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Anti-Black Racism in Pittsburgh

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Racism as a Wicked Problem

Quite simply, this is a human rights issue.

Racism directly impacts and impedes the lives of every Black Pittsburgher, and it's our job as humans (and people with privilege) to combat racism, and make the world a more welcoming place for our Black neighbors.

Racism is also an institutionalized issue. It's upheld by nearly every other system we have in our country: politics, criminal justice, education, employment, the economy... The list goes on. Because of this, racism is one of the most wicked problems there is, and it requires many complex interventions from various angles in order to mitigate the problem.

Our works cited can be found here.

Key

- Global
- National
- State/Region
- City/Local
- Individual
- Historical
- Intervention
- Stakeholder
- Cause → Effect
- Social Effect
- Technology Effect
- Economic Effect
- Environmental Effect
- Political Effect
- Feedback Loop

Map Explanation

Our map is designed using off-center concentric circles. The circles are each representative of the scales at which effect the problem. We placed them off-center in order to represent the different scales most at play in each sector. For example, looking at things from a social lens, there is a lot more information represented in the individual and city sectors, whereas from a technological lens, there is more information represented in the global sector. The off-centeredness allows more space to be created in differerent sectors for this changing representation.

The outermost ring represents the historical lens. In the wicked problem of racism, the historical lens provides much needed context and shows how past problems have created the problem we see today.

Finally, the connection arrows between all of our nodes are represenative of the STEEP (Sociological, Technological, Economic, Environmental, and Political) analysis. We chose not to include Values, to analyze things from a STEEP+V perspective, because racism is a value based problem. While each part of STEEP affects all parts of the system, the core issue is truly values, so we found it to be overarching.

Reparations System

Problem: Slavery and the subsequent sharecropping generationally effected the economic situation of Black people, entering them into a vicious cyle of poverty.

Intervention: Paying Black people reparations for slavery would help them to break the poverty cycle that they're currently stuck in, allowing them to have more opportunities and build a future for themselves and the generations after them. This pay would come out of general taxes.

Potential Negative Externalities: Outrage from racist white people; money that could be used on other parts of the economy or the social ecosystem would be siphoned away from those projects

Universal Basic Income

Problem: The poverty cycle is a vicious one, and it can be hard for people to stay out of the poverty cycle once they first break out of it. Poverty disproportionately affects Black people, so it's important that this problem is addressed in order to help achieve equality.

Intervention: Setting a universal basic income for residents of Pittsburgh will help Black people stay out of poverty after the reparations program helps get them out.

Potential Negative Externalities: People would potentially be upset about this use of their tax dollars; it could take money away from other programs

Color-Aware Work Program

Problem: Black people in Pittsburgh are unemployed at a much higher rate than white residents. This feeds into the poverty cycle and income inequality.

Intervention: Implementing a color-conscious program like this would help more Black Pittsburgh residents to get jobs, providing them with a secure income and increasing diversity.

Potential Negative Externalities: White unemployment rates may go up a little bit in order to compensate for Black employment rates rising. This also may run into some of the same issues that Affirmative Action did in terms of discriminatory practices.

White Supremacy Education

Problem: White supremacist groups easily find homes in Pittsburgh, and vulnerable young white people often fall prey to their cult-like tactics.

Intervention: Teaching white students of Pittsburgh to recognize the signs of a white supremacist group and how to avoid being indoctrinated by one will reduce white supremacy in Pittsburgh.

Potential Negative Externalities: Implementing this program will cost money, which could be used for other programs, and likely take some time away from students' other education.

Addressing Redlining

Problem: Pittsburgh neighborhoods are currently extremely segregated. This lack of diversity leads to a lack of empathy and creates racist attitudes.

Intervention: Reverting redlining will help Pittsburgh's neighborhoods to become more integrated, improving empathy and fostering a more diverse community.

