Dearborn Michigan is perhaps the most notable Arab American community in the United States. This dissertation examines how Arab Americans in Dearborn have altered landscapes to suit their needs and tastes. Using qualitative approaches to landscape observation and participant engagement, I have explored the Dearborn community and neighborhood, focusing on the visual built environment to identify alterations to the landscape affected by Arab Americans. Informants also offered varied perceptions of the neighborhood’s ongoing redevelopment and Dearborn’s symbolic position as an Arab American enclave. In the context of Dearborn’s ethnic enclave and two of its major Arab American Organizations, the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS) and the Arab American National Museum (AANM), I discuss the development of Arab American identities. The relationship between the various subgroups in the Arab American community is complex, and Dearborn is not perceived as an in-group enclave by all Arab American groups. It appears that the sense of pan-Arabism fostered by major organizations has yet to become salient among the majority of Arab Americans. There is, however, a growing level of comfort for Arabs, non-Arab Muslims, and other Middle Easterners within the Dearborn neighborhood and the surrounding area. Dearborn offers an inviting setting for visitors and students who wish to practice traditional culture without drawing notice.
ARAB AMERICAN IDENTITIES AND THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE OF DEARBORN, MICHIGAN

A dissertation submitted to
Kent State University in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the
degree of the Doctor of Philosophy

by

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

This dissertation examines how Arab Americans in Dearborn have altered landscapes to suit their needs and tastes. I also aim to explore the development of Arab American identities to find if there exists an emerging conception of a single Arab American identity that transcends religious or national divisions. I have also sought to discover how this community is perceived by those within and outside of the Detroit Arab community (Figure 1.1). The Dearborn community could accurately be described in part as an ethnoburb in contrast to the urban nature of most ethnic neighborhoods in the United States (Li 1998; Logan, Zhang and Alba 2002; Peach 2002). Ethnic enclaves have been the subject of comprehensive research studies, though the Arab American community in the Detroit suburbs deserves more attention. Semi-structured interviews with local citizens have informed this analysis of the Dearborn Arab landscape, which also incorporates past work by researchers outside of geography. Arab Americans have created identities within a context of Arabs being portrayed, in fiction and the news media, as the “other” to ordinary Americans (Shaheen 2003). I expected at the outset of this study that Dearborn would have become significant to the creation of Arab-American narratives and identities.
Figure 1.1 Map of Arab groups in Detroit metro region. (Schopmeyer 2011, p. 41; Kiskowski 2015, p.47)
Dearborn Michigan is the most notable Arab American community in the United States. It is so well-known that the word “Dearborn” has often served as a stand-in for any and all of the Arab communities in the Detroit area (Abraham and Shryock 2000; AANM 2016).

Neighborhoods like Dearborn that exhibit a concentration of population made up of one ethnic minority group, surrounded by communities of a dominant society, are often referred to as ethnic enclaves. Ethnic enclave is a term coined by sociologists but has been applied to communities in geography and other social sciences. The role of family ties is paramount in the migration of this immigrant group to the Dearborn area. Dearborn has exhibited a model of chain migration where family members, pioneer immigrants, act as hosts to family members. Upon becoming more self-sufficient, these new family members will choose a suitable home that is as close as possible to their host family (Katarsky 1980). This creates small pockets of concentrated chain migration where the areas change demographics on a small-scale but at great speed. The structure of these families, and inter-family relationships, the closeness of ties, and economic assistance are the variables that to explain the dense Arab residence patterns in the community. There are several prominent Arab and other Middle Eastern communities in metropolitan Detroit that have varying levels of connection to Dearborn’s community. This connection can vary from former Dearborn transplants that have moved to more-affluent suburbs to non-Arabs who use the Dearborn market to purchase goods provided by the Arab Marketplace.

Market forces and racial considerations have had a strong impact on the development of Arab identities in the United States and Detroit’s suburbs. The various subgroups in the Arab American community have experienced these considerations at different levels, with some experiencing greater agency within commercial and racial networks. Others, such as poorer or Muslim Arabs, have had less access to the benefits of the American experience and struggle to
create agency within those networks. Arab groups have established and maintained boundaries between each other as well as between Arab Americans in general and non-Arab social groups they live amongst. Barth’s (1998) theories of identity and boundary maintenance are an important consideration when we discuss the Arab American community and its constituent subgroups in Dearborn and other Detroit suburbs. Chaldean Christians have an especially dynamic relationship with the Arab Community, as they are often placed into the Arab group by outsiders though they do not traditionally speak Arabic and Chaldeans do not self-identify as Arabs. Chaldeans realize that they are categorized by many Americans as Arabs, and have distanced themselves socially from Arab groups especially Muslim Arabs. Other Arab Americans, Muslim Americans, and Middle Eastern Americans have gravitated to the Detroit metropolitan area because of the general visibility and acceptance of Middle Easterners, largely predicated by the Syrian-Lebanese ethnic communities in the region.

I am pursuing this research with several assumptions in mind. One is that commercial enterprise and the ethnic economy has given Arab Americans agency within the Detroit metropolitan area. Another is that sacred spaces, houses of worship, have provided networks to increase economic and social agency while some sacred spaces, mosques, have limited the social capital provided through assimilation. Arab Christians have had an advantage in social capital in regards to assimilation and integration in the United States. Arab Christians are aware of and wary of their association with Arab Muslims, who have experienced delayed assimilation and integration punctuated by times of extreme prejudice against Muslims because of global geopolitical circumstances (Abraham, Howell, and Shryock 2011). While Arab Americans are experiencing great economic success in the Detroit area, it has not completely outstripped their otherness in regards to American perception of identity.
The Arab American community in Dearborn, Michigan is the product of many years of immigration of Arabs to the Detroit area. Arabs initially migrated to the area from other parts of the United States and later directly from Arab countries, especially from Syria-Lebanon. Family networks provided the initial support and logistical connections to bring new immigrants to the area from Arab countries. Immigration from other Arab countries has gravitated to the area by individuals seeking refuge or opportunity in the United States who wish to remain culturally connected to Arabic culture. Dearborn is the largest Arab city outside the Middle East (Shalabi 2001). Significant Arab populations are also found in Windsor Ontario, just across Lake Saint Clair from Detroit, Toronto, Cleveland, New York, and Los Angeles.

By exploring the landscape, meeting with Arab Americans and interviewing them about the meaning of Dearborn to the Arab community in the United States, I have seeking to understand the importance of this ethnic enclave to its residents as well as other Arabs and Arab Americans who are familiar with the Dearborn Arab community. This community has been understudied within academic circles and has yet to be meaningfully included in published geographic literature. The research on Dearborn’s Arab community has largely been the provenance of local Arab American academics focusing on their own community. I have employed qualitative methods to answer my research questions in this study.

Research Questions

Question 1 - How have organizations been used to alter spaces and places to suit the needs of the Arab-American community in Dearborn, Michigan?

Question 2 - How have these changes become visually apparent on the landscape?
Question 3 - How have these changes been perceived within the Arab American community?

Question 4 – In light of their immigration experiences and interactions with pre-existing ethnic identities and local expectations of assimilation within the United States, to what extent has Dearborn offered a place of American pan-Arabism? In other words, have group barriers between Arab subgroups eroded to become a more collective identity in the American context?

Using qualitative methods to find the meaning of neighborhood and community in the minds of individuals living and working in the area is a key part of the geographic literature I am looking to add to. Dearborn is an example of an ethnic enclave that needs to be better understood, and the fact that it is an enclave of Arabs in the United States makes it even more relevant. In this age of global wars on terror and increasing nationalist sentiments in the United States, it is important to illustrate the assimilation and integration of Arabs into our way of life. It is also important to discuss those individuals best suited to educate US authorities in the culture of Arab groups. This will better allow US institutions to incorporate our Arab citizens, displaying our value of diversity and high lighting the fact that Arabs and Americans are not opposites or opposed to one another. GIS is a useful tool to project neighborhood boundaries and features such as markets, retail stores, houses of worship, museums, restaurants, and other buildings created by or dedicated to the practice of Arab culture. Applying GIS to social science and human geography research is an accepted use of the technique that is still being explored within
geography. I plan to create GIS maps to see if group social boundaries are reflected by the spatial distribution of Arab community features. This will also highlight the overlaps between Arab and non-Arab society as well as the intermingling of Arab subgroups in certain areas. Ultimately we want to discover the meaning of these neighborhood communities to various Arabs to see what extent to which Arab Americans feel connected to Dearborn’s community. Do Arab Americans in general feel sentiments towards Dearborn as an enclave of their ethnic group? Is there any emerging sentiment of Pan-Arab feelings among Arab Americans in the Dearborn area, do groups splinter along religious or national divides, socioeconomic concerns, or other factors? These lines of inquiry have led me to valuable insight on a modern ethnic minority in the United States, as well as allowing us to observe the process of identity creation unique to this community. Without giving away too much of my conclusion, and understanding that there are many divisions within the Arab groups that contradict my imagined American Arab solidarity, I found that Dearborn represents a broader conception of an ethnic enclave community for Middle Eastern Americans in general, Arabs included, as a location where individuals did not feel they looked out of place and that where diversity included people who looked like them rather than a black or white binary.

The landscape of Dearborn’s market district is instantly recognizable as an American suburban community, but with Arabic symbols and language adorning the signs and advertisements. Key features of the Dearborn enclave are a visible market district for Arab goods and services, houses of worship that feature Arab patrons, architecture, and a major social service organization that has funded and maintained an Arab American museum in downtown Dearborn. Architectural clues indicate Arabic influence, such as the Islamic Center of America, The American Moslem Society, the Maronite church, and the Arab American Museum, but the
majority of the built environment is similar to the non-Arab populated areas in the Detroit suburbs. Some residential units have also been remodeled to reflect Arab tastes. The content and character of these built spaces are what exhibits the Arab character or this neighborhood, visible differences limited to language script and various uses of symbols and flags. Though some specific mosques, museums, and buildings stand out as Arab in architecture the majority of Muslim Arabs worship in boutique mosques built into pre-existing structures, often store fronts in retail areas. The mosque itself poses a strict divide within the Arab community, as Christians never shared in the Arab Muslim experience and the growing divide between the Shia and Sunni groups in the area. Many Arab Americans report having little past understanding of the divisions between Sunni and Shia denominations, and the groups once shared mosques in the Dearborn area without dispute. Today mosques are divided by affiliation, Sunnis and Shias worship separately and develop separate social networks. The growing social and spatial distance between Arab Sunnis and Arab Shias is another function of boundary maintenance as communities develop the agency to maintain its own facilities and a sense of security empowering them to do so.

Religious and national divisions are very apparent between subgroups, but those divisions have varying levels of meaning to individuals, and there is certainly growing consciousness of pan-ethnicity within many of these groups beyond national or religious identity but based on the “American minority experience,” broadly considered. Many Arab Americans are only nominally Muslim, celebrating major holidays in a fashion but applying their ethnic identity more so to Arab cultural traditions that are not specific to a religious denomination. Organizations provide forums where cultural identity can be negotiated; they can focus community agency towards the development and redevelopment of landscapes which often incorporate cultural tastes of their
constituent group. Organizations, especially the family as an organization, also provide the logistics, finances, and other social capital for immigrants, before migration, in-transit, and upon arrival. Organizations grow further to advance and proliferate community success, and their agendas collectively evolve with the changing needs of the community as well as the arrival of newer immigrants from Arab nations and other countries.

Dearborn is an ideal location for this research because of the large population of Arab Americans (Rignall 1997; Naber 2010). Furthermore, this space has been occupied in part by Arab Americans since the early 1920s. This has given the community the time and opportunity to alter much of the built environment and visual landscape to suit the needs and tastes of the Arab American residents who continue to be attracted to the area. The Arab character of the area is well known, and it is possible that it has become a haven for middle easterners and Muslims from many nations who are divided abroad, but who may have found common cause in the United States. Multiple waves of immigration have had a wide variation on country of origin since there is no single “Arab nation” and the familiar language appeals to Arabic speakers from widely dispersed parts of the world (Katarsky 1980; AANM 2016). I believe that I will show that this place has grown dynamically to incorporate new conceptions of Arab identity in an American space.

I have broken this dissertation into chapters based on each step of my research process. Chapter 2 introduces the theoretical framework of this dissertation and the literature of ethnic enclaves in various settings. Chapter 3 continues the literature review in regards to the history of Arabs in the United States and the legal precedent of their citizenship rights. Chapter 4 outlines the various methods I have employed to answer my research questions, including landscape interpretation, participant observation, in-depth unstructured interviews, and archival research.
This creates an ethnographic framework I have used to better understand the creation and maintenance of Arab American identities in the Dearborn neighborhood. Chapter 5 discusses my results in regards to the various Arab American organizations that are engaged in the Dearborn community, including market organizations, social service organizations, educational organizations, and the family. Family considerations are the most significant factors in the identities espoused by Arab Americans, and family networks have a powerful impact on the identity of individuals in the Arab American community. Chapter 6 explores the visual alterations that are apparent on the Dearborn neighborhood landscape, focusing on Arab cultural modifications to the space that creates a unique sense of place. Chapter 7 examines the perceptions that have grown in response to the alteration of the Dearborn landscape and the interpretation of outsider oppositions to the Dearborn Arab Community. Chapter 8 engages with the identities produced and made possible by the presence of the Dearborn Arab community, leading directly into Chapter 9 which discusses the broader conclusions of this study.
CHAPTER 2 – ETHNIC IDENTITIES AND COMMUNITIES

2.1 Ethnic Identity

The description of ethnic enclaves is based heavily on the assumption of contrasting ethnic identities, which may or may not be self-evident. Ethnicity has become a key point of difference between groups of people (Parenti 1967; Isaacs 1975), though it is by no means the only or main basis for division. Some key aspects of this ethnicity are language, cultural traditions and religion, familial relationships, and some type of narrative that holds a measure of collective meaning. The multiple meanings of nature and culture and the relationship between these terms and meanings are discussed in Raymond Williams’s *Keywords* (1983). Ethnic identities have become the basis for nationalist sentiment and have become tied into geographical relationships to territorial spaces and the communal creation of place (Kaplan and Herb 1999). Ethnic enclaves will set a stage for the interactions of disparate ethnic groups within a relatively small scale, creating new dynamics of cultural interaction and identity formation.

The ethnic aspect of identity has roots in the Linnaean divisions between human racial categories that were later made hierarchical based on Blumenbach’s subjective appraisal of the relative beauty between the races (Gould 1994). The relative position of human races in Blumenbach’s spectrum, while important, is not the only influence on resistance to Arab immigration. Tying race and genetics to specific places and territories, Ratzel’s work would serve as inspiration to those who would envision the nation-state as an organism that would
function best when ethnically and culturally pure (Ratzel 2008). The concept of a pure ethnicity, like the nation state, or national identity, is derived from the mental constructions of those who participate in discourse concerning the matter in question (Foucault 1971). The interaction between these different concepts of ethnic and racial groups is translated within each individual’s consciousness to create an idea of the self we call identity.

The psychological process of identity creation, as documented by Erik Erikson and heavily cited by many, is a complex discourse created through group dynamics and self-identification with some relative to others, in expanding fields surrounding the conceptualization of “self” (Erikson 1956; Isaacs 1975; Gergen 1971; Serpe and Stryker 2011). Ethnic group differentiations are created through a continuous matrix of ongoing processes that are closely related to the development of individual identity and social identity (Barth 1969; Jenkins 1996; Baumeister 1998). Ethnicity is rooted in a collective understanding of group identification based on a perceived cultural difference (Jenkins 2000; Smith 2005). These considerations of individual and group identity are created in relation to and contrasted against “others,” which represent those identities that can contrast the identity of the self or the group the self belongs to (Erikson 1956; Isaacs 1975; Triandafyllidou 1998). Power relationships between groups have a significant impact on the development of identities within Jenkins’ models (1996). Phinney expanded on the formation of identity in line with Erikson’s opinions on the importance of adolescence in the development of identity (Phinney 1993; 2007). Phinney (1993) emphasized an order of development that could take place in any of the social milieux described by Jenkins (1996). Phinney’s model designated three states of development, one where an individual was completely ignorant of their identity or possibly even the existence of an identity, one where an individual seeks to discover their identity, and finally when one actualizes their identity. When
ethnic groups face prejudice or unequal status within the dominant society, ethnic neighborhoods are reinforced through a process of mutual exclusion, seclusion, and segregation. This should not be confused with the literal creation of the ethnic neighborhood from the perspective of observers but as a philosophical consideration of who is “in” a group as opposed to “out” of a group (Anderson 1987). This framework leads us to consider the dynamic nature of situational identity, nested identities, and the fluidity of meaning behind the general concept of the individual and how it relates to group identity (Kaplan and Herb 1999). The constructivist approach I have just described can be contrasted against primordialist arguments that strongly endorse the saliency of community membership and the imagination of a collective heritage with a long history of existence that should be considered intuitive and a fixture of reality (Geertz 1963; Jenkins 1996; Smith 2005). These two considerations are useful when discussing various phenomena we use to define ethnic or cultural boundaries because we should consider which socially constructed phenomena are most likely be considered a “deeper” part of the identity and why it is considered as such. When social constructs become part of a primordial perspective of identity, it is an opportunity to observe the values of that group and its members.

Immigrants have various issues trying to adapt to their new culture and go through periods where everything seems wonderful followed by periods of culture shock (Tajfel 1981). This is hopefully replaced by a gradual sense of normalcy as identities are negotiated to manage dissonance. The options range from trying to fit in versus keeping a distance from a new culture and avoiding “Americanization.” Emotional attachment to a group membership and self-awareness through that group membership, are ways in which identity come to be understood (Tajfel 1981). Honeymoon phases within a new culture transitions into one of culture shock, and then possibly into an adjustment to normalcy where you may adopt what you like and discard or
ignore what you do not. Trying to fit in is negotiated between completely melting into the host culture to total seclusion and rejection of all change, avoiding Americanization (Barret 1992). The cultural-national label may also be a definition provided in a cultural framework, a legal or official designation that is created by such things as census reports and identification cards.

It is difficult to create hard boundaries separating peoples, nations, and cultures to discern bounded regions that comprise a single “civilization” (Sewell 1999). Benedict Anderson argued that the development of print media and national language readership is the greatest catalyzing force in the process of nation-building (1983). There are others who say that language and symbols can create nationalist sentiments as they become more commonplace on the landscape and reinforce nationalism in an everyday manner (Billig 1995). This would suggest that nationalism can change with assimilation into new language groups, or the adoption of nationalist symbolism, but dismisses ethnic considerations of identity that go beyond language use and the ability to identify with nationalist symbols.

European identity has been a major factor in the establishment of the United States, and ethnic identity has been embedded in the subsequent order of our society ever since. This identity has been forged in the local context based on an ongoing negotiation of what constitutes “Europe” and which nations and nation-states are included in that imagination (Murphy 2005). Membership in the European Union and other historical alliances are one modern aspect of European identity which has been legitimized by the presence of those institutions (Kösebalaban 2007). Ideas of identity have been constructed in regards to establishing an other as a counterpoint to an idea of group identity (Isaacs 1975; Triandafyllidou 1998; Hancock 2010). In that manner, we argue that in many cases, European identity is established in relation to such others in close proximity. The southern and Eastern portions of the world, measuring from an
ancient sea named for the center of the world the Mediterranean, became the other to the north and west representing Europe (Said 1978; Ballard 1996). Aspects of contrast between these areas such as language, religion, cultural practices, and especially skin tone, could make a person, country, or concept more or less European, versus its other; the Eastern, the Oriental, and in this case the Arab.

Tajfel says identity comes from group membership and that, in part, an individual derives from his or her awareness of a social group combined with the emotional attachment to that group and membership in it (1981). European, identity had been constructed in opposition to an “Eastern threat,” established by the time of the crusades, popularly characterized by barbaric practices, savagery, wanton excess, and a lack of cultural sophistication (Said 1978, Ballard 1996, Murphy 2005). Edward Said’s Orientalism (1978) began the modern discourse on the perception of “Easternness,” which David Sibley (1998) has expanded on his discussion of exclusion. This exclusion is often predicated by perceived differences and resulting hostility (Herb 1999). The impact of this exclusion is compounded within societies predisposed towards xenophobia. The use of discourse to create and modify socially constructed imagery, leading to the creation of identities, is discussed in detail by Foucault (1971). The West-East dichotomy has also expressed itself as the “Christian World” against the “Muslim World” (Ballard 1996). This system of beliefs has also been institutionalized in the United States and is therefore significant in relation to ethnic enclaves in American cities.

This brief analysis of the creation and recreation of identity, both within individuals and groups, reinforces Barth’s argument that it is the social construction of group boundaries that is most significant and the manner in which groups define their identities in relation to others, rather than actual differences in culture, lifestyle, etc. (1969). The group perception becomes
paramount. This solves the problem of deciding which aspects of culture, identity, and ethnicity will be the most salient among individuals and groups at different times. People will choose, individually and collectively, what is and is not important to their identity. It is also very important to consider ethnic groups as a process of social organization, in which elites (leaders) create and maintain ethnic boundaries (Barth 1969; Smith 2005; Abouyoub 2009). These aspects of ethnic enclaves should prove equally important when we investigate the processes taking place among Arab Americans in suburban Detroit. We assume that alterations made to the landscape of Dearborn will reflect the tastes of the Arab American community, many of which we can identify visually.

2.2 Ethnic Enclave Communities

Over time, cultural groups can leave visible signs of its cultural identity upon the landscape in various ways. The concentrated presence of a specific group’s population or business enterprises in a specific area or community becomes known as an *ethnic enclave* (Portes and Jensen 1992). It is often easy to recognize the existence of an ethnic enclave, but it is difficult to define the exact criteria to legitimize a place as an ethnic enclave. Ethnic enclaves in the United States have been most often associated with urban communities in New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago, and other large cities (Abrahamson 1996). There is no critical mass required to constitute an ethnic enclave, but I am focusing on the recognizable aspects of the cultural community. Very few Italians may live in the “old neighborhood,” but the businesses, houses of worship, and markets stand as a monument to their immigrant experiences as well as a central location for group activity. Signs, symbols, sound, and tastes can be altered to reflect the cultural activities taking place within these dynamic spaces (Billig 1995; Marcus 2009).
enclaves serve as gathering places for cultural events, employment opportunities, and house social service organizations and religious denominations that aim to serve their ethnic community. These economies also evolve, as groups become assimilated into more aspects of American society and diversify their types of employment.

Ethnic enclaves have all evolved based on their contexts, but some similarities are recognized. The characterization of an ethnic enclave can be conceived as the result of discourses between internal and external forces and actors (Barth 1969; Isaacs 1975). More simply; people can either 1) set themselves apart from or 2) can be put into a segregated space by; the dominant society (Anderson 1987). This simple binary should be expanded and considered as a spectrum of social discourses, with the idea that segregation may or may not be a voluntary process (Kaplan and Holloway 2001). These discourses negotiate relative amounts of power to legitimate a particular narrative of ethnic integration, and evolve dynamically within individuals and are reimagined through group exchanges and collective interpretations of meaning (Gergen 1971). As people assign themselves an ethnic identity, they can gauge that identity against others in their own group and the identity of their groups in comparison to other groups or, most pertinent to this study, in comparison to the dominant society.

Visible features of ethnic enclaves come from various activities in which ethnic identity is created and recreated through practice (Rose 2003). Ethnic marketplaces have evolved marketing traditional goods and services to their target groups, attracting outsiders as well who seek to experiment with local exotic culture (Portes 1987; Stiffler 2004). Consumer products often contribute to the practice of traditional cultures, cuisine, and dress being key aspects of ethnic identity. Ethnic communities build organizations for the social welfare and community development of its member citizens (Rignall 1997; Liu and Geron 2008). Festivals and
community events, as well as religious holidays and celebrations, punctuate the calendar with visible expressions of traditional ethnic culture. Architectural styles may also be developed to taste and are most obvious in the design of temples, churches, mosques, other houses of worship and community buildings (Meinig 1979). During festivals and times of community mobilization, religious organizations may function alongside community and political organizations that may otherwise avoid religious affiliations. Ethnic enclaves offer a unique setting in which to observe the formation of group identity and the interaction between disparate cultural traditions. These interactions occur within a relatively small space and develop distinct cultural landscapes over time, with investment of capital by community members (Barth 1969; Lewis 1979). Transnational migratory processes create unique landscapes that serve as new spaces for the practice and creation of cultural identity (Marcus 2009a). American ethnic diversity has increased as immigrants from many places in the world have become a significant aspect of American communities. Little Tokyo, Chinatown, Little Italy, Little Havana and other enclaves become notable communities as new ethnic groups shape their environments to their tastes and needs (Anderson 1987; Abrahamson 1992; Smith 2005). These groups, along with their immigration narratives, are a visible component of the melting pot metaphor applied to the phenomena of the great diversity of American ethnic identities.

2.3 Marketplaces and Ethnic Economies

The successful immigration of some individuals from one migrant community to a new host community will often spur further immigration as more people follow the lead of pioneer migrants (Massey 1990). Incorporation into economic systems in the new community will make it easier for subsequent waves of immigration, each wave facilitating the next so that migration
barriers are steadily mitigated, possibly leading to chain-migration on a large scale (Portes 1987). Remittances from family abroad may encourage future migrants to take their chances in labor migration or permanent relocation.

The proliferation of an ethnic enclave often depends on self-sufficiency and economic prosperity. An ethnic enclave is a geographically defined space with identifiable cultural and economic activities and features (Portes and Wilson 1980). The term is usually used to refer to either a commercial or residential area with high concentrations of ethnic people and firms. Immigrant clusters in close geographic spaces lead to the development of migrant networks based on social interaction. These networks allow immigrant groups to exchange valuable resources and knowledge with their home communities to encourage later migration. Immigrants benefit from social networks by transforming information into tangible resources, and ultimately reduce costs and other barriers against migration (Coleman 1994; Portes 1995). This social capital may include employment opportunity, housing options, and assistance programs provided by the government or NGOs.

Enclaves create an alternative labor market that is suited for members of those ethnic groups to engage within, one that does not demand socio-cultural or lingual fluency within the host nation. Enclave economies employ a large portion of their ethnic compatriots, helping those individuals and the entire group to assimilate and integrate into the host nation (Portes and Wilson 1980). This is possible because the enclave allows these individuals to communicate and interact based on their traditional cultural and social values rather than that of the host nation. Looking at these ethnic enclaves may help us to identify employment opportunity and economic mobility as key variables that will explain the relative success or failure of immigrant communities.
Ethnic economies certainly benefit immigrants in the short-term negotiation with a new country, but they may also stunt the long-term opportunity for immigrants by restricting opportunities to build commercial networks outside of the ethnic group or assimilate into the dominant culture (Duncan and Waldorf 2009). The ease of entry into an ethnic economy may delay language acquisition, and further limit a new immigrant or a family of immigrants greater opportunity (Sanders and Nee 1987). The long-term economic success of an ethnic enclave can depend on the ability of individuals to assimilate further into the host society economy, or possibly for the entire ethnic community to develop its economy in progression with greater skills attained by its constituent members. Growing the ethnic economy from within and without, providing a home location through the market district and greater economic capital through more employment streams, leads to greater prosperity for the ethnic community as a whole (Portes and Jensen 1992). The communities are often aware of this, and actively encourage children to pursue education and career paths beyond the abilities of the parents along with a sense of community responsibility and individual agency.

In this area, we especially find pressure on children and young adults to assimilate to the host community while preserving traditional culture simultaneously. Children and later generations, in general, are more likely to have been born in the United States or have arrived at a younger age. Some residents of enclaves actively encourage their children to move beyond the parent’s occupation while others encourage the next generation to maintain businesses and practices that have provided financial rewards (Naff 2000). While some children are distraught to be stuck in the family business, others are free to pursue higher goals, while others are distraught at being stuck between. They may not have the desire to remain in a family business, but do not have access or wherewithal to acquire the social capital required to pursue new ventures. It has
also been theorized that the ethnic enclave has had more benefits to early migrants and their children when compared to later migrants and their respective offspring (Portes and Shafer 2007).

Language and social fluency are the areas where enclave members may fall behind. They are secluded from exposure to the local social culture, and mainstream opportunities may be unavailable or completely unknown (Brown 2007). Second-generation members of ethnic communities may find an outlet in public education and other systems that were unknown to previous generations, using their bilingualism as a springboard for further success (Mouw and Zie 1999). The ability of an ethnic community to expand its economic base beyond the enclave economy, to integrate and assimilate into the local market economies, may be a key factor in the relative success or failure of these immigrant groups and the communities they have built (Portes and Shafer 2007). In the meantime, ethnic immigrants offer an extremely committed labor pool that is in many ways captive to the ethnic economy because they lack the skills to participate elsewhere.

The creation of the Cuban ethnic economy of Miami and the role of commerce in organizing the Cuban American community is one example of an ethnic community which has in many ways defined itself (Portes 1987). Cuban Americans have etched a unique space in Miami, and have become a powerful ethnic economy that has facilitated much of their integration into the United States (Portes 1987; Forment 1989; Light, et al. 1994). This integration has led to political agency in regards to local, national, and international affairs (Haney and Vanderbush 1999). The focus on enterprise distances the Cuban American community from the Cuban communist state and emphasizes loyalty to the United States, through the global economic system it represents. Proactive engagement with the United States government, media outlets,
and local communities enables the Cuban American community to maintain a predominantly favorable positive image during tensions with the Cuban state that peaked during the Cuban missile crisis (Haney and Vanderbush 1999). I consider the Cuban case especially closely because it is an ethnic enclave populated by a group from a nation that has been in conflict with the United States, albeit in a very different manner than what has occurred with Arab nations during the so-called Global War on Terror.

After examining the Cuban ethnic economy in Miami, Alejandro Portes and Kenneth Wilson concluded that ethnic economies provide immigrants with a quick economic opportunity in a host nation (1980). A large factor of ethnic economies occurs in the informal sector of the economy. New immigrants gravitate towards the informal and ethnic sectors of the economy because of various reasons including a lack of social resources (language skills, cultural mores), outright discrimination and prejudice, or legal issues. Informal sectors of the economy may have offered original immigrants their first opportunities in a host nation as well. Many legal restrictions and other regulations can be bypassed or otherwise ignored by operating on the margins or within informal structures, aided by communication networks established within and between ethnic minority groups.

Portes and Wilson also noted that new immigrants are more likely to work for companies run by their ethnic compatriots rather than enter the labor pool of their new host society. These businesses run and owned by specific immigrant groups, in this case, Cubans, became what Portes and Wilson describe as the "ethnic economy" (1980). These markets also have an internal-service aspect at their outset. These firms may cater to the needs of their ethnic community, providing the goods and services unavailable in the host society for the practice of traditional culture within the ethnic enclave. These businesses may mature into a popular local product for
members of the host society who begin to sample and enjoy the ethnic offerings now available. Chinatowns, Little Italys, and other commercial areas have become tourist destinations in their own right, and these enterprises begin to profit from outsiders to their communities as well as their own local-ethnic customers.

2.4 Community Organizations

The success or failure of these ethnic enclave communities is dependent on the general access to social capital, which is a short hand for general social support provided by family, kinship networks, and various organizations that provide the logistical support to immigrate, live in, find employment and progress onwards within the dominant community. Social capital could be as simple as staying with a family member for several months or having access to someone who can help with job leads and networking. Social capital could also be extended family networks that provide cash transfers to meet expenses, which can be imagined as a transfer of capital from one type to another.

It is important to note that within family networks, the most important organizations in many communities, financial capital is used to manipulate the actions of family members reliant on a collective family leader or group of earners or elders who decide what occupations and educations are best for their families and the community as so far they can influence. Social capital can be strongly impacted by the population size of the ethnic community, the level of economic accessibility afforded the immigrants through skills, entrepreneurship, and economic opportunities, and the financial capital available to the community. Mary C. Waters speculates that parental involvement in ethnic political activities and group-based organizations will heavily influence the ethnic identity of their children (2008). If parents are going to their...
traditional language schools, churches, and social functions, children internalize it as part of their identity and are likely to continue participation into adulthood. Subsequent generations may have to consciously try to maintain their ethnic identity and the factors, such as language and cultural practices that go into that identity.

Ethnic enclave communities are the result of various types of immigration, both legal and illegal. Attitudes towards specific ethnic groups can influence a nation’s immigration policy towards peoples from that defined group. Geopolitical conflict can create negative attitudes toward perceived enemy groups and can directly predicate prejudice against unwanted immigrants, including state-based discrimination within immigration policy and defining some American citizens as less than (Kaplan and Holloway 2001). Japanese American communities during World War II, and to a lesser extent German and Italian Americans, were subject to martial law and extrajudicial detention. Immigration from these nations ground to a halt, except in extenuating circumstances and cases of defection (Stanley 1994). Organizations formed to protect Japanese Americans from unconstitutional treatment expanded the discussion of national identity versus ethnic identity and how we must learn, especially in multi-cultural America, to distinguish which is most relevant. The organization and direction or community groups can have a heavy influence on the perception of ethnic communities and their ability to integrate into new countries.

Minority groups may be lumped together through external factors that create a discourse of minority, inferiority, and marginalization, based on ethnic and cultural prejudice (Anderson 1987; Liu and Geron 2008). Japanese Americans (Smith 2005) faced prejudice in North American communities when they were able to settle at all (Liu and Geron 2008). East Asian immigrants were highly exploited as low-wage labor and also relegated to spaces that were most
unappealing to North American residents, such as in back alleys and near community refuse. As a result, they became associated with those spaces and the trade of sanitation and disposal. Anti-Asian discrimination peaked during World War II after the bombing of Pearl Harbor and was manifest in the internment of Japanese-American citizens. Relief and advocacy organizations were unable to counteract racist interpretations of the conflict and ultimately failed to spare the oppression of Japanese Americans. Japanese communities in Los Angeles also have unique historical and geographical characteristics that make these so-called “Little Tokyo” communities extremely relevant in cases of minority groups experiencing a time of crisis within the dominant community (Smith 2005). The “ethnic enclaves” are built within a paradigm of group identity boundaries and serve as a haven for minority groups within a dominant society that regards them as foreign.

Government policies towards immigration will also have a significant influence on the political incorporation of immigrant groups. Ethnic enclaves can provide a location for the mobility of ethnic organizations and participation in local politics, or conversely as a refuge away from mainstream society and the burdens of official residency or citizenship. Churches and other houses of worship have provided space and networks for political organizations in the United States, especially for minority groups. It is possible that this is seeking refuge to engage in political activity by using the protections of religious freedom. Governments can be accommodating, ambivalent, or neutral towards the success of an ethnic enclave community depending on political expediency, legal considerations, and popular sentiment.

By providing a space that allows for economic agency for an ethnic minority group, these enclaves can become a significant role model for the perception of the community as a whole. The enclave is a role model for the ethnic group when being perceived by the host society, while
the enclave is also the medium through which new members experience the host society. Hence, the relationship between the ethnic enclave and the host society and their general perceptions and opinions of one-another, become a paramount aspect of the negotiation of identity, agency, and possible assimilations opportunities for the ethnic minority group.

Ethnic organizations often engage such issues as documentation, citizenship, naturalization or another legal residency status, voter registration and electoral participation, putting forward candidates to represent the ethnic group within existing state structures at the local, regional, or national levels, and other community-based mobilization. Ethnic organizations also take part in crafting historical narratives, funding research and authors to create works that help to build a group story of immigration and community. They may work to preserve significant pieces of architectural history that are unique and significant to a specific group or document the development of their ethnic enclave and others in museums, novels, films, or other documentary media. Ethnic and national organizations, like all organizations, are moving towards greater use of online media to spread their message and engage with members. They usually operate websites, or at least a Facebook or similar blog website, and can serve as an online forum for community discussion. What I am trying to emphasize that when we say ethnic organizations, it means a lot more than it sounds. These organizations change landscapes through construction projects and empower communities to do the same by stimulating economies of individuals. They provide these forums for community interaction, discussing and archiving current events and past histories. The individuals involved in these conversations, this type of research, are going through a complex negotiation of their ethnic identity on personal and community levels. Organizations that arise in enclave communities are often built to negotiate this maze of identity perception and also to aid in the logistics of practical living. They focus
community zeitgeists, most importantly in the realm of civic engagement. Communities are often held responsible for their members, or even those perceived to be members. In that regard we may witness some people looking out for the interests of their coethnics because of enlightened self-interest, not wanting newcomers to give good American minorities a bad name.

2.5 Chain Migration

Ethnic Enclaves are most established through a process known as chain migration. Chain migration has been used to describe types of immigration with some variance in its meaning. Remittances contribute to chain migration by aiding in both funding and interest in migration. In addition to sending money home to subsidize their home country, remittances encourage new migrants seeking similar rewards (Dresch 2000; Dimova and Wolff 2011). People who received remittances from abroad are much more likely to seek migration opportunities themselves, in comparison to individuals who do not receive such payments (van Dalen, Greoenewold, and Fokkema 2005). The position of family ties in the sending and receiving of remittances also reinforces the strength of family networks over those of village or nation (van Dalen, Greoenewold, and Fokkema 2005). This transfer of remittances most often takes place along family networks, as do the gains in social capital that create feedback loops of greater remittances to more migration and further remittances to remaining family who are thereby encouraged to follow the chain of migration (Dresch 2001, Katarzky 1980, Massey et al. 1998).

Chain migration was first described in the late 19th century by Jacob Riis and later named by R. A. Lochmore (Riis 1898; Lochmore 1951; Katarzky 1980). MacDonald and MacDonald pioneered the study of urban ethnic enclaves, “Little Italys,” in the pre-WWI United States (1962). These communities established immigrant networks whereby “prospective immigrants
learned of opportunities, were provided with passage money, and had initial accommodation and employment arranged through previous immigrants (MacDonald and MacDonald 1962;1964). The MacDonalds’ study indicated that Italian immigrants exhibited no solidarity as a unified ethnic group (1962; Katarsky 1980). Italian settlements in urban areas were based on town and village origin, including immediate family, extended family, and neighborhood-level kinship networks. Their identity was focused on those village networks, and they did not self-identify as Italian although their communities would be dubbed “little Italy” (Handlin 1959). Arabs have also been lacking the unifying aspect of religion, whereas Italians were and are almost exclusively Catholic. While enclave economies are undoubtedly beneficial to new immigrants, they may stunt the success of future generations living in the ethnic enclave. Because the ethnic enclave is so insular, those groups who participate in it may find themselves shut off from the greater economic opportunities available in the host nation. The upward mobility that is possible through the enclave economy hits a virtual "glass ceiling" where those networks have been maximized, and more growth is difficult or results in reduced returns.

