OBAMA AS FOLK DEVIL: A FRAME ANALYSIS OF RACE, NATIONALISM, AND MORAL PANIC IN THE ERA OF OBAMA

A Thesis

Presented to the faculty of the Department of Sociology

California State University, Sacramento

Submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in

Sociology

by

Jeanine L. Cunningham

SPRING 2012
Student: Jeanine L. Cunningham

I certify that this student has met the requirements for format contained in the University format manual, and that this thesis is suitable for shelving in the Library and credit is to be awarded for the thesis.

__________________________, Graduate Coordinator
Mridula Udayagiri, Ph.D.       Date

Department of Sociology
Abstract

of

OBAMA AS FOLK DEVIL: A FRAME ANALYSIS OF RACE, NATIONALISM, AND MORAL PANIC IN THE ERA OF OBAMA

by

Jeanine L. Cunningham

Using participant observation at Tea Party rallies held in Northern California in 2010 and 2011, this research analyzes how the movement performs diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing tasks and explores how the movement operates within allegations of racism, a nationalistic orientation, and a foundation built upon moral panic. Findings suggest the application of three primary diagnostic frames: the U.S. economy, the Affordable Care Act, and President Obama as the primary threat. Analysis suggests three prognostic frames: acquiring knowledge, voting undesirable people out of office, and getting involved in political organizing. As motivational frames Tea Party framers used concepts of saving the economy, stopping socialism, providing for children’s futures, protecting liberty, and “taking back America” as rationale for action. Racism was addressed and denied but not explicitly denounced. Nationalistic and exclusionary tendencies were demonstrated through diagnostic and motivational framing tasks.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dr. Kevin Wehr, for having a ridiculous amount of patience, cultivating and challenging me theoretically and methodologically, assuring confidence in me, and affording me a degree of autonomy.

Dr. Cid Martinez, for theoretical enlightenment, encouragement, and conversations about the San Joaquin Valley that helped put many things into perspective.

The people at the Institute for Social Research for fostering my research skills and for a wide variety of support throughout the graduate school process.

Kelly Nelson, for mentally sharing the thesis writing process with me.

Jeff Kernen, for love, emotional support, motivation, sharing the process of higher education, and indulging hundreds of hours of discussion about this project.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Orientation</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance of the Study</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of the Research Questions</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. LITERATURE REVIEW</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Movements and Framing</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationalism and the Imagined Community</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Construction of Moral Panic</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Race Theory</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discourse on Obama</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. DATA COLLECTION AND PROCESS OF ANALYSIS</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observing the Movement</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event Selection</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Experience of the Researcher</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Analytical Considerations

Diagnostic Framing

Prognostic Framing

Motivational Framing

Emergent Factors

5. CONCLUSION

Appendix A. National Tea Party Factions and Conservative Organizations

Appendix B. Rally Descriptions and Attributes

Appendix C. Catalogue of Informational Materials

References
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figures</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The “Deficettes”: women holding numbers representative of the federal deficit</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Participant sign relating Obama’s politics to socialism</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Sign addressing socialism, big government, and Obama, Pelosi, and Reid</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. A collection of signs regarding the denial of racism</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Obama and other liberal leaders of contempt</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Front and back of sign criticizing liberal media and politicians</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Borders, Language, Culture</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Example of a strategy booklet</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Examples of topical booklets</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. A flyer encouraging involvement on a congressional campaign</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Taking back the U.S.A.</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Infiltrator signs</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 1
Introduction

The 2008 presidential election presented voters with an unprecedented prospect: for the first time in over 200 years of U.S. election history a major political party was represented by a Black presidential candidate. The implications of Barack Obama’s racial and ethnic identity suggested the beginning of a vitalizing socio-cultural paradigm shift in America; however, the reaction following Obama’s Democratic nomination was, at times, neither constructive nor rational. Popular conservative media brimmed with stories of suspicion and speculation over Obama’s well documented educational achievements, religious affiliation, and professional qualifications (Ayers and Dohrn 2009), while other outlets glibly praised Obama’s image and character to the point of unwarrantedly evoking a brand of superhero status (McLaren 2009; Metzler 2010). An array of pre-election propaganda began permeating popular media and popular culture including the distribution of slanderous chain letters through email and social networking sites, schoolyard name calling on t-shirts and bumper stickers (e.g. Obama Bin Laden, A village in Kenya is missing its idiot, Vote for the American: Elect McCain), and the more sinister dissemination of misinformation regarding Obama’s birthplace, religion, and sexual activities through You Tube and other online sources (Ayers and Dohrn 2009).

Though mudslinging and attempts at character assassination are not foreign to any U.S. election process, anti-Obama propaganda had an ominous edge focused upon the social and physical aspects of the man, rather than just his politics (Burghart and Zeskind 2010). Beginning with his bid for presidency, Obama’s racial and ethnic identity became
the issue that would underlie public discussion yet often remain explicitly unmentioned (Edge 2010; Peery and Bodenhausen 2009). Given the historic unease of U.S. race relations, it is not surprising that the first election of a Black president would result in significant social strain (Delgado and Stefancic 2001; Hunt and Wilson 2009). Within weeks of President Obama’s inauguration, a contentious and forceful conservative movement, known broadly as the “Tea Party,” vaulted into public awareness. Forged by concern regarding the current state of U.S. financial affairs, the Tea Party movement also served as a prominent symbol and voice of opposition to the new president.

Shortly after its inception, the Tea Party began to amass substantial support from a conservative political constituency. Ideological criticism and allegations of racist rather than financial motives for foundation surrounded the movement’s formation, resulting in the initial dismissal of the stamina of the movement by the political left (Berlet 2011). However, much like conservative reaction to Obama’s candidacy, derision and dismissal did not make the Tea Party disappear. As observed through the course of this study, media attention and public criticism appeared to result in the movement developing a greater sense of self-awareness, impacting both identity development and political influence. This research sought to examine the dynamic nature of the Tea Party movement. Specifically, the purpose of this study is to 1) analyze how the Tea Party movement performs the core diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing tasks of a social movement as outlined by Snow and Benford (1988), and 2) to explore how the movement responds to and operates within allegations of racism, a nationalistic orientation, and a foundation built upon moral panic.
Historical Orientation

Currently, the “Tea Party” moniker is used by a variety of national and local conservative political factions, many of which carry out their own events and vary slightly in ideological focus (for a listing and description of factions, see Appendix A); however, most all Tea Party groups band together to create a strong presence at protests and public rallies (Burghart and Zeskind 2010). Allusion to the Tea Party namesake—the Boston Tea Party—is meant to incite a political fervor analogous to the radical events that took place in 1773. The Boston Tea Party was a reaction to colonists being forced to adhere to the rule of a government by which they were not represented; hence the familiar phrase “no taxation without representation” as a slogan of British colonists directed at the British House of Parliament (Middlekauff 1982). Generally focused upon the concepts of fiscal responsibility, constitutionally limited government, and the maintenance of a free market (Tea Party Patriots 2010; Tea Party Express 2012a), the goals stated by today’s Tea Party movement are not related to the governmental representation issues encountered by British colonists, but the fervor remains.

Widespread use of the “Tea Party” term was partially the result of an offhand comment made by a cable channel stock analyst named Rick Santelli (Burghart and Zeskind 2010; Gupta 2011; Tea Party Express 2012b). As a reaction to a section of funding set aside from the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to help homeowners refinance mortgages in crisis, on February 19, 2009, while broadcasting from the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, Santelli chided the government for subsidizing the “losers” struggling to pay their mortgages while not rewarding people who “might
have a chance to actually prosper down the road” (Burghart and Zeskind 2010). He then went on to famously state, “We’re thinking of having a Chicago Tea Party,” while stock traders around him broke into applause (Gupta 2011). The target of the federal money, also the “losers” to which Santelli referred, was the millions of Americans who had both taken and been taken advantage of by sub-prime mortgage lending over the last decade. Santelli’s anti-populist rant made him a hero to conservatives, while the invocation of the term “Tea Party” and its implications transformed into a vessel for conservative grievances. In an ironic turn, the Tea Party movement asserts itself as a populist movement, a claim that has been met with much criticism.

While a Democratic majority rose to power after the 2008 election and the focus of the U.S. public turned from the election to the personal and political actions of its newly elected leaders, the Tea Party movement began to form. One month after President Obama was sworn into office, Tea Party events began to take place across the nation cited as protest of the $825 billion American Recovery and Reinvestment Act signed by the president in January 2009 (Hudson Teslik 2009). Tea Party participants cited anger with President Obama and Democratic leaders over the poor state of the U.S. economy, the continuation of federal bailouts for large corporations, Obama’s proposed healthcare reform act, and the prospect of climbing taxes. However, though the federal economic stimulus plan was a project of President Obama, the economy did not simply spoil upon the day Obama took office. For all Americans, the signing of the stimulus plan by the new president served both to develop awareness and to heighten alarm regarding the enduring problems of the U.S. economy.
As Tea Party members noted economic concern as the grounding of the movement, the use of personal attacks regarding the race, politics, and character of President Obama became an overarching hallmark of the movement (Burghart and Zeskind 2010). However, before the birth of the Tea Party movement, political pundits took to disparaging Obama before he was even elected: in 2008, during his May 21 radio program, bombastic conservative commentator Rush Limbaugh stated that Obama was the “affirmative action candidate,” because he was a “Black guy” allowed to slip through the “feminazi” plan to eliminate jobs for White males (Media Matters for America 2008). The invectives continued: six months after Obama took office, conservative political pundit and Tea Party figurehead, Glenn Beck, stated on air in July of 2009, that “Obama has a deep seated hatred for White people or the White culture” (The Huffington Post 2009a). Beck was never moved to provide evidence for his claim. As demonstrated by the signs proudly exhibited by Tea Party members, coupled with displays concerning the perceived communist/socialist/fascist state of the U.S. economic system under President Obama’s leadership, the words and sentiment of Beck and other pundits propagated throughout the movement (The Huffington Post 2009b).

While not solely responsible for the formation of the Tea Party movement, Beck and other conservative pundits may have helped fuel trepidation and disquiet associated with the election of a Black president among those who identify with the Tea Party. Empirical evidence has demonstrated a relationship between Tea Party members and prejudice: in 2010, researchers at the University of Washington released the results of a multi-state study, finding that prejudice toward Blacks and Latinos is significantly higher
among Tea Party supporters than among those who oppose the Tea Party movement (Parker 2010). Moreover, as the Tea Party movement evolved further from a base of economic concern, a wider net was cast for subjects of derision including immigrant groups, Muslims, and recipients of government assistance (Berlet 2011; Burghart and Zeskind 2010).

**Significance of the Study**

The goals of this study are to explore how the movement operates in relation to the criticisms of the movement’s identity while examining how the Tea Party movement performs the core framing tasks of a social movement. With six major national Tea Party factions, a litany of Tea Party-linked conservative organizations, countless locally established meet-up groups, and an (ever-shifting) membership in the hundreds of thousands, what elements bind the newly established Tea Party community together? Social movements are characterized as groups of people with a shared history and a shared issue or concern (Tilly 1998). In the case of the Tea Party movement, national financial concerns were the initially stated purpose for foundation; however, a number of other binding issues are both addressed by the movement and asserted by critics.

Social movements are formed in order to address and defeat a real or perceived threat. A poll performed by *The New York Times* (2010) found that Tea Party members were overwhelmingly White, relatively well-educated, and conservative. Tea Party members have claimed the movement to be both grassroots and populist, meaning they perceive themselves to be representative of the sentiment of the general population. Much in line with moral panic, Canovan (1981) describes reactionary populism, a form of
action and rhetoric aiming to rally a specific racial or ethnic group against “others” seen as a threat to society. Given the history of issues by which the Tea Party movement is motivated, a 2010 report by researchers from the Institute for Research & Education on Human Rights (IREHR) argues that the movement is not merely populist; instead, it is nationalist. Nationalism is a nebulous concept, as variations in people, location, and time can change its meaning within different situations (Anderson 1991; Gerteis & Goolsby 2005). However, Anderson (1991:6) defines a nation as, “an imagined political community- and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign,” stating that nationalism occurs when nations are invented where they did not previously exist. A major component of this “invention” is the manner in which prospective members are included or excluded (Gerteis & Goolsby 2005).

Moral panic theory provides a framework through which to examine the establishment of the Tea Party community network. Moral panic literature is very clear about the demographics of whom and what tend to be the targets of fear and therefore catalysts for widespread politicized reaction (Cohen 1972; Goode & Ben-Yehuda 1994): an abundance of literature on various topics framed by moral panic theory note racism and xenophobia as moral panic catalysts (Aitken 2001; Cocca 2002; Herndon 2005; Welch 2003). However, regardless of the catalyst, or the “folk devil” object of derision, moral panic operates as a function of defining what is deviant by a particular culture or group (Cohen 1972). The manner through which a person or group becomes labeled as deviant is often the result of being considered an outsider by another social group (Becker 1963): deviance labeling can be the result of fear or the assertion of dominance. Within
the moral panic model, the fear and panic is fueled by a combination of the media and influential individuals: with the conservative media leading the way for anti-Obama sentiment, the formation of the Tea Party embodied the tenets of a moral panic.

Moral panic theory provides a framework to examine the Tea Party’s motivations and influences, but the theory does not lend to deriving the nuanced focus on racial and ethnic identity found within movement rhetoric. Both discrete and blatant racism (specifically, racist rhetoric) have been documented throughout the life of the movement (Burghart and Zeskind 2010): the Tea Party has responded to the allegations both with defiance and denial. Critical race theory argues that context adds to the assault factor of racist speech, and posits that racist speech is an almost acceptable part of the cultural vernacular to those unaware of their privilege (Matsuda, Lawrence, Delgado & Crenshaw 1993). Historically accepted, racist discourse is ignored in favor of protecting First Amendment rights, which are selectively granted based on majority or minority status. As the Tea Party is a self-defining, selective community, those who do not fall into the criteria for inclusion are subject to being labeled as catalysts of fear. It is within the assignment of the folk devil status that racism is allowed to develop under the semblance of defending majority group privilege.

A shared sense of fear may be enough to spark a panic and remain as a long term thematic impetus for action, but if the object of panic is significant enough to maintain lasting impact, a full social movement may develop. As Victor (1998:543) notes, “A moral panic often gives rise to social movements aimed at eliminating threatening deviants and may generate moral crusades and political struggles over use of the law to
suppress the dangerous deviants.” Over the course of President Obama’s term, the Tea Party has begun to create a cultural and political legacy: though national membership continues to fluctuate (Burghart and Zeskind 2010), the movement has lasted for three years and pulled out major political gains, including winning a Republican majority in the House of Representatives in the 2010 election. Further, during the 2010 election, the Tea Party movement gained the development of the wholly Republican, so-called “Tea Party Caucus” within the United States House of Representatives and Senate.\(^1\)\(^2\) In a different facet of the movement, “Birthers,” or those who maintain that President Obama is not a citizen of the United States and is being deceptive about the authenticity of his birth certificate, have found a home for over three years within multiple Tea Party factions (Burghart and Zeskind 2010). In February 2012, members of the 1776 Tea Party faction established a Birther super Political Action Committee, aimed at discrediting the president before the 2012 election (Burghart 2012).

