

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

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Tea Party Fairness:
How the Idea of Proportional Justice Explains the Right-Wing
Populism of the Obama Era

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Political Science

by

Emily Elisabeth Ekins

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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Professor John Zaller, Chair

In this dissertation I argue that the main impulse underlying the tea party movement is a conviction that activist government helps the undeserving at the expense of the truly productive members of society. I say main impulse because racial resentment and other illiberal attitudes also contribute to tea party involvement. But illiberal motives do not play the dominant role that much existing research suggests. When tests are properly conducted, preference for limited government is the strongest and most consistent predictor of tea party support.

Further, I show that the movement catalyzed as a protest against the “bailouts” of undeserving Wall Street banks, other financial institutions, and automakers in 2008, before it acquired the famous tea party moniker from journalist Rick Santelli in February 2009. With repeated fast-paced government interventions in response to the Great Recession and with

increasing publicity of the tea party brand early in the administration of President Barack Obama, the movement grew into a heterogeneous coalition, consisting of three distinct groups.

I find the largest of these subgroups has a strongly libertarian flavor and scarcely a whiff of racial animus. Social conservatives comprise another significant group, with strong preferences for limited government and moral traditionalism, and some racially conservative attitudes. Racial conservatives are a substantial subgroup too, but my analysis shows that they are no less motivated by the issue of limited government than others in the movement. These groups are different from one another but came together in the same movement largely because they shared a belief that the federal government had violated basic fairness in its response to difficult economic times.

I go on to argue that tea partiers' preference for limited government is itself primarily driven by a "reap what you sow" conception of economic justice, rather than, as much tea party rhetoric proclaims, a desire for individual liberty. In the psychological literature on fairness, this conception is called "proportional justice"—the idea that everyone should be rewarded in strict proportion to their achievements and failings, and that government should not shield people from the consequences of their decisions. In sum, I contend the tea party impulse is at its core a demand for what its members see as basic economic fairness.

The dissertation of Emily Elisabeth Ekins is approved.

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To Justin and my parents

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ABBREVIATIONS

TCOT: Top Conservatives on Twitter

CBS/NYT: CBS/*New York Times* April 2010 National Survey

ANES EGSS 2 (or ANES12): 2012 American National Election Studies Evaluations of Government and Society Study Survey 2

YM: YourMorals.org Convenience Sample 2012

FMWK: FreedomWorks/YourMorals.org Convenience Sample of Tea Party Supporters 2012

DC: Washington D.C. April 2010 Tax Day Tea Party Protest, Activist Survey

VA: Richmond, Virginia Tea Party Convention October 2010, Activist Survey

MFT: Moral Foundations Theory

MFQ: Moral Foundations Questionnaire

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Preface

“Whenever the Government assumes the power of discriminating between different classes of the community, it becomes, in effect, the arbiter of their prosperity.”¹

The rapid expansion of credit fueled a boom ushering in an era of unprecedented prosperity. But the boom soon devolved into a liquidity crisis, a devaluation of capital, bank runs and calamitous bank failures. In a matter of months, the country devolved into one of the worst economic recessions the United States had ever witnessed.²

Many debtors found themselves underwater on their debt obligations and teetering on bankruptcy. Policymakers and advocates argued that the economy could not withstand the level of marketplace debt and thus government intervention was necessary.³ Furthermore, many argued that debtors had been “beguiled” into purchasing their assets at high prices and therefore government action was not only needed to soften the impact of the financial crisis but to protect them from “injustice, injury, and ruin.”⁴ Others admitted that while some debtors were speculators, they were victims of the markets’ whims.⁵ Some proposed various forms of debt forgiveness, state-banking policies to expand the money supply, and other laws to ease debtors’ burdens. Intervention of the kind had been seen before but perhaps never on such a widespread scale.

At the same time many opposed the use of legislative intervention arguing that

¹ Leggett, W. (1834-1837/1984). Democratick Editorials: Essays in Jacksonian Political Economy by William Leggett. Indianapolis, Liberty Press.

² See Watson (1990/2006), Howe (2007), Rothbard (1962)

³ Rep. Allen of Tennessee, “We are told there is not money in the country to pay this enormous debt, and to attempt exacting it is requiring from the people who owe it impossibilities (House of Representatives 1821, p. 1187)

⁴ Rothbard (1962, Loc. 900), Sen. Johnson of Kentucky argued “the Government owes no less to itself than to them [the debtors], to protect them from injustice, from injury, from ruin. Withhold the relief which their peculiar necessities now demand, and you give a deadly blow to the brightest hopes of the nation. It will be life refusing the kind offices of paternal care to a perishing child, who, if nourished, is destined to be your support and comfort in declining age...a good man will not leave all his children to starve (House of Representatives 1821, p. 216).

⁵ See Rothbard (1962, Loc. 840-855); see Sen. Ninian Edwards of Illinois, House of Representatives (1821, pgs. 161-178); see Sen. Jesse Thomas of Illinois, House of Representatives (1821, p. 156).

government should not interfere or “meddle” in the marketplace.⁶ As one prominent news outlet argued, government “should concern themselves very little with the profits or losses of trade.”⁷ Such critics often reasoned that government interference would instead simply aggravate the crisis with the “most pernicious effect.”⁸

More passionately, however, critics of State relief further reasoned that government intervention would in effect unjustly privilege one group over another and that ethically government should not shield people from the consequences of their actions.⁹ Indeed, elected officials opposed to proposed government interventions contended that those on the verge of bankruptcy should “pay the consequence of his own folly of imprudence” and that government

⁶ Rep. Robert T. Thompson of Virginia, *New York Daily Advertiser* (1819) March 6, 1819; May 20, 1819; June 10, 1819; June 17, 1819; August 21, 1819, The Hopkinson Committee report: cited in Rothbard (1962, Loc. 463, 1006, 1087). Rep. James Johnson of Virginia argued “let the people manage their own affairs...the people of this country understand their own interests and will pursue them to advantage” (*National Intelligencer* (1820): cited in Rothbard 1962). The *New York Evening Post* also argued “Time and the laws of trade will restore things to an equilibrium, if legislatures do not rashly interfere in the natural course of events” (*New York Evening Post* (1819): cited in Rothbard 1962).

⁷ Prominent New England lawyer Willard Phillips at the time wrote that legislatures “should concern themselves very little with the profits or losses of trade, as it is a question which the merchants alone are acquainted with, and capable of deciding; and as the public interest coincides exactly with theirs, there is no danger of its being neglected. The losses of trade fall, in the first instance, on the capitals of the merchants” (Phillips 1819, p. 231).

⁸ See *Missouri Intelligencer* (1821), *St. Louis Enquirer* (1821), *Philadelphia Union* (1820): cited in Rothbard (1962, p. 1210, 1126). Rep. Robert Allen of Tennessee warned: “If the people learn that debts can be paid with petitions and fair stories, you will soon have your table crowded” (*Annals of Congress*, 16th Congress 1st Session, pp 1187-89, 1221ff, Rep. Robert Allen of Tennessee Rothbard 1962). Prominent journalist Hezekiah Niles contended that “I have never heard of anything of the kind being done [legislative relief], which did not add to the heap of suffering which it was presumed to be a panacea for...the dissolute and desperate...calculate upon such procrastinated payments...that they get not only deeper and deeper in debt, but involve others in their difficulties” (Niles 1821, p. 146). (Phillips 1819). Hopkinson Committee Report: “palliatives which may suspend the pain for a season, but do not remove the disease, are not restoratives of health; it is worse than useless to lessen the present pressure by means which will finally plunge us deeper in distress” (*New Jersey Legislature* 1820).

⁹ See VA State Rep. William Seldon (1820): cited in Rothbard (1962, p. 880-894, 1079), see Rep. Robert Allen of Tennessee House of Representatives (1821, pgs. 1187-1189) “If he [the debtors] has been disappointed, has he any right to call on the whole community to bear his loss? No; no more than they would have had to share his profit, had his expectations been realized. Let us not direct all our sympathy to one particular class of traders”; Gov. William Carroll of Tennessee (1821) cited in: Rothbard (1962, Loc. 1370). Hezekiah Niles, one of the leading journalists of the day, wrote in the prominent *Niles’ Weekly Register*: “But they [Kentucky and Tennessee state legislatures] attempted to legislate their people out of their difficulties, and the result has been, that every act for that purpose producing momentary relief to some, has mightily added to the general stock of misery and distress—and caused the ruin of thousands through the sudden extensions and sudden contractions of the credit system—by outrageous depreciations of the local currency, which necessarily caused extraordinary appreciations of money” (Niles 1821, p. 146).

should “leave men alone.”¹⁰ Likewise, a leading journalist contended that government had “attempted to legislate their people out of their difficulties, and the result...produc[ed] momentary relief to some” while “mightily add[ing] to the general stock of misery and distress” of others. Instead the writer insisted that “extensive suffering” of the debtors would “compel” such individuals to make wiser choices in the future.¹¹

Critics of government intervention often resorted to calling their opponents “spendthrifts,” “those who would live on the labor of their fellows,” and “big speculators” who favored privileging the politically connected at the expense of the common people.¹² Instead, this camp urged frugality and retrenchment of government spending and reducing the national debt.¹³

Such debate was not limited to lawmakers and journalists. A strain of grassroots populism also emerged suspicious that government favoritism had led to the financial crisis by enabling the central bank to facilitate excessive credit expansion during the boom years.¹⁴ These populists feared government intervention too often turned into government favoritism, giving unfair and undeserved advantages to the politically connected at the expense of everyone else and thus desired less government, free enterprise, and a reduction of the national debt.¹⁵

These events may seem all too familiar to those who witnessed the 2008 financial crisis, governmental attempts to contain the crisis, and the ensuing backlash from fiscal conservatives. What may surprise readers, notwithstanding the old language, is that these events surrounded the Panic of 1819, the United States’ first financial depression. The conditions and reactions are

¹⁰ See VA State Rep. William Seldon and Rep. Andrew Stevenson of Virginia (1820) cited in: Rothbard (1962, Loc. 1079).

¹¹ Niles (1821, p. 146)

¹² Franklin Missouri Intelligencer (1821) and Jackson Independent Patriot cited in: Rothbard (1962, p. 1244-1245, 2282). See Rothbard (1962) Chapter 1, footnote 100, Loc. 787. Hezekiah Niles lambasted those who would “live on the labor of their fellows” and instead suggested that “extensive suffering” should “compel [them] to live honestly or suffer [them] to exist ignominiously” (Niles 1821, p. 146)

¹³ See Rothbard (1962) Chapter 1, footnote 100, Loc. 787.

¹⁴ See Howe (2007).

¹⁵ See Lamoreaux (1994) Hofstadter (1943) Leggett (1834-1837/1984) and Howe (2010).

strikingly similar to the tea party movement that emerged 190 years later whose explicit top priorities were to rein in government spending, reduce the national debt, and constrain government action.

Modern observers who view the tea party social movement as a contemporary phenomenon or a product of status maintenance fears fail to recognize that it is perhaps better understood as a common set of reactions and complaints about fairness and government action that recur throughout history. Indeed, historian Daniel Walker Howe has compared the contemporary tea party to the populist energy that gave rise to Andrew Jackson's election as president in 1828 and provided him the electoral cover to destroy the Second Bank of the United States. Howe explained, "the policies of Jackson's administration would warm the hearts of tea partiers...Jackson seemed to have little use for...much of the federal government," notwithstanding expanding the spoils system and Indian Removal (Howe 2010). Furthermore, during Jackson's tenure Congress lowered taxes and for the first and only time in United States history completely paid off the national debt.

Chapter 1:

What the Tea Party Is, What It Wants, and Why It Matters

Few anticipated the conservative backlash that burst into American political life in the early 2000s and came to be known as the tea party movement. Although likely short-lived as social movements often are, no history of the period can overlook the tea party's significance as a meaningful strain of mass public opinion in demand of limited central government.

In this dissertation I argue that the main impulse underlying the tea party movement is a conviction that activist government helps the undeserving at the expense of the truly productive members of society. I say main impulse because racial resentment and other illiberal attitudes also contribute to tea party involvement. But illiberal motives do not play the dominant role that much existing research suggests. When tests are properly conducted, preference for limited government is the strongest and most consistent predictor of tea party support.

I also demonstrate that the tea party is a heterogeneous movement, consisting of three distinct groups. The largest of these subgroups has a strongly libertarian flavor and scarcely a whiff of racial animus. Social conservatives comprise another significant group, with strong preferences for limited government and moral traditionalism, and certain racially conservative attitudes. Racial conservatives are a substantial subgroup too, but my analysis shows that they are no less motivated by the issue of limited government than others in the movement.

The skepticism toward government action found across the tea party's several factions has been present throughout American history, but seems to come to the fore in bad economic times. I therefore argue that the tea party is best understood as an economic protest movement.

I show that the movement catalyzed in late 2008 as a protest against the "bailouts" of undeserving Wall Street banks, other financial institutions, and automakers. This was before it

acquired the famous tea party moniker from journalist Rick Santelli in February 2009. With repeated fast-paced government interventions in response to the Great Recession and with increasing publicity of the tea party brand early in the administration of President Barack Obama, the movement grew into a coalition of dissimilar types, including libertarians, social conservatives, and racial conservatives. Across multiple datasets and using multiple methods I find this pattern of ideological heterogeneity. These groups were different from one another but came together in the same movement mainly because they shared a similar belief that the federal government had violated basic fairness in its response to difficult economic times.

I go on to argue that tea partiers' preference for limited government is itself primarily driven by a "reap what you sow" conception of economic justice, rather than, as much tea party rhetoric proclaims, a desire for individual liberty. In the psychological literature on fairness, this conception is called "proportional justice" or "proportionality." The key idea is that everyone should be rewarded in strict proportion to their achievements and failings and that government should not shield people from the consequences of their decisions. In the minds of tea party supporters, this idea is simple fairness.

Jonathan Haidt proposed this explanation of the tea party movement in a 2010 *Wall Street Journal* op-ed in which he contended:

"the passion of the tea party movement is, in fact, a moral passion. It can be summarized in one word: not liberty, but karma...they want to live in a country in which hard work and personal responsibility pay off and laziness, cheating, and irresponsibility bring people to ruin. Give them liberty, sure, but more than that: Give them karma" (Haidt 2010b).

In this dissertation I further develop and test Haidt's argument that the tea party movement is largely driven by this particular concept of justice.

Many political science researchers have conceptualized justice in terms of egalitarianism. However, studies by social psychologists dating back to the 1960s have found that at least two

conceptions of justice exist in human populations (see Adams 1963, Walster, Berscheid, and Walster 1975, Deutsch 1975, Walster, Walster, and Berscheid 1978, Harris 1980, Rasinski 1984, Rasinski 1987, Fiske 1992, Haidt 2013). As Haidt (2012) has written, “everyone cares about fairness, but there are two major kinds. On the left, fairness often implies equality, but on the right it means proportionality—people should be rewarded in proportion to what they contribute, even if that guarantees unequal outcomes” (p. 160).

This conception of fairness is separate from concepts of principled conservatism such as economic individualism, which stresses desire for achievement and belief in economic mobility. In contrast, proportionality is a normative value that demands individuals to succeed or fail based on their effective and ineffective decisions. Fairness conceived as proportionality means getting what you earn, not what you need. Thus, I contend the tea party impulse is at its core a demand for what its members see as basic economic fairness.

Tea Party Emergence

The tea party emerged during one of the most serious economic downturns in American history. After a period of credit expansion and economic boom, the housing bubble popped followed by a severe devaluation of capital bringing down with it home prices and the highly over-leveraged investment banks. In the fall of 2008, some of the nation’s largest financial institutions failed or were on the verge of failing, the economy shed hundreds of thousands of jobs each month, and home values plummeted.

In efforts to mitigate the crisis, Republican Treasury Secretary Hank Paulson proposed providing money to financial institutions to prevent them from dragging down the rest of the economy. While Congress first rejected the initial version of the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act, on October 3, 2008 the revised bill passed securing \$700 billion in Troubled

Asset Relief Program (TARP) dollars or “bailouts” for banks. Then automakers caught up in the downturn also petitioned for government help, and the George W. Bush administration directed TARP funds to them as well. Soon after the historic election of Barack Obama as president, the incoming Obama administration proposed another government intervention: the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, also known as the stimulus, which passed Congress in February 2009. In particular, the legislation included financial assistance to homeowners facing foreclosure and states and municipalities in fiscal crisis, as well as tax cuts, additional social services spending, and infrastructure, energy, and education investments.

As I will argue in Chapter 2, TARP was the spark that violated a deeply felt moral concern among grassroots fiscal conservatives. To such conservatives, government appeared to be rewarding the cheaters and the failures at the expense of the productive all in the context of troubling economic times. Altogether, from tea partiers’ view, government had unfairly provided money to banks, automakers, homeowners, localities, and the politically connected, leaving hardworking taxpayers with the bill. It is notably within this context that the tea party movement emerged.

Beginning in early 2009, thousands of angry conservative and libertarian activists began holding protests under the banner of “tea party” with explicit opposition to increased government spending, the growing national debt, and the expansion of government power in the aftermath of the financial crisis. With its success, the movement grew into a heterogeneous coalition of dissimilar types including libertarians, social conservatives, and racial conservatives.

One of the earliest surveys investigating the tea party found 96 percent of tea party sympathizers favored a “smaller government, providing fewer services” compared to 42 percent of non-supporters, and 81 percent of sympathizers wanted the government to prioritize deficit

reduction over spending money to create jobs, compared to 36 percent of non-supporters (CBS News/New York Times 2010). Activists called for a return to constitutional principles, reining in of federal power, retrenchment of government spending, and reduction of the national debt. At tea party protest and rallies, activists brought homemade signs: “Big Government= Less Freedom,” “Stop The Spending-Give Us Liberty Not Debt,” “Stop Punishing Success; Stop Rewarding Failure,” “Don’t Spread My Wealth, Spread My Work Ethic,” or “Free Markets Not Freeloaders” (Ekins 2010, Zernike 2010, Loc. 735). While vocal activists often relied on libertarian rhetoric, their complaints were ultimately grounded in terms of fairness.

Historical Significance

Political observers began to take the movement seriously in the spring of 2010 when tea party-backed challengers ousted long-standing Republican incumbents or beat establishment-backed candidates in the primaries. After the 2010 mid-term elections, the tea party grassroots helped send roughly 40 House Representatives and 10 Senators to Congress, enough to form a caucus on Capitol Hill. In combination, unyielding grassroots activists, affiliated groups, and tea party-backed members of Congress twice caused the nation to nearly breach the debt ceiling, almost took the country over the so-called “fiscal cliff” that would have simultaneously cut spending and raised taxes, and managed to shutdown the entire federal government for 16 days. Indeed, Nominate scores reveal a second dimension becoming important in predicting congressional voting particularly on votes to raise the debt ceiling, to renew the Patriot Act and FISA amendments, and to elect Republican John Boehner as Speaker—the votes that distinguished tea party members from their Republican counterparts (Voteview Blog 2013, 2011). In fact, Congressional Tea Party Caucus members’ second dimension scores on several of

these votes were more similar to Progressive Caucus members' scores than among their fellow Republicans, revealing meaningful intra-party conflict.

Furthermore, several presidential contenders in the 2016 presidential race come from the ranks of tea party-backed lawmakers, including Senators Rand Paul (R-KY), Ted Cruz (R-TX), and Marco Rubio (R-FL), who would not have been in a position to run had it not been for the social movement catapulting them into high elected office in 2010 and 2012.

Antecedents in American History

As suggested in the Preface, the tea party movement of today is not the first fiscally conservative backlash in the aftermath of a financial crisis and significant government intervention using rhetoric grounded in the idea that government action was unfair.

Indeed, the Jacksonian populists of the 1820s-1840s and conservative tax revolts of the 1930s also emerged in the aftermath of demoralizing financial crises that punished even the productive and rule-abiding without regard to effort or virtue. They were met with various uprisings using similar rhetoric to express their complaints.

Jacksonian populists emerged in the wake of the Panic of 1819 in which the National Bank, similar to a central bank, was thought to have excessively extended credit during the boom years leading to the financial crisis (Howe 2007, Watson 1990/2006, Rothbard 1962). Historian Daniel Walker Howe (2007) describes the Panic of 1819 as “profoundly disturbing that a change in personal fortune could be unrelated to personal merit, yet the hardworking and honest suffered along with the undeserving” (p. 144). Many viewed government favoritism, particularly of banks, as a chief villain. National Bank supporters, recognizing the tide turning against them, sought early renewal of the bank charter, timing the vote right before an election. Bank president Nicholas Biddle calculated that President Andrew Jackson—who was particularly inimical to

banks— would defer to Congress rather than risk upsetting voters. Biddle was wrong, and Jackson vetoed the bank bill anyway using language familiar to the contemporary tea party movement:

“Distinctions in society will always exist under every just government. Equality of talents, of education, or of wealth cannot be produced by human institutions. In the full enjoyment of the gifts of Heaven and the fruits of superior industry, economy, and virtue, every man is equally entitled to protection by law; but when the laws undertake to add to these natural and just advantages artificial distinctions, to grant titles, gratuities, and exclusive privileges, to make the rich richer and the potent more powerful, the humble members of society— the farmers, mechanics, and laborers— who have neither the time nor the means of securing like favors to themselves, have a right to complain of the injustice of their Government... [Government’s] true strength consists in leaving individuals and States as much as possible to themselves” (Jackson 1832).

Jacksonian populists were generally averse to debt and trepidatious of government action which they felt all too often turned into government favoritism, giving unfair and unearned advantages to the politically connected at the expense of the hardworking producers (Lamoreaux 1994, Watson 1990/2006, Howe 2007, Hofstadter 1943). As one Jacksonian intellectual leader, William Leggett, put it:

“Whenever Government assumes the power of discriminating between the different classes of the community, it becomes, in effect, the arbiter of their prosperity... Government may at pleasure elevate one class and depress another; it may one day legislate exclusively for the farmer, the next for the mechanic, and the third for the manufacturer, who all thus become the mere puppets of legislative cobbling and tinkering, instead of independent citizens relying on their own resources for their prosperity... Governments possess no delegate right to tamper with individual industry a single hair’s breadth beyond what is essential to protect the rights of person and property (Leggett 1834-1837/1984, I.1.5, I.1.9).

In other words, Leggett contends that when government seeks to offer politically connected groups what they need, government necessarily, and unfairly, bestow favors on some and not others thereby creating dependency among some and undermining the ability of people to earn. Democratic Senator Robert Rantoul made a similar point condemning such actions using moralized language:

“If an association of individuals wish to loan money, let them; no one wishes to prevent it; **but it is wrong and unjust** that a set of individuals who make it a business to let money should be allowed to enjoy privileges which would be denied to men in other businesses...Let not the government, instituted for the protection of the whole, protect one class more than another” (Rantoul 1854, p. 351).

Many Jacksonian populists believed that government undermined equality and instead the free market promoted it (see Benson 1961, Leggett 1834-1837/1984). Consequently, it was argued that government should be limited to the “protection of persons and property” and ultimately, as Richard Hofstadter (1943) explains, “Freedom of enterprise...rather than government action, would redress the balance of affairs” (p. 588).

Also following a devastating financial crisis, historian David Beito (1989) details a conservative taxpayers revolt that took place in the aftermath of the 1929 stock market crash and Great Depression.

While taxes decreased at the federal level during the 1920s, they actually had been increasing at the state and local levels. General property taxes generated nearly 90 percent of municipal revenues and 25 percent of state revenues, and were principally raised through the real estate tax and thus falling principally to property and home owners. As real estate values plummeted and the Depression hit, municipal tax collections as a percentage of the national income doubled from 5.4 percent in 1929 to an “unheard of” 11.7 percent in 1932 and state taxes surged from 1.9 to 4.6 of the national income (Beito 1989, p. 6).

Hundreds of taxpayer and economy leagues as well as protests formed throughout the entire country demanding spending cuts, deficit reduction, and lower taxes from their state and municipal governments. As one 1930s “tax leaguer” from Atlanta put it “something like a mob spirit moved us” (Steed 1933). Alfred M. Bingham, editor of *Common Sense* called the social unrest a “revolt of the middle classes” (Alfred Bingham (1935): cited in Beito 1989, p. 85). Prominent *New York Times* journalist Anne O’Hare McCormick who had been traversing the country to cover the Depression wrote of the far-ranging movement:

“Wherever you go you run into mass meetings called to protest against taxes. That is nothing new, of course, but opposition has seldom been so spontaneous, so universal, so determined. The nearest thing to a political revolution in the country is the tax revolt. For the first time in a generation taxpayers are wrought up to the point of willingness to give up public services. ‘We’ll do without county agents,’ they say, ‘We’ll give up the public health services. We can no longer pay the cost of government’ (McCormick 1932, p. 2).

Beito reports that taxpayer organizations formed in every state reaching “well over 1,000” with group memberships generally ranging from a hundred to several thousand (p. 161). Similarly, at its peak the tea party is estimated to have had between 800-1500 local groups comprised of under a hundred to several thousand members each.¹⁶

Like the Jacksonian populists, 1930s tax leaguers’ rhetorical complaints were framed in terms of government action being unfair, particularly that organized interests and elites, or “tax eaters,” “get the ears” of government in efforts to secure special advantages “while the poor property owner pays the bill” (p. xii., 20, 52). Beito explained, “they feared that, unless limited in its power to tax, government would become the protector of entrenched special interests, retard economic recovery and sap individual autonomy” (p. 15).

An Ohio state group inveighed: “We are building up by legislation and poor relief a class which will more and more take away from those who are industrious, thrifty, self-dependent” (Beito 1989, p. 11). A Washington group lamented, “some group of tax spenders, better organized and more versed in political pressure, will get the ears of the candidates and formulate their program which will always be for more money and more government” (p. 20). Also using similar language, a Wisconsin group declared that “in their every effort to affect [*sic*] a reduction [in taxes], they meet with stubborn opposition from those selfish individuals and organized groups who prey upon the government” (p. 20).

¹⁶ This range is based on my own compilation of tea party groups between 2010 to 2014, and roughly comports with Skocpol and Williamson’s (2012) estimation of 800 active local tea party groups each with 200 active members on average (p. 22).

Altogether, tax leaguers complained of government spending and debt, undeserving bureaucrats, and government paternalism. Similar to today's tea party rhetoric, these complaints led angry activists to want to "curb government's power" (p. xiii).

Many of the tax leaguers and those sympathetic to their cause later became vocal critics of the Roosevelt Administration and the New Deal for similar reasons; Beito writes: "Roosevelt's reliance on government intervention seemed only to bolster their old nemesis, the tax spender" (p. 160).

Although established among wealthy businesspersons rather than among the grass roots, the American Liberty League, formed in 1934 in opposition to the New Deal, still attracted a sizeable membership—at its height 124,856 registered members in 1936 (Wolfskill 1962, p. 62). Similarly, Theda Skocpol and Vanessa Williamson (2012) in their calculation of tea party activists estimated there to be approximately 160,000 to 200,000 active grassroots activists (p. 22). In terms of leadership, affiliate tea party organizations, such as FreedomWorks and Americans for Prosperity, which also have ties to wealthy businesspersons, played a similar leadership role as the Liberty League in organizing the grassroots. While initial mobilization was different, the Liberty League used similar rhetoric that attracted their members and sympathizers. For instance, one Liberty League pamphlet warned against the 1935 Farmers' Home Bill that would "prove costly to taxpayers" because:

"It subsidizes one group of farmers and gives them an unfair advantage over others...it is inevitable that political favoritism if not outright scandal, would follow where large tracts of land...might be unloaded on the government at excessive prices...there would be opportunity for all sorts of petty as well as major graft in the handling of so large a fund" (Liberty League 1935).

Also similar to the tea party today, Liberty Leaguers called the President, Franklin D. Roosevelt, a socialist or communist and compared him to despots such as Hitler, Mussolini, and Stalin, and even Louis the XIV. In fact, over and over again, New Deal policies were labeled as

socialism, un-American, “alien,” and “foreign” (Wolfskill 1962, p. 12, 109, Desvernine 1935). In response, critics denounced the New Deal skeptics as resisting progress and desiring to perpetuate the past (Wolfskill 1962, p. 70).

Jacksonian populists, 1930s conservative tax resisters, and today’s tea partiers witnessed demoralizing financial crises in which personal fortune became detached from individual merit. They then perceived government either as part of the cause or exacerbating the gap between work and rewards by acting as an unfair arbiter, spending money and granting favors to some at the expense of others, leading angry activists to want to curb government power.

While these movements are not exactly the same, nor necessarily exhaustive, similar circumstances seem to have prompted groups of angry activists with similar sensitivities to express their complaints using similar rhetoric. This suggests that tea party complaints are not new, but a recent incarnation of previous grievances in a contemporary context.

Rhetoric associated with these movements ostensibly fits into what scholars have called *producerism*, or producer populism (Kazin 1995, Berlet and Lyons 2000, Berlet 2012a, see Postel 2012). Producerism’s principal complaint is that parasitic unproductive groups from above and below are squeezing the hardworking, productive middle. Producerism has been conceived as an “ethic, a moral conviction,” as Michael Kazin (1995) argues “it held that only those who created wealth in tangible, material ways could be trusted to guard the nation’s piety and liberties” (Loc. 352). Historically, to qualify as a producer one must “be willing to rise or fall primarily on one’s own efforts,” in other words *to get one what one earns* (p. 14). In order to earn, producers strove for self-reliance through the “steady improvement of property” and thus property and producerism were inextricably related (p. 14).

Researchers have identified producerist rhetoric in Jeffersonian and Jacksonian movements, most notably in Jackson's veto message. Similarly, in Thomas Jefferson's first inaugural address he declared "a wise and frugal Government, which shall restrain men from injuring one another, shall leave them otherwise free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvements, and *shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned*" (Jefferson 1801, emphasis added). Notably, Jefferson did not define freedom as individual autonomy. Instead, he says freedom is the freedom to get what one earns.

Scholars have also identified provincial tendencies among some of the producer populists. As Kazin (1995) points out "the romance of producerism had a cultural blind spot" such that some producers allowed their prejudices against immigrants, African-Americans, and Jewish Americans to continue "unchallenged" (Loc. 861). For instance, few scholars deny that some 1890s populists engaged in anti-Semitic conspiratorial rhetoric or revealed prejudice (see Johnston 2007, Collins 1989, Hofstadter 1955, Ostler 1995, Handlin 1951, Pollack 1962, Woodward 1959).¹⁷ However, as the debate over Richard Hofstadter's *Age of Reform* reveals,¹⁸

¹⁷ In *Age of Reform* Richard Hofstadter (1955) caused controversy by proposing there were strains of anti-Semitism in the 1890s populist movement: "In the books that have been written about the Populist movement, only passing mention has been made of its significant provincialism; little has been said of its relations with nativism and nationalism; nothing has been said of its tincture of anti-Semitism" (Hofstadter 1955, Loc. 990, also see Handlin 1951). However, it was Hofstadter's bolder argument which instigated much debate: "It is not too much to say that the Greenback-Populist tradition activated most of what we have of modern popular anti-Semitism in the United States" (Hofstadter 1955, Loc. 1231-1263). However, other historians remained unconvinced by Hofstadter's argument, evidenced by Lawrence Goodwyn's (1991) recent declaration that "the world of populism constructed by Hofstadter now languishes in ruin" (cited in: Ostler 1995, p. 2, see Woodward 1959, Pollack 1960, 1962, Nugent 1963, Goodwyn 1976). However, few historians today deny that there were strains of anti-Semitism found among some parts of the 1890s populist movement (see Johnston 2007, Collins 1989, Hofstadter 1955, Ostler 1995, Handlin 1951, Pollack 1962, Woodward 1959). Robert Johnston (2007) points out that "without a doubt many Populists did engage in a search for "Shylock" bankers...and most of these writers were not innocent of the cultural work of the term "Shylock" (p. 132). (The term "shylock" is considered an anti-Semitic slur). Rhetoric often made references to conspiracies involving Jews versus the "toilers," or like populist orator Mary E. Lease accused President Grover Cleveland as being the "the agent of Jewish bankers and British gold" (Higham 1957, p. 132, Johnston 2007). In Populist leader Tom Watson's 1892 campaign book he wrote: "Did [Jefferson] dream that in 100 years or less *his* party would be prostituted to the vilest purposes of monopoly, that reared Jewish millionaires would be chiefs of that Party, and that the liberty and prosperity of the country would be...constantly and corruptly sacrificed to Plutocratic greed in the name of Jeffersonian Democracy?" (Watson 1892/1975 cited in: Kazin 1995, Loc. 252). Woodward (1959) pointed out that among some in the movement there was a "tendency to turn cranky,

historians largely agree that such illiberal strains were not central to the 1890s populist core. Instead, they argue that populists' economic grievances were the most important motive of their mobilization and thus largely define scholarly understanding of the movement (Woodward 1959, Nugent 1963, Johnston 2007, Ostler 1995, see Hicks 1931, Goodwyn 1976).¹⁹ This is similar to my argument of the contemporary tea party, which is that illiberal attitudes are present in some parts of the movement, but they are not the dominant force behind tea party members' grievances and mobilization.

The Tea Party's Place in Scholarly Literature

A number of important studies of public opinion stress the importance of racial resentment on voting behavior and political attitudes, especially attitudes toward government. Moreover, attitudes toward government functions that have little to do with race are found to be "racialized," that is reflective of underlying animus toward African-Americans and people of color more generally (Sears and Kinder 1971, Sears, Hensler, and Speer 1979, Kinder and Sears 1981, Gilens 1995, Kinder and Sanders 1996, Sears et al. 1997, Gilens 1999, Sears and Henry 2003, see also Hutchings and Valentino 2004, Kinder and Kam 2010, Kluegel and Smith 1986). In sum, much of this literature finds that racial attitudes are a powerful force behind opposition to government action.

illiberal, and sour...to take off after race phobias, religious hatreds, and witch hunts" (p. 70). Nevertheless, the prevailing scholarly view is that illiberal attitudes did not define the movement or the primary grievances of the movement adherents.

¹⁸ Richard Hofstadter was perplexed by the backlash against his proposition that late 19th century populism had strains of anti-Semitism. Robert Collins (1989) writes that some historians viewed Hofstadter's research as reducing the Populists to "a horde of xenophobic, anti-Semitic, delusional cranks" (p. 152, see Pollack 1960, Pollack 1962). In a letter to historian C. Vann Woodward in 1963 Hofstadter wrote "if I had known what an imbecile fuss would be raised about my having mentioned the occasional anti-Semitic rhetoric among the Populists, I would either have dropped it as not worth the trouble or else spent even more time than I did in clarifying what I was saying" (cited in Johnston 2007, p. 130).

¹⁹ For instance, C. Vann Woodward (1959) contended "Whatever concern the farmers may have had for their status was overwhelmed by desperate and immediate economic anxieties....while their legislative program may have been often naive and inadequate, it was almost obsessively economic" (p. 63).

Furthermore, the historic election of Barack Obama as president has led to new studies documenting the influence of race on political attitudes (Tesler 2012, Knowles, Lowery, and Schaumberg 2010).

In light of this tradition of scholarship and the fact that the first widely known tea party protests erupted shortly after President Obama's inauguration, much of the leading work on the tea party has viewed it within the literature on racialized politics, particularly Parker and Barreto (2013) and to some extent Skocpol, Williamson, and Coggin (2012, 2011), Abramowitz (2012), and Knowles et al. (2013).²⁰ Few have considered the tea party as a successor to populist reactions such as the Jacksonian populists or 1930s tax leaguers, with historian Daniel Walker Howe (2010) and Chip Berlet (2012a) the exceptions.²¹

Scholars have largely argued the tea party was mobilized by a fear of change, fears particularly colored by racial attitudes in reaction to the nation's changing demographics and specifically Obama's election (Parker and Barreto 2013, Perrin et al. 2011, Skocpol and Williamson 2012, Abramowitz 2012, see Rosenthal and Trost 2012, Knowles et al. 2013). Parker and Barreto (2013) also go further to suggest that tea partiers perceive President Obama to have 'stepped out of his place' by becoming president and fear he "threatens to displace...white, middle-class, middle-aged men" (p. 11). Consequently, they argue, the tea party is a successor to previous status maintenance movements like the Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s. This builds on some of the right-wing social movement literature which anticipates such reactions to materialize when 'dominant' social groups feel their status in the social hierarchy is threatened—although

²⁰ Arceneaux and Micholson (2012) find racial attitudes failed to significantly impact support for government aid among tea party supporters in controlled experiments and thus such attitudes do not appear to primarily undergird their opposition to government action. Knowles et al. (2013) find no association between racial prejudice and tea party identification when controlling for other variables in their latent growth model, but that prejudice is mediated by belief in national decline and libertarianism.

²¹ Historian Daniel Walker Howe (2010) has written in *Politico* that the tea party is a successor to Jacksonian populism. Chip Berlet (2012b) briefly mentions the tea party as heir to the Jacksonian legacy, among others (p. 568).

typically during times of prosperity—and seek to defend it from subversion (Lipset 1955b, a, Hofstadter 1952, Lipset and Raab 1970).²²

Overall, the tea party literature has tended to emphasize racialized motivations over preferences for limited government, as the driver of tea party mobilization. However, some researchers find that racism does not significantly animate tea party support or drive their opposition to government aid (see Arceneaux and Micholson 2012, Ulbig and Macha 2012).²³ In survey experiments randomizing the racial identity of prospective beneficiaries of expanding unemployment benefits and college aid, Arceneaux and Micholson (2012) found that instead of tea partiers, it was non-tea party conservatives who significantly and substantially favored expanding unemployment benefits to Caucasian over African-American prospective beneficiaries. Although tea partiers were less likely to support expanding aid overall, they found little statistical support for the claim that racial animus drove their opposition.²⁴ Moreover, they

²² Richard Hofstadter explained in the *Paranoid Style* that the “right wing feels dispossessed: America has been largely taken away from them and their kind, though they are determined to try to repossess it and to prevent the final destructive act of subversion” (Hofstadter 1952, p. 23). Lipset (1955a) argues that that “prosperity, especially periods when full employment is accompanied by inflation and many individuals are able to improve their economic position, fosters status politics” (p. 177). However, other researchers of right-wing social movements have modified the interpretation of status-oriented movements, see Lo (1982) and Gross, Medvetz, and Russell (2011) for further discussion.

²³ Ulbig and Macha (2012) use different questions to measure racial attitudes, based on why respondents thought “African-Americans have worse jobs, income, and housing than white people.” These answers included statements like “just don’t have the motivation or will power to pull themselves out of poverty” or “mainly due to discrimination” (reverse coded) or “because most African-American have less in-born ability to learn,” or “because most African-Americans don’t have the chance for the education that it takes to rise out of poverty” (reverse coded). This demonstrates that the results are sensitive to the types of racial questions used. Knowles et al. (2013) find no association between racial prejudice and tea party identification when controlling for other variables in their latent growth model. However, they find that prejudice is mediated by belief in national decline and libertarianism: “In other words, highly prejudiced participants tended to report high levels of national decline and libertarianism, which in turn predicted identification with the tea party movement.”

²⁴ Arceneaux and Micholson (2012) find in survey experiments randomizing the racial identity of prospective beneficiaries of expanding unemployment benefits and college aid that *non-tea party* conservatives significantly ($p < .05$) and substantively (+10 points) favored expanding aid to Caucasian over African-American beneficiaries. For tea party conservatives, statistical tests failed to reach statistical significance, but came close ($p < .07$) with a substantially smaller difference (+4). Moreover, they found that non-conservative tea partiers were statistically more supportive of government aid to Hispanic and African-American beneficiaries rather than white beneficiaries. They found no statistical difference across racial groups when asking about college aid. Overall the authors conclude that

found that non-conservative tea partiers were statistically more supportive of government aid to Hispanic and African-American beneficiaries rather than white beneficiaries. This leads Arceneaux and Micholson to note ideological heterogeneity within the movement and to recommend that future research further examine it.

The Arceneaux and Micholson study is an important precursor of my dissertation. However, it has taken a narrower look at the tea party movement, has focused more on what does not motivate the tea party rather than what does, and has less prominence in the literature than the studies finding racialized motivations for the tea party movement. Moreover, as I will demonstrate, conservative racial attitudes are present in some parts of the tea party movement. Determining the extent to which racial attitudes matter is a complex task requiring better measures and stronger methods than have yet been deployed.

Further complicating the tea party story, researchers continue to also find strains of libertarianism in the movement uneasily cohabitating with illiberal attitudes, such as authoritarianism, ontological insecurity (fear of change), and racial resentment (Perrin et al. 2011, Knowles et al. 2013, Arceneaux and Micholson 2012, Skocpol and Williamson 2012). Could this libertarianism be evidence that tea partiers' stated penchant for limited government does in fact stem from their desire for individual liberty, as they say?

If the movement were primarily concerned with liberty, why did a 2014 national survey find 56 percent of tea partiers favor government promoting traditional values in society? (Reason Foundation/Princeton 2014b). Or why did a 2013 national survey find 54 percent oppose legalizing marijuana? (Reason Foundation/Princeton 2013a). While tea partiers are no more likely than Republicans who do not support the movement to favor such use of government

“although we find evidence that racial resentment colors tea party members’ judgments about government aid to the poor, racial animus does not appear to be the primary force behind their opposition to government aid” (p. 700).

intervention, these attitudes nevertheless belie tea partiers' claims that they are primarily concerned about government violating individual liberty.

Thus, the question remains: why does the tea party movement embody so many different motivations? Why does it manifest both liberal and illiberal attitudes—such as racial resentment—and then insist that its true motivation is a desire for limited government?

Some researchers have identified tea partiers' (and conservatives') inconsistencies regarding government action and have concluded this implies a lack of sincere desire for limited government and instead a preference for privileging the ingroup (see Skocpol and Williamson 2012). Others believe there is no common thread besides perhaps a fear of insecurity and change and actual preference for inequality. For instance, regarding conservatives, Jost et al. (2003) write:

“There is no obvious political thread that runs through these diverse positions [among conservatives] (or their liberal counterparts) and no logical principle that renders them all consistent. Their incoherence may be explained just as well with psychological theory as with political theory. Conservative opinions acquire coherence by virtue of the fact that they minimize uncertainty and threat while pursuing continuity with the past (i.e., the status quo) and rationalizing inequality in society” (p. 391).

However, if the pursuit of certainty and security (or even to defend status) primarily motivated tea partiers, who are predominantly conservative, why would they want a government limited in scope? Isn't a strong government necessary to help provide stability and protect individuals and the economy from threat and volatility?

Although it is often overlooked, Converse (1964) noticed that while few reach their political conclusions on ideological grounds, elites could use a kind of psychological constraint or “an appeal to some superordinate value or posture toward man and society” to connect beliefs. Feldman (1988) later pointed out that if elites were responsible for structuring packages of beliefs according to superordinate values, why would individuals gravitate to one over the other in the first place? A number of studies have shown that individuals have core values, or moral

intuitions, which are important in explaining political opinion and behavior (Rokeach 1973, Graham, Haidt, and Nosek 2009, Feldman 1988, Schwartz 1992, Cochrane, Billig, and Hogg 1979, Braithwaite 1994, Evans, Heath, and Lalljee 1996, Feldman 1983a).

My argument of the tea party movement seeks to resolve what appears to be ideological contradiction and propose a “superordinate value” that may act as the glue holding most of the tea party together, particularly undergirding their support for limited government.

Tea Party Fairness as Proportional Justice

In this dissertation, I argue that the primary belief undergirding support for the tea party movement is a perception that government is violating proportionality by unfairly rewarding the undeserving at the expense of the productive. As defined earlier, proportionality is a desire for individuals to be rewarded or punished in accordance with their actions. My argument builds upon the case Haidt made in his 2010 *Wall Street Journal* op-ed that karmic thinking, or a belief in proportionality, is the underlying theme of the movement (Haidt 2010b).

Although not previously applied to the study of the tea party movement in the academic literature, social psychologists have found that proportionality is a value-based sensitivity capable of shaping evaluations of fair government action and allocation, particularly among conservatives (Rasinski 1984, Rasinski 1987, Deutsch 1975, see Haidt 2012). The study of proportionality has its roots in the literature on reciprocal altruism, Moral Foundations Theory (MFT) (Haidt and Joseph 2004, Haidt, Graham, and Joseph 2009, Graham et al. 2011, Haidt 2012), and equity theory (Adams 1963, Walster, Berscheid, and Walster 1975, Walster, Walster, and Berscheid 1978). MFT has identified concerns about fairness as an innately prepared value receptor favored in human evolution: those who were more cognizant of cheaters and those

pulling their own weight were more likely to survive (Haidt and Joseph 2004, Haidt and Graham 2007, Graham et al. 2011, Haidt 2012).²⁵

Equity theory, first developed as part of organizational psychology, contends that individuals evaluate fair exchanges based on how they perceive their inputs, such as hard work and skills, to relate to outputs, the rewards of the inputs: individuals who produce or contribute more should get proportionally more than those who produce or contribute less. Individuals who perceive an inequitable development feel distress or even anger and seek to restore equity.

By implication equity, or proportionality, demands that individuals face the consequences of their actions; it's about desert. Haidt (2012) has compared proportionality to karma, wanting “to see cheaters punished and good citizens rewarded in proportion to their deeds” (p. 215).

While nearly everyone has this sensitivity—no one likes a cheater—some are far more sensitive to its concerns. Proportional justice becomes controversial particularly when it comes to its punitive side—such as allowing failure or adjudicating punishment—or if compliance with proportionality's demands undermines equality or need (see Leventhal 1976). In fact Rasinski (1984) found that equity and need were the most negatively correlated values among equity, economic individualism, equality, and need (p. 112). It is upon this critical point that tea partiers and non-supporters often diverge. By implication, a strong demand for proportionality means outcomes may be unequal and needs may go unfulfilled by government.

Proportionality is more than just about hard work, competition, and achievement. Proportional justice requires individuals to be allowed to succeed or fail and to face the consequences of their effective and ineffective decisions. This means achievement is not itself the end goal necessarily, especially if it has not been perceived to be rightfully earned.

²⁵ Particularly, see Haidt (2012) pages 182-216.

Government, from the perspective of tea partiers, often violates their notion of proportional justice. In their view, government takes on the role of an unfair arbiter dispensing favors to meet the needs of politically connected groups all at the expense of the productive taxpayers. It appears that government shields people from the consequences of their bad decisions and rewards them with government transfers and privileges they did not directly earn in the marketplace of their peers.

Furthermore they feel that government diminishes the benefits of success with high taxes, fees, mandates, and regulations that restricts one's ability to go out and earn, to obtain, keep, and enjoy the benefits of one's inputs. For social conservatives, government also undermines proportional justice by bolstering permissive norms, for instance with taxpayer-funded birth control and social services to unwed mothers.

As I will demonstrate in later chapters, the tea party does not explain its motivations clearly. When tea partiers express this desire for proportional justice, they do so by often using vague platitudes about individual liberty and rights. But the use of vague platitudes does not invalidate data that show them attempting to convey a deeply felt moral conviction. Americans have long used appeals to freedom and liberty to convey their notions of justice. For instance, Rokeach (1973) observed appeals to freedom in both capitalist and socialist writings, concluding "freedom cannot mean the same thing to socialists as to capitalists, even though both may insist that they value it very highly" (p. 183). Based on qualitative interviews with over 50 activists throughout the country, I argue that when they say government is violating liberty, they are conveying their belief that government is being un-proportional, or unfair.

I will demonstrate that some in the tea party do highly value individual liberty, but they do not constitute all or even a majority of the movement. Instead, a desire for proportional justice

binds together a coalition primarily comprised of libertarians and social conservatives. Consequently, I argue proportionality is the prevailing impulse of the movement and the force behind their support for small government.

Tea party activists on average tend to oppose government transfers, including to private businesses like banks and automakers, non-profits, individuals like homeowners facing foreclosure, and public unions, bureaucracies, and localities in fiscal duress. This tends to result in tea partiers feeling resentment toward individuals and groups they feel have obtained unearned benefits, particularly at the expense of the producers. A strong sensitivity to proportional justice results not only in resentment towards one group but resentment toward anyone who violates their notion of fairness.

Why Has Other Scholarship Missed Proportionality?

There are several reasons why the scholarly work on the tea party movement has focused on out-group hostility and overlooked the role of proportionality in explaining mobilization.

First, scholars have assumed the tea party catalyst occurred in February 2009, after President Obama's inauguration rather than during the fall of 2008 in reaction to TARP. Consequently, researchers have placed too great an emphasis on the role of President Obama and socio-political factors and paid inadequate attention to the role of government economic policies. As a result, many scholars have overlooked that much of the tea party's energy has been a reaction to perceived government unfairness.

Second, the racial paradigm has been a primary frame for scholarly understanding of public opinion. This literature's commonly used measure of a race-neutral alternative, economic individualism, tends to perform poorly in multivariate models. Little work on economic individualism has conceptualized it in terms of justice and thus improperly measured it as a

positive perception of, rather than normative belief about, economic mobility. This has led some researchers to conclude that principled conservatism is of limited importance in explaining attitudes toward government action and to instead emphasize the role of race in public opinion (Kinder and Sanders 1996, Sears et al. 1997, Sears and Henry 2003, Gilens 1995, 1999).

Third, little work has directly tested quantitatively whether limited government preferences or racial attitudes are a stronger predictor of support for the tea party. Moreover, standard models used in the existing literature assume ideological homogeneity in the movement, and thus preclude groups of tea partiers from placing different weights on limited government preferences and racial attitudes. Without allowing for heterogeneity, researchers have not considered what common threads may hold the tea party coalition together.

Fourth, little research has been done to explore how morality and conceptions of justice may bolster support for free market capitalism and limited government. Research on fairness has had a strong tendency to examine it in terms of distributions and egalitarianism, even though evaluations of fair government action have been found to also rely on proportionality concerns (Rasinski 1984, Rasinski 1987). Moreover, until recently little work has considered economic issues to be moralized, and instead confined moral politics to the social domain. However, research has found that economic issues are moralized, value-based concerns (Ryan 2013b).

Fifth, conservative social movements have received inadequate attention in historical scholarship (Brinkley 1994). Perhaps consequently, existing work of conservative mass movements has had a constricted view of such reactions, viewing them primarily through the lens of status-defense or arising based upon a fear of change, despite such movements often

using different rhetoric, drawing from different constituencies, and mobilizing in disparate socioeconomic contexts, and coalescing around different types of candidates.^{26,27}

Overview of the Chapters

In Chapter 2, I argue that the tea party movement is best understood as a coalition of heterogeneous protestors largely sharing a core belief that the government violated basic fairness in its response to the 2008 Financial Crisis and Great Recession. I provide evidence to demonstrate that it catalyzed as opposition to the “bailouts” of undeserving Wall Street banks, financial institutions, and automakers in 2008 and gained momentum with the passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (the stimulus), and debate over the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

In Chapter 3 I show that when tests are properly conducted, the results from opinion data from 2010 onward consistently show that variables measuring preferences for limited government have about twice the impact of variables measuring racial resentment. While the success of the tea party movement drew a heterogeneous coalition, standard multivariate models of the type used in existing research inappropriately smear, or blend together, these different types of tea partiers. Consequently, I use a latent class analysis to identify clusters of supporters

²⁶ For instance, Lipset and Raab (1970) contend right-wing movements tend to emerge in periods of prosperity although Parker and Barreto (2013) propose the tea party to be an heir of such movements despite emerging in the midst of a severe recession. Lipset and Raab (1970) argue right-wing movements are primarily drawn from lower income, lower socio-economic status groups (the “preservatists”) except the “economic extremists” who came primarily from higher income higher education groups like the tea party movement today. Lipset and Raab (1970) found that both “economic extremists” and “preservatists” coalesced around Barry Goldwater in 1964, but significantly split in 1968 over George Wallace. Parker and Barreto (2013) explain the 1920s Ku Klux Klan’s explicit rhetoric was primarily concerned about groups they perceived as “either racially or ethnically un-American” and that “the Klan defined the American way of life ethnoculturally” (p. 33, 68); the contemporary tea party movement’s explicit rhetoric avoids topics of race.

²⁷ Perhaps another reason proportionality has been overlooked is that as Duarte et al. (forthcoming) argue, scholars are less likely to share the value-based sensitivities of conservatives. Consequently, since research has shown different ideological groups often do not recognize each others’ political complaints as moral concerns (Haidt and Graham 2007, Graham, Haidt, and Nosek 2009), tea partiers’ proportionality concerns may have been less easily placed.

and estimate their relative frequency. Doing so finds three distinct groups: the first (41%) leans libertarian and strongly endorses limited government, but takes moderate to liberal positions on social and race issues. The second group (36%) I find leans socially conservative and is also strongly defined by its limited government preferences and harbors some racially conservative attitudes. The third group (24%) also strongly supports limited government and takes racially conservative positions. While these groups differ in their racial attitudes and endorsement of moral traditionalism, what they share is a strong preference for small government.

In Chapters 4 and 5, I investigate tea partiers' conception of and desire for limited government by analyzing in-depth interviews with 53 activists across the country. I demonstrate that when tea partiers speak of their frustrations, particularly with government action, they do so in terms of it violating their notion of fairness. In their view government undermines proportionality by picking winners and losers, distributing unearned special favors, and rewarding bad behavior at the expense of the hardworking productive middle. I show that tea partiers are not simply resentful toward certain recipients of government transfers, but instead tend to resent all groups and individuals who receive more than tea partiers think is their due. Thus I contend, tea partier calls to "restore America" and concerns over losing the American Dream are largely a symptom of their deeper concern that government is undermining the American reward system by violating basic fairness.

Furthermore, I demonstrate that while activists differ across issues related to criminal justice, national security, religious and social conservatism, race, and immigration, they are unified in their views on economics and limited government. These bolster the findings from Chapter 3 that the tea party is a coalition of dissimilar types who share a desire for small government.

In Chapter 6, I quantitatively investigate what preferences for limited government mean among tea partiers using surveys of activist members and national sympathizers. In this chapter I investigate the explanatory power of a quantitative proportionality measure as compared to other explanatory concepts such as racial attitudes, liberty concerns, and economic individualism. I find that even when controlling for these other explanations, a fervent belief in proportional justice is a stronger more consistent statistical determinant of tea party support and their preference for limited government.

In sum, I argue that tea party demand for limited government action is not primarily derived from a preference for liberty or racial anxiety, but rather a desire for actions to be proportionally related with consequences and a belief that fairness is getting what one earns rather than what one needs.

Chapter 2:

In the Beginning, There Was TARP

*“I voted against the bailout both times...We have also compromised the market of tomorrow by reversing the incentives critical to long-term stability: bailing out the bad actors and as a result punishing the good.”*²⁸

This outspoken opponent of the Trouble Asset Relief Program (TARP), also known as the bailouts, was none other than Rep. Michele Bachmann (R-MN), the eventual founder of the Tea Party Congressional Caucus in 2010. Most narratives of the tea party movement begin in the spring of 2009, after President Obama took office, explicitly stating or implying that Obama’s inauguration as president acted as a catalyst (Berlet 2012a, Skocpol and Williamson 2012, Parker and Barreto 2013, Perrin et al. 2011, Langman 2011). However, researchers have underexplored and thus underappreciated the importance of the 2008 financial crisis and government’s reaction to the crisis in catalyzing the conservative grassroots movement. Furthermore, little academic research has examined the movement’s first protests and thus has been unable to connect the early tea party activists to the fall of 2008.

In this chapter I will argue that the tea party’s catalyst was a reaction to the perception that government violated basic fairness as it took action to counter the onset of the financial crisis in the fall of 2008, particularly the passage of the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP), or the “bailouts.” The program used government funds to purchase troubled assets from private financial institutions in efforts to prevent bank failures from deepening the Great Recession. While most Americans were not thrilled with bailouts to failing businesses, those with a strong sensitivity to proportionality felt that this value had been particularly violated. The passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, or the stimulus, coupled with debate over health care

²⁸ Rep. Michele Bachmann (R-MN), November 26, 2008 (Bachmann 2008).

reform in early 2009 further energized the movement. These events primarily attracted the fiscally conservative wing of the Republican Party as well as disaffected fiscally conservative independents and libertarians. Over the course of the next year the tea party grew into a heterogeneous coalition within the context of the following: the Great Recession, repeated fast-paced government interventions, the Democratic consolidation of political power, the election of President Barack Obama, and the floundering of the Republican Party. As the movement grew, it attracted different types of conservatives, nevertheless, the tea party cannot be properly understood without relocating its initial beginnings as a reaction namely to TARP, or the bailouts.

First, I provide evidence that suggests Congressional Republicans feared voting for TARP because of passionate resistance from grassroots constituents. Statistical models show that Republicans who voted for TARP were significantly less likely to remain in Congress by 2010, while no statistical relationship exists among Democratic members. Republican votes against TARP are also predictive of later membership in the Tea Party Congressional Caucus. Second, I use survey data to show that tea party supporters have consistently had the most negative reaction to TARP, even compared to Republicans not affiliated with the movement. Third, I show that those who were most opposed to TARP when it passed share common characteristics with eventual tea party supporters. Fourth, I provide evidence that many of the angry grassroots opposed to the bailouts eventually organized some of the first tea party protests. I then explain how the tea party grew over time into a heterogeneous coalition with members largely sharing the belief that recent government interventions violated justice, based on qualitative interviews with 53 tea party activists, including early organizers of the movement, from California, Washington, Utah, Texas, Kentucky, Florida, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia,

North Carolina, Ohio, and Minnesota. (See Chapter 4 for a full methodological explanation, activist names in italics have been changed). Here I examine their reactions to TARP, the stimulus, the health care reform law, and Obama's election.

TARP and the Financial Crisis

To understand how and why early tea party discontent began with TARP it is critical to understand the context of the financial crisis and government's reaction to it, and how tea partiers perceived it. As discussed in Chapter 1, it is relevant to note that previous conservative populist uprisings emerged in the aftermath of financial crises and significant government action (Howe 2007, Beito 1989).

The 2008 Financial Crisis

Early rumblings of the ensuing financial crisis began in the latter half of 2007 with the collapse of the subprime mortgage market. Consequences of the credit crunch became clearly evident in the spring of 2008, as the titan investment bank Bear Stearns teetered on the brink of collapse. As Bear Stearns failed, the Federal Reserve Bank of New York and the Treasury intervened to facilitate its sale at "fire-sale" prices to JP Morgan Chase. Not only that, but the New York Fed offered to provide up to \$29 billion in financing (Sorkin 2008). Former Fed Chairman Paul Volker described the actions as "sweeping powers [that] have been exercised in a manner that is neither natural or comfortable for a central bank" and that "extend to the very edge of its lawful and implied power" (Volker 2008, p. 2, 8).

Several months later in July, mortgage lender IndyMac Bank failed, prompting the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) to effectively nationalize it, costing the FDIC up to \$9.4 billion (Luhby 2009).²⁹

By the fall of 2008 and reeling from mortgage-related investment losses, financial institutions appeared headed for total meltdown. In a matter of days, large financial institutions and Government-Sponsored Enterprises (GSE) went bankrupt, were acquired under duress, or effectively nationalized.

With losses of \$14.9 billion, on September 7, 2008 the federal government took over GSEs Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. Providing up \$200 billion in extended credit, the *Economist* (2008) dubbed it the “largest-ever financial rescue” with the government only requiring a \$1 billion “fee” in exchange (Kopecki 2008). In addition, the US Treasury would become the GSEs’ buyer of last resort, basically shielding them from potential failure.

As Merrill Lynch too headed for bankruptcy, on September 14th Bank of America announced its acquisition of the firm. The *New York Times* later reported evidence that federal officials had pressured the sale.³⁰ The very next day, the Dow Jones dropped 504 points and Lehman Brothers filed for bankruptcy. JP Morgan Chase provided \$138 billion in cash advance to Lehman to stabilize markets, that were then repaid by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York (Kary and Scinta 2008).³¹ The day after that on September 16th a credit rating downgrade of American Insurance Group (AIG) threw the giant insurer into a liquidity crisis. The Federal Reserve once again came to its rescue with an \$85 billion bailout in exchange for nearly 80% of

²⁹ The FDIC eventually sold much of IndyMac’s assets to IMB Management Holdings. CNN reports the FDIC remained responsible for approximately 80% of IndyMac’s losses (Luhby 2009).

³⁰ Bank of America Chief Executive, Kenneth Lewis, reports that federal officials “pressured him to keep the merger alive, and acknowledged that his job had been at risk if he did not.” House Republican Staffers also released a memo citing subpoenaed internal Federal Reserve emails (Story and Becker 2009, Lanman and Torres 2009).

³¹ Some analysts believed Bank of America and other financial institutions refused to acquire Lehman without government aid (Sorkin et al. 2008)

AIG's equity. Later that month marked the largest bank failure in US history as Washington Mutual declared bankruptcy and government regulators seized control and pressured a deal with JP Morgan to purchase much of the bank's operations.

TARP is Born

Unstable financial markets led to the economy shedding hundreds of thousands of jobs every month. It was within this context that Republican Treasury Secretary Hank Paulson proposed a plan for the federal government to spend \$700 billion to purchase toxic securities from financial institutions' balance sheets. The Treasury then changed the proposal to instead give money directly to the banks or "inject capital." President Bush famously defended the plan by saying, "I've abandoned free market principles to save the free market system." As I will later demonstrate, this quote is perhaps one of the most remembered events of the ordeal among grassroots activists.

Despite Congress rejecting the first version of the bailout plan, on September 29th Congress then passed a revised version authorizing the Treasury to provide up to \$700 billion to troubled financial institutions. But the bailouts did not remain limited to just large financial institutions. Later that fall President Bush used his executive authority to give the Treasury greater discretion over how it spent TARP funds. President Bush and the Treasury then supported redirecting \$25 billion in TARP funds to automakers Chrysler and General Motors that were also about to fail.

