

Is the Tea Party Libertarian, Authoritarian, or Something Else?

Scholars have been fascinated by the Tea Party since it first emerged on the American political scene in the spring of 2009. While some have dismissed it as simply a repackaging of conventional American conservative populism, many have been struck by how effective it has been in remobilizing the Republican Party base in the wake of the Democratic electoral landslide of 2008. Most of the scholarship has focused upon the demographic make up of its members (Courser 2012; Disch 2011; Maxwell and Parent 2012; Williamson, Skocpol, and Coggin 2011), how it combines elements of elite and grassroots political mobilization in new and innovative ways (Bailey, Mummolo, and Noel 2012; Karpowitz et al. 2011), how it is a racialized response to the election of the first African American President (Abramowitz 2012; Bailey, Mummolo, and Noel 2012; Disch 2011; Lowndes 2012; Skocpol and Williamson 2012) and how it might connect with more militarized elements of the American far right (Parker and Barreto 2013; Skocpol and Williamson 2012). Less attention has been paid to the question of whether or not a specific ideology might be driving support for the Tea Party. When ideology is explicitly addressed, authors tend to note a peculiar contradiction in core beliefs of Tea Party supporters: the Tea Party seems to embody an odd fusion of libertarianism and social conservatism (Arceneaux and Nicholson 2012; Berlet 2012; Montgomery 2012; Parker and Barreto 2013; Williamson, Skocpol, and Coggin 2011; Wilson and Burack 2012). While we agree with previous scholars who observe that the Tea Party does not have one unifying ideology, we believe that political scientists have so far underestimated or incompletely specified the unique ideological drivers of Tea Party support.

The central claim of this article is that a crucial ideological factor explaining support for the Tea Party is what Friedrich Nietzsche called “misarchism” in reference to the political philosophy of Herbert Spencer. As we explain in detail below, distinct from both libertarianism and social conservatism, misarchism refers to an aversion to *government* combined with support for the *state* and traditional morality. Consistent with the expectation of a misarchist

dimension in American attitudes, factor analysis on nine variables from the 2012 American National Election Time-Series Study (ANES) reveals that attitudes toward state power are positively intercorrelated with attitudes toward traditional morality. Though neither are strongly intercorrelated with attitudes toward government, the factor underlying support for the state and traditional morality (which we call “moral statism”) is strongly and negatively correlated with the factor underlying support for government. These results are consistent with the Nietzschean diagnosis of misarchism as an ideological structure which combines support for the state and moral traditionalism on a dimension which is distinct from, and opposed to, attitudes toward government. Consistent with the argument that misarchism is a crucial ideological driver of support for the Tea Party, regression analyses reveal that the interaction of moral statism with governmentalism (our operationalization of misarchism) has, of all the independent variables considered, one of the strongest and most robust partial correlations with support for the Tea Party. Our findings have important implications for our understanding of right-wing ideology in the United States and they help to resolve the puzzle of the Tea Party’s still poorly understood and contradictory ideological components. The article proceeds in five sections. The first section elaborates the puzzle of the Tea Party’s ideological composition. The second section details the theory that misarchism is a key ideological component of Tea Party support, which helps to explain the Tea Party’s puzzling tendency to appear both libertarian and authoritarian. The third section explains our research strategy, including a discussion of our data and modeling approach. A fourth section presents the analysis with a discussion of findings, and a fifth section concludes.

Libertarians, Conservatives, or Something Else?

There are currently two dominant accounts of Tea Party ideology in the academic literature. The first approach argues that Tea Party support is driven largely by far right-wing support within the Republican Party (Burack and Snyder-Hall 2012; Parker and Barreto 2013; Skocpol and Williamson 2012). The second approach downplays the role of ideology by contending

that the Tea Party does not represent the ideology of members but is rather a decentralized group of diverse viewpoints exploited by party elites (Bailey, Mummolo, and Noel 2012; Karpowitz et al. 2011; Lo 2012; Williamson, Skocpol, and Coggin 2011). The first approach uses the standard linear conceptualization of ideology as ranging from left to right along a single dimension (Knight 2006, 619), whereas the second approach denies that ideology has much of a role in explaining Tea Party support. Contra the first account of the Tea Party, we think that the specific ideology of “misarchism” can explain some important differences between Tea Party members and other conservatives that is not easily captured in the left-right conceptualization of ideology. Contra the second account of the Tea Party, our argument is that ideology can explain an important aspect of Tea Party support.

One prominent example of explaining Tea Party supporters as consisting largely of the “far right” of the American political spectrum is the detailed analysis of the Tea Party by Christopher S. Parker and Matt A. Barreto. They argue that the Tea Party is the latest manifestation of “reactionary conservatism” (Parker and Barreto 2013; Robin 2013). They describe reactionary conservatives as individuals on the far right of the political spectrum who participate in a “paranoid style” of politics that sees “others” as a threat to the traditional vision of America. They locate the Tea Party as inheritors of the political tradition of the John Birch society and the KKK (Parker and Barreto 2013, 35). According to Parker and Barreto, the election of the USA’s first African-American President mobilized this reactionary strand of conservatism and drove support for the Tea Party. While there are other examples, the Parker and Barreto version of Tea Party ideology is emblematic because it considers ideology in a traditional one-dimensional, left-right spectrum. The party can be labeled “reactionary” because it is further to the right on the ideological spectrum than “mainstream” conservatism (Parker and Barreto 2013, 48).

