2011

The Tea Party and Social Movements

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The Tea Party and Social Movements

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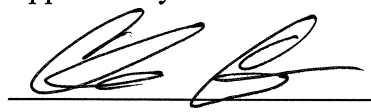
A Thesis Submitted to the Honors Council

For Honors in Political Science

May 10, 2011

Approved by:



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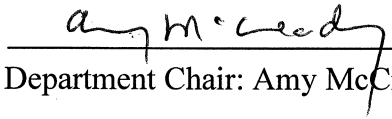

Department Chair: Amy McCready

Acknowledgements

Writing this thesis was not easy and I would not have been able to do without the help and support of a number of people. I'd like to thank my adviser, Professor Ellis for not only being an excellent editor and sounding board for ideas, but also for keeping the whole process relaxed so that despite the incredible amount of work it never really felt like I was working too hard. I'd also like to thank Professor Meinke for helping me whenever I had questions about SPSS. And I'd like to thank all three of the professors who read this thesis, Professors Ellis, Meinke and Traflet, for their insightful comments. Here's a shout out to my mom for being an amazing editor and also to my dad who got me interested in the Tea Party in the first place and kept me excited enough about the project throughout the year to finish it. To my dog Sasha, stay fluffy.

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Abstract:

The recent rise of the Tea Party movement has added a new dimension to our discussion of domestic politics. The main question is: what effect will the Tea Party have on the political landscape? The best way to answer this question is to place the Tea Party in historical and theoretical context, in order to discuss what type of social movement the Tea Party is and what impact it might have. To this end, I will define and discuss the two major literatures in social movement theory: Issue Evolution and Political Process theory. This theoretical framework will provide the basis for a more concrete definition of the Tea Party movement itself. I will attempt to define the Tea Party movement based on its demographics, goals and political successes and will discuss it within the context of this theoretical framework. In addition, I will discuss four landmark social movements within our country's history through the lens of the theoretical framework. I have found that successful movements rely on a combination of internal organizations and networks and external political opportunities to achieve and maintain national relevance. In the end, I will come to the conclusion that the Tea Party will not likely have a major lasting impact on the political arena. It lacks key parts of the internal structure that makes some movements, such as the Civil Rights movement, so influential. But in the short term it will succeed in pushing the Republican Party towards a more fiscally conservative position.

Chapter 1: Introduction

What does the Tea Party believe? Are they just concerned with lower taxes, smaller government and paying off the federal budget? Or are they social conservatives who agree with Friedrich Hayek when he wrote that in our Constitution "freedom of religion does not mean freedom of religion…"? Some Tea Partiers interpret the "separation of church and state" clause that the Founding Fathers put in the Constitution to mean that religion should play a part in the governing of our country (Zernike, October 2010).

Who is the Tea Party? Are they Glenn Beck, the right-wing talk show host of Fox News or Michele Bachmann and the Tea Party Caucus politicians in the House? Or is it an old woman, whose son lost his job and his house, and who woke up one day afraid of the future and the growing powers of the federal government (Barstow, 2010)? The answer is: a little bit of all the above.

Lastly, how important is the Tea Party? Are they just a minority of right wing extremists who will get their five minutes of shouting time and then vanish? Or do they represent a legitimate constituency within the population that will be able to sustain its influence and enact major change within our federal government? The answer is again, a little bit of both.

Up to this point there has been little scholarly research done to analyze the Tea Party and figure out who belongs to the Tea Party, what they want and if they will succeed. I think given the media waves Tea Party supporters have been making recently, it is important to understand from an objective perspective just how powerful the movement is so that we do not either overstate their importance or ignore a major concern of the population.

Thesis Layout

The quest for a better understanding of social movements in general and a better understanding of the Tea Party movement and how it will affect our political arena are mutually dependent investigations. I find that there are basic guidelines for discussing social movements that do fit multiple movements and so further our understanding of what constitutes a social movement. But it is helpful to examine these basic rules and fit them to a specific example to better understand them as well as gain a clearer understanding of a specific movement. Given the influence the Tea Party has recently wielded in the political arena, it makes sense to have a systematic understanding of exactly what is this movement. And examining the Tea Party movement through the theoretical frameworks commonly applied to the study of social movements will greatly enhance our understanding of the Tea Party and of social movements more broadly defined.

I will begin this thesis with a chapter on the definitions of the Tea Party movement. The Tea Party movement is not easy to define, largely because even members of the Tea Party movement cannot agree on what makes a Tea Party group and what those groups should be doing. For example, many Tea Party leaders have attacked the Tea Party Express, a candidate-campaign driven Tea Party group, as an illegitimate Tea Party organization (Lorbert and Liptont and Lipton, 2010). But there are some things that the majority of Tea Party members can agree on. Most importantly, they can agree on the most basic, important goals of the Tea Party movement: reducing the federal government (*NYTimes Poll,* 2010). It is this consensus of ideology that unifies the Tea Party. In some ways this ideological goal is really the only thing that unifies the movement.

The Tea Party is essentially a grassroots movement with no specific center of leadership (Courser, 2010). It has no defining class or level of education characteristics that set it apart. Indeed, apart from its over-representation of whites within the movement and its overwhelmingly conservative ideology, the movement is fairly representative demographically and socially of the nation at large. Its main goals, along with its lack of unified leadership, make it a decentralized grassroots level social movement.

After discussing the Tea Party's definitions, I will introduce the two theoretical frameworks, Political Process Theory and Issue Evolution that are commonly applied by sociologists and political scientists when analyzing social movements. I will use the insights provided by these theories when discussing the Tea Party and placing it into perspective of other historical social movements. I will be using Tarrow's definition of a social movement as the foundation for this discussion:

> "contentious politics is triggered when changing political opportunities and constraints create incentives for social actors who lack resources on their own. They contend through known repertoires of contention…when backed by dense social networks and galvanized by culturally resonant, action-oriented symbols, contentious politics leads to sustained interaction with opponents. The result is a social movement" (Tarrow, 2, 1998).

This broad definition as a starting point will be useful because it lays out the general foundation of what makes a social movement, but leaves enough flexibility to apply the definition to different cultural and political norms of specific movements.

Furthermore, I will work to integrate the themes of Political Process and Issue Evolution theories, making the case that despite different disciplinary origins and perspectives they are not contradictory schools of thought, but rather complementary ideas that in many cases actually use different words and ideas to define the same concepts.

Once the theoretical framework has been established, it is possible to use it to place the Tea Party movement within a broader historical context. To this end, I will use four examples of varying types of social movements and examine them through the lens of Issue Evolution and Political Process theory. The first movement I will examine is the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s. This movement is very important, and has been already examined by scholars from a Political Process perspective (McAdams, 1999) and an Issue Evolution perspective (Carmines and Stimson, 1989), but not via a synthesis of both. The Civil Rights movement is an example of a social movement achieving issue evolution, in which it successfully captures national attention and sustains it to a degree that it evolves and changes the politics of the era (Carmines and Stinson, 1989). Political Process theory is helpful because it explains the variety of internal and external factors that went in to strengthening the movement. The Tea Party is not based on such a divisive issue as race, but it can be very illuminating to compare the two, especially since some less obvious similarities exist between them.

The next historical movement I will examine is the American Party movement of the 1850s. This movement is very different from the Civil Rights movement because it only lasted three years (Maizlish, 1982) and its effects are not quite as obvious as those of the Civil Rights Movement. This was essentially a one goal movement: to extend the time required for naturalization to 21 years (the time immigrants must reside in the US before they can become US citizens), thus making immigration a more daunting process for some (Maizlish, 1982). This would not only potentially dissuade some foreigners from immigrating, but also keep recent immigrant influence out of the government. This movement has many superficial similarities to the Tea Party. Like the Tea Party, it has one main focus (the Tea Party focuses on small government and the budget deficit) at its core, but has many other side issues and influences

acting on it and threatening its stability. And like the Tea Party, it is a reform based anti-status quo grassroots movement based largely on local networks and chapters (Maizlish, 1982). In the end it was swallowed up by the major parties (Maizlish, 1982), and its sudden demise could be a helpful lesson in discussing the viability of a long term impact coming from the Tea Party.

The third social movement I will discuss is the Religious Right movement, which took off in the 1980s. This movement, like the Civil Rights movement, changed the political landscape by shifting party ideology (Domke and Coe, 2008). For Republicans, a whole new set of social issues, such as abortion, gay rights and prayer in school, became a focus for party identification for politicians, activists and the general public (Layman, 2001; Domke and Coe, 2008). The political opportunities for this movement, such as the Supreme Court decisions in the 1960s and 70s on abortion and prayer in school (Domke and Coe, 2008) as well as the liberal campaign of George McGovern in 1972, helped to create an environment conducive to an injection of religious ideologies into the Republican party (Layman, 2001; Domke and Coe, 2008). The Tea Party has had strong ties to the Republican Party from the beginning (among its supporters at least), but is an anti-status quo movement, while the Religious Right movement began with less defined party identification and became an integral part of the Republican Party (Layman, 2001). But the Religious Right movement is still extremely important in politics today, over thirty years after it took shape. Hence, it is a great example of issue evolution and a useful comparison when looking at the Tea Party's potential for longevity.

The last movement I will discuss is the modern environmental movement. The environmental movement is another type of movement entirely. As scholars have commented, there is no single "environmental movement" (Egan and Crane, 2009). Instead, it is a perfect example of a movement driven by short-term political opportunity; an environmental crisis

occurs, gains national attention, and then often largely disappears from national view (Downs, 1972). Like the environmental movement, the Tea Party movement's core beliefs (smaller federal government and less spending) have been a long simmering point of political contention. And like the Tea Party, many environmental issues flame up due to short term political opportunity. But in the past many environmental issues directly affect small populations[1] (Egan and Crane, 2009), while the main issue underlying the Tea Party movement is a fairly broad national issue.

After a basic understanding of the historical context of social movements has been established, I will undertake an explanation of the politics (successes and failures) of the Tea Party. I will first look at Tea Party candidates, and their success rate against traditional Republican and Democratic nominees. In addition, I will further examine their success by measuring the influence of many of the Tea Party members in Congress by looking at their committee assignments and standings within the two houses. And I will attempt to define the Tea Party's relationship with the Republican Party, a link that many Tea Party members are working to dissolve while others are working to strengthen (Herszenhorn and Hulse, 2010).

Lastly I will analyze what type of social movement the Tea Party is from the historical comparisons and way it fits into the theory framework. Based on this, I will try to project the type of long-term and short-term effects it will have on the political environment in the coming years.

The Tea Party movement is based on the specific goals of decreasing the federal budget and the size of the federal government. But because of its grassroots nature, it has a very loosely

[1] And even the relatively new issue of global warming, which carries the message of direct of impact on everyone, often boils down to how these global changes will affect people locally.

unified assortment of groups, with many citizen-based local groups often clashing heads with more organized and professional campaign based organizations. And this splintered structure is pressured by a love-hate relationship with the Republican Party, with which many members would like to join and others would like to avoid. It is a movement that lacks the internal organization of the Civil Rights and the Religious Right movements, and even to some extent that of the American Party movement. It draws its strength from political opportunities based on a national issue (federal government spending) that lacks the passion provided by local political opportunities such as those in the Environmental movement. Because of this it seems that while the political opportunities are currently expanded, giving the Tea Party movement the potential to make dramatic short term changes, it will not likely become issue evolution and create a long-lasting impact on the political environment.

Chapter 2: Tea Party Definitions

To analyze what type of social movement the Tea Party is, it is important to figure out who the Tea Party is, why they are organizing and what they are organizing for. There has been a general portrayal of the Tea Party as white, well-off and better educated conservatives (Zernike and Thee-Brenan, 2010). But for the purposes of this thesis, a more detailed look is necessary to determine what makes someone a member of the Tea Party movement. I will look at the main goals of the Tea Party, based on the stated goals of organized Tea Party groups. I will also examine survey answers of identified Tea Party supporters. I will be drawing much of my information regarding the demographics and political makeup of the Tea Party from two polls, an NBC poll done in July of 2010 and a Gallup poll in October 2010. I will assess the demographics of the Tea Party in order to analyze how accurate this basic reading--of a more wealthy, generally white and conservative citizen-- is in reality. In understanding the nature of a social movement, it is also important to discuss the leaders of the movement. In the Tea Party's case, there are certain examples, such as Rand Paul, Sarah Palin and Glenn Beck who stand out. But it is also important to analyze just how much influence these leaders hold over the greater movement. I have found that while these leaders certainly maintain influence and support from the Tea Party, it is essentially a grassroots, disorganized movement that has little overall cohesion. I will look at the structure of the movement, which I find seems to be more of an anti-establishment movement than a true populist revolution. And I will illustrate how the Tea Party fits Tarrow's definition of social movement.

Main Goals of the Tea Party

The most basic fact that needs to be understood about a social movement before it can be analyzed successfully is the main goals of the movement. Only after we understand what the

main goals of the movement are can we begin to figure out who makes up that movement and why, and what it is that makes it a successful or unsuccessful movement. Because of the nature of the Tea Party movement, it is difficult to come to a consensus about what the *Tea Party* wants. To get a basic understanding, I will start with a brief discussion of the goals of the organized Tea Party groups. Because there are a variety of independent groups, I am going to examine the mission statements of several of these autonomous organizations to look for similarities and differences in an effort of define the overarching Tea Party goals.

One such group, Tea Party Nation, has a very simple and basic statement of purpose: "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 Second Amendment, our Military, Secure Borders and our Country" (TeaPartyNation.com). It also credits itself as a "home for conservatives", drawing the obvious link between the Tea Party movement and conservatism as a social and political value. This statement also tells an important story about the type of organization Tea Party Nation sees itself as. It is "user driven groups of like-minded people" claiming a grassroots nature, which does not encourage hierarchical leadership. And until recently the Tea Party Nation has intentionally stayed away from an organized and regimented system of local chapters (TeaPartyNation.com), making it a very loosely organized grassroots group.

The TeaParty.org, another Tea Party group, was founded in 2009 in protest of President Obama's stimulus bill (TeaParty.org). Like Tea Party Nation, they seem to have avoided local chapter approaches, instead contacting members regionally (TeaParty.org). TeaParty.org has a list of "core beliefs" that are (given in the order they are and as they are presented): anti-illegal immigration, pro-domestic employment, pro-military, anti-special interest, anti-gun control, pro-

smaller government, pro-balancing the federal budget, pro-ending deficit spending, the illegality of bail out and stimulus plans, pro-reduction of personal income taxes, pro-reduction of business income taxes, political offices should be available to all citizens, end of intrusive government, pro-traditional family values, English should be the core language, and pro-"common sense constitutional conservative self-governance." Between these two groups we see significant overlap. Both want a limited government, stronger military, stronger borders (anti-illegal immigration) and are anti-gun control.

Freedomworks, another major Tea Party group, considers its main goal to be more confined to the economic field. Freedomworks' main goals are lower taxes, less government and economic freedom for all Americans. Like Tea Party Nation, Freedomworks considers its grassroots ties as its primary driving force. Unlike Tea Party Nation, or Tea Party.org however, Freedomworks was founded in 1984. This raises the question: what makes up a Tea Party group? Some groups, like the two mentioned above, are clearly Tea Party movements. Freedomworks is too, largely because its main goals intersect perfectly with other Tea Party groups' goals. It considers itself part of the Tea Party Movement (Freedomworks.org, November 2010). And I think it is fair to say that this is indeed the case. But the *New York Times* makes an important distinction when it discusses the Tea Party and Freedomworks, describing Freedomworks as an organization that has worked *with* Tea Party groups (Zernike, January 2011). There are groups that are inherently Tea Party groups, that were born because of, and essentially gave birth to the Tea Party movement, and there are groups such as Freedomworks, which are not inherently Tea Party groups, simply because they existed before the Tea Party. But they have become an important part of the movement.

Another national Tea Party group is the Tea Party Patriots. The Tea Party Patriots claim three main goals in their mission statement: a constitutional, limited government, fiscal responsibility, and free market (against any government intervention in the private sector). The Tea Party Patriots also claim to be a grassroots level movement, (Teapartypatriots.org), similar to the Tea Party Nation, Freedomworks and TeaParty.org. However, unlike Tea Party Nation, the Patriots try to create a strong network at the local level through local chapters (Teapartynation.com).

This brief overview of several Tea Party groups is not meant to be an exhaustive analysis of the core beliefs of all Tea Party groups, nor a discussion of all the different types of groups out there that are part of the Tea Party movement. There are simply too many groups out there to discuss all the various permutations and opinions. Instead, it is meant to provide a brief introduction to the most basic beliefs held by those in the Tea Party movement. The recurring themes—limited government, a fiscally responsible government (deficit reduction), lower taxes and limited to no government interference in the private sector of the economy—however, are important to understand as a basis for further exploration. However, there are many other issues that attach themselves to these Tea Party groups, such as immigration, gun control and family value issues, that differ from group to group and demonstrate not only the wide range of issues that some Tea Party groups attack, but also the clashing opinions between the groups. Not only do some groups differ on what they say, they differ on what they believe it is important to focus on.

Understanding what groups of the Tea party movement believe is important because they represent the views of many of the Tea Party supporters, but it is also just as important, if not more important, to understand what individual supporters of the Tea Party are saying about

public policy. To accomplish this goal, I will draw data from several national polls, drawing largely from a Gallup Poll from October 2010, and an NBC poll from July 2010 in order to dissect what Tea Party supporters believe with regards to specific issues.

The Gallup Poll asked respondents whether or not they consider themselves supporters of the Tea Party, and whether they consider themselves activists of the Tea party. Only a miniscule amount, 2.6%, classified themselves as Tea Party activists (Gallup, 2010), not a large enough number to analyze. So for matters of definition, all respondents who self-classified themselves as Tea Party supporters are considered members of the Tea Party movement. Both polls are national polls given to a nationally representative sample. The NBC Poll was done in May of 2010, right in the middle of the 2010 election primaries. It had a sample size of 1027 respondents, and would likely give a fairly representative picture of the nation's mood during the primary election season. The Gallup poll was done in October of 2010 with a nationally representative sample with 1019 respondents and would give a better picture of the nation's mood right before the general elections in November.

Table 1. Main Goals

(%)	Tea Party Supporters	Tea Party Opponents	Neither (Opponent or Supporter)
Economy's Health	35	37	27
`Unemployment and Jobs	15	24	26
Reducing Federal Budget	9.3	1.6	5.3
Chi-Square Value	0		

Source: Gallup, Oct 2010.

This table demonstrates the top three main issues for Tea Party supporters and how non-Tea Party supporters choose to rank these issues. Clearly the health of the economy is the most

important issue across the board, winning a plurality of support for the most important issue. Likewise unemployment and jobs were ranked across the board as the second most important issue. But the third most important issue for Tea Party supporters, reducing the federal budget, hardly registers as an important issue for opponents of the Tea Party, and is barely half as important for everyone else as it was for the supporters of the Tea Party. Tea Party supporters are more likely than the rest of the population to rank reducing the federal budget as the most important issue facing our nation.