In sum, throughout the frenzy of the crisis, the Federal Reserve and the US federal government chose to help some banks but not others. It used the financial resources of American taxpayers to shield private companies from the consequences of risky decisions in efforts to prevent the economy from collapsing. From the perspective of eventual tea party activists,

government action during this time period appeared unprecedented, sweeping, and as I will further argue: unfair.

From the Activists: Bush, the Republicans, and TARP

“TARP is the whole reason the tea party started!” exclaimed tea party activist *Keith Marshall*. Nearly all tea party activists interviewed expressed extreme anger and consternation over TARP. However, tea party anger over TARP should also be considered within the context of expanded government spending and scope during the George W. Bush presidency. While a significant number of activists expressed concern over the Patriot Act and foreign policy during the Bush administration, nearly all expressed anger and frustration over spending during his tenure. Activist after activist nearly used the same phrasing, “*He spent too much money.*”

Ryan Billings elaborated, “Part of the problem during the Bush years was there was so much focus on tax cuts and the war and so little focus on spending, and spending was the real problem that conservatives never found a way to address.” However, some were frustrated that because Bush was a Republican he got cut slack by co-partisans, as *Matthew Fowler* said “I became increasingly concerned under Bush, the spending was becoming problematic, but people were Bush-bots just like people are Obama-bots.” Many concluded that while Bush had “good intentions” ultimately in their view “he was a big government guy” as *Sheri Lo* put it.

While fiscal conservatives were growing increasingly frustrated during the Bush years, it was the onset of the financial crisis coupled with government enacting TARP that brought anger to a boil. Indeed, activist after activist lambasted the same quote from President Bush in which he said: “I’ve abandoned free market principles to save the free market system” seeking to justify TARP. Further aggravating the situation was the Republican Party’s presidential nomination of

John McCain who even suspended his campaign to vote *for* the TARP bill. As *Shane Halberg* put it:

“The movement started when the Republicans completely abandoned the notion of free markets and started to debate bailing out Wall Street...I came to realize the mass conservative movement wasn't getting things done and was getting hijacked by people who seek power and want to expand government...I saw the Republican Party gravitating toward an interventionist policy in the marketplace...The free market system is the best system possible and this was very contrary to what they were doing. George W. Bush said he had to abandon free market principles to save the system? I just shook my head, these guys are a bunch of crony people or they don't know what they're talking about.”

Ronald Brant, one of the earliest tea party organizers, felt similarly “I was just astounded at what President Bush had proposed and astonished how McCain agreed to it and everyone agreed to horrific anti-free market policies, yet they were run through. This was the wrong path for the country. We shouldn't be in the business of picking winners and losers. I had this profound sense that the country was going in the wrong direction” *Ryan Billings* lamented, “We were watching the economic crisis happening and money just getting thrown at it with little concern over how much money was being spent. Remember the Bush quote? Where he said we had to abandon free market principles to save the free market system? And the Dick Cheney line about how deficits don't matter?” Tea partiers viewed TARP as “Bush not following the Constitution” as *Roger Bishop* phrased it. TARP prompted eventual activists like *Luke Cannon* to consider taking action: “It became important to call out that behavior and the error in that way of thinking.”

TARP Evades Justice

“*It betrayed basic fairness*”—*Lance Owen, Virginia Tea Party Activist*

TARP was an ultimate violation of tea partiers' desire for proportional justice, for inputs to be associated with outputs, for actions to have consequences, described in Chapter 1. As Texas activist *Tony Watts* contended, “they made poor decisions that got them where they got and they must pay the consequences for that.”

Instead of facing the consequences, however, government appeared to reward the poor decisions and punish the productive in the form of future tax increases. *Keith Marshall* was not alone in using moral language on this point: “You’re encouraging bad behavior, the government is bailing out banks that made bad loans. So if it's a free market, if they make bad loans they need to go out of business. You don’t want to reward people for bad behavior.” *Sheri Lo* concurred: “It seemed to be a primary violation of the economic rules. The federal government had become the enabler of unsuccessful business.”

In their view TARP not only rewarded “bad behavior” but it also gave unearned benefits to some by “taking” from taxpayers who had earned it. *Keith Marshall* explained, “The whole point is you’re giving people something they did not earn, that they are not entitled to.” *Joe Jaworski* used similar terms: “No way should a single dollar ever be used to bail out companies that make poor business decisions. They have no right to my money; they have no right to the money of any American. Why on earth are we handing them billions and billions of dollars that rightfully belong to the individuals who earned that money in the first place.”

Furthermore, in their view TARP removed failure. By not allowing failure, tea partiers feared businesses like anyone else “would not learn their lesson,” as *Emma Welch* phrased it, and would thus continue to make the same poor choices. *Tony Watts* explained:

“They should be allowed to fail. And yes, a lot of people would have been hurt, but you know with failure, we learn more from our mistakes than our successes. When you don’t allow people to fail, then how do they learn? We change our behavior when we face challenges, like the alcoholic that hits rock bottom. We don’t learn when we’re constantly bailed out.”

Without learning a lesson, activists like *Sheri Lo* were additionally concerned that TARP would encourage more irresponsible behavior in the future:

“The idea of ‘too big to fail’ just opens itself up to a situation where a large company can behave irresponsibly and lose money and then turn to the government and say “oh look at me! I’m about to fall off the cliff, but I’m too big to fail so you better help me up...It’s going to happen over and over and over again!”

Activist language may remind observers of harsh conservative rhetoric regarding government provision of social services. Indeed, activists equate TARP with other types of government programs that they believe shield people from bad decisions. As *Tony Watts* put it, “We don’t need to be bailing out companies and we don’t need to be bailing out individuals.”

TARP was also a clear demonstration, in their perception, of government picking winners and losers, treating groups differently, and thus acting unfairly. *Ronald Brant* recalls thinking at the time: ““What is happening to my country? Why are we bailing out one group and not another group? Why is Bush defying the principles of the free market system to ‘save’ it?”” *Greg Rogers* felt it violated his “sense of fairness” because: “If I create a company and it fails, I go into bankruptcy and I do what I have to do. I go back and rebuild it...is the bank going to bail me out? No...What’s different about a bank bailout? Why are you different? That’s the thing that made everybody mad. It’s a sense of fairness is really what it was.”

Tea party activists aren’t sure what would have happened without TARP. Most don’t believe that it was truly necessary; some feel as though it may have worsened the problem, but even if the crisis would have deepened without it, most would still oppose it. *Brad Osmond* explained, “I don’t really know how bad the economy would have gotten if we hadn’t done it [passed TARP]. Everybody says the world would have crumbled. Maybe the world would have ended; I don’t know. But I was against it on principle, and I still am.”

As angry as eventual tea party activists were over the bank bailouts, President Bush’s decision to extend TARP money to troubled automakers further fueled their rage. Once again, the government seemed to be giving money to those who hadn’t earned it, rewarded their ineffective business practices, and “shredded contract law” by privileging the unions over the bondholders. Furthermore, many felt the government was essentially “nationalizing the auto

industry.” *Greg Rogers* explained it from his point of view: “The government basically said: ‘Ok, Mr. Bondholder, you’re going to get two cents on the dollar. Mr. Autoworker and Mr. Unionman, you’re going to get your full pensions and we’re going to guarantee your job and we’re going to give you a raise. That’s wrong, just flat out wrong!’”

Repeatedly, tea partiers explained their reactions to TARP using moral language, such as *right* and *wrong*, *good* and *bad*. In so doing they further articulated a conception of fairness that has a strong desire for inputs to relate to outputs, for actions to have consequences even if that comes at the expense of pragmatism or need. They communicated a preference for proportional justice. With TARP, government became the ultimate violator of proportional justice at a much larger scale.

Despite near universal anger over TARP among interviewed activists, qualitative interviews alone are insufficient to conclude that the bailouts were indeed a catalyst for the movement. Next, I will provide evidence that indicates TARP was the movement’s impetus.

TARP Passed with Democratic Votes

Even though a Republican, Treasury Secretary Hank Paulson, proposed the TARP plan and had Republican President George W. Bush’s support, TARP ultimately passed with Democratic votes not Republican votes. The first version of the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008, HR 3997 (2008), had failed on September 29th with primarily Democrats voting for it (140-95) and Republicans more than doubly opposed (65-133). The Senate subsequently debated a revised version and passed it with majorities of both Democrats (40-9) and Republicans (33-15), but with proportionally more Democratic support. While the House then passed the revised version on October 3rd, it did so with Democratic votes. A

majority of Republican representatives voted against the second bill to bail out the banks (91-108) whereas Democrats voted nearly 3 to 1 in favor (172 to 63).

What could explain Republican trepidation of voting for the bill twice in a row (no one switched their vote from yes to no) despite the prodding the President, a member of their own party? Reports at the time indicate many Republican House members were terrified of ending their political future with this one vote.

In a radio interview on the day the first bailout vote failed, Karl Rove, former Senior Advisor to President Bush, explained why so many Republicans voted against it, “when you've got a big issue like this...it's an emotional place as people *contemplate literally whether or not they will end their political futures by their vote*” [Emphasis added] (YouTube 2008a).

In fact, news outlets reported that during the debate the Capitol was inundated with phone calls and emails against the bailout, so much so that it jammed the system (Lueck and Phillips 2008). FreedomWorks, a Washington DC based conservative-libertarian activist group which eventually became one of the largest affiliate tea party organizations (Washington Post 2010), also reports that their phone lines were inundated with calls from citizens across the country who didn't know who else to call since Congress' phone lines were busy (Steinhauser 2010).

Certainly both Republicans and Democrats made many of these calls; however, Congressional Republican voting patterns indicate many of these calls were from the Republican grassroots, as I will show below. In addition, the *Washington Post* reported that much of President Bush's October 17th speech justifying TARP was likely “aimed at fiscal conservatives, who have bristled at a series of rescues and other steps that amount to the most extensive government intervention in the markets since the Great Depression,” and to reassure them that he still loved the free market, “ ‘the greatest system ever devised’ ” (Eggen 2008).

To determine if in fact an affirmative TARP vote may have hurt Republican's future electoral prospects, I ran a logistic regression using Republican TARP votes to predict lapsed membership in the House by 2010. Results in Table 2.1 show votes in favor of the first bailout vote (H.R. 3997), which failed, did not significantly predict membership in the House by 2010. However, voting for the second bailout bill HR 1224 was statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level. These results indicate a Republican House representative who voted *yea* on the second bailout bill was about 2.5 times as likely to have left Congress by 2010. Republicans who voted for TARP but no longer remained in the House by the end of 2010 primarily retired, several were defeated in the 2008 general or 2010 primaries, and two left to run for other offices. TARP votes also did not significantly predict continued membership in the house by 2012. Instead, Republican House members' TARP votes were most related to the 2010 midterms.

Democrats, however, do not appear to have faced the same consequences for their TARP vote. Running a similar regression model among Democratic House representatives failed to detect a significant relationship, shown in Table 2.2. Neither the first nor second vote was significantly related to continued membership in the House by the end of 2010.

This evidence suggests that despite prodding from the Republican president and Republican Treasury Secretary Hank Paulson, Congressional Republicans may have very likely felt additional pressure from their constituents back home to oppose TARP. This indicates a growing level of discontent among conservative grassroots that did not spontaneously emerge in early 2009 with the stimulus package and President Obama's inauguration, but very likely had been brewing since TARP.

TABLE 2.1
TARP-Related Votes Predicting Republican Congressperson's
Leaving the House by 2010

<i>Logistic Regression,</i> <i>DV= (R) Out of House by '10</i>	Out of House by 2010	
	1	2
YES-Vote HR 3997 (Bailout 1)	1.92 (1.76)	
YES-Vote HR 1224 (Bailout 2)		2.53* (2.06)
Logistic Regression, * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$; z-values in parentheses, clustered standard errors by state; TARP votes were not significantly predictive of presence in the house by 2012		

TABLE 2.2
TARP-Related Votes Predicting Democratic Congressperson's
Leaving House by 2010

<i>Logistic Regression,</i> <i>DV= (D) Out of House by '10</i>	Out of House by 2010	
	1	2
YES-Vote HR 3997 (Bailout 1)	1.46 (1.11)	
YES-Vote HR 1224 (Bailout 2)		1.13 (.34)
Logistic Regression, * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$; z-values in parentheses, clustered standard errors by state		

Republican candidates running for office who previously supported the bailouts found their endorsement used against them in the Republican primaries. For instance, former Senator Bob Bennett (R-UT), dubbed “Bailout Bob,” lost the party nomination at the state convention in 2010 as the crowd chanted “TARP, TARP, TARP, TARP!” (Hulse and Herszenhorn 2010). Or even since 2010, for instance Matt Bevin who ran to unseat Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell in the 2014 primaries used McConnell’s support for TARP as “the centerpiece of his

challenge,” *Politico* reports “it was part of Bevin’s first campaign ad, and he raise[d] McConnell’s views repeatedly in stump speeches and media interviews” (Bresnahan 2014). There would be no need to use a candidate’s opinion about a policy from 6 years ago if it weren’t sincerely important to the grassroots activists who matter most in the primaries. McConnell now calls the bailouts “irresponsible.” (As it turns out, it later came to light that Bevin also publicly supported TARP in 2008; his campaign also had trouble gaining traction against McConnell).

Tea Party Activists Most Angry about TARP

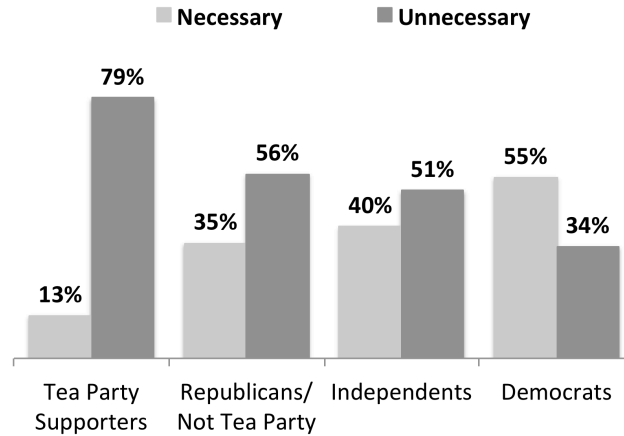
The tea party label was not generally conferred until spring of 2009, and surveys did not even begin asking about tea party support largely until 2010. However, there is evidence that suggests many of these angry grassroots activists eventually became tea party supporters.

First, tea party supporters exhibit the most negative reactions to TARP, even compared to regular Republicans who don’t support the movement. A CBS/*New York Times* poll conducted one of the earliest surveys of the tea party movement in April 2010, including an oversample of approximately 800 tea party supporters. This survey found that 79 percent of tea party supporters said they felt “providing government money to banks and other financial institutions” was “unnecessary” “to get the economy out of recession.” In comparison 56 percent of Republicans who did not support the tea party agreed, followed by 51 percent of independents and only 34 percent of Democrats (See Figure 2.1).

It is not the case that tea partiers more strongly opposed because they incorrectly believed TARP was passed and signed into law under President Obama. Instead, a PIPI/Knowledge Networks survey found the opposite. Tea party supporters were the most likely (67%) to believe that President Bush had signed TARP into law, compared to 49 percent of non-supporters (see Table 2.3).

FIGURE 2.1
Public Reaction to TARP: By Partisanship and Tea Party Support

Do you think providing government money to banks and other financial institutions was necessary to get the economy out of recession, or would the economy probably have improved without doing that?



Source: CBS/New York Times April 2010 Survey

TABLE 2.3
Knowledge About TARP: By Tea Party Support

Is it your impression that the government bailout of banks and financial institutions, also known as TARP, was passed and signed into law under...?

	Not a Tea Party Supporter	Tea Party Supporter
President George W. Bush	49%	67%
President Barack Obama	47%	31%
Don't Know/Refused	4%	3%

Source: PIPA/Knowledge Networks Nov 6-15 2010

Second, Republicans' TARP votes are predictive of later membership in the tea party Congressional Caucus. To determine the relationship, I ran another logistic regression using House Republican TARP votes to predict eventual membership in the Congressional Tea Party Caucus. As shown in Table 2.4, I found both voting *against* the first bailout-related vote (HR 3997) and TARP (HR 1224) each significantly predicted later membership in the tea party

Congressional Caucus in 2010. However, Republican votes on TARP had a larger and more significant effect on tea party caucus membership than HR 3997. Republicans who voted against HR 3997 were about 3 times more likely than Republicans who voted for it to eventually join the tea party caucus, significant at the $p < .05$ level. Republicans who voted against TARP were more than 4 times as likely to eventually join the tea party Caucus by 2010, significant at the $p < .01$ level. Both bailout-related votes also significantly predict membership in the caucus by 2012. If there were not a connection between TARP and the tea party, why would representatives who opposed TARP be significantly more likely to have joined the tea party caucus?

TABLE 2.4
TARP Related Votes Predicting Joining Tea Party Congressional Caucus

<i>Logistic Regression,</i> <i>DV=Joined Tea Party Caucus</i>	Joined Tea Party Caucus			
	by 2010	by 2010	by 2012	by 2012
NO-Vote HR 3997 (Bailout 1)	3.02* (2.16)		3.11** (2.62)	
NO-Vote HR 1224 (Bailout 2)		4.15** (3.09)		3.99** (3.49)

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$; Clustered standard errors by state

Third, FreedomWorks, which later became one of the largest tea party affiliate groups, put up a website at NoWallStreetBailout.com during the debate and within the first month garnered over 60,000 signatures.³²

Examining the rhetoric of the comments from the petition signers, I found petitioner comments' were similar to tea party rhetoric I found in my database of tea party groups' websites' "about us" sections.

³² For information on the online petition, visit archive.org, typing in the website domain name, <http://nowallstreetbailout.com/>.

One might have guessed the following quotes came from tea party websites, when in fact they came from NoWallStreetBailout.com in the fall of 2008:

- “We're MAD As Hell & We're NOT going to take it ANYMORE! ... RESTORE the AMERICAN WAY of LIFE!”—Gwen
- “No Wall Street or auto bailouts! Maybe Americans should boycott paying 2008 federal income tax - no income tax revenue, no bailout.”—John
- “It is not the responsibility of the American people to bail out businesses who have acted in a manner that caused them to lose money. They lost the money, they should fail. Rewarding a business for their failures is not the American way.”—Joshua
- “Our tax dollars are burning holes in Paulson's pockets! Why not just admit that you were wrong, cut your losses & bail out of the Bailout! We, the people, don't want our tax dollars going to these overpaid execs when all they do is spend the \$ on resorts, jets, etc. Let the Free Market run its course!”—Lynn
- “This bailout could end up breaking the spirit that underlies the true American way. The key word is "RESPONSIBILITY!" WHERE IS IT?! This entire process is too SECRETIVE. The American people deserve to know who is truly influencing the outcome.”—Kevin
- “NO BAILOUT! NOT FOR WALLSTREET OR INDIVIDUAL IRRESPONSIBLE HOMEBUYERS. ACCOUNTABILITY SHOULD BEGIN NOW! IT WILL BE TOUGH AND PAINFUL THE NEXT FEW YEARS. BUT, MUCH WORSE AND A LONGER NEVER ENDING PAIN IF AMERICANS ALLOW THIS.”—Paul
- “This bailout will destroy what remnants we have left of the free market economics, which have allowed this nation to become the worlds greatest economic power. It was precisely this kind of government interference that created a culture of recklessness within the financial Investments Industry that has led us to this national economic crisis. You do not have my consent (nor my future vote) to turn this nation into an economic dictatorship!”—Timothy
- “Where is the Constitutional authority for Congress to spend tax payer money like they are doing us in the hinterland a favor? This buy-out/bail-out is nothing short of financial socialism!”—Fred

Parker and Barreto’s (2013) content analysis of tea party websites found they talked a lot about socialism. So did those who signed the anti-bailout petition in 2008:

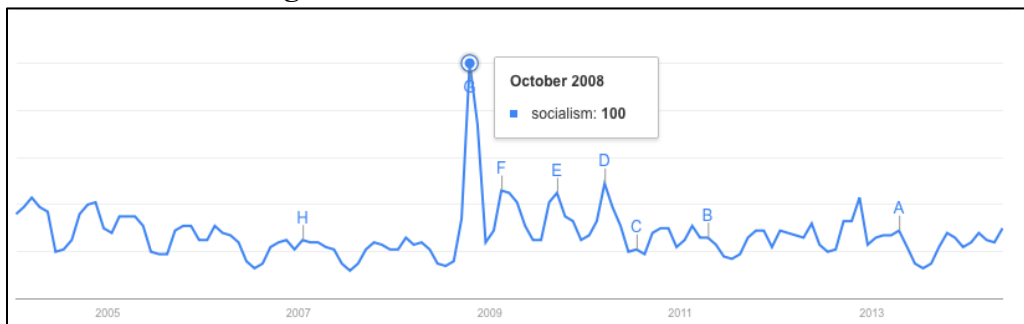
- “No government bailouts for failed socialist experiments trying to guarantee outcome, like the Freddie Mac and Fanny Mae debacle. We are a capitalist country trying to guarantee opportunity, not outcome.”—Deborah
- This is outright stealing from the taxpayers! We're socializing (government ownership or funding) every major industry of the economy. It's immoral, bad economically and unconstitutional. —Rakinder
- “Our country will now be called, ‘THE UNITED SOCIALIST STATES OF AMERICA,’ if the government bails out and owns most of these failed companies.”—Richard
- “No more bailouts! No more Socialism!! ... Americans are furious at how corrupt our government has become. Thank God for the first and second amendments. Go back and re-read our history. Americans take a very dim view of politicians who take their money and limit their freedoms. A trillion dollars down the

drain to prop up the mess that Congress (Fannie and Freddy are Federal institutions) and foolishly greedy banks made is unacceptable.”—Jeff

- It is wrong to privatize profits and socialize losses as you are proposing. This is a Constitutional Republic and not a fascist dictatorship. No bailout or we will start voting congressional leaders supporting this bill out of office. —Al
- “I totally oppose the socialization of our country.”—Debbie

Parker and Barreto (2013) use tea partiers’ belief that the country is headed toward socialism as an indication of conspiratorial thinking and thus a measure “for gauging the perceived subversion associated with Obama” (p. 87). However, concerns about the country moving toward socialism peaked in October 2008 when TARP was passed (shown in Figure 2.2), not upon Obama’s election as president in November 2008 or inauguration in January 2009.

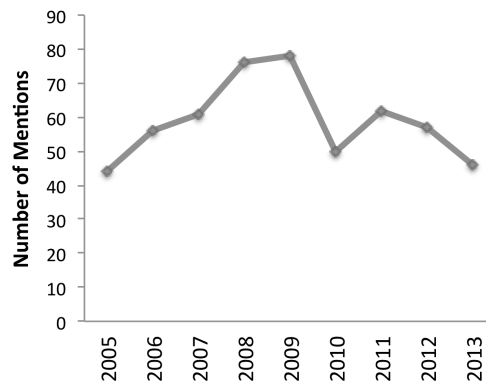
FIGURE 2.2
Google Trends for Search Term: Socialism



Source: Google Trends, www.google.com/trends

In fact, examining the *New York Times* pages reveals that mentions of socialism were on the rise as early as 2006, increasing each year until it peaked in 2008 and 2009 and then began to decline to its 2005 levels by 2013, as shown in Figure 2.3.

FIGURE 2.3
Number of Mentions of “Socialism” in *New York Times* 2005-2013



Source: Lexis Nexis Search of "Socialism" in *New York Times*, measuring 7/1-12/31 annually.

Fourth, if the tea party began with TARP we would expect those most reactive to TARP at the time to share characteristics and political beliefs with what later surveys found among tea party supporters. NBC News/*Wall Street Journal* conducted a survey October 4-5 2008, one day after Congress passed and President Bush signed TARP. The benefit of this survey is that it was conducted immediately after the law went into effect. The survey found that Americans were divided in their reaction, with 40 percent who approved and 38 percent who disapproved, with 22 percent who had not yet formed an opinion. The survey further probed asking which of three statements best described the respondent’s view. It found only 11 percent agreed “given the financial conditions facing America, the federal bailout plan passed by Congress [was] the right approach to dealing with the problem.” Fifty-four percent agreed with statement 2, “the federal bailout plan passed by Congress [was] not the best approach to dealing with the problem, but [was] necessary anyway.” Another 29 percent instead agreed with statement 3, “the federal bailout plan passed by Congress should not have been passed and dealing with the problem should be left to the markets and the private sector.” Statement three was the most likely to

explain why respondents said they opposed TARP. We would expect initial tea partiers to come from the third group opposed to TARP and instead preferring a free market solution.

Indeed, the third group of respondents appears extraordinarily similar to eventual tea party activists. Among the 29 percent, nearly two thirds believe that “government is doing too many things better left to businesses and individuals” compared to 38 percent of other respondents. Similarly, nearly three fourths wanted Congress to prioritize dealing with “waste, fraud, and abuse in the system to protect taxpayers from government inefficiency and pork barrel spending” compared to half of other respondents. The third group’s opinions about government are clearly in line with explicit tea party complaints.

Fifth, another indication that TARP initially sparked what would eventually be called tea party fervor is a regression analysis predicting opposition to the bank bailouts. Using the 2008 ANES Time Series survey, I model opposition to the bank bailouts using racial resentment and a preference for limited government as the literature has shown both of these to significantly predict tea party support (see Parker and Barreto 2013), as well as standard controls. Preference for limited government and racial resentment both significantly predict opposition to the bank bailouts with the former being a substantially larger coefficient (see Table 2.5). I then run a similar model using the April 2010 CBS/*New York Times* survey. While preference for limited government remains the stronger of the two significant predictors, the ratio is smaller. This provides some indication that the initial wave of fiscal conservatives opposed to TARP may have over time influenced those who score higher on racial resentment, perhaps as they joined the tea party ranks.³³

³³ Question wording can be found in Appendix A.

TABLE 2.5
Predicting Opposition to TARP:
Regressions on Measures of Racial Resentment and Preference for Limited Government

Survey	ANES 2008		CBS/NYT 2010	
	1	2	1	2
<i>Logit Regression</i>	Say Bailouts Were "Wrong Thing" For Govt To Do	Say Bailouts Were "Wrong Thing" For Govt To Do	Believe Bailouts Unnecessary	Believe Bailouts Unnecessary
Racial Resentment	0.272** (3.21)	0.190* (2.17)	0.915** (2.97)	0.774* (2.35)
Preference for Limited Govt		1.044*** (8.00)		1.265*** (5.37)
Republican	0.557** (2.64)	0.0847 (0.39)	1.000*** (3.82)	0.622* (2.39)
Independent	0.415** (2.81)	0.243 (1.48)	0.710** (3.10)	0.485* (2.09)
Nonwhite	0.0042 (0.03)	0.187 (1.04)	0.181 (0.72)	0.403 (1.53)
Male	0.254* (1.99)	0.137 (1.02)	0.147 (0.51)	0.156 (0.5)
Education	-0.00932 (0.18)	-0.0677 (1.27)	-0.0513 (0.52)	-0.0983 (0.91)
Age	0.000914 (0.22)	-0.0036 (1.00)	0.00955 (1.30)	0.00325 (0.44)
Middle Income	0.0854 (0.53)	0.0381 (0.23)	-0.107 (0.51)	-0.0916 (0.47)
Higher Income	0.153 (0.96)	0.0163 (0.09)	-0.846* (2.54)	-0.995** (2.90)
Constant	-1.111*** (4.01)	-1.136*** (4.36)	-0.72 (1.25)	-0.747 (1.20)
N	1897	1897	1509	1509

Source: ANES 2008 Time Series Survey; CBS/NYTimes April 2010 Survey; Logit Regression, t statistics in parentheses, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001, Clustered standard errors by state

Early Activist Organizing

Michael Patrick Leahy, distant cousin of Democratic Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT) was horrified by the passage of TARP and the inability of the Republican Party to nominate a challenger to Barack Obama for the 2008 presidential election who would actively oppose

TARP-like government interventions. Instead, the party had nominated John McCain who had even suspended his presidential campaign to vote in *support* of TARP. With the Republicans' crushing 2008 general election defeat and the country in the midst of the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression, the Republican Party's brand had taken a significant beating and Republican voters felt alienated and demoralized. It was within this context that Michael Patrick Leahy began thinking about how to connect with other conservatives outside of formal party structures, and this led him to consider a relatively new online service called Twitter:

"It struck me that I wasn't probably the only person who shared the view that as limited government conservatives we were very unhappy with Bush's abandonment of free market principles and the election of President Obama. With the GOP totally destroyed politically they were unable to mount a decent political ground game against the Obama administration. I had a sense that if we could connect with other likeminded conservatives, there was potential for a political comeback for limited government."

Twitter is a public micro-blogging service offering each user a unique screen name called "handles" with the ability to publicly post short messages online called "tweets." Users may elect to "follow" other users' tweets and be followed by other users who wish to receive their tweets. Users can connect with others on similar topics using a "hashtag," such as #SuperBowl.

In the fall of 2008, Michael Patrick Leahy took to Twitter to begin assembling a list of Twitter "handles" or screen names of self-identified conservatives. He then rank ordered by number of followers, and posted to a website called topconservativesontwitter.org. In the course of 72 hours he was inundated with over 1500 tech savvy conservatives around the country wanting to be included on the "#TCOT" list, standing for "Top Conservatives On Twitter." He recounts, "I don't think I slept for 48 hours straight just updating it, it was this avalanche of people wanting to be part of it." Overwhelmed with the database management, Leahy enlisted the help of Rob Neppell, well known right-of-center tech guru and early adopter of political blogging, to streamline and automate the system. Neppell later went on to help plan the early tea

party protests in 2009 and to co-found Tea Party Patriots, an umbrella organization of local tea party groups.

In addition to Leahy and Neppell, several of the early tea party protest organizers are found on this TCOT list. Appendix B includes a screenshot of the TCOT list retrieved from Archive.org from December 16, 2008. For instance, eventual co-founder of the Tea Party Patriots umbrella organization, Jenny Beth Martin is #23, and libertarian Eric Odom, who was later instrumental in putting together the coordinating websites for the protests, is found at #16. Additionally, Smart Girl Politics founders' (also stay-at-home moms) Stacey Mott and Teri Christoph, who also helped plan the early tea party protests, joined up with TCOT in 2008. TCOT activists were not just DC politicians, but were from all throughout the country.

Early tea party activists on the TCOT list expressed similar concerns to Michael Patrick Leahy, largely pin-pointing their activation to frustration with the bailouts. As one early activist explained, "it was a pivotal moment...it seemed like an excuse to radically expand the size and scope of government in light of the crisis."

The TCOT activists used the hash tag #TCOT in their tweets to connect and communicate with each other online. Michael Patrick Leahy explained, "there wasn't an entity, but a community, this is how we became connected." While TCOT hadn't formed until after the bank bailouts, the TCOT activists took to Twitter in outrage over President Bush's decision to allocate some TARP funds to automakers. They used Twitter to coordinate a conference call to discuss "action projects" like "Melt the Phones" to coordinate deluging the Capitol with grassroots phone calls to protest automaker bailouts. This led to regular weekly conference calls, that one described as "wild and woolly," including up to several hundred people in one activists' estimation. It was through these calls that the eventual early tea party activists and organizers

met, particularly Stacey Mott, Teri Christoph³⁴, Eric Odom³⁵, Jenny Beth Martin³⁶, Michael Patrick Leahy³⁷, and Rob Neppell³⁸ among others. These individuals were part of a group paramount to the first and second waves of tea party protests in 2009. As one of these early activists put it “those five people and the work they did laid the groundwork for technology and social media [for the tea party]; it was critical and cannot be overstated.”

In December the group decided to organize around several core values they shared in common. They built upon principles from the conservative Heritage Foundation and libertarian Cato Institute think tanks, which included constitutionally limited government, free markets, fiscal responsibility, and a strong national defense. As it turns out, the first three of these principles later were incorporated as the core values of the Tea Party Patriots and local tea party groups throughout the country. Notably, one early activist recalled, “the one area of contention was the social issues” (i.e. same-sex marriage, abortion, marijuana legalization, etc.) They viewed themselves as a combination of libertarians and conservatives who were primarily focused on “constitutional and fiscal issues” and consciously excluded a core Heritage principle about social values. As I will later show, this division is reflected among the broader swath of tea party activists and sympathizers nationally.

³⁴ Teri Christoph (Virginia) and Stacey Mott (New Jersey) were stay-at-home moms who founded Smart Girl Politics in July of 2008 with the goal of attracting more conservative women into politics and to run for office.

³⁵ Libertarian digital activist Eric Odom (Illinois) co-founded #DontGo as an online clearinghouse for free market conservatives and libertarians opposed to Congress going on their annual summer break in 2008 in the midst of debate over offshore oil drilling and Congress’s failure to vote on a related energy bill.

³⁶ Active in local politics, Jenny Beth Martin (Georgia) was a computer programmer and stay-at-home mom.

³⁷ Michael Patrick Leahy (Tennessee) was a technology entrepreneur, graduate of Harvard College and Stanford’s Graduate School of Business. During this time frame he also had become interested in writing books on political figures, publishing two on the political beliefs of Sarah Palin and Barack Obama respectively.

³⁸ Rob Neppell (California) worked primarily in private sector technology, but also was a well known “tech guru” within the right-of-center network and early adopter of blogging and social media.

The Stimulus and the Santelli Rant

After the passage of TARP the economy continued reeling throughout the remainder of 2008. Consequently, a new consensus began forming among academic economist circles that another kind of government intervention was necessary. At a conference that fall Larry Summers, former Treasury Secretary and soon-to-be appointed director of the National Economic Council, said the plan needed to be “speedy, substantial, and sustained” (Grabell 2012, p. 28). Lawmakers and the incoming Obama administration began to work on a stimulus program, akin to Franklin D. Roosevelt’s public works programs that put people back to work and many believed helped revive the economy (Grabell 2012). Many viewed the stimulus plan as a kind of Keynesian economic plan, as the one promoted by British economist John Maynard Keynes as a response to the Great Depression. However, many on the political right already had come to view Roosevelt’s use of Keynesian economics as socialism (Grabell 2012, p. 28, Glenn Beck 2008).

Working with economic experts and Hill staff, the Obama transition team formulated a plan during the December 2008 holidays that would likely cost slightly more than TARP, \$820 billion, divided into three parts. One third would go toward tax cuts, another third to social services, including to those most hurt by the recession and states facing budget crises, and then another third would go toward investments in infrastructure, energy, and education.

As Congress quickly deliberated the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), also known as the stimulus, grassroots discontent began to reach the surface even outside of the TCOT activists. In Seattle, a 29-year-old Hispanic libertarian-leaning fiscal conservative with a pierced nose named Keli Carender began planning one of the first protests, but not yet under the “tea party” banner. She had grown upset under Bush and was particularly frustrated that the

Republican Party hadn't figured out what had gone wrong: "None of them seemed to understand what conservatives didn't like about Bush...it was the spending" (Zernike 2010, Loc. 264-265). With Congress preparing to pass the stimulus bill on top of TARP she worried that the country might not be able to pay back the money. She started a blog and with it began promoting the first anti-spending protest she dubbed "The Anti-Porkulus Protest," borrowing the term "porkulus" from renown conservative talk radio host Rush Limbaugh (Zernike 2010). Carender contacted local conservative radio hosts and economists to spread the word. However, it was nationally known conservative blogger Michelle Malkin who agreed to help promote the event that got it the most media attention. In all, about a hundred protestors showed up on February 15th in Seattle to protest government spending. Other small protests also bubbled up in Denver and Florida, but remained small without much media attention (Zernike 2010).

Two days later on February 17, 2009 Congress passed the stimulus bill. It was within this context that an energetic cable news commentator gave the tea party movement a name and acted as a coordinating mechanism galvanizing the movement. CNBC contributor Rick Santelli standing on the floor of the Chicago Mercantile exchange took to the show Squawk Box to loudly protest the stimulus bill, particularly the \$75 billion provision granting financial assistance to homeowners facing foreclosure. In what has become known as the infamous Santelli "rant" he declared:

"The government is promoting bad behavior!...This is America! How many of you people want to pay for your neighbor's mortgage that has an extra bathroom and can't pay their bills, raise their hand?!...We're thinking about having a Chicago tea party in July. All you capitalists that want to show up to Lake Michigan, I'm going to start organizing. We're going to be dumping in some derivative securities."

He further questioned whether Americans should "subsidize the losers' mortgages" or "reward people who can carry the water instead of drink the water." In an unusual fashion, stock floor

traders shouted out in affirmation with one exclaiming: “How about we all stop paying our mortgage? It’s a moral hazard!”

Something in Santelli’s outburst struck a nerve. The rant was repeatedly replayed throughout the conservative media network of TV and radio, appeared on the front page of the Drudge Report, and CNBC’s posting of the rant garnered over a million hits in 24 hours. Most tea party activists remember the rant and share a similar reaction to it.

Activists React to the Stimulus and the Santelli Rant

Many activists remember the day they watched the so-called “Santelli rant” and the profound impact it had on them. *Matt Reid* recounted, “I watched it live and replayed it 5 times,” *Greg Rogers* remembers it “struck a nerve.” Santelli had articulated or “validated” what they wanted to say as *Sarah von Canon* put it. *Keith Marshall* explained, “When I saw Rick Santelli’s rant on CNBC, I was charged up and ready to go...His entire rant revolved around the fact that we as American taxpayers should not be bailing out banks who made bad decisions or paying for people with mortgages who made bad decisions.”

From the perspective of tea party activists, the stimulus seemed like “TARP 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6” as *Lance Owen* put it. Consequently, while Santelli was referring specifically to a provision in the stimulus providing financial assistance to home homeowners facing foreclosure, many activists viewed the rant as a general critique of government spending on both TARP under Bush and the stimulus under Obama.³⁹

Santelli used the same moral language to describe current government policy as eventual activists used to describe both TARP and the stimulus, using phrases like “bad behavior.”

Moreover, he employed classical proportionality reasoning about rewarding people who make

³⁹ According to a PIPA/Knowledge Networks Nov 2010 survey, nearly 7 in 10 national tea party sympathizers believed that TARP was passed under George W. Bush, not Obama. In contrast, 49 percent of non-tea party supporters believed TARP was passed under Bush.

effective decisions and allowing those who make bad decisions to face the consequences. It was for this primary reason, I argue, that Santelli resonated with eventual activists. For instance, *Joe Jaworski* explained how Santelli's rant resonated with him because:

"It's frustrating when me and my wife are paying our mortgage on our house on time and we're being forced to pay for other people's mortgages. So we're being penalized for doing the right thing and other people were being rewarded for doing the wrong thing...More important than math to me is the morality of it. Good behavior should be rewarded; bad behavior should be punished...that's what I found very frustrating about a lot of aspects of what the federal government does."

But what made the lasting impact was Santelli's call to hold a "tea party;" it was a call to action. *Linda Rodriguez* recalls, "he said these magic words: 'lets have a tea party' at the very same time nationwide. And I thought to myself—I have to do that! I came to the realization that I'm an activist." While the conservative grassroots had feared they would be alone had they protested TARP, Santelli's rant effectively operated as a coordinating mechanism reassuring them that they would not be alone if they took action.

Aside from Santelli's rant, the stimulus was also upsetting to tea partiers. As few look kindly at Keynesian economics (as many explicitly pointed out) they consequently viewed the stimulus as cronyism and unearned payoffs to the politically connected. As *Lance Owen* explained, "I knew it would be an utter failure. You don't take money out of the pockets of producers and send it to the Washington machine and then repay it out in government works projects. I don't think it's ever worked. It's false growth. Government doesn't spend a dollar that it doesn't extract from somewhere else." *Michael Adams* called it a "boondoggle, full of payoffs to donors and things like that...it seemed like a political move rather than an economic move." *Ronald Brant* called it "political graft" and felt it was essentially a huge eventual tax on the middle class for the sake of political patronage: "the debt today means future taxes tomorrow." *Harvey Baxter* thought it was just "socialism...only giving aid to the crony capitalist."

Tea party activists involved at the beginning of the movement will summarize that it was the combination of TARP, the stimulus, and Santelli's call to action that galvanized the movement. *Lance Owen* explained that with all "the craziness, TARP, the auto bailout, stimulus spending...there was a growing murmur that everybody needs to get more involved and start taking their stand on the overspending, the economy, the debt, the spending was just totally out of control."

Spending and Debt

In this context of increased government spending for the bailouts and the stimulus and expectations of tax increases in the midst of the financial crisis, tea partiers became hypersensitive to spending and debt. In the minds of tea partiers, high spending, deficits, and debt became symbolic of government not facing the financial constraints regular people face. Cutting government spending would conversely be a symbolic gesture of government "rolling up its sleeves" like regular Americans who are "tightening their belts," making sacrifices, and exercising frugality.

"If I ran my house like [the federal government], I'd be on the street," exclaimed *Carol Hudson*. Activists often compared running their own homes and businesses to the government. Similarly *Joan Rayas* warned, "We have a \$17 trillion dollar debt, and it's going to do nothing but enslave our children and grandchildren. It's out of control. They can't control it. Now they spend billions like it's nothing...it's causing us to make bad decisions. Without fiscal responsibility, everything else falls apart." *Raymond Webster* felt that government was "unwilling to do what people were doing—the bitter pill—that we need to cut, tighten our belts and make some hard decisions, even on entitlements."

When asked what they wanted to cut, they rarely first brought up social services. Instead, they most frequently reported wanting “across the board” cuts. *Lester Boone* suggested, “a 10 percent across the board cut for everybody. Let’s see what that does. That way everybody can complain at the same time.” *Brad Osmond* admitted, “I’m a radical. I’d cut the government by 50 percent—defense everything, no sacred cows—over 10 years.” *Laura Thomas* took a more moderate approach; she wanted a 1 percent spending cut per year “across the board, that way we are all hit by the same percentage rate decrease, so we all share equally.”

Federal Reserve

An extraordinarily high share of activists felt the Federal Reserve was “printing” money as way to help the federal government avoid cutting spending. As *Kent Connor* put it, “every time we need money we just print. They should show a little more restraint, but they don’t have to.” While few go so far as to advocate abolishing the Federal Reserve, most feel it must be audited and reined in. The central bank had become another symbol of declining accountability in government. They felt that because the bank can “print money out of thin air” it enabled Congress to spend more money than they should. *Tony Watts* felt, “The people who run it [the Federal Reserve] aren’t held accountable to any citizens. It’s a group of people who control the flow of money, it goes against free markets...This is the third central bank, and the first two we got rid of quickly, and this one has lasted too long, and it needs to go away, for sure we need to audit it.”

Quite a few activists reported reading the works of Austrian economists like Frederick von Hayek and Ludwig von Mises which led them to view the Federal Reserve as a possible source of the boom and bust cycle, and a leading cause of the 2008 financial crisis.

Something's Got To Give

From tea partiers' perspective, high spending, deficits, and debt necessarily portend future doom. *Lance Owen* compared the country's deficit spending to a credit card, "The problem with deficit spending is you can't spend more money than you make over time. Like a private credit card it's going to catch up with you...I think we're at \$17.8 trillion right now, \$200-\$300 trillion in unfunded liabilities. I don't think we'll be able to keep that up." Similarly *Tony Watts* felt, "\$17 trillion in debt, that is real money owed to real people that will come due. And I don't know if we're going to have some major upheaval or a collapse in the federal government because of the overwhelming debt and the too many promises to too many people. Some day someone will say the cash box is empty, it could be ugly." *Greg Dennis* exclaimed, "Well, we've kicked the can down the road to where we are now. The music has stopped, and there's twenty people looking for two chairs." Some went so far to believe that the US wouldn't survive the recession. *Jack Burke* felt that "there is a very real possibility that the United States won't make it...We're making some really critical decisions over the next four years. There is a very real possibility of hyperinflation."

Obama

It should come as little surprise that tea party activists, who overwhelmingly vote Republican, highly disapprove of President Obama who is a Democrat. They reported their main point of disagreement with Obama was over economic policy and what they perceived to be his expansion of government powers at the expense of constitutional restraint. However, tea party activists begin to diverge widely in how they explained *why* Obama does not share their own views.

When it came to the President's economic policies, they felt he was too willing to spend too much money and distribute it to the politically connected. *Tony Watts* explained in his view "Obama buys into Keynesian theory...and so many of those basic ideas just don't match with what I thought this country was all about." Not all specifically mentioned *Keynesian* economic theory, although quite a few did, but most had a general gut reaction against the idea that government spending could stimulate the economy.

Many referenced several comments Obama made while on the 2008 presidential campaign trail. The first came from a dialogue between Obama and an Ohio resident, Samuel Wurzelbacher later dubbed "Joe the Plumber" in which Obama said, "when you spread the wealth around, it's good for everybody." The second comment came a few days before the 2008 presidential election on a Missouri campaign stop when Obama said "we are five days away from fundamentally transforming the United States of America" (YouTube 2008b). Conservative media then repeatedly aired both these excerpted comments in isolation of the broader context. Many among the conservative punditry and among tea party activists themselves tended to perceive these statements as a promise to transform America into a European-style social democracy. However, these statements combined into something like a perfect storm with the financial crisis as government did embark on dramatic spending initiatives in efforts to revive the economy. Numerous activists expressed fears that Obama was an ideological heir to Franklin D. Roosevelt and he and the progressive left would use the crisis to transform the US into a "European socialist state." For instance, *Joe Silva* thought, "He [Obama] wants European Socialism. He thinks it's more fair and just. He wants equality of outcome."

Obama was not alone in receipt of a socialist label; most tea party activists felt that liberal Democrats are socialists. Consequently, they tended to view Obama as a member of a

progressive triumvirate with the Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and the Democratic Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid. *Greg Rogers* felt, “you could feel the mood of the country...it was like the progressive wing of the Democratic Party was just getting their way on everything.”

While activists were unified in their opposition toward Obama’s economic policies, they varied significantly in how they explained *why* they disagreed with the President. The three main reasons given were that he simply had different value priorities from them, others pointed to his upbringing and influences from young adulthood, while others thought Obama viewed the US something like a world bully who he needed to apologize for and “take down a notch.”

Some activists expressed that Obama had good intentions, but was misguided or had different value priorities. As *Kent Connor* explained, “I think he feels like he’s doing the right thing. He feels the country would be better off with a much more socialized system.” Similarly, *Emma Welch* felt that “he probably believes the end results should be more equal.”

Others activists felt that Obama disagreed with them because of how he was raised, particularly by his left-leaning academic mother and grandparents. They also pointed to his mentors and acquaintances in college and young adulthood as culprits in convincing him of a socialistic worldview. As *Heather Burton* explained, “I think that for everyone, it’s about their upbringing. Obama had a mother and grandparents who were left leaning and that rubbed off on him.” But she also felt that he selected friends and acquaintances who were a negative influence, and in her view “you are who you surround yourself with.” *Carol Hudson* felt that, “Obama was taught that corporations are bad and everybody needs to be the same, and I think that is just how he was raised. Through his father and mother and in college, I think he has become a product of education.”

Others thought that Obama was strongly influenced by his Kenyan father and “anti-colonial” influences which led him to view the US not as a “shining light upon a hill” but as a world bully. *Jeff Swanson* summarized this view:

“His [Obama’s] father and grandfather and the people he hung around with early in his life were anti-colonial. People who believe that everything that went wrong with underdeveloped countries is the responsibility and result of Western societies. Obama is a believer in the single-pie system. They feel that anytime a country has more than another country they stole it rather than created it. His father talked on and on about how he despised the West. And this is what Obama came from.”

While some felt he was “apologizing” for the US and making Americans look “like a bunch of jerks” others went so far to think Obama had nefarious intentions to “destroy” the country to “punish the US for a series of past transgressions on the world stage,” as one activist put it.

Some activists talked about President Obama in such a way that suggests they were thinking of his race. These activists were typically from the South. In these interviews, activists would choose to bring up Obama within the context of other subjects, such as race, disproportionate poverty among African-Americans, and associate him with African-American civil rights leaders. For instance, one activist declared unprompted that “people like [Al] Sharpton, [Jesse] Jackson and President Obama” still “sell the narrative” that African-Americans are “held down by white men” in order to court votes.

Nevertheless, other activists had positive things to say about the president despite their disagreements over politics. Activists often mentioned he seemed like a nice person you could “have a beer with” was very intelligent, and someone whose achievements they admired. *Emma Welch* felt a great deal of respect for his office despite policy disagreements, “I don’t care for Obama’s policies, but I would throw myself in front of the President to take a bullet for him. He’s the leader of the free world.” The more libertarian-leaning activists interviewed would often

point out that while they vehemently disagreed on economics, they felt more favorable toward Obama's foreign policy.

Among activists asked, nearly all thought it would be an honor to have dinner with President Obama. As *Tony Watts* explained, "I'd be honored to have dinner with President Obama. I'd be nice and polite, but I'd have lots of questions for him. It's not personal." *Oliver Hayes* felt he would definitely accept an invitation to dine with Obama because "he is the president and deserving of respect. Even if people disagree with his policies, and I certainly disagree, but he is to be respected as Commander and Chief." One activist from the South declined the hypothetical invitation. Why? "Well I don't trust him," said the activist.

Many of these reactions to President Obama are unsurprising. Research has found that partisans tend to view their political adversaries as fundamentally opposed to the partisan's own core values, rather than adversaries pursuing their own, albeit different, core values (Chambers and Melnyk 2006, Graham, Nosek, and Haidt 2012). Consequently, this often leads partisans to believe their opponents have malicious intentions. Furthermore, it is well understood that as groups struggle for power in governance, populist demonization of adversaries has tended to be the rule rather than the exception in American politics (Rogin 1988, Fenster 1999).⁴⁰

Nevertheless, from interviews alone it is difficult to ascertain if the strong dislike and political demonization of Barack Obama often found in the tea party stems from these common partisan impulses or is also colored by a racial lens. Qualitative interviews alone are insufficient to investigate this question; instead, Chapters 3 and 6 will employ quantitative methods to examine the role of race in the tea party.

⁴⁰ Indeed, such conspiracy theories animated the American revolution, abolitionism, fear of international banks, but also have had racist and anti-democratic strains as well (Fenster 1999).

TCOT Activists Take Action

The early tea party organizers reacted similarly to the broader group of eventual rank and file activists to TARP, the stimulus, spending, and the Santelli rant. Michael Patrick Leahy recounted, “He [Santelli] was basically saying that governments should not be picking winners and losers and the government shouldn't be taking money from one group to another. That was consistent with our views. We had set up TCOT essentially on those principles.”

Immediately after Santelli’s rant, TCOT activists began communicating and planned a conference call that same evening with about 25-50 activists to discuss action plans. The activists generally agreed that grassroots energy dissipated quickly and waiting until July to hold a tea party protest, as Santelli proposed, would be too far away. One exclaimed that they needed to “strike while the iron is hot.” Another suggested holding a rally as soon as February 27th 2009, just 8 days later, in Washington DC to coincide with the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) to get more attention. From there they decided to hold simultaneous events across the country to generate more media coverage and to keep the grassroots fervor going. Since TCOT activists lived throughout the country, many offered to head up efforts in their own cities.⁴¹

While planning the protests, early tea party activists had to deal with the “divisive” social issues important to more traditional conservatives. Some of the core activists were staunchly libertarian and refused to allow socially conservative issues like opposition to gay marriage to be recognized as a core issue. They reasoned that there were plenty of other organizations within which someone could advocate socially conservative positions, but no grassroots limited

⁴¹ The initial 35 cities planned included Chicago, Washington DC, Atlanta, Orlando, Fort Worth, Pittsburg, San Diego, Tulsa, Nashville, St. Louis, Houston, Portland, Kansas City, Cleveland, Philadelphia, Seattle, Los Angeles, Lansing, Fayetteville, Shelby County Alabama, Greenville, Columbia, Denver, and a virtual city in the virtual world of Second Life.

government groups. Another explained it was pragmatic to select issues conducive to a coalition: “building alliances and a coalition with people was so important so we could focus on the issues that really matter.”

While one might have expected protests to primarily occur in conservative bastions, protests instead occurred in large urban centers like Seattle, Chicago, and Atlanta. In total, 51 events were counted in all, attracting an estimated thirty thousand people (Zernike 2010). Grassroots TCOT activists who planned events in their cities often had no experience planning a protest. As one confided, “I had never even been to a protest before; I didn’t even know what you do at a protest.” A key ingredient for their organizing success was often the cooperation of a sympathetic local conservative talk radio host who would promote the protest and also speak at it. Others tried to get well known conservatives such as former House Speaker Newt Gingrich to speak at their event, although they, like Gingrich, often declined. (Gingrich later offered to sponsor the next round of protests). Republican Party leadership, like RNC Chairman Michael Steele offered to speak at one of the rallies, but the activists refused. Activists relied on their personal contact lists to get the word out. Also key were Campaign for Liberty email lists which stemmed from libertarian Congressman Ron Paul’s presidential campaign. Within the TCOT community, best practices, logistical tips, and sample agendas were shared.

Affiliate organizations, namely FreedomWorks, as well as others such as Americans for Tax Reform and Americans for Prosperity, cannot be understated for their role as well. For instance, activists at these organizations also worked as coordinators, posting websites to help activists find a local tea party protest near them. Similarly, they posted blogs with information about how to plan a protest in one’s neighborhood, that in turn invited email responses and helped further build email lists.

The activists felt so pleased with the February 27th tea party protests they immediately began planning another round of protests this time for April 15, 2009 to coincide with tax day. Eric Odom put up a website at TaxDayTeaParty.com which allowed anyone to register a protest in their area and that would invite them to their twice-weekly conference calls to plan logistics. One of the early activists described the calls as a “huge wild west thing” with several hundred activists all on the same call trying to organize in 6 weeks what would typically take one year.

Despite the February 27th protests’ success, the activists decided that protests alone were not sufficient. For instance, an organizer of the Dallas protest explained, “this needed to be more than a one day protest, we needed to build a movement that would actually enact change to our political system.” Consequently, they planned to use the April 15th protests to gather contact information and form local tea party groups in their areas.

Glenn Beck Takes on Role as Teacher

As the TCOT activists were organizing, Fox News host Glenn Beck further tapped into tea party energy. Beck’s complaints also rested on a common tea party criticism of TARP and the stimulus, that government shielded people from consequences:

“You know, many in Washington, left and right, want to convince you that they’re the solution. I happen to believe that them being the solution is the problem. The system has been perverted and it must be restored. **Those who screwed up must be allowed to fail; those who broke the law must go to jail. Those who live by the rules must be left alone to rebuild the nation.** The answers have never come from Washington.” (Zernike 2010, Kindle Locations 401-404).

Beck encouraged his viewers to form local 9/12 groups based on “nine principles and twelve values.” For instance, these principles and values included uncontroversial themes like honesty, charity, justice, and personal responsibility. He argued the American Framers had built the country upon these principles and were ingredients for its continued success. 9/12 also had added significance. Beck explained 9/12 also symbolized the day after the September 11, 2001 attacks in which the nation was unified, and he urged viewers to seek after that unity and shared

sense of purpose. Many of these groups began to form in March 2009 to hold viewing parties for one of Beck's Fox News specials. Many 9/12 groups joined up with the loose knit tea party groups also sprouting up; both were viewed as "sister" groups.

There can be little doubt that Glenn Beck played a paramount role in harnessing and galvanizing tea party energy. He took on the role of teacher, even equipped with a blackboard. As *Gail Chapman* explained, "he's become like a teacher, a professor saying 'Look at this!'...Glenn Beck provided such a wealth of information that most people don't have any idea where to find that information...He has a great way of explaining things so that he doesn't talk down to you." *Joe Silva* concurred, "It's like a class! He's very educational, I learn when I listen to him." *Jack Burke* added, "He has awakened me to things I didn't know." Beck discussed fairly complex economic concepts from libertarian economists like Frederic Bastiat, Frederick von Hayek and Ludwig von Mises, and used these theories to explain what was happening to the country and what could be done to fix it. He even dedicated a show to explaining Hayek's 1944 book *Road to Serfdom* that warns of tyranny's prerequisites. One day later the book shot to the number one slot on Amazon's bestseller list.

Journalist David Weigel who covered the tea party movement perhaps best summarized Glenn Beck's impact. "He's really good at capturing what the tea party feeling is all about" but that Beck connected something "inherently political" into the general tea party feeling without making it explicitly political (Weigel 2010). Instead, Beck talked about getting back to charity, self-reliance, and other values he believed were inherently at odds with major social reforms since Woodrow Wilson onward. In Weigel's view, Beck did a better job galvanizing grassroots conservatives because he connected their deeply felt moral values to politics.

Tax Day Tea Party Rallies

While 9/12 groups were organizing, TCOT and tea party activists were employing new online communication technologies like Meetup and Ning to connect and organize with other activists in preparation for the April 15 tax day tea party protests. Others used new forms of social media to advertise, such as Facebook ads. Many had personally developed their own email lists and promoted the event that way. Additionally, Fox News had taken full notice of the event planning and Fox News hosts promoted the protests on their shows. However, sympathetic local conservative talk radio hosts were again key to local promotion. Despite claims of “Astroturf” few local tea party organizers had money to pay for media to promote the events, besides what they received through Fox News and local conservative radio hosts. As one activist organizer said, “there was no money, we were doing this in our free time.”

While the first wave of protests occurred in 51 cities, many activists expressed the preference for events held closer to home. This marked the shift from primarily urban centers to both urban and suburban locations. By the time Tax Day arrived, the *New York Times* estimated there were over 750 protests held throughout the country and most activists recall significantly larger crowds than the February 27th rallies (Robbins 2009).

Protestors who attended but did not organize the April 15th rallies recall finding them by first being upset and then “Googling,” searching on Twitter to find a protest near them, or finding a Facebook event page, or using other online tools.

To collect information from protest attendees, organizers tended to use small index cards to collect names, emails, phone numbers, and willingness to participate in various forms of activities, such as joining a local tea party group, attending local government meetings and so

forth. From there they started their mailing lists; more successful groups averaged 1000-6000 per group, with some as high as 25,000.

Journalists reporting on these early protests document they were overwhelmingly fiscal in content. For instance, *New York Times* journalist Kate Zernike gave examples of the signs she encountered at the early rallies including “Stimulate business, not government,” “Your mortgage is not my problem,” “the government has no right to take ours,” “free markets not free loaders,” “you can’t spend your way out of debt,” and “we can’t afford more change” (Zernike 2010, Kindle Location 372)

It was from these early protests in 2009 that tea party groups formed, established boards, agreed to “core principles,” established regular meeting times, and identified activities. They would then put up a website and often create a Facebook group and or Meetup group and likeminded grassroots in the area would reach out to them.

Why No TARP Protests?

There appear to be at least two related reasons why eventual tea party protestors did not begin protesting in direct reaction to TARP in 2008. Both are coordination problems and one particularly being an assurance problem.

First, affiliated tea party activists revealed that many in the conservative grassroots wanted to organize in reaction to TARP. Activists at FreedomWorks report that they first began to notice heightened grassroots concerns in the fall of 2008. One FreedomWorks activist recalled, “when the bailouts began, you started to see grassroots conservatives upset...phone calls and emails began coming in with the same question: ‘What can we do?’” With Capitol phone lines jammed, constituents were having difficulty getting in touch with their representatives’ offices.

Consequently, FreedomWorks encouraged them to “go protest, go protest a Republican—that is the way to get their attention” as the FreedomWorks activist put it. However, the grassroots reported being fearful they’d be alone in their protest. Indeed, since the tea party movement’s emergence, tea partiers will tell you how they believed they were the only ones who felt the way they did, until the tea party, particularly Santelli’s “rant.” As one activist explained, “you don’t want to do it by yourself with two people and look silly.” Initial mobilization and organization was difficult and daunting for unconnected grassroots conservatives.

Angry grassroots in 2008 faced a classic coordination problem or “assurance problem” which Michael Chwe (2001) defines as a situation such that “each person wants to participate in a group action but only if others also participate” (see Sen 1967). He explains individuals receiving a message to act (like the FreedomWorks call to protest) is not sufficient because individuals will only participate when they know that others know the same information and want to participate. In other words, they must share *common knowledge*. He argues common knowledge is often shared through *public ritual* such as ceremonies, rallies, advertising and media events. Indeed, the Santelli “rant” was a media event that essentially operated as a mechanism promoting common knowledge activists lacked during TARP in 2008. Moreover, Chwe further argues that common knowledge often depends on a shared symbolic system and often draws on history as a resource. Indeed, Santelli did both things by appealing to their sense of patriotism by referencing the American Founding and Boston Tea Party of 1773, which communicated deeper symbolic meaning to viewers. Most importantly, he told millions of people all at the same time to form a tea party and protest together. Those who watched the rant and saw it repeated throughout the conservative media network knew that others saw the same

rant and may share their views. In this way, Santelli may have very well assisted eventual tea partiers in overcoming an assurance problem.

A more general coordination problem was connecting energized activists who were willing and able to plan tea party protests. However, the innovation of TCOT on Twitter created an institution capable of creating common knowledge among potential organizers needed for coordination.

Indeed, when asked why the early tea party activists did not organize to protest TARP, the answer was fairly simple: “We were not connected!” one early activist explained, “We were a million people thinking these thoughts in isolation, but we had no mechanism of organizing during the TARP bailouts, we didn’t know each other. What #TCOT did is it gave us a mechanism for organizing and we had a community.” Others echoed such sentiments, “you couldn’t have had the tea party movement in the way we have it today 20 years ago” because modern technologies were essential for “coordination.”

Indeed, it appears unlikely that even the February tea party protests would have occurred had it not been for the community of TCOT activists that initially connected in 2008. Perhaps some would have organized a protest in Washington DC, but it is unclear how grassroots activists throughout the country would have coordinated simultaneous events on February 27 and April 15 had there not been a way to bypass sticky and bureaucratic traditional party structures and had they not already formed an online community, holding regular conference calls, and already having coordinated smaller scale political activities.

