

Study reveals cultural characteristics of the Tea Party movement

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American voters sympathetic to the Tea Party movement reflect four primary cultural and political beliefs more than other voters do: authoritarianism, libertarianism, fear of change, and negative attitudes toward immigrants and immigration, according to new research to be presented at the 106th Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association.

"Our findings show that the [Tea Party](#) movement can best be understood as a new cultural expression of late 20th century [conservatism](#)," said Andrew J. Perrin, an associate professor of sociology in the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill's College of Arts and Sciences, and lead author of the study, "Cultures of the Tea Party."

Findings are based on two telephone polls of registered voters in North Carolina and Tennessee (conducted May 30-June 3, 2010 and Sept. 29-Oct. 3, 2010), and a set of interviews and observations at a Tea Party movement rally in Washington, N.C. Nearly half of poll respondents (46 percent) felt favorably toward the Tea Party movement.

Researchers found that respondents who felt positively toward the Tea Party movement held the following primary cultural and political dispositions more often than other voters did:

- **Authoritarianism:** respondents believe that obedience by children is more important than creativity, and that deference to authority is an important value.

- **Libertarianism:** respondents believe there should not be regulations or limitations on expressions such as clothing, television shows, and musical lyrics.
- **Fear of change/ontological insecurity:** respondents sense that things are changing too fast or too much.
- **Nativism:** respondents hold [negative attitudes](#) toward immigrants and immigration.

More information: The paper, "Cultures of the Tea Party," will be presented on Monday, Aug. 22, in Caesars Palace Las Vegas, at the American Sociological Association's 106th Annual Meeting.

Provided by American Sociological Association

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