Table 2. Tea Party Main Goals

Tea Party Goals	(%)
Reducing Federal Budget	21.1
Reducing Federal Government	17.3
Personal Liberty	16.5

Source: NBC/WSJ Poll, May 2010

Self-identified supporters of the Tea Party were asked which issues were the reasons they chose to support the Tea Party. The most important issues they identified were reducing the federal budget, reducing the size of the federal government, and personal liberty. These two tables demonstrate that while reducing the federal government is not the most important issue in general, even for Tea Party supporters, Tea Party supporters are more likely to give increased importance to it than the rest of the population. And reducing the federal budget is the main Tea Party issue since it is the most important reason supporters of the movement give for supporting the Tea Party movement. [2]

[2] One other thing that is important to note is that while these issues are the top three Tea Party issues, there remains clearly a sizable chunk of the Tea Party's support base who consider other issues paramount. A majority of Tea

One other important point to reiterate however is that while these issues are the *most* important issues for Tea Party supporters, they are certainly not the only ones. As we saw with several of the Tea Party groups, many other social issues (among others) are often tied by different supporters to the movement. For example, there also appears to be a large overlap between Tea Party supporters and supporters of the religious right. Half of the Tea Party supporters in a recent *Washington Post* poll said they identified as members of the religious right as well (Boorstein, 2010) who naturally identify with socially conservative issues (on issues such as abortion) while many others will not. Under the standard of reducing federal government spending and size the varying types of Tea Party supporters bring a wide array of other minor issues to the table as well.

Demographics

The next step in understanding the Tea Party is to understand what type of people make up this movement. For this section I will again be relying largely on polling data, largely drawn from the July NBC poll and the October Gallup poll. The Gallup Poll in October found that 31% of Americans are Tea Party supporters (Gallup, 2010), while the NBC Poll back in July had a Tea Party supporter rate of 27% (NBC, 2010). Gallup's measurement has shown that as of January 2011, there has been little change in the percent of Americans who consider themselves supporters of the Tea Party (Gallup, 2011). Additionally, the data from the Gallup Poll in October shows that only 2.6% of Americans actually consider themselves activists. In other words, 8.3% of Tea Party supporters consider themselves activists.

Party supporters consider these issues the big three, but about 45% of Tea Party supporters believe that there are other priorities. This just underscores the earlier point that while the Tea Party movement is founded on the goal of reducing the federal government, issue consensus within the movement is far from perfect.

There has been a significant amount of debate in the media as to the makeup of the Tea Party supporters. They have been labeled by some as older, whiter and better-off, more conservative, and better educated than the general public (Zernike and Thee-Brenan, 2010), a picture that many Tea Party groups have strongly denounced (TeaPartyNation.org). While the data provided by the NBC and Gallup Polls show there might be some truth to these claims, they demonstrate that some of these claims may be exaggerated.

Table 3. Tea Party Demographics

	Tea Party Supporters	Survey Average
Gender	(%)	(%)
Male	54.7	50
Female	45.3	50
Chi-Square Value	.022	
Source: NBC/WSJ, May 2010		
Race	(%)	(%)
White	88.1	76
Black	2.2	15.8
Hispanics	5.4	6.6
Chi-Square Value	0	
Source: NBC/WSJ, May 2010		
Education	(%)	(%)
Graduated College	37.7	42.3
Attended College (Dropped Out)	28.7	23.7
High School Graduate	21.3	22.3
Chi Square Value	0	
Source: Gallup, Oct 2010		
Age	(Years)	(Years)

Mean Age	57.5	55.5
Median Age	60	57
Source: Gallup, Oct 2010		
Personal Income	(%)	(%)
Under $30,000	19.50%	20.8
Between $30,000-75,000	35.2	35.6
More than $75,000	32.7	31.2
Chi Square Value	.15 (Not Statistically Significant)	
Source: Gallup, Oct 2010		
Household Income		
Under $30,000	22.6	24.9
Between $30,000-75,000	30.3	31
More than $75,000	37%	35.60%
Chi-Square Value	.121 (Not Statistically Significant)	
Source: NBC/WSJ, May 2010		

Table 4. Tea Party Political Values

Ideology	Tea Party Supporters (%)	Survey Average (%)
Very Conservative	23.1	9.9
Conservative	52.5	32.7
Chi Square Value	.01	
Source: Gallup, Oct 2010		
Party Membership	(%)	
Republican	54	30.2
Independent	38	38.5
Democrat	5.6	28.7
Chi Square Value	0	
Source Gallup, Oct 2010		

The polling data supports the idea that men are overrepresented within the Tea Party movement and it also backs up the claim that whites are also overrepresented. It also appears that the Tea Party is slightly older than the rest of the population, although this difference is fairly small and likely has been overstated. They also are far more conservative and the movement's supporters are drawn mostly from self-identified Republicans and Independents. And as I mentioned before there is a large overlap between Tea Party supporters and members self-identifying as the Religious Right.

But there are some problems with our media's picture of the movement. It does not appear that Tea Party supporters are more educated than the average American. On the contrary, it appears that college graduates are slightly underrepresented within the Tea Party. If anything, the Tea Party appears less, not more, educated than the average American. And it does not

appear that the average Tea Party supporter is any wealthier than the average American. Based on both personal income and family income Tea Party supporters seem to be earning almost exactly as much as everyone else and the results are not statistically significant[3].

So who are the Tea Party supporters? They are whiter, more conservative, more religious and slightly older than the average American, but they are not more educated or more well off.

Origins of the Tea Party

The Tea Party movement did not begin in a vacuum. Courser (2010) traces it back to the anti-party movement of the Ross Perot era and his Reform party. If you look at the characterizations of the Ross Perot movement "independent political attitudes, economic fears, and distrust of government" (Courser, 13, 2010) you could almost word for word be speaking the Tea Party line. The Tea Party's main goals are cutting the federal government spending and decreasing the size of the federal government. And given that the Tea Party was born during the recession, it seems fairly safe to say that it too is motivated at least to some extent by economic fears. Despite the fact that he did not win, Perot won almost 20% of the popular vote in 1992, and districts in which he was popular were overwhelmingly Republican (Courser, 2010).

This fact is highly important. Ross Perot wanted to create a third party, a "Reform Party", which did not end up becoming a major force in American politics (Courser, 2010). But the fact that his electoral attraction translated in many ways into Republican electoral success is crucial. The Tea Party is fighting a similar battle in an effort to stay separate from the Republican Party, even though some Republicans want to work toward a "big tent" approach to

[3] A chi square value of greater than .05 denotes that it is possible that any trend seen between the two variables could be simply due to random chance and not show a real relationship. So there appears to be no relationship we can conclude between being a Tea Party supporter and your wealth status.

Tea Party and Republican Party motions (Herszenhorn and Hulse, 2010). Admittedly there is a difference between the Reform Party, which was founded by one man, and the Tea Party movement, which at times seems to lack direction and a central leadership. But the popularity of the Ross Perot campaign shows that his anti-party reform message was heard and the electoral success of many Tea Party politicians during the 2010 mid-term elections show that that message is still popular.

In addition, Newt Gingrich can be seen as a forerunner of Tea Party ideology. Much of Tea Party ethos has echoes in the Republican "Contract with America" Gingrich spearheaded when the Republicans took back the House of Representatives in 1994 for the first time in decades. The very first point in the Contract with America is the "Fiscal Responsibility Act," which is meant to reign in federal spending and cut waste (newt.org, 1994). In fact, federal waste is mentioned several more times in the Contract, both in the promise to cut committee membership and staff members (to save money) and to cut welfare spending (newt.org, 1994). This type of waste cutting is reminiscent of the Tea Party movement's push to cut federal spending. And Gingrich is now strongly considering running for President in 2012 (Weber, 2011), which could be due, at least in part, to a resurgence in the popularity of fiscal conservatism. The last time the Republicans espoused this position, they took back the House of Representatives. In 2010 (and for the 2012 election) these same issues are raised up again by the Tea Party. This shows that what the Tea Party is advocating has long been part of the Republican Party's program, and the fact that they are pushing it shows that in the intervening years the Republican Party may have strayed from its fiscally conservative stance. But if this fiscal conservatism was fairly recently a major part of the Republican Party platform, it does not seem that unlikely that it could become again, absorbing the Tea Party movement.

Interestingly enough, this argument for smaller government was virtually absent in the GOP party platform in 2004. The vast majority of that platform is devoted to a discussion of national security (gop.com, 2004), which makes sense, given it was the first platform post 9/11 and we were heavily invested in wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Another reason for this might have been because the US economy during this time was strong (Witte, 2004), and people were less concerned with government spending than with issues of national security.

In 2008, the issue of federal spending returned to the Republican platform, and is in fact included in Chapter Two of the platform, just behind the first section about national security (which is a shorter section than in 2004) (gop.com, 2008). This is likely the first indicator of the return of fears over government spending as a result of the recession.

An interesting point is that in 1994, the first time that cutting back on government spending became a major issue in recent times, the economy was doing very well (Gillette, 1995). So the economy is clearly not a reliable indicator for the rise and fall of the anti-government spending sentiment by itself. But the spending during the Obama administration as a result of the weak economy certainly might be. And this shows that the issues behind the Tea Party are not likely to simply evaporate once the economy rebounds.

Back in the 1990s when the Ross Perot reform party broke up, the federal government had taken steps under the Clinton administration to rectify the budget deficit. It is possible that these steps had a mollifying effect on the majority of the population. But a decade of fairly serious spending, both abroad in wars and domestic spending because of the recession have destroyed that effect and returned the issue of the national debt to the forefront.

This spending set the stage for the creation of the Tea Party movement and its role in the 2010 election. There were 141 Tea Party candidates running for Congressional office in 2010 (I will return to a more detailed discussion of this election in Chapter Five) and over half of them would win office.

Nature of the Tea Party Movement: Leadership and Populism

Another big question regarding the Tea Party centers around the debate: is the Tea Party movement a grassroots movement, or a hierarchical movement controlled by a few leaders (such as Glenn Beck, Fox News, Sarah Palin, Michele Bachmann, or Sal Russo, to name a few prominent names commonly associated with the Tea Party)? I have found that the Tea Party movement appears to be more of a grassroots, disorganized movement than an organized hierarchical one driven by one person or bankrolled by a small group of elite[4]. There are two primary reasons for this. First, many of these groups are not designed to make direct change in the political arena through activities such as election campaigns (Courser, 2010). Rather, they are more based on information sharing and general networking among groups of like-minded individuals. The Tea Party Movement was essentially born of one giant demonstration on tax day in April, 2009 (*The New American*, 2009). In addition, the majority of the members of the Tea Party movement are not primarily interested in campaigning; their major goal is to voice their opinion (Courser, 2010). This gives the Tea Party movement a grassroots, anti-government outlook.

[4] One example of a group that has come under fire for being an elite bankrolled Tea Party groups is the Americans for Prosperity (AFP). AFP is an organization that was founded by David Koch, a major GOP donor, and works primarily to run advertisements to influence various campaigns (Good, 2010; *Factcheck.org*, 2010). It is widely considered a Tea Party group (Courser, 2010; Good, 2010; americansforprosperity.org), and its main goals include cutting back on federal spending and reducing the size of the federal government. The *Washington Post* found that only four percent of local Tea Party groups are affiliated with this organization, so while the Koch funded group, unlike the Tea Party Patriots, is very much involved in influencing campaigns and has strong ties to the Republican party, it is far from representative of the Tea Party movement.

To understand the Tea Party as an anti-government reform movement, we must first go back to the main goals and demographics of the movement. The main goals of the Tea Party movement, illustrated by the mission statements of several Tea Party groups and reinforced by the polling data of Tea Party supporters, are a reduction in the federal budget deficit, limiting the size of the federal government, and the promotion of personal freedoms (be it based on civil liberties or economic liberties). There are other issues that members of the Tea Party care about strongly, but these three are the three most important because they represent not only *why* many people support the Tea Party movement, but also, given the actions of the Tea Party groups, *what* the movement is pushing for.

These goals lend themselves to an anti-government type of movement. And Tea Party supporters push this populist image, one of fighting against the elite in government, in order to strengthen their cause (Courser, 2010). At their core, all three of these goals are based on the idea of less government and mobilizing against the status quo (the status quo being a large, involved federal government). But the fact that they are pushing for major reform does not by definition make them a populist movement (defining a movement as "populist" has the connotation of a people's movement against a political elite, usually involving some type of class demarcation between supporters of the movement and their opponents), just anti-big government.

The demographics do not really support the notion of the Tea Party movement as a populist movement either. From the two data sets I have examined, the Tea party movement appears to be a basically white, conservative movement whose members are slightly older. In other respects such as gender, education level, and income the movement is fairly representative

of the American public as a whole. And far from being a people's movement, more people are currently opposed to the Tea Party movement than supportive of it (Cohen, 2011).

A useful point of comparison is the Populist Party of the 1880s-90s, which was based on a specific economic group: the small farmer (*Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2011). The Tea Party movement clearly lacks this kind of clear demarcation, whether it is class, education or something else. The two demographic aspects of the Tea Party supporters that truly stand out are their overwhelming "whiteness," and their overwhelming conservativeness. But the racial makeup of the Tea Party's supporters is not helpful in defining the Tea Party movement itself (beyond a very basic level) because none of the Tea Party's goals are racially based (certainly not directly at least). Furthermore, the classification of "conservative" is not helpful either. Conservative, as an ideology, lets us place the Tea Party movement along the ideological spectrum and serves as an important role in how they fit in the political landscape. But it does not help define the movement itself beyond that or let us differentiate what it means to be Tea Party compared to conservative Republican.

A clue as to the grassroots nature of the Tea Party can be found in the types of groups that make up its membership as well as their structure. More than 50% of the Tea Party groups in existence have fewer than 50 members, while only 6% have over 1000 members (Courser, 2010). This highlights the general, decentralized grassroots structure of the movement. Dig a little deeper and we find that of the 1,400 Tea Party groups the *Washington Post* identified, 42% of them (a plurality) are not affiliated with any larger Tea Party organization (Courser, 2010). So the structure of the Tea Party demonstrates its decentralized, grassroots nature.

The question is: why is the movement so decentralized? The simple answer is, because most Tea Party supporters want it that way. A majority of Tea Party members (57%) claimed that the main purpose of the Tea Party groups is to "operate as a network of independent political organizations," compared to only 24% who wanted to "take over" the Republican Party (Courser, 2010, 9). The key word here is *independent* political groups, which makes the idea of a united movement difficult to express. While there is some unity as far as the main goals of the Tea Party supporters, there are many other minor goals that cause disagreement and friction between the groups.

According the NBC Poll done in July, an overwhelming majority (77.9%) of Tea Party supporters think that it would be a good thing if the Tea Party forces the Republican Party towards fiscal conservatism (NBC Poll, 2010). This is important because while a majority of Tea Party members do not want to take over the Republican Party, this demonstrates that they do want their opinions to be heard in the political arena. Courser (2010) claims that the majority of the Tea Partiers would prefer to simply have an outlet to voice their opinion and is less concerned with getting directly involved in politics than with making change through the party structure. And this claim is supported by the NBC Poll data: while it may be true those Tea Party members are largely uninterested in getting involved in political parties and campaigning, they still do want their opinions to matter. And it is this consensus among many Tea Partiers—that they should focus on voicing their opinion and are content to remain in autonomous, locally operated groups—that leads to such a decentralized movement.

Nature of the Tea Party Movement: Aim and Structure of Specific Groups

We can also look at several of the larger groups themselves and address whether this general consensus of a decentralized movement is being respected by the movement's organizers. First is the Tea Party Patriots, which among the groups has the largest number of affiliated local groups (32% of groups nationwide are affiliated with it) (Courser, 2010). But the Tea Party Patriots is more of a consortium of local chapters that acts to *connect* these small local networks on a nationwide scale rather than *run* them (Courser, 2010; Good, 2010). Between the small local groups that are unaffiliated and account for 42% of the Tea Party Groups, and the Tea Party Patriots, which accounts for another 32% of the local Tea Party groups (for a total of 74%) it becomes clear that the majority of the Tea Party groups are in fact following this decentralized-grassroots tenet.[5]

The Tea Party Express is another important Tea Party group, despite the fact that only two percent of local Tea Party groups are affiliated with it. The Tea Party Express was founded by Sal Russo, a consultant who has been involved with the Republican Party for decades (Lorbert and Lipton, 2010). The Tea Party Express is unique among Tea Party groups because it focuses almost entirely on individual campaigns and it gained most of its notoriety through its nationwide bus tours and rallies for its (Tea Party) candidates (Courser, 2010; Goods, 2010; Lorbert and Lipton, 2010). The Tea Party Express is different yet again because it is accused of not being a grassroots groups, but rather a "top down organization" (Lorbert and Lipton, 2010). But while the Tea Party Express is not representative of other Tea Party groups, and has less of a

[5] However, not all Tea Party groups adhere to this mold. Like the AFP, Freedom Works is more concerned than the Tea Party Patriots with directly taking action. They work to train activists to protest for policy reform (Courser, 2010; Good, 2010) and endorsed candidates for the midterm elections (freedomworks.org). But in a similar vein to the Patriots, they emphasize a decentralized, grassroots movement (Courser, 2010). These groups have a variety of structures and main goals.

membership base than the others, it has had a large impact on the election results of several Tea Party candidates (Lorbert and Lipton, 2010).

Another important group is the Tea Party Nation, which accounts for just one percent of local group affiliation (Courser, 2010), largely because it has actively resisted getting involved with local chapters (Phillips, 2011). This group's lack of local affiliation and a desire to avoid involvement with local chapters demonstrates that it is not at all a local network based type of group. However, it has indicated that it will soon be getting involved in more grassroots organizing by starting its own chapters in the coming months (Phillips, 2011).

It seems that the majority of the Tea Party groups have respected the general the wish for a decentralized grassroots movement that many Tea Party supporters say they prefer. Many of the more influential groups (like Freedomworks) may be less decentralized and grassroots. But in terms of sheer numbers, the vast majority of groups are decentralized grassroots movements that are at best loosely unified and espouse a wide variety of marginal goals in addition to the core message of reducing the spending and size of the federal government.

Nature of the Tea Party Movement: The Role of Mass Media

The 9-12 group, with three percent of local Tea Party groups associated with it (Courser, 2010), was started by Glenn Beck, the talk show host of Fox News (glennbeck.com, 2009), in an effort to get back to the sense of unification the nation felt immediately after 9/11. The 9-12 organization provided the impetus for the "Taxpayer March on Washington", a major Tea Party rally in August of 2010 (Courser, 2010), that had an estimated 87,000 people in attendance (Sundby, 2010). The 9-12 organization is important to discuss when talking about the Tea Party movement for two reasons. The first is because of its close connections and influence in the

movement, such as the "Taxpayer March" (Courser, 2010). The second is because it is the brainchild of Glenn Beck of who owes most of his fame to Fox News, where he is a host of a talk show. So it is important to discuss not only how much influence Glenn Beck and his group (9-12) have on the movement, but also how much influence Fox News has had. Beck, in a poll of Tea Party supporters about the national figure who best represents the movement, came in 3rd with seven percent, behind "Nobody" (34%) and Sarah Palin (14%) (Courser, 2010). So while he certainly represents a major influence in the movement, given such a low vote of recognition, he is far from the head of the Tea Party.

