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# We're "Fed" Up and Tea'd Off: Frame Analysis of the Tea Party Movement

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We're "Fed" Up and Tea'd Off:  
Frame Analysis of the Tea Party Movement

By  
Daniel P. Flaaen

A thesis submitted in partial  
fulfillment of the requirement for the  
degree of Master of Arts at  
Minnesota State University – Mankato

Mankato, Minnesota  
2012

We're "Fed" Up and Tea'd Off: Frame Analysis of the Tea Party Movement

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"Fed" Up and Tea'd Off: Frame Analysis of the Tea Party movement.  
Flaen, Daniel P., M.A. Minnesota State University – Mankato. 2012. Pages

There is a new wave sweeping American politics. Beginning in 2009 as the people's movement, the Tea Party is taking American politics by storm. Hoping to change the way the American public thinks about American politics, the Tea Party is using some innovative tactics. Utilizing the only official Tea Party publication, an analysis of the publication's first year was done to identify the frames that were being put forth by the organization to gain support. By using the cross over frame, the us vs. them frame and the threat frame, the Tea Party hoped to resonate with a large population in the upcoming elections. Each of frames sought to bring the movement together for the 2012 elections. What was not clear was the movement's intentions after the election. Thus the movement needed to fashion their frames to make sure that they can live within those frames and still be successful. The movement must do this quickly as public support for the movement is beginning to dwindle.

## Table of Contents

## Chapters

I. “YOU CAN’T FIX STUPID BUT YOU CAN VOTE IT OUT”: TEA PARTY AND THE ELECTIONS.....	1
II. PATRIOTS ARE ON THE MARCH: ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL MOVEMENT THEORY.....	4
COLLECTIVE BEHAVIOR .....	5
RESOURCE MOBILIZATION .....	6
POLITICAL PROCESS .....	9
NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENT THEORY .....	10
SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION AND FRAMING.....	11
III. “WHAT’S IN YOUR WALLET. WAIT A SEC ... THAT’S MY WALLET !!!”: ANALYSIS OF THE TEA PARTY .....	21
BIRTH OF THE MOVEMENT .....	21
WHO ARE THE TEA PARTIERS? .....	23
WHAT DO THEY STAND FOR?.....	26
GOP CONNECTIONS .....	30
HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE MOVEMENT .....	32
IV. IF YOU’RE NOT OUTRAGED, YOU’RE NOT PAYING TAXES!: METHODS OF ANALYSIS.....	41
THE TEA PARTY REVIEW.....	41
MAGAZINE ANALYSIS .....	42
THE ANALYSIS PROCESS .....	45
ETHICAL CONCERNS.....	45
V. IF YOU THINK HEALTH CARE IS EXPENSIVE NOW, WAIT UNTIL IT’S FREE” FRAME ANALYSIS OF THE TEA PARTY .....	47
CROSSOVER FRAME.....	48
US VS. THEM FRAME.....	50
THREAT FRAME.....	55
VI. GOT MONEY?? DON’T LET THE GOVERNMENT KNOW: THEORIZING THE TEA PARTY MOVEMENT .....	61
FRAME COMPONENTS.....	61
THE TIMING OF THE MOVEMENT .....	71
EPILOGUE: CURRENT STATUS .....	75

APPENDIX: CODING FORM.....80  
WORKS CITED .....82  
TEA PARTY REVIEW ARTICLES .....87

## Chapter I

### *“You Can’t Fix Stupid But you Can vote it out’: Tea Party and the Elections*

“The American Taxpayers are the Jew’s for Obama’s Ovens”

“Cap Congress and Trade Obama back to Kenya”

“Obama Economics, Monkey see, Monkey Spend”

“Somewhere in Kenya, a village is missing his idiot.”

Tea Party Protest Signs

In 2009 a movement started that has been sweeping the nation ever since.

Frustrated at the established government this groups looks to not only change the elections, but the way we view politics all together. Typically American politics has been divided down two lines, Republican and Democrat, but this movement looks to shake up American politics. The Tea Party movement seemed to spring out of nowhere and is looking to take back American politics. Invoking a sense of frustration with the established government, the Tea Party looks to drive a change in the government back to the way it was meant to be. Using parts of a conservative ideology that has been seen in the United States, the Tea Party is going full steam ahead into the elections. With some success in smaller elections, the Tea Party has set its sights on the presidential election, hoping to oust current president Barack Obama.

With protests and rallies all over the country, the Tea Party hopes that in the 2012 election they will be able to make some changes to the government. Utilizing thousands of community-based organizations all over the United States and millions of members, the Tea Party seeks to change the American political landscape. Using signs, slogans,

commercials and magazine articles that are both mildly offensives and humorous, the Tea Party hopes to grab people's attention to show the American population what is going on in the government.

The Tea Party seeks arguments that resonate with, and will motivate the larger population in hopes that they will stand up against the established government and parties. Thus the use of magazines, television and radio make it crucial for the success of the Tea Party movement.

The movement hopes that by using these media outlets they will be successful by gaining support for their ideology. The Tea Party's ideology is nothing new; in fact the Tea Party ideology has been used before. Dating back as early as World War II, multiple organizations have tried to implement similar principles. These organizations have had both success and failure both in elections and society. Using principles and beliefs that have been both successful and unsuccessful, the Tea Party must be crafty to mobilize the populace around their ideology.

This study examined how the Tea Party used one of their feature publications to promote their ideology to gain support for their movement. This support from the general population was then used to gain resources to drive change within the political landscape. A content analysis of articles written in the Tea Party magazine during its first year of existence was done. Currently the Tea Party Review is the only official Tea Party magazine that is in publication. Only the magazine's articles that fit under certain criteria were used to see how they promote their principles in a way that will help gain them support. We will first begin by going over Framing Theory and will then examine the Tea Party movement and its principles. A discussion then examines the frames of the



Tea Party movement and how they fit into social movement literature. A discussion will follow that focuses on changes that the movement must make to be successful over the long term.

## **Chapter II**

### *Patriots Are On The March: Analysis of social movement theory*

Social movements begin when people in a society become so dissatisfied with the way their society is structured that they mobilize and protest. Social movement theory started with a functionalist ideology in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and viewed social movements as a challenge to the very institutions that create stability for the society. The conflict perspective grew out of challenges to the functionalist ideology, as did social movements. Social movements were seen as not a challenge to institutions of the society, but more to the relation of power and authority seen within the society. Near the turn of the century, social movements began to reject the notion of the rational actor model. The post-modern social constructionist ideology began to make significant contributions to the theories of social movements. Constructionist theorists developed framing theory which saw individuals formed around a collective identity and common beliefs about the greater society.

This section will focus on the development of social movement theory. Specifically I will focus on the theories of collective behavior, resource mobilization, political process, new social movement theory and framing theory. Framing theory will be the primary focus of this review of social movement theory as well as the primary focus of the study.

### *Collective Behavior*

Early social movement literature is based upon Smelser's collective behavior concept. Collective behavior refers "to the behavior of two or more individuals who are acting together collectively" (Smelser 1963). These variant strains come from established practices that the reactants see as an injustice and needs to be changed (Turner and Killian 1987/1997). This collective action is in response to a variation of strain. The more severe the strain, the greater the chance of collective behavior (Smelser 1963). This leads to feelings of uncertainty and a resolution to enact a change in their environment. Thus social movements emerge.

Collective behavior looks at social movements as irrational and undemocratic because "it abrogates institutional procedure intended to guarantee both majority choice and minority rights, and denies respect for principles of free competition and public discussion as the bases for compromising conflicting interest" (Kornhauser 1959/1997). This thought is outlined in the dominant mode of thought -functionalist theory – which prevailed throughout the early part of the 1900's. Functionalism's basic assumption is that every institution is created to fill some societal role and is ultimately needed for society to survive (Ritzer 2008).

Kornhauser's theory of mass society moved beyond the functionalist ideology and saw that it wasn't the institutions that individuals are rejecting, but rather their relationship to the established systems of authority. Individuals are alienated and isolated from each other. This feeling of political and social isolation is a prerequisite for protest

that hopes to drive change by attacking the leader and systems (Kornhauser 1959/1997). This attack is based upon the mass feeling of the crowd (Blumer 1969/1997).

The crowd that emerges in protest is what Blumer called an acting crowd (Blumer 1969/1997). An acting crowd gathers and has a presence or target for their actions (Blumer 1969/1997). LeBon (1969) cites three principles that a crowd must follow. First members temporarily abandon their identities for the identity of the larger crowd. Second, members of the crowd lose their sense of rationality and moral reasoning. Finally, the crowd will form around a leader who is charismatic and is able to appeal to the symbolic and emotional values of the crowd (LeBon 1969).

Collective behavior, mass society and collective groupings all look at crowd formation. The issue with these theories is that they don't address the motivations behind joining the crowd. Le Bon's crowd theory and how the crowd forms around a charismatic leader provides an answer.

### *Resource Mobilization*

An ideological shift occurred in the mid twentieth century. Theorists began to see flaws in the functionalist perspective. Harsh criticism of functionalist theory and how it glossed over conflict within the society led theorists to conflict theory. The development of conflict theory not only gave a new way of looking at the society, but also a new way of looking at social movements. Dahrendorf's theory of conflict stated that individuals occupy positions within a given society, which can hold power over others (Ritzer 2008).

Positions that hold power over others are referred to as superordinate positions. Groups that lack power over others are referred to as subordinate groups (Ritzer 2008). Subordinate groups look to change their group's status, while superordinate groups look to stay the same. Conflict theory refers to these groups as quasi-groups. Quasi-groups are those who hold positions that share the same interest, in this case power (Ritzer 2008). Conflict arises in the challenge for power within the structure. This transforms quasi-groups into conflict groups fighting over the same interest.

Dahrendorf's conflict theory brought change to social movement theory. Action isn't seen as an irrational rejection of societal systems, but rather as a rational mode in which people can change their societal positions. Resource mobilization draws from this perspective by rejecting the collective behavior model and views social movements "as normal, rational, institutional rooted, political challenges by aggrieved groups" (Buechler 1993). Movements are then viewed as rational, with discontent always present (Jenkins and Perrow 1977), but only mobilizing when there are adequate resources to implement and succeed with their goals.

Resource mobilization also throws out the collective behavior, mass society approach when looking at individuals. Resource mobilization no longer looks at individuals rejecting the democratic institutional procedures that guarantee both majority choice and minority rights (Kornhauser 1959/1997), but instead as members of a group that is not equally represented in the political and social realms of the society. Resource mobilization looked for a better way to explain motivation and saw the rational actor model as a perfect fit.

The rational actor model viewed individuals performing a cost benefit analysis (Ritzer 2008). This model formed around the economic model of exchange theory, where businesses perform the same cost benefit analysis. Resource mobilization uses it to view participants as rational actors who only participate in movements when the benefits outweighed the costs. Subordinate groups in conflict with superordinate groups might view the benefit of gaining authority as better than the cost of not having power.

Criticisms of resource mobilization and the rational actor model pose the free rider dilemma. They point to the dilemma of how to gain motivation to participate when the resulting good can't be withheld from anyone. Public goods are at the center of the free rider dilemma issue. The free rider dilemma states that actors will sit by and do nothing in a movement, while "others win the goal and then share the benefits" (Buechler 1993).

Thus social movements must address the free rider problem. Resource mobilization saw resources from individual members as important for the success of the movement. When movements form out of public good, it is extremely important they address the free rider problem. Many social movements may offer incentives as a way in which they can recruit members (Olson 1965). Incentives can also be used as a way to help the movement survive because they "often perish if they do nothing to further the interests of their members" (Olson 1965). Offering incentives then not only helps out the individual, but it increases the movement's ability to succeed.

Movements want to implement their goals in the most effective way. Social movements then draw on organizations as a way in which this can be done. Social

movement organizations are any “organization that identifies its goals with the preferences of social movements or a countermovement and attempts to implement those goals” (Buechler 1993). Movements may look to either join existing organizations, i.e. churches, or form their own organizations during movements, like the NAACP. These organizations may form alliances with other organizations that indentify with certain aspects of the movement. These organizations might work together and try to mobilize different populations, all the while competing for the same resources.

Many social movement organizations also interact with each other and the structures that they would like to change. Three types of interactions are intra-movement, extra-movement and institutional. Intra-movement interaction happens between organizations within a movement, where they come together over similar goals or on the difference of opinion about the beliefs, strategies and goals of the movement (Benford 1993). Extra - movement interaction is where the organizations, outside of the movement, come to challenge each other over the issues that one presents. Institutional interaction happens when the organization interacts with the institutions they are trying to change, like the state, economy, etc.

