

**'THE POLITICS OF NOSTALGIA AND ITS DISCONTENTS: AN INTENSIVE CASE STUDY
OF THE TEA PARTY SOCIAL MOVEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA'**

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Declaration- "This work is substantially my own, and where any part of this work is my own, I have indicated this by acknowledging the source of that part or those parts of the work".

Contents

<i>Abstract</i>	4
<i>Introduction</i>	5
a. Overview of the Tea Party	5
b. Structure of the Thesis	7
<i>Chapter One- Overview of Methodological Techniques</i>	9
a. Introduction- The Triangulation of Data	9
b. The Case Study Approach	9
c. Sample Surveys	10
d. Content Analysis	10
e. Frame Analysis	12
f. Discourse Analysis	12
<i>Chapter Two- Literature Review: Theorising on Social Movements</i>	15
a. The Definition of a Social Movement	15
b. Background to Literature and Major Debates	16
i. Issue Framing	16
ii. Cultural Studies	19
iii. Political Sociology of Emotion	21
c. Thesis Argument	23
<i>Chapter Three- History of Ultra-Conservatism in the United States</i>	25
a. The Importance of History in the Political and Social Sciences	25
b. The Ultra-Nationalism of the Patriot Movement	26
c. Christian Evangelicalism	28
d. White Supremacy	31
e. The Emergence of the Tea Party and its Significance	33
<i>Chapter Four- Who are the Members and Supporters of the Tea Party?</i>	38
a. The Verification of Tea Party Activist Bases	38
b. Parameters of the Content Analysis	41
c. Results of the Content Analysis	41
i. Scope and Nature of the Policy Issues	41
ii. Criticism of Barack Obama	47
iii. Contribution and Nature of Policy Prescriptions	49
iv. Nostalgic References to American History	50
v. Christianity in the United States	52
vi. A 'White' United States or Barack Obama's Perceived Muslim Background	53
vii. The United States Constitution	54

d. Conclusion- A Model Member and Supporter of the Tea Party	55
<i>Chapter Five- How has the Tea Party Mobilised its Activist Bases?</i>	57
a. Tax Day Tea Party Rallies, 15 April 2009	57
b. Taxpayer March on Washington, 12 September 2009	64
c. Restoring Honor Rally, 28 August 2010	73
d. Conclusion- The Evolution of the Tea Party	79
<i>Conclusion</i>	80
a. The Schematic Diagram of Tea Party Frames	80
b. Scope for Further Research	83
c. Predictions of the Future of the Tea Party	83
<i>Appendix</i>	85
<i>Bibliography</i>	95

Abstract

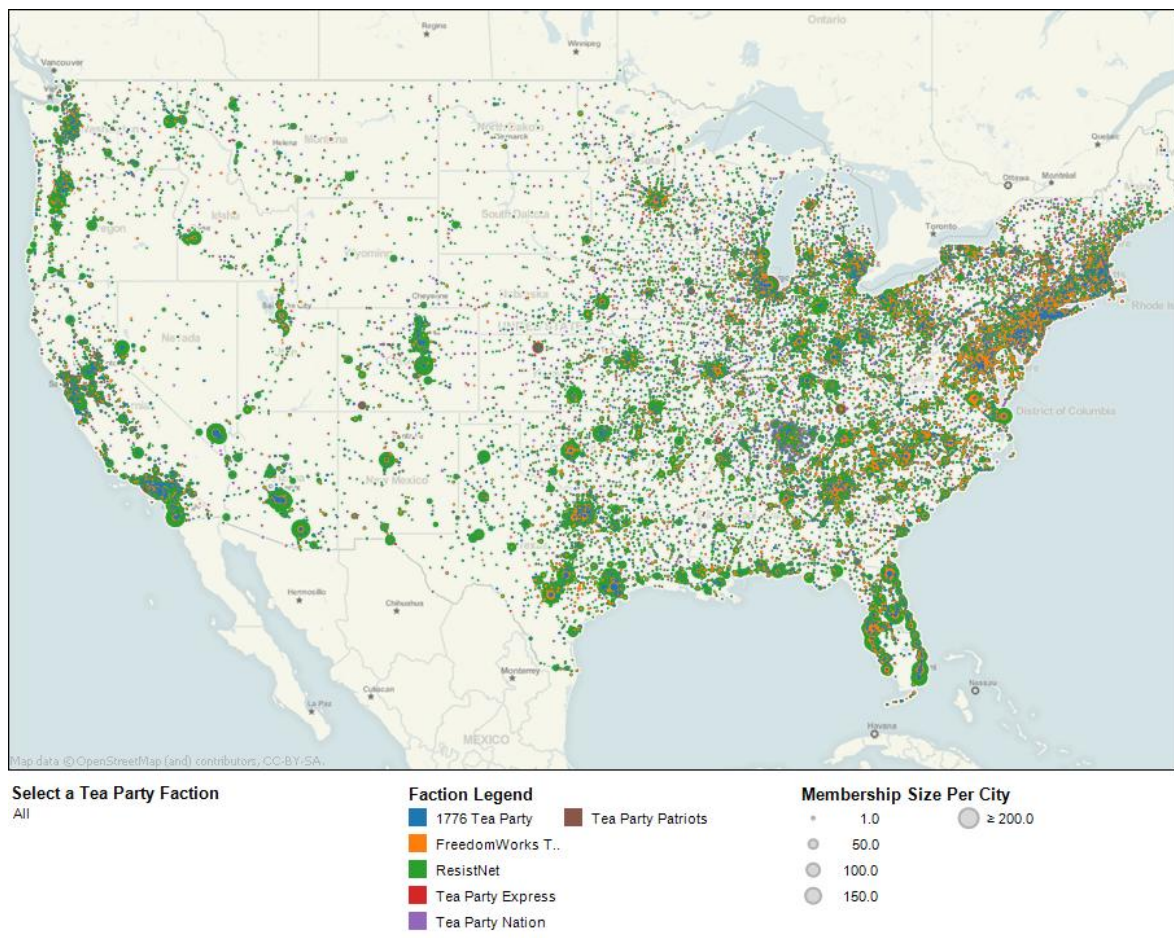
The focus of the thesis is an intensive case study of the processes accompanying the mobilisation and growth of the social movement known as the Tea Party in the United States of America. The thesis is grounded in an analytical lens of issue framing, which has come to be regarded as an equally-important framework in understanding the dynamics of social movements (Benford and Snow 2000: 612) alongside the more traditional lenses of resource mobilisation theory and political opportunity structure. The thesis combines a cultural approach to the social movement with the political sociology of emotion by examining the emotional implications of cultural foci like historical narratives, figurative rhetoric and archaic artifacts, which have been utilised by the Tea Party in its protest performances. The thesis finds that by appropriating the cultural history of the United States in its resonant collective action frames, the Tea Party has consciously and rationally exacerbated the emotions of distrust of the government, outrage towards existing policies but hope for the future amongst its activist bases in order to mobilise and grow in support.

Introduction

Overview of the Tea Party:

The Tea Party is not a monolithic organisation; nor does it have a centralised leadership structure. Rather, the Tea Party is a network of distinct but affiliated political organisations which are active throughout the United States of America; the largest of these are the 1776 Tea Party, the Freedomworks Tea Party, the Patriot Action Network, Tea Party Express, Tea Party Nation and Tea Party Patriots, in terms of national membership (Burghart and Zeskind 2010a). The map in Figure 1 below visually displays the vast network of the Tea Party which is spread across the nation, but largely confined to the eastern states.

Figure 1- National spread of the six largest Tea Party organisations



Source: Burghart and Zeskind, 'Tea Party Membership Map'.

Significantly, the Tea Party is a reference to the Boston Tea Party of 16 December 1773, where Bostonians openly defied the British Government and East India Tea Company by dumping supplies of tea rather than submit to 'taxation without representation'; this event precipitated the American War of Independence. The Tea Party entered the wider public consciousness in 2009 through its extensive and persistent public protests against the authority of the United States Federal Government to collect taxation; subsequently however, it has expanded its agenda to encompass a broader range of political, economic and social issues (Burghart and Zeskind 2010b). Despite its anti-establishment rhetoric, the Tea Party is working within the existing political institutions to make its claims; the most important political institution for the Tea Party is the United States Constitution, defined by its support for the constitutional doctrine of originalism. This doctrine asserts that the original intent of the Founding Fathers that wrote the document is static and knowable; thus, the Tea Party demands that the Constitution should be applied today in the same guise of that original intent (Lepore 2010: 112-113). The key result, according to the Tea Party, is that extensive constraints should be imposed on the exercise of power by the Federal Government (Liptak 2010).

The 'manifesto' of the Tea Party is the Contract from America, which sets out ten items ostensibly designed to secure individual liberty and limited government in an ultra-conservative fashion. This list demands the following:

- The political protection of the Constitution
- The restoration of a limited government
- A limit on government spending
- A balanced budget
- A moratorium on earmarks until the budget is balanced

- Fundamental tax reform due to the complicated tax code
- The elimination of various taxes
- The repeal of universal health care as dictated by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act
- Growth in the energy sector
- The rejection of a cap and trade emissions trading system ('Contract from America' 2010)

Structure of the Thesis:

The thesis is first comprised of an overview of both the quantitative and qualitative methodological techniques that are used within the case study, including a discussion of sample surveys, a content analysis, frame analysis and discourse analysis. Chapter Two contains the literature review of issue framing, cultural studies and the political sociology of emotion, the three interrelated ways of understanding social movements; the thesis argument is also briefly outlined in terms of its location within the academic literature. Chapter Three provides an overview of the history of ultra-conservatism in the United States, with its three strands traditionally emanating from the Patriot movement, the Christian Right and white supremacy.

The body of the thesis begins with Chapter Four, which addresses the major research question of 'who are the members and supporters of the Tea Party?': this question is answered through a discussion of existing material from sample surveys which quantitatively provides the demographical make-up of both members and supporters of the Tea Party and a content analysis of 300 blogs composed by online Tea Party activists in order to illuminate their broad ideology. Finally, and most significantly, a discourse analysis

is carried out in Chapter Five in regards to three major protest performances executed by the Tea Party in order to qualitatively answer the other major research question of ‘how has the Tea Party mobilised its activist bases?’, through its use of cultural foci and cultivation of emotional responses. The three protest performances chosen are the Tax Day Tea Party rallies on 15 April 2009, the Taxpayer March on Washington or 9/12 Tea Party on 12 September 2009 and the Restoring Honor Rally on 28 August 2010: this particular timeframe spans the evolution of the Tea Party from its singular focus on taxation to its current focus on the array of political, economic and social issues that have contributed to the perceived decline of the United States of America. The conclusion summarises the thesis argument through the production of a ‘schematic diagram’ of frames referenced by the Tea Party, suggests where there is scope for further research and predicts the future of the Tea Party.

Chapter One- Overview of Methodological Techniques

Introduction- The Triangulation of Data:

The thesis is informed by an epistemology of social constructivism, which posits that all social actions, including collective action carried out by the Tea Party, are shaped by the ideas, beliefs, norms and identities through which actors interpret the world around them (Parsons 2010: 80). Accordingly, the major methodological techniques used within this thesis are of both the quantitative and qualitative variety: within the case study, the research question of ‘who are the members and supporters of the Tea Party?’ is best answered quantitatively through a discussion of sample surveys and a content analysis, while the research question of ‘how has the Tea Party mobilised its activist bases?’ is best answered qualitatively through frame and discourse analysis.

The Case Study Approach:

A case study is methodologically defined by three characteristics: the investigation of a particular social phenomenon, a ‘thick’ elaboration of the phenomenon and the triangulation of data (Snow and Tran 2002: 147). Case studies are usually examined comparatively in political science, so that generalisations about the behaviour of political actors can be empirically established. However, singular case studies are still valuable in terms of extending and refining theories of social movements (Snow and Tran 2002: 164-165) which this thesis is designed to accomplish in its holistic account of the Tea Party at the macro-level, along with the elaboration of processes accompanying the mobilisation and growth of the social movement at the micro-level. Any cross-national comparisons of the Tea Party with other social movements would be flawed: the Tea Party is firmly located in the context of the history of ultra-conservatism in the United States. In this sense, the goal

of the thesis is the “interpretation of meaning and to provide understanding” of the Tea Party itself rather than any generalisability (Vromen 2010: 256).

Sample Surveys:

Firstly, existing sample surveys of active Tea Party members within the American populace conducted by respected bodies and publications will be utilised, such as *Gallup* and *The New York Times*. Although they do not constitute original research, these sample surveys will be inductively examined in order to discover the “intensity and distribution of ideational elements” of the political ideologies dispersed within the content of collective action frames utilised by the Tea Party (Johnston 2002: 76). This is important because the sample surveys reveal that the strong opposition of the Tea Party to the current administration is “more rooted in political ideology than anxiety about their personal economic well-being” (‘National Survey of Tea Party Supporters’ 2010: 1). Before these polls, attitudinal information about the Tea Party was largely gathered from anecdotal sources (Zernike and Thee-Brenan 2010: 1); used along with the content analysis, it is hypothesised that the sample surveys will provide evidence of the distinct activist bases of the Tea Party with their influences from the Patriot movement, the Christian Right and white supremacists through overlapping demographic backgrounds and political ideologies.

Content Analysis:

Content analysis is a text-based technique in which primary sources produced by political actors are systematically studied, to find patterns through coding and therefore to make generalisations about the texts in question (Vromen 2010: 262). Content analysis is thus heavily reliant on the scientific method in its quantitative approach, in terms of its attention to objectivity, reliability and hypothesis testing (Neuendorf 2002: 10).

The online data analysis currently published by Alexa, the website information company, was used to select the websites of three of the six largest Tea Party groups¹ for content analysis. Through the search engine at <http://www.alexacom/>, the websites were measured in terms of the volume of website traffic on a national and global scale, as well as their reputation through outside links. As indicated in the table below, the most popular websites for online Tea Party activists are those of the Patriot Action Network at <http://www.patriotactionnetwork.com/>, the Freedomworks Tea Party at <http://www.freedomworks.org/> and Tea Party Nation at <http://www.teapartynation.com/>.

Table 2- Online data analysis of the websites of Tea Party groups

Tea Party group	Website link	Global ranking	American ranking	Outside links
Patriot Action Network	http://www.patriotactionnetwork.com/	40 254	6984	208
Freedomworks Tea Party	http://www.freedomworks.org/	44 442	9897	1096
Tea Party Nation	http://www.teapartynation.com/	49 795	12 945	205
Tea Party Patriots	http://www.teapartypatriots.org/	164 396	52 038	590
Tea Party Express	http://www.teapartyexpress.org/	536 284	112 078	433
1776 Tea Party	http://www.teaparty.org/	649 755	129 112	128

Source: <http://www.alexacom/>

Nine auxiliary research questions were designed in the content analysis in order to gain an understanding the political ideology of online Tea Party activists: the results are found in Figure 2 in the Appendix, which contains the Microsoft Excel spreadsheets of the codified blog entries from the Patriot Action Network, Freedomworks Tea Party, Tea Party

¹ As stated in the introduction, the six largest Tea Party groups in terms of national membership are the 1776 Tea Party, the Freedomworks Tea Party, the Patriot Action Network, Tea Party Express, Tea Party Nation and Tea Party Patriots.

Nation and Congresswoman Michele Bachmann's official blog, along with the accompanying legend for reference. Thus, 100 blog entries on each website were codified over the sixteen-month period from 15 April 2009 to 28 August 2010: this allows for a statistical examination of the primary mode of communication used by online Tea Party activists. These two dates coincide with the beginning and endpoint of the protest performances examined in the discourse analysis, with the Tax Day Tea Party rallies and the Restoring Honor Rally respectively. Furthermore, Bachmann's official blog was chosen to act as a 'control', due to her affiliation with the Tea Party and similar political ideology.

Frame Analysis:

Frame analysis requires a holistic description of the content of collective action frames and their impact on the development of the social movement; in this sense, the texts of the Tea Party itself promoted in public performances, interviews, flyers and Internet websites are the subject of analysis. One useful way to empirically verify the concepts and relationships that exist amongst the various frames is by amalgamating their content and formulating a 'schematic diagram' that represents the hierarchy of frames which stem from the master frame (Johnston 2002: 72). This diagram will be revealed in the conclusion of the thesis but will be enhanced in its sophistication within its body through the 'systematic exposition' of the essential content of the frames, such as the provision of problems, blame and solutions, use of symbols and broader links to the wider culture (Johnston 2002: 73).

Discourse Analysis:

Comparatively, discourse analysis involves analysis of the relationship between the aforementioned texts of the Tea Party and the discursive field of the broader national culture, so that there is an "intensive focus on movement-related texts to identify patterns,

linkages and structures of ideas” displayed in the three protest performances of the Tax Day Tea Party rallies on 15 April 2009, the Taxpayer March on Washington on 12 September 2009 and the Restoring Honor Rally on 28 August 2010 (Johnston 2002: 69). Through the Durkheimian ontological approach to the world, social movements must operate “in tune with the routines, rituals and myths which stipulate appropriate organisational forms and practices” (Polletta 1997: 440). Accordingly, the individual production of text by Tea Party members, in the form of posters and banners, and dialogue, in the form of speeches and interviews, is examined through photography and over 150 minutes of preserved YouTube footage of protest performances.

Thus, a discussion of the historical narratives and myths that are utilised by the Tea Party will be integral to the thesis, defined as “an account of a sequence of events in the order in which they occurred...to make a point” (Polletta 2009: 36). Significantly, the use of narratives are not only crucial to solidifying collective memories in social movements but also allow the teller “to lead [the audience] to intended conclusions” as they are built on preconceived assumptions (Johnston 2009: 14). Polletta has thus paradoxically ascribed the power of narratives to their ambiguity, which consequently “necessitates our interpretive participation” to fill in any gaps (Polletta 1997: 414). For instance, the United States Constitution is one of the most famously ambiguous documents in history, as it institutionalised the distribution of power in the Federal Government in under five thousand words (Rosati and Scott 2011: 292; ‘The Constitution of the United States: A Transcription’ 2011). Because it remains “the final source of political authority, the ultimate arbiter of every argument”, many policies and phenomena that members of the Tea Party are threatened by are framed around their lack of constitutionality, so that they can be rejected by the American populace at large (Lepore 2010: 47).

Chapter Two- Literature Review: Theorising on Social Movements

The Definition of a Social Movement:

Defining a 'social movement' is a difficult conceptual task, because they are historically specific (Tilly 1979: 7) and vary greatly in their degree of structural organisation, temporal continuity, orientation of goals towards or against change and balance between institutional and extra-institutional forms of protest (McAdam and Snow 2010: 1). The thesis will thus utilise the broad definition contained in *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements* of them as collectivities formulating relatively organised and sustained "challenges to institutional, organisational or cultural authority or systems of authority" (Snow, Soule and Kriesi 2004: 11). In this sense, social movements are "a cluster of political practices" as they actively appeal to activist bases through their relatively organised and sustained challenges to power holders, rather than act as a formal unified group (Giugni 1998: xiii).

