

**Insurgency on the Populist Right: A Case Study of the
Contemporary U.S. Patriot Movement**

By

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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Sociology in
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Abstract

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by

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This dissertation is a case study of the patriot movement. The patriot movement is an umbrella term that has been deployed to conceptually unite many diverse groups that espouse an anti-government ideology. Patriots encompass groups as diverse as constitutionalists, survivalists, home school practitioners, hemp activists, tax protestors, militia members, and common law court activists. Using archival data alongside ethnographic methods this research shows that there is a surprising diversity among those who united around a patriot movement identity. Using cultural studies, political sociology and social movement theories, I argue that the patriots are a contemporary expression of U.S. populism and a response to real conditions of political powerlessness. As populists they are not necessarily fascist, white supremacist, or Anti-Semitic (although they can be). Chapter one introduces the reader to five respondents who call themselves patriots and shows through their narratives that the patriot identity is more than just a movement identity but a way of being in the world. It influences beliefs as well as actions in varied aspects of patriot lives—not just their activist life. Chapters four through seven explore the patriot identity further explaining some of its cultural and structural supports, including discourses of privilege—whiteness, masculinity, and American individualism combined with counter-systemic discourses about governance—republican populism, conspiracy and morality. In chapter eight I turn to the often

puzzling array of patriot tactics and explain how they logically flow from patriot ideology and identity as discussed in the preceding chapters. Methodologically the research depended on ethnographic methods. I interviewed 22 respondents in five central Arizona towns. These respondents were associated with three different patriot organizations. I spent the equivalent of six weeks in Arizona over the period of two years. Ethnographic work was supplemented with archival research on the patriot movement. Archival data came primarily from the Anti-Defamation League's Columbus, Ohio office shepherded by Mark Pitcavage. Interviews and documents were analyzed for dominant themes. For the interviews the dominant themes were the patriot's economic and political critique, religion, republicanism and conspiracy.

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Introduction

Who are the Patriots?

Do you believe any of these?

- Both the federal and state governments are violating their constitutions in numerous major and dangerous ways, particularly regarding the individual rights guaranteed to all Americans in the Bill of Rights.
- These documents are contracts between government and its citizens with the primary purpose of limiting government power, scope, and functions. As a result of these violations of the rights of the people, we no longer have the same government; government will do whatever it can get away with; government can be manipulated to the advantage of those wielding the reins of power-and their cohorts, associates, and financiers.
- This type of government and social order is contrary to everything the founders of our country tried to create.
- The average American worker now pays over 50 percent of his or her earnings in taxes-income tax, excise tax, sales tax, property tax, and so forth. Given the size of the federal budget and our rapidly decreasing standard of living, many Americans wonder where their hard-earned dollars are going.
- The mainstream media, both print and electronic, are controlled by the same big, money monopolies working hand-in-glove with the government, resulting in a public overwhelmed by trivia and dangerously uninformed about the issues that affect them most.
- People within the U.S. government and power elites are trying to subsume our country under a United Nations-controlled one-world government, endangering the sovereignty of the United States and the validity of its constitution.
- Beneath all the rhetoric, the New World Order is simply the concentration of power into a few hands and a global monopoly over the sources of wealth.
- America's founders warned that, somewhere down the road, citizens might have to defend their free form of government from usurpers-whether within or without the country's borders-and such a time may be close at hand. (Dority 1995)

Those who call themselves patriots, those who have come to hold a “patriot identity” would, for the most part agree with the preceding critiques of the U.S. government. Now of course you don’t have to be a patriot to place faith in these tenets. In fact many Americans believe a large portion of what I listed above. The list is from an article written by a journalist, writing for *Humanist* in 1995 after she conducted extensive research on “patriots” who were, at the time, being demonized by the media, mainly

because of Timothy McVeigh's (the person who bombed the federal building in Oklahoma City) assumed links to the patriot movement. As a journalist Dority was attempting to not pre-judge the patriots and present for her readers a less slanted perspective as opposed to the views of many journalists who had written about the patriots and militias in a primarily derogatory and sensational style.

This dissertation comes to the study of the patriots in the same spirit as Dority's journalistic instinct. It is an attempt to look at patriots through a sociological lens—it seeks to understand how patriots construct their worlds, how individuals construct a patriot identity, and what historical and cultural contexts fuel that identity. It is in short about ideas within particular political, social and cultural contexts and how these ideas are used to create and support identities and actions, what I later call meaningful action and practiced meanings.

Politically and culturally I argue that the patriot movement and the larger patriot counter culture is best understood as a contemporary manifestation of American populism. It draws on a distinctly populist discourse (patriot discourse divides the populace into two oppositional groups—the elite and the people). Those with power (the elite) are enriching themselves at the expense of the people. The patriot movement should, I argue, be seen as a movement that critiques and attempts to deal with a state of powerlessness. As such patriot discourse reflects the current political condition of many Americans who find themselves far outside the political process.

As the reader may recall, the patriot movement leapt into the mainstream imagination after Timothy McVeigh allegedly bombed the Alfred P. Murrah Oklahoma City Federal Building on April 19th 1995. Since then the patriot movement has slipped

from the national radar screen. But while its activities may be beyond media attention for now, the patriot movement draws from an oppositional culture that shows no immediate signs of dissipating. This study is a look at the various ways an oppositional culture is created, sustained and manifested in particular practices. In particular, this case study is a glimpse at the activities of three cells in central Arizona during 2002 and 2003. Like the groups I studied, it is not hard to imagine that other patriot organizations throughout the United States have gone into a similar time of quiet practices, suggesting not an end to the movement but a latent period (Melucci 1989). The widespread experience of economic and political powerlessness that the patriot movement expressed has not disappeared and material conditions continue to fuel an oppositional culture that clamors for real political impact.

The patriot movement is an umbrella term that has been deployed to conceptually unite many diverse groups that espouse an anti-government ideology. Patriots encompass groups as diverse as constitutionalists, home schoolers, hemp activists, tax protestors, militias, and common law court activists. What makes a patriot group anti-government? While there are a wide variety of patriot beliefs¹, there are some fundamental tenets with which most patriots would agree. The patriots I interviewed certainly agreed with Dority's list—printed in the opening lines of this chapter—and I see this list as representing the minimal anti-government beliefs of patriots. Chapter one introduces the reader to five respondents who call themselves patriots and shows through their

¹ I argue throughout the dissertation but primarily in chapters three and four that because of the nonhierarchical organization of the movement and because many keywords in the patriot worldview can operate like empty signifiers, there can for example be significant diversity in patriot beliefs while all still hold a patriot identity. So white supremacists see themselves as patriots as can the African-American leader of the Ohio State militia. Dority's list is the minimal agreed to tenets of patriots.

narratives that the patriot identity is more than just a movement identity but a way of being in the world. It influences beliefs as well as actions in varied aspects of patriot lives—not just their activist life.

After a brief introduction to some patriots along with the demographic background of my respondents and the towns in which they reside, I turn to the literature review in chapter two and to the reasons why this study's methodological strategies were important for studying the patriots, as well as why most other scholars have failed to see the populist leanings that I argue are central to the patriot identity. In chapter three I propose a theoretical approach which seeks to close some theoretical lacuna evident in patriot scholarship.

In chapter four I return to the processes of identity formation and suggest it is a patriot identity that is the unifying force for movement actors. No other unifying structure exists for patriots. The patriot movement is among the few movements that consciously decentralize and as a result there are no overarching organizations that try to bring activists together as a potent political force. It is the patriot identity, alone, that gives the movement coherence.

There is a certain unity around the patriot identity and in chapters five, six, and seven, I look at the three themes that dominated my interviews and contributed to a unified patriot identity: republican populist discourse (chapter five), religiosity (chapter seven) and by far the most predominate theme, the patriot critique of contemporary political economy (chapter six).

Chapter eight examines selective patriot practices. Patriots tend to have tactics that separate them from would-be patriot sympathizers and the majority of Americans

who distrust the American government. These practices include the active disengagement from government institutions. Following are just a few examples: There are elaborate schemes for removing oneself from the social security and income tax obligations. Patriots often drive without driver's licenses; they do not register their cars, and drive without license plates. They take their children out of the public school system. They educate themselves about alternative medicine so they don't have to rely on doctors. They file all sorts of quasi-legal and illegal documents aimed at disrupting the financial and government bureaucracies they encounter. In the past they have established alternative courts called common law courts that serve as a critique of the American system of jurisprudence. They also engage in local politics, attending city council meetings and running for office. Most often patriots aim to educate themselves and others about the state of current political corruption and the need for action.

Contextualizing the Patriot Movement

But why did the patriot movement erupt when it did? The key debates in the movement literature are about understanding the causes of patriot movement insurgency. There has been much alarm at its growth because of evidence of violent tendencies, its real ability to disrupt various bureaucratic functions (the courts, county administrative functions, local police and government agencies, the IRS, etc.), not to mention Timothy McVeigh's bombing of the Murrah P. Federal Building. But research investigating the origins of the movement is fraught with best guesses. Durham (1999) argues its roots are in the rise of the right beginning in the 50s and 60's. Some argue that it has its roots in the 70's tax protest movement (Pitcavage 2002). Aho (1991) documents the rise of the extremist right activity in the 1980's in Idaho that has important ideological and strategic

similarities to the 1990's militias and other patriot groups. What is clear is the documented rise in militia and patriot activity in the 90's. The resurgence was in response to anti-gun legislation spurred on by the pro-gun lobby (Durham 2000) and key instances of federal government intolerance and unashamed use of force as evidenced by the Randy and Vicki Weaver family standoff in 1992 and the Waco, Texas stand off with the Branch Davidians in 1993.

The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), an anti-hate watch dog organization began tracking patriot groups in 1994. The SPLC's numbers give some idea of the trajectory of movement activity. The SPLC listed as a patriot group only those that ascribed to a belief in the New World Order conspiracy (groups with explicit anti-Semitic or racist ideologies were not included). The patriot movement peaked in 1996 with 858 groups throughout the nation. As a result of government infiltration and legal repression of patriot tactics, many movement participants have been jailed, have left the movement, or have gone underground. By 2001 only 158 groups were listed (Southern Poverty Law Center 2002). In a recent update though the Anti-defamation League said the militia movement was beginning to "retool," mainly "under the radar screen of law enforcement and much less publicly visible" (ADL 2004).²

At the most general level, the patriots are a response to the same forces that account for the rise of social protest on both the left and the right in the 80's and 90's (Castells 1996). Many are coming to terms with the effects of globalization (economic restructuring), the continuing political power shifts to moneyed interests of big business and the upper class, the closing of the political process to democratic influences, rapid

² See Appendix A for maps and lists of groups from the SPLC and the ADL.

technological change, and social and cultural changes that are both independent of and influenced by these changes. The anti-globalization movement, the simplicity movement, the survivalist movement, the rising anarchist movement, and evangelical revivalism are all attempts to respond meaningfully to these forces and the real havoc they have created in individual and family lives. This is the political, economic and social context for the patriot movement, but it is far from explaining how and why it came to be.

The patriots are part and parcel of the rise of the New Right, but only to a limited degree. Jane Hardisty (1999) argues that those who joined the ranks of the New Right were recruited based on their real sense of uncertainty, fear and resentment caused by major economic and the attendant cultural shifts in America over the past 35 years. And I believe this is the case too for patriots. But she believes (and I hope she is right) “the grievances captured and exploited by the right could have served as the basis for a resurgence of liberal or progressive thought” (35). Why they didn’t was because of a “well-organized and well-funded” New Right leadership (Paul Weyrich, Richard Viguerie, and William F. Buckley and the religious right that joined them, including Jerry Falwell, and Pat Robertson) and it must be said the absence of a progressive political message. In a top-down mobilization, white working and middle class uncertainty and economic hardship has been co-opted by the organized right for the furtherance of a right agenda that benefits the upper class: tax breaks for the rich, a decrease in redistributive policies and social services (Hardisty 1999). The New Right was able to do this at a time when there was and still is overwhelming support for redistributive policies (Bartels 2005).

What is interesting about the Patriots though is that unlike the “mainstream” right, they were not a force that developed out of the concerted efforts of the New Right leadership. It is of a different character and I argue more populist in nature. Its beliefs and tactics are more in line with the United States’ tangled populist history. Patriot ideology is a blend of left and right beliefs and protest activities that are far outside the norm of either protest or politics-as-usual practices. Nor are they likely supporters of the Republican Party, or supportive of the class interests of the New Right. Many patriots, for example, dislike both Democrats and Republicans, argue that the multinational corporations have too much power over the federal and state government, and are not supportive of the Iraq War because it seems to be for the interests of big businesses connected to the Bush regime. Their ideological roots come out of rural histories of radical protest (Berlet and Lyons 2000; Stock 1997) and my research shows patriots resurrect classical republican populist ideas about governance and citizenship more reminiscent of Tocqueville than Buckley and are more likely to challenge than support the status quo.

Patriots are often categorized as white supremacists and Anti-Semitic, and as such part of the extremist right. But it is misleading to characterize the entire movement as white supremacist or Anti-Semitic. Many groups, including the ones that I studied, have explicit anti-government ideologies that are not white supremacist or Anti-semitic. Other researchers have seen evidence of this too (Aho 1990; Berlet and Lyons 2000; Durham 2000; Gallaher 1998). Durham (2000) for these reasons categorizes the Patriots as part of the radical right as opposed to the extremist right. Durham’s term, “radical right” is reserved for groups espousing “non-racist [anti-government] conspiracism” (xii).

Labeling any particular group extremist or radical can be difficult, for it is often the case that white supremacists and non-racist *individuals* can be found in the same group. But groups can be categorized as having an explicitly anti-government or white supremacist ideology according to what the official ideology of the group may be. The content of an “official ideology” is part of a fluid process and one group may be radical and change over time to extremist, but there are important political differences in these groups that necessitate different labels. Who a group blames, paints as the enemy, who is excluded or included in membership, and the ultimate goals for a group circumscribe the possibilities (and impossibilities) for tactics, coalitions, and political strategies³. Patriots, more so than white supremacists, are more populist and therefore more poised for a progressive politics should that opportunity ever arise. I do not argue though that patriots are therefore not racists; to the contrary, they like much of white America tend not to see the privileges of whiteness nor the disadvantage and oppression of brownness still prevalent in American institutional, organizational and individual practices.

Today’s patriots have become less vocal and visible but there is still a viable patriot counter-culture (what I will later refer to as an oppositional culture). Small groups of individuals who identify as patriots still get together. They congregate for a variety of reasons: to educate themselves by reading and discussing patriot materials (books, web pages, radio broadcasts, monographs, articles, videos, etc.), to learn survival skills, to educate each other about patriot tactics (the latest research on tax protest tactics, common

³ Aho’s research shows that white supremacist beliefs were more associated with Christian fundamentalist beliefs and often white supremacists that were the perpetrators of violence.

law courts, and alternative medicine), to perform military-style exercises, and yes, even, to plot violent activities against appropriate targets.

This introduction serves as a general overview of the patriot movement. Let me now introduce you to five people that call themselves patriots.

Part I Micro Processes of Becoming a Patriot: Meaningful Practices

Chapters two and three provide a methodological and theoretical framework for looking at both micro and macro processes in order to understand how a patriot identity came to be, how it is sustained through meaningful individual practices, group interactions and cultural institutions of religion, race, and populism.⁴ What the identity is (or really its various forms) is the focus of chapters one and four. In chapter four I examine the patriot identity in light of on going conversations in the social movement literature about the role of identity in social movements.

⁴ For this research I adopt Alford and Friedlander's (1991) definition of institutions that combines material and ideational components. Institutions are "supraorganizational patterns of human activity by which organizations and individuals produce and reproduce their material subsistence and organize time and space" (232). By using the term logic they attempt to convey institutions as "simultaneously" material and cultural forms—the way in which ideas get encoded in practices and practices are enacted meanings. See chapter three for an elaboration of their definition and how I use it in this analysis.

Chapter One

Why become a Patriot?

Overcoming Institutional Dependence

Being a patriot is not just a way of seeing the world, but a way of being in the world. The patriot way of being in the world is primarily about becoming less dependent on organizations and institutions. In this section I introduce the reader to the patriot way of being in the world by introducing you to five patriots. In each case the narratives describe a way of interpreting the world and being in the world that demonstrates efforts to overcome institutional dependence. This section also gives the reader an easy introduction to various components of the patriot worldview that will be further analyzed in coming chapters. To contextualize the five respondents, I conclude the chapter by giving the basic demographic information of all people I interviewed.

Using interview data this chapter attempts to answer the question why people became involved in the patriot movement. The patriot movement is characterized as an anti-government movement, but it is more akin to populist movements in American history and is better understood as a populist movement about self-reliance. What irks my respondents is a lack of control over one's life, economically, politically, medically, in body and in spirit. There is a true valorization of not only self-sufficiency but autonomy. They are the American individualist ideal, the pull yourself up by the bootstrap Americans.

Let me illustrate with Mark's⁵ account of why he ended up a participant in the patriot movement. Like many patriots, Mark is a veteran. He was drafted during the Vietnam War and served for two years before being granted a medical release. He is no champion of the military. He argues that the army was "full of incompetents" and servicemen were merely pawns for the more powerful. He illustrates his critique by relaying a conversation he had with his commander while stationed in Germany in the nineteen seventies. Mark's commander told him the troops were only a "trip wire" in that they were left mostly defenseless to be killed by Russian troops in case of a Russian invasion. The idea behind the trip wire is that the slaughter of Americans would trigger American support for a war.

But Mark's dislike for the government is also entangled with the medical establishment and both his military service and his entanglements with various doctors (military and private) have fueled his patriot beliefs.

It's funny how things happen in your life that bring you around to this [becoming a patriot]. They told me when I got out of the army [in the early seventies] I might live a week, I could die at any time, or I might live to be an old man, they didn't know. But around 1990 I really got down. I couldn't walk from here to my truck and when you get like that, you gotta start thinking so I started praying more and I went up to St. Louis and the doctor up there looked at the medication they were giving me at the VA in Marion and they said what are you doing taking this medicine? I said well that's what the doctor gave me and he said well you're lucky you're not dead. So I said well you know I better start studying it, but they wanted to do a heart surgery right away. Well I ran into another older doctor then and he said, "did they explain this surgery to you?" I said not really, they just said I needed to have it done right away. And so he says this medicine he's giving you right now, are you feeling better from it? I

⁵ In this case and in all others I use pseudonyms to protect the identity of the people who generously chose to grant me an interview. Although not all asked for anonymity, and a couple were recognized leaders I chose it for all as giving away one or two people's identity and location would necessarily compromise the identities of many of my other respondents. Many respondents feared harassment from federal authorities if their names were revealed.

said yes, somewhat, and he said take it until you feel better and then ease off of it cuz he said if you keep taking it, it won't help you after a while, and then you will have to have the surgery. He explained about the surgery. He said if they do it, they'll probably have to redo it again in 7 years and he said they might be able to go in after that one more time and do it, and he said after that they can't redo it, so he says you know you're done for. And I said well I think you just made my mind up about surgery [laughs].

And I asked God cuz I was really having a hard time. I started praying a lot and I asked God, I said God, I ask you to heal me. I said but I want to know what's going on in the world and all these falsities and what's the truth, what's not the truth, and I'll tell you what, after that it was like my heart started healing and I started studying herbs. That's when I got into the herbs.

Well the last time I went into a doctor he said your heart sounds good. I just kept getting better and better and better and it's like all of a sudden knowledge started coming. I didn't want any money, just give me knowledge cuz I want to understand this whole thing. And I'm not kidding you, knowledge from the medical side started coming in, knowledge from the political side, from every angle, I mean everything in this life. I'd run into people and they'd say well have you tried this alternative? Have you ever heard of this? And I'd get all their literature and I'd run into this other one and other one, and on political stuff and it was just like they were coming out of thin air with this stuff. (0308:29-30)

Mark was released from military duty because of a heart condition which the military doctors told him could end his life at any time. He was probably misdiagnosed as he later discovered but the VA doctors, which first misdiagnosed him and later put him on a medication that almost did end his life, began to have little credibility in Mark's eyes. Yet another doctor suggests surgery and another not to have surgery. The medical confusion leads not only to a medical crisis in Mark's life but also an institutional crisis about who to trust, what knowledges to put faith in. At a time when science fails him he turns to religion and asks for God's guidance and finds knowledge that he can trust—but not just from God—knowledge that comes from his own investigations.

Mark's story reads like a morality play...before he was sick, before he had to rely on doctors, and not just any doctors but military doctors, before he had to risk his life

because someone else said so.⁶ Then he learned the truth, he gained knowledge, in short he became more self-reliant and therefore he got better and more importantly less dependent on institutional forces (the military, doctors, hospitals, and pharmaceuticals). For Mark it is the military and the medical establishment—which is a proxy not only for the military but western medicine in general—which are the forces to be overcome, and self-reliance and self-actualization are the means toward well being.

This story—the overcoming of institutional dependence—is similar for many of my respondents. The target to overcome changes, it may be the local police or judiciary, the local fire department, the federal health department, or a lawyer but the elements of the story are the same. These are the institutions that have an effect directly or indirectly on individual lives; we as sociologists study their effects on individuals, groups and the course of history. As anyone who has taught an introductory Sociology class knows, the American people's literacy about social institutions as *institutions* is near non-existent, but this is not the case for patriots. For patriots, though, various social institutions are frequent topics for discussion. For many patriots (and many social theorists) these social institutions are forces of control over individual patriot lives, and it is this aspect of control that patriots resent. As Mark's story illustrates many patriots have real experiences tied in with their resentment that makes those feelings all the more powerful.

Patriots' feelings of resentment though are channeled into various practices of resistance. Patriots counter forced-dependence on various institutions and their various organizational manifestations through education, often autodidactic, and self-sufficiency. Some patriots, for example, not only know about alternative medicine but also become

⁶ Obviously religion has a large part to play here. I address the theme of religion in chapter 6.

practitioners of alternative medicine. (I have one respondent who claims to have healed three diabetics with herbal remedies.) Similarly, those who have ended up in court represent themselves. When I visited my respondents' homes most had volumes of legal books, Arizona statutes, law dictionaries, and volumes filled with copies of court cases. In chapter 8 I discuss the establishment of an oppositional culture that has resulted from practices of self-sufficiency and autodidacticism.⁷ The patriot movement's lure, then, is not just its anti-government sentiment, but the advantage (or seeming advantage) it gives to the newcomer—knowledge, self-reliance and a group of others who are also striving to become less dependent. In this chapter I focus on the reasons people gave for joining the movement, and like Mark's account it is often a blend of institutional forces and experiences that come to shape the respondent's worldview which make them more open to a patriot world view once it is encountered.

Conversion Narratives

To insist upon explanation in terms of causes simply bars us from trying to understand how human beings interpret their worlds and how we interpret their acts of interpretation. Jerome Bruner (1990) *Acts of Meaning*

Gary Alan Fine (1995) argues "social movements are a bundle of stories" (134).

He elaborates,

A social movement is not only a set of beliefs, actions and actors, but also a bundle of stories. We narrate stories to help us process our experiences. As a result of our conversations, we build shared identifications and rely on common emotional reactions that are easily called out. (134)

Stories—narratives—are productive. They are means toward building shared movement identities and beliefs, raising righteous anger, identifying who or what is to blame and

⁷ See chapter three and four for discussions of oppositional culture and consciousness.

articulating means of redress. Fine identifies three narrative types, horror stories, war stories and happy endings that dominate social movement cultures. Horror stories are what I here call conversion narratives. Fine defines “horror stories” as narratives that justify “involvement in the movement” (135). These stories follow a particular story arc which I also found in the narratives of my respondents. Fine argues,

These are narratives that postulate a bad time, which is only now being overcome, often with the aid of one’s colleagues in the movement. The horrors provide justification for these movements: their existence reveals a ‘social problem’ to be confronted and overcome (136).

Methodologically the horror stories or conversion narratives are windows into not only patriot movement culture but also reflect the bridge between personal biography and history, to use Mill’s eloquent phrase (Mills [1959] 1967). The narratives are not only a means by which respondents communicate their involvement in the movement but are narratives about how they see they see the world, the link between institutions/culture and individual experience.

I did not take an exhaustive accounting of my respondent’s past lives so I cannot really say why they joined, and even if I had the question is arguably unanswerable, for the answer to this question can change upon the day, time for reflection, and stage of one’s life, etc. What I present here is what consistently came up as a theme in my interviews as a whole (a myriad of negative experiences with social institutions) which the respondents presented as stories about themselves in the context of an interview about the patriot movement. So it is likely that these are reasons that the respondents believe explain their own participation and views. Overall I think the respondents’ stories, of which I present a few below, can be taken as evidence of why these people became involved. It is of course, as all things, an interdependent combination of psychological

and sociological reasons that form the foundation of all behaviors, attitudes and beliefs; here I outline some of the sociological and structural experiences, as expressed in the interviews which help explain my respondents' involvement.

I did not go into the interviews thinking that my respondents had negative experiences with social institutions. As a working class child and now middle class grown up who has followed an academic track, I have had benign encounters with various social institutions; I have perhaps in Althusser's language been "fully interpolated" (Althusser 1971). In early interviews I did not directly ask about their interactions with particular social institutions. But as I began interviews it became clear that this was a prominent theme and in later interviews I asked questions about specific social institutions including the state, religion, education, and the military.

The information I present below does not come out of a question that asks *why* did you get involved in the patriot movement. Rather, I took a more subtle approach, asking about *how* they first got involved in the movement. Answers varied and included stories about negative run-ins with governmental and non-governmental organizations, personal histories of distrust of the mainstream culture to "just heard from friends." Most of those I spoke with had direct relations with aspects of the state whether at the state, local or federal level. Many were in the military or had spouses that were in the military. No one had anything good to say about those experiences. For others it was local corruption or entanglements with the judiciary that fueled their anti-government predilections.

But for all, whatever structural ties they developed with the state or other social institutions, there was already a sense that something was wrong; and this I think has to

do with their overwhelming economically uncertain position combined with a rich populist cultural heritage which I discuss in chapter 5-7. All my respondents lived in conditions that showed signs of economic distress and struggle. In addition my respondents' critique of the concentration of power in both economic and political spheres was the predominant theme in my interviews. One patriot, I would argue chose these more difficult financial circumstances (and he is my one respondent that comes from a privileged background), but all the others have landed here, perhaps by surprise.

George

George grew up in the Northeast and moved to Arizona only recently. George worked for various state agencies much of his life. Early on he worked for the NSA and later went on to become a police officer in Baltimore. In the eighties he got involved in a group fighting local corruption in his home state which cost him his homestead and livelihood and landed him in prison for a year in a federal detention center. It was in the fight over local corruption that George discovered the patriot movement. I interviewed George along with the former leader of the local militia, Linda, and I asked them about how they and others get involved:

Linda: Usually there is some kind of thing they see that gets people involved. Something they see in government, or they see corruption. And he (George) [was investigating local government]

George: ...and nothing was working. The government was not working. And about the same time I was asked to take over a group that was called LAW Incorporated, a whole group of people got together, and they were having problems with lawyers and judges. And they had put an ad in the paper, have you ever been ripped off by a lawyer and they had 600 responses to the ads. So they had all this information coming in, but they did not know what to do with it. That was in Portland, Maine, and I was up in Albion, Maine. And at that particular time because of some articles [of mine] in the paper, they got in touch with me and they said would you take this organization over. So I looked through the documentation and I looked at about a dozen horrendous cases. And about the same time I ran into a guy from Portland by the name of Rush and he started talking to me about this movement in the country. (0302/03:4)

At the time George was trying to expose a local political scheme where politicians and bankers were conspiring to line their pockets with public money. The scam worked like this, the legislature would claim the need to build a bridge (not really needed) on private lands usually owned by a politician or someone linked with the bank, the bank would make money by funding the bonds needed for land improvement and make loans available to the construction company doing the building. Thus public money was funneled into private pockets. Certainly not a new story, but one that made the patriot worldview quite plausible and a natural fit once George was exposed to it. While, George found a lot of the patriot “theories” outrageous, enough was convincing, and George stayed hooked into patriot groups throughout the eighties and nineties, spending much of his time researching various legal problems, until he recently became quite disillusioned with the patriot culture.

George responded to overt government corruption by becoming involved in a local citizen’s group whose efforts landed a couple of the outspoken activists in federal prison for a year. That experience combined with his earlier jobs with various governmental organizations—the NSA and the Maryland police force—made the patriot critiques of the American political system quite plausible. After his entanglements with federal courts, George, until recently dedicated his life to legal research aimed at uncovering legal corruption throughout the American political system and living “off the grid” as much as possible.

Charley

Charley is the recruiter for the Kingman branch of the Arizona Sons and Daughters of Liberty, a statewide militia. He was in the midst of a battle with the Social

Security Administration over disability pay when he had a conversation with a neighbor over their adjoining backyard fence.

I happened to meet him one morning, just by chance. We got to talking over the fence, you know, and he was talking about the way things are in this country and the things that the government was doing to make a power grab and different control of different things in the country and I showed an interest. And he said can I send you some things. And I said certainly. So about 2 weeks later I got a box, and I mean (motions with hands) about 2 feet deep, full of information on things that were going on in the United States, not generally known to the public. He also had some information on the militia movement. And he gave me, one of the tapes in the box was a video tape of...well I can't think of the guys name...a two hour tape anyway by Koernke. He had been an intelligence officer in the military for several years and when he retired, he didn't like what he had seen so he made this video tape. *America In Peril* is the name of the tape, a two hour video. When I got done watching that I was absolutely stunned. I just could not believe what I had just heard. At that time I was in the process of fighting it out with social security for disability. I have never in my life been so frustrated, so angry with people in my whole life, as when I was dealing with social security administration.

While in this narrative Charley linked his SSA experience with inclination to patriot ideas in standard social movement narrative form, it was already the case that there was a sense of political unease that something was wrong. I do not argue that the run-in with the social security administration made the patriot worldview an easy match, although it certainly contributed. Like Charley, all my respondents already had a sense that something was wrong. This sense of unease existed before the final event that solidified their patriot movement involvement as codified in the conversion narratives. Because of their life experiences there is a general unease about the direction their lives are going, and this view is reinforced by what they see in their communities, and what they hear in the news; as a result, for many, there is a general sense that society is running amok. For some it is political, for others economic, for many it is both. Charley came from a somewhat privileged background, and had a small family inheritance which he squandered and lost. He was now in his sixties, retired and in ill health. Life has not

gone as planned. He is one of the millions of the middle class who found their bottom dropping out over the last 30 years of economic restructuring. These factors together made the patriot worldview compelling for Charley and many others.

Paul

Paul grew up in the Northeast. His father was a district attorney for the state of Maryland and his mother was a nurse. At the age of 13 his family moved to Mesa, Arizona. He went to college and received degrees in math, physics and art but then became disillusioned with the suburban life of Mesa. He moved outside a small town in Arizona seeking a way out of the rat race; he has worked as a fireman, worked for the forest service and studied to become a paralegal. He now runs a small store on his property and gets by economically by running a number of small business: his store, a firewood cutting and delivery business, and landscaping. It is largely his experience with local bureaucratic agencies, as well as his willingness to fight bureaucratic arbitrariness which encouraged his anti-government sentiments.

Paul's patriot activity includes paralegal work for a local patriot movement organization as well as his own legal research on a myriad of issues including the right to travel and federal and state election laws. His own patriot claim to fame was his self defense (pro se) against the state of Montana. He was taken in by the financial schemes of the Montana Freeman and was charged with fraud by the state of Montana. He successfully represented himself in court. He was found not guilty and as a result hundreds of court cases were dropped by the State of Montana against others who were taken in by the Montana Freeman schemes.

Paul has been involved with many local manifestations of state bureaucracy as employee and citizen. In attempting to remove himself from the "rat race," he

perpetually ends up butting heads with local bureaucratic authorities, from the health department (he owns a small grocery store) to local judges (he received a traffic ticket he fought), to the local political machinery which makes decisions on which roads should be paved (tax dollars were only being spent on one small area of the county). These encounters have led him to believe that “they are revenue crazy, that is all they care about anymore. Raising revenues. They have gotten too big for their own britches. [We are] an exploitable human resource.”

But it is not all about revenues; it is also ignorance. He argues there are too many laws on the books and agency representatives don’t understand the laws under which they operate.⁸ As he sees it the various government agencies and their representatives, because the law itself is so voluminous, contradictory, and difficult to interpret, are free to either exploit the legal loopholes or are merely ignorant of the law. This results in people being treated unfairly at best and exploited at worst. I asked him if he felt it was an individual problem or systemic:

It’s a combination of things, okay. If you’ve got a government agency that is dictating that you do a, b, c and d, but then you find somewhere along the line that in “c” there is sub part 1, 2, and 3. And they [the agency representatives] are just taking the force of C and forcing you to comply with it without looking at 1, 2 or 3. It’s just like with the health department [a health department official was going to site him for a violation. But when Paul read the written regulations

⁸ Many patriots are concerned with the legal expansion of the government and there have been many attempts to circumvent and critique the seeming legal unboundedness. In chapter seven and eight I talk specifically about the legal critiques and strategies pursued by some patriots. Paul’s story I think helps illustrate the effects of a legal system that is often beyond democratic control. When I say beyond democratic control I am specifically referring to the ways in which law gets made and implemented. Bills are passed by legislatures (often heavily influenced by lobbyists) but are then put into policy through an administrative agency. The implementation of the rules and regulations by the administrative agency may or may not fully enact the intention of the original bill. Finally how any regulation is actually carried out in the field is often another place where the democratic principles underlying the rule-of-law are compromised.

he thought she gave an incorrect reading of the regulations and sat down with her to actually review the written regs and ultimately she dropped the violation charges. Paul contends that the bureaucrat simply did not understand how to read the regulations.] You can't pick from here and pick from there. Then you are doing the same damn thing the freemen or the patriots do because they are picking and choosing and putting together this fruit salad of law, and you can't apply law that way. If the law is applied to the apples over here and excludes the oranges over here, you can't force it on the oranges, but they do it anyway. Why? Because people are ignorant of the law. "well ignorance of law is no excuse." Well those ignorant sons of bitches are sitting on the bench.

But like other patriots, for Paul, the accusation of ignorance or malfeasance is not isolated to government agencies. It is a systemic problem, a problem with professionalization. Here is Paul's formative encounter with the medical establishment

At 13 I started to develop migraines. I could not figure out why I was having migraines, and then all of a sudden I discovered that my pancreas does not produce certain enzymes to break down certain foods—chocolate, cheese, velveeta, oh I love it. You know stuff like that. Well they are pumping me full of these drugs, do this, take this. At 17 I had a jar of Percadin for christ's sake, and a life time prescription. Well who in the hell wants to be doped up all their life. It wasn't until I was about 30 that I found out about papaya, dried papaya. They have the enzyme, I take five of those pills or take a piece of that dried papaya and eat it and within 5 minutes I have no migraine. I use to suffer some very severe migraines, I mean ocular migraines, where your eyes go out, and you have numbness in your hands and fingers, and you suffer with it for a 24 hour period. They use to have inject me with Demerol and valium and that kind of crap to control the migraine. Well these guys didn't believe in home remedies because they are doctors with the AMA, so someone like me who suffers from something like that, has to suffer not only their idiocy but the fact that they will not recognize natural remedies for the imbalance. They know what is going on in my system. I think I would like to run into that neurologist today I would give him something to hurt for. I have seen stuff like that all of my life. People get victimized, victimized, victimized, because of the ignorance of the person they are depending on to be competent in their own job.

Paul's narrative is not just about this particular doctor, but a story that illustrates the need for self-reliance in a culture that is overly specialized and valorizes scientific knowledge. The narrative highlights that the problem of institutional dependence is not just reserved for the government, but spreads to the major institutions of our society, and once again we see that specialized knowledges come to be distrusted—the AMA trained

doctor, the local bureaucrat. They are the causes of suffering in individual lives and Paul's answer is not finding a different expert (a lawyer in the case of the health department or another doctor's opinion for migraines) but to turn to the self. The moral of this story, and often in patriot narratives is to distrust government officials and the educated elite. The answer, or strategy for action, is one redolent with American individualism—trust yourself and educate yourself. It is also a useful strategy when there really seem to be no other options—when you yourself seem powerless to change social conditions. Organized social change is the exceptional state. Individual level resistance, however, abounds.

Betty

Betty has spent her adult life dealing with government bureaucracy. Her husband was in the military and when released from duty worked at Lawrence Livermore Labs until he died in his mid-fifties. She receives money from the government for her husband's life of service to the country and for her son, now 42, whose skull was crushed during birth at a military hospital. Betty spends most of her time caring for her son, who is unable to speak, read or write, and is developmentally at a 2 year old level. Betty depends entirely on money and medical services from the military, which she believes not only out of negligence caused her son's condition, but also was experimenting on her husband by purposely exposing him (and others) to nuclear radiation.

Betty was first introduced to a patriot ideology by a constitutional lawyer in the nineteen seventies who told her that her marriage license allowed the government to own her children and to take them away at anytime. She was seeking legal counsel at the time to get the state (Oregon) to allow her to home school her child. The lawyer told her there was nothing she could do, but advised her to move outside the city limits and that then

the state may not bother since they would have to transport her child. The strategy worked, but Betty was left with the assumption that the state was interested in controlling her child and other aspects of her life. And this she says was not a far-fetched idea at the time:

He just let me know that the government was not under our control and the people were not made aware of it.

L: Do you remember having any sense of disbelief when he first told you?

No and I'll tell you why. I had a friend that worked in one of the state offices and she worked for the office that was connected with the SIECUS⁹ in the state of Oregon. She made copies of some paperwork that she had access to and gave it to me, regarding the same thing, how these programs were being implemented into the mental institutions and into infant care centers and into school facilities. It was hard to believe from the aspect that you are brought up with a straight and moral agency concept and to know that our government would do something like this, not just in that area, but want to control all our lives.

Here Betty is specifically talking about the implementation of sex education in the schools that started in the early twentieth century but came to a controversial head beginning in the late 60's as the right including the John Birch Society began to organize against school-based sex education curriculum (Moran 2000). But what Betty feared is a lack of control over her own rights as a parent and more generally the sense that life choices were being shaped more from the outside and less from local forces. In this view public education is not just a means to educate a child but to inculcate values (as indeed it does). And if your values conflict with the general mainstream values then public

⁹ SIECUS is the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States. As an NGO it "serves as the national voice for sexuality education, sexual health, and sexual rights" since its founding in 1964. It collaborates directly with state education offices advocating for the implementation of age-appropriate sex education curriculum. Betty was mistaken in her characterization of the organization as a governmental body. Although SIECUS does currently receive nominal funding from the Centers for Disease Control, Betty I'm sure would not be surprised to learn that it certainly is an elite organization supported by liberal or progressive foundations seeking to change the way sexuality is taught in U.S. public schools.

education can be seen as social engineering—a way to replace local and parental values with state-sanctioned values. In Betty's eyes (and on many other places of the political spectrum) parental control and local community control was being taken away and in place of it was some set of other forces, be it elites, be it the government. But these forces are much more abstract and less able to be confronted, debated. Control was being lost and for Betty and other patriots control was threatened to be lost to a set of forces which were not benign for they were to inculcate their children with values not of their own-parents' making.¹⁰

Betty though, unlike other respondents, is not interested in completely disentangling her life from the government, since her livelihood and her son's medical assistance completely depends on the federal government. But this dependence and interaction with various state organizations, the military, SSI, and Arizona's state aid offices, merely reinforces her belief that the state is interested in control. She told me numerous stories about the incompetencies of the various agencies she encounters. Here is one story:

Over a year ago I started my thinking on what is going wrong. I got a letter that said they (the Social Security Administration) wanted him evaluated. [the son receives social security after his father's death.] This letter did not ask me when it would be convenient for me. They assigned a time and a place and they informed me that I would not be in the room when my son was interviewed. This letter immediately caused anger. So I picked up the phone, and they said well these are the rules. So I made a personal trip down to Social Security and I said what is this garbage. Nobody is going to talk to my kid without me sitting in the room. And they said well that is not my problem you have to go talk to

¹⁰ There are many on the Christian right and patriot right who have chosen to home school their children. But political persuasion for home schooling families are all over the map. Those who choose to home school for counter-systemic but largely progressive reasons are not the usual homeschooler profiled by the media (Bielick, Chandler, and Broughman 2001; Stevens 2001)

DES. And I said well where is DES, and they gave me the address and I drove over.

L:What is DES?

Department of Economic Security (of Arizona) which has all of the state, county and city programs underneath them. So I go there...and I happened to have my son's medical records. And I said why do you need this? From birth on up you have all his information. He is not someone you can disqualify, what is the purpose of this? Well what they are doing they are collecting new information on everybody. They are making databases on everybody.

I told him, you are not going to talk to my son without me in the room. Number one he has a speech impediment and no one can understand him. But it is just the principle of the thing. I am the one who has been his caregiver all his life. [After this encounter she was not granted permission to be present when her son was interviewed and below she continues her story.]

So I had to go and get an attorney. I hired an attorney here in town. They (DES) waited until just 5 minutes before our appointment to call my attorney to say that they have given me permission to stay in the room. And this is how they try to intimidate you, they try to scare you. We got down there and I asked the guy who was interviewing and I said exactly who are you working for? And he said well I am not working for social security and I am not working for DES, I was contracted to come in here and do this job. He was contracted by DES. So he let me know up front that he was contracted for this particular job. And he said he had not been told about the severity of Kevin's limitations. He asked Kevin how many people live in our home, and he could not understand a word Kevin said. And I said would you like me to interpret what he said. And he said yes please [laughs]. And that is how we conducted the interview.

Just total harassment. You cannot let them intimidate you.

Betty wants to be treated as a person, with respect, by an agency which sees only cases not people, since that is the nature of bureaucracy. All are treated the same, in the name of indifference. But what results is a machine that can end up treating clients inhumanely.

Betty's dependence and experiences with state agencies merely has reinforced her anti-state attitudes. And while she does not seek independence from the state, as it would be economic suicide, she seeks institutional independence in religion. She argues that the 501C3 status of churches gives the government control over the conduct of churches.

She talked about a run-in she had with a minister who, while arguing that he did not

support abortion, felt he had a duty to uphold the law. She feels this attitude, directly attributed to the 501cs status, is what is crippling the churches as they can no longer speak the truth and wake up the citizenry about government corruption. As a result she has actively attempted to sway the local churches in her community to her side, to no avail.

Betty has suffered much loss (her husband and son) which she attributes to the military's disregard for basic human dignity. I think Betty's story is important because her story shows how people have been manipulated and hurt by the state in very personal ways. I don't think this explains why she joined per se, but it shows certainly why she would be sympathetic to a patriot worldview and why she would spend what little time she has working to help patriot causes.

Demographic Backgrounds

The five preceding vignettes are meant to give a more complete picture of some of my respondents, not just as patriots, but as people with complicated lives. The patriot ideology evident in their narratives is not incidental but has helped them make sense of various encounters between their daily lives and the social institutions that shape those encounters. In the following section I denude my respondents of their particularities and attempt to talk about them in terms of their generalities—average ages, education, income and other characteristics they share. Following the discussion of my respondents' demographic—without giving too much detail away and thus compromising anonymity—are descriptions of place. I detail some of the flavor of the towns where my respondents live as well as describe the demographics of their towns.

Perhaps my one regret in conducting this research was that I opted not to ask specific demographic questions. At the time I felt it was invasive and yet paradoxically almost too impersonal. Let me explain. I had to work hard to gain the trust of most of those that I interviewed so that by the time I was sitting down to a formal interview it was as if you were talking to a distant relative or friend of a friend whom you wanted to get to know better. It is in that context that income questions seemed too invasive and really impolite. It would be like asking your Great Aunt just exactly how she survived economically.

Also making it difficult for me to overcome the feeling that income questions were too invasive was that the interviews were very informal. The conversations I had with my respondents were just that, conversations. They did have some of the formal trappings of an interview—I had a consent form, a tape recorder and I even had an interview schedule (which generally I only consulted at the end of the interview to see if I had missed anything). But the tone of the interviews was informal. Sometimes an interview started by the respondent questioning me and who I was and what my interest was in them. Sometimes I started the questions but the tone would (in most cases) result in something more like a conversation with both of us revealing strands of ourselves, our beliefs, our interests, our lives. In one or two of the interviews they were conducted more like formal interviews—where I directed the questions and the respondent answered, but these were exceptional.

I also had a theoretical hesitancy to asking the income-education-class-type questions. It is this hesitancy that fueled the feeling that asking these questions was too impersonal. While these categories are important I feel as sociologists we definitely put

too much explanatory power on these categories, rather than the processes through which these categories are created, recreated, and infused with meaning. And I assumed (although probably incorrectly) that my respondents would question the reasons I revealed for tackling this research (*verstehen* in its fullest sense) if I asked such reified simplistic questions, like what is your current or historic income level? What was the highest year of schooling you completed? In the media the complexity of their lives was often reified by using these simplistic explanatory categories (often in a derogatory tone) as if one's income/education level could explain the life choice to participate in the patriot counter culture and take on the identity of a patriot. This is not to argue that income level is unimportant, of course. I argue in chapter six that patriots are likely to live economically insecure lives (often not really about income levels *per se*) and that the experiences of living tenuously make the patriot theories about relations of power—which explain both political and economic powerlessness—compelling narratives for which an investment of affect and time in a patriot way-of-being come to seem appropriate.

Although I did not directly ask these questions, it of course did come up. And where I felt it was appropriate I asked questions about work histories (although never income), family, military and educational histories. Often I interviewed people in their homes so I could also infer certain economic factors from their places of residence. As I have much demographic information missing, I have also included, using the 2000, Census basic demographic information about the towns in which my respondents lived—average income levels, educational level, age, veteran status, etc. In all cases the

respondents resided in communities that fell below both state and national averages for income attainment and education levels.

I have 22 respondents in my sample. All my respondents were white and included 14 males and 8 females. My respondents were mostly in their 40 and 50s (2/3rds) while 1/3 were over the age of 65 (most of them considerably older than 65). I had one respondent in her 30's.

Comparison of Site A-E Demographics with U.S. and Arizona Averages

<i>Site*</i>	<i>Populati on</i>	<i>median family income</i>	<i>% living in poverty</i>	<i>% white</i>	<i>media n Age</i>	<i>% 65 or older</i>	<i>% high school gradua te or above</i>	<i>% Bachelor s or above</i>	<i>% vetera n</i>
U.S.		\$50,046	12.4	75.1	35.3	12.4	80.4	24.4	12.7
AZ		46,723	9.9	75.5	34.2	13.0	81.0	23.2	15.0
A	13,500	38,713	9.9	94.8	48.9	29.2	83.9	17.6	21.3
B	1717	32,250	12.4	95.9	60.4	37.6	75.1	12.6	28.2
C	5082	40,051	11.4	91.8	48.4	28.7	80.2	19.9	21.6
D	20,069	41,327	11.6	89.9	39.6	17.8	82.0	13.9	18.5
E	396,375	49,232	8.9	81.7	32.0	13.3	84.7	21.6	14.5

*Data based on Census 2000 (2004 data were not available for the smaller geographies)

As I mentioned above I do not have income data. If visual indications are taken at face value then none of my respondents were living even close to upper middle class lives or even middle class lives. Those living in towns A and C were living in economically depressed areas. I am missing housing data for six of my respondents, but for those for which I have data, five lived in trailers, three in rented houses and six in houses they owned. Homeownership in these towns is not necessarily a sign of a comfortable middle class living. Even when people owned their homes the houses were

often located in the poorer parts of the town (and in the case of town B the whole town is an impoverished enclave.)

With the exception of three, my respondents grew up in working class families (the other three came from middle class families). Two now hold professional degrees (1 is a minister, 1 is a retired doctor). Two have BAs who then went on to get paralegal degrees. Three have some college and another 4 finished high school but did not attend anything higher. (I am missing education data for nearly half of my respondents.) This of course leads to a limited but very diverse range of occupational backgrounds of my respondents. There was an interesting pattern among even the older patriots where over their life times they held a number of different types of jobs. I expected to find this to be the case for the younger respondents, but not necessarily the older patriots. Here is a list of some of the ways my respondents have created incomes: miner, sailor, ship's captain, police officer, truck driver, pipe line worker in Alaska, highway patrol, bus driver, mechanic, machinery operator, fire fighter, teacher, pool shark, merchant marine, corpsman in army, electrician, small-time chicken rancher, cashier in grocery store, property manager/rentier, restaurant owner, gun shop owner. Their current work status was not as colorful. Seven were retired, 5 owned their own businesses (a lawyer, a minister, a small grocery store owner, a small restaurant owner, and a gun shop owner) 2 contracted out their services (an electrician and a machine operator), 3 were unemployed, 2 worked full time for wages and 1 was a full time care giver (mom to a severely mentally impaired adult son).

My interviewees came from 5 Arizona sites. 2 of the 5 were rural small towns (population between 1,000 and 5,000), town B and C in the table below (12 interviews).

Two sites were medium towns (population 13-20,000) town A and D (7 interviews). Only one could be characterized as a metropolitan area town E (3 interviews). The bulk of my interviews came from two very small towns (B and C) located close to one another.¹¹

With the exception of those that resided in a metropolitan area, the towns they chose to live in (for most it was a choice) were largely white communities considerably above average in their white composition when compared to Arizona state and national averages. These medium to small towns are also notable for other demographic characteristics. They (towns listed below as A-D) are all below the national and state median family income levels, below average educational attainment, higher than average age of the population including very large percentages of those over 65, and a higher percentage of veterans than the national average. So overall residents in sites A-D are older, more likely to be veterans, more likely to have less income (but also less likely to live below the poverty line), lesser educated, and more likely to be surrounded by white neighbors. I include this data because it gives a context for understanding not only my respondents but can also begin to give a taste of the towns they have for the most part chosen (given the limited options of those on limited incomes) to live in.

Employment & Industry Statistics U.S., Arizona and Sites A-E

<i>OCCUPATION (% employed)</i>	<i>U.S.</i>	<i>AZ</i>	<i>P-A</i>	<i>C-B</i>	<i>W-C</i>	<i>K-D</i>	<i>M-E</i>
Management, professional, and related occupations	33.6	32.7	24.9	23.2	31.7	28.5	30.9

¹¹ The distribution of interviews is not as I would have liked them, but that unfortunately is the nature of snowball samples. It was also the case that the groups in the small towns were more active at the time that I was interviewing. The folks in the metropolitan area largely turned down interviews and I ran out of contacts and time to pursue the few leads I had there.

Service occupations	14.9	16.2	21.5	22.2	23.9	15.7	14.5
Sales and office occupations	26.7	28.5	29.8	25.3	20.6	26.8	30.1
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	0.7	0.6	0.7	4.3	2	0.3	0.2
Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations	9.4	11	15	11.2	12.1	11.2	12.1
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	14.6	10.9	8.1	13.9	9.6	17.5	12.3
CLASS OF WORKER							
Private wage and salary workers	78.5	78.1	72	70.6	73.9	74.2	83.6
Government workers	14.6	15.2	17	13.7	13.3	18.5	10.9
Self-employed workers in own not incorporated business	6.6	6.4	10.9	15.1	11.6	7	5.3
Unpaid family workers	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.6	1.2	0.3	0.2

*Data based on Census 2000 (2004 data were not available for smaller geographies)

Site A

This growing town located about 90 miles outside of Phoenix is quickly becoming a retirement and second-home community for those escaping the city. Recent state-funded construction has made it possible for city dwellers to easily make the drive within 2 hours, a drive that before the major highway was built could take up to 5 hours. The growth has created a service economy with predominantly low-skilled service sector employment although there are good paying jobs in the health services which service the growing retirement-age population. Wal-Mart has recently moved in and local retail outlets have already shown sign of suffering as increasingly small chain restaurants and retail outlets take their place. Patriot activity in this town has ebbed. There was considerable activity up until about 2000 according to my respondents. Some of my respondents were part of a local chapter of the Arizona Sons and Daughters of Liberty (a chapter was also located in site D).

Site B

Site B is on the outskirts of Site C. Set in the desert a couple of hours from Phoenix, this is one of those towns where if you blink you might just miss it. There is one

restaurant and one convenience store on the main paved road that comes off a main interstate highway. The rest of the town is a series of winding dirt roads that lead to various land blocks most of which are small houses or trailers, often with room for horses or chickens. Many who live here are over 65 (37.6%) or commute to work at site C. To the North are mountains that create the beautiful contrast of the desert merging into mountains that is so characteristic of Arizona.

Site C

Once a bustling early twentieth-century mining, ranch and farming town, site C is now trying to become a tourist destination. There are plenty of restaurants and hotels and boutique/gallery type stores attempting to attract the tourist dollar. Old working ranches are now tourist destinations as the chamber of Commerce promotional material declares this town the “Dude Ranch Capital of the World.” 24% of those employed are employed in service occupations as compared to a nation wide average of 14%. Site B and C are actually closely linked in terms of their patriot activity. One leader was key to establishing two groups that drew membership from both towns. As far as I know they were the only patriot groups in the immediate area. The SPLC does not list any other patriot groups in this site, but nor does their list include the two that I researched. A militia group was active for about 3 years in the mid-nineties, and a citizens action group (an education-oriented citizens group) started in the mid 1990’s and continues to this day.

Site D

Site D is a rapidly growing city about 3 hours from Phoenix in the high desert region of Arizona. Manufacturing and tourism are its biggest industries. Its low cost of living and low wages, as well as its location near major interstate freeways, has led to a

number of large low-skill employers relocating here. Many big chains have moved in including Wal-Mart and chain restaurants, but for now there is still a vibrant local business scene. The patriots I met with here were in the eve of their participation as measured by any sort of participation in a group. But in the past extensive patriot activity was highlighted in the media because of Timothy McVeigh's association with patriot groups in the area.

Site E

Site E, once a bedroom community for Phoenix, is now a city in its own right. Large swaths of housing followed by swaths of chain retail outlets are characteristic of site E. This site had a number of patriot groups operating in the area. The SPLC lists 15 number operating in the greater metropolitan area in 1996 at the height of patriot activity. The most well known was a group called The Vipers which were arrested on gun charges in 1998. There is at least one still thriving group, the Heritage Institute, in the area that regularly meets and conducts educational workshops and seminars. Appendix 2 contains some of the recent flyers I have received from Heritage's educational courses.

My respondents participated in groups that were loosely linked through personal connections. But that does not cover the breadth of their participation in the broader patriot oppositional culture. Many of them attended special seminars of touring patriot leaders who would speak to large audiences, often in Phoenix, or another larger town. Many regularly checked patriot-oriented news websites, all received patriot literature in the mail. But what I hoped to convey in the first part of the chapter is that being a patriot, becoming a patriot is taking on a new identity and a new way of life that became for many of the patriots a key identity, an identity primarily about cultivating a life of self-reliance and institutional independence. Their activism in the patriot oppositional culture

was not tangential to their own lives, but central. I return to the centrality and the cultivation of a patriot identity in chapter four. But before we turn to the substantive chapters the next two chapters will review and critique what others have said about patriots and marshal a theoretical and methodological perspective that is better able to understand the patriot oppositional culture.

