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2018

## The Effects of Gubernatorial Political Party Affiliation & Election Year on Funding to Florida's State Arts Agency

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# **The Effects of Gubernatorial Political Party Affiliation & Election Year on Funding to Florida's State Arts Agency**

## **Abstract**

In this article, we investigated the effects of gubernatorial political party affiliation and election year on funding to the Florida Division of Cultural Affairs (FDCA), Florida's state arts agency. Through a comprehensive quantitative analysis of legislative appropriations to the FDCA since 1970, our study revealed that funding to the FDCA increased during Republican gubernatorial appointments. The study also revealed that election year had no effect on funding to the FDCA. This study contributes to extant knowledge about state government's impact on funding to state arts agencies.

**Keywords:** Cultural policy, election year, funding, gubernatorial political party, state arts agency

## **Introduction**

State arts agencies (SAAs) play a vital role in the U. S. arts ecosystem. As a major cultural public funder, SAAs aim to ensure that residents of all regions of the country have access to cultural opportunities (Mulcahy, 2002; Rushton, 2015; and Stubbs & Clapp, 2015). Nevertheless, because SAAs operate in particularized political contexts, their funding remains unstable and volatile. Until 1992, aggregate SAA appropriations declined in fiscal years 1972, 1977, and 1991 (Love, 1991). In the 1990s, this is partly because conservative Republicans' protest of the use of public funding to create art that they deemed sexually graphic received extensive media coverage (Urice, 1992). Indeed, Senators Jesse Helms and Pat Buchanan's lobbying against the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) caused seismic shifts in U. S. cultural policy at the federal level, most notably that the NEA could no longer fund individual artists. Furthermore, Urice (1992) argued that SSAs have not prepared well for a tumultuous political future. This is not true of Florida's state arts agency, however.

Founded in 1969, the Florida Division of Cultural Affairs' (FDCA) mission is to advance, support, and promote arts and culture to strengthen the economy and quality of life for all Floridians (Florida Division of Cultural Affairs, 2015). In a strategic alliance to protect itself from elimination, the FDCA statutorily acquired the Museum of Florida History from the Division of Historical Resources in 2010, the worst funding year in its history. In the next section, the literature review will provide the conceptual framing for this study.

## **Literature Review**

Extant literature has examined a plethora of topics related to cultural public funding (Getzner, 2015; Lewis & Rushton, 2007; Lowell, 2004; Mulcahy, 2002; Noonan, 2007; Noonan, 2015; Rosenstein et al. 2013; Rössel & Weingarten, 2015; Rushton, 2008; and Urice, 1992). However, Lewis & Rushton, 2007; Noonan, 2007; Noonan, 2015; and Stubbs & Clapp, 2015 were critical to the conceptual framing of this study because we agree that political preferences of the electorate have greater importance than party ideologies (Rushton, 2004; and Lewis & Rushton, 2007). However, Noonan (2015) found that the shift to Republican control state governments did not benefit SAAs' budgets. In fact, it appears that a unified Republican state government is the worst situation for SAA appropriations. However, Noonan (2015) warned that idiosyncratic state-specific funding tendencies play an important role in SAAs' funding.

Large cuts in states such as Florida, Louisiana, Michigan, South Dakota, Washington, and Wisconsin are consistent with lower SAA appropriations in those states. Yet, a clear relationship exists between political economy factors and cultural public funding at the state level. Additionally, Noonan (2007) explained that SAA budgets are sensitive to past appropriations, state revenues and National Endowment for the Arts grants, some demographic variables, party control of state government, and state budgeting rules. But after the Great Recession, Noonan (2015) found insufficient evidence to support the claim that SAAs suffer disproportionately during times of fiscal stress.

Two rationales support the need for further exploration of issues relative to cultural public funding (Lewis & Rushton, 2007; Noonan, 2007; and Noonan, 2015), particularly as it relates to the state of Florida. First, Florida's is one of eleven, "purple" or "swing" states. During the 2016 presidential election the purple states included Colorado, Iowa, Minnesota, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Wisconsin. In purple states, equal numbers of Democrat and Republican voters exist. However, Florida is the largest purple state which makes it the ideal political environment in which to study if gubernatorial party affiliation effects funding to the FDCA. In addition, as shown in Table 1, Florida has had an equal number of Democrat and Republican gubernatorial appointees, not counting Claude Kirk and Bob Martinez who switched from Democrat to Republican (National Governors Association, 2015). This raises the question, does gubernatorial political party effect funding to the FDCA?