Consequently, the three distinct groups deemed necessary for the existence of a social movement are participants, power holders and activist bases (Tilly 1999: 257); in this case study, the three distinct groups are the Tea Party, the Federal Government and specific activist bases amongst the American populace respectively, as the Tea Party has executed "modern forms of contention...aimed at demonstrating a claim" to both the power holder of the Federal Government and activist bases (Tarrow 2011: 98). Since its conception, the forms of contention that the Tea Party has used have included: disruption, in order to startle bystanders and leave elites disoriented with sporadic 'brawls' at protests (Tilly 2003: 15), contained behaviour, with the "advantage of building on routines that people understand and that elites will accept" such as marches and electoral politics (Tarrow 2011: 99), but

most importantly, public performances, with the invocation of “symbolic and cultural elements” to provoke movement solidarity (Tarrow 2011: 98).

Background to Literature and Major Debates:

Issue framing

A collective action frame refers to a static “snapshot” of the interpretive content that is exerted at a specific point in time by a social movement (Noakes and Johnston 2005: 12), while issue framing refers to the ongoing discursive, strategic and contested processes that accompany the production of collective action frames (Benford and Snow 2000: 623-625). A particular kind of collective action frame is the ‘master frame’, an overarching frame that acts as the organisational theme for a social movement (Benford and Snow 2000: 619); for the Tea Party, this master frame is the nostalgic desire to restore the prestige of the United States from the American revolutionary era. Critically, ‘frame resonance’ is viewed as the major dependent variable in the mobilising potency of a social movement (Noakes and Johnston 2005: 16), influenced by four frame alignment processes. These processes are ‘frame bridging’, defined as the “linkage of two or more ideologically congruent but structurally unconnected frames” (Snow, Rochford Jr., Worden and Benford 1986: 467), ‘frame amplification’, defined as the “invigoration of an interpretive frame” (Snow, Rochford Jr., Worden and Benford 1986: 469), ‘frame extension’, defined as the portrayal of activities as “being congruent with the values or interests of potential adherents” and ‘frame transformation’ (Snow, Rochford Jr., Worden and Benford 1986: 472), defined as substantial changes in the way a particular domain is framed (Snow, Rochford Jr., Worden and Benford 1986: 474). Frame resonance is also influenced by the six additional factors of frame consistency, empirical credibility, credibility of the political entrepreneurs,

experiential commensurability, centrality and narrative fidelity (Benford and Snow 2000: 619). For example, the 'small government' frame deployed by the Tea Party is especially resonant in the United States: it is amplified by members of the Tea Party as an essential characteristic of American society, is bridged with the policy prescription frame of the rejection of health care reform, is credibly legitimised by the existence of the Libertarian Party, can be easily measured in terms of government spending and has strong narrative fidelity as it is a key ideal of the Founding Fathers.

The concept of issue framing was first established in the social sciences by Erving Goffman in his 1974 study, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organisation of Experience*. In this work, Goffman explained that the social experiences of individuals in everyday life are structured according to 'frames', or "definitions of a situation...built up in accordance with principles of organisation which govern events" (Goffman 1974: 10). Frames are useful for individuals who are 'cognitive misers' and rely on the memory of past events to make decisions (Fiske and Taylor 1984). Goffman thus argued that an understanding of the role frames play in social experiences is invaluable, because they turn "what would otherwise be a meaningless aspect of [a] scene into something that is meaningful" (Goffman 1974: 21).

In their 1986 journal article, 'Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization and Movement Participation', the sociologists Robert Benford and David Snow, along with Burke Rochford and Steven Worden, innovatively applied Goffman's work on issue framing by individuals to the realm of collective action, which popularised its use in the literature of social movements as an analytical lens. The authors proposed the significance of 'frame alignment' for the mobilisation of activist bases whereby the interpretive orientations of the individual, in terms of their values and beliefs, and the social movement, in terms of its activities, goals and ideology, are linked (Snow, Rochford, Worden and Benford 1986: 464).

Issue framing has since been considered an agential tool by social movements to contend with the struggle over the production of meanings that occurs in society, as it typically combines a diagnosis of a social problem, a prognosis with a proposed solution and the motivation or rationale for engaging in collective action (Benford and Snow 2000: 616-617). The political strategy associated with issue framing has been further developed by the political scientist Deborah Stone through her discussion of 'causal stories', defined as discursive narratives in which political entrepreneurs explicitly attribute cause, blame and responsibility to social problems that are amenable to human control (Stone 1989: 282). For instance, the major causal story that is propagated by the Tea Party is the attribution of blame of the depressed state of the American economy to the newly-appointed President Barack Obama, because of his presidential power that gives him control over national economic affairs.

The most significant 'debate' in the literature of issue framing was the refinement of Goffman's ideas presented in *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organisation of Experience* by Benford and Snow for their purposes in discussing social movements. While Goffman acknowledged that the 'belief-system' of a group represented its "framework of frameworks" (Goffman 1974: 27), he proposed framing as a distinctly individual process and only ever analysed the interpretive capacity of individuals in everyday social life. In contrast, Benford and Snow applied the concept of frames to social movements and the manner in which activist bases are collectively mobilised (Snow, Rochford Jr., Worden and Benford 1986: 466).

One major criticism that this conceptual development attracted was the tendency to use the terms 'frame' and 'ideology' interchangeably without questioning the relationship between the two (Oliver and Johnston 2005: 186). Ultimately, the distinction was made that

while ideologies can link theory, norms and values in a sophisticated fashion to focus on the content of belief-systems, frames are “relatively shallow, situated specifically in arenas of contention, and compared to ideologies...are assimilated relatively easily and quickly” (Westby 2005: 219). For example, within the Tea Party, libertarianism is a political ideology while the demand for small government is a frame that fits within this ideology.

Cultural studies

Cultural studies of social movements emerged in the late 1990s due to the rise of social constructivism in the political and social sciences and have taken two diverse approaches. On the one hand, cultural studies have focussed upon the fluid relationship between the social movement and mainstream culture; on the other hand, cultural studies have extrapolated upon the internal development of the distinctive culture of the social movement itself (Johnston and Klandermans 1995). Both approaches have been inspired by the French sociologist Alain Touraine’s pioneering 1981 work, *The Voice and the Eye: An Analysis of Social Movements*, in which he advocated a Durkheimian understanding of society as a system of “actors defined by cultural orientations and social relations” (Touraine 1981: 2).

A leading academic in this field, Hank Johnston, has defined culture as a complex and interrelated ‘matrix’ of powerful rituals, symbols, narratives and world-views that are “embedded in social relations where agency, diversity and opposition come in” (Johnston 2009: 8). Johnston proposes three areas of cultural foci as ideations, artifacts and performances (Johnston 2009: 7): an ideation is based in “the traditional stuff of culture” and includes values, beliefs and ideologies like the ultra-nationalism displayed by Tea Party members, an artifact is a cultural object available for display or use after their initial

production like the tri-cornered hats or 'tricornes' worn by Tea Party members and performances are symbolic actions like the Restoring Honor Rally. Importantly, performances are claimed to be the most powerful as they allow for human agency as "social actors bring their ideas about how the world is or should be, offering them up to social discussion, scrutiny and vetting, and, then, act" in the process of interpretation (Johnston 2009: 26). Furthermore, the thesis is grounded in Ann Swidler's related idea of culture as a 'tool kit' (Swidler 1995), in which the three areas of cultural foci can "be strategically used by movement organisations and leaders to navigate the seas of confrontation and contention" in protest performances (Johnston and Klandermans 1995: 21).

The major ontological debate that surrounds cultural studies in political science is between the Weberian and the Durkheimian approaches to the place of culture in society, which have not been easily reconciled. Swidler has usefully conceptualised the Weberian approach as perceiving culture from the 'inside out' and the Durkheimian approach as perceiving culture from the 'outside in' (Swidler 1995: 25). In this sense, the Weberian approach focuses on the individual actor with their internalised values and beliefs as the fundamental unit of analysis; contrarily, the Durkheimian approach views culture as the collective composition of the institutions, rituals and symbols that are contested, infused with power and pervade society, so that the 'action system' of a social movement is instead the unit of analysis (Melucci 1995: 44).

Despite the value of the Weberian approach in examining the role of political entrepreneurs in the mobilisation and growth of social movements, the thesis will be grounded in a Durkheimian approach like the majority of cultural studies released today, which ascribes the power of culture as "a global, collective property" that can shape the

beliefs of actors (Swidler 1995: 39). However, the relationship between the systemic perspective of culture, which involves the description of dominant cultural patterns that are uniformly accepted, and the performative perspective of culture, which understands that actors consciously utilise dominant cultural patterns as strategies of action, needs to be clarified (Johnston and Klandermans 1995: 6-7). As a solution, Johnston proposes the value of Benford and Snow's framing perspective of culture in uniting both perspectives through its symbolic interactionism, which understands that "our perceptions of the world are forged in ongoing and emergent social interaction" (Johnston 2009: 23).

Political sociology of emotion

Despite being an intrinsic element in all social experiences, the role of emotion in analysing social movements has often been rejected as being too personal and idiosyncratic (Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta 2004: 413). The collective behaviour school of thought in the 1950s and early 1960s regarded emotions as wholly irrational resulting in social movements typified by 'immature' and 'frenzied' mob behaviour (Eyerman 2005: 41), as in Neil Smelser's 1968 work, *Theory of Collective Behaviour*. Resource mobilisation theory however, which dominated thinking from the late 1960s as an analytical lens, emphatically denied the role of emotion as it only ascribed to 'hyper-rationality' in its explanations; this meant that emotion "led a shadow existence" in the literature of social movements for a long period of time (Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta 2001: 1). Nevertheless, the cultural studies of social movements that emerged in the late 1980s ensured that emotion was placed back on the agenda due to the common epistemology of social constructivism (Eyerman 2005: 41). These studies acknowledged that "emotions are shaped by cultural understandings and norms" and therefore held explanatory value (Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta 2004: 414),

culminating in the publication of the seminal 2001 work, *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements*, edited by the sociologists Jeff Goodwin, James Jasper and Francesca Polletta.

These commentators explained that the decisive causal force attributed to concepts such as frames and culture comes from the inherent emotions, or 'feeling rules', released by their production and dissemination (Flam 2005: 25). Emotions in this way are socially constructed (Calhoun 2001: 47), as they emerge in response to "moral intuitions, felt obligations and rights and information about expected effects" (Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta 2001: 13). Social movements therefore consciously attempt to provoke and stimulate a variety of emotions in participants, targets and opponents that are deemed to be most effective in terms of their objectives by influencing political behaviour, which can include 'reflexive emotions' like fear and surprise, 'affective bonds' like love and distrust, 'moods' like optimism and pessimism and complex 'moral emotions' like outrage and hope (Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta 2004: 423). Importantly, it has been argued that even "before collective action can get underway, people must collectively define their situations as unjust" in a process of 'injustice framing' (McAdam 1999: 51); this requires the stimulation of emotional responses that are particularly 'mobilising' or 'vitalising' (Tarrow 2011: 154), like distrust, outrage and hope.

Due to the historical centrality of rationality in the discipline of political science and the aforementioned dominance of resource mobilisation theory in explaining the mobilisation and growth of social movements, the major debate that the political sociology of emotion has had to grapple with is the contention that emotions themselves are incompatible with rational analysis. On the contrary, it has been forcefully highlighted that writers of modern utilitarianism and instrumental political analysis such as Niccolò

Machiavelli, Thomas Hobbes and Jeremy Bentham understood the “need to tame and organise passions” that shape “the otherwise inexplicable source of differences in what people found pleasurable and painful” (Calhoun 2001: 50). The perceived incompatibility of emotions with rationality is consequently one example of the numerous ‘false dualisms’ that abound in Western society, like ‘mind’ and ‘body’ and ‘motive’ and ‘action’; therefore, it is important to negate this dualism and acknowledge social movements as being simultaneously instrumental and expressive (Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta 2001: 15).

In *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements*, Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta presented their four interpretations of emotion in the literature of social movements that have been inspired by a variety of disciplines. Biological, Freudian and structural interpretations of psychology exist (Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta 2001: 11), but the authors advocate a cultural interpretation of emotion, by arguing that “the tools of cultural analysis [ideations, artifacts and performances]...are the best means of coming to grips with the emotions that matter most in politics and social conflict” (Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta 2001: 13). This is strongly related to the idea of ‘motivational framing’ in the literature of issue framing, in which vocabularies of severity, urgency and efficacy are utilised in historical narratives and figurative rhetoric to formulate a “call to arms” in the form of collective action (Benford and Snow 2000: 617).

Thesis Argument:

Cultural foci have often been dismissed as inconsequential by-products of the processes accompanying social movements (Johnston 2009: 4), while the role of emotion in explaining their mobilisation has been neglected due to its widely-perceived incompatibility with rational behaviour (Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta 2004: 413). On the contrary, Sidney

Tarrow, a major authority on social movements, has argued that movement solidarity which underpins mobilisation and growth is comprised of three elements: framing, identity construction and emotion work (Tarrow 2011: 143). Thus, the thesis will argue that by appropriating the cultural history of the United States in its resonant collective action frames, the Tea Party is consciously and rationally exacerbating the emotions of distrust of the government, outrage towards existing policies but hope for the future amongst its activist bases in order to mobilise and grow in support.

Chapter Three- History of Ultra-Conservatism in the United States

The Importance of History in the Political and Social Sciences:

The three major strands of ultra-conservatism in the United States that have existed since the birth of the nation as 'sets of ideas' are the ultra-nationalism of the Patriot movement, Christian evangelicalism and white supremacy. These sets of ideas have been supported and perpetuated by specific political institutions, of which the John Birch Society and the National Center for Constitutional Studies are affiliated with the Tea Party today. The mobilisation of these three sets of ideas in the United States has historically been in reaction to the threats caused by structural change of the economic, political and demographic variety (Van Dyke and Soule 2002: 499). Importantly, the term 'ultra-conservatism' itself is most commonly used to distinguish extremist ideologies based on ultra-nationalism, religious fundamentalism or racism from other parties and movements on the right of the political spectrum, which are characterised by their support for economic and social conservatism in the form of free market capitalism and a traditional moral order respectively (Blee and Creasap 2000: 270).

It must be acknowledged that history has an important role in the political and social sciences, especially through the study of political institutions, or organisations that exhibit a "stable, recurring pattern of behaviour" (Goodin 1996: 22) in their embodiment of values (Lowndes 2010: 68) whilst being "deeply embedded over time" (Pierson 2004: 15). It is understood that an understanding of history is an essential requirement of any rigorous explanation of political processes like a social movement (Tilly 2006: 420), because "all political processes occur within history and thus need knowledge of the historical context" (Vromen 2010: 263). This chapter will provide a historical overview of the ultra-nationalism of the Patriot movement, Christian evangelicalism and white supremacy and suggest the

reasons why the supporters of these three sets of ideas act as 'activist bases' for the Tea Party. The chapter concludes by framing the emergence of the Tea Party within this historical context and explaining its significance in terms of its newly-acquired institutional power, the ideological polarisation of party politics and the growing potential for violence.

The Ultra-Nationalism of the Patriot Movement:

Like the Tea Party, the Patriot movement is not a monolithic organisation and does not have a centralised leadership structure. Instead, the Patriot movement is "an assortment of loosely aligned [ultra-conservative] groups" including economically disenfranchised farmers known as the Posse Comitatus, militia and anti-Semites (Huhn 1999: 419); these groups are characterised in their political behaviour by vigilante activism, in the form of disruption of local law courts and domestic acts of terrorism (Smith 1997: 278). The central belief-system of the Patriot movement that unites the groups is ultra-nationalist and anti-government with the assertion that the Federal Government "has failed to uphold and protect the Constitution, and that citizen action is necessary for its protection", which is constitutionally supported by the Second Amendment with the right to bear arms (Van Dyke and Soule 2002: 497). The Patriot movement has featured in American politics since the pre-Revolutionary colonial era with the militant Regulator movement in South Carolina from 1767 to 1769, which was opposed to "an assembly which contained no representative of the people [and] drafted oppressive laws" (Smith 1997: 281). However, the Patriot movement only gained national attention in the United States in 1995 with the bombings of the Oklahoma City Federal Building organised by the United States Army veteran, Timothy McVeigh (Van Dyke and Soule 2002: 497); through the 'coordinated destruction' of a high-profile governmental target (Tilly 2003: 15), McVeigh and his

accomplices achieved disruption on a large scale in order to instantly command coverage from the mass media and put forward their claims to the power holder of the Federal Government (Tarrow 2011: 101).

The most important institution that is part of the Patriot movement is the John Birch Society (Van Dyke and Soule 2002: 501), founded in 1958 by the businessman Robert Welch in response to the “challenge begun by...Joseph McCarthy to expose and defeat the communist menace” that threatened the United States (Stewart 2002: 424) through “conquest and enslavement” (Welch 1958: 21). Since the end of the Cold War, in which communism was widely discredited with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the John Birch Society did not dissolve as many predicted but rather evolved by beginning to disseminate anti-government conspiracy theories (Stewart 2002: 426). The foremost anti-government conspiracy theory propagated by the John Birch Society is that international organisations such as the United Nations, the Council on Foreign Relations and the Trilateral Commission are actively attempting to create a socialist world government called ‘the New World Order’ (Welch 1958: 100). Another institution that supports the Patriot movement is the National Center for Constitutional Studies (NCSS) which was founded in 1971 by the political theorist Cleon Skousen to teach the United States Constitution in the tradition of the Founding Fathers and their principles. Like the Tea Party, the NCSS advocates the constitutional doctrine of originalism in order to fulfil “America’s divine stewardship as a beacon of liberty to all mankind” (National Center for Constitutional Studies 2009).

The ultra-nationalism of the Patriot movement thus seems to have inspired the Tea Party, in the form of its anti-government rhetoric, its perception that American citizens have a right to ‘revolt’ because of the broken ‘social contract’ with the Federal Government and its strict adherence to the Constitution (Smith 1997: 301-310). The form of contention

favoured by the Patriot movement is disruption; the very birth of the Tea Party itself can also be traced back to a moment of disruption, when the CNBC cable-news reporter, Rick Santelli, broke with routine and shouted into the camera on live television, “This is America! How many of you people want to pay for your neighbours’ mortgage that has an extra bathroom and can’t pay their bills?...We’re thinking of having a Chicago Tea Party in July!” on 19 February 2009 (‘CNBC’s Rick Santelli’s Chicago Tea Party’ 2009). Disruption in the form of harassing politicians at local town meetings is also a tactic used by the Tea Party intermittently (Tarrow 2011: 97): for instance, one memo circulated by the Tea Party Patriots implored members and supporters of the Tea Party to “pack the hall” and “yell out and challenge the Rep’s statements early...to make him uneasy early on” (MacGuffie 2009: 1-2). However, the Tea Party has gained more legitimacy because it has favoured protest performances and contained behaviour to make their claims, rather than illegally resorting to violence (Tarrow 2011: 98-99). The threats that have similarly mobilised both the Patriot movement and the Tea Party today largely involve the progressive policies implemented by Obama since his inauguration on 20 January 2009, with their substantial government spending and regulation: these include the \$787 billion economic stimulus package deployed in 2009 in response to the global financial crisis and the attempts to curtail industrial greenhouse gas emissions under the auspices of the Environmental Protection Agency (MacGillis 2009; Broder 2009).