In regards to American ethnic communities, chain migration refers to the social process by which immigrants from a particular town follow others from that town to a particular city or neighborhood, whether in an immigrant-receiving country or a new, usually urban, location in the home country. The term also refers to foreign immigration under laws permitting family unification in the receiving country, a phenomenon which has been occurring in the United States since the passage of immigration reform laws in the 1960s and 1970s. It could also be used in general to refer to large-scale immigration from specific nation-states with the underlying assumption that chain migration is taking place within those waves of immigrants. The information and personal connections that lead to chain migration lead to transplanted
communities from one nation to another. American history is punctuated with the emergence of ethnic enclaves that have been built and sustained by immigration. Different ethnic groups claimed distinct physical space in city neighborhoods to provide a reception for chain migration and maintain the community network it created. Examples of this trend include the many neighborhoods called Little Italy, Little Havana, Little Tokyo and Chinatown throughout the United States.

Chain migration can be defined as a “movement in which prospective migrants learn of opportunities, are provided with transportation, and have initial accommodation and employment arranged using primary social relationships with previous migrants” (Coleman 1990, p.304). Massey et al. agree with Gunnar Myrdal and his cumulative causation theory, “each act of migration alters the social context within which subsequent migration decisions are made, thus increasing the likelihood of additional movement. Once the number of network connections in a community reaches a critical threshold, migration becomes self-perpetuating” (Myrdal 1944; Massey, Durand and Malone 2002, p.19) Small actions spur the creation of small social migrant networks, and chain migration becomes a much more significant. Mexican migration to the United States followed some of the same patterns as Italian immigration. The history of Mexican migrant labor in America and return migration to Mexico produced a network that allowed for chain migration once more restrictive legislation was passed to harden the border between the two nations (Massey et al. 1998). Social capital is both created and exchanged in the process of chain migration, it is engaged by using networks and capital to arrange migration, and it encourages later migrants with remittance transfers (Massey, Durand and Malone 2002). In the context of migration, social capital refers to social networks, access to funds or material support, and any other knowledge or skills that predicate successful migration. Social capital has had a
A proven relationship that spurs subsequent migration in China, where successful immigrants have established positive feedback loops that have transferred large portions of labor migrants in chain migration (Zhao 2003).

Single, young, male laborers were initially the largest group using chain migration to the United States in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, each immigrant group maintained a unique composition due to circumstances in home countries, goals of migration, and American immigration laws. For example, Irish migration after 1880 had a slight female majority, the only migrant group with that distinction (Daniels 2002, p. 141). Italian chain migration was initially wholly male based on intent to return but became a source of family reunification when wives eventually immigrated. Chinese chain migration was almost exclusively male until 1946 when the Chinese War Brides Act allowed Chinese wives of American citizens to immigrate without regards to Chinese immigration quotas. Before that time, chain migration was limited to “paper sons” and actual sons from China (Bernstein 2009). The imbalanced sex ratio of Chinese immigrants was due to Chinese exclusion laws and the inability to bring current wives or to marry and return to the United States, inhibiting the corrective measure of chain migration (MacDonald and MacDonald 1964). When immigrant groups react to economic pull factors in the labor markets, chain migration via family has been used informally to balance out the gender ratio in ethnic immigrant communities. The recurring theme in gendered migration to the United States has been forerunner male laborers followed by wives and families after a period of initial settlement and establishment.

Different groups of immigrants to the United States throughout its history have employed different strategies to enter, work, and live in America. Some groups, such as Eastern European Jews, emigrated in families en masse from the Russian and Austro-Hungarian Empires of the late
nineteenth century. One group of forgotten “immigrants” to America were African slaves brought over forcibly in large numbers. However, many ethnic groups have immigrated to the United States throughout history via chain migration and have gone on to establish ethnic enclaves based on those networks in their new home communities. These social networks for migration are universal and not limited to specific nations, cultures, or crises. Chain migration is an overarching theme of many of the immigration experiences in American history.

2.6 Immigration Legislation

Sudden influxes of immigrants and reactionary nativist sentiments had led to a history of immigration legislation in the United States that has been aimed to limit immigration from select countries and nations specifically. Preference has historically been given to northern and western European countries, but I will focus on exclusionary legislation that has been aimed to reduce chain migration. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, and the Asiatic Barred Zone, and the National Origins quota established through the Immigration Act of 1924 were effective in limiting chain migration but could not end it entirely (Johnson 1996; Massey, Durand and Malone 2002). Chinese migrants exploited gaps in enforcement and employed false documentation to enter the United States until they received a national quota with the McCarran-Walter Act of 1952, and presumably, illegal immigration was reduced.

Other migrant groups were limited in number by the National Origins system, which designated national quotas based on census ratios from 1890 (Massey, Durand and Malone 2002). These ratios heavily favored Western European nations and older migrant groups, such as the English, Irish, and Germans. This manifestation of European identity politics has had a strong impact on US immigration law and the evolving “American” ethnic identity
conceptualizations growing in the United States. Irish, Jewish, and Italian Americans were delayed in receiving the privilege, or even status of being “white,” until much later than the British, French, and Dutch colonists. Exclusion and quotas affect who chain migration draws as potential immigrants as well as how immigrants deal with their status once in the new country. The contemporary focus on family reunification in immigration laws has served to promote chain migration through extended family visas and employment arranged through family or ethnic service organizations. Chain migration exists as a phenomenon regardless of laws limiting immigration, the changing goals and provisions of immigration legislation nonetheless affect how the system of chain migration works.

Chain migration based on the knowledge gained from migrant labor experience and relationships with American residents or citizens again provided some ease of immigration. From 1942 to 1964, the American government sanctioned Bracero Program allowed many Mexican migrant workers to “familiarize themselves with U.S. employment practices, become comfortable with U.S. job routines, master American ways of life, and learn English,” thereby creating social and human capital (Massey et al. 1987; Massey, Durand and Malone 2002). After the disbandment of the Bracero Program, the incentives and effects of chain migration perpetuated undocumented immigration to the United States. Absent any of the economic incentives, the Mexican American immigration relationship has a longstanding history, and the effects of chain migration are pervasive when considering the number of Mexican American citizens, legal residents, and undocumented residents. Social capital provided by chain migration has helped perpetuate Mexican migration, whether it is undocumented or legal.

While immigrants from European nations during the period before the McCarran–Walter Act of 1952 were able to immigrate legally if with varying levels of ease depending on country
of origin, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 barred almost all Chinese from immigrating to the United States (Massey et al. 1993). Nonetheless, many Chinese immigrants arrived in America by obtaining false documents. The Chinese Exclusion Act allowed the Chinese Americans already settled in America to stay and provided for limited numbers of family members of Chinese Americans to immigrate with the correct paperwork. This loophole and the fateful 1906 earthquake that destroyed San Francisco’s public records provided Chinese immigrants, almost entirely men, with the potential to immigrate with false documents stating their familial relationship to a Chinese American. These Chinese immigrants were called “paper sons,” because of their false papers. “Paper sons” relied on networks built by chain migration to buy documentation, develop strategies for convincing authorities on Angel Island of their legal status and for starting a life in America.

Limits were based in part to limit the number of Southern and Eastern European immigrants. The National Origins system limited family reunification as an avenue for chain migration and placed a preference on naturalization. If an immigrant became a U.S. citizen, he or she had the ability obtain non-quota visas for more family members but as a resident that number was capped annually. Additionally, the Immigration Act of 1924 formally opened the door to chain migration from the entire western hemisphere, placing that group under non-quota status. The abolition of the National Origins quota system came with the Hart-Celler Act of 1965. This new legislation placed heavy emphasis on family reunification, designating 74% of visas for that purpose. There was no limit on spouses, unmarried minor children, and parents of U.S. citizens. The percentages for family reunification were as follows: Unmarried adult children of U.S. citizens (20%), spouses and unmarried children of permanent residents aliens (20%), married children of U.S. citizens (10%), brothers and sisters of U.S. citizens over age 21 (24%). These
new visa preferences created a swell of new chain migration and immigration in general. European immigration to America was replaced by immigration from less-developed countries for the first time in history, surpassing it by the end of the 1960s and doubling the numbers of European migration by the end of the 1970s (Massey, Durand and Malone 2002). This history of immigration legislation would continue to influence the demographics of American ethnic groups into the present.

2.7 Immigration Legislation from the 1980s to Present

In reaction to the flood of new immigrants brought by the Hart-Celler Act, and increasing numbers of undocumented immigrants from Mexico and Latin America, Congress attempted to reverse the consequences of the 1965 legislation by enforcing border patrol, using amnesty for undocumented immigrants in the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, and proposing limits to family reunification policies (Lopez 1997). The effects of the ending the Bracero Program were increased undocumented Mexican migration because of the social capital gained during that period. Chain migration had provided relatively easy access to migration for Mexicans that the immigration legislation of the 1980s to the present has attempted to deal with. In many cases, Mexican communities have lived along the border and have crossed it casually for generations; though that has become increasingly less feasible in a matter tangentially related to this study.

Currently, there is a movement against chain migration and its effects, in addition to growing nationalist sentiment and a movement against immigration in general. This trend directly intersects the Arab Community in Detroit by alienating its people, giving hateful monikers to their communities, and further isolates them in their minority support to take
additional refugees from the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East; many focused on Arab countries. Most especially Syrian and Lebanese political events will have a strong impact on the Dearborn community; accusations of extremist connections are not unheard of. ISIS in Syria and the Iraqi wars have been highly sensitive topics with Chaldean and Arab Americans, representing a recent peak in an ongoing level of high scrutiny from both official outlets and citizen critics.

The anti-immigrant aspect of the Arab American experience is also tied into a greater opposition to immigration, in general, that is occurring across many parts of the United States, embraced by a variety of influential politicians and interest groups. Securing the border and fear of terrorism is part and parcel to the same policies that are applied to anti-immigrant sentiments in historical contexts. Specifically, the family reunification emphasis of the Hart-Celler Act had the unintended consequence of dramatically increasing levels of migration in general and chain migration in particular. FAIR, the Federation for American Immigration Reform, a conservative think tank, promotes the idea that, “chain migration-and the expectations and long lines it produces-increases illegal immigration (FAIR USA 2016). Additionally, Federation American Immigration Reform argues that illegal aliens given amnesty by Congress in 1986 are now fueling naturalization in record numbers. As these former illegal aliens become citizens, all of their immediate relatives qualify to come immediately to the United States and start new migration chains of their own. NumbersUSA, cites the tradition of chain migration to America as a main cause for creating incentives for undocumented immigration. NumbersUSA, FAIR, and other groups are working to change immigration law to limit chain migration.

On Feb. 4, 2009, Rep. Phil Gingrey (R-GA) introduced the Nuclear Family Priority Act (H.R. 878). The bill would eliminate the extended family visa categories (e.g., married sons and daughters of citizens, etc.), thus ending “chain migration” as recommended by the bi-partisan Barbara Jordan Commission in 1997. (Numbers USA 2016).
Massey, Durand, and Malone state that while immediate family immigration provisions were created to promote and stabilize the family unit in American immigration and society, family reunification visas for extended family, such as adult siblings, are unnecessary when faced with rising immigration numbers (Massey, Durand, and Malone 2002, p. 162). This is all part of a general backlash against immigration to the United States by many people, including prominent politicians, which is couched in nativism and genuine concern for border security. Border security and issues beyond labor disruption directly engages the fact that when it comes to ethnic identities, all migrants are not created equal.

2.8 Community and Neighborhood

Researchers have made various attempts to describe ethnic enclaves based on their characteristics. Many ethnic enclaves have moved beyond immigrant reception area and urban slums while maintaining relative levels of community cohesion. The most commonly used variables are the level of urbanization versus suburbanization, or even rural enclaves, the level of wealth and affluence maintained by a community, the density of the community population in relationship to the surrounding peoples, and the level of integration between the community neighborhood, other neighborhood community groups, and greater society. It is also important, at this point, that we agree for this piece the definitions of community and neighborhood. It is a difficult task to define the operational uses that would encompass every citation of community and neighborhood, but for simplicity, I have followed Katarsky’s lead by also using Carol Agoc’s definition as applied to Detroit:

“It is logical to refer to the territorial community as a neighborhood, and to the interactional community as community. The concept of ‘neighborhood’ suggests a
relationship between people and the territory where they live, and interactions among those residents as a consequence of sharing territory. ‘Community’ suggests a social network, a set of relationships among people who may or may not reside in a common territory.” (Agocs 1977, p. 68; Katarsky 1980, p. 12).

So community is the discussion of a human network on some level of scale, while neighborhood is territorial space where interactions occur. These two concepts interact with each other, and both create meanings to individuals from which identity is perceived. Places become a player, an actor, another family member or a host setting to the family narrative, another piece in the complex genesis of identity within the individual, the family, extended family, and community. A community of ethnic network connections is at some level integrated into their local social community, and so on and so forth until we are at the global level. Global village, world wide web, globalization, these are new words for old concepts. The exchange of ideas and products across the world, but the pace at which it is occurring is certainly unprecedented. It is clear that even defining our terms can confuse the point, but it is good that we can progress with this discussion using community and neighborhood with marginally greater confidence.

2.9 Enclave Community Typologies

This section has proven very difficult to place. It can certainly be applied to any ethnic enclaves, but of course, I will be applying it to Dearborn and the other Arab suburbs in the Detroit area. We are discussing general levels of urbanism, population density, and community structures, which can be split into infinite categories or lumped into just one. The use of typologies and definitive variables is just a way to facilitate discussion of the various traits that emerge within ethnic enclaves.
I refer to Italian-Americans several times as an example to compare the Arab American experience. The reason I do so is because Italians immigrated to the United States without a strong national consciousness, like the Arabs, and did not speak the same exact dialect/language. Italians, by contrast, formed their immigration networks at the village level while Arabs did so at the family level (Katarsky 1980). The result has been largely the same where we see strong concentrations of one ethnic group with a strong community sentiment, based on chain migration predicated by family networks providing economic and social support (Thompson 1973; Katarsky 1980). There are several little Italy communities in the United States, representing the old neighborhood to countless individuals who self-identify as Italian but once would have held allegiance to a specific village and certainly regional biases e.g. Northern versus Southern Italy.

Enclave communities may integrate into some aspects of “American lifestyle,” while retaining the desire for ethnic cohesion and the preservation of traditional customs. Wei Li has noted a recent trend away from market-oriented enclaves with business establishments and commercial ties as the foundation for the ethnic concentration (1998). These ethnoburbs may have a significant commercial aspect to them, aiming to service the needs and wants of the resident ethnic community. Though signage may vary, the visible aspects of the landscape are not architecturally different from other suburban spaces, while urban ethnic enclaves have often established a more visible outward expression of the immigrant culture. The communities in Arab Detroit have are discussed in relation to their level of suburbanization (Agocs 1975; Katarsky 1980.) The community typologies in Table 1, discussed in regards to Dearborn by Katarsky and designed for Detroit in general by Agocs, emphasize the distribution of the ethnic subgroup within territorial neighborhoods and the level to which they are centralized or suburbanized in nature (1974; 1980, p. 13). This would build upon Li’s ethnurb and Marcuse’s
enclave, citadel, and ghetto to create a matrix of possible arrangements based on the density of settlement and level of urban versus rural development in the community’s environment (Marcuse 1997; Li 1998). Even further than the enclave, citadel, or ghetto, this table gives great detail on possible manifestations of an ethnic community.

The density of the ethnic population in the neighborhood or immediate vicinity is measured against the overall urban or rural nature of the community neighborhood context. A concentration of ethnic residents is possible in all of these scenarios, and it is easy to see that some differences will emerge based on these variables. No enclave fits into any category perfectly. Otherwise we would be forced to create a new category for every enclave or several categories for each enclave based on variance in individual perceptions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Population Distribution</th>
<th>Clustered and Segregated</th>
<th>Dispersed and Integrated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Centralized</td>
<td>Ghetto</td>
<td>Residual Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Immigrant Reception Center</td>
<td>Community</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Urban</td>
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<td>Village</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suburbanized</td>
<td>Transplanted Community</td>
<td>Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New Suburban Settlement</td>
<td>Without a Neighborhood</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.1 – Community Typologies. Source: Katarsky, p. 13; Agocs, p.215

Agocs further postulates that the presence of a neighborhood concentration will predicate the existence of an ethnic, social network or community (1977, p. 69). This does not seem to necessarily mean that the social network will directly reflect the nature of the community’s density or centralization, but that some network must exist. This distinguishing of the Arab communities is central to the discussion of this case study, as outsiders in the United States
presume the Arab community to be one monolithic entity (Abraham, Howell, and Shryock 2011), along with conflations of Arab with Islam (Beydoun 2013), while the diversity within the Arab groups and a myriad of faiths represented within those groups should be understood better in the common understanding than is exhibited at present (Abraham and Shryock 2000; Schopmeyer 2000; 2011).
CHAPTER 3 – ARAB AMERICAN IDENTITIES AND COMMUNITIES

3.1 Arab American Identity

Arabs have had a complex and conflicted identity in the United States. The context of their immigration experience must be considered in order to understand their development of enclave communities in the United States. Arab nations are not ethnically or cultural homogenous, and the first Arab immigrants to the United States were leaving a multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire which did not divide its administrative units based on territory but rather on the millet system that administered citizens based on their religious and ethnic classifications (Gelvin 2011). Arabs have gone through also gone through a series of legal decisions that have dictated their status vis a vis their religion, whiteness, and ultimately their ability to become citizens in the United States through naturalization (Abraham and Shryock 2000; Nagel and Staeheli 2005). Arab Americans have had a mixed level acceptance as individuals in the United States based on our racially segregated communities and census classifications (Schopmeyer 2000; 2011). To better understand the current status of Arab Americans and their community in Dearborn, we must discuss the history of Arabs in the United States in relation to their identity. This identity has been confusing from the beginning, when Arabs first began to immigrate to live in the United States.

We consider Arab Americans as those citizens, permanent residents, and their descendants, who live in the United States and have emigrated from Arab League states (Rignall
Individuals who do not identify as Arab can be lumped into this category, because of their roots in Arab nations or the American presumption that all Middle Eastern peoples, especially Muslims, are also Arabs. Arabs have a long history of a conflicted identity upon immigration to the United States. Furthermore, American citizens who speak Arabic as a primary or secondary language should be included, as many Arabs are not from Arab-League nations nor are those league nations ethnically homogenous (Schopmeyer 2000; 2011; Abouyoub 2009). There has been a history of national unity based upon language and mutually recognized cultural symbols which will factor into this analysis of the Arab American community (Anderson 1983; Billig 1995). The use of language groups and community membership will be relevant to this project because official data possibly undercounts the number of Arabs in the United States, as well as Dearborn specifically (Schopmeyer 2000; 2011).

Arab Americans have undergone an experience in which they are very much part of the United States while signifying a manifestation of a “significant other” to many Americans (Triandafyllidou 1998; Abraham, Howell, and Shryock 2011). Even before 9/11, depictions of Arabs in film and media most often portrayed Arab characters as villains (Shaheen 2001; 2003; Panagopoulos 2006). The events of 9/11 and the war on terror have become significant factors in the negotiation of Arab American identities in the United States (Salaita 2005; Leslie 2011). The process of creating a European common identity has been documented in relation to an “Eastern threat” characterized by barbaric practices, savagery, wanton excess, and a lack of cultural sophistication (Said 1978; Sibley 1998). Edward Said’s Orientalism (1978) began the discourse on this phenomenon and David Sibley (1998), Roger Ballard (1996), and Alexander Murphy (2005) have expanded on this discussion of exclusion predicated by perceived difference, knowledge, and hostility that can result when individuals, cultural realms, and governments are...
predisposed towards xenophobia. Islam has often been cited as one of the dividing points defining modern Europe and European identities (Ballard 1996; Murphy 2005). The idea that Arabs are not European and that it is institutionalized within identity politics will be discussed during the legal environment of chain migration.

Metropolitan Detroit hosts a large number of Chaldeans, who came from Iraq but traditionally do not identify as Arabs (Hanoosh 2008; 2011). Chaldeans are not Arabs; they have their own cultural traditions and language (David 2000; Henrich and Henrich 2007; Hanoosh 2011). Chaldeans do often speak Arabic, which certainly muddles the issue, and they are still aware that to “most Americans” all Arabs are the same and anyone from Iraq, including a Chaldean, would be an Arab (Najor 1988; Hanoosh 2008). Chaldeans are Christians and are often more affluent than their Arab Christian peers or Arab Muslims as well as likely to be working in professional jobs rather than owning or operating storefronts (Hanoosh 2008). They are still lumped into the category of Arab by most Americans (Najor 1988; Hanoosh 2008) and work to maintain social and spatial distance from Arabs, especially Muslim Arabs. Chaldeans have always had a conflicted relationship with their neighbors, in Iraq as well as in Metro Detroit (Hanoosh 2011). They provide key services in grocery businesses, especially by providing alcohol where others are prohibited from doing so. They own grocery stores in impoverished areas of Detroit and have been accused of profiting from the desperate environment in poor areas where they hide behind bulletproof glass and collect the meager resources of their impoverished clientele (David 2000). Saddam Hussein used the American Chaldean population to publicly alter his reputation towards Iraqi minority groups, providing Chaldean Americans in Farmington Hills with a community center and other high-cost amenities.
Arab American studies have been anchored by several key books that explore this community on multiple geographic scales and over a large period (1700-present). *Arab Speaking Communities in American Cities* is perhaps the first comprehensive work dealing with Arab American history and immigration, which also includes discussion of Arab Detroit (1974). *Arab Detroit: From Margin to Mainstream* (Abraham and Shryock 2000). *Arabs in the New World* (Abraham and Abraham 1983). *The Chaldean Americans: Changing Conceptions of Ethnic Identity* (Sengstock 1982). *Arab Detroit 9/11: Life in the Terror Decade* (Abraham, Howell, and Shryock 2011). The geographic literature on Arab Americans is sparse. Much of the geographic research concerning Arabs in the United States has been written in French or German (Katarsky 1980). The existing literature on Arab Americans does contain a great deal of geographic material and often focuses on the meanings of place and space within the scope of their respective disciplines. In fact, the anthology nature of the two *Arab Detroit* (2000;2011) books brings together a diverse set of disciplinary, cultural analyses, and opinions on ideas of places, ethnic spaces and the varied ways to consider them.

It is a common misconception that most Arabs in the United States are Muslims (Zieve 2007; Abraham, Howell, and Shryock 2011). The fact is that the majority of Arab citizens in the United States are Christians (Schopmeyer 2000; 2011). Christian Arabs have had an easier history of naturalization and assimilation compared to their Arab counterparts and their relationships with each other and their surroundings in Detroit and the United States have created very different realities for them as individuals and groups.
3.2 Arab Immigration Context

Immigration documents and census forms have both been found lacking when researchers have explored the history of Arab immigration, and many argue that the US Arab population should include others who may have been classified erroneously or based on a nationality not recognized by the individual, e.g. Turkish or Armenian (Abraham and Shryock 2000). The earliest Arab immigrants were predominantly Lebanese Maronite Christians (Abouyoub 2009) 2000). They were followed by Syrian Orthodox Christians and Chaldeans. Chaldeans are a Christian ethnic minority in Iraq who trace their origins to the ancient inhabitants of Mesopotamia (Bannon 1973). Chaldeans usually speak Aramaic, though a majority of Chaldeans speak Arabic as well, and many may not identify themselves as being Arab. Armenian Christians also became an important group in the “Middle Eastern” community (Abraham and Shryock 2000; Schopmeyer 2000). Recent immigrants from Iraq, Yemen, Palestine, and Jordan, are more often Muslims (Schopmeyer 2011). The Lebanese still represent the dominant majority in numbers and local influence.

In some cases, wealth has eased some structural prejudice against Arabs in the United States, but for most Arab Americans, low socioeconomic status (SES) represents an additional barrier to full inclusion within the American idea (Tam Cho, Gimpel and Wu 2006). We are rarely dealing with a globalized professional class but rather a locally integrated ethnic community of a tolerated group (Poulsen, Johnston and Forrest 2002; Naber 2010). This imbalance between SES and representation has led to weak representation of Arab Americans within municipal employment (Hijazi 2012). The interaction between popular depictions and identity formation will be considered as we explore the Arab American experience, as Arabs are effectively held captive to a popular imagined identity in the United States.
Researchers have also emphasized the importance of Arabic customs and language towards the workings of ethnic identity among residents of Arab Detroit in general, Dearborn in specific. Religious organizations and community groups are also mentioned as key aspects of ethnic identity’s influence on the community because these organizations focus the will of the community into action which may alter the landscape to better suit the needs of the community (Breton 1964; Katarsky 1980). Discovering various ideas and self-perceptions of Arab identity in the American context is a key goal of this study, and further discussion will be necessary when discussing my participants and their responses to my queries.

3.3 Arab Immigration to the United States

Arab immigrants have been documented in the United States as early as the late 1860’s. Multiple waves of Arab immigration to the United States have led to the creation of several prominent Arab-American communities in and around major U.S. cities. Immigration documents and census forms have both been found lacking when researchers have explored the history of Arab immigration, and many argue that America’s Arab population may include individuals who may have been classified erroneously or based on a nationality not recognized by the individual, e.g. Turkish or Armenian (Schopmeyer 2000; 2010). It has been speculated that much of early immigration from Ottoman Syria took place in the late 1800s through the Castle Garden facility in Battery Park (Dogan 2012).

During the period from 1880-1924, a large number of Arabs came from what was known as Greater Syria, including the present-day countries of Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine, and Israel (Abouyoub 2009). A notable community in New York City was established, known as “Little Syria,” now lamented as an erased ethnic neighborhood (Dogan 2012). This early
immigration was often administered through the Castle Garden facility in Battery Park on the southern tip of Manhattan New York City (See Figure 3.1). This led to the creation of the Syrian enclave because of its proximity to the tenement houses that hosted waves of various immigrant groups over the dynamic history of New York City’s development as an immigration hub in the United States.

![Figure 3.1 - Memorial in Battery Park to the immigrants who arrived through the Castle Garden Facility in Lower Manhattan (Photograph by author).](image)

The records from Castle Garden were transferred to Ellis Island, where they were destroyed in a fire, losing a lot of information about early immigrants from Syria/Lebanon and other provinces of the Ottoman Empire (Dogan 2012). The community known as Little Syria...
was built within and among a diverse mosaic of immigrant groups in lower Manhattan tenement houses (See Figure 3.2). Little Syria was also known as the “Syrian Quarter” and the “Mother Colony” of Syrian-Lebanese residents in the United States (Caratzas 2009). The majority of the tenement homes and residential blocks were destroyed during the construction of the Brooklyn-Battery Tunnel (Orfalea 2006). St. George’s Church (Figure 3.3) has been designated for preservation while the tenement building’s status is still under threat from urban redevelopment and renewal (Dunlap 2012). These are the last vestiges of the ethnic communities established by immigrants in lower Manhattan. There is a push to preserve the few remaining features of Little Syria, including the last remaining tenement building on Manhattan which served as home to many ethnic immigrants in the Castle Garden and Ellis Island immigration periods but now is in a prime location for urban renewal in the shadow of the Freedom Tower.
Figure 3.2 – The last remaining tenement building in Manhattan with St. George’s Syrian Catholic Church also in view. (Photograph by author).
Figure 3.2 - These large pipes now obscure the church epitaph, but the words can still be deciphered. (Photograph by author).

The majority of Arabs who came to the United States during the early 20th century were Christian men; an estimated 5-10% were Muslim (Schopmeyer 2000; 2011). By 1920, half of Arab immigrants were women, much higher percentage-wise than most other immigrant groups during the period (Abraham and Shryock 2000). Most of these immigrants had faced economic and political difficulties in their nation of origin due to the collapse of the silk industry. Many Arab nations at the time were controlled by the waning Ottoman Empire, which had been raising taxes and conscriptions in its dying efforts to maintain itself (Rignall 2000). Arab immigrants were difficult to classify by immigration officials when they arrived in the United States from the Ottoman Empire, which was unlike the nation-based immigration the United States was accustomed to. Because Arab countries are located in both Asia and Africa, and because Arabs
do not have common physical characteristics, Arabs were also classified as Greek, Armenian, Turk, Ottoman, African, Asian, White or European (Schopmeyer 2000; 2011). Many Arab immigrants arrived through Castle Garden facility which was destroyed in 1897, losing much of the data regarding Arab immigration to the United States to that point (Dogan 2012). The Arabs who came through the Castle Garden are known only from stories, passed down through families, newspapers and other public records (Caratzas 2009; Dogan 2012). Major undertakings by local Arab scholars and researchers from local universities have been employed to bridge the gap and create greater understandings of the genesis of Arab Detroit and the origins of its people.

The second wave of Arab immigration occurred in the post-World War II period and was significantly more diverse than the initial Arab immigration. Arab immigrants who came during this period included people from a greater number of Arab countries. In addition to Syria and Lebanon, immigrants came from countries such as Iraq, Egypt, Palestine and Jordan (Abraham and Shryock 2000; Schopmeyer 2011). These immigrants were both Christian and Muslim, and many were highly educated, coming from urban middle-class backgrounds. Strict immigration laws were still in effect, but the U.S. made exceptions for desirable groups of educated immigrants. This wave of immigration is also notable because of its high percentage of war refugees (Shoeb, Weinsten and Halpern 2007). Many new Arab immigrants came from regions devastated by long wars, including those in Palestine, Iraq, and Lebanon. New Arab immigrants also included a large number of highly educated professionals. Conflict driven immigration continues from Arab countries to this day, subject to great popular debate and pending public policies in many nations including the United States.
3.4 Arab Immigration and Legal Status

The legal history of Arab identity in American is extremely informative to the diversity in the Arab American community and how it has developed to date. There is a legal precedent for the conflation of Arab and Muslim, as well as an assumption that Muslims are not white (Abraham and Shryock 2000; Schopmeyer 2011; Beydoun 2013). Furthermore, it is established that Syrians are distinct from the rest of the “Arab world.” The assumption of Arabs as Muslims has become even more salient since the 9/11 attacks and the government response to that event (Alasry 2011; Howell and Shryock 2011; Seif 2011; Beydoun 2013). Arab Americans are aware of this perception, and the harsh realities it can create just for people practicing their culture, speaking their language.

This discussion also establishes a legal framework where society maintains boundaries between its group of citizens and immigrants who are perceived to be in other groups ineligible for citizenship (Barth 1998). Geography plays a key role in social exclusion (Sibley 1995). The negotiation of Arab legal identity in the United States has and will continue to impact the numbers of immigrants from Arab countries as well as the ability for those immigrants to become naturalized and assimilated.

Arab Americans are among those groups classified as white in our controversial racial, ethnic group system of the United States. The classification of whiteness of Arabs, and others was not a sure thing at the outset (Lopez 1997; Gugliemo and Salerno 2003). Baby boomers can remember a time when the Italians in their town were not another white ethnic immigrant group, but a legitimate non-white minority group. Along with Jews and Irish Americans, Italians, and later Arabs, would become “white” (Brodkin 1998; Ignatiev 2008) The conversation surrounding group identities and their whiteness plays out both in popular discourse and the legal arena.
Laws will often reflect popular sentiment, but both are sources of unique perspectives on the functional importance of race and ethnicity in practice.

The displacement of native peoples by immigrant populations has led to a national narrative of immigration. This immigration has been punctuated over time with various waves and trends, often influenced by legislation that regulates immigration from specific areas, regions, or countries (Daniels 2002; Massey, Durand, and Malone 2003). Prominent among these measures was the Immigration Act of 1924, which limited the heavy influx of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe based on contemporary theories of racial superiority, favoring immigration from northern and western Europe. Arabs first arrived in what would someday become the United States as slaves during the 1500s, though it was many years before they became a significant group in American society (AANM 2016). Improvement in steam-powered transportation during the 1800s, not only made immigration from Arab countries to the U.S. much safer and faster, but it also made it possible for many Americans to visit the Arab World, specifically the “Holy Land.” Faster, easier transportation also led to increased activity by American missionaries, who encouraged Arab Christians to seek an education in the United States.

The Naturalization Act of 1790 set racial/ethnic criteria for American citizenship. It made racial whiteness a necessity to gain American citizenship for over one hundred and fifty years (Lopez 1997). In 1909 this was challenged by an Arab resident of Los Angeles seeking to be naturalized as a US citizen, something unheard of for Arabs at the time. Shishim argued that his level of assimilation and public service should enable him to become a citizen (Beydoun 2013). His assimilation weighed in his favor, but during that time frame, religious identification was the most critical factor in naturalization proceedings. Naturalization officials and the judge presiding
at first were convinced that Shishim’s Arab identity disqualified him from being white, and therefore from citizenship (Beydoun 2013). The reasoning was that his region of origin was hostile to American and Christianity (Beydoun 2013). This is echoed in today’s discourse surrounding immigration to the United States, especially the Arab world, by the suggestion that Islam is incompatible with American values (Abraham, Howell, and Shryock 2011). Shishim relentlessly professed his Christian faith, but he was doubted because of the strong overwhelming belief that all Arabs were Muslims (Beydoun 2013). Shishim would ultimately be the first immigrant from the Arab world to be naturalized as an American and ruled white by judicial decree. This decision effectively announced the whiteness of Arab Christians, while maintaining the non-whiteness of Arab Muslims. Immigrants are still judged based on their origin country, its ethnicity, and the dominant religions and cultural practices immigrants may bring with them (Beydoun 2013). This legal precedent has had a strong impact on attitudes of Arab groups towards each other, depending on the level of privilege granted their group.

Christian petitioners could overcome the conflation and claim American citizenship, while Muslim petitioners were categorically ineligible for citizenship until ex parte Mohriez lifted that bar in 1944 (Beydoun 2013).

Not all but most courts followed these decisions and awarded Syrian Christians petitions based on their whiteness. Challenges that arose specifically questioned the genuine nature of the petitioner’s Christianity and judges’ opinions on religious purity and legitimacy decided the outcome against the petitioner. Speaking Arabic was taken as evidence that a petitioner was a Muslim and those petitions for citizenship denied (Beydoun 2013). The debate over true, genuine or pure Christianity continues to be played out in contemporary discourse; people accuse others of faking their religions completely or practicing religions other than one claims. Some
politicians have claimed that only Christians should be allowed entry from Arab nations, based on their persecution in some Arab countries, with the assumption that it is possible to verify the truthfulness of a claimed religion.

The first Muslim to petition the naturalization courts was a Yemeni named Ahmed Hassan, in 1942. This happened in the metropolitan Detroit area which was already becoming a hub in the Arab diaspora (Beydoun 2013). Two years after Hassan’s petition was denied, Saudi Arabian Mohammed Mohriez petitioned the Massachusetts courts seeking naturalization. He was granted the petition as a white Muslim Arab, the first time a non-Christian Arab petitioner was granted naturalized citizenship (Beydoun 2013). This whiteness was exciting for the Arab American community, who now had a stronger avenue for citizenship, but it did not confer all of the benefits that being white had meant to others.

Arabs have a conflicted ethnic identity when considered in the American context. Arab Americans are defined as white people based on a few landmark court cases. Arabs self-identify as people of color, generally, but in between the black-white divide that dominated American discourses (Seif 2011). They are also not Latin American, the other major in-between group in the United States along with Asian Americans who have their own census box (Krogstad 2014). Arabs have also been included as Turks and Asians within census and immigration documents. In the past few years, there has been a push to add a Middle Eastern – North African (MENA) classification on United States Census forms (Beydoun 2014; Krogstad 2014). This would enfranchise Arab Americans within their own unique group classification in an attempt to correct past errors and ambiguity.
3.5 Arab Ethnic Economies

It is possible to estimate the number of Arab immigrants who arrived in the U.S. during the 1930s, but it is almost impossible to know the exact number (Schopmeyer 2000). Approximately 200,000 Arabs were living in the United States by 1924. Most Arab immigrants settled in cities such as New York, Boston, Pittsburgh and Detroit, where peddling, textile, and automotive industries promised employment. Peddling was the most attractive profession; it required no capital or knowledge of English, and yet yielded relatively high incomes. Peddling also was an early form and symbol of self-employment that is easily integrated into a capitalist consumer culture (Rignall 2000). Some homesteaded in North Dakota and other parts of the “American frontier.” Successful peddlers often gave up the road and stationed themselves in key towns along peddling routes, providing peddlers with supplies and resting places (Abraham 2000). Some opened grocery stores, bakeries and produce stands, establishing more permanent marketplaces and offering the beginnings of a community infrastructure and populations that would later re-migrate to areas in and around Detroit, especially Dearborn (Rignall 2000).

Many Arab immigrants in the 1920s and 1930s were attracted by employment opportunities in auto manufacturing and encouraged through networks of kinship and ethnic ties (David 2000). Participation in the labor pool is cited by several researchers, and this is the economic driver that has predicated an ethnic economy and further assimilation of many Arab Americans into more sophisticated careers within manufacturing and into professional and global entrepreneurship as well (Abraham and Shryock 2000). This has given the community an opportunity to alter much of the built environment and visual landscape to suit the needs and tastes of the Arab American residents who continued to be attracted to the area.
The effects of family networks and chain migration make Arab enclaves that are primarily sourced by immigrants from a single village or cluster of villages. Family ties are sufficiently strong such that when temporary family residents do move out, it is usually to relocate within walking distance of the host family. Location of employment has little to do with choice of home; this choice is governed primarily by the will to be located as near as possible to family members (Katarsky 1980). Ethnic enclave economies followed the chain migration of Arab Americans and international Arab immigrants to service the tastes of those communities (Rignall 2000; David 2000). An early importer of “Middle Eastern” goods to the Detroit area, Gabriel brothers, was mentioned as the first importer to focus primarily on servicing the needs of Middle Eastern peoples living in the Detroit area. Merchants, who had previously maintained travel routes to connect with enough customers to make a profit, were now settling into brick-and-mortar retail locations in Detroit and, its close suburb to the west, Dearborn.

The turn away from peddling was a major turning point in the development of Arab communities. Store owners settled in one place; they were able to send for family members from overseas and provide work for them in the family store (Abraham 2000; Rignall 2000). Stores required hard work and long hours, and the children of grocery store owners were motivated to move on to other employment (Naff 2000; David 2000). This trend also began the visible and permanent impression of Arab culture onto the American landscape. New Arab immigrants began taking over the grocery stores and retail businesses. This was possible largely because many earlier immigrants helped newer immigrants with credit and loans (Katarsky 1980; Naff 2000; David 2000). The spirit of entrepreneurship and self-employment has become a strong part of the Arab American work experience. The 1970s was an eventful decade for Arab Detroit. The automotive industry was in a state of recession, which lessened economic drivers for much of the
Arab influx to the metropolitan area, but global machinations would spur increased immigration nevertheless.

3.6 Dearborn and Arab Detroit

It is difficult to overstate the importance of Ford and the automotive industry in general to the viability of the Detroit Arab community. Even the grocers can attribute their patron dollars to those industries that support the entire metropolitan region (Rignall 2000). Ford and the other major auto companies directly provide manufacturing jobs in its factories and supplier facilities (Rignall 2000). Ford also directly invested in the community and actively planned towards providing ethnic groups with their own public services and neighborhood territory.

