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EXPLAINING THE TEA PARTY'S SUCCESS IN 2010

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## ABSTRACT

*This thesis analyzes why the Tea Party was successful in the 2010 election cycle, specifically focusing on the role spending played. Looking at Republican primaries in which Tea Party candidates were involved, I found that primary spending in raw dollars was not as important relative to the share of the money spent in the primary. Furthermore, my results show that candidates who received endorsements from the Tea Party Express and Sarah Palin were the candidate who received the money. The endorsements acted as a signal to voters that these candidates shared the endorser's values and ideals. Thus, these endorsements acted as a signal that these were quality candidates to vote for, and increased their likelihood of success at the ballots.*

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

Despite having great success in the 2008 election cycle, economic conditions, anger over healthcare reform and rapidly increasing government debt were a burden to the Democratic Party entering the 2010 midterm elections. Riding this wave of disaffection came the Tea Party, a social movement turned political force. According to the Contract from America, a bottom-up developed platform for Tea Party candidates, the Tea Party stands for ten principles. These principles are

1. Protect the Constitution
2. Defund, Repeal, & Replace ObamaCare
3. Demand a Balanced Budget
4. Enact Fundamental Tax Reform
5. Restore Fiscal Responsibility & Constitutionally Limited Government
6. End Runaway Government Spending
7. Reject Cap & Trade
8. Pass an “All-of-the-Above” Energy Policy
9. Stop the Pork
10. Stop the Tax Hikes

Despite generally having little experience, Tea Party candidates proved to be surprisingly successful in both primaries and the general election. This left many asking “why were Tea Party candidates successful in some primary races and not others?” I

believe this is an important question to look at for a variety of reasons. First of all, identifying the factors that brought Tea Party candidates to power provides an insight as to how relative political outsiders can be successful in the future. Additionally, since there is so little research done on congressional primaries, this will add to the literature while also addressing an especially relevant area of interest. Furthermore, the Tea Party has had dramatic effects on Washington since its emergence in the 2010 election cycle. Many of the Tea Party candidates had little to no government experience, yet were still elected to hold high level positions in Washington. Furthermore, since their rise to prominence in the 2010 election cycle, gridlock and partisanship within Congress is at an all-time high. For being a relatively small group within not only Congress, but more importantly the Republican Party, they have played an extremely large role in shaping the actions of Congress and government.

I will first review literature on social movements, quality candidates and campaign finance in order to base my research and build a framework to work on. Next, I will lay out the theory that I will use in order to frame my research. I will then analyze what role spending had in the success of Tea Party candidates in a series of regression analyses. Finally, I will draw conclusions and identify areas to examine in order to build a more complete explanation for the success of the Tea Party in primary congressional elections.



## Chapter 2

### Toward an Explanation of the Tea Party's Success

There are several studies that must be examined in order to understand why the Tea Party was successful in the 2010 election cycle. After examining the literature, it becomes evident that little work has been done on congressional primaries, with the vast majority of research focusing on presidential primaries and general elections. As a result, the majority of the literature focuses on general election research with the assumption that it will hold true on the primary election level. I begin by identifying the principles that unify the Tea Party. Next, I discuss social movement literature, which predicts how social movements like the Tea Party will be coopted by the Tea Party. Then I discuss insights from the literature on candidate quality and spending. Finally, I focus specifically on the article “Tea Time in America? The Impact of the Tea Party Movement on the 2010 Midterm Elections” by Karpowitz, et al (2011), which is the primary basis for much of my research.

Before delving too deeply into literature about why the Tea Party was successful in primaries, I believe it is important to first define what the Tea Party is. The Tea Party began as a social movement in opposition to the Obama administration and congressional Democrats. Based on polling data of Tea Party supporters, there are three things that tie the Tea Party together. (1) There is a deep distrust of President Obama and congressional Democrats, (2) there is deep cynicism about the state of the current economy and its future, and (3) while most Tea Party candidates ran along Republican Party lines, they do not fully, or neatly, fit under the Republican Party umbrella (Ashbee 2011). Addressing

the first point, due to the Wall Street bailouts and massive expansion in government deficits and debts, many fiscally conservative voters turned away from the Obama administration. Along those same lines, the bursting of the housing bubble, the collapsing of Bear Stearns and Lehman Brothers, and massive increases in unemployment had many Americans pessimistic about the economy and what the future held. Thirdly, the Tea Party ran candidates in many Republican primaries in order to unseat “establishment” members of Congress in the hopes of putting in place more fiscally conservative Tea Party members that would try to turn the tide away from the deficit spending direction Washington had been going. While the Tea Party is very complex and multifaceted, these three points act as a common ground for Tea Party members. Additionally, Bailey et al. (2012) find that there is a strong focus on reducing government spending and lowering taxes, relaxing environment restriction, and opposition to healthcare reform. All of these stances placed them in firm resistance to President Obama and congressional Democrats.