Christian Evangelicalism:

The United States is renowned for its persistently high level of religiosity over time compared to other advanced democracies (Norris and Inglehart 2004), to such an extent that the normally negative relationship between economic development and religiosity is

inapplicable for this nation (Jelen 2006: 330). For instance, a 1995 cross-national study of religious attitudes reported that in response to the question, 'is God very important in your life?', 13% said 'yes' in France, 19% said 'yes' in Great Britain, while 58% said 'yes' in the United States (Gogan 1995: 405-418). Within this peculiarly religious nation, the Christian Right is the activist base of those who ascribe to Christian evangelicalism: it is dominated by white Protestant evangelicals at the individual level, who represented almost 25% of all registered voters in 1999 (Martin 1999: 68). Due to its extremely high level of organisation and dispersion within American society, Christian evangelicalism encompasses a very powerful set of interest groups in the United States that have an ultra-conservative stance towards the religio-moral issues in domestic politics, like abortion, stem cell research, gay marriage and pre-marital sex (Jelen 2006: 33).

In terms of their central belief-system, individuals in the Christian Right revere the Bible as "the sole authority of faith", engage in an intensely personal relationship with God and aim to convert others to accompany them on their 'spiritual' journey (Huliaras 2009: 161; Lindsay 2006: 208). Thus, the central belief-system of the Christian Right corroborates effectively with the self-perception of American exceptionalism; this is encapsulated by the Puritan John Winthrop's renowned 1603 'city upon a hill' sermon in which he asserted that the United States would be 'God's chosen nation' (Winthrop 1603). This "assumption remains implicit in much of [American] public rhetoric" today (Boyer 2001: 548), so that only three United States Presidents have been unaffiliated with a religious tradition of the Christian variety during their tenure (The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life 2009). Therefore, President Obama has been forced to constantly remind the American voting public that he is a "Christian by choice" often with limited effectiveness, due to the

abundance of conspiracy theories that portray him as a Muslim, a Jew or even the Antichrist ('Obama 'Christian by Choice': President Responds to Questioner' 2010).

Like the Patriot movement, Christian evangelicalism originated in the pre-Revolutionary colonial era with the Great Awakening, which was a period of dramatic religious revival (Kidd 2007: 3). However, the Christian Right only became actively involved in United States politics in the late 1990s, where it mobilised as a voting bloc in favour of George W. Bush in his 2000 presidential election campaign (Huliaras 2009: 161). Moreover, the Christian Right has vocalised its attitudes to not only religio-moral issues in domestic politics but also international relations in the last decade: the September 11 terrorist attacks prompted about a third of evangelical Christians to name foreign policy as the most important issue for the United States, as opposed to less than 2% previously (Shriver 2006: 53). Most visibly, the Christian Right "has been a major driving force in placing African issues on the U.S. government agenda" (Huliaras 2009: 161): almost 350 000 Americans undertook proselytising missions in 2001, eight times as many as in 1996, while the Southern Baptist Convention spent \$290 million in developing nations by constructing more than 8000 churches and baptising over 421 000 converts (Huliaras 2009: 162). There are numerous institutions under the aegis of the Christian Right that generally focus on a particular religio-moral issue; for instance, the Family Research Council is dedicated to defending the "Judeo-Christian value system" of the traditional family unit (Martin 1999: 66), the American Family Association "keeps a close watch on media that are deemed offensive" (Martin 1999: 69) and the Evangelical Association for the Promotion of Education presents an evangelical approach to social justice (The Evangelical Association for the Promotion of Education 2005).

It will be revealed that the Christian Right acts as an important activist base for the Tea Party; this is unsurprising, as the respective belief-systems of both movements overlap heavily. For instance, the Eagle Forum, which has been “leading the pro-family movement since 1972”, supports a reduction in income taxes, rejects “the false dogmas that tax-and-spend government...can solve our social and economic problems” and opposes any attempts to alter the United States Constitution in its manifesto (The Eagle Forum 2011). Furthermore, the threats that both the Christian Right and the Tea Party perceive as important for mobilisation encompass “the influx of adherents of non-Christian faiths as well as of Christians from non-Western lands” (Orwin 2004: 20): according to a Gallup poll, the proportion of Americans that say Christianity is their religious preference has declined from 91% in 1948 to 77% in 2009 (Gallup 2009).

White Supremacy:

White supremacy is the racist ideology that the Caucasian race is ‘superior’ to all other races, mainly directed against African-Americans, Asian-Americans and Hispanics in the United States (Canady 1998: 43). Again, white supremacy has a long history in the United States, having been established immediately in the pre-Revolutionary colonial period because “the habit of racial hatred, in the form of the hatred of [native] Indians” was rampant amongst the white settlers (Wilkins 2000: 159). The sexualised rituals and ‘immodest’ clothing of the native American Indians deeply contradicted the austere ideals of the Puritans and subsequently meant that the race was dehumanised, resulting in their ultimate suppression by 1676 after a series of devastating wars (Perry 2007 106).

However, the most blatant institutionalisation of white supremacy in the United States was unquestionably the period of slavery: this denial of liberty based solely on race to

millions was only eradicated in 1865 with the Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution (Montgomery 2001: 1255). Nevertheless, the period of slavery “left a legacy of racism that has afflicted America up to the present generation”: this legacy revealed itself soon after the Civil War in the form of the segregation statutes, or Jim Crow laws, which extended the social ostracisation of African-Americans to public transportation, schools, churches and recreational parks (Canady 1998: 43). White supremacy still lingers today in the United States, despite arguments that the nation has entered a new era of ‘post-racism’ “in which race has substantially lost its special significance” with the success of the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s and the election of Obama, the first black president, in 2008 (Pettigrew 2009: 279). On the contrary, contemporary manifestations of white supremacy are encapsulated by the idea of ‘symbolic racism’ or ‘modern racism’, “based on moral feelings that blacks violate such traditional American values” as individualism, thrift, self-reliance and discipline (Zuriff 2002: 117); the result is a ‘two nation’ social structure in the United States that are “Black and White...separate, hostile and unequal” (Christian 2002: 182).

Obviously, the key institution that has ostensibly supported white supremacy in the United States is the Ku Klux Klan, the secret society of southern vigilantes that terrorised the newly enfranchised African-Americans in the years following the American Civil War (The JBHE Foundation 1997: 32). The tactics deployed by the Ku Klux Klan ranged from harassment, intimidation and boycotts to intermittent incidents of physical violence in order to expel from local communities “all those it deemed to be an obstacle to an agenda of white...supremacy” (Blee 1993: 597). The level of influence that this institution had attained throughout the United States by the early 20th century was tremendous, even in the northern states: in parts of Indiana, for example, the Ku Klux Klan controlled almost every

local electoral office, police agency and school board so that they could dictate electoral results, policies of law enforcement and the education of race relations (Blee 1993: 597).

White supremacy is therefore heavily associated with the Tea Party: Ku Klux Klansmen have been described in sociological literature as victims of 'status anxiety' with the self-perception that "vital interests and social values were threatened by immigrants, cultural radicals, or political dissidents", like the Tea Party (Horowitz 1998: 71). Throughout Obama's 2008 presidential election campaign, the ideology of white supremacy was being challenged like never before: racist reactions were exposed amongst the general public and elites, from an African-American teenager being assaulted by white men shouting 'Obama' in New York (Pettigrew 2009: 285), to the Republican Vice-Presidential candidate and Tea Party figurehead, Sarah Palin, declaring in a speech on 6 October 2008 that "he's not one of us" (Pettigrew 2009: 286). The ideology of white supremacy is set to be challenged further in the future with the rapid growth of racial minorities which will foster an even more multicultural nation (The Economist 2010): the Pew Hispanic Center has estimated that the Hispanic population will rise from 14% of the national population in 2005 to 29% in 2050 and that whites will become a minority in 2050 at 47% of the population (Pew Hispanic Center 2008).

The Emergence of the Tea Party and its Significance:

Since the turn of the 21st century, "the right has become a powerful force in many parts of the world" (Blee and Creasap 2010: 269), through more effective public discourse, electoral breakthroughs and ultimately public policy in liberal democracies like the Netherlands and Sweden (Kitschelt 2007: 1177). Therefore, the consolidation of ultra-conservatism as opposed to the more traditional form of conservatism in liberal

democracies is a contemporary political issue which represents “the most formidable new political challenge” to this entrenched political system (Betz and Johnson 2004: 311), because it is indicative of how “a minority can influence society at large by imposing its ideas upon the outside world” (Orfali 2006: 715). While the Patriot movement and Ku Klux Klan were limited in legitimacy by their violent tactics, the Tea Party has been much more effective in mobilising support: it has targetted the three activist bases that propagate the ultra-conservative ‘sets of ideas’ in the United States, merged their overlapping ideologies and used contained rather than violent forms of contentious politics in its all-inclusive development because “they require relatively little commitment and involve low risk, [so] can attract large numbers of participants” (Tarrow 2011: 111).

In terms of the domestic political arena of the United States, a 2010 Gallup poll found that 28% of American adults call themselves supporters of the Tea Party, greater than the 26% of American adults who consider themselves opponents (Saad 2010: 1); in other words, there are approximately 86 million Americans in the nation who support the social movement. The sheer strength of numbers commanded by the Tea Party, in terms of members as well as supporters, was successfully converted into electoral success in the 2010 mid-term elections for Congress, indicating that it had “matured from a protest movement into a powerful force for political change” (Thompson and Gardner 2010: 1).

According to the exit polls and the analysis of electoral results carried out by *The Washington Post*, the Freedomworks Tea Party and Tea Party Express made 196 official endorsements, resulting in 125 elections with a success rate of approximately 64% (2010 ‘Tea Party Endorsement Overlap’). To dispel fears that the Tea Party would be assimilated into the Republican Party, a Tea Party Caucus of 60 Republicans from the United States House of Representatives and Senate was formed by Congresswoman Bachmann on 16 July

2010 in order to highlight its independent authority (Sherman 2010; Karpowitz, Monson, Patterson and Pope 2011: 308; Bachmann 2011).² The power of the Tea Party Caucus was confirmed during the 2011 debt ceiling crisis: its steadfast opposition to raising the debt ceiling meant that John Boehner, the Republican Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, was unable to win enough support from his own party for his proposal (Mardell 2011). Ultimately, the institutional influence of the Tea Party in the United States has contributed to the ideological polarisation of party politics between the Democratic and Republican Party: this is deemed to have caused the treatment of politics as a 'zero-sum game' with vastly reduced bipartisan cooperation within Congress and the continued decline of public trust in government amongst the American populace (Galston 2010: 17-19). It has also been predicted that the Tea Party will again influence the 2012 Republican congressional primaries, by pressuring candidates to adopt stances towards political issues that are much further to the right than the average voter (Abramowitz 2011: 1). Furthermore, high-profile politicians closely affiliated with the Tea Party, in terms of their supporters, have announced their intention to win the Republican Party nomination for the 2012 Presidential Election, including Bachmann ('Michele Bachmann for President: A Constitutional Conservative in 2012' 2011), Rick Perry ('Rick Perry for President' 2012), Herman Cain ('Herman Cain for President' 2011) and Ron Paul ('Ron Paul 2012: Restore America Now' 2011).

On a more sinister note, it has been convincingly argued that the rise in right-wing extremism has been tragically accompanied by a "growing potential for violence" (Krugman 2011). This "climate of hatred" and intolerance of those with different views in political

² The two-party system that characterises the American political system suggests that the Tea Party will never form an official political party, but will continue to attempt to gain institutional power through the election of candidates in the Republican Party that support the Tea Party.

discourse (Kulish 2011: 1) has infiltrated the Tea Party, as indicated by the photograph captured at the Taxpayer March on Washington in Figure 3 on the following page. This has been explosively confirmed by the attempted assassination of the Democrat Representative from Arizona, Gabrielle Giffords, on 8 January 2011 and the mass murder of Norwegian Labor Party youth members on 22 July 2011: both crimes were perpetrated by lone gunmen with ultra-conservative views, as suggested by their tirades on social media platforms (Pilkington 2011; Englund and Birnbaum 2011: 3). While violence has become rarer than the other forms of contentious politics over time, the relative ease of its initiation means that brawls or even scattered attacks remain a distinct possibility (Tilly 2003: 15); this gives the Tea Party psychological leverage against their opponents (Tarrow 2011: 110).

Figure 3- Extremist rhetoric at Tea Party protest performances



Source: Susurro, 'Anti-Obama Signs'.



Source: Sussuro, 'Anti-Obama Signs'.

Chapter Four- Who Are the Members and Supporters of the Tea Party?

The initial research question of ‘who are the members and supporters of the Tea Party?’ is designed to reveal the distinctions between the average member and supporter of the Tea Party and the average voter in the United States. Firstly, the demography of members and supporters of the Tea Party is discovered through a discussion of sample surveys which verifies their similarity to the activist bases of the Patriot movement, the Christian Right and white supremacists; secondly, the political ideology of members and supporters of the Tea Party is illuminated through a content analysis. With the demography and political ideology of members and supporters of the Tea Party known, it is then possible to answer the second research question of ‘how has the Tea Party mobilised its activist bases?’ in the following chapter.

The Verification of Tea Party Activist Bases:

The table on the following page is adapted from the sample survey carried out by *The New York Times*, which compares members and supporters of the Tea Party to the rest of the American population and reveals their general demographic background: they tend to be white, married, older than 45, Christian and favour the Republican Party rather than the Democratic Party (‘National Survey of Tea Party Supporters’ 2010: 1), with intimations of bigotry and racism. This verifies that the Tea Party has very similar members and supporters to the Patriot movement, the Christian Right and white supremacy, the three major strands of ultra-conservatism in the United States.

Table 1- Demographic background of members and supporters of the Tea Party

Racial background	Marital status	Age	Religious background	Favoured political party	Employment status
89% white	70% married	46% 45-64	61% Protestant	54% Republican	56% currently employed
6% other	11% never married	29% over 64	22% Catholic	36% independent	32% retired
3% no response	9% divorced	16% 30-44	7% no religion	5% Democrat	6% temporarily out of work
1% Asian	7% widowed	7% 18-29	5% other religion	5% no response	5% not looking for work
1% black	1% separated	1% no response	3% no response		
	1% no response		1% Jewish		

Source: Adapted from ‘National Survey of Tea Party Supporters’.

Like the activist base of the Patriot movement, the Tea Party members and supporters display an extremely high level of anxiety towards the future of the United States as a nation. A mere 6% of Tea Party members and supporters believe the country is on ‘the right track’ and an overwhelming 92% believe it is on ‘the wrong track’; comparatively, while a majority of Americans agree that the country is on ‘the wrong track’ with 59%, 34% still believe that it is on ‘the right track’ (‘National Survey of Tea Party Supporters’ 2010: 4). The strongly anti-government sentiment behind the Patriot movement is also shared by Tea Party members and supporters: 13% of Tea Party members believe that ‘politicians and government’ themselves is the most important problem facing the United States as opposed to 4% of the general public, which is further highlighted by Obama’s and Congress’s approval rating of 7% and 1% respectively amongst the Tea Party (‘National Survey of Tea Party Supporters’ 2010: 2, 7). The anxiety displayed by Tea Party members and supporters is

manifested in the fact that 68% of households with a Tea Party member contain a firearm of some kind, evoking the militia-style behaviour of the Patriot movement ('National Survey of Tea Party Supporters' 2010: 38).

The influence of the Christian Right on the Tea Party is also strongly indicated by the stance of the Tea Party towards religio-moral issues: for instance, the *Gallup* poll found that 65% of supporters of the Tea Party is 'pro-life' and only 26% are 'pro-choice', while there is a more even split amongst all Americans with 46% being 'pro-life' and 45% being 'pro-choice' (Saad 2010: 1). Furthermore, 61% of Tea Party members and supporters identify as Protestant as opposed to 52% of all Americans, while 39% even see themselves as 'evangelicals or born again Christians' as opposed to 28% of all Americans ('National Survey of Tea Party Supporters' 2010: 39). This self-identification of the Tea Party with the Christian Right has translated into fervent religiosity in their political behaviour, as 38% of Tea Party members and supporters attend a religious service every week as opposed to 27% of all Americans ('National Survey of Tea Party Supporters' 2010: 39).

Finally, in terms of the racial make-up of Tea Party members and supporters, *The New York Times* poll found in 2010 that 89% were white, while only 2% were of the racial minorities of blacks and Asians ('National Survey of Tea Party Supporters' 2010: 41). While the revelation that approximately 89% of Tea Party members and supporters are white can only suggest that there is an underlying sentiment of white supremacy, *The Washington Post* exit polls of the 2010 mid-term elections still found that 11% of Tea Party supporters said that Obama's race or ethnic background was either 'very important' or 'somewhat important' in their electoral choices despite its political incorrectness, which was rationalised by their anxiety towards his 'un-American' behaviour (Gardner 2010: 2). Furthermore, the overwhelmingly white Tea Party members and supporters feel so

threatened by other races that there is a strong perception of 'reverse racism' under the Obama administration, which amounts to self-victimisation through the spread of the complex emotion of outrage. *The New York Times* poll found that 25% believe that it has favoured blacks over whites, while only 11% of all Americans do ('National Survey of Tea Party Supporters' 2010: 24); similarly, it found that 31% of Americans believe that white people 'have a better chance of getting ahead in today's society', while only 16% of Tea Party members believe the same ('National Survey of Tea Party Supporters' 2010: 30).

Parameters of the Content Analysis:

The content analysis is structured around nine auxiliary research questions, which are designed to gain an understanding of the content of the blog entries and thus the political ideology of online Tea Party activists, in terms of their most commonly invoked frames and their appreciation of American culture. These questions concern: i) the scope and ii) nature of the political issue being discussed, iii) whether there is any explicit criticism of Obama, iv) whether a policy prescription is suggested and v) what the policy prescription exactly is, vi) whether there is any historical and nostalgic reference to American history, vii) whether there is a discussion of Christianity in the United States, viii) whether a 'white' United States or Obama's perceived Muslim background is referenced and ix) whether the United States Constitution is mentioned.

Results of the Content Analysis:

Scope and nature of the policy issues

Firstly, the strong nationalism characterised by the online Tea Party activists is strongly conveyed in the content analysis; this is because all but one of the blog entries coded from the Tea Party websites are focussed upon issues of domestic policy as opposed

to foreign policy. This suggests that the Tea Party encapsulates a nostalgic yearning for an American past, particularly the Continental Era of 1776-1860s. During this period, foreign policy was “less integral and much more sporadic” (Rosati and Scott 2011: 24), but generally involved pressuring foreign nations to open markets and attacking trade barriers in the regions of South America, China and the East Indies (Van Alstyne 1974: 126) “in order to bolster the national economy and secure independence” (Eckes 1995: 1). Comparatively, the Federal Government was largely focussed upon the twin domestic goals of nation-building and continental expansion (Rosati and Scott 2011: 19), while the former President George Washington advocated ‘non-alignment’ in his 1796, ‘Farewell Address’, whereby permanent alliances and foreign ventures were to be avoided if possible as it was in the national interest to “settle and mature its recent institutions and to progress without interruption” (Washington 1796: 31). Essentially, the overriding focus on domestic policy by online Tea Party activists corroborates with their neo-isolationist and insular approach to foreign policy in the arenas of war and pre-emptive aggression (Mead 2011: 40), exemplified by Paul’s admission that “we were never given the authority to be the policeman of the world” (Klein 2011).