The first Middle Eastern immigrants to the Detroit Metropolitan area were Syrian-Lebanese, mostly Maronite, Melkites, and Eastern Orthodox Christians, with a lesser number of Sunni and Shia Muslims, and a very few of the Druze people (Schopmeyer 2000; 2011; Abraham, Howell, and Shryock 2011). The collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the vagueness of immigration documents forces researchers to rely on self-identification of past interview subjects and group narratives rather than immigration documents (Rignall 2000). This has been further complicated by the destruction of the Castle Garden records which would have included the documentation of a large number of early Arab immigrants, but not are permanently lost (Dogan 2012). After the collapse of the Ottoman state, immigrants from those provinces began being identified as Lebanese, Syrian, and Palestinian, as those nation stated began operating as functional units.

The multiple waves of immigration have had a wide variation on country of origin since there is no single “Arab nation” and the familiar language appeals to Arabic speakers from
widely dispersed parts of the world. Immigration flows from Iraq and Yemen both began during the early 20th century. Iraqi immigration peaked between 1927 and 1950, while Yemeni and Peninsular Arabs arrived mostly between 1912 and 1925. In the early 1950s, it is estimated that there were 50,000 Arabs in Detroit from Syrian Lebanon, and as many as 5,000 other Arabs from Iraq, Yemen, The Arabian Peninsula and other Middle Eastern countries (Schopmeyer 2000; 2011; Howell 2010). The Yemeni have had a documented presence in Dearborn from at least the 1960s (Howell 2010).

The Arab-Israel war, in particular, drove immigration to Dearborn from Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, Jordan, Egypt, and the Arabian Peninsula (Naff 1983; Shalabi 2001). At this point, Muslim immigrants exceeded the number of Christian immigrants by a sixty percent margin (Shalabi 2001). Immigration from southern Lebanon was also spurred by Israel’s invasion of the region in the early 1970s (Ibrahim 1981; Naff 1983; Shalabi 2001). Reports indicate that this immigration came from that region of southern Lebanon, even just a few villages with networks allowing immigration to Dearborn (Katarsky 1980; Ibrahim 1981; Naff 1983; Shalabi 2001). Arab immigrations through the rest of the 1970s would be sourced mostly from Lebanon, Iraq, and Yemen (Aswad 1974; Loose 1986; Shalabi 2001).

The 1975-1990 civil war in Lebanon resulted in a wave of Arab immigration to the US and Detroit/Dearborn, echoed by the 1991 Gulf War and the 2003 invasion of Iraq (Rignall 2000). Many people displaced in Kuwait by Iraq’s invasion also had immigrated to the United States. Immigrants from Lebanon, including those who came from war-devastated areas, were mostly Shia Muslim, urban middle-class merchants, and professionals (Schopmeyer 2000; 2011). Before the 1990s, the number of Iraqi immigrants was relatively low because many had enjoyed a high standard of living and educational opportunities in their oil-rich nation. The current war in
Iraq has produced 4.5 million Iraqi refugees; 2.5 million found their way to Syria and Jordan, with fewer arriving in the U.S. Today, there are sizable Iraqi communities in many major U.S. cities, including Dearborn and other suburbs of Detroit (Abraham, Howell, and Shryock 2011). Kuwaitis and Iraqis alike had their reasons to be mistrustful of Arabs from other regions, especially Palestine and Yemen, and were likely to blame minority groups for treachery and existence as a “fifth column” within the national group.

Barbara Aswad focused her research on the South End community in Dearborn, where many villagers from Tibnine are recorded as having settled (1974). That village in South Lebanon is in the same general area as Bint Jubail, a point highlighted by Katarsky because of the large portion of people he encountered in Dearborn that had emigrated from there (1980). The family unit provides the connections as well as the social and economic security to encouraging migration to very specific neighborhoods and locations (Katarsky 1980; Aswad 1974; Abraham and Shryock 2000; Naff 2011). This immigration can be an inter-state (within the USA) or international in scope, with the Italian-village type model being the closest to the Arab-nation model as each group does not include their ethnic group as their primary national identity, preferring closer family, kinship, and village ties over the concept of a unified Arab nation. Dearborn’s Lebanese-Syrian community went through a period suburbanization within Dearborn by transferring its population from the South End region of the city to the northeast part of the city centered near Schaefer Rd. and Warren Ave.

The initial migration from the South End was specifically in pursuit of more diverse housing options, especially single family homes (Katarsky 1980). The South End community is more urban in its housing patterns than the northeast, and there were many choices of home and room to expand. Families would settle in homes within close proximity of each other. Only a few
immigrants from the South End settled in the northeast initially, followed by more family members from the South End. At those times immigration from Lebanon was targeted towards the South End. Immigration from the South End to the northeast increased over time, and the northeast also began to eclipse the South End as a destination for immigrants directly from Lebanon. It could be conceived that these communities became separate when separate services were established for the northeast community, which gradually eliminated cross travel between the neighborhoods.

The northeast Dearborn neighborhood and community have been dominant for some time, and if any Lebanese influence or population remains in the South End it is a token relic of the past (Rignall 2000; Abraham, Howell and Shryock 2011). Mosques, ethnic markets, and churches in the northeast Dearborn market district and neighborhoods soon outnumbered those in the South End. Medical professionals, legal services, real estate agencies, and travel agencies, run by Arab families and entrepreneurs, continue to add diversity to the services available within the Arab Ethnic economy (Rignall 2000). The new community space and market district enabled the community to provide support for additional immigrants fleeing conflicts in Lebanon, as well as those incentivized to join in the commercial possibilities becoming available. Work within the ethnic economy could establish an immigrant or family of immigrants, and they often try to create a complimentary local business or new regional outlets of previously existing family enterprises.

The first immigrants to northeast Dearborn may have been South End Arabs looking to move from the South End apartments and urban housing to the single family homes prevalent in the northeast (Katarsky 1980). The diverse variety of housing available in northeast Dearborn, from apartments, duplexes, and large single-family homes, made it an advantageous location
over the multi-unit buildings that had dominated the South End. Housing quality and choice were generally superior in northeast Dearborn than in the South End, which partially spurred the relocation of this community to northeast neighborhoods (Katarsky 1980). Arab immigration to Dearborn has replaced previous ethnic enclaves of Polish and Italian communities, as well as Polish and Ukrainian communities in Hamtramck.

The South End is and was perceived as run down in comparison, possibly leading us to dub the south end a *ghetto* or recent *immigrant reception area* based on community typology from Table 1 in Chapter 2 (Agocs 1975; Katarsky 1980). By 1980, Dearborn, especially the South End, was well-known for its Arab cultural flavor. Katarsky (1980) focused on the relationship between the South End and northeast Dearborn but by the time I came to study the bulk of all Syrian-Lebanese families had moved away from the South End and had been replaced by incoming Yemeni and Iraqi immigrants. He also indicates that place of employment would be a key point to emphasize, theorizing that the nearby Rouge Plant would be the main workplace location for the South End community (Katarsky 1980). It turned out that the family linkages were paramount and that the workplaces among residents of the community were widespread from the residential concentrations in the communities of northeast Dearborn and the South End. The final element dividing the South End from northeast Dearborn was the establishment of services in the northeast that precluded any need to visit the old neighborhood for consumer goods.

Once established in the northeast, a relative from Lebanon will emigrate, and share his home temporarily. He will then purchase a home which is usually in the same block or on the next block. In other instances, another South Ender will move into the immediate vicinity of a relative. The first case mentioned is the more common. This process continues, and soon a whole
group of relatives reside within a short distance of each other (Katransky 1980). One might question at this point whether the original village or town is the controlling factor as opposed to family in migration destination. The family is the factor which goes beyond village ties in control. Families provide economic assistance and take relatives in, not villages. The fact is that a village unit is being transferred to the United States, but the family is the controlling mechanism. The family is the influence, the village transfer, the consequence. Without family, a newcomer arrives in the United States disoriented; with family, he has a home, financial support and, perhaps, most importantly, emotional support.

Families provide economic assistance, not villages. Families take relatives in, not villages. The fact is that a village unit is being transferred to the United States, but the family is the controlling mechanism. The family is the influence, the village transfer, the consequence. (Katransky 1980, p. 42).

Relatives will often live together in the same neighborhood and sometimes in the same household. By working and socializing together, it is easier to preserve the culture and traditions that are so important to them. The well-being of the community and that of the family are stressed over that of the individual (Aswad 1974; Naff 2011). As second- and third-generation Arab Americans adopt the nuclear-family lifestyle, newer immigrants arrive with strong family ties binding generations together and keeping the extended Arab family structure alive. Respect for elders is strongly emphasized in Arab culture; individuals gain status as they age and their advice and opinions become more valued and respected (Aswad 1974). Grown children are expected to take care of their parents and often, elderly parents live with their married children. Rarely is an Arab American placed in a nursing home, unless the individual requires serious medical care. While families tend to support the young in acquiring education and starting their
new lives, the younger generation is expected to take care of their elders (Aswad 1974). A certain level of dependency is encouraged among children in Arab families, as parents prefer to maintain control of their children’s lives well into adulthood.

Though most of the consciousness of Arab identity is built around the family, it is possible that there is solidarity among the Arabs in Dearborn, and in Arab Detroit in general. The sentiment may be delayed from what we would usually expect to find, where a village consciousness quickly follows the stage of family consciousness (Thompson 1973). Though Arabs have populated Dearborn and metropolitan Detroit for many years, it appears that the many national and religious divisions within the Arab communities has delayed the development of community consciousness beyond family and local national networks (Rignall 2000). While Italian Americans had Catholicism to unite their village-based language groups under one particular cultural religion, the divides between Shia, Sunni, and Christian erode Arab ethnic identity into smaller parts and then Chaldeans are even less obvious a candidate for inclusion in a speculated composite identity (David 2000; Daniels 2002; Schopmeyer 2000; 2011; Abraham, Howell, and Shryock 2011). The fact remains, however, that these groups and other Middle Easterners” are lumped together by Americans, and westerners in general, as the oriental other described previously by Said, Ballard, and others (Said 1979; Ballard 1996; Abraham, Howell, and Shryock 2011).

As of this study, it is clear that Arabs have the predominant impact on the local landscapes and also may have assumed a majority population in many areas and neighborhoods in the city of Dearborn, especially the northeast. This group is likely still a concentration of chain migrants and their descendants from Bent Jubail and other specific villages in southern Lebanon that spurred great immigration in the 1970s, securing Dearborn as a majority Lebanese/Syrian
area with little connectivity to other Arab subgroups in the Detroit area or the United States at large (Aswad 1974; Katarsky 1980; Abraham 2000). Given a city the size of Dearborn, the proximity of the South End, and the history of the two communities and their ethnic composition, one could logically expect close ties to exist, or at least some official affiliation between the two. Such is not the case, as the results of this study indicate that they are largely independent of each other. In the 2000s it has become even more contrasted between new immigrants from Iraq and Yemen living in the South End and northeast Dearborn being exclusively Lebanese/Syrian. As part of the development of ethnic services, it was found that Warren Avenue is becoming the focus of the community. Unlike many other ethnic centers, it is spread out linearly over the distance of one mile along Warren and expanding to Ford and Michigan avenue and the cross street Schaefer (Katarsky 1980; Schopmeyer 2011). This is where I decided to begin my exploration of the community, seeking out individuals and organizations I could encounter to find more information on the current processes shaping the Dearborn neighborhood and the local Arab communities.
CHAPTER 4 – RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction to Methods

This work represents the culmination of three years of landscape observation, participation and engagement with the Dearborn area community. This project relies on a qualitative analysis of my interview meetings to answer the primary research questions. I establish themes of content based on my earlier review of the literature, visits to the Arab American National Museum and consideration of its exhibits, and my observations of the landscape and field notes from those trips. I considered points made by my interview subjects as well, creating new interview questions and themes. I did not code for these topics, but I rather used ongoing qualitative analysis to focus on critical ideas and themes that arose throughout each segment of my research inquiry.

My outsider status and position as a researcher represented some obstacles as well as advantages, which would be expected (Kusek and Smiley 2014). Additionally my background in multicultural development and being a “third culture kid,” may have presented me with an advantage in acclimatizing to Dearborn’s culture but also may have been an obstacle because of the privileged tone of my personal narrative. It was imperative to consider my own background as I delved through questions with my participants about their own personal history. I certainly felt a sense of security I feel would have been lacking for many of my female colleagues in some situations, which is expected in mixed gender research (Kusek and Smiley 2014).
I believe that the landscape and people of Dearborn will be able to articulate a narrative of ethnic American existence and that it will be best translated through my qualitative approach to the research and writing of this study. This approach arises from the understanding that everything known is contextual and subjective when it comes to the meanings of places, people, and identities (Mohammed 2001; Rose 1997; Haraway 1988; Smith 2005). It is through narrating the contextual knowledge of Arab Americans in Dearborn that I hope to benefit the community by telling part of the story of their identity and the landscapes that have been created through the agency of Arabs in the United States.

My main approach to this project was to explore the landscape of Dearborn’s Arab community to observe and converse with Arab residents. Ethnographic research, combined with community interviews, is cited as being an effective set of qualitative methods in geographic research (Baxter and Eyles 1997; Hay 2000; Hoggart, Lees and Davies 2002; Smith 2005; Marcus 2009, Marcus 2009b). Participation in group advocacy organizations and interviews with organization officials has proven one effective method to gauge critical ethnic discourses (Oda 2010). I also gave a lot of thought to learning by exploring and watching from various vantage points within the city, also cited as a strong tool to gather data (Ford 2001). The subjective nature of my research questions, absent a scientific hypothesis or quantifiable outcomes, led me to choose qualitative methods for this study. The fundamental aspects of identity are subjective processes occurring within individuals and groups. Therefore their meaning and the meaning of landscapes in relation to identity also reinforces the application of qualitative methods. Though I can show concrete changes to the landscape and discuss the various meanings of those landscapes based on archival records and my respondents’ comments, it is impossible to quantify the meaning of place and identity within the framework I have chosen to work.
In addition to hundreds of conversations with merchants, entrepreneurs, social workers, university staff, and random pedestrians, I conducted 20 formal in-depth interview sessions and an additional 11 informal interviews. Informal interviews reflected the fact that my questions were asked of merchant and other market employees over the course of several meetings. My approach towards engaging merchants and other professionals in the Dearborn community has been based on building ongoing relationships, with each subsequent meeting leading to greater levels of understanding and intimacy. By the final visit to the market district on Warren Avenue, I had successfully connected on a very meaningful level with families managing several prominent businesses in the heart of Dearborn’s Arab commercial district. I visited with and corresponded with several members of the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS) during the planning stages of my proposal. I also interviewed a key administrator who was knowledgeable about ACCESS and its mission as well as the operations and exhibits at the Arab American National Museum. My participant Scott, who works for a prominent Arab American Organization, describes himself as a fourth-generation Arab American. I also became acquainted with a server at a local restaurant who gave me a lot of key information before and during the research engagement, as well as being the first person to give me directions within the community and who first warned me that I did not want to walk anywhere because of perceived safety issues I discuss below. I have given pseudonyms for each my research participants, applied to the entirety of this dissertation.

Site visits and landscape observation are crucial aspects of geographic research. When combined with subject interviews, participant and landscape observation can provide an ethnographic understanding that (re)validates the use of a qualitative approach (Hay 2000; Hoggart, Lees and Davies 2002; Smith 2005; Marcus 2009). The subliminal feelings and
interpretations of place are necessary to consider the differences within an ethnic enclave in comparison to the surrounding region. Visual signage from the landscape, community gatherings, and website verbiage has also been considered as part of the overarching literature on Arab Americans and ethnic enclaves.

4.2 Landscape and Participant Observation

I engaged in field research and site visitations on five occasions between January 2013 and December of 2015. My initial exploration of the community consisted of walking tours of the market district and housing neighborhoods in northeast Dearborn. I looked for clues in the landscape that would indicate the presence of an ethnic enclave. In addition to architectural styles, languages used for signage, and cultural markets, it is possible to see the Arab character in the human geography of Dearborn. It is important to note that I returned to landscape observation and exploration after interviews were performed and during breaks between interview engagements. This study began and ended with a critical look at the landscape, on foot and via automobile, where I identified Arab cultural features on the landscape. Those observations would gradually incorporate more information as I gathered it from the literature, the archives, and my discussions with members of the community.

My approach towards interpreting landscapes is rooted in my understanding of Carl Sauer, Pierce Lewis, and Donald Meineg (1925; 1979; 1979). Cultural landscapes are in a constant flux of change (Sauer 1925; Lewis 1979). Human-altered landscapes are contrasted against, imagined, pre-human “natural landscapes;” the blank sheet of space upon which human history has been written and preserved (Sauer 1925; Lewis 1979). The built environment has been altered due to the increase in Arab population over the last half century and reflects the
change in population. The built environment represents the axiom of cultural change, and the building or retooling of places represents a significant investment by residents to change the landscape. A lot of the angst that is aired through the non-academic literature, following Lewis’s corollary to discover vernacular opinions of issues (1979), has been partially in response to visibility, and even audibility, of Arab communities. Using a visual methodology makes it possible to witness the alteration of preexisting spaces and also to identify newer construction (Krase 2002). I did a robust analysis of the current visual landscape to compare to subject responses as well as the historical record uncovered in literature and archives (Rose 2003). This methodology will be applied to visible aspects of culture and will certainly intersect theories on the significance of language text and the visual symbols associated with banal nationalism (Anderson 1983; Billig 1995). Though we can read landscapes, it is not always easy because they are often jumbled, garbled, and without organization. They have been over-written so many times that the texts can be indecipherable and illegible (Lewis 1979, p.2). Automobiles, bicycles, trains, and airplanes facilitate travel to the point where landscapes are passed in such a way that they are impossible to be read. Their patterns can be identified by such means but to read landscapes takes a more deliberate, local, and methodical approach.

I also looked for new lines of inquiry during my interview conversations, leaving the door open for ideas I had not considered (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Marcus 2009). Some interviews may have extended into the depth of oral history, of the individual and their family, which could prove useful to finding previously undocumented aspects of Arab American geographies (Riley and Harvey 2007). I follow in the footsteps of previous researchers who felt that engagement and presence in a community, using both passive and active observation approaches, can create understandings of places and people (Ford 2001; Smith 2005). This is the
lens by which I use to observe the landscapes, being present and feelings places. I use a sensory approach that captures the sights, sounds, smells, and feeling of place, based on my perspective from within the landscape. Watching people can be a simple affair for an afternoon, but if it is applied systematically or even just consistently, we can see patterns of behavior and cultural expression in real-time practice. The real time practice of community life, with time and investment, becomes writ upon the built environment as well. So when we use this over-arching concept “landscape observation” we can mean to see the people and community interactions taking place, or we could mean the built environment that reflects a history of such interactions. Both contain great value to the consideration of ethnic enclaves, and this study hinges on such contextual understanding.

4.3 Archives, Film, and Web Media

I supplement my interview data relevant materials from the archives of the Arab American National Museum, especially two key pieces of unpublished scholarship produced at Wayne State University in the 1970s and 1980s (Agocs 1975; Katarsky 1980). Agoc’s dissertation on the ethnic composition of communities in Detroit directly informed Katarsky’s study of the Arabs in northeast Dearborn and the South End, and both have become critical components that inform the basis of this written piece but were not analyzed until after field work had been largely completed. The fact that Katarsky used similar methods in the same neighborhoods but in the late 1970s is a huge boon, and the quality of his thesis invites comparisons between this study and his. I included their work among the other pieces reviewed in the Arab Immigration and Arab Identity Sections and the discussion of the literature of Arab Detroit. I also screened films cited by Arab American research as significant as well as a specific
documentary short filmed that chronicles the history of Little Syria in Battery Park New York City. Shaheen has directly engaged the importance of mass media in the depiction of Arab identities, while others have discussed these issues in regards to ethnicity and depiction in general to the self-awareness or perception of acceptance within ethnic groups (Shaheen 2003).

The Arab American National Museum has a copious amount of information that covers community history, individual and family oral histories, literary and non-fiction accounts of Arab American experiences and cultural contributions, and visual information (specifically photographs) that will all help to gauge changes in the neighborhood landscape. I have used these archives to build my literature review and as comparisons to confirm general impressions of Dearborn, as well as to track the development of organizations within the Arab American community. I have considered these aspects of community activity in regards to their alteration of the visual landscape of Dearborn. The process of organizing and developing the initial Arab American presence in the region will be used to contrast the current political organizations working in the community today, on local and national levels.

The museum itself is an excellent resource from which to consider the various divisions within the Arab American communities and to witness their efforts to construct a very inclusive and collective narrative for their guests. Including featured exhibits on artwork and individuals from many Arab backgrounds, the museum actively discusses the cultural connections and religious divisions that exist within the various groups that could be considered Arab. They also include Chaldean Americans within their group representation, highlighting the contrasting and comparable aspects of the Chaldean experience to that of the Arab American experience.

I also engaged in discussion with various group-based organizations through the internet, email, and social media. I have similarly treated online sources to print media, and social media
in a similar manner to participant observation and informal discussions with community members. I will include discussions of online interaction within the discussion of my overall results where applicable or when online forums serve to add context to community issues. Online networks from every possible scale, individual to global, interact together to create new places and possible points of contact. Discussions abound, and there are more online focus groups, being conducted by volunteer participants who have already signed terms of use and disclaimers. What began with bulletin boards and chat rooms has evolved into a constant set of posts and chats, broadcast messages aimed at everyone on a platform, a group of friends, a specific group of interested parties. People are operating online more than ever before, providing evidence for research beyond what will ever be possible to compile or analyze. The communication aspect of online activity is still a powerful tool, and diaspora communities avail themselves of the possible connections available through online presence (Brinkerhoff 2009).

I followed the Dearborn Community Members Facebook page which acts as a clearing house for information about the Dearborn community. In addition to posting basic public information, emergency updates, and celebratory announcements, these forums create threads of conversations about the various issues facing the community. This is where I learned of the fiasco surrounding the proposed mosque in Sterling Heights, as well as the ongoing push for greater representation by Arab Americans within local Detroit metro politics. Social media has mixed benefits, and I tried to emphasize to any contacts that if they reach out to me on a social media platform, I would probably prefer to connect but that it could endanger anonymity, especially if they later discuss anything mentioned during an interview session.

My consideration of public postings on social media such as Facebook does not meet the criteria for human subjects research (Moreno et al. 2013), and therefore should be considered as
an extension of my landscape observations and archival research. I will protect the identities of individual poster identities, but they have been placed in an open forum available to any member of the public. A half hour of discussing respondent anonymity and future contact parameters under IRB guidelines can be compromised immediately when a subject makes a friend request. What should be done? If the participant has been informed and then chooses to make contact with the author outside the study, is it at the discretion of the researcher? On the one hand, I could politely message that it may not be the best idea. On another, I am building relationships and trust in a more transparent manner. I am not connecting any names, or real names, to any of my interview subjects and I am building networks beyond my interview pool. I believe that any connections would be difficult to make and would be of little or no use, and I decided to “accept friend request” in several instances when I had been sought out by people I had met or interviewed. Furthermore, the information disclosed belongs first and foremost to the participants, and they have every right to speak on every platform available to them. I feel that I have stuck beyond the spirit of the law behind informed consent and all of my contacts are aware of the possible issues I outlined in my IRB for participant risks, which are minimal and unlikely to occur.

The only time this line was blurred at all was when I asked the location of a mosque I had seen but did not record its location data. The responses to that beyond the location were unsolicited and candid. I will maintain the study’s general approach to disguising any identifying information from online outlets as I did with my actual human subjects as per Moreno et al.’s recommendations for ethics in using social media as a research tool (2013). It is important to note that minors were not engaged in any portion of this study. No social media connections were made with any individuals who had not been completely briefed on my study’s informed
consent protocols and had been informed again upon receipt of any further communication originating from the individuals to the researcher (me). I did not pursue any survey or interview research on the internet or social media that would require an online informed consent; all research questions were in person. Online outlets were only explored for the visual photographs posted to public sites for community interest groups, with the sole exception of my inquiry regarding the location of a mosque in Dearborn and the unsolicited comments which it inspired and I have included with the commenter’s identities removed. I believe this puts our limited use of social media on terra firma in regards to the use of online and social media sources in regards to best practices (Moreno et al. 2013).

4.4 Interview Locations

Interview subjects were engaged in January 2015, March 2015, and July 2015. Interviews took place in the Dearborn market district, Fairlane Town Center mall, and the University of Michigan Dearborn. I spent many hours walking through the Dearborn market and residential district to perform landscape and participant observation, but I was unable to get as many interview samples from that approach as previous geographers had been able (Katarsky 1980). I was warned about this at the outset by a museum employee I had spoken with, and I began to plan new approaches to secure interviews.

The Arab American Festival, a large gathering of many Arab groups from the entire country, has been indefinitely postponed and effectively canceled since its last gathering in June of 2012. This certainly was a setback as I decided that it would be my main venue for attracting participants whom I could hopefully snowball into a decent qualitative sample. I decided to keep exploring the market district but to also venture to the local mall and university. I scoured for
interview subjects at a popular local mall, Fairlane Town Center, and the University of Michigan Dearborn, where I finally had good luck in finding respondents. The more media-savvy the interview subject, it seemed the less issue they had with being recorded. As a matter of fairness and trying to maintain a sense of continuity, I did not record interviews. I provided map images featuring local Dearborn locations, without naming markets that I wanted to glean from the participants based on their shopping patterns and general awareness.

I initially focused my efforts on the market and residential neighborhoods in northeast Dearborn near Warren Avenue. Merchant participants were quite open to engagement, but it was impossible to intercept pedestrians for reasons we will certainly discuss at length, but in short; Arab Americans don’t travel on foot. There is also a popular shopping mall in Dearborn, Fairlane Town center, which is also adjacent to one of the locations where the author resided during the study. Steve, my first interview subject within the scope of this study, is a prominent researcher and archivist working in and on behalf of the Arab American community. Members of the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services were also consulted during the planning stages of this dissertation project. They commented on my questions and script, as well as offering me some logistical support. First and most importantly, they gave me a general letter of endorsement which I used to sell the idea of my research to my potential interviewees and funding agents. Almost equally valuable was their offer to use the library and resource center at the Arab American National Museum to do my office work, use their internet connections, full access to their archives which include many unpublished research projects on the Arab Detroit communities, and a location where I could arrange potential interview sessions.

4.5 Interview Content and Participant Overview
It was difficult to gain the trust of interview subjects but once they heard my initial lines of questioning, which focused on food preferences and the markets they shopped, it was easier to convince them that I did not have an active agenda or ulterior motives in regards to the scrutiny faced by Arab Americans from government agencies or news media. Once I gained the trust of a few key participants, they led me to more participants in their social networks creating a snowball sample. This played out in the market districts and on the UMD campus, giving me access to three distinct groups of Arab American respondents I have classified as the market workers, the social fraternity, and the prayer group. In addition to these three clusters of acquainted and related interview subjects, I also engaged in some discrete interviews with other merchants and students who do not fit neatly into those categories but expressed ideas that were relatable to one or more of the classified groups.

Scott recommended against using tape recorded interviews and suggested that informants would be more likely to open up if it were less formal of an interview and that Arabs in the area were leery about reporters and government officials to a certain extent because of recent incidents such as the wedding cake request and hidden camera style interactions. Individuals in Dearborn have a reason to fear accidental collaboration with media outlets or law enforcement agents, under the guise of educating interested parties (Yezbick 2011). Organizations, festivals, museums, and individuals are under scrutiny and surveillance (Howell and Shryock 2011), and individuals are conscious of law enforcement, investigative journalism, and other intrusive inquiries in the community (Howell and Jamal 2011). Of all participants, Sam was by far the most aloof upon meeting me. Sam was particularly wary of my questions but relaxed when he heard my script about the AANM, the market and restaurants and other cultural features in the
Dearborn neighborhood. Sam was worried I would ask personal questions and made me sum up my research and aims, and opened up as I described my work.

Interviews were guided to engage in a discussion of landscapes and meaning, as well as address the position of group organizations in the process of identity formation and landscape production. Arab Americans living in and around Dearborn were interviewed in a semi-structured format to gain insight into the development of personal relationships with the Dearborn community and larger scale Arab American networks. Secondary methodologies are included to augment my primary method of semi-structured interviews with members of the Arab American community. This approach is in line with the most recent trends in cultural geographic inquiry (Davies and Dwyer 2007) and particularly in the field of ethnic mobility and transnationalism (Blunt 2007; Marcus 2009). These interviews have been conducted and analyzed with several key factors in mind. I attempted to assure a proper level of academic rigor by accompanying interviews with a comprehensive interpretation of the landscape as a textual artifact (Baxter and Eyles 1997; Geertz 1973; Cosgrove and Jackson 1987).

All interview subjects were given informed consent and explicitly agreed to participate in this study. Implied consent, consent without IRB’s protocol, or cases where informants did not wish to hear my spiel but would answer my questions without hesitation, were considered reasons to not include an individual from the interview subjects list but the author noted their input as part of the general landscape and participant interaction.

I supplemented my interview sessions with follow-up correspondence in the form of electronic mail and telephone conversations. Archives consisted of primary sources and collections of unpublished scholarship produced by and from the Arab American communities in Metropolitan Detroit. My informants came primarily from merchants working in the Dearborn
market district as well as Arab and other Middle Eastern students attending the University of Michigan, Dearborn. I also interviewed several key employees of Arab American organizations working in the community and one non-Arab employee of an extended stay hotel who witnessed many Arab immigrants seeking to enter the community on a permanent basis. The merchant group was comprised of adult individuals of all ages while the students were primarily young adults between the ages of 18 and 21, with one notable exception of Helena, a non-traditional student who had left Lebanon in the late 1970s for Kuwait, left Kuwait for Libya in the early 1990s, and relocated to Dearborn from Libya in the mid-1990s. I want to display the real cultural differences between Arabs and other American groups while also emphasizing the commonalities that could be defined as American first and foremost across all immigrant groups and those who posture themselves as native. Theories of group and individual identity suggest that these respondents will naturally incline themselves to speak as a group representative rather than merely forwarding their individual opinions (Jenkins 1996). This focus on young people may also allow us to understand much of the childhood experience taking place within the community, without directly engaging with minors, and in a less traumatic setting than a refugee situation (Bek-Pedersen and Montgomery 2006). Young people may also be able to elucidate processes of integration, assimilation, and resistance to such processes based on a transnational, or exile experience.
Table 4.1- Breakdown of my interview subjects including their pseudonym or identification, hometown, ethnicity, sex, and religious affiliation.

4.6 Application of GIS

Combining qualitative research with GIS offers an excellent way to engage in participatory mapping that can incorporate a wide variety of input and perspectives (Elwood 2009). The use of computer-aided mapping also makes it possible to see various descriptive
elements, from impressions and perspectives collected in interviews and mental maps. Maps activities and engaging with maps during interviews have proven to be a valuable method to test community perceptions of neighborhood boundaries in comparison to official definitions and designations (Coulton, et al. 2001). These maps have also been proven a reliable method for acquiring qualitative spatial information (Blades 1990). This information can provide many possible visualizations of place-based information.

I have been using ArcMap, a Geographic Information System (GIS), to facilitate my analysis. GIS programs have proven to be a powerful analytical tool to visualize qualitative data (Pavlovskaia 2009; Curtis 2012). ArcMap is a program that uses various database files, excel spreadsheets, and web applications needed to maintain and build maps for research. I also found it necessary to perform many web searches to puzzle out small issues with data processing and formatting of the symbols to my preference.

I began thinking that ArcMap was certainly more feature-heavy than my needs, and its system requirements push computers to the max at my home and office. I was quite certain all along that there was a free, user-friendly application that would suit my needs, and thus far I have settled on a combination of Google Earth for the visualization and inspection of data, Google Maps for the display outputs and map images, and Excel for my databases. The data was based on interviewee responses based on their geographies, places of interest mentioned by interviewees, media outlets, and those noted by me while on foot and car walking tours of the neighborhood.

I recorded interviewee data including hometowns and places mentioned in the discussion, as well as those places that advertise or appears obvious on the landscape as Arab American in character. It could be that the architecture, products, or signage is targeted to appeals to Arab
tastes or market the Arabness of a product or service to the outside community. Regardless of the GIS application package used, the Earthpoint Project website is an invaluable resource for GIS users, especially casual users or those trying to use open source programs. I used this site to transfer my excel data sheets into KML files that can be visualized in Google Earth, as well as Google Maps and most other GIS and mapping programs. In addition to Google Earth and Google Maps, I used ArcMap, Marble, and uDiG, all popular GIS and mapping solutions with various pros and cons. ArcMap is the only one mentioned that does not come in a free or open-source version, though it is also the most common place in academic research.

Significant places and spaces in the community are based on the author’s observations and interview responses, creating maps that may be compiled into composite maps with ArcMap. Categorized visual elements will be defined and displayed, special locations will be listed as stand-alone points of significance, and a scale will be created to illustrate the relative amount of importance based on the number of mentions and implications given during subject interviews. I am using GIS to visualize and better understand spatial relationships in qualitative data, within a map that gives us the proverbial “bird’s eye view.” This approach will help contextualize and advance the limited personal map I can conceive from my own perspective, or the personal perspectives of others. In sum, the use of GIS applications in my research will unearth valuable insight on the Arab community in Dearborn.

Using these applications to actually make it part of the method of research, means to consider these maps and maps in general at various points in the research project and allow them to become part of the interview experience. I had the map from figure 1.1 along with a few other state and regional maps, and I encouraged interviewees to discuss places and their mental maps and mark on my examples or to draw their own. Looking at the data after I had collected
information about hometowns and points of interest, I find it relevant that many respondents discussed Dearborn as if it were far away from their hometown though to me they all seem quite close together except two interview subjects from outside the region. In addition to respondents from Dearborn and Dearborn Heights, I had several respondents from Canton, Ypsilanti, and Ann Arbor, who were studying at the University of Michigan – Dearborn. The two outsiders from the Detroit region were living in Maryland, one of whom has since relocated to New York City.

4.7 Applying Methods to the Research Questions

My research questions each correlate with one or more of the methods I have described in this section. It was difficult to predict where each method would align with the research questions until after I had gathered information and began to correlate it to the major themes in the literature as well as my specific research questions. Each method is described in relation to its importance to each question in Table 4.2, and expanded to describe the major applications of each in Tables 4.3 and 4.4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Primary Methods</th>
<th>Secondary Methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How have organizations been used to alter spaces and places to suit the needs of the Arab American community in Dearborn, Michigan?</td>
<td>Landscape and Participant Observation, Subject Interviews, Archival Sources</td>
<td>Social Media, GIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How have these changes become visually apparent on the landscape?</td>
<td>Landscape and Participant Observation, Subject Interviews</td>
<td>Archival Sources, Social Media, GIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How have these changes been perceived within the Arab American community?</td>
<td>Subject Interviews, Social Media</td>
<td>Archival Sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. To what extent has Dearborn fostered a sense of American pan-Arabism?</td>
<td>Subject Interviews, Social Media</td>
<td>Archival Sources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2 - Summary of methods as applied to research questions.
How have organizations been used to alter spaces and places to suit the needs of the Arab American community in Dearborn, Michigan? My first research question seeks to find to what extent Dearborn’s landscape has been changed by Arab Americans, especially as part of networks or organizations. Participant and landscape observation led me to some key organizations and resources, especially the market district on Warren Avenue and the Arab American National Museum. I returned to the areas I visited at various stages to see what new impressions I had of the landscape after hearing from participants and building more understanding of the community. Institutional guidelines for observational and archival research are more flexible than human subject interviews, and therefore landscape observation and archival research served as the jumping off point for this project. After getting a sense of the extant literature on Dearborn and some of the manuscripts held at the Arab American National Museum, I built my interview questionnaire and searched social media for comparative opinions against those from the archives and published literature on Dearborn. I asked interview subjects about those organizations that they were members of, or even aware of, especially asking if they had heard of ACCESS and been to the Arab American National Museum. I supplemented those primary methods with the use of social media and GIS. Social media provides a platform for many Dearborn members who post photographs and comments relevant to Arab American landscapes in Dearborn. I followed key pages recommended by interview subjects to stay informed of developments in the community. I used GIS to maintain a growing index of locations that were visibly Arab, maintaining the data and its spatial relationships in a series of maps that grew through the projects’ lifespan. The specific alterations to the landscape I had in
mind involved the visual impression of the built environment, which was the core element of my second research question.

*How have these changes become visually apparent on the landscape?* Visual observations of the community and neighborhood landscape were the method used to answer my second research question. The visual landscape was initially explored through landscape observation and walking tours of the Dearborn market district. I also asked my participants about significant visual impressions they had of locations in and around Dearborn. As my research progressed, I returned to the downtown Dearborn area and the main section of town where the Arab American presence is most palpable. My informants led me to find new ways of seeing the landscape, and to locations, I had not found on my own. I supplemented those main methods applied to this question with attention to archival accounts, social media activity, and I used GIS to maintain an ongoing dataset of locations serve as visual evidence of the Arab American community. The visually apparent Arab American community with some exposure in the media, featuring several prominent Arab American institutions, led me to ask how Dearborn’s development has been perceived by members of the community in my third research question.

*How have these changes been perceived within the Arab American community?* Impressions of the Dearborn community and its ongoing redevelopment were a primary theme in my subject interviews. I asked my participants what sentiments they felt towards the Dearborn neighborhood and efforts by ACCESS and others to create a unifying narrative to apply to all Arab Americans, as well as Chaldean Americans. I also asked how they felt about the presence of a significant Arab American community in Detroit and how they felt their territory was perceived by outsiders, meaning members of non-Arab groups in Detroit and the United States. I also followed conversations on social media where various developments were being discussed.
Community members comment on the development of the built environment as well as the social cohesion between Arab groups in Dearborn. I supplemented these approaches with context from the published literature as well as unpublished materials housed at the Arab American National Museum. Their archives include several key sources that were used to gauge changes in the community as well as to benchmark the general proliferation of Arab American impressions on the landscape. The Arab American National Museum makes a case for pan-Arab awareness in its arrangement of exhibits and the overall message delivered by the museum experience. My final research question directly asks to what extent a sense of pan-Arabism exists and if it is a residual artifact in the process of deteriorating or a nascent sentiment that is just recently catching on.

In light of their immigration experiences and interactions with pre-existing ethnic identities and local expectations of assimilation within the United States, to what extent has Dearborn fostered a sense of American pan-Arabism? I relied on my interview subjects and online sources to get a sense of supranational identities within the Dearborn community, especially pan-Arabism. I also used archival sources to contextualize what I had learned in comparison to trends noted over the community’s history. My interview respondents were directly asked about their sentiments towards the Dearborn neighborhood and its Arab cultural character. I also asked my respondents to what extent they engaged with or intermingled with members of other Arab subgroups as well as non-Arab Muslims. Social media pages, one Facebook community group in particular, also host engaging discussions about the meaning of Dearborn to the Arab and Muslim communities and who the major community groups are advocating for and mean to aid.

