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Culture, Surprise, and Adaptation:
Examining Undergraduate Students' Matriculation Processes

by

Catherine W. Barber

Dissertation

Submitted to the Department of Leadership and Counseling

Eastern Michigan University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Dissertation Committee:

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April 22, 2010

Ypsilanti, Michigan

Dedication

To my daughter, Lucy Willingham Barber

May you develop a love of reading like your father and a love of math like your mother!

Acknowledgements

To my fellow colleagues and friends who shared in Dr. Barott's dissertation seminar. The support of the group and ability to learn from one another is one of my fondest memories of the program. Dr. Barott, your encouragement as we explained concepts to one another and ability to conceptualize the dissertation process is notable. You explained in my first doctoral cohort class that conducting dissertation research was a lengthy process under your direction; however, the process of discovery has been worthwhile and informative for my educational practice. Thank you for your support and guidance.

March 28, 2010

Ypsilanti, Michigan

Abstract

The purposes of this study were to (a) explore undergraduate students' experiences as they transitioned to the university, (b) explore how the cultures of students' hometowns influenced student culture at the university, and (c) provide a conceptual model which has analytical generalizability across higher education.

This ethnographic research focuses on developing a cultural knowledge of hometown community culture. While previous research examined how college affects students, this research reverses the approach and investigates how the students and their hometown community values actually affect the college community. To investigate these topics, I did ethnographic observation including trips to students' hometowns and conducted in-depth interviews with 21 diverse students to learn about their matriculation process and how hometown culture(s) affected their entry into Eastern Michigan University.

To examine the hometown cultural environment and the institutional cultural environment, I used ten cultural categories including (a) demographics, (b) tasks/jobs, (c) income, (d) family structure, (e) education, (f) physical environment, safety, and security, (g) ideology, (h) activities, entertainment, and rituals, (i) schools, and (j) extracurricular activities. Comparing hometown cultural environment to institutional cultural environment resulted in either a match or a mismatch; a mismatch was termed a "surprise" for students.

I discovered that students must make sense of the institutional environment when they matriculate to the university. Adaptation, how individuals construct reality and interpret situations, is a significant process for undergraduate students at the institution. Since students come from different communities in southeast Michigan and have different experiences prior to their collegiate experience, they experience different surprises and react to these surprises in different ways.

This study, which examined students' organizational entry from a hometown in southeast Michigan to EMU, found that students experience a surprise once at the institution. As a result of the surprises, students adapted in one of two ways, either behaviors which resulted in integration or segregation. The adaptation process is an ongoing process, which is initiated by incongruencies between a student's hometown culture and the campus culture (i.e., mismatches or surprises). Overall, this research has helped me better understand the needs, perspectives, and aspirations of the students whom I serve.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

As the United States population continues to grow, our nation is becoming increasingly diverse. Despite an increase in our population diversity, this has not translated into residential diversity. There remains a disproportionately concentrated minority population in certain states and locales within states (Sugrue, 1999). “Michigan has a higher percentage of African American residents (14.2%) than the national average (12.2%), totaling 1,412,742” (Evaluation Plan Section Knapp, 2007, p. 1). In Michigan, specifically southeast Michigan, there is limited residential diversity, which in turn produces relatively homogenous schools and cultural separation. The impact of the segregation in southeast Michigan on the formation of student cultures at the university level has not been adequately studied.

This ethnographic study is situated at Eastern Michigan University (EMU), a public institution located in southeast Michigan. EMU is a comprehensive Carnegie Master’s/L institution, with an enrollment of nearly 22,000 in fall 2008, of whom 17,213 were undergraduate students and 4,713 were graduate students. In Fall 2006, 77% of EMU undergraduate students were from southeast Michigan (EMU Institutional Research and Information Management, 2007). This study explores the undergraduate student culture at EMU. First, the study highlights significant historical events in southeast Michigan which shaped communities and created cultural and residential boundaries. Next, culture and conflicts within communities in southeast Michigan are examined, specifically focusing on how culture is transmitted by students to the university.

Purposes of the Study

The purposes of this study were to (a) explore undergraduate students' experiences as they transition to the university, (b) explore how the cultures of students' hometowns influence student culture at the university, (c) provide a conceptual model which has analytical generalizability across higher education, and (d) develop myself as an educational leader. In this section I will provide greater detail about each of the purposes.

Cultural elements within the communities in southeast Michigan have a profound impact on students; students come to campus having been shaped by their hometown community. This study explored the cultures within southeast Michigan and how these cultures permeate the campus. Exploring culture by focusing on students' hometown culture enables faculty, staff, and administrators to develop a more holistic view of students, specifically their experiences which shaped them prior to college.

Developing a greater understanding of the culture and conflicts on the Eastern Michigan University campus will inform my practice as an educational leader and administrator. Knowing students' cultural experiences prior to coming to campus makes a difference in how we organize the university and the services that are provided. I believe that knowing who the EMU students are, essentially the populations being served at the university, matters.

This study focused on where students are coming from (mainly communities in southeast Michigan), essentially putting the environment back into higher education. From my experience, as a student and then a student affairs administrator, most administrators do not look beyond the boundaries of the campus. Exploring culture by focusing on students'

hometown culture will enable faculty, staff, and administrators to develop a more holistic view of students specifically their experiences which shaped them prior to college.

The unit of analysis for the study was southeast Michigan. I employed an interpretive research tradition which is defined by assumptions of causality. The interpretive paradigm originated from the works of Edmund Husserl and Wilhelm Dilthey, both German philosophers (Dilthey, 1911/1977; Husserl, 1929/1969). The interpretive research tradition transcends several academic disciplines including anthropology and sociology.

The third purpose of the study was to provide a conceptual model which has analytical generalizability across higher education. This ethnographic study utilized a conceptual framework in order to understand the undergraduate EMU student culture(s); the framework used in this ethnography can be used at other institutions to examine their student culture.

The final purpose of the study was to develop myself as an educational leader. As an educational leader, I can benefit both professionally and personally by developing a greater understanding of culture and how it is created on a college or university campus. By creating an awareness of student culture, I can better understand how students experience college and the factors that influence students' lives. Understanding collegiate student culture is in essence understanding hometown communities and the systems that shaped students prior to their matriculation to college.

Personal value of the study.

Next, I describe the personal value of this study. For three years, I lived in the midst of student culture at EMU with an apartment and office located inside a first-year student residential building as an Areas Complex Director in University Housing. I continue to work

with the residential student population, now as an Assistant Director of University Housing, with frequent trips into the residence halls, meetings with students, and telephone calls from parents regarding their student's experience. In my administrative role, the students' experiences, their ties to their hometown in southeast Michigan, and conflict between various cultures within southeast Michigan are in plain sight. In anthropological terms, something that is in plain sight is visible and seen by an observer.

Living in southeast Michigan, I travel throughout students' hometown communities on a regular basis. The variation in communities in the area is drastic, from a small town rural community to the urban center of Detroit; one cannot help but notice the differences. The goal of this study was to systematically review the culture of communities surrounding Eastern Michigan University in order to better understand student culture on the campus.

As an educational leader, I am interested in developing an understanding of culture, particularly how it forms and recreates itself, essentially the process of cultural transmission (Spindler, 1963). Using empirical, evidence-based environmental factors, my research was to explain the logic of the social system, in this case the culture of southeast Michigan. I believe that the communities in southeast Michigan shape the dominant EMU undergraduate student culture(s). It was my goal to identify and understand EMU student subcultures that have their beginnings in the southeast Michigan community. Specifically, I sought to uncover community and environmental elements that affect the student culture. Instead of placing value on cultures and labeling them as good or bad, positive or negative, the focus of the research was on the reality that students experience.

Having been raised and educated outside of Michigan, I consider myself an outsider. I believe this status was a benefit as I explored the cultural norms, expectations, and values in

southeast Michigan. Because I am not entrenched in the cultural components of this area, I have a different perspective when identifying cultural elements. Because I grew up in a shipbuilding community in Virginia, my social network was with children whose parents worked in white collar jobs, similar to my own family, who were business owners. Despite my middle- to upper-class social network, I attended a highly racially integrated high school. Thus my school experience was vastly different than my social experience. This study allowed me to explore what it meant to work with students raised in an industrial, blue collar area.

I attended high school in Newport News, Virginia, and was accustomed to an integrated educational system, although our neighborhoods were less integrated than the school. Newport News, Norfolk, and Virginia Beach comprise a large metropolitan area in eastern Virginia. This area is cited as one of the most integrated metropolitan areas in the country (Spatial Structures in the Social Sciences, n.d.). In high school I was a student athlete; the racial composition of teams varied by sport. My track team was nearly all Black and I was the only White female, which contrasted with my all White male and female swimming team. Racially, EMU has some parallels to my secondary school experience. At EMU, I explored what it meant to be a White female working with Black students from the Detroit area (which mirrors the ethnic diversity in my high school experience). Because of my secondary school experience, I have an understanding of an urban culture. Despite this knowledge, I remain separate from this community, having not lived in an urban area.

Engaging in this study allowed me to compare and contrast my collegiate experience to the experience of students at EMU. As an administrator at EMU, I have experienced a new student culture, one much different than my experience as a college student at Virginia Tech.

This study enabled me to explore what it meant to be an outsider in a regional school, having come from a research institution.

As I explored what it meant to be a housing administrator at a school with a vast number of commuters, my understanding of the residential experience was challenged. While the student population at EMU is nearly 23,000, the residential population is much smaller; approximately 3,000 students live in on-campus residence halls. Often it feels like the residential population is small, as many residential students are able to travel to their hometown on the weekends or even during the week because of the close proximity. Despite this difference from my previous experience, my belief in the residential experience remains strong. I believe the on-campus residential experience for college students benefits them academically and provides students an opportunity to grow and explore their beliefs and values. As I continue to work in the field of higher education, I believe it is essential to have an understanding of how to uncover culture as this affects how students interact on campus and in the residence halls.

Significance of the Study

Using the disciplines of sociology and anthropology to study student culture contributes to the existing higher education literature. Further, the conceptual framework used in this study has analytical generalizability and can be applied to other higher education institutions. This framework enables faculty, staff, and administrators to develop a greater understanding of the student population as well as the culture and conflict which has shaped our neighborhoods and schools. The results of this study will be shared with university officials in order to increase our understanding of the cultural differences present in southeast Michigan, which are brought onto the EMU campus. An awareness of the cultural

differences in southeast Michigan is useful contextual information for faculty, staff, and administrators who work closely with the undergraduate student body.

While previous research examined how college affected students, this research is reversing the approach and looking at how the students and community actually affect the college. This research approach gives faculty, staff, and administrators the ability to investigate the cultural characteristics of students' hometowns, whether they are rural, urban, or suburban, and explore the nature of the students' hometown culture.

In the university setting, newcomers (incoming students), experience surprises and work to make sense of these surprises. Being familiar with the concept of surprise and sensemaking will aid administrators and student leaders as they work to support students during their transition to the university (Louis, 1980b; Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005). In an era when the student body at many institutions is becoming increasingly diverse, this conceptual framework can have important implications for how students are oriented to the university and curriculum.

This research project is creating new knowledge in the area of student culture. In this study, the stories of students' experiences are generated from the specific context of southeast Michigan. While southeast Michigan has a unique history, the stories illustrate the basic premise that students from different communities have different experiences once at the university. In this light, this research can be applied to a wide range of higher education institutions that draw undergraduate students from various settings, including small rural towns, suburban areas, and urban centers.

The present study is significant for both future practice and future research. In terms of practice, the study is beneficial for numerous groups. The study serves student affairs

practitioners because it provides an assessment of culture and conflict on the campus.

Administrators might use this information as they provide services and programs for the undergraduate student population. The study is beneficial to university housing staff because it provides them with data about the varied cultures of the students who are living together in campus housing. Thus, staff might provide programs or services that acknowledge and normalize the change students experience when moving from a (homogenous) community in southeast Michigan onto the campus, which is more diverse. Faculty can benefit from this study by gaining a more in-depth understanding of student culture which informs student behavior, preparation, and support to persist in college.

This study is important in terms of the research that has been done in the area of retention; specifically this study explored the culture and socialization of undergraduate students. Retention studies at EMU often utilize quantitative measures such as aptitude test scores, GPA, and high school curriculum, whereas my research focused on culture and the cultural meanings that students carry in their heads. Utilizing the variables of culture and socialization for future retention studies will provide a qualitative supplement to the current quantitative approaches used to analyze retention.

This study is of value to the institution because it illustrates students' transitions to the university. Based on the cultural elements highlighted in the study, administrators can begin to predict the transitions that students may experience, student behavior, and interaction or lack of interaction between groups of students with these variables (culture and socialization). Thus, this study has predictive validity. Science is about description and explanation on the way to prediction. By providing description and an explanation, administrators begin to be able to predict. Knowledge of communities is a powerful tool

because you can begin to predict patterns, specifically patterns of behavior. Ultimately, patterns of behavior provide a different perspective and context, which varies from the prediction based on test scores. By knowing about students' hometown cultures, administrators can predict some of the social, academic, and cultural transitions that a student may encounter on the campus.

Definition of Relevant Terms

Culture: Communities are defined by their culture. Culture is the “patterned system of tradition-derived norms influencing behavior” (Spindler, 1963, p. 6). “Culture refers to the various ways different groups go about their lives and to the belief systems associated with that behavior” (Wolcott, 2008, p. 22). The different communities that are the hometowns for EMU students teach values and norms. The different values and norms taught illustrate the differences in culture which exist among these communities. The cultural differences which exist among communities are the catalyst for conflict which occurs on the EMU campus. Though culture is a group phenomenon, culture is carried by individuals; in this case culture is carried by individual students to the campus.

