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Tea Party Movement Mobilization: Examining The Role Of Emotive Cues And Strategic Appeals

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TEA PARTY MOVEMENT MOBILIZATION: EXAMINING THE ROLE OF EMOTIVE
CUES AND STRATEGIC APPEALS

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Dedication

I lovingly dedicate this thesis to my parents, for giving me the opportunity to experience the world in a way that has made me the strong, dedicated, and successful individual that I am today.

Mil gracias, los quiero mucho.
TEA PARTY MOVEMENT MOBILIZATION: EXAMINING THE ROLE OF EMOTIVE CUES AND STRATEGIC APPEALS

by

REBECA B. PUENTES, Bachelor of Liberal Arts – International Relations

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Abstract

Campaign messages used by political parties have given scholars a rich opportunity to analyze the impact that such cues may have on voters. While voter mobilization and participation is a necessity for a democracy’s survival, certain messages used by very conservative movements and conservative parties may encourage intolerance towards minorities. This study examines the racial cues and appeals used by the Tea Party movement in the United States and the influence that such emotionally-charged appeals have on citizen support for very conservative political parties, movements, and policies. As my main theoretical framework, I merge political opportunity theory and intergroup emotions theory. Regarding my methodological approach, I combine in-depth case study research and quantitative analyses using data from a national poll conducted by CBS News/New York Times in 2010. As the literature on the Tea Party movement continues to develop, this study offers a new and more systematic perspective in an area lacking empirical research.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

As immigration and racism remain ever-present topics of political debate and controversy in democratic countries around the world, political parties take advantage of stereotypes to present cues likely to strike a responsive and aggressive form of action from their citizens. In this study, I analyze how racial cues trigger emotions, actions, and responses as a strategy of acquiring support for political campaigns of the very conservative groups. The goal of this study is two-fold. First, I seek to explore how and why the Tea Party movement resorts to emotional cues and triggers. Second, I explore how the public reacts to such messages and propaganda cues of the very conservative. Specifically, I seek to understand or determine if emotional cues and triggers mobilize the participation and growth of very conservative groups. Therein, I also investigate whether and how the Tea Party takes advantage of the emotional state of individuals who are already angry in order to increase their likelihood of supporting the movement. As such, this study sets the stage for further exploration of the impact of emotional cues presented to those individuals already prone to sensitive messaging.

It can be safely assumed that individuals living in a democratic state often encounter some form of emotionally-charged political campaign or message with the intention of gaining not only their attention but also their support and/or vote. In a society where an individual’s political preference matters, political candidates and parties use campaigns and slogans as a means to persuade the population to go out and vote in their favor. Very conservative groups such as the Tea Party movement are no exception to the strategic use of both explicit and implicit messages. By appealing to the differences in the reactions of their sympathizers in regards to political events and policy issues, movements like that of the Tea Party utilize strategic methods
and racially emotive rhetoric to increase awareness and mobilization.¹

Strategies triggering racial and emotive cues/attitudes can be partly attributed to the lasting impression that emotional propaganda tends to have on people (see, for example, Bartels, 1993). However, a critical observation to be made in this analysis is the fact that racial and emotive cues are not new phenomena or strategy used among political leaders wanting to mobilize supporters. The use of such messaging and appeals might exist and be successful at times where criticism of government evokes anger among the public. In the case of the Tea Party movement’s messages and mobilization, having an African American president elected into the White House presented the opportunity to mobilize such anger. The principal observation is that the Tea Party movement makes use of racial cues as latent emotive appeals to mobilize its support base.

I use the term “racism” according to Michael Tesler’s (2013: 114) interpretation of symbolic racism, modern racism, and racial resentment, which best explains the influence of anti-black [minority, and racially emotive] sentiments in contemporary American politics. This definition is unlike old-fashioned racism, which is grounded on embracing black biological and social inferiority.² Contrary to the previous understanding of this definition, “new racism” is characterized by a “moral feeling that blacks violate such traditional American values as

¹ It would be wrong to assume or even claim that all affiliations and associations with the Tea Party movement are founded solely on racist or emotive bases of support. This study highlights the use of racially charged messages by some factions of the Tea Party movement to mobilize sympathizers. Evidence was found among formal statements, such as speeches and comments made during campaigns or in office.

² Bobo et al. (1996) distinguish old-fashioned racism (OFR) as Jim Crow racism, which embodies a desire for social distance between the races, beliefs in the biological inferiority of blacks [minorities], and support for public policies insuring racial segregation and formalized discrimination.
individualism and self-reliance, work ethic, obedience, and discipline” in the way that “real” Americans do (Kinder and Sears, 1981: 416). For this reason, observations of racial and emotive messages in this study refer specifically to the rhetoric employed by Tea Party activists and leaders who identify themselves as “real” Americans in order to relate and connect with sympathizers.3

A successful movement relies on the ability of leaders to mobilize the masses. I use the term “mobilization” in reference to whether the movement has successfully elected Tea Party leaders as local and national representatives, succeeded in organizing or joining protests, demonstrations, factions, donating funds, and other forms of social movement where a support base is formed. I also take into consideration more shallow forms of participation such as posting on/following Tea Party websites and social networking sites (such as Facebook and Twitter).

As the literature on the Tea Party movement continues to develop, this study offers a novel theoretical framework and a more systematic analytical approach in an area lacking empirical research. By combining political opportunity theory with intergroup emotions theory, and employing quantitative data to test my hypotheses, I will analyze if emotionally-charged racial cues and messages combined with the pre-existing emotional state of individuals can be a

3 In order to understand why racism and racially emotive cues are used in this research, I must first clarify that “racism” itself has varying levels of appeals, impact, and effects. While I do use the distinction between overt forms of racism and new, more subtle and symbolic forms of racism, it is clear that racial appeals continue to exert a pervasive influence on policy debates (Sniderman and Tetlock, 2010). There are varying degrees of racism that include a broad spectrum of triggers, strategies, and levels of use (including explicit versus implicit messages). For this reason, taking these degrees of racism into account helps differentiate whether the messages and triggers are in fact politically relevant or just personal among the Tea Party leaders and supporters.
determinant of political mobilization and support.

As a basis of analysis, this research intends to contribute to the lack of literature examining the effects that explicit messages have on future mobilization of the Tea Party and their supporters. This is a collective study of an important facet of information missing from the literature concerning the triggering effects of influential leaders and public responses of social movements based on pre-existing racial sentiments or emotional cues/attitudes. The effects of racial resentments in politics are yet to be studied, especially as they pertain to triggers influenced by Tea Party leaders. This research demonstrates how racial resentment and anger (towards fiscal concerns, big government, mistrust in government, and disapproval of President Barack Obama) are the driving forces behind these messages, attitudes, support and Tea Party mobilization. Strategic attraction and relateability to the movement has caused Tea Party organizations to re-think their approach. Along with increasing use of implicit messages and cues, striking responsive actions and mobilization from citizens has caused a noteworthy change in tactics. In order to understand adherent responses to Tea Party mobilization, this research will observe the link between implicit/explicit racial and emotive rhetoric and party mobilization.

This analysis proceeds as follows. First, I will review the literature on the Tea Party movement, particularly vis-à-vis its key characteristics and the political mobilization and tactics of political opportunity required of a social movement. Next, I will review emotions research with a focus on how emotions affect mobilization, especially when racially charged. I will then present my theoretical framework—which is a merger of political opportunity theory and

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4 It is necessary during this study, to keep in mind that racism has *always* existed. It is not racist to disagree with a leader and it is not racist to point fingers and blame a President for problems felt by a nation. It is not racist to criticize President Obama, it is not racist to have conservative views, nor is it inherently racist to join or follow the Tea Party movement.
intergroup emotions theory—followed by a discussion of my methodological approach. The data analysis of this research will be divided into two methods. The first method of analysis involves a structured and focused comparison qualitative approach in which I address certain aspects of the specific examined case studies so as to guide and standardize the data collection. The second method of research analysis involves a quantitative analysis of factors attributing to the recognition and mobilization of the Tea Party movement based on its overall presence and effectiveness in relaying their message and ideologies. The final section offers a conclusion and identifies areas for future research regarding this nascent movement in American politics.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

The Tea Party movement is a grassroots movement that has emerged in response to the frustration of the American people at a time of economic hardship, job loss, and social instability. Its rise and success in American politics despite a plethora of target issues and lack of cohesion among members has produced rich grounds for academic literature about the Tea Party movement. This relatively new movement of the political right has been labeled by many as either insignificant, “Astroturf,” racist, or unworthy of making an impact because of its heterogeneous nature. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that the movement has indeed made an impact on the political landscape of the United States, thus triggering scholarly interest to observe the focus, development, and organizational skills of the Tea Party’s organization and movement (Burghart and Zeskind, 2010; Neely, 2010; Rasmussen, 2010; and Williamson et al., 2010).

2.1 Origins of the Tea Party Movement

The most acquainted Tea Party goals and messages demand a reduction in the size and power of government by decreasing federal spending, decreasing big government, and taking “our” stolen government back from “un-American hands” (Formisano, 2012). Comprised of primarily upper and middle class conservative Americans with Libertarian views, Tea Party leaders not only

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5 Grassroots movements develop naturally at the local level before spreading throughout the state and even across the nation. Typically, grassroots movements are known to arise spontaneously due to a pressing political issue that a community or group feels the need to change or improve without being organized by political actors (Burghart and Zeskind, 2010; Rasmussen and Schoen, 2010; Zernike, 2010).

6 An Astroturf campaign is considered a false grassroots movement. Although it may appear and claim to be a spontaneous uprising of concerned citizens, in reality it is founded and funded by elite and political interests (Monibot, 2010).
show adamant support for limited government and taxation, but are also vigorously against
government bailouts of large corporations and industries. Though these ideologies of the
political actors involved protesting the state of the economy led to the Tea Party movement’s rise
to prominence, gaps remain in existing literature about which circumstances and events in
particular enabled the movement’s momentum to thrive in the way that it did.

2.1.1 Brewing Anger and the State of the Economy

In order to understand why or how Tea Party resentment and anger was used to mobilize and get
the nation’s attention beyond simply fiscal concerns, a look back to a time before the 2008
election is necessary to understand the roles of both political opportunity theory and intergroup
emotions theory. The political environment of late 2008 and early 2009 first cultivated the
feelings that would soon lead to the rise of the Tea Party. Precipitately, the American people’s
ire with the federal government upon experiencing and suffering from one of the worst
recessions since the Great Depression in the 1930s created mass public resentment against policy
leaders in Washington. At that time, the state of the nation was socially, economically, and even
in regards to foreign affairs, chaotic (Trost and Rosenthal, 2012). This environment provided the
ideal political opportunity for Tea Party activists and leaders to increase their brewing anger and
frustration against the state of mainstream politics and the economy. Additional momentum
accumulated in the final years of the Bush administration, when increased spending, spiraling
debt, and an augmenting size of federal government initially began. Anger and tension based on
the characteristic Tea Party founding values started brewing during the Bush administration,
early Tea Party activists could have targeted and condemned federal spending taking place
before Barack Obama’s inauguration. In reality, anger began brewing among conservatives
against the mass federal spending coming from the War on Terror with the invasions of
Afghanistan and Iraq, the creation of the new Department of Homeland Security causing increased federal interventions, the extension of Medicare prescription drug benefits costing taxpayers an additional outstanding $62 billion a year, and forcing government to take $700 billion dollars through the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) in 2008 (Formisano, 2012: 13).

2.1.2 Barack Obama

Tea Party anger and anxiety of American decline combined with a unique economic and financial meltdown only seemed to multiply among activists when Republican political figures were no longer considered sufficiently conservative and Barack Obama became the first African American President of the United States. Anger combined with the nation’s history of racial sensitivity led to outrage over the Obama administration’s response to the economic crisis, which included a second bank bailout, and more than $750 billion in stimulus funds for the auto industry to restart the economy, added to the prompt emergence of the Tea Party (Formisano, 2012). Emerging activists began questioning the legitimacy of Obama’s presidency and willingness to bail out industries as opposed to helping “the real American people;” creating that which would become the principle goals of the Tea Party movement.⁷

2.1.3 A Powerful Message

Accounts give credit to CNBC commentator Rick Santelli, whose live rant is considered the

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⁷ Individuals, who deny the legitimacy of Obama as eligible for being President of the United States for not being a U.S.-born citizen, are called “bithers.” Birthers believe that “Barack Obama is ineligible to be President, thinking/believing that he is neither a ‘natural born citizen’ nor a ‘citizen of the United States’ at the time of the Adoption of this Constitution.” Among Tea Party leader activists in favor of the “birther” conspiracy, are Mark Williams, Michelle Bachmann, Dale Robertson, and thousands of supporters dedicated to promoting and funding conspiracy theories expressing doubts and concerns about his religion and capabilities to effectively run the nation.
spark that ignited what would become the national Tea Party movement. On February 19, 2009, Santelli, speaking from the floor of the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, called for a “Chicago Tea Party” when he vented his anger and protested against the Obama administration’s plan to help homeowners who could no longer pay their mortgages. “This is America!” Santelli exclaimed, “How many of you people want to pay for your neighbors’ mortgage that has an extra bathroom and can’t pay their bills? It’s time for another Tea Party.” His message advocated that government – and President Obama in particular – promoted bad behavior by giving money to individuals who, due to carelessness, did nothing to stimulate personal or national economic growth. Though Santelli was commentating on the Homeowners Affordability and Stability Plan, which was designed to relive mortgage holders, his message to prevent “subsidizing the losers’ mortgages” resonated with viewers and inspired a small group of bloggers, policy wonks, and Washington politicos to organize local protests in Chicago that same month (Trost and Rosenthal, 2012: 10). Santelli’s underlying message was clear; the government was giving billions of taxpayers’ dollars to irresponsible individuals across the country, and it was time for the American people to take action against those who were allowing that to happen.

Within days of Santelli’s tirade on television, anti-tax and anti-government organizations such as FreedomWorks, a Washington-based conservative advocacy group led by former House Majority Leader, Republican Dick Armey, displayed Rick Santelli’s image on its website with a message asking: “Are you with Rick? We are.” This message spread quickly; with similar websites promoting Tea Party support groups and launching local protests for those who were outraged by senseless federal spending and bailouts. In March, the announcement of a twenty-five city nationwide Tea Party tour “where taxpayers angry at their hard-earned money being

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usurped by the government for irresponsible bailouts” was organized and the “TEA Party, Taxed Enough Already” began to take form (Burghart and Zeskind, 2009: 17).

The media and social networking outlets such as talk radio, cable television [Fox News in particular], websites, and blogs became indispensable in facilitating the development of the Tea Party. Without these media outlets, the organization of the movement would not have experienced as much success or national recognition as it continues to do to this day. Though the movement originally aimed to inform and gain support of individuals based on budget deficits, overly high taxes and reckless federal spending, this research found Tea Party leader messages to be permeated with both explicit and implicit concerns about race, national identity, and other concerns on social issues negatively affecting the country. Findings beyond concerns of the fiscal state of the union included numerous obsessions and methods of reaching out to the public, specifically questioning Barack Obama’s birth certificate and questions about whether the first black president of the United States was a “real American” or not (Burghart and Zeskind, 2010: 7).

2.1.4 Characteristics

As a movement, the Tea Party’s ideology advocates the core principles supporting the United States Constitution such as limited federal government, individual freedoms, personal responsibility, free markets, and returning political power to the states and the people, as the Founding Fathers had intended (Rasmussen and Schoen, 2010: 255). The array of topics wanting to be addressed by very conservative groups like the Tea Party varies as much as the number of organizations whose members classify themselves as movement supporters. For example, the organizations considered ‘leaders’ of the movement are composed of both established and nascent organizations such as the Tea Party Express, Our Country Deserves
Better, Liberty First, Patriot Majority, Patriot Caucus and FreedomWorks— all working together within the framework of opportunities and Tea Party ideologies within the United States (Neely, 2010; Burghart and Zeskind, 2010).

Because it is considered to be a grassroots movement, the Tea Party prides its success on being able to provide support based on an ideal shared among millions of like-minded Americans from all backgrounds and political parties (Courser, 2012). That said, a poll taken by CBS and the New York Times in 2010 found that the 18% of Americans who consider themselves Tea Party supporters exhibit all of the characteristics of being white, male, married, wealthy, and older than age 45 (Zerneke, 2010). Despite the seemingly standard base of supporter characteristics, the Tea Party movement’s agenda is based on more heterogeneous fears and anxieties ranging from the present state of the economy to “dark skinned immigrants, Muslim terrorists, gender panics, gay marriage, abortion, and a liberal Black Man in the White House” (Berlet, 2011). In fact, the Tea Party exists in what Courser (2012) terms as “democratic anomie,” which is an unstable political state of unrest and alienation coupled with a lack of political information. There are those who believe that the Tea Party movement is neither racist nor radical and that its political demands fit within the mainstream of American politics (Courser, 2012). Although supporters of the movement suggest that the party’s emphasis has always been on economic responsibility, constitutionally limited government, free market economic policies, and not racism, their messages and tendencies relay much attention and blame to minorities and foreigners for many of the present economic problems the country faces (see, for example, Gilens, 1999).

2.2 SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND POLITICAL OPPORTUNITY

As a part of the political process, it is necessary for activists of social movements to be able to
capture their audience through their words and actions. Though emotions are vital to the effectiveness and mobilization of social movements (Aminzade and McAdams, 2001), the right political environment is essential to the success of any social movement. For this reason, authors have described the relationship between political opportunities and social movements as tautological: if “political opportunities” mean “the chance for people to get together,” then it is certainly true that social movement mobilization requires political opportunities, where political opportunity is built into the definition of a social movement (Goodwin and Jasper, 2004: 6).