In sum, in light of the limitations and obstacles encountered by any research project, I used these approaches in my attempt to better understand the history of the Dearborn
community, neighborhood, and cultural landscape. Each served to bolster or supplement one or more lines of inquiry involved in this dissertation (See Tables 4.3, 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Landscape and Participant Observation</td>
<td>Participant and landscape observation led me to some key organizations and resources, especially the market district on Warren Avenue and the Arab American National Museum. I returned to the areas I visited at various stages to see what new impressions I had of the landscape after hearing from participants and building more understanding of the community. Institutional guidelines for observational and archival research are more flexible than human subject interviews, and therefore landscape observation and archival research served as the jumping off point for this project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject Interviews</td>
<td>I asked interview subjects about those organizations that they were members of, or even aware of, especially asking if they had heard of ACCESS and/or been to the Arab American National Museum. I directly asked respondents about their connections to the Dearborn community, when and how their family encountered Dearborn. I asked directly if my respondents felt sentimental towards Dearborn or any part of the neighborhood. By asking about their family history and cultural habits, I created lines of conversation that led back to the sentiments the respondent and his network had to Dearborn. I followed that up with a discussion of the various organizations in Dearborn, specifically ACCESS and the Arab American National Museum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archival Sources</td>
<td>After getting a sense of the extant literature on Dearborn and some of the manuscripts held at the Arab American National Museum, I built my interview questionnaire and searched social media for comparative opinions against those from the archives and published literature on Dearborn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media</td>
<td>Social media provides a platform for many Dearborn members who post photographs and comments relevant to Arab American landscapes in Dearborn. I followed key pages recommended by interview subjects to stay informed of developments in the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographic Information Systems</td>
<td>I used GIS to maintain a growing index of locations that were visibly Arab in character, maintaining the data and its spatial relationships in a series of maps that grew through the projects’ lifespan.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3 - Detailed Description of Methods Applied for Research Question 1.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Landscape and Participant Observation</td>
<td>Visual observations of the community and neighborhood landscape were the key point of my second research question. The visual landscape was initially explored through landscape observation and walking tours of the Dearborn market district.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject Interviews</td>
<td>I asked my participants about significant visual impressions they had of locations in and around Dearborn. My informants led me to find new ways of seeing the landscape and to locations I had not found on my own. I directly asked respondents about their connections to the Dearborn community, when and how their family encountered Dearborn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archival Sources</td>
<td>I used archival sources to contextualized the current state of Dearborn's Arab neighborhood and allow me to gauge change over time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media</td>
<td>I used social media to some extent to supplement my list of locations to visually inspect on the landscape, as I did with subject interviews.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographic Information Systems</td>
<td>I used GIS to maintain an ongoing dataset of locations serve as visual evidence of the Arab American community.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4 - Detailed Description of Methods Applied for Research Question 2.
3. How have these changes been perceived within the Arab American community?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Landscape and Participant Observation</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject Interviews</td>
<td>Impressions of the Dearborn community and its ongoing redevelopment were primary themes in my subject interviews. I asked my participants what sentiments they felt towards the Dearborn neighborhood and efforts by ACCESS and others to create a unifying narrative to apply to all Arab Americans, as well as Chaldean Americans. I also asked how they felt about the presence of a significant Arab American community in Detroit and how they felt their territory was perceived by outsiders, meaning members of non-Arab groups in Detroit and the United States. I asked directly if my respondents felt sentimental towards Dearborn or any part of the neighborhood. By asking about their family history and cultural habits, I created lines of conversation that led back to the sentiments the respondent and his network had to Dearborn. This gave me an opportunity to directly engage with my research question in regards to the perception of changes occurring in the community. If the respondent or their family identified much with the narratives provided by ACCESS or the museum, in addition to any opinions on the festival or community maturation, it directly informed my understanding of their attitude towards the Dearborn neighborhood as well as pan-Arabism. I directly queried as to the respondent’s connection to the Dearborn community, prepared for descriptions of locations that are important to the individual as well as their family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archival Sources</td>
<td>I supplemented these approaches with context from the published literature as well as unpublished materials housed at the Arab American National Museum. Their archives include several key sources that were used to gauge changes in the community as well as to benchmark the general proliferation of Arab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media</td>
<td>I followed conversations on social media where various developments were being discussed. Community members comment on the development of the built environment as well as the social cohesion between Arab groups in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GIS</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.5 - Detailed Description of Methods Applied for Research Question 3.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Landscape and Participant Observation</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject Interviews</td>
<td>I relied on my interview subjects and online sources to get a sense of supranational identities within the Dearborn community, especially pan-Arabism. My interview respondents were directly asked about their sentiments towards the Dearborn neighborhood and its Arab cultural character. I also asked my respondents to what extent they engaged with or intermingled with members of other Arab subgroups as well as non-Arab Muslims. I created lines of conversation that led back to the sentiments the respondent and his network had to Dearborn. I followed that up with a discussion of the various organizations in Dearborn, specifically ACCESS and the Arab American National Museum. If they had been there or were familiar, I asked if they noted the very pan-Arab tone of the museum’s exhibits and literature. This gave me an opportunity to directly engage with my research question in regards to pan-Arabism in the United States, as well as the perception of changes occurring in the community. If the respondent or their family identified much with the narratives provided by ACCESS or the museum, in addition to any opinions on the festival or community maturation, it directly informed my understanding of their attitude towards the Dearborn neighborhood as well as pan-Arabism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archival Sources</td>
<td>I also used archival sources to contextualize what I had learned in comparison to trends noted over the community’s history.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media</td>
<td>Social media pages, one Facebook community group in particular, also host engaging discussions about the meaning of Dearborn to the Arab and Muslim communities and who the major community groups are advocating for and mean to aid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographic Information Systems</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 5 – THE IMPACT OF ORGANIZATIONS ON DEARBORN’S LANDSCAPE

5.1 Introduction to Results

The first research question in this study is aimed at discovering how Arab Americans have used organizations to recreate space and places to suit their needs in Dearborn, Michigan. Focusing on Arab American organizations rests heavily on Brubaker’s assumption; that group identity only becomes salient when it is operationalized through the creation of representative organizations (2006). In-depth interviews with members of the community, combined with observational ethnographic techniques, are an effective method to learn about the imagination of space in identity creation. These interviews may allow us to understand the meaning of places and spaces that are critical to the formation of an Arab American identity. It will get to the core geographic imagination of individuals, who feed back their perceptions into group identity and how group divisions are maintained (Wright 1966; Barth 1969; Murphy 2005). The literature I have cited for interviews supports the idea that group organizations provide a platform for families to mediate intergenerational discourses of identity (Marcus 2009). Organizations can provide a key framework for groups to influence the behavior of individuals to maintain and affirm ethnic identities through the use of boundaries and norms that reinforce ethnic values (Barth 1998). New immigrants can use religious and social institutions to interact with previous
immigrants and build social and cultural capital they can later apply to build financial capital and further agency within the receiving community.

In my study, as well as those of researchers who have focused on Arabs in America, it is clear that the family is of paramount importance to the considerations of individuals in this community. Family networks have sourced the majority of ethnic enclaves in the United States and chain migration occurring across the globe (Ziegler 1977; Katarsky 1980; Naff 2000; Dresch 2001). Families provide the foundation for the establishment of all other organization networks in the Arab American community. Family networks created the necessary social capital to predicate Arab chain migration to the Dearborn area as well as the financial connections to establish an ethnic enclave economy. Subsequent development of religious and social service organizations has been made possible by the economic agency created by the enterprises created by family relationship networks. My respondents routinely mention their family connections as a vital aspect of their presence in the United States. Uncles, brothers, and other extended male relatives serve as forerunners to create networking possibilities for further family immigrants. Sisters, mothers, and extended family members follow(ed) suit, and the families have established new traditions in the United States to varying degrees. Families have provided the bulk social and economic support for immigrants in the Dearborn communities. Families provide housing and network opportunities to their immigrant guests, who happen to be from the same villages in Lebanon.

It is clear that the foundational and most important level of organization is the family, but without economic engines they would be unable to alter the landscape. Therefore, with the understanding that family networks are the fundamental organizational component of the Arab community in and around Detroit, we first consider the economic organizations, markets, and
employers that have allowed Arab Americans the agency to recreate landscapes in Dearborn as well as other communities in metropolitan Detroit.

Ethnic organizations facilitate community influence and can also act as indicators of the level of development and influence of the organizing group. Businesses, mosques, and medical professionals such as doctors and dentists, are other good indicators of the community’s success and development, and add to the institutional completeness of the enclave. Arabs and Muslims have been organizing civil and religious associations to ease Americanization and assimilation in the Detroit area for almost a century (Abraham 2000; Rignall 2000; Abraham, Howell and Shryock 2011). These organizations have grown in terms of member numbers and financial capital along with the growth of the Arab community in the Detroit area (Abraham, Howell, and Shryock 2011). There are also a vibrant array of produce and meat markets, retail shopping outlets tailored towards Arab culture, restaurants, hookah lounges and supply stores, and sweet shops that attract Arab customers from the metro area, as far away as Chicago, and many non-Arab tourists using Dearborn to experience the cultural environment.

5.2 Economic Organizations and the Ethnic Economy

David Harvey argues that all human activities can ultimately be considered through capitalist considerations, and it is possible to frame the Ottoman failure to an economic loss to European and other rising powers on a global scale and the immigration of individuals to places of greater opportunity on a local scale (1982; 1998; Gelvin 2011). Financial opportunities in the United States encouraged many immigrants from Syria and Lebanon, as well as other post-Ottoman countries, to relocate to the United States. Economic forces also brought Arab Americans to the Detroit area to fill a need for employment in the Ford auto manufacturing
plants as well as a rising need for labor in the auto industry in general (Katarsky 1980; Abraham and Shryock 2000). Peddling merchants found a permanent home in the Dearborn market district where there were enough Arab shoppers to fill a need for fixed brick-and-mortar outlets for goods catered to Arab tastes (David 2000; Naff 2000). Early arrivals established this market district and began to form organizations to facilitate the assimilation of later arrivals from their own ethnic, national groups and later Arab groups who followed the Arab American migration to the Detroit region. The discussion of the mingling and segregation of these Arab subgroups will take place in Chapter 8, but it is important to note that these group distinctions would dictate various roles each group’s level of agency within the economic systems of Dearborn. Early arrivals, especially Christian Arabs, have advantages in the economic market and a higher level of assimilation in comparison to later arrivals, especially Sunni Muslims who are among the latest arrivals with the lowest level of assimilation in comparison to Shia and Christian Arabs in Dearborn. At the local level, the most prominent formal organizations operating in Dearborn are ACCESS and the Arab American Chamber of Commerce. They both seek to facilitate and support the market district of Dearborn and to increase the agency of their constituents through lobbying, education, and employment services.

The Arab American labor market is now less reliant on the automotive industry and has diversified into professional services such as medical, dental, financial, and legal professions. Those seeking employment in the auto industry discuss accounting and engineering careers rather than line production or other factory jobs, reinforcing the increased upward mobility of Arabs in the local economy. Individuals engaged in the market district were often working at family businesses and attending local schools, in some cases it was clear that the management responsibilities had already been passed to college-aged family members while the business
owners (often parents of several employees) greet customers and keep an eye on things, echoing Alixa Naff’s biography of following in the family business (2000). It is also apparent that the owners of merchant outlets have greater aspiration for their children’s future employment, which agrees with David’s (2000) comments about the desire to move on from the grueling hours and demands of family-owned markets. Family members have a large impact on the goals of the younger generations, including educational choices and plans for future careers (Aswad 1974). Marco’s father is a partner at an accounting firm where Marco interns and plans to work at and take over in the future. Marco’s family once owned grocery markets before beginning to do accounting for other Chaldean’s in the business, now exclusively work in accounting services for Chaldeans as well as others. Students also reported working at area restaurants, family business such as gas stations, groceries, or accounting offices, and studying to become automotive engineers at one of the local factories. Martin mentioned that Ford was a common location for employment for many Arabs in the area and that the Ford plant and corporation was a significant aspect to Dearborn. Van works at Coney Island hot dogs while in school. Mike’s father was born in Syria but moved to Saudi Arabia to teach and now owns two gas stations in Dearborn where Mike also works while he is in school. Mike is studying to become an automotive engineer as is Sebastian, whose father works as a line worker at a GM plant and had previously worked at Ford. Sebastian’s father also helps other Sikh-Americans with assimilation, such as by helping with their tax returns and opening bank accounts.

In the market district, I was sensitive to the fact that merchants are required to be polite and speak with people in their place of business. People were eager to discuss their products and customer habits, as well as any plans for expansion or wholesaling. One prominent restaurant owner had recently purchased property in Ohio, near Cleveland, and speculated on opening a
business in that area also. I asked what, and he shrugged and gestured around to indicate a
restaurant I presume. People knew they could find merchants at their place of business almost at
any time. Visitation happens in family restaurants similarly as is reported in homes; people use
private commercial space as family space in many contexts, including hospitality and worship.

All of my respondents were able to name several restaurants, bakeries, and sweet shops in
the Dearborn area. People were quick to name both their favorites, but also the most popular and
the most over-rated. Arab food markets, consumption of ethnic foods, and the memories
generated by family events punctuated with such cuisine, all lend themselves to the creation of
identity for Arab Americans. My respondents often mentioned traveling to Dearborn to get Arab
foods they could not elsewhere and readily described how food was a method in which they
practiced traditional culture. One reason this is necessary is that in the multicultural United
States, it is often enviable to have a marketable ethnicity. Echoing the responses from Katarsky’s
study, most of my participants indicated they shopped wherever the best value could be found
and included stores such as Walmart and Target in addition to Arab grocery stores in their
responses (1980). Respondents gave examples of places they would shop in general for food
items such as produce, meat, dairy, or fish. They also gave other examples for dining out in a sit-
down manner, carry-out restaurants, bakeries specializing in bread versus pastry shops for sweets
(often one store would sell both breads and sweets, but the preference for one or the other at each
location would split the shopper between stores and items). The bakery sells sweets and the
pastry shop sells bread, but some people would switch their preferences based on what seemed to
be arbitrary opinions on taste and quality. I think some indicated preference based on cultural
attachment, such as who shops at a sweet shop that serves kunafa even though he does not prefer
that sweet dish. His mother did, and they began going to that shop on her account, and he maintains brand loyalty.

The most popular responses among my interviewees were Cedarland, Al Amir, Shatila, Masri Sweets, and the New Yasmeen Bakery. Golden Bakery, the Dearborn Bakery, and the Roma Bakery were also quite popular with my respondents. Shatila and Masri are exclusively sweet shops, selling various forms of baklava, kunafa, and other confections, while The New Yasmeen offers groceries, prepared meals, and sweets as well. Cedarland and Al Amir are both sit-down restaurants with extensive menus of Arab cuisine and desserts. The sweet shops as well as the many hookah lounges are the preferred destination for young adults to go out after breaking Ramadan fast, as well as general dating and socializing outside of the holiday season. Arthur and Helena both mentioned that Shatila is somewhat over-rated and is popular because it has a corporate feel and has been around for a long time, a somewhat unique perspective of a place highly rated by customers and most of my interview respondents, stating that Masri, the New Yasmeen, and other shops were just as good or better. Mike and his family do not eat Arab cuisine outside of the home, preferring home-cooked meals and the occasional parcel of sweets from Shatila, but they do like the Dearborn Italian bakery and eat American and Italian cuisine when dining out. Zineb also does not dine out often, especially for Arab or Middle Eastern foods, but mentioned Al Amir as a place to get Arab cuisine. Sebastian travels a reasonable distance with his family to Dearborn for fresh meat and produce, as it complies with their non-Arab requirements for Halal slaughtering. Sebastian defended Shatila as the best sweet shop, directly countering Arthur whom he overheard while allowing that Masri was also quite good. Sam mentioned that he liked Shatila only for the ice cream and gets real sweets at Masri, especially
kunafa. Van shops for groceries at the Dearborn Fresh Market, dines at Al Amir, and exclusively visits Masri for sweets, especially for kunafa.

The individuals I spoke with during this study that were Arab by descent but did not speak Arabic, would usually offer food preparation by ethnic parents and grandparents as a key element of their Arab identity. Foodways, the social and cultural traditions behind the sourcing and preparation of food (Stiffler 2014), have been used to market an ethnicity to people, and Arabs offer their cuisine as a safe medium through which to experience their culture. It is exotic, taps into romantic ideas of faraway places, and feeds an American desire for culinary diversity (Stiffler 2014). It is especially important for Arab-American Christians, whose Arabness may be less obvious, to maintain a connection to the homeland identity through food (Stiffler 2014). Thus, American Arabs can embrace a safe and engaging part of their identity to share with their fellow Americans, one that is positive or at least neutral in comparison to other stereotypes leveled against Arabs in the United States. Arab businesses, especially restaurants, name themselves after literary or mythological figures that are stereotypically applied to Arabs in other settings (Stiffler 2014). His description of food’s place in cultural practice brings forth a visceral understanding through adages and new metaphors. Stiffler discusses the actual processing of food towards the nourishment and growth of the body, reminding us “we are what we eat” is more descriptive than we realize. Food is a fundamental essential, it is life giving and associated with identity.

I engaged with merchants in the market district to gauge the clientele and popular items, as well as to pose my relevant interview questions to owners, employees, and customers when possible. To keep my market participants and their enterprise anonymity intact, I will discuss individuals I encountered at an individual sweet shop, a hookah lounge, a sit-down restaurant,
and a carry-our restaurant. I also interviewed a non-Arab hotel clerk who gave me insight on many recent immigrants who have stayed and are staying at the hotel where she works, including several families I spoke with who were trying to establish themselves in Dearborn. At the sweet shop, I spoke with the Palestinian owner and a Lebanese man who was working the counter. They had just introduced ice cream as an option. They are one of the preferred places for Arabs and non-Arabs to get baklava and other Arabic desserts. The sweet shop’s specialty is a dish called kunafa, which is a sweet soft cheese drizzled with honey and pistachio crumbs. I spoke with the owner of a sit-down restaurant and one of the servers who works there, who is also the owner’s daughter. The owner and his brother, co-owner, can often be found at one of the tables in the restaurant drinking coffee and greeting regular customers and those picking up take out items from the counter. The owner also mentioned that he had family in Ohio and owned property in the Cleveland area where he was considering opening a similar Arab restaurant. I spoke with him on several occasions, and he was curious about my work and asked me many times how it was proceeding. The family is Shia and Lebanese-Syrian, and he said that the majority of his customers were from the area but were just as often non-Arab as Arab and indeed I saw many “white Americans,” eating at the restaurant in addition to seemingly local Arab Americans. The restaurant itself was once a 1960s-era diner, and the main architectural features and furnishings remain intact but with new signage and menu items reflecting the Arab character to the fare being offered. They are very proud of their restaurant’s success and the position of prominence it holds in the community as well as being disappointed in the cancellation of the Arab American Festival which was a prime occasion to advertise their products. I also spoke with the owner-operators of a carry-out restaurant, which was comprised of a married couple and their college aged son, all of whom are Syrian-Lebanese Shia operating their business in the
main market district on Warren Avenue. Their restaurant had an off-site bakery and bulk processing kitchen where the bulk of their breads and sweets are produced and sold at wholesale to other restaurants and markets, located in Windsor, Ontario. This caused much of their bulk and prepackaged items to carry a label “product of Canada.” I mainly spoke with the son, who’s English was much more fluent than his parents’ and the other first-generation Arab immigrants that worked at the restaurant. Their customers varied from local Arabs to non-Arab tourists and regulars from other nearby neighborhoods. Their most popular items were baklava and other pastries made with filo-dough, and eggplant dish, shawarma, and Zatar bread.

Multiculturalism in the United States creates incentives for people to possess “authentic” ethnic identities. Knowing where your roots trace back to and practicing some cultural aspect of that homeland is an interesting part of the American immigration narrative. Ethnic cuisine is part of this consideration, and the local merchants market themselves as authentic providers of Arab cuisine and cultural wares. Stiffler argues that self-Orientalism is one way Arab Americans use Orientalist symbols and themes to actively market their culture (Said 1978; Stiffler 2014). Food is especially important as an aspect of traditional culture that can be experienced by in-group and out-group individuals. Foodways are a key point in cultural analysis (Stiffler 2014). Though their cultural capital had less value in their homelands, because of the ubiquity of Arab cultural foods and goods, Arab immigrants were able to sell their cultural products to new markets in the United States. It was through this cultural uniqueness in the American context that Arabs were able to build an ethnic enclave in lower Manhattan that would become central to the idea of America to Arabs who immigrated at that time. Subsequent internal migration of Arabs in the United States was also spurred by market forces, as Arabs sought to create economic agency. Dearborn became a central location because of Ford’s inclusive hiring practices and the
proximity to several factories where Arabs could find work (Katarsky 1980; Abraham and Shryock 2000). Furthermore, Ford’s policies towards providing territory for groups of people to settle in and around his facilities gave Arabs the space to recreate into a place to call their own. In the case of Detroit, Arab immigrants provided needed labor for Ford production facilities and embraced the economic and social agency provided by Ford’s policies in and around his factories. Ford personally directed his corporation’s mission in regards to his employees and the benefits offered. Today, Arab agency in Detroit is high based on their economic success beyond the industrial labor market but also limited based on the social context that maintains an idea that Arabs are a threat to American values.

Based on number of locations mentioned for purchasing specific goods, the market has expanded and diversified as well as added many more stores specializing in each good. This is a logical parallel to the expansion of the community and the other Arab communities in the Detroit area. None of my respondents mentioned any market locations in the South End, all of them were able to name at least many in northeast Dearborn which they had been to, if not regularly or at least occasionally. Katarsky mentions that those who had not arrived from the South End community would not return there to shop, and that certainly plays out according to my observation above (1980). Especially considering the variety and value found in the northeast market district, there would be little reason to go to the South End for any goods or services unless one was previously loyal to one location. Those who worked in the restaurants, bakeries, and hookah bars in the market district indicated that the bulk of their customers were Arabs but that tourists and other outsiders also frequented their shops. The hookah bar employees said that the location was very popular with college students of all ethnic groups and Arab Americans of all ages, but again most popular among college students and younger adults ages 20-30. Bars and
gentlemen's clubs are largely absent from the Dearborn neighborhoods but found just outside the borders of Dearborn in Detroit and Wayne County. Hookah bars seem to fill the niche left open by the absences of alcohol-serving establishments. Food and beverages are usually available at hookah lounges, and they are often a subsection of a restaurant that predates the hookah lounge outbreak. After Marco told me to ask about it, I never failed to ask people if and when they took part in Hookah smoking. It is very popular across all Arab and Middle Eastern groups, as well as among many local non-ethnics. It is difficult to overstate how seriously hookah is embedded into Arab culture.

In 2016 as in 1980, local supermarkets are the preferred shopping locations for bulk foods. Target and Wal Mart have replaced K-Mart as the most common retail standalone store, and the Fairlane Towne Center retail shopping mall is still a popular location for Dearborn Arabs, and individuals of all groups in its general vicinity (Katarsky 1980). My respondents often replied with a series of shops preferred for specific items based on quality and price. Best value and quality are imperative elements of Arab shopping habits. The Market district of Dearborn is one of the points where the Dearborn community becomes a place of Arab American cultural unity, unequivocally. This market brings together ethnic groups that go far beyond the Arab label, or Middle Eastern for that matter. That is only accounting for people who avail themselves of the market for cultural need (e.g. traditional use of hookah, Arabic or Muslim dress, and especially Halal meat). Cultural outsiders regularly visit Dearborn specifically for dining and tourist purposes, seeking to experience Middle Eastern culture and cuisine via the local Arab community. This aspect of Dearborn’s attraction is featured in publications of the Dearborn chamber of commerce and the Detroit Tourism Council.
Many of the South End outlets have been closed because of a lack of patronage as their customers moved on to new neighborhoods with their own markets. I was told by several respondents that more markets are growing to service the various sub group communities, but that Dearborn’s market district still had strong competition and variety enough to attract regular visitors outside of the local Syrian-Lebanese community. This has apparently matured to the point where it is obvious northeast Dearborn is distinctly paramount among the suburban communities of Arab Detroit, and the epicenter of the Lebanese-Syrian community that had established the South End and relocated to the northeast augmented by additional waves of immigration from Lebanon to the USA, via the process called chain migration (Katarsky 1980, Schopmeyer 2000, Schopmeyer 2011, Kiskowski 2015). Services are the most diverse and variegated, with a great deal of competition in north east Dearborn, even non-Arabic markets cater to the Arab consumer (See Figure 3.4). The South End has some remaining markets and services, but far fewer in comparison to the northeast Dearborn, my focal study area. The market district is now focused on Northeast Dearborn, and major organizations such as the Arab American Chamber of Commerce and ACCESS engaged with Arab people in business to provide greater opportunity for Arab residents in the area.

The Arab American Chamber of Commerce operates for the benefit of existing successful Arab American enterprises and is thought, through its membership, to control over half of the independent gas stations in Dearborn (Abraham, Howell, and Shryock 2011). Mike’s interview responses directly intersect the role of independent service stations in the economic market occupied by Arab Americans. His father and family own and operate two gas stations, one of which also offers automotive mechanic services. Mike is training at the University of Michigan Dearborn to become an automotive engineer in order to move beyond the merchant status, with
the understanding that he will assume an ownership role in the business in addition to his main career as, hopefully, an engineer for Ford or another Detroit car manufacturer. There are also a significant number of professional services offered by Arab Americans marketed towards Arab Americans and more recent Arab immigrants. Legal services, medical professionals, real estate agencies, accounting services, and travel agents are among the most advertised business in Arab American news publications and billboard signage, along with the ubiquitous restaurants, grocery markets, sweet shops, and hookah lounges. The further I expand my search into the other Arab suburbs, the more additional medical facilities and doctors who cater to Arab language communities, many Arab doctors and dentists work in the affluent communities found in the northern suburbs of Detroit, in southern Oakland county and along the coast of Lake Saint Claire. Furthermore, the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS) has also assumed a strong role in the local public health arena. It provides low-cost medical care and outreach, the ability to sign up for the Affordable Care Act, Medicare, or Medicaid as needed. They have continued to diversify their services to be a clearing house for Arabs in need or merely seeking access to optional services.

ACCESS’s primary economic mission includes occupational education and job seeker services. It is charged with providing English language education to recent immigrants as well as job placement for recent immigrants and other members of the community. Its educational mission also includes connections to local community colleges and universities for its constituents to further their economic agency with additional education. ACCESS has been established by Arab Americans who are seeking to provide opportunity to more-recent arrivals and to maintain the economic viability of the communities (Rignall 2000). Existing Arab American merchants often employ recent arrivals in the production of their goods, where Arabic
language skills are enough to begin entry-level jobs. Mario and Mike both reported that their fathers had taken computer classes at ACCESS for the improvement of their business operations, accounting and gas filling stations respectively. Mike also indicated that there was the possibility to train at ACCESS to gain entry to Henry Ford Community college and gain further education, as well as job placements in various fields. Many interview subjects had not heard of ACCESS but when informed of the mission indicated they may have heard of it and were mistaken or did not know it by name, whereas almost all of my Arab interview subjects were aware of the Arab American National Museum, which is administered by ACCESS, and many had visited the museum as well.

Based on observation and interview response locations; Warren Avenue, Ford Avenue, and Michigan Avenue are still the most relevant East-West routes in northeast Dearborn, where the majority of the Arab presence is obvious. Schaefer is the most significant North-South cross street in regards to this neighborhood. The Arab American National Museum is on the corner of Michigan and Schaefer, on the same lot as a large Arab supermarket. Arab markets have grown in size, diversity, and number of locations. Bulk items served out of sacks and large bins are very common, as is a very competitive pricing market and steep discounts on specific bulk items.

Other Arab and Chaldean neighborhoods in the counties surrounding Detroit have established their own local markets, sometimes selling products from the Dearborn market wholesalers, but individuals from those communities do make trips to Dearborn because of the diverse offerings available in its market districts. Sebastian’s family would make an hour long round-trip to Dearborn to purchase the freshest Halal meat that could be found. Arab groups outside of Dearborn, in far-flung suburbs of Detroit and beyond, have embraced automobile and airplane culture to maintain their cultural networks within their ethnic group. Like Wood’s
observations of Vietnamese residents in Northern Virginia, it is possible to consider the Arab community through the idea of heterolocalism (1998; Zelinsky and Lee 1998). The automobile culture of the Detroit area and the aversion to walking has possibly reinforced this phenomenon, as the residential area became more dispersed and further travel times are needed to maintain kinship and ethnic ties. This also explains the distance of the Islamic Center of America from the residential areas of Dearborn and Dearborn Heights because its visitors use cars rather than walking to worship as they had previously in Dearborn and longer ago in Lebanon. Automobiles empower the more rural ethnoburbs to access employment opportunities while maintaining separation from other minority groups or other Arab groups. Time and travel costs are balanced against living within the ethnic community and the benefits that it provides (Katarsky 1980).

5.3 The Family Unit, Neighborhood Territoriality and Home Life.

Dearborn has hosted a significant Arab American presence ever since Arabs began working at Ford motors in the late 1950s and early 1960s (Haddad 2000). Additional arrivals from villages abroad joined family members in those communities, causing them to increase in concentration. The discussion of immigration will also clarify the emergence of various Arab nationalities and the various ways in which those subgroups do and do not interact.

I found that while the surrounding areas and directly adjacent neighborhoods contained diverse types of Arab groups, Dearborn itself is almost exclusively Syrian/Lebanese Shia with some Christians and Sunni. This is likely because the chain migration networks established from a handful of villages in Lebanon, and focused on family linkages, led to many members of those specific subgroups emigrating (Aswad 1974; Schopmeyer 2000; 2011). Those subgroups are also clustered in a hyper-local manner, as relatives often choose the closest available housing to their
initial host family (Katarsky 1980). Arabs from all over metropolitan Detroit, in addition to others looking for the same types of goods, avail themselves of the Dearborn market shops and stores, though this has not generated a great deal of community sentiment towards that neighborhood from Arabs who do not live there.

The home is the center of family life, and that is where the social life of this group hinges. In addition to cultural restrictions on certain foods and slaughtering style, food is also accredited with a ritualistic approach towards hospitality (Shalabi 2001). Food plays a key role in expressing hospitality and it helps to ensure that guests feel as welcome as possible. For example, it is unheard of to go into the home of an Arab without being offered something to eat, along with a hot beverage (Booshada 2003; Young 2007). In Arab American culture, significant emphasis is placed on being generous to those you associate with, especially to those who are entering your home (Shryock 2004). Visitors are obliged to accept any food offered, and refusal is a sign of disrespect (Bates and Rassam 1983; Shalabi 2001). Hospitality is considered to be one of the most admired virtues and many times, families are judged by their generosity to relatives and guests (Shryock 2004). Arab Americans will often make extra food “just in case” an unexpected relative, neighbor or a friend arrives. An offer of coffee and food will usually be made without asking, and are expected to be eaten and drank (Shalabi 2001). When offering food and drink to their guests, Arabs are persistent in making sure everybody leaves feeling satisfied. Accepting hospitality is also a key aspect of Arab social communion and maintenance of traditional culture. One is obliged to accept an offer of hospitality, sometimes after declining once or twice but ultimately accepting (Booshada 2003). There is a nuance of communication exchanged in the offering and refusal that also conveys how much to take or give when the subtle negotiation has played out. Arab Americans have been forced to adjust to different, less
formal, or completely absent forms of guest reception and hospitality while assimilating to the United States (Shalabi 2001).

It is also important to note that Dearborn’s Arab immigrants had primarily lived in rural settings before emigration from Lebanon/Syria and that almost all aspects of social and professional life are hinged upon consideration of the family (Katarsky 1980; Torstrick and Faier 2009). Social relations expand to the village level where family status determines social relationships such as spousal choice, business partnerships, and the development of any close relationship of any sort to the point where an individual without strong ties within their family would be treated as suspect and judged with much more scrutiny than a person whose public networks are well-known (Katarsky1980; Smith 2005).

I also spoke at length with a female desk clerk at an extended stay hotel. Many Arab families and individuals stay there on extended stays of up to a year or more. The longest current group was six months. There was an Arab family of 4 who asked them about finding apartments, which indicates me a lack of family or close friends to rely on for that assistance. Shuttles came to take groups of people to the mosque at set times, sometimes chartered by groups of individual families, the mosque, or through the hotel. Though these individuals were possibly immigrating, they were not identifying as Americans and I also did not feel their specific situation invited me to include them in an in-depth interview, but it added to my contextual understanding that this was indeed a target for additional chain-migration based on cultural familiarity even in the absence of direct family connections and networks. The hotel clerk also stated that almost all of their extended stay guests were Arabs and that many of them approached her about finding apartments or other long-term residences in Dearborn, indicating to me that many of these arrivals cannot depend on family networks or other informal connections for their social capital
since they are relying on financial resources and outside sources to look for such accommodations.

5.4 Religious Organizations and Landscapes

Arab American religious organizations understand their position of advocacy for their communities. The Islamic Center of America and its “progressive Imam” works in conjunction with non-religious organizations to act as a public liaison for the Dearborn Muslim community and has become key to dialogues between the Dearborn Arab community and outsiders seeking a spokesperson for Arab Americans (Abraham, Howell, and Shryock 2011, p. 4). Meinig’s work on sacred landscapes brings to the forefront the importance of houses of worship and religious institutions to the daily lives of individuals (1979). The establishment of these buildings also indicates a large amount of capital and effort applied to their constructions and maintenance (Abraham, Howell, and Shryock 2011). They are both a symbol of group activity and agency and also a location that hosts further group activities. It is a place for the practice and maintenance of cultural traditions as well as a point for networking on social, economic, and cultural levels. Institutions such as mosques, churches, and museums aim to instill values, ideals, and traditions in their congregants in a manner that appears universal in its principles and appeal (Sack; Smith 2005). Religious organizations and their built environments are representatives, spokespeople, and the figurative guest room of the community.

Newer Arab immigrants seek the solace of their compatriots in a new society, even though they have fewer financial and social resources. Established Arab Americans have created social organizations such as ACCESS to aid their newly immigrated coethnics but also seek to maintain their obvious distinctions in status and financial agency. Newer arrivals seek to mitigate
their lack of social and economic status by participating in cultural realms where they may enjoy greater influence such as churches and mosques (Ley 2004). This may force newer arrivals to establish their own houses of worship so as to avoid conflict with those organizations dominated by Arab Americans already assimilated into the host society (Smith 2005). This explains the great many mosques nearby that cannot be accounted for merely by the Sunni/Shia split but is explained by each sect and nationality needing an outlet for their own specific immigrant group from a similar generation of arrival.

Most of my respondents reported that they do not go to mosque or church to pray, per say, but do attend Islamic centers for worship. The difference between a mosque, prayer room, and community center can be easily lost on an outsider. Through everyone knew the image of the Islamic Society of America on Michigan Avenue, none reported having been to or attended worship there. Two respondents reported worshipping at the Detroit Mosque and one at the Dearborn Moslem Society, but most said they pray at home or at a boutique-style community center, the likes of which can be found throughout Dearborn and other Muslim neighborhoods in the metropolitan area. The footbath in UMD, necessary for pre-prayer ablutions, also applies to the idea of pride in the incorporation of their religious identity on their territory. Social and political activities are also crucial to the community; Funerals, weddings, and Arabic language schools provide events where Arab culture is practiced and taught by older generations for the benefit of younger generations.

The multitude of student interest groups at the University level is considerable, and they highlight the various splits in what could be considered the Arab community, and where that community overlaps or creates barriers with and against other groups. There is a Muslim Students Association, which focuses on the needs of Sunni students and faculty members. There
are the Students for Islamic Awareness which focuses on the needs of the Shia student body, which is also engaged with the Shia power base of Dearborn. Dearborn has become known as the heart of Shiism in America. Arabs and other Middle Easterners in the area are well aware that they are lumped together as an indecipherable whole by outsiders in the United States. The student groups represent an attempt by students to maintain cultural and ethnic identities in line with their personal negotiation of those group identities. My collegiate respondents are within the searching and discovery process described as the transitionary state between ignorance and actualization (Phinney 1993). Some Arab groups have moved so far as to pass within greater society as nothing other whatsoever, adopting Christian or secular modes of thought and limiting Arab cultural practices including language.

The Muslim Students Association (MSA) is a prominent student group at UMD that transcends national boundaries and is quite distinct from other religious and national student groups. My participant Hanna is an officer of the MSA who told me that the group advocates for Sunni students at the university. Both Mike and Danielle indicated that though they are Sunni, they were aware that there are more Shias in the Dearborn area. Arthur was the only member of the social fraternity to mention the foot baths and reflection rooms on campus for the use of Muslim students. Hanna was first contacted as a member of the organization, and though she is Pakistani she wanted to speak with me about the importance of Dearborn to her as a place where she felt welcome to be in her hijab. The general diversity beyond black and white gave a place for Hanna, and others to practice their own traditional culture under the auspices of the environment created by Dearborn’s Lebanese Shia community. She reported no issues with Shia individuals or groups, but that she had found a lot of common ground through the MSA and its mission which includes the unity of all Middle Eastern peoples and outreach between the Sunni
and Shia communities. Henry is the informal leader of a prayer group at the University of Michigan – Dearborn, joined by Martin, Zineb, Matthew, Barry, Sam, and Van. I met Henry in the lobby of the student center on the campus of the University of Michigan Dearborn. Henry discussed at length the importance of Islam in his everyday life and that every part of his character is shaped in his consideration of Islam and being a good Muslim. Henry had never been to the AANM and had also not heard that the Arab American festival was canceled for 2014. Henry’s prayer group is loosely affiliated with the Muslim Students Association. Henry wears typical American clothing, in our first meeting wearing jeans and a button-down dress shirt tucked-in. Several members of the prayer group, by contrast, wore traditional Arab or Middle Eastern garb that was much more obviously part of their cultural tradition. Zineb is a Kashmiri Indian who speaks Arabic with his family based off their Sunni religious practices with the Quran. Zineb lives in Ann Arbor and emphasized the place of Islam in every aspect of his daily life, echoing many of Henry’s points while we all spoke together. Zineb especially indicated that to be religious was quite the opposite of what other Sunni Arabs enjoyed, such as smoking hookah and drinking alcohol. The mosque in Islam is not exclusively of religious significance since Muslims can pray on any clean spot on the earth. The mosque function as one of the key centers of religious and social life in the community and tends to reinforce if only in a symbolic fashion, a pride in religious identity. The prayer group was also operating out of the Student Organizations office but they have no official group designation with the university. Several of the prayer group members were members of the Muslim Student Association, which focuses on engaging Sunni students at UMD. The Students for Islamic Awareness (SIA) focuses on the needs of Shia students.
The contrast between community space and religious affiliation has become more pronounced in the past 30 years since Katarsky engaged the neighborhood (1980). Dearborn, especially the northeast, is profoundly Shia in majority. The surrounding Arab-Muslim communities in the South End, West Detroit, and Dearborn Heights are much more likely to be Sunni. Taken as a whole, the Arab groups and neighborhoods in the metropolitan area are Christian (Schopmeyer 2011, Kiskowski 2015). Many of my interview subjects were surprised I knew anything of the various nuances of Arab identity, and they quizzed me on my knowledge of Shia and Sunni differences and what a Chaldean was in comparison to an Iraqi Arab. My answers satisfied my curious respondents to the extent that I was given very open and candid comments on a wide range of issues concerning identity which I focus on in Chapter 8.