Chapter Two: Cultural Structures

How to explain and study the Patriot Movement

A Literature Review and Discussion of Methodology

Reflections on Methods and Literature

“When talking of social movements and collective action, one is usually referring to empirical phenomena with a certain degree of empirical unity. Yet what in fact is in question are heterogeneous and fragmented phenomena, which internally contain a multitude of differentiated meanings, forms of action, and modes of organization, and [what] often consumes a large part of their energies...[is the task] to bind such differences together.” (Melucci 1989:13)

I don't know much about the patriot movement, we really don't have anything to do with it. (Recruiter for the Arizona Sons and Daughters of Liberty, a patriot organization).

I chose a difficult task. Here was a phenomenon that the press, following two non-profit watchdog organizations (the SPLC and Anti Defamation League), called a patriot or alternately a militia movement. At the time of McVeigh's trial I was searching for a topic for a methods class and I got hooked and it ended up being the dissertation you see before you. But as I sat down to figure out how to study this movement it became clearer and clearer that it was indeed not a movement, at least not in any conventional way that we understand the term. Why do I say this? Melucci has argued that a movement is a collection of “fragmented phenomena.” And I certainly agree. When one looks closely at, for example, the feminist movement it is a myriad of sometimes-conflicting groups working toward disparate goals through disparate means. But, unlike the patriot movement, there are recognizable movement activists and organizations that one could interview and study and that, most importantly, *have an interest* in seeing themselves as movement actors in the cause of furthering women's rights. There is as Melucci argues a concerted effort on the part of movement actors to “bind such differences together.” This effort does not exist in the so-called patriot movement.

How does one study a movement which does not manifest itself as a traditional movement? Well it is in part a question of what you want to study about the movement. If you are interested only in the ideology (and not ideology as process) a researcher can turn to the vast amount of material available on the web or other textual primary sources. And many researchers have followed this track (Bellon 1999; Crothers 2002; Donelan 2000; Durham 2000; Flanagan 2000; Katz and Bailey 2000; Mahan 1997; Mulloy 2004; Niday 2001). A small number have turned to ethnographic research methods (Aho 1990; Akins 1998; Gallaher 1998; Gallaher 2003).

Almost all researchers, whether their data is text or experience based, have attempted not only description but causal explanations. What caused the movement to erupt when it did and what accounts for the form it took? Most researchers have offered *macro* cultural and/or structural explanations for the rise of the movement.

Variables Explaining Rise of the Patriot Movement ¹²		
Academic¹³ Researcher	Structural Cause	Cultural Cause
Akins	Deficient education system	Christian fundamentalism
	Economic restructuring	
	Political factors (gun control, farm crisis, political corruption)	
Crothers	Political Power shift to suburbs	American individualism
	Oppressive government practices (Weaver and Waco)	
Aho	Patriot opportunity structure (being exposed to the patriot ideology)	Christian fundamentalism worldview
Castells	Globalization	Globalization
Freilich	Environmental movement	Perception of a liberal threat to American way-of-life
	Globalization	
	Economic restructuring	
	Technological advances (internet)	

¹² Frielich is the only one that talks about how culture and structure cannot really be separated. Akins, Gallaher and Aho are the only researchers that combine macro causal explanation with evidence coming from movement actors.

¹³ There is a considerable amount of research on the patriots conducted by watch dog organizations and journalists. I don't cite them here, although their work where relevant has been cited in the body of the dissertation. Frielich's dissertation looks at the body of research on the patriots which at the time consisted only of journalistic and SPLC (Dees) and Anti-Defamation League (Stern) accounts. His work is a good review of that body of literature, see where I review his work for a list of authors. Dyer's work on the farm crisis stands out as exceptional journalistic work on the patriots, which became an incidental topic given his interest in the real life stories of rural communities' attempts to deal with the farm crisis that started in the 1980s. It is often the case that academics have relied on journalistic and watch dog accounts for possible causal explanations and evidence of movement activity. So while I may not include these accounts there trace is implicit in many of the arguments made by academics.

Usually the evidence for causality is not explicitly stated.¹⁴ Economic restructuring, specifically the declining independent family farm and manufacturing sectors are often named as casual factors (Akins 1998; Berlet and Lyons 2000; Castells 1996; Dyer 1998; Freilich 2001; Gallaher 1998; Van Dyke and Soule 2002). Many macro cultural factors have been named as causal including a white male reaction to the civil rights and feminist movement (Kimmel and Ferber 2000), the rise of Christian fundamentalism (Aho 1990, Akins 1998); the American culture of individualism (Crothers), and the perception of a liberal threat to the American way of life (Freilich, Pienick, and Howard 2001a).

Two studies have tried to measure the macro structural and cultural factors which many have argued account for the rise of the patriots. Freilich (2001) reviews the literature on the patriots (drawn from journalists and writers from watchdog organizations) and finds two competing models for explaining the rise of the patriot movement, the economic/social integration hypotheses and the cultural hypotheses. The economic thesis suggests that negative economic conditions, social disorganization, and the farm crisis account for the rise of the militias (Abanes 1996; Bennett 1995; Berlet 1995; Davidson 1996; Dees and Corcoran 1996; Dyer 1998; Lamy 1996; Neiwert 1999). The cultural hypothesis suggests that basic liberal tendencies since the 1960's have created a backlash in the form of a paramilitary culture and led to movements like the militias (Gibson 1994). Freilich tries to measure, as proxies for this backlash, levels of cultural diversity in a state, and female earning power relative to men. He uses

¹⁴ While I am not a strict empiricist, and I certainly reside on the social constructionist side of the sociology of knowledge, I do think there needs to be some evidentiary bases for causal explanations.

quantitative regression modeling at the state level to test these theories. The dependent variable was a log of the number of militias per state per capita based on SPLC's list of organizations per state¹⁵. He found no support for either theory. The only significant variable was the percentage in a state voting for a third party which may be a measure of the level of an anti-government oppositional culture present in any given state.

In a similar attempt to explain the rise of patriot groups, Van Dyke & Soule (2002) used regression modeling of macro variables. Using the SPLC numbers from 1996 they constructed two models, one at the state level and one at the county level. The dependent variable was the number of patriot groups at the county or state level. Independent variables included in their model were measures for demographic change (the increase in the minority population); a measure of perception of growing power of minorities and women (the percent of the state legislature that was African American or female); organizational support for patriot groups (number of far right organizations in the state; and the percent of the population that called themselves liberals). Variables that measured the amount of economic restructuring were the only ones found to have explanatory power and significance. These variables were the percent decrease in manufacturing jobs in the three years prior to 1996 and the percent decrease in family farms during the same period. If there was a decrease in manufacturing it was 65% more likely a patriot groups would be found in the state. If the state experienced a decrease in

¹⁵ The SPLC list is really the only "count" of patriot groups that exists. The SPLC culled information from news reports, police reports, their own field observations, and internet searches. Groups that they considered patriot were ones which explicitly supported the belief in a New World Order conspiracy of which the United States government is a part. SPLC does not open its archives to researchers so verification of this list is impossible. It is, however, the only list out there. At best it is probably a count of the most visible groups. Visibility of course can be the result of criminal acts or movement activities. None of the groups that I encountered were on the list.

family farms it was 56% more likely that the state would have a patriot organization. These numbers were even stronger at the county level (76% and 258% respectively).

As Van Dyke's research indicates, a strong case can be made that the decline in the manufacturing base and family farms are linked with the rise of the patriot movement. But of course a largely structural argument does not explain why particular individuals find the patriot world view compelling. Aho's (1990) work on early manifestations of the patriot movement in Idaho sheds some light on some of the macro cultural processes behind the patriots. Aho (1990) is one of three researchers [Gallaher (1998 & 2003) and Akins (1998) are the other two] who attempted to connect the micro and macro by actually talking with patriots. I review their work extensively here as it has important insights and serves as a point of departure for my research.

Aho's research on Idaho Christian patriots in the 80's suggests a two-step mobilization process. The first step is cultural, an early political socialization in a fundamentalist worldview. The second is encountering the patriot ideology through a patriot opportunity structure that means that one had to be exposed to the patriot movement in order to join it. Most often this exposure happens through people in your personal network of those you trust, friends, family members, trusted authority figures, like pastors, teachers. In Aho's study most new recruits knew someone who had already joined the movement. While it is important to acknowledge that one has to be exposed to a movement in order to join it I don't think it merits further discussion.

The first step of mobilization—early political socialization in a fundamentalist worldview—does, however, require elaboration. Aho interviewed 520 Christian patriots. For approximately 2/3 of his sample he obtained information on religious upbringing.

80% were raised in Protestant churches, “32.3% in Mormon denominations and 32.5% in fundamentalist denominations” (166). 90% of his patriots listed Protestantism as their current faith compared to 54% of the Idaho population (168). 65% of patriots were raised in conservative Protestant sects. Furthermore he saw a clear distinction in religious disposition between Christian Identity adherents with a white supremacist and anti-Semitic ideology as compared to Christian Constitutionalists who actively shunned white supremacist and anti-Semitic ideologies. 65.4% of the Constitutionalists were raised in the Church of Latter Day Saints (Mormon) while only 18.2 % were from fundamentalist sects. For Christian Identity adherents the percentages were reversed, 60% were from fundamentalist backgrounds and only 9% from LDS (177).

Aho defines fundamentalists as holding five beliefs which differentiate it from more moderate religious beliefs these are, “divine transcendence and earthly sin, misogyny, innerworldly asceticism, conspiratorialism, dispensationalism” (171-3). The belief in divine transcendence establishes a dualistic thinking where God is perfect and man and the world are inherently imperfect and evil. Aho argues this leads to a disgust and hatred of worldly things, “but as world-reforming ascetics” their goal is to remake the world in God’s image. Misogyny comes from identifying the feminine with materiality, with substance, and thus with the cycle of birth and death which the Christian religion seeks to control, and thus men are seen to have sole authority in church hierarchies and family structures. A belief in conspiratorialism creates the “insistence that there are no accidents (173)” leading to a tendency to link all events and actions into a grand plan. Finally dispensationalism is the belief that we are now living in the end times prior to Armageddon which lends urgency to adherents’ actions. Whether or not

those who were fundamentalists actually hold any of these views we do not know as Aho assumes religious upbringing in a fundamentalist church means that one holds these beliefs.

I'll return to this discussion in Chapter 5 where I explore the religiosity of the patriots I interviewed. While most of my respondents were religious they did not identify as *Christian* patriots. Religiosity was not central to their anti-government philosophy. Most were from Protestant faiths, but a few had even spent time in Eastern religious traditions. In line though with Aho's findings, those who were from fundamentalist backgrounds held religion as more central to their patriotism. Most of the patriots I interviewed were not explicitly white-supremacist or Anti-Semitic, the two exceptions in my data were more likely to have religion as central to their anti-government beliefs and were both in or had been involved in fundamentalist churches.

Aho looks primarily at cultural (religious background) and meso processes (patriot opportunity structure) to account for the rise of the patriot movement in Idaho. He argues, like most coming from the resource mobilization school, that grievances do not matter. For Aho, what is important is the cultural frame through which events are interpreted. He argues that if someone holds a fundamentalist worldview and they come into contact with a patriot opportunity structure, i.e. someone espousing patriot ideology, then they are more likely to be recruited when compared to someone without that fundamentalist worldview. But, Aho's theory of fundamentalism only explains the rise of Christian Identity groups and not the Christian Constitutionalists. The Constitutionalists were likely to be more religious than the average Idaho citizen, more conservative—but not necessarily fundamentalist—and did not adhere to white

supremacist or Anti-Semitic beliefs. Aho's analysis cannot explain the Christian Constitutionalist phenomenon nor what it portended, the largely more secular patriots groups that erupted in the nineties.

Of the ethnographic research, Aho's was the most broad based. But his work is from the 80's and it seems the movement expanded and as a result became more secularized in comparison to its early manifestation. This is not to argue that religious fundamentalism has faded as a background factor in the movement. This is hardly the case. Akins' (1998) work, largely with fundamentalist white supremacist groups, shows the strength of Aho's fundamentalist argument.

Akins, like Aho, creates a multi-step mobilization process, but Akins includes grievances (structural conditions) as part of his multi-step model. Akins, trained as an anthropologist, conducted ethnographic research with 5 militia groups in central Florida. He interviewed leaders and rank and file members of each group (about 5 in each case). He also analyzed documents he received as part of his participation in groups and material given to him by militia members (everyone always has something that you just have to read!).

Akins argues that most Americans share the concerns of many militia members. And he attempts to answer the question of who joins and why by a multi-step model. His model of mobilization starts with an available pool of all native-born Americans. In the second step those likely to join a militia are those who have been "left behind" (151) or "unable to adapt" (151) at all class levels to economic restructuring of the past 30 years. Those who are "resentful" (153) and those who are likely "to blame others" (153) for their condition are part of the likely pool of militia recruits. Evidence for the salience of

economic factors is the frequent mention of economic grievances in patriot literature and in meetings he attended. Like Aho, Akins argues that one has to encounter an “opportunity structure”—there must be some personal connection with someone associated with the movement before one joins (154). At this point the cultural factors kick in. Once someone “who is economically distressed and distrustful of the government” (154) and actually personally encounters the movement they can reject, embrace, or sympathize with the movement. As in Aho’s work, those more likely to join are those with a fundamentalist world view. Akins adopts Aho’s conception of fundamentalism but broadens it to apply to secularists in the militias who hold conspiratorial views—conspiracy becomes fundamentalist, argues Akins, because of its dualistic narrative of us versus them.

Aho’s work largely embodies a Hofstadterian theoretical approach to extremist politics.¹⁶ However, his work does give evidence of the ways in which structural and cultural macro conditions are important for understanding why people join militias. Nevertheless, his work does not discuss the actual processes through which people come to understand the conditions they experience as grievances and what it is about the patriot ideology which helps them recognize those grievances. My research focuses on those processes.

Gallaher (1998), a trained geographer used post-structuralist identity theory, to link micro manifestations with their macro cultural and structural antecedents. Gallaher argues that a patriot identity is a class identity that attempts to create a classed “other” within a normative frame of white, male and heterosexual. She argues that class concerns

¹⁶ I review Hofstadter’s legacy and its theoretical implications for the study of the right-wing in chapter seven.

“are articulated locally and through livelihood issues.” For example, in Kentucky there were many patriot activists who were also advocates of hemp farming. The local quality to patriot groups makes it difficult to generalize about them, since as researchers we can see so much variation. Class amongst the Arizona patriots I interviewed, was articulated through a populist rhetoric, not livelihood issues as Gallaher found in Kentucky. The “other” for AZ patriots, was the elite. Who the elite are varied for AZ patriots, but it was often defined as those who controlled corporations and international financial organizations and were allied with the United States federal government. The primary aim of the elite was to extract money through the form of labor from the populist masses of whom more and more were coming under the control of elite forces.

Gallaher’s work also underlines the significance of space for understanding the patriot movement. Not only are rural and small town configurations more likely to spawn patriot groups, but also at the movement’s apex, groups were far more likely to crop up in the West and Southwest than in the South (excluding Florida and Texas) or New England.

My work builds on the insights of Aho’s, Akins’ and Gallaher’s works. Like them I was not interested in just the rhetorical flourishes of patriots (as manifested in websites, radio shows, newsletters, magazines, etc.). I wanted to know what patriots themselves felt, and thought, and to ask them what drew them to the movement. But I was also interested in trying to establish some explanatory narrative that explores both micro and macro causal forces. Aho and Akins offer structural and cultural macro causal variables although they don’t really connect their models with the interview data they

collected—the micro level. I think this can be better done with an explicit multi-level framework. I develop this theoretical frame in the next chapter.

Many authors have offered structural and cultural macro variables to explain the rise of the patriot movement. While I don't necessarily disagree with some of their arguments, there is a tendency to collapse categories of structure and culture. There are two problems with this collapse. The first is seeing structure and culture as only macro concepts. Macro forces like economic restructuring get expressed (or not) in the daily reality and lived practices of people's lives (getting laid off, the inability to find a job, or finding a job). Individuals at the micro level grapple with the meaning of these practices (sometimes without seeing the more macro causes). Likewise meaning is taken from many places macro to micro—religious institutions, media, family lore, peers' perceptions, individual cognitive processes. Second, culture and structure are independent concepts but completely intertwined. Economic structures, for example are not just structural forces that organize our economic life but are imbued with economic values too (free market or socialism?). Likewise, individuals attribute meaning to laboring practices. We practice meanings and conduct meaningful practices. Material reality or practices and the meanings that get ascribed to it are an interconnected process. I explore a theoretical framework that helps make these linkages in the next chapter.

Before turning to theoretical considerations, methodologically what made Aho, Akins and Gallaher's work descriptively rich and also less dominated by the researchers' interpretations¹⁷ was their engagement with actual patriots through a blend of

¹⁷ I don't think my approach is more "pure" or less interpretative, but compared to non-interview based research, my interview data acts as a restraint on my own interpretative imagination.

ethnographic methods, interviews, participant observation, and document analysis.

Below I describe the methodological methods and problems associated with my research.

Getting In

I knew shortly after choosing this topic that talking to patriots was an essential component to my research. There are many barriers, however, that impede ethnographic research. First you have to find patriots. Second, patriot organizations tend not to monitor membership or have public membership lists. There is no way to tell how large this movement may be nor its significance or insignificance. As I mentioned above, the SPLC, which monitored patriot organizations and produced a list of patriot organizations from 1994-1999, does not open their archives to the public or even to interested researchers to verify or to use for contacting patriot members. None of the patriot organizations I contacted were on the SPLC list.

Further complicating matters, patriots since 1995 don't really want to be found. The patriot movement, after the Oklahoma City bombing, was infiltrated and repressed by the FBI, despite the fact that McVeigh, while he visited a few patriot meetings, was not affiliated with any particular group and evidence suggests the bombing was planned by a group of Aryan Nation adherents with which McVeigh was affiliated (Dyer 1998, Goodwyn 2005). The repression caused many groups to disband or go underground. In addition many patriots were wary of outsiders for their candor with the media usually resulted in what patriots perceived as an unfair characterization. So patriots became harder and harder to find and those one could find were reluctant to talk.

Once you actually find patriots you have to convince them that you are not a threat. Gallaher (1998) interviewed only local leaders in Kansas because other members

were not willing to talk to her. Akins (1998) overcame this problem by becoming a full participant. This is limiting too because you can't always ask the questions that you are allowed to as a recognized researcher (which of course has its limitations too).

I was uniquely positioned in that I had a family relation who knew a militia member in his hometown. My (adopted) grandfather lived in Kingman, Arizona, which became infamous because McVeigh had spent some time there shortly before the bombing. My grandfather also happened to know the Kingman recruiter for the Arizona Sons and Daughters of Liberty (ASDL), a statewide patriot organization. My grandfather was willing to introduce me. I had already established some amount of trust because I gained entry through a trusted member of the community (the ASDL had asked my grandfather if he would like to be a spokesperson for the group at the height of media attention. He politely declined). I surmised I could produce a snowball sample from these few initial contacts.

I interviewed the recruiter for the Kingman militia on a number of occasions and a few other patriots in the Kingman area, but was stumped after that for two reasons. The first was that the recruiter refused to give me access to some of his members because they were too radical.¹⁸ And second, one name he gave me (Jack), which was his connection to an ASDL cell in another AZ town, had a nonworking phone number and didn't answer my mail.

Thus my snowball sample died out after only a few interviews. But all was not lost since I still did have an address for Jack. I actually have to thank my father for getting me this contact. The phone number I had was no longer in service, and all I had

¹⁸ Sample bias is covered further on in this chapter.

to go on was an address. My father happened to be traveling in the area (I was living in New York at the time) and drove to the address. He found a number of people living in what was actually a compound, and gave a woman he met there my phone number and asked her to pass it on to the man I was trying to locate.

Jack it turns out thought I was with the FBI which is why he never answered my letters. But after we had a number of phone conversations, where I was told I could not use the M word (militia) over the phone lines, he agreed to meet with me, and I set up a trip to Arizona. From my contact Jack, I was able to create a snowball sample of 22 respondents from three patriot groups in central Arizona.

The preponderant data on which this dissertation is based is the result of in-depth interviews and participant observation with these 3 patriot organizations in central Arizona. I interviewed both members and leaders of the groups, sometimes on multiple occasions. The interviews lasted anywhere from 1.5 to 5 hours.

The data was collected over a period of two years. In the spring of 2002 I interviewed and spent time with patriots in the Kingman area for the equivalent of about 3 weeks of participant observation. In the winter and spring of 2003 I finished my interviews in central Arizona and the Phoenix area. Over 4 months I spent the equivalent of 6 weeks in central Arizona and 3 in the greater Phoenix area. For the most part I spent this time with patriots attending meetings, hanging out, and just absorbing the general political and cultural atmosphere of Arizona's patriot counter culture.

Before I conducted interviews I had spent much time reading secondary sources on patriots and looking at primary source materials that were available on the web. I came to the conclusion that it was impossible to decipher much of this material. For one

thing it was vast! Second, there was a patriot language for which I needed a guide and interpreter. Third, it was not clear what was relevant and what was just some random individual putting up his own material on the web. Did other patriots read it? Did they like it or not? So I decided to let my respondents be my guides. What sources were important to them? I was thus able to cull from the voluminous material the relevant sources according to the patriots I interviewed. This became an important data point for understanding how patriot views were shaped. Three news sources were repeated again and again by my respondents. These were *The New American*, Rense.com, and *The Idaho Observer*.

The New American is the monthly magazine published by the John Birch Society. I talk extensively about *The New American* in my chapter on classical republican populism, chapter five, and again in chapter six. Like its 60's incarnation The John Birch Society continues to provide the ideological fire for right wing populists. I subscribed to the magazine for 2 years and did a thematic analysis of its content. All my respondents listed *The New American* as an important source of information.

It is hard to characterize Jeff Rense. No topic is beyond his reach. He is a syndicated radio host of an hourly daily show called the Jeff Rense Show. His website offers everything from UFO research to links to mainstream news articles on alternative health, politics, the environment, and immigration. It is more conspiracy oriented than other patriot sites that were listed as sources by my respondents. About 1/3 of my respondents listed the renses.com website as an important source. Over the period of my dissertation I visited renses.com about once a week.

The Idaho Observer is a patriot newspaper. It is printed monthly and runs about 24 pages. It has been publishing since 1997. It was mentioned by over 2/3 of my respondents as an important source of information. Its mission is to expose “the wall of corruption and government intrusion” which treats Americans as “human resources.” It features articles on activists doing research on corporate malfeasance, the latest on the fight against the IRS, alternative health news, and news commentary.

<http://www.proliberty.com/observer>.

To put the three patriot organizations in the context of the larger movement I conducted archival research at the Anti-Defamation League. The ADL houses an extensive collection of patriot primary sources, including thousands of pseudo legal documents produced by patriots. I also had informal conversations with expert trackers of the patriot movement, Mark Pitcavage and Chip Berlet of the Political Research Associates.

Interpreting in the Field

I am a young-looking, somewhat-attractive white female. I was also visibly pregnant for my last two visits in Arizona in the Spring of 2003. I introduced myself as a neophyte looking to understand the movement. I have no doubt that all these factors contributed to my ability to gain access to people who would otherwise distrust outsiders. I usually described myself as in need of a patriot education, and that my respondents were my teachers. My goal, as I described it to potential interviewees was to understand the movement and those who were involved in the movement. I was very non-threatening (as a young pregnant female), I was a pleasant person, and as researchers know, we all love to talk about ourselves. I purposely played up the neophyte angle because I wanted

to diminish as much as possible the presumption of academic authority. In hindsight this was probably not much of an issue, as there is much distrust of higher education. Many of my respondents went to college and held bachelors and advanced degrees, but there was a general distrust of the academic enterprise, particularly, social science, as a cloak for social engineering. In fact many were surprised I was conducting this research and had support from faculty members.

An interview should be seen as not just evidence of what the responder believes or how he believes actions are tied to his or her beliefs, but as an interchange between the researcher and a respondent that is a point in the construction of meaning. Many variables influence this interchange. The motivations of the respondents are one variable that must be considered. All those I spoke with felt patriots were unfairly portrayed in media accounts. I came to them telling them I was interested in their worldview and their understanding of the movement. If there were differences with the media accounts I was here to help set the record straight. And indeed I did believe that the patriots had been stereotyped and mischaracterized and I was seeking sociological understanding of those involved with the hope that it would shed light on the movement as a whole.

Most patriots I interviewed were talking in a context of defensiveness and therefore most interviews can be seen as narratives of normalization (the attempt to prove to me that the patriot worldview is normal). The “movement” was certainly on the decline, perhaps, because of McVeigh and the negative media representations (Chermak 2002). This has to be taken in account in terms of the interviews. While there was no shortage of critiques of the movement and other patriots by my respondents, I think there was a general tendency to downplay certain negative aspects of the movement, like its

Anti-Semitism and racism. This is not to argue that my respondents were closet racists or Anti-Semites, but it is well documented by others that these elements do exist amongst patriots.¹⁹

The historical time of the interview is also important. At the time I was speaking to them the height of overt patriot activity had passed; many patriot groups had disbanded and many others were keeping low profiles. For those interviewees who had been involved since the height of the movement, about 2/3 of my sample, the interview was a time for reflection, about what went wrong and what was right, it was a place to create a narrative of both critique of the movement and of their own involvement. There was much talk about convincing other people about the rightness of the patriot view, and that the movement would not be effective unless more people became convinced of the rampant corruption in the federal and state governments. And I was of course a person to convince and a means for convincing others through the publication of the dissertation. I was told by one respondent that his interest in being interviewed was “primarily to get [me] interested as a young person” which would give us a better “chance to save our country.” (0311:17)

The trend toward normalization influenced the names I was given as contacts. In at least one case I was told I would not be given certain contacts because they were once too radical. Here is an interchange between myself and the Kingman recruiter:

Q: I was suppose to ask you about Joseph. Is he someone I should talk to?

A: Joe used to be quite outspoken in the pro-gun movement. They took pictures of him with his arms crossed standing in the back of his pick-up with all his guns and bumper stickers. He was quite outspoken for quite a while and I had several conversations with him and he and I are friends. But he has turned the

¹⁹ See earlier literature review in this chapter, but primarily Akins (1998) and Aho’s (1990) research

other way. He is now working as a mediator for the court system. This is a big change for him.

Q: Do you think he would talk to me as someone who was formerly involved?

A: I think he is over balanced into the gun thing, too much. I think you are going to get a really slanted view point. When I've talked to you today I have tried to not be one-sided. It probably may sound a little bit like that on the tape, but there is still good in our system, the system still works. It's just that people that are running it are not honest. I don't say that about every single one, but the ones that are in control are not honest. They have a different agenda than you and I have. And I say you because I have a feeling you understand what I am saying about our freedoms and protecting what we still have. I don't know what kind of article you are going to write or how you are going to put it, but don't do what the guys in U.S. Today did. That has hurt me and made me look real bad. They messed me up. I've kept copies of it, and you can probably look it up, its USA Today. The local paper did one on me, and Newsweek. (0202:19)

Other respondents, though, gave me names of those they considered on the radical edge of the movement. I was given the names of people who had fought the IRS, both physically and on paper. But for many reasons I was not able to follow up on interviews with those labeled more radical.²⁰ The patriots I interviewed made a distinction between the radicals in the movement and the rest of the movement. Radicals were those interested in pursuing change through violent or illegal means, whereas the rest of the movement activists pursued change through legal means. As a result those I interviewed do not represent the more radical stream of the movement.

I taped most of the interviews. Only two respondents did not let me record the interview. Some interviews took place in public spaces like restaurants, and some in people's work places. The venue was always the choice of the respondent. Some did not fully trust my stated purposes and they were more likely to choose public spaces in which to talk. But most of the interviews took place in the respondents' home. I did not ask

²⁰ Many I could not contact. People had moved and I had no resources to follow up. Some were outside of the Arizona area where I was conducting research and I ran out of money to pursue research in other areas.

demographic data or income data, but for those interviews that took place at the respondent's home I was able to infer much about socio economic status from the type of home, its location and its décor.

I transcribed all interviews and field notes. These were read a minimum of three times each and coded for thematic content. See appendix for codes. I created a separate document of all relevant quotes for each code and then analyzed each code together and in connection with the original interview text. From this analysis three themes dominated the interviews: their critique of the political economy, classical republican populism, and religion. These are addressed in chapters five through seven.

Ruminations on Knowledge Production

My methodological training is both sociological and feminist. Michael Burawoy (1998) argues that all social science endeavors are ethnographic by our very "presence in the world we study" (4). It is because we are ethnographers in everyday life that we have devised methods to either distance ourselves from our subjects, claiming objectivity, or embraced our presence and explored the possibilities of a reflexive science that recognizes research is a series of dialogues in knowledge production: of theory and data, of researcher and respondent, of process and meaning production.

My goal in doing this research was understanding, *verstehen*. I wanted to reach across the divide created by my academic training, my worldviews and social constructions, to understand the worldviews of those who have come to call themselves patriots. I came to feel that the patriots, because an academic elite and a socially liberal media had largely studied them, had been mischaracterized. I felt there was value in understanding them because they were a potential political force poised for either

progressive or regressive change. Their tactics were at times radically democratic and inspiring: they dared to take umbrage at the political, financial and intellectual elite that frankly could not care less about them. They were underdogs who defied being victimized. And they stood for a deeply held faith in freedom of spirit and of mind.

They were in some ways amateur sociologists. Rather than internalizing all the difficulties in their lives, the drastic economic changes that have hit the middle and working class in America over the last 40 years, they looked to social processes, albeit not the social processes I would look to. But coming from a feminist sociologist background is to locate their lived experiences within its contextual field (Smith 1987). What accounts for the beliefs they hold and the actions they take? This is where data and the processes of meaning production contained at the ethnographic site end and where sociological reasoning and imagination begins.

In the following chapter I explicate the theoretical orientation that influenced my work.

Chapter Three

A Theoretical and Methodological Framework For Understanding the Patriots

Many authors have offered structural and cultural *macro* variables to explain the rise of the patriot movement. While I don't necessarily disagree with some of the reviewed authors' arguments, they do not necessarily make a convincing link between the micro manifestations of the movement and the purported macro causes. To make this link we need to conceptualize structure and culture as both micro and macro (because indeed they are). Friedland & Alford (1991) developed a multi-level framework for the study of social institutions that can be adapted to look at any social phenomenon. In the next section, I explicate their framework, as it is applicable to the patriot movement.

Alford and Friedland's Multi-Level Approach

Institutions

Institutions are "supraorganizational patterns of human activity by which organizations and individuals produce and reproduce their material subsistence and organize time and space" (243). Institutions, they argue, must be "reconceptualized as simultaneously material and ideal, systems of signs and symbols" (232). Alford and Friedland's institutions have a "logic," a term they use to bring together both material and ideal components in one word. Examples of important institutional logics in contemporary society include capitalism, the state, religion, the family (248). The central logic of capitalism is the extension of the logic of profit and the market relationship into all facets of life. The central logic of the state is the "rationalization and regulation of human activity by legal and bureaucratic hierarchies. The central logic of democracy is "the participation and the extension of popular control over human activity" (249). I

would extend their list to include the institutionalized logics of race, gender and sexuality as primary realms through which our human activity is organized and lived. These institutions are inhabited by language and symbols which constitute them but are only visible in the material practices of individuals and the meanings ascribed by individuals to their practices and interactions with others.

A “logic” is “a set of material practices and symbolic constructions which constitute [an institution’s] organizing principles and which is available to organizations and individuals to elaborate” (248). By “material practices” Friedland & Alford mean the ways in which institutional arenas are “concretized” in human action and interaction. A person voting, for example, can be a concretized instance of the institution of democracy. The act of prayer is an enactment of a religious institution.

Symbolic construction follows from the interpretive school in sociology and refers to the complex of meaning making processes by which we make meaning out of and internalize the values and norms often residing external to the individual. Any particular symbolic construction of any institutional practice, however, is not a given. For example, despite her action of voting, our voter may not “believe” in the validity of the institution of democracy and may be quite critical, or perhaps she may indeed fully believe in the symbolic force of her action—that the act of voting is not only an act of voting but is a symbolic act of enacting democracy. With each action then there is an implied, explicit, and/or unconscious meaning tied up with the action that can reinforce or challenge the existing institutional logic. For any action then (whether supportive or disruptive of an institution) there can be multiple meanings. For example, Friedland and Alford argue, the central logic of democracy is the extension of popular control over

human conduct. Democracy is enacted and reproduced by the act of an individual voting (among other things). But the act of voting may have various meanings for that individual (voting may be a habit, a civic duty, or the right thing to do.)

An individual (or micro-level) action can support or disrupt a dominant institutional logic. Many patriot practices are easily understood when viewed from the institutional framework. The first chapter of this dissertation in fact is about the various ways patriots have attempted to carve out arenas of what I call institutional independence. But let's remain with our institution of democracy and the example of the simple act of voting. Many of the patriots I interviewed did not vote. This could easily be interpreted as simply alienation. But their refusal to vote is understood by the patriots I interviewed as an act of resistance, a refusal to legitimate a political system that patriots argue is corrupt. Many argued their vote did not make any difference, Republicans and Democrats similarly looked out for their own pocketbooks and not for the best interests of the people. Some argued it is the administrative apparatus that interprets and enforces the laws—who we elect has nothing to do with who gets to wield power (0302) so why vote. Others argued it was a flawed political process where only those with money (or links to moneyed interests) can compete:

If people really think they put somebody in office these days, they've got rocks in their heads, because you might put a county sheriff in office, somebody low on the totem pole, but when you get up to the congressional level, it's very hard to put somebody into office because usually they already have their men picked, they finance them, and those men since they're financed by these people, they're going to vote how they want it voted, pass the laws that they want, so we live in a massive world of corruption. (0308:14)

One patriot put it quite succinctly, and this was after a three-year term as a councilwoman “Money controls the politician.” (0306b:35) The micro manifestation of the act of voting, or in this case not voting, is for a patriot an act of refusal to give assent

to the institution of democracy that they find inherently corrupt. To argue they are alienated because of their lack of voting is to mistake what is a political act of resistance (by withdrawal) to contemporary politics. Many will vote in local elections and many have run for local offices and have supported politicians whom patriots believe will fight corruption.

What do institutions do? They function at both the macro and micro level. Institutions constrain and define available ends (what is success? what is the life well lived—financial success? spiritual success?) they constrain and define the available means through which ends can be attained (what is considered criminal versus legitimate means to obtain success). They provide individuals with vocabularies of motive and identities (I want to live comfortably therefore I go to school, I want to reach spiritual enlightenment therefore I attend church, pray, meditate, I am white, African American, brown, a Chicaña, a woman, a womyn, a man, a mother, a father, a teacher, a learner, a patriot), they define what is valued (riches, land, capital, a place in heaven, cockle shells), they define the rules by which something is valued and distributed (meritocracy, classes, markets, elite power, gender, race). Institutional logics define the limits of our fundamental concepts like individuality, freedom, rationality, the self.

The key question for interpreting the patriot movement is linking patriot lived practices and meanings with what accounts for them. The answers are varied and often individual, but over the 23 interviews I was able to find patterns that suggest something larger at play than individual level randomness. I talk extensively about these larger institutional forces in the following chapters, the patriot identity (chapter 4), classical republican populism (chapter 5), conspiracy (chapter 6), and Christian religiosity and

morality (chapter 7) and how they have been used by patriots, sometimes not explicitly named, as frames of analysis for understanding the world as it is. Within each of the three chapters I also talk about what we could call meta institutions, or what Gamson calls master frames which are some of the taken-for-granted, uninterrogated categories and assumptions framing the patriot identity, classical republican populism and religiosity (Gamson 1995). These are the institutional logics of white masculinity and individualism and in each of the institutional chapters I reflect on the interplay of individualism, white privilege and masculinity as constitutive of the patriot identity, classical republicanism and religiosity.

Friedland & Alford's institutions are not static or reified. These institutions are changing, in process, contradictory and are challenged. For example, the conception of the American self as independent and self-reliant is increasingly contradictory with a state and capitalistic institutional logic that encroaches on that independence in ways that are harder and harder to ignore. I think the patriot movement resides in the contradiction between individualist and capitalist institutional logics within American society. The patriot movement ideology resides in the discourses of individualism and self-reliance and conjures a mythical American past where "the people" could make it on their own. This mythical past is saturated in white privilege, because what success and self-reliance was obtained came on the backs of slave labor and stolen Indian lands and ethnic genocide. While the patriot movement challenges the American institutions of democracy, the bureaucratic state and capitalism, it does so by relying on even more problematic discourses of classical republican populism and individualism alienating other constituencies who also suffer political powerlessness.

These logics then are also resources, available for organizations, groups and individuals to use to their own advantage and resist as well as reproduce. Organizations focused on political mobilization often use institutional logics to create support for their cause. Many—but not all—civil rights movement organizations, for example, used the institutional language of democracy and rights to call for equal treatment of blacks in various realms—education, the state, community. They did not just challenge the institution of racial oppression but used the language and practices of other logics to pursue change. The challenges brought forth by the civil rights movement were also sites for the political mobilization for those willing to uphold white privilege. On both sides these mobilizations were occasions for the mobilization of not just political interest but deeply felt emotional and cognitive ties to institutional meanings and practices of and challenges to white privilege. Similarly, the patriot movement uses the language of democracy, of freedom, of rights, of patriotism, to both challenge and yet support traditional notions of the American nation and people.

Institutional logics should then be seen as sites of contestation. There may be a dominant view of various institutional realms—many believe we live in a functioning democracy—but any dominant institutional logic may also be contested. There are many individual groups and organizations, including the patriots, that have various critiques of the hollowness of American democracy and demand change in various institutional meanings and practices associated with democracy as an institution.

Organizations and Individuals in Interaction in Institutional Realms

In a symbolic interaction approach, at the micro level individuals are social actors, interpreting their worlds and acting. Individuals are complexes of rational, cognitive thought as well as affective, emotional beings, with desires, motivations and identities

that are partly social and partly unique to that individual. We learn about our social world through a complex of language learning and experiences that affect us at cognitive and emotional levels. This is an institutional and individual process, we acquire language embedded with values and norms and our most basic understanding of the world through interaction with others, usually family and care providers in our lives, and later through interactions with peers. But while much of this is external and exists before we are born into it, it becomes us and we make it our own through our own conative deliberation with the world. Individuals are active complexes of past and present institutional practices and meanings.

It is at the individual level that institutional logics are visible. The institutions are “concretized” in the behavior and consciousness of individuals. These individuals are in interaction, either competing or cooperating with others. This action usually takes place within some organizational and institutional realm that both constrains and provides opportunities for action. For example, here I sit writing a dissertation that supports a whole historical institution of education and the opening of that educational opportunity to non-elites. If I was born 100 years ago this track I have “chosen” would be much more difficult if not impossible (as a woman and as someone born into a working class family). I am motivated to finish for a number of reasons with simultaneously rational and emotional components (and let’s not discuss the possible unconscious desires I am fulfilling by doing the mundane task of sitting and writing with the ultimate goal of getting my doctorate.) My actions support the institution of education and a system of learning which rewards those who put in an effort to research and write and who have been evaluated by their peers—one rife with privilege, support of the status quo, but also

a strong tradition of disruption of those very same institutionally practiced meanings. This simple act and the meaning I ascribe to it, and the meanings other ascribe to it (particularly once the doctorate is in hand) are all connected intimately to an institutional realm of education that has put into place a “knowledge validation process” which can both support and disrupt conventional institutional practices (Collins 1990).

Organizations are those complexes of group activity that occur in some patterned way. Organizations can be formal bureaucratized orders that markedly pattern the behavior of actors in hierarchical ways or informal associations of groups that minimally pattern the actions of its members. These organizations can be resources, producers of meaning for individuals, as well as actors in their own right. Organizations are also constrained by institutional logics.

Individuals and organizations have identities, interests and actions but these are grounded in larger institutional logics. In addition institutional components are reflected in individual consciousness and behavior.

Institutional practices and symbols then are available to individuals and organizations as resources to extend or challenge but these institutions also act as constraints on organizations and individuals, for they become part of organizational and individuals motives, desires and cognitive frames.

In the real world all levels operate simultaneously but it helps when analyzing “the real world” to think about them separately. For example, an individual patriot is simultaneously an individual who has an identity as a patriot with its associated cognitive and affective connections to that identity, but that identity is constituted through language that operates at the institutional level, that moves far beyond the level of the individual,

but which is also sustained through various organizations (like the John Birch Society, the NRA, patriot groups). Furthermore, these identities and the language, affectations, and political commitments that comprise the identity are meted out through a complex of relations and interactions with others (patriots and nonpatriots). All levels are often present...but it is analytically useful to talk about them separately and how they are omnipresent in any moment of social life.

Why a multi-level approach? One because it is a useful analytical description of the way life is actually lived. Second, specifying levels adds clarity to our analysis. Resource mobilization and political process models were critiqued for inadequately theorizing and analyzing the individual or group level processes which made movements successful [these collections are often cited as formative in what has been termed the “cultural turn” in social movement theory through their critiques of the resource mobilization and political process models (Johnston and Klandermans 1995; Klandermans, Kriesi, and Tarrow 1988; Morris and Mueller 1992) and see Piven (1984) for earlier critiques]. The critique though was in part a level of analysis problem...political process models and resource mobilization models are excellent at describing and analyzing organizational variables’ contribution to social movement success, but not the individual and interactional process components that are also important to social movement success. We don’t necessarily need to throw out the political process model (or others for that matter) for cultural models (a very mixed bag of both institutional and micro process analyses), they each have their strength at various different levels of analysis. This does not mean that they co-exist happily...but looking at them through the lens of a multi-level approach can help make visible what is useful

versus where true conflicts between models exist. Third, adequate explanations of social phenomena, like the patriot movement, require a multi-level approach. What has been missing from the literature on patriots is the link between individual action and beliefs (micro level), the patriot movement ideology, organizational structure and movement activity (meso level), and the institutional (macro) forces which are both the target and are causal as they are interwoven in the micro and meso practiced meanings and meaningful practices of patriot groups and individual patriots.

Bridging Culture and Structure (oh no, not this debate again!)

As shown in Chapter Two the second major problem with the patriot movement literature is that many authors don't use a framework that assumes that culture and structure are interdependent concepts.

I want to turn to a discussion that moves beyond material versus ideational components of causation. Are they patriots simply because their material life is difficult? No of course not, millions of residents of the United States would then be patriots. Are they patriots simply because they have been exposed to patriot ideology? Again the answer is no, because cognition, attribution, material interest, and values together create a complex textual fabric that lead to specific practices not just ways of thinking.

Ideas are not just some *intellectual* process of meaning making, but are part of a process of symbolic construction that also grounds our identities, informs our practices, and has affective as well as cognitive significations. Ideas then are not just free floating cultural data, they are grounded by lived practices in everyday life and through individual and group identities. When we as social movement scholars look at the importance of

ideas we need to remember that processes of meaning making are complex and have effects at individual, group and institutional levels.

Cornell West is one of the more eloquent writers on the topic. In *Race Matters*, West (1993) critiques both the liberal structuralist and conservative cultural approaches to the problem of black poverty that is also a critique of the unnatural theoretical divide between structure and culture. “First we must acknowledge that structures and behavior are inseparable, that institutions and values go hand in hand. How people act and live are shaped—but in no way dictated or determined—by the larger circumstances in which they find themselves.” (18) He adds, “culture is just as much a structure as the economy or politics; it is rooted in institutions such as families, schools, churches, synagogues, mosques, and communication industries (television, radio, video, music). Similarly the economy and politics are not only influenced by values but also promote particular cultural ideals of the good life and good society.” (19).

Throughout the dissertation I’ll use language like “meaningful practices” or “practiced meanings,” to try to convey the simultaneity of meaning and practice, the interplay of culture and structure.

Social movements are one of the ways in which we artfully attempt to change certain institutions and practices and the meanings ascribed to those institutional practices. The second wave women’s movement, for example, not only challenged and changed the accepted meaning of being a woman, but, through a myriad of individual actions, informed by feminist movement consciousness, created a different set of “womanly” practices. Social movements are a compelling place to look at the culture versus structure debate, because by their very nature social movements are always doing

both in a way that makes the accepted and often invisible meanings of the institutional structure visible.

The culture versus structure debate animates social movement theory as well. The now infamous cultural turn in social movement theory of the nineties (a response to the overly structural and rational approaches of resource mobilization and political process models) is now being critiqued for under-theorizing the structural causes of social movements. Morris & Braine (2001) claim that the cultural turn in social movement theory has left structure completely out of the analysis. The focus on cultural processes has been to the detriment of understanding the structural conditions, i.e. relations of power (economic, political, and cultural) that give rise to social movements in the first place. Morris & Braine do not argue for a return to purely structural approaches, for structural approaches tend to miss the processes of meaning making which impact on the understanding of structural position. We need both a structural and a cultural approach Morris & Braine argue. I start with this proposition and try to make explicit a way of combining these without ending in a conceptual quagmire. In the section below I outline a few concepts that are central to my theoretical framework. Each of these concepts assumes that culture and structure are intertwined and as I show are helpful concepts for linking the micro and the macro.

Oppositional Consciousness

Oppositional culture and consciousness are terms adopted from feminist and queer scholarship by Mansbridge and Morris (2001) for social movement theory. It combines structural and cultural components and is a bridging concept between the individual and institutional levels. Oppositional cultures arise where structural subordination occurs. Much like Scott's (1990) *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*,

the authors assert there is always resistance where there is oppression. Mansbridge and Morris' edited volume is an attempt to theorize about the transition between oppositional cultures that are just about resistance, to oppositional consciousness. They argue that this transition and oppositional cultures themselves are important sites for scholarship as they are an important variable in understanding social movements particularly when they seem to erupt out of nowhere.

Oppositional Culture is a structural term: oppositional consciousness can only arise from those in subordinate positions (or perceived to be in a subordinated position). "By a subordinated group we mean a group subordinate in a system of social organization in which members of one group create and reinforce inequalities between themselves and the members of another group through the exercise of power, that is the threat of sanction and the imposition of constraint" (2). These positions are only understood through the production of meaning. Components include minimally: "identifying with a subordinate group, concluding that the mechanisms that have produced at least some of the group inequalities are unjust, opposing the injustice, and seeing a common interest within the subordinate group in eliminating the injustice." What an oppositional culture does not provide is the clear need for collective action, or "directions or strategies" for overcoming oppression (26).

The patriot movement is fundamentally a populist movement that derives from structural powerlessness and a larger populist (patriot) oppositional culture. It draws on populist rhetoric and is anti-elite more than anti-government. Patriots are anti-government because it is elites that run the state and control the "people." I argue in Chapter 4 that the patriot identity is a movement identity (one of oppositional

consciousness) that attempts to create an injustice frame around a subordinated position—that is the “people” vis-à-vis the elite.

Mansbridge and Morris’ definition of consciousness makes it a bridging concept between levels of analysis. Borrowing from Gamson’s work they argue consciousness ‘involves a mesh between individual and cultural levels’ and is a process by which ‘the meaning that individuals give to a social situation becomes a shared definition implying collective action’ (Gamson 1992:55). There are shared events in the patriot worldview: Ruby Ridge, Gordon Kahl, Waco, all signify the growing power and control by the federal government over individuals’ lives and livelihoods. But the response has often been individualized resistance, not collective action. And I think this too has to do with structural position, not one of subordination but one of superordination and has much to do with the construction of white masculinity.

While oppositional consciousness is often used to describe progressive groups, it is applicable to non-progressive movements, including the patriots. In the final chapter of *Oppositional Consciousness*, Mansbridge (2001) talks about problems that develop out of oppositional consciousness including nationalism, group hatreds, exaggeration of difference between the dominant and subordinate group, and a deafness to new and contradictory information (252). These are all visible in the patriot movement and I would add a solipsistic cultural view. As information from outside is seen as suspect, ideas and language that develop merely tend to isolate oppositional cultures and can squelch more than aid movement building efforts. Melucci (1989) discusses latent movement activities in *Nomads of the Present* and suggests that movements turn inward

when they can no longer make political strides and turn to intra-movement work. I talk about these issues in chapter eight.

In Mansbridge & Morris' (2001) edited book on oppositional consciousness contributors focus on movements that arise among structurally oppressed groups.²¹ Morris argues that for structurally oppressed groups (like women, racial minorities, sexual minorities) oppositional culture already exists prior to the eruption of movements due to the experience of oppression (and runs concurrent with a culture of subordination which justifies that oppression). The question for movement scholars is to explain the transition from an oppositional culture to oppositional consciousness. Oppositional consciousness, as opposed to an oppositional culture is a movement identity that turns generalized disgruntledness about subordination into a focused movement.

The patriot movement may theoretically shed light on the transformation from an oppositional culture to one of consciousness. Patriots are generally economically oppressed. Like most Americans in the middle and working classes they have seen their economic well-being undermined over the past thirty years as wages and benefits have eroded and many families have been forced to work multiple jobs and/or send another wage earner out into the workforce to make ends meet. Many patriot groups are located in rural or small communities which since the farm crisis in the nineteen-eighties have seen family farming—often an alternative to wage earning—erode as a possibility for survival (Van Dyke and Soule 2002). Those seeking to understand these vast transformations in their communities and families can fall back on a narrative that points

²¹ On disability rights see Groch, on African American activism see Harris and Waite; on AIDS see Stockdill, on Mexican-American activism see Rodriguez all in Mansbridge and Morris (2001) *Oppositional Consciousness*.

to individual failures, drawing on the dominant American ideology of individualism. Those exposed to a “patriot opportunity structure” though find another, and perhaps more appealing explanation—it’s the government’s fault. And there is no shortage of evidence to support that belief.

The patriot movement, then, presents an interesting puzzle. Any cursory look at the movement exposes its populist nature. Yet the demographic base of the movement is embedded in institutions of privilege, masculinity and whiteness. So within a discourse of economic injustice there also exist discourses of privilege stemming from white masculinity. There is no reason given their race and gender and a belief in the possibility of the American dream that they should not be “making it.” What structural or institutional arrangements can they as individuals look to in order to explain their impoverished economic conditions? How is an oppositional culture created? And how does it become an oppositional consciousness? These questions are processes of meaning making (what I refer to as culture) about structural conditions (but the structural conditions cannot be dropped out of the equation as there would not be a quest for meaning making if not for a real oppressed class position).

I propose it is this structurally contradictory position that in part explains such an odd movement. Such vociferous resentment at a class-biased economic and political system transforms itself not into a class-based movement, but into a decentralized counter culture composed of individual (and sometimes small group) acts of resistance against the powers that be. That it does not become a movement grounded in a class analysis of an unjust system has much to do with dominant American discourses like individualism,

classical republican populism, and of course the privileges of white masculinity—the focus of chapters five through seven.

Ideology

If the cultural turn in social movement theory has taught us anything it is that ideas are not just some intellectual process of meaning making, but are parts of symbolic constructions that also ground our identities, inform our practices, and have affective as well as cognitive significations. Ideas then are not just free floating cultural data; they are grounded by lived practices in everyday life and through individual and organizational identities. Ideas then are both external and internal to individuals, they have both cognitive and emotional effects, and they are most importantly, practiced. (For example, this writing you are now reading is a practice in meaning creation of a particular type of social theory and your reading of these ideas is a practice.)

Ideology has been a forsaken term in dominant models of social movement theory. Recently though, some theorists have called for its return, as opposed to the concept of framing which elides power relations (Ferree and Merrill 2000; Oliver and Johnston 2000). These authors argue for a link between ideas, values and norms and that the concept that provides this link best is not framing but ideology. New definitions of ideology delink it from its Marxist connotations as only about the justifications for unjust economic structures but maintain the Marxist spirit. Ideology is those set of ideas that justify unequal power relations. Ideology according to Oliver and Johnston is “any system of meanings that couples assertions and theories about the nature of social life with values and norms relevant to promoting or resisting change.” These authors stress how political interests are absent from the framing concept despite the fact that political interests are the core of social movement activity.

In a review of the framing concept Benford & Snow (2000) the conceptual founders of the adoption of framing for social movement theory, argue that “framing processes have come to be regarded alongside resource mobilization and political opportunity processes, as a central dynamic in understanding the character and course of social movements” (611). The framing concept is derived from Erving Goffman (1974), who defined it as a “schemata of interpretation” that “enables individuals ‘to locate, perceive, identify, and label’ occurrences within their life space and the world at large” (quoted by Snow: 614). Frames “organize experience and guide action.” Frames become *collective action* frames (CAFs) when they simplify and condense “the world out there” but in ways that are ‘intended to mobilize potential adherents and constituents, to garner bystander support and to demobilize antagonists’ (Snow and Benford 1988:198). “Thus CAFs are action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns of SMO’s” (614).

Benford & Snow (2000) argue their conception is different from ideology. They argue that framing and ideology are two distinct concepts: “Ideology is generally portrayed as a fairly broad, coherent, and relatively durable set of beliefs that affects one’s orientation not only to politics but to everyday life more generally.” In contrast CAFs “function as innovative amplifications and extensions of or antidotes to, existing ideologies or components of them” (613). “Accordingly ideology functions as both a constraint and resource in relation to framing processes and CAFs (613).”

Despite the restricted definition of framing presented by Benford & Snow, it has been used expansively for all sorts of meaning/cultural processes within social movements (Ferree and Merrill 2000; Goodwin and Jasper 1999; Jasper 1997; Oliver and

Johnston 2000). Framing, Jasper (1997) argues, comes to stand in for too much and suggests limiting it to “the conscious efforts by groups or recruiters to craft their rhetoric and issues in such a way that they appeal to potential recruits” (75). Ideology as a concept is important because as Jaspers suggests, “movement organizers may forge new meanings, but by appealing to and building on existing ones...Frames resonate with potential recruits precisely because recruits already have certain visions of the world [moral values, political ideologies, and affective attachments]. Cultural meanings can certainly be shaped and transformed by groups and individuals, but they already exist out there, just as language is a pre-existing set of rules that we must to some extent adapt to” (75).

But what Jasper and Snow & Benford do not include and make central are issues of power, which is central to the definition of ideology. Snow and Benford acknowledge that ideology is a factor in social movements by serving as a “constraint” and a “resource,” but the case can be made that the formation of counter ideologies is often a central practice of social movement organizations. Let’s return to Oliver and Johnston’s (2000) suggested definition for ideology: “any system of meanings that couples assertions and theories about the nature of social life with values and norms relevant to promoting or resisting change” (39). My working definition of ideology is not too far from this conception. I add a couple of parts to the definition.

In response to the cultural theorists of movements, borrowing from Eagleton (1991), I use a materialist and symbolic conception of ideology. Ideology is not just ideational but material, and what I mean by material is that it becomes grounded in lived experience. Not only are culture, ideas and ideology constitutive of our understandings

of the world, but ideas must correspond in some way to lived experience and the structural conditions under which we live. Social movements show that ideology and lived experience must adhere to a certain degree or be challenged. Movements are the metaphorical and material ground upon which the power inherent in language becomes visible as it is contested. The players of the patriot movement are not just borrowing the language of freedom, democracy, and individual liberty but are challenging the nations' hegemonic understanding of these words.

Second I want to pull ideology apart as a multi-level concept, and show how it has impacts at the individual level, organizational level (here it is most analogous to Snow and Benford's collective action frame concept), and is rooted in institutional systems of power.

Ideology is where fact and value come together, where power, language and norms intersect; it is the positing of what is with what should be²². Ideologies, then, are the signifying practices that rationalize power relations. Ideologies are justifications of our symbolic and material realities. Ideology is about ideas/beliefs that are specifically about the nature of power and its distribution: it is a discursive linkage of what is (empirical reality) with what should be (normative valuations with moral standing).

