

## Identity: Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Sexuality



Jerry Redfern/LightRocket/Getty Images

**FIGURE 5.1 Phnom Penh, Cambodia.** Cambodian women and men fashion rebar for a high-rise construction project. The non-profit organization CARE Cambodia estimates between 20 and 40 percent of all construction workers in Cambodia are women. Women often work the same jobs as men on construction sites but are paid less.

Cambodian women work alongside men on construction sites across the country (Fig. 5.1). In the summer, each day starts early in hopes of getting in a full 12 hours of work before the late afternoon's monsoon rains.

After laboring all day alongside men, the women will return home with between \$1 and \$3 less than the men. A report from CARE Cambodia found 75 percent of Cambodian women in the construction industry are paid between \$3.75 and \$5 a day, which is much less than the minimum \$6.25 a male construction worker earns for the same day's work.

Phnom Penh's economy is growing rapidly, and construction can barely keep pace. Construction jobs, even at a lower pay rate than men, are drawing women from the country's provinces out of the rice fields and into the city.

"Education is out of reach for me now; I just have to work now to help provide for my family," a 22-year-old female construction worker explained to CARE Cambodia. The women receive few if any protections on the construction site, as most of them work at a day labor rate as part of the informal economy. While Cambodia's laws legislate a maternity leave, women in the informal economy are simply fired if their pregnancy or birth of a child prevents them from working for a day.

This chapter examines how people and society construct identities, including gender, race, ethnicity, and sexuality. We also discover how place factors into identity and how differences in power are reflected in the cultural landscapes people create.

### CHAPTER OUTLINE

#### 5.1 Define identity and explain how identities are constructed.

- Gender
- Race

#### 5.2 Determine how place affects identity and how we can see identities in places.

- Race and Place
- Identities Across Scales
- Ethnicity and Place

#### 5.3 Explain the role structures of power play in shaping identities.

- Identity and Space
- Counting the Work of Women
- Vulnerable Populations
- Women in Sub-Saharan Africa
- Women in India
- Shifting Structures of Power Among Ethnic Groups

## 5.1

## Define Identity and Explain How Identities Are Constructed.

A woman pulls off a bicycle helmet and wipes her tears of joy. The voice of Serena Williams intones, “If we show emotion, we’re called dramatic.” A ponytail extends from under a football helmet to the middle of a jersey as a young girl tackles the running back. Williams adds, “If we want to play against men, we’re nuts.” Alex Morgan and teammates from the U.S. Women’s National Soccer Team stand in a line for the national anthem. Williams remarks, “And if we dream of equal opportunity, we’re nuts.” The 90-second commercial ends with Williams urging, “If they want to call you crazy? Fine. Show them what crazy can do.” Nike’s “Get Crazier” advertisement campaign spoke directly to women, inspiring them to achieve athletic heights by using negative concepts of what women can and should do in sports to fuel them.

Identities are marketed through sports clothing and equipment, cars, luxury goods, club memberships, jewelry, and fundraising campaigns. Marketing campaigns give us the impression that we can buy our identity, but identity is much more personal than what we wear, drive, or belong to, or where we live. Geographer Gillian Rose (1995) defines **identity** as “how we make sense of ourselves.” How do we each define ourselves? We construct our own identities through experiences, emotions, connections, and rejections. We work through derivations and delineations to find an identity that meshes with who and where we are at different points in life. An identity is a snapshot, an image of who we are at a moment. Identities are fluid, constantly changing, shifting, and becoming. Place and space are integral to our identities because our experiences in places and our perceptions of spaces help us make sense of who we are.

In addition to defining ourselves, we define others and others define us. One of the most powerful ways to construct an identity is by **identifying against** other people. To identify against, we first define the “Other,” and then we define ourselves in opposing terms. Edward Said wrote thoughtfully about how Europeans, over time, constructed images of the Middle East and Asia. Europeans defined Asia as the “Orient,” a place with supposedly mystical characteristics that were depicted and repeated in European art and literature.

In a similar vein, geographer James Blaut wrote perceptively about how Europeans came to define Africans and Native Americans as “savage” and “mystical.” Through these images of the “Other,” which developed during periods of European exploration and colonialism, Europeans defined themselves as “not mystical” or “not savage” and, therefore, as “civilized.” These ideas are still part of our language (vernacular) even today, as seen in references to “the civilized world” or a time “before civilization.” Phrases like these invariably carry with them a sense of superiority in opposition to an “Other.”

Identities are powerful enough that governments work to construct or build national identities, often fortifying them by identifying against other countries. They do this whether they are under threat, at war, or trying to garner support for policies. State nationalism has been such a powerful force that in

many contexts people think of themselves first and foremost as members of a nation: French, Japanese, Brazilian, or the like.

National identities are a product of the modern state system, which is discussed in Chapter 8. But there are all sorts of other identities that divide humanity. Alternative identities are equally and often more important to people than national identities. Language and religion are also sources of identity, and we will turn to these in Chapters 6 and 7. This chapter examines several other important foundations of identity—those based on race, gender, ethnicity, and sexuality.

## Gender

Whether a culture favors males or females and how a culture sees the role of women in society are aspects of gender. Geographers Mona Domosh and Joni Seager define **gender** as “a culture’s assumptions about the differences between men and women: their ‘characters,’ the roles they play in society, what they represent.” Gender impacts everything from who is born to who eats first in a culture. Some cultures have a strong preference for males over females, and the sex ratio, the proportion of males to females, reflects that preference. In countries with a strong preference for males, females are aborted, killed, or abandoned at a higher rate than infant males, which creates a culture with many more men than women. Even in countries with balanced sex ratios, a preference for males can be seen when girls leave school at an early age to work and provide income for the family. In both lower income and higher income countries, divisions of labor and expectations of unpaid work in the home are the clearest signs of how cultures are gendered.

Factory jobs in lower income countries around the world often go to women instead of men. Factory managers report hiring women over men because they see women as an expendable labor pool. Researcher Peter Hancock (2000) studied gender relations and women’s work in factories in Indonesia and reported, “Research in different global contexts suggests that factory managers employ young women because they are more easily exploited, less likely to strike or form membership organizations, are comparatively free from family responsibilities, and more adept at doing repetitive and delicate tasks associated with assembly line work.”

In Southeast Asia, young women migrate from rural areas to cities and overseas to the Middle East or to larger cities in other countries in Southeast Asia to work as cooks, housekeepers, and nannies. Singapore, a higher income country in Southeast Asia, draws more than 200,000 migrant women primarily from the Philippines and Indonesia (lower income countries) to work as domestics (**Fig. 5.2**). The end goal is to earn a wage that they can send home as a **remittance** to support the schooling of their brothers and younger sisters, or to support their husbands and children. In the United States, rarely does an oldest daughter migrate to the city or another country to work so she can pay for her younger siblings’ schooling. However, young women from

rural areas of the United States do migrate to larger cities to work seasonally. Usually they work in the tourism industry to help financially support their children, who stay home with their father or grandparents.

Although public education in the United States is free and open to boys and girls, American society still has gendered divisions of labor. A long-standing assumption is that work requiring heavy lifting needs to be completed by men and that good-paying, unionized jobs need to go to men because men are the “heads of the household.” For example, in a brick-making factory, women are hired to do tasks that require little lifting. They might glue pieces of the various types of brick to boards so that salespeople can use them as samples.

Society creates boxes in which we put people and expect them to live. These boxes are in a sense stereotypes embodying assumptions and expectations. By creating boxes, society can assign entire professions or tasks to members of certain categories. For example, we often hear of “women’s work,” which denotes a gendering of the division of labor. Places, like the kitchen of a home or a store in a shopping center, can also be gendered. People are constantly negotiating their personal identities, finding their ways through all the expectations placed on them by the boxes society puts around them and modifying and reinforcing the social relations that create the places where they work and live.

## Race

What society typically calls a “race” is in fact a combination of physical attributes in a population. Differences in skin, eye, and hair color result from human adaptation at different latitudes. Sunlight stimulates the production of melanin, which protects skin from harmful ultraviolet rays. The more melanin in the skin, the darker the skin will be. The tropics, between 23.5°N and 23.5°S, receive consistent sunlight all 12 months of the year. According to biologists, this helps to explain why people living in the tropics, through South America, Africa, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Australia, have darker skins.

In higher latitudes, closer to the North and South Poles, people have less melanin and less pigmentation. Higher latitudes receive little to no sunlight in winter and a lot of sunlight in summer, though at a relatively low angle. People living there have less melanin, but enough so their bodies can absorb ultraviolet light in the summer and convert it to vitamin D.

No biological basis exists for dividing the human species into four or five races based on skin color. Genes do not tell us the color of someone’s skin, but genes can tell us where people’s ancestors came from, geographically. **Race** is better understood as social constructions of differences among people based on skin color. Such constructions have had profound consequences on rights and opportunities.

Governments and society create and institutionalize racial categories. Think of how often we are asked to complete applications, census forms, product warranty information, surveys,



Vivek Prakashy/REUTERS

**FIGURE 5.2 Singapore.** A 36-year-old woman from the Philippines works as a maid in Singapore. A survey of more than 800 domestic workers and 80 employers in Singapore found that 84 percent of workers reported working more than 12-hour days and 41 percent reported working on their one day off each week. More than a third of those surveyed reported receiving no pay.

and medical forms that ask us to check a box identifying ourselves as “white,” “black,” or “Asian” (**Fig. 5.3**). Such practices institutionalize and reinforce modern ways of viewing race. With each box we check, we learn to think that the categories of race on the census are natural, fixed, mutually exclusive, and comprehensive. In contrast, the more social scientists study race, the more they recognize that racial categories are constructed, fluid, overlapping, and incomplete.

**Race and Class** Benedict Anderson explains that the intersection of class with race began before 1500. Wealthy French and British citizens defined themselves as superior to lower income citizens. After 1500, during European colonization, France and Great Britain claimed colonies in the Americas, Africa, and eventually Asia. In the process, lower income French and British citizens were encouraged to see themselves as superior to the people living in the colonies. The socioeconomic differences fueled a sense of superiority. As darker-skinned subjects in the colonies were easily categorized by race, racism became a method of maintaining a social, economic, and political order in which the lowest-income British and French citizens were no longer seen as the lowest class. Anderson (1982) explains:

Colonial racism was a major element in that conception of “Empire” which attempted to weld dynastic legitimacy and national community. It did so by generalizing a principle of innate, inherited superiority on which its own domestic position was (however shakily) based to the vastness of the overseas possessions, covertly (or not so covertly) conveying the idea that if, say, English lords were naturally superior to other Englishmen, no matter: these other Englishmen were no less superior to the subjected natives.

**What is this person's race?**Mark  one or more boxes **AND** print origins.

- White – Print, for example, German, Irish, English, Italian, Lebanese, Egyptian, etc. ↴

- Black or African Am. – Print, for example, African American, Jamaican, Haitian, Nigerian, Ethiopian, Somali, etc. ↴

- American Indian or Alaska Native – Print name of enrolled or principal tribe(s), for example, Navajo Nation, Blackfeet Tribe, Mayan, Aztec, Native Village of Barrow Inupiat Traditional Government, Nome Eskimo Community, etc. ↴

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese  | <input type="checkbox"/> Vietnamese  | <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Filipino   | <input type="checkbox"/> Korean  | <input type="checkbox"/> Samoan          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian Indian   | <input type="checkbox"/> Japanese  | <input type="checkbox"/> Chamorro        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other Asian –<br>Print, for example,<br>Pakistani, Cambodian,<br>Hmong, etc. ↴ | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Pacific Islander –<br>Print, for example,<br>Tongan, Fijian,<br>Marshallese, etc. ↴ |  |

- Some other race – Print race or origin. ↴

Source: "Questions Planned for the 2020 Census and American Community Survey", U.S. Census Bureau.

**FIGURE 5.3 United States Census.** Although biologically there is only one human race, we are often asked to choose race boxes for ourselves. This page of the United States Census asks the individual, "What is your race?" and directs the individual to "Mark one or more races to indicate what you consider yourself to be." The 2020 Census listed racial categories and provided a place to write in a specific race not listed on the form. Since 2000, the Census has allowed individuals to choose more than one race as their identity.

Stories that lower income British and French people heard about the "mystical" and "savage" "Others" in the colonies also fostered feelings of superiority. But since one of the easiest ways to define the "Other" is through the visible trait of skin color, differences in the color of skin became the basis for a social divide that was built on class and that defined economic places in society that privileged fair-skinned Europeans.

Racial distinctions are the product of cultural history, structures of power, and local political developments. Geographer Benjamin Forest (2001) gives us a global overview of racial distinctions:

In Britain, the term "black" refers not only to Afro Caribbeans and Africans, but also to individuals from the Indian

subcontinent. In Russia, the term "black" is used to describe "Caucasians," that is, people such as Chechens from the Caucasus region. In many parts of Latin America, particularly Brazil, "racial" classification is really a kind of class placement, in which members of the wealthy upper class are generally considered as "white," members of the middle class as mixed race or Mestizo, and members of the lower class as "black." Indeed, because racial classifications are based on class standing and physical appearance rather than ancestry, "the designation of one's racial identity need not be the same as that of the parents, and siblings are often classified differently than one another."

In each of these cases, and in countless others, people have constructed racial categories to justify power, economic exploitation, and cultural oppression.

Unlike a local culture or ethnicity to which we may choose to belong, race is an identity that is more often assigned, often "imposed by a set of external social and historical constraints" (Forest 2001). In the United States, residential segregation, racialized divisions of labor, and the categories of races recorded by the United States Census reinforce race.

Definitions of race in the United States historically focused on dividing the country into "white" and "nonwhite." Influential figures in sports (Tiger Woods), politics (President Barack Obama), and music (Zendaya), who do not clearly fit into one race, are often asked by the media to choose or explain their racial identity (Fig. 5.4). Governments use race to justify limits on migration (see Chapter 3). In the late 1800s and early 1900s, immigration to the United States shifted from northern and western Europe to southern and eastern Europe, and the U.S. government redefined what constituted "white" so that people with olive-colored skin from the Mediterranean would count as "white."

Skin color is not a reliable indicator of genetic closeness. The indigenous peoples of southern India, New Guinea, and Australia, for example, are about as dark-skinned as native Africans, but native Africans, southern Indians, and Aboriginal Australians are not closely related genetically.

**Classifying Race** Racial and ethnic classifications are arbitrary. Governments can create racial classes and institutionalize them. When Spain colonized much of the Americas, including South America, Central America, and Mexico, they created the Casta system to identify and classify different races (Fig. 5.5). In each of a series of oil paintings, artists showed combinations of couples from the same and different races (mainly Spanish, indigenous, and African) with a child and designated racial labels for their children. The Casta paintings



**FIGURE 5.4 London, United Kingdom.** Actor Zendaya poses during a photo call in London. The actor has received many questions about her race. Zendaya describes her mom as having roots in Germany and Scotland, and her dad as an African American. In one interview, Zendaya answered questions about her identity saying “No one’s just white and no one’s just black.”

both defined and institutionalized racial classes in Spain’s colonies in the Americas.

Governments can create racial classes, and they can change racial classifications. Before 2000, the United States Census classified Hispanic as a race. A white person from Venezuela, a black person from Brazil, and a native person from Bolivia were all classified as Hispanic in the Census before 2000. Coming from Latin America overrode all other classifications or categories and made the person racially Hispanic. In 2000, the Census recognized that Hispanic is not a race and that it is better defined as an ethnicity (**Table 5.1**).

The ethnic term *Hispanic* is itself problematic. The word Hispanic means coming from a country where Spanish is the predominant language, including Spain, Mexico, and many countries in Central and South America and the Caribbean. A person from Brazil who is classified as “Hispanic” should not be under this definition. The predominant language in Brazil is Portuguese, not Spanish, which means that Brazil is not a Spanish-speaking country.