Table 1. Florida Gubernatorial Appointee & Party Affiliations

<b>Gubernatorial Appointee</b>	<b>Years in Office</b>	<b>Political Party</b>
Claude Kirk	1967 - 1971	Democrat, Republican
Reubin Askew	1971 - 1979	Democrat
Daniel Graham	1979 – 1987	Democrat
Robert Martinez	1987 – 1991	Democrat, Republican
Lawton Chiles	1991 – 1998	Democrat
Kenneth Mackay	1998 – 1999	Democrat
Jeb Bush	1997 – 2007	Republican
Charlie Crist	2007 – 2011	Republican
Rick Scott	2011 - 2017	Republican

Governors, legislators, state agencies, and the chief financial officer all play key roles in Florida's budget process. Governors exercise some power at the beginning of the budgetary process when they provide written instructions to state agencies to develop their budget requests (LobbyTools, 2016). However, Governors have the most authority at the end of the budgetary process when they make budgetary recommendations that the House and Senate will use to craft the state's budget during legislative sessions. For example, in fiscal year 2016-17 the governor recommended that the FDCA receive \$9,455,488. While the FDCA did not receive its total budget requested, with the checks and balances provided by the House and Senate it received \$33,000,000 (Florida Cultural Alliance, 2016) ranking it 7<sup>th</sup> in the nation for state-level arts funding (National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, 2016).

Second, in 2014, a gubernatorial election year, the FDCA received \$56,384,417 its highest appropriation in its forty-five-year history. It received its lowest appropriation of \$950,000 four years earlier. The unpredictability of funding through legislative appropriation may explain why the FDCA procured its highest legislative appropriation in its history. Although previous literature (Getzner, 2015; and Rössel & Weingarten, 2015) found no effect, the level of funding and the timing of this particular legislative appropriation begs the question, does election year effect funding to the FDCA?

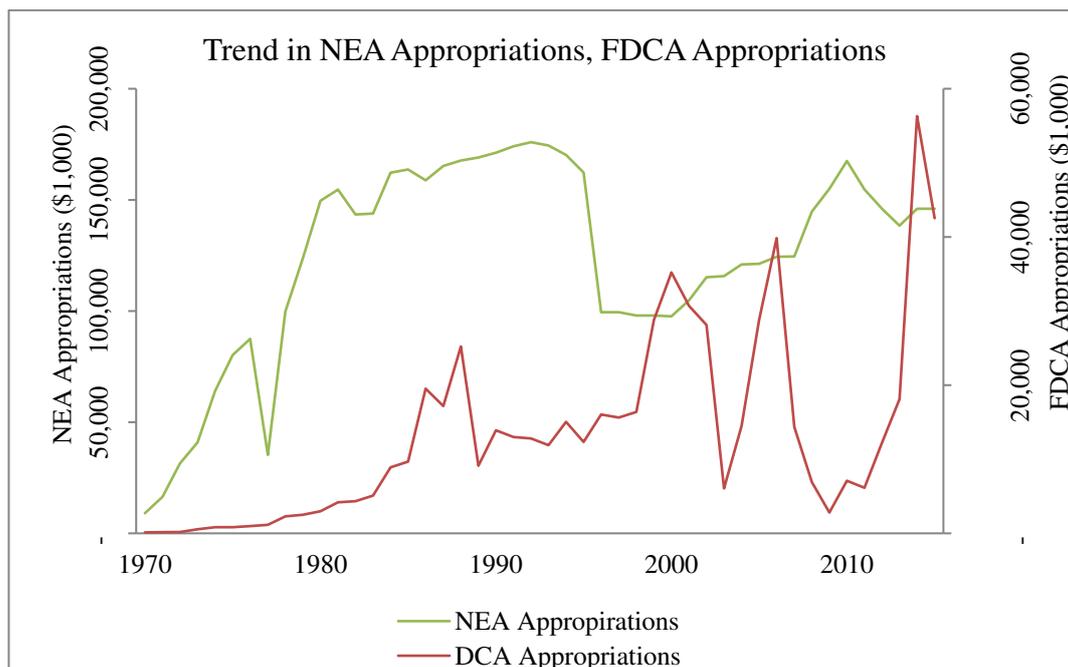
Therefore, we investigated two research questions in this study: (1) does gubernatorial political party effect funding to the FDCA, and (2) does election year effect funding to the FDCA? The purpose of this study is to examine the effects, if any, of gubernatorial political party and election year on funding to the FDCA.