Debate over the Affordable Care Act

Throughout 2009 several other large scale protests were organized and coordinated. However, Congressional debate over health care reform in the spring of 2009 and eventually

passed as the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act in 2010 gave the tea party movement a second shot in the arm, channeling a second major wave of activists into the movement.

To be sure, the tea party reaction to health care reform was not a new phenomenon, as insurgent conservatives have continually pushed back on progressive reforms for decades, including President Clinton's attempted health care overhaul in the 1990s (Zernike 2010).⁴²

Activists would often say that they opposed the health care law because of the individual mandate; however, most Americans opposed that provision of the law and did not flock to local tea party rallies. Instead, tea partiers opposed the ACA largely for at least two reasons: First, they did not want the institution they felt lacked accountability and proper incentives (and thus was often unfair) to be the sole provider of a vital service like health care. (See more in Chapter 4). Second, the ACA seemed like another transfer program, giving people something they need at the expense of people who have earned.

In Chapter 4 I will discuss tea partiers' views of government as an institution, but it sufficeth to say that they are deeply distrustful of government. While the law's proponents may feel the actual wording of the ACA was quite moderate and will point out that several key provisions were proposed by conservatives, tea partiers tended to view the law as a thinly veiled ploy to put the country on a path to government-run health care. Because of their distrust of government, they assumed that the ACA would necessarily reduce the quality of health care and they would be left paying a more expensive bill.

Emma Welch felt "I believe government should not be in the business of doing business. I would like things like Obamacare and the VA hospitals not run by a large federal bureaucracy."

⁴² In 1994 Congressional Republicans rode a wave of government skepticism picking up 52 House Seats similar to Republicans in 2010 riding a similar wave picking up 63 House seats (Abramowitz 1995, Jacobson 1996). It is unlikely that the 1994 and 2010 waves were completely unrelated to the conservative backlash that occurred after lawmakers attempted, and in the later case succeeded, in reforming the nations' health care system.

When asked why she felt this way, she explained, “for government, the focus is political not the product of the business. They have no profit motive; all they have is a political motive...it isn’t safe for the people, it’s not good.” Others voiced similar concerns, often summarizing that government lacked the proper “incentives” and competition found in the free market. More generally, tea partiers viewed the ACA as a step further away from the free market system, which they whole-heartedly embrace. As *Ronald Brant* said, “It [the ACA] actually furthers the distance between the free markets that are the core of what American economic growth is about.”

Typically, this led to their calling for greater competition in health care. Indeed, at a health care Townhall meeting in August of 2009, small business owner and tea party favorite Catherine Bragg fulminated: “If you opened it [the health care system] up to competition, like I experience in my business, competition makes me better! And in the end I do not try to overcharge anybody, I don’t try to gauge anybody. If you let the free market system work, everybody can have insurance!” (YouTube 2009). As I will further explain in Chapter 4, tea partiers tended to view the market system as inherently fair, and thus an institution they trusted. Consequently, they tended to oppose reforms they felt were moving away from a system they trusted.

There was a fearful component to their opposition. Many voiced concerns that more government involvement in health care would necessarily lead to “control” over the people. As *Kurt Dennis* said, “When the government gets a hold of your health care, they’ve got you.” In other words, they were fearful that an institution they distrusted could ever become the provider of this vital service.

Tea partiers also tended to view the ACA as a redistributive transfer program that they would be disproportionately responsible for funding. Activists often reacted to the mention of the

ACA as a policy that would spend more money or was “the ultimate socialism.” *Shane Halberg* felt that it was “just a backwards way of taxing” him. *Michael Adams* felt that he was likely going to be a “net payer” rather than a net beneficiary of the law. *Emma Welch*, a single mother, didn’t think it was “right” than young men “should have to pay for maternity coverage.” She also felt that if she lived to 90-100 years old why she should have to pay for maternity care. When asked why people shouldn’t help subsidize maternity care for others to make it more affordable for them, she exclaimed: “There are people everywhere that don’t want to pay their fair share. They want somebody else to pay for them. Why would they say that I should have to pay their way? I’ve got a kid to raise; I’ve got family members to take care of. Why am I taking care of them and their family? Why are they dropping the ball?”

A combination of frustration over TARP, the stimulus, and then debate over the Affordable Care Act fueled more tea party protests on July 4th, and the largest single protest on September 12th in Washington DC which attracted activists from across the country estimated in excess of 70,000 to several hundred thousand (Sherman 2009, Markman 2009).

Tea Party Evolution

Early activists often mentioned how the tea party changed over time as various groups of conservatives “glommed” on and “mucked up” the tea party as one early activist put it. The early organizers usually told a similar story that the tea party protests began largely with younger, urban, tech savvy, libertarian-leaning people. However, as activists began wanting to hold protests closer to their own homes in the suburbs conservatives also interested in social and immigration issues joined up with the movement. As one activist explained, “the tea party became a brand, a winning team, and everyone was wearing a jersey and took the opportunity to make it about their candidate, their issue, their cause” he summarized that it was “dismaying and

frustrating.” These reports provide further indication that the tea party did evolve into a movement of dissimilar types. As it turns out, this observation comports with Knowles et al (2013) finding in a longitudinal study that libertarianism among tea party supporters significantly declined between survey waves conducted in June 2010 and May 2011.

Conclusion

In summary, the tea party began as a reaction to the TARP plan passed and signed into law under George W. Bush in the midst of the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression. I demonstrate this by showing Congressional Republicans who voted for TARP were significantly less likely to remain in Congress in 2010 and those who voted against TARP significantly more likely to join the eventual Tea Party Caucus. I show tea party activists were also more upset about TARP even though they were more aware that President Bush signed it into law, and they share common characteristics with those who opposed TARP in early surveys before the tea party label was conferred. I also find that while preferences for limited government and racial resentment significantly predict opposition to TARP in 2008 and 2010, the ratio of coefficients decreases over time. This provides some indication that those with racial anxieties became more opposed to TARP over time likely following the fiscal conservatives’ lead.

While TARP was the initial impetus for the tea party, it wasn’t until conservative and libertarian tech savvy activists had connected using relatively new social networking tools, largely via #TCOT, that they were able to coordinate and be capable of organizing protests. The widely televised Rick Santelli outburst on CNBC helped articulate what eventual tea partiers were feeling and acted as both a coordinator and a solution to the assurance problem telling eventual activists to protest all at the same time. At this point, #TCOT activists were connected and ready to organize protests simultaneously such that they could generate more media attention

and attract more activists. #TCOT activists in conjunction with affiliate organizations subsequently provided instruction and coordination crucial for helping other local level grassroots activists to plan their own protests and to form contact lists that could then be used to establish their own local tea party groups. Marketing occurred not only through Fox News channel, which could not provide details on specific locations, but namely through local conservative talk radio hosts who were sympathetic to the movement and would use their radio pulpit to promote the protests.

While principally a reaction to TARP, a combination of the financial crisis, coupled with the stimulus, debate over the Affordable Care Act, the Democratic consolidation of power, the election of President Obama, and the fragmented Republican Party created a context that mobilized fiscal conservatives but over time attracted a heterogeneous coalition of protestors. Estimating their relative frequency and respective attitudes on race, social and cultural issues, and limited government is conducted in the next chapter.

Chapter 3:

The Tea Party Coalition: Some Racial Resentment, Lots of Economic Resentment

Chapter Two made the case that the tea party began as an economic protest against Wall Street bailouts, gaining steam with the stimulus and the Affordable Care Act, and has continued down to the present to be motivated by a strong sense of economic grievance. However, leading scholarship on the tea party views it through a prism of racial resentment and out-group hostility (Parker and Barreto 2013, Skocpol and Williamson 2012, Perrin et al. 2011, Abramowitz 2012). In this chapter I review this scholarship and subject it to empirical scrutiny, with three main results. The first result is that existing scholarship is correct in its claim that racial attitudes correlate with support for the tea party movement. However, the second empirical result is that, when tests of the kind used in existing studies are properly conducted, variables measuring preferences for limited government have about twice the statistical impact of variables measuring racial attitudes. The third empirical result, based on latent class analysis, is that tea party supporters consist of three distinct clusters of individuals.

The first cluster, which leans libertarian, comprises 41 percent of the movement and highly endorses limited government but takes moderate to liberal positions on social issues and race. The second cluster, 36 percent of all tea partiers, leans socially conservative and is also strongly defined by limited government preferences and harbors some racially conservative attitudes. The third group of racial conservatives, 24 percent of all tea partiers, also shares strong preferences for limited government but also takes racially conservative positions. While these three groups differ in their attitudes on moral traditionalism and race, they share a strong preference for limited government.

In light of this heterogeneity in the composition of the tea party movement, scholars should use care in making statements that apply to all members. In particular, my results imply that it is not quite accurate to make statements of the form, “tea party membership is partly predicted by racial resentment,” because this statement implies that all tea party supporters are to some degree predicted by racial resentment. Rather, based on my results, one should say that some tea party members are predicted by racial resentment and some are not.

More Racialized Politics?

Over the past several decades, a number of important studies of public opinion have stressed the importance of race and racial resentment on voting behavior and political attitudes, especially attitudes toward government action. Moreover, attitudes toward government functions that have little to do with race are found to be “racialized,” such that they are impacted by underlying hostility toward African-Americans and people of color more generally (Sears and Kinder 1971, Sears, Hensler, and Speer 1979, Kinder and Sears 1981, Kinder and Sanders 1996, Sears et al. 1997, Gilens 1999, Sears and Henry 2003, Hutchings and Valentino 2004, also see Kinder and Kam 2010, Kluegel and Smith 1986). The election of President Obama in 2008 led to new studies documenting the continuing impact of race on political attitudes (Tesler 2012, Knowles, Lowery, and Schaumberg 2010).

Consequently, since the first widely known tea party protests erupted shortly after the inauguration of the first African-American president, much of the leading work on the tea party has viewed it within this literature on racialized politics, particularly Parker and Barreto (2013) and to some extent Skocpol, Williamson, and Coggin (2012, 2011) and Abramowitz (2012). Instead of comparing the movement to the Jacksonian populists and the conservative tax resisters of the 1930s, researchers have been more likely to compare the tea party to social movements

like the Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s, Father Charles Coughlin and his followers (Parker and Barreto 2013, Berlet 2012a) or the John Birch Society (Parker and Barreto 2013, Skocpol and Williamson 2012).

Economic Resentment, Racial Resentment, or Both?

These scholars largely agree a fear of change mobilized the tea party, but contend that the change it fears is rooted in some form of demographic change and out-group hostility (Parker and Barreto 2013, Perrin et al. 2011, Skocpol and Williamson 2012). Nevertheless, the literature varies in the extent to which researchers argue out-group hostility drives tea partiers' fears. For instance, Parker and Barreto argue that the election of President Obama, the first non-white president, signifies subversive change—a “plot to undermine dominance” of white Americans, in tea partiers' view (p. 45). Perrin et al and Skocpol and Williamson make a softer, more nuanced, argument that nativism and racial stereotypes color tea partiers' fears and give a strong indication that Obama's election played a role in stimulating these concerns.

Perrin et al (2011) finds that tea partiers are more likely than non-tea partiers to be very concerned about “changes taking place in American society these days” leading the authors to conclude they are similar to earlier right-wing movements concerned with “status defense” (p. 4). The authors go on to say that this deontological insecurity (fear of change) is blended with nativism, the fear that newcomers will change the system and their society.

Interestingly however, the very quotes Perrin et al use to demonstrate tea partiers' fear of change perhaps better reflects the proportionality impulse I identify in earlier chapters. For example, Perrin et al cite one tea party survey respondent who explained, “We don't want the big government that's *taking over everything we worked so hard for*...the government's becoming too powerful...we want to take back what our Constitution said” (p. 7) [emphasis added] Instead

of identifying this as a specific complaint of government violating their notion of justice, the authors explain it as a categorical fear of change: “Such emotional statements are rooted in feelings of ontological insecurity and are consistent with expressions of earlier right wing movements that were based on status defense” (p. 7).

However, some researchers find that the changes tea partiers feared were not necessarily or exclusively about losing social prestige. For instance, in their in-person interviews with tea partiers, Skocpol and Williamson find tea partiers were distressed over perceived changes to the rewards system in America: “...for members of the Tea Party, it felt as though the fundamental rules about the American Dream had changed. Working hard no longer meant getting ahead” (p. 30). These concerns are predictable given the 2008 financial crisis that punished everyone regardless of merit. What distinguished tea partiers was where they laid blame: “government efforts at redistribution,” to soften the impact of the economic downturn, “skewed the rewards and costs that should rightly [have been] apportioned by the free market,” explain Skocpol and Williamson (p. 31). In other words, tea partiers viewed government action as the culprit changing the rewards system in America, rewarding the “freeloaders” at the expense of the “hard working taxpayers.”

Nevertheless, Skocpol and Williamson further argue that tea partiers’ distinction between “hard working taxpayers” and “freeloaders” has “ethnic, nativist, and generational undertones” (p. 74) They conclude this because the authors believe tea partiers made a ‘big government’ exception for themselves in the form of Social Security and Medicare. As Skocpol wrote for *Politico*, “[tea partiers] stand for nothing clear besides deep generational and racial anxieties” (Skocpol 2010). If Skocpol and Williamson are correct that tea partiers’ support large

government programs for their ingroup but not for other groups, this undermines supporters' claims that the movement is about limited government and not about race.

Skocpol and Williamson base their argument on the belief that tea partiers are not really opposed to large government programs and services that “benefit people like them,” they are opposed to programs going to others outside of their “social orbit” (p. 60).⁴³ They cite an April 2010 CBS/*New York Times* survey which found 62 percent of tea party supporters believe Social Security and Medicare are “worth the costs...for taxpayers” (p. 60). They reason that since tea partiers oppose cutting entitlements, but favor cutting other programs, tea partiers' aversion to government spending is conveniently self-serving, perhaps shaped by racial anxieties, rather than grounded in some sort of moral orientation toward politics.

Their interpretation fits within the literature on racialization, in which some individuals are more likely to view people in their race/ethnic group as producers and thus deserving of government services and individuals in other race/ethnic groups as “takers” disqualifying their desert for government services.

However, there are several shortcomings with Skocpol and Williamson's assessment. First, Skocpol and Williamson based their conclusion on an incomplete understanding for how tea partiers comprehend Social Security and Medicare entitlement programs. Contrary to the authors' assertion, tea partiers are in fact supportive of reforming entitlements if they can get back what they put in—consistent with a proportional approach—and are often more supportive of reform than those not supportive of the tea party movement.

Social Security and Medicare are extraordinarily complicated programs, the details of which are lost on most Americans. Further complicating the public's understanding is that these

⁴³ Skocpol in *Politico* also explains, “Rank-and-file tea partiers are not even opposed to the core of federal spending for defense, Medicare, and Social Security” (Skocpol 2010).

programs are not funded by their own tax dollars in some sort of “lock box.” Moreover, some individuals will get back less than the real amount they contributed plus interest while others will get back more. When overly simplistic survey questions find the public opposes cutting entitlements, it’s unclear if the public opposes losing redistributive benefits they could receive from the programs, or if they are afraid of losing the dollars they could have otherwise saved in a retirement account.

To further investigate how tea partiers viewed these programs, I requested that Reason Foundation place several questions on Social Security and Medicare on the Reason-Rupe national telephone survey. The survey revealed that, contrary to Skocpol and Williamson’s argument, tea party supporters were willing to support cutting entitlement benefits if they were guaranteed to get back what they contributed into the system, and were more likely than non-tea party supporters to favor changing entitlement programs.

For instance, although a majority (62%) of tea party supporters thought entitlements were worth the costs to taxpayers, a majority (74%) were also willing to reduce their own Social Security benefits if they were guaranteed to receive benefits equal to the amount they and their employer contributed into the system (Reason Foundation/Princeton 2012a). (See Table 3.1). At first a slim majority (51%) of tea partiers would favor reducing their own Medicare benefits to help balance the federal budget, while a majority of non-tea partiers would oppose (54%). However, if respondents were guaranteed to receive what they contributed toward the system (this question did not mention employer contributions) then 67 percent of tea partiers would support, compared to 57 percent of non-tea partiers (Reason Foundation/NSON 2011).

Table 3.1
Beliefs about Entitlements and Entitlement Reform by Tea Party Support

	Tea Party Supporter	Not a Supporter
Q1 Favor or Oppose Reducing own Medicare Benefits to balance federal budget?		
Favor	51%	41%
Oppose	44%	54%
Q2 Favor or Oppose Reducing own Medicare Benefits if Guaranteed to Receive Benefit Equal To Amount R and R's Employer Contributed Into System?		
Favor	74%	65%
Oppose	19%	28%
Q3 Favor or Oppose Reducing own Social Security Benefits to balance federal budget?		
Favor	42%	37%
Oppose	52%	58%
Q4 More Willing to Reduce own Social Security Benefits if Guaranteed to Receive at Least the Amount of Money R Contributed Into the System?		
Favor	65%	61%
Oppose	27%	31%
Q6 Favor or oppose allowing workers to opt-out of Social Security?		
NET Favor	71%	47%
NET Oppose	24%	48%
Strongly Favor	53%	27%
Somewhat Favor	18%	20%
Somewhat Oppose	7%	10%
Strongly Oppose	17%	38%
Q7 Favor or oppose allowing workers to opt-out of Medicare?		
NET Favor	74%	48%
NET Oppose	21%	46%
Strongly Favor	51%	28%
Somewhat Favor	23%	20%
Somewhat Oppose	8%	12%
Strongly Oppose	13%	34%
Q8 Who Should Be Primarily Responsible for Paying for Basic Expenses in Retirement?		
R should be primarily responsible	72%	55%
R should expect help from government	19%	37%
Q9 Who Should Be Primarily Responsible for Paying for Health Insurance in Retirement		
R should be primarily responsible	59%	37%
R should expect help from government	36%	56%
Q10 Favor or oppose giving seniors a credit to purchase the health insurance plan of their choice from private companies or the government? Supporters say this would lower Medicare's costs and ensure that seniors have more health care choices. Opponents say it would result in seniors paying more money out-of-pocket for their own health care.		
Favor	66%	40%
Oppose	29%	56%

REASON-RUPE POLL, September 2012 Reason-Rupe Survey: Q2, Q10; August 2011 Reason-Rupe Survey: Q1, Q3-Q9, reason.com/poll

Tea partiers were also roughly 20 points more likely than non-tea partiers to say individuals should be primarily responsible for paying for basic expenses (72 to 55 percent) and health insurance (59 to 37 percent) during retirement. Tea party supporters were also roughly 25 points more likely to favor allowing workers to opt-out of Social Security (71 to 47 percent) and Medicare (74 to 48 percent). Tea partiers were also 26 points more likely to support Medicare vouchers than non-tea partiers (66 to 40 percent).

These data indicate that tea partiers were more likely to take a more fiscally conservative position on not only taxes, spending, and social welfare programs, but also on entitlements as well. This does not imply tea partiers want to privatize or abolish old-age retirement programs, but it weakens Skocpol and Williamson's underlying assumption that tea partiers selectively favor programs for people like themselves, but not for other groups.

This leads to the next shortcoming of their analysis. Without further empirical research, it remains unclear the extent to which racial anxieties color tea partiers' perceptions of deservingness and attitudes toward government. This is important to ascertain because if racial anxiety is a prevailing feature of tea party support, this undermines members' claims that the movement is about limited government, rather than about race.

Arceneaux and Micholson (2012) conduct such an empirical investigation finding little evidence that race drives opposition to government aid. Using an experiment, the authors test if tea partiers are more likely to support increases in unemployment benefits and college aid if such a request were paired with a Caucasian face, compared to a Latino or African-American face. They find little statistical support for the claim that racial animus drove tea party opposition to program expansion. Interestingly, they find that non-conservative tea party supporters were *more* likely to support unemployment aid when paired with Latino and African-American faces than

white faces ($p < .05$). However, even though not statistically significant, they also find that conservative tea partiers rated government assistance to the unemployed 4 points higher when attributed to a white face compared to a nonwhite face (p -value .07). The authors conclude that, “racial animus does not appear to be the primary force behind [tea partiers’] opposition to government aid” but that it may “color...judgments.”

Interestingly Arceneaux and Micholson (2012) find that among conservatives who were *not* tea party supporters, racial attitudes influenced their support for aid: they were the only group who substantially and significantly offered greater aid when paired with a Caucasian face than an African-American face by about 12 points ($p < .05$). If racial anxieties were a primary motivator for tea party support, why didn’t these conservatives join? Nevertheless, Arceneaux and Micholson do not discuss these implications or fully address the extent to which racial anxieties may define support for the tea party movement itself.

To date, the most systematic and quantitative study of sources for tea party support is Christopher Parker and Matt Barreto’s *Change They Can’t Believe In: The Tea Party and Reactionary Politics in America*.

Parker and Barreto take a stronger position than Skocpol and Williamson, and Perrin et al, with their central thesis being that the election of Barack Obama threatened a substantial number of Americans, who turned to the tea party as an expression of their perceived loss of power and status in their own country:

“We believe that President Obama, by virtue of his position as president, and the fact that he’s the first nonwhite person to hold the office of president, represents to some an assault upon a specific ethnocultural conception of American identity and everything for which it stands...” (p. 35).

“We argued that if members of out-groups hold positions of power, members of the in-group are likely to perceive the powerful out-group members’ goals to be antagonistic to those of the less powerful in-group. Based on the power and authority the president

wields, it's no surprise that people who support the tea party, most of whom are white, feel a loss of control" (p. 97).

As evidence for this view, they use original survey data they collected in 13 states, selected disproportionately from competitive states. They run a regression model predicting tea party support, finding that preferences for limited government, racial resentment (modern racism) and social dominance (old-fashioned racism) predict tea party support. In the most careful statement of their findings in Table 2.8 on page 96 they report that a movement across the full range of their Limited Government scale increases support for the tea party by 9 percentage points, while the corresponding increase for their Racial Resentment scale is 14 percentage points and Social Dominance is 15 percentage points.⁴⁴ The measures were standardized to a 0-1 range, min to max.

This analysis has some shortcomings. One is that the Limited Government scale consists of three dichotomous items, while the Racial Resentment scale consist of four items, each having a range of 1 to 5 and the Social Dominance scale consists of six items, also ranging from 1 to 5. Thus the latter measures are likely to be more reliable, and more likely to generate minimum and maximum values that are more extreme than those of the Limited Government measure. Conversion of both scales to a 0-1 metric will not change the likelihood that scores of 0 and 1 will be more extreme positions on the racial resentment scale than on the limited government scale. For both reasons – more reliable measurement and greater extremity of min and max values – the Racial Resentment and Social Dominance scales are likely to have an unmerited advantage in competing for effect size with the Limited Government scale.

Another shortcoming of the analysis is that it does not determine whether the effect of racial resentment or social dominance is statistically significantly larger than the effect of belief

⁴⁴ Full regression results found in Table A2.2 on p. 290

in limited government.⁴⁵ Yet the book refers 81 times to Racial Resentment as a cause of support for the tea party, but only 18 times to the impact of Limited Government. The strong impression is that the tea party is mostly the product of racial resentment, but this is by no means demonstrated by the book's analyses.

An additional problem is their measure of old-fashioned racism, Social Dominance. Researchers have found agreement with statements like "inferior groups should stay in their place" predicts old-fashioned racism and aggressive intergroup interactions (Ho et al. 2011). However, there are some statistical problems with using these measures. First, few people endorse such views. For instance the 2004 National Politics Survey finds only 13 percent of Americans agree that "inferior groups should stay in their place," including 11 percent of Republicans, 13 percent of independents, and 15 percent of Democrats (Jackson et al. 2004).⁴⁶

These small percentages lead to the next problem: regressions using these measures with skewed distributions have results driven by extreme cases. This may be the reason Parker and Barreto supplemented the standard Social Dominance battery with a separate battery that some view as related but also a separate construct that measures *egalitarian* preferences. This egalitarianism battery has been shown to predict "conservatism and opposition to redistributive social policies" (Ho et al. 2011). It is problematic to conflate one battery that has been shown to predict racism and zero-sum competition (social dominance) with another battery that predicts conservatism and opposition to redistributive social policies, suggesting they indicate the same latent preference for social dominance. This is analogous to surveying beliefs about abortion and

⁴⁵ Table A2.2 on page 290 shows the limited government variable in an ordered logistic regression for tea party support has a coefficient of .84 (.315) while the racial resentment variable has a coefficient of -.25 (.095) and Social Dominance .19 (.062). The racial resentment variable is negative because these items were coded in reverse (see page 271). The authors say they reversed coded racial resentment due to "survey question order." It is unclear why they did not recode the results when running the regression.

⁴⁶ Searching the ICPSR database finds few recent surveys have asked standard social dominance questions. One includes a 2004 survey finding that only 11% of Republicans, 13% of independents, and 15% of Democrats endorsed the view that "Inferior groups should stay in their place."

gay marriage and using those as a proxy for limited government preferences. They may be related, but they are by no means the same thing. Consequently, it is questionable that this egalitarianism construct is properly measuring if tea partiers believe Obama becoming president symbolizes “subversion.”

Hypotheses and Method

Further analyses are needed in order to determine if tea partiers’ explicit claims—concerns about limited government—or out-group hostility are primarily driving their support. I will test these competing explanations in a series of head-to-head tests of variables measuring both factors. However, these tests will take care to ensure both variables are measured with comparable reliability and will utilize tests to compare the relative explanatory power in predicting tea party support.

Data Analysis I

First, I have selected the CBS/*New York Times* (CBS/NYT) April 2010 dataset to test these hypotheses for several reasons. First, the CBS/NYT survey was one of the earliest surveys conducted of the tea party movement, being fielded in April 2010, capturing earlier joiners. Second, in part because of its earlier fielding, it asks about the issues most salient when the tea party emerged, for instance about bailouts, the stimulus, racial resentment, where Obama was born, about prioritizing economic or social issues, etc. Third, and perhaps most importantly, the survey includes an oversample of tea party supporters (775) that allows for greater precision in predicting tea party support.

The survey includes questions that can measure the variables of interest. (Question wording can be found in Appendix C). I measure preferences for limited government and racial anxiety using one variable each, coded 0-1; the variables were selected to be as similar in

variance as possible.⁴⁷ I also run an additional regression model including a measure of unauthorized immigration anxiety, since Skocpol and Williamson found this issue featured prominently in their interviews.

Data Results I

Table 3.2 shows the results of the logit regression model predicting tea party support. I run a separate model with each primary variable of interest and the standard demographic variables, and then combine the primary variables of interest into one regression model.

Similar to Parker and Barreto's results, the model finds both preferences for limited government and racial anxiety are statistically significant predictors, even when included in the same model. The model finds tea partiers are significantly more likely to be male, Republican and independent, evangelical, have more education, be older, and middle income. These demographics fit what one would expect of a middle class, conservative social movement.

Table 3.2 Model 4 adds a measure for unauthorized immigration anxiety finding this to also significantly predict tea party support, without significantly altering the significance or coefficients for limited government or racial anxiety.

The full regression model offers an opportunity for a "contest" between the two primary explanations of tea party support—preferences for limited government or racial anxiety. The results reveal that preference for limited government has about twice the impact of racial attitudes. A linear-combinations-of-estimates test indicates that the coefficient for limited

⁴⁷ The CBS/NYT question used to measure racial anxiety arguably maps onto the standard battery of racial resentment questions used in the literature, "Has too much or too little been made of the problems facing black people, or is it about right?" However, to differentiate this question from the standard four, I labeled it "racial anxiety" rather than racial resentment.

government is a statistically more influential predictor of tea party support than racial attitudes ($p < 0.01$).⁴⁸

Table 3.2
Predicting Tea Party Support:
Regressions on Measures of Preference for Limited Government, Racial Attitudes, and
Immigration Anxiety (CBS/NYT April 2010 Survey)

<i>Logit Regression</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Tea Party Supporter	Tea Party Supporter	Tea Party Supporter	Tea Party Supporter	Tea Party Supporter	Tea Party Supporter	Tea Party Supporter
<i>Linear Combinations Test Limited Govt-Racial Resentment</i>						Difference= Significant	Difference= Significant
Preference for Small Government <i>Would you rather a smaller govt w/ fewer services or a larger govt w/ more services?</i>	3.544*** (7.65)				3.379*** (7.15)	3.336*** (7.27)	3.187*** (6.87)
Racial Anxiety <i>Has too much or too little been made of problems facing black people, or is it about right?</i>		2.038*** (8.08)		1.957*** (7.54)		1.862*** (6.98)	1.793*** (6.70)
Illegal Immigration Anxiety <i>How serious a problem do you think the issue of illegal immigration is for the country right now?</i>			1.650*** (4.69)	1.535*** (4.26)	1.209*** (3.33)		1.048** (2.76)
Male	0.524* (2.24)	0.557* (2.44)	0.543** (2.60)	0.527* (2.35)	0.513* (2.21)	0.531* (2.27)	0.521* (2.25)
Republican	1.854*** (4.67)	2.361*** (6.93)	2.345*** (7.28)	2.222*** (7.11)	1.796*** (4.87)	1.767*** (4.52)	1.711*** (4.76)
Independent	1.323*** (4.04)	1.772*** (5.62)	1.707*** (5.90)	1.684*** (5.74)	1.266*** (4.08)	1.306*** (4.02)	1.241*** (4.03)
Evangelical	0.401* (2.47)	0.650*** (4.78)	0.632*** (3.98)	0.651*** (4.71)	0.386* (2.35)	0.447** (2.93)	0.446** (2.89)
Education	0.303*** (5.08)	0.436*** (6.78)	0.429*** (7.91)	0.478*** (7.51)	0.329*** (5.47)	0.334*** (4.81)	0.352*** (5.17)
Age	0.036*** (6.96)	0.043*** (7.58)	0.038*** (7.99)	0.039*** (6.97)	0.033*** (6.74)	0.037*** (6.48)	0.035*** (6.19)
Nonwhite	-0.147 (0.47)	-0.246 (0.84)	-0.377 (1.33)	-0.098 (0.33)	0.030 (0.09)	0.026 (0.08)	0.128 (0.37)
Middle Income	0.448** (2.83)	0.385* (2.36)	0.485** (3.20)	0.450** (2.67)	0.467** (3.02)	0.443** (3.07)	0.467** (3.25)
High Income	0.053 (0.25)	0.032 (0.15)	0.256 (1.31)	0.181 (0.80)	0.136 (0.61)	0.044 (0.18)	0.123 (0.49)
Constant	-9.140*** (13.23)	-8.681*** (16.06)	-8.466*** (15.36)	-9.797*** (17.87)	-9.938*** (14.20)	-10.33*** (14.06)	-10.96*** (15.29)
N	1490	1490	1490	1490	1490	1490	1490

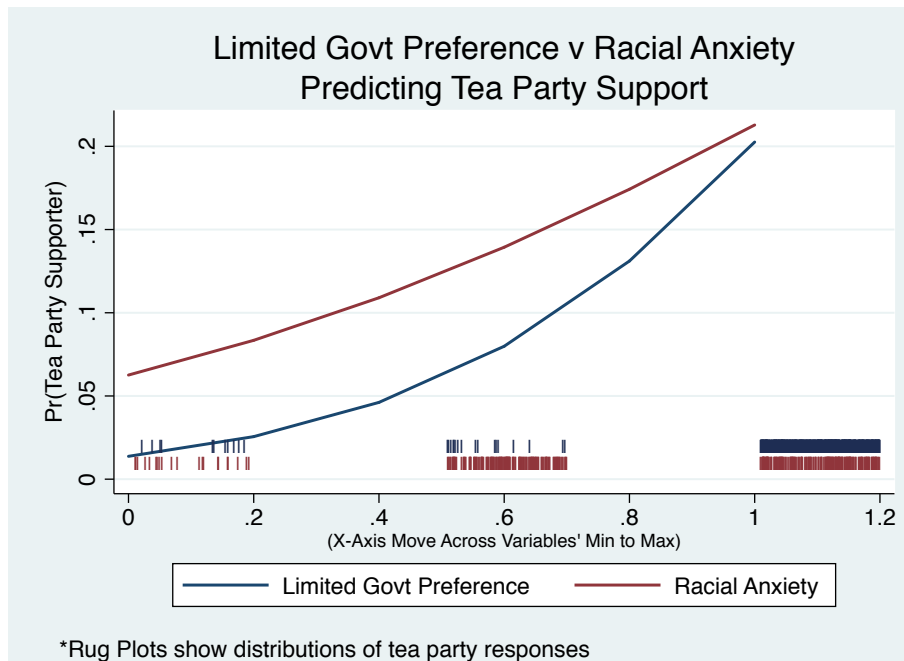
Source: CBS/NYTimes April 2010 Survey; Logit Regression, t statistics in parentheses,
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$, Clustered standard errors by state.

⁴⁸ The linear combinations of estimates test reveals the odds ratio between limited government and racial anxiety is 1.47 in Model 6 and 1.39 in Model 7.

Limited government has about three times the impact of unauthorized immigration anxiety, and a linear-combinations-of-estimates test also finds the coefficient for limited government is a statistically more influential predictor ($p < 0.001$).⁴⁹

Predicted probability plots with associated rug plots (see Figure 3.1) shows how the probability of being a tea party supporter increases as one moves from the min to max values (0 to 1) for the limited government variable and racial attitudes variable respectively. The slopes in the predicted probability plots visually demonstrate that tea party support is more strongly related to preferences for limited government than racial attitudes.

Figure 3.1 Predicted Probability of Tea Party Support: Limited Govt and Racial Attitudes (CBS/NYT April 2010 Survey)



Note: Figure displays predicted probability plots moving from min to max values for limited government preferences and racial attitudes in predicting tea party support. Random noise was added to the rug plots to enhance ability to observe frequency of responses. Without random noise, the responses would be on top of each other. For this reason, the rug plots are slightly shifted to the right. Rug plots show distributions of tea party supporters' responses.

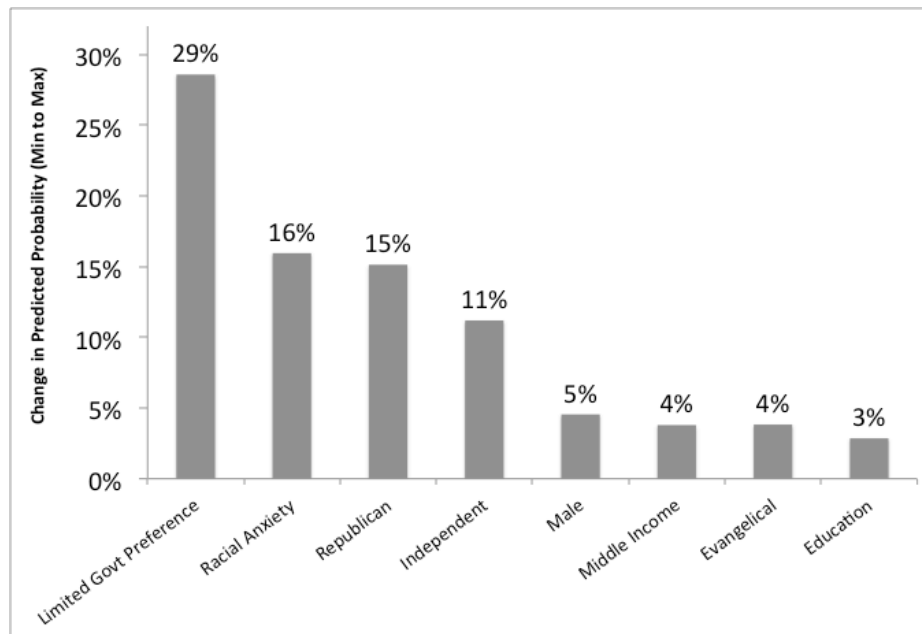
The rug plots display the distributions of responses among tea party supporters. The rug plots indicates that almost all tea party supporters (96%) indicated a high preference for limited

⁴⁹ The linear combinations of estimates test reveals the odds ratio between limited government and immigration anxiety is 2.17 in Model 5 and 2.14 in Model 7.

government (blue plot). However, a little more than half (55%) of tea party supporters indicated a racially conservative position, while the remaining were at the national median or below (45%) (red plot).

Calculating marginal effects shows that, while holding other variables at their observed values, moving from low to high support for limited government increases the probability of being a tea party supporter 29 percent. In contrast, moving from low to high racial anxiety increases the probability of being a tea party supporter by 16 percent, almost half the effect of limited government (see Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2 Probability of Supporting the Tea Party, Marginal Effects (CBS/NYT April 2010 Survey)



Note: Predicted probabilities of significant predictors of tea party support. All predictors shown are significant at the $p < 0.05$ level.

Data Analysis II

In this section I replicate this model using the American National Election Studies 2012 Evaluations of Government and Society Survey (ANES12). Although it lacks the tea party oversample of the CBS/NYT survey, and is conducted 3 years after the tea party mobilized, there

are several benefits to using the data. First, the dataset includes the four standard racial resentment questions most often used in the academic literature and four questions about the size of government or its economic scope. The advantage of having four survey items each is that research has shown that averaging multiple survey questions reduces measurement error of policy preferences (Ansolabehere, Rodden, and James M. Snyder 2008). Additionally, when averaging the four items into scale, they can be standardized in such a way to reduce the influence of extreme cases.

If using the standard battery of racial resentment questions, and controlling for extreme cases, we once again find limited government a significantly more influential predictor of tea party support, this would provide additional compelling evidence that the tea party is primarily about the size of government.

In this dataset I average responses across four items for both limited government preferences and racial resentment respectively, taking care they are measured with comparable reliability and comparable variance.⁵⁰ (Question wordings found in Appendix C). I then transform both variables such that moving from 0 to 1 indicates moving across the interquartile range, reducing the influence of outliers. (This also will reduce the size of the coefficients relative to coding 0-1 from min to max.)

Data Results II

Table 3.3 shows the results of the logit regression using the ANES12 data predicting tea party support. As before, I run a separate model with each primary variable of interest and

⁵⁰ It is important to ensure both the variables measuring limited government preference and racial resentment have comparable reliability and comparable variance to prevent one variable from having an unmerited advantage in competing for effect size. The 4 racial resentment questions range from 1-5, 2 of the limited government questions range from 1-3 and another two range from 1-7. Combining these questions into respective scales creates a limited government measure with a standard deviation of .68, and a racial resentment measure with a standard deviation of .75.

standard demographic variables, and then combine the primary variables of interest into one regression model. In this analysis, the coefficients represent moving from the 25th to the 75th percentile (the interquartile range) for both the limited government and racial resentment scales.

Like the CBSNYT model, the ANES12 model finds both preferences for limited government and racial resentment are statistically significant predictors of tea party support. (See Table 3.3). Being Republican or independent remain significant predictors, and in several models tea partiers are significantly less likely to be in the highest income group.

In the contest between preference for limited government or racial resentment, similar to the CBSNYT model, the former has nearly twice the impact of the latter. Moreover, a linear-combinations-of-estimates (lincom) test indicates that the coefficient for limited government is a statistically more influential predictor of tea party support than racial anxiety ($p < 0.01$).⁵¹ Limited government has about 3 times the impact of unauthorized immigration anxiety, and a lincom test also finds the coefficient for limited government is a statistically more influential predictor ($p < 0.01$).⁵²

Predicted probability plots of the interquartile range (See Figure 3.3) again show a steeper slope for limited government preferences than racial resentment, demonstrating the strong relationship. Calculating marginal effects shows that when holding the other variables at their observed values, moving across the limited government variable's interquartile range increases the probability of being a tea party supporter by 16 percent. In contrast, moving across the racial resentment measure's interquartile range increases the probability by 9 percent, almost half the effect of limited government.

⁵¹ The linear combinations of estimates test reveals the odds ratio between limited government and racial resentment is 1.75 in Model 6 ($p < .05$) and 2.02 in Model 7 ($p < .001$).

⁵² The linear combinations of estimates test reveals the odds ratio between limited government and immigration anxiety is 2.59 in Model 6 ($p < .001$) and 2.43 in Model 7 ($p < .001$).

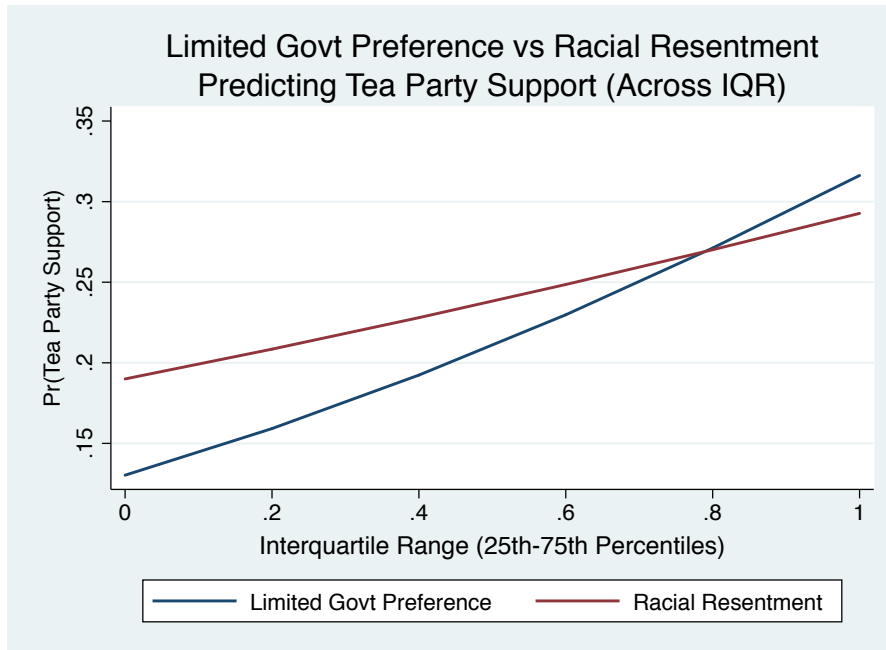
These results indicate that even when muting the effect of min and max values by examining the interquartile ranges of these variables, desire for small government is a significantly more influential variable than racial resentment.

Table 3.3
Predicting Tea Party Support:
Regressions on Measures of Preference for Limited Government, Racial Attitudes, and
Immigration Anxiety (ANES EGSS 2 Survey)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>Logit Regression</i>	Tea Party	Tea Party	Tea Party	Tea Party	Tea Party	Tea Party	Tea Party
<i>Linear Combinations Test</i>	Supporter	Supporter	Supporter	Supporter	Supporter	Supporter	Supporter
<i>Limited Govt-Racial Resentment</i>						<i>Difference=</i>	<i>Difference=</i>
						<i>Significant</i>	<i>Significant</i>
Limited Government Preferences	1.514***				1.490***	1.327***	1.345***
<i>4-Item Scale, 0-1 Represents IQR SD: .68</i>	(10.84)				(10.47)	(9.53)	(9.30)
Racial Resentment		1.071***		0.928***		0.801***	0.647***
<i>4-Item Scale, 0-1 Represents IQR SD: .75</i>		(8.23)		(7.63)		(5.18)	(4.46)
Unauthorized Immigration Anxiety			0.581***	0.445***	0.558***		0.463***
			(5.45)	(3.90)	(4.52)		(3.71)
Male	0.24	0.241	0.25	0.185	0.185	0.188	0.146
	(1.31)	(1.47)	(1.49)	(1.10)	(1.06)	(1.05)	(0.82)
Republican	2.026***	2.370***	2.742***	2.307***	1.912***	1.775***	1.706***
	(5.93)	(7.08)	(9.25)	(6.95)	(5.69)	(4.80)	(4.62)
Independent	0.941**	1.113***	1.242***	0.995***	0.774**	0.807**	0.678*
	(3.18)	(4.26)	(5.02)	(3.93)	(2.83)	(2.72)	(2.40)
Evangelical	0.317	0.22	0.2	0.155	0.21	0.248	0.165
	(1.28)	(0.95)	(0.91)	(0.65)	(0.83)	(0.93)	(0.62)
Education	0.0822	0.236	0.252*	0.277*	0.131	0.119	0.147
	(0.76)	(1.90)	(2.38)	(2.10)	(1.09)	(0.90)	(1.06)
Age	-0.007	0.0008	0.0005	0.0004	-0.008	-0.007	-0.008
	(1.20)	(0.14)	(0.09)	(0.07)	(1.40)	(1.19)	(1.34)
Nonwhite	-0.258	-0.096	-0.275	-0.061	-0.225	-0.061	-0.056
	(1.12)	(0.41)	(1.17)	(0.23)	(0.91)	(0.25)	(0.21)
Middle Income	-0.126	-0.003	0.244	0.0778	-0.0647	-0.202	-0.149
	(0.49)	(0.01)	(0.96)	(0.31)	(0.25)	(0.78)	(0.57)
Higher Income	-0.541**	-0.228	-0.148	-0.24	-0.557**	-0.577*	-0.595**
	(2.63)	(1.02)	(0.71)	(1.11)	(2.70)	(2.51)	(2.63)
Constant	-3.097***	-3.809***	-5.120***	-4.983***	-4.583***	-3.354***	-4.494***
	(6.22)	(6.89)	(6.82)	(6.30)	(6.12)	(6.40)	(6.00)
N	1198	1193	1194	1189	1194	1193	1189

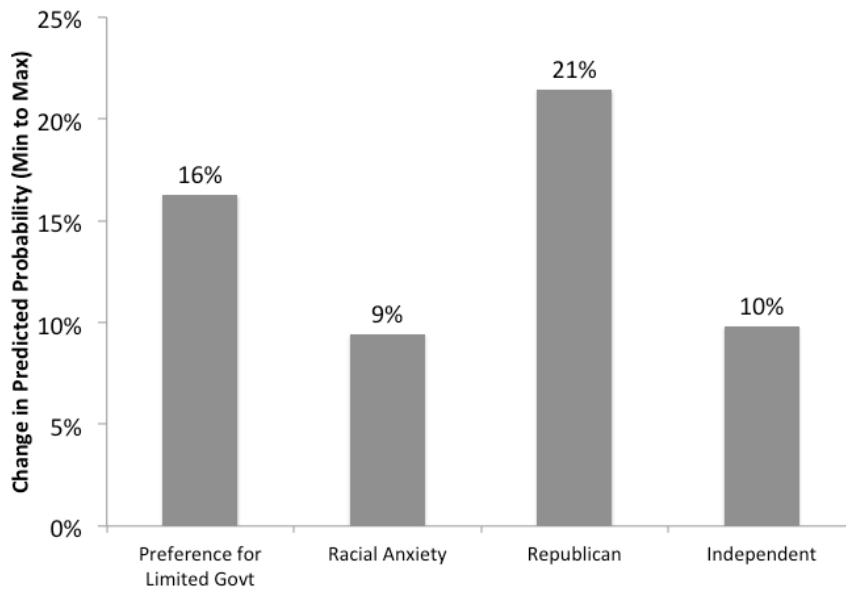
Source: ANES EGSS 2 2012 Survey; Logit Regression, t statistics in parentheses, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001, Clustered standard errors by state.

**Figure 3.3 Predicted Probability of Tea Party Support:
Limited Govt and Racial Attitudes
(ANES 2012 EGSS 2)**



Note: Figure displays predicted probability plots moving from 25th-75th percentiles for limited government preferences and racial resentment in predicting tea party support.

**Figure 3.4 Probability of Supporting the Tea Party, Marginal Effects
(ANES 2012 EGSS 2)**



Note: Predicted probabilities of significant predictors of tea party support. All predictors shown are significant at the $p < 0.05$ level. Figure displays predicted probabilities moving from the 25th-75th percentiles for each variable.

In sum, even when using different datasets, and different questions within these datasets to operationalize the two variables of interest, the ratio of limited government to racial anxiety remains almost 2 to 1. The results from these two investigations provide compelling evidence that the tea party is more about limited government than racial resentment.

The Tea Party as a Coalition

Initially using these standard logit regression models are advantageous because most of the academic literature has been thinking about the tea party as a homogenous block. Using improved measures in head-to-head contests demonstrate that even if the tea party is homogenous, limited government preferences are the prevailing impulse, ahead of racial anxiety.

However, what this standard logit model (and the models used in Parker and Barreto (2013) and (Abramowitz 2012)) ignore, is the possibility that the tea party movement is comprised of dissimilar types of people. Standard logit regression models assume that every tea party supporter places the same weight on all the variables. However, the results cannot distinguish whether the tea party is comprised of a homogenous group of conservatives in which everyone harbors some resentment but are more strongly motivated by limited government preferences, or if the tea party is a coalition of those primarily motivated by limited government preferences, others primarily motivated by racial resentment, and some motivated by a mix of both. Under either scenario, the aforementioned regression models wouldn't distinguish between the two.

There are several reasons to think that different people in the tea party place different weights on various considerations. First, as I will show in Chapters 4 and 5 based on my interviews, activists expressed dramatically different positions on privacy, civil liberties, race, immigration, gay rights, but all were very fiscally conservative.

Second, running the standard logit model predicting tea party support among *subgroups* in the CBSNYT dataset reveals that when offered the ability to do so, tea partiers do place substantially different weights on limited government and racial anxiety. (See Table 3.4).

Interestingly, among tea partiers with high levels of economic information (reported both knowing a lot about the Federal Reserve and the federal budget deficit, 25%), racial resentment drops out as a significant predictor, while preference for limited government remains significant and larger than the coefficient in the standard model. Among those with less than high economic information, both competing variables are significant, but limited government remains significantly more influential.

Dividing tea partiers into social conservatives (58%) and social moderates (42%) in the sample demonstrates that the latter are significantly more predicted by their support for limited government than racial anxiety by a factor of almost 3 to 1.⁵³ However, among social conservatives, even though limited government has a larger coefficient, tests fail to reject the null that's its significantly larger than racial anxiety. In another model, libertarian-leaningers are also not significantly predicted by unauthorized immigration anxiety, while social conservatives are.

Third, Those who know "a lot" about the tea party (56%) place significantly more weight on limited government than racial anxiety, compared to those who are less engaged in the movement (44%). This indicates that more energized supporters are better predicted by their concerns about the size of government than racial anxiety they may harbor.

⁵³ Socially moderate tea party supporters were also significantly more likely than socially conservative tea partiers to know Obama was born in the United States, to say Roe v Wade was a good thing, and to prioritize economic issues over social issues.

**Table 3.4 Predicting Tea Party Subgroups:
Regressions on Measures of Preference for Limited Government and Racial Attitudes
(CBS/NYT April 2010 Survey)**

Logit Regression of Subgroups	1a Tea Party		1b Tea Party		2a Tea Party		2B Tea Party		3a Tea Party		3b Tea Party		4a Tea Party		4b Tea Party		5a Tea Party		5b Tea Party		
	High Economic Info	25%	Not High Economic Info	75%	Know A Lot About TP	56%	Know < A Lot About TP	44%	TP Libert	42%	TP Social Con	58%	South	41%	Non-South	59%	Evangelical	41%	Non-Evangelical	59%	
Subgroup																					
% of Tea Party Supporters	25%		75%		56%		44%		42%		58%		41%		59%		41%		59%		
Linear Combinations Test	N/A																				
Limited Govt-Racial Resentment																					
Preference for Small Government	4.84***	(3.84)	3.14***	(6.58)	4.38***	(5.41)	2.74***	(4.36)	3.94***	(7.30)	3.04***	(5.73)	2.96***	(5.10)	3.62***	(5.64)	3.83***	(5.44)	3.23***	(5.52)	
<i>Would you rather a smaller govt w/ fewer services or a larger govt w/ more services?</i>																					
Racial Anxiety	0.66	(1.17)	2.10***	(6.08)	2.08***	(3.71)	1.84***	(6.90)	1.51***	(5.76)	2.09***	(6.24)	2.29***	(5.04)	1.66***	(5.02)	2.46***	(5.60)	1.39***	(4.55)	
<i>Has too much or too little been made of problems facing black people, or is it about right?</i>																					
Male	0.21	(0.39)	0.52*	(2.13)	0.15	(0.45)	0.54**	(2.60)	0.46	(1.85)	0.57*	(2.15)	0.82***	(3.44)	0.32	(1.01)	0.50	(1.28)	0.47*	(2.08)	
Republican	1.44*	(1.99)	1.75***	(4.05)	1.91***	(3.97)	2.12***	(7.13)	1.87***	(3.83)	1.78***	(4.23)	1.24**	(2.68)	2.32***	(4.07)	0.97	(1.91)	2.33***	(5.43)	
Independent	0.61	(0.90)	1.31***	(4.01)	1.45***	(3.32)	1.65***	(6.76)	1.59***	(4.34)	1.16**	(2.68)	0.87	(1.69)	1.66***	(3.99)	0.72	(1.37)	1.72***	(5.26)	
Evangelical	0.20	(0.44)	0.47*	(2.26)	0.77*	(2.31)	0.24	(1.29)	-0.32	(1.64)	0.89***	(5.00)	0.78***	(3.79)	0.14	(0.62)					
Education	0.15	(0.86)	0.34***	(4.18)	-0.12	(0.73)	0.42***	(4.45)	0.40***	(4.08)	0.28***	(3.83)	0.26*	(2.44)	0.43***	(4.62)	0.35*	(2.24)	0.30***	(3.43)	
Age	0.04***	(3.36)	0.04***	(5.36)	-0.002	(0.20)	0.04***	(6.49)	0.04***	(6.62)	0.04***	(5.10)	0.04***	(10.27)	0.03***	(3.39)	0.03***	(3.43)	0.04***	(5.41)	
Nonwhite	0.80	(1.22)	-0.13	(0.36)	-0.07	(0.16)	-0.10	(0.28)	0.02	(0.07)	0.12	(0.30)	-0.30	(0.52)	0.18	(0.44)	-0.10	(0.21)	-0.03	(0.08)	
Middle Income	0.76	(1.55)	0.46*	(2.57)	0.49	(1.42)	0.36	(1.74)	0.35	(1.53)	0.48**	(2.66)	0.59*	(2.25)	0.33	(1.59)	0.16	(0.47)	0.49*	(2.17)	
High Income	-0.03	(0.11)	0.06	(0.23)	0.26	(0.73)	-0.07	(0.26)	0.43	(1.55)	-0.21	(0.78)	0.26	(0.73)	-0.21	(0.71)	-0.48	(1.47)	0.38	(1.13)	
Constant	-9.09***	(6.12)	-10.31***	(12.43)	-6.42***	(5.40)	-10.99***	(12.08)	-11.78***	(13.29)	-10.76***	(11.53)	-10.38***	(11.99)	-10.42***	(9.13)	-9.66***	(10.60)	-10.34***	(10.10)	
N	314		1176		560		930		1078		1181		556		934		474		1016		

Source: CBS/NYTimes April 2010 Survey; Logit Regression, t statistics in parentheses, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001, Clustered standard errors by state

The following additional groups placed significantly greater weight on limited government than racial anxiety: non-southerners, non-evangelicals, non-birthers, and those with average or above average education levels. Conversely, for southern, evangelical, less educated tea partiers, tests failed to reject the hypothesis that supporters placed equal weight on both variables.

These results imply that the core tea party supporters are more motivated by the size of government than racial anxiety, but dissimilar types of people joined the movement. While nearly all are strong fiscal conservatives, they vary in the extent to which racial attitudes inform their political judgments.

Data Analysis III

As a more incisive test of whether the tea party following consists of different kinds of people, I will run a latent class regression model for polytomous outcome variables (poLCA) (See Blaydes and Linzer (2008)) to identify clusters of like-minded tea partiers. Latent class models define response clusters according to an unobserved, or latent, categorical variable, and assign respondents' probabilities of class membership in each class. The average posterior probabilities indicate the predicted share of respondents within each latent class.

Consequently, this analysis can distinguish whether the tea party is largely homogenous, or if it contains different groups who place different weights on competing considerations. It will identify what people place more weight upon limited government concerns or racial concerns or a combination of both. I can then examine these groups, who they are, where they are from, their differences and similarities.

To identify the clusters, I include both economic and race related questions: limited government, taxing the wealthy, the problems facing African-Americans, Obama's treatment of

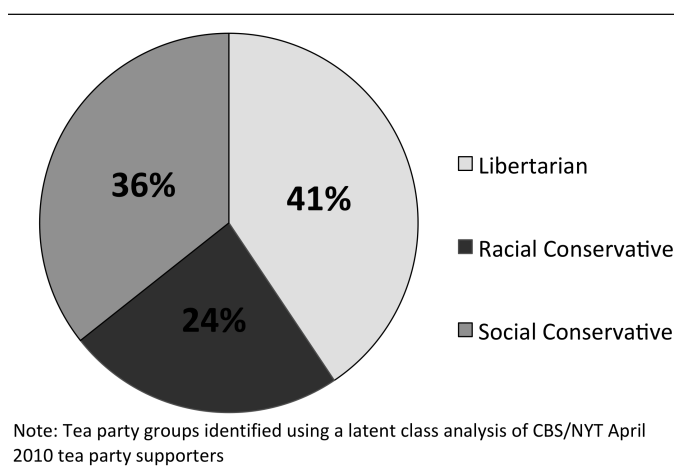
Caucasians and African-Americans, and Obama's birthplace. I include several manifest variables on social issues as well. (See Appendix D for question wording). As covariates to the latent class regression, I include partisanship, gender, income, education, age, region, and evangelicalism. I run the poLCA model only on the tea party subset sample of 735 respondents to identify clusters within the tea party movement.⁵⁴

Data Results III

Based on an assessment of minimizing both the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) and Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC), I determine that three clusters is the appropriate number of classes (See Figure 3.5). Doing so reveals a cluster representing 41 percent of tea party supporters who are libertarian leaning and racially moderate and very economically conservative. Another cluster making up 36 percent of tea party supporters are socially conservative, also very economically conservative, and in between being racially moderate and conservative. The third group are racial conservatives, comprising 24 percent of the tea party movement. A key finding is that all three tea party clusters are strong economic conservatives, but vary substantially in their positions on social issues and race. It should be noted that the group denoted as libertarian-leaning, or libertarian, are not necessarily Libertarian Party identifiers, but rather take economically conservative positions and moderate to liberal positions on social and cultural issues.

⁵⁴ The CBS/NYT April 2010 survey included an oversample of 775 tea party supporters. However, in the poLCA analysis I excluded 40 observations with missing data.

Figure 3.5:
The Tea Party Coalition
Tea Party Clusters Discovered Through Latent Class Analysis



Demographic Profiles

Table 3.5 provides basic demographic information on the three types of tea party supporters.

Libertarian Leaning Tea Partiers

The libertarian group has significantly more education, higher incomes, are middle aged, male, and are less likely to attend church regularly or be evangelical. This group also feels less comfortable within the Republican Party with half identifying as independent, almost twice as many as the other two tea party groups. These tea partiers are also much less likely to identify as staunch conservatives and are less favorable toward President George W. Bush compared to the other groups. Libertarian-leaning tea partiers are solidly favorable toward former Fox News host Glenn Beck and former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin, but considerably less so than the other groups. Only a third of libertarian leaners think Palin would make an effective president.

Social Conservative Tea Partiers

Social conservatives are middle class, middle-aged evangelicals, and staunch conservative Republicans who attend church weekly. They are solidly favorable of the

Republican Party and George W. Bush, and are also overwhelmingly positive toward Glenn Beck and Sarah Palin. Nevertheless, this group doesn't think Palin should be the president. In comparison to libertarian leaners, these tea partiers have less education, are more middle income, more female, but roughly the same age and similarly likely to be employed.

**Table 3.5 Tea Party Clusters:
Demographics, Political Identification, Tea Party Engagement
(CBS/NYT April 2010 Survey)**

	Tea Party Supporters		
	Libertarian (41%)	Racial Conservative (24%)	Social Conservative (36%)
Demographics and Political Identifications			
High School or Less	19%	36%	35%
Some College	32%	36%	35%
College Grad+	49%	28%	30%
Under \$30K	15%	21%	20%
\$30K-\$75K	37%	42%	49%
\$75K+	44%	29%	19%
Female	32%	39%	46%
Male	68%	61%	54%
Non-Southerner	70%	45%	58%
Southerner	30%	55%	42%
Non-Evangelical	83%	65%	29%
Evangelical	17%	35%	71%
18-29	6%	1%	9%
30-44	22%	9%	18%
45-65	49%	40%	46%
64+	23%	50%	27%
Employed	62%	39%	59%
Retired	27%	50%	29%
Attend Church Weekly	21%	41%	60%
Democratic	4%	4%	2%
Independent	51%	33%	30%
Republican	46%	63%	68%
Liberal	2%	3%	<1%
Moderate	27%	18%	9%
Somewhat conservative	45%	30%	28%
Very conservative	25%	48%	63%
Political Favorabilities			
Favorable of Republican Party	49%	63%	62%
Favorable of Democratic Party	5%	3%	1%
Favorable of George W. Bush	53%	63%	68%
Favorable of Glenn Beck	57%	65%	79%
Favorable of Sarah Palin	62%	82%	79%
Thinks Palin Would Be Effective President	34%	60%	46%
Tea Party Activity			
Tea Party in R Community	54%	60%	51%
Contributed to Tea Party (Money/Rally)	17%	21%	15%
Visited Tea Party Website	34%	33%	35%

Source: CBS/NYTimes April 2010 Survey; Latent Class Analysis identified three groups in the tea party.

Racially Conservative Tea Partiers

Racial conservatives are considerably older, retired, male, and from the South. In fact, fully half are over 65 years old, and a majority (56%) are from the South. This group is similar to social conservatives in terms of education, partisan identification, and favorability toward the Republican Party, George W. Bush, and Sarah Palin. However, racial conservatives are the only tea party group that thinks Sarah Palin would be an effective president (60%). This group differs from social conservatives on religiosity, is significantly less evangelical and less likely to attend church weekly but is not as secular as libertarian leaners. This seems to translate into this group being in between social conservatives and libertarians on ideology.