Norms: Norms explain how things should be done, what is typical; these are the patterns which are learned from others (Scott, 2001).

Surprise: A surprise is an unexpected experience or event which does not resonate with one's previous experience. A surprise is a trigger for the reaction process (Louis, 1980a)

This study examined students' matriculation processes. Specifically the study examined students' transition from their hometown community to the institutional environment.

Chapter 2: Research Methodology and Literature Review

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to better understand undergraduate students' experience of transitioning from a hometown in southeast Michigan to the EMU campus. Further, this study was intended to provide a conceptual model for studying student culture and the matriculation process, which has analytical generalizability across higher education.

In this section I address how this study contributes to the educational leadership literature, how the research will promote growth for me as an educational leader, and how this policy research will develop knowledge to improve practice. As an educational leader, I can benefit both professionally and personally by developing a greater understanding of culture and how it is enacted on a college or university campus.

Educational leadership.

As an educational leader, it is helpful to look to the environment in order to understand what is happening within the institution. This project used a conceptual framework and applied it to understand the EMU student culture(s). Analytically this framework can be used at other universities; thus there will be analytical generalizability. By creating an awareness of student culture, educational leaders can better understand students' organizational entry to the institution.

As an educational leader, I was interested in developing an understanding of culture, particularly how it forms and recreates itself, essentially the process of cultural transmission. Using empirical evidence based environmental factors, I sought to uncover the logic of the social system, in this case the culture of southeast Michigan. I believed that the communities in southeast Michigan shape the dominant EMU student culture(s). It was my goal to identify

and understand community and environmental elements that affect the student culture. Instead of placing value on cultures and labeling them as good or bad, positive or negative, the focus of the research was on the reality that students experienced in their hometown and on the campus.

Personal value of the study.

For three years, I lived in the midst of student culture at EMU with an apartment and office located inside a first-year student residential building as an Area Complex Director in University Housing. I continue to work with the residential student population, now as an Assistant Director of University Housing, with frequent trips into the residence halls, meetings with students, and telephone calls from parents regarding their student's experience. In my administrative role, students' experiences, students' strong ties to their hometowns in southeast Michigan, and the conflicts between various cultures within southeast Michigan are in plain sight.

Living in southeast Michigan, I travel throughout students' hometown communities on a regular basis. The variation in communities in the area is drastic, from a small town community to the urban center of Detroit; one cannot help but notice the differences. The goal of this study was to systematically review the culture of communities surrounding Eastern Michigan University in order to better understand student culture on the campus.

Having been raised and educated outside of Michigan, I consider myself an outsider. I believe this status was a benefit as I explored the cultural norms, expectations, and values in southeast Michigan. Because I am not entrenched in the cultural components of this area, I had a different perspective when identifying cultural elements. Because I grew up in a shipbuilding community in Virginia, my social network was with children whose parents

worked in white collar jobs, similar to my own family who were business owners. Despite my middle to upper class social network, I attended racially integrated high school. As of 2009, my former high school's racial composition was 54% Black, 34% White, 6% Hispanic, and 3% Asian, which is similar to the demographic mix when I was a student (Newport News Public Schools, 2009). This study allowed me to explore what it means to work with students raised in an industrial, blue collar area, which was different from where I was raised and socialized, which was a white collar area.

I attended high school in Newport News, Virginia, and was accustomed to an integrated educational system, although our neighborhoods were less integrated than the schools. Newport News, Norfolk, and Virginia Beach comprise a large metropolitan area in eastern Virginia. This area is cited as one of the most integrated metropolitan areas in the country (Spatial Structures in the Social Sciences, n.d.). In high school, I was a student athlete. The races of my teammates varied by sport; my track team was nearly all Black and I was the only White female, which was in contrast to my all White co-ed swimming team. Racially, EMU has some parallels to my secondary school experience. At EMU, I explored what it meant to be a White female working with Black students from the Detroit area (which mirrored the ethnic diversity in my high school experience). Because of my secondary school experience, I had an understanding of an urban culture. Despite this knowledge, I remain separate from this community, having not lived in an urban area.

Engaging in this study allowed me to compare and contrast my collegiate experience to the experience at EMU. As an administrator at EMU, I have experienced a new student culture, one much different than my experience as a college student at Virginia Tech. As I explored what it meant to be a housing administrator at a school with a vast number of

commuters, my understanding of the residential experience was challenged. With a student population of nearly 23,000, fewer than 3,000 students live in on-campus residence halls at Eastern. Often it feels like there are even fewer on-campus residential students since most residential students are able to travel to their hometown on the weekends or even during the week because of the close proximity. Despite this difference from my previous experience, my belief in the undergraduate residential experience remains strong. I believe the on-campus residential experience for college students benefits them academically and provides students an opportunity to grow and explore their beliefs and values. As I continue to work in the field of higher education, I believe it is important to have an understanding of how to uncover culture. The ability to recognize and understand culture will aid me as I work with students from various cultural backgrounds.

Knowledge to improve practice.

I believe that cultural research is one way to contribute to data-driven decision-making at the university. Strategic measures can be designed to assist students during their organizational entry process based on a solid cultural knowledge of hometown community culture. Developing a cultural knowledge is one means of improving practice. Thus, I believe that cultural knowledge can guide our practice as we work to provide institutional support for students entering the institution. In order to provide services for the varied student population, I believe that we must identify mismatches that exist between home environment and institutional environment and work to provide support to students, especially as they transition into the institution. This study contributes to the educational leadership knowledge because of the analytic generalizability (Yin, 1994). My conceptual framework can be

applied to other university settings as a tool to explore student culture and the organizational entry process.

Research Tradition

This case study on the culture of undergraduate students at Eastern Michigan University utilized an interpretive research tradition. An interpretive position is defined by and based on meanings of assumptions of causality. Researchers trained at the Chicago School of Sociology, including Boas, Mead, Spindler, Ortner, and other educational and cultural anthropologists, all offered an interpretive perspective. Researchers using an interpretive position explore *the meanings that are in people's heads*. The assumption of causality, i.e., idea that people act based on the meanings in their heads, connects these researchers who come from different disciplines.

German economist and sociologist Max Weber, as well as Wilhelm Dilthey, developed the concept of symbolic interactionism. Dilthey explained that meanings are all based on a set of assumptions that people share about the nature of how to interact, how human beings should relate to one another, and how they should not (Dilthey, 1911/1977). Interactionists often use participant observation to study social interaction. Much of my research study built upon the sociological research developed in the Chicago School of Sociology. Founded in 1892, the Chicago School of Sociology was the second department of sociology at a higher education institution in the United States; the first was at the University of Kansas (Chapoulie, 1996). The Chicago School, also described as the Ecological School, is known for creating a theoretical foundation for a systematic study of society (Chapoulie, 2004). Case study and qualitative field research are two prominent methodological approaches used by the Chicago School (Farber, 1988).

The initial Department Chair of the Chicago School of Sociology was Albion Small. He was also a founder of the American Sociology Journal and an editor for the American Journal of Sociology (The University of Chicago Department of Sociology, 2007). John Dewey and George Mead began their sociological studies at Chicago during the 1890s (Farber, 1988). Robert Park later studied philosophy under the guidance of Dewey (Chapoulie, 1996). Park, who became a faculty member in the Chicago School of Sociology, advanced the focus of sociological research to individuals and their social behavior. Grounded in the methods of anthropologists, Park researched both urban life and the culture of the North American Indians. Methodologically, Park used a variety of approaches to focus on culture including direct observation, statistical analysis, and analysis of deviant subcultures. Dewey, Mead, and Park are considered pioneers in sociological research. These three researchers trained many students who went on to become faculty members at the Chicago School, shaping future generations of sociological study (Farber, 1988).

The city of Chicago itself became the focus of numerous sociological studies, and as such, the city was studied using the Chicago School's pragmatist approach (Ohm, 1988). An initial research study from the Chicago School of Sociology focused on the culture of Chicago, examining ethnic group relations and everyday life in the city (Chapoulie, 2004). Park, who headed this research, described the cultural elements of Chicago, stating "The city is a state of mind, a body of customs and traditions, and of organized attitudes and sentiments that inhere in this tradition" (Park & Burgess, 1925, p. 1). The culture of Chicago was described by examining the actions and interactions in households, on the streets, and even in courthouses. Descriptive reports including census data, crime statistics, housing records, and welfare information are examples of artifacts which were used to examine the cultures

throughout Chicago. When describing the research in Chicago, Park (1928) stated, “In these great cities, where all the passions, all the energies of mankind are released, we are in a position to investigate the process of civilization, as it were, under a microscope” (p. 890). Firsthand experience with a phenomenon was the data collection method used by Park and Burgess to develop an “intimate acquaintanceship” (Farber, 1988, p. 346).

Ernest Burgess and Robert Park worked extensively with doctoral students in the 1920s and 1930s on sociological studies of Chicago. They taught their students that social reality was based out of ecological and economic factors. The next wave of theorists at the Chicago School, Everett Hughes, Lloyd Warner, and Herber Blumer, focused on urban ethnography and interpretive sociology (Chapoulie, 2004; The University of Chicago Department of Sociology, 2007). This group of theorists grounded their research in symbolic interactionism, a concept developed by Blumer, who was one of George Mead’s students. Symbolic interactionism is based on the premise that individuals act based on meanings that are garnered from social interaction, through the use of language and symbols (Carrothers & Benson, 2003). Ethnographic research, specifically using participant observation, is one means of studying symbolic interaction.

This study of undergraduate student culture at Eastern Michigan University borrowed from the methods of previous Chicago School field researchers, including Wirth’s (1928) study on Chicago Jewish ghettos and Thrasher’s (1927) study of Chicago gangs, both histories of territory dispute (Abbott, 1997). There are a host of empirical studies which provide a theoretical foundation for this study, including Whyte’s *Street Corner Society* (1943/1993), which detailed Italian immigrants living in the Boston Slums; Goffman’s *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959) and *Asylums* (1961), a study of the National

Institute of Mental Health; and Becker's *Outsiders* (1963), a sociological study of deviance. Like these researchers, I served as the main research instrument, observing the undergraduate student culture at Eastern Michigan University (Chapoulie, 1996). I discuss my role as the main research instrument in this ethnographic study later in this chapter.

Burgess, who expanded upon Park's research, established a concentric-ring diagram of Chicago, which delineated cultural areas within the city. Burgess' ecological concept (1925) was applied to southeast Michigan for this research study. Within southeast Michigan there are urban, suburban, and rural areas; distinct culture(s) exists within each of these areas. Succession, as described by Burgess, occurs when the city grows; with growth, additional rings are developed within the city, and there is a population movement. "White flight," a movement of White people out of the city of Detroit, is an example of what Burgess deemed succession. Succession occurs as the inside rings are invaded by a new group of people, which results in the desire of the elite to move to a more desirable location (Park & Burgess, 1925).

According to the Chicago School of thought, social facts make sense when they are studied in a social context. Human interactions occur in social space, and there is value in focusing on the geographic space because it provides a contextual element (Abbott, 1997). Thus, I decided that the most appropriate way to understand student culture was to examine students' experiences, as well as their actions and interactions in the natural campus setting.

I utilized an interpretive research tradition, which used ethnographic fieldwork methods to study the EMU undergraduate student culture. An interpretive research tradition was the chosen approach because it allowed for the study of society, specifically the ability to utilize theory and apply it to actions and interactions of groups. In this study, it was important

to examine both the campus environment and students' hometowns in order to develop an understanding of student culture. An empirical approach to research was used to examine the social reality in the communities in southeast Michigan and the student cultures at EMU (Farber, 1988).

Ethnographic research.

Ethnography is a primary method used to conduct anthropological studies. This research study is an ethnography of student cultures at Eastern Michigan University. Ethnography is field study research that uses culture as an organizing concept. Wolcott (2008) described ethnography as the “study of the customary social behaviors of an identifiable group of people” (p. 241).

Anthropologists study real life, human behavior, characteristics, and qualities. Anthropologists generally agree that individuals are unable to explain why they behave in a certain manner, essentially what they do and why. What individuals are able to verbalize is a rationalization of their beliefs system (Spindler, 1963).

Wolcott (2008) suggested that three fieldwork methods be used in ethnographic research: experiencing, enquiring, and examining. These methods were utilized for this study. Experiencing includes participant observation, what is seen and heard. Wolcott explained the concept of observation, further stating “We are overwhelmed by how much we can take in through looking and listening, from the subtleties of body language to the organization of cultural space” (Wolcott, 2008, p. 49). Through firsthand observation, what is seen and heard, Wolcott suggested the researcher is able to gather data. The next fieldwork method, enquiring, focuses on the interviewing process, which Wolcott saw as a complement to observation. The enquiring process is an interactive role, questioning and interacting with

those being studied. The third fieldwork method, examining, focuses on what has been produced by others including archival research, documents, and photographs. The informant-focused element of examining allows informants a time to share items with the ethnographer such as personal possessions or household items which may inform the research (Wolcott, 2008). In the methods section I describe in greater detail the use of participant observation, interviews, and archival research which were used for this ethnography.

Ethnographic study of EMU undergraduate students.

My interest in student culture at the university level drove my study, which was designed to explore the undergraduate student culture(s) at EMU. Ethnographic research, *ethno* (referring to culture) + *graphy* (referring to the study of), was used to investigate the student culture(s) of EMU undergraduate students. Spradley (1980) stated that “cultural description, the central task of ethnography, is the first step in understanding the human species” (p. 13).