Fox News has played a large role in the development of the Tea Party movement, but it does not appear to have any direct links, beyond extensive coverage which allows many Tea Party groups an easy way to spread their message. The cable news station's importance is demonstrated by the fact that, according to a Washington Post poll, 59% of Tea Party supporters get all their news from Fox News, compared to 37% all Americans surveyed (Boorstein, 2010). This shows how important Fox News is to the movement, but it demonstrates correlation, not causation; the fact that most Tea Party supporters watch Fox News does not demonstrate that Fox news started the Tea Party. To dig a little deeper, Fox News did have very extensive coverage of the original Tax Day protests in April 2009. This included sending many of their top TV personalities, including Sean Hannity, who broadcasted his show from a rally, and Neil Cavuto, a Fox News anchor, among others, to cover the events (Robbins, 2009). In addition, Fox News created a web page to promote the event, with links for everything from discussing counter-protests by movements like ACORN, to ways for maximizing the message of the Tea Party and to a brief article comparing the Obama administration to the British tax decrees from the 18th century that stirred the American Revolution (FoxNews.com, 2009). Indeed, many other

major news outlets attacked Fox News for promoting the Tax Day Tea Parties instead of just reporting them (Delaney, 2009).

However, despite its extensive coverage, and regardless of its bias or lack thereof, there is no proof of Fox News actively organizing various aspects of the Tea Party. Fox News was one of the vehicles by which the Tea Party was able to spread its message. Fox News chose to cover the Tea Party extensively at the same time that other networks chose to largely ignore it (Delaney, 2009). So it is true that Fox News willingly amplified the Tea Party's message, but at the same time it did not start it. An analogous example would be the way Twitter helped "organize" protests in Iran. Twitter did not organize the protests; it merely made it easier for them to happen. The difference is that Twitter did not choose to amplify the protestors' message, while Fox News did. Thus, it is likely that the Tea Party would exist on some scale without Fox News' help, but without its extensive coverage it would not likely have spread so far, so fast. [6]

Conclusion

The Tea Party has political roots going back to the last decade. The issues the Tea Party movement is espousing are by no means new issues. On the contrary, they are almost like cyclical issues that appeared for several years, disappeared as the federal government took bi-

[6] An interesting point of discussion is how the internet (social media and otherwise) has impacted the Tea Party movement. It is the only social movement I discuss in this thesis that has its origins post-internet. I think that the internet will not actually make that much of a difference for the Tea Party Movement. I think it will allow it to spread its message faster and more widely, at least initially, in a similar manner that Fox News and its coverage have aided the Tea Party. But I think that this extra exposure it will gain will not change much in the long run because it does not have the internal support and indigenous organizations (which I will discuss later) to keep national attention.
A parallel example for this would be the environmental movement. Many environmental groups (probably all of them now) use new technology and the internet to some degree, but this technology alone has not really allowed the environmental movement to create more change. The environmental movement's heyday, at least politically, was the 1970s, long before the internet allowed groups to spread their message instantaneously and in the last decade when the internet has really come in to its own we have not seen a lot of major environmental legislation. So I think, like with the environmental movement, the internet will allow the Tea Party movement to spread its message to more people, but that does not necessarily translate in to more support and success.

partisan action under the Clinton administration to rein in spending, and have since returned after a decade of spending. Furthermore, it seems unlikely that the Tea Party movement will simply fall apart with the economy returns, since its motivation seems to lie outside the fate of the economy based on the historical rise of its issues (in 1994). There is a good chance that the issues that keep the Tea Party salient will remain until they are dealt with (or co-opted by a major party) to some degree.

The Tea Party movement is demographically a white, conservative movement that wants to limit the size of the federal government and balance the federal budget. At its core it is a decentralized grassroots movement that is anti-government in nature with various types of groups and media assisting its message on a national level. But it is important to keep in mind that this could change quickly. The nature of social movements is not to remain static, but rather adapt to the circumstances. So as time progresses, especially with the lead-up to the 2012 Presidential and Congressional elections, it is very likely that the dynamic of the Tea Party will shift and we will obtain a clearer view of what it is capable of.

Chapter 3: Theory Framework

In Chapter Three I will discuss the theory behind social movements, focusing on Political Process theory and Issue Evolution. These two literatures do an excellent job of laying out the basic ideas and power flows behind social movements, and when used in conjunction provide a more complete picture of social movement theory. Also, the theory of Critical Election Realignment will be discussed because its shortcomings illustrate the strength of the Political Process Theory and Issue Evolution.

I will use these theoretical frameworks to analyze the Tea Party movement in greater detail. Having the theoretical foundations provided by Political Process Theory and Issue Evolution allows me to discuss specific events and factors that play in to the Tea Party movement and so analyze the probable outcome of the movement. In Political Process Theory there are basically two things that push social movements: internal social networks that allow a movement to expand and external factors called political opportunities that make it easier (or harder) for the social networks to get their message out. Examining the Tea Party through this structured framework allows us to break it down piece by piece and systematically examine each section to get a better idea of its sustainability.

Issue Evolution basically describes the results of these factors and allows us to classify a movement. A social movement that achieves issue evolution is one that causes a fundamental change to the political environment (Carmines and Stimson, 1989). By breaking down the Tea Party movement using Political Process Theory, we can then fit it in to a classification based on Issue Evolution theory and thus make an inference as whether or not the Tea Party movement

will achieve issue evolution (make a significant difference in the long run) or simply be a short-term phenomenon.

Issue evolution was developed after Political Process theory in the 1980s by Carmines and Stimson as a way to look at broad trends in social movements. Much of its language is either borrowed from or based off of Political Process Theory ideas and simply takes the varied ideas within Political Process Theory and combines them to take the theory one step further by creating classifications for social movements. But in order to understand how Issue Evolution Theory works, we must understand Political Process theory to comprehend the factors that drive movements to issue evolution. One other theory that is out there is Critical Election Theory. The weakness in Critical Election Theory is that is basically functions simply as a measurement of electoral trends. It does not actually analyze the factors, such as the strengths of the various parties or different social movements, which actually cause these electoral changes (VO Key Jr, 1959). Therefore, while a critical election might be an indicator of a strong social movement, or some other national trend, it does not dig deep enough to tell us what that trend might be or why it occurred. So I will look for evidence of a critical election as a measuring stick for the Tea Party's effect, but evidence of one (or lack thereof) will give us only an indicator of the movement's success. For this reason, we must rely on Political Process and Issue Evolution theory to understand the mechanics of those changes.

Critical Election Theory and the New Deal

Through much of the 20th century and even up until today Critical Election Theory has been a dominant framework that many scholars have applied to examine social movements and political party system (e.g. Sundquist, 1983; Weatherford, 2002; Clubb et al, 1969). The election

that is considered the prime example of critical election theory is the election of 1928 (Clubb et al, 1969). But critical election theory, simply put, is not designed to analyze national movements (VO Key Jr, 1959). It is however useful in understanding political elections and election cycles (Nardulli, 1995).

The phenomenon of a critical election is derived largely from the era of the New Deal and the elections of that era, from 1928 to 1936, when the realignment hit its peak and the political system re-stabilized (Weatherford, 2002). Basically, the 1928 elections was a Democratic victory, and the 1932 election was a Democratic landslide that reaffirmed their power (Sundquist, 1982; Clubb et al, 1969). This realignment occurred because voters were searching for a solution (in this case, a solution to the Great Depression) and so experimented by deserting the party in power in favor of a new tactics to fix the depression (Weatherford, 2002). Critical election theory is limited, though, because it looks at these movements through the lens of a single election, which is essentially a snapshot of the political environment that is continually changing. And describing the outcome of the critical election of 1928 does nothing to explain the number of long term factors that led up to such realignment.

Furthermore, by 1938, when another recession hit, the Democrats suddenly became in danger of losing their complete majority (Weatherford, 2002). To be sure, the Democrats maintained their coalition and their majority (and would do so for years to come), but the "realignment" was already starting to shift, even by 1938, just ten years after the start of the realignment. When this is applied to the New Deal Era, it explains how so shortly after a major "realignment", the power of Democrats was already decreasing (Nardulli, 1995). Electoral alignments depend on voter preferences for issues that politicians present to them (Lidge, 2002). But critical election realignment theory gives no thought to how these voter preferences are

shaped through activist activity and how they in turn can shape party identification and the political environment at large. Critical election theory is like a thermometer of how the mass electorate feels, but without PPT and issue evolution, we would have no idea *why* the electorate feels way it does. And that is the most important part.

Political Process Theory

Political Process Theory (PPT) is an amalgamation of theories to describe social movements. But at its heart it is a discussion of the factors, internal and external, that can help explain or predict social movement flow. This can be seen if we go back to Tarrow's initial definition of a social movement:

> "contentious politics is triggered when changing political opportunities and constraints create incentives for social actors who lack resources on their own. They contend through known repertoires of contention…when backed by dense social networks and galvanized by culturally resonant, action-oriented symbols, contentious politics leads to sustained interaction with opponents. The result is a social movement" (Tarrrow, 1998).

Social movements are what happen when people organize in groups because of a controversial issue (contentious politics) that they care deeply about. The strength of these groups, their resources and networks, (the social networks and social actors) are considered internal factors to the social movement because they arise within the movement. But these internal factors alone will not have the strength to endure and interact with its opponents for a sustained period of time if there are no external factors (political opportunities) that create a friendlier environment for their protest. And on the other side, there exist constraints on social movements, external factors that make it more difficult for people to organize or protest and make the creation or continuation of a social movement more difficult (Goodwin, 1999).

It is important to keep in mind that the modern social movement is a fairly recent phenomenon. Social movements can only happen in modern nation-states (Tarrow, 1998; Meyer and Staggenborg, 1996). As McAdams, (1999) point out, social movements, are at their most basic, political movements. Without the state providing a political arena for organizers to protest in, social movements as we think of them do not exist.

Many scholars of Political Process Theory agree that the impetus behind social movements is a result of long term buildup of factors (McAdams, 1999; Downs, 1972). Social movements don't happen overnight. The factors that affect the buildup behind a social movement can vary, but in all cases, they constitute the *reasons* people protest. So why do people protest? The first reason they do so is because certain factors, whatever they may be, create an environment for contentious politics. That is, they create an environment in which people believe strongly that there is a need for change (McAdams, 1999; Tarrow, 1998). This may seem fairly obvious, because if social movements are essentially political movements, it stands to reason that they occur because people want a change in how their government interacts with society.

However, just because contentious politics exist, does not mean that a social movement will occur (Tarrow, 1998). We must further understand how contentious politics can become a social movement. The explanation developed in Political Process theory is that there are external factors that allow such political sentiment to organize: political opportunities. Political opportunities are any factors in the political environment that allow these movements to mobilize. The idea is that when political opportunities expand, it becomes easier for the networks of a social movement to organize, but when they contract it becomes more difficult for those networks to organize (Tarrow, 1998; Meyer and Minkoff, 2004). For example, a series of

drunken driving accidents created a sympathetic political environment for groups such as Mothers Against Drunk Driving, thus expanding the political opportunities available to the movement. An example of a contraction of political opportunities could be when a high profile gun crime occurs (for example, the one in Tucson). Politicians, at least for a short period of time, would not likely lend a sympathetic ear to any gun-rights activists who want to create legislation expanding individual gun rights because of the violence. Thus the political opportunities for the gun-rights movement contract for a time. Thus, these movements become context dependent on the external factors (Meyer, 2004). But it is important to realize that both these internal and external factors are important. It is impossible to explain a social movement fully without looking both the movement the internal organizations driving the movement and the context of the movement itself (Meyer, 2004).

What is a political opportunity? The short answer is that they vary substantially by social movements. My definition of political opportunities is very basic: simply factors in the political environment that cause people to mobilize. But this definition is very vague, and really gives us no concrete idea what a political opportunity is in real life. That is why this basic definition must be taken and applied on a case by case basis to specific social movements. As Goodwin (1999) points out, if we accept that political opportunities often *are* specific to specific movements then it is not important create a cut and dry universal definition of these opportunities. Rather, we keep the basic idea of what a political opportunity does and apply to different social movements so we can identify them in the real world and not worry about clearly defining them in the abstract.

But there is a universal lesson that can be learned from political opportunities. People do not protest in movements unless they believe that they can be heard (Meyer and Staggenborg,

1996). This demonstrates the impact of political opportunities. Political opportunities, whatever they may be, will only be successful in creating a social movement if they expand enough so that people are willing to invest time and resources in the cause. There are cases where people with few resources and little political opportunity will still organize a social movement (Tarrow, 1999), and often times people will still organize when political opportunities appear to contract (Goodwin, 1999). The current popular uprisings in the dictatorial Middle Eastern states are a perfect example of this. The government is cracking down with violence on the demonstrations, but despite this (and the people must know that they run the risk of this violence when they choose to demonstrate), they come out to the streets anyway. The same dictatorial regime which is violently cracking down on protestors in the Middle East created the oppressive environment that gave rise to the demonstrations in the first place. They raised the price of doing nothing because conditions were so bad, thus expanding political opportunities, and now are trying to raise the price of demonstrating by resorting to violence, attempting to contract the political opportunities. Such movements are, historically, rarely successful because the political opportunities narrow so quickly. It thus seems appropriate to classify political opportunity as any occurrence in the political environment that causes mobilization (because that mobilization is a response to external factors and would not otherwise have occurred due to internal the internal organization).

For another example of how political opportunities can function, let us look to Peter Eisinger's study of protests throughout American cities during the Civil Rights movements (1973). Eisinger found two important things. The first was that there is a correlation between cities where residents engaged in protest and the greater representation the black community enjoyed within the local government (Eisinger, 1973). This at first seems counterintuitive. One

would think that citizens would be more likely to protest when they had no representation, and be more satisfied and willing to just continue with the status quo given more power. But in fact the opposite is the case, and is explained well by PPT. The citizens with more representation in cities are more likely to protest because they have greater political opportunities. They know that if they protest, they are more likely to be heard by the government, because they already have their foot in the door. Similarly, Meyer (2004) suggests that social movements often follow a curvilinear pattern. If the power in society is too open, then people will not feel the need to protest, and instead just engage the government directly through the regular and available channels. But if a society is too closed, if its control seems much too distant or unresponsive for the average person to make any sort of difference, then it is also unlikely people will be willing to protest in a lost cause (Meyer, 2004; Eisinger, 1973). So it takes a slightly open society, where the people feel the need to protest, but also feel that they will be heard by that society, to create the optimum conditions for a social movement.

Eisinger also notes how cities could work to avoid riots by inviting action through other more regular channels (Eisinger, 1973). This again shows how political opportunities afforded can affect the nature of the social movement. Cities that might have experienced protests were able to avoid much more violent riots by expanding the political resources available to the movement, thus limiting its destructive impulses (Eisinger, 1973). But taking this further, often the occurrence of violent protests or riots forced the federal government to step in. And this led to a contraction of political opportunities for the movement because of government repression of such violence (McAdams, 1999; Meyer, 2004). Thus, we can see how the external political opportunities affect the internal strength of a movement.

Now that we have established the basic forces that drive social movements in PPT, we can explore what it is that makes a social movement internally successful. As Tarrow noted, a social movement must have strong networks that allow the movement to sustain itself. The first stage of social movements is generally the disorganized, grassroots phase. It is comprised of a group of people who want to change something. McAdams (1999) calls the networks at this phase of the movement "indigenous organizations" (McAdams, 1999, 43). These indigenous organizations are made up of groups such as college groups, church groups, or other types of already existing organizations through which people involved in the social movement begin to organize. These pre-existing groups are so important because they allow word of the movement to spread easily, and are ready made organizers that can easily facilitate protests (McAdams, 1999). These indigenous organization can take different forms, but one example is the church, which in both the Civil Rights movement (McAdams, 1999), and in the Religious Right movement, provided an initial impetus for the movement's success.

Once these indigenous organizations have been established and the movement has gained some level of national attention they must adapt. Typically this adaptation involves formalization and institutionalization of the movement. One reason the Civil Rights movement was so successful, for example, was that once it had gained national attention from its grassroots efforts, it re-focused its power in a few major, formal organizations that were created essentially for the purpose of the movement (McAdams, 1999). But these formal organizations will not maintain the strength of the social movement unless they are connected by strong informal connections established in the indigenous population (Tarrow, 1998). This evolution, from indigenous organization to the creation of formal organizations within the movement, is vital to the success and endurance of a social movement.

Yet the creation of formal organizations within the social movement does not guarantee the movement will endure. The main goal of a social movement is to enact change by sending a message to the government and this is done by spreading the message and mobilizing as many people as possible (Tarrow, 1998). But once the formal organizations have been created and the movement has attracted some form of national attention, a balance must be attained. The organizations cannot try to spread their message too far, to too large a base, or they will lose their power to organize. On the other hand, they cannot simply internalize the message and focus on the current followers or it loses its power to expand, and, as Tarrow puts it, minimizes their "power of disruption" (that is, the power to mobilize enough people to give the government cause for concern) (Tarrow, 1998, 137). So there is a general two-step balancing process for social movements. First, the indigenous organizations spark the movement. For the movement to continue though, it is necessary for the members to form more formal, movement based institutions to continue the focus of the social movement. And these formal, movement-based organizations must then perform a balancing act in order to retain the movement base and expand to continue applying pressure to the government in order to enact change.

One symptom of a successful social movement is the countermovement it generates (Meyer and Staggenborg, 1996). The reason for this is that social movements magnify issues, bringing them to national attention and creating a challenge to the status quo. Thus, a counter movement to the sustained threat that a social movement represents is inevitable[7] (Meyer and Staggenborg, 1996). This theory is born out in virtually every one of our examples of social movements to some degree. For example, the Civil Rights movement created a rabid white

[7] And because movements that are generated around core value issues are easier to mobilize, they often arouse an equally strong counter-movement since they work at such a basic level (Meyer and Staggenborg, 1996).

counter-movement, and many issues within the Religious Rights movement, such as abortion, have equally strong movement-counter movement dynamics (pro-choice v pro-life). Later, as we examine historical examples of social movements, I will point out a degree of counter-movement was generated that in each case.

PPT also helps us understand the effects that social movements have on political parties. If social movements are magnifying issues, and are politically based, then obviously they will have an effect on the political landscape and thus influence the political parties. So it is important to examine how the issues that social movements can revolve around will affect political parties. It is true that different social movements can have wildly different effects on political party organizations, but the intensity and endurance of these effects can often be predicted by the intensity and endurance of the social movement. This must be measured on a base by case basis, but we can see some of the general effects an enduring social movement will have on political parties.