When it comes to tea party participation, no one group seems to have the advantage. Nearly equal numbers (slightly more than half) say there is a tea party group active in their community, about a fifth have participated in a tea party group either by attending a rally or donating money, and a third have visited tea party websites. These similar participation rates are particularly notable given the fairly heterogeneous demographic profiles across these groups' ages, incomes, education, religiosity, and region.

Political Beliefs

Taking a closer look at these tea party groups' political beliefs (see Table 3.6), reveals they are all very fiscally conservative, but differ across partisan loyalties, social issues, and race.

All three tea party groups equally favor smaller government offering fewer services (roughly 96%) and overwhelmingly oppose raising taxes on high-income households (roughly 85%). Moreover, 7 to 8 in 10 still favor smaller government even if it requires cuts to defense, education, Social Security and Medicare. However, when it comes to priorities, 95 percent of

libertarian tea partiers prioritize economics over social issues, compared to 57 percent of social conservatives and 80 percent of racial conservatives.

Table 3.6
Political Beliefs Across Tea Party Clusters and Non-Tea Party Groups
(CBS/NYT April 2010 Survey)

	Tea Party Supporters			Not Tea Party		
	Libertarian (41%)	Racial Conservative (24%)	Social Conservative (36%)	Republican (Not-TP)	Independent (Not-TP)	Democrat (Not-TP)
Obama						
Disapprove of Obama's Job Performance	90%	99%	94%	61%	31%	11%
Says Obama Moving US Toward Socialism	92%	97%	99%	67%	45%	29%
Correctly Defined Socialism (Open-Ended)	59%	52%	57%	40%	19%	16%
Says Obama Expanded Govt Role Too Much	92%	95%	95%	50%	31%	7%
Says Obama Doesn't Share Values	69%	94%	87%	45%	33%	15%
Size of Government/Economics						
Favors Smaller Government, Fewer Services	95%	96%	96%	64%	44%	24%
Still Favors Small Govt if Cuts to Defense, Education, Medicare, Social Security Required	80%	70%	70%	57%	53%	36%
Oppose Raising Taxes on \$250K	80%	85%	90%	56%	30%	13%
Says Welfare Keeps People Poor	73%	86%	74%	57%	30%	17%
Says Economics More Important Than Social	96%	80%	58%	76%	75%	90%
Obama and Race						
Says "Too Much" Has Been Made of Problems Facing Black Americans	41%	75%	58%	34%	18%	22%
Says Obama Favors Blacks Over Whites	8%	84%	8%	21%	4%	3%
Says Obama Born in United States	65%	18%	25%	44%	53%	81%
Says Obama Born Abroad	15%	59%	32%	30%	23%	3%
Social/Cultural Issues						
Oppose Gay Marriage/Civil Unions	8%	50%	77%	38%	24%	24%
Abortion Should Be Illegal	8%	23%	73%	30%	22%	12%
Says US Should Decrease Legal Immigration	37%	49%	44%	49%	38%	40%
Says Roe v Wade a Good Thing	61%	43%	8%	54%	62%	68%

Source: CBS/NYTimes April 2010 Survey; Latent Class Analysis identified three groups in the tea party.

In comparison to their non-tea party Republican counterparts, tea partiers are substantially more fiscally conservative. Compared to Republicans who do not support the movement, tea partiers are about 30 points more likely to favor smaller government, and oppose raising taxes on upper income households, and about 20 points more likely to continue favoring small government if it requires difficult cuts (significant at $p < .001$) and to believe that social services fosters dependency (significant at $p < .01$). Libertarian tea partiers are also about 20 points more likely to prioritize economics over social issues compared to regular Republicans (p

< .001), but socially conservative tea partiers are about 20 points less likely ($p < .001$). Racial conservatives are similar to regular Republicans. Less surprisingly, independents and Democrats are far less likely to select fiscally conservative positions.

Major differences emerge among tea party groups on the issue of race and moral traditionalism. On race, racial conservatives (75%) are nearly twice as likely as libertarian tea partiers (41%) and nearly 20 points more likely than social conservatives (58%) to say “too much” has been made of the problems facing African-Americans. Racial conservatives were more than 10 times as likely as both libertarian leaners and social conservatives to say that President Obama favors black Americans over white Americans (84% to 8%). Only 15 percent of libertarian tea partiers thought President Obama was born outside of the United States, compared with 59 percent of racial conservatives and 31 percent of social conservatives.

Interestingly, on issues of President Obama and race, libertarian tea partiers take more liberal positions than non-tea party independents and Republicans, or are about the same. For instance, only 8 percent of libertarian tea partiers said they believed Obama favored black Americans over white Americans, compared to nearly three times that among Republicans who do not support the tea party movement, with this difference being statistically significant ($p < .001$), and were statistically similar to independents. In addition, libertarian tea partiers were more than 20 points more likely than regular Republicans (significant $p < .001$) and 12 points more likely than independents (significant $p < .05$) to believe President Obama was born in the United States. Furthermore, a comparison of means tests finds that libertarian tea partiers are equally likely as non-tea party Republicans to say “too much” has been made of the problems facing African-Americans, but significantly more likely than independents ($p < .001$).

Similar to libertarian tea partiers, socially conservative tea partiers are significantly less likely than non-tea party Republicans to say that the president favors African-Americans over Caucasians ($p < .001$), and are statistically similar to independents. However, they are less likely to believe President Obama was born in the United States than regular Republicans ($p < .01$) and independents ($p < .001$), but equally likely to go so far to say he was born abroad. While not as high as racial conservatives, social conservatives are considerably more likely than non tea party Republicans and independents to say “too much” has been made of the problems facing African-Americans (significant, $p < .001$).

Given the heterogeneous attitudes on race and Obama, it is particularly interesting that tea partiers are still nearly universally unfavorable toward him. Fully 90-99 percent of all three groups say they “disapprove” of Obama’s job performance, and nearly equal numbers say he’s moving the country toward socialism and expanded the role of government too much. Rather than abstract trepidation, socialism connotes a very specific outcome across tea party groups. Interestingly, despite differential levels of education, the three tea party groups correctly defined socialism in roughly equal proportion. Tea party supporters were the only political group in the CBSNYT survey that could accurately define socialism using their own words in response to an open-ended survey question. While nearly 6 in 10 tea partiers could accurately define socialism, only 40 percent of non-tea party Republicans, 19 percent of independents, and 16 percent of Democrats could do the same. Overwhelming numbers also disbelieve the president shares their values; however, libertarian-leaners are less likely to believe they have disparate values (68% versus ~90%). These data indicate that tea partiers may reach similar unfavorable conclusions about President Obama but perhaps for different reasons.

On traditionalism, 77 percent of socially conservative tea partiers say there should be no legal recognition for same-sex couples and 74 percent think abortion should be illegal. In comparison, only 8 percent of libertarian tea partiers agree. Instead 62 percent of libertarian tea partiers say that Roe v Wade was a “good thing” compared to 8 percent of social conservatives. On each of these social issues, racial conservatives are in between (50 and 23 percent respectively).

Again, libertarian tea partiers take more liberal positions on social issues compared to some non-tea party groups. For instance, non-tea party Republicans are nearly 5 times as likely to oppose legal recognition of same-sex couples compared to libertarian tea partiers, 38 to 8 percent respectively, (significant at the $p < .001$). Non-tea party independents and Democrats are about 3 times as likely to oppose as libertarian tea partiers, (significant at $p < .001$). Similarly on abortion, non-tea party Republicans are about 4 times as likely to say abortion should be illegal and independents are about 3 times as likely, compared to libertarian tea partiers (both significant at $p < .001$). Libertarian tea partiers are statistically as likely as Democrats to say abortion should be illegal. Six in 10 libertarian tea partiers say Roe v. Wade was a good thing, statistically similar with non-tea party independents and Democrats. On immigration, libertarian tea partiers are 12 points less likely than non-tea party Republicans to support decreasing immigration levels ($p < .05$) and statistically similar to non-tea party independents and Democrats. Socially conservative tea partiers are statistically similar with non-tea party Republicans and independents on lowering immigration levels.

Table 3.7 reports some additional information on how the three subgroups of tea partiers differ from the rest of the population. Each column of the table reports results for a different subgroup. In the first column, for example, the dependent variable is membership in the tea party

libertarian subgroup versus everyone else in the CBSNYT sample. Results from logit models show that preference for limited government is a large and significant predictor of membership in each of the three tea party subgroups. However, racial anxiety loses its statistical significance in predicting tea party libertarians and is considerably less influential among social conservatives. Among the latter group, limited government has roughly 2.5 times the effect of racial anxiety, and a *lincom* test reveals it's a significantly more influential predictor ($p < .01$).⁵⁵ For the racially conservative quarter of tea partiers, both racial anxiety and preference for limited government are equally significant predictors of this group.

The model verifies that libertarian tea partiers are significantly more likely to be male, independent or Republican, be older, have more education and have higher household incomes, and are less evangelical. Socially conservative tea partiers are significantly more Republican (but not independent), evangelical, and middle income. Being older and Republican are significant predictors of being racially conservative.

In sum, these three tea party groups are extraordinarily similar in their fiscal conservatism and preference for small government—the very issues they say they are about. However, they differ substantially across race and moral traditionalism—issues scholars have emphasized as defining the movement. The presence of these three groups in the tea party indicates that while race and traditionalism matter, and that racial conservatives and social conservatives were drawn to the tea party, the prevailing impulse of the movement is what they say: it's primarily about limited government.

⁵⁵ The linear combinations of estimates test reveals the odds ratio between limited government and racial attitudes is 7.82.

TABLE 3.7
Predicting Tea Party Cluster Membership:
Regressions on Measures of Limited Government Preferences and Racial Attitudes
(CBS/NYT April 2010 Survey)

<i>Logit Regression</i>	1	2	3
	Social Moderates, Racial Moderates, Fiscal Conservatives	Racial Conservatives, Fiscal Conservatives	Social Conservatives, Racial Mod/Con, Fiscal Conservatives
% of TP	41% of Tea Party	24% of Tea Party	36% of Tea Party
<i>Linear Combinations Test:</i> <i>Limited Govt-Racial Anxiety</i>	N/A	<i>Difference= Insignificant</i>	<i>Difference= Significant</i>
Preference for Small Government <i>Would you rather a smaller govt w/ fewer services or a larger govt w/ more services?</i>	2.908*** (5.45)	3.082** (3.27)	3.624*** (5.19)
Racial Anxiety <i>Has too much or too little been made of problems facing black people, or is it about right?</i>	0.36 (1.83)	2.920*** (6.99)	1.567*** (4.01)
Male	0.532** (2.91)	0.316 (1.36)	0.267 (0.90)
Republican	1.742*** (4.18)	1.575** (3.08)	1.290** (3.21)
Independent	1.881*** (6.36)	0.973 (1.86)	0.353 (0.81)
Evangelical	-1.052*** (4.85)	-0.023 (0.15)	1.795*** (8.32)
Education	0.405*** (5.63)	0.0462 (0.41)	0.137 (1.33)
Age	0.019*** (4.66)	0.060*** (8.01)	0.015* (2.04)
Nonwhite	-0.013 (0.05)	-0.326 (0.85)	-0.059 (0.13)
Middle Income	0.152 (0.74)	-0.094 (0.38)	0.759*** (3.33)
High Income	0.469* (2.00)	0.129 (0.48)	-0.779* (2.06)
Constant	-9.266*** (13.03)	-12.72*** (-10.82)	-9.948*** (-12.54)
N	1490	1490	1490

Source: CBS/NYTimes April 2010 Survey; Logit Regression, t statistics in parentheses, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001. Clustered standard errors by state. Each model includes whole sample in which 1=Tea Party Subgroup 0=Remainder of sample not in tea party subgroup.

Furthermore, these results indicate the tea party is comprised of libertarian leaners who take moderate positions on race and social issues, a group of older, largely Southern, racial conservatives who also care about limited government, and social conservatives who are primarily concerned about limited government but also harbor some racial resentments.

These results somewhat reflect groupings Lipset and Raab (1970) identified nearly 50 years previous when they wrote “there are at least three different kinds of right-wing strains”

(Lipset and Raab 1970, p. 472). The first comprised economic conservatives who were higher income, more educated and did not hold prejudicial views towards African-Americans, similar to the libertarian tea party group. The second group comprised “radical rightists” were also very economically conservative, but less educated, working class, more religious, with a strong desire to preserve or bring back the past with which they identified, similar to the tea party social conservatives. The authors labeled the third group the pejorative term “rednecks” who were less economically conservative, but shared demographic characteristics with the radical rightists, and were “susceptible to status preservatism, whenever it becomes or is made salient and when it jibes with their economic position” and that the backlash target is “typically ethnic or racial in nature” (Lipset and Raab 1970, p. 474). This third group seems most similar to, although not the same as, the third group of tea party racial conservatives.⁵⁶

These results suggest that, like among the 1890s populists, illiberal attitudes are also present in the contemporary tea party movement. However, just as economic grievances are viewed as the dominant force defining the 1890s populists, so to do limited government preferences define the tea party movement of the early 21st Century.

Conclusion

This chapter has evaluated competing claims that the tea party is primarily motivated by racial attitudes or a desire for limited government. This has been done using standard logit regression models that assume homogeneity of the movement, latent class models allowing for heterogeneity, and then specialized models predicting membership in the classes identified in the

⁵⁶ The Lipset and Raab further report that radical rightists and economic conservatives were united in their support of Republican Barry Goldwater’s presidential candidacy and the John Birch Society; however, they were divided in the support for George Wallace’s third party bid in 1968 (Lipset and Raab 1970, pgs. 475-476).

LCA model. Opinion data starting from 2010 onwards show that preference for limited government is a significantly more influential predictor of tea party support than racial anxiety.

The latent class analysis reveals three distinct clusters of tea partiers, one being libertarian-leaning tea partiers who are racially moderate and very fiscally conservative, another being socially and fiscally conservative who also hold some racially conservative attitudes, and then a third group of racial conservatives who are also fiscally conservative.

This analysis demonstrates that the tea party movement attracted many different kinds of people, including secularized fiscal conservatives, social conservatives, and some racially anxious people as well. While these groups vary substantially in their attitudes on race and moral traditionalism, what all three groups share in common is an explicit desire for small government. In sum, race is some but not all of the tea party story. Instead, fiscal conservatism and a preference for limited government is the movement's prevailing impulse.

Chapter 4:

The Tea Party In Its Own Words

In Chapter 3 I find that a preference for limited government is the primary predictor of tea party support and the pervasive preference across the three tea party groups. In this chapter, I investigate tea partiers' conception of and desire for limited government. I argue that tea party activists largely explain their frustration with government in terms of it violating their notion of fairness—proportional justice—by distributing unearned special favors and rewarding bad behavior at the expense of the productive taxpayer. In the tea party mind, the undeserving may include both rich and poor, and they tend to resent all groups and individuals who they believe government provides more than their due.

In the second part of the chapter, I will argue that perceived government proportionality violations, namely economic interventions including the bailouts and the stimulus, combined with the Great Recession, undermined their confidence in the American rewards system. Consequently, I argue that calls to “take back the country” or “restore America” are largely grounded in their desire to balance proportional justice, in their view, by ceasing such kinds of government interventions.

As I explained in the previous chapter, much of the existing literature on the tea party movement has viewed it through the lens of racialized politics. Nevertheless, researchers continue to find that preferences for limited government are at least an explicit theme in the movement (Parker and Barreto 2013, Skocpol and Williamson 2012). Furthermore, I demonstrate in Chapter 3 that a desire for small government is a significantly more influential predictor of tea party support than anxiety over race and immigration. However, few researchers have sought to probe deeper to understand what limited government means to tea party activists,

with Skocpol and Williamson (2012) the notable exception. They argue that tea party activists want limited government when it comes to “others” benefits, but reserve support for government activism for themselves (pp. 54-55, 60-61). They report that at the “abstract” level activists “decry big government, out-of-control public spending, and ballooning deficits” (p. 54). However they argue that activists “evaluate regulations and spending very differently, depending on who or what is regulated, and depending on the kinds of people who benefit from various kinds of public spending” or if they are “unworthy categories of people” (pp. 54-55).

Skocpol and Williamson’s argument largely rests on the assumption that tea partiers “love the parts of government they recognize as offering legitimate benefits to citizens who have earned them” namely Social Security and Medicare benefits that conveniently many of them receive (p. 63) . The authors assume tea partiers perceive these to be “their own entitlements” from government that they earned through “lifetimes of hard work,” more than by paying into the programs and wanting their money back (pp. 60-61).

In contrast to Skocpol and Williamson, I find that tea party activists tend to express a fairly consistent impulse when talking about government transfers, including transfers to businesses, non-profits, localities, and individuals—even transfers that ostensibly benefit themselves. I argue that insufficient probing and misinterpretation of tea party complaints led Skocpol and Williamson to a premature conclusion. I further provide empirical data to support my claims.

The Value of Interviews

In efforts to identify what tea partiers want and what they believe, most of the existing literature has relied on national and state level surveys (Perrin et al. 2011, Ulbig and Macha 2012, Arceneaux and Micholson 2012, Jacobson 2011, Parker and Barreto 2013), convenience

samples (Knowles et al. 2013), web-enabled survey experiments (Arceneaux and Micholson 2012) and in some cases anecdotal observations (Berlet 2012a). Interestingly, little academic research has included field interviews with actual tea party activists, the exception being Skocpol and Williamson (2012).

While analyzing high-level surveys are a critical component to understanding the multifarious parts of the movement, surveys are limited by what pollsters think to ask. Interviews and meeting with activists on their own terms can provide context, further explanation, and allow respondents to express feelings top of mind. Moreover, without hearing from actual activists it becomes difficult to understand what symbolic meaning coefficients in a regression model might imply.

To date, the little existing research that includes interviews of any kind with tea party supporters (Parker and Barreto 2013, Skocpol and Williamson 2012) are in some cases limited by narrow interview time and space, narrow scope of interview content and insufficient probing to uncover intuitions behind explicit complaints.

Method

In this chapter I employ in-depth, in-person and telephone interviews with tea party activists across the country between 2010 and 2014. I model my approach off of Kristen Luker's (1984) and Jennifer Hochschild's (1986) books which both used in-depth, free-wheeling, and probing interviews. While similar to Skocpol and Williamson's (2012) approach, I ask further probing questions to examine how tea partiers explain their reasoning. In this chapter I make efforts to understand tea partiers from their own perspective and perception.

To identify tea party activists to interview, I scraped the web for tea party groups and compiled a database with approximately 1500 functioning grassroots tea party groups at the state

or local level.⁵⁷ Subject to travel costs, I selected several geographic locations in both 2010 and 2014 and contacted leaders or activists listed for each group in a specified area. To include a balanced regional mix of interviews, I identified geographic areas in the West, South, mid-Atlantic/Northeast, and Midwest including, California, Washington, Utah, Texas, Kentucky, Florida, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, North Carolina, Ohio, and Minnesota. (See Appendix E for interview data). When in-person, I offered activists the choice of where to meet, typically local diners and coffee shops in their local areas. Some invited me to local tea party meetings, or to observe strategy sessions with outside groups. When travel costs prohibited an in-person meeting or the activist found it more convenient, we conducted an in-depth telephone interview. In total, I conducted interviews with 53 activists. Names of interviewed activists have been changed to protect their privacy.

In addition to interviews, I observed local and state level tea party meetings, rallies, strategy sessions, and with permission accompanied an Americans for Prosperity bus throughout Virginia the week prior to the 2010 midterms.

What Tea Partiers Say They Are About

“We’re all fiscal conservatives!” –Emma Welch

Tea partiers will often tell you that what holds the movement together is a set of principles they believe are responsible for the nation’s prosperity, which typically include constitutionally limited government, fiscal responsibility, and free markets. In fact tea party Patriots, a large umbrella group of tea party groups throughout the country identified these three principles as the founding core principles (Tea Party Patriots 2014). Similarly, Rep. Michele

⁵⁷ Functioning tea party groups shared a common set of characteristics. They were established as a citizens “tea party,” “9/12,” “liberty,” or “patriot” group at the local or state level formed on or after 2008, functioning as a website with multiple contributors, rather than a personal political blog.

Bachmann founder of the Congressional Tea Party Caucus similarly stated that the caucus was “dedicated to promote Americans’ call for fiscal responsibility, adherence to the Constitution and limited government” (Herszenhorn 2010). Local groups may add additional principles, such as national sovereignty, rule of law, traditional values, or a strong national defense, although these vary widely across groups. For instance, *Michael Adams* explained that in his group:

“Early on we organized around some core principles. This was something we did locally here and other tea party groups did around the country. The principles weren’t always the same, but there were some core principles that most agreed upon. First is the government needs to be strictly limited, especially at the federal level, a very constrained set of powers that it has to stay within, so constitutionally limited government. Second is fiscal responsibility. This came up over and over again. The issue is we’re spending more money than we have...whenever we run out of money we’ll just print more and that’s an irresponsible way to go about your fiscal planning.”

Activist after activist echoed the same general complaints—largely about the size of government and economic issues. *Jill Alvaro* explained “the tea party is about a set of principles which are for reduced spending, repealing unconstitutional laws, and restoring America back to what the forefathers wanted it to be. The point is to make government accountable. The spending is an example of this. No one is accountable!” Similarly *Evan Reese* felt “the point is to stop the spending, stop the taxes, and make sure that fiscal responsibility gets in there [in Washington DC], that’s what we’re hoping for.”

What Do Protest Signs Tell Us About Issue Salience?

Tea partiers’ central complaint throughout my interviews was that government is getting too expansive and their top priority is to reduce the size and scope of government. One method to test the salience of this overarching complaint is to systematically measure signs at a tea party protest rally. While signs certainly do not tell us everything that protestors care about, it tells us how they prioritized using a limited amount of time and space to express themselves.

I conducted such an analysis of tea party signs at the 9/12 tea party Capitol Hill rally in Washington, D.C. in September 2010. Walking in a systematic fashion along each row from the

back of the tea party rally to the front (about 1pm-4pm), I took pictures of every visible sign. The sampling procedure could not prevent sign-holding protestors from moving from one place to the other, or ensure that some protestors did not leave during the sampling procedure, which means that some signs would be missed. Also, some signs were placed on the ground and under bags as the protestors occasionally sat down to rest. Bias could be introduced if there were systematic differences among the types of protestors who may have left early, especially if they were grouped together in the audience. Also, understandably, older protestors would be more likely to become tired and place their signs on the ground, perhaps under bags, to rest. However, I did not find a high number of signs placed on the ground out of view.

The sampling procedure of protest signs produced 234 readable pictures of signs. I coded the signs' content, identifying sixteen unique categories. Signs could be assigned multiple topics, and signs with even subtle connotations were assigned the relevant category. (See Table 4.1).

The analysis revealed that more than half the signs (56%) themed a limited government ethos, either in the form of mentioning the proper role of government or problems with socialism (36%), concrete economic policies like cutting spending and taxes (33%), or individual liberty (19%).

Forty percent expressed populist anger, including 28 percent that specifically mentioned ousting elected officials in the upcoming election, and 12 percent mentioned the elite versus the people. Twenty-seven percent expressed anger toward or disapproval of President Obama. Twelve percent of the signs had patriotic or nationalistic themes, while less than ten percent respectively of protestors' signs explicitly referenced health care (9%), the US Constitution (8%), cultural or religious conservatism (5%), ethnic othering (5%), anti-unauthorized

immigration (3%), the mainstream media (1%), Obama’s birthplace or “birtherism” (1%), and generational theft (<1%).

Table 4.1
Shares of Tea Party Protest Signs by Category at the 9/12 2010
Tea Party March on Washington D.C.

Sign Category	%
Limited Government Ethos	56%
Role of Government	36%
Spending, Taxes, Deficits	33%
Liberty/ Freedom	19%
Populist	40%
Ousting Politicians	28%
People versus Ruling Elite	12%
Anger Toward Obama	27%
Patriotic/Nationalistic	12%
Healthcare	9%
Constitution	8%
Social Conservatism	5%
Ethnic Undertones	5%
Anti-illegal Immigration	3%
Anti-mainstream media	1%
“Birther”	1%
Generational theft	0.4%
Ambiguous	6%

Source: 9/12 Tea Party March on Washington, D.C., September 12, 2010;
Method: Author took pictures of every visible sign from 1pm to 4pm on the day of the event, and walked throughout the entire crowd in a systematic fashion, going row by row during this period, starting from the back moving to the front. Percentages add up to more than 100% since signs could be tagged with more than one category.

Overall, the central thrust of the signs confirmed the principal *explicit* complaint tea partiers make: that the movement is about limited government in general, in the form of cutting spending, taxes, or deficits, or more philosophically in terms of promoting liberty. The signs’ second most common complaint reflects the populist nature of the conservative uprising: these activists want to “throw the bums out” and feel resentful toward elites who they believe want to

tell them what to do. Thirdly, the movement places Obama in the position of the opposition's symbolic standard-bearer.

The Meaning of Limited Government

What do the economic issues and limited government mean to tea party supporters? The problem with talking about principles, as tea partiers often do, is they tend to devolve into vague platitudes that can mean different things to different people, both inside the tea party and outside of it. This makes it difficult to understand what tea partiers mean to convey when they declare they want to “return” or “restore” these principles of limited government.

Probing deeper to understand their general worldviews and attitudes toward specific issues can help clarify what they wish to convey when they talk about their desire to limit the scope of government and to promote fiscal responsibility and free markets. Doing so reveals that undergirding the vague platitudes are a set of deeply felt emotions about fairness.

Across income and education, those with lots of facts to justify their opinions and those with little more than gut feelings—nearly all activists expressed a similar conception of fairness as proportionality. That is, the strong desire that everyone be rewarded in proportion to their achievements and failings. Ultimately this belief leads to the idea that *fairness is getting what you earn not what you need*. The zealotry of their devotion to this conception of fairness is what distinguishes tea partiers from mainstream political culture. For tea partiers, the American Creed is not just about hard work, or effort, but about what you produce. At the same time, tea partiers will talk about hard work along side other “moral” qualities like creativity, sacrifice, risk-taking, and frugality, as they are ancillary for production.

This sense of fairness often outweighs competing concerns, including need and protection from harm, and tends to guide how activists explain even their own challenges and how they

interpret the challenges of those within their social orbit for whom they might be tempted to make exceptions. In sum, as I will demonstrate in this chapter, fairness conceived as proportionality appears to underlie their shared ardent support for fiscally conservative policies and limited government.

Don't Subsidize Anyone

What becomes clear in interviewing tea party activists is that complaints about social services and welfare recipients were usually not first on their list. Instead, government picking winners and losers and the bureaucracy itself were typically most salient. Tea partiers appear averse to the very process of government transfers in any form, rather than antipathy to classical redistribution alone.

From tea partiers' perspective, the process of government transfers violates proportional justice in two ways. In their view, the very fact that government has transferred or "given" resources to a particular group of recipients, whether to businesses, state and local governments, unions, homeowners or individuals necessarily implies that it was unearned. Moreover, they feel such transfers are funded by "taking away" from those who have earned it and thus have punished the producers. A succinct summary of their views may be: don't subsidize anyone, because no one *deserves* anything; people should get what they *earn*, not what they *need*.

Skocpol and Williamson tend to view tea partiers as wanting government benefits for themselves and those within their social orbits but not for others, particularly racial and ethnic minorities (Skocpol and Williamson 2012, see p. 60-61, p. 74.). However, I will demonstrate that activists' concerns about government transfers extend far beyond just social services and do not end before old-age entitlements. Here, I will argue that tea partiers' concerns include transfers to

various private and non-profit sector entities, government bureaucracy, as well as social services and entitlements.

Corporatism

“I think business and government are now really one in the same,” –Lance Owen

Activists repeatedly expressed frustration over “crony capitalism,” that business and government had gotten too close, with government consequently providing special favors to the wealthy and politically connected at the expense of the common person. They perceive it as just another form of welfare—corporate welfare. As *Michael Adams* explained:

“One thing that makes us so angry is corporate welfare. Upside capitalism downside socialism. If it’s a loss, taxpayers are left holding the bag, but if they profit they walk away with it. That’s what sets most of the tea partiers off the most is corporate welfare...ironically similar to the Occupy people [Occupy Wall Street movement].”

In some ways, their complaints are similar to those of the Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement, in that both are concerned that government and business have colluded. However, while OWS may feel that government should provide greater assistance to the common person *rather* than or in addition to business, tea partiers don’t want government to subsidize either.

There are several reasons corporatism offends activists’ sensibilities. First, they view “corporate welfare” similarly to social services. They believe it rewards unproductive behavior with unearned resources paid for by punishing productive behavior, and thus is unfair. As *Lance Owen* explained:

“Corporate welfare is the same as food stamps. It’s all the same. It’s equally destructive. When you give someone money it destroys their work ethic and hurts their self worth. When you give money to a corporation it teaches them that they don’t need to be a good warden, and that how you conduct yourself in business doesn’t matter. It’s a wealth transfer to both groups. It’s a wealth transfer from taxpayer to entitlements; it’s a wealth transfer from taxpayer to the corporations. It’s destructive to the taxpayer too because it’s confiscating from what they wanted to do with it to someone who didn’t necessarily deserve it.”

Second, activists perceived federal, state, and city governments to use transfer and regulatory powers to “pick winners and losers” instead of letting the marketplace decide.

Activists reported long lists of varied grievances including “doling out special favors” using licensing, zoning, and permitting powers, awarding contract bids, eminent domain, tax abatements and providing subsidies to businesses, non-profits, the arts, research and development, and using vaguely worded regulatory laws to prevent smaller businesses from competing with larger ones.

For instance, one activist reported her tea party group worked to protect “small farmers being regulated out of business.” She explained that farmers classified as wineries were treated differently than non-wineries in which the later could be sued for selling produce and hosting birthday parties without a permit (see Osborn 2014). Her group felt that “special interests” were using regulation to keep the small organic farmers down. Other activists vented that local and state contracting bids were a “pay to play situation” and that one had to be “greasing the right palms” to obtain government contracts.

Subsidies, in their view, are doubly problematic because they simultaneously transfer unearned resources and bestow special favors on a selected few. *Joe Jaworski* was upset that a federal agency had given money to Dominos Pizza to promote its reformulated pizza: “the government paid for part of the ad campaign for that. If I were someone who works for Pizza Hut or Papa Johns or a local pizza parlor and found out that part of my tax money was just given to my business rival to promote their product—it’s outrageous! Government should not give any business money to promote their products and services” (see Moss 2010).

Businesses were not the only groups tea partiers objected to receiving subsidies. Many voiced concerns about subsidies going to particular non-profit organizations, the arts, and research groups. Often activists referred to the subsidies as “handouts” or the money being “doled out” indicating they viewed these also as unearned transfers. For instance, *Roger Bishop*

felt “a lot of non-profit groups get handouts” even though his tea party group did not. In his view neither group should receive government funds “because it's not part of the Constitution.” *Sheri Low* reports that while she loved art, she was “totally opposed to the national endowment for the arts. Why should money be taken away from people who work for it and given to people who create artwork with it? The government is in the business of choosing winners and losers and it shouldn't do that.” In her view, grants for the arts were a form of picking a winner.

Some tea partiers expressed concern that the country was becoming increasingly corporatist. This led more than a few to describe a future they trepidatiously envisioned in which large corporations in conjunction with government power kept down small business and entrepreneurs. As *Van Graham* worried:

“When government gets involved in [business] they take away what capitalism is set up for. It changes all the rules of the game. It sets things up so it's all big huge conglomerates, multinational corporations and the average small guy doesn't have a chance anymore, whenever the government steps in.”

Many were aware that campaign donations enabled corporatism. As *Sheri Low* said, “these huge companies were gaining and holding their place in the world by their comfortable positions with government by making donations to politicians.” Nevertheless, few were interested in additional campaign finance regulations or other types of government regulations to break up “too big to fail” companies. *Lance Owen* had a typical activist response to such proposals when he succinctly replied, “that's not me.”

Federal, State, and Municipal Bureaucracy

Activists were also concerned about transfers to government bureaucracy itself. In fact, when asked what government spending they would prefer to cut first, activists typically began listing federal government agencies and departments they would cut or shrink. Typically these agencies included the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Education, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Department of Energy. It's interesting that they

pointed out DHS, recently established by President George W. Bush, a Republican president, suggesting their motivations were not entirely partisan.

They explained that they didn't believe these departments served their purpose or were needed, at least on the federal level. However, they described their concerns largely in terms of agencies not facing natural constraints that individuals and markets face. Consequently they tended to feel that agencies grew beyond their usefulness without having to "earn their keep" with the luxury of raising taxes to pay for their spending. *Sheri Low* explained,

"They want this and they want that and they just raise taxes. Whereas when I want something, I have to work harder for it and provide increased value to someone in some way to justify it. If I want a better car, well I better earn more money or get a second job or save money or cut back on the amount of ice cream and sodas I buy each week. But government is under no such constraint."

Using similar reasoning, activists also voiced frustration and at times anger over how their state and city budgets were maintained, particularly regarding public employee pensions and compensation and also patronage. They felt that city and state governments had little incentive to rein in their spending because, as *Lynette Reese* said, "they can just come back to the taxpayer for more."

Many were also upset about retired public pensioners who they felt were collecting more than what they had contributed, as *Harvey Baxter* put it: "they're collecting big time retirement and they didn't put anything into it. I don't force people to put it [money] in mine, why should I put it [money] in theirs'?"

Particularly in the aftermath of the 2008 Financial Crisis and Great Recession, their perception that governments avoid consequences led them to anticipate additional taxpayer bailouts, but this time to bankrupt municipal and state governments. *Bill Ballard* reported that when his group made their next trip to Washington DC to meet with their representatives the first thing he was going to demand was "absolutely no state bailouts. If these states want to continue

electing people that have no regard for them, then let them suffer.” In other words, let them face the consequences of their decisions; let them reap what they have sown.

Earmarks

Tea party groups often mentioned that their group was collectively against earmarks. From their perspective, earmarks are the epitome of *political* favoritism. Rather than government picking winners and losers in business, it’s transferring resources from one locality to another necessarily making it unearned. They report that even if the money were sent to their locality, this offends them. *Heather Burton* lambasted her own representative who boasted to his constituents that he brought home money to the district: “I don’t want the Congressman to bring back more money than we paid. It’s taking from another community and it’s not right. It’s essentially theft. You are taking from another community. I just don’t think its right that we should be taking from other communities.” When probed about why she felt this way, she shrugged and said “just morals.”

Social Services

Assuming tea partiers look through a proportionality lens, it’s unsurprising that social services, another type of government transfer, would register a complaint. While they acknowledge the *needs* social services are intended to serve, they still view such transfers as *unearned* and worry about its affect on accountability. Activists voiced concerns that social services programs lacked sufficient obligations to hold recipients accountable. For instance, *Tony Watts* recounted,

“I have a friend who if he got it together he could make some money and get to work. But nobody is holding him **accountable** about how he goes about spending his life. If someone is supporting him, I think he should have an **obligation** to live in a responsible way that reflects the gratitude for their help as well as doing everything he can from whatever bad situation he’s in. If a government entity is just writing checks, there isn’t **accountability**.”

Activists had a strong desire to tie benefits to a type of input or obligation, and suggested tying financial assistance with attending job training and job interviewing courses, conducting “busy work,” or even requiring thank you notes from recipients. For instance, *Joe Silva* suggested, “We could still have a safety net. But how about giving them temporary unemployment for say three months? But during that three month period, give them job training and education and teach them how to interview for jobs.” In their own way, activists were attempting to bring outputs like social services into balance with inputs such as obligations, thank you notes, and job training.

Most wanted programs brought closer to home at the local and state level, or even provided privately. Many expected that doing so would further increase accountability because recipients would see the neighbors providing them assistance and government administrators could ask more questions and impose obligations and requirements that activists felt would improve the situation. As *Tony Watts* explained, “you’d have accountability for the funds that are given. I’d be accountable to the people in my life that helped me out.”

Just as activists felt that TARP and corporate welfare were rewarding “bad” behavior and punishing “good” behavior, similarly activists felt government assistance to the needy could do the same. For instance, *Laura Thomas* used similar phrasing when she exclaimed that “welfare” was where “you get rewarded for doing wrong.” Similarly *Sheri Low* felt that the “rules of welfare essentially reward people for doing the wrong thing and punish them for doing the right thing.”

For tea partiers, earning is an important part of life fulfillment and self esteem and they worry too much government aid risks dis-incentivizing production and thereby potentially

“crushing the human spirit.” As *Edward Chapman* felt, “if you give people everything they need, then you take away initiative, pride, it hurts the human spirit, and the urge to do it yourself.”

For religious tea partiers, like *Heather Burton*, government-provided social services also undermined the incentive people might have to join a religious congregation and in the process turn to God in order to obtain financial assistance. *Heather Burton* explained it could cause people to “look to government for the solution, not to God and the community” and that it was often “replacing God with government.” More libertarian leaning activists instead suspected that government spending crowded out private charities and the obligation individuals should feel to help others. They might have used different examples but expressed similar intuitions.

Overall, few tea party activists wanted to abolish the social safety net. *Raymond Webster* explained, “Now don’t get me wrong. We need some social safety net for people who are, for a variety of reasons, hurt, disenfranchised, are uneducated, this isn’t black or white. It’s as bad in Appalachia as it is in the 5th ward in Houston.” So he felt government could “play a role in providing some help” but he wanted it to be limited and more community based. Similarly, *Lance Owen* whose mother had taken government assistance for several months when he was a child explained, “I’m not someone who says we should not care for our most desperate. I absolutely believe that we should. I absolutely feel there is value in having a *very limited* social safety net. However it needs to be extreme need and state-based.”

When talking about recipients of social services in qualitative interviews, it is difficult to ascertain if activists assumed recipients are racial and ethnic minorities and because of prejudice viewed them as less deserving. As is well known in the literature, social welfare policies are often tangled up in the politics of race (Gilens 1999, 1995, Kinder and Sanders 1996, Sniderman and Piazza 1993, Kluegel and Smith 1986). In some cases it was clearer. For instance, in the

context of social services some activists would immediately weave in discussion of immigrants or “generations of African-Americans in poverty.” Such conflation of topics seems to imply racialization of social services in their minds. Nevertheless, these were not the majority of examples given. Instead, many activists mentioned personal friends, extended family members, poverty they had heard of in Appalachia, poverty they had observed in Europe (e.g. Ireland), or trailer parks which typically connote lower income Caucasians (see Wray 2006). While it is possible activists’ used racial and ethnic stereotypes to color their views about social services, interviews did not indicate this explained most of it.

The Trade-Off Between Accountability and Equality

Tea partiers have great faith that private charities, particularly churches, and communities would pull together if government relinquished the provision of some of its social services. What they have not considered is the necessary trade-off that comes with more local and particularly private control: unequal access. If financial assistance is left to religious and community organizations, assistance becomes dependent on one’s religious belief or acceptance by one’s community. As history has shown, racial, religious, and sexual minorities could lose access to important social services as the majority pushes them to the periphery.

When asked about these possibilities, for instance if a lesbian couple would be at a disadvantage for help from religious congregations that oppose homosexual relationships, activists felt that churches “wouldn’t turn anybody away” or if they did it would be a “rare occurrence” and some other source of help could be found. As social conservative *Oliver Hayes* felt, “I don’t know of any church that would deny help regardless of their lifestyle choices” even though he would not want the government to require churches to give equal access to funds.

Despite these assurances, it became evident that activists had not put much thought into these egalitarian concerns. For instance, *Ronald Brant* conceded, “this isn’t something we as tea party activists get engaged in a lot.” It appeared that since these activists had places to turn, they assumed others did as well, and possible exclusion did not seem to have occurred to them or was less relevant to their judgments.

Nevertheless, tea party activists don’t like to be told they are not compassionate and go out of their way to point out that they believe in charity and community. As *Brad Osmond* put it “you can’t just live your life as an island of a person without any human relationships or need. We all need help. But it should be done in a mutually respectful, voluntary way, like a business.” Many pointed out they felt an inherent obligation to help others, as *Olive Baker* put it “poverty is a matter of consciousness” and that people should not “turn their backs” on those in need. Activists would volunteer how they donated to charities in efforts to prove that private charities could serve the community.

Entitlements

Skocpol and Williamson (2012) make the argument that tea partiers favor benefits for themselves such as the Social Security and Medicare entitlement programs, but not benefits for others. For instance, based on their interviews with activists across four groups they report:

“not a single grassroots tea party supporter we encountered argued for privatization of Social Security or Medicare along the lines being pushed by ultra free market politicians like Representative Paul Ryan (R-WI) and advocacy groups like FreedomWorks and Americans for Prosperity...They are sure that Obama’s Affordable Care Act is unconstitutional but elide this standard **for their own entitlements**” (p. 60-61).
[emphasis added]

However, tea partiers whom I interviewed conveyed a starkly different message. Activist after activist contended that government should not be involved in old age entitlement programs. For instance, *Lance Owen* said, “I don’t think the government should be in Social Security at all. If you do a program, do it at the state level.” When it came to Medicare, “It’s the same position

as Social Security, and I don't want the federal government involved in healthcare." *Tony Watts* felt, "The government has no business in being in retirement planning. Social Security was a poor decision in the first place, and I don't know how we wiggle out of it." *Sheri Low* concurred, "Constitutionally, I'm opposed to their existence, I don't think that they are a legitimate role for government. It's something that never should have been created in the first place." *Linda Rodriquez* felt "I believe I should be able to save my money, budget, and spend it wisely, and if I didn't that's no ones fault but my own." *Neal Park* was among a multitude who called Social Security a "ponzi scheme" but also went so far to call the program a "socialist problem." How could tea partiers view these programs as "their own entitlements" if they do not even think such federal programs should exist?

A number of activists described these entitlement programs as a form of generational redistribution. *Carol Hudson* was concerned for her daughter, "Why should my daughter be paying for someone else? It's redistribution of wealth." *Joe Silva* had similar reasoning, "Why would they start a program like that where *you* support *me* when I retire?" *Ronald Brant* felt that entitlements were essentially a "transfer of income from one generation to another" that "robs" the next generation of "capital that they could use to build businesses and their own savings."

One notable exception came from *Harvey Baxter* who felt that Medicare was "good" because "everybody pays into Medicare." In this instance, the universal and contributive nature of the program made it palatable.

Tea partiers' support for entitlement reform is obfuscated largely by their desire to "get back" the money that they have already contributed to the programs. Skocpol and Williamson (2012) provide a quotation from activist *Nancy Bates* that supports this point: "I'm not looking for a handout. I'm looking for a pay out of what I paid into" (p. 61).

The complexity of the program's contribution and benefit allocation process appears to drive their cautious approach to reform. Americans are required to participate in and contribute to the program and are essentially promised to receive a return on their "investment," similar to a savings account or traditional retirement account. For this reason, activists typically articulated that solutions were "tricky" and should be phased out slowly because, as *Tony Watts* put it, "so the people who paid into them should get something back out of them." *Keith Marshall* felt it was "complicated" because "the fact is the people who paid in were forced to and they were promised and expected a *return* on that money."

Empirical data further bolster this point. A national public opinion survey conducted in September 2012 which included about 300 tea party sympathizers, found this group far more supportive of voucher-like entitlement reform methods than non-tea party supporters. Indeed, fully two-thirds of tea partiers favored a reform that would give "seniors a credit to purchase the health insurance plan of their choice" even if it might result in "seniors paying more money out-of-pocket for their own health care." In contrast, only 40 percent of non-tea partiers agreed (Reason Foundation/Princeton 2012a). Similarly in an August 2011 survey, which also included about 300 tea party sympathizers, nearly three fourths of sympathizers agreed that "people like me should be primarily responsible for saving enough money to meet basic expenses in retirement" compared to 55 percent of non-supporters. Similarly six in 10 tea party supporters also felt that "people like me should be primarily responsible for saving enough money to purchase health insurance in retirement." However, among non-supporters numbers were flipped with nearly 6 in 10 instead agreeing that "people like me should primarily expect help from the government to pay for health insurance in retirement" (Reason Foundation/NSON 2011). Furthermore, roughly 7 in 10 tea party sympathizers supported cuts to their own Social Security

and Medicare benefits if they were guaranteed to get back their contributions, compared to roughly 6 in 10 non supporters (Reason Foundation/NSON 2011, Reason Foundation/Princeton 2012b) (See Chapter 3, Table 3.1 for further details).

Overall, caution in supporting entitlement cuts was largely grounded in the idea that activists wanted the outputs to correlate with inputs—for people to get their contributions to the program back. This is different from wanting government to provide them with “their own entitlements” as Skocpol and Williamson argue. Again, tea partiers’ preference for proportionality appeared to guide their judgments about entitlement reform.

Don’t Punish the Producers

Activists are frustrated not only by the system of government transferring resources, but also the process by which government raises the tax revenue to fund such transfers. In interviews, it became clear that activists tended to speak about heavy taxation the same way they talked about redistribution. In turn, this led them to talk about liberty being taken away. However, listening to the greater context of their complaints, it became clear they were again making an argument about fairness.

At first, activists tended to deride heavy taxation and redistribution as self-evidently bad. Like *Benny Stewart* explained, “it wreaks of communism which is in direct opposition to our freedoms in the Constitution.” But what does this even mean? *Oliver Hayes* helps demonstrate by weaving both liberty and fairness arguments together:

“Justice and liberty are two sides of the same coin...the country was founded on the idea of individual liberty and when my individual liberty has been compromised, then the result of that is injustice. If someone is **taking** money from me because they have decided I have too much, they are **taking** it without my consent. That’s my money. I have **earned** it. Telling people what to do with their money is unjust. When you work for something you have invested your life in that, any type of product you have made you have invested a piece of you. For someone to come and take it they are taking a piece of you and your life.”

Oliver Hayes connects liberty and property by asserting that property represents a piece of a person's time and their life. By this definition, heavy taxation of property is infringing on freedom. Consequently, "taking" his money is "taking" his freedom and is thus "unjust."

Similarly, consider this exchange between a Chicago tea party protester and CNN reporter Susan Roesgen that occurred at an April 15 Tax Day tea party protest in 2009 (CNN 2009):

tea party Protestor: I hear a president say he believed in what Lincoln stood for. Lincoln's primary thing was he believed that people had a right to **liberty** —

CNN Reporter Susan Roesgen: Sir, **what does this have to do with taxes?** What does this have to do with your taxes? Do you realize you are eligible for a \$400 dollar —

tea party Protestor: Let me finish my point, Lincoln believed that people had the right to **share in the fruits of their own labor**, and that government should not **take it**, and we have clearly gotten to that point.

Roesgen, as many observers would, found it perplexing that the protestor was talking about *liberty* in the context of the stimulus package and future taxes. In the mind of this Chicago protestor, he thought it was clear that by talking about liberty he was talking about the freedom to keep what he believed to be a fair portion of his outputs, "fruits," earned by his inputs or "labor." He felt that future taxes, as a consequence of the stimulus, would become excessive and thereby put inputs and outputs out of balance. While talking about liberty, he was simultaneously conveying his concerns about fairness as proportionality.

Like *Oliver Hayes* and the Chicago protestor, one will notice activists often use words such as "earned" or "acquired" rewards being "taken" from them with heavy taxation and thus they feel "punished." To activists, redistribution and heavy taxation is akin to punishing society's virtuous producers. For instance, *Sandy Patterson's* immediate reaction to the idea of redistribution was, "what is the point of **punishing** people for being successful?"

When talking about heavy taxation and redistribution some, but certainly not all, would use language suggesting they viewed it as theft or stealing. This is relevant because while not all

called taxation theft, it points to a raw sensibility that leads activists to believe heavy taxation is “taking.”

Lance Owen was not unique when he admitted that redistribution offended his sense of “basic fairness” but he wasn’t sure why: “It isn’t right to take from one and give to another than hasn’t earned it. I think it’s basic fairness. I don’t know why I feel that way; I just feel strongly about it.”

They are not opposed to taxation, but they oppose some unspecified or unclear threshold of taxation at which they believe it becomes confiscatory. A typical benchmark for “excessive” taxation typically includes a tax increase or dramatic spending increase because they view deficit spending as future taxes. Indeed, an activist survey I conducted and further discuss in Chapter 5 revealed that more than 8 in 10 activists polled felt their future taxes would increase dramatically in the future as a consequence of increased spending. Consequently, given the expansive spending programs enacted in the midst of an economic crisis such as the Troubled Asset Relief Program (the bailouts) or the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (the stimulus), it’s unsurprising tea partiers took to the TEA party acronym “**T**axed **E**nough **A**lready.”

Activists would further justify their aversion toward redistribution by saying that it diminished “incentives” to “produce”. For instance, *Shane Halberg* explained that redistribution was “problematic” because it “destroys incentives.” He went on to say, “I look at this iPhone and I think if someone didn’t have the incentive of making money, how would it ever have been **produced**? That comes from people’s incentives to **acquire** more wealth and I think that’s a great and beautiful thing...To me, to **take away or redistribute** wealth is dangerous because you’re hurting the entrepreneurial spirit that helps our way of life and standard of living become

better.” For *Shane Halberg*, property rights over ones’ production were central to his conception of his “way of life.”

Furthermore they felt that redistribution taken to the extent of socialism not only reduced production but also diminished personal self-esteem. For instance, *Bill Ballard* felt that socialism “removes the incentive to improve one’s self personally and financially because there’s no reward.” *Kurt Dennis* used similar language when he said that socialism “has never worked anywhere its ever been tried” because it “destroys people’s lives” by “destroy[ing] their will to be exceptional...their will to take care of themselves...and to progress and succeed in what they do.” It was unclear what worried them more, if redistribution undermined production or undermined personal self-worth.

Deficits and Tax Hikes As “Bailouts”

To tea party activists, both tax increases and deficit spending (portending tax increases) have become emblematic of a lack of accountability. In their view, both are an indication that government did not spend within its means and thus jettisoned responsibility onto the responsible taxpaying producer. Consequently, deficit spending and actual or expected tax hikes are thus viewed as a type of bailout, removing the consequences and constraints of government decisions.

As the nation repeatedly nearly breached the debt ceiling in 2011 and 2013, most activists remained ardently opposed to an increase, despite experts warning of disaster. For activists, raising the debt ceiling amounted to another “bailout” but this time of government decision-making. Just like they opposed the bank and auto bailouts “on principle” they tended to oppose raising the debt ceiling for similar reasons. Their aversion to compromise on these fiscal issues suggests they have moralized the issues. For instance, Timothy Ryan (2013a) finds that moralized attitudes are distinct from simply extreme or strong attitudes but instead have a

tendency to “reorient behavior from maximizing gains to adhering to rules.” Indeed, most activists would have rather risked the consequences of national default than to compromise with another “bailout.”

Regulation and the Producer

Tea partiers had many complaints about what they viewed as excessive regulations unnecessarily impeding theirs and others’ ability to earn and produce. These types of regulations typically included environmental and labor related rules that impacted their own or friends’ businesses. A helpful exercise may be to briefly take on their assumptions to better illustrate: If fairness is getting what you earn, then you would want as much ability to earn as possible. Particularly if you believe the system is fair, you would want there to be only minimal regulations so that you would have as much power over your environment as possible in order to produce. Consequently, you would want government regulations to be made as local as possible so you could better influence it.

Joan Rayas particularly articulated this view: “They have made the regulations here so impossible...It’s impossible for you to run a business and to bow to all the regulations they are putting on you.” Similarly, *Carol Hudson* felt, “how can you get ahead when there are so many obstacles in the way?” *Christine Phillips* used the word “oppressive” to describe the current regulatory structure. *Heather Burton* felt regulations were “wrapped around [her] husband’s neck like a chain.”

Many activists had their own personal stories as small business owners where they felt caught in a labyrinth of government regulations, special interests, and irresponsible neighbors. For instance, *Heather Burton* recounted a series of experiences where, in her view, government regulation had stalled bank lending making it difficult for her husband to get a small business

loan to put a new roof on their business' warehouse. But at the same time "hooligans" came by and graffitied their warehouse and the government threatened to fine them \$1000 if they didn't pay to remove the graffiti. And then on top of that their mayor—a Republican she noted—proposed a new rule to require property owners to pay to shovel snow off the sidewalks of businesses who didn't pay to do it themselves. She exclaimed, "Not only are you paying to take care of your own property, but you're paying more for a negligent property owner...It's like you're constantly being pushed from one side or another at all times. That's the way it feels."

Other activists brought up regulations impacting access to consumer products, like salt, trans fat, sugary drinks, and even marijuana and liquor laws among the more libertarian leaning activists. They tended to believe these sorts of regulations were motivated by a desire to control people rather than look out for their health. *Kurt Dennis* felt that "It's government control. It's elitist individuals who think they know better how we should spend our money than we do...They look down their noses at people; they look down on everybody."

Part of their complaint is a classic populist argument that individuals are capable of making their own decisions and they chafe at the idea that governmental and academic elites would engineer laws to help prevent people from making bad decisions. As *Shane Halberg* explained, "We can make decisions ourselves, we're not children. Part of liberty is responsibility, the more liberty we have the more responsibility we have. I truly do believe that when people take on more responsibility we're a better nation."

At root is a differential perception of *harm* and thus *need*. Tea partiers appear less sensitive to potential harms and needs guiding the motivations behind progressive reforms and thus are much more likely to view regulations as unnecessary. To demonstrate their lower sensitivity to harm and need, take for instance *Sheri Low's* sentiments, "A lot of folks out there

think everything in life should be wrapped in bubble wrap, that everything should be 100% safe.” *Joan Rayas* felt that “you have to be like a mother to all of your employees and everything that happens between two employees becomes the employer’s fault...let’s be grownups.” Even more extreme, several activists from coal country in far western Virginia positively reminisced the past when there were many small mining operations that were so industrious that there was an “acrid smell that used to be all over everything in the county.” These activists seemed to miss the pollution because it was a sign of production. *Kurt Dennis* felt that regulations intended to help people gain access to health care was the same as helping people get Rolls Royce automobiles because he felt health care and Rolls Royce cars were equivalent luxury goods rather than one being more *needed* than another.

Without a stronger sensitivity to *need* as a type of logical yard stick, they do not perceive any logical limit to what their liberal opponents are willing to regulate. This leads them to exaggerate what liberal “elites” are willing to do. As *Richard Ray* said, “we’re in a world that very shortly you’ll wake up some morning and you can’t get out of bed because you haven’t gotten the government authority to get out of bed.” Similarly *Kurt Dennis* complained that their local school districts wanted to raise taxes to equip schools “to handle every kind of handicapped situation, and every kind of handicapped student whether they have one or not.” He said he would be willing to pay more in taxes if it were clear that the schools had students enrolled that needed help, but wanted it to be the exception rather than the rule. With a lower sensitivity to need, regulations often appeared as unnecessary hindrances to obtaining rewards and success.

Government at the Vortex

*“The government is in the role of choosing winners and losers and it shouldn’t do that.”
–Sheri Low*

Just about every tea party activist will tell you that government is responsible for causing many economic and societal ills and consequently they desire a government limited in scope. Virtually all believe it should be limited when it comes to economics, property, and business-related issues. The primary reason they provide is that it too often acts as an unfair arbiter, removing consequences, rewarding failure, punishing success and enacting unnecessary roadblocks and in so doing picking winners and losers. Ultimately they explain this is possible because government lacks the competitive constraints individuals and businesses face in the marketplace.

Luke Cannon explained that he desired limited government because otherwise government would be in a position to pick winners and losers: “When there is a large government you get crony capitalism and you get corruption and a lot of waste and intervention...A bigger government creates a bigger stake in what regulatory policies are made and incentivizes more lobbying.” He felt that the “biggest chunk of change” with government spending ultimately came down to “crony capitalism, not just welfare.” *Raymond Webster* gave a hypothetical example: “So it could go like this—GM finds it didn’t sell as many cars this month, but simply says, “Don’t worry about it I will get a tax break and a credit because I got pull with the government. That doesn’t make you successful, that just makes you a leech.”

Activists often spoke of government using moral language. According to their narrative, as government transfers resources and privileges to some groups over others this amounts to punishing those who followed the rules and produced and rewards those who did not produce. This is necessarily at odds with proportional justice because they believe government is

distorting the relationship between work and rewards, actions and consequences, inputs and outputs. *Joe Jaworski* explained in the context of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which provided assistance to homeowners facing foreclosure:

“It’s frustrating when me and my wife are paying our mortgage on our house on time and we’re being forced to pay for other people’s mortgages. So we’re being penalized for doing the right thing and other people were being rewarded for doing the wrong thing. More important than math to me is the morality of it. Good behavior should be rewarded; bad behavior should be punished...that’s what I found very frustrating about a lot of aspects of what the federal government does.”

The reason most often explicitly given for why government acted as an unfair arbiter was that activists felt it lacked natural constraints faced by regular people. Wherein the private marketplace a company that made poor decisions and ran out of money would go out of business, government has the ability to raise taxes. Furthermore, without government facing marketplace constraints and incentives, it appeared to lack accountability. *Sheri Low* explained:

“Government is totally different from private business because if government needs more money they can arbitrarily raise taxes. Whereas, your average business man if his costs got up, unless his customers are willing to pay the increased cost, he could be in a bind. A smart businessperson needs to make smart decisions to keep his costs down and provide products customers want to buy. Government isn’t under those constraints, because they are the government. There are no supply and demand constraints on government. And we the public are supposedly able to fire officials at the ballot box, but it doesn’t work very well because incumbents just keep getting reelected and reelected.”

While activists agreed government should be limited in the economic realm, another group emerged that also wanted government limited in relation to personal choices. For instance, these libertarian leaning tea partiers would add in their frustration with government prohibiting the purchase of liquor on Sundays, banning gay marriage or marijuana, or infringing on civil liberties, etc. *Brad Osmond*, one of the early tea party activists demonstrates this combination of views for why he preferred limited government:

“To be completely honest, there are two reasons. One—the liberty side. I don’t want government in my life. I want to be free of a draft, wars, etc. It affects my civil liberties. Two—it affects my pocketbook. A lot of what government does is wasteful. Government doesn’t do many things well. I want to keep more of the money I earn. My wife and I built our business. We did that.”

While tea partiers have a deep distrust of government they will also point out that they are not anarchists and believe government serves legitimate functions. As *Kathy Alfonso* said, “We are not anarchists in the tea party movement. So we believe in government. The tea party is not about no government. The question is what is the appropriate role of government.” Typically the legitimate functions mentioned were foreign affairs, nation defense, the court system, the police, and other functions intended to promote safety and security.

Federalism as the Solution

Nearly all activists expressed a preference for government closer to home. Many of the problems they perceived in an expansive federal government they believed would be better checked at the state and local level and thus many tasks should be devolved. The primary reason they gave was that they believe regular people like themselves would have greater influence over localized government and could better hold elected officials accountable. By holding them accountable, they felt they would be better able to prevent government picking winners and losers. For instance, *Shane Halberg* felt elected officials would be held more accountable if he knew them and interacted personally with them: “There’s an accountability factor to it. I can point to where my mayor lives and to my city councilman’s favorite restaurant. I know nothing about my congressmen and senators, or shake their hands. Especially the bureaucrats out there. Accountability is so much better at the local level than the federal government.”

Activists also chafe under what they perceive to be a “one-size-fits-all” approach with rules and regulations enacted at the federal level. They prefer the idea that states and localities experiment and compete, similar to a marketplace, to develop the best package of rules as people “vote with their feet” as *Michael Adams* put it. *Lance Owen* explained:

“When states do individual programs in different ways it’s like a petri dish, 50 different lab experiments. If someone does something terrible it impacts their state and we’d see that and people wouldn’t do that anymore. If we had a state that had great spending ideas and legislation that would bubble to the top and

we'd see that state's experiment is working and say lets do more of that.”

Their penchant for localism ostensibly stems from their desire to shape and mold their environments to increase their ability to earn and compete. However, this often necessarily comes at the expense of equality of rules and services, and may at times violate human rights. Nevertheless, these concerns were simply not salient or as relevant to their judgments. When probed, activists typically responded that people could simply move to a better locality.

Free Market Fairness

With protection of property rights, the free market system ostensibly fits into tea partiers' conceptualization of fairness. What tea party activists seem to like most about the free market system is that resources appear to be allocated according to what one produces, not just based on how hard someone works. Moreover, they seem to like that markets allow not only success but also failure. These key points—zealous emphasis on production rather than effort and allowing success or failure—distinguish tea partiers from the traditional American Creed that believes in hard work. For activists, it's not “she who works the hardest should be rewarded the most” or “she who contributes the most should be rewarded the most” but rather it should be “she who produces the most should be rewarded the most.” Hard work is glorified particularly as it is viewed as evidence of participating in a moral mechanism of inputs and outputs. As *Kent Conner* said, “the free market offers incentives that drive people to produce.”

In their view, the market allocates resources according to what one earns. They tend to define “earning” based on having to convince people to buy products. That sort of validation from peers and community demonstrates to them that they made a product of value. Activists often appraise contemporary millionaires and billionaires like Bill Gates, Steve Jobs, Sam Walton, and companies like Apple and Wal-Mart. *Joan Rayas* explained that in the marketplace business owners had to *earn* their business:

“People have a choice. When you have to please the people with your product, you have to do the very best job you can to get their business. They aren’t required to come to you in a free market. They can see what your competitors are selling for. People can’t sell a product if it doesn’t make sense compared to what other competitors are charging. They have to tighten up their products, their costs, and entice you to buy their product.”

If someone succeeds in the marketplace that must be, they assume, because the person produced something of value. As *Jack Burke* explained: “In the marketplace, a good idea is one that stands the test of the marketplace of ideas. That can be an economic idea, a political idea, or a religious idea. It has to pass the test. And so we reward the good ideas and correct or punish the bad ideas.”

Tea partiers often used similar language to describe markets, such as “rewarding good ideas and punishing bad ideas” as they did to describe what they did not like about government transfers which they often referred to as rewarding “bad behavior.”