Ethnography allows for consistent evaluation and synthesis of cultural elements, which builds on empirical data (Merriam, 1998). The result of the ongoing ethnographic research process is the emergence of new data, which leads to a refinement of cultural understanding.

In ethnography...data and interpretation evolve together, each informing the other. Additional data provide illustration, test the adequacy of the developing account, and suggest avenues for further inquiry. Fieldwork and interpretation go hand in hand as concurrent, rather than sequential, steps. (Wolcott, 1987, p. 40)

Ethnography is a form of qualitative research which enables the researcher to examine individuals' experiences by looking at their everyday life. Morgan (1997) suggested that “one of the easiest ways of appreciating the nature of...culture and subculture is simply to observe the day-to-day functioning of a group or organization to which one belongs; as if one

were an outsider (p. 129). Morgan (1997) suggested to “Adopt the role of anthropologist” (p. 129). This approach was utilized to study the undergraduate student culture at EMU.

Human interaction is the basis of ethnographic inquiry; more specifically, it is about understanding culture by studying “groups of people engaging in customary forms of social interaction” (Wolcott, 2008, p. 37). This inquiry process leads to cultural interpretation, which is the central purpose of ethnographic research (Wolcott, 2008). Student culture is a complex reality that has meaning and is influenced by external forces. Culture “has its own textual coherence but it is always locally interpreted; a fragile web of stories and meaning woven” by individuals (Ortner, 1997, p. 11). Spradley (1980) identified cultural behavior, cultural knowledge, and cultural artifacts as the three fundamental components of culture. Cultural behavior is what people do, cultural knowledge is what people know, and cultural artifacts are the items that people use. Cultural description of the undergraduate student body at Eastern Michigan University is the first step to understanding the diversity on the campus. Wolcott (1987) explained “the purpose of ethnographic research is to describe and interpret cultural behavior” (p. 43). An ethnographic design, based in anthropology, was employed for this study because the method relates to a theory of culture (Spradley, 1980). Further, the design enabled me, as the researcher, to examine the relationships and interactions between groups of students raised in southeast Michigan.

This ethnographic study was grounded in the communities within southeast Michigan; utilizing an anthropological and sociological lens, the study focused on the communities surrounding EMU which are dominant feeder areas for the campus. Students come to campus with a cultural foundation, which can be described as their belief system, unique use of language, patterns of interactions with others, routines, and rituals (Spradley,

1980). Uncovering cultural elements in southeast Michigan and how they shape students prior to college provided a basis for understanding the undergraduate student culture on the EMU campus.

Ethnographic methods were utilized for this study because of their suitability for studying student cultures and relationships between groups of students on campus. By studying groups of students' relationships to one another, I began to discern the student culture(s) on the campus. In summary, an ethnographic study provides a systematic means of uncovering the undergraduate student culture(s) on the EMU campus.

Interpretivist perspective.

The foundation for this ethnographic study is an interpretive set of assumptions of causality: that people act based on the meanings that they have in their heads. Accordingly, the subset of ethnography I use for my study is called interpretivist perspective. Culture is derived from these powerful, socially constructed, and socially reinforced meanings. Essentially my research is designed to explore *meaning communities*, which are culturally defined. Meanings are all based on a set of assumptions that people share about the nature of how to interact, how human beings should relate to one another, and how they should not (Dilthey, 1911/1977). Rules, norms, and values emerge from these meanings, such as whom you can marry and whom you cannot, whom you are going to fight, and where you are going to live. Meanings lead to cultural differences, from which conflict, segregation, and boundaries may develop.

Individuals carry explicit meanings, which the individual is able to describe because he/she is aware of the meanings. Other aspects of culture have implicit meanings. Individuals are unable to explain the culture with implicit meanings because this falls out of awareness

resulting in a collective unconscious. The term collective unconscious was developed by the late Carl Jung who was a theoretical psychologist and practicing clinician. The collective unconscious, which influences our experiences, emotions, and behaviors is based on a reservoir of experiences as a species and connects our outer and inner realities. This theory suggests why individuals may have an immediate recognition of the meaning of myths or symbols (Jung, 1973).

Similarly, Spradley (1980) described the impact of being socialized in a culture:

Whenever people learn a culture, they are to some extent imprisoned without knowing it. Anthropologists speak of this mode of existence as being “culture-bound,” that is, living inside of a particular reality that is taken for granted as “the reality.” (p. 14)

All cultures socialize their children and have their own language (Spindler, 1959). Culture is a group phenomenon which is carried by individuals. A foundational aspect of this research is an understanding of the meanings that people carry in their heads, that is, their causal assumptions. One of the best ways to understand culture is to explore the environment, specifically looking at the tasks that are organized around community rules. As an institution of higher education, Eastern Michigan University can be described as a formal transmitter of culture and has well-defined community rules. Spindler (1963) explained the connection between schools and culture:

Education is [one] instrument through which cultures perpetuate themselves. It is the process through which the members of a society assure themselves that the behavior necessary to continue their culture is learned...The school is concerned with the transmission, conservation, and extension of culture. (p. 50)

Institutions operate with rules, which can be defined as *the way we do things around here*.

Communities, churches, businesses, schools, and families transmit and perpetuate culture by sharing the rules (explicitly and implicitly) about how to live.

College students come to campus having grown up in a social system governed by rules, laws, and myths, which create a shared expectation of how to act. There are thousands of rules with each culture; inclusion or exclusion within a culture is based on knowledge of the cultural rules. Individuals are free to act within a culture once they understand the rules. Spradley (1980) reflected on the unconscious component of cultural rules, stating, “Once we learn the cultural rules, they become tacit and we hardly think about what we are doing” (p. 53).

Cultures are designed to embrace people within the culture more than people outside of the culture. When experiencing cultures different from one’s own, there are a variety of emotions that could arise, including curiosity, fear, dislike, or uncertainty. Differences between cultures may result in conflicts. Conflict can manifest itself in the form of a competition, which involves the exertion of power resulting in the emergence of a dominant and subordinate culture. At times the dominant culture overtakes the subordinate culture; in essence the subordinate culture is organized out of existence because of the inability to sustain itself. The interpretivist research perspective is well suited to study such cultural conflicts.

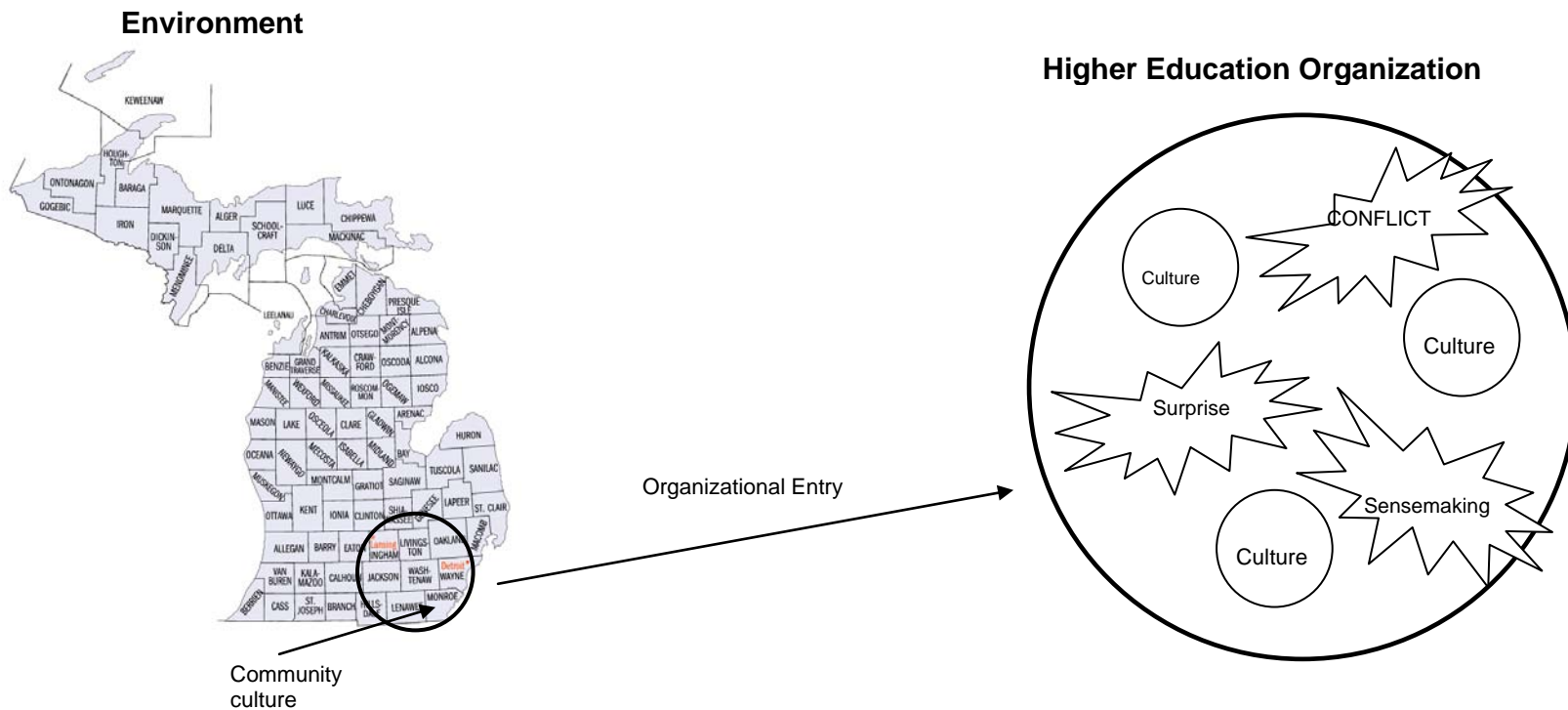
Organizing Conceptual Framework

Culture and conflict are the key concepts in the conceptual framework for this study. The cultural environment on the Eastern Michigan University campus is composed of various cultural groups from southeast Michigan. This study examined the interaction, or lack of interaction, among the various cultures in southeast Michigan and how this translates at EMU.

The organizing conceptual framework for this study, which illustrates that students bring their culture onto the campus, is diagramed in Figure 2.1. In addition, definitions of *attributes of culture* and *transmitters of culture* are provided. The figure illustrates that southeast Michigan was the dominant feeder area for Eastern Michigan University. Students came from an array of communities ranging from small rural communities to larger urban areas.



Figure 2.1. Conceptual framework: Cultural environment and educational organization



Attributes of culture: include rules, laws, myths, tasks, and rituals; *what* to love and hate, *who* to love and hate, behaviors, language that is spoken, gender relationships, clothing, transportation, how and with whom one spends free time and money.

Transmitters of culture: include formal and informal institutions. Examples of formal institutions include family, churches, businesses, schools, and prisons. Neighborhoods are an example of an informal institution. The transmission of culture, a transfer of existing shared meaning and behavior, leads to cultural reproduction.

Figure 2.2. Conceptual framework: Organizational entry process, from hometown community to higher education organization

Culture.

Culture is a complex idea, and many prominent researchers have written about their attempts to study culture. Several of their definitions of culture are presented in this section. Researchers Boas (1938), Mead (1937/2002), Spindler (1959; 1963), Wolcott (2008), and Ortner (1997), all provided their interpretation of the elements of culture. Franz Boas, one of the earliest researchers on culture, is considered the father of modern American cultural anthropology. Boas studied how the environment affects the way individuals view the world. Boas' early work explored cultural groups including the cultural contact and change within North American Indian and Eskimos (Wolcott, 2008). Boas stated, "Culture embraces all the manifestations of social behavior of a community, the reactions of the individual as affected by the habits of the groups in which he lives, and the product of human activities as determined by these habits" (Boas, 1938, p. 149). Boas' research suggested that hometown or community has a significant effect on college students, as home communities are the place where individuals learn acceptable social behaviors as defined by the community. Thus when students come to campus they bring with them the standards from their hometown community.

Another cultural researcher, Margaret Mead (1937/2002), conducted ethnographic research in Samoa under the direction of Boas (Wolcott, 2008). Mead provided a broad definition of culture, stating that:

Culture means the whole complex of traditional behavior which has been developed by the human race and is successively learned by each generation. A culture is less precise. It can mean the forms of traditional behavior which are characteristic of a given society, or of a group of societies, or of a certain race, or of a certain area, or of a certain period of time. (p. 17)

By applying Mead's cultural definition to the university environment, there are varied cultures within southeast Michigan and thus varied cultures accompany students to the university.

The notion that *we are products of our culture* suggests the intense effect that culture has on inhabitants (in this case, students). On the surface, culture is the way individuals dress, speak, and socialize, as well as their daily rituals. On a deeper level, culture is one's values, beliefs, behavior, perceptions, and practices. Educational institutions, such as universities, are composed of cultures and subcultures; students can belong to one or several of these groups. Students bring a variety of value systems to campus that fashion a mosaic of university culture (Morgan, 1997).

