

TEA PARTY NATIONALISM



A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE TEA PARTY MOVEMENT
AND THE SIZE, SCOPE, AND FOCUS OF ITS NATIONAL FACTIONS

**Tea Party Nationalism:
A Critical Examination of the Tea Party Movement
and the Size, Scope, and Focus of Its National Factions**

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Foreword

By Benjamin Todd Jealous
President and CEO of the NAACP

We know the majority of Tea Party supporters are sincere, principled people of good will. That is why the NAACP—an organization that has worked to expose and combat racism in all its forms for more than 100 years—is thankful Devin Burghart, Leonard Zeskind and the Institute for Research & Education on Human Rights prepared this report that exposes the links between certain Tea Party factions and acknowledged racist hate groups in the United States. These links should give all patriotic Americans pause.

I hope the leadership and members of the Tea Party movement will read this report and take additional steps to distance themselves from those Tea Party leaders who espouse racist ideas, advocate violence, or are formally affiliated with white supremacist organizations. In our effort to strengthen our democracy and ensure rights for all, it is important that we have a reasoned political debate without the use of epithets, the threat of violence, or the resurrection of long discredited racial hierarchies.

This July, delegates to the 101st NAACP National Convention unanimously passed a resolution condemning outspoken racist elements within the Tea Party, and called upon Tea Party leaders to repudiate those in their ranks who use white supremacist language in their signs and speeches, and those Tea Party leaders who would subvert their own movement by spreading racism.

The resolution came after a year of high-profile media coverage of racial slurs and images at Tea Party marches around the country. In March, members of the Congressional Black Caucus reported that racial epithets were hurled at them as they passed by a Washington, DC health care protest. Civil rights legend John Lewis was called the “n-word” in the incident while others in the crowd used ugly anti-gay slurs to describe Congressman Barney Frank, a long-time NAACP supporter and the nation’s first openly gay member of Congress. Local NAACP members reported similar racially charged incidents at local Tea Party rallies.

At first, the resolution sparked defensive, misleading public responses from the usual corners. First, Tea Party leaders denied our claims were valid. Then Fox News repeatedly circulated the false claim that we were calling the Tea Party itself racist. Then their commentators and other media personalities said the Tea Party was too loosely configured to police itself.

Local NAACP volunteers and staff members around the country were barraged by angry phone calls and death threats.

Yet, amid the threats and denials, something remarkable began to happen: Tea Party leaders

began to quietly take steps toward actively policing explicitly racist activity within their ranks.

Before the end of July, the Tea Party Federation had expelled Mark Williams, then-president of the powerful and politically connected Tea Party Express for his most recent racially offensive public statements, a move they had previously refused to make. The move was significant for three reasons: 1) it proved wrong those national leaders and news personalities who said the Tea Party was too loosely configured to insist its leaders act responsibly, 2) it sparked a rift among Tea Party leadership between those who are tolerant of racist rhetoric and those who would stand against it, and 3) it showed our resolution was having an impact. Soon after, Montana conservative Tim Ravndal was fired as head of the Big Sky Tea Party Association after local media published messages posted to his Facebook account that appeared to advocate violence against gays and lesbians.

In the midst of all this, Tea Party leaders moved quickly to take on a communications strategy typical of corporate crisis public relations. A “Uni-Tea” rally to promote Tea Party diversity was hastily organized, while FreedomWorks launched a “Diverse Tea” web initiative to spotlight pictures of nonwhite Tea Partiers. There was a Tea Party leadership “race summit” facilitated by Geraldo Rivera.

In August, Fox News personality and Tea Party icon Glenn Beck instructed his followers to leave all signs at home in the lead-up to his rally on the National Mall to avoid media scrutiny, and has since admonished Tea Partiers across the nation to “dress normally,” lest their signs and t-shirts distract from the fiscal message for which he would prefer the Tea Party be recognized. In some areas, the response appears to have spread beyond the Tea Party itself. In September, former Florida Republican Party Chair Jim Greer made a surprise public apology for the “racist views” among some members of his party.

These are welcome first steps. They promote diversity and acknowledge the inherent perception problem that plagues the Tea Party: that while many of its leaders are motivated by common conservative budget and governance concerns, for too long they have tolerated others who espouse racism and xenophobia and, in some instances, are formally associated with organizations like the Council of Conservative Citizens—the direct lineal descendant of the White Citizens Council.

This report, from the Institute for Research and Education on Human Rights, serves as a cautionary reminder that Mark Williams is not unique within Tea Party leadership circles and that ties between Tea Party factions and acknowledged racist groups endure. It is the most comprehensive research to date into the Tea Party’s scope and emergence onto our political landscape. I extend my personal thanks to the Institute for Research & Education on Human Rights for this research report.

Tea Party Nationalism is a product of the Institute for Research and Education on Human Rights. Neither the NAACP nor its leadership was involved in its research or authorship.

Introduction

T*ea Party Nationalism* is the first report of its kind. It examines the six national organizational networks at the core of the Tea Party movement: FreedomWorks Tea Party, 1776 Tea Party, Tea Party Nation, Tea Party Patriots, ResistNet, and Tea Party Express. This report documents the corporate structures and leaderships, their finances, and membership concentrations of each faction. It looks at the actual relationships of these factions to each other, including some of the very explicit differences they have with each other. And we begin an analysis of the larger politics that motivate each faction and the Tea Party movement generally.

The result of this study contravenes many of the Tea Parties' self-invented myths, particularly their supposedly sole concentration on budget deficits, taxes and the power of the federal government. Instead, this report found Tea Party ranks to be permeated with concerns about race and national identity and other so-called social issues. In these ranks, an abiding obsession with Barack Obama's birth certificate is often a stand-in for the belief that the first black president of the United States is not a "real American." Rather than strict adherence to the Constitution, many Tea Partiers are challenging the provision for birthright citizenship found in the Fourteenth Amendment.

Tea Party organizations have given platforms to anti-Semites, racists, and bigots. Further, hard-core white nationalists have been attracted to these protests, looking for potential recruits and hoping to push these (white) protestors towards a more self-conscious and ideological white supremacy. One temperature gauge of these events is the fact that longtime national socialist David Duke is hoping to find money and support enough in the Tea Party ranks to launch yet another electoral campaign in the 2012 Republican primaries.

The leading figures in one national faction, 1776 Tea Party (the faction more commonly known as TeaParty.org), were imported directly from the anti-immigrant vigilante organization, the Minuteman Project. Tea Party Nation has provided a gathering place for so-called birthers and has attracted Christian nationalists and nativists. Tea Party Express so outraged the public with the racist pronouncements of its leaders, that other national factions have (recently) eschewed any ties to it. Both ResistNet and Tea Party Patriots, the two largest networks, harbor long-time anti-immigrant nativists and racists; and Tea Party Patriots has opened its doors to those aiming at repeal of the Seventeenth Amendment and the direct election of United State Senators.

While Tea Partiers and their supporters are concerned about the current economic recession and the increase in government debt and spending it has occasioned, there is no observable statistical link between Tea Party membership and unemployment levels. Readers will note a

regression analysis on this question done last January specifically for this report. And their storied opposition to political and social elites turns out to be predicated on an antagonism to federal assistance to those deemed the “undeserving poor.”

The Tea Party movement as a whole is a multimillion dollar complex that includes for-profit corporations, non-party non-profit organizations, and political action committees. Collectively they have erased the advantage that Democrats once enjoyed in the arena of internet fundraising and web-based mobilization. They have resuscitated the ultra-conservative wing of American political life, created a stiff pole of opinion within Republican Party ranks, and they have had a devastating impact on thoughtful policy making for the common good, both at the local and state as well as at the federal levels.

A quick look at the Tea Party Caucus in Congress, led by Rep. Michele Bachmann (R-MN), reveals a significant level of overlap with the enforcement-only House Immigration Reform Caucus led by Rep. Brian Bilbray (R-CA). More, a number of these caucus members are also sponsors of a bill sitting in committee that would end birthright citizenship, H.R. 1868.

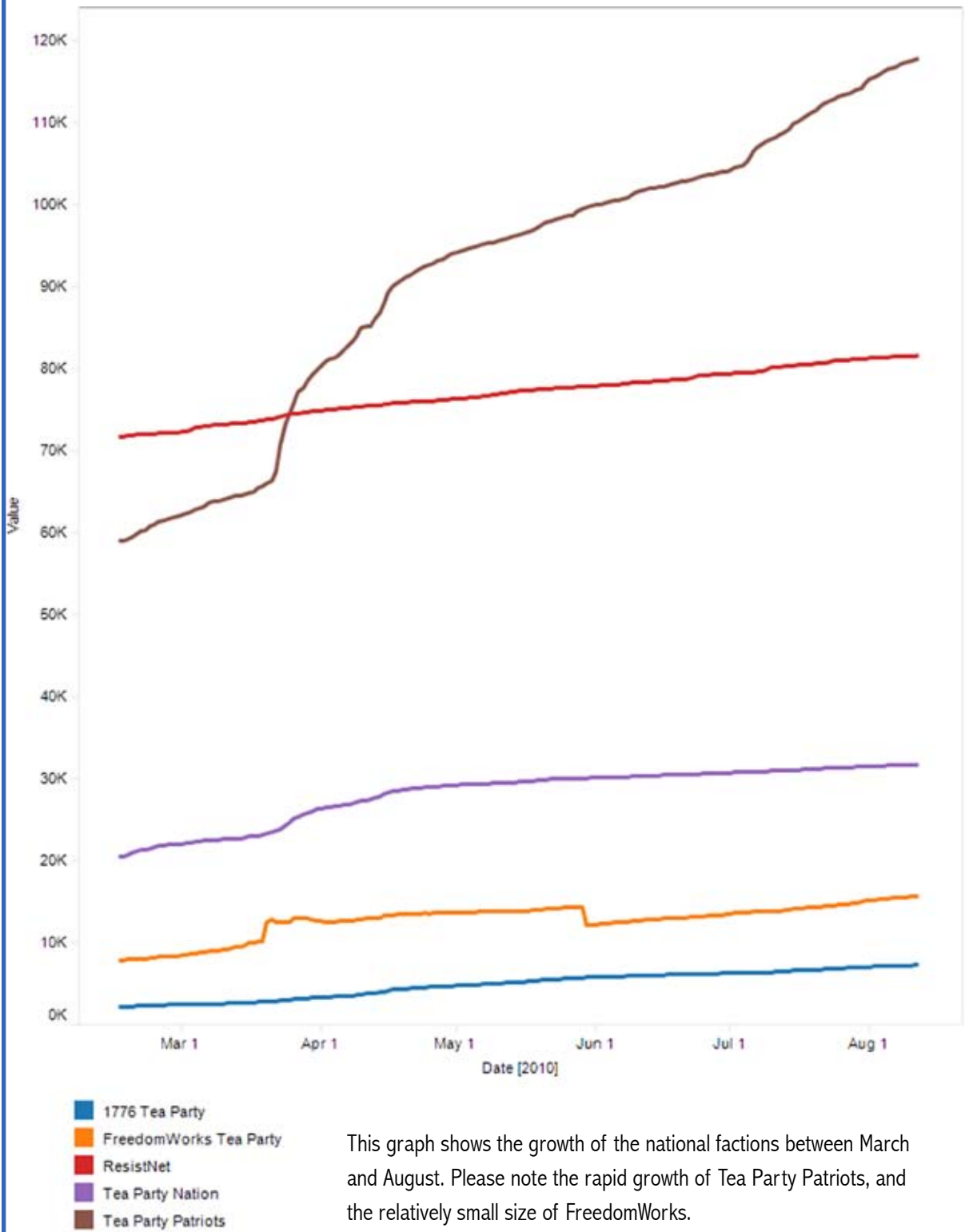
The Tea Party movement has unleashed a still inchoate political movement who are in their numerical majority, angry middle class white people who believe their country, their nation, has been taken from them. And they want it back. The oft-repeated Tea Party call to “Take it Back, Take Your Country Back” is an explicitly nationalist refrain. It is sometimes coupled with the assertion that there are “real Americans,” as opposed to others who they believe are driving the country into a socialist ditch.

The Tea Party phenomenon exists at about three levels of agreement and commitment. Several national opinion polls point to support for the Tea Parties running at approximately 16% to 18% of the adult population, which would put the number of sympathizers in the tens of millions. That would be the outermost ring of support. At the next level is a larger less defined group of a couple of million activists who go to meetings, buy the literature and attend the many local and national protests. At the core is the more 250,000 members in all fifty states who have signed up on the websites of the six national organizational networks that form the core of this movement.

Tea Party Nationalism focuses on this core of the movement. It would be a mistake to claim that all Tea Partiers are nativist vigilantes or racists of one stripe or another, and this report manifestly does not make that claim. As this report highlights, however, all of the national Tea Party factions have had problems in these areas. Of the national factions, only FreedomWorks Tea Party, headquartered in the Washington, D.C. area, has made an explicit attempt to narrow the focus of the movement as a whole to fiscal issues—an effort that has largely failed, as this report documents.

Nevertheless, the impact of President Barack Obama’s election, and the fact that the First Family of the United States has ancestors who were once the property of white people, has had an

FIGURE 1. TEA PARTY FACTION GROWTH OVER TIME



effect. It is not direct and mechanical, like a cue ball hitting the nine ball into the corner pocket. But it is identifiable nonetheless. Consider, for example, the incessant depiction of President Barack Obama as a non-American. This theme began among those who regard him as a non-native born American who should not rightly (constitutionally) hold the presidency. The permutations go on from there: Islamic terrorist, socialist, African witch doctor, lying African, etc. If he is not properly American, then he becomes the “other” that is not “us.” Five of the six national factions have these “birthers” in their leadership; the only exception being FreedomWorks.

A look at the graph counting Tea Party numbers over time shows that the organizations are continuing to grow. The different factions are not all growing at the same rate, however. The Tea Party Patriots and ResistNet, the two national factions with the most diffuse, locally-based organizational structures, are experiencing the fastest rate of growth. This would tend to indicate a larger movement less susceptible to central control, and more likely to attract racist and nativist elements at the local level. Simply put, the Tea Parties are not going away after the mid-term elections, and they can be expected to have a continuing impact on public policy debate into the future. It should not be expected, however, for the Tea Party movement to have the same organizational configurations for the indefinite future. At a minimum, some sorting out process is likely to occur--including a major segment of Tea partiers who move in to the Republican Party apparatus, while others shift closer to the white nationalist movement.

The contemporary white nationalist movement was created in the 1990s, as a realignment of forces brought the Klan-national socialist dominated white supremacist movement together with elements formerly associated with Buchanan-style conservatism. This type of nationalism is akin to the ethnic nationalism of the post-Soviet era in Yugoslavia, and differs significantly from the post-World War Two anti-colonial national liberation movements in southern Africa and elsewhere.

In this instance, “scientific” racists, America first isolationists, anti-immigrant nativists seeking to maintain a white demographic majority, neo-Confederates, and a strain of so-called paleo-conservatives melded with Holocaust deniers, Posse Comitatus-style militia groups, Aryanists, white power skinheads and white citizen council-types to create a single if not seamless white nationalist movement. These are all self-conscious racist ideologues, as opposed to those who exhibit unconscious racist attitudes. While this movement’s goals are often divided between those who want to carve a whites-only republic out of the United States and those who work for a return to the pre-*Brown* decision, pre-civil right legislation era, one and all seek the establishment of total and unquestioned white domination. Toward these ends, the white nationalist movement is divided between two strategic orientations: the go-it-alone vanguardists, and the mainstreamers who seek to win a majority following among white people. It is decidedly the mainstreamers, such as the Council of Conservative Citizens discussed in this report, who seek to influence and recruit among the Tea Partiers.

Similarly, it is the more mainstream-oriented militias that most interact with Tea Party organizations. Militias are organizations of men and women with weapons, who create a command structure based on rank, and often engage in paramilitary training with the presumption that they will fight an enemy to be named later. For justification, they search in the Second Amendment, as well as in the ideas of the 1980s-era Posse Comitatus. That Posse Comitatus based itself on the arcane doctrine of a “sovereign” form of citizenship for white Christians, with rights and responsibilities that are presumed to be superior to that of those who they call Fourteenth Amendment citizens--all non-Christians and people of color. The Posse’s form of “state” citizenship predates the “national” citizenship of the Fourteenth Amendment, and it is this state citizenship, coupled with the Second Amendment, that creates their justification for militias. Otherwise these groups might otherwise be regarded simply as private armies. As noted in this report, there are several militias that regard themselves as Tea Party organizations.

A word about Tea Party nationalism *qua* nationalism. Despite the fact that Tea Partiers sometimes dress in the costumes of 18th century Americans, wave the Gadsden flag and claim that the United States Constitution should be the divining rod of all legislative policies, theirs is an American nationalism that does not always include all Americans. It is a nationalism that excludes those deemed not to be “real Americans;” including the native-born children of undocumented immigrants (often despised as “anchor babies”), socialists, Moslems, and those not deemed to fit within a “Christian nation.” The “common welfare” of the constitution’s preamble does not complicate their ideas about individual liberty. This form of nationalism harkens back to the America first ideology of Father Coughlin. As the Confederate battle flags, witch doctor caricatures and demeaning discourse suggest, a bright white line of racism threads through this nationalism. Yet, it is not a full-fledged variety of white nationalism. It is as inchoate as it is super-patriotic. It is possibly an embryo of what it might yet become.

In this report, please note the maps (which are interactive at www.teapartynationalism.com). Each traces the geographic location of the members, the relative size of each one of the members, and provides a stunningly graphic overview of the size and scope of the Tea Party organizations. This provides the most accurate assessment to date of where each of the faction’s strength lies, and when combined with other data not included in this report could help future analysts gather information about the Tea Parties’ potential electoral impact.

All of the local groups that are not affiliated with one national network or the other are outside the scope of this report. They await further examination and analysis in the future. Similarly beyond the reach of this report are the many ancillary organizations that have contributed to the movement since its inception, including: Ron Paul’s Campaign for Liberty, Americans for Prosperity, National Precinct Alliance and the John Birch Society. Also not included in this report was an analysis of the various national 9-12 groups. The 9-12 formations lack the same sort of national structure present in the Tea Party movement. The national 9-12 formations are important

peripheral forces, but as organizational actors they do not appear to play a notable role in the internal movement infrastructure. Moreover, much of the 9-12 group momentum was co-opted by the Tea Party movement. Following the 9-12 rally in 2009 in Washington, D.C., many local 9-12 Project groups hitched up with one or more of the national Tea Party factions.

A note about the methodology and techniques used to gather the data for this report.¹ During the past twelve months, we've employed a variety of investigative reporting techniques to study the Tea Parties to keep up with the expanding and ever-changing dynamic of the movement.

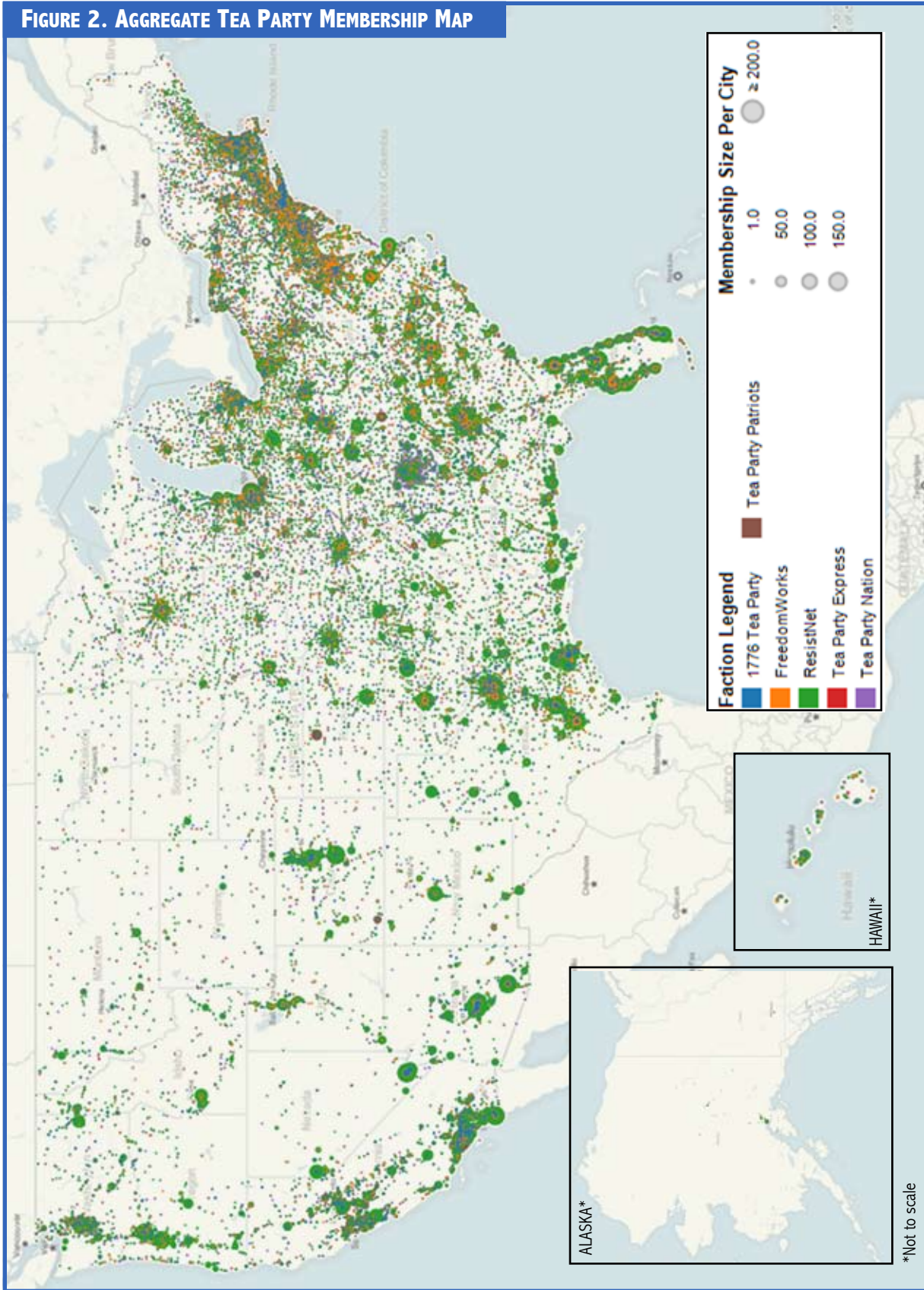
The authors of this report read through the Tea Party literature—from movement produced books like *The Official Tea Party Handbook* and *Taking America Back One Tea Party at a Time*, to electronic publications including emails, electronic newsletters, articles, blog posts, and tweets written by Tea Partiers. We also watched many hours of online video of Tea Partier and Tea Party events. For firsthand accounts, IREHR staff and volunteers attended Tea Party rallies, conventions, and meetings from Washington, D.C., to Washington State. We also talked with numerous Tea Party activists.

To follow the money, the authors dug through government documents and databases, including corporate filings, IRS forms, court cases, campaign finance reports, and unemployment statistics. We utilized computer-assisted reporting to collect additional data and help make sense of it all.

The authors of this report also did a thorough scan of secondary sources, including the exceptional reporting that has already been done on the Tea Parties. We also analyzed the considerable amount of polling that's been done on the Tea Parties.

It was IREHR's goal to provide new data and analysis and to add something of use and value to the growing literature on the Tea Party movement. Upon reflection, we think the following pages do just that.

FIGURE 2. AGGREGATE TEA PARTY MEMBERSHIP MAP



Chapter 1: Origins of the Tea Parties

The founding moments of the contemporary Tea Party movement were many. Several were grassroots in nature, developing outside the existing power centers in Washington, D.C. and in the more remote regions where conservative politics meets a more libertarian (right-wing and anti-statist) opposition. Others derived directly from elements within the Republican Party apparatus and began as proxies for the party itself.