²² I understand ideology as a special case of discourse. Discourse analysis rooted in Foucault's groundbreaking work links power with language (both textual and symbolic) and I do not disagree (Foucault 1980). Ideology for me is a special case of discourse that specifically links norms and values with real lived conditions. It is a delicate line I tread here for "real lived conditions" are of course also interpreted through a lens of language that necessarily constitutes that reality. But discourse cannot completely account for lived reality hence the need for ideology that serves to justify (link norms and values) lived reality. I use both discourse and ideology throughout the dissertation depending on the context.

Ideology like institutions operates at multiple levels: at the individual level it creates identities, sorts out what is right and wrong and we create emotive attachments to these identities and beliefs. It affects us cognitively and affectively as part of our identities. It is used by individuals/organizations/groups to shore up and challenge reigning ideology or their own particular interests and motives. Institutional logics can be ideological as well, when those meanings and practices are about relations of power.

Ideology crosses institutional realms: state power can be justified by the family, religion or educational institutions. Religious ideology can be used to justify state action. As many theorists have shown there is an interdependency amongst a society's institutional logics (although there are contradictory logics too).

Patriot ideology crosses so many institutional and organization fields because of the interdependency of many institutional realms. The patriots are not just anti-government but also critique particular institutional practices. Patriots, for example, critique the growing specialization and protection of key areas of knowledge (like medical knowledge). Likewise the extension of the state into education is critiqued. Sex education is, of course, a key critique but patriots also argue the schools no longer teach students to be citizens and to think critically. One of their favorite words for describing the uncritical masses is “sheeple” (a combination of the word sheep and people). The media is also critiqued because it merely reinforces the status quo—it doesn't give us the information we need to be vigilant citizens. Their critiques are all about power; it is an ideological critique that challenges the way we are socialized, the actual ways in which we come to live our lives. At its root the patriot vision (also rooted in a number of

practices) is about creating a new American identity and practice: a morally engaged citizen.

I have designated ideology a bridging concept because it links institutional and individual levels. We come to understand our lived conditions—our day-to-day realities, our subjective reality through various means, not necessarily ideological. But when our lived conditions are about the effects of institutional power (for example, unequal access to key social resources based on race, class, gender, political representation) ideology (or the meanings we assign to those effects) is the concept that best describes the attribution process. Where we look for understanding can come from various places, and although these understandings of how the world works are often subjective (they become our own) they are not private—they exist externally often at the institutional level. There are hegemonic or dominant ideologies (that tend to justify and reproduce unequal power relations), but also competing ideologies that challenge the dominant meanings.

Power

Power is not evenly distributed in society. Social movements arise fundamentally because of the imbalance. Piven (2005) argues that resource mobilization and political process models' inability to theorize about power has denied it explanatory power. She argues that a different understanding of power based in interdependency along with the political structure accounts for movement success, particularly for those without resources.

Power (as well as from traditional resources) “derives from the patterns of interdependence that characterize all social life, and from the leverage that inheres in these interdependent relations. Power, in other words, is interactional and relational; it is embedded in patterns of social relationships” and institutional life (Piven and Cloward

1997:331). As examples she gives workers withholding labor, consumers withholding buying, citizens withhold obedience to the rules governing civil society. These are examples of the power to disrupt—the key power that poor people have.

The metaphor, power *relations*, makes clear the relational character of these various systems of power—that we contribute and can deny our contribution to what seem formidable institutions. *Power* is used to show that these are not neutral institutional forces, but that they are conative, they create effects. They create individual identities, categories of race, gender, sexuality, our ideas of selfhood, freedom, rationality, democracy, etc. In this dissertation I will use both metaphors, power relations and institutions—a marriage of both social and feminist theory—to convey what sociologists have often come to call structures.

Power as should be clear by now is central to my understanding of social relations in general, but specifically social movements. Power too is a multi-level concept. At the individual level it can be the individual's ability to take action or influence the actions of other individuals or organizations. But organizations have power too, often much more than mere individuals, although obviously individuals and groups head various organizations. Power also resides in resources valued by society (so it has an institutional component as well)—but these resources are wielded by organizations and individuals (capital, organizational capacities, etc.). Institutions themselves have significant power—in the ability to shape our lives: ideologies of gender, race and sexuality wield enormous influence over how we see ourselves and how others interpret our actions.

For the most part people will not break the rules which accounts for the relative sporadic nature of protest movements (Piven and Cloward 1997). People believe in the

rules, or because of sanctions against breaking the rules refuse to take up arms, or they fear state repression. This is what makes the patriot movement so interesting to me—the degree to which they are breaking the rules. In the second half of the dissertation I return to these questions, what makes patriots break the rules? And why do patriots break them in the often peculiar ways that they do?

Identity

Identity is one of those slippery concepts that become less opaque when we use a multi-level framework. Jasper (1997) distinguishes three types of identity used in the social movement literature that are not necessarily always made analytically distinct by social movement scholars. These are helpful analytical distinctions. The first, is “*personal* identity” which includes:

a sense of who one is, a sense of self, that combines attributes (I’m a good person, or tough or smart), activities and interests (I’m a welder, jogger or Grateful Dead fan), and identification with collectivities (I’m an American, Italian-American). (86)

Personal identity resides at the individual level of analysis, it is about who or what a person thinks they are. The personal identity of course, draws on institutions, organizations and groups (sometimes consciously and more often unconsciously) as sources for a “sense of self.” Jasper assumes “such selves are not unitary or fixed, but neither do they change rapidly or unpredictably” (86).

Collective identity, on the other hand, “consists of perceptions of group distinctiveness, boundaries and interests” (86). Collective identities include such things as institutional categories like gender, race, class, and caste, but can also include differentiation and identity based in geography, like nation, region or neighborhood.

A *movement* identity Jasper says, “arises when a collection of groups or individuals perceive themselves as a force in explicit pursuit of social change” (86).

These movement identities are often based on collective identities, as in the women's movement or the Civil Rights movement. Jasper's definition of movement identity replaces the conventional use of the term collective identity in social movement scholarship and throughout the rest of the dissertation I will use these terms to differentiate types of identity.

Chapter Four

Identity is Movement

In chapter one I argued that becoming a patriot was compelling in part because movement groups were spaces of support for becoming more self-sufficient and self-empowered—for developing the patriot identity. In this chapter I talk more explicitly about components of the patriot identity, identifying key themes I will address in part two of the dissertation: macro and historical components of the patriot identity. Using field research this chapter explores the processes informing movement identity. It is the standard social movement view that collective identity is produced through movement organizations, but the Arizona patriots I researched construct strong movement identities that impacted all aspects of their life *without* strong ties to a larger movement. The evidence suggests that Melucci’s concept of “solidarity networks” combined with the concept of oppositional consciousness may be more useful in studying social movements, particularly why and how individuals commit to social movement causes. The patriot phenomenon begs scholars to take seriously the power of collective identity, for it is identity and identity alone that holds the patriots together and perhaps challenges our traditional definitions of what actually comprises a movement.

The Patriot Identity (A reprise)

That’s what makes a patriot; you can fight it or lay down. There’s a fellow around here we know has got a license plate, it says I’d rather die on my feet than live on my knees. I’m with him. (0306:5)

What may be the most interesting aspect of the patriot movement is the continuing production of a patriot movement identity. To become a patriot is to learn a new language, to adopt a new worldview, or as most of my respondents say, “to know the truth.” The truth is not what we have learned in school, or on the news, in fact it is

usually the opposite. There are various patriot versions of the truth but, as a reminder, here are a few of the basic beliefs of a self-identified patriot:

- The people should be the foundation of government power
- Power and control over monetary resources has shifted over time from the people to corporate and governmental elites and has jeopardized the ability of the people to be political actors and to survive economically.
- News sources are controlled by these same elites and can no longer keep the people informed.
- One who is a patriot must (at the very least) educate themselves and others about the truth, and then eventually the people can take the power back from corporate and government elites.

While there was some variation in how my respondents defined a patriot (some more religious than others), the term patriot had come to be an identity of cultural resistance to current social and political conditions (what most social movement researchers refer to as a movement identity). Here is a typical (if long) example from one of my respondents Mark:

A: A patriot group? That's a group of people that would like to see the country changed to what it's supposed to be. It's a group of people that are highly concerned. Most of them are religious people, but they don't belong to one specific religion. They come from a lot of different religions. Most of them do believe in God, they believe we'll all answer some day for whatever we do to other people or our crimes. They're not really a hostile group of people. They're relatively easy-going but they just don't like being tread on. I think they're a little bit like Patrick Henry. I have run into a few that were trying to make money out of it but I didn't see them as patriots. When you speak to a true patriot they know the problems with the government and they speak out about it and they're not afraid to speak. That's a true patriot because they know if the truth comes out and enough people wake up, then the people will change everything. But as long as people are afraid to speak and live in a country where they're afraid to speak, speak openly, then you'll never change a country. It will always stay the same or get worse. That's the first thing that will destroy a government is for the people to start speaking out and to push for change because truly governments are formed by the people. The people are the true power in any government, the only thing they have to remember is we are the power, not the government. (0308:7-8)

There are certain core aspects that this definition connotes which the following chapters will attempt to explicate. Patriots are activists. They are "people who are highly

concerned” and who want to see the government “changed to what is supposed to be.” Patriots are political actors, and that may just be in a cultural sense (and not political) as I talk about in chapter 8 but it is a core conception of themselves. I see this activist identity combined with a moral vision of “what is supposed to be” that has its roots in what I call classical republican populism, an ideology most prominent during the revolutionary period. Classical republican populism, unlike contemporary liberal philosophy²³, explicitly talks about values and morality as the foundation for government and social institutions (Sandel 1996). I see a revised classical republican populism at the heart of contemporary patriot identity.

The patriot identity is a populist one. “The people are the true power in any government,” quips Mark. It is essentially to know the game of life has been rigged—the rich are getting richer; elites are controlling the government and the press, and are educating our children. It is also to believe that the system is not supposed to benefit elites. The patriot identity is then an oppositional identity and we can talk about a patriot oppositional consciousness rather than just identity. Oppositional consciousness coming out of feminist theory via Gramsci and Marx, connects consciousness directly with a structural position (Mansbridge 2001). Consciousness denotes the cultural processes through which individuals come to understand their position in hierarchies of domination and power. Often oppositional consciousness is tied to racial, gendered and sexual structures of domination. But in the case of the patriot movement, a predominantly white movement claiming a subjugated identity is problematic. And in the chapters five and six where I touch on various issues of populism I look at the challenges of forging an identity

²³ Although this is not true of classical liberalism, see Kloppenber (1987).

or consciousness that is both race and classed based but weighted by a history of white supremacy.

Christian fundamentalism does play a significant role in the patriot movement. As Mark said, “Most of them are religious people.” Although not all are Christian, many are and the imprint of conservative religious values is strong in many parts of the movement. But the importance of a Christian fundamentalism is tempered by the fact that only two of my respondents could be said to hold fundamentalist outlooks. These two respondents connected the patriot identity with a belief in God. My most religious respondent said, “a patriot means to me someone who believes in God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit, country and family, humanity as a whole, and protecting our God given rights...rather than permitting an opposing force to take them away from us” (0312:11). Others were more apt to say that religion was important, and some had dabbled in many non-Christian based religions in a search for answers. Though not everyone is a Christian, religiosity is a key part of a patriot identity and I focus on the varied ways that religion discourse is used in the patriot culture in chapter seven.

Mark continued, “When you speak to a true patriot they know the problems with the government and they speak out about it and they’re not afraid to speak.” In the second half of the dissertation I focus on what patriots do. Oppositional consciousness is a *movement* identity, and therefore suggests activism. But patriot activism often does not involve conventional politics. There are two interesting components to patriot activism. First it is largely confined to individual not collective action. Patriot political activity includes individual battles with various government institutions (court battles, local state activism) and disengaging from government ties (not paying taxes, not accepting social

security, working only for cash, driving without a driver's license). Second, many activities are at the cultural level: like forging a new political language, learning survivalist skills, educating oneself and others, producing patriot cultural/political materials, learning alternative medicine.

Puzzling though, the patriot identity is not necessarily movement based, at least it is not based in formal organizations. Many of my respondents did not talk about a patriot *movement* or felt they belonged to any such entity. It was common for my respondents to say, for example, "I never really heard of the patriot movement" (0311:5). I asked a recruiter, who you would think would be interested in promoting a movement identity, "Do you feel you are a part of a patriot movement." He answered, "I don't know much about the patriot movement, because we really don't have anything to do with it. But we are patriots" (0202:12). Being a patriot is not about being involved in a movement. But it is a *movement* identity as defined by Jasper (1997)²⁴, in that to be a patriot, to identify oneself as patriot is to align oneself with a certain oppositional worldview and vision and partake in patriot activities.

The patriot identity seems to float free, unbounded by formal organizational bodies. The patriot phenomenon, unlike more traditional and organizationally bound movements, is a collection of hundreds or maybe thousands of small cells (groups of 5 to 6 people—although sometimes larger) throughout the nation. Patriot cells are largely unaffiliated with other cells but tap into and create a movement culture that serves to build a patriot identity and inspire cell activities. The patriot cultural milieu is comprised of cultural works (writings, video tapes, radio shows, magazines, newspapers, internet

²⁴ Also see discussion in Chapter three.

sites), and speakers who go on a speaker's circuit invited by recognized "patriot" groups. But despite the loose affiliation of groups, and an unorganized cultural scene, patriots have a strong movement identity.

What is one to make of an organizationally unbounded collective identity? The social movement literature is in contention over the importance and processes of collective identity formation. One perspective, largely developed by Melucci (1995), conceptually equates "identity" with "movement." He argues movements are actually analytical fictions. What we consider a movement is actually "solidarity networks." These networks, the essence of a movement, are the basis for movement identity.

Political Process and Contention models on the other hand give collective identity less conceptual freight. These models suggest that collective identity is an important variable to consider *alongside* other traditional movement resources (Benford 2000). "Collective action framing processes constitute a central mechanism facilitating" the development of collective identity (631). Framing processes are considered an analog to "resource mobilization and political opportunity processes" as central to understanding movements (611). In addition this theoretical perspective assumes that framing work is done within organizations and by movement leaders, who actively change and manipulate frames to assure participation and movement cohesion (Polletta and Jasper 2001:292).

The patriot movement is an interesting case in which to explore these tensions in the movement literature. Could Melucci be right, that movement identity is what makes a movement a movement, and that organizational resources are a secondary concern? Or do movements need organizational bodies to make a movement cohere, to make a

movement a recognizable social actor, to make movement activists recognize themselves and each other?

Identity in Social Movement Theory

Over the last three decades social movement scholars have turned more and more to cultural tools to explain many aspects of social movements: their rise and fall, success and failure, and why people protest in the first place. This move was in response to the dominant political process model that focused primarily on the success or lack of success of movements, and looked primarily at the political, economic, and organizational resources of movements as causal variables for success.

Combining poststructural identity theory with social movement research is one of the more interesting components of the cultural turn in social movements studies. One of the fundamental insights of identity theory is the notion of an ever-changing, ever-negotiated self. The self is continually at work producing and reproducing and sometimes changing conceptions of themselves and the objects and institutions around them. I think social movements are interesting because they become sites where individuals become acutely aware of the re-negotiation of the relationship between self and world. The patriots in particular are an interesting movement because their worldview is radically different from what is accepted in the mainstream, and therefore narrative productions that explain the shift into a patriot identity are a salient part of the movement. As Bruner (1990) writes, “when you encounter an exception to the ordinary

(how people are suppose to behave or think), and ask someone what is happening, the person you ask will always tell a story that contains reasons” for their behavior (49)²⁵.

What is a movement identity supposed to do?

What is the conceptual freight of movement identity? In a review essay, Snow and Benford (2000) argued that “framing processes (which include the formation of a movement identity) have come to be regarded alongside resource mobilization and political opportunity processes as a central dynamic in understanding the character and course of social movements” (611). Creating and maintaining a movement identity, then, is seen as central to the success (or failure) and dynamics of a movement. Mansbridge (2001) argues, identity formation solves much of the free rider problem and that movement identity provides a “constellation of incentives” that induces people to give time, and emotional and cognitive space to a cause (1).

Melucci (1989) takes us to a slightly different theoretical place. He argues movement identity, and the processes creating a movement identity, is actually what researchers call a “movement.” He argues that the concept “movement” has been reified. What we regard as a recognizable social movement is only an analytical construct, a fiction.

When talking of social movements and collective action, one is usually referring to empirical phenomena with a certain degree of empirical unity. Yet what in

²⁵ It may seem contradictory with my previous claim that selves are not unified to now suggest that we create stories to explain differentiations from the expected self, which implies a unified self. However, I think we tend to assume a unified self when we think of ourselves, and talk about ourselves, and more importantly we assume that others think that of us, and therefore the need to explain to someone else why we acted outside of what was expected. See Fenstermaker & West (2002) on interactional expectations as a norming force).

fact is in question are heterogeneous and fragmented phenomena, which internally contain a multitude of differentiated meanings, forms of action, and modes of organization, and which often consume a large part of their energies...to bind such differences together. (Melucci 1989:13)

Movements, he later writes, “take the form of solidarity networks” (Melucci 1995:53). It is the *processes* of movement identity that makes such disparate individual actors and actions seem to create a unitary (but fictional) movement. For Melucci movement identity is a concept about *processes* and he focuses research on “processes of mobilization, organizational forms, models of leadership, ideologies and forms of communication” that comprise the movement identity which then allows a collective actor (movement) seem to appear (52). For Melucci then, movement identity (and the processes that create and continually create it) is the whole enchilada.

How to Study Movement Identity

Melucci is attempting to methodologically break out of a dualistic conceptual noose in social movement theory: the focus on either structure or individual motivation to explain human behavior and meaning. Neither he says help us understand “how people actually manage acting together and being a we” (Melucci 1989:15). Instead he focuses on *processes* of meaning production:

[movement] identity as a process refers thus to a network of active relationships between actors, who interact, communicate, influence each other, negotiate, and make decisions. Forms of organizations and models of leadership, communicative channels, and technologies of communication are constitutive parts of this network of relationships (1995:45).

For Melucci, the construction and re-construction of movement identity is the core concept for understanding social protest. It is not an additional concept, equal to political, organizational, and leadership resources, as Snow and Benford suggest. These

variables (organization, leadership, etc), for Melucci, are part of what *constitutes* movement identity.²⁶

Other social movement scholars have largely assumed or suggested that movement identity is rooted in organizational structures and leadership resources. Polletta & Jasper (2001) in a review essay on movement identity center much of their discussion on organizations and organizers. “In sum, any social movement group must continually manage its collective identity” (292). Managing identity is the task of organizers: “Organizers often concentrate on recasting constituents’ identities to include participation as one of the responsibilities...identities need to be integrated with injustice and agency frames” (Polletta 2001:292). Melucci offers a different view. He argues identity adheres in the practices of individuals in action together in a constant negotiation of movement (and personal) identity; identity is not necessarily a thing to be negotiated and managed by the leadership or movement organizations but in the interactions among activists, whatever the venue.

Processes in the making of a Patriot movement identity

Existing research suggests there is a strong sense of localism in the patriot movement, and this is a reflection of the patriot organizational structure (Gallaher 1998, Akins 1998). National, state or even regional patriot organizations do not exist which could produce and manage a patriot identity. There have been attempts at creating some

²⁶ Melucci’s insight provides more of a methodological move than theoretical. It is true that the concept “movement” has become reified, but it is a question of level of analysis. When we look closely at what we call a movement, it can be merely a collection of small groups, or cells, as is the case of the patriots. Look even closer at the movement organizations and it could be just a small number of people that do most of the movement work. But yet we can recognize “a movement.” The movement has a social reality in that we (activists, adversaries, researchers) have created it at least at the discursive level.

umbrella type organizations like the Arizona Sons and Daughters of Liberty. But, following ideological inclinations, even these umbrella organizations keep a hands-off policy regarding followers: the ASDL had recruiters in a number of Arizona cities, but each recruiter would only know 5-6 other patriots who then in turn would recruit others, adopting the “leaderless resistance” model (0301). As a result the ASDL did not show up on the official count of patriot organizations according to the SPLC. Other groups I researched were larger but even in these cases there were no efforts to engage in organization building or linking with other groups with the goal of massing numbers for more effective political participation.

The history of one of the patriot organizations I followed may serve as an example of how loosely patriot groups can be structured. In the early nineties, one of my respondents, Linda, was serving as a city council woman and was beginning to get fed up with what she perceived as local corruption. Linda began giving classes on the U.S. Constitution, for she saw that even fellow council members did not understand basic rights and freedoms as outlined in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. She distributed flyers around town to announce upcoming classes and fairly quickly she began drawing 40-50 locals.

At this point Linda had never heard of the patriot movement, but it found her. Soon, because of her position on the city council, she gained the air of authority on local patriot radio networks. This in turn increased Linda’s following locally. As a result of learning about the patriot movement she started a local militia group in addition to the Constitution group. Both the law group and militia were highly informal groups. Neither of these groups took attendance or dues, had membership rolls, or took any other form of

group history. Neither of these groups was interested in systematically creating a patriot identity or making sure members adhered to the patriot line. In fact Linda's leadership model highly encouraged debate and knowledge through self-discovery.

Linda was the acknowledged leader, but meetings were run more like discussions:

...and we ran very loose meetings, we would talk and we would have a subject and everyone would partake in it. I would not lecture. I could, but I did not. Because it was more important to involve *everyone* in the direction we were going in and let the people talk. This is about 1993, 1994 the high point of the patriot movement, and our meetings grew phenomenally. And we would have people run in saying the FBI was running our licenses plates. And we were like so, they can come in if they want, we were not doing anything. (0303:12)

Despite the very local and loosely organized nature of these groups, all the members of this patriot organization whom I interviewed identified themselves as a patriot. The identity was forged not so much because of the leadership, but because it brought people together in a particular space to talk to one another. In a sense the groups served the same function as consciousness raising groups of the feminist movement.

Leadership is indeed important though. The leaders could define the parameters of patriot topics and sources. They picked the topics of discussion, the video tapes that would be viewed, what speaker might be invited, what internet sources were deemed "patriot." While the leadership was highly localized they culled resources from a panoply of patriot resources found primarily on the internet.

While the leaders I saw served as important filters of patriot topics they by no means controlled the definition of what is or is not appropriate patriot discourse. As I mentioned before discussion in the meetings was important. At the meetings I attended when an issue was taken up with a variety of viewpoints aired, there was no conclusion drawn by the leader. He or she was not the final arbiter of patriot truth. Many of the patriots I spoke with hold self-realization as an important value. A person must realize

the truth for themselves, my respondents would tell me. If you just believe then you are not a true patriot, you are not sufficiently questioning. I was told on a number of occasions that I must verify the truth for myself.

For example, when I interviewed Doc in 2003, he had only been attending Linda's law group for about four years and he was not a "patriot" when he first began attending the meetings. He actually argued against some of the things that he was told at the meetings, but he was allowed to stay and he was eventually converted to a patriot worldview:

L: Did you find information hard to digest and believe at first?

Not only that. I got up and violently opposed some of the things they were telling me. I have freedom of speech...but I would get up and tell them I don't believe that.

another Arizona leader I spoke to talked about the process of coming to believe:

Well it took me a long time, it took me probably a year and I don't know about a process, the process is just the more I read, well the more I would look for stuff to back it up, you know, and the more I'd find stuff to back it up. I mean um it's all right in the Federal Register in the Congressional Record, it's all there, all you gotta do is read it. I know there is a million words in it, but it's there.
(0309:1)

But how indeed is patriot identity created and reinforced in the patriot meetings?

Following are some excerpts from field notes taken from one of the patriot meetings I attended. The notes are important because they show the range of material that was discussed, the nature of the discussion, and the ways in which the basic assumptions of a patriot worldview and identity are upheld.

The current leader of the study group (they dropped the militia title) has a very different style from the one I described above. Mike does not see himself as a leader, more as a facilitator. He hopes to spawn conversation amongst those that attend, and certainly does not want to be viewed as the only speaker. Each week he goes through

various patriot internet sites to decide what to bring to the meeting. He makes copies of articles he finds of interest, distributes those copies, and then reads those articles at the meetings. At the meetings I attended there were at times spirited discussion but the bulk of the meeting time was taken up by Mike's voice. Attendance has fallen to 10-15 at their weekly meeting in part because of a loss of dynamism. Interest in patriot material has not diminished though, for another 30 people received the copies of the material via mail.

April 2003 Patriot Study Group Meeting in Small Town Arizona

The meeting was at the community center in town. The group had been meeting there for several years and was never given a hard time by the community center management about the business they conducted on the premises. The meeting started at seven on a Tuesday night. I arrived right at seven, because nerves kept me from arriving earlier. I felt fine once I was actually there. In fact I should have gone sooner as a curative for the nerves...as soon as I start actually interacting with people I am fine.

I walked over from the too-pricey hotel where I was staying. Although this town has a depressed economy, it is a tourist town and hotels here are not cheap. I walked through the parking lot of various tourist-trap shops and some upscale looking but somewhat cheesy art galleries. The air was crisp and cool after a warm day and the desert air was dry. There is a surprising amount of greenery in the area and I learn later there is a underground river that runs through the town, which is probably why the town was here in the first place.

The meeting was just getting started as I walked in. I said hi to Mike (the leader) and he welcomed me, but did not introduce me. I also said hello to Mel and Betty as I

walked in. I had already interviewed them on a previous visit, and I hoped my visit tonight would elicit more interviews.

This room was a much smaller room than when I was here last. It was a much more intimate space and I noticed a difference in the level of interaction amongst the participants. This time there was much more conversation and discussion.

There were between 12 and 14 people there including myself. All white, 6 were women (including myself). The average age was around 50 to 65. One man told me he was 83, a couple of others in their 70s...but also one woman I would guess in her 30s, but certainly the norm was around 65. The room was divided in half with room on each side for three at a table. There were highlighters at each table and refreshments at a table up front. Two women seemed to be in charge of refreshments, Betty and another man's wife. The flag up front was fifty stars in blue and alternating vertical wide stripes of red and white (I think 13 all together—but I didn't count). Flying a different flag was meant to convey the belief that the current political formation was a corrupt one and was not the true "united states" as the founders of the Constitution envisioned it.

As usual the meeting started with a prayer led by Sammy. He prayed for justice and truth to be revealed and remarked on how people kept their head in the sand and people could only be helped if they asked for help. The opening prayer encapsulates a lot of the patriot worldview. It distinguishes between those who know the truth and those who are keeping their head in the sand. The patriots at the meeting are reaffirming their practice of informing themselves and working for justice, as opposed to others who just go on with their lives. The prayer also shows the importance of God to the patriots.

They start with a prayer at every meeting and many believe it is with God's guidance that they were led to know the truth about American politics.

Mike announced Jeannie would be missing on account of being in the VA hospital in Phoenix for a kidney stone. Some remarks were made about the uselessness of the VA hospital (many in the room were veterans). Mel commented on the usefulness of a particular herb for kidney stones. Many of the patriots I interviewed and in the overall movement are veterans. They know first hand the level of incompetence of VA doctors and social service providers. Also here is the introduction of alternative medicine. Mel is teaching himself to become a herbalist, and amongst patriots there is a strong distrust of mainstream medicine. But in addition to basic distrust, to be a patriot is to question official knowledge and as an alternative research and teach oneself. There are many autodidacts among patriots.

The turn to alternative medicine is based on a critique of the medical industry. The assumption is that the medical industry, particularly pharmaceuticals, are not serving the best interests of consumers. The industry is interested in profit and keeps the American people in the dark as to cheaper and less medically intensive alternatives. It is a widely held belief that there is a cure for cancer available through alternative medicine, but that the pharmaceutical companies made the substance illegal in the United States in order to maintain a monopoly on the highly profitable cancer treatments.

Mike opened the meeting with a general call for comments. Mel talked about the latest in the Iraqi war—most said they were not following it, that they had turned off their TVs. Mel remarked that it seemed clear that we would be there for a while trying to establish a new government, and that the longer we took the clearer it would be that we

were not interested in Iraqi freedom. The patriots I interviewed were largely against the Iraqi war, and tended to think we were there because of an interest in oil. In the meeting there was little discussion about Mel's assessment, but just a few nods of agreement.

As there seemed to be no other general comments Mike began to read from the articles he chose from this week's internet collections. We each had a packet and could follow along as he read.

The first article from *Idaho Observer* was on the health benefits of cayenne pepper, "the #1 herb for today's illnesses". The *Idaho Observer* is a patriot newspaper. It is printed monthly and runs about 24 pages. It has been publishing since 1997. It was mentioned by over 2/3 of my respondents as an important source of information. Its mission is to expose "the wall of corruption and government intrusion" which treats Americans as "human resources." It features articles on activists doing research on corporate malfeasance, the latest on the fight against the IRS, alternative health news, and news commentary. <http://www.proliberty.com/observer>.

The evidence for the health benefits of cayenne is based on testimonials (not medical journals). When Mike was done reading the article he asked Doc what he thought about it (Doc being the resident doctor in the group). Doc said he knew that it was useful for heart conditions as it dilated the blood vessels, but he was not sure about its anti-bacterial effects. There were many people in the room who were already taking cayenne as part of combating or warding off heart disease. Those who did not take it were asking questions about how to take it and where to get it. Everyone in the room was talking about it at once, and it generated a flurry of conversations.

The second article was also on alternative medicine but Mike just said it was a bit more info than what he read last week and he opted not to read this piece. The next piece was from www.rense.com “death by slow burn.” Rense’s article, “death by slow burn,” actually had end notes with references to various other news articles and journals. The article is about the effects of depleted uranium (DU) weapons and the article argues that the use of DU weapons is what caused the gulf war syndrome. The article estimates that 20,000 to 50,000 people have died as a result of DU weapons use. At this point, many in the group commented showing disgust (directed at the federal government) at the numbers of people who had died of gulf war syndrome. Patriots in the meeting, who had read up on DU weapons, conspiratorially suggested that those who have studied the syndrome have consequently died...by exposure or because they themselves were uncovering the link between DU and gulf war syndrome. The article also condemns the destruction it has wreaked on the native populations where we have used DU weapons. Overall the article is a stinging indictment of the use of these weapons and its effects. The article suggests that the U.S. uses DU weapons because particular elites, including George Bush, profit from their use in war. Conversations in the room also suggested eugenics and the need to depopulate the world as part of the motivation for using DU.

This article, and many others like it, serves to reinforce an oppositional identity. First the article is yet another example of how elites will manipulate world conditions, i.e. get the nation into war in order to simply make more money. The cost of war is always borne by ordinary people, who in the patriot worldview are merely treated as resources for the enrichment of the elites. (Patriots would not believe me when I told them this was a Marxian point of view). Second, reading the article is a form of education about the

truth and fulfills the patriot desire to be politically educated. Self-education and truth-seeking are fundamental components of a patriot identity. Patriots are always uncovering and seeking the truth about the world around them, particularly about power and its machinations.

It is break time back at the meeting and I introduce myself to Sal and Joan and asked if they would be interested in being interviewed. They are an older retired couple who spend much of their time at the local citizen's center. It turns out Sal is an herbalist and has claimed to cure three people of diabetics through the use of milk thistle. The main part of our conversation is about him attempting to convince me of the benefits of milk thistle for diabetics which of course is an anti-medical establishment discourse as well as proof of the efficacy of self-education.

I return to the meeting and the next article is the "the psychology behind mass subservience to tyranny." It warns of the parallels between Nazi Germany and the current policies of George W. Bush's administration that threaten individual liberties. The article ends with a quote from Bush, "if you are not with us you are against us" as a warning of the coming end to political freedom ushered in by the Bush regime. Betty says this comes from the Bible, and that Satan often uses God's words.

A fair number of authors who research the patriots make claims about its fascist intentions (see Stern 1996 and Niewert 1999) so when I actually found patriots criticizing the U.S. for being too much like Hitler's Germany I was surprised. Rather than fascists, the Arizona patriots I interviewed I would argue are more libertarian or even anarchist. Again I think the level of overt racism and fascist tendencies vary from group to group but that there has been a tendency to over-generalize about the movement despite limited

data. Patriot literature does reference Hitler, not usually as someone to uphold, but as a warning and as a point of political critique—the United States policies are leading us in the same wrong direction.

The previous article led to a long discussion about the Oklahoma City bombing and in general about how the American public is deceived by mainstream media and the government. Mel related that on one news broadcast of the bombing you could hear multiple bombs going off, and he lists other evidence supporting the fact that the bombing was a government set up.

Patriot evidence that the bombing did not occur as the media claimed comes from people's own knowledge of fertilizer bombs and their capabilities. It is grounded in people's actual experience—some of them are farmers, know farmers, or are miners or veterans who know about explosives generally. If you have no direct knowledge, then you know someone who does. This experienced-based knowledge is privileged over official or expertise knowledge put out by the federal investigators. The privileging of experience-based knowledge and the skeptical eye toward expertise-based knowledge for patriots carries over to all areas of life.

The discussion of the Oklahoma City bombing also illustrates the strong tendency toward conspiratorial thinking; I will talk at length about this in chapter six. It is not a necessary part of a patriot identity, but it is certainly prevalent and can be understood as a critique of political power relations by those excluded.

The anti-government sentiment is upheld even through jokes. Someone mentioned a bumper sticker they have “thank god we don't get all the government we pay for.”

The critique of government power extends to the court system. At the meeting, Patriots discussed a current federal legal case being heard in Phoenix. The defendant, Lee, was originally tried for manufacturing illegal guns. According to the patriots at the meeting the federal prosecutor could not get a conviction on that charge so they brought him up on some other made-up charge. Members of the patriot group had been attending his trial to bear witness to the injustice of the courts as well as to help Lee in whatever way they could. During the meeting discussion it was clear that they thought Lee had followed some bad legal advice that made his situation worse and probably jeopardized the whole case. But the analysis that Lee had done a bad job of representing himself in no way countered the assumption that the court would flout the law and find Lee guilty, and that therefore courts in general, lawyers and judges were corrupt and could not be trusted to do justice.

As the meeting ended I introduced myself to some others that were not at the last meeting I attended. They were not interested in being interviewed, but the 83 year old man was the anti-Semitic conspiracist I was supposed to find in my research. He told me, "it all goes back to the Jews and the Masons, they control everything." He also said they got involved because for years they put in all they could into social security, and then some law was passed that your social security payments would only be based on your last 5 years of income (not what you had paid in) and they fought the decision but felt they had lost a lot of money. And each time they fought the government, they were convinced the government lessened their social security payments.

In a clearly gendered division of labor, the two women who initially put out the food now set to work cleaning it up. I was asked to join the group for an after-meeting

breakfast. Often parts of the group, particularly the younger folk, would go out to eat afterward and often talk to all hours of the night, thus the reason for calling it a breakfast as it often started around ten at night. I, however, was too exhausted to join them this night, and I still had to go back to my hotel and make sense of my field notes. The walk back to the hotel was pleasantly quiet, a welcome break from the complete immersion in what sometimes felt like a foreign language but at others felt refreshingly politically charged.

This group meets once a week and it is a key source for re-producing and re-enforcing a patriot identity. Most of the people I interviewed from this group did not feel they belonged to a “movement.” But they did call themselves patriots. The patriot identity gained strength not from “movement” organizations (the group did not conceive of their group as part of a larger movement) then but from the everyday work of individuals talking to individuals often in small group settings and social gatherings. This group in particular had formed a small patriot community where others could be relied on to help in times of need or for social occasions. They would have meals together. They helped each other out with basic needs. One woman helped a very elderly couple get to the meetings and home again as their mobility had recently been impaired, and she often helped them out with chores they could no longer perform. Many of the seniors saw each other at the local senior citizens center. And on more than one occasion when I was interviewing one of the patriots in their home, another would stop by to chat. Another patriot was planning on putting his trailer on the property that

another patriot in the group owned. These were the myriad and small ways in which everyday interactions maintained and reproduced the patriot identity.

The patriots are interesting because at the most abstract level they are a movement. There are groups throughout the nation that call themselves patriot; they participate in activities that are labeled patriot (militias, common law courts, paper terrorism). They have a movement identity or oppositional consciousness rooted in a critique of political power in the United States and a belief that action needs to be taken in order to effect change.

At the level of the group though, the movement aspect disappears. What remains is a patriot identity. This identity exists despite the lack of centralized patriot organizations. In the absence of centralized movement organizations, patriots use an expansive and unorganized movement culture—comprised of websites, pamphlets, videos, radio networks, books, and touring speakers—that keep the patriot culture vibrant and maintains a patriot identity. In addition to the external patriot culture, the groups I interviewed form an intense intra-group patriot movement identity that also creates a patriot identity at the individual level.

If we are only to consider the question of what is a movement, and not questions of effectiveness or success, then the case of patriot phenomenon suggests that movement identity formation does not need leadership or strong organizations to be efficacious. This may be because a patriot identity is already part of a structural position, that it is an identity rooted in the experience of political powerlessness. This is why the concept of oppositional consciousness and oppositional culture is useful. This concept assumes an oppositional identity based on the experiences of objective structural powerlessness. It

may be that when a movement or culture arises out of structural repression it does not need centralized bodies to formulate and reinforce a movement identity. This is not to say that a movement identity labeled patriot spontaneously erupted but it did not need much organizational support because it tapped into a pre-existing oppositional culture resulting from political powerlessness.

Movement Identity as Oppositional Consciousness

While my evidence shows support for Melucci's formulation (we should focus on the process creating movement identity) the evidence also suggest an important caveat.

First recall from chapter three, that Mansbridge and Morris (2001) combined social movement, feminist and queer studies literatures, that helps clarify the question of identity for patriots. Their main conceptual contribution is the idea of oppositional consciousness and oppositional culture. Oppositional consciousness and culture are on a movement continuum, where consciousness is the recognition of a movement identity: one that recognizes an injustice and sees the importance of acting to change that injustice. Oppositional culture, on the other hand, drops the activist component. In an oppositional culture there is recognition of injustice done (injustice based on an unequal social system) but not a recognized need or ability to do something about it.

An oppositional culture is the foundation of oppositional consciousness or movement identity. Methodologically the lens is pointed to similar processes that Melucci proscribes. Recall too from early in this chapter that I argue Melucci is attempting to methodologically break out of a dualistic conceptual noose in social movement theory: the focus on either structure or individual motivation to explain human behavior and meaning. Neither, he says, help us understand "how people actually

manage acting together and being a we.” But it may be the case that we can’t elide the question of structure and, as the Mansbridge and Morris collection suggests, that structure (mediated through processes of meaning making) helps in the production of the “we.”

We should amend Melucci’s theory by combining it with oppositional consciousness (which recognizes structural position as important). Melucci may have the strongest case (that it is all about the processes and not structural resources) when we have a structurally repressed group that moves from oppositional culture to oppositional consciousness. A movement does not need strong organization or even material resources when there is a strong oppositional culture feeding oppositional identities (regardless of whether or not movement organizations exist.) This may be why, as Piven & Cloward (1977) suggest, poor people’s movements can sometimes seem to come out of nowhere for they are already embedded in oppositional cultures.

What then are some of the processes (the production of oppositional culture) that patriots draw on to inform their oppositional consciousness? The patriots draw on and contribute to an oppositional culture. There is a significant anti-government sentiment or culture throughout the nation, but in Arizona there is an even stronger, more patriot-oriented, oppositional culture. You can see support for a patriot oppositional identity in the state and local papers, you can hear it from some Arizona politicians, and you can hear it from your neighbors. But there is no denying that the patriot identity is about oppositional consciousness and incorporates a recognized need to take action. By definition a patriot is politically engaged.

Oppositional consciousness is the effect of processes that produce the “we.” It develops within subordinated groups as “an empowering mental state” that “prepares

members of an oppressed group to act to undermine, reform, or overthrow a system of human domination” (Mansbridge 2001:25). Patriot identity has all the hall mark components of oppositional consciousness. Components include minimally: “identifying with a subordinate group (the people), concluding that the mechanisms that have produced at least some of the group inequalities are unjust (corruption and greed are at fault), opposing the injustice, and seeing a common interest within the subordinate group in eliminating the injustice” (26).

In the following chapters three chapters I outline some of the sources of both oppositional culture (collective identity) and consciousness (movement identity). I talk about specific components of this identity and the practiced meanings it generates as well as some of the movement and historical discourses that have supported the patriot movement and identity.

Part II Macro and Historical Cultural Components of the Patriot Identity

In the next three chapters I talk about the three themes that dominated my interviews: conspiracy theory as a critical economic and political discourse, classical republican populism and religiosity. Together, populist ideas about governance, the economy and religion, comprise the ideological heart of the patriot identity. I trace the ideas to their historical antecedents as well as the cultural institutions and organizations that are the contemporary carriers of these ideas. Implicit in each of these chapters is that ideas and culture matter. Ideas are of course both constraints on and resources for action and it is difficult to analytically separate ideas or meanings from action, for they are inseparable. Meanings are practiced; we create meaningful practices. And while I spend a lot of time in the next three chapters talking about ideas and discourse and ideologies, it is in the spirit that recognizes that words are spoken actions—words and ideas can be used strategically. (And here I speak of not only my respondents but of my own choices in the craft of writing!)

Chapter Five

The Phantom of Classical Republicanism: An American Populist Discourse

...it is my understanding that in a republic of law you can get people who just basically have an interest in our society and are willing to go ahead and work with the law and with people according to the law. They don't really get compensated like our current congress...who can serve for two terms and get a salary for the rest of their life. Hell I would love to work for 10 years in medicine and then get my peak salary for the rest of my life each year, and a bunch of other stuff. [In a republic] people that showed responsibility, that is you owned land, you had a job, you were married, you were responsible, you didn't get arrested, all these things that showed responsibility, were the people that were presented and others could say, yeah I like Jack, he owns a business he takes care of his people, he does not ruin his employees, he doesn't kill them, he does not have child labor. He is somebody that I would like to look over our community. [0311:31]

[elected representatives would be] disinterested men [who] would employ their whole time for the public good; then there would be but one interest, the good of the people at large (*Writings of Paine*, II 409; *Boston Independent Chronicle*, July 10, 1777.)

In the opening quote, Doc—WWII fighter pilot, retired general practitioner and new patriot—voices simultaneously his critique and ideal vision of an American politician. What is not so evident in the quote is that Doc is heralding ideas (and not necessarily realities) about governance and politicians that go back to the founding of the American state. In American historiography the values that both Paine's and Doc's quotes voice are what historians have tagged American republicanism²⁷. While most patriots didn't say they believed in classical republican values, when I asked them about

²⁷ For excellent expositions of the historiography of republicanism see Appleby 1992; Kerber 1985; Kramnick 1982; Rodgers 1992; Shalhope 1972; Shalhope 1982; Shalhope 1991. Those who have been named the early espousers of the republican thesis include Bailyn 1967; Pocock 1975; Wood 1969.

their ideal government it was often classical republican values that my patriot respondents articulated.

The doctor's quote exhibits some of the hallmark components of classical republicanism. Shalhope (1982), in a review of historical research on republicanism²⁸, relays that colonial spokespersons drew on libertarian thought to create a unique American republicanism that espoused the “maintenance of public and private virtue, internal [national] unity, social solidarity and vigilance against the corruption of power” (335). In classical republicanism, virtue,²⁹ or morality was thought to be the key that would hold a republican nation state together—the possibility of a virtuous state was dependent not only on virtuous disinterested politicians but also virtuous citizens, an idea that Doc’s quote clearly reflects.

Contemporary patriot and colonial Republican discourse also embodies normative values rooted in religious doctrines regarding not only governance but social relations.

²⁸ Classical Republicanism is a controversial historical topic. Questions bandied about in the literature include: how do we define it? What did it in fact mean to various groups of peoples and individuals? How was it used? Was it central in creating support for the American revolution? I am not going to into these debates here other than to say the nature of the debate has much to do with the nature of ideas themselves—that they are resources to be used by various groups in the furtherance of their own causes—they are malleable and not static. And even the most vociferous critics [see Appleby (1992) as an example] of the republican thesis (that republicanism is the main cause of the American revolution) argue that there were a set of different ideas about governance and the relationship between citizens and the state that existed and that slowly changed to something we now recognize as liberalism. The controversy is also about the nature of disciplines. My only claim in using republican historiography is that republican discourse actually circulated during the colonial period and that in the patriot movement we see the longevity of some republican tenets.

²⁹ Other research shows classical liberalism had a strong moral component. See Kloppenberg (1987) for interpretations of John Locke, Adam Smith, James Madison and Thomas Jefferson (early liberals) that connected individual autonomy with moral responsibility.

Doc's quote mythically recalls a time when leaders were known in the community, where a person (and in this case a white, propertied male) could be judged and held accountable by others in the community. The ideal statesman was one who demonstrated a normative social competence; he was married, employed, treated employees well if he was an employer, and was a responsible community member. The word responsible also implies disinterestedness in political service. These values: disinterestedness and civic virtue are some of the core values circulating during the founding of United States. These values are also burdened with a white, male, heterosexual narrative, that stains what are otherwise exemplary ideas. (As quaint as it seems, we would like our political leaders to actually serve their communities, to exhibit disinterestedness, to be virtuous.)

Doc's quote also shows how republicanism operates as a utopic discourse. Utopic discourses are political discourses, often used by social movement organizations and leaders to inspire movement activists and participants. Utopias supply a possible future, a vision of the good life. Embedded in this vision is a critique of present day conditions, which the social movement can presumably change. Utopic discourses always contain both future vision and present critique. In pre-revolution colonial America, republicanism served as a rallying vision (actually multiple visions) of what future might be possible once the colonies were free of monarchical control. It was also a critique of monarchical control and present social condition in the colonies. It was "a way by which dissatisfied people could criticize the patriarchy, luxury, and corruption of eighteenth-century monarchy" (Wood 1991:930). Contemporary patriots also use classically republican values to both critique present day social and political relations, but unlike

their revolutionary antecedents the patriot movement looks back in time rather than toward a promising future.

In this chapter I look at what historians have said about classical republicanism and demonstrate how classical republican discourse, two hundred years, later is echoed by contemporary patriots.

Republicanism then and now

18th century American republicanism can be traced back to Latin writers of the first and second century b.c. who were bemoaning the decline of the Roman Empire. In order to account for the Roman Empire's decline the Latin writers created a utopic past from which the Roman Republic had strayed (Pocock 1975). Their current empire was riddled with conflicts between rich and poor, by government corruption and extravagant displays of opulence by the wealthy and well connected. Latin writers, including Cicero and Plutarch, compared the current Empire with a mythic past where the citizens were virtuous and frugal and government leaders disinterested. They combined ideas about the good life with potent values of frugality, egalitarianism, and disinterestedness as the basis for good government.

Beginning in the 16th century the Latin republican tradition was revamped by Renaissance writers including Machiavelli. According to Pocock, the early Latin writers' conceptions were "blended into a tradition of civic humanism-a tradition that stressed the moral character of the independent citizen as the prerequisite to good politics and disinterested service to the country. To be good citizens people had to be free of control by others and free of the influence of selfish interests." (quoted in Wood 1991:931).

Seventeenth and eighteenth century British Whig writers borrowed from their Latin and Renaissance republican predecessors and created a potent discourse about the basis of good government, good society and good citizens. These authors, including James Harrington, John Milton and Algernon Sidney, along with many eighteenth century colonial popularizers, like Thomas Paine, created the texts espousing Republican discourse in colonial America.

Republicanism in its eighteenth-century colonial American version was a treatise against monarchic rule and a rallying cry for self-government, a rule of the people by the people. A new form of government demanded new types of citizens, particularly if the basis of government power was no longer one god-inspired man, but citizens. It was argued that in order for a republic to work, citizens must be ever vigilant. Citizens must watch for government corruption, always possible because centralized power tended toward corruption and abuse of power.

In republican discourse citizens must be of good moral character. They should be frugal and hard working. Citizens should not take part in displays of wealth or opulence as opulence was a sign of laziness and led to moral decay and corruption. It was important for citizens to be in a word, virtuous, because a government was only as virtuous as its people. Republican discourse of the 18th century was embedded in larger institutional norms about society (in this case government and its citizens) whose fates were bound together as one organic body. If one part of the system/body was ill so too was the whole society. If the people were corrupt so too would follow the government (Wood 1969). Likewise, those who led government should come from that base of hard-

working morally upright citizenry. Government leaders should be disinterested, they should rule not on the basis of their own narrow self-interest but for the public good.

The fact that good citizens were defined as free and independent demarcates its normative meaning. Those who were free and independent were most likely to be white and male. Decidedly unfree were African slaves, Native Americans and all women regardless of race who were under the force of coverture laws. It also left out about 40% of white men who were not property holders (Keyssar 2000). Historically republicanism has tempered its class, race and gendered meaning by using language that masks its exclusivity.

Republican discourse passed out of vogue as liberal philosophies of governance and individuality came to dominate by the mid nineteenth century (Appleby 1992). But its vestiges can be found throughout the United States. Wood (1991) argues

Republican [today] tempers the scramble for private wealth and happiness and accounts for many of the Americans' ideas and aspirations: for their belief in equality and their dislike of pretension and privilege; for their relentless yearning for individual autonomy and freedom from all ties of dependency; for their periodic hopes, expressed, for example, in the election of military heroes and in the mugwump and progressive movements, that some political leaders might rise above parties and become truly disinterested umpires; for their long-held conviction that farming is morally healthier and freer of selfish marketplace concerns than other occupations; for their preoccupation with the fragility of the Republic and its vulnerability to corruption; and, finally, for their remarkable obsession with their own national virtue-an obsession that still bewilders the rest of the world (931).

From its colonial beginnings republican attitudes and values have found their way into many social movements, including the 19th century populist movement (Goodwyn 1976) and many aspects of the labor movement (Oestricher 1988; Roediger 1991). The south has of course, long been a bastion of republican ideas that have often subtly (and not so subtly) masked the racism in the language of republican universalistic values.

While most historians have argued republicanism discourse fades in the early part of the twentieth century, it can be found, starting in the 1960's, in the re-emergence of the right, particularly the radical right, from which the contemporary patriots have sprung

Republicanism as a Phantom Ideology

In this chapter I call republicanism a phantom discourse for two reasons. In the interviews republicanism is not always named but its presence is felt. It is there not by name but in the values people espouse, their ideal government and politician, their ideal society. Before entering into my interviews I did not really know about republicanism in American history. It might have been better if I had. But as I analyzed the data I was simultaneously reading American history, pulled there by my respondents' constant references to American history, particularly the founding of the United States. It was within these readings I first discovered republicanism as an ideology. As I reviewed the historiography of the American Revolution the worldviews of my patriot respondents became much clearer. It was one of those "aha" moments in my research, where many of the disparate ideas of the patriots could now be mapped under the tag, republicanism. So phantom seemed an appropriate metaphor because my respondents often held traditional republican views, but did not name them as such.

The second reason I use phantom is because republicanism can conceal just as much as it reveals: once again its presence is felt but ambiguously. Critiques of the status quo, from both the left and the right, have used classical republican ideas, but it is commonly freighted with linkages to a states-rights political stance that can be really about upholding white privilege. In the colonial days of republicanism it went hand in hand with a political culture that upheld slavery, denied most rights to women and was

silent on the genocide of the American Indian tribes even as it upheld populist notions of governance by the people. Who are the “people” then is only clear if a person defines their terms. More often in history and in the patriot movement republicanism operates as an empty signifier, left undefined with those who are part of the discussion left to fill in the blank or assume that they all mean the same thing when “the people” are invoked.

Republicanism’s other components are just as open to interpretation: What is meant by virtue? Or the common good? Who is included in the common good? These questions are left unanswered or the answers are assumed, which among patriots allows a great diversity and even contradictory definitions about republicanism to exist simultaneously in the patriot movement. Thus one can have an African American leader of a militia in Ohio as well as avowedly white supremacist Christian-identity adherents call themselves patriots and both could hold “republican” worldviews.

Conceptually, republicanism has always been fuzzy. Thomas Jefferson said he never knew what the term meant (Appleby 1992). Appleby (1992) talks about the “conceptual confusion about republicanism” in the early national period. It became more of a strategic code word, a political “prize” if one could manage to gain the mantle “republican.” And this is not to say that it was devoid of meaning. People poured meaning into it, taking from it what they wanted and putting in what was politically expedient. What is republican can really only be found in context, in the particular time and place where it is manifested. Its meaning is created through the interactions of those who use it (as well as those that write about it).

In the patriot movement republicanism remains a phantom discourse because of the decentralized structure of the movement. There is no centralized body that says what

a patriot is, what the movement is about, and what political philosophy patriots should uphold. To have such a structure would be against the values that the movement upholds. People must learn to do and think for themselves. It is a movement of the self-educated; a movement of autodidacts that are only as educated as the sources they choose to read. I found sophisticated renderings of American political history as well as some of the most misinformed.

In the following section I look at specific components of classical republican discourse (the people, civic virtue, disinterestedness) and compare republicanism's historical manifestation with contemporary patriot views. Just as in history republicanism is a utopic narrative so too do the patriots frame republican ideas in forms of a hopeful future, mythic past, and present critique. I also reveal how some conceptual features of republicanism, particularly "the people," function as empty signifiers which helps elide basic differences among patriots and thus helps unify disparate movement participants.

Preserving Classical Republican Discourse: John Birch Society's *The New American*

How have republican ideas endured? While they have certainly altered since their revolutionary apex, they have become a vibrant counter ideology to the dominant political ideology of liberalism.³⁰ How these ideas have been maintained over two

³⁰ What liberalism is could take a chapter in and of itself, so suffice to say here I use Michael Sandel's (1996) liberalism from *Democracy's Discontent*. He claims, liberalism is the public philosophy of our time and incorporates an ideal vision of governance structures (constitutions, rights, elections) that necessarily implies a certain type of individual. Sandel argues that contemporary liberal philosophy (contrary to republican philosophy) is a take-off from Kantian liberalism, in that first, the government takes no official position on the "public good" or the "good life" and makes no "official" effort to put in place policies/practices that would ensure civic virtue—or good citizens. What is

hundred years is not the focus of this dissertation, but The John Birch society's, *The New American*, the most important ideological source for my patriots, is redolent with republican discourse. I received a subscription to *The New American* for two years. All my respondents read *The New American*, the John Birch Society's monthly news magazine. The following is from a recent article in *The New American*:

The roman Republic produced no greater statesman than Cicero. A distinguished legal expert, republican patriot, and orator without peer, he had risen to his nation's highest office, that of Consul. Tragically this great pillar of Roman virtue witnessed the end of the Republic he had loved. In those long-ago days, in the first century B.C., the old Rome was in its death throes, beset by friction between political parties and plagued by conspiracies. Cicero lamented, 'when we inherited the republic from our forbears it was like a beautiful painting whose colors were fading with age. We have failed to restore its original colors and have not taken the trouble to preserve its overall composition or even its general features.' If Cicero were an American living in the U.S. today, he would surely have made a similar lament. (Behreandt 2003:9)

Republican discourse is found throughout the pages of *The New American* (previously published as *American Opinion*) and it has educated a generation of libertarian and radical right patriots since its founding in 1958. In general my respondents read many patriot publications and borrowed material from both left and right alternative media, including from the left, *The Nation* and *Covert Action Quarterly*. But *The New American* was the one source all my respondents said they read.