George Spindler, an emeritus professor of Anthropology and Education at Stanford, devoted his professional career to educational anthropology. Specifically, he examined educational organizations as cultural transmitters (Spindler, 1963, 1974). Spindler was a pioneer researcher connecting anthropology to education. His research examined school systems in both the United States and abroad. He is best known for applying ethnographic methodology to the educational sector, specifically in the classroom (Spindler, 1963). Spindler's work included studies on the cultural diversity in the classrooms in America. He explained that the K-12 educational system transmits culture, essentially teaching students how they should act in their culture (Spindler, 1974). Spindler described culture as a "patterned system of tradition-derived norms influencing behavior" (1963, p. 6). Hometown communities teach cultural norms to children and new community members, norms are recognized as acceptable behavior within the community. Spindler further described the cultural transmission process, stating,

Human beings achieve human status by learning, and this learning must take place in a social environment that is never wholly unique and is always structured in some degree by whatever cultural norms govern the behavior of the people in their society. (Spindler, 1963, p. 35)

Harry Wolcott, professor emeritus in Anthropology at the University of Oregon, suggested that cultural transmission includes two components, (a) socialization and (b) enculturation. He provided definitions for both:

Socialization: describes[s] how people *have to act*, the “know how” of the range of behavior acceptable within a particular group

Enculturation: a complementary set of beliefs and values linking the knowledge of what must be done with a set of shared values that recognizes such behavior as “good,” “moral,” and so forth, and thus how one *wants* to act. (Wolcott, 2008, p. 99) [italics in original]

As a doctoral student at Stanford University, Wolcott studied under the direction of George Spindler. Wolcott was part of a doctoral cohort which conducted field research on Indian reservations in western Canada, between Calgary and Edmonton. Wolcott’s site was the Hobbema Reservation in Alberta, Canada. Over the course of Wolcott’s academic career he conducted numerous ethnographic studies with varied subjects ranging from his study of the Kwakiutl to an elementary school principal (Wolcott, 2008). In Wolcott’s book *Ethnography: A Way of Seeing* (2008), he defined culture, stating: “Culture refers to the various ways different groups go about their lives and to the belief systems associated with that behavior” (p. 22). Wolcott suggested that the underlying concept of culture “is revealed through discerning patterns of socially shared behavior” (Wolcott, 2008, p. 71).

Yet another description of culture was provided by Sherry Ortner, a prominent researcher and Distinguished Professor of Anthropology at University of California, Los Angeles. Culture is able to illuminate the “complex motives and complex debates that are the stuff of real lives and struggles” (Ortner, 1997, p. 11).

In studying student culture, I utilized a framework of cultural concepts based on several researchers' theories, including Schein (1992), Mintzberg (1973), and Spindler (1959; 1963; 1974). Edgar Schein (1992), a professor at the MIT Sloan School of Management, is well known for his work in organizational and corporate culture. Schein, who studied organizational culture, defined culture as:

A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to think, and feel in relation to those problems. (Schein, 1992, p. 12)

Schein's conceptual model of culture is three tiered: artifacts are on the surface level, values lie just below the artifacts, and at the core are basic assumptions. These levels of culture exist simultaneously (Schein, 1992). Using an iceberg as a metaphor, the cultural artifacts are seen above the water, values are just below water's surface, and basic assumptions are deep beneath the water. These cultural levels differ based on the visibility to the observer.

Artifacts are visible, tangible, and audible; they include the physical environment, language (verbal and non-verbal communication), and style as embodied in clothing, artistic expression, rituals, and ceremonies. Artifacts are grounded in values and assumptions. Though artifacts are easy to observe, it can be challenging to decipher their meaning (Schein, 1992). On the college campus, technology, food, cars, transportation, student clothing, how students greet other students, and what students talk about are examples of artifacts.

Values are less visible than artifacts but often more personal and deeply held. Returning to the metaphor of an iceberg, the artifacts are the tip of the iceberg visible above the water and the values are the larger foundation beneath the water (Schein, 1992). Values represent goals, philosophies, standards, ideals held in high esteem, and social principles. Espoused values are a deeper level of culture than artifacts but are seen and known. Espoused

values, attitudes, and beliefs are conscious strategies which are taught within communities, the value may start with one individual but spread within the group or community. Espoused values serve as a guide to community members, essentially what a group expresses they are or will do. These values serve as the norms for conduct and can be observed in everyday behavior. As Schein (1990) pointed out, at times espoused values contradict basic assumptions, meaning what one says (espoused values) is different than what one does (basic assumptions).

Basic underlying assumptions are the deepest level of culture and are often taken for granted and rarely debated, in essence these assumptions are non-negotiable (Schein, 1992). Assumptions create a vital layer of culture, encompassing the primary aspects of life which include the value placed on work, family, and self. Assumptions are concepts believed without question and are patterns of interaction between individuals in the group and the nature of reality, time, and space (Schein, 1992). These assumptions are very strongly held because they exist at the deepest level of consciousness. Basic assumptions are the essence of culture and embody the way we do things around here. There is tremendous strength in basic assumptions; individuals cannot fathom approaching a situation any other way; the basic assumption serves as their guiding mental map. Thus basic assumptions are very difficult to change, and challenging such assumptions will create intense defense and anxiety. Further, groups make assumptions of others based on their own values (Schein, 1990).

Wolcott (2008) states “although culture cannot be directly observed, there is plenty to draw upon for making inferences about its influence in the form of custom, or tradition, or prevailing patterns of believing and acting characteristic of a group” (p. 242). Observable artifacts and behaviors can provide insight into group norms and values. Though culture

cannot be completely explained, behaviors can be observed and patterns noted which provide evidence of cultural elements. By making sense of pervasive patterns of interaction and observed behavior, the researcher is able to build a cultural account (Wolcott, 2008).

Mintzberg (1973), a professor of business and management, provides an explanation of group norms:

The behavior of a group cannot be predicted solely from an understanding of the personality of each of its members. Various social processes intervene. The group develops a mood, an atmosphere. In the context of the organization, we talk about a style, a culture, a character. (p. 151)

Much like a culture developed in organizations as described by Mintzberg, there are parallels to the educational sector. Students come to college with an established cultural foundation: sets of beliefs, norms, and values which were taught in their hometown community.

Communities in southeast Michigan teach different cultural norms and values; thus when students convene on the EMU campus, there are an array of student cultures which are grounded in the values of their hometown community. At the collegiate level, value conflicts occur because of varied cultural foundations. When conflicts occur, cultures work to protect themselves. Power is one element used to protect oneself; this is referred to as micropolitics and is used to influence others.

Cultural reproduction.

Pierre Bourdieu, a French cultural theorist, developed the concept of cultural reproduction (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Bourdieu's work focused on education and social class, specifically examining the power held by the dominant class. Conversely, Bourdieu also examined the effect of cultural reproduction on individuals from the lower social class. His research illustrates that those at a disadvantage economically and educationally are locked in a pattern or track. Bourdieu's study of schools illuminated that educational systems

are a reproductive mechanism enabling those in the dominant class to remain in the dominant class (Bourdieu, 1993; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977).

Bourdieu's cultural reproduction model identified parental socioeconomic status and cultural capital as factors that impact cultural reproduction (Bourdieu, 1993). Massey (2007) defined and explained the impact of cultural capital:

In contrast to human capital, which includes knowledge, skills, and abilities that make people directly productive as individuals, cultural capital consists of knowledge and manner that do not make individuals more productive in and of themselves, but that permits them to be more effective as actors within a particular social context – in this case, elite settings. (p. 18)

Cultural reproduction occurs in communities as norms and values are passed from one generation to the next. This transfer of existing shared meanings and behavior results in continuity within the community. Durability is a characteristic of social stratification; it withstands time as it is passed from older members of communities to younger generations (Massey, 2007).

The gravitation towards individuals like oneself, an example of class divisions, is evident in society at large and on college campuses. Markers such as clothing, language, and even means of transportation provide evidence of class status. Group affiliation can be created based on a variety of characteristics, including one's hometown, interest in social activities, skin color, and language (Brantlinger, 2003).

Bourdieu (1993), who used a geographic lens when studying society and culture, concluded that spatial distances have direct relation to social distances. Geographic separation between communities as well as within communities often translates into social separation. Bourdieu contends that social background influences our social taste, the

activities we engage in, and our preferences in music, food, and entertainment. Taste is a symbol of dominance, a means of illustrating social distinction (Bourdieu, 1993).

Taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier. Social subjects, classified by their classifications, distinguish themselves by the distinctions they make, between the beautiful and the ugly, the distinguished and the vulgar, in which their position in the objective classifications is expressed or betrayed. (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 6)

Class divisions and social barriers on a college campus can be illuminated using Bourdieu's concept of tastes, which he defines as social patterns (Bourdieu, 1993).

Caste and class.

Caste and class play pivotal roles in many societies. Social class is based on a number of elements including economic status. Individuals can move in the class system but not in the caste system. Caste status is for a lifetime. In *The Way Class Works*, Weis (2008) provided:

... examples of profoundly classed experiences, rooted not only in material realities but also in shared culturally based expectations, whether recognized or not: the books we read (or if we read at all); our travel destinations (if we have them) and modes of travel (bus, car, private jet); the films we see; clothes we wear; food we eat; ... where we feel most comfortable and with whom; sports our children play and where they play them; the extent and type of extracurricular activities our children engage in; where we live and the nature of our housing. (p. 2)

Though there is the possibility of movement in the class system, there is not a similar movement pattern in the caste system. India is one country that is divided by a visible caste system. The United States also has caste system influences, though these elements are often hidden. John Dollard, emeritus professor of Psychology at Yale University and author of *Caste and Class in a Southern Town* (1937), described the caste system sharing that it "is often seen as a barrier to social contact or, at least, to some form of social contact. It defines a superior and inferior group and regulates the behavior of the members of each group" (p. 62). Dollard's 1935-1936 study of a southern cotton-producing town in the southeast focused on

the caste system for Whites and Blacks. Throughout the study, Dollard found that the lives of individuals both White and Black were intertwined. Dollard explained that to understand the lives of individuals in the southern town one must look collectively at the culture; he emphasized that the experiences of Whites or Blacks could not be studied in isolation.

Dollard suggested that individuals born into the lower caste could not rise to a higher caste as there were barriers which prevent individuals from legitimately moving to a higher caste. Individuals in the lower caste often experienced social isolation which limited personal development. “Caste and class distinctions are ways of dividing people according to the behavior expected of them in society. Caste and class show the relations in which people stand to one another...” (Dollard, 1937, p. 61).

In Dollard’s study he described a White caste and a Black caste; within each caste there were classes. Lower, middle, and upper social classes existed within a caste. Lower class individuals had agricultural work and had limited financial and capital resources with minimal opportunity for social advancement. Lower class Whites had advantages over lower class Blacks because of political opportunities. Socially mobile middle class individuals generally came from the lower class. That is, individuals were more likely to move up (rather than demoting) in class status. Middle class individuals held managerial or professional positions, had capital, and valued education. Socially, middle class White individuals distanced themselves from lower class individuals and Blacks, working to promote the White aristocracy. Upper class status, which was often passed from one generation to the next, is a position in which an individual has achievements and strong ties to the social and economic system (Dollard, 1937).

The late John Ogbu, Professor of Anthropology at University of California, Berkeley, focused his professional career on minority education, specifically studying how race affects educational attainment and achievement. Ogbu studied an array of educational settings throughout the United States and abroad (Great Britain, New Zealand, India, Israel, and Japan). Ogbu researched how culture influenced academic achievement. Ogbu believed that the American system of caste or racial stratification influenced the educational performance of Black students and was a factor that contributed to the lower performance of Black students (Ogbu, 1978). Further, Ogbu believed that the caste system in other countries, where there was a dominant and minority group, would show similar educational patterns. To test this theory, Ogbu studied societies divided by caste, including India, Israel, and Japan where there was the same race for both the dominant and minority groups. In contrast, he also studied societies where the dominant and minority groups were of different races including Britain, New Zealand, and the United States. A pattern, specifically an educational gap, emerged between the dominant and minority groups in all countries studied (Ogbu, 1978).

Gerald Berreman, Professor Emeritus of Social Cultural Anthropology at University of California, Berkeley, devoted his career to the interaction of caste, gender, and class. His work examined the environment, focusing on an array of communities ranging from urban to rural. Berreman contrasted caste and class stratification:

Class is a matter of acquired status rather than of birth-ascription, and is in this respect distinct from race, caste, and ethnic stratification, with different social consequences. In a class system, one is ranked in accord with his behavior and attributes (income, occupation, education, life style, etc.). In a birth-ascribed system by contrast, one behaves and exhibits attributes in accord with his rank...A class system is a continuum; there are individuals who are intergrades, there are individuals in the process of movement, there are individuals who have experienced more than one rank...A birth-ascribed system is comprised of discrete ranks on the pattern of echelon organization, without legitimate mobility, without intergrades; the strata are named, publicly recognized, [and] clearly bounded. (Berreman, 1972, pp. 398-399)

In the United States, caste structure is identified as a Black caste and a White caste, each as a bounded group. Class is a subsidiary of caste, as each caste is subdivided into a class structure (Ogbu, 1974). The castes are unequal as evident by the educational, economic, and social achievement. Ogbu reflected on the values within this country:

Here [in the United States] the social and economic inequality or gap between blacks and whites persists, even though Americans espouse the principles of equality and freedom, and even though public education is believed to be a channel for individual self-improvement. The gap in education is just as wide as the gap in socioeconomic status, and equally persistent. (Ogbu, 1978, p. 2)

Ogbu's findings related to the educational system were contentious; his research suggested that Black high school students in Washington, D.C., hindered their academic performance for social reasons, specifically fear of being identified as an individual who *acted White*. While serving on an educational task force in California, Ogbu identified cultural clashes in language, what he identified as incompatibility between the language used in the home environment for Black students and the school environment. At home the Black vernacular, sometimes called Ebonics, was in stark contrast to the Standard English used in the classroom. Ogbu viewed the language difference as valid, a characteristic which was not inferior. His research suggested that many Black students form an oppositional cultural identity "where Blacks because of their internalization of discrimination developed their own culture. In his perspective, Black Americans exhibit this oppositional culture in music (rap, hip-hop, jazz), through clothes (baggy, loose fitting) and even speech (Ebonics)" ("Racial identity and academic achievement: Ogbu theory," 2008, p. 1).