The Tea Parties also had points of origin within established right-wing organizations hoping to draw a line of distinction between themselves and the views of Sen. John McCain, who had just lost the presidential election, as well as the discredited conservatism of the Bush era. In so doing, they planned to create an opposition to President Obama and the Democrats.

One of the earliest moments leading up to the Tea Party movement occurred in December 2007, on the 234th anniversary of the original Boston Tea Party. Ron Paul's supporters held a "tea party moneybomb" to raise campaign funds for his campaign in the 2008 Republican presidential primaries. A Republican Congressman from Texas who ran for president in 1988 as the Libertarian Party's candidate, Ron Paul has long had one foot in the Republican Party, and one foot in its far-right opposition. His Campaign for Liberty (CFL) is now a significant stand-alone, membership-based non-profit institution headquartered in Virginia. It has played a noteworthy role in the growth of the Tea Party movement, even if few CFL members have enrolled in any of the national Tea Party groups.²

During the period after the election of President Barack Obama but before his inauguration, the Libertarian Party of Illinois began formulating a concept they called the Boston Tea Party Chicago and advertising it through the Libertarian Party of Illinois Yahoo and "meetup" groups, through Ron Paul Meetup and Campaign for Liberty groups, as well as national anti-tax groups. Dave Brady of the Libertarian Party of Illinois even claimed, "we gave Rick Santelli the idea for the Tax Day Tea Parties."³

One of the original cadre of Libertarian Party of Illinois list members discussing the Tax Day Tea Party was Eric Odom, a 30-year old Chicagoan originally from Nevada. In August 2008, he had worked on a twitter campaign that encouraged Republicans in Congress to fight against a ban on offshore oil drilling.⁴ While working as the new media director of the Sam Adam Alliance, Odom developed a virtual network of conservative activists that would later serve as a pillar of Tea Party organizing.⁵

At roughly the same time, a group founded by investors based in Troy, Michigan, FedUpUSA, sent out a call on February 1, 2009 for people to send tea bags to members of Congress — "a

Commemorative Tea Party.”

Also outside the D.C.-Beltway area, a number of anti-”pork” protests fed the stream of events that became the Tea Parties as the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act passed the Congress. On February 16, a Seattle “Porkulus”—a term popularized by radio talker Rush Limbaugh—protest drew about one hundred people. This event was organized by Keli Carender, a 30 year-old Seattle-area math teacher and improv actor, who used the name “Liberty Belle” when posting on her blog *Redistributing Knowledge*.⁶ A conservative with a pierced nose, known for wearing Converse All-Star tennis shoes, she quickly became one of the more important figures as the Tea Parties emerged later that month.⁷ Like many early activists, Carender would later be brought to D.C. for additional training and support by the D.C.-based FreedomWorks. She eventually became affiliated with the Tea Party Patriots faction.

On February 17, 2009, the day President Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, he visited Denver, Colorado, to promote the stimulus bill. That afternoon, Americans for Prosperity and the Independence Institute hosted another “Porkulus Protest” in Denver.⁸

Shortly after the Seattle and Denver protests, on February 19, 2009, a stock analyst for a cable television network, Rick Santelli, let loose a five-minute on-air rant from the floor of the Chicago Mercantile Exchange. Yelling “This is America!” he attacked the home mortgage rescue plan the Obama administration had unveiled the day before. It was “promoting bad behavior,” he argued, by rewarding the “losers” who took on more debt than they could afford. Santelli said that Obama was turning America into Cuba, and called for a capitalist “Chicago Tea Party.”

An unstated racial element colored Santelli’s outrage over the Obama administration’s home mortgage rescue plan. During the years leading up to the housing crisis, banks had disproportionately targeted communities of color for subprime loans. Many of the so-called “losers” Santelli ranted about were black or Latino borrowers who’d been oversold by lenders cashing in on the subprime market. Their situations were worsened by derivatives traders, like Santelli, who packaged and re-packaged those loans until they were unrecognizable and untenable.⁹

Nevertheless, Santelli became an instant right-wing hero. A small group of stock traders in the background sporadically cheered him on during his outburst. The video clip of the whole scene was watched and re-watched.¹⁰ And when he said “we’re thinking of having a Chicago Tea Party in July, all you capitalists that want to show up to Lake Michigan, I’m gonna start organizing,” it was the spark that conservative organizers had been waiting for.

Immediately following Santelli’s scream, the localized anti-stimulus, anti-tax protests changed character. As they morphed into the Tea Party protests, several of the characters who had organized previous protests took up the Tea Party torch. Eric Odom put up a new website called officialchicagoteaparty.com.¹¹

On February 20, the short-lived “Nationwide Tea Party Coalition” was formed. At the same time, a new Facebook group, “Rick Santelli is right, we need a Taxpayer (Chicago) Tea Party” was

created. The group was created by Phil Kerpen of Americans for Prosperity, and administered by Odom. It was the intervention of Brendan Steinhauser and FreedomWorks that completed this initial transition. Steinhauser, like Odom, was part of the under-35 generation of conservative activists that would play a significant role in the Tea Party movement. He was also campaign director at the time for FreedomWorks, a D.C. based lobby and training organization founded by former Congressman Dick Armey. And on February 9, Steinhauser had contacted a Florida activist, one who had attended an earlier FreedomWorks training session, and recommended that she organize a protest in response to President Obama's visit to Ft. Myers.¹²

The night after Santelli's televised tirade, Steinhauser was in a hotel room in Orlando, and he later described what happened. "I just wrote this little ten quick easy steps to hold your own Tea Party, wrote it up and kinda was proud of it and sent it to Michelle Malkin. She linked to it from her blog..." Steinhauser's website choked from all the visitors.

FreedomWorks staff members called local supporters across the country asking if they were willing to organize a Tea Party. Then FreedomWorks quickly announced the launch of a nationwide Tea Party Tour, "From this desperate rallying cry FreedomWorks has tapped into the outrage building from within our own membership as well as allied conservative grassroots forces to organize a 25-city Tea Party Tour where taxpayers angry that their hard-earned money is being usurped by the government for irresponsible bailouts, can show President Obama and Congressional Democrats that their push towards outright socialism will not stand."¹³

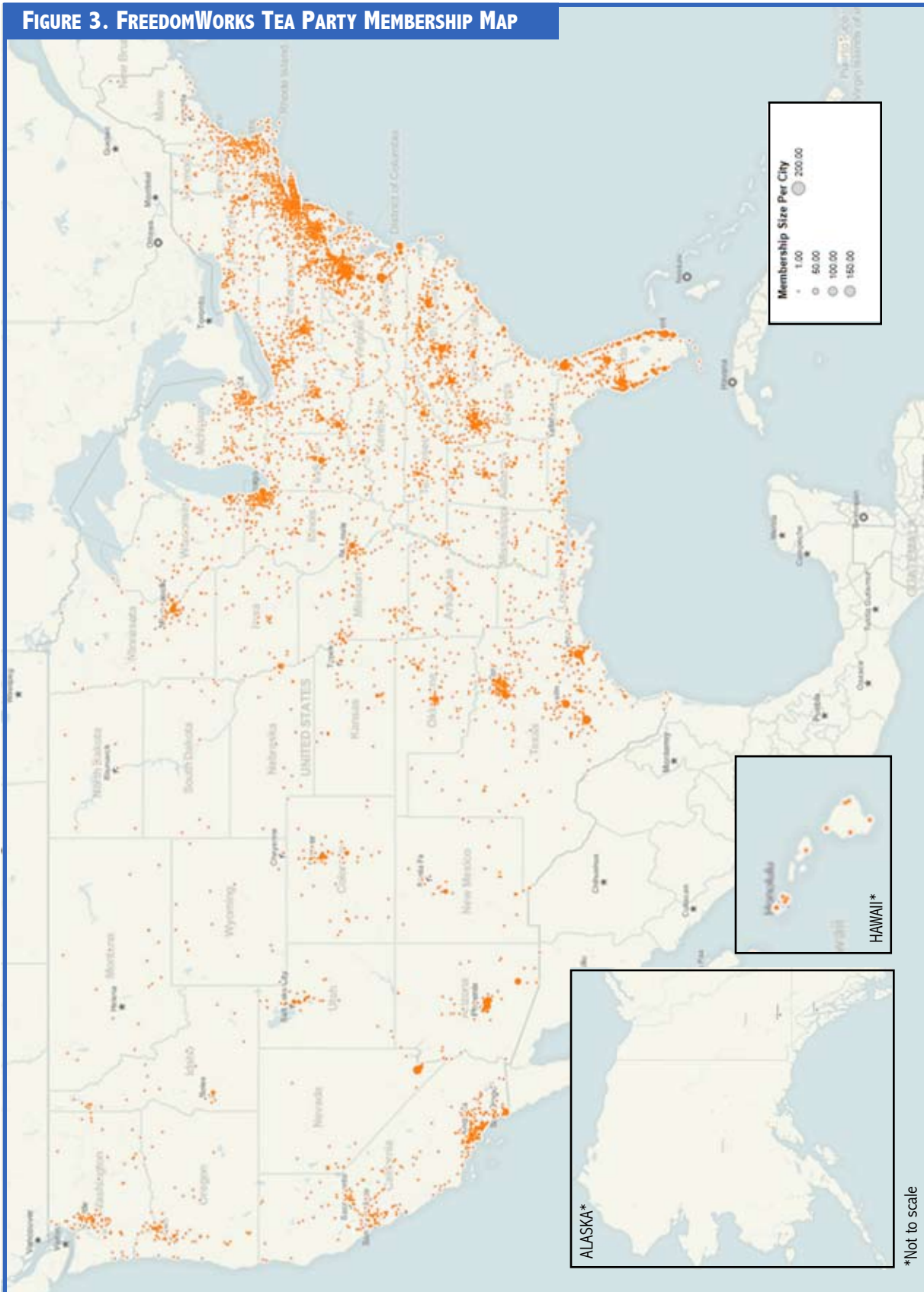
In the anger that the Tea Party theme captured, FreedomWorks would find the street activists they felt they'd been missing. A week later, on February 27 the first official "Tea Parties" took place, organized primarily by the Sam Adams Alliance, FreedomWorks and Americans for Prosperity.

Many of these original players quickly faded away in importance as national structures arose. Within weeks of the Santelli rant, the nucleus of what would become the six different national Tea Party factions formed. Some of the groups already existed (FreedomWorks, ResistNet, and the Our Country Deserves Better PAC). Others formed almost immediately (1776 Tea Party, February 20; Tea Party Patriots, March 10; Tea Party Nation, April 6).

Throughout the summer, Tea Party momentum continued to build as the national factions stoked the local anger and fear that raged in health care protests and town hall meetings.

The turning point for the Tea Parties was the FreedomWorks-hosted September 12, 2009 rally in Washington, D.C. Planning the massive event gave Tea Party groups an opportunity to work together. Hundreds of thousands of Tea Partiers met in the streets, broke bread together, shared their stories and their anger, and made connections to one another. Before the last port-a-potties were removed from the Capitol Mall, the Tea Parties had turned from periodic protests into a full-fledged social movement.

FIGURE 3. FREEDOMWORKS TEA PARTY MEMBERSHIP MAP



Chapter 2. FreedomWorks Tea Party

After the 2008 election, FreedomWorks worked to develop an insurgency that would separate conservatives from the legacy of the failed Bush administration. It sought alternatives to the grass roots organizing previously done by Democratic Party activists. The emergence of the Tea Parties proved to be just what FreedomWorks needed.

Although FreedomWorks Tea Party has fewer enrolled members than several of the other national factions, it has the largest structure of support. The FreedomWorks corporate complex includes both a foundation and a c(4) membership organization. In 2008, the c(4) raised and spent more than four million dollars. The foundation took in more than three million dollars that year, and spent about \$100,000 more than it received. As of February 2010, FreedomWorks boasted a staff of thirteen professionals, including state directors in North Carolina, Georgia and Florida. Former House Majority Leader Dick Armey chairs FreedomWorks. He received \$300,000 in compensation from the foundation in 2008, and another \$250,000 from the related membership organization that year, according to documents filed with the IRS.¹⁴

FreedomWorks was born out of one of the organizational splinters from a 2003 disagreement within a conservative think-tank known as Citizens for a Sound Economy (CSE). One side of this conflict formed Americans for Prosperity. When CSE's remaining remnants merged with a group called Empower America in 2004, FreedomWorks was created.

In the past, FreedomWorks has supported: Social Security privatization, tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans, caps on lawsuit damages, deregulation and free trade. It has opposed efforts to address global climate change, and it has received sizable industry funding.

Commentators such as Paul Krugman have cited the presence of FreedomWorks inside the Tea Parties as proof that the Tea Parties are an “astroturf” phenomenon— a sleight-of-hand effort manufactured by inside-the-Beltway organizations to concoct the appearance of grassroots support.¹⁵ This suspicion is not completely unfounded. In 2004, for example, when President George W. Bush was pushing for Social Security privatization, the administration heaped praise upon someone described as a “regular single mom.” This person turned out to be the FreedomWorks Iowa state director, according to the *New York Times* investigative story on the incident.¹⁶ Similarly, FreedomWorks' role in 2008 in creating the grassroots-looking angryrenter.com website, that campaigned against federal insurance to help refinance troubled mortgages, was exposed by *The Wall Street Journal*.¹⁷

Nevertheless, it would be an analytical mistake of the first order to conflate FreedomWorks' corporate machinations with the grass roots insurgency of the Tea Parties. In fact, FreedomWorks

Tea Party membership is the second smallest of the national factions. It had 15,044 online members, as of August 1, 2010.¹⁸ These are concentrated in the Northeast, particularly the corridor from Boston to New York City to Washington, D.C. Other clusters are in Texas and Florida. The top ten cities for FreedomWorks Tea Party membership include: Jacksonville, Florida; Washington, D.C.; New York, New York; Houston, Texas; San Antonio, Texas; Tampa, Florida; Richmond, Virginia; Las Vegas, Nevada; Alexandria, Virginia; and Fort Lauderdale, Florida.¹⁹ The FreedomWorks Tea Party online membership is 40% male, 36% female, with 24% choosing to not self-identify.²⁰

According to Dick Armey, “Frustrated Americans began taking their grievances to the streets and the tea party movement was born. Just as the original Boston Tea Party was a grass-roots rebellion against overbearing government, tea party participants are reacting to government that has grown too large.”²¹

At a March 9, 2009 training of the Macon County, North Carolina chapter of FreedomWorks, Director of Federal and State Campaigns Brendan Steinhauser described the Tea Parties origins in terms that flattered his organization. “Basically, FreedomWorks was already asking people to take to the streets before the Stimulus passed...”

After the initial burst of nascent activity, described in the Introduction, FreedomWorks created a website containing ideas for slogans on signs, a sample press release, and a map of local events.²² In a video interview, Steinhauser described FreedomWorks’ role with local Tea Party groups, “Usually what happens is an organizer from anywhere in the country will contact me and say I’d like to organize a Tea Party and do something in my city, so what we do is we help resource them with ideas for signs, locations, for media outreach, and we try to give them this list of things to do so that they can make sure their event is successful. A lot of that just entails paying attention to details, like signing up people when they come, and sending email reminders, and following up with phone calls and things like that. And we’ve seen a lot of success. There are a lot of people out there that have never done this before but they are having successful events by sort of following this recipe.”²³

In fact, FreedomWorks played an important role from the beginning, coordinating Tea Party efforts, as well as offering training and technical support for new Tea Party organizations. They provided online and phone consultations on how to organize a local group, how to hold rallies, and how to protest at town hall meetings.²⁴ FreedomWorks also facilitated intra-movement communication. They sponsored a weekly Tea Party conference call with activists from around the country, where activists got to know one another.²⁵ FreedomWorks staff even provided technical support to other national Tea Party factions.²⁶

At this early stage, in anticipation of battles to come, FreedomWorks provided organizers with information on health care and climate change legislation.²⁷ By August 2009, even before the heat of the town halls, Dick Armey announced that “his organization’s members are ready to

sabotage immigration reform, a cap-and-trade proposal and other Democratic legislative priorities that are likely to stir the conservative base.”²⁸ On August 18, FreedomWorks joined with the Our Country Deserves Better PAC and six other organizations to launch a 16-day national Tea Party bus tour which would become the Tea Party Express.²⁹ The tour began in Sacramento, CA on August 28 and ended with the 9-12 rally in Washington D.C.

September 12, 2009, March on Washington and After

FreedomWorks then turned the organization’s attention to a planned September 12, 2009 march in Washington.³⁰ Before the big rally the group offered a two-day grass roots training session that attracted more than 2,000 local activists. That number was up ten times from the two hundred that had attended a similar session the year before.³¹

Attendance numbers for the September 12, 2009 Tea Party rally in Washington, D.C., remain in dispute. Estimates range between 60,000 to over one million, depending on who is doing the counting. There is no disagreement over the importance of the rally, nor over the range of organizations that supported it. While FreedomWorks hosted the event, sponsors included Tea Party Express, (aka Our Country Deserves Better PAC), ResistNet (Grassfire.org), Tea Party Nation, and Tea Party Patriots. ResistNet’s Darla Dawald claimed to be one of three national coordinators.³² Notably, she also had a FreedomWorks Tea Party membership listed on its website.³³

Also sponsoring this march were established D.C. lobbies such as Club for Growth, Americans for Tax Reform, and National Taxpayers Union. Other organizations and websites with one foot inside the Tea Parties supported the demonstration: Campaign for Liberty with forty thousand plus online members, the website Smart Girl Politics which had fewer than 15,000 enrolled supporters at the time, Leadership Institute, Free Republic, and Eric Odom’s American Liberty Alliance.

In January 2010, FreedomWorks began focusing their Tea Party activism on the 2010 elections. Dubbed as “the first leadership summit of the Tea Party era,” more than sixty leaders from two dozen states gathered in D.C. under its auspices. The meeting developed 2010 midterm election plans, and gave FreedomWorks the opportunity to roll out their list of 65 targeted congressional races. A workshop taught effective television techniques and mastering social media. Another session was entitled “what you can and can’t say: how to stay out of jail this year.”³⁴ FreedomWorks announced plans to fund opposition research, mail, door-to-door and get-out-the-vote efforts with the hope of electing “ideologically pure conservatives,” according to one of its staff personnel.³⁵

FreedomWorks has had a particularly close working relationship with Tea Party Patriots, which sports the FreedomWorks logo as one of several organizations promoted on its website’s frontpage. FreedomWorks staffer Tom Gaitens runs the Tea Party Patriots listserv.³⁶ And Tea Party Patriots board member Diana Reimer has also been listed as a FreedomWorks volunteer.³⁷ Tea Party Patriots

participated in the January 2010 sessions in Washington, D.C., and the two organizations have collaborated on local events, such as the April 15, 2010 Atlanta Tax Day Tea Party.³⁸

After the January summit, several Tea Party groups released the Declaration of Tea Party Independence (though the spokespeople refused to release the initial organizations involved in crafting the document).³⁹ The five page manifesto declared war against “the Democrat party” and moderate Republicans. And it announced that “We are the Tea Party Movement of America and we believe in American Exceptionalism.”⁴⁰ The document tried to define culture war issues out of the Tea Party Doctrine. The only three points of unity in the declaration were “Fiscal Responsibility, Constitutionally Limited Government and Free Markets.” According to this declaration, “This threefold purpose is the source of our unity in the Tea Party Movement.”⁴¹

As this report will demonstrate, more than limited government and fiscal responsibility is at stake for the Tea Partiers.

FIGURE 4. FREEDOMWORKS TEA PARTY TOP 25 CITIES

CITY	STATE	MEMBERS
Jacksonville	Florida.....	59
Washington	District of Columbia.....	57
New York	New York.....	54
Houston	Texas.....	51
San Antonio	Texas.....	48
Tampa	Florida.....	46
Richmond	Virginia.....	44
Las Vegas	Nevada.....	42
Alexandria	Virginia.....	42
Fort Lauderdale	Florida.....	37
Charlotte	North Carolina	37
Austin	Texas.....	36
Raleigh	North Carolina	33
Phoenix	Arizona.....	32
Pittsburgh	Pennsylvania.....	32
Virginia Beach	Virginia.....	32
Orlando	Florida.....	31
Chicago	Illinois.....	31
Fairfax	Virginia.....	31
Fort Worth	Texas.....	30
Arlington	Virginia.....	30
Oklahoma City	Oklahoma.....	29
Indianapolis	Indiana.....	28
Cincinnati	Ohio	27
Dallas	Texas.....	27

Chapter 3. 1776 Tea Party

The 1776 Tea Party, also known as TeaParty.org, is the one national faction most directly connected to the Minuteman Project and the anti-immigrant movement. Its corporate headquarters are in Woodlake, Texas, north of Houston area, where a Texas Certificate of Formation Nonprofit Corporation was filed in February 2009. Its staff positions are situated in California. The 1776 Tea Party describes itself as “a Christian political organization that will bridge the gap of all parties, in particular Democratic and Republican Parties. It will welcome all peoples and ideological perspectives, with the intent to streamline government and adhere to the Constitutional Rights addressed in the U.S. Constitution, and by God above.”

