Research in a Minefield: Relating with Tea Party Activists

DOI 10.18422/68-05

by Marion Douzou

Based on a doctoral research project on Tea Party groups in Pennsylvania, this article deals both with the various pitfalls I had to learn to avoid and the significant impact that being a young, white French woman had on the way activists interacted with me. In addition, I reflect upon the general ramifications of studying a right-wing social movement while not aligning with it politically. The automatic distance—and presumed ensuing objectivity that this viewpoint initially seems to afford—is much more fragile and complicated than apparent at first glance.

Introduction

> Many decades of empirical research in all its forms, from ethnography to sociology and from the so-called closed questionnaire to the most open-ended interview, have convinced me that the adequate scientific expression of this practice is to be found neither in the prescriptions of a methodology more often scientistic than scientific, nor in the antiscientific caveats of the advocates of mystic union. (Bourdieu et al. 607)

1 In *Weight of the World*, Pierre Bourdieu et al. describe the difficulty of reaching an adequate scientific expression for empirical research. All fieldwork based on the observation of people involved in activism raises questions that have been well-documented by social science researchers: How do you establish contact with your subject? How can you observe without changing the very nature of your field? How can you find the right or the least problematic distance to reach scientifically-sound conclusions? How can the researcher be both inside (experiencing) and outside (observing, analyzing) his or her field?

2 The French geographer Paul Claval characterized fieldwork as a solitary experience during which young researchers must adopt a trial-and-error approach for as long as it takes to reach a scientifically-satisfying result (11). In *Tricks of the Trade: How to Think about Your Research While You're Doing It*, Howard Becker insists on the absence of one academic methodology that would work for all fieldwork, regardless of the interviewer and the interviewee's identities, and presents the "tricks of the trade":

> The word “trick” usually suggests that the device or operation described will make things easier to do. In this case, that’s misleading. To tell the truth, these tricks probably make things harder for the researcher, in a special sense. Instead of making it easier to get a conventional piece of work done, they suggest ways of interfering with the comfortable thought routines academic life promotes and supports by making them the “right” way to do things. (6)

3 When I set out to do fieldwork to study the Tea Party movement in Pennsylvania, I prepared myself as best I could. While oral history is very rarely taught or discussed in Anglophone Studies curricula in France, I had compensated by reading the literature in this area and by identifying the difficulties I might encounter during my research. I was well-aware of the pitfalls previous researchers had to grapple with, such as the relationship between interviewer and interviewee. However, I expected that being from France and not aligning with my subjects politically would create an automatic distance that would protect me from many of the problems that researchers pointed out; for example, I thought that I would never run the risk of identifying with the people I was studying.

4 Eventually, however, I realized that neither my political views nor my nationality made me immune to the difficulties other researchers encounter. All in all, I conducted 107 interviews: 73 with grassroots activists, two with Goldwater supporters, one with a John Birch Society member, seven with people who worked for conservative think tanks or groups like Americans for Prosperity (AFP) or Heritage Action for America, twenty with State Representatives or Senators from Pennsylvania, three with US Congressmen, and one with a member of Senator Pat Toomey’s staff.

Getting Access to the Pennsylvania Tea Party World

5 What is usually called the Tea Party movement is a combination of grassroots and top-down branches. The first is made up of a myriad of groups, whose size varies, while the second includes organizations that operate at the state or national levels, like Tea Party Patriots or Heritage Action. I decided to study the interlacing of organizations at the local, state, and federal levels to understand what role each had and how they interacted with one another. I also included interviews with elected officials both at the national and the state levels. Interviewing each of these three groups of people—representatives, grassroots activists, and coordinators of national organizations—required very different approaches, and in the end, it was a combination of all the tactics I had tried—even some I was not initially aware of—that proved successful.

6 To get in touch with grassroots activists, I sent out e-mails introducing myself and my project to all the Tea Party leaders, Tea Party websites, and *MeetUp* groups I could find. Considering the number of people I contacted, I received a rather small number of responses. However, most of them either agreed to talk to me on the phone or invited me to their meetings. Some, who were located far from

Philadelphia (where I was based), even set up interviews prior to my arrival. In terms of efficiency, the latter was by far the best-case scenario. The coordinator of The Bedford County Patriots, who regularly meet in a town located 200 miles from Philadelphia, arranged five interviews prior to the meeting to which he had invited me.

