

Supplementary Material

Chapter 11: The Contemporary Era – Foundations

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**The Tea Party (2013)**

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*Formed in 2004, the Tea Party came to public prominence during the first years of the Obama administration. Members aggressively championed a religious, nativist, and small-government constitutional vision that they claim is rooted in the original understanding of the Constitution of the United States. Proponents insist that the Tea Party is an authentic populist movement. Detractors maintain that the movement is a tool of affluent conservative interests. Political scientists Theda Skocpol and Vanessa Williamson suggest the truth is more complicated. They write:*

*The Tea Party is neither a top-down creation nor a bottom-up explosion. This remarkable political outpouring is best understood as a combination of three intertwined forces. . . . Grassroots activist is certainly a key force, energized by angry, conservative-minded citizens who have formed vital local and regional groups. Another force is the panoply of national funders and ultra-free-market advocacy groups that seek to highlight and leverage grassroots efforts to further their long-term goal of remaking the Republican Party, pushing it towards the hard right on matters of taxation, public spending, and government regulation. Finally, the Tea Party cannot be understood without recognizing the mobilization provided by conservative media hosts who openly espouse and encourage the cause.<sup>1</sup>*

*The following statement of principles is from the Tea Party's website. Compare these principles with contemporary Republican Party platforms and demands made by previous populist movements. What are their similarities? What are their differences? Is the Tea Party simply an arm of the Republican Party or are Tea Party members animated by a very different constitutional vision? What broader principles unite the "15 non-negotiable core beliefs" laid out below?*

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Tea Party, "About Us"<sup>2</sup>

The Tea Party is a grassroots movement that calls awareness to any issue which challenges the security, sovereignty, or domestic tranquility of our beloved nation, the United States of America. From our founding, the Tea Party represents the voice of the true owners of the United States: WE THE PEOPLE.

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The Tea Party includes those who possess a strong belief in the foundational Judeo-Christian values embedded in our great founding documents. We believe the responsibility of our beloved nation is etched upon the hearts of true American Patriots from every race, religion, national origin, and walk of life sharing a common belief in the values which made and keep our beloved nation great. This belief led to the creation of the modern-day Tea Party.

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<sup>1</sup>Theda Skocpol and Vanessa Williamson, *The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 12–13.

<sup>2</sup><http://www.teaparty.org/about-us/>

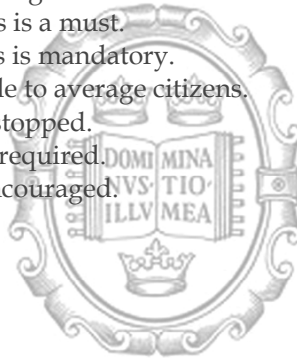
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We stand by the Constitution as inherently conservative. We serve as a beacon to the masses that have lost their way, a light illuminating the path to the original intentions of our Founding Fathers. We must raise a choir of voices declaring America must stand on the values which made us great. Only then will the politically blind see and deaf hear!

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### 15 Non-negotiable Core Beliefs

1. Illegal aliens are here illegally.
2. Pro-domestic employment is indispensable.
3. A strong military employment is essential.
4. Special interests must be eliminated.
5. Gun ownership is sacred.
6. Government must be downsized.
7. The national budget must be balanced.
8. Deficit spending must end.
9. Bailout and stimulus plans are illegal.
10. Reducing personal income taxes is a must.
11. Reducing business income taxes is mandatory.
12. Political offices must be available to average citizens.
13. Intrusive government must be stopped.
14. English as our core language is required.
15. Traditional family values are encouraged.



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