### *Political Process*

Wanting to expand on the issue of resources between institutional and organizational interactions, theorists developed the political process model (McAdam 1982/1997). Political process model looks at the interactions between the social movement and the state. The state is often seen as the center for change within a society, especially over the issue of public goods. The society and social movements “are

inherently political [and] are based on the demand for social change” (Jenkins 1995), thus giving the state the power to bring about change within the society. The problem is that the state is not neutral on the issue of change. Different people have different amounts of authority in respect to the state. Thus some groups are not able to access the state, and consequently the state only listens to people who have the authority and resources to access it.

The state is seen as an actor within the conflict. Having interests of their own, the state will shape the number and type of protests that are seen within the society (Jenkins 1995). The state as well can have affect over which issues come to a vote (Dugan 2004). They can use violence as means to stop protest, which can have damaging affects on the movement. The political process model views the state as a resource which has massive effects on the success or failure of a social movement. Therefore changes in the political structure can cause a movement to fail or succeed (Bates 2000; Jenkins and Perrow 1977).

### *New Social Movements*

New social movement theorists have a problem with the rational actor model in explaining social movements (Buechler 1993). These theorists view actors as living within a community that has morals and values. Ferre (1992) points out that the rational choice theory of resource mobilization is problematic because it only offers “a one-dimensional view of rationality, insisting on the theoretical significance of free riding and presents a decontextualized view of individuals” (32). This means that actors are not “isolated, independent monads” who enter into arrangements based on their own benefits



(Buechler 1993). Resource mobilization treats actors as monads, negating the fact that each one has different interests and values. These differences in values and interests can then moderate the relationship between the cost benefit analyses of the rational choice theory approach. Economists though, point out that inputting interests and values into the equation is an “intractable problem ...out of their field of interest” (Ferre 1992).

New social movement theorists see that individuals are socially embedded; they live within a community in which they interact with the people around them. This challenges the rational choice theory approach of resource mobilization by rejecting that individuals are “out for themselves” (Ferree, 1992), and will always seek to ride free on the efforts of others. This rejection of “out for ourselves” believes that individuals may enter into movements where the benefits outweigh the costs because the movement betters the people within their community or neighborhood. The resource mobilization ideology rejects that we have lives and we do interact with others, only stating that we will join movements if they benefit us. They reject that having friendships and being involved with networks of other people can prove to be more important to us than the incentives, or benefits, that movements may offer.

### *Social Construction and Framing*

People in the world have beliefs on how the world should be. People involved in social movements are no different. Social movements are a way in which people can project their beliefs and values onto the society as a way in which the society should be

viewed, or how it can be changed. This view is created by people within the movement who through actions, such as protest and statements, convey their beliefs to the society. People in a society have different views on how they see the world. Statements or actions that movements enact must be done in such a way that it projects the beliefs and ideas of the people with the movement. This is called framing. Social movement theorists draw on this social construction approach of reality to create a new theory called framing theory. Framing theory hopes to answer all of the questions of collective behavior and the resource mobilization dilemma of mobilization.

Goffman was the first person to conceptualize the idea of framing. In his piece that looked at frame analysis, he states frames answer the question what is going on here (Goffman, 1974). People then answer this by their own interpretation of what they believe is going on. By interpreting frames, people give events and symbols meaning that would be otherwise seen as meaningless. People actively project their frame onto the world around them (Goffman, 1974). Depending on the frame, and by interpretation, people can see that a situation is wrong and needs to be addressed or changed. This ideology challenges the conflict perspective addressed earlier of how movements arise out of authority and the positions that they hold (Ritzer 2008). Instead, movements arise out of the challenges to the old beliefs and the creation of new ones, called injustice frames. Injustice frames see the actions of an authoritarian system as unjust and simultaneously legitimate noncompliance (Snow et al., 1986). Berbrier and Prutt (2006) found that gay rights issues are often central to creating injustice frames because one group sees the system as treating them differently and unfairly, while the other group does not.

Movements not only create injustice frames, but also try to mobilize individuals to action by gaining support for their movement. Snow and Benford (1988) outline three tasks of how organizations must frame their statements and actions to gain support. The first task is to create a frame around an “event or aspect of social life that is problematic and in need of alteration” (Snow and Benford 1988: 199). This task is called diagnostic framing where it looks to blame someone or identify causes of problems. The second framing task is called prognostic. Prognostic framing is “a proposed solution to the diagnosed problem that specifies what needs to be done” (Snow and Benford 1988: 199). Here the frame is promoting a solution to the problem that was outlined during the diagnostic frame. The final task is the motivational frame. Here the frame must get people interested within the movement by motivating them to participate.

Motivation and resonance are two key aspects to frames, because they must work together to address the issue of participation. Motivation in this study is the stimulation of interest to an event or action (Merriam-Webster 2002: 1475). Resonance is the quality of stimulation that is being presented (Merriam-Webster 2002: 1933). Snow and Benford (1988) point out that by diagnosing a problem and providing a solution, people will not automatically be motivated to participate. Along with motivating the people to participate the frames must also have some form of resonance. The frame, or frames, that are being presented must be believed by their intended audience, so they can feel the injustice. The ability to motivate and resonate with its intended audience is what Snow and Benford call frame alignment.

There are four different types of frame alignment. The first type of frame alignment is frame bridging. Frame bridging is “the linkage of two or more ideologically

congruent frames... regarding a particular issue” (Snow et al., 1986: 467). Snow et al., point to mail strategies that are used when movements buy mailing lists from other organizations that are like-minded. Organizations that are similar in some aspects might bridge their frames in a way which they can gain support from other organizations.

The second type of frame alignment is called frame amplification. Here movements try to clarify their frame on a particular issue, problem or event (Snow et al. 1986). This clarification seeks to link a particular cause to underlying values held by both the movement and the population the movement seeks to recruit. Both value and belief clarification must work together to amplify a movement’s frame, because if a movement decides to pick up new values that they believe are central to their movement, they must go about addressing these by changing their belief.

The third type of frame alignment is called frame extension. Here movements will extend their frame beyond its intended interest to try and gain more people that are presumed to be important to the movement (Snow and Benford, 2000). Movements here will try and reach out to other groups who might share similar values. An example would be how groups like Focus on the Family might extend their frame to include other issues such as abortion or family tax breaks. Even though it is not their direct focus, their frames will broaden to include issues of extended populations.

The final type of frame alignment is called frame transformation. Here a movement changes its previous frame to include new values, meaning and understanding to help recruit participant (Snow and Benford, 1986). There are two types of transformations. The first type is domain specific transformation, where the frame looks to “change the frame of a single aspect of social life” (Snow et al., 1986: 474). The

second type of frame transformation is the global frame transformation. This transformation looks to change the broad way in which the whole world is viewed. Changes in religious views can result from global frame transformation.

Social movement organizations not only frame their issues for mobilization of individual participants, but also issues for other organizations both within and outside their movements. Interactions between organizations can go three ways: neutral, oppositional and supportive. Within these movements interactions are mostly positive, but negative ones do occur. Three types of negative intra-movement interaction are diagnostic, prognostic and frame resonance disputes.

Intra-movement diagnostic conflict is conflict focused on who or what should be identified as the cause of the problem (Benford, 1993). Prognostics frame disputes are disagreements about what is to be done to address the problem. Each of these disputes happen when there is a conflicting view between the two organizations at hand. The final type of intra-movement dispute is called frame resonance dispute. This dispute tries to address how the movement needs to present reality and conflict arises over how confrontational frames should be and if they are consistent enough with previous frames, both within the movement and the culture. Benford (1993) found that frames that follow a cultural narrative during the nuclear disarmament movement were usually more effective.

Conflict not only arises within movements but also between movements. This is called a countermovement. Countermovements often butt heads over multiple social, cultural and political issues. Theorists have also found that countermovement's affect the way in which frames can be displayed by movements or what frames they need to

address for success (Miceli, 2005; Fetner 2005). Fetner (2001) also found that countermovements dramatically impact the tone and language that a movement must use. Movements thus not only need to address the issue of the countermovement, but also make sure that it resonates with a voting population. Dugan (2004) examines this process and saw that when voter initiative is at stake, movements and countermovements must make sure that they resonate within the larger population. Most of these frame disputes arise out of the diagnostic and prognostic arenas because the society might view them as bad or wrong, which caused the movement to call the frame into question.

Frames often tell us the stance of that movement and about the character of the people in it and what they believe in. As stated before this belief can have harmful effects and can give rise to new movements who often don't see eye to eye and reject the belief. People within authority positions have the hardest time projecting their belief on the subordinate group, because they are often projecting their belief to multiple subordinate people. Some movements use frames that cast any other belief as that of an outsider in hopes of trying to gain support for their movement.

There are four ways in which movements can deal with frames from countermovements. The first way is to reframe, or restate, the issue so it continues to motivate and resonate (Hunt, Benford and Snow, 1994). The movement might need to reframe the issue because of ideological changes or beliefs in the organization. This can relate to frame amplification where the issue has to be reframed due to change in the values or belief of the movement. The reframe might also come from the fact that there has been a change in the culture outside the movement, and if the movement doesn't adapt, they might fail.

The second way that movements can deal with countermovement frames is by “viewing them as a reinforcement of identity avowal” (Hunt, Benford and Snow, 1994: 201). Here an organization may accept the frame that the counter organization has placed on them. Even though the frame may be negative, the organization will accept it and view itself as discriminated against. An organization does this so they can hopefully gain sympathy within the general public and get more individuals to support them.

Finally organizations that deal with countermovement frames can interpret them as misunderstandings based on faulty impressions or accept them as accurate (Hunt, Benford and Snow, 1994). Both of these countermovement frames can help an organization. If they accept the frame by the other it will require them to examine their own frame for errors. By getting a frame that is based on faulty assumptions the movement will be forced to examine the organizations within its structure and see if they fit within their values and beliefs. An example would be if a movement leader calls for violent attacks that don't fit within the movement; it can discredit him as not belonging to the movement because he didn't act in keeping with the movement's values.

Early views of social movements perceived movements as based during certain times and places only rising up during time of harsh discontent. Benford and Snow state that this is a protest cycle. Protest cycles, first outlined by Tarrow, are “sequences of escalating collective action that are greater in frequency and intensity than normal times, that spread throughout various sectors and regions of society, and that involve both new techniques of protest and new forms of organizational infrastructures, determine the spread and dynamic of the cycle” (1994/1997: 462). Benford et al. state that framing research has neglected framing and the cycles of protest.

Benford and Snow (1992) have concluded that more research needs to be done on framing and the temporal order of protests. They have outlined a set of propositions that look to explain the temporal context of social movement frames. Collective action frames and master frames are two key terms that help to examine the relationship between framing and the temporal order of protest. Collective action frames are frames that deal with the diagnostic, prognostic and motivational aspects of a movement at a specific time or location. Master frames are much like collective action frames, except these frames look to frame the movement as a whole.

The first proposition states that only when a master frame is present and the conditions are ripe enough for protest will there be protest (Benford and Snow, 1992). If conditions, such as dissatisfaction with the structures, are right for a protest to take place and there is not a master frame, no movement will take place. A master frame lets people become aware of an issue and if no one is aware, no one will protest.

The second proposition states that the time within which an organization is formed can have an effect on its framing. Organizations that arise early within the cycle can help to develop the master frames of the issue, but organizations that develop much later will often be forced to live within the frames that have been formed before them. Some organizations might feel constrained by the master frame as not completely following their values and beliefs.

Master frames will have an impact on the protest and its tactics. Benford and Snow (1992) state “Movement tactics are not solely functioning of environmental constraints and adaptations, but are also constrained by anchoring master frames” (p: 146). Much like the time within which an organization arises, the frame that it presents



can also affect how it goes about its mobilization. A movement may feel constrained by the master frame. A change in master frames can also give the movement more tactics for its mobilization.

The fourth proposition looks at the shape of the master frame. Shape is defined as “the diffusion of movement activity across different populations and organizations within a society... [during] the duration of the cycle” (Benford and Snow, 1992: 148). A master frame that resonates with a large population and is at the correct cycle of the protest will give the movement more potential to mobilize.