The organization’s platform includes points on immigration issues as well as taxes and federal budgets: “Illegal Aliens Are Here illegally. Pro-Domestic Employment Is Indispensable.... Gun Ownership Is Sacred. Government Must Be Downsized. National Budget Must Be Balanced. Deficit Spending Will End. Bail-out And Stimulus Plans Are Illegal. ... English As Core Language Is Required. Traditional Family Values Are Encouraged. Common Sense Constitutional Conservative Self -Governance.”⁴²

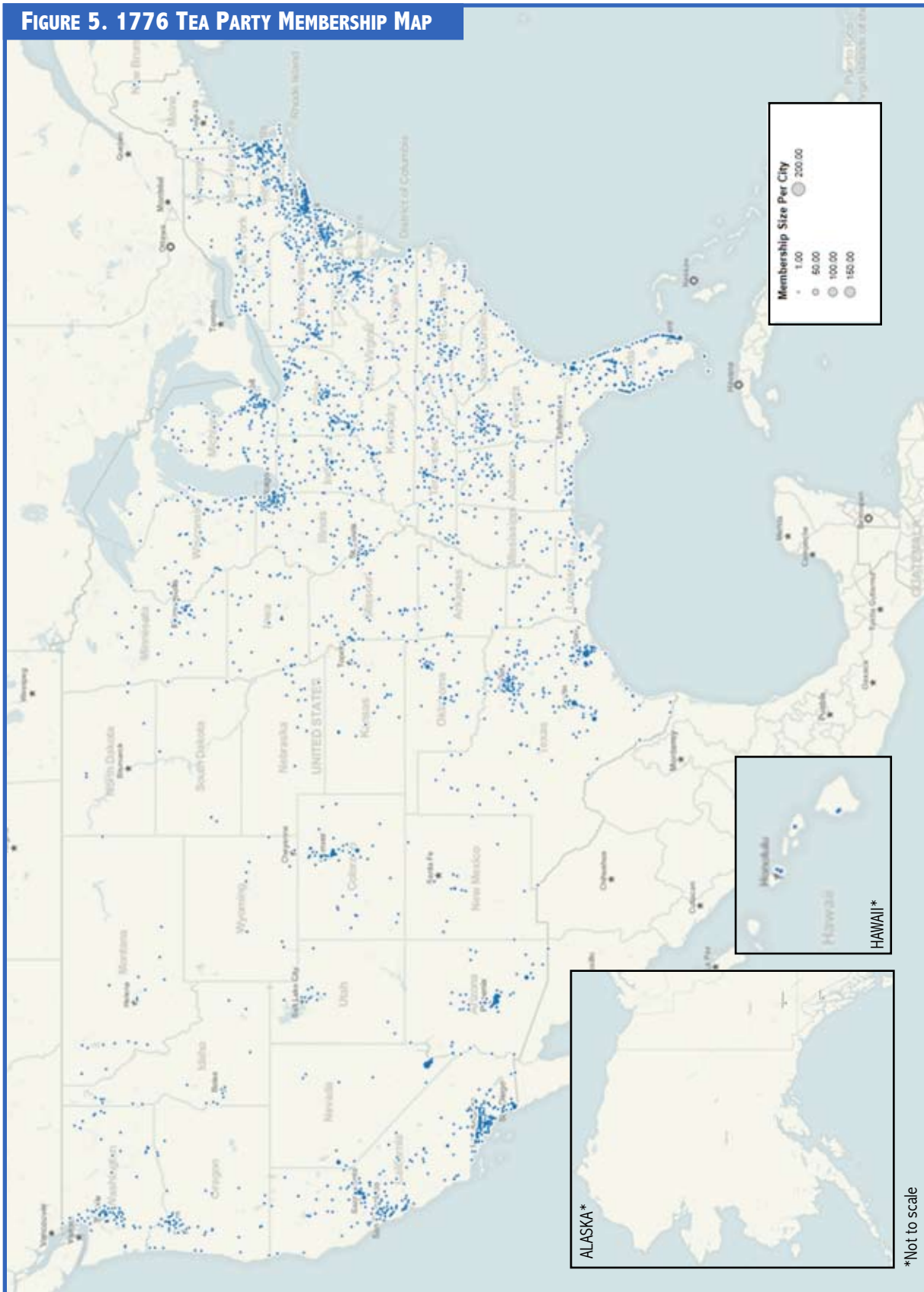
With 6,987 online members, as of August 1, 2010,⁴³ the 1776 Tea Party is the smallest of the national Tea Party factions. Its membership is lightly dispersed around the country, with no more than 30 members in any city. The top ten cities for 1776 Tea Party membership include: Las Vegas, Nevada; Houston, Texas; Phoenix, Arizona; New York, New York; Jacksonville, Florida; Austin, Texas; Denver, Colorado; Mesa, Arizona; Henderson, Nevada; and Miami, Florida.⁴⁴ Of all the factions, it is the most male dominated, with 66% of the online membership identifying as male, 27% female, and 6% choosing not to self-identify.⁴⁵

The 1776 Tea Party has adopted a deliberately confrontational posture. One of its leaders argued, “Most of the other TP’s [Tea Parties] are afraid to make such a powerful stand. We tell the world we have Core Beliefs! We don’t step on toes, we step on necks!...”⁴⁶

The organization’s founding president is Dale Robertson, a former Naval officer who served with the Marines. According to Mr. Robertson, “We can do this the easy way or the hard way. If the Republican Party or the Democrat Party does not turn Conservative, and soon, then it will leave the Tea Party no choice but to take them over and clean house.”⁴⁷ In seeming furtherance of that goal, the 1776 Tea Party website solicited money to use on campaigns. They called it a “Tea Party Money Bomb.”⁴⁸

On February 27, 2009, Robertson attended a Tea Party event in Houston with a sign reading “Congress = Slaveowner, Taxpayer = Nigger.”⁴⁹ He’s also sent out racist fundraising emails depicting

FIGURE 5. 1776 TEA PARTY MEMBERSHIP MAP



President Obama as a pimp.⁵⁰ Robertson also has a history of promoting anti-Semites on his “Tea Party Hour” radio program. [See the chapter “Racism, Anti-Semitism and the Militia Impulse” for more.] Both incidents increased the negative publicity surrounding the 1776 Tea Party, but its notoriety did not stop two leaders of an anti-immigrant vigilante group, Minuteman Project, from stepping in to run the 1776 organization.

On June 8, 2009, Robertson sent out a press release claiming that financial hardship would soon force him to sell the teaparty.org website domain to the highest bidder on Ebay.⁵¹ At that point Stephen Eichler, who had graduated from Trinity Law School in 2005 but had never joined the California Bar Association, and Tim Bueler, a media savvy business-type, stepped in. Both men were leaders of the anti-immigrant vigilante organization, the Minuteman Project. Eichler was its executive director and Bueler its media director.

From the Minuteman Project to the Tea Party

Their path to the 1776 Tea Party corresponded with a sharp decline in the Minuteman Project’s organizational fortunes. The nativist group had been fractured in 2007 by a series of lawsuits and counter-suits in which the Minuteman Project leaders sued each other for fraud, defamation and business tort.⁵² A second step in the Minuteman Project’s decline occurred after one of its “border operations directors,” Shawna Forde, was arrested for the murder of Raul Flores and his 9-year-old daughter Brisenia in Arizona.⁵³ Forde was charged along with Jason Eugene Bush and Albert Gaxiola. The murder of the Flores’ was allegedly part of a plot to secure funds for their border war. Records collected after the arrests indicate that Eichler was one of the last people Forde spoke to before she was arrested.⁵⁴ As scrutiny of the Minutemen increased dramatically, the organization continued to lose members and money.

Despite this chain of events, Eichler claimed, “We are seeing a substantial increase of groups wanting to be Minuteman Project chapters, not to mention our growing relationship with Tea Party and 9/12 organizations.”⁵⁵

Actually, while the Minuteman Project’s fortunes plummeted, Eichler and Bueler were in the process of affiliating with Robertson’s 1776 Tea Party. According to records filed with the Texas Secretary of State, Eichler and Bueler formally became corporate directors of the 1776 Tea Party on October 28, 2009; Eichler as treasurer and Bueler as secretary. Robertson is president of the Texas non-profit corporation. Although Robertson remained the public face of the 1776 Tea Party, much of the day-to-day operations and the public relations shifted to Eichler, who became the 1776 Tea Party executive director in addition to his corporate board role, and to Bueler, who became media director while also keeping his corporate board role.

At the same time as they have assumed roles which essentially put them in charge of the 1776 Tea Party, both men have maintained a number of other relevant business and political positions: Stephen Eichler has remained executive director of the Minuteman Project. He is also

listed as president of the Minuteman Victory Political Action Committee, a corporate officer in Minutemanbookclub.com, and a board member of the American Civil Responsibilities Union (acru.org), which claims to be seeking a “better balance between civil liberties and civil responsibilities.” Further, Eichler continues to host a radio talk show on the nativist “Wake Up America Talk Show,” and is an officer of the program’s sponsoring corporation, Wake Up America U.S.A. Inc.⁵⁶ As president of FaxDC.com, Eichler bills visitors to the 1776 Tea Party website who want to send faxes to Congress.⁵⁷

Tim Bueler uses his public relations group, U.S. Media Direct, Inc., to do business with the 1776 Tea Party. Bueler’s past media work included a stint in 2008 with Jerome Corsi (of Swift Boat Veterans for Truth infamy). Corsi and Bueler were detained and eventually deported from Kenya while attempting to hold a press conference at which they promised to “expose secret ties between Obama and Kenyan leaders, as well as a mysterious plot that would be launched should the Democratic nominee win the U.S. election.”⁵⁸

To complete the transformation from Minutemen to Tea Partiers, the teaparty.org website was redesigned in May 2010 to look strikingly similar to that of the Minuteman Project.

Interaction with Other Factions

Dale Robertson’s grandstanding as “a founder of the Tea Party movement,” combined with the negative attention attached to his group, has created some distance between the 1776 Tea Party and the other factions.⁵⁹

FreedomWorks spokesman Adam Brandon stated, “There’s only a handful of people we would categorically not work with—Dale Robertson, maybe.”⁶⁰

Tea Party Patriots put out a press statement denouncing 1776 Tea Party leader Dale Robertson: “Tea Party Patriots wishes to make clear that our organization has never had any association with Mr. Robertson, and that we stand firmly against any expression of racism and the kind of language and opinion expressed in his sign.”⁶¹ Despite this denunciation, the Tea Party Patriots website list of Tea Party groups still, as of August 2010, included the 1776 Tea Party website.⁶²

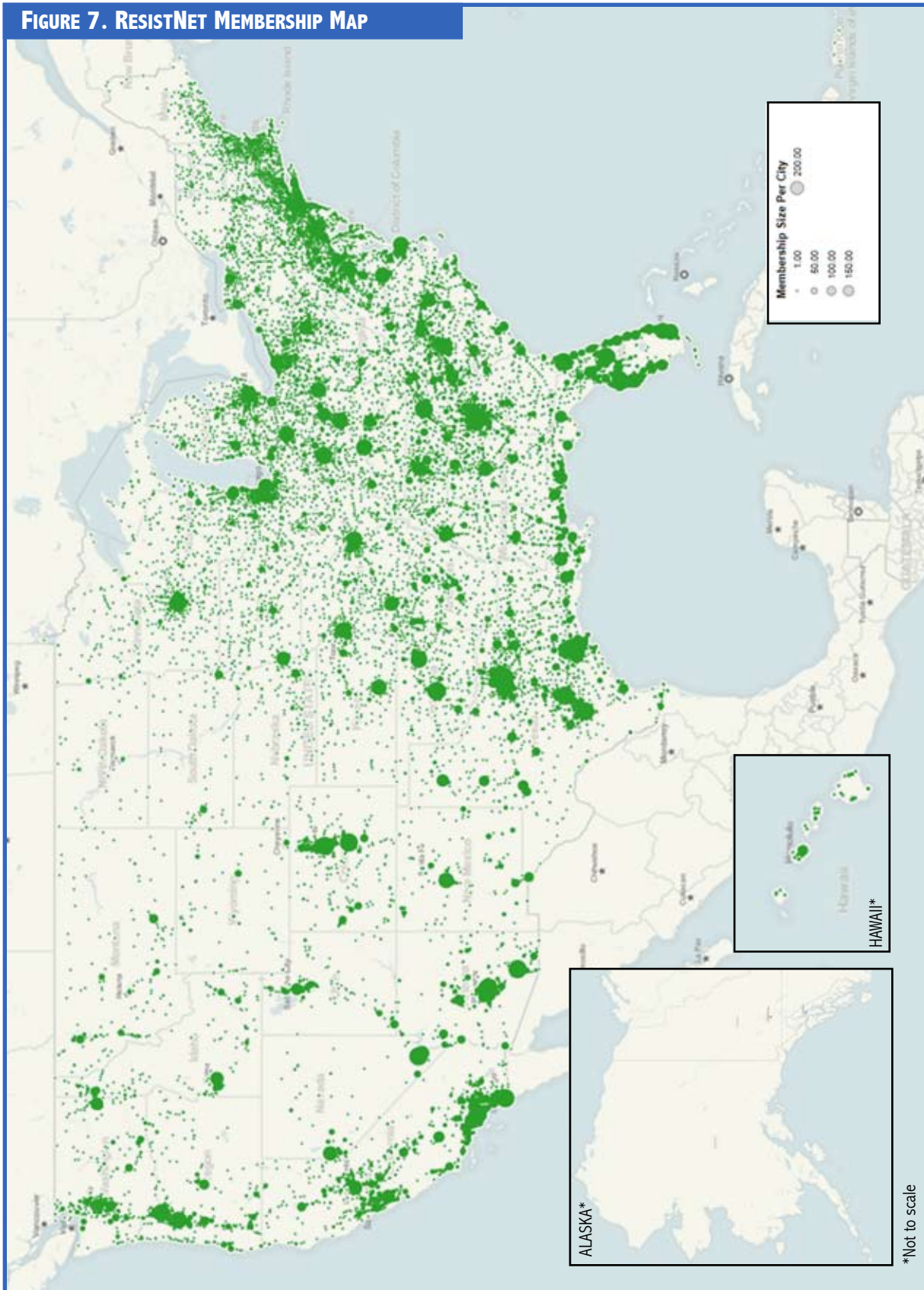
Of all the other factions, ResistNet worked most closely for a time with Robertson’s organization, sending out email in December 2009, inviting supporters to attend 1776 Tea Party “Liberty Concerts.”⁶³ Resist.Net later backed away a bit with an email to its supporters, “While they [1776 Tea Party] are a separate group from us, we share many of the same goals, a free, conservative America, and fiscal responsibility within our government. We are not necessarily promoting their complete ideology.”⁶⁴

Robertson announced that he sent members of his own 1776 organization to a Tea Party Express bus tour event in Searchlight, Nevada in March 2010.⁶⁵ While these two groups have been the ones most notoriously marred by racist incidents, as the report makes evident, they are not the only Tea Party factions with problems in this regard.

FIGURE 6. 1776 TEA PARTY TOP 25 CITIES

CITY	STATE	MEMBERS
Houston	Texas.....	29
Bethesda	Maryland.....	24
Dallas	Texas.....	19
New York	New York.....	18
Rancho Santa Fe	California.....	15
San Antonio	Texas.....	15
Scottsdale	Arizona.....	14
Las Vegas	Nevada.....	14
Hagatna	Guam.....	13
New Orleans	Louisiana	13
Woodside	California.....	12
San Diego	California.....	11
Tallahassee	Florida.....	11
Newport Beach	California.....	9
Sunnyvale	California.....	9
Austin	Texas.....	9
Fort Worth	Texas.....	9
Ridgecrest	California.....	8
Washington	District of Columbia.....	8
Atlanta	Georgia	8
Charlotte	North Carolina	8
Ogden	Utah	8
Mountain View	California.....	7
Portola Valley	California.....	7
Santa Barbara	California.....	7

FIGURE 7. RESISTNET MEMBERSHIP MAP



Chapter 4. ResistNet Tea Party

ResistNet.com is a for-profit organization. According to its website, “ResistNet is a place where citizens can resist — in a peaceful, patriotic way — the efforts to move our nation away from our heritage of individual liberties toward ‘brave new world’ of collectivism. ResistNet is designed to give citizens a new level of networking resources to organize the Patriotic Resistance.”

The corporate structure that envelopes ResistNet.com is similar to that of Russian nesting dolls. ResistNet is a for-profit project of Grassfire Nation, a division of Grassroots Action, a for-profit, Internet activism services organization privately-held by Steve Elliott.⁶⁶ To further complicate the structure, Grassroots Action, Inc. is more a virtual rather than traditional bricks-and-mortar organization. Elliott lives in Virginia, but the company’s business address is in the small town of Maxwell, Iowa (population 793), because Elliott uses web developers based there.⁶⁷ In addition to its for-profit side to which ResistNet belongs, Grassfire also has a 501c4 non-profit corporation, Grassfire.org Alliance, with its corporate headquarters in Iowa. The 501c4 was created in 2004 and had total revenue of \$1,415,667 in 2008.⁶⁸ Elliott served as president for twenty hours a week and was paid \$61,000 for the year.

Grassfire has grown through the use of a number of Internet petition campaigns, using a model once employed by MoveOn.org. The nature of these petition campaign points to a political base with a set of concerns much broader than simply taxes and budgets. Its first petition was sent to 200 friends on September 15, 2000, supported the Boy Scouts [anti-gay stance]. Within forty-five days more than 140,000 people had signed it.⁶⁹ Petitions included: saving traditional marriage, “stand for the unborn,” opposition to partial birth abortion, stopping internet porn, make God Bless America the National Hymn, supporting the Pledge of Allegiance, and support for Judge Roy Moore’s fight to place the Ten Commandments in his Alabama courtroom.⁷⁰ During the period 2005-2007, when the number of nativist anti-immigrant groups grew by as much as 600%, Grassfire started several petitions opposing meaningful immigration reform. By June 2010, Grassfire had developed a contact database of 3,713,521 people (including 2,608,818 phone numbers and 1,211,259 opt-in email names).⁷¹

After the 2008 election, Grassfire’s Email blasts warned that “what President-elect Obama and the Pelosi-Reid Congress have in store has the potential to rapidly move America to the socialist Left.” People were asked to sign up to Grassfire.org and join the resistance. On December 15, 2008 Elliott registered the ResistNet.com website domain and soon after, it was officially launched as the “Home of the Patriotic Resistance.” This new website argued that, “Resisting is just the first step. That is why we propose a three-phased recovery for conservatives: Resist, Rebuild, and

Restore. We believe that resisting will create newfound unity among conservatives.”⁷²

Soon after, Darla Dawald joined this social network, and during January 2009 she organized a team of volunteers to promote Tea Parties at every State Capitol. By early February, Dawald had a paid position as national director of ResistNet.com. Indeed, all of ResistNet’s leadership team are women, unlike other male-dominated Tea Party factions.⁷³ (Of course, ResistNet is a project owned primarily by Steve Elliott, who ultimately calls the shots).

ResistNet groups began holding Tea Parties as soon as the idea hit cyberspace. On February 24, 2009, for example, a ResistNet group in Louisiana announced that they would be holding a “tea party” in the city of Lafayette that March.⁷⁴ By April, ResistNet had started working with FreedomWorks, and Dawald became one of the three National Coordinators for the September 12, 2009, March on DC. ResistNet listed 142 different local Tea Party chapters in 34 states, and has worked at one time or another with all the national Tea Party factions.

As of August 1, 2010, ResistNet is the second largest national Tea Party faction, with 81,248 online members.⁷⁵ Its membership is scattered around the country, in every region. The top ten cities for ResistNet membership include: Houston, Texas; Las Vegas, Nevada; Phoenix, Arizona; San Antonio, Texas; Tucson, Arizona; Dallas, Texas; San Diego, California; Austin, Texas; Fort Worth, Texas; and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.⁷⁶ The organization may have an all-female leadership team, but the majority of the ResistNet members are men — 56% of members identify as male, 36% female, and 8% chose not to self-identify.⁷⁷

ResistNet has also created its own structure of state groups to “flip this House!” and return Congress to conservative control. As a sprawling online social network and Tea Party national faction, ResistNet has also become a gathering spot for bigotry against Islamic believers. Its website proclaims: “We are at a point of having to take a stand against all Muslims. There is no good or bad Muslim. There is only Muslims and they are embedded even in our government, military and other offices. What more must we wait for to take back this country of ours...”⁷⁸

ResistNet and Nativism

Many leaders of state and local anti-immigrant groups have become active with ResistNet, including:

- Robert Dameron, founder of Citizens for the State of Washington (Yakima, WA);
- Wendell Neal, leader of the Tulsa Minutemen (Broken Arrow, OK);
- Mike Jarbeck, director of the Florida chapter of the Minuteman Civil Defense Corps (Orlando, FL);
- David Caulkett, creator of IllegalAliens.us and Report Illegals (Pompano Beach, FL);
- Robin Hvidston of the Southern California Minuteman Project and Gilchrist Angels (Upland, CA);
- Ruthie Hendrycks, founder of Minnesotans Seeking Immigration Reform (Hanska,

MN);

- Evert Evertsen, founder of Minutemen Midwest (Harvard, IL); and
- Rosanna Pulido, the founder of the Chicago Minutemen and a former staffer for the Federation for American Immigration Reform (Chicago, IL).⁷⁹

After Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer signed SB1070, which required local and state officials to enforce federal immigration law, the statute faced immediate challenges in court; and as of the time this report went to press, key provisions have been blocked by a temporary injunction. A boycott campaign and other protests have been underway to oppose the law. In response, ResistNet started a “We Stand With Arizona” project to support the law. Nearly one hundred sponsors, including numerous local Tea Party and 9-12 groups, have signed on. So have celebrities such as Sarah Palin, Jon Voight, Ted Nugent, and Lou Ferigno. Other nativist groups are also supporting this campaign, including NumbersUSA, North Carolinians for Immigration Reform and Enforcement, and Kentuckians for Immigration Reform and Enforcement. In addition, Oath Keepers and a group called Well Regulated American Militias are on the We Stand With Arizona list.⁸⁰

ResistNet is also soliciting donations for an Arizona defense fund.⁸¹ KeepAZsafe.com is an official website of the state of Arizona where “donations collected through this website will be deposited into the Border Security and Immigration Legal Defense fund to be used by Arizona on Border Security and Immigration matters.”⁸²

ResistNet.com sports a section of links and “partners” which allows it to project itself into a larger network of ultra-conservative organizations. Among these partners is The Tenth Amendment Center, which had, as of July 2010, twenty six chapters in twenty three states. An online home for many of those supporting states rights as a way of opposing the federal government, the Tenth Amendment Center popularizes legal theories such as “nullification” and “secession” as viable options in its fight against the Obama presidency.

Another partner is the We the People Foundation for Constitutional Education, Inc., headquartered in Queensbury, New York. Run by Bob Schulz, on January 27, 2010 the Internal Revenue Service revoked its non-profit status, retroactively going back to 2003. Although it started as a tax protest organization, in the current period We the People promotes conspiracy theories about President Obama’s birth certificate. On January 27, 2010, after a multi-year legal battle dating back to the George W. Bush presidency, the Internal Revenue Service revoked the corporation’s tax-exempt, retroactively going back to 2003. Nevertheless, We the People claims to be continuing its program.

On December 1 and 3, 2008, We the People took out full-page ads in the *Chicago Tribune*, entitled “An Open Letter to Barack Obama: Are you a Natural Born Citizen of the U.S.? Are you legally eligible to hold the Office of President?” The ad argued that if Obama didn’t meet all the group’s demands, then he would be a “usurper,” who “would be entitled to no allegiance, obedience or support from the People.”⁸³ A year later, on December 8, 2009, the group held a

press conference at the National Press Club to further promote this point of view. Attending that event were Philip Berg and Orly Taitz, both leading “birther” attorneys.

Another ResistNet partner organization is TakeAmericaBack.org, a website launched in April 2009 to publish anti-immigrant propaganda. One article claimed that “multiculturalism” demands that “Americans learn to speak Spanish so illegals can take over America with foreign cultures.”⁸⁴ Another article on this site concluded that “a Kenyan, Communist, son of a terrorist, as our wannabe president, who has not only expressed his hatred of America, but is also an avowed Muslim...”⁸⁵

Also included among the official partners is a trio of groups run by anti-Islam activist Pam Geller. [See Chapter “Who Is an American?”]

It is this untenable attempt to vilify President Obama as “non-American” and “foreign” that pushes a significant number of ResistNet Tea Partiers out of the ranks of a responsible opposition and into the columns of bigots and xenophobes.

