

June installation for the ARTI newsletter

In this issue we conclude our critique of the move to promote Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) within organizations as a response to high-profile racial and gender abuse around the country.

Aside from trivializing workplace equity as an intergalactic fantasy, organizations tend to form special JEDI (sometimes abbreviated to EDI) departments with little power or meaningful connection to the rest of the organization.

We now turn to the most problematic issue with the JEDI/EDI trend: its failure to deal with racism.

Before going further, we must also note that, while ARTI sees that acknowledgement of racism is essential to achieve justice, equity, diversity and inclusion, there has been recent backlash against even that watered-down discussion.

We contend the backlash is actually about racism, and by avoiding the term, advocates for justice are weakened.

Is an “R” missing from JEDI?

In our last posting, we looked at the elements of a successful JEDI program. As we explore the thought further, one cannot miss that there is no “R” in the “JEDI” equation. The “R” of course standing for “Racism”.

ARTI maintains that without understanding racism, its history, its dynamics and the tactics of successfully undoing it, an organization cannot have a JEDI program that will be genuine, effective and meaningful for people, systems and humanity.

Racism is the underlying reason there is a need for JEDI programs. Through a knowledge of history, we can see the direct connection between racism and the policy failures that JEDI programs seek to address.

For example, we see how the racist policy of **redlining** and the racist implementation of the **GI Bill** allowed banks to deny Black veterans home loans even though the federal government would guarantee their mortgages. In this issue we see how racism is directly linked to **homelessness**. (What is “redlining”: [What is redlining and is it still happening across the U.S. - CBS News](#); The “GI Bill”: [The Inequality Hidden Within the Race-Neutral GI Bill - JSTOR Daily](#); and “homelessness”: [State of Homelessness: 2023 Edition - endhomelessness.org](#)).

As these examples suggest, the historic effects of racism don't pass away; they are passed on, and perpetuated in new forms.

What this looks like in the "real world" includes: Denying people of color their right to homeownership; denying people of color a tool by which to build generational wealth; and keeping people and communities of color stuck in poverty.

Through a knowledge of the dynamics of racism we see how the dehumanization and demonization of people based on the color of their skin makes other false hierarchies of human worth, such as those based on religion, gender, language and culture, appear natural and normal. The Spanish **Casta System** is an early example of racism based on skin color, clearly spelled out by Spanish colonizers to maintain their power and superiority over other racial groups in the Americas. (Here's a link to information on the Casta System; [Las Castas – Spanish Racial Classifications | Native Heritage Project](#)).

Centuries later, racist systems and practices are institutionalized, and poverty and homelessness abound within our communities of color. Furthermore, the dehumanization and demonization of persons of dark skin has accelerated, multiplying exponentially.

In the recent murder of Jordan Neely, who had his life choked out of him on the floor of a subway train by a white vigilante, we see **the intersection of racism and homelessness**. ([Homelessness and Racial Disparities - National Alliance to End Homelessness](#)). At this intersection are the many other homeless persons of color who are the targets of hatred and violence. ([Opinion | The Demonization of the Homeless Has Vile Consequences - The New York Times \(archive.is\)](#))

Diversity and inclusion alone, without understanding the ways that racism has made dehumanization of difference okay, will not lead to justice and equity. We need to add the "R" to the JEDI equation!

What are your thoughts?

Share them with ARTI at:
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