Master frames can also lead to the decline of the cycle of protest. Changes in the culture climate that render the master frame ineffective will lead to the decline of a protest (Benford and Snow, 1992). Not only can master frames help protests and their cycles by giving them tactics, but they can also lead to their downfall. If the culture climate changes, the master frame must make changes to the values of the new culture or the movement might fail.

Social movement literature has shifted from viewing social movements as undemocratic challenges to institutions of society which make it stable. Changes in the culture and theories behind which we viewed our society led to a new approach to looking at social movements. Social movements were seen as not challenging the institutions themselves, but the system of authority that keeps them in groups of either superordinate or subordinate positions. The view of the individual also changed. Individuals were seen as rational actors weighing costs and benefits of their actions when deciding which movement to join or which one best suits them. Social constructionists, though, pointed to the fact that individuals not only form relationships by viewing which

ones benefit them more, but also through values and beliefs that motivate a decision to join. These values and beliefs are then different between everyone. People often project their values and beliefs onto others. Sometimes, these values and beliefs challenge the old beliefs as no longer just and in need of change. Movements then need to address their issues of who is blame for the old beliefs and how they can change them. Social movement theorists call this framing theory. Framing theory then addresses claims that movements have and seeks to answer how they motivate within the population. The purpose of this study is to see how the Tea Party motivates its population around its principles.

### CHAPTER III

*“What’s in Your Wallet. Wait a Sec ... That’s MY Wallet !!!”:  
Analysis of the Tea Party*

As we examine the Tea Party movement literature one of the biggest questions that arises is who exactly is the Tea Party? As we get closer and closer to the 2012 presidential election and the Tea Party supporters grow in numbers, the question of who the Tea Party really is gains more and more attention. People want to know what does the Tea Party stand for? Who are the people involved? Where do they come from? All questions asked by members of the public who want to know exactly “who are the Tea Partiers?” In the following section we will examine the Tea Party birth, supporters and ideology, to help paint a clear picture of the group. This section also examines the lead up to the Tea Party from the first years after World War II through the 2008 election.

#### *The Birth*

If one man was given the creator status of the Tea Party it may be Rick Santelli. Santelli is an on air editor and business analyst for CNBC (Santelli 2006). On February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2009 Santelli along with other business analysts, were discussing Obama’s “Homeowner Affordability and Stability Plan.” The plan gave \$75 billion to lenders as incentives to decrease mortgage payments to less than 31% of the homeowner’s income (McCullagh 2009). Santelli began yelling on the floor asking people around him “Who

wants to pay for your neighbor's mortgage that has an extra bathroom and can't afford to pay their bill?" (CNBC 2009). To the roar of the crowd, Santelli claimed that what we are doing in this country right now is making people like Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson roll over in their graves, and shouted that they were thinking of having a Chicago Tea Party. From that a movement was born.

A few days later John O'Hara and J.P. Freire harnessed this frustration with a plan; they planned a rally outside the White House. Six weeks later, around tax time, over 500,000 people all across the country took to the streets to begin the protests and cry for a change in government. Almost a year after Santelli's rant, Judson Phillips planned the first ever Tea Party Convention in Nashville, Tennessee. The convention was headlined by key political figures, including Sarah Palin, who were upset by Obama's allegedly failed presidency.

Although Santelli is seen as the founder or creator of the Tea Party movement, Glen Beck is also seen as a key figure in the birth of the movement. Beck, a radio and TV talk show host, asked listeners to send in pictures of themselves to show that we love this country and that "*we surround them,*" meaning the government (Beck 2009). He planned two rallies that helped strengthen the Tea Party in the growing months. First was his 9.12 Program, which led to a massive taxpayer march to Washington on September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2009. Almost a year after his march on Washington, Beck hosted a Restore Honor Rally at the Lincoln Memorial, in Washington D.C. Although the rally was not supposed to be political but instead more of a religious rally, some of the key speakers included powerful political candidates, including Vice President nominee Sarah Palin and Minnesota Congress woman Michelle Bachman. Bachmann used her time on stage to

promote her own Tea Party rally at Lincoln Memorial after Beck's. Beck used his time to speak about the country's loss of faith in God, an ideology that resonates with Tea Partiers and many old conservatives. Beck believes that the only way to restore America through faith in God. (Smith 2010)

### *Who are the Tea Partiers?*

An ideology of faith bringing the country together and an outcry for a change in government are central themes of the Tea Party supporters and are what bring people together. Tea partiers form together under the same ideology of faith and the belief in Barak Obama's failed presidency, but they have no structure and no formal headquarters. The Tea Party is a grassroots movement, which expresses vast discontent with America (Von Drehle et al. 2010). No single person is the leader, yet key players in the movement include: Michelle Bachmann, Sarah Palin, Sean Hannity and Ron Paul (Jonsson and Knickerbocker. 2010). These key political figures may be big names in the political spectrum, but none of them are considered leaders.

One of the biggest misconceptions of the Tea Party movement is that they are an extension of the Grand Old Party (GOP) or better known as the Republican Party. This is not true. First the Tea Party is a movement based off of an ideology. Republicans are part of an established political party that has been around since 1854. Republicans main goal is to replace Democrats in government, while the Tea Party will replace anyone that doesn't believe in or follow their ideology. No one is safe according to the Tea Party, which has been evident in the current midterm elections when Republican candidates have been ousted by Tea Party backed candidates, such as in Utah, where 18 year

Republican senator Robert Bennett was replaced by Republican candidate Mike Lee (Economist 2010).

Another misconception about the Tea Party and Republicans is that all Tea Party members are Republicans. According to a CBS News/New York Times Poll (2010) 54% of Tea Partiers identify themselves as Republicans, while 41% view themselves as independents. Other polls show that only 49% of Tea Partiers view themselves as Republicans and 33% view themselves as neither Republican, nor Democrat (Ekins 2011). Most people state that they are sick of both parties. Either way, Republicans and Tea Partiers don't view themselves as working together.

Even though Tea Party supporters may not view themselves as Republicans, they are continuing to grow in numbers. According to a CBSNEWS POLL, most Tea Party supporters are white males who have completed some form of college and make somewhere between \$50,000 and \$100,000 per year (CBSNews/New York Times Poll 2010). Among them 73% of Tea Party supporters polled identify themselves as conservatives, are currently employed or retired, are Protestant and on some form of welfare.

Though these characteristics may not differ greatly from those of the general population, the views about America vary. According to a CBS News/New York Times Poll (2010), 92% of Tea Party supports view that the country is going in the wrong direction, compared to 59% of all respondents. A majority of Tea Party supporters disapprove of Barack Obama and when asked regardless of their overall opinion of him what do they like best about him, 45% said nothing or refused to answer the questions. When asked about Congress, 96% of Tea Party supporters disapprove of how they are

handling their job, 28% believe that they are to blame for the current state of the economy, which Tea Party supporters see as a very important issue facing the country today. According to the same poll, 88% believe that the stimulus packages, put in place by Congress and the President, have not helped to improve the economy. Tea Party supporters also do not like the size of the Federal Government. In fact, 61% believe that the biggest threat to the future wellbeing of the United States is the size of the government (Gallup 2010) and 92% would prefer a smaller government with fewer social services (CBSNews/New York Times Poll 2010). The CBS News poll also found that 72% of Tea Party supporters would be in favor of cuts in spending to domestic programs like Social Security, Medicare, Education, Defense (which over 40% of Tea Party supporters receive) to support a smaller government. Tea Party supporters know that this is not happening. In fact, 92% of supporters believe that the country is moving toward a socialist nation and see the government taking ownership and control of our daily lives.

Many of the views shared by Tea Party supporters are also shared by the 1,000 community based Tea Party organizations (Knickerbocker 2010). These organizations are seen all over the United States, in places like Florida, California, South Dakota, Iowa and Pennsylvania. These organizations are the only formal structure of the Tea Party and are in place to educate, organize and mobilize around the Tea Party's central ideas (Knickerbocker 2010). Some Tea Party supporters have formed a national organization, known as the Tea Party Patriots. This organization serves as a bridge to help organize local community organizations by posting events and giving resources to mobilize organizations in each community. This is an online based organization that lists all community based organizations and asks for donations to help push their agenda.

*What do they stand for?*

Along with being a resource to help local organizations, the Tea Party Patriots also provide an agenda for organizations to follow. The Tea Party movement forms around three different principles. The first goal of the Tea Party is to protect individual liberties (Tea Party Patriots 2010). Many organizations are upset with the new role of the government and believe that they are beginning to infringe on our rights and freedoms of being human. According to a CBSNews New York Times Poll, 92% of Tea Parties believe that the policies Barack Obama and Congress have put in place take too much control and are pushing the country into a socialist nation. Tea Partiers look at the health care bill, passed in 2009, as an example. The movement's blogs exploded because they believed that forcing people to buy health care infringed on their right to choose for themselves, a basic civil liberty that many that Tea Partiers do not want to lose. Members believed other liberties outlined in the Bill of Rights, like freedom of speech, freedom of unreasonable search and seizure and the right to bear arms will soon go away because of governmental interference.

The ideology of promoting civil liberties follows much of the same ideology of liberalism. As stated before, many Tea Party supporters believe that the government is taking too much control. Libertarians write "societies that reward individual initiative [make] phenomenal accomplishments in science and technology over the last three hundred years, as well as vastly enriching themselves" (Allit 2009: 160). This is something that Tea Parties today are fighting for. Tea Partiers believe that forcing people to buy healthcare doesn't allow people to choose for themselves and leads to a country of total politics, like Germany during Nazism and Russia during the years of Communism.



Protecting the civil liberties of people and not becoming a country of total politics lies in the mindset of anti-communism. Anti-communism has been seen for centuries, but since the end of World War II there has been an increase in the rejection of the communist ideology. Communism is a system in which property is owned by the community and all citizens share in the joy of the common wealth (Britannica 2010). Tea Party supporters view this political system as bad because it takes away people's civil liberties, which is "not the highest achievement of civilization, but actually the antithesis" (Allitt 2009: 172). Tea Partiers cite the number of different policies, like health care reform and auto bailouts, that have led to the disappearance of civil liberties. They believe that these policies have expanded the government so that soon they will make all of the decisions for us as a community, much like communism.

Tea Party organizations state that their second goal is free markets. Tea Party supporters state that the nation was founded under the ideology of free markets (McKenna 2010). This type of market is driven by supply and demand with little to no government influence (Britannica 2010). Agreements between companies would be mutual and prices would rise and fall based on the supply and demand of a good or service. The government would have almost no interference with any decision made in the market. According to the Tea Party Patriots, the non-free economy has led to the worst financial crisis since the great depression and the current interventions have led the recession to be longer and worse (Tea Party Patriots 2010). An example of government control that the Tea Party members cite as not allowing for a free market economy is the banks and auto industry bailouts. The auto industry has been hit hard by government regulations. The auto industry has now been taken over by the government, because of

the bailouts. When the government gave the money to many of the automobile manufactures they demanded that smaller automobile manufacturers, like Saturn, be shut down. The government has recently imposed new fuel regulations that automakers must follow, or face harsh fines (Valsic 2011). Tea Party supporters believe that these regulations do more damage to the market than good.

One of the biggest goals of the Tea Party is to limit the size of the government. According to a Gallup poll in May and June of 2010, 49% of Tea Party supporters believe that the size of the government poses a serious threat to the future wellbeing of the United States (Gallup 2010). A limited government would mean that the power resides with the people and is mainly used at a local level. Tea Party Patriots and other organization agree stating “that government powers should be limited, enumerated, and constrained by our Constitution” (2010). The constitution states that the role of the government is to collect taxes, regulate laws, provide military and produce money (US Constitution). Movement members believe that this is the main cause of our problems (Tea Party Patriots 2010) and that government is too large and does not know how to fix the problems facing our country. Party Members state that “a government full of brainy people can’t solve the problems of the people by passing legislation” (Knickerboacker 2010).

A limited government role follows much of the traditionalist perspective. Traditionalists state that we need to return to “the days when the conventions of faith and deference prevailed and each person knew his or her place” (Story and Laurie 2008: 8). People turn to this idea in two different ways. The first is returning to the idea of a faith based country. As stated before, Beck’s Restoring Honor Rally was a cry for faith and he

believed that the United States has lost its faith and the only way to become a prosperous nation again is to return to it (Smith 2009). Traditionalists also want to return to the constitutional era and limit the roles of the government to the vision written down by the founder fathers. Michelle Bachman, presidential candidate and Tea Party supporter, in a 2011 debate, stated that the only thing, she “would bring to the White House is the constitution of the United States” (CNN 2011). Both traditionalist views invoke visions of yesterday and the original vision of the founding fathers.