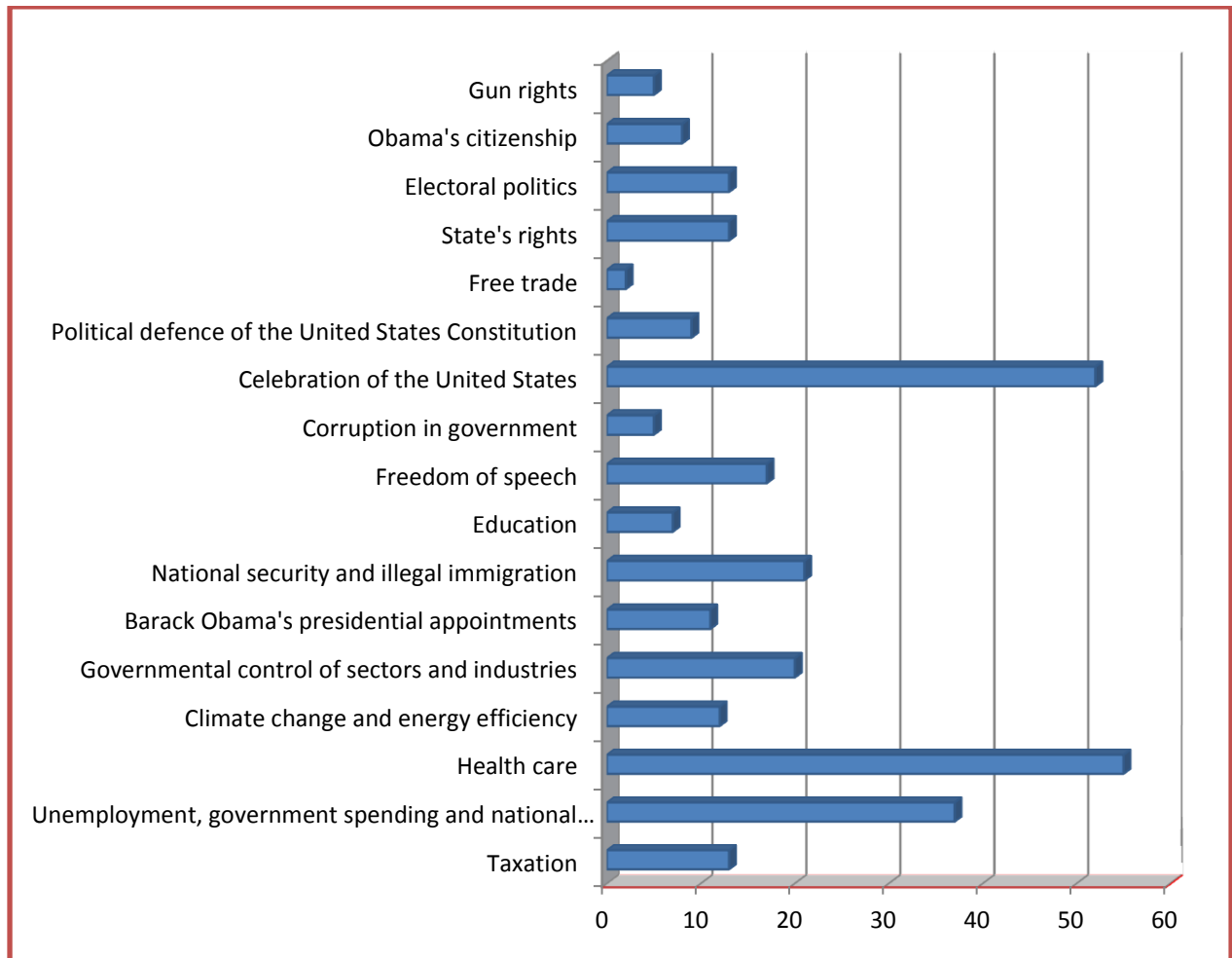
Even the sole blog entry written by an online activist of the Tea Party that focuses upon foreign policy ultimately engages with the 2009 United Nations Climate Change Conference in terms of its domestic ramifications. This is communicated through the depiction of the Copenhagen Summit as an international conspiracy against the United States and its economic system of free-market capitalism, by asserting that the arguments made by leaders of the global South in favour of mitigating and adapting to climate change epitomised “assaults on the American way of life” (Clemente 2009). Similarly, only 4% of Bachmann’s blog entries engage with foreign policy, of which almost all are related to the

staunch support of Israel during the Middle East peace process. This foreign policy issue is also heavily influenced by domestic politics in the United States, due to the consummate power of the Israel Lobby led by the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee; this group pressures Congress and the executive branch in order “to prevent critical comments [about Israel] from getting a fair hearing in the political arena” (Mearsheimer and Walt 2011: 387), which ensures that the United States remains pro-Israel in Middle Eastern affairs.

In terms of the nature of the domestic issues that are contained in the blog entries written by online Tea Party activists, the graph in Figure 4 on the following page proves that the social movement has evolved from its singular focus on taxation to its current engagement with a broad range of political, social and economic issues, including corruption in government, climate change and energy efficiency and free trade. The content analysis of 300 blog entries written by online Tea Party activists produces a discussion of seventeen distinct issues, of which the most frequently debated was health care with just over 18% of the total. Obviously, the predominance of health care as the most discussed issue is because in 2008 the Democratic Party under Obama was partly elected on the platform of providing universal health coverage, which was also heavily debated throughout 2009 and 2010. This ultimately resulted in the controversially narrow passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act on 23 March 2010 by a vote of 60-39 in the Senate (‘U.S. Senate Roll Call Votes 111th Congress- 1st Session’ 2010) and 219-212 in the House of Representatives (‘Final Vote Results for Roll Call 167’ 2010). Other recurring issues that are discussed by online Tea Party activists are intrinsically related to the domestic economy, such as taxation, unemployment, government spending and national debt and the governmental control of sectors and industries; this corroborates with the Tea Party’s anti-government sentiment, as the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act enacted by Congress in February 2009 is

constantly criticised for its perceived failure to create jobs and contribution to national debt (Strickberger 2009a; Tarasuk 2010).

Figure 4- Nature of political issues in Tea Party blog entries



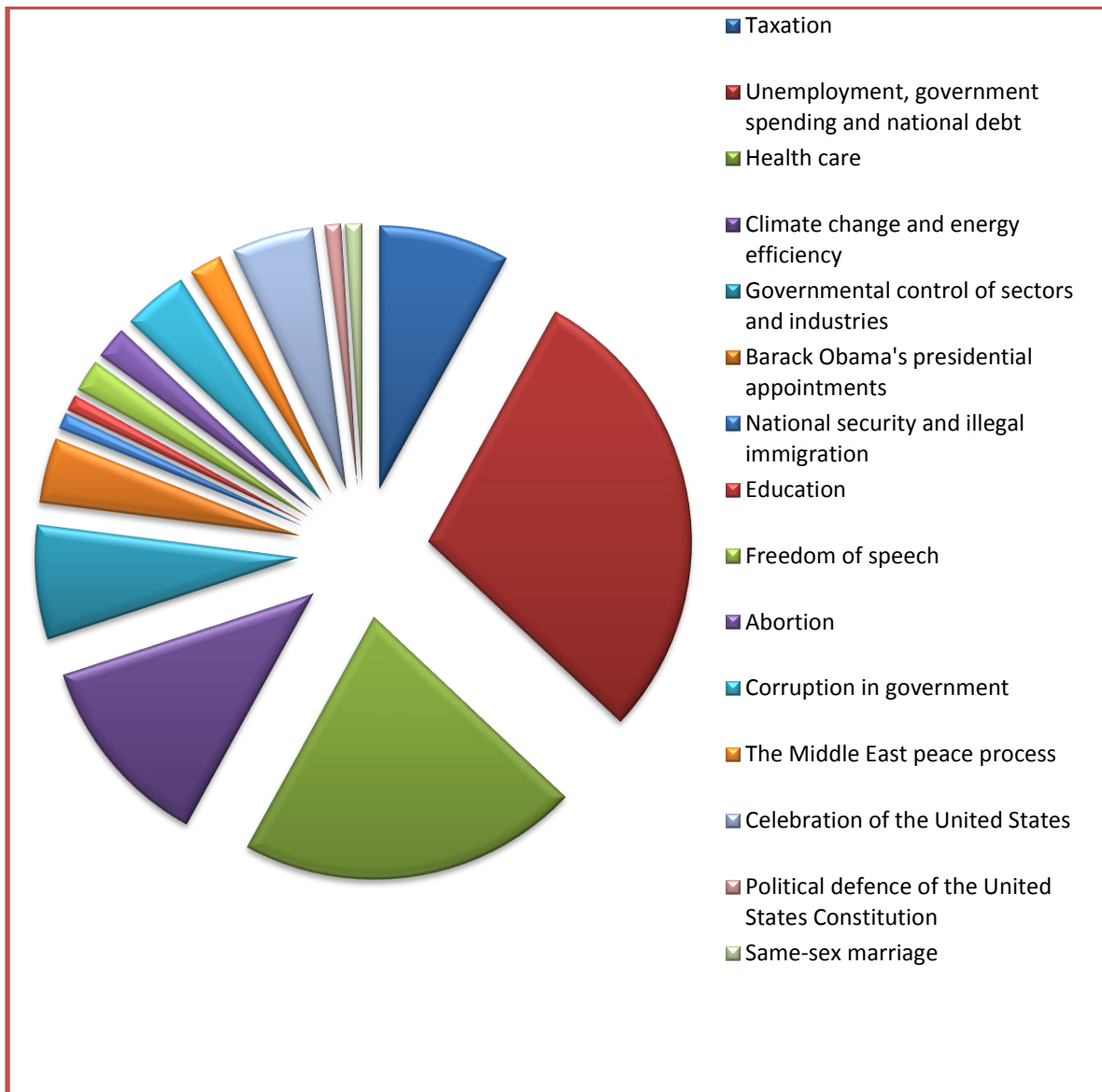
Source: content analysis of Tea Party blog entries

However, the most striking discovery is that just over 17% of the blog entries written by online Tea Party activists do not address a political issue at all, but rather encapsulate a celebration of the United States as a kind of appeal to American patriotism. A recurring message is that online Tea Party activists do not see themselves as defined by a political party as they are “not a Republican, Democrat, liberal, moderate or conservative” but represent “an American citizen” (Baldwin 2009); another activist deplores the fact that

there are “too many Democratic congressmen, too many Republican congressmen and never enough United States Congressmen” (Pinkstaff 2009). Thus, numerous blog entries invoke the United States’ benevolent role as a champion of human rights, Judeo-Christian heritage and ideals of liberty and freedom in its political culture to justify why the nation is “worth fighting for” (Baldwin 2009; White 2009; Heyward 2009). One particular blog entry uses the imagery of the artifact of the Gadsden flag with its symbolism of “the nation’s...military victories on the bloodiest battlegrounds” to persuasively motivate (Benford and Snow 2000: 616-617) readers to “go on fighting ruthlessly [against the Federal Government] for what we know is right!” (Szemanczky 2010b).

Comparatively, any generic celebration of the United States within Bachmann’s blog entries is minimal and subtle, with the pie-chart found in Figure 5 on the following page indicating that five core issues tend to predominate: these are unemployment, government spending and national debt, health care, climate change and energy efficiency, taxation and governmental control of sectors and industries. This is unsurprising given Bachmann’s serious aspirations to win the Republican Party nomination for the 2012 Presidential Election, with a Gallup poll carried out on 5-8 August 2010 revealing that over two-thirds of Americans describe features of the domestic economy such as unemployment, the budget deficit or debt as the country’s major problem, as shown in Figure 6 found on the page after next.

Figure 5- Nature of political issues in Bachmann’s blog entries



Source: content analysis of Bachmann’s blog entries

Figure 6- Gallup poll of the most important problem facing the United States

What do you think is the most important problem facing this country today?

	% Mentioning
Economy in general	30
Unemployment/Jobs	28
Dissatisfaction with government/Congress/politicians; poor leadership; corruption; abuse of power	12
Federal budget deficit/federal debt	7
Poor healthcare/hospitals; high cost of healthcare	7
Immigration/illegal aliens	7
Ethics/moral/religious/family decline; dishonesty	5
Wars/War (non-specific)/Fear of war	4
Education/poor education/access to education	3
Lack of respect for each other	3
Natural disaster response/relief	3

Gallup poll, Aug. 5-8, 2010

GALLUP

Source: Newport, 'Economy Remains Top Concern as Nov. Elections Draw

Nearer'.

Criticism of Barack Obama

Furthermore, 174 out of 300 or 58% of the blog entries written by online Tea Party activists explicitly criticise Obama himself in relation to his policies, principles or personality. Naturally therefore, Obama acts as the major source of blame for the litany of political, economic and social problems amenable to human control that have contributed to the perceived decline of the United States (Stone 1989: 282). In particular, one blog entry attributes "three utterly despicable words" for perpetuating conspiracy theories over the September 11 terrorist attacks, implementing socialist programs throughout the country, denying the nation's Judeo-Christian heritage and ridiculing the United States Constitution:

these three words are revealed to be ‘President Barack Obama’ (Briggs 2009). Significantly, Obama is believed by online Tea Party activists to be intentionally causing the decline of the United States as his political actions have been “wilfully taken...in order to bring about the consequences that actually happened” (Stone 1989: 285); this particular causal theory devised by Stone is outlined in the table below with its combination of purposeful actions with intended consequences, which is revealingly the only type of causal theory proposed in the blogs. This has provoked the complex emotion of outrage that the extremely powerful position of United States President is being debased. For instance, numerous online Tea Party activists overtly liken Obama to a megalomaniacal fascist dictator with the description of his “reign [in which]...he wanted war and division as his goal” with the ultimate consequence of the “Third Worldlization [sic] of America” (Szemanczky 2010a; Whittaker 2009; Kaminsky 2009a); another blog entry even firmly asserts the view that “history is repeating itself with Obama, if nobody believes this they should read the biography of Adolf Hitler” (Nyden 2010).

Table 3- Stone’s types of causal theories

Four types of causal theories		Consequences	
		Intended	Unintended
Actions	Unguided	Mechanical cause	Accidental cause
	Purposeful	Intentional cause	Inadvertent cause

Source: Stone, ‘Causal Stories and the Formation of Policy Agendas’, 285.

More specifically, online Tea Party activists highlight Obama’s policies as being explicitly designed to cause the destruction of the United States by fundamentally transforming it “from the land of liberty to a land of dependency” (Sabatini 2010), which is “the antithesis of this nation’s founding” (Kaminsky 2009a). This is because Obama’s policies

such as the stimulation of the national economy by the Federal Reserve through the injection of funds and the implementation of universal health care with strategic interaction between firms and the federal government are more typical of a coordinated market economy, rather than the liberal market economy that has been institutionalised within the United States (Hall and Soskice 2003: 8). This also corroborates with criticism of Obama's 'communist' principles (Pinkstaff 2010) which are perceived as being diametrically opposed to the American ideals of liberty and freedom. Significantly, communism has been completely discredited as a political ideology in the United States since the Second World War, due to the era of McCarthyism: the Communist Party U.S.A. only has 2000 members today (Berger 2011: 2). At an even more base level, Obama's personality is attacked with claims that he is morally bankrupt; one online Tea Party activist claims that he "bought the presidency of this country" and now "steals from its people to do nothing more than make [himself] rich" (Younger 2009a).

Contribution and nature of policy prescriptions

Remarkably, less than 3% or a mere seven out of the 300 blog entries written by online Tea Party activists contained a policy prescription. Nostalgia, defined as "a backward-looking reactionary ideology, reflecting a deep [desire] for the good old days" (Betz and Johnson 2004: 324), explains the overall absence of policy prescriptions offered; clearly, a diagnosis of the problem being the decline of the United States is more easily communicated than a series of thorough and realistic prognoses (Benford and Snow 2000: 616). Comparatively, 35% of Bachmann's blog entries that were coded managed to offer a policy prescription; this higher proportion is explained by Bachmann's profession as a Congresswoman in formulating and implementing policies.

On the rare occasion that a policy prescription was found in the blog entries written by online Tea Party activists, it was invariably trivial, unrealistic or both. Firstly, three of the seven blog entries that contained policy prescriptions advocated the secession of their particular state from the United States, due to their distrust of the Federal Government (Bowling 2009; McCormick 2009; Lindsey 2010). Such a prospect is extremely fanciful as the policy does not hold widespread legitimacy today: the last serious secessionist movement in the United States was the Confederate States of America that was disbanded in 1865 by the American Civil War, while only 22% of Americans believe that any state or region has the right to 'peaceably secede from the United States and become an independent republic', according to a 2008 poll carried out by Zogby International (The Middlebury Institute 2008). Secondly, the remaining policy prescriptions proposed by online Tea Party activists are lacking in detail and directed at petty grievances: one advocates the abolition of the current tax code and the installation of a flat tax because compliance is currently "annoying to say the least and extremely time-consuming" (Onorati 2009), while another broadly demanded the minimisation of governmental control over education (Wishnick 2010) in reaction to President Obama's National Address to Students (Obama 2009) which was viewed as indoctrination.

Nostalgic references to American history

A majority of 169 out of 300 blog entries written by online Tea Party activists contain nostalgic references to American history, as opposed to only seven of Bachmann's coded blog entries. These references are largely manifested within the blog entries in the form of direct quotations from the glorified Founding Fathers like Washington, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson that are deemed to be relevant to the political climate of today, or a

veneration of the revolutionary American spirit throughout the birth of the United States of America with the Declaration of Independence in 1776.

The Founding Fathers act as a kind of 'yardstick' in the blog entries in terms of judging what the attitude of the Tea Party should be towards particular political issues or policies: the blog entries typically pose the rhetorical question of what the Founding Fathers would do in a given situation. The health care reform implemented by Obama is constantly attacked in the blog entries in this way; the argument is best summarised by Bachmann herself, who declares that "our nation's founders never envisioned Congress enacting legislation which would require an unwilling citizen to purchase something against his or her will" (Bachmann 2009). One online Tea Party activist even manages to dismiss the discourse on climate change as an "anti-capitalist corporate climate-change conspiracy", by relating it to Samuel Adams' quote that "it does not require a majority to prevail, but rather an irate, tireless minority keen to set brush fires in people's minds" (Kaminsky 2009c). Furthermore, another activist claims that he only approves of former President George W. Bush due to the belief that "he weighed his decisions in light of the long established Judeo-Christian principles of our Founding Fathers" (Conerly 2009); thus, the political leaders of today are revealed to be secondary in stature to the glorified Founding Fathers.

