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# STRUCTURAL OPPRESSION AND HEALTH ACROSS U.S. STATES

Summary of Findings and Future Directions

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# STRUCTURAL OPPRESSION DEFINITION

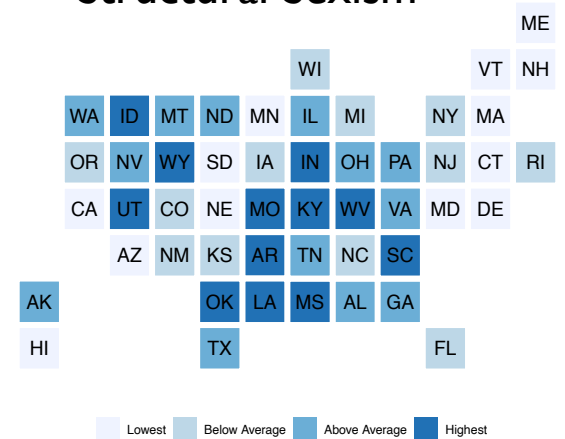
- **Structural oppression** entails systems of discrimination that create and sustain stratification in life chances between socially disadvantaged and advantaged groups. Structural oppression is reflected in institutional inequities, discriminatory laws, widespread cultural norms, and the unequal distribution of power and resources (Brown and Homan 2023, *Milbank* 2024, *JHSB*; Homan, Brown, & Everett, Forthcoming *JMF*).
- NOT focused on overt prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory behaviors of individuals.

# STRUCTURAL OPPRESSION IN U.S. STATES

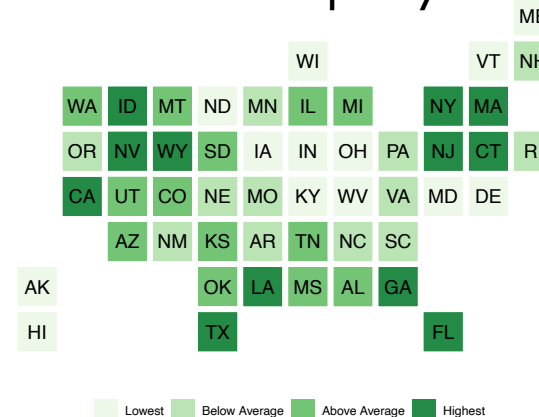
■ My research has measured the following in **U.S. States**:

- Structural sexism
- Structural racism
- Income inequality
- Structural intersectionality (constellations of the above 3)
- Heteropatriarchy
- LGBTQ structural stigma
- Political gender inequality
- Racialized disenfranchisement
- Income support policy packages