The effect that social movements have on political parties can be measured by the party polarization of the issue (that the social movement is magnifying). This effect of party polarization is also known as conflict extension (Carsey et al, 2010). Conflict extension often occurs due to issues that are thrust to the forefront by social movements. So identifying where conflict extension occurs, and to what degree it occurs, is important when analyzing social movements to understand just how much of an effect the movement has had. The main driver of

conflict extension is the political activist[8] (members of a social movement are by definition activists, so social movements drive conflict extension as well) (Carsey et al, 2010). [9]

Now that we understand what gives rise to successful social movements and how they can affect the ideologies of the parties, it is important to understand why social movements fail according to Political Process Theory. The first objective is to define what a failed social movement constitutes, because people's convictions do not just disappear en masse, and neither do all the representatives of a social movement. The first type of failure is the inability to maintain a national spotlight on the issue at hand before gaining the required concessions from the government. For example, the environmental movement could be considered to have failed if people stop caring about global warming before the government enacts lasting legislation to control for it, or technology makes the problem obsolete. The other way is if the movement fades away or is usurped or absorbed by another movement. In many cases, a social movement can be absorbed and still have its interests represented. But often when a social movement is absorbed by another movement or party, it becomes one issue (or set of issues) among many. It thus also fades from national attention (again, before getting the desired change enacted). For

[8] One last important issue with PPT is to address the question of whether or not activists are optimists or strategic. Strategic activists would pick and choose a moment when they should mobilize because they read the signs of the political opportunities and deem them favorable. If activists are optimists, then they are simply trying to enact change constantly, and social movements only arise when the political opportunities create the correct environment (Meyers and Minkoff, 2004). Meyer (2004) discusses how activist potential is undervalued, and that activists are strategic and take advantage of political opportunity, but also points out that they are context dependent. In the end it seems impossible to separate activists from their political opportunities, and therefore impossible to truly tell just how rational or optimistic they are. All we can do is analyze what affect they have in conjunction with the political opportunities they are presented with.

[9] Other theories for conflict extension include external shocks to the system (such as war), or a change in ideology of the mass electorate (Carsey et al, 2010) and procedural cartel theory. Procedural cartel theory argues that the party polarization occurs in Congress because party leaders set the agenda and push to vote on issues that they are internally unified about, but which may be a very divisive issue between parties. This, they argue will widen the split between parties and increase polarization (Campbell et al, 2002). All these can be traced back to the activist, since it is the activist that first responds to external shocks to the system, and the relationship between the activists and candidates that often dictate what type of politician gets elected (Carsey et al, 2010).

now, if we consider failure to be a fading from national attention to the point that it can no longer exert enough influence to force the government to enact the change it wants, we can consider a social movement to have failed or be failing.

Social movements fail for a variety of reasons that are often circumstance specific. But there are a few general rules we can follow to predict a failure. One such rule is the "issue attention cycle" (Downs, 1972, 38). This evolution cycle articulates five stages for any issue that a social movement represents. The first is the pre-problem stage in which it escapes national attention while small groups fixate on it. The second is the "alarmed discovery and euphoric enthusiasm" stage (39) when the issue captures national attention and brings a feeling that steps can be quickly taken to solve the issue. The third is when the significant costs of the issue are realized, which leads into the fourth stage when the issue fades from national attention because people are not willing to make the necessary sacrifices to seriously fix the issue and another issue pops up. The last stage is the pro-problem stage. In this last stage the issue almost entirely fades from national attention, but organizations still exist that work towards fixing it. At this point, those organizations generally become underfunded due to lack of public interest.

The last couple of steps in this cycle are more universally helpful in explaining why social movements fail. Step four, when the issue begins to fade from view, can occur not only because the high costs of fixing it have been recognized, as Downs points out, but also because the public either feels enough has been done (for example, the Civil Rights movement after the passage of the Civil Rights Act (McAdams, 1999)), or because they are unwilling to make any changes at all (which is what happened for the American Party (Mulkern, 1990)). Step five is also universally applicable to social movements when an issue remains incompletely addressed (since few social movements ever achieve a complete or permanent victory with their demands).

The activists and organizations that initially fought for the issue in the earlier stages continue working, whether it is as part of a larger movement or simply a little noticed and underfunded continuation of pressing the issue question.

A more general reason for why social movements fail is a contraction of political opportunities that make it more difficult for the movement to mobilize support (Tarrow, 1998; McAdams, 1999; Meyer and Minkoff, 2004). As has been discussed, this can be from a variety of factors, whether because opponents are oppressing the organizers supporting an issue (McAdams, 1999) or simply because a new issue arises, as in the case of Downs' issue attention cycle.

Finally, the failure of social movements can be attributed to a decline in organizational strength and a "decline in the salience of certain cognitions" that are necessary to the strength of the movement. The former can be attributed to a number of things, a decrease in activist support, for example, or a decrease in public funding because of a lack of national attention. The latter refers to a lack of agreement between organizations within the movement on the most important issues and the best way to attack certain issue, and in turn leads to a haphazard social movement and a decline in interest from the public (McAdams, 1999). A haphazard approach to a social movement can often lead to conflicting messages from the movement, creating multiple issues that vie for attention in the public spotlight and so diffuse the power of the movement. It seems the most basic reasons social movements "fail" is due to a lack of national interest, a narrowing of political opportunities (often the two overlap) and a failure of the internal organizations of the movement

Political Process Theory is not without its detractors. Most of these criticisms have been already mentioned. The difficulty in creating a universal definition of political opportunities is one of its largest problems (Goodwin, 1999), but if we avoid the universal discussion, and instead focus on a case by case examination of social movements as Goodwin suggests, then this problem can be avoided. Another problem is the fact that sometimes seemingly narrowing political opportunities (such as government oppression) lead to more mobilization within a social movement, thus frustrating our ideas of what effects political opportunities should have on a movement (Goodwin, 1999; Meyer and Minkoff, 2004). But if we widen our definition and consider any external effect that has a positive outcome on the movement, then this paradox too can be avoided. This may seem something of a tautology, but so long as we examine social movements in context and look at each external factor and why it had a positive (or negative) effect on the movement, then I do not think that critique is of any consequence. The last central criticism of PPT is that it gives too much credit in its literature to the context (political opportunities) of a social movement and not enough to the internal factors of the movement (Meyer, 2004). This highlights the importance of examining both the internal networks of a movement in addition to the context in which they arise. Holding all these factors in place we can create a full examination of a social movement.

Issue Evolution

Issue Evolution theory as presented by Carmines and Stimson (1989) is essentially a discussion of issues and how they vie[10] to capture national attention. An issue that captures that national attention to the extent that it profoundly changes the political environment and causes an

[10] Carmines and Stimson admit that issues are passive and do not "compete" for attention but rather their supporters compete to gain attention for the issue. I use the active voice to an issue competing for attention in the same sense here, understanding that issues do not actively compete but rather gain attention based on how people react to them.

evolution of political ideologies is regarded as achieving issue evolution. But the theory of issue evolution can be used for our purposes here, because it serves to highlight many of the most important aspects of PPT and add another layer to our understanding of what social movements succeed and fail.

Carmines and Stimson (1989) introduce Issue Evolution theory by first defining the causes of it. They look at issue evolution as a result of issue competition, so before analyzing issue evolution, it is important to figure out what they mean by issue competition. Issue competition is basically the idea that issues compete for national attention within the political spectrum because in the end only a few issues at most will occupy them majority of the public's attention and politicians can only focus on so many things in their agendas.

As Carmines and Stimson admit, "issue evolution is a theory of political process" (vx, 1989), but that does not make it part of Political Process Theory. Rather, Issue Evolution provides an alternate lens to look at the same issues and a coherent framework within which we can categorize different types of social movements.

The vocabulary of Issue Evolution is drawn largely from the biological discussion of natural evolution. To this end, the way to think of issue competition is similar to how we think of natural competition: the survival of the fittest. As mentioned above, issue competition is the "struggle" of issues to gain national attention (1989). There are four fundamental sources of issue competition. The first is the "strategic politician," usually from the minority party, (6, 1989) who exploits certain issues for electoral gain and to increase public support for his or her policies. Generally, politicians already in a majority position highlight the old issues that were

most popular during their campaigns. But minority politicians try to highlight new[11] issues which could cause a shift in the next elections by getting citizens to reconsider the basis on which they are voting. The important part, regardless of who is doing it though, is that "new" issues are gaining attention due to politicians who use them as leverage (1989).

The second source of issue competition is called "local variation" (8, 1989). Carmines and Stimson compare local variation to Darwin's speciation (old species evolve into new ones). They argue that local variation arises when an old issue gives rise to a new one because of the changing technology and norms of time. Local variation, like Darwin's speciation, requires time for the new issues to take on separate identities from those that gave rise to them. The example Carmines and Stimson give is with the old issue of government intervention in the economy and airfare regulation. The question of government intervention in the economy existed long before airfare regulation, but this was applied in a specialized setting (airline regulation) and eventually gave rise to an entirely new type of issue (1989). This new issue takes on a life of its own as the airline industry works with (or battles) the government over different airline regulations. The question is no longer whether or not the government should intervene in the airline; that is the old question of government intervention. The new question is: should the government mandate (for example) monthly plane inspections, or stricter pilot tests. Thus, the attention of the issue has completely shifted in a different direction and become a new species of debate.

The third source of issue competition is external disruption. External disruptions are simply external shocks to society, for example, a war or economic depression. The importance

[11] By "new" issue I mean an issue that is not currently considered as part of the political or party conflict. For example, if a Democrat runs on a ticket for improving the education system, and wins re-election several times, the Republican challenger will try to move the public's attention to a "new" issue, such as fiscal responsibility, that might point out a weakness in the Democrat's policies.

of an external disruption is that it changes the natural flow of issues, and does not allow existing, day to day, political concerns to completely control the system (1989).

The last source of issue competition that Carmines and Stimson cite is internal contradictions. The theory behind internal contradictions is that every coalition contains within it the "seeds of its own destruction" (9, 1989). This can give rise to issue competition because not all members of a coalition will agree on the most important issues, thus creating a fight for issue supremacy. Internal contradiction is important for two reasons. It creates issue competition from within, as aligned groups try to push different issue to the fore, and it also creates instability among coalitions. When a coalition fails because of its internal disagreements, massive amounts of issue competition are unleashed due to the sudden vacuum of issue stability left by the defunct coalition (1989).

What are the results of issue competition, and what happens to "new" issues or cleavages that have the potential to shake up the political system? According to Issue Evolution theory, it results in three possibilities: organic extensions, unsuccessful adaptation, and issue evolution. Organic extension is when a new issue is interpreted as being an offshoot of an old issue, and so fails to capture the attention it might deserve. Carmines and Stimson give the example of federal aid to education in the 1960s, which while being a genuinely new issue, was seen as merely an extension of FDR's New Deal. Because an organic extension is seen as old news, it will not garner the type of attention needed to enact an evolution in the political landscape (1989).

Like organic extension, unsuccessful[12] adaptation also fails to gain sufficient attention to create major, evolutionary change, but for a different reason. Unsuccessful adaption is simply when an issue fails to capture attention, or it captures attention for a short period of time. An example of an unsuccessful adaptation is Watergate and its effects on how we deal with political corruption. Watergate created a media hurricane, but did not create meaningful evolution of the political issue environment because once it was over with and punishment doled, few were interested in mobilizing around it (1989).

The last possible result of issue competition is issue evolution. Issue evolution, Carmines and Stimson contend, is usually generated by gut level reactions to issues the public easily understands, such as moral values (1989). Issue evolution is important because it is such a game changer. It allows an issue to gather nationwide attention, and allows it to maintain its relevance for a long period of time, which unsuccessful variation fails to do. And because of this enduring national relevance, it causes a change in political ideology, not only of how the electorate and major parties view a certain issue, but also how they might view contemporaneous or similar issues (1989). For example, the issue evolution of the civil rights created a new liberal-conservative dynamic (the fight over the proper role of government in promoting civil rights) that bled over to other issues such as Lyndon Johnson's war on poverty (1989). An issue fails

[12] Unsuccessful adoptions do not necessarily unsuccessful. Carmines and Stimson acknowledge that unsuccessful adaption can *succeed* in capturing national attention, and the unsuccessful part is merely due to its (lack of) longevity. Social movements can at times succeed in getting policy passed in a decisive and fast manner, and when that happens they are not likely to create a counter-movement, but more importantly, the movement is not likely to endure if its goals are met and there is not a counter-movement to threaten those achievements (Meyer and Staggenborg, 1996). So in some cases of "unsuccessful" adaption, an issue or movement can be extremely successful, too successful, and so may render itself obsolete. This is not to argue that Carmines and Stimson are wrong with their terminology, because they take this into account. It is merely important to point out that "unsuccessful" does not necessarily denote failure of an issue or its movement, but rather a failure to endure over a long period of time.

the issue evolution test if it does not both win national attention and cause a fundamental shift in how ideological spectrum of the political environment.

Issue evolution is derives its strength from the activity of the political elite (namely, activists). In Issue Evolution theory, issues do not become a priority because the mass electorate decides it wants to prioritize something and the political elite follow suit. Rather, the activists tap into the mass electorate through social networks. The electorate, taking its cue from the activists, eventually conforms its own beliefs to fit the party ideologies and those of political activists (Carmines and Wagner, 2006). So the driving force for issue evolution is the activist.[13]

Issue evolution creates clearly defined channels in which social movements can be described. We can define both the source of their issue through issue competition, and the result of it, through its classification as unsuccessful adaptation, organic extension or issue evolution.

Synthesizing Political Process Theory and Issue Evolution

The interplay between political process theory and issue evolution creates a powerful picture of the theoretical structure of a social movement. As has been mentioned, issue evolution

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[13] There are three theories for how issue evolution occurs. One is the "critical election realignment" which Carmines and Stimson compare to cataclysmic adaption in the natural world (Carmines and Stimson, 12, 1989). The idea behind critical election realignment is that a period of political stability is suddenly hit by a critical election, which shakes up the party system and thrusts it on to a new, different level of stability. Carmines and Stimson discard theory as unfeasible for true issue evolution analysis because of how rarely it occurs (1989). Additionally, I would refer back to the discussion of critical election in Political Process theory and point out again that Critical Election Theory does not provide us with the necessary tools to analyze a social movement, just a basic measuring stick to measure the movement's influence.

Another theory, called "pure gradualism" is the ideas that slow, long-term changes in the political environment, gradually chips away at the political structure until it has created a permanent shift due to incremental change (Carmines and Stimson, 13, 1989).

The last theory is "punctuated equilibrium" (13, 1989). Carmines and Stimson view this as a mix between critical election theory and pure gradualism. The idea is that there is a critical moment when massive change occurs (like in critical election theory), but this massive change does not simply end there, but continues with smaller, incremental change that leaves a permanent mark on the political and ideological environment.

is a theory of political process, so it stands to reason that it will have many similarities and overlap to a large extent with PPT, but it also provides a coherent frame with which to classify movements based on the tools of analysis that PPT gives us.

The first similarity is the discussion surrounding the "easy issues". In their discussion of issue evolution, Carmines and Stimson (1989) look at the "easy" issues as the primary motivators for issue evolution because they can be understood at the gut-level. The difference between easy issues and hard issues is that opinions on hard issues are a result of informed, analytical decision making. This requires serious attention of the issues. Easy issues are issues that are so ingrained in the political value system that they become "gut-level" issues that people can make based on their value system, without analyzing the issue (Carmines and Stimson, 1, 1980). This is reflected in PPT, and is most apparent in the discussion of movements and their countermovement. Counter-movements are more likely to result when the issue is an "easy" one that people can quickly tell which side they stand on, and will care strongly about (Meyer and Staggenborg, 1996). Some issues are easy, and some issues rely on the ability of special interests to frame the issue as an easy one (Tarrow, 1998). But it is obvious the success of social movements often depends on the "easiness" of the issue.

Another place of overlap is the central importance of the activist. In both PPT and issue evolution scholars cite the importance of the strategic politicians who can affect social movements, but even more important is the role the activist plays in connecting and mobilizing the mass electorate and influencing the candidates and politicians who represent them.

A further important overlap between PPT and issue evolution is the gradual buildup that provides the impetus for social movements. Just as McAdams (1999) and others mention in

PPT, Carmines in Stimson (1989) acknowledge the importance of the historical context of a movement and its issues; social movements do not grow in a vacuum. This is reflected in the pure gradualism of Carmines and Stimson's theory (Carmines and Stimson, 1989).

One final example of the overlap between the two literatures is in the discussion of conflict extension (PPT) and issue competition. Issue competition, whether the source is a strategic politician or external disruptions, can cause conflict extension. Conflict extension discusses the source of these issues, and how that source polarizes parties. For example, a Democrat during the 1960s might seize on a civil rights issue for electoral gain if the Republican candidate is avoiding. This act by a strategic politician can cause conflict extension, because suddenly the Democrat is the civil rights candidate, and the Republican is not. Over time this can (and did) polarize the parties. This explanation of issue competition and conflict extension illustrates how these issues can command electoral attention and affect party identification in a very lasting way.

These similarities are helpful in understanding the close relationship between PPT and issue evolution. It is of equal if not more importance to understand how they are different. It is their differences that show that they are useful and separate literatures, and not just copies of one another.

The main difference between PPT and issue evolution is their focus. Issue evolution theory focuses on definitions of the channels (unsuccessful adaptation, organic extension and issue evolution) of a movement. We are given the source of the issue (of a movement) and then some basic predictors of what that means for the movement. But more importantly, it provides definitions to create a framework within which we can place types of movements. Issue

evolution does not go in to great detail about the internal mechanisms of social movements, and barely touches at all upon external factors which could affect it. PPT theory, in contrast, discusses in detail the internal details of a social movement (such as indigenous organizations and more formal institutions) and also the external factors (the political opportunities of the environment) which will play a role in the makeup and success of a social movement. So political process theory provides us with the tools we need to analyze a social movement. Issue evolution does not attempt to compete with the various types of details and tools of PPT. It assumes many of them, and from that gives us a coherent layout of the types of results we can expect social movements to achieve. Using Political Process Theory and Issue Evolution theory in tandem allows us to fashion a very complete picture of social movements, and a framework through which individual movements can be productively analyzed.

Chapter 4: Historical Examples

In this section I will examine four major historical social movements through the theoretical framework established in chapter 3. In doing so, I will be better able to place the Tea Party movement within a historical context. This section will also deepen our understanding of the basic theoretical framework of social movements. The four movements I chose to examine—the Civil Rights movement, the American Party movement, the Religious Right movement, and the Environmental movement—are all very different types of social movements with differing and success rates. By discussing them I detail, I hope to illustrate why some movements are successful but others seem to fail more quickly or are less likely to gain the change they desire.

The Civil Rights Movement

Historical Background

The Civil Rights movement culminated in the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and is widely considered as a watershed social movement in our nation's history. Not only did the Civil Rights movement help to enact widespread and unprecedented legislation during the 1960s, but it continued to have a major impact on politics long after the movement itself had lost much of its momentum. In the long run, it would shape the nation's political environment in profound ways, which can be felt even now. By using Issue Evolution and Political Process theory, we can set the stage for understanding the Tea Party and other contemporaneous movements.

To begin our discussion of the Civil Rights movement, we start with the long-term political factors that would provide the impetus for the social movement to follow. From Chapter 3, we saw how important these long term factors are to a strong social movement

(Downs, 1972; Carmines and Stimson 1989; McAdams, 1999), and the buildup to the Civil Rights movement provides a useful example.