Furthermore, online Tea Party activists are persistently attempting to instil the revolutionary American spirit that pervaded the original Boston Tea Party into today's social movement (Breitweiser 2010; Nerenz 2010; Strickberger 2009b). One blog entry entails a 'call to arms' of replacing the 50-star national flag of the United States with the 13-star Betsy Ross, Navy Jack or Gadsden flags from the era of the American Revolution to "take a daily stand and declare that...we will serve God and the republic as the Founders did" (Younger 2009a). This revolutionary spirit is also reflected in the portrayal of Glenn Beck, the

prominent Fox News personality and organiser of the Restoring Honor Rally, as the ‘Father of the New Revolution’ because he has popularised discussion of the Founding Fathers in the media today (W 2009). On Beck’s eponymous Fox News television show that ran from January 2009 to June 2011, he had a segment called ‘Founders’ Friday’ in which he attempts to ‘restore’ the history of the United States by discussing the motivations and values of the Founding Fathers; in relation to Benjamin Franklin, Beck claims that he “defined Americanism”, was “Bill Gates and Steve Jobs...and Stephen Hawking all rolled up into one” and if he “were alive today, boy he would be pissed off at us...and with good reason, because we’re not using common sense” (Beck 2010a).

Christianity in the United States

Also, 94 out of the 300 blog entries written by online Tea Party activists reference Christianity in the United States: this strongly suggests that from the Tea Party’s point of view, the church cannot and should not be separated from the state. While only two of Bachmann’s coded blog entries reference Christianity in the United States, both of these blog entries are explicitly an encouragement of Americans to pray for “[God’s] blessing...over our troops, over our leaders in our nation, over our economy and over our people; we need His care and provision now more than ever” (Bachmann 2010c; Bachmann 2010b); this indicates that a strong belief in a Christian God is similarly central to Bachmann’s belief-system.

Policies are judged by online Tea Party activists often through the influence of Christianity also; for instance, one blog entry criticises American education policy because of the existence of non-denominational schools, by arguing that “our first command from our Creator was to bring up children who also knew God” (Rice 2009). Furthermore, another

activist outlines in his blog entry the twelve most important factors that influences his judgment of political candidates running in the 2010 Mid-Term Elections, which includes their support for bringing “God back into our culture and our Christian values” (Brice 2010). As the United States has an overwhelmingly strong Judeo-Christian heritage, the zealous spread of Christianity is one avenue of ‘restoring’ the United States: one online Tea Party activist attempts to provoke the reflexive emotion of fear by deploying an apocalyptic tone in his warning that “God is already pulling away from this nation...Americans will suffer the most in these final days because so many of the people in our country have chosen evil ways as their primary desires and goals in this life” (Collins 2009).

A ‘white’ United States or Obama’s perceived Muslim background

Most controversially, 53 of the 300 blog entries written by online Tea Party activists contain a reference to either a ‘white’ United States or Obama’s perceived Muslim background. As these references are either implicitly or explicitly racist, which is an untenable position for a political leader in the United States, none of Bachmann’s coded blog entries contain such a reference. A clear influence on these blog entries seems to be Samuel Huntington’s famous ‘clash of civilisations’ thesis, in which he provocatively argued that conflict between groups in different civilisations, especially between Western Christianity and Islam, will become more frequent, sustained and violent in the multipolar post-Cold War environment (Huntington 1996).

Although not as common as nostalgic references to American history or references to Christianity in the United States, it is still important to note that this small collection of blog entries that describe a ‘white’ United States propagate an American identity that is scathing toward Islamic culture: one online Tea Party activist explicitly questions those “who

blame the white man for all their ills”, when Islam is a “cult of fanatical madmen determined to rule the world” (Younger 2009b). Similarly, another activist claims that Obama “spits in [the] face” of “smart white folks” because he is “advancing Islam in this country”: clearly, civilisational conflict in the United States is viewed by online Tea Party activists as such a great threat that Islamic culture must be wholeheartedly rejected. In addition, while some of the blog entries openly describe Obama as a Muslim without any evidence (Pinkstaff 2009; Caruba 2010), others point to the doubt over Obama’s birth certificate to similarly claim that he is ‘unfit’ to be the United States President (Augero 2009; Montgomery 2009). Evidently, this is another major source of distrust of the Federal Government and an indication of the decline of the United States according to the online Tea Party activists: one suggests that Americans stop paying taxes until Obama “is in jail and our country is restored to the Real American People and no Moslim [sic] or Arab has a part in it” (Montgomery 2009).

The United States Constitution

Finally, a majority of 168 of the blog entries written by online Tea Party activists invoke the United States Constitution, while only eight of Bachmann’s coded blog entries do the same. For the Tea Party, the United States Constitution is a worshipped document that is the ‘masterpiece’ of the glorified Founding Fathers, consequently acting as the ultimate ‘yardstick’ in judging policy: if a policy is deemed unconstitutional like Obama’s health care reform (Eboch 2009a), there is no fathomable way that it can be supported by the Tea Party. Although the content of Bachmann’s blog entries remain constrained by policy analysis due to her status as a Congresswoman, even she venerates it on occasion by describing it as “timeless and universal in its application” as well as her hope for “renewed trust and

implementation of the Constitutional rights our forefathers designated to be the eternal rule of the land” (Bachmann 2010a).

In these blog entries, the implication that the United States needs to be restored through widespread support for the constitutional doctrine of originalism is conspicuous: in describing the perfect political leader, one blog entry asserts that avowed support for both the letter and *spirit* of the Constitution is always the best place to start” (Eboch 2009b). The Constitution also commands such devotion amongst online Tea Party activists that it is personified as if it has human rights: one activist claims that Obama “openly disses the Constitution” (M 2009), while another describes the Constitution as being “tortured” (Kaminsky 2009b). The devotion to the personified Constitution is also revealed to be quasi-religious through protest performances carried out by the Tea Party: one blog entry calls for “a vigil outside the National Archives to mourn the death of the Constitution” in Washington to mark the anniversary of the Boston Tea Party (Swift 2009). This is why the historian Jill Lepore argues, in the first ever academic book published on the Tea Party social movement, that it encapsulates historical fundamentalism, because its members strongly believe that “political arguments grounded in appeals to the founding documents, as sacred texts, and to the Founding Fathers, as prophets, are therefore incontrovertible” (Lepore 2010: 16).

Conclusion- A Model Member and Supporter of the Tea Party:

In essence, a model member and supporter of the Tea Party would be white, married, older than 45, Christian and would favour the Republican Party rather than the Democratic Party. Furthermore, the political ideology of this model member and supporter of the Tea Party would be characterised by i) a parochial focus on American domestic policy, ii) the consistent attribution of blame to Obama, iii) a nostalgic desire to restore the prestige

of the United States from the era of the American Revolution and iv) a strict adherence to the United States Constitution, along with aspects of Christian evangelicalism and white supremacy to varying degrees.

Chapter Five- How Has the Tea Party Mobilised its Activist Bases?

This chapter will illuminate how the Tea Party has used frames, culture and emotions to mobilise the three activist bases of the Patriot movement, the Christian Right and white supremacy in their protest performances, through three narratives that comprise the discourse analysis. This chapter thus provides richly detailed and ‘thick’ descriptions of the most interesting moments captured throughout the evolution of the Tea Party. This narrative-style of writing is useful because micro-perspectives of social movements reveal them to be essentially “a bundle of [cultural] narratives, which when expressed within an interactional arena by participants strengthens the commitment of members to shared organisational goals” (Fine 1995: 128). By qualitatively examining how the Tea Party has used “the raw materials of the dominant [American] culture in creative ways” (Johnston 2009: 11) in order to provoke desired emotional responses, its mobilisation and growth can be illuminated. Therefore, the Tea Party has fostered its movement solidarity through ‘persuasive communication’ in its framing (Johnston and Klandermans 1995: 10), a distinctly American identity construction and further emotion work on the ‘mobilising’ and ‘vitalising’ emotions of distrust, outrage and hope (Tarrow 2011: 143).³

Tax Day Tea Party Rallies, 15 April 2009:

The Tax Day Tea Party rallies of 15 April 2009 were the first major protests performed by the Tea Party to be coordinated around the nation in over 750 locations, (Robbins 2009), with largely modest crowds drawn to each protest. These crowds ranged from a shivering huddle of people silently holding posters and banners at City Hall Park, New

³ Due to the alleged sensitivity of modern America to racism, hints of white supremacy in protest performances carried out by the Tea Party are invariably fleeting and subtle. Nevertheless, there is still literature that seeks to expose the racist tendencies of the Tea Party, largely directed at the African-American President Obama (Enck-Wanzer 2011; Walker 2011).

York City ('Tax Day Tea Party NYC 2009 Part One' 2009) to a boisterous mass of hundreds displaying their messages next to a multi-laned highway in Window on the Bay Park, Monterey ('Anti-tax Protestors Gather in Monterey for Tea Party' 2009). During the Tax Day Tea Party rallies, the majority of protestors were wearing civilian attire, interspersed with vibrant pockets of those waving varieties of American revolutionary flags or adorned with American artifacts such as the tricorneres or novelty paraphernalia in the national colours of red, white and blue, as depicted in the photographs found in Figure 7 on the following two pages below.

Figure 7- Scenes at the Tax Day Tea Party rallies throughout the United States in Sacramento, Phoenix and Boston



Source: McClintock, 'Tax Day Tea Party, State Capitol, Sacramento, CA. April 15, 2009'.



Source: Lester, 'Phoenix Tax Day Tea Party 2009 Photos'.



Source: 'Tea Protests Brew Unsweetened Tax Message'.

Explicitly coinciding with the annual collection of income taxes by the Federal Government which fuels its spending programs, the frames identified in the Tax Day Tea Party rallies were largely confined to those found under the umbrella of the economic restoration of the United States, such as the policy prescriptions of the 'removal of various taxes' and 'removal of governmental control from sectors and industries', along with some references to the political restoration of the United States. Because the Tea Party was in an embryonic stage of its development at this time as a social movement, the use of American culture was mainly limited to ideations communicated through text and dialogue. Furthermore, the majority of performances were held in public 'free spaces' which are "small-scale settings within a community...that are removed from the direct control of dominant groups" such as parks and roads (Polletta 1997: 434), rather than symbolic locations such as Capitol Hill and the Lincoln Memorial which would be the norm in later months to draw maximum attention to themselves from the media and bystanders ('Anti-Tax Protestors Gather in Monterey for Tea Party' 2009; 'Harrisburg PA Tax Day Tea Party April 15, 2009' 2009; 'Tax Day Tea Party NYC 2009 Part One' 2009; 'Tyler, Texas Tea Party April 15, 2009' 2009). Thus, the major emotion that the Tea Party members sought to exacerbate throughout the Tax Day Tea Party rallies was the affective bond of distrust directed at Congress, President Obama and the Federal Government in general, which logically appeals to the activist base of the Patriot movement, in order to strengthen in-group solidarity and provide a common source of blame (Stone 1989: 282) for the diagnosed problem of the economic deterioration of the United States (Benford and Snow 2000: 616).

Naturally, the Tea Party members interviewed have diverse opinions and each Tax Day Tea Party rally was configured differently in terms of its components; nevertheless, the most obvious strategic interaction that united all of the crowds in their respective protest

performances was the ritualistic and repetitive chanting of “U.S.A., U.S.A., U.S.A....”.

(‘Harrisburg PA Tax Day Tea Party April 15, 2009’ 2009; ‘Tyler, Texas Tea Party April 15, 2009’ 2009). In a similar fashion, the hymn-like renditions of ‘The Star-Spangled Banner’, the national anthem of the United States, amalgamated the crowds as the protestors proudly held their left hands to their hearts and sporadically cheered (‘Tyler, Texas Tea Party April 15, 2009’ 2009). Thus, it is evident that the master frame of the restoration of the United States is also a ‘motivational’ frame, because it acts as an ultra-nationalistic “call to arms” which is able to appeal to all three of the activist bases (Benford and Snow 2000: 617), especially the Patriot movement. For the Tea Party, the survival of the United States as a nation-state is absolutely paramount and takes precedence over the individual: when asked what brought her to the Tax Day Tea Party rally at Tyler by an interviewer, one Tea Party member described her epiphany one morning that she had to “get up for our country, our Constitution”, before revealingly nominating “[her] children’s future” as a belated side-note (‘Tyler, Texas Tea Party April 15, 2009’ 2009).

The other recurring theme that ran through all the various Tax Day Tea Party rallies which encapsulates the desire for the economic restoration of the United States is the invocation of the value of liberty. The Tea Party members continually reject the Troubled Asset Relief Program on these grounds, because their taxed individual income is being used by the Federal Government to ‘bail out’ those avaricious banking institutions. Consequently, one poster displayed at the Tax Day Tea Party rally at Monterey demanded, ‘Give me liberty, not a bailout’ (‘Anti-Tax Groups Gather in Monterey for ‘Tea Party’” 2009), which powerfully frames the debate over the economic stimulus package in terms of a direct competition between the sustenance of the fundamentally American value of liberty on the one hand and the implementation of the package on the other. This frame alignment process of value

amplification, whereby an elevated value that is presumed to be popular amongst prospective activist bases is used “as a springboard for motivating support” (Snow, Rochford Jr., Worden and Benford 1986: 469), was most obvious at the Tax Day Tea Party rally at the symbolic Liberty Memorial of Kansas City, where an organiser asserted in the primary speech that the Founding Fathers “brought forth upon this continent a nation conceived in liberty” (‘Kansas City, Missouri Tea Party on Tax Day 2009’ 2009).

In this sense, members of the Tea Party clearly engaged in cultural contextualisation through public narration about American folklore in the Tax Day Tea Party rallies, in order to legitimate their political behaviour and mobilise support (Fine 1995: 130). These narratives of American folklore either invoked the era of the American Revolution, such as the young woman dancing and singing alone, “Party like its 1773”, in New York City (‘Tax Day Tea Party NYC 2009 Part One’ 2009), the immortalised Founding Fathers, such as the banner at Tyler that simply read ‘W.W.J.D.’ standing for ‘What Would [Thomas] Jefferson Do?’ (Tyler, Texas Tea Party April 15, 2009’ 2009), or the United States Constitution, such as the poster in Boston seen in the third photograph of Figure 7 that directly quoted, “we the people”, as being served by the Federal Government rather than the reverse (‘Tea Protests Brew Unsweetened Tax Message’ 2009). In other words, “the cultural stock of movement symbols and speech is used to accomplish key processes in mobilisation”, exemplified by the organiser at the Tax Day Tea Party Rally in Kansas City who argued in his primary speech that “if Jefferson were alive today, I believe that he would say Congress and the Federal Reserve are more dangerous to our liberties than standing armies” in order to reject the Troubled Asset Relief Program, which is deemed to be threatening the economic liberty of the United States (‘Kansas City, Missouri Tea Party on Tax Day 2009’ 2009). This is a clear example of ‘diagnostic’ framing, whereby a fundamental binary opposition is established

between the protagonists of both the Founding Fathers and Tea Party protestors and the antagonists that caused the global financial crisis and currently hold power in the Federal Government, in order to successfully “delineate the boundaries between “good” and “evil”” (Benford and Snow 2000: 616).

Thus, the Tea Party has particularly appealed to the set of ideas of the Patriot movement in the Tax Day Tea Party rallies, by claiming its entitlement to the support of the American revolutionaries, the Founding Fathers and the United States Constitution. This intentional utilisation of the cultural ‘matrix’ in American society is therefore explicitly designed to “build upon presuppositions held by the audience that allows the teller to lead them to intended conclusions” (Johnston 2009: 14); in this case, the implication is that the administration under President Obama is unable to call upon the support of these ideational figures and texts, is consequently un-American and therefore should be expelled from power. In other words, “agents of resistance [are] created by virtue of alienation” (Johnston 2009: 10), such as the elderly woman who signified that her motivation for protesting at the Tax Day Tea Party rally in Monterey is that she is “really sick and tired of being sold out by our Federal and State Government” (‘Anti-Tax Groups Gather in Monterey for Tea Party’ 2009). Similarly, two children of Tea Party members giggled towards the camera as they held a poster that hyperbolically stated, “I read as much of the stimulus bill as my Congressman”; in other words, members of Congress were being infantilised. These Tea Party members were thus palpably infused with the affective bond of distrust towards the Federal Government as they performed in the Tax Day Tea Party rallies; helpfully, this emotion has persisted over a long period of time as the protestors successfully established a “negative commitment or investment” towards the current Federal Government under President Obama (Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta 2004: 418).

Taxpayer March on Washington, 12 September 2009:

Figure 8- Panoramic view of the Taxpayer March on Washington



Source: Kazan, 'Another Tea Party March on Washington'.

The Taxpayer March on Washington, also known as the 9/12 Tea Party, was performed on 12 September 2009 with a public march from Freedom Plaza to the United States Capitol in Washington D.C.; while media outlets greatly varied in their estimates of the size of the crowd, most agree that up to 100 000 Tea Party members were in attendance (Markman 2009). The stated aim of the protest performance was to “take this country back” according to the National Chair of the 9/12 Project, Yvonne Donnelly, on the date directly following the anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks (Bodnar 2009). As revealed in the photograph in Figure 8 above, the Taxpayer March on Washington symbolised an ‘assault’ of the American populace on the distrusted Federal Government; the photograph in Figure 9 below shows how Tea Party members climbed onto statues of historical figures on horseback, directly associating themselves with the militaristic glory won by American revolutionary heroes.

Figure 9- Close-up shot of Tea Party members near the United States Capitol



Source: Schiller, 'Photograph of the Crowd Near the U.S. Capitol'.

Because there was a greater focus on the master frame of the restoration of the United States as a world power rather than any of its individual components, the utilisation of American culture in the production of individual discourse was more pronounced in the Taxpayer March on Washington than the Tax Day Tea Party rallies. Consequently, there were more frequent “cultural narrations” in the form of historical allusions and internal performances directly evoking the Founding Fathers and the American revolutionary era, which were intended to instil the frames propagated by the Tea Party with improved narrative fidelity and thus make them resonate more with the American populace at large (Benford and Snow 2000: 619). Finally, the racist discourse and rhetoric directed towards President Obama is indicative of both the mobilisation of the activist base of white supremacists and the evolution of the affective bond of distrust from the Tax Day Tea Party

rallies directed at Congress, President Obama and the Federal Government in general, into the complex emotion of outrage with its accompanying cognitive “moral judgments” of political life (Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta 2004: 422).

