

# Critical Race Theory, Racial Stratification in Education, & Public Health

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*Favianna Rodriguez*

# Workshop Program

- Introductions
- Guiding Questions
- Public Health, Education, & Racism
- A Structural Analysis of Oppression vs. Individual Experience
- The Trump Effect
- Microaffirmations
- Closing

**Preferred Name**

**Pronouns**

**Affiliation**

***(teacher, community member, professor, other)***

**Hello**  
my name is

**Alma**

**She/Her/Hers**

**Assistant Professor**

# Guiding Questions

1. What is the relationship between public health, education, and racism?
2. Does educational attainment lead to better physiological and psychological health outcomes for Latinx students?
3. How does our current political climate impact the well-being of Latinx students?
4. What can educational institutions do to promote a healthy and safe campus climate for Latinx students?

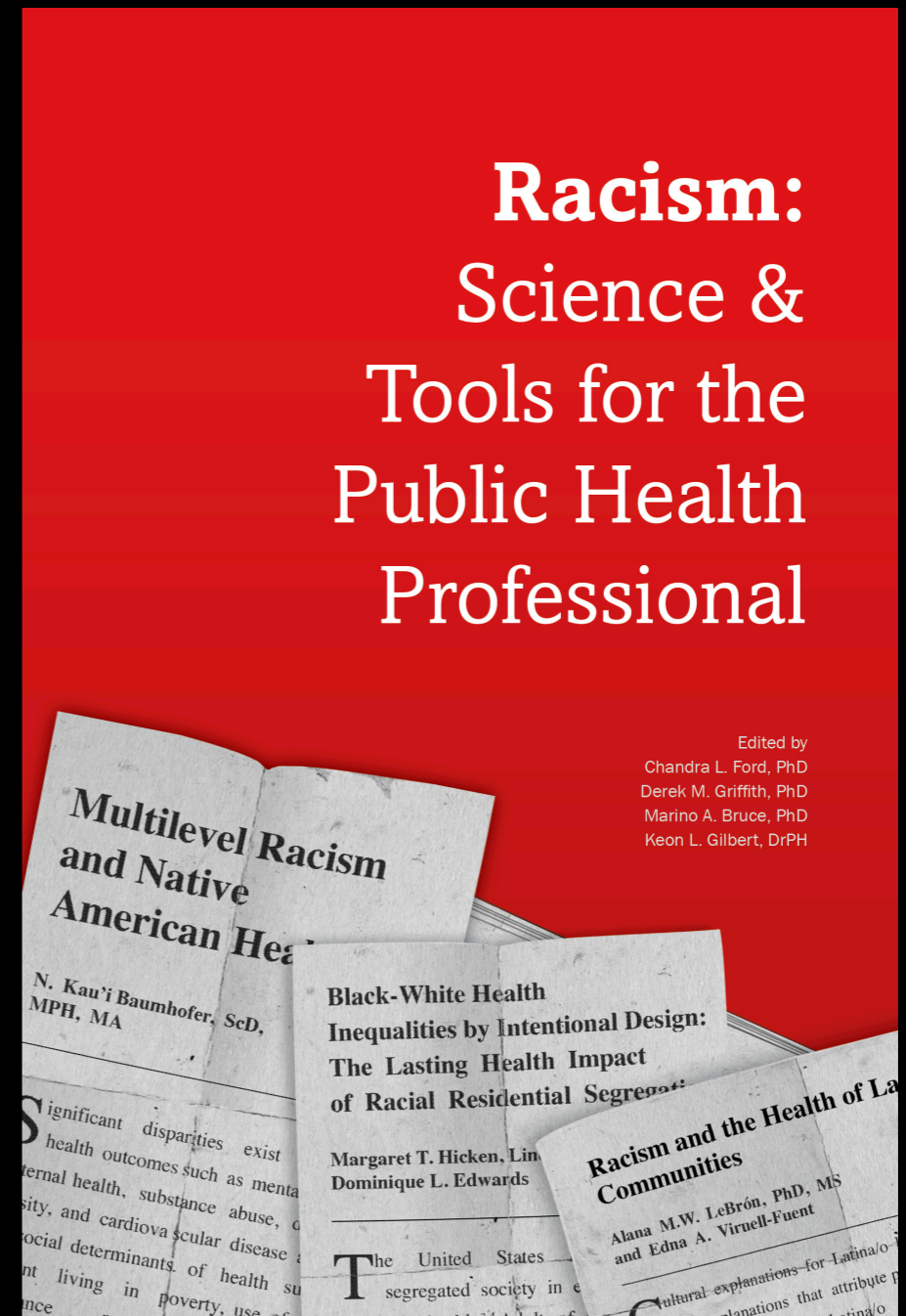


# Public Health, Education, & Racism

- What is public health?
  - “Public health promotes and protects the health of people and the communities where they live, **learn**, work, and play” (American Public Health Association, 2019).
- School climate (often referred to as campus racial climate) affects student wellness.
  - School climate can either reinforce racism (and other forms of oppression) or help students grow, learn, and graduate.