Following the argument that individuals join social movements in response to the political opportunities presented to them through messages targeting emotions, research has additionally determined that the mobilization of social movements emerges as a result of “expanding” political opportunities (Tarrow, 1994: 17-18). In terms of these expanding opportunities, the rhetoric used by activists emphasizing the need for social and cultural change becomes relevant for the mobilization of social movements, especially when mediated by politics. Karpowitz et al. (2011) further explain how the relationship between political parties and social movements is two-fold. On the one hand, the authors say, social movements can provide recourses, energy, and enthusiasm for a political party during its pursuit of recognition and votes. On the other hand, social movements can equally portray negative images of a party, alienate its members, and drain resources from its activities. Additionally, the success of movements relies on both the internal organizations and networks combined with external opportunities to achieve and maintain the movement’s national relevance (Palmer, 2011).

Despite having a political environment that permits the mobilization of social movements, they have always had a complex relationship with political parties in the United States, with the Tea Party movement being no exception (Karpowitz et al., 2011). Because the
United States currently has a two-party system, dissatisfaction with the political system or government policies is not uncommon. For this reason, social movements become a vehicle to convey that dissatisfaction of citizens to the parties or to the government itself (Lipset, 1972). Schwartz (2010) adds to literature on social movements that, depending on the intensity of the dissatisfaction or the prominence of the issues expressed and presented by a movement, movements and parties tend to effectively pursue coordinated, invasive, or even hostile strategies to manage their relationships among one another. As such, leaders of the Tea Party movement have thusly succeeded in connecting and appealing to sympathizers who share similar grievances, anger, and resentment towards big government and fiscal concerns. By connecting their grievances and anger to a political cause dedicated to addressing those concerns, it is determined that the Tea Party has effectively utilized the political environment to mobilize sympathizers. The way in which the Tea Party has mobilized its support base despite being considered a nebulous mass can be determined by the successful campaigns and elections of certain Tea Party leaders (such as Sharron Angle, Michele Bachmann, and Jim DeMint). To further explain this, these political leaders, whose campaign messages included the emotive cues and strategic appeals based on Tea Party ideologies, were elected in their respective districts in 2010. The effect of forming and mobilizing a support base from their constituents is an example of how successful the movement is in triggering a responsive chord and action among them.

It is important to recognize that critics deny the consideration of the Tea Party movement being categorized as a social movement capable of mobilizing their intended audience. In their book, authors Paul Street and Anthony DiMaggio (2011: 21), argue against the Tea Party meaningfully mobilizing and connecting with all of their audience, in particular the working-class and disadvantaged people on the left who should be organizing in common opposition to
the concentrated wealth and corporate state power. Additionally, critics argue against the fact that the Tea Party is made up of a number of local and to some extent national levels of organization, therefore lacking central leadership structure that coordinates its nationwide efforts. Nevertheless, what makes the Tea Party a social movement despite its varying levels and identities, is that the factions and organizations at both local and national levels who have adopted the “Tea Party” label are recognized and identified by spectators and news organizations as affiliates of the movement (Karpowitz et al., 2011: 304).

2.2.1 Political Mobilization and Movements

The study of conservative movements in the United States is not a novel field of research. Existing literature mostly categorizes any very conservative social movement analyses (Hofstadter, 1964; Lipset and Raab, 1978; Meyer and Minkoff, 2004; Berlet, 2011). Conclusions found in this literature determine a tendency for reoccurring patterns, fears, tactics, and actions across time and parties. Tactics and emotive cues that demonize and scapegoat target groups such as minorities are used to increase movement awareness, often resulting in aggression, discrimination, and violent action (Berlet, 2011).

Lipset and Raab’s (1978) sociological interpretation of conservative parties provides extensive empirical examples of very conservatives in America ranging from 1790 to 1977. In their research, these authors determine a number of recurring tendencies, repeating events, and characteristic themes shared by conservative movements and their attempts at achieving political

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9 The Tea Party movement, which started slowly and reached its peak of recognition or support in 2010, steadily lost popularity and support during the following years. The Tea Party Caucus, at one point the center of attention in American politics, equally lost momentum. However, in 2013, the Tea Party transformed from being a loose network and acquired a lobbyist and political adviser; reinforcing the fact that it began, evolved, and remains a social movement within American politics.
mobilization. Their findings yield conclusions determining that members of very conservative parties are “preservationist” in that they guard their members’ social status from encroachment by others, are “monistic” in that they perceive the world as a place of fixed standards rather than pluralistic, and most importantly, that all movements must have a conspiracy theory around which the forces can rally by forming a coalition between elites and the masses with similar goals and intentions (Lipset and Raab, 1978). Similarly, Richard Hofstadter’s “paranoid style of American politics” explains the irrational fear and extreme views felt by marginalized or threatened groups. Hofstadter (1964) argues that the “politics of frustration” create a status anxiety that fuels irrational political belief and radicalizes marginalized social groups. Comparable views, fear, and anger are seen amongst Tea Party movement supporters.

Although the Tea Party is not an official political party and denies looking to form a third political party in the near future, the movement is certainly active in the process of collecting donations and mobilizing supporters (TheTeaParty.net, 2012). Courser (2012) argues that due to the movement’s lack of organization, Tea Partiers have resisted organizing, electing, or coalescing around a specific political candidate or leader in order to redress the frustration of their political representation through mobilization and protest, not just votes. Notwithstanding the fact that it is a young conservative grassroots movement, the common goal is largely coordinated and financially supported by established Political Action Committees (Neely, 2010). Due to the forceful presence and demand to be heard (Garder, 2010), local grassroots movements across the country have seen greater support and active mobilization as opposed to national movement parties (Williamson et al., 2011).

A main attribution to the growth of the movement is the success in relatedness of the ideals that the party provides and the connection to their sympathetic and frustrated supporters.
The momentum of political and social power increases as activists are convinced of their movement’s potential to succeed, which in turn helps draw in hesitant participants (Schoenwald, 2001). For this reason, gaining enough support while a nascent political movement continuously evolves requires a powerful vehicle to deliver their message to the nation (Schoenwald, 2001). Schoenwald (2001) determines key stages through which democratically based movements often pass through in the process of evolution. First, an independent institution is created in the form of a political party or organization before the second stage allows members to formulate a tactical approach to recruit supporters and create new ideas to expand the movement (Schoenwald, 2001).

The media has played a crucial role on the impact, recognition, and mobilization of the movement across voters. Karl Deutsch (1961) stresses the importance of social mobilization that occurs during times of transition from traditional to modern ways of life and its effects on political behavior. The effectiveness of the language, channels, and methods of communications used media sources are fundamental for the survival of conservatism and very conservatives such as the Tea Party. Some scholars argue that it was not until the 1970s that conservatives began to form an effective political movement by creating a network of publications, think tanks, and political action committees (Brinkley, 1994).

Presently, most influential Tea Party organizations depend on the Internet to relay their messages. This indispensable tool enables greater ability to coordinate and organize hundreds of smaller, disparate local and regional movement organizations (Neely, 2010). The Internet is used by the independent organizations to broadcast videos and messages, send e-mail alerts, raise funds, and inform the public of Tea Party movement goals for the country. Similarly, television networks such as Fox News and television personalities like Glenn Beck were “hosting
representatives of Tea Party organizations to explain their missions, offer advice for joining
groups and rallies, or to call activists to help oppose the current enemy of American liberty: the
United States Government” (Neely, 2010). Additionally, media such as popular radio talk shows
hosted by conservative Rush Limbaugh are considered by authors Kathleen Jamieson and Joseph
Cappella to attribute exhibits of very conservative groups as an “echo chamber” designed to
mobilize conservatives, define, and validate their insular community (Jamieson and Cappella,
2008).

The success of movements and parties supported by the response of citizens are the
epitome and ultimate goal of democratic governments. In a successful democracy, the response
will shape the movement as the movement shapes the response, and ultimately, should define
how the movement progresses (Neely, 2010). Overstreet and Overstreet (1964) declare that
Americans have given extremism a right to exist and have been able to afford its presence due to
the overwhelmingly moderate political views of the nation. Democracies are characterized by
their moderate stance and evasion of any extremist ideals capable of threatening their stability
and well-being. In observations about how democracies combat extremism, tactics such as bans
or calculated disregard on explicit messages are used to prevent such drastic threats to
democracy (Overstreet and Overstreet, 1964). In a study carried out by the Institute for Research
and Education on Human Rights, Devin Burghart and Leonard Zeskind (2010) described the
links between certain Tea Party factions and acknowledged hate groups in the United States. In
2010, the NAACP National Convention unanimously passed a resolution condemning outspoken
racist elements within the Tea Party. The NAACP passed a resolution condemning explicit
rhetoric to prevent Tea Party leaders and slogans to spread racism after a year of high-profile
media coverage of racial slurs and images at Tea Party marches around the country (Burghart
2.2.3 Public Responses to Politically Motivated Cues

The United States of America continues to pioneer in having a “melting pot” spirit (Lahav, 2004: xiii). However, those same attitudes acquired by individuals living in a nation that places emphasis on integration and equal opportunity have consequently set the framework for growing politicization of racism in the country. As an institutionalized democracy that relies on mobilization and responsive action from voters, political elites use instrumental messages and policies to shape public responses. Tea Party movement leaders are no exception to the existing elite who use politically motivated cues as an advantage in order to increase their movement support.

Much literature exists demonstrating political priming, messaging, and the responsive effects it has on mobilizing or demobilizing citizens. Knowing that an individual’s political preference matters, political leaders use cues and messages as means to persuade the population to go out and vote in their favor (Iyengar and Simon, 2000, Kaid, 2012). This form of messaging has become not only powerful but also increasingly explicit (Wattenberg and Brians, 1999). Although citizens use a variety of means to evaluate the political world including party issues, ideology, economic performance, and scandals (Basinger and Lavine, 2005), it is explicit messaging which tends to make the most memorable and lasting impression on voters. For this reason, leading scholars place much attention and research on the effect of propaganda on voter turnout. Findings demonstrate that political messages—especially negative ones—may have powerful effects on a voter’s political recourse; which is why participants in the political marketplace continue to invest in the exposure and relatedness of their messages so as to activate voters’ prevailing sentiments (Iyengar and Petrocik, 1998).
Being exposed to politically charged messaging serves to increase citizen knowledge about issues and can lead to positive or negative movement evaluations (Iyengar and Simon, 2000, Kaid, 2012). Each party has issues that they “own,” and a political campaign can be considered a contest to focus attention on issues that favor them and their odds of being preferred, related to, and supported by voters (Petrocik, 1996). Leaders and parties use campaigns to announce positions on issues in order to win votes, leaving it up to the citizens to choose the alternatives that best represent their interests based on those issues (Ansolabhere et al., 1994). By doing this, citizens become more or less engaged in politics and are enabled – through engaging leaders and party messaging– to see how such public policies are shaped according to the benefit of their own beliefs, preferences, demands, and power (Gutmann and Thompson, 1996; Shapiro, 1995).

2.3 Political Framing and Emotions

Political movements use public policies to frame the underlying nature and origins of societal problems by identifying target groups such as minorities (Mettler et al., 2004). In addition, Mettler et al., suggest that by perceiving the issue as a matter of individual or societal responsibility, negative messages advocate the need for government action and resolution. For a political challenger to have a successful political impact (in this case, the Tea Party), it must employ resonant prognostic and diagnostic frames to identify problems and pose credible solutions for them (Cress and Snow, 2000). Campaigns serve to successfully define a problem, provide a clear scope, rationale, and evidence to support that their proposed policy and party is prepared to address that issue (Burstein and Hirsh, 2007). By giving issues and policies salience among the public, policies may create material incentives for mobilization –especially if individuals are affected by a specific political issue which they can relate to– usually resulting in
their encouragement to take political action to presumably protect or expand their own benefits (Verba et al., 1995). Schneider and Ingram (1997), add that by articulating particular messages to target populations, policy designs shape citizens’ orientation toward government and their political participation.

Despite movements having the ability to mobilize voters, there are critics suggesting that problems exist from using framing to explain political outcomes (Amenta, 2010; Bartels, 1993). Mettler (2004) suggests that political thinking can be viewed as a politically constructed outcome, with the masses being shaped by direct experiences of government institutions. Following the case of the Tea Party, that experience is anger from handouts being given to the underserving/minorities. He adds that group identification and consciousness do not simply emerge for individuals or social groups, but that they get organized into or out of the political process. Providing citizens with an influential movement requires campaign frames to be minimally plausible yet culturally resonant.

Additional critics argue that partisan loyalties are more than socialized identities or instrumental allegiances (e.g., Taylor and Van Dyke, 2004). Among these authors, Shefter (1978) suggests that they are political achievements constructed by innovative organizations that actively seek to attract mass followings. For this reason, the issue raised by these scholars aims to determine which political actors are the ones who shape mass responses; the elite individuals and organizations (Zaller, 1992), or popular movements and insurgent activists (Lee, 2002; Piven and Cloward, 1997). The opportunity for the potential influence of mobilized challengers has enabled strategies such as claims making and framing to be observed by critics of negative and explicit messaging (Polletta and Ho, 2004). In essence, evidence has shown that negative advertisement is not only effective in influencing voters (Iyengar and Simon, 2000), but serves as
a source of information about political issues for voters who lack political sophistication or interest; especially through the use of media advertising (Wattenberg and Brians, 1999; Patterson and McClure, 1976).

2.3.1 Emotions

Political elites make a constant attempt to relay political messages and cues designed to shape how citizens attach themselves to campaign advertisements and how they subconsciously react to those messages (Feldman, 1988). Researchers have carried out numerous studies using surveys, videos, false campaign ads, and media exposure in the attempt of determining how a voter’s political evaluations are influenced by their emotions. For example, Ted Brader (2005: 388) conducted a study that showed for the first time, that political messages can change the way citizens get involved and make choices simply by using images and music to evoke emotions. Another study found that when national political issues and events are continuously presented to the public through the media (such as the Tea Party is advantageously doing), their subconscious begins to develop tallies and opinions about those messages (Feldman, 1988). Further research shows that individuals adjust to group pressures and are consequently more inclined to support a candidate whose influence changes their core political values (McCann, 1997). While some authors gather that emotions play a vital role in how political advertisements work (Kern, 1989), other critics find that such tactics are a manipulative way of appealing to voter emotion over reason (Kamber, 1997).

Research on the use of negative messages takes voter emotions as a source for mobilization or de-mobilization into high consideration (Ansolabhere and Iyengar, 1995). Emotions affect how citizens choose movements and parties to which they feel a connection. Of these emotions, several studies have shown that anger plays a significant role in the way an
individual understands national issues, especially when they have limited political knowledge or sophistication (Sirin et al., 2011). Because people are more likely to react when they are angry and disgusted with a national issue than when they fear it (Conover and Feldman, 1986), political movements make sure to target these emotions so as to strike responsive actions from citizens. Leaders and movements have a particular incentive to use arguments that evoke emotions such as threat, anxiety, and anger.

2.3.2 Threat, Anxiety, and Anger

The Tea Party’s success in recruiting and mobilizing its support base is partly due to its references to external threats along with its messages that play to the economic and social anxiety felt by Americans. Research studying the effects of perceived threat has resulted in remarkably consistent findings. One of the most powerful effects of threat is to increase intolerance, prejudice, ethnocentrism, and racism regardless of whether the threat is explicitly or implicitly depicted (Rokeach, 1960; Levine and Campbell, 1971; Wilkinson, 1972; Feldman and Stenner, 1997; Huddy et al., 2005, 2007a; Lahav, 2004; and Sarrasin et al., 2012). The explicit link between threat and racism demonstrates whether perceived or real, threats to the economy, physical safety, culture, status, and way of life trigger varied attitudinal reactions and behaviors (Lahav, 2004: 190). While attitudinal cues and motivations may be driven by self-interest, anti-immigrant and racial messages are the result of perceived threats and exposure to certain emotive triggers (Valentino et al., 2008).

In addition to perceived threat, scholars also examine the distinct role of negative emotions such as anger and anxiety in shaping political attitudes and behavior. For instance, research has found that anxiety boosts information seeking and learning, while anger motivates action (Lahav, 2004; Valetino et al., 2008; Sirin et al., 2011). Findings show that anger
suppresses information seeking and leads to more impulsive behavior, while anxiety increases it, therefore demonstrating how anger, more than anxiety or enthusiasm, may mobilize individuals (Valentino et al., 2008, 2011). Other findings point to the effects that racial cues have on influencing political action based triggering of emotions by adding that anxiety, anger, and action depends on who the immigrants are and their relatedness to the targeting group (Brader et al., 2008). Ultimately, considerations of national identity dominate those of economic advantage in evoking exclusionary reactions to immigrant minorities and situational triggers and messages mobilize support for exclusionary policies among a core of the constituency already predisposed to support them (Sniderman et al., 2004).

2.3.3 Race

In this study, it is important to explain why race is observed. Race has occupied a prominent place in Americans’ partisan preferences long before the nation appointed its first African American president, Barack Obama. While both Democratic and Republican parties agreed to embrace the new norm of racial equality by the late 1960s (Mendelberg, 2001), authors such as Edsall and Edsall (1992), Kinder and Sears (1981), and Mendelberg (2001) have documented the existing and ever-increasing emergence of subtle appeals to “anti-black [minority]” stereotypes by Republican candidates in the post-civil war era. It is for this reason, that white voters less frequently encountered the explicit racial appeals than they are now increasingly exposed to. With this taken into account, Banks and Valentino (2012) clarify that while old-fashioned racism has previously been linked to emotions, new racism is linked to anger. Authors Tesler and Sears (2010) present evidence indicating how Obama’s campaign and election activated older more blatant forms of racial prejudice such as old fashioned racism and anti-black affect in a powerful manner of influence over the black-white racial divide. Additionally, evidence of changing
Americans’ opinions and attitudes concerning health care and tax policy demonstrated significant fluctuation in terms of racial predispositions after Barack Obama’s election (Tesler and Sears, 2010). It is the feeling of resentment, mixed with race, frustration, and the blame that has to be directed at someone or something, which, in this case, Obama and the causes for the current state of the economy.
Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses

As my main theoretical framework, I use a combination of two existing theories. Specifically, I combine political opportunity theory and intergroup emotions theory to rationalize how Tea Party movement uses emotive triggers to enhance their political opportunity to expand and ultimately mobilize supporters in their political favor.