FIGURE 8. RESISTNET TOP 25 CITIES

CITY	STATE	MEMBERS
Houston	Texas.....	629
Las Vegas	Nevada.....	510
Phoenix	Arizona.....	363
San Antonio	Texas.....	342
Tucson	Arizona.....	289
Dallas	Texas.....	255
San Diego	California.....	251
Austin	Texas.....	235
Fort Worth	Texas.....	229
Oklahoma City	Oklahoma.....	228
Mesa	Arizona.....	226
Jacksonville	Florida.....	211
Denver	Colorado	209
Colorado Springs	Colorado	208
Knoxville	Tennessee.....	197
Orlando	Florida.....	188
Indianapolis	Indiana.....	177
Portland	Oregon.....	177
Salem	Oregon.....	176
Atlanta	Georgia	173
Scottsdale	Arizona.....	169
Tulsa	Oklahoma.....	168
Minneapolis	Minnesota	165
Louisville	Kentucky	160
Fort Lauderdale	Florida.....	156

Chapter 5. Tea Party Nation

Tea Party Nation (TPN) was organized by Judson Phillips, a Nashville attorney, and his wife Sherry Phillips. He is a local Republican activist and former assistant district attorney. His private practice, in 2010, specialized in drunk driving and personal-injury cases. Judson Phillips had filed for Chapter 7 personal bankruptcy in 1999, according to public records. During the past decade he has had three federal tax liens against him, totaling more than \$22,000. He claims the tax liens have been paid off.⁸⁶

TPN describes itself as a “user-driven group of like-minded people who desire our God given Individual Freedoms which were written out by the Founding Fathers. We believe in Limited Government, Free Speech, the 2nd Amendment, our Military, Secure Borders and our Country!”⁸⁷

“I’m not trying [to] attract moderates. Moderates are just those who have no core beliefs,” explained Judson Phillips.⁸⁸

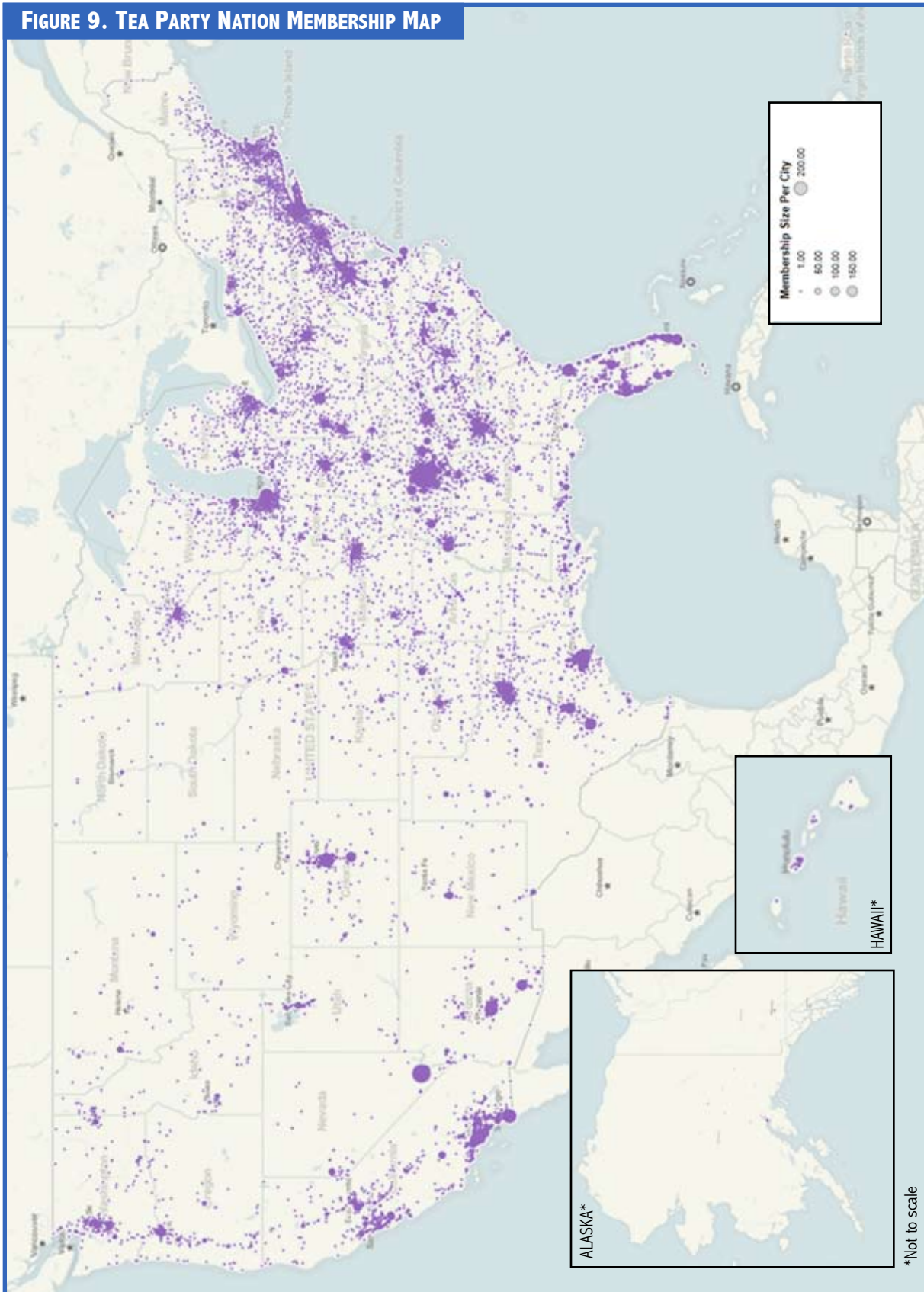
The birth of Tea Party Nation mirrors that of several of the other factions. Phillips helped organize a Tea Party rally in Nashville on February 27, 2009. That event attracted several hundred people. Several became volunteers in the operation. On April 6, he registered the TeaPartyNation.com domain name. Phillips and his volunteers organized April 15 Tax Day Tea Party protests in Nashville, where about 10,000 attended, and in nearby Franklin, Tennessee, with an additional 4,000. The success provided the impetus to officially go national.

Tea Party Nation is now third largest national Tea Party network, with 31,402 online members, as of August 1, 2010.⁸⁹ Geographically, the largest concentration of members is in group’s home state of Tennessee. There are also sizable membership clusters in the Northeast, in Texas, Florida, Illinois, California, and Nevada. Tea Party Nation’s top ten member cities are: Nashville, Tennessee; Las Vegas, Nevada; Houston, Texas; Franklin, Tennessee; Murfreesboro, Tennessee; New York, New York; Chicago, Illinois; Denver Colorado, Washington, D.C.; and San Diego, California.⁹⁰ A breakdown by gender of the online membership was not available.

Two early disputes revealed a fault line within the Tea Party over money-handling and the movement’s relationship to Republican Party structures. According to Kevin Smith, a volunteer who served as the group’s founding webmaster, Phillips gave the impression that the newly formed organization was going to be a non-profit effort. Nevertheless, on April 21, 2009, Phillips formally filed records with the Tennessee Secretary of State registering Tea Party Nation, Inc. as a for-profit corporation.⁹¹

This action led to the first internal clash, and webmaster Smith resigned in protest on April 24, 2009. In an email sent to donors, Smith apologized for participating in a deception and chastised

FIGURE 9. TEA PARTY NATION MEMBERSHIP MAP



Phillips: “I certainly take strong exception with building a corporation using the altruistic contributions of hundreds of volunteers, donors, corporate sponsors, and vocal, public champions of the tea party movement. I believe that you gave generously of your time and money because you assumed, like I did, that this was a non-profit effort meant to plan and pay for rallies and advance the goals of the tea party. For this very reason, I cannot continue to be involved with Tea Party Nation.”⁹²

Smith also attacked the direction the organization was heading, writing, “It’s become clear to me that Judson and his for-profit Tea Party Nation Corporation are at the forefront of the GOP’s process of hijacking the tea party movement. What began as cries for true liberty and a public showing of frustration with the big government policies of both Democrats and Republicans has now been co-opted by mainstream Republican demagogues determined to use this as their 2010 election platform.”⁹³

(Dave Kasold, of Bothell, Washington, later replaced Smith as “technical director.” Kasold had helped form a group called the Eastside Tea Party. Kasold also runs HandsofLiberty.com, a for-profit company that sells playing cards featuring caricatures of Democratic leaders. Kasold is also a member of the ResistNet social networking site.)

Others, including steering committee members, soon followed Smith out of the organization. During the fall months of 2009, as Phillips and Tea Party Nation began planning a convention set for the following February, a second set of disputes began. Several of the remaining steering committee members opposed the proposed \$550 registration fee. And a number of supporters quit after a contentious November 7 meeting at a Golden Corral restaurant.⁹⁴

Instead of looking for ways to satisfy the concerns of the steering committee or conference planning volunteers, Phillips excluded both groups from the planning process, replacing them with a group of seven: Sherry Phillips, Judson Phillips, his sister-in-law Pam Farnsworth, Bruce Donnelly, president of the Chicago-based Surge USA Bruce Donnelly, Bill Hemrick, the founder of Upper Deck sports cards, and Hemrick’s business partner Jason Lukowitz.⁹⁵ By year’s end, this smaller planning committee seemed to have the convention back on track.

Summer 2009 Altar Calls

Throughout the summer 2009, TPN held a number of events in Nashville, including Revival Rally on July 6 and an Altar Call on July 31. The group was also an official sponsor of the big 9-12 March on DC.

At a July 31, 2009 “Altar Call” at the Cornerstone Church in Nashville, Tennessee, six hundred Christian conservatives gathered for a “call to arms.” Phillips exhorted the crowd to action. “You must get involved. The time for sitting on the sidelines is over,” he said. He urged the crowd to fight what he called the “Obama-Pelosi-Reid axis of evil,” which he believes threatens the American way of life. “Tonight we are doing a different kind of altar call,” Phillips said. “Tonight’s altar call

is not for God. It's for country.”⁹⁶

The main attraction of that altar call was Ralph Bristol, a local talk show host. Bristol wore a green Army jacket and a baseball cap adorned with the American flag on stage and played a character he called “Sergeant Bristol.” Some of the audience wore similar uniforms and brought their guns. Bristol gave his audience marching orders to slay the socialist monster.⁹⁷

Planning a Convention

As Tea Party Nation continued planning its convention, problems persisted. In January 2010, one of the largest convention sponsors, the American Liberty Alliance (ALA), announced that it would “pass on being involved with the Nashville event.” The way money was being handled was the problem for ALA. “The controversy surrounding the event involves conversations about the infrastructure of the Tea Party Nation and the way its finances are channeled through private bank accounts and paypal accounts,” ALA director Eric Odom declared.⁹⁸

The National Precinct Alliance, a group seeking to take over the GOP by filling the local ranks of the party, also stated that they would no longer participate.⁹⁹ “We are very concerned about the appearance of T.P.N. profiteering and exploitation of the grass-roots movement,” the organization’s national director, Philip Glass, said in a statement.¹⁰⁰ Glass also expressed dismay about the role in the convention of groups like Tea Party Express and FreedomWorks. He called them “Republican National Committee-related groups,” and added, “At best, it creates the appearance of an R.N.C. hijacking; at worst, it is one.”

Then, on January 11, Erick Erickson, the editor of the influential right wing blog RedState.com, joined in and said, “I think this national tea party convention smells scammy.”¹⁰¹

The Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), one the leading nativist anti-immigration organizations, initially signed up an official “bronze” sponsor of the convention. It was included in a January 4 press release by Tea Party Nation announcing the conference. The FAIR logo appeared on the conference website, and a workshop on “Operation Amnesty Shield” was scheduled. FAIR abandoned the convention, however, during the second week of January over concern that the for-profit status of the Tea Party Nation could jeopardize FAIR’s 501c3 non-profit status. FAIR staff also reportedly expressed anxiety about the possibility of funds from the convention being funneled to political candidates.¹⁰²

FreedomWorks also did not support the Tea Party Nation Convention, although Tea Party Nation had been one of the sponsors of the September 12, 2009 rally in D.C. As FreedomWorks staff person Adam Brandon explained, “A number of people in Nashville might be focused on social issues, like being anti-gay, or being anti-immigration and that is not a good way of building a movement. We want to focus on what we have in common, which is opposition to big government and taxes.”¹⁰³ Despite this criticism, the two Tea Party factions have worked together at other points.

Although Tea Party Patriots had a significant number of members in Tennessee and could have helped the convention, Mark Meckler, one of the Tea Party Patriots co-founders, described the coming Nashville event as the “usurpation of a grassroots movement.”¹⁰⁴ Commenting on the exorbitant price of the conference, Meckler stated, “most people in our movement can’t afford anything like that.”¹⁰⁵ In fact, the high cost of registration and Palin’s speaking fee was later cited as one of the reasons why a second convention was soon organized in Tennessee by an alternative coalition of Tea Party groups. [See Tea Party Patriots section].

Convention in Nashville February 2010

Despite all of these pre-conference difficulties, the convention in Nashville was well attended. Sarah Palin spoke there, generating discussion about her speaking fee, rumored to be over \$100,000. Underneath the hoopla attending Palin’s appearance, the convention highlighted the place of Christian conservatives, indeed Christian nationalism, inside this movement generally, and in Judson’s Tea Party Nation specifically. The convention also built bridges to nativists and so-called birthers. There was a marked shift away from a supposed focus on bailouts and budget deficits towards a culture war.

This connection was apparent in the workshop of about 215 people led held Dr. Rick Scarborough, a former Southern Baptist pastor from Pearland, Texas. Scarborough heads up a constellation of corporations that includes Vision America, Vision America Action and the Judeo-Christian Council for Constitutional Restoration. A fixture on the Christian Right for many years, the Rev. Jerry Falwell published his first book.

After showing an eight minute video cataloguing his many television appearances, Scarborough told the room that the gap between “fiscal and social conservatives has got to cease.” In addition to attacking the Obama administration for its commitment to including attacks on gays and lesbians into federal hate crimes protections, Scarborough warned that we are moving towards a “collectivist” society. We have a Godly duty to defend “American exceptionalism,” he said.

Scarborough used much of his speech to launch a new campaign, called the Mandate to Save America, a project of the S.T.O.P. Obama Tyranny National Coalition. He worked up the crowd in the room, and got a standing ovation when he demanded, “enough is enough!” When he finished, an older woman in the front row stood up and stated, “What we need is revival and revolt!” which brought cheers from the audience.

The theme continued when Judge Roy S. Moore gave the convention’s lunchtime keynote speech. Once an Alabama Supreme Court justice, Moore was impeached from office after he refused to enforce a court order to remove a statue of the Ten Commandments from within his courthouse. At the time of the convention, Moore was running in the Republican primaries for Alabama governor.

During his speech, Moore proclaimed that “we must fight,” and that “the war is inevitable.”

He was not talking about Iraq or Afghanistan. “The battle is here in America. We must preserve the Republic and our faith in God, or have it taken from us,” he said. Moore received some of the loudest applause of the entire convention when he spoke about “spiritual warfare,” and declared that “it’s time for Christians to take a stand.”

Also at the Tea Party Nation Convention in Nashville, a noted conservative figure who is black, Bishop E. W. Jackson, spoke briefly and prayed for Tea Party conventioners. Jackson declared, “I have not found Nazis here or racists here. I have found Americans who love their country and are prepared to stand up for the values we believe in.”¹⁰⁶ Jackson urged African-Americans to join the Tea Party movement.

In 2009, Jackson created the group Staying True to America’s National Destiny (STAND), which claims to be “a national grassroots organization of Americans dedicated to preserving our Judeo-Christian History and Values; saving the unborn from the slaughter of abortion; maintaining marriage as a sacred union between one man and one woman; reversing our country’s slide into secular atheism, anti-Semitism and anti-Christian bigotry; continuing to be the world’s strongest military power; protecting Israel’s right to exist and be secure within its borders; supporting political leaders who uphold these values and opposing those who do not; and promoting a vision of America as one nation under God, without regard to ethnicity.”¹⁰⁷ He was also at a rally against hate crime legislation, where he blasted the legislation as the result of a “virulent strain of anti-Christian bigotry and hatred.”¹⁰⁸

Jackson also created the STAND AMERICA PAC through which he is “declaring political war on the Democrat Party and the liberal Congressional Black Caucus.” According to Jackson, “The Democrat Party’s commitment to abortion, homosexuality and moral relativism is an affront to the values of the black Christian community. It is a ‘Coalition of the godless.’ Black Christians do not belong in a ‘coalition of the godless,’ and should not vote for those who are.”¹⁰⁹ The PAC had about \$13,000 in revenue at the time this report was being written, however, not enough to go to war with anybody.¹¹⁰

Joseph Farah, of the website WorldNetDaily, gave the convention’s Friday evening keynote speech. Farah spent nearly half his time cooking up a Biblical basis for his obsession with Obama’s birth certificate. Some of the convention leading figures did not like this kind of “birther” conspiracy talk, however. Andrew Breitbart, for example, privately criticized him for it. Nevertheless, the issue of whether or not President Barack Obama is a natural-born American continued to percolate in Nashville. For example, Miki Booth, an Hawaiian-born woman who’s also a member of the Route 66 Tea Party, announced her candidacy for the Oklahoma 2nd District Congressional seat from the convention floor. Holding up a copy of Obama’s birth certificate, she said “this piece of junk is what you get when you don’t have one of these,” she finished, holding up a copy of her birth certificate, to raucous applause. When Orly Taitz, the California resident who has pressed the birth certificate issue the most loudly, made an appearance at the convention,

she was warmly welcomed and continually stopped for autographs.

Although the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) pulled out of the convention as discussed earlier, several of FAIR's allies still addressed the Tea Party Nation crowd. Phil Valentine, a Nashville radio talk-show host that has featured FAIR on his radio program numerous times, spoke at the convention. During a 2006 town hall meeting broadcast with FAIR staffer Susan Tully, Valentine advised Border Patrol Agents to "shoot" undocumented immigrants.¹¹¹

Further, former Republican Congressmen from Colorado, Tom Tancredo, opened the convention with a fiery speech attacking President Obama and "the cult of multiculturalism." Commenting on the 2008 election, Tancredo declared, "People who could not even spell the word 'vote' or say it in English put a committed socialist ideologue in the White House." Tancredo also said Obama won because "we do not have a civics literacy test before people can vote." Tancredo, who founded the so-called House Immigration Reform Caucus, appeared to have missed the irony in his rant. Immigrants are required to take a civics test to as part of the process to become citizens and earn the right to vote, while people born here, like those in the crowd, do not. He also seemed to conveniently skirt over the use of literacy tests to keep African-Americans away from the polls under Jim Crow segregation. The Tea Party crowd on hand in the ballroom enthusiastically responded to Tancredo's racially charged remarks.

Tancredo also joined NumbersUSA head Roy Beck for a workshop focused on generating anti-immigrant activity. Beck is one of the anti-immigrant movement's most active spokespersons, speaking at a meeting of the white nationalist Council of Conservative Citizens, as well as testifying before a Senate hearing.¹¹²

Before that workshop formally began, Beck chatted with attendees about the issue of "anchor babies" and the birthright citizenship portion of the Fourteenth Amendment. He noted that it was on the NumbersUSA agenda, but given the current Democratic Congress they were going to focus on legislation targeting immigrant workers. During the workshop, Beck introduced Chad MacDonald, NumbersUSA director of social media marketing. MacDonald told the group that his organization's planned to have an "immigration expert" in each local tea party group around the country. And he admitted to being no stranger to the Tea Parties. After all, he spoke at an "anti-amnesty" Tea Party rally in Pasadena, California in the fall of 2009.

As this report was being written, Tea Party Nation was planning a "unity" convention in Las Vegas, Nevada during the month of October 2010.

FIGURE 10. TEA PARTY NATION TOP 25 CITIES

CITY	STATE	MEMBERS
Nashville	Tennessee.....	402
Las Vegas	Nevada.....	197
Houston	Texas.....	154
Franklin	Tennessee.....	148
Murfreesboro	Tennessee.....	145
New York	New York.....	138
Chicago	Illinois.....	123
Denver	Colorado.....	117
Washington	District of Columbia.....	115
San Diego	California.....	112
Knoxville	Tennessee.....	105
Phoenix	Arizona.....	103
Jacksonville	Florida.....	90
San Antonio	Texas.....	85
Brentwood	Tennessee.....	80
Austin	Texas.....	78
Los Angeles	California.....	75
Miami	Florida.....	75
Dallas	Texas.....	73
Hendersonville	Tennessee.....	73
Atlanta	Georgia.....	73
Tucson	Arizona.....	72
Columbus	Ohio.....	71
Mount Juliet	Tennessee.....	69
Memphis	Tennessee.....	68

Chapter 6. Tea Party Patriots

The Tea Party Patriots website was registered on March 10, 2009. Its credo contains a statement of faith in the Founding Fathers and private property. “The Tea Party Patriots stand with our founders, as heirs to the republic, to claim our rights and duties which preserve their legacy and our own. We hold, as did the founders, that there exists an inherent benefit to our country when private property and prosperity are secured by natural law and the rights of the individual.”¹¹³ In June 2009, Tea Party Patriots incorporated as a 501(c)4 non-profit organization. In January 2010, Tea Party Patriots Inc. PAC, registered with the Federal Election Commission. As this report went to press, however, the PAC had neither raised nor spent any significant amount of money.¹¹⁴

Of all the Tea Party factions, Tea Party Patriots can rightly make the claim that it is the most grassroots. As of August 2010, there are just over 2200 different local Tea Party Patriot chapters listed on its website, more than all the other national factions combined. There are 115,311 online members on its main website and 74,779 registered to its social networking website, as of August 1, 2010.¹¹⁵ Tea Party Patriots online membership is dispersed throughout the country, in every region, with the top ten cities being: New York, New York; Houston, Texas; Colorado Springs, Colorado; Las Vegas, Nevada; Los Angeles, California; Atlanta, Georgia; Phoenix, Arizona; San Diego, California; Chicago, Illinois; and Beverly Hills, California.¹¹⁶ Tea Party Patriots membership is also heavily weighted towards men, with 63% identifying as male, 31% female, and 6% choosing not to self-identify.¹¹⁷

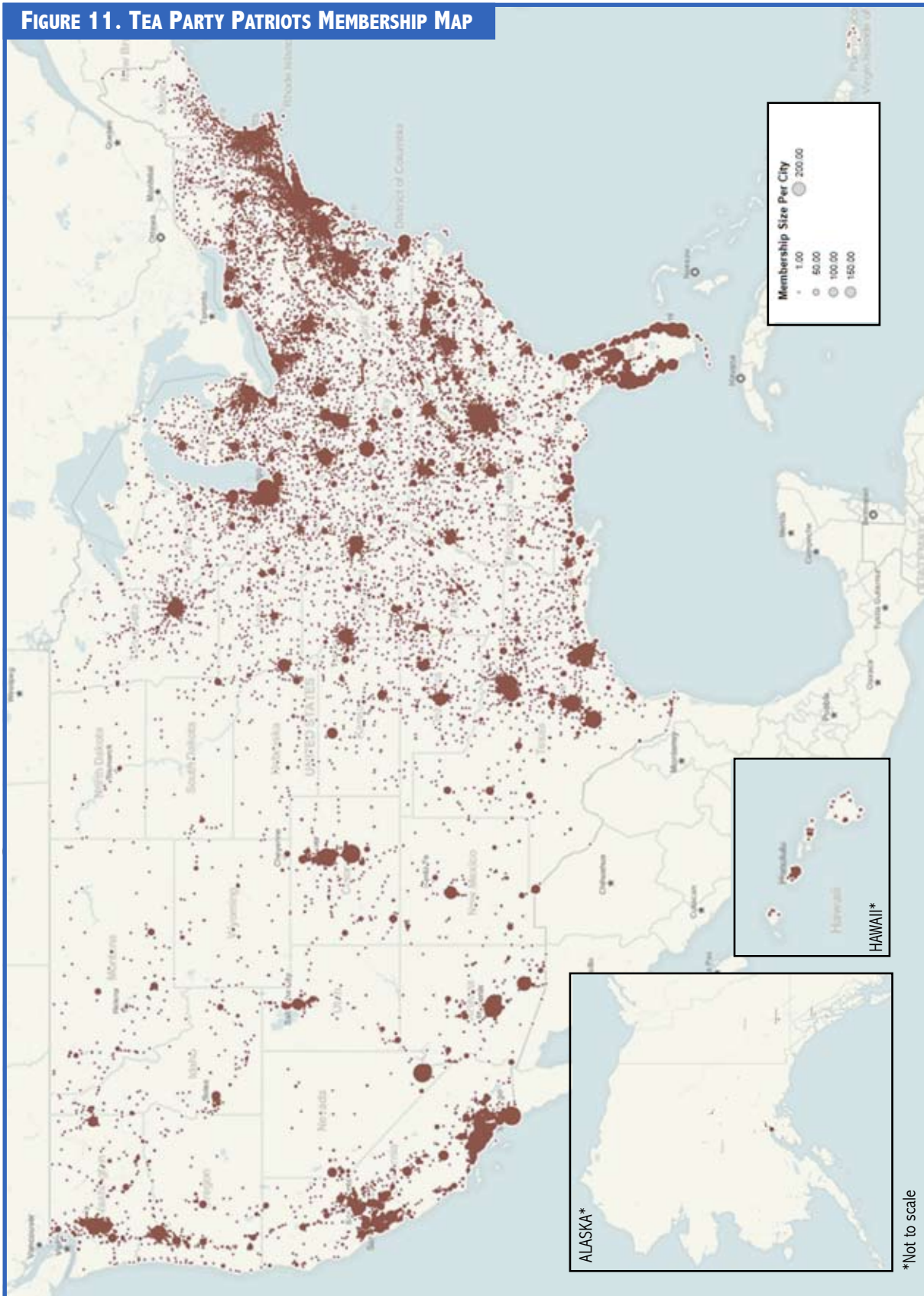
Despite its size, Tea Party Patriots budget is considerably smaller than FreedomWorks, Tea Party Express, and ResistNet.¹¹⁸ Tea Party Patriots financial information for fiscal year ending May 31, 2010 showed total contributions of \$538,009 and total expenses of \$400,596 (\$342,559 to program service, \$58,037 to administration and management).¹¹⁹

Tea Party Patriots Founders

The original Tea Party Patriots national coordinators, as listed on the group’s Facebook page, were Jenny Beth Martin, Mark Meckler, and Amy Kremer.