5.5 Social Service Organizations

Arab places in Dearborn have been carefully considered to provide for community needs and desires as well as to market to outsiders the positive aspects of the community. Some landscape features, such as the Arab American National Museum (AANM), have been created primarily to negotiate the meaning of culture and identity within the Arab community and to market the community to outside perspectives in a positive manner. The museum is a tool to connect Arab groups into a single group and to show that group in a positive manner for outsiders to understand. In that sense, it seeks to create an appreciation of the Arab ethnic enclave within the community and outside the community, the love of place dubbed topophilia by Tuan (1974). The understanding of places becomes important to the consideration of identity, especially the identity of people who are creating and recreating cultural spaces and those who choose to experience them from outside the cultural group that created them. In this sense, places
become an intermediary between groups of people where they can learn to understand one another better on an individual and group basis (Entrikin 1991).

The presence of social organizations, houses of worship, retail and dining are all necessary for the completeness of the ethnic enclave (Breton 1964). Organizational involvement in community identity creation has been evident among Brazilian returnees to Japan (Oda 2010), Tamil settlements in Norway (Bruland 2012), and the global diaspora of Tibetans (Hess 2006).

Group organizations have offered various Native American identities a support network or social outlet in which to experience their identities, even if each is unique in its fabrication (Jacobs 2012). The use of interviews to discover the role of organizations and their position as gatekeepers to ethnic community groups, along with landscape and community observation, could stand alone as a comprehensive methodology with which to better understand the development of the Arab American community in Dearborn.

The AANM offers profiles on many organizations working with various Arab American subgroups and levels of scale (AANM 2013). They include groups based on individual nationalities as well as groups working on behalf of religious groups and Arabs in general. The Yemeni American Benevolent Association (YABA) was established to provide for the needs of the growing Yemeni communities in Dearborn’s South end and Hamtramck. YABA aims to assist new arrivals in settling into and contributing to the community. The American Federation of Ramallah, Palestine, also known as the Ramallah Federation, was founded in 1952 to maintain ties with Palestinians from Ramallah, to maintain cultural practices for younger generations, and to exhibit Palestinian culture to an American audience to further cross-cultural understanding and humanitarian goals pertinent to Palestinians and Arabs. The Palestinian Aid Society of American (PAS) aims to provide political and material support to Palestinians in the occupied territories.
and Lebanon with the goal of establishing an independent Palestinian state. The Syrian Ladies Aid Society of New York was established in 1907 to provide financial, medical, and social support to Syrian girls and women immigrating to the United States through the Port of New York. The American Task force of Lebanon (ATFL) aims to strengthen relations between the United States and Lebanon and was established as a subgroup within the National Association of Arab Americans. The Arab Chamber of Commerce has been established to increase and strengthen the presence of Arab business enterprises through referrals, networking, publications of informative research, as well as lobbying government officials and agencies (Abraham, Howell, and Shryock 2011). The Federation of Islamic Associations in the United States has lobbied the government and engaged in public awareness to further equal recognition of Muslim Americans. The Arab American Institute (AAI) has been established to increase the civic and political agency of Arab American groups and individuals. The AAI and the Arab American Leadership Council (ALC) have established networks of Arab American public servants to increase participation in community governments at local, regional, state, and national levels. The American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee has advocated and defended Arab Americans who have been subject to discrimination and looks to re-educate the general public against misconceptions about Arab American culture, especially since September 11, 2001 (AANM 2013). Though the efforts of these organizations are substantial, on the local level ACCESS is by far the most active and effective organization working on behalf of Arab Americans. The Arab American Chamber of Commerce has also been effective at organizing economic enterprises to advocate for further employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for Arab Americans.
ACCESS has grown and proliferated in its mission to extend to almost all social services provided to the Arab community. It is possible to sign up for language education, health care coverage, job programs, and other key services where ACCESS acts as a comprehensive clearinghouse for the community’s needs. Mike is a Sunni Lebanese male who works at his father’s gas stations and met with me while waiting to register for courses. He had transferred from Henry Ford community college and gave me a summary of the local universities and colleges, and where people went from Henry Ford to UMD, or often Wayne State. Mike’s father also had taken computer classes at ACCESS facilities and his family had been to the AANM together, and he also went with a school trip. Mosques, churches, and other houses of worship partner with ACCESS programs where their stated missions overlap, ACCESS having replaced those religious institutions as the main provider of social welfare services to the Arab American community in and around Dearborn (Rignall 2000; Shryock, Abraham, and Howell 2011). Katarsky’s thesis predicted this multitude of services as a result of continued growth of the population and an increase in their collective financial and, more importantly, social capital (1980). Respondents were initially dismissive of the role of ACCESS in their lives, but upon further discussion, many admitted connections to the organization. Students from as far as 20 miles away from Dearborn reported that they had been to the museum on school field trips. ACCESS has also been prominently included in previous research that explores the Arab community in the Detroit area (Abraham and Shryock 2000). The physical location of the ACCESS community centers, along with the museum, serves to legitimize the community, these organizations, and their efforts to create new Arab American identities and narratives. These organizations offer a physical space for the practice of Arab culture, as well as a conceptual space for the negotiation of identity. The entire neighborhood could be considered within this
framework as we consider the neighborhood (especially visible landscapes), individuals, and these organizations and how they interact to maintain and develop narratives of Arab American identity.

The presence of the community service organizations, ethnic service providers, market options, and houses of worship, all lend themselves to the institutional completeness (Breton 1964) of the enclave and its ability to provide for the cultural and practical needs of Arab Americans living there. Scott indicated that ACCESS was an effective organization but also disorganized, and attributed it to Arab nature and a general laid back, utilitarian approach towards the social services provided. Mike’s father had also taken computer classes at ACCESS and that his family had been to the AANM. Though ACCESS is very involved in the Dearborn neighborhood and surrounding communities, many of my participants had never heard of it or only could identify it after being explained its mission and did not know it by name. Many of those participants, however, had heard of or been to the AANM and were unaware of the association between those who organizations. Edouard had never heard of or been to the AANM, but is interested in seeing it next time he visits the Dearborn area. Martin had also never heard of ACCESS but had been to the AANM once a school field trip and another time with his family. Barry was more familiar with local events and locations more than the other members of the prayer group and had been to the AANM and knew of ACCESS. James is not familiar with the Dearborn community but was on a visit because he heard it was a central place of Arab Americans and was excited to experience the neighborhood and visit the AANM, where he was headed when I met with him. Hanna had never been to the AANM but wished to go someday, and while she had heard of and was interested in the museum, she had never heard of ACCESS or its mission. The level of engagement that ACCESS has among new immigrants does not seem
to be sustained with Arab Americans who have lived in the United States for generations. If ACCESS and the Arab American National Museum it administers wish to forge a unifying Arab American identity I would have expected it to be better known by more-assimilated Arab Americans in addition to people who directly benefit from their services. The various Arab subgroups in the United States and the Detroit suburbs are wary of being captured within a single ethnic group. That being said, Arab Americans who are aware of the museum are very proud of the fact it exists, even those who only visited on school field trips appreciated that it was included in the curriculum to reflect the prominence of the ethnic communities in the region.

In addition to ACCESS in the central market and cultural district, I also engaged with several student organizations at the University of Michigan-Dearborn (UMD) and will briefly discuss the various student groups at that school and how they reflect broader implications to the Dearborn community and the other Arab suburbs of Detroit.

5.6 Educational Organizations

Many Arab American students attend the University of Michigan, Dearborn, Henry Ford Community College and Wayne State University. These schools are notable for their large numbers of Arab students, as well as generally strong diversity within their student bodies. Mike described to me a process whereby students could learn introductory skills at ACCESS facilities to matriculate into Henry Ford Community college and onward into the University of Michigan at Dearborn or Wayne State University. Mike is a junior at UMD after transferring from Henry Ford Community college, both popular colleges for Arab Americans along with Wayne State University. Henry was very proud to show me the reflection room and foot baths created by the University for the Muslim students to pray and prepare their ablutions. Hanna and Arthur chose
both Dearborn over Wayne State, Michigan, and Eastern Michigan because of the more diverse and inclusive environment to Middle Easterners. Hanna said that the University of Michigan at Dearborn, and the Dearborn area in general, was black, white, Middle Eastern, and more.

Market owners, especially hookah shops, also mentioned that college students from these schools are common patrons. I met with members of a social fraternity, members of the Muslim Student Association (MSA), and members of the Lebanese Student Association. Some of the members of the social fraternity were also members of other ethnic and religious student groups that were pertinent to this study. The Students for Islamic Awareness is another group that advocates for Shia students and issues while the MSA caters to the Sunni student population, displaying a phenomenon where Shia groups and mosques will describe themselves as Islamic and Sunni groups prefer the term Muslim. This is also played out in the mosques in the area where the Islamic Center of America is the prominent Shia mosque, and the American Moslem Society is Sunni.

There are several social and academic groups that are open to members of both sexes and any ethnic group, often focused on community service or professional affiliation. National student groups include the Arab Student Union, the Chaldean American Student Union, the Omani Student Association, and the Lebanese Student Association. Religious-based organizations include the Association of Muslim Scientists and Engineers, the Muslim Students Association, and Students for Islamic Awareness. These groups have varying levels of Arab members, but I went to the student organizations offices on several occasions for interviews and to meet people via previous interview sessions (snowball sample). I met with a Pakistani member of the MSA who stated that the Shia, usually Syrian-Lebanese, do not mix much with Sunni students. There was a prayer group that I engaged with heavily as individuals, and in group
settings, they were affiliated somewhat with the MSA but for the most part represented the most visibly devout group of Muslim students on campus. They said they were a Sunni prayer and study group that met regularly in the organizational offices but did not affiliate with an official group. Some members of the prayer group were affiliated with other clubs but declined to mention them. The Sunni prayer group indicated that there was a great deal of acceptance of Sunni individuals from all backgrounds in their group and on campus. This was also reflected by the national makeup of the Sunni prayer group; two individuals were Yemeni, two Algerian, one Kuwaiti, and one Kashmiri.

The social fraternity members were part of a national collegiate social fraternity dedicated to multicultural membership and diversity. The first chapter was founded in New York by Jewish and Christian students who were also friends disappointed in the lack of fraternities that were open to both religions. Many of the Arab and Middle Eastern members of the social fraternity chose UMD in part because they felt it was an inclusive environment for their traditional cultures, though they could (for the most part) assimilate into mainstream American society. They impressed on me the importance and near-universality of hookah smoking, especially one Chaldean participant named Marco. This group actively sought out a college experience that included diverse multicultural engagement. Everyone in this group expressed general progressive attitudes towards their identity and values, without discarding the importance of their heritage and traditions either. They were frustrated by some of their peers and adult attitudes towards head coverings and female behavior and said that their ideal female partners did not exist because many of the women from their culture had less freedom to adapt to American modes, and “Americanized” Arab females were rare in their opinion.
Although the various student groups, religious groups, and national organizations underscore the level of diversity within the Arab American community, there is a sense of unity generated by the opinions of external society. This unity is encouraged by ACCESS and the AANM as part of a broader Arab American identity and is also reinforced through group events, holidays, and ethnic festivals. These community events give individuals an opportunity to engage in their traditional culture with others in their ethnic group and other ethnic groups that share similar elements.

5.7 Community Events, Holidays and Festivals

Festivals and community events, as well as religious holidays and celebrations, punctuate the calendar with visible expressions of traditional ethnic culture. The major community events I considered during this project were the Arab International Festival, organized by the Arab American Chamber of Commerce, and the holy month of Ramadan. The Arab International Festival has been canceled for the past several years due to incidents in 2010 and 2012, including non-Arab protesters marching with pig heads mounted on sticks, chanting anti-Islamic slogans, and counter-protests which turned the event into a chaotic mess resulting in police response (Arab American News 2015). The Muslim holy month of Ramadan is a less centralized matter, but many Muslims go out in the Dearborn market district to dine and socialize after breaking the evening fast. Edouard mentioned Palestinian conventions as a central aspect of Palestinian American community networking, which I take to mean the large meetings of the Ramallah club which take place regularly in the United States. Edouard indicated that weddings and family events are very significant to Palestinian cultural identity and those events are where traditional customs are transmitted between generations.
The Arab International Festival is perhaps the most significant annual event within the Dearborn Arab community, though it has been indefinitely postponed for the last several years. Helena has been to previous Arab International Festivals in Dearborn and indicated they had become too crowded and this was off-putting. Helena did not care that the festival was canceled, indicating she thought it would be after how crowded and combative it had become with protesters and such in the media reports. Helena has not personally witnessed any such disruption; she was just annoyed by the level of crowding. Mike did not know that the Dearborn festival was canceled; his family went to the Dearborn Heights one as they live in a gray area between the two neighborhoods. This decentralization of the Arab International Festivals may further erode the sense of Arab American unity put forward by ACCESS and the AANM. Martin had been to previous Arab American festivals but was unaware of that year’s cancellation. He also does not go out after Ramadan and indicated it was a Syrian/Lebanese practice and hinted that it was somewhat of a practice among more secular Arab Muslims without specifying Sunni or Shia. Barry was aware that the Arab American festival had been canceled.

The Muslim holy month of Ramadan is another occasion where Arab Muslims find common ground, though many Arabs see it as more of a social event than a religious one. According to Helena, “Going out” for Ramadan is a popular thing for both Sunni and Shia Lebanese Americans. Albert is a Sunni Palestinian who goes out for Ramadan, the first non-Syrian/Lebanese person I met who does so. This echoes the idea that the Syrian-Lebanese and Palestinian Muslim communities share a lot in common and interact more closely than other groups. His general approach to religion as a social network along with his membership in the social fraternity underscores Albert’s general level of assimilation and secular attitude, which seems to be a strong element in the idea of going out on the town after breaking the fast on
Ramadan evenings. Sam’s family speaks Arabic almost exclusively in the home and attends a Sunni mosque in Canton. Sam goes to the mosque regularly and especially during Ramadan remains there for the religious social scene that takes place before and after worship. Van also goes to the mosque and stays there for Ramadan for the social scene but does not go to the market after breaking the Ramadan fast. Hanna indicated that while Dearborn is busy during Ramadan, Pakistanis and non-Syrian/Lebanese Sunnis were unlikely to “go out” after breaking the holiday fast in the evenings. Arthur does not “go out” after Ramadan and indicates that is a practiced by Lebanese Syrians and other secular Arabs in Dearborn but less so elsewhere and by non-Syrian/Lebanese Muslims.

Community events, festivals, and holidays give Arab Americans a chance to gather and practice traditional culture. These events can either be a unifying element, as was the Arab International Festival, or can highlight divisions within the community. Ramadan is exclusively celebrated by Muslims, and distinctions arise between some devout Muslims who remain in their homes or mosques after breaking the fast versus others who embrace the social climate in Dearborn’s market district and the twenty-four-hour policies restaurants, sweet shops, and hookah bars offer during the holidays. The various types of Arab organizations in Dearborn, from family networks to social organizations, leave visible evidence of their presence on the landscape. By reading these visible landscapes, we may be able to further understand the intentions of the organizations and individuals who have altered them.

5.8 Organizations and Cultural Landscapes

Arab Americans have used organizations to assist their transition to life in the United States and recreate places to suit their needs and tastes. These organizations are economic, social,
and often familial, and contribute to the agency of Arab Americans living in Dearborn as well as other Detroit suburbs. Financial support has allowed religious organizations and social groups, notably ACCESS, to alter the neighborhood landscape to advertise and celebrate the Arab ethnic presence in the area. After finding organizations that were modifying the landscape of Dearborn, my research questions led me to explore how the Arab cultural impact in Dearborn can be seen on the landscape. This visual exploration of culturally Arab landscapes in Dearborn is the subject of Chapter 6.
CHAPTER 6 – READING CULTURAL LANDSCAPES IN DEARBORN

6.1 Cultural Landscapes and Visibility

In this study, we are looking to see where the landscape has been altered by the presence and preferences of Arabs in the United States, specifically the Dearborn neighborhood. Photo surveys, mapping, and architectural considerations have been important in documenting and presenting research concerning vernacular landscapes (Krase 2002). Places represent the current state of landscapes that were reconstructed over time. Cultural landscapes are landscapes made by humans (Lewis 1979). It is not just a simple background that hosts the activities of people, but an actor in those activities as well as the product of human activity and industry. “Windshield surveys” that rely on one’s own eyes, photographs, and video recorders have a strong tradition in qualitative urban research (Krase 2002). Signs, symbols, sound, and tastes can also be altered to reflect the cultural activities taking place within these dynamic spaces (Billig 1995; Marcus 2009). Though the market district, residential areas, and houses of worship seem to be separate elements of a cultural expression, they are in fact observable parts of the same “Arab American culture.” Exploring these elements has helped me to understand the sensory knowledge of place that has become the idea of a geographic imagination (Wright 1966; Tuan 1976; Marcus 2009). This is the appearance of place to the eye, the sounds to the ear, and all of the sensations imagined when imagining place. By considering these multifaceted aspects of an ethnic community, we are moving beyond what is strictly visual and taking into account how a
community can be identified by multiple senses to establish a sense of place which is critical to the understanding of cultural geography. Architectural styles are also developed by cultural processes and are most obvious in the design of temples, churches, mosques, other houses of worship and community buildings (Meinig 1979). During festivals and times of community mobilization, religious organizations function alongside community and political organizations that may otherwise avoid religious affiliations.

Storefronts can visibly identify the market district found there, the Arabic scripts used in the signage, and the Arab cultural products on offer. The architectural styles, however, conform to the suburban American landscape and do not visibly indicate an Arab style in the construction style of the buildings used. This is in contrast to the houses of worship, the Arab American National Museum, and even residential dwellings where community members have remodeled their homes with Arab-inspired architectural features Dearborn’s community market area is not an idealized ethnic community as planned in Washington D.C.’s Chinatown (Pang and Rath 2007) or the Hispanic landscapes of San Antonio (Arreola 1995). The presence of the AANM does position Dearborn somewhat as a prepared landscape, but within an organically grown Arab neighborhood that evolved to meet the needs of the Arab community it hosts. The maintenance of some services and markets in the South End also embraces Larry Ford’s (1984) understanding that preservation maintains an idealization of the past and rejection of the concept of authenticity of a planned or preserved landscape, what Lewis (1979) described as historical lumpiness where some time periods or eras are more evident upon the landscape than others. This creates a landscape and history that appears in a punctuated equilibrium which has not steadily evolved but rather was changed in greater portions in some eras and left intact through other portions of
time. The resulting landscape is a hodgepodge of alterations that have built up, overlapped, and overwritten earlier alterations on the same landscape.

The combination of human actors and places over time, and their interaction with each other and the entire milieu of local place and daily time becomes what Buttimer describes as “lifeworld,” a holistic concept for the entire environment and actors within it (1976). Everyday symbolism along with profoundly sacred considerations of spaces creates unique ideas of place and meaning to otherwise inanimate buildings and physical locations. This concept of human agency’s impact on the creation of place is a key point in human geography (Tuan 1976; Smith 2005). The combination of these elements makes it certain that places are not just a location of activity but also an actor within the activity of humans using spaces and making them into places (Sack 2001). Considering these points and the organizations from the previous chapter, we ask “how have changes to the Dearborn neighborhood become visibly apparent on the landscape?”

In addition to visible change, we also explore, to a lesser extent, other sensory aspects of the Arab American community in Dearborn.

6.2 Dearborn’s Cultural Landscape

The most ordinary and seemingly anonymous landscapes have cultural meaning, even if it is not obvious (Lewis 1979, p.1). Creating landscapes is simultaneously a conscious and unconscious process, and we embed the cultural meanings we wish to see in addition to those we may prefer to leave out of the landscape record (Lewis 1979). In this way, the landscape is often a more accurate account or biography than those left in print (Lewis 1979). Landscapes cannot keep secrets nor are they able to lie, though some may argue that they are designed to tell untruths (Mitchell 1996). Ordinary landscapes exhibit the daily qualities of the people who
produce and consume those landscapes. I have made efforts to maintain Lewis’ (1979) axioms in mind as I explored the landscapes of Dearborn and its surrounding neighborhoods on foot and applying those axioms to Arab cultural symbols, signs, architecture, clothing, writings, and people.

As Dearborn’s community spreads out or attempts to do so, so do similar alterations to the landscape. This corollary of diffusion (Lewis 1979) is evident in the creation of a mosque in Sterling Heights, which is being actively resisted by the mayor of that town and its majority Chaldean Christian community. That community has openly tried to distance itself from Arab groups in the Detroit area, as well as the United States, especially Muslim Arabs. This goes beyond the corollary of taste (Lewis 1979, p.4) which would describe different cultural preferences in landscape but engages more what Barth (1998) described in maintaining group identity boundaries between the Chaldean community and the Dearborn Arabs. That corollary of taste does become part of the discourse against the proposed mosque, but as a larger part of the discourse maintaining the boundary between Chaldean and Arab groups in the United States, against the discourses put forward by ACCESS, the AANM, and other organizations seeking to unite all Arab groups and subgroups, including Chaldeans, within the American context.

Dearborn is an extremely visible Arab landscape as the home of the Mosque of America, The American Moslem Society, The Arab American National Museum, numerous Arab Christian Churches and a vibrant Arab commercial district. Dearborn is also the headquarters of the Arab Center for Community and Social Services (ACCESS), a prominent community organization involved in a wide range of social outreach on behalf of Arab Americans (Rignall 2000). ACCESS has partnered with other organizations, countries, and businesses to fund the
Arab American National Museum, located in downtown Dearborn, as well as sponsoring regular community festivals, in addition to community outreach support at its storefront offices.

There is a strong architectural tradition associated with Arab construction, including those features associated with churches and mosques. Mosaic brick designs and arched doorways are common features applied to Arab homes and houses of worship. Commercial enterprises and organizational facilities provide the most visually apparent features of Middle Eastern Architecture and public displays (signage) in Arabic. This is especially the case when considering the Arab American National Museum and Library, owned and operated by ACCESS with numerous partner organizations. The museum is built with a white dome, which it describes as traditional but not specifically religious and non-denominational in any case. Exhibits celebrate the many different aspects of Arab and Arab American identity, engaging in public education as well as cultural displays. It features mosaic tiled artwork inset into walls and floors, reinforcing the museum’s authenticity as its exhibits engage in creating a narrative of Arab-American identity. Arabic script and icons represent one set of visible cultural elements, like the hijab, burka, or another headscarf would represent a visible cultural element of clothing. Architectural designs contain elements that are described as “Middle Eastern,” in their construction, decoration, and adornment. The heavy application of archways and domes in domestic construction is a hallmark of Arab Architectural style and is preferred by members of the community (Ragette 2003; AANM 2013). The Arab economy in Dearborn has enabled the community to invest heavily in landscape modifications that display their cultural presence. The application of these features to homes in the Detroit area is only apparent in Dearborn.

Merchants use Arabic script and architectural features to display the cultural nature of their offerings. Houses of worship also adopt Arab styles when they aim to service Arab
congregants, especially traditionally-styled mosques which follow the large dome and minaret patterns that are commonly found in mosques around the world. Family homes are also remodeled or designed to include large doorway arches and windows, as well as brick facades with multiple color brick patterns, cited by several respondents as the preference of Arab homeowners. The exploration of many different types of landscapes reflects Lewis’ *axiom of cultural unity and landscape equality* (1979). The houses and restaurants are just as key indicators of cultural change as are mosques and temples, or the white dome of the museum. The reuse of an old diner or billboard with Arabic scripts and symbols illustrates the embrace of American mores and preferences of an early generation combined with the sensibilities and marketing of Arab American merchants. The concentration of ethnic homes and business is greatest in northeast Dearborn but does not end abruptly at neighborhood boundaries. As you move east or west on Warren Avenue, the concentration becomes less but Arab markets, restaurants, and mosques are still evident on the landscape outside of the Dearborn market district which is the most concentrated area of Arab culture.

6.3 Ethnic Market District

Arabs provide a unique culture for consumption of their art, cuisine, and cultural products within the urban setting of Dearborn and Detroit. In recreating landscapes, human beings leave clues to their culture. This applies even to the most seemingly nondescript areas that seem in many ways untouched by human agency. These *ordinary landscapes* are what Lewis used to explore cultures as the landscape “provides strong evidence of the kind of people we are, and were, and are in process of becoming.” (Lewis 1979, p.3). Our culture is reflected upon the landscape without any necessary intent on making it so. Dearborn has been created mostly on the
choice of Arab residents to maintain an ethnic enclave where they chose to relocate for its diverse housing options while maintaining village networks that were present in their source regions in Lebanon (Katarsky 1980). Ethnic marketplaces have evolved marketing traditional goods and services to their target groups, attracting outsiders as well (Portes 1987; Stiffler 2004). Retail grocers are among the most common Arab markets to be found in the shopping district, though they are often only identified by the use of Arabic script in their signage, see Figure 6.1, 6.2, and 6.3. These market outlets are typical of the Dearborn Arab neighborhood, where the architecture does nothing to indicate the nature of the business, but Arab scripts on the sign reflect their cultural character.

Figure 6.1 - A typical Dearborn community Arab store. Photograph by author.
Figure 6.2 - The Arab character of this grocery store can easily be missed without seeing a closer view of the main sign, as seen in Figure 6.3. Photograph by author.
Figure 6.3 - Closer view of the Dearborn Fresh sign. Photograph by author.

The landscape of Dearborn’s market district is instantly recognizable as an American suburban space, outdoor “strip malls” and retail storefronts, but with Arabic symbols and language adorning the signs and advertisements. The content and character of these built spaces are what exhibits the Arab character or this neighborhood, visible differences limited to language script and various uses of symbols. The products on offer also illustrate the cultural aspects of the market stores. Markets offer special items that are staples to Arab residents, from specific garments to spices and foodstuffs, providing the necessary items for the practice of traditional Arab culture, as seen in Figure 6.4, 6.5, 6.7, 6.8, 6.9, and 6.21. This is also a continuation of traditional commercial merchandising and peddling popular among some Arab groups. Consumer products often contribute to the practice of traditional cultures, cuisine, and dress being key aspects of ethnic identity. The AANM exhibits specifically cite restaurants, as well as
grocery markets and coffee shops, as a cultural link between Arab Americans and their Syrian roots (AANM 2013). Coffee and sweets are also a key element of hospitality that families keep on hand to offer to guests in their homes (AANM 2013). Coffee houses are an extension of the home where many people gather with friends and acquaintances to socialize, with very rare sightings of outsiders in the unique social environment more commonly associated with adult males but also enjoyed by others (Abraham 1974).

Figure 6.4 - Sweets such as Baklava and filo pastries are popular among Dearborn Arabs. Photograph by author.
Figure 6.5 - Almonds and other nut varieties offered in bulk in supermarket bins. Photograph by author.

Figure 6.6 - A clothing store specializing in hijabs and other female cultural dress. Photograph by author.
The market district gives the opportunity for Arab merchants and the community a space in which to engage with the non-Arab community in the area (Ley 2004). This offers a place where communication and relationships can be built to bridge divides between the Arab and non-Arab communities in the Detroit area. By marketing their goods to outsiders, Arab Americans also propel the tourist industry in Detroit as people travels there to experience Arab and Middle Eastern culture without having to leave the country. Restaurants offer the opportunity to enjoy traditional cultural cuisine, as well as the chance for outsiders to participate in and experience the Arab landscape. Bakeries and pastry shops open the appeal of Arab culture to an even more wide audience of avid consumers in addition to tourists and those interested in trying the exotic. This sharing of cultural fare is an extension of the Arab value of hospitality, the sweets and cuisine being central to a cultural attitude towards how to treat guests and what should be offered. Restaurants are one of the places where both Arabs and non-Arabs will intermingle while enjoying Arab cuisine, see Figure 6.10.
The Lebanese of Dearborn are unique when compared to their other Muslim and Christian neighbors. They go out to the sweet shops and hookah bars after evening prayers in Ramadan. I saw this on the street and in the markets during the holiday, and it was repeated to me by many respondents that is a Lebanese thing. Most Muslims do not go out and socialize late at night during Ramadan, but it is a significant part of the Dearborn Arab community. Arabs of all ages mix at the mosque, or a café or sweet shops. Many also go to hookah lounges for company. Popular sweet shops, such as the New Yasmeen Bakery in figure 6.11, are also open late during the holy month of Ramadan, see Figure 6.12. This policy is intended to attract customers who go out on the town after the breaking of fast during the holiday. My respondents indicated that this is commonly practiced by the Shia Lebanese and Syrians in Dearborn but that other Muslim groups do not “go out” during Ramadan and remain in their homes or possibly meet with friends and family at mosques rather than to socialize at markets and hookah bars.
Figure 6.8 - Popular local restaurant, grocery, bakery, and sweet shop. Photograph by author.

Figure 6.9 - A popular sweet shop advertises its extended hours during Ramadan. Photograph by author.

It is also possible to pick up any one of several local Arab-language newspapers in the Detroit Metropolitan area, especially Dearborn. A print-language community and popular
materials are a key aspect of cultural geography and the maintenance of distinct communities (Anderson 1983). Abraham (1974) also cites Breton’s (1964) criteria of publications and radio stations as part of the South End of Dearborn’s institutional completeness to the interpersonal identities and networks within the Arab American community. Lewis’ (1979) corollary of nonacademic literature also reminds us to not overlook journalism, including trade journalism, magazines, news print, advertisements, and even billboard announcements. I believe that if online social media were in use in the late 1970s, Lewis would have included this in his definition of nonacademic literature and used it in combination with the axiom of common things. Abraham (1974) speculates that the South End will maintain this completeness for a long time, though at this point it has been eclipsed by and overtaken by the northeast Dearborn neighborhood where the market and social institutions have relocated in relation to the South End community which has faded in significance. Newspapers included on the free racks in markets include the Michigan Arab Times, the Muslim Observer, and Al Hayat Alarabiya.
Katarsky did not pioneer the use of market access and networks to describe activity space in Dearborn (1980). His technique and mine follow a general practice of gauging these activity spaces to ascertain the connectivity of people within those areas. Detroit’s Arab community transfers wealth via remittances to sending communities, but its wealth is generated through the market, service industry, and automotive jobs in Detroit rather than international connectivity. Travel to and from services and neighbors create networks of travel described as activity space (Boal 1969). Boal’s research of segregated housing in Belfast indicated that these travel patterns could also be used as evidence to indicate community boundaries (1969). The large variety of publications (newspapers) also impacts interpersonal network compositions and in-groupness (Breton 1964; Abraham 1974).
It is also possible to see what Stiffler (2014) describes as self-Orientalism in the naming of markets and restaurants. Restaurants called Ali Baba’s, Sinbad’s and most especially Aladdin’s, are very common as Arab restaurateurs actively market the exotic nature of their foods to attract outside customers (Stiffler 2014). While these stereotypes are usually unfavorable to Arabs, they can also be exploited for name recognition. This taps into Orientalist expectations that existed in the country before the arrival of Arab restaurants. Cedarland, in Figure 6.14, evokes the Cedars of Lebanon which is significant to that nation’s identity. The application of Cedar may be a less-obvious use of orientalist styling, possibly aimed more towards in-group members. If this is an example of self-orientalism as described by Stiffler (2014), it is likely not aimed at outsiders who may not know the significance of the cedar trees. Orientalism is also evident in markets that use popular fiction or history, such as Sinbad’s in Figure 6.15, to advertise their ethnic character. “Sinbad” is one of the monikers specifically cited by Stiffler as a “self-orientalist” name for such a place (2014). Some stores aim for a more religious connotation, by naming themselves after religious symbols and using Islamic iconography, such as in Figure 6.13. The use of religious and fictional naming conventions is used to add an authentic impression of a market’s cultural offerings and to attract customers looking for that type of product. The fact that their goods are advertised both in English as well as Arabic underscores the truth that these businesses are catering to visiting tourists as well as members of the Arab community; their target market goes beyond Arab community members.
Figure 6.11 - The Cedars of Lebanon are invoked in the name of this restaurant, and are also featured on the Lebanese national flag. Photograph by author.

Figure 6.12 - A market plaza in Dearborn. Photograph by author.
It is also somewhat possible to witness the success of businesses over time, through observation of the landscape. Photographs from before and after certain changes can be particularly informative, as they can mark the success of specific projects or efforts, in the case of Figure 6.14 and 6.15 which show visual evidence of the success of an individual business. In this case, I have followed the example of Krase (2002) to treat my observations and photographs qualitatively as I have done my interviews and observations of participants. When I began my research, Masri Sweets occupied an older building on Schaefer Rd. in northeast Dearborn less than a mile from its new location, also on Schaefer Rd.
One aspect of sensory geography that is receiving newfound attention is the geography of smell (Hoover 2008; McLean 2014). In addition to the smells made apparent by the various types
of cuisine in the Dearborn neighborhood, hookah smoke is a commonly encountered scent that is also a prominent aspect of Arab culture. Hookah is also referred to as *argileh* in Arabic (Stiffler 2011). The proliferation of hookah bars and hookah supply shops is relatively recent and was mentioned by several of my respondents in both a positive and negative manner, and is featured in some exhibits at the AANM (2013), as seen in Figure 6.16.

Figure 6.16- Hookah display at the Arab American National Museum as part of an Arab material culture exhibit (AANM 2013). Photograph by author.

Marco was the first respondent to emphasize hookah smoking and told me to ask other interviewees about it. Marco asked me if I had yet gone to Hookah bars and or asked people about Hookah. He was very enthusiastic that I should start asking people about that, he claims it is something that all Arabs and other (Chaldean, Palestinian, other “non-Arabs” from Arab countries), and non-middle eastern groups do, and that outsiders enjoy it. He says many strict religious followers will pass, but that it is also something culturally Arab that many otherwise
devout people would use. Marco acknowledges the negative health effects of hookah, but also mentions his grandfather is in his 90s and smokes hookah “all the time.” I was able to follow up with most of my previous respondents to get their opinion on hookah use and ask them whether or not they do smoke or have smoked hookah. I followed up with the social fraternity, and they all had used Hookah (including many white and African American non-interviewees from that fraternity). Several non-ethnic (white and black) members of the social fraternity also smoke hookah regularly, something that brings the groups together to experience Arab culture. Steven emphasized the role of hookah in regards to non-devout Arab Muslims, who say it is a popular way to practice tradition culture beyond the religious context, and that even Americanized Arabs often smoke hookah to be in touch with their Arab culture. Edouard smokes hookah, with many of his Arab and non-Arab friends. James smokes hookah and has one in his home.

The religious group had for the most part not used hookah, citing first the number of cigarette equivalent in Hookah smoke, and then the Muslim prescriptions against self-contamination. Henry does not smoke hookah, nor do any of his prayer group currently and furthermore lectured me on the unhealthy nature of hookah smoke and Islam’s policy against such harmful substances. Zineb said he had at one point drank alcohol and smoked hookah but only very briefly and stressed that not doing so was part of the struggle to follow Islam in all parts of one's life properly. Barry and Van were both also more lenient in regards to smoking hookah, which they have done but less regularly than the other Arabs and less-devout Muslims I spoke with. Kevin is one of the secular Arab Muslims I spoke with who does not smoke hookah but knows many people who do. Kevin gave me a photo from his phone that he said I could use. It depicts a hookah buckled in the back seat of a taxi cab in a manner that allows for the driver to smoke hookah, Figure 6.17.
Danielle, Hanna, and Helena do not smoke Hookah, making it seem less common among Arab and Middle Eastern females opposed to males. I have engaged fewer females in total, so this is perhaps a coincidence based on my observation of many female patrons smoking in the hookah bars and lounges including the one I feature based on my interviews with their staff.

The hookah lounge staff was very informative about their customers, as well as representing members of the Arab American community who are employed in the market district. The staff indicated that hookah was very popular with Arabs of all ages but that college-aged males made up the bulk of their customers. They said they were pretty strict in ID, making sure customers were 18, but also indicated that younger customers would often accompany older family members and that if they were parents, aunts, uncles, or grandparents, they would be less inclined to turn away younger customers. One female server at the hookah lounge was a student.
at Wayne State and indicated that many students from Wayne State and UMD would frequent their lounge. They also serve Arabic food and play both Arab and American popular music in the lounge. Another female employee said she was somewhat bothered by the hookah smoke and said it was very irritating when the place was very busy, and the smoke was thick in the air, one of the coworkers agreed that the smoke could get to her after a long shift in the environment. The manager of the hookah lounge said it was busy every night and that in addition to the hookah packages they sold many fruit smoothies, in lieu of alcohol which is not served, and a lot of food items. The hookah lounge is especially busy on weekend nights in addition to weekday evenings. The employees all indicated that hookah lounges and retail hookah supply stores were opening all over town and becoming increasingly popular and that many of their customers had a hookah/shisha apparatus in their homes but would prefer the public lounges to mix with other people and whatnot. It is difficult to overstate how popular hookah is for my respondents, where even those who did not smoke acknowledged what a big deal hookah is to the community. Several interview respondents also mentioned the negative health effects in addition to the employees I met with, of all the employees in the hookah lounge only the manager said he was unconcerned with second-hand smoke.
I also found the Arab presence in Dearborn evident in the non-Arab businesses that cater to Arab and Muslim tastes. Even Chinese restaurants and video arcades will offer halal meat as seen in Figure 6.19 and 6.20. Service-oriented companies also advertise their products in Arabic signage, and the malls post their rules in Arabic as well (see Figure 6.21)
Figure 6.19- Chinese restaurant in Dearborn advertising “We’ve got Halal.” Photograph by author.