# Public Health, Education, & Racism

- People of Color experience a shorter life expectancy due to race by an average of seven years compared to whites (American Public Health Association, 2018).
  - Why?
- Racism is one of the leading causes for health inequities; racism is making us sick.



# Public Health, Education, & Racism

- Education, particularly obtaining a college degree, can help alleviate inequalities and lead to a better quality of life through higher income, access to social resources, and **longer life expectancy** (Winkleby et al, 1992).
- Individuals with more education live healthier and longer lives. People with more education can expect to outlive their less educated counterparts by about a decade (Hummer & Hernandez, 2013).
- *Is this true for everyone? For People of Color? More specifically, Latinx students?*
- *Can education actually improve our health?*

# Critical Race Theory in Education

**An explanatory framework that accounts for the role of race and racism in education and that works towards identifying and challenging racism as part of a larger goal of recognizing and disrupting all forms of subordination (Solórzano, 1997, 1998).**

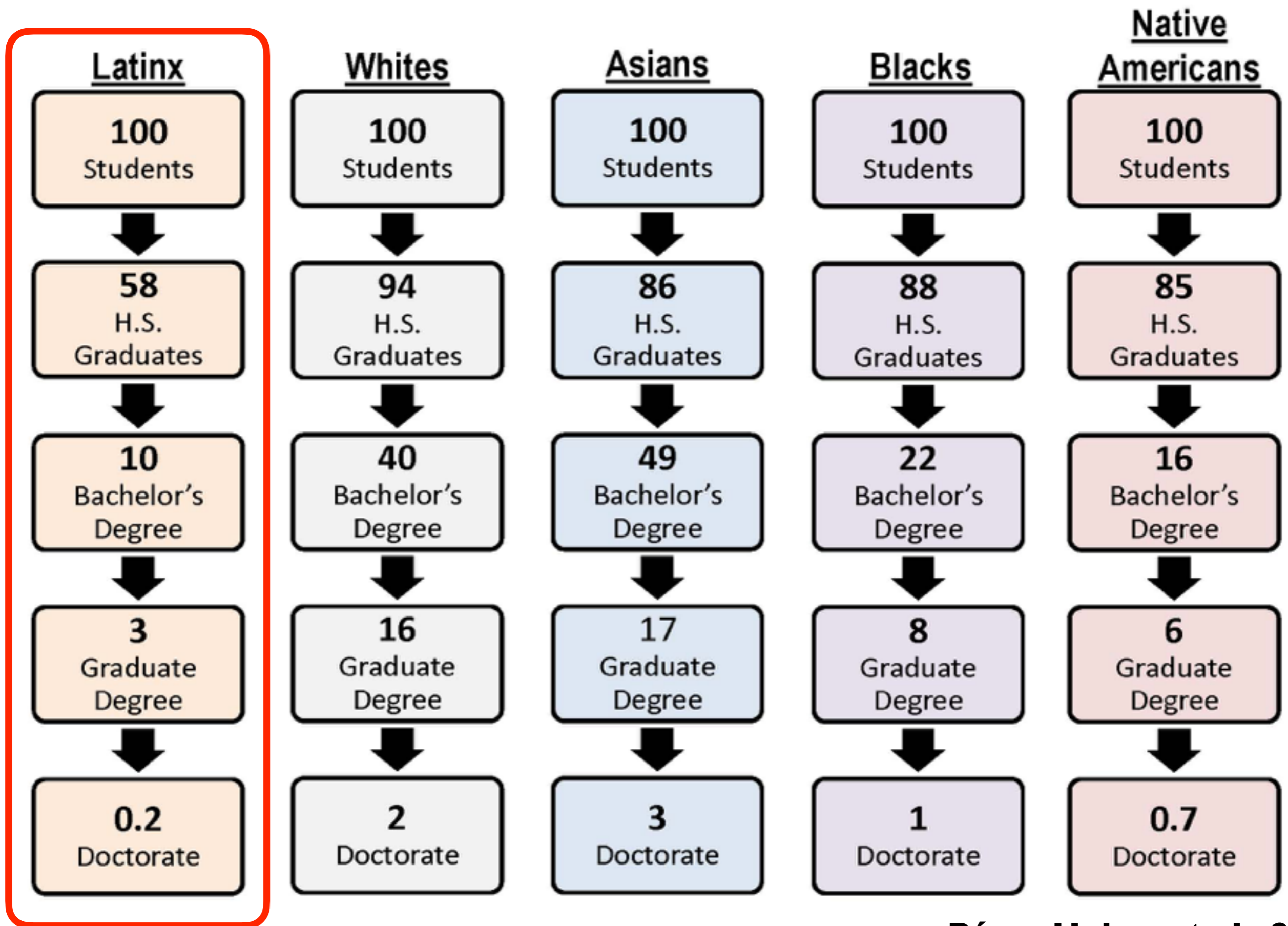
# Critical Race Theory in Education

1. The intercentricity of race and racism
2. The challenge to dominant ideology
3. The commitment to social justice
4. The centrality of experiential knowledge
5. The interdisciplinary perspective

