

# Republican Radicals in a Polarised Union

WHAT IDEAS ARE DIVIDING CONSERVATIVES AND FRACTURING THE REPUBLICAN PARTY?

## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	1
<i>Research question and methodology</i> .....	4
<i>Key concepts</i> .....	6
<i>Structure of the thesis</i> .....	7
<b>1. What is the Tea Party movement?</b> .....	9
<i>1.1 A Short Narrative</i> .....	10
<i>1.2 A critical review of the literature so far</i> .....	12
<i>1.3 Conclusion</i> .....	24
<b>2. The Constitution, Democracy and the role of the Federal Government</b> .....	26
<i>2.1 A Strong National Government and the Constitution</i> .....	32
<i>2.2 Progressivism within or without the bounds of the Constitution</i> .....	33
<i>2.3 Progressives un-Democratic/Democratic Take on the Constitution</i> .....	38
<i>2.5 Conclusion</i> .....	46
<b>3. The Constitution, Welfare State and the Growth of the Federal Government</b> .....	48
<i>3.1 Hoover and Roosevelt: constrained and unconstrained approaches to reform</i> .....	51
<i>3.2 The New Deal politics</i> .....	57
<i>3.3. Growth of the Welfare State and Federal Debt</i> .....	60
<i>3.4 Conclusion</i> .....	64
<b>4. Conservatives and the Republican Party</b> .....	65
<i>4.1 Contradiction from the beginning of the Conservative Movement</i> .....	66
<i>4.2 The Conservative Movement and the GOP</i> .....	71
<i>4.3 Conclusion</i> .....	80
<b>Chapter 5: Contradictions on the Right</b> .....	82
<i>5.1 Ronald Reagan and the GOP</i> .....	84
<i>5.2 Divisions in Foreign Policy</i> .....	86
<i>5.2 Conclusion</i> .....	100
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	102
<b>Sources</b> .....	105

## Introduction

In 2008 America elected its first President of African-American descent, Barack Obama. He campaigned on a message of hope and change, which he sold as “Change We Can Believe In,” and pledged to herald in an age of bi-partisan politics<sup>1</sup>. Alas, the opposite occurred. Many Americans couldn’t believe in the change – many feared and hated what it entailed. Obama was thus regarded as deeply ideological by his political opponents, and not implausibly. Since President Obama was inaugurated on January 21<sup>st</sup> 2009, American politics has become more polarised, and this is well characterised in the emergence of two antagonistic and angry populist movements: “Black Lives Matter” and “the Tea Party.” There is now widespread suspicion of the “Washington D.C. Establishment”, but with widely diverging opinions on how this ought to be combatted, while the dissatisfied are ambiguous about specific policy recommendations<sup>2</sup>.

It is fair to say that when Obama leaves the White House the U.S.A’s problems will not be solved: federal debt remains at historic highs, whereas labour participation is reaching historic lows; racial harmony continues to be elusive; the economy is inherently weak, and the Federal Reserve still has interest rates at close to their historic lows, despite their having been at these lows for already unprecedented lengths of time; in spite of these attempts to prop up a faltering economy, the life expectancy of white Americans without a high school diploma has dramatically decreased over recent years, as their susceptibility to vice grows, and political

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<sup>1</sup> Obama in 2008 said at a rally "turn the page on the ugly partisanship in Washington, so we can bring Democrats and Republicans together to pass an agenda that works for the American people." Barack Obama: "Remarks Introducing Senator Joseph Biden as the 2008 Democratic Vice-Presidential Nominee in Springfield, Illinois," August 23, 2008. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=77954> This view was predominant in the mainstream media.

<sup>2</sup> "Public Trust In Government: 1958-2015". 2015. *Pew Research Center For The People And The Press*. <http://www.people-press.org/2015/11/23/public-trust-in-government-1958-2015/>. "Beyond Distrust: How Americans View Their Government". 2015. *Pew Research Center For The People And The Press*. <http://www.people-press.org/2015/11/23/beyond-distrust-how-americans-view-their-government/>.

concerns such as illegal immigration, trade, and low-wages, remain unaddressed<sup>3</sup>. Such times provide fertile grounds for the emergence of populist politics and cheap demagoguery. And as Americans move to choose Obama's successor, the public's disillusionment with politics and its political class can be seen with pellucid clarity in the political emergence of both Donald Trump - a celebrity businessman who wants to 'Make America Great Again' - and Bernie Sanders, a left-wing independent Senator from Vermont, who is proposing a vast expansion of the welfare state.

The Tea Party movement came to national prominence during the Tax Day protests of April 15<sup>th</sup> 2009, which opposed the Recovery Act (a Keynesian stimulus package totalling \$837 billion), and the Affordable Care Act (a sweeping reform of healthcare that made it compulsory to purchase health insurance); hence they demanded a return to 'fiscal sanity' as these projects would drive the Federal Debt to unprecedented heights. Broadly, the movement seeks a return to constitutional governance, for the Federal government to become fiscally responsible, and ardently supports free enterprise<sup>4</sup>. Substance and consistency is often lacking among Tea Partiers. Regardless, President Obama has been acting diametrically to their wishes. The Republican Party had already dissatisfied many conservatives during George H. W. Bush's presidency (2001-2008), with its penchant for profligacy and reckless militarism; so the actions of Obama, coming immediately after Bush, provoked severe recriminations. Obama's supporters, and many liberal commentators, have frequently responded to the movement's opposition and apparent obstructionism, by calling the activists "tea baggers" and portraying them

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<sup>3</sup> In order of appearance, Treasurydirect.gov, 2016. "Debt To The Penny (Daily History Search Application)". <http://www.treasurydirect.gov/NP/debt/current> ; Tavernise, Sabrina. 2012. "Life Expectancy For Less Educated Whites In U.S. Is Shrinking". *Nytimes.Com*. [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/21/us/life-expectancy-for-less-educated-whites-in-us-is-shrinking.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/21/us/life-expectancy-for-less-educated-whites-in-us-is-shrinking.html?_r=0). Khazan, Olga. 2015. "Middle-Aged White Americans Are Dying Of Despair". *The Atlantic*. <http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2015/11/boomers-deaths-pnas/413971/>.

<sup>4</sup> Contract From America provides the most convenient manifesto for the movement. It has been signed by Tea Party influenced politicians and hundreds of Tea Party organisations, local and national, and can be found here "The Contract From America | Contract From America". 2016. *Contractfromamerica.Org*. Accessed May 26. <http://contractfromamerica.org/the-contract-from-america/>. From here you can access organisation's websites and see the similar of their rhetoric. A notable amount are shutdown.

as divisive radicals who dream erroneously of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and all of its presumed moral culpabilities. Too often the movement has been characterised incorrectly as racist, stupid and bigoted<sup>5</sup>. The Tea Party movement has been associated with the more despicable manifestations of opposition to Obama, such as the “birther” spectacle, when many American citizens sincerely believed – and many still do – that Obama was not a natural born citizen, and thus constitutionally prohibited from the Presidency<sup>6</sup>. In short, petulant name-calling and cheap rhetoric have often dominated over rational arguments that have involved the Tea Party movement, because of polarisation in American politics, and not only because of their actions and Obama’s administration.

Ideology and party polarisation have taken the USA, via a different path, towards something resembling the mass parties that can be seen in the United Kingdom, which runs contrary to the traditional dominance of party structure by the States of the Union, which made for more pronounced local variations. With the emergence of the so-called Culture War, which has placed the secular against the religious, the conflict is now being fought out at the Federal level, and on a mass scale.

Consequently:

‘social forces have pushed American parties into something of a de facto convergence on this model, as heightened social cleavages and party polarization serve to mimic the function if not the form of mass parties.’<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> This is not to say that movement doesn’t have it is bigoted or ignorant elements. Obama is quoted as calling them “tea-baggers” and lude slang term for an unpleasant act in Jonathan Alter’s *The Promise: President Obama, Year One* (2010) Simon & Schuster. London. But not to justify the template accusations of racism and idiocy that are so frequent as to be pointless to reference.

<sup>6</sup> It is now widely acknowledged that the “Birther” spectacle began with Hilary Clinton’s failed nomination contest with Obama. See: Smith, Ben and Byron Tau. 2011. "Birtherism: Where It All Began". *POLITICO*. <http://www.politico.com/story/2011/04/birtherism-where-it-all-began-053563>. Swaine, Jon. 2011. "Birther Row Began With Hillary Clinton". *Telegraph.Co.Uk*. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/barackobama/8478044/Birther-row-began-with-Hillary-Clinton.html>.

<sup>7</sup> Casey, Terrence. 2011. *The legacy of the crash: how the financial crisis changed America and Britain*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. pg. 29.

These crude, polarising tendencies have come from ideologies, or articulated worldviews, rather than simple association with a party. It is the hatred of the other ideology, or worldview, and its mutual reciprocation that has led to this polarisation in politics, and not the partisanship of politicians. According to Tea Partiers and conservatives, the Federal Government has become even more dominant, which does not naturally suit America's history, customs and culture. Those who place an emphasis on State's rights, rather than a strong national government that promotes economic growth, see reducing the size of government and strengthening the States separation from the Federal Government as paramount<sup>8</sup>. This has led to a confrontational style of politics, and a desire to modernize the Republican Party, which has been antagonising many Republican voters; as Tea Partiers and other conservatives seek radical change they have encountered obstacles, particularly from the Chamber of Commerce, which spent big in 2012 and 2014 election cycles to prevent radicals, who they perceived to be unelectable in the general, from winning Republican nominations, and campaigning for Democrats in general elections<sup>9</sup>.

### **Research question and methodology**

The central purpose and research question of this thesis is threefold: to outline the polarized nature in American politics, both within and without of the Republican Party, and before and after the Tea Party movement; and secondly, to see if the Tea Party movement has affected new divisions in the Republican Party, or whether it is

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<sup>8</sup> There are numerous articles on polarisation, but it clearly remained an issue since the rise of a national conservative ideology: Geoffrey C. Layman and Thomas M. Carsey 2002 *Party Polarization and "Conflict Extension" in the American Electorate*. *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 46, No. 4 (Oct., 2002), pp. 786-802 ; John C. Pierce. 1970 Party Identification and the Changing Role of Ideology in American Politics *Midwest Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (Feb., 1970), pp. 25-42;

<sup>9</sup> Eichelberger, Erika. 2014. "How The Tea Party Is Causing Big Business To Back Democrats". *Motherjones*. <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2014/09/democratic-candidates-chamber-commerce-endorsement/>; Hall, Wynton. 2013. "Chamber Of Commerce To \$50 Milion To Crush Tea Party". *Breitbart*. <http://www.breitbart.com/big-government/2013/12/26/chamber-of-commerce-to-spend-50-million-to-crush-tea-party/>; O'Connor, Neil. 2016. "GOP, Business Recast Message". *WSJ*. <http://www.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702304753504579280084264850074#printMode>.

symptom of unresolvable contradictions in ideas within the Party, its intellectual basis, and voter coalition. And, lastly, to discern the peculiar combination of conservatism and radicalism within the Republican Party. This will allow me to answer what are the ideas dividing conservatives and the GOP.

To answer my main question, it is important to structure it around incremental sub-questions. In chapter one this will be ascertaining the nature and purpose of the Tea Party movement? In the second and third chapters establishing what is behind the polarisation in politics is the key question. Thus, I question: what are the different interpretations of the Constitution and how do these relate to political developments in Federal government, democracy and the welfare state? Is there a new precedence of governance? How does this make the Tea Party appear radical? Is the movement symptomatic of prior polarisation, and are the symptoms ultimately more consequential than the movement? Another sub-question will be the focus of chapter four: what are contradictory ideas among conservatives and how have these affected the GOP? And in the last chapter I look at this with a particular focus on foreign policy: is there another radicalism present that is fracturing the GOP? None of these questions can be interpreted sensibly, unless a context beyond Barrack Obama's presidency is provided. More importantly, my main question cannot be answered because the movement did not come out of a vacuum. Ascertaining the prior state of political and cultural divides precedes what the Tea Party movement might have done, and likewise for divisions in the Republican Party.

It is for this reason that the thesis has a loose periodisation, 1900-2016: with primary research being used to bolster what appear to be weaknesses in the secondary literature, which will include to the years of George H. W. Bush's presidency (1989-1993), George W. Bush's presidency and Barrack Obama's (2008-), but with research that goes back as far as the Progressive Era and the Great Depression (1929-1933). I have looked at the long term because of the limitation of sources on the Tea Party itself, and contemporary politics, or access to key letters

and documents of Republicans; I have no especial sources other journalists do not have. The contemporary nature of the main question also causes similar problems. Thus to add substance to the research, that perhaps depend too much on newspapers and opinion pieces, I must look at more general trends and try to deduce my argument from this. Thus placing conservatism in the longer term, and gauging why and to what extent, in a polarised political and social culture, they appear to be radical or populist, and what this means for fractures in the conservative movement. For similar reasons this means I have focused on the conservatives more than the Republican Party, but this was also done because the core method of this thesis is to trace contradictory ideas in conservatism to fractures in the conservative movement and the Republican Party.

### **Key concepts**

The Tea Partiers see themselves as conservatives and/or libertarians: therefore, we most look at the political Right in America, and try to discern the conservative fragments that make up the Republican Party's main ideational grounding. American conservatism is beyond a simple description. George Nash, widely seen to have written the best survey of the intellectual conservatism, said 'I doubt there is any single, satisfactory, all-encompassing definition of the complex phenomenon called conservatism.'<sup>10</sup> Thus I treat conservatism as an instinctual, as well as a theoretical, idea in America. Conservatism and Republicanism are as much the subject of this thesis as the Tea Party movement itself, because the latter is inseparable from the former.

Liberalism naturally arose as a counter-weight in American politics to conservatism. Again, Liberal and Progressive politics is hard to pin down – I ground the two traditions in arguments over the welfare state, the role of the executive, and interpretations of the constitution and democracy, rather than define either. This serves to demonstrate the substance of what Americans are divided over, rather

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<sup>10</sup> Nash, George. 2014. *The Conservative Intellectual Movement*. *Intercollegiate Studies Institute*. EBook. Location 111



than characterising or searching for some essence by which I can then precede to explain divides. This partially circumvented a constant issue: the lack of consistent use of key words in political language – conservative, liberal, libertarian, Tea Party - in the political discourse.

The Conservative Movement, a politically conscious grouping of activists, intellectuals and politicians, which arose in reaction to political developments in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, also suffers from ambiguities and discordant associations that limited my ability to measure the extent it influences the Republican Party, also known as Grand Old Party (GOP), and relates to the Tea Party. Therefore, I am interested in how it has been perceived and described; how the different interpretations and perceptions of conservatism, and by extension, the Tea Party movement, result from differences in interpretations of history. This is the key reason why this thesis will go back to the Progressive Era and Franklin D. Roosevelt's presidency (1933-1945). It will be argued that the liberal versus conservative paradigm, perhaps necessitated by the growing importance of national over local politics, has its roots here, especially in the successful period of electoral dominance of Franklin Roosevelt's presidency. Specifically, I want to establish that new precedents in governance which, in the eyes of conservatives, represented a fundamental departure from previous political traditions, occurred in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and now places conservatives in a peculiar position of being the antagonist of the dominant political tradition. Frustrations with this revolutionary change eventually coalesced into a conservative movement that incorporated many differing political philosophies in the 1950s.

### **Structure of the thesis**

I will briefly outline in chapter 1, as much as this is possible, the historiography of the Tea Party. What is the Tea Party movement? How is it portrayed in previous literature? What are its origins? Chapters 2 and 3 will focus on the introduction of welfare policies at the national level from the 1900s, of the growing importance of regulatory law, increased democratisation – so-called “pure democracy” – and

interpretations of the constitution. The first of these will be moored to the constitution, a national government and the idea of democracy. The second will focus on the Federal Government's role in maintaining the welfare of the population. Both conclude by linking the Tea Party movement, and conservatives, into these decades-long arguments, some of which even go back to the founding of the United States of America. Chapter 4 looks at the relationships within a burgeoning conservative movement after World War Two and how it influenced the Republican Party. I am more concerned here with the role of ideas, than I am with political consequences, which are dealt with elsewhere with more detail than this thesis could ever attempt.<sup>11</sup> It will give a brief account of how the conservative movement became institutionalised, with various magazines, journals and think-tanks. In Chapter 5, I will explore the blatancy of contradictions within the Conservative Movement after the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991. The Conservative Movement has always had many discordant aspects, but as time has unravelled, these fundamental differences in philosophical outlook, and by result, policy recommendation, have become patent. The Tea Party movement culminated from these developments, and made them impossible to ignore, but is in itself far from consistent or unified. Here the focus is on foreign policy which brings to the fore the curious alliance that underwrites the modern Republican Party: that between libertarians and social conservatives, an alliance of incongruous antipodes in many respects<sup>12</sup>. Lastly I conclude by bringing together the answer to my sub-questions (see above) together in full to concisely answer the main research question.

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<sup>11</sup> Mason, Robert. 2012. *The Republican Party And American Politics From Hoover To Reagan*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Print. Mayer, George H. 1967. *The Republican Party, 1854-1966*. New York: Oxford University Press. Print. Nash, George. 2014. *The Conservative Intellectual Movement*. Intercollegiate Studies Institute.

<sup>12</sup> Kirk, Russell. 1981 *Libertarians: Chirping Sectaries* *Modern Age* 25 (Fall 1981) pgs. 345-51

## 1. What is the Tea Party movement?

This chapter will survey the existing literature on the Tea Party movement. It will discuss Tea Partiers' misrepresentations and exaggerations. It will also give a brief narrative account of how the movement appeared, and explain the confusing nature of the movement: the balance between "anti-establishment" sentiments and small government, fiscal conservatism. Such ambiguities are imperative to understanding the movement. Although the movement arose on a message of fiscal responsibility and constitutional governance, often the most striking aspects of the Tea Partiers' are their populism, patriotism and distrust of political institutions. There seems to be a notable difference between those who promulgate the movement's message nationally – lobbyists, think-tankers and politicians – and those who sympathised with the movement and made it notably popular in 2009 and 2010<sup>13</sup>.

Unsurprisingly, there are many difficulties researching the movement; there is no central leader from whom we can gauge its general ideas. Politicians have (perhaps insincerely) utilised the movement's popularity for their own political advancement, and many journalists as a repository for their pre-existing views. Due to the multifarious beliefs and concerns of activists and organisations within the movement, I have decided to use the term Tea Partiers rather than refer to one collective Tea Party movement. The particular concern that is magnified distorts the comprehension of Tea Partiers more broadly interpreted. Yet from the various mission statements of Tea Partiers' organisations there is an observable and general agreement that Tea Partiers are for: unashamed patriotism, fiscal responsibility,

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<sup>13</sup> Polling in 2009 suggested that the Tea Party movement was viewed favourably: Reports, Rasmussen. 2009. "51% View Tea Parties Favorably, Political Class Strongly Disagrees - Rasmussen Reports™".

*Rasmussenreports.Com*.[http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public\\_content/politics/general\\_politics/april\\_2009/51\\_view\\_tea\\_parties\\_favorably\\_political\\_class\\_strongly\\_disagrees](http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public_content/politics/general_politics/april_2009/51_view_tea_parties_favorably_political_class_strongly_disagrees). And was still viewed so in 2013, Reports, Rasmussen. 2013. "Favorable Views Of Tea Party Up 14 Points Since January - Rasmussen Reports™".

*Rasmussenreports.Com*.[http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public\\_content/politics/general\\_politics/may\\_2013/favorable\\_views\\_of\\_tea\\_party\\_up\\_14\\_points\\_since\\_january](http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public_content/politics/general_politics/may_2013/favorable_views_of_tea_party_up_14_points_since_january).

economic freedom, personal liberty, free-trade and constitutional governance. Yet, even within this framework, there is much room for disagreement and division.<sup>14</sup>

### 1.1 A Short Narrative

I start with a brief introduction of how the movement rose to national prominence. This is different to explaining the conditions that brought about the dissatisfaction of the movement and of other conservatives, which will be discussed in the succeeding chapters. There is broad agreement that Tea Partiers started to become nationally prominent with a “rant” by CNBC Business News Network’s on-air editor, Rick Santelli. Live on CNBC Squak Box, February 19<sup>th</sup> 2009, Santelli angrily objected to President Obama’s planned mortgage assistance policy that intended to help Americans who couldn’t pay their mortgages after the housing crash that triggered the global financial crisis. He pondered aloud having a Chicago Tea Party of ‘capitalists,’ but instead of dumping tea into Lake Michigan, he was for ‘dumping in some derivative securities’. He thought Obama’s proposals rewarded bad behaviour and leads to what economists call a moral hazard. Many books start their narrative with, or give prominence to, Santelli’s vitriol. Five years after this rant Glenn Beck, the hysterical, lachrymose radio and T.V. broadcaster, said that despite many being credited with starting the movement, ‘make no mistake, it was Rick Santelli.’<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> "Our Vision". 2016. *Tea Party Patriots*. <http://www.teapartypatriots.org/ourvision/>. "Tea Party Express | Mission Statement | Tea Party Express". 2016. *Teapartyexpress.Org*. <http://www.teapartyexpress.org/mission>. "About Us - Tea Party". 2012. *Tea Party*. <http://www.teaparty.org/about-us/>.

<sup>15</sup> Meckler, Mark, and Jenny B. Martin. *Tea Party Patriots: The Second American Revolution*. New York: Henry Holt and Co, 2012.; Skocpol, Theda, and Vanessa Williamson. *The Tea Party And The Remaking Of Republican Conservatism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012 pgs . Kibbe, Matt. *Don't Hurt People and Don't Take Their Stuff: A Libertarian Manifesto*. New York: HarperCollins, 2014. Internet resource pgs. . O'Hara, John M. 2010. *A New American Tea Party*. Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley & Sons. pgs. 1-2 ; Perlberg, Steven. 2014. "Rick Santelli Started The Tea Party With A Rant Exactly 5 Years Ago Today — Here's How He Feels About It Now". *Business Insider*. <http://www.businessinsider.com/rick-santelli-tea-party-rant-2014-2?IR=T>. For transcript of Santelli’s rant see *FREEDOM EDEN 2009: Rick Santelli: Tea Party*. [online] Available at: <http://freedomeden.blogspot.co.uk/2009/02/rick-santelli-tea-party.html> [Accessed 30 Mar. 2016].

Although Santelli's rant provides a convenient point to start a book, it was just the reawakening national recognition of long-existing complaints. Santelli's rant became famous but it was not a sufficient cause or even a necessary one. In *Boiling Mad: Inside Tea Party America* Kate Zernike provides a journalistic narrative of the movement, focusing on interviews of Tea Partiers, first-hand accounts, and, to a lesser extent polling. Zernike mocks the 'legend' that Santelli started the movement. She details the frustration of a young conservative, Catherine Carender, who had held a protest meeting in Seattle three days before Santelli had become a YouTube phenomenon.<sup>16</sup>

On the 2009 Tax Day and in 2010 Tea Partiers went marching in Washington D.C. They both heckled and questioned Senators and Congressmen in 2009-2010 town hall meetings. This wasn't because of Santelli's incoherent rant and poor historical analogy, but rather in protest against the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP, 2008), the auto-bailouts, and the Affordable Care and Patient Protection Act (2010). This came on the back of a long frustration with the extent of power (and wealth) centralised in "Washington D.C.", a disillusionment with general trends in United States politics, and exacerbated by the failure of previous Republican administrations and politicians to combat them, and the continuance of them under President Obama.<sup>17</sup> In fact, the allusion to the Boston Tea Party wasn't even novel, with TeaParty.org having been set up in 2004.<sup>18</sup>

After Santelli's rant hundreds of local organisations had been set up, as well as several national ones.<sup>19</sup> In 2010, 2012 and 2014 a host of small government, fiscally conservative politicians, such as Senators Rand Paul, Marco Rubio, Ted Cruz and Mike Lee, got elected to the both the House and the Senate at the expense of candidates more favoured by the Republican Party leaders and donors. Other

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<sup>16</sup> Zernike, K. (2010). *Boiling mad*. New York: Times Books/Henry Holt and Co.

<sup>17</sup> See chapters two and three.

<sup>18</sup> "About Us - Tea Party". 2012. *Tea Party*. <http://www.teaparty.org/about-us/>.

<sup>19</sup> Brown, Heath (2015). *Tea Party Divided: the hidden diversity of a maturing movement*. Praeger, Denver Colorado pgs. 20-32. Skocpol and Williamson 2012 pgs. 83-120.

notable politicians such as Michelle Bachmann also took up the Tea Partiers calling cry. The Republican Party gained control of the House of Representatives in the 2010 midterms and the Senate in 2014 midterms, giving them control over the legislative arm of the Federal government for the first time in eight years. This allowed Republicans to obstruct and stifle much of President Obama's and the Democrat's progressive agenda, which led to a series of budgetary crises, and a partial government shutdown in 2013, which was largely blamed on Tea Party inspired politicians, particularly Senator Ted Cruz.<sup>20</sup>

The electoral successes of the GOP is sometimes credited to Tea Partiers rejuvenating the Republican Party. They certainly renewed small government conservatism, which had stagnated during the Bush Administration (2001-2009), with its doctrine of "compassionate conservatism" which had marginalised the predominant rhetoric and (sometimes) policy of Republicans since Senator Barry Goldwater's failed presidential campaign in 1964, which had been much more in line and tone with the Tea Party.<sup>21</sup>

## **1.2 A critical review of the literature so far.**

What are the Tea Partiers against? What is causing their anger? What policies have alienated them? What are they for? What is their relation to the Republican Party? Responses to these questions have had pronounced differences between self-described Tea Partiers, as well as those who are sympathetic with its aims, and those who do not have any particular sympathy with the movement, especially writers and academics who see the movement as their political antagonists. There

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<sup>20</sup> Raju, Manu. 2013. "Some Colleagues Angry With Cruz". *POLITICO*. <http://www.politico.com/story/2013/10/ted-cruz-blasted-by-angry-gop-colleagues-government-shutdown-097753>. Zezima, Katie. 2013. "For Ted Cruz, The 2013 Shutdown Was A Defining Moment". *Washington Post*. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/how-cruzs-plan-to-defund-obamacare-failed--and-what-it-achieved/2016/02/16/4e2ce116-c6cb-11e5-8965-0607e0e265ce\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/how-cruzs-plan-to-defund-obamacare-failed--and-what-it-achieved/2016/02/16/4e2ce116-c6cb-11e5-8965-0607e0e265ce_story.html). DigParton, Heather. 2013. "Ted Cruz'S Diabolical Shutdown Strategy: Why The GOP Senator Wants To Watch The World Burn". *Salon*. [http://www.salon.com/2015/09/23/ted\\_cruzs\\_diabolical\\_shutdown\\_strategy\\_why\\_the\\_gop\\_senator\\_wants\\_to\\_wa](http://www.salon.com/2015/09/23/ted_cruzs_diabolical_shutdown_strategy_why_the_gop_senator_wants_to_wa)

<sup>21</sup> Skocpol and Williamson (2012) pgs. 155-188

are also notable differences between Tea Partiers themselves. These are often based on the degree to which the movement is socially orientated and its relationship with the GOP. The latter has affected the methods of Tea Partiers' numerous organisations, whilst the former has made Tea Partiers hard to classify with political labels: is it libertarian, nationalist, conservative, or just a protest movement based on certain specific policies? In the literature there is no consistent use of terminology, and even when there are similarities, behind the terminology are different images and perceptions.