Figure 6.20- Comcast store in Dearborn with Arabic script on the door. Photograph by author.
Northeast Dearborn has become both the center of Arab American market commerce as well as an area of cultural tourism for non-Arab visitors to the area. Non-Arab visitors would presumably be attracted to easily accessible cultural shops offering books, restaurants, and groceries, as are non-Chinese shoppers in Chinatown markets (Pang and Rath 2007). It makes sense because food is a cultural feature that is appreciated and helps to overcome cultural differences (Valle and Torres 2000; Diner 2001; Pang and Rath 2007). Cultural tourism is initiated by the availability and accessibility of ethnic institutions such as the AANM, mosques, community center, and ethnic community festivals (Lalich 2003; Pang and Rath 2007). Immigrant entrepreneurs and their businesses are central to this development in the cultural tourism sector (Kunz 2005). The development of Dearborn as a cultural tourism hotspot is a byproduct of a vibrant ethnic community that is centered on the northeast market district and Warren Avenue. It does not suddenly begin or end, which would be indicative of planning efforts.
(Pang and Rath 2007), but it gradually fades into the surrounding suburbs where Arab businesses are still apparent on the landscape but in less concentration. The community has developed in situ with corporate businesses and other enterprises in the same market area as the Arab cultural district. Dearborn Heights, Livonia, And Hamtramck can be considered extension communities that have developed from populations that initially settled in Dearborn, and they remain socially connected to the Dearborn community in some respects. Though their populations and neighborhoods are now distinct from Dearborn, their communities remain part of the Dearborn network, and there are social, cultural, and economic ties between these communities. They also share some social contexts in regards to the incorporation of Islam in their neighborhoods, while the development of mosques in other neighborhoods, notably Sterling Heights, is subject to opposition.

6.4 Community Organizations

Ethnic communities build organizations for the social welfare and community development of its member citizens (Rignall 1997; Liu and Geron 2008). The cost of investment in human landscapes, the time and effort committed to altering homes, roads, towns, and other ordinary landscapes, represents a significant level of sacrifice a community makes to create a neighborhood, creating the corollary of cultural change (Lewis 1979). These changes will not occur unless a community is very motivated or under significant pressure to alter the landscape (Lewis 1979). Millions of dollars have been invested in the creation of Arab American landscapes in Dearborn and the surrounding suburbs of Detroit. These landscapes represent a large capital investment predicated by the financial viability of the Arab American communities and offer places and space for the practice, maintenance, and creation of Arab traditions. When
these landscapes are significantly different from other parts of the same country, or region, or city, it is likely that there will also be a significant difference in culture between those same places (Lewis 1979). By noting the contrasting cultural landscapes in and around Dearborn, we are also gauging the cultural contrasts between Dearborn and its fellow suburban communities in the United States.

The Arab American National Museum was founded by and financially supported by ACCESS and has served to legitimize Dearborn as a center of Arab American activity. The museum itself is built in an Arab style, with domed roofs and a heavy addition of interior design inspired by Middle Eastern architecture including enormous mosaic installations. The museum is located immediately across from the Dearborn city hall and occupies a central location in the area that has been visibly transformed by the Arab American culture in the neighborhood. The sign on the facade is a tile mosaic, and the dome is unadorned by religious symbols, providing an architectural symbol relevant to all Arabs rather than any religion or denomination (see Figure 6.2). Dearborn is the preeminent Arab enclave in the United States but, in many ways, it is in the shadow of a neighborhood all but disappeared. Lewis (1979) emphasizes the investment that goes into altering landscapes and, unlike businesses that generate their own funds; the AANM was created with $15 million dollars invested by ACCESS and its corporate donors to establish its mark upon the landscape. The museum library and archive (Figure 6.23) attracts visitors, and it holds the most relevant archives concerning Arab Americans, including copious amounts of unpublished research that involved Arabs in Dearborn, the United States, and the nations where many Arab Americans immigrated from. They provided me with office space and resources, several interview subjects, and a location where to meet and speak with individuals I was following up with from previous meetings. ACCESS provides many services beyond
administering the Arab American National Museum and educational programs, giving it a great deal of influence within the Arab community and other communities who use the Dearborn area services provided under ACCESS programs (Figure 6.24). National fraternal and social organizations also have offices in the Dearborn neighborhood (Figure 6.25).

Figure 6.22- Arab American National Museum from the back lot. Photograph by author.
Figure 6.23- The Arab American National Museum’s Library and Resource Center. Photograph by author.

Figure 6.24- ACCESS provides numerous social services to the local community. Photograph by author.
Symbols and visual cues are a key element to understanding the meanings embedded in landscapes (Lewis 1979; Meinig 1979; Rose 1992). Mental images translate to us the nature of a landscape’s meaning. Important aspects of these landscapes are sacred or symbolic landscapes that give us an idea of the character of the people who live in these places and have built these landscapes. The linear landscape of the main street and market district is central to the idea of an American town or village (Meinig 1979). It is a center of commerce, of real and sensible individuals who are playing by society’s rules. It is also an idealized view of the landscape, where our expectations are developed based on the visual cues provided (Meinig 1979). The use of automobiles along with garages, lawns, and a certain type of building indicate that we are...
witnessing an American suburban landscape, while the mosques, Arab-styled churches, and sacred spaces adorned with Arabic script advertise the ethnic nature of the Dearborn community (Meinig 1979; Katarsky 1980; Abraham Howell and Shryock 2011).

The social lives of Arab Americans and their cultural preferences have a strong impact on the places they have created. Their sacred spaces have an immense amount of importance that is variable based on elements of gender, age, and level of experience and commitment to Arab cultural traditions. This reflects the fact that any consideration of human geography will be contingent on the perspectives of many individuals within groups and that no universal agreement on meaning can be established. This would give credence to Foucault’s (1971) general apprehension to any universal truth behind the understanding of any phenomena, opposed to a discursive consideration of these elements and processes. In addition to the 3 or 4 major mosques in and near Dearborn, there are many small storefront mosques in retail districts and converted homes used by large family networks to pray. New mosques are still needed for the growing communities, and some neighborhoods unused to such architecture have resisted calls for the establishment of new mosques in their area. The large Mosque on Ford Rd, The Islamic Center of America, is a Shia mosque and school (Figure 6.26). The Islamic Center was built to accommodate the growing Syrian-Lebanese population of Dearborn most of who are Shia. This iconic feature on the landscape is not accessible from Dearborn by walking and is used by wealthy Arabs who drive to worship or study at the center. These places have been created to display cultural preferences secondarily to their primary purpose of practicing Arab culture. ACCESS, on the other hand, has been built primarily to create and maintain greater economic and social opportunities to members of the Arab groups in Detroit as well as other, non-Arab individuals who live in the Dearborn area.
The investment in cultural landscapes in Dearborn is obvious when seeing the Arab American National Museum ($15 million) and the Islamic Center of America ($16 million – See Figure 6.26), which are perhaps the two most significant monuments to Arab culture in the Detroit Metropolitan area. Other mosques are apparent on the landscape as well, some more obvious (Figure 6.27) than others (Figure 6.28). The Islamic Center of Hamtramck is typical of the boutique-style mosque common in the Detroit area communities, built within the commercial district and only identifiable by its signage. Hamtramck is the first Muslim-majority city in the United States and is socially connected to Dearborn by the many residents and religious organizations that relocated to Hamtramck from Dearborn’s South End, as well as the ongoing relationships between the Hamtramck and Dearborn communities (Bailey 2015). Christian churches are often less obvious still, with only Arabic script to indicate the nationality of their congregants (Figure 6.29 and 6.30).
Figure 6.26- The Islamic Center of America. Photograph by author.

Figure 6.27- Masjid al-Furqan, the Quran Institute of America mosque and religious school. Photograph by author.
Figure 6.28- The Islamic Center of Hamtramck. Photograph by author.

Figure 6.29- The Mother of the Savior Lutheran Church in Dearborn. Photograph by author.
6.6 Neighborhood and Residential Modifications

The diverse variety of housing options in Dearborn, which attracted the initial Arab immigrants to the area, have given the Syrian-Lebanese community a reason to stay and keep filling the area with Arab families as more immigrants arrive and some non-Arabs exit the neighborhoods. As families become more established or even wealthy, you can see massive rehabilitation to the single-family homes which now feature architectural aspects that are favored by Arab owners. Scott stated that Arabs do not move out of Dearborn, but remain in the area if at all possible. Italian-American neighborhoods could be recognized in part by the alteration of front-porches with wrought-iron accents and other small elements that stylistically announced their presence (Agocs 1975; Katarsky 1980). Arab Americans have adopted large arching doorways up to 2-stories in height on the façades of their homes, requiring custom-made
elements by contractors as seen for example in Figures 6.31, 6.32, and 6.33. Figure 6.34 illustrates the same convention applied to a newly constructed home as opposed the other homes which are remodeled from previous styles. Scott confirmed my assumption that this was the preferred remodeling style of Arab Americans when they have established enough financial resources to afford such contracting. Arab American residents especially prefer the doorway arch during home remodeling and new construction.

This leads into Lewis’s axiom of common things where suburban housing styles, church architecture, garages, shopping centers, and other common market features reflect the thinking and behavior of “ordinary Americans” (Lewis 1979, p.5). We can observe culture in every seemingly ordinary landscape if we have the tools in mind and the idea to look. The ethnic design of homes is also a possible clue to landscape’s ethnic composition and the investment it takes to alter those houses (McGovern and Frazier 2015). As individuals increase their wealth, they usually remain in Dearborn. In many cases, several homes are in simultaneous redevelopment by the same contractors for an Arab family that collectively owns the handful of homes that are under construction. Religious holidays also give opportunities for temporary decorations that advertise the ethnic and cultural traditions of area residents (see Figure 6.35). Combined with the integrated pattern of housing and length of residence, one must keep in mind the lack of environmental problems faced by the community. There has been no major urban renewal or recent industrialization in the local area. Compared to the South End, there have been few problems associated with urban crime, inadequate housing, and lack of room to expand or redevelop (Katarsky 1980). The amount of residential redevelopment, infill, and the opposition to mosques established north of 10 Mile Rd., indicate that the community is quite saturated and
possibly needs to expand or continue to shunt population to new communities in satellite urban areas.

Figure 6.31- Arab-owned home with the characteristic threshold arch with the original style of home included in the photograph. Photograph by author.
Figure 6.32- Another home remodeling example. Photograph by author.
Figure 6.33- Another home remodeling example. Photograph by author.

Figure 6.34- An example of new construction with the same features preferred by Arab Americans. Photograph by author.
6.7 The University of Michigan Dearborn

The University of Michigan at Dearborn has provided reflection rooms and foot baths for the use of their students, which the prayer group proudly showed off to me (See Figure 6.36, 6.37 and 6.38). Meditation and reflection rooms service the needs of Muslim students at UMD, as well as the two footbaths the university has installed in the library and student center for pre-prayer foot cleansing. The University provides many accommodations for student groups, which includes this facility, a contemplation room, and another library foot bath for the use of Muslim students. My respondents and the University publications stated this was because of issues with Muslim students using bathroom sinks for pre-prayer ablutions before the installation of the foot bath. The Reflection Room at UMD serves as the prayer location for Muslims students in the University Center. It is nondescript and not limited to any specific group for use, but my respondents stated Muslim students mostly use it for prayer.
In addition to these facilities, it is also clear through observing the school’s advertisements that the university wishes to embrace its Arab and Muslim student bodies by incorporating them into their displays (Figure 6.39). The University of Michigan Dearborn wants to welcome their Arab, Muslim, and other Middle Eastern students in a way that puts them at ease without singling them out. From the responses I have heard from students, it has been effective. Several installations and marketing materials made it clear that the University of Michigan Dearborn was celebrating and embracing its Arab student population, creating a space where Arab American students felt welcome and incorporated into the university’s culture.

Figure 6.36- This foot bath was installed to accommodate Muslim worshippers who needed to bathe their feet before prayer. Photograph by author.
Figure 6.37- The Reflection Room at UMD. Photograph by author.

Figure 6.38- Clothing and prayer mats inside the reflection room for the use of students who may not wish to cart a prayer rug with them on campus. Photograph by author.
6.8 Applying GIS to Visualize the Community with a birds-eye view

The final visual aspect I focus on is the development of maps based on extant literature and my interview responses. The majority of my visual analysis has focused on the ground-level observations of landscapes in Dearborn, but by plotting locations on a map, it is possible to develop a broader view of the neighborhood features. GIS maps offered both an index of the significant features I encountered as well as a visual output of these features that I have included here. My first use of GIS for this dissertation was to digitize several neighborhood maps sketched by Schopmeyer (2000; 2011). I used this experience to familiarize myself with the various groups in the area and provided printed versions of the maps for my interview subjects to consider when we met (See Figure 6.40 and 6.41). These maps also served as the basis for Figure 1 in Chapter 1. It is clear to see the expansion and development of the changes from 1983 to the late 2000s when comparing it against the 1983 map.

My respondents discussed the communities they were familiar with and indicate where they had been and what meaning any of the areas had for them. Northeast Dearborn is a community that once was split between the South End and northeast Dearborn, where gradual
relocation almost exclusively to the northeast and the deterioration of the Lebanese-Syrian Arab presence in the South End. The South End area has subsequently been used by Iraqi and Yemeni immigrants as a foothold community, but those routes into Dearborn’s community are based on networks unavailable to Iraqis and Yemenis but exclusive to the Syrian/Lebanese community which hailed from a select few border villages in southern Lebanon. Palestinians, many who may have been in that same region of Lebanon, have a somewhat more intimate connection with the Lebanese community, though they have collected in their own suburban community in Livonia (Schopmeyer 2011).
The communities described by Schopmeyer (2011), illustrated in Figure 6.45, reflect the *transplant community* model in regards to the suburban settlements of Palestinians, Chaldeans, and other Arab Christians in the far-flung suburbs of Detroit’s surrounding counties, while they all began more or less within the same cluster of neighborhoods in western Detroit that has become known as the Lebanese/Syrian stronghold, with the most notable Shia population outside the Middle East (Abraham, Howell, and Shryock 2011). Dearborn itself could be conceived as
the transplant of villages from South Lebanon into new communities in the United States, a wholesale transplant of that community and its associated networks. Northeast Dearborn could also be considered a transplant of the community from the South End. *Transplanted communities* exhibit a clustering and segregation along with a well-defined territory (Agocs 1977). They are isolated from the area of initial settlement, geographically as well as socially (networks, markets, houses of worship). These communities seem very important because they operate as satellite groups to some of their ethnic enclave brethren who do live in an urban village or other obviously ethnic community space. This community could be more or less connected to various bounded communities that do have social ties to the outside ethnic group, or they may provide familiar products, product, and other markets that appeal to them based on broader regional tastes. This is where Dearborn becomes placed in this study, that though it does provide a place for many groups to shop and socialize in a familiar setting, it does not inspire feelings of community among all groups, many of whom openly state that Dearborn is for the Lebanese/Syrians, Shia and Christian especially and to a lesser extent Sunni Syrian/Lebanese.

Dearborn contains two distinct neighborhoods that host Arab communities, and it is difficult to try to apply just one of Agocs’ (1977) label to the Dearborn Arab community. We could say Warren Avenue’s market district is central because it has some tenure and other services and residential areas have accreted onto it over time. The South End has traditionally served as a *recent immigrant reception area*, where from Arabs have moved to northeast Dearborn or other suburbs that host enclaves of their national group (Agocs 1977; Katarsky 1980; Schopmeyer 2000; 2011). The abandonment or decay of an ethnic community may lead to the *residual community* designation and could apply to the South End communities if we consider the Lebanese/Syrian community separate from the Yemeni and Iraqi groups now.
settling in the South End and Hamtramck (Agocs 1977; Schopmeyer 2011). The urban village has been the designation I feel most accurately describes the Dearborn community. It is highly clustered like the immigrant reception area, but it does not have a great many recent arrivals as of this study. There is also a strong generational mix, in part because this community has endured for a long period of time and has maintained a cultural connection between the people and the area.

The Northeast Dearborn community itself is made up of a population sourced from villages in southern Lebanon, including some Palestinians who had immigrated there prior (Schopmeyer 2000). They describe the American Moslem Society building as not having a denomination for many years that Shia and Sunni both used the space. This was discussed on social media in direct reference to an image of the mosque at various years during its operation. The mosque grew along with the community and is currently led by a Sunni Imam. Immigration from Lebanon to the South End has been exceeded by immigration to the northeast, while Iraqi and Yemeni immigrants occupy the South End community vacated by the Lebanese (Katarsky 1980; Schopmeyer 2011). This is illustrated in the map images through the expansion of the Lebanese settlement region and the concentration of the Muslim (Yemeni, Lebanese, Iraqi, and other Muslims) portion highlighted in solid green shading within the broader Lebanese boundaries but centered in the area of the South End. Schopmeyer’s (2011) description of Warren Avenue as the central route through the main Arab market district is reinforced by the mapping of observed stores and my interview responses. Figure 6.42 highlights the study area over a Google base-map of the Dearborn area, where Warren serves as the major East-West route and Schaefer the major North-South cross street. I also used the basic Google Maps symbols to
identify each business or service type; you can see the businesses along Warren Ave in 2016 in Figure 6.43 and those marked by Katarsky in 1980 in Figure 6.44.

Figure 6.42- Map of downtown Dearborn with study area highlighted within the shaded box.

Figure 6.43- Businesses along Warren Ave. in Dearborn 2016, showing the increase in Arab markets over Katarsky’s observations in 1980 featured in Figure 6.44. This map was generated by plotting locations mentioned in interviews as well as those observed by the author on the landscape.
As mentioned before, my respondent Marco quickly amended his statement, about Dearborn exclusively catering to the Lebanese, to reflect that many people shop the market in Dearborn but that Lebanese live there and run the town. He also indicated that he thought the museum and ACCESS were really Lebanese-focused organizations, but that his father had taken computer classes at an ACCESS facility. Along with Mike, Marco helped me build the narrative with respondents about educational facilities available to Arab Americans in the Detroit area.

Hannah also opined on this at length. Dearborn’s market district on Warren Avenue is frequented by Arabs, Middle Easterners, and others from the entire metro region. South End markets have been shuttered, or their customer base shifted as the majority of outlets moved to the northeast.

Ethnic enclaves serve as gathering places for cultural events, employment opportunities, and house social service organizations and religious denominations that aim to serve their ethnic community. These economies also evolve, as groups become assimilated into more aspects of American society and diversify their types of employment. The number of churches, welfare organizations, newspapers, periodicals, and market options lead to a level of institutional completeness (Breton 1964; Abraham 1974). This also enables ethnic communities to attract and maintain group members, based on the attractive array of features that cater to Arab tastes (Abraham 1974). The next line of inquiry I followed was to explore the community perception of
the alterations on the landscape and the possible identities predicated by an Arab American neighborhood in suburban Metropolitan Detroit.

6.9 Arab cultural landscapes in Dearborn

The impact of Arab American organizations is readily apparent in the architecture, signage, and offerings in the market district. Arab cultural influences are also visible in the building of homes and houses of worship, as well as other community buildings. These locations serve as key places for the practice and maintenance of ethnic identities across generational lines (Smith 2005). The association with specific sects or the broader community also engages in the maintenance of boundaries based on interactive networks and ongoing in-group negotiation (Barth 1998). These landscapes offer locations where the community can practice ethnicity and that they can actively recreate in their vision of what the neighborhood could or should reflect.

Lewis’ (1979) axioms and Carl Sauer’s (1925) morphology remind us that these alterations are a current snapshot of development which required large investments of capital to achieve. By comparing archival maps and photographs, we can see the developments and improvements the community has produced. Figure 7.1, at the very beginning of the next chapter, reflects the redevelopment of community spaces and the feelings it brings up in members of the community. After visualizing the community space and the neighborhood of Dearborn, I had to find out how the community members perceived these changes in positive, negative, or other terms.
CHAPTER 7 – PERCEPTION OF COMMUNITY CHANGE

7.1 Perception of Cultural Landscapes within the Community

My research has confirmed that the mentality towards citizenship, religion, and global geopolitics is extremely contingent on religious and citizenship factors and that American citizens, especially Shia and Christian Arabs, are much more secular and market-oriented than more recent arrivals, especially recent Sunni immigrants who are more often devoutly Muslim and less dedicated to what could be called American ideals. The social distance between Shia and Sunni communities in the United States is growing, even in Dearborn where separate facilities and community organizations have been developed for each group with an erosion of shared spaces. This runs directly counter to the efforts of ACCESS and its Arab American National Museum which seeks to create narratives of Arab unity across religious, socio-economic, and national divides. There are also disagreements within the community as to how much of a divide exists and has existed between Sunni and Shia Muslims. Figure 7.1 shows the American Moslem Society in 1957 at the top, 1979 in the middle and the bottom in 2016. This was posted to the Dearborn Area Community Members Facebook page, and the conversation turned to the historic denomination of its Madhab, or school of thought taught there. The original comment asks if it were a Sunni or Shia mosque, many respondents replied that they had not even heard of such a split until they were adults and that the mosque serves all Muslims.
The community is very proud to have its own place, and has positive feelings about their neighborhood but is also conscious of the fact that their neighborhood and its apparent Arabness have also made their community a visible target for various types of oppositional sentiments and actions (Howell 2011). Mosques have been defaced, festivals have been protested, and online social media is highly subject to suggestions of radicalism and terrorist accusations towards the Arab Americans in the Detroit area. Arab Americans take to their Facebook pages and groups to publish their reactions to these accusations and create discussions that denounce their detractors and defend their community.
In the Dearborn Neighborhood, people do not leave, and it is “only for the Lebanese,” according to my participant named Marco. According to Scott, locals in Dearborn do not travel much outside of the community and very rarely relocate once they have settled. Scott named several Yemeni and Lebanese areas to explore and framed the northeast Dearborn community in contrast to the South End, stating that Dearborn residents rarely if ever leave their home neighborhood. The students at the University of Michigan, Dearborn, were also very disconnected from the Arab cultural district on Warren Avenue.

The presence of ACCESS and the Arab American National Museum (AANM) generate tourism from outside Arab groups but have failed to ignite any sentimentality among those other groups for the neighborhood of Dearborn itself. At the same time, this initial group from Bent Jubail (Katarsky 1980) should be credited with the generation of this space in and around Dearborn that has created positive attitudes towards Arab and Islamic culture, mentioned by many of my interview subjects as a reason they chose to relocate to Dearborn or attend the University of Michigan-Dearborn (UMD). The comfort level described was the reason Hanna chose to attend the UMD over the University of Eastern Michigan because of greater diversity and acceptance of Middle Eastern culture in Dearborn over Ypsilanti. Though Hanna is Pakistani, she cited the general acceptance of her hijab, and other cultural comforts of food, prayer groups, and student organizations focused on her desired college experience. The familiarity brought by these groups should not lead to the assumption that they are all banding together in some way, according to my interview responses.

Arab Americans have had a complicated relationship with their host society and each other in the aftermath of 9/11 and the war on terror (Howell and Shryock 2011). Many Americans clamored for Arab Americans in Detroit to crack down on radicalism in their
communities after the events of the 9/11 attacks, while Arab Americans were largely confused at the suspicion towards them and the lack of understanding of Arab American identities (Shryock, Abraham, and Howell 2011). The majority of Arabs in greater Detroit are Christian, and the minority Muslim communities are dominated by the Shia sect (Katarsky 1980; Schopmeyer 2000; 2011). This status leaves them outside the Sunni-dominated groups most commonly associated with terrorist acts in the 21st century, namely Al Qaeda and the Islamic State of Iraq and The Levant, better known by the acronym ISIS/ISIL and referred in Arabic Daesh. Furthermore, the 9/11 attackers, and Al Qaeda in general were predominantly Saudi nationals, while Dearborn’s core Arab group is from Lebanon with additional citizens from Iraq, Palestine, and Yemen (Shryock, Abraham, and Howell 2011). Chaldeans (Iraqis) and Maronites (Lebanese) have also further distanced themselves from their Arabophone fellows, as their Christian faith and distinct cultures going back to their history in their Arab countries. The 9/11 attackers were also foreign nationals, while 80% of Arabs in Detroit are naturalized or natural born citizens of the United States (Abraham, Howell, and Shryock 2011).

Some Arabs subgroups, notably the quasi-Arab Chaldean community and other Christian Arab groups, have sought to distance themselves both socially and spatially from the Dearborn neighborhood and community, returning us to Agocs’ (1977) consideration of community as a group of interrelated human relationships and neighborhood as a physical built environment with boundaries. Several Arab groups in the Detroit suburbs can selectively participate as part of the Dearborn community and avail themselves of the neighborhood and community services while maintaining a distance from the neighborhood and community when it suits them. Islam has been a divisive element both within the Arab American communities as with Arab Americans and the surrounding society. Mosques are arguably the most visibly distinct element of the Muslim Arab
community, and they are difficult to establish in new areas due to protests and other resistance from Arab Christians, Chaldeans, and non-Arab residents of the neighborhoods where they are proposed.

Chaldean Christians, as well as other non-Muslims, have resisted the establishment of mosques in their neighborhoods in suburban Detroit. While these groups understand that they are lumped together as one by outsiders, there are still strong feelings of ambivalence towards various subgroups. Indian Sikhs have also been lumped together with Arabs and Muslims in the minds of many mainstream Americans. These assumptions are even more obvious when engaging those highly opposed to immigration, ethnic integration, or cultural pluralism in general. In addition to tension between Arab groups, or from the Chaldeans towards Muslim Arabs from Dearborn, there are outside agitators who broadcast their anti-Arab sentiments using Dearborn as a symbolic target (Howell 2011). Vitriolic rants and hateful labels dominate website traffic on sites established to vilify Muslims in general, often focusing on Arab American and Muslim citizens.

7. 2 Social Media

Internet technology is now used for much more than long-distance communication, but for ongoing interactions in our environment and communication with people at all distance scales. Online places, cyberspaces and other virtual locations are not completely analogous to the geographic methods designed for considering real landscapes. That does not mean to say it is impossible to consider virtual places in similar ways to real landscapes, especially in regards to lurking and observing, but also that new approaches and possibilities become available (Dodge
The line between space and online space has been blurred, communication from one spills to the other, and both are part of people’s daily lives.

Geographers have been more interested in online geographies since the 1990s when the world wide web began to proliferate into many households, but the concept of cyberspace dates back to the development of the Arpanet and internet platforms in the 1970s and 1980s (Batty 1997; Batty and Barr 1994; Kitchin 1998). It is impossible to fully engage with communities in contemporary research without acknowledging the importance of virtual spaces, online communities, and social media. In many cases, they choose to highlight the positive aspects of their opinions concerning Dearborn’s makeup, what I call celebrating the community.

A lot of time spent on the Facebook community page is building up the community esteem. They announce officials for public office, new police officers, and fire personnel, as well as any other community events that Arabs may be interested in. The online Dearborn community assisted me on one specific occasion where I had observed a mosque but could not retrace my steps and find it again. I looked through google maps and other websites, searching the internet for this prominent mosque I somehow had lost. I found it by posting a photo to the community page, and I received some amazing feedback, including the location of the mosque and school but also some insight into its history, culminating with a comment “It used to be an old church/catholic school that became a mosque/Muslim school once the demographics of the neighborhood had changed from working class European immigrants to Muslim immigrants (See Figure 7.2). It's like Detroit's own Hagia Sofia!”
The Dearborn Arab community is socially isolated from the other Arab groups and the Chaldeans living in the surrounding suburbs. Dearborn has supplied a familiar setting for immigrants to process through, especially in the South End. The northeast Dearborn community has been comprised of a transplanted group from a few villages in southern Lebanon and augmented by chain migration from the same region (Katarsky 1980; Schopmeyer 2000). The diverse suburbs in metropolitan Detroit, and even the greater Midwest, find in Dearborn a vibrant market district filled with their favorite cultural goods, food products, clothing, hookah supplies, and home furnishings. They also find a community where traditional Middle Eastern or Muslim dress does not stand out, mentioned by several non-Arabs as reasons for going to the University of Michigan at Dearborn over other schools where diversity is based on black/white dichotomy rather than inclusive of Arabs as another group in between or outside of our usual dynamic.
7.3 The Chaldean Community

Chaldeans have enjoyed a level of privilege provided by their Christianity and high socio-economic status; they are not interested in being more closely associated with the Arabs and Muslims from Dearborn. They may avail themselves of the shipping district, but Chaldeans are not moving to Dearborn, and they do not want Arabs moving to Farmington Hills or Bloomfield Heights. Chaldean Christians, as well as other non-Muslims, have resisted the establishment of mosques in their neighborhoods in suburban Detroit. While these groups understand that they are lumped together as one by outsiders, there are still strong feelings of ambivalence towards various subgroups. Indian Sikhs have also been lumped together with Arab and Muslims in the minds of many mainstream Americans. These assumptions are even more obvious when engaging those highly opposed to immigration, ethnic integration, or cultural pluralism in general.

Chaldeans, and other Christians have distanced themselves from Muslim Arabs because of what I believe is the old legal precedent of Muslims being less white (Beydoun 2013). The idea that Arabs and Muslims were popularly perceived as less white or less American was a common refrain among my respondents. Losing their whiteness by association is a risk Chaldeans are not willing to take, and they do not wish to share their enclave community with Arab groups, especially Muslims. In one specific case a movement towards building a mosque in Sterling Heights, MI, about fifteen miles north of Dearborn, featured in Figure 7.3, has received bitter opposition by the Chaldean community of Sterling Heights and the local politicians who represent them (Warikoo 2015). Dearborn services are clustered on the map in Figure 7.3, with the proposed mosque further north near Sterling Heights. This proposed mosque is approximately 15 miles from the Dearborn market district and has driven a wedge between the...
Muslim groups moving from Dearborn, Hamtramck, and Detroit northward into what the Chaldean’s consider their territory. This has spurred protests by Chaldeans against the mosque location and counter-protests by Muslim groups who feel they are being discriminated against in their efforts to build a house of worship on legally acquired space in Sterling Heights. The screenshot of Sterling Heights’ mayor’s Facebook post (Figure 7.4) illustrates the collective Chaldean opposition to the establishment of a mosque in their community of Sterling Heights. It is approximately 15 miles from the Dearborn community, and they actively resist the expansion of the Muslim Arab community into what they consider their territory.

Figure 7.3- Proposed mosque in Sterling Heights illustrated apart from the Dearborn market area and associated facilities.
7.4 Concerns over Safety and Security

Recent migrations to Arab Detroit have been most often found in association with conflict. The conflict between Israel and the Palestinians accelerated Arab population growth in Dearborn. One major source village of Lebanese residents, Bent Jubail, is located just north of the border with Israel. Israeli attempts to wipe out PLO camps have destroyed much of Bent Jubail. As of 1980 there were very few young people left in Bent Jubail at all, leaving it a so-called *ghost village* (Foerster 1929; Katarsky 1980, p.42) Bent Jubail and other border towns such as Tebnine in southern Lebanon are the primary source community of the Arabs in

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Figure 7.4- Facebook capture underscoring Chaldean opposition to Muslim facilities.
Dearborn (Aswad 1974; Katarsky 1980). Nearly all of the 1970s arrivals from Bent Jubal cited the conflict as their primary reason for leaving Lebanon. My respondent Helena mentioned it as her motivation to leave Lebanon for Kuwait, and Operation Desert Storm as her reason for leaving Kuwait for the United States where her brothers had established businesses. Van also expressed his fear of remaining in Yemen, though he was also fearful of moving to the United States and engaging a new culture. Residents are also wary of walking on the streets and concerned for the security of their homes and businesses. Though the types of fear is different, the United States is not necessarily presumed to be “safer” and Arab Americans are often very cautious in public settings.

Geopolitical conflict can create negative attitudes toward perceived enemy groups and can directly predicate prejudice against unwanted immigrants, including state-based discrimination within immigration policy (Kaplan and Holloway 2001; Shryock, Abraham, and Howell 2011; Youmans 2011). The Arab community has come under scrutiny by federal and local law enforcement, as well as private citizens who are suspicious of both Arab Americans and their organizations (Youmans 2011). This has caused a negative aspect to the seemingly positive growth and proliferation of the neighborhood and community in and around Dearborn (Howell 2011). It is more obvious to the casual observer, and therefore more likely to be targeted for opposition and other attacks both literal and figurative. Non-Arabs, including Chaldeans, Sikhs, and other middle Easterners, also find themselves under scrutiny and seek out the University of Michigan Dearborn as a place where their appearance, garb, and houses of worship have been normalized in the landscape.

Van spoke of the geopolitical situation of Yemen and president Saleh and was pleased that we could discuss the various factions I was aware of. Civil unrest and civil war were the
direct influence of Van leaving Yemen to reunite with his brothers and uncle who lived in southeast Michigan. His broaching of the subject made it easier to speak of the geopolitical conflicts in the region and the “war on terror,” which was joined by other members of the prayer group. The impact of 9/11 and the subsequent conflicts between the United States and Arab countries was the metaphoric elephant in the room up until this point. Each of the prayer group members, and indeed all of my Arab participants, seemed profoundly affected by the opinions towards Arab and Middle Eastern groups generated in the American imagination by way of the so-called war on terror and the discourses it has created. They said that people assumed Arabs and Muslims are terrorists, and that Americans do not know anything about Islam or Arab culture and do not wish to. This is extremely evident in the sharing of online posts in the Dearborn Community Facebook Group, where such items as found in figure 7.6 are commonly shared and critiqued by the group. This causes a great deal of angst within the community, who wish to be better understood by others in society.

Several of my respondents reported that they and their families moved to the United States because it was unsafe in their Arab home country. They were reunited with family members who brought them, and/or brought over family members after they had settled here. Violent conflicts, including wars and sectarian strife, were most often cited as the reason for the lack of safety in their home countries before immigrating to the United States. This is also interesting when we contrast the perception of the home country as unsafe against the perceived lack of security in Detroit. My interview subject Helena left Lebanon for Kuwait in 1982, where she would have to flee in 1989 to Algeria and then ultimately join her brothers who had moved to the Midwest immediately after fleeing the war in Lebanon. Her story of an immigration timeline punctuated by incidents of global conflict and facilitated through family networks of
chain migration, meshes with the literature and reports from the other interview subjects who are from a later generation of Arab Americans and for the most part were born in the United States. Leaving during this time frame was however a theme for my respondents’ families, whether their parents or family had been involved in migration predicated by conflicts in Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq. The two Yemeni interview subjects I encountered also cited conflict as a reason their family participates in general labor migration, conflict and a lack of opportunity were cited as reasons for leaving the middle east as well as a reason not to return or plan on returning. The Dearborn community as a whole is also way of security issues at the local level.

In Dearborn, the territoriality displayed is a watchful concern over the homes on a specific street, specifically the homes of family members (Katarsky 1980). This is one of the many testaments to a communal regard for family property and businesses, as well as gossip (Katarsky 1980; Naff 2000). I received many suspicious looks from home residents when I walked through residential streets, and it was uncommon to see pedestrians other than individuals immediately in front of their homes, although related families use their homes and the spaces between them as common activity space. There are numerous visible reminders that the community is watchful and protective of its space (see Figure 7.5). This home displays it alarm yard sign, with a neighborhood watch sign on the street, and barely visible are the wires for the home’s CCTV system.
The perceived lack of safety in the Detroit area is most pronounced in an aversion to walking on public sidewalks and streets especially for females who report that it is unthinkable. Upon meeting my first female interview subject, Danielle, I asked if I could walk to a sweet shop she mentioned from where we were speaking, she responded emphatically “you can’t walk anywhere around here,” with an earnest caution in her voice and her eyes. Danielle’s warning against walking a few blocks to another merchant’s location began a new line of inquiry where I asked people their walking habits and general opinion on the safety of walking. Many respondents replied that walking in the area was not condoned by the community, though some expressed doubt over the actual danger. Mike agreed that Arab Americans were wary about traveling on foot and preferred automobiles, especially for females. Helena indicated that cars were a symbol of safety and class affluence in the United States and that this was even more
pronounced in Detroit. Helena was engaged in discussing automobile culture and the fear of walking and indicated this was not a traditional cultural stance, as she experienced pedestrian community habits in Lebanon and Algeria before coming to the United States. Henry said that walking was unacceptable for women unless accompanied by a male relative, but that the safety issue is negligible for males or females with an escort.

Automobiles dominate local travel, shopping, and social interaction patterns of the groups living within the selected study area. These patterns of interaction, including the effect of automobile travel, are important to defining the boundaries of a community and its area of influence. I focus on interactions inside Dearborn and from Arab groups outside of Dearborn with the city of Dearborn and its market district. Katarsky made consideration of territoriality, activity sets, and patterns of interaction as key elements that help construct the idea of community (1980). Katarsky’s fieldwork was based on encounters he made with individuals on foot, which was impossible in my work in the area due to several factors. What I encountered was a very different culture in regards to walking, being on the street, and engaging strangers in their common activity areas. I felt like I was on the sidewalk to keep moving, with very few times I saw anyone walking as well, it is very rare to see anyone walking on the street more than a block for any reason. Female interview subjects all reported that walking unaccompanied was completely unthinkable and that even in the company of an acquaintance of her or her family were to see, the woman in question would be the subject of worry from family members who would undoubtedly get a report. There is a great fear of cars breaking down or being unable to travel by automobile.

Helena was one respondent who also had much to say about the idea of walking being dangerous. She said that in her communities in Lebanon, Kuwait, and Algeria, it was common
for people to travel on foot within neighborhoods and market areas and that it had been in Dearborn when she moved there. This fits in with Katarsky’s observation of pedestrians feeling safe in their home communities (1980). This is no longer the case today, as most of my respondent statements and personal observations indicate that very few Arabs travel by foot unless in great distress, to the point of stranding oneself to the inconvenience of another who will deliver a ride before allowing a family member the shame to walk alone. Helena especially noted that indeed it was uncommon for Arab Americans ever to walk anywhere. Mike confirmed that it is an issue of safety for women to be on the street, even accompanied, and that cars are a security blanket for Arab families in the Detroit area. The concern seems to be a mix of actual regard for security and a loss of face in a society that associates automobiles with wealth and status. My other male participants echoed this sentiment, but generally applied the rule more for females than males who were relatively freer to move.

7.5 Perceptions and Suspicion of Outsider Opposition

Shryock, Abraham, and Howell (2011, p.4) discuss Dearborn in the terms of a “target of opportunity,” where the Arab communities surrounding Detroit have become involved in defending themselves against Islamophobia and orientalist discourses and have put themselves in a position for further attacks and accusations from the media and oppositional segments of society. 2015 and 2016 were years of strong nativist resistance to immigration in the United States. The Syrian refugee crisis is one major outcome from the current “war on terror” taking place in Syria between representatives of the state, Syrian military and supporters of president Assad, and the Islamic State of the Levant (ISIL), aka the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and also referred to as Daesh. There have also been allegations of financial connections between
residents of Arab Detroit and Hezbollah. The fact that Bent Jubail, the severely depopulated source village of many Dearborn residents, is a center for Hezbollah activities makes it quite possible that family remittances went to people who are affiliated with such groups (Matthews 2006, p.46). The more pressing concern for security figures was any commercial financial relationships that provided substantial capital to militant groups (Youmans 2011). This is similar to how IRA funds were funneled through neighborhoods in the United States with the general approval of the Irish American community (Richey 1985). Public policy and popular sentiment have slowed immigration through traditional channels, but the author observed several families from Lebanon in extended stay hotel accommodations who were in the process of establishing themselves in Dearborn. I asked after their intentions and origins, but they were certainly not part of my target participant group, and I restricted myself mostly to observation. Their presence indicates ongoing, if reduced, immigration from the Levant.

