

# Santa Fe Institute - REU Abstract

C. F. Flocken with mentor Cris Moore

Do pairwise correlations exist between elite individuals' 'social ties' and political campaign donating behavior? I hypothesize that persons with more social ties to a particular party will exhibit less political shifts. Furthermore, individuals within certain industry types (e.g, investment banking) will often contribute to both political sides. Social ties are of the following kind: "relative of", "business partner of", "worked as a lobbyist for", "hired as a consultant by", "went to school with", "close friends of", "served on the same board as". The simplest scheme for a political shift is when one contributes the most to a different party than they did the preceding election cycle.

Firstly, I will look at the time series of individuals' donations to the Republican and Democratic Parties from a large database.<sup>1</sup> I will compare donating behavior by using a variety of statistical methods including the KS test, Shannon-Jensen divergence, and ANOVAs. Secondly, "snowball sampling" will be used to create individual social networks for each election cycle (by the social criteria aforementioned). This comparative study investigates if social ties might influence a certain donating behavior- political shifting. An additional task is to detect if organization types (e.g, think-tank, non-profit, academic institution) are composed of persons with statistically similar donating behavior.

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<sup>1</sup>The data is obtained from Little Sis and derives from government filings and other reputable sources. According to Little Sis their information on members of Congress is from the Congressional Biographical Directory, GovTrack.us, and Project Vote Smart. Political contribution data is from the Federal Elections Commission. The corporate board and executive data is from the Form 4 and 10-K filings of the Securities and Exchange Commission. The lobbying data is from the US Senate's Lobbying Disclosure Act database. Lastly, the government contract data is from the Federal Procurement Data System, by way of OMBWatch's FedSpending.org