In nearly every instance that activists discussed the free market system which they viewed as inherently fair, they would contrast it with government, or government in collusion with business—which did not face marketplace constraints: *Joan Rayas* explained:

“Markets are better than government who sets the rules and says to companies they can’t lose because we’ll tax the people to pay your losses. What’s the incentive for them to come up with the best possible product?...It’s human nature. You have to give people a reason to work hard and come up with the best possible solutions they can. Paying them when they fail is not going to create that.”

Almost as an afterthought, activists would often seek to justify their views by explaining that a rising tide lifts all boats. As *Shane Halberg* explained, “Through that process of acquiring wealth, they are employing others and sharing that wealth with others.” Nevertheless, this was not the first reason given, and not likely most relevant to their judgments about markets.

In the American cultural context in which hard work is believed to bring rewards (Kluegel and Smith 1986), it may very well be tea partier’s penchant for proportionality that leads them to find market outcomes as fairer than those influenced by conscious governing bodies. Work by Alan Fiske (1992) implies that sensitivity to proportionality can bolster ones

perception that market procedures are fair.⁵⁸ Furthermore, Sondak and Tyler (2007) find that perceptions of fair market procedures lead one to favor market allocations, as tea partiers generally do.

The American Dream and Rewards System

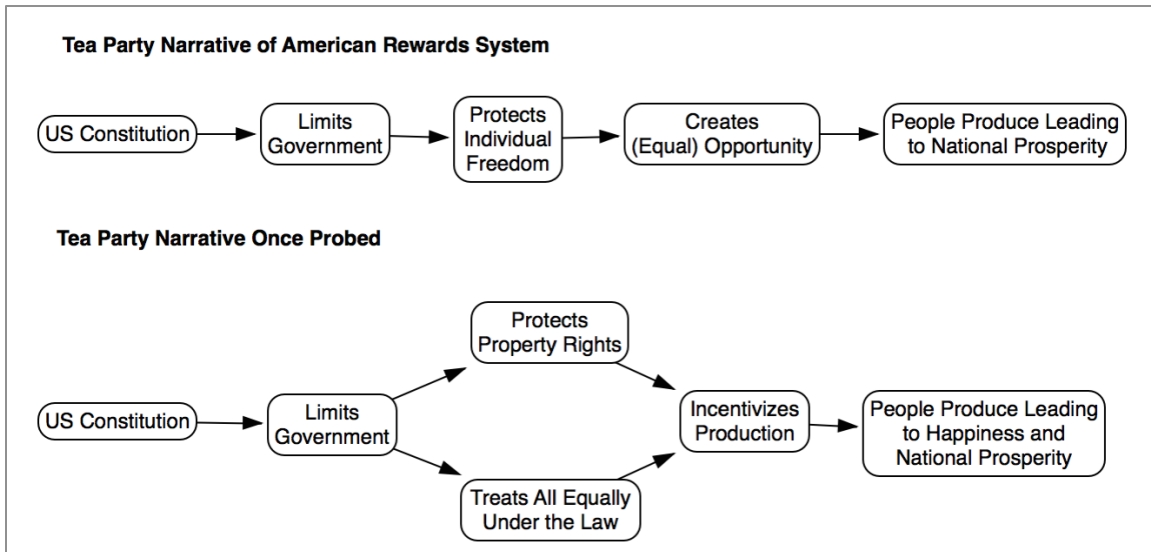
Tea partiers have a distinct and oft-recited view of the rewards system in America, also known as the American Dream, and they say it is this they fear the country is at risk of losing. To describe these views, they would often use vague platitudes that mean different things to different people. However, additional probing and listening holistically to both the context and the way they explain their concerns reveals a similar narrative that goes like this: America is exceptional because it is the only place that has a constitution that limits government in such a way to protect all individuals' "right to earn" and the "fruits of their labor"—property rights—regardless of background, race, religion, creed, income, etc. and this is the reason for economic opportunity that brings about production, happiness, and American prosperity (See Figure 4.1).

The key for tea party activists, and what distinguishes them from the traditional view of American exceptionalism is the zealous emphasis on government protecting property rights and doing so equally, without preference or "doling out special favors." This becomes controversial when government action may otherwise be desired to address a societal need. Nevertheless, they believe that within this context people have greater ability to earn and produce and thereby

⁵⁸ Fiske (1992) identifies "market pricing" as one of the four primary relational models that explain how people evaluate social interactions. Fiske writes, "market pricing transactions are distinctive because they are based on proportionality...[and] use proportional standards to establish rates of contribution or proportionate distributions" (p. 706). He goes on to explain that Western cultures often tend to "allocate rewards in proportion to taste input" and that distributive justice in the market pricing frame is determined by "to each in due proportion" and exchange based on "pay for commodities in proportion to what is received" (p. 706). This stands in contrast to a more socialistic ideal: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need." In sum, individuals' with a high sensitivity to proportionality may be predisposed to view markets as fair because markets often rely to varying degrees on proportional inputs and outputs. This may particularly base the case in the American cultural context in which most believe hard work brings rewards.

pursue happiness and personal fulfillment. This perceived system ostensibly fits within their broader moral paradigm of fairness.

FIGURE 4.1
Tea Party Narrative of American Rewards System



The key for tea party activists, and what distinguishes them from the traditional view of American exceptionalism is the zealous emphasis on government protecting property rights and doing so equally, without preference or “doling out special favors.” This becomes controversial when government action may otherwise be required to address a societal need. Nevertheless, they believe that within this context people have greater ability to earn and produce and thereby pursue happiness and personal fulfillment. This perceived system ostensibly fits within their broader moral paradigm of fairness.

American Exceptionalism

In just about any political conversation with a tea party activist, they will bring up the topic that America is a very special place because “we can be whatever we want to be,” or “you can be and become whoever you want to become” or “you can grow up and be anything you want” or “you have the opportunity to achieve whatever goal you want to achieve” or you can

“create something.” Or at the very least, they would say “you always have the right and freedom to try.” However, examples of success rarely came in the form of achieving rare and extraordinary eminence like becoming Bill Gates or a famous rap or opera mogul and it didn’t imply becoming wealthy by working on driftwood sculptures. Success often came in banal forms like working one’s way up at a parking lot to one day owning the parking lot. In the view of tea partiers, success is the process of earning.

Key to their conception of the American Dream is that it must allow failure, and doing so actually promotes prosperity for all. As *Oliver Baker* said, “The freedom to prosper and fail made America great.” Or as *Lynette Reese* explained, “When we were growing up there was always this idea that hard work and perseverance can either have good or bad outcomes.” While in their view success or failure is not completely self-determined, they feel that failure allows people to “learn from the bad decisions” and use their “free will” to “make as many good decisions as possible” as *Joe Jaworski* explained.

The U.S. Constitution

When you ask tea partiers *what* they think makes their conception of American exceptionalism possible, they will typically move straight to the US Constitution. In tea partiers’ view, the Constitution is like the “special ingredient” or “formula” that distinguishes the US from other countries, and seems ostensibly responsible for its success. As *Kurt Dennis* reasoned:

“The US is 230 years old. How is it that in that space of time, the US went from a hodgepodge of what some would consider a third world colony to the predominant super power and economy on the face of the Earth? Our DNA as people isn’t different from anybody else. In fact, it’s a combination of everybody else’s DNA. So the only difference between us and countries like England, Germany, and China that have been around for thousands of years is our Constitution.”

Because they view the Constitution as so instrumental, many elevate it to a type of sacralized text and its writers and influencers the sainted founders. But this is not purely a religious exercise. While religious tea partiers may cite God’s influence on its construction, non-

religious tea partiers place equally great emphasis on it but without religious justification. For policies and institutions tea partiers like, they will often say the “founders designed it that way” or “intended it that way.” However, policies they dislike, even those found constitutional by the US Supreme Court, such as the Affordable Care Act, they will insist are not sanctioned by the Constitution.

Activists emphasize that they want the country to consider the founder’s “original intent” when writing the Constitution, which typically means to more narrowly interpret the Commerce and General Welfare clauses. However, they bristle at the mention of slavery also being part of “original intent.” For instance, *Heather Burton* was “dumbfounded” when a history professor spoke to their tea party group and referenced the founders as “white racist slave owners.” They go to great lengths to explain why the founders should be revered despite their complicity in the barbarism of slavery.

Some activists though were clear that while the Constitution was a grand document to be respected, it wasn’t always right. As *Joe Jaworski* said, “just because it’s in the Constitution doesn’t make it right” referring to slavery. Or as *Sheri Lo* said, “Some people think the tea party is about some sort of golden age of the Constitution that we want to get back to. But that didn’t exist. Even at the time of writing the Constitution, slavery was accepted, something that barbaric and primitive.”

Freedom

When you ask tea partiers *why* the Constitution was able to allow people to “be whatever they want to be” they will tell you that the Constitution limits government and thereby protects “freedom.” This is probably one of the most complicated aspects of understanding their conceptualization of the American rewards system, but it actually has historical roots. As I will

demonstrate, when they say the Constitution protects freedom, while listening to the broader context of their argument it becomes clear that they intend to convey two things: first, that the Constitution protects one's "freedom to earn" or specifically *property rights*, and second, that the Constitution does this in such a way that it doesn't privilege one group over another.

There is a long history of conceiving freedom in terms of property rights. For instance, William Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws of England* published in 1765, included property along with security and personal liberty as three principal components of ones' "absolute rights" (Blackstone 1765/1900, p. 128-129).⁵⁹ Clark Gordon (1982) further argues that English philosopher John Locke synthesized individual liberty as synonymous with property rights. This concept carried over to the American context. Harry L. Watson (1990/2006) in his survey of American public life during the Jacksonian era explains the populist conception of liberty at the time in similar terms. Watson argues that while the benefits of "liberty" were "self-evident" and rarely merited definition or justification, it was historically conceptualized as the freedom to be an "owner of a farm or shop" or the ability to own property (Watson 1990/2006, p. 49). Furthermore, also similar to tea partiers today, Watson explained freedom was also conceptualized to mean "citizens were equal before the law" and that no individual would be subject to the "arbitrary rule of another" (Watson 1990/2006, p. 43).

Freedom is Property Rights

⁵⁹ Blackstone argued that "these [absolute rights of individuals] maybe reduced to three principal or primary articles: the right of personal security, the right of personal liberty, and the right of personal property: because there is no other known method of compulsion, or abridging man's natural free will, but by an infringement or diminution of one or other of these important rights, the preservation of these, inviolate, may justly be said to include the preservation of our civil immunities in their latest and most extensive sense" (Blackstone 1765/1900, p. 124, 128-129)

Kurt Dennis explained “What the Constitution says is you can go get a PhD and you can do what you can do with that PhD and you get to keep the fruits of that labor. And that’s freedom. Freedom is property rights.”

Activist after activist would explain freedom in terms of property rights. *Sheri Low* explained the Constitution gives you the “freedom to keep what you work for, private property rights is just so fundamental for any true freedom” and that it “allowed people to benefit from working hard.” *Lance Owen* also explained, that the government “protected the rights of the individual, private property rights specifically.” As did *Neal Park* who said “We have the right to own and keep our property.” *Lynette Reese* explained, “if you cannot keep the fruit of your labor, which is money, then pretty much then you lose a little bit of your freedom.” Similarly, *Lance Barrett* said, “The Constitution ensures the government won’t take it away if I become successful.” Words like “acquire” “keep” “own” and government not “take” were repeated.

However, freedom in their view does not only mean the right to own something, but it tends to connote an obligation and ability to earn and produce. As *Matt Reid* said, the Constitution allows one to “fulfill their freedom.” It becomes even more clear what *Christine Phillips* thinks freedom means when you hear what she thinks takes it away: “When government gets too involved it infringes on our freedom and prevents you as an individual from pursuing and doing everything to your fullest capacity.” In her view freedom is the freedom to earn. Similarly *Lance Owen* remarked that freedoms protected in the Constitution include the “freedom to produce, the freedom to toil for a day’s work.” *Greg Rogers* felt freedom “guarantees the right to make, to produce, and to market.” The first examples of freedom that came to *Tony Watts* and *Joe Silva*’s minds was the “freedom to put a lemonade stand in your

front yard” or the “freedom to open up a barber shop.” For tea partiers, freedom is the freedom (and obligation) to earn, to produce, and to keep the fruits of ones’ labor.

Tea partiers often mentioned Western European social democracies, or “socialist nations” as being “less free.” The very fact these countries were so often identified as less free when they are clearly not authoritarian regimes provides further insight into tea partiers’ thinking about freedom. *Kurt Dennis* explained that these nations were less free because “the government takes far more in taxes...*why give the government the authority to decide how to live your life?*”

Freedom Means Equal Treatment Under the Law

Repeatedly tea partiers will tell you that liberty comes from God or nature but not from government or men, and that the Constitution codifies this into law. They will then immediately reiterate that liberty coming from God or nature is what makes America “remarkable” but that this liberty is at risk in America. Naturally, these concerns should raise several questions among observers. First, nobody in the mainstream political debate is arguing that rights come from government or men. Liberals also believe in natural unalienable rights. So why do tea partiers feel the need to consistently reiterate that rights *don't* come from a place no one is arguing that they do? Also, what makes them feel their rights are infringed on *now*? Why not in 2004, 1995, or 1977? It’s not sufficient to just report they feel their rights are trampled on without further investigation.

Further probing reveals tea partiers feel that if rights are natural that necessarily means government must treat everyone the same. Following their line of reasoning past where they say that rights don’t come from government, they will typically follow this by telling you that government can’t take those rights away “by no man whether wealthy, poor, rich or strong.” As *Kathy Alfonso* explains:

“Rights enshrined by the Constitution were ensured not by man or government but by God...The idea is that each right is for each individual. It isn’t about class, it’s not about groups, it’s about individual rights. What unites a coal miner in Pennsylvania with a rich oil man in Texas with a housewife in Iowa, and a farmer in Alabama? What unites us is that as individuals **we are all provided the same rights, rights that can be taken away by no man whether wealthy, poor, rich or strong...**The idea that you as an individual have the power to create your life and you have as much right as the man standing next to you.”

Repeatedly, tea partiers bring up equal treatment under the law within the context of natural rights. For instance, while talking about natural rights *Neal Park* explained, “The Constitution of the United States sets up rules and laws that ensure every man is treated equally under the law.” Similarly *Michael Adams* reasoned, “We need the rules to stay consistent and be applied consistently to one person to another, it doesn’t matter rich or poor, the same rules need to be applied to everyone.”

Tea partiers explain their primary fear about not adhering to the Constitution is that government will necessarily grow in size and that will necessarily lead to unequal treatment under the law and instead Americans would be subject to “man’s whims” and ultimately that would lead to “anarchy.” Tea partiers further take comfort in knowing the rule of law is stable, and consistent because as *Christine Phillips* put it “you know where you stand.”

For tea partiers freedom is property rights; the freedom to earn and to produce. Furthermore their conception of freedom as essentially proportionality is central to their view of the rewards mechanism in America. Consequently, if property rights or the rewards to production appear infringed or inequitably privileged—particularly by government—they also feel this has undermined the American Dream. Taking into account the broader context in which the tea party movement emerged, it becomes clearer why in 2009 they felt they were “losing their liberty.” From their perspective, government was engaging in all sorts of unequal treatment, doling out bailouts to banks, auto companies, homeowners facing foreclosure, the politically

connected in the form of the stimulus. Given how they define freedom, it becomes clearer why they felt government had infringed upon it.

Opportunity and Self Determination

According to tea partiers, if the Constitution protects freedom, thereby protecting property and treating people equally before the law, they expect this to engender opportunity and the ability for each individual to direct their lives. (See Feldman (1983a) for discussion of how these two beliefs shape American attitudes of mobility.)

Tea partiers have a strong belief in self-determination or an internal locus of control (see Levenson 1981, Rotter 1971, Levenson and Miller 1976). They tend to minimize the role of external factors impacting individuals' decisions and outcomes, which is more common among conservatives (Levenson and Miller 1976). As *Joe Jaworski* said, "every man and woman is a free individual with free will to make their own decisions and they make as many good decisions as possible and they learn from the bad decisions." As long as the Constitution is followed and that the rules are the same for everyone they also believe that the "chances are fair." With free will and fair rules, tea partiers believe that there is "opportunity for every single person." Consequently, they tend to view those who have difficulty getting out of hard times as responsible for their situation.

What Opportunity Is

When tea partiers say, "I don't want equality of outcome, I want equal opportunity," they don't mean to imply that everyone has equal beginnings or access to resources. Instead, opportunity is about "chance," although not necessarily equal chance. As *Matt Reid* explained, "So it is that chance, just the chance that's all that I'm saying... if I have the sense of 'I have a chance to succeed' I will make an effort to succeed." Not only do they say there is chance, but

there are *multiple* chances to be had, which further legitimizes the system. *Kent Conner* explained opportunity is “not a once chance deal. One can fail and fail again. But in other countries the government has their thumb on you from the beginning and they don’t have the ability to try and fail.”

From tea partiers’ perspective, opportunity, multiples chances, and self-determination are made possible by government’s equal treatment of people’s freedom or freedom to earn. A graphical analogy might prove useful: imagine a ladder connecting a platform on one level to a platform on a higher level. Then imagine there are several platforms of differing heights but all connected to the ladder. For tea partiers, the ladder is the mechanism of opportunity representing a system of laws and property rights protections. The platforms represent various economic levels or access to resources. There are many different reasons for why the platforms vary and why individuals begin at different platforms, for instance if they were born into poverty or wealth. However, the platforms are less relevant to tea partiers’ judgments. Instead, the ladder is what matters. No matter where someone begins on the ladder, if the ladder treats each person equally, then in tea partiers’ view, that means equal opportunity.

Kent Conner illustrates that the ladder matters more to him than the platforms. When asked if two children had equal opportunity if one was born into wealth and connection and the other was born into poverty with little access to health care or quality education, he said:

“That’s tricky...I think we still have equal opportunity even if the circumstances we are born into aren’t always ideal compared to the next person. I speak from my own experience. I was born into a rural western Kentucky town and my dad worked at a chemical plant for 44 years, so we were middle class. I still felt as though I had the same opportunities. Sometimes you have to become a little more determined and work a little harder to get out of poverty.”

Raymond Webster demonstrates that the ladder not the platforms define his view of the American Dream:

“Let me define the American Dream by first telling you what it’s not. The American Dream is not the house with the picket fence, or the corporate job, or any of the things we normally think of when people talk about the American Dream. Instead it’s about one word: Opportunity. In America you have opportunity. It exists. It may be difficult and it may require some help but there is opportunity in America.”

Equalize Opportunities?

With their conception of opportunity, defined by equality before the law, efforts intended to equalize distributions or access to resources are viewed as coming at the expense of the ladder of equal treatment, thereby diminishing opportunity.

Furthermore, tea partiers tend to feel that inequality is a natural part of life and it’s unclear to them where one draws the line in efforts to equalize beginnings. For instance, *Greg Dennis* felt that “life is not perfect” or *Michael Adams* said “there is only so much you can do to level that out.” Most acknowledge that those born into lower income households would “have to work that much harder;” however, this was always followed with a “but.” “*But* if you have the freedom to chart your own course, over time you’ll be able to get the best circumstances for yourself and your community” as *Ronald Brant* put it.

Reasons Why They Say Opportunity is Fair

Tea partiers say that opportunity in America exists and is fair because in their view hard work pays off and wealth generally appears *earned*. In other words, inputs appear to be rewarded with proportional outputs. As *Greg Dennis* explained, “If you work hard, study, and do what it takes, and you’re smart with your decisions, and you’re prudent with your money, you can succeed in this country.”

Tea partiers detest being told wealth is the result of luck rather than self-determination. *Joe Jaworski* described how he and another classmate growing up always worked and studied harder than the other students. He described risks and sacrifices he and his fellow classmate took, while others did not. Now in a job in New York City that he enjoyed and paid well, he reported

that he and his former classmate were doing better financially than their other classmates, with the implication that this was deserved. When a friend told him his financial success was largely due to “luck” he found it “deeply offensive” and it “boggled” his mind. *Brad Osmond* reported that his wife was born into poverty but without government assistance she was the first member of her family to graduate from college and was now running a successful small business.

Often, activists had direct contact with or knowledge of a highly affluent person who started with nothing leading them to believe opportunity was fair. As *Tony Watts* said, “Every wealthy person I know had an idea, worked hard, stuck with it, they kept going, and I’m inspired by them on a daily basis.” Likewise in *Michael Adams’s* view “most of the people I know with significant assets have earned it.”

Furthermore, opportunity seemed fair because successful people *produced*. Frequently, famous inventors and modern day entrepreneurs were held up as shining examples of opportunity, including Steve Jobs, Bill Gates, Thomas Edison, and the Wright Brothers among others. Others pointed to immigrants in their own families and among friends who came to the United States with “nothing” and worked their way up.

Activists also tended to view poverty as largely within the control of the individual. While most felt that the origins of poverty often were at least in part the result of external forces, they tended to feel that many of the poor could pull themselves out. Reasons for poverty varied but included mental illness, the rising minimum wage, underperforming schools, and the libertarian leaners would point out the criminal justice system, while others pointed to despair, “low horizons,” family upbringing, and others felt it was about “poor decisions” or drugs. But ultimately, tea partiers felt that most poor individuals could improve their situation. As *Michael Adams* said, “I believe the number one cause of poverty is despair, and it’s self-fulfilling. I think

poverty has a lot more to do with folks' horizons where they see opportunities and hope for themselves or whether they don't." But he did not believe people were "trapped in their situation" but rather "they have a path to somewhere if they want to take it."

Opportunity Drives Production

Tea partiers feel that with freedom in the form of property rights creating opportunity, this incentivizes people to produce giving them drive and fulfillment. As *Jack Burke* said, "individualism and personal freedom in the United States generates a group of people that think outside the box, are entrepreneurial, and are highly innovative." Similarly *Ronald Brant* remarked that with freedom "human beings are pretty darn creative and energetic." Nevertheless, in their view property rights remained key. As *Kurt Dennis* explained:

"The reason we ended up where we are is because some people—Henry Ford, Thomas Edison, George Washington Carver, there's a whole slew of them that all said-'You know, I can do that better.' Whatever that was—build a car, make a cotton gin, make a light-bulb—I can do that better, so I'm going to do it...But **the only reason they did it is because they can then sell it to everybody else, and they can then keep the fruits of that labor. And it was theirs. It was theirs to spend, it was theirs to do what they wanted to do...**That's what American exceptionalism is—our Constitution and it's also the entrepreneurship and the ability of the American people to constantly find better ways to do things that are marketable and can be sold."

In their view, undermining the freedom to earn and produce demoralized people. *Heather Burton* gave an example of her friend from Hungary whose father started a business in Hungary and the government had seized it. "He didn't smile after that. If you don't have the freedom you take the drive out of people. You take out the ability to accomplish whatever goal you want to accomplish, away." In their view, without property rights, without proportional justice, demoralization ensues.

America Threatened and Taking the Country Back

Understanding tea partiers' conception of the rewards system in America is critical for later understanding their oft-repeated anxieties and concerns about the future of the country and their desire to "take back the country."

Tea partiers will tell you that one of the main reasons they got involved in the tea party movement was that they were concerned their children, grandchildren, and the next generation of children wouldn't have the same opportunities that they had. As *Edward Chapman* said: "We have grandchildren and I want them to have the same opportunities I had when I was a child," or as *Lynette Reese* said "I want to preserve liberty for my grandchildren." They will say they that America is changing into something they "don't recognize" and that they want to "take the country back".

Researchers have tended to view tea party calls to "restore" or "take back" the country as an expression of ethnocultural anxieties over demographic change or even losing "dominance" prompted by President Obama's election as president (Parker and Barreto 2013, also see Postel 2012). Parker and Barreto (2013) argue: "The reactionary conservative...hopes for America's return to a point in history during which the cultural dominance of the group to which he belongs remained unchallenged. This appears consistent with the tea party's desire to "take their country back" (p. 6).

Skocpol and Williamson (2012) argue: "Why are they [tea party activists] insisting on taking back their country and defending their "rights" from tyranny when all that is happening is a pussyfooting health care reform...What is so "fascist" or "socialist" about an economic stimulus bill?...When tea partiers talk about "their rights" they are asserting a desire to live again in the country they think they recall from childhood or young adulthood. Their anger evinces a

determination to restore that remembered America, and to pass it on to their children or grandchildren” and that their fears are “wrapped up with anxieties about immigration and America’s changing links to the larger world beyond the nation’s borders” (p. 74-75).

There is little doubt that for some tea partiers, concerns over immigration clearly informed their general trepidation. This could be observed in interviews where the activists repeatedly brought the conversation back to “illegal aliens” or “illegal people” who wanted to “get money from us” or were “bankrupting” the system.

Nevertheless, most tea partiers talked about their concerns in terms of economics with little mention of immigrants or use of racialized language. For instance, *Edward Chapman* exclaimed, “Each baby is \$37,000 in debt when they are born. How is that right? I think about the interest on our debt, how can we afford that? I could not run my home like that. If I did, I’d be in jail.”

Probing deeper it becomes clear that their concerns about fiscal issues ultimately stem from their conception of fairness as proportional justice. They fear the government and by extension the country is losing the ability to associate actions with consequences and thus losing responsibility, as *Lance Owen* said, “I want us to get back to responsibility.”

Tony Watts articulated what tea partiers generally mean when they talk about the taking the country back: “The idea of ‘take the country back’ is the idea of going back to what the original idea of this country was.” And what was that? “Responsibility” he said. He elaborated “It relies on personal responsibility and that is one of the biggest problems we have right now...In the tea party movement what we’re trying to do is not to change things overnight, this is going to have to be a generational project, we have to start re-instilling some of these ideas into the next generation, and moving back toward the idea of personal responsibility.”

In their view, (as I demonstrated in Chapter 2) government bailed out banks, businesses, homeowners, and localities, picked winners and losers, privileged the promises made to unions over those of bond holders, keeping taxpayers responsible for the bill. When they say they want to take their country back, most intend to convey that they want to restore actions being associated with consequences, to restore proportional justice in government and society. They want government to stop offering bailouts and “favors” and for individuals to refuse such bailouts and “favors” when offered.

Repeatedly, tea party activists voiced similar concerns that society was losing the ability to allow failure by removing consequences. For *Greg Rogers*, the turning point at which he felt the American Dream was at a critical risk was “TARP” because “all of a sudden we were bailing out—we were giving billions of tax dollars to companies that had failed.” He labeled it “wrong” because “there was a belief that companies are too big to fail and that’s not the American Way.” *Jack Burke* similarly felt that “today, not only do we reward good ideas, but we fail to punish the bad ones.” *Raymond Webster* explained, “If you are a corporation we’re going to back you up with a social safety net, if you are a person we’re going to back you up with a social safety net.” *Oliver Baker* lamented, “individual liberty and the freedom to prosper and fail made America great. We have lost the ability to fail and therefore the ability to learn—we have become ‘too big to fail.’”

Tea partiers perceive that the root of the problem is a society that tries to cater to individuals, businesses, and governments’ *needs* rather than their *deserts*. As Greg Rogers said, “it’s like the progressives believe that the government is there to give them everything they **need**.” In tea partiers’ view, need is beside the point, fairness is getting what you earn not what you need.

Tea partiers felt that if individuals and businesses did not feel owed they would stop taking bailouts and go out and earn. Furthermore, they felt that if government allowed people to face the consequences of their choices, individuals and businesses would take on the responsibility. For instance, Kathy Alfonso explained this in the context of her own family:

“If you give people responsibilities, they will act responsibly. If you trust people to do things, they will do it. I am a mother of children and I see this in the littlest of people. If you take them and say: ‘**You don’t deserve anything**. You have to go out and make your way. Your government provides you with safety, security, and a playing field where you can **go out and produce or not produce** to reach a particular potential, but it should not provide you with anything outside of basic fundamental rights.’”

Many felt the problem was part of a “broader mentality” shift in society to shield people from struggle and failure. As *Raymond Webster* explained, “We start these kids at a young age telling them that we will cover all their risks—we put them in padded lives living in a padded world isolated from everything...If you take risk out of the equation, you take risk out of the population and the social psyche and eventually that erodes that spirit that has made America work.”

For tea partiers, associating actions with consequences has crystalized as part of their American identities. To bail out and shield individuals or groups from the consequences of their decisions seems un-American to them. *Greg Dennis*, a Generation Xer felt earlier generations had spoiled the younger generations and the result was losing American values. Speaking of the Baby Boomer generation, he said “They feel they’re ‘entitled to this,’ to ‘live large,’ ‘no consequences.’ If you don’t pass down American values, you’ll lose them. And I think we are in a place now where people have lost their sense of what it means to be an American.” And in his view, what it means to be an American is inextricably related to associating actions with consequences.

In their perception, when government protects individuals and groups from consequences they fear the common person will lose out to the elite and politically connected too. This is

exactly how they felt the bailouts to the banks and automakers and stimulus program played out.

For instance, *Edward Chapman* explained:

“We’re saying ‘come back’ to the values that made this country great...the government is out of hand with our money, the Constitution, and free markets...What we want to get back to is the Constitution...The Constitution was for limited government—which is for the people. **Now it seems that the government is for the big spenders, the lobbyists, the people with the money, the unions, not the people like us who put them there.** I like the movie *Mr. Smith goes to Washington*, that’s the ideal for us.”

Tea partiers ostensibly feel such a sense of foreboding because they feel violations to proportional justice and shielding people from consequences in society must itself come with consequences. They suspect it may come in the form of lowered production, self-esteem, or responsibility. Especially in the midst of the financial crisis it appeared as though the country had reached a breaking point, they felt as though something had to give and they were waiting for the other shoe to drop.

Furthermore, it’s important to note that phrasing like “take the country back” is common political rhetoric in American politics that predate President Obama’s tenure in executive office. Most notably is billionaire and former third party presidential candidate Ross Perot who published a book in 1992 titled “United We Stand: How We Can Take Back Our Country.” Additionally, several Democratic candidates in the 2000s used the phrase “take back our country” including former Democratic presidential candidates Al Gore, John Kerry, Howard Dean, and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton (Shepard 2004, Schneider 2004, Wims 2004, Kennedy 2006). In sum, the politically engaged—activists and politicians alike—often use similar phrasing to express their frustration and desire to re-shape the country according to what they believe is best for the country.

Practice What They Preach?

What observers may find particularly striking about tea party activists is that when they describe their own challenges and personal failings many tend to describe them in terms that

imply a strong personal desire for, or the appearance of, accountability for the events in their lives. Similar to how they express lower levels of empathy for other people's needs, they tend to speak of their own using similar terms and phrasing. Tea partiers' application of proportionality in their own personal lives further substantiates my contention that their concern for proportionality and accountability ostensibly derives from a visceral intuition.

For instance, one tea party activist shared a story about how her family's once-successful small business failed, which ultimately led them to personal bankruptcy and they lost their house. But, she explained, "After filing bankruptcy and losing our house, the mortgage company offered us a Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac loan to stay in the house rather than having to start over. Who in their right mind gives people getting out of bankruptcy a loan? Only the federal government would be stupid enough to do that. We turned it down because we were opposed to TARP. It was very personal. We wanted the government to be responsible; we didn't want what happened to us to happen to America. We know what happens when you borrow too much money. So we turned down that money." Later, when she heard Rick Santelli's on-air outburst about people with homes they could not afford "with an extra bathroom," she thought "had my husband and I not turned down that money, our neighbors' and taxpayer money would essentially have been used to bail us out of our own problems."

She reports that her husband took unemployment for several months, but they later decided, "that was something we did not want to do. And asked ourselves, how do we roll up our sleeves and take care of ourselves without doing that?" She explains that she decided to approach the crisis the way her dad taught her: "One of the things my dad always taught me when I had a tough day on the job was-'What did you learn today? Quit complaining and tell me what you learned. Stop complaining, and what did you learn from it?' So that's how I approached it."

Several activists confided that they had small businesses that failed and had (or nearly) bankrupted them. Yet, they used their experiences as evidence that the free market system was fair. As one activist explained, “It’s the coming up of new ideas and the rewarding of it through the capitalist system that makes us great. Also we’re punished or corrected by the marketplace if we have a bad idea. I’ve gone bankrupt before because I had an idea that wasn’t that good.”

A low-income activist (which is unusual among tea party activists) explained why she thought some people are rich. “They seem to have good jobs, be responsible with money...but I think mostly its determination, drive, and responsibility. All three of which I lack. See, from my angle of being poor, sometimes I feel resentment, but then I remember they are probably working 12 hours a day while I’m griping about it while playing angry birds on my phone.”

The bootstrapping mentality also didn’t necessarily mean they did not recognize external challenges. Instead, they tended to discount such challenges, often viewing them as surmountable in their own lives and in others. For instance, one activist described sexism in the workplace where male subordinates “didn’t want to listen to you as a woman” but yet she said, “I don’t believe we’re restricted by gender or race. I do believe it can cause difficulties, but it’s easy to overcome here.” She explained that instead “I had to figure out how to make it happen, and I was able to do it. I just think there are so many other places in this world where that would not be possible.”

Also telling of their value system is what they report teaching their children. While scholars have used child-rearing questions about obedience to distinguish conservatives (see Stenner 2005), these tea party conservatives were more concerned with kids becoming soft than obedient. Some tell their children “they don’t deserve anything” as *Kathy Alfonso* put it. *Laura Thomas* didn’t want her children to feel “owed” or how *Shelley Bowen* wanted her kids “to learn

how to struggle” as did *Lance Owen*. *Edward Chapman* wanted his kids and grandkids to learn that in life there are “winners and losers” and *Raymond Webster* didn’t want kids to get trophies just for participating but only for winning.

These stories these activists chose to share about their lives tended to reveal a consistent impulse, that in their view fairness is getting what you earn not what you need. This is not to say that all did genuinely hold themselves accountable; perhaps they wanted to appear accountable. Moreover, not all were consistent or would have been consistent had more shared personal stories. One example of logical inconsistency is that *Bill Ballard* felt older people, like himself, were discriminated on the basis of their age. Consequently, on his next trip to Washington with his tea party group, he was going to petition his representative to introduce legislation making those over 50 a “diversity group” so that they could get the benefits certain groups receive as part of “diversity legislation” and “get back to work” as he put it. Nevertheless, his sentiment was in the minority among the activists who shared stories.

Conclusions

Tea partiers’ conceptualization of freedom and proportional justice undergirds how they perceive the rewards system in America. They conceptualize freedom largely as the freedom to earn, to keep the fruits of ones labor—or property rights—and for government to not privilege some property rights over others. Consequently, government actions subsequent the onset of the financial crisis, namely the bailouts and the stimulus appeared in their view to have privileged some over others thereby interfering in the American rewards system. From their perspective, this was a problem endemic to government acting outside of a limited scope.

Overall, they perceive government to often act as an unfair arbiter transferring undeserved resources to businesses, non-profits, localities, and individuals and in so doing,

rewarding unproductive behavior and punishing productive behavior. Consequently they feel government violates justice by, in their view, interfering in the process of work and rewards and not allowing failure and punishing success. From their perspective, government “enables” businesses and individuals by focusing on providing for *needs*, not allowing them to get what they *earn*.

Overall, they feel society too has systematically begun disassociating actions from consequences by rewarding or shielding failure and bad decisions and punishing success and good decisions. Their perception that government and society is repeatedly violating the standards of proportionality leads them to feel the country’s incentive structure is undermined and chaos will ensue.

Nevertheless, for those who feel government action can be a source for good in society, these results imply that programs that are universal and contributive in nature may be more palatable to even a tea party audience. By feeling that government is treating all individuals equally under the law, and that transfers are funded and shared in a universal manner, this could to some degree deflate the visceral opposition posed by the tea party wing of the Republican Party.

Chapter 5:

The Tea Party Divide: Quantifying the Activists

In Chapter 4 I argued tea partiers' unifying explicit concern is that activist government through economic policy unfairly rewards the undeserving at the expense of the productive. In this chapter, I further demonstrate the emphasis activists place on fiscal matters by comparing activist opinion on non-fiscal issues. Based on qualitative interviews and quantitative activist surveys, I demonstrate that while tea party activists agree on government's role regarding economic affairs, the movement is starkly divided across a number of other issues, particularly those related to religious and social conservatism, cultural conservatism, criminal justice, national security, and immigration. I show divisions are not randomly distributed, but rather those who hold more moderate attitudes on social issues do so also for security and cultural issues, reflecting a libertarian/authoritarian divide. To avoid conflict and promote cohesion, members tend to emphasize economic matters rather than delve into divisive issues. This buttresses findings from Chapter 3 that the movement is a coalition of dissimilar types, with some leaning more libertarian and others more traditionally conservative, but that such groups are unified in their fiscal issue positions. The division over non-fiscal issues and unity across economics further indicates that the latter undergirds the core impulse of the movement.

Prior research of the tea party movement has identified both libertarian and authoritarian strains of opinion (Perrin et al. 2011, Arceneaux and Micholson 2012, Skocpol and Williamson 2012). To date, researchers have not sought to explain why studies have found ostensibly contradictory beliefs.

When it comes to analyzing American conservatives, there is a tendency to assume conservatism comes in one type and is expressed in some instances as authoritarian, or

libertarian, and at times as Burkean status quo conservatism (see Stenner 2009, Huntington 1957, Gross, Medvetz, and Russell 2011). Researchers tend to carry over this assumption when analyzing tea party supporters in large datasets: assuming the tea party is ideologically homogenous. Part of the reason is that scholars have found a single left/right economic continuum to generally structure political parties in liberal democracies (Poole and Rosenthal 2009, Bishop, Barclay, and Rokeach 1972).

In addition to the findings from Chapter 3 that the tea party is comprised of three distinct groups, there is further reason to believe that contradictory strains of tea party opinion may be indicative of a coalition, rather than simply a manifestation of contradictory beliefs. Karen Stenner (2009) has argued that while the three aforementioned strains of conservative expression tend to be “‘packaged’ in the American party system” individual conservatives do not necessarily come packaged with these three “psychological predispositions” (p. 144).

Indeed, scholars have identified at least *two* dimensions accounting for much of the variability in attitudes across mass publics (Rokeach 1973, Stenner 2009, Fleishman 1988, Swedlow 2008, Evans, Heath, and Lalljee 1996). While the first dimension largely measures economic attitudes, the second scales across an authoritarianism/libertarianism dimension (Stenner 2009). This implies that while fiscal issue positions may largely divide political parties and Congressional voting patterns in the United States (Poole and Rosenthal 2009), the authoritarianism-libertarianism dimension cuts across political parties. If this holds true for political parties, why not also the tea party movement?

As the latent class analysis in Chapter 3 demonstrated, the tea party is comprised of different types of tea partiers. However, interviews can be helpful in further teasing out how an authoritarian/libertarianism dimension divides tea party activists, and what their packaged

conservative dispositions might be. In addition, surveys of tea party activists offer an opportunity to quantitatively examine the presence of divided attitudes.

Interviews

Tea Partiers' Divided Worldview

Religious and Social Conservatism

Researchers often categorize the tea party as the far right or ultra right of American politics (Skocpol and Williamson 2012, Abramowitz 2012). However, my interviews indicate this conclusion is an oversimplification. While activists expressed ultra conservative views on economics only some held far-right conservative views on social issues. Discussion of religion, God, salvation, or judgment rarely came up in my tea party interviews, in stark contrast to the socially conservative activists Martin Cohen (2006) interviewed who rose to prominence in the 1990s. Few tea party activists used similar rhetoric or expressed the same concerns as the religiously-minded social conservatives Marty Cohen described.

Nevertheless, many tea party activists are religious or socially conservative and these views did shape their political beliefs. For instance, *Richard Ray* identified himself counting on his fingers, “First I’m an independent, then a Christian, then a conservative...As a Christian, I have no business putting my faith in the federal government. My faith has got to be in God.” *Edward Chapman* and his wife felt the country had a divine purpose, which helped prompt their involvement: “We believe there was a higher power involved when our forefathers got together. They were Godly men standing on Godly foundations.” However, other activists would volunteer that they were not religious at all.

Social conservatives tend to view their position in society less as an autonomous agent, but rather co-relational with others in society. Their view of the social contract provides

incentive to form cohesive societal bonds that encourage conformity in upholding ‘best-practices’ or ‘wisdom of the ages’ that create order, accountability, and trust. In their view libertarians in the movement didn’t appreciate this conception of the social contract. For instance, *Matt Reid* explained, “I think that there is a certain social contract that you enter into that says that you will be a good person in society and not do anything to harm your fellow men” However social conservatives’ conception of influencing others goes beyond use of physical force. *Matt Reid* continued: “Using drugs harms your fellow men. Having an abortion harms your fellow men because you diminish the quality of generations that’s coming up behind you.”

However, libertarian leaning activists like *Brad Osmond* disagreed with activists like *Matt Reid*: “I want the freedom to choose virtue. I’d rather marijuana be legal because of freedom and costs. But would I encourage my children to use it? No. But I want the freedom to choose virtue.” He also felt that the country should legalize gambling and prostitution, “it doesn’t need to be illegal...I lean on the side of liberty rather than to protect people from themselves.” Some libertarian leaners confided that they wished their zealously “devout” fellow tea partiers would “find another group to join.”

This division translated into a number of concrete issue conflicts, particularly legalization of marijuana and same-sex marriage. Some activists agreed with *Oliver Hayes* that “marriage is between a man and a woman” but quite a few others concurred with *Emma Welch* who thought: “Gay marriage doesn’t bother me at all. I don't see it as a problem.” Others thought marijuana should be banned while others thought it should be legal. Most activists tended toward being pro-life, while others were in the middle, and a few were “effectively pro-choice.” This led most activists to report their groups disagreed about such “divisive” issues and thus avoided them.

Cultural Anxieties

During the early emergence of the tea party movement in 2010 an Islamic cultural center with a Mosque was proposed to be built in New York City near Ground Zero of the September 11 attacks. Such a case provided an excellent example to examine how tea partiers weighed competing considerations of ingroup loyalties and the protection of property rights and religious freedom. Similar to the social issues, the question of the Islamic Cultural Center divided activists. For instance, one activist felt that it was “disrespectful” and that the builders had “bad intentions.” Yet another activist said “I don't care, private property rights are far more important.”

Some activists were more generally alarmed about Islam, in some cases believing that Sharia law was being imposed on localities throughout the US. Nevertheless, this was simply a non-issue for other activists.

Immigration was another issue that divided tea partiers. Some were extraordinarily alarmed about the influx of unauthorized immigrants, while others admitted they simply hadn't thought about it and their group wasn't doing anything related to it.

Some activists expressed clearly sympathetic views of immigrants, some going so far to favor a liberalized immigration policy. As *Joe Jaworski* said “I'm for a free market in immigration. If somebody wants to come to this country and work hard, they should be free to do that.” *Sandy Patterson* felt “they are just people too” and that she would be “100% open border” if social services were reined in. *Neal Park* explained, “I'm in the construction business and have worked with a lot of Mexican immigrant guys and they are good people, like those you encounter anywhere in the world. They have a right to be here as long as they do it legally.”

However, other activists expressed concerns. Their complaints included a worry that reforms offering citizenship to those who had entered the country without government authorization would essentially be “rewarding” the illegal behavior and was unfair to those “waiting in line.” Other feared it would take jobs from Americans. As *Tony Watts* felt, “being citizens of this country we have privileges. If other people from another country come here to work a job, Americans should have first access to that job” or others like *Harvey Baxter* felt that the country should “stop flooding the market with cheap workers.” Others felt it would be a drain on social services, like *Victor Floyd* felt that “California is bankrupt because it’s paying for social programs for illegal people.”

While some activists had harsh things to say when it came to immigration, many felt immigrants came here for a better life rather than to game the system or harm Americans. Quite a few admitted they would attempt to immigrate to the US illegally too had they been born abroad. For instance, *Lance Owen* felt “They’re here for a better life. They want to be rid of their Communist/Marxist poor country. I’d want to flee from there too. I think they want to come here to work, to be educated and for their children to have a better life.” However, others weren’t so sure. Like *Ronald Brant* felt “I don’t know why they come. I think it’s mostly economic opportunity, but I’m not sure if it’s more handouts our economic opportunity.”

Race

As is well known, racial attitudes are hard to measure directly. Consequently given tea party activists’ fervent belief in the American Dream and promise of upward mobility, I asked why they felt there was disproportionate poverty in the African-American community. The reasons they provided ranged from sympathetic to harsh.

Many activists felt that lower-income African-Americans lived in neighborhoods with concentrated poverty that could trap individuals with a lack of jobs, a lack of educational opportunities, or instilling a sense of hopelessness and despair. More than a few felt that moving out of a neighborhood with concentrated poverty could help. Most felt opportunities were available, but those finding it difficult to climb out of poverty had not yet recognized them or were too hopeless to look for them.

Others, particularly libertarian leaning tea partiers, mentioned the “government’s War on Drugs” and mandatory minimum prison sentences. These activists mentioned the biased criminal justice system engaging in disproportionate policing of minority neighborhoods and issuing harsher sentences for nonviolent offenses. As *Shane Halberg* said, “it’s not helping that we have young black men who smoke a joint and we lock him up. That’s not helping at all. It’s just a terrible drug war that is breaking up households and doing nothing to individuals but keeping them in a certain segment of the population.”

Others felt progressive social service programs were to blame, creating dependency and undermining drive. This led some to describe what they viewed as a “poverty culture.” For instance *Heather Burton* felt that “[the progressives] are actually holding people down, like perpetual welfare for everyone, not giving them the hand up instead of the handout.” Others felt that social services instilled a worldview “that the government pays for everything” as *Keith Marshall* put it.

Some mentioned the breakdown of the family either in regards to social services discouraging family cohesion or harsh criminal justice sentences keeping families apart.

Few brought up the possibility of discrimination. However, when prompted to consider the possibility tea partiers were divided. Some like *Sheri Low* felt that “discrimination has

largely subsided.” Others like *Tony Watts* reiterated that institutional discrimination was over but societal discrimination continued and was “passed on generationally unfortunately.” *Shane Halberg*, who is Caucasian, conceded that, “I’m so ignorant of that issue [discrimination] to be frank. I don’t see a ton of it, not that it doesn’t exist, but I just don’t see it.”

Some tea partiers chaffed at the type of questioning. For instance, quite a few activists were uncomfortable (and some came close to anger) discussing racial *groups* in American society. For instance, *Keith Marshall* said: “I have a major problem with classifying by race in the first place. You’re just accepting the premise that we should carve society into groups by even having this conversation about a particular minority.” *Sheri Low* used similar language: “The group identity politics I find offensive. I view people as individuals.”

When it comes to race, the one issue upon which activists enthusiastically agree is that they hate being called racists. Many go out of their way to point out their support for African-American political candidates and public figures and to reassure observers that they do not believe they discriminate.

Overall, many tea partiers expressed sincere concern for the well being of African-Americans, celebrated the Civil Rights movement, and enthusiastically embraced African-American political candidates and leadership. However, at the same time many would also share observations that indicated an endorsement of stereotypes, a lack of empathy, or lack of understanding of the complicated racial terrain in the United States.

Security

Significant differences emerged among activists on the issue of foreign policy and national security. Many explicitly mentioned the Patriot Act passed during the Bush administration that they felt undermined civil liberties and expressed concerns about the Iraq

war, while others were favorable and supportive of Bush's foreign policy. *Emma Welch*

explained her reaction to the Patriot Act:

“The Patriot Act angered me, to be able to detain people, it took people's rights away. Look where we are today, the federal government is spying on its own people. It's just not acceptable. We didn't start that with Obama, they were data mining with Bush. It's grown out of control, reading my emails, my texts to my boyfriend. It just really bothers me, and I believe in privacy. I value my privacy. I'm not trying to hide a darn thing. It's just nobody's business. I should not have to walk on eggshells. I should not have to worry if they've got a drone pointing over here watching me pick my nose on the porch. I don't want to worry about every single move and communication being monitored...They [the government] aren't meant to keep us in line. The Constitution keeps them in line, or else it will quickly devolve into tyranny.”

Activists who supported the Patriot Act had little to say other than that they supported President Bush. Typically activists who supported Bush's foreign policy would mention the Iraq War, like *Greg Rogers* who said he had supported the decision “100%.”

A particular encounter may prove illustrative of the divide. While meeting with four activists in Philadelphia, one man lambasted Chelsea Manning who leaked classified US government documents to Wikileaks. The activist declared, “The man responsible for Wikileaks should be hanged for what he did!” But another activist immediately shot back, “see that really offends my libertarian sensibilities and my civil rights.” This hawkish versus dovish divide differentiated activists.

To some degree this disagreement on foreign policy was also reflected in a gulf over criminal justice reform. While conservative tea partiers had little to say about the police and the courts, others brought up the “militarization of the police and sheriffs” or “no-knock raids where the police knock the door down.”

Those concerned with criminal justice and domestic surveillance also tended to be more moderate on social and cultural issues, indicating a libertarian disposition.

Working as a Coalition

Both social conservatives and particularly libertarian leaning activists will tell you that their groups focus on economic issues and avoid “divisive” issues, particularly social issues. As

Lance Owen said, “[our tea party group] doesn’t touch social issues whatsoever at all,” or *Matt Reid* who said, “the tea party has avoided the idea of social issues largely because they are so divisive.” *Joe Jaworski* reported that his group remained “focused on fiscal issues” because they were “the core, moral issues.”

The activists I interviewed were not unique in this respect. National tea party leaders have made similar efforts to avoid non-economic issues. For instance, Jenny Beth Martin and Mark Meckler co-founders of the national tea party Patriots group wrote in their book: “Issues like abortion and gay marriage have little to do with our three core principles, and therefore we leave these issues for other groups to advocate” (Martin and Meckler 2012, 23). Tea party Express Chairwoman Amy Kremer similarly said, “We do not focus on social issues because that is what divides us” (Kremer 2010). Michael Patrick Leahy, the founder of TCOT and one of the earliest tea party organizers wrote:

The tea party movement has rejected the discussion of social issues as an unwanted distraction that will hurt the movement's ability to accomplish its constitutional and fiscal objectives. I know this because I helped start the movement, and I have participated in hundreds of conferences calls where this position has been deliberated and confirmed -- both publicly and privately -- innumerable times...Tea party activists, whether they govern their private lives by faith in God or by a purely secular morality, are united in their concern about the loss of individual rights stemming from our corrupted Constitution and our corrupt system of representation...The social issues that motivated the Moral Majority in the 1970s and 1980s, and the Christian Coalition in the 1990s, are considered secondary to the preservation of the republic. (Leahy 2010).

Arguably, the focus is on economics because that is what initially galvanized the movement, as I contend in Chapter 2. As *Raymond Webster* said, “The fiscal issues are the reason the movement was founded.” For these reasons, activists like *Sheri Low* reported that her group focused on limited government: “The number one thing we all agree on is limiting the size and scope of government. We all agree that taxes and regulations are too high and too intrusive and we all support the Constitution.”

Moreover groups likely concentrated on economics because a sufficient number disagreed about other issues such that delving into them risked the groups' efficacy. Without focus on core economic principles, "it's like herding alley cats" as *Jack Burke* put it. Moreover, many like *Emma Welch* claimed they "wouldn't have anything to do with it" if the group delved into these other topics.

However, as the movement grew some activists reported increasing conflict over new activists' competing priorities. In the first wave of interviews in 2010, activists tended to report their groups were united on economics but divided in half on social issues. However, activists interviewed in 2014 tended to report a distinctive bias in favor of social conservatives, while libertarian leaners still remained. This comports with Knowles et al (2013) longitudinal study of the tea party in which they found declining libertarianism in the movement over time. In some instances tea party groups split, such as one in Kentucky, between a "regular" and "Christian" tea party group. Interviewed activists reported that in some cases, social conservatives drove out social moderates and libertarians. However, I came across one tea party group in the Northwest where the fiscal conservatives and libertarians drove out the social conservatives.

Overall, socially moderate activists tended to voice greater frustration than social conservatives. For instance *Keith Marshall* lamented:

"At the beginning everyone was united that the spending and taxes were out of control, those are the abuses that were so egregious that we said we have to stop this. The tea party started out with a winning hand...If you go back and watch Rick Santelli's rant on CNBC, there was no mention of God, or Muslims, or pro-life or abortion issues...The tea party has been coopted by the Religious Right and its really frustrating. People literally say to me 'Whatever happened to the tea party? How come they don't talk about spending any more? Somewhere the tea party went off script.'"

One of the early tea party activists involved with the first wave of protests said he saw the transformation happen. In his view, the tea party "became more about Sarah Palin than Ron

Paul...and other groups glommed on, the anti-gay marriage, immigration, and abortion groups, they mucked up the tea party by 2011, and by 2012 they had destroyed the brand.”

Activist Surveys

To quantitatively test the consensus on economic issues and internal division on non-economic issues observed in my qualitative interviews, I collected survey data of tea party grassroots activists from two tea party events. Unfortunately, questions directly related to race were not included on these activist surveys making it difficult to identify the same three groups from chapter 3, but they did include questions on religious and cultural conservatism and security issues in addition to economics.

Method

The first survey polled activists outside at the Tax Day tea party Rally in Washington DC at the Washington Monument on April 15, 2010. TargetPoint Consulting in collaboration with *Politico* and Edison Research conducted the survey of 457 rally participants, and generously provided the data.⁶⁰ Demographic data revealed that respondents came from a variety of areas, the most numerous being from Maryland (15%) and Virginia (15%), but some took buses in from Ohio (6%), Pennsylvania (6%), as well as New Jersey, Georgia, and Florida (4% each). Another 27 percent came from a collection of other states. Media coverage of the rally emphasized the finding that tea partiers were divided over whether Sarah Palin or Ron Paul best exemplified the movement’s goals, implying a similar divide I found in my interviews (Hohmann 2010). This survey informed the activist survey I later conducted in the fall of 2010, in which I included similar questions for comparison.

⁶⁰ The response rate for the intercept survey was 58 percent. Liberal spectators (11%) inadvertently included in the survey and identified in the cluster analysis have been excluded from the results.

I conducted the second activist survey employed in this analysis at the Virginia tea party Convention, one of the largest grassroots-organized tea party events in the country, on October 8, 2010 in Richmond, Virginia. A collection of predominately female grassroots activists, heading groups that comprised the Virginia tea party Patriots Federation, themed the convention “The Constitution Still Matters.” Some even put up their own seed money to rent the Greater Richmond Convention Center. At \$50 dollars a ticket, the convention registered 2,300 participants.

The range of speakers and sponsors provides context regarding the types of activists the convention organizers were trying to attract. For instance, the speakers ranged from Fox Business commenter Lou Dobbs known for controversial questions regarding President Obama’s birth certificate to libertarian Representative Ron Paul to socially conservative Sen. Rick Santorum, and to former Godfather’s Pizza CEO and radio host Herman Cain.⁶¹ The convention sponsors ranged from Americans for Prosperity to the libertarian-leaning Virginia Campaign for Liberty and Ayn Rand Center for Individual Rights to the conservative mainstream’s Heritage Foundation, to the immigration restrictionist group American Council for Immigration Reform.⁶²

The Cato Institute provided institutional support to conduct a survey and the conference organizers granted us permission to conduct an entrance poll of participants. We assembled a team of interns to intercept tea party attendees as they entered the convention and major conference halls, in total collecting 629 unique activist surveys.⁶³

⁶¹ The major speakers advertised on the vateapartyconvention.com website as of October 9, 2010 include: Lou Doubs, Dick Morris, Bishop EW Jackson, John Fund, Herman Cain, Jenny Beth Martin, Ginni Thomas, Steve King, George Allen, Ken Cuccinelli, Ron Paul, Rick Santorum, Bob McDonnell, Bill Bolling, and Bob Holsworth.

⁶² The political sponsors included the Heritage Foundation, Americans for Prosperity, American Majority, American Citizens Defense League, Take Our Country Back PAC, Ayn Rand Center for Individual Rights, Virginia Campaign for Liberty, American Council for Immigration Reform, the Patrick Henry Center for Individual Liberty, Virginia Rule of Law, and GOOOH.

⁶³ The response rate was estimated to be 52 percent.

Results

Demographic Profile

As would be expected of political activists, Table 5.1 indicates tea party activists from both surveys came from wealthier households and have attained higher levels of education compared to tea party sympathizers nationally. On average, tea party activists came from the \$60K-\$100K household income range and were college graduates. In fact, more than half of activists had college degrees (34%) or post-graduate degrees (26%). Activists were also overwhelmingly Caucasian, nearly 9 in 10.

Activists were divided in partisanship and religiosity. About half of the activists first identified as Republican, nearly 4 in 10 said they are politically independent, 11 percent reported identifying with another party, and less than 2 percent were Democrats. Despite the high share of political independents, 7 in 10 tea partiers self-identified as conservative. Activist religiosity was also divided with nearly equal numbers reporting weekly church attendance (41%) and rare or no church attendance (44%).

Typical surveys rarely offer the option to select “libertarian” as one’s political affiliation; however doing so on the convention activist survey produced a striking result. Fully 23 percent of activists at the event chose to self-identify as libertarian. This is notable, since national surveys find only about 5 percent of Americans self identify as libertarian as well as about 7 percent of national tea party sympathizers (Reason Foundation/Princeton 2014a). This percentage is also particularly remarkable given recent work that finds only a minority of those who endorse broadly libertarian positions actually are familiar enough with the word to choose its label (Boaz and Kirby 2006).

Table 5.1
Tea Party Activist Demographics

		Washington DC Tax Day Tea Party Protest ¹	Virginia Tea Party Convention	CBS/NYT Tea Party Supporters	Mobilization Deficit
Sex	Male	63%	59%	60%	+1
	Female	37%	41%	40%	-1
Age	18-24	9%	5%	2%	+5
	25-34	12%	7%	7%	+3
	35-44	15%	9%	14%	-2
	45-54	26%	30%	20%	+8
	55-64	26%	33%	25%	+5
	65-74	9%	14%	20%	-9
	75+	2%	2%	11%	-9
Race/Ethnicity	Caucasian	85%	91%	89%	-1
	African-American	2%	1%	1%	+1
	Hispanic/Latino	3%	1%	3%	-1
	Asian/Other	6%	5%	5%	+1
Education	< High School	0%	1%	3%	-3
	High School Graduate	11%	9%	25%	-15
	Some College	29%	29%	34%	-5
	College Graduate	35%	33%	22%	+12
	Post Graduate Study	24%	28%	16%	+10
Income	<\$100K	57%	55%	72%	-16
	\$100K+	35%	39%	19%	+18
	< \$20,000K	3%	5%	-	
	\$20K-\$39K	9%	9%	-	
	\$40K-\$59K	16%	14%	-	
	\$60K-\$99K	29%	27%	-	
	\$100K+	35%	39%		
Entrepreneurial	Small Business Owner	30%	27%	12%*	+17
Religiosity	<i>Attend Religious Services...</i>				
	More than once a week	13%	15%	-	+1
	Once a week	30%	27%	40%	
	A few times a month	14%	15%	22%	-8
	A few times a year	27%	28%	21%	+7
	Never	16%	14%	16%	-1
Partisanship	Republican	48%	51%	57%	-8
	Independent	37%	37%	35%	+2
	Democrat	2%	0%	3%	-2
	Something Else	12%	11%	-	
Ideology Self ID	Liberal/Progressive	-	2%	2%	N/A
	Moderate	-	4%	19%	N/A
	Libertarian	-	23%	-	N/A
	Conservative	-	72%	79%	N/A
	<i>Somewhat Conservative</i>	-	-	(35%)	N/A
	<i>Very Conservative</i>	-	-	(44%)	N/A
N		457	629	775	
Population and Methodology		Activist Intercept	Activist Intercept	National Sympathetizer Telephone	
Date		Apr 15, 2010	Oct 9, 2010	Apr 2010	
Note: ¹ Washigong DC Tax Day Protest excludes the 11% liberal spectators which were inadvertently included in the exit poll and later identified in the cluster analysis. *Small business owner statistic retrieved from Reason-Rupe August 2014 National Survey, which included 247 tea party supporters. The national sample found 9 percent reported being small business owners. Don't Know/Refused excluded from this table.					

Notably, nearly a third of tea party activists were small business owners. This is a surprising statistic given that only 9 percent of Americans nationally report owning their own business. This reflects what I found in my interviews, in which a disproportionate share had experience running their own small businesses and reported negative experiences dealing with government regulations, licensing, and zoning. These small business owners with a penchant for small government were likely drawn to the movement as they felt their own livelihoods more directly connected with governmental scope.

Another 9 percent of activists reported being unemployed, roughly the same as the national average in 2010 but slightly higher than Virginia's 6.9 percent unemployment rate that year (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2010a, b). This suggests that difficult economic times may have prompted at least some activists to get involved, or at least given them more time to participate.

While researchers have often assumed particularly older people comprised tea party activism (see Skocpol and Williamson 2012, p. 7) a majority of tea party activists came from the 45-64 year old range (52% DC, 63% VA). This fits with my observations at tea party events, rallies, and strategy sessions that middle-age women and men did most of the mobilizing and organizing. This age range maps onto the Baby Boomer generation, being born between 1946-1964, the same generation known for community activism in its youth. Perhaps ironically, tea partiers were not the 1960s college-campus protestors; instead, they waited until they had a few gray hairs before reading the influential work of 1960s community organizer Saul Alinsky.

One might expect Americans over 65 to be more likely to have time to dedicate to political organizing. However, tax bills are more salient to those currently in the workforce saving for retirement and not currently receiving Social Security and Medicare. It may be that for those distrustful of government, this phase of life may present a unique pressure point to mobilize.

The benefit of having activist data from both a rally and a convention allows one to compare the different types of activists mobilized. Comparing the demographics reveals age is the primary difference between the respective activist populations. Fitting with Walgrave, Rucht, and Aelst (2010) who found protestors trend younger, better educated, and male, tea party protestors in Washington DC also trended younger (and were also male and highly educated). Fully 21 percent of tea party tax day protestors were under 35, compared to 12 percent of convention activists. Despite being more youthful, educational attainment was roughly the same between the protestors and convention attendees.