7 In his article, “On Oral History Interviewing,” Charles Morrissey notes that interviewing several subjects in a row is very challenging: “You’re tired, you’re run-down, you’re confused, and in some cases you can’t remember if the person you’re interviewing said something to you five minutes ago, or if somebody you interviewed earlier in the day said something to you; that very definitely affects your technique” (107–08). It quickly became clear that I could extract more information from my interviews when I met the interviewees at least once beforehand. This is what I did with the Indiana Armstrong Patriots: After talking to the coordinator on the phone, she agreed to organize a lunch meeting with ten activists prior to the meeting itself. Having met me, talked to me within the comfort of a group, and seen me cross the state of Pennsylvania to attend their meeting helped them feel more at ease when I interviewed them afterwards over the phone.

8 I tried as much as possible to talk to people face to face as it often allows interviewees to open up more easily. Some meetings were announced online which enabled me to come unannounced and meet people on arrival. This practice, however, sometimes led to misunderstandings since the members’ initial enthusiasm at the sight of a new, young ‘recruit’ quickly morphed into suspicion. Aside from the expected questions—“who are you?” or “why are you studying the Tea Party movement?”—I got other, more surprising questions, for instance: “Do you work for the CIA?” This rather shocking question may be explained by lingering memories of the 1956–1971 COunter INTELligence PROgram era (COINTELPRO), a series of covert actions conducted by the FBI and aimed at surveilling, infiltrating, and discrediting domestic political organizations. However, some reactions were rather aggressive.

9 At one Tea Party meeting, one of the activists approached me to welcome me to the group. When I explained why I was attending the meeting, she asked in a very unpleasant tone: “Who told you you could do that?” I told her that one of the organizers of her group had invited me to attend. In the end, however, it was this woman who eventually granted me a 3-hour interview with her husband, which turned out to be one of the most useful testimonies for my understanding of the movement. Overall, the receptions I got varied greatly. The first meeting I attended took place in Delaware County. I had just arrived in Pennsylvania and did not yet have a car. My journey required two trains, one bus, and a fifteen-minute walk alongside a very busy road with no sidewalk (by the way: thinking that I could navigate the Tea Party world without a car was an error in judgment that no American researcher would have made). When I finally arrived, the activists seemed to interpret my journey as a sign of great determination which made them open up to me very quickly.

10 Sending a letter to introduce myself and my project was very useful in the beginning; however, attending activists' meetings month after month and spending time with them turned out to be the most efficient way to experience the inner workings of the Tea Party's grassroots branch. I followed them to the various events they organized, such as lobbying their elected officials or demonstrating against a bill about to be voted on. In her book *Strangers in Their Own Land*, Arlie Hochschild uses a similar approach and explains how it helped her "open a window into that community" (248). Over the course of several months, I developed a deep knowledge of the Tea Party universe in Pennsylvania.

11 Activists, elected officials, and representatives of national organizations eventually became used to seeing me at various events. Thanks to my regular presence, I was able to interview state representatives but also the coordinators of Heritage Action or AFP. Surprisingly, seeing rank-and-file Tea Party activists at ease around me led these coordinators to lower their guard much more rapidly than I had expected. National groups are usually extremely suspicious of journalists or academics, and all the attempts I had made to contact them outside the setting of a Tea Party meeting had failed.

12 However, given my knowledge of Tea Party groups and their relationships to one another, many had come to perceive me as a resource. One of the coordinators of a national group, whose presence in Pennsylvania had greatly diminished since the beginning of the movement, was very eager to learn about all the groups I had talked to, what they were like, and if I thought they were in line with the group's mission statement. This unexpected reversal of the information-sharing dynamic eventually enabled me to attend events organized by this national group in Washington, DC, as well as in the state's capital, Harrisburg. These meetings, in turn, allowed me to observe how grassroots activists interacted with the movement's top-down branch.

13 After this initial stage of meeting attendance and participation in events, the network of people I knew grew quickly. One member of the Tea Party Patriots Eastern Montco, for instance, took me to a meeting with State Representative Todd Stephens, who then set up interviews for me with his colleagues in Harrisburg. As for national representatives and senators, the only way I was able to get an interview was after one activist personally seconded the request I had been making for months.