According to Klandermans (1984), in order for a social movement to be successful participants must possess a shared sense of a problem and have the desire to engage in collective action. Snow and Benford (1988:199) concur with Klandermans, but add that in order for action and mobilization to \textit{stay} successful, a social movement must robustly perform what they call core “framing tasks.” Framing tasks include three components: diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational (Snow and Benford 1988), and each task serves a different purpose for the development of the movement. Diagnostic

\(^1\) A discussion of specific Tea Party political gains in the 2010 election, along with the effects of Tea Party influence on the actions of elected officials is not within the scope of this project and will be considered for future research.

\(^2\) It is important to note that the Tea Party is not a distinct political party; rather, it is a conglomeration of generally conservative members involved in collective action. Even among Tea Party members, the win of a Republican majority is controversial and does not represent the ideology of all members and factions (Burghart and Zeskind 2010).
framing refers to how the movement identifies the problem on which the movement is focused, prognostic framing is used to suggest solutions to the problem, and the purpose of motivational framing is to provide a call to action (Snow and Benford 1988). Framing tasks are not static and are performed continuously throughout the life of the movement. Using the identification of framing tasks in order to structure the analysis of the Tea Party allows a complete picture to develop of the evolution of the movement.

Analysis of the Research Questions

This research explores how the Tea Party responds to and operates within criticisms of the movement’s identity (i.e. racism, nationalistic orientation, moral panic) and analyzes how the Tea Party movement performs the core diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing tasks of a social movement as outlined by Snow and Benford (1988). Investigation of the research questions was performed through participant observation at Northern California Tea Party events over the course of 16 months, from May 2010 to August 2011. Field notes, pictures, informational material, and interactions from eight major Tea Party rallies were analyzed and included in this analysis. All events were open to the public. As a way to gather context and understand Tea Party-specific rhetoric, I also attended multiple other informational meetings, ad hoc protests, and lectures over the course of the sixteen months; however, those events are not explicitly used in the analysis of this study unless noted.

Ethnographic research, according to Tilly (1998), is the preferred method for understanding a social movement as detailed ethnography strives to illustrate the whole picture of a movement by exploring content and context. It is therefore important to
understand the theoretical basis for social movement formation and to be able to understand how a particular movement exemplifies and varies from theory. In order to keep the scope of this research within the confines of a thesis, I chose simple participant observation as the method by which to complete the study. Lichterman (2002) notes that social movement participant observation can generally fall into two categories: field driven and theory driven. Whereas field-driven research allows theory to emerge in the process of analysis, theory-driven research requires the researcher to enter the field already driven by a thematic or theoretical framework. Due to the developing and evolving nature of the Tea Party movement, this project required a mixture of pre-determined theoretical frames and a field-driven approach to observation. Therefore, field notes, pictures, informational material, and interactions were analyzed using the frames of moral panic theory, literature on nationalism, critical race theory and frame analysis; emergent issues developed within the field are noted as existing outside the theoretical framework.

As the Tea Party movement is a relatively new part of the American cultural landscape, a dearth of scholarship exists on the movement. Through this research, I wanted to investigate beyond fundamental descriptors of the Tea Party and explore how the movement operates on a micro and mezzo-level within the context of high-participation Tea Party rallies. By engaging in participant observation, I was able to examine how Tea Party framers and participants performed and participated in framing tasks in order to develop the identity and define the purpose of the movement. Using Snow and Benford’s (1988) core framing tasks to structure analysis, I was able to explore
Tea Party-asserted identity and ideology in relation to three major criticisms of the movement: a racist underpinning, a nationalistic orientation, and a foundation built upon moral panic. In order to identify and understand the existence, or lack thereof, and nuances of those external identity factors, I used tenets of critical race theory, moral panic theory, and literature on nationalism to frame the organization of data analysis, anticipating a degree of overlap between performance of the core framing tasks and presence of the identity factors. In addition to contributing to academic literature on the Tea Party movement, this research adds to analysis of the empirical application of core framing tasks, critical race theory, moral panic theory, and literature on nationalism.
Chapter 2
Literature Review

In order to better understand the socio-political characteristics of the Tea Party movement, this study examines two separate, yet heavily linked, components of the Tea Party’s identity: the manner in which it behaves as a social movement and the way in which it responds to and operates within the common criticisms of its identity. Multiple theoretical frameworks must be employed in order to provide a structure for the research questions. First, frame analysis and social movement theory will be discussed in order to provide a structural understanding of the development of social movements. Second, in order to provide a lens through which to critically examine criticism of the movement, literature on nationalism, moral panic theory, and critical race theory will be discussed. Finally, because the Tea Party movement is a product of the era of Barack Obama’s presidency, a short section is provided on literature devoted to scholarly analysis of the president.

Social Movements and Framing

Goffman (1974) writes that interactions and interpretations are guided by frameworks that have been both socially and biologically developed within an individual. Frames are “schemata of interpretation” used for guiding behavior (Goffman 1974:21). A frame allows an individual the ability to situate knowledge through a process of locating, perceiving, identifying, and labeling information into something understandable and manageable. Frames operate within all facets of interaction; frame analysis is
therefore employed by a variety of disciplines particularly when investigating strength and degree of relationships.

Among social movement theorists, the frame concept is of particular interest in being able to establish the relationship between individuals and movements. In order for a social movement to thrive, an identity needs to be founded that creates an organization attractive to prospective members and encourages collective action (Klandermans 1984). Identity encompasses a broad spectrum of components, but perhaps the most vital is the way in which a movement presents the purpose of its formation, or the way that it “frames” information for prospective members (Snow and Benford 1988; Snow, Rochford, Worden, and Benford 1986). Frame alignment is the process through which a social movement aligns its interests with those of participants (Snow et al. 1986). If frame alignment is successfully executed, frame resonance, or the mental link between participants and the social movement, occurs.

There are four components to the process of frame-alignment: frame bridging, frame amplification, frame extension, and frame transformation. Frame bridging involves linking previously “unconnected frames regarding a particular issue or problem,” providing a platform for prospective participants to link to a specific issue, and therefore mobilize (Snow et al. 1986: 467). Frame amplification involves the invigoration of certain values or beliefs among participants, thereby encouraging involvement within a social movement. Frame extension is an effort by a social movement organization to broaden its own frame in order to prove more attractive to targeted participants. Finally, frame transformation is an effort by a social movement
organization to reframe itself in order to better “garner support or secure participants”
(Snow et al. 1986:473)

In addition to the ongoing performance of frame alignment, a social movement
must carry out framing tasks in order to properly situate itself for prospective
participants. Snow and Benford (1988) describe what they consider to be the three core
framing tasks of a social movement, which includes diagnostic framing, prognostic
framing, and motivational framing. This research specifically employs Snow and
Benford’s core framing tasks in order to structure analysis regarding the evolving breadth
and identity of the movement. Diagnostic framing involves both defining the problem to
be focused upon and then assigning blame or attributing causality to the problem.
Prognostic framing provides suggestions for solutions to the diagnosed problems and
identifies, “strategies, tactics, and targets” through which to address the problem (Snow
and Benford 1988:201).

Diagnostic and prognostic framing, though they do not have to be performed at
the same time, are totally intertwined: prognostic framing cannot be performed without
first establishing the diagnostic in order to make logical sense to participants. The third
core framing task is motivational framing, which involves providing the rationale for
action and the call for mobilization (Snow and Benford 1988). Motivational framing
provides the final push toward action as diagnostic and prognostic framing by themselves
do not motivate toward to mobilization. In essence, the three framing tasks provide a
cyclical sequence of problem identification, solution suggestions, and explanations for
why problems are important and solutions need to be carried out.
Social movements are inextricably linked with the political climate of a society. Political ideology, law, and legislation serve to shape both the reason and the manner in which members of the public engage in collective action. Tilly (1986) argues that social movements are built around “contentious politics,” or simply, social interaction wherein one party makes a claim about another and the government plays a role in sorting out the claim. In this case, the government can strictly be a third party, or it can be the subject or object of the claim. Social movement engagement, Tilly also contends, requires the possession and use of a certain repertoire of knowledge about the meaning of social movement participation (Tarrow 2008). Therefore, aside from initial elements of foundational similarity, each social movement is conducted differently based upon its existing repertoire of knowledge. Moreover, as social movements on the whole tend to vary from one another, individual movements are often comprised of different groups and factions, with diverse foci and goals (Zald and McCarthy 1980). Factions often disagree on the meaning of and approach toward certain topics therefore resulting in frame disputes. Frame disputes consist of disagreement, “regarding specific objectives, strategies, and tactics” (Benford 1993:678). Therefore, within a single social movement, one single issue can be constructed and addressed through a multitude of presentations and practices.

Tilly (1998) compares social movements to election campaigns: for both, the goal is to create a cultural change, but in the case of a social movement, the movement must be in response to a real or perceived threat to a particular group. Though enthusiastic organizers are imperative in making social movement participation a worthwhile venture,
a successful movement possesses supporters who are a good combination of “worthy, unified, numerous, and committed” (Tilly 1998:467). Tilly (1998) adds that a movement with paltry possession of the preceding elements does not endure; therefore, organizers must strive to maintain the pull of an almost mythological shared history and shared problem among participants in order to keep the movement afloat.

**Nationalism and the Imagined Community**

The Tea Party movement has claimed to be motivated by a populist conviction. Generally, populism is defined as an ideology that supports the removal of power from elites and the resulting empowerment of common people (Canovan 1981). Moreover, another fundamentally defining element of populism is that those seeking empowerment are generally representative of the people within their given population. Considering the demographics (see Chapter 1) and stated missions of Tea Party factions (see Appendix A), at issue is why Tea Party members citing populist grievances have risen up distinctively after the election of President Obama. Critics of the Tea Party have argued that observing the movement as having a nationalistic, rather than populist, ideological orientation allows for a more accurate understanding of the identity of the movement.

The study of the existence of nationalism within social and political movements is pervasive in social movement literature. Nationalism is a multifarious concept involving the shared definition of such elements as a group’s ethnic, religious, linguistic, political, and cultural identity. Furthermore, the manner in which nationalism is constructed and performed is contingent upon a variety of factors affecting a specific group. Chiefly, a nationalist ideology is the product of a group’s strong identification with a specific nation
(Breuilly 1994). However, the identity and composition of what constitutes a “nation” is ambiguous. Moreover, scholars of nationalism have not settled upon a shared definition of the term; therefore, many perspectives exist on precisely how nationalism should be defined. While some scholars suggest that requisition of statehood must be a paramount demand of those movements categorized as acting within a nationalistic framework (Breuilly 1994; Hechter 2000), others argue that defining nationalism by only one criterion (e.g. groups seeking to achieve statehood) limits the field of study on the subject, thereby creating a barrier to studying a diversity of movements (Maxwell 2010).

A different school of thought on defining nationalism lies in the use of binary dichotomies to explain characteristics of different types of groups. Kohn (1946) argued that nationalism resides in two constructions: civic and ethnic. Elaborating upon Kohn, Ignatieff (1994:7) describes civic nationalism as a “patriotic attachment to a shared set of political practices and values.” Further, ethnic nationalism can be defined as, “a sense of peoplehood arising from a common language, culture and genetic type” (Ignatieff 1994:294). However, just as a single definition of nationalism fails to capture the plenary essence of the concept, a binary and comparative system fails in the same way. Multiple scholars have proposed definitions that move beyond a binary structure. Adding to civil and ethnic constructions, Anderson (1991) proposes a third category within the realm of nationalism: creole. Creole nationalism maintains elements of civic and ethnic constructions but is a product of a combination of resettlement and colonization.

Additionally, Anderson (1991) proposes the term “imagined communities” to describe the manner in which people group themselves together with others. Anderson
notes that even though an individual may not be able to know or communicate with another member of their community, a bond remains nonetheless. The imagined community is little more than a social construction; though actual geographic boundaries may or may not exist, the community socially remains a sovereign and restrictive entity. Classifying who, within a society, falls into the prevailing view of nationalist identification can be used as a tool for establishing group inclusion and exclusion. Gerteis and Goolsby (2005:199) note, “national labels always rest on the creation of a collective ‘we’ in opposition to a specified or unspecified ‘they.’” Moreover, Gerteis and Goolsby (2005:201) note that the “they” identity, or the “out-group,” is often defined before the in-group is fully developed, leaving the “we,” “us,” or “our” to evolve as a reaction to the definition of the out-group.

This research uses Anderson’s concept of the imagined community to better understand the identity of the Tea Party movement. Within the analysis, consideration is given to how the movement creates and defines a national identity for Tea Party members (Anderson 1991), and how, as discussed by Tilly (1998), Tea Party framers constantly work to construct a shared history for participants, especially through the use of exclusionary and inclusionary rhetoric (Gerteis and Goolsby 2005).

The Construction of Moral Panic

Applying moral panic theory to analyze the Tea Party helps to provide an understanding of the “shared problems” (Snow and Benford 1988; Tilly 1998) that stimulated the movement. Cohen (1972) theorized that the construction of a moral panic begins with the awareness of either an individual or a social behavior that somehow
appears to pose a threat to the traditional social values of a certain section of the population. The perceived threat then becomes the focus of intense media scrutiny, drawing on and contributing to a passionate reaction by prominent cultural figures (i.e., religious leaders, politicians). Through this process, a “folk devil,” or representative of the threat, emerges. The folk devil becomes the face of the problem, while those who work to solve the problem, the “moral entrepreneurs,” focus on trying to break down and dominate the folk devil (Cohen 1972). Cohen also states that circumstances and feelings surrounding moral panic are often not new; therefore, panic can be constructed by the insertion of one new variable into a pre-existing social condition.

In 1994, sociologists Goode and Ben-Yehuda published a landmark addition to moral panic theory. Building upon Cohen’s ideas, they sought to further develop some of what they considered to be the more ambiguous terms of Cohen’s original theory. Goode and Ben-Yehuda delve deep into identifying the social constructionist roots from which moral panic analysis stems. The authors identify three main origins of moral panic: the grass-roots model, which states that moral panic originates through fear in the general public; the elite-engineered model, where panic is crafted and carried out by a small group of powerful people; and interest-group theory, in which a group with a social or political agenda orchestrate the elements of a moral panic. Their conclusion is, very simply, that different moral panics are constructed and maintained differently; therefore, a more careful examination of those differences is what is needed to guide moral panic analysis (Goode and Ben-Yehuda 1994).
In addition to exploring the construction of moral panic, Goode and Ben-Yehuda (2009) also establish five specific criteria for defining moral panic: concern, hostility, consensus, disproportionality, and volatility. Concern requires that there exists a, “heightened level of concern over the behavior (or supposed behavior) of a certain group or category and the consequences that that behavior presumably causes for the rest of society” (Goode and Ben-Yehuda 1994:156). Hostility is the increase in hostile behavior toward those seen creating the concern. Moreover, part of the hostility criterion includes creating a distinctive “us” versus “them” dichotomy: within this dichotomy emerge the folk devil and the folk hero. Whereas the folk devil is the object of derision, the folk hero is one who steps in to combat the folk devil (Cohen 1972). The third criterion, consensus, implies that there is collective agreement about the nature of the perceived threat. Goode and Ben-Yehuda (2009) note that consensus does not have to involve an entire culture or group; rather, the consensus involves just enough people for the concern to become addressed.

