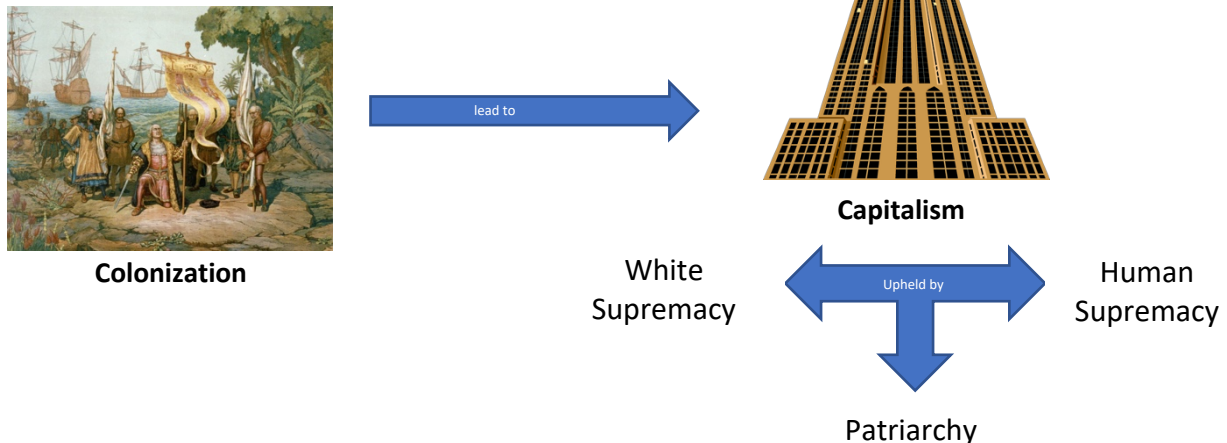


WHAT IS COLONIZATION?

Visual representation of how colonization manifests



A short narrative of how colonization has manifested in our society

One of the underlying barriers to achieving a more just and equitable world is that many folks struggle to understand the concept of colonization and how it has manifested. Because of this, it is oftentimes difficult to create lasting change within a matrix of oppressive systems (ex. Talking about racism and possible solutions without addressing gender or talking about climate change issues without addressing capitalism). In unpacking colonization, we begin to get at the root of oppression and suffering.

To understand the root causes of the social justice issues we experience today; which impact all of us, but affect Brown, Black, gender-diverse, and Poor people more intensely, we have to examine the foundations of this society which began with [colonization](#).

Colonization was the way the extractive economic system of [Capitalism](#) came to this land, supported by [systems of supremacy](#) (supremacism) and domination which are a necessary part to keep wealth and power accumulated in the hands of the colonizers and ultimately their financiers.

In what is now known as the US, this system of supremacy is expressed in many ways with many outcomes, but we will focus on specific ones for the sake of time. First [white supremacy](#), which created a framework that legitimized slavery and genocide. Slavery created cheap labor which is necessary for a functioning capitalist system. And genocide created unlimited access to resources, in the form of land, animal parts, minerals and raw materials which are also necessary for a functioning capitalist economy. And as capitalism functions, it further entrenches systems of supremacy.

We all know that white supremacy looks like scary people with swastikas in hoods. But it can also look like any place where there's an abundance of white people in exclusive contexts, where power and access is not readily ceded to others.

There's white supremacy and then there's male supremacy, AKA [patriarchy](#), which leads to the invisibility of womxn / gender diverse folks labor - or in this context, reproducing the work force and suppressing our wages, which further supports capitalism. Patriarchy also leads to femicide, domestic violence and child abuse, which we see across different groups.

We also see [human supremacy \(anthropocentrism\)](#), where people feel superior to the rest of living entities, thereby subjecting living soils, seeds, animals, plants and water to horrific treatment in the name of exploiting resources, which in turn feeds the capitalist need for ever-increasing profits.

After generations of experiencing these ideologies manifest on individual, interpersonal, and institutional levels, we've carried them forth via the cycle of socialization. It's important to note that while Black, Indigenous, People of Color are most impacted, all folks in America are impacted by colonization mentally.

To be [colonized in our minds](#) means to be disconnected and disintegrated—from our ancestry, from the earth, from our indigeneity, our earth-connected selves. We all come from earth-connected people, people who once lived in deep connection to the rhythms of nature.

While this wheel of domination, exploitation, generation and sequestration of wealth continues, we experience as a byproduct and common pathway trauma in our communities that manifest in a myriad of ways. In order to disrupt this process, we must combat colonization by engaging in the process of decolonizing our minds, our communities, and the institutions that impact our communities. This collective and complex process of decolonizing ourselves on a personal and interpersonal level is the root of the "[social justice movement](#)" because it has many moving parts and involves diverse groups acting in unison.

We'd like to offer that our roles in dismantling these oppressive systems requires us to firstly dismantle these oppressive ideologies in our minds so that we no longer reinforce them in the ways we operate aka becoming [agents of liberation](#). We can start by changing small habits in your thinking/actions that exist because of oppressive ideologies. It may be difficult... just feel proud of yourself for the effort and keep trying. When we allow ourselves to exist and dream outside the confines of the system, we create solutions to some of our nation's most pressing issues.

Glossary

1. **Colonization** – the way the extractive economic system of Capitalism came to this land, supported by systems of supremacy and domination which are a necessary part to keep wealth and power accumulated in the hands of the colonizers and ultimately their financiers.
2. **Capitalism** - an economic system in which investment in and ownership of the means of production, distribution, and exchange of wealth is made and maintained chiefly by private individuals or corporations, especially as contrasted to cooperatively or state-owned means of wealth.
3. **Supremacism** - is an ideology which holds that a certain class of people is superior to others, and that it should be or is entitled to dominate, control, subjugate, and/or eliminate others. The supposed *superior* people can be defined by age, race, species, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexuality, language, social class, ideology, nation, or culture, or belong to any other part of a particular population.
4. **White supremacy** - the belief that white people constitute a superior race and should therefore dominate society, typically to the exclusion or detriment of other racial and ethnic groups, in particular black or Jewish people.
5. **Patriarchy** - a system of society or government in which men hold the power and womxn / non-male identifying folks are largely excluded from it.
6. **Anthropocentrism** - regarding humankind as the central or most important element of existence, especially as opposed to God or animals.
7. **Colonization of the mind** - a metaphor that shows how a colonizer forces their ideologies, beliefs, or some external source into the mental sphere of its subjects. It thereby changes the subjects way of thinking, and the contents that are in the mind.
8. **Social Justice Movement** - Groups of people working together to advance their shared political, social, or artistic ideas around the ways in which human rights should be manifested in the everyday lives of people at every level of society.
9. **Agent of liberation** – A person who actively works to free themselves and others from imprisonment, slavery, and/or oppression. Someone who promotes freedom from limits on thought or behavior.