The left-right ideological spectrum approach, however, has a difficult time explaining Tea Party support (Carmines and D’Amico 2014, 214). Scholars will observe that the movement seems to combine elements of libertarianism and social conservatism (Wilson and Burack 2012;

Parker and Barreto 2013, 174; Arceneaux and Nicholson 2012, 701; Skocpol and Williamson 2012, 35). All of these different accounts of the Tea Party struggle with the apparent puzzle of how the Tea Party reconciles its apparently contradictory commitments to smaller government on the one hand, and calls for greater government intervention in areas such as morality and immigration on the other hand.

This synthesis can lead to some apparent contradictions in policy preferences. First, the Tea Party members (at least in public opinion polling) seem to favour existing entitlement programs such as Social Security and Medicare while opposing other programs such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and the Affordable Care Act (Skocpol and Williamson 2012, 54–68). Second, Tea Party members are quite concerned about government intervention with respect to firearms, but are strongly in favour of increased intervention in terms of immigration enforcement and counter-terrorism (Parker and Barreto 2013, 165–72; Skocpol and Williamson 2012, 71–72). Third, while the Tea Party expresses deep concern about government programs aimed at trying to alter the behavior of citizens (such as Michelle Obama’s anti-obesity campaign) they also express a general concern that America’s moral collapse is at the root of most contemporary problems (Jones, Cox, and Navarro-Rivera 2013; McCalmont 2013). We will contend that these apparent contradictions about Tea Party supporters’ policy preferences make more sense if we view them as expressions of an underlying misarchist ideology.

A Theory of the Tea Party as a Misarchist Movement

By ideology we mean “a set of ideas, beliefs, opinions and values that: 1) exhibit a recurring pattern, 2) are held by significant groups, 3) compete over providing and controlling plans for public policy, and 4) do so with the aim of justifying, contesting or changing the social policy and political arrangements and processes of a political community” (Freedman 2003, 100). Existing research on the Tea Party has downplayed the ideological dimension. Parker and Barreto in their research control for ideology as one possible factor in Tea Party support

and find that it is not statistically significant (Parker and Barreto 2013, 100). Others have argued that the Tea Party does not have a coherent ideology. Instead it is more a product of top-down organization via well-funded PACs, wealthy individuals such as the Koch brothers, and media support through venues such as Fox News (Lo 2012).

One reason most scholars of the Tea Party neglect the possibility of an ideological basis for Tea Party support is the influential current of scholarship which suggests the general public is not characterized by coherent belief systems (Campbell et al. 1960; Converse 1964; Lewis-Beck et al. 2008). An overarching argument in this current is that most citizens' attitudes do not reflect enough information, stability, or consistency to be considered ideological. Given such findings, how could a certain ideology help to explain Tea Party support? A burgeoning research agenda in political psychology suggests that political attitudes are indeed characterized by substantial, underlying psychological differences which correlate with ideological self-placement (Goren 2013; Graham, Haidt, and Nosek 2009; Haidt 2012). Haidt argues that the difference between liberals, conservatives and libertarians in the U.S. is that their moral systems are based on different psychological foundations (Graham, Haidt, and Nosek 2009; Haidt 2012). In a similar vein, Goren demonstrates that voters do not vote on liberal-conservative predispositions but rather genuine policy principles, namely, limited government, traditional morality, and military strength (Goren 2013). Our argument is that misarchism is a particular combination of precisely such policy principles, a combination which represents a unique source of Tea Party support and is distinct from other ideological currents prominent on the contemporary American right, namely conventional conservatism and libertarianism.

Nietzsche used the term misarchism as a pejorative term to describe the biological and political philosophy of Herbert Spencer (Nietzsche 2007, 52). He argued that at the core of Spencer's philosophy was a hatred of rule (as the term misarchy comes from the Greek roots *misein* for hatred and *archos* for ruler). Spencer hated the government, because government polices and regulations limited human freedom. Spencer believed that the government's

practice of conducting the conduct of individuals would short-circuit the development of his end goal for society: an individual who would be completely self-reliant and altruistic. Government policies interfered with the evolutionary process, and enabled less fit, or unfit individuals to survive. According to Spencer this was a threat to the overall strength and health of a society. The government was bad not simply because it limited negative liberty; it was bad because it threatened the full development of the species. A society without government would enable human evolution in both physiological and moral terms. Humans would have a longer life expectancy, would be stronger, and would develop morally in a way in which they reconciled altruistic and egoistic impulses. Eventually a fully morally-evolved person would selfishly pursue ends that were for the benefit of society as a whole. He labeled this type of person the “ideally moral man” (Spencer 1879, 75).

Critics of Spencer, including Thomas Huxley and Nietzsche, noticed a peculiar feature of Spencer’s political philosophy: he was opposed to any use of the government to redistribute wealth, alleviate poverty, to regulate professions such as health care, to fund and regulate a public education system, or to spend on infrastructure, yet he was strongly supportive of the state increasing its policing power to maintain order. In his rejoinder to Spencer, Huxley labeled the political philosophy alternately “administrative nihilism” and “astynomocracy” (police government) (Huxley 1871). While Spencer’s vision of a minimalist state appeared to promote human freedom, he had developed a model that eliminated all the regular administrative activities that a government engages in and replaced it with a state that was fully vested in its police powers.