The redesignation of Hispanic as an ethnicity on the Census enables people to identify as “White, non-Hispanic,” “White, Hispanic,” “Black, non-Hispanic,” “Black, Hispanic,” and so forth. The United States Census now recognizes that “Hispanic” can be seen as excluding people who are not native Spanish speakers. The Census also recognized that some people, including U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor, prefer the term *Latina* or *Latino* to *Hispanic*. The United States Census Bureau describes Hispanic ethnicity as “Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin,” and continues to list Hispanic as an ethnicity and not a race.

With the evolution in understanding of race and ethnicity, it is sometimes difficult to choose the right term to describe an individual or group of people. In this chapter and in the

rest of the text, we use the most precise description possible. Instead of a generic term like *Hispanic*, if we are talking about a group of migrants from Bolivia, we call them migrants from Bolivia. If we discuss a study about Cree Indians in Canada, we use *Cree*, not the more general term *First Nations*. In general references, we use the term *Hispanic* instead of *Latino* or *Latina*. This convention follows Census definitions and surveys of Americans who defined themselves as Hispanic or Latino. In a Pew Research survey, half of Americans who identified as Hispanic or Latino reported having no preference for either term. Among those who expressed a preference in the survey, “‘Hispanic’ was preferred over ‘Latino’ by a ratio of about 2 to 1” (Pew 2013).

In the United States, 64 percent of the Hispanic population identifies as having Mexican origin, and 9 percent of people who define themselves as Hispanic are of Puerto Rican descent. In the U.S. Census, people who identify as Hispanic can also identify a racial category. By combining race and ethnicity boxes, statisticians can separate Americans into “White, non-Hispanic” and “everyone else.” Projections hold that the population of “everyone else” will surpass (in numbers) the “White, non-Hispanic” population around 2045 (**Table 5.2**).



**FIGURE 5.5 Casta Art.** When Spain colonized much of South America, Central America, and Mexico, they defined and institutionalized racial classes through a series of paintings. Casta art showed mothers and fathers of different races (Spanish, indigenous, and African) and classified the races of their children.

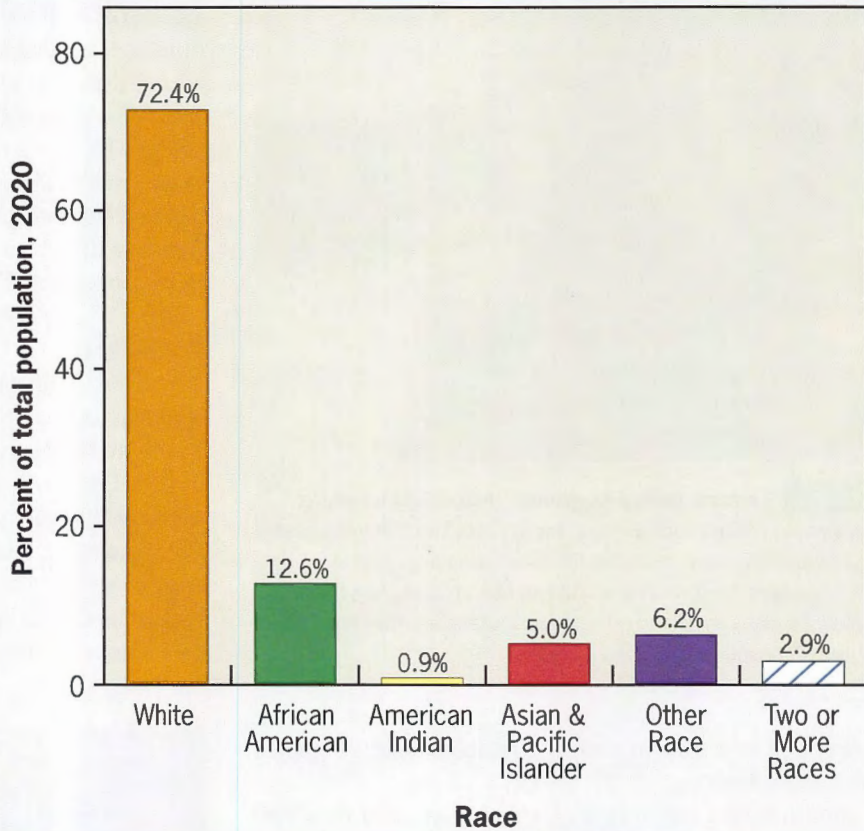
ISABEL INFANTES/AFP/Getty Images

Four Different Racial Groups (oil on panel)/Isabel Infantes de (fl.1772)/Museo de America, Madrid, Spain/  
Bridgeman Images

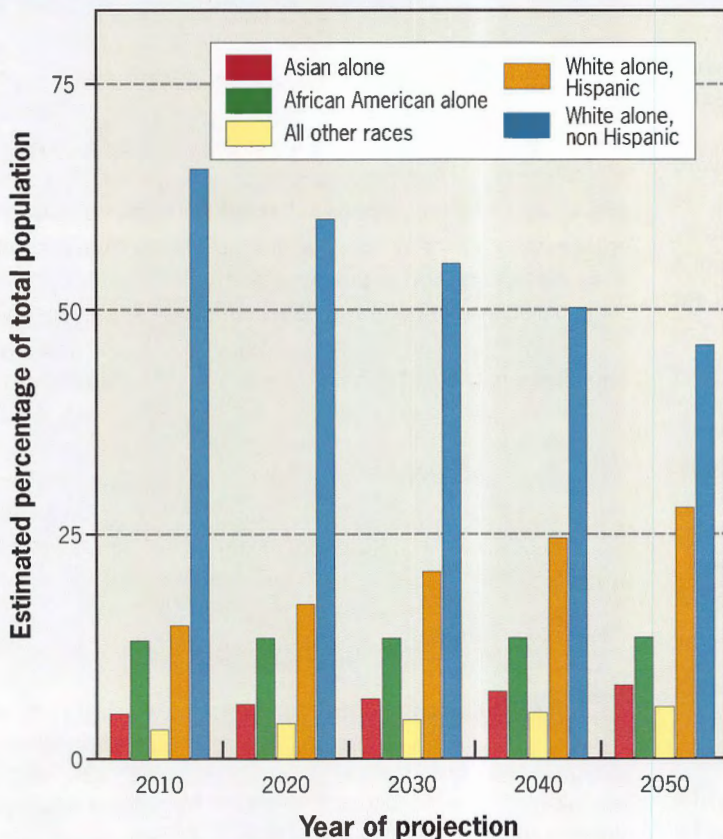
**TABLE 5.1** Population of the United States by Race, 2020.

The U.S. Census projects that when looking at race alone, and not Hispanic ethnicity, whites are the majority population, followed by African Americans, Asian and Pacific Islanders, 2 or more races, and American Indians and Alaska Natives.

Source: U.S. Census 2017.



**TABLE 5.2** Estimated Percentage of United States Population by Race and Ethnicity Until 2060.



In 2000, the United States Census Bureau began to calculate race and Hispanic origin separately, allowing people to place themselves in one or more race categories plus one of two Hispanic origin categories (Hispanic or non-Hispanic). Based on projections from the U.S. Census and the Brookings Institute, the white, non-Hispanic population will no longer be the majority population in the United States after 2045.

Source: United States Census, 2017 and Brookings Institute, 2018.

**TC Thinking Geographically**

Think of the last time you were asked to check a box for your **race**. How does that box factor into your **identity**—how you make sense of yourself individually, locally, regionally, nationally, and globally? Does the role that race plays in your identity change at different **scales** or in different **places**?

## 5.2 Determine How Place Affects Identity and How We Can See Identities in Places.

The processes of constructing identities and identifying against an “Other,” just like any other social or cultural process, differ from place to place and are rooted in places. When we construct identities, part of what we do is infuse place with meaning by attaching memories and experiences to it. This process of infusing a place “with meaning and feeling” is what Gillian Rose and countless other geographers refer to as “developing a sense of place.” Like identity, our sense of place is fluid; it changes as the place changes and as we change.

Of particular interest to geographers is how people define themselves through places. Our sense of place becomes part of our identity, and our identity affects the ways we define and experience place. Rose (1995) explains:

One way in which identity is connected to a particular place is by a feeling that you belong to that place. It’s a place in which you feel comfortable, or at home, because part of how you define yourself is symbolized by certain qualities of that place. The geographer Relph, for example, has even gone so far as to claim that “to be human is to live in a world that is filled with significant places: to be human is to have to know your place.”

The uniqueness of a place can become a part of who we are, just as who we are—individually and in communities—shapes places.

### Race and Place

Racism has affected where people live throughout the history of the United States. The United States government policy of segregation ended legally in 1954, but segregation has remained at the neighborhood scale. States, cities, and towns passed laws that prevented mixing of racial groups in certain neighborhoods. The civil rights movement in the 1960s challenged the legality of neighborhood segregation, and the 1968 Fair Housing Act outlawed racial discrimination in rental and housing markets. The 1977 Community Reinvestment Act prohibited redlining in the mortgage industry, a practice that created segregated neighborhoods (see Chapter 9). Eventually, cities changed laws and ended legal segregation by neighborhood. However, many cities in the United States remain residentially segregated.

Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton defined **residential segregation** as the “degree to which two or more groups live separately from one another” within an urban area. Massey and Denton identified and measured five different kinds of residential segregation: evenness, exposure, concentrated, centralized, and clustered. Thinking of segregation along five different measurements is helpful because residential segregation is complex:

Groups may live apart from one another and be “segregated” in a variety of ways. Minority members may be

distributed so that they are over-represented in some areas and under-represented in others, varying on the characteristic of *evenness*. They may be distributed so that their *exposure* to majority members is limited by virtue of rarely sharing a neighborhood with them. They may be spatially *concentrated* within a very small area, occupying less physical space than majority members. They may be spatially *centralized*, congregating around the urban core, and occupying a more central location than the majority. Finally, areas of minority settlement may be tightly *clustered* to form one large contiguous enclave or be scattered widely around the urban area.

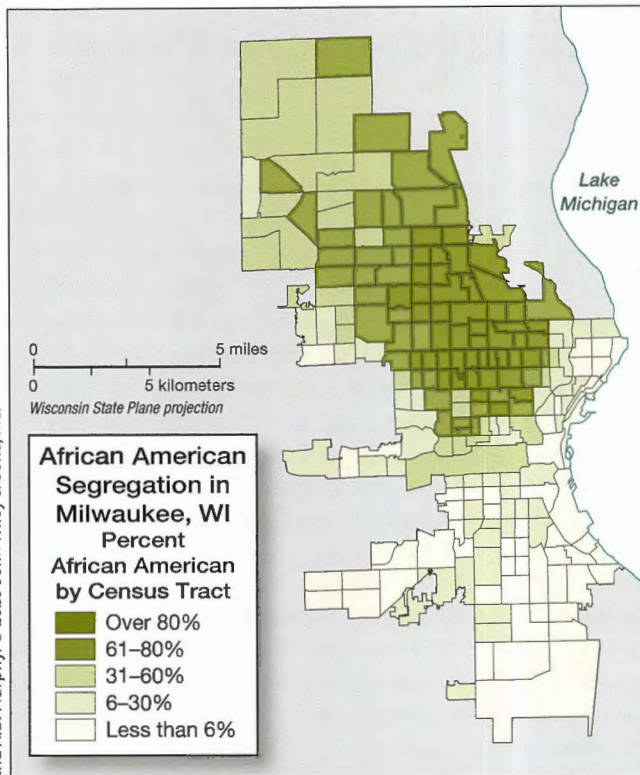
The methods that Massey and Denton established are used by researchers along with the United States Census to calculate segregation in the United States. Maps for the most segregated and least segregated cities can be generated using Census data. Understanding which cities are most or least segregated helps reveal where underlying structures may be entrenching residential segregation.

The roots of residential segregation in the United States are typically attributed to three factors: money, preferences, and discrimination. *Money* leads to residential segregation when only people with certain income levels can afford to live in a neighborhood. In almost all cities, race is related to class, making it difficult to afford a higher-class neighborhood that is also populated by another race. *Preference* means that people may choose to live in a neighborhood with a certain racial composition. In some of the most segregated cities, people will purposely choose to live in neighborhoods with people like themselves. Residents may choose to live in what others call a “blighted” or “rundown” neighborhood because it is their neighborhood: They have helped create it and it reflects their culture. Although discriminatory housing practices are illegal, *discrimination* in the housing market still takes place. Real estate agents and community leaders may consciously or subconsciously direct people to their “own” neighborhoods.

Residential segregation for African Americans nationwide peaked in the 1960s and 1970s. Milwaukee, Wisconsin, remains among the most residentially segregated large metropolitan areas for African Americans (**Fig. 5.6**). Phoenix-Mesa, Arizona, is the most residentially segregated metropolitan area for American Indians and Alaska Natives. Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, is the least residentially segregated. Among metropolitan areas with at least 3 percent of the population American Indian, the four least residentially segregated are all in Oklahoma. The most residentially segregated metropolitan area for Asians/Pacific Islanders is San Francisco, followed by New York and Los Angeles.

Baltimore, Maryland (**Fig. 5.7**), is one of the most residentially integrated cities in the United States for Asians as well as

Data from: United States Census Bureau, 2010. Visualization by E.H. Foubberg and A.B. Murphy. © 2020 John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

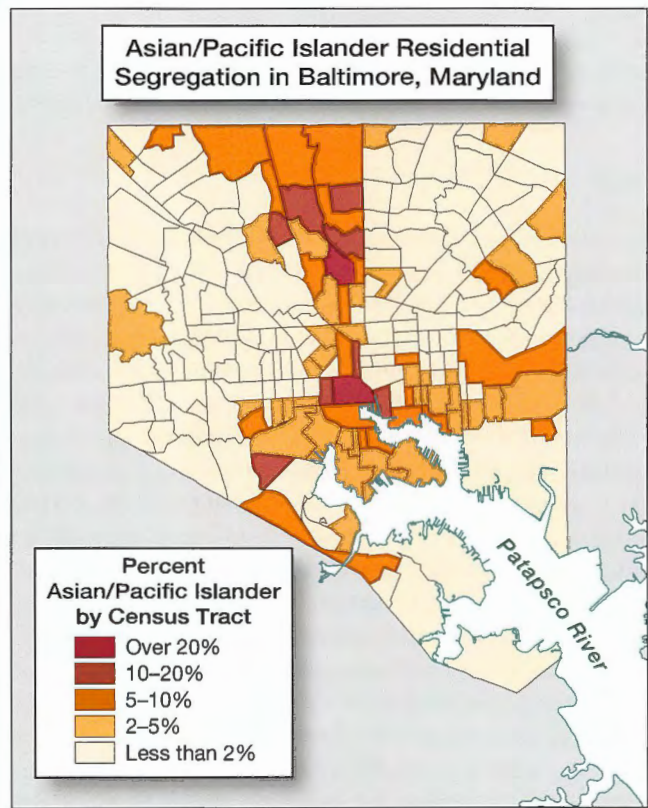
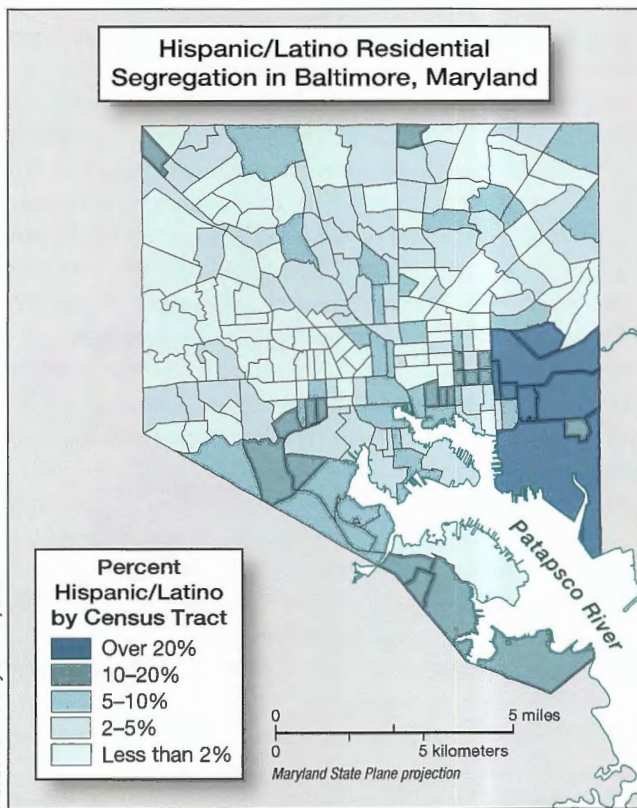


for Hispanics/Latinos. A Census report found that the cities with the highest number of Hispanic residents experience the greatest degree of residential segregation.