As stated previously, the Tea Party began largely as a social movement. That raises the questions of “How and why did the Tea Party come to be a political force?” The Tea Party began with popular dissatisfaction with the direction that the Obama administration and congressional Democrats were taking the country, and in just a relatively short period of time, was able to mobilize and take back some of the control that Democrats enjoyed in Congress following the 2006 and 2008 elections.

Schwartz (2010) explains that social movements utilize parties in order to force their concerns onto the political agenda. With the Tea Party being largely leaderless, it required a platform in order to express its concerns and for meaningful change to be implemented. Conversely, parties utilize social movements as leverage when they adopt

issues and, in turn, bring in new supporters. With the Tea Party having such a large and passionate voice going into the 2010 midterm elections, it made perfect sense for the Republican Party to bring Tea Party supporters into the fold. The joining of forces did not go as smoothly as either side may have wished, though. The Tea Party utilized an invasive strategy, which means “a movement behaves like an insurgent when it arises within a party to oppose established personnel, procedures, or parties” (Schwartz 2010, 593). Tea Party candidates entered the fray in order to remove Republican candidates who were seen as too close to the establishment. In contrast, the Republican establishment attempted to use a less hostile strategy of cooptation, which is when “parties...attempt to alter movements through cooptation, where movement members are given some voice, in order to control their potential for disruption and to temper the fervor of their demands” (Schwartz 2010, 597). While the Republican establishment has tried to limit the power of the Tea Party within its ranks, it has encountered difficulties over the years in doing so. Courser (2012) notes that the Tea Party differs from previous social movements that pushed for populist democracy. While others were able to form parties within government, the Tea Party has been unable to exert its force in the established parties, and has instead relied on resistance to organization, remaining largely leaderless and resistant to mobilization. Thus, while the Tea Party does share some attributes of prototypical social movements, it is unique and difficult to explain fully under the social movement moniker.

Another question that the Tea Party brought to the forefront was how were they so successful despite having so little success? According to Karpowitz et al.'s (2011) data, out of the 157 Tea Party candidates who ran as Republicans, only 13 were incumbents.

This would suggest Tea Party candidates should not have been very successful due to the widely accepted incumbency advantage. In stark contrast, 148 of these 157 candidates were able to advance through the primaries and onto the general election, *a success rate of 94.3%*. This would suggest that other factors were at play. Buttice and Stone (2012) show that “(1) candidate-quality differences affect voting choice; (2) that the effect of candidate quality increases with reduced differences in quality and ideology; (3) and that the effect of issues on voting depends on candidate differences in quality and ideology” (870). As a result, quality incumbents are incentivized to moderate while non-quality candidates are not. This can be seen in many races involving Tea Party candidates. With so many political newcomers involved, Tea Party candidates were able to maintain their partisanship while their incumbent counterparts moderated.

Furthermore, Gordon and Landa (2009) show that extremely high-quality incumbent candidates can be harmed by the incumbency advantage because voters are unable to differentiate high- and low-quality incumbent candidates from one another. This would act as a negative to long-tenured members of Congress involved in races with Tea Party candidates that had little to moderate levels of experience. As long as a Tea Party candidate had some name recognition relative to their incumbent counterparts, they received a positive boost from this phenomenon. Additionally, Dominguez (2011) finds that endorsements significantly increases a candidate’s vote share in primary races, even when campaign funds and other measures of candidate quality are taken into account. Endorsements from reputable and trusted sources act as a signal to voters in low-information races (primaries) that a candidate is worth voting for, thus dramatically increasing the likelihood of their success in the primaries.

A final piece in the explanation of the Tea Party's success comes from their success at spending relative to their opponents. Jacobson (1978) finds that "spending by challengers has a much greater impact on the outcome than does spending by incumbents," and that "campaign expenditures buy nonincumbents the necessary voter recognition already enjoyed by incumbents prior to the campaign" (469). 144 Tea Party Republicans did not enjoy the advantages of incumbent status. As a result, it was imperative that they spend and spend significantly in order to overcome the difficulties that challengers face. Since over 94% of Tea Party Republicans advanced past the primaries, I suspect that spending played a very significant role in their success.

