AN ANALYSIS OF THE TEA PARTY PATRIOTS

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AN ANALYSIS OF THE TEA PARTY PATRIOTS

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by

Jared A. Meyer

Spring 2012

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I thought about examining several other projects, including neoclassical liberalism, inflationary policy, and national unemployment before stumbling upon the idea of the Tea Party. I even presented the idea of neoclassical liberalism to Professor Paul Viotti and formulated an abstract for the prospective project. I eventually strayed from the neoclassical proposal because of its potential of turning into an extensive book review. I also drifted from reports on inflationary policy and national unemployment because both ideas did not fully constitute a student pursuing a political science degree. I actually came up with the idea of the Tea Party while walking with my wife, Kimberly, in Bidwell Park one late afternoon. When we returned home from our walk I immediately contacted, via email, Political Science Department Chair, Dr. Charles Turner, about the idea. He seemed pleased with the theme and asked if I would write him a proposal. He also asked if I would consider a committee. I soon responded to him with a two-page proposal and asked Dr. Turner if he would be interested in being my committee chair. To my astonishment he agreed. Dr. Turner also suggested that he worked well with Dr. Matthew Thomas and that Dr. Thomas is a knowledgeable resource on third-party politics. So despite minimal involvement with Dr. Thomas as a graduate professor, I asked him to be on the committee. Surprisingly, he agreed. I thought about a third committee member but strayed from the idea because I believed that Dr. Turner and
Dr. Thomas would be adequate representatives. Finding additional members might confuse and frustrate the undertakings of the project.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge Dr. Charles Turner and Dr. Thomas Matthew for their assistance in helping me with this project. I would also like to recognize the individuals that I interviewed, Sue Hubbard, Ph.D., Cindy Selby, Ph.D., Matt Miller, Dan Acton, Mark Acton, Donald Gates, Peter Leonard, J.D., Erin Ryan, Cindy Harvey, Ted Sonnier, and the many other anonymous interviewees mentioned in the report. Your insights and outlook of the Tea Party have been invaluable to this research project. I want to especially thank Dr. Cindy Selby for her time and dedication and her help particularly involving qualitative and quantitative research. I also want to thank Dr. Sue Hubbard, Matt Miller, and Cindy Harvey for their time and useful insights into the Chico Tea Party. Whenever I struggled with a question or had doubts about continuing, they buoyed me up and pointed me in the right direction.
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The Tea Party movement began in 2009 and has rapidly grown throughout the United States due to dissatisfaction with politicians in Washington. People were attracted to the movement because they felt their political parties were failing in representing their core values concerning fiscal policy.

In view of the fact that the Tea Party movement began so recently, there is not a lot of credible information on the subject. This lack of information is what brought about my desire to learn more about the individuals that make up this movement and provide a glimpse into who they are. To help gather this information, I dispersed a 38-item questionnaire to local Tea Party participants in Chico, Redding, Oroville, and Paradise. In addition, the most helpful data to support my research came from credible newspaper articles, academic online resources, and scholastic magazines.

As the report came together, I moved further from the political significance of the Tea Party, especially in the 2012 elections, to a comparative analysis of the local Tea
Party to the Tea Party at large, and the Tea Party at large to the American public. My fundamental objective became finding out whether or not devout Tea Partiers actually believe what they claim to say at large plaza gatherings or town hall meetings. Understanding and discussing this point is precisely why this report is unique and different from all other material written on the movement. Moreover, it delves beyond the surface day-to-day rhetoric and gets to the bottom of the Tea Party. Some of my research results include the Tea Party’s disdain for the expansion of the federal government, disappointment in the Republican Party, cries for widespread political reform, and other pertinent issues. It concludes that the Tea Party’s rise to prominence will likewise decline and that, by and large, the movement is relatively isolated from the American people.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Tea Party

The Tea Party is a growing controversial political movement in America. It is predominately composed of fiscal conservatives and fiscal libertarians. The tea party concept existed long before the modern movement, but the concept has only caught the attention of likeminded Americans in recent years. The Republican Party claims support of the Tea Party, but the Tea Party does not necessarily claim the Republican establishment. California is well represented, but the highest growth has occurred in rural counties of sparsely populated states of America. There are over 1,000 community Tea Party groups nationwide (Tea Party Patriots 2009a). Chico, CA has more than 120 members and Redding, CA has over 1,200 that meet together weekly. Members often delve into notorious social conservative causes, but the movement stays firm to its fundamental philosophies of fiscal responsibility, constitutional limited government, and free markets.

The local Tea Party in Chico, Paradise, Redding, and Oroville resembles that of the Tea Party at large, yet the Tea Party differs from mainstream Americans on almost every major political issue. A survey (Appendix B) was conducted in March and April of 2010, targeting Tea Party members in such localized areas. Its purpose was to discover their attitudes concerning a variety of topics, such as the national economy, Republican and Democratic parties, and George W. Bush and President Barack Obama. It also asked
questions concerning social issues like education, healthcare, unions, and environmental policy. Even more so, it had inquiries regarding motivation, demographics, and California’s economy. Overall, there are eight chapters that are closely connected to the survey and each chapter is comprised of distinct characteristics of the Tea Party, essential Tea Party fundamentals, filled with necessary facts and answers that will enable the reader to understand the movement in its entirety.

Chapter 1 begins as the introduction into the movement. Chapter 2 is concerned with Tea Party motivation. Chapter 3’s focus is the Tea Party’s makeup and demographics. Chapter 4 is an overview of their partisan views. Chapter 5’s focal point is their views of the national economy. Chapter 6’s focus is their opinion of congressional policy. Chapter 7 discusses their domestic policy positions. Chapter 8 targets their understandings of California’s economy. Finally, subsequent to the chapters are the concluding remarks, which include an extensive chapter summation.

The purpose of an introductory section is to establish a general overview of essential fundamentals of both the local Tea Party in Chico, Oroville, Paradise and Redding to the Tea Party at large. It begins with the creation of the national movement, core values, philosophy, and countrywide demographics. Second, it covers the foundation of the local Tea Party specifically in Chico, the original establishment, characteristics, and makeup. Third, it highlights and develops pertinent terminologies such as Tea Party Patriot, Tea Party Express, compassionate conservative, moderate Republican, neocon, and progressive that are frequently used throughout the report. Lastly, an extensive methodology segment summarizes each chapter and concludes the section.
Motivation

Excessive government spending and taxation is the impetus of the Tea Party movement (Meckler 2010). Some within the establishment, like Fox News television host Greta Van Susteren and others outside the organization like Jill Lepore, believe that the Tea Party began February 19, 2009, approximately one month after the inauguration of President Obama (Lepore 2010, 3). Others, like Senator Rand Paul, say that the movement began long before Obama took office. Many Chico Tea Partiers such as Cindy Harvey (2010) and Dr. Sue Hubbard (2010), say that stirring motions were commonly felt among prospective members during the Bush years, especially towards the end of his presidency, when TARP and other bailout recipients such as AIG and Leman Brothers were pushed by Congress and the Bush Administration.

Core Values

The Tea Party is centered on three core values: fiscal responsibility, constitutional limited government, and free markets (Tea Party Patriots 2009b).

Fiscal Responsibility

The Tea Party is comprised of two primary groups the Tea Party Express and the Tea Party Patriots. According to Tea Party advocate Mark Meckler (2010), both organizations strongly believe that the government should respect the freedom of the individual by spending government revenues as if the money was their own. They feel that “constitutionally limited government, designed to protect liberty, must be fiscally responsible or will inherently subject its citizenry to high levels of taxation that unjustly restrict the liberty that the Constitution was designed to protect” (Tea Party Patriots
Furthering the enlargement of the government bureaucracy will only result in additional deficit spending, which compels the Tea Party Patriots to take action. They see the “increasing national debt as a serious threat to national sovereignty and the personal and economic liberty of future generations” (Tea Party Patriots 2009b).

**Constitutionally Limited Government**

The Tea Party Patriots (2009b) say they are inspired by the founding documents and “regard the Constitution of the United States to be the supreme law of the land.” They believe that “it is possible to know the original intent of the government and stand in support of that intent” (Tea Party Patriots 2009b). Like the founders, they support “states' rights for those powers not expressly stated in the Constitution” (Tea Party Patriots 2009b). Lastly, “as the government is of the people, by the people, and for the people, in all other matters they support the personal liberty of the individual, within the rule of law” (Tea Party Patriots 2009b).

**Free Markets**

The Tea Party Patriots state that “a free market is the economic consequence of personal liberty” (Tea Party Patriots 2009b). They assert that the “founders believed that personal and economic freedom were indivisible” (Tea Party Patriots 2009b). For that reason, they believe that the “nation’s current government's interference distorts the free market and inhibits the pursuit of individual and economic liberty” (Tea Party Patriots 2009b). Therefore, they “support a return to the free market principles on which the nation was founded and oppose government intervention into the operations of private business” (Tea Party Patriots 2009b).
Philosophy

Tea Party believes in fiscal responsibility, constitutionally limited government, and free markets. Tea Party Patriots is a non-partisan grassroots organization of individuals united by core values derived from the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States of America, and the Bill of Rights, as explained in *The Federalist Papers* (Hamilton, Madison, and Jay 1961). The group recognizes and supports the strength of grassroots organization powered by activism and civic responsibility at the local level. They hold that the United States is a republic conceived by its architects as a nation whose people were granted “unalienable rights” by a creator. Essential among these are the rights to “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” (Tea Party Patriots 2009a). The Tea Party Patriots stand with the Founding Fathers as heirs to the republic. They embrace the idea that there exists an inherent benefit to the country when private property and prosperity are secured by natural law and the rights of the individual.

Size and Population

The exact number is unknown. The closest estimates have been conducted recently by several pollsters, such as the *Rasmussen Report*, *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, CNN, and Gallup. Gallup compared the scope and size of the Tea Party to the American left (Gallup 2011). Although the polling data does not provide specific evidence as to the oversize of the Tea Party, it does help one understand the magnitude of the movement. The *Rasmussen Report* did a study in December of 2009 using a three-way generic ballot test featuring a hypothetical “Tea Party” candidate. Their results showed that Democrats attracted 36 percent of the vote, the Tea Party candidate picked
up 23 percent, while the Republicans finished last at 18 percent. Among independent voters, the Tea Party bested both the Democrat and Republican candidates, with 33 percent of all independent voters preferring the Tea Party candidate (Rasmussen 2009). In addition to Rasmussen, on December 16, 2009, Susan Davis (2009) wrote in the *Wall Street Journal* that the Tea Party movement fared better than both the Republican and Democratic parties, with 41 percent of respondents saying they had a “favorable” or “somewhat favorable” view of it. Furthermore, a poll made by CNN (2010) found that “one-third of Americans have a favorable view of the Tea Party movement,” while “26 percent of the public has as unfavorable view.” Another 40 percent either have not heard of the movement or do not know enough to form an opinion (CNN 2010). A similar poll done by Fox News found that of 900 registered voters from early February 2010, 35 percent of voters view the Tea Party movement favorably, 22 percent view it unfavorably, and 42 percent do not know or never heard of the movement (Fox News 2010b). Another poll conducted by CNN (2010) on February 12-15 2010 found that of 1,023 adult Americans (with a sampling error of +/- 3 percent), 35 percent of the sample either strongly or moderately supported the Tea Party, 19 percent strongly or moderately opposed the Tea Party, 16 would vote for a Tea Party candidate for Congress, and 2 to 7 percent participated in or gave money to the Tea Party movement.

**Nationwide Representation**

There are over 1,000 community-based Tea Party groups across the country that meet weekly and bi-weekly (Tea Party Patriots 2009a). As of August 2009, it has been recorded that tea parties have been held in no fewer than 750 cities nationwide.
(Bowers 2009). The Tea Party may have officially begun February 19 2009, but the “coming out party” for the movement was actually several months later on April 15, America’s tax day. Tea Party protests were held in hundreds of cities and towns across the nation (Lepore 2010, 3). At these events it was common to witness large numbers of people huddled around a city park tree or massed in a downtown plaza.

**California Representation**

California has recently surpassed Texas as the leading Tea Party state with close to 200 groups (Tea Party Patriots 2009a). In an interview with Redding Tea Party coordinator, Erin Ryan (2010), she stated that they have over 1,300 members meeting together weekly in Redding, Red Bluff, and Corning. She also said that Corning has close to 50 participants that meet every other Tuesday night. Red Bluff has at least 50 participants that meet weekly. Fifty people in Alturas meet together once per month. Ms. Ryan even made reference to a number of people from Weed that drive to Redding weekly to attend the meetings. She then stated that Weed will soon have its own monthly meetings. Redding alone has weekly gatherings of over 300 members that meet on Monday nights. She also explained that Redding has Tuesday and Wednesday night classes that aim to educate people about the Constitution. Some of the groups meet at Marie Calendars restaurant, while other groups meet at some of the local Dairy Queen.

Chico Tea Party coordinator Matt Miller (2010) said they have about 120 people convening biweekly at Scrambles restaurant, which is located on the corner of East and Cohasset Roads. Unlike Redding, Chico is only represented by a single group, but it may be divided in the near future. In addition to Chico, Magalia, and Oroville also
have Tea Party factions. The North Valley has a good representation, but the San Joaquin Valley has seen the largest following in the state. Environmental protection policies concerning the Delta smelt have only electrified Tea Party enthusiasts in cities like Fresno and Bakersfield.

**Chico Tea Party**

In an interview with Chico Tea Party spokesperson, Cindy Harvey (2010), the local group began with 25 members at Cynthia van Auken’s house May 5 2009. It was in response to the downtown Chico rally on April 15 2009. After a brief decline in participation, word eventually got out to the public and the group rapidly expanded. Ms. van Auken’s home soon became inadequate. The group then moved to Logan’s restaurant, and that location was eventually superseded as well due to the growing membership population. After a few short months at Logan’s, the body moved to Scrambles Restaurant. If the group continues to expand, Scrambles will not have the facilities to accommodate the growing needs of the local organization. However, committee members such as Cindy Harvey and Matt Miller are dedicated to keeping the Tea Party Patriots at Scrambles for as long as possible because Scrambles owner, David Frietas, does not charge the group for the use of his facilities.

**General Makeup**

The group is growing steadily with additional members joining weekly. When the national healthcare bill passed recently, close to 20 new members joined the group that night alone. Committee members like to refer to the Chico segment as a PAC and not a nonprofit organization. The faction in Redding, however, is a nonprofit organization.
instead of a PAC. In addition, the Chico Tea Party has a number of guest speakers: anyone from Congressman Wally Herger and Coronel Stigler to Chico city administrators speak at the Monday night meetings. The group is also interested in having opposing guest speakers such as healthcare proponents and progressive representatives. Thus far, none has been eager to take the Tea Party committee up on the offer.

The Chico Tea Party is interested in more than just listening to guest speakers, they are interested in taking action, and one way they do this is through their watchdog groups. The purpose of these watchdog groups is to identify areas of concern using the Party’s core values as a measuring device. This means that once an area of concern has been identified, watchdog group members gather research, scrutinize the information, and then develop an action plan by notifying Chico Tea Party members (Chico Tea Party 2010). The watchdog group in Chico is only concerned with local politics. This is why the Tea Party organization meets biweekly because on the subsequent Mondays they attend as “watchdogs” at Chico City Council meetings.

The Chico group actually has an official website where all events, educational materials, videos, discussion forums, and blog postings are disseminated (Chico Tea Party 2010). They also have a local and state initiative website where their watchdog group leaders are able to provide information regarding legislative issues. They say that these websites can be accessed by the Chico Tea Party Patriots’ website. Despite having an organized committee, the Chico Tea Party Patriots seem to be looking for volunteers and are overwhelmed with demand. They want each member to mentally assess his or her level of involvement.
Tea Party Patriots

A Tea Party Patriot is representative of the majority of the Tea Party movement. According to their official webpage, the movement is essentially “a public reaction to the fiscal actions of the federal government, namely ‘stimulus’ spending, bailouts and government intrusions of the private market” (Tea Party Patriots 2009a).

It is an American political grassroots organization that promotes fiscally responsibility. Its mission is to attract, educate, organize, and mobilize the populous to secure policy consistent with the three core values of fiscal responsibility, personal accountability, and limited government. (Tea Party Patriots 2009a)

The Tea Party affiliates in Chico and Oroville belong to the Tea Party Patriots.

Tea Party Express

The Tea Party Express is much smaller in comparison to the Tea Party Patriots. They generally take a more active role in political campaigning. They aggressively campaign across the nation for Tea Party-friendly candidates like Rick Santorum, Michelle Bachman, and Herman Cain. The former governor of Alaska, Sarah Palin, also uses the Tea Party Express to promote her own personal agendas. Many within the Tea Party view the Tea Party Express as a distraction or an obstacle to the overall movement’s objectives and fear the co-opting into the Republican establishment such as the Chico Tea Party. The Tea Party movement in Redding belongs to both the Tea Party Patriots and the Tea Party Express.
Compassionate Conservatives

According to the online Urban Dictionary (2007), “the Tea Party views ‘compassionate conservatives’ as collective actors.” They generally have a negative connotation to Tea Party members because they stress social policy rather than individual accountability. Overall, “compassionate conservatism is a political philosophy that stresses using public accepted techniques and concepts in order to improve the general welfare of society” (Urban Dictionary 2007). The Tea Party rejects this notion and understands that the only means in which the general welfare of society can be improved is by individual actors and not collective action (Urban Dictionary 2007). Presidents such as George W.H. Bush and George W. Bush are considered by the Tea Party as compassionate conservatives. Senator John McCain (R-AZ) and Mitt Romney (R-MA) are also deemed by the movement as compassionate conservatives.

Moderate Republicans

Moderate Republicans are typically center-right, reject far-right policies, and are culturally liberal. They generally espouse government and private investments in environmentalism, healthcare, and higher education as necessities for the nation’s growth. (Urban Dictionary 2008)

The Tea Party does not accept “moderate Republicans” because the Tea Party does not advocate government investments in the environment, healthcare, and education. They reject government investment in such because they deem it to be costly and oppressive to the economy.
Progressives

“A progressive favors advocating changes or reform through governmental action” (Urban Dictionary 2005b). The Tea Party rejects this notion because they discard collective action. Both George W. Bush and President Obama are also considered progressives to the Tea Party, because Bush advocated the expansion of public education during his years in office and Obama advanced the expansion of public healthcare during his.

Neocons

A “neocon” is a neoconservative which is a branch of American conservatism. It has been associated with democracy promotion that is with assisting movements for democracy, in some cases by economic sanctions or military action. (Urban Dictionary 2005a)

The Tea Party is divided in their view of a neoconservative because some of them accept the notion of aiding countries towards democracy, whereas others do not. Republican candidates friendly to the Tea Party movement, such as Michelle Bachman (R-MN) and Rick Santorum (R-PA), are considered neocons because of their aggressive positions on Iraq, Afghanistan, Israel, and Iran. However, Congressman Rand Paul (R-KY) and his father Ron Paul (R-TX), also friendly to the Tea Party, do not accept government involvement oversees in the aiding of democracy.

The Evolution of the Research Questions

The purpose of this research study was to explore the Tea Party’s attitudes regarding a number of national policy issues such as education, healthcare, and unions. More specifically, the original intent was to compare the local Tea Party to the Tea Party
at large, the Tea Party to the general American populous, and to sufficiently discuss chapter hypotheses concerning such. The primary hypothesis question was: What are the attitude, makeup, and direction of the Tea Party movement? Strauss and Corbin (1998, 14) advise that the research question should be such that there is sufficient flexibility and freedom investigating the phenomenon of interest. In addition, they mention that during the course of research it is likely that the research question may adjust or be modified as the data directs. This certainly was the case with this study. During the initial phases of the project, I was most interested in the Tea Party’s impact concerning the 2010 midterm elections, but as it proceeded the project went from predicting future political outcomes to understanding the Tea Party’s general makeup and character. This pivotal alteration in the overall direction of the report led to the maturity and development of an extensive survey, which is the backbone of the thesis. In all, the survey is comprised of 38 questions and is broken into seven separate categories, including the introduction.
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Tea Party movement began in 2009 and has rapidly grown throughout the United States due to dissatisfaction with politicians in Washington. People were attracted to the movement because they felt their political parties were failing in representing their core values concerning fiscal policy. This thesis project focuses primarily on comparing the local Tea Party with the Tea Party at large, and the Tea Party at large to the general American population. The most helpful sources that supported the hypothesis are the 38-item questionnaire (Appendix B), polls conducted by The New Times and Gallup (Gallup 2010c), Rand Paul’s book The Tea Party Goes to Washington (2011), Pillars of Prosperity (Ron Paul 2008), Milton Friedman’s books Capitalism and Freedom (2002) and Free to Choose (1980), and Georgetown and George Mason professors Roger Pilon and Thomas Rustici.

The 38-item questionnaire is by far the most beneficial and most widely used source in the report. Its extensiveness provides a vast array of data on the local Tea Party that had never been collected before by a student from Chico State. When I first began to compile the thesis, I used the questionnaire as the basis for a momentous 38-chapter report and, after some deliberation and council from Dr. Turner, I reduced the scope and size of it from 38 chapters to 9. Without the questionnaire, most of the data on the local Tea Party would not have been discovered and a comparison could not have been
properly developed between them and the Tea Party at large. It truly is the basis for the entire report.

A *New York Times* poll, conducted by Kate Zernike and Megan Three-Brennan (2010), encompasses the majority of Chapter 3 (Makeup and Demographics) and is constantly referred to in almost each section of the report. The reason why this specific poll is so important is because it provides the majority of the relevant data on the Tea Party at large. Without it, a comparison could not have been developed between the local Tea Party and the Tea Party at large. Initially, I never really considered the importance of the poll and almost dismissed it altogether. However, after seeing how minute the available data was on the Tea Party, I began to appreciate and extensively use the poll.

Ron Paul’s and his son Rand Paul’s insights on the Tea Party, and books such as *The Tea Party Goes to Washington* (Rand Paul 2011) and *Pillars of Prosperity* (Paul 2008), are also widely quoted and used, especially in the party comparisons in Chapter 4 (Overview of Partisan Views). They became very useful in the research because Ron Paul is the benchmark and supposed “father” of the Tea Party movement and they also commonly illustrate Tea Party frustrations with the federal government and the GOP. It is difficult to understand why they are so disenchanted with both without delving into their works.

Milton Friedman’s most popular writings, *Capitalism and Freedom* (2002) and *Free to Choose* (1980), are also extensively used in report. Since his works aim at resolving economic policy, his writings are primarily used in Chapter 5 (Economic Policy). Friedman died before the advent of the Tea Party, but his legacy remains among the
movement because of his influence on individuals the Tea Party widely respects, such as President Ronald Reagan and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. Tea Partiers often look to Friedman’s works because he is very influential on the government’s impact on free-market economics, essentially that absolute government and absolute freedom cannot coexist. Friedman is also one of the few world renowned economists that align with the Tea Party attitude. Without Friedman’s insights, I could not have composed Chapter 5.

Relevant data from Georgetown professors Dr. Roger Pilon, George Mason, and Dr. Thomas Rustici are also widely used in Chapter 7 (Domestic Policy) in reference to the Tea Party’s views concerning environmental policy and constitutional law. The reason why I used their works is because they were actually my professors at Georgetown University. Dr. Pilon teaches courses in constitutional law and Dr. Rustiti teaches courses in economics and environmental policy. Dr. Pilon is actually the nation’s leading Libertarian professor in constitutional law and is also co-founder of the CATO Institute in Washington DC. He has written many books on the subject and travels around the country teaching students the Madisonian approach to the Constitution. He is very influential in my writings because his foundational views of the Constitution align perfectly with the Tea Party. His works and personal influence also provided me the ability to delve a little deeper into such constitutional matters. In addition, Thomas Rustici’s personal influence and works are also influential to me and this report. Dr. Rustici is a proud member of the Tea Party and one of the most outspoken participants ever personally witnessed. Dr. Rustici has devoted his life to the Tea Party cause and claims to have read several
hundred books on economics and environmental policy. His authority on the subject matter assisted in the academic research of the thesis, namely in the Tea Party’s view of environmental policy.

Taken as a whole, the report does not correspond with other studies in the field. It is also told from the Tea Party’s point-of-view and not from the opposing side. The reason why I set the thesis up this way is because I sought to understand the Tea Party’s views concerning a number of wide ranging, currently debated issues, such as healthcare, environmental policy, and party politics. I supplemented the report with opposing views from prominent members of society such as Morgan Freeman and congressional representative Harry Reid (D-NV) to transpire impartiality. I also frequently used newspaper articles from the Huffington Post and Politico to further illustrate objectivity and in-depth analysis. Nevertheless, neither approach was used to support or disprove the hypothesis, but to only discover the true meaning behind the Tea Party. In lieu of that, this is the first report conducted by a graduate student at California State University, Chico that pertains to the Tea Party Patriots and is completely original in character.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

When I began the report in 2010 there were few known scholarly resources written on the Tea Party. The local Tea Party in the vicinity of Chico, CA, even had less academic literature available on them. I initially desired to put together a quick and easy project so that I could graduate that summer. I even spoke to Dr. Turner as if I was graduating in two to three months. After some long walks in Bidwell Park with my wife, Kimberly, I came to the realization that nothing was going to be quick and easy about undertaking a thesis project, and that I needed to put together a survey in order to accurately understand the local Tea Party population.

When I began researching in March of 2010, the nation just underwent a large fiscal operation. Politicians in Washington from both the Bush Administration in 2008, and again by the Obama Administration in 2009, unveiled what Americans understand to be the expansion of monetary policy as a means to save the nation from economic collapse. Accordingly, large conservative populations and staunch fiscal libertarians, frustrated with the expansion of monetary policy, took to the streets across America in protest, beginning the modern Tea Party movement. After witnessing this public outcry first-hand in my graduate studies, I began writing and formulating thoughts and ideas on paper in order to make sense of everything that had been happening. Within a short time period, I had a pretty good idea of what I wanted to do in the research, and also knew
what I wanted included in the survey. Yet, after careful deliberation and help from Dr. Turner, I changed a few errors and reduced the total number of survey questions from 50 to 38 to simplify the project. In turn, I directed most of the survey questions at understanding the local Tea Party on contemporary debated issues, including the economy, wealth redistribution, healthcare, education, environmental policy, foreign relations, presidential politics, and California politics. Some of the topics proved to be more useful than others, and in the end I was unable to relevantly use questions 17-19, 23, 27-28, 30, and 37-38.

It is almost impossible to understand the motivations of the Tea Party without delving into the economy. So I directed a good portion of the research at such. The Tea Party and the economy have a direct relationship. I even include at the end of the thesis that the Tea Party will falter when the economy recovers. Nonetheless, survey questions 20 through 23, 26, 31, 32, 35 and 36 are directed at understanding their views on the economy. The most eye-opening and widely used question is 21, because it targets congressional stimulation of the economy.

Wealth redistribution is not exactly talked about on national television but the Tea Party is passionate about this subject. It was only fitting to include a number of wealth redistributive topics and see firsthand their positions on such. Survey questions 25 and 32’s primary and secondary aim is wealth redistribution. Question 25 is especially pertinent because it asks their opinion on congressional redistributions of wealth. This was a sticky question because I wanted to know beyond reasonable doubt that the Tea
Party does not accept any form of wealth redistribution and the results only solidified my personal inclinations.

The topic of healthcare is essentially next to the economy in left of importance, because the Tea Party is so ardently against President Obama’s healthcare plan. Of course when I wrote the survey, the Obama administration had not yet passed the latest congressional healthcare bill, but it was imminent at the time of composing the survey to the Tea Party. Therefore, it was necessary to include question 30 in the survey, which directly targeted their overall attitude concerning national healthcare. The most dominate response was to promote tort reform and the ability to purchase private insurance across state lines. I was, however, somewhat surprised by the results because I thought turning healthcare over to the private market would be the most widely picked question.

Education is also important, but not as significant as healthcare, because the last time an education bill was pushed through Congress was the No Child Left Behind Act in 2001. So the subject matter is not as current as some of the others. I added a question on education in the survey so that I could better understand the local Tea Party population on educational matters. I also have a section in Chapter 6 (Domestic Policy) dedicated to considering their educational views. Survey question 29 is the only question aimed at education and, not surprisingly, they suppose teachers unions to be the biggest problem with America’s education system.

Environmental policy is another presently debated issue amongst Tea Partiers. I included question 32 on environmental policy in the survey so that I had some empirical data on the matter. Tea Parties definitely see from the results that
environmental regulation does significantly impact the economy and that the economy takes precedence over the environment. I figured that they would see it this way when researching the topic but I needed data for more proof.

I originally had several questions devoted to foreign policy when the survey was 50 questions in length. I removed several of questions that included U.S. involvement in Iran and North Korea, and kept questions 27 and 28, regarding national catastrophes and the U.S. involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan. I planned on devoting an entire chapter to Iraq and Afghanistan but removed them from the report altogether. In the end, only a few brief paragraphs remained regarding the demise of the United States and the rise of China.

The topic of presidential politics is a topic that evolved throughout the report. From the beginning I desired to devote my entire research paper to the Tea Party’s impact on the 2010 elections. However, in March, the 2010 election results were still six months away in November. Once I realized that I could not adequately research a paper on speculation alone, I eventually diverted my attention to understanding the movement in its entirety. Unfortunately, this was a process, and not a single event, because I wrote at least 30 pages on the matter before removing them altogether. Still, the project came together much slower than anticipated and the 2010 elections became the issue of the past and not relevant by the end of the report. Ironically, the 2012 primaries became much more relevant by the time of the defense, March 9, 2012.

Lastly, California needed some attention. After all, the Chico vicinity is within the state of California. Questions 35 through 38 are directed at understanding their views
of California. The most relevant and most widely used question is their position regarding
the targeting of the California state budget and the end results only determined that they
are not united on this issue. The Tea Party has big ideas when it comes to slashing the
budget, but they do not have a clue on how to approach the matter.