**Entrenched Residential Segregation** Measurements of residential segregation and corresponding maps show the outcomes of a variety of stories, but they do not tell us the stories that created the patterns. Why does residential segregation persist in some places and not in others? Since 1990, overall residential segregation by race/ethnicity has been declining in the United States as a whole, but several cities have entrenched residential segregation that has not declined. Sociologists Maria Krysan and Kyle Crowder studied residential segregation in Chicago to find the underlying stories of how residential segregation has become so entrenched in the city (Fig. 5.8).

**FIGURE 5.6 Residential Segregation of African Americans in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.** Percent African American by Census tract. African American neighborhoods are concentrated on the north end of Milwaukee. First settled in the 1800s by Germans, northern Milwaukee became predominantly African American during the Great Migration (see Chapter 3).

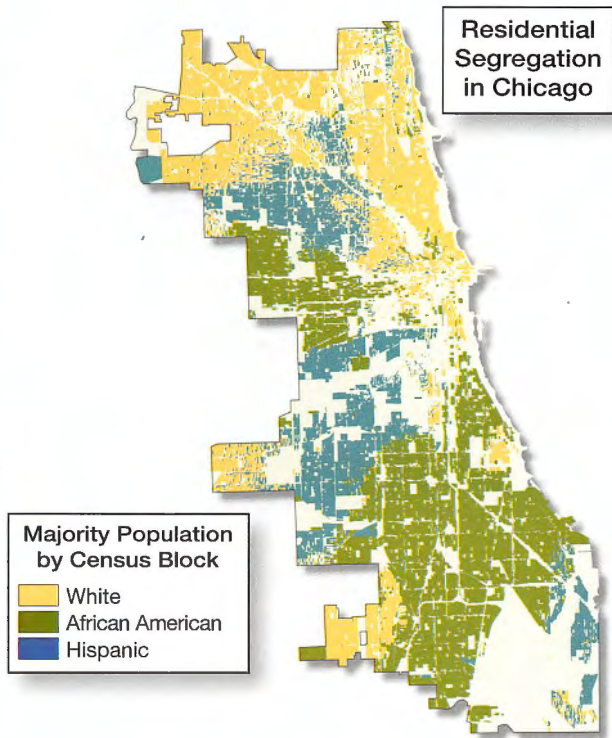
Data from: United States Census Bureau, 2010. Visualization by E.H. Foubberg and A.B. Murphy. © 2020 John Wiley & Sons, Inc.



**FIGURE 5.7 Residential Segregation of Latinos and Asians/Pacific Islanders in Baltimore, Maryland.** Baltimore, Maryland, is one of the least segregated cities for Hispanics and Asians/Pacific Islanders. The Hispanic population is distributed throughout the city with some neighborhoods standing out as strongly Hispanic.



Source: Adapted from American Community Survey data from 2016. WAPO: "America... more diverse that ever- but still segregated." May 10, 2018. Visualization by E.H. Foubberg and A.B. Murphy. © 2020 John Wiley & Sons, Inc.



**FIGURE 5.8 Residential Segregation in Chicago.** Chicago is residentially segregated with clear breaks between African American neighborhoods in the south and west; white neighborhoods in the north, along Lake Michigan, and in the southwest; and Hispanic neighborhoods in the center.

The social networks, activity spaces, and lived experiences of people in Chicago perpetuate residential segregation. While Chicago is a diverse, multiracial city, people from different races have little spatial interaction in their residential neighborhoods. Social networks are divided with little overlap, and in the rounds of everyday activity, people from different racial groups do not interact much. Krysan explains that African Americans in Chicago are concerned about both explicit discrimination (“where people refuse to rent to you”) and anticipated discrimination, the question of whether you will be welcomed and belong in the neighborhood. Social networks also play a role in where people choose to live.

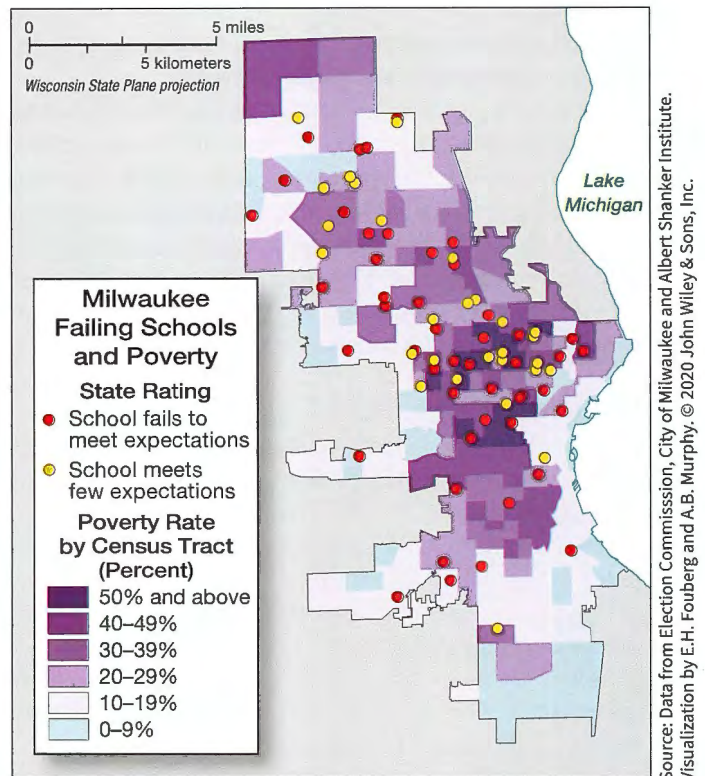
Krysan describes the search for a residence as a three-stage process: pre-search stage, stage one, and stage two. The pre-search stage is your activity space and your social network: the places and people with which you are familiar. In stage one, you use shortcuts of what you already know to “choose which of the many possible communities you’re going to search in” (Gun 2018). Then, in stage two, you look for specific attributes like cost of rent, configuration of house, or proximity to family to make your selection. Each stage helps entrench residential segregation because you start from the places with which you are familiar and then use your social networks in both stage one and stage two to select your home. As long as neighborhoods

and social networks are segregated in practice, residential segregation becomes, in Krysan’s words “baked in” (Gun 2018).

Residential segregation matters, particularly in the United States, where public school districts are funded by local property taxes (**Fig. 5.9**). Being separated residentially separates groups by “educational quality and occupational opportunity,” according to Crowder (Williams and Emamdjomeh 2018). In the United States school system, affluence correlates with achievement (**Fig. 5.10**). Children from families with higher incomes go to schools with higher funding and perform at grade levels above where children from families with lower incomes at lower-funded schools perform.

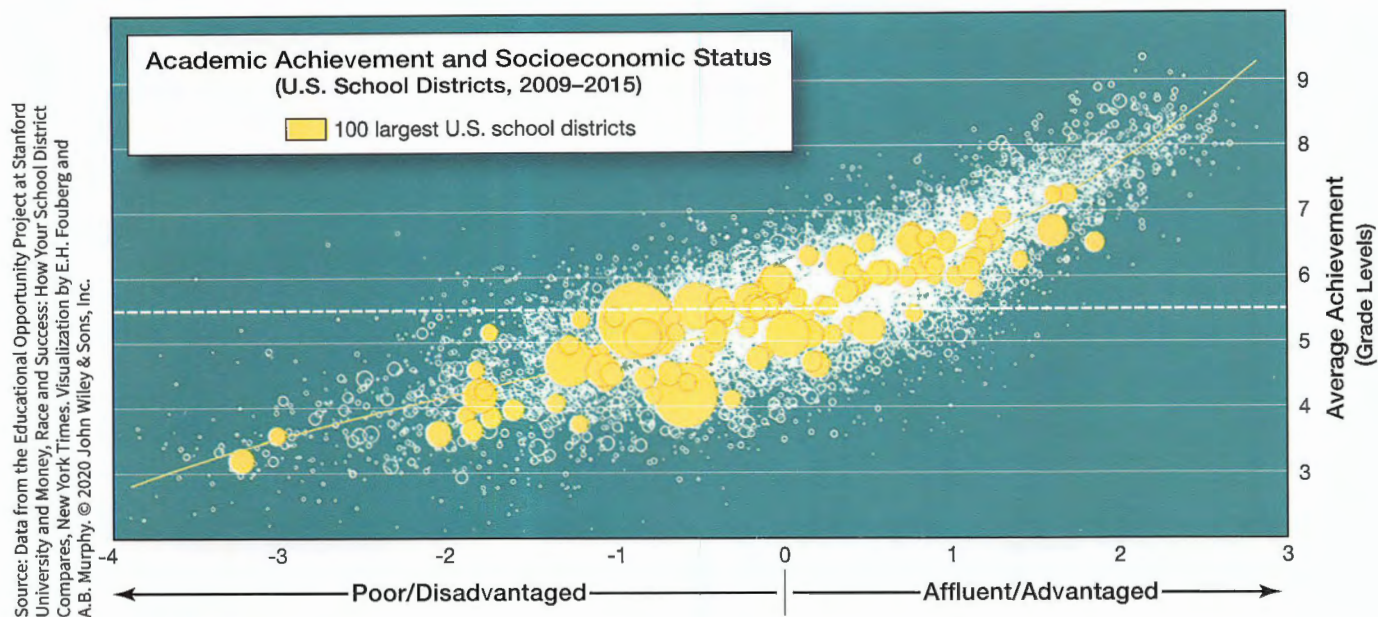
### Identities Across Scales

The way we make sense of ourselves in an increasingly globalized world is complex. We have different identities at different scales: individual, local, regional, national, and global. At the individual scale, we may see ourselves as a daughter, a sister, a teacher, or a student. At the local scale, we may see ourselves as members of a community, leaders of a campus organization, residents of a neighborhood, or members of an ethnic group. At the regional scale, we may see ourselves as Southerners, as north Georgians, as Atlantans, as Yankees



**FIGURE 5.9 School Performance and Poverty in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.** The colors on this map show the percent of people with incomes below the poverty line. The dots on the map show schools that fail or are below expectations according to a state rating of school districts.

Source: Data from Election Commission, City of Milwaukee and Albert Shanker Institute. Visualization by E.H. Foubberg and A.B. Murphy. © 2020 John Wiley & Sons, Inc.



**FIGURE 5.10** Correlation between Academic Achievement and Socioeconomic Status in U.S.

**School Districts.** All U.S. school districts are charted on this graph, with the relative size of the student population shown in the size of each bubble. The 100 largest school districts are shown in yellow. Degrees of poverty and disadvantage and affluence and advantage are shown on the X axis and average grade level achievement is shown on the Y axis.

living in the South, or as migrants from another region of the world. At the national scale, we may see ourselves as American, as college students, or as members of a national political party. At the global scale, we may see ourselves as Western, as educated, as relatively wealthy, or as free.

One way to view an individual's various identities is to treat them as nested, one inside of the other. The appropriate identity is revealed at the appropriate scale. In this vein, each larger geographic space has its own corresponding set of identities. Today, however, geographers see identities as fluid, intertwined, and contextual rather than as neatly nested. Identities affect each other in and across scales. The ways places and peoples interact across scales simultaneously affect their identities.

**The Scale of New York City** One way that scale affects identity is by helping to shape what is seen—what identity is apparent to others and to ourselves at different scales. To demonstrate this idea, we can shift our focus from residential segregation in all large metropolitan areas in North America to one enormous metropolitan area, New York City. New York has a greater number and diversity of migrants than any other city in the United States. At the scale of New York, we can see how identities change so that we are no longer simply Hispanic (as the Census enumerates us); we are Puerto Rican or Mexican or Dominican from a certain neighborhood.

The point is that the people in New York are much more diverse than the box on Census forms labeled “Hispanic” would suggest. For example, in a chapter called “Changing Latinization of New York City,” geographer Inés Miyares highlights the importance of Caribbean culture to New York. The majority of New York’s 2.4 million Hispanics are Puerto Rican,

Dominican, or Mexican (together accounting for over 70 percent of the city’s Hispanics). The Hispanic population in New York is quite diverse, also including Ecuadorians, Colombians, and Central Americans. Each group has made its own profound imprint on New York’s cultural landscape.

New migrants to a city often move to low-income areas that are being gradually abandoned by older immigrant groups. This process is called **succession**. In New York, Puerto Ricans moved into the immigrant Jewish neighborhood of East Harlem in the early twentieth century, successively assuming a dominant presence in the neighborhood. With the influx of Puerto Ricans, new names for the neighborhood developed, and today it is frequently called Spanish Harlem or El Barrio (meaning “neighborhood” in Spanish). As the Puerto Rican population grew, new storefronts appeared that catered to the Puerto Rican population, including travel agencies (specializing in flights to Puerto Rico), specialty grocery stores, and dance and music studios.

A large-scale migration from the Dominican Republic began in 1965 and resulted in a distinct neighborhood and cultural landscape. Dominican migrants landed in the Washington Heights/Inwood neighborhood of upper Manhattan, a neighborhood previously occupied by immigrant Jews, African Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans. Miyares reports that although a Jewish cultural landscape persists, including a Jewish university, synagogues, and Jewish delicatessens, the cultural landscape of Washington Heights is clearly Dominican—from store signs in Spanish to the presence of the colors of the Dominican flag (**Fig. 5.11**).

New York is unique because of the sheer number and diversity of its immigrant population. The city’s cultural landscape reflects its unique population. As Miyares explains:

Since the overwhelming majority of New York City's population lives in apartments as opposed to houses, it is often difficult to discern the presence of an ethnic group by looking at residential housescapings. However every neighborhood has a principal commercial street, and this is often converted into an ethnic main street. It is commonly through business signs that migrants make their presence known. Names of businesses reflect place names from the home country or key cultural artifacts. Colors of the national flag are common in store awnings, and the flags themselves and national crests abound in store décor. Key religious symbols are also common. Migrants are so prevalent and diverse that coethnic proprietors use many kinds of visual clues to attract potential customers.

Throughout the process, new migrants do not need to change the facades of apartment buildings to reflect their culture. Instead, many new migrants focus their attention on the streetscapes, offering goods and services for their community and posting signs in their language.

In New York and in specific neighborhoods like East Harlem, the word *Hispanic* does little to explain the diversity of the city. Hispanic identities in New York vary by “borough, by neighborhood, by era, and by source country and entry experience.” Since 1990, the greatest growth in the Hispanic population of New York has been Mexican. The process of succession continues in New York, with Mexican migrants moving into and succeeding other Hispanic neighborhoods, sometimes producing tensions

between and among the local cultures. Mexican migrants have settled in a variety of ethnic neighborhoods, living alongside new Chinese migrants in Brooklyn and Puerto Ricans in East Harlem.

Urban ethnic neighborhoods like Washington Heights and Little Italy (see Chapter 4) in New York create places where identities are rooted and reinforced. The local scale identities found in ethnic neighborhoods affect identities at larger scales including the nation.