Tea Partiers have tended to argue that the primary focus is economic and constitutional issues such as the response to the financial crisis and the huge bailouts that occurred under Presidents Bush and Obama. They are opposed to what they see as a long-running trend of profligacy and creeping usurpation of power by the Federal Government. These arguments have been influential among movement-conservatives since after World War Two (explored further in Chapter 4) and are normally based on economic reasoning and the unconstitutional nature of current governmental policies.

Representative of this view are the manifestos written by Matthew Kibbe, Jenny Beth Martin and Mark Meckler; as well as that of Rand Paul, who was elected junior Senator from Kentucky in 2010. Both Kibbe and Martin Meckler are important figures at organizations that are key to the movement. Matthew Kibbe was CEO and president of FreedomWorks, until he left to lead Rand Paul's super-Political Action Committee in 2015.<sup>22</sup> Jenny Beth Martin is a national coordinator at Tea Party Patriots and has become a seasoned speaker at conservative conventions, and alongside Meckler, had a key role in founding the organisation that has become nationally prominent. Martin went on to become the CEO of the Tea Party Patriots, but Meckler left the organisation due to its role in financing Republican

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<sup>22</sup> Welch, Matt. 2015. "Matt Kibbe Leaves Freedomworks To Head Up Rand Paul Super PAC". *Reason.Com*. <https://reason.com/blog/2015/06/18/matt-kibbe-leaves-freedomworks-to-head-u>.

candidates.<sup>23</sup> He believed Tea Party Patriots, by funding Republicans, had become too closely aligned with the party. Kibbe's *Hostile takeover: resisting centralized government's stranglehold on America* and *Don't hurt people and don't take their stuff: a libertarian manifesto* are directly focused on constitutional arrangements, the perceived economic fallacies of government intervention and the view that economic freedom is central to any other sort of freedom.<sup>24</sup> In the former he depends on many conventional views of libertarianism and Austrian economics.<sup>25</sup> He makes reference to 'the seen and the unseen', the title of a famous essay by Frederic Bastiat, and to the highly influential 19<sup>th</sup> century political economist, Carl Menger.<sup>26</sup> His arguments are premised on the work of economists, notably, Friedrich von Hayek and Ludwig von Mises; the following quotation emanates these influences:

"Viewing events and human actions in real time is integral to a bottom-up understanding of economic processes. Real time is constantly changing and the future is uncertain. The world we live in is not a static snapshot of a particular moment or imagined equilibrium."<sup>27</sup>

An economist by trade, Kibbe's writing is rooted in economics. Tea Partiers, in his view, are against a ballooning federal debt, so he explicates on the economic fallacies he thinks are inflating the balloon; for him, the Constitution mandates limited government and the two issues are intertwined. The constitution is being

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<sup>23</sup> Pappas, Alex. 2016. "Exclusive: Co-Founder Mark Meckler Resigns From Tea Party Patriots". *The Daily Caller*. <http://dailycaller.com/2012/02/24/exclusive-co-founder-mark-meckler-resigns-from-tea-party-patriots/>.

<sup>24</sup> Kibbe, Matt. *Hostile Takeover: Resisting Centralized Government's Stranglehold on America*. New York: HarperLuxe, 2012. Print. And Kibbe, Matt. *Don't Hurt People and Don't Take Their Stuff: A Libertarian Manifesto*. New York: HarperCollins, 2014. Internet resource.

<sup>25</sup> Austrian economics is a school of thought outside of mainstream academia, and an approach despised by most scholars for its trenchantly pro-markets, rigid epistemological conclusions regarding government interventions and skepticism regarding macroeconomics.

<sup>26</sup> Kibbe (2012) pgs. 40, Carl Menger is seen as the key scholar in fomenting the Austrian School, which has now gone through several permeations, the former being seen as integral to developments in economic scholarship, the later ones as a pestilence to be avoided.

<sup>27</sup> Kibbe (2014), pgs. 100 This argument similar to Hayek's, while 'Human Action' is the title of Ludwig von Mises's magnum opus where he introduces the 'science' of 'praxeology' as being key to economics, the study of human action.



debased by misinformed conventional wisdom. As the quote suggests, he rails against Keynesian economics, 'the Keynesian conceit,' with its emphasis on government spending in times of crisis, and obsessive belief that consumption drives economic growth, and that there are constants in human relations that allow for aggregates supported by the law of large numbers. The book is individualist in its methodology and conclusions. It is an application of Austrian economics, and therefore it is unsurprising that he locates issues in changes that came about during first half of the twentieth century: the situation has become 'progressively worse' since the Progressive Era and Franklin Roosevelt's presidency (1933-1945).

Jenny Beth Martin, along with Mark Meckler, from an insider's perspective, explain the nature of the movement's discontent similarly. Their arguments centre less on economics, but highlight the importance of the constitution in a more marked fashion than Matthew Kibbe.<sup>28</sup> The books talked about the need for self-responsibility, local government, a strict interpretation of the powers delegated to Congress in Article I section 8 of the constitution, and the 10<sup>th</sup> Amendment. Both books are written from the perspective of insiders, who want to influence as well as describe Tea Partiers concerns.

Rand Paul is less focused on economic arguments, although in his book, *The Tea Party Goes to Washington*, he does make similar arguments to Kibbe, even quoting from the same Bastiat essay as Kibbe. In the chapters on social welfare policies and the ballooning federal debt his arguments are based on the same economic theories, but he combines these with a discussion on the political norms that prevent what he sees as a needed correction. Like in Kibbe's book, he shows equal disdain for Republican and Democrats that ignore the calls for 'common sense' and the Constitution: 'the Tea Party sees no distinction between big government Republicans and big government Democrats.'<sup>29</sup> He dedicates much time to what he

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<sup>28</sup> Meckler, Mark, and Jenny B. Martin. *Tea Party Patriots: The Second American Revolution*. New York: Henry Holt and Co, 2012. Print.

<sup>29</sup> Paul, Rand, and Jack Hunter. *The Tea Party Goes to Washington*. Nashville: Center Street, 2011. Print. pgs 7-8

sees as the failures of the previous Bush administrations to even lower the rate of increase in Federal spending. He barely mentions the Democratic Party. The goal of the Tea Partiers is to make politicians recognise their oath to uphold the constitution and to recognise that deficit and high levels of debt must be addressed.

In chapter seven, Paul provides a glimpse of the possible foreign policy views of Tea Partiers. Firstly, the levels of debt and disregard to civil liberties are caused by military excess as well as profligate welfare policies. Secondly, that national security is dependent on sound finance as much as it is on military power, though this might just be what Rand Paul *hopes* the Tea Partiers' views on foreign policy are.<sup>30</sup> Paul dedicates many pages to dismissing the views of so-called neo-conservatives (see Chapter 5) and the reactions of Bush Jnr's administration to 9/11 and their ruinous effects on civil liberties as defended by the first and fourth amendments. He is a rare American politician and, rarer still, Republican: he was against the war in Iraq in 2003.

At base, Paul's message is simple: constitutional governance is sick, and the required palliative is being stymied by bi-partisan collusion between Republican hawks and social justice warriors who are corrupting the constitution, the rule of law and unbalancing the thoughtful distribution of power within and without the federal government. The establishment must be challenged - Republican and Democrats alike - because it stands in the way of a limited federal government that prioritises the defence of liberty over everything else.<sup>31</sup>

Constitutional lawyer Emily Foley, who argued against the Affordable Care and Patient Protection Act (2010) in practice as well as in theory, provides a succinct view of Tea Partiers general concerns and how these tie back to the constitution and link Tea Partiers together, it's "not a book about policies or politics."<sup>32</sup> The importance of the terms conservative and liberal, dominant in most books on the

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<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.* pgs 69-86

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Foley, Elizabeth Price. 2012. *The Tea Party*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press pg xi.

subject, are not important: it is about preserving the Constitution. (Unfortunately the Constitution has become politicised, see Chapters 2 and 3). Foley puts forward three general trends that our undermining the Constitution and which are the uniting factors behind the varied views of Tea Partiers: limited government, U.S sovereignty and constitutional originalism. She sees the movement as having an originalist approach to the constitution, meaning the original intent of the Constitution is the law. She believes these to be behind the anger and frustration with American governance. Foley then surveys the Supreme Court rulings on divisive policies, contemporary and historic, such as Obamacare and the *Brown versus the Board of Education* (1954) which both hinged, in her opinion, on too fluid an interpretation of the Commerce clause and other aspects of the constitution.<sup>33</sup> The importance of the constitution to the Tea Partiers is clear. Joseph Farah, in his *Tea Party Manifesto* is one of many who included the Constitution in his manifesto.<sup>34</sup>

John O'Hara in his *A New American Tea Party* provides another first-hand account of the movement's rise. He was involved in organising the first protests in 2009 and 2010. He focuses more on the specific political events since the financial crisis than Kibbe and Paul. According to O'Hara the United States has become 'unmoored' from its history of individual liberty, embodied in the constitution. He begins with the false heralds of small-government conservatism, such as the Republicans' 'revolution that wasn't,' the 1994 Contract with America, led by the then Leader of the House, Newt Gingrich. President George Bush Jnr betrayed free-market principles with Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP), but it was, however, the coming of Obama's presidency that tested Americans patience to breaking point.<sup>35</sup> O'Hara details all the annoyances, petty and justified, that the Tea Partiers, since their inception, had with the Obama administration: the stimulus package,

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<sup>33</sup> The Commerce Clause refers to Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3 of the U.S. Constitution, which gives Congress the power "to regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states, and with the Indian tribes."

<sup>34</sup> Farah, Joseph. 2010. *The Tea Party Manifesto*. New York: WND Books

<sup>35</sup> O'Hara, John M. 2010. *A New American Tea Party*. Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley & Sons. pgs. 3-8 and quote taken from pg. 21

healthcare reforms, Obama's relationship with unions, and a variety of other problems. They are mostly connected to arguments about free-markets and limited government common to other Tea Partiers' books.<sup>36</sup> In a chapter called 'The Tea Pot Boils Over' healthcare reform is seen as integral to growing support of the Tea Party. Unlike Paul and Kibbe, he barely mentions questions of foreign policy. And in a chapter titled 'The Tea Party Manifesto,' he makes a summary case against wealth redistribution, government bailouts, and the entire regressive/progressive dichotomy, by which he believes the Left has cast conservatives as being opposed to "progress" and the greater good, and therefore calls for a counter-revolution against the radical policies of Obama's administration to redress the balance.<sup>37</sup>

Joseph Farah, in his manifesto, strikes an incongruous chord with Kibbe's, O'Hara's, and Paul's. For Farah, the movement is concerned just as much about the moral and social issues that have dominated American Politics since the 1960s, and that led to a politicised Christian Right (the New Right). These divisive issues and the politics surrounding it have become known as the "Culture Wars". For Farah, no issue is without its social concerns and moral implications, an imputation with which many conservatives agree. He also argues that the Tea Partiers' concerns were already well established in American political discourse. The book is repetitive and rhetorical rather than analytical, and is anti-establishment and unabashedly populist in its message. It is unashamed propaganda.

Steve Johnson, in a *Tea Party: Culture Wars*, argues that, despite at 'its most basic level' the Tea Partiers protest centred on fiscal conservatism, "it is truly much deeper than just politics and economics: it is a spiritual battle."<sup>38</sup> For him, there are two competing worldviews: one is religious and the other is secular, and it is this divide which is salient, and accounts for the apocalyptic language of many Tea Partiers. A now or never tone is present in most of their works. David Broody, in

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid* pgs. 141-201

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid* pgs. 203-235

<sup>38</sup> Johnson, Steve (2011). *Tea Party Culture War: A Clash of Worldviews* Wine Press Publishing, Enumclaw pgs. xxi and xix

*The Teavangelicals*, his insider account, also connects the politically engaged evangelical Christians and their concern for marriage, the family, and abortion, with fiscal conservatism and limited government, supporting his views with polling from the Pew Research Center.<sup>39</sup> It isn't just two competing economic and political theories that motivate Tea Partiers: the primary priority is reclaiming America's 'Judea-Christian heritage,' and limiting government was secondary to this. In academic works, and those written by political opponents, Tea Partiers motivations have always been seen as more than economic concerns, but also cultural ones.<sup>40</sup>

Some who do not sympathise with Tea Party aspirations, and who are partial to political slander, assert that Tea Partiers are racist, atavistic, and stupid, motivated only by fear and paranoia. Such conclusions were also made about former conservative movements and will be discussed elsewhere. The most heavily cited historical antecedent to this kind of pseudo-psychological pathologising of a political "other" is the esteemed historian Richard Hofstadter, who penned the famous essay *The Paranoid Style in American Politics*.<sup>41</sup> Hofstadter made this argument not based on conservatism per-se, but on those who felt their status to be challenged by new and worrying externalities. These, he posited, caused a radical, paranoid variant of political action that had manifested itself in different forms throughout the history of the Union. It is characterised by status anxiety, the feeling that one is losing something integral to his or her identity, combined with a tendency to be conspiratorial. He includes in this understanding of political paranoia any kind of hatred of Roosevelt's New Deal (see chapters 3 and 4). Hofstadter's theorising has been replicated by many who have written on the Tea Party, possibly because of the ease with which it allows one to simply dismiss political opponents entirely. Matt A. Barreto et al. found that activists within the Tea Party 'hold a strong sense of out-group anxiety' because the demographics of the country are changing. This is

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<sup>39</sup> Broody, David. 2012 *The Teavangelicals* Zondervan, Grand Rapids Michigan pgs. 19-25

<sup>40</sup> Flanders, Laura. 2010. *At The Tea Party*. New York, NY: OR Books. Parker, Christopher S. 2014. *Change They Can't Believe In*. Princeton University Press

<sup>41</sup> Hofstadter, Richard. *The Paranoid Style In American Politics and Other Essays*. New York: Knopf, 1965. Print. Pgs 1-3 and 23-29

replicated later in their book, where they accuse the movement of using ‘any means at their disposal to forestall what they believe is a loss of social prestige as social change takes root’. Quoting Hofstadter, they posit that the movement feels “spied upon, plotted against, betrayed, and very likely destined for ruin.”<sup>42</sup> Countless examples of this myopic focus on the worst elements of the movement can be found.

Skocpol and Williamson, in *The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism* describe the movement differently. Previous arguments by scholars had mainly focused on debunking the myths and interpretations of the constitution and have been patently ideological (see below). Instead, the authors utilise the methods of the social sciences. Their intention was to look into how the movement was actually organised, and to study the actual views of activists through interviews and the use of questionnaires. They find that the average activist is not concerned as much about fiscal and economic issues, as they are about immigration and perceptions of fairness. While the activists aren’t actually very active. However, they also refer back to Hofstadter’s paranoid style of politics when it comes to Tea Partiers’ interpretations of Obama and of the word socialist. They also make the strange assumption that history has somehow proven the departure from limited government. With the New Deal and the failure of Senator Goldwater’s bid for the presidency in 1964. They associate Goldwater’s conservatism with the Tea Partiers. They conclude that the organisation of the movement is loose and essentially leaderless, that it is another manifestation of small government conservatism, but that it is also socially motivated. Focusing on how the media has covered the movement, Skocpol and Williamson posit that conservative media outlets were important in maintaining the ideas of the movement when it was in its infancy.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>Matt A Barreto et al (2011) *The Tea Party in the Age of Obama: Mainstream Conservatism or Out-Group Anxiety?* Political Power and Social Theory, Volume 22. Emerald Group Publishing Limited; Brown, Heath A. *The Tea Party Divided*. Pgs. 1-15 Hitchens, Christopher. 2011 *‘Tea’D Off*. Vanity Fair. N <http://www.vanityfair.com/news/2011/01/hitchens-201101>

<sup>43</sup> Skocpol, Theda, and Vanessa Williamson. 2012. Pgs. 132-141

However, from the perspective of Tea Partiers and conservatives, these arguments are sophistry that has provided ideological historians and writers with a means of squaring the unpopularity of their own prescribed policies with an avid support for democracy, and to confound the fanatical and delusional elements of political conservatism with all principled opposition to the common precepts of leftist thinking (i.e. a need to mischaracterise opposing opinions due to an unwillingness to accept a widespread unpopularity towards their own opinions). Tea Partiers worrying about their status, which is effectively one's livelihood, seems a fair complaint for any American citizen, and not something to be simply dismissed as pathological paranoia; and this is especially true off the back of nearly forty years of stagnant real-wages, declining job opportunities, declining life expectancy and increasingly common struggles with depression, anxiety and drug-abuse.<sup>44</sup>

This thesis will not be able to delve into liberalism's many intricacies and connotations in the required detail to exhaustively explain why many of its proponents, and Democrats, deem opposition to their successes as a mark on their opponent's moral or intellectual capabilities, rather than take it to be the mere political disagreement it most probably is. It is enough to point out that one frequently encounters in the literature on conservatism, and the media coverage of it, the Republican Party, and populist movements of the "right", a fanatical aversion to anything that it might recommend, unsophisticated scholarship, and even flat-out misrepresentations. The most frustrating examples of this show their evident bias in their sources, and don't seem able to realise that some people might be against their own conceptions of democracy, justice and equity.

An archetypal example of such a work is Ronald P. Forsimano's *The Tea Party a brief history*. His sources and research are predominantly from liberal organisations and papers. He makes reference to MotherJones and the New Republic throughout, and

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<sup>44</sup> O'Hara, John M. 2010. *A New American Tea Party*. Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley & Sons. Pgs. 203-234  
Farah, Joseph. 2010. *The Tea Party Manifesto*. New York: WND Books  
Armey, Richard K, and Matt Kibbe. 2010. *Give Us Liberty*. New York: William Morrow Rasmussen, Scott W, and Douglas E Schoen.  
2010. *Mad As Hell*. New York: Harper.

his basic narrative depends on the New York Times (a newspaper seen by conservatives to be editorially on the left). Forsimano's work begs the question: did he even read any Tea Party material? Many books written on the subject suffer similar weaknesses, and show no sign of trying to imagine or sympathise with the position of Tea Partiers, but rather presume to know what their conclusions on policy and politics says about their character and intentions, which are unvaryingly found to be sordid and ignoble. This is a backward approach, going from prejudice to description, while accusing the Tea Partiers of the very same thing. When one actually reads the Tea Partier's own literature, one is struck by the lack of consistency and cohesiveness within the movement itself.

Often in the critiques of Tea Partiers, certain historical interpretations are presumed to be indisputably correct, and as a consequence, potentially valid contentions of time and place become misconstrued as being against all the changes that have occurred since the founding of the Union. Zernike, Sckopol and Williamson, Forsimano, Daniel Broody, and others discuss how Tea Partiers yearn for a time and tradition in politics that can't recommence because of the industrial revolution and changes in politics that occurred. These dealt with the great mass and autonomous nature of modern society. Now man was dwarfed by machines and subsumed in the sheer volume of human life allowed by developments in agriculture, medicine and other productions. If business could become large, they argued, surely government would also have to expand in response. These historical assumptions have led to Tea Partiers being misrepresented and misunderstood by many scholars and journalists, who have worked with assumptions they do not always acknowledge, and which Tea Partiers disagree with or dismiss.<sup>45</sup> These assumptions are centred on decisive moments in the United States history, and are buttressed by the idealisation of democracy and equality and how all of this connects back to the Constitution (this will be discussed more fully in succeeding chapters). This has blinded many scholars and writers, who don't appear to have the imagination

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<sup>45</sup> Zernike 2010, Sckopol and Williamson 2012.



required to understand how some Tea Partiers (and conservatives) could oppose social welfare policies, positive discrimination laws, Medicare and Medicaid, Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal, Supreme Court rulings on Civil Rights, and so on, and not be congenitally evil. In reality, Tea Partiers and their opponents share many of the same ends, and hope for many of the same things out of politics, and it is only the means through which these ends are to be reached that differs; one can fairly portray one's political opponents as mistaken, or ignorant, but it is both bad taste and bad manners to impute ill-intent off the basis of political differences alone.

Such arguments have been frequently made both in leading newspapers and journals, such as the *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, and the *New Republic*. The historian Rick Perlstein provides an archetypal example:

“[The worst element] has been the overwhelming historical myopia.... they are the same angry, ill-informed, overwhelmingly white, crypto-corporate paranoiacs that accompany every ascendancy of liberalism within U.S. government.”<sup>46</sup>

Disagreeing with Pearlstein, or writers like Paul Krugman, politically or morally, means you are (at best) non-historical or a contradiction.<sup>47</sup> Having an aversion to the latest strictures of liberalism too often is taken as sign of being paranoid and in need of a psychologist. Like all prevalent stereotypes, it has a degree of truth to it. The Tea Partiers, and many other Americans strongly distrust the Media, particularly that which is written and produced in New York City and the District of

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<sup>46</sup> Editors, The. 2010. "What Tea Party Backers Want". *Room For Debate*.

[http://roomfordebate.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/04/15/what-tea-party-backers-want/?hp&\\_r=0](http://roomfordebate.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/04/15/what-tea-party-backers-want/?hp&_r=0).

<sup>47</sup> Krugman says, 'But they're probably reacting less to what Mr. Obama is doing, or even to what they've heard about what he's doing, than to who he is. That is, the driving force behind the town hall mobs is probably the same cultural and racial anxiety that's behind the "birther" movement, which denies Mr. Obama's citizenship. Senator Dick Durbin has suggested that the birthers and the health care protesters are one and the same; we don't know how many of the protesters are birthers, but it wouldn't be surprising if it's a substantial fraction.' This is a typical example, it makes the claim they are one and the same, but then introduces doubt, after the implication has been made. Paul Krugman, August 6<sup>th</sup> 2009. *The Town Hall Mob*, The New York Times  
[http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/07/opinion/07krugman.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/07/opinion/07krugman.html?_r=0)

Colombia, amplified by developments such as the internet and the rise of new media, which can often become mired in bitter conspiracies. There is no better example of this than Glenn Beck. Yet it is fallacious and erroneous to magnify the more despicable or conspiratorial elements of any movement to the point of ignoring the whole.<sup>48</sup>

### **1.3 Conclusion**

In summation, the literature has been grossly inadequate in characterizing *all* Tea Partiers. Often, scholars and writers have declared them non-historical because their political views contest *their own* historical deductions. Given the diffuse nature, and the varied sentiments that inhabit the movement, it at times seems to be a brand, a mere gimmicky piece of marketing, one multifariously used by people and institutions already active in politics to serve a purpose not always in line with the motivations of the Tea Party movement. There is no discernible consistent use of Tea Party as an adjective attached to conservative, or as a descriptive noun, in the media or between conservatives. “Tea Partier” is not the stable symbol a researcher would like it to be.

However, it is clear that there is a widespread desire for a return to constitutional governance based on a stricter, more literal interpretation of the Constitution, as well as one that is broadly against appropriations for social issues, and certainly against further expansion. As scholars have pointed out though, there is a difference between those who articulate and write books about the movements and what made it popular, between the anti-establishment sentiments and libertarian (or small government conservatism), between its concern for fiscal prudence and the maintenance of welfare system, between politicians and voters. It is openly against the Republican Party establishment, but more so against progressive types. It also

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<sup>48</sup> Several books give undue importance to Glenn Beck. Sckopol and Williamson, more balanced than most books on the Tea Party, say he has a ‘special role’ pp. 133—134

emerges that confronting the GOP establishment is the main tactical goal, an establishment they regard as similar to the Democrats.

## **2. The Constitution, Democracy and the role of the Federal Government**

The next two sections will detail the divisions, cultural and moral, economic and political, that are behind the growing polarisation and sectionalism in the United States, within which Tea Partiers are vocally involved. I have done this in order to understand the viciousness and polarised disagreements Tea Partiers and conservatives have with liberals, democrats and moderates (including many Republicans), and their radical appearance, which were documented in chapter 1. This chapter will look specifically at the American Constitution: how does it relate to democracy and the powers and role of the federal government? And what disagreement are there over such relations? The argument will be a synthesis of secondary sources bolstered by primary sources where I have seen it necessary to justify my own arguments.

I begin with the Progressive Era (c. 1890s to 1920s) because this is when I believe the conservative-progressive divisions began to take on their modern character.<sup>49</sup> 1912 Republican Convention Chairmen, Elihu Root (see below), described it as the era in history when the postulates of politics and society that had gone 'unquestioned for long periods,' the conceptions of 'social rights and obligations' and the institutions based upon them, suddenly ceased to be accepted. The 'whole controversy' from which they were established was 'fought over again'. Thus the Progressive Era was a 'period of re-examination' the United States system of politics. The 'wisdom of the founders of the Republic' became disputed; the ideas that they had earlier repudiated were now starting to be approved.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Glenn Beck repeatedly bemoans Woodrow Wilson, Theodore Roosevelt and the Progressive, both in his popular histories, and on his TV and Radio shows. He has been very consistent on this point. Glenn Beck: Drawing On 1950s Extremism?". 2010. *NPR.Org*. <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=130534982>. Packer, George. 2010. "American Progress - The New Yorker". *The New Yorker*. <http://www.newyorker.com/news/george-packer/american-progress>.