# Latinx Students in CA

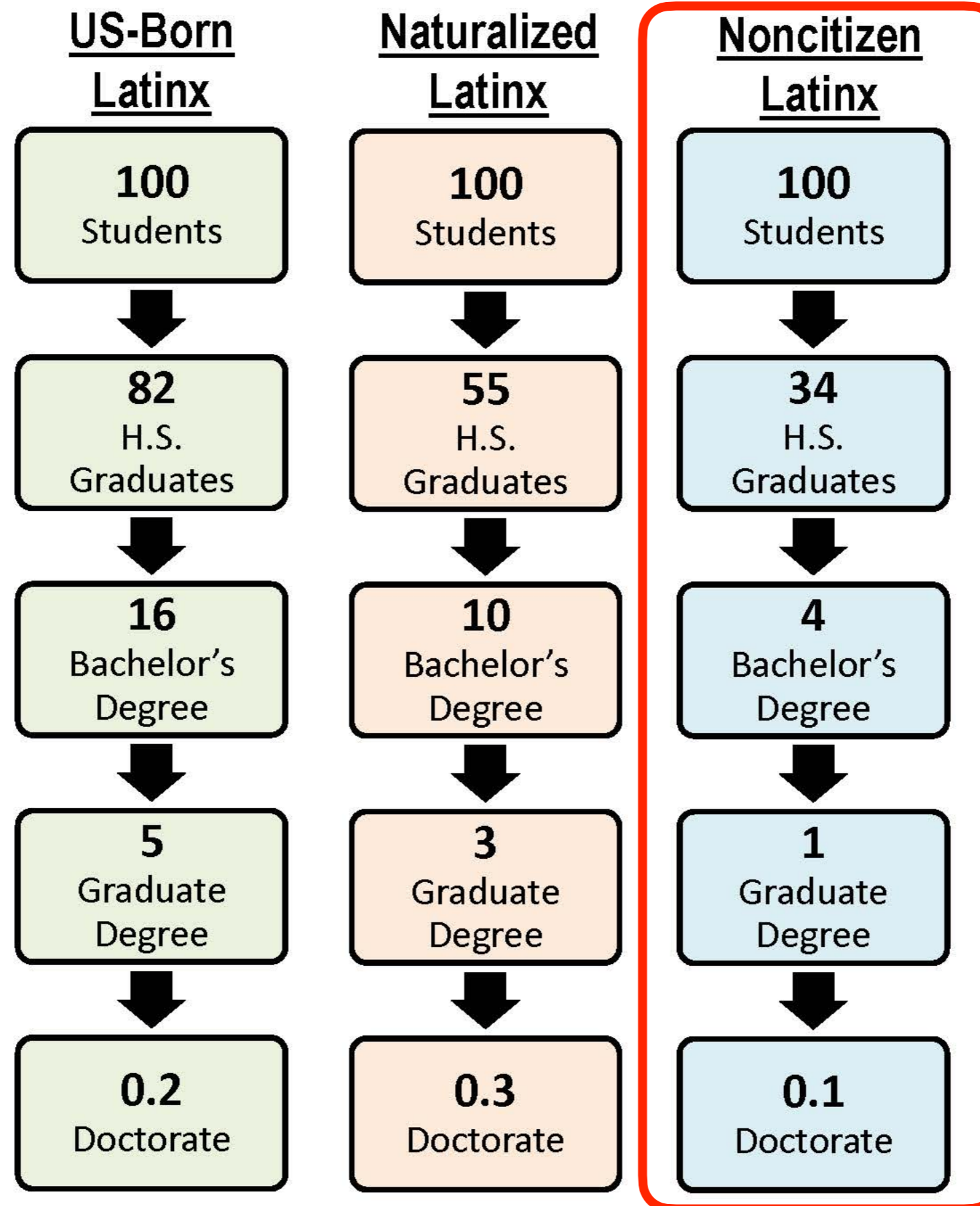
- California is one of the most racially diverse states of our nation and home to the largest Latinx population with over 15 million people (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018).
- In 2014, demographically Latinx (39%) surpassed whites (38%) in California making them the state's largest ethnic/racial group (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018).