## Ethnicity and Place

Ethnicity offers a good example of how identities affect places and how places affect identities. The idea of ethnicity as an identity stems from the notion that people are closely bounded, even related, in a certain place over time. The word **ethnic** comes from the ancient Greek word *ethnos*, meaning “people” or “nation.” Geographer Stuart Hall (1995) explains: “Where people share not only a culture but an ethnos, their belongingness or binding into group and place, and their sense of cultural identity, are very strongly defined.” Hall makes clear that ethnic identity is “historically constructed like all cultural identities” and is often considered natural because it implies ancient relations among a people over time.

Ethnicity may sound simple, but it is not. In the United States, for example, a group of people may define their ethnicity as Swiss American. Switzerland is a country in Europe where people speak four major languages and other minor

### Guest Field Note Reading the Dominican Landscape in Washington Heights, New York

#### Inés Miyares

Hunter College of the City University of New York

It is a warm, humid September morning, and the shops along Juan Pablo Duarte Boulevard are already bustling with customers. The Dominican flag waves proudly from each corner's traffic signal. Calypso and salsa music ring through the air, as do the voices of Dominican grandmothers negotiating for the best prices on fresh mangoes and papayas. The scents of fresh empanadas de yuca and pastelitos de pollo waft from street vendor carts. The signage, the music, the language of the street are all in Spanish and call out to this Dominican community. I am not in Santo Domingo but in Washington Heights in upper Manhattan in New York City.

Whenever I exit the “A” train at 181st Street and walk toward St. Nicholas Avenue, renamed here Juan Pablo Duarte Boulevard for the founding father of the Dominican Republic, it is as if I have boarded a plane to the island. Although there are Dominicans living in most neighborhoods of New York's five boroughs, Washington Heights serves as the heart and soul of the community. Dominicans began settling in Washington Heights in 1965, replacing previous Jewish, African American, and Cuban residents through processes of invasion and succession. Over time they have established a vibrant social and economic enclave that is replenished daily by transnational connections to the residents' homeland. These transnational links are pervasive on the landscape, and include travel agencies advertising daily flights to Santo



FIGURE 5.11 Washington Heights, New York.

Domingo and Puerto Plata and stores handling *cargas*, *envios*, and *remesas* (material and financial remittances) found on every block, as well as *farmacias* (pharmacies) selling traditional medicines and *botanicas* selling candles, statues, and other elements needed by practitioners of Santería, a syncretistic blending of Catholicism and Yoruba beliefs practiced by many in the Spanish Caribbean.

ones. The strongest identities in Switzerland are most often at the canton level—a small geographically defined area that distinguishes cultural groups within the country. So, which Swiss are Swiss Americans? The way Swiss Americans perceive Switzerland and sense it as part of who they are may not exist in Switzerland proper (Fig. 5.12).

Ethnic identity is greatly affected by scale and place. The Jackson Heights neighborhood in Queens, New York, is home to speakers of 167 different languages. Half of Jackson Heights's 67,000 residents identify as Hispanic, and 20 percent identify as South Asian: Indian, Pakistani, or Bangladeshi. In South Asia, the countries of Pakistan and India have a history of animosity since the British partitioned them in 1947. Pakistan and Bangladesh were one country as of 1947, but they split in 1973. However, in Jackson Heights, a world apart from India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, many South Asians identify with one another. South Asian restaurants, grocery stores, and a theater that plays new release Bollywood movies attract Pakistanis, Indians, and Bangladeshis alike. The geographical context of Jackson Heights fosters a collective South Asian identity.

Cultural groups often invoke ethnicity when race cannot explain differences and antagonism between groups. Just as “racial conflicts” are rooted in perceptions of distinctiveness based on differences in economics, power, language, religion, lifestyle, or historical experience, so too are “ethnic conflicts.” A conflict is often called ethnic when a racial distinction cannot easily be made. For example, using physical appearance and skin color, an observer cannot distinguish the ethnic groups in many of the conflicts around the world. The adversaries in post-World War II conflicts in Northern Ireland, Spain, the former

Yugoslavia, Sri Lanka, Ivory Coast, or Rwanda cannot be identified racially. Thus “ethnicity” becomes the marker of difference.

In some instances, the term ethnicity is reserved for a small, cohesive, culturally linked group of people who stand apart from the surrounding culture (often as a result of migration). In other cases, ethnicity is used to describe a group that covers an entire country or world region. A map showing all recognizable ethnic areas would look like a three-dimensional jigsaw puzzle with thousands of often overlapping pieces—some no larger than a neighborhood, others as large as entire countries.

**Chinatown in Mexicali** The border region between the United States and Mexico is generally seen as a cultural meeting point between Mexicans and Americans. Yet the ethnic composition of people in the border region is even more diverse.

Indigenous peoples have lived in what is now the border region for thousands of years. A treaty defined the current border between Mexico and the United States in 1848. Mexico ceded half its territory to the United States through that treaty, and the new border arbitrarily divided indigenous people. New identities were forged over time, with communities on the north side of the border becoming Native Americans and communities on the south side of the border becoming indigenous Mexicans.

Through migration, people from Germany, Russia, India, China, Japan, and many other places also live in the cities and rural areas of the United States–Mexico border region. Over time people have created distinct patterns of settlement and imprinted cultural landscapes with their ethnic identities. For example, the town of Mexicali is the capital of Baja California, located in Mexico just south of California. Not far from the central business district of Mexicali lies the largest Chinatown in Mexico, La Chinesca. Chinese migrants began arriving in 1902, brought by the Colorado River Land Company, which started growing cotton in Mexicali when diversion of the Colorado River brought water to irrigate fields in the area (Curtis 1995). Chinese in the United States were drawn to Mexicali because the American government started persecuting Chinese after passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882. Chinese settled in the town of Mexicali, and by 1919 more than 11,000 Chinese were either permanent or temporary residents of the valley. They established a thriving Chinatown in the heart of Mexicali that has served as the uncontested center of Chinese life in the region for decades (Fig. 5.13).

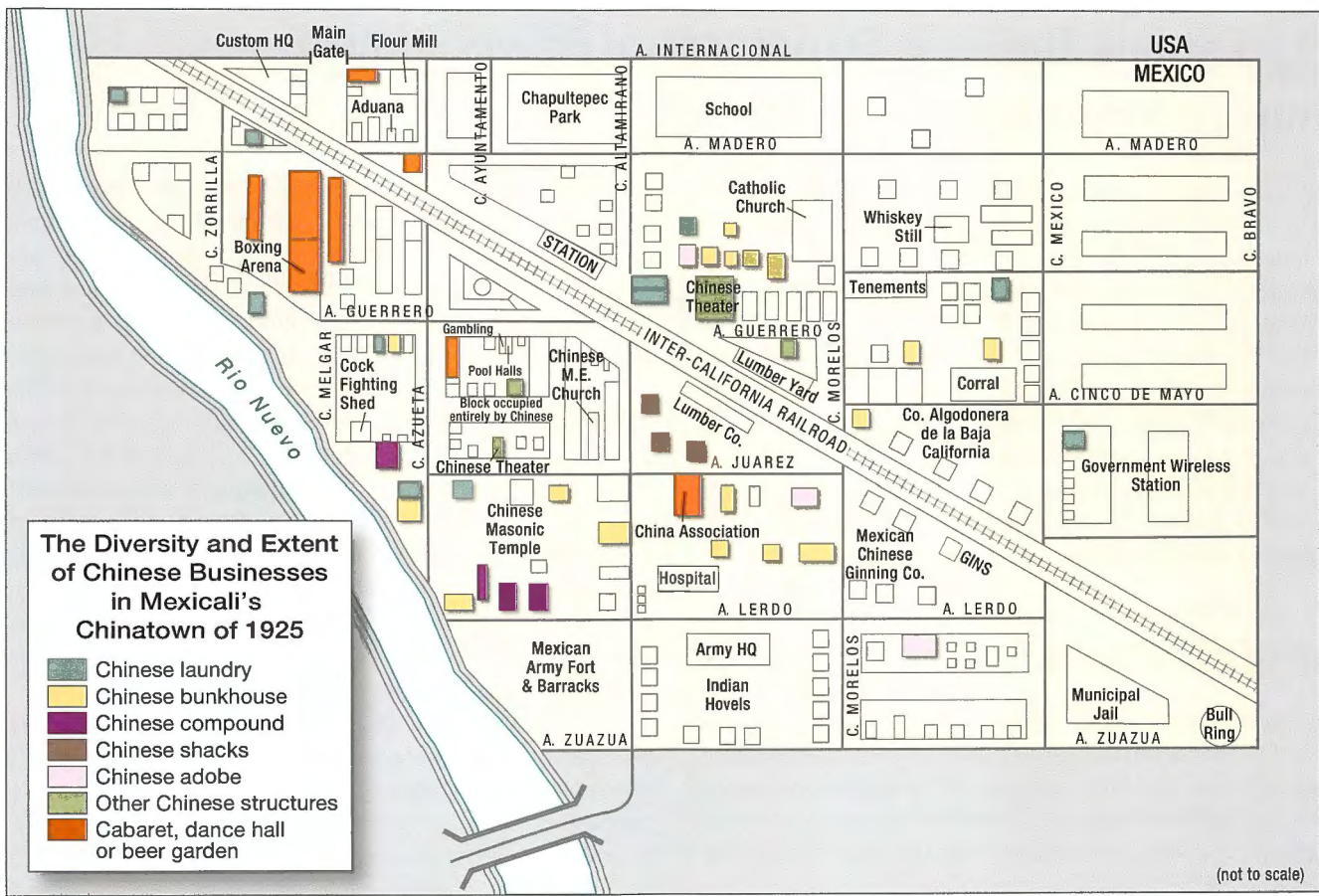
Chinese in Mexicali remained prominent players in the social and economic life of the city during the twentieth century. Chinese owned and operated restaurants, bars, retail trade establishments, commercial land developments, currency exchanges, and more. Chinese migrants also built a system of underground tunnels connecting businesses in the Chinatown area so they could avoid the hot Mexican sun by traveling and sleeping underground. The tunnels served as a refuge when anti-Chinese sentiments grew during the second Mexican Revolution, starting in 1910.

By 1989, Chinese owned nearly 500 commercial or service properties. In an effort to sustain their cultural traditions and add to the cultural life of the city, they established the China Association, which plays an active role in Mexicali's social and civic life.



Photo by E.H. Foubert. © 2020 John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

**FIGURE 5.12 New Glarus, Wisconsin.** Immigrants from Switzerland established the town of New Glarus in 1845. The Maple Leaf Cheese and Chocolate Haus, across the street from the New Glarus Hotel, combines Wisconsin cheese and Swiss chocolate in one shop. The building is designed with a Swiss architecture style and flies a Swiss flag. The Swiss flag and Swiss architecture are found all over town, as a constant reminder of the pride the town has in its history and culture.



Source: Adapted from J.R. Curtis "Mexicali's Chinatown," *Geographical Review*, 85 (1995), 344.

**FIGURE 5.13 Chinatown in Mexicali, Mexico.** The diversity and extent of Chinese businesses in Mexicali's Chinatown of 1925 are shown in this map.

Mexicali's Chinatown is now experiencing a transformation. Chinese residents have dispersed to the edges of the city and beyond, as many can afford to move out of town. As a result, relatively few Chinese continue to live in the city's Chinatown. Some have even moved across the border to Calexico, a city on the California side of the border, while holding on to business interests in Mexicali.

Mexicali's Chinatown continues to play an important symbolic and functional role for people with Chinese ancestry in the area who are still shaping the region's social and economic geography. The city of 1 million people is home to 300 Chinese restaurants that fuse southwestern and Mexican flavors into traditional Chinese fare (Fig. 5.14). Even if the ethnic population in a region is small, ethnic group identity and consciousness can have a lasting effect on the cultural landscape.

### TC Thinking Geographically

Study the example of residential segregation in Milwaukee from the beginning of this section of the chapter. Hypothesize how the pattern of segregation was created and how it reflects the history of **migration** in Milwaukee (see Figure 3.11).



Aurelio Jose Barrera/Los Angeles Times/Getty Images

**FIGURE 5.14 Mexicali, Mexico.** The Mexican city of Mexicali still has over 300 Chinese restaurants today, including the Villa China that advertises Pepsi and Tecate, a Mexican beer.

## 5.3 Explain the Role Structures of Power Play in Shaping Identities.

Geographers who study identities of gender, ethnicity, race, and sexuality realize that when people make places, they do so in the context of surrounding social relationships, including structures of power. We can, for example, create places that are gendered—places seen as being appropriate for women or for men. A building can be constructed with the goal of creating gendered spaces within it, or it can become gendered by the way people make use of it. People with greater power can claim and shape spaces to match their identities. People with less power can define smaller, often informal spaces as their own and shape them to reflect their identities. The use of space is powerful in defining a place as belonging to a people.

### Identity and Space

One way of thinking about place is to consider it as a cross section of space. Doreen Massey and Pat Jess (1995) define space as “social relations stretched out” and place as “particular articulations of those social relations as they have come together, over time, in that particular location.” Part of the

social relations of a place are the embedded assumptions about ethnicity, gender, and sexuality. These assumptions dictate expectations about what certain groups “should” and “should not” do socially, economically, politically, and even domestically. These same assumptions also create barriers to equality and also render some groups more visible than others.

**Structures of power** are assumptions and relationships dictating who is in control and who has power over others. Structures of power affect identities directly, and the nature of those effects depends on the geographical context in which they are situated. Structures of power also affect cultural landscapes by determining what is seen and what is not. Massey and Jess (1995) contend that power is central to the study of place, as power controls “the contest over how the place should be seen, what meaning to give it,” and power constructs the “imaginative geography, the identities of place and culture.”

Structures of power do much more than shape the cultural landscape. Structures of power can also subjugate entire groups of people, enabling society to enforce ideas about the ways people should behave or where people should be welcomed or turned away. Such consequences alter the distribution of peo-

ples. Policies created by governments can limit the access of certain groups. Jim Crow laws in the United States once separated “black” spaces from “white” spaces, right down to public drinking fountains.

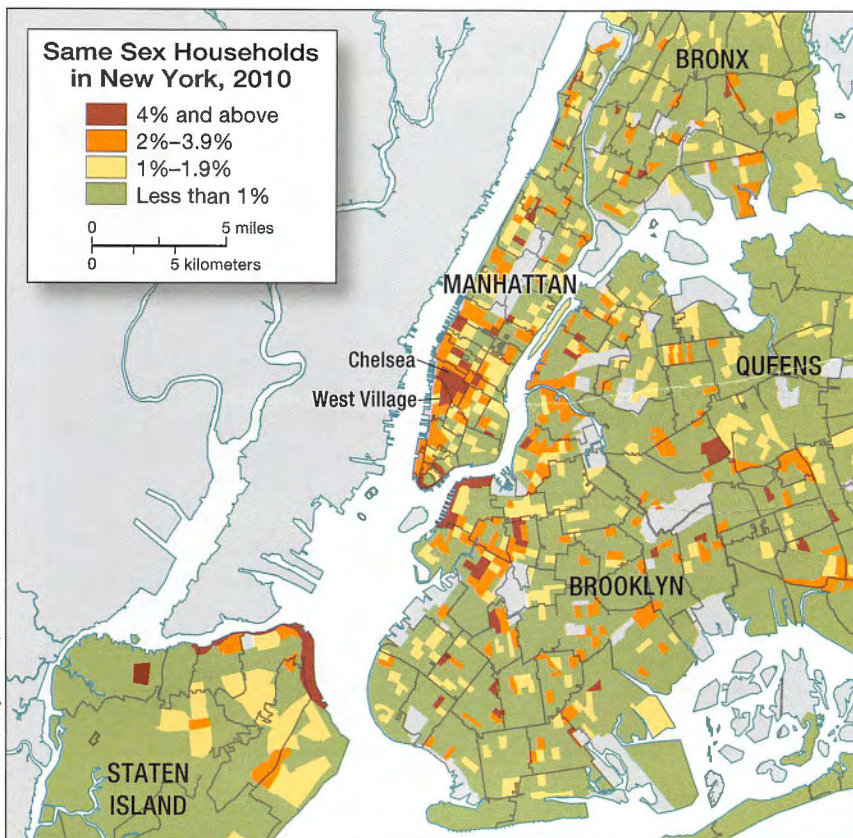
Even without government support, people create places where they limit the access of other peoples. For example, in Belfast, Northern Ireland, Catholics and Protestants defined certain neighborhoods as excluding the “other” by painting murals, hanging bunting, and painting curbs (**Fig. 5.15**). In major cities in the United States, local governments do not create or enforce laws defining certain spaces as belonging to members of a certain gang, but the people themselves create these spaces, as the people of Belfast do, through graffiti, murals, and building colors.