<sup>50</sup> Root, Elihu. 1913. *Experiments In Government And The Essentials Of The Constitution*. London: Princeton University Press. Pgs 1-4

Historically, the Federal Government's expansions of power – and the nature or use of this power – has always been the root of divides in American politics.<sup>51</sup> The first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in 1819 said the question of which respective powers lie with the Federal Government over the States “is perpetually arising, and will probably continue to arise, as long as our system shall exist.”<sup>52</sup> Elihu Root nearly a century later concurred, “nothing has involved more constant discussion in our political history than questions of conflict between these two powers.”<sup>53</sup> American history is littered with populist complaints about the power of federal government, such as the Whiskey Rebellion, the near-secession of New England in early 19<sup>th</sup> century at the Hartford Convention, and the Civil War (1861-1865).<sup>54</sup> Today is no different. As was shown in chapter 1, Tea Partiers consistently voice their aspiration for a return to constitutional government, based on the ‘original intent’ or ‘strict construction’ of the Constitution.<sup>55</sup> President Obama's executive actions on issues such as immigration, the environment, and healthcare, have been bemoaned as unconstitutional by many Tea Partiers and conservatives. His signature reform, the Affordable Care Act, was repeatedly challenged in the courts. Rand Paul on Fox News' *On the Record* argued that Obama had consistently undermined the system of checks and balances that the Constitution entails and reminded Obama that he was

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<sup>51</sup> Zavodnyik, Peter. 2007. *The Age Of Strict Construction: A History Of The Growth Of Federal Power 1789-1861*. Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press pg. 2-6.

<sup>52</sup> Chief Justice John Marshall's majority verdict in *McCulloch v. Maryland*. 1819, 17 US. 4 Wheat 316. Supreme Court of the United States accessed here:

<https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/17/316/case.html>

<sup>53</sup> Root, Elihu 1913. *Experiments In Government And The Essentials Of The Constitution*. London: Princeton University Press. Pg. 56

<sup>54</sup> Somin, Ilya. "The Tea Party Movement and Popular Constitutionalism." *Northwestern University Law Review Colloquy* 105 (2011): 300.

<sup>55</sup>A working definition for strict construction here is the ‘narrow construction of a statute, confining its operation to matters... strictly pointed out by its terms, and to cases which fell fairly within its letter.’ P. Zavodnyik, *The Age of Strict Construction*. Washington D.C. Catholic University of America Press pg. 1

Skopol, Theda, and Vanessa Williamson. *The Tea Party And The Remaking Of Republican Conservatism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. Print. Pgs. 48-52 Foley, Elizabeth Price. 2012. *The Tea Party*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.. Farah, Joseph. 2010. *The Tea Party Manifesto*. New York: WND Books; Arney, Richard K, and Matt Kibbe. 2010. *Give Us Liberty*. New York: William Morrow; O'Hara, John M. 2010. *A New American Tea Party*. Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley & Sons.

'not a king'. Ted Cruz, a Tea Party endorsed senator from Texas, in response to Obama's executive action on immigration said, "We are witnessing a constitutional crisis... Obama's... defying the Constitution."<sup>56</sup> It would be wrong, however, to see Obama's presidency as novel in this regard.

Complaints are not just aimed at President Obama and his perceived style of gangster government, as Tea Party favourite Michelle Bachmann called it.<sup>57</sup> Tea Partiers have also complained about the unconstitutionality of past Presidencies and past legislation of Congress. Rand Paul and Matthew Kibbe launched a class-action suit against section 215 of the Patriot Act (2001) believing that the collection of meta-data without a warrant or probable cause violates the Fourth Amendment.<sup>58</sup> Paul also filibustered the renewal of the act in 2015. The act was enacted by the George Bush Jnr. administration, which despite being the first administration to have Republicans in control of Congress since 1954, often chose particular policies and partisan politics, based on electoral considerations, over federalism (limited government). While according to Rand Paul the Federal Reserve and Social Security are unconstitutional, as well as all regulatory agencies.<sup>59</sup> Tea Partiers' complaints go beyond one Presidency or party.

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<sup>56</sup> Jones, Susan. 2014. "Ted Cruz: 'We Are Unfortunately Witnessing A Constitutional Crisis'". *CNS News*. <http://www.cnsnews.com/news/article/susan-jones/ted-cruz-we-are-unfortunately-witnessing-constitutional-crisis>.

<sup>57</sup> Michelle Bachmann Remarks at Fundraising Banquet, March 11<sup>th</sup> Accessed here: <http://www.c-span.org/video/?298387-1/representative-michele-bachmann-remarks>

<sup>58</sup> Section one of the Fourth Amendment stipulates: 'The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.' Clearly a particular reason, a particular place, and particular case for seizing people's information from their computers and phones. "Class Action Complaint For Declaratory And Injunctive Relief": '*The Type and quantum of evidence needed to satisfy the "reasonable articulable suspicion" threshold to initiate a query by the NSA officials... is not publicly known*' 2014.

[http://s3.amazonaws.com/freedomworks.org/files/nsa\\_complaint.pdf](http://s3.amazonaws.com/freedomworks.org/files/nsa_complaint.pdf).

<sup>59</sup> C-SPAN,. 2015. *Senate Session May 20Th 2015*. Video. Times, Los. 2014. "Republicans Attack Obama's Action On Immigration As Unconstitutional". *Latimes.Com*.

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/politics/politicsnow/la-na-congress-immigration-hearing-20141202-story.html>; <http://cnsnews.com/news/article/susan-jones/ted-cruz-we-are-unfortunately-witnessing-constitutional-crisis> ;

<http://www.breitbart.com/video/2014/08/27/rand-paul-obama-cant-just-do-what-he-wants-he-is->

Liberals and Democrats disagree with the constitutionality of Obama's signature policies and his use of executive authority. Yet both the Republicans and Democrats in their 2012 party platforms showed praise for the Constitution<sup>60</sup>. This is because there are, broadly stated, two interpretations of the constitution: living constitutionalism and strict constructionism (or originalism). Living constitutionalism is a fluid interpretation of the constitution, which allows for reinterpretation without changing the law through actual legislation (which makes the amendment procedure less important). Strict constructionism takes the contrary view, that words have fixed meanings and the original intent of the law is the only interpretation until there is a change in the law.<sup>61</sup> They both are sincerely held positions with significant precedence in the courts. These conflicting interpretations are one factor behind the divide in American politics and disagreements over historiography, and is imperative to understanding Tea Partiers, because for them, limited government and strict constructionism are both salient and inseparable issues; it also explains how Tea Partiers have been interpreted by liberals and Democrats (very differently to than they and their sympathisers have done), and why partisanship isn't subservient to the rule of law as put forward by the Constitution. There are no stable rules on which liberals and conservatives, Democrats and Republicans, can agree.

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[not-a-king/](#) Conlan, T. 2007. "Federalism, The Bush Administration, And The Transformation Of American Conservatism". *The Journal Of Federalism* 37 (3): 279-303

. Ron Paul May 15, 2011: Paul on "Fox News Sunday With Chris Wallace."

<sup>60</sup> The Democrat's 2012 platform stats on the issue of court nominations: 'we will continue to nominate and confirm judges who are men and women of unquestionable talent and character and will always demonstrate their faithfulness to our law and our Constitution and bring with them a sense of how American society works and how the American people live.' Democratic Party Platforms: "2012 Democratic Party Platform," September 3, 2012. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=101962>. While the Republicans dedicated their platform to '[t]he wisdom of the Framers of the United States Constitution,' calling it the 'the greatest political document ever written,' a 'sacred' one that showed the way forward. This was immediately followed by 'Trust the people. Limit Government. Respect federalism.' Republican Party Platforms: "2012 Republican Party Platform," August 27, 2012. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=101961>.

<sup>61</sup> For a detailed account of this see West, Robin. 1990 *Progressive and Conservative Constitutionalism* Michigan Law Review, Vol. 88, No. 4 (Feb., 1990), pp. 641-721

A change in political and constitutional precedent in United States materialized at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that loosened constraints on the legislative and executive arms of the Federal government, plebiscite governance, and (further) diminished the power of State and local governments, and increased the importance of the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS). The results of this, which can only be partly detailed below, have placed conservatives in the odd position of being opposed to the status quo. This led to the rise of a conservative movement after the Second World War and conservatives' increasing acceptance of ideology (which will be discussed in chapter four).<sup>62</sup> To overturn the accrued results of this new precedent, whether they were intended or not, requires radical policies. This in itself is a cause of division within the Republican Party, and between Tea Partiers and conservatives, because it runs against the conservative instinct to disfavour large-scale change and the required, radical policies entailed. Dismantling Social Security and Medicare and Medicaid would promote disorder in society, at least in the short-term; the contradictions between Tea Partiers' rhetoric and their conservative instincts suggests the significance and nature of this change in precedent. Many Tea Partiers support Social Security and Medicare has been seen as hypocritical by many scholars and journalists.<sup>63</sup> While it has long been pointed out that conservatives, apparently including Tea Partiers, have a schizophrenic approach to politics: being for limited government in the abstract, but being operationally liberal in practice.<sup>64</sup>

Now the federal government has centralized and become a national government, not the general government of a confederacy or federal republic made up of nations

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<sup>62</sup> See Goldberg, Jonah. 2013. *The Tyranny Of Cliches: How Liberals Cheat In The War Of Ideas*. 2nd ed. New York: Penguin Group. Pgs. 3-4 and 32-38 for a defense of conservative ideology.

<sup>63</sup> Tanner, Micheal. 2011. "This Is Going To Hurt". *National Review Online*.

<http://www.nationalreview.com/article/263972/going-hurt-michael-tanner>. Dalmia, Shikha. 2010. "Entitlement Reform? Not Their Cup Of Tea". *Reason.Com*.

<http://reason.com/archives/2010/11/01/entitlement-reform-not-their-c>.

<sup>64</sup> Free, Lloyd A, and Hadley Cantril. 1968. *The Political Beliefs Of Americans*. New York: Simon and Schuster. Rushefsky, Mark E. 2014. *Public Policy In The United States*. Routledge. Cantrill, Albert, and Susan Davis Cantril. 1999. *Reading Mixed Signals: Ambivalence In American Public Opinion About Government*. Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press. Pgs. 1-8 and 23-25



(which the States certainly were before the Constitutional Convention (1787)), coupled the increasingly fluid meaning and unstable role of the Constitution I will briefly outline below, the SCOTUS the has taken on an overtly important role being the final arbiter of what is constitutional. Due to the competing moralities in the US, between the secular and religious, the so-called “Culture Wars”, and the diminished power of the States, most contentious issues are decided upon by nine unelected Justices in Washington D.C. This has made the nominations of Justices by the President, and their acceptance by the Senate, a salient process. During a 2016 Republican Nominee debate, days after the passing of Justice Antonia Scalia, Marco Rubio, a Tea Party-backed Senator from Florida, said “we need to put people on the bench that understand that the Constitution is not a living and breathing document. It is to be interpreted as originally meant.”<sup>65</sup> At the same debate other candidates talked about the importance of conservative justices to prevent a liberal-dominated court: “We are one justice away from a Supreme Court that will strike down every restriction on abortion adopted by the States’ Ted Cruz argued, one that ‘will reverse the Heller Decisions [this up held the Second Amendment rights to bear and keep arms]... [one] that would undermine the religious liberty of millions of Americans.”<sup>66</sup>

The stakes are high: the Supreme Court being the arbiter between two competing moralities, moralities confined by two different views on the meaning of the Constitution. On the flipside, liberals seem to be equally concerned about this, with the website MotherJones sending various emails warning of the consequences of Obama failing to have his appointee accepted by the Senate, and similar sentiments could be read at other leading magazines and newspapers.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Republican Presidential Debate February 13<sup>th</sup> 2016 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/02/13/the-cbs-republican-debate-transcript-annotated/>

<sup>66</sup> Republican Presidential Debate February 13<sup>th</sup> 2016 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/02/13/the-cbs-republican-debate-transcript-annotated/>

<sup>67</sup> Email in my possession. It links to this petition [http://act.endcitizensunited.org/page/s/supreme-court-nominee?source=MS\\_LR\\_PET\\_2016.02.18\\_X\\_supreme-court-nominee\\_X\\_F1\\_S1\\_C1\\_MotherJones\\_eyJtc0Nvc3QiOiUwMDB9&email=johnny.aiken1%40gmail.com](http://act.endcitizensunited.org/page/s/supreme-court-nominee?source=MS_LR_PET_2016.02.18_X_supreme-court-nominee_X_F1_S1_C1_MotherJones_eyJtc0Nvc3QiOiUwMDB9&email=johnny.aiken1%40gmail.com)

## 2.1 A Strong National Government and the Constitution

It is plausible to argue that the original intention was always *for* a strong national government that could meet the requirements of its time and that there was no preventing it becoming tyrannical. One of the three gentlemen who didn't sign the Constitution was George Mason (1725-1792) of Virginia. He was of this opinion that the Constitution would lead to the federal government having too much power, over too vast a territory, to allow liberty to flourish. Due to the variance between - and the extent of - the various States, he could not see democratic rule persisting. When he argued against ratification of the Constitution at the Virginia Convention in 1788 he wrote:

“The very idea of converting what was formerly a confederation, to a consolidated government, is totally subversive of every principle which has hitherto governed us...[The State and Federal Government] cannot coexist long together; the one will destroy the other: The general Government being paramount to , and in every respect more powerful than, the state governments, the latter must give way to the former.... It is ascertained by history, that there never was a Government, over a very extensive country, without destroying the liberties of the people: History also, supported by the opinions of the best writers, shew us, that monarchy may suit a large territory, and despotic Governments ever so extensive a country; but that popular Governments can only exist in small territories —Is there a single example, on the face of the earth, to support a contrary opinion? Where is there one exception to this general

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Jeffrey Tobin called Republicans ‘pre-emptive blockade’ ‘unprecedented and outrageous’ – it might have outraged Toobin. 2016. “The Supreme Court Is Not Above Politics”. *The New Yorker*. <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/03/28/merrick-garland-and-the-politics-of-the-supreme-court>.

It is not unprecedented (just like using the debt ceiling to influence legislation was not) nor is it the President's right to nominate without Senate confirmation. Selective memories seem suited to partisan politics. See Hogue, Henry 2010 *Supreme Court Nominations Not Confirmed 1789-August 2010* Congressional Research Service accessible here: <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RL31171.pdf> Of the 160 nomination in the reports time period 36 were not confirmed by the Senate.

rule? Was there ever an instance of a general National Government extending over so extensive a country, abounding in such a variety of climates, where the people retained their liberty? I solemnly declare that no man is a greater friend to a firm Union of the American States than I am: But, Sir, if this great end can be obtained without hazarding the rights of the people, why should we recur to such dangerous principles?"<sup>68</sup>

I have quoted at length because of the pertinence of Mason's views. But also because it suggests Tea Partiers' and other conservatives' causes are doomed. Perhaps the representative form of democracy they desire and the constitutional restraints cannot coexist. The United States has shown no signs of avoiding the experiences of history. Each day, the analogy with the Roman Empire appears more sensible. Still, some American conservatives believe they can in some way buck the trend. An example of this being a co-founder of the Tea Party Patriots, Mark Meckler, petitioning for a convention of States to amend the Constitution and bypass Congress.<sup>69</sup> Or Rand Paul campaigning for constitutional democracy in line with Madison's take on the Constitution.<sup>70</sup> Perhaps it is time to admit George Mason's point? Tea Partiers still do not. Nor do liberals and Democrats. The belief that the United States is a Democratic Republic is still strong.

## **2.2 Progressivism within or without the bounds of the Constitution**

Theodore Roosevelt (1858-1919), the Republican president between 1901 and 1909, was a central figure in the Progressive Era. His divisive character and actions were behind the realignment of the party in 1912, when he decided he would run

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<sup>68</sup> George Mason June 04, 1788, *Speech at the Virginia Ratification convention*. The Founders' Constitution Volume 1, Chapter 8, Document 37 <http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/documents/v1ch8s37.html> The University of Chicago Press

<sup>69</sup> Meckler, Mark. 2014. "Mark Meckler - Convention Of States". *Convention Of States*. <http://www.conventionofstates.com/author/mmeckler/>.

<sup>70</sup> Paul, Rand, and Jack Hunter. *The Tea Party Goes to Washington*. Nashville: Center Street, 2011. Print. Charles W. Cooke as also written a similar plea for decentralised federalism. Cooke, C.C. 2015. *Conservatarian Mind* Crown Publishing Group. New York

for the Presidency, was denied the nomination at the Republican convention, and ended up running on the ticket of the Progressive Party. What interests me here about Theodore Roosevelt is his support for pure democracy (direct democracy), which caused many of his friends and close allies to politically distance themselves from him. He had a large role to play in linking socially just, progressive policies with democracy and then the Constitution. In his, 'A Charter for Democracy' at the Ohio Constitutional Convention in 1912, he declared, "I believe in pure democracy."<sup>71</sup> Perhaps it was because he believed that his progressive reforms - the expansion of programs that monitored corporations, compensated workers and regulated the workplace - would require constitutional reform. The progressive policies were constrained by the limitations of United States institutions and namely the constitution. Roosevelt advocated sweeping reform of the Constitution and thus ran for the Progressive Party.

According to conservatives, the object of the Constitution was not democracy, but instead to constrain and balance all sections of society.<sup>72</sup> A populist, J. Smith, wrote in 1907 that the Constitution stood in the way of broad reforms that emanated from the federal government, purporting that the Constitution was the result of a reactionary thought. This may have influenced Theodore Roosevelt. But is not relevant to our purposes, because in his speech he advocated for the popular recalls of judicial decision-making. In advocating this decision, he admitted that the power of interpretation of laws should be placed in the people's hands (and thus the majorities). For him the 'power to interpret is the power to establish' and as the fundamental thing to do was to empower the people, whom "must be the ultimate

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<sup>71</sup> Roosevelt, Theodore 1912. Charter for Democracy accessed:  
<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/a-charter-for-democracy>; Progressive Party Platform 1912 accessed:

<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=29617><http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=29617>  
<sup>72</sup> Federalist no. 51.; Russell Kirk, Speech at the Heritage Foundation 1987, *The Constitution's Conservative Character*, The Heritage Foundation; Buckley, William F 1970. *The Republic's duty to Repress*, A Luncheon Address at a Conference of New York State Trial Judges, Sponsored by the Judicial Conference of the State of New York; Crotonville, N.Y. June 1970

makers of their own Constitution.”<sup>73</sup> He did not think a government was representative of the people unless it ‘absolutely’ represented them. This is unfeasible because it will always be representative of a majority, not all people, and it has already been shown that Americans are spiritually and economically divided. He was lost in “one of the great battles of the age-long contest waged against privilege on behalf of the common welfare.”<sup>74</sup> And the Constitution, despite the amendment procedure, was an obstruction. This is the same rhetoric that later reformers would use, and not much of Roosevelt’s speech at the Ohio convention would be out of place in an Obama speech.

William Howard Taft (1857-1930), who succeeded Roosevelt to the presidency in 1909, did not have an impatient take on the Constitution, nor did many of Roosevelt’s progressive allies. At the 1912 Republican national convention Roosevelt had won the required amount of delegates to win the nomination, but these were not binding, and he was thwarted in his attempt at a second full term in office. He and his allies left the convention, and Taft was nominated. Roosevelt’s intentions were later made starkly clear in the Progressive Party platform, which declared that there should be a “more easy and expeditious method of amending the Federal Constitution.”<sup>75</sup> Elihu Root, previously an ally of Roosevelt in the Progressive cause, was chairman of the Republican national committee, and chaired the 1912 convention. He played an integral role in undermining Roosevelt’s ambition. He was not against any of the legislative programs put forward, but split with Roosevelt regarding the Constitution, which he decided “imposed its

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<sup>73</sup> Roosevelt, Theodore 1912. Charter for Democracy accessed:  
<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/a-charter-for-democracy>; Progressive Party Platform 1912 accessed:  
<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=29617><http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=29617>

<sup>74</sup> Roosevelt, Theodore 1912. Charter for Democracy

<sup>75</sup> Smith, Joe A 1965, *The Spirit of American Government*. Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge pgs. 29–30 ; Roosevelt, Theodore 1912. Charter for Democracy accessed:  
<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/a-charter-for-democracy>; Progressive Party Platform 1912 accessed:  
<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=29617><http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=29617>

limitations upon the sovereign people and all their officers and agents.”<sup>76</sup>

Authorities were to be excluded from carrying out any particular policy that “would destroy or impair the declared inalienable right of the individual.”<sup>77</sup>

Root argued that everything possible within the bounds of Constitution had been attempted. Republicans had done as much as they could in the “name of social justice...[and] Republican national administrations [had] done their full, enlightened, and progressive duty to the limit of national power under the Constitution.”<sup>78</sup> He argued that they should not ‘apologize for American institutions,’ at the Republican convention in 1912. He found that there were no grounds for weakening the constraints of the constitution. He then made an impassioned speech defending the wisdom of the ‘great minds’ at the Constitutional Convention (1789). Root wrote in 1913, building on his speech at the convention, that the Constitution worked by ‘limiting power,’ and although he believed that experimentation was needed in policy, he believed that this must be done under current institutions because: “Popular will cannot execute itself directly except through a mob. Popular will cannot get itself executed through an irresponsible executive, for that is simple autocracy. An executive limited only by the direct expression of popular will cannot be held to responsibility against his will, because, having possession of all the powers of government, he can prevent any true, free and general expression averse to himself.”<sup>79</sup> This is a scathing dismissal of Roosevelt’s views, and of many modern writer’s partiality for pure democracy, which Root saw (along with the founders) as being a self-defeating and inevitable path to tyranny.

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<sup>76</sup> Root, Elihu (1913) *Experiments In Government And The Essentials Of The Constitution*. London: Princeton University Press. Pg. 47

<sup>77</sup> Root, Elihu (1913) *Experiments In Government And The Essentials Of The Constitution*. London: Princeton University Press. Pg. 47

<sup>78</sup> Root, Elihu (1913) *Experiments In Government And The Essentials Of The Constitution*. London: Princeton University Press. Pg. 47

<sup>79</sup> Root, Elihu. 1913. *Experiments In Government And The Essentials Of The Constitution*. London: Princeton University Press. Quote taken from pg 6 and pg 12.

The 1912 Republican National convention prevented populist progressivism from dominating the Republican Party. If Roosevelt had won the nomination he would have had the machinery of the GOP at his disposal. And it is likely that his campaign would have been successful. A campaign which had rested on a radical policy of constitutional and populist reform. Woodrow Wilson (1856-1924) is viewed as a progressive, and Roosevelt, rightly or not, thought he had purloined much of his platform, though he did not radically change the Constitution. Thus the Constitution did not end up being significantly altered. What *did* persist, however, was a belief that the Constitution was a reactionary document, best exemplified by the popularity of Charles Beard's *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution* (1913). In 1950 William F. Buckley, a famous conservative, wrote of it: "Today a study of this analysis is a prerequisite to a doctoral degree in American history."<sup>80</sup>

From the perspective of the conservative movement that arose in the 1950s, modern historiography depicts this monumental election year and Republican convention erroneously, painting the figures like William Howard Taft, Elihu Root and Senator Henry Cabot Lodge (1850-1924) as mere defenders of business interests.<sup>81</sup> The conservative movement in large part was a delayed defence of the principles put forward by Elihu Root's and Taft's actions at the 1912 convention. Here again the key figures of the soon to be called "old guard" were not small government conservatives, but those who believed in a strong national government that operated within the bounds of the Constitution, with varying sympathies to "progressive" concerns. This is a contradiction between Tea Partiers and many Republicans, particularly between those more concerned with economic growth than they are with cultural issues (see chapters 4 and 5).

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<sup>80</sup> Brown, Robert Eldon. 1956. *Charles Beard And The Constitution*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.; Buckley, William F. 1950 *Today We Are Educated Men*. The Class Day Oration at Yale University; New Haven, Conn., June 11, 1950

<sup>81</sup>Brinkley, Alan. 'The Problem Of American Conservatism'. *The American Historical Review* 99.2 (1994): 409. Web.

### **2.3 Progressives un-Democratic/Democratic Take on the Constitution.**

Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826) suspected that the Supreme Court would enable the rise of a strong, mercantile national government that would render other governments, State and local, weak and undermine the checks and balance of the Republic. He wrote in a letter to Charles Hammond in 1821 about Chief Justice Marshall:

“It has long, however, been my opinion, and I have never shrunk from its expression... that the germ of dissolution in our federal government is in the constitution of the federal judiciary; an irresponsible body (for impeachment is scarcely a scarecrow) working like gravity by night and by day, gaining a little today and a little tomorrow, and advancing its noiseless step like a thief, over the field of jurisdiction, until all shall be usurped from the States, and the government of all be consolidated into one. To this I am opposed; because when all government, domestic and foreign, in little as in great thing, shall be drawn to Washington as the centre of all power, it will render powerless the checks provided of one government or another, and will become as venal and oppressive as the government from which we separated.”<sup>82</sup>

This is a pertinent point and true from the perspective of Jefferson and Tea Partiers. It concurs with George Mason’s earlier argument. Jefferson worried that the Supreme Court would read powers for the Federal Government into the Constitution, beyond those explicated in the 18 clauses of Article 1, section 8; this would diminish the independence of the States and weaken the competition that was meant to limit government. However, many people today believe – and have believed - that the actions of the judiciary during the Progressive Era, and the dominance of New Deal Liberalism (after the court packing debacle in 1937), right up to the *Obergefell* (2015) ruling in favour gay marriage, reflect democracy and

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<sup>82</sup> cited in Foley pp. 25



therefore make the system more accountable to some ephemeral sense of justice.<sup>83</sup> Tea Partiers, and most conservatives, see this as encroaching on States' powers, on their ability to reflect regional diversity, cultural and economic.

Jefferson's complaints were with John Marshall, who according to Russell Kirk, did more than any other man to establish the country on the Federalist Party's principles, at a time when Jefferson's Republican party dominated the Congressional and Executive branches of government.<sup>84</sup> Jefferson was more favourable to the notion of democratic equality and government ruled by the people than the other Founding Fathers (in many cases, radically so), but interestingly, he would be opposed to the interpretations given to the Constitution by the progressives and liberals of today: because their views are *anti-democratic* – in words more suitable to his time: he would have believed it to undermine republican principles, and prevent governance from being kept as close to what it governs as is possible; this, in his view, could only result in the disempowerment of the people, and the rule of an elite, presiding over highly centralised power. Jefferson's consternation demonstrates that the decisive importance of the SCOTUS is not novel, and that its function has always been controversial; it can push the country in a differing direction to desires of the majority. And what is troubling today is the polarised, sectional nature of the citizenry and the parties that purport to represent them; how moral issues (abortion, religious freedom and gun control) now must be judged on at the national level as the precedence for States to decide on such issues has dissipated; how, because of this centralisation, a district could live under laws that a large majority of its population consider repugnant, that have been foisted on them from afar; such things can only polarise and sow dissension.