Disproportionality is the fourth element of a moral panic: it is the assumption that the, “concern is out of proportion to the nature of the threat, that it [the concern] is, in fact, considerably greater than that which a sober empirical evaluation could support” (Goode and Ben-Yehuda 1994:158). Goode and Ben-Yehuda (1994) note three key exhibits of disproportionality: exaggeration in numbers when measuring the scope of the problem, nonexistence of the threat, disproportionate attention given to one threat not more obviously threatening than another, and disproportionate attention given to the same subject at two different points in time. Lastly, volatility refers to the nature of the arrival
and disappearance of the panic: moral panic is always defined by its quick arrival into culture and its (sometimes) quick disappearance. Moral panic, however does not have to disappear quickly in order to meet the criteria for its definition. In fact, sometimes a moral panic lingers in a multitude of ways, one of which being the development of a social movement. As Goode and Ben-Yehuda note:

> It is entirely possible that “germinal” social movements and social movement organizations thrown up in the wake of moral panics represent a somewhat different type of movement than those that arise during less heated periods. It is possible, for instance, that their claims are less likely to be checked by credible evidence, that the vilification of “folk devils” is sharper and less restrained, that matters of technical expediency and material resources are less likely to be considered by activists in attempting to achieve their goals (2009:148).

*Agents of panic*

A moral panic does not spark without reason, albeit a possibly misguided one (Cohen 1972), and similarly, not all issues are ripe for a moral panic response (Jenkins 2009). Though the perceived threat may appear to be a relatively new phenomenon, a panic is the result of socially constructed fear over a long standing social problem. As Goode and Ben-Yehuda (1994) state, moral panics are constructed differently by different stakeholders, but the “stake” is often the same: power and (real or perceived) control over a certain domain. Hunt (1997) warns of the misuse of the term “moral panic” both in academia and the media, noting that if scholars misuse or over-use the term then the media will be likely to follow suit, and when the media misuses the term a perceived threat becomes even more inflated. Fraley and Lester-Roushazamir (2004) through content analysis of contrasting media coverage on the death of a leader of the Black Panthers illustrate the dual power of media in how it can simultaneously inflate a
perceived threat and purposefully silence voices of opposition. Media of all varieties plays a major role in the formation and maintenance of moral panics.

Jenkins (2009) examines the moral panic concept by discussing why society fails to engage in panic over certain social issues. Jenkins (2009:36) questions the “surprising lack of panic response” to the trade of child pornography while pondering how society sometimes should perhaps engage in “legitimate panic and well founded hysteria.” In terms of responding to child pornography, he answers his own question: a lack of technological knowledge on the part of law enforcement—or any authority—leads to a misunderstanding of the depth of the problem (and this concept can be applied to any crime or issue where abounding new technology is involved). Jenkins’ conclusion certainly has implications for the role of technology in limiting the spread of moral panic; however, if child pornography is as widespread as he anecdotally suggests, then, by nature, it must fail to ignite moral panic as a ‘true’ moral panic is based not on widespread reality but on the fear from marginal occurrences of certain behaviors blown out of proportion by interest groups.

Public authority figures and politicians are often the vehicle through which moral panic is heightened. Welch, Fenwick, and Roberts (1997) use a content analysis of newspaper articles on crime to examine the language used, or at least reported in the media, by both politicians and academics. Their findings demonstrate how the commentary of those with expert knowledge—scholars, academics, and intellectuals—is often downplayed and given less space when compared to the sensational language used by politicians. Beland (2007) argues that politicians heavily influence the public’s
perceptions of reality by constructing a “collective insecurity”. This collective insecurity allows for easy manipulation and introduction of fear, which can lead to a moral panic. Hawdon (2001) performed a content analysis of Bush and Reagan’s speeches on the “War on Drugs” issue in order to understand a political leaders’ role in creating, maintaining, and ending a moral panic. Similar to Beland, Hawdon found that moral panic was a result of the introduction of unfounded fear into the minds of U.S. citizens.

Religious leaders are yet another group who influence panic. Moral panic resulting from religious influence is often focused on issues dealing with sexuality and body politics. Hunt (1998) examined the early twentieth century religious backlash to masturbation: an issue and activity that has certainly always been with humanity, yet, suddenly at the turn of the century, it garnered undue attention and created a “masturbation panic.” Religious organizations spent years circulating materials and teaching about the shame, sin, and negative medical implications of engaging in masturbation. Their claims, based upon definitions of religious morality as opposed to scientific evidence, managed to influence public policy and incite widespread fear.

Mauro and Joffe (2007) discuss in great detail the lengths that the Religious Right has gone in recent years in order to impose its value system upon the American public and to change public policy. Using Cohen’s framework, the authors specifically examine the political wars fought over reproductive rights and sexual education, spelling out the tactics used by the Religious Right to influence value judgments and fear based on sexuality.
Much of the moral panic literature leads to a similar conclusion: it is those without expert subject knowledge who create and maintain a panic. Social and political issues are dangerous in the hands of ill-informed leaders and media personalities, especially when they are highly influential and have followers who never question the validity or ethical implications of their claims.

Critical Race Theory

Throughout its short history the Tea Party has been frequently charged with the allegation that racism flourishes within the movement. Though the target of racism has primarily been alleged as the president, the Tea Party has also been accused of disparaging other groups including immigrants, ethnic minorities, and Muslims (Burghart and Zeskind 2010). Within the analysis, the manner in which the Tea Party negotiates a relationship between acknowledging racism and participating in nationalistic exclusion and inclusion is explored. In order to examine the nuances of racist rhetoric within the movement, critical race theory is employed.

Critical race theory (CRT) is grounded in legal studies, but further explored in the writings and research of other disciplines. As a response to perceived shortcomings of the civil rights movement, CRT was established in the 1970s by lawyer and professor, Derrick Bell, in order to further expand discourse on race relations in America (Jones 2002). Bell and colleagues found outcomes of civil rights activism and legislation to be less than promising for the future of Black Americans; therefore, after a series of drawbacks and unpromising results within the civil rights movement, CRT grew into a method of theoretical analysis by which to examine racial structures, constructions, and
relationships of the period (Jones 2002). CRT has continued to remain a framework

drawn upon to analyze race, racialism, or a belief in distinctive racial categories, and

racism with society (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas 1995).

As observed by Bell and his colleagues, hard fought civil rights legislation was

not making the impact upon culture as had either been hoped or predicted: unpredictable
dual outcomes began to emerge from the civil rights movement (Metzler 2010). For
example, in the 1954 case of Brown v. the Board of Education, the Supreme Court ruled

that a separation of students is inherently not equal and, therefore, required schools to
desegregate. Bell (1976) noted that though schools were required to integrate Black and
White children, there was no pressure to uphold a minimum standard of educational
quality; the result was forced compliance to the desegregation ruling without a need to
provide comparable opportunities for learning. Another clear example of a dual outcome
arising out of the civil rights era was the implications of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.
The Act ensured and protected the right for African Americans to vote, but it did not
ensure that African Americans would receive any degree of representation in
governmental leadership (Metzler 2010). In both cases, because the White public was

inexperienced with and incognizant of addressing such issues, the disparities remained
unnoticed by Whites. As Metzler summarizes:

CRT was born out of the reality that the formal and legalistic approach to civil
rights in America began but did not end the conversation about how Blacks
experience racism and how Whites have the privilege of opting out of the
conversation unless it provides succor to their own self-interest (2010:399).

CRT initially emerged as a framework through which to examine the U.S. legal
system using the lens of race (Mirza 1999). Critical race theorists use the analysis of
narrative speech and written materials to uncover and explore racial discourse from the perspective of those subordinate to dominant culture, therefore looking to better understand content and context of racial and racist constructions (Matsuda et al. 1993). As Matsuda et al. (1993) discuss, racist speech can be both overtly and covertly employed. Also, covert racism can be either a product of purposeful action or the result of ignorance; however, no matter how it is delivered it is still racism. Additionally, critical race theorists maintain that racist speech and racist policy continues to be an unchecked part of the American culture: if holders of normative power engage in racist behavior it is protected by White privilege, but if Blacks and other minority group members engage in the same behavior little to no protection is afforded (Matsuda et al. 1993).

**Key tenets of critical race theory**

As the general purpose of CRT is to examine the world through a perspective of racial constructions of knowledge, Delgado and Stefancic (2001:8) provide a clear list and description of what they deem to be the central tenets and suppositions of CRT. First, racism is normal in society, it is not an aberration. Racism is a common everyday experience of people of color. Second, a hierarchy within social structure that places Whiteness over color serves two important purposes: the maintenance of ordinariness and interest convergence. “Ordinariness” indicates that racism is hard to address. Post-racial rhetoric, or “color-blind” discourse, serves only to address the most blatant forms of discrimination ignoring the reality and implications of a racialized society. Interest convergence, also called “material determinism,” states that because racism works to
advantage and advance the interests of a spectrum of statuses from White working class to White elites, many White people have no reason to either address racism or work to eradicate it. Third, CRT operates on the basis of a social construction of race thesis. Race and races are products of social thought and social relationships. Races are categories used, invented, and generally manipulated by normative power when convenient. Also, acknowledging that certain groups of humans clearly share physical traits, critical race theorists state that scientific evidence of intra-group diversity is ignored when only physical traits are focused upon: ignoring diversity makes it easier to categorize and manipulate whole groups of people.

The fourth tenet of CRT is differential racialization. Each race has its own origins and ever evolving history; dominant society, however, racializes different minority groups at different times. At any given point, an ethnic or racial group may find favor or disfavor with dominant culture. As a result, popular images and stereotypes of minority groups shift over time. Fifth, CRT examines the impact of intersectionality and anti-essentialism, declaring that absolutely no individual has an easily stated, unitary identity. Globally, every single person has overlapping, potentially conflicting identities, loyalties, and allegiances. Finally, people of color collectively possess a unique history and voice distinct from Whiteness. Because of different histories with oppression, different groups are able to communicate information about oppression that White people are unlikely or unable to know.

_Criticism and endorsement of critical race theory_
Critics of CRT are most concerned with qualitative research analysis and the concept of allowing the legal system to be viewed subjectively through the narrative experiences of those who are not experts within the legal system. Bell (1995) acknowledges that CRT does not adhere to a process of empirical testing, as a qualitative approach allows for deeper understanding of content and development of context. Also, Bell notes that uncovering a subjective view of the legal system (or any other system to which the theory is applied) is exactly the purpose of CRT as critical race theorists aim to give voice to those not in possession of normative power.

Though CRT began as a framework with which to understand the American legal system, the theory has come to be a common form of analysis for many other areas of research. Most commonly, educational research employs a method of using CRT to analyze classroom interactions (Ladson-Billings 2005; Picower 2009). Additionally, immigration law and reform has become commonly approached using CRT (Romero 2008; Sanchez and Romero 2010). Other subjects employing a CRT framework includes environmental justice (Kurtz 2009), mental health (Brown 2008), and public health (Ford and Airhihenbuwa 2010). Using the tenets of CRT as outlined by Delgado and Stefancic (2001), this research will seek to examine the language and rhetoric used by the Tea Party movement.

*Discourse on Obama*

As the Tea Party came into existence directly following the election of President Obama, it is essential to situate the establishment of the movement within that frame. Obama’s political campaign offered to bring the nation a “Change We Can Believe In.”
“Change” is a loaded word: was it meant to imply a change in political parties, the approach to social problems, political ideology, or, maybe, a change in the 200-year-old tradition of having a White president? The word and phrase succeeded in presenting voters with a multifaceted concept open to either optimistic or pessimistic interpretation.

The scholarly analysis of “change” has been quite complex. Some scholars have criticized the hope that Obama’s racial identity will bring about a nationwide change in attitudes toward racism (Fiske, Bergsieker, Russell, and Williams 2009), while others are optimistic that his election will make a difference in national race and class relations (Harris and Davidson 2009). Fiske et al. (2009) state that the habitual vision of Obama in the media is the only reason why White voters became accustomed to, and then voted for, Obama; as a consequence, Obama’s presence is rendered as little more than a symbolic marker of a society trying to lay claim to a post-racial status. According to Fisk et al. (2009), this situation does not accomplish any real social change and further glosses over the issue of race in favor of a color-blind ideology. Conversely, Harris and Davidson (2009) posit that Obama’s election is a most progressive and profound change that has the propensity to bring closer together all people of America’s diverse racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic statuses. However, Harris and Davidson (2009) provide one stipulation: President Obama must entirely fulfill economic promises otherwise the campaign that brought people to choose Obama on Election Day will be all for naught. Harris and Davidson fail to provide any analysis or acknowledgement of racial constructions in the U.S. and therefore advocate a connection between President Obama’s success with economic policy and the perceived result of racial and socioeconomic harmony.
Many scholars have taken a hard look at how race will continue to shape Obama’s public reception. Winant (2009) posits that Obama’s race and ethnicity will continue to be the factor by which he is judged, regardless of his leadership and accomplishments. Other scholars, without taking a stand or making a prediction as to the future of race relations, believe that the most important issue is how the nation continues to respond to Obama’s race (Ford 2009; Peery & Bodenhausen 2009). On the other hand, Harlow (2009), states that President Obama himself has done nothing and will continue to do nothing to improve race relations in the U.S. Harlow posits that before race relations have the slightest opportunity to improve, Obama needs to take on and openly address the issue of strained race relations.
Chapter 3
Data Collection and Process of Analysis

Bearing in mind that the Tea Party movement is young, evolving, and possibly transitory, I set out to accomplish two goals with my research analysis. First, in order to explore and respond to three popular criticisms of the movement’s identity (i.e. racism, nationalism, moral panic) I used critical race theory, literature on nationalism, and moral panic theory to inform my analysis. Second, I sought to theoretically situate the movement by examining the diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing tasks performed by the movement (Snow and Benford 1988). As noted by Jasper (1997), social movement theory and moral panic theory derive from two separate schools of thought; however, Goode and Ben-Yehuda (2009) note a relationship between the rise of moral panic and the resulting action of social movement organizations. Whether a social movement collapses or proves successful depends upon how well framing tasks are performed (Snow and Benford 1988). I chose to engage in participant observation in order to collect data on the Tea Party movement’s identity and employment of framing tasks.

Lichterman (2002) conceives of two kinds of participant observation in relation to social movements: field driven and theory driven. Whereas field-driven research aims to explore and interpret a specific subject matter within applicable theoretical frames, theory-driven research requires the researcher to enter the field guided by a thematic or theoretical framework. Lichterman (2002:122) notes that field-driven research is criticized as failing to examine underlying “social-structural forces” and being non-
generalizable; therefore advocating for the use of theory-driven research. Because I was interested in both elucidating and situating the Tea Party movement I entered the field directed by a mixture of theory-driven and field-driven approaches.

*Observing the Movement*

Over the course of 16 months I engaged in participant observation at Tea Party rallies and events within Northern California. Participant observation not only allowed me to examine the diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing tasks employed by the movement, but also to develop a rich understanding of the context through which those frames are presented to Tea Party participants. During the period of data collection, I attended Tea Party rallies, meetings, lectures, protests, and actively read the blogs of all Tea Party factions active within Northern California. Because of the abundance of data including field notes, pictures, and informational materials acquired from attendance at rallies I chose to focus this research only upon the data collected at rallies. Rallies are different from other events in that they are completely open to public observation, consist of a well-planned program organized ahead of the event date, and attract the largest amount of participation. Meetings, lectures, and protests, while not necessarily private, did not meet all three of the above criteria. I viewed my attendance at non-rally events as a way to provide insight into the language, imagery, and community created by Tea Party participants. Furthermore, reading blog posts helped me to both understand the culture of Tea Party members and to keep informed of all local events.