The survey was handed out to Tea Party members in Oroville, Chico, and
Redding. I also collected 75 copies at the April 15 Tax Revolt rally held at Chico’s City
Plaza. I had, by far, the most success handing out copies at local Tea Party meetings. For
instance, I stood at the door of Scrambles Restaurant in Chico and collected over 112
copies in about two hours. The meeting that night only had about 120 altogether, so
receiving back 112 surveys was a remarkable feat. I did the same at the Lake Oroville
Golf and Country club and had a lot of success as well. Unfortunately, I did not have near
the success in Redding because I was not personally available to coordinate and handout
the surveys. I gave 50 copies to Tea Party Redding official, Erin Ryan, and about ten
came back completed. To her credit, it was more of a lack of communication on my part
than anything else. Erin was very helpful and more than willing to assist me in my edu-
cational endeavors. The most surprising success story of all is that I collected surveys
from 21 members that could not immediately complete them and so mailed them to me
via the United States Postal Service. Remarkably, surveys that I handed out in March and
April came back to me by mail in May and June. I actually received one copy from an
elderly woman four months after giving it to her husband.

By and large, I was absolutely stunned and amazed by everyone’s willingness
to help me with this project. I copied 300 surveys, handed out about 200 of them, and
about 180 of the 200 came back completed. Moreover, many of them did not just fill out the first page, or the first ten questions, most actually filled out my entire 38-question survey. Not only did most of them completely fill out the survey, but many also made extensive remarks after each question. For instance, one retired school teacher did exactly that. He said, in connection to survey question 1, his motivation for joining the Tea Party movement was an accidental occurrence. He stumbled upon the Tea Party when he wandered into the City of Chico’s Plaza that day during the April 15 Tax rally. In response to question 2, he said that the role of the Tea Party should undo the corruption of government and somehow return to honoring the Constitution. Another participant from Oroville responded to questions 23 and 24 (both regulatory questions) that none of the choices was applicable to his personal situation and that it depends on the type of regulation being implemented. Overall, information and data collected from avid participants like these two participants were invaluable to the project.
CHAPTER IV

THE MOTIVATION AND DIRECTION

OF THE TEA PARTY

Introduction

At its core, populism in the United States remains what it has always been: a protest by ordinary people who want the system to live up to its stated ideals — fair and honest treatment in the marketplace and a government tilted in favor of the unhealthy masses. (Beutler 2009)

The theme of the Boston Tea Party has long been used by anti-tax protesters with libertarian and conservative viewpoints (Daily News 1984). According to the United Press International, the Tea Party was part of Tax Day protests held throughout the 1990s and earlier (UPI 2009). The name Tea Party is a reference to the Boston Tea Party, whose principal endeavor was to protest taxation without representation (Fox News 2010a). Anne Schroeder Mullins of Politico coined the Tea Party protests as having sought to call to mind slogans, themes, and images from the American Revolution, such as tri-corner hats and yellow Gadsden “Don’t Trend on Me” flags (FreedomWorks 2010b). She also said that the letters “TEA” have been used by some protesters to form the catchphrase “Taxed Enough Already” (Politico 2009). Michael Levenson of Political Intelligence claims that the libertarian theme of the tea party protests has also been used by Republican Congressman Ron Paul and his supporters during fundraising events in the primaries of the 2008 presidential campaign to underline Paul’s fiscal conservativism, which they
later claimed laid the groundwork for the modern-day Tea Party movement, although many of them also claim their movement has been hijacked by neoconservatives (Political Intelligence 2007). Trevor Leach, New York chairman of Young Americans for Liberty, organized a protest on January 24, 2009, with participants dressing in Native American costumes and dumping soft drinks into Binghamton, New York’s Susquehanna River in protest of former New York Governor David Paterson’s proposed 18 percent tax increase on soda (Political Intelligence 2007). Philip Elliott of the Associated Press (AP) found that as home mortgage foreclosures increased and details of the 2009 stimulus bill became acknowledged, organized protests began to materialize (AP Business 2008).

According to Stephen Webster, some diehard Paul supporters understand that the character of the Tea Parties has since deviated from Paul’s anti-war and libertarian focus, and Paul has stated that “neocons” who do not accept his politics have become more prevalent in the protests (Webster 2010).

Without a doubt, the Tea Party movement has evolved since the Ron Paul protests in 2008, but what is their overall direction today? Tea Partiers say that concerns for fiscal responsibility, personal accountability, and free markets are the primary motivations for the advent of the movement. However, social issues like abortion agendas, homosexual rights, religious referenda, drug-related issues, and concerns of public morality have captivated the hearts and minds of many within and could potentially polarize staunch, fiscal libertarians from the movement. This means that if their key motivations are truly fiscal responsibility, personal accountability, and free markets, then the Tea Party needs to stay strongly tied to such and not actively engage in social agen-
das. Furthermore, if the Tea Party drifts from its core values and embraces social issues that are generally accepted by its conservative population, then they will polarize non-conservative sympathetic factions. This could potentially thwart the forward progression of the Tea Party. For this reason, if the Tea Party remains with their core values, then they will attract a much larger diverse population. However, if public attitudes concerning an improving economy change and social matters arise, then the Tea Party might not have a choice but to adjust their core policies in order to adapt to the changing social climate. Survey results and evidence found from scholarly resources should verify these remarks.

Origins of the Movement

I think that leaders in Washington are totally tuned out. I think that they’re totally bought out by special interests and lobbyists. All those people in Washington are getting campaign money some way or another, and it’s influencing how they handle their positions and bills that they’re supporting. It’s bad. And it really validates my concern that less government is better. I think they should be seen and not heard. I think they should have a low profile. (Ralph Sproveer, quoted in Rasmussen and Schoen 2011)

Although tea parties took place long before the Tea Party movement, many trace the true beginning of the Tea Party to the spring of 2009 (Politico 2009) when libertarians and conservatives rose up in small towns and big cities to oppose Obama’s policies, including the $787 billion economic stimulus measure (Tedford 2009) and Wall Street bailouts. It is also understood that the primary motivation for them joining the Tea Party movement is primarily due to the lack of fiscal responsibility, personal accountability, and the violation of free markets. Then again, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) explained that the protests on April 15, 2009 are not by any means an organic
grassroots movement. Rather, she said, they “are a deliberate ‘Astroturf campaign’
organized by two well-funded right-wing think tanks intended on obstructing the Obama
agenda” (Powers 2009). However, Tea Party activists and sympathizers claim that they
are primarily motivated by concern for the rapid expansion of government, for the
countless spending and debt accruing, and for an economy that has been deeply damaged
by government mismanagement (Dalrymple 2010).

Although the three-fold mission of fiscal responsibility, personal accountability, and free markets are the primary motivators, one can see from the survey results
above that the primary motivation for each applicant’s involvement in the Tea Party
movement considerably differs (survey question 1). Approximately 6 percent chose govern-
ment healthcare as their primary reason, whereas 9.4 percent chose an increase in
government spending. Other participants chose ideology (7.4 percent), whereas others
chose congressional letdowns (4.9 percent). The highest statistical result is found with
response F, which is the government’s movement away from constitutional principles.
Although response F has the highest results, only a mere 11 percent of the participants
chose that answer.

Many of them say that they joined the Tea Party because they grew tired of
not being heard (Harvey 2010). A poll done by Rasmussen said that 60 percent of U.S.
voters say most members of Congress do not listen to their constituents, while only a
mere 22 percent believe most congressmen do care what is on the minds of their constitu-
ents (Rasmussen Report 2010c). Additionally, a study done by the Atlantic found that the
Tea Party is enabled by the web. They say that
President Obama got elected in part by harnessing the Web, drawing on a new generation of young people. Now his biggest challenge comes from old people who are using the Internet more effectively than he is. (Atlantic 2010a)

The Web is unique in that it lowers transaction and collaboration costs. It also enables organization to occur more rapidly.

Chico Tea Party advocates say that when rallies take place locally they highly encourage participants to stay with the three-fold mission of the party, which means to avoid social agendas. One such occurrence took place at a Paradise Tea Party rally two years ago. In an April 2010 interview with Tea Party advocate Cindy Harvey, she explained that a few rowdy members showed up to a Tea Party rally in Paradise with anti-abortion posters and paraphernalia. She and a few others immediately approached the rowdy pro-life crowd and removed their political belongings. Harvey and a few other sources mentioned that these moments happen all the time and should be cautiously watched for and dealt with accordingly. A similar incidence occurred when the Chico Tea Party held a tax day rally at the Downtown Plaza, on April 15, 2010. A large anti-Tea Party mob showed up in black anti-Obama t-shirts acting as Tea Party enthusiastic supporters. However, many of the volunteer security members picked up on their act and swiftly asked them to remove their t-shirts. Also, the entire week before the rally, local Tea Party officials such as Harvey sent out e-mails and phone calls to warn the people of possible mishaps, especially people posing as Tea Party advocates. Harvey understood that a lot could not be done concerning the rabble-rousers, but it was her duty to at least warn members of the potential situation. “And of course they always draw all the media attention,” says Harvey (2010). Fox News host, Neil Cavuto, also highlighted a number
of similar incidences on his television program that evening. He showed clips from across
the nation of Tea Party posers at rallies. He even reported “that the tax day Tea Party
movement is being infiltrated by well-organized liberals out to destroy it” (Huffpost
Politics 2009). Fox News hosts Bill O’Reilly and Sean Hannity also confirmed Cavuto’s
earlier program on their evening shows (Fox News 2010c).

Although they claim to be infiltrated by “tea party look-a-likes,” there have
been a number of grievances against their protests and some include racial slurs.
According to Spencer Magloff (2010) on CBS News, on March 16, 2010, a counter-
protester with Parkinson’s disease was berated and had dollar bills thrown at him with
additional protesters also mocking the individual. On March 20 2010, before the Patient
Protection and Affordable Care Bill was voted on in Washington DC, it was reported on
Fox News that protesters against the bill used racial and anti-gay slurs (Fox News 2010e).
The Weekly Herald reported that Congressman Emanuel Cleaver mentioned he heard the
word “nigger” shouted (Heraldnet 2010). And again, on CBS News, Representative
Andre Carson said that as he walked from the Cannon House Office Building with Rep-
resentative John Lewis, amid chants of “kill the bill,” he heard the “n-word” coming from
several places in the crowd. Conservative commentator, Andrew Brietbart, who was not
present at the protest, has said that the racial slurs and other allegations by Cleaver,
Lewis, and Carson were fabricated as part of a plan to annihilate the Tea Party movement
by all means necessary and that they never actually happened. He offered $10,000 of his
own money as a charitable donation to the United Negro College Fund if Lewis could
provide audio or video footage of the slurs, or pass a lie detector test. The amount was
later raised to $100,000 for “hard evidence” (CBS News 2010). Moreover, Harvey and several of her close Chico friends attended the Tea Party functions held on Capitol Hill in October 2009 and said they heard no such racial comments coming from the audience. “And if I had, I would have told them to knock-it-off” (Harvey 2010). In addition, the National Tea Party Federation sent a letter to the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) denouncing racism and requesting that the CBC supply any evidence of the alleged events at the protests (Alexander 2010). Nevertheless, Jean Howard-Hill, leader of the National Republican African American Caucus, illustrated that “any movement which cannot openly denounce racism, calling it out as wrong troubles me. To attack President Obama on his policy is one thing, but to do so on his race or some hysterical pretext of socialism is yet another” (Washington Post 2010b).

As problematic as these reports and occurrences are for the Tea Party, there is a much larger issue at hand. Popular advocates like Sara Palin love to bolster their own personal agendas in the name of the Tea Party. And some of her personal agendas include the sponsoring of social referenda. There is a smaller “sister” group called the Tea Party Express, which actively campaigns across the nation for Tea Party friendly candidates like Palin and Michelle Bachman. The Tea Party Express generally takes a more active role which usually goes beyond the three-fold mission of the Tea Party. Unlike the Tea Party Express, the Chico Tea Party does not support political candidates, because candidates support social agendas. Many of the Chico Tea Partiers might have a favored candidate, but most of them seem to believe that campaigning is the same as being co-opted into the Republican establishment. The truth is, a large number of Tea Party advocates
fear the possibility of being drafted into the Republican Party. They feel that they had been spurned by the party during the Bush years and would rather not associate with them. This also explains why the issue of fundraising is such a touchy matter to those that took the survey. Nevertheless, Tea Party members differ as to the role high profile advocates like Sarah Palin should have with the organization and how involved the Tea Party should be in the elections.

The results of survey question 2 show that only a mere 5.7 percent support fundraising. However, results from supplementary populations, especially results from reputable Tea Party Express regions may noticeably differ from the sample population. A number of group advocates in Chico have mentioned that support for the Tea Party Express is not as strong in cities like Chico, Paradise, and Oroville as it is in places like Redding or Fresno. Then again, connecting fundraising support to the Tea Party Express and to social issues is a stretch, and may not be entirely appropriate.

Staying the Course

Conservative Republicans are not the only people that identify with the Tea Party movement. Libertarians are also linked to free markets and limited government structures and are actually some of the original advocates of such ideologies. Some Democrats, known as “blue dogs,” identify with some of these values as well, especially when the movement focuses on fiscal responsibility and personal accountability. This may be the reason why all the interviewees said that the Tea Party Patriots is not exclusive to Republicans. They say that the organization identifies with Americans from all social groups and background affiliations. One undisclosed interviewee told me that anyone
tired of excessive government spending may find interest in the Tea Party. As appealing as fiscal responsibility, personal accountability, and limited government structures are, too many non-conservative Republicans belonging to the Tea Party that pursue conservative agendas beyond such fiscal issues may polarize a good portion of the movement. As mentioned before, Libertarians like Ron Paul are free market, limited government addicts, but they are not generally social crusaders like many conservatives. Tea Party conservatives might find an overwhelming need to embrace pro-life referenda, but Libertarians within will not feel the same. Likewise, the few fiscally concerned Democrats belonging to the Tea Party will drift from the Tea Party if the conservatives within pursue social agendas.

As polarizing as accepting social issues may be to the Tea Party, taking such actions seem to be commonly discussed within. The Boston Globe reported that embracing social issues could be a downward direction for Tea Party organizations. One such Tea Party group in Raleigh, North Carolina became socially involved in eliminating racial integration of the local school system (Tea Party Tribune 2011). Tea Party groups in Iowa and Massachusetts took a stand on an issue of morality concerning same-sex marriage and believe firmly that taking such positions is necessary. They suppose that they are not just issues of morality but they are actually constitutional, in which they say are incorporated in the core principles of the movement. However, others within the organization believe that pursing such issues is a downward trend for the Tea Party at large. For instance, the Chico Tea Party became socially involved last year when they invited the National Rifle Association (NRA) to speak at their meeting at Scrambles
Restaurant. Many of the participants loved the idea of the NRA at their meeting that night, but there were others from the assembly that did not appreciate them as much. One such undisclosed source mentioned in a personal interview that “constitutional or not, the Tea Party cannot get too involved with the NRA because gun-rights detract from the party’s core values.” Chico Tea Party organizer, Matt Miller (2010), also agreed with her stance. He appreciated that the NRA was there that night but vowed not to invite them back to another meeting. Miller and the undisclosed source unanimously said that the Tea Party should not be involved in social issues. Individual members will have their own beliefs on these issues, whether religiously motivated or not, and they should be allowed to follow them, but the group as a whole should refrain from taking public stands in the name of the Tea Party. Moreover, “these are the types of issues which will breed dissent within the movement and once this dissent begins, the tea party will be no better than the Democrats and Republicans who they disagree with.” Miller continued by saying, “we need to stick to our core principles, because there is enough to be concerned with.” Both Miller and the undisclosed source alluded that perhaps when the country returns back to fiscal responsibility then the movement could embrace social agendas.

Adapting to a Changing Social Climate

For the most part, the people of the nation are concerned with the economy. Many understand that the rise of the Tea Party came about because of the faltering economy. This also means that the Tea Party would not function as well if the economy recovers. Moreover, the focus of the nation could easily shift from fiscal to social issues. In addition, as tensions rise in the Middle East, the focus may shift from domestic to
foreign affairs. As the social climate shifts in the United States, the Tea Party might not have a choice but to adjust core policies in order to adapt to such. As discussed earlier in the chapter, changing core strategy could alienate key supporters and polarize the movement.

Several sources, including *Newsweek* magazine, say that in 2010 the Tea Party was a strict fiscal group. *New York Times* reporter, Kate Zernike, wrote in an article that for decades, faith and family have been at the center of the conservative movement. But as the Tea Party introduces conservatism with new energy, its leaders deliberately avoid discussion of issues like gay marriage or abortion. It seemed the new type of conservatives was too focused on lessening the government and balancing the budget to deal with disorganized, divisive issues of morality. (Graham 2010)

She went on to say, “Go forward eight months into the heated elections and it is a different picture” (Graham 2010). Zernike said that Tea Party advocate and GOP Senate candidate, Ken Buck of Colorado, had a strong position on homosexuality and Sharron Angle of Nevada had some of the strictest abortion politics in the country. Another Tea Party advocate, Delaware Senate contender Christine O’Donnell, also took a stand on a number of social issues. Does this mean the Tea Party is shifting away from their core policies? To Kate Zernike it does, but to others it does not. Some within the party like Dan Acton (2010) believe that the group is primarily conservative to begin with, and that it would only be natural for them to embrace conservative social agendas, especially in the election years. His brother, Mark Acton (2010), also indicates that the Tea Party will naturally gravitate to the Republican Party because most of them are in fact Republican. However, Ted Sonnier (2010), a student of Princeton University, said, while attending the Ludwig von Mises Institute, “As the Tea Party movement becomes high-jacked by
conservative idiots like Sarah Palin and Christine O’Donnell, people like me will be less
drawn to the group.” Sonnier also said that “the Tea Party needs to stay closely connected
to its libertarian foundation, and not to embrace the neocon way.”

Concluding Chapter Remarks

The Tea Party, which is mostly represented by the Tea Party Patriots, claims
not to support political agendas and stays strictly to the three-fold mission of the organi-
zation: fiscal responsibility, limited government, and personal accountability. They also
claim not to participate in social issues or positions of morality. The Tea Party Express,
on the other hand, advocates political agendas, supports candidates, and stands for social
issues. Nevertheless, the Tea Party Express is small in comparison to the Tea Party
Patriots; hence, the overall attitude of the Tea Party movement is to remain closely con-
nected to its core fiscal values. However, many of them oppose using the Tea Party plat-
tform to support social issues, but most of them fight social battles on their own time. The
prevailing attitude is that high profile advocates like Sarah Palin will continue to fight
conservative social causes in the name of the Tea Party, despite low recognition from
within the movement. Most within ascertain that such persons should fight such social
battles at appropriate Republican conventions. Those, like Ted Sonnier and Cindy
Harvey, who are adamantly against the Tea Party’s participation in social agendas, are
afraid that identifying with such personalities and agendas will confuse organizational
objectives and risk the Tea Party being co-opted into the Republican establishment.

The Tea Party should remain firm to its core values. The prevailing attitude is
that free markets and limited government positions should continue to dominate Tea
Party agendas well into the next ten years. An unyielding approach to the problems around them will only bolster the organization and attract likeminded people to their cause. Moreover, remaining firm to a specific standard is exactly what many of them believe political groups like the Republican Party have not done, especially when faced with pressure.
CHAPTER V

TEA PARTY DEMOGRAPHICS

Introduction

The Tea Party sprang in each state de novo. It wasn’t created by a network. It wasn’t created by a billionaire. It came from the people. It has no single leader, is often adamantly against leadership and threatens the power structure of both political parties. It threatens the perquisites and privileges of the establishment and, therefore, many on both sides of the aisle think it must be destroyed. (Paul 2011)

Tea Party advocates like Congressman Rand Paul sincerely believe that the movement is reflective of the American people. By and large, Tea Partiers believe they are a mainstream political force. Although they claim that they do not have an established leadership, the Tea Party definitely has a number of national figures guiding them, including Republican politicians such as Governor Chris Christy (R-NJ), Governor Bobby Jindal (R-LA), Congressman Tom McClintock (R-CA), Senator Jim DeMint (R-SC), Senator Mike Lee (R-UT), Senator Ron Paul (R-TX), Congressman Rand Paul (R-KY), former Governor Sarah Palin (R-AK), former Congressman Dick Armey (R-TX), Congressman Eric Cantor (R-VA), Congressman Paul Ryan (R-WI), and Senator Michele Bachman (R-MN). Not to mention popular right-wing public figures like Glenn Beck, Rupert Murdoch, Bill O’Reilly, Rush Limbaugh, Shawn Hannity, Dick Morris, Scott Rasmussen, Mark Levin, Neil Cavuto, and many others like them champion the Tea Party movement (Atlantic 2010b). According to Wikipedia (2010; Bailey, Mummolo, and Noel
n.d.), there are over 150 congressional delegates, 17 governors, and 11 other public officials that say they support Tea Party, all of whom are Republicans. Nevertheless, defined leadership or not, the Tea Party is not a national political party. Polls from the *Washington Post* show that most Tea Partiers consider themselves to be Republicans (*Washington Post* 2010c), and Scott Rasmussen found that the movement’s supporters tend to endorse Republican candidates (Rasmussen 2010f). *The Los Angeles Times* reported that commentators, including Gallup editor-in-chief Frank Newport, suggest that the movement is not a new political group, but merely a rebuilding of traditional Republican candidates and policies (*Los Angeles Times* 2010). A *Washington Post* (2010c) canvass of local Tea Party organizers found 87 percent saying “dissatisfaction with mainstream Republican Party leaders” was “an important factor in the support the group has received so far.”

Notwithstanding, does the local Tea Party reflect the movement as a whole? Does the Tea Party at large reflect mainstream America? The Tea Party movement is more than two years old (established April 15, 2009) and many of them maintain that they were not involved in politics before the advent of the movement. Polls show that males slightly outnumber females and whites out number blacks (Gallup 2010c). Market research also says they enjoy watching the nightly news and reading conservative magazines (Real Clear Politics 2009). They are older than the national average; many are either retired or close to retirement age (Daily Paul 2010). They tend to be married with children (*New York Times*/CNN Poll 2011), and prefer private schools over public institutions (Gallup 2010c; Walker 2010). They are also above the national average for church
attendance (Harris Poll 2010). The local Tea Party population should be representative of the movement at large and survey results should verify these similarities and differences. Therefore, if the local Tea Party consists of a relatively new political embodiment, working populous, educated persons, males as to females, retirees, church goers, and private school supporters, then the national movement should likewise consist of the same. Mainstream or not, the Tea Party should reflect a population fragment of America. Thus, if the Tea Party is mainstream American, then its demographics should simply line-up with mainstream America.

Political Involvement

Although some say its roots can be traced back to the original Boston Tea Party, the Tea Party movement is a relatively new phenomenon (Politico 2009), and due to its newness, many within say, such as several undisclosed sources from the Chico Tea Party, that they were not involved in politics before its creation (Undisclosed Source 2010). On the contrary, others within suggest otherwise, that they were involved in politics long before the Tea Party movement, and are former active campaigners of the Republican Party (Undisclosed Source 2010).

Regarding survey question 3, the majority of the participants (35 percent) have been actively involved in politics the last five years. Only 26 percent noted they have been actively involved in the last year, but 39 percent say they have been involved less than two years. It could be deduced from the research that they became involved the last two years due to a heightened political event such as the presidential nomination of President Obama, TARP, and other federal bailout programs that developed about two
years prior to this survey. Notwithstanding, 61 percent were actively involved in politics before the advent of the Tea Party. However, what cannot be inferred from the results is that about 61 percent of the local Tea Party population was involved in the Republican Party prior to the movement. However, one can determine that 39 percent of them were not involved with the Republican Party prior. The only means in which one could determine if they are former campaigners of the Republican Party is if additional questions are added to the research.

Matt Taibbi of the *Rolling Stone* disagrees. He wrote,

I've concluded that the whole miserable narrative boils down to one stark fact: They're full of shit. . . . The Tea Party is a movement that purports to be furious about government spending—only the reality is that the vast majority of its members are former Bush supporters who yawned through two terms of record deficits. . . . The average Tea Partier is sincerely against government spending—with the exception of the money spent on them. In fact, their lack of embarrassment when it comes to collecting government largesse is key to understanding what this movement is all about. (Rolling Stone 2010)

Taibbi concluded,

This, then, is the future of the Republican Party: Angry white voters hovering over their cash-stuffed mattresses with their kerosene lanterns, peering through the blinds at the oncoming hordes of suburban soccer moms they've mistaken for death-panel bureaucrats bent on exterminating anyone who isn't an illegal alien or a Kenyan anti-colonialist. (Rolling Stone 2010)

Clearly, Tea Partiers adamantly disagree with Taibbi and do stand by their infuriated with government positions.

**Gender**

According to Gallup (2010c), a number of people in the national media say that males dominate females in the Tea Party organization. “Male dominance” is usually a derogatory slant against the movement so it seems that they would protest such. How-
ever, the supposed “godfather” of the Tea Party, Ron Paul, actually supports the media’s male dominant claims when he mentioned in his Newsletter called the Daily Paul that, “overtime, I have noticed how the vast majority of [the Tea Party] are white males between 18 and 50. I have seen many, many articles, comments, blogs, etc. stating this observation” (Daily Paul 2010). In addition to Paul’s remarks, news resources such as the Gallup, *New York Times*, and CBS News assert that the Tea Party is dominated by males as to females (Gallup 2010c; *New York Times* 2010). Although their data of the national Tea Party movement is valid, they still do not have evidence as to the gender demographics of the local Tea Party (survey question 4).

Gallup found that 55 percent of the Tea Party is male, compared to 44 percent female. Similarly, a study done by Gallup shows that the Tea Party is also 55 percent male to 44 percent female (Gallup 2010c). In other words, Ron Paul and the national media are correct in their assumptions concerning the gender population of the Tea Party movement. According to the U.S. Census Bureau’s census of 2000, 281.4 million people were counted in the United States, 143.4 million of whom were female and 138.1 million male. Females made up roughly 50.9 percent of the population, compared with males roughly 49 percent of the population. As a result, the Tea Party movement (55 percent male to 44 percent female) is significantly different from the national average (50.9 percent male to 49 percent female). Therefore, the local Tea Party and the Tea Party at large are not aligned on the issue of gender with mainstream America.
It is recorded earlier in this chapter that Ron Paul believes that the Tea Party is mostly representative of people between the ages of 18-50 (Daily Paul 2010). However, the local Tea Party population appears to be much older than what Paul suggests. The local Tea Party looks more like a group of people between the ages of 45-75 years old (survey question 5).

It can be deduced from the results that the Tea Party has caught the attention of an older population, but few young Americans relate to the movement. The Student Free Press Association (2010) wrote that former Democratic Presidential hopeful Howard Dean (D-VT) mentioned that the “Tea Party arose out of a discomfort with the demographic shift going on in this country.” Again, the Student Free Press Association found that according to Dean, the country is shifting to a group of ethnic and social minorities and this frustrates members of the Tea Party, which he said consists mostly of white people 55 years and older. “Obama was elected overwhelmingly by voters under 35 years of age,” Dean said. “Obama has not lost any voters to the Tea Party” (Student Free Press Association 2010). In other words, the Tea Party is not taking advantage of the younger generational voters like President Obama. Lastly, the Student Free Press Association (2010) found that according to Dean, the Democratic Party composes of a younger generation. “The problem with Republicans in general is that they offend the younger generation with their attacks on gays and immigrants,” Dean said. “I don’t have much advice for Republican presidential contenders other than to abandon their right-wing social agenda.”
Although they would be amused or practically annoyed by Howard Dean’s (D-VT) remarks concerning them, an astonishing 75 percent of sampling participants are indeed over the age of 50, whereas a mere 10 percent are below the age of 35. Notwithstanding, a poll done by the Huffington Post says that only 50 percent of Tea Partiers at large are above the age of 50 (Huff Post Politics 2010a). In addition, a study done by Gallup also found that 50 percent of the national movement is above the age of 50 (Gallup 2010c). Moreover, the New York Times found that 75 percent of the Tea Party polled is 45 and older, whereas those not affiliated with the group (50 percent) said they are 45 and older (New York Times 2011). Why the discrepancy? Andrew Gelman (2008) of Columbia University discovered in his many mathematical models that the age discrepancy may be attributed to voter turnout because voter turnout increases with age.

Howard Dean attributes this to racial slurs and generational attacks, but younger populations may fill their time with work and school, whereas older folks have more time to think and ponder and stew over world events and concerns. Whatever the reason, there is indeed an age discrepancy in the local Tea Party population. So not only is the Tea Party movement significantly older than the American population, the local Tea Party is much older than the Tea Party at large. Therefore, the local Tea Party and the Tea Party at large do not resemble the American population on this issue either.

Educational Background

The New York Times (2010) found that the Tea Party is more educated than the general public, which may negatively impact their public outlook. Although their claims
may be valid concerning the Tea Party at large, they do not have data on the local Tea Party.

