

Using organizational outreach event analysis to understand political mobilization

Sarah James¹ and Angie Bautista-Chavez²

Motivation

Existing studies of political mobilization focus on explaining activist recruitment and organizational outreach by conducting surveys, interviews, and ethnographies. These methods more reliably explain organization intention, rather than actual behavior. Furthermore, such methods are not possible if the organization does not choose to cooperate with scholars.

Method	Outcome of Interest	Examples
Ethnographies	Making of Activists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Munson, 2008 Han, 2016
Experiments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocacy Organizations' Strategies Effective Advocacy Organization Outreach Strategies Effective Party Outreach Strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Karpf, 2012 McEntire et al., 2015 Michelson, 2003 Nickerson, 2005
Surveys	Party Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gershtenson, 2003 Gimpel et al., 2007 Goldstein & Ridout, 2002 Huckfeldt and Sprague, 1992
Interviews	Effective Advocacy Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Andrews et al., 2010
Behavioral Outcomes	Advocacy Organizations' Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LeRoux, 2007
Event Analysis	Party Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connaughton, 2005
	Party & Advocacy Organizations Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Herrnson, 2009 Koger et al., 2009
	Organizational Outreach Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current Study

We offer a new method that facilitates the examination of organizational behavior by highlighting the range, goals, and modalities of outreach efforts. Furthermore we examine political engagement by conservatives, which is understudied in contemporary studies of organizational outreach.

Method

- Gathered the universe of publically advertised events, including descriptions, date, location, and prominent attendees
- Coded the event descriptions for values communicated, political participation requested, products provided, and values communicated.
- Yielded a dataset of 1700 events occurring between 2011 and 2016.
- Compared patterns in these categories across organizations to discern the goals and strategies towards 3 constituency building groups

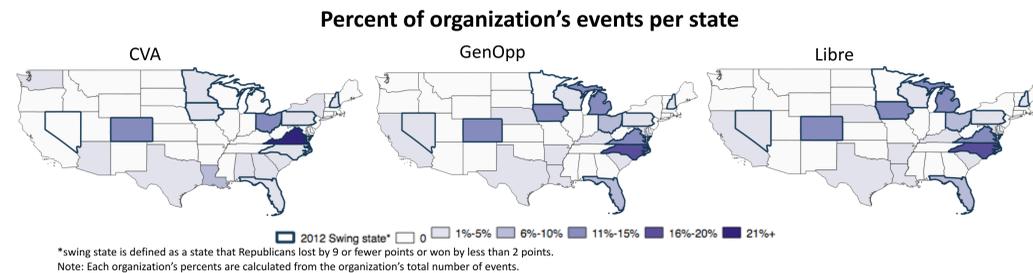
Data: Koch-funded constituency organizations

We examined the political outreach strategies of three constituency mobilization organizations created by the ultra-conservative Koch Network.

Organization	Mission
The Libre Initiative	Our mission is to equip the Hispanic community with the tools they need to be prosperous. We are committed to developing a network of Hispanic pro-liberty activists across the United States so that our message reaches every corner of the country.
Generation Opportunity	Generation Opportunity enables young Americans to make a difference in their lives by building a movement that promotes a free society.
Concerned Veterans for America	To preserve the freedom and prosperity we [veterans] and our families fought and sacrificed to defend.

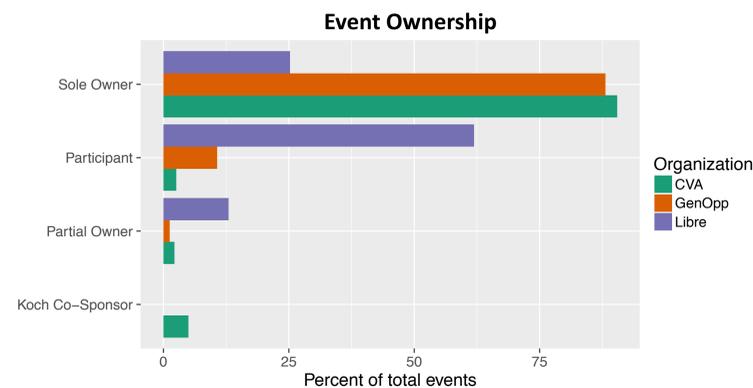
Event location

Event locations demonstrate both an electoral and demographic strategic logic.



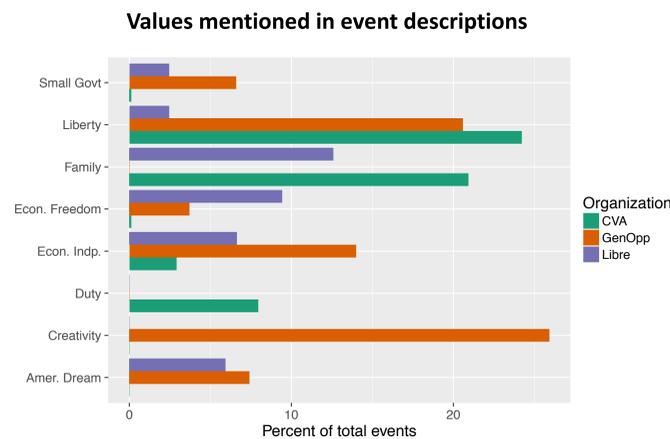
Event structure

GenOpp & CVA own the majority of their events, while Libre partners with Latino-serving community organizations.



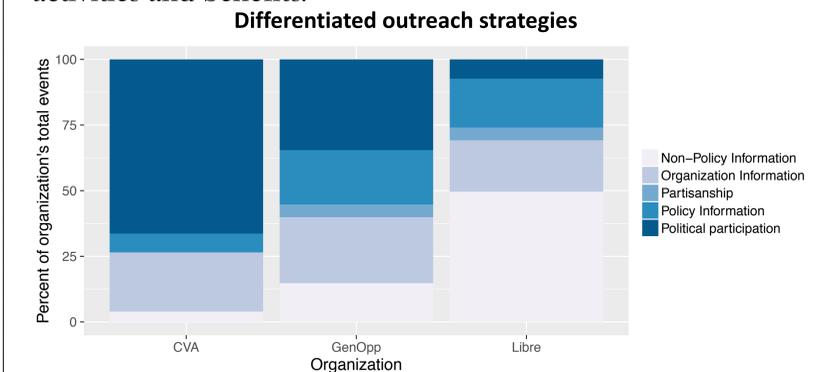
Values

The organizations emphasized shared values between the target constituency and conservatism. These values varied by group.



Political requests

Organizations differentiate the intensity of their political requests based on the target constituency's partisanship. CVA, which targets the most conservative group, veterans, emphasizes political participation, while Libre, which targets the least right-aligned group, emphasizes less explicitly political activities and benefits.



Conclusion

- There are efforts on the right to recruit and mobilize non-conservative constituencies.
- Using publically available organizational documents can provide rich insight into the political goals and patterns of organizational behavior.
 - This is especially useful if the organization does not welcome scholarly attention.
- The Koch organizations differentiate their political recruitment strategies to match the target constituency's alignment with conservatism.
 - This suggests that, unlike parties, allied organizations have long time horizons for seeing political results.
 - Changing policy preferences may begin with exposure and apolitical discussion
- The event styles and content and qualitatively different, targeting the preferences of the target constituency
- Partnerships with trusted community organizations may represent a critical strategy for engaging with non-aligned communities.

¹ Ph.D. Candidate, Harvard University

² Ph.D. Candidate, Harvard University