Many Tea Partiers believe that the size of the government is a serious threat, but also believe that the federal government debt poses a greater threat to our well being (Gallup 2010). According to the United States National Debt Clock.org, the United States debt has reached 15 trillion dollars and is continually rising (US National Debt Clock 2011). According to the many different Tea Party organizations, the way to fix this is by making the government be fiscally responsible, meaning that the government spends only what it takes in (Tea Party Patriots 2010). One of the biggest questions surrounding the bailouts and healthcare reform is “who is going to pay for it?” Tea Party members are angry at the government when they choose to raise the debt ceiling and continue to spend money they do not have. Members fear for their children’s future, wondering how their children will end up paying for these bailouts and how much it will affect them (Rasmussen and Schoen 2010). They believe that as the national debt increases, the country will face more and more problems. Thus, fiscally responsible policies will solve the problems of our economy.

The three principles outlined by the Tea Party patriots (limited government, free markets and individual liberties) are outlined in the Contract from America. The

Contract from American outlines ten items which the American public view as the problems of the government. Politicians sign the contract, stating that they will fight for these goals while in office (Contract from America 2010). Currently over 150 state senators and representatives have signed the Contract, including presidential candidates, Newt Gingrich and Michelle Bachmann. The contract states that as politicians, they will;

- 1) Protect the Constitution,
- 2) Reject Cap & Trade,
- 3) Demand a Balanced Budget,
- 4) Enact Fundamental Tax Reform,
- 5) Restore Fiscal Responsibility & Constitutionally Limited Government in Washington,
- 6) End Runaway Government Spending,
- 7) Defund, Repeal, & Replace Government-run Health Care,
- 8) Pass an ‘All-of-the-Above’ Energy Policy,
- 9) Stop the Pork and
- 10) Stop the Tax Hikes (Contract from America 2010).

These ten items are what they believe will help fix America, provide free markets, and protect our individual liberties.

### *GOP Connections?*

As stated before, the Republicans and Tea Partiers are not the same. The Tea Party is a movement, while the Republicans are an established political party known as the Grand Old Party (GOP). Most Tea Party supporters even state that they lean more to being independent because they are sick of both side of the political spectrum. They look for candidates that support their beliefs and ideology and in fact, Republicans are not that far away. A Gallup poll shows that Tea Partiers and Republicans show similar beliefs. According to the poll Tea Party’s beliefs differ very little from that of Republicans on threats to the United States. When asked about serious threats to the wellbeing of the United States, 49% of Tea Party respondents stated that the size of the government is a

serious threat, while 43% of Republicans stated the same thing. One of the biggest issues pressing the United States is the amount of national debt. According to a Gallup Poll, 61% of Tea Party respondents and 55% of Republicans state that it poses a serious threat. Republicans and Tea Partiers share similar views on immigration, unemployment, corporate policy, global warming and terrorism, making very interesting connections between the groups.

Views are not the only thing that Republicans and Tea Partiers have in common. They are also similar in their membership base. As stated before some of the key players in the Tea Party movement are Michelle Bachmann, Sarah Palin, Sean Hannity and Ron Paul (Jonsson and Knickerbocker 2010), all of whom are members of the Republican Party. Ron Paul is a United States representative from Texas running for president of the United States under the Republican Party. Michelle Bachman is the leader of the Tea Party caucus and is a Republican representative from Minnesota who ran for President. Sarah Palin is a Vice Presidential nominee who ran for office with Republican Senator John McCain in 2008. Sean Hannity is a Republican radio and TV host who has backed numerous republican candidates including, Sarah Palin and Michelle Bachmann. The Tea Party caucus is also a list of Republicans who are currently in Washington promoting the Tea Party agenda. Currently there are 60 Tea Party Republicans in the House of Representatives and 4 members in the Senate (Travis 2011).

Connecting both in ideology and members may make it seem like the Tea Party is an extension of the Republican Party. Yet, as stated before, the movement does not view Tea Partiers and Republicans as the same. Republicans might be Tea Party members, yet

Tea Parties are not part of the Republican Party. These two distinctions make it difficult to figure out who exactly are members of the Tea Party are and what they really want.

### *Historical Context of the Movement*

Both Santelli and Beck have been given credit for the start of the Tea Party movement, although this may not be entirely true. In fact calling the established government into question is nothing new. In fact, political parties and politicians have been doing this for centuries. The views of the Tea Party movement are not new. In fact, the very ideology of the Tea Party is evident all throughout United States history and even the world. This ideology though has begun to pick up steam in the last 65 years.

Beginning after World War II, the conservative movement began to rise into the movement that we see it is today. Soon after World War II people began to see trouble with the New Deal and the Fair Deal, (Truman's extension of the New Deal) (Story and Laurie 2008). From 1933 to 1945 the United States had a democratic president who believed that government is and can do good. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, FDR, was elected in 1933. In his time he expanded the role of the government and developed social welfare programs that not only expanded the size of the government, but helped the country pull out of the worst depression in history. Harry Truman took over for FDR after his death in 1945 and he continued to expand the role of the government. Soon after World War II all of the expansion became unsettling. Many people wanted some quiet after the war, but union strikes began to fill the news. The party for Business and Isolation campaigned as a party to fix the problems (Story and Laurie 2008). Campaigning with the Republicans, they were able to take both the House and Senate in

1946 and began to instantly dismantle the New Deal. In 1947 they were able to pass the Taft - Hartley Act, which limited protection of labor unions (Story and Laurie 2008). Republicans cited that the New Deal's welfare programs expanded the government beyond its role, causing them to infringe on people daily lives, taking away their civil liberties.

Not only was the expansion of the role and size of the government a worry for the conservative movements, but so was communism. The American population felt betrayed at the Yalta conference, where FDR seemed to hand over Eastern Europe to communist Russia (Story and Laurie 2008). Many Americans during that time believed that communism was spreading and would soon seep into America. With Russia, one of the world's super powers, now in control of half of Europe, another super power, many Americans were fearful that it was only a matter of time. Government officials held hearings and bullied politicians that were even suspected of being a spy for the Soviet Union. The most famous hearings were done by Republican Senator Joseph McCarthy. McCarthy had a "guilty until proven innocent" mind set, which led to multiple politicians being thrown out of Congress. Around the time of the hearings, a magazine called the National Review was founded by William F. Buckley in 1955. The goals were to address communism abroad as well as communism in the United States by enlightening people on the issue of communism (Allitt 2009). This then pushed the anti-communist agenda into the forefront and on the national stage.

Economists also were involved and began to write about free market capitalism. Milton Friedman of the University of Chicago was best known for his book titled *Capitalism and Freedom*. Friedman believed that the government should have as limited

role as possible and only be there to make and enforce the laws (Allitt 2009). Friedman's book challenged John Maynard Keynes, which had dominated prior decades by advocating a larger government role during times of recession and depression. Friedman believed that for a democracy to survive, there needs to be no help from the government (Klein 2007). After Milton, Barry Goldwater was next in line to pitch his idea of government. Writing a book titled *The Conscience of Conservatism*, Goldwater condemned liberalism and stated that we need to do away with farm subsidies, income taxes, and that the federal government needs to leave housing, education and urban renewal alone. He attacked communism and stated that it is "better to be dead than red." Goldwater's book was a hit and even landed him the presidential nod for the 1964 election, but he lost John F. Kennedy's replacement Lyndon B. Johnson.

After Goldwater's loss in 1964, the conservatives moved their attention to civil liberties and civil rights. With Lyndon B Johnson in office, the government expanded their role and gave protection to minorities. Upset, the conservative movement began to expand their support. The conservative movement began to bring in other political groups, such as anti-civil rights members, anti-feminists, right to bear arms supporters and lower tax coalitions. With a democratic house and senate, Lyndon B. Johnson declared a "war on poverty." His task was to clean up poverty, which he did by expanding welfare programs to cover both the elderly and the young, and by developing what was seen as the first national health care reform through Medicare and Medicaid.

With the election victory of Republican candidate Richard Nixon, the conservative movement thought they had a victory. This was not case. In fact, Richard Nixon expanded the government even more. During Nixon's tenure as president, he



expanded social welfare programs and pushed businesses to the conservative side. While corporations preached for tax reforms, deregulation and privatization, Nixon signed the Clean Air Act, which created the Environmental Protection Agency and Occupational Safety and Health Administration, all of which caused more corporate regulation.

Organizations and bills, such as National Organization for Women and the Equal Rights Amendment, were passed, which gave women more opportunities to thrive. Right wing conservatives opposed these bills and organizations cited that civil liberties were being taken away. Anti-Feminist activist Phyllis Schlafly spoke out against the National Organization for Women stating that the equal rights amendment act attacked the rights of the wife and family and made men unnecessary (Story and Laurie 2008).

After Nixon left office, President Carter took over and conservative movement's focus shifted to foreign policy. One highlight was the issue of giving the Panama Canal back to Panama. A committee was formed called the Committee for the Present Danger, which emphasized that Carter was too soft on the issue of the Soviets and cared too much about human rights, which they viewed as a threat to the American society, because Russia was still communist and conservatives still believed it was a threat.

Finally in 1980 the conservative movement was able to get a president that they believed was there for them: Ronald Reagan. Ronald Reagan was elected president of the United States in 1980 and instantly was what the movement had been looking for. Reagan feared the government's size and believed that big government is bad. In his first years in office Reagan shut down the Air Traffic Controller strike firing more than 11,000 people who refused to go back to work. He then sent troops into Grenada because he believed that they were working with Russia, which was still a communist nation.

Reagan also increased the tax cuts for the wealthy, slashed spending on welfare programs, de-regulated industries and appointed two Supreme Court justices that backed his conservative agenda. Reagan was seen as the conservative movement's leader. He believed in the principles of modern day conservatism: traditionalism, protection of civil liberties and anti-communism.

After Reagan left office many conservatives felt good about where the country was going. In 1988 they elected Reagan's vice president, George H. Bush. Although George H Bush was only a one-term president, many conservatives praised him for his stance on foreign policy and helping to dismantle the Soviet Union, thanks in large part to Ronald Reagan. Broken promises were his downfall; although he promised not to raise taxes, in 1991 he signed a bill that allowed taxes to be raised (Kelly 2012).

After the Clinton presidency, many conservatives felt that George W. Bush's election and presidency would restore the core principles of conservatism by cutting taxes, securing our nation's borders and expanding our military after the tragedy of 9-11. Despite these hopes, many conservatives discredited him because of his policies to help education and his role in allowing the worst recession in United States history (Bush 2008). Thus, the two Bush presidencies led many people believe that the conservative movement needs to be reexamined. They believe that the policies put forth by these presidents have only helped push the Obama agenda and move our country away from our conservative roots.

Some conservative supporters believe that Ron Paul is the reason for the new wave of conservatism and not the broken policies for the Bush administration. People believe that he has done more for the Tea Party movement than both Santelli and Beck.

Ron Paul is a Republican politician from Texas. In 2012 he will be running for the office of the President of the United States. Although he is not a registered member of the Tea Party caucus, his ideas follow that of the Tea Party. In 2008, Ron Paul ran for the president of the United States as well. While running for office he wrote a book titled *The Revolution: A Manifesto* (2008). His book outlined his goals and belief that he would follow if he was elected as president. The goals were much like that of the Tea Party movement today. Paul (2008: 4) also wrote that every year we elect officials that promise change, but change to them means “more government, more looting of Americans, more inflation, more police-state measures, more unnecessary war, and more centralization of power”, reflecting the Tea Party Patriots’ belief of having a very limited government. Paul (2008: 28) also took a very harsh stance on the size of government when he stated “the power of the Executive Branch has expanded far beyond what the framers of the constitution envisioned.” Paul also believes in civil liberties, running under the Libertarian Party in 1988. In his 2008 book, Paul wrote that “government should stay out of our personal affairs” (2008: 67). Paul believed that the government has taken away both our economic and personal freedom. In the end of the book he called on the people to wake up because these liberties are being taken away and if they do not stop, they will lose them all; thus, we need to start a revolution.

This ideology that Paul writes is no different than what Beck, Santelli and the Tea Party argue. All three men call into question the system in hopes that they can light a fire in the population and drive change in the established parties. They believe that the country is heading in the wrong direction and to fix it, they need to fix the government.

Individuals have called these same issues into challenge before, but the people have not always listened.