Tea Party rallies are not protest events *per se*; rather, they are meetings for proclamations, affirmations, and celebrations of movement ideology. Because the
purpose of this research is to understand the identity of the movement while examining how the movement engages in core framing tasks, I observed rallies as holistic units. In order to allow thorough observation, I generally arrived between 15-30 minutes early at each venue in order to familiarize myself with the staging areas, information booths, vendors, and space provided for the event. Moreover, I stayed at least until 15 minutes after the official end of each organized program in order to watch performers, listen to music, or listen to announcements. Rally programs varied from one-and-a-half hours to three hours.

To study the participants on an individual level or to examine “frame resonance” between the movement and the participants would require an unfeasible amount of time, money, and other resources for this thesis; however, this is an area which certainly lends itself to future research. Over the course of rally attendance, I did not purposefully contact or solicit individuals for interviews; however, a fair amount of interaction occurred at each event. Moreover, I did not collect personal or identifying information on individual participants. However, with regard to the identification of participants, I believe there is a distinct difference between the public figures who chose to openly represent themselves at Tea Party rallies and the private citizens in attendance. Public figures will be defined by the following: holding a publicly presented occupation (e.g. members of the media, politicians, judges), making a major presentation in front of the group of private participants, and being an event organizer whose name and picture were prominently displayed or easily found in event literature. Public figures and their affiliations may be mentioned by name in the analysis as they are central to studying both
the unique and analogous identities of the events. In the analysis I refer to the crowd as participants, while speakers, performers, leaders, and public figures are referred to as framers or presenters.

*Event Selection*

From July 2010 to August 2011, I attended eight Tea Party rallies. Because different Tea Party factions and conservative organizations are situated differently throughout the state and the country, I feel it extremely important to note that my observations are relevant only to the region in which I experienced them. Primarily, I chose rallies on the basis of location within the loosely defined area of Northern California. The Northern California region provides a rich and variable palette of Tea Party factions and conservative organizations. Each of the six Tea Party factions monitored by the Institute for Research and Education on Human Rights (IREHR) is heavily represented in Northern California, while dozens of high school and college student movement groups exist within the area as well (Burghart and Zeskind 2010). Moreover, Sacramento is home to the Tea Party Express faction, which is known for conducting national bus tours and hosting rallies at each stop on the tour. Tea Party Express is the creation of the conservative, Sacramento-based Our Country Deserves Better political action committee, which was formed in 2008 to bolster the John McCain-Sarah Palin White House bid (Tea Party Express 2012b).

In addition to location, Tea Party rallies were chosen for location population size, Tea Party faction or conservative organization affiliation, projected attendee amount (which often differed from actual attendance), and the symbolic day chosen by the event
planners (for a list of events, see Appendix B). Of course, Tea Party rallies are not an everyday or every-month occurrence; therefore, rally choices were also limited by the availability of events. Another limitation to event selection stemmed from the diminishing number of events from year to year. From personal observation, I found that the numbers of Tea Party rallies in the Northern California area decreased significantly between 2010 and 2011. Primarily, my goal was to experience a cross section of rallies: even though the Tea Party movement is splintered by faction, the common perception of the movement is that it is one entity. Among all eight rallies, the similarities and differences between ideological factors and accomplishment of framing tasks were absolutely fascinating and contributed to a more developed analysis.

Of the five factors for rally selection, one factor deserves elaboration: the symbolic day chosen for the event. When the Tea Party came into being, the anti-government, anti-tax sentiment “naturally” aligned with using April 15, or Tax Day, as a day for action and mobilization. I found that in addition to rallies scheduled on or around Tax Day, Independence Day (July 4) and Patriot Day (September 11) also preindicated the scheduling of rallies around the region. This does not imply that Tea Party rallies are only held on symbolic days; rather, during the course of collecting data for this study I found that my choices for events in Northern California were often limited to dates on or near a patriotic holiday or symbolic day.

Data Collection

In order to develop a standard set of identifying variables, during each rally I noted perceived event size, types of speakers and performers (e.g. politicians, musicians,
members of the media, private citizens), demographics of the crowd, decorations, music choices, and the number and types of vendors and booths. Additionally, I took pictures at various points throughout each rally in order to document participant attendance. On occasion, I filmed crowd-riveting musical numbers and speeches: the purpose of filming was to both document the presentation and to capture participant reaction.

Data collection during rallies involved three elements: recording simple field notes, taking pictures, and collecting literature provided at the event. At each rally I kept a notepad readily available and recorded notes throughout the event, immediately writing observations into extensive field notes upon returning home. In the process of recording notes I listened to speakers and entertainers, interacted with vendors and booth representatives, and observed the crowd. In addition to handwritten notes, I used a digital voice recorder to describe observations I deemed to be important or too extensive to handwrite, immediately transcribing my digital notes after each event. However, before I did any work with field notes I made a ritual of stopping on my way home from each rally in order to journal about the experience. As each event brimmed with new information, I found journaling to be a way for me to debrief and center my mind while making sense of what I had seen and heard. My journal entries eventually became a part of my data collection in a way that allowed me to clarify meanings and provide insight into the analysis of data (see Bailey 2009).

In addition to the process of note taking, I took pictures of the venue, the booths, sign displays, and clothing slogans, securing verbal permission before taking a picture of any crowd member’s face. In almost all cases, I found that people were very enthusiastic
to have their pictures taken with their signs: clever and controversial signs were defining artifacts of each event. Moreover, at several events a number of people in costume roamed through the crowd including those dressed as the Statue of Liberty, Jesus Christ, Uncle Sam, and other “characters” created for the rally. I documented the characters through a combination of taking pictures, describing them in my notes, and making note of any interactions I had with them.

Finally, I collected informational materials given out at the events (for a list of items see Appendix C). At my first rally, I did not have a systematic plan in place for collecting materials; in fact, though I had thought about the possibility of handouts and information packets, I was surprised at the amount of materials provided. I therefore devised a plan for collecting information upon attending my second rally: I collected items both given away freely at the information booths and those items distributed among the crowd. I did not approach people in the crowd to obtain their handout materials, as I found the approach or overt avoidance of me to be an interesting observation. Also, if I had previously received information from a specific booth at an event prior I did not intentionally collect the materials again.

The Experience of the Researcher

The importance of gaining permission to enter into groups and organizations subject to observation is a fundamental principle of participant observation research (Berg 2005; Taylor and Bogdan 1998). Because the subject of this study is the Tea Party rally as a single unit, and rallies are fully public events, I did not need to receive permission for my presence. In fact, the structure for obtaining such permissions did not
exist at any of the rallies that I attended. Though interactions varied between large and small events, my non-threatening presence seemed to make me an allowable observer.

At all rallies, there were three apparent categories of attendees: Tea Party participants, contrarian protestors, and overt observers. Protestors were either not allowed onto the official grounds reserved for the event or forced to stand back from the crowd, depending upon the venue. Though protestors were not allowed in the crowd, their presence was still a major part of the event. In all cases, local law enforcement performed crowd control. Observers included reporters, students, and curious citizens; though there were never too many of us “overt observers,” it was easy for us to pick one another out of the crowd. At my first rally, which also happened to be one of the smallest, I spent a bit of time situated next to an Asian-American family of three: the boy took notes as his parents provided commentary and interpretation when the boy looked puzzled. Seeing their actions as fellow observers gave me the courage to take out my notepad for the first time.

The sense of community and solidarity among rally participants was palpable. With notepad often in hand and camera strapped across my shoulder, I neither desired nor expected to be covert about my presence; however, I did anticipate some degree of anonymity simply because I was operating within crowds. To the contrary, I believe that I was immediately recognized as an observer at each event I attended. Reflecting upon the factors that made other observers obvious to me, I came to the realization that standing out could be attributed to three factors: not being appropriately dressed, being young, and, more importantly, being alone. More noticeable than my camera (everyone
had a camera) and the notepad I held onto, was my clothing. In order to blend in, I intentionally dressed plainly for each event; however, many Tea Party participants do not dress plainly. They wear red, white, and blue clothing, sport patriotically themed accessories, and don Tea Party t-shirts. I learned quickly that if fading into the background was my goal, I was not wise to wear blue (Democrat), green (Green Party/environmentalist), or purple (union member). Compounding the importance of clothing were the issues of being young and alone. As participants tended to be older, younger people generally stood out among the group. Moreover, younger participants tended to be in couples or with families. No matter where I sat, stood, or roamed at any rally, I was conspicuous.

On the few occasions when I was asked about what I was doing, I was honest about my identity and my purpose for being there: I found that most people thought it interesting that I wanted to study the movement. At a rally in April 2011, after responding to a question about why I was taking notes, the man with whom I was speaking enthusiastically said to me, “Well, this is a sign that we still have impact!” Themes of validation and loss of movement momentum and membership happened to be major talking points at that particular rally. People generally did not approach me for any reason other than to ask about note taking or to give me informational materials. I found that I was sometimes excluded from receiving handout materials, which was a product of being recognized as an overt observer and not a Tea Party participant.

Because every news story I read or watched before beginning this project emphasized the significance of the sometimes-incendiary protest signs displayed by rally
participants, I prepared to take pictures. At the beginning of the study, however, I was timid about pulling out my camera. I soon discovered that my timidity was unwarranted because participants were generally extremely proud of their protest signs and loved to pose for pictures with them. Unless I was photographing a sign in the crowd, I always asked permission before taking photos: often, I was not the only person asking. I found that photography was an equal-opportunity pastime allowable among Tea Party participants and observers alike.

*Data Analysis*

The purpose of this study is to 1) analyze how the Tea Party movement performs the core diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing tasks of a social movement (Snow and Benford 1988), and 2) to explore how the movement responds to and operates within allegations of racism, nationalism, and a foundation built upon moral panic. Before starting the analysis, I predicted that there would be substantial overlap and integration within the analysis of theoretical frames. After compiling and organizing notes, journal entries, pictures, and informational items, using the qualitative data analysis software program Atlas.ti, I began the process of coding my materials using indicators from applicable theory. I chose to situate my analysis first by rally event and second by theoretical framework: meaning, all data from a single event was analyzed as an individual unit, and when the analysis of each unit was complete I then performed a secondary level of coding, arranging data into “families,” in order to find themes among the units. I chose to arrange my analysis simplistically, using concepts explicated by
frame analysis, moral panic theory, critical race theory, and literature on nationalism.

The following is a list of coding elements along with descriptions of interpretation.

Framing tasks

1. Diagnostic framing:

   Problem identification and blame assignment are the two key elements of diagnostic framing (Snow and Benford 1988). In analysis, I used the concept of problem identification to account for instances where I encountered the naming and discussion of a problem that speakers or participants identified as a subject worthy of addressing at a rally. Moreover, using the concepts of blame assignment and causality, I identified the object of blame in relationship to the identified problem. I had to be vigilant in parsing out problems associated only with the movement and not those associated with peripherally related groups or individuals; however, I also made note of instances where tangentially related groups were allowed to distribute their materials or set up information booths.

2. Prognostic framing:

   Prognostic framing provides suggestions for solutions to the diagnosed problems and identifies, “strategies, tactics, and targets” (Snow and Benford 1988:201). In my analysis I looked for both the solution type and the method suggested for carrying out the solution. Moreover, for both diagnostic and prognostic framing I identified the manner in which problems and solutions
were presented to audiences: I identified whether both were presented at the same time and the method of delivery (e.g. speech, song, or sign).

3. Motivational framing:

Motivational framing involves both the provision of a rationale for action and the call for mobilization (Snow and Benford 1988). Moreover, motivational framing requires the use of incentives that build off of fostering an emotional connection to the diagnostic and prognostic frames. In order to capture motivational framing, I looked for instances where both explanations and motivations for action were presented to participants. Moreover, while coding the data, I categorized motivating factors into two categories: vague, or grandstanding emotional and moral proclamations, and specific, meaning those explanations that actually cited data or provided a realistic scenario for motivation.

Identity Elements

4. Racism/racial rhetoric:

As a way to capture the relationship between the Tea Party movement and racism and racial rhetoric I looked for all instances in which race was mentioned or implied. Moreover, using the principle from critical race theory that racism is subtly engendered in daily life and interaction (Delgado and Stefancic 2001), I coded for instances where colorblindness, the illusion of interracial solidarity, and direct denial of racism were intimated. In addition, I
looked for ways in which racism was critically addressed and denounced and the status of who was involved in such situations.

5. Nationalism

One of the great debates surrounding the Tea Party is whether or not it is a product of populism as the Tea Party claims, or of nationalism, as asserted by critics. In order to explore this concept I investigated the use of nationalistic rhetoric and imagery, particularly focusing upon broad structures of inclusion and exclusion (Gerteis and Goolsby 2005). In order to examine inclusion and exclusion within the framework of nationalism, I coded for the following concepts: ownership of America; expressions of patriotic duty; reference to religion; references to race; references to President Obama; references to Democrats, leftists, and progressives; and definitions of America, American principles, and American patriotism. Within all the preceding categories I looked for the way in which an “us versus them” structure was constructed in order to promote the identity of the Tea Party movement members versus “others.” Moreover, I examined how leaders, speakers, and participants framed the status of the movement, that is, I studied how elitism and populism were presented and in what context. Finally, in the most superficial yet transparent measure, I documented the demographics of leaders, speakers, and participants at each rally, looking for indications of representativeness.
6. Moral panic

Goode and Ben-Yehuda (1994) note five criteria indicative of moral panic: concern, hostility, consensus, disproportionality, and volatility. In the case of the Tea Party movement, concern and consensus are already established as part of the foundation of the movement. Where the moral panic can be distinguished from a different type of social movement, is through the other three criteria. Very much in line with the analysis of exclusion and inclusion, I coded for displays of hostility toward those considered folk devils and praise for those considered folk heroes. In order to examine disproportionality, I looked at how numbers, figures, and facts were presented to rally audiences, coding for factors of exaggeration, nonexistence, and disproportionate attention. Volatility is a characteristic of both the beginning and the end of a panic, however, in the case of the Tea Party it cannot be fully observed at this point in time. I believe it is clear by examining the origin of the movement that the concept of volatility was wholly applicable in its sudden development. In order to address volatility, I analyzed how the framers addressed dwindling numbers and the possible mortality of the movement. Moreover, in following with Cohen’s (1972) construction of moral panic theory, I noted both instances of media influence, and the use of and reference to prominent cultural figures.
Chapter 4

Findings and Discussion

As expected, during the process of analysis I found an inextricable relationship between the performance of framing tasks and the manner in which the Tea Party handles and embodies identity criticisms. In order to provide a succinct discussion of findings, I have chosen to organize all information by core framing task, integrating identity variable data if related to each task. Moreover, I include an additional section discussing both identity-based observations that did not fall into a framing task category and emergent issues developed within the field and existing outside of theoretical framework.

**Analytical Considerations**

Two major factors affect the way knowledge was developed throughout the course of this study: time and location. As a young movement, the identity of the Tea Party is highly subject to the effects of time. As President Obama and the economy consistently remained the primary objects of criticism while I collected data between May 2010 and August 2011, the secondary foci of the movement constantly changed based upon intrinsic and extrinsic social and political factors such as shifting leadership within the movement and governmental elections. Moreover, location and faction or conservative organization affiliation affected the way in which knowledge was delivered. As discussed by Benford (1993) I sometimes found that different factions approached topics differently, and even within faction, rally location made a difference in how information was presented.
As I performed the analysis of my notes and other items, I remained conscious of the effect those factors played in the performance of each rally and in the way in which I interpreted what I experienced. When applicable, I make note of instances where location and affiliation made a clear difference in rally delivery. Time, as it created small, almost month-to-month differences in Tea Party movement identity and diagnostic framing, was only noted as a factor when rallies scheduled at around the same time presented topics through incredibly different frameworks.