### Method

To examine legislative appropriations since 1970, we used official State of Florida budgetary documents. Florida's Executive Office of the Governor published Florida's ten-year summary of appropriation data annually. This allowed us to collect legislative appropriations to the FDCA from 1969-1970 through 2009-2010. After 2010, the State of Florida's Executive Office of the Governor placed the state's operating budget online at the Transparency Florida website, which is where we retrieved appropriations data between 2010 and 2015. To determine the amount of appropriations, we used a nominal dollar unadjusted for inflation from the State of Florida Executive Office of the Governor.

As the trend analysis in Figure 1 shows, the FDCA's and NEA's appropriations differ remarkably. We thought it important to show this analysis because Noonan (2007) explained that SAA budgets are sensitive to state revenues and National Endowment for the Arts grants. While the NEA appropriations decreased by 60% in 1977, the FDCA appropriations increased by 17%. The FDCA's average percent of change in appropriation from year to year was 29%, but the NEA's average was 11% from 1971 to 2015. Consequently, the FDCA's funding appears more unstable and volatile than the NEA's.

Figure 1. Trends in NEA/FDCA Appropriations



## Results

First, we tested the difference in the mean value of the FDCA's appropriations by gubernatorial political party: Democrat/Republican, Democrat, and Republican. Because we had more than two groups, we tested for the equality of means at the same time using the analysis of variance F-test (ANOVA). Our null hypothesis was that the FDCA's mean appropriations are the same for the three political types of gubernatorial appointees.

$$H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2 = \mu_3$$

The alternative hypothesis was that the FDCA's mean appropriations are not all the same for the three political types of gubernatorial appointees.

$H_1$ : The mean appropriations are not all equal.

Table 2 presents the results of the ANOVA of the three groups. The computed value of p was 0.026, less than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, we rejected the null hypothesis. The mean appropriations of the FDCA was higher with Republican gubernatorial appointees than those with Democrat/Republican or Democrat affiliations. Although we conducted a Dunnett T3 for post hoc tests to determine intergroup relationships among the three groups, the p values were larger than 0.05.

Table 2

Variable	Gubernatorial Political Party	Mean	SD	F/p
FDCA Appropriations	Democrat, Republican (a)	10,523,121	7,593,528.68	
	Democrat (b)	5,816,574	4,139,964.70	4.000/0.026*
	Republican (c)	10,750,315	7,275,137.92	

\*  $p < 0.05$

Secondly, we tested the difference in the mean value of the FDCA's appropriations between election and non-election years. The null hypothesis stated that there was no difference in the mean appropriations for election and no-election years.

$$H_0: \mu_1 - \mu_2 = 0$$

$H_1$ : The mean appropriations were not all equal.

Table 3 shows the results of the T-test between election years and non-election years. We did not reject the null hypothesis because the value of 1.065 was smaller than that of 1.96. We concluded that there was no difference in the means for the appropriations between election years and non-election years.

Table 3

	Mean		SD		T	p
	Election (n=12)	Non-election (n=34)	Election	Non-election		
FDCA Appropriations	9,794,571	7,571,585	7,570,970.20	5,697,235.67	1.065	.293

## Conclusions

This study investigated two research questions: (1) does gubernatorial political party effect funding to the FDCA, and (2) does election year effect funding to the FDCA? Our investigation of these questions found that funding to Florida's state arts agency increased during the appointments of Republican gubernatorial appointees. This result is contrary to contemporary conventional wisdom. To a degree, the cultural sector has vilified Republican policymakers when it comes to cultural public funding, and perhaps for good cause. As stated earlier, since the U. S. cultural wars, some conservative Republican policymakers have been extremely vocal about their desire to eliminate cultural public funding, especially at the national level. In 2012, Republican Presidential Candidate, Mitt Romney, stated in an interview that if he became the president that he would eliminate subsidies for the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities (Allen, 2012).