After the Civil War, blacks were fully liberated from slavery, but with the failure of Reconstruction, when northerners attempted to force a semblance of political racial equality on the South, black people again became oppressed. The Supreme Court played a major role in this repression through a variety of court decisions. First, the Slaughterhouse Cases stripped any constitutional anti-discrimination protections for blacks in the 1870s. Then the famous Plessy v Ferguson case in the 1890s which ruled that "separate but equal" was an appropriate method for separating whites and blacks, setting the stage for half a century of segregation (Carmines and Stimson, 1989). These cases allowed for the creation of a highly oppressive and racist system, known as the Jim Crow laws, which would shape the face of southern society for decades. By setting a precedent with these rulings, the Supreme Court essentially took civil rights off the national agenda (Carmines and Stimson, 1989).

In 1955, however, the Supreme Court helped the issue of race back on the national agenda with its decision overturning Plessy v Ferguson, in the Brown v Board of Education case (Carmines and Stimson, 1989). But before this happened, there was a long term buildup of cultural and other societal factors that came in to play.

The collapse of the King Cotton system during the Great Depression essentially destroyed the economic system that for decades had kept so many blacks in a system of economic bondage. In part as a result of this economic depression, this era saw mass migration of blacks to the north: over 5 million blacks migrate north between 1910 and 1960 (McAdams, 1999). This migration, in turn caused a shift for northern politicians, who suddenly had a new

black constituency that became electorally important. Thus blacks became a force in northern politics. In addition, during WWII (and the end of the US's isolationist period) our nation was suddenly exposed to a large number of other foreign ideologies which looked down upon segregation (McAdams, 1999).

All of these factors together would lead to the long-term creation of an environment that gave birth to a civil rights race movement. The changing demographics forced politicians to pay attention to the black vote for the first time. Democrats (due to the racist southern base) had never made race a political issue, and Republicans had never cared enough it to make it a national political issue, because with a tiny northern black voting bloc there was no need to. But because of the great migration, race suddenly became important to northern Democrats and Republicans, and strategic Republican politicians seized on it as a way to win votes from the Democrats (Carmines and Stimson, 1989), expanding political opportunity for the civil rights movement.

Under FDR, a large degree of the black vote swung to the Democrats. This was because his economic programs benefited many poor black farmers, but also because during his regime the administration made a token admission of federal racism. For example, during World War II Roosevelt established the Fair Employment Practices Act, which would "monitor race discrimination in war-related industries" (Klarman, 19, 1994). And while it is true that very little (if anything) of substance was accomplished regarding racial equality during Roosevelt's administration, this admission served as an important notice to many black voters (McAdams, 1999). This admission is extremely important in the context of Political Process Theory. PPT argues that people must feel that the government will listen to them if they protest; in order for people to take collective action and start a social movement there needs to be some level of

acknowledgement that the government is accessible. And while it would be another 15 to 20 years before the Civil Rights movement really began to organize in earnest, FDR's administration served notice to the black constituency that its plight was not unnoticed (even if it was to remain ignored as a matter of public policy). The influence that the black constituency had on the political environment is even clearer when the southern Democrats bolted the party in 1948 after Truman was nominated as the party's Presidential candidate, because he was considered to be racially liberal (Carmines and Stimson, 1989). The influence of the black vote would create political opportunities by eventually creating a government that was more willing to listen to the civil rights movement.

There are other cultural issues that played a part in this long term buildup of factors. For example, during the mass migration, most blacks moved to the cities. This often led to a better source of income for many blacks. The increase in resources would later provide a vital source of internal strength of the social movement. Additionally, with urbanization, black urban churches became much more widespread. This would provide another internal pillar, and resource base, for the social movement to come.

Together these factors lay the groundwork for the Civil Rights social movement over a period of several decades (McAdams, 1999). So what sparked the fire? The previously mentioned court case of Brown v Board of Education (1955) is commonly mentioned as the major issue that sparked the Civil Rights Movement, but the validity of this is hotly debated. Klarman (1994) argues that the case of Brown v Board of Education had virtually no causal effect on the civil rights movement besides stirring up a white opposition movement. However, this court case represents something else important: an expansion of political opportunities. Suddenly, with a government that was more willing to listen to their cause, organizing for the

black community was less of an obstacle than it had once been with a government at best indifferent to their interests.

Mechanics of the Movement

There are two types of institutions within a social movement: the organizational, and the indigenous. But they both represent the internal resources and ability of the movement's community to organize (McAdams, 1999).

McAdams (1999) examines the protests that were generated by the movement based on what type of institutions they were organized by. He starts with the period from 1955-1960. While it is true that before this there was constant pressure from a civil rights movement (Carmines and Stimson, 1989), this time period still seems appropriate because it is the first time we start to see sustained major movements from the black community. He found that of 487 protests that were organized during this time, 76% of them were organized by what he terms "indigenous groups": church groups, student groups, or local chapters of the NAACP (McAdams, 126, 1999). These groups are considered indigenous because they were not formally organized directly because of the movement, but had already existed for years and represented natural bonds within the black community (McAdams, 1999). On the other hand, during this time period, the formal organizations only organized 14% of those actions (McAdams, 1999). During this time, the links between these organizations expanded in an attempt to better coordinate their efforts (McAdams, 1999), which created the type of dense social networks that Tarrow (1998) cites as necessary for a social movement.

In the later stage of the movement, after 1960, the formal organizations took over the reins of the movement from the indigenous organizations. Four large organizations shared the

power. The first three institutions were essentially created by the movement, often from the already existing relationships between church and campus communities: the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committees (SNCC), and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) (McAdams, 1999). The last was the national NAACP that oversaw and unified all the local networks created by its local chapters (McAdams, 1999).

The creation of these formal institutions was vital to the success of the social movement. Social movements must be able to capitalize on their initial success and continue their momentum by creating more organized institutions that can keep the movement going strongly (McAdams, 1999). Tarrow (1998), in his discussion of social movements, takes these formal institutions as a given necessity for the success of a social movement. He takes this further and argues that these formal institutions draw a balance between diffusing their message too much, and losing the strong support of their core bloc, or internalizing the core support too much and losing greater public interest in the issue at hand (Tarrow, 1998). Go too far in one direction and movement becomes widespread by with thin influence, too far in the other and it remains strong, but isolated. The key was to split the difference and get the best of both extremes: a strong, widespread movement. Such a balance would naturally require great coordination and planning, something that indigenous groups would be unlikely to achieve. The formal institutions that the civil rights movement succeeded in creating would be better able to achieve this.

However, once such formal institutions are created, they still face the problem of balancing diffusion and concentration of their movement. Analyzed from the framework of Political Process theory, the Civil Rights movement had several factors in its favor in this regard. First of all was a geographical focus. Because the worst problems important to the movement occurred in the Deep South, they were able to focus their efforts there, thus maintaining a

concentration in their focus (McAdams, 1999). A second advantage was an issue consensus. The main groups were all able to agree on their main goals: better protection for the civil rights of the black community (McAdams, 1999). The third advantageous factor arose from the strong network links between the big institutions. These strong links were largely due to the role the indigenous organizations played earlier on in the movement, allowing the formal institutions to maintain close ties to one another and not spread their message too thin (McAdams, 1999).

These institutions, both indigenous and formal, were able to push the Civil Rights movement forward. But there were also expanding political opportunities at work during this time. Many of these were in fact directly caused by the white countermovement that the civil rights movement generated. The first political opportunity came from the increasing influence of the black vote for many politicians. In 1956, Eisenhower, won 40% of the black vote, setting up intense competition for the black vote which led to a more civil rights movement friendly government (Carmines and Stimson, 1989).

The Supreme Court Decision in *Brown v Board of Education* in 1955 was a major spur to the white supremacist counter-movement (I will call it a "counter-movement" since it was in response to the Civil Rights movement, even though it, along with all counter-movements, are essentially social movements as well) (Klarman, 1994). The Montgomery, Alabama bus boycott in the same year also was a major spur to the white counter-movement. For example, the Citizens' Councils in the Deep South, an organizing body for the white counter-movement founded in 1954, expanded to 60,000 members after *Brown v Board of Education*, and jumped massively after the December bus boycotts in Montgomery to a quarter of a million (McAdams, 1999). The influence of this movement is reflected by the massive increase of state level legislative action over the next couple years that attempted to ensure a continuation of

segregation (McAdams, 1999). This counter-movement initially contracted political opportunities for the Civil Rights movement by creating intense local political opposition to it. But in the long run the extreme pro-segregation measure the local legislatures were passing had the opposite effect by forcing the federal government under the Eisenhower administration to step in. This ended up reducing out the strength of the states' legislatures and eventually led to less segregation (McAdams, 1999).

This initial federal involvement is highly important. President Eisenhower followed the Supreme Court's directives even though it required going against the stated desires and laws of the southern states. This decision was deeply important to the Civil Rights movement because it showed that the movement was exerting enough influence on the federal government that Eisenhower found it necessary to intervene and fight the battle with the states. That is not to say that the federal government was in support of the movement, but there was just enough pressure from the black community that after the Supreme Court set the precedent, the executive branch (and eventually Congress) would have little choice but to follow.

As the Civil Rights movement continued, so would the counter-movement, and in many ways, the counter-movement would continue to damage itself. Another example of this occurred with the Freedom Riders of 1963. The opposition presented by the white supremacist movement was so extreme that the federal government had no choice but to intervene again. The violent reaction to the Freedom Riders not only engaged the federal government, but it aroused sympathy for the Civil Rights movement in the general populace and ended up created a political environment more conducive to a successful push for civil rights (McAdams, 1999). Once again, the reactions of the counter-movement to the movement's protests expanded political opportunity.

It seems only natural, due to these expanded political opportunities and high degree of internal resource mobilization, that what followed was sweeping legislation in the form of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This act was bi-partisan, with the vast majority of both Democratic and Republican Congressmen voting in favor of the bill, which passed in the House 290 to 130, and 73-27 in the Senate.

After the passage of this crucial legislation the Civil Rights movement by no means ended, but it began to face a decline and a fall from national attention. But it is as this decline was occurring that we begin to see just how much the movement had changed the political arena, both in how it changed how people viewed other issues, and how it changed what it mean to be a liberal or a conservative, or a Republican or a Democrat.

Results of the Movement

The issue evolution of the Civil Rights movement had profound implications for the political environment of the US. Not only did it affect racial issues, but it also affected political party identification and other salient issues of the time. The high-bipartisanship in Congress on the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was probably the closest the two party ideologies would come on civil rights issues (Carmines and Stimson, 1989). Even though the Civil Rights movement achieved many of its major policy goals by 1965, the polarization between the two parties on Civil Rights issues continued to widen after this year. In 1964, Democrats swept to power, but it was largely (racially) liberal Democrats replacing liberal Republicans (Carmines and Stimson, 1989) and largely a continuation of fairly constant Democratic control since the New Deal. Carmines and Stimson (1989) argue that this forced the Republican Party to find a new avenue to win elections. In order to gain the conservative white vote that was against federal government

intervention, which the Democratic Party lost with the Civil Rights legislation, the Republicans did not need to become conservative on racial issues, just less progressive than the Democrats.

And when Barry Goldwater—and his message of less government intervention and states' rights—emerged as a force in the Republican Party, the Republicans were able to stake a platform against federal government intervention, and so gain the support of many white southerners who hated the Civil Rights legislation. This would in turn set in motion a path for the Democrats to inherit the title of the Civil Rights Party, and the Republicans to become the party of small government (Carmines and Stimson, 1989). And since much of the constituency that the Republicans won with this platform were the racial conservatives, they became by default the racially conservative party.

The race issue would continue the change the political arena in the coming years. As Goldwater helped set in motion the political cleavage between the two parties, the political jockeying began. In 1966 there began a type of recoil against the Civil Rights movement, that would eventually lead to an attempt by the Republican leaders to brand the Democratic Party as the black party in an attempt to isolate it and gain more white constituents (Kellstedt, 2002). This party polarization among the parties created a delayed reaction for the masses that would eventually change the face of party identification for the average American. Racial conservatism became a factor for party identification (Carmines and Stimson, 1989).

Racial conservatism not only changed the way masses associated with the major parties (and how the politicians of those parties were liable to vote), it also changed at a basic level what it meant to be "liberal" or "conservative." Goldwater's brand of conservatism led the Republican Party towards a brand of racial conservatism. In this way, racial conservatism

became part of what it meant to be conservative; in the same way that to be racially liberal became part of the definition of a liberal (Carmines and Stimson, 1989). In this way, the issue evolution of the Civil Rights movement not only changed the definition of political party identification, but it also changed the very definition of liberal versus conservative. [14]

Decline of the Movement

Finally, it is important to also briefly look at why the Civil Rights movement lost power and fell out of the national salience. There are two main reasons why this occurred. The story here is again consistent with PPT: the internal coalition of formal organizations began to fracture, and the political opportunities of the day began to narrow.

After the Civil Rights Acts passed in 1964 and 1965, the social movement's internal coalition began to fray. Their strongest advantages—geographic focus, strong network linkages, and issue consensus—disappeared (McAdams, 1999). Once the major legislation had been accomplished, the groups that made up the movement often had different ideas as to where they should focus their efforts (many no longer wanted to focus strictly on the Deep South), what

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[14] By the 1980s, the issue of race in politics had subsided to a great degree as the strength of the Civil Rights social movement had largely faded. The idea of the Civil Rights movement as issue evolution is not universally believed. Abramowitz (1994) argues that by the 1980s, after controlling for other variables, race was not a significant variable in party identification. He attempts to prove this by examining the "white flight" from the Democratic Party during this period and the various reasons why white constituents would have left the Democratic Party. He finds racial factors play a very small role in comparison to issues such as social welfare and military spending (Abramowitz, 22, 1994). He also examines the 1988 Presidential elections and finds that party identification played the largest role in predicting how a person would vote, while the issue of race was not statistically significant (1994).

I think he has a serious issue in his means of analysis. He attempts to explain the insignificance of race on party identification during this period based on survey answers of *white* constituents. He does not look at black constituents. The bi-partisan nature of the Civil Rights Act, and the competition that the two parties engaged in order to seem more pro-civil rights through the movement should show exactly that race would not predict party identification for white voters. Many white voters during the Civil Rights movement were for it, just as many were against it, but race for *whites* was not a predictor. The end of the civil rights movement would not magically change this. Instead, he should have looked at the *black* political party identification. If he had, it is likely he would have seen a very different story since party identification for blacks would likely show a very high predictor once the Democratic Party consolidated its hold as the civil rights party and gained the majority of the black vote.

types of specific issues they should tackle, and how they should tackle them (for example, many groups were pushing for a more violent approach than the peaceful demonstrations organized by Martin Luther King Jr). This, in addition to an overwhelming feeling of pessimism among the black community that additional major change would be impossible, led to dissolution of the strong linkages between groups, and was the beginning of the end for the movement (McAdams, 1999). After 1965, there were simply too many specific goals that different groups tried to focus on, splintering the overall affect of their efforts (McAdams, 1999). As the internal resources of the movement began to fail, the external political opportunities also began to close.

The first and most obvious narrowing of political opportunities resulted from the sweeping legislation that was passed by 1965. Many people, in Congress and in general, felt that enough had been done for the time being, and that effecting more change was simply too much. Furthermore, the inner-city riots of 1964 caused a similar reaction to the violent white-supremacist movement in earlier years: they provoked the federal government into stepping in and clamping down (McAdams, 1999). This also intensified the pressure that the federal government placed on many of the movement's organizations. Lastly, as the 1970s began, several new issues, such as the Vietnam War, the economy (McAdams, 1999) and even the environment (Washington, 2009) began to seize national attention away from the movement. All of these factors combined to decrease the political opportunities available to the civil rights movement. And given the breakup of the internal coalition, this narrowing of political opportunities would signal the end of race as the most important issue in American politics. Indeed, 1965 was the last time a majority of Americans thought of racial issues as the most important problem facing the nation (Abramowitz, 1994).

Theory Framework

Using the tools of Political Process theory to examine the political opportunities and internal resources of the movement, we see that the Civil Rights movement is a clear example of issue evolution. Political opportunities expanded in the 1950s, which allowed internal forces within the movement to mobilize and gain national attention and support. This would eventually lead to major legislative change. But once major legislative change was accomplished, the internal forces began to splinter and the narrowing political opportunities would hasten its downfall. However, its affects on political party identification and even our definition of liberalism and conservatism have shown that it was successful enough to have a lasting impact on the political environment.

The American Party

Historical Background

The American Party (or by other names, the Nativist or Know-Nothing movement) began its true rise in 1853, and when it hit its peak had over 1.25 million members and by 1856 had nominated a Presidential candidate. But by late 1856 it was already on the decline, would almost entirely disappear within a couple of years (Maizlish, 1982). The American Party was also a one-issue movement at its core: stricter nativity laws for immigrants. This movement provides a contrast to the Civil Rights movement, both in its focus, and its flash rise and fall from power and national attention.

The American Party was a secret society that limited its membership to male, protestant, white citizens (Mulkern, 1990). The American Party, despite being a formal political party, also fits Tarrow's definition of a social movement. Membership of the Party spread through local neighborhood lodges (Mulkern, 1990) and this type of exclusive, local networking was probably

its greatest strength. It is made up of local networks that through a "culturally resonant, action-oriented symbols" (Tarrow, 2, 1998) (that of anti-immigration) created a major political push for achievement of its goals. One could argue that all political parties do this, but the way the American Party picked a certain niche of issues to discuss (just like the Civil Rights movement, the Religious Right, or any other generally accepted social movement) in a way that the main parties do not. For example, a Democrat (in the 1850s) might agree with the American Party on its naturalization goals, but have other priorities. An American Party politician would focus on the issue of naturalization as his number one priority, just the way a Tea Party candidate today focuses all his or her priorities on the budget in a way that a Republican who is fiscally conservative might not.

The main goal of the American Party was to pass a bill that lengthened the amount of time it took for an immigrant to naturalize, from five to 21 years (Maizlish, 1982). Between 1845 and 1854, there was a massive surge in migration that led to an overall population growth within the United States of 14.5% (Maizlish, 1982). And on the surface it would appear that this surge in immigration, and the backlash to it, easily explains the rise of the American Party. But there are other important factors to consider as well that gave the politics of the American Party a unique twist. The most important of these factors were the issue of slavery at the time, and the industrial revolution, which allowed the movement to harness a populist feeling and ride it to political success.

The populist sentiment that arose as a result of the industrial revolution began in the 1840s and would give the American Party its initial impetus. The American Party was by far the strongest and had enjoyed its largest electoral successes in Massachusetts (Mulkern, 1990). During the 1840s, many workers in the Northeast, especially in Massachusetts, wanted reform

and protection from the government because of the changing work environment from the industrial revolution (Voss-Hubbard, 1996). The massive immigration directly affected the laborers as well, in the form of lower wages and strike breakers (Mulkern, 1990, Voss-Hubbard, 1996). So it was the industrial revolution which created the laborer jobs that would become so susceptible to negative effects due to immigration.