Karpowitz et al. (2011) is one of the small number of articles looking at Tea Party candidate success in primary races. They analyzed the determinants of vote share in Republican primaries in 2010. Karpowitz et al argued that Tea Party candidates would be more successful – receive a higher share of the vote – where they faced fewer opponents, if they were incumbents, if the primary was held early, if they received endorsements from either Sarah Palin or the Tea Party Express, and if they signed the Contract from America. Their results show on average, incumbents enjoy a 40 point expected vote advantage over their opponents. Furthermore, candidates that received endorsements from the Tea Party Express or Sarah Palin received an 8-9% increase in their vote share, while individuals who signed the Contract from America saw about a 20% increase in their vote share. I examine the effect of campaign spending on a candidate's vote shares in Republican primaries, and specifically in Republican primaries in which Tea Party candidates were involved. As a result, I will form a better understanding of why Tea Party candidates were successful in some primaries and not others.

### **Hypotheses**

For my analysis, I'm examining candidate's primary vote share in 2010 House races. There are several reasons why the Tea Party was successful in some primaries and not others. First of all, as stated previously, individuals who align with Tea Party principles are strongly opposed to President Obama and congressional Democrats. This implies that Tea Party candidates in districts where Obama won a large share of the vote in 2008 would be expected to fare less well than in districts the President won a smaller share of the vote. If they did choose to run in pro-Obama districts, their chances of success would be severely limited. As a result, I hypothesize that Tea Party candidates that ran in pro-Obama districts would see less success at the polls, while Tea Party candidates that ran in anti-Obama districts would see their primary vote share increase.

Using the findings of Jacobson (1978), challengers must raise and spend significant sums of money in order to achieve the recognition and prominence that incumbents already possess. Only 13 of the 157 Tea Party candidates were incumbents. I hypothesize the average Tea Party candidate would need to spend more money, and particularly more money relative to his/her opponent to achieve name recognition necessary to gain support and to win. Along those same lines, I hypothesize that as a candidate's share of the spending increases, so will his/her vote share. In some races, small amounts of money are spent relative to other races. As a result, I hypothesize that the spending of a candidate, relative to his/her opponents, will be more important versus just the raw number of dollars spent.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Analysis**

#### **Design**

My research design is to model the share of the vote in Republican primaries in 2010. I largely followed the design of Karpowitz et al. (2011). In their analysis, they examined what effect endorsements from Sarah Palin and/or the Tea Party Express had on a candidate's vote share, along with what effect a candidate signing the Contract from America had. In their analysis, they included controls for the number of candidates running in a primary, the party of the candidate, if the primary was early on in the process, and whether a candidate was an incumbent or not.

For the purpose of my analysis, I included all of Karpowitz et al.'s (2011) measures, minus whether a primary was held early on. I did this because that measure was not included in the dataset that Karpowitz provided. Once additional variables are included, I believe that early primary status will not have a large impact my results. I am more interested in examining the effect of candidates spending on their primary vote share. In order to accomplish this, I collected the total amount of money each candidate spent by each candidate included in Karpowitz et al.'s (2011) analysis utilizing OpenSecrets.org and the FEC's spending database. I also calculated the share of each candidates spending in the primary. The process in which I calculated this measure will be addressed in the next section. Furthermore, with the Tea Party being formulated

largely in opposition to Barack Obama's administration and congressional districts, I included Barack Obama's 2008 district-level vote share.

### **Measurement**

Karpowitz et al. (2011) identified 2009 candidates that took part in the primary process. Within this set of candidates I defined a candidate a member of the Tea Party if he/she was a Republican candidate that signed the Contract from America. Out of the 2009 candidates, 157 individuals met this definition. While there were a few individuals that ran outside of the Republican Party, the vast majority ran as Republicans running in Republican primaries. Therefore, I analyze this subset of candidates.