# The California Education Pipeline, by Race/Ethnicity, 2012





# The California Education Pipeline, by Citizenship, 2012





# Public Health, Education, & Racism

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# NO!

- Gaydos et al. (2018) found that the health returns from more education are ***not equal for all individuals***.
- Their findings show that for Black and Latinx students from “disadvantaged” backgrounds finishing college has negative effects on their physical health.

# Gaydosch et al.'s Findings

- Black and Latinx students face higher levels of metabolic syndrome with a college degree than without one.
- In contrast, whites from any socioeconomic background will enjoy the health benefits associated with college completion.
- Black and Latinx students may actually experience the opposite of their white counterparts, where their health suffers due to higher levels of education.
- Suggesting that educational attainment may come at a health cost for some Students of Color.

# Gaydosh et al.'s Explanation

- When students from “disadvantaged” backgrounds achieve upward mobility they may experience social isolation or a lack of support in their new socioeconomic status.
- This environment may be hostile or uninviting.
- They may also feel like their new achieved status is not assured which can cause them to deploy strategies that are “effective in alleviating mental strife but are harmful for physical health.”
- This causes a wear and tear impact on their bodily system.

# From Culturally Deficit to a Community Cultural Wealth Framework

- Gaydos et al. measure “disadvantage” based on Students of Color’s households, schools, and neighborhoods.
- This approach adds to the portrayal of Communities of Color as places immersed in a culture of poverty, the focus is on individuals rather than institutions.
- We shift the focus to the ways racism is enacted via institutions like education by providing a critical race analysis to explain why this disparity exists.
- We approach our analysis through a Community Cultural Wealth framework in which we position the Latinx community as a site of knowledge and strength to combat racism rather than a disadvantage to Latinx students.

# The Symptoms of Everyday Racism: *Campus Racial Climate*

- Examines the overall racial environment of educational institutions
- The racial climate of a campus, whether positive or negative, can be assessed using the following criteria:
  - 1) the school's mission & history, 2) **the contemporary socio-political discourse**, 3) the infrastructure of the school, 4) **school policies & practices**, 5) **the racial make-up of faculty**, students, and administrators, 6) support programs for students, and 7) the classroom curriculum and pedagogy (Hurtado & Ponjuan, 2005; Solórzano, Villalpando, & Oseguera, 2005; Yosso et al., 2009).
- Most Latinx students experience a negative campus racial climate which is a social and academic environment that exhibits and cultivates racial and gender discrimination against People of Color (Yosso et al., 2009).

# Campus Racial Climate of Sac State

University Fact Book, 2016

**TABLE 4: First-Time Freshmen - Profile**

	Entering in Fall									
	2012		2013		2014		2015		2016	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
<b>Ethnicity</b>										
African American	209	6.6%	232	6.9%	243	6.6%	266	7.0%	255	6.8%
American Indian	8	0.3%	7	0.2%	9	0.2%	15	0.4%	8	0.2%
Asian	787	25.0%	782	23.2%	867	23.5%	824	21.8%	807	21.5%
Pacific Islander	39	1.2%	45	1.3%	33	0.9%	28	0.7%	36	1.0%
Latino	987	31.3%	1,155	34.3%	1,301	35.2%	1,414	37.4%	1,423	37.8%
<i>Underrepresented Minority</i>	1,243	39.4%	1,439	42.8%	1,586	42.9%	1,723	45.6%	1,722	45.8%
<i>All Minority</i>	2,030	64.4%	2,221	66.0%	2,453	66.4%	2,547	67.4%	2,529	67.3%
White/Caucasian	761	24.2%	756	22.5%	766	20.7%	782	20.7%	689	18.3%
Foreign	44	1.4%	67	2.0%	100	2.7%	107	2.8%	131	3.5%
Multiracial	215	6.8%	211	6.3%	247	6.7%	213	5.6%	266	7.1%
Other/Unreported	101	3.2%	111	3.3%	129	3.5%	132	3.5%	145	3.9%

**TABLE 1: Faculty Profile**

	Fall									
	2012		2013		2014		2015		2016	
<b>Total Faculty</b>	<b>1,382</b>		<b>1,479</b>		<b>1,574</b>		<b>1,623</b>		<b>1,729</b>	
<b>Ethnicity</b>										
African American	68	4.9%	72	4.9%	80	5.1%	78	4.8%	86	5.0%
American Indian	13	0.9%	16	1.1%	12	0.8%	16	1.0%	18	1.0%
Asian/Pacific Islander	151	10.9%	169	11.4%	182	11.6%	184	11.3%	193	11.2%
Latino	91	6.6%	94	6.4%	96	6.1%	109	6.7%	130	7.5%
<i>All Minority</i>	323	23.4%	351	23.7%	370	23.5%	387	23.8%	427	24.7%
White/Caucasian	983	71.1%	1,045	70.7%	1,108	70.4%	1,110	68.4%	1,153	66.7%
Multiracial	7	0.5%	9	0.6%	9	0.6%	15	0.9%	19	1.1%
Other/Unreported	69	5.0%	74	5.0%	87	5.5%	111	6.8%	130	7.5%

# School policies & practices

NBCBLK

## Louisiana girl sent home from school over braided hair extensions

"This decision is going to affect black children more than white children," Steven Evergreen Fennidy, the girl's brother, wrote on Facebook.

