

# Talking Turkey: What Defines & Motivates America's Right Is Intolerance

By JIM SMITH

In the past, I have joined other analysts in characterizing Trumpers and those Republicans who have fallen under his spell as driven by racism.

While racism is clearly a dominant theme, the larger theme motivating Trump Republicans, as I see it, is intolerance. (Note: Not all Republicans are alike in their opinions, just as not all Democrats are alike. Consider the following as reasoned generalizations.)

**Republicans are intolerant of immigration,** often railing against “white replacement” by people of color and the culture of diversity. Democrats see America as the “melting pot” and see immigrants as the people who built America from the beginning. Most of us are children of immigrants. My observation from studying first generation immigrants such as Jacob Riis, Nikola Tesla, Andrew Carnegie, Albert Einstein, Henry Kissinger and others, is that they are more driven to succeed

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and live the American dream and more appreciative of our freedoms and our free enterprise system than those of us who are, happily, in the position to take America's freedom for granted.

**Republicans are intolerant of government and taxation,** whereas Democrats recognize the need for government and for taxes to fund government services. That doesn't mean that Democrats accept corruption, malfeasance and waste in government, although Republicans often portray them that way. Democrats would like to minimize taxation, but not at the expense of important social services.

**Republicans are intolerant of progressive taxation and “income redistribution,”** whereas Democrats support higher tax rates for the wealthy and consider addressing poverty a matter of “social justice.” Republicans opposed Social Security until it was too popular. They opposed Medicare and Medicaid until they were too popular. They opposed the Affordable Care Act, but that, too, is fading now that “Obamacare” is gaining in popularity. Democrats would move faster toward such things as universal healthcare, higher

minimum wages, and other social justice issues, but Republicans still get political mileage (for now) by labeling such efforts “a radical socialist agenda.” If voters understood and appreciated how such policies have made the Scandinavian countries the happiest populations on earth because of their socialist policies (and high taxes to support them), then that Republican strategy would not be as successful as it is, but Americans who would benefit from such programs are, sadly, underinformed and easily manipulated by politicians who appeal to their other intolerances such as of people of color.

My biggest fear is that social media and right-wing “news” networks such as Fox have allowed 30-40% of Americans to be protected from real news and voices that don't play to their insecurities and intolerances.

I think it was in the book *How Fascism Works*, by Jason Stanley, himself the son of immigrants from Nazi Germany, that the author noted that democracy, because of its freedom of speech, contains within it the seeds of its own destruction, and we are definitely seeing that play out, thanks to

Trumpism. (*Please read that book!*)

Other intolerances exhibited by Republicans include **universal voter registration and easy ballot access.** Our diversifying population is terrifying to white males, who see easy ballot access as a death sentence for white supremacy. Democrats don't fear a universal franchise, they welcome it.

**Republicans are intolerant of non-Christian religions and voters,** while ignoring Jesus' teachings about serving the poor and needy. They are **intolerant of diverse sexual orientations and preferences and of a woman's right to choose.** The list goes on. As I said, the dominant theme is intolerance.

I'm not a psychologist, but I'm of the belief that intolerance is built on insecurity. Republicans are made insecure by the growing presence of diverse races and religions in our “melting pot.” Insecurity is a close cousin of fear. Republicans build their intolerant base by playing to their fears, whether economic, social, or other. My fear is that they'll succeed.

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