Robert Welch, a former candy company executive, started the John Birch Society (JBS) in 1958. Caught up in the anti-Communist cultural fervor and government

the good life is left to individuals to decide. Embedded in a liberal philosophy of governance is a particular ideal individual. Liberal individuals are unencumbered, they are free and independent selves. Freedom in Kantian philosophy comes from the capacity of individuals to choose their own lives their own ends, to define for themselves the good life. Individual rights are the focus of liberal governments not the good life. This definition necessarily also implies an economic ideology, often called neo-liberalism, where not only are markets unfettered by government interference but so too are individuals "free" to succeed or fail in the marketplace.

propaganda of the 1950's Welch launched what would become the largest, best organized and most visible of the anti-Communist crusades in the post-war II United States (Stewart 2002). At its peak in the 1960's it is estimated that it had over 100,000 members, 400 bookstores, and a large cadre of speakers with nation wide tour schedules (Stewart 2002).

Despite the fall of communist governments worldwide in the nineteen eighties, JBS remained relevant because it was essentially not an anti-communist organization but a critique of growing government power (creeping socialism in JBS-speak) and economic concentration at the expense of "the people." Stewart (2002) argues that JBS was able to survive the fall of communism because of a reliance on a master conspiracy of which communism was only one stage of a grand narrative of an ever more powerful elite working toward One World Government and the eventual enslavement of all peoples of the world.

JBS' political economic critique is similar to 19th century republicanism in that it argues that economic and political power are not seen as independent and that the power held by elites is essentially at the expense of the "people." Contemporary republicanism is not that *state sponsorship* has made economic concentration possible, but that they are no longer separable; state interests are economic interests. Furthermore these elite interests are antagonistic to the interests of the citizenry.

The JBS master narrative is a political, economic and social critique. Renewed interest in the JBS in the 80's and 90's (and the larger Newj Right I would contend) comes from its ability to marry populist concerns to conservative ideology. They make the case that elites are liberals. It is liberals that are in control (since they are the elite) and are the cause of all that is wrong with the United States. Why are things bad today

(Why can't my family make ends meet without two wage earners? Why do I constantly feel anxiety over potential job loss?) JBS and the religious right answer it is because of liberalism, a godless philosophy that valorizes the pursuit of self-interest at the expense of morality and community values. It is the pursuit of self-interest (evidenced by rampant consumption and loosening of gender and sexual mores) that is evil. Liberal philosophy is evil because it does not put morality at the center of decision making.

The John Birch Society was shunned by much of the rising neo-conservatives in the 60's, because it was actually too radical (Andrew III 1997). Since the JBS master narrative relies on a classical republican discourse to critique a philosophically liberal state, its critique actually calls for major systemic change that would change both the economic and political relations of the current U.S. state. The JBS narrative calls for the state to be more responsive to the people—a political program that the neo-cons were not really interested in promoting.

Classically Republican Patriots

"In America the republican polarities of virtue and corruption, disinterest and interestedness, public spirit and private ambition, participation and passivity, structured the world of politics" (Appleby 1992:22). Appleby's breakdown of revolutionary republicanism into binaries exhibits how the concept functions as both future vision and present critique—whether social or political. This is as true for today's patriots as it was in the 18th century. For each component of republicanism I look at what it was in history, what my patriots say, and how it serves as both critique and vision.

A Republic by the People: The History

A republic most broadly conceived means a government whose authority comes from the “people.” During the American Revolution a republican government form stood

in opposition to a monarchical form. The possible forms of a republican government varied though: most of the colonies called themselves republics but had various forms of governance (Cantor 1997). What is meant by "people" is of course subject to place and time and politics. In the founding, as we all know, only propertied-white-males were allowed any say in the political realm. Who "we the people," came to represent has slowly expanded—at least nominally—in American history.

Historically, the terms "republic" and "people" have been held up as an ideal; we are a republic, we are governed by the people, is a national religious mantra. (Historically democracy supplants republic as the ideal.) But what each faction or individual may have meant by a "republic" or who exactly "the people" included was flexible or left purposely ambivalent. Kelley's (1979) work looks at the variants of republicanism that existed during the founding. Kelley describes four variants of republicanism that reflected particular regional, race and class interests. Libertarian republicanism, supported by white Southerners, advocated for a small central government. New England republicanism on the other hand emphasized the more moralistic components of Renaissance republicanism and argued for a strong government tied to strong communities. The two other variants split the Middle Atlantic States in terms of class and religion. The Presbyterian, largely Scotch and Irish and working -class variant favored egalitarianism and individualism, while the mercantilist class, largely Anglican, favored an active centralized government along with government support for a flourishing commercial life (Kelley 1979).

According to Foner's (1976) research, Thomas Paine fostered a variant of republicanism that emphasized both egalitarianism and economic enterprise that was

attractive to working class followers. "Paine outlined a society in which republican government together with economic progress, would produce social harmony, equality and abundance" (quoted in Shalhope 1982:343).

While there were many variants of republicanism at the time of the revolution, republicanism as a concept was able to hide and conceal particular interests while creating the perception of a unified front (Shalhope 1982). Republicanism in the contemporary patriot movement operates like a phantom, concealing as much as it reveals. The concept, as in revolutionary times, served as both critique (anti-monarchical) and vision for future social and governmental relations.

Contemporary Patriots on "The People"

When asked about an ideal government or what was wrong with our current government, all my respondents invoked the idea of a government run by the "people" or some sort of republican form of government. A typical response to my questions of the ideal form of government was given by Roy, "Ideal government huh. Oh my god, you get a government to uphold your rights...the government needs to get back to where the people are the leaders anymore, that is what it really needs to get back to. Where the people have a say so in what the outcome is." Paul says something similar,

"I would like to see it made possible for the common person to get back into the government. I would like to see our government go back to being run by a constitution, which worked fine for 200 and some years, and all of a sudden it is out-dated, or doesn't apply anymore. I would like to see them going back to running the country that way." [0202:8]

The People: What It Hides

When I first started interviewing, not everyone used the term republic, but the phantom republic and republicanism was always at the edge of our conversation, although it took me a few interviews to realize this. When my respondents said a

government by the people, I heard "democracy." But, as I later learned, this was not the case. And when I learned that respondents were talking about a republic, then I thought, yes they are all racists, as "republic" is code for states' rights which is code for the deliberate privileging of whiteness.

But it is really more complicated than that. No one of course said they wanted a "white" nation, although one respondent talked about a "common culture [Cindy]" being necessary. On the other hand some of my respondents praised Martin Luther King and the tactics of the civil right movement, and used examples of institutionalized racism (Tuskegee) to demonstrate the federal government's abuse of power (0308). For others the concept of a republic and the people is sometimes religious (0312). But often the term republic was meant to invoke a populist understanding of the people. "The people" are those who are not in power, often regardless of race or gender.

I will not make the case that patriots in general are not white supremacists, for other researchers have provided plenty of evidence that a patriot ideology and a white supremacists ideology can happily co-exist (Aho 1990, Akins 1998). But to argue that all of the patriot movement is white supremacist is a mistake. Theoretically what is interesting is the way in which the terms "patriot" and "republic" can be vague enough to unite individuals who may have very different perceptions of patriotism and republican forms of governance. Among patriots, while there may be variation in what it actually means, what it critiqued—republicanism as a critical discourse—showed more unity.

The People: What it Critiques (democracy)

While there were various versions (some white supremacist, some religious, some race-blind³¹) of the ideal republic, democracy was a concept with greater consensus.

Democracy, for the patriots, always leads to corruption while a republic somehow limits corruption. I asked Fred what would be the best form of government and the following exchange took place:

A: Unless it would be under a creation of a republic, not a democracy. Democracy is two wolves and a chicken asking what's for dinner?

Q: Who are the wolves and who are the chicken in this analogy?

A: Well, the wolves are in there right now [laughs] and we are the chickens. (0312)

Here is my exchange with Linda:

Q: What would you think is the ideal form of government?

A: The one we had.

Q: What does that mean to you?

A: It means that I am the person running government and that we the people trusted the people we sent up to Washington D.C. to become our representatives. And it didn't mean that they were going to be a democratic democracy. Because that means they eventually become dictators which they are doing right now. ... In other words, politicians in a democracy change the laws whenever they feel like it. We get use to one law and then they go and change it. And that is what we have today, but under a republic this does not happen. (0307:14)

The problem with a democracy for patriots is that it is inherently corrupt. And whenever a republic is invoked it is usually simultaneously a critique of the corruption of the current political system. In the above quotes this is already evident. The current government is being run by "wolves" who are out to eat the citizen "chicken," or run by

³¹ Of course race-blind conceptions of "the people" would generally uphold the existing white supremacist culture. But I don't think my respondents have a sophisticated understanding of conceptions of race and the ways in which the ideology of race-blind is actually a means for perpetuating an unfair racial system.

"dictators," and it is no longer "constitutionally bound" as Tom tells us. Another patriot argued democracy would not be necessarily bad, if we actually had one,

We don't live under a democracy today because the people don't really rule anything. If it was a democracy, a true democracy we would not have NAFTA or GATT. When they came up it was about 85-90% of the people that didn't want NAFTA or GATT, they were both rammed down our throats. Now in a true democracy, that wouldn't be true. So we're not under a democracy.
(0308:11)

For many patriots the root of the corruption comes down to money. Jack went on to say, "Makes you wonder who's in charge? Who is financing everything, they get their boys in there, it doesn't matter what you vote. Money, money, money just follow the money." Fred put it this way, "it's all about power, control, about money. Now you can follow the money and find out where it's coming from."³²

A large proportion of patriot publications I reviewed document the corruption evident in our current government system. Most patriots believe in the New World Order conspiracy where the fundamental goal of government is to take money from the people and to quell any rebellious citizens who might protest the suctioning of money or the increased control over our day-to-day lives.³³ The money goes to a privileged elite who benefit from government largesse. In fact control (operationalized by many patriots as more laws) is itself linked to making money. "[the government] is a money making businesses they are there to make money. And the more laws they pass the more money they make (0314). I will review patriot theories of wealth and money in chapter 6.

³³ I review the New World Order extensively in chapter 6, see also appendix 3 for a patriot source on the NWO..

A republic is somehow resistant to corruption. But most respondents were unsure about how that would actually work. One patriot, Linda, a leader of a cell and a prominent patriot, worked out how we could keep our leaders accountable to the people.

I would run a government very similar to how our republic was set up. The flaw in this [current] government, the concept is gorgeous, the flaw is that we are too big. So our forefathers didn't have this because they had little communities and little towns. They could not even begin to envision what our country has become. But there is no reason that we had to get too big for our system to work. We have grids across America that are divided into 36 square miles that are townships. Now I say that every township should have a representative. Our republican form of government should work just as well in a township and then all the way to the top, a perfect representation of the people's wishes. That is almost a democracy in some sense of the word, in that you are electing officials. But we were a democratic republic. So what I say instead of having a statewide election, where you have people running that you never talk to or that you never see, you don't know them...But if you took this country, and it is already grided out in townships because all of our legal descriptions for land. So in 36 sq. miles [the size of a township] a representative has a chance to go the houses, maybe not everyone's but certainly enough. [He] can do public speeches, he can reach his people. You know who you are voting for. You send your best representative, you get your people involved again. And you make this a national cause to get people involved. And there will always be those who don't want to be. But the way the government is running right now is that they don't want people involved, they don't want people to know, because if they did they would be putting it into the paper: we are having a public meeting, the following things will be discussed." Do you ever see that, no. We are running a government now by concealment because those in power want to make the decisions. So that is my ideal government, you put the government back to the people, you put it back into the townships, you let the townships elect somebody. Those people then go to the county level. How ever many townships you have that is how many sit in the county, not a board of supervisors. It could work. Once you get to the county level then you have all these township people, and then you have those elect the [state] Senate and house representatives. The body chooses it and this is the way our government used to work. So then we put all these people in the state government, and the same thing happens there, they choose their best member to go to Congress and the U.S. Senate. In this system you have a complete filtering down of all kinds of what is going on. Don't you. Because the guy is going to report back to his fellow people at the senate, and so on. Perfect government. That is what we need. [0303:6]

Virtue and Corruption: The History Virtuous (vigilant) Citizens Keep Corruption at Bay

Political and social thinkers of the pre-revolutionary period had a dilemma as the strains between English interests and colonial interests grew. If the colonies were not to be ruled by a new monarch what was to be the new system of governance and of social control? In recent European history, a society's people had heretofore been ruled by the tradition of the divine right of kings backed up by the use of force when necessary. Masses heretofore were subjugated. How could these masses now be the seat of power in a new republican form of government? The answer, in the republican conception of the world, was civic virtue. "The eighteenth century mind was thoroughly convinced that a popularly based government cannot be supported without virtue" (Wood 1969:68). Civic virtue is the suspension of the pursuit of self-interest, "the capacity to place the good of the commonwealth above one's own." (Appleby 1992:21).

Civic virtue constructs a theoretical ideal of how citizens should work and live and how then governments (and those who work in government should work and live). It is a moral vision that attempts to bind the parts—citizens, representatives, systems of governance—into one whole that will thrive or destruct as one whole. Civic virtue is more than a political discourse; it is a social theory about an ideal body and how it governs itself. Republicanism was not so blind as to deny that we each had personal interests. Wood (1969) argues "no one of course denied that the community was filled with different and clashing interests. But apart from the basic conflict between governors and people [clashing interests] were not to be dignified by their incorporation into formal political theory" (58). This theoretical blindness to divisive self-interest may be because divisiveness in 18th century political philosophy is considered a "sign of sickness." Many

18th century thinkers regarded division among the people as both dangerous and destructive” and arising from non-virtuous activity like “false ambition, avarice or revenge” of either individual citizens or their representatives (59). Civic virtue was supposed to be an answer to this divisiveness. A widely held belief in civic virtue would (it was hoped) goad this new society and its citizens into working for the good of the community.

The goal of republican government, and those who ran government, was the furtherance of the common good. “To make the people’s welfare—the public good—the exclusive end of government became for the Americans, as one colonial general put it, their ‘Polar Star’ (Wood 1969:55). A government for the common good was possible because it would be inhabited by disinterested men. Thomas Paine argued, representatives would drop their personal or party interests at the door of the government and be “disinterested men. Who could have no interest of their own to seek and ‘would employ their whole time for the public good; then there would be but one interest, the good of the people at large’ (1777.)

But in a republican conception of governance government must always be watched because it was quite likely to become tyrannical. Power was likely to corrupt. Republican forms attempted to keep power from becoming tyrannical by requiring that they be representational of the people. Quoting a colonial preacher, Wood argues, “Any government which ‘lacked a proper representation of the people’ or was in any way even ‘independent of the people’ was liable to violate the common good and become tyrannical” (56).

But the primary force keeping government power in check was its citizens, who were to be both virtuous and vigilant. Wood (1969) argues, “in a republic each man must be persuaded to submerge his personal wants into the greater good of the whole” (68). The citizen often imagined in republican discourse is that of the god fearing farmer bound to community and the dampening of private interest to the interest of the community (Appleby 1992).

The burden of the great experiment of republicanism, of a government by the people, fell on its citizens. A government could only govern for the good of the people if the people were vigilant, were involved in politics and watchful for the ever-possible concentration of power. If a nation's people (white propertied men that is) exhibited civic virtue then the nation would thrive. The citizen was not a passive on-looker of politics but a participant. This is in stark contrast to liberalism's belief that a nation's success depends on each member pursuing their own personal interests.

Republicanism is a religious discourse (Williams and Alexander 1994). It is not just about governance but about the interrelationship between morality and good governance. For a nation to be prosperous (for the common good to be fulfilled) its people had to be morally upright (virtuous). A republican government did not eschew questions of morality, questions of which values were right, but put them front and center, this is what the common good was suppose to be about. Wood (1969) argues that in the colonial period enlightened rationalism and evangelical Calvinism were not at odds. Both, when interpreted in a republican frame, placed revolutionary emphasis on the general will of the community and on the responsibility of the collective people to define it” (60). The moral part of the equation I return to in the next chapter.

Contemporary Patriots on Virtue

As discussed in the identity chapter, patriots see themselves as vigilant citizens out to expose and fight corruption, so it is no surprise that their conception of good government relies on a politically active citizenry.

But even the guys like Jefferson and Adams and Washington, had more sense than all of educated people that we have got now put together...And they said when it gets out of control then you have to take up your guns and take your government back again. But the people they don't have the guts for that. And see a little group can't do nothing, they will squash you in a second. It is the people's fault for letting them get away with doing what they are doing (0314:17)

The key line in the quote above is “it is the people’s fault for letting them get away with what they are doing.” As in classical republicanism, for patriots it is people’s vigilance that disrupts potential government corruption. I heard this sentiment echoed many times in my interviews. Doc argued, “a republic avoids that [corruption and its ultimate destruction] by people understanding and believing in a republic and being willing to fight to preserve it (0311:30). Another patriot strongly argued that the American people were now servants because of our political inactivity:

we are no longer a republic we are no longer a democracy, we are what the Romans use to call a dulocracy³⁴. A dulocracy is when the public servant becomes so powerful *because of the license and neglect on the part of the voter* that they become the masters and we become the servants (0302:10).

Similarly Linda, one of the patriot cell leaders, voiced:

What we are trying to get across here is that this is a precarious situation. Here we have this beautiful system of government, the best in the world. It is being eroded by ignorance, it is eroded by blindness because we are just not paying attention. We are very close, we are far closer than people imagine to losing everything in this country. (0303:10)

³⁴ According to the Webster Unabridged Dictionary (1996) a dulocracy (also spelled doulocracy) is “a government by slaves.” In the respondent’s usage he is clearly using more metaphorically in that the people that are suppose to rule in a democracy are no longer entitled citizens, but are slaves, made so by the rulers.

While these are critiques about the ineptitudes of the American people, the answer too always comes back to the “people.” We need to get more “people” involved in the government. If we could just get more “people” involved then we could end the inexorable march of corruption and centralization of power.

Ideal government huh. Oh my god, you get a government to uphold your rights...the government needs to get back to where the people are the leaders anymore, that is what it really needs to get back to. Where the people have a say so in the outcome. (0203:15)

Another patriot saw the Constitution as being essentially about a government being run by the people. He argued:

I would like to see it made possible for the common person to get back into the government. I would like to see our government go back to being run by a constitution, which worked fine for 200 and some years, and all of a sudden it is out-dated, or doesn't apply anymore. I would like to see them going back to running the country that way. (0202:8)

Why don't the “people” rise up then? There are many reasons for this, and some I will talk about in the next two chapters but in terms of the ideology of republicanism, what we need is a more vigilant base of citizens, and one aspect that needs major improvement, according to the patriots, is our education. Primarily what the country needs is a more educated citizenry:

But if you go back into the history of our country and you look at the ratio of education to the populace you will find that the people back then had a much higher percentage of people who were basically truly educated. Not being able to read do re mi, but truly educated. They understood the law. Most of them were very, very well aware of the law. Now most people today, including you and me, are not aware of the law, haven't been. And there is such a tremendous change that has taken place to the extent that they are basically dumbing down Americans. [For example] they don't teach American history in grade school anymore. (0311?)

Linda echoed a similar sentiment about education today:

I ran into a high school student here 6 or 7 years ago and I was talking about the Constitution with her, and she said, ‘I had to take a class on that, and it was a stupid subject, my teacher even says that the Constitution should be done away

with.’ The teacher teaching them! So when these kids see we are getting a different form of government, they will think, well what is the big deal.
(0302b:21)

Doc, who was concerned about getting younger people involved in the movement, reflected that getting the education needed to become a good citizen was made harder because young folks were kept too busy:

A: Both of my sons are so busy that they don’t really have time to go into all of this in depth like I do. And I have given papers to several people, but they have to try to keep their life going, their family going, their work going, and they don’t have time to dig into it.

Q: Do you think not having time is part of becoming an indentured servant (*have I already mentioned this or do I need to explain?*)

A. yes ...They (my sons) are being kept so busy just trying to keep a pleasant profitable life that they don’t have time to get into this stuff that you and I are talking about. And I understand that, and I think it is wrong and I think it is intentional by the government (0311:24)

Doc’s quote is conspiratorial, but he sees the factual evidence of key government legislation (trade agreements like NAFTA and GATT loom large in the great NWO conspiracy) that has helped create the harried life of his sons and keeps them and most Americans from becoming engaged citizens. The critique of the American people is a critique about the current American way-of-life, which in this case is a critique of economic pressures on American families—we no longer have any time, we work to survive. While for Doc the lack of vigilant citizens is due to time pressures, other patriots list other causes: we are enslaved to webs of debt and wedded to consumption, for some it is the loosening of sexual mores. There is no universal patriot cause for our decline, nor is there any particular agreed upon time signature for the advent of moral, political and social decay of the American social fabric.

Like classical republicanism and 18th century philosophes, patriot civic virtue views the social fabric as one whole cloth and touches on various institutional realms: political, economic, religious, educational. Disparate social realms are all intertwined.

One woman I interviewed said “the moral condition is connected to the political, which is connected to economics, and business...its all interrelated” (0308:7). All this connects in the patriot worldview to make for a complete lack of civic virtue in the American populace: we lack education and the right education, we don’t have time, we are no longer responsible. This is in contrast to what things were like in the past (or in an ideal future). Embedded in the critiques about government and the political sleepiness of the American people is a critique about the way life is now lived and a strong nostalgia for a mythic simpler past. Contemporary citizens don’t have the time to be noticing what laws are being passed or debated or whom they are voting for. Many of my patriots harkened back to a time where people were more educated, life was simpler, morals stronger, people more “responsible,” they had “less debt”, you could make a living, and were “economically secure.” The people of the past were in short better citizens. There has been an inexorable slipping, a decay of American society, and so follows the government and its people. In the following chapters I am going to talk more specifically about the patriot view of the moral degeneration of the American people and government. But before we turn to the conceptions of morality and religion in the patriot movement, I want to end this chapter with a look at the significance of an ideology of decline, which was central to the 1st century Latin writers’ conception of republicanism.

The Republican Theme of Decline

The theme of degeneration and decline is a universal theme within patriot republican discourse. The earliest republican writers, as *The New American* editors remind us, glorified the earlier days of the Roman Empire from which it had rapidly declined. The people had become fat and more interested in greed and the pursuit of

pleasure. Its people no longer industrious or virtuous, the Roman Empire began to fade. According to *The New American* the American Empire parallels the fading Roman Empire.

This sense of loss and nostalgia betrays the (largely unconscious) privileging of whiteness and masculinity.³⁵ It is in this regard that the patriots are most like the New Right which have used the rhetoric of the dispossessed to rally working class whites to their standard (Durham 2000, Hardisty 1999). By and large patriots don't agree with Republicans, they often see them as part of the same corrupted political and corporate elite, but for a movement to so uniformly glorify a past wrought with violent racial oppression is problematic. Most of the patriots because of their age lived through the Civil Rights and Women's movements. How could a generation of folks who lived through and saw the effects of institutionalized racial and sexual oppression, glorify a past that does not speak to the oppression associated with that past?

The theme of loss, of dispossession, that we have lost something we once had and long to regain, rather than something we had no right to have in the first place, reveals an unconscious privileging of whiteness. Past privileges and well being (while often mythic interpretations) relied on the possession of others' land and labor and life. Within the patriot ideology I have seen little spoken about a future vision, it is an ideology of the past. I think this is for many reasons, including the fact that given their tactics and structure of the movement, the movement has been a politically ineffective force for

³⁵ I argue it is largely unconscious, because of the lengths the majority of my respondents went to distance themselves from the white supremacist ideologies or explicit sexist ideologies. Gallagher also saw this from her respondents (2003).

actual change. But the elision of a more racially inclusive future vision also speaks to the indelible mark of white privilege.

Chapter Six Populism and Conspiracy Theory

The Institutional critique of the American Political Economy: Freedom Lost—the Recreation of American Slavery and the One World Government

Congress once asked Rockefeller how much he paid in taxes and he said nothing. Now I don't agree with that. He lives like a king, big fancy mansion and some other things, now there's got to be a big problem here somewhere. The common people out here are working at Hardy's, McDonalds, they have to pay taxes. Why should the common people pay more taxes and have to live in a slum so that somebody like that can live like a king? Now it shows me that there are a lot of different classes here in this country. We're not all equal. We're not equal in the eyes of the government either if one has to be robbed of his money and another man can keep all of his. (an Arizona patriot)

And believe me we are all slaves, all of us. This is where the money thing comes in. (Linda, leader of a patriot cell in Arizona)

What is the patriot critique of the American political economy? In short they argue political power is not equally distributed, in fact, the scales are tipped to the advantage of one group. They claim that elite power is growing. It is evidenced by the collusion of moneyed interests and political interests. My respondents told me you need “money to get elected,” and “money controls the politician.” The “right” people can't even be elected now, “it is too late.” Although the government is often claimed to be the main perpetrator, the concentration of power extends beyond the government; elites from the financial and corporate sector work in collusion with political elites to hold and extend their power.

The patriots argue that the effect of growing government and elite power drains political power from the “people” and even more emphatically argue that the end game

will lead to an economic and political powerlessness of the American people, a condition they equate with slavery. Some patriots argued we are already enslaved. The “American people” are enslaved because we work for the enrichment of others, our basic rights are being trampled on and there are various systems in place to ensure we are or become a docile populace (through public education which is “dumbing us down”, the media industry through disinformation and entertainment, and the elision of our basic political rights). Who this benefits, patriots argue, are the political and economic elite who gain in this unfair system that concentrates political power and capital to benefit the few. This process of ever growing government and elite power is often referred to as the one world government or new world order. In this chapter I attempt to explicate the mostly conspiratorial patriot critique of the American political economy. I start with what patriot movement leaders have said about the One World Government. I then show how my patriots also see the United States moving toward this one world government, and show how it is mainly about lack of control over political and economic power in their own lives. But first here are some thoughts on conspiracy theory.

Conspiracy as populist political discourse

...once you get your mind opened up that wide, then you can see how the guys with the money are playing this game. They want more money, more control. And once you open up your mind, what is going on comes better into focus. But the average person does not have the foggiest. They don't know that the richest woman in the world is Queen Elizabeth, they don't know that. Or they have never heard of the Committee of 300, which is the 300 richest families in the world. They control everything, drugs, industry, politics, everything. Nothing happens without them saying yes or no. (Leader of an Arizona militia group)

Are these the ravings of paranoid conspiracists? Voices of the populist critique of American elite power? Some blend of both? Hofstadter in his not-so-wise historian's voice of authority declared in a 1963 *Harper's Magazine* that American political life was

characterized by “uncommonly angry minds” “most evident on the extreme right wing...particularly in the Goldwater movement”(Hofstadter 1965:3). This style of political engagement came to be called the “paranoid style” and according to Hofstadter was typified by “heated exaggeration, suspiciousness” and most importantly “conspiratorial fantasy” (4). Movements or other less formal political groupings that espouse conspiracy theories have since been demonized by academics on both the left and the right³⁶. Starting in the 1990’s though, important work in cultural studies and political sociology has attempted to understand conspiracy as a political discourse, usually articulated in a populist narrative form, as a real theory about power which, while limited as effective political discourse, is also productive and indicative of and rooted in particular historical, political, social and cultural conditions.³⁷

Just to be clear, this dissertation assumes that conspiracy theory is a form of populist political discourse. Conspiracy theory, in short, is a theory about real relations of power in American society. Indeed it is a problematic theory and I will return to that at the end of this chapter. But I argue we should not dismiss conspiracy thinking outright merely because of the form it takes. And below I outline some of the reasons why we

³⁶ Hofstadter (1965), Daniel Bell (1963), Lipset and Raab (1970) are the patriarchs of the view of conspiracy theory as denotative of pathology in its followers. I don’t want to review their work here and not all of what they write is to be discounted but they come to their work with the basic assumption that politics as usual is fine. Hofstadter was a consensus historian—the democratic machine was working just fine, the people were perfectly represented in the give-and-take politics of a liberal state. Any one person or group who thought otherwise just must not realize how power really operates or is irrationally paranoid. Even activist/progressive academics though have discounted the conspiratorial ravings of right wing populists. On the left there is the assumption that populist conspiratorial expression can only support exclusionary political projects like fascism (Adorno 1952; Fromm [1941] 1994) white supremacy (Berlet and Lyons 2000; Dees and Corcoran 1996) or anti-Semitism (Berlet and Lyons 2000; Stern 1996).

³⁷ See Fenster 1999; Goldberg 2001; Laclau 2005.

should take it as not lunatic ravings but as a form (though problematic form) of political discourse.

First populist conspiracy theory should be distinguished from every day conspiracies that do occur. A conspiracy is, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, “a secret plot by a group to do something harmful or unlawful.” Conspiracies do happen. For example, in recent headlines it is reported that President George Bush conspired along with other members of his cabinet and advisors to manipulate intelligence and silence critics in order to build a case for going to war against Iraq. This was a conspiracy and it really happened. Populist conspiracy theory, however, has a master conspiracy that goes beyond the day-to-day conspiratorial workings of the government.

This master conspiracy (as I will talk more about later in this chapter) assumes that there is a tiny elite that orchestrates and controls almost everything. This elite is all-powerful, more God-like in their power and omniscience than human. They work together and are single-minded in purpose. Their purpose is to fleece (financially or politically) the people. Thus the narrative form of conspiracy theory constructs two antagonistic groups, the elite and the people making it a populist narrative about relations of power, where one side is all powerful and the other powerless.

I think here we begin to see why it is a narrative form that is popular in both popular culture (evidence in the popularity of conspiracy oriented television shows like X-Files, movies like *The Matrix*, and best selling books like Dan Brown’s *The DaVinci Code*) as well as a theory of real power relations in American society³⁸. It is reflective of growing feelings of mistrust for government and corporate power, and in its narrative

³⁸ See Knight (2000) for reflections on the cultural, political and social ramifications of the emergence of what he sees as a “conspiracy culture” since Kennedy’s assassination.

form provides a hero who confronts the all-powerful enemy (and in its popular cultural forms often wins). Knight (2000) argues that we all now live in a culture of conspiracy that is an “expression of doubt and distrust” regarding the major institutions—corporate and government—which seem to control our lives (44).

I would not argue that all of my respondents believed in the master conspiracy—but they certainly knew of it and none had dismissed it outright. In part this is because of their own feelings of powerlessness—that external forces have more control over your life than one’s own individual choices or efforts. Mirowsky and Ross (1983) found (not surprisingly) that those with low socioeconomic status were more likely to believe that external forces had more control than their own individual inclinations and that these feelings of powerlessness led to mistrust of various social institutions (and for some clinical paranoia). My respondents were not clinically paranoid—they were not likely to believe that these external forces were out to get them personally³⁹, but that the external forces (the elite) are out to get the American people⁴⁰. Conspiracy theory, then, is a theory about power and powerlessness...it explains powerlessness, and powerlessness is real in this American century because the power to effect political change is not equally accessed by all.

Power—political and economic—in American society today is highly concentrated. The very institutions that conspiracy theorists love to target—the trilateral

³⁹ Although in one case this might be true but I think the paranoia was founded not on fantasy but actual FBI infiltration of the group she was leading and harassment of her by the FBI as part of a nation-wide crack down on militia groups after the McVeigh’s bombing in Oklahoma. She was an outspoken and well known leader in Arizona, so it would no be surprising if her and her groups were targeted by the FBI.

⁴⁰ It is precisely this characteristic of conspiracy theory that led Hofstadter to label it as paranoid.

commission, the IMF, the WTO, the Federal Reserve, the Heritage Foundation, the Council on Foreign Relations, do wield tremendous power, and often conduct their work with little transparency⁴¹. It is also indeed the case that financial power and those representing finance have had significant influence over the determinants of our global and U.S. financial system (Helleiner 1994). In short, as Fenster eloquently puts it:

although conspiracy as a totalizing, instrumental entity might not exist, then relatively secretive, and at times quite open, concentrations of power, built through economic and social connections among elite groups, do. The ability of class, class fraction, or alliances of classes to influence and at times, control the state demonstrates the degree to which certain corporate and private nongovernmental institutions constitute a measure of great—and if not secret, neither public nor consensual—power (63).

It is indeed the case as countless political theorists and analysts have demonstrated, bemoaned and continue to analyze, that corporate, political and financial power are ever more concentrated and ever further from the influence of the common citizen (Balanyá 2000; Cohn, McBride, and Wiseman 2000; Cox and Skidmore-Hess 1999; Domhoff 1990; Phillips 2002). Major financial and economic decisions which influence millions of individual lives are made by organizations including the International Monetary Fund, the Federal Reserve, the World Trade Organization that are altogether removed from the democratic processes. Trade agreements like NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) and the financial and political architecture created largely by the U.S. and Britain under Reagan and Thatcher which freed up nation-bound capital and corporations to freely roam the globe in search of profits have led to insecurity for employees over the status of their jobs. In addition, the overall

⁴¹ For research on the Council on Foreign Relations see (Parmar 2001) for the Federal Reserve see (Greider 1989) on the role of multinational organizations see (Babb 2001; Berger 2000; Jacobson 2003).

composition of jobs in the United States which has moved from a manufacturing union base to a service based economy with declining union power leaves individuals to fend for themselves in a climate of “globalization” that certainly seems beyond state control (a myth) but certainly beyond individual control.

In addition, American government domestic priorities have shifted over the last 40 years becoming increasingly neo-liberal. Budgetary priorities have shifted from a war on poverty to a war on those who are impoverished, as social services have been scaled back and are increasingly coupled with work requirements while tax cuts for the rich are now de rigueur. Local and federal budgets now focus more on war, policing and prisons and away from other public expenditures like education and mass transit.

While expanding concentrations of power, a lack of transparency and outright secrecy continues to be the norm in American politics, there is a corresponding closure of political or social space to operate as a “citizen.” Media outlets and the news itself is owned by an ever smaller group of transnational corporations (Disney, AOL-Time-Warner, and Viacom), the news itself is more and more “manufactured” by political and corporate PR firms rather than reported thus reducing the outlets for real news or the ability of the non-connected or moneyed to access mass media channels. Traditional civil society organizations, that in theory connect individuals with the larger governing structure and which Tocqueville in the 1830s noted as so crucial to a functioning democracy, have also eroded. The erosion of civil society—of labor unions, of civic associations, of political associations—together with the concentration of power has led to little political space for actual political activity beyond the ballot box or joining your favorite interest group.

For many citizens this gives a feeling of powerlessness, or as Fenster argues insignificance—a feeling not all together about class, though significantly coextensive with class position. Fenster argues conspiracy theory resonates with those who have a sense of “insignificance.” Insignificance, or powerlessness refers to “both the ability to be invisible to power and the condition of political voicelessness.” It is the systemic condition of insignificance that, Fenster argues, “provides the context for conspiracy’s theory emergence (as a pathology) and a ‘cover’ for the political subject (as a tactical response)” (xiii). Fenster is arguing that the existence of conspiracy theory shows that there is not a pathology evident in those individuals that believe in it, as Hofstadter would argue, but that it is a pathology resulting from structures of power that are (nearly) closed to democratic processes and forces of change outside of elite factions. In addition, he argues that those who are insignificant find significance through engaging with conspiracy theory “by reading the signs of the powerful, in finding and investigating conspiracy,” by being in the know—unlike the countless masses who live in ignorance of the real manifestations of power.

In the rest of the chapter I turn to the patriot oppositional culture more broadly and my respondents specifically. Analysis of the interview transcripts revealed that financial and political institutions were most often characterized as institutions of control. I find Fenster’s argument that belief in conspiracy theory comes from a sense of insignificance quite on target as evidenced in my respondent’s transcripts. I’ve organized the rest of the chapter in the following way. I first look at the key cultural sources of conspiracy theory that were mentioned by my respondents, Devvy Kidd and The John

Birch Society.⁴² I then describe my respondents' views and attempt to show that one, their views about conspiracy are narratives of external control, and thus narrativize feelings of powerlessness. And two, control comes from fundamentally two different sources, legal and financial, and I try to convey their views of control that emanate from both politics and finance.

Cultural Sources of Populist Conspiracy Theory

Devy Kidd

Devy Kidd was mentioned by about half of my respondents as someone they read. She has been active in the patriot movement for over 20 years, mostly as a tax protestor. She is a firm believer that the coming one world government will enslave us all. The following excerpts are from her website devvykidd.org. As one of the best of the patriot conspiracy proselytizers she starts with the actual state of the American economy. Devvy (2004) writes,

There is no reason for poverty in a bountiful land such as America. In 2002, 34.9 million Americans didn't get enough to eat each day; more than 13 million were children. Not through any fault of their parents, but because good paying jobs have been wholesaled off U.S. soil, family farmers have been driven off the land by corporate greed and the Fed[ederal Reserve Bank]. Americans have destroyed their own job bases by supporting politicians in Congress who have betrayed this republic by supporting these destructive and unconstitutional treaties. The result is American workers in the bread line while populations of foreign countries now have jobs that should have stayed here for our people (2004:¶14).

The main perpetrators of the growing poverty and difficulties of the American working and middle class are greedy corporations and corrupt politicians who do their bidding. The unconstitutional treaties she mentions include GATT and NAFTA. She

⁴² For those who are interested in the sources of conspiracy theory there are many. Some of the books that were mentioned by more than one respondent as formative of their views include, the *Committee of 300* by John Nelson, *The Creature from Jekyll Island* a conspiratorial view of the creation of the Federal Reserve. Mark Koernke was a major leader in the patriot movement who helped proselytize CT.

points to the very real economic problems many Americans have had to contend with in the last 35 years of economic restructuring which has undermined the manufacturing and union base and replaced it with service sector jobs which often do not pay adequate wages nor offer benefits typical of manufacturing jobs. She offers up headlines from recent newspapers that serve as reminders of continual downsizing and plant closures: “Montgomery Wards closes its doors; Sears announces closing 89 stores (2004:¶2).”

For Kidd, those who are working against American interests are most Congressional representatives and corporations. Often in the service of greed, corporations want to decrease wage burdens and increase profits, and congressional members’ pockets are lined with corporate payouts to pass legislation (like NAFTA) that the corporations need to keep profits high. So far Kidd does not stray far from the truth.

But Kidd’s answer for why this is happening is not sociological but individualistic and conspiratorial. It is not in the nature of capitalism, or even the nature of elite power that explains the current economic woes people face. For Kidd the cause of this financial ruin is the New World Order.

As nations, economically, politically and culturally become more interdependent, the NWO conspiracy theory assumes international interdependence decreases American sovereignty and will compromise the American people’s interests (as indeed it has for many working class Americans). Important recent political and economic events have confirmed in the eyes of believers their own position: the growing international financial and legal architecture including the WTO, NAFTA, CAFTA, INTERPOL, and of course the United Nations. Why all this internationalization? According to the NWO theory it benefits an economic and political elite, which seeks to enslave the American public and

seek ever more power, control and money. More control and centralization of power occur through scaring the American public, so wars or wars on terror, or in times of crisis, governments use these events (or create them) in order to continue to centralize and usurp power from the “people.” The Patriot Act, the Iraq war, the continuing “war on terrorism” are ways to enrich a few while controlling the masses by keeping them fearful and centralizing power along the way.

In some versions of the NWO conspiracy, the elites are Jewish financiers, and it retains a history of Anti-Semitism. In other versions the elite enemies are not Jewish, but just elites, and for the Christian Right the elite are Satan-inspired, leading not only into a one world government but also a one world (non-Christian) religion. Kidd is publicly agnostic on who *they* are; she refers to them as the “global masters” or “One World Order architects” who will bring communism and totalitarianism to American shores.

John Birch Society

The John Birch Society is another organization that has maintained a powerful influence in the patriot world. The NWO theory that is propounded by Kidd (and many others) is also found in the pages of *The New American*, the monthly news magazine produced by the John Birch Society. All my respondents said they read this magazine—so it is an important ideological resource of the patriot movement. As discussed in chapter five *The New American* editors use a classical republican critical discourse—but it is also a populist and conspiratorial discourse.

Recall that the John Birch Society was started in 1958 by, Robert Welch, a former candy company executive. Caught up in the anti-Communist cultural fervor and government propaganda of the 1950’s Welch launched what would become the largest, best organized and most visible of the anti-Communist crusades in post-World War II

United States (Stewart 2002). At its peak in the 1960's it is estimated that it had over 100,000 members, 400 bookstores, and a large cadre of speakers with nation wide tour schedules (Stewart 2002).

Despite the fall of communist governments worldwide the JBS remained relevant because it was essentially not an anti-communist organization but a critique of growing government power (creeping socialism in JBS lingo) and economic concentration at the expense of "the people." Stewart (2002) argues that JBS was able to survive the fall of communism because of a reliance on a master conspiracy of which communism was only one stage in a grand populist narrative of an ever more powerful elite working toward One World Government and the eventual enslavement of all peoples of the world.

The New American pages are filled with examples of the encroaching power of the elite. In a July 2003 *The New American* the pages are filled with the unmasking of the powerful—their contradictions, their lies, their masterful and unstoppable use of power to enrich themselves. For example the "power elite" are finding little resistance to recent free trade agreements. The article is headlined "trading away jobs and liberty" (5). It warns of future free trade agreements and of President Bush's Trade Promotion Authority that allows for little citizen response to the agreements as trade agreements are "polished off in a mere 21 days" and are approved by the House and Senate by large majorities in record time. For *The New American* editors the trade agreements are examples of the loss of liberty. *The New American's* critique of free trade agreements is couched in populist anti-elite discourse that threatens both liberty and jobs. But in this case *The New American* editors also talk use nationalistic rhetoric. The free trade agreements will ultimately sterr the United States on the "fast track to self-demolition and

oblivion, from world superpower to Third World has-been, a mere cog in the new one-world imperium” (Jasper 2003:5)

In another article, the editors highlight the contradiction between rhetoric and action within the Bush administration. The underlying message is that those in power cannot be trusted—they will manipulate the people at any cost. But *The New American* will expose them (as opposed to the mainstream papers). In the following excerpt from the same issue they highlight Bush’s condemnation of Iraqi television’s news broadcast of dead American soldiers but then point to the same practices of the American army.

U.S. forces also properly condemned Iraqi television and the Arab Al-Jazeera network for displaying gruesome images of American servicemen killed in battle. But the Bush administration broadcast images of the bodies of Uday and Qusay Hussein, Saddam’s loathsome sons and henchmen, killed by U.S. forces after an intense firefight in Mosul (Benoit 2003:7).

Citing a *Washington Post* article (Ricks 2003) detailing an army tactic of taking family members as hostages to get wanted Iraqi’s to turn themselves in, *The New American* argued that the means to the ends were unjustifiable:

It’s bad enough that our government went to war against Iraq to enforce United Nations Security Council resolutions without a Congressional declaration of war, after clotting the air with alarmist lies about Sadam Hussein’s supposed arsenal. But the means being employed in the open-ended occupation of Iraq may have lasting effects on the integrity of our armed forces as well. (Benoit 2003:7)

In this article the people are those who are reading the newspapers and are being manipulated and lied to by the administration and it is represented by “our armed forces” who pay the ultimate price for the power plays of the elites in power.

Finally in an article called “totalitarian medicine” Norman Grigg, an editor of *The New American*, argues that the diagnosis of Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is not only problematic but may be a political artifice. The very real problem of over diagnosing problem-behavior and opting for a medical solution is couched in *The*

New American article in terms of pitting parents against the “experts.” Grigg’s discussion of ADHD is put into a master frame of distrust of science and experts. The rhetorical strategy in the article is to expose where experts fail as well as where they come in conflict with the needs of people to make decisions over their own lives. The following quote combines both aspects of the master frame. First, the experts are not really experts. Second, the point of the quote from the American Psychiatric Association’s Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) is to show that the “people” and parents are right to challenge expert knowledge. (And in this case I completely agree!):

According to the 1994 edition of the American Psychiatric Association’s Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (commonly abbreviated as DSMV-IV and often referred to as the bible of psychiatry), “there are no laboratory tests that have been established as diagnostic in the clinical assessment of [ADHD].” Nor are there any “specific physical features associated with” the disorder, which means that in making their diagnosis about the need for Ritalin, physicians must rely largely on the ambiguous criteria enunciated in DSMV-IV, supplemented by subjective reports from various so-called experts (Grigg 2003:19).

Later in the article Griggs quotes (ironically) another psychiatrist who argues that ADHD “is a construct of the psycho-pharmacology industry” (20). Grigg attempts to fit a legitimate problem into a populist master frame which pits experts against the people, but also links these experts with an economic elite which seek to benefit from defining “childhood itself as a form of mental illness requiring mental intervention” (20).

Throughout the pages of *The New American* current problems are couched in a republican discourse as talked about in chapter five but also a populist discourse. *New American’s* editors often use nationalist discourse as well—something less likely with my patriot respondents who though were very likely use populist discourse to explain current

political and economic conditions. But overall there are strong similarities between *The New American* discourse and the critical discourse espoused by my respondents.

Populism, Powerlessness and Control

My respondents almost universally characterized the current “state of affairs” as one orchestrated by a conspiring elite. It is important to note that while the critique was universally conspiratorial, there was no agreement on who the elite were, if they had already taken control, if they had then when they took control, and whether or not it was too late for positive social change. Each patriot had their own, and often changing version of events, and you can find theories about the advent of the usurpation of power from the American people going back all the way to the Constitution and those who see the fall beginning as recently as Clinton. But there is no denying that conspiracy, or a theory of elite control is an important filter through which to understand day to day events. Following are some quotes to help illustrate how a conspiratorial worldview shaped my respondents’ understanding of the U.S. political economy.

Much of the patriot political economic critique is about the changing nature of the American political economy as we have economically restructured through various federal government supports for globalization. And patriots, unlike many Americans, argue and point to government legislation that has supported economic restructuring that has for the most part made it easier for capital and more difficult for wage earners. Here is one rather long quote from one of the militia leaders about globalization. I asked what he thought of the groups on the left that were protesting some of the very same processes he and other militias were critiquing and I used the protest in Seattle in 1999 against the WTO as an example. He replied:

I think it is too little too late. A lot of these groups have good information but they have gone about it the wrong way, socially unacceptable what they are doing, rioting and demonstrating. But they have got it right. And this thing in Seattle about the shipping of many jobs over seas and the lowering of American wages. These people are right on the money they have a right to gripe, but they are too late. Every state in the United States is working on crowd control, police tactics, non-lethal weapons, on and on. They (the government) know troubles are coming. They know there is going to be riots and demonstrations, but this thing is still going on, it's still going to happen. In fact, it's happened. People just don't realize how far into this we are. In Europe they don't have this problem. They are so far ahead of us now, in far as being conditioned for a one-world-system. America is resisting because we don't want to lose our freedoms, we don't want to lose our Constitution, and the high paying jobs, and our standard of living. And its funny, instead of bringing the world up to our standard of living, they are tearing the United States down to make a level playing field. The one world order can't work if there is one country that doesn't need it or doesn't benefit. What do we gain by a one-world-system? We don't gain anything, because we have to take a step down in order to join their system. So why would we want to do it? That has been the feeling for a long time, I don't know if it is still prevalent or not. I believe that the riots in Seattle and the fighting and demonstrations against GATT, against NAFTA, or as I call in SHAFTA, which is what we are getting, and I think it is fine (the demonstrations), I just think they have done what they have done to us. I think they are too late. And maybe in some ways the militia movement may be too late. (0202:15-16)

Who are they? They are "the people with money in this world, and there are people with more money than the government has that are calling the shots." They are "the ones that have the agenda, the one-world-order agenda. People laugh when you say one world order, but its coming just as sure as God made little green apples" (0202:5). I asked him what me meant by the one world order.

We are talking about a one-world currency, a one world government. All countries will be run by this government. A lot of people think it is the United Nations, it might be, but I don't know. An international economy, where there are no more American products, they are world products. Everyone goes into a melting pot. Nationalism is done away with, pride of country, we are all workers for the same man, to work for the good of man, that kind of stuff. But in reality what it is, everyone goes to work for the rich few. The rich guys get richer the poor guys just will work a lot. But what about the little guy? What would happen if the little guy got smart and said hey, we aren't getting anything out of this, you guys are making all the money we are just working. They don't want that to happen. And the people that have tried to change that sort of thing

like Martin Luther King, I don't believe he was killed because he was black, I believe he was killed because he was uniting the little guy. They didn't want that. And if you look at, I want you to read that book (*The Committee of 300*) if you can find it, it is on Amazon.com. It will tell you a lot. I am reading a new book now, *Treason the New World Order*, it is a small book, if you want it I'll have to dig it out. (0202:5-6)

Many of my respondents pointed to NAFTA and other trade agreements as important documents which were evidence of the ways in which government has sold out the "little people." But the critiques of real economic conditions are almost always used as evidence of a conspiratorial elite at work. Most of the literature and patriot leaders purporting conspiracy operate in the same way—they start with real economic conditions that really are creating difficult economic conditions for many Americans and impoverished peoples throughout the world—as did Devvy Kidd in my example above—and then move the blame to a tight-knit, though identifiable group who are orchestrating things behind the scenes.

There is some attraction and power in the act of naming names, or in the act of discovering those names in some book. Rather than abstract external forces like globalization or economic restructuring, conspiracy theory does name names. The discovery gives a sense of certainty where there really is no certainty. It also helps make sense of everyday life experiences for those who are not economically secure and seem politically powerless. It is a form of religion.

My respondents would often point to some conspiratorial moment in history as evidence of two things, first that there *is* an elite at work behind the scenes and two to show that the workings of secrecy are always in the interest of the elite's personal gain and at the expense of the American people. Wars are for the enrichment of a few at great

expense to the people in terms of both financial sacrifice and by the sacrifice of individual lives to the war machine:

...they conned the people into World War II. Roosevelt knew when we were going to be bombed, 11 days before. That's been on a number of TV channels that he knew about it beforehand, he disarmed the people at Pearl Harbor so they couldn't even fight back, all their stuff was locked up. So we've been led into these massive deals just for the personal gain of a few people that controlled a lot of the financial system all over the world. If people really think they put somebody in office these days, they've got rocks in their heads, because you might put a county sheriff in office, somebody low on the totem pole, but when you get up to uh congressional level, it's very hard to put somebody into office because usually they already have their men picked, they finance them, and those men since they're financed by these people they're going to vote how they want it voted, pass the laws that they want. So we live in a massive world of corruption. (0308:13)

Similarly this respondent saw all wars as about pursuing the interests of corporate concerns.

Men have through the years sacrificed their lives thousands of them because they believe in this country. Now I would also say that many men have died to promote money projects. In Guatemala, Coca-Cola was a big instigator. A lot of times world wars and conflicts are fought over the world market rather than ideals. They always said, "the war to end all wars, the war to keep the world free for democracy," and all that (pause). You know, if someone has got an axe to grind, someone is going to get rich. (0202:11)

As if quoting from the John Birch Society's *New American*, this respondent tied liberal concerns to the one world government.

You know we could actually buy the Federal Reserve back for so much money but we ain't going to do that. It's the whole thing. You got different factions trying to do different things, environmentalists, feminist movement, just on and on and on, and I look at it as a spoked wheel. Each one of these factions is trying to do something and they may be in contrast with the opposites but yet they're both working for the same thing, a one-wheel government. And its Marxist. If you want a good description of where this country is going, read the history of Germany. Or if you want something that really is scary, read *1984*, or *Animal Farm* by George Orwell. Some of the pigs got more rights than the other pigs you know. We are in another era like Rome. The Fall of Rome was the same thing, and a democracy cannot stand forever. There has never been one that hasn't fallen and fallen from within. (0309:18)

As you can see with this last quote the ruling elite are interested in controlling the lives of individuals. It is the named external force that impinges on our own. But the elite's main goal is enrichment through control. This last section was an introduction to the ways in which my respondents used conspiracy theory to understand the past and current events. The following sections examine how my respondents basically saw elite power as the ability to control and manipulate both the political and financial system as a means to control "the people." Power equals control—precisely what a lot of the patriots were lacking in their own lives. Control was a powerful theme in my interviews. Below are some quotes to show how control oozed into the narratives of political and economic critique.

Evidence of Government Control

To say that the patriots mistrusted the federal government is an understatement. The mistrust was often evident even in conversations that were not directly related to the federal government. This quote is from Mark who was telling me why he became a herbalist. The knowledge would help in his day-to-day life, but in case of catastrophe he could rely on his knowledge and not have to depend on the government (whose motivations are not to be trusted) for help:

...Mostly I figure if the country falls, just knowing what plants are edible, how to prepare them, how to help somebody else if they're sick, knowing which plants will help them herbal-wise because we can see a lot of times when our government, if they do move into an area, they're not really concerned about the people, they're concerned about the power they can wield, they're not concerned about the health of people. If they were concerned about the health of the people, would they let Blacks get syphilis? I mean they let them have it until they died. This started in the 1930s when they were doing the research but this [government abuse of power] has been going on for years. (0308:26)

The theme of control, often through the government was a powerful one in my interviews. Often my respondents made comparisons between the fall of the Roman

Empire and current U.S. policies but just as often Hitler's control over the German populace was cited as evidence of an empire about to fall (this interview occurred before 9-11)

What Hitler had planned is what we have at the UN right now. And his idea of world domination and his beliefs...as far as infrastructure and motivating people to do things for him, you know he was blessed that way, but he is a lunatic otherwise. And to target a groups of people for annihilation, you know come on. I mean this has happened throughout the world throughout history, and you always get some clown up there who wants to be king of the world, the new world order trip, which is exactly what we are bringing in right now. It is hardly any different. More and more you are going to find that they are going to restrict your freedoms every inch of the way. We will become like fascist Germany. They are going to give more power and authority to the FBI, to the cops, to the CIA, to all these other intelligence groups. And you are going to find your phone being tapped right and left.

When I asked this respondent what the point of all this policing power he replied:

Think about it, what is governments' purpose? To control the masses...the nature of bureaucracy is to control and dominate. What was the nature of Hitler, control and dominate. What was the nature of Communism? Dominate. Every government wants to control and dominate the people and suck as much money out of them to further their own interests and handle the people. (0204:9-10)

Other patriots saw the exercise of government control in many aspects of their lives. In the next two sections I am going to talk about the two main areas through which the government exerts more control over the American people's lives: the financial system and the administrative/legal system. But my respondents also named other mechanisms through which we were soon to be or were already controlled—or made into indentured servants. One patriot quoting a local sheriff told me the sheriff claimed that the driver's license was a mechanism for tracking people. This patriot said, "Because that is how [the government/police] see this thing, you got to control the people because the people need control, because people are irresponsible. That sounds like Nazi Germany to me."

(0302:20). For another the fact that we have to work so hard is itself a manifestation of control over our lives: "the government does not want us to have a family unit...my sons

they work so hard they do not have time to look at any of this.” But most specifically—which I think echoes my respondents’ experiences with economic uncertainty—control is manifested through money.

Money as a Form of Control

The patriots I spoke with almost uniformly talked about the financial system (banks, government spending and taxation, the laboring process) as systems of control. Nowhere in the rhetoric of the patriots is its populism more evident than from my conversations with them about money. All the patriots I spoke with, while many held college degrees, were not financially well off. Some were small business owners, some surviving on various government benefits, some working in the cash-only economic underground, some living off the land. All were eking away an insecure and unstable living (for one this was of their own choosing).

Money, for patriots, is about control: John put it this way:

J: I’ll take you, your family, anything you want, your college, your country, and you let me control all aspects of your currency, or money, or foreign exchange, and I can control you.

L: So it is the belief that having control over money means having control over all other aspects?