NBCBLK

## When hair breaks rules: Some black children are getting in trouble for natural hairstyles

In the past, "African-Americans often conformed through haircuts, wigs and relaxers," one lawyer said. "Now, more of us are choosing not to conform."



# **Your school climate**

- 1. How would you describe the school/campus racial climate at your school? Consider the markers of assessment.**
- 2. Does the racial/ethnic make-up of teachers/educators reflect the student racial/ethnic demographics?**
- 3. How do your school/university's practices inform the campus/school racial climate?**

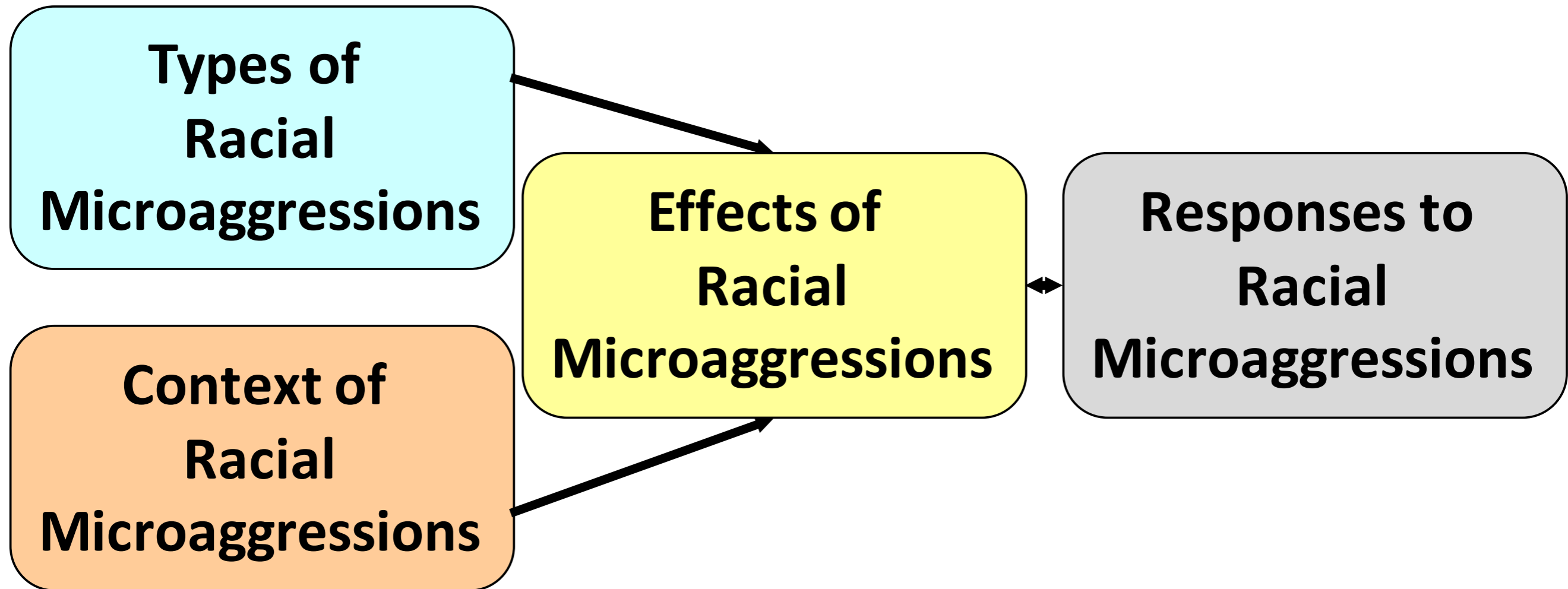
# The Symptoms of Everyday Racism: *Racial Microaggressions*

- One form of systemic everyday racism that are subtle, layered, and cumulative; they are verbal and nonverbal assaults directed at People of Color (Yosso et al., 2009).
- Cumulative assaults that take a physiological, psychological, and academic toll on People of Color