The local Tea Party sampling is fairly educated even compared to the national average (survey question 6). Eighty percent of the survey participants have at least attended college, whereas only a mere 15 percent of the participants noted they have a high school diploma or GED. Gallup (2010c) has done a similar study that compares the Tea Party to U.S. adult populations. They found that 34 percent of the Tea Party population has not attended college; whereas 34 percent have been to some college; while 16 percent are college graduates; and 15 percent have post graduate degrees. The Tea Party at large is slightly more educated than the national average. *The New York Times* found that 14 percent of the Tea Party, compared to 10 percent of the average American, attended post-graduate courses. The poll also found that 23 percent of Tea Partiers compared to 15 percent of Americans are college graduates. Moreover, the study found that 33 percent of Tea Partiers compared to 28 percent of Americans attended college (*New York Times* 2011). These results do not correspond with the survey results because the survey shows that the local Tea Party population is even more educated than the national Tea Party average. However, the survey does include additional categories, such as associates degree and trade school, which skew the results. Nevertheless, even without the added categories, the statistics from the Gallup poll still differ from the survey results (Gallup 2010c). Why is the local population more educated? Participants may seek to hype their own educational resumes by circling in added educational categories. Perhaps the discrepancy is due to the educational demographics of Oroville and Chico. According
to Scott Martindale (2010) of the Census Bureau, California ranks twenty-third among U.S. states in per-pupil spending on public education and is ranked twenty-sixth in testing results.

Political Knowledge

I will tell you what I understand a strict constitutionalist of the Constitution to be. I understand that if a strict constructionist wants a measure to succeed, it is Constitutional; and if he does not want it, it is unconstitutional (Warren 16).

Tea Party members like Ron Paul (R-TX) and Rand Paul (R-KY) love to claim they are strict constitutionalists. However, a former New York representative in 1876 said it best: “I will tell you what I understand a strict constitutionalist of the Constitution to be. I understand that if a strict constructionist wants a measure to succeed, it is Constitutional; and if he does not want it, it is unconstitutional” (Warren 16). The Tea Party may disagree with many people’s interpretation of the Constitution, but they respectfully try to pay respect to the constitutional founders. They even attempt to model their own personal lives after them, not by their outwardly appearance, but by their makeup, character, and attitude. Tea Party advocate Glenn Beck had “Founders Fridays” on his Fox News television program before its ending in July of 2011. The Redding Tea Party has constitutional forums every other Thursday of each month (Ryan 2010). Moreover, the Huffington Post reported that the Tea Party is frustrated with public educators on the subject and understands that the Constitution has been left out of the classroom (Huff Post Politics 2011b). Director of the Constitutional Accountability Center in Washington DC, Doug Kendall believes that the Tea Party is attempting to indoctrinate America’s children with right-wing rhetoric: “It’s indoctrination, not education. . . .
They’re so far from the mainstream of constitutional thought that they are completely indefensible” (Huff Post Politics 2011b).

Notwithstanding their dedication of the Constitution, the real question is how informed they are when it comes to politics. An article from Real Clear Politics (2009) found that according to President Obama the Tea Party is fairly uniformed when it comes to politics. The President said on April 29, 2009 that, “when you see, you know . . . those of you who are watching certain news channels on which I’m not very popular.” The President was referring to the Tea Party’s adamant watching of Fox News programs like Glenn Beck and Bill O’Reilly. Although such a statement could not be proved without further data, the sample population does seem to enjoy such conservative news programs and more than likely receives most of their daily news from them (survey question 7).

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the national average number of hours an individual (12 and older) spends watching television is approximately 1,700 hundred hours per year. This means the average individual watches television 4.7 hours per day (U.S. Census Bureau 2010). The Tea Party sample population watches politics less than the national average at 2.7-3.8 hours per day. Eighty-two percent of the sampling watches or reads politics 2-5 hours per day, whereas only a mere 9 percent do so more than 8 hours per day. However, just because one watches or reads politics more than one hour per day does not necessarily make them well informed. It depends on what the person reads and watches. Besides, there may be a huge intellectual difference from one that reads politics 8 hours per day verses one that watches politics 8 hours per day.
Employment Background

As mentioned earlier, the Local Tea Party and the Tea Party at large are much older than the national average (survey question 8). Seventy-five percent are over the age of 50, and a good portion of them are retired (55.9 percent). Although over half of them are retired, many of those whom are not may be unemployed. Therefore, what percentage of the local Tea Party is unemployed.

Since so many of the local participants are retired (75 percent), it would be interesting to observe the sample population without the retired population. The following is a list of participant percentages not including retired contestants.

Excluding retired participants, category B, employed and satisfied, and C, partially employed and unsatisfied, accounts for 47 percent of the sample population. A noteworthy insight is that A, employed but unsatisfied and D, partially employed and unsatisfied, accounts for a mere 13.4 percent of the sample population. Moreover, only 6.7 percent, are not employed and looking for work. This is significant because some would assume that the Tea Party sampling is unemployed or unsatisfied with their working environment. However, this is hardly the case, because most are either retired (55.9 percent), or employed and satisfied (47 percent). Nonetheless, do these figures match up with the Tea Party at large? According to a study done by Gallup (2010c), the Tea Party is 49 percent fully employed, 6 percent partially employed, 24 percent retired, and 6 percent unemployed.

In lieu of the results above, the employment demographics of the local Tea Party do not correlate with the National Tea Party. However, the evidence does suggest
that the Tea Party is fairly mainstream American in this statistical category. The *New York Times* says that 54 percent of Tea Partiers, compared to 56 percent of Americans, are fully employed (*New York Times* 2010).

**Marital Status**

Married adults now divorce two-and-a-half times as often as adults did 20 years ago and four times as often as they did 50 years ago . . . between 40 percent and 60 percent of new marriages will eventually end in divorce. The probability within . . . the first five years is 20 percent, and the probability of its ending within the first 10 years is 33 percent . . . Perhaps 25 percent of children ages 16 and under live with a stepparent. (Gallagher 1996)

The Heritage Foundation (2010b) believes that marriage is in trouble in the U.S. Their leading marital scholar, Chuck Donavan (2011), says that Americans are cohabiting more, marrying less, and marrying much later in life. According to Donavan, out-of-wedlock childbearing is reaching European levels and still climbing. Divorce levels, although below their peak, remain high. Public attitudes continue to shift, with Americans expressing less concern about various “family forms” even as the children raised in those forms continue to file frank and frequently negative field reports on their experiences. The U.S. Census Bureau (2011) estimated in 2009 that 64 million males married in the U.S., compared to 65 million females. The Bureau also found that there are 32 million males not married in the country, compared to 26 million females. Donavan (2011) says that part of the increase in single parenthood is a result of a rise in cohabitation, which has been increasing since 1960, when a little more than 1 percent of all co-residential couples in the United States were married. Today, the figure is more than 10 percent of all couples. He says, in fact, more than 60 percent of all first marriages
today are preceded by living together, a practice that was virtually nonexistent just 50 years ago. However, a group called Americans Against the Tea Party claim that Republicans like Donavan have been fighting the cohabitation fight for years and actually have laws in place to prevent cohabitation in the state of Florida. Marie Diamond (2011) in her blog says that “thousands of unmarried couple who are living together in Florida may be surprised to learn that they are actually breaking the law.” Notwithstanding, the Leon County Tea Party (2011) reported that Tea Partiers in Texas says that cohabitation is contributing to divorce and threatening America’s children. The National Marriage Project from the Institute for American Values reveals that more than 40 percent of children in the country spend some portion of their lives in a household with a cohabitating parent before they are 12 years old (The University of Virginia Magazine 2010).

More importantly, the Tea Party has not officially commented on the issue of cohabitation but many of them view cohabitation as a concern for America. The real question pertains to the sample population’s marital status. Are they, or are they not married?

Regarding survey question 9, despite declining trends in America, the majority (72 percent) of the sample population are married. Less than 20 percent are not married, and only .008 percent are living in a cohabitated partnership. Eleven participants choose category “other,” in which they all said something on the line of being married and now widowed. For that reason, if category D, “other,” is combined with category A, “married,” then 80.8 percent of the sample population is or has been married. This is a staggering number when comparing to national averages. In 2006, The American Com-
Community Survey found that 49.7 percent, or 55.2 million, of the nation’s 111.1 million households are made up of married couples (with and without children), just shy of a majority and down from more than 52 percent in 2000 (New York Times 2006). This means that the sample population is at least 30 percent higher than the national average for married couples.

The Census Bureau (2011) estimates that 5.2 million couples, a little more than 5 percent of households, are unmarried cohabitated partners, which is considerably lower than Donavan’s figures of over 10 percent. An additional 413,000 households are male couples, and 363,000 are female couples. In all, nearly 1 in 10 couples are unmarried. Moreover, 1 in 20 households consists of people living alone (New York Times 2006). Corresponding figures show that only 1 in 125 surveyed is living in a cohabitated partnership. A New York Times/CNN Polls shows that 70 percent of the Tea Party is married (New York Times/CNN Poll 2011). This means that there is a 2 percent difference from the Local Tea Party (72 percent) and the Tea Party at large (70 percent).

Household Size

The U.S. Census Bureau (2010) recorded that the population in 1950 had surpassed 150 million, a gain of 10.4 percent since 1940. The median age had increased to 30.2 years (29.9 for men and 30.3 for women). The under-15 cohort had continued to decrease to 26.9 percent. Again, the Bureau (2010) recorded that the percentage of the population that was white had remained constant at 89.5, and the male-to-female ratio had dropped further, to 98.6 men for every 100 women. There were 46 million housing units in the country, of which 51.3 percent (32.8 million) were owner occupied. Average
family size had decreased to 3.0 children per household. In the 1960s the family size grew from 3.0 percent to 3.2 percent. By 1970, the average household size declined below 3.0 percent for the first time in the United States to 2.8 percent. Today, the average household size in America is about 2.1 percent, which is about equal to the national death rate of 2.1 percent (U.S. Census Bureau 2010). In spite of the declining household size of America, the Tea Party population is much older than the general population and therefore had their children many years ago. This means that the average household size for the sample population should be much higher than the average population of 2.1 percent. Survey question 10 will provide the necessary data for the comparison.

Almost 68 percent of the local Tea Party population has 2 or more children. Eighteen percent have no children and 6.7 have a single child. Seven percent have either and adopted children or have lost a child. The U.S. Census Bureau (2010) estimates there are 2.1 children per household in the United States in which the sample population (at 2.1 percent) is almost perfectly identical with the national average. This is somewhat surprising because children per household have significantly declined in the U.S. since the sample population had their families. Nevertheless, the sample population compares with the national average on this issue.

Education Preferred

Most Tea Partiers deem the Republicans during the eight years of Bush as a dreadful disappointment. Tea Party advocate and congressional leader Paul Rand (2011) said “the president ran on a platform of ‘compassionate conservatism’ only to double the size of government and the national debt.” In 1996, Republican presidential nominee
Bob Dole was talking about abolishing the Department of Education in his speeches and it was an established part of the GOP platform. A decade later, Bush doubled the size of the Department of Education with the No Child Left Behind Act in 2001. Republican House Leader John Boehner would call No Child Left Behind his proudest achievement (Paul 2011). Public education is not popular with the Tea Party. Hardliner conservatives such as Congressman Rand Paul (R-KY) and Senator Ron Paul (R-TX), former Senate majority leader Bob Dole, Governor Chris Christy (R-NJ), and former Senator Barry Goldwater (R-AZ), and many others connected to the movement all desired to abolish public education. Tim Walker (2011) of NeaToday found that in March of 2011, Tea Party Republican Jim Summerville took to the floor of the state Senate and told educators, “Make no mistake, the final responsibility is ours, and we are warriors, we will bend public education to our awe, or break it all to pieces.” More recently from the New York Times, Chris Christy (R-NJ) used his State of the State address to push his education agenda further by calling for an end to teacher tenure, on top of his support for merit pay for teachers based partly on student achievement and adoption of a voucher-like system that would give students other options (New York Times 2011).

Indeed, public education is unpopular with the Tea Party and will continue to be a “hot topic” for them for many years to come. When it comes to the Tea Party and public education, there are fundamentally two reasons why they do not support it. First, they claim public education is unconstitutional, that all education in America should be solely left to private hands. Second, public education is costly and that it commonly underperforms private institutions. Scott Rasmussen and Douglas Schoen (2010) illu-
strate this in their book Mad as Hell: “Frustrations have mounted [within the Tea Party] due to the deficiencies of American [public] education which hamper American workers vis-à-vis global technological competition, as well as the increasing cost of higher education” (23). Since public education is so unpopular amongst them it is assumed that they would avoid the public system and prefer sending their children to alternative schools.

Seventy two percent of the local Tea Party prefers private, charter, and home schooling as to public education (survey question 11). Thirty-eight percent of them chose private school over the other educational choices. This is a significant statistic because according to Education USA (2008), a large majority of U.S. elementary and secondary students (88.3 percent in 2007) attend public schools. These numbers show without a doubt that the majority of the sample population has a problem with public education. Notwithstanding, I should have included why the majority of the sample population chose private, charter, and home schooling over public education. Some of the participants may have mentioned a reasoning that does not reflect opposition to the U.S. government. Even though there is an abundance of supporting evidence that compares preferred education of the local Tea Party to nationwide statistics, there is no substantial evidence to compare the local Tea Party to the Tea Party at large.

Religious Affiliation

According to Jennifer Marshall of the Heritage Foundation, religion has continued through the course of human history and despite its recent decline should continue well into the next century (Heritage Foundation 2010b). Even with an increase in
religious non-affiliation, religious belief and practice continue to be strong in America. More than 60 percent of Americans have no doubt that God exists, and almost 40 percent frequently practice their faith (Marshall 2010).

William Anderson of the Ludwig von Mises Institute found that there is a conservative “right wing” Christian political group in America called the Christian Right that advocates social policies. Religious conservatives principally seek to apply the teachings of particular religions to politics, sometimes by merely proclaiming the value of those teachings, at other times by having those teachings influence laws (Anderson 2006). The Tea Party is not openly affiliated with the Christian Right but it is assumed that many of its devotees are at least religious. Tea Party advocate Mark Levin (2009) illustrates in his book *Liberty and Tyranny* that the Declaration of Independence appeals to “the Laws of Nature and of Nature’s God” (page 27). It provides further, he says, “we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” (Declaration of Independence). Glenn Beck also reiterates Levin’s religious message. Beck (2003) said in his book *The Real America*, “In my faith we have temples, and they are kept spotless and clean. The only place more sacred than the temple is your home, and your home is to be kept just as clean and in order” (3-4). Not every Tea Party backer supports the idea of God or agrees with Glenn Beck or Mark Levin. Professor of economics of Loyola University, Walter Block, claims to be a devout atheist (Ludwig von Mises Institute 2010) as well as a Tea Party supporter. Accordingly, does the sample
population align with atheist professor Walter Block, or do they align with Mark Levin or Glenn Beck? Survey question 12 addresses this issue.

The majority of Americans still hold to some religious beliefs. The Gallup Poll (2007) found that 41 percent of Americans report they regularly attend religious services, compared to 15 percent of French citizens, 10 percent of United Kingdom citizens, and 7.5 percent of Australian citizens. Notwithstanding, the true figures show that only about 21 percent of Americans actually go to church one or more times a week. Despite their claims, according to a study done by a group called Religious Tolerance (2007), many Americans tell pollsters that they have gone to church even though they have not.

Additional research done by the Harris Poll (2010) found in 2010 U.S. adults (18 and older) found that only 26 percent of those surveyed attended religious services “every week or more often,” 9 percent went “once or twice a month,” 21 percent went “a few times a year,” 3 percent went “once a year,” 22 percent went “less than once a year,” and 18 percent never attend religious services. An identical survey by Harris in 2003 found that only 26 percent of those surveyed attended religious services “every week or more often,” 11 percent went “once or twice a month,” 19 percent went “a few times a year,” 4 percent went “once a year,” 16 percent went “less than once a year,” and 25 percent never attend religious services.

Regardless of Tea Party atheists such as Walter Block, the Tea Party is more religious than the general population, but is less religious than conservative Christians (HuffPost 2010). The Huffington Post (HuffPost 2010) found that 11 percent of Ameri-
cans say they are part of the unstructured Tea Party movement, compared to 22 percent of Americans who identify as Christian conservatives. They also found that nearly half (47 percent) of those associated with the Tea Party label also consider themselves Christian conservatives or part of the religious right. Even more so, the Huffington Post found that evangelicals make up more than one-third of the Tea Party movement; more than double the size of the second-largest groups, mainline Protestants and Catholics (14 percent each). More so, the Huffington Post established that 70 percent of the movement is Christians. By and large, their report mentioned the religious profile of the Tea Party “differs only modestly” from the religious make-up of the Republican Party (HuffPost 2010).

Although many of them claim to be a part of the Christian right, Samuel Goldsmith (2010) of the New York Daily News claims that the Tea Party has been accused of numerous anti-Islamic controversies. Tea Party Express leader Mark Williams referred to Allah as a “Monkey God” (Goldsmith 2010). He said that Williams’ comments provoked strong rebukes from New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, New York state senators and Muslim leaders. In a subsequent blog posting, Williams wrote,

I owe an apology to millions of Hindus who worship Lord Hanuman, an actual Monkey God. Hanuman is worshiped as a symbol of perseverance, strength, and devotion. . . . Those are hardly the traits of whatever the Hell it is that terrorists worship. (Goldsmith 2010)

Brian Montopoli (2011) of CBS News recorded that Williams came under further criticism when he posted a fictional letter named “Colored People” on his blog. Williams claimed the letter was a “satirical” response to a resolution passed by the NAACP calling on Tea Party leaders to “repudiate the racist element and activities’ from within the
movement.” In response, Fox News (2010d) reported that the Tea Party “demanded that the Tea Party Express oust Williams from the organization. When it did not, the movement expelled both Williams and his conservative friends.”

Racial Background

The Tea Party has had its fair share of racial controversies to contend with. Mark Duell (2011) of the Daily Mail found that Oscar-winning actor Morgan Freeman claims racism in the U.S. has actually got worse since Barack Obama took office in January 2009. The film star told CNN the President has become a target for the Tea Party’s racist aggression (Duell 2011). The Washington Post (2010b) alleged that black conservatives have expressed mixed feelings about the Tea Party’s inclusiveness and concerns about racism. The Washington Post (2010b) also recalled that Brandon Brice, a primary black speaker at a tax-day Tea Party rally, said he was worried about the movement, noting that, “it’s strayed away from the message of wasteful spending and Washington not listening to its constituents and it’s become more of this rally of hate.” Lenny McAllister, a Republican commentator, author and Tea Party supporter, said he has seen racism within the movement and has confronted it by approaching people with racially derogatory signs of President Obama and asking them to take the signs down. Like Brice, McAllister supposes that leaders of the Tea Party movement must not ignore the issue. McAllister told the Washington Post, “The people are speaking up and becoming more educated on the issues, but you have fringe elements that are defining this good thing with their negative, hateful behavior” (Washington Post 2010b). He mentioned that the movement is more diverse than news clips claim, commenting that “there is this percep-
tion that these are all old, white racists and that’s not the case (Washington Post 2010b). Jean Howard-Hill, leader of the National Republican African American Caucus, illustrated that “any movement which cannot openly denounce racism, calling it out as wrong troubles me. To attack President Obama on his policy is one thing, but to do so on his race or some hysterical pretext of socialism is yet another” (Washington Post 2010b).

Again, the Washington Post reported that during an interview on NPR with Michael Martin, McAllister and columnist Cynthia Tucker discussed racism and the Tea Parties; Tucker wrote about the interview, concluding that McAllister’s take on racism was that he’d seen enough racist signs at other Tea Party gatherings to know that racism is associated with the movement (Tucker 2010). Moreover, Tea Party activists from Chico, like Susan Hubbard (2009), say that they are adamant about taking all racist signs away from suspected perpetuators at local meetings and events. Brian Montopoli (2011) of CBS News reported that black Republican presidential candidate Herman Cain (R-GA) said that racist accusations about the Tea Party Movement are “ridiculous.” “I have been speaking to Tea Parties, Americans for Prosperity, since 2009, before it was cool,” Cain said. Then, referring to his victories in recent Tea Party Straw polls, “If the Tea Party organization is racist why does the black guy keep winning all these straw polls?” (Montopoli 2011). Monopoli further reported that Herman Cain continued by saying that while he does not feel President Obama used race to get elected, “a lot of his supporters use race selectively to try to cover up some of his failures, to try to cover up some of his failed policies.” He said that Cain mentioned that Obama’s surrogates “try to play the race card, because there’s supposed to be something wrong with criticizing him,” and
concluded, “some people have tried to use race to try to give the president a pass on failed policies, bad decisions and the fact that this economy is not doing what it’s supposed to do.”

Concluding Chapter Remarks

The Tea Party has an image problem. Many deem them as a white, male, right-wing homophobic organization because several surveys Gallup conducted in March, May, and June of 2010 found that only 30 percent of Americans identify as Tea Party supporters (Gallup 2010d). Then again, these figures may be much lower because the New York Times/CBS News poll found that only 18 percent of Americans identify with the Tea Party (New York Times 2010).

Prior to and shortly after the debt-ceiling crisis in 2008, the Tea Party gained strength and national approval, but after the debt-ceiling crisis, polls became more unfavorable towards the movement (Gallup 2011). According to Gallup, 28 percent of adults disapprove of the Tea Party compared to 25 percent approving, and noted that the national Tea Party movement appears to have lost some ground in popular support after the contested debate over raising the nation's debt ceiling in which Tea Party Republicans . . . fought any compromise on taxes and spending. (Gallup 2010d)

Likewise, a Pew poll found that 29 percent of respondents thought congressional Tea Party supporters had a negative effect, compared to 22 percent thinking it was a positive influence. It noted that “The new poll also finds that those who followed the debt ceiling debate very closely have more negative views about the impact of the Tea Party than those who followed the issue less closely” (Pew Research Center 2011).
The *New York Times* (2010) found that Tea Partiers are wealthier and more educated than the general public. Nevertheless, the Tea Party is still relatively new; the majority of them have not been involved in politics beyond the advent of its creation two years ago. Males have a slight edge to females, and Tea Party supporters are considerably older than the national average. Forty percent are 55 and over, compared with 32 percent of other polling populations, while 22 percent are under the age of 35 (Digital Journal 2010). They watch politics 2.7 hours per day, which is less than the 3.8 hours per day national average. They are predominately employed, but since so many of them are over the age of 55 many are retired. They tend to be married with two to three children, which is precisely the nation average. Tea Partiers prefer sending their children to private schools. They also are above the national average for church attendance. Taken as a whole, the localized sample population seems to correlate with the general Tea Party populous in most categories except for age and educational statistics. Moreover, the Tea Party at large is comparable to the average American in some categories such as family size and employment status, but they are substantially different in marital status, preferred education, study, gender, age, educational background and religious affiliation. Despite some differences, the local Tea Party does reasonably compare with national Tea Party. However, the Tea Party substantially differentiates from most Americans, because in 7 out of 9 categories in this research they differ.
CHAPTER VI

POLITICAL OUTLOOK

Introduction

Will you stand up to fellow Republicans if they try to expand the debt? my answer was an unequivocal “Yes,” and the people believed me. They believed me because in every speech for a year, I spoke out and said that the GOP platform does not support bailing out failed business, much less owning them. (Rand 2011, 52)

It is commonly believed by those critical of the Tea Party that Republicans did not protest much when President Bush ran up deficits and expanded government, so when President Obama does the same, Republicans complaints cannot be sincere. So how can the Tea Party be so critical of Obama’s performance and yet give President Bush a free pass on his for doing the same thing in Washington? It is well defined that partisanship plays a role, but partisanship only explains so much given that the Tea Party is sincere about limited government and often quite fond of Republican bashing. Case in point, Congressman Rand Paul mentioned in his book, The Tea Party goes to Washington, that what connected him the most to the Tea Party was his willingness to examine and criticize his own party. Paul repeated in speeches all over the state that the Tea Party targets Republicans just as much as Democrats regarding both parties’ failure to control the debt and balance the budget (Huff Post Politics 2011a; Paul 2011). He continued by saying that “the Republicans doubled the debt while the Democrats tripled it.” Paul said that “if presidents were based on their handling of fiscal policy alone then Clinton would be
hands down the better president than George W. Bush” (Paul 2011). Given that, Tea
Party conservatives do not want to be deceived again with another moderate “reach
across the aisle” compassionate conservative president again.

Again, according to Rand Paul (2011), when President Bush came into office
promising to be a different kind of conservative, and one of his first legislative victories
was the No Child Left Behind Act, sponsored by Ted Kennedy. Paul claims that through-
out his presidency, Bush’s “compassionate conservatism” surrendered either rhetori-
cally or substantively to the assumptions of welfare-state liberalism that Tea Partiers have
not forgotten. Lastly, Paul said that Bush was best measured by his commitment to large
government programs. “When somebody hurt,” Bush insisted, “government has got to
move.” Many conservatives disliked this whole mindset and the policies behind it, from
comprehensive immigration reform to Medicare, and the Republicans eventually lost the
House and Senate because they did not stay true to their conservative principles.

Does the Tea Party detest politicians in general? Other than a few lucky ones,
the Tea Party seems to dislike most political leaders. They also believe that most func-
tions of government are unnecessary and risk the integrity of the republic. Various Tea
Party members maintain that the Republican Party under George W. Bush is almost as
destructive to the nation as the Democratic Party under President Obama, and they do not
want to be fooled again by another compassionate conservative like Bush. If the Republi-
can Party is as damaging to the country as the Democratic Party, then the Tea Party
should have a counter as to the proper means in which to govern the nation. If the Bush
administration was almost as damaging to the country as the Obama administration, then
the Tea Party should have a standard they hold all politicians to regardless of partisanship and political affiliation.

Party Politics

Notwithstanding their Republican displeasures, the Tea Party should be more politically partisan in their views of the Republican Party than they are towards the Democrats. Survey questions 13 and 14 illustrate Tea Party partisanship.

The *Washington Post* reported June in 2010 that a new poll done by Gallup found that nearly 7 in 10 Tea Party supporters describe themselves as conservative Republicans (Gallup 2010d; *Washington Post* 2010d). All told, nearly 80 percent of Tea Party supporters describe themselves as Republicans; while 15 percent say they are Democrats and just 6 percent as Independents (*Washington Post* 2010d). Conversely, according to the *New York Times* Poll, 54 percent of the Tea Party is Republican, 6 percent Democrat, and 36 percent Independent (*New York Times* 2011).

Even if most of the Tea Party belongs to the Republican Party, it does not necessarily suggest they are satisfied with their performance in office. A combined 64 percent, of them indicate they are either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the Republican Party, whereas no more than 18.5 percent specify they are satisfied. Not surprisingly, the majority of the participants (83 percent) say they are very dissatisfied with the Democratic Party. In addition to overwhelming dissatisfaction for the Democrats, only two participants signified they are very satisfied and satisfied with the Democratic Party. Again, this is significantly lower than the participants’ impressions of the Republican Party, which is an indicator of their partisan views towards the Republicans. More than
15 percent of them mentioned they are very satisfied (25 percent) or satisfied (18 percent) with the Republicans in the research. Nevertheless, there remains to be an overwhelming dissatisfaction for both parties. Notwithstanding, the local Tea Party differs from the Tea Party at large. The *New York Times* (2011) found that 54 percent of Tea Partiers view the Republican Party as favorable, whereas 43 percent say the party is unfavorable. Again, the poll indicates that 6 percent of Tea Party deems the Democratic Party as favorable, whereas 92 percent of them agree that the party is unfavorable.

Congressman Rand Paul (2011) disputes the Tea Party’s partisan views. He claims these persons to be destructive to the American way of life and even labels them a brand.

This sort of partisan nonsense has long shielded big government Republicans from having to answer for their voting records and is precisely the sort of useless politics that so many Americans are sick of. Such partisanship is also precisely what the Tea Party should now stand against, firmly and fully. The word “conservative” came to lose its meaning as Republicans doubled government and the debt under their own watch. The Democrats are now tripling both and must be stopped, but by a return to fiscal and constitutional sanity, not simply the same old, status quo insanity under the same old Republican brand. (51)

As mentioned before, and according to Gallup (2010d), the preponderance of the Tea Party are current members or former associates of the Republican Party. Since most of them belong to the Republican Party, it is fitting that they have a stronger dislike for the Democratic Party than they do the Republicans. Even though they are not always satisfied with the Republicans, many within the movement deem them basically as the lesser of the two evils, because to them, neither looks out for the good of the nation and neither
adheres to the Constitution. They also say that both parties are selfish in character and seize power whenever possible, even if it means destroying the country.

Case in point, many Tea Partiers allege that party dissatisfaction is a major contributing factor for the rise of its existence. To all of the interviewees, there is a need for the Tea Party because the Republicans have alienated them by pushing for fiscally unsound policies. They say that these so-called right-wing Republican leaders more often than not support left-wing policies, which is an unacceptable standard for the Republican Party. Tea Party affiliate Dan Acton (2011) said that “Republicans like John McCain (R-AZ) and Olympia Snow (R-KS) are nothing more than wolves in sheep’s clothing. Moreover, interviewee Mat Miller (2010) said that “the Republicans are lucky that the Tea Party did not abandon them in the 2010 elections.” Chico ADA civil law attorney Peter Leonard (2010) told me that he refuses to vote for either party because politicians in general are prone for making unconstitutional promises. Leonard continued by saying that even so-called good politicians regularly lie and cheat the public whenever possible. The Republicans, during the eight years of Bush, were an abysmal failure. The president ran on a platform of “compassionate conservativism” only to double the size of government and the nation debt (Paul 2011).

Third Party Politics

Does the Tea Party desire to begin a third party? Tea Partiers have been so disappointed with the Republican Party that many of them understand that it is best to begin a third party. The New York Times (2011) found that 40 percent of Tea Party members suppose that a third party should be established. However, some Tea Partiers argue
against a third party because they believe that it would only empower the Democrats. Tea Party supporter Erin Ryan (2010) mentioned in our interview that she would rather have the Tea Party support the Republicans than back a third-party platform for the very same reason.

The Tea Party is not too distant with the general public on this issue, because according to a study conducted by the Pew Research Center (2010a), 43 percent of voters say they would like to see their members of Congress reelected. The Pew Research Center (2010a) also found that anti-incumbent sentiment is widespread, with just 41 percent of Republicans, 54 percent of Democrats, and 36 percent of independents saying they would like to see their representatives reelected. They maintain that this is the lowest percentage of support for incumbents among Republicans and independents over the last five midterm election cycles (Pew Research Center 2010a). The New York Times (2011) found that even though 40 percent of the Tea Party aspire to break from the Republican establishment, 60 percent still desire to hold on to it.