To identify who of the potential pool of tea party sympathizers became activated I use demographic data from an April 2010 CBS/*New York Times* national telephone survey to identify the demographics of tea party sympathizers as a measure of activists' "mobilization potential." Comparing activists with national sympathizers will reveal mobilization "deficits" and "surpluses" between the two groups.

As would be expected, differential resources highlights the primary difference between activists and the mobilization pool. In fact, activists are more than 20 points more likely than sympathizers to have obtained a college degree, and 20 points more likely to have annual incomes above \$100,000.

Activists were not particularly different from the potential pool across race, gender, and religiosity. This suggests that religious congregations did not necessarily disproportionately mobilize tea party activists as they may have done for religious conservatives in the past (see Cohen 2006).

Activist Issue Attitudes and Priorities

The two surveys confirmed activists to be skeptical of government, greatly concerned about economic issues, to believe individuals direct their success, and to be frustrated with both political parties (See Appendix F).

Nearly every activist surveyed (95-99 percent) believed the less government the better, that the free market can handle problems without government being involved, that government is doing too many things better left to individuals and businesses, and that government should prioritize cutting taxes and spending over ensuring vital services are fully funded.

Similar to their attitudes toward government, fully 97 percent of activists agreed that people get ahead by their own hard work, while only 3 percent thought that “lucky breaks or help from other people are more important.” Similarly in national polls, tea party sympathizers are significantly more likely than non-supporters to say “most people who want to get ahead can make it if they’re willing to work hard” (78% v. 56%, (Reason Foundation/Princeton 2013a)).

When asked which of several goals were the two most important for the tea party, coming more than 20 points above the rest activists identified “restore respect for the Constitution” (68%) and “reduce federal spending and the national debt” (62%). These goals further confirm the explicit articulated goals documented in Chapter 4. In fact, these ranked higher than to “stop the country’s slide toward socialism” (41%) and more than 50 points higher than to change the political culture in Washington, send a message to the political parties, or a take-over of the Republican Party.

In both surveys activists stated their dissatisfaction with both political parties, including the Republican Party that they are more inclined to vote for. Majorities in both surveys said

neither party could fix government. When asked which party best represented the tea party, the Libertarian Party actually beat out the GOP by 7 points.

Issue Salience

Both activist surveys asked respondents to rate their level of concern or anger across a number of economic, government, cultural, social, and national security related issues. Doing so allows one to analyze the relative issue salience among the activists. Both surveys used similar question construction except that the DC Protest survey asked respondents to use a scale of 1 to 5 to rate how “angry” they were across 22 issues, while the VA Convention survey asked how “concerned” they were across 17 issues. The results suggest asking about level of anger elicits less extreme responses than about level of concern. For instance, the average response on the VA Survey asking about “concern” was 6 percent higher (.24 points) than the DC Protest survey asking about “anger” across the same issues.

Table 5.2 displays the average response and standard deviation for all of the issues for all activists. Activists consistently rated issues related to the size of government and economics as top priorities across both surveys. Cutting the national debt ranked first on both surveys, and the top ten issues for both surveys included the Affordable Care Act passed in 2010, reducing the size of government, government “intrusion” into personal lives, the bailouts of private industry, the economic stimulus package, earmarks, and taxation.

Notably, while some tea party members say the “tea” in tea party stands for “**T**axed **E**nough **A**lready,” activists actually rated taxation toward the bottom of the top ten list. Instead, government transfer activities, such as spending, the stimulus, and bailouts, ranked relatively higher than taxation. By transfer activities I mean more than conventional income redistribution,

but the range of activities where government transfers resources including to private business, localities, and individuals, as discussed in Chapter 4.

Table 5.2
Tea Party Activists' Ranked Issue Concerns

October 2010 Virginia Tea Party Convention Survey			
<i>On a scale of 1 to 5 where "1" indicates not at all concerned and "5" indicates extremely concerned, how concerned are you about each of the following?</i>			
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Issue Type
1 Cutting federal government spending and the national debt	4.89	0.52	Economic/Govt Size
2 Recently passed health care reform	4.85	0.59	Economic/Govt Size
3 Reducing the size of government	4.80	0.62	Economic/Govt Size
4 Government intrusion into personal lives	4.79	0.62	Economic/Govt Size
5 The economic stimulus packaged passed by Congress	4.76	0.60	Economic/Govt Size
6 Government bailouts	4.75	0.63	Economic/Govt Size
7 Proposals granting legal status to illegal immigrants	4.60	0.93	Cultural/Economic
8 Current levels of taxation	4.53	0.76	Economic/Govt Size
9 Concessionally earmarks	4.50	0.86	Economic/Govt Size
10 Moral direction of our country	4.35	1.05	Social
11 The influence of special interests	4.23	1.01	Economic/Govt Size
12 Obama's handling of the wars in Afghanistan & Iraq	4.23	1.00	Foreign Policy
13 Outsourcing of American jobs	4.11	1.20	Economic/Cultural
14 The number of abortions performed each year	3.93	1.36	Social
15 The planned building of the Mosque in NYC	3.90	1.36	Cultural
16 Granting same-sex couples the right to marry	3.59	1.54	Social
17 Federal govt interference with state medical marijuana laws	3.34	1.46	Social/Govt
April 2010 Washington DC Tax Day Tea Party Protest			
<i>On a scale of 1 to 5 where "1" is not at all angry and "5" is extremely angry, how angry are you about each of the following?</i>			
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Issue Type
1 The growing national debt	4.60	0.87	Economic/Govt Size
2 Government intrusion into personal lives	4.54	0.93	Economic/Govt Size
3 Govt bailouts of private industry	4.51	0.87	Economic/Govt Size
4 Recently passed healthcare reform	4.45	1.19	Economic/Govt Size
5 The rate of growth of government	4.43	1.06	Economic/Govt Size
6 Politicians in Washington DC	4.39	0.87	Govt
7 Congressional earmarks	4.37	0.99	Economic/Govt Size
8 Economic stimulus	4.34	1.12	Economic/Govt Size
9 The influence of special interests in Washington	4.34	0.93	Economic/Govt Size
10 Current levels of taxation	4.28	1.09	Economic/Govt Size
11 The number of fraudulent/frivolous lawsuits	4.22	1.04	Govt
12 Granting legal status to illegal aliens	4.21	1.26	Cultural/Economic
13 Restrictions on legal use of guns and firearms	4.17	1.28	Guns
14 Environmentalist blocking domestic energy exploration	4.15	1.23	Environment
15 Plans to try terrorists in civil courts	4.03	1.37	National Security
16 The moral direction of the country	4.00	1.26	Social
17 Outsourcing of American Jobs	3.83	1.23	Economic/Cultural
18 # of Abortions	3.76	1.52	Social
19 State govt political leadership	3.52	1.47	Govt
20 Growing Competition from China	3.51	1.30	International Affairs
21 Obama's handling of the wars in Afghanistan & Iraq	3.43	1.26	Foreign Policy
22 Legalizing Same-Sex Marriage	3.24	1.59	Social

Issues ranked lower on the respective lists included cultural, social, and foreign policy issues such as legalizing marriage for same-sex couples, abortion, the planned building of the Islamic Cultural Center in New York City, Obama's handling of foreign policy, and job outsourcing. Moreover, these lower ranked issues had standard deviations more than twice as large as the fiscal issues' standard deviations. This indicates far more disagreement on social, cultural, and foreign policy issues compared to fiscal issues among activists, and comports with the divide observed in my qualitative interviews.

The Tea Party Coalition

Given the high standard deviations on non-economic issues coupled with the activist ideological divide I observed in my interviews, I next determine if there are clusters of activists similar to the groups found in Chapter 3. While questions on racial attitudes are not available, I use the economic, social, cultural, and security issue questions to determine if there is a libertarian/socially conservative divide.

Method

To investigate this, I use a method similar to Maddox and Lilie (1984) and Boaz and Kirby (2006) in which they use a battery of screening questions about the abstract role of government in economic and social regulation respectively to glean ideological groups. These are intended to map on to both the left/right economic and authoritarian/libertarian dimensions respectively (see Stenner 2009). However, instead of using a screening method, I run kmeans cluster analyses, using the Euclidean distance measure, of questions about the role of government asked on both surveys. The benefit of using kmeans cluster analysis is to allow groups of likeminded respondents to naturally emerge. Both surveys included a question asking

if government should have a role in promoting traditional values and had similar questions about government's size and economic involvement:

Protest Survey (1) Which comes closer to your own view: Government is trying to do too many things that should be left to individuals and businesses; or, Government should do more to solve our country's problems. (2) Which comes closer to your own view: Government should promote traditional family values in our society; or, Government should not promote any particular set of values. (3) Which ONE do you think should be a more important priority for the federal government: To cut taxes and spending; or, To ensure that vital services like education and public safety are fully funded.

Convention Survey (1) Which of these statements comes closest to your own views? The less government the better; or, There are more things that government should be doing (2) Which of these statements comes closest to your own views? We need a strong government to handle today's complex economic problems; or, The free market can handle these problems without government being involved. (3) Which of these statements comes closest to your own views? The government should promote traditional values in our society; or, The government should not favor any particular set of values.

Results

Cluster analyses of both activist surveys respectively identified remarkably similar clusters confirming the libertarian/authoritarian divide and economic unity observed in the qualitative interviews. Across both activist surveys and comports with my interviewee's own observations, slightly more than half leaned more traditionally conservative while slightly less than half leaned libertarian.

A two-cluster kmeans model best fit the Virginia convention activists with Cluster 1 comprising 52 percent of the activists being primarily traditional conservatives, and Cluster 2 comprising 48 percent who were socially moderate or more libertarian leaning (see Figure 5.1). Nearly 99 percent of both groups agreed the less government the better and that the free market can better solve complex economic problems rather than a strong government. However, Cluster 1 felt government should promote traditional values in society and Cluster 2 felt government should not favor any particular set of values. Moreover, Cluster 2 was more than 20 more likely than Cluster 1 to say people should be more tolerant of those with different moral standards (62 vs. 39 percent). (See Appendix F).

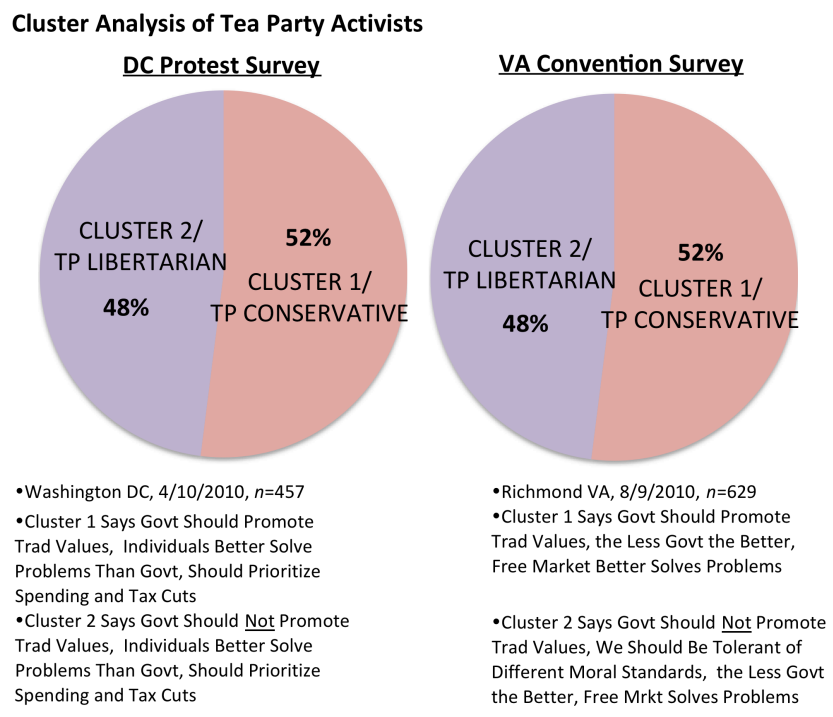
A kmeans cluster analysis of the DC protest activists indicated *three* separate groups in attendance. These three groups included the same two groups found in the convention activist survey in roughly the same proportion, but also a third group of young, liberal, pro-government spectators— 11 percent of the survey.

The analysis of DC protestors in this chapter has excluded the third group of pro-government spectators because the inclusion of this third group in the entrance poll was likely unintentional. They were the only cluster to say government should do *more* to solve problems and prioritize funding education and public safety over spending cuts. Moreover, 78 percent had voted for Barack Obama (compared to less than 5 percent of the other clusters) and 67 percent identified as Democrats (compared to less than 5 percent of the other respondents). They disagreed with the other two clusters on virtually every question asked on the survey. It's understandable how these respondents may have been inadvertently surveyed. Activists held the protest outside at the Washington Monument, and survey administrators could not ensure that non-protesters did not wander into the geographical area being surveyed. For these reasons, I make the assumption that Cluster 3 protest respondents were not conscious participants of the tea party protest and have excluded them from the activist analyses.

It is notable how abstract questions about government's role could so effectively cluster groups such that its clustering extends to voting behavior, partisanship, and specific issue attitudes. This suggests that attitudes toward government are emblematic of an individual's many other values and beliefs. Furthermore, this implies that when limited space is available on a survey, asking high-level questions about government's role may be an efficient method to glean ideological groups.

Constraining the DC protest sample to the two tea party clusters now mirrors the VA convention survey clusters. Cluster 1 includes traditional conservatives again comprising 52 percent and the libertarian-leaningers with 48 percent comprise Cluster 2 (See Figure 5.1). Like the convention survey, traditional conservative and libertarian leaning clusters both feel government is doing too many things and that it should prioritize cutting spending and taxes over funding vital services like education and public safety. However, Cluster 2 libertarian leaning protestors say government should not promote a particular values set while Cluster 1 conservatives say government should promote traditional values. (See Appendix F).

Figure 5.1
Tea Party Groups Discovered Through Kmeans Cluster Analysis:
DC Protest Activist Survey and Virginia Tea Party Convention Activist Survey



Comparing demographics between the two clusters across both surveys (found in Appendix G), reveals that libertarian leaning tea party activists differ from conservative tea party activists in being slightly more male, less likely to attend church regularly, and far less

Republican. Furthermore, in both surveys, libertarian leaners were roughly 20 points more likely and well over 50 percent to say “neither” political party could be trusted to reform and fix government.

Issue Priorities of Tea Party Clusters

Comparing relative issue salience across the two tea party clusters in both surveys reveals both groups rated economics higher than non-economic issues. However, comparisons of means tests find that while both clusters rated economic and government issues equally high, they statistically diverged on social, cultural and foreign policy related issues. Figure 5.2 and the associated Table 5.3 display the mean level of concern or anger (between 1-5) across economic, cultural/social, and foreign policy related issues for both traditionally conservative and libertarian leaning activists from both surveys respectively. Moving from the inner to the outer circles indicates an increasing level of concern or anger for each respective issue.

Notably, each respective cluster had similarly ranked preferences between the protest and convention surveys, even though they were conducted six months apart, and the protest survey included several additional issues. This indicates some stability and external validity of ordered preferences.

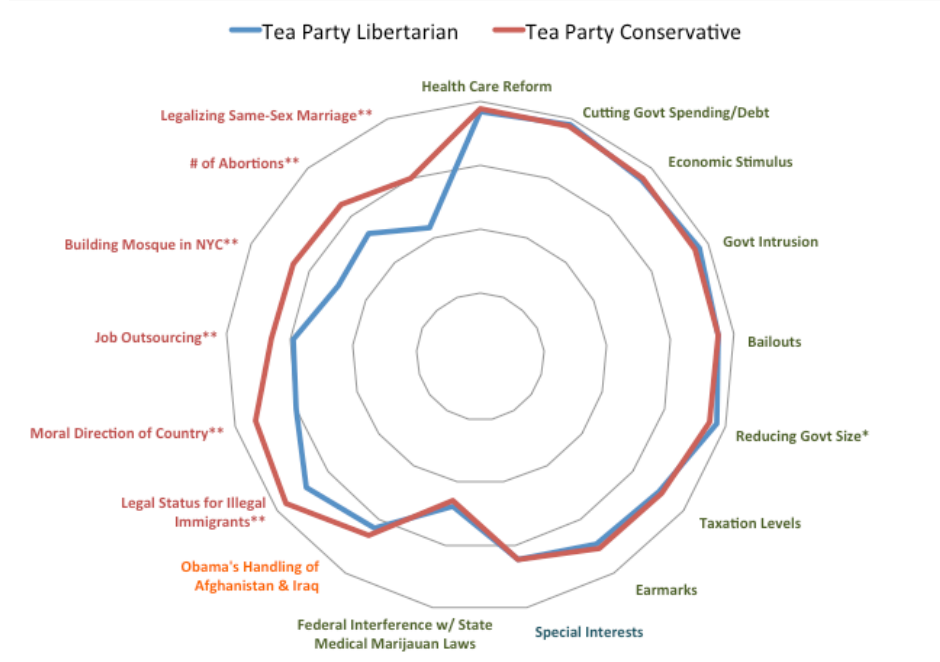
Economics/Government Comparison of means tests reveals that in the VA convention survey both clusters equally rated the issues tea partiers say they care most about, including cutting government spending and the debt, the health care reform law, the economic stimulus package, the bailouts, taxation, earmarks, and government “intrusion.” However, libertarian leaning activists rated reducing government size statistically higher than conservatives. Among DC protest activists, there were significant albeit small differences on health care, bailouts, the

stimulus, earmarks, blocking domestic energy exploration, and government intrusion.⁶⁴ However, the two were statistically similar in their anger over the national debt, reducing the size of government, and taxation levels. Creating an index averaging responses to economics and government size questions ($M = 4.55, SD = .52, a = .78$) finds no statistically significant difference in the convention data, $t(564) = .73, p < .47$, but a significant difference in the protest data ($M = 4.71, SD = .44, a = .93$) $t(375) = 2.03, p < .04$. The scale was coded such that higher values reflect higher levels of concern for the issue (and also more conservative issue positions). Appendix H includes items used to construct issue indices.

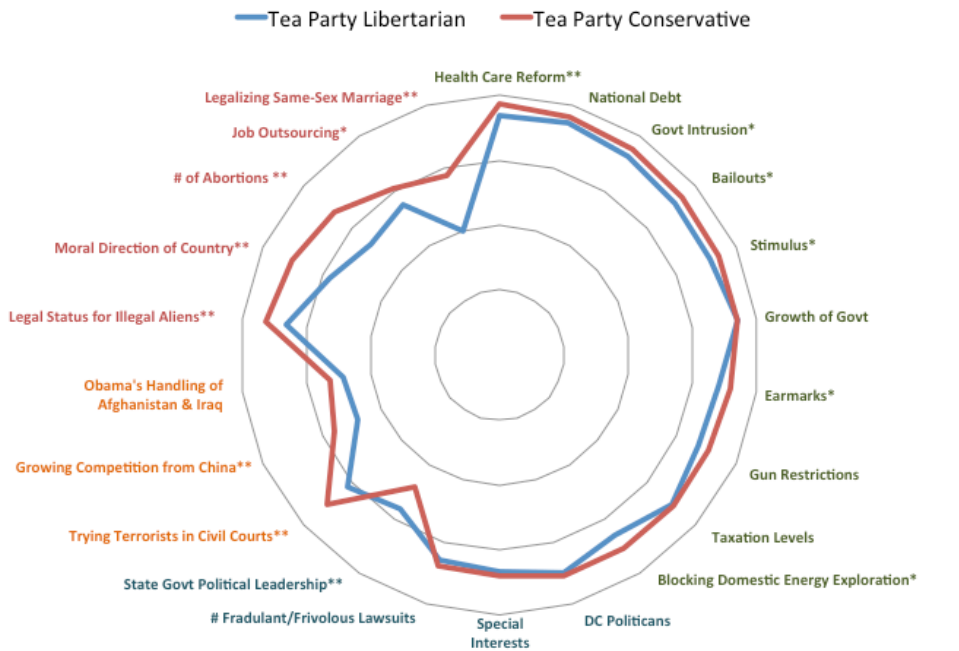
Social and Cultural The convention and protest surveys found that across issues with a cultural or social component, libertarians were statistically and substantially less concerned, including across legalizing same-sex marriage, providing legal status to unauthorized immigrants, the building of the Islamic Cultural Center in New York, the number of abortions, and the moral direction of the country. Creating an index averaging responses across social and cultural questions finds statistically significant differences across both convention ($M = 4.38, SD = .66, a = .82$), $t(564) = 8.43, p < .00$ and protest surveys ($M = 4.24, SD = .66, a = .84$), $t(373) = 6.81, p < .00$). The scale was coded such that higher values reflect higher levels of concern for the issue (and also more conservative issue positions).

⁶⁴ Some of these differences in the DC protest survey may be due to question wording effects. Conservatives were more likely than libertarians to provide higher ratings on the DC survey asking about *level of anger*. However on the VA convention survey both conservatives and libertarians provided similar *levels of concern* across issues.

Figure 5.2
Tea Party Libertarians' and Conservatives' Average Level of Concern Across Issues
Virginia Tea Party Convention Survey



Washington D.C. Tax Day Tea Party Protest



Note: Figure displays mean level of concern or anger (between 1-5) across economic, cultural/social, and foreign policy related issues for both traditionally conservative and libertarian leaning activists from both the VA convention and DC protest activist surveys. Moving from the inner to the outer circles indicates an increasing level of concern or anger for each respective issue. Comparison of means test ** $p < .01$ * $p < .05$, Green: Economic/Govt Size related issues, Blue: Governance Issues, Orange: Foreign Policy/International Relations related issues, Red: Social and Cultural related issues.

Foreign Policy Again on foreign policy and international related issues, libertarian leaning tea partiers were significantly and substantially less concerned about trying terrorists in civil courts and growing competition from China. Both groups were statistically similar and less concerned about President Obama’s handling of Afghanistan and Iraq. Only the protest survey included more than one foreign policy related question, consequently only one index was created ($M = 3.98, SD = .74, a = .60$). Doing so found tea party libertarians were significantly less angry than conservatives on foreign policy related issues, $t(373)=3.82, p < .00$. The scale was coded such that higher values reflect higher levels of concern for the issue (and also more conservative issue positions).

Table 5.3
Top Ranked Issue Concerns of Activist Tea Party Clusters

Virginia Convention Survey					
Libertarian Leaners Mean	M	SD	Conservative Leaners Mean	M	SD
1 Govt Spending/Debt	4.91	0.42	1 Health Care Refrom	4.89	0.53
2 Govt Size*	4.86	0.46	2 Govt Spending/Debt	4.88	0.59
3 Govt Intrusion	4.84	0.47	3 Legal Status for Illegal Immigrants**	4.80	0.59
4 Health Care Refrom	4.84	0.60	4 Stimulus	4.79	0.59
5 Bailouts	4.75	0.60	5 Govt Intrusion	4.76	0.69
6 Stimulus	4.75	0.57	6 Bailouts	4.76	0.64
7 Taxation Levels	4.51	0.90	7 Govt Size*	4.75	0.71
8 Earmarks	4.45	0.90	8 Moral Direction of Country	4.67	0.72
9 Legal Status for Illegal Immigrants**	4.41	1.12	9 Taxation Levels	4.56	0.82
10 Special Interests	4.23	1.02	10 Earmarks	4.55	0.82
DC Protest Survey					
Libertarian Leaners Mean	M	SD	Conservative Leaners Mean	M	SD
1 National Debt	4.73	0.60	1 Health Care Refrom**	4.86	0.47
2 Growth of Govt	4.72	0.62	2 National Debt	4.82	0.56
3 Health Care Reform**	4.70	0.77	3 Govt Intrusion*	4.78	0.58
4 Govt Intrusion*	4.65	0.71	4 Bailouts*	4.73	0.62
5 Bailouts*	4.59	0.75	5 Stimulus*	4.71	0.59
6 Stimulus*	4.56	0.81	6 Growth of Govt	4.70	0.70
7 Taxation Levels	4.52	0.79	7 Legal Status for Illegal Immigrants**	4.64	0.76
8 DC Politicians	4.49	0.76	8 Earmarks*	4.58	0.78
9 Earmarks*	4.40	1.00	9 Gun Restrictions	4.55	0.82
10 Gun Restrictions	4.37	1.02	10 Taxation Levels	4.55	0.71

Note: Comparison of means test ** p<.01 * p<.05

Predicting Tea Party Cluster Membership

Using the three issue indices, economic, social/cultural, and foreign policy, I next run a regression model to determine how these indices predict membership in the two tea party clusters. I run a logit regression coding the dependent variable as 1 for tea party activists in the libertarian cluster and 0 for tea party activists in the conservative cluster. Since only the DC protest survey included sufficient foreign policy items to construct an index, I constrain the analysis to that survey.

Table 5.4 shows the results of the logit regression model predicting being a libertarian-leaning tea party activist among DC tea party protestors. I first run a model with the economic and foreign policy indices, a separate model with economic and social/cultural indices, and a third model with all three. All models include demographic controls.

The model finds that the economic issue index does not significantly predict tea party libertarians from tea party conservatives. However, the social/cultural index has a statistically significant and negative relationship with being a tea party libertarian activist. The foreign policy issue index also has a statistically significant negative coefficient in the model that excludes the social/cultural issue index. However, once social issues are included, the foreign policy coefficient loses statistical significance.

Predicted probability plots with associated rug plots (Figure 5.3, Model 1) shows how the probability of being a libertarian-leaning tea party activist changes as one moves from the min to max values (0 to 1) for the economic issues index and the foreign policy issues index respectively. The slopes in the predicted probability plots visually demonstrate that the probability of being a libertarian leaning activist declines considerably as one expresses more conservative foreign policy concerns. However, economic issue concerns do not distinguish tea

party libertarians. Similarly, Figure 5.3 Model 2 shows that the probability of being a libertarian leaning activist declines significantly as one becomes more concerned about social issues. While the economic index has a slight upward slope, the regression model failed to detect a significant relationship. In sum, economic policy positions do not distinguish activists, but security and social issues do distinguish activist groups.

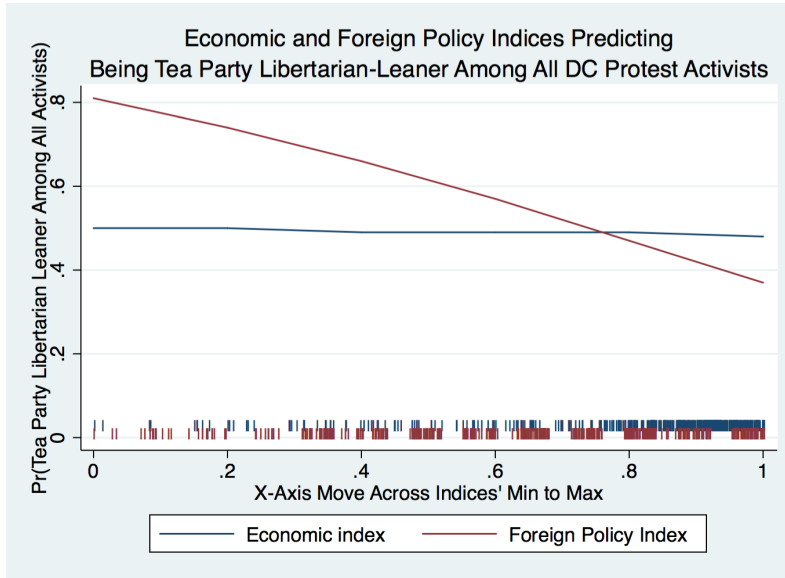
Table 5.4
Predicting Tea Party Cluster Membership Among DC Activists:
Regressions on Economic, Social, and Foreign Policy Issue Concern Indices

	1	2	3
<i>Logit Regression</i> <i>1=TP Libertarian</i> <i>0=TP Conservative</i>	TP Libertarians Among DC Activists	TP Libertarians Among DC Activists	TP Libertarians Among DC Activists
Economic Level of Concern Index	-0.0136 (0.05)	0.221 (0.83)	0.198 (0.71)
Social/Cultural Level of Concern Index		-0.962*** (5.21)	-0.994*** (4.64)
Foreign Policy Level of Concern Index	-0.417** (2.68)		0.0573 (0.30)
Male	0.0853 (0.37)	0.0685 (0.29)	0.0783 (0.33)
Age	-0.00331 (0.04)	0.0628 (0.75)	0.0597 (0.71)
Education	-0.303** (2.59)	-0.420*** (3.38)	-0.417*** (3.34)
Income	0.0313 (0.45)	0.0383 (0.55)	0.0363 (0.52)
Church Attendance	0.283*** (3.30)	0.0824 (0.86)	0.0772 (0.79)
Constant	1.681 (1.33)	3.526** (2.60)	3.561** (2.61)
N	363	363	363

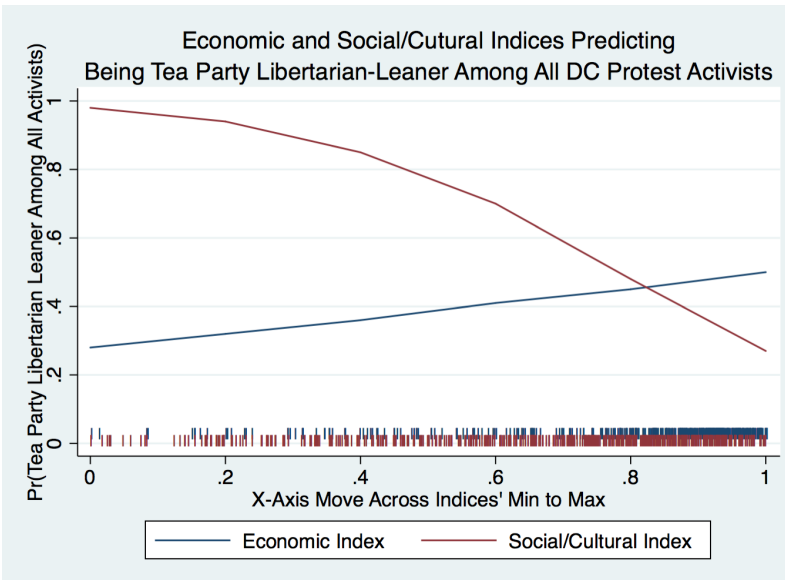
Source: TargetPoint DC Tax Day Tea Party Protest; Logit Regression, t statistics in parentheses, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001; Economic, Social/Cultural, and Foreign Policy Level of Concern indices are coded from low level of concern about each set of issues to high level of concern for each set of issues.

Figure 5.3
Predicted Probability of Being a Tea Party Libertarian
Among All DC Tea Party Protest Activists

Model 1



Model 2



Note: Random noise was added to the rug plots to enhance readers' ability to observe frequency of responses. Without random noise, the responses would be on top of each other.

Discussion

In this chapter I have aimed to demonstrate that while the tea party is united in holding conservative economic issue positions, the movement is divided over non-economic issues. I have shown this using qualitative interviews and quantitative analysis of activist surveys. Doing so indicates opinion differences are not randomly distributed but that those who moderate on foreign policy issues also tend to moderate on social and cultural issues. The cluster analyses recovered the two groups I observed in qualitative interviews, and the libertarian and socially conservative groups identified in Chapter 3. The first manifested a libertarian disposition, exhibiting lower levels of concern about immigration, gay marriage, religion, and foreign policy but high levels of concern over the size of government, government spending, the debt, bailouts, and the stimulus. The latter group represented a traditionally conservative group who was also very concerned about fiscal matters and government economic intervention, but was also anxious about unauthorized immigration, and the moral direction of the country. Although both groups rated foreign policy as a lower priority concern, the libertarian group was less concerned about international competition and trying terrorists in civil courts compared to conservatives. Statistical tests confirm that these differences are meaningful and significant and likely do present a considerable conflict to tea party members trying to hold together a heterogeneous coalition.

These results further imply that the central thrust of the movement is a preference for limited government in economic affairs because it is not only activists' top concern but also is a primary issue binding the activist factions together.

Chapter 6:

Deconstructing Fiscal Conservatism: Proportionality, Liberty, Individualism, and Race

In the previous five chapters, I have argued that the tea party is primarily an economic protest movement that has attracted a coalition of dissimilar types, but that preference for limited government is the most common impulse of the movement. I have further investigated what limited government means to tea party activists. Based on activist interviews, I have shown that tea partiers make use of libertarian rhetoric about defending individual liberty and freedom from activist government. However, I demonstrated that when tea party supporters explained their grievances with activist government, they did so in terms of their notion of fairness: proportional justice. In consequence, I have argued that tea partiers' demand for limited government is based on their belief in proportionality and that proportionality is the main motive for the movement.

Until now, however, I have presented only qualitative evidence for the importance of the value of proportionality. The limitation of this evidence is that one cannot control for competing explanations when relying on qualitative evidence. Hence in this chapter, I turn to quantitative measures of proportionality. The purpose is not to advance a major new argument, but to provide strong evidence that the arguments I have already presented are sound. I have organized this work into three different studies. In Study 1, I show that contrary to the claims of many tea partiers, proportionality is more important than belief in liberty as a motive of tea party involvement. In Study 2, I show that economic individualism, a measure which is used by much existing research to capture the principled impulse underlying support for limited government, pales in explanatory power when put head-to-head with proportionality. Finally, in Study 3, I

show that proportionality remains the strongest and most consistent predictor of tea party support and their desire for limited government, even after taking into account racial attitudes.

Study 1: Proportionality versus Liberty

Tea partiers say their demand for limited government ultimately stems from belief in individual liberty. However, as I explained in Chapter 1, researchers have found strains of authoritarianism in the movement. Moreover, national surveys find that more than half of tea partiers both favor using government action to promote traditional values in society (56%) and oppose legalizing marijuana (54%) (Arceneaux and Micholson 2012, Perrin et al. 2011, Reason Foundation/Princeton 2014b, 2013a). These findings do not seem consistent with tea partiers' claims about paramount commitment to individual liberty. But if preference for limited government is not primarily about maximizing liberty, what does limited government mean to tea partiers?

As noted in Chapter 1, general values like freedom can take on different meanings in different groups. For instance, Rokeach (1973) found both capitalists and socialists claimed a preference for freedom but had different conceptions in mind. I have taken a similar position, contending in Chapter 4 that many tea party activists do not explain their motivations clearly: when they invoke liberty concerns in their drive to constrain government, they are worrying about government violations of the proportionality principle, which they consider unjust. As one activist put it, "Justice and liberty are two sides of the same coin."

Moral Foundations Theory

In this first study, I use Moral Foundations Theory (MFT), first proposed by Jonathan Haidt and Craig Joseph and widely used within social psychology, as a framework for testing

whether liberty or proportional justice is the more important motive for tea party attitudes. I introduced MFT in Chapter 1 and will further develop it here.

MFT holds that through evolution humans developed universal psychological systems that give rise to culturally specific moralities. These systems guide *moral intuitions*, which are flashes of approval or disapproval in reaction to situations involving other people. Some cultures and individuals have a heightened sensitivity to particular moral intuitions compared to others, and these sensitivities are believed to shape moral judgment.

MFT has identified six *moral foundations* or value-based sensitivities, which include Care/Harm, Proportionality/Cheating, Liberty/Oppression, Loyalty/Betrayal, Authority/Subversion, and Sanctity/Degradation (Haidt and Graham 2007, Graham et al. 2011, Haidt 2012). The three latter foundations are often called the “binding foundations” because they promote group-oriented values that help individuals come together to form cohesive units. It should be noted that these three “binding foundations” are highly correlated, and exploratory factor analyses have found they may reasonably load on either a single factor or multiple factors (Graham et al. 2011). These three foundations are also predictive of socially conservative beliefs (Koleva et al. 2012). The Care/Harm foundation is connected with feelings of empathy, and disproportionately informs liberal moral judgments, whereas the binding foundations disproportionately inform conservatives’ judgments (Graham, Haidt, and Nosek 2009, Haidt and Graham 2007).

The Six Moral Foundations	
Binding Foundations	1. Care/Harm
	2. Proportionality/Cheating
	3. Liberty/Oppression
	4. Loyalty/Betrayal
	5. Authority/Subversion
	6. Sanctity/Degradation

Each of these foundations operates like an individual “taste bud,” and nearly all human beings are sensitive to these foundations, although to varying degrees. The degree to which each individual is sensitive to each moral foundation undergirds that individual’s political attitudes.

Moral Foundations Theory, in combination with measures that have been developed as part of the MFT research program, provide a basis to quantitatively test whether tea partiers more strongly endorse proportionality or liberty concerns, and to identify what other value-based sensitivities may be relevant to their moral judgments.

The Social Psychology Lens

There are several reasons why MFT in social psychology may offer a valuable lens to further investigate the underlying values held by tea party movement supporters.

First, MFT assumes that even political laypersons have moral passions or intuitions that inform their judgments about what is right and wrong and draw them to a particular perspective of politics. Indeed, tea partiers often used moralized language such as—“good,” “bad,” “right,” and “wrong,”—suggesting their concerns were grounded in moral passion. Research has shown that even mundane economic issues like government budgets and collective bargaining can be moralized issues (Ryan 2013b, Haidt 2012, Iyer et al. 2011).

Second, MFT assumes a social intuitionist model, rather than a rationalist model, of moral judgment (Haidt 2001).⁶⁵ The social intuitionist model assumes that individuals make quick flash judgments, without necessarily even being aware of the mental processes having led to them, and form post hoc justifications to support their intuition-formed conclusions. Similarly, when tea partiers explained their view of government, proportionality concerns seemed to inform their judgments first, but they often used libertarian rhetoric to justify their views, after the fact.

⁶⁵ This comports with Converse (1964) that most of the mass public lacks logical ideological constraint.

Racial anxieties could also inform their judgments about government first, and libertarian platitudes used as a justification after the fact. For some tea partiers, it is also possible that concerns about liberty were truly part of their initial gut instinct.

Third, MFT assumes an extended moral domain of innately prepared value-based sensitivities that has already identified proportionality and liberty as moral foundations (Graham et al. 2011, Haidt 2012). This offers a theoretical paradigm through which to empirically test if proportionality or liberty is a stronger pulse in the movement. Further, it may also reveal what other values may inform their moral judgments. MFT has already found significant differences between liberals and conservatives (Haidt and Graham 2007, Graham, Haidt, and Nosek 2009, Haidt, Graham, and Joseph 2009), which imply that these values may also help distinguish tea partiers from non-supporters.

Fourth, MFT has the potential to provide coherence across political opinions that may otherwise appear contradictory. For instance, Koleva et al. (2012) write, “MFT may be useful in illuminating why some positions go together, even when on the surface they seem to contradict each other” (p. 9). While tea partiers may have appeared inconsistent in their endorsement of individual liberty, they may be more consistent when evaluated according to a different underlying value like proportionality. Research has shown that people sometimes have difficulty explaining why they believe something but that does not imply their feelings are any less genuine (Haidt and Hersh 2001, Haidt and Kesebir 2010). Indeed, while nearly all tea party activists interviewed expressed a strong desire for individuals to succeed or fail according to their own decisions and production, many fully admitted they didn’t know *why* they felt that way. Instead they would explain that their views were informed by “just a sense of fairness,” a “gut feeling,” or “just morals.”

Fifth, MFT allows for multiple values to inform moral evaluations. Koleva et al. (2012) write that the “moral concern that is most visible on the surface may not be the only one at work” (p. 5). If a desire for liberty does inform tea partiers’ judgments, particularly among libertarian leaning tea partiers, MFT allows for both liberty and other values to matter.

Method

Using Moral Foundations Theory and its associated measures, I worked with Jonathan Haidt to field a survey instrument, a version of the Moral Foundations Questionnaire (MFQ), containing multiple items measuring endorsement of each of the six moral foundations, including proportionality and liberty. Survey items measuring each respective foundation were averaged into scales and standardized to measure endorsement of each value. The survey also included questions about the proper role of government, demographics, and various types of political identifications including tea party support.

Participants and Procedure

We fielded the survey at YourMorals.org, a website that administers research surveys maintained by Jonathan Haidt and other social psychologists. The site attracts a variety of persons to participate, including liberals, moderates, conservatives, and libertarians.

To supplement regular traffic on the YourMorals site, we partnered with FreedomWorks, one of the largest tea party affiliate organizations (Gardner 2010), to administer the same survey to tea party activists. FreedomWorks sent an email inviting participation in the survey to three randomly selected cross-sections of their email mailing list between September and October 2012. Those who did not initially respond were sent one follow-up email. Each email included a unique web link to the survey hosted at YourMorals.org. FreedomWorks also posted a link to the survey on the FreedomWorks Facebook page. The unique web link in both the email and on the

Facebook page identified if survey respondents were directed to YourMorals.org by the FreedomWorks email.

Altogether, the FreedomWorks solicitation attracted 12,489 responses from tea party supporters and 519 responses from non-supporters.⁶⁶ The standard YourMorals survey collected 6,930 non-tea party responses and 2,443 tea party responses. The surveys combined also captured 985 conservatives who did not support the tea party movement.

The regular YourMorals sample collected responses disproportionately from self-identified liberals (65%). Moreover, the self-identified tea party supporters who took the survey through the routine YourMorals data collection rather than the FreedomWorks solicitation were less conservative (53% YM versus 88% FMWK) and more libertarian (35% YM versus 10% FMWK). (See Appendix I for demographic comparison). For these reasons, I present results from both samples separately.

These samples constitute convenience rather than representative samples. Even the tea party sample enlisted through FreedomWorks is a convenience rather than a representative sample of all tea partiers. The benefit of the FreedomWorks/YourMorals dataset is that it provides a very large sample of engaged tea party supporters at low cost. Furthermore, the survey instrument administered online included a comprehensive questionnaire with multiple items per value construct which yields lower measurement error and more accurate self-reports of the unrepresentative sample (see Haidt 2010a, Ansolabehere, Rodden, and James M. Snyder

⁶⁶ Not all FreedomWorks email subscribers and Facebook fans are tea party supporters. For instance, subscribers may include non-tea party conservatives and Republicans who listen to conservative talk radio that has promoted FreedomWorks, or they could be interested liberal, moderate, or conservative spectators who may not agree with the FreedomWorks platform. The non-tea party supporters in the FreedomWorks sample self-identified as follows: 247 conservatives, 87 moderates, and 99 liberals.

2008, Chang and Krosnick 2009).⁶⁷ The comprehensive survey instrument with long multi-item scales administered to such a large sample would be prohibitively expensive to conduct of a nationally representative sample. Nevertheless, to make up for the limitations inherent to convenient samples, Study 2 and 3 will use a nationally representative sample.

Measures

To measure the relevance of each moral foundation in making moral judgments, the MFQ includes questions of two types. The first type measures level of agreement with specific moral statements: “Please read the following sentences and indicate your level of agreement or disagreement.” The second type asks respondents to assess the moral relevance of various statements: “When you decide whether something is right or wrong, to what extent are the following considerations relevant to your thinking?” Respondents answered according to a 6-point Likert scale.

Six items per moral foundation were included on the questionnaire to measure endorsement of each foundation. The standard items were used to measure Care/Harm, Loyalty/Betrayal, Authority/Subversion, and Sanctity/Degradation (See Appendix J). Since survey questions used to measure proportionality and liberty concerns were more recently introduced (see Haidt 2012, pgs. 194-210) exploratory factor analyses were conducted of the six items for proportionality and six items for liberty. Using principal component factor extraction with oblique rotation, I found that some items written to measure these foundations had weak loadings or were related more strongly to another value. In this survey, four items loaded highly

⁶⁷ Chang and Krosnick (2009) found that when comparing nationally representative telephone-administered surveys, nationally representative Internet-administered surveys, and nonprobability Internet-administered surveys, the nonprobability Internet sample yielded more accurate self-reports of the biased sample. Trading off sampling quality for measurement quality can be particularly useful in social psychology research, as Jonathan Haidt (2010a) explains: “psychologists rarely want to know the percentage of Americans who believe X. We’re trying to figure out how our minds work, particularly different kinds of minds.”

and revealed internal consistency for proportionality and three items measuring liberty performed well. To ensure the same number of items was used to construct each moral foundation scale, I used the three highest loading items measuring each moral foundation (see Appendix J).⁶⁸ Each set of three items was then averaged into a scale and standardized into z-scores of the whole sample. Proportionality and liberty items are also shown below:

Proportionality

- The world would be a better place if we let unsuccessful people fail and suffer the consequences
- People who produce more should be rewarded more than those who just tried hard.
- People who are successful have a right to enjoy their wealth as they see fit.

Liberty

- I think everyone should be free to do as they choose so long as they don't infringe on the freedom of others.
- People should be free to do dangerous and self-destructive things, as long as they don't put others at risk.
- Our laws should aim to improve public health, even if that sometimes prevents people from doing what they want to do. (REVERSE SCORED)

Note that the items in the Liberty scale measure attitudes toward liberty outside of the domain of economics. It is possible – perhaps likely – that when tea partiers invoke liberty, they are thinking about liberty in relation to matters of economics, such as freedom from taxes or from government regulation of business. But if the Liberty scale were based on items asking about business or economics, it would risk measuring economics-based attitudes more than, or perhaps in place of, attitudes toward liberty per se. Thus, to determine whether tea partiers' attitudes toward liberty are driving their attitudes about economics, including attitudes toward limited government, we must measure liberty attitudes apart from matters of economics, as the items in this Liberty scale do.

⁶⁸ Exploratory factor analyses using principal component factor extraction were used to identify the top three best performing items per value scale. Factors were rotated using promax (oblique) rotation, allowing them to correlate. Factor analyses confirmed each three-item set measuring endorsement of each moral foundation loaded on one factor, respectively.

Hypotheses

Tea party members maintain that their preference for limited government stems primarily from a commitment to individual liberty. If so, we should find tea partiers rate the Liberty foundation more highly than non-tea party groups. Moreover if, amongst themselves, tea partiers rate the Liberty foundation more highly than the Proportionality foundation, it would provide further indication that liberty is more important than proportionality in informing their moral judgments.

However, if proportionality were the primary impulse of the movement driving their preference for limited government, we would expect activists to endorse the Proportionality foundation more highly than non-tea partiers. We would further expect tea partiers to rate the Proportionality foundation higher than the Liberty foundation.

In earlier chapters I have demonstrated the tea party is a coalition of dissimilar types who share similar views on fiscal issues. Consequently we should expect the moral profiles to vary across the different types of activists but for each group to similarly endorse values related to the central thrust of the movement. If liberty is the movement's central impulse, we should expect heterogeneous tea party groups to equally rate Liberty concerns as relevant to their moral evaluations. If instead proportionality were the movement's central impulse, we would expect the heterogeneous coalition to equally rate Proportionality.

$H_{\text{Tea Party Claim}}$: The tea party is primarily driven by a desire for individual liberty and this is the value motivating their desire for limited government.

$H_{\text{Proportionality}}$: Different groups in the tea party place different weights on liberty and proportionality but proportionality is the value groups tend to share, and this is the value motivating their desire for limited government.

To test these hypotheses I examine the moral profiles of tea partiers compared to non-tea party groups and then examine the moral profiles of clusters of dissimilar tea party groups.

Results

Descriptive Statistics and Marginals

Despite the fact that the FreedomWorks (FMWK) and YourMorals (YM) surveys are non-probability samples, sample demographics are generally similar with tea party sympathizers identified in nationally representative samples. Appendix I shows gender and partisanship are generally similar between tea party activists in the FWWK/YM samples and tea party sympathizers in the national sample. However, the YourMorals sample is slightly less Republican, more libertarian, far less likely to attend church regularly, and considerably younger compared to national sympathizers and the FreedomWorks sample. In contrast, the FreedomWorks sample is similar to national sympathizers across church attendance, age, partisanship and ideology.

Table 6.1 displays the marginals for all 18 MFQ items, which includes each set of three items used to construct scales measuring endorsement of each of the six moral foundations.⁶⁹ Factor loadings are also shown for each item comprising each moral foundation. The proportion of variance explained by the three items for each value is also reported. Scale reliabilities of each set of three items comprising each foundation scale are also shown: Proportionality items (.73) cohere better than Liberty items (.54). Other foundation scales cohere about as well as Proportionality, including Authority (.78), Loyalty (.80), Care (.74), and Sanctity cohered better (.88).

⁶⁹ Factor analyses of newer MFQ items found three items best loaded on Liberty and four on Proportionality. The remaining foundations have six items that perform well. However, to ensure comparable reliability of scales I select the three top performing items for each foundation to ensure each scale is derived using the same number of items.

Table 6.1: Endorsement of Items Measuring Moral Foundations: Tea Party Supporters and Non-Supporters

Moral Foundation	Item Measuring Each Moral Foundation	% Net Agree			Factor Loading	Proportion of Variance	Scale Reliability
		Tea Party	Conservative	Not Tea Party			
Proportionality	People who are successful have a right to enjoy their wealth as they see fit	98%	90%	87%	0.79	0.66	0.73
	People who produce more should be rewarded more than those who just tried hard	90%	71%	66%	0.82		
	The world would be a better place if we let unsuccessful people fail and suffer the consequences.	82%	50%	37%	0.83		
Liberty	I think everyone should be free to do as they choose so long as they dont infringe upon the freedom of others	85%	76%	81%	0.76	0.53	0.54
	People should be free to do dangerous and self-destructive things, as long as they don't put others at risk.	73%	54%	62%	0.81		
	Our laws should aim to improve public health, even if that sometimes prevents people from doing what they want to do. (REV)	64%	37%	30%	0.59		
Authority	Respect for authority is something all children need to learn	95%	95%	91%	0.83	0.69	0.78
	Whether or not an action caused chaos or disorder	87%	82%	78%	0.77		
	Whether or not someone showed a lack of respect for authority	81%	77%	60%	0.89		
Loyalty	Whether or not someone showed a lack of loyalty	83%	80%	68%	0.88	0.72	0.80
	Whether or not someone did something to betray his or her group	81%	79%	72%	0.85		
	Whether or not someones actions showed love for his or her country	87%	66%	43%	0.81		
Sanctity	Whether or not someone violated standards of purity and decency	88%	77%	60%	0.88	0.81	0.88
	Chastity is an important and valuable virtue	88%	72%	52%	0.90		
	Whether or not someone acted in a way that God would approve of	84%	66%	40%	0.92		
Care	Whether or not someone was cruel	92%	90%	91%	0.82	0.66	0.74
	Whether or not someone cared for someone weak or vulnerable	90%	84%	85%	0.82		
	Whether or not someone suffered emotionally	71%	77%	81%	0.79		
	N	14932	985	1019		4143	

Note: FreedomWorks/YourMorals Survey 2012; table reports responses from tea party supporters and non supporters respectively for each survey item measuring endorsement of the six moral foundations. Responses from the 6-point Likert scale have been summarized as follows: responses 1-3 are coded as “net disagree” and 4-6 are coded as “net agree.” Factor scores used principal component factor extraction with oblique rotation.

Notably, among the three items measuring belief in proportionality, the item that most distinguishes tea partiers and non-tea partiers is level of agreement with this statement: “The world would be a better place if we let unsuccessful people fail and suffer the consequences.” Eighty-two percent (82%) of tea partiers agreed with the statement compared to only 18 percent of liberals, 37 percent of moderates, and 50 percent of conservatives who did not support the movement. This is consistent with findings in Chapters 2 and 4, which reported tea partiers’ anger over the bailouts to failing financial institutions and automakers during the 2008 financial crisis, and tea partiers’ more general complaint that government and society were removing the ability to fail and to face the consequences of ones’ actions.

Moral Profiles of Tea Partiers Compared to Non-Tea Partiers

Figure 6.1 graphically compares the moral profiles of tea party supporters and liberals, moderates, and conservatives who do not support the movement. Comparison of means tests were conducted to determine if tea partiers rated any of the six moral foundations significantly more relevant to their moral judgments compared to non-supporter groups. Given the large sample size, most tests achieve statistical significance; however, attention should be given to the size of the difference in means between tea party and non-tea party groups. (Appendix K reports the means, standard deviations, and comparison of means tests results).

The striking difference between tea partiers’ and non-tea party groups’ endorsement of Proportionality is clear. In each statistical comparison in both FreedomWorks and YourMorals samples, except for one⁷⁰, the difference of means and comparison of means t-statistic is largest for Proportionality. This indicates proportionality concerns, rather than liberty concerns, are significantly and substantively more relevant to tea partiers’ moral judgments compared to non-

⁷⁰ In the libertarian-skewed YourMorals sample, the difference in means was slightly higher for the Liberty foundation (.64) than the Proportionality foundation (.57) between tea partiers and non-tea party conservatives.

Figure 6.1a
Moral Profiles: Tea Party Supporters and Non-Supporter Groups
Reporting Mean Z-Scores, Comparison of Means Tests

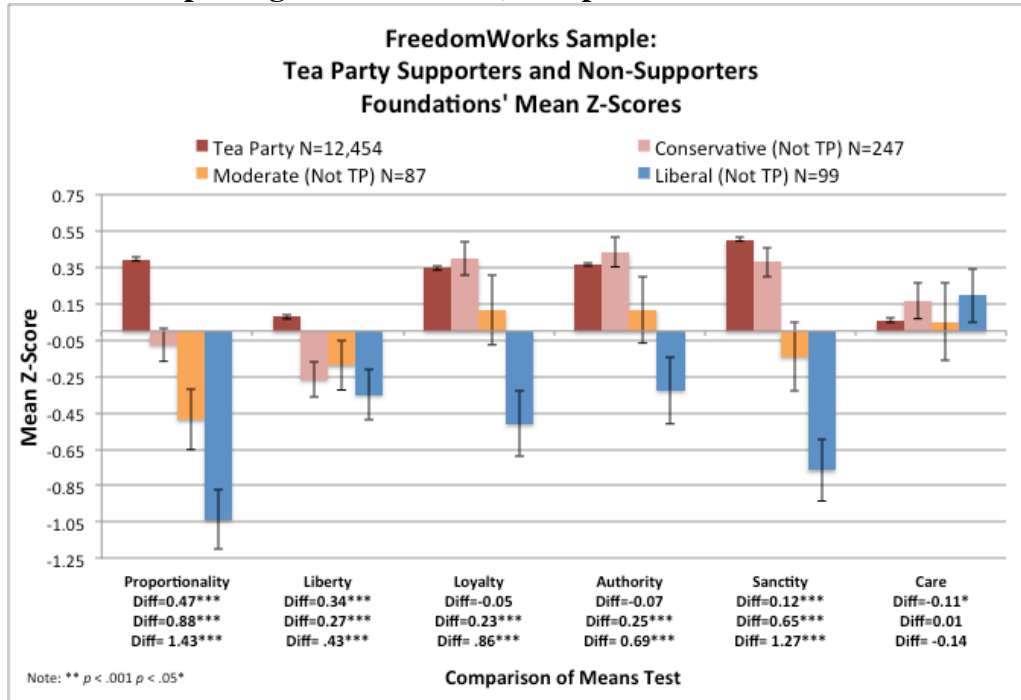
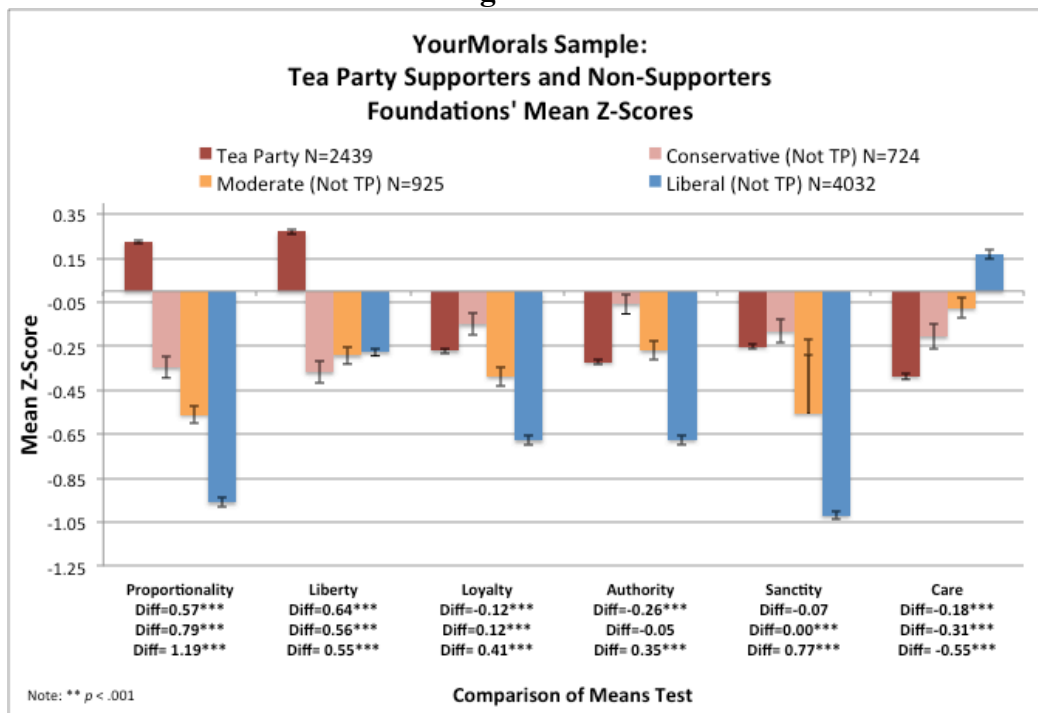


Figure 6.1b



Note: Mean endorsement of each moral foundation among tea party supporters and non-tea party conservatives, moderates, and liberals. Z-scores were calculated from the full sample. Diff= Reports the difference in mean foundation rating, and comparison of means tests results, between tea party and each non-tea party group respectively, starting with conservatives, then moderates, and then liberals who do not support the tea party. Results are shown for FreedomWorks and YourMorals samples separately. Full results found in Appendix K.

tea party groups.⁷¹ Even among conservatives, from which most tea party activists are drawn, proportionality is the value that distinguishes those who support the tea party and those who don't (See Appendix K for complete results).

In the FreedomWorks sample, in addition to Proportionality, tea party activists also highly rated Sanctity, Authority, Loyalty, but only moderately rated Liberty and Care as highly relevant to their moral judgments. In the YourMorals sample, in which tea partiers skewed considerably more libertarian, activists also rated Liberty highly, but not the binding foundations or Care.

These results undermine tea partiers' explicit claim that a desire for liberty is the driving impulse of the movement and the motivation of their preference for limited government. In the FreedomWorks sample, activists rate Proportionality and the binding foundations as more relevant to their moral judgments than Liberty. Although in the YourMorals Sample, activists rate Liberty slightly higher than Proportionality, the sample skews libertarian and is less representative of national sympathizers than the FreedomWorks sample. Furthermore, the difference in means for each moral foundation reveal tea party activists are primarily distinguished from non-supporters in their endorsement of Proportionality rather than in their endorsement of Liberty.

Moral Profiles of Tea Party Conservatives and Tea Party Libertarians

In this section, I set aside the non-tea party respondents of the FMWK/YM samples and focus on differences between different kinds of tea partiers. My aim is to find out whether the differences among types of tea partiers identified in national samples are also present in the

⁷¹ FMWK: (Proportionality: Tea Party M=.39, SD=.51; Non-Tea Party M= -.41, SD=.87; Diff -.80, $t(12966)=-33.49$, $p < 0.001$) (Liberty: Tea Party M:.08, SD=.74; Non-Tea Party M=-.16, SD=.77; Diff=-.24, $t(12969)=-7.12$, $p < .001$). YM: (Proportionality: YM: Tea Party: M=.22, SD=.64; Non-Tea Party: M= -.75, SD=.75; Diff -.98, $t(9352)=-57.27$, $p < .001$) (Liberty: YM: Tea Party: M=.27 SD=.70; Non-Tea Party M=-.22, SD=.64; Diff=-.49, $t(9352)=-32.09$, $p < .001$).

FMWK/YM samples. More specifically, Chapters 3 and 5 demonstrated that the tea party is a heterogeneous coalition of activists who largely share a preference for limited government. In this section, I identify similar clusters of tea party activists, compare their moral profiles, and identify the moral foundation most widely shared across the dissimilar activists. The moral foundation most widely endorsed should provide a strong indication of which value is the main motive of the movement and the primary driver of their desire for limited government.

To identify clusters of tea partiers, I use two different clustering methods. First, I identify clusters of tea partiers as I do in Chapter 5, with a kmeans cluster analysis of questions about the role of government in social and economic affairs. Second, I determine if I can recover similar clusters running a kmeans cluster analysis of the individual Moral Foundation Questionnaire items alone. If both clustering methods reveal similar tea party groupings, and if such groupings are more similar in their endorsement of proportionality, rather than liberty, that would further bolster my argument that proportionality is the movement's pervasive value also likely driving their preference for small government.

Clustering Method 1: Based on Role of Government Questions:

Conveniently, I have nearly the same questions about the proper role of government used in Chapter 5 available in both FreedomWorks and YourMorals datasets to cluster tea party supporters. Unfortunately, neither dataset includes variables measuring racial attitudes like those used in Chapter 3. However, racial attitudes will be examined in Study 3 of this chapter.

I conduct a kmeans cluster analysis using the role of government questions shown below, with the Euclidean distance dissimilarity measure constrained to find two groups:

FreedomWorks/YourMorals Survey (1) Some people say the less government the better, others say that there are more things that government should be doing. Which comes closer to your view? (2) Some people say we need a strong government to handle today's complex economic problems, others say that people would be better able to handle today's problems within a free market with less government involvement. Which comes closer to your view? (3) Some people think the government should promote traditional values in our society. Others think the government should not favor any particular set of values. Which comes closer to your own view?