FOR PEOPLE WHO STILL DON'T THINK

# A Model for Understanding Racial Microaggressions

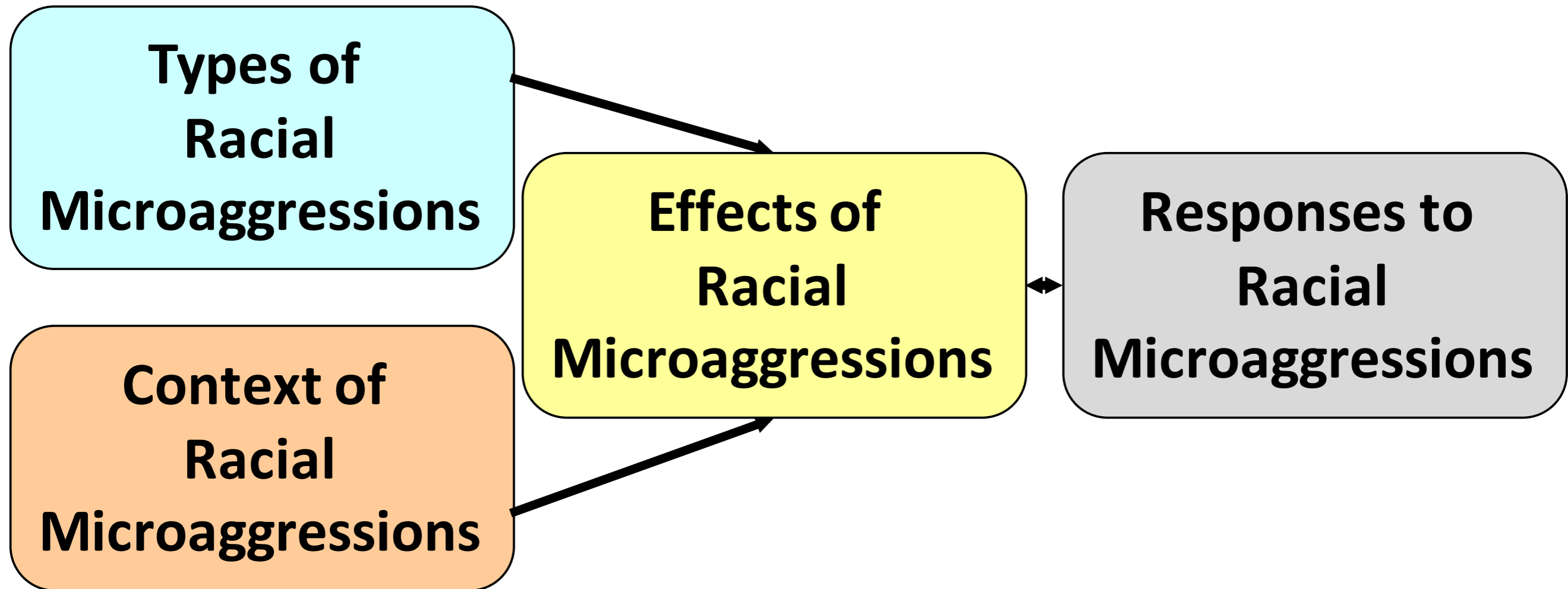








# A Model for Understanding Racial Microaggressions



# **Racial Microaggressions & You**

- 1. Have you ever experienced or witnessed a racial microaggression?**
- 2. How do you respond? And why?**
- 3. What are some ways we can prevent racial microaggressions?**

# How does this affect Women of Color specifically?



*Unnatural causes: Is inequality making us sick, 2008*



# The Symptoms of Everyday Racism: *Racial Microaggressions*

- Creates anxiety, self-doubt, and a troubling amount of race-related stress.
- For Chicanas/Latinas microaggressions have caused changes in their menstrual cycle and reproductive experiences, chronic conditions, increased illness, depressed immune systems, and racial battle fatigue (Cueva, 2014; Gutiérrez y Muhs et al., 2012).

# The Symptoms of Everyday Racism: *Racial Battle Fatigue*

- Physiological symptoms include suppressed immunity and increased sickness, tension headaches, trembling and jumpiness, chronic pain in healed injuries, elevated blood pressure, and a pounding heartbeat (Smith, Yosso, & Solórzano, 2006).
- In the anticipation of racial microaggressions, People of Color may also experience rapid breathing, an upset stomach, or frequent diarrhea or urination (Smith, 2004; Smith, 2009).
- Other symptoms include constant anxiety, ulcers, increased swearing or complaining, insomnia or sleep broken by haunting conflict-specific dreams, rapid mood swings, difficulty thinking or speaking coherently, and emotional and social withdrawal.

# How Much Racism Do You Face Every Day?

By AMY HARMON  
Illustrations by MARI KANSTAD JOHNSEN  
JAN. 20, 2020

To see how your experience with discrimination compares with others', answer some of the questions that were posed to 101 black teenagers as part of a study measuring the racism they face on a daily basis.