An Evolving Methodology

14 All the scholars who have studied the Tea Party movement mention its members' deep distrust of journalists and academics. Jill Lepore reports that during her fieldwork she was presented as being from "the people's republic of Cambridge" (100). According to Theda Skocpol and Vanessa Williamson, the suspicion is sometimes so immense that Tea Party leaders simply do not respond to any request (51). During my fieldwork I faced several such refusals. For instance, all members of a group of Oath Keepers in the county of Berks in Pennsylvania, who regularly attended the meetings of The Berks County Patriots and of The Berks

Tea Party, repeatedly refused to be interviewed. Even when I went through the proper channels and asked their leader—who responded by demanding a list of documents about my research (which I provided)—I never heard back.

15 This distrust of academics is one of the reasons why I decided not to conduct my research through questionnaires. It may strike potential respondents as an abrupt way of obtaining information and probably would have antagonized some of them. Conducting interviews seemed the best way to get them to talk about their experience, their role in the movement, what drove them to activism, and where they came from—politically, economically, and geographically. Becker underlines the importance of talking to people directly:

> [R]esearchers must learn to question, not accept blindly, what the people whose world they are studying think and believe. Now I have to say that at the same time they should pay attention to just that. After all, people know a lot about the world they live and work in. They have to know a lot to make their way through its complexities. They have to adjust to all its contradictions and conflicts, solve all the problems it throws their way. If they didn't know enough to do that, they wouldn't have lasted there this long. So they know, plenty. And we should, taking advantage of what they know, include in our sample of things to look at and listen to the things the common knowledge and routine practice of those studied make evident. (98)

16 The details researchers gather during an interview and the relationship they create with the interviewee are crucial elements that no number of questionnaires could unearth. The way activists tell their stories or the anecdotes they share seemed of such importance that I decided to use non-directive interviews as much as possible. I would, for instance, start with an open-ended question: "Can you tell me about your experience in the Tea Party movement?" From there, I tried to be as silent as possible, which—as I discovered—is no easy task. Once the first question has been asked, I received a wealth of information that triggers fresh questions. This moment is when researchers have to "bite their lips," to use Morrissey's expression (113) and make sure—even when the interviewees seem to have finished answering—to enable them to continue if something else comes to mind.

17 The importance of silences in interviewing has been well documented (see, for instance, the online journal of the international association of oral history, *Words and Silences*). These silences as well as the tone used by an interviewee sometimes tell us as much (or more) about the story than their words do. However, interpreting these paralinguistic signs while formulating follow-up questions is an extremely difficult exercise:

> Interviewing, in conclusion, is very difficult when you think that the good interviewer must know his stuff; he must be listening to what the man is saying; he must think of more questions to ask; he must be thinking of what the question was he just asked, to make sure the man is answering it. He must know what's already been covered; know what he has yet to cover. He must anticipate where he's going to go if the man, while he's talking, indicates he's about through with the subject; and in anticipating where the conversation is going to go, he must in his mind be beginning to try to formulate the next question so it will come out well-phrased. It's a very difficult business. Anyone who does it successfully is probably so successful that he should himself be interviewed. (Morrissey 113)

In the case of elected officials who often had less time on their hands, the dynamic was different. I had to ask more questions, especially as my goal was less to talk about their personal experiences than to get a sense of their impressions and relationships to the movement itself. I quickly realized that interviewing Democratic elected officials gave me a better grasp of the political landscape in Pennsylvania but did not provide me with in-depth detail about the Tea Party movement in particular.

18 The method I used varied from one interview to the next depending both on the status and position of the interviewee and on the time the activist was willing to dedicate to my research. Some only talked to me once while others met with me several times, called me to tell me about something they remembered, or even took me to events they were attending. One member of the Tea Party Patriots of South Philadelphia drove me to a lobbying day organized by the AFP in Harrisburg. We listened to talk-radio on the way there, and he made comments about the shows. He lobbied his elected officials, and on the way back we talked about his impressions of the Representatives and Senators he had talked to as well as of the events the AFP had organized. The events of this day told me more about him and his relationship to both the Republican Party and the top-down branch of the movement than any questionnaire could have ever done. I also realized that the participant part of the equation was unavoidable and greatly increased the quality of my fieldwork. Interviewing and participating in the day-to-day life of Tea Party activists led me to reflect on the relationship between interviewer and interviewee as well as the proper distance to keep to ensure my research would remain as objective as possible.