The terms government and state are often used interchangeably but in order to understand how misarchism works as an ideology, we need to differentiate these two terms. We follow Max Weber in defining the state as the “monopoly on legitimate physical violence” (Weber 2004, 33). We follow Michel Foucault in defining government as the “‘the conduct of conduct’: a form of activity aiming to shape, guide or affect the conduct of some person or persons” (Foucault 1991; Gordon 1991, 2). The state uses its monopoly on violence to dominate its

subjects and punish violations of the law. Conversely government uses techniques such as education, regulation, administration, and management to shape human behaviour. While states have governments, government is not limited to the state. For instance, both for-profit and non-profit corporations have boards of governors and business schools teach corporate governance.¹

Our point is that one can be anti-government while being pro-state. If this position seems odd it is only because we are seeking to identify an ideology distinct from more established ideologies about government authority. Classical libertarians are strongly skeptical of both state power and government power. Libertarianism as an ideology holds that individual freedom is the greatest good and favors policies that maximizes individual freedom in both the economic and social sphere and seeks to minimize government interference as much as possible (Brennan 2012, 1–3). There are crucial differences in policy preferences between Tea Party supporters and Libertarians on issues such as NSA surveillance, the use of drone warfare, aggressive U.S. foreign policy, and the continuation of the war on drugs. Libertarians tend to oppose state power in these areas, whereas Tea Party members are more likely to be supportive of increasing state power in these domains. All these programs involve increasing the state's use of the instruments of violence in order to counter perceived threats to the state. Where libertarians and misarchists agree is on their opposition to governmentalism; to using government programs and policies to shape the behaviour of individuals, and to improve the well-being of society. Traditional conservatives tend to be skeptical of both state power and governmental power but are more moderate. Conservatism is an ideology that defends preservation of the status quo and values traditional social and political structures, preferring incremental social change to more radical proposals for reform or revolution (Heywood 2007, 65). Traditional conservatives recognize the need for some statism and some governmentalism, but are also skeptical of the extremism of both libertarians and misarchists, who favour the

¹Political theorist John Hoffman (1995) draws a similar distinction between statism and governmentalism, where the state refers to the use of force to tackle conflict and the government refers to the use of negotiation and arbitration to resolve conflicts of interest.

abolition of almost all government (in both cases) and the minimization of the state (in the case of libertarians).

Based on this reading of Nietzsche, we define misarchism as an ideological constellation which combines three general attitudes. It combines attitudes which are 1) anti-government, 2) pro-state, and 3) moralistic. Anti-government attitudes are those which reflect opposition to using government policy to improve the condition and behaviour of individuals and society in general. Misarchists will oppose wealth redistribution and any programs that aim at assisting individuals in need. They will also oppose government attempts to regulate individual behaviour. Pro-state attitudes reflect support for the state using its monopoly on violence to maintain order and confront perceived threats to society. Moralistic attitudes are those which see the cultivation of individual morality rather than government regulation as the best way to promote a good society.

Finally, Nietzsche's diagnosis of misarchism as an ideology is surprisingly consistent with certain findings in contemporary empirical research. In particular, Goren finds that citizens have genuine policy principles which they rely on for presidential vote choice. He identifies three core "policy principle cleavages:" limited government, traditional morality, and military strength. While Goren does not investigate Nietzsche's argument about the specific misarchist combination of these factors, Goren's findings increase the plausibility of our argument—which we arrived at independently through Nietzsche and Spencer—that a particular combination(s) of precisely these factors can help to explain the Tea Party's ideological composition and at least one key source of its support.

Research Design

To test our argument, we examine data from the 2012 ANES. We selected the 2012 ANES because it is the largest and most recent survey of Americans to measure the wide variety of social and political attitudes required to test our hypotheses.² Specifically, to investigate

²The Cooperative Congressional Election Survey, used in some previous research on the sources of Tea Party support (Bradberry and Jacobson 2014), has a much larger sample than the ANES but does not include

the existence and potential structure of a misarchist ideological constellation, we select a total of nine variables, three variables gauging each of the ideological strands discussed above (moral traditionalism, governmentalism, and statism.) In a first stage of analysis, we employ exploratory factor analysis to explore whether a smaller set of latent variables underlies the nine original variables in a fashion consistent with the notion of misarchism. In a second stage, we test whether the latent ideological dimensions identified in the factor analysis help to explain support for the Tea Party. If our argument is correct, we expect that latent ideological dimension(s) approximating what we call misarchism should be associated with Tea Party support.

In selecting variables from the ANES and designing the factor analysis, our approach is grounded in previous work that has sought to use factor analysis to study ideology. First, one of the most common findings is a two dimensional space with one dimension reflecting economic preferences (government intervention vs. market outcomes) and a second dimension reflecting social preferences (modern vs. traditional) (Feldman 2013, 4). Therefore we begin by selecting three variables measuring attitudes toward government interventions not related to “police powers.” Two are economic and one is not to reflect that our concept of governmentalism is inclusive of, but more general than, economic interventionism. All three have been used in previous factor analyses of ideology (Bradberry and Jacobson 2014, 5; Feldman and Johnston 2014, 6). *Jobs* measures on a seven point scale how much the respondent supports the government guaranteeing jobs or income. *Services* measures on a seven point scale support for government provision of services. *Guns* measures on a seven point scale support for federal laws which make it harder to purchase a gun. We then select three variables measuring attitudes toward social preferences or what we have been calling moral traditionalism, all three of which have been used previously in factor analyses of ideology (Bradberry and Jacobson 2014, 5). *Morals* measures on a 5-point Likert scale disagreement with the statement, “The world is always changing and we should adjust our

direct measures of moral traditionalism.

view of moral behavior to those changes.” *Intolerant* measures on a 5-point Likert scale disagreement with the statement, ‘We should be more tolerant of people who choose to live according to their own moral standards, even if they are very different from our own.’ *Family* measures on a 5-point Likert scale agreement with the statement, “This country would have many fewer problems if there were more emphasis on traditional family ties.”