**Diagnostic Framing**

Diagnostic framing defines problems identified by social movements while establishing attribution of blame or causality (Snow and Benford 1988). Because there are a great number of issues and narratives identified by the Tea Party movement as problems and objects of blame, I have broken diagnostic framing into primary and secondary categories. Primary diagnostic framing explicates the most salient problems identified by the movement, while secondary diagnostic framing examines recurring concerns of the movement that appear to be less central to the movement’s identity.

*Primary diagnostic framing*

At each rally, the poor state of the U.S. financial system was presented as a primary problem. In tandem with the subject of finances was the role of President Obama in creating the ailing economy. Tea Party framers referred to the U.S. economy in terms of both the national public debt and the federal deficit; however, issues related to the economy such as unemployment and general federal spending were also focused upon. Based upon analysis between Tea Party presenters and the crowd of participants, I found
that the framers of the Tea Party were more likely to address the topic of the economy than participants who, through their signs and clothing, were more likely to address issues with President Obama and other peripheral concerns. Tea Party presenters, however, also frequently addressed problems with President Obama and other government leaders.

Though U.S. finances were referenced at every rally, the degree of focus was contingent upon the time period. The specific topic of the economy became even more applicable during the several months in which the federal government was working to approve a federal budget in the spring of 2011. At Rally 3 in April 2011, in order to reinforce an understanding of the size of the federal deficit, a speaker had women from the audience come to the stage, don patriotic hats, and hold the amount of numbers it took to make up the deficit (see Figure 1). At the end of the demonstration the women were asked to participate in a little kick line, a request to which they obliged. By having the women hold up the numbers in front of the crowd, the framers succeeded in

![Figure 1. The “Deficettes”: women holding numbers representative of the federal deficit. Note the “Abolish the IRS” sign held by a participant in the foreground. Rally 3, April 2011](image-url)
demonstrating the size of the $13 trillion deficit in an accessible manner; however, the visual also served to overinflate the issue in relationship to blame. In an example of disproportionality (Goode and Ben-Yehuda 1994), the claim was made that President Obama was responsible for the deficit when in fact the current state of the U.S. economy is a complex issue that most certainly requires looking beyond Obama and back to the presidency of George W. Bush. By the time spring 2011 came to an end and the U.S. government had avoided a shutdown, the U.S. budget and federal deficit became a less prominent topic at rallies and other events.

At all events, President Obama was cast equally as both problem and object of blame: if federal financial issues were the problem, Obama was responsible. However, criticism of the president went far beyond relating his actions to the poor economy and crossed into a condemnation of his politics and motives as president. There is a relatively small, but incredibly vocal streak of Tea Party membership that believe the president is not a U.S. citizen: these members are called “Birthers.” Birthers believe any combination of the following: the president’s birth certificate from Hawaii is a forgery, Obama was born in Kenya, the mother and father listed on Obama’s birth certificate are not his real parents, Obama’s mom was not old enough to be a U.S. citizen and therefore he cannot be either (Obama’s father was not a U.S. citizen). I did not encounter a large, obvious Birther presence at the rallies I attended; however, on multiple occasions throughout the study I saw participants and heard framers refer to the president as illegal, thereby reinforcing the president’s deviant folk devil status. Moreover, regarding the president’s political agenda, for many Tea Party members the problem is not simply that the
president is a Democrat; instead, there is a major line of Tea Party rhetoric that frames the president as a socialist, communist, Marxist, and/or authoritarian fascist (see Figures 2 and 3).

Tea Party framers and participants noted funding allocated by President Obama through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, for education, high speed rail, poverty relief, and consumer mortgage aid as examples of how Obama champions socialism and communism. At the heart of the discussion lies a desire to deny or suppress services related to public good, so long as the public good is not related to Tea Party defined heroes such as police officers, military members, and firefighters.

As the most prominent citation of so-called evidence for Obama’s socialism, the Affordable Care Act of 2010, disaffectionately dubbed “Obamacare,” was often noted as an example in demonstrating how the president is turning the United States into a

Figure 2. Participant sign relating Obama’s politics to socialism.

Rally 2, September 2010
“socialist regime” by demanding “government-run healthcare.” The fallacy in this argument is that the Affordable Care Act is not about provision of government-run healthcare; rather, it is concerned with providing accessible healthcare coverage, through governmental regulation of the healthcare industry, to people of the United States. The nuances of the Act were not a part of discussion, as focus tended to remain on how people wanted to interpret the motives of President Obama in effectuating the Act.

In another, more hostile line of criticism, Obama is considered to be not only socialist but also either a closet Muslim or Muslim apologist. Though I undoubtedly found the expression of this line of thought to rest mostly among participants, of the 44

Figure 3. Sign addressing socialism, big government, and Obama, Pelosi, and Reid. The quote attributed to Thomas Jefferson is actually a statement made by Gerald Ford in 1974 (Monticello.org 2012). Signs with quotes incorrectly attributed to constitutional framers or founding fathers were commonplace at several rallies. Note the “Repeal Socialized Healthcare” sign in the background. Rally 2, September 2010
framers and/or presenters I watched over the course of rally attendance, 13 directly mentioned or alluded to the president having some degree of an “unholy” relationship with Islam. At Rally 7 in July 2011, the regional director of conservative action group Young Americans for Liberty indicted President Obama as allowing and welcoming the creeping presence of Sharia law across the nation. Further, in an effort to engage in both diagnostic and prognostic framing he added, “Sharia law—we’re getting closer. We want to tell our government that we don’t want our country to sink to the level of our enemies.” The speaker did not explicitly state who “our enemies” are, but implied the definition through context as the focus of the speech was about Muslims. Through defining Muslims as enemies and linking the President with Islam the speaker succeeded in compounding President Obama’s status as an un- or anti-American deviant.

By the time I began attending rallies, after much criticism from the media, civil rights groups, and concerned citizens, literal and figurative signs of racism were not abundant. However, allegations of racism left a wake of direct responses to racism by Tea Party participants and framers. Knowing they were under scrutiny for the way in which they—or their counterparts within the movement—had previously addressed President Obama’s race, denial of racism was commonly addressed at Tea Party rallies. Participants and presenters alike iterated several different versions of a common line about how disagreement with Obama’s politics does not equal racism (See Figure 4). This was yet another way in which the president was cast as both problem and object of blame; in a circular argument, Obama is blamed for creating a situation (through his manner of governance) in which Tea Party members criticize his actions and are charged
with racism, once again blaming Obama, for being accused of racism. Charges of racism may not have become a trademark of the movement if participants wielding racist signs had not been allowed to participate in the first place (see Burghart and Zeskind 2010; Huffington Post 2009b): disallowing such participation does assume, however, that the presence of racism concerns Tea Party members and that addressing racism is not merely the product of image management.

In addition to use as an example of the president’s socialism, the Affordable Care Act itself was also identified as a problem by Tea Party framers and participants. One of the first times I heard the term “Obamacare” was at Rally 1 in July 2010, four months after the president signed the statute into law. I had heard the term used at other events, but not knowing its context I was naïvely unaware of its relationship to the Affordable Care Act.

Figure 4. A collection of signs regarding the denial of racism. Each sign has a different audience and assignment of blame: the first is addressed to President Obama, the second is for a vague “they,” and the third addresses the media. From left to right: Rally 2, September 2010; Rally 6, April 2011; Rally 8, August 2011
Care Act. At that event, a question and answer session took place after a congressional hopeful delivered a speech to the small audience. One participant asked the speaker what he would do if elected to office to address the “unconstitutional Obamacare plan,” while the rest of the audience broke out into applause. Directly following that question a man from the audience stood up and delivered a two to three minute monologue on why the “illegal president’s” actions in signing the Act fundamentally made Obamacare unconstitutional. In this case, and in multiple others throughout the study, the Affordable Care Act was identified as an act against the U.S. Constitution though the reasons given for unconstitutionality varied by person and event. At Rally 6 in April 2011, the emcee quipped, “having the same people who fixed the DMV and the Post Office fix healthcare scares the crap out of me!” implying that because the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and the Postal Service are perceived as inept, the government must be incompetent at delivering all services. Meant to be humorous, as one of many “jokes” rendered at the expense of the government, Democrats, or Obama by the emcee, this overdramatic statement was received with cheers by the small crowd.

Concerns over the U.S. financial system were augmented by discussion of the California economy at some rallies. California Governor Jerry Brown and other “tax and spend liberals” in elected positions throughout the state were cited as a part of why the California state budget was in shambles. I found this discussion to be most prominent in the April 2010 Tea Parties. At Rally 6, the Chairman of the California Republican party warned that Governor Brown wanted to, “increase spending and increase taxes.” This occurred during a time period in which state funding for a host of educational and social
programs was being cut. While the Vice Chairman of the California Republican Assembly expanded the placement of blame concerning California’s economy by emphatically stating, “We will not stand idly by as the people from the California capitol wreck our state!”

*Secondary problems and attribution of blame*

The economy, the president, and the president’s policies were not the only problems focused upon by Tea Party framers and participants. Democrats, progressives, liberals, and leftists were all a part of the Tea Party narrative of the problematic other. “We have a mutual enemy,” said a conservative activist who referenced Glenn Beck’s book *The Overton Window* four times in his speech at Rally 2 in September 2010, “our enemy is a philosophy: progressivism, socialism, fascism, big government!” The speaker thereby compared progressivism to both socialism and fascism: two relatively disparate political philosophies. This line of discourse urges participants to equate Democrats to socialists and fascists while defining both what an enemy of the Tea Party is and what a member of the Tea Party is not. Earlier in the same rally, a separate speaker asked the crowd to bow their heads and close their eyes as though to recite a prayer. Instead, he asked for a show of hands from the crowd indicating who was Republican, Libertarian, or Independent. After listing the conservative political parties he asked about the presence of Democrats saying, “We might have a few of those. Probably don’t want to raise their hands though.” He went on to ask about Green Party members saying, “Just kidding. I doubt any of *those* would be here.”
Anti liberal and progressive sentiment was a theme throughout all rallies: terms such as the “enemy,” the “other side,” and the “parasites” were commonly used to describe Democrats, leftists, liberals, and progressives. On occasion, however, a speaker would profess a desire to see all American people unite. As the crowd would cheer at such statements, it was clear that unification was not political compromise; rather, it was a desire to see people unite under conservatism. At Rally 2 in September 2010, caught off guard while taking a quick break to drink water, I was approached by a lady who asked me if I was registered to vote. When I said yes, she asked if I had moved recently. I said “no,” and that I always stay on top of such matters anyway. Prodding, she then asked if I was a registered Republican. As I said no she then asked if I was Libertarian: once again I said “no” and she responded with, “Are you at least an Independent? That would be okay then.” I wondered what would have happened had I told her I was a member of the Democratic Party, the Green Party, or the Socialist Labor Party. This early interaction provided me with an understanding of how the Tea Party engages in defining in-groups and out-groups as relevant to the identity of the movement.

Democratic leaders, most notably Senator Harry Reid and Representative Nancy Pelosi, were also presented both as problems and objects of blame (see Figures 3 and 5). One speaker at Rally 3 in April 2011, dubbed Obama, Reid, and Pelosi, “The three robbers of individual liberty and freedom,” but did not specifically elaborate on that categorization. Blame was not well defined for Reid and Pelosi. They were viewed as problematic because they were outspoken Democratic members of their respective
Figure 5. Obama and other liberal leaders of contempt. Note Senator Reid labeled as “Sleazy,” Representative Pelosi labeled as “Skanky,” and Representative Barney Frank labeled as “Queeney.” Moreover, President Obama is labeled as “Snow White???” The racist, sexist, and heterosexist overtones of this participant’s sign are flagrant and represent a general anti-liberal sentiment common throughout the movement.

Rally 2, September 2010

political stations, and they were assigned blame for being deemed complicit agents of the president. In an illustration of that sentiment, at Rally 3 in April 2011, a conservative talk radio host asked the crowd, “Why would the media speak badly about [former governor Sarah] Palin and [Representative Michele] Bachmann? They wouldn’t say the same things about Pelosi: it’s because Palin and Bachmann think for themselves” (emphasis mine). This statement also implied that media engineer bad press coverage for Tea Party members, conservatives, and Republicans.

The media plays an interesting and complicated role within the Tea Party movement. There is a distinct line between acceptable media and liberal, main-stream,
“drive-by” (as borrowed from conservative talk show host Rush Limbaugh), and “lame-stream” (as borrowed from Sarah Palin) media. Fox News and alternative conservative news sources appeared to almost entirely create the acceptable media category. Conservative news personalities Glenn Beck, Bill O’Reilly, and Rush Limbaugh were often espoused as folk heroes of conservatism. All three men were quoted and discussed on several occasions over the course of rally observation; however, Beck, as the media personality most referenced for his books, radio talk show, and entertainment show on the Fox News Channel, stood out as the media-related folk hero of the movement. Beck’s own Tea Party related organizing efforts resulted in a series of rallies on the east coast (Halloran 2010). The rhetorical influence of Beck was exhibited mostly as part of the orations of Tea Party framers and was often used as a lens through which to assign blame for the problems perceived to be befalling America. The emcee at Rally 6 in April 2011, paraphrased Beck as a way to provide criticism of elected officials stating, “As Glenn Beck said, ‘You go to church with your family, yet we elect leaders who don’t represent our moral values.” He then went on to reproach the “communist values of the liberals.”

A liberally oriented media was often blamed for framing the Tea Party in a negative manner (see Figure 6). At Rally 4 in April 2011, the emcee of the event admonished the main-stream media for purposefully trying to make it appear as though the Tea Party movement was losing membership and momentum. Along the same line, at multiple other rallies, presenters discussed how the main-stream media was instrumental
in working with liberal politicians and public figures to engineer ways in which to broadcast negativity about the movement. Tea Party framers and participants appeared to be relatively equal in aversion to the media. At Rally 3 in April 2011, while stopped at a booth distributing information from the Pacific Research Institute (PRI)\(^3\), a participant stopped by and proclaimed to all who were within earshot, “This type of stuff, this information, this is the truth. You won’t see them quoting this in the lib-media.” The “this” to which he was referring was PRI produced information on how to recover the California economy.

Republicans in name only, or “RINOs,” are another problem for Tea Party members. Whether RINOs exist in the media or within the Republican electorate, they

---

\(^3\) Pacific Research Institute is a conservative research organization located in San Francisco. Its mission is to, “champion freedom, opportunity, and personal responsibility for all individuals by advancing free-market policy solutions” (Pacific Research Institute 2012).
are considered to be of detriment to Tea Party goals. Furthermore, non-RINO conservative leaders who fail to govern with Tea Party principles are also objects of disdain. This particular area of concern is significantly impacted by faction. As different factions and organizations possess differential goals, the degree to which “failure” is measured is based purely upon factional frameworks. Tea Party rallies and events in the summer before the 2010 election were full of optimism regarding the opportunity to both clear out Democratic leadership and elect Tea Party approved leaders. Due to motivational efforts to get Tea Party members to vote in the November 2010 election, a significant number of Republicans and Tea Party endorsed candidates were elected across the nation. By April 2011, Tea Party presenters were discussing how newly (federally) elected leaders had failed the Tea Party by either voting moderately or failing to deliver on campaign promises. Through this cycle, the movement succeeded in producing and reproducing a problematic object on which to focus creating the necessity to continue their efforts as a movement.