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<sup>83</sup> Leuchtenburg, William E. 1995. *The Supreme Court Reborn: The Constitutional Revolution In The Age Of Roosevelt*. New York: Oxford University Press. Brennan, William J. 1985 *The Constitution of the United States: Contemporary Ratification Text and Teaching Symposium*. Georgetown University Washington, D.C. October 12, 1985 Robin, Corey. *The Reactionary Mind*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. Epps, Gareth. 2012. *Wrong and Dangerous, Ten Right Wing Myths about Our Constitution*. Plymouth. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

<sup>84</sup> Kirk, Russell, 1960 *The Conservative Mind: From Burke to Eliot* Henry Regnery Company. Chicago. Third Edition. pgs. 126-130

Charles Cooke of the National Review wrote in 2015 that is ‘one of the great semantic jokes of history’ that liberals have a centralising, even authoritarian approach to legislation, while conservatives have a tradition supporting liberty.<sup>85</sup> This shows that there are differing beliefs of what liberty and freedom is, that have large consequences of the form of government one supports (see next chapter). Tea Partiers often harbour the belief that progressivism (liberalism) has gained a large advantage because they have tied constitutionality to their own political ambitions under the auspices of pure democracy.<sup>86</sup> They don’t like having to argue that being against x policy doesn’t mean you don’t care about person y, or social harmony, or humanity.

Many policies and agencies are constitutional not because of the word of law, but because of common law, precedence in court rulings; there is a new sense of justice and equity which is not shared by Tea Partiers and conservatives. For conservatives and Tea Partiers this is not democratic, but rather a different morality exerting itself upon them. Some liberals are extremely sensitive to any criticism of along this line.<sup>87</sup> Corey Robin, in a more sympathetic account simply deems putting the constraints of the Constitution before social justice as a reaction to the forces of democracy.<sup>88</sup> There is a prevalent sense among conservative voters and Tea Partiers that the National Government does not represent them just because they have a vote every couple of years. Washington D.C. now bears interesting similarities to Old England in the 18th century: it oppressively rules and doesn’t reflect or answer to the

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<sup>85</sup> Cooke, C.C. 2015. *Conservatarian Mind* Crown Publishing Group. New York

<sup>86</sup> Schambra, William 2012 *The Origins and Revival of Constitutional Conservatism: 1912 and 2012* First Principles Series Report 44 on Political Thought, Heritage Foundation. Accessed here: [http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2012/08/the-origins-and-revival-of-constitutional-conservatism-1912-and-2012?roi=echo3-12950794047-9532346-86bbf45ae448dbf68c252ac68230c10c&utm\\_source=Newsletter&utm\\_medium=Email&utm\\_campaign=Morning%252BBell#\\_ftnref5](http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2012/08/the-origins-and-revival-of-constitutional-conservatism-1912-and-2012?roi=echo3-12950794047-9532346-86bbf45ae448dbf68c252ac68230c10c&utm_source=Newsletter&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=Morning%252BBell#_ftnref5)

<sup>87</sup> Epps, Gareth. 2012. *Wrong and Dangerous, Ten Right Wing Myths about Our Constitution*. Plymouth. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc pgs. 5-30 Epps claimed the “far right” is ‘stealing the constitution’, and quotes Jefferson in an implication that conservatives are as stupid as witch-hunters, and that the constitution was not meant to restrain the power of the Federal government. Epps, lacking in subtle attacks those who disagree with him, as non-historical ignoring that some States *did* have state religions.

<sup>88</sup> Robin, Corey. *The Reactionary Mind*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. Print. Pgs 3-39

people; there is (still) “taxation without representation”. This is the core of the analogy and the reason for the historical allusion: the belief that they are close to living in tyranny. (The more conspiratorial have long presumed they already do, left and right, liberal or conservative).

Numerous conservatives and Democrats (during Republican presidencies and House and Senate majorities) have bemoaned the trends towards a centralised government in Washington D.C. *because* it was – and is - undemocratic. Today, many Tea Partiers believe it is getting worse with Obama’s policies, which, from their perspective, reflect an unconstrained and undemocratic form of government. They feel it is less democratic because a centralised federal government is unaccountable over such a large extent of territory and regional diversity.<sup>89</sup> Is it therefore a reasonable historical argument to be of the opinion that certain Founding Fathers, including James Madison (1751-1836), the so-called father of the Constitution, feared the consequences of pure (direct) democracy, and would have reacted differently to the colossal material and spiritual (ideational) changes that have occurred since the Revolutionary Period (1776-1789). In short, they agree with George Mason, but their hope is not extinguished and they believe he could still be proven wrong.

As we have seen, the Constitution was not radically democratised during the Progressive Era. Instead, the revolutionary or radical changes that have occurred have done so clandestinely, through tricks of semantics, the contortion and conflation of language and intent, and finally through the decades of precedence and a changed sense (for some) of the role of liberty, justice and equity. Chief Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes (1841–1935) had a decisive role. He contributed to making the Constitution more democratic (from one sense of the word) and more evolutionary. Things were to be seen in light of the whole countries experience and not in the original intent of the law – judicial activism through the re-evaluation of

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<sup>89</sup> Paul, Rand. 2010. *The Tea Party Goes to Washington*. Pgs. 58-68

words' meanings lessened the need for the chore of constitutional amendments and laws. He was a man very much of his time. Where Roosevelt failed, Holmes succeeded.

While Holmes was Justice of the SCOTUS, the Constitution was no longer interpreted as a strict constraint on democracy, the people, and their rulers, as it had been intended by the delegates at the Constitutional Convention, and in the Federalist Papers. He advocated that he had no right, and neither did any other Justice, to rule against majorities desires (to be a judge!) as they manifested from the legislature. By doing this he essentially allowed experimentation in legislation even if he thought it imprudent. He remarked: "I always say, as you know, that if my fellow citizens want to go to Hell I will help them. It's my job."<sup>90</sup> Felix Frankfurter, later a Justice of the SCOTUS, stated that this improved his stature in the court, because he transcended his "personal predilections and private notions of social policy, and became truly the impersonal voice of the constitution."<sup>91</sup> Tea Partiers and Conservatives dispute this. While most people believe an impersonal voice to be an unheard voice - an impossible voice - many think that this made him an even more personal voice on the bench, for what right did he have to reinterpret laws based on his apparent liking for the people?

Holmes was instrumental in making living constitutionalism a precedent. "We must consider what this country has become in deciding what that Amendment has reserve", Holmes wrote in the 1920 *Missouri v Holland* case – which decided whether federal government had the right, with regard to an international treaty

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<sup>90</sup> Mark de Wolfe Howe, ed., *Holmes-Laski Letters* (2 vols., Cambridge, Mass., 1953), 1: 249  
Leuchtenburg, William E. 1995. *The Supreme Court Reborn: The Constitutional Revolution In The Age Of Roosevelt*. New York: Oxford University Press; Felix Frankfurter, Mr. Justice Holmes *and the Supreme Court* (Cambridge, Mass., 1961).

<sup>91</sup> Mark de Wolfe Howe, ed., *Holmes-Laski Letters* (2 vols., Cambridge, Mass., 1953), 1: 249  
Leuchtenburg, William E. 1995. *The Supreme Court Reborn: The Constitutional Revolution In The Age Of Roosevelt*. New York: Oxford University Press; Felix Frankfurter, Mr. Justice Holmes *and the Supreme Court* (Cambridge, Mass., 1961).

with Canada, to proscribe regulation of the migration of certain birds.<sup>92</sup> Holmes decided that the Tenth Amendment must be interpreted based on experiences of the nation as a whole, not just the experience of those at the Constitutional Convention. This began to set a precedence of living constitutionalism in the eyes of many conservatives. Conservatives and Tea Partiers are not predisposed against change, or reform: they are against the introduction of what they see as radical new ideas that oppose, on first principles, the very traditions, customs and culture they hold dear. When it comes to the Constitution, however, Tea Partiers believe it is no longer moored to the originator's intentions, and people more focused on morality among conservatives believe it has become attached to a hostile morality and interpretation of governance.<sup>93</sup>

The late Justice William J. Brennan (1906-1997), nominated to position of Justice at the chagrin of conservatives by President Dwight Eisenhower in 1956, and described as 'probably the most influential Justice' of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by the late Justice Antonia Scalia, is also critiqued for taking the Constitution as an inspirational, living document rather than as the rule of law conservatives and Tea Partiers ask for. Justice Breyer lauded his interpretation of a living Constitution for its ability to fundamentally ensure 'human liberty, human equality.' It is clear he saw it as necessary to be in "ceaseless pursuit of the Constitutional ideal of protecting and furthering human dignity... for the spirit adheres in the aspirations of all Americans... who yearn for dignity and freedom."<sup>94</sup> For Brennan, the Constitution was not the rule of law, like conservatives and Tea Partiers view it, but an aspirational document, conjoined with the Declaration of Independence, that should

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<sup>92</sup> Mark de Wolfe Howe, ed., *Holmes-Laski Letters* (2 vols., Cambridge, Mass., 1953), 1: 249  
Leuchtenburg, William E. 1995. *The Supreme Court Reborn: The Constitutional Revolution In The Age Of Roosevelt*. New York: Oxford University Press; Felix Frankfurter, Mr. Justice Holmes *and the Supreme Court* (Cambridge, Mass., 1961).

<sup>93</sup> See Chapter One.

<sup>94</sup> "Justice Brennan Remembered". 2016. *PBS Newshour*. [http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/law-july-dec97-brennan\\_7-24a/](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/law-july-dec97-brennan_7-24a/). In this transcript one can read the opinions of contemporary Justices on Brennan.

be adjusted to further human dignity, in a changing world *with changing morals*.<sup>95</sup> As a consequence, politics in the United States is marked by a polarisation that looks set to worsen before it abates, and this is partly because the constitution has become excessively questioned, and ideological lines have been drawn.

In the eyes of conservatives, and Tea Partiers, by taking an organic, evolutionary approach to Constitution, the Judiciary becomes a legislator itself, and resultantly stops constraining the government from legislating on areas it has no remit to do. The cultural divides in the US, often called the “Culture War”, have played themselves out according to the divisions within the SCOTUS. Notable cases *Roe v. Wade* (1963) which ruled in favour of federally mandated and funded abortions, *Engel v. Vitale* (1962), which ruled that it was unconstitutional to have official prayers in public schools; more recently, *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015), which has legalised gay marriage and thus alienated those with religious and traditional values (so often seen as prejudicial and bigoted by their political counterparts). According to Rand Paul, and Tea Partiers and conservatives, the justification behind upholding the Affordable Care Act (ACA, 2010) was based on an interpretation of the commerce clause; this gives the federal government the power to regulate interstate commerce, so loosely that now not acting, not buying a product, that economic inaction can be regulated. Such a loose reading of the clause, they fear, gives the Federal Government unlimited scope. In the end it was upheld based on power to tax.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Justice William J. Brennan, Jr. October 12<sup>th</sup> 1985 “Speech given at the Text and Teaching Symposium, Georgetown University, Washington D.C. Accessed here:

[http://www.pbs.org/wnet/supremecourt/democracy/sources\\_document7.html](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/supremecourt/democracy/sources_document7.html)

<sup>96</sup> Tribe, Laurence. 2011. "On Health Care, Justice Will Prevail". *Nytimes.Com*.

[http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/08/opinion/08tribe.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/08/opinion/08tribe.html?_r=1). For the court’s ruling see, National Federation of Independent Business *ET AL v, Sebelius, Secretary of Health and Human Services et al* accessed here: <https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/392172/supreme-court-decision-on-the-patient-protection.pdf> Rand Paul spoke on the dangers of Tribe’s loose take on the Commerce Clause in a Speech at 2011 Conservative Political Action Conference Feb 11, 2011: ‘Our understanding of the Commerce Clause has become so broad that I often will say, if my shoes were made in Tennessee, they’ll regulate my walking in Kentucky.’

This essentially legislative role for the Supreme Court has led to cultural battles being played out at SCOTUS making the political nominations of Justices one of the most important acts the President has in the eyes of Tea Partiers and Conservatives.<sup>97</sup> With the passing of the formidable Justice Antonia Scalia in February 2016, the conservatives believed they had lost their leader on the bench. It also lay bare the cultural divide in America, and the unhealthiness of the Supreme Court becoming seen as a legislator by large portions of the population. As the potential 2016 Republican nominee Ben Carson, a retired neurosurgeon stated: “[w]e need to start thinking about the divisiveness that is going on in our country. All of the other potential nominees also talked of the importance of preventing a liberal nomination because of all the horrible things a liberal dominated court could do.”<sup>98</sup> But it would not be this politically divisive when a court justice died if the rule of law was stable, and the Constitution was not an aspirational document conflated with the Declaration of Independence, open to interpretation based on the sentiments of “we the people”; if the culture was not fractured into two opposites, like one magnet repelling another, as they all seem to refuse to understand that they are now opposites and harmony will only come with recognising this, instead of righteously ignoring it.

Scalia’s passing away has burdened the sectional divide of the people who have been encouraged to view politics through identity, not personality, and where there are two distinct worldviews, with many distinguishable subsets within them. Now liberals and conservatives, Republicans and Democrats, see the 2016 Presidential election almost as an election on court rulings. This is a sign that the judiciary is not

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<sup>97</sup> "EMERGENCY: STOP OBAMA'S SUPREME COURT APPOINTMENT - Tea Party". 2016. *Tea Party*. <http://www.teaparty.org/emergency-stop-obamas-supreme-court-appointment/>. "Conservatives: SCOTUS Pick More Important Than Senate Majority - Tea Party News". 2016. *Tea Party*. <http://www.teaparty.org/conservatives-scotus-pick-important-senate-majority-145404/>. "Tea Party Patriots | Defend Our Supreme Court". 2016. *Teapartypatriots.Org*. <http://www.teapartypatriots.org/supremecourtdefenders/>.

<sup>98</sup> Ben Carson South Carolina, GOP presidential debate February 2016, transcript accessed <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/02/13/the-cbs-republican-debate-transcript-annotated/>

separated from democracy, and not from the legislative or executive; that it is no longer the constraint Tea Partiers want it to be, or above the petty or significant differences of the citizenry. The death of a conservative legal icon has lit up 2016 election cycle and caused a minor political crisis.

## 2.5 Conclusion

The causes of progress or degeneration (it depends on your opinions) in American politics ever since the Constitutional Convention in 1789 have been: the growing democratisation of the Republic at the Federal Level; the dominance of a Federal Government over local and state governments; and the weakened role of the Constitution as constraint on *all* institutions and *all* citizens.<sup>99</sup>

The Federal Government has taken on a larger role than can sate the democratic instincts of the American people so well documented by Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859). This has become especially problematic due to the cultural and moral divides within the populace – the diversity that George Mason warned could not square with self-governing, participatory democracy. Thus whether one is an evangelical Christian or a progressive libertine, he is unlikely to be satisfied under such a centralised system; that is unless he answers with majority on most issues - which Tea Partiers certainly do not. Democracy has, on the left, generally been seen as the expansion of liberalism and progressive politics, which have in turn been used to fundamentally make the nation more just and equitable (by their own measure and estimation). Hence the argument over one policy, such as the constitutionality of the ACA, is often taken as being against other policies like Civil Rights, Medicare and Medicaid.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> These subject in themselves are myriad and worthy of whole books. This has caused me many problems – and is a severe weakness of this paper.

<sup>100</sup> Zernike, K. 2010. *Boiling mad*. New York: Times Books/Henry Holt and Co. Pgs. 52-63



Whilst Tea Partiers share the belief that the self-responsibility and active participation in governance is more reflective of the popular will. They might agree with Elihu Root, who encapsulates a reformer proudly constrained by the Constitution, as well as the experience of the Founders, that “the supreme test of capacity for popular self-government is the possession of... self-restraint through which a people can subject its own conduct to the control of declared principles of action.”<sup>101</sup> I argue in the next chapter that this capacity was found lacking during the turmoil of the Great Depression (1929-1933), where the politics of doing anything was deemed preferable to that of being constrained by the rule of law - by the Constitution.

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<sup>101</sup> Root, Elihu. 1913 pgs. 50-51

### 3. The Constitution, Welfare State and the Growth of the Federal Government

*“Those who would give up Essential Liberty, to purchase a little Temporary safety, deserve neither Liberty nor Safety.”* – Benjamin Franklin<sup>102</sup>

In this chapter I focus on the welfare state and the growth of the Federal government, both in terms of power and extensiveness of policy, and how this relates to the Constitution. Before looking at how the welfare state arose, and the Federal Government grew, it is worth analysing the precedent setting response to philanthropic policies by President Franklin Pierce (1804-1869, President 1853–1857). Pierce importantly vetoed a bill entitled, ‘An act making a grant of public lands to the several States for the benefit of indigent insane persons.’ The legislation aimed at providing land and money for the care of the indigent insane. Pierce gave a timeless veto message owing to his heartfelt sympathies for the concerns of the legislation: “I have been compelled to resist the deepest sympathies of my own heart in favour of the humane purpose sought.”<sup>103</sup> He believed sustaining the Constitution was the ‘first and paramount duty’ of a President and he argued that the legislation was not constitutionally mandated. Furthermore, he argued such legislation would set an endless precedence for further socially motivated policies, each justifiable in isolation: “for however worthy may be the present object in itself, it is only one of a class.”<sup>104</sup> It would entail entering into a ‘novel field’ of legislation, “providing for the care and support of all those among the people of the United States who by any form of calamity became fit objects of public philanthropy.”<sup>105</sup> He saw no justification “on the authority of the Constitution for making the Federal Government the great

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<sup>102</sup> Benjamin Franklin, Pennsylvania Assembly: Reply to the Governor, November 11, 1755. *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, ed. Leonard W. Labaree, vol. 6, p. 242 (1963).

<sup>103</sup> Franklin Pierce, May 3<sup>rd</sup> 1853, Veto Message to Senate.

<sup>104</sup> Franklin Pierce, May 3<sup>rd</sup> 1853, Veto Message to Senate.

<sup>105</sup> Franklin Pierce, May 3<sup>rd</sup> 1853, Veto Message to Senate.

almoner of public charity throughout the United States.”<sup>106</sup> Worse still, doing so would be subversive of the ‘letter and spirit of the Constitution,’ and it would undermine the States, whom he believed to be primary to the Federal Government, because they would lose their dignity and have to bow down to the authority and ‘bounty of the Federal Government, reversing their true relations.’ It would be ‘the beginning of the end’ if the power was endowed in the Federal Government to directly engage in this field of legislation.

This field of legislation has now been entered into and Franklin Pierce’s veto message is as pertinent today as it was in 1853.<sup>107</sup> For the scope of federal action in helping those in need has continually, if inconsistently, increased like Pierce foretold. His veto held for over 60 years, then a cascade of new legislation and power poured into the coffers of the Federal Government. The previous two presidencies have both expanded entitlement mandates to the frustration of Tea Partiers in principle, if not practice. During the 20<sup>th</sup> century the federal government has grown massively in power and scope. In every indicator of note, it has grown: federal employment, number of federal agencies and departments, the volume of legislation and regulations, appropriations, the level of its debt, and control over monetary policy. Those associated with the Tea Party movement, in many speeches, essays and blog-posts since 2009 have stated their belief that the Federal Government has become too dominant over the States, too dominant over the individual, and threatens the liberties of the American people. They believe this will only worsen with President Obama’s healthcare reforms. It is apparent is that the citizens’ dependence on the Federal Government increasingly alienates many Tea Partiers, and other conservatives, as they believe it increasingly shows little concern for their core interests<sup>108</sup>.

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<sup>106</sup> Franklin Pierce, May 3<sup>rd</sup> 1853, Veto Message to Senate.

<sup>107</sup> Franklin Pierce, May 3<sup>rd</sup> 1853, Veto Message to Senate.

<sup>108</sup>Palin, Sarah. 6th February 2010, “Keynote Speech at the Inaugural Tea Party Convention” Nashville, Tennessee accessed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E7gVp3diPbI> ; Rand Paul. 2015. “Speech to Conservative Political Action Conference” <http://www.c-span.org/video/?324558-12/senator-rand-paul-rky-remarks-cpac-2015> Beck, Glen. 2013. “No More

One's political views are based on our particular understanding of history (or a lack of one) as much as it is based on present and future expectations and desires. This is obviously the case with regard both, to United States' political history in general, and, as was shown in the previous chapter, to the role and meaning of the Constitution in particular. Counter-factually nothing is certain in history, thus there is no objective measure by which to judge potentialities that were not – and can never be - realized. Many would malign Pierce's views today and many would see him as being completely wrong on the Constitution. Tea Partiers are questioning the postulates of governance that they presume to be above questioning. Roles have been reversed between principles of limited government and principles of government philanthropy. Thus dismissing the ambiguities of history has, and will continue to, lead to thoughtless analyses of the Tea Partiers from their political foes, as well as in academia, where the presumption that the New Deal (1933-1939) and Lyndon B. Johnson's the Great Society (1964-1968) legislative programs that introduced the Federal Government into provision of social security and healthcare, have proven successful *for all time*. Tea Partiers tend to think they are at the root of the federal deficits, problems and ruinous of liberty. This has had – and will continue to have further affects – on the *nature* of opposition from Tea Partiers (as well as nationalists and conservatives). Many Tea Partiers believe that key institutions, such as higher education, federal agencies and the media, conspire against them.<sup>109</sup>

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Lies': Glenn Beck's Powerful Speech At Tea Party Washington, D.C. Rally - Tea Party News". *Tea Party*. <http://www.teaparty.org/we-will-no-longer-accept-the-lies-glenn-becks-powerful-speech-at-washington-d-c-rally-25595/>. U.S. Senator Mike Lee (R-Utah) "What Conservatives Are For?" Remarks to the *Heritage Foundation* April 22, 2013 Accessed here: <http://www.c-span.org/video/?312279-1/senator-mike-lee-conservative-agenda>

<sup>109</sup> Noyes, Rich. (2010) *TV's TEA PARTY TRAVESTY: How ABC, CBS and NBS have dismissed and disparaged the Tea Party Movement*. The Media Research Center. Alexandria Virginia

### **3.1 Hoover and Roosevelt: constrained and unconstrained approaches to reform.**

I will now discuss the approaches to reform during the Great Depression. These years are important in understanding Tea Partiers views, because it is when the precedents in United States politics turned against their principles. The Republicans of the era were not the small government conservatives the Tea Partiers now see themselves as, as things had yet to take on their dogmatic colourings, but it was the moment when hopeful, experimental centralisation won out over a constrained attempt at reform by Herbert Hoover (1874-1964, President between 1929 and 1933). An attempt, which many conservatives, particularly “objectivists,” also bemoan as being against the principles of limited government.<sup>110</sup>

Thomas Sowell, in his book, *Conflict of Visions*, provides a useful dichotomy for understanding political, moral and ethical issues: the ‘unconstrained vision,’ and the ‘constrained vision.’ The former is more optimistic about human nature and the capacity of reason to improve humanity and society; it sees things in terms of solutions. The constrained vision, contrarily, tends to see things in terms of trade-offs rather than solutions, and has a more pessimistic view of human nature, placing a greater emphasis on the extent of human ignorance and the limitations of reason. This, of course, is no black and white dichotomy. Sowell conceives this as more of a spectrum. An individual can easily be an amalgamation of the two visions: he can be constrained regarding one area of policy and unconstrained with another – like a conservative who advocates scepticism about welfare policies because of their unintended consequences yet advocates nation-building and the export of democracy into an alien culture (see chapter five). This distinction, despite its simplicity, will help to understand the nature of the political divide in United States

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<sup>110</sup> This lecture by Thomas Wood Junior provides a typical critique of Hoover along lines we associate with critiques of Franklin Roosevelt: Wood Jr., Thomas. 2007. "14. Herbert Hoover And The Great Depression". *Mises Institute*. <https://mises.org/library/14-herbert-hoover-and-great-depression>.

politics during Franklin Roosevelt's presidency onwards.<sup>111</sup> There is nothing novel about Sowell's approach. Irving Babbitt, writing in the 1930s, and influential on the conservatives that will be discussed in the next chapter, contrasts the difference as that between 'Rousseau and the idyllic mind' with 'Burke and the moral imagination'. Placing the changes in American political thought, and subsequently action, on a long arch of political dialectics between the defenders of the traditional order, epitomised by the British statesmen Edmund Burke, and the forces of optimistic rationalism and democracy, idealised by Rousseau, that became prominent from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards.

In 1928 Herbert Hoover was elected the 31<sup>st</sup> President. He had made a name for himself during World War One with his humanitarian efforts in Western Europe. He was courted by both parties for a possible presidential run in 1920. His future political rival, Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR, 1882-1945, President between 1933 and 1945), shared a Wilsonian interpretation of politics with him. Both were influenced by the Progressive Era and were advocates of reform and fiscal prudence. Roosevelt thought Hoover was the most suitable successor for Woodrow Wilson. He wrote to a friend in 1917, "He is certainly a wonder, and I wish we could make him President of the United States. There could not be a better one."<sup>112</sup> Hoover equally disliked Republican "reactionaries" and the "radical" Democrats and declared himself an "independent progressive." Hoover favoured working with the Republicans, but in the end was passed over for the nomination in 1920, being seen as too progressive.<sup>113</sup> A little over a decade later he would be seen as a conservative.

By the 1920s, in the wake of mass industrialisation, it was already becoming the responsibility of the Federal Government to maintain people's livelihoods and

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<sup>111</sup> Thomas Sowell (2015). *A Conflict of Visions: Ideological Origins of Political Struggles* (Kindle Locations 164-182). Perseus Books Group. Kindle Edition. Similar distinctions were made by Irving Babbitt in the 1920s, between the imagination of Burke and the imagination of Rousseau. Babbitt, Irving. 1924. *Democracy and Leadership*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin see pgs. 49-91

<sup>112</sup> Cited from Gordon, Lloyd, Gordon, Herbert Hoover, and Franklin D Roosevelt. 2006. *The Two Faces Of Liberalism*. Salem, MA: M & M Scrivener Press pg. vi

<sup>113</sup> For a detailed understanding of Herbert Hoover relationship with the progressive thinking see Hoff, Joan. 1975. *Herbert Hoover, forgotten progressive*. Boston: Little, Brown.

regulate the economy. Hoover viewed the Federal Government as an “umpire” for American markets and society. In the 1924 platform, Republicans congratulated themselves for “rigid economy” and an “unsurpassed” record in public finances; they also declared that labour should be assisted in certain industries and favoured the “adequate appropriations for this purpose.”<sup>114</sup> It suggested an active role for Federal Government in job creation. Furthermore, the platform decreed support for public opinion being the “final arbiter in any crisis... [which] vitally affects public welfare.”<sup>115</sup> Coal was a natural resource that “belonged to all the people” and government policy “should safe guard, develop and utilise these possessions.”<sup>116</sup> Needless to say, the Republican Party was not anti-statist, or libertarian. It bore the influence of the Progressive Era.