J: Absolutely. (0311:13)

June tied in debt and the minimum wage as ways in which we are controlled:

J: and so of course people can’t live off the minimum wage...if you control money you control people, which is what we have. To me we live in involuntary servitude because it’s very difficult to go out on your own and start a business because obviously you have to have money and money is very hard to come by...and I think as time goes on and we get more oppressed. Debt too [contributes to our oppression]...during the time of the Depression, a lot of people owned their home or they didn’t have the debt that they have today. They didn’t have credit cards. Debt is a hard slave master and people are just incredibly in debt today and I think part of it is media-generated, you need to buy this car, this home, this color-coordinated furniture. And everything is available on credit and, and then of course also just the cost of things now, trying to keep up with the cost of things to maintain a certain level [is difficult] (0301:5-6)

Many of my respondents compared Americans to indentured servants, working off their individual debt, enslaved to a government and a corporate profit-making machine. By enslavement, it is largely meant that we work harder and harder to turn over more of our hard earned money to benefit a few elites.

This respondent was most specific about the relationship between the government and business and the global financial system. Following is our exchange where I am trying to understand who is at fault for the enslavement of the American people.

Q: Do you see it as one big system working together, the corporations and government to ensure this indentured life?

A: I think that basically what you are saying is true, it appears to be true. For the simple reason that the major corporation which is the government sends down the philosophy and the procedures and the things that are necessary for the sub corporation to do and commit and in order to keep their corporation and they are constrained at the neck if they don't, if you see what I mean. So the philosophy of making you work harder, make the corporations do this, and also the lecherous and the thievery aspect, there is a word for thievery that I can't think of right now, everyone has to take their little bit under the table. So this philosophy is spread from the top government down to every sub corporation and finally down to the individuals, to you. So that when you deal with your neighbor I don't want to pay him exactly what that is worth. This philosophy is given down from our government intentionally, but they get it from the people who own the corporations.

L: The bankers?

A: Basically the bankers yes.

L: The IMF the World Bank?

A: The IMF the World Bank, basically all of them. Have you ever read the book *The Creature from Jekyll Island*? It will explain economic slavery to you (0311:21-22)

Not surprisingly according to patriots even some of the programs meant to make Americans more financially secure are meant to defraud us. I had of course heard of the republican right's dislike of social benefits, but I could never understand why working class people would be against some of the very programs that can make a significant difference in their lives. This quote helped clear things up for me:

Social Security was a fraud from the word go. The government never had to pay you Social Security anyway. Read the contract, 1934-35 Social Security Act. If you read the contract, they don't have to give you a dime if they don't want to, never did have to give you a dime, but they want your money and you'll find this in the Congressional Records that basically what they're saying is you're incompetent and that's why you have to have the state to take care of you. Well if you're incompetent, you're no longer the master of your government. Social Security was a very dangerous thing that the government did. It was to get control of the people. (0308:15)

I asked him for possible alternatives given that in the 1930s many elderly were starving and leading very impoverished lives after years of hard work. He argued:

They should have invested that money. Instead of drawing a measly \$600-\$700 a month they could have been drawing probably 12-15 thousand dollars a month interest on their investments. So Social Security is not a very good thing, not a good thing at all. You don't even have a guarantee they'll ever even give you your money and if the government goes broke, how will they give you anything? (0308:15)

I asked him to clarify what he meant by investing because of our earlier conversations I knew he was not exactly on the side of business and I thought it somewhat contradictory that he would advocate investing in stocks which support the very corporate interests he had earlier critiqued. I asked if he thought we should be investing our social security taxes in the stock market?

Well, no, there are other things to invest in. Land, precious metals, precious metals always have some value. They may not be as high in value, but they always have some value, precious metals. But to me something you can hold in your hands as tangible, that's what has value. Food, clothing, water, some way to heat, if the economy falls then those are the things that you can survive on. That's what true wealth will be. It's not paper money that wouldn't be worth anything, it's not worth anything now. If it was worth so much then why is it changing prices so much? It's because it's not worth anything. It's just the thought in our mind that it's worth something. Whereas gold and silver and copper, things that you can use, are worth something (0308:15)

And this is what he said about the stock market:

The stock market, it's a dangerous game because the same people that play the banks, run the banks, they're the ones that basically set the stock market up so it's a rigged game from the word go, since they're the ones that control the stocks. They're the ones that issue the stocks and they've got it rigged, so how

are you going to win? You might win for a little while, but you better be sharp enough to get out before it takes its dive. (0308:16)

Control happens through the money system and a few respondents talked about the need to go back to a gold standard, or away from a money system controlled by the Federal Reserve:

A: Well let me tell you something every bill we have in our money system costs them about 2 to 3 cents to print. All they do is print it and Greenspan pulls it back or releases it. And we will continue to function like that but that is what controls our economy and the workforce. Now if we were just on the gold standard then even the people that go out and are miners have some means of exchange.

Q: You mean that there is an independent source of wealth separate from the Federal Reserve?

A: yes

Likewise, taxes and fees are merely various ways of sucking money from the common person to the elite and a means of control. This is what the same respondent said about property taxes: “it is a tax, it is a way of taking money from you so that you don’t own that house, and if you think you own that house don’t pay the taxes. And you will not be in that house. And if you use this kind of reasoning and logic in your research you will find out that you own very little.” To understand this quote you need a little background. This patriot logic recalls a period in U.S. history when few property taxes or income taxes were levied. His critique goes back to the idea of the sovereign individual where (a propertied male) was viewed as sovereign on his property. “Individuals—that is white propertied males at the time—took on the cloak of sovereignty of the king. In other words all the rights the king had, all the white males had” (0302:2). From this perspective any attempt to tax your property, to require permits or any type of regulations that seek to control in some way what you do (even on your own property) is viewed as a

means of control and a way to further enrich the elites at the people's expense, as well as an erosion of basic sovereignty.

That is why when you take your title to your property to the recorder's office and turn it over to them, it is that turning it over that allows them to tax your property. They could not tax it before the civil war. But now they can do it because of the S-Star process. It is the idea that because you are a debtor because of this security that is owed to the bank, when you bring your deed in that you are acting in good faith to show that you are a debtor, and therefore they can begin taxing it because there is an encumbrance on it. This whole thing is such a racket.(0302b:18)

Here is another patriot on the permit process:

...you can't just go out and set something up and just build something you know without permits, everything's going to permits you know, and I mean all those things are about revenue and I'll give you a prime example. Like David's getting ready to move a trailer out here, ok, and Tom was asking last week, he said why does he have to have a permit to move the trailer? It's in a trailer park right now. I said well the permit has nothing to do with the trailer going down the road. What the permit has to do with is so the city knows where to send the tax bill for the trailer because if you take it out of the park and they don't know where it went, they won't be able to tax you. Now those are the types of things that are wrong because if you buy something it's yours, ok, you shouldn't have to turn around every year and pay taxes to the county. (0306:20-21)

Licenses are the same way. Particularly driver's licenses, but the logic also extends to the marriage license which was mentioned by two of my patriots:

Why should you have to get license to get married? It is a form of taxing and control on you. Telling you, you can't get married unless you have a blood test, you can't get married unless you have the government's permission, etc. etc. And you think corporate law does not control your life. I think you are a young lady who has brains and college. Corporate law has no other purpose than to take money from you and control your life. That's all. There is no other purpose for it. It is profit for the people who own the corporation⁴³. (0311: p. 13)

⁴³Some patriots refer to federal law as corporate law and the federal government as a corporation—it is a technical definition that explains how our true republic check and balances were usurped by this elite which now control the fiscal and political apparatus for their own control.

The legal and the money-making system are one system in patriot minds equally able to control and fleece the American people. Already in this section on finance we can see how we cannot neatly unbind the political means (laws) through which financial control over our lives is exerted. In the next section I describe the patriot critique of the various legal means through which the elite have maintained power and control over the American people.

The Legal System as a Form of Control

If there is one thing that many of my respondents and patriots in general know it is the law. Many of my respondents had shelves and shelves of legal tomes, often including the full library of *Arizona Revised Legal Statutes*. One respondent had bought a trailer dedicated to the storage of his legal library. Two of my respondents were certified paralegals, and another was a self-made legal historian. It is not so surprising that I found shelves with the same tomes found in attorney's offices. The Arizona Sons and Daughters of Liberty hired two of my respondents to research whether or not a militia was a legal form. After they finished the research they became patriots themselves and for over ten years dedicated themselves to historical legal research as to why certain laws and legal practices have come to be. One respondent who is a legal researcher and successfully represented himself in a Montana criminal case against him when he got entangled with the financial schemes of the Montana Freemen summed up what many of my respondents believe, "you have people in public office that are making laws and don't know a god damn thing about how the law operates. So we have too many ridiculous laws" (0204:2).

The patriot critique of the legal system is varied, much like the critique of the financial system. There are numerous critiques circulating through the patriot milieu and

individual patriots pick their own, as one respondent critical of much of the movement suggested, “fruit salad” of laws and legal critique. But there is an overall theme of a government-out-of-control at best and at worst the proliferation of laws is meant to make corruption easier (legislatures pass laws for their favorite corporate causes) and to stupefy the people into complacency. In short the critique is about two things, the inability of the people to control the political process (the proliferation of laws and the political corruption those laws can lead to) and the sheer volume of material that makes *inaction* much easier than political action. It is a critique from those who feel powerless, but none-the-less have come into contact with the legal system in various ways. (In chapter eight I talk about patriot contact with the legal system as it is sometimes sought after and used as a particular strategy of by movement activists.)

Political corruption not only has occurred through the sheer proliferation of laws, but because laws are largely implemented through an administrative agency that has free reign to interpret and implement those laws. One respondent said, “the administrative has really created a fourth branch of government. It’s unlawful. (0302/03b:13). It is unlawful because it is beyond democratic control, or as my respondents would say the “people’s control.” This respondent, who was also a city councilwoman for 4 years, explained how the federal legal chaos contributes to chaos in the lower courts and powerlessness for those entangled with local courts.

I don’t find anything outrageously wrong with the government. [But] there are too many laws, nobody knows the law anymore. And for every law, if you can find it, there is one to get you out of it. So we have a confused society here, and you add to that people don’t know the law, because none of us can know all of the law. So what do we have? We do not have a constitutional government that our forefathers envisioned. We have the worst government that man could think of because we don’t even have a king making the laws. That is one person standing up there and everybody knows what the king said. We don’t have that

in our society. Here you go into one court and the judge interprets the law this way, and you go into another court that interprets in another way. In our local court rule books, there is no rule book for administrative lower courts. So you don't know how to fight in them. There are people all over America who are trying desperately to figure out these lower courts. (0303b:4-5)

Another way that the legal apparatus is used to control the people is through the usurpation of our legal rights. The Patriot Act had just recently passed when I did my second set of interviews and its fast passage merely confirmed the patriot fears that the U.S. is moving toward a fascist or totalitarian state. Here is a typical quote:

It's to take all the liberties away from what we've got left or what we still enjoy. Take all that away from the American people. They can take away everything you've got, your property, your car, your house any time they want to and they can ship you off to a prison and call you an enemy combatant. No, no court, no habeas corpus, nothing for the American people, all for the government. Adolph Hitler did the same thing in World War II when he took control of Germany. They had a constitution, they had a republic. When he got power he had Congress give him more power and more power, and pretty soon he ruled the country. He dictated what he wanted done and I see the same things happening here right now. Same type of laws, same gun laws being passed, in fact almost written word for word. The other laws that are being passed are just about exactly like Adolph Hitler, and Joseph Stalin used the same tactic in Russia, so where do you draw the line? (0308:10)

Many patriots call the current U.S. government the de facto or corporate government to discursively mark their political critique. The name de facto or corporate marks the fact that the government in place now is in fact an illegal body operating outside the constitutional limits that bound the state to "the people." The de facto demarcation also serves as an historical narrative that reveals when power was transferred from the people to the elites. There are many different versions of when this great transfer happened, but the theme is the same. One respondent put it this way:

You have a problem in a nation. You have a private government that's operating outside the Constitution. It's not even Constitutionally-bound. It's not the de jure government, the true and lawful government, it's the de facto government, or government de facto, whichever way you want to say it. The government de facto sets rules up and then they say in their law that they can't be held accountable for their treason which is nice. I had a friend that bought

some older *Arizona Revised Statutes*. They were the 1939 issue law books and he read them and they even admitted in there that they were the de facto government, not the de jure government. (0308:8)

What is Lost: Patriot Views on Freedom

From many of the quotes above you can see that what is jeopardized—by more police control, more laws, more taxes—is freedom itself. It is a definition of freedom with very American roots. Isaiah Berlin (1958) contrasted American's negative conception of freedom with Western European's positive conception (Berlin 1958). Americans' idea of freedom is a freedom from: freedom from government, from regulation, from taxes. This was a compelling idea at the time of the founding of the United States and is part of a classical republican worldview as well. It is a view of government that was transported here from England in the 1600's and took root. Western Europeans associate freedom with freedom to, and view the government as an important ally in creating the social context in which one can pursue the freedom to do something. Americans' conception of freedom much like the patriot view is about freedom from—we are only free to the extent that institutional bodies do not impinge on our lives.

I asked all my respondents for their definition of freedom. Most of my respondents defined freedom as some variation on negative freedom. Freedom was most often articulated as a lack of infringement in one's life. Others mentioned the basic constitutional rights, and two even mentioned some kind of economic freedom, the right to work or be financially secure. The following quote from the Kingman recruiter combines the three. In this conversation he had just remarked that freedom and protecting your family were probably the two things worth dying for. When I asked him what he meant by freedom this was his reply:

The right to say what I want, to whomever I wish. The right to have a gun in my house, to carry a gun if I wish. I can go through the Bill of Rights, but basically that's it. The freedom to work, the freedom to be free of someone barging in my door without a search warrant. The right to a speedy trial, the right to face my accusers, and on and on. But I believe, as do most other patriots that the first ten amendments, the Bill of Rights they cannot be repealed. Those are cut in stone, the foundation of what this nation is made on. Whether you are a Democrat or a Republican that Bill of Rights is worth dying for, anytime. (0202:11)

A couple of patriots defined freedom in terms of economic freedom. This respondent combined economic freedom with the freedom from infringement, as he talked about why he believed income taxes were morally wrong.

Your labor is your property, it always has been. I hate to see people robbed of their labor because that's what they are. If you're robbed of your labor, you're nothing but a slave. (0308:5)

Another respondent more strongly articulated that financial security is part of what enabled freedom alongside traditional constitutional freedoms.

Freedom to me would be to be able to express yourself politically, and of course religiously, and financially [laughs]...to live your ideals and be able to express them. And to be able to not have fear, not have fear of financial ruin, as you get older to be secure in your last 20 years. And then of course to have freedom to express yourself. I mean that's why we're sitting here in the kitchen where I work, because of a lack of those kind of freedoms; there's no tolerance any more for thinking outside what's acceptable. And then of course to be able to afford to live in a decent house. (0301:24-25)

For most of my respondents, though, freedom was defined as the absence of bodies, governmental or otherwise which might infringe on their lives. This respondent is philosophical at first but then goes on to give a response that was emblematic of most of the patriots I spoke with:

Freedom I think is also part of the mind and the way you think, the way you believe. I think that freedom is being able to do anything that you want to do that does not impose on someone else's freedom or right to do something that they want to do. You don't have a right to destroy someone else's property or even their character, and as long as it doesn't entail that, well then I think it's all right.

Patriots tend to argue that we had this freedom when the republic began.

I think the sad thing is that most people don't understand really what the term freedom means, they don't understand what the word liberty means.

Q: What do you mean?

A: If you've never lived under liberty, how can you really know what liberty or freedom really are? To me there's a fine line between freedom and liberty. The way I was taught was that our nation was supposed to have been set up so that everybody owned their land and everybody on their land was like their own king. We were supposed to have the same rights as a king on our own land and as long as you didn't hurt anybody else or damage anybody else, that's the way our country was supposed to have been. Now if you damage or harm somebody else's property, just like it says in the bible, you have to pay for it, you have to be held accountable...(0308:4)

The last two quotes clearly illustrate how freedom is inextricably linked with some amount of control over one's life—even if it is only on your land. This ability to construct a life, to feel that you can live a life of your choosing is a powerful motif even when articulated in language that is redolent with white male privilege.

What is also striking is that along with this freedom to do whatever I want—the bold masculinity that struts about the page—there is always the moral counter balance, “you can't hurt anybody” or you have freedom “as long as you don't interfere with anyone else's rights.” And here is another respondent's moral counter balance:

Freedom is your ability to do whatever you wish with responsibility and without harm to anything or anyone. Liberty is the removal, or being in the state where there is nothing that restricts your ability to be free...liberty enables you to have freedom, it takes away those chains that someone else, or politics, or government, or a dictator puts on you. You have liberty, which means you have no constraints. You can be free, but you must be free with responsibility. (0311:2)

And in this vein, as I showed in the chapter on republicanism, patriots echo ancient Greeks philosophers like Aristotle who argued that freedom comes from being politically engaged. But some of my patriot respondents are also articulating a moral accountability and the moral (and usually religious) underpinnings of the movement are the topic of the next chapter.

Populist Problematics in Conspiracy Theory

Mark Fenster (1999) makes the claim that conspiracies of all types construct a “theory of power that fails to recognize how real power relations work in modern society.” Belief in conspiracy theory is not pathological, and he suggests that specifically conspiracy theory addresses “real structural inequities, and constitutes a response to a withering civil society and the concentration of ownership of the means of production, which together leave the political subject without the ability to be recognized or to signify in the public realm” (page 67). I think my respondents find conspiracy theory efficacious because indeed to a limited degree it does accurately describe power relations. Their quotes show how they use conspiracy theory to point to real economic and political conditions as a means of explaining real inequalities in power in today’s American society. But conspiracy theory is problematic.

Leftist critic of populist conspiracy theory, Chip Berlet (2000), relates the following critiques of conspiratorial thinking. It “is a particular narrative form of scapegoating that frames the enemy as part of the vast insidious plot against the common good, while it valorizes the scapegoater as hero for sounding the alarm” (9). In addition conspiracy theory blames *individualized* and *subjective* forces for political, economic and social problems. In conspiracy theories the forces of history are not structural they are individualized. Fenster certainly agrees, he argues conspiracy theory is a “disabling theory of power” with effective resistance unlikely in part because of the closed narrative that conspiracy theory presents—the elite are in control and thus political action is

ineffective (xv).⁴⁴ If the patriots can be taken as an example, conspiracy theory does not motivate political action that is effective at creating institutional change. But it can bring about political activism like the radical separatism evident in parts of the patriot counter culture (the focus of chapter 8).⁴⁵ Conspiracy theory also, as I mentioned earlier, creates subjects that feel their lives are lived in significance—it does make a difference for some individuals. From a politically progressive point of view this type of political activism is not positive, but conspiracy theory's ability to create political subjects should be noted for it is important to see the payoffs for those who are believers.

In short conspiracy theory is problematic because it tends to lead believers (who might otherwise support economically progressive causes) to inaction or action that merely results in the production and distribution of a conspiracy culture or cultures of radical separatism. Conspiracy theory does misrepresent the structural causes of repression like capitalism itself, although one could cull through my interviews and certainly come to the conclusion that while these folk would not call themselves Marxists or socialists, they were not for a capitalist free market economic model⁴⁶.

⁴⁴ This is not to argue that conspiracy theory is always disabling. Goldberg (2000) argues that conspiracy theories about King George were important political discourses that fomented support for the revolution.

⁴⁵ And I don't think we can discount the effectiveness of counter cultural movements. The women's movement was probably more powerful in its ability to change micro beliefs and practices than in its ability to create change in cultural and political organizational and bureaucratic realms. And while the patriot counter culture has yet to bring about widespread institutional change, the jury is still out, for the patriots continue to produce and live in a vibrant counter culture.

⁴⁶ Although ultimately they put the blame on values gone mad. Capitalism would probably be okay if tempered with the right social values. Greed is anathema to my patriots (see chapter on morality).

Finally because conspiracy theory often takes a populist form creating two antagonistic groups, the elites versus the people, it ignores other important axes of repression like race, class and gender. And thus it comes to be used in the service of some of the most repressive ideologies, like fascism, white supremacy, totalitarianism and anti-Semitism. But those exclusive categories do not exhaust the whole of possible expressions of populism. Laclau argues that populism's progressive potential lies in the very fact of its discursive construction of the antagonistic dualism: the elite and the people. This dualism potentially can unite many under its expansive term in what he calls a "logic of equivalence" directly counter to a "logic of difference" which is the discursive heart of liberalism (Laclau 2005). But to this I will return in the conclusion.

Above all conspiracy theory is a theory of power relations that reflects, though inaccurately, real political, cultural and social inequalities, and it articulates a real desire of "the people" to be significant. As Fenster says it articulates "a nascent desire for a politics in which the people can affectively and effectively engage" (62)." And given what my respondents have told me...even when they are inarticulate or don't know their history (or do know their history) it is clear that they want to be significant, to be political subjects and tilt the balance in access to power more in favor of the "little people."

Chapter Seven

Religiosity and the Patriots Religio-political Critique of the Worlds we Inhabit

I invoke god to come save the country, only with the power of God can we overcome this. Only God has the power to make and break government. (opening prayer at a patriot meeting in Arizona spring 2002)

This chapter will examine religiosity at numerous levels from the individual to the institutional. Researchers of the patriot movement have hypothesized that a Christian fundamentalist worldview is key to understanding why individuals are attracted to the patriot worldview⁴⁷. My own and Gallaher's (1998) research did not find Christian fundamentalism to be a salient feature of the patriots we interviewed, suggesting a more complicated causal picture. In this chapter I do argue, however, that religious discourse is an important institutional discourse that is utilized in the patriot movement and by my respondents, to create meaning out of their lived realities. The bulk of the chapter is concerned with the second aspect of religiosity—particularly its use as a movement framing discourse for critiquing current social, political, economic and cultural relations.

Any critical discourse is an argument about what is wrong and hence what is right. Critique then is an evaluative discourse. There are various institutional realms (not just religion) from which a movement or an individual could look for values that justify and/or inform their own critical views. For patriots, religious discourse is a key critical framing discourse that organizes disparate social critiques—cultural, economic, and political—and allows for one over-arching religious critique.

⁴⁷ See my review of Aho (1990) and Akins' (1998) work in chapter 2.

But of course religious discourse is too broad a term—even if we just limit our geography to that of the United States and to Christianity there are thousands of variations on Christian religious discourse. And we need a religious ideology that makes sense of what we learned in the last chapter—a patriot economic critique that could possibly resonate with progressive economic policies (what I call patriot progressivism) but traditional ideas of freedom combined with cultural conservatism (covered in this chapter). What seems like a contradictory ideology (economic progressivism but conservative cultural values) makes sense as recent work on American populism exposes American populism’s religious roots (Williams & Alexander 1994). The end of the chapter is dedicated to a discussion of the relationship between the patriots, populism and religiosity.

But first I begin with my respondents. What was the nature of their religious history and beliefs? I then broaden the discussion to show how religious moral discourse is an important frame for my respondents, even influencing their prescriptions for today’s social ills. But any talk about the radical right and Christianity must first counter the legacy that Richard Hofstadter’s mid-twentieth century essays “the Pseudo-Conservative Revolt” and “The Paranoid Style in American Politics” has left for contemporary scholars⁴⁸. While Hofstadter’s work has long been discounted in certain academic lines of thought,⁴⁹ Hofstadter’s views are still adopted in both popular and academic accounts of the patriots (Corcoran 1990; Neiwert 1999; Wilcox and George 1996).

⁴⁸ “The Pseudo-Conservative Revolt” was re-published in 1963 as part of Daniel Bell’s [1963] 2001 *The Radical Right* and “The Paranoid Style” in a book of the same name in 1965. (Bell [1963] 2001; Hofstadter 1955; Hofstadter 1965)

⁴⁹Hofstadter called American right-wing politics “paranoid” because of the rampant use of conspiracy theories in American political history and his contemporary political milieu

Religious? Yes. Fundamentalist? Only Sometimes

Hofstadter, seven years after demarcating the terrain of “status politics,” claimed he was wrong and offered a new term, “projective politics” as an explanation for conspiratorial rhetoric found among the radical right.⁵⁰ The theory of status politics, most fully articulated by Lipset and Raab’s award winning *The Politics of Unreason* (1973), argues that fear over declining social status (which Lipset & Raab never define for their readers) are the cause of the conspiratorial fantasies of the “dispossessed” radical right. But in Daniel Bell’s (1963) edited volume, *The Radical Right*, Hofstadter claimed it was not status anxiety but a Christian Fundamentalist worldview (“projective politics”) that more accurately explained “the Manichean style of thought, the apocalyptic tendencies, the love of mystification, the intolerance of compromise that are observable in the right-wing mind” (Bell [1963] 2001:103). Structural threats to status no longer explained the conspiratorial (pathological) mind, Hofstadter claimed, it was a fundamentalist frame that accounted for conspiratorial views.

(the 1960s). His essay first delivered in a speech at Oxford in 1965 and later that year published in *Harper’s Magazine* is mainly a critique of the “irrational” reliance on conspiracy theories. I do not fault him for an incorrect description of the conspiratorial nature of some political discourse, but he does fail to see the attraction to conspiracy theory as a form of critical political discourse. It is his view that conspiracy is irrational, without recognizing its political content, for which I critique Hofstadter. But I am not the first to do so (Dean 1998; Fenster 1999; Goldberg 2001; Knight 2000; Melley 1995; O’Donnell 2000). There are other critiques. There are those that contend that the general characterization of populists as intolerant and anti-democratic is incorrect (Clanton 1991; Goodwyn 1976; McMath 1975; McMath 1993; Pollack 1987). Others have taken issue with Hofstadter’s interpreters [primarily Lipset & Raab (1970)] who argued that it is a decline in status position which fuels paranoia. Critics of status theories include (Aho 1990; Bennett 1995; Berlet 1998; Bruce 1988; Diamond 1995; Mirowsky and Ross 1983; Ribuffo 1983).

⁵⁰ See his two essays, “The Pseudo Conservative Revolt” and “The Pseudo Conservative Revolt Revisited” most recently reprinted in Bell 2001.

Both Akin (1998) and Aho (1990), following Hofstadter, (although both expunge Hofstadter's judgment of these beliefs as pathological) argue that Christian Fundamentalism is an important institutional frame that contributes to a patriot worldview (see chapter 2 for elaboration). Gallaher's (1998) research on patriots in central Kentucky though found no evidence of Christian fundamentalism among her interviewees. Like Gallaher's findings most (but not all) of my respondents did not exhibit the Christian fundamentalist worldview that Aho found salient among a portion of the Idaho patriots he interviewed.

To say the Arizona patriots are not religious, though, would be wildly misleading. The Arizona patriots I interviewed are religious—just not necessarily fundamentalist. As one of my respondents remarked when asked to describe other patriots:

Most of them are religious people. I won't say they belong to one specific religion. They come from a lot of different religions. Most of them do believe in God, they believe we'll all answer some day for whatever we do to other people or other crimes. (0308:7)

You may recall this quote from my opening chapter where this respondent tried to characterize a patriot organization. The first element of a patriot identity he listed—not restated in this quote—was a movement identity, they are a “a group of people” that want to see “change” and are “highly concerned.” But the second aspect he mentions (see above) is a measure of religiosity. His characterization is fairly accurate in that it corresponds with the data I collected from my respondents (not surprising since he knew about ½ of the respondents I interviewed). Of my 25 respondents, when the question of religion was addressed, 24 mentioned a belief in God. Given that 90% of the American populace professes a belief in a higher being, the patriots are certainly not out of line with the general American populace.

I can place most of my respondents on a fundamentalist continuum. The continuum represents the range of fundamentalist belief. Respondents at the far left hand of the continuum express the key fundamentalist beliefs as outlined by Aho, dispensationalism, dualism, and conspiratorialism⁵¹. Placement on the far right of the continuum expresses a rejection of fundamentalist thinking. I had a respondent on each end of this continuum. At the fundamentalist end of the continuum I had one respondent, also discussed in chapter one, whom I would describe as a fundamentalist Christian in the vein that Akins and Aho saw in their research. She saw the world as quite clearly a battle between Satan working in the world and those who were God's warriors trying to make things right. She said, "I believe that there are two systems in this world. There is Satan's system and there is God's system. The two oppose one another, good versus evil" (0312-408:409). When she describes a patriot, religion was the most important organizing frame:

A patriot means to me someone who believes in God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit, country and family, humanity as a whole; protecting our God given rights the inherent rights that God gave to us rather than permitting an opposing force to take them away from us. (0312—358:362)

She and two other patriots, one who I interviewed, went out to the local churches to try to inform them of the error of their ways and bring them into the patriot worldview. These two respondents also had strong anti-abortion and homophobic beliefs which were central to their moral critiques of American society. So these two, I argue, are most similar to the type of patriots Akin and Aho found. However, they represent only 2 out of my 22 respondents.

⁵¹ See Chapter 2 for further elaboration.

At the other end of the continuum was Paul, who had an active dislike for organized religion (and even segments of the patriot movement). He argued religion, particularly of the fundamentalist variety has led to many social and political problems:

Perius Idiota, that is Latin for absolute idiot. There is a lot of perius idiota out there. They all function from different points of view. Some of the biggest problems with society are people who are devout religious fanatics. I studied religion, I was born and raised in the Catholic church. At 17 I said adios, bye-bye I don't want anymore of this. I studied the Baptists, the Morons, I mean the Mormons, I even went to some of these churches that have those goof balls who stand up and say blahdeblahdeblah [speak in tongues]. I mean look at these fruit loops, the rag heads with their jihad and the Jews aren't any different they are just as fanatical. Society and all a lot of this stuff is not based on logic, reason, what is reasonable. It is based a lot on their own personal beliefs. (0204:2)

L: So you are religious to a certain degree?

I believe in my creator. All the rest of them out there, all their different religions, all their ceremonies, its bull shit. (0204:7)

Most of the other respondents fell more on the Paul side of the continuum. Many of my respondents had, like Paul, rejected organized religion but felt deeply spiritual.

For example:

Basically my philosophy is that you don't need a church if you believe in God, that God is in you if you want him to be there. And secondly, instead of just on Sunday you should be that way all the time. And thirdly, any sect or group that has a dogma and creed means that they eliminate the rest of the people who don't believe in that dogma or creed. And the way I believe He'll accept anybody. (0311:23)

One of the patriot leaders said, "we are Christian but we are more metaphysical...we believe that our relationship is with the universe and with nature and with things like this" (0303:23) This same woman had followed a guru for a number of years (0303) and another of my respondents, while a Christian now, studied under a Buddhist master for ten years (0304).

How do I account for the differences found in my research (and Gallaher's) as compared to Aho's and Akins'? In general, I don't find fault with Aho and Akins' work.

But by arguing that Christian fundamentalism was an important organizing frame that made individuals comfortable with the patriot worldview, Aho does not account for the Constitutionalist patriots in his sample who were more likely to be Mormon (and not fundamentalists) and were also much *less* likely to hold white supremacist and anti-Semitic beliefs. Aho, in his discussion of causal analysis (his patriot opportunity structure) does not really point out to the reader that the constitutionalists could not be accounted for by his theoretical analysis, but it is evident in his data tables. There may be validity in Aho's arguments in that it still may be the case that those individuals that had a pre-existing fundamentalist worldview when they happen upon a patriot group were more likely to find themselves comfortable in groups that tend to hold white supremacist and Anti-Semitic ideologies. But the whole of the patriot movement cannot be characterized as white supremacist or anti-Semitic (as even Aho's data shows). Let me underscore, because it is at least one major point of my dissertation, that not all patriot groups can be characterized as white supremacist and anti-Semitic, but for those who are, a Christian fundamentalism worldview may be an important cultural frame that explains (in part) why an individual would be attracted to a patriot ideology.

A second answer as to why there are different findings about the importance of Christian fundamentalism comes from the very structure of the patriot culture. The evidence from all patriot groups (Gallaher's work in Kentucky, mine in Arizona, Aho's in Idaho, Akin's in Florida) underscores my larger point that the movement (culture) is decentralized. Place makes a significant difference in the ideas that animate patriot identity. Generalizing from any one ethnographic site should be viewed as highly problematic in such decentralized movements (which is also the case for my data!).

Finally, that Aho and my respondents can have such different views also underscores the ability of words (like republic, the people) to become empty signifiers even as they can resonate across such wide ideological differences—a facet of the patriot movement made even more possible by its decentralized structure.

Patriot Morality: from Critique to Vision

While fundamentalism may not be the evil specter of the patriots, religious discourse still has much explanatory power when attempting to understand the patriot critique of social and political relations. In the following section I review two aspects of religiosity. First I look at religious discourse when it is used as a critical discourse to critique current social, political, and cultural relations. Second I examine religious discourse as it is embedded in patriot visions of an ideal society.

Religious discourse underpins patriot morality and the patriot critique of current social relations. The centrality of religious discourse is evident from my respondents and in the larger patriot counter culture. The patriots perceive that there is something wrong with the U.S. society, and in the world at large. This woman's quote is emblematic in tone and content of many of the patriots I interviewed, and of the primary literature I reviewed.

But there are problems, people are ill all over the world. Men think they can fix it themselves, that they don't need God that they are not dependent. It has to get so bad that men begin to look to God. But men will always want to rebel, we have that inclination. It's just a house of cards. Look at our heads of state, and not just in this country. Are these people to follow? No they are human, they make mistakes. Our ecology is messed up. Our food supply is messed up: we have GMO⁵²s, pollution, and even the way people are treating each other. People are cold, selfish, self-serving, evil. Greed is the problem and control. Hitler wanted control. These men don't think about dying and what happens after, they only think about greed and control. (0304:3)

⁵² Genetically Modified Organisms

The patriots rely on religious discourse (and likewise republican discourse as I showed in Chapter 5) as counter narratives to a world gone mad. How does one explain the sense of displacement, of fear, of loss of control over one's life, powerlessness both politically and economically? And how do you explain it when you are white when you live in a culture where race is the predominant language of oppression? Religion, for patriots, is an important cultural resource that has explanatory power for why things have gone bad—U.S. citizens (the nation, the people) have displaced God and Christian values with the values of greed and power (control). Religious discourse serves as both critique and a moral vision of what a just society would look like.

As I mentioned at the end of the last chapter on republicanism (chapter five) embedded in the critiques about government is a critique about the way life is now lived and a strong nostalgia for a mythic simpler past. Many of my patriots harkened back to a time where people were more educated, life was simpler, morals stronger, people more “responsible,” they had “less debt,” you could make a living, and were “economically secure.” The people of the past were in short better citizens. The patriot narrative suggests, there has been an inexorable slipping, a decay of American society, and so follows the government and its people (see chapter five, republican populism, for a discussion of the philosophical links between the state of the citizens and the state of a governing body inherent in 18th century republican discourse). In this section I focus on the patriot view of the moral degeneration of American society and its people and how it has created an unjust society. Below I combine a few patriot moral visions into one narrative. This narrative is emblematic of many of the patriots I interviewed, and is a

weaving of various patriot conversations on the state of American society. It is hard to separate out particular issues, as people talk about them as all connected.

This whole kind of mad spin that we're on where whether for greed or for money or whether it's on a governmental level, we're almost forced into it, to get on that treadmill. It's for survival. That's kind of where life is...(0301:10)

This pretty much sums up the patriot view of how American morals impinge on the individual. Americans are greedier, they are more focused on making money and there is speculation that the government through its policies has nourished greed and material acquisition at the expense of other more communitarian values. What is wrong with American mainstream values? What is unjust about them? Patriots answer that they take away individual control over the state of our individual lives. "We are almost forced into it...this whole kind of mad spin." This patriot goes on to talk about when life was easier—there was more autonomy, less reliance on markets or city life. She harkens back to a time when Americans could farm the land as a time when there was more independence. She uses the ever dwindling numbers of family farms as an example of the historical move from independence to reliance on wage labor and corporatization of food production, and, although not named by her, the forces of economic liberalization.

...of course a lot of the farm land is [now] owned by corporate America. It's been bought up and so now they're using a lot of the farmland for genetically modified plants to make pharmaceuticals and, and other things. I think there were people [patriots] that had a vision that were hoping to stop some of this. If you look not at the 80s so much but even before that, there was a lot more rural America prior to the mid-70s and 80s. People have to live in cities now to make a living, for instance where I live here (small town in AZ) the pay is not that great but most people they decide to make the tradeoff.

The farm crisis narrative is symbolic of many patriot themes that link moral decay with government malfeasance. As is true for many patriots, she points to the farm crisis of the 1980's as first evidence of the declining family farm and the devastation it brought on many rural families and communities. But more important in the narrative of the farm

crisis is the hand that the federal government had in creating the crisis and ignoring the aftermath of the devastation. She talks about how the “government helped” give out loans which then farmers could not repay and as a result ended up selling farmland that had been in the family for generations. The federal government while helping to give out loans was not really so giving as those loans needed repayment. Often the land was sold to corporations which in the patriot narrative of events is a moral theft trading on greed at the expense of the family farm and rural communities. Second, her narrative embodies a populist critique. The loss of land is part of the great transfer of wealth from individuals to corporate interests, with the help of the Federal government. Third, the narrative is also a tale about the changing political economy of the her town. The surrounding land was largely ranchland about 50 years ago and now is mostly a tourist service economy with little ranch land available and an economy that provides services for retirees, those with second “mountain” homes, and the land developers that speculate on the rising population of those fleeing the city for the weekend or a lifetime.

This emblematic respondent tied many aspects of American culture to a great moral decline—a moral decline that we’ve been sold in part by a government that purports to give us more freedom. We’ve been sold the idea of freedom as having more choice (the promotion of a drug culture, looser sexual mores are examples this respondent used) but “what appeared to be freedom was people destroying themselves.” Freedom—in its liberal form—has merely meant the destruction of not only selves, but of our political and moral selves.

The patriot oppositional culture provides various answers for explaining the overwhelming sense that things are “out of control.” Mostly it provides the answer

provided in conspiracy theories, as I detailed in the previous chapter. But the patriots I interviewed also had a vision—although a backward looking vision—of what the ideal society would be like. In general just being a part of the patriot oppositional culture provides a type of answer to feelings of being out of control. The patriot culture can be viewed as an attempt to create mini-communities where they can create their idealized life. And in the next chapter I will talk about the various “practiced meanings” of the patriots. But here I want to focus on how religious discourse shaped not only patriot critiques but also patriot visions—their answers to what an ideal society would look like. And it is here that the religious underpinnings of the patriot oppositional culture are most clearly visible.

Churches were not necessarily important organizational supports for religious discourse; rather it was more likely that the religious discourse emanated from the patriot oppositional culture (including the production and distribution of patriot newsletters, books, magazines, web sites, etc.). As one might surmise given what we now know about the decentralized nature of the patriot movement, activists disdain for authority figures, and a penchant for self-reliance, patriots are not necessarily part of religious organizations. Many of my respondents while deeply religious did not attend church. And for those who did there was a pragmatic not sacred understanding of the role of the church, as one of my respondents said “churches are just meeting places...a home that teaches you how to do things good...and not all the bad that is shoved on to us” (0307:15).

But religious discourse, at the institutional level, and not necessarily in its organizational manifestation, was an important ideological resource for countering a

liberal-democratic philosophy of governance. At a time when patriotism and loyalty was a norm religious doctrine served as an important legitimation of dissent—a counter institutional realm that within the eyes of the believers also drew on a higher power than that of the U.S. government. Recall the quote that opens this chapter. It was the opening prayer for one of the patriot meetings I attended: “I invoke God to come save the country, only with the power of God can we overcome this. Only God has the power to make and break government.” God’s power/authority usurps the government’s and thus legitimizes the patriot cause as well as establishing a counter discourse to hegemonic philosophies of governing (in this case interest group liberalism). Likewise, in the following quote this respondent basically argues that religious doctrine (not liberal philosophy) is a guide for relations between humans and governments, “You look at the Christian religion, it is mostly about how man treats man and man treats government, and government treats man.” (0302b:8)

Similarly other respondents remarked on the historical ties between religious (Protestant) beliefs and the founding of the United States: “I said this is a Christian nation, this was founded as a Christian nation. Now whenever we grant people freedom of religion in this country, that law comes from Christianity” (0306:16).

My respondents perceive the need for an overarching moral order that they feel is missing from current society: As one respondent said, “People can’t rule themselves, governments can’t rule very well. If the Constitution was adhered to it would work. God, I was told, inspired the Constitution—the founders were Christians” (0304:1). Approximately half of my respondents when I asked them about their ideal society used religious discourse as part of their answer.

I would say a Christian-based representative form of government...But this would be a system tolerant of other beliefs...where you have spirituality and your Christian belief system but you can allow for people on different levels, or people outside of your belief system, without persecution. (0301:26-27)

Many patriots believe God's authority supersedes the government's authority.

Many argued that because we were a Christian nation at our founding that the Constitution itself was inspired by God, and that the laws set forth in the Constitution were merely a human representation of laws that were really "God's laws." God's laws are prior to their human manifestation that took form in the Constitution, thus God's laws (our basic rights) come from a higher authority than that of the federal government. Because our current government has been corrupted and these rights have been jeopardized patriots can call on a religious institutional discourse to combat government corruption. Not only is corruption bad in and of itself, but the corruption has eroded those God given rights and no government really has any authority to take those away, only God can rescind those rights. Furthermore my most fundamentalist respondent argued that our government is corrupt because we no longer recognize (as a nation) who is our true authority, "when you don't recognize who is the true power everything gets corrupted and that is what has happened to our nation" (0313:413-414).

Christian institutional discourse becomes a powerful discourse on which the patriot movement can draw (as can any movement) as a counter-discourse to government authority. God's power/authority is greater than the state, therefore God's authority can be relied on as a mantle for an array of anti-state beliefs, strategies and tactics from mild resistance to breaking the law to murder. There is probably no more potent a discourse than one that says you are right and that some superpower is on your side. I don't think I need to say more about how religion is one of the most powerful ideologies (as we see

evidence of that almost daily in the international headlines), and of course religious discourse has been drawn upon for some of the most repressive as well as the most progressive movements in U.S. history.⁵³

These themes also reflect republicanism. One respondent characterizing the difference between a democracy and a republic reflected that a republic maintains God's laws better. Echoing C. Wright Mills' 1956 critique of mass society, this respondent argued that in a democracy publics can be led en masse to do things that were not necessarily in their own best interest⁵⁴ (Mills 1956):

But democracy is where a group of people are *led* to do something en masse, that is opposed to the good of people, or the good of their neighborhood, or the good of the law, or against the law, or against God, because someone leads the majority of them to believe and act in that way. [0311:30]

What patriots envision is not just a vast repealing of laws by going back to the constitution (whatever that might mean) but also going back to particular social conditions that prevailed (and it seems were recently lost) during the founding of the United States. You may recall in the chapter on republicanism one patriot waxed nostalgic about a time when political leaders were also “known in the community.” The patriots I interviewed did not usually specify the conditions that they wanted to go back to. It is not a well articulated re-vision. But as we saw in the previous chapter some mentioned that the “rule of law” prevailed then and does not now—because of corruption. The simplicity of the laws and the connection “the people” had between those who made laws and those who were ruled by them was much more direct (at least in theory). And of course, given the over riding theme of control versus freedom, the

⁵³For a useful review of the impact of religion on political culture see Richard Wood's “Religious Culture and Political Action” (1999).

⁵⁴ Mills' critique is updated by Colin Crouch (2004).

assumption is that we as a people were much freer then. The following conversation occurred after this patriot finished telling me that we are living under corporate law, an unlawful legal system set up by the federal government and that a return to “God’s laws,” would return us to a state of freedom. I ask him what in particular he sees as important about the past (I’m hoping to get clear what type of racial and gender relations he wants preserved or changed—but I don’t get that):

Q: When we were out front you mentioned that you think it is possible to go back to [the rule of law], but without destroying the progress we have made.

A: Yes

L: What did you think was good that came out of the last 200 years.

A: Oh my God there are so many things.

Q: What is worth preserving?

A: Gee whiz, look at our progress. We are in space, you ride in an automobile, you don’t ride a donkey and a horse to come and see me do you? And you are getting food year round that is fresh and did not have to be canned in a root cellar. There are so many things. Yeah, I don’t think we have to give those things up.

Q: Sure, I don’t see them as tied together at all.

A: No they [progress] are not tied to the rule of law. They are tied to ingenuity of the American people, which totally came about through the freedom to do it, not the repression of it. With repression you can’t go so far, our tax system, the IRS which is privately owned by the international banks, is not a governmental organization...it is what represses us (0311:10)

In this quote you can see how freedom is directly tied to the absence of government infringement, particularly in terms of money and taxes. The past becomes a “state of grace” from which we have fallen, whether, as in this case we are talking about a political system, or a cultural system as is the focus of this chapter.

The patriots I interviewed had a romanticized view of the past that also led to a simplistic answer to their critique of current times—“going back to the Constitution” or to “God’s laws.” Not only are these very ambiguous terms but they are extremely simplistic, not to mention impossible answers to their wide ranging political, economic and social critiques. In part this simplicity comes from a sense of powerlessness I would

argue—the sense that you really cannot change the prevailing conditions, so why bother coming up with concrete answers. In addition the fact that the movement is more of an oppositional *culture* rather than movement (at this point in time) merely reinforces the sense of powerlessness. And it may be the case that movements actually need leaders to articulate forward-looking visions that can galvanize resentment into something politically viable.⁵⁵

Coming from a more socially progressive worldview, as I do, it would be easy to critique the patriots for their socially conservative views. I don't wish to do that here but rather attempt to understand the patriot oppositional culture: what if anything is it really about? And from my conversations it does seem that a lot of the social conservatism comes from a deeper concern or critique about a culture that does not seem to have debates about values—a culture that seems valueless even as our political leaders talk endlessly about values—coupled with a feeling of powerlessness. If that is indeed what is at the root, then I can certainly agree at a certain level. This does not change the fact the patriots I interviewed were socially conservative, nor do I think their attitudes can be changed, but I don't think it builds understanding to merely off handedly disregard their views because to do so does not assist in strategizing for progressive change.

How is that the case? First, to critique patriots for merely having moral vision would be incorrect. As mentioned above social movement theorists have remarked on the importance of moral visions for social movements. Morality and moral visions are essential components of the ways we make meaning about our lives and the worlds we

⁵⁵ The patriot movement in its heyday did have some charismatic leaders, and for a time they were what we could call a movement...but then Timothy McVeigh blew up the Murrah P. Federal Building in Oklahoma City and the FBI began infiltrating and repressing the movement.

inhabit. These ideas come from larger cultural discourses about values, religion being one of the key institutions which produces moral discourses.

Second, movements are also embodiments of ideological visions opposed to the status quo. As such James Jasper suggests contemporary movements are responding to a hegemonic neo-liberal philosophy. As the title of his book alludes, *The Art of Moral Protest*, Jasper (1997) argues that morality is central for understanding why social movements arise in the first place. Jasper argues our modern institutions do not generally take up the question of morality, and hence protest often centers on moral issues. Democratic liberalism eschews questions of morality, preferring to be (at least in theory) the arbiter of struggling disparate and equally empowered interests. “In modern society [protest movements] are one of the *few* places where we see people working out new moral, emotional and cognitive sensibilities” (xiii). This is not so hard to see in the current debates of our time as various factions attempt to impose their moral visions on the rest of the country.

Moral visions then (and hence their implicit and explicit critiques) tap into and give focus to emotions—like anger, or sadness—at an injustice or injustices done, and thus connect individual cognitive and emotional states with larger cultural ideas. “The injustice component refers to the moral indignation expressed” as political consciousness. “This is not merely a cognitive or intellectual judgment about what is equitable, but is what psychologists call ‘hot cognition’ one that is laden with emotion” (Gamson 1995:90). Moral indignation is that sense that there is something wrong in the world and that you are mad enough to do something about it. But this indignation comes out of a

sense of values one holds about a given reality—of ideology—which may be held by an individual but also circulates in the larger culture.

Perhaps it is not so surprising that religion is one of the key institutional discourses (and organizational strengths) of protest movements (whether left, right or populist). Given an official (if not actual) policy of a valueless philosophy of governance (liberalism), what types of institutions can one look to in order to combat a force such as the government in both its real and philosophical manifestations. Religion is a significant cultural resource for ideas and ideology that can also be made into an oppositional discourse and one powerful enough to oppose institutions supporting liberal governance. For the patriots religion is blended with populist beliefs, hence granting it both its progressive and conservative character. As discussed below the blend of economic progressivism and social conservatism characterizes much of American populist history.

Populism's Religious Heritage

Hertzke (1993) in *Echoes of Discontent*, argues that American populism is distinguished by the combination of two features: pietism and economic progressivism. Working from an understanding of American society that underscored “classical or Christian ideas, such as community, duty and sacrifice,” 19th century populists he avers were acutely sensitive to the atomizing tendencies and hedonistic acquisitive ethic of the Gilded Age’s “unbridled individualism” (42). Appalled by the flagrant inequalities and social abuses engendered by the unfettered workings of the market in the industrial age, they responded with a trenchant social critique that joined ‘progressive economic ideas’ with firmly held ‘religious values’ (27). It was precisely this critique, Hertzke maintains,

that was “echoed” in the 1984 presidential campaigns of Jesse Jackson and Pat Robertson.

Hertzke claims that Populists of the 19th century, and populists attracted to both the Robertson and Jackson presidential campaign in the 20th century (early 1990’s) were united by a religious critique of classical liberalism. Liberalism is embodied in the individualist values of both the neo-liberal market and cultural manifestations like the availability of abortion, gay rights movements and loosening of sexual mores in popular culture. The populist critique of liberalism emanates from a particular religious critique and not a political critique that gives populism its characteristic blend of economic progressivism and cultural conservatism. It is neither left nor right. The right has been able to tap into the culturally conservative side of populist rhetoric but by no means does this mean that the left can’t tap into the economic progressive side. But for a progressive trumping of populist rhetoric one must understand the religious grounding of the populist rhetoric.

Hertzke argues populism actually precedes republicanism in American history. Populism he says is rooted in Protestant (Puritan) communities that preceded the U.S. founding. Trumpeters of revolutionary republicanism used the rhetoric of religious populism to rally people to the revolutionary cause, but after the revolution religious populist discourse remained strong in American culture. Historically puritan populism was concentrated in rural communities (over 90% of the population at the time) that preached that American freedom came from living in moral families and communities and not through individualistic liberalism which was more likely to be embraced by the educated elite. This disdain for the elite (hence its populism) and for connecting liberal

philosophy with those in power (the elites) goes back to the early foundations of the founding of the United States. It is this same connection that animates the Christian right in contemporary politics (Frank 2004).

The politics of populism make sense if we look at this history and see that the key enemy is liberal individualism. The logic goes like this: first there is the assumption that true freedom can only come about through some repression of individual desire to the dictates of moral communities. As these communities have changed (because of vast changes in the American economy less than 1% now work in family farming), and cultural ideas about control over individual selves have changed, it is less and less the case that local communities have much control over individuals or families. Liberalism as a philosophy and a series of government practices/policies comes to bear the attribution of gradually loosening ideas about individuality. Thus liberalism comes to be seen as destructive of true freedom. Liberalism has taken over—Americans no longer have a moral compass—as evidenced by individual and corporate greed, excessive materialism on the economic side and by unbridled sexuality on the social side. Importantly, both economic individualism and social/cultural individualism become examples of individualism gone mad, of liberalism untamed by some type of moral code supported by government programs that further erode our communities and families. The government becomes a target for two reasons: one, it is the main body that makes the laws that can influence the market as well as social policies. Two, populism—since it relies on a classical republican philosophy of governance—tends to argue that governments should be morally accountable.

If Hertzke is right, that traditional moralism (pietism) and progressive economics are what distinguishes populism, than we can certainly argue that the patriots are populists. This chapter and the last taken together illustrate the two seemingly contradictory aspects of patriots, their fierce and even radical economic critique and yet very strongly held, almost vociferous critique of socially liberal policies (like advancing gay rights, abortion, the sheer increase in volume of the sexually explicit material in the popular culture.)

Many readers may disagree with the populist's view of the world, as I certainly do. But it is important to understand where their seemingly contradictory ideas come from and that from this perspective it is not at all contradictory. And, in fact, I can even sympathize. I have my own moral vision of the way the world should work and parts of my vision certainly overlap with the political and economic visions of the patriots. I think we should have time to be citizens, I think those who choose to be parents should be able to spend time with their children without worrying about how they are going to pay their bills, I think we really should have an economic system that reflects family values (although I'm sure my family values differ from most patriots). Even on the cultural level I too as a mother and feminist worry about the rampant way in which women's (and increasingly men's) bodies are used to sell almost anything, the way in which desire gets coded onto bodies in service of the capitalist machine. This is not to say my vision is a patriot vision, for there are important limitations to populist discourse and the limitations are most clearly seen in the lack of clear vision for social change.

Calling for a populist vision: The limits of a politics of nostalgia

Mansbridge (2001) argues that to move from an oppositional culture to oppositional consciousness an oppressed group must articulate that their circumstances are indeed unjust and their vision of a just society. Oppositional consciousness requires a vision along with hope with which to galvanize those who have been oppressed to act for change. Patriots, while they see their circumstances as unjust, do not have a vision. They do not have a projective politics but one that is nostalgic.

Patriots, or at least a few Arizona patriots, clearly believe that American and global economic and political systems are inherently unjust. American society is distinguished by its inequitable distributions of political and economic power where elites hold power and the people do not. And furthermore our social or cultural values are also slipping. We are a society of individuals only interested in fulfilling our own desires, being entertained, and pursuing profit and greed at whatever expense. This situation too is unjust according to many patriots because this condition was created by some external force that seeks to control all our lives. The patriot critique implicitly then calls for a value system or laws to check our unbridled individualism, which is relayed in the explicit call to religion, to return to the Constitution, or God's laws, as a means of redress. But it also calls for a return to a time when community values ruled over individual lives more directly. And thus here again we have a looking back rather than a vision for the future.

When I asked my respondents what an ideal government would look like, without exception the answer was something along the lines of going back to Gods' laws as inscribed in the Constitution (although on two occasions the Ten Commandments was mentioned). There usually was not much elaboration of what that would look like, how

we would take steps to get there (other than educating other citizens about political corruption). (For an important exception see Linda's discussion in chapter five of how a republican model of governance could work.)

The absence of more complex answers to producing an ideal government shows the failings of relying on a conspiratorial narrative as an explanation for current unjust power relations. The end is already known. Those in power get more power and control. The best one can do when the narrative is already written, is be-in-the-know and watch. At the institutional level and organizational level conspiracy theory is a disempowering narrative and ineffective in galvanizing adherents toward effective political action. But importantly at the individual and group level it is NOT disempowering. An individual can become a patriot and as a result envelop him or her in an affirming identity. This empowered patriot can meet with fellow patriots, who are also in-the-know and share information. They can create communities of sharing not only of information but ways in which to empower oneself and other patriots: become self-reliant, a herbalist, grow your own organic food, help others with their ailments, live in the underground economy surrounded by others like you and simply watch and live. So at the individual level it is a very empowering narrative. And my respondents were not images of the disempowered, but active citizens taking charge in their communities. Many were involved in trying to change the political scene at the local level, they were in short active citizens. In this way despite a narrative of disempowerment, individual patriots, through creating a patriot culture and communities, empower themselves and make real qualitative improvements in their lives through creating a patriot oppositional culture. This oppositional culture is the topic of chapter eight—patriot strategies and tactics.