In the Taxpayer March on Washington, the master frame of the restoration of the United States’ prestige was most powerfully invoked through patriotic and nostalgic claims and historical allusions produced in individual discourse, thus acting as the “new primary framework” that has gained “ascendance over others” in the protest performances of the Tea Party (Snow, Rochford Jr., Worden and Benford 1986: 475). For instance, a youthful man from Columbia, Franklin McGuire, claimed that he was in attendance at the Taxpayer March on Washington because “we’re here to take it back to where it used to be...the America that was great”, which exemplifies the strong desire amongst Tea Party members to reinstate American hegemony in world affairs (‘Video Essay- Taxpayers’ Rally at U.S. Capitol’ 2009). Such claims are often so nostalgic that they unequivocally regard the era of the American Revolution as the standard to which the nation must be restored, such as the man who angrily proclaimed, “I see the fundamental purposes of the foundation of our nation being eroded, corrupted”, whilst carrying a poster entitled, ‘Tyranny Theatre’, with caricatures of President Obama, Vice-President Joe Biden, Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, and the former speaker of the House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi (‘9/12 Washington D.C. Tea Party Protest- Why Are You Here?’ 2009). Furthermore, historical allusions made by Tea Party members explicitly equate the current administration under President Obama to the former struggles or crises of democracy with the political systems of fascism and communism that were legitimate in the early 20th century. This is clearly a strategy of frame transformation whereby “a domain previously taken for granted is reframed as problematic and in need of repair” (Snow, Rochford Jr., Worden and Benford 1986: 474); this was best

exemplified by the man intentionally dressed in the capitalist garb of suit pants, a white buttoned shirt and a black tie who held a bland poster which simply read, 'Marx was a moron' ('Tea Party Confidential- Live from the September 12 Taxpayer March on Washington' 2009), which implies that American republican democracy has been mutating into communism under President Obama.

These claims and historical allusions produced in individual discourse were incredibly resonant due to the dramatic increase in the use of American culture by Tea Party members in the Taxpayer March on Washington, as indicated by the photography in Figure 10 on the following two pages. Most importantly, culture does not merely encapsulate the three foci of ideations, artifacts and performances in the Taxpayer March on Washington but is strongly indicative of discursive power: Tea Party members actively utilised the cultural 'matrix' in American society throughout this protest performance "in creative ways to forward their own interests in a system of unequal power" (Swidler 1995: 30). For instance, the Founding Fathers are idolised to such a great extent that their period costumes were mimicked by many Tea Party members during the Taxpayer March on Washington, as shown in the first photograph of Figure 10, while one older woman wearing a tricorne hat bluntly stated, "if I could vote for Thomas Jefferson or George Washington, I would" ('Tea Party Confidential- Live from the September 12 Taxpayer March on Washington' 2009); the implication here is that the administration under President Obama is acting contrarily to the ideals established by the Founding Fathers.

Figure 10- American costumes and artifacts at the Taxpayer March on Washington



Source: Johns, '2009 Taxpayer March on Washington'.



Source: Bill, '2009 Taxpayer March on Washington'.

Two artifacts that hold special significance in the American cultural matrix were particularly prevalent throughout the Taxpayer March on Washington: these were the Gadsden flags and the fife and drums, seen in the first and second photographs respectively of Figure 10 on the previous page. Firstly, the 'ownership' of the Gadsden flag, designed in 1775 by Colonel Christopher Gadsden who led the South Carolina Patriot movement throughout the American Revolution (Rankin 1954: 343), was claimed in the modern era by the Tea Party. Its vibrant yellow background, aggressive imagery of a coiled rattlesnake and accompanying motto of "don't tread on me" clearly resonated with the powerful emotion of outrage felt by Tea Party members towards the Federal Government. Furthermore, its representation of "a primal instinct of defensive aggressiveness at the group level of the psyche" neatly captured the reflexive nature of the Tea Party in its responses to the various threats (Singer 2007: 50) shared with the activist bases of the Patriot movement, the Christian Right and white supremacists. Secondly, the Taxpayer March on Washington was led by a fife and drum corps ('September 12, 2009 March on Washington D.C.- Fifes and Drums Marked the Beginning' 2009; Barabak 2009), because it was a customary feature of regimental armies in the American revolutionary era to not only communicate orders during battles and regulate camp duties but also to boost morale (Howe 1999: 87). In this sense, such a performative re-enactment of a typical battle in the American Revolution was incredibly nostalgic as it was intended to intoxicatingly "recreate the spirit of the time [so] the intervening years disappear" (Allred 1996: 6).

Finally, the mobilisation of the white supremacy activist base was evident in the Taxpayer March on Washington through the racist discourse and rhetoric directed personally towards the demonised President Obama (Franke-Ruta 2009). The personal vendetta of white supremacists towards the first black President of the United States

corroborated effectively with the outrage of Tea Party members towards his universal health care package; this arose “out of [the] complex cognitive understanding and moral awareness” (Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta 2004: 422) that this normative or acceptable domain of health care reform should be “reframed as an injustice that warrants change” (Snow, Rochford Jr., Worden and Benford 1986: 474), ironically despite the intention to increase equality under the new system. Evoking the debate over the birthplace of President Obama, the Tea Party members at the Taxpayer March on Washington constantly rejected the notion that he was an American citizen in a subliminal fashion: two elderly women agonised that “he is basically trying to take away our American way of life” (‘Tea Party Confidential- Live from the September 12 March on Washington’ 2009), while an elderly couple from Indianapolis claimed that “we love our country and we want to do all we can to keep it from being destroyed by Obama and his czars” (‘Tea Party Confidential- Live from the September 12 March on Washington’ 2009). As depicted in the photography of posters in Figure 11 on the following three pages, the demonisation of President Obama throughout the Taxpayer March on Washington was unprecedented in terms of the extent of unashamed racism, dehumanisation as an ‘alien’, comparisons with Adolf Hitler and hyperbolic descriptions of him as the ‘antichrist’.

Figure 11- Racist discourse directed towards Obama by Tea Party members



Source: Susurro, 'Anti-Obama Signs'.



Source: Taylor, "Kenya".



Source: Taylor, 'More DC Today'.



Source: Taylor, 'Craziest One Yet'.



Source: Taylor, 'The Crazy'.

Restoring Honor Rally, 28 August 2010:

The Restoring Honor Rally was organised by Glenn Beck and was held on 28 August 2010 at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C., attracting a tremendous crowd of hundreds of thousands of Tea Party members and supporters, as shown in Figure 15 on the following page (Hartenstein 2010). Because Beck requested that attendees do not bring posters or banners to focus attention on the messages conveyed by the speakers, the discourse produced by individual Tea Party members is limited to interviews; however, the key focus of analysis is the speech produced by those speakers at the Restoring Honor Rally, which included Beck himself, Palin and the niece of Martin Luther King, Alveda King, a Christian minister and pro-life activist. Alveda King's presence was largely an attempt to dispel criticism amongst civil rights leaders that Beck's Restoring Honor Rally should not be

held on the same day as the anniversary of Martin Luther King’s historic March on Washington and ‘I Have a Dream’ speech (Khan 2010), because of charges of racism laid against Tea Party members and Beck’s assertion in 2009 that President Obama “has a deep-seated hatred for white people or the white culture” (Khan 2010).

Figure 15- Panoramic view of the Restoring Honor Rally



Source: The Right Scoop, ‘Photos: Glenn Beck’s Restoring Honor Rally’.

The most important frame induced in the Restoring Honor Rally was the ideation of the evangelical spread of Christianity under the umbrella of the cultural restoration of the United States. Thus, the major activist base that was being mobilised was obviously the Christian Right: the program was permeated with prayers, gospel songs and a bagpipers’ rendition of ‘Amazing Grace’, while Beck introduced the protest performance as having “nothing to do with politics” but “everything to do with God” (‘Restoring Honor Rally- Glenn Beck Highlights’ 2010) with the professed aim to “start the heart of America again” (Hohmann 2010). Just like the Taxpayer March on Washington, nostalgic references to

American culture in the form of “heroes and heritage” were invoked with regularity to instill the frames propagated by the Tea Party with improved narrative fidelity and superior resonance (Halloran 2010). Finally, the Durkheimian conceptualisation of ‘collective effervescence’ was extremely prevalent in this protest, as the preceding emotions of distrust and outrage transmuted into the complex moral emotion of hope for the future of the United States.

Firstly, the meticulously planned components and rhetoric used in the Restoring Honor Rally were noticeably intended to appeal to the activist bases of both the Patriot movement and the Christian Right, with both ultra-nationalistic and evangelical rituals. In terms of the Patriot movement, the Restoring Honor Rally began with the Pledge of Allegiance which was recited by a boy scout, was echoed by the crowd and received a standing ovation with the patriotic words, “I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty, and justice for all” (‘Restoring Honor Rally- Opening Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance’ 2010); this was immediately followed by an *a capella* rendition of ‘The Star-Spangled Banner’ by a gospel choir. Furthermore, the closing prayer delivered by a Vietnam War veteran, Dave Roever, neatly combined the ultra-nationalistic and evangelical spirit of the Restoring Honor Rally by imploring the crowd to “move the heart of God to protect our troops who have protected [us]” and closing with the words, “spread the word- God bless” (‘Restoring Honor Rally- Closing Prayer and Song’ 2010).

In terms of the Christian Right, the opening prayer delivered by Pastor Paul Jehle was delivered in an extremely evangelical fashion, as he showered Jesus Christ with praise with a list of titles including “ruler of the nations, king of kings and lord of lords, the holy one, the righteous one...the eternal redeemer” and attempted to awaken the crowd’s pride in their

Christianity by closing with the words, “we come back to you today and we see you...for the advance of your kingdom, we once again say, may you God, bless America; may we be one nation under God, in Christ’s name, Amen” (‘Restoring Honor Rally- Opening Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance’ 2010). This Christian rhetoric was also exhibited by Tea Party members and supporters present at the Restoring Honor Rally: one elderly woman used her Christian beliefs to vehemently reject President Obama’s plans for a cap-and-trade system to curb greenhouse gas emissions, by confusedly arguing that “I just don’t believe that God will let us destroy the earth with carbon dioxide, we exhale and breathe carbon dioxide, so that doesn’t make a bit of sense” (‘Glenn Beck’s Restoring Honor Rally- Interview B-Roll’ 2010).

Furthermore, nostalgic references to American culture permeated the keynote address made by Beck in particular: with the location of the Restoring Honor Rally at the Lincoln Memorial, Beck reminded the audience that Abraham Lincoln in the inanimate form of his statue was literally “casting a shadow on all of us” and invoked his spirit as the crowd should “look to a giant for answers” (Beck 2010b). With a similar motivation in pleading for a return to traditional American values, Beck also humanised those ‘sacred’ texts in American culture like the United States Constitution and the Gettysburg Address by asserting that “our documents, our most famous speeches are American scripture and they are alive today just as any other scripture is. They speak to us from the past” (Beck 2010b), so that this protest performance was much more about American unity rather than divisiveness within the United States which characterised the previous two. The way in which Tea Party members and supporters use the distinct American culture to unify was most pronounced at the Restoring Honor Rally, ironically through appeals to Huntington’s ‘clash of civilisations’ thesis. When an interviewer from *New Left Media* asks a variety of people in attendance what they thought about plans to build a mosque at ‘Ground Zero’ in

New York City ('9/11 Memorials and Remembrance' 2010), the rhetorical response was strikingly similar with such phrases that it was a "slap in the face", "them thumbing their nose up at us" and that it "not only slaps the families in the face but America in general"; furthermore, when the interviewer suggested the need to recognise the distinction between moderate and radical Islam, one elderly man angrily retorted that "I learnt all I needed to know about Islam on 9/11" ('Glenn Beck's Restoring Honor Rally- Interviews With Participants' 2010).

Figure 16- Geese flyover at the Restoring Honor Rally



Source: Taggert, 'Restoring Honor Rally 8/28'.

Finally, the anecdotal story of the 'geese flyover' at exactly 10:00 a.m. over the Reflecting Pool, as depicted above in Figure 16, vividly encapsulated the complex emotion of hope for the future of the United States that was channelled amongst the Tea Party members and supporters at the Restoring Honor Rally. When this event occurred, the initial

reaction was evidently one of incredulous amazement as the crowd turned and held the geese's path in their gazes ('Honor Rally Geese Flyover' 2010). In hindsight for the Tea Party, this was a sublime moment as they were able to pause their own strategic interactions, relax and view this miraculous 'performance' from God in wonder ('Honor Rally Geese Flyover' 2010).

This inspirational event clearly nourished the emotion of hope for the future of the United States amongst the Tea Party members and supporters with similar rhetoric to Obama's 2008 presidential election campaign, despite the multitude of threats faced by the nation. Thus, the Tea Party members and supporters stringently ascribed to the perception of American exceptionalism throughout this protest performance: in an interview, one woman asserted that "we're the only nation like this in the world, and if we lose this, there's nothing else" while a man wearing a T-shirt that bears a full transcription of the United States Constitution stressed that "we're the last bastion of hope and right now we're on very shaky ground" ('Glenn Beck's Restoring Honor Rally- Interviews with Participants' 2010). Comparatively, President Obama was personally criticised at this protest performance, not in terms of his policies that have provoked outrage amongst members and supporters of the Tea Party, but in terms of his lack of hope for the future of the United States: in an interview, one woman expressed her bewilderment that "this country would elect someone so anti-progress and anti-pride of America...he would wilfully destroy the country" while another simply stated "I don't think he has faith in our country, I don't think he believes in our country" ('Glenn Beck's Restoring Honor Rally- Interviews with Participants' 2010). Nevertheless, the underlying message from the Restoring Honor Rally was one of hope that was designed to especially appeal to the activist base of the Christian Right: Beck deployed a vocabulary of urgency and efficacy in his invocation of the

'motivational' frame of the evangelical spread of Christianity (Benford and Snow 2000: 617), as he implored the crowd that "we must go to God boot camp and straighten our own lives up so we can help the people out in the rest of the world and guide them down the stairs and out of the building into safety" (Beck 2010b).

Conclusion- The Evolution of the Tea Party:

Finally, it is evident that the Tea Party has evolved from fostering the affective bond of distrust in the Tax Day Tea Party rallies, to the complex emotion of outrage in the Taxpayer March on Washington and ultimately the complex emotion of hope in the Restoring Honor Rally in its mobilisation and growth. These three protest performances thus marked "high points of contention [which] produce emotional pivots around which the future direction of a movement turns" (Tarrow 2011: 154). Thus, it was the sequential cultivation of these three distinct but interconnected emotional responses that produced the 'emotion energy' of pride in the United States which has sustained the social movement (Collins 2001: 28); this suggests that the mobilisation and growth of the Tea Party a successful blueprint for future social movements in the United States and other countries to follow because "nationalism is a ready source of emotional energy" (Tarrow 2011: 153).

Conclusion

Schematic Diagram of Tea Party Frames:

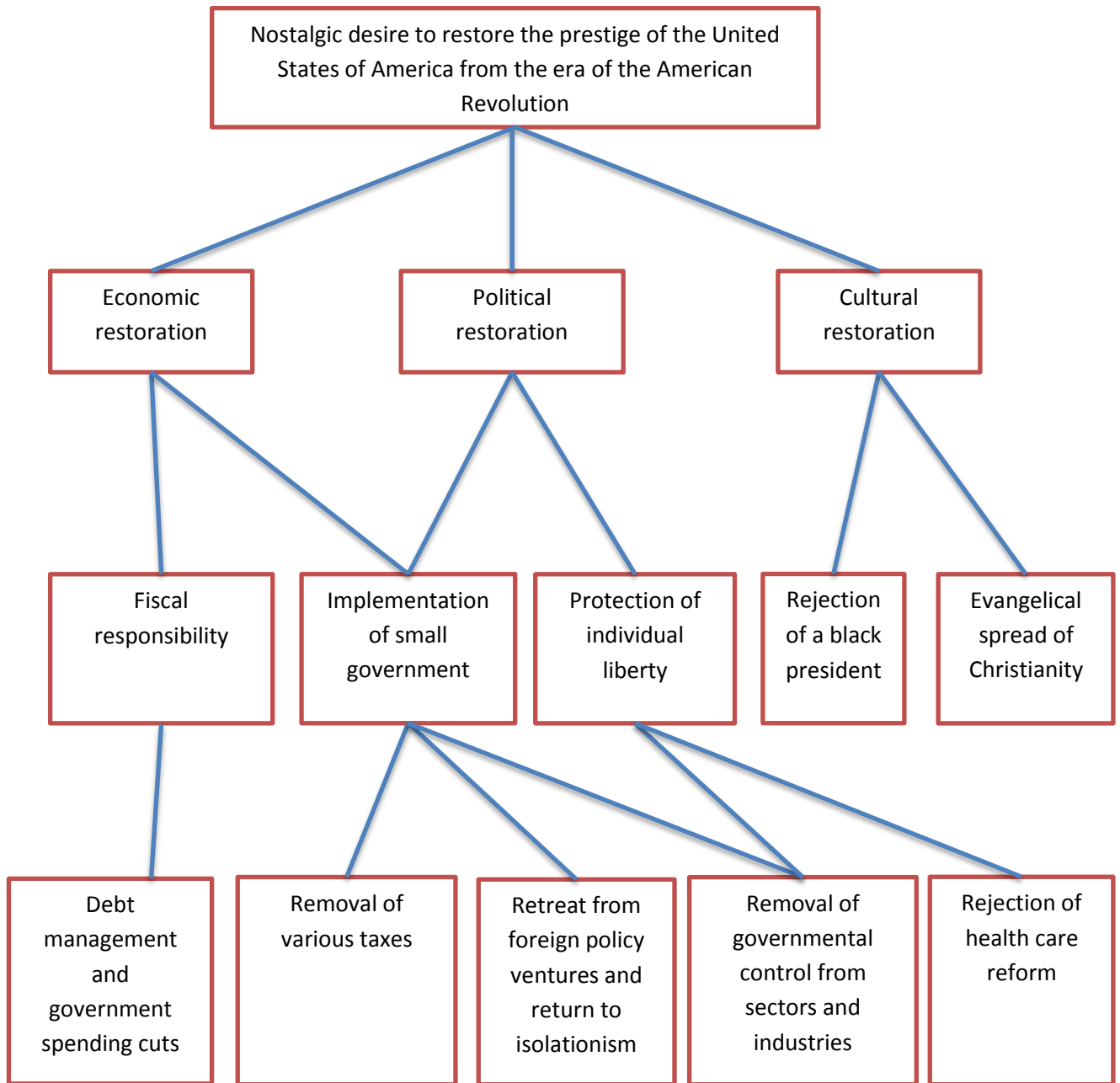
In conclusion, the thesis has outlined the demographic background and political ideology of Tea Party members and supporters through sample surveys and a content analysis of blogs on Tea Party websites. Furthermore, the thesis has shown in a discourse analysis of three protest performances that by appropriating the cultural history of the United States in its resonant collective action frames, the Tea Party has consciously and rationally exacerbated the emotions of distrust of the government, outrage towards politicians and policies but hope for the future amongst its activist bases in order to mobilise and grow in support. According to Tarrow's conceptualisation of the intersecting elements of social movements, the Tea Party utilised frames and cultural artifacts throughout its extensive networks and organisations to cultivate these specific emotional responses, due to its initial political constraints in the form of absent institutional power (Tarrow 2011: 121).

By using the results of the content analysis and discussion of the sample surveys, it is now possible to produce a schematic diagram of the various frames used by the Tea Party. In the schematic diagram found on the page after next as Figure 17, the hierarchy of the frames that are referenced by the Tea Party in their protest performances is as follows: the master frame of the restoration of the prestige of the United States, the three methods of economic restoration, political restoration and cultural restoration, the ideations that originate from the master frame and the policy prescriptions that address these ideations. The schematic diagram also depicts how the master frame of the restoration of the prestige of the United States is amplified through its hierarchical dominance, while the connected frames are strengthened through the frame alignment process of frame bridging.