To elaborate, Meyer and Minkoff (2004) present political opportunity theory to explain how political movements become politically successful amongst supporters by expanding a social coalition between elites’ messages and adherents. This theory is used to explain how exogenous factors enhance or inhibit prospects for mobilization, how strategies of influence can be turned into actions, and the likelihood of movements affecting mainstream institutional politics and policy. A movement must take into careful consideration numerous factors, circumstances, and methods in order to enhance their political opportunity to expand and ultimately mobilize supporters in their political favor. Generally, leaders of political movements do not easily manage to quickly and successfully convey their interests and goals among members and supporters. In order to successfully alter socialization and conventional means of participation, actors must seek visible openings and take advantage of the repressed or discouraged state of individuals (Meyer and Minkoff, 2004: 1459).

Tea Party leaders make strategic efforts to evoke enthusiasm and support in favor of their ideologies. I apply intergroup emotions theory because it explains how behavior is a natural stimulus to emotions, and emotions are a consequence of intergroup phenomena (Huddy, 2001). Specifically, intergroup emotions theory explains the creation of in-groups and out-groups, which leads to the negative evaluation of anybody outside the inner-group promoting social identification between an “us” versus “them” (Mackie and Devos, 2000). Moreover, any
possible threat to the intergroup promotes intolerance, forges in-group unity, and triggers
cognitive reactions and behaviors based on those shared emotions (Huddy, 2009). Emotions are
socially constituted and define social relationships, and therefore play a major role in forming a
“we” united by shared emotions (Mackie and Devos, 2000; Tiedens et al., 2004; Huddy, 2009).

Both theories provide insight and framework into the understanding of how emotional
experiences, which are dictated by our social surroundings in a way we may or may not notice,
influence our behavior through the use of implicit and explicit societal messaging. Implicit and
explicit information provided by groups have a large impact on what people believe they ought
to feel, and therefore define or unite groups and societies (Huddy, 2009). Furthermore, the
importance of group identity caused by perceived external threats is relevant in this research.
Group identity allows individuals to increase both their fear and anger in reaction to threats that
make their group membership and involvement significant (Huddy, 2009). This same external
societal threat to an in-group is a cause of ethnocentrism, intolerance, and rejection of out-groups
such as ethnic minorities, which increases support for political movements that are strong,
persistent, and active in addressing follower concerns (McCann, 1997; Lahav, 2004). The
merger of political opportunity theory and intergroup emotions theory will help provide a better
understanding of how emotions strike a responsive chord and cause mobilization once a
perceived threat such as racism is made salient issues by political movements.

In applying this framework, this thesis analyzes (1) whether the Tea Party rhetoric and
messages contain racially-charged appeals and emotive cues and (2) whether exposure to such
Tea Party rhetoric and messages evoke negative emotions about mainstream politics (particularly
anger) among individuals, which in turn increase support for the Tea Party movement. The
mobilization of the movement depends on the ability of leaders and activists to effectively relate
enthusiasm and support among sympathizers. Using the combination of both theories, I expect to find that based on anger expressed by individuals about the state of mainstream politics, support for the Tea Party movement will increase. Based on these assumptions, my first hypothesis is as follows:

**Hypothesis 1:** Tea Party public appeals are likely to employ racial and emotive cues in mobilizing the Tea Party support base.

From this main hypothesis, I seek to determine how Tea Party appeals are likely to use racial and emotive cues to mobilize their support base. Consequently, I expect to find that these racial and emotive cues are more prevalent in Tea Party movement leaders’ messages at the local level, rather than national level:

**Hypothesis 1a:** Such racial and emotive cues are likely to be more prevalent in Tea Party leaders’ messages at the local level rather than Tea Party leaders’ national public appeals.

Similarly, I expect to find that these racial and emotive cues are more prevalent in Tea Party movement leaders’ blogs than on other public media sources such as interviews, websites, and campaign messages. This assumption takes into consideration the fact that local campaigns and messages by these local leaders are not under as much scrutiny or exposure to mass media as are their counterparts at the national level:

**Hypothesis 1b:** Such racial and emotive cues are likely to be more prevalent in Tea Party leader blogs than other public platforms (such as national websites, interviews, and campaign messages).

In terms of how successfully these leaders appeal to individuals who express anger, one may expect that the more knowledge and opportunity to connect with the Tea Party movement is
provided to sympathizers and supporters, the more likely supporters are to mobilize. Similarly, providing social media outlets where supporters can interact and engage with a community who shares feelings of anger on the state of the political environment is also essential to the success of the movement. Taking these factors into consideration, I hypothesize the following:

**Hypothesis 2:** The higher one’s exposure to Tea Party public appeals, the more likely one will express anger about mainstream politics.

Therein, I focus on four particular factors (one’s general knowledge of the Tea Party movement, visits websites associated with the Tea Party movement, engagement in Tea Party-based social network sites, and level of Tea Party activity in one’s community) to help determine how these messages and appeals influence supporters, and therefore trigger anger felt about the state of mainstream politics. More specifically, I hypothesize that:

**Hypothesis 2a:** The higher one’s general knowledge of the Tea Party movement, the more likely one will express anger about mainstream politics.

**Hypothesis 2b:** The more one visits websites associated with the Tea Party movement, the more likely one will express anger about mainstream politics.

**Hypothesis 2c:** The higher one’s engagement is in Tea Party-based social network sites, the more likely one will express anger about mainstream politics.

**Hypothesis 2d:** The higher the level of Tea Party activity in one’s community, the more likely one will express anger about mainstream politics.

Having political opportunity to engage supporters is one tactic used by leaders and activists of the Tea Party movement. It is important to take into consideration, however, the rhetoric used to appeal to sympathizers and supporters. While connecting with supporters based on anger towards the state of the political and economic environment, one may expect that
intergroup emotions play a similar role in the success and appeal of the movement. For this reason, in my third hypothesis, I analyze specific factors regarding the state of mainstream politics and how supporters who express anger are more likely to support the Tea Party movement.

**Hypothesis 3:** Those who express anger about mainstream politics are more likely to support the Tea Party movement.

These specific factors (Tea Party Knowledge, Visiting Tea Party Websites, Engaging in Tea Party Social Networking Sites, and Tea Party Activity in One’s Community) are expected to demonstrate the likelihood that sympathizers are to support the movement. I argue that by taking advantage of citizens who express frustration about the state of the economy and mainstream politics, Tea Party leaders make use of the anger among individuals to increase and mobilize support. For this reason, in my fourth hypothesis, I examine the likelihood of support for the Tea Party movement based on the mediated effect of anger towards Tea Party activity in one’s community, presidential approval, trust in government, and an individual’s perceived state of the economy. I will use this method to see if those variables enhance or elevate the effect of support by creating anger:

**Hypothesis 4:** Anger is likely to be a significant mediator of key factors related to Tea Party support.

**Hypothesis 4a:** Anger is likely to mediate the effect that Tea Party activity (within the respondent’s community) has on Tea Party support.

**Hypothesis 4b:** Anger is likely to mediate the effect of presidential approval on Tea Party support.

**Hypothesis 4c:** Anger is likely to mediate the effect of trust in government on Tea Party
support.

**Hypothesis 4d:** Anger is likely to mediate the effect of the perceived state of the economy on Tea Party support.

To test the proposed hypotheses, I will present a mixed-methods approach using qualitative and quantitative research. The findings will be divided into two primary sections. The first consists of a qualitative analysis consisting of research gathered from Tea Party group and leader interviews, messages, and rhetoric during the height of the movement in 2010. Upon observing the rhetoric used among national and local factions of the Tea Party movement, a quantitative analysis of the data from a CBS News/New York Times poll will help identify the likelihood Tea Party support among sympathizers. By focusing on questions addressing the reactions of individuals receiving these messages based on anger and the active presence of the Tea Party within their communities, I determine the likelihood of support and mobilization towards the Tea Party movement.

I link both qualitative and quantitative analyses by identifying the relationship between the public appeals (such as racial cues and messages) used by these Tea Party movement leaders and how the public reacts to such messages and cues. While the qualitative section clearly provides examples of the overt rhetoric being used among these leaders and factions, the quantitative section of this analysis does not explicitly address a respondent’s degree of racism. Although respondents and supporters are not explicitly defining themselves as racists, they do demonstrate their anger, support, and response to what these Tea Party leaders are saying. The bridge between leaders’ messages and respondent’s actions is made by first providing the qualitative evidence of messages being used (supporting the fact that those emotive cues and strategic appeals use varying degrees of racism) and the quantitative support demonstrating the
correlation between Tea Party movement exposure, anger, and support. I specifically link racially emotive cues and sentiments that the Tea Party elites employ (by qualitatively analyzing Tea Party leader messages) to anger, and in turn, support among the members of the public based on the exposure to such messages (by quantitatively analyzing a national survey).

Similarly, I link both political opportunity theory and intergroup emotions theory by identifying the relationship between the Tea Party movement and the mobilization of its support base. I do this by taking into account the economic and political environment leading up to the height of the movement in 2010, where the right combination of anger and frustration along with (time and events) provided sympathizers an opportunity to emotionally connect and support a movement and leaders with similar feelings and ideologies.
Chapter 4: Qualitative Research Analysis and Findings

In this first section, I investigate the presence and extent of implicit and explicit racial and emotive cues within Tea Party messages. For this analysis I use the method and logic of structured, focused comparison. I use this method to address certain aspects of the case studies examined so as to guide and standardize the data collection. The first consists of a qualitative analysis consisting of research gathered from Tea Party group and leader interviews, messages, and rhetoric during the height of the movement in 2010. This structured focused comparison helps organize and interpret my findings by allowing me to address my specific hypotheses to reflect the research objective across each case study to guide the data collection. Figure 1 below demonstrates the structure and focus of my qualitative analyses.

![Figure 1: The Structure and Focus of the Qualitative Analyses](image)

This rhetoric was analyzed from the beginning of the movement, through President Barack Obama’s re-election in 2012, and into early 2013. Three specific sources of information
were observed to carry out this research in order to provide evidence of tactics used exclusively by Tea Party leaders both at a local and national level. Within each of these categories, cues used in messages regarding economic, immigration, and social issues such as immigration, education, welfare, and drugs, homeland security, and general principles and values of the American people were observed. The first category, *Tea Party Websites and Blogs*, covers both national and state based websites and blogs maintained by leaders and chairpersons. The second category, *Self-Endorsed Politicians*, covers racially and emotionally charged messages made by Tea Party leaders during campaigns and rallies. The third and final category, *Tea Party Leader Interviews*, covers a wide range of videos, interviews, and speeches made by Tea Party leaders in which racially charged messages were used to not only gain but also to reinforce the attention and support of potential followers.

### 4.1 Tea Party Websites and Blogs

Reaching out to sympathizers was invaluable to the transition and mobilization of a localized grassroots movement into a national social movement. In order to effectively appeal to potential sympathizers, the use of Tea Party websites and Tea Party leaders’ blogs became a popular method of communication among supporters. Well-funded organizations and groups led by conservative leadership were crucial to the initial development of the movement to provide resources, direction, and standardized messages necessary in instigating Tea Party protests (Lo, 2012: 98). The Tea Party movement as a whole has developed into a complex fusion of independent organizations ranging from for-profit corporations, to non-party non-profit organizations, and political action committees (Burghart and Zeskind, 2010: 8). At the national level, Burghart and Zeskind (2010) defined prominent organizational networks including the 1776 Tea Party, Freedom Works Tea Party, ResisNet, Tea Party Nation, and the Tea Party
Patriots as the initial core of the movement. The size, involvement, and success of each individual faction at a local, state, and federal level has relied on the ability of the faction to mobilize and reach sympathizers. Though much literature includes the aforementioned factions as the support of the movement, thousands of other factions have emerged with similar goals but different methods of acquiring the public’s attention. The following examples demonstrate how factions at the national level have used both political opportunity and intergroup emotions tactics through the use of racial and emotive language in their messaging towards Tea Party sympathizers.

Websites

4.1.1 The Economy

*Tea Party Victory Fund, Inc.*

Supporters and organizers at the national level are dedicated solely to the collection of funds for conservative candidates and Tea Party sympathizers through Political Action Committees (PACs). One such Federal Election Committee PAC, the Tea Party Victory Fund, Inc., was designed to take contributions for conservative supporters against President Obama during the 2012 elections. As a strategy to attract supporters and collect funds, a video was released on the organization’s website on September 2012 and went viral across the Internet after appearing on The Drudge Report news website. In the misleading advertisement titled, “Obama Gave Us a Phone,” an African American woman was depicted making statements about entitlements received by minorities under President Obama at an Ohio rally.

> Everybody in Cleveland, low minorities, got Obama phones…You sign up if you are in food stamps, you are in Social Security, you’ve got low income. Keep Obama in president, you know! He gave us a phone, he’s gonna do more.

> The video played perfectly into the Republican stereotype of Democrats creating a
dependency government for Americans. While other Tea Party groups used less explicit methods of communication and appeal, the Tea Party Victory Fund’s message strategy of expressing anger about federal funding going towards irresponsible citizens was designed to appeal to angry and racially motivated supporters. Although the Republican movement encouraged then Presidential candidate Mitt Romney to dismiss any ties to this faction, chair and former Ohio Secretary of State Ken Blackwell backed the video by stating that he had personally “written a book on what Obama [was] doing to fundamentally transform this country, and this 30 second rant demonstrates the dependency that he and his plans are fostering” (Tea Party Victory Fund).

In actuality, the “Obama phone” is a program designed to assist less fortunate Americans who cannot afford access to a cell phone- not just minorities (Obama Phone). However, the program, which began long before President Obama took office, has been notorious for waste and abuse. Divided into two programs, Link-Up America and The Federal Lifeline Program help low income families have access to land lines and make emergency phone calls has been in existence for decades (Obama Phone). The Federal Lifeline program, which is paid for by customer fees on most phone bills, began in 1985 under the universal access initiative instated by Ronald Reagan’s administration (Federal Lifeline Program). The government began offering discounted phone service to any needy Americans who were unemployed or living at or below the poverty level. Because telecommunications are now a necessity, households are limited to one cell phone or landline specifically for use in case of emergencies or for the use of those seeking employment (Obama Phone).

Tea Party anger stemming from a Wall Street Journal review of the program found that a large number of individuals who received the phones had failed to prove that they were eligible
to receive them in the first place. The ad continued instilling messages of frustration knowing that its major audience would come from running in three predominantly white counties in Ohio.

Have Barack Obama’s policies empowered or enslaved Americans? The Obama Record: 1 in 7 Americans on Food Stamps, $16 Trillion in Debt, Millions of Jobs Lost. Can We Afford Four More Years of Barack Obama?

This particular video emphasized the risks for waste, fraud, and abuse towards lower income individuals receiving similar government benefits, especially when they were ineligible to receive the benefits at all. Supporting my hypotheses predicting that individuals who express anger are more likely to support the Tea Party movement, this video is exemplary of the ability to appeal to resentful sympathizers. By motivating supporters who are angry and providing them a target to make a political stance against, this video appeals to [uninformed] sympathizers that the Tea Party movement is dedicated to stopping the abuse of such individuals.

4.1.2 Immigration

Interestingly, up until the time of this study, because the Tea Party Movement lacks official ‘National Party Status’ recognition or organization, it remains in part, a more conservative fragment of the Republican Party. For this reason, while individual politicians at the national level and leaders at the local level may have individual stances on immigration reform, they remain for the most part, in conjunction with those of their Republican colleagues. The lack of a clear-stated stance on immigration reform supported by the Tea Party at the national level can have detrimental consequences on the impact and success of the movement. To clarify, the nationally recognized stance of the Republican Party on immigration reform remains extremely uncompromising, asserting that no illegal immigrant should be allowed a path to citizenship or amnesty; believing that building a better and stronger fence between the United States and Mexico border along with mass deportation of undocumented workers is key; and are strongly
opposed to the D.R.E.A.M. Act along with other uses of U.S. taxpayers’ dollars to support undocumented immigrants. As immigration becomes an increasingly controversial issue in mainstream politics, the rhetoric used by Tea Party leaders will affect the influence and likely appeal of the movement, especially when trying to appeal to a broader constituency.

On May 5, 2010, registered users received an e-mail on immigration from TeaParty.org entitled, “They Only Go There To Work: We Must Show Sympathy.” The message and post on the website called for the attention and sympathy from American citizens for the thousands of men and women who:

- Travel in miles in the heat.
- Risk their lives crossing a border.
- Do not get paid enough wages.
- Do jobs that others will not do or are afraid to do.
- Live in crowded conditions among a people who speak a different language.
- Rarely see their families, and face adversity all day, every day.

Initial understanding about whom the message references can be alluded to be illegal immigrants. However, the message continues with, “I’m not referring to illegal Mexicans, but to our troops!” Implicit messaging such as this captures the resentment towards increasing sympathy for illegal immigrants as opposed to the men and women serving in the military, or as Tea Partiers would suggest, the “real” Americans. Outreach through such messaging is exemplary of existing anger and frustration against the government and policymakers for providing “all kinds of social benefits on illegals, [but not towards] supporting our troops, all the while threatening to defund them.”

4.1.3 Social Issues

According to Tea Party movement ideologies, Tea Partiers view government as the enemy of freedom, [making] Obama, who they call a proponent of big government and socialism, [a] likewise enemy of freedom (Lilla, 2010). Nevertheless, the topic of social issues such as
immigration, education, welfare, and drugs, homeland security, and general principles and values of the American people contained the most rhetoric and cues of appeal among the speeches of Tea Party leaders. A number of social issues regarding abortion were found, but not as significant or effective in appealing to individuals as the racially charged messages used.

TeaParty.org

Some of the most audacious racially charged messaging has been presented by a national faction of the movement called, TeaParty.org (also formerly known at the 1776 Party). Within the “About Us” section of the website, proclamations of being a “grassroots movement that calls to any issue which challenges the security, sovereignty, or domestic tranquility of our beloved nation,” exhibits how this highly nationalist and nativist group has served as a social media portal into the Tea Party movement. By providing links that promote all types of nationalist E-books, links to Twitter and Facebook feeds to similar Tea Party factions, and the latest Tea Party news, their public outreach strategy extends to constant Tea Party e-mail alerts for interested and loyal subscribers.