Jenny Beth Martin, a 39 year-old from Atlanta, Georgia, once worked as a Republican consultant.¹²⁰ Her route to the Tea Parties includes a bumpy collision with tax collectors. According to court documents, Martin and her husband owed over \$680,000 in tax debt, including over half a million dollars to the Internal Revenue Service, when the pair filed for bankruptcy in August of 2008.¹²¹ Though the Martin’s financial woes occurred entirely under the administration of

FIGURE 11. TEA PARTY PATRIOTS MEMBERSHIP MAP



Republican George W. Bush, the Tea Party Patriots vitriol is targeted squarely at President Obama. Now Martin is pulling down around \$6000 a month working as CEO of Tea Party Patriots.¹²² She also serves as co-chair of the local Tea Party group in her hometown.

Mark Meckler, 48, a punk rock DJ turned business attorney, lives in southern California. In 2007, Meckler developed an internet firm, Opt-In Movement, which aimed to build email lists on behalf of political candidates. The firm aspired to work for GOP candidates and causes, including FreedomWorks. Meckler was also paid by a California Republican business group to gather petition signatures for an anti-public employee union ballot initiative. He served as a coordinator for the Sacramento Tea Party group, then as the California coordinator, before co-founding Tea Party Patriots.¹²³

Amy Kremer, of Roswell, Georgia, was the third original Tea Party Patriot national coordinator. Kremer organized Georgia Tea Partiers, as well as helping to coordinate with other local groups across the country during the first round of nationwide protests. Kremer worked as Tea Party Patriots organizer until she became Director of Grassroots & Coalitions at Tea Party Express. (see discussion below).

Tea Party Patriots national coordinating group grew to include Debbie Dooley, Mike Gaske, Kellen Giuda, Ryan Hecker, Sally Oljar, Diana Reimer, Billie Tucker, and Dawn Wildman.

The budding organizational network received a boost in April 2009 when Eric Odom posted a statement on the Tax Day Tea Party website declaring that the “place to shift the momentum to” was Tea Party Patriots. “Tea Party Patriots is being organized by a selfless group of grassroots minded individuals who have been a part of this since day one, and I think they are the best equipped to provide a collaborative environment for what we built here...” Odom wrote. “So, if you’re asking ‘who do I join up with for July 4th and beyond in 2009?’, Tea Party Patriots should be your answer.”¹²⁴

As new local groups continued to pop up, they gravitated to Tea Party Patriots. The national network grew rapidly.

After successfully working with the other Tea Party factions on the September 2009 march in Washington, D.C., Tea Party Patriots had its first significant conflict with another national group when Kremer jumped over to Tea Party Express. Tea Party Patriots formally removed her from its leadership with a letter from its board on October 15,¹²⁵ then filed a lawsuit against Kremer, and on November 10 was granted an injunction against her using the Patriots name.¹²⁶ At that point, the two organizations stopped cooperating with each other.

A second imbroglio developed in February 2010 with Tea Party Nation (discussed in Tea Party Nation section). Tea Party Patriots followed up in May as one of the sponsors for the “Tennessee Tea Party Coalition Inaugural Convention” in Gatlinburg.

Coalition Convention in Gatlinburg May 2010

This gathering stood in marked contrast to the Tea Party Nation event. The entry fee was \$35, considerably less expensive and more accessible than the Nashville event. The big name keynote speaker was Rep. Steve King (R-Iowa), who generated considerably less media buzz than Sarah Palin. More than twenty local Tea Party groups in Tennessee sponsored the gathering. The sponsors claimed to have pre-sold 1,000 tickets to the event, and told the press they expected more to attend. To the casual observer, however, there never appeared to be more than 300 people attending at any one time.

Notable among the workshops were presentations by Pam Geller, an anti-Islam agitator; and a set by the Oath Keepers, a quasi-militia group that focuses on recruiting law enforcement officers and military personnel, and defending their version of the Constitution. A similar workshop with Spike Constitution Defenders, mixed a bit of Posse Comitatus-style rhetoric into their propaganda. Another workshop presenter, Samuel Duck, conducted a workshop advocating repeal of both the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Amendment. The Sixteenth Amendment, which gave congress power to levy the income tax, has long been a target of the far right. Making a target of the Seventeenth Amendment, which provides for the direct election of United States Senators, however, is less widely discussed. Among proponents of its repeal are Rep. Ron Paul (R. Tex.) and Tony Blankley, a conservative columnist. They consider repeal an extension of states' rights. By any other measure, repeal of the Seventeenth Amendment has to be one of the most anti-democratic proposals floating around inside the Tea Party milieu.

Tea Party Patriots was listed as a Gold Sponsor (a \$2500 payment).¹²⁷ It was the only national faction among the Gatlinburg convention sponsors, and it is precisely this kind of broad-based, locally sponsored event that has been the hallmark of its growth. In fact, the real power of the Tea Party Patriots lies in its network of allied state and local Tea Party chapters. These local chapters are its greatest strength. The militia members, racists and sympathizers in its ranks, however, present it with its greatest political vulnerability.

Consider the Wood County Tea Party (formerly known as the Winnsboro, Texas Tea Party). Located almost midway between Dallas and Shreveport, Louisiana, this group formed in 2009 and launched its website in January 2010. Its stated principles include: "The Constitution as the Supreme Law of the Land, Fiscal Responsibility, Limited Government, Free Market Society."¹²⁸ While the group claims alliances with both Tea Party Patriots and FreedomWorks,¹²⁹ they also declare that they are not "affiliated [sic] with TP Nation or The National Tea Party Federation."¹³⁰ From the beginning the group has held local meetings, BBQs, and co-sponsored events.

Wood County Tea Party is lead by Karen Pack, who describes herself as a "A Christian, a Tea Party Member, a Constitutionalist and a Patriot."¹³¹ Missing from that description, however, is Karen Pack's history with the Ku Klux Klan. Documents obtained by IREHR show that Karen Pack of Winnsboro, subscribed to the "White Patriot" tabloid, and that Thom Robb's Knights

of the Ku Klux Klan listed her as an “official supporter.”¹³² Founded by David Duke in the mid-1970s, the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan fell into Robb’s hands after a series of factional disputes, and he positioned and repositioned the organization over the decades. By the 1990s, Robb attempted to steer his Klan closer to a more mid-stream “Christian patriot” position. It was still a Klan, however, an inheritor of the violent tradition associated with white supremacist organizations of that type. Pack’s association with Robb’s Klan in 1996 should not be read as an indication that the entire Tea Party movement is like the KKK. It does indicate, however, that a certain amount of overlap exists between the upfront racism of the Klan and the “we are not racists” denials of the Tea Parties.

In an essay entitled “Texas... Silent No Longer,” Pack declared that, “Those of us who work hard every day and are the backbone of this country all had one reaction to these power hungry mongrels. My professor used to tell me that people who curse lack the english [sic] language to express themselves but I hope here, he will make an exception to his rule. Our reaction was simple and it was not polically [sic] correct or socially nice.”¹³³

In another essay entitled “An Ardent Plea,” Pack wrote, “There is no seperation [sic] of church and state. There never has been. Only the historically ignorant or purposefully distructive [sic] will claim that there is. There are people at work today who hate our God, despise our Country and will stop at nothing to destroy both Christianity and the United States of America.”¹³⁴

Pack’s vision of the country sees a violent conflict looming in the future: “Morality, Christianity and God given rights are being massacred in front of us today and Christians are doing nothing to stop it. The evil running rampant today will inevitably lead to tyranny. History proves it. If the Christians of this nation continue to sit on their church pews and turn a blind eye to what is happening, is this not a denial of Christ and all the foundations of Christianity? Are we such cowards that we can’t proudly proclaim our allegiance [sic] to the fundamental [sic] Christian principles that founded and built this nation? How long will Christians wait? How long will they be silent? How much of the Constitution must the enemy shred before they figure out that the Constitution is the only law left in the world that garantees [sic] their religious freedom? Will they wait until they outlaw Christianity like they outlawed prayer in school? By then, my friend, it will be too late to preserve our nation without bloodshed.”¹³⁵

In May, the Wood County Tea Party joined the Tyler Tea Party and the East Texas Constitution Alliance to sponsor a speaking engagement of militia favorite, Sheriff Richard Mack of Oath Keepers.¹³⁶ Other Tea Party Patriot chapters sponsored Mack, including groups in Prattville, Alabama,¹³⁷ Amarillo, Texas,¹³⁸ Silver City, New Mexico,¹³⁹ Prineville, Oregon, and Bloomington, Minnesota.¹⁴⁰

Militia infestation of Tea Party Patriots extends beyond the presence of a militia figure like Richard Mack. Several Tea Party Patriot groups officially call themselves militia groups or actively promoted militia formation.

Tea Party Patriot local chapters have also been the scene of exhortations to political violence similar to those of the Posse Comitatus. At a February 13, 2010 Lewis and Clark Tea Party Patriots event in Asotin, Washington, one unidentified female podium speaker asked the crowd, “How many of you have watched the movie *Lonesome Dove*?... What happened to Jake when he ran with the wrong crowd? What happened to Jake when he ran with the wrong crowd. He got hung. And that’s what I want to do with Patty Murray.”¹⁴¹ The response to the call for hanging Sen. Patty Murray was applause.

Other Tea Party Patriots local chapters have appealed to a variety of strains of Christian Patriot ideas. They have held workshops on topics such as “Republic vs Democracy,” citizenship, and the Tenth Amendment that were staples of the militia movement of the 1990s.

In one instance, a statewide network known as the North Carolina Freedom Project (or NC Freedom) is listed with Tea Party Patriots. NC Freedom leaders also work closely with Tea Party Nation. Presenters from NC Freedom’s were popular workshop presenters at the February 2010 Tea Party Nation Convention in Nashville. They are also scheduled to speak at the Tea Party Nation convention in Las Vegas in October.¹⁴²

NC Freedom also publicized a series of seminars conducted by a third group, calling itself the North-Carolina American Republic. These workshops, entitled “Restore our Republics,” promoted the notion that individuals can declare themselves citizens of the North-Carolina Republic—the “real government” that was taken away by the Reconstruction Acts after the Civil War. By these lights, the Fourteenth Amendment is considered unconstitutional. These ideas are derived from the warped constitutionalism of the Posse Comitatus in the 1980s, and groups such as the Free-men and Republic of Texas in the 1990s. In any case, such propaganda is far closer to the world of white nationalism than its is to simple concerns about budgets and taxes.

The fact that these workshops are on the periphery of the Tea Party Patriots tells us something about the significance of the fact that NC Freedom has also promoted the idea of secession. In February 2010, it emailed a newsletter to members which contained an article entitled by “Solutions to the tyranny of National government.”¹⁴³ The article outlines two solutions. The “incremental” approach is to adopt a 10th Amendment position of state’s rights and state sovereignty to stave off an overreaching federal government. The second solution, secession, is described as a “quantum leap” that is “probably beyond the comfort of most citizens, but still bears serious consideration.”

Just as some Tea Party Patriots local groups have latched onto armed militias and Christian Patriotism, other local chapters are promoting nativism and vitriolic anti-immigrant politics. The local Tea Party Patriots chapter, Help Save Maryland, has been holding protests outside the state headquarters of CASA, an immigrant rights group.¹⁴⁴ Help Save Maryland was founded in 2005 as an explicitly anti-immigrant organization, now it is a Tea Party group.

In Washington State, Tea Party Patriot groups urged supporters in Covington, Kent, and

Renton to gather signatures for Initiative 1056, a measure similar to Arizona’s SB 1070, that would require state and local agencies to assist in enforcing federal immigration laws.¹⁴⁵ It would also require all private and public employers to “E-verify” immigration status of employees, and require verification of immigration status of applicants for many public benefits. Nonprofit organizations would be prohibited from offering employment services without proof of immigration status. Issuance of driver’s licenses would be prohibited without proof of immigration status.¹⁴⁶

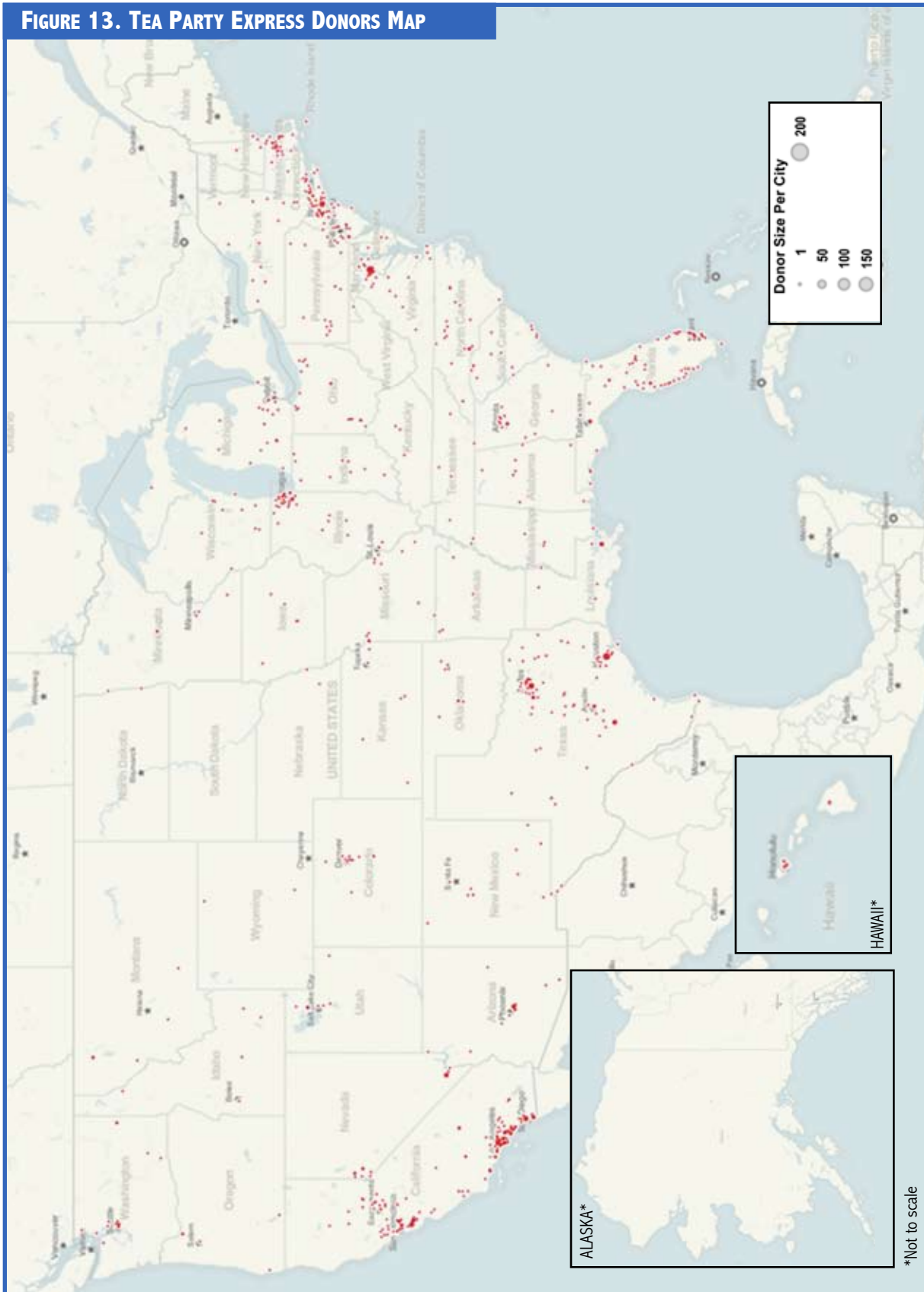
The Columbus, Georgia Tea Party held a rally to support Arizona, after the state passed the draconian SB1070 anti-immigrant law.¹⁴⁷ Many other local Tea Party Patriot groups have also supported the Arizona anti-immigrant law, as has the national leadership.

The nativist side of the Tea Party movement will be discussed further in the “Who Is An American” section.

FIGURE 12. TEA PARTY PATRIOTS TOP 25 CITIES

CITY	STATE	MEMBERS
New York	New York.....	413
Houston	Texas.....	319
Colorado Springs	Colorado	267
Las Vegas	Nevada.....	250
Los Angeles	California.....	236
Atlanta	Georgia	234
Phoenix	Arizona.....	229
San Diego	California.....	217
Chicago	Illinois.....	210
Beverly Hills	California.....	196
Jacksonville	Florida.....	180
Denver	Colorado	175
San Antonio	Texas.....	174
Austin	Texas.....	167
Marietta	Georgia	153
Minneapolis	Minnesota	152
Seattle	Washington	149
Philadelphia	Pennsylvania.....	147
Brooklyn	New York.....	141
Orlando	Florida.....	139
Louisville	Kentucky	139
Mesa	Arizona.....	136
Indianapolis	Indiana	135
Miami	Florida.....	134
Tampa	Florida.....	133

FIGURE 13. TEA PARTY EXPRESS DONORS MAP



Chapter 7. Tea Party Express

Tea Party Express was created in 2009 by a pre-existing conservative operation, Our Country Deserves Better Political Action Committee. This faction has conducted cross-country publicity-driven bus tours, as well as raised funds in support of Republican candidates. It is not a membership organization, and one thing that distinguishes the Tea Party Express from other national factions is that they are not attempting to build or support local groups.

Its initial chairman, Mark Williams, has repeatedly crossed the line from civil political discourse into vicious rants and explicit racism. Further, its leadership has clashed repeatedly with other Tea Party organizations, and has been most marked by public controversy.

Tea Party Express, and their parent company, the Our Country Deserves Better PAC, lack an online social network presence like the rest of the Tea Party Factions. As a Political Action Committee, the group has donors who give money, not members who can just sign up. This difference makes it difficult to draw direct comparisons to the other factions.

Though the Our Country Deserves Better PAC collected millions of dollars in donations during the current election cycle, the group has only reported 1,508 donors to the Federal Elections Commission as of June 2010.¹⁴⁸

While donors are disbursed around the country, there are many members in the organization's home state of California and in Texas. The top ten cities for Tea Party Express donors are: Houston, Texas; Bethesda, Maryland; Dallas, Texas; New York, New York; Rancho Santa Fe, California; San Antonio, Texas; Las Vegas, Nevada; Scottsdale, Arizona; Hagatna, Guam; and New Orleans, Louisiana.¹⁴⁹

Russo Marsh and Rogers

As of the time of this report, the chairman of Our Country Deserves Better PAC is Howard Kaloogian, a former Republican California State Assemblyman. Kaloogian ran a failed campaign for congress in 2006, although his opposition to the ban on assault weapons garnered the support of Larry Pratt's Gun Owners of America Political Victory Fund. (Pratt was one of the founding figures in the militia movement of the mid-1990s.)¹⁵⁰

The PAC's "chief strategist" is Sal Russo, a California Republican political consultant who had run Kaloogian's failed congressional campaign.¹⁵¹ Russo is a principal of Russo Marsh & Rogers, a public relations firm that also does business under the names Kings Media Group and Russo Marsh & Associates, Inc. The firm was hired by the California Republican Party in 1996 to help pass Proposition 209, the anti-Affirmative Action ballot measure.¹⁵² And it has been involved in

a number of other GOP-affiliated campaigns.

In July 2008, the two men formed Our Country Deserves Better PAC (OCDB) “to champion the Reaganesque conservatism of lower taxes, smaller government, strong national defense, and respect for the strength of the family as the core of a strong America.”¹⁵³

In April 2009, a memo by the PAC’s coordinator Joe Wierzbicki outlined the project that would become the Tea Party Express. The memo suggests an initial gap between the Express group and other budding Tea Parties. “This will be a very sensitive matter that we will need to discuss in the coming days,” Wierzbicki wrote. “We have to be very very careful about discussing amongst ourselves anyone we include ‘outside of the family’ because quite frankly, we are not only NOT part of the political establishment or conservative establishment, but we are also sadly not currently a part of the “tea party” establishment ...”¹⁵⁴

The bus tour for which the Tea Party Express became known was actually a tactic recycled from the Our Country Deserves Better 2008 “Stop Obama Bus Tour.”¹⁵⁵ After the loss to Obama, OCDB continued to support Sarah Palin, including running pro-Palin advertisements. Palin later returned the favor by headlining two events on the Tea Party Express III tour.

The Tea Party Express has had several re-configurations of its staff. As this report was going to press, Amy Kremer took over for Mark Williams as the chair of the organization. She had previously served as its Director of Grassroots & Coalitions. Before joining Tea Party Express, she had been a staff member of a different faction: Tea Party Patriots. Recruiting Kremer away from the Tea Party Patriots exacerbated tensions that existed between the two organizations. The Tea Party Patriots sued Kremer, and a Georgia judge decided that the defendant had to return control of the organization’s website, relinquish the use of the mailing lists and otherwise not take advantage of any inside information she might have gained while working with Tea Party Patriots.¹⁵⁶

Although Kremer has adamantly dismissed charges of racism in the Tea Party movement, she was quick to defend a July 2009 email featuring a racist caricature of President Obama sent to fellow Tea Partiers by Dr. David McKalip.¹⁵⁷ A neurosurgeon practicing in Florida, McKalip’s action was later condemned by the Florida Medical Association.¹⁵⁸ After the offending email surfaced and a controversy ensued, however, Kremer wrote to a Tea Party email list, “David, we all support you fully and are here for you. I can assure you of one thing and that is we will protect our own. We all have your back my friend!”¹⁵⁹ McKalip was a featured speaker when a Tea Party Express bus tour stopped in Orlando, Florida the following November.

Kremer’s blog, “Southern Belle Politics,” is filled with calumny for the president, including repetition of the (false) charge that he is not a natural born American, “There are many reasons that I don’t like Barack Obama, including his healthcare plan, tax policies, and his big government and socialist programs that will be initiated through his massive tax and spend policies. However, more importantly than the reasons listed above, I truly do not think Barack Obama is eligible to be President of this great country. If he is eligible and really doesn’t have anything to hide, then

why not just produce the vault copy of his birth certificate and put the issue to rest?”¹⁶⁰

On staff of Our Country Deserves Better PAC as a “spokesperson,” and as a peripatetic pop-up figure at Tea Party events is Lloyd Marcus from Deltona, Florida. Marcus, who describes himself, parentheses included, on his own web site, as a “(black) Unhyphenated American, singer/songwriter, entertainer, author, artist, and Tea Party patriot.” The African-American entertainer supported the re-election of George W. Bush in 2004. He is also president of the National Association for the Advancement of Conservative People of Color, (which later changed its name to the National Association for the Advancement of Conservative People of ALL Colors). The group is focused on ridiculing and opposing the NAACP, the oldest and largest civil rights organization in the country. According to FEC records, Marcus received over \$21,000 in consulting fees from Our Country Deserves Better PAC between March 2009 and May 2010. He consistently defended the Tea Parties from any charges that racists exist within its ranks, including during the period when Mark Williams served as head of Tea Party Express.¹⁶¹

Mark Williams

The initial vice chairman of the PAC and chairman of the Tea Party Express was Mark Williams, a radio talk-show host and a past director of the National Association of Talk Show Hosts. According to Williams, Tea Parties are “gatherings of people who believe in America and while maybe not knowing the Constitution verbatim nonetheless are still well schooled on its spirit, and they are gathering to Take Back America, One Tea Party at a Time.”¹⁶²

Mark Williams has referred to President Obama as a Nazi, a half-white racist, a half-black racist and an Indonesian Muslim turned welfare fraud.¹⁶³ He has stated, “it is time for not just Republicans but all Americans to regroup and stage our own coup. That’s right, ‘*coup*.’”¹⁶⁴ Williams abruptly announced that he was stepping down as chairman of the Tea Party Express on June 19.