The cluster analysis identified groups similar to those found in Chapter 5 in which both groups say the less government the better, and the free market better solves problems, but the first group thinks government should promote traditional values (socially conservative tea partiers) and the second prefers government to *not* promote a particular set of values (libertarian tea partiers). It should be noted that activists denoted as libertarian tea partiers are not necessarily members of the Libertarian Party, but activists who take moderate positions on social issues and remain fiscally conservative. Among FreedomWorks tea party activists, 61% (n=7,558) fit into the conservative Cluster 1 and 39% (n=4,768) in the libertarian Cluster 2. As expected, the YourMorals tea party activists skew libertarian, with 64% (n=1,548) in the libertarian Cluster 2 and 36% (n=868) in the conservative Cluster 1.

Table 6.2 reports the means for each moral foundation scale for tea party social conservatives and tea party libertarians. Table 6.2 also reports the results from comparison of means tests comparing both clusters' moral foundation endorsements. Here we would expect the differences in means to be smallest for moral foundations rated similarly high among disparate tea party groups. Foundation scores for both groups are then compiled in Figure 6.2 that graphically compares the moral profiles of tea party social conservatives and tea party libertarians.

Table 6.2
Mean Endorsement of Moral Foundations
Among Tea Party Social Conservatives and Tea Party Libertarians
Based On Two Kmeans Clustering Methods
Reporting Mean Z-Scores, Comparison of Means Tests

Note: Method (1) clusters tea party activists according to their responses to questions about the role of government. Method (2) clusters tea party activists according to their responses to the Moral Foundation Questionnaire items that do not explicitly mention government. Both methods uncovered similar tea party groups, one leaning libertarian and the other socially conservative. This table reports the means for the clusters across the six moral foundations and reports the comparison of means test results between tea party conservatives and tea party libertarians on each foundation.

Z-Scores	Foundation	α	Method (1) Role of Govt Cluster Analysis				Method (2) MFQ Cluster Analysis			
			Cluster 1 Conservative N=7558 M	Cluster 2 Libertarian N=4768 M	Diff	Comparison of Means Test TP Libt v TP Con	Cluster 1 Conservative N= 8792 M	Cluster 2 Libertarian N= 2325 M	Diff	Comparison of Means Test TP Libt v TP Con
Proportionality			0.38	0.41	0.03	t(12291)= 3.08***	0.38	0.50	0.12	t(11115)= 10.39***
Liberty			-0.04	0.27	0.32	t(12294)= 23.70***	-0.03	0.52	0.55	t(11115)= 33.33***
Loyalty			0.41	0.24	-0.17	t(12298)= -13.17***	0.56	-0.48	-1.04	t(11115)= -77.21***
Authority			0.46	0.22	-0.24	t(12317)= -21.69***	0.55	-0.37	-0.92	t(11115)= -80.63***
Sanctity			0.64	0.28	-0.36	t(12315)= -37.44***	0.67	-0.13	-0.79	t(11115)= -76.13***
Care			0.13	-0.05	-0.17	t(12298)= -11.90***	0.28	-0.77	-1.05	t(11115)= -67.44***

Z-Scores	Foundation	α	Method (1) Role of Govt Cluster Analysis				Method (2) MFQ Cluster Analysis			
			Cluster 1 Conservative N=866 M	Cluster 2 Libertarian N=1548 M	Diff	Comparison of Means Test TP Libt v TP Con	Cluster 1 Conservative N=784 M	Cluster 2 Libertarian N=1410 M	Diff	Comparison of Means Test TP Libt v TP Con
Proportionality			0.17	0.25	0.08	t(2410)= 2.89***	0.15	0.26	0.10	t(2192)= 3.56***
Liberty			-0.08	0.46	0.54	t(2409)= 19.61***	-0.13	0.50	0.63	t(2192)= 22.70***
Loyalty			0.10	-0.48	-0.58	t(2411)= -16.93***	0.40	-0.65	-1.06	t(2192)= -35.24***
Authority			0.17	-0.60	-0.77	t(2411)= -22.15***	0.40	-0.74	-1.14	t(2192)= -36.00***
Sanctity			0.33	-0.58	-0.91	t(2411)= -27.70***	0.54	-0.72	-1.25	t(2192)= -43.44***
Care			-0.15	-0.52	-0.37	t(2409)= -9.53***	0.17	-0.72	-0.89	t(2192)= -24.37***

Figure 6.2a
Moral Profiles: Tea Party Social Conservatives and Tea Party Libertarians
Reporting Mean Z-Scores, Comparison of Means Tests
Cluster Analysis Based on Role of Government Items (Method 1)

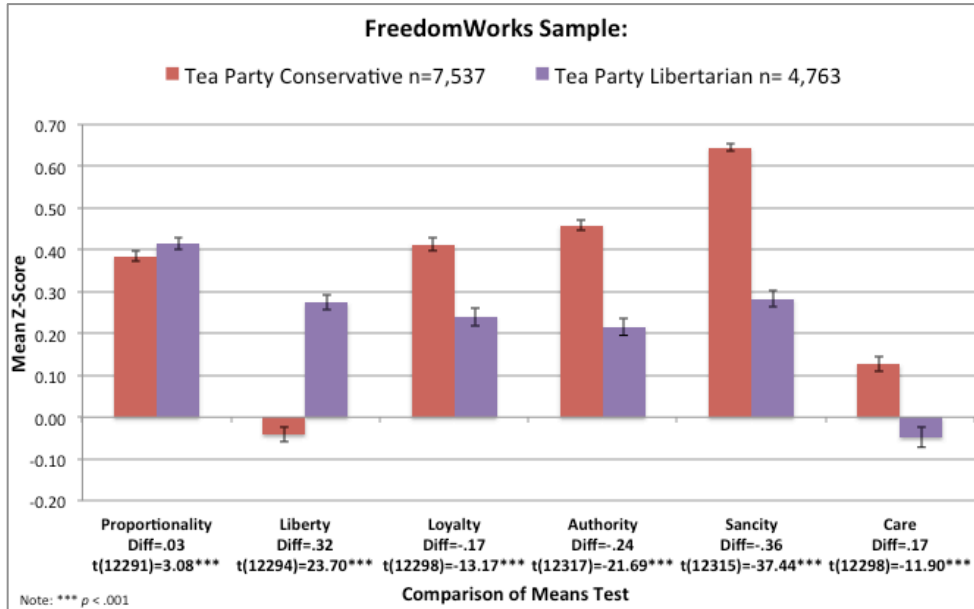
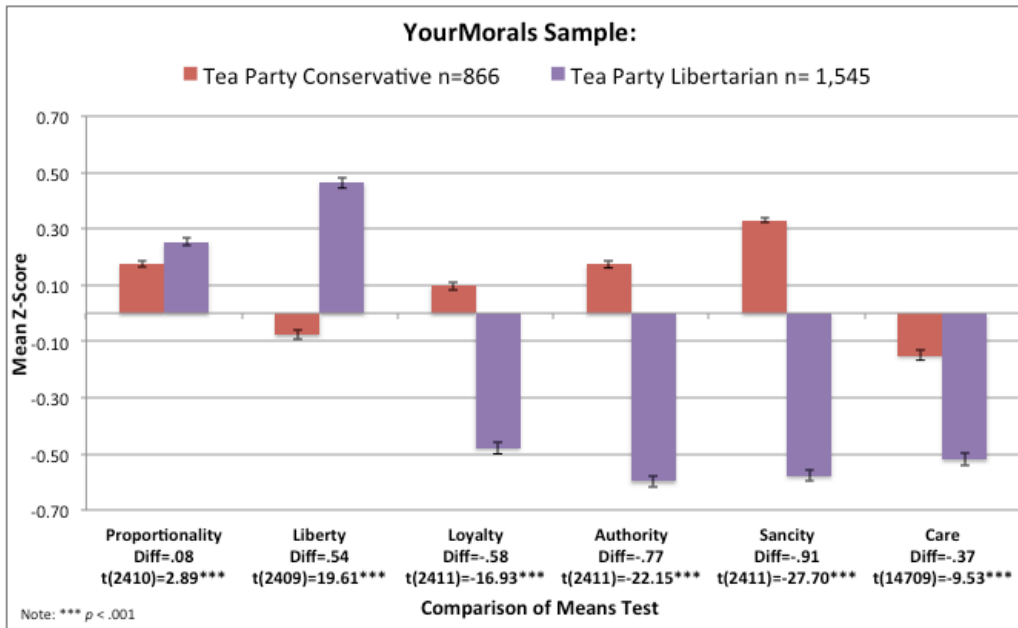


Figure 6.2b



Note: Average endorsement of moral foundations for tea party conservatives and tea party libertarians. Clusters were identified using Method 1 kmeans cluster analyses of role of government questions. Diff= Reports the difference in mean foundation rating between tea party conservatives and tea party libertarians. Comparison of means tests determine if differential endorsement of moral foundations for tea party conservatives and tea party libertarians is significant.

In both the FreedomWorks and YourMorals samples, the conservative and libertarian tea party activists have substantively different moral profiles. (See Table 6.2 and Figure 6.2). Perhaps most strikingly, libertarian tea partiers rate Liberty concerns as significantly more relevant to their moral judgments compared to socially conservative tea partiers. In fact, socially conservative tea partiers are not distinctive in their endorsement of liberty concerns compared to non-tea partiers.

Less surprisingly, the groups differ significantly in their endorsement of values shown to correlate with social conservatism (Loyalty/Betrayal, Authority/Subversion, Sanctity/Degradation). Socially conservative tea partiers rate these scales higher than libertarian tea partiers. Libertarian activists also rate Care as less morally relevant, compared to socially conservative activists.

However, as can be seen in both samples in Figure 6.2, Proportionality is the moral foundation most widely endorsed by the heterogeneous tea party activists. This is confirmed by Proportionality having the smallest difference in means between the two groups compared to the other foundations.

The fact that only libertarian tea partiers rate Liberty concerns more highly than non-supporters seriously undermines tea partier claims that a desire for liberty chiefly motivates the movement. The fact that libertarian and socially conservative tea partiers differ in their rating of the binding foundations, Care foundation, and Liberty, but more similarly rate Proportionality buttress my argument that proportionality is the pervasive impulse in the movement.

Recovering Tea Party Groups with MFQ Items

Clustering Method 2: Based on Moral Foundations Questionnaire (MFQ) Items:

Next, I test if Proportionality remains the most widely endorsed moral foundation even if I use different items to cluster tea party activists. If similar groups emerge, and such groups are similarly united in support for Proportionality and divided in ratings of other foundations, this will further bolster my thesis. To do this, I re-cluster tea party activists using the Moral Foundations Questionnaire items rather than role of government questions and allow the number of clusters to vary.

Using kmeans cluster analysis of the MFQ items found in Appendix J with the Euclidean distance dissimilarity measure, I recover the two clusters identified in the previous section and in Chapter 5, although with slightly different sizes. Among FreedomWorks tea party activists, 79% (n=8,792) fit into the conservative Cluster 1 and 21% (n=2,325) in the libertarian Cluster 2. The YourMorals tea party activists skew libertarian with 64% (n=1,410) in the libertarian Cluster 2 and 36% (n=784) in the conservative Cluster 1. I also constrain the analyses to find 3-, 4- and 5-cluster solutions. The Calinski-Harabasz pseudo-F values for the 2-, 3-, 4-, and 5-cluster solutions indicated the 2-cluster solution was more distinct and thus a better fit.⁷²

Table 6.3 indicates that Cluster 1 leans conservative and Cluster 2 leans libertarian. Cluster 1 is more Republican and conservative than Cluster 2, is more likely to believe the Republican Party has the best ideas for reforming government (62% v 37%) and to have voted for Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney in 2012 (97% v 74%). Cluster 1 is also about 20 points more likely to watch or listen to conservative Rush Limbaugh and Glenn Beck (65% v 44%), is more than twice as likely to be an Evangelical Christian (49% v 21%), regularly attend

⁷² Calinski/Harabasz pseudo-F, 2-cluster: 2403.35, 3-cluster: 1977.46, 4-cluster: 1610.84, 5-cluster: 1413.27.

church (37% v 15%), and be over 55 years of age (61% v 30%). Cluster 2 is almost twice as likely to identify as a supporter of former Texas Congressman Ron Paul (45% v 23%), and skews younger (under 35: 35% v 9%) and male (73% v 58%). Both groups are equally likely to be small business owners (a third, respectively).

Table 6.3
Comparison of MFQ Cluster 1: Tea Party Social Conservatives
and MFQ Cluster 2: Tea Party Libertarians

	Tea Party Supporters	
	MFQ Cluster 1: Socially Conservative	MFQ Cluster 2: Libertarian
Role of Government		
The less government the better	99%	96%
People would better handle today's problems within a free markets with less govt involvement	98%	95%
Too often govt regulation of business does more harm than good	99%	96%
Income inequality is an acceptable part of our economic system	95%	94%
Government should do more to protect morality in society	44%	18%
Government is too involved in the issue of morality	56%	82%
Government should promote traditional values in society	66%	32%
Government should not promote any particular set of values	34%	68%
Political Identification		
Democrat	1%	2%
Independent	30%	38%
Republican	64%	43%
Other Party	3%	15%
Liberal	0%	3%
Moderate	2%	5%
Conservative	92%	55%
Libertarian	5%	37%
Ron Paul Supporter	23%	45%
<i>Which party has the best ideas for reforming government?</i>		
Republican Party	62%	37%
Neither can be trusted to fix govt	38%	61%
Democratic Party	0%	2%
<i>2012 Presidential Vote</i>		
Mitt Romney, Republican Candidate	97%	74%
Barack Obama, Democratic Candidate	<1%	3%
Someone Else	1%	16%
Conservative Media Consumption		
Glenn Beck Viewer/Listener	64%	44%
Rush Limbaugh Listener	66%	44%
Religion		
Evangelical Christian	49%	21%
Strongly Agree with the Religious Right	43%	12%
Attends Religious Services Weekly or More	37%	15%
Never Attends Religious Services	10%	31%
Demographics		
Small Business Owner	31%	34%
18-34	9%	35%
35-54	30%	35%
55+	61%	30%
Female	42%	27%
Male	58%	73%
N	9576	3735

Note: FreedomWorks/YourMorals 2012 Survey, Clusters derived using Method 2 kmeans cluster analysis with the Euclidian distance dissimilarity measure of Moral Foundation Questionnaire items (found in Appendix J) constrained to find two groups.

Figure 6.3a
Moral Profiles: Tea Party Social Conservatives and Tea Party Libertarians
Cluster Analysis Based on Moral Foundation Questionnaire Items (Method 2)
Reporting Mean Z-Scores, Comparison of Means Tests

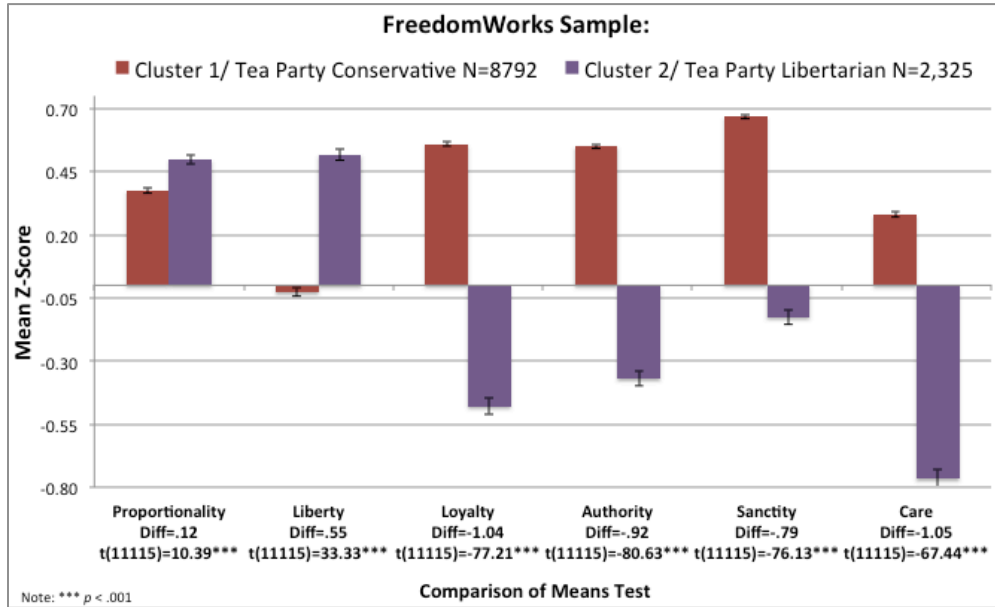
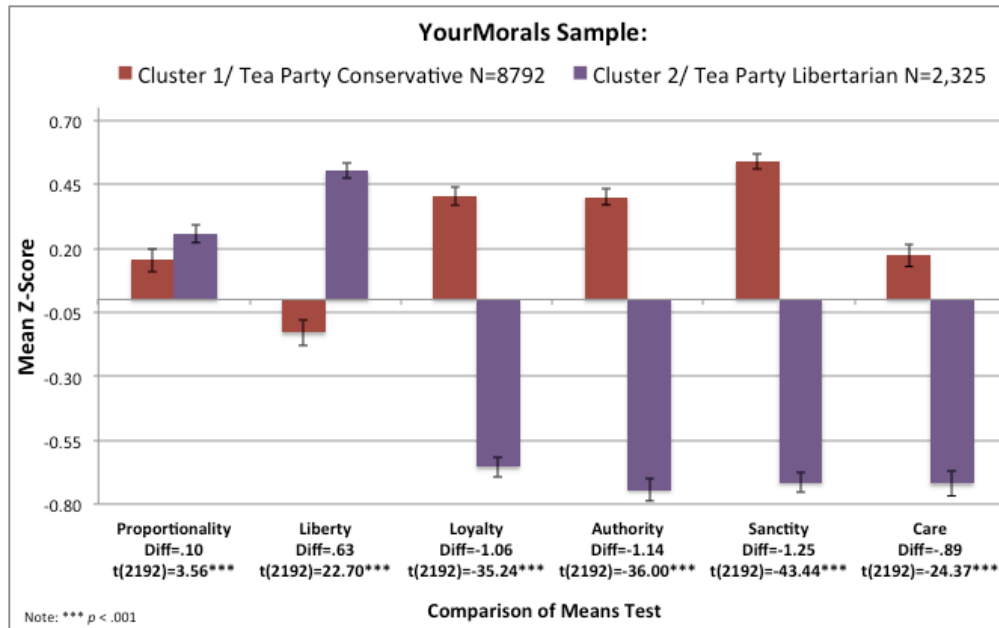


Figure 6.3b



Note: Average endorsement of moral foundations for tea party conservatives and tea party libertarians identified using Method 2 kmeans cluster analyses of Moral Foundation Questionnaire items (found in Appendix J). Diff= Reports the difference in mean foundation rating between tea party conservatives and tea party libertarians. Comparison of means tests determine if differential endorsement of moral foundations for tea party conservatives and tea party libertarians is significant.

Table 6.2 also reports the means for each moral foundation scale for MFQ Cluster 1 social conservatives and MFQ Cluster 2 libertarians, groups derived from the Method 2 kmeans cluster analysis of MFQ items. Table 6.2 also reports the results from comparison of means tests comparing both clusters' moral foundation ratings. Once again, we should expect the difference in means to be smallest for moral foundations most widely endorsed across tea party groups. Foundation scores for both groups are then compiled in Figure 6.3 that graphically compares the moral profiles of MFQ Cluster 1 tea party social conservatives and MFQ Cluster 2 tea party libertarians. Strikingly, these results mirror those from the Method 1 cluster analysis, which clustered using questions on the role of government.

Similar to the results using Method 1, the Method 2 MFQ cluster analysis finds Proportionality is the moral foundation most widely endorsed by both socially conservative and libertarian tea party activists. Once again, Liberty is rated highly by libertarian leaning tea partiers, but not among socially conservative activists. Socially conservative activists rate the binding foundations significantly higher than do libertarian tea partiers in both FreedomWorks and YourMorals samples, while libertarians rate Care as less morally relevant. The small difference in means between the two clusters' endorsement of Proportionality reveals heterogeneous tea partiers are most similar in their rating of Proportionality, rather than Liberty.

It is worth noting that both Method 1 and Method 2 clustering methods using either explicit questions about the role of government or MFQ items not mentioning government were capable of recovering very similar groups. This implies individuals project their personal moral values onto what they view as a proper functioning government. In other words, individuals do not want to separate their own moral values from government; instead, they tend to expect government to embody their own personal moral beliefs. Furthermore, these results indicate that

questions on the role of government may glean groups of individuals according to deeply held moral values.

Proportionality Underlying Tea Party Support for Limited Government

The previous results provide a strong indication that proportionality, rather than liberty, is the core impulse of the tea party movement because it is the value most tea party activists share and rate highly, and the value that distinguishes them from non-supporters. Given tea partiers' strong and pervasive preference for limited government, as demonstrated in previous chapters, one might reasonably expect proportionality to also underlie tea partiers' desire for small government. In this section, I test this expectation. In order to do so, I constructed a variable to measure preference for limited government based on averaging responses to two questions:

Limited Government

- Some people say the less government the better, others say that there are more things that government should be doing. Which comes closer to your view?
- Some people say we need a strong government to handle today's complex economic problems, others say that people would be better able to handle today's problems within a free market with less government involvement. Which comes closer to your view?

Scale Reliability Coefficient $\alpha = .88$

Those who said “the less government the better” and that the free market could better solve problems were categorized as tea partiers who prefer limited government. In the FreedomWorks/YourMorals samples combined, 96 percent of tea party activists revealed a preference for limited government using this measure. The remaining 4 percent of activists revealed they preferred an activist government. If proportionality undergirds tea partiers' desire for limited government, it follows that this value would differentiate the 96 percent of tea partiers desiring small government and the 4 percent who want activist government. Indeed, results presented in Figure 6.4 bolster this hypothesis.

Figure 6.4a
Moral Profiles: Tea Partiers Who Prefer Small Government and
Tea Partiers Who Prefer Active Government
Reporting Mean Z-Scores, Comparison of Means Tests

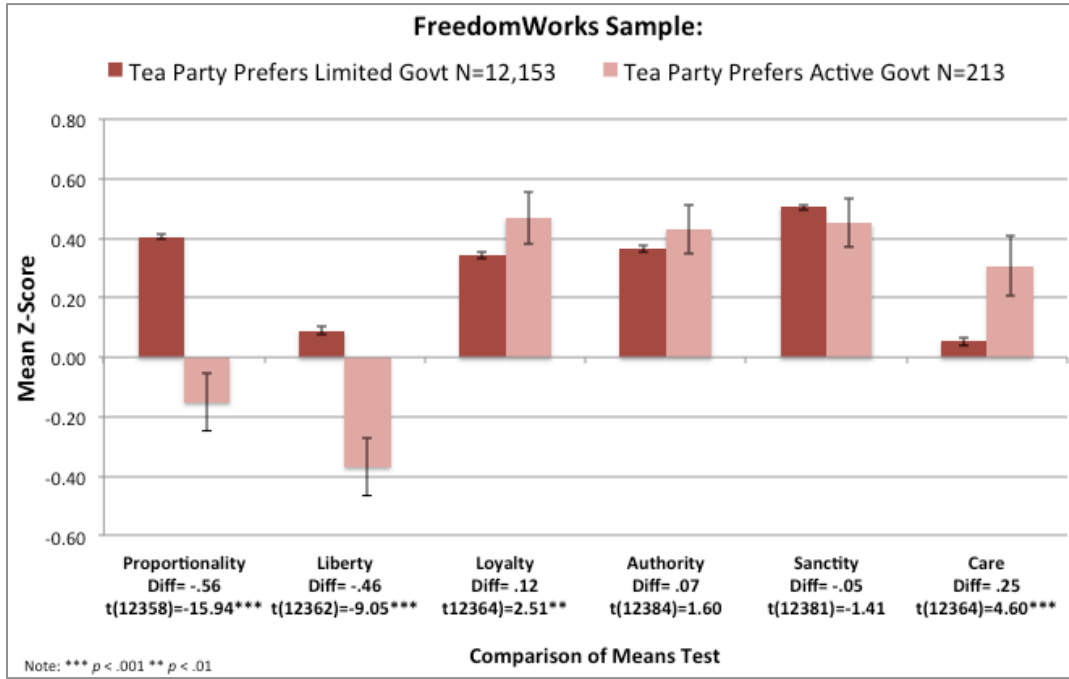
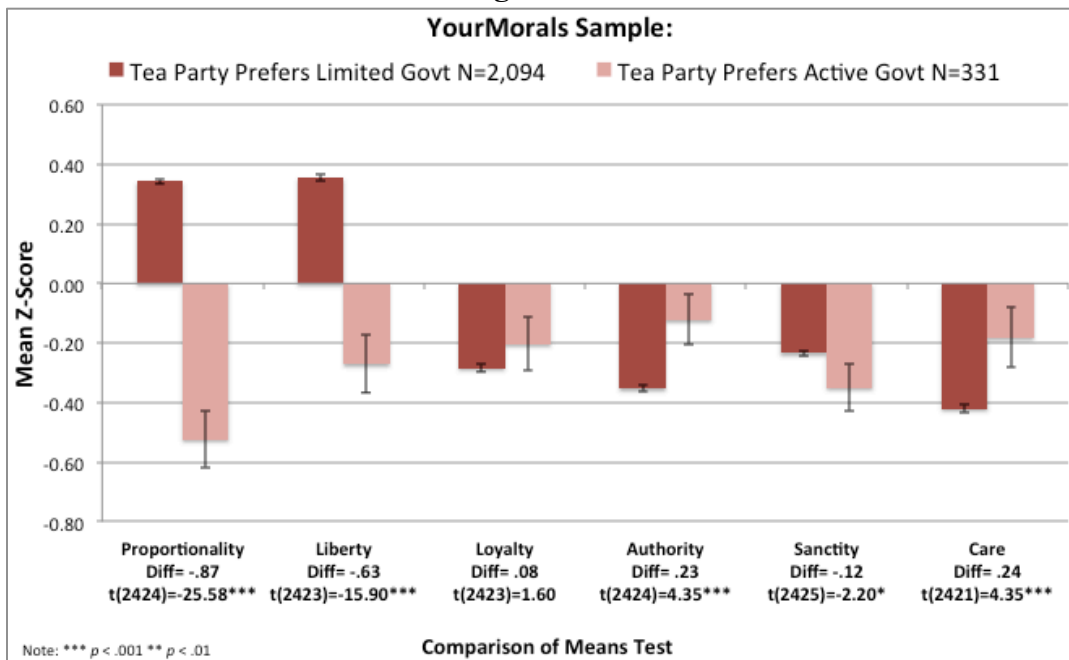


Figure 6.4b



Note: Average endorsement of moral foundations for tea party supporters who favor limited government and tea party supporters who prefer active government. Diff= Reports the difference in mean foundation rating between limited government and active government tea partiers. Comparison of means tests compare endorsements of moral foundations for limited government and active government tea partiers.

Figure 6.4 (data in Appendix L) reveal that high endorsement of both Proportionality and Liberty foundations distinguish small government tea partiers from large government tea partiers. Differences in mean endorsement of the foundations are greatest first when comparing small and large government tea partiers' rating of Proportionality and second when comparing ratings of the Liberty foundation, across both samples.⁷³ Moreover, comparison of means tests fail to detect a significant difference between the two groups on several of the binding foundations.

To further examine the relationship between proportionality and tea party support for limited government, I run several logit regression models predicting tea party support for limited or activist government using the six moral foundations and available controls in both FreedomWorks and YourMorals samples respectively.

Table 6.4 displays the results of three separate logit regression models, first predicting all tea party supporters (Models 1a/1b), second predicting tea partiers who prefer limited government (Models 2a/2b), and third predicting tea partiers who prefer activist government (Models 3a/3b). For instance, in Models 2a/2b, the dependent variable includes being a tea party supporter who also favors limited government versus everyone else in the sample. If proportionality does indeed undergird tea party support for limited government, we would expect the coefficient to be positive and statistically and substantively meaningful for tea partiers who favor limited government but not for those who favor activist government.

⁷³ FMWK: (Proportionality: Tea party activists who prefer limited government: $M=.41$, $SD=.50$; Tea party activists who prefer activist government: $M=-.15$, $SD=.72$; $\text{Diff}=-.56$, $t(12358)=-15.94$, $p<0.001$) (Liberty: Tea party activists who prefer limited government: $M=.09$, $SD=.73$; Tea party activists who prefer activist government: $M=-.37$, $SD=.71$; $\text{Diff}=-.46$, $t(12362)=-9.05$, $p<0.001$). YM: (Proportionality: Tea party activists who prefer limited government: $M=.34$, $SD=.55$; Tea party activists who prefer activist government: $M=-.52$, $SD=.69$; $\text{Diff}=-.87$, $t(2424)=-25.58$, $p<0.001$) (Liberty: Tea party activists who prefer limited government: $M=.36$, $SD=.67$; Tea party activists who prefer activist government $M=-.27$, $SD=.61$; $\text{Diff}=-.63$, YourMorals $t(2423)=-15.90$, $p<.001$).

Table 6.4
Predicting Tea Party Support,
Tea Partiers Who Desire Small Govt, Tea Partiers Who Desire Active Govt:
Regressions on Moral Foundations

	FreedomWorks Sample			YourMorals Sample		
	1a	2a	3a	1b	2b	3b
	Tea Party Supporter	Tea Party Prefers Limited Govt	Tea Party Prefers Active Govt	Tea Party Supporter	Tea Party Prefers Limited Govt	Tea Party Prefers Active Govt
<i>Logit Regression</i>						
Proportionality	1.342*** (12.37)	1.207*** (13.91)	-0.764*** (4.93)	0.928*** (13.55)	1.308*** (15.74)	-0.279* (2.55)
Liberty	0.558*** (5.08)	0.605*** (7.39)	-0.683*** (4.78)	1.091*** (14.65)	1.425*** (16.19)	-0.250* (2.17)
Loyalty	0.186 (1.52)	0.0111 (0.11)	0.494* (2.32)	0.0778 (1.25)	0.062 (0.89)	0.106 (0.91)
Authority	-0.198 (1.45)	-0.148 (1.33)	-0.0129 (0.06)	-0.0853 (1.34)	-0.164* (2.30)	0.306* (2.48)
Sanctity	0.838*** (6.53)	0.671*** (6.38)	-0.0591 (0.27)	0.573*** (8.45)	0.575*** (7.49)	0.226 (1.87)
Care	-0.159 (1.43)	-0.220* (2.43)	0.212 (1.19)	-0.221*** (4.32)	-0.127* (2.24)	-0.336*** (3.61)
Age	0.243*** (4.08)	0.218*** (4.74)	-0.281** (3.27)	0.275*** (8.50)	0.383*** (10.52)	-0.271*** (4.00)
Male	0.318* (2.12)	0.242* (2.13)	-0.13 (0.61)	-0.0204 (0.24)	0.106 (1.05)	-0.214 (1.50)
Born Again	0.0645 (0.37)	0.289* (2.22)	-0.41 (1.72)	0.500*** (3.93)	0.611*** (4.31)	-0.1 (0.48)
Ideology	0.742*** (11.38)	0.547*** (10.88)	-0.267** (2.94)	0.754*** (19.52)	0.886*** (18.81)	0.216*** (3.68)
Constant	-2.206*** (5.81)	-1.800*** (5.99)	-1.588** (3.00)	-4.275*** (20.88)	-5.667*** (22.14)	-3.523*** (11.05)
N	6605	6641	6641	7122	7154	7154
<i>Linear Combinations</i>	Pr-Li: 4.37***	Pr-Li: 4.41***	Pr-Li: -0.33	Pr-Li: -1.37	Pr-Li: -0.84	Pr-Li: -0.16
<i>Test Z Statistic</i>	Pr-C: 10.69***	Pr-C: 12.34***	Pr-C: N/A	Pr-C: 14.98***	Pr-C: 15.90***	Pr-C: 0.45
<i>Equity - [Variable]</i>	Pr-Lo: 6.88***	Pr-Lo: N/A	Pr-Lo: -4.58***	Pr-Lo: N/A	Pr-Lo: N/A	Pr-Lo: N/A
	Pr-A: 8.54***	Pr-A: N/A	Pr-A: N/A	Pr-A: N/A	Pr-A: 13.32***	Pr-A: -3.41***
	Pr-S: 2.94***	Pr-S: 3.84***	Pr-S: N/A	Pr-S: 3.71***	Pr-S: 6.56***	Pr-S: N/A

Note: FreedomWorks/YourMoral 2012 Survey; Logit Regression, t statistics in parentheses, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001; Dependent Variables: Model 1a/1b: 1=Tea Party Supporter 0= Not a Tea Party Supporter. Model 2a/2b: 1=Tea Party Supporter and Prefers Limited Govt 0=Not a Tea Party/Limited Govt Supporter. Model 3a/3b: 1=Tea Party Supporter and Prefers Active Govt, 0=Not a Tea Party/Active Govt Supporter.

In the FreedomWorks sample, sensitivity to Proportionality is the strongest predictor of both tea party support and tea party preference for limited government, followed by a sensitivity to Sanctity (primarily driven by conservatives), followed by a sensitivity to Liberty (primarily

driven by libertarians). Loyalty and Authority foundations predict neither tea party support nor their desire for small government. Sensitivity to the Care foundation is negatively related with tea partier demand for limited government. Notably, Proportionality has about twice the effect of either Liberty or Sanctity.

In the YourMorals libertarian-skewed sample, both Liberty and Proportionality, as well as Sanctity, positively predict tea party support and demand for limited government. While Proportionality is a significantly larger coefficient than Sanctity, it is statistically equivalent to the effect of Liberty. Ratings of Authority and Care concerns have significant and negative coefficients.

Collinearity among the moral foundations cannot explain proportionality's stronger impact. In head-to-head tests comparing the relative effect of Proportionality to each other moral foundation, reported in Appendix M, Proportionality has a significantly larger impact in each model except in the YourMorals sample Model 1b in which Proportionality and Liberty had an equally strong effect.

Interestingly, in Table 6.4, logit models predicting tea party support for *active* government (Model 3a/3b), find both Proportionality and Liberty have *negative* coefficients and only the binding foundations (Loyalty or Authority) have positive and significant coefficients. In the YourMorals sample, Care also negatively predicts tea partiers who favor large government. These results indicate that neither proportionality nor liberty can very well explain why these few tea partiers who desire active government joined the movement. Instead, group loyalties whether partisan, racial, or something else, may be more important for their rare membership.

Overall, these results imply that both proportionality and liberty are important values behind tea partiers' desire for limited government. However, liberty is only highly relevant

among a subset of tea party supporters, leaving proportionality the stronger and more pervasive moral foundation explaining desire for limited government. Notably, the “binding foundations” key for socially conservative issue positions, are far less important in explaining support for small government, despite the fact that many social conservatives support small government. Also these results confirm observations in Chapter 4, that tea partiers tend to be less sensitive to need and potential harms, and their lower levels of empathy may bolster their support for small government.

In sum, these results indicate that a desire for proportional justice—rather than liberty—is a stronger motivation for membership in the movement and members’ desire for limited government. Furthermore, these results have shown that proportionality is the moral foundation most widely endorsed among activists, and most distinguishes them from non-supporters. While liberty concerns are likely highly relevant for some tea partiers’ moral judgments, these findings indicate proportionality is the main impulse of the movement.

Study 2: Proportionality versus Individualism

In Study 2 I briefly expand my scope beyond the tea party movement to investigate other measures used in the scholarly literature to explain principled support for limited government. Existing research has often used a battery of questions measuring *economic individualism* to capture the principled impulse underlying opposition to government intervention, or support for limited government. However, in this study I demonstrate that the explanatory power of proportionality far exceeds that of economic individualism in predicting support for limited government.

Results from the previous study indicate proportionality is a common thread running through the tea party movement and a powerful driver of their support for limited government.

Consequently, it is reasonable to expect that belief in proportional justice may be an important component of *principled conservatism*, which is believed to offer a race-neutral alternative explanation of support for limited government (see Sears and Henry 2003, Sniderman and Piazza 1993, Gilens 1995, Sidanius, Pratto, and Bobo 1996, Kinder and Sanders 1996, Sears et al. 1997, Carmines and W. Richard Merriman 1993). Principled conservatism has typically been used in the racial resentment literature as a competing explanation with measures of symbolic racism to explain opposition to government intervention, particularly race-targeted policies and income redistribution.

To date, proportionality has not yet been fully considered in the political science literature as a component of principled conservatism. Instead, researchers have typically operationalized principled conservatism using a measure of ideological self-identification or a battery of questions intended to measure *economic individualism*, developed on the 1983 American National Election Pilot Survey (see Feldman 1983b, 1988, Sears and Henry 2003, Sears et al. 1997, Kinder and Sears 1981, Sears, Hensler, and Speer 1979, Sniderman, Crosby, and Howell 2000).⁷⁴ The economic individualism battery questions ask respondents to report their level of agreement with the following statements using a 4- to 7-point Likert scale:

- “Any person who is willing to work hard has a good chance of succeeding.”
- “If people work hard they almost always get what they want.”
- “Hard work offers little guarantee of success” (REVERSE CODE)
- “Most people who don’t get ahead should not blame the system: they really have only themselves to blame.”
- “Even if people are ambitious they often cannot succeed.” (REVERSE CODE)
- “Even if people try hard they often cannot reach their goals.” (REVERSE CODE)

Studies relying on this battery of economic individualism questions typically find the battery has little predictive power or loses statistical significance in multivariate models predicting support for various government actions (Sears and Henry 2003, Sears et al. 1997,

⁷⁴ Alternatively, some researchers have used economic individualism questions from the 1972 and 1976 National Election Studies (Carmines and W. Richard Merriman 1993, Feldman 1983a).

Kinder and Sanders 1996, Gilens 1995). Despite the poor performance of the individualism battery, researchers have continued to detect a value that looks a lot like principled conservatism that powerfully influences policy positions (Sniderman and Piazza 1993, Kluegel and Smith 1986, Sidanius, Pratto, and Bobo 1996, Arceneaux and Micholson 2012). However, researchers tend to find such effects when employing experiments rather than using survey questions measuring attitudes. Surprisingly, researchers have not re-evaluated the standard measures of principled conservatism or reconsidered the concept and assumptions behind the economic individualism battery questions.

Reconsidering Measures of Principled Conservatism

There are several reasons why principled conservatism conceived as economic individualism may perform poorly in multivariate models. First, the economic individualism questions are phrased as perceptions of actual income mobility rather than normative values. Stanley Feldman (1983a), drawing from Lipset (1979), provides insight into the thinking behind the creation of the economic individualism battery. He explains individualism is a “value,” but that it is based on the *perception* that “upward mobility is a direct function of the effort applied in one’s life” (p. 5). Later, however, Feldman (1988) writes that the individualism battery was intended to be based upon “the belief that people *should* get ahead on their own through hard work” (p. 419) [emphasis added]. While Feldman writes that the individualism questions are intended to measure what people believe *should be*, the statements used are instead worded as descriptive statements of perceived reality. They ask survey respondents about their perceptions of what *is*, not what *ought to be*. Values are about what one believes should normatively be the case, not what they believe is actually the case.

In contrast, Sears et al. (1997) explain they developed the symbolic racism questions to inquire “how society *should* be organized” (p. 22) [emphasis added]. In models testing both sets of attitudes, the racial resentment scale tends to be based on individuals’ normative values while the individualism scale has been based on perceptions of actual upward mobility. To better compare the effects of principled conservatism and the effects of racial attitudes both scales should be comprised of normative items.

Second, surprisingly little research, besides the Feldman (1983b) report, has investigated if in fact current operationalizations of principled conservatism are robust. Instead, researchers simply rely on the conventional battery or use different measures without fully explaining why. For instance, Kinder and Sanders (1996) include a measure for limited government preference that Gilens (1995) uses as a measure of individualism.

Third, scholarly interpretation of principled conservatism may have over-emphasized ideas that may be ancillary rather than central to principled objection to government intervention. For instance, Sniderman and Piazza (1993) write that principled conservatism finds expression in achievement, competition, and valuing ones’ own judgments. While principled conservatism may find expression in such values, that does not mean these values comprise the core moral concerns. For instance, for those highly sensitive to proportional justice, achievement means little if it is not earned, and individual effort means little if the results of one’s effort do not produce something the market values.

Fourth, economic individualism items are non-controversial. Most Americans believe that hard work pays off. For instance, a national survey conducted in 2013 found that 63 percent of Americans believe that “most people who want to get ahead can make it if they are willing to work hard (Reason Foundation/Princeton 2013b). Indeed, Kluegel and Smith (1986) found “the

belief is widespread that opportunity for economic advancement is present for all who work hard” (Kluegel and Smith 1986, p. 72).

To this point, a Reason Foundation/Princeton (2014b) national survey which included two standard individualism questions (See Table 6.5) found both tea party supporters and non-supporters were equally likely to strongly endorse individualism (1% average difference). In stark contrast, the average difference between tea party supporters and non-supporters in strong agreement with proportionality items was 23% (See Table 6.5).

Table 6.5
Endorsements of Proportionality and Economic Individualism
Comparison of Tea Party Supporters and Non-Supporters

<i>Strong Value Endorsement (Rating 6-7)</i>	Not Tea Party Supporter	Republican, Not Tea Party	Tea Party Supporter	<i>Diff TP-Not TP</i>
Proportionality				
People should be allowed to keep what they produce, even if there are others with greater needs	32%	41%	53%	21%
The world would be a better place if we let unsuccessful people fail and suffer the consequences.	18%	27%	41%	23%
People who produce more should be rewarded more than those who just tried hard.	26%	33%	50%	24%
	<i>Average Proportionality Difference</i>			23%
Individualism				
If people work hard they almost always get what they want	31%	31%	32%	1%
Even if people try hard they often cannot reach their goals (REVERSED SCORED)	18%	19%	15%	-3%
	<i>Average Individualism Difference</i>			-1%
Note: Reason-Rupe October 2014 National Survey; Respondents rated level of agreement or disagreement with statements on scale of 1 to 7. Strong agreement or disagreement (6-7 rating) endorsing proportionality or individualism shown above.				

There are also several reasons to expect that using a single measure of ideological self-identification as a measure of principle conservatism may also perform poorly in multivariate models. First, ideological labels mean different things to different people and they choose these labels for different reasons (see Conover and Feldman 1981). Martin Gilens similarly argues that “ideology, when used as an item in public opinion surveys, has no clear referent; we simply do not know what people mean when they say they are liberal or conservative” (Gilens 1995, p.

1004). Furthermore as Gilens points out, roughly a third of Americans can't place themselves on the right-left continuum to begin with. Second, ideology is multidimensional (Maddox and Lilie 1984, Feldman and Johnston 2014). For instance, social conservatives and fiscal conservatives may both self identify as conservative, but do so for very different reasons. Third, in a regression model that includes 4-6 items measuring symbolic racism it is unbalanced to only have one item, like ideology, measuring principled conservatism. For instance, Sidanius, Pratto, and Bobo (1996) suggest that "more multifaceted indices of these constructs may provide stronger evidence for the principled conservatism position" (p. 481).

Considering Principled Conservatism as Proportionality

There are several reasons why we might expect proportionality to be a better measure of principled conservatism than economic individualism. First, results in Study 1 of this chapter found proportionality concerns strongly predict tea partiers' preference for limited government. Second, proportionality questions are worded as normative questions rather than perceptions of income mobility. Third, as demonstrated in Table 6.5, questions measuring proportionality concerns are more controversial than the standard economic individualism battery. Fourth, Rasinski (1984) found that when considering different conceptions of fairness, including individualism, proportionality, need, and equality, proportionality performed better than individualism (see pgs. 113-118). Fifth, proportionality is grounded in social psychology theory as an innately prepared trait (Haidt 2012), suggesting that proportionality rather than individualism is closer to the raw sensibility underlying moral judgments.

Method

To compare the explanatory power of proportionality and individualism in explaining opposition to government economic intervention, I collected data with the Reason

Foundation/Princeton (2014b) national survey of 1000 respondents that included several standard measures of individualism and measures of proportionality. (See Appendix N) for question wording). Limited survey space prevented the inclusion of the full individualism battery. A particular advantage of this dataset is that it is nationally representative, rather than a convenience sample. Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement/disagreement with several statements measuring endorsement of proportionality and economic individualism using a 7-point Likert scale.

First, I conduct exploratory factor analyses and confirmatory factor analyses of two items for proportionality and two items for individualism from the standard individualism battery, shown below (full wording in Appendix N):

Proportionality (Scale Reliability Coefficient: $\alpha = .41$)

- People should be allowed to keep what they produce, even if there are others with greater needs.
- The world would be a better place if we let unsuccessful people fail and suffer the consequences.

Individualism (Scale Reliability Coefficient: $\alpha = .31$)

- If people work hard they almost always get what they want
- Even if people try hard they often cannot reach their goals (REV)

Second, I examine their relative effects in predicting preference for limited government.

Results

I conducted an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) of the individualism and proportionality items, and extracted factors using the principal component factor extraction method with oblique rotation, which allows the factors to be correlated. The EFA model revealed two factors with eigenvalues greater than one, exceeding the Kaiser criterion threshold. A screeplot further validated retaining the two factors (see Costello and Osborne 2005). Using Tabachnick and Fidell (2001) suggestion of factor loadings of at least .32 and setting .50 as strong factor coefficients, exploratory factor analysis further indicates that the proportionality items loaded on the first factor and individualism on the second factor. The first two factors explain 63.4 percent

of the variance. The average loadings for proportionality were .77 on the first factor and -.07 on the second factor. The average loadings for individualism were .10 on the first factor and .75 on the second factor (See Table 6.6).

Table 6.6
Factor Loadings of Proportionality and Standard Individualism Items

Foundation	Factor 1	Factor 2
Proportionality		
People should be allowed to keep what they produce, even if there are others with greater needs.	0.79	-0.20
The world would be a better place if we let unsuccessful people fail and suffer the consequences.	0.74	0.06
Individualism		
If people work hard they almost always get what they want	0.40	0.63
Even if people try hard they often cannot reach their goals (REVERSE SCORED)	-0.21	0.86

Note: Factor loadings from exploratory factor analysis. Strongest factor loading for each item indicated in bold (>.50). Items are coded such that higher scores reflect higher endorsement of proportionality or individualism items.

An alternative test of the 2-factor solution uses confirmatory factor analysis constrained to either a 2-factor or single-factor solution. Goodness of fit indices indicate the 2-factor solution CFA ($\chi^2=10.98$, d.f. = 6 , $p = .09$; CFI=.99, TLI=.97) has a better fit than the single factor solution CFA ($\chi^2=65.58$, d.f. = 9 , $p \leq .00$; CFI=.88, TLI=.80) (see Hu and Bentler 1999).⁷⁵

In sum, these results suggest that items measuring proportionality are related but distinct from items measuring economic individualism as currently operationalized. Since individualism has performed poorly in statistical models, but researchers continue to find evidence of principled conservatism exerting an effect on attitudes, these results provide further justification

⁷⁵ The CFA 2 factor model goodness of fit indices: SRMR=.018, TLI=.97, and CFI=.99 indicating a good level of fit; CFA 1 factor model goodness of fit indices: SRMR: .044, TLI=.80, CFI=.88 indicating a fair level of fit (see Hu and Bentler 1999). The CFA model with only 4 variables shown in Table 6.6 was unidentified. Including a non-standard individualism question about hard work allowed the model to be identified: “A distaste for hard work usually reflects a weakness of character.” EFA revealed that both this item and “If people work hard they almost always get what they want” moderately loaded on proportionality in addition to individualism. Consequently, the CFA model allowed pathways between proportionality as a latent variable and these two individualism items.

to use proportionality as an alternative to individualism in explaining support for limited government.

Next, I construct two-item scales for both proportionality $\alpha = .41$ and individualism $\alpha = .31$ to predict preference for limited government. (Full wording in Appendix N). Ideally, the individualism scale would have a similar alpha reliability; however, these two questions are part of the standard battery and there was limited space on the survey preventing more from being included. To construct the dependent variable measuring a preference for limited government, I code 1 = respondent would rather have a “smaller government providing fewer services” and 0 = respondent would rather have “a larger government providing more services” or respondents who did not know.

Table 6.7 reports the results of a logit regression model regressing support for small government on proportionality, individualism, and standard controls. Table 6.7 Model 1 shows that proportionality is a statistically significant and large predictor of ones’ preference for limited government, an even larger predictor than partisan identification. Table 6.7 Model 2 finds that individualism is not a statistically significant predictor of support for limited government. Table 6.7 Model 3 combines both variables into the same model and proportionality remains a highly statistically significant and powerful predictor while individualism lacks predictive power.

These results provide evidence to suggest that proportionality may in fact be a better measure of principled conservatism than individualism. Furthermore, this suggests that proportionality rather than individualism should be included in models as the race-neutral alternative explaining opposition to various government actions, such as race-targeted policies.

Table 6.7
Predicting Support for Limited Government:
Regressions on Measures of Proportionality and Individualism

<i>Logit Regression</i>	1 Prefer Limited Govt	2 Prefer Limited Govt	3 Prefer Limited Govt
Proportionality	1.910*** (6.01)		1.880*** (5.74)
Individualism		0.468 (1.37)	0.236 (0.63)
Male	0.534** (2.62)	0.515* (2.56)	0.528* (2.56)
Republican	1.410*** (6.46)	1.641*** (7.80)	1.397*** (6.33)
Independent	0.533* (2.54)	0.683*** (3.59)	0.534* (2.53)
Evangelical	0.082 (0.45)	0.116 (0.69)	0.0805 (0.43)
Education	0.0452 (0.53)	0.0414 (0.51)	0.0448 (0.52)
Age	0.018*** (3.68)	0.020*** (4.07)	0.019*** (3.85)
Nonwhite	-0.398* (1.98)	-0.456* (2.45)	-0.411* (2.03)
Middle Income	0.263 (1.60)	0.387* (2.40)	0.265 (1.60)
High Income	0.249 (1.07)	0.495* (2.45)	0.257 (1.11)
Constant	-2.87*** (8.33)	-2.38*** (7.05)	-2.98*** (8.39)
N	961	961	961

Source: Reason-Rupe/Princeton Survey Research Associates 2014 National Survey; Logit Regression, t statistics in parentheses, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001, Clustered standard errors by state. Dependent variable coded 1=prefer limited government, 0= does not prefer limited government.

Study 3: Principled Conservatism and Racial Anxiety

In this dissertation, I have shown that preference for limited government is a significantly stronger predictor of tea party support than racial attitudes. I have further provided evidence that tea partiers' preference for limited government is itself predicted by a strong desire for proportional justice, and thus likely the movement's prevailing impulse. However, I have not thus far evaluated the impact of proportionality while controlling for racial attitudes in the same model. It is possible that the strength of proportionality could be partly explained by racial attitudes.

Previous studies have often found that measures of racial attitudes perform better than standard measures of principled conservatism in explaining various policy beliefs, even policies not explicitly racial (Gilens 1999, 1995, Kinder and Sanders 1996, Sears and Henry 2003, Sears et al. 1997, Kinder and Sears 1981).⁷⁶ Since I proposed that proportionality be used as an alternative measure of principled conservatism, based on findings in Study 2, it is particularly important to include both a measure of racial attitudes and a measure for proportionality in the same model predicting tea party support.

In this study I compare the performance of three measures of principled conservatism—proportionality, individualism, and liberty concerns—with racial attitudes in predicting tea party support and the tea party's desire for limited government. Based on the cumulative results of Study 1 and Study 2, we should expect proportionality to be a stronger predictor than liberty and economic individualism of tea party support and their desire for limited government. However, it remains unknown how these effects may change when controlling for racial attitudes.

⁷⁶ Although, researchers using different operationalizations of principled conservatism often find they perform better than racial attitudes (Sidanius, Pratto, and Bobo 1996, Kluegel and Smith 1986, see Sniderman and Piazza 1993). Nevertheless, these researchers did not use an explicit measure of proportionality.

Method

Data for this study come from the same Reason Foundation/Princeton (2014b) national survey used in Study 2. The survey is nationally representative with 225 tea party sympathizers out of 1000 total respondents. The survey included multiple items measuring endorsement of proportionality, liberty, economic individualism, and racial attitudes. I measured each explanatory concept of interest by constructing 2-item scales, to ensure each measure used an equal number of items and had comparable reliability.

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement/disagreement with several statements measuring endorsement of proportionality, economic individualism, and liberty using a 7-point Likert scale. (See Appendix N for complete question wording). The measure of racial attitudes is comprised of the same question from the CBS/NYT 2010 survey used in Chapter 3 and a question on support for police use of racial profiling.⁷⁷ Unfortunately the standard racial resentment items were not included on the survey. Based on the performance of the CBS/NYT race question in Chapter 3, there is reason to have confidence that this scale can be used as a proxy for racial attitudes. The scale reliabilities for each two-item scale are as follows: Proportionality $\alpha=.41$, Individualism $\alpha=.31$, Liberty $\alpha=.35$, and Race $\alpha=.44$.

Next, I investigate the explanatory power of proportionality, individualism, liberty, and racial attitudes on tea party support.

⁷⁷ This CBS/NYT question asked respondents on a 5-point scale whether too much, too little, or the right amount has been made of the problems facing African-Americans. The question on racial profiling offered a 4-point scale from strongly approve to strongly disapprove with the practice of police officers stopping “motorists or pedestrians of certain racial or ethnic groups because the officers believe that these groups are more likely than others to commit certain types of crimes.” (See Appendix N for complete question wording).

Results

Table 6.8 reports the results from logit regression testing the three measures of principled conservatism and racial attitudes in predicting tea party sympathy. Table 6.8 Models 1-4 report bivariate relationships between each key variable of interest, with controls, and tea party support. Proportionality, liberty, and racial attitudes all are significant predictors of tea party support, while individualism is not significantly related. Of the three significant predictors, proportionality is the largest significant predictor, followed by racial anxiety, and then liberty.

Table 6.8 Models 5-7 compare each measure of principled conservatism with racial anxiety in head-to-head tests, with standard controls. Model 5 shows that proportionality is a substantively larger coefficient than racial attitudes. When not clustering standard errors by state, a linear combination of estimates test finds proportionality has a statistically larger coefficient than race. However, when clustering by state, the test fails to reject the null hypothesis that the two predictors are equal. In Model 6 measuring relative effects of liberty and race, racial attitudes has a larger effect than liberty. When not clustering standard errors by state, race is a significantly larger predictor than liberty, but the test fails to reject the null hypothesis when clustering by state.

Table 6.8 Model 8 considers all key variables of interest in the same model. Proportionality is the largest statistically significant predictor of tea party support, followed by racial attitudes, and then liberty. Notably, proportionality is larger than partisan identification as well. In this model, a linear combinations of estimate test finds that when not clustering standard errors by state, proportionality is a statistically larger predictor than race. Nevertheless, when clustering by state, the test fails to find them significantly different. Such results suggest that a

larger dataset and sample of tea partiers may have sufficient statistical power to reject the null hypothesis even when clustering standard errors by state.

Table 6.8
Predicting Tea Party Support:
Regressions on Measures of Principled Conservatism and Racial Attitudes

<i>Logit Regression</i>	1 Tea Party Supporter	2 Tea Party Supporter	3 Tea Party Supporter	4 Tea Party Supporter	5 Tea Party Supporter	6 Tea Party Supporter	7 Tea Party Supporter	8 Tea Party Supporter
Principled Conservatism								
Proportionality	2.101*** (5.48)				1.911*** (5.35)			1.806*** (4.85)
Liberty		0.995** (3.19)				1.037** (3.08)		0.764* (2.03)
Individualism			-0.0686 (0.20)				-0.178 (0.52)	-0.415 (1.12)
Racial Attitudes								
Racial Anxiety				1.562*** (4.37)	1.289*** (3.68)	1.584*** (4.70)	1.573*** (4.35)	1.345*** (4.06)
Controls								
Male	0.121 (0.49)	0.0607 (0.25)	0.177 (0.72)	0.104 (0.40)	0.0614 (0.24)	-0.0261 (0.10)	0.109 (0.41)	-0.0231 (0.09)
Republican	1.195** (3.27)	1.416*** (4.28)	1.480*** (4.40)	1.222*** (3.67)	1.001** (2.71)	1.160*** (3.52)	1.234*** (3.69)	0.994** (2.71)
Independent	0.601 (1.80)	0.725* (2.32)	0.769* (2.49)	0.634* (1.98)	0.492 (1.43)	0.587 (1.81)	0.636* (1.99)	0.471 (1.36)
Evangelical	0.513 (1.95)	0.575* (2.36)	0.535* (2.22)	0.504* (2.05)	0.484 (1.84)	0.544* (2.18)	0.504* (2.04)	0.516 (1.92)
Education	-0.0309 (0.28)	-0.0534 (0.50)	-0.0328 (0.30)	0.0303 (0.30)	0.0149 (0.15)	0.0109 (0.11)	0.0311 (0.31)	0.00571 (0.06)
Age	0.00706 (1.09)	0.00956 (1.53)	0.00849 (1.39)	0.00628 (0.96)	0.00525 (0.78)	0.00727 (1.09)	0.00588 (0.91)	0.00512 (0.77)
Nonwhite	-0.332 (1.00)	-0.403 (1.17)	-0.411 (1.21)	-0.29 (0.83)	-0.247 (0.73)	-0.277 (0.78)	-0.281 (0.80)	-0.217 (0.63)
Middle Income	-0.312 (1.39)	-0.162 (0.73)	-0.167 (0.77)	-0.23 (0.99)	-0.357 (1.51)	-0.218 (0.92)	-0.232 (1.00)	-0.344 (1.43)
High Income	-0.406 (1.33)	-0.117 (0.36)	-0.135 (0.42)	-0.273 (0.85)	-0.5 (1.61)	-0.247 (0.76)	-0.276 (0.86)	-0.476 (1.50)
Constant	-3.377*** (6.90)	-2.882*** (5.66)	-2.494*** (5.51)	-3.229*** (7.55)	-3.844*** (8.23)	-3.611*** (7.36)	-3.143*** (7.77)	-3.893*** (8.02)
N	961	961	961	961	961	961	961	961
<i>Linear Combinations Test:</i>					Proportionality-Race		Proportionality-Race	
<i>Z Statistic</i>					Robust: 1.32; Non Robust: 2.73***		Robust: 1.02; Non Robust: 1.99*	
					Liberty-Race		Liberty-Race	
					Robust: -.98; Non Robust: 2.76***		Robust: -.97; Non Robust: -2.89**	

Source: Reason-Rupe/Princeton Survey Research Associates 2014 Survey; Logit Regression, t statistics in parentheses, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001, Clustered standard errors by state.

Predicting Tea Party Support for Limited Government

Next I replicate the test run in Study 1 measuring the predictive power of proportionality and liberty concerns in explaining tea partier preference for limited government. However, in this section, I control for racial attitudes as well. Earlier, I found that endorsement of proportionality most strongly distinguished tea partiers who favored limited government from those who preferred large government. Will this finding hold in a nationally representative sample controlling for racial attitudes?

To answer this, I run several logit regression models predicting tea party support for limited or active government using the two statistically significant principled conservatism measures, proportionality and liberty, and racial attitudes. Individualism has been excluded from this model, as it was not statistically significant in the previous models of tea party support, nor in these models. I identify tea partiers who support limited government as those who favored a “smaller government offering fewer services” comprising 72 percent of the tea party sample and tea partiers who prefer activist government as those who favored a “larger government offering more services” or did not have an opinion, making up the remaining 28 percent. Notably, between 2010 and 2014 the share of tea partiers in support of limited government declined, likely as the movement attracted different types of people and became less libertarian (Knowles et al. 2013).⁷⁸

Table 6.9a Models 1a-6a displays the results of regression models predicting tea partiers who prefer limited government and Table 6.9b Models 1b-6b displays results from regression

⁷⁸ The CBS/NYT 2010 survey found 96% of tea party supporters favored a smaller government offering fewer services. The 2012 FreedomWorks/YourMorals survey of 14,865 tea party activists found 98% agreed that “the less government the better” 2% instead felt that “there are more things the government should be doing.” Similarly, 97% said that “people would be better able to handle today’s problems within a free market with less government involvement” while 3 percent agreed “we need a strong government to handle today’s complex economic problems.”

models predicting tea partiers who prefer activist government. For instance, in models 1a-6a, the dependent variable includes being a tea party supporter who favors limited government versus everyone else in the sample. If proportionality undergirds tea party support for limited government, we would expect the coefficient to be positive and statistically significant even while controlling for racial attitudes.

In both bivariate models and head-to-head tests comparing proportionality to racial attitudes and liberty respectively, proportionality remains the largest predictor of tea party demand for small government. Liberty is also a strong and significant predictor, but has about half the effect of Proportionality (2a, 6a). While the measure of racial attitudes is statistically significant in a bivariate model and when paired with liberty concerns, it loses its predictive power in a head-to-head test with proportionality (5a). However, in a model with proportionality and liberty, racial attitudes retains slight statistical significance but the coefficient is about a third the size of proportionality in explaining tea party support for limited government (6a). Notably, the coefficient for Proportionality is about 60 percent larger than the effect of partisanship.

The predicted probability of being a tea party limited government supporter increases by 13 percent as one moves from the min to max Proportionality values, 6 percent from min to max Liberty values, and 4 percent moving from min to max on the Racial Attitudes measure, based on Table 6.9a Model 6a.