**Republican Frustrations**

Why is the Tea Party frustrated with the Republican Party? As Scott Rasmussen (2010f) pointed out in his article, “the Republican Party continues to support too much government, spend too much money, and does not listen to its conservative constituency.” Tea Partiers say that the Republicans forget their conservative values more often than not, which undermines conservativism and the Constitution. The Tea Party believes that Article 1, Section 8, of the U.S. Constitution is a list of 13 congressional responsibilities or enumerated powers which Congress can exercise only when it is
granted to do so by the American people. Therefore, when Congress is involved with responsibilities that are beyond this list of enumerated powers, then Congress is acting outside of its constitutional jurisdictions and no longer abides by the rule of law. Moreover, Congress does not have the authority to interfere in the freedom of conscience, expression, and association. Also, the federal government is forbidden to interfere in specific jurisdictions that are left to state and local governments. They say that the purpose of the government is to provide the most security without overstepping constitutional boundaries. They say that the Constitution guarantees that certain unalienable rights cannot be infringed upon or violated by the government, for example, the government cannot take away certain rights. For instance, the Second Amendment guarantees that the government does not have the right to take our gun rights away. However, this does not mean that the government is under any obligation to ensure or provide every citizen a gun. Hence, the Constitution is concerned with protecting rights but it does not mean that the government is under any obligation to provide rights. With this in mind, the powers of Congress should be limited and it should not be engaged in the everyday activities of the American people.

Tea Partiers such as George Mason University economist Dr. Walter Williams (2002) argue that the Constitution is based on negative rights instead of positive rights. For instance, nationalizing healthcare is a positive right and is therefore unconstitutional because positive rights are not established therein. Public education according to Frederic Bastiat (1998) is a form of legal plunder and is also a positive right and is unconstitutional. They say that under the Constitution, the government cannot take one’s home
without just compensation. However, the government cannot buy a home because it does not have the right to do so under the law. Milton Friedman (2002) says that “if the government has the right to give then they also have the right to take away” (Friedman 4-5). More importantly, the Republican Party has supported positive rights, like healthcare and education for many, many years, which are unconstitutional. The customary standard for the Republicans should be more than standing for small government or business, but they should stand for constitutional values beginning with understanding the meaning of negative and positive rights.

Government Abolition

The Tea Party has an ideology just to get rid of all government. (Chuck Schumer, quoted in Real Clear Politics 2011)

Does the Tea Party desire to abolish government? The Tea Party is considered by most politicians to be a right-wing fringe group. Even Republican politicians that claim to be conservative do not always support the economic philosophies of the Tea Party. Real Clear Politics (2011) reported that Senator Chuck Schumer (D-NY) says “the Tea Party has an ideology just to get rid of all government.” They see it that most politicians are not familiar with the Tea Party’s policies and the ones that are more familiar with them struggle with their concepts of free markets. They say that a major source of objection to a free economy is precisely that it does the task of free enterprise so well. Tea Partiers relish in the words of Milton Friedman because he believes that “free markets gives people what they want instead of what a particular group thinks they ought to want” (Friedman 2002), which is exactly what the Tea Party wishes that Congress
understood. Friedman (2002) says in conjunction to the Tea Party that “underlying most arguments against the free market is a lack of belief in freedom itself” (Friedman 15).

Another concern that a number of politicians have with the Tea Party is the reality that they are so adamantly indifferent towards them, essentially the modern role of the government. Undeniably, the Tea Party’s philosophies attack centralized government and essentially the new modern presidency. However, in contrast to what politicians believe of them, they believe that the existence of a free market does not, of course, eliminate the need for government. Again, Friedman (2002) says that “government is essential both as a forum for determining the ‘rules of the game’ and an umpire to interpret and enforce the rules decided on” (Friedman 15). He says that what the market does is to greatly reduce the range of issues that must be decided through political means and thereby to minimize the extent to which government should participate in the game. Nevertheless, the characteristic feature of action through political channels is that it tends to require or enforce substantial conformity. On the other hand, the great advantage of the market is that it permits wide diversity. “It is, in political terms, a system of proportional representation (Friedman 2002, 3). Other than a few modern politicians such as Bob Bar (L-GA), Ron Paul (R-TX), Rand Paul (R-KY), Michelle Bachman (R-MN), Herman Cain (R-GA), and a few select others, politicians tend to forget the words of Milton Friedman (2001) that “the fundamental threat to freedom is power to coerce, be it in the hands of a monarch, a dictator, an oligarchy, or a momentary majority” (Friedman 15). The Tea Party understands that the preservation of freedom requires the elimination of such concentration of power to the fullest possible extent and the dispersal and distribution of
whatever power cannot be eliminated. For this reason, a return to the system of checks and balances is needed. In view of that, the Tea Party understands that a limited government structure is advantageous for the Republic. And since the modern role of government undermines the concepts of negative rights, their intentions to do good more often than not are unconstitutional and damaging to the Republic.

Bush v. Obama

Regardless of overwhelming aggravation with both parties, the Tea Party endorses the Bush administration to the Obama administration. Yet, it is clearly not understood how much more they support the Bush administration as to the Obama administration. Survey questions 15 and 16 differentiate their attitudes of each.

Although President Bush had higher approval ratings than President Obama, Bush still is not considered as a great president by Tea Party standards. The former president had a disapproval rating among participants of 47 percent, whereas 43.4 percent approved of his performance. No participants approved of President Barrack Obama’s presidency; 86 percent of them indicated that his presidency is either unsatisfactory or terrible. According to USA Today (2010), the Tea Party’s dismal attitude towards Barack Obama is much higher than the national average, because Gallup found that Barrack Obama’s approval rating is at 44 percent. Comparatively, Bush had an approval rating of approximately 28 percent at the end of his presidency (Historical Bush Approval Ratings 2008). The majority of Tea Party members are former Bush supporters that lost trust in his presidential performance. For instance, all of the interviewees alleged they are discouraged with Bush’s approval of TARP and most had huge issues with his No Child Left
Behind Act. Furthermore, all of the interviewees struggled with the rapid expansion of government, as well as the growth of the national deficit during Bush’s tenure in office. Many of the participants made inferences to Bush’s “progressive” policies (Urban Dictionary 2005b), frequent “reach across the aisle politics,” constantly compromising conservative principles, and relatively moderate strategies. Chico Tea Party member Matt Miller (2010) said that if Bush had been more conservative in his policies the country would not be in the dire predicament it is in today. Another Tea Party Chico affiliate, Cindy Harvey (2010), also made repeated derogatory remarks towards the former president. Harvey mentioned that Bush was a better president than Obama, but he still abandoned his conservative roots and advanced “leftist” policies. A number of other Tea Party members in Oroville and Chico, disappointed in Bush’s presidency, commonly say that Bush was definitely no Ronald Reagan.

Many conservatives subdued their objections when Bush left office, in part because they liked the man personally or approved of his stances on tax cuts, judges, abortion and the war on terrorism. A number of other conservatives practically gave Bush a “free pass” because he simply belonged to the Republican Party. Tea Partiers allege that his progressive policies along with the 2008 GOP primaries compounded their frustrations (Huff Post Politics 2010a). Rand Paul (2011) asserted that they have not forgotten that Bush, despite all his bravado of standing for small government and budget slashing doubled the size of the Department of Education with his No Child Left Behind Act in 2001. He also exclaimed that they have not forgotten “Bush’s enactment of Medicare Plan D, the largest entitlement expansion in nearly half a century, and the bank bailouts, a
$700 billion Troubled Assets Relief Program” (Paul 2011). Some ascertain like Paul that since there was no stand-in for Bush in the contest, there was no obvious outlet for anger at Bush’s years of pre-Iraq ineptness or his decision to outsource domestic spending to Republican congressional leaders (Paul 2011). Again, Paul claims that Bush as a lame duck president may have laid the predicates for Obama’s first 100 days in office, supporting both stimulus and Wall Street bailouts (Paul 2011). Jill Lepore (2010) recorded that as one participant of the DC Tea Party rally told the Washington Examiner’s Byron York, “George Bush opened the door for Barack Obama and the Democrats to walk in.” Indeed, 43 percent of the Tea Party have a favorable view of Bush, but it hardly captures their anxieties. According to Lepore (2010), when Bush’s face appeared on the Jumbotron in the Cincinnati area, the audience applauded. When speakers criticized Bush and the GOP for “losing their way,” the audience applauded even lauder. With that said, Tea Partiers will not be fooled again by another Bush in the Whitehouse (Lepore 2010).

Presidential Standards

What standard does the next President need to uphold in order to be accepted by the Tea Party? In order to be upheld by the standards of the Tea Party, the next candidate has to have an impeccable voting history and unblemished record, one that has always stood for limited government principles. Republican politicians eager to “reach across the aisle,” like John McCain (R-AZ), former Mayor Giuliani (R-NY), and George W. Bush, historically do not have stalwart conservative voting records and therefore should not be the banner representatives of the Tea Party. More recent presidential candidates such as Mitt Romney (R-MA) or Rick Perry (R-TX) also have less than favorable
voting records. Mitt Romney (R-MA) says he has lowered taxes 19 times when he was
governor of Massachusetts, but in fact raised the state’s gasoline tax. He also taxed his
citizens by raising state fees. Additionally, he promoted and passed a socialized health-
care plan similar to the national healthcare plan. Overall, Romney expanded the size of
government while governor of Massachusetts. Rick Perry (R-TX) has also raised taxes in
Texas and has a less than stellar record (Fox News 2010a). The Tea Party is mostly con-
cerned with out of control government spending and a growing federal government.
Other candidates such as Libertarian junky Ron Paul (R-TX) and Michelle Bachman (R-
MN) should achieve a large percentage of the Tea Party voting population because they
have unblemished voting records. The Tea Party mantra is limited government, fiscal
responsibility, and personal accountability and to them, Bachman and Paul have stood
firmly on those principles, even long before the establishment of the Tea Party. Tea
Partiers truly believe that Bachman and Paul see the government like Milton Friedman,
that is, that the government is truly a hindrance in the expansion of wealth and capital.
More importantly, a significant Republican divide has taken shape since the advent of the
Tea Party. Republicans will either continue to promote a platform of “compassionate
conservativism,” largely practiced by George W. Bush and many others within the
Republican Party, or they will step back and become the party of small government
again.

Role of Government

What should be the role of government according to the Tea Party? The gen-
eral synopsis of the Tea Party is that the role of government in a free market society is
limited in power, fiscally responsible, and personally accountable. A select few of them may suggest entirely abolishing government, but most of them agree with Milton Friedman and his understanding that the responsibility of the government is to maintain law and order, define property rights, and serve as a means whereby the people could modify property rights and other rules of the economic enterprises of the people (Friedman 2002). Moreover, they also agree with Milton Friedman (2002) when he said that

the government’s responsibility is also to adjudicate disputes concerning the interpretation of the rules, enforce contracts, promote competition, provide a monetary framework, engage in activities to counter technical monopolies, and to overcome neighborhood effects widely regarded as sufficiently important to justify government intervention. (Friedman 25-26)

Friedman (2002) says that “if the government were to be limited to these basic functions, which are not a few, such a government would clearly have important functions to perform” (Friedman 34). Yet, it is also true that such a government to them would have clearly limited functions and would refrain from a host of activities that are now undertaken by federal and state governments in the United States? And living up to these principles of limited government is the standard in which all presidents will need to live by in order to be accepted by the Tea Party.

Concluding Chapter Remarks

The Tea Party despises most political leaders because they usually lack similar standards. They see it that even the so-called good ones generally disagree with the organization. Tea Partiers suppose that the best elected officials are those that do not actually strive for political office. Similar to a sole proprietor or a large corporation,
anyone willing to strive for an elected position is generally looking after one’s self-interests instead of the good of the constituency or the Republic. They see it that the people that actually make changes in America are not those striving for office such as individual actors (Beck 2003). Therefore, if the Republicans reclaim both the Senate and the Executive in 2012, the Tea Party understands that the newly elected officials will not be the reason for saving America from economic collapse; yet again, it is the individual, abiding by the Constitution and free markets, that will save the Republic (Beck 2003; Crookston 2012). They see that present administrations relish in fixing problems created by previous administrations because they believe they are better at governing than the last and therefore have superior solutions. This is also why so many Tea Partiers say that the Republican Party during George W. Bush was almost equally destructive to the nation as the Democratic Party under President Obama (Paul 2011; Sonnier 2010). Overall, the Tea Party does not want to be hoodwinked again by another moderate George Bush and will do everything to prevent the Republicans from becoming a moderate party that represents “compassionate conservatism” programs.
CHAPTER VII

NATIONAL ECONOMY

Introduction

Before delving into this topic of the national economy, it must be understood that not all Tea Partiers understand the complexities of free market economics, nor do they all grasp macroeconomic principles of monetary policy or the Federal Reserve and their relationship to the overall economy. For that reason, this section pertains to those that have studied free market economics that do understand such economic principles. Tea Partiers who do appreciate free market economics should at least have an educated opinion concerning the dialogue discussed in this section of the report.

Has monetary policy aided the recession? Tea Party sympathizers astute in economics ascertain that except for a few brief periods in American history, U.S. monetary policy since John Maynard Keynes has been aimed to stimulate the economy by targeting measures of consumption. The Bush Administration, influenced by Chairman of the Federal Reserve Allen Greenspan, also aided such consumption friendly policies and encouraged higher rates of consumption to bolster the economy. Part of his monetary plan was to stimulate lending rates from lending institutions, thus allowing borrowers to purchase homes they could not normally qualify for or afford to buy. In turn, home sales skyrocketed and so did home prices. Consequently, such policies, according to some within the Tea Party, led to the collapse of the housing market in 2007. Avid Tea Party
supporters from the Cato Institute and Ludwig Von Mises Institute also ascertain that if Americans desire to achieve a stronger national economy, then they should understand that monetary policy based on consumption alone is structurally flawed. Hence, monetary policy based on rates of consumption should instead focus on rates of savings and investment. This means that if the Tea Party does truly believe that monetary policy based on savings and investment is necessary for the stability of the economy, then they should promote compatible policies.

Economic Outlook

The Tea Party rallied behind national economic issues. They are especially concerned with the growing national debt and see it that monetary policy based on consumption has aided the recession. So what is their view of the national economy? Survey question 20 will provide a more complete understanding of their views concerning such.

An astounding 76.9 percent of those surveyed said that the economy is bleak and will not turn around in the near future. Whereas 2.8 percent noted that the national economy is stronger than most people’s perceptions. The local participants’ bleak outlook of the economy holds up with a number of polls and statistical models. The New York Times (2011) found that 93 percent of the national Tea Party sees that the economy is either “fairly bad” or “very bad.” The New York Times (2011) also found that 42 percent of Tea Partiers perceive the economy as getting worse. The Tea Party aligns with the general population on this issue too, according to a poll done by Angus Reid (2010) of Public Opinion, 83 percent of nationwide respondents in April 2010 rate the economic conditions in the U.S. as “poor” or “very poor.” The Pew Research Center (2010b) also
found that though many experts propose that the nation’s troubled economy is showing signs of recovery, most of those surveyed and much of the public disagree. Close to 90 percent of those polled say that economic conditions as either poor (49 percent) or only fair (39 percent). These numbers have changed slightly since June of 2009. A majority of Americans do not expect an imminent turnaround. More than a third (36 percent) say they think economic conditions will be about the same a year from now, while 19 percent say they expect conditions to worsen (The Pew Research Center 2010b).

Furthermore, the Pew Research Center (2010b) found that public perceptions of two of the federal government’s most far-reaching efforts to correct the ailing economy could be contributing to the pessimism. They discovered that more than 62 percent say the economic stimulus package enacted by Congress has not helped the job situation. While about half (49 percent) say the government’s loans to banks and other financial institutions did not help prevent a more severe economic crisis. Along with those surveyed the public sees minimal government progress toward fixing the causes of the financial crisis. Approximately 42 percent say they see just a minimal progress, whereas 25 percent say they see no progress in the near future at all.

Problems with the national economy are contributing to the expansion of the Tea Party, especially when close to 77 percent of those surveyed in this research believe the economy is dire and will not recover in the near future (survey question 21). Some political scholars found that people generally join political groups, movements, and organizations when their personal conditions worsen. In fact, Mancur Olson in 1965 published a book called *The Logic of Collective Action*, and found that rational actors will not
contribute to the production of a collective good unless selective incentives persuade
them to do so. Frances F. Piven and Richard A. Cloward (1978) also discovered in their
book *Poor People’s Movements* that people join social movements because they are
drawn to collective action. It is not inconceivable to perceive that people join the Tea
Party movement for similar incentives and collective reasons. Even persons that Tea Par-
tiers deem as radical anarchists like Saul D. Alinsky (1989) understand that all revolutio-
nary movements must have ideologies to spur them and the Tea Party is definitely driven
by their anti-government ideologies.

**Stimulation Packages**

The Tea Party is fearful of both monetary and fiscal stimulation packages.
They are especially concerned with stimulus funds like TARP, increases in regulation
and oversight, inflation, and the growth of social entitlement programs. The local popu-
lation aligns with the national Tea Party on this issue. A study done by the *New York
Times* (2011) found that 88 percent of the Tea Party either believes that government sti-
mulation packages have either hurt or done nothing for the economy.

**Anti-Stimulation Government Packages**

Why are they so against stimulation of the economy? Contrary to the Republi-
can establishment, and even though they may not fully understand the reasons why they
see it this way, the Tea Party is against all types of government stimulation. They con-
sider stimulations to be unconstructive influences on the natural market. Many of them
also see it as a constitutional dilemma, which will be discussed later in the report. They
say that instead of creating growth, the government and their stimulation packages inhibit
growth and therefore slow the economy. The Tea Party believes that if the government would not intervene in economic crisis the economy would recover. They believe that the more the government is involved the less economic development occurs. According to the Darrell M. West (2011) of the Brookings Institute, Tea Party favorite Michelle Bachman (R-MN) and former Texas governor Rick Perry (R-TX) attacked President Obama’s most recent ploy to mend the ailing economy via additional congressional stimulation. The Tea Party’s economic philosophy is quite simple really. If public spending drops, then private investing increases, which stimulates the economy. If public spending increases, then private investing decreases, which slows the economy. Even more so, more government spending equals higher taxes and vice versa.

**Anti-Inflation**

Why does the Tea Party fear inflation? Economists that share Tea Party interests, such as Milton Friedman and Peter Schiff, as well as economists like David Kennedy, Neil Ferguson, and David Colander, argue that inflation is always and everywhere a monetary phenomenon, in the sense that it cannot occur without a more rapid increase in the quantity of money than in output (Ferguson 2008). Despite his occasional anti-Tea Party idioms, GOP candidate Newt Gingrich also reiterates the same message by recently stating that the country needs to return back to the “Reagan-era monetary policies” which he claims stopped the declining dollar and runaway inflation (Yglesias 2011). World renowned economist, Neil Ferguson, understands that although a minimal amount of inflation is good for the economy, inflation has been known to lead to uncertainty, discouraging saving and investment (Ferguson 2008). It also negatively influences
the nation’s international trade and redistributing incomes (Ferguson 2008). McLean and McMillan (2003) illustrate in the *Oxford Dictionary of Politics* that since the 1970s, the reduction of inflation became a key target of monetary policy by the Federal Reserve. Methods of controlling the price level centered first on income policies as well as monetary policy. Economist and publisher David Colander (2004) also illustrates in his book *Colander: Economics* that even when inflation itself is not a problem, the fear of inflation guides monetary and fiscal policy. Fear of inflation prevents the government from expanding the economy and reducing unemployment. It also prevents the Federal Reserve from using macroeconomic policies to lower interest rates.

The majorities of Tea Partiers are not Ron Paul (R-TX) and have not been involved in extensive economic programs or degrees. Their understanding of macroeconomic principles habitually comes from the latest conservative tabloid or Fox News program. Nevertheless, Peter Kennedy (2001) in his book *Macroeconomic Essentials*, explains if the expansion of excessive money-supply causes inflation and if the money supply is under the control of the Federal Reserve, then why would the Federal Reserve allow the money supply to grow too quickly? Again, Neil Ferguson answers this question in his historical account of the aftermath of the First World War. He says that the war led not only to shortages of goods but also to short-term government borrowing from the central bank, which effectively turned debt into cash, thereby expanding the money supply, causing public expectations of inflation to shift and the demand for cash balances to fall and prices of goods to rise (Ferguson 2008). Tea Party advocate Sarah Palin likewise says that the “U.S. policy of debasing the dollar is increasing commodity prices in
dollar terms, as it is increasing prices for other real assets, including precious metals” (Arends 2010). Ferguson (2008) also said that “it would be misleading to look at the Treaty of Versailles as the primary culprit to Germany’s hyperinflation” (Ferguson 102). “The reckless spending of public money combined with insufficient taxation and excessive spending created enormous deficits in Germany and essentially led to Germany’s hyperinflationary period” (Ferguson 2008, 103). Moreover, according to Ferguson (2008), “those in control of economic policy at the central bank made matters worse because they felt they had little incentive to stabilize German fiscal and monetary policy” (Ferguson 103). Although economic scholars like Schiff and Friedman disagree with Ferguson on the issue of insufficient taxation, they agree that public spending is the primary culprit of Germany’s hyperinflation and, if U.S. monetary policy is not soon reversed, will likewise lead to hyperinflation in America.

Tea Partiers like Ron Paul (R-TX), Glenn Beck, O’ Reilly and others loath the thought of additional printing of money or the expansion of the money supply. In addition to them, economists such as Ferguson and Friedman explain that printing money is an attractive alternative for any government, especially when faced with a budget deficit, but the reality is, printing money reduces interest costs and achieves the political end of straying from higher taxes. Furthermore, because real growth causes an economy’s demand for money to grow, the money supply should be increased to meet this further demand for money (Friedman 2002). David Kennedy (2001) says that buying government bonds on the open market is how this purpose is accomplished so that some financing of government spending by money printing is acceptable. Money printing beyond this amount can lead to inflation, therefore, losing control of the money supply. (Kennedy 170-171)
One method that the Federal Reserve can employ, according to David Kennedy, is to target monetary policy by monitoring the natural rate of unemployment. Whenever unemployment is below the NRU, monetary policy reacts by pushing it back. A problem with this approach is that the facts of the NRU can never be known but must be estimated. One reason for underestimation, according to Peter Kennedy (2001), is that many politicians find it difficult to believe that the natural rate can be so high and consequently, bring pressure to bear on the Federal Reserve to lower unemployment.

David Kennedy (2001) says that the Federal Reserve can underestimate the natural rate of unemployment and assume that the natural rate of unemployment is lower. As a result, expansionary monetary policy will be undertaken to push down unemployment, creating some unanticipated inflation. Kennedy (2001) found that due to unexpected inflation, real wages fall, causing firms to increase output. On the other hand, he said, over time, inflation expectations increase and contracts are renegotiated, restoring the real wage to its original level and moving the economy back to the true natural rate. Again, Kennedy found that this situation prompts the Federal Reserve to increase its stimulation efforts in order to keep the economy below the natural rate of unemployment, which hastens the “inflationary forces” and causes this process to be repeated. Taken as a whole, the economy is prohibited from moving back to its real natural rate of unemployment, but at a cost of an accelerated inflation. Once again, by underestimating the natural rate of unemployment, the Federal Reserve could lose control of the money supply (Kennedy 2001, 81).
Again, most Tea Partiers are simple everyday Americans that do not grasp macroeconomics or monetary policy, however, Michael Nubert and William Beach (2004) from the Heritage Foundation found that the Federal Reserve’s monetary policy ought to support a growing economy but should not adversely affect the general level of prices. In other words, the Federal Reserve should constantly strive to maintain an amount of money and credit that meet the economy’s need for cash and credit, but at levels that do not cause inflation (Nubert and Beach 2004). If the Federal Reserve wants to increase the supply of money, it should do so by controlling interest rates and not by having more money printed. According to them, printing money is not a good monetary policy because of the crowding out effect, which is the offsetting of a change in government expenditures by a change in private expenditures in the opposite direction (Colander 2004). Additionally, Nubert and Beach (2004) found that “printing money would be the best way to make sure too many dollars are chasing too few goods, leading to higher rates of inflation” (Nubert and Beach 2004). They say that “if the Federal Reserve can keep interest rates low, there will be more money in the economy, and if it can send interest rates higher, then there will be less money in the economy” (Nubert and Beach 2004). On the other hand, they found that if the Federal Reserve prints too much money or it underestimates the natural rate of unemployment, the central banking system will run a high risk of losing control of the money supply and harmfully raise the rates of inflation, such as in the case of post World War I Germany (Nubert and Beach 2004).
Anti-Increased Money Supply

Why are they so adamant against an increased money supply? Former Fox News television host Glenn Beck repeatedly warned his Tea Party audiences that an increased money supply would likewise lead to a repeat of the hyperinflation under the German Weimar Republic of the 1930s (Tucker 2009). Again, economic scholars that share common ground with the Tea Party like Milton Friedman argue that from the time when The New Deal was established in 1938, the primary excuse for the expansion of governmental activity has been the supposed necessity for government spending to eliminate unemployment. At first, government spending was needed to “prime the pump” (Friedman 2002). Friedman says that this meant that temporary expenditures would position the economy in such a manner as to set the economy going and the government could then step out of the picture. However, expenditures were seldom temporary and it became essential for the government to spend and run a perpetual deficit. Furthermore, Friedman explains (2002), it is believed that the securities issued to finance the deficit would provide individuals with a way to accumulate savings while the government expenditures provided employment. To the Tea Party, promises by congressional members to temporarily raise taxes, as a means of temporarily spending money, are nothing more than broken promises because such policies generally lead to long-term taxes and long-term spending increases.

Friedman (2002) says “that more recently, the emphasis has been on government expenditures neither to prime the pump nor to hold in check the specter of secular stagnation but as a balance wheel” (Friedman 76). Friedman has also claimed that a
number of post-depression economists have suggested that when private expenditures decline for any reason, governmental expenditures should rise to keep total expenditures stable. On the other hand, when private expenditures rise, according to Freidman (2002), governmental expenditures should decline: “Unfortunately, the balance-wheel established by Keynesian aggregate theories is unbalanced” (Friedman 75). Friedman continues by saying that even though the advent of most recessions are minimal in comparison to the Great Depression, the arrival of such, “however minor, sends a shudder through politically sensitive legislatures and administrators with their ever present fear that perhaps it is the harbinger of another 1929-33” (Friedman 79). Again, Friedman says that despite the necessity of swift reaction, the government hastens to enact federal spending programs of one kind or another. Consequently, most programs do not come into effect until after the recession have passed. Case in point, Huma Khan (2010) says that the 2010 healthcare proposal by Barack Obama comes into effect 2014. If Obama is not reelected, then he will not have to publicly face as the current president the consequences of his program. For this reason and many others, economists with shared Tea Party interests say that insofar as government fiscal and monetary policies do affect total expenditures, they tend to intensify the subsequent expansion of the government rather than to alleviate the recession. According to Friedman, “the acceleration with which spending programs are proved is not matched by an equal swiftness to repeal them or to eliminate others when the recession is passed and expansion is under way” (Friedman 2002, 76). On the contrary, it is then argued that a “healthy” expansion must not be “jeopardized” by cuts in governmental expenditures (Friedman 2002, 77). The primary damage done by the
balance wheel theory, according to Friedman, “is not that it has failed to offset recessions, which it has, and not that it has introduced an inflationary bias into governmental policy, which it has done too, but that it has continuously fostered an expansion in the range of governmental activities at the federal level and prevented a reduction in the burden of federal taxes” (Friedman 2002, 77).

Tea Parties claim that the widespread acceptance by many Democrats and Republicans alike say that of the belief that government should play a larger role in economic and private affairs has resulted in the creation of the welfare state. According to the *Oxford Dictionary of Politics*, the welfare state is a concept of government in which the state plays a key role in the protection and promotion of the economic and social well-being of its citizens. It is based on the principles of equality opportunity, equitable distribution of wealth and public responsibility. (Mclean and McMillan 2003, 570-571)

Friedman claims that in fiscal policy as in monetary policy, says that “we simply do not know enough to be able to use deliberate changes in taxation or expenditures as a sensitive stabilizing mechanism” (Friedman 2002, 75). Again according to Friedman, that in the process of trying to minimize periods of recession and mitigate periods of high-economic activity, the government will more than likely make matters worse. He implies that not by being consistently perverse, because that would be easily cured by merely doing the opposite. Monetary policy will make matters worse by introducing a largely random disturbance that is simply added to other disturbances (Friedman 2002, 77).

Lastly, Friedman claims and Tea Party economists wholeheartedly agree, that monetary policy disrupts the natural flow of the free market. Instead of the free market operating at an incredibly sophisticated, complex level, dictated by the invisible-hand, it is artificially controlled and manipulated by the Federal Reserve (Friedman 2002, 79).
Taking the Blame

What is to blame for the economy? Without question, sympathetic Tea Party economics hold failed monetary policy responsible for the state of the national economy. However, this does not necessarily mean that the local Tea Party necessarily blames the economy solely on failed economic policies. They may suggest that a combination of a number of factors could be the blame. Survey question 22 targets this potentially responsible grouping (Figure 1).