The conservative movement has been seen to move in three waves. Early their focus was on anti-communism with the fear of Russia having too much power. The movement then shifted their view to that of the civil liberties and how they were being taken away by the bills passed by the president. Finally, they concerned themselves with the size of the government viewing it as evil and something that needed to be limited. This is something that conservative movements, like the Tea Party, are still fighting for today. Movement supporters believe that with the bailouts of the banks and auto industry and the new health care reform, the government is becoming too large and needs to be limited in its power.

These three waves of the conservative movement have not only led to politicians running for president or Congress, but also led to new political parties. The United States has always been a two party system. Many parties provide supporters with new principles that differ from that of the established parties and provide hope for change. One group is known as the Libertarian Party. The Libertarian Party began in 1971 and was notified as a political party on five different presidential ballots. Most notably was Ron Paul in 1988. According to the Libertarian Party website, they “see a world of liberty; a world in which all individuals are sovereign over their own lives and no one is forced to sacrifice his or her values for the benefit of others” (Libertarian Party 2010). This belief follows the conservative and Tea Party belief of liberalism and individual liberties. People must be free to choose and live for themselves.

Another political party that follows at least one goal of the conservative movement is the Constitutionalist party. Constitutionalist state that the “sole purpose of government, as stated in the Declaration of Independence, is to secure our unalienable rights given us by our Creator. When Government grows beyond this scope, it is usurpation, and liberty is compromised” (Constitutionalist Party 2011). This belief follows the new wave of conservatism that big government is bad. Like the Tea Party, the Constitutionalist believe that we need a smaller government and that when the government is too large, the country moves away from the founding documents of our country: the Bill of Rights, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and the Bible.

Other parties reflecting conservative movement principles include the American Party, America's Independent Party, Boston Tea Party, Christian Liberty Party and the Independent American Party. Each organization believes in one or two aspects of the conservative movement. Not since the development of the conservative movement has there been a party to stand for all the same principles, but the Tea Party movement is the only one to align itself with all the core principles of conservatism.

Social movement theorists have only begun to analyze the Tea Party movement. As part of that project, the foci of this study will be the frames of the Tea Party movement’s ideology. Focusing around the basic principles of limited government, free markets and civil liberties, we examine the language, tone and rhetoric used to recruit members in selected articles found in the first official Tea Party magazine, the Tea Party Review. This study hopes to examine the gap in literature that scholars have neglected to fulfill in previous years.

## Chapter IV

### *If You're Not Outraged, You're Not Paying Taxes!: Methods of Analysis*

As stated before the foci of this study will be to examine the frames of the Tea Party movement's ideology. This research gathered qualitative data. Typically qualitative research analyzes written and spoken words, actions, sounds, symbols, physical objects, and visual images (Neuman 2006). Such methods are best-suited for this study of the Tea Party and the analysis of written articles.

Qualitative research also has many variants. This study used content analysis as a way to examine the frames of the Tea Party. Earl Babbie (2009) defines content analysis as "the study of recorded human communications, such as books, websites, paintings and laws." This type of analysis is the best type of analysis for this research because it will examine human communication and how the movement communicates its frames in the articles of the Tea Party Review. A brief discussion of the magazine and selection of the articles that will be utilized follows.

#### *The Tea Party Review*

My "data" is drawn from a sample of all the possible publications that "speak" for the Tea Party and/or the Tea Party agenda. The problem in sample selection is that the party itself is rather ill defined which makes it problematic to select representative media sources from a fairly arbitrary list of possibilities. My approach is to take a magazine that is definitively aligned with the Tea Party and the Tea Party's agenda. Thus, data was drawn from the Tea Party Review. The Tea Party Review is currently the only national

Tea Party magazine and is the only magazine in the United States that publishes articles specifically supporting the Tea Party agenda. The magazine has just completed its first year of publication, beginning in March 2011. With the selection of this magazine I am assured of data on all three Tea Party agenda items. While there are a number of other sources I might have considered, I would argue that they do not include the “whole package” that is required for this analysis.

### *Magazine Analysis*

As stated before I examined the Tea Party review to see how they frame the Tea Party’s agenda to gain support. For my data I examined the magazine’s articles. I could not select all of the articles within each magazine, so I used a method called purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a type of non-random sample that uses a wide range of methods to locate all possible cases of a highly specific and difficult-to- reach population (Neuman 2006). This type of sampling worked the best for my research because of selecting unique cases that fit in my population. Because the Tea Party has multiple tasks in their movement, I only want to focus on this issue of mobilization. Thus I only selected articles that fit into my research.

The magazine was divided into categories under which each article fell. For my categories I made sure that they are articles that will discuss the Tea Party principles. Thus the categories must fit four criteria. First the category cannot be letters from the editor. The articles in these categories deal more with issues related to the magazine and not to the Tea Party. Second, the category cannot be about the candidate in the 2012 elections. Since the magazine arose in 2011, there have been changes to the Tea Party

election candidates; thus these articles will be irrelevant. Third, the articles must deal with the issues that the country is facing today. They can be about policy or law changes and things that the government is doing. Finally the categories must be somehow related to the Tea Party ideology. The categories must use the same language of their principles or directly state part of a principle that the Tea Party believes. These categories may include concerns like protecting civil liberties, or defending free markets. These statements directly relate to an ideology that the Tea Party supports.

After examining the magazine I selected only those articles that fell within the following four categories. The first category that I examined is the tea party strategy. These articles are a good fit because they focused on the implementation and promotion of government, free markets and individual liberty ideology. The second category that I examined was titled “issues.” This category outlined the issues that the Tea Party believes affect our nation and how the Tea Party will address these concerns. The third category that I examined was any article focusing on fiscal issues. I am defining fiscal issues as taxes, taxation and government spending. As stated before, Tea Partiers believe that there needs to be a limited government. One way they expect to do this is to limit taxes. This category was essential to examine because it focuses on a review of government taxation strategy and how our taxes are used. The final category that I examined is titled “Constitution.” Tea Partiers believe that individual liberties, as outlined in the Constitution, are being taken away. This category focused on what parts of the constitution were being threatened and or taken away. These four categories helped to explain and promote the Tea Party’s ideology.



Each category has multiple articles listed under them. Because each category may have a lot of information in each article, I limited the number of articles that I read in each category. I read up to five articles in each section. After reading the five articles I gauged if the rest of the articles were starting to get redundant. If the information was redundant I did not read the rest of the articles in the section. I also did this for sections that had less than five articles in them. If the articles continued to present the same information, I stopped reading the remaining articles in the section (although I made sure to read at least half of the articles listed under any one category).

After I collected all of the articles I analyzed them using a coding sheet. The coding sheet looked to examine the relationship between the Tea Party agenda and mobilization. The coding sheet that I utilized is a mix between what Bruce Berg (2007) discusses and a coding sheet utilized by Jeff Langstraat (1998). The sheet first discussed the basic information about the article, such as title, publication month and issue numbers. The sheet also examined the author's credentials to examine if the author has extensive background knowledge on the issues. The sheet also focused on the main theme of the article and the supportive argument for that theme. The themes of the articles were compared to see if they were the same. The sheet also examined the events the article discussed and any political figures mentioned in the article. Because the Tea Party is a political movement, the mention or discrediting of any political figures and events offered insight into the frames that the movement was trying to convey. Finally the coding sheet offered a section to utilize a pull out quote that discussed the frame or event of the whole article. A sample coding sheet can be found in the Appendix.

Once I completed each coding sheet I typed my answers, summary of the publication and reaction into the computer that was used for my results section. Each of the coding sheets was examined to see patterns between them that discussed similar events or themes. Once patterns were examined, an analysis of the frames put forth by the Tea Party Review was discussed in the findings and results section.

### *Analytical Process*

After I collected all of my data, I began to analyze it through a form of coding. Coding is defined as naming segments of data with a label that simultaneously categorizes, summarizes and accounts for each piece of data (Charmaz 2008). The type of coding that was utilized was called open coding. In this process I made notes on the articles in small detail. After the open coding process was complete, I examined the data using a form of selective coding. Selective coding is a type of coding that sees all smaller codes fitting under the category of one grand narrative (Charmaz 2008). Therefore each smaller code, like statements, worked towards explaining the story that each article is trying to convey. In this case the articles formed around the three principles of the Tea Party. The article here addressed the goals of the Tea Party agenda, which is the focus of my research.

Along with coding the rhetoric that was used, I made sure that I wrote memos about my thought and feelings about each dissemination. My memos also looked to examine the patterns and relationships that I saw between the different articles. I then sorted each memo and code into those categories and wrote about how they related to the theory at hand.

*Ethical Concerns*

Before collecting my data, I examined the Minnesota State Universities - IRB (Institutional Review Board) application. Because I am not directly working with human subjects I did not perceive there to be any ethical issues directly related to human subjects. This did not mean that I had no ethical issues that I needed to address. The first issue dealt with me as the researcher. As stated above, I did a content analysis of the Tea Party review articles. As a researcher I examined and categorized the rhetoric used in each of the articles. I do have beliefs in which view I think is right and as a researcher I must be able to get away from that. I must detach myself, like Sandra Harding stated, and be able to let the data fall where it will fall (1992). This is the main ethical issue I saw arising. Along with furthering my belief, I could have also hurt the organization by categorizing their frame wrong, which may make them look bad. As a researcher, I strove to examine each frame carefully to make sure that it presented exactly what the organization wanted to be stated. Researcher error was the only ethical issue I saw arising, and these steps were systematically followed to minimize such error.

## Chapter V

### *If You Think Health Care is Expensive Now, Wait Until it's Free: Frame analysis of the Tea Party*

The following chapter outlines the results of the analysis of the first year of the Tea Party Review. The following frames were the results of the magazine analysis:

*Crossover Frame* – The usage of principles from both sides of the argument. Typically, the Tea Party is seen as being a far right political party or ideology. The movement uses both sides of the argument in hopes that they will be able to gain support from people upset at their party ideology.

*Us vs. Them* – The creation of an enemy that the Tea Party must fight in order to win. The Tea Party is seen as being at battle with an enemy who discredits and dislikes their ideology. The Tea Party frames this argument in two separate ways: liberalism and the federal government.

*Threat* – The use of threat to the life and well being of the people in hopes of gaining support for their movement. In this frame the movement believes that if their ideology is not supported, the “them” in the Us vs. Them frame could ruin America and send the country into turmoil.

The following sections in this chapter will discuss how the frames were utilized as well as what they mean for the movement. Each section will first begin with what each frame means in the context of the magazine and the movement. The following part of each section will discuss how the frames were utilized, citing specific examples from the text. Each frame was utilized in different ways.

When reading the text, there were no predetermined frames. The analysis was compiled by reading the text and only the written articles were utilized. Each of the selected articles was coded drawing frames from the words written on the pages. Frames were developed out of the readings and not theories. Theories were not used as a guide in

which to examine the frames, but were only used to analyze the frames as they related to the movement and previous research. In a way, the research process was similar to a grounded theory approach, even though grounded theory was not used in the collection process or used in the analysis section. Grounded theory states that the data is the key to your theory and you will pull your theory out from the data. Data was not manipulated in any way to get the frames that resulted. Instead, data was the medium from which the frames were extracted.

### *Crossover Frame*

The crossover frame was the least common frame, only appearing in four of the twenty articles read. The crossover frame was seen as the Tea Party using both principles and beliefs of liberalism and conservatism to gain support for the movement. As stated before, typically most Tea Party supporters have the same belief as those in the Republican Party (GOP). Multiple times through out these four articles, the Tea Party would use language that supported both a conservative and liberal ideology. To use the crossover frame, the movement talked about the other party using direct language. Sometimes the parties were seen as working together. Dick Pattern who wrote “The Death Tax: Killing the American Dream,” stated “that’s one reason that many Democratic and Republican members of congress have joined together to push for permanent repeal of the Federal Estate Tax” (2011 38). The movement also talked about other parties as a way to show that they were not so bad. An example was written in John Berlau’s (2011) article “How Big Government and Big Retailers are Teaming Up to Rip You Off.” In this article Berlau writes that even Democrats are starting to see flaws in

some of the laws or bills that they are passing; “Democrats who supported the Dodd-Frank so-called “reform” have pulled back” (36).