Table 6.9a
Predicting Tea Party Support for Limited Government
Regressions on Measures of Principled Conservatism and Racial Attitudes

	1a	2a	3a	4a	5a	6a
Logit Regression	Tea Party; Prefers Limited Govt	Tea Party; Prefers Limited Govt	Tea Party; Prefers Limited Govt	Tea Party; Prefers Limited Govt	Tea Party; Prefers Limited Govt	Tea Party; Prefers Limited Govt
Principled Conservatism						
Proportionality	2.603*** (5.27)				2.481*** (5.25)	2.226*** (4.59)
Liberty		1.710*** (5.12)		1.745*** (5.15)		1.417*** (3.54)
Racial Attitudes						
Racial Anxiety			1.097** (2.70)	1.150** (2.90)	0.693 (1.73)	0.789* (2.02)
Male	0.704* (2.47)	0.617* (2.27)	0.738* (2.52)	0.555* (1.98)	0.677* (2.33)	0.534 (1.90)
Republican	1.815*** (4.07)	2.035*** (5.04)	1.944*** (4.82)	1.848*** (4.65)	1.701*** (3.87)	1.640*** (3.82)
Independent	0.980* (2.32)	1.110** (2.82)	1.098** (2.75)	0.987* (2.44)	0.904* (2.11)	0.835 (1.95)
Evangelical	0.653* (2.41)	0.716** (2.81)	0.627* (2.45)	0.687** (2.66)	0.633* (2.33)	0.699* (2.51)
Education	0.129 (1.13)	0.101 (0.81)	0.163 (1.34)	0.147 (1.20)	0.154 (1.34)	0.152 (1.30)
Age	0.02*** (3.91)	0.03*** (4.36)	0.02*** (3.88)	0.02*** (3.88)	0.02*** (3.65)	0.02*** (3.72)
Nonwhite	-0.794* (2.09)	-0.900* (2.22)	-0.823* (2.08)	-0.809* (1.98)	-0.755* (1.98)	-0.767 (1.95)
Middle Income	-0.304 (1.04)	-0.154 (0.53)	-0.202 (0.66)	-0.183 (0.59)	-0.323 (1.05)	-0.299 (0.97)
High Income	-0.195 (0.53)	0.125 (0.32)	0.00492 (0.01)	0.043 (0.11)	-0.241 (0.64)	-0.191 (-0.50)
Constant	-6.051*** (9.58)	-5.544*** (8.35)	-5.334*** (9.36)	-6.064*** (8.93)	-6.276*** (9.56)	-6.789*** (9.25)
N	961	961	961	961	961	961
<i>Linear Combinations Test: [KEY VARIABLE]-RACE Z Statistic</i>				Liberty-Race Robust: 1.08; Non Robust: 2.50**	N/A	Proportionality.-Race Robust: 2.57** Non Robust: 4.99*** Liberty-Race Robust:1.05 Non Robust: -2.59**

Source: Reason-Rupe/Princeton Survey Research Associates 2014 Survey; Logit Regression, t statistics in parentheses, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001, Clustered standard errors by state. Model 1a-6a 1=Tea Party Supporter and Prefers Limited Govt 0=Not a Tea Party/Limited Govt Supporter. 72% of tea party supporters favored limited government.

Table 6.9b
Predicting Tea Party Support for Active Government
Regressions on Measures of Principled Conservatism and Racial Attitudes

	1b	2b	3b	4b	5b	6b
Logit Regression	Tea Party; Prefers Active Govt	Tea Party; Prefers Active Govt	Tea Party; Prefers Active Govt	Tea Party; Prefers Active Govt	Tea Party; Prefers Active Govt	Tea Party; Prefers Active Govt
Principled Conservatism						
Proportionality	0.743 (1.22)				0.484 (0.89)	0.585 (1.03)
Liberty		-0.528 (0.64)		-0.521 (0.60)		-0.611 (0.69)
Racial Attitudes						
Racial Anxiety			2.261*** (3.96)	2.264*** (3.84)	2.194*** (3.81)	2.187*** (3.70)
Male	-1.254** (2.77)	-1.181* (2.47)	-1.442** (2.93)	-1.356** (2.64)	-1.443** (2.93)	-1.340** (2.61)
Republican	-0.435 (0.96)	-0.272 (0.59)	-0.724 (1.49)	-0.693 (1.49)	-0.809 (1.72)	-0.79 (1.73)
Independent	0.032 (0.09)	0.071 (0.19)	-0.0278 (0.07)	-0.0292 (0.08)	-0.0608 (0.16)	-0.0713 (0.18)
Evangelical	0.191 (0.49)	0.199 (0.54)	0.189 (0.55)	0.167 (0.49)	0.161 (0.44)	0.129 (0.36)
Education	-0.505* (1.98)	-0.473 (1.84)	-0.403 (1.72)	-0.377 (1.61)	-0.418 (1.72)	-0.393 (1.63)
Age	-0.03** (2.71)	-0.03** (2.69)	-0.04** (2.91)	-0.04** (2.92)	-0.04** (2.92)	-0.04** (2.95)
Nonwhite	0.227 (0.49)	0.189 (0.40)	0.379 (0.85)	0.376 (0.83)	0.387 (0.88)	0.384 (0.86)
Middle Income	-0.151 (0.44)	-0.0884 (0.27)	-0.254 (0.72)	-0.279 (0.79)	-0.299 (0.82)	-0.34 (0.93)
High Income	-1.117 (1.11)	-1.014 (0.98)	-1.275 (1.18)	-1.31 (1.20)	-1.349 (1.27)	-1.405 (1.30)
Constant	-0.386 (0.44)	0.0258 (0.03)	-1.136 (1.35)	-0.984 (1.07)	-1.246 (1.54)	-1.091 (1.25)
N	961	961	961	961	961	961
<i>Linear Combinations Test: [KEY VARIABLE]-RACE Z Statistic</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Source: Reason-Rupe/Princeton Survey Research Associates 2014 Survey; Logit Regression, t statistics in parentheses, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001, Clustered standard errors by state. Model 1b-3b: 1=Tea Party Supporter and Prefers Active Govt 0=Not a Tea Party/Active Govt Supporter. 28% of tea party supporters favor active government.

Interestingly, in Table 6.9b Models 1b-6b, logit models predicting tea party support for *active* government find neither proportionality nor liberty have significant coefficients predicting tea party support for active government. Instead, the coefficient on racial attitudes is substantively large and statistically significant. Neither the inclusion of proportionality nor liberty impacts the coefficient for racial attitudes. The predicted probability of being a tea party active government supporter increases 13 percent moving from the mix to max value on racial anxiety.

Some readers may find it unusual that conservative racial attitudes predict a preference for *activist government* among tea party supporters. Typically, conservative racial positions are expected to correspond with opposition to government intervention. While this may be true among the population as a whole, these models consider what role for government conservative and libertarian tea partiers desire. Among tea partiers who value limited government, they appear more likely to do so largely because of their endorsement of proportional justice and liberty. Conversely, among tea partiers who do not value limited government, they may be in the tea party more on the basis of ethnocultural anxieties. These large-government tea partiers may wish government to provide benefits to people like themselves but may oppose transfers going to other groups. However, limited government tea partiers may be concerned with most types of government transfers to any group. For the latter group, ethnic or nativist resentment may not have as much impact on their perception of deservingness or desire for limited government.

Given the clusters of socially conservative and libertarian tea partiers identified in Chapters 3 and 5, I sorted limited government tea partiers into social moderates and social conservatives, based on whether they favored government promoting traditional values or not. In 2014, this resulted in 43 percent categorized as socially conservative tea partiers and 29 percent

as libertarian tea partiers.⁷⁹ Appendix O reports logit regression results predicting socially conservative and libertarian tea partiers who support limited government. Similar to findings in Chapter 3, while proportionality has a statistically significant and substantially large effect in predicting both libertarian and socially conservative tea partiers, racial attitudes do not significantly predict libertarian tea partiers, but is significant and about half the effect of proportionality in predicting socially conservative tea partiers. Liberty concerns are also large and statistically significant, although about two-thirds of the effect of proportionality for both groups.

Conclusion

In sum, these results provide a strong indication that a desire for proportional justice is a powerful predictor of tea party support and their demand for limited government, more so than liberty concerns and racial attitudes. Liberty also is a significant predictor; however, it has less explanatory power than racial attitudes in predicting tea party sympathy but nearly double the effect in predicting tea party demand for limited government. Racial attitudes are also predictive but have less effect than proportionality in predicting general tea party support. Racial attitudes also have a weak relationship predicting tea partier support for limited government. In some models and among some subsets of tea partiers, racial anxiety lost statistical prediction or retained a weak relationship compared to proportionality. Among the minority of tea partiers who prefer activist government, racial anxiety is the most powerful predictor of their membership, while proportionality and liberty are not significantly related. This suggests that tea partiers' desire for limited government may very well hinge on their endorsement of proportionality and/or liberty.

⁷⁹ The diminished share of libertarian tea partiers is less surprising given Knowles et al. (2013) longitudinal study finding decreasing levels of libertarianism in the movement over time.

Overall, results from these three studies undermine tea partiers' claim that a paramount commitment to liberty was most important in their joining the movement. It appears that activists may conflate their preferences for proportionality with economic liberty. These results also further weaken the arguments of researchers who emphasize the role of racial anxiety in the tea party movement such as Parker and Barreto (2013) and Skocpol and Williamson (2012). Although racial attitudes and a desire for liberty are sources of tea party support, particularly among certain subgroups, findings from these three studies indicate endorsement of the proportionality principle is a stronger, more pervasive force that forms the core impulse of the movement.

Concluding Thoughts

The veneration of liberty and skepticism toward concentrations of power is a longstanding, deeply rooted tradition in American political culture. Within this broad tradition, an undercurrent of extreme suspicion of government action as a source for good has also persisted. America witnessed this debate between the federalists and anti-federalists, the Hamiltonians and Jeffersonians, and throughout the modern era. Repeatedly, this strain has stood “athwart history, yelling Stop,”⁸⁰ erecting barriers and impeding progressive reforms that were intended to help meet the needs of people.

The academic literature has focused on particular issues within this limited government ethos, but little work to date has sought to investigate the motivations behind this strain of public opinion at large. What drives this demand for limited government? What causes this extreme opposition to government economic intervention?

A body of literature has investigated preferences for redistribution (see Alesina, Glaeser, and Sacerdote 2001, Benabou and Ok 2001, Fong 2001, Alesina and Ferrara 2005). However, this narrows the aperture of analysis to a single type of government transfer, thus missing the bigger picture. Activists in Chapter 4 expressed frustration not only with wealth redistribution, but a multitude of other types of transfers and taxation. The scope of the preferences for redistribution literature has been too narrow to answer the question of what drives demand for limited government.

Other scholars have considered opposition to government action within the framework of symbolic racism. This body of work has produced compelling evidence that racial attitudes are a

⁸⁰ Buckley Jr., William F. "The Mission Statement." *National Review* November 19, 1955.

significant component shaping attitudes toward government action. However, this literature has been less careful in its vetting of race-neutral explanations and operationalizations, such as economic individualism, that also exert influence over attitudes toward government. Typical measures of principled conservatism used in the literature tend to perform poorly despite the persistence of experimental studies finding opposition to various government interventions, even controlling for racial attitudes.

The emergence of the tea party movement provided a unique opportunity to directly investigate the 20-25 percent of Americans who found themselves drawn to a movement that purported to be about limiting the size and scope of government. The tea party offered regular Americans a label to use on surveys that was previously unavailable. Before, researchers had access to partisan and ideological identifications. However, such labels were clearly unable to delineate the members of the electorate who later came to identify with the tea party movement. Tea partiers identify primarily as Republicans as well as independents, conservatives, moderates, and libertarians—and a sizable number of Republicans and conservatives do not support the tea party movement.

With the tea party label, the movement became a unique case study allowing investigation into the beliefs, values, and motivations of those who claim to support limited government.

Given the simultaneity of the tea party movement and the election of the nation's first African-American president, the movement was destined to attract those who oppose various government interventions because of racial animus. But does that mean that tea partiers' limited government rhetoric is merely a guise for the entire movement's racial anxiety? As I have

demonstrated in this dissertation, preferences for limited government significantly exceed the explanatory power of racial attitudes as a predictor for this movement's emergence.

Finding that the tea party was itself a heterogeneous coalition revealed that different groups placed different weights on racial attitudes and limited government preferences respectively. For some, racial attitudes were not predictive while for others such attitudes were as predictive as demand for small government. This provides a strong indication that desire for limited government need not be related to racial anxieties, and is likely derived from a separate value set.

The passage of TARP also offered an opportunity to examine the sincerity of the movement's limited government preferences. How would this slice of the public react when a group they tend to sympathize with—private business—received government assistance? Would they levy similar criticism if the recipients were private businesses rather than the poor? Findings in this dissertation suggest this answer is largely yes. My research indicates tea partiers felt resentment toward a large number of groups including businesses, non-profits, the arts, research and development groups, bureaucracies, localities, and individuals who they felt obtained unearned benefits and thus violated their conception of fairness. The tea party embodies, in a sense, “equal-opportunity resentment.”

This underscores what I have argued is a core motivation behind their demand for limited government: proportionality. This conception leads one to demand that community members be “willing to rise or fall primarily on one's own efforts” and insist they accept the notion that fairness is getting what one earns rather than what one needs. Endorsement of the proportionality ideal appears a more important criterion than race, religion, income or education to tea partiers as they evaluate who belongs in their group—who are the “real” Americans.

Implications for Academic Research

My study has broad methodological and substantive implications. I begin with methodology.

When I examined the compositional structure of the tea party movement, I found that it consisted of three distinct groups. Racial attitudes were not significantly predictive of one group, moderately predictive of another, and strongly predictive of the third group, while limited government preferences were strongly predictive of all three groups. Moreover, moral traditional only strongly defined one of the three groups. When this sort of heterogeneity is present, it can be problematic to do regression analysis on all groups together and then contend the results necessarily apply to the group as a whole. Rather, one should make efforts to examine the groups separately, noting which motives are common to all groups and which are not.

The tea party is surely not the only social movement with a heterogeneous composition. Latent class analysis should therefore probably be used more often than it is in the study of public opinion. When, for various practical reasons, scholars cannot test for the sort of heterogeneity uncovered by latent class analysis, they should use caution in statements they make on the basis of simple regression analysis.

I turn now to substantive implications. Findings in this dissertation indicate that this sensitivity to proportional justice is not only a pervasive impulse in the tea party movement, but also a likely key ingredient in explaining support for limited government. Yet, neither the scholarship on preferences for redistribution nor symbolic racism has considered the role and impact of proportional justice. Common operationalizations of principled conservatism, used as a race-neutral alternative to racial resentment, have not conceptualized it as proportional justice.

Instead, measures have described one's positive description of perceived economic mobility, or a desire for achievement—ideals that are ancillary to proportionality.

Researchers have also loosely considered principled conservatism in terms of “rationalizing inequality” or “inegalitarianism” (Jost et al. 2003, Kluegel and Smith 1986). But instead of thinking in terms of what people are against, it may prove more elucidative to consider what people are for. There is little question that the tea party slice of society is less concerned with inequality of conditions. But, this may be the result of their preference for proportional justice, which often comes at the expense of equality of outcome.

Finding the powerful effect of proportionality in predicting tea party support and their desire for limited government provides a strong indication that this measure should be used as a race-neutral alternative in future work examining the effect of racial attitudes on support for various government policies.

These results also support the inclusion of proportionality in Moral Foundations Theory as a moral foundation. Without proportionality, we would not have been able to connect the libertarian and socially conservative tea partiers in the movement. Their moral profiles are considerably different, placing more or less emphasis on group-centric or individualistic values. Proportionality is the only identified pervasive value. Furthermore, the other moral foundations were limited in their ability to predict attitudes toward government economic intervention. Proportionality appears to be a key consideration when evaluating fiscal policy and may be part of the mechanism through which such policies become moralized and contentious.

It may also be worth noting that as proportionality may act as the “glue” binding together libertarians and social conservatives on fiscal matters in the tea party, it may also attract libertarians and social conservatives into the same voting coalition (see Boaz and Kirby 2006).

Assuming a group-centric theory of parties (see Bawn et al. 2012) policy demanders' party programs and partisan elites may have been successful in attracting both libertarian and conservative voters because they appealed to the "superordinate" value of proportionality.

In what may be considered a small N discipline, the tea party movement further provides another useful data point in the study of right-wing social movements. Evidence in this dissertation suggests this conservative eruption is a movement based less on status-defense and out-group hostility, but based more on values and beliefs about fairness. This implies that populist movements originating on the "right" may not always be mobilized for the same reasons or even attract the same types of people and thus not easily categorized under one general theory of right-wing social movements.

Implications for Democratic Action

Understanding what motivates the tea party wing of the electorate and their demand for limited government is not only relevant for the academic literature, but has implications for policy advocates across the political spectrum.

For conservative economic reformers, this research implies that making appeals to "liberty" or "unintended consequences" may be insufficiently direct. Instead, they should be clear it's about fairness. For instance, despite the fact that many fiscal conservatives who oppose raising the minimum wage have never ventured into the empirical economic literature on the subject, they insist that such a policy would raise unemployment and hurt the poor. Why are they so quick to assume this consequence while others remain unconvinced? As conservative economist Greg Mankiw has suggested, fairness is the issue. Instead of placing the responsibility of improving the well-being of low-wage workers disproportionately on business owners, a more "fair" approach would be that "we all share that responsibility" through other more universalistic

policies like the Earned Income Tax Credit (Mankiw 2014). Being clearer about how policy preferences stem from fairness concerns may come across as more authentic, precise, and improve the quality of debate.

Progressive reformers who seek government action may be better able to deflate their opposition by further understanding its motivations. If proportional justice is a key concern behind those opposed to government intervention, structuring programs and policies in a more universal and contributive manner may help assuage their fears. For instance, the widespread popularity of Social Security and Medicare programs in the United States or the National Health Service in the United Kingdom suggests that this approach may be effective. These programs are structured such that citizens are more likely to feel as though they are part of a community that earns, contributes, and then benefits from their cooperative action. Indeed, Sniderman and Carmines (1997) found broader public support for government policies when they fashioned policies to be more universal and less group centric. However, programs that transfer resources from one group to another group and policies that give greater discretionary authority to a governing arbiter such as a commission or panel are more likely to arouse fairness concerns.

Equality versus Liberty?

Great debates in American politics often are framed in terms of a conflict over equality and liberty. The Sunlight Foundation's Capitol Words tool quantifying words in the Congressional Record reveal that indeed between 1996-2015, 79 percent of members who used the word "equality" in their speech were Democrats and 19 percent were Republicans. Conversely, of those who used the word "liberty," 62 percent were Republicans and 36 percent were Democrats (Sunlight Foundation 2014).

Findings in this dissertation indicate that this cleavage may be less about freedom versus equality, but rather equality versus proportionality—two distinct notions of fairness. It is also often assumed that people disagree because they have different preferred end goals. However, this research suggests this debate is not necessarily about disparate end goals, at least in the mass public domain, but over different value-based sensitivities that give rise to conflicting conceptions of justice. Ultimately, great debates in American public opinion may hinge on individuals' answers to one simple question: what's fair?

APPENDIX A

ANES 2008 Times Series Post Survey

TARP/Bailouts

- V085297a/ V085297b As you know, the government is potentially investing billions to try to keep financial institutions and markets secure. Do you think this is the right thing or the wrong thing for the government to be doing?

Racial Resentment-4 Item Scale

- V085143 Irish, Italians, Jewish and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same without any special favors.
- V085144 Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for blacks to work their way out of the lower class.
- V085145 Over the past few years, blacks have gotten less than they deserve.
- V085146 It's really a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if blacks would only try harder they could be just as well off as whites.

Limited Government-3 Item Scale

- V085106 ONE, we need a strong government to handle today's complex economic problems; OR TWO, the free market can handle these problems without government being involved.
- V085107 ONE, the less government, the better; OR TWO, there are more things that government should be doing?
- V085105 ONE, the main reason government has become bigger over the years is because it has gotten involved in things that people should do for themselves; OR TWO, government has become bigger because the problems we face have become bigger.

CBS/New York Times April 2010 National Survey

TARP/Bailouts

- Do you think providing government money to banks and other financial institutions was necessary to get the economy out of recession, or would the economy probably have improved without doing that?

Racial Resentment

- Q72. In recent years, do you think too much has been made of the problems facing black people, too little has been made, or is it about right?

Limited Government Preference

- Q22. If you had to choose, would you rather have a smaller government providing fewer services, or a bigger government providing more services?

APPENDIX B

Screenshot from Archive.org of TopConservativesonTwitter.org as of December 16, 2008.

Top Conservatives on Twitter

last update: 12-16 03:15 pm EST next update in: 3 hours 54 minutes

Rank	Name	Location & Bio	# Followers
1	James R. Dickey (@jamesdickey) info	Dallas, TX VP Marketing, Husband, Father of 3, Lover of courteous/intelligent/principled debate, Christ and Monty Python movies. Stanford and Baylor Graduate	6,520
2	Brooks Bayne (@brooksbayne) info	LA marginalizing the everyman. satirist, entrepreneur, technologist, music producer and melter of faces utilizing molten guitar riffs. independently conservative.	4,989
3	johnculberson (@johnculberson) info	Houston TX/Washington DC John Culberson: Proud father, happy husband. TX Congressman-Jeffersonian Republican. Let Texans Run Texas. Amateur astronomer	4,743
4	lesliecarbone (@lesliecarbone) info	Virginia I didn't leave the Republican Party; it left me.	3,388
5	Alli Worthington (@fussypants) info	Nashville {Home of BlissDom09} Founder- Blissfully Domestic Magazine., Serial entrepreneur, Conservative, Mom of 5 boys, Type B slacker, Gooftail Extraordinaire, Cool Chick	3,191
6	MichaelPatrick Leahy (@michaelpleahy) info	Nashville, TN Conservative Author and Republican Strategist	3,094
7	Dayngr (@Dayngr) info	Miami, FL Social Media Pusher, New Media Darling., Connector, Twitterati, Techie Babe, Blogger and PR Chick for eMOM's @MailOurMilitary, Ever Dayngrous @http://ix.gd/5ETn	3,070
8	Alexander Muse (@amuse) info	Dallas, Texas Entrepreneur. Blogging about the hottest startups in Texas.	3,004
9	Gerard LeBlond (@Gerard_LeBlond) info	Central NY, U.S.A. I write my own speeches, & I don't need a teleprompter. I'm a problem solver & simplifier. To Tweet Sweet - Write Tight	2,808
10	Patrick Ruffini (@patrickruffini) info	Falls Church, VA Strategy guy / tech geek	2,769
11	Bill Austin (@wbaustin) info	Arizona Bill Austin Ramblings and News from Phoenix Arizona and Surrounding areas.	2,638
12	James Lileks (@lileks) info	Minneapolis Writer, columnist, mid-century pop culture enthusiast	2,596
13	Tabitha Hale (@pinklephantpun) info	Raleigh, NC Unapologetically Christian and Conservative. http://smartgirlpolitics.ning.com. Check us out.	2,508
14	Hugh Hewitt (@hughhewitt) info	California Updates from HughHewitt.com	2,545
15	Trish Forant eMOM (@MailOurMilitary) info	Miami Lakes, FL and Global Honor, Duty, eMail! Using social media to support our troops. eMOM sends morale boosting email and packages to our troops. Est. 2001.	2,473
16	Eric Odom (@ericjodom) info	Chicago, IL Capitalist, blogger, social media junkie, web strategist. Oh... and I'm highly addicted to politics	2,431
17	stiennon (@stiennon) info	Birmingham, MI Social media security analyst, blogger, writer	2,382
18	stephenkruiser (@stephenkruiser) info	West L.A. Conservative stand-up comic & writer. Seriously. Single dad. Runner. Reader. Sports & social media freak. Really like people who don't agree with me.	2,377
19	Steve Dalton (@daltonsbriefs) info	Northwest Indiana #TCOT, Mortgage lender, economic dev consultant, commercial realtor	2,366
20	Misty Khan (@MistyKhan) info	Houston, TX CRM/CMS/Microsoft Outlook/sales process/marketing consultant & marathon running/wine drinking/needlework geek oh & mommy/wife/daughter/sister/friend/etc. #TCOT	2,290
21	sugarjones (@sugarjones) info	San Diego Photographer, Writer, Mom, Occasional Wife of Pilot, and Jesus Freak. Tweets A LOT! Like A LOT!	2,203
22	David All (@davidall) info	Washington, DC "David All is an unusual animal: a Republican Web 2.0 communications consultant in Washington, D.C." - Wired.com	2,137
23	Jenny Beth Martin (@jenuinejen) info	Atlanta, Georgia Tips, Tales, and Thoughts of Peach State Mom of Twins, Christian, Conservative Republican	2,124

APPENDIX C

CBS/*New York Times* April 2010 National Survey

Tea Party Issues

- Q22. If you had to choose, would you rather have a smaller government providing fewer services, or a bigger government providing more services?

Racial Resentment

- Q72. In recent years, do you think too much has been made of the problems facing black people, too little has been made, or is it about right?

Immigration Anxiety

- Q65. What about illegal immigration, how serious a problem do you think the issue of illegal immigration is for the country right now — very serious, somewhat serious, not too serious, or not at all serious?

Tea Party Libertarian-Leaners/Social Moderates and Social Conservatives

Tea party supporters were divided into two groups, reflecting the divide I found on the ground among tea party activists, and the entrance poll I conducted. While most of the tea party is extremely fiscally conservative, one part is fairly socially moderate while the other part is socially conservative. Using the method developed in Boaz and Kirby (2006), I categorize tea party libertarian-leaners as those who are socially moderate to liberal and tea party social conservatives as those who are socially conservative.

In this dataset I use a question about same-sex marriage and another on abortion. Tea party social conservatives say there should be no legal recognition for same-sex couples and abortion should not be permitted. Tea party libertarian leaners favor civil unions or same sex marriage and say abortion should be generally available or available with limits.

- Which comes closest to your view? Gay couples should be allowed to legally marry, or gay couples should be allowed to form civil unions but not legally marry, or there should be no legal recognition of a gay couple's relationship?
- Which of these comes closest to your view? Abortion should be generally available to those who want it, abortion should be available but under stricter limits than it is now, abortion should not be permitted?

APPENDIX C (Cont.)

ANES EGSS 2 2012 National Survey

Tea Party Fiscal Issues

- c2_zh_ Do you think that the government should provide more services than it does now, fewer services than it does now, or about the same number of services as it does now?
- c2_zr1 Some people feel that the government in Washington should see to it that every person has a job and a good standard of living. Suppose these people are at one end of a scale, at point 1. Others think the government should just let each person get ahead on their own. Suppose these people are at the other end, at point 7. And of course, some other people have opinions somewhere in between, at points 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this?
- c2_w7 As you may know, about 10 years ago the federal government cut income taxes for Americans at all income levels through 2010. In December 2010 the tax cuts were extended until 2012. Do you think the tax cuts should have been extended for all income levels, extended only for incomes under \$250,000, or not extended at all?
- c2_zk3 Do you favor, oppose, or neither favor nor oppose the government trying to make this income difference (income inequality) smaller?

Scale Reliability Coefficient: .676; Standard Deviation .68

Racial Resentment

- c2_zgg1 Irish, Italians, Jewish and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same without any special favors.
- c2_zgg2 Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for blacks to work their way out of the lower class.
- c2_zgg3 Over the past few years, blacks have gotten less than they deserve.
- c2_zgg4 It's really a matter of some people not trying hard enough;; if blacks would only try harder they could be just as well off as whites.

Scale Reliability Coefficient: .795; Standard Deviation .75

Unauthorized Immigration Anxiety

- c2_zb1 Which comes closest to your view about what government policy should be toward unauthorized immigrants now living in the United States? Should the government
 - Make all unauthorized immigrants felons and send them back to their home country.
 - Have a guest worker program that allows unauthorized immigrants to remain in the United States in order to work, but only for a limited amount of time.
 - Allow unauthorized immigrants to remain in the United States and eventually qualify for U. S. citizenship, but only if they meet certain requirements like paying back taxes and fines, learning English, and passing background checks.
 - Allow unauthorized immigrants to remain in the United States and eventually qualify for U. S. citizenship, without penalties.

APPENDIX D

CBS/*New York Times* April 2010 National Survey

Manifest Variables Included in Latent Class Regression Model

- If you had to choose, would you rather have a smaller government providing fewer services, or a bigger government providing more services?
- Do you think it is a good idea or a bad idea to raise income taxes on households that make more than \$250,000 a year in order to help provide health insurance for people who do not already have it?
- In recent years, do you think too much has been made of the problems facing black people, too little has been made, or is it about right?
- According to the Constitution, American Presidents must be "natural born citizens." Some people say Barack Obama was not born in the United States, but was born in another country. Do you think Barack Obama was born in the United States, or do you think he was born in another country?
- In general, do you think the policies of the Obama administration favor whites over blacks, favor blacks over whites, or do they treat both groups the same?
- Which comes closest to your view? Gay couples should be allowed to legally marry, or gay couples should be allowed to form civil unions but not legally marry, or there should be no legal recognition of a gay couple's relationship?
- Which of these comes closest to your view? Abortion should be generally available to those who want it, abortion should be available but under stricter limits than it is now, abortion should not be permitted?

APPENDIX E

Activist Information

Between 2010 and 2014 53 interviews were conducted with tea party activists in California, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington, and the District of Columbia.

State	Gender	Race	Age Range	Occupation	Interview Method
California	Male	White	40s	Computer/IT	Phone
California	Female	White	50s	Small Business Owner	In-Person
California	Female	Hispanic	60s	Small Business Owner	Phone
Florida	Male	Hispanic	30s	Non-Profit	In-Person
Florida	Male	White	40s	Small Business Owner/Mortgage Broker	Phone
Georgia	Female	White	40s	Computer Programmer	Phone
Kentucky	Female	White	30s	Small Business Owner	Phone
Kentucky	Male	White	30s	Business	Phone
Kentucky	Male	White	30s	Student	Phone
Kentucky	Male	White	70s	Doctor	Phone
Minnesota	Male	White	30s	Finance	Phone
New Jersey	Male	African-American	40s	Activist	In-Person
New Jersey	Female	Hispanic	40s	Homemaker	In-Person
New Jersey	Male	White	40s	Small Business Owner	In-Person
New Jersey	Male	White	40s	Finance	In-Person
New Jersey	Male	White	50s	International Business	In-Person
New Jersey	Female	Hispanic	50s	Homemaker	Phone
New Jersey	Male	White	50s	Manufacturing Manager	In-Person
New Jersey	Male	White	50s	Unemployed	In-Person
New Jersey	Male	White	50s	Business Management	In-Person
New Jersey	Male	White	50s	Project Manager	In-Person
New Jersey	Male	White	60s	Electrical Engineering	In-Person
New Jersey	Male	White	60s	Computers	In-Person
New Jersey	Female	White	60s	Educator	In-Person
New York	Male	African-American	40s	Media	In-Person
North Carolina	Female	Asian/White	50s	Construction Surveyor	Phone
Ohio	Male	White	30s	Business Management	Phone
Ohio	Male	White	60s	Retired	Email
Pennsylvania	Female	White	30s	Homemaker/Small Business Owner	In-Person
Pennsylvania	Male	White	40s	Small Business Owner	In-Person
Pennsylvania	Female	White	40s	Homemaker	In-Person
Pennsylvania	Female	White	40s	Medical Field	In-Person
Pennsylvania	Female	White	40s	Medical Field	In-Person
Pennsylvania	Male	White	40s	Working Class	In-Person
Pennsylvania	Male	White	50s	Business Management	In-Person
Pennsylvania	Male	White	50s	Nurse	In-Person
Pennsylvania	Male	White	60s	Sales, of Manufacturing Products	In-Person
Pennsylvania	Male	White	70s	Retired	Phone
Tennessee	Male	White	50s	Retired	Phone
Texas	Male	White	30s	Activst	Phone
Texas	Male	White	40s	Attorney	Phone
Texas	Male	White	50s	Business Management	In-Person
Texas	Male	White	50s	Small Business Owner	Phone
Utah	Female	White	30s	Recruiter	In-Person
Virginia	Female	White	40s	Computer Programmer	Phone
Virginia	Male	White	40s	Health Care	Phone
Virginia	Male	White	70s	Retired	Phone
Virginia (Appalachia)	Male	White	40s	Coal Surveyor/Small Business Owner	In-Person
Virginia (Appalachia)	Male	White	60s	Famer	In-Person
Virginia (Appalachia)	Male	White	70s	Retired	In-Person
Washington	Female	White	30s	Writer	Phone
Washington	Male	White	60s	Small Business Owner	Email
DC	Male	White	30s	Journalism	Phone

APPENDIX F

Virginia tea party Convention Entrance Poll Results

		TP Conservative (52%)	TP Libertarian (48%)	Total
Role of Government	The less govt the better	98%	99%	98%
	There are more things govt should be doing	2%	1%	2%
	We need a strong government to handle today's complex economic problems	4%	1%	2%
	The free market can handle these problems without govt being involved	96%	99%	95%
	The govt should promote traditional values in society	100%	0%	50%
	The government should not favor any particular set of values	0%	100%	45%
Social Tolerance	"We should be more tolerant of people who choose to live according to their own moral standards, even if they are very different from our own."			
	<i>NET Agree</i>	39%	62%	50%
	<i>NET Disagree</i>	44%	19%	30%
	Strongly Agree	13%	38%	25%
	Somewhat Agree	26%	24%	25%
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	15%	16%	16%
	Somewhat Disagree	21%	10%	15%
	Strongly Disagree	23%	9%	15%
Locus of Control	Which do you think so more important?			
	Some people say that people get ahead by their own hard work	98%	96%	97%
	Others say that lucky breaks or help from other people are more important	2%	4%	3%
Potential Sources of Mobilization	I'm worried that in the future my taxes will go up dramatically to pay for today's government spending	87%	81%	84%
	I'm worried that the next generation's standard of living will be lower than mine	84%	81%	83%
	I'm angry at Washington	74%	78%	76%
	I have a close friend or family member who is unemployed	36%	33%	34%
	I'm a small business owner	29%	24%	26%
	The financial crisis has caused my family severe financial distress	21%	20%	21%
	I'm unemployed	8%	10%	9%
Tea Party Movement Goals	Which <u>Two</u> Best Describe Goals of the Tea Party Movement?			
	Restore Respect for the Constitution	70%	64%	68%
	Reduce federal spending and the national debt	61%	62%	62%
	Stop our country's slide toward socialism	44%	39%	41%
	Change the political culture in Washington	13%	12%	13%
	Send a message that two parties don't represent views	9%	12%	10%
	Protest the performance of Obama and Dems in Congress	6%	1%	4%
	Protest the performance of Republicans in Congress	2%	0%	2%
	Hostile take-over of the Republican Party	1%	2%	1%
	Partisan Efficacy	Which party has the best ideas for reforming and fixing government?		
Republicans		35%	20%	28%
Democrats		0%	0%	0%
Neither		65%	80%	72%

APPENDIX F (Cont.)
Washington DC Tax Day tea party Entrance Poll

		TP Conservative (52%)	TP Libertarian (48%)	Total (100%)
Role of Government	Govt is trying to do too many things best left to individuals and businesses	99%	98%	99%
	Govt should do more to solve country's problems	1%	2%	1%
	Govt should prioritize cutting taxes and spending	93%	92%	93%
	Govt should prioritize ensuring vital services like education and public safety are fully funded	7%	8%	7%
	The govt should promote traditional values in society	100%	0%	52%
	The government should not favor any particular set of values	0%	100%	48%
Potential Sources of Mobilization	I'm scared about the direction our country is going	85%	77%	81%
	I want to send a message to both political parties	81%	75%	78%
	I'm worried that the next generation's standard of living will be lower than mine	80%	71%	76%
	I'm angry at Washington	72%	65%	69%
	I have a close friend or family member who is unemployed	53%	49%	51%
	I'm a small business owner	32%	30%	31%
	The housing crisis has caused my family severe financial distress	17%	14%	16%
President Obama	"Barack Obama is pursuing a socialist agenda"			
	NET Agree	90%	79%	85%
	NET Disagree	6%	13%	9%
	Strongly Agree	84%	64%	75%
	Somewhat Agree	6%	15%	10%
	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	1%	2%	2%
	Somewhat Disagree	1%	3%	2%
Strongly Disagree	5%	10%	7%	
Tea Party Candidate	If Congressional elections held today, would you vote for...			
	The Democratic candidate	0%	2%	1%
	The Republican candidate	29%	25%	27%
	The Tea Party candidate	31%	30%	30%
	None of these	2%	4%	3%
	Don't Know	26%	30%	27%
Refused	13%	10%	12%	
Partisan Efficacy	Which party has the best ideas for reforming and fixing government?			
	Republicans	50%	35%	43%
	Democrats	1%	2%	1%
	Neither	46%	60%	53%
	Don't Know/Refused	3%	3%	3%
Best Represents Tea Party	Republican Party-NET WELL	57%	43%	50%
	Not At All Well	4%	6%	5%
	Not So Well	32%	42%	37%
	Very Well	49%	37%	43%
	Extremely Well	8%	6%	7%
	Libertarian Party-NET WELL	52%	64%	57%
	Not At All Well	5%	3%	4%
	Not So Well	28%	23%	25%
	Very Well	39%	40%	39%
	Extremely Well	13%	24%	18%
	Democratic Party-NET WELL	0%	2%	2%
	Not At All Well	79%	76%	78%
	Not So Well	12%	8%	10%
Very Well	0%	1%	1%	
Extremely Well	0%	1%	1%	

Note: Total excludes the 11% identified as non-tea party supporters included in the entrance poll

APPENDIX G

Demographic Comparison of tea party Clusters

		DC Tax Day Tea Party Activists		Convention Tea Party Activists	
		Cluster 1: TP Libertarian	Cluster 2: TP Conservative	Cluster 1: TP Libertarian	Cluster 2: TP Conservative
		48%	52%	48%	52%
Sex	Male	67%	60%	61%	58%
	Female	33%	40%	40%	42%
Age	18-24	10%	8%	6%	4%
	25-34	16%	9%	7%	7%
	35-44	16%	15%	12%	6%
	45-54	27%	25%	31%	30%
	55-64	19%	33%	29%	38%
	65-74	9%	8%	12%	14%
	75+	3%	2%	2%	1%
Race/Ethnicity	Caucasian	86%	85%	94%	91%
	African-American	4%	0%	2%	1%
	Hispanic/Latino	3%	4%	1%	<1%
	Asian/Other	6%	9%	3%	8%
Education	< High School	1%	0%	<1%	1%
	High School Graduate	14%	10%	8%	10%
	Some College	28%	30%	32%	28%
	College Graduate	38%	31%	28%	38%
	Post Graduate Study	20%	28%	32%	24%
Income	<\$100K	59%	56%	60%	56%
	\$100K+	31%	38%	40%	45%
	< \$20,000K	5%	1%	8%	4%
	\$20K-\$39K	11%	8%	8%	10%
	\$40K-\$59K	16%	16%	15%	13%
	\$60K-\$99K	27%	31%	29%	29%
Entrepreneurial	Small Business Owner	30%	32%	24%	29%
Religiosity	<i>Attend Religious Services...</i>				
	More than once a week	9%	17%	13%	18%
	Once a week	28%	31%	20%	32%
	A few times a month	9%	20%	15%	15%
	A few times a year	30%	23%	31%	26%
Never	24%	9%	20%	9%	
Partisanship	Republican	40%	57%	39%	63%
	Independent	42%	32%	44%	29%
	Democrat	3%	1%	<1%	<1%
	Something Else	15%	9%	16%	7%
Ideology Self ID	Liberal/Progressive			2%	<1%
	Moderate			4%	4%
	Libertarian			37%	11%
	Conservative			58%	85%
<i>N</i>		186	198	284	306

Source: TargetPoint DC Tax Day Tea Party Protest, April 2010, Virginia Tea Party Convention, October 2010.

Note: Ideology not asked of Washington DC activist survey.

APPENDIX H

Items Used to Construct Issue Indices

Virginia tea party Convention Entrance Poll, October 2010

Economics/Govt Size Index

Level of concern: health care
Level of concern: cutting fed government spending/national debt
Level of concern: government intrusion into personal lives
Level of concern: reducing government size
Level of concern: bailouts
Level of concern: economic stimulus package
Level of concern: earmarks
Level of concern: taxation, current levels
Level of concern: fed government interference with states' medical marijuana law
Level of concern: job outsourcing
Scale reliability coefficient: 0.78

Social/Cultural Index

Level of concern: moral direction of country
Level of concern: allow gay marriage
Level of concern: # of abortions
Level of concern: legal status to illegal immigrants
Level of concern: Mosque
Level of concern: job outsourcing
Scale reliability coefficient: 0.82

DC Tax Day tea party Protest, April 2010

Economics/Govt Size Index

Level of anger: The growing national debt
Level of anger: The rate of growth of government
Level of anger: Government intrusion into personal lives
Level of anger: Recently passed healthcare reform
Level of anger: Current levels of taxation
Level of anger: Congressional earmarks
Level of anger: Government bailouts of private industry
Level of anger: The economic stimulus package passed by Congress
Scale reliability coefficient: 0.93

Social/Cultural Index

Level of anger: The moral direction of the country
Level of anger: Courts granting same sex couples the right to marry
Level of anger: The number of abortions performed each year
Level of anger: Proposals that would grant legal status to illegal aliens
Scale reliability coefficient: 0.85

Foreign Policy Index

Level of anger: Plans to try terrorists in civil courts
Level of anger: Obama's handling of the wars in Afghanistan and
Level of anger: Growing competition from China
Scale reliability coefficient: 0.60

APPENDIX I

Descriptive Statistics Comparing Tea Party Activists with National Tea Party Sympathizers

	Tea Party Supporters		
	Activists		Sympathizers
	FreedomWorks	YourMorals	CBS/NYT
Male	60%	68%	60%
Female	40%	32%	40%
Democrat	1%	4%	3%
Independent	31%	31%	35%
Republican	59%	44%	57%
Other	5%	13%	.
DK/Refused	4%	7%	5%
Liberal	<1%	6%	2%
Moderate	2%	7%	19%
Conservative	88%	53%	79%
Libertarian	10%	35%	-
Weekly +	33%	8%	40%
Almost Every Week	19%	10%	11%
Monthly	8%	7%	11%
About Yearly	26%	30%	21%
Never	13%	45%	16%
18-29	4%	43%	6%
30-44	15%	24%	17%
45-64	52%	25%	45%
65+	29%	9%	31%
N	12,489	2,443	775

Note: FreedomWorks/YourMorals 2012 Survey;
CBS/NYT 2010 National Survey

APPENDIX J

FreedomWorks/YourMorals Survey September-October 2012 Moral Foundation Scale Items

Question setup for assessing levels of agreement with moral judgment statements: "Please read the following sentences and indicate your level of agreement or disagreement." Question setup for moral relevance questions: "When you decide whether something is right or wrong, to what extent are the following considerations relevant to your thinking?" Respondents provided level of agreement or moral relevance on a Likert scale of 1 to 6.

Proportionality

- The world would be a better place if we let unsuccessful people fail and suffer the consequences
- People who produce more should be rewarded more than those who just tried hard.
- People who are successful have a right to enjoy their wealth as they see fit.

Scale Reliability Coefficient: $\alpha = .73$

Liberty

- I think everyone should be free to do as they choose so long as they don't infringe on the freedom of others.
- People should be free to do dangerous and self-destructive things, as long as they don't put others at risk.
- Our laws should aim to improve public health, even if that sometimes prevents people from doing what they want to do.

(REVERSE SCORED)

Scale Reliability Coefficient: $\alpha = .54$

Loyalty

- Whether or not someone showed a lack of loyalty.
- Whether or not someone did something to betray his or her group
- Whether or not someone's actions showed love for his or her country

Scale Reliability Coefficient: $\alpha = .79$

Authority

- Respect for authority is something all children need to learn
- Whether or not an action caused chaos or disorder.
- Whether or not someone showed a lack of respect for authority

Scale Reliability Coefficient: $\alpha = .78$

Sanctity

- Whether or not someone violated standards of purity and decency
- Chastity is an important and valuable virtue
- Whether or not someone acted in a way that God would approve of.

Scale Reliability Coefficient: $\alpha = .88$

Harm

- Whether or not someone suffered emotionally.
- Whether or not someone cared for someone weak or vulnerable.
- Compassion for those who are suffering is the most crucial virtue.

Scale Reliability Coefficient: $\alpha = .74$

Limited Government

- Some people say the less government the better, others say that there are more things that government should be doing. Which comes closer to your view?
- Some people say we need a strong government to handle today's complex economic problems, others say that people would be better able to handle today's problems within a free market with less government involvement. Which comes closer to your view?

Scale Reliability Coefficient: $\alpha = .88$

Appendix K
Mean Endorsement of Moral Foundations
Reporting Mean Z-Scores, Comparison of Means Tests
Among Tea Party Supporters and Groups of Non-Supporters

**Mean Endorsement of Moral Foundation Scales Among Tea Party and Non-Tea Party Supporters;
Comparison of Means Tests**

Sample: FreedomWorks

Z-Scores	Tea Party				Not Tea Party				Comparison of Means Test					
	Supporters		Conservatives		Moderates		Liberals		Tea Party v Non-TP Conservatives		Tea Party v Non-TP Moderates		Tea Party v Non-TP Liberals	
	N=12454	M (SD)	N=247	M (SD)	N=87	M (SD)	N=99	M (SD)	t(12699)	t(12539)	t(12551)	t(12702)	t(12546)	t(12552)
Proportionality	0.73	(.51)	-0.07	(.73)	-0.49	(.77)	-1.04	(.82)	t(12699)=-14.07***	t(12539)=-15.89***	t(12551)=-27.46***	t(12702)=-7.27***	t(12546)=-2.99***	t(12552)=-5.7***
Liberty	0.54	(.74)	-0.27	(.78)	-0.19	(.64)	-0.35	(.68)	t(12709)=1.09	t(12566)=-3.74***	t(12576)=-11.79***	t(12709)=1.09	t(12566)=-3.74***	t(12576)=-11.79***
Loyalty	0.79	(.72)	0.40	(.74)	0.12	(.91)	-0.51	(.90)	t(12728)=-3.56***	t(12563)=-10.91***	t(12573)=-22.62***	t(12728)=-3.56***	t(12563)=-10.91***	t(12573)=-22.62***
Authority	0.78	(.61)	0.43	(.66)	0.12	(.87)	-0.33	(.92)	t(12710)=2.12*	t(12546)=-0.08	t(12556)=1.7*	t(12710)=2.12*	t(12546)=-0.08	t(12556)=1.7*
Sanctity	0.88	(.55)	0.38	(.66)	-0.14	(.89)	-0.76	(.84)						
Care	0.74	(.80)	0.17	(.79)	0.05	(1.02)	0.20	(.73)						

Sample: YourMorals

Z-Scores	Tea Party				Not Tea Party				Comparison of Means Test					
	Supporters		Conservatives		Moderates		Liberals		Tea Party v Non-TP Conservatives		Tea Party v Non-TP Moderates		Tea Party v Non-TP Liberals	
	N=2439	M (SD)	N=724	M (SD)	N=925	M (SD)	N=4032	M (SD)	t(3362)	t(3361)	t(3366)	t(3367)	t(3368)	t(3364)
Proportionality	0.73	(.65)	-0.35	(.65)	-0.56	(.65)	-0.96	(.70)	t(3161)=-20.9***	t(3362)=-31.51***	t(3469)=-68.19***	t(3161)=-20.9***	t(3362)=-31.51***	t(3469)=-68.19***
Liberty	0.54	(.70)	-0.37	(.68)	-0.29	(.60)	-0.28	(.58)	t(3160)=-21.79***	t(3361)=-21.69***	t(6470)=-33.97***	t(3160)=-21.79***	t(3361)=-21.69***	t(6470)=-33.97***
Loyalty	0.79	(.85)	-0.15	(.68)	-0.39	(.67)	-0.68	(.67)	t(3160)=3.50***	t(3366)=-3.76***	t(6470)=-21.52***	t(3160)=3.50***	t(3366)=-3.76***	t(6470)=-21.52***
Authority	0.78	(.90)	-0.06	(.62)	-0.27	(.64)	-0.68	(.72)	t(3161)=7.38***	t(3367)=1.61	t(6474)=-17.42***	t(3161)=7.38***	t(3367)=1.61	t(6474)=-17.42***
Sanctity	0.88	(.89)	-0.18	(.72)	-0.56	(.72)	-1.02	(.64)	t(3163)=1.92	t(3368)=-9.37***	t(6476)=-40.32***	t(3163)=1.92	t(3368)=-9.37***	t(6476)=-40.32***
Care	0.74	(.93)	-0.21	(.79)	-0.08	(.69)	0.17	(.65)	t(3157)=4.75***	t(3364)=9.25***	t(6469)=28.19***	t(3157)=4.75***	t(3364)=9.25***	t(6469)=28.19***

Note: Comparison of means tests comparing tea party and non-tea party endorsements of moral foundations. Results are shown for FreedomWorks and YourMorals samples separately.

Appendix L
Mean Endorsement of Moral Foundations
Reporting Mean Z-Scores, Comparison of Means Tests
Tea Partiers Who Favor Limited Govt and Tea Partiers Who Favor Active Govt

Sample: FreedomWorks							
Z-Scores		Tea Party + Limited Govt		Tea Party + Active Govt		Comparison of Means Test	
Foundation	α	N= 12153		N= 213		Diff	
		M	(SD)	M	(SD)		
Proportionality	0.73	0.41	(.50)	-0.15	(.72)	-.56	t(12358)= -15.94***
Liberty	0.54	0.09	(.73)	-0.37	(.71)	-.46	t(12362)= -9.05***
Loyalty	0.79	0.34	(.72)	0.47	(.66)	.12	t(12364)= 2.51**
Authority	0.78	0.36	(.62)	0.43	(.62)	.07	t(12384)= 1.60
Sanctity	0.88	0.50	(.55)	0.45	(.59)	-.05	t(12381)= -1.41
Care	0.74	0.05	(.80)	0.31	(.75)	.25	t(12364)= 4.60***

Sample: YourMorals							
Z-Scores		Tea Party + Limited Govt		Tea Party + Active Govt		Comparison of Means Test	
Foundation	α	N= 2092		N= 331		Diff	
		M	(SD)	M	(SD)		
Proportionality	0.73	0.34	(.55)	-0.52	(.69)	-.87	t(2424)= -25.58***
Liberty	0.54	0.36	(.67)	-0.27	(.61)	-.63	t(2423)= -15.90***
Loyalty	0.79	-0.28	(.86)	-0.20	(.75)	.08	t(2423)= 1.60
Authority	0.78	-0.35	(.92)	-0.12	(.71)	.23	t(2424)= 4.35***
Sanctity	0.88	-0.23	(.90)	-0.35	(.76)	-.12	t(2425)= -2.2*
Care	0.74	-0.42	(.95)	-0.18	(.77)	.24	t(2421)= 4.35***

Note: Comparison of means tests comparing endorsements of moral foundations for tea party supporters who favor limited government and tea party supporters who favor active government. Results are shown for FreedomWorks and YourMorals samples separately.

APPENDIX M
Predicting Tea Party Support for Limited Government
Regressions on Moral Foundations

Logit Regression	FreedomWorks Sample						YourMorals Sample					
	1a	2a	3a	4a	5a	6a	1b	2b	3b	4b	5b	6b
	Tea Party Prefers Limited Govt	Tea Party Prefers Limited Govt	Tea Party Prefers Limited Govt	Tea Party Prefers Limited Govt	Tea Party Prefers Limited Govt	Tea Party Prefers Limited Govt	Tea Party Prefers Limited Govt	Tea Party Prefers Limited Govt	Tea Party Prefers Limited Govt	Tea Party Prefers Limited Govt	Tea Party Prefers Limited Govt	Tea Party Prefers Limited Govt
Proportionality	1.274*** (15.18)	1.467*** (18.47)	1.467*** (18.50)	1.459*** (18.18)	1.458*** (18.23)	1.207*** (13.91)	1.334*** (16.59)	1.997*** (26.88)	1.928*** (25.89)	2.045*** (27.08)	1.943*** (25.35)	1.308*** (15.74)
Liberty	0.536*** (6.83)					0.605*** (7.39)	1.316*** (16.31)					1.425*** (16.19)
Loyalty		-0.00535 (0.07)				0.0111 (0.11)		-0.0888 (1.67)				0.062 (0.89)
Authority			-0.0578 (0.73)			-0.148 (1.33)			-0.287*** (5.46)			-0.164* (2.30)
Sanctity				0.352*** (4.21)		0.671*** (6.38)				0.135* (2.20)		0.575*** (7.49)
Care					-0.0844 (1.18)	-0.220* (2.43)						-0.152** (3.05)
Age	0.232*** (5.17)	0.174*** (3.93)	0.178*** (4.03)	0.146** (3.28)	0.180*** (4.08)	0.218*** (4.74)	0.387*** (10.87)	0.315*** (9.46)	0.337*** (10.01)	0.307*** (9.18)	0.327*** (9.71)	0.383*** (10.52)
Male	0.231* (2.09)	0.292*** (2.67)	0.281* (2.56)	0.351** (3.18)	0.265* (2.40)	0.242* (2.13)	0.0624 (0.64)	0.295** (3.17)	0.213* (2.25)	0.338*** (3.6)	0.271** (2.90)	0.106 (1.05)
Born Again	0.504*** (4.11)	0.374** (3.12)	0.381** (3.17)	0.22 (1.74)	0.391** (3.25)	0.289* (2.22)	0.965*** (7.34)	0.748*** (5.99)	0.816*** (6.52)	0.647*** (4.87)	0.781*** (6.24)	0.611*** (4.31)
Ideology	0.637*** (13.82)	0.576*** (12.88)	0.585*** (12.81)	0.504*** (10.61)	0.583*** (13.18)	0.547*** (10.88)	1.010*** (22.94)	0.836*** (21.52)	0.886*** (22.17)	0.783*** (19.27)	0.817*** (21.86)	0.886*** (18.81)
Constant	-2.273*** (8.09)	-1.756*** (6.56)	-1.806*** (6.63)	-1.346*** (4.75)	-1.800*** (6.77)	-1.800*** (5.99)	-6.463*** (27.75)	-5.489*** (26.42)	-5.814*** (26.96)	-5.133*** (22.94)	-5.428*** (27.56)	-5.667*** (22.14)
N	6652	6646	6654	6654	6644	6641	7162	7157	7162	7163	7155	7154

Note: FreedomWorks/YourMoral 2012 Survey; Logit Regression, t statistics in parentheses, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. DV=1 includes tea party supporters who prefer limited government, DV=0 includes everyone else in the sample.

APPENDIX N

Reason-Rupe/Princeton Survey Research Associations 2014 Survey

For proportionality, individualism, and liberty scales, the following setup was read: Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements, using a scale from 1 to 7 in which 1 means you totally disagree and 7 means you totally agree.

Proportionality

- People should be allowed to keep what they produce, even if there are others with greater needs.
- The world would be a better place if we let unsuccessful people fail and suffer the consequences.

Scale Reliability Coefficient: $\alpha = .41$

Individualism

- If people work hard they almost always get what they want
- Even if people try hard they often cannot reach their goals (REV)

Scale Reliability Coefficient: $\alpha = .31$

Race

- In recent years, do you think too much has been made of the problems facing black people, too little has been made, or is it about right? (Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?)
- It has been reported that some police officers stop motorists or pedestrians of certain racial or ethnic groups because the officers believe that these groups are more likely than others to commit certain types of crimes. Do you approve or disapprove of this practice by the police? (Do you strongly or somewhat (dis)approve?)

Scale Reliability Coefficient: $\alpha = .44$

Liberty

- People should be free to do dangerous and self-destructive things, as long as they don't put others at risk.
- Sometimes the government needs to make laws that keep people from hurting themselves (REV)

Scale Reliability Coefficient: $\alpha = .35$

Limited Government

- If you had to choose, would you rather have a smaller government providing fewer services, or a larger government providing more services?
- Do you favor raising US corporate tax rates, keeping US corporate tax rates where they are now, lowering US corporate tax rates to match those of other industrialized countries, or lowering US corporate tax rates below those of other industrialized countries?

Scale Reliability Coefficient: $\alpha = .39$

Additional Hard Work Questions for Confirmatory Factor Analysis

- A distaste for hard work usually reflects a weakness of character.

APPENDIX O.1
Predicting Tea Party Social Conservatives
Regressions on Measures of Principled Conservatism and Racial Attitudes

	1a	2a	3a	4a	5a	6a
	Tea Party Supporter; Prefers Limited Government					
	Social Conservative	Social Conservative	Social Conservative	Social Conservative	Social Conservative	Social Conservative
	<i>43% of Tea Party Supporters</i>					
Principled Conservatism						
Proportionality	2.181** (3.01)			2.015** (2.93)		1.791* (2.51)
Liberty		1.429** (3.20)			1.466** (3.12)	1.186* (2.13)
Racial Attitudes						
Racial Anxiety			1.330** (3.03)	0.989* (2.41)	1.389** (3.06)	1.068* (2.54)
Male	0.36 (1.14)	0.31 (0.99)	0.434 (1.36)	0.334 (1.02)	0.251 (0.76)	0.199 (0.59)
Republican	2.671*** (4.41)	2.897*** (4.94)	2.768*** (4.63)	2.513*** (4.12)	2.676*** (4.52)	2.474*** (4.06)
Independent	1.641** (2.87)	1.809** (3.16)	1.761** (3.04)	1.523** (2.64)	1.655** (2.85)	1.477* (2.52)
Evangelical	0.758** (2.69)	0.808** (3.05)	0.744** (2.76)	0.734** (2.63)	0.789** (2.94)	0.790** (2.81)
Education	0.0234 (0.15)	-0.0108 (0.07)	0.0609 (0.38)	0.0588 (0.40)	0.0476 (0.29)	0.0492 (0.33)
Age	0.0188** (3.10)	0.0203*** (3.53)	0.0176** (3.02)	0.0174** (2.81)	0.0180** (2.97)	0.0175** (2.80)
Nonwhite	-2.330*** (3.40)	-2.442*** (3.47)	-2.339*** (3.41)	-2.303*** (3.32)	-2.364*** (3.36)	-2.363*** (3.32)
Middle Income	0.0998 (0.31)	0.238 (0.71)	0.153 (0.46)	0.0628 (0.20)	0.185 (0.55)	0.0999 (0.31)
High Income	0.0271 (0.07)	0.314 (0.69)	0.17 (0.39)	-0.0346 (0.09)	0.216 (0.49)	0.0297 (0.07)
Constant	-6.721*** (10.20)	-6.283*** (8.70)	-6.383*** (9.49)	-7.063*** (9.81)	-6.929*** (9.44)	-7.433*** (9.92)
N	961	961	961	961	961	961
<i>Linear Combinations</i>				Proportionality-Race	Liberty-Race	Proportionality-Race
<i>Test: [KEY VARIABLE]-</i>				Robust: 1.08;	Robust: 1.08;	Robust: 1.08;
<i>RACE Z Statistic</i>				Non Robust: 2.50**	Non Robust: 2.50**	Non Robust: 2.50**

Source: Reason-Rupe/Princeton Survey Research Associates 2014 Survey; Logit Regression, t statistics in parentheses, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. Clustered standard errors by state. Tea partiers identified as “social conservatives” were those who thought government should promote traditional values in society, “libertarians” were tea partiers who thought government should not promote traditional values in society.

APPENDIX O.2
Predicting Tea Party Libertarians
Regressions on Measures of Principled Conservatism and Racial Attitudes

	1b	2b	3b	4b	5b	6b
	Tea Party Supporter; Prefers Limited Government					
	Libertarian	Libertarian	Libertarian	Libertarian	Libertarian	Libertarian
	<i>29% of Tea Party Supporters</i>					
Principled Conservatism						
Proportionality	2.205*** (4.25)			2.167*** (4.65)		1.905*** (4.37)
Liberty		1.516** (3.05)			1.512** (3.05)	1.159* (2.38)
Racial Attitudes						
Racial Anxiety			0.579 (1.01)	0.173 (0.32)	0.555 (0.98)	0.194 (0.36)
Male	0.844** (2.75)	0.812** (2.68)	0.920** (2.80)	0.834** (2.62)	0.772* (2.43)	0.730* (2.37)
Republican	0.662 (1.18)	0.882 (1.63)	0.897 (1.71)	0.635 (1.12)	0.787 (1.48)	0.564 (1.01)
Independent	0.575 (1.01)	0.669 (1.24)	0.717 (1.31)	0.556 (0.94)	0.609 (1.09)	0.481 (0.82)
Evangelical	0.255 (0.71)	0.339 (0.96)	0.29 (0.81)	0.248 (0.67)	0.316 (0.87)	0.284 (0.76)
Education	0.210* (2.06)	0.210* (2.02)	0.238* (1.99)	0.215 (1.95)	0.230* (1.96)	0.217* (1.96)
Age	0.0197* (2.31)	0.0243** (3.01)	0.0213** (2.61)	0.0194* (2.25)	0.0234** (2.84)	0.0213* (2.48)
Nonwhite	0.0879 (0.18)	0.00387 (0.01)	0.00764 (0.02)	0.0991 (0.20)	0.0554 (0.11)	0.119 (0.25)
Middle Income	-0.635 (1.55)	-0.544 (1.42)	-0.582 (1.42)	-0.638 (1.53)	-0.549 (1.37)	-0.596 (1.45)
High Income	-0.283 (0.69)	-0.074 (0.18)	-0.134 (0.32)	-0.293 (0.69)	-0.116 (0.28)	-0.259 (0.61)
Constant	-6.250*** (7.50)	-6.038*** (7.22)	-5.619*** (6.92)	-6.296*** (7.46)	-6.256*** (7.31)	-6.699*** (7.82)
N	961	961	961	961	961	961
<i>Linear Combinations Test:</i>						
[KEY VARIABLE]-RACE Z				N/A	N/A	N/A
Statistic						

Source: Reason-Rupe/Princeton Survey Research Associates 2014 Survey; Logit Regression, t statistics in parentheses, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. Clustered standard errors by state. Tea partiers identified as “social conservatives” were those who thought government should promote traditional values in society, “libertarians” were tea partiers who thought government should not promote traditional values in society

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