IDENTITY: RACE, ETHNICITY, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY

Chapter 5
What Is Identity, and How Are Identities Constructed?

- **Identity**: “How we make sense of ourselves” – Rose
- How identities are established
  - Through experiences, emotions, connections, and rejections
  - A snapshot of who we are at a point in time
  - Fluid, constantly changing, shifting, becoming
  - Vary across scales, and affect each other across scales
  - Identifying against (defining the other and then defining ourselves as “not that”)
Gender

“A culture’s assumptions about the differences between men and women: their ‘characters,’ the roles they play in society, what they represent.”

– Domosh and Seager
Race

- A categorization of humans based on skin color and other physical characteristics
- Social and political constructions
- Based on ideas that some biological differences are more important than others
- Major element in colonialism and imperialism
- Typically imposed on people through
  - Residential segregation
  - Racialized divisions of labor
  - Racial categories defined by governments
U.S. Population by Race

2000. Census option of one or more than one race

2050. White, non-Hispanic population no longer the majority
Residential Segregation

The “degree to which two or more groups live separately from one another, in different parts of the urban environment.”

– Massey and Denton

Highest rate of residential segregation for African Americans: Milwaukee, WI
Residential Segregation

**Lowest rate of residential segregation**
- For Hispanics/Latinos: Baltimore
- For Asians/Pacific Islanders: Baltimore

![Maps showing residential segregation](image)
How Do Places Affect Identity, and How Can We See Identities in Places?

• Sense of place: Infusion of places with meaning and feeling, with memories and emotions
• Becomes part of our identity
• Effect of identity on ways we define and experience place
Ethnicity

• A constructed identity that is tied to a place
• Comes from idea that people are closely bounded, even related, in a place over time
• Often result of migration
• May change in meaning with migration
Changes in Ethnic Space

- Few Chinese residents in Mexicali’s Chinatown
- Continued important place for the region’s Chinese population
Identity and Space

• **Space**: “Social relations stretched out”

• **Place**: “Particular articulations of those social relations as they have come together, over time, in that particular location”
  
  – Massey and Jess

• Place making in the context of surrounding social relationships
Sexuality and Space

• **Heteronormative**: Viewpoint that white, heterosexual, male is “normal”

• Identity cluster
  – How spaces are created
  – What problems they have

• **Queer theory**: Focuses on political engagement of “queers” with the “heteronormative”
Sexuality and Space

SAME SEX HOUSEHOLDS IN NEW YORK, 2000
- Very high
- High
- Moderate
- Low

0 — 10 Miles
0 — 10 Kilometers

ATLANTIC OCEAN
Power Relationships and How People Are Counted

• The U.S. Census undercounts
  – Minority populations
  – The homeless

• Gross National Income (GNI) does not count
  – Unpaid work of women in the household
  – Work done by rural women in poorer countries
  – The informal economy: Private, often home-based activities such as tailoring, beer brewing, food preparation
Gender Empowerment Measure

Map of the world showing gender empowerment measures (GEM) with different colors indicating various ranges.
Women in Subsaharan Africa

- Populate much of the rural areas, as men migrate to cities for work
- Produce 70% of the region’s food
- Small percentage of women have legal title to their land
Dowry Deaths in India

- Murders of brides (often by burning) when a dispute arises over a dowry
- Difficult to “legislate away” the power relationships that lead to dowry deaths
- Female infanticide also tied to the disempowerment of women
Ethnic Groups in Los Angeles

- **Barrioization**: When the population of a neighborhood changes over largely to Hispanics.
- Changes in cultural landscapes to reflect changing populations.
- Strife usually tied to economic change.