Years later, and despite claims of Tea Party movement inertia fading, on January 24, 2013, another e-mail was sent out to registered sympathizers calling for their help to “Stop America’s Hitler” featuring a picture of President Obama sporting a Hitler moustache as well as a photograph of two Nazis executing a victim with a pistol. The memorandum advocates for Americans to protect their Second Amendment Rights in order to prevent reverting to a time where society unable to defend itself from an oppressive regime similar to that of Hitler’s Nazi Germany.

Stop the next Holocaust from happening right here, in America upon becoming a helpless nation, unarmed, defenseless without the guts to protest. Where we live in a nation where only the police and the military have guns and the people are unable to defend themselves.
This particular e-mail was sent out to individuals in order to promote a Tea Party fundraising campaign named, “Operation Raise Hell,” which would also demand the deportation of the pro-gun-control British CNN host, Piers Morgan, and support a “Youth Firearms Training Initiative” run by the group, Gun Owners of America. The provocative message calls to protect the rights of American citizens to bear arms during a time where personal freedoms such as gun ownership, are being threatened with systematic dismantling of the American people’s Constitutional rights by legislation, bills, and Executive Orders from Washington. Explicit images of President Obama as an enemy and threat to the sovereignty of red-blooded American people undeniably resonates among sympathizers, instilling a racial resentment towards policies supported by an “anti-American” individual. Both of these examples from the TeaParty.org reference both implicit and explicit messaging used by Tea Party websites to instill fear, anger, and resentment against both illegal immigrants and anger against the Obama regime. Media outlets and scholarly research have studied the reason for anger and resentment against the President. Those who disapprove of Barack Obama (besides the fact that he is a Democrat or of African American descent) believe that he does not share the values most Americans live by, and therefore does not comprehend/address the problems of Tea Party sympathizers. Similarly, supporters of the Tea Party movement who argue against the way President Obama is managing the government and economy is reflected in the fact that they feel that his policies too overwhelmingly favor poor blacks over the white middle class (Zernike and Thee-Brenan, 2010).

Although the movement’s fundamental ideologies seek to unite sympathizers based on the concept of a free country, it is evident by these cues and messages that Tea Party leaders have had problems disassociating racially implicit and explicit rhetoric from stereotypical targets such as black welfare dependence, crime, and racial violence.
**Blogs**

In a similar manner as websites, I expected blogs to provide a place of limitless opportunities and freedom of expression for Tea Party factions at the national level. While websites provide a community for Tea Party leaders and groups to reach out to, I expected to find less restricted rhetoric among Tea Party leaders’ blogs than on other forms of public platforms such as national websites, interviews, and campaign messages. Based on these assumptions, I found that while there are some Tea Party factions who express racial and emotive cues in their rhetoric, the evidence collected resulted to be underwhelming. Thusly, my Hypothesis 1b demonstrates less significant results. However, one possible explanation for this observation could be that Tea Party factions realized the scrutiny of the media and critics at the national level based on such explicitly racial and emotive cues to mobilize sympathizers. Nevertheless, there were Tea Party leaders within those factions who used blogs within national Tea Party websites to express racial and emotive cues in order to appeal to individuals.

**4.1.4 The Economy**

*Tea Party Express*

The 2009 creation of the Tea Party Express can be attributed to its conservative predecessor called the Our Country Deserves Better Political Action Committee (OCDB PAC). Distinct from other national Tea Party coalitions, their attempt was not to build or support local groups, but rather to reach out to sympathizers and donors willing to endorse and promote conservative candidates running for public office. Specifically designed to reach out to supporters by conducting cross-country, publicity-driven bus tours in order to raise funds in support of Republican candidates, this particular faction quickly became one of the most successful political action committees within the movement (Burghart and Zeskind, 2010: 49). Although the Tea
Party Express may be one of the most recognized factions of the movement, public controversies and clashes with other Tea Party groups have been a constant occurrence during its existence.

In particular, racist allegations related to the Tea Party Express are attributed to its initial leader and Chairman, Mark Williams, a California-based radio talk-show host and past director of the National Association of Talk Show Hosts, who has repeatedly crossed the line from civil political discourse into vicious rants and explicit racism (Burghart, 2012: 82). In his book, Williams (2010: 156) explained the purpose of Tea Parties as, “gatherings of people who believe in America and while maybe not knowing the Constitution verbatim, nonetheless are still well schooled in spirit, and they are gathering to Take Back America, One Tea Party at a Time.” However, William’s reputation as an opinionated Tea Party leader and spokesperson was short-lived. In response to the battle against the Islamic community center in Lower Manhattan (Ground Zero mosque), Williams labeled the Manhattan boro president a “Jewish Uncle Tom” and referencing President Obama as a Nazi, a half-white racist and half-black racist, as well as an “Indonesian Muslim turned welfare thug” (Burghart, 2012: 84). Soon after, Williams posted a satirical letter claiming to be from “the Colored People” to President Lincoln praising slavery. The letter was posted as a blog under the powerful umbrella of the Tea Party Express website appearing to come from the voice of slaves themselves,

Mr. Lincoln, you were the greatest racist ever. We had a great gig. Three squares, room and board, all our decisions made by the massa in the house. We Coloreds have taken a vote and decided that we don’t cotton to that whole emancipation thing. Freedom means having to work for real, think for ourselves, and take consequences along with the rewards. That is just too much to ask of us Colored People and we demand it to stop!

Williams’ letter continued proclaiming that African Americans did not prefer to have tax cuts because it would jeopardize incoming welfare benefits: “How will we Colored People ever get a wide screen TV in every room if non-colored get to keep what they earn?”
Initially, the Tea Party Express failed to condemn Mark Williams’ behavior and defended him against any existing charges of racism. However, due to the group’s status as one of the most influential Tea Party factions in the nation, it quickly drew attention from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), whose president, Benjamin Todd Jealous challenged the Tea Party to “expel the bigots and racists in their ranks or take full responsibility for all of their actions.” With little success, Mark Williams attempted retaliation declaring a verbal battle against the “race-baiting” NAACP, causing him to abruptly step down as chairman of the Tea Party Express on June 19, 2010 (Burghart, 2012: 84).

A month later, on July 2010, the NAACP held its 101st National Convention where it succeeded in unanimously passing a resolution condemning outspoken racial elements within the Tea Party (Burghart and Zeskind, 2010: 5). This resolution, which specifically called upon Tea Party leaders to repudiate individuals among their ranks who utilize white supremacist language and racism as a method of public outreach, was backed by a letter from Jealous assuring that, “in order to strengthen our democracy and ensure rights for all, it is important that we have reasoned political debate without the use of epithets, the threat of violence, or the resurrection of long discredited racial hierarchies.” Although this resolution was specifically directed at Tea Party leaders, representatives, chairpersons, and outspoken activists, public response from the movement determined that the Tea Party lacked established movement leadership, therefore making it difficult to regulate individual member or leader actions.

4.1.5 Immigration

Because this particular analysis focuses specifically on messages presented by nationally recognized Tea Party politicians and websites, evidence found pertaining to racially sensitive messaging and emotive cues -although substantial- was primarily contributed and expressed by
individual citizens and sympathizers. Much of the media attention has focused on these individuals and their explicit messages opposing the use of government services by illegal immigrants at rallies held across the nation. Scholarly works have also interpreted the success and mobilization of the movement based on the emotional reactions of these individuals and sympathizers. Nevertheless, the success and mobilizing factor of the movement analyzed in this study dismisses any individual or group that is not a politician, faction leader/chair, or a nationally recognized faction of the Tea Party.

This does not signify, however, that there are no movement leaders who are unafraid to voice their opinions on immigration reform. Steve Eichler, CEO of the TeaParty.org website and a lifelong self-proclaimed Minuteman, posted a blog entry encouraging sympathizers to not be discouraged and realize that Tea Party beliefs were in-sync in many of their own beliefs and core values for the restoration of the United States of America. Below is the entry in which Eichler made clear that among the fiscal concerns of the Tea Party, are also immigration concerns which need to be addressed:

**Illegal Aliens Are Here illegally.**
Pro-Domestic Employment Is Indispensable.
Stronger Military Is Essential.
Special Interests Eliminated.
Gun Ownership Is Sacred.
Government Must Be Downsized.
National Budget Must Be Balanced.
Deficit Spending Will End.
Bail-out And Stimulus Plans Are Illegal.
Reduce Personal Income Taxes A Must.
Reduce Business Income Taxes Is Mandatory.
Political Offices Available To Average Citizens.
Intrusive Government Stopped.
**English As Core Language Is Required.**
Traditional Family Values Are Encouraged.

By calling for all Tea Party sympathizers and American patriots to unite, leaders and
activists such as Eichler similarly encouraged individuals and other factions to unite against a government and political elites threatening the freedoms of the American people. Mobilization tactics such as these play on the emotions of “real” Americans against “those others” who are taking away their constitutional rights.

4.1.6 Social Issues

Similar to nationally recognized opinions concerning immigration, the lack of cohesion among Tea Party leaders and organizations blurs the lines on stances regarding social issues such as abortion, gun control, health care, and government programs. Nationally recognized Tea Party websites and the leaders that run them provide access to blogs for members and sympathizers to voice their opinions. However, findings pertaining specifically on anger and resentment towards foreigners and minorities creating a threat to the American way of life were not actual blog posts by nationally recognized leaders. While posts have been made regarding Tea Party frustration on the state of the economy, sympathizers- not nationally recognized websites or blogs- provided evidence as much as followers, and for this reason do not serve for this analysis.

4.2 Self-Endorsed Politicians (Policy Stances and Campaigns)

The Rise and Fall of Tea Party Movement Leaders

Because the movement comprises of separate local, regional, and national groups, there is consequently no one Tea Party leader or voice that can be distinguished as the face of the movement. Even Mark Williams, chair of the Tea Party Express emphasized in his blog that there is no tea party leadership; every tea partier is a tea party leader.\(^{10}\) Though there are

\(^{10}\) Mark Williams, July 18, 2010. Response to NAACP questioning the leadership of the movement and which caused his resignation as chair of the Tea Party Express after being proclaimed as explicitly racist. (http://www.MarkTalk.com).
numerous local leaders and representatives at a national level who speak representing the Tea Party, a continuous variation of self-proclaimed Tea Party activists and politicians have been hailed as the trending “Tea Party Sweetheart.”

For this reason, a cohort of names synonymous with the movement such as Michele Bachmann, Jim DeMint, Steve King, Sarah Palin, Allen West, Joe Walsh, Marco Rubio, Rand Paul, and countless others have all at one point been at the center of the Tea Party political stage. Despite the fact that there may have been additional successful spokespersons for the movement, the number of prominent Tea Party leaders has, however, diminished since the height of the movement in 2010. While each of these individuals’ names has been recognized as synonymous with the movement, a Tea Party Sweetheart’s lifespan has proven to be as succinct or extensive as the longevity of trending issues within the political environment. Findings within the study exhibited evidence that the racially explicit rhetoric used in attempt to win the attention and sympathy of the masses during campaigns has caused a subsequent reoccurring pattern of Tea Party leaders having short-lived positions of influence, abandoning being the voice of the movement, risking damaging their political image, or even vanishing almost entirely from the political stage.

Rich grounds were discovered during this analysis of the racially explicit rhetoric used by self-endorsed politicians who utilize an emotional element during campaigns and rallies. Just as a divide exists among Democrats and Republicans, schisms exist within the Tea Party and the Republican Party as well. The Tea Party is a broad-based movement that has many sides and supporters not always agreeing on the numerous different issues the separate factions wish to address. Nevertheless, one common goal and interest found among all Tea Partiers and supporters is the concern to get the American budget under control during the current economic
recession as well as the decrease of both government spending and debt. Findings related to the campaigns and messages of self-endorsed politicians demonstrated a higher frequency of political opportunity because they are under close watch of the nation, combined with intergroup emotions to mobilize movement or party sympathizers.

4.2.1 The Economy

Across a majority of Tea Party groups, leaders placed significant emphasis on the fact that no mention of social issues was allowed and that only economic issues were to be discussed during gatherings and meetings (Formisano, 2012). For those individuals, it was important to make Americans understand that the movement was not one identified or defined by social issues. Instead, the first Tea Party leaders designed their rhetoric to portray the movement as good for America and being one which simply wanted America to get its financial house in order for the prosperity of future generations.

The message that these Tea Party leaders were trying to communicate was that Americans must fight to take back their government from lobbyists and big-money interests that shaped the current laws of those in government with selfish interests, as opposed to looking out for the future good of the entire nation. The message of taking back “our government” became one where many sympathizers blamed more than merely self-interested politicians, but politicians with power who were in favor of providing assistance to the needy with government funding. What transpired, however, turned out to involve emotionally and racially charged rhetoric by Tea Party leaders and conservative advocates of the movement used as a tactic to communicate and connect with sympathizers. By using the rhetoric of “taking back our government,” leaders connected with angry sympathizers by blaming not only the politicians in favor of big-government, but the “un-deserving” and “un-American” individuals willing to
receive those benefits without contributing to society in return.

By identifying themselves as leaders of a movement protecting the interests of Americans who are hard-working, responsible, and deserving, politicians were able to successfully distinguish themselves and their supporters from the undeserving and “un-Americans” who do not contribute to society in the way that they do. Explicitly, the rhetoric used in messaged might have been directed at big government and large social spending, while implicitly, the anger was directed towards individuals within the United States who were, in their eyes, taking their government from them. Although findings in this section were not as explicit as those found within leader interviews, political leaders at a national level still used implicit and tactful emotional messaging to appeal to sympathizers.

At a 2010 campaign rally in Paducah, Kentucky, then-Senate candidate Rand Paul, who was the transient Tea Party Sweetheart, proclaimed that it was necessary to go to Washington and take back “our” government without saying taking it back from whom.11 Not much later, during a fundraising event, then Republican-presidential hopeful Mike Huckabee encouraged his supporters to help in the process of “returning the American government to the American people” (Formisano, 2012). The rhetoric used within these explicit messages was not merely to take back the American government, but to take it back from the “un-American” people. It is these messages that sparked the interest among the people who shared anger and resentment

11 In 2013, Republican Senator for Kentucky, Rand Paul delivered a Tea Party response to the Barack Obama’s State of the Union Address in which he suggested that President Obama had been re-elected by winning the vote of the lower-income voters by giving them “free stuff.” Additionally, Paul stood by the Tea Party Movement when talking about school choice and immigration of undocumented individuals by reaffirming to sympathizers that “we must be a party that says, if you want to work, if you want to become an American, then we welcome you.” (Robinson, 2010; Weiner, 2013).
towards the government’s economic policies and began the mobilization of the Tea Party movement.

4.2.2 Immigration

Tea Party strategy in regards to immigration demands fixing the current legal system, which allegedly caters to the illegal immigrant. Rather than encouraging illegal immigration by providing government funds and programs catering to individuals residing within the nation illegally, the Tea Partier’s stance on immigration is one which believes that all undocumented immigrants should be permanently deported and forbidden from obtaining or being granted a legal path to citizenship. In this regard, the Tea Party slogan “Take back our country!” is one that goes beyond taking power from big government and including taking the nation back from the hands of individuals who are here illegally (Rosenthal and Trost, 2012). Strategic messaging by politicians and campaigns use rhetoric that triggers emotional responses of anger and fear among citizens. By relating mutual anger against government funding being provided to illegal immigrants, fear of a nation being overrun by crime and undocumented abusers are messages often seen in messages used by politicians supported by or directly associated with the Tea Party Movement.

Jan Brewer, Arizona

During the height of the movement in 2010, Republican Governor from Arizona, Jan Brewer, became a heroine and Sweetheart of conservatives and Tea Party sympathizers across the nation who supported stricter anti-immigrant politics. Despite fiscal responsibility being at the heart of Tea Party concerns, immigration and therefore one’s identity- became a highly emotive factor for mobilization amongst the factions that stood behind the Support Our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhoods Act (also known as Senate Bill 1070, or S.B. 1070). After passing the bill in
April of 2010, the state of Arizona received national attention for enacting a measure, which would seemingly promote racial profiling against Latinos, Asian-Americans, and any other individual perceived as “foreign” and “illegal” based on their appearance. The law, which was designed to make working a crime for undocumented immigrants, would require all immigrants to obtain and then carry their official legal documentation at all times, allow police to make warrantless arrests of suspected non-citizens, and additionally to penalize individuals who help, hire, and support any undocumented immigrants. After S.B. 1070 passed on April 23, 2010, two-dozen copycat bills were introduced in state legislatures across the country; five such bills passed in Alabama, Georgia, Indiana, South Carolina and Utah (Wessler, 2013). Despite the Supreme Court overturning three of S.B. 1070’s major provisions, the Courts still upheld Section 2B, granting permission to law enforcement in counties across Arizona to interrogate suspects questioning their immigration status, often detaining individuals without cause.

Within the movement, three factions in particular (Freedom Works, Tea Party Express, and the Tea Party Patriots) expressed concerns about the negligent immigration policy in the United States. Although these factions avoided commenting specifically on the S.B. 1070 ruling, sympathizers openly blamed undocumented immigrants for damaging the United States’ economy by driving up costs and taxes to support health care and education needs to which they fail to make a legal contribution (Burghart and Zeskind, 2010). Most factions of the movement were in agreement about the restriction of immigration by securing out borders and the deportation of all existing undocumented individuals in order to reduce the level of unemployment and government funding given to them. However, support for Tea Party Sweethearts such as Jan Brewer grew among sympathizers for being an outspoken critic of the federal government reaction to the state of the nation as well as its neglect of policies on
immigration and border security issues. In a 2010 interview with Fox News, Brewer’s bold words comparing illegal immigration to terrorism on American soil solidified the support of a conservative fan-base filled with sensitive, resentful, and angry Tea Party sympathizers.