Furthermore, the two frames of 'evangelical spread of Christianity' and 'rejection of a black president' are indicative of the frame alignment process of frame extension, as they are invoked consistently in order to appeal to the activist bases of the Christian Right and white supremacists respectively (Snow, Rochford Jr., Worden and Benford 1986: 467-472).

The frames used by the Tea Party shown in the schematic diagram on the following page were instilled with narrative fidelity through the consistent invocation of American cultural foci, in the form of ideations, artifacts and performances (Johnston 2009: 7). Significantly, the nostalgia for the restored prestige of the United States from the American revolutionary era that characterises the Tea Party is a particularly powerful form of nationalism that appeals to the activist base of the Patriot movement. This is because nationalism "possesses a great emotional potential [to mobilise social movements], especially when it is linked to religious or ethnic appeals" (Tarrow 2011: 153), as the Tea Party does by appealing to the activist bases of the Christian Right and white supremacists respectively.

Figure 17- Schematic diagram of the frames used by the Tea Party



Scope for Further Research:

The thesis has focussed wholly on the three historical strands of ultra-conservatism in the United States in forming the diverse activist bases for the Tea Party, being the Patriot movement, the Christian Right and white supremacy; however, it would be important to examine in greater depth the other traditional constants of ultra-conservatism in the United States and their role in the mobilisation and growth of the Tea Party, such as the opposition to gay marriage, scepticism towards environmental issues and hostility towards illegal immigrants. Furthermore, it would be worthwhile to examine the counter-movements that have arisen in response to the Tea Party social movement itself and how they have shaped the discourse produced by the Tea Party: these include the Coffee Party, which has stated its desire for a “society in which democracy is treated as sacrosanct and ordinary citizens participate out of a sense of civic duty, civic pride, and a desire to contribute to society” (‘About Us’ 2010), or even the comedian Jon Stewart’s Rally to Restore Sanity, which satirically advertised itself as being “for the people who think shouting is annoying, counterproductive, and terrible for your throat” (‘Rally to Restore Sanity’ 2010).

Predictions of the Future of the Tea Party:

Since the election of Tea Party-backed candidates in the 2010 mid-term elections and the consequent establishment of the Tea Party Caucus in Congress, the number of protest performances carried out by the Tea Party has diminished noticeably which has prompted commentary on the ‘decline’ of the Tea Party (Keyes 2011; Epstein 2011; Mitchell 2011). Nevertheless, the newly-acquired institutional power of the Tea Party has been revealed through the 2011 debt ceiling crisis, which would be further amplified in the event of Bachmann, Perry, Cain or Paul winning the Republican nomination for the 2012

Presidential Election which seems to be increasingly possible ('Being Michele Bachmann: The Terrifying Truthfulness of Victor of the Ames Straw Poll' 2011). With the legitimisation of the Tea Party as a political entity, it is clear that the Tea Party will continue to shape the domestic political arena in the United States for at least the near future, until an administration is elected that satisfies the values and ideals of the Founding Fathers and the spirit of the American revolutionary era.

Appendix

Figure 2- Legend for the codified blogs in content analysis

- **Scope of policy issue**
 1. Domestic policy
 2. Foreign policy

- **Nature of policy issue**
 1. Taxation
 2. Unemployment, government spending and national debt
 3. Health care
 4. Climate change and energy efficiency
 5. Governmental control of sectors and industries
 6. Barack Obama's presidential appointments
 7. National security and illegal immigration
 8. Education
 9. Freedom of speech
 10. Abortion
 11. Corruption in government
 12. The Middle East peace process
 13. Celebration of the United States
 14. Political defence of the United States Constitution
 15. Same-sex marriage
 16. Free trade
 17. State's rights

18. Electoral politics
19. Obama's citizenship
20. Gun rights

- **Criticism of Obama**

1. Criticism of Obama
2. Absence of criticism of Obama

- **Contribution of a policy prescription**

1. Contribution of a policy prescription
2. Absence of a policy prescription

- **Nature of policy prescription**

1. Reduction in government spending through fiscal restraint
2. Improved governmental transparency and accountability
3. Continued privatisation of health care
4. Further enshrinement of private property rights
5. Total removal of federal governmental control over sectors and industries
6. Implementation of an 'all-of-the-above' energy strategy for maximum energy security
7. Increased federal assistance in job creation
8. Ban on federal funding of abortions
9. Widespread reduction in taxation
10. Continued support of Israel at the expense of Palestine
11. Ban on gay marriage

12. Increased bilateral free trade agreements
 13. Installation of a 'flat tax' in place of current complicated tax code
 14. Secession of states from federal government
- **Nostalgic reference to United States history**
 1. Nostalgic reference to United States history
 2. Absence of any nostalgic reference to United States history
 - **Reference to Christianity in the United States**
 1. Reference to Christianity in the United States
 2. Absence of any reference to Christianity in the United States
 - **Reference to a 'white' United States or Obama as a Muslim**
 1. Reference to a 'white' United States or Obama as a Muslim
 2. Absence of any reference to a 'white' United States or Obama as a Muslim
 - **Reference to the United States Constitution**
 1. Reference to the United States Constitution
 2. Absence of any reference to the United States Constitution

The Microsoft Excel spreadsheets found on the subsequent pages span two pages each and are in the following order: Patriot Action Network, Freedomworks Tea Party, Tea Party Nation and Michele Bachmann's official blog.

Date	Title	Scope of policy issue	Nature of policy issue	Christina Obama	Contribution of a policy prescription	Nature of policy prescription	Notable reference to U.S. history	Reference to Christianity in the U.S.	Reference to a white U.S. or Obama as a Muslim	Reference to the U.S. Constitution
15-Apr-09	2010 Census, Illegal Aliens and Why It Means for All of Us	1	13	1	2	N/A	1	1	1	1
16-Apr-09	A Government of Laws or Government of Men?	1	17	2	2	N/A	1	2	1	1
19-Apr-09	Obama to Release Terrorists into the United States- Against U.S. Law	1	7	2	2	N/A	1	1	2	1
24-Apr-09	Severity	1	2	2	2	N/A	1	2	1	2
25-Apr-09	Let's Take a Step Back and Remember Our Principles	1	5	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	2
26-Apr-09	Children of God? Which is More Important to Godly America?	1	8	2	2	N/A	1	1	2	1
29-Apr-09	Love of Power and Money	1	11	2	2	N/A	1	2	2	2
1-May-09	Obama is GPS Marking the Front Door of Every Residence in America!	1	11	2	2	N/A	1	1	2	1
6-May-09	Happy Independence Day!	1	13	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	2
7-May-09	Constitution	1	14	2	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
12-May-09	SEE WHO IS CHARACTERIZING AMERICANS WHO SUPPORT THE CONSTITUTION AS TERRORISTS	1	14	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
13-May-09	Obama: He Had the "Bill" - The House that Protects Him from Having a Birth Certificate?	1	19	1	2	N/A	1	1	2	2
25-May-09	Wake Up and Survive	1	7	1	2	N/A	1	1	2	2
29-May-09	Obama Aids Which Public Records You Want to See... Tell Him Its His Birth Certificate	1	19	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
1-Jun-09	Obama's "Care"	1	6	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
5-Jun-09	WHY ARE YOU PROTECTING THE WOLF AT THE DOOR?	1	14	1	2	N/A	1	1	2	1
9-Jun-09	AMERICA IS IN MORTAL DANGER!	1	6	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
15-Jun-09	Hussein to Get Rid of Alternative Medicine	1	3	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	2
23-Jun-09	Stop Conserving the Eligibility Issue!	1	19	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	2
29-Jun-09	Hussein Health Care	1	3	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	2
1-Jul-09	Don't Let Barack Hussein Obama Laugh Off the Requirement of the United States Constitution	1	19	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	2
6-Jul-09	The Defenders of Liberty	1	13	2	2	N/A	1	1	2	2
8-Jul-09	Are Care Constitutional?	1	6	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	2
12-Jul-09	Regarding Tyranny response Corps	1	12	2	2	N/A	1	2	2	2
19-Jul-09	Terminations According to Obama	1	13	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	2
23-Jul-09	Is it Time to Be a Birth State?	1	13	2	2	N/A	1	2	2	2
1-Aug-09	I Remember When	1	13	1	2	N/A	1	1	2	2
7-Aug-09	Un-American	1	3	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
10-Aug-09	Hippocratic Oath of All Doctors	1	3	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
15-Aug-09	OBAMA DESERVES AN "R" FOR U.S. HISTORY!	1	13	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	2
25-Aug-09	You Have Tread on Me!	1	13	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
28-Aug-09	A WORLD TURNED UPSIDE DOWN	1	5	2	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
2-Sep-09	Obama's True Religion	1	11	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	2
4-Sep-09	I Pledge...	1	9	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	2
6-Sep-09	Obama adviser Van Jones Resigns Amid Controversy	1	6	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	2
13-Sep-09	What I'm Fighting For	1	13	2	2	N/A	1	1	2	1
21-Sep-09	Am I Going Nuts or Do I See a Lot of Parallels in Societies of the Past to Current Events	1	5	2	2	N/A	1	1	2	1
30-Sep-09	Public Option Dilemmas and the Dangers of the Individual Mandate	1	3	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
5-Oct-09	WHAT TOOK YOU SO LONG!	1	6	1	2	N/A	1	1	2	1
8-Oct-09	JUDGE CARTER CONFRONTS ELIGIBILITY TRIAL OF Barack Hussein Obama TO PROCEED AS SCHEDULED!	1	19	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	2
13-Oct-09	We the People Will Overcome	1	2	1	2	N/A	1	1	2	2
13-Oct-09	Will American Always Be Free?	1	2	1	2	N/A	1	1	2	2
21-Oct-09	You Might Be a Constitutional If...	1	14	1	2	N/A	1	1	2	1
24-Oct-09	Where in the Constitution is Government Empowered to Mandate Health Insurance Coverage?	1	3	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
3-Nov-09	ASSAULT ON AMERICAN LIBERTIES	1	3	1	2	N/A	1	1	2	1
7-Nov-09	THE PATH IS NOW BEFORE US and We Must Act to Save Our Country	1	9	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	2
10-Nov-09	So You Still Think Islam is a "Religion of Peace"?	1	7	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	2
13-Nov-09	Would You Vote for a Person, if His Plans for Our Country Were to?	1	9	2	2	N/A	1	1	2	1

Date	Title	Scope of policy/issue	Nature of policy/issue	Christen of Obama	Contribution of a policy/prescription	Nature of policy/prescription	Nostalgic reference to U.S. history	Reference to Christianity in the U.S.	Reference to a white U.S. or Obama as a Muslim	Reference to the U.S. Constitution
20-Nov-09	Can a Muslim be a Real American?	1	13	2	2	N/A	2	1	1	1
23-Nov-09	A Muslim is Going to Run for Texas Governor on Democrat Ticket	1	18	1	2	N/A	2	1	1	1
1-Dec-09	WILL WE SOON BE SLAVES OF ISLAM?	1	7	2	2	N/A	2	1	1	1
8-Dec-09	WHAT I BELIEVE	1	18	1	2	N/A	2	1	1	1
15-Dec-09	MUSLIMS IN 21ST CENTURY AMERICA- HOME GROWN TERRORISM	1	7	1	2	N/A	2	1	1	1
17-Dec-09	WE ARE AT THE TIPPING POINT!	1	3	1	2	N/A	2	1	1	1
23-Dec-09	We, the People	1	9	1	2	N/A	2	1	1	1
26-Dec-09	The Wundhausen Plan- Barack Obama, TEATDR-IN-CHIEF	1	13	2	2	N/A	2	1	1	1
1-Jan-10	2010, A New Year, A New Beginning	1	18	2	2	N/A	2	1	1	1
2-Jan-10	A Call to Arms	1	13	2	2	N/A	2	1	1	1
8-Jan-10	United States	1	6	1	2	N/A	2	1	1	1
12-Jan-10	Muslim Takeover in the Future	1	18	2	2	N/A	2	1	1	1
20-Jan-10	A Shot Heard Around the World	1	3	2	2	N/A	2	1	1	1
26-Jan-10	HEALTH CARE IS STILL ALIVE ACCORDING TO THE UNR IN CHIEF!	1	2	1	2	N/A	2	1	1	1
1-Feb-10	Steve B. Big Bureaucracy	1	2	2	2	N/A	2	1	1	1
4-Feb-10	About Me...	1	13	2	2	N/A	2	1	1	1
8-Feb-10	The Jobs Corpse	1	2	1	2	N/A	2	1	1	1
14-Feb-10	Totalitarian Islamic Sharia Law for Americans?	1	6	1	2	N/A	2	1	1	1
22-Feb-10	Need More Proof About Obama's Incompetence? Here It Is	1	14	1	2	N/A	2	1	1	1
26-Feb-10	ARE WE AFRAID TO SAY GOD? AMERICA WON'T BE FIXED UNTIL WE RECOGNIZE HIM(YAGAMI)	1	13	2	2	N/A	2	1	1	1
1-Mar-10	What a Great Way to Spend a Sunday Afternoon!	1	1	2	2	N/A	2	1	1	1
4-Mar-10	Proposed Spending Limit Amendment to U.S. Constitution	1	2	2	2	N/A	2	1	1	1
11-Mar-10	In His Time and Ours	1	8	1	2	N/A	2	1	1	1
13-Mar-10	"Deemling," A Constitutional Question	1	3	2	2	N/A	2	1	1	1
19-Mar-10	Two Can Play This Game	1	17	1	2	N/A	2	1	1	1
22-Mar-10	Repeal the 17th Amendment to the US Constitution and Restore States' Rights	1	3	1	2	N/A	2	1	1	1
27-Mar-10	Obama's Pre- and Post-Battlefield	1	13	1	2	N/A	2	1	1	1
9-Apr-10	A Civil War is Being Fought in the United States With Swords and Deeds...	1	13	1	2	N/A	2	1	1	1
16-Apr-10	The Tea Party's Fight Under the Godless Flag	1	5	2	2	N/A	2	1	1	1
17-Apr-10	America Has Returned to Its Pre-American Revolution "Federal Roots"	1	9	2	2	N/A	2	1	1	1
23-Apr-10	Politically Correct is Incorrect	1	13	1	2	N/A	2	1	1	1
30-Apr-10	Our Muslim Heritage	1	14	1	2	N/A	2	1	1	1
2-May-10	Reason for the 54th Amendment...Doesn't Include Illegals From Any Other Country	1	1	1	2	N/A	2	1	1	1
10-May-10	"The Payer Have NO RIGHTS"	1	2	1	2	N/A	2	1	1	1
15-May-10	"You Can't Drive"	1	7	1	2	N/A	2	1	1	1
22-May-10	JBAMM (WITH MEXICO PREZ) AND DEMOCRATS IN CONGRESS... VIOLATED THEIR CONSTITUTIONAL OATH	1	2	1	2	N/A	2	1	1	1
26-May-10	QUESTIONS FOR TEA PARTY PATRIOTS	1	17	1	2	N/A	2	1	1	1
28-May-10	STATE LANDS BEING STOLEN FROM THE PUBLIC- A FEDERAL PRIME LAND GRAB, UNCONSTITUTIONAL?	1	7	2	2	N/A	2	1	1	1
1-Jun-10	HISPANIC (COMMUNISTS) LEADERS SPEAK OUT... FOR ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION...ANTI-USA	1	18	1	2	N/A	2	1	1	1
6-Jun-10	Let's Look on the Bright Side	1	8	2	2	N/A	2	1	1	1
14-Jun-10	"Patriot Academy" for Young People Between the Ages 16-25	1	11	1	2	N/A	2	1	1	1
24-Jun-10	Barack Hussein Obama, Upset By His Abuse of Constitution...	1	17	1	2	N/A	2	1	1	1
24-Jun-10	Declaration of Independence of the United Republics	1	7	1	2	N/A	2	1	1	1
10-Jul-10	WHAT TO DO ABOUT ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION- FROM A FATHER'S PERSPECTIVE	1	7	2	2	N/A	2	1	1	1
20-Jul-10	NO TO GROUND ZERO MOSQUE...NO TO SHARIA LAW...NO TO MUSLIM "TRADITIONS" AS ACCEPTABLE!	1	17	2	2	N/A	2	1	1	1
31-Jul-10	CONGRESSIONAL PROGRESSIVES BURIED OUR FREEDOMS	1	2	2	2	N/A	2	1	1	1
1-Aug-10	A Concerted Effort to Destroy the White Middle Class	1	5	1	2	N/A	2	1	1	1
5-Aug-10	The Obama Beast of Prey Fathers, But Inflates Again	1	1	1	2	N/A	2	1	1	1
16-Aug-10	THE EVIL MUSLIM COMMUNIST USURPER, Barack Hussein Obama's EVIL SPREADS TO NNCI	1	9	1	2	N/A	2	1	1	1
25-Aug-10	Only God Knows What is Obama's "Heart and Soul"	1	18	1	2	N/A	2	1	1	1