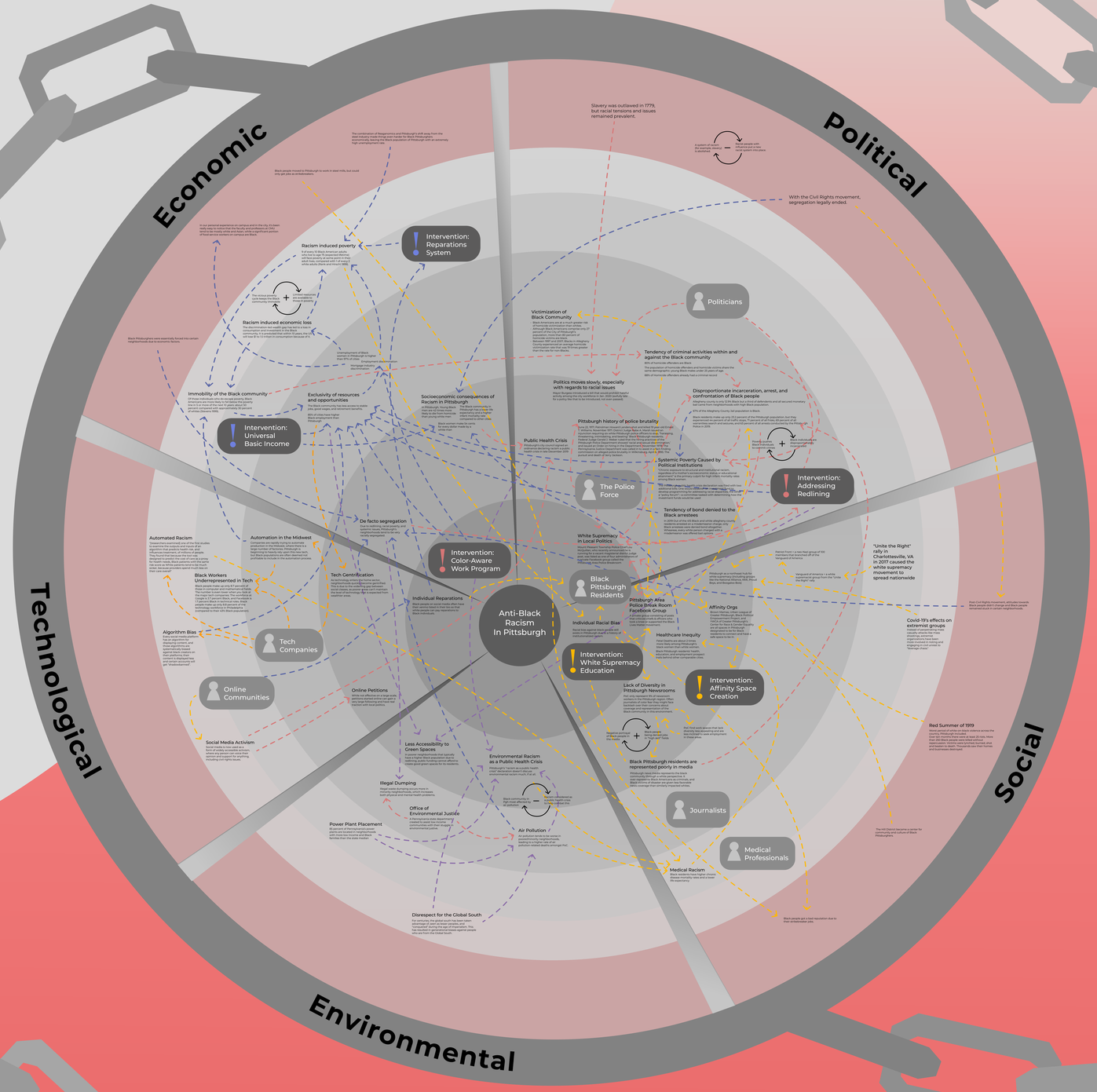
Potential Negative Externalities: This will likely be very difficult to implement, as it wouldn't be fair to force people out of their homes. Instead, it will be an extremely gradual process of trying to diversify buyers and renters of homes that go on the market.

Affinity Space Creation

Problem: Black people have to be on guard everywhere they go, all the time. From racist encounters with strangers to police brutality, there's not a place for Black people that is guaranteed to be safe.

Intervention: Providing Black Pittsburghers with spaces just for them will help them to connect with one another and heal from the racism they experience outside of these spaces.

Potential Negative Externalities: Using public resources on a program or space that's only for a part of the public would likely cause some outrage. It could also prevent that money and space from being used for other things.



Implementation of Interventions Over Time

Immediate	> 3 years	> 5 years	>10 years
Affinity Space Creation		Addressing Redlining	
White Supremacy Education	Color-Aware Work Program	Reparations System	Universal Basic Income