

Why a Social Justice Framework Is the Only Way to Climate Justice and Deep Sustainability

How did we get here?

Know the history

Age of Reason to Enlightenment > Imperialism > Colonization > Industrialization > Mass production and expansion > Ideology of consumerism > Globalization...

Know the mindset within that history

Gender Oppression

In the midst of Europe's patriarchal and misogynist society where violence against women was normative, framing Nature in the feminine form guaranteed the dominance of violence against Nature.

Economic Oppression

Via Europe's imperialist, colonizing mindset, its rapacious appetite for people, places and things set the stage for linear modes of extraction and endless consumption.

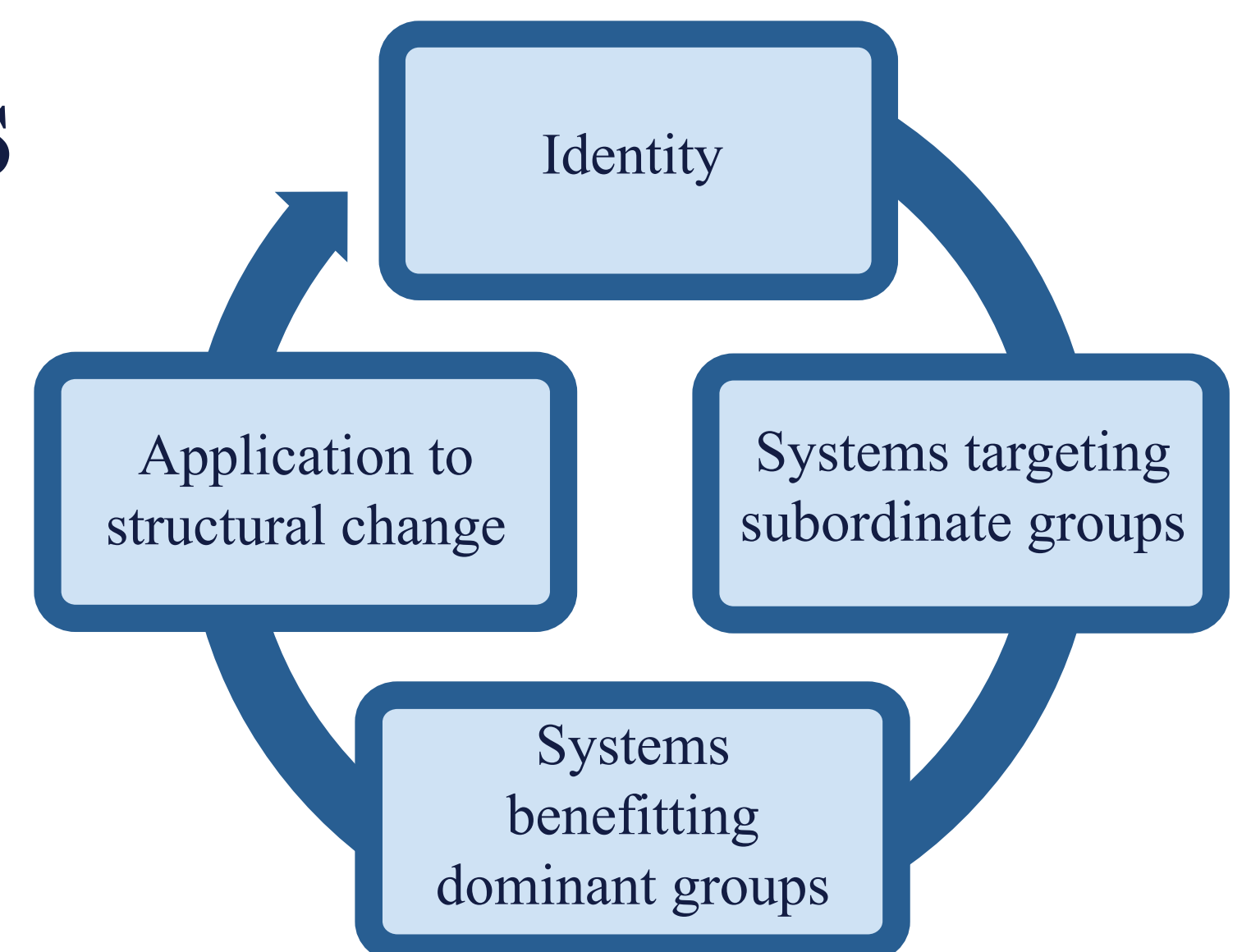
Racial Oppression

Over the last four centuries, White supremacy has effectively explained this all away by saying, "You cannot question the White, Western Global North's stewardship of this planet and its resources because we are the superior race / people."

Our Climate Reality

How to Develop a Social Justice Lens

- Understand socially constructed identities and their relationship to systems of power
- Examine how these systems work and how they affect people's daily lives, with specific attention to how they regulate access to resources, power, and privilege to subordinate and dominant groups
- Engage in structural change from the ground up *and* the top down



How to Apply a Social Justice Lens to Climate Justice and Sustainability Work

Key Question: "What, exactly, are we trying to sustain?"

To answer this, investigate the ways gender, class and race privilege inform what we think of as "sustainable", and utilize a GCR Justice lens to rewrite this reality.

Example – Individual ownership as the key measure of personal success.

Here is a strong metric for the application of this framework:

- If a sustainability policy does not directly support the lives of women and trans* students on your campus, do not implement it
- If a sustainability program does not lead to increased economic access for poor and working class students, do not implement it
- If a sustainability effort does not take into consideration the specific needs to Students of Color and Native students, do not implement it



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