**“Collectively, the 101 black teens participating in the study reported more than 5,600 experiences of racial discrimination over two weeks. That boils down to an average of more than five instances per day for each teenager.”**





# The Trump Effect: *Emboldening Racism in Education*



NEWS  
abc 10



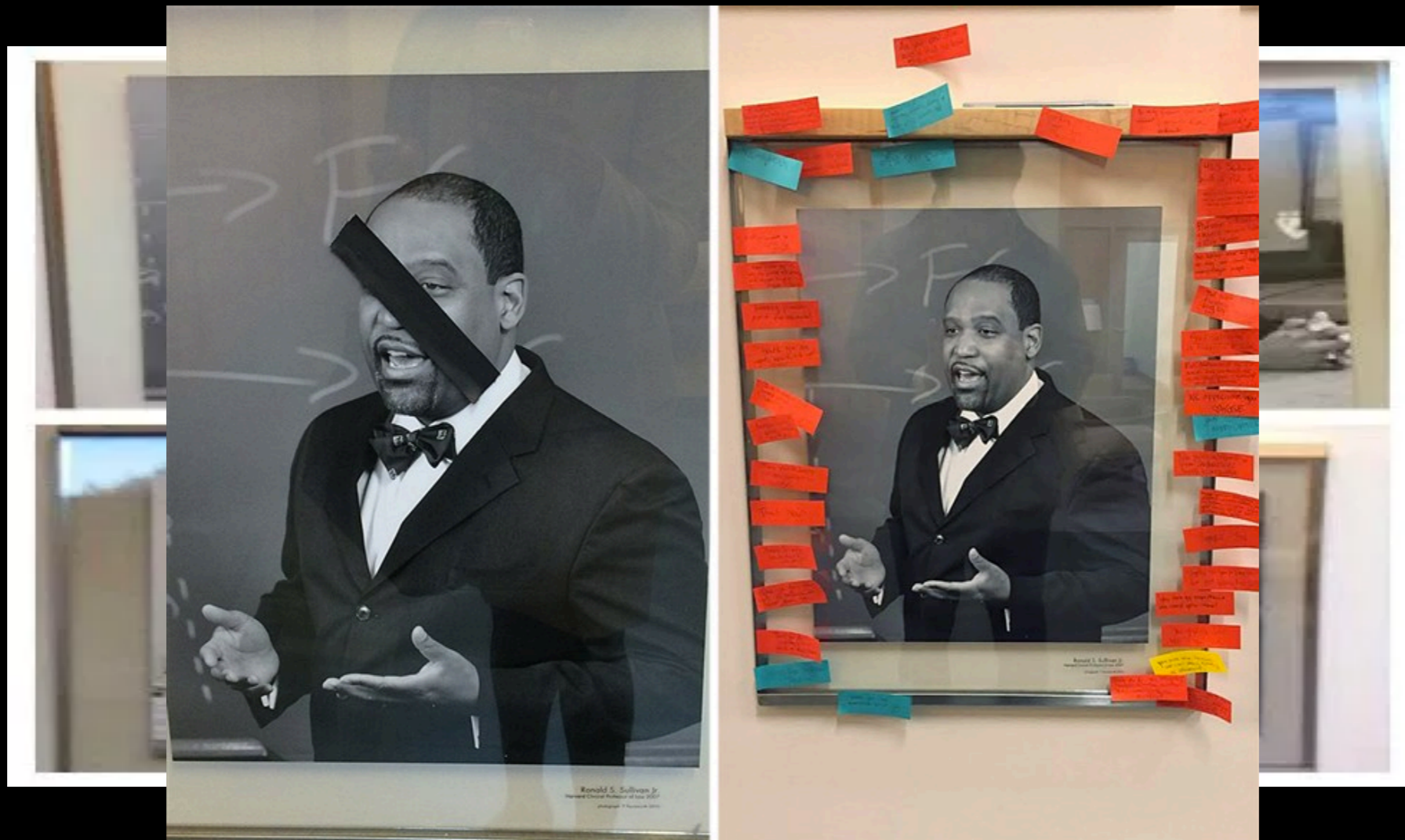
# The Trump Effect: *Emboldening Racism in Education*





# Microaffirmations as a Response to Racial Stress

Small and/or brief interactions (moments of shared cultural intimacy) that make People of Color feel acknowledged and valued ( Solórzano, Pérez Huber, & Huber-Verjan, in press).



# Other examples of Microaffirmations



- Children's books
- Ethnic studies
- Racial/Ethnic Graduations
- Art- music, murals



# Other examples of Microaffirmations



- 1. Can you think of others?**
- 2. What type of microaffirmations have you witnessed in your school/campus/classroom? What else can you do?**
- 3. Is the presence of People of Color (i.e. in a Space, in Text, in History...) a microaffirmation?**
- 4. And, is the absence of People of Color (i.e. in a Space, in Text, in History...), a microaggression?**



# Closing thoughts

- When it comes to the health promises of an education, Students of Color are at a disadvantage, often experiencing a worsening of their health rather than an improvement.
- Using a Community Cultural Wealth approach means shifting the focus from individuals and communities to institutions and structures.
- Rather than looking at what Communities of Color lack, we should ask what can institutions do better?

