**A Preliminary Analysis of the Koch Brothers’ Policy Planning Network**

**First Authors: Teide Riley-McNary and Ryan Koster**

**Sociogram: Anthony Jreije**

**Data Gathering: S. Biddle, D. Burchill, C. Gyang-Duah, O. Irakiza, D. James, C. Kirongozi, D. Lawson, B. Little, W. Merritt, J. Shattuck, M. Stein, G. Trevor, K. Xheleli**

In Who Rules America?, G. William Domhoff uses network analysis to document the existence of a corporate community, and to demonstrate its political activity. He argues that “the ability of the corporate rich to transform their economic power into policy expertise and political access makes them the most important influence on the federal government” (xiii). Moreover, “The corporate rich supplement their small numbers by financing and directing a wide variety of nonprofit organizations, such as tax-free foundations, think tanks, and policy-discussion groups, to aid them in developing policy alternatives that serve their interests” (xii). Domhoff describes these linked organizations as a “policy planning network” (PPN). He goes on to say that the corporate community’s network begins in informal discussions. Then, the policy issues raised move to the more organized part of the network. That part “is a complex network of people and institutions that plays an important role in sharpening the issues and weighing the alternatives”, made up of foundations, think tanks and policy-discussion groups (Domhoff 76). Foundations are usually the ones who fund the rest of the network and “only a few dozen have the money and interest to involve themselves in funding programs that have a bearing on national-level policy” (Domhoff 81). Think tanks and policy-discussion groups both provide places to improve the corporate community’s policies, either through research and refinement (as in think tanks) or through educating the officials who will endorse these policies. These three types of organizations then push the finished policy into the government, often through the government officials they help fund or support in other ways.

Domhoff’s book itself cannot possibly cover the breadth of evidence that exists around this topic, so there is always an opportunity for further research. Specifically, this paper will begin to examine the policy-planning network of the well known Koch brothers. Charles G. Koch and David H. Koch are the co-owners of Koch Industries, one of the biggest privately owned companies in the world. According to [sourcewatch.org](http://sourcewatch.org), they have been involved in funding the policy-planning network of the corporate community since the 1980s, and recently have been marked in the media as major actors for the corporate community’s interests.

The Washington Post recently published an article about the Kochs’ network (“Koch-backed political network, built to shield donors, raised $400 million in 2012 elections”). This article served as the starting point for our research. The article included a sociogram that listed three central nodes as its major actors - Freedom Partners (FP), TC4 Trust, and the Center to Protect Patient Rights (CPPR). FP and TC4 (the latter is now defunct) are described as politically active nonprofits that serve as de facto banks that feed money into many other groups in the network. They moved a large share of their funds through CPPR, described as a “major cash turnstile”.

We suggest that these are not the only “nodes” in the Koch network. In recent years, the Kochs and other wealthy donors have relied increasingly on Donors Trust and Donors Capital. These organizations are described as a way for the wealthy and corporations to remain anonymous while funding controversial issues or groups ([www.prwatch.org/news/2012/10/11819/meet-network-hiding-koch-money](http://www.prwatch.org/news/2012/10/11819/meet-network-hiding-koch-money); see also (<http://www.greenpeace.org/usa/Global/usa/planet3/PDFs/DonorsTrust.pdf>). Additionally, we chose to include the Charles G. Koch Charitable Foundation because family/corporate foundations have traditionally been core actors in the PPN. After selecting these five key nodes, all the organizations that received money from them in 2012 were identified from www.[conservativetransparency.org](http://conservativetransparency.org) and listed on a spreadsheet. (Note that useful descriptive information on all of our nodes may be found at [www.conservativetransparency.org](http://www.conservativetransparency.org) ). Those recipients that received over one million dollars were highlighted. That spreadsheet was then used to create a sociogram (see Figure 1 below) that was more extensive than the one made by the *Washington Post*.

The sociogram suggests that the Koch Brothers spearhead a widespread policy-planning network that they maintain through their massive fortunes and their connections in the corporate community. Clearly, not all of the network’s funds come directly from the Kochs, as a large pool of other conservative donors is involved. Nonetheless, the “Koch network” sociogram creates an image of corporate manipulation, with hundreds of lesser advocacy groups under financial control of the Kochs and their allies. These organizations include such core conservative actors as the National Rifle Association, Americans for Prosperity, the 60 Plus Association, ALEC, AEI, Heritage, the State Policy Network, and more. The spreadsheet created lists the amounts of money each organization received, provided the donation was over one million dollars. Sixty groups received at least that much money from the nodal actors, with many receiving much more. As Domhoff said, only a relatively small number of foundations, or other advocacy groups, have this kind of money to move around, and most of them are ultraconservative and opposed to the policies that the less powerful, but more moderate (or liberal) groups support.

((The sociogram is presented below))