![Bar Chart](image)

**Figure 1.** Who or what is responsible for the struggling economy?

Not surprisingly, the local Tea Party aligns with the economic philosophies of Milton Friedman and Peter Schiff in that the government is to blame for failed economic conditions. Over 39 percent of the local population believes that the government is to
blame for the national economy. An additional 32 percent hold responsible a combination of Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama, which are also factors of government intervention. Less than 5 percent blame the economy on the private market. Likewise, the *New York Times* found that Tea Partiers generally blame a combination of reasons such as the Bush Administration (5 percent), Obama Administration (10 percent), Wall Street and financial institutions (15 percent), Congress (28 percent), and all of the above (15 percent) (*New York Times* 2011).

**Illusionary Justification for Restoring the Economy**

Why do they see the stimulus plan as an illusionary justification for restoring the economy? Former Governor of Sarah Palin (R-AK), former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, Congresswoman Michelle Bachman (R-MN), Senator Rick Santorum (R-PA), Senator Herman Cain (R-GA) and popular Fox News host Bill O’Reilly say that the stimulus packages introduced by Congress under George W. Bush in 2008 and Barack Obama in 2011 are nothing more than an illusionary justifications for restoring the economy. Bill O’Reilly on his Fox News evening program “The O’Reilly Factor,” claims the stimulus packages to be nothing but “two and a half years of economic failure” (Media Matters 2011). Rick Santorum alleged on CNN that the stimulus packages did nothing but cost American jobs (CNN Politics 2011). Likewise, Glenn Beck wrote an article titled, “The Incredible Shrinking Dollar” (Beck 2009) referring to the illusionary justification of inflating the economy. He said that nations such as China, Russia, and France all threaten the United States by dropping the dollar as the world’s currency. Beck
reiterated on the idea that before World War II, America’s currency was based on the gold standard.

For every dollar the United States printed, there was a dollar's worth of gold in the vault. However, this all changed after World War II, when a group of nations came together and created an artificial standard for valuing currency, hence, taking America off of the “gold standard” in 1965. (Beck 2009)

According to Beck, this was the beginning of the end. Tea Party leader Michelle Bachman (R-MN) agrees. She simply said “a dollar in 2011 should be the same as a dollar in 1911. A dollar should be worth a dollar” (Marche 2011). Without the gold standard the United States could now issue money as basically IOUs to the world, where each dollar could buy a dollar of gold. Essentially, this was gold that did not have to actually exist. Furthermore, because the United States left the gold standard the nation went from being the world’s biggest lender to one of the world’s biggest borrowers. The Tea Party stands behind them and sees that the new mantra for America since has been, “if we can't afford something, we just go into our basement and print up some more money” (Beck 2009). Beck says that on the surface, this may appear to be a fantastic deal for the American people; however, nothing is backing up the currency and America is mortgaging its future on empty promises. Now, the nation’s credit system is failing and after converting $2 trillion of debt into available currency two weeks in the month of March 2009 alone. He says that America’s lenders are looking for ways to drop the dollar and find another, more stable currency (Beck 2009).

Not everyone agrees with the Tea Party concerning the illusionary justification of stimulus spending. World renowned Economist Paul Krugman sees the economic situation differently. He discovered in his research that the debt ceiling could be much
higher than it is. Also, stimulus spending is and has been good for the economy (Krugman 2011). In fact, Krugman argues on CNN that the stimulus packages pushed during the Bush and Obama administrations should have been much higher. Krugman essentially says that unless something is done soon the economy will plunge into a depression and the markets will dramatically fall (Krugman 2011).

Unlike Krugman, Tea Partiers fail to understand the nation’s impulsive need for economic stimulus. They commonly say that the United States fought two world wars and experienced a horrible depression and only carried a running deficit of about 5 percent of the total GDP for those years. However, today the monetary expenditures exceed well over 20 percent with no end in sight. The point is, higher government spending according to Friedman will not lead to more rapid monetary growth and inflation if additional spending is financed either by taxes or by borrowing from the public. In this occurrence, government has more to spend, while the public has less. Essentially, higher government spending is matched by lower private spending for consumption and investment, which offsets the Keynesian “multiplier” model (Friedman 1980).

The Tea Party argues that financing government spending by increasing the quantity of money is often extremely attractive to both the President and Congress. They say that it enables them to increase government spending and provide earmarks for their constituents without having to vote for taxes to pay for them, and best of all, without having to borrow from the public via taxation (Friedman 1980). As Prime Minister James Callaghan put it to a British Labour party conference in September 1976:

We used to think that you could just spend your way out of a recession and increase employment by cutting taxes and boosting government spending. I tell
you, in all candor, that that option no longer exists; and that insofar as it ever did exist, it only worked by injecting bigger doses of inflation into the economy followed by higher levels of unemployment as the next step. That is the history of the past twenty years (Friedman 1980, 266)

Milton Friedman illustrates that financing government spending by increasing the quantity of money looks astonishing to the American public, “It’s like getting something for nothing” (Friedman 1980, 268-271). Again, he audaciously asserts that when the government builds a bridge, it finances the expenses with newly printed money. It appears as if everybody is better off. The workers who build the bridge receive their pay and can buy food, clothing, and housing with it. Nobody has paid higher taxes. Yet there is now a bridge where there was none before. Who paid for it? The answer is that all holders of money have paid for the bridge. The additional money raises prices when it is used to induce the workers to build the bridge instead of engaging in some other productive activity. Those higher prices are maintained as the extra money circulates in the spending circle from the workers to the sellers of what they buy, from those sellers to others, and so on. The higher prices mean that the money people previously held will now buy less than it would have before. In order to have on hand an amount of money that can buy as much as before, they will refrain from spending all of their income and use part of it to add to their money balances (Friedman 1980).

The Tea Partiers like Dick Morris argue that in the midst of the current economic crisis, the Obama Administration can in essence build a number of “bridges,” introduce tax cuts to the middle class, continue entitlement programs for the poor, present the illusion of creating jobs, and give money to special interest earmarks by merely increasing the national deficit by printing additional money from the Federal Reserve
without supposedly any negative economic backlashes in return. Having the audacity to
do such, in an era of economic contractionary decline, without additional tax revenues,
and depleted public budgets is essentially fleecing America (Morris 2009). The point is,
to Morris, somebody will have to pay for this “stimulus plan,” and if it does not come by
additional taxation, then repayment will come via inflation courtesy of the American
people (Morris 2009). Also, the Tea Party see it that the President’s plan may even result
in hyperinflation, which will destroy the savings of the middle class and obliterate an
already weakened currency. They also see it that China, Russia and France will all con-
tinue to threaten to drop the dollar, while the American public will have less money and
less to invest for the future. Indeed, according to the Tea Party, at this moment the Presi-
dent’s plan looks appealing on the surface, but at what cost to the American public in the
long run?

In turn, according to Dick Armey and Matt Kibbe in their book *Give Us
Liberty*, the Tea Party argues that no government is willing to accept responsibility for
producing inflation. The Bush administration refused to take responsibility and so has the
Obama Administration. According to Armey and Kibbe, politicians love to find some
other excuse, “greedy AIG businessmen, selfish GM trade unions, compulsive con-
sumers, Arab oil-tycoons, or anything else that seems even somewhat conceivable”

However, the Tea Party does agree that AIG businessmen are greedy, GM
trade unions are selfish, consumers are compulsive, and Arab oil-tycoons have
raised the price in oil by they are not the primary facilitator of inflation.
(Armey and Kibbe 2011, 168)
They say that all of them can produce high prices for individual items but cannot produce rising prices for goods in general. They can cause temporary shifts in the rate of inflation, but they cannot produce continuing inflation because none of the suspected guilty parties have power of the printing press, therefore, only the government can contribute through means of monetary policy long-term inflation (Armey and Kibbe 2011, 78).

Federal Taxes

How should Congress approach the federal tax system? Likeminded economists of the Tea Party see that the federal tax system is flawed and should be drastically altered. Some Tea Party congressmen like former Texas Governor Rick Perry (R-TX) and Senator Herman Cain (R-GA) argue in behalf of a flat tax (Mishra 2011) while others such as former Governor Mike Huckabee (R-AR) (Reginer 2008) see it that the fair tax is the best alternative tax system. Notwithstanding their opinions, the local Tea Party may or may not necessarily agree with their tax policies. Therefore, survey question 26 should provide the necessary evidence (Figure 2).

Results from the survey show that 3 out 4 (75 percent) local Tea Partiers believe that either a flat tax (choice B) or a fair tax (choice C) should be initiated over all other federal tax approaches. Whereas, only 1.3 percent of the sample population agree that the tax burden should shift from the residential to the commercial sector; or the tax burden should shift from the commercial to the residential sector; or from the commercial and residential sectors to the industrial sector. Moreover, only 1.9 percent of the sample population supposes that Americans making over $250,000 should pay higher taxes. It is apparent that the sample population does not agree with President Obama’s tax plan of
taxing American’s making over $250,000. It is also apparent that they do not like America’s current progressive tax system and they would rather have a flat tax or a fair tax initiated.

A fair tax essentially abolishes all federal personal and corporate income taxes, gift, estate, capital gains, alternative minimum, Social Security, Medicare, and self-employment taxes, and replaces them with a simplified federal retail sales tax administered primarily by existing state sales tax authorities (Fair Tax 2009). A fair tax taxes only on what Americans choose to spend on new goods or services, not on what is earned, whereas a flat tax taxes citizens on a flat rate based on income earnings.

Figure 2. How should Congress approach the federal tax system?
In addition to the local population, 42 percent of the Tea Party at large believes that they pay too high of an income tax (*New York Times* 2011). Furthermore, Gallup found that 48 percent of Americans say that the amount of federal income taxes they pay is “about right,” with 46 percent saying “too high” (Gallup 2009e). In last year’s Gallup poll, slight majorities of both lower and middle income Americans say they pay about the right amount of taxes, while upper-income Americans tend to think they pay too much. The views of upper-income Americans have not changed in the past year, while both middle- and lower-income Americans are more likely to say they pay the right amount of tax (Gallup 2009e). This is not to say according to the data collected in this report that one can fully determine if the sample population is in line with Gallup’s research on the issue of paying “too much” or “too little” taxes. The only point that can be determined is that the sample population predominately does not like America’s progressive tax system and desires an alternative.

**Pro-Flat Tax**

Why do they favor a flat tax system? Tea Partiers like Hermain Cain (R-GA) and Rick Perry (R-TX) (Mishra 2011) believes that America is burdened with one of the most complicated tax systems in the world and that a flat tax would simplify the structure. The flat tax was first introduced by Milton Friedman in 1962 and later proposed on the House floor by Dick Armey, Rep. Mike Pence (R-IN), and Jim DeMint (R-SC). According to them, the flat tax is less complicated, but it also helps the economy. Essentially, everyone pays the same rate, and the more money one makes the more that person will pay. Tea Party supporter Dick Armey argues that it would be a huge improvement
over the current tax system (FreedomWorks 2010a). Besides, Armey backlashes that if the United States wanted to introduce a flat tax it would have plenty of other nations to follow. Twenty-five nations have adopted the flat tax system and most of them have tax rates below 20 percent. Armey continues by claiming that after implementing a flat tax, nearly all of these foreign nations have experienced economic growth and lower unemployment rates (FreedomWorks 2010a). Armey, Pence, and DeMint ascertain that the only reason why the United States has yet to introduce a flat tax system is because of powerful interest groups in Washington. According to Mike Pence, the U.S. tax code has special preferences and tax loopholes that Congress and lobbyists have built into the tax code over time and of course these codes favor them and not the American people (FreedomWorks 2010a).

**Pro-Savings and Investment Strategies**

This is my chance to help this lady put some money in her pocket. Let me explain how the economy works. When you spend money to buy food it helps this lady's business. It makes it more likely somebody is going to find work. So instead of asking questions, answer mine: are you going to buy some food? (Office of the Press Secretary, White House 2004)

Why do they favor savings investment over consumption policy? Tea Party economists see it that the U.S. economy, or the nation’s gross domestic product (GDP), is based on John Maynard Keynes formula: private consumption, plus gross investment, plus government spending, equals gross domestic product (GDP = C + I + G). They understand that from the time Keynes introduced the formula in the 1930s almost all U.S. macroeconomic policy since has been based on its basic premises. However, according to economist George Reisman, “if one is to delve a little deeper into the formula, one would find
that private consumption and government spending account for about 75 percent of the total U.S. economy” (Reisman 2008). This means that 75 percent of the economy is based on public and private consumption according to Keynes GDP formula. Tea Partiers see it that this gives explanation as to why President George W. Bush said that it is our “patriotic duty to spend money” after the bombings of 9/11, because he believes that the strength of America’s economy rests on consumption. This also explains why the U.S. tax system is a progressive tax policy, because a progressive tax policy aims to incentivize public and private spending and discourage private savings. It also explains why so many analysts in Washington suppose that private savings is bad and consumption is good for the economy. However, according to Austrian Economist Ludwig von Mises if Keynes formula changes from $C + I + G = GDP$, to $P + W = NI$ (profits + wages = national income) then the public psyche would shift from pro consumption to pro investment and savings (Ludwig von Mises Institute 1963).

The reason why this argument is so important to the Tea Party economists is because it solidifies their monetary foundation of fiscal responsibility. Being fiscally responsible is basically “code language for rise up against (1) rising public deficits, stemmed from (2) out-of-control public spending habits” (Mises 1963). What the Tea Party more than likely does not understand, but almost mistakenly promotes is that all capital goods come into existence by saving and investment. “A part of the goods produced is withheld from immediate consumption and employed for processes the fruits of which will only mature at a later date” (Ludwig von Mises Institute 1963).
Ludwig von Mises articulately displays that if every American uses their excess money to purchase McDonald Hamburgers and Wal-Mart accessories then there would be no savings for capital investment. Those that save consume less than their share of the goods produced, which inaugurate progress toward general prosperity. “The seed they have sown enriches not only themselves but also all other strata of society including the consumers” (Ludwig von Mises Institute 1963). Mises sees it that there is no other method to make wages rise than by investing more capital per worker. More investment of capital means to give to the laborer more efficient tools (Ludwig von Mises Institute 1963). And this is precisely why Tea Party economists sees it that John Maynard Keynes model $C + I + G = GDP$ is inconsistent in addressing sustained economic growth because it does not adequately annotate the acquiring of capital goods. Without savings, capital goods would not exist, and the United States would just be another undeveloped nation.

Concluding Chapter Remarks

A lot can be determined about the Tea Party from this section of the report. The reader ought to understand that the Tea Party disagrees with economists like Paul Krugman and John Maynard Keynes and their positions on expanding the debt ceiling; stimulus spending, and consumptionary policies (Gallup 2010a). On the other hand, one should know that they support economists like Milton Friedman and Peter Schiff and the Austrian School of Thought and their views of fighting public deficits and spending, as well as their views of savings and investment strategies. One should also recognize that Tea Partiers wholeheartedly blame the current economic crisis on the government no matter how knowledgeable they are in macroeconomic policy. Some like the fair tax but
most of them prefer the flat tax as opposed to America’s progressive tax system. They affirm that meager efforts to amend the economy by past and current politicians only prolong macroeconomic concerns. Moreover, empty political promises are what they call as the illusionary justification, which justifies the expansion of the federal bureaucracy.

Replacing Keynes general theory of GDP (public and private consumption) with the Austrian point of view (savings and investment) would directly play into the interests of the Tea Party and place them on the national stage of credibility. They see it that instead of being perceived by the American public as a right-wing fringe group or a libertarian nuthouse their ideologies would be more accepted by mainstream America. Of course accomplishing such a task would need to begin with likeminded people and then spread from the core base. However, as wonderful as some of them may think that accomplishing this would be, doing so would be almost impossible if not delusionary and would only fuel Tea Party opposition in the short run and potentially destroy the movement in the long run. Nevertheless, many of them deem that standing for what’s commonly accepted is not the answer and therefore they would rather be ridiculed by the American public for their beliefs on monetary policy than standing with the status quo.
CHAPTER VIII

CONGRESSIONAL REGULATORY POLICY

Introduction

It is easier to free ride on the system than it is to actively participate in a movement. (Olson 1965, 91).

Tea Partiers claim, such as Cindy Harvey of the Chico Tea Party Patriots, that before the establishment thereof, many of them felt deeply frustrated and incredibly alone concerning the direction of the country (Harvey 2010). Harvey, and countless others belonging to the movement, often allege that when it came to unrestrained congressional policies, such as expanding public education and escalating social security benefits, environmental regulation, or entitlement programs, most of them felt alone in their concerns because conservatives’ opinions were and are hardly voiced by the mainstream media. They see that nowadays, with the advent of the Tea Party, there is no need for them to feel alone in their political frustrations anymore.

What the Tea Party has done for them is that it has essentially connected a group of people across the nation that has never been connected before. That did not have the means of interlinking with one another prior to the movement. In a sense, the establishment of the Tea party has provided an opportunity for a group of people that want to be heard that did not have a voice before. And now since this opportunity to be heard publicly has been provided it will not be easily taken away in the near future. It is almost
reminiscent of World War II naval Japanese icon Isoroku Yamamoto when he replied, following the bombing of Pearl Harbor, “I fear all we have done is to awaken a sleeping giant” amongst the conservative populations (U.S. Air Force 2006).

It is perceived that recent legislation passed by both the Bush and Obama administrations has only stirred a population in America that had been sleeping. What matters is not if Congress stirred this once dormant population, but how many individuals are actually sympathetic to the Tea Party phenomena. After all, less than 30 percent of the country supports them (New York Times 2010). Of course, if the Tea Party only represents a small portion of the population, then those in power in Congress have nothing to be concerned with, but if the movement is as big as some conservative pundits, analysis, and talk radio hosts say it is, then Congress needs to be careful of overstepping this population too much because in the next election and elections to come it could have dire consequences.

Surely, local active populations are known in Chico, Redding, Paradise, and Oroville, but the size (raw population figures) of the Tea Party is relatively unknown. Nobody really understands how expansive the movement actually is or how many people sympathize with their cause nationwide. A number of conservatives throughout California welcome the movement but most of them do not regularly attend Tea Party functions nor are they on the Tea Party records. Many of them do not simply make the time or desire to be that involved and would rather voice their opinions via the electoral ballots in a presidential year. This is also why most of the Tea Party regulars are beyond the retirement age. Retirees seem to have the time and the willpower to be involved with Tea Party
activities. At times, polling from Fox News and CNN comes out with the latest Tea Party estimates but the bottom line is nobody really knows. Nevertheless, the Tea Party movement is not the only grassroots organization that faces this statistical dilemma of accounting because all grassroots social movements deal with this predicament. Nobody probably explains this complexity better than Mancur Olsen (1965) when he said “it is easier to free ride on the system than it is to actively participate in a movement” (Olson 91).

Free riding the system is a complex phenomenon that political scientists have been targeting for a very long time. A free rider in this instance is someone who consumes a resource, such as the Tea Party platform, without participating in the organization. Nevertheless, sympathizers participating or not, the New York Times (2011) found that over 93 percent of them consider that the federal government is doing too much and if they had a choice on the matter, they would rather have a smaller government providing fewer services, than a bigger government providing more services. The same poll found that less than 1 percent of Tea Partiers approve of Congress. Still, does this mean they are against all congressional regulatory policy? It appears to be evident that they do not support all, if not most, congressional regulatory policy, because they fought and continue to fight the expansion of healthcare; attack economic safety net packages such as TARP and other corporate bailouts; detest the No Child Left Behind Act; wrestle with extending environmental protection laws; abhor additional congressional taxes and spending; squirm over additional laws and regulations; and loathe the continuation of Social Security benefits, Medicare, and entitlement programs, even if such benefit them
personally. If they truly detest congressional regulatory policy, then they perceive Congress as essential a non-factor or anti-solution to most national issues.

**Congressional Regulation of the Free Market**

The Tea Party does not support congressional regulation. They believe that regulation stifles the growth of the economy and crushes the American entrepreneurial spirit. They say that businesses faced little to no government regulation for about a century after the founding of the United States. This unfortunately began to change during the Progressive Era; to them it is a period of time in the late 1800s and early 1900s when the intellectual foundations of law and justice in the United States were essentially turned upside down. Tea Partiers argue that advocates of progressivism, Theodore Roosevelt, William Jennings Bryan, Woodrow Wilson and John Maynard Keynes, held that the federal system of delegated powers was archaic and out of date for a “progressive” society (Anderson 2004). Tea Party sympathizers such as Georgetown professor of constitution law, Dr. Roger Pilon (Pilon 2004), and Dr. William Anderson of the Ludwig von Mises Institute, argue that their legal strategy did not only include stripping powers from state and local governments and transferring them to Washington DC, but they also were successful in convincing members of Congress to give up their own constitutionally-designed powers. This was done, according to Pilon (2004), through the developing of regulatory agencies. Likewise, Anderson (200) says that the U.S. Constitution gives Congress the power to “regulate” commerce, but the regulatory agencies that Congress created to carry out the increasing number of rules were part of the executive branch of the U.S. government. In other words, Congress, through legal actions, redelegated those
powers that the Constitution had given Congress. The first of these agencies was the Interstate Commerce Commission, formed in 1887 to regulate railroads. Other agencies followed, such as the Food and Drug Administration and the Federal Trade Commission. By the end of the twentieth century, regulatory agencies dominated the political and economic landscape of this country (Pilon 2004).

Despite the Tea Party’s harsh, unbending approach to government regulation, many of them are employed in regulatory fields and may actually benefit from their existence. For example, title companies exist because of government housing regulations, or planning departments exist because of zoning regulations. Many law practices, accounting firms, and financial auditors operate because of regulatory policies. Therefore, Tea Party sympathizers need to address the question, Would national employment rise in a deregulated economy? If addressing this question publicly, absolutely not, but since so many of them are employed in such regulated existing industries they may ironically on a case by case survey justify some forms of regulation. Survey question 22 concerns congressional regulatory policy.

Without a doubt, three-fourths (76.8 percent) of the local Tea Party sample population stand together on this issue in that congressional regulatory policy does indeed negatively impact the economy. These same individuals would probably say that regulation is not permissible under any circumstance and that the country is better off without them.

Regulation is never popular with the Tea Party, but regulation of business existed in the ancient early Egyptian, Indian, Greek, and Roman civilizations
Standardized weights and measures existed to an extent in the ancient world, and gold may have operated to some degree as an international currency (Braithwaite and Drahos 2000). Even today many Americans disagree with the Tea Party on this issue and support additional regulation. The Safe Cosmetics Alliance supports regulatory measures namely in the cosmetic industry. They declare in an online media add that regulation is necessary for the protection of safety standards. “We support new regulations to help strengthen FDA oversight, increase transparency, and enhance consumer confidence” (Safe Cosmetic Alliance 2011). Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) also disagrees with the Tea Party when he proclaimed on the Senate floor, 

While it’s proper to guard against and remove onerous regulations, and we need to do that, my Republican friends have yet to produce a single shred of evidence that the regulations they hate so much do the broad economic harms they claim. That’s because there aren’t any. (Beauprez 2011)

Former Senator Howard Dean (D-VT) also disagrees with the Tea Party stance on regulation and calls for a comprehensive “re-regulation” of U.S. businesses (On the Issues 2009). He understands that after years of government deregulation of energy markets, telecommunications, the airlines and other major industries a significant reversal is needed to get the American economy back on track (On the Issues 2009).

Congressional Regulation Impact on Freedom

In addition to the Tea Party’s view of regulation on the free market, they also predominately understand that regulation has a huge impact on freedom too. That America’s liberty is perishing beneath the constant growth of government power. Author of Lost Rights, James Bovard (2000) says that “Americans today must obey thirty times as
many laws as their great-grandfathers had to obey at the turn of the century” (Bovard 1). Bovard found that federal agencies produce an average of over 200 pages of new rulings, regulations, and proposals in the *Federal Register* each business day. Bovard says that “a man’s home is his castle only after it has been approved by zoning laws and the planning commission” (Bovard 1). He continues by saying that “not only does the United States have more laws than ever before, but the laws themselves are becoming less clear, consistent, and coherent” (Bovard 1-2). Likewise, James Madison illustrated in the *Federalist Papers* over 200 years ago the threat of government regulations.

The decline of liberty according to Bovard (2000) results not only from specific acts of government, but also from the cumulative impact of hundreds of thousands of government decrees, hundreds of taxes, and numerous government officials with discretionary power over other Americans. By and large, Tea Partiers understand that America’s comprehension of the preservation of liberty is rather aphetic. They normally say that the greatest threat to liberty is apathy. Most Americans say they are willing to fight for freedom but do nothing when they are called to fight. John Locke (Locke, 1965, 297), whose *Second Treatise of Government* had a profound influence on the Founding Fathers’ thinking, wrote: “The end of law is not to abolish or restrain, but to preserve and enlarge freedom” (Locke, 297). The Founders realized that some amount of government was necessary in order to prevent a “war of all against all.” But coercion remains an evil that must be minimized in a free society. To them, the ideal is not to abolish government, but to structure government to achieve the greatest respect for citizens’ rights and the least violation of their liberties (Lost Rights 2000). The real question
to Tea Partiers is not whether Americans have lost all their liberties, but whether the average American is becoming less free with each passing year. As a Revolutionary-era pamphleteer declared in 1768, “as the total subjection of a people arises generally from gradual encroachments, it will be our indisputable duty manfully to oppose every invasion of our rights in the beginning” (Downer 2002, 1071). To their utter dismay, Tea Partiers often recognize that it is too late to oppose invasions of Americans rights “from the beginning” as the revolutionary pamphleteer suggests because such encroachments have been occurring since the founding. Most of them believe that this invasion of rights has been occurring since the days of Woodrow Wilson and Franklin D. Roosevelt and have become more progressive and more severe in the recent years of George W. Bush and President Obama.

University of Vermont professor Dr. John Burke (2000) describes in his book *The Institutional Presidency* that when George Washington became President in 1789, he established many of the customs and usages of the new government's executive department. During the course of his presidency, there were only four departments apart from his cabinet: Secretary of State, Secretary of Treasury, Secretary of War and the Attorney General. Even after Washington’s presidency, the following administrations experienced very little change. Roughly 60 years later, President Ulysses S. Grant had only three staff members. Even 35 years later, President Teddy Roosevelt still operated with a staff of 13 (Burke 2008). During these initial administrations, all staff members were paid out of pocket by the president. It was not until 1857 that Congress appropriated funds of $2,500 for presidential staff members (Burke 2008). It was not until President Franklin D.
Roosevelt, in 1938, that the government expanded and developed into the government that we are familiar with today.

From the time of Franklin D. Roosevelt, American presidents have taken on a much larger role. Even though many Americans would consider government expansion as an unavoidable occurrence, the Tea Party disagrees. In his book, *The Constitutional Presidencies*, Jeffery K. Tulis (2008) says that at first the presidency was limited in power and designed to protect individual rights and foster liberty. It then greatly expanded into an unlimited role. He compares this change to demagoguery, which is an excess of passionate appeals. The modern presidency is still made up of the four original departments, but it has added the Secretary of Interior, Agriculture, Commerce, Labor, Health, Education, Housing, Transportation, Energy, Veterans Affairs, and Homeland Security. The presidential cabinet also has an administrator of the environment, director of Management and Budgeting, director of National Drug Control Policy and a U.S. Trade representative. It has also grown from 31 staff members during the tenure of President Harding to over 2,000 staff members of today (Barton and Becker 2007). Even though the Tea Party believes that the government should be scope in size, they have not adequately defined the proper role of government and which departments should be added to or done away. However, Tea Party students at the Ludwig von Mises Institute suppose that all of the departments mentioned above should be abolished and left to the private market. This means that the private market is better at performing the function of education, or healthcare than the public sector.
The Tea Party supposes that the first step to saving liberty is not to abruptly turn back the clock but to realize how much America has already lost and then strive for recompense one step at a time. For them, the Glenn Beck program does precisely this. His program does more than just underline day-to-day newsworthy events; Beck enjoys connecting the dots of the fundamental changes happening in America. He stresses the preservation of liberty by focusing on the nation’s beginning and connecting the events of the past with the problems of today (GBTV 2012). Beck’s program is very popular with the Tea Party movement (ABC News 2010); they seem to share the same constrained compassions as Beck and sympathize with his extreme hyperboles and non-partisan positions. Many of them consider Beck as being one of the few trustworthy sources in news broadcasting. Some of them are even willing to pay $5-10 per month to be one of his “extreme” members to gain special access to in-depth coverage and unusual literature (GBTV 2012).

The Tea Party may be impulsive in some regards but their compassion for the preservation of liberty is paramount. Their overall aim is to rectify Americans from what they believe as an intrusive government, but many may not be so firm on a case by case basis when it comes to congressional regulation. Survey question 24 provides evidence as to their clear position on Congressional regulation and oversight, and its impact on freedom.

Unsurprisingly, 3 out of 4 participants allege that congressional regulation and oversight does impact individual freedom. Most of them would most likely agree with Thomas Paine when he concluded that “by granting government far more unexamined,
unrestrained power leads to tyranny” (Adams 1993). David Nevin (1993) in the *Washington Post* describes in his article that the founders succeeded in creating a government where individual rights and liberties were respected because they were cynical about political power. They realized that, as George Washington wrote, government is like “fire . . . a dangerous servant and terrible master” (Nevin 1993). Likewise, Tea Partiers say that most Americans base their concept of government not on how government actually performs but on what they feel the government needs to do.

Tea Partiers often refer to the term “fairness,” as the primary reason for the expansion of government control, which to them has destroyed American lives, property, and opportunities. To them, “fairness” is essentially code language for wealth redistribution or income equality outcome and therefore the government once again ventures beyond constitutional limitations. By and large, they understand that government is a far more effective tool for preventing harm than for achieving good.

Those who see the state as the engine of progress see progress as originating from some men having the power to force other men to obey them, not from the voluntary association of free individuals. (Bovard 2000, 5-6)

The Tea Party believes that far too many Americans hold a quasi-blind faith in the talismanic power of legislators and their ability to proclaim a new law and thereby make society a better place.