I will first explain Karpowitz et al.'s (2011) measures, I will then move on to my own. Karpowitz et al. coded party as Democrats=0, Republicans=1, Green=2, Libertarian=3, Independent=4 and Other=5. The number running was defined as the number of candidates running in a party primary. For incumbent status, incumbents were coded as a 1 if they were an incumbent and 0 if not. If a candidate signed the Contract from America, he or she was coded as a 1 and if they did not, they were a 0. Also, if candidates were endorsed by either the Tea Party Express or Sarah Palin, they were coded as a 1, and if not, a 0.

I used the 2014 Partisan Voter Index by State and District, which came from the Cook Political Report to measure Barack Obama's vote share in 2008 in each district. In order to determine the amount spent prior to the primary, I utilized data from both OpenSecrets and the FEC. I was unable to collect actual figures for primary spending, so



I had to develop my own measure. For the 2010 election cycle, campaign finance data was collected from January 1, 2009 to December 31, 2010. If a candidate did not make it past the primaries, I assumed that they did not spend money past the primary, and thus coded their primary spending as the total provided by the FEC or OpenSecrets. If a candidate ran in the general election, I worked under the assumption that their spending was constant over the election cycle. I then divided the total amount of money spent over the course of the election cycle by twenty-four, in order to determine a monthly spending figure. If the primary was held in August of 2010, twenty months into the election cycle, I multiplied the monthly spending figure by twenty in order to determine the amount of money spent prior to the primary.

For example, if a candidate spent \$240,000 over the course of the election cycle and competed in the general election, I divided that figure by twenty-four for a monthly spending figure of \$10,000. If the primary of that candidate was in August of 2010, twenty months into the election cycle, I worked under the assumption the candidate spent \$200,000 leading up to the primary. In order to determine a candidate's share of the spending in a primary, I divided the amount the candidate spent in the primary by the sum of the money spent by members of the same party in the same district in the same Republican (or open) primary. For example, if Republicans in a district spent \$100,000 and Candidate A spent \$10,000, Candidate A's share of the spending would be 10%.

## Results

My analysis will be focused on predicting vote share in every primary election in 2010 by first replicating Karpowitz's findings to show what effect endorsements had on the success of Tea Party candidates. These results are presented in Table 1. Since many candidates were endorsed by both the Tea Party Express and Sarah Palin, these two variables are highly collinear. Therefore I estimated the effects of each endorsement separately, examining the effect of endorsement by the Tea Party in Model 1 and the effect of a Sarah Palin endorsement in Model 2. Next, I will include measures of primary spending in order to determine what effect spending had in conjunction with endorsements and other factors Karpowitz examined.

Table 1: Replication of Karpowitz et al.'s Findings

Independent Variable	Model 1		Model 2	
Number of candidates running in a primary	-3.29	***	-3.289	***
	.196		.195	
Incumbent	43.394	***	44.067	***
	1.819		1.794	
Endorsed by Tea Party Express	9.456	***	--	
	3.495		--	
Endorsed by Sarah Palin	--		11.501	***
	--		3.357	
Signed Contract from America	22.211	***	22.003	***
	1.438		1.437	
Constant	37.083		37.001	
n	970		970	
RSq	.597		.599	
Standard Errors are reported under the coefficients. *= $p < .10$ , **= $p < .05$ , ***= $p < .01$ , one-tailed; #= $p < .10$ , ##= $p < .05$ , ###= $p < .01$				

My results match up very well with Karpowitz et al.'s (2011) initial findings. As was expected, as the number of candidates running in a primary increases, the expected vote share decreases. This is due to the votes being spread out over more candidates. Furthermore, being an incumbent is very important, resulting in an expected increase in vote share of 40 points. Furthermore, endorsements from either Sarah Palin or the Tea Party Express proved to be influential. Endorsements act as a signal to voters that a candidate is worth their vote, thus resulting in a significant increase in expected vote share. Finally, signing the Contract from America proved to be very influential on the vote share of a candidate. If a candidate signed the Contract from America, their expected vote share increased by approximately 22%.