**Sexuality and Space** Sexuality is part of humanity. Just as gender roles are culturally constructed, so too do cultures decide sexual norms. In their installment on “Sexuality and Space” in *Geography in America at the Dawn of the 21st Century*, geographers Glen Elder, Lawrence Knopp, and Heidi Nast contend that most social science across disciplines is written in a heteronormative way. The default



Photo by E.H. Foubert. © 2020 John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

**FIGURE 5.15** Belfast, Northern Ireland. Signs of the conflict in Northern Ireland mark the cultural landscape throughout Belfast. In the Shankhill area of Belfast, where Protestants are the majority population, a mural commemorating Stevie McKeag, member of the Ulster Defence Association, a Protestant paramilitary organization, stands in the middle of a residential neighborhood. McKeag is called “Top Gun” for killing 12 Catholics, most of whom were ordinary citizens, in the 1990s. He died in his home of a drug overdose in 2000 at the age of 30.



**FIGURE 5.16 Same-Sex Households in New York.** The map shows the concentrations of same-sex households in New York, by Census tract. Chelsea and West Village, both on the west side of lower Manhattan, stand out as having a large concentration of same-sex households.

subject in the minds of the academics who write studies is heterosexual—and usually white and male as well. Elder, Knopp, Nast, and other geographers are working to find out how heteronormative ideas influence understandings of places and cultures, and how the practices of peoples who do not conform to these ideas influence the development of places.

Early research on **sexuality** by geographers focused largely on the same kinds of questions posed by those who first took up the study of race, gender, and ethnicity. Academics asked where people with shared identity live and gather, what they do to create a space for themselves, and what kinds of problems they confront. For example, early studies examining gay neighborhoods in San Francisco and London focused on how gay men created spaces and what those spaces meant to gay identities. Specific studies have looked at the role of gay pride parades in creating communities and the political struggle for access to other parades, such as St. Patrick's Day parades in some cities. Other studies examine the role that gays and lesbians play in the gentrification of neighborhoods in city centers (a topic we explore in Chapter 9).

The U.S. Census counts the number of same-sex households and same-sex marriages in the United States, which makes it possible to map their distributions. These data, by Census tract—a small area in cities and a larger area in rural America—made it possible for Gary Gates and Jason Ost to publish *The Gay and Lesbian Atlas*. Their detailed maps of major cities in the United States show concentrations of same-sex households in certain neighborhoods of cities (Fig. 5.16),

such as Adams Morgan and DuPont Circle in Washington, D.C., and the West Village and Chelsea in Manhattan (Fig. 5.17).

Demographer Gary Gates analyzed the geography of same-sex couples in the United States. He found a changing pattern, as cities with well-established gay and lesbian neighborhoods fell in the rankings of the proportion of same-sex couples, and retirement communities and smaller cities rose in the rankings. The *New York Times* reported that San Francisco fell to 28th in the rankings of communities with the top proportions of same-sex couples. Same-sex couples in the baby boomer generation are retiring and moving to cities, including Rehoboth Beach, Delaware; Palm Springs, California; and Provincetown, Massachusetts (ranked number 1).

Today, geographers studying sexuality focus not only on the distributions and experiences of people in places but also on the theories behind the experiences and the intersectionalities of LGBTQ identities. Theories explain and inform our understanding of sexuality and space. For example, many of the geographers who study sexuality are employing “queer theory” in their studies. Elder, Knopp, and Nast explain that social scientists (in geog-

raphy and other disciplines) are appropriating a commonly used word with negative connotations (*queer*) and turning it in a way that “highlights the contextual nature” of opposition to the heteronormative. Use of the term *queer theory* focuses on the political engagement of queers with the heteronormative. Geographers also concentrate on extending fieldwork on sexuality and space beyond the Western world of North America and Europe to explore and explain the local contexts of political engagement in the rest of the world.

Moving beyond mapping patterns and establishing theories, geographic research on sexuality is increasingly studying intersectionality. Recognizing that much LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) research focused on white, middle-class, gay men, geographers are studying how people with intersecting identities, for example gay Muslims or black lesbians, create space and place. **Intersectionality** is the overlap or interconnection between social groups, including race, gender, class, and sexuality. The concept of intersectionality is credited to attorney Kimberlé Crenshaw, who argued black women were disadvantaged in the workplace and in labor laws because jobs were generally divided by race and by gender. Jobs designated for blacks went to black men and jobs designated for women went to white women, leaving black women underemployed. Crenshaw argues that academics need to study structures of power that create barriers to equality for less-visible social groups.

Sexuality research is also moving beyond world cities in higher income countries to smaller cities and rural areas and

### Author Field Note Parading Pride through New York, New York

“I just happened to be in New York City the weekend after the state of New York legalized same-sex marriages. I cut it close getting to the airport so I could catch the first part of the annual Pride parade. The parade, which started on the edge of the Chelsea neighborhood at 36th Street, traveled down 5th Avenue toward where I took this photograph near Union Square, and ended in the West Village. The route of the Pride parade passes by the Stonewall National Monument, the site of June 1969 riots where New York’s LGBTQ community demonstrated and fought back against police raids of spaces the LGBTQ community frequented, including the bar at the Stonewall Inn. Always a boisterous, celebratory event, the Pride parade had a special feel this year as celebrants cheered what many described as one of the great civil rights victories of the current era.”

– A.B. Murphy



Photo by A.B. Murphy. © 2020 John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

**FIGURE 5.17** New York, New York.

also to lower income countries to better understand the varying roles sexuality plays in making space and place.

Geographer Christopher Schroeder’s study of gentrification of the Old West End neighborhood found that intersectionality played a key role in creating spaces and places for gay men and lesbian women in Toledo, Ohio. Through oral histories and archival research, Schroeder (2014) recognized 3 stages in the development of an Old West End neighborhood. As Toledo went through deindustrialization, a small group of gay men who worked as interior decorators rented and bought beautiful, architecturally interesting, older homes in the Old West End starting in the 1950s. As deindustrialization accelerated, families moved out of the neighborhood into suburbs. The neighborhood was home to 5 Methodist churches, and a minister and his wife at one church became a support system for younger, sometimes homeless and often lower income gay men, who moved into the neighborhood where rents were falling. Class, sexuality, and religion intersected to create a supportive environment for young gay men and lesbian women. Schroeder’s research highlights that simply saying that gay men play an important role in gentrification of cities does not tell the whole story, and that research into change over time and the roles individuals and intersecting groups play in creating place and space better reveal the role people play in making places.

## Counting the Work of Women

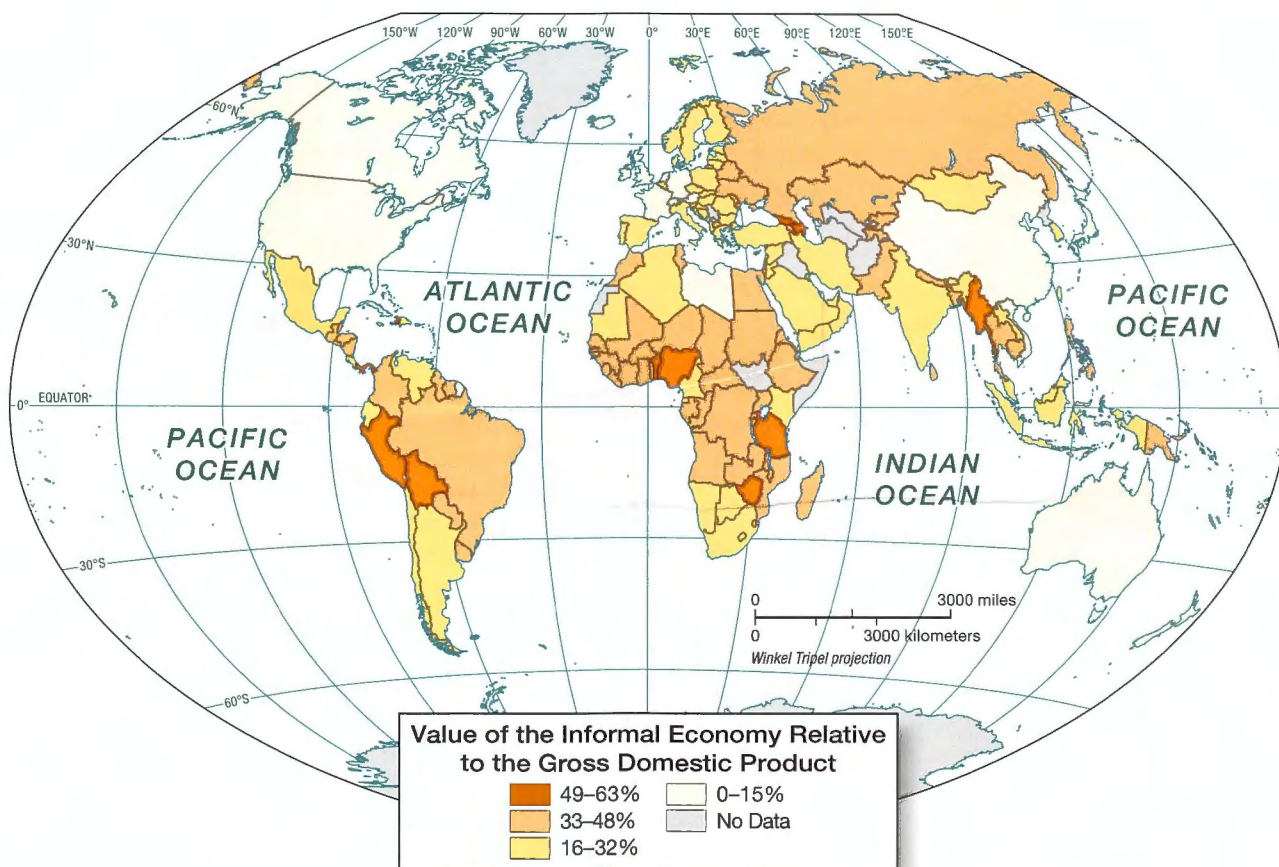
The statistics governments collect and report reflect the structures of power involved in defining what is valued and what is

not. Think back to the Constitution of the United States prior to the Fourteenth Amendment, when the government enumerated a black person as three-fifths of a white person. Until 1924, the U.S. government also did not recognize the right of all Native Americans to vote, even though the Fifteenth Amendment guaranteed the right to vote regardless of race in 1870.

The U.S. government separated Native Americans into those who were “civilized” enough to be citizens and those who were not (“Indians not taxed”) until 1924, when it recognized the citizenship of all Native Americans born in the United States. In 1920, enough states finally ratified the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which extended voting rights regardless of sex, to allow women to vote. Despite progress in counting people of all races, ethnicities, and sex, some charge that the United States Census Bureau continues to undercount minority populations (see Chapter 2).

Throughout the world, the work of women is often undervalued and uncounted. When the United States and other governments began to count the value of goods and services produced within their borders, they did so with two assumptions: (1) that the work of the household is reserved for women, and (2) that this work does not contribute to the productivity of the country’s economy. The most commonly used statistic on productivity, the **gross national income (GNI)**, does not include work in the home. The GNI includes neither the unpaid labor of women in the household nor, usually, the work done by rural women in lower income countries. GNI counts only the **formal economy**, what is reported to and taxed by government, not the **informal economy**, economic activities not counted or taxed by government (**Fig. 5.18**).





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**FIGURE 5.18 Informal Economy as a Percentage of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).** Based on economic analysis, the World Bank estimates the value of the informal economy in 162 countries as a percentage of the country's official GDP.

Scholars estimate that if women's productivity in the household alone were given a dollar value by calculating what it would cost to hire people to perform these tasks, the GNI for all countries of the world combined would grow by about one-third. In lower income countries, women produce more than half of all the food; they also build homes, dig wells, plant and harvest crops, make clothes, prepare and sell foods, and do many other things that are not recorded in official statistics as being economically productive because they are in the informal economy (Fig. 5.19).

The number of women working in the formal economy is rising. The United Nations reported that "women are predominantly and increasingly employed in the services sector" of the formal economy (2010). Combining paid work with work in the informal economy and unpaid domestic work, "women work longer hours than men do." The proportion of women in the labor force grew in all regions reported by the United Nations except Asia and eastern Europe. In South America, for example, the percentage of women in the labor force rose from 38 in 1990 to 59 in 2010. In North Africa, the participation of women in the labor force increased from 23 percent



Laure Siegel/Alamy Stock Photo

**FIGURE 5.19 Bangkok, Thailand.** A woman waits for a street vendor to put chocolate sauce on her coconut ice cream at a street stall. This activity is one part of the informal economy, the uncounted economy in which women play a large role. While the government does not regulate the informal economy, informal structures do. Bangkok's large informal economy includes structures of power where street vendors pay for access to certain street corners.

in 1990 to 29 percent in 2010, while over the same time period in sub-Saharan Africa, women accounted for 60 percent of the labor force.

Even though women are in the official labor force in greater proportions than ever before, they continue to be paid less and have less access to food and education than men in nearly all cultures and places around the world. Two-thirds of the 774 million illiterate adults in the world are women, and women account for 60 percent of the world's poorest citizens. The United Nations Development Program reports that "75 percent of the world's women cannot get bank loans because they have unpaid or insecure jobs and are not entitled to property ownership." As a result, women worldwide only own "one percent of the world's wealth."

The United Nations publication *The World's Women* reported regional variations in agriculture employment for women. In Africa, for example, the proportion of women employed in agriculture ranges from a low of 19 percent in countries in southern Africa to a high of 68 percent in countries in eastern, middle, and western Africa. In northern Africa, 42 percent of women are employed in agriculture and 41 percent of women are employed in services. In Asia, employment of women in agriculture ranges from 11 percent in eastern Asia, where 76 percent of women are employed in the service sector, to South Asia, with 55 percent of women working in agriculture and 28 percent in the service sector.

Although the number of women working in industries globally is small relative to the proportion of men, it is rising.

However, employment of women in the industrial sector was slowed by the global economic downturn of 2008. Simultaneously, mechanization led to job reductions and hence to layoffs of women workers. In the maquiladoras of northern Mexico (see Chapter 10), for example, many women workers lost their jobs when labor markets contracted after the 2008 financial crisis.

To provide for their family, many women engage in private, often home-based activities. They tailor, brew beer, make food products, and make soap (**Fig. 5.20**). Activities like these are not counted in the formal economy. In both long-standing neighborhoods and migrant slums on the fringes of many cities, the informal economy is the mainstay of many communities in the global periphery.