They understand that liberty by itself will not create an ideal society. Friedrich von Hayek observed, “The results of freedom must depend on the values which free individuals pursue” (Hayek 1944, 76-77). Sadly to them, Hayek declares that “the more powerful government has become, the more likely the people’s values are to be debased”
Furthermore, the more government becomes the more people devote their attention to Washington rather than to their own efforts. “Freedom is largely a choice between allowing people to follow their own interests, or forcing them to follow the interests of bureaucrats” (Hayek 2007, 71). However, according to Hayek, “government can make great contributions to social progress by upholding law and order, by maintaining a legal code that recognizes individual rights and the sanctity of contract, and by preserving national security” (Hayek 2007, 82). The Tea Party is structured around the premise that America has abandoned the tasks that government can and should perform to essentially pursue goals that government has no ability to achieve. In other words, they believe it is not possible for the government to be engaged in entitlement programs, healthcare, education, for example, because it is not possible for the country to sustain such needs. That the people should provide such by their own choosing, that every individual has the power to succeed and also the ability to fail. That responsibility is derived from the individual and not the common good.

Environmental Regulation

The survival of the United States of America as we know it is at risk. And even more—if more should be required—the future of human civilization is at stake. . . . The climate crisis, in particular, is getting a lot worse—much more quickly than predicted. (Gore 2008)

In 1997, Japan submitted to the United Nations an environmental alliance against global warming called the Kyoto Protocol which later went into force in February of 2005. Their principle aims is to essentially “cap and trade,” or stabilize greenhouse gases in the atmosphere as a means of preventing dangerous anthropogenic interference
with the climate system (United Nations 2011). As of 2011, 191 countries have signed and ratified the protocol (United Nations 2011). Despite popular support of most nations from around the world, the United States refuses to ratify the protocol. Many powerful leaders on the political left, such as Al Gore, support the protocol, but others on the political right, such as Sarah Palin, do not. Likewise, the Tea Party does not support the Kyoto Protocol or additional environmental regulation. Moreover, the Rasmussen Reports (2009a) found that Americans seem to prefer taking steps to improve the economy over taking steps to reduce global warming. Rasmussen (2009a) says that 56 percent of Americans say they are not willing to pay more in taxes and utility costs to generate cleaner energy and fight global warming. Even less so, 21 percent of Americans say they are willing to pay $100 more per year for cleaner energy and to counter global warming, whereas, only 14 percent are willing to pay more than that amount. On the other hand, and according to Rasmussen, 52 percent of Americans say it is more important to keep the cost of energy as low as possible, than it is to develop clean, environmentally friendly sources of energy. Whereas, 41 percent disagree and say developing cleaner, greener energy sources should be the priority. As a result, 63 percent rate creating jobs as more important than taking steps to stop global warming (Rasmussen 2009a).

Evidently, the Tea Party does not want additional environmental regulation but how strongly do they really feel about the issue? Survey questions 31 and 32 support their anti-environmental regulatory positions. Survey question 31 asks the following: How will “Cap and Trade” impact the U.S. economy? Survey question 32 asks: What is the sample population’s stance on additional environmental regulation and oversight and
their impact on the U.S. economy? Despite evidences found by Al Gore and the Kyoto Protocol, a remarkable 86 percent of the sample population mentioned that additional environmental regulation and oversight significantly negatively impact the U.S. economy. An additional 90 percent mentioned in survey question 31 that “cap and trade” will significantly impact the economy. Therefore, expanding the role of government in this field is not an option to the Tea Party.

The Tea Party may not be too far distant from rightwing America because a study done by Gallup (2009b) says that Americans are likely to say economic growth should take precedence over environmental protection when the two objectives conflict (53 percent) than to say otherwise (38 percent). The poll found that they do, however, differ with most Democrats, because 49 percent of Democrats believe that protection of the environment should be given priority, even at the risk of curbing economic growth. On the other hand, the Tea Party movement does seem to agree with most Republicans, because Republicans favor protecting the environment over economic growth on 22 percent of the time (Gallup 2009b).

However, due to Gulf of Mexico oil spill, another study by Gallup (2010b) says that “between March and May 27 2010 that Americans’ preferences for prioritizing between environmental protection and energy production have shifted from a somewhat pro energy stance to an even stronger pro-environment stance.” Withstanding this shift since 2009, the Tea Party movement has not shifted much on the issue. Gallup (2010b) also found that in March of 2010, 50 to 43 percent of Americans said it is more important to develop U.S. energy supplies than it is to protect the environment. Despite the see-
mingly positive numbers this is a significant drop from the previous year, which is due in part to the gulf oil spill. Lastly, the poll ascertains that this is the second largest percentage favoring the environment in the ten-year history of the study (Gallup 2010b).

Although the Tea Party is not satisfied with additional environmental regulation, it does not necessarily mean they are anti-environment. They may adamantly disagree with Al Gore, but when asked about environmental policy, all of the interviewees allege that they seek to protect the environment. The problem with environmental regulation they say is simply the added governmental bureaucratic formalities. Many Tea Partiers ironically claim that bureaucratic rules and regulations do not actually protect the environment. Incongruously, according to George Mason public choice theory professor, Dr. Thomas Rustici, environmental regulation actually speeds up the extinction of endangered species. Studies done by the Mercatus Center demonstrate that whenever the Environmental Protection Agency consigns a new animal to the endangered species list, the population of that variety declines (McLaughlin 2009). For instance, when the spotted owl was consigned as an endangered species, its population declined because land owners refuse to risk the possibility of a decline in property value (Rustici 2004). When a spotted owl is found nesting on a particular piece of property, the wildlife protection agency comes in and tapes off the land and prohibits further private use. If the land owner desires to continue to use the land he does so at a tremendous cost. So to avoid such consequential circumstances he goes out and shoots the bird in the middle of the night (Rustici 2004).
Founded or not, Tea Party activists see environmental regulation as a means of bypassing constitutional law. They see it that the Locke’s contract within the Constitution is a set of laws that protect life, liberty, and property. And that the Fifth Amendment says that private property could not be taken without just compensation. They claim that without the “taking clause,” the government could take one’s property without monetary recompense. Unfortunately to them, and according to Dr. Thomas Rustici, environmental regulation is the government’s way to bypass the taking clause, because it has the right under the law to destroy one’s property without just compensation in the name of protecting the environment (Rustici 2004).

On the contrary, Tea Partiers steeped in public choice theory adamantly disagree with English economist Author Cecil Pigou’s findings. In 1937, A.C. Pigou found that in a free market the price system has a fundamental blind spot. He discovered that negative externalities will in time cause market failure which leads to over production. According to a study done by Duke University, an externality is essentially a transaction spillover concerning a cost or benefit, not transmitted through prices, incurred by a party who did not agree to the action causing the cost or benefit (Duke University 2011). Pigou discovered that consumers will pay for the cheaper products that are higher polluters because consumers do not collectively care about the environment. In order to prevent this incident from happening, Pigou says it is necessary for the government to tax the polluter—tax polluting firms and not tax non-polluting firms. He said it is necessary to tax polluting firms because left unchecked would lead to a catastrophic environmental
disaster (Rustici 2004). On the other hand, if prevented, the non-taxed companies would eventually lead the taxed companies out of business which would avert disaster.

Academically inclined Tea Partiers delight in the findings of University of Chicago economist Ronald Coase. In 1960, Coase challenged Pigou’s social cost theory in his Nobel Prize award winning book, *The Problem of Social Cost*. In the opening remarks of Coases’s book, University of Chicago economist Joseph Stigler says that Coase argued that if we lived in a world without transaction costs, people would bargain with one another to produce the most efficient distribution of resources, regardless of the initial allocation. This is superior to allocation through litigation (Coase 1960). Coase used the example of a nuisance case named *Sturges v. Bridgman*, where a noisy sweetmaker and a quiet doctor were neighbors and went to court to see who should have to move. Coase said that regardless of whether the judge ruled that the sweetmaker had to stop using his machinery, or that the doctor had to put up with it, they could strike a mutually beneficial bargain about who moves houses that reaches the same outcome of resource distribution. However, many welfare-maximizing reallocations are often forgone because of the transaction costs involved in bargaining (Coase 1960). For instance, the sweetmaker may have many neighbors who claim “nuisance”—some legitimate and some not, that the firm would have to sort through, and some of those neighbors who do claim nuisance may try to hold out for excessive compensation. In these cases, the transaction costs eat away, and ultimately eclipse, the price signals that would have led to the most efficient distribution of resources. In cases like these with potentially high transaction costs, the law ought to produce an outcome similar to what would result if the
transaction costs were eliminated. Hence courts should be guided by the most efficient solution. The ultimate thesis to Coase is that law and regulation are not as important or effective at helping people as lawyers and government planners believe (Coase 1960). Coase and others like him wanted a change of approach to put the burden of proof for positive effects on a government that was intervening in the market, by analyzing the costs of action (Coase 1960).

Again, the real problem with protecting the environment, according to Thomas Rustici, is caused by communal property, called the “tragedy of the commons.” When property is in common, nobody personally owns it, and therefore is not willing to take personal responsibility. Examine buses for instance. Communal buses are usually filthy, unmaintained, and have “Wrigley’s chewing gum” stuck under the seats; whereas private buses are clean, maintained, and would never have chewing gum under the seats (Rustici 2004). Another example of this communal dilemma, according Rustici, is examining the world’s forests and oceans. The oceans are overly fished and the forests are excessively logged because they are not privately owned. Logging companies clear cut public land because it is a zero sum. They do not have the incentive to leave trees behind because their competitors would come in after and reap any remaining profits. Logging companies would leave trees behind under private ownership so they could reap future profits (Rustici 2004).

Ultra Libertarian Tea Party activists glee over the information founded by George Mason professors like Thomas Rustici when they discovered that buffalo outnumbered Midwestern people 10 to 1 at the signing of the Declaration of Independence,
but because nobody owned them, their estimated population of 10,000,000 in 1800 declined to 800 by 1900 (Rustici 2004). According to Rustici, the only reason why buffalo came back is because some ranchers realized a profit. Moreover, he found that the African nation of Zimbabwe privatized elephants which experienced dramatic rises in population, whereas the rest of Africa’s elephants are on sharp decline. Again, he claims that there were only 400,000 green sea turtles left in 1970. A privately operated firm decided to harvest the turtle for its meat. Since they had the profit incentive to maintain the green sea turtles, their population rapidly grew to 500,000 in just a few short years. Almost immediately, environmental activists protested the expanding turtle harvest industry and petitioned government in the name of environmental protection to stop production. Soon, the green sea turtle was declared an endangered species and the harvesting stopped and has experienced a declining population since (Rustici 2004). Rustici (2004) claims that the reason why turkeys, cows, pigs, chickens will never go extinct is because no matter how many turkeys, cows, pigs, or chickens people eat, there will always be more the next year. Entrepreneurs have the incentive to produce more turkeys, cows, pigs, and chickens than are being eaten. All animals not able to be commercialized will have declining populations and will eventually fall victim to extinction.

Additionally, libertarian Tea Party advocates relish in cold war figures because they deem the Soviet Union to be the pinnacle of out of control governance and often point to it whenever the United States pushes towards a larger centralized bureaucracy. Nevertheless, researchers established that the post-cold war Soviet Union was founded to be on the brink of environmental disaster. The Aral Sea had undergone an
entire transformation, from fresh water to saline ruin (Mayfield 2008). In 1986, a nuclear
disaster in Chernobyl left the city desolate, and hundreds of miles of land ruined. With
respect to air pollution, official reports confirmed that more than 100 of the largest Soviet
cities registered air quality indexes ten times worse than permissible levels. Inhabitants of
Kirishi, a city not far from Leningrad, succeeded in closing a chemical plant whose toxic
emissions were found to be harming, and in some cases killing the city’s residences
(CountryData.com 1989). Environmental experts opposed to the Tea Party claim that
such disasters took place because of an absence of environmental regulation, but Tea
Partiers believe such disasters took place because of the absence of property rights.

Although most Tea Partiers are not founded in public choice theory, they tend
to understand that if the nation desires to safeguard the environment, then additional gov-
ernment rules and regulations are not the solution to the problem. Therefore, resolving
such resides in the tiny intricacies of the free market and property rights and not the
Kyoto Protocol. To them, hiding behind bureaucratic rules and regulations only devas-
tates businesses, destroys private property, and does nothing in the end to protect the
environment. Not only do they claim that environmental regulation negatively impacts
the environment, they also maintain that environmental law undermines Section 5 of the
Constitution and does not provide just compensation to property owners impacted by the
law.

Congressional Wealth Redistribution

Despite the countless Americans that disagree with their constitutional posi-
tions, the Tea Party does not take the Constitution lightly, nor do they support wealth
redistribution and see it as unconstitutional. They claim that the founding fathers and several subsequent leaders expressed opposition to redistribution of wealth. They often quote the words of Samuel Adams:

The utopian schemes of leveling redistribution of wealth, and a community of goods, are as visionary and impracticable as those that vest all property in the Crown. These ideas are arbitrary, despotic, and, in our government, unconstitutional. (New Opera 2008)

They often quote the words of James Madison, when he wrote, “I cannot undertake to lay my finger on that article of the Constitution which granted a right to Congress of expending, on objects of benevolence, the money of their constituents” (New Opera 2008). They also admire President Grover Cleveland’s vetoing of an expenditure that would have provided $10,000 of federal aid to drought-stricken Texas farmers. When explaining to Congress why such an appropriation of taxpayers’ money was inappropriate, he stated:

I can find no warrant for such appropriation in the Constitution; and I do not believe that the power and duty of the General Government ought to be extended to the relief of individual suffering which is no manner properly related to the public service or benefit. A prevalent tendency to disregard the limited mission of this power and duty should, I think, be steadily resisted, to the end that the lesson should be constantly enforced that, though the people support the Government, the Government should support the people. (Mackinac Center 2005)

President Cleveland continued:

The friendliness and charity of our fellow countrymen can always be relied on to relive their fellow citizens in misfortune. This has been repeatedly and quite lately demonstrated. Federal aid in such cases encourages the expectation of paternal care on the part of the Government and weakens the sturdiness of our national character, while it prevents the indulgence among our people of that kindly sentiment and conduct which strengthens the bonds of a common brotherhood. (Mackinac Center 2005)
By and large, Tea Partiers understand that wealth redistribution has been attempted by
governments for a very long time and has never worked, and is nothing more than an
inhibitor of growth and economic prosperity. In addition to them, Austrian economists
friendly to the Tea Party fiscal positions also speak harshly of wealth redistribution. The
Austrians argue that the redistribution of wealth necessarily means the complete destruc-
tion of wealth. Austrian economist Lorenz Kraus (2010) said that “Communists never
successfully distribute wealth equally.” He also said that wealth cannot be subdivided,
only rights to wealth can.

Socialists do not fight over air; their infighting is over this radio station, that
printing press, these tanks, or this bit of rancid meat. The redistribution is pure
criminality and it demands further criminality after the seizure, like wolves
fighting over a carcass, or thugs offing their accomplices. And yet hundreds of
millions of people have thought that redistribution of wealth will lead to per-
sonal gain. (Kraus 2010)

Even supposing the Tea Parties harsh condemnations of wealth redistribution many of
them personally collect and benefit from its existence. Fundamentally, whenever an indi-
vidual collects social welfare, or accepts a Federal Pell Grant, or food stamps contribute
to the redistribution of wealth. And Tea Party opponents have disparaged them on their
hypocritical predicament too. Tea Partiers usually respond to this by saying that it is
impossible to live in today’s society without being a beneficiary or even a contributor of
redistributive income. Nevertheless, according to Joshua Holland (2011) of Alternet,
redistributing wealth is essential to what governments are supposed to do as defending a
country’s borders or maintaining a functional judicial system. “Every government,
whether it leans right, left or somewhere in between, redistributes wealth.”
Whenever a public road is built, a forest fire extinguished or publicly funded research discloses a new medical innovation, wealth is redistributed . . . As long as Americans do not make people pay their exact share of the cost of laying that road, extinguishing that fire, or researching that therapy, wealth is being redistributed. (Holland 2011)

Moreover, Holland exclaims that “the U.S. military budget costs every tax-payer about $4,000 per year. But not everyone pays $4000.00 or more in federal taxes —every year” (Holland 2011). Holland claims that the nation has been redistributing wealth since its creation. The American colonies imposed “faculty taxes,” which combined the characteristics of income and property taxes. Federal taxes on income came about with the ratification of the Sixteenth Amendment in 1913, the government collected taxes, mostly in the form of tariffs, from the beginning (Holland 2011). On the contrary, the author of Congress as Santa Claus, Charles Warren (1978), disagrees with Holland’s remarks. Warren understands that congressional wealth redistribution did not exist from the America’s beginning, but gradually became more prevalent over a 150-year period.

Notwithstanding, the countless Tea Partiers and sample participants that are employed in or take advantage of redistributive programs it is necessary to have data concerning their opinion of such because one could assume that their positions concerning such would be softened. Survey question 25 highlights and provides supportive evidence to their quandary. It asks the following concerning their feelings aimed at wealth redistribution.

Essentially, 59 percent of the sample population disagrees with Joshua Holland’s article and that they do not believe in redistributive wealth. However, an unlikely 34 percent support some factors of wealth redistribution. This is controversial
because either (1) much of the sample population personally benefit from wealth redistribution and are for wealth redistribution; (2) or they refuse to benefit from redistributive programs and adamantly oppose wealth redistribution programs altogether; or (3) benefit from redistributive programs and oppose the system. Perhaps this inquiry may also distinguish a Tea Party libertarian from a Tea Party conservative, because a Tea Party libertarian would never tolerate wealth redistribution whereas a Tea Party conservative would support some limited redistributive programs. This means that since the majority of the sample population chose selection D, instead of selection A, maybe an indication that there are more Tea Party libertarians than Tea Party conservatives. Then again, this assumption is impossible to prove without further research.

Concluding Chapter Remarks

The Tea Party is not aligned with the myriad of Americans that see it that wealth redistribution is necessary for the health and wellbeing of the nation. The majority of Americans (58 percent) say money and wealth should be more evenly distributed among a larger percentage of the people, although slightly less than half (46 percent) go so far as to say that the government should redistribute wealth by “heavy taxes on the rich” (Gallup Poll 2010c).

Tea Partiers are also not united with America and will be often publicly humiliated on their positions concerning environmental protection laws. They believe that instead of supporting additional regulation and unfounded laws, they understand that property rights and the free market are the best means in which to protect the environment. Despite the differences of opinions and being out numbered 10 to 1, heated dialog
will continue between public choice theorists and Kyoto Protocol enthusiasts. As Tea Partiers learn and develop in their free market passions, they will more than likely continue to gravitate towards the public choice theorists’ views of the environment because so many of them are already founded in rouge environmental theories.

Although all of them are positively and negatively influenced by wealth redistribution and congressional regulation, this report discovered that over 75 percent of the Tea Party participants do not publicly support wealth redistribution. By and large, the Tea Party views most government policies as a hindrance to economic growth and prosperity. Not only do they claim that governmental policies obstruct the economy, they also understand them to impact freedom and are contrary to the embodiment of the Constitution. Lastly, this section supports the New York Times (2011) claim in that indeed over 93 percent of the movement considers that the federal government is doing too much and if they had a choice on the matter they would rather have a smaller government providing fewer services, than a bigger government providing more services.
CHAPTER IX

DOMESTIC POLICY

Introduction

I am for doing good to the poor, but I differ in opinion of the means. I think the best way of doing good to the poor, is not making them easy in poverty, but leading or driving them out of it. In my youth I travelled much, and I observed in different countries, that the more public provisions were made for the poor, the less they provided for themselves, and of course became poorer. And, on the contrary, the less was done for them, the more they did for themselves, and became richer. (Benjamin Franklin, quoted in West and Jeffery 2006)

The most important contributing factor for the Tea Party’s aversion to the growth of the public sector is cost. They see it that entitlements represent the largest part of the United States budget and debt. Rand Paul says there is essentially no “fund” in which the federal government takes money out of that is set aside for Social Security or Medicare because Congress has already spent the money. The Tea Party wholeheartedly believes that entitlement spending will practically consume the entire budget within a few decades at its current pace and that is why they say it must be stopped. The Tea Party agrees with Admiral Mullen, Defense Secretary Gates, and others like Paul Ryan (R-WI) who have said that the biggest threat to America’s national security is debt (Paul 2011). Nevertheless, there is no doubt in their minds that Social Security and healthcare desperately need reform, but the only domestic policies worth pursuing to them and at the dismay of most Americans, is a gradual turnover of each to the private market.
Does the Tea Party attack most domestic policies? Despite the tremendous cost, U.S. domestic policy has placed a high priority on the expansion of the public sector. Although a number of academic scholars including Germany’s former chief economist Adolph Wagner, co-founder of Marxism Fredrick Engels, and French socialist theorist Saint Simon claim that the key to a swift economic recovery is to expand the public sector, in that the Tea Party obstinately disagrees (Moberg 1986). As mentioned earlier in the report, the Tea Party understands that the public good is an inhibitor to job growth and productivity and that the private sector is the answer to a healthy economy. Moreover, they understand that recent entitlement policies in healthcare, environmental protection, and education, are pushing the United States in an unsustainable direction and must be stopped before further regression. Therefore, if they distain the expansion of the public economy, then all government domestic intrusions, especially additional entitlement programs, will not be accepted by the movement.

Education

Congress has no power to appropriate tax revenues for the purpose of educating the people of the states. Should Congress exercise such a power, this would be to break down the barriers which have been so carefully constructed in the Constitution to separate Federal from State authority … constitute a sort of partnership between the two in the Treasury of the United States, equally ruinous to both. (Charles Warren, quoted in Warren 1978, 65)

Milton Friedman (2002, 86-87) understands that the general populous understands that the key to a stable democratic society is impossible to achieve without a minimum degree of literacy and knowledge. Although they may greatly differ on the means of carrying out effective education in America and will be endlessly mocked for their education
positions, the Tea Party is involved in and concerned with education. The *Washington Times* (2012) found that like mainstream America, the Tea Party understands that the more education one has the more likely they will succeed. Where they differ with conventional America is the *means* and not the *ends* of education. Some say that it is necessary to require that each child receive a minimum amount of schooling at the expense of the common good. Whereas others suppose that it is not the responsibility of the government to force a minimum educational requirement, even if by doing so benefits the common good of society (Friedman 2002, 87). Another problem with this quandary is the justification of payment. Who should pay for the education? Should the responsibility of payment be left to the parents or the state? Most Americans agree that the dilemma of parents carrying the financial burden of education is that some parents cannot afford to pay and therefore their children would not be privy to the same opportunities as more affluent families (Friedman 2002, 87). Many Tea Partiers suppose that education is a privilege and not a fundamental right and therefore should not be a financial burden to families of the state. For that reason, it is not the responsibility of the state to provide or force children to undergo a certain degree of education, even if it benefits the common good of society. America’s educational system would be stronger to them without government assistance and intervention.

Tea Partiers agree with the words of Congressman William McCoy of Virginia, who, in 1826, opposed the appropriations of federal treasury monies for education. He said, “Soon the people of this country would be unable to build a schoolhouse unless their Government gave them the money . . . if you give to one State, you cannot
with justice withhold from another” (Warren 3). There are many reasons why the Tea Party and others like William McCoy would prefer the government left out of education. First, they claim that public education is unconstitutional. They say that the Constitution clearly defines “negative rights,” rights an individual has that the government cannot take away, but the Constitution does not grant public rights (Warren 1978, 3). The Tea Party has held this over George W. Bush his entire presidency, because he ignored the Constitution and expanded public education with No Child Left Behind (Paul 2011, 51).

Second, if Congress fails to adhere to the Constitution and force a minimal educational requirement, then they understand it best to allow private education. The Tea Party maintains (this is the means of education) that private schooling is simply better than public schooling because private education is profit incentivized. Private educators have the incentive to maximize the quality of education for their students because they are rewarded financially when they produce results. They say that public educators do not share the same incentives because it is not profit driven. If public educators fail to provide a quality education, then they are paid the same and continue to operate. On the other hand, they claim that if private educators fail to provide quality education then they are paid less and risk losing students and jeopardize services. The same scenario applies to them concerning teachers. They say that teachers that provide a higher degree of education in the public sector are often not rewarded for their successes, whereas private educators are. To them, teachers unions only compound the public incentive dilemma. Both good and bad teachers are protected under a union contract. The good teachers are paid the same as bad teachers and bad teachers are not fired for being bad teachers. It is a
long arduous process to fire a bad teacher tied to union contract. Consequently, to them, these bad teachers continue to be less than satisfactory. And ultimately students’ education suffers. This is why they adamantly oppose teachers unions. Undeniably, the Tea Party at large, especially publicly, sees public educators in like manner but does the local Tea Party population agree? Survey question 29 addresses America’s educational system.

The sample population (41.2 percent) does agree with the Tea Party at large; they, like the Tea Party, believe that teachers unions are the biggest problem with America’s educational system. Nevertheless, this percentage would be higher if category “other” had not been included, because all of the participants that chose “other” essentially responded saying that “all of the above” are problems that need to be addressed.

A noteworthy point is response E (No Child Left Behind Act), because Americans provide a less-than-enthusiastic endorsement of the impact of the No Child Left Behind Act. Gallup (2010c) found that those familiar with the act, 21 percent say it has made the education received by public school students in the United States better, while almost half, 45 percent, say it has made no difference and 29 percent say it has made public school students’ education worse. As mentioned before, the Tea Party is not happy with the No Child Left Behind Act and somewhat aligns with the general public. Most of them believe it to be unconstitutional and would like to see it removed from public education. The Tea Party’s general mantra is the less government involvement the better. Republicans vying for Tea Party support need to understand that advancing public education is never a winning position with the Tea Party.
Despite their strong convictions against teachers unions, the Tea Party does not align with mainstream public opinion concerning teachers unions. A recent survey done by the Rasmussen Reports (2010a) found that unlike the Tea Party, Americans are generally favorable toward public unions. Moreover, the Rasmussen Reports (2010a) found that 53 percent of adults at least somewhat favor unions for public employees, whereas 37 percent oppose them. By and large, public unions are more widely supported by the public opinion than labor unions, because 49 percent have a favorable view of them, while 42 percent regard them unfavorably. In defense of teachers unions, Randi Weingarten, president of 1.4 million member American Federation of Teachers (AFT), says that people are looking for an entity to blame for school failures. Moreover, Weingarten adds that blaming unions for failing schools is like blaming the middle class for the recession. The AFT’s mantra is “what is good for kids and what is fair for teachers,” reiterates Weingarten (Newsweek 2010). Again Weingarten states that if teachers’ unions were to blame for failing schools, then places like Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana, who have relatively few unionized teachers, would do much better than the states with the most densely unionized teachers such as Massachusetts, New York, Maryland. But those are the states whose schools do the best. (Newsweek 2010)

President Weingarten continues by saying that he believes that having a strong union is a necessary entity for resolving problems by examining the big pictures of what is right and what is wrong (Newsweek 2010). The Tea Party’s usual response to Weingarten’s defense of unions is that teachers’ unions are not the cause of all things wrong with education. Unions are, to them, the catalyst or the inhibitor of necessary change.
The discussion of “insufficient” or “too much public funding” is another hotly debated topic for them. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, the difference between tuition and the net cost less financial aid at public two-year colleges is not that significant. The center found that figure noticeably increases when comparing private nonprofit four-year schools to public institutions to almost $20,000. The average annual tuition including expenses at a private nonprofit four-year college is about $35,000 (U.S. News & World Report 2010b). Notwithstanding such evidence, most Tea Partiers understand that public education spending is too high. They often appeal to studies conducted by likeminded institutions such as the Mackinac Center which found that public education costs twice as much as private education (Mackinac Center 1997). They also applaud research done by the Ludwig von Mises Institute, which found that public verses private educational costs are contrary to public intuition, since most people think of public schools as free and private schools as expensive. Nevertheless, once one considers the source of funding (tax dollars vs. market tuition or donation), the private alternative is much cheaper for the vast majority of college students (Ludwig von Mises Institute 2008; U.S. News & World Report 2010a). Additionally, the institute found that public schools cost as much as the most expensive and elite schools in the country. The difference is that the cost of public schooling is spread out over the entire population, whereas the private school cost is borne only by the families with students who attend them (Ludwig von Mises Institute 2008).

The Tea Party also believes that an increase in public education does not necessary correlate with a rise in quality education. They say that education funding has
significantly increased since the Carter administration, yet learning in the classroom and testing results have remained the same. The Heritage Foundation discovered that since 1985, inflation-adjusted federal spending on K-12 education has increased 138 percent (Heritage Foundation 2010a). Again, the Heritage Foundation (2010a) discovered that since the 1960s real per-student federal education expenditures have more than tripled. Meanwhile, academic achievement has suffered. Moreover, since the 1970s, basic math achievement has increased only slightly, reading achievement has almost stagnated, and graduation rates have remained at about 73 percent nationally (Heritage Foundation 2010a). On the contrary, a study done by Jack Jennings (2011) from the Center of Educational Policy found that higher wages do attract better quality teachers, which means that attracting better quality teachers improves academic achievement. Therefore, cutting educational costs would be detrimental to education.

The First Amendment states that “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof” and regardless of the “separation of church and state” established therein, some Tea Partiers often complain that creationism or the topic of God is not permissible in a public setting. Since creationism is not taught in public schooling, gives them even more reason to support private schooling. Some Tea Partiers even go so far as to say that students are allowed, and almost encouraged, to teach acceptance of ungodly lifestyles. According to Tea Party advocate Douglas Wilson (2006), Christianity is viewed as offensive, divisive, and unfit for consumption in the public school. In order to keep their certification current, teachers are required to take various courses on the latest politically correct positions of the public
education community says Wilson (2006). These are often grievous and blasphemous, and have the tendency to drive away teachers with a more traditional Judeo/Christian world view (Wilson 2006). Wilson concludes by saying that the public school situation becomes worse with the gradual elimination of those with even nominally Christian values. On the other hand, not all Tea Partiers agree with Douglas Wilson and the creationist view, nor are they all adamantly against public education. For those that agree tend to be zealously engaged and outspoken at Tea Party functions/meetings concerning such positions.