After replicating Karpowitz et al.'s analysis, I then added three additional variables to the model. Barack Obama's district-level vote share in the 2008 Presidential election, the total number of dollars spent in a candidate's primary, and a candidate's share of the spending in his/her primary. My results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Models of Primary Vote Share

Independent Variable	Model 1: All candidates		Model 2: Races in which TP candidates were involved		Model 3: TP candidates receiving TPE Endorsement		Model 4: TP candidates receiving Sarah Palin Endorsement	
Obama's 2008 District-Level Vote Share	-.009		.070		.071		.071	
	.026		.093		.093		.093	
Number of candidates running in a primary	-2.653	***	-4.541	***	-4.573	***	-4.610	***
	.166		.622		.621		.619	
Party of the candidate	-3.301	***	--		--		--	
	.782							
Incumbent	16.731	***	17.707	***	18.768	***	19.086	***
	1.328		5.760		5.686		5.634	
Signed Contract from America	5.757	***	--		--		--	
	1.252							
Endorsed by Tea Party Express	3.575	##	6.169		5.555		--	
	2.747		5.492		5.470			
Endorsed by Sarah Palin	5.827	**	4.931		--		4.428	
	2.618		4.446				4.429	
\$'s Spent in Primary	1.22e-06	***	2.51e-07		3.96e-07		4.22e-07	
	6.00e-07		1.42e-06		1.41e-06		1.41e-06	
Share of Spending in Primary	.359	***	.178	***	.176	***	.174	***

	.014		.040		.040		.040	
Constant	31.270		49.224		49.532		49.739	
n	1079		116		116		116	
RSq	.793		.575		.571		.552	
Standard Errors are reported under the coefficients. *= $p < .10$ , **= $p < .05$ , ***= $p < .01$ , one-tailed; #= $p < .10$ , ##= $p < .05$ , ###= $p < .01$								

Table 2 shows the results from a series of multiple regressions. In all cases, the vote share of the candidate in the primary is the dependent variable. Model 1 included all races and is meant to act as a baseline for comparison. As Barack Obama's vote share in 2008 increased in a district increased, the vote share of the candidate decreased. While this variable is not significant, it is telling of the 2010 election. Due to large dissatisfaction with Barack Obama and the Democratic Party, voters were turning away from their agenda. This is reflected in Republicans taking back the House and gaining seats in the Senate. Also, there is an inverse relationship between the number of candidates in a primary and the vote share of the candidates. As more candidates become involved in a race, the vote gets diffused among the candidates, thus making it more difficult to achieve large shares of the vote. In Model 1, each additional candidate in a primary reduces the expected vote share of a candidate by over 2.5%. There is also an inverse relationship between the party of the candidate and his or her vote share in the primary. For my analysis, Democrats are coded as 0's and Republicans are coded as 1's. Candidates outside of those classifications are coded 3's, 4's and 5's. Due to the two-party system that we have, it makes sense that individuals outside of the main two parties saw less success at the polls. Incumbency for a candidate increases their expected vote

share by over 16.5%. This provides a candidate with a significant advantage, regardless of other factors going on in a race.

I identified Tea Party candidates by whether they signed the “Contract from America.” The results show that candidates who signed the Contract from America saw a 5.8% increase in their primary vote shares. This is further evidence of the Tea Party’s success in the 2010 election cycle and the nation’s shift from the Democratic agenda. Along the same lines, candidates who received endorsements from either the Tea Party Express or Sarah Palin saw an increase in their primary vote shares, but the results are not significant in a model that includes spending measures. The evidence suggests that both the raw number of dollars and the share of money spent in a race increased the average vote share received by a candidate. Candidates who were able to raise and spend more money had greater success.

Model 2 specifically looked at primaries in which a Republican Tea Party candidate was involved. All of the relationships from Model 1 held up, with the exception of the relationship between Obama’s vote share in 2008 and candidate’s primary vote shares. In this case, since more non-Tea Party candidates made it through the primaries than Tea Party candidates, the direct relationship would suggest that either the Tea Party enthusiasm was not as great as originally thought, or not all Tea Party candidates were viewed as quality candidates. Also, in the first model in Table 2, an endorsement from Sarah Palin was significant. In Model 2, this endorsement loses significance. I also find that in the subset of races that included Tea Party candidates, the total amount of spending in the primary loses significance.

The Tea Party Express endorsed 35 Republican candidates (6 Tea Party candidates), while Sarah Palin endorsed 24 candidates (10 Tea Party candidates), with two candidates receiving endorsements from both. When looking solely at races in which Tea Party candidates were involved, money became the determining factor in the success of a candidate instead of whether he or she was endorsed. One explanation of this could be that endorsements acted as a signal to voters that an individual was a quality candidate, prompting them to have greater success at the polls. Since the total number of dollars spent loses its significance, this would suggest that the total amount of spending is not as important as a candidate's total share of the spending in these races. If a candidate can purchase enough influence through limited spending, more dollars spent will have no impact. A 1% increase in the share of spending resulted in an expected vote share increase of .18%. That means that if a candidate had a significant lead in spending, he/her would receive a great advantage over his/her opponent.

