

# THE INFLUENCE OF POLITICAL IDEOLOGY IN THE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE HEARINGS HELD OVER THE CREATION OF THE NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION:

*using ideological influences in committee hearing witnesses rosters to  
classify policy issues in scientific and technical congressional debates*

BY

KONRAD EDWARD IAN POSCH

AUGUST 4, 2011

**Abstract:** In this paper, I develop a bipartite network analysis method of committee hearing witness analysis that allows me to classify policy issues in a congressional debate as politically partisan or nonpartisan by comparing the witnesses who testified in the hearings over the issue. In so doing, I am able to determine which of the five major issues (administration, federal coordination of research, patents, inclusion of the social sciences, and the need for a foundation) in the 1945-1949 debates over the creation of the National Science Foundation were and which were not primarily divided along the lines of liberal-conservative political ideology. I find that administration, federal Coordination of Research, and patents are clearly divided along the lines of partisan ideology while the inclusion of the social sciences and the need for a foundation are supported by both liberals and conservatives of the era. The methodology is particularly suited to analysis of scientific, technical, or otherwise complex and esoteric issues that are increasingly important in social and political life (i.e. healthcare, environmental regulation, energy policy). In an appendix, I develop an elaboration of Groseclose, Levitt, and Snyder (1999) which allows cross-temporal, cross-chamber comparison of Americans for Democratic Action (ADA) ideology scores to be tared to the ideological spectrum of an arbitrary era from 1947 onward (when the ADA began scoring members of Congress).

A paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
Master of Arts degree in the  
Master of Arts Program in the Social Sciences  
at the University of Chicago

Faculty Advisor: John F. Padgett  
Preceptor: Lauren Duquette