The Whig Party, in the majority in Massachusetts for the 1840s, completely and consistently failed to address the workers' concerns (Mulkern, 1990). Because this anger over immigration was largely linked to the labor movement, it was able to capitalize on this populist feeling and greatly expand its membership. Thus, the immigration created a massive anti-immigration movement in the form of the American Party, and the success of the American Party in 1854 can be attributed largely to the concerns of domestic laborers especially in highly industrialized centers such as the many mill towns of Massachusetts. Indeed, once in power in Massachusetts, the American Party passed a series of labor reform laws, although they never achieved their goal of increasing the law of naturalization from five to 21 (Voss-Hubbard, 1996).

The issue of slavery, while important, is a little more complicated. In many of the northern states, Free-Soilers (who did not want to allow any more slave states to join the union) ended up joining the American Party and voting for many of their candidates, thus binding the two into a coalition (Baum, 1978; Haynes, 1897). In the Midwestern states, such as Ohio, where the American Party was very successful during the 1854 elections, this success was largely derived from Free-Soil support. The American Party successfully tied itself to a successful campaign against the Kansas-Nebraska Act and so rode it to political success (Maizlish, 1982). In both cases, the American Party made use of the issue that would come to dominate all issues: slavery. But this position on slavery was not universal within the American Party. There existed

an American Party faction in the south, and in the end a split between the Northern factions, which opposed slavery, and the southern factions, which supported it, would play a major part in the destruction of the American Party (Maizlish, 1982) as I will explain in further detail later. But as demonstrated, the American Party tied its anti-immigration policy to an anti-slavery policy in much of the country. And while this at first would be a boon for the American Party, it would in the end largely spell its doom.

Internal factors and political opportunities also existed for the American Party movement, but they are not quite as clear cut as in the Civil Rights movement. The American Party benefited from internal networks that were created between laborers who were concerned about their livelihood. Its networks were also very exclusive, limited to a certain demographic, which created an element of solidarity. And the links between these elements were strongest at the neighborhood level (Mulkern, 1990), creating a very grassroots type of movement.

Political opportunities also expanded to aid the Party for a brief time. The industrial revolution and massive immigration spurred fears and anger over low wages and labor shortage, making political mobilization easier for the American Party. They did not have to worry about government repression the way the Civil Rights movement did. There also existed a religious, anti-Catholic sentiment, especially in the northeast, that the American Party was able to capitalize on because many of the immigrants were Irish-Catholics (Mulkern, 1990). Lastly, the American Party was able to ally itself in many cases with the anti-slavery movement of the time period, which was becoming more and more prevalent.

But the American Party did not last. Even in Massachusetts the American Party representatives barely had a couple of years to enjoy their electoral success before they lost it

(Baum, 1978). Nationally their candidate, Millard Fillmore, ran a distant third place in the 1856 presidential campaign, thus ending the hopes of the American Party for becoming a national party (Mulkern, 1990).

The sharp reversal of fortunes for the American Party can be explained mostly by a sharp decline in political opportunities. By 1855 there was a major drop in immigration, rendering the main point of the American party, if not useless, then much less. Cohn (2000) actually goes so far as to attribute the major decline in immigration in this year directly to the success of the American Party and its mobilization of violent protests. He argues that the other factors such as the recession (which should have caused a universal decline in immigration across the board, but instead only saw a decline in specific countries), and the Crimean War (which could have caused an increase in prices of travel, thus raising the price of immigration, but did not) did not have a significant effect on immigration levels (Cohn, 2000). Whether the American Party had this level of influence is debatable, but if this is the case, then one could argue that the American Party was a victim of its own success.

The other major decrease of political opportunity for the American Party came from its partial alliance with the anti-slavery movement. In many places, the same constituency supported the anti-immigration and anti-slavery movements, and in the end, there was not room for them both (Maizlish, 1982). This is borne out by the example in Massachusetts, where in 1854, the year of the American Party's greatest success, as many as 78% of the Free-Soil party's membership voted for the American Party candidates, while by 1858, over 60% of the American Party members voted Free-Soil (and only 50% of the American Party voters who turned out in 1854 turned out again in 1858). The electorate came to view the two issues of slavery and

naturalization as exclusive (represented by different candidates) and they had to choose one; they chose slavery as the more important of the two.

The issue of slavery also hurt the American Party because it was not a universal tenet of the Party. In 1856, at the national gathering of the American Party the southern wing of the American Party there was an argument between the pro-slavery southern delegates and the anti-extensionist northern delegates. The anti-extensionists wanted to reintroduce into the platform the opinion that slavery should be prohibited in settled territories. The southern delegates refused and the northerners bolted the national American Party for the Republican Party (Maizlish, 1982). Thus the narrowing of political opportunities due to the rise of the issue of slavery, and the end of the massive immigration between 1845 and 1854 cut out the American Party's ability to sustain itself, and its factions scattered to different parties.

The American Party seems to fail the issue evolution test despite its brief success. Carmines and Stimson's (1989) definition of issue evolution is that it captures national attention and is so influential that it actually causes an evolution in the ideological spectrum of the political environment. While the American Party captured national attention for a brief three year period, it did not cause a major change in the political landscape. Rather, it was overshadowed by the question of slavery and largely folded back in to the new Republican Party (Mulkern, 1990).

Religious Right

Historical Development

The United States is the only developed country to have such strong religious sentiments intertwined with its politics (at least in modern times). We are far closer to developing nations in

the role religion plays in our contemporary politics than we are to any other developed nation (Domke and Coe and Coe, 2008). Given the events of 9/11 and the current uprisings in the Middle East, it could be argued that the influence of religion in politics has never been more prominent. And the past two GOP platforms have included sections about "family values" (gay marriage, abortion, prayer in school, among others) (gop.com, 2011) So how did get to the point where religion has in some ways become fused with politics, despite the fact that our founders were so opposed to mixing religious and politics that they created a clause for the separation of church and state in the constitution? The answer is: the Religious Right movement. The Religious Right movement is a unique movement in that it has no specific goals outside of generally pushing (Christian) religious values into the political system. It relies on a number of salient issues, such as abortion, gay-marriage and prayer in school in order to promote its views. Because of this, I will examine the Religious Right movement as if it were a cohesive movement with a main goal of pushing religious values into politics, and treat these other specific issues (gay-rights, abortion, etc) as instigators and political opportunities for the general movement.

The Religious Right movement, like all the other movements we will examine, had at least a somewhat long term build-up of factors that contributed to the creation of the movement. In the case of this movement, it was a series of Supreme Court decisions that initially placed religious values back on the national agenda. This first started when the Supreme Court banned organized prayer in school during the 1960s. That was followed by the Roe v Wade case in 1973 that essentially legalized abortion (Domke and Coe and Coe, 2008). To say that this started the religious right would be a bit of an exaggeration, since the politics in the United States have always had religious undertones. Before these Supreme Court cases, most politicians did not discuss religious issues because it was assumed that organized prayer in school was allowed as a

matter of course. But once the Supreme Court stepped in with these landmark cases, and said that religion was not allowed in school, or that abortion was in fact legal, it suddenly became necessary for religious factions to mobilize and protect their value system.

Mechanisms of the Movement

The Religious Right relied on essentially two paths to influence. The first was the involvement of activists. The second was an evolution in the way strategic politicians used the issue of religion. In some cases, the activists spurred strategic politicians to make changes to their platforms for political gain. But there is also evidence that the strategic politicians took advantage of factors that already existed and so spurred the activists.

The Supreme Court cases, which put these religious values back on the national agenda, were largely responsible for spurring the special interest activists. For example, after Roe v Wade in 1973, a large number of special interest groups (both pro-life and pro-choice) mobilized. During the 1970s the issue of abortion, one of the fundamental parts of the Religious Right movement, had not yet attached itself as a partisan-based issue, but remained a religious one (Jelen and Wilcox, 2003). But *Roe v Wade* played a critical role in making this issue explicitly a political one. This would change as the Religious Right movement took hold, as we will see.

The other major issue that was central to the early Religious Right movement was the issue of prayer in school. The two court cases in question, *Engel v Vitale* in 1962 and *Abington School District v. Schempp* in 1963 banned organized prayer in school. Just as *Roe v Wade* would do a decade later, these court decisions made the issue of prayer in school a political one. This was a hugely controversial issue because the majority of Americans for many years actually

favored prayer in school (Green and Guth, 1989). And once this issue was politicized, it became incredibly important, because whichever party took the side of pro-prayer in school would gain influence with a majority of the voting bloc. This expanded the political opportunities for the Religious Right by creating an issue for it to focus on, and it was obviously a popular one since by the 1980s a majority of the public still supported it.

Special interest activists played some role in pushing the agenda of the Religious Right. But the picture is still incomplete. The missing piece is the strategic politicians, especially Presidential candidates, who in an effort to win votes would begin to use religion as a political tool (Domke and Coe and Coe, 2008). In fact, the first Presidential nominee to have an effect on this process was not a conservative at all, nor was he trying to gain a religious vote. It was McGovern in the 1972 campaign, and his campaign was aimed at recruiting more secular liberals to the Democratic Party (Layman, 2001). But his plan backfired. In 1972 the secular voters were 7% more likely to vote Democrat, but at the same time Evangelical Protestant voters became 32% more likely to vote Republican. It was, however, the start of a larger trend, because between 1972 and 1992 there is clear growth in the secularism of the Democratic Party. (Layman, 2001). So in a sense, the Religious Right movement was in fact a counter-movement to the secularization of the Left. It was in a way similar to the Civil Rights movement and the Barry Goldwater brand of conservatism. Once the Democrats became the party of civil rights, the Republicans did not have to oppose civil rights to gain the southern voting bloc, they just had to be less progressive than the Democrats. In 1972, once McGovern made a push for secular voters, the Republican Party did not have to declare immediately a pro-life position; it just had to not declare for pro-choice (since in a sense McGovern had declared that for the Democrats). So

it was the strategic politician that signaled to the special interest activist which way to direct their efforts for the movement.

After McGovern, the Religious Right has become increasingly hostile to the Democratic Party. Jimmy Carter was personally very religious but his strict loyalty to a separation of church and state caused many religious conservatives, especially socially conservative but economically liberal Democrats, to become disillusioned. This opened the door for Reagan's brand of religious conservatism that would take the Religious Right's movement to the next level (Domke and Coe and Coe, 2008; Layman, 2001). Reagan was able to use his discussion of religion and politics as a major draw for the Republican Party. And after him every President, from Bush Senior to Clinton to Bush Junior has made religion a major part of their campaign (Layman, 2001). There is even evidence of how important the religious question still is to voters in 2008 with Obama's campaign judging by the intense questioning of Obama's religious connection to the Reverend Wright. So we see that it was strategic politicians who pointed the way for the special interests to attach themselves to different parties. And over time, through the influence of strategic politicians, party polarization increased with regards to religion, thus leading to a change in the definition of party identification (Republicans became the party of religiously conservative values, the "Religious Right," and Democrats became the party of seculars and religious liberals).

Theory Framework

The Religious Right movement was successful in evolving the scope of political discourse in the United States, since abortion and its other main concerns, like gay rights and prayer in school all had an effect in changing the definition of party identification. Regardless of

the policy success it has experienced, the fact that it has so fundamentally changed the political discussion with regards to these religious values shows just how deep the Religious Right movement has infiltrated politics.

The Religious Right movement had internal factors that allowed it to create dense networks, which allowed it to organize sustained interaction with its opponents (thus matching Tarrow's definition). The Religious Right, like the Civil Rights movements, had an obvious indigenous organization that allowed it to organize so successfully: the church. Churches allowed organizers to raise support for religious values and recruit activists, and supported many conservative church leaders, such as Jerry Falwell (Domke and Coe and Coe, 2008), who would rise to prominence and give strength to the movement.

The Religious Right also benefited from a number of expanding political opportunities. By addressing controversial religious subjects such as abortion and prayer in school, the Supreme Court opened a political opportunity and gave the religious activists a reason to mobilize and an issue to mobilize around. (State courts have done the same in the last decade with same-sex marriage). And the Religious Right remains a major factor today, because its issues are "easy" issues that people understand at the gut level, and they continue to be controversial.

The existence of the strategic politicians surrounding the birth of the Religious Right is perfectly explained in Carmines and Stimson's (1989) examination of social movements. And furthermore, the fact that the movement elicits such strong counter-movements (around all its issues: gay rights, abortion, prayer in school, etc) also demonstrates the continuing salience of the Religious Right and help explain its ability to infiltrate the Republican Party to such a degree.

The Environmental Movement

Historical Background

The environmental movement has a very long history, stretching all the way back to the 19th century. But the unique thing about the environmental movement is that no one unified movement actually exists, and there is no definite base of origin (Egan and Crane, 2009). While the indefinite base of origin may seem similar in all the movements I have discussed simply because movements do not develop in a vacuum, the lack of a cohesive movement is truly astounding in the environmental movement. It is a "movement defined by the diversity of its actors" (Egan and Crane, 3, 2009).

To pick a point in history to describe the environmental movement, I will begin with the founding of the Sierra Club, since it marked a shift in the environmental debate. The Sierra Club was initially founded by John Muir in 1892 as an organization dedicated to preservation. During the time period, there was an argument between environmentalists whether preservation (completely preserving land) or conservation (scientifically sustainable use of land) was the better path to take (Young, 2010). The Sierra Club's most famous fight early on in its existence was the Hetch-Hetchy Controversy in 1913 when the city of San Francisco attempted to dam up a river that would in turn flood the Hetch-Hetchy Valley in Yellowstone. In the end the Sierra Club was unsuccessful in fighting the dam's construction, but this proved to motivate the Club and show the power of its potential (Righter, 2009). This type of localized event would become commonplace to the environmental movement. Part of the reason the Sierra Club failed in this instance was because it was unable to successfully nationalize the issue and so draw much

support from outside of California (Righter, 2009). This would be an obstacle that environmental groups would need to figure out how to overcome in the future.

Up through much of the first half of the twentieth century, the attempt to preserve (or conserve) land was the main motivator for environmental groups. But this would change as scientists began learning more about pollution, pesticides, toxic waste, and a host of new problems that would fall under the umbrella of the environmental movement.

In the 1940s the federal government created a few basic pollution control resolutions because of severe health issues due to pollution in several cities. But through the 1960s, the federal government largely left it up to the states to create and enforce environmental regulation, with the idea that states can better judge what needs to be done based on their specific regions and industries. But this strategy was almost a complete failure from an environmental perspective, as states either could not or were not willing to pass the necessary laws to protect the environment (Young, 2010).

In 1969, the NRDC (National Resources Defense Council) was founded in an effort by environmentalists to pursue environmental enforcement through the court system (Young, 2010). After Earth Day in 1970 the federal government began a decade of environmental reform, passing laws such as the Clean Air and Water Acts, and NEPA (the National Environmental Policy Act), which gave the NRDC plenty of laws to work with when pursuing legal recourse to get such laws enforced (Young, 2010). All in all, the federal government passed 23 major environmental laws during the 1970s (Bevington, 2009). But in the 1980s the Reagan administration made it much more difficult for environmental groups to work towards new laws, and instead environmental groups focused on fighting to protect what had already been

accomplished (Young, 2010). The issues surrounding the environmental movement clearly continue to be fought. Probably the most recent major event in the environmental movement to occur was the failure of a new environmental protection bill, the Waxman-Markey Climate Bill, which passed in the House but failed in the Senate (Schnidman and Schofield, 2010).

The environmental movement has also evolved as science tells us more about the world. For example, many people now care about nationalized issues like global warming, carbon emissions, fuel efficient cars and using wind power (although the importance they place on these issues still fluctuates). It seems that many environmental groups have moved their efforts into affecting national change on global issues like global warming, but local issues, like the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico are still current and remain a major part of the overall movement.

Mechanics of the Movement

Looking back at the history of the environmental movement, it seems safe to say that the 1970s have up until now marked the most successful period of influence for the environmental movement within the US. But it was a confluence of events that led up to the groundbreaking legislation in the '70s. One seminal event was the burning of the Cuyahoga River in Cleveland in 1969 which helped stir action for the federal Clean Water Act (Washington, 2009). Another was the publication of the famous book *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carlson in 1962 which took the nation by storm and called for more public information, arguing that scientists were not capable of making environmental decisions alone that could impact health for many people (Thomas, 2009). Part of the reason this book was so successful was because the public was aware of several other environmental crisis, such as the decade-long debate over radioactive fallout, the cranberry crisis of 1958 and the thalidomide crisis of 1962 (Thomas, 2009). All of these events

stimulated public awareness, making people ready to think about and organize about these environmental issues, and call for reform.

Indeed the call for change was so strong that the first Earth Day in 1970, announced by Senator Gaylord Nelson as a "teach in", which had little help from the larger environmental organizations, had over 20 million participants nationwide (Bevington, 2009). In fact, in 1970 Democrat Edmund Muskie and President Nixon were competing for the title of who was the bigger environmentalist (Uekoetter, 2009). This demonstrates, along with the many acts of environmental regulation that were passed during the 1970s just how much of an effect the environmental movement was having.

In the 1970s, however, the first signs of partisan cleavage on the environmental issue arose (Young, 2010). This partisan cleavage would grow larger in the 1980s when the Reagan administration came to power and created a hostile environment for the environmental movement (Young, 2010). Ironically, while the Reagan administration made it more difficult for many environmental groups to function within the confines of Washington DC, his anti-environmental stance produced something of a public outcry and led to a rise in membership and resources available to many environmental groups (Young, 2010).

So we have a number of environmental crises that spur environmental regulation from time to time, an "environmental" party, and a group of environmental organizations dedicated to saving the environment. But despite these crises there has not been enough political will to pass major environmental legislation since the 1970s (Bevington, 2010). The question is, why hasn't more been accomplished since the 1970s? The answer lies in the internal weakness of the environmental movement.

If we start with various crises such as the Hetch-Hetchy controversy, the burning of the Cuyahoga River, or the crisis of the Love Canal in 1978 (when toxic waste from a landfill leaked into a town (Melosi, 1995), then we have the beginnings of our answer. All these events are localized, but more importantly, they are political opportunities. In some cases, like the Cuyahoga River and the Love Canal incident, activists were able to nationalize the crisis, gain nationwide attention and enact significant environmental regulation (Blum, 2008; Young, 2010). But in cases such as the Hetch-Hetchy controversy, the event is localized. In all of these cases, any regulation that gets passed (or fails to get passed) is directly due to a political opportunity. Without those environmental disasters, it is very unlikely that regulation would have passed at that time (if ever).