Models 3 and 4 in Table 2 are estimated with only the endorsement from the Tea Party Express or Sarah Palin, respectively. Both show that an endorsement from either increases the vote share for the candidate, but neither is significant. As stated previously, once primary spending and the share of the spending are included, endorsements are no longer important. My results in Models 3 & 4 align very closely with Model 2.

In addition to an analysis of vote share, I also analyzed the probability of victory in the primary. Candidates, after all, care most about winning. I estimated a logit model in order to determine what effects my independent variables had on the probability a Tea Party candidate won in Republican primary races. Table 3 shows my results.

**Table 3: Predicting Tea Party Candidates' Chance of Victory**

Independent Variable	Model 1: Republican Races		Model 2: Nonincumbent, Unendorsed Tea Party Races	
Obama's 2008 District-Level Vote Share	8.78e-4		.123	#
Number of Candidates Running in Primary	.188	***	-4.226	***
Incumbent	.836	#	--	
Endorsed by Tea Party Express	1.779	*	--	
Endorsed by Sarah Palin	1.399	#	--	
Tea Party Republican	3.583	***	--	
\$'s Spent in Primary	3.06e-7		4.24e-08	
Share of Spending in Primary	.0825	***	.187	***
Constant	-5.878			
N	938		116	

\*=p<.10, \*\*=p<.05, \*\*\*=p<.01, one-tailed; #=p<.10, ##=p<.05, ###=p<.01

Model 1 examined Republican primaries specifically. Similar to my initial findings, signing the Contract from America, which in this case is represented as “Tea Party Republican, proves to be very significant. Being a Tea Party candidate improved a Republican’s chances of winning their primary. Furthermore, the share of a candidate’s spending in his or her primary was significant as well. As a candidate spent a larger proportion of the money in a primary, the likelihood they won the primary increased. Model 2 looked specifically at unendorsed, nonincumbent Tea Party candidates. With the



vast majority of Tea Party candidates falling under that category, I thought it would be important to determine what gave them so much success at the polls. For these individuals, the larger the proportion of money spent in their primary, the higher the likelihood was that they won their primary. Thus, spending did play a role in the success of the Tea Party in the 2010 primary elections.

Figure 1: Tea Party Candidates Share of Spending vs. Non-Tea Party Candidates

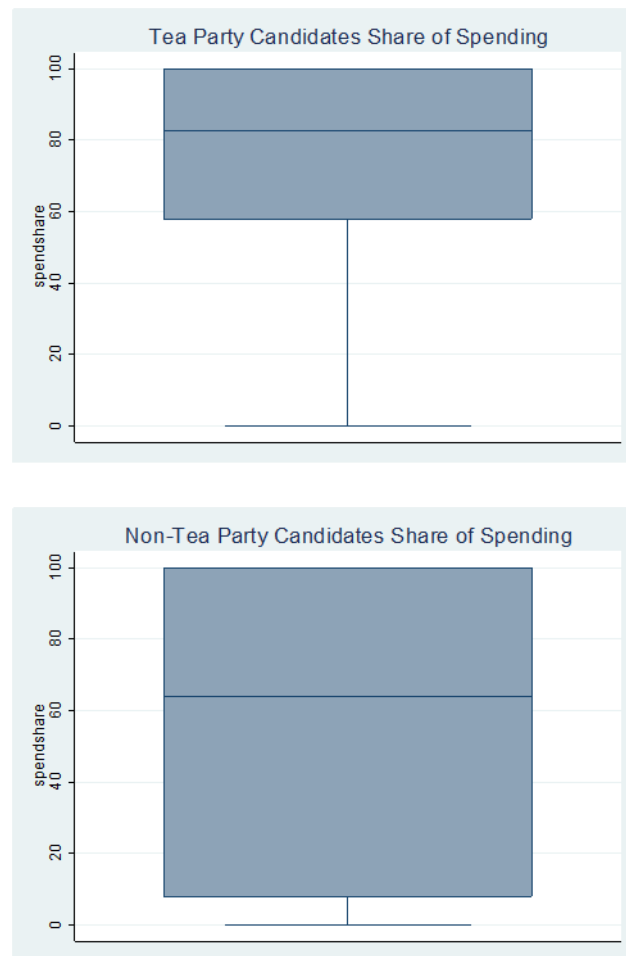


Figure 1 shows the share of spending by Tea Party Republicans relative to Non-Tea Party candidates. The median Tea Party Republican spent slightly over 80% of the money in the primary while the median non-Tea Party candidates spent slightly over 60% of the money in the primary. Thus, Tea Party Republicans had an important advantage in the money spent relative to their counterparts.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Conclusion**

