor. In the past twenty-five years, the subject areas of major and substantial policy proposals has varied from 5 in 1955 to 12 in 1971 and 1975.

2. Policy success also fluctuates from governor to governor. The lowest rate of success was 40 percent for Governor Faubus in 1955, and the highest rate was 100 percent for Faubus in 1957. Generally, the success rates of governors in gaining enactment of their policy initiatives have been high. The exceptions to this were Faubus in 1955 and Winthrop Rockefeller in both of his terms.

3. With two exceptions, veto activism has varied little. From 1957 until 1977, the number of vetoes ranged from 28 to 47 during each legislative session. In 1955 the number of vetoes reached 75. That was the highest total for the twenty-five year period under study. The next highest total was reached in 1979 when Governor Bill Clinton vetoed 64 bills.

4. Except for the vetoes exercised by Governor Winthrop Rockefeller, gubernatorial vetoes were almost always sustained by the General Assembly. About 14 percent of Rockefeller's vetoes were overridden by the state legislature.

5. Of the independent variables which might be casually related to policy activism, the analysis indicates that at least two of them have no direct relationship to the dependent variables. Changes in the formal powers of the governor and the anticipated honeymoon effect appear to have no effect on policy activism or success.

6. Increases in state and federal funds and growth in staff resources appear to be positively correlated with policy activism.

7. Three different variables appear to be positively related to policy success: experience as governor (serving a second or later term instead of being a freshman governor), a large electoral mandate in the previous election, and a large partisan margin in the legislature (i.e., a large majority of legislators with the same partisan affiliation as the governor are often positively correlated with the success rate of the governor).

The following chart provides a summary of the relationship between the dependent variables and the independent variables. A "plus" mark indicates that some positive correlation was observed by the authors.

Independent Variables

Dependent Variables Policy Activism Policy Success

Change in Formal Powers	-	-
Increase in funds	+	-
Growth in staff resources	+	-
Experience as governor	-	+
Honeymoon effect	-	-
Extent to electoral mandate	-	+
Partisan margin in the legislature	-	+

+ indicates evidence of positive correlation

- indicates no positive correlation was observed

Notes

1. John J. Harrigan, *Politics and Policy in States and Communities*, (Boston: Little Brown, 1980), p. 119.
2. Coleman B. Ransone, Jr., "The Governor, the Legislature, and Public Policy," *State Government*, Summer 1979, p. 120.
3. Cal Ledbetter, Jr., "The Office of Governor in Arkansas History," *The Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, XXXVII (Spring 1978), pp. 44-73, focuses principally on "the legal powers and duties. . . and the historical forces and events that have shaped these." In the conclusion he compares the legislative and administrative roles of the governor with those of the president, almost exclusively from the formal powers focus.
4. See Dan Durning, "Budgeting in Arkansas; Agencies, Governor and the Legislature," in Walter Nunn (ed), *Readings in Arkansas Government*, (LR: Rose Publishing Co., 1973) and Diane D. Kincaid, "Gubernatorial Appointments and Legislative Influence: Preliminary Observations in Arkansas", a paper prepared for delivery at the Annual Meeting of the Arkansas Political Science Association, February 17-18, 1977. Other articles pertinent to the Arkansas Governor's role in the policy process include the following: Donald T. Wells, "The Arkansas Legislature," in Nunn, *Readings*, pp. 59-84; Diane Kincaid, "The Arkansas Plan: Coon Dogs or Community Services?", *Publius*, Winter 1978, pp. 117-133 and Cal Ledbetter, Jr., Beadle Moore, and Glen Sparrow, *The Arkansas Plan: A Case Study in Public Policy*, (LR: University of Arkansas at Little Rock Monograph Series), 1979.
5. Jim Lester, *A Man for Arkansas: Sid McMath and the Southern Reform Tradition*, (LR: Rose Publishing Co., 1976) and John Ward, *The Arkansas Rockefeller*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Press, 1978).
6. V.O. Key, *Southern Politics*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1949), p. 184.
7. Key, p. 185.
8. Henry Alexander, "The Executive Branch and Administration," in *Background Papers for the Arkansas Assembly on State Government, June 4-6, 1959*, (Mimeograph, n.d.), p. 39.
9. Lists for two or three previous sessions were once available but were destroyed in cleaning out records in the House Speaker's office. Appreciation is expressed to the secretary of the Speaker of the House (Helen Swesey) for compiling and retaining the existing records and sharing them.
10. The Arkansas Highway Commission was created by Amendment 42 (the "Mack-Blackwell Amendment") in 1952; the Game and Fish Commission was created by Amendment 35 adopted in 1944.
11. In January 1978, the estimated number of boards and commissions stood at 187 according to Carol Griffie, "Boards and Commissioners: Just like Rabbits," *Arkansas Gazette*, January 17, 1978, p. 1B.
12. Joseph Schlesinger, "A Comparison of the Relative Position of Governors," in Thad Beyle and J. Oliver Williams, *The American Governor in Behavioral Perspective*, (NY: Harper and Row, 1972). The article originally was published in Herbert Jacobs and Kenneth Vines, *Policies in the American States*, Second Edition, (NY: Little, Brown & Co., 1971).