Tea Party Express Bus Tours

Unlike the other groups, Tea Party Express was designed at the beginning as a campaign vehicle to attack “politically vulnerable” electoral candidates. The memo drafted by Wierzbicki also explains to potential donors how the OCDB PAC – Tea Party Express would establish bus tours to “defeat Harry Reid,” “defeat Chris Dodd,” and “defeat Arlen Specter.”

Reliance on mailing lists of existing right-wing groups to kick-start the Tea Party Express efforts. The memo discusses renting the mailing lists of other right-wing groups, including Newsmax, Human Events, Townhall, WorldNetDaily, and others.¹⁶⁵ Expenditure reports filed with the Federal Elections Commission confirm that OCDB/TPE has paid \$187,340 to NewsMax Media, \$93,800 to Human Events, and \$36,206 to TownHall.com.¹⁶⁶

The need to “buttress our ‘authenticity’” by using locals was also discussed in the memo.

The first Tea Party Express bus tour started in Sacramento on August 28, 2009. The tour crisscrossed the country, holding events in several cities in Nevada and Texas, as well as in multiple places in the Midwest and Mid-South before arriving in Washington, D.C., for the September 12 March on Washington. These rallies gathered support for the Tea Party movement generally, as well as finding new contributors to the political action committee. The October after that first tour, the group officially filed with the FEC to change the name of the PAC to the Our Country Deserves Better PAC—TeaPartyExpress.org.

A second tour, entitled “Tea Party Express II: Countdown to Judgment Day,” kicked off in San Diego on October 25, and again included multiple stops in Nevada and the West before heading South through Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia. It concluded in Orlando, Florida, on November 12.

As the second bus tour concluded, the attention of Our Country Deserves Better PAC -Tea Party Express turned to a special election in Massachusetts to fill the Senate seat left open by the death of Ted Kennedy in August. Hoping to make the election a referendum against health care reform, the PAC pumped in direct contributions of \$348,670 in support of Scott Brown, a relatively unknown Republican state senator. On January 20, 2010 Brown defeated Democrat Martha Coakley. Whatever the reason for Brown’s election, to Tea Partiers, this was the “Scott heard ‘round the world” and Tea Party Express was quick to take credit for the victory.

The following February, Tea Party Express was expected at a convention held by Tea Party Nation, but pulled out, creating a bit of a rift between the two groups.

Just two weeks later, however, Tea Party Express held a rally at the annual Conservative Political Action Committee convention in Washington, D.C. The Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) is an annual conference for conservative activists and politicians. Tea Party groups played a significant role at the 2010 CPAC conference, including a rally stop by the Tea Party Express bus. Also in attendance at the 2010 CPAC convention: the far-right, conspiracy mongering John Birch Society—the first time in the thirty-seven year history of the conference that the John Birch Society was a conference sponsor.¹⁶⁷

A third round of the bus tour was launched on March 27 with a big rally in Searchlight, Nevada (Harry Reid’s hometown). Tea Party Express III again visited towns in Nevada, trying to drum up opposition to Senator Reid, before winding across the country.

Along the way, the Tea Party Express announced the endorsement of additional candidates, including Minnesota Congresswoman Michelle Bachmann. (Bachmann and Rep. Marsha Blackburn of Tennessee had followed Tea Party Express’ lead and pulled out of the Tea Party Nation convention in February). The tour concluded again in Washington, D.C., on April 15, to coincide with the Tax Day 2010 Tea Party protests.

On April 15, Tea Party Express announced their endorsement of Sharron Angle in the Republican US Senate primary in Nevada. On April 25, they rolled out two television ads and a

radio spot in support of Angle.¹⁶⁸ On May 11, they ran a full-page newspaper ad in support of Angle.¹⁶⁹ On May 16, TeaPartyExpress.com featured a Tea Party Express \$150,000 “Money Bomb” in support of Sharron Angle.¹⁷⁰ Within a week, they were more than halfway there, raising \$80,910.¹⁷¹ Sharron Angle came from behind to win the June 9 primary.

On May 4, 2010 Tea Party Express jumped into the anti-immigrant fray, supporting Arizona’s controversial S.B. 1070 with an online petition.¹⁷²

One of the official partners of the Tea Party Express is Free Republic, which identifies itself as “an online gathering place for independent, grass-roots conservatism on the web.”¹⁷³ It is an important space for the birthers and racist. One of those posting material on Free Republic claiming that President Obama had no birth certificate was James von Brunn, the white supremacist who killed the guard at the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C., on June 10, 2009.¹⁷⁴ This website has also posted racist attacks on the Obama family. In July 2009, after Obama’s eleven-year-old daughter Malia was photographed wearing a t-shirt with the peace symbol, a Free Republic thread featured racially charged comments about President Obama’s wife and children, using racist epithets and terms like “Ghetto street trash.” The thread was accompanied by a photo of Michelle Obama speaking to Malia that featured that caption, “To entertain her daughter, Michelle Obama loves to make Monkey sounds.”¹⁷⁵

On the front page of its website, Free Republic advertised the Tea Party Express Bus Tour. (The Free Republic web page also features links to Tea Party Patriots and ResistNet). Free Republic’s Kristinn Taylor serves as a bridge between Free Republic and the folks behind the Tea Party Express.¹⁷⁶ He has also worked for the anti-immigrant vigilante group Minuteman Civil Defense Corps, and has spoken at Florida Tea Party events.¹⁷⁷ He does not get along particularly well with factions other than Tea Party Express, however. In a March 22, 2010 article entitled “Freedom Works Willing to Throw Tea Party Under the Bus to Appease Democrats, Media” on Free Republic, Taylor wrote: “Freedom Works...latched onto the Tea Party movement last year is now threatening to abandon the grassroots movement in the face of a propaganda onslaught by the Democrat party and the media.”¹⁷⁸

Interaction with other Tea Party Factions

Several Tea Party factions have been official sponsors of the Tea Party Express Bus Tours at one time or another. FreedomWorks participated in the first Tea Party Express Bus Tour, but not the third round. It was scheduling, however, that kept Dick Armey off the bus.¹⁷⁹ Although aware that some factions are upset with the Tea Party Express, FreedomWorks staffer Brandon Steinhauser noted that, “I actually think the bus is a really cool thing.”¹⁸⁰ ResistNet not only sponsored a bus tour, the organization’s national director, Darla Dawald, was listed as part of the Tea Party Express “team.”¹⁸¹ Although Tea Party Nation also supported a tour, Tea Party Express cancelled a bus appearance at the Tea Party Nation convention in Nashville.

After a conflict arose over Tea Party Express' pre-primary endorsement of Sharron Angle, an email from Tea Party Nation explained, "The folks over at Tea Party Express are our friends. They were kind enough to invite Tea Party Nation to join them at the huge event in Searchlight, NV and we believe their hearts are in the right place, just not their strategy."¹⁸² The Express faction's Amy Kremer was a presenter at Tea Party Nation National Convention in Nashville.¹⁸³

No official sponsorship relations exists between Tea Party Express and the 1776 Tea Party faction, but 1776 Tea Party president Dale Robertson noted that members of his group traveled to Nevada for the kickoff rallies of the third Tea Party Express.¹⁸⁴

By way of contrast, Tea Party Patriots dubbed Tea Party Express the "Astroturf Express," because of its ties to establishment Republicans and a lack of support to local groups, Debbie Dooley, a national coordinator for the Tea Party Patriots, told *Politico*, "We've worked hard to distance ourselves from the Tea Party Express because of their close affiliation with the Republican Party, the Republican establishment and their PAC."¹⁸⁵

The competition and conflict between the two groups also revolved around money raising issues. "When people donate to Tea Party Express," Tea Party Patriots noted, "they think that they are donating to a tea party, because they don't read the fine print at the bottom of their e-mails that says it is a PAC. And that hurts the local grass-roots tea party organizers, since a lot of that is actually taking some money away from them."¹⁸⁶

There was also a growing consensus among Tea Party Patriots that Tea Party Express was giving all Tea Parties a bad name, and Tea Party Patriots issued a rare press release stating, that it, "wishes to confirm that it does not directly or indirectly support or endorse any activities of Our Country Deserves Better, the political action committee (PAC) responsible for the 'Tea Party Express' bus tour conducted from 8/28 through 9/12 of this year, and an upcoming tour recently announced." At the heart of the matter was the litany of offensive comments made by Mark Williams, the Tea Party Express chairman at the time. "Williams' antics play into the hands of mainstream media attempts to paint the Tea Party movement as a racist, radical fringe," the statement noted.¹⁸⁷

During the NAACP's 2010 annual convention, Tea Party Patriots' prophecy became a fact in concrete evidence.

FIGURE 14. TEA PARTY EXPRESS TOP 25 CITIES

CITY	STATE	MEMBERS
Houston	Texas.....	29
Bethesda	Maryland.....	24
Dallas	Texas.....	19
New York	New York.....	18
Rancho Santa Fe	California.....	15
San Antonio	Texas.....	15

Scottsdale	Arizona.....	14
Las Vegas	Nevada.....	14
Hagatna	Guam.....	13
New Orleans	Louisiana	13
Woodside	California.....	12
San Diego	California.....	11
Tallahassee	Florida.....	11
Newport Beach	California.....	9
Sunnyvale	California.....	9
Austin	Texas.....	9
Fort Worth	Texas.....	9
Ridgecrest	California.....	8
Washington	District of Columbia.....	8
Atlanta	Georgia	8
Charlotte	North Carolina	8
Ogden	Utah	8
Mountain View	California.....	7
Portola Valley	California.....	7
Santa Barbara	California.....	7

Mark Williams in His Own Words

In 2009, Mark Williams of Tea Party Express self-published a book entitled *It's Not Right versus Left, It's Right versus Wrong; Exposing the Socialist Agenda*. He republished the book in 2010 as *Taking Back America One Tea Party At A Time*. Any understanding of the Tea Party movement must include some knowledge of what Williams has written, if only to show that his racism and bigotry were articulated and well known in Tea Party ranks, long before he was forced out of the Tea Party Federation in July 2010.

In a chapter entitled “Some people should not vote,” Williams claims that voting is not a right nor is it an absolute duty of citizenship.¹⁸⁸ Rather, he writes, “Sometimes the best choice for the rest of us is if some of us don’t vote at all.”¹⁸⁹

Williams writes that it’s an “open secret that Mr. Obama is improbably a native-born citizen of the United States.”¹⁹⁰ Another statement that places Williams firmly among the so-called birthers who echo similar views. Further, he declares, “That Obama was elected largely because

of his pigmentation is not a difficult conclusion to reach given the void in Obama's words where substance should dwell."¹⁹¹

"The sweet Irony of the potential first black president instituting a modified slavery is not lost on me. I say 'modified' because while Africans could not quit their 'jobs' in the cotton fields, you and I are still free to quit ours and be supported by the remaining fools who chose to participate, or starve, our choice – at least for now."¹⁹²

"So-called Obamacare is essentially a version of eugenics, even genocide or perhaps an ethnic cleansing – or all three, it all depends on how it is implemented, evolves and who controls it."¹⁹³

"The Chosen One's cult is remarkably unlike their Dear Leader. He—as his running mate Joe Biden so famously said; is a "clean and articulate one." They—unwashed, inarticulate, and brutish, are his future Schutzstaffel, to be used in the continuing Kristallnacht being waged against independent thought. He pits race against race, class against class, Americans against America. (My use of German is not unintentional)."¹⁹⁴

"Obama – Reid – Pelosi & company exist as an elite corps of parasites that send their leftovers down the food chain to those forced into dependence by programs and usury taxation created for the express purpose of being an army in waiting"

"Barack Obama and his followers embody the Seven Deadly Sins; pride, greed, envy, wrath, lust, gluttony and sloth. ... The man and those around and allied with him are driven by a narcissistic pride that allows no room for being wrong in his worldview, nor does it allow room for facts to derail his increasing, angry determination to not be disputed. He and his kind derive power from the exploitation and feeding of his followers' envy, greed, sloth, and gluttony. Where the President deviates from garden variety liberalism and ventures deep into the depravity of authoritarian socialism is the sin of wrath."¹⁹⁵

"I am not going to go into a painfully detailed 1,300+-year history of the 7th Century Death Cult we call "Islam" and how it came to be. Suffice to say that the story involves lots of bisexual men who are oddly homophobic and a psychotic pedophile, who coughed up this twisted and violent ideology during seizures in the desert, augmented by an inbred paranoia and an imposed ignorance acquired and reinforced over the centuries. The details of how my assailant came to be my assailant really do not concern me; I just want him contained or dead."¹⁹⁶

Mark Williams latched onto this issue around the Islamic center in lower Manhattan months before many of his colleagues. In May, when blogging on the issue of the cultural center, Williams averred that Muslims worship "the terrorists' monkey god." (After being widely lambasted for the stupidity of the statement, he eventually apologized to Hindus for the remark. No apology to Muslims was offered).¹⁹⁷

He also wrote that "Islam is a dangerous and savage culture that must either be tamed to live among us or be excluded to the wild corners of the Earth."¹⁹⁸

Chapter 8. Racism, Anti-Semitism and the Militia Impulse

This section of the Special Report compiles opinion polling data, documents significant examples of racist vitriol on the part of Tea Party leaders, shows incidents where well-known anti-Semites and white supremacists have been given a platform by Tea Partiers, and analyzes the attempt by white nationalist organizations to find new recruits in Tea Party ranks.

Tea Party leaders have bristled at any mention of the racism, Christian nationalism and white supremacy that is a part of their movement. In several notable instances, people of color have been prominently put forward as speakers or entertainers at Tea Party rallies, as if to say: look, this is a racially diverse movement that wants to add more color to its ranks. Prominent among these few individuals has been Lloyd Marcus, previously mentioned in this report as a paid consultant of Tea Party Express.

Nevertheless, Confederate battle flags, signs that read “America is a Christian nation,” and racist caricatures of President Obama have been an undeniable presence at Tea Party events in both local communities and in Washington, D.C. The venom (and spittle) directed at African-American Congressmen during the health care debate carried an unmistakably racist message. It is not the contention of this report that all Tea Partiers are consciously racist. The evidence presented, however, speaks for itself.

Providing a Platform to Bigots

Tea Party leaders have promoted and provided a platform to known racists and anti-Semites on multiple occasions. Dale Robertson, the chairman of the 1776 who displayed the infamous “n****r sign,” for example, brought Martin “Red” Beckman on as a guest to the Tea Party Radio hour that he co-hosts with Washington state talk show host Dr. Laurie Roth. Beckman has been known for over twenty-five years for his anti-Semitic writings and his defense of militias. In 1994, Beckman was evicted from his property in Montana by the IRS for refusing to pay taxes. He now resides in southwestern Washington State.¹⁹⁹

While introducing Beckman, Robertson said, “Red’s a great guy. He’s been actually leading this fight long before I probably was even born. Red has written many books, one is *Walls in Our Minds*, another is *Why the Militia*. And so you’ll find that he agrees with you Laurie wholeheartedly that owning a gun is a constitutional right. And he is an authority on the Constitution and what the government has done to undermine our authority as citizens. It’s a pleasure to have

him on board.”²⁰⁰

At the end of this program, Beckman promoted his book and noted that “Dale is talking about putting it on his website and I have no quarrel with that.”²⁰¹ Robertson added, “I’ve read his books, and they are a must read. Once you read them you’ll realize that we’ve definitely been deceived by our government and we need to do everything in our powers to take our nation back.”²⁰²

In a separate incident, Robertson endorsed Pastor John Weaver on the 1776 Tea Party Meet Up website. According to Robertson, “John Weaver is a very knowledgeable Christian leader who presents scriptural basis for Constitutional Rights. The Church has not exercised these rights and consequently is in decline. The Constitution is founded on the principal of God and a moral people, without either then the Church and the people of this land will fall victim to an oppressive government.”²⁰³ Robertson also used this Meetup site to advertise an August 29, 2009 “family retreat” with Pastor Weaver in Magnolia, Texas.²⁰⁴ The site also indicates that Robertson attended that retreat.

Weaver, of Fitzgerald, Georgia, has a sprawling set of connections to neo-Confederates and those preaching the so-called Christian Identity doctrine. He is the former Chaplain in Chief of the Sons of Confederate Veterans.²⁰⁵ He has spoken at “Christian Identity” gatherings in Branson, Missouri in 1998 and 1999.²⁰⁶ According to this particular theology, Jews are considered a satanic force (or the incarnation of Satan himself), and people of color are considered less than fully human. By contrast, the white people of northern Europe are considered racial descendants of the Biblical tribes of Israel, and the United States of America is considered their “promised land;” a theory descended from a theology known as British-Israelism. Although Weaver describes his particular outlook as a variant of “Dominionism,” his essay, “The Sovereignty of God and Civil Government” was listed in a book catalogue published by the British-Israel World Federation. As such, this would place Weaver just one step to the right of the most radical forms of Christian fundamentalism.²⁰⁷

The list of out-front anti-Semites on Tea Party platforms includes an event in July 2009. One thousand people gathered in Upper Senate Park for a rally in D.C. A full line-up of speakers included representatives from several tax reform groups, FreedomWorks, and talk show hosts. Also on the platform that day was the band Poker Face, playing music, providing technical back up, and receiving nothing but plaudits from the crowd.²⁰⁸ The band, from Lehigh Valley, Pennsylvania, already had a reputation for anti-Semitism. Lead singer Paul Topete was on the public record calling the Holocaust a hoax, and writing and performing for *American Free Press*—a periodical published by Willis Carto, the godfather of Holocaust denial in the United States. According to Topete, “The Rothschilds set up the Illuminati in 1776 to subvert the Christian basis of civilization.”²⁰⁹ Because of their bigotry, the band had been kicked off venues at Rutgers University in 2006 and a Ron Paul campaign event in 2007.²¹⁰ But they made it to the stage of the Tea Party without any questions asked.

More insidiously, it is common for rank and file activists to use anti-Semitic rhetoric in their web postings. For example, one Hutchinson, Kansas woman, using the name “salthawkmom,” recently wrote a message on a Tea Party website reading: “An international cult, called the Order of the Illuminati-Cabalistic bankers and Freemasons control WORLD finances, their goal is to degrade and enslave humanity.”²¹¹ The “Illuminati-Cabalistic” language is widespread among followers of the John Birch Society and more radical Christian patriot-types active in Tea Parties in the Midwest and South.

In another instance, in April 2009, the San Mateo, California Republican Party chairman was moved to comment on an anti-Semitic graphic used to advertise a Tea Party event, “we strongly condemn the use of anti-Semitic imagery in the promotion of a recent event.”²¹²

Signs claiming that “This is a Christian nation” have been part of many Tea Party protests, and they were in particular abundance in September 2009 during the large demonstration in Washington, D.C. This should not come as a surprise, since organizations usually associated with the so-called Christian right have been a part of this movement since the beginning. The American Family Association, for example, signed up more than 1,500 organizers to lead protests in their home towns during July 2009.²¹³

Founded by the Rev. Don Wildmon in Tupelo, Mississippi, this organization was initially known as the National Federation for Decency. It organized boycotts of the sponsors of television shows such as “Saturday Night Live,” and “Roseanne,” in opposition to the supposed “anti-Christian” character of these programs. It sponsored a boycott of Disney because of its “attack on American families.” And it has otherwise attempted to make its narrow vision of Christianity the law of the land.²¹⁴

Members of this organization continued to participate and lead Tea Party events into 2010. Notably, the president of American Family Association of Kentucky, Inc., Frank Simon, became a director of Tea Party of Kentucky, Inc., and ensured that Louisville Tea Party events had an anti-gay cast to them, according to local reports.²¹⁵

Enter White Nationalists

Soon after the first set of April 15, 2009 events, Tea Party protests attracted members of white nationalist organizations and networks. As a movement, white nationalism has projected two slightly different visions of white supremacy. One goal is a United States of America in which white and black and other people of color are all resident, but white domination is complete and un-complicated by civil rights laws and voting rights for people of color. An alternative white nationalist vision is a whites-only republic carved out of the remains of a collapsed and dissected United States of America. Hard core white nationalists use terms such as “racial realist” and “self-conscious whites” to distinguish themselves from the majority of white people in this country, including those that simply exhibit racist or prejudiced opinions.

In preparation for Tea Party protests held on July 4, 2009, national socialists and other white supremacists created a discussion thread on Stormfront.org, the largest and most widely accessed of the many white nationalist websites.²¹⁶ While highlighting the distinction between themselves and the majority of Tea Partiers who were not self-conscious about their own racism, one person argued, “We need a relevant transitional envelop-pushing flyer for the masses. Take these Tea Party Americans by the hand and help them go from crawling to standing independently and then walking towards racialism.”²¹⁷

Some of the posts in this thread had an almost cartoonish aspect, with elaborately construed pseudonyms and accompanying graphics—a number of which included pictures of William Pierce, the now deceased founder of the National Alliance best known as author of *The Turner Diaries*, a race war novel. Nevertheless, the Stormfront discussion board aimed at a highly conscious intervention. One group decided against wearing any gear with swastikas or other symbols of their actual core ideologies. They would carry Confederate battle flags and other more generic symbols of white protest. And they planned to hand out a leaflet with a relatively muted political message. Others had slightly different ideas. Several people said they would bring a variety of pieces of propaganda, with the intensity of racism apparent on a sliding scale. They would gauge the individual Tea Partier that they were talking to, and hand them material accordingly.

In contradistinction, another messenger argued that there was no need to hide their core politics. “I distributed WN [white nationalist] literature at the last Tea Party in Phoenix,” they wrote. “I will be doing it again in July. This is the time and place. For those on a budget, I would suggest printing business cards with the web address of your group or organization. Keep it simple.”²¹⁸

In this Stormfront discussion, a segment of white nationalists usually associated with the most outrageous neo-Nazi behavior acknowledged a shift towards a set of tactics more commonly employed by the Council of Conservatives Citizens (CofCC).

The Council of Conservative Citizens, headquartered in St. Louis with its strongest chapters in the South and Mid-South, is the largest white nationalist organization in the country and the group most active in the Tea Parties. A direct lineal descendant of the white Citizens Councils that fought to defend Jim Crow segregation during the 1950s and 1960s, the Council of Conservative Citizens promotes the idea that the United States is or should be a white Christian nation; and that Barack Obama and black people generally oppress white people. The Council does not itself advance the same kind of bald anti-Semitic conspiracy theories that motivate national socialists like those at Stormfront.org, although there are hard-core anti-Semites throughout its ranks and leadership.

In a sign that the Council’s low key intervention in the Tea Parties was holding sway within the white nationalist universe, one Stormfronter wrote, “I think the CofCC approach of representing whites without being able to be portrayed as racist boot wearing Nazis is the best approach. As a non-CofCC member, I believe they have one of the most effective approaches.”

Through its periodical tabloid, *Citizens Informer*, and its website, www.cofcc.org, the Council of Conservative Citizens both led and promoted Tea Party protests. In Mississippi, the organization advertised a “Mississippi Tea Party” at Flowood City Hall on March 9, 2010; a “Mississippi for Liberty March” at the state capitol on April 17; and the Upper East Mississippi chapter sponsored a Halloween Tea Party at the Tippah County Courthouse, in Ripley on October 31, 2009.²¹⁹

In Florida, the Florida West Coast chapter distributed three boxes of tabloids as well as an unknown number of membership applications at a Sept. 12, 2009 Tea Party in Crystal River attended by about 1,500. Congresswoman Ginny Brown-Waite (R-FL) spoke at that event. At a Citrus County Tea Party attended by 4,500 people on January 16, 2010, the same chapter “worked [the] crowd,” and passed out two boxes of its tabloid and 250 Council business cards.²²⁰

Despite these and other similar actions, the Council of Conservative Citizens remained ambivalent about the Tea Parties ultimate goals. On the positive side, one of the organization’s leaders wrote, “the fact that hundreds of thousands of white people got up the nerve to oppose the government [was] astonishing.” On the other hand, he noted, the “negative tendency that plagues Tea Party activism...to deny the racial dynamic empowering the movement.” He concluded that, “The future of this revolution, if that is what it is, depends on white zealots.”²²¹ Little talk of taxes and budget deficits intruded into this analysis.

