

Abstract

The aim of the present thesis is to determine whether the Tea Party candidates' attitudes towards selected controversial issues influenced their electoral success and the success of the Tea Party movement as a whole. The thesis consists of two parts, theoretical and empirical.

In the theoretical part the author focuses on the historical perspective of the political and party system in the United States of America, bipartism and position of third parties in the system. It also includes a brief analysis of the Democratic and Republican parties. Next, the author examines the Tea Party phenomenon – its genesis, structure, purposes and ideals. The subsequent section deals with three controversial issues, i.e. abortion, LGBT rights, and race, which reflect an ideological cleavage among the american public.

The empirical part presents a case study entitled *The influence of controversial issues on the (non)success of the Tea Party candidates*, which deals with attitudes of the House and Senate Tea Party candidates who won the 2010 congressional elections towards the above-mentioned controversial issues.