Ecological correlations and communities in southeast Michigan.

Ecological correlations provide descriptions of groups of people, not single individuals, and are often used for sociological studies. According to Robinson (1950), the

purpose of an ecological correlation is to “discover something about the behavior of individuals” (p. 352), which is achieved by looking at the relationship between the environment (ecology) and a group of individuals. “It has long been recognized that where people live and work can be a relevant factor in helping to explain their demographic behavior” (Hugo, Champion, & Lattes, 2003, p. 277). People behave based on the meanings they have, and the meanings they have are derived from their environment. Students come to campus with a lifetime of experience; most students attending EMU have lived in a particular area of southeast Michigan for 18 or more years.

Conflict.

Laurence Iannaccone is well known for his cultural and micropolitical research in schools. His dissertation research titled *The Social System of an Elementary School Staff* (1959) examined the micropolitics of education. His study addressed the conflict within the K-12 school system and how policy was developed out of conflict. Iannaccone remarked of the distinct culture he observed in each of the schools he studied. Micropolitics in the school systems include the interactions between different groups with the educational system: students, teachers, and administrators. The second element of micropolitics according to Iannaccone was the interaction between professionals and lay persons in the school system (Iannaccone, 1991). Blase (1991) described micropolitics as:

...power and how people use it to influence others and to protect themselves. It is about conflict and how people compete with each other to get what they want. It is about cooperation and how people build support for themselves to achieve their ends. It is about what people in all social settings think about and have strong feelings about, but what is so often unspoken and not easily observed. (p. 1)

It is evident that different perspectives and desires exist between groups and that these differences manifest themselves within the educational setting (Iannaccone, 1991).

Elmer Schattschneider, a distinguished political scientist and past president of the American Political Science Association, is well known for his work *The Semisovereign People: A Realist's View of Democracy in America* (1975). Schattschneider, whose research was based in political science, developed several conflict concepts that are applicable across disciplines. One example is *scope of the conflict*, which refers to how the audience is involved in the conflict. The audience members are the individuals on the sidelines who are observing the individuals actively involved in the conflict; the outcome of the conflict depends on how people are divided and the reactions of the audience. Schattschneider suggested that the audience is not a neutral party. On the contrary, the audience can influence the outcome of the conflict. Conflict can separate and unite groups of people at the same time. For those who are united by the conflict, a sense of intra-group cohesion is formed. Boundaries which are created because of the conflict separate those who belong and those who do not belong. The outcome of the conflict is determined based on how individuals are divided by these boundaries (Schattschneider, 1975).

There are three approaches that can be used to manage conflicts: (a) privatize the conflict, (b) socialize the conflict, or (c) define the conflict (Schattschneider, 1975). The visibility of the conflict is determined by whether the conflict is privatized or socialized. Privatizing the conflict is an example of segregation, whereas socializing the conflict is an example of integration. The goal of privatizing a conflict is to maintain control and keep the conflict invisible, a tactic used more often by the powerful side. Privatizing is achieved by restricting the scope of the conflict as well as working to keep the conflict out of the public arena. If a conflict is socialized, the goal is to get more people involved in the conflict, which is achieved by appealing to the public. Socialization is often a tactic used by the weaker

party; it is an effort to seek help from others in order to strengthen one's side of the conflict. A third option which can be used to manage a conflict is to define the conflict. Defining a conflict allows the person defining the conflict to either privatize or socialize the conflict, essentially determining who engages in the conflict. There are an overwhelming number of conflicts in society; however many of the conflicts do not fully develop due to stronger conflicts which come to the forefront (Schattschneider, 1975).

Conflict and Eastern Michigan University.

The conflicts between groups of undergraduate students coming from different areas in southeast Michigan were examined in this study. Specifically, I identified mismatches between hometown cultural environment and institutional environment. Mismatches are an example of conflict; in my conceptual framework I used *surprise* to describe conflicts that student experienced during their matriculation process.

Schattschneider addressed the competition of conflict, stating, "What they want more becomes the enemy of what they want less" (1975, p. 66). This kind of competition of conflict exists within student culture(s) at Eastern Michigan University. Schattschneider's statement, *what you want more is the enemy of what you want less*, could be modified in two ways when examining the EMU student culture(s):

1. What is essential is the enemy of what is not essential, and
2. What the family needs more (e.g., financial support, time) is the enemy of what the individual student needs less (e.g., degree, education).

At the university, it is assumed that students want an education, a degree, and the opportunity to have a higher earning potential. In southeast Michigan, particularly for students at Eastern Michigan University, there are many competing interests to education. As I detail in Chapter

4, elements that students identified in conflict with their education included taking care of family including dependents, the ability to finance an education, to pay bills, rent, and buy food. For some students, the desire for an education supersedes all other factors. For other students, family and financial responsibilities are of primary importance, and their education becomes a secondary priority.

Student culture and conflict on the EMU campus.

Student culture on the EMU campus was constituted by the culture of communities in southeast Michigan. For students growing up in southeast Michigan, it is possible *not* to encounter diversity prior to college; some students are isolated in their communities and do not venture to other communities. Still other students traveled within their immediate area yet avoided certain communities. As students on the EMU campus interact with students from different hometown communities, they are confronted with different cultural norms and values. What were constants (norms or values) in students' hometowns may not be constants on the college campus.

Spindler (1963), who studied interactions within school systems, discovered that conflict occurred both within and between educational levels. Teacher-to-teacher conflict was an example of a conflict within a level, and teacher-to-administrator conflict was a between-level conflict. More specifically, the conflict Spindler identified within the educational sector was cultural conflict. Spindler explained the impetus of the conflict, which "can be understood as conflicts that grow out of sharp differences in values that mirror social and cultural transformation of tremendous scope" (1963, p. 142). Though Spindler researched conflict within the K-12 system, similar cultural conflicts exist within the higher education system. My research examined EMU undergraduate students and the cultural

conflicts which exist because of different values systems, specifically examining the challenges that students experienced as they transition to the collegiate environment.

Spindler researched the effects of values clashes and found that students often retreated to the comforts of their own values system. Spindler described this interaction, “after some exploration in the new dimensions of feeling and belief offered to him by the opposing system his feeling of threat overcomes him and he seeks refuge in the comforting shelter of his established values” (Spindler, 1963, p. 158). According to Spindler (1963), a new cultural experience can result in three outcomes: (a) an increased rigidity causing the individual to overcompensate and identify only with his/her prescribed values, (b) a shift in the direction of another values system, or (c) a conflict that remains unresolved within the individual.

To summarize, conflict occurs on the campus when a student’s values and norms clash with other students’ values and norms. In the college environment, students begin to realize that their established norms and values differ from those of other students. The student body at EMU is composed of many cultures from southeast Michigan. Once at EMU, students are exposed to a variety of cultures through both the academic and residential components of university life. For many students the cultural immersion is a new experience, as many students come from a community where there is limited exposure to different cultures. The conceptual framework for this study uses the concepts of culture and conflict to examine the student culture at EMU, which is created by the hometown communities of southeast Michigan.

Surprise and Adaptation.

For this study, the social context for the adaptation process was the university environment, which was where students interact with others, formed relationships, and constructed meaning. Identity for this study referred to student identity, focusing on the question “Who am I?” The identity component also encompassed where the student came from, essentially the student’s past experiences in their hometown environment. In the retrospective component, students made sense of previous events or actions (Weick, 1979). For example, students can use their past experiences to interpret events that they encounter on the college campus. For students, the retrospective component may be comparing their collegiate experience to that of their hometown community.

Louis is credited with the component of surprise, which functions as the trigger in the sensemaking process (Louis, 1980b). In the article “Surprise and Sensemaking: What Newcomers Experience in Entering Unfamiliar Organizational Settings,” Meryl Louis (1980b) described her research on organizational entry in the business setting and the differences that individuals experience between old and new roles. She focused on how newcomers experience and make sense of their experience in a new organizational setting, specifically focusing on career transitions which included changing jobs, role in an organization, or profession (Louis, 1980a). Louis (1980b) suggested that newcomers to an organization employ a sensemaking process as they experience the culture of their new organization.

Louis defined three cues in the sensemaking process: changes, contrasts, and surprises. Her sensemaking concepts of changes, contrasts, and surprises can be applied to this ethnographic study of student culture. In my study of student culture at Eastern Michigan

University, changes are objective differences which students experience as they move from an old to a new environment, that is, from their hometown to the college campus. For example, a change for a student could be moving from a small, homogeneous rural town to a larger, heterogeneous university environment. Contrasts differ from change in that the difference is subjective and is person-specific. The contrasts are not known in advance. Surprise represents a difference that the student encounters in the new setting, the college campus. Surprises occur when expectations differ from what the student experienced (Louis, 1980a, 1980b).

For my study, matriculation to the university served as the point of organizational entry for students. Utilizing Louis' concept of surprise, I examined how students dealt with surprises they encountered.

Louis' (1980b) research focused on organizational entry in the business world, that is, how employees transitioned into a new work setting and managed their experiences. Just as employees in a business organizational setting experience surprises and then make sense of these surprises, students entering the collegiate setting also experience surprises. Prior to organizational entry, matriculating to the university, students anticipate what it will be like to be a college student. In the anticipation process, college students develop expectations about their college experience. Once on the campus, the students' "anticipations are tested against the reality of their" collegiate experience (Louis, 1980b, p. 231).

Students encounter an array of surprises as they transition from their hometown and previous experiences to EMU and their role as a college student. In their new role and setting as students at EMU, individuals experience surprises which vary in context and scale. Louis termed "surprise" as the notion that individuals experience when a situation is different than

what was expected (Louis, 1980b). Surprise “represents a difference between an individual’s anticipations and subsequent experiences in the new setting. Surprise also encompasses one’s affective reactions to any differences including contrasts and changes. Surprise may be positive... and/or negative” (Louis, 1980b, p. 237).

While Louis highlighted a number of surprises which occur during organizational entry, the surprises that result from cultural assumptions align most closely with my study on undergraduate student culture. Louis (1980b) explained that “surprise results when the newcomer relies on cultural assumptions brought from previous settings as operating guides in the new setting, and they fail” (p. 238). Students come to campus with cultural assumptions from their hometown and previous experiences. Most students then experience surprises when they realize that the cultural norms and values taught in their hometown are not universal, and that communities transmit various norms and values. Employee turnover was one outcome in Louis’ study, specifically for individuals who experienced a work setting different than expected. In the higher education setting, student retention can be affected if students’ expectations are unmet when they enter the collegiate environment.

Adaptation is a continual process for students, which occurs when their collegiate experience is different than what they expected. Students’ stories of their experiences at EMU as compared to their hometown experiences shed light on their organizational entry. Students’ reactions further explain how students cope when they experience unmet expectations.

Weick et al. (2005) suggested that individuals work through two questions, “What’s going on here?” and “What do I do next?” (p. 412). Students may find similarities or

differences when comparing their hometown experience to their EMU experience. Louis explained how surprises can be a negative experience:

When surprises occur, transitioners most likely attach meanings to them using interpretation schemes developed in previous roles and settings, resulting in inappropriate or dysfunctional interpretations. Interpretational errors, in turn, lead to inappropriate behavior and attitudinal responses. (1980a, p. 338)

One way to lessen the degree of inappropriate or dysfunctional interpretations is to process the surprise with an insider. Utilizing an insider's perspective can aid in a newcomer's transition. Insiders are individuals in the organization who can "serve as sounding boards for reality testing during transition" (Louis, 1980a, p. 339). Further, Louis explained that "insiders can be a potentially rich source of assistance to transitioners in gaining understandings of their experiences and the organization" (Louis, 1980a, p. 338).

Research Questions

In this study, I explored the organizational entry of undergraduate students on a college campus, particularly examining the transition from hometown community culture to the campus. The following exploratory research questions were addressed:

1. What is the nature of students' (undergraduate students from southeast Michigan) hometown cultural environment?
2. What is the nature of institutional cultural environment?
3. What surprises do students experience at organizational entry (matriculation to the institution)?
4. How do students react to these surprises?

Site Selection

My interest in understanding the community and the student population which I serve influenced my decision to study Eastern Michigan University and southeast Michigan.

Enhancing my cultural understanding of southeast Michigan has in turn enhanced my cultural understanding of the undergraduate students at EMU. I believe it is important to conduct research that provides faculty, staff, and administrators with information that can help them better understand the student populations they serve.

The decision to study the environment in which I am fully immersed was purposeful and pragmatic. As a staff member for university housing, I have worked, lived, dined, and even shared a laundry room with students. Although I no longer live in an on-campus residence hall, I live within the Ypsilanti community, allowing for frequent trips to campus. Data collection was facilitated by my connection to and immersion within the EMU community.

Driving tour.

A driving tour of Michigan Avenue was my first exposure to anthropological field research. In my Organizational Theory course taught by Dr. James Barott, he suggested that members of the class drive and observe the 30 mile stretch from the EMU campus in Ypsilanti to downtown Detroit, which is approximately an hour of driving along Michigan Avenue (see Figure 2.3). This trip spans several southeast Michigan communities including Ypsilanti, Canton, Wayne, Inkster, Dearborn, and Detroit. As I drove along Michigan Avenue, I observed cultural artifacts along the route including new shopping centers, small businesses which appeal to the residential area, and boarded up buildings. Just as Dr. Barott had suggested each area was unique, I observed a stark contrast from community to community. In anthropological terms, driving along Michigan Avenue and noting distinct elements was part of field research which involved both observing and experiencing the culture (Wolcott, 2008).