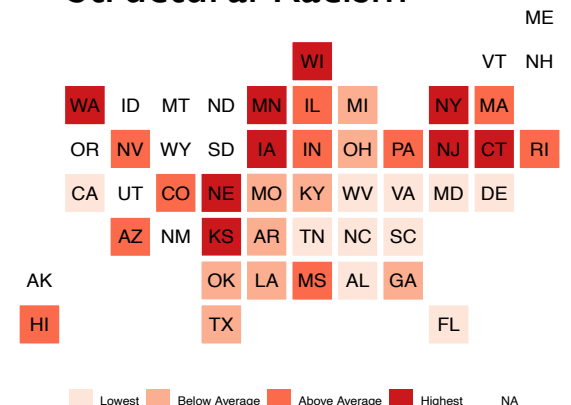
Structural Sexism



Income Inequality

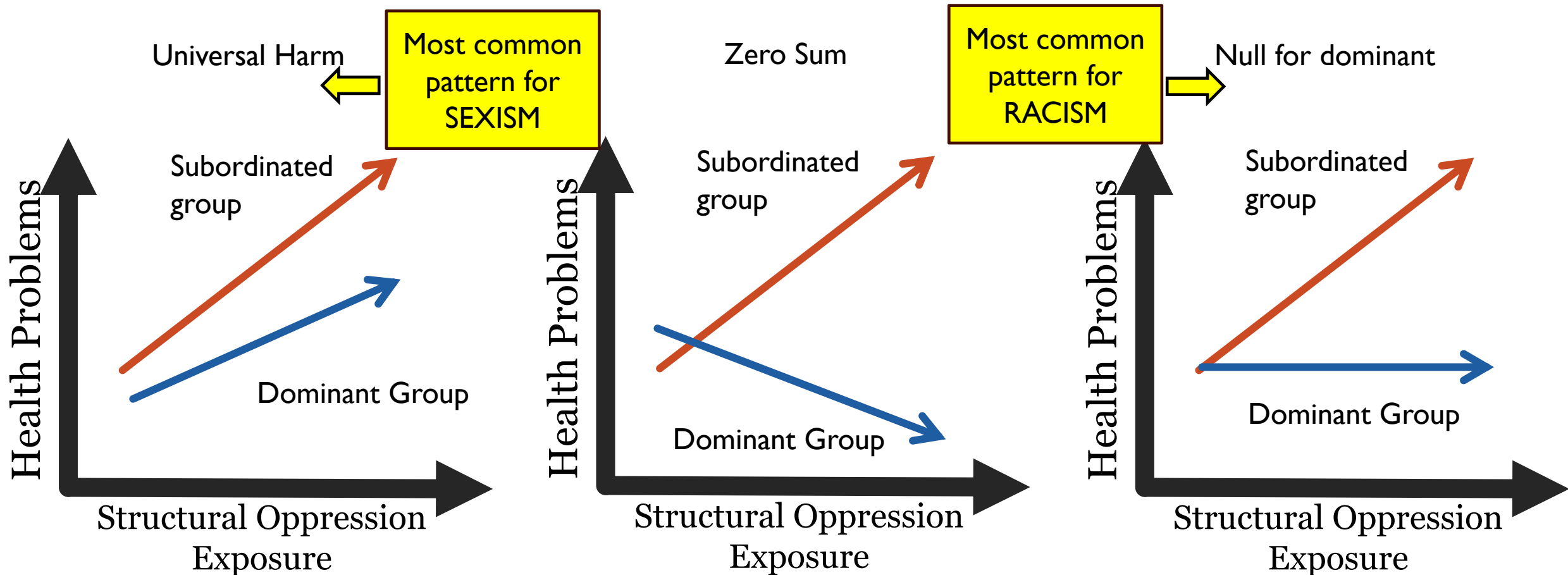


Structural Racism



# OVER-ARCHING PATTERNS IN HEALTH CONSEQUENCES OF STRUCTURAL OPPRESSION

- Bad for health!! BUT WHOSE?



# FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Broadening Inquiry:
  - Expand/refine structural oppression measures
  - Other health outcomes (e.g. biomarkers, life expectancy, maternal & child health)
  - Structural oppression approach **beyond health**
- Thinking intersectionally:
  - Synergies between systems of oppression
  - E.g., Sexism & heterosexism are both part of a system of heteropatriarchy  
(Everett, Limburg, Homan & Philbin, *Demography* 2022)
- Incorporating more life course analysis and perspectives

# CHALLENGES

- Temporal patterns
- Causality?
- Controls
- Folks claiming sexism or racism isn't important or "actionable"
- Connections between Structural -ISMS and Laws/Policies?

# RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OPPRESSION, POLICY AND HEALTH?

## 2 Different Types of Structural Oppression Measures

### **Discriminatory Contexts Manifest in Inequities**

Use administrative data measure racialized/gendered inequities stemming from discrimination across a range of societal domains and geographic contexts (e.g., regions, states, MSAs, counties, and neighborhoods).

Ex. Ratios of Black to White (or male to female) inequality in income, poverty, homeownership, employment, voting, police violence etc.

Unequal power structure shapes policies



Policies shape distribution of power and resources



### **Policies**

These measures capture ISM-related policies; some are explicit, but many are defacto and have disparate impacts limiting the resources, opportunities, and freedom of marginalized groups.