In 2010, the newfound Tea Party had unprecedented success in the primaries, with 148 of the 157 Republicans who signed the Contract from America advancing to the general election. Several conclusions can be drawn from the analysis. Total spending and a candidate's share of the spending in a primary proved to be significant factors in not only a candidate's vote share, but also in the likelihood a candidate won his/her primary. My research supports Jacobson's (1978) findings: challengers need to spend significant sums of money in order to achieve the recognition that their incumbent counterparts already enjoy. With so few Tea Party candidates enjoying the advantages of incumbency, they were forced to spend, and they did. Despite this, Tea Party candidates were able to have significant success, perhaps more than they should have enjoyed. This speaks to the dissatisfaction with Barack Obama's administration and congressional Democrats, which was widespread throughout the US. With Tea Party candidates representing virtually polar opposite stances as Obama and congressional Democrats, they were set up perfectly to have great success in the 2010 midterms.

After examining the Tea Party candidates that did not advance past the primaries, there are several findings stand out. Only one Tea Party candidate spent a majority of the money in the primary. Three of the candidates spent six figures, while five more spent five figures, showing that even though they did not win their primary, they still had significant spending capabilities. Six of the Tea Party candidates who did not advance

past the primaries lost to a fellow Tea Party candidate, while another lost to an incumbent. This provides further evidence of how dominate the Tea Party was in the primary elections in 2010.

There are several reasons why my study is important. First of all, there is a shockingly low amount of research done on congressional primaries. My study adds to this literature. Secondly, little work has been done on the Tea Party and its success. My study finds that spending did play a significant role for the success of Tea Party candidates. While many people believe that the Tea Party is a grassroots organization funded largely by small donations, the Tea Party has much larger, much more financially influential backers. Additionally, my study shows how a social movement can be coopted into a political party, and how to do it successfully.

There were several limitations to my analysis. First of all, because I was unable to find spending data prior to the primaries, I had to make several assumptions in order to calculate candidate's spending. It is very likely that candidates who advanced past the primaries received more money going into the general election, but there was no viable way to take this into account. As a result, I made the assumption that money spent was evenly distributed over the course of the election cycle. It is unclear how realistic this assumption is. Another limitation was that spending data was not available for all candidates. While those that did not provide spending data did not have great success in the primaries, the lack of data for them could mean I have underestimated the role of spending, especially if those candidates for which there is no data simply did not spend much money.

My analysis suggests several areas for future research. First of all, additional variables, like public opinion data and district-level demographic information, can be included. These would provide a better picture of exactly who the Tea Party's backers were in terms of socioeconomic status. Additionally, a comparative analysis on why the Tea Party social movement was able to be coopted by the Republican Party so successfully, while groups like Occupy Wall Street did not have the same success can be done. Finally, an updated analysis including the 2012 primaries can be done, in order to determine if my results hold up into subsequent elections.

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## ACADEMIC VITA

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### EDUCATION

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**The Pennsylvania State University** University Park, PA  
**The Schreyer Honors College, Paterno Fellows**  
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Major: Bachelor of Arts in Political Science Expected Graduation: May 2014  
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### ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIPS/ACTIVITIES

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#### **Political Science Association**

*Treasurer/Member*

- Maintain and organize the organization's finances, arrange trips to various relevant locations

#### **The National Society of Collegiate Scholars**

*Member*

- Acquired professional development skills through seminars from professionals in various fields and participated in charity events such as blood drives

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

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#### **De Facto States in World Politics Project**

*Undergraduate Researcher*

University Park, PA  
October 2011-Present

- Researched histories of countries based in the Middle East including Iran, Kazakhstan, Lebanon and Syria for the presence of de facto states or states-within-states, utilizing a variety of sources

#### **International Center for the Study of Terrorism**

*Intern*

University Park, PA  
Spring 2011

- Processed newspaper articles for relevancy, coded newspaper articles into the dataset, studied the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA), Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), and Al-Muhajiroun