The Tea Party does not just use language as a way to crossover to both sides; they also cross over principles as a way to gain support from both sides. Historically, liberals and conservatives have been divided along harsh lines. For example, Democrats want to expand the role of the government, while Republicans want a limited government. Democrats believe in social welfare policies, while Republicans typically do not. Even though Democrats do want to expand the role of the government, they do believe that there does not need to be as much spending on national defenses. Republicans on the other hand believe that the role of government should be limited while making exceptions for our national defense.

According to the magazine the Tea Party does not believe in just one side. As stated before, 54% view themselves as Republican; while 5% view themselves as Democrats and 41% view themselves as Independent (CBSNews/New York Times Poll 2010). Thus, the Tea Party does not want to truly exclude both sides, so they will also use crossover principles. In the article “Cut Defense Spending, but be Smart About It,” Douglas Macgregor writes that we, as a country, need to cut defense spending in order to balance the budget (2011). Making sure not to exclude people outside of the Tea Party, the author provides cuts to defense spending that will still support the conservative ideology of having a strong national defense. For example, the author talks about how we need to balance the budget, something Tea Party and Conservatives support, by cutting defense spending, something that the liberal ideology supports.

Using both liberal and conservative ideology and language exemplifies the crossover frames. The Tea Party movement uses the crossover frame to promote both principles and beliefs in hopes of trying to mobilize individuals to join the movement.

#### *Us vs. Them Frame*

The second frame utilized by the Tea Party movement is the Us vs. Them frame. The Us vs. Them frame is the second most common frame appearing in ten of the twenty articles. The Us vs. Them frame outlines a battle cry for both magazine readers and the movement to stand up and support the movement. They claim that We are in a war against an opponent and if They win We will lose on out three core principles: limited government, free markets and protection of civil liberties. This frame sets up an enemy that movement supporters must fight. The frame is examined in two different Us vs. Them frames, the liberals vs. conservatives frame and the federal government vs. the Tea Party frame.

The first frame of Us vs. Them is the liberal vs. conservative frame. The Tea Party Review would attack this enemy in two ways. The first way would be to attack the ideological standpoint of the liberal ideology. Although not all Tea Party supporters identify themselves as conservatives, 54% of them did identify with it (CBSNews/New York Times Poll 2010). Liberal principles and conservative principles fall on different ends of the spectrum; when one side says to do one thing, the other side says to do the other. Unions are often a top debate item when it comes to principles and nothing has been more evident than the Wisconsin protest last year. In the Article; "A Tea Party to Public Sector Unions": the author offers a guide to how the Tea Party should view

unions. The author states that unless something is done “public pensions plans that appear on the surface to be adequately funded will be revealed to be seriously underfunded – and those that presently appear to be underfunded will be shown to be for all practical purposes broke” (Denholm 2011: 14-15). Thus, Tea Party members must elect leaders like Chris Christie and Scott Walker, because if they do not union reps will pay huge money, like they are now (Denholm 2011), to elect officials that will promote their own ideology and not that of the conservative Tea Party Ideology. If they continue to support unions the government will be forced to pay these union benefits without adequate funding sources.

Not only did the Tea Party attack the liberal and conservative ideology on the issue of unions, they also attacked them on the issue of immigration. The Tea Party states that all liberals believe all illegal immigrants should have blanket amnesty; meaning that the government will overlook anyone who comes into the country illegally (Truong 2011). Conservatives disagree with this policy and believe that liberals do not take a harsh enough stance on the issue. They believe that to accept this ideology does not help the country. The Tea Party also believes that we as a country should reject the liberal ideology approach to immigration because it “does not further our nations right history of legal immigration” (Truong 2011: 45). Rejecting the principles and beliefs set forth by liberals, the Tea Party then accepts the beliefs and principles of the conservatives, making it a battle between the parties.

Not only does the Tea Party not accept the ideology of liberals but they also reject them as a group. There have been constant battles between liberals and conservatives



and it is known that they do not like each other. The Tea Party also would take a harsh stand on liberals, always tying liberals to a policy or ideology in which they did not agree. For example, in the article “Progressives Use Secular Humanism to Promote Socialism” the author states the policy of secular humanism is something that the left wants to promote, much like fascists and communists (Espenscheid 2011). Tying liberals to fascists and communists paints liberalism in a negative light, by blaming them for a policy that would turn the country into a fascist or communist nation. By using this tactic the Tea Party hopes to have an easier task of creating an enemy and gaining support.

Tea Party members even go so far as to reject the political parties supported by liberals and conservatives. Historically, the U.S. has been a two party system. Other parties may have minor victories in small elections, but typically do not win big elections. Liberals and conservatives are the current dominant constituencies of the United States two party system. Liberals are most often referred to as Democrats, while conservatives are referred to as Republicans. Although this changed with the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1932, for almost a century American politics has been divided this way between the parties.

Using political parties is another way that conservatives can attack the liberal ideology. Although not all Tea Party members support the Republican Party, many do not agree with the Democratic Party’s ideology. The movement will often paint them in a negative light. In some cases, they pointed to them as the enemy, stating: “Given the hostility to Tea Party values of almost the entire Democratic party, that means that ... we must work within the Republican Party” (Pratt 2011: 33). The Tea Party even goes so far

as to list off contributions given to only the Democratic Party from unions and how none of the contributions came to the Tea Party or Republican Party. These attacks were used to paint the Democratic Party in a negative light, making them look bad in the eyes of the general population, while making the Tea Party look good.

The second frame in the Us vs. Them frame was the Tea Party vs. the federal government. This frame was much like the first frame in that it was used as a rallying cry to support and motivate people. The only difference in this frame was that the enemy shifted from liberals and Democrats to the federal government. According to recent polls, 33% of Tea Party supporters identified as neither Democrat nor Republican, as they are upset with both parties (Ekins 2011). Upset at both parties, the Tea Party then launches their attack on Congress members and their actions.

In this frame the movement takes direct action toward stopping many laws and policies that the federal government is imposing. One of the biggest issues the Tea Party is fighting for today is civil liberties, which is one of the core principles that the movement supports. Many supporters of the movement believe that if the government continues to grow, the nation's civil liberties will soon disappear. The Tea Party cites the REAL ID act of 2005 and the new Traffic and Safety Administration scanning systems as the beginning of the decline and shrinking of our nation's civil liberties (Biterman 2011). The movement provides an outcry for Tea Party supporters to "be ever vigilant as an expanding federal government works to restrict the civil liberties from 'non-violent' people (37)." The Tea Party must be aware of the declining civil liberties

because if they do not 92% of Tea Party supporters believe that the US will turn into a socialist nation (CBSNews/New York Times Poll 2010).

The Tea Party also uses laws and policies put into effect to create an enemy of the federal government. Tea Party supporters use the idea of blanket amnesty for illegal immigrants, allegedly supported by many liberals in the federal government, as a way to rally support. As stated before, the Tea Party supporters do not support blanket amnesty for illegal immigrants. Some people in the federal government, mainly liberal, have supported this policy. Tea Partiers believe that this policy would be bad for the US, rejecting the policies of the federal government.

What was not clear from this frame was the rationale for the attack on the federal government. Is it because the current president is a Democratic or is it something else? Some of the articles made a point to attack the federal government. These attacks were specifically focused on the issues that Obama, a Democratic president, has discussed or implemented. For example, in the article discussing “Progressives Use Secular Humanism to Promote Socialism,” the author discusses Obama’s plans to cut tax breaks for churches and nonprofit organizations (Espenscheid 2011). It is not clear if the author is attacking the federal government or the liberal ideology. Either way, the author looks to frame the federal government as an enemy that must be stopped because liberals do not believe in any tax breaks for anyone.

The Tea Party vs. the federal government frame examines how the enemy is no longer the liberals, but instead the federal government. Because of the power that the Federal government has, the Tea Party states that we, the general population, need to be

careful of the policies that they are trying to implement. The Tea Party frames it as an “Us vs. Them.” We are in a constant battle with the federal government.

### *Threat Frame*

The final frame seen in the analysis of the Tea Party Review is the threat frame. This frame was the most common frame, found in fourteen of the twenty articles. In this frame authors assert that something in our lives is being threatened. The threat may be from either the taking away of things that were once granted to us, or the threat may be of not receiving something needed. The threat frame involves two sub-frames: the threat to well being frame and the threat to life frame. Each was used to create a sense of suspense in the society, in hopes that it will bring people together to work collectively.

The threat to life frame was used to scare people into acting. The movement used death as a way to try and scare people into supporting their ideology. This was done either directly or indirectly. The movement indirectly threatened the life of the readers by not overtly stating bad things will occur, but rather by implying that if they do not support their ideology bad things will happen. Frank Goff (2011) in his article “Our Common Defense” points out our entire national defense weak points. The author hopes that by pointing out all of the weak points that threaten our national security, people will support the ideology of the movement to increase defense spending and therefore protect lives.

The movement’s frames identify both direct and indirect threats to readers’ lives. One of the key issues between Tea Party supporters and non- Tea Party supporters is the

issues of taxes. Tea Party supporters believe that the size of the government is too large and if we decrease taxes, this would limit the size of the government and make them fiscally responsible (Tea Party Patriots 2010), which 61% of Tea Party supporters believe is a major issue for the federal government (CBSNews/New York Times Poll 2010). Tea Party supporters also believe that if we decrease the tax levels people in this country will spend more on goods and services as items that the government helps us buy already. With the elevated level of taxes and role of the government, many of the Tea Party supporters believe that if this issue does not get fixed the US will turn into a socialist nation (CBSNews/New York Times Poll 2010).

The Tea Party believes that not only do taxes increase the risk of fiscal irresponsibility, a larger government, and turning the country into a socialist nation, but also that taxes run the risk of decreasing your health. In an article written by Dr. Lee Hieb (2011), she writes that due to tax increases on the wealthy or upper class people, doctors choose to work less hours. Citing examples of friends and colleagues, Dr. Lee Hieb states that many doctors choose to work less hours because they know that, due to current taxation strategies, if they work longer hours they will see less money. A problem then arises. If doctors do not work enough hours, patients may then not get the required surgeries or operations that they need to survive. Dr. Lee Hieb and the movement use this illustration as a way to show people that through taxation policies, their lives can be directly threatened.

The threat frame identifies threats to people's lives, and also to their well. The most common use of the threat frame concerns the well being of the people of the US.

The movement uses clever means to get people to think that if their ideology is not supported, people would not have the same privileges they possess now. One way in which the movement frames this threat concerns the well-being of the people in the US on a national scale. Gopal Khanna (2011) wrote that one of the biggest questions marks in our national security is our information technology sector. He writes that if we do not expand or tighten our information technology sector, “we risk disaster by deliberate act” (Khanna 2011: 49-50). Citing examples of other nations who experienced turmoil because of lack of information technology security, the movement uses this as motivation for the reader to support their ideology. Khanna (2011) cites that attacks may have consequences that are on par with what this country experienced on September 11, 2001. Although not providing a direct attack to anyone person, the sounds of September 11<sup>th</sup> still resonate within many Americans hearts as one of the worst days in American history.

The threat to the well being of the American population happens at a personal level as well as at the national level. For instance, the budget is an issue that many Tea Partiers believe is a problem in our country. In fact 10% believe that it is the most important problem facing this country today (CBSNews/New York Times Poll 2010). Tea Partiers believe that if the federal government does not balance the budget we potentially may have a huge problem. Jordan Forbes (2011) even compares the US to places like Greece and Ireland, whose huge debts have caused the country to go into turmoil. By threatening that budget issues will cause the country to go into turmoil, many supporters believe that this challenge is a major priority. The Tea Party believes that their ideology will help solve this problem for everyone.

The movement also uses other hot button topics like civil liberties. In fact, many Tea Party supporters believe that the role of the government is getting too large and taking away civil liberties. Civil liberties are outlined in the Constitution of the United States as the rights that individuals inherently possess. Tea Party supporters believe that the role of the government has become so large that soon civil liberties will disappear. They cite the Real ID act of 2005 and the new Traffic and Safety Administration guidelines as laws and policies that infringe on our civil liberties (Biterman 2011). They state that if we, meaning the American public, are not vigilant to these expansions, “we could lose the fundamental freedoms that the Founders fought and died for” (Biterman 2011: 37). Losing civil liberties is something that many Tea Party supporters do not want and they frame arguments that if we continue to lose them, the government will take them all, and that is something that does not sit well with many people. The movement hopes that they will then stand up and fight to gain those civil liberties back.