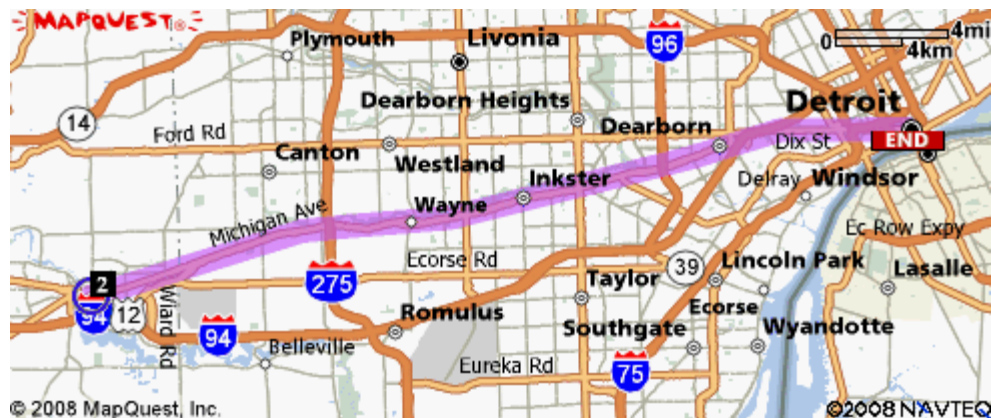


Figure 2.3. Michigan Avenue spanning from EMU to Detroit, Michigan

After taking Dr. Barott's suggestion of the journey on Michigan Avenue, traveling east to Detroit, I set out on Michigan Avenue in the opposite direction going west from EMU, a route which runs through Saline and Clinton. The east end of Michigan Avenue is the urban center of southeast Michigan, Detroit, and sixty miles west along the same road you find yourself in rural southeast Michigan. This exercise solidified my understanding that there are dramatic cultural differences in southeast Michigan and piqued my interest in studying culture and students' hometown communities. Wondering if there is truth to the statement "students are products of their environment," I began to explore if and how cultural differences affected students, specifically examining the cultural patterns, norms, values, and rituals that exist in southeast Michigan.

Unit of Analysis

Southeast Michigan was my unit of analysis for this study. Southeast Michigan is the dominant student feeder area for Eastern Michigan University. For the purpose of this research, Southeast Michigan was defined as seven counties: Lenawee, Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, Washtenaw, and Wayne. Eastern Michigan University, located in Ypsilanti, Michigan, is within Washtenaw County. Two maps are provided for a visual representation of my unit of analysis, a United States map highlighting southeast Michigan as shown in Figure 2.4, and a Michigan county map, as shown in Figure 2.5.



Figure 2.4. Location of southeast Michigan

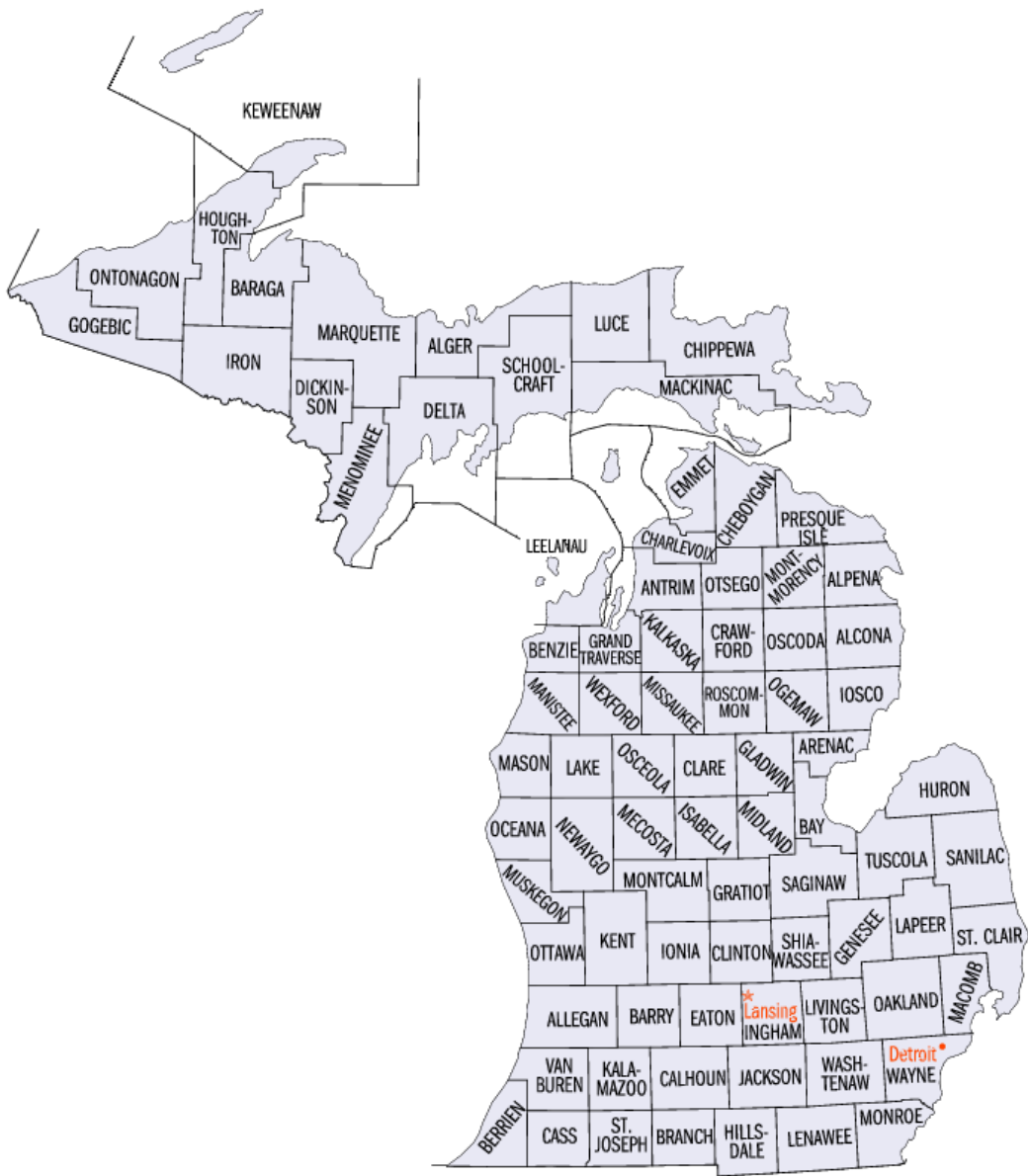


Figure 2.5. Michigan counties

Moral, Ethical, and Legal Issues

Conducting research means that I carry the responsibility to represent research accurately. I worked to conduct research in a manner that does no harm and respects individuals. As a researcher I used professional etiquette and integrity in all aspects of the research process. Also, I had an awareness of a power relationship that existed as a university employee when working with students, and this awareness guided my practice.

The Human Subjects Review process through Eastern Michigan University is designed to “safeguard the rights and welfare of all individuals involved as subjects in research” (EMU Board of Regents, 1978, p. 1). Institutional review boards, such as the EMU Human Subjects Review Board, were put in place by the federal government in order to protect research participants. The process of the board review was completed, and approval from the board was obtained prior to data collection (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2005).

Accepted ethical practices in the field of sociology and anthropology were utilized, and this involved conducting research using informed consent and practices designed to minimize harm. The overarching approach of this ethnographic research was to respect the individual and his or her experiences. Several ethical questions that guided my research included how would the subject feel? what harm would occur? and what is the risk involved for the subject? (Halasa, 2008).

The Council of the American Anthropological Association issued their *Statements on Ethics* which included *Principles of Professional Responsibility* (1971/1986), addressing the researcher’s responsibility in relation to those studied:

In research, anthropologists’ paramount responsibility is to those they study. When there is a conflict of interest, these individuals must come first. Anthropologists must do everything in their power to protect the physical, social, and psychological welfare and to honor the dignity and privacy of those studied. (paragraph 1)

Another professional organization, ACPA – College Student Educators International, which is one of the leading professional organizations for student affairs practitioners, provided guidance in their *Statement of Ethical Principles and Standards*. I utilized this statement developed by ACPA as the ethical guide for my research. Two ethical foundations within this document are (a) to be faithful and (b) do no harm; both are applicable to my ethnographic study because my research involved both observing and interviewing students:

Be faithful. Student affairs professionals make all efforts to be accurate in their presentation of facts, honor agreements, and trustworthy in the performance of their duties. *Do no harm.* Student affairs professionals do not engage in activities that cause either physical or psychological damage to others. In addition to their personal actions, student affairs professionals are especially vigilant to assure that the institutional policies do not: [a] hinder students' opportunities to benefit from the learning experiences available in the environment; [b] threaten individuals' self-worth, dignity, or safety; or [c] discriminate unjustly or illegally. (ACPA, 2006, p. 7)

Ethical principles are designed to guide behavior and provide standards that can be used in daily practice. ACPA's ethical principles also address culture, which is related to the organizing conceptual framework for this research. ACPA's guidelines regarding culture are

Every culture has its own ideas about values, virtues, social and family roles, and acceptable behavior. Cultures may be grounded in ethnicity, faith, gender, generation, sexual orientation, physical ability, or geographic area to name a few. Every campus also has a range of cultures based on work status or location as well as a dominant culture of its own. Ethical dilemmas often arise among or between people from different cultures. Ethical decision-making suggests that the values of relevant cultures be examined when dilemmas arise and overt conversations about conflicting values take place, if necessary. (ACPA, 2006, p. 7)

As a professional within Student Affairs, I subscribe to the ACPA ethical standards and use them in my administrative role at the University, specifically working with students on campus. I utilized these ethical principles in my research, specifically while conducting interviews. Prior to a formal interview, I reviewed the consent form with the individual and ensured that he or she consented to the participation and audio recording. I had the student

sign two consent forms; one was given to the student and one kept for research records. During the introduction to the interview session, I reviewed with the interviewee that the interview was voluntary and they could refuse to answer any question or end the interview at any time. I discussed the confidentiality and the student's ability to select a pseudonym which would be used to protect anonymity. In addition, I allowed the student time to ask questions prior to beginning the interview. At the end of the interview, I provided time for questions and encouraged the individual to contact me if questions arose or if there was additional information that he or she wanted to share related to the research.

Reasonable expectations of privacy.

After reviewing *Title 45, Public Welfare* from the Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health, Office for Protection from Research Risks, Part 46, Protection of Human Subjects (1991), I worked to uphold their definition of private information for this research, which reads:

Private information includes information about behavior that occurs in a context in which an individual can reasonably expect that no observation or recording is taking place, and information which has been provided for specific purposes by an individual and which the individual can reasonably expect will not be made public (for example, a medical record). Private information must be individually identifiable (i.e., the identity of the subject is or may readily be ascertained by the investigator or associated with the information) in order for obtaining the information to constitute research involving human subjects. (§46.102, f)

In my dissertation study, I avoided places where there was a reasonable expectation of privacy, such as a restroom or a locker room. I also avoided situations where a student would believe to be engaged in a private conversation. During my observations I made every effort not to invade the privacy of students.

For my study, I limited myself to public situations and public behavior in public areas at the intuitions that were accessible to the undergraduate student population. I used a public

vantage point; for example, I sat outside on the steps to the residence hall or at a picnic table to observe the student interaction which occurred outside of residence halls and the Eastern Eateries (a campus dining venue). At times my observations took place as I walked across campus. Observations also took place at student events such as the Teacher Job Fair at the Convocation Center, a student organization dance competition, and so on.

This study qualified as exempt as outlined in *Title 45, Public Welfare* from the Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health, Office for Protection from Research Risks, Part 46, Protection of Human Subjects (1991) §46.101, b. 2. The exemption for this study was based on the federal interpretation of public observation, “Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior” (Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health, & Office for Protection from Research Risks, 1991, p. 1).

Data Needed for this Research

In order to better understand undergraduate students’ experience of transitioning from a hometown in southeast Michigan to the Eastern Michigan University campus, I needed data about students’ hometown communities as well as data about their experiences at EMU. Specific data needed about hometown communities included racial composition of the community, median household income, educational level, and crime statistics. In order to strengthen my understanding of the community culture I sought to learn about the tasks, ideology, and activities in communities as well as the schools.

The next piece of needed data was student behavior on the campus, i.e., observational data of students in their collegiate environment. In order to understand students’ experience

on campus, I used an observational approach in order to understand the group-level phenomena, which comprise undergraduate student culture. Also, I needed data (which I collected via formal and informal interviews) from students about their personal experiences as they transitioned from their hometown community to the university, and information about how they made sense of that transition.

Research Instrumentation

For this research project I utilized sociological and anthropological lenses and engaged in anthropological field research methods. I utilized direct observation, document analysis, artifact review, and interviews. Staying true to this form of research, initially I could not provide specificity as to particular behaviors I would observe. Instead, the approach was to observe the undergraduate student behavior in public on the EMU campus. Bateson (1984) provided a succinct overview of anthropological field research methods and offers a comparison to psychological research. She shared:

In contrast, for many kinds of psychological research, the observer's attention is very highly specified and he will record only certain types of events...But in anthropological fieldwork, even when you take certain questions you want answered or certain expectations about how society functions, you must be willing to turn your attention from one focus to another, depending on what you are offered by events, looking for clues to patterns and not knowing what will prove to be important or how your attention and responsiveness have been shaped. (Bateson, 1984, p. 164)

My study, which was based on anthropological field research techniques, is considered discovery research. Based on observations, I moved from a description of student behavior to an explanation of this behavior. Observing students in their natural environment meant observing them on campus. Since the research was anthropological in nature, I did not enter this research with a particular hypothesis. I simply observed public student behavior in an effort to understand the group-level phenomena which are undergraduate student culture.