Statistics showing how much women produce and how little their work is valued are undoubtedly interesting. Yet the work that geographers who study gender have done goes far beyond the accumulation of data. Since the 1980s, geographers have asked why society talks about women and their roles in certain ways. They've asked how these ideas, heard and represented throughout our lives, affect geographic circumstances and how we understand them. For example, Ann Oberhauser (2003) and her coauthors explained that people in the West tend to think that women are employed in the textile and jewelry-making fields in poorer countries because the women in these regions are "more docile, submissive, and tradition bound" than women in more prosperous parts of the world. A geographer studying gender asks where these

### Author Field Note Making Pineapple Jelly in Phuket, Thailand

"The beaches are the main destination for tourists on the island of Phuket, Thailand. The western side of the island was hard hit by a major tsunami in 2004. Many hotels and restaurants were completely rebuilt after 2004. We ventured into the city of Phuket on the east side of the island to get a better sense of the island's history and older architecture. Phuket has a small Chinatown with links to Chinese laborers who migrated to Phuket to mine tin starting in the 1800s. You can get a sense of the role Phuket played on the trade route between Indian and China, and how that trade once created the heartbeat of Old Phuket. Driving across the island, we could tell it was the month of Ramadan, when Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset. Restaurants were shuttered, waiting for the evening hour of the sunset when Muslims could break their fast. North of Old Phuket, we visited a Muslim village in the Pa Klok district where several families operate a group of businesses growing rubber, pineapple, and goats. We saw the cottage industries where raw materials are processed into sheets of rubber, pineapple jelly, and goat milk soap. We watched members of a family cut pineapples, start fires in small, stone, outdoor stoves, and heat pineapple and sugar to make jelly on the patio outside their home. We each took a turn

stirring, as it took nearly an hour to stir the ingredients until they were ready to pour into small bowls made out of banana leaves to cool into jelly."

— E. H. Fouberg



**FIGURE 5.20** Phuket, Thailand.

Photo by E. H. Fouberg. © 2020 John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

## Guest Field Note Studying Vulnerabilities of Children in Gilgit, Pakistan

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One of the leading causes of mortality and morbidity among children under the age of 5 in developing countries is waterborne disease. My research has focused on building an understanding of the factors that contribute to the vulnerability of young children to this significant public health problem. I have conducted my research in communities located in the relatively remote Karakoram Range of northern Pakistan. Of interest to me is the microenvironment of water-related disease risk, and in particular, the factors at the household and local scale that influence the prevalence and severity of childhood illness. One of the primary methodological strategies that I employ in this research involves household microstudies, which entail in-depth interviews with family members (primarily mothers, who are the principal child health providers), child health histories, and structured observations. One of the most important findings of this research in these mountain communities, in my opinion, is that the education, social networks, and empowerment of women are all critical to breaking the cycle of disease impacts and to ensuring long-term child survival.



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**FIGURE 5.21** Gilgit, Pakistan.

ideas about women come from and how they influence women's work possibilities and social positions in different places. These ideas are key elements in making places what they are.

## Vulnerable Populations

Structures of power can have a fundamental impact on which populations or areas are particularly vulnerable to disease, death, injury, or famine. Geographers use mapping and spatial analysis to predict and explain what populations or people will be affected most by natural hazards such as earthquakes, volcanoes, hurricanes, and tsunamis, or by environmental policies. The study of **vulnerability** requires thinking geographically because social, political, economic, or environmental change does not affect all people and places in the same way. Rather, vulnerability is fundamentally influenced by geographically specific social and environmental circumstances.

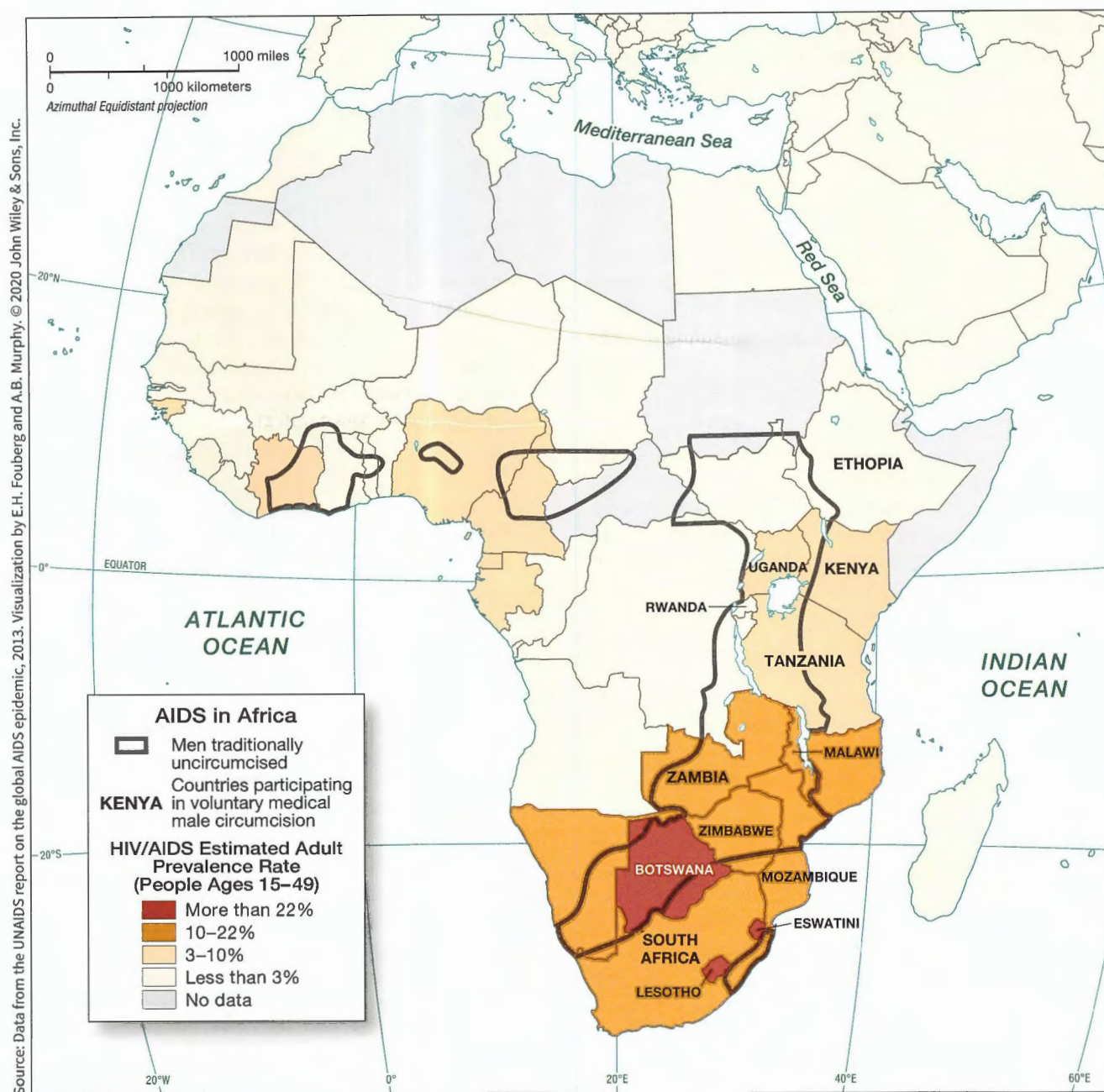
Fieldwork is often the best way to understand how structures of power in society create vulnerable groups at the local scale. Fieldwork can reveal how vulnerable groups might be affected by particular developments. Through fieldwork and interviews, geographers can also see differences in vulnerability within groups of people.

Geographer Sarah Halvorson (2004) studied differences in the vulnerabilities of children in northern Pakistan. She examined the vulnerability of children to diarrheal diseases by paying attention to “constructions of gender, household politics, and gendered relationships that perpetuate inherent inequalities and differences between men and women and within and between social groups.”

Halvorson studied 30 families, 15 of whom had a low frequency of diarrhea and dysentery and 15 of whom had a high frequency of these diseases. Through her fieldwork, Halvorson came to understand that several tangible resources, including income and housing, and several intangible resources, such as social status and position within the family structure, all influenced the vulnerability of children to diarrheal diseases in northern Pakistan. She found that people with higher incomes generally had lower disease rates, but that income was not the only relevant factor (**Fig. 5.21**). The least vulnerable children and women were those who had higher incomes and an established social network of support. In cases where income was low, if a woman had a strong social network, her children were more likely to be in the low-disease group.

Geographer Joseph Oppong recognized that the spatial analysis of a disease can reveal what populations are most vulnerable in a country. In North America and Europe, HIV/AIDS is much more prevalent among homosexual and bisexual men than among heterosexual men and women. In sub-Saharan Africa, women have much higher rates of HIV/AIDS than men. As Oppong (1998) explains, “AIDS as a global problem has unique local expressions that reflect the spatial distribution and social networks of vulnerable social groups.” According to Oppong, in most of sub-Saharan Africa, HIV/AIDS rates are highest for women in urban areas and for women who work as sex workers.

However, in Ghana, HIV/AIDS rates are lower for women in the urban area of Accra. Oppong postulates that women in Accra have lower HIV/AIDS rates because they have greater access to health care than women in rural areas. Women in rural areas who were not treated for malaria had higher incidences of HIV/AIDS,



**FIGURE 5.22 HIV/AIDS in Africa.** Researchers mapped HIV/AIDS adult prevalence rates and areas where males are traditionally uncircumcised to see if the two were related.

according to his research. Oppong also found that women in polygamous relationships in the Muslim part of northern Ghana had lower HIV/AIDS rates, and he offers two theories to explain this finding: First, as a matter of cultural practice, most Muslims tend to avoid sexual promiscuity, and second, Muslims in Ghana practice circumcision, which helps lower the rate of HIV/AIDS transmission in that part of the country (Fig. 5.22).

Fieldwork helps geographers apply vulnerability theory to understand how existing spatial structures, structures of power, and social networks affect the susceptibility of people to diseases and other hazards around the world.

## Women in Sub-Saharan Africa

Migration flows, birth rates, and child mortality rates affect the gender composition of cities, states, and regions. Some regions of the world have become male-dominated, whereas other regions have become female-dominated—at least numerically.

Much of sub-Saharan Africa, especially rural areas, is dominated numerically by women. In this region of the world, most rural-to-urban migrants are men. Domosh and Seager (2001) point out that men leave rural areas to work in heavy industry and mines in the cities, “while women are left behind to tend

the farms and manage the household economy. Indeed parts of rural South Africa and Zimbabwe have become feminized zones virtually depopulated of men.”

In the large region of sub-Saharan Africa, women outnumber men in many rural areas. They have heavy responsibilities, coupled in many places with few rights and little say (**Fig. 5.23**). Women produce an estimated 70 percent of the region’s food, almost all of it without the aid of modern technology. Their hand cultivation of corn and other staples is an endless task. As water supplies decrease, the exhausting walk to the nearest pump gets longer. Firewood is being cut at ever-greater distances from the village, and the task of hauling it home becomes more difficult every year. As men leave for the towns, sometimes to marry other wives and have other children, the women left in the villages often struggle for survival.

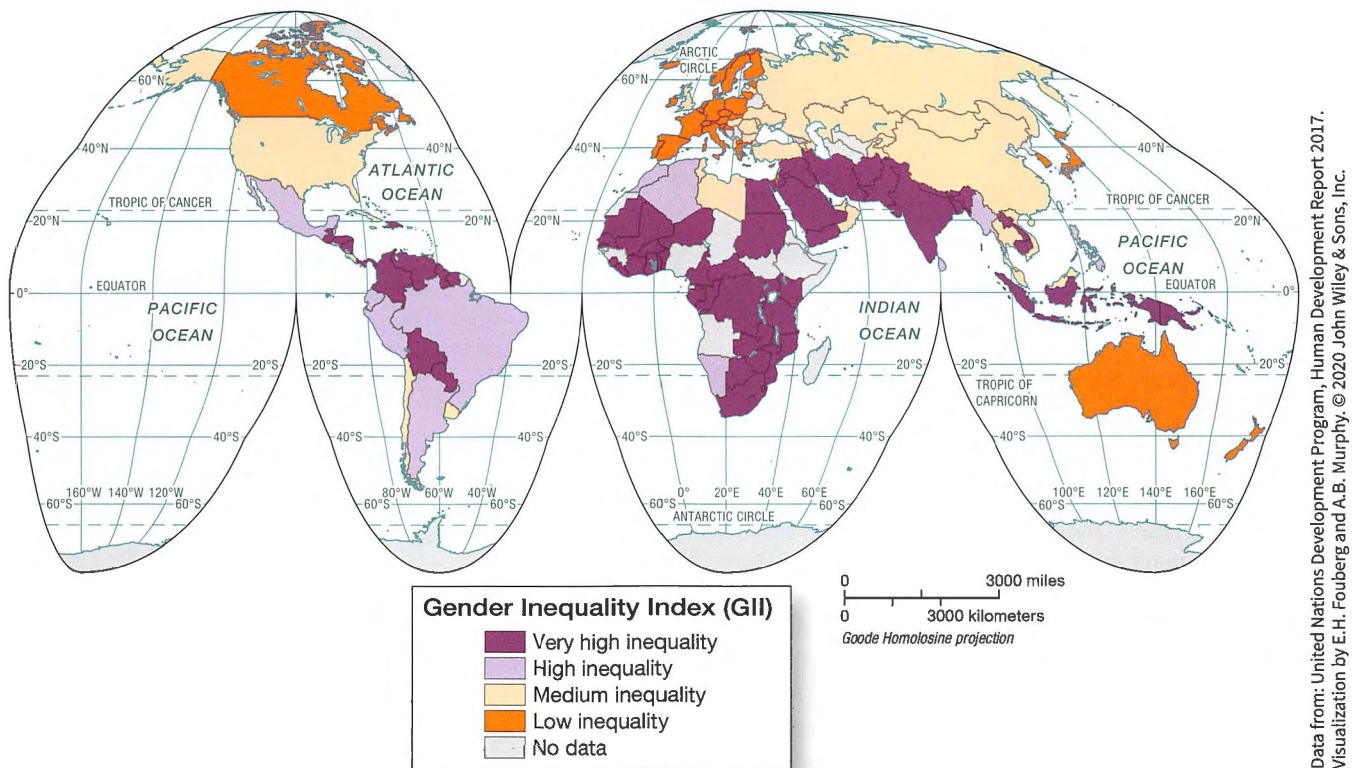
Even though a woman in this position becomes the head of a household, if she goes to a bank for a loan, she may well be refused. Traditional banks throughout much of Africa do not lend money to rural women. Not having heard from her husband for years and having reared her children, she might apply for title to the land she has occupied and farmed for decades, but in many places land titles are not awarded to women.

Young girls soon become trapped in the cycle of female poverty and overwork. Often there is little money for school fees; what is available first goes to pay for the boys. As soon as she can carry anything at all, the girl child goes with her mother to weed the fields, bring back firewood, or carry water.