>You know Arizona has been under terrorist attacks, if you will, with all of this illegal immigration that has been taking place on our very porous border ... The whole issue comes back, that we do not and will not tolerate illegal immigration bringing with it very much so the implications of crime and terrorism into our state. (Fox News)

By selecting minorities and foreigners as the target groups threatening the security and prosperity of the United States, Brewer was able to mobilize similar emotive and racially discriminatory measures into the Arizona education system. In addition to S.B. 1070, Brewer’s fight against illegal immigrants prohibited school teachers in public school from instructing in English if they had an accent and passing a bill that prohibited education of ethnics studies classes—shutting down any and all chance that children of Latino, Native American and African American descent to see themselves reflected in the history of this nation.

*Sharron Angle, Nevada*

During the 2010 race for a seat in the United States Senate, Republican candidate from Nevada, Sharron Angle received endorsements from Tea Party factions for her campaign against Senator Majority Leader from Nevada, Harry Reid. Campaign finance reports and data documented on the Federal Election Commission’s (FEC) website indicate that the 1776 Challenge PAC, and Our Country Deserves Better PAC (also known as the Tea Party Express), were among those factions contributing to Angel’s campaign of a record $500,000 to use in television advertisements, radio time, and direct mail to be distributed to encourage support for the candidate’s campaign (Kroll, 2010). During the primaries, Angle’s campaign messages to “take back America” boosted support from a mere 5 percent in April, to 40 percent in June (CBS
News). The Republican nominees’ rapid increase in approval demonstrated popularity among voters in matters regarding race and anti-illegal immigrant messages.

In particular, Angle released two advertisements attacking majority leader Harry Reid for supporting illegal immigrants. In the political advertisement called “The Wave,” the message was explicitly stated- her opponent was in favor of providing government funding and benefits for “un-Americans” versus “real Americans” while depicting Hispanics -Mexicans in particular- as nothing but criminals and thugs:

Waves of illegal aliens streaming across our border joining violent gangs forcing our families to live in fear. And what is Harry Reid doing about it? Voting to give illegal aliens Social Security benefits; tax breaks; college tuition; voting against declaring English our national language (twice); and voted with President Obama and the President of Mexico to block Arizona’s though new immigration law. Harry Reid, it’s clear whose side he’s on… and it’s NOT YOURS.

In the second similar television advertisement called, “Best Friend,” Angle highlights Harry Reid’s record of opposing Arizona’s new illegal immigration bill and giving special tax breaks to illegal aliens. Several of the candidate’s political campaign messages contained similar content; however, this advertisement in particular depicted illegal aliens sneaking across the border with backpacks and flashlights only to meet up with gang-looking thugs only wanting to threaten the stability and prosperity of families in Nevada:

Illegals sneaking across our border, putting Americans’ safety and jobs at risk. And what does Harry Reid do? He comes our opposed to Arizona’s new immigration law despite families struggling with the nation’s highest unemployment. Harry Reid, he votes to give special tax breaks to illegal aliens and to give the illegals Social Security benefits, even for the time they were here illegally. Harry Reid, the best friend an illegal alien ever had.

Ultimately, the advertisements and campaign messages differentiated between the opposing policies of the two candidates. Despite criticism from liberal and pro-immigration law advocates, Sharron Angle’s campaign was under the harsh criticism for explicitly making race an
important issue of concern in her campaign for Senator. Tactics involving fear and frustration were used in the messages by Angle to attract sympathizers. By expressing concern to those already sensitive and angry about illegal immigration, Angle combined fear and frustration towards government funding being dedicated to those individuals who are in their country illegally. The right combination of political opportunity with intergroup emotions theory spiked interest and support for this Tea Party Sweetheart up until the midterm elections. Ultimately, Angle lost the election to incumbent Harry Reid despite the support and mobilization of sympathizers.

**Louie Gohmert, Texas**

Another outspoken and often times controversial Tea Party favorite is Republican House Representative for Texas, Louie Gohmert. The Congressman, who is known for making outlandish claims about immigration and terrorism within the United States, became one of the first members of the Tea Party Caucus. Besides being a firm supporter of a bill proclaiming a

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12 In an effort to defend her anti-illegal immigration campaign message and political advertisements, Sharron Angle appeared on Countdown with Keith Olberman on MSNBC after she had met with the Hispanic Student Union at Rancho High School in Nevada on October 15, 2010. When a group of Hispanic students asked the then-candidate about her “race-baiting” techniques and anti-immigration advertisements, Angle insisted that they were “misinterpreting those commercials.” Angle continued; “I’m not sure those are Latinos in that commercial. What it is, is a fence and there are people coming across that fence. What we know is that out northern border is where the terrorists came through. That’s the most porous border that we have. We cannot allow terrorists, or anyone to come across our border if we don’t know they’re coming, and that’s what it was about, border security. That’s what we want, a secure and sovereign nation and, you know, I don’t know that all of you are Latino. Some of you look a little more Asian to me. I don’t know that. What we know about ourselves is that we are a melting pot in this country. My grandchildren are evidence of that. I’m evidence of that. I’ve been called the first Asian legislator in our Nevada State Assembly.”
“birther” conspiracy questioning the president’s citizenship, Gohmert additionally spoke out about a “terror baby” conspiracy consequential to the administration’s and President Obama’s immigration policies. Gohmert’s “terror baby” claims, which he stated were learned from a woman on a plane to the Middle East and from a retired FBI agent, involved messages and rhetoric designed to mobilize paranoia and frustration among voters and sympathizers (Schulman, 2010). By declaring that failed immigration policies within the United States permitted enemies to easily enter the country, Gohmert warned of the future consequences related to terrorist organizations and their plot to infiltrate the United States with pregnant women who would give birth to terrorist babies and threaten the American way of life:

"It appeared that [the terrorists] would have young women, who became pregnant, would get them into the United States to have a baby, and then they would turn back where they could be raised and coddled as future terrorists. And then one day, twenty, thirty years down the road, they can be sent in to help destroy our way of life."

Gohmert’s message to inform the American people that terrorists and foreigners had figured out our system and used it as a strategic game to harm the nation instilled anger and fear among his supporters and sympathizers. By supporting Arizona’s stance on immigration reform against “anchor babies,” Gohmert related his concern over the “terror baby” conspiracy to the safety of the American people (Tacopino, 2010). Instilling anger into the American people with ideas that foreigners are taking advantage of birthright citizenship is a tactic commonly used by politicians such as Louie Gohmert to attract the attention of sympathizers.¹³

¹³ Politicians often use racially-triggered scare tactics to mobilize citizens. In light of the Boston Marathon bombings, which took place on April 15, 2013, Republican State Representative Louie Gohmert similarly warned that “radical Islamists were being trained to act like Hispanics and cross the U.S.-Mexico border. We know Al Qaeda has camps with the drug cartels on the other side of the Mexican border, and we know that people are now being trained to come in and act like Hispanics when they are [actually] racial Islamists. We know these things are
The rhetoric, as extremist or explicit as it may be against foreigners, is successful in attracting the attention of individuals already sensitive to the fear of their rights and country being abused by outsiders. Provoking fear between cultures is a tactic often seen to mobilize support among angry and frustrated constituents during political campaigns. Evidence demonstrates how Tea Party Sweethearts such as Jan Brewer, Sharron Angle, and Louie Gohmert use these messages and tactics to cater to the anger that their tax dollars are being wasted on programs for individuals who should not be in their country in the first place, and fear that these individuals, because of their masses, are only here to abuse a system that protects them and ultimately could threaten the safety or prosperity of their nation. While some of these candidates (Sharron Angle) did not win national elections, others (Jan Brewer, Louie Gohmert) with the financial and emotive support of the Tea Party movement and sympathizers, continue to hold seats in the Senate and House of Representatives because they have successfully mobilized their constituents to vote in their favor.

4.2.3 Social Issues

Self-endorsed politicians who identify with the Tea Party Movement clearly oppose political and social elites in favor of federal [economic] assistance being given to those deemed as the “undeserving poor” (Burghart and Zeskind, 2010: 8). Grievances directed at a system they perceive as unjust adhere to the concerns of those angry middle class individuals who believe that undeserving “non-Americans” are ruining the country’s economy, ideals, and future prosperity. The threat of these undeserving individuals taking their country from their hands happening, and it is insane not to protect ourselves by building walls to protect ourselves from domestic and foreign attacks” (Johnson, 2013). Although such facts appear to be peculiar, the strategic timing of such messaging reflects the concerns of citizens willing to believe such statements and mobilize in favor of the politician or political movement such as with the Tea Party.
provided the ideal opportunity for politicians with extremist opinions to use this emotive factor to mobilize sympathizers. While the rhetoric used by many of these individual politicians set off a number of controversies and alienation from the Republican Party, Tea Party sympathizers stood by these extremist politicians despite their outlandish statements, backing them as “Tea Party Sweethearts” rather than condoning their opinions.

Jon Hubbard, Arkansas

In 2010, Republican State Representative for Arkansas, Jon Hubbard received heavy criticism over a self-published book from 2009 entitled, “Letters to the Editor: Confessions Of A Frustrated Conservative.” While a cautious Republican Party did not hesitate to distance itself from Hubbard, the Northeast Arkansas Tea Party, which is considered a non-profit organization and Tea Party coalition, backed the outlandish politician and his radically extremist statements about slavery. In his book, Hubbard (2009) defended his viewpoints about un-American individuals defining them as not being capable of loving or appreciating everything this country has provided for them: outlandish

The true American is unlike any person found in any other country, but unfortunately, not everyone who calls America home is capable of being a true American. It has nothing to do with one’s race, color of skin, nation of origin, or the economic status into which they were born. But, it has everything to do with their love of God, their family, and their love for this country. They simply will not allow their sense of the values and long-held traditions of this nation to be compromised. (1)

Hubbard (2009: 2) further explained, “If you love this country –if you really love this country- tell someone. Tell everyone what makes you proud to be an American […] Christians were told to become tolerant and submissive of other religions, even to the point of forgoing our own traditions and beliefs.” By defining himself as a “true American,” Hubbard clearly played into the intergroup emotions theory by differentiating between those who love American and
deserve to be here, and those who will never understand or appreciate the meaning of being 
American. Predominantly referring to African Americans, Hubbard’s opinions about slavery, 
education, and integration conveyed a message about the societal consequences of people 
undeserving of being American.

In regards to slavery, Hubbard (2009) proclaimed that it was actually a “blessing” for 
African Americans, as they would have otherwise not had the opportunity to live in the United 
States and therefore suffered even more in Africa:

… The institution of slavery that the black race has long believed to be an 
abomination upon its people may actually have been a blessing in disguise. The 
blacks who could endure those conditions and circumstances would someday be 
rewarded with citizenship in the greatest nation ever established upon the face of 
the Earth. (183-89)

African Americans must “understand that even while in the throes of slavery, 
their lives as Americans are likely much better than they ever would have enjoyed 
living in sub-Saharan Africa. Knowing what we know today about life on the 
African continent, would an existence spent in slavery have been any crueler than 
a life spent in sub-Saharan Africa?” (93 and 189)

Hubbard (2009) additionally asserted that the integration of African Americans into 
American society was not only diminished by their lack of appreciation and willingness to learn, 
but that it also caused the decline of the American educational system and work ethic for 
Africans, whites in particular:

… Will it ever become possible for black people in the United States of America 
to firmly establish themselves as inclusive and contributing members of society 
within this country? (187)

Wouldn’t life for blacks in America today be more enjoyable and successful if 
they would only learn to appreciate the value of a good education? (184)

… One of the stated purposes of school integration was to bring black students up 
to a level close to that of white students. But, to the great disappointment of 
everyone, the results of this theory worked exactly in reverse of its intended 
purpose, and instead of black students rising to the educational levels previously 
attained by white students, the white students dropped to the level of black
students. To make matters worse the lack of discipline and ambition of black students soon became shared by their white classmates, and our educational system has been in a steady decline ever since. (27)

Despite being one of the most extremist and explicit racial messages by a conservative politician, Tea Party sympathizers stood beside Hubbard as he defended his publishing, proclaiming that he only hoped that the book “would motivate and inspire others to ‘express’ themselves if they were mutually concerned about America’s future” (Golgowski, 2012).

**Jason Rapert, Arkansas**

Since his first appearance at the Herber Springs Tea Party event in 2009, Republican Senator for Arkansas, Jason Rapert, expressed support and favor for a movement he calls a literal “Resurrection of the American Spirit.” In his 2010 campaign website, Rapert swore to take action after “seeing his nation almost subverted from within by those who had no respect or reverence for the history of their great nation, and saw the ‘people’ of America rise up and exercise their freedoms and right to self-governance” (Rapert, 2010). Already a supporter of the movement and having attended numerous Tea Party rallies during and after his campaign, Rapert’s use of racially suggestive language became commonplace in messages while addressing his constituents.

During a Tea Party rally in 2011, Senator Rapert used racially explicit language criticizing President Obama for inviting Muslim leaders to the White House for a Ramadan dinner, claiming that he [President Obama] did not attend the traditional National Prayer Breakfast, calling into question what the president “truly stands for,” and warning the president that his people have had enough of “minorities” running the country (Fang, 2013):

Folks, it’s serious […] I wonder sometimes, when they invited all of the Muslims to come into the White House, and have a little Ramadan Supper, but our President could not take the time to attend the National Prayer Breakfast. I wonder what he stands for […] I hear you loud and clear, Barack Obama, you
don't represent the country that I grew up with. And your values is not going to save us. We're going to take this country back for the Lord. We're going to try to take this country back for conservatism. And we're not going to allow minorities to run roughshod over what you people believe in!

Despite Rapert’s explicit references to President Obama and questioning his ideology and allegiance to the American people, he later defended his reference to ‘minorities’ as being towards ‘political minorities’ (Brantley, 2013). Nevertheless, the rhetoric expressing clear animosity towards President Obama and Muslims received cheers and support from supporters and sympathizers present at that rally. Such an example demonstrates how regardless of whether or not racially explicit rhetoric is used among Tea Party-backed politicians, sympathizers support candidates by relating to their frustration and resentment against big government and the minorities in office who are threatening their traditional American way of life.

**Michele Bachmann, Minnesota**

During the Tea Party’s initial year, Republican Representative for Minnesota, Michele Bachmann, became one of the movements’ first identifiable Sweethearts. Recognized for being the founder of the Party Caucus in Congress, she became an iconic public figure for the Tea Party Movement on a nation-wide scale. The Tea Party Caucus, formed in July 2010, was designed by Bachmann to promote synergy between the movement and legislators and initially included fifty one Republican representatives (Burghart and Zeskind, 2010: 72). Bachmann had not only become the face of the movement, but she had gained enough political support and national recognition to become a serious contender for the 2012 GOP presidential nomination (Rosenthal and Trost, 2012: 172). Bachmann’s reputation as an outspoken conservative woman assured her a place among the leaders and activists of the Tea Party Movement; at least for a while.

Bachmann’s antecedents of using controversial, inflammatory and racially charged
rhetoric upheld support among her conservative sympathizers while demonstrating her clear disregard for foreigners and minorities, with Muslims in particular. Most notably, during a Republican debate in 2005, long before the rise of the Tea Party Movement, when asked about rioting Muslim youths in France, Bachmann expressed her opinions about Muslims among Western societies, including the United States, by stating that not all cultures were equal due to a lack of ability to assimilate into society:

Not all cultures are equal, because of the tribalism of Muslims immigrating to the country. Not all values are equal among those who are coming into France, which had a beautiful culture; the French culture is actually diminished. It’s going away. And just with the population in France, they are losing Western Europeans, and it’s being taken over by a Muslim ethic. Not that Muslims are bad, but they are not assimilating (Diamond, 2011).

By upholding her conservative stances and say-as-it-is approach, Bachmann grew in popularity and support among angry Tea Party sympathizers for regularly condemning President Obama’s big government and her terse handling of ‘hot button’ topics including homosexuality as a "dysfunction"; global warming as a "hoax"; that the media should investigate "anti-Americans" in Congress; and clear stance against abortion- all of which endeared her to the Tea Party (Formisano, 2012: 41-42). Admired for not hiding behind or filtering her views through Twitter, Facebook and Fox News, Tea Party endorsement and support increased by her willingly subjecting herself to interviews with David Gregory, Chris Matthews and others who were not reliably friendly to her worldview (Capehart, 2011).

During the height of the movement, Bachmann made a bold allegation against the Obama administration’s health care reform legislation for being a "gangster government" that has taken actions that are "corrupt, thoroughly corrupt, turning our country into a nation of slaves” in addition to playing into the Obama-is-a-secret-Muslim-and-noncitizen claim (Capehart, 2011). By rallying her supporters in Minnesota to be armed and ready to fight back against an
increasingly demanding government and Obama’s Cap and Trade issue, she encouraged her constituents and angry sympathizers to stand up for their rights and freedoms:

Thomas Jefferson told us, having a revolution every now and then is a good thing, and the people -- we the people -- are going to have to fight back hard if we're not going to lose our country. And I think this has the potential of changing the dynamic of freedom forever in the United States and that's why I want everyone to come out and hear (Frick, 2009).

Bachmann’s appeal to conservatives and angry sympathizers encouraging individuals to be ‘armed and dangerous’ is an example of provocative rhetoric which could be taken literally among individuals who are already fearful and angry by the threat of losing control over their country. Although her appeals and messages have been directed at conservatives and sympathizers taking a stance against a government that is straying away from “the American way,” her explicit rhetoric calling President Obama and his supporters “anti-American” and questioning his interest for the welfare of the American people ultimately make an impact on sensitive citizens. In addition to provoking sympathizers to take action against legislation they disagree with, Bachmann’s stance on immigration equally emphasizes the dangers of catering to undocumented citizens with government funding:

I think that the American way is not to give taxpayer subsidized benefits to people who have broken our laws or who are here in the US illegally. That is not the American way […] What works is to have people come into the US with a little bit of money in their pocket legally with sponsors so that if anything happens to them, they don't fall back on the taxpayers to take care of them. And then they also have to agree to learn to speak the English language; learn American history and our constitution. That's the American way (Tea Party Republican Debate, 2011).