The magazine also looks at other issues, such as “Obama Care.” Passed in 2010, Obama Care is one of the most significant achievements in recent political history, but many Tea Party supporters see it as a threat to the society. Dr. Jane Orient (2011) writes that if Obama Care passes and goes into effect, approximately 250 million people will see their costs in health care go up and find their coverage and care disrupted, something that many people do not want to see. If doctors already work less hours to avoid being taxed more (Hieb 2011), people will feel threatened for their lives. Dr. Orient also points out that if Obama Care passes, 700,000 people will lose their jobs; others will lose benefits and their insurance because their employer may not offer it anymore. With the threat of losing jobs in an already unstable economy and having health care costs go up after

people already cannot afford them, the movement hopes to have many Americans fear for the worst.

The movement and its supporters believe that if the policies and laws which go against their principles are passed into law, many people will be affected, something that many people fear today. New policies and laws are currently in the works that affect a family's finances after death and discredit religion and its use (Pattern 2011 and Espenschied 2011). According to the Tea Party, each of these policies and laws will affect the very well being of the people in the United States and could cause the country and its people to go into turmoil. The movement believes that if people accept the Tea Party ideology the very well being of the county will be saved.

The frames put forth by the Tea Party believe that if their ideology is not supported, the United States will be in jeopardy. By using the threat frame the Tea Party hopes to gain peoples' support for the movement. They believe that with the support of these people they can reverse the policies and laws put into place and save the American people.

Each of the frames outlined above are used by the Tea Party. They are used to help mobilize a population to support their ideology; an ideology that they believe will help fix America. By crossing over and supporting arguments from both sides, the Tea Party hopes to mobilize and gain membership from people who may be upset at their party or their side's ideology. By using frames to help gain membership from both sides, the movement hopes that the Tea Party will form a collective identity. This collective identity is one that must fight against an evil enemy that threatens the well-being and life



of the American public. The Tea Party thus uses their frames to try and gain support for their movement.

## Chapter VI

### *Got Money?? Don't Let the Government Know: Theorizing the Tea Party Movement*

The following is a discussion of the frames outlined by the Tea Party. The first section will discuss the frames and their connection to the theory of social movements. More specifically, the focus will be on how the frames are used and what components are evident: injustice frames, diagnostic framing, prognostic framing, motivational frames and frame alignment, and more specifically, frame extension. These components, as outlined earlier in the literature review, are tasks that social movements must complete to develop resonance that mobilizes a population.

The final section will focus on the cycle of protest as it relates to political social movements. A discussion will focus on how the movement is working in a temporal context and what can be done to increase its chances of surviving. An analysis of Snow and Benford's frame transformation will discuss what the movement could do to further the longevity of the movement depending on the results of the 2012 elections.

#### *Frame Components*

Snow and Benford, although not the founders of framing theory, are two theorists that have contributed the most to its success. Current research in social movement theory has focused much of its attention on framing theory. Many theorists have helped to develop framing theory and it is a theory with many different areas of emphasis. Frames are often critical to the success and failure of movements. This section will focus on the different components of frames. Injustice frames, prognostic frames, diagnostic frames,

motivational frames and frame alignment will be the focus of this section, examining how the frames fit into these categories. A more detailed discussion of frame extension will be done in the frame amplification section as it seems to be the most interesting theoretically.

In society people typically live under taken-for-granted rules that, for the most part, benefit the people within the system. Authority is given to people within the system to make the rules and norms. Most often, this authority is given to people who have political power. In the system, the general population elects a few members who will work for the people in the government. In the United States, the general population elects mayors, senators, representatives, governors, a president, etc. to make laws and policies that work in favor of the general population.

More times than not, these policies and laws created by representatives do not reflect the interests of the general population. Lawmakers sometimes serve their own special interests and not that of the general population. Lawmakers may also refuse to pass certain laws or policies because they do not serve their own special interest and will not help them get reelected to the position of authority. An example of this is civil rights.

Many lawmakers refused to pass amendments and laws that supported any giving of rights to minorities. Many people felt that this situation was wrong and needed to be addressed or changed. The people began to challenge the old system and way of belief. A “Civil Rights” movement arose when the people realized the system was unjust and they legitimated non-compliance (Turner and Killian 1987/1997). The development that challenges a system of old beliefs is called an injustice frame.

Injustice frames are critical for the success of many movements. Often political battles are the best forums for creating injustice frames because there are two distinct parties who seem to be on opposite ends of the policy and law spectrum. Typically, one end will agree with the policy or law, while the other group views the policy or law as unjust. The analysis of the Tea Party is no different. The Us vs. Them frame is the injustice frame that the Tea Party outlines.

Analysis of the Us vs. Them frame revealed that the Tea Party used it in multiple different ways. As stated before, the injustice frame arises out of the challenge to old beliefs or, in this case, the creation of new ones. Using the injustice frame, the Tea Party challenged multiple new policies and laws involving “Obama Care,” Real ID, immigration, defense spending, unions, etc. Each of these new policies and laws caused the Tea Party to see that something was unjust and therefore legitimated non-compliance.

As stated before, what is not clear is whether or not the Tea Party views the liberal ideology as an authoritarian system. Currently in American politics there are two political beliefs: liberalism and conservatism. Neither one has more political power than the other, except when their ideology controls the White House and Congress. Currently the conservative ideology, or Republicans, control Congress while liberals, or Democrats, control the White House. The president is seen as having more power than Congress, in certain cases. Each level of government has the power to control the other, but because of the status given to the president, a majority of people believe he has more power.

In the case of the Tea Party frames and the creation of injustice frames, the movement views the liberal ideology as an authoritarian system. With the view of it as

an authoritarian system, any principles or policies thus supported by liberals are unjust and are called into question. This is evident in the article that discussed immigration. In this article the author David Truong (2011) states the president's policy on immigration, but doesn't attack liberals. Seeing that they have power with the president, they fear those liberals are trying to implement a policy that is unjust. Seeing it as a problem, they challenge this belief of liberals, creating an injustice frame of Us vs. Them and appealing for help.

Once movements develop an injustice frame, or a frame that calls into question old beliefs or new laws, the movement must deploy this frame to gain support for the movement. Snow and Benford (1988) state that there are three frames which can help a movement gain support. The three frames are diagnostic framing, prognostic framing and motivational framing. Each of these frames plays a key role in gaining support for the movement.

The first frame task is the creation of the diagnostic frame. Diagnostic frames are defined as "event or aspect of social life that is problematic and in need of alteration" (Snow and Benford 1988: 199). In this frame the movement tries to define who and what is to blame for the injustice frame. Analysis of the Tea Party reveals that the us vs. them frame states that the "them" is to blame, causing the problems in our society. As stated above the "them" in the frame can be seen as two different parts of the population. The first person that is blamed is President Barack Obama. Dena Espenscheid (2011) states that the president is using his power to promote secular humanism, which causes churches and non-profit organizations to go under because they are no longer getting tax

breaks given to them during the Bush era. This frame assigns blame to President Obama for causing churches and non-profits to close their doors.

President Obama is not the only person that the Tea Party blames for the problems in our society. Throughout numerous articles, the Tea Party would also blame liberals/democrats as the cause of problems in our society. David Truong (2011) is harsh on liberals stating that because of their policy on blanket amnesty to immigrants, they are ruining our country's rich history of immigration. Pratt (2011) also states that because of hostility toward Tea Party values in the Democratic Party, the Tea Party must align itself with the Republican Party if it wants to achieve any success in politics. The Tea Party believes that without the liberals/democrats, the country would not have the problems that it faces today, like budget issues, large government, immigration, destruction of civil liberties, etc. They believe that the cause of our problems lies in the hands of liberals, democrats and President Barack Obama.

Once movements develop the diagnostic frame, the next step is to provide solutions to the problems outlined. This type of frame is what Snow and Benford (1988) called the prognostic frame, which is "a proposed solution to the diagnosed problem that specifies what needs to be done" (Snow and Benford 1988: 199). Although the Tea Party doesn't have a direct frame that it uses to propose solutions to the problems, they do at multiple times through the articles state that change is possible if people get out and vote for politicians that work with the Tea Party (Biterman 2011). The Tea Party believes that if they vote, they will be able to oust Barack Obama and his liberal friends, and elect members of congress who will work for their ideology.

Once movements identify what and who is to blame for the problems of our society and provide solutions, they must develop what Snow and Benford call the motivational frame. The motivational frame is a “rationale for actions, a call to arms, and vocabularies of motive supporting that action” (Buechler 2011: 158). The analysis of the Tea Party reveals that the threat frame can be seen as a way to motivate people to act. As stated above the threat frame states that if the people do not support their movement, the country could be thrown into turmoil and the very well being of the population could be in trouble. This frame utilizes both the diagnostic and prognostic frames. It states that the “them” in the “us vs. them” frame are ruining our country and if we do not go out and vote they will threaten the well-being of the country. The government not only threatens the very well-being of the people in the country but they also threaten the lives of the people. Doctors’ state that if Obama Care is passed millions of people will lose health insurance (Orient 2011) and many doctors will stop working because they are being taxed more (Hieb 2011). This frame then hopes that there will be a “call to arms” to motivate people to get up and support the movement.

The tasks outlined above are only the beginning part of the framing process. Once movements frame an injustice and their grievances in a way that provides solutions to the problems, they must find ways to align their frame or frames. There are four ways in which movements can align a frame: frame extension, frame bridging, frame amplification and frame transformation. Although each of the alignment processes is important to the movement and its frame, the Tea Party chooses to use frame extension as its way to amplify its frames.

Frame extension is where a movement extends its frames beyond its intended constituency to try and gain more people that are seen as important to the movement (Snow and Benford, 2000). This can be crucial to the movement as it may find success for the movement. The Bangladesh acid attacks are a perfect example of using frame extension. In trying to gain support and mobilization for the women of Bangladesh, the movement had to be crafty and find other ways in which it could get people to mobilize (Anwary 2003). At first the movement focused around the issue of gender because the attacks were directed at women. The movement gained little success, until it extended its frame to include not only women, but also children; then the movement was able to successfully reach its goals.

Although this movement had to extend its frame to include children for success, some frame extension is for mobilization purposes. The Tea Party extended its frame mostly for mobilization. The crossover frame is seen as an extension of their frame to include other populations. The Tea Party has supported the conservative ideology in American politics. As stated before, politics in American has been divided down two lines, liberals and conservatives. They are in battle with each other to try and mobilize the same populations to support their side. The Tea Party though occasionally crosses over these lines and includes frames that support both liberal and conservative beliefs. The Tea Party does this to gain support for the movement.

What makes the frame extension of the Tea Party more interesting than some other social movements is that the Tea Party is a political movement. If political movements want to extend their frame, they must reach out to the opposition they



normally challenge. This makes this extension different than all other movements because if political movements want to extend to other populations, they must extend their frame to the enemy. In other movements, movements may try to extend its frame to other populations (like genders or races), but political movements already include those groups. In democratic societies no one is excluded from politics and the supporting of political parties. The only way for political movements then to extend their frame is to extend to the other side, or the exact side they are opposing.

There is only one case in which political movements may be able to extend their frame without extending it to include the enemy. Often political groups will receive endorsement from certain groups within the society. Political movements may state that they will work to pass laws that may favor one group over others. For example, if a candidate was to speak out that there needs to be welfare reform because the policies that are in place may not help the poorer communities, poorer communities may endorse that candidate. Here the movement isn't directly trying to extend its frame to include an excluded group, but is only trying to get support from a population or group already in the voting society.

Not being able to extend its frame to a certain population may in fact be a good thing for the Tea Party movement. As stated before, 5% of Tea Party supporters are Democrats and 41% are independent (CBSNews/New York Times Poll 2010). The movement then must reach out to these other beliefs because some of their supporters believe in their principles. By using both a liberal and conservative frame, the Tea Party seeks to mobilize a population that may only support the liberal ideology or the

independent ideology, thus expanding the mobilization base. Tea Partiers also do not typically care about all Republicans. In fact, they only look to elect members of THEIR conservative ideology and if you do not they will not support you.

Frame extension to include oppositional political groups is very difficult. Political support or ideology falls along a continuum. This continuum has points that range from strongly conservative to moderate to strongly liberal. Groups fall along the continuum based on their principles and beliefs. The Tea Party is a political group that falls along the strongly conservative side of the continuum and discredited by conservatives groups as having principles that are too extreme. The question then is asked if the Tea Party is further right than established conservative parties that liberal parties already oppose, why would the opposition move further to the right than the established parties? Thus the Tea Party has to be careful and not try to extend their frame to include all issues that conservative groups favor, as the left may not agree. The Tea Party must only extend their frames very selectively to get support for the rest of the movement. If the movement fails to do this the crossover frame will not work, because liberals then may not vote on the Tea Party's policies, and the Tea Party may fail, or even cease to exist.