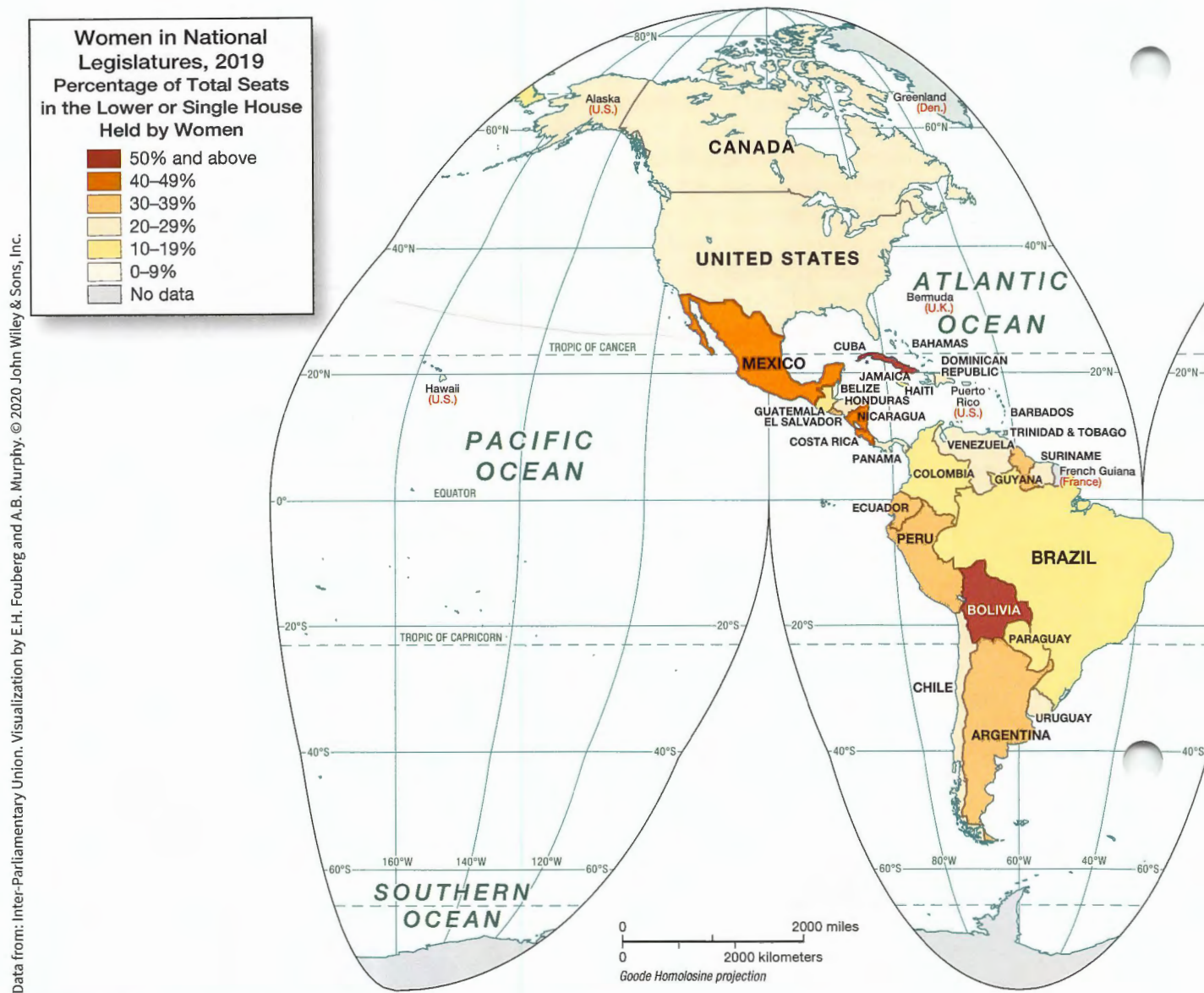
She will do so for 12 hours a day, 7 days a week, during all the years she remains capable of working. In East Africa, cash crops such as tea are sometimes called “men’s crops,” because the men trade in what the women produce. When the government of Kenya tried to increase productivity on the tea plantations in the 1970s and 1980s, the government handed out bonuses—not to the women who did all of the work, but to the men who owned title to the land!

Since the 1990s, women have lobbied for greater representation in governments in southern and eastern Africa. Uganda was a leader in affirmative action for women by setting up a quota or guarantee that women must hold at least 20 percent of the legislative seats. In South Africa, Apartheid, the systematic oppression of the majority black population by the minority white population, ended in 1994. The South African government established a constitution with universal suffrage (voting rights) in 1997. The constitution does not include an affirmative action policy for women’s representation in the parliament. Instead, major political parties, starting with the African National Congress (ANC), reserved a certain percentage of their seats won for women.

Today, the country where women hold the highest proportion of legislative seats is neither Uganda nor South Africa. Rather, another African country, Rwanda, is the first country in the world where women hold more than 50 percent of the legislative seats. Women in Rwanda passed the 50 percent mark in the 2008 election (**Fig. 5.24**). Rwanda suffered a bloody civil war in the 1990s in which over 800,000 people died



**FIGURE 5.23 Gender Inequality Index (GII).** The GII measures inequality in labor market participation, access to reproductive health, and empowerment. It measures how much achievement is lost by women as a result of inequalities in these three areas.



**FIGURE 5.24 Women in National Legislatures.** Compare and contrast the pattern of the Gender Inequality Index (GII) in Figure 5.23 with this map of women in national legislatures. Several countries in sub-Saharan Africa are high on the GII, but have a large proportion of women in the national legislatures. Countries such as the United States and Australia have low gender inequality, but they do much less well when it comes to female representation in legislative bodies.

(one-tenth of the population at the time), a majority of whom were men. Immediately after the war, women accounted for more than 70 percent of the population of the country. Today, women make up 55 percent of the voting-age population. The Rwandan constitution, adopted in 2003, recognizes the equality of women and set a quota of at least 30 percent women in all government decision-making bodies. Of the 80 legislative seats in Rwanda, 24 are reserved for women, and in these 24 seats, the only candidates are women and only women can vote. In the 2013 elections, women won 26 seats in the legislature in addition to the 24 seats reserved for women, and now women hold 62.5 percent of the seats in the Rwanda legislature.

## Women in India

India is a country of contrasts: the wealthiest in the world live next door to teeming slums in cities that have grown exponentially over the last 30 years. The complex relationship between culture and economy is impacting girls and women in India. Some shifts, such as a rise of love marriages, may empower women. Other shifts, such as a higher price placed on a dowry, make women and their families susceptible to extortion.

India defies the norm of economic growth leading to a more balanced **sex ratio**, the ratio of males relative to females in a population. For example, in the 1990s, South Korea had a



high gender imbalance, with more boys than girls being born and living to age 4. Since the early 2000s, as South Korea's economy has grown to be one of the most competitive in the world, that gender imbalance has narrowed and is closer to normal. India has likewise undergone a massive economic change in the same time frame, but the country's gender imbalance has not been righted and is even more severe for the second- and third-born children than before the country's growth.

The cultural practice of the **dowry**, a price paid in cash and gifts by the bride's family to the groom's father, has changed over time. In the Middle Ages, the dowry was given to the bride from her family "to maintain her independence after marriage" (Pulitzer Center). Before British colonialism, marriage customs in India were diverse and the dowry was not included in all of them. During British colonialism, however, the British institutionalized the dowry and made it mandatory in India as part of a larger project to institutionalize caste and social order. The dowry practice also changed, and the dowry was now a

payment to the groom's family. India gained independence from Britain in 1947, and in 1961 the Indian government outlawed the practice of dowry. The practice continues, however, and in an age of increasing demand for material goods and financial pressure on families, dowries have become exorbitant in some cases and groom's families have used dowries to extort more money even after marriage.

In the early 2000s, dowry deaths received a great deal of press globally. The bride may be brutally punished, often burned, or killed for her father's failure to fulfill a marriage agreement. Only a small fraction of India's girls are involved in dowry deaths, but the practice is not declining and reporting is increasing. According to the Indian government, in 1985 the number was 999; in 1987, 1786 women died at the hands of vengeful husbands or in-laws; in 1989, 2436 perished; in 2001, more than 7000 women died; and in 2012, it was reported that 8233 women died from dowry deaths. These figures report only confirmed dowry deaths; many more are believed to occur but are reported

as suicides, kitchen accidents, or other fatal domestic incidents. Whether the number of dowry deaths is increasing as a result of the country's growing population, increased reporting by families, or another factor is not easy to discern.

The structures of power that place women below men in India cannot simply be legislated away. The government of India passed the Dowry Prohibition Act in 1961, which made it illegal to take or give a dowry. Nonetheless, the practice continues. Government entities in India have set up legal aid offices to help women who fear dowry death and seek assistance. In 1984, the national legislature passed the Family Courts Act, creating a network of “family courts” to hear domestic cases. But the judges tend to be older males, and their chief objective, according to women's support groups, is to hold the family together—that is, to force the threatened or battered woman back into the household. Indian culture attaches great importance to the family structure, and the family courts tend to operate on this principle.

India is starting to see the impact its booming economy and growing proportion of educated young women and men in well-paid jobs is having on marriage. The number of love marriages is on the rise (**Fig. 5.25**), and many couples in love marriages in India are meeting online. The number of divorces is also on the rise, with 1 in 1000 marriages ending in divorce in India today. Although this is one of the lowest divorce rates in the world, India's separation rate is three times its divorce rate. Divorce holds a stigma in India, especially for women. India's Census



Photo by A.B. Murphy. © 2020 John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

**FIGURE 5.25** **Mumbai, India.** Arranged marriages were the norm not long ago in India, and the family of the bride was expected to provide a dowry to the groom's family. Arranged marriages are still widespread in parts of rural India, but in urban areas they are rapidly giving way to love marriages following romantic courtships. Evidence of this cultural shift is not hard to find on the streets of India's major cities.

data showed that the number of divorced women is higher than the number of divorced men, likely because the stigma against women who are divorced makes it more difficult for them to remarry than divorced men. Changes in marriage and divorce customs will not necessarily result in fewer dowry deaths in the short run in India. An article in *The Times of India* explained that in the city of Chennai, where the information technology boom is in full swing, police reported a rise in dowry deaths. This rise was likely a result of increasing materialism among the middle class and an accompanying feeling of desperation for more goods and cash, coupled with the fact that many men in less powerful positions have begun to act out violently.

Understanding changing gender relations and structures of power in India is very difficult. Just as some statistics point to an improving place of women in Indian society, other statistics confirm that India still gives preference to males overall. India's 2011 census reported a sex ratio of 1065 males for every 1000 females, which seems to be an improvement over the 2001 sex ratio of 1080 males for every 1000 females. However, the gap between the number of boys and number of girls ages 0 to 4 is still quite wide in India, with 6.2 million more boys than girls in that age bracket alone (Denyer and Gowen 2018).

The probability of a female being born or living to age 4 in India varies by region. The northern states of India have higher gender imbalance than the southern states (**Fig. 5.26**). Pregnant women in India, especially in northern states, undergo gender-determining tests (ultrasound and amniocentesis) and may elect to have abortions when the fetus is a girl. Girls who make it to birth may suffer female infanticide because many parents fear the cost of dowries and place less social value on girls.

In India and elsewhere, directing the attention of people in far-flung places to social ills—moving the issues up in scale—has the potential to create change. Yet problems cannot really be solved unless structures of power shift at the family, local, regional, and national scales. As the number of women and men in the middle class in urban India continues to rise, love marriages will continue to rise as well. How dowry will shift as a result of India's gender imbalance remains to be seen. India has 37 million more men than women, and this imbalance “creates a surplus of bachelors and exacerbates human trafficking, both for brides and, possibly, prostitution” (Denyer and Gowen 2018). The number of girl children who are born and live to age 4, the growth of trafficking for brides, and the rate of divorces in the country will continue to fluctuate as structures of power shift across gender and scales.

## Shifting Structures of Power Among Ethnic Groups

In Chapter 4, we discussed local cultures that define themselves ethnically. The presence of local ethnic cultures can be seen in the cultural landscapes of places discussed in that chapter: “Little Sweden” in Kansas and the Italian North End in Boston. In many places, more than one ethnic group lives



in a place. Each group creates unique cultural landscapes and reveals how structures of power factor into the ways ethnicities are constructed, revised, and solidified, where ethnic groups live, and who is subjugating whom.

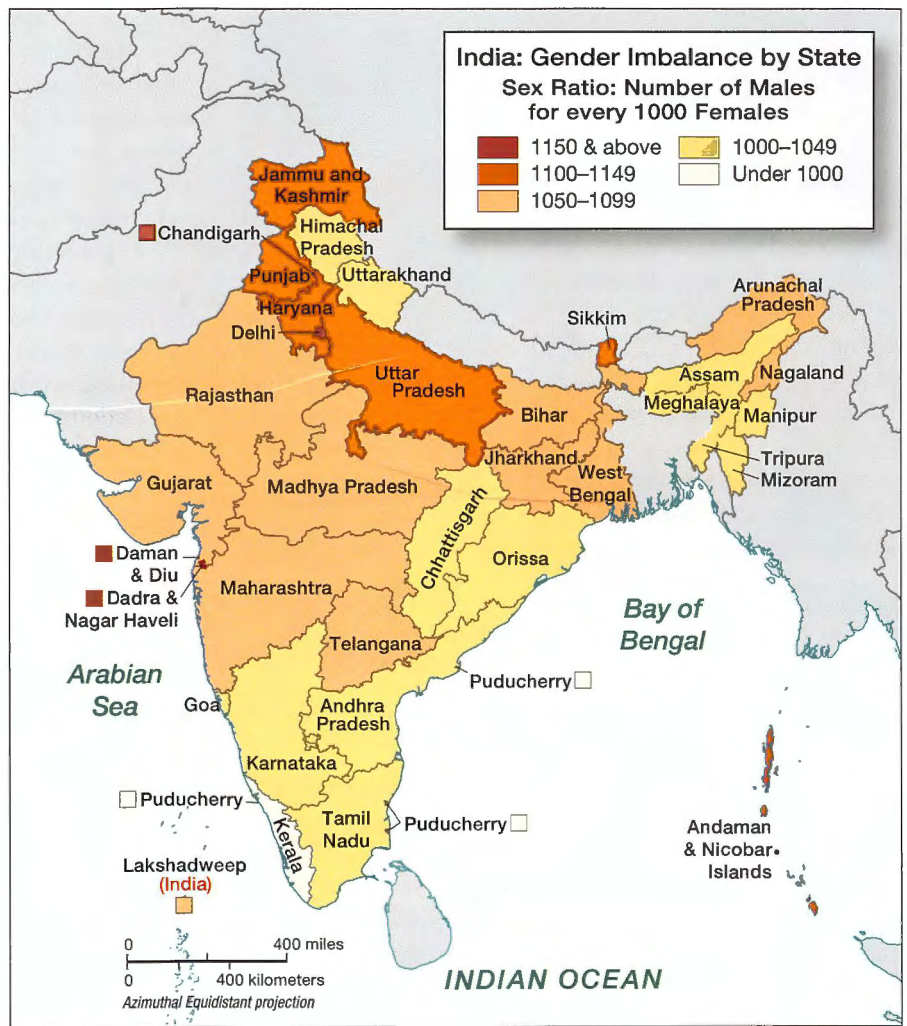
### Structures of Power in Alameda County

In their book *Race and Place: Equity Issues in Urban America*, three urban geographers—John Frazier, Florence Margai, and Eugene Tetley-Fio—tracked the flow of people and shifts in power among the multiple ethnic groups that have lived in Alameda County, California. Alameda County borders San Francisco and includes the cities of Berkeley and Oakland. Latinos populated the region prior to the Gold Rush. After 1850, migrants from China came to the county. The first Asian migrants were widely dispersed, but the first African Americans lived in a segregated section of the county.

Areas with multiple ethnicities often experience an ebb and flow of acceptance over time. When the economy is booming, residents are generally more accepting of each other. When the economy takes a downturn, residents often begin to resent each other and can blame the “Other” for their economic hardship. In Alameda County, much of the population resented Chinese migrants when the economy took a downturn in the 1870s. The United States government passed the first Chinese Exclusion Act, which prohibited immigration of Chinese, in 1882. Chinese exclusion efforts persisted for decades afterward in Alameda County. The exclusion resulted in the city of Oakland moving Chinatown several times.

During the 1910s, the economy of the region grew again. However, the city of Oakland limited the Chinese residents to Chinatown, using ethnic segregation to keep them apart from the rest of the population. Frazier, Margai, and Tetley-Fio (2003) described how the location and homogeneity of Oakland’s Chinatown were dictated by law and not matters of choice for the Chinese:

At a time when the Chinese were benefiting from a better economy, the “whites only” specifications of local zoning and neighborhood regulations forced separatism that segregated the Oakland Chinese into the city’s Chinatown. What today is sometimes presented as an example of Chinese unity and choice was, in fact, place dictated by law.



**FIGURE 5.26 Gender Imbalance by State in India.** The sex ratio on this map shows the number of males for every 1000 females. States in northern India have greater gender imbalance than states in southern India.

Chinese were segregated from the rest of Oakland’s population until World War II. When the war began, residents of Alameda County focused on the Japanese population in the county. They were segregated, blamed, and interned in relocation centers, as was the case in the rest of the United States.