In 1928 the Republican Party platform declared that: “economy had been raised to the dignity of a principle of government,” and pledged the party to continuing “its effort to maintain this present standard of living and high wage scale.”<sup>117</sup> The party in the 1928 platform stated that it had lifted the nation out of a “great depression” and that the party was more than justified in claiming a “major share of the credit” for this renewed prosperity. As the historian Mayer put it, the party was assuring the electorate, “that economics had achieved the dignity of a science and would usher in greater prosperity.”<sup>118</sup> When Hoover succeeded Calvin Coolidge (1872-

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<sup>114</sup> Republican Party Platforms: "Republican Party Platform of 1924," June 10, 1924. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*.  
<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=29636>.

<sup>115</sup> Republican Party Platforms: "Republican Party Platform of 1924," June 10, 1924. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*.  
<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=29636>.

<sup>116</sup> Republican Party Platforms: "Republican Party Platform of 1924," June 10, 1924. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*.  
<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=29636>.

<sup>117</sup> Mayer, George H. *The Republican Party, 1854-1966*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1967. Print. pg. 435. Republican Party Platforms: "Republican Party Platform of 1928," June 12, 1928. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*.  
<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=29637>.

<sup>118</sup> Mayer, George H. *The Republican Party, 1854-1966*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1967. Print. pg. 435. Republican Party Platforms: "Republican Party Platform of 1928," June 12, 1928. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*.  
<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=29637>.

1933), he was the last Republican President of a period of Republican dominance in Washington D.C. But the economy soon crashed during Hoover's presidency and undermined the GOP's creditability. In 1929 between October 24<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> the Dow Jones lost roughly 30% of its value and record numbers of shares were sold, sparking widespread panic, unemployment, poverty and chaos. The so-called "roaring twenties" were over and the "Great Depression" began.<sup>119</sup> It was impossible for Republicans to disown the dire state of the economy going into the 1932 elections. Thus, with the depression continuing, the electorate overwhelmingly blamed the GOP. It had failed to live up to their expectations at coping with the economic malaise. Expectations that had been encouraged by the party were turned against them.

In the presidential campaign of 1932 Roosevelt was quick to let the electorate know that it was the Republicans who were responsible for the economic crisis.

Roosevelt's campaign team launched a particularly personal attack on Hoover. Labelling the crisis "Hoover's Depression" and calling the slums "Hooverilles".<sup>120</sup> It was a time of widespread poverty and unemployment, when the silently assumed postulates of the culture and political system were further challenged. Much was to hinge on interpretations of public welfare. Who spoke for the public? And what did government protection of liberties entail? What did liberty even mean? On these questions Hoover and Roosevelt disagreed. Their rivalry played itself out in a momentous and vicious presidential election in 1932. After Hoover's defeat he would spend the rest of his life arguing against Roosevelt, both in the perceived regimentation of the nation he thought the New Deal would result in, and by 1939, Roosevelt's foreign policy.

In the campaign of 1932 Roosevelt had complained that Hoover was being inactive as president while castrating him for fiscal impudence. But Hoover had been

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<sup>119</sup> Lloyd, Gordon, Herbert Hoover, and Franklin D Roosevelt. 2006. *The Two Faces Of Liberalism*. Salem, MA: M & M Scrivener Press. Pgs 3-24

<sup>120</sup> Mason, Robert. 2012. *The Republican Party and American Politics from Hoover to Reagan*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 39.



proactive in trying to lessen the negative effects of the depression – as much as his principles would let him. Hoover had a constrained vision of liberty and for national governance: any deviation into direct intervention by the Federal Government would result “in the regimentation and the destruction of personal liberty.”<sup>121</sup> He had attempted voluntary cooperation with leading industrialists, businessmen and labour leaders. He tried to stimulate the economy with public works spending. He urged, in response to the inability of local charities and governments to combat poverty he expanded the role of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC) Act that he had signed into law in January 1932. To do this he encouraged the corporation to sign a relief act that allowed the provision of funds for loans and public works.<sup>122</sup> This gave Hoover and the RFC up to \$4 billion to alleviate the worsts ills of the depression. Yet as Hiram Johnson remarked to a friend, “We [financial experts and politicians involved in the RSC] have simply taken innumerable shots in the dark in the hope some enormous sums of money appropriated might accomplish some good.”<sup>123</sup> Hoover was himself drawing a fine line between what he saw as threatening to individual liberty.

Roosevelt, contrarily, thought the country was in need of bold experimentation to restore equality of opportunity. Hoover thought this threatened an overbearing Federal government trying to do too much.<sup>124</sup> Hoover saw Roosevelt as introducing a ‘continental style’ (European) politics to the United States at the expense of individual liberty. According to Hoover the Republican’s after World War One had returned the United States to the “American tradition,” instead of continuing with large-scale control of the economy, the so-called “continental tradition.” It was a contest not between parties or men but ‘two philosophies of government’.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Herbert Hoover, Sept. 15, 1934 “Consequences to Liberty of Regimentation” *The Saturday Evening Post* vol. 207 no.11

<sup>122</sup> Burner, David. 1979. *Herbert Hoover, a public life*. New York: Knopf. pp. 274-9

<sup>123</sup> Hiram Johnson quoted in Mayer, George H. 1967. *The Republican Party, 1854-1964*. New York: Oxford University Press. Pg. 424

<sup>124</sup> Herbert Hoover: Presidential Nomination Address Sent to the Republican National Convention Washington, D.C., August 11, 1932

<sup>125</sup> Herbert Hoover: Campaign Speech Madison Square Garden, New York, October 31, 1932

Roosevelt proposed to reverse this. Hoover thought this reversal represented ‘a profound change’ and a departure from the American tradition. Another Republican, T. Roosevelt Jnr, was blunter in his denigration: “a radical form of socialism,” was threatening the existence of the current social order. Similar accusations abounded. To such accusations Roosevelt responded, “my policy is as radical as American Liberty; as radical as the constitution of the United States.”<sup>126</sup>

Roosevelt’s administration and his Democratic successors went on to revolutionise the Federal Government, permanently expand the role and power of the Federal Government, particularly the executive branch, and ultimately the very foundation of American society. In his inaugural speech, Roosevelt declared that he would “treat the task [of responding to the effects of the Great Depression] as we would treat the emergency of war.”<sup>127</sup> The country in his “calm judgment” was facing an emergency greater than in 1917. The long term effects of this was fundamental change in politics, government and society is succinctly by Lloyd and Davenport in *New Deal & Modern American Conservatism (2013)*: “In the name of addressing an emergency, an earlier generation was willing to trade in some of its liberty and reshape the republic on a temporary basis. But.... Instead it became [the] “the new normal,” a newly reshaped welfare state from which we continue to work, and to which we continue to add.” <sup>128</sup>

Franklin Pierce was correct to surmise that once the Federal Government had entered into public philanthropy it would continue to expand its powers and prerogatives. Alas, it is doing so now at the cost of a huge federal debt. It is this debt

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<sup>126</sup> The "Portland Speech." A Campaign Address on Public Utilities and Development of Hydro-Electric Power, Portland, Ore. September 21, 1932. Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: F.D. Roosevelt, 1940, Volume 9 Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., to Charles D. Hilles, July 4, 1932, box 28, Roosevelt Papers cited in Mason, Robert. *The Republican Party And American Politics From Hoover To Reagan*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012. Print. Pg. 35

<sup>127</sup> Franklin Roosevelt First Inaugural Address 1933

<sup>128</sup> Lloyd, J. G., and David Davenport. 2013. *The New Deal & Modern American Conservatism a Defining Rivalry*. Chicago: Hoover Institution Press.

<http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=1370636>.

pg. 8

that purportedly is the central concern of Tea Partiers, along with the dependence the welfare state creates, which is seen to undermine the American liberties – but there are two conceptions of liberty: the positive and the negative, the constrained and the unconstrained, the new and the traditional. Tea Partiers want a return to constrained liberty and believe it is upheld by the restriction they believe the Constitution to place on all institutions and people within the Union.

### **3.2 The New Deal politics**

It is not the place of this thesis to remark specifically on the New Deal. But it is necessary to mention some of the changes it brought, presumed and actual, because it had an immense impact on the Republican Party's future. While many of the complaints we have seen originate from the Tea Partiers are a rebuke upon the principles of the New Deal. Such policies as the National Recovery Act (1933), the Agricultural Adjustment Act (1933) were attempts to both code and regulate prices and standards of quality and production. It was also that Roosevelt, with the aid of his Brain Trust, was leading legislative efforts with a pliant Congress. Much of the legislation Roosevelt's Congress introduced was deemed unconstitutional. The Democrats were finally provoked by Roosevelt's attempts to pack the Supreme Court with younger Chief Justices his choice. The New Deal went through several permeations. Roosevelt's policies failed economically, in that the recession was ongoing going into World War Two, and had arisen as soon as he tried to balance the budget.<sup>129</sup> This is irrelevant to liberals because a necessary change in the American political tradition had occurred and this was a worthy price.

Roosevelt's experimentation led to a vast federal bureaucracy that has only grown since. Social security originates from these times, and along with other relief programs, created the rudiments of the American Welfare state. As Arthur Schlesinger, a principal defender and historian, of the New Deal joyously remarked

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<sup>129</sup> Flynn, John T. 1949. *The Roosevelt Myth* Ludwig von Mises Institute Ebook. loc. 562-677

in 1948, “there seems no inherent obstacle to the gradual advance of socialism in the United States through a series of New Deals.”<sup>130</sup> A prevalent American history book in schools today states the most important achievement of the New Deal, despite it failing on every one of its goals – lowering unemployment, rationalising the economy, being just two – “was to create a sense of possibilities among Americans, to persuade them that the fortunes of the individual” need not be left to the chances of the markets.<sup>131</sup> It demonstrated the value of enlisting government in the effort to provide protection to individuals. In short, it led to the change that conservatives, no matter one’s respective vintage, are now organised against – either in principle or rhetoric – and completely conforms to Franklin Pierce’s warnings about such policies.

Roosevelt thought it was time for bold experimentation. He renounced the tradition of Jefferson and Thomas Paine. Hofstadter, esteemed historian, describes the “flood of legislation” as so confusing, as such a “chaos of experimentation,” that it is preferable to call it interventionism and not “economic planning”.<sup>132</sup> Because “genuine planners... found themselves floundering amid the cross-currents of the New Deal and ended in disillusionment.”<sup>133</sup> From an economic viewpoint the New Deal lacked the “rationality and consistency which is implied in the concept of planning.” Yet according to Hofstadter it was ‘cliché-ridden’ to point out the many failings of the policies at the time. Thus the analysis of Hofstadter, and many of those similar to him, is self-contradictory: it portrays the New Deal as a kind of blind experimentation, and yet concomitantly dismisses the opinions of those who disagreed with such random Federal policy as being fringe fanatics, whose arguments need not be addressed for history has proven them to be atavisms. This

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<sup>130</sup> Arthur Schlesinger Jr., “Schlesinger Manifesto,” *Partisan Review*, May-June 1947.

<sup>131</sup> Brinkley, Alan. 2004. *The unfinished nation: a concise history of the American people*. Boston: McGraw-Hill. pg.649

<sup>132</sup> Hofstadter, Richard. 1995. *The Age of Reform: from Bryan to F.D.R.* New York: Vintage Books. pgs. 307-308

<sup>133</sup> Hofstadter, Richard. 1995. *The Age of Reform: from Bryan to F.D.R.* New York: Vintage Books. pgs. 307-308

seems somewhat dishonest, at the very least, as much of the historical coverage of both the New Deal and conservatism was in the 1940s and 1960s. This will be briefly discussed here and more fully in the succeeding chapter.

Hofstadter provided a typical defence of the New Deal which rests on the assumption that history *necessitated* circumventing the Constitution. This was done in order to experiment with policy and directly control the labour market. Because of the emergency situation the Great Depression had caused, Hoover's doctrinaire views were now outdated. They relied on a "healthy society." America had changed to such an extent that it was atavistic to be against New Deal experimentation.<sup>134</sup> Doing *anything* was now better than acting cautiously, prudently - conservatively. Society was unhealthy and therefore it was time for interventionism and reform, to try something new, and to create the organisation by which this could be done. Even if no one agreed on what would work or not. Hudson and Wolfskill, in their book on New Deal opposition, replicate Hofstadter's defence: "Errors were made; inconsistencies developed; agency piled upon agency, many with overlapping functions, some with contrasting goals. *In general, the country agreed that bold action, even experimentation, was preferable to hesitation and calm deliberation.*"<sup>135</sup>

The general will of the people was becoming more important than the Constitution, the need for a solution, and quickly, allowed Roosevelt to ultimately change United States politics in a radical fashion with his huge electoral successes in 1936 and 1940. Whether right or wrong, morally or economically, it represents a clear departure from former precedents and the wording of the Constitution. For someone of Pierce's persuasion it was the 'beginning of the end'. Tea Partiers clearly haven't given up hope. But as the George Eliot once remarked in *Middlemarch*, "What we call are despair is often only the painful eagerness of unfed hope."<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Hofstadter, Richard. 1995. *The Age of Reform: from Bryan to F.D.R.* New York: Vintage Books. pg. 320.

<sup>135</sup> Wolfskill, George and John A Hudson. 1969. *All But The People*. [New York]: Macmillan Pgs. 180. Emphasis added, JA.

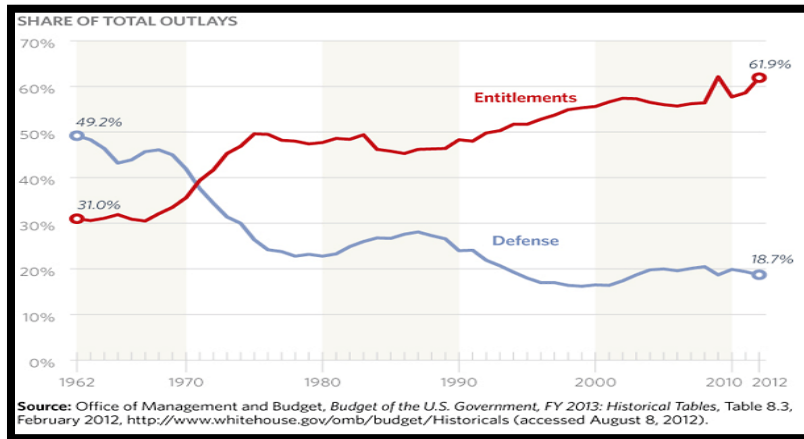
<sup>136</sup> Eliot, George. 2016. *Middlemarch*. pg 345.

Hope quickly turns to despair when it isn't fed. A small government conservatives' hope has not been meaningfully sated since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. That is why they appear to be so darn outdated to the modern mind. That is why they appear to be exasperated.

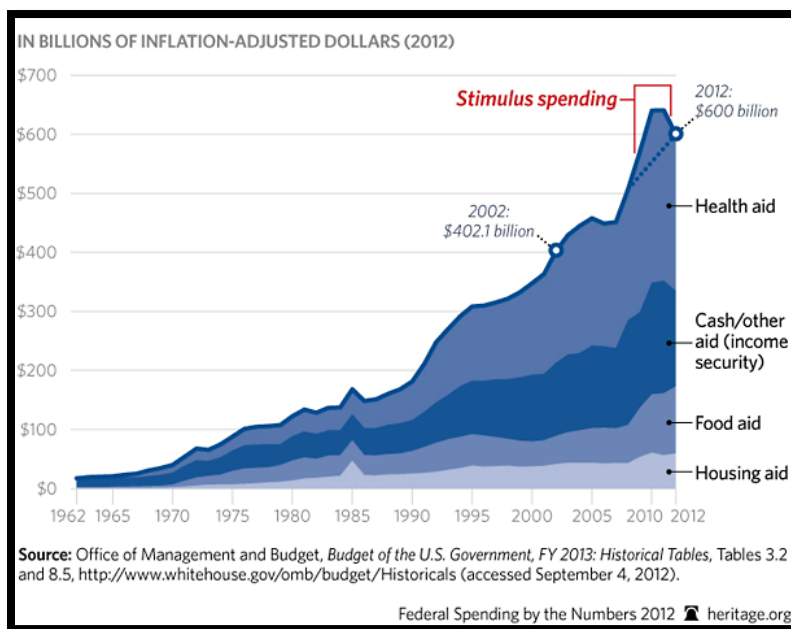
### **3.3. Growth of the Welfare State and Federal Debt.**

Federal spending has become heavily based around entitlements. Lyndon Johnson's (1890-1969) Great Society programme of legislation in the 1960s commenced Medicare and Medicaid, which moved the Federal Government further into the domain of providing healthcare for the old and the indigent. This occurred in 1965 through the expansion of the Social Security Act, which had previously been enacted in 1936 under Roosevelt. Since this occurred, Federal government spending on entitlements has ballooned. Figure 3.3.1 plots this rise. In 1971, total outlays on entitlements became higher than defence outlays for the first time. The gap has since widened substantially. What we can also see in Figure 3.3.2 is that spending on anti-poverty measures, or what Pierce would have called public philanthropy, has consistently grown since the 1960s in real terms.

**Figure 3.3.1: Federal Spending on Entitlement programmes<sup>137</sup>**



**Figure 3.3.2 Anti-Poverty Spending<sup>138</sup>**



Conservatives, and especially Tea Partiers, believe that it is a spending problem and not a revenue problem that is causing the deficit and debt of the Federal Government to rise. The “Tea” in Tea Party is often used as an acronym for ‘taxed

<sup>137</sup> Fraser, Alison Acosta. 2012. "Federal Spending By The Numbers - 2012". *The Heritage Foundation*. <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2012/10/federal-spending-by-the-numbers-2012>.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*

enough already'. This would mean that if the deficit were to be removed and debt levels lowered, then entitlements would need to be cut, streamlined and reformed. This suggestion has been met with a chorus of execration, and many Tea Party critics have written of the inconsistencies in their views on this subject: they are usually against cuts in practice, but for them in principle. There is sense that they deserve what they have paid for, having been taxed for social security throughout their lives (which diminished their capability to save for their own retirements). Thus it is unreasonable to belittle Tea Partiers' values, and their desire for independence, and self-governance, just because they still need and want the very entitlements they have contributed towards. Instead of hypocrisy, it illustrates just how difficult a task, politically and culturally, it will be to reform social welfare, let alone to remove it, because it directly affects citizen's livelihoods, and will always be unpopular, no matter how necessary. Regardless, it is being made dependent on a distant Federal Government they dislike and distrust, that is behind the anger conservatives and Tea Partiers have for the Federal Government.<sup>139</sup> It is not sustainable or admirable to depend on your foe for your sustenance, having little power or choice to do otherwise.

The wastefulness and profligacy of this government adds to their consternation. As was shown in chapter one, the size of the federal debt and deficit was one of the key causes of Tea Partiers' angst. They see it as borrowing from the unborn, and undermining the nation's long-term sustainability. In 2009, the year Tea Partiers came to national prominence, off the back of the Trouble Assets Relief Program, and Obama's infamous stimulus package, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, the deficit was \$1,412,688,000,000 (around 9.8 percent of GDP according to

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<sup>139</sup> "Thousands Of Anti-Tax 'Tea Party' Protesters Turn Out In U.S. Cities | Fox News". 2009. *Fox News*. <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2009/04/15/thousands-anti-tax-tea-party-protesters-turn-cities.html>; Corsi, Jerome. 2013. "U.S. Slips Into Government Dependency Under Obama - Tea Party News". *Tea Party*. <http://www.teaparty.org/s-slips-into-government-dependency-under-obama-26373/>. Many speeches have been spoken against a dependence on government one being Governor Scott Walker Remarks at Conservative Political Action Conference Feb 26<sup>th</sup> 2015 <http://www.c-span.org/video/?324557-12/governor-scott-walker-remarks-cpac>



Congressional Budget Office). Gross Federal Debt was \$11,875,851,000,000 or 82.4 percent, rising from 67.7 percent in 2008.

As of 2015, gross federal national debt was close to \$18 trillion, consisting of debt borrowed from credit markets and the Federal Reserve (publically held), which surpassed \$13 trillion, and intragovernmental debt (like the Social Security Trust Fund) that is just above \$3 trillion. Since President Obama was elected, gross federal debt has risen from 67.7 to 101.3 percent of GDP at the end of 2015. The interest payments in 2015 were over 6 percent of total federal outlays, and over nearly a quarter of a trillion dollars.<sup>140</sup> Perhaps Tea Partiers and conservatives are correct to demand reform, and to demand less spending, but if the debt is to be lowered or stabilised, taxation also needs to be reformed. (Whether the movement is for lowering taxes or truly for fiscally conservative policies is hard to ascertain.) Given the political divides between Democrats and Republicans, it is implausible to think spending cuts alone, coupled with tax reductions, which were proposed by most of the Republican field for the 2016 presidential nomination, will resolve this issue.<sup>141</sup>

Rand Paul has called this level of debt a threat to national security, while many intellectuals have theorised on how high levels of debt ruin a nation's power. No wonder a contemporary historian of the United States, Niall Ferguson, with his seeming nostalgia for committed imperialism, believes the Tea Party, if it actually commits to specific spending cuts, is providing a needed injection of fiscal conservatism into American political discourse. It needs addressing urgently, against the instincts of short-termist politics, because compounded interest will only make it harder to resolve.

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<sup>140</sup> Congressional Budget Office Historical Budget Data for January 2015 accessed here: [https://www.cbo.gov/about/products/budget\\_economic\\_data#2](https://www.cbo.gov/about/products/budget_economic_data#2)

<sup>141</sup> Tax plans of Ted Cruz, Donald Trump and Rand Paul all advocated cutting taxation not raising it to cover the deficit in 2016 see their plans at: "The Simple Flat Tax Plan | Ted Cruz For Senate". 2016. *Ted Cruz For Senate*. [https://www.tedcruz.org/tax\\_plan/](https://www.tedcruz.org/tax_plan/). Trump, Donald. 2016. "Tax Reform". *Donaldjtrump.Com*. <https://www.donaldjtrump.com/positions/tax-reform>. Paul, Rand. 2016. "Taxes - Rand Paul Kentucky US Senator". *Rand Paul Kentucky US Senator*. <https://www.randpaul.com/issues/taxes>.

### 3.4 Conclusion

This chapter was a continuance of chapter two, but here, as well as being interested by the Constitution, I focused on the growth of the Federal Government. Particularly the degree to which it has become directly involved in the welfare of the American citizens. I have shown that the Federal Government has grown in nearly every way imaginable since the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in response to profound, large-scale changes in the economy and of society during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and which continued into 20<sup>th</sup>, as well as the tumultuous years of the Great Depression.

Tea Partiers, in principle, are against these developments; but to overturn them would undermine their own immediate self-interest given that tax-payers pay for government philanthropy, which makes them more dependent on the Federal Government as it expands. When they oppose entitlements it is not hypocritical but inescapable, unless they are rich, to accept them when necessary. Contrary to many people's views, this isn't a fault of Tea Partiers; instead, it represents the formidable obstacle to their ideological program, or their instinctual desire for independence; as a Liberal might put it: Tea Partiers are on the *wrong* side of history<sup>142</sup>. Tea Partiers believe that liberty is being traded in for security, but liberty for their political opponents means the right to security, health, employment, education, etc. This is the divide on the most important of cultural norms: equity, justice, and liberty

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<sup>142</sup> Egan, Timothy. 2013. "Wrong Side Of History". *Opinionator*.  
<http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/10/03/wrong-side-of-history/>.

#### **4. Conservatives and the Republican Party**

Tea Partiers' frustrations are not only aimed at their contemporary President, Barack Obama, nor even with George Bush Jnr. (even if this is how Tea Partiers understand themselves). Nearing the end of Franklin Roosevelt's presidency, H.L. Mencken, in his essay 'Bringing Roosevelt Up to Date' stated: "When he goes out at last, precious little will be left of the idea that government is a creature of limited powers, with no right of its own to extend them."<sup>143</sup> Tea Partiers, especially those who have articulated the concerns of the movement, have become *de facto* media representatives for the call to a return to limited government, and share Mencken's animosity to the legacy of Franklin Roosevelt.<sup>144</sup> They are the latest manifestation of a severe discontent with the tendencies of the age: that is, the further centralization of power in the Federal Government apparatus, the diminishment of both local governance and participatory democracy, and a statist approach towards the economy. Technological developments have enabled this centralized polity and this has been, and still is, supported by the dominant ideas and norms of academics, journalists, and the political establishment.

In the final two chapters, the focus shifts towards movement conservatives and their interactions with the Republican Party. To do so I explore the Tea Partiers' antecedents to see how conservatives have interacted with each other and the GOP, while continuing to place the Tea Partiers on the long arc of political and cultural developments, which are central to properly understanding the movement.

This chapter briefly details how a varied array of influences, signified as conservative, came to influence the Republican Party. I focus on the idea of fusionism: the bringing together of traditional conservatism with classical liberalism (or individualism and libertarianism); the role of foreign policy in the Cold War Era; and lastly, the friction between conservatively inclined politicians, such as President

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<sup>143</sup> Mecken, H.L. March 1939 *Bringing Roosevelt Up to Date* The American Mercury vol. XLVI no, 183 pgs. 257-264 accessed here: <https://www.unz.org/Pub/AmMercury-1939mar-00257?View=PDF>

<sup>144</sup> Continetti, Matthew C. 2010. "The Two Faces Of The Tea Party". *Weekly Standard*. <http://www.weeklystandard.com/the-two-faces-of-the-tea-party/article/482098>

Eisenhower (1953-1961), and the revanchist principles of (some) movement conservatives who desired to overturn the main legislative achievements of the New Deal (namely the Social Security Act of 1936).