Part III

Being a Patriot: Practiced Meanings of Resistance

In the following chapter I change emphasis from meanings to practice. In light of what they believe (the focus of the previous section) I review what patriots have done (and still continue to do).

Chapter Eight

Patriot Practiced Meanings: Acts of Resistance

Common Law Courts, Tax Protest and Counter Cultural

Production

I argued in chapter one that the patriot identity is not just a movement identity but a way of life. It influences not only how one interprets day to day life but also major decisions in one's life—the type of jobs one take, the places one chooses to live, what one values. I also argued that the patriot way of life was one that sought something I called “institutional independence.” This phrase was inspired by Piven & Cloward's phrase “institutional interdependence,” which they coined to show that power inheres in institutional relationships when both parties in a social relationship depend to some degree on one another. They argue power that resulted from interdependent relationships explains why—sometimes—those with seemingly no traditional resources (money, political connections, social movement organizations) win political concessions. But, in the case of the patriots institutional interdependence does not apply since the patriot ideological enemy is narrativized, often through populist tales of conspiracy, as all-powerful. There is no narrative of interdependency (except in the utopian case where all the people fought the conspiracy). While theirs is a description of power relations that mischaracterizes the relations of power, it does come close to describing the relationship between most citizens and the American state in the 21st century (as I reviewed in chapter six). There is little real interdependency in this relationship, hence I argue patriots tend to seek institutional independence, particularly from the state and other mainstream institutional realms: medical industry, public education, urban living, and the mainstream media.

In this chapter I focus on what Patriots have done, although given the monumental task of attempting to describe and document patriot tactics I have chosen a select few that I feel shed light on the overall patriot counter culture. Overall patriots have tried numerous tactics from the most mainstream (lobbying a local elected official) to the most counter systemic (completely living “off the grid” in communities far from state control). But the predominant model of patriot resistance is of the lone individual (backed by a patriot oppositional culture) which commits individual acts of resistance. Examples include driving without registering your car or driving without a license plate, refusing to pay your taxes, and removing yourself from the Social Security system. There are often elaborate legal reasons for what I call strategies of exit—and I touch on some of those below. But at the heart of all patriot resistance is the belief that the state has no right to control the individual through various mechanisms of control which the state (through prior legislation) has used to control citizens: driver’s license (it’s a way to track you), registration and insurance for a car (citizens have the right to free travel, registration infringes in that right), taxes (take away your ability to make a living and are used merely to enrich a few).

What first drew me to the patriots were their outlandish strategies and I found that it was true that you can’t understand the practices of patriots without understanding the meanings behind them. In this chapter I try to convey those meanings to you. Patriot strategies are truly practiced meanings. I review three patriot practices: common law courts, sovereign citizenship, and tax resistance. I then turn to a discussion of the production of a patriot counter culture. But first in the next section I review some theory on power and interdependency and why the patriots fundamental lack of interdependency

with the chosen target—the elite—closes the space for effective systemic political action—and thus fuels a culture of individual level resistance (I argue later too that individual resistance is also about white masculinity).

Power, Control and Institutional Interdependence

Consider that one form of potential power and control is derived from individuals' socially prescribed relationships to institutions (Piven and Cloward 1997; Schwartz 1976). Power [from interdependent ties] “derives from the patterns of interdependence that characterize all social life, and from the leverage that inheres in these interdependent relations. Power in other words, is interactional; it is embedded in patterns of social relationships” and institutional life (Piven & Cloward 1997:331). Examples of institutional relationships include employee/employer; state/citizen; lover/lover; parent/child; consumer/producer.

Power inheres in the interdependency—it is a type of relational power (Piven & Cloward 1984; Schwartz 1976:172-3). Thus to take a simplified relationship for exposition, let's take the employee/employer relationship. Employees depend on the employer for a job. Employers have the power to hire and fire almost at will. And as we know employers often have the upper hand in the employer employee dyad. But employers rely on the workers to do their jobs—to be productive, and employees have power to the extent that they can exercise their right not to work—to strike, to slow down production. What is important to note is that even in relationships characterized by a great imbalance in power, those with less power are not necessarily completely powerless.

Interdependent relationships are also informed and enforced by cultural norms that tend to preclude resistance and reinforce the status quo. There are a set of values, for example, about being a good loyal worker which strengthen the employer's position. Workers often perform, they "do" their jobs in the sense that not only do they do the tangible work (sew buttons, cut steel, copy papers, create a digital image) but they perform the values attached to the doing of working (or at least can appear to)⁵⁶. It is often the normative cultural forces that often reinforce unequal power relations.

The scales of power (as if it was something we could tangibly measure!) are lopsided in these interdependent relations—which often creates the situation that the party with more power (which often also possesses other resources that translate into power like money, political connections, etc.) often gets their way. Furthermore, the price of exercising power from below—outright contention—can be costly. Thus more often there is resistance as opposed to outright defiance or collective contention (Scott 1990)⁵⁷. But it is important to consider that even those movements or groups without

⁵⁶ See Fenstermaker and West (2002) for a discussion of the way in which through interactions with others through a mechanism of expectation and accountability we not only perform the task at hand but also perform other normative values like gender, race, class and other relations of difference.

⁵⁷ Of course the move from a culture of resistance (what I have been calling an oppositional culture) to one of contention (oppositional consciousness) is about a whole host of processes and not just power, which are in many ways the focus of this dissertation: processes of identity formation in movements, formation of injustice frames, formation of movement groups and the creation of leaders. In this chapter I am just talking about power and its connection to resistance and not the more complicated question of the translation of resistance into contention. Here I want to merely point out that practices of resistance are about relationships of power, and in the case of the patriots often between the citizen and the state or an individual and some bureaucratic representation of the state.

traditional resources have the potential to exercise power, although often in limited ways, and often limited to tactics of resistance.

Contention and resistance then is at least in part about the practice of power in society, and the normative right to exercise control or have authority over others. Ideologically the patriot movement and oppositional culture—its leaders and the producers of its cultures—produce a narrative that puts the emphasis on the power relations between the citizen and the state. For patriots it is the authority of the state that needs to be fended off. Patriot resistance and ideological critique is about a state that, as they see it, has too much control over individual lives. However, this is not just an abstract citizen and an abstract state; many individual patriots have met face to face with the bureaucratic apparatuses of the state and have elaborate narrative productions regarding these encounters. Recall from chapter 1 Betty's experiences with the obstetricians who delivered her baby, or David's experiences in the army, or Paul's experiences with the Health department. These and others were formative in patriots' antagonistic and critical responses to the state. Here are a few more examples of direct confrontation with the state apparatuses⁵⁸ from my respondents.

This quote is from a Vietnam veteran. He said as a result of his experiences in the Vietnam War he began to question everything. In this quote he is recapping an earlier conversation when I asked him how he became a patriot.

I entered the service in '69, I think I told you I was patriotic and wanted to do my thing for the country, do my obligation for service. It came to the point, like I said, I got off the plane and they were spitting on me. I pointed out [to you] a

⁵⁸ I purposefully invoke Althusser here because Althusser saw all manifestations of culture as about state power. The patriots view, whether it be the military, or the health department, or the media, or the local fire department as analogous institutions and part of the same hydra which is at the core of their critiques—the state.

lot of stuff about how the service worked. Plus we were fighting a winless war. Wasting 70,000 American lives and for nothing.

L: What was the reason, as you saw it that the United States was in Vietnam?

When I first landed it was Communist aggression, to stop Communist aggression. But that wasn't their goal at all. I think personally, my personal opinion is that the whole war was for economical gain. It keeps the economy moving. You're producing goods and services for the military, so that is one of the reasons. (Respondent 0203:2)

For the Kingman recruiter, Charley, it was his experience with bureaucrats from the Social Security Administration during his attempt to file for disability payments:

When I got done watching [*America in Peril*⁵⁹] I was absolutely stunned. I just could not believe what I had just heard. At that time I was in the process of fighting it out with social security for disability. I have never in my life been so frustrated, so angry with people in my whole life, as when I was dealing with social security administration...(Respondent 0202:1)

As one of my respondents said, and some of us can probably agree with him, there is much frustration whenever one has to deal with a bureaucratic agency. As I will try to show below, when I describe some the activities of resistance by patriot members, the reaction is against the raw authority that these agencies have over the lives of the people that come in contact with them and over the lack of humanity of a rationally organized bureaucratic agency.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ *America in Peril*, explaining the New World Order conspiracy is a video produced and narrated by Mark Koernke. Koernke, now serving a jail sentence for “absconding the law” until March 2007, was one of the most widely known patriot leaders and proselytizers of the New World Order conspiracy. He is best known as Mark from Michigan his short-wave radio handle. He became active in the movement in the early 1990s. In 1993 he produced a video of a speech he delivered called “America in Peril” which launched his fame in the growing movement as copies of the tape and video were widely distributed at gun shows and preparedness expos (where survivalists gathered for the latest in survival goods). The tape was followed by many sequels detailing the nature of the conspiracy as well as a short-wave radio stint on WWCR (World Wide Christian Radio). (Anti-Defamation League 2006)

⁶⁰ Of course, this is a narrative re-telling in retrospect about how they became involved. This is not to say that these relationships determined their patriot participation. It is more

Unlike other groups in contentious and interdependent relationships, for the patriots there is little to no interdependency in their relation to the state and hence little access to power against the mammoth bureaucratic regime. And in fact, when the patriots have organized (as in the case of the common law courts or the militias) the organizations were infiltrated, leaders arrested and often jailed and state laws arose to legislate patriot practices out of existence (see below for further discussion). As a result of both the repressive actions of the state and the movement's characteristics—politically marginal, organizationally dispersed—patriot tactics have tended to be more about resistance than about real political reform. This type of resistance is typical for the poor and politically marginalized (Lazarus-Black and Hirsch 1994; Piven and Cloward 1977; Scott 1985; Scott 1990). However, this does not make the movement non-political. Their tactics and ideology should be viewed as political acts of a repressed group who lack the resources to be effectively heard in the current political system.

Below I talk about the common law courts, a patriot legal strategy to seek legal redress at the local level that was simultaneously a critique of the current legal system. The common law courts was a strategy in effect from 1993 until 1997—when various states created laws specifically aimed at closing down the common law courts and their activities which officials dubbed “paper terrorism.”

Legal Resistance-Common Law Courts

Almost all patriot tactics can be viewed as legal tactics. Since the state's overabundance of laws has been targeted as the enemy of freedom (see chapter six) it

likely that a life-long culture of discontent with the government provided the "cultural resonance" when they were introduced to the movement (see Jasper (1997) on cultural resonance).

may be of no surprise that in large measure patriots use the law to attempt to either change, break or elude the law. Through the manipulation or re-interpretation of legal terms and laws they have attempted to resist the state at the legal level. They have done this through legal *pro se* (self) representation, declining the "U.S. citizen" label, extorting money from the U.S. treasury, filing false liens, and bringing legal cases against the state (both local and federal) (Levin 2001). While this is largely done at the individual level, these attempts are informed by a body of thought that is collectively produced and disseminated through movement channels: seminars, material passed out at gun shows, word-of-mouth, and the Internet. The common law courts are probably the one tactic collectively implemented.

What follows is a brief introduction to the common law courts—when and where the courts started, how they were run, and the types of cases they tried. After this brief introduction I turn to the analytical and theoretical importance of the common law courts that draws upon these initial details.

The origins of the idea for the resurrection of the courts are to be found in a book called the Blue Book, written in 1968 by Henry Lamont "Mike" Beach, founder of the Oregon Posse Comitatus (Burghart & Crawford 1996). The book is a "how-to" for setting up common law courts. In 1967 these were called "citizen grand juries."⁶¹

The earliest documented common law court of the patriot movement was established in 1992 in Tampa, Florida by a father daughter team, Susan Mokdad and

⁶¹ Because the idea for the courts can be traced back to the Posse Comitatus which had a racist ideology (as did the Montana Freeman) many commentators have argued that any common law court that follows is racist in origin. However, this is a logical fallacy and can only be linked through empirical data— and a significant majority of the common law court documents I have collected do not purport a racist ideology.

Emilio Ippolito. By 1993 common law courts were established in Montana (by the infamous Montana freemen) and Oklahoma. The Montana Freemen—Dale Jacobi, Roy Schweitzer and Rodney Skurdal—before becoming famous for their standoff with FBI, were the common law gurus of Montana. From 1993 until 1996 (the end of the stand-off) through workshops and video tapes they trained many others to establish common law courts. According to the FBI in the time they were holed up in Justus Township they taught about 800 people who paid \$300 each to set up common law courts back in their hometowns.

After 1993 common law court organizations quickly spread throughout the country. The United Sovereigns of America, based in Oklahoma, was, in 1996, the dominant national common law organization. By 1996 they established common law courts in 13 states⁶². In 1994 the Idaho Sovereignty Association (ISA) headed by Barry DeMott, came into being. *America's Bulletin* a monthly publication produced by the Medford Citizens Bar Association also started in 1994 and was a central place where legal tactics as well as political commentary were shared and discussed. Finally in Texas the patriot organization the "Republic of Texas" established various common law courts throughout the state. Hard and fast numbers are hard to come by, but according to the Coalition for Human Dignity, by 1996, one or more common law courts had been established in 20 states and the SPLC reported in 1996, 35 states had 137 common law courts. According to a study done at the University of Nevada, 55% of Nevada state and local judges had contact with common law court adherents and Karen Mathews, a

⁶² See appendix 5 for a SPLC map and list of national common law courts in 1997.

California county recorder, reported that every county in California had common law court filings (Southern Poverty Law Center 1998).

There are many reasons for the attraction to the common law courts as a strategy, from its vigilantism to its populist overtones. It is populist in that no person with a specialized notion of the law was allowed in the courts—no judges, no lawyers—the expertise came from the people involved in the common law court. The judges of both the law and the cases that were brought were the people in the courtroom. In common law courts, the judge, clerk, and jurors would be elected from among those who were in attendance. Jurors were volunteers from those in attendance the day the court was held. No practicing lawyers were allowed in the court. The judge would ask for cases to be heard, and the jury would vote on them after hearing the case. The filings from the cases would then be taken to the (real) county clerk to be officially recorded—as if these court proceedings had legal standing—and often these filings would also be placed in the local newspaper, as per local laws.

The activities of the common law court include liens, judgments and quiet titles that officials began to dub “paper terrorism” and the SPLC characterized as “mass public resistance against the federal government” (Zeskind 1998:15). The earliest court filings were predominantly liens and they were very effective for a short while. This is how it worked. A patriot would file a “bogus” lien against a person, corporation or a creditor. If it was a person it was usually a government official (but a local representative). This lien would be officially recorded at the county clerk's office⁶³. Then two things happen. First

⁶³ At various rates county clerk/recorder offices began to refuse to take the common law court liens—although it was often the case that special state laws had to be imposed before the common law court liens were actually illegal.

this lien would show up on the accused person's or corporation's credit file. To get rid of the false lien the accused person or corporation would usually have to fill out paperwork and hire a lawyer to process the paperwork that proved that it was a false lien. Second, the person who filed the false lien can for a short while, write checks against the lien to pay off other debts (usually the people who are doing this already owe someone a lot of money, because of farm failure or other financial problems).

Judgments were also handed down in the common law courts. The judgments were then filed (with the county clerk) on cases that required a finding of guilt or innocence. If found guilty and punishment was a payment, a lien could also be filed. Some punishments were violent, as in death by hanging. (While these were never carried out, many threats were made often against local officials, judges, lawyers). In one documented common law case a father brought a case against Dow Chemical. His daughter had breast implants from Dow, which caused her various health problems. They sued in the mainstream court system but lost their case, so the father brought it to the common law courts. He won the case and then filed a lien for the amount rewarded, and it cost Dow Chemical lawyer's fees to get the lien taken off (Hansen 1996).

“Quiet titles” are another common law court tactic. Quiet titles are in short the breaking of the theoretical social contract. By filing and processing this document patriots symbolically relinquish their rights and obligations to the United States federal government. In doing this they claim sovereign citizenship (as opposed to being a citizen of the U.S.). Later in this chapter I discuss the tactic of declaring sovereign citizenship.

In 1996 the backlash against the common law courts had begun. By 1998, 27 states had enacted laws that made any common law activity illegal and included hefty

prison time and significant fines. Montana, for example, passed some of the harshest penalties under the “Montana Anti-Intimidation Act of 1996.” If a person was caught publicly threatening a public official they could face up to 10 years in prison and \$50,000 in fines. A federal law was also in the works to make common law courts illegal. The backlash by the states seems to have effectively ended common law court activity, at least as a public mass resistance. As of 2003, when I did most of the research for this section, most of the leaders were in jail; there are now only a few references to common law courts on the web; the websites that sold common law information are no longer up or have changed tactics. And as a former Oklahoma official quoted by the SPLC said, the repressive laws were quite effective: “we’ve gone from pleadings that measured in the yards to none at all” (Southern Poverty Law Center 1998:13)

Common Law Courts: A Historiography

At the founding of the United States, common law was the law of the land. Starting in the late 1800's and certainly by the 1920's, however, statutory law (called hereafter rule-of-law) took over common law practices (Calabresi 1982; Pound [1921] 1999). Looking historically, the predominance of rule-of-law practices—law made by legislatures—is a feature only common since the beginning of the 20th century. Common law has a long history, but to make a long story short, the English colonists brought traditional English common law practices to the colonies. Common law was a legal system that was judge centered. Judges made and shaped the law and could even declare laws null and void (Calabresi 1982). Scholars argue that common law cases were decided in a way that kept to local traditions and changes in community norms (Calabresi 1982). Common law, therefore, has been called a tradition-based legal system. This is contrasted with the legal system that we know today. Today's laws are [often] created by

lobbyists, passed by elected representatives, implemented by bureaucratic agencies, and cases are brought to judges not so much as to test the law (although that is done as well) but to apply the law to the case at hand. Judges in our system are not making law, although they do have to often interpret intent of the lawmakers.⁶⁴

There are also significant philosophical differences between rule-of-law and common law legal systems. Rule-of-law is based in universal abstract principles. This is the "rational interpretation" of law that Weber, famously speaks about in his theory of bureaucracies. He goes on to contrast it to traditional forms of governing: "the rational interpretation of law on the basis of strictly formal conceptions stands opposite the kind of adjudication that is primarily bound to sacred traditions" (Gerth and Mills 1946:215). Rule-of-law is based in a philosophical tradition that is individualistic—that is it sees only discreet individuals—and applies laws universally, objectively; adherence to the law is what matters, and not the circumstances of the particular individual involved in breaking the law.

This is in contrast to common law that has been described by legal scholars as relational law (Pound 1921:21). Common law derives from feudal traditions where laws followed the rights and duties associated with certain social relations. For example, the lord and the tenant had certain rights and obligations in relation to one another. Common law settlements were based on the relation between the two, in this case, the lord and the tenant. What this means is that a lord and a tenant would not be seen as equals before the court, as they would be seen in a court established by the rule-of-law. "It is about first who you are, not what you do" (21). What you "do" (as opposed to who you are)

⁶⁴ For an interesting discussion on the antecedents and make-up of the common law see Pound's (1921) *Spirit of the Common Law*.

assumes individual free-will not bounded by social relations. In short, a modern day sociologist would argue that common law sees the world as socially constructed and thus individual will is delimited by various social relations, which should be accounted for in terms of claims of right or justice, while rule-of-law assumes a world free of social constraints where individuals have complete free will to do or not do as they please. It should be noted that I have exaggerated the differences between rule-of-law and common law for purposes of exposition; in the day-to-day practice of these systems there is some amount of overlap between the two legal traditions.

Because common law judges tended to rule based on community norms, common law developed different common law traditions based on locality. Thus there was a hodge podge of laws from community to community, no law necessarily was necessarily nationally the same. At a time of growing capitalist markets local common law was coming under more and more pressure to be universal. Indeed it was Weber who remarked that it is the needs of a capitalist market economy which require universal laws, and more bureaucratic and efficiently organized governance structures (Gerth and Mills 1946:215). A common law legal system could not survive under capitalist pressures. Indeed one of the first moves to codify (and actually destroy) common law was the Uniform Commercial Codes (U.C.C) which established the same commercial laws across all the U.S. states (Calabresi 1982:70 fn).

As U.S. citizens in the 20th and now 21st century we are quite familiar with the rule-of-law. But the patriots have attempted to bring back elements of the past through their common law courts. In the next section I review some of the ideological reasons patriots gave for the re-introduction of common law courts.

Patriot Common Law

In this section I show how the Patriots have interpreted common law philosophies for their own purposes. The following excerpts and discussion are derived from patriot texts, in particular a publication from one of the key common law organizations, The North American Freedom Council (associated with the Idaho Sovereign Citizens). I would not in any way argue that patriot theories of the common law are coherent across the patriot movement, but in general when they promote the common law courts they emphasize the philosophical difference between abstract rule-of-law concepts, versus common law that is rooted in the language of traditional rights and obligations language. In addition, the populist themes are quite pronounced.

The Common Law was expounded over the years in case decisions as a result of trials in which the Common Law jury acted as the Judges, and in which they exercised the authority to hear and decide questions of both Law and fact, and Common Law deals with legal relationships, powers and liabilities, and types of actions rather than theoretical definitions of abstract legal concepts (Pond, 1997:3).

Notice in this description that the people who are part of the jury confer authority. It is in fact the people who make up the jury that have the right to hear cases and pass judgment on the facts and law of particular cases. The language of "law and fact" make it clear that the basis of common law court decisions are "not about abstract legal concepts" but are rooted in the actual details of specific cases. Notice too there are no lawyers in this theoretical court. The authority lies not with judges, and not with a legal specialist who can manipulate facts and legal concepts, but with the jury made up of supposedly local people.

Common law, Pond continues, "was designed to secure the rights of individuals to property to make it difficult for property to be taken away without due process" (3). The right to property under patriot common law, however, is explained in a particular way: as

a protection against authority. Pond pulls a quote (the reader is to assume this as no reference is given) from English common law to explain the concept of private property:

The poorest man, may in his cottage, bid defiance to all the forces of the Crown. It may be frail; its roof may shake; the wind may blow through it; the storms may enter, the rain may enter; but the King of England cannot enter; all his forces dare not cross the threshold of the ruined tenement (4). (attributed to William Pitt)

Private property in the Patriot world is imbued with populist tones, it is property that can protect one from an overbearing state, it is the haven one has if all else fails.

In this particular essay the author, Dale Pond, is also making a distinction between the common law and "Equity/Merchant Law." Historically, equity and merchant law replaced common law during the late 1800's, and was part of this move from law based in tradition to abstract rational law. The patriots consider the court system we have now as based in Equity and Merchant law, so their critique of this equity and merchant law is simultaneously a critique of the current legal system. The basis of the difference is the conferment of rights. In the patriot version of legal history, merchant and equity law developed in situations where common law was inapplicable and a Chancellor to the King was assigned to pass judgment on these disputes. Decisions in these cases were not based on inherent individual rights but on the preferences of the chancellor. What patriots see as problematic is that the authority lies with the chancellor (who in modern day courts becomes the judge); juries have no real authority and there are no individual rights in modern-day courts; in addition the judges are not impartial. Pond puts the patriot view succinctly for us "Equity Law is the law of the ruler, Common Law is the law of the people" (8).

Legal Resistance—Individual Manifestations

In addition to the common law courts there have been innumerable attempts to seek redress from governmental agencies through legal combat. This is of course a tactic open to anyone, but what makes it a patriot tactic is often the use of self-representation (*pro se*) and the populist tone of the language. Often the re-interpretation of the law is quite convoluted. The following excerpt comes from a document that was filed as a brief in a common law court case against (to name a few), the United Nations, the IMF ("the fund"), De Facto United States (they use de facto because they believe that the United States is operating illegally as a corporation and we are no longer under constitutional rule) and Alan Greenspan. The impressive document, 88 pages of text plus 2,000 pages of exhibits, is a tale of the turn of the United States away from constitutional rule to becoming a corporation (a legal entity no longer responsive to democratic channels) but as you can see from this excerpt it is a little hard to follow:

The government by becoming a corporator, (see: 22 U.S.C.A. 286e) lays down its sovereignty and takes on that of a private citizen. It can exercise no power which is not derived from the corporate charter. (See: *The Bank of the United States vs. Planters Bank of Georgia*, 6 L.Ed. (9 Wheat 244), *FHA vs. Burr*, 309 U.S. 242) The real character of the party- in interest is not the de jure "United States of America" or "State", but "The Bank" and "the Fund." (See: 22 U.S.C.A. 286)... (Nelson 1993:15)

Not all confrontations with authority are so confusing to the outsider. One of my respondents—a paralegal—has numerous tales to tell about his combat with "ignorant experts" of bureaucratic agencies. I asked him if he thought it was an individual or systemic problem that plagued government agencies, to which he replied:

It's a combination of things, okay. If you've got a government agency that is dictating that you do a, b, c and d, but then you find somewhere along the line that in "c" there is sub part 1, 2, and 3. And they are just taking the force of C and forcing you to comply with it without looking at 1, 2 or 3, and then you try 1, 2, or 3, and find it works better, and then they come and jump on your butt or

pull something else. When you come back and slap them in the face that is decent fun. [what the heath department did] is the same as what the freemen or the patriots do because they are picking and choosing and putting together this fruit salad of law, and you can't apply law that way. If the law is applied to the apples over here and excludes the oranges over here, you can't force it on the oranges, but they do it anyway. Why? Because people are ignorant of the law. Well, "ignorance of law is no excuse." Well those ignorant sons of bitches are sitting on the bench.

This respondent is simultaneously critiquing the patriot movement of which he has been a part and the legal apparatus of the state, for precisely the same thing—the arbitrary use and ignorance of the law. The problem is of course these two practices of "fruit salad" are connected to vastly different webs of authority—one to the power of the state which had the power to completely repress the patriot attempts at legal resistance.

One can begin to see why the patriot movement may have taken common law courts as a tactic of resistance. Rule-of-law, in a hierarchically organized society, works to the benefit of those with more power in the system. This could mean simply the ability to hire lawyers who can argue your case in a sophisticated manner; those without this economic resource are simply at a disadvantage in court. In addition, laws are passed with only the input of a few politically connected groups. Even more importantly, even once laws are passed they are bureaucratically administered—how and if laws get enforced depends on the agency and who controls the administration of that law. This is one very important way that the laws of the land have been taken further and further from democratic input.

Tax Resistance

People don't want to pay taxes? I realize this is hardly a novel topic—resistance and the levying of taxes go hand in hand. Sometimes resistance is motivated by simple monetary interest, but more often this monetary interest is also combined with an

ideological critique of why that governing authority should not have the money, or does not have the right to take the money in the first place. How these critiques get framed are purely cultural considerations and those cultural forces are the interesting narrative twist to an old story. Patriot critiques of government authority and by extension taxation are rooted in contemporary economic conditions, but blend classical republican philosophies about how governments should rule with American individualism from a white rural working class perspective. This section attempts to explicate how these influences come together in the patriot critique of and resistance to the tax system.

In 1987 the Internal Revenue Service began requiring Social Security Numbers for any dependent claimed as a tax deduction. When compared with 1986's tax returns, over 7 million fewer children were claimed as dependents in 1987 (Levitt and Dubner 2005). It may be then that tax evasion is a bit of an American pastime. The IRS categorizes tax evasion into 7 categories including, corporate fraud, money laundering, abusive tax schemes, employment tax evasion, slavery reparation schemes, and those they call nonfilers. It is the case that the wealthy have long had the financial means to buy the best legal advice in setting up ways to protect their assets and minimize their tax burdens. Despite this it is also the case that it is the poorer individual filers that are more likely to be targeted by the IRS and they are also more likely to serve jail time for willful cheating. Investigations of corporate filers are at an all time low, and the IRS does not even release data on its investigations (or lack thereof) of the largest American corporations. And the U.S. has turned a blind-eye to off shore accounts that many corporations use to avoid taxes. In fact the tax burden for corporations and wealthy

individuals has decreased significantly in the last 30 years (Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse 2005).

Patriots do get a special IRS category all their own, they are often found in the non-compliance non-filer category. The IRS has published special reports to counter some of the patriot arguments against filing taxes (Internal Revenue Service). And while patriots are just as eager—and perhaps more so since there is less of it—to keep their money as wealthier individuals, patriots have distinctive ideological reasons attached to their noncompliance, an ideology that goes far beyond a critique of the IRS.

Many tax protest groups of the 70's called themselves patriots (Durham 2000). These patriots were not just conservative small government supporters; rather taxes were just one prong of a radical critique of financial power. This movement grew throughout the 80's as a result of the agricultural crisis in the United States, and expanded into the 90's. Its growth is largely rooted in the economic deterioration of the 80s and 90s experienced by many Americans but even more acutely in farming communities throughout the United States (Van Dyke & Soule 2002). As a result of their direct experience with economic hardship, patriots had much more radical views than mainstream conservatives who also took issue with taxes:

Recruiting from among those who have come into conflict with the IRS, the movement's anger is fuelled by the confiscation of possessions, the loss of liberty, and unless drawn together by adversity, even the collapse of marriages. Rather than tax reduction, Patriots teach tax resistance, disputing the very constitutionality of the fiscal apparatus itself (Durham 2000:126).

All of my respondents participated in small acts of resistance to what they called the New World Order. Some refused to drive with a license or register their cars, some would antagonize their local bureaucrat at the Social Security office or health department, some created havoc at local city council meetings and often turned up at the mayor's

office to lodge complaints. Only two attempted to outright refuse to pay taxes. I begin with their experiences.

You may remember Mark from chapter one. He considered himself a patriot through and through, which to him meant being in constant vigilance against the system...they were out to get the best of you—something he learned in the military stationed in Germany shortly after the Vietnam War. Incompetent military doctors nearly killed him by prescribing an incorrect medicine for a heart condition. After his near death experience he rejected any reliance on institutional authorities and began educating himself and becoming more “self-reliant.” In his quest to be more self-reliant he has become an herbalist (and his heart condition no longer bothers him), most of his employment is on a cash only basis, and he has attempted to end his entanglements with other components of the federal government, including the paying of income taxes:

Q: So have you ever tangled with the tax system then and tried to not pay taxes?

A: I only pay lawful taxes, just lawful ones, not unlawful ones.

Q: So only if you were importing or exporting.

A: Exporting, something that comes under the constitutional limitations. All other taxes are not.

Q: So you’ve been able to stay under the radar screen?

A: Well I filed the paperwork. They’re aware of what I claim my status to be so, and I gave them a full chance to rebut anything I said in the paperwork, and they never have.

There are many patriot arguments about what are lawful versus unlawful taxes. Many argue that only the taxes outlined in the original Constitution are lawful. Many patriots view as unlawful the 16th amendment that allowed the taxation and collection of income tax. Patriots describe many reasons for why it is unlawful, some argue that it was actually never ratified by 2/3rds of the states; some argue that it was always intended to be a voluntary tax. Mark has a philosophical argument about the right to tax one’s labor. He argues that labor is your own property and any attempt to tax it was a form of slavery:

...your labor is your property, it always has been. One of the big things that I hate to see is people robbed of their labor because that's what they are. If you're robbed of your labor, you're nothing but a slave. They can call you free, tell you you're free, that doesn't mean you have to believe you're free because you should have the mentality and the intelligence to look around and figure out you're not free. (0308:5)

Mark has been one of the lucky patriots; for whatever reason the IRS has not followed up on the paperwork he filed. Another patriot I interviewed, Elizabeth, was not so lucky. She argued like many patriots that the income tax was a voluntary tax. Many official IRS publications talk about the U.S. tax system as a voluntary system. This language is of course open to interpretation. Many patriots interpreted this language as meaning they had a right to *not* voluntarily file or pay their income taxes. The IRS has countered and argued that the word voluntary means that taxpayers voluntarily give the IRS financial information through filing and not that the taxes themselves are voluntary (IRS 2004). Many courts have upheld the IRS's interpretation.

One of the patriots I interviewed, Elizabeth, argued that it was indeed a voluntary tax. In addition, she believed that the federal government actually didn't need the money. Unlike David, the IRS launched an investigation against Elizabeth, but her experiences with the IRS merely confirmed her anti-government beliefs:

In 1938 they needed taxes for the war and depression—but they went beyond that...they went beyond what the original intentions were. They liked having the income, but they didn't really need it anymore. I used it [the patriot anti-tax argument] but it all just toppled over—there are too many bad guys (the government agents). The IRS sent intimidating letters and I fought them myself. They said I owed 80,000, but I got them down to 5,000. Someone did my taxes but I did all the legal stuff with the IRS. I don't like the way they were threatening me. You are suppose to be innocent until proven guilty, but with the IRS, the burden of proof lies with you. I don't think I even owed them that much but I wanted them off my back, and once you feed the beast they can't bother me anymore. I'm sure they have me red flagged, but there really is no more income anymore anyway. (0304:2)

The emotional toll was much more than the economic cost of fighting the IRS. Elizabeth nearly lost everything, including her life. Her body was consumed by an infection that she believes she contracted and could not control because of the level of stress created by her interactions with the IRS. Despite the fact that the IRS won, when I interviewed her (five years after her entanglement with the IRS) she still believed she was right.

What were the ideas that led Mark and Elizabeth and hundreds (perhaps thousands) like them to take up strong ideological arguments against the IRS and as a result invite the very scrutiny they were fighting against? It is a many-layered answer, and mainly touched on in chapters five through seven. Below I talk about a tactic called the declaration of sovereign citizenship. It is, I argue, the most revealing of the ideological nature of the patriot movement.

Sovereign Citizenship

The declaration of sovereign citizenship is still a popular tactic among patriots and embodies the ideological and tactical heart of the patriot movement. This excerpt explaining sovereign citizenship was taken from a patriot website:

A Sovereign is "Sui Juris" which is defined in Black's Law Dictionary as: "Of his own right; possessing full social and civil rights; not under any legal disability, or the power of another, or guardianship. Having the capacity to manage one's own affairs; not under legal disability to act for one's self." A Sovereign adheres to the Common Law. What it really means is, as long as one is responsible for their actions and maintains the Sui Juris status, one can do whatever one pleases as long as two conditions are met: 1) Do not infringe on the Rights of others, or damage their property or person, and 2) Keep all agreements entered into knowingly, willingly, and voluntarily. (anon 2003)⁶⁵

⁶⁵ See also appendix six for a longer patriot description of sovereign citizenship

This is how it works. In the patriot world one can declare oneself sovereign (often this was “legally” done by filing “quiet titles” in common law courts) which is really a declaration ending one’s ties to the federal government. One is “not under...the power of another.” Sui juris is Latin for independent or “of one’s own right.” Think of the declaration of sovereign citizenship as a tonic for the powerless made up in language that appeals to the average white male. Its symbolic significance is analogous to being “born again” in the Christian faith. Rather than being born into Christ’s love though, one is born a full fledged citizen-of-the-self, bound only to “agreements entered into knowingly, willingly and voluntarily.” Most federal obligations do not come under this category of agreements. It is in short to declare oneself king over oneself—although women of course have declared themselves sovereign citizens.

The language of sovereignty draws on the American colonial period. During the time of monarchical rule only kings (and queens) were sovereign, only the government head had official power. The language of liberty and equality born in revolution transferred sovereignty to the people. What defined “the people” was strictly regulated over the two centuries since the words “we the people” were written. But it is this colonial republican conception of power contemporary patriots draw upon: if a king can be sovereign, then an individual can be sovereign. For patriots individual sovereignty means that governmental authorities should no longer have the right to have authority over them. This includes the various incursions federal authorities make into individual lives—the IRS, Social Security, the ever expanding web of bureaucratic authority and regulatory power over many aspects of our lives and livelihoods (remember many

patriots come from rural and farming communities where the power of outside authorities including the federal government, the Federal Reserve, the markets loom large.)

When my respondent Mark said, “the IRS knows my status” it is his status as a declared sovereign citizen that he is referring to. For the powerless it is a symbolic “fuck-you” to the powerful (in this case the federal government). Although largely symbolic it carries the freight of an ultimate expression of freedom and the self-expression of individual rights, and as such draws on the very American idea, as coined by Tocqueville, of individualism.

The fundamental goal of most patriot movement followers is to return the United States to a (fictional) past where “man” (and of course, this is a gendered ideology) could be self-sufficient and self-reliant. This tactic, like many others, is an attempt to re-create a Utopian past referred to in chapter seven. The United States government has overstepped its powers to meddle in the affairs of the people and what people do with their property. In the patriot ideal world there would not be any need to rely on a federal institution to settle disputes or to create a social safety net. In many ways these groups move beyond a states’ rights argument straight to the individual as the fundamental legal and economic unit.

Patriot Tactics—an Analysis

As compared to progressive anti-government groups, patriot adherence to a dominant ideology of individualism leads to fundamentally different strategies. While progressive protesters rally the troops as a show of force in Seattle, Washington D.C., Quebec, etc., patriot members often act individually or at most in small groups.

Patriots reject the power of the federal government over their own lives and with the declaration of sovereignty some have stopped using their social security number, refused to get a driver's license, refused to renew their license for their car, stopped paying taxes and various other mechanisms for pulling themselves out of the federal bureaucratic web.

Now even the simplest of strategies—to remove the license plate from your car—will bring one into direct contact with law enforcement officials. The patriot must either cave in the face of law enforcement or the situation quickly escalates to stand off proportions. Neiwert (2000) details a few cases where patriot members, refusing to participate in these basic civic obligations have been given a ticket which they then refuse to pay which leads to a warrant for their arrest which has led in too many cases to a violent gun-involved stand off with local, state and/or federal officials—depending on the offense.

The futility of this strategy seems evident to most of us—this is not going to change anything anytime soon. However, within the ideology of the patriot movement it is perfectly rational and in keeping with their goals at a certain level—this is an attempt to retreat from the power of the federal government. The person who takes this stand is then fully justified (in his mind) in pointing to the abuses of the state as they have affected him. It is at its heart a solipsist strategy—what is gained is the evidence that proves that one is repressed by the state. The tactics provide hard evidence for what they already feel is the case—that they are powerless in the face of bureaucratic authority.

I believe this exposes one of the underlying premises of the patriot strategy, the reclamation of masculinity. Many of those involved have seen for themselves, their

families, or their communities the toll that neo-liberal globalization and environmental policies have taken. There are fewer and fewer opportunities to make a living in the rural areas where the patriot movement is the strongest (VanDyke 2002). Changing these overwhelming circumstances must seem daunting, and many in the rural communities whether part of the patriot movement or not have bitterly complained about the lack of coverage in the media and in the halls of government for their concerns. The patriot movement allows, if almost nothing else, the anger a place to flow, and permits individuals (mostly white men) to “stand up” to the government by which they feel so screwed, literally, and gives them strategies that at the very least allow them a chance to reclaim the “sovereignty” to which they feel entitled.

Creating a Patriot Counter Culture of Resistance

As formal movement activity ebbs the oppositional culture is sustained by the production and consumption of a counter culture. This counter culture is manifested through various media. It includes short wave radio outlets, closed internet groups, web sites, blogs, serial publications, books, pamphlets as well as speaking events, and more traditional group meetings. Much of the current energy of the movement has gone into producing a patriot culture. In a never-ending cycle, patriots use and produce elements of this culture that then reinforces the patriot culture. Remember much of the resistance is about cultivating self-sufficiency, so the educational material is vast and includes articles on, for example, alternative medicine, survival skills, home schooling, and organic farming, as well as news outlets that document the most current corporate and government malfeasance (often spun as manifestations of the New World Order conspiracy).

The task of documenting the counter culture would be a dissertation in and of itself. That is not what I wish to do here. But it was clear to me in my journeys both online and with the people I spoke with in Arizona, that the material generated by patriots is monumental. I have two file drawers full of “primary sources” just of the materials that were given to me by my respondents. The legal brief by John Nelson, circulated from person to person, that I quoted from above contained 2,000 pages of documentation (not included in the two drawer file cabinet!).

What I want to communicate here is the sense that the culture could become solipsistic, as the counter culture begins to seal itself off from mainstream sources (which right now it does not do entirely), and as people actually become more self-sufficient and value autodidacticism. I don't think there is any real danger of this from a legal standpoint, but as a political sociologist I do find it disturbing that a group of people who are interested in politics, who are spending a significant amount of time educating themselves by following politics, and are active—in fact the very type of citizens democracies should cultivate, could potentially—if not already—be lost from future democratic participation. This speaks to a larger problem about the functioning of democracy, or really the lack of a functioning democracy in the contemporary United States. But these larger questions are topics for the conclusion.

Conclusion

Overall this dissertation touches on several academic literatures regarding the radical right, populism, social movements and political sociology. Below I'll review my contributions to the literature for each of these areas, but I will save the discussion of populism and political sociology for last as these are my main interest.

Contributions to Studies of the Right-Wing

The patriot literature is quite thin and almost anything written can add to our understanding of the patriot movement and broader oppositional culture. This dissertation, utilizing in-depth ethnographic methods sought to understand (at least through the limited eyes of my respondents) the patriot oppositional culture and the ideas and practices that animated its followers. The data though are not "representative", and there are important limitations to consider. While I did additional research on the patriot movement as a whole (in terms of the collection of primary documents) the dissertation relies heavily on my respondents' views. What my respondents said may indeed be just a unique group in the entirety of the patriot culture, but I doubt that is the case. Even given its limitations I do think it is an interesting case study that serves to shed light on the patriot oppositional culture as a whole. Because my respondents contributed to and were shaped by the larger patriot oppositional culture, their experiences and narratives shed light not only on their particular micro manifestation of the patriot culture, but also tells us about the larger patriot oppositional culture.

I attempted to demystify a few common ideas about the patriots: first they are not all racists. I attempted to create an analytical line which on the one hand showed that the patriot ideology while an anti-state ideology is not necessarily a white supremacist or

anti-semitic ideology. At the same time I wanted to show the importance of the institution of whiteness as it has contributed to the main ideologies of which the patriots inhabit and circulate: populism, republicanism, and individualism.

Second, while Christian discourse may be formative of the movement's ideological tendencies, Christian fundamentalism is not. I showed the complex use of religious discourse in chapter 7, both as a foil to those who argue Christian fundamentalism's black and white worldview helps explain the rigid ideologies of adherents and to illustrate how religiosity is used as a powerful counter-discourse to contemporary discourses of governance.

Third, they are not all fascist. Patriot voices are critical of fascist tendencies in our current government. The patriot critique reflects the real conditions of closing democratic channels in the contemporary United States. In other words there is a structural component to my story. The patriots cannot be understood—their beliefs or their activities—without recognizing the current deterioration of our democratic culture. Patriot ideology is in part a response to a closed political process.

Contributions to Social Movement Theory

In regard to social movement theory in chapter three I combine Mansbridge & Morris' conception of oppositional culture and consciousness with Melucci's idea that the "identity is movement." The patriots I spoke with had a very strong identity as patriots, but they were only very loosely connected with something we might recognize as a movement. I suggested a theoretical answer to this puzzle by linking Melucci's idea that "identity is movement" and the concept of oppositional consciousness. Melucci's case may be strongest—that a movement is carried by the processes of identity

formation—in those movements which develop out of structurally oppressed conditions. As Mansbridge & Morris suggest, identity and cultures of resistance arise in groups/cultures which are oppressed by the powers that be—in the 20th and 21st century these powers are often states.

In part this research suggests that if we are primarily interested in social change and what gets people to do what they do to create social change—then looking primarily at movements (as they have been defined with their focus on SMO's and leaders, and physical resources) is not efficacious. This traditional definition of social movements privileges a particular form of organizing for change—one that befits primarily those who already have certain amounts of resources: the knowledge of how to organize, money to organize, politically connected networks, etc. In essence this definition privileges middle class movements, which leads to an elision of working class and the poor's various manifestations of resistance, which tends to be unrecognized and thus often dismissed as apolitical or system supportive.

My (near) silent interlocutor is Richard Hofstadter and the line of academic literature that has labeled movement adherents that espouse conspiracy theories as paranoid populists. More than anything else I hoped to demonstrate that the patriots (once put in a larger social, economic and political context) should not be called an extremist movement. The signifier, extremist, conjures a particular image—irrational, even crazy, unsophisticated, reactionary—a discourse that is meant to deride and does not lead to understanding but further mystification. Extremist also conjures the idea that those who participate are outside of normal politics—that their activities and critiques are not responding to any sort of “real” conditions. But there is no outside, and while patriots

do operate from a position of limited power, even near powerlessness—that does not make them “outside” of political, social and economic effects. I hoped to show, in short, that the patriots were part of a *political* movement. Their ideas, ideologies, strategies and tactics were about the operation of power in contemporary U.S. society.

As a social movement and oppositional culture the patriots are responding to a closed political process from particular sites of oppression which draws on a unique set of ideas with which to construct meanings—conspiracy theory, republicanism, and traditional religious notions of community. The making of a collective political identity, in this case called patriot, is forged through a complex of meanings and practices at all levels of the social imaginary: the individual, the group, the movement, the counter cultural and the institutional level. It is a discourse though that relates back to power, whether that power adheres in a word, a social relation or in the political and economic practices of a particular time and place. I have tried to trace the history (although very briefly in most cases) of these ideas in American culture in each of the chapters in Part II Macro Historical and Cultural Processes: republican populism in chapter five, conspiracy theory in chapter six and religiosity in chapter seven. Implicit in these chapters and particularly combined with the final chapter on patriot practices, is that ideas (language, discourse, ideology, meanings) do matter. How lived realities are talked about, the meanings created, in part create our lived realities but also help us navigate and influence how we *are* (our practices) in our day-to-day life.

The patriots voice political powerlessness and the desire for significance in an age of felt “insignificance,” as discussed in chapter 7. They express the desire for political

signification (though, true the desire is expressed in odd ways) at a time when those desires have nowhere to be effectively heard.

This is the tragedy of democracy in the 21st century—democracy as an empty signifier. I think the patriot story relates to a larger more significant story about the decline of democratic institutions and practices in the United States accompanied with disquiet about the terms of political debate in the United States. I argue below that this disquiet has to do with a failure of liberalism as a political philosophy to engage citizens in a discussion about governance: how should we live? Religion has provided an answer for these questions and for a while during the reign of republican populist discourse so to did political philosophy.

Michael Sandel argues that the public philosophy guiding today's U.S. institutions and practices is liberalism. This public philosophy assumes that the role of government is to be morally neutral on the question of what is the good life and the governments only role is to serve as arbiter between competing interests. Liberalism assumes that individual freedom lies in the capacity to choose amongst various life goals and the government's role is to ensure individuals right to pursue these self-chosen goals⁶⁶. But liberalism, claims Sandel, fails to encourage self-rule or the very democratic practices

⁶⁶ Sandel is writing about liberalism today, sometimes called laissez-faire liberalism, neo-liberalism or interest-group liberalism. The institution of liberalism—its philosophy of governance, how it conceptualizes the individual and freedom--has over time changed. Indeed our unencumbered individual of the 21st century is actually quite counter to the liberal individual as conceived by Adam Smith and John Locke, patriarchs of liberal thought. Kloppenberg argues that their Smith and Locke's individual lived in "moral communities" they were never assumed to be autonomous. "Autonomy, for these early liberal thinkers "meant the combination of personal independence and moral responsibility" (Kloppenber 1987:30).

that are required to keep a democracy vibrant. Like Tocqueville in the 1830's Sandel sees that individualism has indeed become "wrongly understood."

Like Sandel, Gamson argues there are competing visions regarding American politics. In *Talking Politics* Gamson (1992) examines the dominant themes and counter themes in American popular culture. The dominant theme regarding American politics is interest group politics, while the counter theme that circulates is one of popular democracy. Popular democracy is what populism (even republican populism) holds out as its promise. The patriots (while they would never use the language of popular democracy) are actually calling for practices that look like popular democracy. Recall, from chapter 5 Linda's ideal "republic." She conjures an image where the channels of political power would (ideally) filter back to actual citizens and envisions a governance system where citizens could actually participate more powerfully at all levels of politics.

Republican populism then is a counter discourse to interest-group liberalism. We saw populism reflected in the dominant themes occurring in patriot ideology: republicanism is about the authority the people should have over governments; conspiracy theory is the patriot political critique that narrates an epic struggle of "the people" versus the elite. Populism asserts the power of the people over all other types of authority. Populist discourse has never been one thing—other than the articulation of demands in particular times and spaces of the needs of the people in relation to a authoritative state. What the demands are, how they are articulated, who are the people, are all questions of process and demand empirical investigation and can be used for both regressive and progressive ends (Laclau 2005).

Historically, I think, populism is intermeshed with a republican philosophy of

governance because both serve as counter discourses to liberalism, and the ever-growing neo-liberal state. Although republican discourse has changed over the last two centuries to accommodate changing circumstances it speaks to a fundamental tension over the definition of freedom unresolved between our liberal philosophy of self and the democratic self. In republican philosophy an individual is free to the extent that they can engage in political processes. Republican individuals, then, are free by virtue of their capacity to contribute to political decisions. In liberalism it is quite the opposite; individuals are free to choose their obligation and ends; they are free to pursue their own self-interest. The republican notion of freedom remains relevant simply because I think it is part of human nature to at least desire to participate in the terms of the debate—a desire to engage in the decisions by which our lives will be ruled. As this capacity and access to governance has diminished, republicanism and populism has found its place in a counter discourse challenging state practices that diminish democratic participation. There are many movements that are articulating the need for each of us to have a voice—to enjoy the feeling of freedom that comes from participation. The Athenians and Aristotle may have been right that the only real freedom comes from political participation. In an era of globalization and massive governments and seemingly all-powerful TNC's not to mention global warming, it may indeed be the only real freedom that is possible.

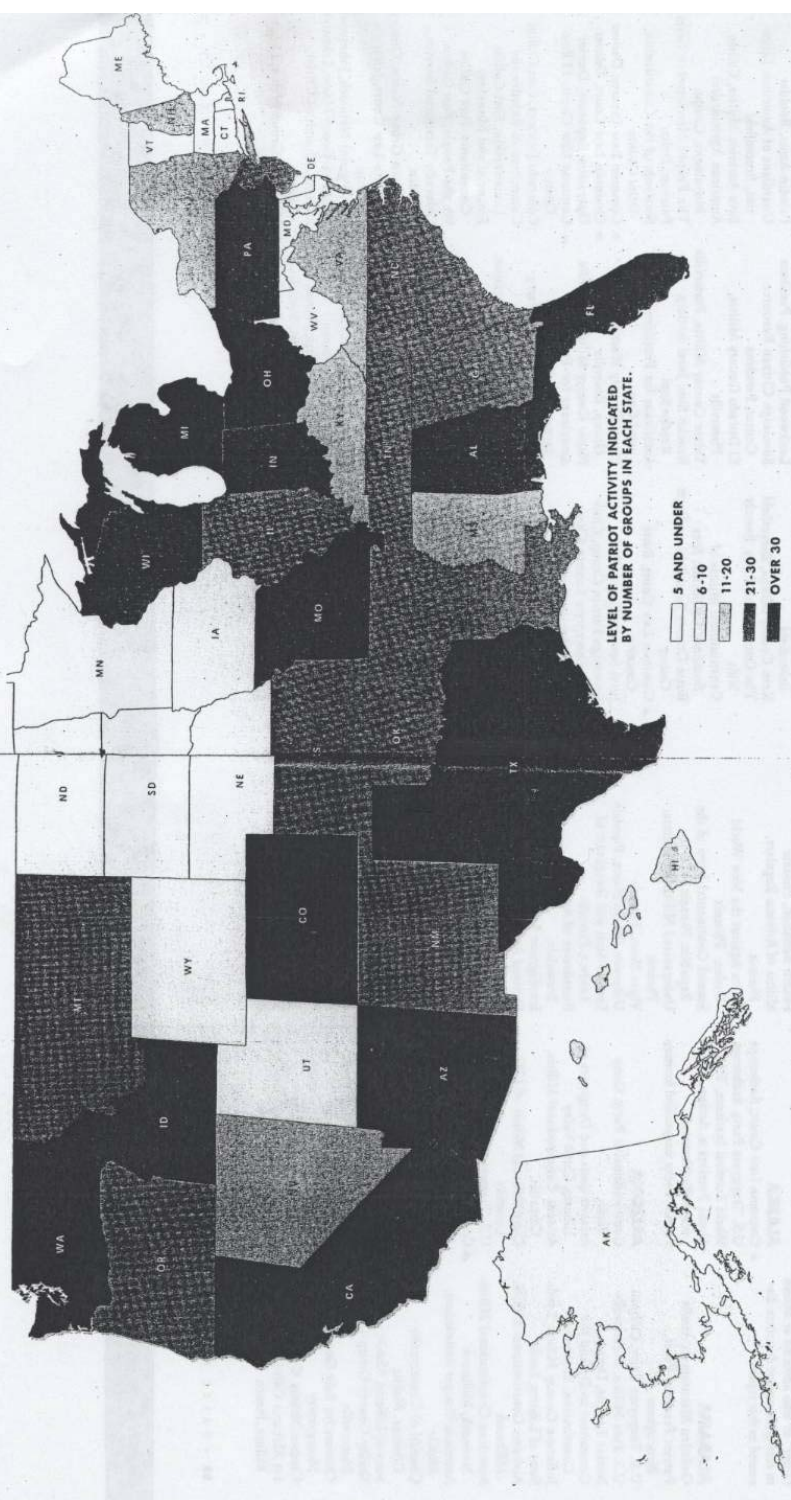
Appendix One SPLC/ADL Maps

Anti-Defamation League Map of States with active patriot groups as of August 2004

<http://www.adl.org/extremism/Militia/default.asp>



Patriot Groups in the United States, 1996



FALSE PATRIOTS • 3

Patriot Groups Active in the United States 1996

(italics are country abbreviations)

The Militia Task Force identified 858 active Patriot groups in 1996. This listing includes militia organizations, common law courts, identity churches, radio broadcasters, publishers, secessionists and others who identify themselves as Patriots opposed to a "New World Order" or who advocate or adhere to anti-government doctrines discussed in this report.