Healthcare

All of us have a responsibility to pay—help pay for healthcare. (Newt Gingrich, quoted in Paul 2011)

Surprise, surprise, the Tea Party does not support nationalized healthcare. The Tea Party has been and is a huge opponent of President Obama’s healthcare plan. Rand Paul (2010) reiterates the words of Janice Shaw that the Obama healthcare plan contains $670 billion in tax increases (Crouse 2010). For the middle class, there are at least 14 different tax increases signed into law that target taxpayers making less than $250,000 per year. She also said that in Massachusetts, a state that enacted healthcare reforms similar to the national plan, multiple lawsuits were filed to prevent higher premium increases. The Boston Globe warned that Obama’s health care plan could result in similar lawsuits at the federal level (Paul 2011).

The promotion of tort reform and the purchase of private insurance across state lines is the most popular choice at 43.5 percent of the sample population. Other
preferences such as leaving healthcare alone, turning healthcare over to the private market, and leaving healthcare to the states are also fairly popular choices. Virtually none of the sample population (one person) believes that healthcare should be turned over to the federal government and therefore aligns with the movement at large.

A noteworthy survey dilemma is that I handed out the survey months before President Obama’s healthcare bill passed, so when 17.3 percent of them said to leave the current system alone may have referred to the healthcare system that existed before the passing of Obama’s healthcare bill. A second notable point concerning the survey is that the majority of the sample population selected response C, instead of response D, which may signify that they are predominately conservative rather than libertarian. The reason why is libertarians are more likely to support turning the healthcare over to the private market, whereas conservatives are stronger on tort reform and other similar issues.

The Chico Tea Party had a huge turnout the week the healthcare bill passed in Congress. Actually, several members inferred to me that no other week up to that time experienced a greater turnout. President Obama’s national healthcare bill is and has been a major topic of discussion for the movement. They openly applaud Congressman Ron Paul (R-TX) and Janice Shaw and their efforts to tear apart Obama’s nationalized healthcare plan. Many devout followers within even go so far as saying that the expansion of healthcare could be one of the largest contributing factors for the rise of the movement.

Not only are they dedicated to overthrowing the Obama healthcare plan, they are also committed to the discontinuation of the America’s healthcare plan in general. They have not been content with either and demand a third option. Former Speaker of the
House Newt Gingrich has attempted to provide that “third option” and has proposed a number of ideas over the years. Yet, Gingrich has been at the forefront of Tea Party reprimand. Many of them are enraged with some of his healthcare proposals. In an interview on Meet the Press, May 15, 2011, Gingrich repeated his long held conviction that “all of us have a responsibility to pay—help pay for healthcare” (Kolawole and Weiner 2011) and suggested this could be implemented by either a mandate to obtain health insurance or a requirement to post a bond ensuing coverage (Kolawole and Weiner 2011).

Again, in the same interview Gingrich went so far as to saying that

I don’t think right wing social engineering is any more desirable than left wing social engineering. I don’t think imposing radical change from the right or the left is a very good way for a free society to operate. (Kolawole and Weiner 2011)

What enrages the Tea Party, when it comes to proposals like Gingrich’s, is that government is not the solution to America’s healthcare problem under any condition. His remarks are a perfect example of what bothers Tea Partiers to the brink of utter frustration when it comes to politicians in general. Even the so-called good politicians that are supposed to be for limited government like Newt Gingrich, Mitt Romney (R-MA), Olympia Snow (R-KS), John Huntsman (R-UT), John McCain (R-AZ), Wally Herger (R-CA), Arnold Schwarzenegger (R-CA), Scott Brown (R-MA), President George W. Bush and so many, many others often appeal to the government. What the Tea Party wants when it comes to finding solutions like this is for the government to get out of the way. If Gingrich or any of these other politicians desire to gain favor with the Tea Party population, then they need to become conservative leaders again.
The Tea Party is in the minority when it comes to the nationalization of healthcare. Gallup found that only 44 percent of Americans believe that the recent health-care reform will improve medical care. Sadly for the Tea Party, these figures also mean that 56 percent of the American public wants healthcare to remain. On the flip side, 26 percent say it would improve their personal medical care (Gallup 2009c). The Pew Research Center (2010a) found that 51 percent of Americans want the recent healthcare bill repealed, whereas 41 percent do not.

Tea Partiers often do not appreciate what scholars like Aaron J. Henry at non-conservative foundations like the Brookings Institute have to say, but if they would listen and read his words, they actually might agree with some of his points. Before the passing of Obama’s healthcare plan, Henry found that America’s healthcare system is broke and needs repairing. He said that the United States spends twice as much per capita on health-care as the average of the ten richest countries in the world. More than one person in six under age 65 is uninsured. And business and labor leaders alike are convinced that employer-financed healthcare is undermining U.S. competitiveness (Brookings 2010). Indeed, Aaron J. Henry is hardly a conservative, and yes, Tea Partiers would not support insuring everyone in the nation, but he conveyed words in that moment that Tea Partiers only wished that most Republicans would stand for.

All Obama’s healthcare plan means to the Tea Party is higher costs and lower quality, rationing and higher taxes, government mandating and penalties. Moreover, it’s another low point for Tea Party Americans that so desperately want for the Republicans to finally make a stand, which crave a major lessening of government intrusions. Rand
Paul (2011) said that government healthcare is about additional IRS agents and fewer doctors, burdening individuals and hindering businesses. Additionally, Paul (2011) said that the Washington Examiner found that 16,500 new IRS workers would have to be hired to enforce Obama’s healthcare plan. In turn, the Tea Partiers lament his findings and look to the founders and presidential incumbents for justification. “Government big enough to give you everything you want is big enough to take away everything you have” (Gerald Ford, quoted in The Jefferson 1987).

U.S. Outlook

No matter what most economists would say, the Tea Party sees a nation going bankrupt. Tea Partiers shriek at the politicians over this data, in that the United States now has a deficit of $14.6 trillion which is more than the GDP at $14.3 trillion (U.S. Debt Clock 2011). If this massive debt was paid off tomorrow, every taxpaying citizen would need to pay over $130,000 (U.S. Debt Clock 2011) of personal earned income. After calling local representatives, the Tea Party understands that Congress has made too many empty promises and nationalizing healthcare is only the latest that it cannot keep. Sadly, many of them say that without the knowledge of early American history, the United States is bound to repeat past mistakes of fallen empires such as ancient Greece or Rome.

Charles Warren (1978, 2) and other scholars like him continue to say that Tea Partiers fully accept as true, one cannot fully understand how Americans maintain that Congress has the power under the American Constitution, to vote the public treasuries as charitable gifts to individual citizens. Likewise, Warren (1978) understands and the Tea Party wholeheartedly agrees that
there is probably no principle of constitutional law more fundamental or more
commonly taught as accepted truth among them than that the American Fed-
eral Government is one of limited powers, and that an Act of Congress is
invalid if it cannot be brought within the scope of some power granted by the
Constitution. (3)

This means that Tea Partiers understand that if the American people fully understood the
Constitution, then the nation would not be in the financial predicament it is in today.

Again, Charles Warren (1978) expresses in his book *Congress as Santa Claus*

“Are not the members of Congress limited by their oaths to support the Constitution?”

(Warren 2-3). In which he replies, “Undoubtedly.” Then he says

that yet such an oath is a very flexible thing. A congressman often swears to
support the Constitution as he views it. And he often views it as authorizing
whatever he personally thinks to be good for the nation. And he usually thinks
that to be good for the Nation is good for his party. (3)

And Tea Partiers love and loath all at the same time this insight. Again, Warren (1978, 5)
points out that in 1897, Congress appropriated $50,000 to give to impoverished Ameri-
cans in Cuba. In 1914, Congress appropriated $200,000 to give to citizens of Salem,
Massachusetts, who had lost their homes and were out of work because of a fire (Warren
1978, 5). In 1921, Congress appropriated $2,000,000 to loan to certain individual farmers
dwelling in a few counties in three or four western states, who had had bad crops owing
to drought (Warren 1978, 5). Indeed, such government appropriations sound charitable,
but the problem that Warren and Tea Partiers have with congressional appropriations is
that under what power granted by the Constitution could Congress pick out these certain
favored individuals and donate them capital from the national treasury? Tea Partiers want
so badly for Congress to be the government of law and not of charity. Once more, Warren
1978) says, “it is easy to be charitable with other people’s money, that one does not rise to generous heights by benevolence at someone else’s expense” (5).

Given that Congress has increasingly ignored the rule of law and have become enamored with pork spending and special handouts Tea Partiers distain such leaders because many of them fail to recognize the difficulty in keeping their congressional powers in check (Vieira 1979). Tea Party advocate, Edwin Vieira (1979), believes that the social compact of the Framers empowered government only to protect each citizen’s natural rights, according to certain defined procedures for the enactment and enforcement of positive laws, and by its very contractual nature, disabled government from any other actions. Tea Partiers like Vieira and Warren understand that their congressional representatives consequently suppose under the General Welfare clause of the Constitution authorizes them in spending government revenues for the benefit of certain citizens for the purposes of benefiting their own constituents (Warren 1978, 6).

The Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts, and excises, to pay the debts and provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States. (Constitution, Article I, Section 8, 7)

Yet again, Charles Warren (1978, 6-7) alleges in his book that James Madison understood that since Congress in the clauses ensuing the Taxing Power clause was granted authority to perform only precise and limited functions, it could raise money under its taxing power and appropriated the same for the general welfare, only to the extent of carrying out those limited functions. Ron Paul (R-TX) also reiterated Warren’s limited government taxing plea because on April 15, 2009, Paul (2009) said that he supports the
elimination of the income tax and Internal Revenue Service on the basis that Congress has no power to impose a direct income tax.

Money cannot be applied to the General Welfare, otherwise than by an application of it to some particular measure conducive to the General Welfare. Whenever, therefore, money has been raised by the General Authority, and is to be applied to a particular measure be within the enumerated authorities vested in Congress. If it be, the money requisite for it may be applied to it; if it be not, no such application can be made. (Warren 1978, 7)

According to Warren (1978, 7), Madison’s view was that the federal government’s methods of taxation and of expenditure were precisely co-extensive with the methods of its other powers. Alexander Hamilton also reiterated that Congress was limited by the Constitution in the governmental functions which it could perform, yet its express power to tax to provide for the general welfare carried with it an implied power to appropriate the tax monies for anything which Congress considered to be for the general welfare (Lodge 1904).

Even if Americans grant such power to Congress to appropriate money for any purpose whatever which it deems to be for the general welfare, the question still remains: Where does it get the power to donate the federal funds for the benefit of particular individuals in Japan, or in St. Louis, Missouri, or for the innocent victims of Hurricane Katrina, who may have been so unlucky enough to lose their property, their houses, or their cars? (Warren 1978, 12). The quandary with this method of government benevolence is that the money has to come from somewhere. Whether by taxation or printing, federal appropriation comes at a steep cost to the American people, and the Tea Party is catching on to such methods.
The Tea Party sees that congressional spending is crippling the economy and because they see no end to such misappropriations of treasury monies they generally believe that the country has reached its apex and is now on decline. Survey question 33 addresses their national outlook.

The bulk of the country may highly disagree with the Tea Party on the constitutionality of government and its handling of the General Welfare clause, but they are not alone in their dire national outlook. Gallup (2008a) found that recession fears in the United States, along with shifting power and economic slowdown abroad, raise questions about the United States’ role in the global economy, and more generally, its place in the world as the leading superpower. The sample population also seems to be on par with most Americans on this issue because a number of individuals say that the United States has already lost its status as an economic superpower. The Tea Party supposes whether the United States will lose its status as the leading superpower is less a question of if than of when and to whom. The sample population does seem to be in line with most Americans on this issue, but they tend to fear powers like China less than the general populace, because only 6.9 percent of them mentioned in this report that they fear China consuming American debts and assets when compared to other catastrophic events.

By and large most Americans no longer believe the United States to be the world’s leading economic superpower. According to Gallup’s (2008a) annual World Affairs survey, 40 percent of Americans consider China to be the world’s leading economic power, whereas only a mere 33 percent of their polling population choose the United States. By contrast, in May 2000 and according to Gallup, the United States
dominated public perceptions on this issue, with 65 percent saying it was the leading country in the world. Despite public perception, the CIA Factbook (2010) still has the United States leading the world with a GDP above $14.14 trillion, whereas China, rated at number two, has a GDP above $8.7 trillion. This means that China’s economy is only 61 percent as strong as that of the United States. Even at an astounding growth rate of 10 percent per year, it will take China 15 to 25 more years before reaching the economic status of the United States.

Concluding Chapter Remarks

The Tea Party in general and the sample population seem to be more concerned with internal domestic issues than China’s rapid expansion to supremacy (Gallup 2008c). The first and foremost is the rapid expansion of the U.S. government. The Tea Party generally views the expansion of government as nothing more than added obstacles for entrepreneurs and higher taxes for businesses. They see that the nation is declining because of too much government bureaucracy and excessive spending habits namely in public education and healthcare, and would rather see the government step aside concerning such. They would like to have federal appropriations slashed to privileged persons and entitlement spending slowed to a halt. This means that the Tea Party desires to see that the people begin the reversal of appropriations of monies and namely for Congress to stop acting as a benevolent “Santa Claus” in their so-called quest to seek after the interests of their constituents.

Notwithstanding their overreaching concerns, the Tea Party understands that the country is not ready to cut all entitlement programs and discontinue all appropriations
at once. Therefore, they seek to gradually cut such misappropriations and to reverse current national trends. Hence, lifting the 20-year moratorium on off-shore drilling off the Atlantic coast, or allowing drilling in Alaska’s ANWAR, or permitting oil shell drilling in Utah, and discontinuing millions of dollars spent on litigation would be major accomplishments for them in the interim and would aspire for further reversals in the long-term. The major dilemma for the Tea Party pursing such initiatives is that they are at odds with so many Americans.

For the most part, Americans view their positions as extreme and right-wing fanaticism, and if the movement is to have any chance at making a fundamental difference in the direction of the United States, then they need to convince the American people of their views.
CHAPTER X

CALIFORNIA POLICY

Introduction

The Tea Party is relatively well represented in the State of California compared to the rest of the states. In 2009, California surpassed Texas as the leading Tea Party state with close to 200 groups (Tea Party Patriots 2009). Mark Meckler is the leading California Tea Party representative. Mark is from Grass Valley and is actually one of two nationwide Tea Party spokesmen and has had numerous appearances on Fox News and other cable networks. Meckler has also attended Tea Party meetings in Redding and Chico, but has yet to attend Tea Parties in Oroville and Paradise. Given that the movement has experienced considerable growth since his last local attendances, he will probably be too busy to attend the Oroville and Paradise Tea Parties in the near future. Nevertheless, and according to advocates, the Tea Party is a group based on ideas and not prominent leaders.

Dick Armey and Matt Kibbe (2010) illustrate in their book, Give us Liberty, that the Tea Party is made up of many branches and is an effective instrument for original ideas, effective innovations, and ground-breaking tactics. Moreover, they further articulate that the Tea Party agrees on the first principles of individual freedom, free markets, and constitutionally constrained government, but when it comes to how to best advocate these ideas, “best practices come from the ground up, around kitchen tables, from
Facebook friends, at Tuesday book clubs, or on Twitter feeds” (78). Once more, they illustrate that the Tea Party is the product of a perfect situation of broken Republican and Democratic commitments. Moreover, novel technological innovations have allowed Tea Partiers to find each other and to organize into an effective movement.

The California Tea Party, also known as the Tea Party Patriots, is not associated with the Tea Party Express. The Tea Party Express was created in August of 2009 as a PAC, essentially an organized movement to help raise money for Republican candidates friendly to the Tea Party. The political know-how behind the PAC is Russo, Marsh and Rogers, a political and media consulting firm based out of Sacramento (California Tea Party Patriots 2009). Capitol Hill Newspaper writer Janie Lorber (2011) found that the Sacramento-based political action committee put $7.7 million behind conservative candidates in the 2010 midterm elections. Nevertheless, the Chico Tea Party is not associated with the Tea Party Express or any political PACS. California State University, Chico professor Dr. Susan Hubbard (2010) said at a local Chico Tea Party event that “we do not involve ourselves with PACs because we do not endorse political candidates.”

The million dollar question for Tea Party activists residing in California is Will California’s economy recover? California Tea Partiers believe that the state’s economy is in shambles and will not recover in the near future (Lifsher 2011). The Tea Party claims that not only does California boost nearly the highest unemployment, it also bolsters the highest deficits and highest taxes in the country. California Tea Party populations believe that State lawmakers need to pursue business friendly strategies to incentivize businesses back to the state. In addition to enticing business, the Tea Party believes
that California lawmakers need to cut spending, reduce taxes, and slash public unions. They understand that providing business incentives, cutting spending, reducing taxes, and slashing public unions, would put people back to work and eventually repair the state’s economy. If the Tea Party deems that state lawmakers have jeopardized California’s economy, then states with healthier economies have not yet been ruined by their public representatives. For instance, states like Texas and North and South Dakota have healthier economic conditions than California’s and Tea Partiers are prone for blaming state officials and their progressive policies for the economic discrepancy.

State Budget

The Tea Party is concerned with state lawmakers handling of the California state budget. Tea Party advocate Mark Levin (2009) explains in his book, Liberty and Tyranny, that grandparents have been taking prospective wealth from future generations for years. Entitlement programs tend to be intergenerational swindles that threaten the well-being of future generations with massive financial obligations incurred from benefits received by today’s generation. The best example of intergenerational duplicity is with programs like Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid (Levin 2009). In 2008, David Walker (2008), then the comptroller general of the United States, reported that the total burden in present value dollars of these and other entitlement programs, including the federal government’s liabilities, commitments, and contingencies, is about $53 trillion. He added, “Imagine if Americans decide to put aside and invest today enough to cover these promises tomorrow. It would take approximately $455,000 per American household or $175,000 for every man, woman, and child in the United States.”
Tea Partiers relish in headline stories involving the intergenerational trap such as the one that occurred in the industrial town of Central Falls, Rhode Island. According to Central Falls receiver Robert Flanders Jr., the town filed for bankruptcy August 29, 2011, immediately voiding current contracts with city workers and retirees (Friedman 2011). Pension payments will be greatly reduced, with some seeing their pensions cut by half or possibly more. Flanders concluded that bankruptcy for Central Falls was inevitable. Central Falls projects $5 million deficits every year for the next five years and faces $80 million in unfunded pensions (Friedman 2011).

Again, Tea Partiers in Chico often traded stories over other towns and cities across the nation also falling for the intergeneration trap and filing for bankruptcy. The City of Vallejo (2008) filed for bankruptcy May 23, 2008 for unfunded pensions. The California Public Employee Retirement System (CalPERS, 2011) discovered that 6,133 retired government workers receive pensions in excess of $100,000. Moreover, the California State Teachers Retirement System (CalSTRS, 2011) found that 3,090 retired teachers and administrators receiving over $100,000 per year in their pensions. The 9,233 members of the current $100,000 club, by themselves, receive over $1 billion in pension payments every year (CalSTRS 2011). Unlike the federal government, the state cannot simply print money to meet these growing underfunded financial obligations. Both cities and others like them fell into the intergeneration trap and bankruptcy because of years of empty promises made by city lawmakers in an effort to immediately please public employees. Second, the town borrowed monies from future generations to pay for present needs.
Tea Partiers agree on many areas, especially when it comes to drastic federal and state budget cuts, yet when one closely examines the California State budget it is difficult to determine exactly which areas of the budget they will agree to slash first. Survey question 34 may provide a solution to the choice dilemma and may persuade Tea Partiers to direct their budget anxieties towards a specific area (Figure 3).

![Bar chart showing budget targets](chart.png)

**Figure 3.** What should be targeted first from the California state budget?

It is unfortunate that survey question 34 did not target a specific budget prerogative, because out of the 12 possible choices, none established widespread support. This means that Matt Kibbe and Dick Armey (2010) are somewhat accurate in their description of the Tea Party when they said that the Tea Party is united on its core principles, but it disagrees when it comes to how to best advocate such ideas. On the other hand, this does say a lot about the persons behind the movement, because they are clearly devoted to a
fiscal cause but do not have apparent solutions to such. Likewise, most of them seem to often complain about the problems at hand but have little experience at fixing them. Not only do many of them often heavily criticize such but most of them prefer complaining as to finding solutions and appreciate Tea Party outings as a podium to express common anxieties.

Butte County Budget

Does Butte County have a budget problem? Resembling most counties in the State of California, Butte County has severe budget problems. According to the Board of Supervisors, the declining economy and California’s complete failure to respond to it have worsened the financial position and outlook for Butte County. Largely because of the state’s negligence, the Board of Supervisors has had to make major spending cuts (Butte County Administration 2009). The Board of Supervisors recently asked county employees to take a pay cut to help balance the budget. Board member Bill Connelly claims that this is the worst recession since the great depression, and the county has made 20 percent departmental cuts and more is needed (24 KNVN 2011). Again, according to Bill Connelly, the County’s local tax base has continued to deteriorate, although not to the degree of the overall statewide tax base. Financial support and grants from the State of California to the county have declined and are likely to decline further, since the state has yet to address its massive $42 billion budget deficit (Butte County Administration 2009). A decline in state and local revenues has significantly increased the county general fund annualized structural budget deficit from $10 million estimated in October 2008 to about $18 million (Butte County Administration 2009). According to the report, the
county is spending $1 million to $1.5 million per month more than it is collecting in general purpose revenue. In 2008, the Board of Supervisors took several actions to ensure a balanced budget for the 2009 fiscal year, including many cost reduction efforts to achieve needed short-term savings. Despite such efforts, many more cutbacks in operations and workforce are needed to address the ongoing structural deficit (Butte County Administration 2009). Furthermore, the local Tea Party commiserates with the county’s Board of Supervisors (Harvey 2010; Hubbard 2010). To them, it is imperative to make all necessary budget cuts in order to keep the county in the black financially.

City of Chico Budget

Does the City of Chico have a budget problem? The 2010-2011 Proposed Annual Budget plan for the City of Chico discovered that akin to most cities in the State of California, the City of Chico has seen a steady decline in revenues since 2008, but it does not have a major budget problem like most California cities. Nevertheless, according to the proposal, the city has been unable to provide the same level of services that it did prior to 2008 (City of Chico 2010-2011). Notwithstanding, the City of Chico is committed in maintaining as many services as possible and has implemented a number of cost cutting measures. Again, according to city officials, operating budgets have been reduced in attempts to correct a structural deficit within the general fund, as well as adjust to the declining revenue base for the city. Sadly, all Chico departments have been impacted by the declining revenue base and have made significant operational changes to maintain the city’s primary services. City officials maintained that reduction measures are necessary and include the elimination of 63 positions, representing 14 percent of Chico’s
workforce (City of Chico 2010-2011). They found that the majority of the positions were lost through attrition and an early retirement program, with only three positions lost from layoffs. City officials also found it necessary for city employees to take a 5 percent reduction in compensation (City of Chico 2010-2011). According to the budget proposal, the 2010-2011 City of Chico revenues are $42,681,848; expenditures for the same year are $42,644,129, which means that the city budget is still in the black despite declining revenues. City officials found, however, that the 2011-2012 budget is expected to have declining revenues of $42,644,129, whereas city expenditures are expected to rise to $43,284,478 (City of Chico 2010-2011).

The local Chico Tea Party maintains that making cuts is necessary in order to sustain a solvent community. Many of them find it almost as their sacred duty to prod city officials towards fiscal reductions in city employee salaries and the elimination of public positions. The local Chico Tea Party has an organized watchdog committee that painstakingly attends all relevant Chico meetings. Harry Swinney, of the local Chico Tea Party, has even noted on his Tea Party blog that being involved with the local watchdog group is important for new group members (Tea Party Patriots 2011). Joining the watchdog group is a part of his five-step plan for being a new Patriot.

Economic Outlook

The Tea Party is aware that California’s statistical comparisons show that the state’s economy is worse than the national average. According to the Wall Street Journal (2010), California has an unemployment rate of 12.4 percent, which only Michigan, at 13.6 percent and Nevada at 14 percent, are higher. California also has one of the worst
home foreclosure rates at 4.4 percent in the nation (CNN Money 2010). Whereas, the
Wall Street Journal has California’s $17.9 billion budget deficit as the highest among
states (Wall Street Journal 2010). There are a number of additional resources that show
that California is near the bottom in almost every major economic statistical category. In
fact, Tea Partiers outside of the state commonly refer to California as “ground zero,”
when it comes to its economic condition and progressive policies. Tea Party affiliate Dan
Acton (2011) said to me that “California better get its finances in order before the golden
age is over.” A close friend of Dan’s, Don Gates (2011), also an affiliate of the Wash-
ington Tea Party, mentioned that the “goose has been cooked and the people of California
are starving.” Both Don and Dan say that California is a beautiful state, blessed with one
of the world’s best agricultural valleys, stunning beaches, and pristine wildernesses, yet
the people of California have squandered the state’s natural resources and now it is in
serious financial jeopardy. Dan’s brother, Mark Acton (2011), believes that the state is in
such financial trouble that it would be unwise for anyone to move there in the immediate
future. He often compares the financial situation of California to that of Greece and often
claims that California is the Greece of the United States. Notwithstanding Acton’s Cali-
ifornia/ Greece comparisons, his remarks may not be founded in any hard evidence.

California’s gross domestic product reached nearly $2 trillion (CIA Factbook
2011a) in 2010, compared to Greece’s $305 billion (CIA Factbook 2011b). Standard and
Poor’s (2011) found that the Golden State’s real GDP growth rate is projected at +2.9
percent in 2011, versus Greece’s -3.5 percent. It also found that Greece’s debt-to-GDP
ratio is 153 percent, compared to California 4.6 percent debt-to-GDP ratio. In 2011,
California remains one of the ten largest economies on earth, while Greece’s economy pales in comparison. Despite what Tea Partiers claim, the Golden State has a better political environment and smaller budget imbalances than Greece has and, as well, the California Constitution requires the state to adopt a balanced budget, while Greece’s constitution does not. Standard and Poor’s (2011) also discovered that California’s ability to repay its debt is strong, according to Standard and Poor’s financial research, with the report citing the state’s economic diversity, modern economy and market elasticity as positive factors.

Although California’s economy is firmly stronger than Greece’s economy, the *Los Angeles Times* (2008) reported that California has actually lost population from 2005 through 2008. They say that the outflow, last seen during the economic and social struggles of the 1990s, started when it became too expensive for most people to buy homes in the state, and has kept going throughout the bust with the loss of so many jobs. The *Los Angeles Times* (2008) found that the trend underscores the state’s poor economy as layoffs continue, the fiscal strain on the government grows and home values continue to decline. Though more births and rising international immigration helped boost California’s population a modest 1.16 percent last year, according to the *Los Angeles Times* (2008), the state continued its steady shift of domestic (out migration), the movement to other states of people who live there. Again, the *Los Angeles Times* (2008) found that in 2008, 135,173 more people moved out of California than moved in from other states. Last of all, they concluded in their report that even though this is relatively insignificant for a state of 38 million people, the trend remains significant because such declines
usually occur when working Californians decide better opportunities reside outside of the state.

The Tea Party would be thrilled if California lawmakers looked to examples of conservative states like North Dakota and Texas for fiscal solutions. Dennis Cauchon of USA Today wrote that the State of North Dakota has the nation’s lowest unemployment rate. Agriculture and manufacturing jobs are doing well in the North Dakota and a number of other jobs have been added to the state over the last decade. The state’s total population grew 4.7 percent from 2000 to 2010, below the national average of 9.7 percent, but robust for a region that has suffered for decades from a depopulation of the Great Plains (Couchon 2011). The state’s unemployment rate hasn’t reached 5 percent since 1987. The state’s per capita income rose over the decade from thirty-eighth in the nation to seventeenth, the biggest advance of any state. North Dakota is enjoying an oil boom in the western part of the state, drawing workers from across the country. Williston, in oil country, grew 17.6 percent (14,716). The oil windfall has created a $1 billion state budget surplus (USA Today 2011). North Dakota is not the only state that is growing in this recession. Texas is another state that is doing relatively well. The state added 165,000 jobs during the past three years, whereas California lost 1.2 million jobs (Lynn 2011). More recently, Tea Partiers were delighted when they heard that a group of California lawmakers flew to Texas to examine how Texas has been able to lure companies in recent years. The trip comes as California faces a remaining $15.4 billion budget deficit after Governor Jerry Brown signed $11.2 billion in spending cuts and fund transfers (Lynn 2011).
Albeit that most Tea Partiers commonly agree that California’s economy is bleak, many of them might disagree as to its economic future. In other words, some may suppose that it is bleak and will recover in the near future, whereas others within the movement will not foresee a desirable future for the State of California. Survey question 35 highlights these differences of opinions within the Tea Party.

Seventy-five percent of the sample population believes that the economy is bleak and will not turn around in the near future. This also corresponds well with their attitude regarding the national economy, because 65.4 percent of them mentioned earlier in the report that the national economy is grim and will not turn around in the near future. So why would the sample population feel any differently towards California’s economy, especially since many deem California to be in a worse economic condition than the national economy? It only makes sense that they would choose B (“economy is bleak and will not turn around in the near future”).