The final three variables we include in the factor analysis are driven by anomalies previously observed within this typical two-dimensional finding, and by our particular theoretical perspective. Previous research notes heterogeneity in the belief systems of conservatives (Ellis and Stimson 2007; Feldman 2013, 4). Many who identify as conservative have notably liberal policy preferences and Ellis and Stimson distinguish between consistent, conflicted, and moral conservatives (Ellis and Stimson 2007, 2009). Our theory suggests that adding variables which distinguish the “police powers” of the state from government intervention in the economy may show that conservatives are not as conflicted as much as the “conservative” label conflates distinct but latent ideological components. Therefore we add to a conventional battery of variables three that capture what Spencer called the state’s “police powers,” distinct from government intervention in economic affairs. The variable *Defense* measures on a seven point scale how much the respondent thinks should be spent on defense. *Immigration* measures respondent support for laws allowing immigration status checks on suspects, measured on a three point scale reflecting opposition, neither opposition nor support, and support. *Wiretapping* measures support for government wiretapping powers on a three point scale, reflecting whether respondents think such powers “have gone too far”, “are just about right”, or “do no go far enough.”

We then estimate a series of logistic regressions on the dependent variable *Support*, which is a binary variable taking the value of one for all respondents who say they support the Tea Party and a zero for all who oppose or neither support nor oppose. In this stage of analysis, the key independent variables are the latent variables extracted from the factor analysis. We also include a variety of standard control variables drawn from previous research. First,

we include a battery of standard variables commonly found to be associated with political attitudes, including *Race* (white or non-white), *Gender* (male or female), *Age*, *Income*, (28 ordinal categories we convert to a numerical variable), *Education* (16 ordinal categories we use as a numerical variable), and *Religion* (a dummy variable for those who attend religious services). *PartyID* is a 7-point ordinal scale we convert to a numerical scale in which the lowest values represents strong identification with the Democratic Party and the highest value represents strong identification with the Republican Party. To control for the argument that a unique driver of Tea Party support is aversion to Barack Obama (Bradberry and Jacobson 2014; Maxwell and Parent 2012; Parker and Barreto 2013), we include the “feeling thermometer” measure of feelings toward the 2012 Democratic Presidential candidate on a 100-point scale. We also control for authoritarianism (Arceneaux and Nicholson 2012, 701) with a variable of that name. Specifically, we take the mean value of four responses to questions about the most important traits in a child, where the authoritarian value is assigned a value of 1 and the other a value of 0: “obedience” or “self-reliance,” “respect for elders” or “independence,” “good manners” or “curiosity,” and “well behaved” or “considerate.” To control for evangelicalism, which previous studies have found to be associated with Tea Party support (Arceneaux and Nicholson 2012; Bradberry and Jacobson 2014; Maxwell and Parent 2012; Parker and Barreto 2013), we include the variable *BornAgain*, which takes a value of 1 for respondents who have had a personal conversion experience related to Jesus Christ and 0 otherwise. Finally, we control for the possible effect of watching the Fox News Channel, which Parker and Baretto find to be a significant predictor of Tea Party support after controlling for attitudes toward Obama and a wide variety of other factors. The variable *FoxNews* takes a value of 1 for all respondents who report watching any of a series of Fox News programs listed by the ANES.³ Lastly, we include a measure of left-right ideology, *Conservatism*, using respondent self-placement on the conventional 7-point liberal-conservative scale.⁴

³These include the programs *Fox Report*, *The Five*, *America’s Newsroom*, as well as the eponymous programs featuring Greta Van Susteren, Sean Hannity, Mike Huckabee, Brett Baier, and Bill O’Reilly.

⁴We do not include any measure of racial animosity because the experiment conducted by Arceneaux and Nicholson produces little evidence that racial animosity is independently associated with Tea Party support,

Analysis

First, we report results from a factor analysis using the extraction method of maximum likelihood and an oblique rotation. Additional technical information, numerical results, and diagnostics for the factor analysis can be found in Supplementary Information. Results of the factor analysis are broadly consistent with our argument; attitudes toward policing powers correlate positively with moral traditionalism, in a way distinct from any possible correlation between moral traditionalism and governmentalism. Figure 1 plots the factor loadings of our nine attitudinal variables, with axes labeled to reflect our interpretation of the factors.⁵ In Figure 1, the horizontal location of a variable reflects the degree to which it loads onto the latent variable we call moral statism, while the vertical location reflects the degree to which it loads onto the latent variable we call governmentalism.

As Figure 1 reveals, attitudes toward policing powers as well as morally traditional attitudes are correlated with Factor 2 (clustered in the bottom-right). Attitudes toward traditional government interventions in society are positively correlated with Factor 1. Factor 1, which appears to capture a governmentalist dimension in public attitudes, explains 15% of the overall variance while Factor 2, reflecting moral statism, explains 14%. *Morals* and *Immigration* are weakly negatively correlated with the governmentalism factor, while the governmentalist attitudes are not positively or negatively correlated with moral statism factor to any significant degree. The key implication of the factor analysis is that moral traditionalism and policing powers are correlated along a dimension distinct from anti-governmentalism, suggesting that the conventional wisdom about the ideology of libertarianism may incorrectly conflate two distinct ideological patterns.

[Figure 1 about here]

It is important to note that we should not expect adequate overall model fit, for two reasons.

even though Tea Party supporters appear more likely to oppose government benefits due to racial resentment.