ALABAMA

- Gadsden Minutemen, Atalla
- Patriot Freedom Press, Birmingham
- U.S. Taxpayers Party, Cullman
- U.S. Free Militia, Drummanville
- Justice League, Dothan
- Committee to Defend the Constitution, Enterprise
- Jefferson County Militia, Leeds
- Sons of Liberty, Leeds
- Alabama Constitutional Militia, Millbrook
- American Constitutional Militia Network, Millbrook
- American Ranger Association, Mobile
- Council of Conservative Citizens, Mobile
- Sons of Liberty, Mobile
- Shelby County Group 19, Montevallo
- Citizens for Safe Government, Montgomery
- Kitchen Militia, Oxford
- 1st Alabama Cavalry Regiment Militia, Pinson

- Men of Liberty and Eternity, Plantersville
- Eastern Diamonds Militia, Roanoke
- Alabama Unorganized Militia, Wilmer
- Council of Conservative Citizens, unspecified location

ALASKA

- Common Law Court, Anchorage
- U.S. Taxpayers Party, Anchorage
- World Survival Institute, Tik
- Alaska Patriots in Action, unspecified location
- Patriot Party, unspecified location

ARIZONA

- Constitutionalist Party, Camp Verde
- Arizona Sons and Daughters of Liberty, Chino Valley
- Arizona Constitutional Militia, Cornville
- Constitutional Militia of 1791, Cornville
- U.S. Taxpayers Party, Glendale
- Common Law Court, Graham
- Arizona Patriots, Kingman
- Common Law Court, Maricopa County
- Yavapai County Militia, Mayer
- Citizens for America, Mesa
- Common Law Court, Mohave County
- Common Law Court, Payson
- Militia of Arizona, Payson
- American Citizens and Lawmen Association, Phoenix

- Americans for Constitutional Action, Phoenix
- America's Destiny National Video Network, Phoenix
- Arizona Constitutional Rights Committee, Phoenix
- Arizona Unified Militia, Phoenix
- First Mounted Rangers, Phoenix
- Fourth Battalion, Phoenix
- Militia of Arizona Regulars, Phoenix
- Police Against the New World Order, Phoenix
- Second Continental Army of the Republic, Phoenix
- Unorganized Militia of Arizona, Phoenix
- Viper Team, Phoenix
- Unknown Group Name, Pinedale
- Yavapai Sons and Daughters of Liberty, Prescott
- Foundation of America, Scottsdale
- Intelligence Service, Showlow
- Citizens Agency for Joint Intelligence, St. Johns
- Research Center, St. Johns
- United States Constitutional Rangers, Tempe
- Pima County Grand Jury, Tucson
- Sovereign Citizens Movement, Tucson
- Tucson Militia, Tucson

ARKANSAS

- Unorganized Militia Affiliate, Alpena
- Deeters Publications, El Dorado
- Washington County Militia, Elkens

- United States Constitutional Rangers, Fort Smith
- Kingdom Identity Ministries, Harrison
- Elohim Kingdom Nation Jacob-Israel, Lake Wedgton
- Christian Patriots Defense League, Little Rock
- Council of Conservative Citizens, Little Rock
- Marion County Militia, Marion
- U.S. Taxpayers Party, Maumelle
- Citizen Militia, Osage
- Red River Militia, Ozarks
- Present Truth Ministry, Uniontown
- We the People, Yellville

CALIFORNIA

- Kern County Liberty Corps, Bakersfield
- Kern County Militia, Bakersfield
- The Constitution Party, Beverly Hills
- Constitutional Militia of Southern California, Brea
- Butte County Jural Society, Butte County
- Common Law Court, Butte County
- Jural Society, Canoga Park
- Sovereign Patriot Group, Chico
- Free Enterprise Society, Clovis
- Citizens Against Legal Loopholes, Del Mar
- Common Law Court, El Dorado County
- First Amendment Committee, Escondido
- Unorganized Militia of California, Fort Bragg Unit, Fort Bragg
- Santa Cruz Citizen's Brigade, Freedom
- Common Law Court, Garden Grove
- Americans for Freedom, Hayward
- We the People, Huntington Beach
- Common Law Court, Kern County
- San Jose Militia, La Jolla

- U.S. Taxpayers Party, La Mesa
- Christian Jural Society, First House of Delegates, Los Angeles County
- Common Law Court, Los Angeles
- San Joaquin County Militia, Manteca
- Juris Christian Assembly, Modesto
- New Nation USA, Morongo Valley
- Freedom Bound, Nevada City
- Alameda County Free Militia, Oakland
- Ojai Jural Society Militia, Oakview
- Orange County Patriots, Orange County
- Americans for Freedom, Paradise
- Lockwood Publishing, Pasadena
- Sovereign Citizen Resource Center, Pasadena
- El Dorado County Militia, Placerville
- Tulare County Militia, Porterville
- Rancho Simi Jural Society, Rancho Simi
- Americans for Freedom, Redwood City
- Placer County Home Rule Group, Roseville
- Placer County Militia, Roseville
- Americans for Freedom, Sacramento
- American Independent Party, San Bernardino
- Fully Informed Jury Association, San Diego
- Northern California House of Common Law, San Rafael
- Santa Clara County Militia, Santa Clara County
- Sons of Liberty, Santa Rosa
- Common Law Court, Solano County
- National Alliance of Christian Militias, Shingletown
- Shingletown Militia, Shingletown
- Common Law Court, Stanislaus County
- Truth In Taxation, Studio City

- U.S. Taxpayers Party, Arvada
- Common Law Court, Baca County
- Boulder County Militia, Boulder
- Boulder Patriots, Boulder
- Paladin Arms, Boulder
- Guardians of American Liberties, Broomfield
- Save America Militia, Calhan
- American Agricultural Movement, Campo
- The Patriot Matchmaker, Craig
- Patriots, Delta
- Stewards of the Constitution, Delta County
- Common Law Liberty, Denver
- Common Law Court, Denver
- Operation Exposure, Denver
- Common Law Court, El Paso County
- Colorado Patriots, Fort Collins
- Committee to Restore the Constitution, Fort Collins
- Financial and Monetary Consultants, Fort Collins
- We the People, Fort Collins
- Colorado Territorial Service, Golden
- Unknown Group Name, Greeley
- Common Law Court, Jefferson County
- USA Patriot Network, Johnston
- Unknown Group Name, Lakewood
- Laporte Church of Christ, Laporte
- Unknown Group Name, Larimer County

Longmont Citizens of the Republic, Longmont
 National Commodity & Barter Association, Longmont
 Stewards of the Constitution, Montrose
 • Common Law Court, Montrose County
 Unknown Group Name, Jefferson County
 Unknown Group Name, Park County
 Unknown Group Name, Pueblo County
 Unknown Group Name, Weld County
 Tenth Amendment Committee, Wheat Ridge
 Colorado 1st Light Infantry, unspecified location

CONNECTICUT
 Constitutional Revival, Enfield
 Military Studies Group, Manchester
 Blue Trail Range, Wallingford
 Nonmarching Militia, Wallingford
 U.S. Taxpayers Party, Wolcott

DELAWARE
 U.S. Taxpayers Party, Herrington
 Delaware Regional Citizens Militia, Smyrna
 Delaware Minutemen, unspecified location

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
 Executive Intelligence Service, Washington
 Liberty Lobby, Washington
 U.S. Taxpayers Party, Washington

FLORIDA
 Union County Militia, Alachu
 Florida State Militia, Avon Park
 Florida State Militia 7th Regiment, Avon Park
 Marion County Citizens Militia, Belleview
 Manatee Minuteman Citizens Militia, Bradenton

Constitutional Militia of Florida, Brevard County
 U.S. Field Forces National Militia, Camp Bradley
 American Citizens Alliance, Daytona Beach
 Liberty Group, Daytona Beach
 U.S. Taxpayers Party, Deerfield Beach
 NAAWP Militia, Eagle Lake
 27th Regiment, Eaton Park
 Florida State Militia, 1st Florida Regiment, Englewood
 Panhandle Patriots, Inc., Escambia County
 Lords of Chaos, Fort Myers
 Constitutional Militia of Florida, Fort Pierce
 Florida State Militia, Fort Pierce
 Okaloosa County Militia, Fort Walton Beach
 Panhandle Patriots, Inc., Fort Walton Beach
 Unknown Group Name, Highlands County
 Unknown Group Name, Hillsborough County
 North Florida Militia, Jacksonville
 Spartan Militia, Jacksonville
 Spartan Legion, Jacksonville
 Martin County Militia, Jensen Beach
 1st Regiment Florida State Militia/United States Militia, Key Largo
 Lee County Militia, Lee County
 Operation Freedom, Maitland
 19th Regiment, Melbourne
 John Birch Society, Melbourne
 Privacy Consultants International, Miami
 Middleburg Militia, Middleburg
 Panhandle Patriots, Inc., Navarre
 American Constitutional Society, New Smyrna Beach
 • Common Law Court, Orange County
 • Orange County Common Law Court, Orange County
 108th Regiment, Orlando
 Christian Jural Society for Florida, Orlando

Florida Unorganized Militia, Orlando
 Santa Rosa County Militia, Pace
 Santa Rosa Militia, Pace
 Brevard County Militia, 19th Regiment, Palm Bay
 Constitutional Militia of Florida, Palm Bay
 Restoration Township Jural Society, Palm Bay
 Unknown Group Name, Pasco County
 Alligator Brigade, Pensacola
 Escambia County Militia, Pensacola
 Unknown Group Name, Pinellas County
 Hillsboro County Militia, Plant City
 Unknown Group Name, Polk County
 People for Sovereignty and Restoration, Pompano Beach
 48th Regiment, St. Petersburg
 77th Regiment of Pinellas County, St. Petersburg
 Minuteman Press, Tallahassee
 55th Regiment, Tampa
 82nd Regiment, Tampa
 Constitutional Common Law Militia, Tampa
 People, Tampa
 Pro Se Litigants of America, Inc., Tampa
 Council of Conservative Citizens, Tampa
 • Common Law Court, Volusia County
 3rd Regiment, West Palm Beach
 Constitutional Militia of Florida, West Palm Beach
 For the People, White Springs
 Central Florida Militia Association, Winter Haven
 Northwest Florida Militia, Youngstown
 Citizens Intelligence Agency, unspecified location
 Florida State Militia, 7th Regiment, unspecified location

Republic of Florida, unspecified location
 Tenth Amendment Militia, unspecified location
 United States Special Forces Militia, unspecified location

GEORGIA
 Fully Informed Jury Association, Atlanta
 Citizens for a Constitutional Georgia, Atlanta
 Council of Conservative Citizens, Augusta
 Georgia Militia, Bolingbroke
 U.S. Taxpayers Party, Canton
 Watchdogs Against Government Abuse, Cherokee County
 • Common Law Court, Cobb County
 Georgia Civilian Militia, Columbia County
 Voice of Liberty, Decatur
 11th North Georgia Militia, Dublin
 Church of the Remnant, Epworth
 Council of Conservative Citizens, Epworth
 Voice of Liberty Patriots, Epworth
 Patriot, Fayetteville
 Militia At Large for the Republic of Georgia, unspecified location

HAWAII
 Common Law Court, Honolulu
 Cornerstones of Freedom Research Foundation, Honolulu
 Hawaii Unorganized Militia, Honolulu
 Kingdom of Hawaii, Honolulu
 U.S. Taxpayers Party, Honolulu
 Honolulu Unorganized Militia, Milani

IDAHO
 • Common Law Court, Ada County
 Idaho Sovereignty Association, Boise
 North American Freedom Council, Boise

Stewards of the Range, Boise
 Common Law Court, Boundary County
 Americans for Constitutional Government, Coeur d'Alene
 Northwest Liberty Network, Coeur d'Alene
 Sovereign Citizens of America Network, Coeur d'Alene
 Concerned Citizens of Idaho, Hayden Lake
 Idaho Liberty Network, Hayden Lake
 John Birch Society, Hayden Lake
 Unorganized Militia of Idaho, Hayden Lake
 American Patriots of the Northwest, Kamiah
 Specially Prepared Individuals for Key Events, Kamiah
 • Common Law Court, Kootenai County
 U.S. Taxpayers Party, Kuna
 • Common Law Court, Lewis County
 Idaho Citizens Awareness Network, Ponderay
 Property Owners Association, Sandpoint
 American Sovereignty, unspecified location
 American Juris Association, unspecified location
 Idaho First Militia, unspecified location

ILLINOIS
 Northern Illinois Minutemen, Adlington Heights
 Southern Illinois Patriots League, Buncombe
 Illinois Patriots Coalition, Centralia
 • Common Law Court, Clark County
 Northern Illinois Minutemen, Elburn
 U.S. Taxpayers Party, Elgin
 Christian Patriots Defense League HQ, Flora
 Order of the Upright Ostrich, Freeport

Morgan County Minutemen, Jacksonville
 Illinois Minutemen, Lombard
 • Common Law Court, Madison County
 Western Illinois Militia, Monmouth
 Northern Illinois Minutemen, Romeoville
 Illinois Taxpayers Party, West Chicago
 Black Dawn, unspecified location
 John Birch Society, unspecified location
 Sons of Liberty, unspecified location

INDIANA
 Council of Conservative Citizens, Bloomington
 Christian Common Law Foundation, Boonville
 North American Freedom Council, Boonville
 North American Militia, Boonville
 U.S. Taxpayers Party, Corydon
 Common Law Court, Delaware County
 Tri-County Carbineers, Elberfeld
 Indiana Citizens Volunteer Militia, Harrison County
 American Justice Federation, Indianapolis
 Black Panther Militia, Indianapolis
 Marion County Militia of Indiana, Indianapolis
 Sovereign Patriots, Indianapolis
 Unorganized Militia of the United States, Indianapolis
 Indiana Citizens Volunteer Militia, Kokomo
 Tippecanoe County Militia, Lafayette
 • Common Law Court, Marion County
 Unknown Group Name, Marion County
 Indiana Citizens Volunteer Militia, Morgan County
 Delaware County Patriots, Muncie

- Unknown Group Name, Salem
- Common Law Court, Warrick County
- Citizens Against Totalitarian Enactments, White County
- Greene County Militia, Washington
- Defenders of the Pure, unspecified location
- IOWA**
- Iowa Militia, Cedar Rapids
- Common Law Court, Delaware County
- Common Law Court, Floyd County
- Common Law Court, Jackson County
- U.S. Taxpayers Party, Story City
- KANSAS**
- Constitutionalist-Networking Center, Baldwin
- Common Law Court, Butler County
- Kansas Citizens Militia, London
- Common Law Court, Rice County
- Common Law Court, Sedgwick County
- Kansas Second Amendment Militia, Spring Hill
- Common Law Court, Stafford County
- Common Law Court, St. Mary's
- 1st Mechanized Infantry Militia, Towanda
- American Constitutional Militia Network, Wichita
- Kansas Citizens Militia, Wichita
- Kansas Taxpayers Party, Wichita
- U.S. Taxpayers Party, Wichita
- KENTUCKY**
- Defenders of Liberty, Boone County
- Kentucky Riflemen Militia, Brooks
- Council of Conservative Citizens, Casey Creek
- West Kentucky Committee of Safety, Henderson
- Michigan Militia Co., Mason
- Northern Michigan Regional Militia, Alanson
- De-Taxing America, Also
- Southern Michigan Regional Militia, Berde Creek
- Central East Michigan Regional Militia, Bay City
- Wolverine Michigan Militia, Benonia
- Southern Michigan Regional Militia, Burton
- American Freedom Network, Canton
- Michigan Militia St. Clair County, Cape
- Gun Owners of Wayne County, Dearborn
- Justice Pro Se, Dearborn
- Michigan Militia, Dredger
- Detroit Constitutional Militia, Detroit
- Michigan Militia At Large, Dretter
- Central East Michigan Regional Militia, Flint
- Southern Michigan Regional Militia, Fowlerville
- Southern Michigan Regional Militia, Frankfort
- American Law Studies Association, Gowan
- Central West Michigan Regional Militia, Grand Rapids
- Superior Michigan Regional Militia, Gwin
- National Coalition of Militias, Harbor Springs
- National Confederation of Citizens Militias, Harbor Springs
- Straits Area Constitutional Militia, Harbor Springs
- Success Marketing, Harbor Springs
- Southern Michigan Regional Militia, Hilldale County
- United States Militia at Large, Hilldale County
- Michigan Militia, Inaballs County
- Superior Michigan Regional Militia, Ishpeming
- Army, Hindman
- Voice of Liberty, Liberty
- U.S. Taxpayers Party, Louisville
- LOUISIANA**
- Council of Conservative Citizens, Baton Rouge
- Louisiana Action Network, Baton Rouge
- Independence Trust, Benton
- Citizens Against the Waco Atrocities, Bossier City
- Red River Militia, Bossier City
- Norwels Common Militia, Bossier City
- Washitaw Nation, Columbia
- Common Law Defense Fund, Lafayette
- Enlightened Patriots, Lafayette
- Louisiana Unorganized Militia, Lafayette
- Common Law Court, Lafayette Parish
- Sons of Liberty, Metairie
- U.S. Taxpayers Party, Shreveport
- Kitchen Militia, Stars
- MAINE**
- Maine Militia, Belfast
- Maine Militia, Biddeford
- National Citizens Alliance, Brunswick
- U.S. Taxpayers Party, Greene
- 2nd Maine Militia, Parsonsfield
- MARYLAND**
- Freedom Technics, Silver Spring
- U.S. Taxpayers Party, Tanawton
- Maryland State Militia, unspecified location
- MASSACHUSETTS**
- John Birch Society, Belmont
- Citizens Justice Programs, Hall
- U.S. Taxpayers Party, Quincy
- Massachusetts Militia, Springfield
- Regiment of Dragoons, unspecified location
- MICHIGAN**
- Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, Adrian
- Common Law Court, Jensen
- Michigan Militia Wolverine Corp, Kalamazoo
- Central West Michigan Regional Militia, Lakeview
- Superior Regional Militia Corps, L'Anse
- Justice Pro Se, Lansing
- U.S. Taxpayers Party, Lansing
- Citizens Constitution Education Committee, Livingston County
- Common Law Court, Manistee County
- Central East Michigan Regional Militia, Midland
- Central West Michigan Regional Militia, Mount Pleasant
- Fed Up American, Munising
- Central West Michigan Regional Militia, Muskegon
- Common Law Court, Ottawa County
- Michigan Common Law Venue Supreme Court, Ottawa County
- Northern Michigan Regional Militia, Pellston
- Oakland County Taxpayer's Party, Pontiac
- Gun Owners of Southeastern Michigan, Redford
- Council of Conservative Citizens, Roseville
- Common Law Court, Smilke County
- Southern Michigan Regional Militia, St. Clair
- Central West Michigan Regional Militia, Tawas
- Southern Michigan Regional Militia, Wayne County
- Northern Michigan Regional Militia, Wolverine
- For the People, unspecified location
- Fully Informed Jury Association, unspecified location
- Michigan Property Association, unspecified location
- Citizens For a Constitutional Minnesota, Apple Valley
- Common Law Court, Hennepin County
- Special Forces Underground, Minneapolis
- Common Law Court, St. Paul
- U.S. Taxpayers Party, Woodbury
- Minnesota Constitutional Rangers, unspecified location
- MISSISSIPPI**
- Council of Conservative Citizens, Calhoun
- U.S. Taxpayers Party, Collins
- Mississippi Militia, Laurel
- Revolutionary Force of America, Laurel
- Mississippi Militia, Ocean Springs
- Council of Conservative Citizens, Vaiden
- Citizens, Webster
- Common Law Court, unspecified location
- Kitchen Militia, unspecified location
- MISSOURI**
- New Covenant Bible Church, Birch Tree
- Common Law Court, Clay County
- Continental Militia, Crawford County
- Common Law Court, Dale County
- In Missouri Volunteers, Des Moines
- U.S. Taxpayers Party, Fenton
- Missouri 51st Militia, Grain Valley
- George Gordon's School of Common Law, Isabella
- Common Law Court, Jefferson County
- Special Forces Underground, Kansas City
- Third Continental Congress, Kansas City
- Christian Patriot Defense League, Lehigh
- Common Law Court, McDonald County
- Common Law Court, Powell
- Council of Conservative Citizens, St. Louis
- First Missouri Volunteers, St. Louis
- Missouri Sharpshooters, St. Peters
- South Central Missouri Regional Militia, Steubenville
- Common Law Court, Texas County
- Missouri Taxpayers Party, Valley Park
- 52nd Missouri Militia, unspecified location
- Central Missouri Militia, unspecified location
- John Birch Society, unspecified location
- MONTANA**
- Bozeman Freeman, Bozeman
- Common Law Court, Cascade County
- North American Volunteer Militia, Darby
- Militia Support Group, Eureka
- Common Law Court, Garfield County
- Fully Informed Jury Association, Heinwalle
- Montana Freeman/Justus Fellowship, Jordan
- Plenifinancial Services, Kalispell
- Common Law Court, Musselshell County
- Education and Economic Abuse Foundation, Noonan
- Militia of Montana, Noxon
- Fully Informed Jury Association, Owyhee
- U.S. Taxpayers Party, Polson
- Common Law Court, Ravalli County
- NEBRASKA**
- Common Law Court, Hamilton County
- Constitutional Reinstatement Group, Omaha

Unknown Group Name, Salem
 ● Common Law Court, Warrick
 County
 Citizens Against Totalitarian
 Enactments, White County
 Greene County Militia,
 Workington
 Defenders of the Pure,
 unspecified location

IOWA
 ● Iowa Militia, Cedar Rapids
 ● Common Law Court, Delaware
 County
 ● Common Law Court, Floyd
 County
 ● Common Law Court, Jackson
 County
 ● U.S. Taxpayers Party, Story City
 County

KANSAS
 ● Constitutionist Networking
 Center, Bulbow
 County
 ● Common Law Court, Butler
 County
 ● Kansas Citizens Militia, Lyndon
 County
 ● Common Law Court, Rice County
 County
 ● Common Law Court, Sedgwick
 County
 ● Kansas Second Amendment
 Militia, Spring Hill
 County
 ● Common Law Court, Stafford
 County
 ● 1st Mechanized Infantry Militia,
 Towanda
 County
 ● American Constitutional Militia
 Network, Wichita
 County
 ● Kansas Citizens Militia, Wichita
 County
 ● Kansas Taxpayers Party, Wichita
 County
 ● U.S. Taxpayers Party, Wichita
 County

KENTUCKY
 ● Defenders of Liberty, Boone
 County
 ● Kentucky Riflemen Militia,
 Brooks
 County
 ● Council of Conservative
 Citizens, Casey Creek
 County
 ● West Kentucky Committee of
 Safety, Henderson
 County

Army Hindman
 Voice of Liberty, Liberty
 U.S. Taxpayers Party, Louisville

LOUISIANA
 ● Council of Conservative
 Citizens, Baton Rouge
 County
 ● Louisiana Action Network, Baton
 Rouge
 County
 ● Independence Trust, Benton
 County
 ● Citizens Against the Waco
 Atrocities, Bossier City
 Parish
 ● Norwalk Common Militia,
 Bossier City
 Parish
 ● Washitaw Nation, Columbia
 Parish
 ● Common Law Defense Fund, Lafayette
 Parish
 ● Enlightened Patriots, Lafayette
 Parish
 ● Louisiana Unorganized Militia,
 Lafayette
 Parish
 ● Common Law Court, Lafayette
 Parish
 ● Sons of Liberty, Mentzic
 Parish
 ● U.S. Taxpayers Party, Shreveport
 Parish
 ● Kitchen Militia, Stars
 Parish

MAINE
 ● Maine Militia, Belfast
 County
 ● Maine Militia, Biddeford
 County
 ● National Citizens Alliance,
 Brunswick
 County
 ● U.S. Taxpayers Party, Greene
 County
 ● 2nd Maine Militia, Parsonsfield
 County

MARYLAND
 ● Freedom Technics, Silver Spring
 County
 ● U.S. Taxpayers Party, Tanerown
 County
 ● Maryland State Militia, unspec-
 ified location

MASSACHUSETTS
 ● John Birch Society, Belmont
 County
 ● Citizens Justice Programs, Hall
 County
 ● U.S. Taxpayers Party, Quincy
 County
 ● Massachusetts Militia, Springfield
 County
 ● Regiment of Dragons, unspecified
 location

MICHIGAN
 ● Church of the Lord Jesus Christ,
 Adrian
 County

Michigan Militia, Co-
 jonson
 Regional
 Michigan Regional
 Militia, Almon
 County
 De-Taxing America, Alo
 County
 Southern Michigan Regional
 Militia, Barre Creek
 County
 Central East Michigan Regional
 Militia, Bay City
 County
 Wolverine Michigan Militia,
 Benzonia
 County
 Southern Michigan Regional
 Militia, Burton
 County
 American Freedom Network,
 Canton
 County
 Michigan Militia St. Clair Coun-
 ty, Capac
 County
 Gun Owners of Wayne County,
 Dearborn
 County
 Justice Pro Se, Dearborn
 County
 Michigan Militia, Dear-
 born
 County
 Detroit Constitutional Militia,
 Detroit
 County
 Michigan Militia At Large,
 Dearborn
 County
 Central East Michigan Regional
 Militia, Flint
 County
 Southern Michigan Regional
 Militia, Fowlerville
 County
 Southern Michigan Regional
 Militia, Frankfort
 County
 American Law Studies Associa-
 tion, Gowen
 County
 Central West Michigan Regional
 Militia, Grand Rapids
 County
 Superior Michigan Regional
 Militia, Gwan
 County
 National Coalition of Militias,
 Harbor Springs
 County
 National Confederation of Citizens
 Militias, Harbor Springs
 County
 Strata Area Constitutional
 Militia, Harbor Springs
 County
 Success Marketing, Harbor
 Springs
 County
 Southern Michigan Regional
 Militia, Hilldale County
 County
 United States Militia at Large,
 Hilldale County
 County
 Michigan Militia, Isabella County
 Superior Michigan Regional
 Militia, Ishpeming
 County

Common Law Court, Jensen
 County
 Michigan Militia Wolverine
 Corp, Kalamazoo
 County
 Central West Michigan Regional
 Militia, Lakewood
 County
 Superior Regional Militia Corps,
 L'Anse
 County
 Justice Pro Se, Lansing
 County
 U.S. Taxpayers Party, Lansing
 County
 Citizens Constitution Education
 Committee, Livingston County
 County
 ● Common Law Court, Manistee
 County
 Central East Michigan Regional
 Militia, Midland
 County
 Central West Michigan Regional
 Militia, Mount Pleasant
 County
 Fed Up American, Munising
 County
 Central West Michigan Regional
 Militia, Muskegon
 County
 ● Common Law Court, Ottawa
 County
 ● Michigan Common Law Venue
 Supreme Court, Ottawa County
 Northern Michigan Regional
 Militia, Peltion
 County
 Okland County Taxpayer's
 Party, Fomac
 County
 Gun Owners of Southeastern
 Michigan, Redford
 County
 Council of Conservative
 Citizens, Roseville
 County
 ● Common Law Court, Smilac
 County
 Southern Michigan Regional
 Militia St. Clair
 County
 Central West Michigan Regional
 Militia, Tuscarora
 County
 Southern Michigan Regional
 Militia, Wayne County
 Northern Michigan Regional
 Militia, Wolverine
 County
 For the People, unspecified
 location
 Fully Informed Jury Association,
 unspecified location
 Michigan Property Association,
 unspecified location

MINNESOTA
 ● Citizens For a Constitutional
 Minnesota, Apple Valley
 County

Common Law Court, Hennepin
 County
 Special Forces Underground,
 Minneapolis
 County
 Common Law Court, St. Paul
 County
 U.S. Taxpayers Party, Woodbury
 County
 Minnesota Constitutional
 Rangers, unspecified location

MISSISSIPPI
 ● Council of Conservative
 Citizens, Calhoun
 County
 U.S. Taxpayers Party, Collins
 County
 Mississippi Militia, Laurel
 County
 Revolutionary Force of America,
 Laurel
 County
 Mississippi Militia, Ocean Springs
 County
 Council of Conservative
 Citizens, Vaiden
 County
 Council of Conservative
 Citizens, Webster
 County
 ● Common Law Court, unspec-
 ified location
 Kitchen Militia, unspecified
 location

MISSOURI
 ● New Covenant Bible Church,
 Birch Tree
 County
 ● Common Law Court, Clay
 County
 Continental Militia, Crawford
 County
 ● Common Law Court, Dade
 County
 ● 1st Missouri Volunteers, Des
 Moines
 County
 U.S. Taxpayers Party, Fenton
 County
 Missouri 51st Militia, Grain
 Valley
 County
 George Goddon's School of
 Common Law, Isabella
 County
 ● Common Law Court, Jefferson
 County
 Special Forces Underground,
 Kansas City
 County
 Third Continental Congress,
 Kansas City
 County
 Christian Patriot Defense
 League, Lecky
 County
 ● Common Law Court, McDonald
 County

MONTANA
 ● Bozeman Freeman, Bozeman
 County
 ● Common Law Court, Cascade
 County
 North American Volunteer Mil-
 itia, Darby
 County
 Militia Support Group, Eureka
 County
 ● Common Law Court, Garfield
 County
 Fully Informed Jury Association,
 Helena
 County
 Montana Freeman/Justus
 Township, Jordan
 County
 Phoenix Financial Services,
 Kalispell
 County
 ● Common Law Court, Musselshell
 County
 Education and Economic Abuse
 Foundation, Novon
 County
 Militia of Montana, Noxon
 County
 Fully Informed Jury Association,
 Ovado
 County
 U.S. Taxpayers Party, Polson
 County
 ● Common Law Court, Ravalli
 County

NEBRASKA
 ● Common Law Court, Hamilton
 County
 Constitutional Reinstatement
 Group, Omaha
 County

Education, Economic Abuse
Foundation, unspecified location

NEVADA
Nevada Volunteers, Carson City
Common Law Court, Clark County
American Patriot Fax Network,
Las Vegas
United States Constitution
Kangas, Las Vegas
U.S. Taxpayers Party, Sparks
Guardians of American Lib-
erty, unspecified location

NEW HAMPSHIRE
U.S. Taxpayers Party, Concord
White Mountain Militia, Cornish
Rodgers Kangas, Haverhill
Hillsborough Troops of Dra-
goons, Hillsborough
Old Man and The Mountain
Militia, Lincoln
Constitution Defense Militia,
Farmstead
Common Law Court, Sullivan
County
John Birch Society, unspecified
New Hampshire Militia, unspec-
ified location
Regiment of Dragoons, unspec-
ified location

NEW JERSEY
George Mason Society, Edison
Salem County Militia, Hancock's
Bridge
Sovereigns Demanding Liberty,
Inc., Hawthorne
Constitutionalists, Mahwah
U.S. Taxpayers Party, Maple
Shade
Middlesex County Militia, Old
Bridge
New Jersey Militia, Trenton
Warren County Militia, Warren
County
Americans For Constitutional
Government, Washington
Christian Patriots, unspecified
location

location

NEW MEXICO
A Well Regulated Militia,
Albuquerque
Christian Constitutionalists,
Albuquerque
Common Law Court,
Albuquerque
Constitutional Task Force,
Albuquerque
New Mexico Militia, Albuquerque
U.S. Taxpayers Party,
Albuquerque
Wake Up America Movement,
Albuquerque
New Mexico Militia, Bernalillo
County
Concerned Citizens, Caron
County
Christian Crusade for Truth,
Deming
Four Corners Patriot Move-
ment, Farmington
Ministry of Salvation, Moun-
tain
New Mexico Militia, Mountain
Rangers Outreach Center, Pecos
County
Common Law Court, San Juan
County
Home of Common Law School
for Responsible Sovereignty,
Santa Fe
New Mexico Citizens Regulated
Militia, Santa Fe
Sana Fe County Militia, Sana Fe
Big Star One, unspecified location

NEW YORK
U.S. Taxpayers Party, Binghamton
2nd Amendment Militia, Binghamton
Broome County at 2AM,
Binghamton
Citizens Militia of Chemung
County, Chemung County
New York State Militia, Elmira
Friends of the 2nd AM, Endicott
Fully Informed Jury Association,
Fort Edward
Patrick Henry Volunteers,
Rochester

Protection, Schenectady
Orange County Committee of
Correspondence, Warwick

NORTH CAROLINA
Stone Kingdom Ministries,
Asheville
Almanac Regulators Militia,
Burlington
North Carolina Citizen Militia,
Canton
Citizens for the Restoration
of Constitutional Government,
Charlotte
Council of Conservative Cit-
izens, Clemmons
U.S. Taxpayers Party, Concord
Council of Conservative Cit-
izens, Forest City
Common Law Court, Franklin
County
Common Law Court, Kingston
Americans for Preservation of
Constitutional Heritage, Mason
County
Common Law Court, Ono
Council of Conservative Cit-
izens, Raleigh
Northpoint Tactical Team,
Topcon
Constitutional Caucus, Wilming-
ton
John Birch Society, unspecified
location
New York Citizens Regulated
Militia, unspecified
We The People, unspecified
location

NORTH DAKOTA
Common Law Court, Douglas
U.S. Taxpayers Party, Minot
North Dakota Militia, unspecified
location

OHIO
Multi-State Defense Force
Unorganized Militia, Bellare
Belmont County
Ohio Unorganized Militia,
Brown County
Constitutional Study Group of
Canton, Canton

U.S. Taxpayers Party, Cincinnati
Ohio Unorganized Militia, Clark
County
Ohio Unorganized Militia, Cler-
mont County
Cuyahoga County Defense
League, Cleveland
Cuyahoga Militia, Cleveland
North Coast Veterans' Associa-
tion, Cleveland
Ohio Unorganized Militia,
Cleveland
Columbiana County Militia,
Columbiana
Ohio Unorganized Militia,
Columbiana County
Mahoning Valley Militia,
Columbiana County
Central Ohio Unorganized Mil-
itia, Columbus
Common Law Court, Columbus
Ohio Unorganized Militia,
Coshococ County
Ohio Unorganized Militia, Day-
ton
Liberty Forum, Delaware County
Ohio Unorganized Militia,
Delaware County
American Anti-Organized Crime
Militia, Franklin County
Central Ohio Unorganized Mil-
itia, Franklin County
Urbain Group Team, Grove
City
Ohio Unorganized Militia,
Hamilton County
Ohio Unorganized Militia, Hilltop
Ohio Unorganized Militia, Knox
County
Partisan Rangers, Lebanon
We're Fed Up, Lebanon
Ohio Unorganized Militia, Tick-
ling Camp
Ohio Unorganized Militia, Lucas
County
Central Ohio Unorganized Mil-
itia, Madison County
Free Enterprise and Govern-
ment, Madison
Ohio Unorganized Militia, Mari-
on County

Unconstitutional United Repub-
lic for Everyone, Medina
Ohio Citizens Militia, Medina
Ohio Unorganized Militia, Medi-
na County
Ohio Unorganized Militia, Mor-
gan County
Mahoning Valley Militia, Mahon-
ing, North Jackson
Mahoning Valley Militia, Stark
County
Ohio Unorganized Militia, Stark
County
E Pluribus Unum, Stockton
Mahoning Valley Militia, Turn-
bull County
Ohio Unorganized Militia, War-
ren County
Ohio Unorganized Militia,
Wayne County
Ohio Unorganized Militia,
Williams County
Southeastern Ohio Defense
Force, Zanesville
A Concerned Citizen, unspecified
location
Common Law Court, Central
Ohio, unspecified location
Common Law Court, South-
western Ohio, unspecified loca-
tion
Ohio Volunteer Militia, unspec-
ified location

OKLAHOMA
Common Law Court, Altita
County
Common Law Court, Bryan
Lighthouse Commons Trust,
Pul City
United Sovereigns of America,
Pul City
Oklahoma Citizens Militia,
Eufala
Common Law Court, Garfield
County
Common Law Court, Grant
County
Pose Comitatus, Je-
ferson County
Common Law Court, Kay
County

Common Law Court, Kingfisher
Cleveland County Militia, Moore
Eliham City, Midmore
Christian Freeman, Smithville
U.S. Taxpayers Party, Tulsa
Big Star One, unspecified location

OREGON
American Justice Research Cen-
ter, Ashland
Eastern Oregon Militia, Baker
City
Freedom Bound International,
Baker City
Christian Patriot Association,
Boring
Natural Coin Exchange, Boring
U.S. Taxpayers Party, Canby
Cascadian Resource Center,
Eugene
Common Law Court, Lane
County
A Lawful American, Medford
Free America Society, Medford
Common Law Court, Multnomah
County
Republic Vs. Democracy
Redress, Oregon City
Jural Society, Portland
Common Law Court, Prineville
Common Law Court, Stayton
Citizens for a Constitutional
Government, unspecified
location
Oregon Militia, unspecified
location
Oregon State Citizens
Association, unspecified location
Southern Oregon Militia,
unspecified location

PENNSYLVANIA
American Nationalist Union,
Allison Park
Proctor's Militia, Bedford
Militia of Birth and Bedford
Constitue Bedford County
Militia of Birth and Bedford
County, Blair County
Crawford Blair Militia,
Crawford County

GREENE COUNTY MILITIA, ZAK COUNTY
Greene County Militia, Greene County

JEFFERSON COUNTY MILITIA, JEFFERSON COUNTY
Jefferson County Militia, Jefferson County

LANCASTER COUNTY MILITIA, LANCASTER COUNTY
Lancaster County Militia, Lancaster County

MILLERSBURG COUNTY MILITIA, MILLERSBURG COUNTY
Millersburg County Militia, Millersburg County

MONTGOMERY COUNTY MILITIA, MONTGOMERY COUNTY
Montgomery County Militia, Montgomery County

MORRISVILLE MILITIA, MORRISVILLE
Morrisville Militia, Morrisville

POTTER COUNTY MILITIA, POTTER COUNTY
Potter County Militia, Potter County

PUNXSUTAWNEY PATRIOTS, PUNXSUTAWNEY
Punxsutawney Patriots, Punxsutawney

SHILLING MILITIA, SHILLING
Shilling Militia, Shilling

WARREN COUNTY MILITIA, WARREN COUNTY
Warren County Militia, Warren County

WEAVER COUNTY MILITIA, WEAVER COUNTY
Weaver County Militia, Weaver County

YORK MILITIA, YORK
York Militia, York

ARYAN REPUBLICAN ARMY, ARYAN REPUBLICAN ARMY
Aryan Republican Army, Aryan Republican Army

KEYSTONE SECOND AMENDMENT ASSOCIATION, UNDESIGNATED LOCATION
Keystone Second Amendment Association, unspecified location

PENNSYLVANIA CITIZENS MILITIA, PENNSYLVANIA
Pennsylvania Citizens Militia, Pennsylvania

UNORGANIZED MILITIAS OF PENNSYLVANIA, UNDESIGNATED LOCATION
Unorganized Militias of Pennsylvania, unspecified location

RHODE ISLAND
Rhode Island Militia, Rhode Island

RYAN REPUBLICAN ARMY, RYAN REPUBLICAN ARMY
Ryan Republican Army, Ryan Republican Army

SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST MILITIA, SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST MILITIA
Seventh Day Adventist Militia, Seventh Day Adventist Militia

WEST GREENWICH MILITIA, WEST GREENWICH
West Greenwich Militia, West Greenwich

SOUTH CAROLINA
South Carolina Militia, South Carolina

BARWELL MILITIA, BARWELL
Barwell Militia, Barwell

SOVEREIGN OR SUBJECT COALITION, SOVEREIGN OR SUBJECT COALITION
Sovereign Or Subject Coalition, Sovereign Or Subject Coalition

CHARLESTON MILITIA, CHARLESTON
Charleston Militia, Charleston

CITIZENS MILITIA, CITIZENS MILITIA
Citizens Militia, Citizens Militia

GREENVILLE MILITIA, GREENVILLE
Greenville Militia, Greenville

COUNCIL OF CONSERVATIVE CITIZENS, GREENWOOD
Council of Conservative Citizens, Greenwood

COUNCIL OF CONSERVATIVE CITIZENS, ORANGEBURG
Council of Conservative Citizens, Orangeburg

SOUTH CAROLINA CIVILIAN MILITIA, PICKENS
South Carolina Civilian Militia, Pickens

COUNCIL OF CONSERVATIVE CITIZENS, SALUDA
Council of Conservative Citizens, Saluda

SOUTH CAROLINA CIVILIAN MILITIA, SPARTANBURG
South Carolina Civilian Militia, Spartanburg

COUNCIL OF CONSERVATIVE CITIZENS, SUMMERVILLE
Council of Conservative Citizens, Summerville

SOUTH CAROLINA MILITIA, TAYLORS
South Carolina Militia, Taylors

SOUTH CAROLINA TAXPAYERS PARTY, SOUTH CAROLINA CIVILIAN MILITIA
South Carolina Taxpayers Party, South Carolina Civilian Militia

SOUTH CAROLINA TAXPAYERS PARTY, UNDESIGNATED LOCATION
South Carolina Taxpayers Party, unspecified location

SOUTH CAROLINA TAXPAYERS PARTY, UNDESIGNATED LOCATION
South Carolina Taxpayers Party, unspecified location

SOUTH DAKOTA
South Dakota Militia, South Dakota

AMERICAN CONSTITUTIONAL MILITIA NETWORK, GREGORY
American Constitutional Militia Network, Gregory

COMMON LAW COURT, LAWRENCE COUNTY
Common Law Court, Lawrence County

SOUTH DAKOTA MILITIA, NEWELL
South Dakota Militia, Newell

COMMON LAW COURT, PENNINGTON COUNTY
Common Law Court, Pennington County

TRI-STATE MILITIA, RAPID CITY
Tri-State Militia, Rapid City

SIoux FALLS MILITIA, SIoux FALLS
Sioux Falls Militia, Sioux Falls

U.S. TAXPAYERS PARTY, SIoux FALLS
U.S. Taxpayers Party, Sioux Falls

TENNESSEE
Tennessee Militia, Tennessee

AMERICAN PATRIOT FEDERATION, CHATTANOOGA
American Patriot Federation, Chattanooga

COUNCIL OF CONSERVATIVE CITIZENS, EAST TENNESSEE
Council of Conservative Citizens, East Tennessee

1ST MISSISSIPPI LIGHT ARTILLERY, HICKSON MILITIA, JACKSON
1st Mississippi Light Artillery, Hickson Militia, Jackson

AMERICANS FOR CONSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY, JOHNSON CITY
Americans for Constitutional Integrity, Johnson City

FREEMAN LIBERTY FOUNDATION, KNOXVILLE
Freeman Liberty Foundation, Knoxville

SONS OF LIBERTY, KNOXVILLE
Sons of Liberty, Knoxville

TENNESSEE VOLUNTEER STATE MILITIA, KNOXVILLE
Tennessee Volunteer State Militia, Knoxville

COMMITTEES OF CORRESPONDENCE, LENOIR CITY
Committees of Correspondence, Lenoir City

COUNCIL OF CONSERVATIVE CITIZENS, MEMPHIS
Council of Conservative Citizens, Memphis

MID SOUTH PATRIOTS, MEMPHIS
Mid South Patriots, Memphis

U.S. TAXPAYERS PARTY, MEMPHIS
U.S. Taxpayers Party, Memphis

GREENE COUNTY MILITIA, GREENE COUNTY
Greene County Militia, Greene County

JEFFERSON COUNTY MILITIA, JEFFERSON COUNTY
Jefferson County Militia, Jefferson County

LANCASTER COUNTY MILITIA, LANCASTER COUNTY
Lancaster County Militia, Lancaster County

MILLERSBURG COUNTY MILITIA, MILLERSBURG COUNTY
Millersburg County Militia, Millersburg County

MONTGOMERY COUNTY MILITIA, MONTGOMERY COUNTY
Montgomery County Militia, Montgomery County

MORRISVILLE MILITIA, MORRISVILLE
Morrisville Militia, Morrisville

POTTER COUNTY MILITIA, POTTER COUNTY
Potter County Militia, Potter County

PUNXSUTAWNEY PATRIOTS, PUNXSUTAWNEY
Punxsutawney Patriots, Punxsutawney

SHILLING MILITIA, SHILLING
Shilling Militia, Shilling

WARREN COUNTY MILITIA, WARREN COUNTY
Warren County Militia, Warren County

WEAVER COUNTY MILITIA, WEAVER COUNTY
Weaver County Militia, Weaver County

YORK MILITIA, YORK
York Militia, York

ARYAN REPUBLICAN ARMY, ARYAN REPUBLICAN ARMY
Aryan Republican Army, Aryan Republican Army

KEYSTONE SECOND AMENDMENT ASSOCIATION, UNDESIGNATED LOCATION
Keystone Second Amendment Association, unspecified location

PENNSYLVANIA CITIZENS MILITIA, PENNSYLVANIA
Pennsylvania Citizens Militia, Pennsylvania

UNORGANIZED MILITIAS OF PENNSYLVANIA, UNDESIGNATED LOCATION
Unorganized Militias of Pennsylvania, unspecified location

RHODE ISLAND
Rhode Island Militia, Rhode Island

RYAN REPUBLICAN ARMY, RYAN REPUBLICAN ARMY
Ryan Republican Army, Ryan Republican Army

SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST MILITIA, SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST MILITIA
Seventh Day Adventist Militia, Seventh Day Adventist Militia

WEST GREENWICH MILITIA, WEST GREENWICH
West Greenwich Militia, West Greenwich

SOUTH CAROLINA
South Carolina Militia, South Carolina

BARWELL MILITIA, BARWELL
Barwell Militia, Barwell

SOVEREIGN OR SUBJECT COALITION, SOVEREIGN OR SUBJECT COALITION
Sovereign Or Subject Coalition, Sovereign Or Subject Coalition

CHARLESTON MILITIA, CHARLESTON
Charleston Militia, Charleston

CITIZENS MILITIA, CITIZENS MILITIA
Citizens Militia, Citizens Militia

GREENVILLE MILITIA, GREENVILLE
Greenville Militia, Greenville

COUNCIL OF CONSERVATIVE CITIZENS, GREENWOOD
Council of Conservative Citizens, Greenwood

COUNCIL OF CONSERVATIVE CITIZENS, ORANGEBURG
Council of Conservative Citizens, Orangeburg

SOUTH CAROLINA CIVILIAN MILITIA, PICKENS
South Carolina Civilian Militia, Pickens

COUNCIL OF CONSERVATIVE CITIZENS, SALUDA
Council of Conservative Citizens, Saluda

SOUTH CAROLINA CIVILIAN MILITIA, SPARTANBURG
South Carolina Civilian Militia, Spartanburg

COUNCIL OF CONSERVATIVE CITIZENS, SUMMERVILLE
Council of Conservative Citizens, Summerville

SOUTH CAROLINA MILITIA, TAYLORS
South Carolina Militia, Taylors

SOUTH CAROLINA TAXPAYERS PARTY, SOUTH CAROLINA CIVILIAN MILITIA
South Carolina Taxpayers Party, South Carolina Civilian Militia

SOUTH CAROLINA TAXPAYERS PARTY, UNDESIGNATED LOCATION
South Carolina Taxpayers Party, unspecified location

SOUTH CAROLINA TAXPAYERS PARTY, UNDESIGNATED LOCATION
South Carolina Taxpayers Party, unspecified location

SOUTH DAKOTA
South Dakota Militia, South Dakota

AMERICAN CONSTITUTIONAL MILITIA NETWORK, GREGORY
American Constitutional Militia Network, Gregory

COMMON LAW COURT, LAWRENCE COUNTY
Common Law Court, Lawrence County

SOUTH DAKOTA MILITIA, NEWELL
South Dakota Militia, Newell

COMMON LAW COURT, PENNINGTON COUNTY
Common Law Court, Pennington County

TRI-STATE MILITIA, RAPID CITY
Tri-State Militia, Rapid City

SIoux FALLS MILITIA, SIoux FALLS
Sioux Falls Militia, Sioux Falls

U.S. TAXPAYERS PARTY, SIoux FALLS
U.S. Taxpayers Party, Sioux Falls

TENNESSEE
Tennessee Militia, Tennessee

AMERICAN PATRIOT FEDERATION, CHATTANOOGA
American Patriot Federation, Chattanooga

COUNCIL OF CONSERVATIVE CITIZENS, EAST TENNESSEE
Council of Conservative Citizens, East Tennessee

1ST MISSISSIPPI LIGHT ARTILLERY, HICKSON MILITIA, JACKSON
1st Mississippi Light Artillery, Hickson Militia, Jackson

AMERICANS FOR CONSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY, JOHNSON CITY
Americans for Constitutional Integrity, Johnson City

FREEMAN LIBERTY FOUNDATION, KNOXVILLE
Freeman Liberty Foundation, Knoxville

SONS OF LIBERTY, KNOXVILLE
Sons of Liberty, Knoxville

TENNESSEE VOLUNTEER STATE MILITIA, KNOXVILLE
Tennessee Volunteer State Militia, Knoxville

COMMITTEES OF CORRESPONDENCE, LENOIR CITY
Committees of Correspondence, Lenoir City

COUNCIL OF CONSERVATIVE CITIZENS, MEMPHIS
Council of Conservative Citizens, Memphis

MID SOUTH PATRIOTS, MEMPHIS
Mid South Patriots, Memphis

U.S. TAXPAYERS PARTY, MEMPHIS
U.S. Taxpayers Party, Memphis

UNITED STATES SPECIAL FORCES NATIONAL MILITIA, HOUSTON COUNTY
United States Special Forces National Militia, Houston County

COMMON LAW COURT, KENDALL COUNTY
Common Law Court, Kendall County

UNITED STATES CIVIL MILITIA ORGANIZATION, KERRVILLE
United States Civil Militia Organization, Kerrville

RED RIVER MILITIA, MARSHALL
Red River Militia, Marshall

REPUBLIC OF TEXAS, SHINER
Republic of Texas, Shiner

GOD SAID MINISTRIES, MOUNT ENTERPRISE
God Said Ministries, Mount Enterprise

COMMON LAW COURT, ORANGE COUNTY
Common Law Court, Orange County

1ST LIGHT INFANTRY REGIMENT, RED OAK
1st Light Infantry Regiment, Red Oak

NORTH TEXAS CONSTITUTIONAL MILITIA, RICHARDSON
North Texas Constitutional Militia, Richardson

CONSTITUTION SOCIETY, SAN ANTONIO
Constitution Society, San Antonio

REPUBLIC OF TEXAS, SAN ANTONIO
Republic of Texas, San Antonio

SONS OF LIBERTY, SAN ANTONIO
Sons of Liberty, San Antonio

TEXAS CONSTITUTIONAL MILITIA, SAN ANTONIO
Texas Constitutional Militia, San Antonio

TEXAS MILITIA CORRESPONDENCE COMMITTEE, SAN ANTONIO
Texas Militia Correspondence Committee, San Antonio

U.S. TAXPAYERS PARTY, SAN ANTONIO
U.S. Taxpayers Party, San Antonio

RED RIVER MILITIA, TEXARKANA
Red River Militia, Texarkana

VICTORY CONSTITUTIONAL MILITIA, VICTORIA
Victory Constitutional Militia, Victoria

FREEDOM FIGHTERS, WESLACO
Freedom Fighters, Weslaco

2ND AMENDMENT FREEDOM ENTERPRISE INC, YOAKUM
2nd Amendment Freedom Enterprise Inc, Yoakum

7th TEXAS INFANTRY, UNDESIGNATED LOCATION
7th Texas Infantry, unspecified location

BIG STAR ONE, UNDESIGNATED LOCATION
Big Star One, unspecified location

CENTRAL TEXAS MILITIA, UNDESIGNATED LOCATION
Central Texas Militia, unspecified location

CITIZENS FOR LEGAL REFORM, UNDESIGNATED LOCATION
Citizens for Legal Reform, unspecified location

JOHN BIRCH SOCIETY, UNDESIGNATED LOCATION
John Birch Society, unspecified location

NORTH TEXAS CIVILIAN MILITIA, UNDESIGNATED LOCATION
North Texas Civilian Militia, unspecified location

PEACEABLE TEXANS FOR FIREARMS RIGHTS, UNDESIGNATED LOCATION
Peaceable Texans for Firearms Rights, unspecified location

TEXAS RANGERS, UNDESIGNATED LOCATION
Texas Rangers, unspecified location

TEXAS RESERVE MILITIA—1ST BATTALION, 1ST LIGHT INFANTRY REGIMENT, UNDESIGNATED LOCATION
Texas Reserve Militia—1st Battalion, 1st Light Infantry Regiment, unspecified location

UTAH
Utah Militia, Utah

PREPAREDNESS EXPO, OGDEN
Preparedness Expo, Ogden

U.S. TAXPAYERS PARTY, OREM
U.S. Taxpayers Party, Orem

STATUS SOCIETY, PROVO
Status Society, Provo

SOVEREIGN MILITIA PATRIOTS, SALT LAKE CITY
Sovereign Militia Patriots, Salt Lake City

ARMY OF ISRAEL, ST. GEORGE
Army of Israel, St. George

MILITIA OF UTAH, UNDESIGNATED LOCATION
Militia of Utah, unspecified location

ROCKY MOUNTAIN MILITIA, UNDESIGNATED LOCATION
Rocky Mountain Militia, unspecified location

VERMONT
Vermont Militia, Vermont

U.S. TAXPAYERS PARTY, SOUTH BURLINGTON
U.S. Taxpayers Party, South Burlington

REGIMENT OF DRAGOONS, UNDESIGNATED LOCATION
Regiment of Dragoons, unspecified location

VIRGINIA
Virginia Militia, Virginia

VIRGINIA CITIZENS MILITIA, ASHLAND
Virginia Citizens Militia, Ashland

1ST VIRGINIA FREEBORN CIVILIAN MILITIA, BEDFORD COUNTY
1st Virginia Freeborn Civilian Militia, Bedford County

WACO REMEMBRANCE, FAIRFAX
Waco Remembrance, Fairfax

JOHN BIRCH SOCIETY, LYNCHBURG
John Birch Society, Lynchburg

VIRGINIA CITIZENS MILITIA, ROANOKE
Virginia Citizens Militia, Roanoke

GUN OWNERS OF AMERICA, SPRINGFIELD
Gun Owners of America, Springfield

U.S. TAXPAYERS PARTY, VIENNA
U.S. Taxpayers Party, Vienna

QUARTERS, PENNA
Quarters, Penna

PROVEBTS OF PATRIOTS, UNDESIGNATED LOCATION
Proverbs of Patriots, unspecified location

WASHINGTON
Washington Militia, Washington

COMMON LAW COURT, CLARK COUNTY, ANCHOR BELIEVE
Common Law Court, Clark County, Anchor Believe

CITIZENS COMMITTEE FOR THE RIGHT TO KEEP AND BEAR ARMS, BELLEVUE
Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms, Bellevue

SECOND AMENDMENT FOUNDATION, BELLEVUE
Second Amendment Foundation, Bellevue

CITIZENS FOR LIBERTY, BELLINGHAM
Citizens for Liberty, Bellingham

COMMON LAW COURT, CHELAN
Common Law Court, Chelan

LAKE CHELAN CITIZENS MILITIA, CHELAN
Lake Chelan Citizens Militia, Chelan

WASHINGTON STATE CONSTITUTIONAL RANGERS, CHELAN
Washington State Constitutional Rangers, Chelan

WASHINGTON STATE MILITIA, DENNING
Washington State Militia, Denning

COMMON LAW COURT, ELLENSBURG
Common Law Court, Ellensburg

CLARK COUNTY MILITIA, FARGHER LAKE
Clark County Militia, Fargher Lake

FOR LIBERTY, GRAHAM
For Liberty, Graham

SONS OF LIBERTY, KITSAP
Sons of Liberty, Kitsap

U.S. TAXPAYERS PARTY, MERCER
U.S. Taxpayers Party, Mercer

AMERICAN SOVEREIGNS GROUP, MOSES LAKE
American Sovereigns Group, Moses Lake

COMMON LAW COURT, MOSES LAKE
Common Law Court, Moses Lake

NATIONAL CITIZENS ALLIANCE, MOUNTDAKE TERRACE
National Citizens Alliance, Mountlake Terrace

CITIZENS FOR A CONSTITUTIONAL WASHINGTON, PUYALLUP
Citizens for a Constitutional Washington, Puyallup

WE THE PEOPLE COMMITTEE, PUYALLUP
We The People Committee, Puyallup

COMMON LAW COURT, SEATTLE
Common Law Court, Seattle

RIGHT WAY, SEATTLE
Right Way, Seattle

COMMON LAW COURT, SNOHOMISH COUNTY
Common Law Court, Snohomish County

SNOHOMISH COUNTY MILITIA, SNOHOMISH
Snohomish County Militia, Snohomish

CONCERNED CITIZENS OF WASHINGTON, SPOKANE
Concerned Citizens of Washington, Spokane

PROMOTIONS MEDIA GROUP, SPOKANE
Promotions Media Group, Spokane

SKAMANIA CITIZENS MILITIA, STEVENSON
Skamania Citizens Militia, Stevenson

CHRISTIAN JURAL SOCIETY, UNDESIGNATED LOCATION
Christian Jural Society, unspecified location

EASTERN WASHINGTON CITIZENS MILITIA COALITION, UNDESIGNATED LOCATION
Eastern Washington Citizens Militia Coalition, unspecified location

WEATHERS COMMON LAW COURT, WENATCHEE
Weathers Common Law Court, Wenatchee

WENATCHEE MINUTEMEN MILITIA, WENATCHEE
Wenatchee Minutemen Militia, Wenatchee

COMMON LAW COURT, WHATCOM COUNTY
Common Law Court, Whatcom County

WE THE PEOPLE, WHITE SALMON
We the People, White Salmon

WEST VIRGINIA
West Virginia Militia, West Virginia

MOUNTAINEER MILITIA, CHARLESBURG
Mountaineer Militia, Charlestown

NATIONAL ALLIANCE HQ, HILLSBORO
National Alliance HQ, Hillsboro

U.S. TAXPAYERS PARTY, HUNTINGTON
U.S. Taxpayers Party, Huntington

UNKNOWN GROUP NAME, PETERSBURG
Unknown Group Name, Petersburg

WEST VIRGINIA MILITIA, WILEYVILLE
West Virginia Militia, Wileyville

WISCONSIN
Wisconsin Militia, Wisconsin

JOHN BIRCH SOCIETY, APPLETON
John Birch Society, Appleton

TAX REFORM IMMEDIATELY, APPLETON
Tax Reform Immediately, Appleton

COMMON LAW COURT, COLUMBIA COUNTY
Common Law Court, Columbia County

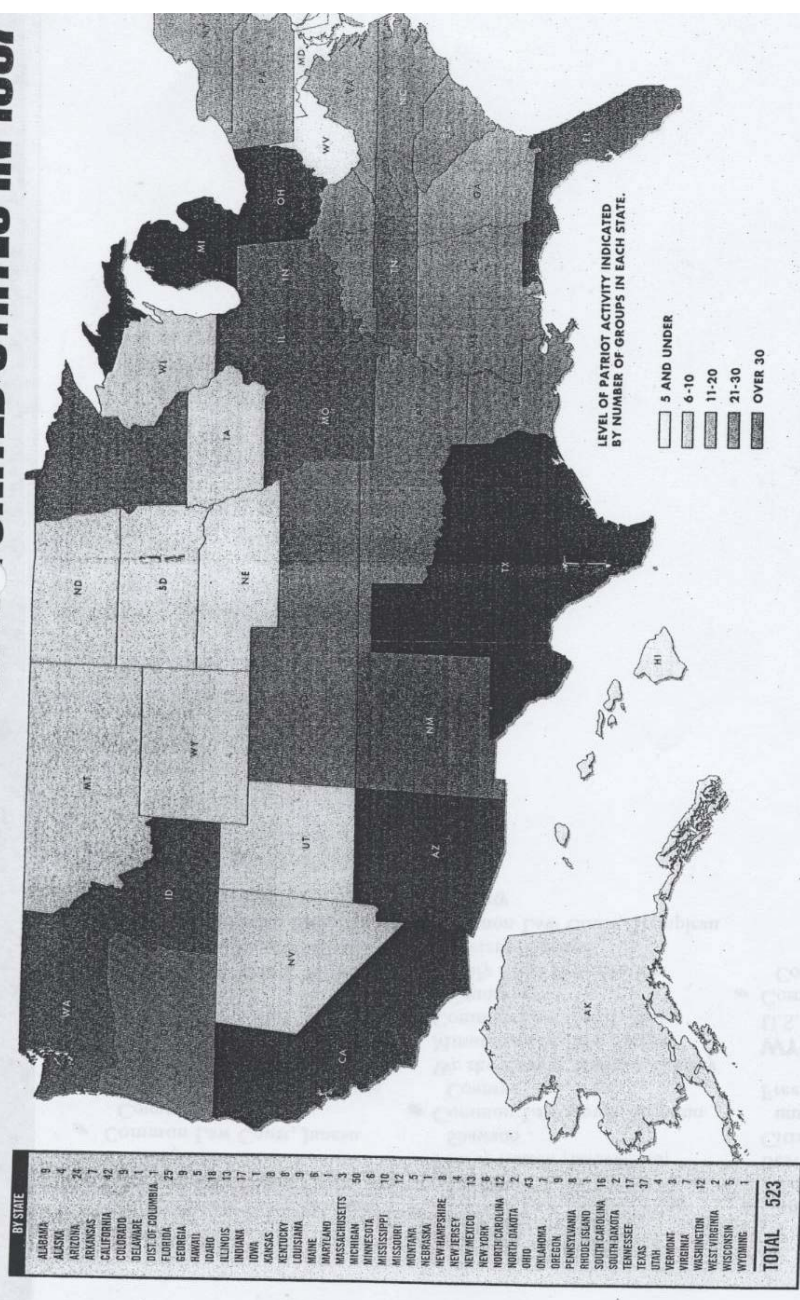
COMMON LAW COURT, CRAWFORD COUNTY
Common Law Court, Crawford County

- U.S. Taxpayers Party, Dousman
- Common Law Court, Grant County
- Common Law Court, Juneau County
- Common Law Court, LaCrosse County
- Waupaca County Militia, Manawa
- Common Law Court, Manitowoc County
- Black Panther Militia, Milwaukee
- Common Law Court, Milwaukee
- Wisconsin Christian Freeman Militia, Milwaukee
- Common Law Court, Portage County
- Family Action Association, Shawano
- Common Law Court, Shawano County
- We the People, Shawano County
- Minuteman Militia, Slinger
- Common Law Court, Taylor County
- Family Farm Preservation Society, Tigerton
- Common Law Court, Trempleau County
- Common Law Court, Waupaca County
- Best Video Productions, Wheeler
- Citizens for Law Reform, unspecified location
- Free Militia, unspecified location

WYOMING

- U.S. Taxpayers Party, Lander
- Common Law Court, Laramie County

DIJIVE PATRIOT GROUPS IN THE UNITED STATES IN 1997



SOURCE: THE INTELLIGENCE PROJECT

INTELLIGENCE REPORT SPRING 1998 24

INTELLIGENCE REPORT SPRING 1998 25

THE INTELLIGENCE PROJECT IDENTIFIED 523 "PATRIOT" GROUPS THAT WERE ACTIVE IN 1997. OF THESE GROUPS, 221 WERE MILITARY, 53 WERE "COMMON-DAY GROUPS," AND THE REMAINDER FIT INTO A VARIETY OF CATEGORIES SUCH AS PUBLISHERS, MINISTERS, CITIZEN GROUPS, AND OTHERS. GENERALLY, THESE GROUPS DEFINE THEMSELVES AS OPPOSED TO THE "NEW WORLD ORDER" OR ADVOCATE OR ADHERE TO EXTREME ANTIGOVERNMENT DOCTRINES. LISTING HERE DOES NOT IMPLY THAT THE GROUPS ADVOCATE OR ENGAGE IN VIOLENCE OR OTHER CRIMINAL ACTIVITY. THE LIST WAS COMPILLED FROM FIELD REPORTS, PRESS PUBLICATIONS, THE INTERNET, LAW ENFORCEMENT SOURCES AND NEWS REPORTS. WHERE KNOWN, GROUPS ARE IDENTIFIED BY THE CITY, TOWN OR COUNTY WHERE THEY ARE LOCATED.