Although bold statements such as those at one time spotlighted Michele Bachman to the point of making her a Tea Party Sweetheart, concerns over whether her explicit rhetoric was harming not only her reputation, but consequently dragging the Tea Party down with her began as early 2011, only a year after the movement reached its peak in popularity and support. Once
one of the most prominent Tea Partiers, Bachmann has since lowered her profile after a difficult reelection campaign in the fall of 2012, avoiding interviews and statements due in part, to the core issues that animated the Tea Party movement in 2010, do not animate the GOP in 2013 (Reeve, 2013).

4.3  **Tea Party Leader Interviews**

Rhetoric used by leaders of local Tea Party factions demonstrates some of the clearest examples of how racism actively played, and continues to play, a role in the mobilization of the movement. Although findings of politicians at the national level using explicitly and racially charged rhetoric were sporadic, they were by no means insignificant. This part of the research places emphasis on messages and rhetoric used by Tea Party leaders particularly at the local level, as opposed to those cases in the previous section focusing nationally elected politicians such as Senators and members of Congress. Consistent with the ideals set by leaders on a national level, the rhetoric used among local Tea Party factions has similarly focused on the concept of taking back or reclaiming something that has been taken from “real” Americans. Evident among the rhetoric used by Tea Party leaders are explicit messages signaling who to blame for the state of the economy, resentment towards having to give money away to help others pay the debt they have irresponsibly accumulated, paying bills other than their own, and even help in bailing out entire industries with taxpayer’s money; often leaving those taxpayers with little to no money for themselves and their families. By explicitly making their anger, frustration, and resentment known, Tea Parties across the nation have successfully attracted the attention of sympathizers and revolved their movement around it.

4.3.1  **The Economy**

Beyond anxieties of big government spending and fiscal concerns affecting the prosperity of the
nation as a whole, local Tea Party leaders used the accumulated anger and resentment as an opportunity to drive the political mobilization of the masses by having someone specific to blame for their angst. Feelings of conservative producerism (similar to those expressed in Santelli’s rant against the government for forcing the hard-working middle class to subsidize [irresponsible individuals] who bought homes they could not afford) deeply resonated during the economic downturn of the nation. Political opportunism used by Tea Party leaders encouraging angry conservatives to direct their ire towards taxes and government spending that was benefitting people [at a social/economic class] below them, explicitly connected beneficiaries of state programs to “welfare queens” of the ghetto and the “illegal aliens” of the barrio (Judis, 2010). This sparked the beginning of angry Tea Party advocates reaching out to sympathizers by creating an image of an America divided between “moochers, big and small, corporate and individual, trampling over themselves with their hands out demanding endless bailouts; and disgusted, hardworking citizens sick of being played for chumps and punished for practicing personal responsibility” (O’Hara, 2010: 15).

**Fight against A Culture of Entitlements**

Following the “real American” versus “un-American” example set by politicians at the national level, local Tea Party leaders used similar rhetoric differentiating between a hard-working American “us” and a mooching, freelloading, minority-filled “them.” By creating a clear distinction among where sympathizers saw themselves in relation to other groups in society, Tea

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14 The notion of “producerism,” which refers to the right-wing populist ideology that productive members of society are exploited by non-productive and lazy “parasitic” members of society, is becoming increasingly popular among sectors of the Christian Right, Patriot movement, armed militias, and those who consider themselves as very conservative. Producerism has origins in the United States from the time of Jacksonians, who sought to rally the elite against the abusive lower-class (Judis, 2010).
Partiers successfully established both group solidarity and a political outlet to facilitate the movement’s full support and mobilization into American society.

Part of the success in strategy used by local Tea Party leaders came from the preexisting attitudes of the American people towards questioning whether foreigners and immigrants support the values that are essential to the American political culture including, civic incorporation, patriotism (de la Garza, 1982), and economic self-reliance (Romano-V. 1973). By playing into the perceived difference between minorities and the American people (in that they are resistant towards political incorporation and assimilation), the idea of foreigners posing a significant threat to their nation mobilized preexisting anxieties shared among conservative Americans (de la Garza, 1996: 336). As a movement that advocates adherence to the nation’s core principles and values, party leaders used rhetoric to reflect the opinions of the American public who consider minorities and foreigners “un-American” for their lack of complying with an important aspect of the assimilation process into the American Dream. “Civic incorporation,” defined by de la Garza (1996: 341), supports economic individualism and patriotism, which is a critical component of American political culture. Because American culture values the individual success of both wealthy and poor, opinions regarding immigrants, minorities, and regular citizens alike are reflected on their effort towards ethnic civic incorporation and socioeconomic incorporation, which begins with cultural assimilation where the immigrant takes on the cultural, educational, and professional values and norms of the dominant society (de la Garza, 1996: 337).

For many Americans, (“red-blooded Americans,” as Tea Partiers might add), it is not until an individual takes on the American cultural values and begins experiencing educational and economic mobility that they can be successfully incorporated into mainstream society.
The effectiveness and success of local Tea Party leaders in the mobilization of sympathizers in spite of or because of the tough rhetoric used may have differed, but evidence indicates that local Tea Party and advocates as opposed to national leaders had a greater tendency of using explicit rhetoric.

**Inge Marler, Arkansas**

With a Tea Party-backed Congressman and Senator, having a Tea Party leader at the local level comes as no surprise among constituents in Arkansas. During an annual rally in 2012, Inge Marler, board member and leader of the local north-central Ozark Tea Party, commenced her speech by using a racially charged joke as an ice-breaker for her audience (Celok, 2012). Her explicit remarks labeling African Americans as comfortably surviving off welfare were commonplace examples of rhetoric used among her messages and campaigns to rally support of her fellow-constituents:

> A black kid asks his mom, ‘Mama, what’s a democracy?’
> ‘Well, son, that be when white folks work every day so us po’ folks can get all our benefits.’
> ‘But mama, don’t the white folk get mad about that?’
> ‘They sho do, son. They sho do. And that’s called racism.’

The “ice-breaker,” which drew in laughs and approval from the audience, defined the stereotype found among very conservatives who believe that minorities feel entitled to receive welfare in order to pay for the luxuries not available to high tax-paying and hard-working citizens. Marler was later condemned by Tea Party leaders within her own state for having made such explicitly racial remarks at a time when the Tea Party was viciously denying accusation of

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15 Randy Due, Civil Rights Advocate for the Northborough Massachusetts Tea Party, is one among hundreds of local Tea Party leaders who addresses supporters as, “All of My Fellow Red Blooded Americans” (TeaParty.Org, 2010).
catering to racist and emotive sympathizers and followers (Celok, 2012).

Ron Johnson, Wisconsin

Although Senator Ron Johnson’s statements fit in the previous category beside his fellow elected officials, the evolution of his statements about the nation nearing a “financial tipping point” into reaching a “cultural tipping point” demonstrate how Tea Party ideals about fiscal concerns are easily altered to strike a responsive chord from sympathizers and supporters in regards to threats from outside groups [in this case, freeloaders and minorities]. In an interview with his hometown newspaper, The Oshkosh Northwestern, about his statements at an Oshkosh Rotary Club meeting in August 2011, Senator Johnson warned individuals who truly valued their local communities to take action against America becoming a culture of entitlements and dependency:

We need to turn around this “culture of entitlement” to benefits such as Medicare, Social Security, food stamps and other social programs. These benefits have led to the increase of the out-of-wedlock birth rate from 7.5 percent in the 1960s to more than 40 percent now. The increase of the out-of-wedlock birth rate in African-American communities from more than 20 percent to more than 70 percent in the same timeframe. More than 46 million Americans relying on food stamps. In this nation, it’s the cultural tipping point that drives the financial one, and I believe we have developed in this national a culture of entitlement and dependency. I think it’s undeniable.

With antecedents of supporting Tea Party ideals against big government and fighting against the nation’s fiscal concerns, Johnson also expressed his concern and disapproval over people who contributed into the system versus those taking from the system and receiving those benefits. Also playing into the ideology of producerism, his message expressing concern over a dangerous situation threatening American society who allowed producers to be outnumbered by people receiving benefits:

When you continue to extend unemployment benefits, people really don’t have the incentive to go take other jobs. They’ll just wait the system out until their benefits run out, then they’ll go out and take, probably not as high paying jobs as they’d like to take, but that’s really how you have to get back to work (Wisconsin
Although Senator Johnson’s comments explicitly attribute minorities and single mothers to the contributing culture of entitlements and dependency, in an interview with the Tea Party Patriots on April 12, 2013, he insisted on the negative consequences of conservatives and Tea Partiers alienating groups of Americans (referring to Hispanics and young single women). By creating a target group to blame for the financial woes felt by sympathizers, Johnson appealed to his followers by asserting that he, with the support of the Tea Party and their true American ideals, would take action against the freeloaders who felt entitled to the benefits of welfare paid for by taxpayer dollars.

*Al Reynolds, Illinois*

Similarly, during his 2010 campaign for Senator of Illinois, Al Reynolds, who had the support of Tea Party leaders, attempted to appeal to supporters and sympathizers by using examples of how the nation’s economic problems were caused by big government and its favor of minorities, which had consequently caused damage to the prosperity of the American people. While trying to appeal to his audience by suggesting that African American and Latino citizens and individuals needed to do more than do drugs and play sports by going to college and getting an education, his racially suggestive remarks were heard loud and clear amongst an audience filled with League of Women Voters and the Champaign County NAACP:

> I've been in the city and the dichotomy of the women and the men in the minorities, there is a difference in the fact that most minority women, either the single parent or coming from a poor neighborhood, are motivated more so than the minority men and it's a pretty good reason. Most of the women who are single parents have to find work to support their family. The minority men find it more lucrative to be able to do drugs or other avenues rather than do education. It's easier. We need to provide ways that are more incentive, other than just sports avenues, for the men for the minorities to want to go to college and get an education and better themselves before the women have to support them all (Kacich, 2010).
Although his comments may have stuck a positive responsive and emotive chord among a different audience, his remarks caused him to relinquish his title as leading candidate for Senate and losing support from other Tea Party leaders. Not all Tea Party candidates running for office get elected after using explicitly racial rhetoric, especially, as is the case in this example, when explicit rhetoric is used among the wrong group of sympathizers and supporters. The difference between the candidates running for office and local Tea Party leaders is that once under the public eye, the choice in words and rhetoric are scrutinized by challengers and the media, making any explicit racial commentary a threat to a politician’s Tea Party campaign.

4.3.2 Immigration
During the start of the Tea Party movement, there had been an organized effort to keep the immigration effort off the Tea Party agenda (Tancredo, 2010). While the Tea Party’s principal issues of concern did not address the topic of immigration, this does not mean that the movement and its leaders did not care or have an opinion about the immigration issue. Across the nation, Tea Party activists rallied around in support of Arizona’s S.B. 1070 immigration law. Additionally, due to the conservative nature of members and leaders within Tea Party groups, positions included opposing a legal pathway towards citizenship for undocumented immigrants, voting against the DREAM Act, cutting off Federal funding in favor of illegal aliens, and being in favor of increasing border security. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPCL), the Tea Party movement “has become home to many nativist extremists… blurring the line between nativist extremist groups with strong anti-immigrant sentiments and Tea Party affiliates” (Beirich, 2011).

For this reason, stances on immigration do not alienate all Tea Party leaders and advocates -particularly at the local level- from openly voicing their opinions in regards to
immigration, minorities, and foreigners. One such founder and leader of the Springboro Tea Party in southwestern Ohio, Brian “Sonny” Thomas, had a history of using racially explicit language towards Hispanic immigrants. Once the leader of a Tea Party faction, supporters were actually fearful and hesitant about attending rallies held by their offensive leader. Thomas demobilized rather than mobilized supporters after he suggested that he “wanted to shoot Hispanic immigrants” and using Twitter to post during a march in support of immigration reform: “Illegals everywhere today! So many spicks makes me feel like speck. Grr. Where’s my gun?” (Roth, 2010). Although examples of radicalized opinions on immigration exist among Tea Party leaders, extremists such as the aforementioned example are and continue to remain rare among a movement barely beginning to tackle immigration reform at a national level.

4.3.3 Social Issues

By now, aggressive rhetoric differentiating between the “real Americans” from the “un-Americans” and the “hard-working, tax-paying citizen” versus the “freeloading, moocher minority and foreigner” has demonstrated that truly angry, resentful, and fearful sympathizers support the movement and appeals used by Tea Party leaders. Scare tactics and intergroup emotions were used as a main strategy by many local Tea Party leaders and officials in attempts to rally supporters in their favor. However, the most common target used as an emotional trigger of anger and action among angry Tea Party leaders and sympathizers was that of African American President Barack Obama. Oftentimes driven by careless emotions and anger stemming from a strong desire for fiscal conservatism and a smaller government, much of the rhetoric used to communicate with sympathizers derives from racism and feelings of “us” versus “them.”

*Thomas Tancredo, Colorado*
During the 2010 National Tea Party Convention in Nashville, Tom Tancredo, Republican Congressman for Colorado, kicked off the opening speech with the typical Tea Party statement of “This is our country. Let’s take it back,” but not before criticizing the fact that President Obama had won his election thanks to a “cult of multiculturalism” which flooded this country:

> We do not have a civics or literacy test before people can vote in this country. People who could not spell the word vote or say it in English put a committed socialist ideologue in the White House- name is Barack Hussein Obama (Ungar, 2010).

After serving in the House of Representatives for over a decade, Tancredo’s message to Tea Partiers and supporters was that of frustration after having allowed an African American into Office with the support of an illiterate and uneducated population behind him. However, not all Tea Party members agreed or sympathized with Tancredo’s slurs, making it clear that one man’s opinion did not define the opinions of everyone in the movement.

**Danita Kilcullen, Florida**

In support of the previous statement that not all Tea Partiers were racist biggots, founder of Tea Party Fort Lauderdale, Danita Kilcullen conceded that the movement was not racist, but it may appear to be simply because it does not draw in many African Americans. Her reasoning as to why the movement lacked an African American support base? “All black people voted for Obama. Well, not all, but 90 percent.” Contrary to most Tea Party activists, Kilcullen is proud to attend a church with a black pastor, supports a black candidate (Allen West) in a local congressional race, and backs a Latino candidate for U.S. Senate (Newsweek, 2010).

**Thomas Hymer, Patriot Freedom Alliance**

Thomas Hymer, responsible for maintaining the Tea Party of Hutchinson website, patriotfreedomalliance.org, posted a satirical picture on its website explaining depicting a skunk to represent President Obama. The message, which states: “The skunk has replaced the eagle as
the symbol of the President and because it is half black, half white, and almost everything it
does, stinks!” is meant to appeal to Tea Party sympathizers who might already have resentment
towards an African American president or minorities in general (Newsweek, 2010).

Amy Kremer, Tea Party Express

In a 2012 interview with CNN, chair of the Tea Party Express, Amy Kremer demonstrated the
assertiveness of certain Tea Party leaders for calling into question whether President Barack
Obama “loves America:”

I just don’t believe that he loves America the way that we do. If you love this
country and want to restore our heritage and that sort of thing, you go out there
and you lead. You don’t wait on others to tell you what to do, and you take those
bold steps. I mean, I don’t think that’s what the objective of this administration is
(Robillard, 2012).

By calling into question whether or not President Barack Obama loved his nation in the
way that a Tea Party patriot does, Kremer is unafraid to challenge and defend that Tea Party
supporters loved their nations in a way an “un-American” never would be able to. Here,
evidence once again demonstrates how intergroup emotions of “us Americans” versus “those un-
Americans” are tactfully used in rhetoric when defending what the Tea Party stands for.

Dale Robertson, Texas

Known for having one of the most iconic and racially explicit photographs of the Tea Party
movement, Dale Robertson of Houston, Texas serves as chairman of the 1775 Tea Party and
operator of the TeaParty.org website. Robertson is notably one of the only local Tea Party
leaders at a local level (or even national level) to be seen carrying such an explicit racially
charged poster. As one of the earliest photographs taken during the birth of the movement in
January 2009, the picture depicts Robertson holding a sign that says “Congress=Slaveowner, Tax
Payer=N---ar,” however, the misspelled N-word appears to have been duct-taped over the
original sign, which Robertson claims read, “Congress=Slaveowner, Tax Payer=Slave” (Weigel, 2010). Although the Houston Tea Party Society claims to have booted Robertson out of the event for the sign, Robertson continued molding Tea Party events to empower and mobilize supporters and sympathizers for the 2010 elections (Weigel, 2010). Table 1 below provides a summary of my qualitative findings.

**Table 1: Summary of Qualitative Research Findings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Significant Qualitative Findings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Hypothesis 1: Tea Party public appeals are likely to employ racial and emotive cues in mobilizing the Tea Party support base.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Hypothesis 1a: Such racial and emotive cues are likely to be more prevalent in Tea Party leaders' messages at the local level rather than Tea Party leaders' national public appeals.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Insignificant Qualitative Findings</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Hypothesis 1b: Such racial and emotive cues are likely to be more prevalent in Tea Party leaders blogs than other public platforms (such as national websites, interviews, and campaign messages).</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Overall, the evidence depicted in this section of the analysis determines that whether at the local or state level, individuals caught using explicit and racially charged rhetoric in their campaigns or messages had either lost their job or voluntarily stepped down from being a voice of the movement (Seitz-Wald, 2013). While politicians at the national level are more understandably concerned about their image and approval from voters across the nation, local leaders and activists, while still under the watchful eye of opponents and the media, have greater flexibility and creativity in the rhetoric they choose to cater towards a specific demographic. Nevertheless, the reoccurring trend across these case studies continues to be one coming to a forceful end by Tea Party advocates on the national scale and the media.
Chapter 5: Quantitative Research Analysis and Findings

The previous section demonstrated the tactics and patterns of rhetoric used among Tea Party leaders and factions at both the national and local levels through qualitative research methods. After having presented examples of the emotive cues and strategic messages used among Tea Party leaders, this next section of the thesis will use quantitative methods to analyze how effective the movement is in appealing and mobilizing supporters.