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17-Apr-09	Denver Post Columnist: I think Just Doesn't Get It	1	5	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	2
21-Apr-09	Beware of Strange Bedfellows in Washington	1	3	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
24-Apr-09	Call Sen. Kent Conrad NOW to Stop Socialized Medicine!	1	3	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	2
27-Apr-09	Prelude to Obamacare	1	3	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
28-Apr-09	The Real Goal of Healthcare Reform	1	16	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
28-Apr-09	Obama's Opposite: Judicial Poison	1	6	1	2	12	2	2	2	2
4-May-09	Obama's Empathetic Judicial Poison	1	17	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	1
6-May-09	Oklahoma Legislature Assenting 10th Amendment Against Federal Government	1	2	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	1
15-May-09	California - Our Canary in a Coal Mine	1	4	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	2
18-May-09	The Climate Collaborators	1	3	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
22-May-09	Campaign to Fight Socialized Medicine	1	2	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
28-May-09	National Debt Threatens U.S. Credit Rating	1	2	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
12-Jun-09	What Won't They Tax? Company Phones Next	1	1	1	2	13	2	2	2	2
15-Jun-09	A Widening Trade Deficit: Something to Worry About?	1	16	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
16-Jun-09	President Reagan on Government-Run Health Care	1	3	2	2	N/A	1	2	2	2
22-Jun-09	Cigarettes: The San Francisco Tax	1	1	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
23-Jun-09	How Much is \$1.6 Trillion?	1	2	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
27-Jun-09	Responding to the "Liberal Middle"	1	2	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	2
4-Jul-09	Happy Dependence Day	1	2	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	2
7-Jul-09	Sanford's Down, Sarah's Out: Franken's In: Is the Tea Party Over?	1	2	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
7-Jul-09	"We're Here Because Our Country is Falling Under Socialism, Marxism and Fascism"	1	2	1	2	N/A	1	1	2	1
16-Jul-09	Obama's Economic Adviser Admits She Can't Ever Know if Stimulus Would Succeed	1	2	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
21-Jul-09	Obama's Blue State Betrayal	1	1	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
21-Jul-09	\$2.700,000,000	1	2	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
15-Aug-09	Rumors of Freedom's Decline Have Been Greatly Exaggerated	1	3	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
15-Aug-09	ObamaCare Really Greed-Free or Pro-Insurance	1	3	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	2
13-Aug-09	Responding to the Hearing and to Sen. Mark Udall's Remarks	1	2	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
13-Aug-09	Join the Fight! Health Care is Not a Right	1	17	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	1
17-Aug-09	Health Care is Not a Right	1	3	2	2	N/A	1	2	2	2
21-Aug-09	Dem's Health Care Spending Driving Themelves into the Ground	1	3	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
3-Sep-09	Don't Be the ObamaCare Frog	1	6	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
8-Sep-09	A Car too Far	1	8	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
8-Sep-09	Obama's Speech to Students	1	1	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
20-Sep-09	Nullification: The States Have a Nuclear Option too	1	17	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	1
20-Sep-09	Obama Incident: National Sales Tax Now Plausible	1	1	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
29-Sep-09	Global Warming: If You Don't Have Good Science, Lose the Science You Have	1	4	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
6-Oct-09	Generation Why?	1	3	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
15-Oct-09	A Liberal Meets Health Care Reality	1	3	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
19-Oct-09	When You Make a (Health Care) Deal with the Devil, You're the Junior Partner	1	5	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
21-Oct-09	Obama Justice Department: Voters Just Don't Know What's Good for Them	1	4	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	1
22-Oct-09	Lord Montodon on the Copenhagen Treaty	1	3	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
29-Oct-09	Dem's Health Care "reform", The More You Know, The Less You Like	1	18	2	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
9-Nov-09	NY-232.0	1	3	2	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
12-Nov-09	Did They Really Die for This?	1	2	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
13-Nov-09	Your Patriotism and Economic Duty: Fire a Democrat	1	3	2	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
13-Nov-09	"If This Health Care Bill Becomes Law, Life As You Have Known It, Will Cease"	1	3	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	1
19-Nov-09	Urgent: Update and Call to Action on Senate Healthcare Bill	1	17	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
19-Nov-09	Welcome to the (10th Amendment) Revolution	1	18	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	1
24-Nov-09	A Tea Party Platform?	1	2	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	1
1-Dec-09	President Obama's Plan to Spend Our Way Out of this Recession"	1	2	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2

Date	Title	Scope of policy/issue	Nature of policy/issue	Christina Obama	Contribution of a policy/prescription	Nature of policy/prescription	Notable reference to U.S. history	Reference to Christianity in the U.S.	Reference to a white U.S. or Obama as a Muslim	Reference to the U.S. Constitution
16-Dec-09	Upcoming Healthio Protest Government Takeover of Healthcare	1	4	2	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
18-Dec-09	Congressman's Anti-Capitolist Agenda	2	3	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	1
22-Dec-09	Could Some States Nullify ObamaCare?	1	3	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	1
30-Dec-09	Protesting by Candlelight	1	3	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	1
8-Jan-10	ObamaCare's Next Big Hurdle: The States	1	3	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	1
11-Jan-10	We'll See You in Court, ObamaCare	1	3	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	1
11-Jan-10	Resistance is Not Futile: Forgotten Lessons from the Nullification Crisis	1	3	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	1
14-Jan-10	VA House Speaker Co-Sponsors 'Tenth of Health Care Bill'	1	3	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	1
19-Jan-10	Virginia IDH Amendment Rally Draws 2400 to the Capitol Grounds	1	3	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	1
20-Jan-10	Freedom is Now Dead Center on the Political Spectrum	1	2	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
1-Feb-10	Freedom Goes 3 for 3 in VA Senate	1	3	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	1
1-Feb-10	Health Care Freedom Bill Passes VA House	1	3	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	1
16-Feb-10	It's Raining Sovereignty in Virginia	1	17	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	1
26-Feb-10	President Obama Ignores Health Care Reform's Most Essential Question	1	3	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
26-Feb-10	EPA Wants More Money, Thinks Blood Comes From Stones	1	4	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
2-Mar-10	Americans More Dependent on Uncle Sam Than Ever Before	1	2	2	2	N/A	1	2	2	2
3-Mar-10	Here Comes the Reconciliation	1	3	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
9-Mar-10	Spending Limit Amendment Cannot Be Ignored	1	2	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
18-Mar-10	Slaughter Rule Has Become a Constitutional Question Mark...	1	3	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	1
19-Mar-10	MIT Romney's Achilles Heel	1	1	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	1
22-Mar-10	Wake Up, There's Work to Do!	1	3	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
23-Mar-10	The Strangers	1	9	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
5-Apr-10	Staggering Unemployment Levels Take Toll on Young Americans	1	2	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
6-Apr-10	Centenary Tax Freedom Day on April 5th	1	1	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
22-Apr-10	Citizens Rally in Redding Against Unconstitutional ObamaCare	1	3	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
22-Apr-10	Congressman's Next Big Hurdle: The States	1	3	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
26-Apr-10	Congressman's Next Big Hurdle: The States	1	4	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
30-Apr-10	50 States Sue to Stop ObamaCare	1	4	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
3-May-10	AL Gov. Scott Brown's Call for Action	1	4	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
3-May-10	Cap and Trade Shuffle: Another Tea Party Victory?	1	4	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
18-May-10	Band Paul Ryan: Get It Right in Speech	1	18	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
19-May-10	President Obama's Job-Killing Agenda	1	2	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
25-May-10	Reminder: May 25th Day of Action to Stop EPA	1	4	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
11-Jun-10	American Citizens Appeal ObamaCare	1	3	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
11-Jun-10	The Future of Fiscal Responsibility	1	2	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
21-Jun-10	A Few Thoughts About "Stimulus"	1	2	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
22-Jun-10	The Myth That Has Plagued U.S. Domestic Policy	1	2	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
23-Jun-10	EDITORIAL: Washington Will Take Care of You	1	18	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
2-Jul-10	Ride Along with Mitch	1	13	2	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
5-Jul-10	We Hold These Truths to Be Self-Evident...	1	5	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
6-Jul-10	Barack Obama, America's Self-Denying Slave	1	1	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
23-Jul-10	Lost in Translation	1	1	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	2
28-Jul-10	ObamaCare's Endless Web of Bureaucracy	1	3	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	2
28-Jul-10	Uncle Sam Has Worse Woes Than Greece	1	2	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
4-Aug-10	Food for Thought: The Dangerous IRS	1	5	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
5-Aug-10	Taxes: A Defining Issue	1	1	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	2
5-Aug-10	Missouri Residents Say "No" To ObamaCare's Unconstitutional Individual Mandate	1	3	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	1
21-Aug-10	It Takes a Tea Party to Start a Tax Revolution	1	1	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
24-Aug-10	Beethner to Obama Fire All Economic Advisers	1	2	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
27-Aug-10	America's Insurgent Politster	1	5	2	2	N/A	1	2	2	2

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19-May-09		1	13	2	2	N/A	1	1	2	1
19-May-09	Do You Know Your State's Preamble?	1	19	2	2	N/A	1	1	2	1
22-May-09	Today, I Received an Email from the Western Center of Journalism	1	13	1	2	N/A	1	1	2	1
29-May-09	"First They Came..."	1	6	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	1
30-May-09	Cling to Your Guns!	1	6	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	1
30-May-09	Big Topic of the Day's Obama's Nomination of Judge Sonia Sotomayor to the Supreme Court	1	20	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	1
30-May-09	Tennesseeans Please Act on This! This is a Threat to Our 2nd Amendment Rights!	1	13	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	1
3-Jun-09	Obama Says USA is One of the Largest Muslim Nations	1	20	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	1
3-Jun-09	Tennessee Firearms Freedom	1	13	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	1
12-Jun-09	I Have to Get Some Stuff Off My Chest and I'm Sure It Will Piss Some Off!	1	13	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
23-Jun-09	Taxes	1	1	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
28-Jun-09	America's Beautiful, May God Bless and Keep Her Safe From All Aggressors Foreign and Domestic!	1	13	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
30-Jun-09	United Nations Wants to be the Parent of Your Child	1	8	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
30-Jun-09	America's Worth Fighting For - HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY!	1	13	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
4-Jul-09	AMERICAN GISTANO COMING READ EVERY WORD!	1	5	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
4-Jul-09	Your 2nd Amendment Rights Under Attack Again!	1	20	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
5-Jul-09	Death of America	1	1	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
15-Jul-09	OL BUJABA LUNOR BIN LADEN!	1	7	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
23-Jul-09	George Washington's Vision and Visit by an Angel, Valley Forge 1777	1	13	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
30-Jul-09	OH, How True...keep the Fires of Liberty Burning!	1	13	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
7-Aug-09	Let's Talk Frankly About Crime in America	1	7	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
9-Aug-09	Three Utterly Despicable Words	1	13	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
10-Aug-09	God This by Email	1	13	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
12-Aug-09	OBAMA: NO TIME FOR CONSTITUTION...WHAT SAY YOU?	1	19	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
15-Aug-09	Reasoning for the 2nd Amendment	1	20	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
22-Aug-09	Wheres the Outrage? Guest List for Obama's White House Ramadan Dinner	1	13	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
2-Sep-09	Don't Forget the Power of Paper	1	13	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
14-Sep-09	Freedom and God for Me	1	13	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
14-Sep-09	Expanding on God Myths	1	18	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
21-Sep-09	A Very Good Idea!	1	13	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
26-Sep-09	The End of Lady Liberty	1	13	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
30-Sep-09	Don't Forget God	1	13	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
4-Oct-09	What's Wrong with America and How Can We Fix It?	1	17	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
5-Oct-09	Constitution of the Confederate States of America	1	13	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
7-Oct-09	Good and Godliness!	1	13	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
9-Oct-09	Stupid! Stupid! Stupid!	1	5	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
20-Oct-09	THE END OF OUR COUNTRY	1	5	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
23-Oct-09	Obama's Unhealthy Obsession With Quashing Opposing Voices	1	9	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
1-Nov-09	Tyanny is At Our Door Step	1	5	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
1-Nov-09	RAMBLINGS OF A PATRIOT!	1	5	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
8-Nov-09	ARE THESE OUR ONLY TWO ALTERNATIVES LEFT?	1	9	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
11-Nov-09	ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF AMERICA RUN AWOL!	1	9	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
13-Nov-09	OBAMA CARE: UNCONSTITUTIONAL? HAVE QUESTIONS	1	3	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
21-Nov-09	Proposed Amendments and Requests Needed to Restore the United States of America	1	17	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
28-Nov-09	What Came First? Christianity or the Constitution	1	14	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
3-Dec-09	Choosing Freedom Over Islam	1	7	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
10-Dec-09	Do You Know What They Are Teaching in Our Schools?	1	8	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
15-Dec-09	Radical Feminism's Attack on Manhood in America	1	9	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
18-Dec-09	TALK ABOUT THE CRIME...HOW ABOUT THIS ONE?	1	7	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
20-Dec-09	The Head of the Snake	1	3	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
25-Dec-09	A TEA PARTY Christmas Wish for We the People	1	13	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2

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4-Jan-10	Protecting Our Families and Children	1	8	1	1	5	2	2	1	1
8-Jan-10	Obama Welcomes Christmas	1	13	1	1	N/A	1	1	2	1
14-Jan-10	Democracy or Republic?	1	5	2	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
14-Jan-10	Saving Haiti... Sorry	1	2	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
24-Jan-10	Those Who Fail to Learn from History	1	5	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
24-Jan-10	Cape Diamond	1	18	2	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
2-Feb-10	My Thoughts on the Constitution and Declaration of Independence	1	13	2	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
11-Feb-10	Words Have Meaning	1	9	2	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
14-Feb-10	The Leaders of Tomorrow: Principles and Values	1	13	2	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
18-Feb-10	A Muslim Sympathizer in the White House	1	7	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
22-Feb-10	New Obama Logo/Islamic Crest Dodo Patches?	1	3	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
24-Feb-10	History Repeats Itself!	1	3	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
26-Feb-10	History Lessons #1	1	9	2	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
2-Mar-10	The Silver Bullet	1	2	1	1	14	1	2	2	1
4-Mar-10	WHEN IN THE COURSE OF HUMAN EVENTS...	1	9	2	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
8-Mar-10	A DAY OF RECKONING IS COMING!	1	13	2	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
11-Mar-10	Free Country My Ass	1	2	2	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
20-Mar-10	Do the Founding Fathers Have Nothing to Say to Us Today?	1	13	2	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
20-Mar-10	Do We Play By the Rules of Congress or the Constitution?	1	17	2	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
31-Mar-10	How Did This Happen?	1	3	1	1	N/A	2	2	2	1
2-Apr-10	A Letter to the U.S. Constitution	1	14	2	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
6-Apr-10	They Have Nothing to Say	1	13	2	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
12-Apr-10	Before You Vote	1	18	2	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
17-Apr-10	Power or Trick: The Fatal Choice	1	5	2	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
17-Apr-10	U.S. Under Siege: Obama Circumvents Constitutional Process; Multi-Pronged Takeover Begins	1	3	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	1
22-Apr-10	Constitution or Conterfence	1	5	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	1
23-Apr-10	Propose a 28th Amendment	1	14	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	1
2-May-10	The Road to Nowhere	1	7	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	1
3-May-10	Obama's Worst Recent Report Card	1	3	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	1
5-May-10	American history	1	1	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
8-May-10	A Declaration of Liberty... The Declaration of Independence Rewritten for Modern Consumption	1	13	2	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
30-May-10	Our Constitution: Our Millitary: Our Nation	1	4	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
2-Jun-10	The Asaric-to-Arabian Nature of Radical Environmentalism	1	13	2	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
4-Jun-10	We are the Freedom Fighters	1	5	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
10-Jun-10	Is the Rider of the Red Horse Ascendant?	1	11	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
18-Jun-10	Warning Labels On Our Constitution? Is Our Liberty Under Final Assault from the Left?	1	9	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
27-Jun-10	Jefferson's Declaration For Taking Arms in Defense of the Freedom That is Our Birthright...	1	20	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
28-Jun-10	INDEPENDENCE	1	13	2	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
4-Jul-10	4th of July	1	13	2	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
6-Jul-10	IS THERE NO END TO THE INSANITY? Obama: NASA's Foremost Mission, Muslim Outreach	1	7	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	1
6-Jul-10	Tea as Border Enforcement	1	7	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	1
12-Jul-10	Wake Up Folks, We're Americans Get Them All Out!	1	18	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	1
28-Jul-10	We Have No Borders Come On In	1	7	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	1
30-Jul-10	The Tea Party is the "Conscience of America"	1	13	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	1
9-Aug-10	SHARIA LAW IS ALREADY HERE IN AMERICA	1	9	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
13-Aug-10	The First Un-American President	1	9	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	1
17-Aug-10	The Feelings of a Patriot	1	13	2	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
20-Aug-10	I'm Not Muslim But I Play One As President of the United States!	1	13	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	1
26-Aug-10	Government is the Problem	1	2	1	2	N/A	1	2	2	1
27-Aug-10	The History of Muslims in America?	1	13	2	2	N/A	1	2	2	1

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16-Apr-09	Tax Hikes Up Ahead	1	4	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
17-Apr-09	Cap-and-Trade	1	4	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
20-Apr-09	A Simple Lesson in Economics	1	2	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
22-Apr-09	MIT Professor Sees the Road Straight on Cap and Trade	1	4	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
27-Apr-09	Debt Day Comes Sooner, This Year	1	2	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
29-Apr-09	Government-run Health Care - A Proven Failure	1	3	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
11-May-09	Ever-Expanding Health Care	1	3	1	1	3	2	2	2	2
12-May-09	The Liberal Playbook: Higher Taxes and More Government	1	1	1	1	N/A	2	2	2	2
13-May-09	Open Up the Government Books	1	2	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
19-May-09	CEO of the American Automobile Industry	1	4	1	1	2	2	2	2	2
21-May-09	Obama's Auto Task Force Putting Dealers Out of Business	1	5	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
27-May-09	The President's Ideal Nominee	1	1	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
29-May-09	American Households on the Hook for \$546.88B	1	2	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
16-Jun-09	Cap-and-Trade is a Tax	1	4	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
16-Jun-09	Here's \$200 Million, Take Our Prisoners!	1	7	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
17-Jun-09	Good Work, You're Fired!	1	6	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
24-Jun-09	Democrat Health Care Plan Costs Too Much, Covers Too Few and Drops Too Many	1	4	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
26-Jun-09	Cap-and-Tax Hits the Floor This Friday	1	3	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
26-Jun-09	Name Your Greenhouse Gas	1	4	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
29-Jun-09	A Responsible Regulatory Framework Needed	1	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2
13-Jul-09	Lacking Up Our Energy Resources	1	5	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
15-Jul-09	Gangster Government, The Sequel	1	2	2	2	4	2	2	2	2
17-Jul-09	Misplaced Priorities	1	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	2
20-Jul-09	Taking Small Business to Pay for Health Care	1	1	2	2	3	2	2	2	2
23-Jul-09	Administration Requested on Keeping Car Dealerships Closed	1	3	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
23-Jul-09	Health Care Reform on the Right Track	1	3	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
25-Jul-09	Health Care Reform: The Right Reports	1	3	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
4-Aug-09	Taking the Health Care Reform Health Care	1	1	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
11-Aug-09	No Child Left Behind Releases the Mark	1	8	2	2	5	2	2	2	2
12-Aug-09	The U.S.A. is Out of Money	1	2	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
17-Aug-09	Revisiting the Fairness Doctrine	1	9	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
20-Aug-09	Should We Trust the Government With Our Health Care?	1	3	1	1	3	2	2	2	2
21-Aug-09	Putting Numbers in Perspective	1	4	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
1-Sep-09	Defensive Medicine Driving Up Health Care Costs	1	3	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
1-Sep-09	Don't Question the EPA	1	4	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
11-Sep-09	Letter to the President	1	5	1	1	3	2	2	2	2
17-Sep-09	Government to Take Over All Student Loans	1	3	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
23-Sep-09	Silencing Its Critics--Again	1	1	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
24-Sep-09	Washington's Spending Addiction	1	4	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
1-Oct-09	No Closer to American Energy Independence	1	4	1	2	6	2	2	2	2
13-Oct-09	New Stimulus on the Way	1	2	2	2	7	2	2	2	2
20-Oct-09	A Victory for America's Seniors	1	3	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
22-Oct-09	Obama's "Card Check" Nominee Hit by Road Block	1	6	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
27-Oct-09	We Must Get Our Fiscal House in Order	1	1	1	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
28-Oct-09	Republican Health Care Solutions	1	3	2	2	3	2	2	2	2
29-Oct-09	Fiscal Recklessness: The Name of the Game in Washington	1	2	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
11-Nov-09	Honoring Our Veterans	2	13	2	2	N/A	2	2	2	2
17-Nov-09	And They Want to Run Your Health Care?	1	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	2
24-Nov-09	Second Stimulus on the Way	1	2	1	1	N/A	2	2	2	2
27-Nov-09	Lessons Learned from the Pilgrims	1	13	2	2	N/A	1	2	2	2

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