⁵To improve readability, abbreviated variable names and a random jitter of .3 was applied to the width and height of each point on the plot.

First, we are not arguing our hypothesized latent factors should explain so much of the variation in these nine variables as to be a fully adequate model of them. We are only arguing that these nine variables should contain certain identifiable, non-trivial latent factors a combination of which will explain a unique portion of Tea Party support. Second, the survey questions refer to diverse political phenomena and likely reflect a great deal of variation admittedly irreducible to our hypothesized factors. Given our research interests, at this stage, it is adequately consistent with our theory to observe that the first two factors identified by the factor model capture latent dimensions reflective of our expectations.

What are the distributions of moral statism and governmentalism across our sample of individuals? How do these constructs comport with what is traditionally called conservatism? If it seems counter-intuitive for individuals to oppose government while supporting the state, this is only because popular conceptions of ideology have not given us the conceptual resources to disentangle these components. Figure 2 illustrates the relationship between these two factors, across the seven ordinal categories of the traditional ideology measure (*Conservatism*). The shaded rectangle represents misarchism: individuals with negative scores on the *Government* factor (i.e. libertarian) but positive scores on the *Moral Statism* factor. Figure 2 reveals a few points of interest. First, *Moral Statism* and *Government* are negatively correlated, highlighting the descriptive significance of disaggregating attitudes toward government and the state. It is not even that popular conceptions of libertarianism ignore ideological constellations “off the diagonal” of correlated attitudes toward government and the state; they are positively misleading about the direction of the correlation.⁶ Second, misarchism is correlated with the traditional concept of conservatism and most of the strong misarchists are conservatives, although misarchism is not unique to conservatives. Indeed, the third point to note about Figure 2 is that a degree of misarchism characterizes a non-trivial

⁶This is not an artifact of the factor model. The correlation plot illustrating correlations among all of the variables entered into the factor model leads to the same description (with the exception of *Wiretapping*, which does not load strongly on either factor): The individual attitudes toward government are negatively correlated with the attitudes toward morality and the attitudes toward state power. See Supplementary Information.

fraction of the sample in general, including those in the center and somewhat liberal categories of the traditional ideology variable.

[Figure 2 about here]

Do the latent ideological variables of governmentalism and moral statism help improve our understanding of support for the Tea Party? Table 1 shows results from three logistic regressions modeling the probability that an individual will support the Tea Party. Before analysis, each independent variable was centered to a mean of zero and divided by two standard deviations, including the factor scores, so that all coefficients can be interpreted as the expected change in the log-odds of supporting the Tea Party associated with a two-standard-deviation change in the independent variable (or a one-category change in the case of a categorical variable). Model 1 is a baseline model including predictors from previous research and standard demographic control variables. Model 2 adds each of the latent variables and a term representing the multiplicative interaction of the two. Model 3, for reasons discussed below, is the same as Model 2 but estimated only on the subset of respondents who identify as some degree of “conservative” on the traditional ideological self-placement scale.

[Table 1 about here]

Given a typical respondent who hypothetically changes from the 10th percentile of moral statism to the 90th when governmentalism is at its mean, we would expect the probability of them supporting the Tea Party to change by -0.5% (sd = 2), from 0.068 to 0.062 on average.⁷ Given a typical respondent who hypothetically changes from the 90th percentile of governmentalism to the 10th when moral statism is at its mean, we would expect the probability of them supporting the Tea Party to increase by 7.5% (sd = 2.4), from 0.037 to 0.114

⁷All discussion of effect sizes refer to 1000 simulations of Model 2 in Table 1, generated using the R package *Zelig* (Imai, King, and Lau 2009).

on average. To gain a sense of how much governmentalism conditions the effect of moral statism is somewhat more complicated. The coefficient in Model 2 for *MoralStatism:Government* reflects the estimated effect that a two-standard-deviation increase in governmentalism has on the estimated effect a two-standard-deviation increase in moral statism would have on the log-odds of someone supporting the Tea Party.

Because a substantive interpretation of this interactive effect requires us to consider multiple values for both variables at once, a graphical illustration is most appropriate. Figure 3 plots the expected effect of moral statism across its range for three different values of governmentalism (-1, 0, 1). While *MoralStatism* has no notable effect on Tea Party support for individuals who moderately or strongly support government interventions, for extreme anti-governmentalists a hypothetical conversion from the lowest to the highest levels of moral statism would be associated with more than a four-fold increase in the probability of supporting the Tea Party, from less than 5% to more than 20%.

[Figure 3 about here]

Consider a more typical hypothetical individual who undergoes a more realistic “conversion” to a strongly misarchist ideology. For individuals in the 90th percentile of governmentalism (strong non-libertarians), a hypothetical shift from the 10th to the 90th percentile of moral statism has little discernible effect on the probability of supporting the Tea Party. The estimated change is -3.6% (sd = 1.8), on average. For individuals in the 10th percentile of governmentalism (strong libertarians), a hypothetical shift from the 10th to the 90th percentile of moral statism shifts the probability of Tea Party support by 8.1% (sd = 3.4), from 0.081 to 0.16 on average.