Once an injustice frame has been put in place and has been amplified to gain support for the movement, the final state is the belief that the participants can play a key role in the movement. If the movement frames a grievance in the society and gains mobilization, but does not instill a belief that they can change the system, the movement is dead. If the movement does however do all these things the movement may have some success. In the case of the Tea Party they have a fairly easy task of gaining the belief that

change is possible. As stated before political movement leaders instill a belief that change is possible through voting. In American politics, politicians live and die by the vote. If officials do not receive sufficient votes they will not get reelected.

Using the 2010 mid-term elections as an example, the Tea Party displays the victories of Governor Scott Walker and Chris Christie and representatives Mike Castle and Rand Paul as key victories. Using these victories, the Tea Party believes that change is possible if people get out and vote (Biterman 2011). Stating that anything is possible if we vote, the Tea Party uses its threat frame to instill a sense of fear that if we do not believe in change in our society and do not vote, the other side, (the us vs. them frame), will win and our lives will be threatened. If supporters vote, they can change the course of the election and bring a victory to the movement.

The creation of injustice frames, diagnostic frames, prognostic frames, motivational frames and the amplification of these frames are all key elements to developing a successful movement. If one of these three components fails, the movement fails. The movement must create an injustice frame that resonates with a population. The amplification process is also critical to the movement as seen in the Bangladesh acid attacks example. If the movement fails to amplify this frame the movement may fail. Once all of these elements have been complete the movement must also instill a belief that change is possible. If supporters do not believe that they can change an injustice, the movement will fail. These steps are outlined by social movement frame theorists and are crucial for the movement to survive.

### *The Timing of the Movement*

Social movements are also affected by the larger socio-historical context and the timing of their challenges. Early views of social movements saw them as occurring during times of harsh discontent and grievances. It was not until resource mobilization theory came along that this view changed. Benford and Snow (1992) extended the analysis to cover the frames that arise during cycles of protests and their temporal order. Both theorists believed that this was one area that needed to be expanded, thus they developed what are called collective action frames and master frames. As stated earlier in the social movement theory literature review, collective action frames focus on the diagnostics, prognostics and motivational aspects of the movements. Master frames have all of the same aspects of the collective action frames, but they frame the movement as a whole.

The Tea Party is much like that of other movements, yet the Tea Party is still very young. The Party was inspired by Rick Santelli in 2009. The Tea Party is basing its success and failure on the 2012 elections, focusing their attention on the candidates and the outcomes of the elections. If the Tea Party gets a candidate elected that accepts their ideology they will count it as a victory for the movement. If a person is elected does not support their ideology, in this case Barack Obama, they will consider the movement, or at least this stage of the movement, a failure.

The Tea Party must also change their focus to things beyond the election. Benford and Snow's (1986) concept of frame transformation comes into play at this point. Frame transformation is where the movement changes its previous frame to

include new values, meaning and understanding (Snow and Benford, 1986). Depending on the election Tea Party could be able to change some its frames. Most notably, the movement could get rid of its us vs. them frame that focuses on the federal government; if the conservatives win the White House, the movement may not feel as threatened by the policies put forth by the federal government and the movement may be seen as an ally.

A loss in the 2012 election may require the movement to examine if it is being constrained by its frames. Sometimes movements develop frames that are not accurate in shape and context within the society. Frames can have damaging long-term effects because the movement may be forced to live within the frames they developed. If the Tea Party loses the election, they will have to examine if the movement is being constrained by the frames put forth, costing them support for the movement from the general population.

The Tea Party is also at an interesting crossroads when it comes to social movements cause of the context of the movement. As stated before political movements offer a unique way of examining social movements, because political movements most often have to extend their frames with the group that they are trying to oppose. The Tea Party is no exception. American politics is different in that success, failure and existence of a movement depends on who is in office.

The cycle of protest in American politics follows a circle. Once one group sees the established party as unjust, they challenge the system, leading to collective action to change the system to be in their favor. Groups do this by electing officials who support

their ideology. This usually leads to another party or group of people to be upset. The new group who is now upset begins to protest and elect new officials or leaders that change the system to be in their favor. This continues because one group is always unhappy with the established party. In America they cycle happens between two parties. Typically when liberals are elected into the White House, conservatives are not happy. Conservative groups rally people to act collectively and vote out the liberal ideology. Once conservatives are elected, liberals see the system as unjust and begin to challenge the system. They begin to act collectively and elect officials that support their ideology.

The cycle of protest in American politics plays a crucial role for the Tea Party. The circle, as stated above describes the process in which new political movements gain power; it does not describe the end to the protest. Typically, when political parties get their officials elected, their protest ends. The movement has had success and thus there is no need to go on. It is crucial for the Tea Party movement to see beyond the circle if they win the 2012 election.

The Tea Party may want to examine if they want to promote their movement further after the elections. As stated before, it is unclear how the frames used by the Tea Party will change after the 2012 elections. Depending on the outcome of the election, the Tea Party may have to change their attack and play defense, fending off attacks from liberal groups who believe that their position is bad.

The frames that a movement produces can tell us a lot about the movement. The frames that a movement produces can either help or destroy a movement. The Tea Party is at a very interesting spot in a movement's history right now. With the 2012 election

coming up, the Tea Party will find out whether or not their frames are the right ones. If victorious, the Tea Party may change their frames to be more defensive. On the other hand, if the Tea Party loses the election of 2012, they will have to examine if their frames resonate and motivate within the larger population. If the movement concludes that their frames are not helping them they may need to transform their frames.

The Tea Party movement is much like other social movements. Using frames as a way to project their beliefs onto the world, the movement hopes to be successful in the 2012 elections. By creating injustice frames, prognostic frames, diagnostic frames and motivational frames, the Tea Party hopes to mobilize populations within the United States to support the movement. By aligning their frames with other movements and values the Tea Party hopes that their cycle of protest is different than that of other movements. They hope that the frames developed by the movement will carry them beyond the 2012 election.

## Epilogue

Since the beginning of the research for this project, a lot has happened to the Tea Party. Some of the changes have been out of the Tea Party's control while others may be the fault of the movement. The discussion will also focus on the changes made to the magazine. Since debuting in March 2011, the Tea Party review has gone under a lot of changes that may, in fact, derive from the changes in the Tea Party movement.

The Tea Party review originated in March 2011 as a magazine that would send out new issues every month. The magazine proclaimed itself as "The magazine of the movement" (Tea Party Review 2011). Since March (2011) the magazine is no longer published monthly; there is no word on whether or not it will be monthly, quarterly or annually, and it has switched to an online database. The magazine printed the first four issues in March, April, June and November (2011), all of which were used for this project. It was after the magazine's first two issues that publishers knew that they did not have enough money to run a monthly publication. On the Tea Party Review's website, publisher William Owen wrote "we were seriously broadsided by the fact that very few conservative groups and businesses were willing to take a step to advertise in a new political expression called, 'The Tea Party'" (Tea Party Review 2012). Without a backing of sponsors, the Tea Party was forced to shift from a monthly printed magazine to an online magazine.



Lack of backing from sponsors could have dramatic affects for the movement and the magazine. First off, if the magazine does not get the sponsorship from businesses or organizations it may reflect badly upon the magazine. Sponsors may view the magazine as unrepresentative of the movement. If sponsors view the magazine in this light the magazine may need to change not only the frames that it produces but also their identity. If sponsors believe that the magazine reflects a poor identity, and is something that they do not want to be associated with, the magazine may change. Second, if sponsors do not help support the magazine the movement maybe in trouble. If the magazine is seen as a legitimate expression of the ideology of the movement, the movement itself may be in trouble because businesses may not want to associate themselves with the movement. If this happens the movement may need to change the way it goes about its business.

The final reason for the magazines decline may have a lot to do with the movement. Since the beginning of the magazine in 2011, the movement has lost some steam in society. Running under the support of the Tea Party, Michelle Bachman has since left the election campaign, only winning the Iowa straw poll. Bachmann was seen as the face of the movement in the presidential election. While Bachmann is still the leader of the Tea Party Caucus in congress, she is no longer is the voice of the Tea Party in the 2012 elections. Rick Perry also had some support from the Tea Party, but he too has backed out. Herman Cain was endorsed in the November issue of the Tea Party Review as the most likely Tea Party candidate, but amidst sexual harassment allegations he too has dropped out of the elections. The only candidate left who may be seen as the face of the Tea Party is Ron Paul. Paul though has only won 47 out of the 827 delegates and has yet to win a single primary (Washington Post 2012).

The decline of the Tea Party candidates could be caused by three reasons. The first reason deals with the victories of the Tea Party. With the victories of Rand Paul, Marco Rubio, Mike Castle, Scott Walker, Chris Christie and others, people may feel like the Tea Party has already gotten what they wanted. The public may believe that the Tea Party is the next fad in American politics and if you give them a bone, they will go away.

The second reason for the Tea Party decline may be because of extreme political parties in American politics. After World War II, extreme political parties were often frowned upon in American politics. People often associate politics of the Right with fascism or neo-Nazi activism that many people explicitly reject. The media has helped to display the Tea Party as a far right political organization for their harsh stance that even Republicans discredit (Meet the Press 2012). Without the support of the media and because of people painting them in a bad light, many Tea Party supporters might disassociate themselves and reject the movement as too extreme.

The final reason for lack of support for the Tea Party is because of the decline in their master frames. According to Benford and Snow (1992) master frames can help the movement by giving them tactics to use but changes in the cultural climate may deem them ineffective and can lead to decline in protest. The Tea Party may not be in decline in protest, but the population may view their master frames as not relevant to the movement. This could have happened because of the victories of the Tea Party candidates or the uprising of the 'Occupy Wall Street' movement that promotes the liberal ideology. Either way the movement may need to transform their frames. The new frames would have to change values, meanings and understandings of the greater society.

Many Tea Partiers do not want to believe their decline in the society. In fact, Rand Paul said in his victory speech “Tonight there’s a Tea Party tidal wave and we’re sending a message to ‘lawmakers in Washington’” (ABC News 2010). The movement still believes that they are the movement that will change American politics for the better. Even though they believe that the movement is not on the decline, others say it is so.

Research now indicates that the Tea Party is losing support from the general population. According to the Pew Research Center, 27% of Americans disagree with the movement, and only 20% agree, a flip from a year ago (Knickerbocker 2010). Public opinion hasn’t stopped at the Tea Party; many people even disagree with Republicans. In October 2010, 48% of people in Tea Party districts viewed the Republican Party as favorable, while a year later only 14% of those people have a favorable view of the Republican Party. Many of the people polled said that in the previous survey they knew little about the Tea Party. It was not until the debates that they saw the Tea Party for what it was. With their harsh stance on the debt ceiling and deficit spending, people began to move away.

The current state of the Tea Party is one that should concern the movement. With the magazine lacking sponsorships and a slouching public opinion, the movement needs to examine if their frames resonate with the population. The movement may have to transform their frames to include new values, meanings and understandings for a culture that looks to be changing. With the candidates dropping out of the elections and counter movements arising, the movement needs to ask itself if they can survive. The movement

must examine if their injustice frames are right for the movement and examine if they need to transform them.

*Appendix Coding Form*

Article Title \_\_\_\_\_

Publication Date/ Issue Number \_\_\_\_\_

Author \_\_\_\_\_

Author Credentials \_\_\_\_\_

Pull Out Quote \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Main Article Theme \_\_\_\_\_

Supportive Argument \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Other Article Theme \_\_\_\_\_

Supportive Argument \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Other Article Theme \_\_\_\_\_

Supportive Argument \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Other Article Theme \_\_\_\_\_

Supportive Argument \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Related Events to theme or article \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Primary Focus of Article (Elections, Laws, Policy, Ideology, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Political figures or other people named in the articles and how they are identified.

Name:

Position

Descriptive:

Argument to which is actor is related:

Related event names with actor:

Ideology tied to Actor:

Ideology Support or Ideology Opposition:

Phrase or Quote Used:

Name:

Position

Descriptive:

Argument to which is actor is related:

Related event names with actor:

Ideology tied to Actor:

Ideology Support or Ideology Opposition:

Phrase or Quote Used:

Other Notes, Reactions or Thoughts:

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