One of the most zealous white nationalists visible in Tea party circles has been Billy Joe Roper, Jr. A former Russellville, Arkansas high school teacher, Roper was an enrolled member of the ResistNet Tea Party. He is also running a write-in campaign for Arkansas Governor.

Roper’s views are unabashed. A one-time leader of the National Alliance, an organization dedicated to the creation of an all-white country and the requisite expulsion and/or murder of Jews and people of color, he continues to idolize its founder, William Pierce. Pierce authored *The Turner Diaries*, a race-war terror novel carried around by Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh. Roper became the group’s deputy membership director in 2000 and worked out of its headquarters in West Virginia. When Pierce died in 2002, Roper issued a statement saying, “I promised him [Pierce] that I would do my best to spend the rest of my life making sure that one hundred and one thousand years from now, White children are taught his name right along with George Washington’s and Adolph Hitler’s, as one of the great men of our race.”²²²

Roper’s sentiments did not change, but he went home to Arkansas and founded his own organization, White Revolution. One of White Revolution’s rallies was held in Topeka, Kansas in May 2004, to protest the anniversary of *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education*, the 1954 Supreme Court ruling that outlawed Jim Crow segregation in education. At that protest, which included Aryan Nations founder Richard Butler, Roper carried a sign that read: “Not Separate, Still Not Equal.”

Roper remains the leader of White Revolution even as he uses his governor’s race as a bid for more support. According to a “Campaign Trail Report” posted by Roper, he met with Tea

Partiers in Baxter County over one weekend in May. In Mountain View he was introduced to a crowd at a folk music concert “as the candidate of choice for patriotic Arkansans with traditional conservative values.”²²³ At a July 4, 2009 Tea Party event in Russellville, Roper’s crew held signs opposing “illegal immigration,” handed out leaflets stating general principles and then came back after the Tea Party disbanded to have a protest of their own. Roper’s ResistNet member page was the site of a continuing discussion he has with other members of the Tea Party group.²²⁴ But the reception that he has had from the Tea Partiers has been ambiguous. In some instances he has been shunned, in others he finds what he is looking for—a few young people to recruit to his cause.

After a *Kansas City Star* report on Roper’s Tea Party efforts, and a Little Rock television news report, Tea Partiers in the region denied that they even knew him.²²⁵ ResistNet pulled down Roper’s website, and Roper lost his ability to use the Tea Parties as a launch pad for his electoral campaign. He did not abandon, however, his write-in efforts nor did he stop describing his efforts to win votes from Tea Party supporters.

David Duke’s embrace of the Tea Parties reveals less about the Tea Parties than it serves as a reminder of the former Klansmen’s never-ending opportunism. He used the Internet to broadcast a ten minute video speech, “Message to the Tea Party.” Duke began the “message” by paying homage to the Tea Parties and the “Founding Fathers,” and ended with his usual roundhouse attack on “the Zionists” (meaning Jews). Over the decades Duke has switched organizational allegiances as new openings emerged for him, but he never abandoned his core national socialist ideology.

Most recently, Duke had spent time flitting across the globe: In France, Duke had his picture taken with Jean-Marie Le Pen, leader of the anti-immigrant Front National. In Russia, he turned a 1995 meeting with Zhirinovsky into a spot at a 2002 “anti-Zionist” conference in Moscow. In November of that year, he spoke at a meeting in Bahrain. He reappeared in Iran in 2006 for a Holocaust denial conference where he thanked President Ahmadinejad for his “courage” and “foresight.” And in 2009, the once and future Republican, David Duke, was unceremoniously expelled from the Czech Republic (although the charges were later dropped.)

Duke’s announcement that he will use a year-long speaking tour to gauge potential support for another campaign in the Republican presidential primaries (in 2012) should not be understood as anything more than a declaration of his perennial search for contributions from new followers. He is quite unlikely to repeat anything near the successes he has had in the past, when he won a majority of white voters in two statewide Louisiana elections. It is, however, one more sign that hardcore white nationalists regard the Tea Party movement as a reservoir of racists, and as potential supporters of a more ideologically defined white nationalism.

The actions of the Council of Conservative Citizens, the Stormfront.org posters and other white nationalists need be understood, in aggregate, as one measure, among many, of the Tea party movement’s political characteristics. Together they point to a truth many Tea Party leaders will not want to acknowledge.

Richard Mack and Militias

Local groups affiliated with Tea Party Patriots that described themselves as militias included the Southeast Michigan Volunteer Militia, the Billy Hill Militia in Oklahoma, and the now-defunct North Coast Militia.²²⁶ Other Tea Party Patriot-affiliated groups actively promoted militia formation. The Pocatello Tea Party, for example, promoted the “Ten Reasons Why We Need a State Militia.” Among the reasons given, “Cultural subversion, corruption, and dissolution,” (including “Pluralism” and “multiculturalism”), “invasion by illegal immigrants,” “Schemes aimed at overthrowing the Declaration of Independence,” and “a staggering burden of governmental financial liabilities.”²²⁷ In Springfield, Missouri the 9-12 Tea Party group advised followers to join the SW Missouri militia.

Other signs of the militia impulse include the omnipresence of Richard Mack at Tea Party-related events—not just those of the Tea Party Patriots mentioned earlier.

A former Graham County, Arizona sheriff (1987-1997), Mack first became prominent in 1995, after he sued the federal government over enforcement of the Brady Bill. During the mid-1990s, he became a popular speaker on the militia circuit. Indeed, he spent so much time outside his own county, that he was defeated in a primary election in 1996 and lost his office. Mack wrote, or co-authored, two books during that period, arguing militia-style that, “proponents of the New World Order are entrenched and moving forward aggressively with their plan.” In Mack’s view, Satan is acting through conspiracies every day. And like other Christian nationalists, he wrote, “The court-imposed separation of church and state is a folly, a myth, a lie.” Further, in language reminiscent of segregationists in the 1950s and former Tea Party Express boss Mark Williams when he wrote about the NAACP: “The Reverend Jesse Jackson types and the NAACP have done more to enslave Afro-Americans than all the southern plantation owners put together.”²²⁸

In the current period as a member of Oath Keepers, Mack presents himself as a defender of the constitution, in terms similar to that he used in 1990s, and the supremacy of the county sheriff over all other law enforcement agencies. He is not talking at these Tea Party events about fiscal policy, taxes and the national debt. He is talking about “states’ rights.” Yet, he is one of the most popular speakers on the Tea Party circuit.

A coalition of Tea Party groups in four California towns, calling themselves the North Valley Patriots, sponsored an engagement with Mack in January 2010; he returned on July 10.²²⁹ The Silver City-Grant County Tea Party Patriots sponsored Mack’s appearance in Silver City, New Mexico on March 1, 2010.²³⁰ In Tyler, Texas on May 29, he spoke at event organized by the Tyler Tea Party and the East Texas Constitutional Alliance.²³¹ Among other Tea Party-related events this summer, Mack also visited Sarasota, Florida.²³²

Bigotry and the health care reform vote

Health care reform legislation had been a flashpoint for Tea Party protests, beginning with a

concerted effort to shout down Congressional Democrats at their “town hall” meetings during August 2009. The following November, at a Tea Party protest aimed at health care legislation, ten people were arrested for unlawful entry when they tried to force their way into the offices of Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi. As the bill moved closer to passage in March 2010, strident voices called for violence. One 1990s-era militiaman from Alabama, Mike Vanderboegh, urged whoever was reading his blog to break the windows of Democrats. “Break them NOW...Break them with rocks...”²³³ In the aftermath of this call, the office windows of several members of the House of Representatives were shattered with bricks. In Washington State, a man charged with making repeated death threats to Senator Patricia Murray, had attended at least one Tea Party event that April 1, although he did not describe himself as a Tea Partier.²³⁴

On March 20, 2010 a Tea Party protest grew ugly as a small group of congressmen walked through them to the Capitol to vote on health care reform. Chants of “Kill the Bill” turned to racist slurs and name calling. Rep. Barney Frank (D-MA) was called a “faggot.” Rep. John Lewis (D-GA) was called a “n...er,” and Rep. Emanuel Cleaver (D. Mo.) was spit upon. Cleaver described the name calling as a “chorus.”²³⁵ The meanness and racism of that particular event was compounded later by Tea Party leaders and others who claimed no such racist and bigoted name calling occurred. Among those denying the obvious was Rep. Michele Bachmann (R-MN), who has since founded the Tea Party Caucus in Congress.

Response to NAACP resolution

During the NAACP’s national convention during July 2010, the organization’s plenary body passed a resolution that called upon all people of good will to repudiate any racism that manifested itself in Tea Party ranks. While the resolution noted the differences in opinions about racial justice issues between the general population and Tea Partiers, it did not attempt to categorize all Tea Partiers as consciously racist.

The resolution was met immediately with anonymous death threats directed at the NAACP generally and to units around the country, and a barrage of verbal abuse was sent to the NAACP’s web site. The reaction by the various Tea Parties to this resolution provided a useful window on the way that they respond to challenges of any kind. In a number of instances the resolution was misunderstood, perhaps deliberately so, as a broad-brush “attack” on all Tea Partiers. In many instances, the response was to deny that any racists were within Tea Party ranks. Several claimed that the NAACP was itself racist, or that the term “racism” had lost all real meaning.

For his part, Tea Party Express leader Mark Williams used the opportunity to post one more obnoxious and racist statement on his blog. It should be noted that Williams already had a history of remarks such as his claim that President Obama was an “Indonesian Muslim turned welfare thug.” His so-called satire, written after the NAACP resolution, belittling black people generally and the NAACP in particular, was not a new departure. Nevertheless, as noted elsewhere in

this report, his “satire” eventually resulted in his removal from the Tea Party Express leadership. Nevertheless, a later comment by Amy Kremer muddied the situation: “...Mark Williams may speak on behalf of us in some circumstances and in some situations...”²³⁶

Tea Party Nation, by contrast, issued a statement that read: “The Tea Party Movement is not racist. Tea Party Nation and many other groups have repudiated racism and racists.”²³⁷ Although it also described Mark Williams’ remarks as a “a controversial blog that many took to be racist,” it left unanswered the question as to whether or not Tea Party Nation leaders believed that Williams’ comment were, in fact, racist. Perhaps the hesitancy to describe the Tea Party Express’ leaders remarks in a straight forward manner stemmed from the fact that the two organizations had been intertwined as recently as the previous May, when Tea Party Nation issued the following statement: “The folks over at Tea Party Express are our friends. They were kind enough to invite Tea Party Nation to join them at the huge event in Searchlight, NV and we believe their hearts are in the right place, just not their strategy.”²³⁸

Tea Party Patriots’ spokesperson Jenny Beth Martin promptly issued a statement that declared, “A few offensive posters or obnoxious remarks of one person DO NOT represent the feelings or behavior of the Tea Party movement.” In fact, Martin herself is not one of the birthers that populate so much of the Tea Party Patriots ranks. Nevertheless, when her statement argued that the “NAACP has a long history of racism,” she joined the ranks of those that count as inherently racist any advocacy on behalf of people of color. And her claim that, “all these attacks,” apparently meaning the NAACP resolution, “are untrue,” simply denied obvious facts long in evidence.²³⁹

The St. Louis Tea Party passed a resolution which included language that: “The very term ‘racist’ has diminished meaning due to its overuse by political partisans including members of the NAACP.”²⁴⁰

Taking much the same tack as the St. Louis Tea Party, the Council of Conservative Citizens, responded to the controversy by republishing parts of an essay by James Edwards entitled, “Racism, Schmacism.” Edwards, an AM radio talk show host from the Memphis area, has been a denizen of the white nationalist movement, frequently providing a platform for David Duke and others. Edwards claimed that the term “racist” simply “means white person.” Specifically to the charge of racism, he wrote, that Tea Partiers should respond, “‘So what?’ or ‘Of course we’re racists—we’re white people.’”²⁴¹ Here, Edwards and the Council of Conservative Citizens were re-articulating the entire white nationalist approach inside the Tea Parties: to push this budding movement ever further toward a self-conscious white racism.

On July 14, The Tea Party Federation, of which Mark Williams and Tea Party Express had been members, issued an immediate rebuff to the NAACP resolution. “The Tea Party Federation (NTPF) today flatly rejected the NAACP’s unfounded accusations that condemn ‘racist elements’ in the tea party movement.”²⁴² Just three days later, after the Tea Party Express had refused to expel Mark Williams from its leadership, the Tea Party Federation issued a second statement.

This one expelled Tea Party Express from its membership.²⁴³ Notably, this second statement did not reference the NAACP resolution nor mention the word “racism.” Nor did it mention the fact that the July 14 statement was wrong-headed. Nevertheless, the Tea Party Federation took the appropriate corrective action.

Black conservatives active in the Tea Parties staged their own rejoinder to the NAACP resolution, at an August 4, 2010 rally in D.C. sponsored by Tea Party Express. Most of the speakers at this event were conservatives who were black and had long-standing ties to either the Republican Party or the conservative movement or both. In any case, attacking the NAACP was nothing new to these speakers. The event, however, signaled that two seemingly contradictory things (at least) were happening at once: For some Tea Partiers race was less important than ideology. At the same time—as amply documented in this report—race and religion are powerful determinants of national identity for many Tea Partiers, marking the border between “self” and “other.”

Despite this obvious pattern, Tea Party leaders insist that their movement is not infested with racists or racist beliefs. Add opinion poll data to the evidence that a problem with racism and racial issues exists in Tea Party ranks.

Opinion Poll Data

Both polling data and observable evidence point to the fact that Tea Party attendees and their supporters are mostly white. Significantly, these white Tea Partiers show noticeably different attitudes than those of white people generally, particularly in regards to racially charged issues. Tea Partiers are more likely than white people generally to believe that “too much” has been made of the problems facing black people: 52% to 39%.²⁴⁴

A striking difference over positive attitudes towards black people showed up in a multi-state poll, conducted in March 2010, by the University of Washington Institute for the Study of Ethnicity, Race & Sexuality. Of those who strongly disapproved of the Tea Party, 55% agreed with the statement that black people were “VERY hard working.” Of those who strongly approved of the Tea Party, only 18% agreed with the statement that black people were “VERY hard working.” This 24-point difference pointed at Tea Party supporters as more likely to have negative feelings about the work ethic of black people. In fact, 68% of the Tea party “approvers” believed that if only they would try harder, then black people would be as well off as white people. That number fell by almost half, to 35%, when the “disapprovers” answered it.²⁴⁵

Further, almost three-quarters of Tea Party supporters (73%), told pollsters that government programs aimed at providing a social safety net for poor people actually encourages them to remain poor.²⁴⁶ In fact, more than a bit of anecdotal evidence shows hostility and resentment towards the poor and the programs designed to help them. Hence, the signs such as one at an early St. Louis Tea Party that read: “Honk if I am paying your mortgage.” Not every Tea party supporter exhibited such feelings, certainly, but enough of it showed up in opinion polls to give

credence to the description of Tea Parties as mean-spirited.

Similarly, both anecdotal evidence and poll data point to an irreconcilable gap between the president and Tea Partiers. More is at issue here than a simple disagreement of social policy and legislation. Indeed, a quarter of Tea Party supporters polled on the question admit that they think that the Obama “administration favors black people over whites.”²⁴⁷ When asked whether or not Barack Obama understood the “needs and problems of people like you,” almost three-fourths of Tea Partiers (73%) said “no.” A similar number (75%) said he did not “share the values most Americans try to live by.”

These numbers indicate racial and cultural differences that morph directly into opposing beliefs about immigration, national identity and a question that haunts this Tea Party movement: Who is an American?

Chapter 9. ‘Who Is An American?’: Tea Parties, Nativism and the Birthers

The Revolutionary War-era costumes, the yellow “Don’t tread on me” Gadsden flags from the same era, the earnest recitals of the pledge of allegiance, the over-stated veneration of the Constitution, and the defense of “American exceptionalism” in a world turned towards transnational economies and global institutions: all are signs of the over-arching nationalism that helps define the Tea Party movement.

It is a form of American nationalism, however, that does not include all Americans, and separates itself from those it regards as insufficiently “real Americans.” Consider in this regard, a recent Tea Party Nation Newsletter article entitled, “Real Americans Did Not Sue Arizona.” Or the hand-drawn sign at a Tea Party rally that was obviously earnestly felt. “I am a arrogant American, unlike our President, I am proud of my country, our freedom, our generosity, no apology from me.”

It is the notion that President Barack Obama is not a real natural born American, that he is some other kind of person, that abounds in Tea Party ranks and draws this movement into a pit of no return. Much of this sentiment predates the actual formation of Tea Parties. For example, in October 2008, before the election, Amy Kremer, who later became a figure from both Tea Party Patriots and Tea Party Express, wrote of Sen. John McCain: “...he needs to tell Nobama to bring his authentic birth certificate to the debate. I am so tired of the spin from his spinmeisters! Johnny Mac...just go straight to the source!”²⁴⁸ This sentiment was coupled with a profound alienation and distrust of established American institutions. On January 8, 2009, she wrote: “I have lost all hope on this issue of OBami’s eligibility to be President of the United States. I am totally disillusioned after sitting and watching Congress certify the Electoral College vote on CSPAN without one objection.”²⁴⁹

Among those promoting these ideas after the 2008 election was Tea Party Nation’s marketing director, Pam Farnsworth, who asked, “Where’s the birth certificate?” in a June 4, 2009 tweet.²⁵⁰ She also remarked that, “New bill would make Obama a US natural-born citizen. Doesn’t the Constitution mandate he already be one to hold office?”²⁵¹

In a Tea Party Nation website discussion forum, one rank and file member, “Charles the pathfinder,” wrote in a way that set the president apart as a non-American: “If obama [sic] is to be stopped, TPN better stop preaching to each other and start some drastic action. I am afraid it is already too late. Just my opinion mind you, but I have been studying obama [sic] since the start.

I hope every one realizes now that he is full blooded Muslim. And I have been told that Muslims are taught to kill all infidels and Americans especially. When is he going to have to answer for all his treasonous acts?”²⁵² That sentiment, the notion that Barack Obama is not a real American, but a “lying African,” is also found across the entirety of the Tea Party movement. Hundreds of posts echoing these sentiments are on the Tea Party Nation website.

In the multiple Tea Party street protests since April 15, 2009, those who do not believe that President Obama is a native born American have been widely visible. They have claimed he was a Muslim instead of a Christian, that he was born in Kenya or Indonesia, rather than in Hawaii. And that Barack Obama was a non-American socialist who conspiratorially slipped into the White House. Dick Armey and FreedomWorks’ injunction that the Tea Parties should be limited only to fiscal policy matters was obviously rarely observed.

Indeed, these claims became so widespread that they corresponded to an uptick in the number of Americans who believe that President Obama is not a Christian, as he professes, but a Muslim. Shortly after he took office, in March 2009, 11% of Americans believed he was a Muslim. In August 2010, the Pew Research Center measured that number at 18%. These numbers were highest among conservative Republicans (34%) opposed to the president policies. Among white Protestant evangelicals, the percentage believing the president was a Muslim stood in August at 29%.²⁵³

While social scientists have not yet said that this jump in the numbers from March 2009 to August 2010 was caused by Tea Partiers propaganda, this was a period of intense protests and mobilization. As such, Tea Party organizations could have served as a perfect Petri dish from which this particular bacterium could have grown and spread.

Pamela Geller and Islamophobia

The term “Islamophobia” was defined in a 1997 Runnymede Trust Report as “unfounded hostility towards Muslims, and therefore fear or dislike of all or most Muslims.”²⁵⁴ Among the characteristic elements of Islamophobia highlighted in the report: Islam is monolithic and cannot adapt to new realities; Islam does not share common values with other major faiths; Islam as a religion is inferior to the West; It is archaic, barbaric, and irrational; Islam is a religion of violence and supports terrorism; and Islam is a violent political ideology.

In fact, alongside racism, anti-Semitism, and nativism, the elements of Islamophobia have found their way into the Tea Party Movement. Tea Party leaders and members have employed anti-Muslim language. With strong Tea Party ties, Pamela Geller stands out in this regard.

As noted earlier, Geller was a featured speaker at a Tea Party Patriots-sponsored convention in Gatlinburg, Tennessee in May.²⁵⁵ Despite weeks of pressure from community groups who raised concerns about Geller’s history of Islamophobia, the convention organizers refused to reconsider their invitation to Geller.²⁵⁶

Geller also spoke at the anti-immigrant rally in Arizona sponsored by Tea Party Nation in August 2010. She is expected to be speaking at the Tea Party Nation Unity Convention in Las Vegas in October.²⁵⁷

Geller maintains a tight-knit trio of organizational fronts: Atlas Shrugs, SIOA (Stop Islamization of America), and the Freedom Defense Initiative. All are listed as official “partner” organizations of the ResistNet Tea Party faction.²⁵⁸ She has appeared on the ResistNet radio program that was heavily promoted by ResistNet leader Darla Dawald.²⁵⁹

With leaders like Geller, it is not surprising to find language on a ResistNet Tea Party website that denigrates an entire grouping of people because of their faith. “We are at a point of having to take a stand against all Muslims. There is no good or bad Muslim. There is [sic] only Muslims and they are embedded in our government, military and other offices...What more must we wait for to take back this country of ours...”²⁶⁰

Geller, like many Tea Partiers is also a birther. In addition to claiming that Obama’s birth certificate is a “forgery,” she has called President Obama a “third worlder and a coward” who’s “appeas[ing] his Islamic overlords.” She has perpetuated the lie that President Obama is Muslim. Geller has referred to Obama as “The Muslim president.”²⁶¹ Media Matters for America documented that Geller’s blog contains 267 posts tagged, “Muslim in the White House?”²⁶² She’s gone as far as to seriously make the argument that Barack Obama is the illegitimate child of Malcolm X.²⁶³

Among the many inflammatory statements Geller has posted on her blog, Atlas Shrugs, she has written that: “It is increasingly clear that the most divisive President in history is itching for a civil war. And at the rate he is going, he is going to get one — if he continues to ignore the will of the American people.”²⁶⁴

Nativism and Support for Arizona’s SB 1070

These doubts and denials about President Obama’s American-ness have been coupled often with a growing level of nativist activity and sentiment from both the grassroots and the leadership of the various Tea Party factions.

As noted earlier, at the Tea Party Nation convention in Nashville, former congressman Tom Tancredo gave a rousing anti-immigrant speech; and he and others conducted workshops along the same lines. (Although some Tea Partiers became upset with Tancredo later, after he decided to run for Governor of Colorado on a third party ticket.) In fact, Tea Party Nation is second only to the 1776 Tea Party in its connections to nativist groups and advancing anti-immigrant issues. And the number of such posts on the Tea Party Nation website has been on the rise.