In Model 2, an overall effect of misarchism on Tea Party support is clearly discernible but relatively small, for three reasons. First, support for the Tea Party is generally uncommon (a proportion of 0.26 in the sample). While our estimated effect does not bring the typical respondent close to supporting the Tea Party, this is unsurprising in part because so few

respondents support the Tea Party. Further to this point, the simulations are based on a “typical respondent,” in this case a white male who identifies with neither the Republican nor Democratic Party, who does not watch Fox News, and who does not feel strongly about Barack Obama. Because Tea Party support is not randomly distributed but overwhelmingly more likely to come from conservative individuals, it is even less surprising that the estimated effects of misarchism for the sample as a whole are modest. Given the very low probability a typical respondent would support the Tea Party, we should not expect misarchism to increase the probability of Tea Party support by very much. Indeed, in relative terms, the effect of a hypothetical misarchist “conversion” is striking, roughly doubling the very low probability a typical respondent would support the Tea Party. Second, we have been conservative in including a large battery of control variables, many of which are correlated with misarchism and may measure the same underlying traits.⁸ For the sake of hypothesis testing we have prioritised additional control variables in order to eliminate rival hypotheses, but we note that this has led to more conservative estimates of our hypothesized effect.⁹

To better gauge the substantive significance of misarchism for explaining Tea Party support, it is helpful to consider conservatives only. Considering only conservatives not only allows us to focus on the part of the population most relevant for understanding the sources of Tea Party support; it also allows us to explore with greater resolution how misarchism helps to clarify otherwise indistinguishable components of American conservatism. Model 3 in Table 1 displays results from a regression identical to Model 2 but estimated only on the subset of respondents who placed themselves to the right of the center (the mean) of

⁸See Supplementary Information, which shows a correlation plot of the independent variables capturing different dimensions of right-wing attitudes. Unsurprisingly they are all positively correlated with coefficients greater than .5.

⁹For instance, we have chosen to include traditional ideological self-placement as a control variable to provide a more challenging test of whether misarchism affects Tea Party support independently of traditional conservatism, but if traditional ideological self-placement is just yet another measure of an underlying ideological dimension, then it may just as well have been included in the factor analysis. If ideological self-placement is included in the factor analysis and removed as a control variable in Model 2, the coefficient for the interaction term increases appreciably. With that approach, a “conversion” to moral statism for strong anti-governmentalists increases the probability of supporting the Tea Party to roughly .4. See Supplementary Information.

ideological self-placement (*Conservatism*). The results are striking. First, the coefficients for *Governmentalism* and the interaction term increase in magnitude, remaining statistically significant. Importantly, this estimated effect is now sufficient to lead the typical conservative to transition from being an unlikely to a likely Tea Party supporter.

Again it is most convenient to consider a visualization. Figure 4 is identical to Figure 3 but now reflects Model 3. Interestingly, for moderately and strongly governmentalist conservatives, moral statism decreases the probability of Tea Party support from large confidence intervals encompassing the 50% mark, to more narrow confidence intervals making them clearly less than likely to support the Tea Party. But for strongly anti-governmentalist conservatives, a hypothetical conversion from the lowest to the highest levels of moral statism would lead them toward the Tea Party, indeed making them more likely than not to support it (the lower bound is roughly at 50% but the point estimate is notably higher than 50% from roughly .5 on the *MoralStatism* factor). Therefore Model 3 shows with a higher resolution that the concept of a misarchist interaction between governmentalism and moral statism helps to explain why some conservatives have gravitated into the Tea Party while others have gravitated away from it. Considering less extreme differences in governmentalism, for individuals in the 90th percentile of governmentalism (strong non-libertarians), a hypothetical shift from the 10th to the 90th percentile of moral statism has a negative effect on the probability of supporting the Tea Party. The estimated change is -13.4% (sd = 6.8), from 0.185 to 0.046 on average. For individuals in the 10th percentile of governmentalism (strong libertarians), a hypothetical shift from the 10th to the 90th percentile of moral statism shifts the probability of Tea Party support by 8.1% (sd = 9.3), from 0.262 to 0.358 on average.

[Figure 4 about here]

We also considered three main threats to regression-based inferences from observational data and a fourth possible threat to our interpretation of the data. First, to guard against parametric model dependence, we use a genetic matching algorithm to identify that subset

of the original dataset for which the distribution of each covariate is optimally balanced across both treatment and control groups (Diamond and Sekhon 2012). From this subset of matched pairs we estimate an average treatment effect for those “treated” to the misarchist interaction. Second, because we do not know the true model, an idiosyncratic search for optimal model specifications can lead to bias (Montgomery and Nyhan 2010, 4). To gauge the sensitivity of our results to model selection, we use Bayesian Model Averaging (BMA) to calculate posterior probabilities for all possible coefficients and models in order to identify the most likely models and variables. Third, another possible problem is that listwise deletion of all observations containing missing values may have led to biased estimates. To consider this, we employ multiple imputation of missing values and re-estimate the regression models. While all of these robustness checks provide additional information and important nuance for evaluating our main argument, overall they suggest the conclusions we have drawn here are not merely artifacts of parametric model dependence, arbitrary model selection, or missing data, respectively. Finally, it could be the case that our independent variables of interest predict Republican Party identification and Conservatism no differently than Tea Party support, in which case misarchism would not uniquely explain support for the Tea Party. Additional regression models similar to Model 2 but using Republican Party identification or Conservatism as dependent variables generate no evidence for this possibility. Additional information and the full results of these robustness checks can be found in Supplementary Information.

Conclusion

This article demonstrates that an ideological constellation first diagnosed by Nietzsche as “misarchism”—a combination of anti-government, pro-state, and moralistic attitudes—helps to predict Tea Party support and generally improves our understanding of the ideological nature of the Tea Party movement. In particular, we leverage the history of political theory to provide a coherent solution to the otherwise inexplicable combination of libertarianism and authoritarianism which scholars have found to co-exist within the Tea Party. While we

find additional support for some previous findings—namely, that feelings toward Obama, evangelicalism, and exposure to Fox News are significant and robust predictors of Tea Party support—this article is the first to provide systematic empirical evidence that a particular ideological constellation irreducible to libertarianism or social conservatism is a unique and notably strong driver of Tea Party support.