#### **4.1 Contradiction from the beginning of the Conservative Movement**

Today conservatives are numerous and fractious. Although they didn't used to be numerous, they have always been fractious – there has never been a settled idea of conservatism, especially not one that has corresponded to an electoral coalition to rival the liberal one that emerged from the New Deal years. There was barely an acknowledged conservative intellectual tradition in the USA prior to World War Two. There was little challenge to liberal ideas and certainly not a persuasive one. Lionel Trilling, in the preface to a collection of essays, *The Liberal Imagination* (1950), perceived challenges to liberalism to be nothing more than an 'erratic mental gestures' and that it was a 'plain fact' that no conservative ideas of note were widely circulated among the intelligentsia. Unlike many of his contemporaries, he did not celebrate this. Instead, he argued that a dynamic liberalism was contingent on a lively sparring over the ideas and postulates that underpin literary analysis as well as politics. Russell Kirk, who would become known as one of the inspirations behind a resurgent conservatism, and a populariser of the term conservative, agreed that 'liberal dogmas in morals and politics had been everywhere triumphant' since the 1920s. However, 'as if Trilling's remark had conjured spirits from the vasty [sic] deep,' by the 1950s, a growing group of 'literary adversaries' began to question the intellectual ideas behind New Deal Liberalism.<sup>145</sup> William Buckley, perhaps the most famous conservative, and founder of the *National Review*, talked of a growing 'spirit of resistance to the twentieth century', as a 'new class of intellectuals' arose and 'stormed the ramparts of the academy' and questioned 'root and branch' the

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<sup>145</sup> Trilling, Lionel. 1950. *The Liberal Imagination*. New York: Viking Press, Print pgs. ix-x

presumptions of the century.<sup>146</sup> Conservatives argued that the United States had changed at an unhealthily fast pace on most fronts of the Republic, threatening the maintenance of traditions (including private enterprise) and the pre-eminence of the individual ethic over the secularist collective.

This proliferation of books, some more popular and ground breaking than others, started to influence politics in the United States, as the ideas within them trickled down through the media into the thoughts and actions of citizens and politicians. Perhaps the first seminal book was Richard Weaver's *Ideas Have Consequences*, which stressed the beginnings of what Kirk was to call the 'the conservative rout' in the idea of nominalism, which he argued became influential in the 12<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>147</sup> It was, however, Kirk's *A Conservative Mind* that became nationally prominent, being widely reviewed and praised. In a book that sparkled with aphorisms, Kirk detailed a tradition in Anglo-American politics that had been weakening for centuries, giving accounts of discordant figures connected by their desire to maintain something 'timeless'. His conception of conservatism provides us with as good a summation as can be found.<sup>148</sup> In 1975 his friend William Buckley Junior discussed the importance of "liberal" and "conservative" as political labels. He believed derived their meaning from their dichotomous use. This could be obscured by complexities, such as the 'widely unacknowledged orthodoxy' of the Supreme Court being 'the supreme moral authority' and the predominance of conservatives in the electorate but the success of Democrats. But if the terms became conflated or confused by events, intellectually at least, if the 'compass needles [got] wobbly,' one could always use Kirk to

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<sup>146</sup> William Buckley an Address to the New York Conservative Party's Second Anniversary Dinner; New York, October 26, 1964, in Kirk, Russell. 2002. *Sword of Imagination* Eerdmans Publishing Co. Michigan pgs. 438-439.

<sup>147</sup> The Conservative Rout was the title of Kirk's dissertation that would become the *Conservative Mind*. Birzer, Bradley J. 2015. *Russell Kirk, American conservative*. University Press of Kentucky. Lexington, Kentucky. Pgs. 116

<sup>148</sup> For this definition see his Program for Conservatives, or the distilled summation of his ten points of conservatism at the Kirk Foundation: <http://www.kirkcenter.org/index.php/detail/ten-conservative-principles/>

‘magnetize it... for guaranteed repolarisation’.<sup>149</sup> However, this doesn’t circumvent that what being a conservative entailed, what should be conserved and how society should be reformed, has been a source of constant disagreement among conservatives since World War Two. This fractious nature has become increasingly apparent and problematic for the Republican Party since the end of the Cold War in 1991 (see next chapter).

The arguments of classical liberals, and the economists and political philosophers who most coherently espoused them, were also gaining attention. Hayek’s *A Road to Serfdom* was highly influential in the USA, as was the persuasive logic of Ludwig von Mises’s individualistic and praxeological interpretation of political economy in his magnum opus, *Human Action*. For Russell Kirk they didn’t make reliable conservatives due to the materialism that their thinking depended upon and their ‘continuing obsession with economics.’ It wasn’t that a conservative doesn’t defend a free economy but they defend it as one facet of an organic complex growth of order, justice and freedom ‘founded upon the understanding of man as a moral being.’ He couldn’t have been plainer when he reflected upon the beginnings of the movement in his memoirs: “To embrace Marxist materialism and determinism in the name of another abstraction called “capitalism” is to delivers one’s self bound to the foe.”<sup>150</sup> He also had a lot of scorn for libertarians, calling them ‘chirping sectaries’ that obsessed about abstract rights much like liberals. He esteemed Edmund Burke and scorned John Stuart Mill (whose *On Liberty* is still a highly regarded book by libertarians).<sup>151</sup>

Traditionalists, classical liberals, and libertarians, were awkwardly allied. Hayek, frequently called a conservative by Americans, and sometimes a libertarian, actually

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<sup>149</sup> Buckley, William 1976 *What is a Liberal-Who Is a Conservative?* A Symposium. Commentary. Sept Edition 1976 <https://www.commentarymagazine.com/articles/what-is-a-liberal-who-is-a-conservative-a-symposium/>

<sup>150</sup> Kirk, Russell. 1995 *Sword of Imagination* pgs. 440-442 and 443.

<sup>151</sup> See Tanner, Michael. 2007. *Leviathan on the Right: how big-government conservatism brought down the Republican revolution*. Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute. Pgs 19-24

eschewed both terms.<sup>152</sup> He argued that the defence of the 'American tradition' was defence of what used to be called liberal in Europe. This being a common view after World War Two.<sup>153</sup> Similar arguments, framed differently, were provided by Peter Viereck and Clinton Rossiter – both of whom were confusingly labeled “New Conservatives” by a host of thinkers (see below). Hayek believed his views differed “as much from true conservatism as from socialism.”<sup>154</sup> This view was shared by Russell Kirk, who dropped Hayek from his *The Conservative Mind* in its later editions. Nonetheless, his works have become canonical for the movement and today; one suspects, he is more popular with conservatives than Russell Kirk, as economic conservatism (essentially a Hayekian take on economics) is a more widespread view than one founded on a Judea-Christian morality.<sup>155</sup> The view that conservatism was the defence of liberalism is widespread and popular among the self-anointed heralds of conservative politics.

An economically focused conservatism is also present in Ayn Rand's philosophy of Objectivism, which contains rigid anti-statist postulates and morally justifies selfishness (this was not just the acceptance of selfishness in human nature like other conservatives views). Rand takes Nietzschean precepts to make a fetish of an illusion, the free market, as something that is inherently objective; she argues that because of the limitations of objective truth and certainty in government policies there should be no philanthropic government policies in the first place. Kirk pithily dismissed the irreligious political philosophy of Rand, as seen in her novels *The Fountainhead* and *Atlas Shrugged*. For him Ayn Rand removed the Cross as the highest symbol of humanity and “literally... put the dollar sign [in its] place.”<sup>156</sup> Ayn Rand and libertarians such as Murray Rothbard were to become hostile to those

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<sup>152</sup> Goldberg, Jonah. 2015. "Fusionism, 60 Years Later". *National Review Online*.

<http://www.nationalreview.com/article/426606/fusionism-60-years-later-jonah-goldberg>.

<sup>153</sup> Hartz, Louis. 1955. *The liberal tradition in America; an interpretation of American political thought since the Revolution*. New York: Harcourt, Brace.

<sup>154</sup> Hayek, Friedrich August. *Why I am not a conservative*. Centre for Independent Studies, 1992.

<sup>155</sup> Goldberg, Jonah. 2015. "Fusionism, 60 Years Later". *National Review Online*.

<sup>156</sup> Quote taken from Birzer, Bradley J. 2015. *Russell Kirk, American conservative*. Pg. 415

with a traditional conservative bent, as seen in their hatred of the National Review publication around which the conservatives began to coalesce in the 1950s.<sup>157</sup>

The movement itself was split philosophically and politically. Today this is framed as economic conservatives and traditionalists, and sometimes as libertarians and conservatives. Frank Meyer, one of the seminal thinkers of the movement, formulated the idea of fusionism. He had an aversion to New Conservatism as he interpreted it; he believed it supported collectivism. Meyer believed the desire to defend the moral and religious values of law beyond humans had a tendency to justify the collectivism he was predisposed against.<sup>158</sup> He was a trenchant supporter of individual freedom, 'all value resides in the individual; all social institutions derive their value and, in fact, their very being from individuals and are justified only to the extent that they serve the needs of individuals.... The entire sphere of economic activity must remain free of political control.' Meyer believed that traditionalism, or New Conservatism, and libertarianism were only opposed when viewed in their extremities. If this was avoided through a dilution of certain aspects of the respective philosophies, they could be allied in a fusionist approach. Allowing for more cohesion and an improved and combined defence against the collectivist tendencies of the age. For Kirk, although libertarians and conservatives (traditionalists) shared a detestation of collectivism, libertarians were a 'vestigial form of nineteenth century liberalism' in the United States who dreaded customs and authority. They elevated the abstract principle of individual rights above all else, and were narrow-minded dogmatists, just another 'chirping sect' of the materialist ideology. Why was an alliance between conservatives and libertarians 'inconceivable?' Because 'genuine libertarians are mad – metaphysically mad'. He did suggest a slight sympathy towards Meyer's fusionism, in that he thought many

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<sup>157</sup> Rothbard's suggestion that it was a CIA funded publication and Buckley was an agent. *Betrayal of the Right*. Rothbard, Murray 2007. Ludwig von Mises Institute. For claims on the National Review and Buckley see pages 173-190 It can be accessed here:

[https://mises.org/sites/default/files/The%20Betrayal%20of%20the%20American%20Right 2.pdf](https://mises.org/sites/default/files/The%20Betrayal%20of%20the%20American%20Right%202.pdf)

<sup>158</sup> Meyer, Frank S. 1996. *In defense of freedom and related essays* Liberty Fund. Indianapolis. '[N]ew Conservatism, stripped of its pretensions, is, sad to say, but another guise for the collectivist spirit of the age.' Pg. 13



self-styled libertarians were not the doctrinaires the philosophy prescribed. It is clear that the conservative movement was fractious, not just in policy arguments, but also in their respective philosophies.

Alongside this proliferation of right-wing literature, ranging from literary analysis to social and political philosophies, actions were carried out in order to develop the institutions that would allow for a conservative political movement. The internal divides among conservatives were (somewhat) put aside in order to formulate a common mooring upon which they would negate the influences of liberalism. Conservatives founded magazines, periodicals and societies, such as the *National Review*, *Modern Age* and *the University Bookmen*, the Philadelphia Society, the Heritage Foundation, and the American Enterprise Institution. Thus was born, from the writings of a few, a resurgent conservatism and its formalization into a political movement. This movement was to be the cause of much slander and fretful polemics from liberals in response. As William Buckley Junior, not without irony, remarked: "I think it is fair to conclude that American Liberals are reluctant to coexist with anyone on their Right...When a conservative speaks up demandingly, he runs the gravest risk of triggering the Liberal mania; and then before you know it, the ideologist of open-mindedness and toleration is hurting and toleration is hurtling toward you, lance cocked."<sup>159</sup>

## **4.2 The Conservative Movement and the GOP**

Although the conservative movement didn't materialize until the 1950s, and institutionalize until even later, the GOP was already divided along reactionary (conservative) and (moderate) lines in how to deal with the ramifications of the New Deal and World War Two. The moderate (and liberal) eastern wing of the party was pitched against the rest of the country, particularly in the Mid-West.<sup>160</sup> As were

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<sup>159</sup> Buckley, William F. 1959. *Up from liberalism*. New York: McDowell, Obolensky. Pg 23

<sup>160</sup> Kabaservice, Geoffrey M. 2012. *Rule and ruin: the downfall of moderation and the destruction of the Republican Party, from Eisenhower to the Tea Party*. New York: Oxford University Press. Pgs. 12-15

those Conservatives who wanted to repeal the New Deal's legislative achievements and those who wanted to accept them. It was as much an argument over electoral strategy as it was one over the principles the GOP should instill.<sup>161</sup> For decades after the New Deal the GOP was often in disarray. It struggled to come up with an electoral strategy to break the Democrats' New Deal electoral coalition that had united blue and white collar workers. Perhaps it only had one choice: acquiescence to the growing role of the state and maintaining conservative values.<sup>162</sup> Republicans also disagreed about what was causing their electoral failures. Two opposing views generally prevailed. Firstly the party didn't campaign vociferously enough against the New Deal. Secondly the party was too negative and needed to accept the New Deal and come up with positive and moderate policies. This division became more ideological with the rise of the intellectual movement in the 1950s. The conservative movement argued against many Republican figures and politicians. In more recent times, conservatism has become the dominant rhetoric of the GOP, and arguments center on picking the most electable conservative.

In 1944, when the Republican nominee Thomas Dewey was beaten by Roosevelt, it meant the Republicans had lost four presidential elections in a row. In 1948 Dewey beat Robert A. Taft to the Republican nomination, but lost again in the Presidential campaign. This was more troubling for Republicans because it wasn't a defeat by Roosevelt, but Harry S. Truman (1884-1972). The GOP had seen 1948 as their best chance in nearly two decades to win. Arguments became heated after the loss. Conservatives were aggrieved because they thought a more conservative nominee, such as Robert A. Taft, "Mr Republican", had a better chance. Taft was a pragmatic politician guided by conservative ideals but not linked to the aforementioned conservative movement. He had earned respect for both his leadership in Congress and his passage of the Taft-Hartley Act (1947), which weakened labour

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<sup>161</sup> Bowen, Michael. 2011. *Roots of Modern Conservatism: Dewey, Taft and the Battle for the Soul of the Republican Party*. The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill pgs. 333-340

<sup>162</sup> Mason, Robert, and Iwan W. Morgan. 2013. *Seeking a new majority the Republican Party and American politics, 1960-1980*. Nashville, Tenn: Vanderbilt Univ. Press.  
pp 2-3

organizations power.<sup>163</sup> For Taft, the party needed to “restore those principles of freedom which had been the foundation stone of America’s historical development.”<sup>164</sup> In other words: the freedoms that had been compromised by Roosevelt’s reinterpretation of American liberty. Contrarily, Thomas Dewey in 1948 ran as a moderate liberal, or to conservatives, as a ‘Me-too’ New Dealer. The GOP platform in 1948 informs us of Dewey’s temporary victory. There was no suggestion of overturning the main achievement of the New Deal and the platform was rhetorically liberal with a strong emphasis on egalitarianism.<sup>165</sup> It also supported the United Nations, which was antithetical to the foreign policy views of Taft and many other conservatives. When Dewey was defeated, conservatives’ convictions were strengthened. Only standing on principles would return Republicans power. The opposite was soon to transpire.

After the surprise defeat of Dewey<sup>166</sup> it looked like the conservative faction would come to dominate, as it had more support among the party’s grassroots than the moderate faction. Dewey’s faction control of the party rested on political machinations rather than member’s support. This proved to be enough in the 1952 nominee contest, but time proved the politically expedient liberal republicanism of Thomas Dewey – and later Rockefeller and George Romney - could only tenuously control the Republican Party. The arguments over the defeat in 1948 rumbled on for decades. Thus going into the 1950s the very same arguments as in the 1930s consumed the party: what were the causes of the defeat? And what are the implications for electoral strategy? Conservatives thought conservative rhetoric would return the Republicans to office, and moderates thought staying close to the

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<sup>163</sup> Bowen, Michael. 2011. *Roots of Modern Conservatism: Dewey, Taft and the Battle for the Soul of the Republican Party*. 290-300

<sup>164</sup> Robert A Taft quoted in Gould, Lewis L. 2014. *The Republicans: a history of the grand old party*. pp. 222

<sup>165</sup> Republican Party Platforms: "Republican Party Platform of 1948," June 21, 1948. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=25836>.

<sup>166</sup> Dewey had leaded in the polls throughout the campaign, with some newspapers even publishing announcements of his victory

liberal consensus would suffice. The party was still reconfiguring itself to a different, expansive form of federal governance. Thomas Dewey and the liberal wing of the party were the short-term victors. Dewey was instrumental in undermining Taft's nomination in 1952 through his support of Dwight Eisenhower as the nominee.

Eisenhower during his first term (1953-1957) managed a perturbed party membership who were more sympathetic to Taft's views than Dewey's and Eisenhower's, as well as the actions of conservative legislators who disagreed with him. During his eight years in office he had to deal with the complaints of conservatives. It was his belief, however, that their desire to repeal much of the New Deal was electoral suicide, and thus would prevent stemming the 'dangerous trend' which was permitting 'too great a degree of centralisation of governmental functions.' This came to fruition with Barry Goldwater's failure in 1964 and Lyndon Johnson's embarking on his Great Society legislative program. Eisenhower remarked in a letter to his conservative brother in 1954: "Should any political party attempt to abolish social security, unemployment insurance, and eliminate labour laws and farm programs, you would not hear of that party again in our political history."<sup>167</sup>

Eisenhower had commissioned a national survey through the Scripps-Howards newspaper chain. Responses to the survey suggested that the thirst for New Deal-style government had been sated, but that its legacy was now embedded. In other words, neither expansion nor cutback in the social programs was desired.<sup>168</sup>

Eisenhower aimed at the political center and was inclined towards moderation. He found the growing polarization in politics distasteful. He believed people were allowing themselves to be "misled by a lot of slogans and catchwords that really

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<sup>167</sup> Eisenhower, Dwight D. Personal and confidential To Edgar Newton Eisenhower, 8 November 1954. In *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*, ed. L. Galambos and D. van Ee, doc. 1147. World Wide Web facsimile by The Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial Commission of the print edition; Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996,

<http://www.eisenhowermemorial.org/presidential-papers/first-term/documents/1147.cfm> and accessed at: <http://zfacts.com/metaPage/lib/Eisenhower-1954-not-abolish-social-security.pdf> m

<sup>168</sup> Bowen, Michael, Jan 26 2011, *Roots of Modern Conservatism: Dewey, Taft and the Battle for the Soul of the Republican Party*. The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill

have no validity in our politics.”<sup>169</sup> He courted a middle way between those that thought ‘the Federal government should enter into every phase and facet of our individual lives,’ and the other extreme in his party that desired to “eliminate everything that the Federal government has ever done that... is generally classified as social advance.”<sup>170</sup>

Eisenhower didn’t want to abolish all the regulatory commissions set up in Washington, or the trade union laws, or Social Security; all of these he believed were ‘anathema’ to extremist conservatives. His middle way was simply a “practical working basis between extremists, both of whose doctrines I flatly reject.”<sup>171</sup> Searching for this ‘middle-of-the-road politics,’ between two extremes he rejected, led to Eisenhower formulating “Modern Republicanism.” But what was this? In 1957, Eisenhower was asked on CBS News what the difference between Modern Republicanism and the policies of New Deal Liberalism were. There were policies, he responded, that fifty years ago were unimaginable but now were part of the national life and must be efficiently carried out. Government must be “as close as possible to [the citizen] where he can take the maximum interest in it and influence it to the maximum degree.”<sup>172</sup> If this didn’t happen an unhealthy dependence on Washington would occur, the citizen would want ‘more all the time, because it is coming from an outside source.’ The real difference, however, was fiscal honesty and prudence, decentralisation (like conservatives seen above) to the structural level where policy would be most effective. Lastly, he cited ‘preserving the soundness of money’ which was in the interest of pensioners and savers. These

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<sup>169</sup> Eisenhower, Dwight D. 1958. *Dwight D. Eisenhower: 1957 : containing the public messages, speeches, and statements of the president, January 1 to December 31, 1957*. Washington: Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Service, General Services Administration pg 646.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.* pg 646.

<sup>171</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, letters to Bradford Chynoweth, 13, 20 July 1954, in Galabos and van Ee, *Papers of Dwight Eisenhower*, 15: 1185-87, 1202-4 (cited by from Bowen 2011 pg. 308-309) Also accessed here: <https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2015/fall/ike-frontier.pdf>

<sup>172</sup> Eisenhower, Dwight D. 1958. *Dwight D. Eisenhower: 1957 : containing the public messages, speeches, and statements of the president, January 1 to December 31, 1957*. Washington: Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Service, General Services Administration Pgs. 104.

three things - decentralisation, fiscal prudence and sound money – if forgotten to be ‘concomitant to all other functions of government’ would “destroy the kind of life we have tried to establish and have maintained in this country.”<sup>173</sup> These are the views, clearly, of a prudent if unimaginative statesmen, uncontaminated by ideology, and perhaps conservative by inclination.

Modern Republicanism came under a lot of criticism from conservatives. Kirk found Eisenhower unimaginative and his speeches muddled and confused.<sup>174</sup> William Rusher, the publisher of the *National Review*, wrote to William Buckley “modern American conservatism largely organized itself during, and in explicit opposition to”, the Eisenhower administration.<sup>175</sup> Buckley couldn’t descry any principles or substance in his speeches, which were confounded further by his ‘devil-syntax’. Buckley complained of the vacuous nature of the Modern Republicanism with its desire to please all and harm no one making it inevitable it would shrink from principle, “because principles have sharp edges, principles cut.”<sup>176</sup> Thus it was chained to no idea, no principle or interpretation of human nature and society. Thus it was flexible but it lacked any consistency, and took no action towards conservatives’ aims, which Eisenhower thought extreme. Unlike Eisenhower, they saw no courage in the ‘middle of the road,’ just a man waiting to be knocked away by the ‘creeping socialism’ of the age. Eisenhower was a man of his time; Buckley and conservatives wanted to change the ethos of their age. Eisenhower was “prime evidence of the failure of conservatives to make their demonstration.”<sup>177</sup> He clearly did not know “what he was defending, how to defend what he defends, or even whether what he defends is defensible.”<sup>178</sup> Eisenhower was wrong to treat policies that had been unimaginable only fifty years prior as a given.

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<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.* pgs. 104-105 Eisenhower thought himself growing more conservative whilst in office.

<sup>174</sup> Kirk, Russell. 2002. *Sword of Imagination* Eerdmans Publishing Co. Michigan pg 141 -145

<sup>175</sup> William A. Rusher to William F. Buckley Jr., March 9, 1972. William F. Buckley Jr. Papers (Yale University) I-166: 1093. Accessed at Emory University.

<sup>176</sup> Buckley, William F. 1959. *Up from liberalism*. New York: McDowell, Obolensky. pg 95.

<sup>177</sup> Buckley, William F. 1959. *Up from liberalism*. New York: McDowell, Obolensky. Pgs. 90-95.

<sup>178</sup> Buckley, William F. 1959. *Up from liberalism*. New York: McDowell, Obolensky. Pgs. 165.

Many were annoyed by Eisenhower's appointment of Earl Warren (1891-1974) to chief justice of the Supreme Court 1953, and his undermining of the Bricker Amendment (1953-1954) in his first term. These decisions were taken as signs that Dewey and his faction were remaking the Republican Party into a liberal outfit (a suspicion many Republican voters have of today's "Republican Establishment"). Before his appointment, Warren had sided with Dewey, not Senator Robert A. Taft and the "Old Guard." Eisenhower when questioned on how he filled Supreme Court vacancies responded: "I have told you time and time again this is one place where I do not consider political affiliations or anything else."<sup>179</sup> Instead he believed that previous experience on the Supreme Court was paramount, with the only exceptions being lawyers with remarkable experience and skill, citing Elihu Root as an example. While the Bricker Amendment was seen by conservatives as vital to ensuring that foreign alliances and treaties couldn't undermine state rights by superseding domestic law. This is a concern that Tea Partiers still have. The autonomy of the States being a key concern for most conservatives.

After World War Two, anti-communism had become virile. With Senator Joseph (Joe) McCarthy (1908-1957) heading an investigation into potential infiltration of communist supporters and sympathizers, the so-called "Red Scare" dominated politics. McCarthy and his supporters accused Democrats of being soft on communism. Weakness had allowed China to go red in 1949. Many conservatives agreed with General Douglas MacArthur (1880-1964), who had been relinquished of his command of the ongoing Korean War (1950-1953) for advocating extending the war into mainland China and utilizing nuclear weaponry. For conservatives, there appeared to be a deficient desire to fight communism. Eisenhower thought the alliance between supporters of Taft and McCarthy as a "marriage of convenience"

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<sup>179</sup> Eisenhower, Dwight D. 1958. *Dwight D. Eisenhower: 1957 : containing the public messages, speeches, and statements of the president, January 1 to December 31, 1957*. Washington: Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Service, General Services Administration

between two factions in the GOP.<sup>180</sup> He could work with Taft but not with McCarthy, whom he found intolerable. He had respect for Taft, which was shown by his executive order, which dictated that flags on Federal Buildings should be at half-mast until the internment of Taft's corpse after his death.<sup>181</sup>

Anti-communism in the 1950s became central to the unity of the conservative movement. Eisenhower eventually moved against McCarthy in 1954 by organizing a hearing on him. It was televised and he was shown to be insufferable and his popularity never recovered. Two leading conservatives, William F. Buckley and L. Brent Bozell, came to his defense though by publishing a justification of the anti-communist crusade. The former had founded the *National Review*, the latter was soon to be the ghost writer of Senator Goldwater's *The Conscience of a Conservative*. For many conservatives they found that the importance of McCarthy's findings were overshadowed by undue focus being given to McCarthy's character and methods. This was again another action by Eisenhower that infuriated them, but not to same degree as how the media and liberals reacted to McCarthyism.

In the end, attempts to build the Republican Party on a moderate acceptance of the New Deal failed. Richard Nixon (1913-1994) ran in the 1960 presidential race with a similar strategy and was defeated by the telegenic John F. Kennedy (1917-1963). The conservatives seized their chance and began to take control of the party. This culminated in Goldwater's defeat to Lyndon Johnson in the 1964 presidential election.

When Arizona Senator Barry Goldwater (1909-1998) won the nomination in 1964, he righteously declared: "I would remind you that extremism in the defence of liberty is no vice," and to applause he continued, "let me remind you that

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<sup>180</sup> Bowen, Michael. 2011. *Roots of Modern Conservatism: Dewey, Taft and the Battle for the Soul of the Republican Party*. The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill pg. 301

<sup>181</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower: "Executive Order 10474 - The Honorable Robert A. Taft," July 31, 1953. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=106584>



moderation in pursuit of justice is no virtue.”<sup>182</sup> It was a direct rebuke to Eisenhower’s “Modern Republicanism”. According to some conservatives, the quote actually exaggerated Goldwater’s views because the speech’s tone had been provoked by the media’s portrayal of him. Nonetheless, one can only presume these words are a rallying call for many American’s today – especially among Tea Partiers.<sup>183</sup> With Goldwater we see the decline of isolationism. Robert A. Taft had been an isolationist. Goldwater thought communism had to be overcome - the Democrats had left America weak in the face of the communist threat. According to Goldwater, the New Deal and the succeeding years portended even worse: American’s liberty was insidiously lost to collectivism. Politicians had scorned the constitution. Too much power was becoming concentrated in the District of Columbia. The *Brown vs Board* education in 1954 had violated states’ rights with an abstruse interpretation of the Commerce Clause. In November 1964, Goldwater lost in a landslide to Lyndon B. Johnson. But as Lewis Gould, a historian of the GOP said: “the Republican Party of the second half the twentieth century had been born.”<sup>184</sup>

The Democratic Party also controlled the federal legislature, with sizable majorities in the Senate and House of Representatives. President Lyndon Johnson could enact his legislative program, the “The Great Society,” which established Medicare, enacted extensive environmental regulations and crusaded against poverty. Goldwater’s loss might have put the GOP on a conservative trajectory – whatever conservative happens to mean – but it failed electorally, and in the long run it undermined their apparent goal: limiting the further expansion of the State. This was because Goldwater’s loss resulted in policies of the very spirit furiously disparaged by his supporters. Goldwater had instilled conservative Republicans to key positions in the GOP but at what expense?