Finding the Right Distance

19 The relationship between an interviewer and the interviewee is complex and fragile. As Bourdieu et al. explain, whether we like it or not, it is similar to any social interaction on which the personalities of both participants have an impact: "If its objective of pure knowledge distinguishes the research relationship from most of the exchanges in everyday life, it remains, whatever one does, a social relationship. As such, it can have an effect on the results obtained (the effects

varying according to the different parameters that can influence the relationship)" (608). It is therefore crucial to carefully consider what is at stake during an interview. Even though no final and definitive answer exists, the first question that needs to be dealt with is: How did the activists I interviewed see me?

20 First, as a young, white, French woman. All of these four characteristics had an impact on the way they shared their stories with me. Our common ethnicity—the overwhelming majority of them were whites—is probably the most difficult aspect to consider since they never made any open reference to it. However, given their views on ethnic minorities and immigrants, especially Mexicans, which were often presented in coded language, it seems very likely that my ethnicity did make a difference. Furthermore, my gender definitely played a role as well. What struck me was that, despite my conscious efforts to achieve gender balance, of the 73 grassroots activists I interviewed, only twenty were women.

21 The number of female participants had greatly decreased between 2009 and 2014, but that is not the only reason for this surprising disparity. Most of the women I interviewed had to be approached several times. Few of them volunteered and most were very reluctant at first. During an interview, a member of the Bedford County Patriots told me about his wife's involvement in the group (I had specifically asked him). When we left the restaurant, his wife was waiting for him in the parking lot. Did she refuse to share her story? Did he fail to suggest she should come along? I never found answers to these questions, but this situation is illustrative of the difficulty I had in getting women to talk about their activism even though our common gender could have facilitated contact.

22 Tea Party activists also seemed to see me as a young person who needed help, a perception exacerbated by my being foreign and female. It was both an asset (the interviewee is often very willing to help a person who seems more vulnerable) and a setback (the interviewee takes things into their own hands and, in doing so, sometimes takes over the interview). While they were telling me about their experience, they sometimes forgot the name of one of the protagonists and, when I was able to remind them, they were surprised and often joked: "I need to depend on a French woman to help me with my history (laughs). How embarrassing!" The frequency of these remarks shows that they saw me, first and foremost, as a young French woman and, therefore, as less threatening than an American researcher. The one exception to this occurred when an activist from the Indiana Armstrong Patriots introduced me to her group as a Lurcy fellow. She had obviously done research on the Lurcy Foundation and seemed very impressed that I had received this scholarship. In this instance, my status as an academic was not only mentioned, but also appeared to have a positive impact on the way activists perceived me.

23 The generational difference also added an interesting dynamic to the interviewer-interviewee relationship. Most of my interviewees were retired whereas I was under thirty. To most, I was their children's or their grand-children's age while they reminded me of my grandparents. This age difference seems to have reinforced their willingness to help me, and they regularly introduced me as "my French friend

Marion.” While this could be regarded as no more than the expression of cultural norms—e.g. the American tendency to use first names and to greet people with greater enthusiasm than French people do—I did get the impression that there was more at stake and that to most of them I was, first and foremost, a young French woman. Yet, it was impossible to determine which of these three characteristics mattered most.

24 Furthermore, I had the impression that the work I was doing was not always clear to them. The word PhD seemed to be an abstract term to the overwhelming majority. For instance, many activists asked if I was done with my project only a month after I had first met them. This might explain why they would sometimes quiz me as though they doubted my knowledge of the topic. When I asked a member of the Veterans and Patriots United about his prior political experience, he responded: “Let’s see if you can guess. If I tell you ‘AuH20’ what am I talking about?” This type of test is very common in interviews and passing or failing can have very different consequences depending on the person. This particular activist seemed impressed that I was able to recognize the reference to the Goldwater campaign, but I also noticed that my occasional inability to answer one of their questions was met with what appeared to be joy at the opportunity to teach me about it.

25 Even though my skin color, age, gender, and foreign birth seemed to make me less threatening, my subjects were sometimes very critical of the way I interviewed them. To the question “How did you start being interested in politics?” an activist answered: “Ok. Is that … what are you most interested in?” This reaction shows that an interview sometimes is like a guessing game during which each participant tries to learn more about the other, and the interviewee sometimes attempts to reverse the initial power dynamic. In such cases, the situation was very different from that experienced with the activists mentioned above, who seemed to see me as a young French woman who was, by definition, naïve and wanted to know more about the Tea Party. During an interview with three activists, one of them asked me about my opinion on the controversy about the caricatures in the French satirical newspaper, *Charlie Hebdo*. When I began to reply that it was a difficult question, he cut me off and said, “Well you’re asking us tough questions.” Apparently he thought that he was doing me a favor by agreeing to answer my questions, and that I was indebted to him.