On five entirely separate occasions at various rallies, I heard a speaker recite a slightly different version of the following: “When they get hurt, they bleed. When we get hurt we bleed red, white, and blue!” This statement combines American patriotism with violence and the establishment of exclusionary and inclusionary membership. Within the diagnostic framework of the Tea Party movement lies another category of problematic others: social, cultural, political, and religious groups to which the Tea Party is opposed. Again, which groups are viewed as problematic is a result of faction and location. The social and cultural groups I found to be primarily focused upon in Northern California
Figure 7. Borders, Language, Culture. Using red, white, and blue to indicate the subject of the sign, this participant used patriotic imagery to convey his or her concern for the preservation of America.

Rally 2, September 2010

were immigrants, Muslims, and producers of the “gay agenda,” while union members and a broad category including anyone receiving government assistance were of secondary concern (see Figure 7). However, not everyone agreed upon the denouncement of each group, nor did everyone agree that the Tea Party movement was the platform upon which to discuss these issues. At Rally 4 in April 2011, a highly influential conservative talk radio host—a key presenter at a number of rallies and events—stated that, “The Tea Party is a very diverse crowd,” and warned the audience to remember to stay focused, “on the financial issues, not the social issues,” as social issues did not directly relate to the mission of financial and governmental reform. Overwhelmingly, the crowd responded positively to this statement. However, a man standing beside me yelled back, “Not if those social issues interfere with my financial issues!” Regarding social issues, at all rallies some framers exhibited a concern over focusing upon certain issues or disparaging
certain social and cultural groups; regardless of the rhetoric, the movement continues to create a safe space for those who wish to engage in that line of reprobation.

_Prognostic Framing_

Prognostic framing both provides solutions to problems and identifies “strategies, tactics, and targets” to address the problems (Snow and Benford 1988:201). Separate from the concerns established within the diagnostic framing process, the Tea Party has many action points held as fundamental to the mission of the movement. Action points, or core values and principles, vary by faction yet maintain a certain degree of homogeneity regarding the economy and “big government” (see Appendix A for description of values by faction).

The Tea Party Patriots have three core values: free markets, constitutionally limited government, and fiscal responsibility (Tea Party Patriots 2010). Tea Party Express, on the other hand, has six core principles: no more bailouts, reduce the size and intrusiveness of government, stop raising our taxes, repeal Obamacare, cease out-of-control spending, and bring back American prosperity (Tea Party Express 2012a). Whereas some core values fall into the existing problems addressed through diagnostic framing, others are simply goals of the movement and are used for prognostic framing. To counter problematic factors and achieve core values, there are three main solutions proposed by the movement: acquiring knowledge, voting undesirable people out of political office, and getting involved in political organizing.

_Acquiring knowledge_

In order to be a formidable member of the movement, Tea Party framers
encourage members to regularly engage in the acquisition of knowledge. Beyond rallies there is an entire online and community network driven realm of information transmission. Blogs, lectures, websites, social events, and meetings are all organized and maintained year round to create a conduit for the dissemination of knowledge. At rallies participants are encouraged to take advantage of the resources available online or within the community. Moreover, in addition to being urged to stay current on political events, participants were asked to perform two other key tasks relating to knowledge acquisition: understanding the U.S. Constitution and getting to know the tactics and doctrine of the enemy. In order to aid in these tasks, rally organizers and information booths passed out a variety of educational materials and copies of the U.S. Constitution.

The sanctity of the U.S. Constitution is a crucially defining element of the Tea Party movement. The reading and understanding of the Constitution was one of the most salient points throughout the course of observation. At all rallies, framers urged participants to read and memorize the document in order to be able to critique those deemed to be interpreting it incorrectly. The ideas that President Obama’s policies are unconstitutional and that the United States is moving in a direction away from the principles of the Constitution firmed the necessity of comprehensively knowing the document. In light of criticism that the president’s actions are unconstitutional and in order to make fun of President Obama’s frequent use of a teleprompter, at Rally 2 in September 2010, a member of the U.S. House of Representatives stated, “Our nation has been struck down by acts of our own president… Put the Constitution on Obama’s teleprompter!” After the Republican gains in the 2010 election, at Rally 6 in April 2011,
a California state senator noted in his speech about the newly elected Tea Party endorsed politicians that, “reading the Constitution out loud in the [U.S.] Senate was phase I of success.”

At Rally 1 in July 2010, I first heard the term “Constitutionalist.” A Constitutionalist is one who identifies with the tenets of the Constitution above all other political ideologies. As Constitutionalism is not a political party, numerous speakers and presenters made a point to note that they did not consider themselves to be a member of any established political party; rather, they defined themselves politically as Constitutionals. Participants were encouraged to identify in such a manner and were given access to a number of tools allowing them to become well-versed in understanding the Constitution. Over the course of observation, I received multiple copies of the document and was offered many deals on purchasing Constitutional companion books. One participant at Rally 8 in August 2011 bought a number of Constitutional companion books from a private seller at the event and then roamed around the crowd asking people if they would like to give one to their children or grandchildren. Participants who received one of the books thanked her for her generosity and assured her that their children would love it.

In addition to the distribution of the Constitution, at many rallies booklets and handouts on handling enemies were disseminated. There are generally two kinds of materials distributed on this topic. First, there are Tea Party strategy booklets. Strategy booklets serve to provide diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational frames to the reader. However, these materials are heavy on the inclusion of solutions to problems and
motivation for action (see Figure 8). Second, there are topical booklets and magazines. Topical booklets mostly serve to reinforce diagnostic framing. I received topical booklets on a variety of issues including Obamacare, the Federal Reserve, and Obama’s socialism. Topical booklets tend to provide sensationalized treatment of a topic and often include graphics that draw attention (see Figure 9). Participants were encouraged to study the booklets and to employ the principles in debate and conversation.

**Voting out undesirables**

Another strategy for achieving goals and addressing problems was the simple action of going to the voting booth and participating in elections. The call to vote out undesirable leadership was the most accessible task that everyone involved in the movement could achieve. As a simple strategy, the phrase, “Vote them out!” was seen on
t-shirts, stickers, signs, and on a variety of other Tea Party related merchandise. Framers consistently urged participants to not only get out and vote themselves, but also to nudge their family and friends toward the voting booth, as well. As some participants and presenters expressed explicit instruction on whom to vote out, there was a sense of vagueness to the sentiment. However, the ambiguity of the term was purposeful as Democrats, RINOs, moderates, and disappointing Tea Party endorsed politicians could easily be inserted into the definition of “them”: the phrase always stays relevant.

Reasons for voting people out varied with the individual or group being discussed. With a twist on the election-action rally cry, at Rally 2 in September 2010, a judge and former senator roused the audience by saying, “Let’s start hanging thieves
instead of electing them to office.” How would a voter discern whom to hang instead of whom to elect? Of course, this statement, possessing many layers of violent and racist implications, is far beyond the simple and innocent call to vote iterated by the vast majority of Tea Party framers. The same speaker had prefaced that statement by first discussing how the president has, “socialized, demoralized, and destroyed our country,” by, “declaring that America is not a Christian nation, dedicating the month of June to gays and lesbians, and apologizing to the Arab world.” Urging the use of the vote was the democratic and decorous approach to expressing a spectrum of emotion from discontent to murderous hatred.

Getting involved

Tea Party participants were strongly encouraged to engage in organizing activities outside of rallies. Organizing required the highest level of participation among the three main elements of the prognostic framing tasks. Participants were incited to perform tasks ranging from joining a campaign either for or against a particular candidate to

Figure 10. A flyer encouraging involvement on a congressional campaign.

Rally 2, September 2010
distributing flyers about upcoming town hall meetings or Tea Party lectures (see Figure 10). Presenters used the concept of involvement as a way to frame the importance of keeping the movement on track and helping the movement stay relevant: without Tea Party members involved in the community it would appear to outsiders as though the movement was losing momentum.

Another important part of involvement was the encouragement to get involved with the propagation of knowledge relating to Tea Party goals. Keeping in line with the focus upon the importance of the Constitution, on multiple occasions, framers spoke of the necessity of observing Constitution Day on September 17 of each year. It was noted that schools receiving public funding were mandated to acknowledge the day in some manner. Participants were told that if their local schools were not properly acknowledging Constitution Day, the impetus was on them to ensure that schools complied. Though discussed at several rallies, Rally 4 in April 2011, had a booth set up for participants to acquire information on how to enforce the mandate about Constitution Day in their children’s and grandchildren’s schools. As a way to make the action feel achievable, framers used examples of how another local faction’s organizers had been successful in getting a local school district to observe the mandate.

**Motivational Framing**

Snow and Benford (1988:202) define motivational framing as, “the elaboration of a call to arms or rationale for action that goes beyond the diagnosis and prognosis” [emphasis in the original]. Moreover, they note the presence of a “vocabulary of motives,” through which to establish the importance of tending to the prognostic frames
Diagnostic and prognostic framing factors, however, do not inspire action de facto; this is why movements must resort to employing motivational frames. Within the Tea Party movement there is a wide variety of factors framed as problematic and presented as critical. As rationale for action, I found five major frames emphasized by the Tea Party movement: saving the U.S. economy, stopping socialism, providing for the future of children, protecting liberty, and reclaiming America.

Two of the major motivational frames, saving the economy and stopping socialism, are tied directly to problems developed within the diagnostic frames. Moreover, the two frames are not mutually exclusive: saving the U.S. economy and stopping socialism are both achieved, according to Tea Party framers, by preserving capitalism. The argument is as follows: government funding of programs for the public good (e.g. education, healthcare, welfare), often referred to as “bailouts” and “handouts,” is socialist by nature. If the economy is to be saved, the government must cut this socialist spending and become decentralized. By decentralizing and privatizing the functions of government, capitalism can be preserved. In this case, capitalism is afforded an almost heroic status, as it is assumed that the economy will automatically correct itself if private enterprise is allowed to prevail. The goal is to therefore elect officials who will work to decentralize the government and prevent government spending.

The other three motivational frames concerning children, liberty, and the reclamation of America, are relatively independent of the diagnostic frames. Framers and participants alike made continuous reference to what the state of the country would be like for—very specifically—“our” (Tea Party related) children and grandchildren. At
Rally 2 in September 2010, a conservative talk radio host and Fox News contributor stated that the government was engaging in “generational theft,” by allowing the enactment of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and other government spending. The phrase ‘generational theft’ was evoked on numerous occasions throughout the course of observation. At Rally 5 in April 2011, a member of the California state legislature stated, “I’m worried about my children’s future,” because, “our children will be paying,” for the government’s mistakes. This particular speaker also brought her children up to the stage with her as she addressed the crowd. By using children as a factor for motivation, framers attempted to connect sentimental and familial concerns with the mission of the movement.

There is a rhetorical theme within the movement focused upon the defense of liberty and freedom in light of governmental control. The concept of “protecting liberty” was often employed within discussions of Tea Party goal achievement. In its most superficial form, the term was inserted into speeches seemingly to inspire cheers from the crowd. In its most complex form, liberty was used in reference to a variety of factors including the economy, security, and the imposition of the government on the will of the people; the concept, however, generally centered upon the idea of free will. Very much connected to the diagnostic frame of President Obama’s desire to impose a socialist or communist system upon the U.S., liberty was the succinct term used for describing the notion of how America should be defined (e.g. English speaking, capitalist, not socialist). This was evidenced through the connection between exercising liberty and adhering to the desires of the “founding fathers” as framed by the Constitution. Tea Party framers
and participants often referenced the importance of the notion of liberty to the founding fathers through speeches, signs, and other event artifacts. With little consideration for the racism and sexism inherent in the original U.S. Constitution, protecting liberty was both a function of defending the sanctity of the document and a rhetorical device used for promoting what it means to be an American. As one speaker at Rally 7 in July 2011 stated, “Our liberties come from god, not from our government,” yet in the same breath emphasized that Tea Party members must, “Defend the whole Constitution whether you agree with it all.”

Finally, the most provocative yet vague frame was the call to reclaim America (see Figure 11), also stated as “taking America back” or “taking back our country.” By stating that America needs to be reclaimed it is implied that, through a variety of factors, America has been lost, stolen, or compromised. In some instances, the reclamation of America was an allusion to voting liberal leaders out of office: when referring to voting

![Figure 11. Taking back the U.S.A. Note the participant’s sign on the right and the Gadsden flag sticking out of a rifle on the left. Gadsden flags are a signature symbol of the movement. Rally 2, September 2010](image)
out politicians, President Obama was most often the target of that sentiment. At other times it was used as a reference to ridding the country of socialism, restoring family values, “bringing back” Christianity, limiting the government, or strictly adhering to the Constitution. In its most ominous form, it alluded to vague fear of an anonymous and ubiquitous “other” as it was often cited and displayed without reference to what or whom America was being taken back from. In all cases, I found the motivational frame of reclamation to be a solid example of employing nationalistic inclusionary and exclusionary terms, as whomever the country is being taken back from does not fit within the boundaries of the Tea Party’s definition of their acceptable community. Moreover, as members of the Tea Party work to denounce and distance themselves from a large number of groups that constitute the population of America, the concept of reclaiming the country is even more exclusionary in implication.

At Rally 3 in April 2011, a talk radio host told the crowd that the Tea Party needs to stop liberals from “poisoning America.” In response to that comment, a man standing about 50 feet away from me yelled, “Let’s take back our America!” As the speaker applauded him and the crowd cheered I heard a woman who was holding an American flag and standing beside me say, “I think our America is gone. It’s gone.” A woman standing next to her emphatically responded, “No, they can’t have it.” Through the brief interaction participants managed to maintain a dialogue in which all references to members of the Tea Party in-group and out-group were vaguely defined yet fully understood by all participants. At Rally 8 in August 2011, the chairwoman of Tea Party Express closed the rally with a call to arms stating, without specific reference, “We’re
gonna take our country back!” as the primarily White, predominantly middle-aged-or-older crowd roared with applause. The demographics of the crowd at Rally 8 matched the demographics at all other rallies attended throughout the course of observation.

**Emergent Factors**

The Tea Party movement engages in a high degree of frame extension (Snow et al. 1986) by allowing certain participants in to the rallies representing their own political, social, or conspiracy-based causes. However, the way in which “outsiders” were handled varied based upon the cause and the faction running the rally. Outsiders are separate from overt observers and clearly contrarian protestors. There were three types of outsiders: off-topic presenters, outcasts, and infiltrators. Off-topic presenters were often allowed to set up booths at events or to roam freely distributing information on issues such as Agenda 21 and smart growth, the United Nations, Chem-trails, PG&E Smart Meters, and redistricting. Tea Party organizers did not ask for off-topic presenters to leave the premises.

Outcasts were often kicked out of rallies: as they were obviously there to sell provocative merchandise or to self promote for their business. At Rallies 4 and 6 in April 2011, a vendor selling extremely provocative anti-Obama stickers attended both rallies. At Rally 4, the vendor was considered an outcast and was asked to leave by Tea Party officials. After watching the conversation between the vendor and the officials, a man standing near the vendor asked him what the officials had said. The vendor indignantly told the man that the officials had asked him to leave: at that the man said “Good! Goodbye. Get out.” At Rally 6, however, the vendor was not considered an outcast: he
was welcomed at the rally where he was not only allowed to stay but also served a number of customers.