The respondents I met with also were well aware that outsiders to the Arab community did not distinguish between the religious and national groups within the Arab community and would presume any Middle Eastern person to be both Arab and Muslim. In general, Arab Americans are very wary of outside agitators who broadcast their anti-Arab sentiments using Dearborn as a symbolic target. Vitriolic rants and hateful labels dominate websites such as Barnaked Islam, where ranting blogs post about the danger of “Dearbornistan” where dangerous Arab men, and women in hijabs, seek to impose Sharia law (Youmans 2011, p. 278). There are several other websites whose main mission also seems to be to defame Arab Americans, targeting Dearborn and other communities in Arab Detroit specifically. These attacks have also included general protests against Islam and mosques, and even attacks on non-Arabs. Indian Sikh’s have also not been immune to a new frenzied backlash in opposition to people perceived
to be from the Middle Eastern or Muslim (Yezbick 2011). Dearborn’s community member regularly post examples of Anti-Arab sentiments on their community Facebook pages (Figure 7.6)

Figure 7.6- Facebook post shared to the Dearborn Area Community Members page. Anonymized and captured by author.

Absolute insanity in my hometown everybody thought it was a terrorist attack
Not going to get political or religious but we do live next door to a city with a lot of terrorist not everybody is a terrorist but they're out there don't fool yourself
there was traffic backed up for miles I hope the driver lives and I'm glad nobody got hurt at least so far that I know of put us in your prayers my daughter was so so scared and with her heart surgery
Her daddy and grandmother came close to having a heart attack please pray.....
And send those positive vibes time to move to the country
The Arab American national festival, once a large event held on Warren Avenue in Dearborn, has been cancelled for the last several years after being indefinitely postponed in 2013. This was in part because of protests from outsiders who used their free speech to mock Islam and get a response from the Arab Muslim attendees. There were several incidents, and the non-Arab agitators were detained.

Members of the group Bible Believers were escorted out of the Arab International Festival in 2012 by police after carrying a pig’s head, telling local Muslims they would ‘burn in hell,’ and carrying banners that said ‘Islam Is A Religion of Blood and Murder.’


The festival was originally planned to be held at an alternate location, a private park for ticketed entry was expected to deflect future incidents. The idea has not been seriously revisited, and many Arab communities held their own local festivals on a much smaller scale. The detention was unjustified based on the facts, and the festival organizers and the city were held liable with a fine of $300,000 (Arab American News 2015). Ethnic festivals are an important occasion for ethnic identity to be practice and reified in a positive and collective manner and where non-ethnics are welcome to experience and enjoy ethnic culture as well (Stiffler 2011). Helena was dismissive of the cancellation of the festival, saying it had become too big and wild of an affair. She had been to the museum and knew the mission of ACCESS, but had never been personally involved with the organization.

Arabs at the University of Michigan Dearborn have very positive feelings about university and the Detroit region where they live, but are still wary of outsiders and opposition.
The prayer group was initially suspicious of my intentions but became extremely open once they felt I had been vetted. Sam, a late-coming member of the prayer group, renewed the suspicion again but then was perhaps the most detailed informant in regards to Sunni unity on campus, the footbaths in the building, and other issues pressing to the religious student body. The prayer group individuals did not report any interaction with Shia or Christian individuals, whereas the social fraternity members all had friends of Christian, Shia, and Sunni Arab backgrounds. They were all quite candid about Dearborn being “for Syrians and Lebanese” rather than all Arabs, but they all mentioned several locations they enjoyed shopping or visiting in Dearborn and most had been to or at least heard of the Arab American National Museum.

Dearborn’s Arab community is experiencing growing pains, its populations want to expand beyond the neighborhood, but Islam is a limiting factor. Opposition to Islam and the construction of mosques has limited the growth of Muslim communities, which is especially a problem for the Sunni who do not have their own special full-service enclave like the Lebanese Shia do in Dearborn. The imagery associated with Islam is often focused on traditional clothing as well as architecture. Just as Scottish history has been hijacked by the stereotypical images of kilts and bagpipes (Trevor-Roper 1983), Islam has become synonymous with the hijab, a scarf that covers the head and neck, and the burqa that covers everything but the eyes. It is quite common to see the hijab worn and stores that sell other veiled garments in the city of Dearborn. The distribution of Arabs is concentrated in urban and suburban regions while oppositional attitudes are often rooted in rural cultural considerations, an argument supported by Pierce Lewis’ *regional corollary* (1979). The places where attitudes and perceptions are being challenged may be very different from those places where older presumptions are maintained. Arab Americans are also conscious of their lack of political agency to counteract opposition by
outsiders. Socio-economic disparities and a lack of cohesion between Arab groups have delayed their representation in electoral politics (Sinno and Tatari 2011). Additional separation based on religious and national background has limited the political agency of the community as social organizations such as ACCESS and the AANM have tried to build an Arab American coalition to gain greater political influence over local, regional, and national politics. Christian Arabs have also had greater success in assimilating and moving beyond the Dearborn neighborhood boundaries, entering into new political spheres and leaving Muslim Arabs behind (Sinno and Tatari 2011). The variance between Arab American groups has had effects on the development of Arab American identities and narratives that look to incorporate Arab groups into a larger unified coalition.

7.6 Different Perspectives on Dearborn’s Community and Neighborhood

The varied perception of the Dearborn community and neighborhood exposes some of the rifts within the Arab American groups in the area. Some Arab Americans fear that Dearborn’s visibility and reputation may make it a target for vandalism or other mischief or worse. Tensions occasionally run high and not all Dearborn community members are committed to staying in the area. Arab Christians and Chaldeans purposely keep their social distance and increasingly spatial distance as well from the Shia and Sunni neighborhoods in Dearborn. Being able to use Dearborn’s market and services but live away from the visibly Arab neighborhood is a luxury denied to lower income Arab Americans. I had thought that the active missions of ACCESS and the Arab American National Museum reflected a trend towards an Arab American identity that included most peoples from Arab countries including Chaldeans. The next step in this dissertation is to find different perceptions towards pan-Arabism that exists in the community

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compared to the message fostered at the museum. The lack of a strong sense of pan-Arabism in Arab Detroit is the focus of the next chapter.
CHAPTER 8 – SUPRANATIONAL IDENTITIES

8.1 Supranational Identities

Arab nations do not have a formal over-arching political, economic, and social government (Culcasi 2011). Attempts have been made to create broader identities under the auspices of Arab nationalism, dubbed Pan-Arabism, and also under a collective religious identity predicated by Sunni Islam, Pan-Islamism. Not all residents of Arab countries are Arabs, or Muslim, let alone Sunni, but the majority of the region is both Arab and Sunni so there is a great deal of overlap and mixing of these ideologies. Pan-Arabism and Pan-Islamism are examples of what could be called Supranationalism, a term that describes an identity that embodies entire regions or ethnic groups that span over multiple nation states (Culcasi 2011, p.1). The term supranationalism has also been used to describe the combination of multiple nation states into a single new municipal body (Culcasi 2011; Agnew 2009, p.68).

There is a connection between the ideas of Pan-Arabism and Pan-Islamism, because the last time a large-scale Arab Empire, including Greater Syria, existed was under the Umayyad Caliphate (Naff 1985). Pan-Arabism was a universalizing movement was rooted very much in the unity that existed within the Ottoman Empire (Ajami 1978). Early Pan-Arabists emphasize two principles to define the characteristics of their nation; a common language and a shared
history (Anderson; Abdi 2007). The Arabic language combined with ancient Arab history predating Islam were the crucial elements of Arab identity (Cleveland 1971; Abdi 2008). The transition of loyalty from Islam to a state-based nationalism has included a “rapid and radical” change in values (Keddie 1969, p.17). Pan Islamism and Pan-Arabism both seek to inspire supranational identities that transcend state boundaries and are capable of influencing geopolitics (Mellon 2002). This was specifically nuanced for Arabs who supported the Caliphate’s existence but were also eager to be out from under their secondary status to Turks within the Ottoman system. The goal of pan-Islamism to revive the Caliphate was formed directly in relation to the reaction of Islamic nations to the dominance of their region by Western powers (Lee 1942). If the breakup of the Ottoman Caliphate in 1929 was the end of pan-Islamism (Keddie 1969), the decline of pan-Arabism began after the six-day war in 1967 (Ajami 1978).

In many ways, to be active in Pan-Arabism is to become politically aware and active in what has been defined as “radical” within mainstream American discourses. The Muslim concept of Pan-Arabism is especially unpopular in the United States, where the majority of Arabs are not even Muslims (Schopmeyer 2000, 2011; Beydoun 2013; Kiskowski 2015). This was reinforced in the minds of non-Arab Americans through what Said called Orientalism, but also our early wars with the Barbary States and the propaganda against those slave-taking barbarians who follow Mohomet (Beydoun 2013). Though the Barbary States were multi-ethnic, possibly Berber in majority, they were conflated as Arabs again because of Islam, the popular religion in the Barbary countries. The Barbary wars were among the first in US history, and the genesis of American vilification of Islam as the ancient arch-enemy of Christianity, and antithetical to everything about American values (Beydoun 2013). Muslims as slavers, taking white Christians
and even Americans as slaves, became part of the body of evidence that decided the Arab peoples were out to dominate all other peoples (Beydoun 2013).

Many of the core ideas of pan-Islamism may have been named as such and defined by Western nations prescribing traits familiar to European nations onto lesser-known Muslim countries, based on orientalist assumptions (Lee 1942). Lee’s observations of the Western influence on pan-Islamism leads him to question whether it is just a western imagination or a genuine reaction by Muslim peoples reacting to the geopolitical reality of Western domination in the Mandate system and the defeat of the Ottoman Empire (1942). Arab nationalism and pan-Islamism were profoundly connected as unifying principles for Arabs after the breakup of the Ottoman system (Keddie 1969). Pan-Islamism and Pan-Arabism shared many principle features, such as hostility to the West, including; opposition to “modernity” and institutions that made Arab militaries seemingly weaker than the western nations, sentiments of cultural superiority of the Arabic language and Islam as a religious order (Lee 1942; Keddie 1969; Abdi 2008)). Many of the pioneers of Pan-Arab movements, as well as many Turkish nationalists, simultaneously supported Pan-Islamism as well (Keddie 1969). While these two related and occasionally united ideals seek to create supranational identities, and are influential in cultural and political fields, the state-based orientation of international relations has dominated regional politics in regards to Middle Eastern and Arab national politics (Mellon 2002).

Syrian territories in the Umayyad and Ottoman Caliphates, as well as the Byzantine era which existed between those Islamic empires, provided much of the vibrant cosmopolitan urban areas in those empires contributing commercial and intellectual stimulus to the region (Naff 1985). The significance of Syria-Lebanon’s involvement in this empire is the fact that Dearborn’s initial Arab population came from that region during the waning years of the
Ottoman Empire which was the final successor Caliphate to the Umayyads. In this sense a revitalized Caliphate would also bring Arab nations back within one political entity, among other majority-Muslim nations. Pan-Islamism, however, would marginalize minority Arab religious groups from the Sunni majority in power.

Educated nationalists in Arab countries were formulating Pan-Arab doctrines to serve as the unifying ideology of a single Arab country that spanned from Iran to the Mediterranean Sea (Abdi 2008). These semi-elite members of the middle-class, with enough wealth and influence to travel throughout the Arab world but not enough to dream of ruling over it, have incubated the ideas at the heart of pan-Arabism (Ajami 1978; Abdi 2008). Elite leaders promoted, and the poorer classes were subject to new nationalistic ideas that looked to forge their countries into cohesive states to engage in the global system. The short-lived United Arab Republic only managed to unite Syria and Egypt for a short time, copied briefly by a united Iraq and Jordan, later followed by Yemen’s involvement in a revival of the UAR with Syria and Egypt (Schwedler and Gerner 2008, p.68). Arab nationalists in these states, as well as others, hoped for a future state model that would encompass all Arab nations, expecting these prototypes to merge in the future and add more Arab states to the polity. This could also be considered part of the Baathist Iraqi expansion of Saddam Hussein, during the invasion to annex Kuwait which was once administered with the Iraqi territories under the Ottoman Empire. A single government last controlled the majority of Arab nations during the peak of the Ottoman Empire in the 16th century (Culcasi 2011).

Arab leaders made a sudden shift away from pan-Arabism to embrace state nationalism to consolidate their political power within as much territory as possible (Ajami 1978; Abdi 2008). These leaders maintained a narrative of pan-Arabism in the hopes of gaining more
territory and possibly reigniting the Pan-Arab with themselves and their nation-state as the central leaders of a new Pan-Arab nation (Ajami 1978). By carving out new states within the Arab nations, the new leaders of these nation-states promulgated new nationalisms within their Arab countries. The artificial partitioning of national territories can leave deep-seated and prolonged conflict on supranational, national, and subnational scales (Hancock 2008; 2010). State-based nationalisms are maintained by Arab Americans who resist or deny the existence of pan-Arabism in their communities. The angst of middle-class Arabs to maintain pan-Arab ideologies is evident in the officer’s revolutions in Egypt where Sadat and his colleague fought to maintain the goals of Nasserism, which were conceived as a dream of a pan-Arab future. This era has now passed, however, and opposition to elitist Arab agendas and the powers that be are rooted in ideologies other than Pan-Arabism (Ajami 1978). Even the Palestinians, once the consummate supporters of pan-Arab goals now seek statehood as the standard of representation within the current international system (Ajami 1978). It may be that the Yemeni, always staunch supporters of pan-Arab movements, are alone in holding pan-Arabism as a popular movement (Dresch 2003). Pan-Arabism has been sidelined on the global stage and transformed into a discourse of what responsibilities wealthier and more stable Arab nations should have to their poorer brethren and those torn apart by war and political corruption (Ajami 1978).

Espiritu emphasizes the importance of measuring the extent to which ethnic groups maintain their distinctiveness, citing Bonacich and Modell (1980) as well as Reitz (1980), versus assimilating into American lifestyles and patterns (Park 1950; Gordon 1964; Sowell 1981; Espiritu 1994). This discourse is expanding and altering the boundaries which are constantly being negotiated and maintained within Barth’s (1969; 1998) theoretical framework. Pan-Islamism has always had the issue of the Sunni-Shia divide, which is even more salient in the
Dearborn context with many Shia Arabs who are well established in comparison to the Sunni community in and around Dearborn. From my responses and consideration of social media discussions, it appears that the Shia and Sunni were once much more unified in practice in the 1950s and 1960s, but as each group has become larger they have established their own designated houses of worship and have begun to identify more closely with their specific branch, and sometimes their sect and national origin exclusively. Though pan-Arabism has remained a legitimate movement within many Arab nations, national identities have proven to be quite resilient. Though their borders were constructed by colonial powers, Lebanese, Syrian, Iraqi, Kuwaiti and other Arab nationals identify with their national group even if they were born and raised in the United States as second-generation immigrant nationals. The ongoing maintenance of these national identities, without a text language divide as proffered by Benedict Anderson, is the process Barth describes as essential to the existence of group identity. Village-level customs rooted in religious and cultural interpretation become symbols that are rallied around by in-group members and serve to identify out-group members as those who do not participate or participate in other distinct rituals and behaviors.

8.2 Supranational Identities in the Dearborn Arab Communities

The final research question leads us to consider to what extent Dearborn, and the Detroit region in general, has served to host a place where Pan-Arabism is fostered in an American setting. In hindsight of my interview responses, I would have been better served to use the term supranational identities (Culcasi 2011). This term would have expanded my consideration beyond just a Pan-Arab identity also to include Pan-Islamist and Pan-Ethnic identities. Pan-Ethnicity, in this case, would be extended to Arabs, Muslims, Middle Eastern and South Asian
individuals who are drawn to the Dearborn area because of the ethnic diversity that is inclusive of their religions and cultures. Religion and family structure are considered two central aspects of Arab culture (Naff 1985; Dwairy and Van Sickle 1996; Haboush 2005). The religious groups in the Arab American community consist primarily of Christians and Muslims. Self-identification with a religious group often supersedes identification with a country or national group (Naff 1985; Hoffman and Shahin 1989; Haddad 2002; Haboush 2005). Conflict among different religious groups has resulted in a legacy of distrust between different Arab subgroups (Haboush 2005). Tensions extending back to the Lebanese Civil War are still evident between Christian and Muslim Arabs and strong divisions also exist among some subgroups of each faith, such as the Shia and Sunni (Haboush 2005). Many Arab Muslims in Dearborn, however, choose not to identify as either Shia or Sunni which would open new avenues to pan-Islamist considerations of identity (Sinno and Tatari 2011).

It is important to note Bourdieu’s (1994, p.10) statement that “…proximity in social space predisposes to closer relations” (Smith 2005). Bourdieu’s statement conflicts with the relationship of the various Arab groups in the Detroit area, who exhibit deep social and spatial divides between nationalities, religious subdivisions, and socioeconomic class. These divisions are in large part due to language, but they are also related to differences in levels and types of social capital. Chaldeans, as Christian non-Arabs from an Arab country (Iraq), exhibit the strongest ambivalence towards their categorization among Arabs and work hard to maintain existing boundaries between their group and Arab groups as well as to create new divisions to illustrate their distinctions. Chaldeans can opt out of Arab identity altogether, as can Arab Christians in many cases (Stiffler 2011). Kaplan’s description of ethnic identities within a nested or compartmentalized level of scale from the local to global is a clear model for the discussion of
identities in this context (Kaplan and Herb 1999). Family networks have broadened into communities in neighborhoods, regions of the United States, and the global Arab community. Places on the most local to the most global of scales are key levels of territory that these individuals use to frame their group’s ethnic identity in various situational discourses (Herb 1999).

The informants I have gathered from second, third, and even fourth-generation Arab Americans have indicated they have profited by building social capital within and between the Arab and non-Arab communities in Dearborn. They are fluent in English but less so in Arabic, though their cultural understanding of Arab matters gives them great agency within the Arab American community and they can generally understand enough Arabic to legitimize themselves with their peers. This increases the level of assimilation of the individual and community and provides cultural capital that can be capitalized on financially. This increased level of status directly impacts the confidence of Arab Americans to build relationships with outsiders on a level social playing field, mostly through English competency and the understanding of American cultural context (Smith 2005).

It is possible that more assimilated Arab Americans, who have lived here for many generations and do not identify as an ethnic group member, will seek out Dearborn to experience some aspect of their culture. It is possibly happening now but, for the most part, self-identified Arabs do not feel sentiments toward Dearborn unless they are of that specific Lebanese community. “Sentiments” in this case means emotional attachment, everyone I spoke with shopped in and spent time in Dearborn even if it did not bring the feelings of attachment or territoriality. Some of my informants indicated little sentimental attachment to the Dearborn neighborhood, but also indicated they and their family and associates would drive considerable
distances to shop, dine, and recreate in the Dearborn neighborhood, as well as base their choice of university on the proximity to Dearborn and the freedom to be Middle Eastern in that locale. This example of behavior is what geographers have called heterolocalism (Zelinsky and Lee 2001; Wood 1997; Smith 2005). The maintenance of relationships to specific mosques after Arabs have left the immediate neighborhood is another manifestation of heterolocalism, as Arab American families commit travel time and resources to return to these houses of worship. That is also due in part to a resistance to establishing new mosques in their home communities, forcing a return to Dearborn for such matters.

I have primarily been considering Frederik Barth’s work on the significance of boundary maintenance in ethnic group identity and behavior (1998). Barth and his fellow anthropologists colleagues in Norway imagined self-identification and ongoing creation of ethnic group criteria and boundary modifications within groups and between groups, subgroups, and external actors as the most important aspects to operationalizing “cultural difference (1998, p. 9; Smith 2005). Ethnic and national identities have proven to be resilient social constructs, more so than those identities based on ideology or philosophy (Castells 1997; Hooson 1994). These identities are also salient because they become incorporated into political mobilization as well as emotions and the creation of meaning (Agnew 2002). Rather than eroding the importance of ethnic and national identities, globalization, modernization, and transnationalism have created stronger emotional attachments to ethnic identities and territorial loyalty (Smith 2005). This makes it difficult for “American values,” or pan-Arab sentimentalities to override long-standing divisions between the Arab groups that exist in the Detroit Suburbs. Outsiders may lump Arabs, and even Middle Eastern peoples, into one monolithic grouping, but that has not and likely cannot be internalized by the individual and group sensibilities in practice.
In many respects, I am trying to increase the general understanding of Arab Americans by illustrating the variance between the cultural groups defined as Arab and the idiosyncrasies many would not expect to find within the Arab groups. I wish to disrupt the othering of Arab people into a presumed inferior group as defined by Said (1978) and others such as Roger Ballard (1998). Some discussion of this phenomenon has empowered respondents to gain insight into their own ideas of group and individual Arab American identity and inform this study with unique data that is a valuable comparison to other subject interviews and cases in the literature.

8.3 Distinguishing Supranational Ideologies

Arab American identities are at the heart of this inquiry, The Dearborn Arab community is socially isolated from the other Arab groups and the Chaldeans living in the surrounding suburbs (Haboush 2011). Dearborn has supplied a familiar setting for immigrants to process through, especially in the South End. The northeast Dearborn community has been comprised of a transplanted group from a few villages in southern Lebanon, and augmented by chain migration from the same region (Katarksy 1980). The diverse suburbs in metropolitan Detroit, and even the greater midwest, find in Dearborn a vibrant market district filled with their favorite cultural goods, food products, clothing, hookah supplies, and home furnishings. They also find a community where traditional Middle Eastern or Muslim dress does not stand out, mentioned by several non-Arabs as reasons for going to University of Michigan at Dearborn over other schools where diversity is based on black/white dichotomy rather than inclusive of Arabs as another group in between or outside of our usual dynamic.

Pan-Arabism is a political ideology established in Syria during the early 1930s, while the former Ottoman province was under French Mandate (Culcasi 2011; Beydoun 2013). This was
based on Arab nationalism and the imagination of a modern Arab State. Later visionaries would consider Pan-Arabism to be a religious-political goal, to return to the golden age of Muslim empires and the reestablishment of the Caliphate. Thus, even the idea of Pan-Arabism contains significant divides and competes with Pan-Islamism to unite various groups of Middle Easterners, Muslims, and Arabs. Pan-Islamism and pan-Arabism are related but discrete ideologies, and while pan-Islamism predates the concept of Pan-Arabism; Arab culture predates Islam. These ideologies are combined in some mindsets but in some areas, compete and are both absent in others. As the initial Arabs in Detroit were Christians, they were much more likely to be involved with pan-Arab discourses over pan-Islamic ones, and I will treat that order accordingly in this discussion of my results. Pan-ethnicity is an even newer concept and is still going through the genesis stage within the Detroit region in regards to Arab and Middle-Eastern Americans.

8.4 American Pan-Arabism

I have found that pan-Arabism in the Detroit suburbs is playing out similarly as it does globally according to Culcasi (2011). There are individuals and groups committed to a greater Arab identity, but national allegiances endure even if they are relatively recent constructions developed by colonial European and earlier Ottoman occupations. Their state national identity has proven to be very meaningful in the identities of Arab Americans as well as Arabs globally (Culcasi 2011). Pan-Arabism was introduced as a post-colonial Arab nationalism that sought to overcome the religious and national divisions among Arab groups, becoming a powerful force shaping global Arab identities (Culcasi 2011). Reaching its height in the 1940s, Pan-Arabism was very popular with Syrian settlers in the United States, who were very proud of their Arab
heritage and American home. This was when the conceptual birth of Arab Americans occurred when people had loyalties to and emotional sentiments with both places. Most Arab immigrants, however, clung tightly to their regional traditions, national identities, and most importantly their religious groups.

In the local context of Detroit, Arab groups maintain national group identities even as American society lumps all Arabs, and even non-Arabs of Middle Eastern descent, into one conceptual identity. Even though the world has become more globalized, these national distinctions are maintained in America just as they are in Arab nations (Culcasi 2011). National Arab identities have remained salient in the United States, where many Arabs identify themselves by their nation of origin, or the nation that now rules over their source villages when their immigration predates the post-Ottoman system. This dovetails with Culcasi’s (2011) observation of the same national identities on a global scale as individuals have internalized their externally constructed national identities. This identification, however, has not eliminated religious, social, and culturally established sub-national and regional identities (Culcasi 2011). In this sense, we have developed more cultural identities on the local levels that fit into a framework of nested identities (Herb and Kaplan 1999), where Arab Americans have multiple personal and group level identities within a broader American identity that is also Arab.

Pan-Islamic identities are also at play in Dearborn, as Sunni groups often eschew national identities in favor of a broader religious identity. This is especially true among Yemeni and other minorities within the broader Arab American community who have less agency within national, social, and financial contexts and find greater cultural capital in Sunni religious identities which could be considered as pan-Islamist. The fact that Christian and Shia groups have the strongest financial and cultural networks in the Dearborn neighborhood and the entire Detroit region
reinforces the fact that Sunnis have a better chance at creating agency by grouping together without regard for national divisions which could erode their salience.

If a sense of local Pan-Arabism exists, it is being nurtured by ACCESS and the AANM. These organizations have been established in Dearborn to create social services for Arab residents of the area and to also create a narrative of identity that all Arabs can embrace. Some believe ACCESS was established by earlier Arab Christians to help Muslim immigrants to better assimilate so that they would not damage the reputation of Arab Americans to the detriment of assimilated Arab Christians. This is another example of where power become involved within the creation of group identities (Jenkins 1996). This is an important line of reasoning to follow because this concept of Pan-Arab unity is a powerful force at the global level (Freitag 1991). We must discover if it could become a salient political force at the state and local level in the United States (AAI 2013). The Arab International Festival was a significant community event which served to motivate pan-Arab sentiments among Arab Americans. The 2013 and 2014 festival cancellations and the indefinite postponement of future festivals has been a setback for those seeking to foster unity among Arab Americans in the region as well as those who visited from other parts of the country or internationally.

The judicial history of American naturalization, in addition to factionalism within the communities, would ensure that Pan-Arabism did not become the norm in the United States. This trend continues today as Arab Christians, notably the Chaldeans, purposely distance themselves from other Arabs, especially Muslims [see Sterling Heights Mosque Case Study]. Dearborn’s community population is experiencing growing pains again, it looks to expand but the Islam is a limiting factor. With regard to the immediate future, the writer sees nothing that will impede growth as an ethnic community. Infill and redevelopment is occurring because of the growing
community needs within the confines of the Lebanese neighborhood in Dearborn. These markets and organizations, along with houses of worship, could be a focus of community sentiment towards Dearborn which served as an initial settlement area for many groups who have settled further in the suburbs today or have settled in other parts of the Detroit area and are close enough to visit for specific goods, services, and ambiance. This place has grown dynamically to incorporate new conceptions of Arab identity in an American space.

My respondents stated that Dearborn was attractive based on diversity, acceptance of Arabs and Islam, as well as Middle Eastern and South Asian students. They reported that Dearborn proper was more of a Syrian-Lebanese “thing” but also acknowledged that it was the presence of this Dearborn community of Shia Arabs and Christians that enabled other groups to follow in the wake created by those initial Arab groups. Marco confirmed that most non-Arab Americans lump all Arabs into one group and that Chaldeans are included in that categorization, including by members of his fraternity who learned about Arab groups through their experiences with the members of the group. Marco does not have a sentimental connection to the Dearborn neighborhood but he and his family visits quite often to shop at the markets and to dine out. He stated that Dearborn is “only for the Lebanese.” Marco was surprised that I even knew what a Chaldean was, stating that most people thought they “were maybe just a different kind of Arab.” Marco mentioned his father speaks Arabic better than he does Chaldean, also known as Neo-Aramaic or Syriac, because he is from Baghdad. Marco himself cannot speak Chaldean well at all but his Mother, from Mosul, speaks Chaldean well but very little Arabic.

I had thought that it may be possible that Pan-Arabism will take on new meanings as disparate national Arab groups interact within the much smaller scale of Detroit’s suburbs. I also considered whether Dearborn’s multicultural Arab community creates a new paradigm in which
Arab American identities become more connected and homogenized via communication technology (Castells 1997). I found that though these groups mix in various settings, there are strong barriers against establishing lasting and profound connections between Arab Subgroups. Whatever the relationship in the Ottoman provinces, the divisions imposed by legal means between Arab Christians and Arab Muslims have been internalized and maintained. It appears this has been primarily on the part of Arab Christians looking to maintain their relative privilege and not to be associated with Muslim Arabs and quite possibly lose their whiteness, one boundary they are keen to maintain (Jenkins 1996; Barth 1998). This is a very real possibility as the United States considers a new legal definition for Census purposes, to identify people from The Middle East – North Africa region (MENA). Syrian Christians could avoid this measure and keep opting as “white,” while others may embrace the opportunity to be counted under a category close to their traditional national identity.

8.5 American Pan-Islamism

Pan-Islamism is particularly untenable in the Arab American communities in the Detroit area because Christian and Shia Arabs outnumber Sunnis. Additionally Sunni American Arabs have much less social and financial capital with which to operate. There are, however, non-Arab Sunnis who gravitate to the familiarity provided within Dearborn and seek to create associations with other Sunnis. Arabs are joined by other groups in practicing Sunni Islam, which expands the possible conception of a Pan-Islamist identity in the Dearborn area. No Persians or other Shia groups were apparent in the region, and therefore it is difficult to consider a possibility of a pan-Islamist Shia movement in the Dearborn area without it including exclusively Arab participants. The Sunni prayer group I met with was multinational and consisted of Arab and non-Arab
individuals who emphasized a pan-Islamist approach to their social networks. Their lack of assimilation, or desire to assimilate, to American culture, makes it difficult for pan-Islamists to integrate their associations with mainstream Arab American groups. They are primarily popular among recent Arab immigrants who seek to form social networks but face obstacles in joining Arab American associations which require a degree of assimilation or fluency with American culture.

Assimilation to the United States and adoption of mainstream American cultural and language modes has been seen as a positive trait, while maintenance of Arab cultural traditions and language a negative trait (Naff 1985). This has in some ways eased family restrictions on female freedom and choice of marriage partners for both sexes (Naff 1985). The results are very uneven as my respondents show a strong contrast between multi-generational Arab Americans and newer arrivals who still maintain Arab traditions and/or Muslim customs of socially reserved behavior, restrictions on female movement, and in-group endogamy. Early Syrian-Lebanese Christians were quick to assimilate to American culture and were often excluded from the consideration of Arab people, based on the assumption of Arabs to be Muslims and also less assimilated (Naff 1985). Dearborn hosts populations of first, second, third, and fourth-generation Arab Americans, each of which has its own level of assimilation or revival of traditional mores that may contrast and conflict with their fellows. The negotiation of Arab American identities is more mutable and dynamic in this setting as there are many possible levels of assimilation or maintenance of traditional Arab ways that will dictate one’s companions and social networks. These groups segregate themselves into discrete social networks with varying interaction with others.
The division in identity is contingent on several factors, including a division between many Arabs who smoke hookah and most devout Sunnis who eschew the practice. Sam described at some length what he thought it meant to be a good Muslim, which included more than just attending prayer sessions and recognizing holidays.

“Many kids say ‘yeah they are Muslim’ but you see them out, partying, drinking, chasing women or smoking hookah.” - Van

The compartmentalization of their Arab identities against an assimilated identity creates a conflicting self-identity where individuals avoid situations where one identity is put at odds with the other. Individuals are wont to avoid situations where they would be judged harshly either by their traditional network or their friends acquired by assimilation. The individuals in the prayer group do not commonly engage with non-Sunnis, or even Sunnis who do not meet their standards of practice. The members of the social fraternity have mixed friendships that extend to other religions, non-Arabs, and those who are not Middle Eastern. The social fraternity members who are religious also maintain social networks with religious folks who do not embrace the respondent’s stance towards outside friendships. The social fraternity I met with is specifically designed for cultural diversity and the use of Arabic or Pashtun is unremarkable, and therefor represents a “safe haven” of sorts for people who wish to selectively assimilate with American culture, maintain non-Arab friendships, but still be free to practice traditional Arab culture without judgement or rebuke. The prayer group operates in almost the opposite manner, where group members judge each other and outsiders on how well they practice Islam, specifically Sunni Islam, and values the use of Arabic over English. The prayer group sees assimilation as a
negative trait as opposed to the American mindset described by Naff (1985) which favors assimilation.

The Sunni individuals I met with seemed more engaged with the role of Islam in their lives and were the more outwardly devout in their religious expression. They also use different terminology than Arab Shia and do not mix with them on a social level when religion is an important aspect of their identity. It seems that when Sunni groups create an organization they go with the term Muslim, and Shia go with the term Islamic. The Islamic center of America, a Shia mosque, and the Students for Islamic Awareness, the student group, firm up my estimation of the Shia side of the equation. The American Moslem Society and Muslim Student Association balance out the other side of this poorly conceived math analogy. The only place this is currently happening is the United States, maybe just Dearborn, where it is necessary to anglicize the wording for these organizations in diverse ways in one place. In this context it is necessary to increase the number of options in order to maintain boundaries between the various subgroups (Barth 1998). I did find social mixing between Shia and Sunni individuals when those Sunni involved were more secular in their practice and more assimilated in general.

Sunnis and Shia find common ground in some parts of their practice, and Muslims of all nationalities are somewhat familiar with Arab culture that is present in the Quran. The Quran is the primary religious text and the foundation of Islam’s religious identity. The Quran was originally recited and printed in Arabic, and Arabic remains the traditional language of Islam. Through Islam, many non-Arabs have been exposed to and are familiar with the Arabic language in which the Quran is written. The five pillars of Islam describe the most important aspects of the religion, that Allah is the only God and that Mohammed is his messenger, that prayer is required at five appointed times each day, to donate to charity via a poor box, to observe the fast of the
holy month of Ramadan, and if possible to make the haj pilgrimage to Mecca one time as an adult (Ali, Liu, and Humedian 2004; Hanna and Green 2004; Turner 2011). These rules apply to all Muslims, regardless of their madhab. The Facebook comments following a photograph of the Dearborn community center at three periods of time showing its redevelopment over the twentieth century indicated that it was once used for both Sunni and Shia and also that many community members still pay little heed to the division between the sects. Martin and Henry chose Dearborn for school at UMD because of the diverse number of Arabs, Middle Easterners, and Sunni practitioners at the school and in the surrounding area. Martin said that Dearborn and the UMD campus were very inclusive but that he mixed almost exclusively with Sunni individuals, without regard to national origins. Henry was emphatic that national origin did not matter in comparison to religious faith and that he is open to mixing with anyone who is Sunni but does not commonly engage on a personal level with non-Sunni Muslims or non-Muslims in general. Zineb is very strict now, living more by what we agreed to call the letter of the law rather than the spirit of the law. Matthew, another prayer group member, was wearing traditional clothing from Yemen, including robes and a knit cap covering his head. He agreed with most of the points of his fellows in the prayer group and helped to move the conversation forward in regards to the importance of Islam in their lives. Matthew also stated that he is a pan-Sunni Islamist and does not engage with non-Sunni Muslims. He initially did not want to speak with me but brought a chair closer as I spoke with Henry and Martin, often clarifying or expanding on their points but offering little of his own input.

Some would consider that due to its ethnic landscape, Dearborn is keeping its residents from assimilating to the United States. Others, such as the prayer group, would maintain that Dearborn’s community itself is an assimilating factor and the neighborhood itself is undergoing
assimilation towards an American model. The market district and the people living there are in the process of assimilation, and more-recent immigrants feel it is much less “Arab” than it is “American.” Strict Arab Muslims, in particular, seem disappointed in the secular attitudes and social approach to religious practice as opposed to a more devout commitment to Islam. The contrast between those who go out to socialize after breaking the Ramadan fast and those who stay in their homes or mosques during Ramadan is one area where this distinction is operationalized. Those who go out are socializing with others who reinforce their attitude towards religion, while those who stay in are reinforcing their commitment to associate with other devout individuals. There is no rule in the Quran or Hadiths that would limit individuals from social interactions like going out after the fast, but strict Muslims are critical of others for doing so.

8.6 Pan-Ethnicity

I am considering the pan-ethnicity among Middle Eastern, including North African, South Asian, and Arab groups in the United States as Espiritu (1994) did with Latin American, Native American, and Asian American groups. There are no large settlements of Iranian Persians in the Detroit area. Thus they are left out of the pan-ethnic group in practice in the region. Espiritu (1994) also considers the saliency of a census designation to authenticate group imagination, which is also present in this study through the unveiling of the MENA Census group designation for the upcoming decennial Census Survey. Along with Pan-Africanism and Pan-Americanism, Espiritu (1994) also alludes to Pan-Islamism which is also included in my consideration of macronationalisms or supranationalism which is also present in Culcasi’s work on the Arab World (2011). The previously distinct ethnic, cultural, and language groups in these
cases are at least partially sacrificing their distinctive identities to interact in a more significant manner within the greater social fabric.

In regards to outsiders, Sunni and Shia groups are well-aware that their distinction is lost on many or most Americans and there is a solidarity predicated on that understanding. The same assumptions impact the entire Arab community, including the Chaldeans, who are collectively aware that Americans do not think of Arabs as Christians and presume them to be Muslims.

Arab Americans identify in between the black-white spectrum popularly imagined in the United States, as one of many “brown” ethnicities in America (Seif 2011). Sebastian is an Indian-American from Lyon Township and a member of the social fraternity along with Arthur, Steven, Edouard, Sebastian, Albert, and Marco. As a Sikh-American, he was in a position to reflect on how Dearborn appeals to Middle Eastern and South Asian people who are looking for a place their traditions are more accepted. Sebastian also chose UMD because of its inclusive and diverse student body. Hanna is a student at UMD who is ethnically Pakistani but moved to Dearborn because of the comfortable environment predicated by the Arab cultural presence, a place where she could wear her hijab without raising comment. Hanna expressed a conception of Dearborn’s residents that she felt a part of as being between the black-white binary of racial considerations in the United States, especially in her home town Canton, Michigan. This has led to their gravitation to The University of Michigan, Dearborn, as a location where their specific ethnic phenotype and clothing choices do not stand out. In this case, I argue that there is a possible pan-ethnic Middle Eastern identity that is forming in and around Dearborn in partial response to expectations from outsiders who see Middle Eastern, South Asian, North African, and Arabs as one monolithic ethnic group, often assumed by outsiders to be “Arab.” This grouping is a very contrived identity of convenience without presumptions of primordialist
connections between the included ethnic groups, but rather resignation towards the possibility that they could ever be communicated to the greater social order acceptably, as necessary according to Espiritu (1994). Kevin has few connections to the Dearborn area, but he is very aware of most global and national issues involving Arab nations and peoples. Kevin’s family is very secular but also Sunni, and he indicated that Arab culture is a much stronger factor in their identity than religion. Kevin indicates that most “Jordanians” in the USA that he knows of are actually from Ramallah Palestine but choose to claim Jordan as their nation of origin. Arthur has two sisters, and he imagines his youngest sister will never wear a headscarf, and his family is open to that modification. Arthur indicated that assimilation is very important to his family over the preservation of cultural traditions. Mike also mentioned that his sister would likely never wear a hijab and that it was not an important fact to his family, he mentioned that the Muslim community in general needs to assimilate to the fact that women would be able to choose what traditional elements they would embrace and discard.