I employ data from the 2010 CBS News/New York Times: Government/Tea Party Movement Poll to analyze the likelihood of Tea Party movement growth by focusing on anger as a key causal determinant and a mediator of mobilization and support.\textsuperscript{16} The survey used for this analysis came from the Roper Center Public Opinion Archives.\textsuperscript{17} This survey constitutes one of the first public opinion polls conducted to determine not only the demographics of Tea Party supporters, but also key sources of appeal and support during the height of the movement’s campaigns and mobilization. In order to measure the amount of support for the Tea Party among the population, this poll contains data collected using landline telephones and cellular phones from April 5 through April 12, 2010. This existing survey will facilitate the analysis of citizen reactions and provide insight into likely behavioral measures.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{16} The nationwide telephone poll by the New York Times and CBS News conducted on April 5 through April 12 with 1,580 adults. The unit of the analysis in this poll is the individual.

\textsuperscript{17} See http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/.

\textsuperscript{18} While the qualitative section of my thesis includes analyses of racial and emotive cues used by Tea Party elites, my quantitative analyses are limited to how exposure to such messages evoke feelings of anger among the members of the public and exclude measures of racism. This is mainly due to the unavailability of racism measures in the survey as well as the elusive nature of measuring racism. Even if questions about racism were available in the survey, direct measures of racism would only have face validity while lacking internal validity and reliability given
In this section, I first examine whether exposure to Tea Party rhetoric and messages evoke anger among individuals. Specifically, I investigate the effects of (1) general knowledge of the Tea Party movement, (2) visiting websites associated with the Tea Party movement, (3) engagement in Tea Party-based social network sites, and (4) Tea Party activity in one’s community on feelings of anger about the current state of mainstream politics via conducting logistic regression analyses. I then analyze whether anger has a direct effect on Tea Party support using a logistic regression model. Last, I employ a binary mediation model to test whether and how anger serves as a significant mediator for key factors related to Tea Party support. More specifically, using the binary mediation model, I examine how anger mediates the effects of (1) the presence of the Tea Party activity within the respondent’s community, (2) presidential approval, (3) trust in government, and (4) perceived state of the economy on Tea Party support.¹⁹

5.1 **Dependent Variables**

For my first set of analyses, I use anger as my dependent variable. To measure anger, I use the Question 24 from the poll: “Which comes closest to your feelings about the way things are going in Washington -- enthusiastic, satisfied but not enthusiastic, dissatisfied but not angry, or angry?” From the 1,591 observations, 37 percent of the respondents expressed that they felt angry about the politics in D.C., 45 percent were dissatisfied but not angry, 14 percent were satisfied but not enthusiastic, and 3 percent expressed they were enthusiastic. A code of “1” is given for angry, biased (and muted) responses due to social desirability concerns. Future research may design surveys that include valid measures of racism that are suitable for a latent analysis.

¹⁹ It is important to note that the original research poll included “DK/NA” as a possible answer for the questions used when respondents chose to state that they had no opinion or thought about that particular issue. These responses were recoded as missing data and, consequently, were dropped from the analyses.
and “0” otherwise.

For the second set of analyses, the dependent variable is support for the Tea Party. Listed as Question 82 in the research poll, respondents were asked: “Do you consider yourself to be a supporter of the Tea Party movement, or not—yes, no?” A code of “1” is given for the original response yes, and “0” for no. From the 1,441 observations, 61 percent of the respondents supported the Tea Party while 38 percent did not support the Tea Party.

For the purposes of investigation within the original poll, Tea Party supporters were oversampled, for a total of 881, and then weighted to their proper proportion; with the margin of sampling error being plus or minus three percentage points for all adults and for Tea Party supporters (Zernike and Thee-Brenan, 2010). Variations in levels and reasons for support exist among Tea Party sympathizers. Since not all Tea Party supporters necessarily express anger, the fact that they were oversampled in the poll allows researchers to explore how fervently individuals are motivated by anger and how they mediate the key variables of support.

5.2 INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

5.2.1 General Knowledge of the Tea Party Movement

Listed as Question 78 in the survey, respondents were asked: “How much have you heard or read about the Tea Party movement—a lot, some, not much, or nothing at all yet?” A code of “4” is given for a lot, “3” for some, “2” for not much, and “1” is given for nothing. From the 1,587 observations, 38 percent reported having a lot of general knowledge about the Tea Party movement, 39 percent reported knowing not much, 13 percent reported knowing some, and 10 percent reported having no general knowledge about the Tea Party movement.

5.2.2 Visiting Tea Party Websites

Listed as Question 85 in the research poll, respondents were asked: “Have you visited Web sites
with the Tea Party movement, or haven’t you—have, have not?” A code of “1” is given for the original response yes, and “0” for no. From the 867 observations, 31 percent of the respondents reported that they had visited Tea Party websites, while 69 percent reported that they had not.

5.2.3 Engaging in Tea Party-based Social Network Sites

Listed as Question 87 in the research poll, respondents were asked: “Have you gotten or shared information about the Tea Party movement through Facebook, Twitter or another social-networking site—yes, no?” A code of “1” is given for the original response yes, and “0” for no. From the 868 observations, 90 percent of the respondents reported that they had not shared information about the Tea Party movement through social-networking sites, while 10 percent reported that they had shared information about the Tea Party movement through social-networking sites.

5.2.4 Tea Party Activity in One’s Community

Listed as Question 83 in the research poll, respondents were asked: “Is the Tea Party movement politically active in your community, or not—yes, no?” A code of “1” is given for the original response yes, and “0” for no. From the 1,311 observations, 44 percent of the respondents reported that the Tea Party was active in their community while 56 percent reported that the Tea Party was not politically active in their community.

5.2.5 Approval of President Barack Obama

By including this variable, I demonstrate how anger and disapproval towards the way mainstream politics are being handled in D.C. are related directly to President Barack Obama, as he is the most prominent and visible national political figure. To measure this variable, I used the following question: “Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as President—approve, disapprove?” A code of “1” is given for the original response approve, “0”
for disapprove. From the 1,502 observations, 30 percent of the respondents approved of the way in which President Obama was handling his job as President of the United States, while 69 percent did not approve of the way in which President Obama was handling the job as President of the United States.

5.2.6 Trust in Government

The variable trust in federal government is important for this study because the Tea Party movement disapproves of the way the Obama administration, Congress, and financial elites support big government as a method of solving the nation’s problems. Question 21 in the poll asked respondents: “How much of the time do you think you can trust the government in Washington to do what is right – just about always, most of the time, or only some of the time?” A code of “4” is given for the original response always, “3” for most of the time, “2” for some of the time, and “1” for never. From the 1,574 observations, 1 percent of the respondents felt that they could always trust the government to do what is right for the nation, 11 percent of the respondents felt that they could sometimes trust the government, 75 percent of the respondents felt that they could trust the government most of the time, and 13 percent felt that they could never trust that the government in Washington had the right interest in mind.

5.2.7 Rate the National Economy

The final independent variable is the perceived condition of the national economy. The economic recession that the U.S. has been experiencing over the past years has created a firm base on which Tea Party supporters could direct their anger and resentment. Listed as Question 13 in the research poll, respondents were asked: “How would you rate the condition of the national economy these days – is it very good, fairly good, fairly bad, or very bad?” A code of “4” is given for the original response very good, “3” for fairly good, “2” for fairly bad, and “1”
for very bad. From the 1,574 observations, less than 1 percent believed that the state of the economy was very good, 14 percent thought that it was fairly good, 40 percent thought the conditions of the national economy were fairly bad, and 45 percent of the respondents believed that the condition of the economy was very bad.

### 5.3 Control Variables

Apart from the main variables, key demographic, socioeconomic, and political factors were also controlled for. The original poll included questions regarding the respondents’ age, gender, race, level of education, total family income, and ideology.

The poll respondents were asked about their race: “Are you *White or Caucasian, Black or African American, Asian, Other (Specify)*?” For the purpose of this analysis, the code of “1” was given for *White or Caucasian* and “0” for all other race options to control for the dynamics of race given the primarily White support base of the Tea Party Movement. Of the 1,556 respondents, 89 percent were White or Caucasian, while 11 percent were all other races.

The age of 1,520 poll respondents ranged from 18 through 93. The mean age of the poll respondents was 57. Additionally, gender was coded as “1” if the respondent is *female* and “0” if the respondent is *male*. Of the 1,591 respondents, 52 percent were female.

Level of education was coded as “5” for *Post-Grad Work or Degree (Master’s PhD)*, “4” for *College Grad*, “3” for *Some College (trade or business)*, “2” for *High School Grad*, and “1” for *Not a High School Grad*. Of the 1,585 respondents, 19 percent had post-graduate work or degrees, 23 percent were college graduates, 31 percent had some college (trade or business), 23 percent were high school graduates, and 4 percent were not high school graduates.

Total family income (for the year 2009) was coded “6” for *Over $100,000*, “5” for $75,000 - $100,000, “4” for $50,5000 - $75,000, “3” for $30,000 - $50,000, “2” for $15,000 -
$30,000, and “1” for Under $15,000. Of the 1,445 respondents, 18 percent made over $100,000, 12 percent made between $75,000 - $100,000, 23 percent made between $50,500 - $75,000, 21 percent made between $30,000 - $50,000, 15 percent made between $15,000 - $30,000, and “8 percent made under $15,000.

The “Ideology” variable was coded, “5” for very conservative, “4” for somewhat conservative, “3” for moderate, “2” for somewhat liberal, and “1” for very liberal. Of the 1,523 respondents, 27 percent of the classified themselves as very conservative, 27 percent as somewhat conservative, 33 percent as moderate, 10 percent as somewhat liberal, and 3 percent were very liberal.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for the General Pool of Survey Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Observation</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Min. Value</th>
<th>Max. Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>1520</td>
<td>57.05</td>
<td>15.69</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>1591</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>1556</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>1586</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>1445</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td>1523</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The distribution of observations using the control variables for Tea Party support based on the descriptive statistics for the general pool of survey participants is shown in Table 2 above. The demographics demonstrate that survey respondents have an average age of 57, are female, White, have some college education with an income between $50,500 - $75,000, and are conservative.

The distribution of observations based on the control variables for Tea Party support is shown in Table 3 below. Within the subset of the general pool of participants, the demographics of individuals who identify themselves as Tea Party supporters tend to be Republican,
conservative, White, male, with an average age of 59, with an income between $50,500 - $75,000 and some college education. Taking these control variables to demonstrate specifically support for the Tea Party movement, this graph demonstrates the expected general demographics of Tea Party supporters.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for the Tea Party Supporters Pool of Survey Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Observation</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Min. Value</th>
<th>Max. Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>839</td>
<td>58.93</td>
<td>14.61</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>881</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>855</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>877</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>799</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td>861</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>.877</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.4 Empirical Results

The first set of analyses displays my results with anger as the dependent variable. To begin with, Table 4 presents coefficients with robust standard errors for the binary logistic regression analysis regarding the effects of general knowledge about the Tea Party movement on anger. The results indicate that increased knowledge about the Tea Party movement has a significant effect on the likelihood of expressing anger (p < 0.01). Regarding the changes in predicted probability, the results demonstrate that an individual with general knowledge of the Tea Party movement has 36 percent greater likelihood of expressing anger. These results thus support my hypothesis (H2a) that individuals who report higher knowledge about the Tea Party movement have a greater probability of expressing anger about mainstream politics.

Regarding the control variables, the results indicate that race has a positive and significant effect on anger (p < 0.01). Individuals who classify their race as “White” have a 17 percent greater likelihood of expressing anger. Finally, results also indicate that ideology has a
statistically significant effect on anger ($p < 0.01$). Individuals who identify with very conservative ideologies have a 48 percent greater likelihood of having anger than those who have very liberal ideologies. On the other hand, age, gender, level of education, and income demonstrate insignificant effects.

**Table 4:** Effects of General Knowledge about the Tea Party Movement on Anger, Binary Logistic Regression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variables</th>
<th>Coefficients (standard errors)</th>
<th>Changes in predicted probabilities (min→max)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tea Party Knowledge</td>
<td>0.626*** (0.081)</td>
<td>0.358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-0.003 (0.004)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>0.055 (0.128)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>0.864*** (0.270)</td>
<td>0.169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-0.029 (0.062)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>0.053 (0.047)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td>0.659*** (0.069)</td>
<td>0.478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>0.695*** (0.542)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1,324</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Log Pseudolikelihood        | -745.56                      |                                             |

***$p < 0.01$ level; **$p < 0.05$ level; *$p < 0.10$ level.

Table 5 presents coefficients with robust standard errors for the binary logistic regression analysis regarding the effects of visiting websites associated with the Tea Party movement based on anger. The results indicate that likelihood of visiting Tea Party websites has a significant effect on anger ($p < 0.01$). These significant effects are reflected in Hypothesis 2b, in which individuals who visit Tea Party associated websites have a greater probability of expressing anger. Regarding the change in predicted probability, an individual who has visited Tea Party
associated websites has a 14 percent greater likelihood of expressing anger.

Table 5: Effects of Visiting Tea Party Associated Websites on Anger, Binary Logistic Regression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variables</th>
<th>Coefficients (standard errors)</th>
<th>Changes in predicted probabilities (min→max)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visiting Tea Party Websites</td>
<td>0.600*** (0.002)</td>
<td>0.144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.002 (0.005)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>0.159 (0.157)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>1.278*** (0.360)</td>
<td>0.301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>0.066 (0.075)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>0.057 (0.057)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td>0.409*** (0.091)</td>
<td>0.383</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-3.526*** (0.670)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>740</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Log Pseudolikelihood        -745.56

***p < 0.01 level; **p < 0.05 level; *p < 0.10 level.

Similar to the previous analysis, the results indicate that race has a positive and significant effect in explaining anger (p < 0.01). Individuals who classify their race as “White” have a 30 percent greater likelihood of expressing anger about mainstream politics. Finally, results also indicate that ideology has a statistically significant effect on anger (p < 0.01). Individuals who identify with very conservative ideologies have a 39 percent greater likelihood of having anger than those who have very liberal ideologies. On the other hand, age, gender, level of education, and income demonstrate insignificant effects.

Table 6 below presents coefficients with robust standard errors for the binary logistic regression analysis regarding the effects of engaging in Tea Party-based social networking sites.
based on anger. As predicted in my Hypothesis 2c, the results for this independent variable indicate that engaging in Tea Party-based social networking sites has a significant effect on anger about mainstream politics (p < 0.01), which can be partly attributed to the speed in which ideas, messages, and shared cues and appeals are spread among sympathizers. Regarding the change in the predicted probability, an individual who has engaged in Tea Party-based sites is 9 percent more likely to express anger about mainstream politics.

**Table 6: Effects of Engaging in Tea Party-based Social Networking Sites on Anger, Binary Logistic Regression**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variables</th>
<th>Coefficients (standard errors)</th>
<th>Changes in predicted probabilities (min→max)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engage in Tea Party Social Networking Sites</td>
<td>0.389*** (0.265)</td>
<td>0.093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-0.000 (0.005)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>0.151 (0.156)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>1.251*** (0.346)</td>
<td>0.296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>0.074 (0.074)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>0.064 (0.056)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td>0.442*** (0.091)</td>
<td>0.410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-3.357*** (0.091)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>739</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Log Pseudolikelihood = -484.87

***p < 0.01 level; **p < 0.05 level; *p < 0.10 level.

At the same time, the results indicate that race has a positive and significant effect in explaining anger (p < 0.01). Individuals who classify their race as “White” have a 30 percent greater likelihood of expressing anger about mainstream politics. Finally, results also indicate that ideology also has a statistically significant effect in explaining anger (p < 0.01). Individuals
who identify with very conservative ideologies have a 41 percent greater likelihood of having anger than those who have very liberal ideologies. On the other hand, age, gender, level of education, and income demonstrate insignificant effects.

Table 7: Effects of the Tea Party Being Active in One’s Community on Anger, Binary Logistic Regression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variables</th>
<th>Coefficients (standard errors)</th>
<th>Changes in predicted probabilities (min→max)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tea Party Active in Community</td>
<td>0.351** (0.137)</td>
<td>0.082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-0.001 (0.004)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>0.026 (0.137)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>1.031*** (0.290)</td>
<td>0.296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>0.056 (0.066)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>0.051 (0.051)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td>0.783*** (0.075)</td>
<td>0.410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-4.812*** (0.558)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1098</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Log Pseudolikelihood -643.28

**p < 0.05 level; ***p < 0.01 level; *p < 0.10 level.

The results in Table 7 above indicate support for Hypothesis 2d in regards to the effects of Tea Party activity in a community on anger (p < .05). With respect to the change in predicted probability, if an individual is in a community where the Tea Party is active, that individual will have 8 percent greater likelihood of expressing anger about the state of mainstream politics.

Regarding the control variables, the results indicate that race has a positive and significant effect in explaining anger (p < 0.01). Individuals who classify their race as “White” have a 29 percent
greater likelihood of having anger. Additionally, results also indicate that ideology has a statistically significant effect on anger (p < 0.01). Individuals who identify with very conservative ideologies have a 41 percent greater likelihood of having anger than those who have very liberal ideologies. On the other hand, age, gender, level of education, and income demonstrate insignificant effects. The second analysis displays my results for the binary logistic regression analysis employing anger as the independent variable along with all other key independent variables (i.e. the presence of the Tea Party activity within the respondent’s community, presidential approval, trust in government, and perceived state of the economy on Tea Party support) in examining the determinants of Tea Party movement support. Robust standard errors were used to avoid any unspecified heteroscedasticity.

The results for the binary logistic regression analysis regarding support for the Tea Party movement with anger as an independent variable are provided in Table 8 below. The results concerning the likelihood that anger affects the support for the Tea Party movement demonstrate statistical significance (p < 0.01). Individuals who express anger have a 14 percent higher predicted probability of supporting the Tea Party movement. These results substantiate Hypothesis 3, which proposed that those who express anger about mainstream politics are more likely to support the Tea Party movement. Additionally, the results indicate that Tea Party activity in a community increases the likelihood of supporting the movement by 15 percent. Additionally, the results indicate that individuals who disapprove President Barack Obama are 60 percent more likely to support the Tea Party movement. Additional significant results indicate how ideology has a 60 percent greater likelihood of increasing the support of the Tea Party movement. Interestingly, this analysis demonstrates significance (p < 0.10) in the level of education by respondents, in which
the more education an individual has, the 19 percent less likely that individual is to support the Tea Party movement. However, trust in government, perceived state of the national economy, age, gender, and level of income display insignificant effects regarding support for the Tea Party movement.