Ex. Mandatory minimum sentencing, affirmative action bans, Abortion law, paid family leave, Same-sex adoption legal; LGB employment non-discrimination law, anti-trans bathroom or healthcare laws

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# THANK YOU

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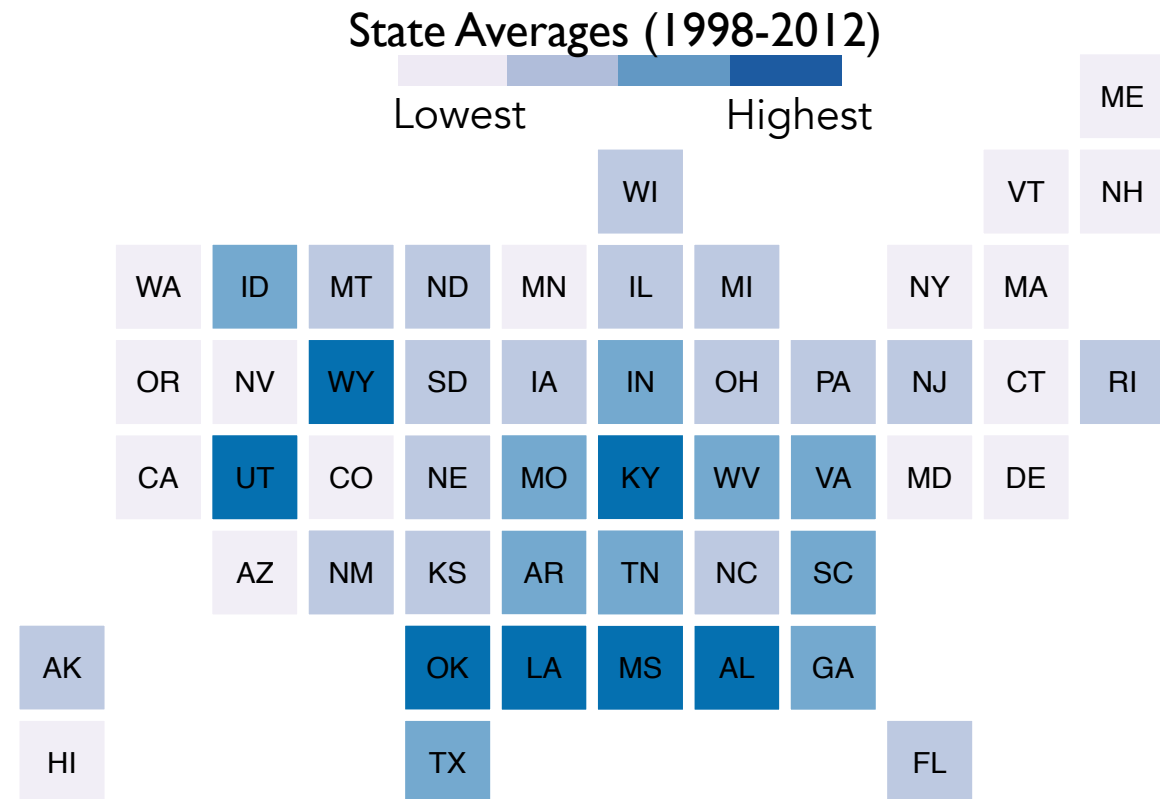


# MEASURES: STRUCTURAL SEXISM INDEX

- *Systematic gender inequality in power and resources in a given social context*

Domain	Measures
<b>Economic</b>	Ratio of men's to women's: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weekly earnings</li> <li>Labor force participation rates</li> <li>Poverty rates (W:M)</li> </ul>
<b>Political</b>	% of state legislature seats occupied by men
<b>Cultural</b>	% of population composed of religious conservatives
<b>Physical/ Reproductive</b>	% of women living in county without an abortion provider

Higher values = More Structural Sexism



(Homan 2019, *American Sociological Review*)