26 All the activists showed real interest in my work and asked to read it once it was completed. Most of them added, “Good or bad, we want to read it.” This comment might seem insignificant, but it is symptomatic of their fear of being portrayed as racists, uneducated Americans, or lunatics—as they felt the press had done during the first Tea Party demonstrations. This experience had a strong impact on the interviews I conducted as some were suspicious of what I was going to write about them while others saw an opportunity to tell their side of the story.

27 At some point during the interviews, the respondent would express an urge to counter criticism against the movement and would attempt to convince me of the legitimacy of their way of thinking. In their eyes, as a foreigner, I had most likely

not been “brainwashed” by what they saw as anti-Tea Party rhetoric. Once the people I was interviewing overcame the initial surprise of seeing a French woman interested in the Tea Party, they seemed very eager to educate me on the history of the movement, American politics, or even American history in general. In these moments, I did not intervene. My silence awarded me the unique opportunity to study how they would frame the issues, explain the history of the Second Amendment and the American Revolution, or share their recently-acquired knowledge about a specific issue.

28 Another advantage of being French was that I never had to answer questions, such as: “Are you a Democrat or a Republican?” or “Who did you support in the last election?” These questions could have easily brought the conversation to an end or created significant tension during the interview. Occasionally, an interviewee would inquire about (and generally lament) France’s socialist president, ask about the National Front’s ideology, or about French immigration policy. In most instances, a vague answer saying how difficult it was to compare two countries and two systems was sufficient and allowed us to quickly return to the interview. Had I been American, I would have run the risk of getting caught in pointless political debates.

29 One of the occasions when I found it difficult to maintain the necessary distance and not share some of my own views was in the immediate aftermath of the attacks on *Charlie Hebdo* and the ones that followed in Paris in January 2015. All the activists showed considerable sympathy and compared these events to the 9/11 attacks. However, their remarks usually ended with an Islamophobic comment, a regret that French people did not carry guns, or even—on one occasion—a note slipped to me during a meeting informing me that the attacks had never actually happened. On these issues, I found myself unable to give a vague answer or change the subject, and I lost at least one interview because the interviewees seemed disgruntled with my comments and abruptly ended the conversation. I can only assume that, had I been American, such topics would have come up on a much more regular basis and made my research extremely difficult.

30 Most interviewees, interestingly, had the implicit idea that if I was studying the Tea Party while not being American, it had to be because I agreed with them. However, even when my interviewees knew I disagreed with them politically, they still expressed the hope that I would not betray them. A silent pact was made between us that was not specific to the study of the Tea Party, but happens in all interviews between a researcher and their subject (cf. Lejeune). The French sociologist Daniel Bizeul talks about a “principe d’impartialité” (“fairness doctrine”; 96) which forces scholars to consider individuals as equal in dignity and intelligence and therefore grants all of them equal opportunity to be heard. The solution, he suggests, is to offer the interviewees the chance to react to what the researcher has written (96). The fact that my PhD had to be written in French kept me from doing this, but I was invited to talk about my work by two Tea Party groups. The exchange that ensued was rich and enlightening.

31 The attendees' reactions and comments allowed me to understand even more clearly the way they saw themselves and their actions. During the presentation I gave to The Valley Forge Patriots, for instance, many people commented on my use of the word "activist" to describe them. One of them explained: "You used the word activists I don't know about the rest of you folks, but I don't consider myself an activist, I'm a citizen. [Another man: "An American."] And real citizens are patriotic, that's the core of it. Activists might work for another group of people. I'm just telling you I never thought of myself as an activist." This type of comment was sometimes rather disconcerting because it put into question the way I looked at my subjects and analyzed their activities.

32 In order to better grasp their way of thinking, I tried to experience their day-to-day lives and understand what drove them to mobilize. Going to their meetings, listening to talk-radio shows, reading their debates on Twitter or Facebook, watching the TV shows they talked about, and going to demonstrations with them helped me get a better grasp of what it meant to be a Tea Party activist. Yet, the time I spent with them in their various political activities as well as talking about jobs and families sometimes put me in uncomfortable positions. As we were driving back from a meeting, an activist asked me "Who is Jesus Christ for you?" I was quite taken aback by his question and mumbled "God's son." He laughed and said: "Jesus is my Lord and Savior." As uncomfortable as this situation felt at the time, the apparent gap between us nevertheless seemed to guarantee that our relationship would not deepen beyond a point that might jeopardize my academic neutrality.