More importantly, there are no indigenous organizations that exist for the environmental movement. There are formal institutions, from the Groups of Ten that came in to being during the 1970s that include groups like the Sierra Club, to the smaller biodiversity groups that sprang up throughout the 1980s (Bevington, 2009). But all of the environmental groups were created directly because of the environmental issues. And they must rely on political opportunities to gain members. There are no existing informal networks that they can rely on in order to strengthen the bonds between these groups and spread the word more easily. The nature of the environmental movement is such that it can affect everyone at some point, and so by that definition, there can be no network that exists between *everyone* and it is simply too diffuse. As Guber (2003) argues, everyone believes that the environment is important to some degree. But the environmental movement is simply not central enough to people's core identities to shape strong indigenous organizations. Additionally, it is an excellent example of the free rider problem: the idea that people will expect others to deal with these issues and so nothing ever gets

done, a collective action problem that all social issues must overcome (Tarrow, 1998). And because of its lack of indigenous organizations and diffuse goals and ability to focus its message, the environmental movement is not able to overcome this collective action problem.

Theory Framework

As I have demonstrated, the environmental movement seemed to be motivated by formal institutions that were created as a result of specific and largely localized political opportunities. And because within the movement there exist no indigenous networks or organizations to support these institutions, they are at a disadvantage and must rely on an expansion of political opportunities to get anything done. And because major regulation would require a political opportunity that would violently affect the entire nation, it seems difficult to envision any major change occurring without a natural catastrophe.

This issue of global warming as national and global issue has changed the game somewhat. Part of the reason so many environmental groups focus on global warming is precisely because it has a national audience. But global warming is an even more abstract issue than many other environmental concerns (like air pollution). A recent Gallup poll shows that concerns over global warming are dropping (Newport, 2011). Like the localized issues, global warming relies on events to occur that can spur concern about it. If the seas don't rise several feet and wipe out beach front property this year, then many people are not likely to take the issue of melting ice caps quite so seriously. Even for global warming it comes down to political opportunities, and while some exist on a general scale (such as mobilizing to save the polar bear), the national issue of global warming does not have direct affects on the lives of many people within our nation.

For this reason, Anthony Downs' (1972) theory of the issue attention cycle appears very apt. Without any indigenous organization to gain national attention and then hand off power to the formal institutions, and without a natural community of support, it is only a matter of time before the political opportunities close as the public sees the enormous cost of fixing the (environmental) issue and so lose interest.

The environmental movement seems to flirt with issue evolution. It certainly grabs national attention at times and has changed the definition of party identification to some extent (Democrats are the environmental party, Republicans are the business party), but it has not quite had the type of sustained national attention that a true issue evolution requires. Instead, it recurs with a variety of political opportunities, and then fades away.

Conclusion

From our discussion on theoretical framework, we know that social movements must have three things to succeed and create issue evolution. They must have indigenous structures which allow the movement to build dense social networks to support the movement. These indigenous structures, when they exist, are usually the first organizers of the movement. They need formal institutions that grow out of these social networks that the indigenous organizations form. These formal institutions must work to spread the message and maintain the integrity of the movement. And they require political opportunities. The context of a social movement is so important because without an advantageous environment, it becomes very difficult for the networks of a social movement to coalesce and mobilize.

The Civil Rights movement is a great example of a combination of internal factors—indigenous organizations creating dense social networks and then handing off to formal

organizations that take advantage of political gains to enact change—and expanding political opportunity that created major change and thus qualifies as issue evolution. The decreasing political opportunities and fracturing internal structure led to its drift away from the national spotlight, but its effects continue to affect the political environment as we know it.

The American Party movement had a very different nature. In many ways it was born largely of political opportunity: the mass immigration and industrial revolution. These issues gave rise to public fear, and the American Party was able to capitalize on this fear of immigration to turn their main goal of increasing time for naturalization of immigrants into electoral success. But it was not issue evolution, and was in fact overshadowed quickly by the issue evolution of slavery. And once the political opportunities began to contract, it fell apart very quickly.

Like the Civil Rights movement, the Religious Right movement was an example of issue evolution as it changed the definitions of party identification in the US. And they were able to do so because they had indigenous structures (for the Religious Right, the church, for the Civil Rights movement, churches, college campuses and local NAACP chapters) which allowed them to form strong social networks to support their movement.

The two movements evolved their party identifications largely through strategic politicians. During the Civil Rights movement, both parties were competing to support the movement, and it was only after the movement had shed some of its national spotlight that that parties began to diverge. During the Religious Right movement, the Democrats at once pushed the religious conservatives away (for example, the McGovern campaign) while the Republicans embraced it (Reagan especially). And the Religious Right movement still retains its salience and great influence in the Republican Party today.

The Environmental movement is yet another type of social movement. The unique aspect of the environmental movement is that it relies on political opportunities to inspire the creation of formal organizations for the movement. But there exist few indigenous organizations that would be naturally drawn to the movement—it is an ideological movement at its core. But because the political opportunities keep expanding and contracting, the environmental movement keeps popping up (unlike the American Party, which dissolved after its main political opportunity disappeared).

Chapter 5: Tea Party Politics

The fact that the Tea Party movement has become a player in the US domestic politics in the short term is undeniable. The question though is, how much influence has the movement actually had, and to what does it owe its influence? To answer this question, I will split this chapter in to two parts. The first section will be an attempt at assessing how successful the Tea Party movement was in the 2010 midterm elections, the only major election cycle for which it has been mobilized. I will also try to assess how much of an impact the Tea Party has had so far in Congress. I cannot look at legislation in the current Congress because that would not present a complete picture since the 112th Congress is just beginning. Instead I will focus on leadership positions, particularly through the committee system. Additionally, I will look briefly at the "leaders" of the Tea Party and make inferences about their influence within the Tea Party and within the greater political environment.

I will then address the second part of my initial question: where is this all coming from? To some degree the main forces behind the Tea Party goals have been building up for decades. Many of its main goals (such as a smaller government), have been part of the Republican Party ideology for the same time frame. Consequently, many people see the Tea Party as simply a right wing extension of the Republican Party. This may be true to some degree and I will try to trace back the roots of the Tea Party's ideology, from Ross Perot's anti-party Presidential campaign in 1992 through evolving Republican Party platforms until the Tea Party movement's inception.

Tea Party Politicians

What is a Tea Party politician? This is the first question that needs to be addressed, and the answer is not clear. The main distinction that needs to be addressed is the difference between a Tea Party politician and a conservative Republican. These two groups can overlap, but I think the main difference is that a Tea Party politician must put federal spending as a major priority. Tea Party politicians can and often do have values that are similar to those of conservative Republicans on social and other varied issues. I have decided, given the fact that the Tea Party is for the most part a grassroots driven movement, to define a Tea Party candidate as one who was endorsed by the Tea Party groups. Each Tea Party groups probably has a slightly different reason for endorsing different candidates, but I think the universal thing they all agree is that a Tea Party politician must emphasize their desire to cut federal spending. To this end I have created a list of all the candidates who were endorsed by Tea Party groups. I have made the list all-inclusive, so if a candidate is mentioned by one group, they are included on the list. I did this because the fractured and disorganized nature of the Tea Party groups means that they might disagree on which candidates are in fact real Tea Party candidates. And many groups did not endorse any politicians. Because the fractured grassroots structure of groups makes up the backbone of the Tea Party, I think this somewhat haphazard listing will actually be a fairly accurate representation of real "Tea Party" candidates.

For the purposes of my study, I limited the data to Congressional endorsements because they made up the vast majority of the endorsed politicians, making comparisons easier and more accurate. Of the 141 Tea Party endorsements I collected across both houses of Congress, only 62 (44%) of the Tea Party candidates lost. This includes seven candidates who lost in the primaries to a Republican candidate. Thus, 79 candidates (56%) won their elections. At first glance this looks like a fairly good success rate for Tea Party candidates, especially since the majority of

these were candidates for the House of Representatives, where incumbents have a much greater advantage and usually face weaker challengers.

Breaking this down some more, I found that of the 10 Tea Party incumbents all were re-elected, except for one, Walt Minnick of Idaho, who was in fact a Democrat (the only Democrat on the list). When a Tea Party-endorsed candidates were not running against an incumbents they also fared extremely well, winning 22 of 27 elections, and only losing five open-seat contests. But when the Tea Party candidate was up against a Democratic incumbent (or Republican incumbent in the primaries), Tea Partiers lost almost 55% of the time. To split this up by the houses of Congress, Tea Party candidates running for Senate won only 44% of the time, while they won almost 59% of the time in House campaigns. So at least on the surface it seems that the Tea Party was more successful at the more local (district) level of House campaigns (rather than the statewide campaigns of the Senate) where their localized grassroots networks could have greater effect on the race.[15]

This data must be put into some context. There was certainly a massive anti-Democrat swing across the nation because of persisting high levels of unemployment as the economy has yet to fully rebound, with Republicans (including Tea Party candidates, since the majority of Tea Party politicians are Republicans) picking up 63 seats in the House and five in the Senate (68 total) (*NYTimes.com*. 2010*)*. And it would be impossible to predict exactly how much of these gains were due to Tea Party influence. But it we take in to account that in the House as a whole Republicans won 55% of the time, (slightly less than the Tea Party candidate average of 59%)

[15] There are other potential reasons for this of course. For example, the fact that Senate campaigns are statewide means that generally Senate candidates must be more moderate than House candidates. This would make it more difficult for a very fiscally conservative Tea Party politician to win at the state level. But one might take advantage of a conservative district and make it in to the House.

and in the Senate Republicans won 65% of the time (compared to 44% for Tea Party candidates) we again see that Tea Party candidates fared relatively better in the House than in the Senate. This would reinforce the notion that Tea Party candidates were more successful on the more local House level than the more nationally prominent statewide level.

We can also examine the Tea Party successes through the perspective of committee assignments. Committee appointments in Congress are very important. Committee chairs have the power over the agenda, and before a bill can come to the floor of Congress (in either chamber), it usually must first go through relevant committees and subcommittees (Davidson et al, 2010). The Rules Committee in the House even gets to decide on the rules of the bill (whether it can be amended, how long it can be debated, etc) making it a very powerful committee (Davidson et al, 2010).

In the House, there are only two committees with zero Tea Party politicians: the Ethics Committee, considered one of the weakest committees in the House (Davidson et al, 2010) and the House Administration Committee. On the other hand, there is not a single committee chairperson who is a Tea Party politician. Of the four most prestigious committees in the House (Rules, Budget, Appropriations and Ways and Means) (Davidson et al, 2010), there are only four Tea Party politicians on the Appropriations committee (out of 66 total) and they are the most junior. On the Budget Committee, the Tea Party has eight of 38 committee members, on the Rules committee they make up two of 13 total members, and on the Ways and Means Committee they only account for two of 47. So we see that Tea Party candidates are underrepresented in the Ways and Means and Appropriations committees and overrepresented in the Budget and Rules committees. But given the fact that there are no Tea Party Committee chairmen, there the influence in this regard is somewhat limited.

This lack of influence in the committee system is no doubt due to a large degree to the lack of seniority of the Tea Party politicians. Of the seven incumbents elected to the House, the longest serving member is Mike Pence, who has only served from 2000 (pence.house.gov). In the Senate the lack of experience is even more glaring. There are only two Tea Party incumbents in the Senate, and both are only in their second term. So this lack of influence in the committee system is expected since chairmen are usually longer serving members (Davidson et al, 2010). But whether the reason is due to a lack of seniority or an anti-Tea Party bias, the result is still a low level of influence in the committee system for the Tea Party movement.

In the Senate, there are several committees that do not have any Tea Party politician representation. But given the fact that there are only 10 Tea Party politicians in the Senate, this is not surprising. Take, for example, the Finance Committee, considered one of the most powerful Senate committees (Davidson et al, 2010)—it includes no Tea Party politicians. This alone does not demonstrate that Tea Party politicians have no influence in the Senate, but it is a worrying sign for the influence of the Tea Party in the Senate. And because the Senate is still under Democratic control, there are naturally no Tea Party politicians who are in the position of chairmen (since the majority party members fill the chairmen positions).

Thus, the influence of the Tea Party candidates in Congress is not yet particularly strong. They are represented to some degree on committees in both houses, but none yet have leadership positions. Additionally, there has to be some skepticism as to just how "Tea Party" these Tea Party candidates are. It is impossible to yet measure their ideological score[16] since the 112th Congress has only just begun. But if we use the Tea Party caucuses as something of a measuring

[16] Ideological scores measure the way members vote and place them on a scale, usually from negative one to one (negative one being the most liberal, one being conservative), to measure what their overall is.

stick, we see some clues. For example, only three members of the Senate have joined the Tea Party Senate Caucus, out of 11 who are currently serving in the Senate and who were endorsed by Tea Party groups (Rucker, 2011). And we know that only 11 freshmen representatives have joined the Tea Party caucus within the House so far. Considering the amount of freshmen who were endorsed by the Tea Party, this number is not promising for the Tea Party activists (D'Aprile and Berman, 2011) (there 60 representatives who are not incumbents in the House and who were endorsed by Tea Party groups, so 49 freshmen Tea Party politicians have yet to join the caucus). Additionally, the total number of Tea Party Caucus members has dropped by two, from 52 to 50, despite the fact that this was supposed to have been the Tea Party's big election (D'Aprile and Berman, 2011). The list of members joining this caucus is likely to grow, but the initial signs are not promising.

For now, at least right out of the gate, it appears the Tea Party influence is somewhat limited. There are some signs the Tea Party is being heard, for example, the moratorium on earmarks that the Republican Party passed in the House (Dwyer and Jaffe, 2010) (although the moratorium was short lived and earmarks have already reentered several bills Congress has passed (Madison, 2011)). And recently a Tea party politician won the election in New Hampshire to run the New Hampshire GOP for the 2012 Presidential election (Goodnough, 2011). But the battle that raged over the 2011 budget is an even better indicator which I will discuss in Chapter Six.

I want to also talk briefly about the Tea Party leadership, a discussion not limited to politicians. The top five "national figures" who represent the Tea Party are in order: Sarah Palin (14%), Glenn Beck (7%), Jim DeMint (6%), Ron Paul (6%) and Michele Bachmann (4%) (Courser, 2010). To start with, Sarah Palin is currently working on a consultant basis and has yet

to rejoin politics since she quit her job as Governor of Alaska and lost the 2008 campaign to be Vice President of the country. She did create endorsements for the 2010 midterm election races (*Washingtonpost.com*, 2010), and she has gained exposure with a prime-time reality TV, show which has since been canceled (*USWeekly.com*, 2011). But currently she does not appear to making any major waves within the Tea Party movement.

Glenn Beck, the next biggest "leader figure" is a talk show host on Fox News. He started the Tea Party 9/12 movement (Courser, 2010) and his rally in August of 2010 in Washington DC drew a crowd of about 87,000 spectators (Sundby, 2010). In contrast, Jon Stewarts rally drew an estimated 215,000 spectators to DC (Montopoli, 2010). Additionally, Glenn Beck's ratings from his talk show have been declining, down 39% from a 2010 ago (Witt, 2011). He still maintains a daily viewership of about 2 million (Ryan Witt, 2011), but his show will be ending later this year and Beck will be leaving Fox News (AP, 2011). The fact that Fox decided not to bring his show back, and this decline in ratings should not be overstated as catastrophic, but the fact together they suggest that Glenn Beck is not going to be the figurehead of the Tea Party anytime soon.

Finally, Michele Bachmann, who despite being only the fifth most popular Tea Party symbol in late 2010 (Courser, 2010), has probably been the most active in pushing explicitly "Tea Party" initiatives forward. She organized the Tea Party Caucus within the House in 2010, and renewed it for the 112th Congress. She also addressed the nation after President Obama's State of the Union address in January despite the fact that Representative Paul Ryan was the Republican picked by the Party itself to respond (normally one member from the opposition party publically addresses the President's speech) (Steinhauer, January 2011). And perhaps most importantly, she has declared her campaign to run for President in 2012. The scope of her influence will be measured more fully based on her success in the 2012 campaign. But the fact

that she has already announced her candidacy not only shows that she feels she has the support to become President, but also that she is ready to be the leader for the Tea Party movement. Now that she has declared, if Sarah Palin or another prominent Tea Party politician declares, it could split the Tea Party vote and significantly weaken the Tea Party's chances in the 2012 Presidential campaign.

Jim DeMint and Rand Paul are certainly important figures in the Tea Party as well. However, as members of Congress their national influence remains fairly limited, with most of it coming from their constituents (the public generally does not pay too much attention to representatives in Congress who are not their own). Until they take action that will push them to national prominence (the way Michele Bachman as decided to run for President and chair the Tea Party caucus in the House), they will probably not rise to the level of national Tea Party leaders.

Conclusion

The Tea Party movement has clearly had some influence during the 2010 political election cycle, both in getting many of its candidates elected and within Congress itself. How successful they were, and how lasting this success appears to be is more difficult to define. Many of their candidates received committee appointments, some even received important committee appointments, especially within the House, but no Tea Party politicians are currently in a position of party leadership as a committee chairperson.

No one person has tried to step up and unify the loose structure of the Tea Party. Michele Bachmann has taken the first step, as a Tea Party politician by declaring a run for President. And the success of her campaign, both in the primaries assuming she runs as a Republican candidate,

or as a third-party candidate, will largely determine if she is the person who will unify the Tea Party. Another Tea Party entrant into the race could prove very divisive to the Tea Party movement going forward and diminish its already loose organizational strength.

Chapter 6: Analysis

In previous chapters I have looked at the various beliefs and groups within the Tea Party movement and the political implications and influence those beliefs and groups have had on the political environment. I have examined at social movement theory in general through the lens of two social movement literatures: Issue Evolution Theory and Political Process Theory. And I have created a historical context that deepens our understanding of social movements and sets up the context for the Tea Party movement. Now I am going to place the Tea Party movement in that historical context on the basis of social movement theory to determine the likely short-term and long-term influences of the Tea Party. Although the Tea Party something in common with all of the social movements I have discussed, I think the Tea Party movement ultimately is most similar to the American Party movement based on its core goals and response to political opportunities and that it will not drastically change the shape of political party ideology. It still may, however, play an influential role in short-term politics within the next few years.

Tea Party Movement Theory

After the 2008 Presidential and Congressional elections, the Republican Party was booted squarely into the position of the minority party for a brief two years. All minority parties search for new issues with which they can sway the electorate and regain the majority (Carmines and Stimson, 1989). So the Republicans found themselves in a position from which they needed to change the national agenda. Then the Tea Party arrived with its call for deficit reduction, right in the midst of a severe national recession. The Tea Party movement is not entirely part of the Republican Party, nor is it entirely separate. The movement is certainly made of up largely conservative Republican supporters, but its extreme fiscal conservative agenda has set it in opposition to many long-time Republican politicians. Given the Tea Party's specific focus, it

does not address all of the core Republican issues in a coherent or cohesive way. And many of its supporters consider the movement an alternative to the traditional two-party system.

But it certainly gave the Republican Party a way to attack Obama: deficit spending, even in the time of a recession. The fact that the Tea Party has been so successful at a time when its main issues (cutting the federal deficit and reducing the size of the government) are overshadowed in public salience by the weakness of the economy (Gallup, 2010) is somewhat counter-intuitive. So why is this the case? The Tea Party movement has so far succeeded for two reasons. First, it has had ample political opportunities which allow it to excite people to hear their message and take action. Second, its formal organizations have allowed it to remain just separate enough from the Republican Party that it can also make use of widespread anti-establishment anger that cuts across party lines.