Our ideological explanation also raises an interesting question about the future of the Tea Party. If opposition to Obama were the primary driver of Tea Party support, then we would expect Tea Party mobilization to subside once Obama’s term as President ends. If however, a significant driver of Tea Party mobilization is a misarchist ideology, then we would expect the Tea Party to continue to play a role in the Republican party by supporting candidates and policies that would be in line with misarchist beliefs long after President Obama leaves office.

There are several questions about misarchism that this study does not answer, but are worthy of further investigation. The first is whether misarchism represents a new ideology within the Republican party, or if it is an ideology that has somehow been a latent feature of American political life. If it is new, then this would raise some interesting questions about how new ideologies form. Did the election of Obama, or a backlash against the Stimulus Act and the Affordable Care Act, somehow crystallize a new constellation of beliefs in the minds of a large bloc of voters? Alternatively, was this a latent worldview held by a large segment of the electorate that was somehow mobilized through and elite branding campaign by Conservative activist groups such as FreedomWorks and media outlets such as Fox News? More generally, our approach, by thinking about the possibility of unique and diverse ideological constellations structuring attitudes within the conventional left-right spectrum, raises questions about what other ideological constellations may mobilize different constituencies in American politics.

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Table 1: Logistic Regressions, Tea Party Support

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Gender (Male)	0.238* (0.124)	0.134 (0.128)	0.255* (0.154)
Income	-0.176 (0.142)	-0.320** (0.147)	-0.386** (0.179)
Age	-0.246* (0.138)	-0.341** (0.144)	-0.212 (0.178)
Race (White)	-0.338** (0.162)	-0.410** (0.168)	-0.510** (0.213)
Education	0.114 (0.153)	0.058 (0.158)	0.134 (0.195)
Obama	-1.820*** (0.200)	-1.340*** (0.223)	-1.270*** (0.282)
Authoritarianism	0.028 (0.142)	0.054 (0.147)	-0.124 (0.174)
BornAgain	0.370*** (0.131)	0.308** (0.134)	0.320** (0.161)
Religion	-0.040 (0.152)	-0.024 (0.155)	-0.044 (0.190)
PartyID (Republican)	0.357* (0.194)	0.318 (0.201)	0.176 (0.250)
FoxNews	0.776*** (0.130)	0.700*** (0.133)	0.735*** (0.158)
Conservatism	1.350*** (0.192)	1.120*** (0.202)	2.000*** (0.405)
MoralStatism		-0.138 (0.261)	-0.513 (0.355)
Governmentalism		-0.809*** (0.253)	-1.030*** (0.328)
MoralStatism*Governmentalism		-1.080*** (0.316)	-1.210*** (0.451)
Constant	-2.600*** (0.202)	-2.580*** (0.208)	-2.890*** (0.324)
Observations	2,406	2,406	1,079
Log Likelihood	-856.000	-832.000	-555.000
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,738.000	1,696.000	1,142.000