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<sup>182</sup> Goldwater, Barry 1964 “July 16 Acceptance Speech” Accessed here: <http://www.c-span.org/video/?4018-1/goldwater-1964-acceptance-speech>

<sup>183</sup> Paul, Rand, and Jack Hunter. *The Tea Party Goes to Washington*. Nashville: Center Street, 2011. Print. Pgs. 7-8

<sup>184</sup> Conscience of a conservative; Gould; Mason

In 1964 the Republican Party still struggled to control Congress. It continued to argue about how to realign itself with a changed American political tradition. Conservatism had no substantial legislative victories since the New Deal. The only executive had been a moderate conservative with little time for, or comprehension of, the principles of movement conservatives. And the Republican Party going into the latter half the 1960s was still split between a liberal (or moderate) faction and a conservative one. It is hard to see how anyone could think there is a specific Republicanism by which to label politicians today, as Tea Partiers are apt to do. Conservatism was never the guiding mentality of the Republican Party, but only one element of the party, and wouldn't become the customarily dominant one until the Reagan nomination of 1980.

#### **4.3 Conclusion**

The conservative movement was fractious from the beginning. In a way they were weak for being united against something rather than for something. If they were united for something in particular it was their bellicose anti-communistic views. By the 1970s, the importance of the Cold War had brought together conservatives, libertarians and neoconservatives (see next chapter), underneath the banner of the Republican Party.

Since World War Two, conservatism has had several additions and permeations, particularly as a political movement. The seminal writers of this resurgence became known as New Conservatives (or to their political counterparts, liberals and socialists, Radical Rightists).<sup>185</sup> They are generally seen to have replaced an old guard of conservatives, such as Robert Taft, who had echoed the sentiment of George Washington in foreign policy with their skepticism of entangling alliances. The most marked change was in foreign policy, with the New Conservatives' belief

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<sup>185</sup> Bell, Daniel. 1963. *The radical right. The new American right expanded and updated*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday. This is a collection of essays which typifies this reaction.  
which typifies this reaction

that America led the fight against communism. Some Tea Partiers see their roots in this Old Guard and have their roots not in the New Conservatives<sup>186</sup> - today's Traditionalists or Paleo-conservatives – but in classical liberalism and libertarianism (and the increments in between) that proliferated at similar times.

Eisenhower's presidency was for many conservatives a missed opportunity to scale back or harness the changes of the first half of the century for conservative ends. Conservatives scorned Eisenhower's Modern Republicanism, which, fairly or not, they believed was unprincipled and bland; it didn't suffer from a moderation of principle but a lack of principle. This led conservatives to support and participate in Goldwater's unsuccessful campaign which ironically proved Eisenhower to be correct: failure to accept the inevitability of the New Deal legacy, of federal regulation and Social Security, threatened decentralized governance even more with the Republican's electoral defeat that allowed Lyndon Johnson to launch his Great Society legislative program that expanded Social Security into a wider provision of healthcare for the elderly and indigent.

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<sup>186</sup> Richman, Sheldon 1996 "The New Deal Nemesis: The "Old Right" Jeffersonians " *The Independent Review*, Vol.I, No.2, Fall 1996, pgs. 201-248

## Chapter 5: Contradictions on the Right.

We have already seen that the conservative movement started with internal rifts caused by discordant philosophies, further compounded by the Religious Right, or the New Right, and the emergence of Neo-conservatives. Both groups reacted to the developments in liberal philosophy and Democratic politics, in domestic and foreign policy during the 1960s and 1970s, which gave them something to conserve<sup>187</sup>. This brought in a different breed of social conservatives to those who were inspired by Russell Kirk. It wasn't going to be long before these worldviews inevitably clashed, due to the many potential frictions between them: for instance, the neo-conservatives weren't trenchantly anti-statist like Goldwater conservatives and were not predisposed against a strong state or particularly concerned with the autonomy of the States<sup>188</sup>.

The radical nature of *laissez-faire* liberalism does not – and has not – squared with the instinct of conservative voters or with more than a plurality of intellectuals inclined to vote Republican.<sup>189</sup> This is because it is a contradictory value to hold with religious beliefs of community and self-restraint. But in this final section I look at the contradictions in foreign policy since 1990s and how they are fracturing the conservative movement and the Republican Party.

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<sup>187</sup> Ehrman, John. 1995. *Neoconservatives and foreign policy, 1945-1994*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Pgs. 35-45. Kristol, Irving 1995 “American Conservatism 1945-1995” *Public Interest Fall 1995*, 121 pgs. 80-91; Berger, Peter L. “Our Conservatism and Theirs” *Commentary Magazine* October 1<sup>st</sup> 1986

<sup>188</sup> David Brooks, 2004 “How to Reinvent the GOP,” *New York Times Magazine*, August 29, 2004. David Brooks, 2004 “Up from Libertarianism,” *Weekly Standard*, August 19, 1996; David Frum, “The Libertarian Temptation,” *Weekly Standard*, April 21, 1997.

<sup>189</sup> This was realised by Irving Kristol back in 1950 when he reviewed a book by William Buckley's He found Buckley self-defeating because of the incompatibility of two ideals: 'loyalty to two incompatible ideals: he is a devout Catholic and an exponent of *laissez faire* liberalism.... The two simply do not mix: one cannot believe that it is the duty of society to assist in the salvation of souls, while simultaneously asserting that the individual should have the immitigable right to order his life and his property as he sees fit.... this makes for an agile performance but an ultimately meaningless one.' On the Burning Deck,” *Reporter*, November 26, 1959. (A review of *Up from Liberalism* by William F. Buckley, Jr.) <http://www.unz.org/Pub/Reporter-1959nov26-00046?View=PDF->

With the election of Barack Obama even more questions began to be raised about the cohesion and resilience not just of the Republican Party, but also of the wider conservative movement. Unsurprisingly publications in opposition to conservatism predicted its death or stagnation.<sup>190</sup> It was more notable that some conservatives partially agreed with this verdict after years of frustration with a movement that had never fully comported with their own views. In 2006 Patrick Buchanan wrote, "It is on four issues where no conservative consensus exists.... trade, immigration, foreign policy, and Big Government."<sup>191</sup> In the last decade, numerous books have been written about crises in the conservative movement and the Republican Party, differing in emphasis of policy, philosophical persuasions, and political tactics.<sup>192</sup>

The Tea Party movement soon arose after Obama's election and energised the Republican Party and conservative movement. This demonstrated that the political Right still had vigorous support from a large section of the population (even if the Tea Partiers had little new to say), but it also laid bare long-festering divisions. Many politicians and voters disagreed with the Tea Partiers' uncompromising rhetoric, others with their radical views on scaling back the Federal Government, or their trenchant support for free markets.<sup>193</sup> And as Obama's presidency concludes,

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<sup>190</sup> Tanenhaus, Sam. 2009. "Conservatism Is Dead". *New Republic*.

<https://newrepublic.com/article/61721/conservatism-dead> ; Packer, George. 2008. "The Fall of Conservatism". *The New Yorker*. <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2008/05/26/the-fall-of-conservatism> ; Blumenthal, Sidney. 2008. *The strange death of Republican America: chronicles of a collapsing party*. New York, NY [etc.]: Union Square.

<sup>191</sup> Buchanan, Patrick, T (2006) *The Conservative Crack-Up* The American Conservative Vol. 5, No.8

<sup>192</sup> Crawford, Alan Pell. 2014 "Twilight of the Right". The American Conservative Accessed here:

<http://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/twilight-of-the-right/>

Aberbach, Joel D and Gillian Peele. 2011. *Crisis Of Conservatism?*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sager, Ryan. 2006. *The elephant in the room: evangelicals, libertarians, and the battle to control the*

*Republican Party*. Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley. Hudgins, Edward Lee. 2014. *The Republican Party's civil war: will freedom win?* ; Tanner, Michael. 2007. *Leviathan On The Right*. Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute.

<sup>193</sup> McCarthy, Daniel. 2013. "Why The Tea Party Can'T Govern". *The American Conservative*.

<http://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/why-the-tea-party-cant-govern/comment-page-3/>.

Scallion, Sean. 2009. "Reagan Revisionism – Do You Like The New Deal Or Don'T You?". *The American Conservative*. <http://www.theamericanconservative.com/2009/05/27/reagan-revisionism-do-you-like-the-new-deal-or-dont-you/>.

Rucker, Philip. 2013. "Rep. Amash And Other Tea Party Congressmen See Early Signs Of Political Backlash At Home". *Washington Post*.

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/some-tea-party-congressmen-find-signs-of-political-backlash-at-home/2013/10/06/d13d698a-2d27-11e3-b139-029811dbb57f\\_story.html?tid=a\\_inl](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/some-tea-party-congressmen-find-signs-of-political-backlash-at-home/2013/10/06/d13d698a-2d27-11e3-b139-029811dbb57f_story.html?tid=a_inl).

these divisions have become particularly glaring during the Republican 2016 presidential primary.<sup>194</sup>

### **5.1 Ronald Reagan and the GOP**

The presidency of Ronald Reagan (1981-1989) is not directly of concern here, but his influence up on the conservatives and Republicans of today cannot be ignored. Over the past 35 years, what actually enabled his electoral success, and caused his popularity, has been a divisive issue among Republicans. Politicians of all stripes have tried to reap the benefits of association with the Great Communicator's legacy. His presidential legacy remains the totem pole around which traditionalists, economic conservatives, and neoconservatives pay obeisance to their respective creeds. Tea Partiers are no exception in this regard, and also claim the legacy of Ronald Reagan in support of their movement.<sup>195</sup>

When Ronald Reagan won the nomination to be the GOP's presidential candidate in 1980, conservatives believed they finally wielded decisive influence in the party. When Reagan won the general election, many conservatives thought they had a mandate to scale back regulations and reform Social Security. The conservative movement had entered a new phase by winning control of the highest office of the land. Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford and Eisenhower had never inspired conservatives quite like Reagan. He had announced himself as a potential political leader of the conservative movement with a speech supporting Goldwater's presidential campaign in 1964, when he declared it was time for choosing between 'self-governance' or abandoning the American revolution and confessing that 'a little

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<sup>194</sup> Lowry, Rich. 2016. "The Battle For The Soul Of The Right". *POLITICO Magazine*.

<http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/01/the-battle-for-the-soul-of-the-right-213548>.

<sup>195</sup> Lord, Jeffrey. 2014. "Return Of The Reagan Revolution | The American Spectator". *Spectator.Org*. [http://spectator.org/57648\\_return-reagan-revolution/](http://spectator.org/57648_return-reagan-revolution/). Del Beccaro, Thomas. 2013. "Reagan Would Have Found Common Ground With Tea Party - Breitbart". *Breitbart*. <http://www.breitbart.com/big-government/2013/12/05/reagan-would-have-found-common-ground-with-tea-party/>. Reynolds, Jeff. 2013. "How Would Reagan Fit Into The Tea Party? | Freedomworks". *Freedomworks.Org*. <http://www.freedomworks.org/content/how-would-reagan-fit-tea-party>.

intellectual elite' in distant Washington D.C. could plan the lives of Americans better than they could themselves.<sup>196</sup>

In hindsight this was only a false dawn of a small-government conservative electoral coalition. It was an ambiguous high water mark of conservative influence. By most conventional measures the Federal Government did not shrink during Reagan's presidency: the size of the State in nominal and absolute terms grew (just at a slower rate to the wider economy); no department within the Federal Executive was removed; federal debt grew, and deficit spending returned; moreover, the regulation that was removed, some conservatives believed, had more importance for big business and the financial sector, than small businesses and citizens.<sup>197</sup>

After the Cold War fizzled out libertarians and traditionalists, neoconservatives and realists, the secular and the religious, no longer had anti-communism to bring them into a broad coalition. Nor did they have a character of Reagan's stature and popularity to unite and lead them. Patrick Buchanan, an aide to Richard Nixon and failed presidential candidate, wrote in 1993: "That the old house is divided, fractured, fallen, is undeniable. The great unifier, Ronald Reagan, is gone. The cold war that brought conservatives together, is over."<sup>198</sup> Buchanan, and similar figures,

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<sup>196</sup> Regan, Ronald 1964 "A Time For Choosing" Speech accessed here:

<https://reaganlibrary.archives.gov/archives/reference/timechoosing.html>

<sup>197</sup> On deficit spending and federal government growth under Reagan: Richman, Sheldon L. 1988.

"The Sad Legacy Of Ronald Reagan". *Mises Institute*. <https://mises.org/library/sad-legacy-ronald-reagan-0>.

Reagan didn't even shut the Department of Education: Los Angeles Times, 1985. "Education Dept. Won't Be Abolished: Reagan Backs Down, Citing Little Support For Killing Agency".

[http://articles.latimes.com/1985-01-29/news/mn-13948\\_1\\_education-department](http://articles.latimes.com/1985-01-29/news/mn-13948_1_education-department). Hechinger, Fred

M. 1982. "The Reagan Effect; The Department That Would Not Die". *The New York Times*.

<http://www.nytimes.com/1982/11/14/education/the-reagan-effect-the-department-that-would-not-die.html>.

On deregulation of the financial see Dreher, Rod. 2012. "Re-Regulate The Banks". *The American Conservative*. <http://www.theamericanconservative.com/dreher/re-regulate-the-banks/>. Dreher, Rod. 2012. "Lake Wobegon Reaganism". *The American Conservative*.

<http://www.theamericanconservative.com/dreher/lake-wobegon-reaganism/>.

Judis, John. 1990. "The Conservative Crackup". *The American Prospect*.

<http://prospect.org/article/conservative-crackup>.

<sup>198</sup> Buchanan, Patrick. 1993. "Reclaiming The American Right". *Antiwar.Com*.

<http://antiwar.com/raimondo/book1.html>.

were to be shunned by the movement for their views, particularly on foreign policy, as during the 1990s the movement began to fracture. In the words of a journalist writing at the time: "Conservatives now find themselves more embattled than they have ever been."<sup>199</sup>

## 5.2 Divisions in Foreign Policy

Foreign policy is the most divisive issue within the political Right. Fundamental differences have always been present. Murray Rothbard, who formulated the curious ideology of anarcho-capitalism, and was a former student of Ludwig von Mises, believed the conservative movement that arose in the 1950s had already betrayed the Old Right, which had been isolationist and against intervening in foreign wars during the 1930s and 1940s. Rothbard correctly feared the growth of the State and of State power that results from war. Unsurprisingly, he wrote a book in the 1970s called *Betrayal of Right* in which he claimed the true movement had been betrayed by 'Cold Warriors', being particularly disparaging of the *National Review*, even going so far as to suggest it had ties with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and that William Buckley was a CIA operative.<sup>200</sup> However, Rothbard's extreme libertarianism has always been a fringe view. Frank Meyer, who also placed the individual above everything, and is classed as a libertarian, was a strong advocate for military action during the Cold War.<sup>201</sup> Thus the Cold War was the glue that held the discordant strands of the movement together. As Rothbard began to see a potential ally in the New Left which arose in the 1960s and 1970s, disaffected liberals, Scoop Jackson Democrats, began to ally with the first with the Republican

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<sup>199</sup>Judis, John. 1990. "The Conservative Crackup". *The American Prospect*.

<http://prospect.org/article/conservative-crackup>.

<sup>200</sup> Rothbard, Murray 2007. *Betrayal of the Right*. Ludwig von Mises Institute. For claims on the *National Review* see pages 173-190 It can be accessed here:

[https://mises.org/sites/default/files/The%20Betrayal%20of%20the%20American%20Right\\_2.pdf](https://mises.org/sites/default/files/The%20Betrayal%20of%20the%20American%20Right_2.pdf)

<sup>201</sup> In defence of freedom



Party and later also with conservative movement, who would become known as neoconservatives.<sup>202</sup>

Once the Cold War was over, the differences regarding foreign policy became overt. In 1999, Mark C Henrie, a senior editor of *Modern Age*, a magazine founded by Russell Kirk, summed up the situation: "The end of the Cold War [had] rendered such a negative principle [anti-communism] of unity unstable. The theoretical muddle of American conservative thought in the post-Cold War period is manifested in the practical divisiveness within the Republican Party. For, strange to say, ideas have consequences; and contradictory ideas have divisive consequences."<sup>203</sup>

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the internal disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 destabilised a fragile consensus on the political Right. Traditionalists, neoconservatives and libertarians all found cause to complain with George H W Bush's foreign policy during his term as president (1989-1993).<sup>204</sup> For traditionalists the Gulf War (1990-1991) was a mistake and represented the formalisation of American Empire abroad. Neoconservatives also found Bush's foreign policy unsatisfactory; typically for them, it didn't go far enough and should have removed Saddam Hussein. Bush had been too dependent on a multilateral approach and the United Nations.<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>202</sup>Rothbard pgs For a brief summation of what neo-conservatism was see Kristol, Irving. 2003. "The Neoconservative Persuasion". *The Weekly Standard*. <http://www.weeklystandard.com/the-neoconservative-persuasion/article/4246>.

<sup>203</sup> On the importance of anti-communism: Mark Henrie 1999. *Re-Constituting American Conservatism*, *Modern Age* Fall Issue quotes pg 368-369; Zelizer, Z.E. 2010 *Reflections: Rethinking the History of American Conservatism*. Reviews in *American History*, Volume 38, Number 2. Pgs. 367-392 and George Nash's *History of the Conservative Intellectual Movement*. For a concise summary on the difficulties between Libertarian and Conservatives see Nisbet, R. 1980 "Conservatives and Libertarians: Uneasy Cousins." *Modern Age* 24.1: 2.

<sup>204</sup>See these speeches for an outline of Bush's views: "Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union," January 29, 1991. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=19253>.

<sup>205</sup> Kirkpatrick, Jeanne. 1993 "Defining A Conservative Foreign Policy speech at the Heritage Foundation February 25<sup>th</sup>". Accessed here: <http://www.heritage.org/research/lecture/defining-a-conservative-foreign-policy>

According to Patrick Buchanan the Gulf Crisis was ‘rupturing the right’. Neoconservatives such as Charles Krauthammer were speaking the ‘Wilsonian gobbledygook’ that had mistakenly taken the United States into World War One.<sup>206</sup> He had garnered the support of some libertarians and traditionalists, even. It was not a vital interest, posited Buchanan and many other conservatives, to be heavily involved in the Persian Gulf.<sup>207</sup> Charles Krauthammer, a brazen neoconservative, disagreed: “If the Persian Gulf is not a vital interest, then nothing is.”<sup>208</sup> Neoconservatives writing at the *Commentary* and other publications agreed. This friction over how active and extensive the military, and American imperial involvement, ought to be, has only worsened with the events of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Murray Rothbard and Russell Kirk assisted Patrick Buchanan’s presidential bids in the early 1990s. Yet, back in 1956 Rothbard had claimed Kirk was ‘attacking liberty’ (this was not a hard thing to do by Rothbard’s standards) and that it was the ‘tragedy of [this] decade,’ that there was no one on the political right to challenge him<sup>209</sup>. However, after the Cold War, Rothbard and Kirk believed Republican foreign policy had become overly interventionist and imperialistic. Kirk argued at a speech at the Heritage foundation that Bush’s foreign policy had become Wilsonian, multilateral and prone to intervention abroad. He cautioned against wars of fanaticism encouraged by moral righteousness. He gloomily detailed the rise of an American empire. Even if Bush believed American power would be used ‘sweetly and lightly,’ bombing the ‘Cradle of Civilization’ was not a good start, especially for no tangible reason, other than vague suggestions of a New World Order, and the importance of stable oil prices. Kirk’s characterisation of the current state of

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<sup>206</sup> Buchanan, Patrick. 1990. "The Gulf Crisis Is Rupturing The Right". *The Southeast Missourian*. [https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1893&dat=19900824&id=\[scfAAAAIBA\]&sjid=udgEAAA IBA\]&pg=911,7328795&hl=en](https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1893&dat=19900824&id=[scfAAAAIBA]&sjid=udgEAAA IBA]&pg=911,7328795&hl=en). ....

<sup>207</sup> Now confusingly known as paleo-conservatives or nativists

<sup>208</sup> Krauthammer, Charles 1990/91. *The Unipolar Moment*. Foreign Affairs, Vol. 70 no. 1, America and the World (1990/1991) pp. 22-33 quote taken from pg 28.

<sup>209</sup> Gordon, David. 2010 *Strictly Confidential: The Private Volker Fund Memos of Murray N. Rothbard*. Ludwig von Mises Institute, Auburn Alabama Pg 50 Accessible here: <https://mises.org/library/strictly-confidential-private-volker-fund-memos-murray-n-rothbard>

geopolitics was similar to Irving Kristol's six years later, the so-called godfather of neo-conservatism. An 'American Imperium' had unwittingly arisen based on client states not colonisation. Both were unenthused by the prospect.<sup>210</sup> It was to be latest generation of neoconservatives who enthusiastically embraced the United States emergence from the Cold War as a nation of unrivalled power.

Rothbard, Kirk and Buchanan set about strategizing for a new political movement and set up a new foundation in 1993, *American Cause*, to operate as a platform to assist Buchanan's presidential bids after his failure in 1992. The core values on foreign policy were markedly different to those outlined by Bush in his New World Speech: 'America must remain engaged in world affairs', but with the Cold War 'won,' troops should have been withdrawn from Europe and Asia and 'all war guarantees and security commitments,' needed evaluating. The United States needed to remain strong, on land and sea, but shouldn't have its strength diminished by global commitments 'where [the U.S. had] no national interest.' They did not want to extend an 'empire abroad' nor colonize her own citizens.<sup>211</sup>

Previously, when Buchanan announced his first Presidential bid in 1991, he had said: "All the institutions of the Cold War... must be re-examined. With a \$4 trillion debt.... should the United States be required to carry indefinitely the burden of defending rich and prosperous allies who take America's generosity for granted as

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<sup>210</sup>Kirk, Russell. February 27<sup>th</sup> 1991 Speech at the Heritage Foundation, *Political Errors at the End of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*. He was clear in this point concluding: 'it would be ruinous for the Republicans to convert themselves into a party of high deeds in distant lands and higher taxes on the home front. Such a New World Order, like the Pax Romana, might create a wilderness and call it peace; at best, it would reduce the chocolate ration from thirty grams to twenty. And in the fullness of time, the angry peoples of the world would pull down the American Empire, despite its military ingenuity and its protestations of kindness and gentleness -- even as the Soviet Empire is being pulled down today, thanks be to God.'<http://www.heritage.org/research/lecture/political-errors-at-the-end-of-the-20th-century>

Kristol, Irving 1997 *The Emerging American Imperium* Wall Street Journal Accessed online here: <https://www.aei.org/publication/the-emerging-american-imperium/>

<sup>211</sup>"The American Cause - About The Cause". 1993. *Theamericancause.Org*. <http://www.theamericancause.org/index.php?page=about-the-cause>.

they invade our markets?"<sup>212</sup> Kirk similarly argued that the national interest did not include the spread of 'democratic capitalism,' as was being articulated at the time by neoconservatives, whom erroneously presumed 'that the political structure and the economic patterns of the United States will be emulated in every continent, for evermore.' For Kirk this was grossly utopian and ideological. Americans instead should accept, a 'true national interest and a diversity of economic and political institutions throughout the world.' The prospect for America were bright so long as they didn't "swagger about the globe proclaiming our omniscience and our omnipotence."<sup>213</sup>

Buchanan's challenging of George H.W. Bush for the Republican nomination provoked those of a neoconservative persuasion and they decried Buchanan and his supporters. Norman Podhoretz, in a provocative essay, accused him of anti-Semitism and associated him with the sordid elements of American isolationism in the 1940s: there was a radical, 'hard right' coalition, he argued, aligning behind Buchanan, which would 'release into the political air the viruses of xenophobia and nativism... and old-fashioned racism.' The neoconservatives would not support Buchanan. His candidacy was 'bad news' for conservatives. Podhoretz believed an important fight was "beginning for the soul of the conservative movement."<sup>214</sup> The then new editor of the *National Review*, John O'Sullivan, and several of his colleagues responded to Podhoretz defending Buchanan's bid, with qualifications,

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<sup>212</sup> Patrick Buchanan speech. A Crossroads in Our Country's History New Hampshire State Legislative Office Building December 10, 1991 accessed here

<http://www.4president.org/speeches/buchanan1992announcement.htm>

<sup>213</sup> Kirk, Russell Speech at the Heritage Foundation. June 14<sup>th</sup> 1990. *Prospect For Conservatives Part 1: Prospects Abroad* accessed here <http://www.heritage.org/research/lecture/prospects-for-conservatives-part-i-prospects-abroad>

<sup>214</sup> Podhoretz, Norman. 1992. "Buchanan And The Conservative Crack Up". *Commentary*.

<https://www.commentarymagazine.com/articles/buchanan-and-the-conservative-crackup/>. There were frequent charges of anti-Semitism being made, wrongly equating it with anti-Zionism or a diminished support for Israel: Podhoretz, Norman. 1992. "What Is Anti-Semitism? An Open Letter To William F. Buckley, Jr. - Commentary Magazine". *Commentary Magazine*.

<https://www.commentarymagazine.com/articles/what-is-anti-semitism-an-open-letter-to-william-f-buckley-jr/>. The most quintessential has to have been Joshua Muravchik's. 1991. "Patrick J. Buchanan And The Jews - Commentary Magazine". *Commentary Magazine*.