- ALABAMA**
 - Council of Conservative Citizens, Central Alabama
 - U.S. Taxpayers Party, Collinsville
 - U.S. Taxpayers Party, Houston County, Dalton
 - Alabama Constitution Party, Wetumpka
 - Alabama Citizens Association, Mobile
 - Michigan Militia, Oxford
 - 1st Alabama Cavalry Regiment Militia, Prichard
 - Men of Liberty and Honor, Phenixville
 - Council of Conservative Citizens, Traver
- ALASKA**
 - Common Law Court, Anchorage
 - U.S. Taxpayers Party, Anchorage
 - Alaska Patriots in Action, unspecified location
 - Heritage Party, unspecified location
- ARIZONA**
 - Arizona Sons and Daughters of Liberty, Chino Valley
 - Constitutional Militia of 1791, Cornville
 - Common Law Court, Graham County
 - Yuma County Militia, Mayer
 - Committee of Honor, Phoenix, Mesa
 - Common Law Court, Mohave County
 - Common Law Court, Pinal County
 - Common Law Court, Pima County
 - American Citizens and Lovers Association, Phoenix
 - Arizona Constitutional Rights Committee, Phoenix
 - First United States Militia, Phoenix
 - For the People, Phoenix
 - Second Amendment is for Everyone, Phoenix
 - Sovereign Citizens Movement, Phoenix
 - Peace Against the New World Order, Phoenix
 - Unorganized Militia of Arizona, Phoenix
 - Viper Reserves, Phoenix
 - Yorpal Sons and Daughters of Liberty, Prescott
 - Citizens Agency for Joint Intelligence, St. Johns
 - United States Constitutional Rangers, Tempe
 - Pima County Grand Jury, Tucson
 - Supreme Law Firm, Tucson
- ARKANSAS**
 - Council of Conservative Citizens, Berryville
 - Washington County Militia, Thrus
- ARIZONA**
 - 1st Missouri Volunteers, St. Louis
 - Council of Conservative Citizens, St. Louis
 - Missouri Militia, 50th Brigade, St. Peters
 - Central West Michigan Regional Militia, Peñon
 - Central West Michigan Regional Militia, Peñon
 - Missouri 11th Cavalry, Coan Militia, unspecified location
- ARIZONA**
 - Freedom Center, Billings
 - Freedom Point, Dorcy
 - Phenix Financial Services, Killebrew
 - American Patriot Internet Classified
 - Central East Michigan Regional Militia, Milba of Montan, Neos
- ARIZONA**
 - U.S. Taxpayers Party, Omaha
- ARIZONA**
 - U.S. Taxpayers Party, Concord
 - White Mountain Militia, Concord
 - John Birch Society, Abington
 - Constitution Defense Militia, Fairfield
 - Lafayette Militia, unspecified location
 - New England Regional Militia, unspecified location
 - Warrior's Rangers, unspecified location
- ARIZONA**
 - U.S. Taxpayers Party, Commission
 - New Jersey Militia, Trenton
 - Council of Conservative Citizens, unspecified location
 - New Jersey Committee of Safety, unspecified location
- ARIZONA**
 - Common Law Court, Albuquerque
 - Constitutional Task Force, Albuquerque
 - New Mexico Militia, Albuquerque
 - U.S. Taxpayers Party, Albuquerque
 - U.S. Taxpayers Party, Farmington
 - Ministry of Salvation, Montezuma
 - New Mexico Militia, Montezuma
 - Common Law Court, Otero County
 - Rangers in Blue, Pecos County
 - Common Law Court, San Fe County
 - Common Law Court, Santa Fe County
 - New Mexico Citizens Regulated Militia, Santa Fe
 - Santa Fe County Militia, Santa Fe
- ARIZONA**
 - Brown County 2nd Amendment Militia, Brown County
 - Citizens Militia of Chemung County, Chemung
 - U.S. Taxpayers Party, Hornell
 - Admiral's Right Way Law, unspecified location
 - Council of Conservative Citizens, Grand Rapids
 - Orange County Militia, Grand Rapids
 - Orange County Committee of Safety, Grand Rapids
 - Orange County Militia, Grand Rapids
 - Orange County Committee of Safety, Grand Rapids
- ARIZONA**
 - U.S. Taxpayers Party, Tucson
 - U.S. Taxpayers Party, Tucson
 - Missouri Militia, 50th Brigade, Franklin
 - U.S. Taxpayers Party, Hornell
 - Admiral's Right Way Law, unspecified location
 - 7th Missouri Militia, Cayuga Valley
 - George Jackson's School of Common Law, Grand Rapids
 - Missouri Militia, Grand Rapids, Lincoln
 - County
- ARIZONA**
 - U.S. Taxpayers Party, Tucson
 - U.S. Taxpayers Party, Tucson
 - Missouri Militia, 50th Brigade, Franklin
 - U.S. Taxpayers Party, Hornell
 - Admiral's Right Way Law, unspecified location
 - 7th Missouri Militia, Cayuga Valley
 - George Jackson's School of Common Law, Grand Rapids
 - Missouri Militia, Grand Rapids, Lincoln
 - County

Appendix Two

Heritage Institute

Private Meeting
Not open to the public

Private Meeting
Not open to the public

Habeas and Superior Law

from Heritage Institute, CS

November 5 and 6, 2005

Requested donation: \$70 (\$100 for married couple)

Saturday November 5, 2005: 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Universal and superior law

Many people in the several American states had to deal with foreign law and foreign procedures resulting in civil or criminal actions stemming from the fiction of a sovereign political authority of a body politic and corporate and its global merchant creditors. Research shows this is not the law and due process for people who are free with liberty, but rather for quasi slaves as subject of a sovereign. Our former classes have provided information on these issues including society of slaves, law merchant, and political societies that are the foundation for processes in the legal forum of the United States and its political subdivisions. One potential means for remedies and recourse is in understanding the relevance of higher or superior laws, many of which are said to be universal, applicable anywhere at all times. This is the basis of my new treatise for this class. Looking at the courts of the foreign merchants in England, the accused had little remedy except he could bring in "his law".

Being Prepared

Generally, you know if there is a possibility that a presentment may be made in the near or distant future. If that is the case, it behooves you to do some preparation ahead of time to be sure you have some of your "ducks in a row" if and when a presentment is made. It may be a subpoena, a summons, a civil complaint, a criminal complaint, an indictment, or even an arrest warrant. Some of these, like subpoenas and summonses, can be administrative and just request an appearance. Others can be "judicial" and require an appearance. If you are prepared for either, you are way ahead of most people.

Almost everyone has a computer and can prepare a punch list to help you stay on track and do as much preparation as possible. If you know you are going to move, you know that you need to get boxes, pack the things you don't need the last week in the old house, label the boxes, reserve a moving truck, and call in a few favors from friends before moving day. If you wait until moving day to start this, you will have a difficult and obstructive moving day. Political presentments are no different. If you know a presentment may be coming, you know you need to speculate what responses might need to be made (the boxes), write the responses before you need them, understand exactly what you are saying in your responses, arrange for a neutral to assist in the dispute resolution, set up your study group support team, and sign one or more powers of attorney before presentment day.

The presentment will be based on a combination of facts and allegations. Facts can be proven through evidence. Allegations are what the plaintiff expects to prove. You have choices. You can 1- prove the allegations for the plaintiff, 2- require the plaintiff to prove the allegations, or 3- waive the proving of the allegations. The choice appears to be easy - #2- require the plaintiff to prove the allegations. Actually, that is the difficult one, as through your own statements and actions, you usually prove the allegations for the plaintiff or waive the proving of the allegations. No one in his right mind would dispute the facts, but they usually are not the problem. It is the allegations that cause the problem. If the allegations are not proven, the facts by themselves will not result in a problem, unless you allow an attorney to enter a plea of Not Guilty. Is this a sign of a double-minded man?

You have learned how to respond to most administrative presentments. Now is time to start learning how to prepare for presentments that are associated with courts. You are not above the law, but you do have a law that is higher than political law. You only get to use it though, if you know that law and live by that law. We will roll play for a post-arrest scenario - booking, bond hearing, release procedures, and arraignment.

Private classroom
Not open to the public

Page 1 of 4

Private classroom
Not open to the public

Private classroom
Not open to the public

Private classroom
Not open to the public

Sunday November 6, 2005: 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM

The Nature of Money and Banking

This will be a preview for one of the next treatises on understanding the accounting system regarding creating money, credit as money, public revenue, public debt, and the legal or moral obligations of the parties involved. Through ignorance of money, banking, and political societies, the wealth of the people can be siphoned off leaving the appearance of enormous debt.

Habeas

A petition for a writ of habeas corpus is a form of appeal that can be submitted under natural law or political law. You are the one who has to make the decision. Which law do you want to use for the appeal? The standard political appeal is often successful, but you might be waiving your natural law appeal by using a political appeal. The legal fiction does have some mandatory rights under political law. You have rights under a higher law, but the penalty for breaking those higher laws is very harsh. The habeas corpus remedy is no more than a corporate order to release the person from detention, restraint, or commitment. If the person is released commercially, it comes through an order. The man then has written confirmation that the fiction has no outstanding obligation to its creditor, and the man has not refused to authorize the use of his exemption to settle the commercial debt of the person.

The habeas section of our class is broken down into topics		
history and purpose	supreme court decisions	parties
jurisdiction	jurisdictional pre-requisites	choices (judicial or political)
preparation	required attitude	apology
need for an interpreter	giving color to pleadings	application
bonds	discharges	using the exemption
no controversy	no dispute	no outstanding obligations
acceptance	words to avoid	attitudes to avoid
LIFO (last in, first out) concept		not being a double-minded man

Byron and Cyndie are researchers and teachers. The opinions expressed during the class are for informational purposes only. Nothing included in this private class is intended to be taken as legal advice, and no one should use anything heard in this class without first verifying the opinions expressed during the class, and seeking counsel from a competent source. Class attendance is predicated upon the understanding that each student agrees to take full responsibility for his choices.



Limited seating (50 +/-) to assure seating availability and handout ...
Eight 90-minute audiotapes of the November 5-6 class will be ready after the class
Requested \$50 donation - for those who attend

Private classroom
Not open to the public

Private classroom
Not open to the public

Appendix Three Interview Codes

Most Frequently Used Codes

Conspiracy	Critique (government, society, corporations, economy, medical, media)	Religious discourse
Tactics	Counter culture	Republicanism
Populism	Money	Freedom

All used Codes in AtlasTi for Interview Transcripts

In alphabetical order

Christian Fundamentalism	civic virtue	Computer	conspiracy	control
conversion narrative	corporations	Counter culture	critique	demographics
economy	education	Family	freedom	gender
George W. Bush	government	Guns	Hegel	Hitler
Institutional Interdependency	immigration	Individualism	Iraq war	John Birch Society
knowledge construction	legal tactics	Limbaugh	media	money
movement	patriot identity	patriot act	patriot organization	political history
populism	property	Race	recruitment	republicanism
Society	sources	Tactics	taxes	truth
Voting				

Appendix Four New World Order Patriot Website

Educate-Yourself

The Freedom of Knowledge, The Power of Thought ©

[Current News](#) | [Introduction](#) | [Colloidal Silver](#) | [Chemtrails](#) | [Sylphs](#) | [Emerging Diseases](#) | [Forbidden Cures](#) | [Ozone](#) | [Immunity Boosting](#) | [Nutrition](#) | [Mind-Body Connection](#) | [Ozone](#) | [Bioelectrification](#) | [Story on Drugs](#) | [Vaccine Dangers](#) | [Cancer](#) | [Newsletter](#) | [New World Order](#) | [NWO News](#)
[Pam Schuffert](#) | [Phil Schneider](#) | [Al Bielek](#) | [Trevor James Constable](#) | [Mind Control](#) | [Brice Taylor](#) | [Ted Gunderson](#) | [Tim White](#) | [Free Energy](#)
[Matthew Ward](#) | [Kanya Vashon McGhee](#) | [Montalk](#) | [Cell Towers](#) | [Ruth Drown](#) | [ZS Livingstone](#) | [Red Elk](#) | [Phil Ledoux](#) | [Don & Carol Croft](#)
[BBB](#) | [The Draft](#) | [Gary Wade](#) | [Planet X, The Sequel](#) | [Tone Generator](#) | [Letters](#) | [Membership](#) | [Help](#) | [Discussion](#) | [Letters](#) | [Links](#) | [Dowsing](#)
[Orgone Generators](#) | [The Succor Punch](#) | [Search](#) | [Home](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Products](#) | ['Peak Oil'](#) | [Police & Tasers](#)

The New World Order (NWO) An Overview

By Ken Adachi <Editor@educate-yourself.org>
<http://educate-yourself.org/nwo/>

Introduction

There is a [worldwide conspiracy](#) being orchestrated by an [extremely powerful and influential group](#) of *genetically-related individuals* (at least at the highest echelons) which include many of the world's wealthiest people, top political leaders, and corporate elite, as well as members of the so-called **Black Nobility** of Europe (dominated by the **British Crown**) whose goal is to create a **One World** (fascist) **Government**, stripped of nationalistic and regional boundaries, that is obedient to their agenda. Their intention is to effect **complete and total control** over every human being on the planet and [to dramatically reduce the world's population by 5.5 Billion people](#). While the name *New World Order* is a term frequently used today when referring to this group, it's more useful to identify the principal organizations, institutions, and individuals who make up this vast interlocking spiderweb of elite conspirators.

The [Illuminati](#) is the oldest term commonly used to refer to the **13 bloodline families** (and their offshoots) that make up a major portion of this controlling elite. Most members of the Illuminati are also members in the highest ranks of numerous secretive and occult societies which in many cases extend straight back into the ancient world. The upper

levels of the tightly compartmentalized (need-to-know-basis) Illuminati structural pyramid include planning committees and organizations that the public has little or no knowledge of. The upper levels of the Illuminati pyramid include secretive committees with names such as: the **Council of 3**, the **Council of 5**, the **Council of 7**, the **Council of 9**, the **Council of 13**, the **Council of 33**, the **Grand Druid Council**, the **Committee of 300** (also called the "Olympians") and the **Committee of 500** among others.

In 1992, [Dr John Coleman](#) published *Conspirators' Hierarchy: The Story of the Committee of 300*. With laudable scholarship and meticulous research, Dr Coleman identifies the players and carefully details the Illuminati agenda of worldwide domination and control. On page 161 of the *Conspirators Hierarchy*, Dr Coleman accurately [summarizes the intent and purpose of the Committee of 300](#) as follows:

"A One World Government and one-unit monetary system, under permanent non-elected hereditary oligarchists who self-select from among their numbers in the form of a feudal system as it was in the Middle Ages. In this One World entity, population will be limited by restrictions on the number of children per family, diseases, wars, famines, until 1 billion people who are useful to the ruling class, in areas which will be strictly and clearly defined, remain as the total world population.

There will be no middle class, only rulers and the servants. All laws will be uniform under a legal system of world courts practicing the same unified code of laws, backed up by a One World Government police force and a One World unified military to enforce laws in all former countries where no national boundaries shall exist. The system will be on the basis of a welfare state; those who are obedient and subservient to the One World Government will be rewarded with the means to live; those who are rebellious will simple be starved to death or be declared outlaws, thus a target for anyone who wishes to kill them. Privately owned firearms or weapons of any kind will be prohibited."

The sheer magnitude and complex web of deceit surrounding the individuals and organizations involved in this conspiracy is mind boggling, even for the most astute among us. Most people react with disbelief and skepticism towards the topic, unaware that they have been **conditioned** (brainwashed) to react with skepticism by institutional and media influences that were created by the Mother of All mind control organizations: [The Tavistock Institute of Human Relations](#) in London. Author and de-programmer [Fritz Springmeier](#) (*The Top 13 Illuminati Bloodlines*) says that most people have built in "slides" that short circuit the mind's critical examination process when it comes to certain sensitive topics. "Slides", Springmeier reports, is a CIA term for a **conditioned type** of response which dead ends a person's thinking and terminates debate or examination of the topic at hand. For example, the mention of the word "conspiracy" often solicits a slide response with many people. (Springmeier has co-authored three books on trauma-based programming which detail how the Illuminati employs highly tuned and extremely sophisticated [Mind Control](#) (MC) training programs that begin the programming process while the intended victim is still [within the womb](#). Mind Control is a much greater problem than most people realize. According to Cisco Wheeler, a former Illuminati mind control programmer, there are **10 million** people who have been programmed as mind

controlled slaves using **trauma-based** MC programs with names like **Monarch** and **MK Ultra**. The newer, non-trauma, electronic means of MC programming that grew out of the **Montauk Project**, may include millions more. [Al Bielek](#), who played a principle role in the development of the Montauk Project, said that there likely 10 million victims of Montauk style mind control programming worldwide, the majority located in the USA. He also said that there are covert Montauk Programming 'Centers' in every major city in the U.S.)

What most Americans believe to be "Public Opinion" is in reality *carefully crafted and scripted propaganda* designed to elicit a *desired behavioral response* from the public. **Public opinion polls** are *really* taken with the intent of gauging the public's *acceptance* of the Illuminati's planned programs. A strong showing in the polls tells the Illuminati that the programing is "taking", while a poor showing tells the NWO manipulators that they have to recast or "tweak" the programming until the desired response is achieved. While the thrust and content of the propaganda is decided at Tavistock, implementation of the propaganda is executed in the United States by well **over 200** 'think tanks' such as the **Rand Corporation** and the **Brookings Institute** which are overseen and directed by the top NWO mind control organization in the United States, the **Stanford Research Institute (SRI)** in Menlo Park, California.

The NWO global conspirators manifest their agenda through the skillful [manipulation of human emotions](#), especially *fear*. In the past *centuries*, they have repeatedly utilized a contrivance that NWO researcher and author [David Icke](#) has characterized in his latest book, [The Biggest Secret](#), as **Problem, Reaction, and Solution**.

The technique is as follows: Illuminati strategists create the **Problem-** by funding , assembling, and training an "opposition" group to stimulate turmoil in an established political power (sovereign country, region, continent, etc.) that they wish to impinge upon and thus create opposing factions in a *conflict that the Illuminati themselves maneuvered into existence*. In recent decades, so called "opposition" groups are usually identified in the media as 'freedom fighters' or 'liberators' (recently the KLA-[Kosovo Liberation Army](#)).

At the same time, the leader of the established political power where the conflict is being orchestrated is *demonized* and, on cue, referred to as 'another Hitler' (take your pick: Saddam Hussein, Milosevic, Kadaffi, etc.). The 'freedom fighters' are not infrequently assembled from a local criminal element (i.e. KLA, drug traffickers). In the spirit of true Machiavellian deceit, the same NWO strategists are equally involved in *covertly arming* and *advising* the leader of the established power as well (the Illuminati always profits from any armed conflict by loaning money, arming, and supplying *all* parties involved in a war).

The conflict is drawn to the world stage by the controlled media outlets with a barrage of photos and video tape reports of horrific and bloody atrocities suffered by innocent civilians. The cry goes up "Something has to be done!" And *That* is the desired **Reaction**

(note: the *same* technique is presently being used to bring about [gun control](#) in the United States).

The NWO puppeteers then provide the **Solution** by sending in UN 'Peace Keepers' (Bosnia) or a UN 'Coalition Force' (Gulf War) or NATO Bombers and then ground troops (Kosovo). Once installed, the 'peace keepers' [never leave](#) (Bosnia, Kosovo). The idea is to have NWO controlled ground troops in all major countries or strategic areas where significant resistance to the New World Order takeover is likely to be encountered.

East Timor, Indosnesia. (9/14/99) Virtually , the **same strategy** used to occupy Kosovo with UN/NATO troops was applied by the NWO manipulators to take military control of East Timor. Once again, the same morality play is trotted out for public consumption: the local evil and demonic Indonesian Army trained *militias* responsible for the slaughter of innocent civilians following the August 30 vote for Independence (from Indonesian control), *must be stopped at all costs*. This time, **Australia** (to keep up the appearance of an 'international' humanitarian effort) will lead the charge with 'peacekeeping' troops. Of course, it didn't take long for Madeline Albright to announce that U.S. 'support assets' will be part of the "UN Peacekeeping Team". In a front page story in the LA Times (9/13/99), **Mike Jendrzejczyk** of *Human Rights Watch* (an Illuminati front group) in Washington DC said that it's "crucial" that "***peacekeepers have the authority to disarm militia forces and any Indonesian soldiers actively working with them***".]

The local, sovereign military force is either defeated (i.e. Yugoslavia) **or**, as in the case of the **United States** itself, *replaced* by foreign UN "**Partnership For Peace**" (**PFPP**) **troops** who take over the jobs of U.S. soldiers who have been sent overseas on 'peacekeeping' missions. In addition to being killed in ground conflicts on foreign soil, U.S. military forces will likely be reduced in the next few years through *disease induced attrition* (i.e. from mandatory **Anthrax Vaccinations** required of all U.S. military personnel). These vaccinations will, in all probability, eventually produce the symptoms of the so-called **Gulf War Illness**, which was acquired by a certain percentage of Gulf War soldiers who were given a "special" anthrax vaccine (intended by the Illuminati/CIA as a *test run* to ascertain how quickly (and fatally) the disease would progress with a substantial population of healthy young men and women).

The corporate portion of the NWO pyramid seems to be dominated by **international bankers** and the big **pharmaceutical** cartels, as well as other major *multinational* corporations. The **Royal Family of England**, namely **Queen Elizabeth II** and the House of Windsor, (who are, in fact, descendants of the *German* arm of European Royalty -the **Saxe-Coburg-Gotha** family-changed the name to Windsor in 1914), are high level players in the oligarchy which controls the upper strata of the Illuminati. The decision making Illuminati nerve centers of this effort are in the **London** (especially the **City of London**), Basel Switzerland, and **Brussels** (NATO headquarters).

The **United Nations**, along with all the agencies working under the UN umbrella, such as the **World Health Organization** (WHO), are full time players in this scheme. Similarly, **NATO** is a military tool of the NWO.

The **leaders of all** major industrial countries like the **United States, England, Germany, Italy, Australia, New Zealand**, etc. (E.g. members of the "G7/G8") are *active and fully cooperative participants in this conspiracy*. In this century, the degree of control exerted by the Illuminati has advanced to the point that only **certain hand-picked individuals**, who are **groomed** and selected by the Illuminati are even **eligible** to become the prime minister or president of countries like England, Germany, or The United States. It didn't matter whether Bill Clinton or Bob Dole won the Presidency in 1996, the results would have been the same (except maybe for Zipper Gate). Both men are playing on the same team for the same ball club. **Anyone who isn't a team player is taken out: i.e. President Kennedy, Ali Bhutto (Pakistan) and Aldo Moro (Italy)**. More recently, *Admiral Borda and William Colby* were also killed because they were either unwilling to go along with the conspiracy to destroy America, weren't cooperating in some capacity, or were attempting to expose/ thwart the Takeover agenda.

Most of the major **wars, political upheavals**, and economic **depression/recessions** of the past 100 years (and earlier) were carefully planned and instigated by the machinations of these elites. They include **The Spanish-American War (1898), World War I and World War II; The Great Depression; the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917; the Rise of Nazi Germany; the Korean War; the Vietnam War; the 1989-91 "fall" of Soviet Communism, the 1991 Gulf War; and the recent War in Kosovo**. Even the **French Revolution** was an orchestrated into existence by the Barvaian Illuminati and the House of Rothchild.

FEMA

In America, the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) was created in 1979 under Presidential Memorandum 32 authored for President Carter by Prof. **Samuel P. Huntington**, a Harvard professor and former FEMA Advisory Board chairman. Huntington wrote the *Seminal Peace* for the Trilateral Commission in the mid 70's, in which he criticized democracy and economic development as outdated ideas. As co-author of the book, *Crisis in Democracy*, Huntington wrote:

"We have come to recognize that there are potential desirable limits to economic growth. There are also potentially desirable limits to the indefinite extension of political democracy. A government which lacks authority will have little ability short of cataclysmic crisis to impose on its people the sacrifices which may be necessary."

Huntington's ideas were rewritten into **National Security Decision Directive #47 (NSDD47)**, which was enacted in July 1982 by President Reagan. Treated as a passing footnote by the media, this law identified legitimate areas to be upgraded to maintain national defense, but it also laid the groundwork for **Emergency Mobilization Preparedness**, a plan under which existing socio/economic regulations or other legal constraints would be waived in the event of a national emergency. This plan was further strengthened in **Public Law 101-647**, signed by President Bush in November 1990. What it boils down to is this: in the event that the President declares a **national emergency**, for *any reason* (from major earthquakes to increased international tensions or economic /financial crisis of any stripe), FEMA can then, at *their* discretion, implement **Executive**

Orders 10995 through 11005. These Executive Orders permit a takeover by FEMA of local, state, and national governments and the suspension of constitutional guarantees. FEMA will have the authority to exert any sort of control that it deems necessary upon the American public. A trained *National Police Force*, formally referred to by the name of *Multi Jurisdictional Task Force (MJTF)*, wearing black uniforms and composed of:

1. specially selected U.S. military personnel
2. foreign military units carrying United Nations ID cards, and
3. specially trained existing police groups from larger metropolitan American cities.

These members of the MJTF will implement and enforce martial law *under the direction and control of FEMA*. The President and Congress are out of the loop.

FEMA is the Trojan Horse by which the New World Order will implement overt, police-state control over the American populace.

War on Drugs

The "War on Drugs" is a cruel joke. The U.S. government, specifically the CIA, is the biggest 'drug lord' on the planet. Drug money is used to pay for innumerable 'black projects', including the construction of huge underground cities housing both humans and aliens working with the secret U.S. government.

The instigation of a trumped-up war as a cover for amassing fortunes can be dated back to at least the 12th Century when only a core group of **nine** members of an Illuminati group called the **Knights Templar**, the military arm of an Illuminati secret society known as the **Priory of Sion**, kicked off the **The Crusades** that lasted for over a century and a half. A rift later developed between the Templars and the Priory of Sion when Jerusalem was lost to Saracen Turks in 1187. In 1307, the king of France, **Philippe the Fair** (a Merovingian Illuminati), coveted the wealth and was jealous of the Templars' power. The French king, being a puppet of the Priory of Sion, set out to arrest all the Templars in France on October 13. While many Templars were seized and tortured, including their Grand Master, Jacques de Molay, many other Templars (who had been tipped off) escaped. They eventually resurfaced in Portugal, in Malta (as the **Knights of Malta**) and later in Scotland as **The Scottish Rites of Free Masonry**.

The acquisition and consolidation of ever greater **wealth, natural resources, total political power, and control over others** are the motivating forces which drives the decisions of the Illuminati. *The toll in human suffering and the loss of innocent lives are non issues for these individuals, who are aligned with very dark and malevolent 4th dimensional aliens.* The dominant group of 4th dimensional malevolent aliens controlling and manipulating the human Illuminati are known as *Draconians* or *Drakos Reptilians*.

Not all alien reptilians are of a negative spiritual orientation.

Mind Control

Recent revelations from deprogrammed Illuminati (government) mind controlled individuals such as **Arizona Wilder** ([The Biggest Secret](#)), [Cisco Wheeler](#) ([The Illuminati](#)

Formula to Create an Undetectable Total Mind Control Slave), **Cathy O'Brien** (*Trance Formation of America*), and **Brice Taylor** (*Thanks for the Memories*) leave NO DOUBT that the upper levels of the Illuminati engage in **Satanic rituals** which usually include the killing of young children, the drinking of human blood and the consuming of flesh and human organs.

The details of the Illuminati conspiracy are brilliantly laid out in the books of **David Icke** (*Tales from the Time Loop*, *Children of the Matrix*, *Alice in Wonderland and the World Trace Center Disaster*, *The Biggest Secret*, *The Truth Shall Set You Free*, and *I am Me, I am Free*); and in three books by **Dr. John Coleman** (*Conspirators' Hierarchy: The Story of The Committee of 300*; *One World Order: Socialist Dictatorship*; and *Diplomacy by Deception*)

To be Continued & Expanded...

This Page Last Updated: March 14, 2005

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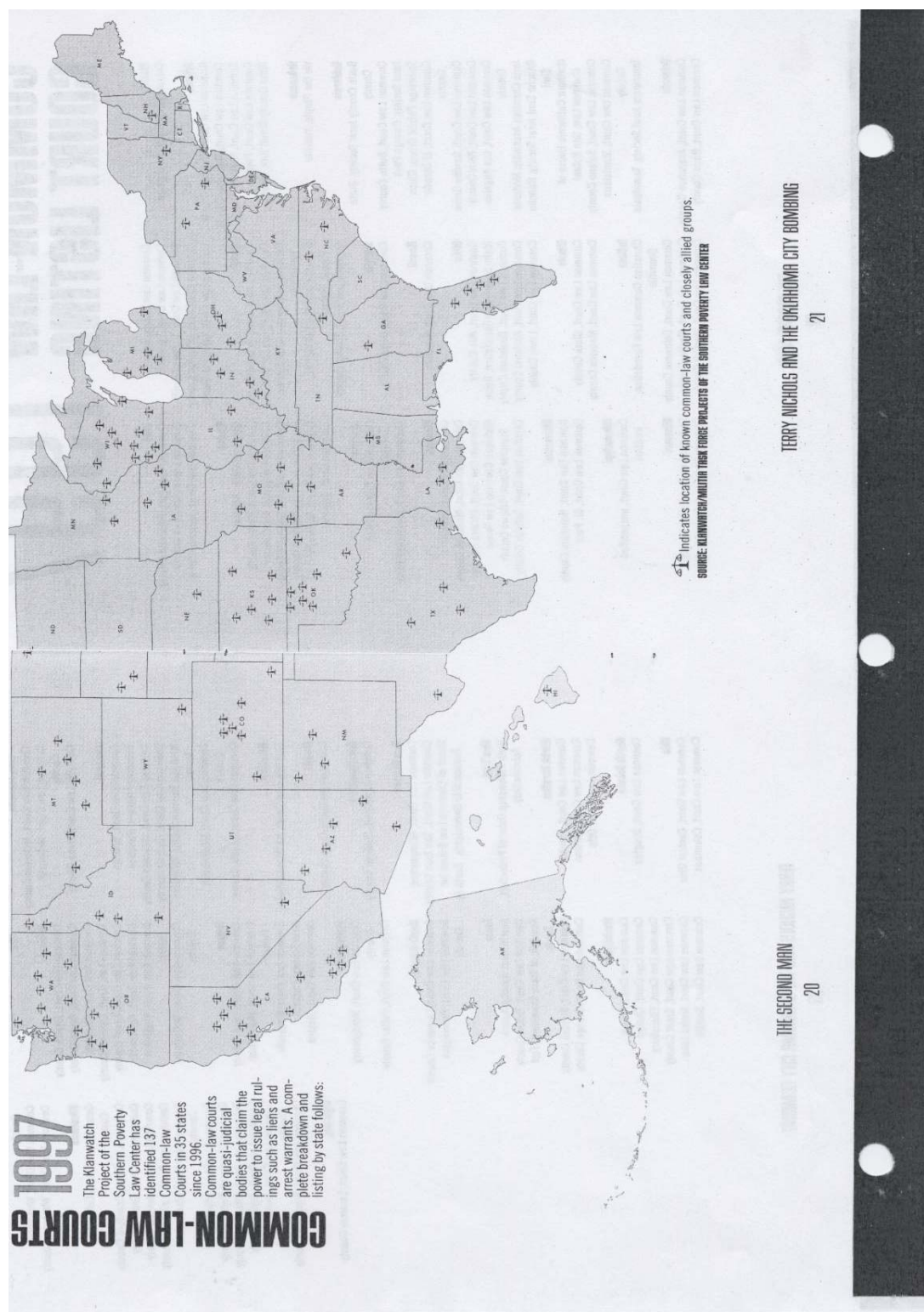
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Appendix Five SPLC Common Law Court Map



1997
COMMON-LAW COURTS

The Kluwatches Project of the Southern Poverty Law Center has identified 137 Common-law Courts in 35 states since 1996. Common-law courts are quasi-judicial bodies that claim the power to issue legal rulings such as liens and arrest warrants. A complete breakdown and listing by state follows:

THE SECOND MAN
 20

TERRY NICHOLS AND THE OKLAHOMA CITY BOMBING
 21

COMMON-LAW COURT LISTING 1997

Alaska

Common Law Court, Anchorage

Arizona

Common Law Court, Graham County
Common Law Court, Maricopa County
Common Law Court, Mohave County
Pima County Grand Jury, Tucson

Arkansas

We the People, Yellville

California

Butte County Jural Society, Butte County
Common Law Court, Butte County
Jural Society, Canoga Park
Sovereign Patriot Group, Chico
Common Law Court, El Dorado County

Common Law Court, Garden Grove
Common Law Court, Kern County
Common Law Court, Los Angeles County
Juris Christian Assembly, Mendota
Rancho Simi Jural Society, Rancho Simi

Northern California House of Common Law, San Rafael
Common Law Court, Solano County
Common Law Court, Stanislaus County

Tamalpais Jural Society, Tamalpais

Colorado

Common Law Court, Arapahoe County
Common Law Court, Baca County

Iowa

Common Law Liberty, Denver
Common Law Court, Denver
Common Law Court, El Paso County
Common Law Court, Jefferson County
Common Law Court, Monroe County

Florida

Christian Jural Court, Brevard County
Common Law Court, Orange County
Restoration Township Jural Society, Palm Bay
Constitutional Court of We the People, Tampa
Common Law Court, Volusia County

Georgia

Common Law Court, Cobb County

Hawaii

Common Law Court, Honolulu

Idaho

Common Law Court, Ada County
Idaho Sovereignty Association, Boise
Common Law Court, Boundary County
Common Law Court, Kootenai County
Common Law Court, Lewis County

Illinois

Common Law Court, Clark County
Common Law Court, Madison County

Indiana

Christian Common Law Foundation, Bourville

Common Law Court, Delaware County
Common Law Court, Marion County
Common Law Court, Warrick County

Kansas

Common Law Court, Delaware County
Common Law Court, Floyd County
Common Law Court, Jackson County

Kentucky

Christian Court, Abilene
Common Law Court, Butler County
Common Law Court, Rice County
Common Law Court, Sedgwick County
Common Law Court, Stafford County
Common Law Court, St. Mary's
Christian Court, Topeka

Louisiana

Common Law Defense Fund, Lafayette

Michigan

Common Law Court, Jenison
Common Law Court, Manistee County
Common Law Court, Ottawa County
Supreme Court, Ottawa County
Common Law Court, Sarniac County

Minnesota

Common Law Court, Hennepin County
Common Law Court, St. Paul

Mississippi

Common Law Court, unspecified location

Missouri

Common Law Court, Clay County
Common Law Court, Dade County

George Gordon's School of Common Law, Isabella

Common Law Court, Jefferson County
Common Law Court, McDonald County
Common Law Court, Texas County

Montana

Common-Law Court, Billings
Bozeman Freeman, Bozeman
Common Law Court, Cascade County
Common Law Court, Garfield County
Montana Freeman/Justus Township, Jordan
Common Law Court, Musselshell County
Common Law Court, Ravalli County

Nebraska

Common Law Court, Hamilton County

Nevada

Common Law Court, Clark County

New Hampshire

Common Law Court, Sullivan County

New Mexico

Common Law Court, Albuquerque
Common Law Court, San Juan County
House of Common Law School for Responsible Sovereignty, Santa Fe

New York

Truth Fellowship Order of Protection, Schenectady

North Carolina

Common Law Court, Franklin
Common Law Court, Kinston
Common Law Court, Otto

North Dakota

Common Law Court, Douglas

Ohio

Common Law Court, Central Ohio
Common Law Court, Columbus

Common Law Court, Southwestern Ohio

Oklahoma

Common Law Court, Atlatla County
Common Law Court, Bryan County
Common Law Court, Cherokee County
Common Law Court, Garfield County
Common Law Court, Grant County
Common Law Court, Kay County
Common Law Court, Kingfisher County
Common Law Court, LeFlore County
Common Law Court, McClain County

Oregon

Common Law Court, Lane County
Common Law Court, Multnomah County
Common Law Court, Prineville
Jural Society, Portland
Common Law Court, Slayton

Pennsylvania

Common Law Court, Montgomery County
Common Law Court, Potter County

South Dakota

Common Law Court, Lawrence County
Common Law Court, Pennington County

Texas

Austin Jural Society, Austin
Common Law Court, Bear County
Republic of Texas Movement, Fort Davis
Common Law Court, Kendall County
Common Law Court, Orange County

Washington

Common Law Court, Amboy
Common Law Court, Chelan
Common Law Court, Ellensburg
Common-Law Court, Grant County
Common Law Court, Moses Lake
Common Law Court, Seattle

Common Law Court, Snohomish County
Common Law Court, Wenatchee
Common Law Court, Whatcom County

Wisconsin

Common Law Court, Columbia County
Common Law Court, Crawford County
Common Law Court, Grant County
Common Law Court, Juneau County
Common Law Court, LaCrosse County
Common Law Court, Manitowish County

Wyoming

Common Law Court, Laramie County
Common Law Court, Laramie County

Appendix Six Sovereign Citizenship Patriot Website

<http://wealth4freedom.com/truth/search/sovereign.htm> (printed without pictures/graphs)

Sovereign Citizenship is the status held by our forefathers.

Sovereign Citizenship
By Scott Eric Rosenstiel

Washington Crossing the Delaware by Emanuel Leutze
Sovereign Citizenship is the status held by our forefathers. George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, and everyone else who won their freedom from the British Empire had this status. It was the birthright of all Americans, and we were generous in extending this most important right to foreign-born persons through the naturalization laws. With this status, our unalienable rights of life, liberty, and property couldn't be infringed. During the Civil War a method was discovered by the leading attorneys, financiers, and politicians of the day to deprive us of this status. Fortunately, we can get it back. This brings us to the question, "What are we getting back?" What does it mean to be a Sovereign Citizen? The word "sovereign" is defined in the 6th edition of Black's Law Dictionary, published in 1990, as being, "A person, body, or state in which independent authority is vested; a chief ruler with supreme power; a king or other ruler in a monarchy." Prior to the War for American Independence, the British king was the sovereign and the American people were his subjects. The war's outcome changed all this:

The sovereignty has been transferred from one man to the collective body of the people - and he who before was a "subject of the king" is now "a citizen of the State." State v. Manuel, North Carolina, Vol. 20, Page 121 (1838)

Thus, the people became Citizens of their respective states. But more importantly, for the first and only time in recorded history, the people were recognized as being the true sovereigns:

It will be sufficient to observe briefly, that the sovereignties in Europe, and particularly in England, exist on feudal principles. That system considers the prince as the sovereign, and the people as his subjects; it regards his person as the object of allegiance... No such ideas obtain here; at the revolution, the sovereignty devolved on the

people; and they are truly the sovereigns of the country, but they are sovereigns without subjects... and have none to govern but themselves... Chisholm v. Georgia, Dallas" Supreme Court Reports, Vol. 2, Pages 471, 472 (1793)

Each individual, at least so far as respects his unalienable rights is his own sovereign. These rights weren't given to any government. In fact, they can't be. Perhaps you can give up all of your rights, if you so choose, but who has the power to give your rights up for you? In America, no one can, because we're all equal. In American this principle of popular sovereign is recognized by all governments - state and federal. When the states became independent, the state governments were formed, all of them based on the authority of the people, and not the will of one man or a small body of men. The federal government as we know it today was created in 1789 when the federal constitution went into effect. The constitution mentioned something previously unknown in American law: Citizenship of the United States:

The term, citizens of the United States, must be understood to intend those who were citizens of a state, as such, after the Union had commenced, and the several states had assumed their sovereignties. Before this period there was no citizens of the United States... Manchester v. Boston, Massachusetts Reports, Vol. 16, Page 235 (1819)

Thus a Citizen of a state is, by the federal constitution, made a Citizen of the United States. This means the following:

A citizen of one state is to be considered as a citizen of every other state in the union. Butler v. Farnsworth, Federal Cases, Vol. 4, Page 902 (1821)

A Citizen of any one of the states is considered and treated as being a Citizen of all of them. The phrase "Citizen of the United States" does not refer to a separate class of citizenship:

A citizen of any one of the States of the Union, is held to be, and called a citizen of the United States, although technically and abstractly there is no such thing. To conceive a citizen of the United States who is not a citizen of some one of the States, is totally foreign to the idea, and inconsistent with the proper construction and common understanding of the expression as used in the Constitution, which must be deduced from its various other provisions. Ex parte. - Frank Knowles, California Reports, Vol. 5, Page 302 (1855)

Because of the principles enunciated in the above cases and others like them, it's correct to say that the American people are Citizens of our

respective states. But we're more than this. We're in a very real sense Citizens of all the states. We are, in the greatest sense, and proudly so, Citizens of the several United States. This brings us to what are considered as being the rights inherent in Citizenship in America:

When men entered into a State they yielded a part of their absolute rights, or natural liberty, for political or civil liberty, which is no other than natural liberty restrained by human laws, so far as is necessary and expedient for the general advantage of the public. The rights of enjoying and defending life and liberty, of acquiring and protecting reputation and property, - and, in general, of attaining objects suitable to their condition, without injury to another, are the rights of a citizen; and all men by nature have them. Douglass, *Adm'r., v. Stephens*, Delaware Chancery, Vol. 1, Page 470 (1821)

These are the rights inherent in Sovereign Citizenship. So long as we remained Citizens, they couldn't be taken away from us. So the key was to take our Citizenship away from us.

ARTICLE #2: Fourteenth Amendment Citizenship

If you look through the copy of the United States constitution found in the 1990 edition of Black's Law Dictionary, you'll notice something very interesting. The word "Citizen" is always capitalized until you get to the fourteenth amendment, which was adopted in 1868. After that, it's no longer capitalized. This isn't an isolated occurrence either. In the definition of "Dred Scott Case," a supreme court case decided before the fourteenth amendment, they capitalize "Citizen," but everywhere else in the dictionary, where it refers to the laws of today, the word isn't capitalized. As you shall see, this is just one small indicator of many that the fourteenth amendment created a new class of citizen. This is certainly no secret to the legal community. In fact, under the definition of "Fourteenth Amendment" it says, "The Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution of the United States... creates... a citizenship of the United States as distinct from that of the states..." This class of "citizen of the United States" was new; it was unknown to the constitution prior to 1868. This wasn't the status of our forefathers. In the first sentence of the definition of "United States" found in Black's, it says, "This term has several meanings." Pursuing this further, we find that one of the definitions is the "collective name of the states which are united by and under the Constitution." This is what the framers of the constitution meant by "Citizen of the United States" - that is, the Citizen of one state is to be considered and treated as a Citizen of every other state in the union. Used in another sense, though, the term is simply the name of the federal government. This is what is meant by "citizen of the United States in the fourteenth amendment":

Privileges and immunities clause of Fourteenth Amendment protects only those rights peculiar to being citizen of federal government; it does not protect those rights which relate to state citizenship. *Jones v. Temmer*, Federal Supplement, Vol. 829, Page 1227 (1993)

From the authorities above, we can see that the fourteenth amendment created citizenship of the federal government. This status is a privilege granted by the government:

Citizenship is a political status, and may be defined and privilege limited by Congress. *Ex Parte (NG) Fung Sing*, Federal Reporter, 2nd Series, Vol. 6, Page 670 (1925)

It goes without saying that the federal government can regulate the privileges it creates. By definition, "citizenship" is the basis of a person's relationship with the government. In the legal sense, everything else is built upon it. Therefore, since fourteenth amendment citizenship is a privilege, every aspect of the citizen's life could potentially be regulated. Worst of all, this new class of citizen does not have the right to invoke the protections of the Bill of Rights, as explained in the following supreme court case:

We have cited these cases for the purpose of showing that the privileges and immunities of citizens of the United States do not necessarily include all the rights protected by the first eight amendments to the Federal Constitution against the powers of the Federal government. They were decided subsequently to the adoption of the Fourteenth Amendment... *Maxwell v. Dow*, 176 U.S. 598 (1900)

This isn't an idea peculiar to the turn of the century either. Going back to the "Jones" case, which was decided in 1993, we find the courts of today saying, "The privileges and immunities clause of the Fourteenth Amendment protects very few rights because it neither incorporates any of the Bill of Rights not protects all rights of individual citizens." Although fourteenth amendment citizens have no guaranteed access to the Bill of Rights, the amendment itself does state that they have certain "privileges and immunities." Here's what the supreme court has decided they are:

Privileges and immunities of citizens of the United States, on the other hand, are only such as arise out of the nature and essential character of the national government, or are specifically granted or secured to all citizens or persons by the Constitution of the United States. *Slaughter-House Cases*, supra, p.79; *Re Kemmler*, 136 U.S. 436, 448, 34 L.ed. 519, 524, 10 Sup. Ct.Rep. 930; *Duncan v. Missouri*, 152 U.S. 377,

382, 38 L.ed. 485, 487, 14 Sup.Ct.Rep. 570. Thus, among the rights and privileges of national citizenship recognized by this court are the right to pass freely from state to state (*Crandall v. Nevada*, 6 Wall. 35, 18 L.ed. 75); the right to petition Congress for a redress of grievances (*United States v. Cruikshank*, supra); the right to vote for national officers (*Ex parte Yarbrough*, 110 U.S. 651, 28 L.ed. 274, 4 Sup.Ct.Rep. 152; *Wiley v. Sinkler*, 179 U.S. 58, 45 L.ed. 84, 21 Sup.Ct. Rep. 17); the right to be protected against violence while in the lawful custody of a United States marshal (*Logan v. United States*, 144 U.S. 263, 36 L.ed. 429, 12 Sup.Ct. Rep. 617); and the right to inform the United States authorities of violation of its laws (*Re Quark*, 158 U.S. 532, 39 L.ed. 1080, 15 Sup.Ct.Rep. 959). *Twining v. New Jersey*, 211 U.S. 78 (1908)

As discussed in the last article, Sovereign Citizens created government to guarantee them their rights. In contrast, it would seem from the above that the federal government created fourteenth amendment citizenship to guarantee its power. As a side note, this amendment has always been controversial. Many people over the years have questioned the amount of power it vests in the federal government. Some have even questioned its validity. On one occasion Judge Ellett of the Utah supreme court remarked:

I cannot believe that any court, in full possession of its faculties, could honestly hold that the amendment was properly approved and adopted. *State v. Phillips*, Pacific Reporter, 2nd Series, Vol. 540, Page 941, 942 (1975)

However, the most important fact about this amendment is that, although it created a new class of citizen, it did not have any effect on Sovereign Citizens. Both classes still exist:

When the Constitution was adopted the people of the United States were the citizens of the several States for whom and for whose posterity the government was established. Each of them was a citizen of the United States at the adoption of the Constitution, and all free persons thereafter born within one of the several States became by birth citizens of the State and of the United States. (Mr. Calhoun in his published work upon the Constitution denied that there was any citizenship of the United States in any other sense than as being connected with the government through the States.)

The first attempt by Congress to define citizenship was in 1866 in the passage of the Civil Rights Act (Revised Statutes section 1992, 8 United States Code Annotated section 1). The act provided that:

"All persons born in the United States and not subject to any foreign

power are declared to be citizens of the United States."

And this in turn was followed in 1868 by the adoption of the Fourteenth Amendment, United States Code Annotated Amendment 14, declaring:

"All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside." Perkins v. Elg, Federal Reporter, 2nd Series, Vol. 99, Page 410 (1938), affirmed by supreme court at 307 U.S. 325 (1939)

Both classes of citizen still exist. It's your right to be a Sovereign Citizen, while it's a privilege to be a fourteenth amendment citizen, and most importantly, it's up to you to determine which one you are, and which one you want to be. [Click here](#) if you want to reclaim your sovereignty.

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Read "An Open Letter to Charlton Heston"

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