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

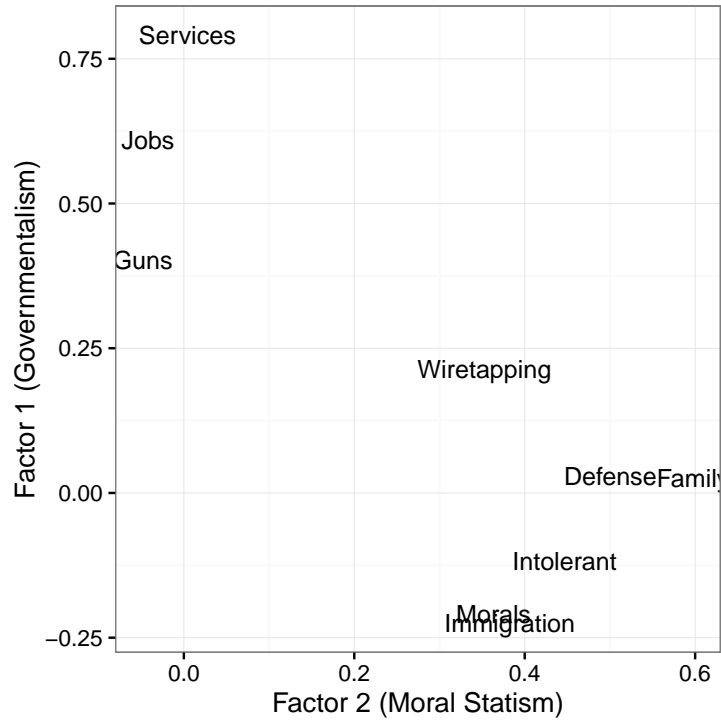


Figure 1: Factor Plot Shows Two Main Dimensions

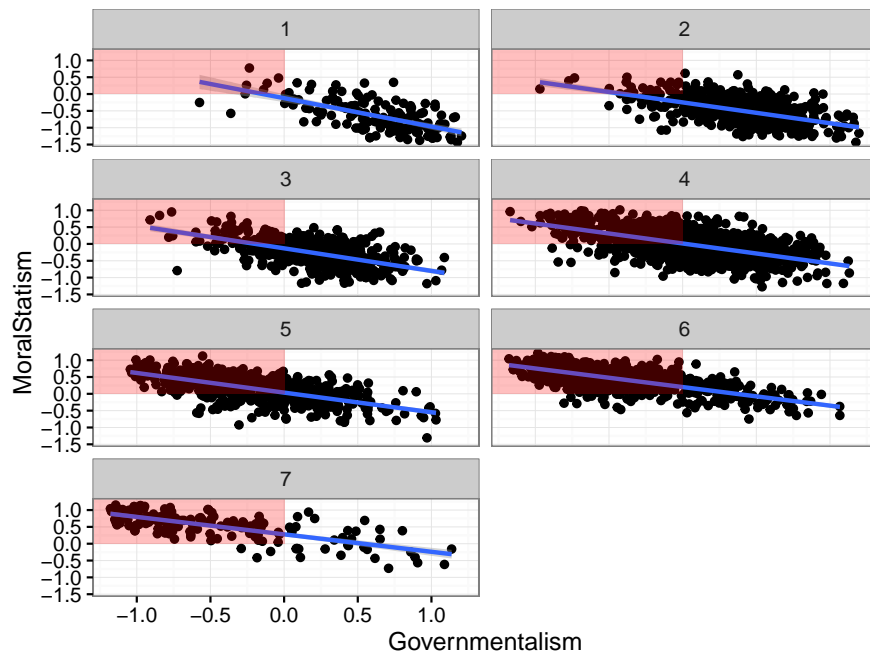


Figure 2: Governmentalism and Moral Statism by Levels of Conservatism (Shaded Rectangle Represents Misarchism)

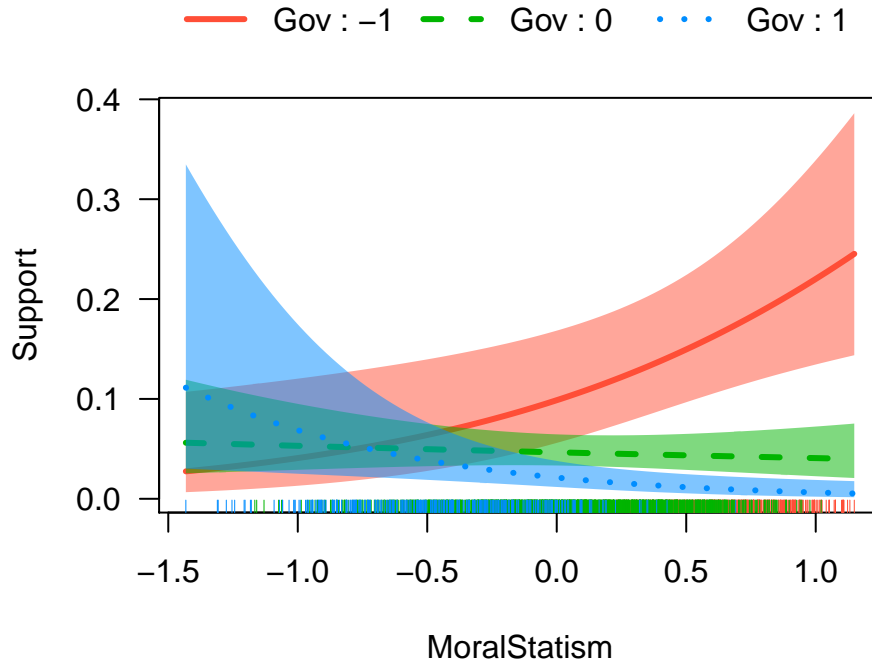


Figure 3: The Effect of Moral Statism Conditional on Governmentalism (Gov)

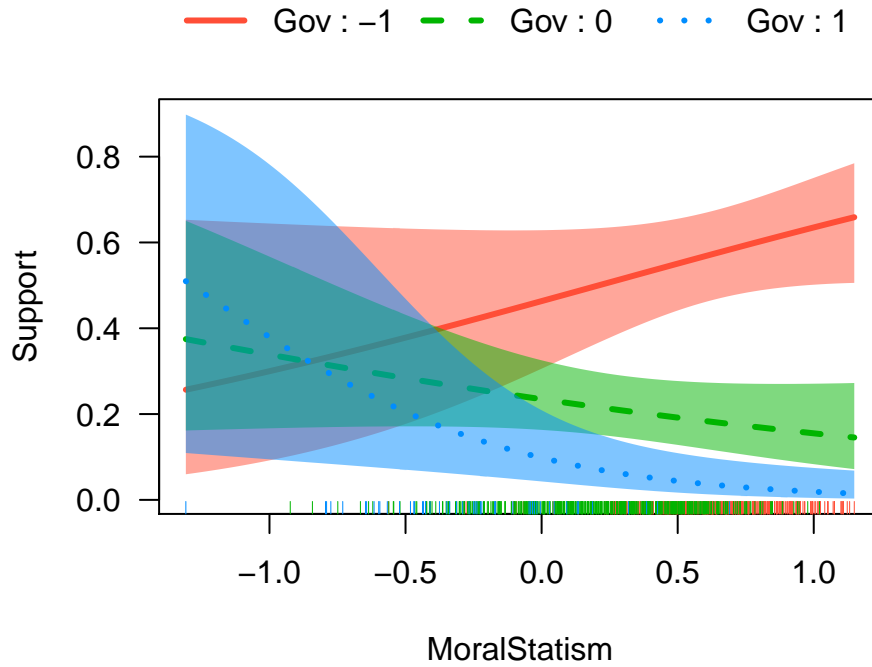


Figure 4: The Effect of Moral Statism Conditional on Governmentalism (Gov) for Conservatives Only