More recently, according to Kennicott and McGlone (2017), the 45<sup>th</sup> President's proposed budget eliminated the National Endowment for the Arts, National Endowment for the Humanities, Institute of Museum and Library Services, and Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Nevertheless, funding remained stable for these cultural agencies due to their bi-partisan support. The cultural sector should note that nearly a dozen Republicans signed a letter in favor of funding the NEA and NEH (Cooper & Deb, 2017). In addition, although scholars (Lewis & Rushton, 2007; Noonan, 2007; Noonan, 2015; and Rushton, 2015) cautioned against looking for well-defined strategic rationales in U. S. state-level cultural policy, this study's results hold important cultural policy implications that compels further inquiry into the effects governors' political party might have on funding to state arts agencies.

Although this study revealed that Florida's state arts agency experienced funding increases during the appointments of Republican gubernatorial appointees, this result may hold true for other purple states, too. Exploration of this result could make a significant contribution to extant literature on cultural public funding to state arts agencies. For example, scholars should replicate this study in Colorado, Iowa, Minnesota, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Wisconsin to see what differences and similarities might exist across "purple" states relative to their cultural funding. Such studies could significantly enhance and inform the advocacy strategies of SAAs in these states.

Given that this study found that state level cultural public funding increased with Republican governors in Florida, the cultural sector should consider that some classic conservatives' views about federal funding might differ from their personal philanthropy. For example, Betsy DeVos and her husband gave the Kennedy Center \$22.5 million, the largest private donation of the institution's history. In addition, David Koch has given major gifts to the Lincoln Center and Metropolitan Museum of Art (Steinhauer, 2017). While cultural organizations will have to think carefully and strategically about the ethical dilemmas that come with accepting philanthropic gifts from individuals whose values may diverge from their missions, the sector should resist making culture a partisan issue. This study supports the use of an advocacy strategy that engages Republicans just as meaningfully as the sector might engage Democrats.

Our second research question inspired an inquiry into if election year effected funding to the FDCA. The results show no effect, which raised the question what is the correlation between the 2014 gubernatorial election and the highest legislative appropriation in the FDCA's history? Other economic, political, and/or social factors may help shed light on the connection. Nonetheless, this correlation warrants further phenomenological investigation into what about Florida's budgetary process in 2014 caused such a large appropriation.

Figure 1 showed a trend analysis comparing the funding of the NEA and the FDCA. Although funding appears less volatile at the federal level than at the state-level, the unpredictability of cultural public funding incites an investigation into alternative strategies for state-level cultural public funding (National Assembly of Arts Agencies, 2013). Wilkerson (2012) proposed a funding model of using the arts to pay for the arts. In his proposal, a new agency he called the United States Fund (or Agency, or Corporation) for Arts and Culture would receive funding through:

- A \$.25 levy on tickets to performing arts events (profit and nonprofit) and movies.
- A download fee of one penny (\$.01) per song through vendors such as iTunes.
- A fee of \$.25 per purchase of all books sold in the United States.
- A fee equal to \$.25 per disc or 1% of the cost of blank media, which would include discs, tapes, and other media designed to contain artistic or entertainment-oriented content.
- A \$.25 charge on all recorded CDs sold in the United States.
- A \$.25 charge on all video games sold in the United States.
- A 1% tax on the sale of all visual artworks sold in the United States.

Clearly, Wilkerson's (2012) model seeks to integrate the for-profit entertainment industry into a funding schema that divests the nonprofit cultural sector of its reliance on policymakers whose priorities change with the way the wind blows. Still, localizing the model to states and cities might enhance its utility. For example, in Florida Wilkerson's (2012) model might look like levying a \$.25 fee or tax on tickets to theme parks such as Walt Disney World and Harry Potter World, as well as tickets to professional sporting events by the Jacksonville Jaguars, Orlando Magic, Tampa Bay Buccaneers, and Miami Heat, among others. But one must consider the question, how much funding would a model of this nature generate?

Would the funding levels increase to what they were in fiscal year 2014-15 when the FDCA received its highest legislative appropriation in its history? Or would funding remain as it is under the current model? Although needing further consideration of political climates for practical implementation, a study exploring the range of options available could greatly benefit the FDCA and the citizens of Florida, especially if it will help to further advance the agency's mission of advancing, supporting, and promoting arts and culture to strengthen the economy and quality of life for all Floridians. Before adopting Wilkerson's (2012) model, however, the FDCA must seriously grapple with a longstanding question that has plagued many organizations in the cultural sector, does it want more funding, more stable funding, or both? Can a state arts agency really have it all?

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