Chaldeans are from Iraq, are usually Catholic, and traditionally Speak Assyrian/Aramaic which is commonly called Chaldean. Many Chaldeans in Dearborn also speak Arabic, because they work or do business in Arab Iraq or more recently Arab Detroit. The relationship is complex, but to outsiders they are often the same or that Chaldeans are just another type of Arab. Chaldeans have always had a conflicted relationship with their neighbors, in Iraq as well as in Metro Detroit. Chaldeans are not Arabs; they have their own cultural traditions and language. Chaldeans do often speak Arabic (Hanoosh 2008), which certainly muddles the issue, and they are still aware that to “most Americans” all Arabs are the same and anyone from Iraq, including a Chaldean, would be an Arab.
Wishing to maintain an ethnic identity, Chaldeans begrudgingly acknowledge their connection to the Arab American groups while trying to explain their unique position within that identity. Marco as a Chaldean Christian whose family has moved beyond grocery store operation to become involved with professional accounting in addition to owning market outlets holds a great deal of both social and financial capital. He speaks native English but does not speak Arabic or the traditional Chaldean Assyrian language. He has friends who are both Sunni and Shia and openly states that Chaldeans are often assumed to be Arabs if and when their ethnic distinction is noticed at all in comparison to white Americans. He possesses great agency in comparison to others who are commonly assumed to be Arab American, and he is well aware of the status. Mike speaks English like a native, but as a Sunni whose family operates gas stations, he has less financial and social capital in this context. He does not wear a traditional dress but he is obviously an ethnic minority in regards to a white-American context. His secular sensibilities set him apart from many of the other Sunni individuals I encountered, especially his insistence that Muslims need to become aware that women will often give up the headscarf. His family hopes he can move into engineering or another profession rather than remain part of the family business, but it is unlikely they will give up their ownership in any case. Henry has a mixture of these qualities, he speaks fluent English and dresses in a mainstream fashion, but he has high expectations for Sunni Muslim behavior. He expects his female family members to wear the veil and to follow general prescripts for public behavior and never to travel unaccompanied in public. Being Muslim is not just part of his social identity and Islam is not something he only engages with in the mosque or on certain holy days, his entire life hinges around his religious faith, and every part of his lifestyle is considered through the idea of what a good Muslim should be. His
companions are exclusively Sunni, regardless of nationality, and he does not mix with non-Sunni Arabs.

8.7 Divisions in Arab Identities

I found that many residual divisions between Arab subgroups have been maintained and subsequently reified into new significance. The literature and my responses both indicate that these Arab groups have strong divisions based on cultural practices and ethnic ties. They are not at-odds, but they also have little sentimental connection to “other Arabs.” The Sunni student group I interacted with was very insistent that they are very open to all groups of people, so long as they are Sunni. In that instance, the Arab component of identity is strikingly emphasized in favor of religious sect. This is also a strong contrast from my more secular Arab subjects, who were more often Christian or Shia, who seemed more focused on Arab identity as a cultural practice more significant than religious denomination. Christians Arabs wish to protect their status within American society and wish to limit the spread of Muslim and recently-arrived Arab groups. Wealthy and assimilated Arabs also press ACCESS to provide language and job training to new Arab arrivals to prevent newcomers from damaging the reputation of Arabs in the Detroit area which could harm their business prospects or future opportunities.

I went looking for a place where all types of Arabs would embrace an idea of one “Arab American” identity. I did not find that, but I did find groups of Arabs who had shrugged off their religious differences to engage socially. Intermarriage between the different sects of Islam is discouraged, as well as marriage to Christians or other non-Muslims (Erickson & Al-Timimi 2001; Haboush 2005). Arab Christian groups comprise Catholic (i.e., Maronite, Greek and Syrian Catholic) and non-Catholic, primarily Orthodox, groups (i.e., Greek, Armenian, and
Syrian Orthodox; Protestants) (Naff 1985; Haboush 2005). The Maronites are Lebanese Christians who constitute a large percentage of Arab Americans (Naff 1985; Mackey 1991). Regarding cultural identification, many Christians have identified more strongly with Western culture than with Arab culture, which they associate with Islam (Erickson and Al-Timimi, 2001; Haboush 2005). Assimilation by Christians Arabs has been cited as a key element of future political representation for Arab Americans (Sunno and Tatari 2011). Economic decline in Detroit will maintain ethnic tensions between Arab and non-Arab Americans as well as tensions between Arab American subgroups with uneven levels of prosperity (Sinno and Tatari 2011). The retiring of non-Arab and non-Muslim elected officials coupled with increases in the number of Arabs and Muslims will result in greater political representation for these groups, provided that existing electoral rules are maintained (Sinno and Tatari 2011). It is also mentioned that a macro-national identity among Muslims will aid the political representation of Muslim Americans, including Muslim Arab Americans, but could also further divide the Muslim and Christian Arab citizens in the United States (Sunno and Tatari 2011 p.339-340). I also found groups who shrugged off national identities to engage in a religious social activity, which should possibly be dubbed Pan-Sunnism. I met some Arabs who felt they were much more American than Arab, they could not speak Arabic and never wished to. They would only marry an Arab girl “if they were like me” and that is not possible. Some American male Arabs openly lamented that their female compatriots are not able to assimilate as much as the males. This leads to males choosing between less-assimilated females who may be less accustomed to American culture, or marrying American females who are ignorant of Arab culture. One path may be uncomfortable for the individual; the other is tough on the family.
If my research has told me anything, it is that the family matters most. Families may
embrace a non-Arab child in-law, but they would certainly have a significant say in the matter.
An Arab youth of either sex would be going against their parents if they dated or engaged with
someone without the approval of the family. Being expressly forbidden from dating a girl or
“white girls” in general, or dating at all, is not unheard of and can create strong feelings of guilt
and shame, which usually result in compliance with parental authority. This compliance is
purposely generated and has lasted well into adulthood for many individuals. This is another
place where my study is not only engaging with people based on their current impressions and
experiences but also what they have assimilated through their lives in family interaction.

Legal considerations still create and maintain salient distinctions within Arab American
identities and tensions between national and religious groups. The law officially mandated
whiteness as a prerequisite for US citizenship until 1952. Landmark judicial rulings in 1915
(Christians) and 1944 (Muslims) solidified the legal designation that Arabs were white by law.
One aspect of these decisions reflected a division between Muslims and Christians, where
Christians Arabs could find a way in which to be designated white rather than Muslim which was
often immediately paired with Arab conflating Arab and Muslim in United States legal
precedent. The only way to subvert this was to have a judge decide that a Christian Syrian was
different from an ordinary Arab who would be considered Muslim and therefore non-white,
regardless of their actual religion. Chaldeans have also enjoyed this privilege provided by their
Christianity and high socio-economic status; they are not interested in being more closely
associated with the Arabs and Muslims from Dearborn.

Besides citizenship, whiteness was an important component of the quota system in place
until the Naturalization era ended in 1965. So from 1915 until 1944, to be a white Arab in the
United States you had to be Christian (Beydoun 2013). Since that 1944 ruling, Arabs have been defined legally as white. That is how they have been counted in the US Census, but that may very well change soon. The US Census Bureau has proposed a new stand-alone classification – “Middle East or North African [MENA]” which may be adopted for the 2020 census. This would in effect end 70 years of Arab American whiteness and categorize that group into the new classification. On the one hand, this will give a better and more accurate measure of Arab American citizens, but on the other, it will create a counting index of Arab people in the United States. Also, the MENA American box would be supplemented with a fillable box, which would allow Arabs to specify their identity along nationality (Lebanese or Moroccan) or broader ethnic terms (such as Arab).

Arabs in the United States are unique in being defined as white but without the privileges usually correlated with that ethnic group. Certainly, the MENA box furnishes Arab Americans with long coveted racial self-determination, but also comes with under-examined risks including losing the designation as “white.” Whiteness in America has been a relevant issue since before the founding; race has always mattered (Beydoun 2015). They are white but treated as people of color, at best and potential terrorist threats at worst. They are described as impossible to assimilate, because of their extremely radical culture which is alien to the culture and values of the United States. Recent Arab immigrants have also been less white in complexion and Muslim in religion, a double dose of minority status in the United States. There is some suspicion of risks that rise to the level of alarm amid a still expanding police state that presumptively perceives the Arab and Muslim identities as suspect and subversive. The MENA box would facilitate collection and compilation of more precise Arab American demographic data. This data would benefit Arab Americans with regard to state services, political organization, and influence, as
well as research and healthcare. With the current issue of expanding surveillance, aggressive counter-terrorism, and Arab refugees fleeing conflict in their home countries, some may be alarmed that the census may become actively complicit in data collection targeting Arab citizens of the United States. If that census designation occurs, it will have also diverted a historical legal precedent established that defined Arabs as white people in the United States.

Barth’s work on ethnic identities through the creation and maintenance of boundaries is crucial to understanding the space and time elements that create a context for existing social structures (1969; 1992). This includes the timing of the legal decisions that altered the Arab position in America’s racial hierarchy and the timing of the arrival of various Arab subgroups in relation to those laws. Bourdieu’s idea of *habitus* to describe the embedded tastes, morals, and tendencies of individuals is also important to consider in contrast to the structural predicates that Harvey insisted were paramount (Bourdieu 1994; Smith 2005; Harvey 2009). Despite the divisions in the community and the existence of opposition from outsiders; I have found that, as much in 2016 as in 1980, Arabs of metropolitan Detroit have very positive feelings about the area in which they live (Katarsky 1980). They are aware that there are large numbers of Arabs in the area, and casually assume it is the majority in Dearborn and the neighborhoods around Dearborn. Dearborn’s Arab community is very much American, and they embrace American values of commerce, citizenship, and are even rabid fans of their local American sports teams. Dearborn is both an actual neighborhood in the Detroit suburbs, as well as a central location in the imagination of the Arab American community. When they say Dearborn, they mean the market and residential areas around Warren Ave. in the northeast of the city specifically. Though it may have been founded by and inhabited almost exclusively by Syrian-Lebanese groups, Dearborn has fostered a community of Arabs and other coethnics within America’s suburbia.

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Despite their diversity, Arab Americans feel connected through common values and cultural heritage which give them their shared identity. Arab Americans continue to value extended family and respect of elders, as well as education, family businesses, generosity, and hospitality. For immigrants that are assimilated culturally and socially to the host society, spatial concentration in an ethnic enclave is an asset that is crucial for material and emotional well-being (Dunn 1998; Smith 2005).

Given my results, the members of the social fraternity as well as Mike have assimilated through school and work while their parents have passed on some cultural aspects of Arab, Chaldean or other Middle Eastern culture. They were raised as Arabs at home but also became Americanized through schooling. They have also been exposed to various levels of traditional culture through their churches, mosques, and temples, as well as community events and Arab American organizations in Dearborn and on campus. The choices each has followed have established their ideas of attachment and meaning to their faith, social networks, and place making (Sack 1997; Smith 2005). Though the Syrian-Lebanese of Dearborn may not feel or express sentiment towards other Arab immigrant groups and do not invite others to share their neighborhood, they do provide an environment where the outward practice of Arab culture has been normalized in the United States. Other Middle Eastern individuals have also reported that they feel comfortable in the general area of Detroit, especially Dearborn and the University of Michigan Dearborn, because the Arab presence has created a general tolerance of Islam, hijabs, and being Arab, Chaldean, Pakistani, or Indian.

Arab Americans still feel self-conscious and scrutinized in public, especially locations such as airports (Charara 2011), when their dress or appearance is in any way culturally Arab. Arab Americans inherit their family narratives of immigration, and their cultural education is
predicated on the values espoused by their families (Joseph 2011). Televisions and film
depictions of Arabs and Muslims serve as an archive of national sentiment, which is often
negative (White 2004; Yezbick 2011). Chaldeans are often assumed to be Arabs by outsiders
(Hanoosh 2008), to the extent that Chaldean authors include it even in fictional accounts (Najor
1988). The AANM seeks to educate its guests on the culture and identities of Arab groups and
dispel such misinformation (Yezbick 2011). This includes creating awareness as to why women
may choose to wear the hijab and the distinction between Arabs and Muslims. The AANM seeks
to walk a fine line between being a spokesperson and ambassador for the community and
protecting the interests of the community as well. The AANM needs to fill its role as a focal
point of Arab American identity and avoid being used as a tool of propaganda against Arab
Americans themselves. It seeks to advocate for inclusion of Arab Americans in the discourse of
citizenship yet also emphasizes their foreign roots and culture in contrast to “mainstream
America” (Yesbick 2011).

In light of my interview results and participant feedback, it is clear that some individuals
embrace some ideas of a supranational identity while others are ambivalent or dismissive of the
concepts’ salience. Arab Christians and Chaldeans are specifically able to select when and where
they practice Arab culture and are wont to distance themselves socially and spatially from other
Arab groups.
9.1 Conclusions and Discussion

The case study developed in this dissertation displays how identity is operationalized in Arab American contexts in Dearborn, the social and economic environment of metropolitan Detroit, and a legal and bureaucratic legacy of contested citizenship in the United States. It is critically important that a basic literacy on Middle Eastern cultures, including Arab and Muslim culture, is emphasized within public discourse. Ethnic enclave research is a widely published topic, but Dearborn’s significant Arab community is underrepresented in that literature. This dissertation has also consolidated supplemental data from several unpublished manuscripts produced at colleges and universities nearby to Dearborn, especially Wayne State University’s graduate programs in sociology, geography, and political science. I believe that this project has delivered a strong account of the history of Arabs in Dearborn, as well as the United States, the current cultural landscapes in Dearborn’s market district, and a sense of the community’s trajectory. I believe we have developed a case study that reaffirms the transactional nature of identity and emphasis on boundary maintenance attributed to Barth (1969) and expanded categorically through our understanding of Jenkins (2000).

The qualitative responses that I have collected and analyzed in this project confirm some trends present in ethnic identity research. Arab American identities are dynamic and vary by age, generation, socioeconomic class, gender, national origin, and religious beliefs (Berry and
Henderson 2002; Smith 2005). The relationship between the Dearborn community, the Dearborn neighborhood, and my informants are part of an Arab American and greater Middle Eastern American narrative that is ongoing. Arabs Americans have recreated Dearborn’s built environment to suit their needs and tastes. Dearborn Arabs have established market areas that not only cater to their preferences but also provide for tourism to the Detroit area for people seeking to experience Arab culture. They have established places where their culture is accepted and accommodated, such as the University of Michigan Dearborn, which also provides a haven for other Middle Eastern groups who wish to embrace their cultural traditions and values. The tendency towards entrepreneurship and higher education has given the Arab community the economic agency to expand and proliferate in this environment, providing subsequent generations the opportunity to maintain Arab traditions or assimilate into mainstream American lifestyles. The result is a mélange of practices where succeeding generations have maintained some important aspects of Arab culture while discarding or modifying other traditions.

Generational angst is present, but no more than exists within other cultural groups in the United States.

People need places and spaces to create understandings and participate in ordinary life and society (Sack 1997; Smith 2005). Locations, spaces, and places anchor events to create experience which leads to understandings of identity, which also become bound together with ideas of place and territoriality (Smith 2005). Dearborn, Michigan, has become such a place not only for the constituents who live in the neighborhood but also for Arabs and Chaldeans who live in the close suburbs of Detroit and avail themselves of the market district and cultural landscape of Dearborn. Syrian-Lebanese Christians and Shia have modified Dearborn's landscape in a manner that has also invited greater participation by other groups who appreciate the goods and
services as well as the constructed environment, especially Sunni Arabs and other Middle Eastern groups. Dearborn’s organizations have consciously created spaces that appeal to groups beyond their neighborhood to market Dearborn as a central place for all Americans who hail from Arab countries, whether or not they identify as Arabs. Furthermore, Dearborn’s organizations have also marketed themselves to non-Arab Americans who may be interested in experiencing Arab culture and goods without having to travel abroad. This reinforces the market viability of the Arab cultural district and provides places and opportunities for Arab Americans and cultural outsiders to interact. This gives the community a space with which to present itself on its own terms and in a positive manner.

The collective willingness to remain attached to their ethnic, religious organizations and commit travel time and expenses to maintain those networks reinforces what Zelinsky and Lee described as heterolocalism (2001). Arab Americans built their own political, commercial, cultural and social service organizations to stay connected and serve their fellow community members. These organizations have continued to help new immigrants adjust to new society, fight against discrimination, and promote the involvement of Arab Americans in the political process (Staeheli and Nagel 2006). Some are simply cultural organizations that help Arab Americans maintain their culture and stay connected. Arab Americans have built a very visible ethnic enclave in Dearborn in which Arab cultures are practiced in very American ways. Dearborn has become the marquis Arab American community in the United States. This status appears only to be growing in prominence as more people take notice that these Americans have invested in the community by recreating anonymous spaces into vibrant places and the unique expression of ethnic neighborhood.
9.2 Dearborn’s Community in context of Ethnic and Group identity

One of the major challenges has been to describe how Arab American identities in Dearborn fit into the over-arching theoretical considerations of culture, ethnicity, and identity. We do accept that cultural differentiation and ethnicity are created through social transactions, especially those that abut or cross group boundaries (Barth, 1969; Jenkins 2000). Ethnicity and ethnic identity are mutable concepts that are in a state of flux as individuals and groups undergo constant recreation and (re)imagination of the meaning behind their traditions, symbols, and relationships (Jenkins 2000; Smith 2005). Barth’s (1969; 1998) work is the logical prototype to the postmodern understanding of culture that is now prevalent in social sciences (Smith 2005). This allows us to consider ethnicity and ethnic identity, as well as culture, as fluid concepts that have varying degrees of significance and permanence as they are constantly undergoing negotiation at the individual, group, and greater collective levels. The interaction between varied cultural identities can be witnessed in part through patterns in participation or conflict within ethnic organizations and institutions (Smith 2005).

Jenkins specified a set of categories to the venues where identity becomes meaningful in various transactional contexts, while also pointing out that they overlap in practice (2000). Phinney’s (1993) three stage model of ethnic identity development should be considering in conjunction with the realms in which Jenkins describes identity being created (1996). Jenkins mentioned a personal identity conception, one of lifestyle, one of social position or status including political affiliation, and an official bureaucratic or state sanctioned categorization (Jenkins 2000). My observations of the religious divides in Arab American groups and their varying level of association with ethnic organizations directly correlates with Barth’s opinions on the transactional and constructive aspects of ethnic, group, and individual identities (1998).
Human identities are always in motion without pause, and it is difficult to understand where they are at present, we must see where they have been in the recent past by reading the landscape and are thus able to see one product of those identity considerations. The discussion of ethnic identities in relation to the categorizations offered by Jenkins (1996) is fraught with power relationships. Why would an individual support or reject certain narratives of their identity in a given context? In regards to the exploration of identity, some expect that identities are chosen based on the privileges, a type of power, that go along with that identity. In the case of subgroups categorized by majority groups, the power relationship is weighted in favor of the group with greater status.

*Personal identities* are the most focused on self and generated within an individual’s ongoing negotiation of the self, one's perception of their identity and group affiliations based on those personal impulses (Jenkins 2000). Arab American identities are compartmentalized within an individualized framework that takes into account their American home identity, their traditional Arab identity which includes family and social relationships as well as religion, their relationship with their Arab national group and other religious groups that overlap and contrast against their personal identities. Religious affiliation is especially subject to its place a hierarchy of values, as it can be the dominant consideration of identity or subverted for national and secular considerations. My informants desire to maintain and preserve ethnic identities that distinguish themselves from broader society, even when faced with the possibility of outright assimilation. Individuals prefer to maintain ethnic identities within the United States, even if doing so can be an obstacle to assimilation and greater financial opportunity. Cultural capital is especially important to newer Arab immigrants who rely on social networks to interact within a new society. Language and communication are the most immediately practical reason to engage
in national groups for employment and initial settlement. Identities are negotiated at the individual level and groups, families, and even siblings will have differing opinions on the relative significance of national, religious, and socioeconomic importance. The possibilities are only limited by the assumptions of mainstream society towards Arab and Middle Eastern peoples, which create a discourse of possible roles to be filled by Arab Americans. To be more or less American can also be described by outsiders as being a “good” or “bad” Arab, with assimilation to and embracing “American values” as positive elements applied by outsiders to the Arab American community. Commercial motivation, secularism and Christianity are foremost among traits that give Arabs agency and social capital in the United States.

The second category of identification Jenkins put forward was that of the *lifestyle*. Jenkins’ description of lifestyle is broad and includes wife-ranging aspects such as individual sexuality, group and individual cultural preferences and practices (2000). Arabs and other Middle Eastern residents are proud of the Dearborn and Arab Detroit communities. Mosques, churches, restaurants, food baths, and hookah shops are prominently displayed as Arabs carve out a section of the American suburbs where their culture has been normalized. It is possible for Arab Americans to maintain a range of lifestyle choices within their traditional culture but family involvement in all facets of life is more common. Although Jenkins’ treatment of *lifestyle* omitted religious practice while including it in the *social position* category, in the case of devout practitioners of any religion it becomes ingrained in every aspect of life. Arab Americans have had different levels of success in part due to their varied level of flexibility in living and operating in new social and cultural environments.

Arab Muslims are still trying to gain acceptance into American society, while Arab Christians and assimilated Muslims want to protect their status from defamation or association
with more recent and unassimilated Arabs. This is in an environment when prominent politicians
and candidates are speaking against Muslims as well as Arabs, with claims that it is possible to
discern a true Christian from a pretender, hearkening back to the legal precedents discussed in
Chapter 3. The importance of faith to the Muslim Arabs in and around Dearborn are so
significant that they establish new prayer groups and spaces wherever they are able, most noted
in the reflection rooms and foot baths on the UMD campus. Christian groups also maintain
connections to churches established before many residents relocated to neighborhoods quite far
from Dearborn. Christian Arabs, and to a slightly lesser extent Shia Arabs, have also gained
greater economic agency in the United States. They own more of the market outlets and have
diversified employment into more gainful professions than more recent arrivals who are more
likely to be Sunni. This echoes Barth’s (1998) comments that ethnic groups can be subject to
social and economic stratification, as well as Wilson and Portes’ observation that early arrivals
gain more of the benefits to an ethnic economy than do more recent arrivals (1980). The
overlapping of the major categories also reinforces Jenkins’ (2000) own comments about his use
of interrelated spheres where identity metaphorically occurs or becomes.

The third major category mentioned by Jenkins is the individual or group’s social
position or status, including marital status, age, gender, ethnicity, class, and religious affiliation
(Jenkins 2000). The various types of social positioning are more or less relevant depending on
the specific context. When operating in a religious space, or during a religious time frame such
as the holy month of Ramadan, it may be beneficial to be fluent in the cultural language of the
religion, if not an outright or recognized member of a group dedicated to the practice. Political
affiliation and ideological loyalty within civic institutions is also an area in which one can
develop an idea of their individual or group identity. This affiliation can be with an official
political party or platform, or could also be a generalized dedication to a specific group of individual principles which may heavily overlap with the other major identity spheres (Jenkins 2000). Though Arab Americans have diverse and varied opinions on their personal and group identities, especially in regards to how broadly they conceive of their cultural in-group(s), they find themselves categorized by forces beyond their or their groups’ control. Arab Americans are distinctly aware that they are constructed as not only an other in regards to their fellow citizens of the United States, but as a “significant other” (Triandafyllidou 1998). The idea of orientalism, establishing eastern cultures as the other to our “western civilization,” has been maintained in the United States as well as globally (Said 1978; Ballard 1996).

Arab groups exist in a stratified manner according to socio-economic class, religion, and level of assimilation. Certain traits grow or shrink in importance depending on who is involved and where interactions are occurring, and in some cases, national or religious differences are secondary to socio-economic class. Some groups can selectively choose when and where they embrace their Arab culture and can selectively assimilate to mainstream America when necessary. The social distance between assimilated and unassimilated Arab groups is reinforced through spatial distance, where some Arabs can visit the Arab neighborhood in Dearborn while others are confined to that area for social interactions. The Syrian-Lebanese community in Dearborn is unique in several ways. They go out for Ramadan, and if this is a national preference or a Shia practice is unknown. If it is Shia in nature, they are also joined by secular-minded Sunnis who join them in the market area for socializing after breaking the evening fast during Ramadan. The Moslem Society of America has accommodated Sunnis and Shias, as the separation between these groups was less pronounced on the founding of the community than it is today. This may be based on the fact that Shias are accustomed to being the minority in Arab
countries, and are used to blending in, or that the mixture of Shia and Sunni congregants was commonplace in the Ottoman era when the initial Muslim immigrants arrived in the United States.

Breton noted that religious institutions are important in the maintenance and production of ethnic ideation in individuals and between generational groups (Breton 1964; Smith 2005). Religious life in this Arab American context entails various Christian denominations, Shia Islam, and to a lesser extent Sunni Islam. These Abrahamic faiths have been preserved from the nations of origin within the Ottoman Empire and the Post-Ottoman States. Christianity offers a level of expedited assimilation for its members as the dominant religion in the United States, including the adoption of pre-existing parishes that served immigrants of other ethnic groups until Arabs displaced them in the local neighborhoods. The split between Sunni and Shia Muslims has become more pronounced in recent years, and larger populations of both groups have predicated the establishment of mosques catering exclusively to one or the other of these sects. In the past, it was commonplace for Sunni and Shia worshippers to share religious space with only the religious school sponsored by a mosque belying the Imam’s denomination and giving the mosque a semblance of one doctrine.

Dearborn’s Arabs no longer recognize the South End as the center of their community or neighborhood. The transfer of the Lebanese-Syrian community group to northeast Dearborn from the South End seems complete in part by the fact that the bulk of economic and social services are located in the northeast Dearborn area, and connectivity to the South End is limited to outsiders from the South End availing themselves of the ethnic marketplace and other services generated by the Lebanese-Syrian community in Dearborn. I met no individuals who reported having lived or shopped in the South End. The area was largely unknown, but those Arab groups
that live there now are seen as new immigrants or “boaters” as they are disparagingly referred to by Arab Americans (Abraham and Shryock 2000). Northeast Dearborn is now the “old neighborhood” for many people who used it as an immigration area, employment outlet, or market district. Palestinians have relocated to Livonia, many Lebanese and Syrians to affluent Detroit suburbs, and Chaldeans always had had their own immigration reception area and suburban communities distinct from the Arab communities (Shopmeyer 2000; 2011; Kiskowski 2015).

Jenkins’s fourth and final general category is that of identity rooted in official bureaucracy and citizenship. The case of Arab immigration policy to the United States and the conflations of Arab and Muslim that took place in a legal precedent reflect the powerful impact that legal identities have had on the Arab American community. Barth’s theories on boundary maintenance focused more on the internal elements of group identity and boundary maintenance, while external influences and forces are also quite significant (Jenkins 2000). Freedoms of movement, economic well-being, and access to social services and citizens’ rights are all bound up in the identity that is legally assigned to you in many jurisdictions (Jenkins 1994). This is especially true in this case, as much of Chapter 3 was devoted to tracking the legal precedent of saying who is and is not an Arab and how or why Arabs could not conceivably be Christian, and therefore could not be American. Jenkins further defines external factors as categorization, if and when the power balance lies with the external elements (1994; 1997). Arab Americans find their identity shaped by powerful external forces in regards to government policies and legislation, as well as the popular media. The possible development of a census category for Arabs in the United States is a direct example of the institutionalization of an ethnic identity by the political authority. Though the categorization may benefit the community in regards to representation and
enfranchisement, the negative connotation of such identification is apparent. It is suspicious and alarming for anyone, but especially legal authorities, to question too closely this community which has experienced unfair scrutiny and negative portrayals.

I also previously mentioned treating ethnic groups as a process of social organization where elites or leaders play a major role in the shaping of ethnic boundaries (Barth 1969; Smith 2005; Abouyoub 2009). The assumption still exists that these elites or leaders are members of the in-group they are representing. Jenkins alternatively presents the power of categorization as an exercise in authority that can be exerted over an ethnic group (2000). Leaders from outside the group are in a sense dictating the ethnic identities of minority groups, which certainly has been the case with Arab Americans throughout their history in the United States. Some prominent Arab leaders and organizations put forward an argument that Dearborn is welcoming to all Arabs and other Middle Easterners, regardless of religion. Others would argue that Dearborn is great for some connected religious individuals as well as secular Shia and Christians, identifications that also parallel wealth and class within the Arab subgroups. Jenkin also emphasizes that it is wise to consider political and economic factors when judging the interests that motivate individuals to embrace one identity over another in a given context (2000). It is also difficult to conceive of a cohesive pan-Arab identity, either globally or locally in the United States, but rather a broader consideration of a pan-Arab association that is selectively embraced based on contextual situations.

It is also noted that perceived advantage will be a powerful influence over the desire to maintain certain situational identities. The advantage could be financial, but could also be a resulting increase in social and cultural capital, the pleasure of inclusion and group membership or prestige (Jenkins 2000). To that end, we considered that market forces, in addition to race and
ethnicity, are extremely important to understand the possibilities and limitations to minority
interactions in communities (Wilson and Portes 1980). Detroit is a major city which has
undergone a great fluctuation in its economic significance on a global and national level that has
impacted how the Arab Americans have been able to participate in the local economy. First as a
labor source, then as a growing economic network, and now as a significant player in Detroit’s
economic environment, Detroit’s Arab community has grown to fill possible niches within the
setting of Dearborn and other Detroit metropolitan areas.

In Chapter 2, we established a binary model that assumed either set themselves apart
from or are put into a segregated space by the dominant society (Anderson 1987; Jenkins 1994;
1997; 2000). We expanded this to represent a spectrum of possible relationships where the
preponderance of the boundary-maintenance agency is balanced between internal and external
actors. This case exhibits the additional caveat that many Arab Americans, and Chaldean
Americans, can avoid ethnic classification entirely when desired. Alternatively, these individuals
can choose to participate in Arab cultural settings as part of the ingroup as well. They can
socially and spatially distance themselves from the Dearborn community and neighborhood,
respectively while reaping the cultural benefits of a community they identify with in some
settings, when it is pleasurable or otherwise advantageous to do so. The ability to switch
channels in regards to situational identity is in itself advantageous. Individuals in my study were
able to embrace assimilated American identities which the exception of those times they wished
to celebrate Arab heritage in various family, religious, or social contexts. Business networks built
upon in-group connectivity and symbolic closeness may mutually exclude business relationships
with non-group members. Secular versus sacred sensibilities are a more complex series of
negotiations where it is certainly possible to compartmentalize or minimize religious practices in
daily life while attempting to connect with the social aspect of major religious events, but it is met with skeptical responses from those who perceive themselves as more devout and committed to a true life of religious meaning rather than a superficial “Americanized” interpretation of what is important. When family reputations are involved, it creates a great deal of pressure on younger generations to comply with cultural expectations.

Ethnic identities can be even more salient when they exist within poly-ethnic settings than in a state of spatial isolation or segregation (Barth 1998, 5-38; Smith 2005). It is possible that under these assumptions, Arab Americans would feel more connection between their subgroups if there were less total groups or individuals available to practice contrasting ideas of Arab culture. Arabs that do not sentimentally attach to the Dearborn neighborhood or community still show a sense of pride that such a location exists and that its constitutive organizations are striving to educate non-Arabs on the distinctions within the community and Arab culture. Arabs of all nationalities and religion wish for greater understanding from their fellow Americans of what it means to be Arab. Though spatial segregation is part of the boundary maintenance, it is less significant than the routines established through social relationships. Many Arab groups have little contact with each other though they are spatially close to one another. Barth’s (1998) theoretical framework is applicable to many of the identities, and social networks are dependent on a transactional consideration based on individual choices, group preferences, and an external opinion on what it means to be Arab and American simultaneously. The Arab American National Museum, along with its founding organization ACCESS, walks a fine line to embrace the Arab community as a singular identity that transcends religious and national divides as well as advocating for Arab groups and causes. ACCESS and the AANM foster an environment where Arab subgroups build ideas of identity that are distinct from a pan-Arab collective that would
include everyone that could be considered as an Arab American. While Dearborn may not be central to the imagination of all Arab American identities, its market district and organizations give it a great deal of significance to many Arab Americans. The AANM has established narratives of pan-Arabism in the American context to the extent that it is available for Arab Americans to embrace, reject, or parcel out based on their own preferred consideration of their Arab identity.

I believe this study has reflected how spaces and places have been altered in Dearborn to suit the Arab community. These changes are often visually apparent on the landscape. It was much more difficult to address the perception of these changes to the Arab American community, especially considering that there are various groups and subgroups of Arab Americans, even within the Detroit region. The divisions in the communities of Arab groups, and their various neighborhood territorialities are also relevant in relation to the development of Arab American identities. My goal was to tap into ethnic identities at the most personal level with my informants to hear about their experiences and impressions of their living space. I believe that a greater understanding of ethnic minority groups and their contextual identities will lead to a better understanding of place-based identities in general. I also believe that such research would better inform policymakers in regards to their considerations of the obstacles and benefits of our multicultural society. The relationship and perceptions of place, including country of citizenship and national tradition, directly impacts the development of identity. Arab-Americans, Muslim Americans, and other Middle Eastern Americans all have varying perceptions on what Dearborn is, and is not. Though there is no exact idea of American “Pan-Arabism” per se, there are many emerging forums for the intermixing of Arab groups into various supranational and macronational identities. These opportunities are often in concert with the mixing of ethnicity
and culture in general, or as part of organizations targeted towards certain national or religious groups. Cultural landscapes and architecture can be metaphorically compared to changes in physical landscapes. This metaphor would equate human constructs to the dynamic process of plate tectonics, where human cultural realms abut and interact through a process we could call cultural tectonics (Hayward 2000). This emphasizes the morphology of cultural landscape by analyzing relationships, rates and patterns of diffusion and the presence of cultural influences across cultural boundaries and the stress that may occur at the boundaries of cultural plates and regions of cultural diversity. I consider Dearborn through this complex analogy as a “hot spot” of the Arab World within the American cultural plate. This interaction creates unique landscapes that are dotting Midwestern urban and suburban neighborhoods through cultural influences originating from various Arab, Middle Eastern, and North African countries.

9.3 Future Directions

I would like to continue my research into the Arab American community by looking at some of the other urban and suburban Arab American populations that have been growing in the Midwest region of the United States. In addition to many communities in Southeast Michigan, Arabs have developed a significant presence in Chicago, Toledo, Cleveland, as well as other Midwest cities. Some of these cities have Near East markets and Arab groceries that offer items that are produced by Dearborn companies. I have found items in Akron, Ohio, which come from the popular sweet shops in Dearborn’s market district. I would like to see to what extent these other communities, creating a Midwestern archipelago of Arab neighborhoods, are related to Dearborn’s community or other communities in the Detroit suburbs. I would also like to see the development of Muslim groups, including the controversial Nation of Islam that was founded in
Detroit in the early 1930s. One of my primary intentions has been to educate readers on the distinction between Arabs and Islam, and that one does not equal the other. That being said, it is clear that Islam is extremely important to the Arab community and that non-Muslim Arabs are still very familiar with the Muslim religion. In the context of Detroit, the founding location of the Nation of Islam (NOI), I would like to explore the relationship between the NOI and the mainstream Muslim communities. The NOI, while sharing the name Islam, has a completely alternate religious cosmology which is not related to mainstream Islam. That being said, many former members of the NOI have since converted to Islam. Considering the strict level of scrutiny applied by many devout Sunnis, even to their own Sunni compatriots, I am interested to find out more about their opinions towards the NOI and their conversion to traditional Islam. I suspect that a large amount of American opposition to Islam has its roots in the NOI’s controversial history and the negative attitude many Americas had to the group during its brief influential period during the 1960s and 1970s. I am also interested in learning more about the Arab Christian communities and their relationship with their Muslim compatriots in regards to geopolitical conflict in their home nations. I wish to find out more in regards to whether Arab Christians support their Muslim homelands in the struggle to maintain order amid regional warfare.
Appendix A. Interview Questions

1. What is your Age/Sex?

2. What is your connection to the Dearborn community?
   a. When did you arrive/when did your family arrive in this area?
      i. Where did they come from?
      ii. Is there any specific parts of the neighborhood that hold significance for you or your family?
   b. When do you visit, when was the first time you visited?
      i. How often do you visit Dearborn?
      ii. How long have you lived in Dearborn?
         1. How often do people come here to visit you?
   c. Where do your friends and family members live in:
      i. The World
      ii. The United States
      iii. The Midwest
      iv. Michigan
      v. Detroit’s Suburbs
      vi. Dearborn proper

3. Where do you live now?
   a. The questions listed above are all established to learn the demographics of the respondent and their association/level of intimacy with Dearborn.

4. Please describe to me the story of how your family became involved in the Dearborn community:
   a. This addresses the history of experience as well as a possible narrative that has been developed to teach the past to a younger generation
   b. Employment
      i. Entrepreneurship and family businesses
      ii. As wage labor

5. Where do you go in Dearborn for:
   a. Shopping
      i. Retail
         1. Food
            a. What items are important in your choice of store?
         2. Clothing
         3. Entertainment/recreation
ii. Dining Out

b. Family or Community Events
   i. Festivals, regular associations
   ii. Locations and purpose
   iii. These questions will delve into religious faith and identity, but I will try to avoid direct mention of any denominations or religions per se but rather press respondents for significant regular activities and the meanings behind any phenomena they mention, including religion.

c. Work or other commerce, business, and professional
   i. Location
   ii. Activity

6. You travel to, from and within Dearborn via:
   a. Transportation

7. What language(s) do you speak at home?
   a. At work?
   b. At formal family events?

8. What does the Dearborn community mean to you?
   a. I will not push too hard but I will suggest/inquire about identity factors

9. Are you aware of any significant divisions within the Dearborn Arab Community?
   a. National groups
   b. Language/dialect groups
   c. I will also lead towards segregation based on faith and denomination as well, without explicitly mentioning any specific faith or asking about religious division.
   d. I will also ask about trends in these considerations, if the respondent believes aspects are more or less important and if those aspects are increasing or decreasing in salience.

10. How significant are the differences that may or may not divide the Dearborn Arabs into smaller groups?

11. What community groups are you aware of working with the Arab Community in Deaborn and elsewhere in the United States?
   a. Which do you support?
   b. Which are you critical of?
   c. Other responses:
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