<https://www.commentarymagazine.com/articles/patrick-j-buchanan-and-the-jews/>.

but they did not support him. O’Sullivan wrote that he would be on the ‘same side of the barricades’ as the neoconservatives in the fights over conservatism in the future. Another wrote, however, to point out that Irving Kristol had recently made similar points, and he wasn’t called a “Neanderthal isolationist [sic]”. Regardless, Buchanan and Kirk’s foreign policy views were to pass out of the mainstream of the conservative movement, and the *National Review* partly modernised.<sup>215</sup> Divides emerged among conservatives during the Gulf War and Balkans crises of the 1990s over what blend of ideals and national interest ought to guide American foreign policy.<sup>216</sup> The Iraq War (2003-) and responses to the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 irredeemably fragmented the movement. For many conservatives, this was conclusive proof that the neoconservatives did want to swagger about the globe proclaiming, relishing the U.S.’s unipolar status in geopolitics, as they propagandized perpetual war for perpetual peace from their think tanks and through their publications, all in the name of ‘democratic capitalism’.<sup>217</sup>

If the neoconservatives – and most conservatives – were not for a narrow national interest, or Bush’s “New World Order” of apparent U.N. led multilateralism, what did they want?<sup>218</sup> In short, they wanted to maintain the dominance that the United States had achieved with the end of the Cold War (which they saw as being won by

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<sup>215</sup> Our Readers,. 1992. "Buchanan And The Conservatives". *Commentary*.

<https://www.commentarymagazine.com/articles/buchanen-the-conservatives/>.

Irving Kristol had recently written: ‘Anyone who has a basic understanding of American society and American politics understands full well that this society and this politics put strict limits on the exercise of our military power.’ In an essay in which he defined the national interest in narrower terms to N. Podhoretz and the younger neoconservatives. Kristol, Irving. "Defining Our National Interest." *The National Interest*, no. 21 (1990): 16-25. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42894692>.

<sup>216</sup> Muravchik, Joshua. 1995. "Clintonism Abroad - Commentary Magazine". *Commentary Magazine*. <https://www.commentarymagazine.com/articles/clintonism-abroad/>. For the a good survey of the views those signified as neoconservative see this Symposium Abrams, Elliott. 2000. "American Power-For What? A Symposium" - *Commentary Magazine*. *Commentary Magazine*. <https://www.commentarymagazine.com/articles/american-power-for-what/>.

<sup>217</sup> Boot, Max (2002) *The Savages War of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power*, Basic Books – in this book he makes the case for perpetual minor wars. See pgs 320-52

<sup>218</sup> Kirkpatrick Speech at the Heritage foundation February 25, 1993 ‘Defining a conservative foreign policy’ argued Bush’s foreign policy was to multilateral.

Reagan).<sup>219</sup> A new foreign policy was formulated throughout the 1990s, justifying the continued growth of a military-complex. Key intellectuals and government employees of the neoconservative persuasion in 1990s, such as Paul Wolfowitz, William Kristol and Robert Kagan set up the 'Project for A New American Century' (PNAC) in 1997, declaring that foreign policy was 'adrift'. Conservatives, it argued, believed President Bill Clinton's foreign policy to be incoherent. Because Clinton had failed to 'set forth guiding principles,' they now had to do so. Typically, they criticised reduction in defence spending and called for a significant modernisation of the military to carry out America's 'global responsibilities'. This included extending 'our principles' around the world, and promoting 'the cause of political and economic freedom abroad.' This was to be an unabashedly unilateral geopolitical order, dominated purely by American power and ideals. The founding letter of this new imperial universalism was signed by leading neoconservatives, such as Donald Kagan, William Kristol, Paul Wolfowitz and Norman Podhoretz, many of whom would later work in the George Bush Jnr. administration.<sup>220</sup> Three years later, the project published a paper, 'Rebuilding America's Defenses,' (2000), which gave a detailed account of what they believed was required to preserve the 'desirable strategic situation' the United States was in. It argued that its military should be the world's policemen in 'critical regions': that the nation should 'perform "constabulary" duties associated with shaping the security environment.'<sup>221</sup>

Neoconservative positions remain antithetical to the views espoused by Buchanan and Kirk. War means chaos and some conservatives place order above freedom and democracy in foreign nations. The views of Kirk and Buchanan were very much in the minority among self-title 'conservatives,' but are often shared by libertarians. Decisive in this was the *National Review*, whose editors, and founder Bill Buckley,

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<sup>219</sup> Neoreaganite foreign policy – with a quote here – and then comment saying that many conservatives believed this was wrong (if I have time) and they seem correct as neocons bemoaned Reagan's diplomacy in his second term

<sup>220</sup> June 3<sup>rd</sup> 1997, Project for A New American Century, A Statement of Principles accessed here: <http://www.rrojasdatabank.info/pfpc/PNAC---statement%20of%20principles.pdf>

<sup>221</sup> Project for A New American Century, 2000. Rebuilding America's Defenses pg i. and iv.

embraced the American Imperium, and supported military endeavours abroad.<sup>222</sup> Accusations that traditional conservatives, such as Patrick Buchanan and Russell Kirk were anti-Semitic and fascists continue today.<sup>223</sup> In a letter to a friend, Kirk remarked that the *National Review* had become 'the New York office of the New World Order,' and in another called it a 'lamentable publication'. Later, he wrote that it had become "the fortnightly edition of *Commentary*".<sup>224</sup> Today the National Review very much *kowtows* to the neoconservative persuasion. There is no notable difference in the predominant views of publication than either *The Weekly Standard* and the *National Interest* (flagship neoconservative publications).

Publications arose and developed in opposition to this foreign policy. One such was co-founded by Patrick Buchanan, *The American Conservative*, and it has been a leading conservative institution writing against the Iraq War and the child-like fantasy of spreading democracy around the globe through arms.<sup>225</sup> Many conservatives wrote against the Iraq War in 2002 to the annoyance of those who did

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<sup>222</sup> "The isolationist tradition in respect of "entangling" alliances was not bad geopolitical thought in other days, other times. The notion that we needed any particular commodity that could be produced only in the Mideast -- or in China, or in Australia -- was quaint. The United States was never an autarchic dream, a nation that could produce for itself everything that it consumed.' And it wasn't until WW2 there was a particular shortage of goods. Thus oil is key to national security if world peace is seen as vital interest of American politics. Buckley Jnr, William. Aug 1990 *On the Right, Vital Interests Explained*. Accessed at Hillsdale College

[https://cumulus.hillsdale.edu/Buckley/index2.html#1463230552704\\_9](https://cumulus.hillsdale.edu/Buckley/index2.html#1463230552704_9)

<sup>223</sup> In search of anti-semitism Muravchik, Joshua. 1991. "Patrick J. Buchanan And The Jews - Commentary Magazine". *Commentary Magazine*.

<https://www.commentarymagazine.com/articles/patrick-j-buchanan-and-the-jews/>.

It is noteworthy that the seminal thinker of the conservative renaissance, and a Jewish Scholar, Rothbard, would support a presidential bid for man routinely characterised as a demagogue, populists and anti-Semite by conservatives writing for the National Review, the Weekly Standard and the National Interest: Williamson, Kevin D. 2016. "The Buchanan Boys". *National Review Online*. <http://www.nationalreview.com/article/430769/donald-trump-pat-buchanan-not-so-different>. Continetti, Matthew. 2015. "Revenge Of The Radical Middle". *National Review Online*. <http://www.nationalreview.com/article/421589/revenge-radical-middle-matthew-continetti>.

<sup>224</sup> Russell Kirk to Stanlis April 16, 1992, Stanlis Papers cited in Bradley J. 2015. *Russell Kirk, American conservative* pgs 583. *Commentary* was a publication hawkish under the editorship of Norman Podhoretz, he had bemoaned Reagan's diplomacy with Mikail Gorbachev during his second term, and is a key neoconservative publication on foreign affairs

<sup>225</sup> McCarthy, Daniel. 2014. "Help The American Conservative Win The Peace". *The American Conservative*. <http://www.theamericanconservative.com/mccarthy/help-the-american-conservative-win-the-peace/>. For a book criticising neoconservative foreign policy see Halper, Stefan A and Jonathan Clarke. 2004. *America Alone*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

support the war. In a vitriolic and emotionally charged essay, David Frum accused anti-war commentators of being unpatriotic: "They began by hating the neoconservatives. They came to hate their party and this president. They have finished by hating their country."<sup>226</sup> Such accusations lack substance, and even common civility, but they are in step with the black and white framing of the "War on Terror", and repeated need to demonise every enemy to the American world order as the new Hitler. In George Bush's speech of 20<sup>th</sup> September 2001, he introduced a simple-minded dichotomy where no nation or person was permitted neutrality: "Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists."<sup>227</sup>

William Kristol, doctrinaire neoconservative as he was, recounted, after the horrible events of 9/11, that Condoleezza Rice, probably Bush's most senior advisor on foreign policy during the 1999 campaign, was not the 'cautious realist' she was previously.<sup>228</sup> He is implying that both she and Bush have got more in line with the neoconservative persuasion post-9/11, and certainly after he got elected (he might of being saying these things because of electoral reasons). The activities of neoconservatives, their writings institutions and incessant lobbying during the 1990s, put them in good stead to influence policy post-9/11. And they were significant in pushing Bush's foreign policy into one of pre-emptive violence and nation building.

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<sup>226</sup> Frum, David. 2003. "Unpatriotic Conservatives". *National Review Online*.  
<http://www.nationalreview.com/article/391772/unpatriotic-conservatives-david-frum>. Articles written against the Iraq War by conservatives:

Margolis, Eric. 2002. "Iraq Invasion: The Road To Folly". *The American Conservative*.  
<http://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/iraq-invasion-the-road-to-foolly/>. Francis, Samuel. 2002. "The Paleo Persuasion". *The American Conservative*.  
<http://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/the-paleo-persuasion/>.

<sup>227</sup> Bush, George W. "September 20<sup>th</sup> Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People" accessed here <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html>

<sup>228</sup> Kristol, William in "The War Behind Closed Doors" PBS documentary, Frontline, episode 21 transcript accessed here: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/iraq/etc/script.html>



I am not analysing the Iraq War, or the debates on its merits and failures, but rather the ideational differences and discordant principles among conservatives and Republicans. Christopher Hitchens, a lifelong Trotskyist, would liken it to an on-going and permanent revolution. He became a most persuasive defender in the media for Iraq War and the battles against radical Islam, "Islamofacism". His brother, a conservative journalist in the U.K, believed he had acted in accordance with his radicalism – and love of revolution; he himself had argued against the war. This little anecdote says a lot about the radical nature of this new generation of neoconservatives. Conservatives who wrote against the war were marginalised and maligned for doing so. The editor of *The American Conservative*, Scott McConnell, even endorsed John Kerry in 2004, hoping for a presidency "in which neoconservatives... are not holding the reins of power."<sup>229</sup> In 2012, McConnell would claim 'Ten Years in the Right' and celebrate, in the publication's survival, the continuation of a conservative tradition that rejected modern militarism.<sup>230</sup> The same grouping continues to write against the illegal military actions of the Obama administration (see below), while contrarily, neoconservatives decry it for being weak and undermining the Pax Americana.<sup>231</sup>

This is fracturing the GOP, enabling populism, and relates directly to the enigmatic Tea Party symbol. We have seen that there are libertarian elements to the Tea Party (see chapter one), but we have seen that there are those concerned with the decline in their culture and heritage, in a manner distinct from economic arguments. It has been shown that Libertarians and traditional conservatives, by taking their most coherent and consistent thinkers, Rothbard and Kirk, did not embrace the foreign policy of both the Bush presidencies; their disdain for a neoconservative foreign policy that ensnared the Union to an area of the globe not of direct American

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<sup>229</sup> McConnell, Scott. 2004. "Kerry's The One". *The American Conservative*.  
<http://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/kerrys-the-one/>.

<sup>230</sup> McConnell, Scott. 2012. "Ten Years In The Right". *The American Conservative*.  
<http://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/ten-years-in-the-right/>.

<sup>231</sup> Sources – against Obama for military action; because of weakness Illegality of Obama's actions – and critiques of them

national interest, and has been sarcastically referred to as being “world policemen”. They worry of overreach and domestic tyranny, even if they reached these conclusions differently, and at different stages.

The PNAC has gone, but *The Foreign Policy Initiative*, has taken its place, being founded by William Kristol and Robert Kagan in 2007. In its mission statement it frets about a ‘resurgent Russia’ and denies the issue of overreach: it “is not the problem and retrenchment is not the solution... in this new era, the consequences of failure and the risks of retreat would be even greater than before.”<sup>232</sup> They have doubled down. In 2012, Mitt Romney suggests he would go to war with Iran.<sup>233</sup> Reihan Salam in his essay, *Why I am still a Neocon*, suggested that those who were of a different persuasion didn’t understand the moral and military position of the United States in the world. It was the linchpin of a prosperous and largely peaceful world system (until, that is, defence spending *might* get cut). Whilst Salem *knew* what the horrors of the former amoral realpolitik that supposedly dominated American policy when Nixon was in the Whitehouse and carpet-bombed Cambodia. This suggests the black and white filter the neo-con ideology argues through: there are no other options, only Kissinger’s and Nixon’s self-serving extension of the war in Vietnam (when pragmatism is as good as the man making the decisions), or nation building and extensive intervention in the critical regions of world.<sup>234</sup> To perceive a middle ground is somehow incomprehensible, and will always be seen as weakness; every failure, or change of events that they perceive as harmful, is blamed on a lack of military force or in foe’s lack of belief that military force will be used. This can border on moral fanaticism.<sup>235</sup> No wonder other conservatives have

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<sup>232</sup> Mission Statement The Foreign Policy Initiative accessed here:  
<http://www.foreignpolicyi.org/about>

<sup>233</sup> Presidential Candidates Debates: "Republican Candidates Debate in Manchester, New Hampshire," January 7, 2012. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*.  
<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=98813>.

<sup>234</sup> For an expose on Kissinger and Nixon’s policies in the Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam see Hitchens, Christopher. 2001. *The trial of Henry Kissinger*. London: Verso.

<sup>235</sup> Salam, Reihan. 2013. "Don't Come Home, America: The Case Against Retrenchment". *International Security* 37 (3): 7-51. doi:10.1162/isec\_a\_00107.

claimed neoconservatives have monopolised moral issues, conflating the complex with the simple, mistaking good intentions for righteous, self-defeating consequences.<sup>236</sup>

Salam admitted the failure of Iraq, but he still calls for more intervention and defence spending, citing the successes of similar policies in the Balkans and in Afghanistan. Hoping his supposed 'virtuous cycle' of globalisation, closer ties and the resultant small militaries of America's allies will continue, so long as the credibility of their security guarantees remained. Other neoconservatives, such as William Kristol, John Podhoretz and Charles Krauthammer, blame nearly every situation in Northern Africa, the Near and Middle East, entirely on Obama's foreign policy and haven't questioned the premise of the policies that preceded the "Arab Awakening".

Rand Paul, despite watering down the principles of non-interventionism of his father, Ron Paul, still cuts a lonely figure among Republicans for his policy views. Rand Paul sees the situation in the Maghreb and Arabian Peninsula as a longer war between sects in Islam, who have awkwardly lived within borders drawn up by European powers after World War One, which America is worsening by selling arms to all sides. According to leading Republican politicians, Senator Paul is not conservative. In 2015 Lindsey Graham, senior Senator of Kentucky since 2005, and Paul's rival for the GOP nomination informed Fox News that Paul "is to the left of Barack Obama."<sup>237</sup> Senator John McCain, twice thwarted in his attempts to become president in 2000 and 2008, has vocally opposed Rand Paul's potential policies, which are aren't influencing legislations in Congress or the actions of the executive branch. Since Rand Paul was elected as junior Senator of Kentucky in 2010,

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<sup>236</sup> Halper and Clarke 2004 pgs. 22-26, 'morality should be a rallying point, not a weapon, as neoconservatives have used it, to divide America from the rest of the world and Americans from other Americans.' (Quote pg. 26)

<sup>237</sup> "Rand Paul 'To Left Of Barack Obama' On Foreign Policy, Fellow Republican Says". 2015. *CNS News*. <http://www.cnsnews.com/news/article/susan-jones/rand-paul-left-barack-obama-foreign-policy-fellow-republican-says>.

Republicans have predominantly bemoaned Obama's administrations passivity and his indecisive actions in Ukraine, Libya, Syria and Iraq.

What isn't so clear is how much Rand Paul, and his father, reflect the average Tea Partier. As was argued in the first chapter of this thesis, there is a difference between professional Tea Partiers and the activists. Overall, it seems the movement marches to a patriotic tune; certainly, it sees America as a force for good in the world, but many are concerned about what they see as failures in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the free-ride many of America's allies get, the opportunity costs of such incessant war making.

Divisions have become patent in 2015 during the Republican nomination contests. Still divided on the fundamental role of the American military in the world: there are vast gaps in policy recommendation, some worry about overreach, of the futility of nation building, and the one-sided nature of NATO in Europe; on the other hand, military action has been too scarce, spending too low, adventurism and commitments too inconsistent. This played itself out in vitriolic primary debate in December 2015, a debate that showcased three Senators imputed to be of the Tea Party, they all had a different view, and drastically so. Tea Partiers have no discernibly consistent foreign policy view. Senators Rand Paul, Ted Cruz and Marco Rubio all decided to run for the Republican nomination as junior Senators and *true* conservatives. Rubio turned out to be a reflexive hawk that echoed the views of leading neoconservatives, such as Charles Krauthammer and William Kristol. Rubio kowtowed to the neoconservative line: because of Obama the U.S's influence 'has declined while [Obama] has destroyed our military.' He advocated a no-fly zone over Syria, along with Jeb Bush, at a time when this would lead to direct confrontation with the military operations of the Russian Federation.<sup>238</sup>

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<sup>238</sup> December 15th, 2015 "Republican Presidential Debate." Transcript accessed here: [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/16/us/politics/transcript-main-republican-presidential-debate.html?\\_r=2](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/16/us/politics/transcript-main-republican-presidential-debate.html?_r=2)

Ted Cruz was more conventional in his views but notably questioned the purposes of nation building, and some of the more utopian or idealistic foreign policy recommendations of neoconservatives. Ted Cruz might have suggested he is less susceptible to the idea of nation building, but he still said he wants see if American military can make the 'sand glow in the dark'. When he was questioned by a moderator in a debate about the implications of the statement, Cruz compared the lower frequency of air raids at the time in Syria and Iraq, to the first Gulf War. He also advocated funding the Kurdish resistance in Western Syria and Northern Iraq. Most importantly, he said, Americans needed to be 'fighting and killing ISIS where they are.' When he was asked to clarify whether he would carpet bomb ISIS, he did, but said this wouldn't entail carpet-bombing cities.<sup>239</sup> Despite this, on December 12<sup>th</sup> 2015, a writer for the Weekly Standard called Cruz's foreign policy *weak* and *muddled*<sup>240</sup>.

Rand Paul's peculiar foreign policy stance showed how isolated a so-called "isolationist" can be in the Republican Party. With his moderate take on events, and desire to think long term, he actually appears to voice opinions meditated upon, and not dictated by special interests, or are merely ideologically reflexive. In response to Rubio he dismissed his charge that he made American unsafe in his opposition to the renewal of the Patriot Act (2001). He argued that the funding of factions in Iraq and Syria had worsened the situation, and that regime change in Libya had been a mistake that made their foes stronger rather than weaker. Regime change was 'mistaken'. It had caused unequivocally ruinous affects abroad and had undermined the provisions of the Constitution, civil liberty, and national solvency at home.

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<sup>239</sup> Richman, Sheldon. 2015. "Hard Times Ahead For Advocates Of Peace And Free Markets". *Reason.Com*. <https://reason.com/archives/2015/10/11/hard-times-for-liberty-lovers>

<sup>240</sup> December 15th, 2015 "Republican Presidential Debate." Transcript accessed here: [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/16/us/politics/transcript-main-republican-presidential-debate.html?\\_r=Smith](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/16/us/politics/transcript-main-republican-presidential-debate.html?_r=Smith), Lee. 2015. "Ted Cruz's Muddled Foreign Policy". *Weekly Standard*. <http://www.weeklystandard.com/ted-cruzs-muddled-foreign-policy/article/2000209>.

Things escalated further in the debate of February 13th 2016, when Donald Trump, who many had seen as a passing fad, was still leading the field; he had infuriated many conservatives at the Republican Candidates Debate in Greenville, South Carolina, because he called the Iraq War 'a big fat mistake.' He went even further: calling George W Bush and his administration liars – echoing the long voiced opinion of the left that Bush and his cronies knew there were no weapons of mass destruction; the war had failed and trillions of dollars were wasted, dollars that could have been much better spent at home<sup>241</sup>. Trump rubbed salt into an open, festering wound that most Republicans and conservatives had ignored or perhaps were unaware of: nation-building foreign policy in recent years had been driving a wedge in the conservative movement, not just between conservatives and libertarians, but simply through alienating those not inclined towards nation building because they saw it as utopian, doomed to fail, and a sure way of making the United States hated throughout the world. This started to happen even with the George H.W. Bush's presidency and the First Gulf War (date), and not only with the developments that followed 9/11.

Thus, many who wrote against the Iraq War and who perpetuated the reflexive military stance and nation building, saw in the success of Trump during the primaries, a clear repudiation of the nation-building military adventurism that had come to dominate the party.<sup>242</sup>

## 5.2 Conclusion

A foreign policy that many Republicans and conservatives see as either radical or imperialistic is causing a fracture in the original conservative movement detailed in previous chapter. The movement had relied heavily on anti-communism to bring discordant elements together; when this was gone, the philosophical divides among

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<sup>241</sup> Presidential Candidates Debates: "Republican Candidates Debate in Greenville, South Carolina," February 13, 2016. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=111500>.

<sup>242</sup> Buchanan, Patrick. 2016. "Republicans Reject Bush (At Last)". *The American Conservative*. <http://www.theamericanconservative.com/buchanan/republicans-reject-bush-at-last/>.

conservatives materialised into political ones within the Republican Party. As of yet this has not fully materialised and politicians, if not their voters, still cling to a foreign policy that emphasises maintaining the United States' unrivalled power in geopolitics, and the export of democratic institutions and open market economies, "democratic capitalism,". It has failed to change its reflexive and ideological behaviour toward countries in the critical regions of the world. The varied foreign policy of the junior Senators, Paul, Cruz and Rubio, demonstrates that the Tea Partiers have no discernibly consistent foreign policy view. Thus the Republican Party has radical (or reactionary) ideas influencing foreign policy, as well domestic policy. Domestically, in the laissez-faire policies recommended by the articulators of the Tea Party, which suggest the upheaval of the welfare State, and internationally, of a military radicalism with its emphasis on military intervention beyond the defence of core national interests and through the encouragement of revolutions abroad.

## **Conclusion**

Politics in the United States is polarised. There is a deep divide in American politics that pits the Tea Party movement, conservatives and Republicans against Obama, liberals and Democrats: in the interpretation of the Constitution, conceptions of the common law, underlying principles, and the direction the country needs to take, there are fundamental disagreements and differences in American politics that predated, and caused, the growth of the Tea Party movement. Therefore, politics is divided not merely by policy, but on the primary questions of governance. These disagreements can be aligned into two broad, inclusive and competing political traditions in America, which include within themselves many divisions and inconsistencies, yet share a mutual opposition: the other tradition. They are the liberal (or progressive) tradition and the conservative tradition. These are underpinned by different views on history, by extension, politics, and a differing interpretation of human nature. In other words, there are varying political, social and cultural worldviews by which politics and politicians are judged that do not perfectly align with party politics. President Obama, correctly or not, has been portrayed by his opponents as a strong liberal, progressive character, who dislikes the U.S., its heritage and its customs, and not as the moderate and optimistic statesman he campaigned as in 2008. Opposition to Obama has been one of few consistencies among conservatives and Republicans, which might have hidden the deep divides within the GOP.

We have seen that small government conservatism is tied to a strict interpretation of the Constitution that has been challenged by a long precedence of a more fluid, evolutionary interpretation of the Constitution. This, along with the development of a welfare state at the federal level, has irredeemably undermined the goals of the small government conservatives. This gives Tea Partiers their peculiar revolutionary characteristics, because if governance was to become more decentralised and welfare policies fundamentally changed, it would require large-scale changes that would disrupt order in society. Thus the uncompromising



principles of such conservatives fractures the GOP and have become ideological. More broadly, the conservative movement has always been a rag-tag coalition of differing ideas. The resultant discordance and incongruity has prevented the endurance of a political coalition that might allow for the aims of Tea Partiers to be achieved, further splitting the GOP. The inconsistencies among Tea Partiers themselves is a demonstration of the difficulties – perhaps impossibility – of their stated aims when the focus confusingly flits between the economic and the cultural. Furthermore, the polarisation patent in the culture and politics of the United States also stymies their aims, as much they can even be discerned, for their views, often caricatured, are vociferously opposed by liberals and Democrats. This leads to arguments in the Republican Party over the need to dilute such principles, to ensure political viability, as we saw during the Eisenhower administration.

The Tea Party movement has sought to influence the Republican Party, and the two have shared an awkward relationship, but one which may have aided in electoral success, with the Republicans winning control of the House of Representatives in 2010, and the Senate in 2014. Despite Republicans' electoral success, the greatest since Franklin Delano Roosevelt's presidency in (1933-1945), the party, and particularly its voter-base, remains deeply divided, and 2016 nomination contest risks tearing apart the party. This is because there are two radical strains of thinking within the party and among intellectuals on the political Right (generally signified as conservatives). These are the neoconservative persuasion in foreign policy, and, domestically, small government conservatism which the Tea Partiers represent. Small government conservatism has made no real progress towards limiting the Federal Government. The longer it fails the less likely it is to succeed and the more radical their ideas become. While the focus on economics, in the ideational grounding of policy, undermines any progress of success in the maintaining the cultural values of traditional conservatives.

Since Ronald Reagan left the Whitehouse in 1989 contradictions among conservatives have become more apparent. Foreign policy is perhaps the most

obvious conflict. It pits the radical strains of thinking in the GOP, in theory at least, against each other. The foreign policy views of neoconservatives have led to encroachments on liberties, a disregard for the Constitution, and fanatical concern for high military spending and extensive military action. All of which conflicts with the Tea Partiers stated aims, and with other conservatives who want American interests to be interpreted more narrowly and less radically.

Thus there are two radical system of ideas, both conflated with conservatism, that have been dividing conservatives and fracturing the GOP: a foreign policy divorced from national interest and set on utilising the United States' power, at a very high financial cost, to spread the values of free markets and democracy. And domestically Tea Partiers have utopian dreams of returning to a form of governance that seems electorally unviable and that would have radical implications and significant immoderation that other conservatives and Republicans find self-defeating or damaging. In a polarised union the Republicans find their house divided.

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