Infiltrators were a blend of outcasts and off-topic presenters. Cleverly appearing as though they supported the movement, infiltrators instead espoused an entirely different agenda: the agenda and motive of such action was entirely dependent upon the individual infiltrator. In fact, this is such a common occurrence that there is a system employed at many rallies of holding up an “infiltrator” sign next to someone suspected of being one (see Figure 12). Infiltrator signs could sometimes be found at Tea Party information booths or they were homemade and brought by participants. With one exception, infiltrators were not usually asked to leave; rather, they were allowed to stay but were followed around by a participant holding the infiltrator sign.

At Rally 1 in July 2010, a group set up an information table displaying anti-Obama materials on the sidewalk of the park at which the event took place. The event organizer warned participants not to support them stating, “They’re not affiliated with us… They’re what Rush Limbaugh calls ‘plants.’” The police were called and they were told to leave; however, they packed up their things and sat at a park bench in protest for the rest of the rally as they had not done anything wrong and were in a public space.

Though attendance of infiltrators was a relatively common occurrence at rallies, infiltrators were, at first, usually difficult to separate from participants. Aside from Rally 1, which had quite a small number of attendees, the process of participants deciding to label someone as an infiltrator was always performed by a very small number of people. At Rally 4 in April 2011, I asked a couple holding an infiltrator sign next to a woman in
Figure 12. Infiltrator signs. The sign on the left was made by the Tea Party Patriots while the sign on the right was brought to the rally by a participant.

From left to right: Rally 8, August 2011; Rally 3, April 2011

patriotically-themed 18th century dress why they felt she was an infiltrator. The man said, “She’s not one of us. She’s pushing some neo-liberal shit.” Additionally, the woman said, “She doesn’t need to be here. This isn’t about her; this is a Tea Party event.” Later, I spoke with the “infiltrator” asking her about her message and purpose of being at the rally. She said she was there to promote an understanding of how neoliberalism is the cause of poverty and suffering in America—a concern not within Tea Party boundaries. Dressed patriotically, she was allowed to roam and mingle at the rally for over two hours before she was reproached as an infiltrator.

Though I was never privy to the infiltrator-labeling process, I observed that Tea Party participants accepted the presence of all non-threatening attendees until they were deemed inapt. Additionally, I noted that participants often did not know exactly why they found a person to be inappropriate, but they were adamant about calling attention to
the fact that they believed the person was not a Tea Party member. Moreover, because infiltrators were allowed to stay at the rally, I wondered about the purpose of maintaining the infiltrator label throughout the event as opposed to asking the infiltrator to leave. At the very least, permitting the infiltrator to stay established an opportunity to define and label a tangible out-group member, therefore allowing Tea Party members to further delineate the boundaries of their own identity.

Beyond the vast territory of movement ideology, there is a material culture built up around the Tea Party movement. This culture is purely capitalist and exists mostly outside of the factions that run non- or for-profit businesses. Moreover, this Tea Party capitalism—and capitalizing—has evolved over the course of this study. At Rally 2 in September 2010, a large tent stood next to the entrance selling t-shirts and other common promotional items. All the items for sale were printed and sold by the faction running the rally. By the time the Tax Day rallies of 2011 occurred, the number of items created for Tea Party members and sold at the rallies was surprising. In terms of material goods, I found patriotic jewelry, Tea Party art, stickers, t-shirts, musical CDs, and, of course books. The whole economy relating to the Tea Party has been created within the last three years, and it is substantial. In an effort to both promote Tea Party identity and exercise the value of free market capitalism, participants have learned how to capitalize on other participants.

Of great interest to me is the Tea Party musical genre that has emerged from the movement. At the first rally I attended, framers played a broad catalogue of hit songs relating to money, taxes, patriotism, and activism. At the second rally and beyond, a
majority of the music was thereafter performed by live, Tea Party themed bands. The Tea Party music genre, as presented at Tea Party rallies, is loaded with lyrics about defining what it means to be an American, the importance of maintaining American values, having American pride, and notions of preserving American freedom and liberty.

Not all Tea Party related music was originally recorded to support the movement, but as Tea Party members attempt to establish a socio-cultural identity for the movement patriotic and nationalistic bands have been able to seize upon an eager prospective fan base. At Rally 8 in August 2011, I spoke to a musical duo asking them how they became involved in the movement. They told me that they had been making music for years and that when the Tea Party came into existence they saw an opportunity to use their music for the mission of the movement. Now they tour the country with the Tea Party Express bus tour, perform at every stop, and sell their albums for $10-15 apiece. Their most popular song is titled, “Press One for English” (copyright 2007); it imparts the idea that everyone in America should not only speak English as their primary language but that everything posted, written, or recorded in the U.S. should be in English because, “it’s the language of this land.” Though that particular song was not performed at the rally the performers were specifically introduced as the ones who sing it; because participants either knew the song or liked the title, when the song was mentioned the crowd cheered vigorously. The Tea Party music genre serves to bind members together by promoting a patriotic, spiritual, sentimental, and activistic imagery and rhetoric.
Chapter 5

Conclusion

The election of President Obama created a platform upon which conservatives can publically address social, cultural, and political grievances. The formation of the Tea Party movement has brought attention to a cadre of long-standing socio-political concerns of conservative America. Of the various concerns central to the identity of the movement, only one is new to the realm of American culture: President Obama. Though the state of the U.S. economy is cited as the primary concern of the Tea Party, unquestionably, the catalyst for the rise of the movement is Barack Obama. Whether his governance, constitution, or reputation is at issue, his presence in the White House has stimulated conservative trepidation and he has come to be considered the folk devil of the movement.

Because I focused my study only upon the Northern California region, the results of this research are limiting. Moreover, because the manner in which different factions approach rally organization is subject to the socio-political characteristics of the region in which they operate, I posit that observations would be notably different had I performed data collection in a different region. Because I only included the analysis of eight rallies in this study, this factor also limits the results. However, as noted in Chapter 3, over the course of the study period, the availability of events was extremely limiting. I found that my own attendance at eight rallies was often more than the other participants with which I interacted. Additionally, because I only employed the use of participant observation for data collection I recognize that there are multiple other methods through which to
examine the movement, which would provide an even clearer description of its function and identity.

I began this project interested in the relationship between the rise of the Tea Party movement and the election of President Obama. As I came to recognize that I could not know that relationship without first understanding the structure of the Tea Party as a whole, my initial interest metamorphosed into a project focused upon dissecting the elements of the movement and then situating the president within those elements. I chose to engage in participant observation at Tea Party rallies in order to develop a thorough understanding of how the movement presents itself and its concerns. Through analysis, I have demonstrated how the Tea Party identifies and performs core framing tasks in order to generate membership and inspire mobilization. Moreover, I have identified instances where notions of racism, nationalism, and moral panic influence the actions and identity of the movement.

President Obama is the root of Tea Party consternation. He is, as Cohen (1972) writes, the catalyst through which long-standing strain or newly constructed fear begets panic. In the case of the Tea Party movement Obama’s election to the presidency became the mechanism through which strain and fear over racial and ethnic relations, the economy, and maintenance of normative power could create a legitimated organization of expression. President Obama, his race, personal life, political affiliation, and political action, is found to be a threat to the traditional social values of those who identify as Tea Party members: he is the folk devil of the foundation of the Tea Party movement as demonstrated by examining the diagnostic framing performed by the movement.
Through the observation performed for this study I found that the Tea Party identifies three primary diagnostic frames—the poor state of the U.S. economy, President Obama, and the “unconstitutional” Affordable Care Act—as the major problems to be addressed by the movement. The president is ultimately held responsible for both creating the Affordable Care Act and producing the poor economy. Undoubtedly, the Affordable Care Act was a direct result of action taken by the president; however, it must be noted that before the Act was approved it was significantly changed from its original state by Republican legislators. Regardless of the changes, the Tea Party fundamentally disagrees with the concept of a government regulated healthcare system and blames “Obamacare” for engendering socialism in the United States.

Obama is also held responsible for the bad economy primarily due to the $840 billion American Recovery and Reinvestment Act enacted by the president within the first month of his presidency. However, even before the signing of the Act, the United States was already in possession of a multi-trillion dollar deficit, a high unemployment rate, and a mortgage crisis before Obama took office. The disproportionate and displaced blame of the president is an example of panic occurring within the movement (Goode and Ben-Yehuda 1994). Furthermore, it is not just the president’s policies with which the Tea Party takes umbrage: because of his financial policies, he is considered to be a promoter of socialism.

Tea Party members criticize the president as being a socialist, communist, Marxist and/or fascist. Moreover, they identify anyone who does not take issue with him and his policies to be socialist as well. Beyond his financial policies, and without evidence,
certain members of the Tea Party also posit that the president is a Muslim or a Muslim apologist; in certain contexts, he was even called a terrorist, equating all of Islam with terrorism. Because there is a deep-seated focus upon god and Christianity within the movement, the idea of a Muslim president is abhorrent to some members. Obama has stated that he is not a Muslim and that he is a Christian, but there exists a general distrust of Obama’s declarations that reaches beyond this particular context. Because a post September 11, 2001, anti-Muslim sentiment has found legitimacy within American conservatism (Johnson and Frombgen 2009) it is acceptable to “insult” the president within that context (only for those who consider it an insult to be called Muslim) whereas strictly racial expressions of disdain would be considered by many to be inappropriate. 

Because early action within the Tea Party movement lead to criticism over a racist appearance, movement framers and participants have become hyper-aware of discussing race and racism. Participants blame both Obama and the media for taking criticism of the president out of context and perpetuating the myth that Tea Party members are racist. However, in line with the CRT concept of the social construction of race (Delgado and Stefancic 2001) Tea Party concern over racism tends to be limited only to the president’s skin color as it is still acceptable to call the president a Muslim, when the term—according to certain Tea Party members—possesses incredibly negative connotations. In this research I found that the notion of racism within the movement, as directed toward the president, was both directly addressed and denied, but not explicitly denounced.

Beyond the primary diagnostic frames of the Tea Party movement is a secondary layer of problematic factors: all of which involve other people, or out-groups, outside of
Tea Party defined and sanctioned membership. Tea Party members frame liberals, Democrats, leftists, and progressives as detrimental to America, thereby establishing the out-group for their own imagined community (Anderson 1991). Whether politicians, members of the media, or average citizens, liberals are largely not welcome into the ideal society that Tea Party members would like to create in America and are therefore objects of ridicule. The desire to integrate politically is not generally an attribute of the movement.

Moreover, beyond liberals, multiple other groups are found in contempt of Tea Party principles and are recipients of Tea Party hostility (Goode and Ben-Yehuda 1994). Muslim “terrorists,” immigrants, union “thugs,” government workers, and those living on government assistance were often mentioned as objects of derision because they did not embody the valued principles of the movement. Moreover, members of those groups were viewed as un-American. The Tea Party movement binds itself in exclusively American terms; however, the concerns and sentiments of the movement are relevant to only a small portion of the American population. Essentially, the Tea Party has effectively established and defined the out-groups of the movement while managing to alienate possible allies within conservative politics.

In performing prognostic framing tasks, Tea Party framers advocate three solutions to dealing with concerns and achieving core values. First, framers advocated obtaining knowledge about enemies of the movement in addition to becoming fluent in knowledge about the U.S Constitution. The Constitution is sacred to the Tea Party movement. By acquiring knowledge, framers told participants they would have the upper
hand over those who oppose them. Second, participants were encouraged to vote and to encourage others to vote as well. The action of voting was presented as a way to allow participants to express disapproval with Democrats, RINOs, Moderate Republicans, and all others whose legislative performance did not align with the goals of the movement. Third, framers urged participants to get involved in organizing for the movement. On many occasions presenters beseeched participants to get involved, discussing how vital involvement is to the life of the movement. A concern over not staying relevant and not having the numbers to support mobilization was the impetus behind the regular requests for organizing action.

Finally, as motivational frames, Tea Party presenters and framers used the concepts of saving the U.S. economy, stopping socialism, providing for children’s futures, protecting liberty, and “taking America back,” as rationale for action. Within the motivational frames, a distinct sense of exclusion and inclusion was developed, as all motivating factors were presented to serve the purpose of providing positive outcomes for Tea Party members only and not the general population of the U.S. Building a sense of community to inspire solidarity, commitment, and mobilization is, however, part of the purpose of motivational framing. Moreover, motivational frames allowed for a generalized other to develop within Tea Party rhetoric, creating an expedient way to describe those on the outside of the movement.

Tea Party factions and Tea Party affiliated conservative organizations possess established core principles and values, but those tenets, by themselves, do not define the identity of the movement and its members. Within the performance of both diagnostic
and motivational framing tasks the Tea Party movement demonstrated nationalistic and exclusionary tendencies. Members of the movement view their actions as the path to building, or rebuilding (or reclaiming), the perfect conservative nation, but clearly not all Americans are involved in Tea Party vision for America. As Gerteis and Goolsby (2005) note, in defining who belongs to a specific nation those seen as members of the out-group are often defined first and those in the in-group develop a reactionary identity based upon those with whom they do not want to identify. As suggested by examining the movement’s execution of diagnostic and motivational frames, in the Tea Party’s America there is a large compendium of out-group members and Tea Party members strive to distance themselves from what they perceive those out-groups to represent.

The future of the Tea Party is predicated upon whether the movement can continue to gain and maintain membership and, moreover, whether it can maintain its influence within conservative culture. The movement neither appeals to nor welcomes all conservatives, therefore setting itself apart from mainstream conservatism. History of the Tea Party shows a rapid and volatile foundation based upon disdain for the president, and the findings of this study demonstrate that through efforts to refine identity and maintain the impact of the movement, the Tea Party continues to distance itself from the rest of society. Future research on the Tea Party would benefit from focusing upon two areas: first, analysis on the long-term socio-political implications of the election of Tea Party endorsed candidates, and second, if the movement maintains a socio-cultural presence, the manner in which frame alignment processes are performed in order to achieve frame resonance.
APPENDIX A

National Tea Party Factions and Conservative Organizations

**Faction: Tea Party Patriots** (teapartypatriots.org)
Business Status: Non-profit, Participant donations only
Leadership: Jenny Beth Martin and Mark Meckler
Headquarters: Woodstock, GA
Associated Political Action Committee: None
Website information: The Tea Party movement spontaneously formed in 2009 from the reaction of the American people to fiscally irresponsible actions of the federal government, misguided “stimulus” spending, bailouts and takeovers of private industry. Within the first few weeks of the movement, Tea Party Patriots formed to support the millions of Americans seeking to improve our great nation through renewed support for fiscal responsibility, constitutionally limited government, and free market economic policies.

**Faction: Tea Party Nation** (teapartynation.com)
Business Status: Corporation
Leadership: Judson Phillips
Headquarters: Franklin, TN
Associated Political Action Committee: Ensuring Liberty PAC
Website information: Tea Party Nation is a user-driven group of like-minded people who desire our God-given individual freedoms written out by the Founding Fathers. We believe in Limited Government, Free Speech, the 2nd Amendment, our Military, Secure Borders and our Country.

