Justin Farrell
Yale University
Climate Change Politics and Machine Learning
What we know...
What we don’t...
Why?
ExxonMobil & Koch Family Foundations → Climate Contrarian Movement
RQs and Method
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1. Which orgs exert the most power in the network?
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2. What is thematic content of their texts?
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1. Which orgs exert the most power in the network?

2. What is thematic content of their texts?

3. Which organizations’ texts most influence media & politics?
A Quick Detour about Data
From analog to digital
Digitizing information
"Your recent Amazon purchases, Tweet score and location history makes you 23.5% welcome here."
Is it useful to you?

GET ALL THE INFORMATION YOU CAN, WE'LL THINK OF A USE FOR IT LATER.

"I can prove it or disprove it! What do you want me to do?"
Data

1. Social Network

164 Organizations

4,556 Individual Actors
Data

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*Donations from EM or KFF
Data

1. Social Network
   164 Organizations
   4,556 Individual Actors

   *Donations from EM or KFF

2. Written Text
   164 Organizations
   40,785 Texts (1993-2013)
Benefits of this approach...
Results: Contrarian Network
Large red nodes represent organizations. Very small black nodes represent individuals.
Results: Text Analysis
Semantic Presence in Media & Politics

News Media

U.S. President

U.S. Floor of Congress

Year (1993–2013)

Year (1993–2013)

Year (1997–2013)
Semantic Presence in Media & Politics

Orgs with Corporate Donations (***p<.001)
Contrarian Orgs who received funding:

1. are more central in the network
2. emphasized different thematic messages
3. were more semantically influential in media
Implications
Thanks!

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