

**Table 1. The primary root causes of climate change**

Root Cause	Description	Manifestation within the climate crisis
<b>Extractivism</b> 	<p>Extractivism functions through growth and profit at all costs. It involves extraction of labor from people through various forms of exploitation and extraction from the natural world, facilitated by the privatization and commodification of nature.</p>	<p>The global extractive economy created unsustainable production and consumption structures with high costs to global environmental and social systems. The extractive economy pollutes air, water, and land, exploits workers, and emits GHGs directly responsible for a changing climate. Global financial institutions engage in capitalism by incentivizing territorial dispossession and deforestation under the banner of “economic development,” relying upon an enclosure system. International policies, such as free trade laws and investor-state dispute clauses, privilege corporations while undermining social and environmental protections.</p>
<b>Colonialism</b> 	<p>Colonial systems ensure the financial, political, and ecological dominance of high-income nations to the detriment of countries still grappling with the legacies of conquest, genocide, and extraction. Modern-day colonialism heavily relies on extractivism; it remains a prominent and effective tool for colonial powers and multinational corporate actors to obtain resources and labor from the Global South.</p>	<p>Historical impacts of colonialism, including historical emissions from Global North countries, and neocolonial forms of subjugation and control, such as structural adjustment policies and predatory lending, have starved Global South countries of the financial and political infrastructure to respond to the climate crisis adequately. For example, debt stocks have risen substantially due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and African nations put in debt by the Global North have had to continue borrowing heavily to bankroll healthcare, responses to the climate emergency, and social welfare, resulting in crucial government resources being diverted from addressing climate change and natural habitat loss.</p>
<b>White Supremacy</b> 	<p>White supremacy is a structure of power that institutionalizes racial hierarchy and dominance via social, economic, and political systems that collectively reinforce the belief that whiteness is superior and entitled. It is linked to racism, which Ruth Wilson Gilmore defines as “the state-sanctioned or extralegal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death, in distinct yet densely interconnected political geographies.” White supremacy is also interlinked with other systems of oppression, including colonization, capitalism, and heteropatriarchy. States with less structural power are subject to resource extraction to finance their debt to high-income, majority-white countries.</p>	<p>Frontline Black, Indigenous, and communities of color are at the greatest risk of forced climate displacement and being relegated to sacrifice zones, resulting in forced loss of land tenure, culture, identity, and security. They are deliberately ignored or purposely exposed to environmental toxins and pollution from industrial outputs, often to protect richer white communities imbued with the access entitlement of white supremacy. In addition to forced displacement because of climate change, these communities are often forcibly displaced by wealthy, large-scale investors—often from the Global North—sometimes under the guise of false solutions, like tree plantations or the REDD+ program. Group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death is painfully evident. Lumumba Stanislaus Diaping, then-Chief Negotiator for the G-77, declared, “We have been asked to sign a suicide pact,” and went on to assert that the amount of money the Global North pledged for support of climate adaptation in the Global South “is not enough to buy us coffins.”<sup>12</sup></p>
<b>Heteropatriarchy</b> 	<p>Heteropatriarchy organizes around the personal, social, political, and economic domination of women and queer, trans, and gender non-conforming peoples.<sup>13</sup> Gender and sexuality are interlocking systems that reinforce one another and shape frameworks of labor and access to decision-making. Heteropatriarchy interacts with capitalism to exploit trans and cis women and gender-diverse peoples while privileging the wealth and agency of cis-gendered men.</p>	<p>Heteropatriarchy resorts to violent tactics to target women and queer, trans, and gender non-conforming peoples on the frontlines of climate change. Heteropatriarchy denies these groups sovereignty over land and water, relegates them to colonial gender roles that limit their decision-making, and carries out militant, coordinated efforts to suppress their resistance. Heteropatriarchy conceals and belittles the leadership of cis and trans women, trans men, gender-diverse peoples, and queer communities by dismissing their research, labor, and experiential contributions to climate mitigation.</p>