Bateson (1984) shared “In anthropology, you usually cannot specify in advance what it will be important to pay attention to...One must be open to the data, to the possibility that very small clues will prove to be a critical and that accident will provide pivotal insight” (p. 163).

This study explored the cultural experiences of undergraduate students at Eastern Michigan University who grew up in southeast Michigan. Thus, undergraduate students at Eastern Michigan University were the informants for this ethnography. As I interacted with students I explained my research purpose; simply stated, I want to learn what it is like to be an undergraduate student at Eastern Michigan University who grew up in southeast Michigan.

Data collection took place throughout the campus, in an array of venues and during activities that students attended. Data were also collected throughout southeast Michigan, specifically from the communities which were feeder areas for the university. I utilized multiple forms of data collection, which are connected to anthropological field research methods including in-depth observation, formal and informal interviews, field notes, and photographs. Informal conversations and formal interviews with students were utilized to obtain students’ perspectives, their stories of growing up in a southeast Michigan community, and their experiences interacting with other cultures within southeast Michigan and on the EMU campus. Observations and informal interviews were collected over a four-year period between January 2006 and December 2009; formal interviews were conducted in Fall 2008 and Winter 2009.

The role of the researcher in an ethnographic study.

My role in this research study was as the main research instrument. As the research instrument I observed humans and social systems; collected documents, artifacts,

newspapers, and visual materials; and conducted informal and formal interviews. At EMU I serve in a number of capacities where I am readily able to observe students. In my primary administrative role, I serve as the Assistant Director of Housing, working with students as they transition from living at home to an on-campus residence hall. I also have the opportunity to interact and observe students in other capacities; I am an adjunct faculty member, an advisor to student organizations, and a doctoral student. These roles enable me to interact with students on a daily basis. Having taken several doctoral courses that focused on organizational theory and culture, I found that I viewed the activities at the university with a cultural lens; culture became a natural framework. There were benefits to working full-time in the environment that I studied; I had formed relationships with students, faculty, staff, administrators, and community members. Our previous relationships provided a foundation and valuable resource when I sought clarification of cultural elements.

A critical aspect of the research process was determining what was occurring within communities in southeast Michigan and on the EMU campus. Since cultural elements are second nature, understood yet rarely spoken of by community members, it was important to open my eyes and ears in an effort to digest what was occurring in the everyday lives of community members. Understanding culture involves an investigation of what is said and what is not said, culturally who is in and who is out, where boundaries exist, and who has the power. Together these elements, or data, build the cultural story.

Archival research.

A number of unobtrusive data collection methods were utilized to gather cultural data including document and artifact collection. I searched for documents, visual materials, and artifacts which illuminated the culture of southeast Michigan (Creswell, 2003). Examples of

archival data used for this ethnography include reports on K-12 school district racial composition, the expert report of Thomas J. Sugrue used in *Gratz et al. v. Bollinger et al.* (Sugrue, 1999), U.S. Census data, and Federal Bureau of Investigation crime statistics. In addition, area maps were gathered and analyzed. Another source of demographic data on communities in southeast Michigan was the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) Community Profiles. The demographic data (poverty, median household income, residential density, and educational attainment) for communities in southeast Michigan provided background data which, when combined with observations of behavior inside a community, helped illuminate culture. Several documents from EMU's Institutional Research and Information Management (IRIM) were utilized including the Common Data Set, EMU Student Profile, Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Freshman Survey, and Educational Benchmarking, Inc. (EBI) Resident Assessment Survey.

Participant observation.

The role of participant-as-observer is frequently used in community studies as it allows for a blend of formal and informal observations (Gold, 1958). Participant observation was one method I used to gather data. Vidich (1955) defined participant observation as an approach which “enables the research worker to secure his data within the mediums, symbols and experiential worlds which have meaning to his respondents” (p. 354). In the role of participant observer, I collected data that illustrated the culture of southeast Michigan, learned from individuals from southeast Michigan, and worked to develop an understanding of the student culture (Glesne, 2006). Glesne (2006) explained the goal of participant observation: “to understand the research setting, its participants, and their behavior” (p. 51). Data are gathered through ongoing interaction with a group in its natural setting; the

observation focuses on how individuals in the group behave. Data analysis can occur concurrently with data collection, which enables the researcher to develop provisional analyses, and later refine them (Becker & Geer, 1958).

In order to gather data, I observed culture as it naturally occurred; observed behavior, actions, and interactions of students in their natural environment. By observing behavior and noting the repetition of certain behavior I began to understand the meanings, repetitive behavior at times had cultural meaning. Frederick Erickson (1984) provided a description of the instrumentation used, essentially the path of a participant observer,

The field worker generates a situation-based inquiry process, learning, through time, to ask questions of the field setting in such a way that the setting, by its answers, teaches the next situationally appropriate questions to ask. The framing of researchable questions also is influenced by the researcher's knowledge of the literature of anthropology and sociology. (p. 51)

Participant observation took place on a daily basis as I traveled to and from meetings throughout the campus. In addition to the casual observation, I spent extensive time on the campus observing the actions and interactions of students in order to collect information about student culture. Ultimately, I sought to understand the nature of the undergraduate student culture.

Interviews.

Informal and formal interviews were conducted with students and administrators to gain an understanding of their cultural experience on the campus as well as in their hometown. Criterion-based sampling was utilized to identify informants for this anthropological study. The sample for formal interviews included informants (undergraduate students) from a range of communities in southeast Michigan, including urban, suburban, and

rural areas. I continued sampling until I reached data saturation and then I looked for disconfirming evidence.

In my role as a university administrator, adjunct faculty member, advisor to numerous student groups, and as a student, I had daily contact with numerous students from southeast Michigan. Based on my interaction with students, faculty, and administrators, I asked others for recommendations for potential informants for the study. I kept a running list of individuals with whom to make contact, who could provide insight into the culture. I followed leads that emerged throughout my research. I continued the criterion-based sampling to gain informants from a range of communities in southeast Michigan, including urban, suburban, and rural areas. After a suggestion of a potential informant, I approached the individual (in person or via email contact) and invited him or her to participate in the study.

Formal interviews were used to examine the students' cultural experiences in their hometown communities and on the EMU campus via personal descriptions of their experiences. The formal interviews were 60-90 minutes in length and provided a glimpse of how students experienced life in their hometown community and on the EMU campus. I conducted formal interviews with 21 students and alumni (10 men and 11 women); descriptive statistics about this sample are detailed in Chapter 4.

Guiding topics for the semi-structured interview included:

- 1) Describe your experience growing up in your hometown.
- 2) Describe your experiences at Eastern Michigan University.
- 3) Compare your experience at Eastern Michigan University to your experiences in your hometown.

The protocol (Appendix A) used for the interviews provides greater specificity of the formal interview process I used.

The overarching goal of interviews was to gain a deeper understanding of students' cultural experiences. As the interviewer, I worked to build rapport and made efforts to put the interviewee at ease. When conducting interviews I used qualitative interview techniques such as open-ended and probing questions in order to gain a fuller understanding of the individual's experience. I utilized a semi-structured interview format. Field notes were taken during these interviews, which were turned into descriptive narrative to report the findings. Interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed. The audio recordings and transcripts were securely stored on a computer in my home in Ypsilanti, Michigan.

Formal interviews for the study were conducted with individuals who were currently or had been undergraduate students (n=21) at Eastern Michigan University. I interviewed students when and where it was convenient for the individual; locations ranged from on-campus administrative offices to an individual's home. Interviews which were digitally recorded were sent to a transcriber. I took notes in both recorded and non-recorded interviews.

Self as instrument: Personal reflection.

I found that the ethnographic research process was informative for me as the researcher and as a student affairs practitioner. I believe the research process was beneficial for students because the informal conversations and formal interviews provided an opportunity for reflection. Over the course of my research, I found that students reacted differently as they shared their stories. Some students shared in a very matter-of-fact manner, with little emotion attached. This contrasted with the previous description of the three women

who were enthusiastic and engaged. Some students were cautious as they shared their stories; one student turned to me and asked “Can I close the door? I do not want others to hear.” This student recognized that the homogenous nature of his hometown and the views in the hometown were different than what he experienced on the campus.

Reflecting on my experiences conducting ethnographic research, I have had a range of reactions. At times I felt as if I had a clear road map; I knew where I wanted to observe students or the events to attend which would provide examples of behavior which informed the culture of the campus. Other times, I felt as if I were traveling in circles, lost with no road map. I wondered how I would be able to accurately describe the culture of southeast Michigan or find the data to compare cultural groups. In the end, prolonged engagement helped me uncover the cultures which exist in southeast Michigan and on the campus. I was able to identify the rules, norms, and values which students learned in their hometown. Further, I was able to describe rituals which occurred on the campus as well as ordinary, daily student behavior.

As the main research instrument in this study, my own social identity was relevant to my methodology. I identify myself as a White woman. I attended a highly integrated public high school and a predominantly White four-year public university in Virginia.

I was raised in Virginia, in the southeastern United States, and therefore was not familiar with many of the local communities in Michigan prior to beginning this study. I made conscious efforts to manage my own subjectivities during data collection and analyses; however, the lenses through which each of us sees the world are impossible to completely remove and therefore important to note here.

Throughout the ethnographic research process I had a great deal of assistance and support from others. One graduate student faithfully called when there was an unusually large amount of activity in front of the Eateries, which is one campus setting I describe in this ethnography. I even had a student approach me, stating that a colleague had shared the details of the study, and suggested that the student share his story of growing up in southeast Michigan. Many colleagues shared academic resources and engaged in lively conversations about living in southeast Michigan and working with undergraduate students at EMU.

Data Collection

Since I did not have the luxury to be a full-time anthropologist, I worked to be more aware of my environment during my daily routine. I learned from Dr. Barott to open my eyes, pay close attention, and internalize what I see. Wolcott (2008) shared that “observational research plays out almost entirely in what we *see* and what we *hear*” (p. 49). However, Wolcott (2008) reminds researchers that experiencing, a form of participant observation, can include collecting information using all senses.

Throughout my research, I took field notes. The field notes were taken on an ongoing basis with the purpose of telling this ethnographic story. Field notes were my means of recording student behavior; the notes contained observations on how students spent their time, where they interacted, and with whom they communicated. During many of my conversations with students I took handwritten field notes. Once at home, I worked to flesh out my field notes, elaborating on the interaction or setting which I observed.

Data Analysis

The data collection and data analysis for this ethnographic study involved an interactive process (Becker, Geer, Hughes, & Strauss, 1961). The main way I identified

cultural elements was by spending time in the field, immersing myself in the culture of Eastern Michigan University in order to discover how individuals spend their time. Glesne (2006) suggested that analysis is a two-fold process, (a) identification of key cultural elements and events and (b) a synthesis focusing on the ties or connections within the elements and event. Cultural analysis takes the form of “description, finding patterns, and interpretation” (p. 165). Merriam (1998) suggests that ethnographic research work toward a balance of description and analysis. Discerning cultural patterns and developing a cultural interpretation are the fundamental components of this ethnographic study of the EMU undergraduate student culture (Wolcott, 1987).

In order to analyze the data, I created a system whereby I applied the data collected to my conceptual framework of culture and conflict. By interacting with the data and the conceptual framework, I formed cultural categories. For example, through my observations, formal interviews, and informal conversations, I determined the norms of cultures in southeast Michigan, such as how individuals live, what happens in their communities, the gender relationships, and rituals. Next, I systematically examined how these community norms played out on the EMU campus by comparing the data I collected about hometown communities with the data about campus life.

A camera metaphor is helpful when discussing data analysis: the zoom allows the researcher to focus narrowly and the wide angle lens allows one to see the bigger picture. By zooming in and focusing on specific examples of the cultural reproduction, I was able to provide concrete depictions of this cultural phenomenon at EMU. The wide angle lens allowed me to look at the whole picture, southeast Michigan, exploring the norms and values by community and applying these data to the conceptual framework. Using a combination of

big picture view of culture and a more focused approach, I sought to describe the student culture that exists on the campus which is developed in the surrounding communities. More specifically, I described and analyzed the cultural conflicts that emerged. Winter (2004) described the conflicts that exist within culture, “a battle for meanings, a never-ending conflict about the sense and value of cultural traditions, practices, and experiences” (p. 120). In this study, I explored culture and conflict within southeast Michigan and how they are manifested in the undergraduate community at EMU.

The research process evolves as data are collected, choices are made, and hunches are followed, allowing the researcher to gather additional data to test current themes (Merriam, 1998). Cultural analysis focused on examining social phenomenon, the practices which are part of everyday life. Ultimately, the empirical data and cultural analysis present the relationships (or lack thereof) that exist among communities within southeast Michigan and on the university campus. Further, the empirical data were used to determine if cultural reproduction occurs from communities in southeast Michigan onto the campus.

Cultural analysis.

To analyze the culture of communities in southeast Michigan, I used a sociological and anthropological approach, focusing on *communities* as opposed to an *individual's* way of life. Spradley (1980) described this type of analysis as making cultural inferences by observing behavior, artifacts, and messages in an effort to understand the shared cultural knowledge within a community. Spradley described the process of making cultural inferences:

At first, each cultural inference is only a hypothesis about what people know. These hypotheses must be tested over and over again until the ethnographer becomes relatively certain that people share a particular system of cultural meanings. None of

the sources for making inferences—behavior, speech, artifacts—are fool-proof, but together they can lead to adequate cultural description. (Spradley, 1980, p. 10)

In *Boys in White* (1961), Becker, Geer, Hughes, and Strauss described their data analysis method, stating, “We describe all the items of evidence that bear on a given point (although usually in summary form) and the degree to which they seem to confirm our proposition” (p. 32). This method allows the reader the opportunity to understand the conclusions presented and to form their own judgments. Coding and indexing field notes and other empirical data was a systematic means of tracking cultural evidence (Becker et al., 1961).