Let us start with the political opportunities. There is little doubt that the Tea Party was spurred by the massive government bailouts. First there was the $700 billion TARP bill under President Bush, followed shortly after by the $787 billion stimulus package that passed under President Obama (*Mediamatter.org*, 2010). These spending bills were, of course, passed because of the economy's woes, so the failing economy indirectly triggered an expanding political opportunity for the Tea Party movement. The federal government's aggressive response, via these bailouts and other deficit spending to help companies and people who were losing money during the recession, directly triggered the Tea Party's angry reaction. For this same reason, the failing economy is not a political opportunity that will have a large effect on the Tea Party's future. If the economy recovers, it might remove the need for any pressure on the government to continue deficit spending, but unless the economy somehow forces the government to cut back on spending, it will not narrow the political opportunities for the Tea

Party. Thus the true political opportunity for the Tea Party is massive government spending, triggered by the economic downturn.

Another political opportunity for the Tea Party is widespread discontent with both major political parties. Prior to the elections in November of 2010 there was major anti-incumbent feeling that translated into anger at Congressional representatives of both parties (Zernike and Thee-Brenan, 2010). This was a major spur for the Tea Party movement, which purports itself to be an alternative to the Republican and Democratic parties. Despite the fact that the vast majority of Tea Party politicians are Republican, the Tea Party was able to paint itself as an alternative anti-party movement and so gain a wide national following. And there is evidence that this anti-party sentiment, that helped open the door for the Tea Party, has so far been sustained. The government reached a last minute agreement on the budget, avoiding a major government shutdown. But a recent poll by *The Hill* found that while 29% of Americans would blame the Democrats and 23% would blame the Republicans, 43% would hold both parties accountable (Wasson, 2011). The budget settlement avoided any anger that could have been caused by a government shutdown, but this poll demonstrates that the public holds both parties accountable, not just one. So long as this general discontent with the two parties major continues, the political opportunity remains for the Tea Party to act as a third option for voters.

Additionally, the fact that after the 2010 election the legislative branch of the federal government split again is probably also a political opportunity for the Tea Party movement. A split Congress, especially in a time of such high party polarization (Theriault, 2008), means that the legislature will likely be unable to agree on much or accomplish much. This will only continue the public resentment against the federal government and the two main parties and increase the popularity of alternative options like the Tea Party.

A perfect example of this is the battle of the budget which I have already mentioned. But this battle does not just represent a political opportunity for the Tea Party. It also represents a potential threat and a measuring stick of its success. Several Tea Party groups were calling angrily for a $100 billion cut in federal spending this year they think believe they were promised (*Patriotupdate.com*, 2011). But Speaker Boehner and the Republicans in the House of Representatives just agreed to a deal with Senate Democrats that would only cut $38 billion (Hulse, 2011). This is a far cry from the $61 billion dollar cuts Speaker John Boehner and House Republicans had passed prior to the new deal (Hennessey, 2011), and even farther from the $100 dollars Tea Party groups were advocating for. The fact that Republicans and Tea Party politicians were able to push Democrats to more cuts than they initially wanted can certainly be viewed as something of a victory. But at the same time, its failure to get anywhere near the proposed number for the budget cuts also shows a serious weakness in the Tea Party movement. It's also important to note that this fight highlighted massive discord within the Republican Party, something Harry Reid and other Democrats are pick to quick up on and argue was to blame for the stalled budget negotiations (Lee and Hook, 2011).

This represents political opportunity for the Tea Party for several reasons. First, with the majority of their supporters coming from the Republican Party, they stand the most to gain from a failure of traditional Republican leadership. If the traditional Republican leadership fails, then those supporters will gravitate toward their next best option: the Tea Party. And the discord among Republican in the House of Representatives is the first step toward that. Secondly, independents are the most likely ideological group to think the government shutdown would be a negative thing (Wasson, 2011), so if the two major parties get blamed for the stalemate then the Tea Party, with a fairly large independent base already (38% of their support consider

themselves independent) (Gallup, 2010), stands to gain the most. And third, a failure to pass a budget would reflect badly on the two main parties and raise the attraction level of the Tea Party.

A government shutdown, however, represents a threat to the Tea Party, although probably more of a long term one. There is always a chance that if negotiations continue to stall, the Tea Party could receive some of the blame for a shutdown, negatively impacting its influence. Additionally, if the Tea Party keeps pushing too hard for extreme measure that the majority of Congress is not ever willing to pass (such as $100 billion budget cuts) it could lose its legitimacy and be viewed as a weak and radical branch of the Republican Party that is not worth listening to. And lastly, if the large budget cuts do pass (and $38 billion could certainly be considered large), there are two other possible results. First, it could assuage many people's anger over overblown government spending. When Clinton balanced the budget in his second term, the issue of federal spending largely fell off the radar. If this occurred, the Tea Party could become a victim of its own success and their message would become diluted because the government had already taken some action. Second, the budget cuts could negatively impact large numbers of people in ways they did not expect, creating a backlash against budget cuts, again destroying much of the strength of the Tea Party's message. The American public has a long history of disliking big government spending in theory, but disliking spending in practice (Cantril and Cantril, 1999) and if this movement manages to create major cuts to important programs it could find itself suddenly opposed by a furious countermovement. Or some combination of these two outcomes could occur and strike a doubly severe blow to the Tea Party's support base. So the budget for 2011 and its effects have become something of a bellwether moment for the Tea Party movement, and the fallout could greatly impact its potential in the 2012 elections and its overall future viability.

The internal structure of the Tea Party movement is also important. The Tea Party seems to lack any semblance of the indigenous structures that were integral parts of both the Civil Rights movement and the Religious Right movement. There is simply no existing type of groups or demographic that naturally unites itself around the issue of the budget deficit. Instead it must rely on formal organizations to create the dense social networks that Tarrow (1998) defines as part of a social movement. There is some evidence that these groups have succeeded to some degree. The incredible numbers of local chapters in addition to national groups that organize them throughout the US demonstrate that there is a willingness among people to coalesce around these issues. And these formal organizations are working to capitalize on what political successes and leverage they have gained since the movement's inception.

But the internal structure is limited by two things. First, there are no strong indigenous organizations, and formal organizations created by the movement must have a salient message in order to remain relevant. This means that they rely on the political atmosphere and political opportunities for their strength. To reference an example from the environmental movement, in the 1980s Reagan's fairly anti-environmental stance created a backlash that saw a surge in membership for groups like the Sierra Club. But without that political opportunity presented by the Reagan administration, the Sierra Club would not have been able to generate that support. In the same way, the many and varied formal organizations of the Tea Party will only remain relevant so long as their message of reducing the spending of the federal government is important to the general public. If political opportunities were to contract, there would be no dense social network, such as the campus and church groups during the Civil Rights movement, for the Tea Party to fall back on and the movement would disintegrate rapidly.

One example of this weakness of indigenous organizations within the Tea Party movement is found on college campuses. Campus groups played a major role in the Civil Rights movement, kicking off many of the more noteworthy protests. Even environmental clubs, which do not have nearly the influence in the Environmental movement that college groups did in the Civil Rights movement, are at least extremely numerous. In contrast, the main campus Tea Part organization is "Tea Party Students." This organization, which is the "student wing of the Tea Party" only, has 13 campus branches nationwide (teapartystudents.org, 2011). Considering the sheer size of the college system in the US, thirteen college chapters is not very large and I have not found any evidence of other widespread Tea Party groups on campuses. This is just one example of the Tea Party's lack of indigenous group support. It is certainly possible that the Tea Party movement simply just does not involve the college demographic. But I think this lack within the college sphere is actually indicative of the wider fact that there simply not many indigenous organizations through which the Tea party movement can easily organize.

The other limitation is that there is very little unification within the Tea Party movement. As I have demonstrated, there is no one figure (or group of figures) that have really succeeded in unifying the Tea Party's message. This suits many members of the Tea Party very well, but would not bode well for them to make the transition from small, localized organizations, to large formal institutions and networks that are critical to the long-term social movement success.

Also, there are a vast number of groups, ranging from all the minor groups that are loosely connected under the banner of the Tea Party Patriots, to the more streamlined and political Tea Party Express and Freedom Works organizations. And many of these groups have very different message and interpretations of what it means to be a Tea Party group and who are good Tea Party politicians (Lorbert and Lipton and Lipton, 2010). Part of the main reason the

Civil Rights movement faded from national attention was because it lost issue consensus between its groups and the overall movement splintered. Until the Tea Party enjoys some level of unification it will always be very much in danger of internal strife leading to self destruction. The Tea Party is a movement lacking uniformity that relies on formal organizations created by political opportunities for its influence. If these political opportunities should begin to contract, it would likely put too much pressure on the already shaky internal organization structure to be sustainable.

Because of this reliance on political opportunities and formal organizations, I think the Tea Party fails (or will fail) the issue evolution test. It certainly has captured national attention and its main points are on the front lines of politics right now. But it does not have the potential to create major ideological change within the two-party system. It might cause a shift in the fiscal conservatism within the Republican Party (indeed many people think it should do this (NBC/WJS, 2010)) which could also potentially affect the Democratic Party's strategy. But it will not create a new definition of what it means to be fiscally liberal or conservative.

Nor will this movement have fundamentally changed how the two parties stand on the issue, since the Republican Party has tried to identify itself as the fiscally conservative party at least as far back as Newt Gingrich in the 1990s, if not further. Instead, it will likely push the Republican Party back to its fiscally conservative roots, but once this has accomplished likely fold back in to the Republican Party. The American Party, which was both a movement and a Party, had one issue that the major parties were not really addressing. Once this issue (immigration) because less important, due to political opportunities, its supporters largely scattered to the various main parties. Once political conservatism returns as a major Republican

Party theme (which is already is starting too), many will abandon the Tea Party's call for extreme cuts in favor the established Republican Party.

And I do not think that this conservative stance on the issue of the budget deficit will have any major effect in defining how political parties identify with other important political issues. For example, the last minute budget negotiations were held up because many Republicans were pushing a conservative social agenda through cuts to programs, such as Planned Parenthood and abortion funding. In return, Republicans gained deeper spending cuts elsewhere (Steinhauer, April 2011). Socially conservative Republicans are not letting the Tea Party affect their outlook on other issues such as social conservatism. The main focus of the Tea Party is just cuts in the federal budget, but many Republicans remain focused on cultural issues as well. This shows the inability of the Tea Party to influence these surrounding issues. And an important part of issue evolution is this major redefinition of political landscape that the narrow-issue Tea Party movement is unlikely to accomplish.[17]

Historical

Of the four historical examples I analyzed in Chapter Four, I think the one with the most similarities to the Tea Party is the American Party movement. Like the Tea Party movement it

[17] Lastly, I think the Tea Party demonstrates once again just how weak critical election theory is. In 2008 the Democratic Party seized both houses of Congress and the Presidency for the first time in years, riding a wave of anger directed at the Republican Party. This was by any measurement a "critical" election. But its roots were based in the unpopular wars that President Bush had entangled us in years before the election and the recession. Just two years later, after the 2008 elections, Republican made major gains, partly helped by the Tea Party movement, and took back the House. This swing, more than anything demonstrates the weakness of the critical election theory. Any massive electoral gain can be just as quickly reversed. And furthermore, the 2010 election was a "critical" election to the infant Tea Party movement, but in reality the 2012 election will be just as critical. Its results will be generated by the politics that built up and gave rise to the Tea Party in 2009, and the Tea Party's successes and failures in the three years before 2012. And whatever happens in 2012 to the Tea Party, even if it manages to win some major electoral victories, could be just as quickly reversed in 2014.

mobilized initially around one major issue. Just as the American Party relied on the buildup of concerns over the industrial revolution and immigration to seize electoral victory, so the Tea Party movement relied on a decade of massive deficit spending (from the wars to the stimulus packages) to ride and a jobless recovery and concerns over the federal debt to electoral victory. The two movements also rely largely on political opportunities and the formal organizations that were created as a result of those. The American Party was important because of the massive levels of immigration from 1845-1854. Yet it disappeared shortly after that, largely because in 1855 the massive waves of immigration stopped. The 2012 elections bear a resemblance to the elections of 1856. Prior to 1856, the American Party seemed poised to make a major impact on the Presidential stage, but their candidates fizzled. The Tea Party is eyeing the 2012 election hungrily, but I have a feeling that it too may experience disappointments similar the American Party in its second election cycle. The Tea Party relies on concerns about the economy and of the federal deficit, but if deficit spending were to be greatly reduced (relatively speaking) it too would quickly lose its primary motivator and its relevance on the political stage.

There are some differences. The American Party was able to create some level of indigenous networks through its connection to the labor party. The Tea Party on the other hand has no such advantage. At the same time, the American Party had to compete with the wildly controversial issue of slavery which overshadowed it. There is currently no such issue quite as shockingly controversial that could overshadow the Tea Party's concerns to such an extent as to cause a civil war. But there is another similarity here. Many supporters of the American Party would go on to join the Republican Party because they were against slavery. There is the possibility that if the size and spending of the federal government loses importance (for whatever

reason), then many of the Tea Party supporters will fold back in to the Republican Party and focus on other issues.

The Civil Rights movement had a series of indigenous networks that allowed the black community to coalesce and spur the movement, leading to the creation of strong and relatively unified front (for a time) of formal organizations. This in turn led to the issue evolution surrounding the issue of race during the fallout of the movement. The Tea Party lacks these indigenous links and is already deeply attached to one party in a way that the Civil Rights movement was not initially.

Additionally, the Civil Rights movement had a number of political opportunities that helped spur the movement. The geographic shift in the black electorate encouraged many northern politicians to pay attention to the black vote. The violent white-countermovement against the Civil Rights movement also created widespread sympathy for the Civil Rights movement and a sympathetic Supreme Court struck down parts of segregation, sending a message to the movement that their issues were being addressed. The Tea Party movement does not seem to have any political opportunities that are quite so magnified. The main Tea Party political opportunities arise from a decade of massive federal spending, people's fears over the size of the federal government and anger as what many see as a failure in the government's response to the economic crisis. But of these political opportunities, only the economic crisis is impacting people in the present, and this is not even related directly to the Tea Party movement (as I have discussed, it has an indirect link because of the government spending that occurred due to the economic crisis). The federal debt is an issue more closely comparable to global warming: many people see it as something future generations will have to deal with. To this extent, the issue of less federal spending to reduce government debt will lose some of its importance when

measured against more immediate concerns. For example, more jobs, as we saw in Chapter 2, is more important to people than cutting federal spending. So if people began to perceive government spending cuts to be negatively impacting job security, the topic of federal spending would almost certainly lose all of its potency as a national issue. In addition to having a weaker internal structure than the Civil Rights movement, it also appears that its political opportunities are less strong.

The Religious Right movement also had the benefit of indigenous structures, through its churches and religious values. It is similar to the Tea Party in that early on it was pushed toward one party, the Republican Party, and so the movement did not create a fight between parties for its support like the Civil Rights movement did. But it managed to deeply change the way the two parties identified around the social issues it represented. The Tea Party issues—and to some extent, the agenda of the Tea Party itself—have been on the political agenda for some time, so whatever effects it has on the current party system, the movement it is not likely to redefine the current political environment.

The Religious Right also has the benefit that it frames most of its important issues (such as abortion, gay marriage, prayer in school) through religion. This turns what would otherwise be difficult issues for people to understand, into what Carmines and Stimson call easy issues (Carmines and Stimson, 1989). Easy issues are topics with which people can easily identify with and take an ideological stance on because they seem to understand the issue at an almost instinctual level. Looking at politics through a religious lens does this. The topics of federal spending and the federal deficit, however, are not easy issues. Reducing the federal debt can be done in two ways: the government can collect more money, or it can cut services. Usually the government collecting more money means higher taxes, and neither higher taxes nor cutting

services (in general) is something that large portions of the electorate are passionate about for long periods of time.

The Environmental movement is similar to the Tea Party in the way that it is very reliant on political opportunities and lacks indigenous structures that could create networks.[18] Additionally, both seem to rely on an underlying issue that is unlikely to dissipate anytime soon. The environment is something that we will have to do with forever, but we tend to only pay attention at times of crisis. Similarly, the trillions of dollars of debt the US currently maintains are not likely to go away any time soon. But just as environmental crises fade, I think attention to the national debt will fade as the current political opportunities contract.

It also has a general lack of unification because of the many issues the movement encompasses. And because of the breadth of the movement, many different environmental groups spring up, often with somewhat differing messages. This is a slightly different type of disunity than the Tea Party experiences because the Tea Party fails to organize even just around one main issue, a deeper problem from the perspective of social movement theory than the disunity shown by the umbrella movement that is the environmental movement. The environmental movement will continue to be salient as long as there are still environmental crises that create political opportunity for its existence. The Tea Party must rely on continued federal spending to remain important. Even a year of surplus could be a potential death blow to the Tea Party movement in its current incarnation, just the way record levels of snowfall during one year have people seriously questioning global warming.

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[18] As I mentioned earlier, the Environmental movement has more widespread indigenous organizations on the campus level than even the Tea Party. But the numeric numbers of college environmental clubs does not translate to movement strength since many of the issues within the environmental movement are localized. For example, the environmental movement at Bucknell University was not able to mobilize Bucknell students to take significant action after the Gulf oil spill, largely because the results were so far away from the college community.

Conclusion

The Tea Party movement, like the American Party movement, does not seem likely to effect long-term change in the American political system. It relies on political opportunities derived from a very specific set of issues and as soon as these issues start to lose relevance, so too will the Tea Party. It is my belief that this is in fact the apex of the Tea Party movement, when the issue of cutting the federal government is foremost on the minds of much of the electorate, affecting both major parties. Both major parties were willing to cut federal spending this year, so they were clearly both listening to the Tea Party's message. Significant electoral victory in 2012 is the Tea Party movement's goal. But if enough spending cuts are achieved in the budget over the next year or two, then its primary message will lose its relevance. And the negative aspect of the budget cuts will result in less government programs and funding, which could end up causing a backlash against the Tea Party's primary message. If this happens, its generally white, conservative support base will likely desert its formal organizations and return to their natural support of the Republican Party. And while the Tea Party will have succeeded in pushing the Republican Party back toward a more fiscally conservative agenda in the short-term, it will not cause any other lasting change.

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Teapartyexpress.com

Teapartynation.com

http://pac.freedomworks.org/

http://www.tea-party-elections.com/

For information on the Congressional Election Results I used the New York Times election results section:

New York Times. "Election 2010." Published Decemnber 15, 2010. http://elections.nytimes.com/2010/. Last Accessed February 4, 2011.

For information on committee memberships I used the Senate and House committee websites

http://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/committees/d_three_sections_with_teasers/committees_home.htm

http://www.house.gov/house/CommitteeWWW.shtml.

In order to determine memberships, for the House I used each individual committee website. For the Senate I used the committee list as a guide and searched for membership statuses on each individual Tea Party Senator's website.

I used the following two polls to create my tables regarding the demographics and main goals of the Tea Party.

Gallup Poll, October 2010.

NBC/Wall Street Journal Poll, May 2010.