After World War II, the ethnic population of Asians in Alameda County became more complex. In the decade between 1980 and 1990, the Asian population alone doubled, and it also diversified to include not only Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Indian, but also Southeast Asians, including Vietnamese, Cambodians, and Laotians. In Alameda County, the first wave of migrants from Asia (mainly from China, India, and Korea), who came to the region already educated, are not residentially segregated from the white population, as is the case in much of the rest of the United States (Fig. 5.27). However, the newer migrants from Asia (mainly Southeast Asia—during and following the Vietnam War) are segregated from whites residentially. More recent Asian migrants tend to earn lower incomes and reside in neighborhoods that are predominantly Hispanic or African American. Alameda County east of San Francisco and neighboring Santa



GABRIELLE LURIE/AFP/Getty Images

**FIGURE 5.27 Alameda County, California.** An Alameda resident rides his motorcycle as part of the “Sikh Riders of America” group in the county’s 4th of July parade, one of the largest Independence Day parades in the United States.

Clara county to its south are major urban/suburban counties where Asians outnumber non-Hispanic whites (31 percent Asian in Alameda and 38 percent Asian in Santa Clara).

In California and in much of the rest of the United States, the “Asian” box is drawn around a stereotype of what some call the “model minority.” Frazier and his colleagues explain that this myth “paints Asians as good, hardworking people who, despite their suffering through discrimination, harassment, and exclusion, have found ways to prosper through peaceful means.” Other researchers have debunked the myth by demonstrating statistically the varying levels of economic success experienced by different Asian peoples. Asian is the fastest-growing racial class in the United States, with the Asian population across the United States increasing 27.8 percent between 2010 and 2018. The most success has a tendency of going to the first wave of migrants, while lower-paying jobs go to newer migrants. Both groups are burdened by the myth that stereotypes them as the “model minority.”

**Structures of Power in Los Angeles** Over the last four decades, the greatest migration flow into California and the southwestern United States has come from Latin America and the Caribbean, especially Mexico. The Census estimates the Hispanic population grew from 16 percent of the U.S. population to 18 percent of the U.S. population between 2008 and 2019. Nationwide, the U.S. Hispanic population grew from 47.8 million to 59.9 million in the same time period. Los Angeles County has over 10 million people, 49 percent of whom are Hispanic.

The area of southeastern Los Angeles County is today “home to one of the largest and highest concentrations of Latinos in Southern California,” according to a study by geographer James Curtis. Four decades ago, this area of Los Angeles

was populated by working-class whites. They were segregated from the African American and Hispanic populations through discriminatory policies and practices. Until the 1960s, southeastern Los Angeles was home to corporations such as General Motors, Bethlehem Steel, and Weiser Lock. During the 1970s and 1980s, corporations began to close as the United States went through a period of deindustrialization (see Chapter 11).

As plants shut down and white laborers left the neighborhoods, a Hispanic population migrated into southeastern Los Angeles. A housing crunch followed in the 1980s, as more and more Hispanic migrants headed to this area. With a cheap labor supply now readily available in the region again, companies returned to southeastern Los Angeles, this time focusing on smaller-scale production of textiles, pharmaceuticals, furniture, and toys. In addition, the region attracted industrial toxic waste disposal and petrochemical refining facilities.

In his study of the region, Curtis records the changes to the cultural landscape in the process. He uses the term **barrioization** (derived from the Spanish word for neighborhood, *barrio*) to describe a change that saw the Hispanic population of a neighborhood jump from 4 percent in 1960 to over 90 percent in 2000. With the ethnic succession of the neighborhood moving from white to Hispanic, the cultural landscape changed to reflect the culture of the new population. The structure of the streets and the layout of the housing remained largely the same, giving the Hispanic population access to designated parks, schools, libraries, and community centers built by the previous residents and rarely found in other barrios in southern California. However, the buildings, signage, and landscape changed as “traditional Hispanic house-scape elements, including the placement of fences and yard shrines as well as the use of bright house colors,” diffused through the barrios. Curtis explains that these elements were added to existing structures, houses, and buildings originally built by the white working class of southeastern Los Angeles.

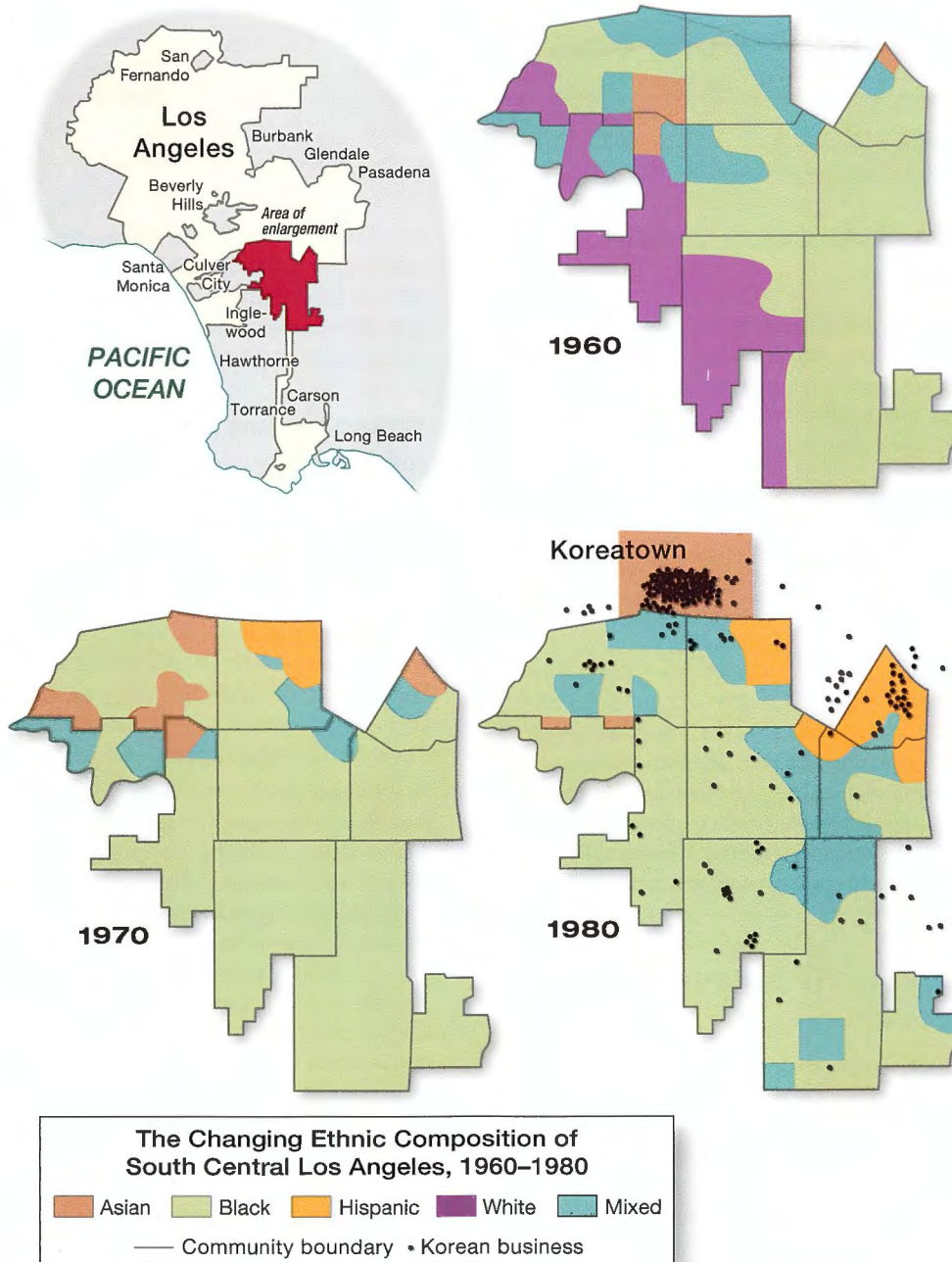
The influx of new ethnic groups into a region, the replacement of one ethnic group by another within neighborhoods, the persistence of the “model minority” myth about Asian Americans, and an economic downturn can create a great deal of volatility in a city. On April 29–30, 1992, Los Angeles became engulfed in one of the worst incidents of civil unrest in United States history. During two days of rioting, 43 people died, 2383 were injured, and 16,291 arrested. Property damage was estimated at approximately \$1 billion, and over 22,700 law enforcement personnel were deployed to quell the unrest.

According to the media, the main catalyst for the mass upheaval was the announcement of a “not guilty verdict in the trial of four white police officers accused of using excessive force in the arrest of Rodney King, a black motorist” (Johnson et al. 1992, 356). To the general public, the Los Angeles riots became yet another symbol for the sorry state of race relations between blacks and whites in the United States. Yet a geographic perspective on the Los Angeles riots helps us understand that they were not simply the product of localized reactions to police brutality, but reflected sweeping economic, political, and ethnic changes unfolding at regional and even global scales.

The riots took place in South Central Los Angeles. Like the region of southeast Los Angeles described above, the South Central area was once a thriving industrial region with dependable, unionized jobs employing the resident population. By the 1960s, however, the population of South Central Los Angeles was working-class African American, and the population of southeastern Los Angeles was working-class white. After 1970, South Central Los Angeles experienced a substantial decrease in the availability of high-paying, unionized manufacturing jobs when plants closed and relocated outside the city and even outside the country. The people of South Central

Los Angeles lost over 70,000 manufacturing jobs between 1978 and 1982 alone!

Geographer James Johnson and his colleagues explored the impact of economic loss on the ethnic and social geography of South Central Los Angeles. They found that the population of the area was over 90 percent African American in 1970, but by 1980 this change in population composition was accompanied by a steady influx of Korean residents and small-business owners seeking a niche in the rapidly changing urban area (Fig. 5.28). South Central became increasingly Hispanic after 1980 as “an influx of immigrants



Source: Adapted from J.H. Johnson Jr., C.K. Jones, W.C. Farrell Jr., and M.L. Oliver. “The Los Angeles Rebellion: A Retrospective in View,” *Economic Development Quarterly*, 6, 4 (1992), pp. 356-372.

**FIGURE 5.28** The Changing Ethnic Composition of South Central Los Angeles, 1960–1980. This time series of four maps shows evidence of sequent occupance, as Asian neighborhoods virtually disappeared but Korean businesses remained in 1980.

from Mexico and Central America” and an “exodus of black residents from a historically divested neighborhood” (USC 2016) combined to create a change in the racial and ethnic identity of the neighborhood. By 1990, the neighborhood was evenly split between African Americans and Hispanics. By 2000, Hispanics comprised 56.9 percent of residents, and today, two-thirds of the residents of South Central Los Angeles are Hispanic.

Johnson and his colleagues argued that the Los Angeles riots were more than a spontaneous reaction to a verdict. They were rooted in the growing despair and frustration of different ethnic groups competing for a decreasing number of jobs. Their environment of declining housing conditions and scarce public resources were aggravating factors. Johnson et al’s work

shows the importance of looking beyond the immediate catalysts of particular news events to the local, national, and global geographical **contexts** in which they unfold.

### TC Thinking Geographically

Geographers who study **race**, ethnicity, **gender**, or sexuality are interested in how structures of power embedded in a **place** form and shape assumptions about “Others.” Consider your own place, your campus, or your community. What structures of power are embedded in this **place**, and how can you see differences in power in the way spaces are used and claimed?

## Summary

### 5.1 Define Identity and Explain How Identities Are Constructed.

1. Geographer Gillian Rose (1995) defines identity as “how we make sense of ourselves.” We construct our own identities through our experiences. Places are important in shaping identities because we attach experiences and emotions to places. We also construct identities for others. Identities are fluid and may change based on context and scale.
2. Gender is a culture’s assumptions about differences between women and men, and assumptions about what roles they should play in families and society. Some cultures have a preference for one gender, which can be seen in the sex ratio (number of males to number of females).
3. Race is socially constructed. Race includes differences assigned to people based on skin color. How cultures define races and what differences they attribute to races has a profound effect on rights and opportunities for each race. Connections between race and class found in modern society have their roots in globalization since 1500. Europeans created numerous arguments for colonization and the Atlantic slave trade based on race. People construct racial categories to justify power, economic exploitation, and cultural oppression.

### 5.2 Determine How Place Affects Identity and How We Can See Identities in Places.

1. Residential segregation is the degree to which two or more groups of people live separately from each other within a city. Sociologists and geographers have developed multiple ways to measure residential segregation. The roots of residential segregation in the United States are typically attributed to three factors: money, preferences, and discrimination. While overall residential segregation has declined, several cities have entrenched residential segregation that has not declined. Social networks, activity spaces, and lived experiences entrench residential segregation.

2. Ethnicities are often rooted in place. Your ethnicity may be tied to where your ancestors came from or to an ethnic neighborhood or ethnic small towns. Conflicts may be described as ethnic if the term *racial* does not fit. Ethnic conflicts, like racial conflicts, are rooted in differences in experiences.

### 5.3 Explain the Role Structures of Power Play in Shaping Identities.

1. How identities are shaped depends, in part, on who is in power. Structures of power are assumptions and structures about who is in control and who has power over others. Someone in power can define people of a particular race, ethnicity, or class negatively and create policies that limit their opportunities. People in power also determine what remains, what is built, and what is wiped from the cultural landscape. They also decide how to interpret the landscape and signal to others through signage what lens they should use to see a place.
2. Structures of power can have a fundamental impact on which populations or areas are particularly vulnerable to disease, death, injury, or famine. Geographers use mapping and spatial analysis to predict and explain what populations or people will be affected most by natural hazards such as earthquakes, volcanoes, hurricanes, and tsunamis, or by environmental policies. The study of vulnerability requires thinking geographically because social, political, economic, or environmental change does not affect all people and places in the same way. Rather, vulnerability is fundamentally influenced by geographically specific social and environmental circumstances.
3. Identity is a powerful concept. The way we make sense of ourselves is a personal journey that is mediated and influenced by the political, social, and cultural contexts in which we live and work. Group identities such as gender, ethnicity, race, and sexuality are constructed, both by self-realization and by identifying against and across scales. When learning about new places and different people, humans are often tempted to put places and people into boxes, into myths or stereotypes that make them easily digestible.

# Self-Test

## 5.1 Define identity and explain how identities are constructed.

- If a culture has a preference for one gender over another, you will be most likely to see that in all of the following except:
  - the sex ratio.
  - a population pyramid.
  - the education level completed by gender.
  - life expectancy by gender.
- The United States Census can be used as evidence that race is socially constructed. Before 2000, Hispanic was counted as a(n) \_\_\_\_\_, and since 2000, Hispanic has been counted as a(n) \_\_\_\_\_.
  - ethnicity / race
  - race / ethnicity
  - race / class
  - class / race
- TRUE OR FALSE: The intersection between race and class was entrenched through European colonization so that lower income residents of European countries began to see themselves as superior to people in their country's colonies.

## 5.2 Determine how place affects identity and how we can see identities in places.

- Current residential segregation in the United States is generally attributed to all of the following except:
  - money.
  - preferences.
  - discrimination.
  - government policies.
- Entrenched residential segregation in cities like Chicago comes from all of the following except:
  - government policies.
  - social networks.
  - activity spaces.
  - lived experiences.

- New migrants to a city often move to low-income areas that are being gradually abandoned by older immigrant groups. This process is called:
  - segregation.
  - succession.
  - profiling.
  - Apartheid.

## 5.3 Explain the role structures of power play in shaping identities.

- The work of women is often undervalued and undercounted because much of the work women do takes place in:
  - the informal economy.
  - the formal economy.
  - ethnic small towns.
  - ethnic neighborhoods.
- Halvorson's research found that intangible resources such as \_\_\_\_\_ influenced how vulnerable children are to diarrheal disease.
  - education level and access to soap
  - social status and position within the family structure
  - access to health care and cleanliness of water
  - bathrooms with flush toilets and presence of sewer systems
- Which country has the highest proportion of women holding legislative seats?
  - United Kingdom
  - India
  - France
  - Rwanda