

# DEFINING RACISM DOWN

Racism, true racism, is being devalued, and nothing contributes to its dumbing-down more than its promiscuous invocation. Being called a racist is by now so common that it has lost its sting. Indeed, the very concept of racism is increasingly irrelevant. For example, Julian Castro, who is running for president, boasts he is opposed to “environmental racism.” Does anyone know what that is, including him?

When someone says there is an “Hispanic invasion” going on, is that proof of racism, or is it an expression of concern about large numbers of people who are entering our country illegally from points south of our border?

When a reporter standing in front of an alley in Baltimore suggests that President Trump is a racist for saying the city is a “rodent-infested mess”—and a large rat is seen running in the alley behind the reporter—doesn’t that undercut the charge?

When actress Ellen Pompeo recently said that Kamala Harris was “overconfident,” was that evidence of Pompeo’s racism, as some said, or was it evidence of devaluing the meaning of racism?

Megyn Kelly was branded a racist for noting that when she was young it was okay for a white kid to put on blackface on Halloween. Her observation was undeniably true. Does that make her a racist for recalling it?

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo recently said on the radio that bigots used to called Sicilians (he is half Sicilian) “nigger wops.” Some black leaders condemned him for making a racist remark. Does that make Cuomo a racist or was he using the exact language used by racists to punctuate his point?

In 2016, comedian Larry Wilmore at the White House Correspondents’ Dinner turned to President Barack Obama (who

went by Barry when he was younger) and said, “Yo, Barry, you did it, my nigger.” Is Wilmore a racist, or was he just joking around? Obama laughed at it. Does that make him a racist enabler, or someone who knows he’s being roasted?

When Republicans complained about IRS abuses against conservative organizations under President Obama, MSNBC host Martin Bashir called the GOP leaders racist, saying they are using the scandal “as their latest weapon in the war against the black man in the White House.” Was that what they were doing—dabbling in racism—or protesting corruption by IRS officials?

MSNBC host Chris Matthews said it was racist to talk about all the people on food stamps. Was he right about that, or was Newt Gingrich right when he said to him, “Why do you assume food stamps refers to blacks? What kind of racist thinking do you have?” [Note: the majority of people on food stamps are white.]

Daily Beast columnist Michael Tomasky once accused Mitt Romney of being a “spineless, disingenuous, supercilious, race-mongering pyromaniac” because he used a “heavily loaded word.” What was that racist word? Obamacare. If that makes Romney a racist, would that make the Obama White House racist for promoting what it called Obamacare?

About a decade ago, when Walmart sold white and black Barbie dolls, they were initially priced the same. But when the store had to prepare for inventory, it marked down certain items. Was it proof of racism, as some charged, that the black doll was reduced in price? Or was it simply a routine business practice?

The devaluing of racism began in the academy. Here are seven examples of “racial microaggressions” taught in our nation’s leading colleges and universities:

- Asking someone, “Where are you from?”

- Asking an Asian person to help with a math or science problem
- Observing that “America is a melting pot”
- Opining that “There is only one race, the human race”
- Saying, “I believe the most qualified person should get the job”
- Noting that “Everyone can succeed in this society, if they work hard enough”
- Commenting, “We got gypped”

If the scales seem tipped against conservatives it is because they are. For example, Joe Biden recently said that “Poor kids are just as bright and just as talented as white kids.” Does that make him a racist, or was it just a clumsy way of saying that low-income kids have the same potential to succeed as high-income kids?

When Biden once said, “You cannot go to a 7-Eleven or a Dunkin’ Donuts unless you have a slight Indian accent,” was he making a racist remark, or was it simply a sociological observation?

When he said that one of the best things about Obama was that he was “clean” and “articulate,” was he voicing his racism, or his penchant for making gaffes?

When President Bill Clinton was being impeached, Biden, and many other Democrats (white and black alike) called it a “lynching.” Now President Donald Trump is calling attempts to impeach him a “lynching.” If Trump is a racist for using this term, in this context, wouldn’t that make Biden a racist as well?

Let’s be fair: Biden is no racist, and neither is Trump. But according to standards that Biden has now adopted as proof of Trump’s racism, he most certainly is.

When Harvard University hosts a separate graduation ceremony for black students, is it being sensitive or racist? Would it

be sensitive or racist if it did the same for white students? To put it differently, are there no principles left? Or is this just a political game, frontloaded against conservatives?

Here's something else to think about. On a scale of 1 to 10, what score should be given to someone who owns a restaurant, tells racist jokes, but does not discriminate against anyone? What score should be given to Harvard administrators who never tell racist jokes, but who discriminate against Asians—they put a cap on how many can get in?

The reason why accusations of racism are losing their sting has everything to do with the duplicity of the accusers, and their relentless invocations of it. When real racists are lumped in with those who are either innocent, or at worst guilty of inartful constructions, that's a lose-lose, the biggest losers of which are those who are truly victimized.