# Closing thoughts

1. Racism does exist even when some might not see it.
2. Racism is a threat to the health and well-being of students.
3. Racism is a system, not an individual character flaw.
4. We need to become actively antiracist
5. Our power is in collective action.

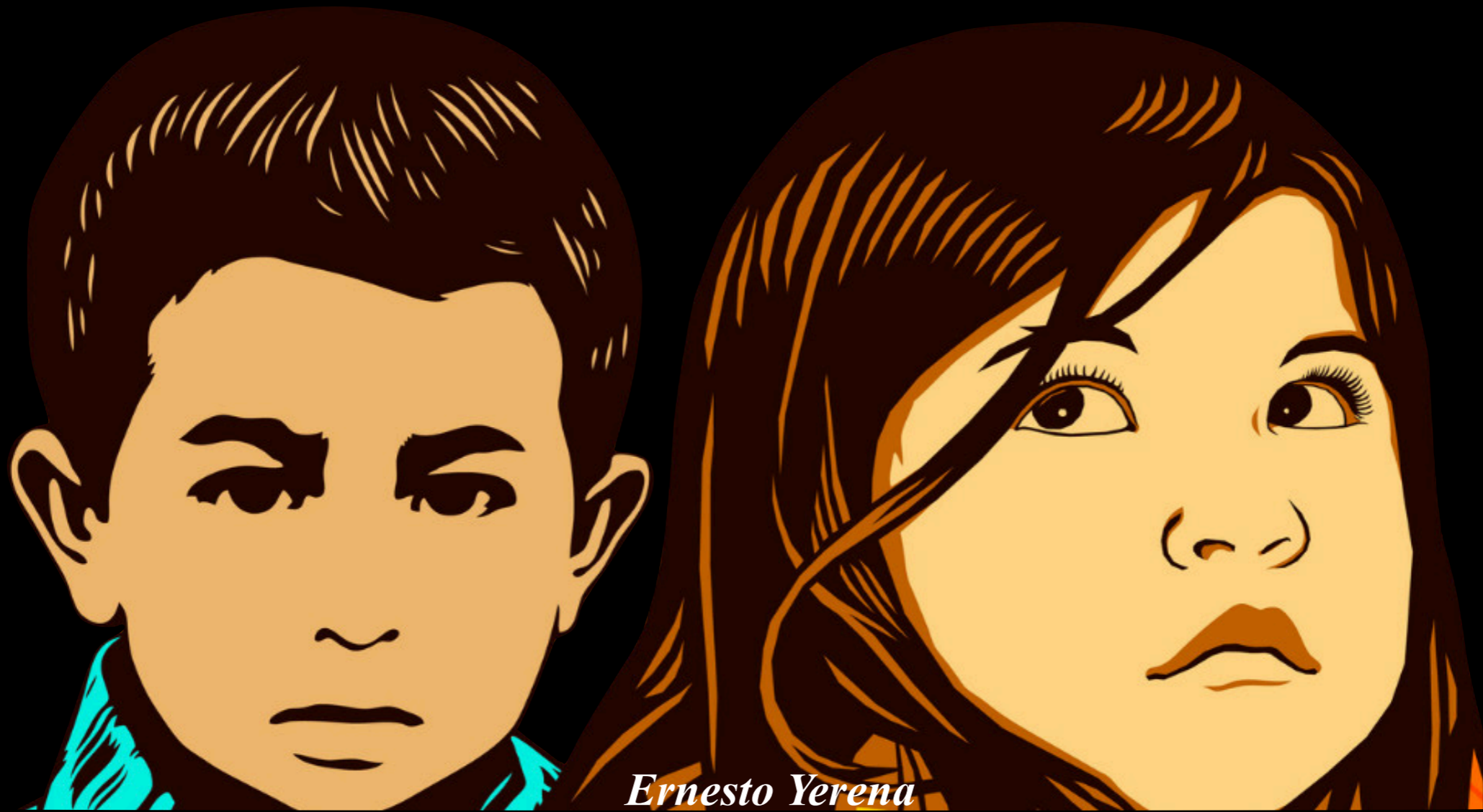
# As educators we must...

- Name racism.
- Ask, “How is racism operating here?”
- Organize and strategize to act.

# Thank You!

Please contact me at:  
[alma.flores@csus.edu](mailto:alma.flores@csus.edu)

*Questions or Comments?*



*Ernesto Yereña*