33 Aside from these uncomfortable moments, I found that the off-the-record conversations I had with the activists gave me a unique understanding of who they were and why they were involved in the movement. These moments also made the activists much more human and complex to me than they had been while I was reading about them in France. It is a paradox that Valerie Yow describes so well in her article, "'Do I Like Them Too Much?'" I had initially dismissed this article since I was studying a movement with which I knew I disagreed. Kathleen Blee mentions her surprise after conducting interviews with Ku Klux Klan members of the 1920s:

> Far from being the stock characters of popular portrayals of Klan members—uniformly reactionary, red-neck, mean, ignorant, operating by an irrational and incomprehensible logic—many of the people I interviewed were interesting, intelligent, and well informed. Although it might be comforting if we could find no commonality of thought or experience with those who are drawn into far-right politics, my interviews suggest a more complicated and a more disturbing reality. It was fairly ordinary people—people with considered opinions, people who loved their families and could be generous to neighbors and friends—who were the mainstay of the 1920s Klan. (339–40)

Getting to know the people involved in this struggle, meeting their families at Tea Party gatherings, and hearing about their fears allowed me to better understand where they were coming from. Becoming aware that studying a right-wing

movement did not protect me from feeling empathy for the people I interviewed did not mean that finding the right distance came easily.

34 The most striking example occurred on the day the coordinator of a Tea Party group I had been working with closely told me that she was going to a Blue Lives Matter demonstration in Washington, DC and offered to take me along. I accepted and interviewed her during our car ride. When we arrived, she handed me a t-shirt she had bought for me with the demonstration's logo on it. I could not possibly refuse to wear it without hurting her feelings or seeming ungrateful after she had given me a ride, so I reluctantly put it on. It was a small gathering. We were photographed and filmed. At this point I felt that I had lost control. I had become an unwilling participant when all I wanted to do was to observe. A similar situation occurred at a John Birch Society meeting. Six of us sat around a table, and each participant was given a stack of envelopes about to be sent to John Birch Society members. I was given my own stack and proceeded to do as requested, that is, insert a flyer announcing an upcoming event. While some of these experiences made me extremely uncomfortable, they allowed me to reflect upon the appropriate position for a researcher, e.g. following a counter-intuitive way navigating on the spectrum between empathy and distance. The ideal approach is not striking the exact middle, but constantly going back and forth in between these two poles.

Conclusion

> The positivist dream of an epistemological state of perfect innocence papers over the fact that the crucial difference is not between a science that effects construction and one that does not, but between a science that does this without knowing it and one that, being aware of work of construction, strives to discover and master as completely as possible the nature of its inevitable acts of construction and the equally inevitable effects those acts produce. (Bourdieu et al. 608)

35 On the whole, my identity was a great asset in the study of a right-wing social movement whose members tend to be very suspicious of academics. In many ways, it made me less threatening to the activists I interviewed. Their desire to help me logistically led to many conversations and experiences to which I would not have otherwise been privy. Their sentiment that it was necessary to explain concepts and beliefs whose meanings are usually implicit— but may not conjure up the same thoughts and images to different people—had the unintended effect of making them explain their world view in a detailed way rarely used in conversations. My French nationality was an additional hurdle as an American researcher would probably have been better equipped to understand the workings of city politics. The way *I* perceived the activists was also impacted by my foreign status. In many ways, I probably had less deeply-rooted preconceptions than an American researcher might have had. On the other hand, I might have appeared more threatening to my potential interviewees.

[36] The impact my identity had on my work does not end with what I have just described. Being an American studies scholar places my research at the intersection of several fields of research. Using the tools of political science, history, sociology, and even anthropology ultimately creates a unique and extremely rich approach to the study of right-wing social movements. The methodological creativity that results from such a multidisciplinary approach also allows researchers—even though it is often a struggle—to find the right distance to their topic.
Read Marie Gayte's Response to "Research in a Minefield"

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Suggested Citation

Douzou, Marion. “Research in a Minefield: Relating with Tea Party Activists.” *American Studies Journal* 68 (2019). Web. 29 Sep. 2021. DOI 10.18422/68-05.

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