It is alarming to consider that so many of them are in such a dire mindset and wholeheartedly believe that California’s economy will not recover in the near future, that so many of them have lost hope in the direction of the state and in its leaders. Founded or not, many of them believe that progressive policies from the political left and moderate Republicans like former governor Arnold Schwarzenegger have destroyed the state’s economy. This means that the Tea Party sees it that both parties are partially responsible for essentially ruining entrepreneurial incentives from the state. The sad reality is to them, that Republicans like Arnold Schwarzenegger and Democrats like Nancy Pelosi have dominated California state politics for so long that they do not believe that the state
will ever elect candidates that will actually promote conservative ideals that would lead California back to prosperity.

Despite one’s view of them, Tea Partiers will support a politician like the former Governor Schwarzenegger as long as he stays firmly to Tea Party standards. Like-minded Conservatives supported President Bush until he abandoned his core conservative principles. The Tea Party will likewise do the same with the candidates they elect in the November 2012 elections and beyond. In times past, those that sympathize with the Tea Party have elected a number of these so-called conservative candidates and instead of growing accustomed to them and their unprincipled behavior, the Tea Party is now holding them accountable for their actions or the lack thereof. To them, moderate Republicans can no longer be tolerated and a new brand of Conservative Republican needs to be the standard bearer of the party.

Claiming Responsibility

“Blame is the act of censuring, holding responsible, making negative statements about an individual or group that their action or actions are socially or morally irresponsible (Merriam Webster Dictionary 11th ed., s.v. “Blame”). When someone is morally responsible for doing something wrong their action is blameworthy. The “blame game” is a very real socio-phenomenon that people do in times of crisis. When times are tough, people either band together to create a strong united front in resolving the issues at hand or they begin to turn on each other in bitter disgust or anguish. The Tea Party, like most political grassroots organizations, has fallen victim to proponent blame tactics as a means in stirring the hearts of likeminded populations concerning California economy.
Nevertheless, they are not alone in their ill feelings towards the California state budget. A study done by Rasmussen (2010d) says that 68 percent of Californians think Congress should cut its own pay until the federal budget is balanced. Also, 48 percent of California voters blame the state budget crisis on the Legislature, whereas, an overwhelming 94 percent of them do not see higher taxes as a budget solution (Rasmussen 2009b). On the other hand, 62 percent in California oppose education budget cuts (Rasmussen 2010e). This negative sentiment by so many in the state is caused by California’s $41 billion budget deficit.

Without a doubt, the Tea Party blames a combination of bad public policies by both parties, but they may also hold responsible the private market. They may blame failed state government policies instead of solely blaming the former governor, Arnold Schwarzenegger. Survey question 36 exposes their opinions concerning such.

Without further ado, the Tea Party is passionate over the direction of California and they are deeply concerned with the state’s economy. The sample population believes that California’s government policies are primarily to blame for the state’s struggling economy. In addition, the greater part of the sample population (76.8 percent) say that failed state government policies, combined with the California State Legislature, are to blame for the state’s struggling economy. By and large, Californians have shown exceedingly low levels of trust in state government since the recall of Governor Gray Davis. Moreover, only 38 percent of Californians trust the state government (Gallup 2009d).
By and large, according to CBS Evening News anchor Melissa McNamara, Politics in California is dominated by strong divides. The north verses the south, and the coastal versus inland areas. Cities such as San Francisco and Los Angeles tend to predominately support Democratic candidates whereas rural and inland areas tend to support Republicans. (CBS Evening News 2009)

McNamara reported that despite the seemingly even divide between liberals and conservatives, Democrats for the most part dominate state politics. “What has been consistent in the last few decades is that California politics has trended towards the Democratic Party and away from the Republican Party” (CBS Evening News 2009). She reiterated that from 1899 to 1939, California had Republican governors. “Once very conservative, having elected Republicans until 1958, California is now a reliable liberal, Democratic state” (CBS Evening News 2009). McNamara also discovered that since 1990, California has generally elected Democratic candidates to federal, state and local offices, including current Governor Jerry Brown. Moreover, the state has also elected a number of Republican governors. However, according to McNamara, many of the state’s Republican governors, such as Arnold Schwarzenegger, tend to be considered “moderate Republicans” and more centrist than the national party. Lastly, she said that “the Democrats also hold a majority in both houses of the state legislature. There are currently 52 Democrats and 27 Republicans in the Assembly and 25 Democrats and 15 Republicans in the Senate” (CBS Evening News 2009).

The trend towards the Democratic Party is most evident to Tea Party observers in presidential elections. They see that the Democratic Party candidate has won California’s electoral votes in the last five elections (CBS Evening News 2009). They realize that both the state’s current Democratic U.S. Senators, Dianne Feinstein and Barbara
Boxer, have held onto their seats since they were first elected in 1992. Moreover, Tea Partiers are aware that in the House of Representatives, the Democrats have held a 34-19 edge since 2007 (Govpro 2005). They also know that the districts in California are partially dominated by one or the other party with very few districts that could be considered competitive. Voting districts within the cities of Los Angeles and San Francisco have voted Democratic candidates for many years and they so no end to such in the near future. Those apart of the Tea Party are growing weary of this misrepresentation and would like to see Republicans regain House and Senate seats in the 2012 elections. Moreover, even when a Republican like Arnold Schwarzenegger wins the governor’s race, Californian Tea Party advocates consider being alone in their views and not properly represented by their state government. Then again, this is perhaps why they blame the state government for the failed economy as to the private market.

**Dividing California**

Does the Tea Party want to split the State of California? Yes, Tea Partiers nationwide would like to see California divide into smaller states, but they have not yet announced it publicly (The Data Lounge 2011). According to the High Desert Daily Press (2011), the Tea Partiers rallied behind recent remarks in July by Riverside County supervisor when Sharon Runner (R-CA) proposed to divide California in half and create a new “South California.” Runner said that the new state would not include Los Angeles County. Instead, it would encompass coastal Orange and San Diego counties, and more sparsely populated, inland areas such as Fresno, Imperial, Inyo, Kern, Madera, Mariposa, Mono, Riverside, San Bernardino and Tulare counties (High Desert Daily Press 2011).
Combined, those counties have a population of about 13 million people. Runner says that this proposal is an expression of frustration about the state’s dysfunction in which Tea Partiers outwardly agree. “The state faces multi-billion-dollar deficits year after year” says Runner. “California cannot continue down this road if the state desires to attract employees” (High Desert Daily Press 2011).

Notwithstanding, Senator Runner almost backtracks in her plea to split the state when she implies that the idea has merit and should be explored but it is unlikely that the California State Legislature would vote for the idea. Again, the California Tea Party has not publicly announced support for splitting the state. However, just because no public announcement has been made does not mean that the majority of them disagree with the measure.

Concluding Chapter Remarks

The question remains, Will California’s economy recover? California’s economy will recover according to Standard & Poor’s, yet the Tea Party understands that such an accomplishment at this time is not possible. The Tea Party firmly believes that Democratic districts and liberal statewide politicians will continue to prevent conservative fiscal policies from developing in the state. Therefore, to them, California will not recover in the near future. Indeed, California is no Greece, but it is no North Dakota or Texas either. They deem that the state needs to look to conservative states like them for fiscal guidance instead of Washington DC. Statewide Tea Party populations believe that California lawmakers need to pursue business friendly strategies to incentivize businesses back to the state. Moreover, the Tea Party understands that California lawmakers need to
cut spending reduce taxes and slash public pensions. They understand that providing
business incentives, cutting spending, reducing taxes, and slashing public pensions would
put people back to work and eventually repair the state’s economy. Lastly, the Tea Party
has not officially commented on the dividing of California, yet Tea Party populations
throughout the country would love to see the state divide (The Data Lounge 2011).
CHAPTER XI

OVERVIEW AND CONCLUSION

The Tea Party movement is mostly represented by the Tea Party Patriots. The organization claims firmly to the three-fold mission of fiscal responsibility, limited government, and personal accountability, but many of its conservative members participate in political parties such as the Republican Party and social policy like pro-life. America’s perception of them being connected to social issues has strongly negatively impacted the group’s image and credibility. Americans are simply unaware that the Tea Party Express on the other hand, advocates political agendas, supports candidates, and stands for social issues, yet the Tea Party Express is small in comparison to the Tea Party Patriots. Indeed, the Tea Party at large is well represented by conservative Republicans, but it is also made up of a large group of fiscal libertarians. Libertarian Texas Congressman Ron Paul (R-TX) actually pushed for the beginning of the modern Tea Party movement and began a number of small Tea Party groups across the nation, long before the 2009 outburst. Many deem Paul as the creator of the modern Tea Party.

The motivation for their involvement varies from person to person, but the vast majority of them say that they grew tired of not being heard by their Republican elected officials. Many of them oppose using the Tea Party platform to support high profile persons like Sarah Palin that desire to promote their own agendas. On the contrary, the Tea Party Express is aimed at raising money and supporting such high profile figures
and seems to not care about being co-opted into the Republican establishment. By and large, Tea Partiers belonging to the Tea Party Patriots are concerned with being co-opted into the Republican establishment and due to such conservative influences, understand that in time it is virtually inevitable.

The Tea Party phenomenon is still relatively new. The majority of them have not been involved in politics beyond the advent of its creation two years ago. Males have a slight edge to females, and Tea Party supporters are considerably older than the national average. Forty percent are 55 and over, compared with 32 percent of other polling populations, while 22 percent are under the age of 35 (Digital Journal 2010). They are predominately employed, but since so many of them are over the age of 55, many are retired. They tend to be married with two to three children, which is precisely the nation average. Tea Partiers prefer sending their children to private schools. They also are above the national average for church attendance. The localized sample population seems to correlate with the general Tea Party populous in most categories except for age and educational statistics. Moreover, the Tea Party at large is comparable to the average American in some categories such as family size and employment status, but they substantially differ in marital status, preferred education, study, gender, age, educational background and religious affiliation (HuffPost Politics 2010b), which also impacts America’s views of them.

Despite the Tea Party’s nonpartisan claims, nearly 80 percent of them describe themselves as Republicans, while 15 percent say they are Democrats and just 6 percent Independents (Washington Post 2010a). Even if most of the Tea Party belongs to the
Republican Party, that does not necessarily suggest they are satisfied with the Republicans’ performances in office. A combined 64 percent of them in this report indicate they are either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the Republican Party. Even though they are not always satisfied with the Republican Party, many of them deem the Republicans basically as the lesser of the two evils when it involves political forces. Tea Partiers claim that neither looks out for the good of the people and neither adheres to the constitutional principles of limited government.

It is imperative for the reader to understand the magnitude of their overall frustrations with the Republican Party. The Tea Party partially began out of frustrations with Republican leaders. Some Tea Partiers have been so disappointed in the Republican establishment that they have even threatened to begin a third party. As triumphant as this may seem to such advocates, the Tea Party has been in a dither concerning the idea of completely splitting from the Republican establishment and showed in the 2010 elections that they are still firmly connected to the Republicans. What won their Republican loyalty is the fact that so many of them fear the empowerment of the Democrats and would do anything to mitigate their success.

Some Tea Partiers want to abolish the entire federal government, but these persons are far and few between in the organization’s masses. By and large, the majority of them seek a very limited government role in America and agree with Milton Friedman’s (2002) understanding of government that essentially the responsibility of the government is to maintain law and order, define property rights, and serve as a means
whereby the people could modify property rights and other rules of the economic enterprises of the people.

Congressional leaders and Tea Partiers standing side by side rarely occurs. The Tea Party despises most political leaders because of their usual lack of standards and integrity. Even the so-called good ones they openly scorn and tend to disagree with. They presume that anyone willing to strive for an elected position is generally looking after him or herself instead of the good of the Republic. They see it that the people that actually make changes in America are not those that strive for office, but instead, are the countless individual actors that make America great. They also affirm that paltry efforts to amend the economy by past and current politicians only prolong macroeconomic concerns. Yet again, they claim that empty political promises are what they call as the illusionary justification, which only justifies the expansion of the federal bureaucracy.

The Tea Party is at odds with the majority of Americans on economic issues. The Tea Party does not see the need for expanding the debt ceiling, promoting stimulus spending, and furthering centralized monetary policies. They wholeheartedly disagree with world renowned economist Paul Krugman and John Maynard Keynes concerning such economic implications. On the other hand, the Tea Party stands firmly with economists like Milton Friedman and Peter Schiff and the Austrian School of Thought and their views of fighting public deficits and spending, as well as their views of savings and investment strategies.

No matter what the condition, the Tea Party blames the current economic crisis on failed government policy by the Obama Administration and past presidencies. The
Tea Party desires to see the end of basic functions like the Federal Reserve and the progressive tax system. They do disagree amongst each other on some minor points of view concerning such, like a flat tax or the fair tax. Notwithstanding their differences of opinions, the majority of them support the fair tax as opposed to the flat tax, and view the implementation of either as necessary for a strong economy.

Overall, the Tea Party has a credibility problem. The Tea Party striving to replace Keynes general theory of GDP (public and private consumption) with the Austrian point of view (savings and investment) will place them on the national stage, but mainly for mockery reasons. And, therefore, they will continue to be perceived by the American people as a right-wing fanatical fringe movement. Nevertheless, accomplishing such a task of fundamentally changing America’s macroeconomic positions, essentially economic standards that have stood firmly since the 1930s, would be monumental and almost impossible for the movement to achieve.

Tea Partiers are also not united with America and will be often publicly humiliated on their positions concerning environmental protection laws. Instead of supporting additional regulation and unfounded unconstitutional laws, they understand that property rights and the free market are the best means in which to protect the environment. The Tea Party understands that the preservation of freedom requires the elimination of such concentration of power to the fullest possible extent and the dispersal and distribution of whatever power cannot be eliminated; for this reason a return to the system of checks and balances is needed. Despite the differences of opinions and being out numbered 10 to 1, heated dialog will continue between public choice theorists and Kyoto Protocol
enthusiasts. As Tea Partiers learn and develop in their free market passions, they will more than likely continue to gravitate towards the public choice theorists views of the environment if they haven’t already because so many of them are founded in outwardly rogue anti-establishment theories.

Although all of them are directly positively and negatively influenced by wealth redistribution and congressional regulation, it is discovered in this report that over 75 percent of the Tea Party participants do not publicly support wealth redistribution. By and large, the Tea Party stands against the majority of Americans in their views that most government policies are a hindrance to economic growth and prosperity (Gallup 200b). Not only does the Tea Party claim that governmental policies obstruct the economy, they also understand them to impact freedom and are contrary to the embodiment of the Constitution. Overall, 93 percent of the movement considers that the federal government is doing too much and if they had a choice on the matter they would rather have a smaller government providing fewer services than a bigger government providing more services (New York Times 2011).

Not only do they perceive the government as a hindrance to economic prosperity and freedom, they also deem government to be the problem to America’s healthcare and educational woes. They often distain leaders of the Republican Party like George Bush, Newt Gingrich, or Mitt Romney when they continually fail to understand that the government is not acceptable or responsible for embedding government solutions to these market conditions. What the Tea Party wants from Republican leaders is to understand that it is just best for the government to get out of the way of the private
market. If Republican leaders like Newt Gingrich or Mitt Romney want to gain favor with the Tea Party population, then it is imperative for them to understand that markets work and governments do not. Moreover, the Tea Party wholeheartedly desires for Republican leaders like them to essentially become conservative leaders once again.

The Tea Party, in general, is most concerned with the rapid expansion of the U.S. government. As mentioned before, the Tea Party views the expansion of government as nothing more than added obstacles for entrepreneurs and higher taxes for businesses. They see it that the nation is declining because of too much government bureaucracy and excessive spending habits, namely in public education and healthcare, and would rather see the government step aside concerning such. They would like to have federal appropriations slashed to privileged persons and entitlement spending slowed to a halt. This means that the Tea Party desires to see that the people begin the reversal of appropriations of monies and namely for Congress to stop acting as a benevolent “Santa Claus” in their supposed quest to seek the interests of their constituents.

Notwithstanding their overreaching concerns, the Tea Party understands that the country is not ready to cut all entitlement programs and discontinue all appropriations at once. Even Ron Paul (2012) has come out with his proposal to gradually restore America one step at a time. Therefore, Tea Partiers like Paul seek to gradually cut such misappropriations and to reverse current national trends. Nevertheless, the major dilemma for the Tea Party pursuing such reversal initiatives is that they are at such odds with so many Americans.
The Tea Party stands contrary to Standard and Poor’s (2011) economic assessment of California when they say that California’s economy will not recover in the near future. The Tea Party firmly maintains that Democratic districts and liberal statewide politicians will continue to prevent conservative fiscal policies from developing and taking shape in the state. Although many of them like to make the comparisons, California is no Greece. Tea Partiers deem that the state needs to look to conservative states like North Dakota or Texas for fiscal guidance instead of Washington DC.

Statewide Tea Party populations believe that California lawmakers need to pursue business friendly strategies to incentivize businesses back to the state. Again, the Tea Party moves against the grain of the majority of Californians when they say that California lawmakers need to cut spending, reduce taxes and slash public pensions. Additionally, Tea Partiers understand that providing business incentives, cutting spending, reducing taxes, and slashing public pensions would put people back to work and eventually repair the state’s economy. Tea Party populations throughout the country would love to see California divide, but the Tea Party Patriot organization has not officially commented on the possibility.

Overall, the local Tea Party populations in Oroville, Chico, and Redding resemble the Tea Party movement at large in almost every major statistical category conducted in this report. Therefore, the wide-ranging hypothesis which compares the local Tea Party to the Tea Party at large is supported. However, the general hypothesis that compares the Tea Party to the American population is not supported. The Tea Party may adamantly oppose and not resemble the vast majority of Americans, but they shall remain
firm in their limited understandings of government, economics, and politics. The Republicans will continue to booster Tea Party support, but the movement will persist in openly scrutinizing the Republican establishment. Due to its traditional character and established makeup, the Tea Party will continue to attract likeminded fiscal conservatives and libertarians, but it is very unlikely that the organization will ever win the hearts and minds of American public. By and large, their economic and political attitudes are just too asymmetrical for most people to grasp or agree with.

In view of that, the Tea Party has huge issues going forward. First and foremost, the Tea Party has a severe image problem with the American people. Most people do not deem them as a credible grassroots social movement and a political force. Second, the organization has and will come across added pressures to be co-opted into the Republican establishment. Joining the Republican enterprise could jeopardize the integrity of the Tea Party’s three-fold mission because Republicans do not always adhere to Tea Party standards of limited government, free markets, and personal accountability. Third, the Tea Party will fight the tides of an ever changing political climate. Their apprehensions in relation to fiscal responsibility and limited governance will not always be on the forefront of the conservative right. Lastly, countless dedicated Tea Party followers will increasingly become apathetic and choose to free ride rather than take an active role in the organization. Social movements usually rapidly rise to prominence and then fall to irrelevance; the Tea Party will likewise undergo the same predicament.

The country may have truly been founded on principles of limited government, personal accountability, and free markets, but that country no longer exists.
America for better or worse has changed and the Tea Party movement today will fight against a people indulged on a system of public entitlements and government securities. Sadly for them, the Tea Party’s prevailing attitudes and positions regarding the role and nature of government are just too old to grasp for an American generation that is steeped in contemporary literature and progressive ideas. If the Tea Party is to survive, its survival depends on the continuation of an absolutely dedicated foundation of people firmly connected to its core principles of the three-fold mission; never wavering, never succumbing to external popular pressures, and never giving in to the Republican establishment and the changing social environment.
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INFORMED CONSENT

I am graduate student in Political Science Department at California State University-Chico. I am conducting a research project for my graduate thesis on the Tea Party Patriots. The purpose of this survey is to collect some basic information concerning your involvement in the Tea Party Patriots and let me know both your thoughts on specific political issues and your general knowledge of the political spectrum. The survey should take you no more than 15 minutes to complete. If you choose to participate in this research there is no benefit to you. Although it is not intended, the subject matter may be stressful. Participation is completely voluntary. There is no penalty for not taking the questionnaire and you can choose not to answer the questions. Your responses will be confidential, neither your responses nor identifying information will be shared outside of me and the thesis committee. Thank you for your survey participation.
APPENDIX B
1. What motivates your interest in the Tea Party movement?
   A. Government Healthcare proposal.
   B. Concern regarding increased government spending.
   C. An increase in progressive ideology in government.
   D. Being let down by Congress.
   E. Concern regarding national security.
   F. Government movement away from following the Constitution.
   G. Increase size of government.
   H. Concern regarding lessening of liberties.
   I. Other (Please specify)_________________________________

2. In view of the upcoming 2010 primary and general elections, what role(s) do you believe this organization should play?
   A. Precinct organization
   B. Candidate forums
   C. Voter registration
   D. Door-to-door canvassing/education
   E. Get-out-the-vote efforts
   F. Fund raising
   G. Other (Please specify)_________________________________

3. In addition to voting how long have you been an active participant in politics?
   A. Less than one year.
   B. One to two years.
   C. Two to five years.
   D. Five to ten years.
   E. More than ten years.
   F. Other (Please specify)_________________________________

4. Gender:
   A. Male
   B. Female
5. Age:
   A. 18-35
   B. 36-50
   C. 51-65
   D. 66+

6. What is your highest level of education?
   A. High school / GED
   B. Some college
   C. Trade school
   D. Associates degree
   E. Bachelors degree
   F. Advanced degree
   G. None of the above.
   H. Other (Please Specify) _________________________________

7. How many hours per day do you spend watching or reading politics?
   A. Less than one hour.
   B. One to two hours.
   C. Two to five hours.
   D. Five to eight hours.
   E. More than eight hours.
   F. Other (please specify)__________________________________

8. What is your current employment status?
   A. Fully employed but unsatisfied.
   B. Fully employed and satisfied.
   C. Partially employed and unsatisfied.
   D. Partially employed and satisfied.
   E. Not employed and not looking.
   F. Not employed and looking.
   G. Retired

9. What is your marital status?
   A. Married
   B. Unmarried
   C. Partnership
   D. Other (Please Specify) _________________________________

10. How many children (include adopted children) do you have?
    A. None
    B. 1
    C. 2
    D. 3
11. What type of education do you prefer[ed] sending your child too?
   A. Home school
   B. Private
   C. Charter
   D. Public
   E. No opinion

12. Are you involved with a religious group or association?
   A. I am highly involved.
   B. I am somewhat involved.
   C. I am rarely involved.
   D. I am never involved.
   F. Other (Please Specify)_________________________________________.

13. What is your opinion of the Republican Party?
   A. Very Satisfied
   B. Satisfied
   C. Neither
   D. Dissatisfied
   E. Very Dissatisfied
   F. Other (Please Specify)_________________________________________.

14. What is your opinion of the Democrat Party?
   A. Very satisfied
   B. Satisfied
   C. Neither
   D. Dissatisfied
   E. Very Dissatisfied
   F. Other (Please Specify)_________________________________________.

15. What is your opinion of Barrack Obama’s presidential performance?
   A. Excellent
   B. Satisfactory
   C. Unsatisfactory
   D. Terrible
   E. Other (Please specify)_________________________________________.

16. What is your opinion of George W. Bush’s presidential performance?
   A. Excellent
   B. Satisfactory
17. What is the ideological separation between the Democrats and the Republicans?
   A. Polar opposites
   B. Similar in some areas and vastly different in others.
   C. Slightly different
   D. No difference
   E. Other (Please Specify) __________________________________________

18. In actual performance, what is the difference between the Democrats and the Republicans?
   A. Polar opposites
   B. Similar in some areas and vastly different in others.
   C. Slightly different
   D. No difference
   E. Other (Please Specify) __________________________________________

19. How should Congress handle Social Security?
   A. Leave social security alone
   B. Push the qualifying age back.
   C. Initiate a half government, half private market system.
   D. Privatize the system altogether
   E. I am not sure.
   A. Other (Please Specify) __________________________________________

20. What is your outlook of the national economy?
   A. The national economy is currently struggling but will turn around in the near future.
   B. The national economy is bleak and will not turn around in the near future.
   C. The national economy is stronger than most people’s perceptions.
   D. The national economy cannot be recovered.
   E. Other (Please Specify) __________________________________________

21. How should Congress stimulate the national economy?
   A. Additional stimulus funds and government programs
   B. Increase regulation and oversight
   C. Print additional money
   D. Enhance social entitlement programs
22. Who is responsible for the struggling national economy? (Pick one or more)
   A. Failed government policies.
   B. Failed government policies combined with the failure of the private market.
   C. The failed private market.
   D. President Barack Obama is to blame.
   E. George W. Bush is to blame.
   F. Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac are to blame.
   G. The collapse of the Housing Bubble.
   H. No one is to blame.
   I. All are partially responsible.
   J. Other (Please Specify) _________________________________.

23. How do Congressional regulatory policies impact America’s free market system?
   A. Significant positive impact
   B. Positive impact
   C. No impact
   D. Marginal negative impact
   E. Significant negative impact
   F. No opinion
   G. Congressional decisions facilitate necessary conditions for the free market system to thrive.
   H. Other (Please Specify) _________________________________.

24. How does Congressional regulation and oversight impact any of your basic freedoms?
   A. Significant positive impact
   B. Positive impact
   C. No impact
   D. Marginal negative impact
   E. Significant negative impact
   F. Regulation and Congressional oversight are necessary conditions for a thriving economy.
   G. No opinion
   H. Other (Please Specify) _________________________________.

25. What is your opinion of Congressional redistribution of wealth?
   A. Some redistributive programs such as financial aid, unemployment protection, and handicapped referenda are necessary conditions.
B. Some redistributive programs are necessary but many are not.
C. Congress should reconsider some redistribution programs.
D. Redistribution is never tolerated under any circumstance.
E. No opinion.
F. Other (Please Specify)________________________________________.

26. How should Congress approach the Federal tax system?
A. Leave our current progressive tax system alone.
B. Initiate a flat tax.
C. Initiate a fair tax.
D. The tax burden should shift from the Residential to the Commercial sector.
E. The tax burden should shift from the Commercial to the Residential sector.
F. The tax burden should shift from the Commercial and Residential sectors to the Industrial sector.
G. Americans making over $250,000 should pay higher taxes.
H. None of the above.
I. Other (Please Specify)________________________________________.

27. What national catastrophe do you fear the most?
A. China buying American debts and assets.
B. Another major terrorist attack.
C. Excessive inflation and unemployment.
D. Out of control government spending and deficits.
E. The government overstepping Constitutional limitations.
F. Other (Please Specify)________________________________________.

28. What should be the U.S. foreign Policy in Iraq and Afghanistan?
A. Finish the job in Iraq and Afghanistan.
B. Bring home the troops.
C. Time to start carpet bombing.
D. Turn the two countries over to allied nations
E. The U.S. should turn to diplomatic solutions.

29. What is the biggest problem with America’s educational system?
A. Teachers Unions.
B. Insufficient Funding.
C. Too much funding.
D. Low test scores.
E. The “No Child Left Behind Act.”
F. Kids are not learning the basics.
G. I generally like our current educational system.
H. It’s fantastic, leave it alone.
I. Other (Please specify)________________________________________.
30. How should Congress approach national healthcare?
   A. Leave the current system alone.
   B. Turn healthcare over to the Federal government.
   C. Promote tort reform and the purchase of private insurance across state lines.
   D. Turn healthcare over to the private market.
   E. Healthcare should be left to the states.
   F. Other (Please Specify)________________________________________.

31. How will “Cap and Trade” impact the U.S. economy?
   A. Positively impact the economy by introducing green technology and green jobs.
   B. No impact
   C. Marginal negative impact
   D. Significant negative impact
   E. Cap and Trade will impact the economy but it is necessary for the environment.
   F. Other (Please Specify)________________________________________.

32. How will additional environmental regulation and oversight impact the U.S. economy?
   A. Green jobs created will help the U.S. economy recover from recession.
   B. No impact
   C. Marginal negative impact
   D. Significant negative impact
   E. Environmental regulation will impact the economy but it is necessary.
   F. Other (Please Specify)________________________________________.

33. What is your general outlook of the United States?
   A. The nation is on decline.
   B. The nation is at its apex.
   C. The nation is on the rise.
   D. Remaining steady.
   E. “Free Falling.”
   G. Other (Please Specify)________________________________________.

34. What should be targeted first from the California state budget? (pick one or more)
   A. K-12 Public Education
   B. High Education
   C. Health and Human Resources
   D. Corrections and Rehabilitation
   E. Business, Transportation and Housing
   F. Natural Resources: water resources, fish and game, recycling agencies.
G. Environmental Protection
H. State and Consumer Services: public retirements, fair employment, safety.
I. Labor and workforce Development
J. Legislative, Judicial, and Executive
K. Leave the state budget alone
L. Other (Please Specify)_______________________________

35. What is your outlook of California’s economy?
   A. The state economy is currently struggling but will turn around in the near future.
   B. The state economy is bleak and will not turn around in the near future.
   C. The state economy is stronger than most people’s perceptions.
   D. The state economy is terrible and cannot be recovered.
   E. Other (Please Specify) ________________________________.

36. Who is responsible for California’s struggling economy?
   A. Failed state government policies.
   B. Failed state government policies combined with the failure of the private market.
   C. The failed private market.
   D. Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger is to blame.
   E. California State Legislature is to blame.
   F. No one is responsible.
   G. Other (Please Specify)____________________________________.

37. How should the California state legislature stimulate the state’s economy? (pick one or more)
   A. Increase spending and deficits
   B. Additional regulation and oversight
   C. Enhance social entitlement programs
   D. Target excessive spending and deficits
   E. Reduce regulation and oversight
   F. Diminish social entitlement programs
   G. Discontinue public unions
   H. Other (Please Specify)____________________________________.

38. Besides addressing the budget and unemployment issues, what should be the primary focus of the next governor of California? (pick one or more)
   A. Begin offshore drilling
   B. Stop illegal immigration
   C. Revitalize the agriculture industry
   D. Discontinue public unions
   E. Invest in green technologies
   F. Connect urban cities with high speed rail
G. Fix K-12 public education
H. Other (Please Specify)_________________________________________.