**Faction: The Tea Party** (formerly 1776 Tea Party) (teaparty.org)
Business Status: Non-profit
Leadership: Dale Robertson
Headquarters: Woodlake, TX
Associated Political Action Committee: None
Website information: 15 Non-Negotiable Core Beliefs: 1. Illegal aliens are here illegally. 2. Pro-domestic employment is indispensable. 3. A strong military is essential. 4. Special interests must be eliminated. 5. Gun ownership is sacred. 6. Government must be downsized. 7. The national budget must be balanced. 8. Deficit spending must end. 9. Bailout and stimulus plans are illegal. 10. Reducing personal income taxes is a must. 11. Reducing business income taxes is mandatory. 12. Political offices must be available to average citizens. 13. Intrusive government must be stopped. 14. English as our core language is required. 15. Traditional family values are encouraged.
**Faction: Tea Party Express** (teapartyexpress.org)
Business Status: Non-profit
Leadership: Amy Kremer
Headquarters: Sacramento, CA
Associated Political Action Committee: Our Country Deserves Better PAC
Website information: We are committed to identifying and supporting conservative candidates and causes that will champion tea party values and return our country to the Constitutional principles that have made America the “shining city on a hill.”
Tea Party Express is proud to stand for six simple principles: No more bailouts; Reduce the size and intrusiveness of government; Stop raising our taxes; Repeal Obamacare; Cease out-of-control spending; Bring back American prosperity

**Faction: FreedomWorks** (freedomworks.org)
Business Status: Non-profit, was once related to Americans for Prosperity
Leadership: Established by Dick Armey
Headquarters: Washington D.C.
Associated Political Action Committee: None
Website information: What We Do: FreedomWorks recruits, educates, trains and mobilizes millions of volunteer activists to fight for less government, lower taxes, and more freedom. Why We Do It: FreedomWorks believes individual liberty and the freedom to compete increases consumer choices and provides individuals with the greatest control over what they own and earn. How We Do It: FreedomWorks' aggressive, real-time campaigns activate a growing and permanent volunteer grassroots army to show up and demand policy change.

**Faction: Patriot Action Network** (formerly ResistNet) (patriotactionnetwork.org)
Business Status: For-profit organization
Leadership: Steve Elliot
Headquarters: Virginia
Website information: Patriot Action Network is the nation’s largest conservative social action network, serving hundreds of thousands of citizens every month. We are united by our passion for re-establishing Constitution-based liberty and limited government through dialogue, debate, legislation and elections.

**Organization: Tea Party United** (teapartyunited.us)
Funding: Private donors and politicians
Leadership: Leadership is distributed through multiple Tea Party factions
Website information: It is our goal to Educate America, and to promote Unity among all Conservatives and Tea Party Groups to work together for Freedom and Liberty

**Organization: Americans for Prosperity** (americansforprosperity.org)
Business Status: Multi-million dollar non-profit, funded by private donors
Leadership: Established by David H. Koch
Affiliation: Americans for Prosperity Foundation
Website information: Americans for Prosperity (AFP) is committed to educating citizens about economic policy and mobilizing those citizens as advocates in the public policy process. AFP is an organization of grassroots leaders who engage citizens in the name of limited government and free markets on the local, state, and federal levels. The grassroots activists of AFP advocate for public policies that champion the principles of entrepreneurship and fiscal and regulatory restraint. To that end, AFP supports: Cutting taxes and government spending in order to halt the encroachment of government in the economic lives of citizens by fighting proposed tax increases and pointing out evidence of waste, fraud, and abuse; Tax and Expenditure Limitations to promote fiscal responsibility; Removing unnecessary barriers to entrepreneurship and opportunity by sparking citizen involvement in the regulatory process early on in order to reduce red tape; Restoring fairness to our judicial system.

Organization: Young Americans for Liberty (yaliberty.org)
Location: National
Affiliations: Students for Ron Paul, Campaign for Liberty
Website information: We welcome limited government conservatives, classical liberals, and libertarians who trust in the creed we set forth.
WE, as Young Americans for Liberty believe:
that government is the negation of liberty; that voluntary action is the only ethical behavior; that respect for the individual's property is fundamental to a peaceful society; that violent action is only warranted in defense of one's property; that the individual owns his/her body and is therefore responsible for his/her actions; that society is a responsibility of the people, not the government

Notes

1 This is not an exhaustive list of organizations associated with the Tea Party movement; rather, it provides information relevant to understanding the size, scope, funding, and origins of the movement.
2 Sources: from individual websites and from the Institute for Education and Research on Human Rights, 2010.
### APPENDIX B

Rally Descriptions and Attributes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rally</th>
<th>Approximate Location</th>
<th>Approximate Attendance Amount</th>
<th>Symbolic Day Affiliation</th>
<th>Faction or Organization Affiliation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rally1</td>
<td>(20,000)</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>Independence Day</td>
<td>Young Americans for Liberty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rally2</td>
<td>(500,000)</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Patriot Day</td>
<td>Tea Party Patriots, Nor-Cal Tea Party Patriots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rally3</td>
<td>(900,000)</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>Tax Day</td>
<td>Tea Party Patriots: Bay Area Patriots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rally4</td>
<td>(500,000)</td>
<td>2500</td>
<td>Tax Day</td>
<td>Tea Party Patriots, Nor-Cal Tea Party Patriots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rally5</td>
<td>(4,000)</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>Tax Day</td>
<td>Tea Party Patriots, Gold Country Patriots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rally6</td>
<td>(500,000)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Tax Day</td>
<td>Tea Party United; Citizens Reclaiming Constitutional Liberty PAC¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rally7</td>
<td>(20,000)</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>Independence Day</td>
<td>Young Americans for Liberty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rally8</td>
<td>(80,000)</td>
<td>1800</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Main: Tea Party Express; Our Country Deserves Better PAC; Also: FreedomWorks, Tea Party United</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ PAC: Political Action Committee
### Rally 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Number</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The Declaration of Independence and The Constitution amended booklet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Dear Patriotic Taxpayer: Why you pay your income and inflation taxes brochure</td>
<td>Explanation of the Federal Reserve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Don’t Tread on Me (DVD)</td>
<td>Film about Constitutionalism, the Republic, getting America “back” to the spirit of 1776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Summer Shields for Congress handout</td>
<td>Entreaty to “Ban Financial Derivatives”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Rally 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Number</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The Declaration of Independence and The Constitution amended booklet</td>
<td>National Center for Constitutional Studies, publisher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Constitutional Compass newspaper</td>
<td><em>North State Tea Party Alliance</em> Publication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Newspaper covers topics such as free speech, political correctness, climate change, Constitution Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>NorCal Tea Party Patriots brochure</td>
<td>Explanation of the founding of the Tea Party Movement and the NorCal Tea Party Patriot group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>[No] Gov’t Mandated Health Care bumper sticker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>TDS Guns: 2nd Amendment Saturday, flyer</td>
<td>Second Amendment talk and gun sale flyer, for event in Rocklin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Yes on [Proposition] 23: California Jobs Initiative handout</td>
<td>Voter pamphlet for explanation of Prop 23; Sponsored by Yes on 23, California Jobs Initiative, a Coalition of Taxpayers, Employers, Food Producers, Energy, Transportation, and Forestry Companies, with major funding provided by Valero and Tesoro</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Rally 2 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Number</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>You! Can Stop Nancy Pelosi flyer</td>
<td>Flyer for volunteering on a congressional campaign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Northern California T.E.A. Party Conference flyer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Rally 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Number</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Taxifornia: California’s tax system, comparisons with other states, and the path to reform in the Golden State booklet (paid for by Pacific Research Institute and Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association)</td>
<td>Title is axiomatic of content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The Art of Political War for Tea Parties (published by David Horowitz Freedom Center)</td>
<td>Booklet discusses how to wage a political war; Image on cover: Obama as Che Guevara as a sign at a national Tea Party event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>California Prosperity: Roadmap to Recovery 2011 (published by the Pacific Research Institute)</td>
<td>Ten steps to “recover” California’s economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mother Mary’s Reading room flyer</td>
<td>Flyer about stopping neoliberalism. Person who gave it to me was dressed like a woman from the 1700s. People followed her around with an “infiltrator” sign.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Fair the lines: Citizens Redistricting Commission Road Show Meetings flyer</td>
<td>Flyer discusses upcoming meetings regarding redistricting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Breaking the System: Obama’s strategy for Change booklet (published by David Horowitz Freedom Center)</td>
<td>Discusses: “The Obama Team’s Strategy for Changing America.” Symbols on cover: blood pouring out of National Capitol, a backwards flag, dollar signs, and a hammer and sickle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Heritage Action for America postcard</td>
<td>On back: graph of Obama’s budget as compared to “Current Law”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Tony Hall SF Mayor brochure</td>
<td>Slogan “People over Politics” appears four times in brochure. Describes Hall’s political platform.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item Number</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>NorCal Tea Party Patriots brochure</td>
<td>Explanation of the founding of the Tea Party Movement and the NorCal Tea Party Patriot group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>NorCal Tea Party Patriots sticker</td>
<td>Express Tea Party Patriots values of: fiscal responsibility, constitutionally limited government, and free markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>A Miracle that Changed the World: The 5000 Year Leap bookmark (published by the National Center for Constitutional Studies)</td>
<td>Discusses the 28 Principles of Liberty as sourced from “over 150 volumes of the founding fathers’ writings”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Howard Jarvis Taxpayer’s Association brochure</td>
<td>Explains accomplishments of HJTA, also includes membership form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Raising the Torch of Justice for our Civil Liberties (Pacific Justice Institute) brochure</td>
<td>Explains the vision and purpose of PJI and asks for donations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Public education: Religious rights and values in California schools (Pacific Justice Institute) booklet</td>
<td>Description of the ascribed religious, political, and personal freedoms given to students in public schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Rally 5</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I pledge allegiance to the flag… of the North American Union? (The John Birch Society) brochure</td>
<td>Brochure on the impending combination of the US, Canada, and Mexico into one country. Symbol: A flag that combines the flags of all North American countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sustainable development- A brief analysis (freedomadvocates.org) handout</td>
<td>Information about Agenda 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The FEMA scheme: low-risk insured newspaper copy handout</td>
<td>Newspaper opinion piece on the abuses and deceptions of FEMA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The Philosophy of Liberty handout</td>
<td>Describes the tenets of liberty. Backside references the importance of recognizing that America is a republic and offers a summation of the Constitution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item Number</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The Declaration of Independence and The Constitution amended (US Government Printing Office, publisher; Compliments of Dan Lungren) booklet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Stop the Merger! Say “No” to the North American Union- NAU (The John Birch Society) bookmark</td>
<td>Asks for help in repealing NAFTA and gives contact information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I pledge allegiance to the flag… of the North American Union? (The John Birch Society) brochure</td>
<td>Brochure on the impending combination of the US, Canada, and Mexico into one country. Symbol: A flag that combines the flags of all North American countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>United Nations description (The John Birch Society) brochure</td>
<td>Discusses how the UN wants to control the behavior of all Americans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The United Nations Wants to Take Your Gun (The John Birch Society) brochure</td>
<td>Discusses how the UN wants to take away all American guns and abolish the Second Amendment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The New American magazine</td>
<td>23 page magazine devoted to exploring “Obamacare”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>John Boehner and Newt Gingrich information (from citizensagainstmoraldecline.com) flyer</td>
<td>Criticizes Boehner and Gingrich’s voting records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Placer County Assembly in the Republic of California brochure</td>
<td>Discusses the difference between a government de facto and a government de jure; provides a list of issues seen as government intrusion. Mentions the importance of a republic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>The Next Level handout</td>
<td>Story and metaphor about the founding and function of the US government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Dear Fellow American handout</td>
<td>Describes the unconstitutionality of the Obama health care bill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Sustainable development- A brief analysis (freedomadvocates.org) handout</td>
<td>Information about Agenda 21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Rally 6 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Number</th>
<th>Item Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Why You Must Vote in Person flyer</td>
<td>Lists four reasons why “absentee ballots increase opportunities for mistakes and fraud”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>The New World Order is Here and it has a Name: United Nations Agenda 21 Sustainable Development flyer</td>
<td>Lists the goals of Agenda 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Addition to Glenn Beck Bad Advice Alert copied email</td>
<td>Describes how Beck is calling for a constitutional amendment limiting congressional spending. Warns that such an action will lead us closer to a one world government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Election Integrity Project: Preserving our Republic through Fair and Honest Elections brochure</td>
<td>Description of the purpose of the Election Integrity Project</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Rally 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Number</th>
<th>Item Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The Declaration of Independence and The Constitution amended (Young America’s Foundation, publisher) booklet</td>
<td>“A field guide to essential liberty and the restoration of constitutional integrity, includes an introduction to the tea party and the legacy of liberty by Mark Alexander and documents essential to American liberty.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Tea Party Primer (Publius Press) booklet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Young American Revolution magazine (published by Young Americans for Liberty)</td>
<td>Issue 1, March 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Young American Revolution magazine (published by Young Americans for Liberty)</td>
<td>Issue 3, October 2009 (these two issues were the only ones available)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Liberty on the Rocks flyer</td>
<td>Flyer for LotR social meet-up group. Claims non-partisanship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Also</td>
<td>Dear Patriotic Taxpayer: Why you pay your income and inflation taxes brochure</td>
<td>Given away, but did not take one because I received one last year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Also</td>
<td>Don’t Tread on Me (dvd)</td>
<td>Given away, but did not take one because I received one last year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item Number</td>
<td>Item Number</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Wake Up California: Did You Know?? Flyer</td>
<td>Discusses “onerous” bills passed by the CA state legislature in 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Wake Up California 2012 Presents: Flip this Precinct 2012 Project flyer</td>
<td>Discusses content of website wakeupca.com and explains the goals of the organization. Quote, “We believe we have developed a successful strategy to return California to its former ‘exceptionalism.’”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sarah Palin postcard (authorized and paid for by American Grizzlies United)</td>
<td>States on front: drill now, strong defense, stop spending. States on back: Sarah Palin is America’s Leader on: energy independence, economic strength, restoring American exceptionalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Organize4Palin.com handout</td>
<td>Describes Palin’s Accomplishments by issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Organize4Palin.com: Is Gov. Palin a quitter? Don’t believe the hype. handout</td>
<td>Discusses why Palin made the right decision in leaving job as Gov. of Alaska</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Tea Party Census card</td>
<td>Card asked for name, email, and zip code of attendees for the purpose of providing an attendance count and for giving away raffle prizes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Ron and Kay Rivoli-The Rivoli Revue business card</td>
<td>Business card of singing couple from Kentucky. Best known for song “Press 1 for English.” Couple did not perform that song but sang three other pieces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Golden Gate Minutemen business card</td>
<td>From the Bay Area Card states: border security, end sanctuary cities, controlled legal immigration only Sticker on back asking for donation to: <a href="http://www.buildtheborderfence.com">www.buildtheborderfence.com</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References


Media Matters for America. 2008. “Limbaugh on Dem Primary: If ‘Feminazis’ had
Remembered to Oppose ‘Affirmative Action for Black Guys’ ... They Wouldn't
Face the Situation They Face Today” Retrieved January 10, 2012
(http://mediamatters.org/mmtv/200805210009).

Metzler, Christopher. 2010. “Barack Obama’s Faustian Bargain and the Fight for

New York: Oxford University Press.

Legal Studies 7:111-132.

Monticello.org. 2012. “Government big enough to give you everything you want...
(Quotation).” Retrieved April 1, 2012 (http://www.monticello.org/site/jefferson/
government-big-enough-to-give-you-everything-you-wantquotation).

(http://www.pacificresearch.org/about/default.asp).

Parker, Christopher. 2010. 2010 Multi-State Survey of Race & Politics. University of
Washington Institute for the Study of Ethnicity, Race, and Sexuality. Retrieved

Peery, Destiny and Galen V. Bodenhausen. 2009. “Ambiguity and Ambivalence in the
Voting Booth and Beyond: A Social-Psychological Perspective on Racial
Attitudes and Behavior in the Obama Era.” Du Bois Review: Social Science
Research on Race 6(1):71-82.