Table 8: Tea Party Movement Support, Ordered Logistic Regression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variables</th>
<th>Coefficients (standard errors)</th>
<th>Changes in predicted probabilities (min-max)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>0.749*** (0.228)</td>
<td>0.143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tea Party Active in Community</td>
<td>0.789*** (0.206)</td>
<td>0.152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approval of Obama</td>
<td>-2.826*** (0.275)</td>
<td>-0.597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust in Government</td>
<td>-0.332 (0.252)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rate National Economy</td>
<td>0.058 (0.174)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.004 (0.007)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-0.065 (0.203)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>-0.302 (0.412)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-0.176* (0.092)</td>
<td>-0.194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>0.045 (0.073)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td>0.729*** (0.109)</td>
<td>0.602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>985</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Log Pseudolikelihood: -331.29

***p < 0.01 level; **p < 0.05 level; *p < 0.10 level.

5.5 Binary Mediation
I conducted binary mediation analysis to examine the mediational effects of anger on the likelihood of support for the Tea Party movement. Mediation analysis investigates the causal mechanisms between the independent and dependent variables by examining how they relate through a third variable, the mediator. As demonstrated in Figure 2 below, typical analyses without mediators assume a direct causal relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable, in which one variable causes one effect. As an example, unmediated interpretations would determine that depending on whether or not the Tea Party movement is active in a community (independent variable), individuals would support or not support the Tea Party movement (dependent variable). However, using a binary mediation model allows me to explore a more nuanced causal path between the independent and dependent variables by including a mediator (here, anger).

Figure 2: Causal Paths and Binary Mediation

I conducted path analyses to test whether anger fully or partially mediates the effects of key determinants of support for the Tea Party movement. Given the nature of my binary dependent variable, I employed standardized logistic regression coefficients to assess mediation. Indications in support of mediation exist when four particular conditions are provided: (a) the predictor (here, Tea Party activity in community, approval of President Barack
Obama, trust in government, and how respondents rate the national economy), (b) the predictor is also correlated with the proposed mediator (here, anger), (c) the proposed mediator is correlated with the outcome variable (here, support for the Tea Party movement), and finally, (d) the effect of the predictor on the outcome variable is changed and elevated when controlling for the proposed mediator (Baron and Kenny, 1986).

Correlational analyses indicated that all four viable mediation models satisfied conditions (a), (b), and (c), where anger mediated the effects of Tea Party activity in community, approval of President Barack Obama, trust in government, and how respondents rate the national economy on support for the Tea Party movement. Path analyses were conducted to test these four meditational models in order to determine whether or not the direct effect of these independent variables would be elevated when controlling for anger in predicting support for the Tea Party movement. These path analyses were conducted while controlling for the effects of age, gender, race, education, income, and ideology.

As demonstrated in Figure 3 below, anger had a mediating effect for each of the four independent variables (Tea Party activity in community, approval of President Barack Obama, trust in government, and how respondents rate the national economy on support for the Tea Party movement) on support for the Tea Party movement. Controlling for anger significantly increased the effects of these four factors on support for the Tea Party movement (p < 0.05). These results indicate that a proportion of the effects of these factors on support for the Tea Party movement was direct, but a significant proportion of the effect was mediated through anger.
Figure 3: Binary Mediation Path Models
The results indicate that anger mediates approximately 15 percent of the total effect of the Tea Party being active in a community, 13 percent of the total effect of approval for President Obama, 32 percent of the total effect of trust in government, and 38 percent of the total effect of perceived condition of the national economy.

The bootstrapping tests (yielding bias-corrected confidence intervals) further demonstrate that these mediation effects are statistically significant (p < .05). Bootstrap methods detect the sampling distribution of the mediated effect. Additionally, bootstrapping tests increase the representativeness of the sample, therefore allowing better generalization of my findings and the theoretical distribution of the general population.

Table 9: Summary of Quantitative Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Significant Quantitative Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 2: The higher one’s exposure to Tea Party public appeals, the more likely one will express anger about mainstream politics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 2a: The higher one’s general knowledge of the Tea Party movement, the more likely one will express anger about mainstream politics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 2b: The more one visits websites associated with the Tea Party movement, the more likely one will express anger about mainstream politics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 2c: The higher one’s engagement is in Tea Party-based social network sites, the more likely one will express anger about mainstream politics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 3: Those who express anger about mainstream politics are more likely to support the Tea Party movement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 4: Anger is likely to be a significant mediator of key factors related to Tea Party support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 4a: Anger is likely to mediate the effect that Tea Party activity (within the respondent’s community) has on Tea Party support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 4b: Anger is likely to mediate the effect of presidential approval on Tea Party support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 4c: Anger is likely to mediate the effect of trust in government on Tea Party support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 4d: Anger is likely to mediate the effect of the perceived state of the economy on Tea Party support.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In summary, the results suggest that a significant proportion of the effects of the Tea Party being active in a community, approval for President Obama, trust in government, rating the condition of the national economy are mediated through anger, thereby supporting my hypothesis of what attributes to the increase in support and mobilization of the Tea Party movement among sympathizers. Table 9 above provides a summary of the findings of my quantitative analyses.
Chapter 6: Conclusion and the Future of the Tea Party

6.1 Implications

This thesis has examined the emotive cues and strategic appeals used by the Tea Party movement in the United States. I observed that the negative emotional state of individuals (particularly anger) is linked to the effective mobilization and growing support facilitated by the influence of emotional and attitudinal appeals of the Tea Party movement and its leaders. By merging political opportunity theory and intergroup emotions theory, this thesis offers a novel theoretical framework. Furthermore, by combining in-depth case study research and quantitative analysis, the thesis contributes to continuous and newly developing literature on the Tea Party movement, which calls for more systematic research on the topic.

In the qualitative section of this thesis, I analyzed three specific sources of information—Tea Party websites and blogs, self-endorsed politicians, and Tea Party leader interviews—to investigate the Tea Party rhetoric at the local and national levels across three key issue areas—economy, immigration, and social issues. In order to collect these data, extensive research using Tea Party based websites, original videos of Tea Party leaders during campaigns and rallies, leader interviews, speeches, and direct news sources were examined.

Findings of my qualitative analyses demonstrate that although Tea Party leaders and activists express concern about the current economic recession and the increase in government debt and spending, their rhetoric has translated into opposition and antagonism towards the political elites providing the federal assistance and the individuals deemed the “undeserving poor” who receive it. The strategy used was designed to specifically create racial resentment around the entitlements and handouts to those who are “undeserving,” versus the hard working, and deserving individuals. For example, claims found within the messages and rhetoric of
President Barack Obama allegedly demonstrating favoritism towards minorities over Whites provided cues and appeals to sympathizers who feel that the president does not share the values that “Real Americans” live by. Popular among the rhetoric used by these leaders, the de-Americanization of President Barack Obama demonstrates clear evidence of emotive cues and racism as an emotional appeal. Despite public messages asserting that race is not an important factor for Tea Partiers; race and religion proved to be powerful determinants of national identity for many Tea Partiers, marking the racially explicit difference between “us” and “them.”

By providing qualitative examples of direct messages and quotes, I reveal a repetitive pattern of emotion-laden rhetoric and strategic appeals used among Tea Party leaders and activists to mobilize sympathizers. The quantitative results in this thesis demonstrated that individuals who express dissatisfaction and anger about the current state of mainstream politics in Washington are more likely to support the Tea Party movement. Similarly, increased general knowledge of the Tea Party movement, visiting Tea Party associated websites, and having an active faction of the Tea Party movement in one’s community demonstrated significant results. Table 10 below summarizes both qualitative and quantitative findings.

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20 As mentioned at the beginning of this thesis, it is important to keep in mind that not everyone who is a Tea Party leader or even supporter is racist. Some are clearly and admittedly just angry about the economy and relate to the movement for that reason alone.
Table 10: Summary of Qualitative and Quantitative Findings

Summary of Significant Qualitative and Quantitative Findings

- Hypothesis 1: Tea Party public appeals are likely to employ racial and emotive cues in mobilizing the Tea Party support base.
- Hypothesis 1a: Such racial and emotive cues are likely to be more prevalent in Tea Party leaders' messages at the local level rather than Tea Party leaders' national public appeals.
- Hypothesis 2: The higher one’s exposure to Tea Party public appeals, the more likely one will express anger about mainstream politics.
- Hypothesis 2a: The higher one’s general knowledge of the Tea Party movement, the more likely one will express anger about mainstream politics.
- Hypothesis 2b: The more one visits websites associated with the Tea Party movement, the more likely one will express anger about mainstream politics.
- Hypothesis 2c: The higher one’s engagement is in Tea Party-based social network sites, the more likely one will express anger about mainstream politics.
- Hypothesis 3: Those who express anger about mainstream politics are more likely to support the Tea Party movement.
- Hypothesis 4: Anger is likely to be a significant mediator of key factors related to Tea Party support.
- Hypothesis 4a: Anger is likely to mediate the effect that Tea Party activity (within the respondent’s community) has on Tea Party support.
- Hypothesis 4b: Anger is likely to mediate the effect of presidential approval on Tea Party support.
- Hypothesis 4c: Anger is likely to mediate the effect of trust in government on Tea Party support.
- Hypothesis 4d: Anger is likely to mediate the effect of the perceived state of the economy on Tea Party support.

Summary of Insignificant Qualitative and Quantitative Findings

- Hypothesis 1b: Such racial and emotive cues are likely to be more prevalent in Tea Party leaders' blogs than other public platforms (such as national websites, interviews, and campaign messages).

One limitation of this thesis is the fact that I could only focus and analyze overt messages available to the public versus backdoor deals and conversations that are not so easily exposed to the public or scrutiny of the media. What could not be empirically observed or tested in this analysis is the rhetoric and appeals that are occurring among Tea Party leaders below the surface,
in private meetings, or offices as opposed to that which is said over mainstream media. A future avenue of research can be conducting “critical discourse analysis” to analyze what is “missing” or even “removed” from the public eye. As previously mentioned, the NAACP along with other forms of media exposed and condemned the Tea Party’s use of strong rhetoric almost immediately after it had started being used. As a consequence, even if original posts or e-mails had contained explicit messaging, the posts and links could have been removed. This circumstance did occur at least once, where a news outlet or recipient mentioned what had been said, provided a link to the website, and that link was no longer available. This limitation in past and maybe future research regarding the exposure of rhetoric that is used openly to the media and public, and what is truly felt and said within closed doors. Political leaders such as those supporting the Tea Party movement may explicitly say one thing to the public while saying another more controversial version of that same opinion to close supporters, financial supporters, and colleagues.

6.2 Future Research

In many ways, the Tea Party has enabled conservatives to rebrand their ideology and mobilize their grassroots movement in new ways through the use of social media and technology to reach out to sympathizers and supporters (Williamson et al., 2011: 35). Although many Americans were still unfamiliar with the Tea Party movement until late 2010, early 2011, future research could expand on the factors leading up to the increasing use of social media by the specific age groups of supporters.

The racially explicit cues and messages used by Tea Party leaders and activists were successful in gaining more than just the attention of supporters. What began as a wave of information and influence over potential sympathizers who expressed similar feelings of anger
simultaneously captured negative media attention denoting their use of racially charged rhetoric. This resulted in the attention from non-conservative media outlets, critics, and even the NAACP, which successfully limited the ability of Tea Party leaders to use racially explicit messaging and methods of appealing to the public. However, increasing restrictions and condemning outspoken racial elements did not and has not prevented suggestive rhetoric and appeals from being used to mobilize supporters. The fact that the Tea Party has become a coherent political movement due to shared ideological stances and symbolic appeals allowed leaders and activists to use conservative media outlets as a resource to continue mobilizing supporters (Williamson et al., 2011).

Of particular interest was the rate at which racially explicit leaders were asked to quietly step down and being replaced or openly endorsed by minority political figures and activists of influence. By encouraging minorities to step up and speak in favor of Tea Party ideologies and founding principals, the movement quickly realized the change in appeal that had to take place. These individuals expressed similarly implicit messages by denoting President Obama and his policies as un-American and a threat to real patriots who have the interest of their country at heart, and not personal interest/benefit at heart. However, there is no question that in the end, it may be the extreme rhetoric and refusal to comprise on their methods of appeal that will have caused the Tea Party’s popularity to become stagnated (CBS/New York Times, 2010).

Similarly, the decline of the Tea Party movement has been attributed to more than just being affected by the use of explicit racial cues and messages to appeal to sympathizers and supporters. An expansive area of future research about the Tea Party is the movement’s reason for decline credited to the Republican Party. A majority of Tea Party supporters identify with the Republican Party. For this reason, although these individuals share many of the same
conservative values, there are still differences between Tea Party Republicans and non-Tea Party Republicans in regards to positions and priority of certain political, economic, and social concerns (Parker and Barreto, 2013; Rapoport et al., 2013).

Primarily, the main difference between Tea Party leaders and activists and Republican politicians is that Tea Partiers are not so much concerned about winning as much as they are about getting their ideologies and anger about the state of mainstream politics across to the nation. Tea Partiers care more about what their political representatives believe than whether or not they can win, proclaiming that compromising on politics means compromising on principle (Parker and Barreto, 2013; Rapoport et al., 2013). As demonstrated in this thesis, the explicit messages and rhetoric used by Tea Party leaders to appeal to sympathizers threatened and ended many of these individuals’ political reputations at both the national and local level. However, there are those who identified, supported, and campaigned for the Tea Party and were even considered Tea Party Sweethearts who stepped down as being a face of the movement in order to save their political careers. Such an example is Representative Michelle Bachmann, who was a founder of the Tea Party caucus. After gaining (both positive and negative) attention for being politically and rhetorically explicit, she almost entirely removed herself from the spotlight so as to salvage the future of her political reputation and career as a Republican candidate. Similar politicians facing public disapproval after being Tea Party favorites include Maine Governor Paul LePage, Florida Governor Rick Scott, and Wisconsin Representative, Scott Walker. The threat of losing political careers on accounts of expressing extremist ideologies has caused many similar Tea Party favorites to abandon representing the movement in order to appeal and accommodate a broader constituency. While Republican politicians are more concerned with their personal political advancement, there are Tea Party leaders and activists who are willing to
sacrifice their mainstream political careers in order to defend the movement’s political agenda.

Future research should also focus on the evolution of the complicated relationship between the Tea Party and the Republican Party. The Tea Party has successfully mobilized an active support base, winning over many of the most politically active supporters who no longer identify with the Republican Party. However, because the Tea Party’s founding ideologies call for smaller government, balanced budgets, and individual political and economic liberties, its political stance coincides to a certain extent with the Republican Party.

The emotion-laden cues, messages, and rhetoric continue to play a vital role in the future and development of the Tea Party movement. It is important to keep in mind that the empirical scope of this research was limited to the year 2010, when the Tea Party movement reached its peak in mobilization of supporters. Nevertheless, examples of extreme rhetoric regarding immigration and social issues continue to mark the importance and relevance of the Tea Party among the political environment of this nation to this day. Tea Party messages regarding immigration during 2010 was limited to rhetoric and support for S.B. 1070 and feelings of resentment against undocumented individuals. Still, although Tea Party allegiance lies with conservative ideologies, the battle for public office and relaying the movement’s ideologies are proving to be controversial among Tea Party Sweethearts and Republican candidates. For example, in the battle regarding immigration legislation and attempts to appeal to large Latino populations, Tea Party Sweethearts Marco Rubio and Ted Cruz have been criticized for either being too extremist to appeal to Republican constituents, or too moderate for Tea Party extremists. Although the Tea Party has always intended to appeal to all Americans, their rhetoric and strategies of emotional appeals of the general population are limited to their very conservative points of view.
Tea Party movement support reached over 23 percent in 2010 and declined by almost two thirds to 8 percent in 2012 (Rapoport et al., 2013). What began as a grassroots movement against big government and fiscal concerns has been taken over by extremist Republicans with resentment and personal agendas. In an attempt to re-launch the Tea Party, leaders and activists, including Republicans have already started to strategically fund Tea Party groups to start promoting the movement via media outlets including websites and social networking sites. These endorsements have resulted in the coming back of major Tea Party leaders such as Michelle Bachmann, who along with other members of the Tea Party caucus, are geared towards making an impact in Washington and across the nation by having a lobbyist and a political advisor. Determined to make their voices heard against mainstream politics and the economy, the future of the Tea Party movement is not complete. Depending on how the Tea Party appeals to supporters and sympathizers, their strategies and use of rhetoric will remain under the careful scrutiny of the mass media and public opinion and will be the ultimate determinant of the Tea Party movement’s success.
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Vita

Rebeca B. Puentes is a recent graduate of the University of Texas at El Paso. Having received her Bachelor's degree in International Relations and Minor in German from Kent State University in 2010, she holds a Master’s degree in Political Science with a focus on International Relations from the University of Texas at El Paso.

Ms. Puentes has professional experience with both domestic federal agencies and international organizations and non-governmental organizations. Her previous work experience includes an internship at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP) in Geneva, Switzerland, where she worked as a research and event-coordinating assistant for a United Nations Peacemaking Conference in Geneva concerning a variety of global issues including human trafficking, non-proliferation, immigration, and other security issues.

Ms. Puentes has also worked for the United States Federal Government as a Foreign Affairs, Public Affairs, and Operations and Management Assistant with the U.S. Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) in El Paso, Texas. This position allowed her to help maintain a positive and active relationship between the United States and Mexico in matters of cross-border security and other issues pertaining to the Rio Grande. Ms. Puentes currently works in Washington, D.C. where she hopes to continue her career in the Federal Government and ultimately work with the United States Department of State.

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