Donna Baker, a TPN member from Gainesboro, Tennessee, for example, wrote: “Yes, things ran quite well before the swarm of manipulated underclasses invaded our country. If they stayed home and made half the effort to change their country as they do marching our streets demand-

ing our laws not be enforced, they could change their own lives. They are blindly being used and manipulated by other forces ... [they are] a huge burgeoning looming voting bloc.”²⁶⁵

Another member, Robert Matheson, wrote: “WOW! I am so mad and pissed off at Obama. I live in Detroit and between the Mexicans and the Arabs this area is run over by them. They come here for a legal Drivers [sic] License which is still possible and welfare and then work in the construction [sic] trade thanks to Governer Granholm [sic] and the holes in our boarder [sic] with Canada.”²⁶⁶

From the leadership, an August 3, 2010 email to members asked recipients to post anecdotes to a new TPN forum about illegal immigrants. “If you have been the victim of a crime by an illegal, or if your business has gone under because your competition uses illegals, or if you have lost your job to illegals, we want to know about it. If you have photos and videos of illegals or their supporters doing outrageous things (like burning the American flag or putting the Mexican flag above ours, or showing racist posters), please share those as well.”²⁶⁷

After Arizona passed a piece of anti-immigrant legislation (SB 1070) and Gov. Jan Brewer signed it into law, a federal judge issued a temporary injunction blocking enforcement of many of the bill’s most draconian measures. The matter is likely to ultimately go to the Supreme Court. In response, Tea Parties have been drumming up support for SB 1070. Tea Party Nation, for example, was one of the sponsors for a United Border Coalition Tea Party in Arizona on August 15. Tea Party Nation also joined the Patriot Caucus and United We Stand for Americans to support the event.²⁶⁸

Similarly, the National Leadership Council of Tea Party Patriots voted overwhelmingly, to ask affiliated members to hold sign waving events for one hour on July 29 to show their “support of the people and State of Arizona on the day SB1070 goes into effect.”²⁶⁹

On the list of “non-negotiable core beliefs” that the 1776 Tea Parties hold are the usual items about budgets and taxes. Also included are “Illegal Aliens Are Illegal” and “English Only Is Required.”²⁷⁰ This faction also supports SB1070, the anti-immigrant statute roiling Arizona. Remember that this particular Tea Party organization imported two of its commanding executives from the anti-immigrant Minuteman Project. Accordingly, their chairman argued, “The Tea Party? We stand with Arizona and why shouldn’t we. The federal government doesn’t give a hoot about us, except we are the cash cows they must keep milking and if a few of us are murdered, kidnapped or abducted into Mexico, well that is the cost of doing business!”²⁷¹

The 1776 group’s executive director, further spelled out his justification for supporting the Arizona anti-immigrant law: “The Tea Party has waved the signs, marched and protested big government, but will we stand with our fellow Citizens as the residents of Arizona are denied their domestic tranquility? Arizona needs the help of the Tea Party and every American Citizen as well. ... While other [Tea Party-ed.] groups have only a plank or two on their platform we have 15 strong ones. How can we restore our beloved nation with only one plank? Our borders are

hemorrhaging, our jobs are being exported and our guns slowly being confiscated, yet few speak up. Are we to guarantee domestic tranquility for the rest of the world while our own Citizens hide in their homes for fear of an invading army of trespassers? ... We will NOT stand down and we will NOT go silently into the night.”²⁷²

Contra Dick Arme y and FreedomWorks

This exaggerated nativism and birther talk has been strong enough to result in something of a rift with FreedomWorks Dick Arme y. Gary Armstrong, a Tea Party organizer in east Tennessee, said he unsubscribed from the FreedomWorks e-mail list after learning of Arme y’s record on immigration and told *Politico*, “right now, I think we should tar-and-feather Dick Arme y.”²⁷³ Arme y’s position on immigration has angered many Tea Partiers. One supporter of the Tea Parties, Michelle Malkin, called Arme y an “amnesty stooge” and “a clueless promoter of bailout-happy, big government Republican Sen. John McCain.”²⁷⁴

The North Carolina nativist group Americans for Legal Immigration PAC (ALI-PAC) jumped into the fray in March 2010, when William Gheen, the director of ALI-PAC, sent out an email which read: “Dick Arme y of FreedomWorks (The group trying to take control of the tea party movement) supports AMNESTY for illegal aliens,” and asked “Does this explain why the D.C. insiders are trying to keep the illegal immigration issue out of the tea party movement?”²⁷⁵

The ALI-PAC attack is a fight over turf. William Gheen, head of ALI-PAC has been trying to carve out a niche for ALI-PAC among the Tea Parties. Like ALI-PAC, the anti-immigrant group NumbersUSA is trying to make inroads into the Tea Party movement. The group has also used Dick Arme y’s immigration position to freeze out FreedomWorks and create some space for nativist groups like NumbersUSA.

In a blog post entitled “Dick Arme y stuns tea partiers with open-borders advocacy,” NumbersUSA head Roy Beck charged that Arme y “wants immigration to be treated as a social issue with no place in the tea parties,” and suggested FreedomWorks may be trying “to intimidate local tea parties” to shy away from the issue at the behest of “corporate benefactors [who] want the foreign labor to keep pouring in.”²⁷⁶

Tea Party Caucus in Congress

The link between the Tea Parties, anti-immigrant politics and birthright citizenship shows up in Michele Bachmann’s Tea Party Caucus in the House of Representatives. Founded in July 2010, the Tea Party Caucus quickly grew to include fifty-one representatives, all of them Republicans. Bachmann, from Minnesota’s 6th District, is the only representative from that state who is a member of the caucus. Ten are from Texas, five are from Georgia and four are from California, and the rest are scattered around the country—although none are from the northeastern part of the country.

Notably, forty-two of the fifty-one are also members of the House Immigration Reform Caucus in Congress—the grouping of the most steadfast opponents to any reform legislation that would include a pathway to citizenship for those without proper papers. In a second count, thirty nine of the Tea Party Caucus members are also co-sponsors of H.R. 1868, the Birthright Citizenship Act of 2009. This bill, currently sitting in a House committee, would end birthright citizenship in the United States for the America-born children of parents without papers. It would present a direct constitutional challenge to the Fourteenth Amendment, passed after the Civil War to guarantee the citizenship rights of the newly-freed slaves and their children.

Opposition to “birthright citizenship” extends throughout the Tea Party movement, and is often linked to an explicit fear of the demographic transformation underway in the United States, in which white people are projected to become one minority in a country of minorities during the next several decades. A web post by a Tea Party Patriot activist using the name “No Anchors” was symptomatic: “We have to stop mexicans [sic] from having kids here and giving them citizenship. They will overtake us if we don’t [sic] stop this now. The 14th amendment [sic] needs to be respected. It is being misrepresented and no one stands up for this!! All politicians agree with it if they don’t [sic] change it.”²⁷⁷

A similar post from Jason Leverette, the ResistNet Alabama State Director, argued that real Americans were being “out-bred.” Leverette wrote, “The Mexicans reasons for invading America is certainly more than just for jobs and ‘anchor babies’! The kidnappings, killings, rapings, slave trade, smuggling weapons and drugs is just another part of their plan to occupy and outbreed the Americans and eventually become the majority who will rule America! If this trend continues...by 2050 the United States will be ruled by Hosea Jesus Delgado Gonzalez Calderon, Esq. WTF!”²⁷⁸

It is here, at the conjunction of nativism, opposition to birthright citizenship, the denigration of President Obama, and the fear of the new majority in American life, that the unstated racism embedded within the Tea Parties becomes vocal and unmistakable.

FIGURE 15. TEA PARTY CAUCUS, U.S. CONGRESS

This chart shows the membership of the Tea Party Caucus in Congress, and cross-references it with membership in the House Immigration Reform Caucus and co-sponsors of a bill sitting in the House that would end birthright citizenship.

Name	Party	State	Dist	HIRC MEM	HR 1868 Co-Sponsor
Robert Aderholt	R	AL	4	YES	NO
Roscoe Bartlett	R	MD	6	YES	YES
Trent Franks	R	AZ	2	YES	YES
Pete Hoekstra	R	MI	2	YES	NO
John Shadegg	R	AZ	3	YES	YES
Michele Bachmann	R	MN	6	YES	NO
Wally Herger	R	CA	2	YES	YES
Todd Akin	R	MO	2	YES	YES
Tom McClintock	R	CA	4	NO	YES
Blaine Luetkemeyer	R	MO	9	YES	NO
Gary Miller	R	CA	42	YES	YES
Gregg Harper	R	MS	3	NO	NO
Ed Royce	R	CA	40	YES	YES
Denny Rehberg	R	MT	At-large	NO	NO
Mike Coffman	R	CO	6	YES	YES
Howard Coble	R	NC	6	YES	YES
Doug Lamborn	R	CO	5	YES	YES
Sue Wilkins Myrick	R	NC	9	YES	YES
Gus Bilirakis	R	FL	9	YES	YES
Adrian Smith	R	NE	3	YES	YES
Ander Crenshaw	R	FL	4	NO	YES
Joe Wilson	R	SC	2	YES	YES
Cliff Stearns	R	FL	6	YES	YES
Phil Roe	R	TN	1	YES	NO
Paul Broun	R	GA	10	YES	YES
Zach Wamp	R	TN	3	YES	YES
Phil Gingrey	R	GA	11	YES	YES
Joe Barton	R	TX	6	YES	NO
Tom Graves	R	GA	9	NO	NO
Michael Burgess	R	TX	26	YES	YES
Tom Price	R	GA	6	YES	YES

Name	Party	State	Dist	HIRC MEM	HR 1868 Co-Sponsor
John Carter	R	TX	31	YES	YES
Lynn Westmoreland	R	GA	3	YES	YES
John Culberson	R	TX	7	YES	YES
Steve King	R	IA	5	YES	YES
Louie Gohmert	R	TX	1	YES	YES
Dan Burton	R	IN	5	YES	YES
Ralph Hall	R	TX	4	YES	YES
Mike Pence	R	IN	6	NO	YES
Kenny Marchant	R	TX	24	YES	YES
Lynn Jenkins	R	KS	2	NO	NO
Randy Neugebauer	R	TX	19	NO	YES
Jerry Moran	R	KS	1	YES	YES
Pete Sessions	R	TX	32	YES	YES
Todd Tiahrt	R	KS	4	YES	YES
Lamar Smith	R	TX	21	YES	YES
Rodney Alexander	R	LA	5	YES	YES
Rob Bishop	R	UT	1	NO	NO
John Fleming	R	LA	4	YES	YES
Cynthia Lummis	R	WY	At-large	YES	NO
Steve Scalise	R	LA	1	NO	YES

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Appendix A:

Is There a Correlation between Unemployment Levels and Tea Party Membership?

By Charles Tanner Jr.

An IREHR analysis of Tea Party online membership and unemployment data demonstrates that there is very little if any relationship between unemployment and Tea Party membership. To look for a correlation between Tea Party membership and unemployment rates, we examined the unemployment rate data for all 372 cities available from the Bureau of Labor Statistics for January 2010 (around the highest level of recent unemployment rates) with the online membership data for 1776 Tea Party, FreedomWorks Tea Party, ResistNet, Tea Party Nation, and Tea Party Patriots for the same period compiled by IREHR.²⁷⁹

The correlation coefficient (r) provides a measure of how strongly related two variables are and in which way they vary together. These values could potentially range from 1 for a very strong positive correlation (when unemployment goes up, Tea Party membership goes right up with it) and -1 for a very strong negative relationship (when unemployment goes up, Tea Party membership goes down). Statisticians usually call any correlation above 0.80 very strong and below 0.19 very weak to non-existent. [See Figure ? on next page.]

In this case, the correlation coefficient between unemployment and the percent of Tea Party members in a city is 0.083.²⁸⁰ This indicates a very weak to non-existent relationship. In effect, knowing the unemployment rate of a city tells us next to nothing about whether there will be a higher or lower level of Tea Party online membership in a city.

This relationship is also not statistically significant—that is there is a greater than 1 in 20 chance (1/13.5) that there is not even any association between these two variables at all. When this is the case, statisticians and social scientists generally conclude that they do not have strong enough evidence to conclude that these variables are related.

It is often said that correlation is not causation. This is true. Just because two things are correlated, doesn't mean that one causes the other. However, correlation *is* a necessary part of causation. if A is said to cause B, then A and B must at least be correlated—a change in one must be

associated with a change in the other. This data—the most comprehensive available on Tea Party online membership—provides no convincing evidence of a correlation between unemployment and membership. As such, it provides no convincing evidence that unemployment causes Tea Party online membership.

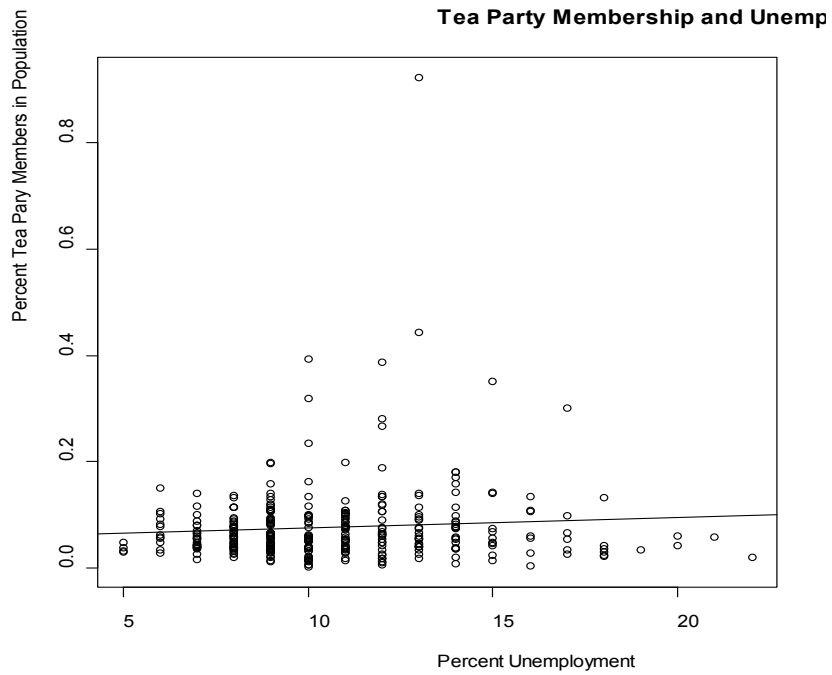
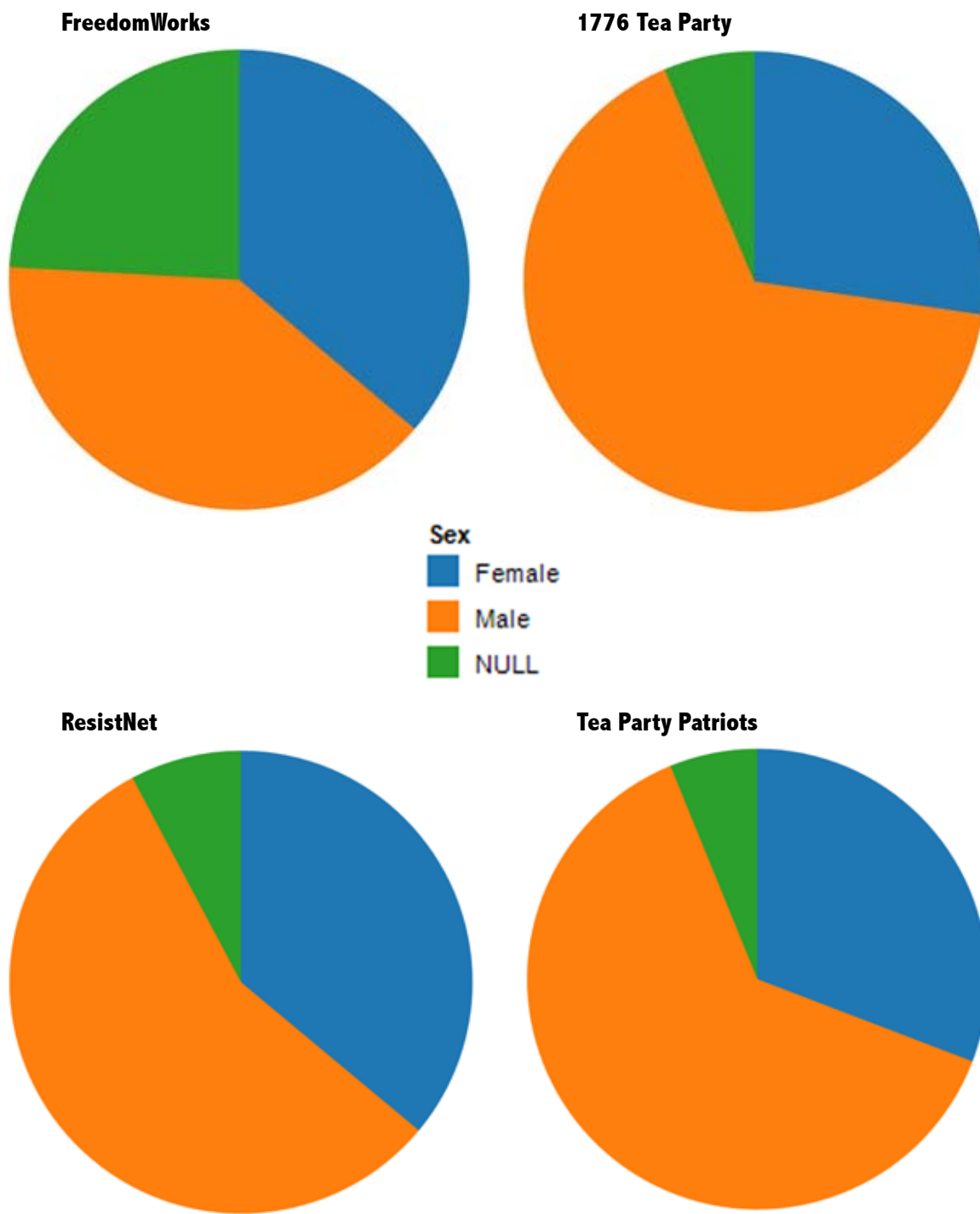


FIGURE 16. TEA PARTY MEMBERSHIP AND CORRELATION WITH UNEMPLOYMENT

Appendix B: Gender Analysis of Tea Party Membership

FIGURE 17. GENDER BREAKDOWNS OF TEA PARTY MEMBERSHIP BY FACTION



Notes

1 TEA PARTY FACTION DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

The data in this report was derived from a collection of online directories on the major national Tea Party faction websites: Tea Party Nation, Tea Party Patriots, 1776 Tea Party (also known as TeaParty.org), FreedomWorks Tea Party, and ResistNet Tea Party. The data for the sixth national Tea Party formation mentioned in this report, the Tea Party Express, was drawn from filings with the Federal Elections Commission (FEC).

The data provides a partial picture of the Tea Party activist base. It is important to note that there may be many more individuals who are not listed in these social networking directories – who either chose not to register, who have registered on some other site (such as one or more of the many local Tea Party sites), or who do not have sufficient computer skills.

Tea Party Membership Data

With the exception of the daily membership totals, the bulk of the Tea Party membership data used in this report was collected during the period from May 1 to May 5, 2010. Using software generously provided by Sequen-tum, an automated process allowed for the copying and compiling of the website membership data into a local SQL database.

Records retrieved from all five Tea Party faction sources generally included: name, city, state, country, and gender. Some records were incomplete – missing city, state, country, gender, etc. Incomplete records were included in the overall numbers, not in areas where data was missing. We also downloaded the contribution records from FEC.gov for Our Country Deserves Better PAC – TeaPartyExpress.com for the same period and imported those records.

From the initial captured material, we worked with the data to eliminate duplicates and extraneous data. We also normalized the data, making sure that column names were the same, and that state and abbreviations were consistent. We then imported that data into a main SQL database.

Once we had a completed Tea Party membership data set, we then geo-coded the set using the city and state information. That information was later used to map the location of membership location using Tableau Public.

After the importation process we ran specific queries to work specifically with Tea Party member data and to extract the information we needed. Those queries included: Tea Party Members by State, Tea Party Members by City, Tea Party Members by Faction, Tea Party Membership by City vs local Unemployment Rate, and Tea Party Membership Totals by City as a percentage of the City population.

Tea Party Chapter Data

The Tea Party chapter information in this report was also collected during the period from May 1 to May 5, 2010, using a process similar to how membership information was compiled. Due to poor site layout, one site required manual data entry of the group data.

The data was placed into a separate Tea Party Chapter database. We used the same process as we did with Tea Party membership data to clean and normalize the Tea Party chapter data. We also geo-coded the data to be able to map the chapter locations.

Additional Data Sources

In addition to the Tea Party data, we relied on several other data sources in this report. The city population data came from the 2008 US Census Data. The city unemployment rate data comes from the Bureau of Labor Statistics January 2010 Not Seasonally Adjusted Unemployment Rates for Metropolitan Areas Monthly Rankings.

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This is confirmed by the Pearson's r correlation coefficient of 0.08. Basically, this is a very weak correlation if it indicates any correlation at all. Correlation coefficients measure the degree of linear association between two variables, ranging from +1 a perfect positive correlation to -1 for a perfect negative correlation.

Though interpretations vary somewhat by authors, taking a conservative approach, anything less than a coefficient of about .19 is considered to be a very low to non-existent correlation. A more intuitive interpretation is to square the value, which produces the coefficient of determination, or r -squared. This is called a proportional

reduction of error statistic and basically indicates what percent of variation in Y (% TP members) is explained by the variation in X (% unemployment). This isn't really explanation in a causal sense, but rather if I know X, how much does this reduce my error in predicting Y. In this case, squaring 0.083 gives 0.0069. That is, if we know the percent unemployment in a city our error in predicting the percent of Tea Party members in the city population is reduced by 0.0064 — this is pretty much nothing. So, from the magnitude of the relationship it is safe to say that there is very little if any relationship between unemployment and online Tea Party membership, at least as evidenced in this data.

This conclusion is strengthened by the fact that Pearson's r is easily skewed by outliers. The high values, for instance, skew the line upward and make the correlation coefficient greater than it would be otherwise. For instance, just removing Nampa, FL (the highest outlier) reduces the correlation coefficient to 0.072 (and that's just removing one data point from a pretty sizeable sample. Removing the next 4 would make it go down even further because they are all above the line).

We also tested whether this correlation coefficient was statistically significant. In short, because the data was not randomly selected, normally distributed and the variances of the two variables were not equal Pearson's r can give a biased measure of statistical significance. We did some other data transformations to make the data fit these requirements, but these did not produce normal distributions. To employ a proxy for statistical significance, we used a randomization method that (1) mixes up the original data so that it is randomly distributed; (2) does this 10,000 times and calculates a new correlation coefficient each time; and (3) creates a population of correlation coefficients from this data that is randomly distributed — i.e., in which there is no relationship between unemployment and tea party online membership. This data can then be used to answer the following question: how likely are you to see a correlation as strong as the value found in the original data (0.08) if in fact there is no relationship between unemployment and Tea Party membership? This is the p-value. In this case, the p-value was 0.0741. This indicates that 7.4% of the values in this distribution are larger than the value we got (see the figure below for where our value landed in the distribution). Generally anything above 0.05 is rejected a "statistically non-significant." Basic this alpha level (the 0.05) is a measure of how willing you are to risk concluding that there is a relationship between the variables when in fact there is none. Generally social scientists says will risk this in 1/20 cases. In this instance (p= 0.0741) we would get our coefficient (r=0.083) 1/13.5 times in a population with no relationship between these two variables. In social science lingo, you would conclude that you cannot reject the null hypothesis of no relationship between the variables at the 0.05 level.

However, this is one of those cases where statistical significance does not really tell us that much about the data. If in fact the p-value was 0.0001, I would still be confident concluding there is little if any relationship between unemployment and Tea Party membership because the magnitude of the relationship (r=0.083) is so small as to be sociologically insignificant.

We also tested to determine the impact of removing further outliers. Dropping out the highest 7 outliers reduces the correlation coefficient to 0.014 and raises the p-value to 0.3982. This means that the correlation coefficient in the first test I ran is inflated by the impact of a few outliers and that there is an even greater chance that you could get this coefficient when there is no relationship between unemployment and Tea Party membership. The resultant graph shows that the line is even flatter than in the first analysis.

One caveat regarding this statistical outcome: the conclusions that can be drawn from it are strongest for the data set on which it was based. We can confidently say that there is no meaningful relationship between these variables across these 372 cities. It is much less clear how well this data can be extended to inferences about the entire population of the 8000+ cities in the Tea Party membership database for the period or the entire population of cities across the United States. Since this dataset is based on cities for which the Bureau of Labor Statistics had unemployment data on, it is likely that this is a set of cities that is larger in population than the whole population.

Summaries of the data:

```
summary(tp$perunemp)#summary information for unemployment across these cities
```

```
Min. 1st Qu. Median Mean 3rd Qu. Max.
```

```
5.00 9.00 10.00 10.65 12.00 22.00
```

```
> summary(tp$permemb) #sumamry information for percent Tea Party members across the cities.
```

```
Min. 1st Qu. Median Mean 3rd Qu. Max.
```

```
0.001893 0.039350 0.059780 0.076340 0.092840 0.924200
```