Data analysis methods.

One means of organizing my field notes was using Visual Mind, which is a mind mapping software (Mind Technologies, 2008). The use of concept mapping or mind mapping provided a systematic means of recording and organizing data. Further, mind mapping assisted as I identified data that illuminated cultural categories such as values, beliefs, norms, rituals, and artifacts. Data points were grouped together and umbrella categories developed, essentially creating descriptive codes. During preliminary data collection, informants were shown Visual Mind diagrams of cultural elements and asked for feedback, specifically if the description typified the cultural experience in their hometown community (Mind Technologies, 2008). These diagrams were continually updated and revised based on feedback from the informants. I found mind maps to be a useful tool as they were much less cumbersome than showing students field notes or a transcript. Students could quickly affirm or raise concerns about the data presented and categories formed.

Each mind map that I created went through numerous stages of refinement. One example of the refinement process was “member checking,” which was completed by sharing

the mind map with undergraduate students and searching for disconfirming evidence. The member checking process enabled me to make adjustments during the research process. Also, it aided in my effort to provide a thorough and accurate ethnographic description.

Throughout this process I found the mind map to be a useful tool both for organizing my field notes as well as providing structure when writing the ethnographic description for my results section.

For this ethnographic study, I drew from the data analysis methods which Becker et al. (1961), Spradley (1980), Winter (2004), and Glesne (2006) utilized for their cultural studies, which I described earlier in this chapter. My analyses began with empirical data, including visual data such as pictures and maps. Transcribed interviews, field notes, and artifacts were organized and thematically coded. Data coding involved identifying events, situations, quotes, and environmental elements which illustrated a particular theme (Merriam, 1998). Diagrams were created to depict relationships, sort data, and analyze information.

Table 2.1 details the cultural categories used for the data analysis. Categories were developed to organize and analyze empirical data including field notes, archival data, and interview data. I completed the initial qualitative research coding by hand, labeling cultural elements which I identified in the transcripts. On each interview transcript I highlighted and labeled the cultural examples. Next, I transferred all data, notes, and analyses into NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software (QSR International, 2008).

Table 2.1

Cultural Categories

Context	Cultural Information Gathered	Theory Application
Experience in Hometown	Hometown demographics, social interactions, rituals, norms, cultural transmitters, working norms, values, class, rules, tasks	Culture (Becker et al., 1961) Culture (Spindler, 1963, 1974)
Transition from Hometown to Eastern Michigan University	Culture shock, new experience, different experience, level of comfort (greater or lesser), similarities to hometown, differences from hometown	Surprise and Sensemaking (Louis, 1980b; Weick et al., 2005)
Experience at Eastern Michigan University	Interaction with others, social experience, academic experience, working norms	Surprise and Sensemaking (Louis, 1980b; Weick et al., 2005) Organizational Culture (Schein, 1990)

Throughout the data analysis I compared and contrasted hometown cultural elements, examining similarities, differences, and conflicts which emerged. Also, I examined whether the culture of southeast Michigan recreated itself as evident by norms, values, patterns, and rituals on the EMU campus.

Validity, Dependability, and Credibility

Validity.

Validity “generally defined as the trustworthiness of inferences drawn from data” is the process of findings that are accurate, representing the socially constructed reality of the participants (LeCompte, Millroy, & Preissle, 1992, p. 644). Cultural observation focused on students’ construction of reality; this study explored how students experience life within their hometown, focusing on the cultures within southeast Michigan which are embedded within students.

Validity in ethnographic research is achieved by prolonged observation in the natural setting, interviewing, and member checking, which aids in presenting a description of the socially constructed reality. Validity is enhanced when researchers have an awareness of their research lens which includes experiences, assumptions, and views (Merriam, 1998). Acknowledging one's beliefs and bias is a critical component in analytical interpretation of culture. Earlier in this chapter, I wrote about my own bias and subjectivities when exploring the purpose, and how the study affected me personally and professionally.

Working at Eastern Michigan University allowed for continual observation which made it possible to develop a greater understanding of the social phenomenon. Observing the culture on an ongoing basis, over a prolonged period of time, enhanced the validity and the credibility of this study.

Internal and external validity.

Internal validity is maximized when research findings closely resemble reality (Merriam, 1998). Internal validity for this study deals with southeast Michigan and the culture within southeast Michigan. Collecting empirical data and applying the data to the conceptual framework created a high degree of internal validity.

I utilized multiple data collection methods including observations, interviews, document analysis, and artifact review in an effort to enhance internal validity (Glesne, 2006). Member checking was used to verify information collected. Specifically, I shared hunches, observations, and conclusions about the student culture with current students. By clarifying with others, I was able to increase my cultural understanding of the environment. The students' validation of the culture analysis or their disconfirming evidence which they shared helped refine and develop an accurate representation of the social phenomenon.

External validity is focused on the question: Is what I found in this study generalizable to other areas or institutions? External validity can be generalizable to other individuals, settings, or times (Gall et al., 2005). This study is not intended to have external validity. Southeast Michigan is a unique area with a comprehensive history. The culture of southeast Michigan cannot be generalized to other areas.

However, there is analytic generalizability for this study based on the link between theory and evidence (Yin, 1994). My conceptual framework can be applied to other university settings as a tool to explore student culture and organizational entry to the institution. This study explored the undergraduate student culture at EMU and how the student culture was constituted from communities in southeast Michigan. Other higher education institutions could study their student culture by determining where they draw students from and what the students' hometown cultural experience was prior to coming to the university. Further, there is analytic generalizability based on the concept that people act based on the meanings they have in their head. However, the particular meanings are not generalizable for this study, as different cultures have different meanings (Yin, 1994).

Trustworthiness.

Trustworthiness is a critical element in ethnographic research because it encompasses the overall integrity of the study. Trustworthiness is created when the researcher presents findings in a manner in which others determine the findings are worth consideration, notice, or further exploration (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Continuity and congruence in all elements are vital to establishing trustworthiness in a qualitative study (Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2006). Jones, Torres, and Arminio proposed that “the most critical aspect of congruence includes the ability to authenticate the findings with participants through member check” (p. 99). Member

checking allows informants to respond to the researcher's interpretations of data and findings, focusing on the findings which emerged because of the individual's participation. Input from member checking can add to and enhance the research, which leads to greater research congruence (Jones et al., 2006).

Jones et al. (2006) suggested that the "issues of trustworthiness are connected to positionality and standpoint" (p. 111). To illustrate this concept, they provided an example of how values have different meanings in different cultures. The value of autonomy has one cultural meaning for Whites and a different cultural meaning to Latinos; for Whites there is a greater level of separation from parents as compared to autonomy in the Latino culture where there remains a high level of familial interconnectedness. This example demonstrates how positionality and standpoint can impact the trustworthiness of a study (Jones et al., 2006). Trustworthiness is enhanced by attending to the researcher subjectivity and how one's subjectivity influences research choices (Schram, 2006).

In order to uncover the student culture, I utilized a twofold observational approach: what was seen or observed and the converse, what was missing. Member checking was conducted by presenting the analysis of data and emerging themes to individuals from various cultures in southeast Michigan (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Students were able to review findings and provide feedback. When conflicts arose when member checking, I worked to illuminate several perspectives; however, I grounded my observations in the empirical data such as field notes.

Triangulation is a technique that increases trustworthiness in qualitative research because it allows the researcher to analyze data from multiple sources, in an effort to check for consistency and corroborate findings (Wolcott, 2008). Triangulation is "the practice of

relying on multiple methods” of data collection (Glesne, 2006, p. 36). This study utilized the following methods of triangulation: observations, recording field notes, searching for disconfirming evidence, and participant interviews. Searching for disconfirming evidence can be a difficult process as similarities are more often recognized (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Dependability and credibility.

Merriam (1998) discussed the problematic nature of reliability in qualitative inquiry and suggested a change in terminology, urging qualitative researchers to strive for findings which have dependability and credibility. Reliability “refers to the extent to which research findings can be replicated” (Merriam, 1998, p. 207). Though results may not be replicated, it is imperative to provide details as to how one reached the results. Reliability is problematic because qualitative research is not replicable in the same step-by-step manner as quantitative research. Wolcott (1995) shared Merriam’s concerns regarding reliability in qualitative research, stating, “The problem with reliability is that the rigor associated with it redirects attention to research processes rather than to research results” (p. 167).

The terms *dependability*, *credibility*, and *plausibility* more closely align with qualitative research. Credibility is achieved through structural corroboration, which is achieved by spending ample time observing the phenomena and using multiple sources of data (Merriam, 1998). Hammersley (1990) suggests that credibility is based on reasonable judgment, if the researcher’s judgment is reasonable based on the topic and research circumstances (Hammersley, 1990). Merriam (1998) compares the research process to the business concept of an audit trail, suggesting that credible research includes specifics of the data collection method and an account of how categories developed and themes emerged within the research. Providing a guide as to how one reached a particular interpretation is

important for trustworthiness. Plausibility is an important element in qualitative research. Plausibility focuses on the interpretation and findings, whether the findings are reasonable and probable (Hammersley, 1990). Hammersley sums up credibility and plausibility, stating, “No knowledge is certain, but knowledge claims can be judged reasonably accurately in terms of their likely truth” (Hammersley, 1990, p. 610).

I enhanced the dependability and credibility of the study by utilizing field notes as a means of documenting activities and observations. Field notes grounded the findings, providing a basis for cultural inferences. Also, reliability was enhanced by spending significant time observing students in their natural environment.

In conclusion, the validity and reliability for this study were addressed in several ways. The conceptual framework for this study has internal validity. There is analytic generalizability as the conceptual framework can be applied to other settings; student culture is constituted from the communities from which students are drawn. In order to enhance reliability, I spent ample time in the field, using multiple data sources and taking detailed field notes.

Limitations

Like all studies, this research had limitations. The data are restricted to Eastern Michigan University (EMU), a regional public institution located in Ypsilanti, Michigan. The specific data are not generalizable to other areas or institutions; however, the study provides a framework that has analytic generalizability. The data gathered in this study provide in-depth knowledge specific to EMU. A comparable study of another university would reveal differences that give each educational institution a unique personality. The study would likely conjure some similarities in college student behaviors and actions.

Another possible limitation of the study was my role of serving as the primary research instrument. I had to be conscious not to take cultural elements for granted and work to fully explore familiar and unfamiliar cultural elements. A third limitation of the study is the ambiguity of culture as a concept. To combat this ambiguity I have attempted to clarify the concept of culture and how it applies to southeast Michigan and specifically Eastern Michigan University. After much research I believe that culture is a mental construct which was most appropriate for this study (Wolcott, 2008).

Despite these limitations, the study provided useful data that provided insight regarding the undergraduate student culture at Eastern Michigan University as well as the culture and conflict within southeast Michigan. This study can inform faculty, staff, and administrators about the student culture on the EMU campus which is constituted by the communities in southeast Michigan.

Chapter 3: Historical Background

In this chapter I provide a historical background of Michigan, specifically focusing on southeast Michigan. I describe the immigration patterns and migration that occurred in Michigan. In addition, the conflicts that influenced residential and educational patterns in Michigan are explored.

History of Native Americans in Michigan

In the 1500s the population in what we now call the United States was entirely Native American (Schaefer, 2002). Over time the population composition in the United States has shifted. Indigenous tribes who lived in what is now Michigan included the Ojibwe (commonly anglicized as Ojibwa or Chippewa), Menominee, Miami, Ottawa, Potawatomi, and Huron. In 1622 Indians first met the Europeans (French) in what we now call Michigan. The French brought metal tools and weapons (knives, axes, guns), all items which changed the Indians' way of life (Eicher & Eicher, 1999). In 1668 a French missionary, Jacques Marquette, established the first permanent European settlement in Michigan in Michilimackinac country, which is known today simply as Mackinac (Catton, 1984; The Legislative Service Bureau, 2006).

Beginning in the late 17th century, trading posts, villages, and forts including Fort Pontchartrain du Détroit were established in Michigan (Catton, 1984). Fort Pontchartrain (which is now Detroit) was founded in 1701 and used for fur trade (The Legislative Service Bureau, 2006). Catton (1984) explained that the valuable animal fur was “the real reason why white men had wanted to come to Michigan” (p. 37). Indian tribes including the Ojibwe, Ottawa, and Potawatomi opposed the White settlement in the area. These three tribes had close alliances and made up the Council of Three Fires.

Native American Indian tribes in Michigan.

“Over the last 350 years many Indian tribes lived in Michigan, especially during the French rule. When the British took the territory away from the French, the dominant tribes were the Ottawa, Potawatomi, Huron, and Ojibwa in the region” (Eicher & Eicher, 1999, 10 minute mark). Tribes traveled throughout the state on the large Indian trails which ran along the western and eastern shorelines of Michigan’s thumb region. On the eastern shoreline of Michigan the trail traveled to Post St. Joseph, which is now known as Port Huron, and southward to Fort Pontchartrain du Détroit, now known as Detroit. On the western side of the thumb, the Indian trail connected from Saginaw to Detroit (Eicher & Eicher, 1999). Catton (1984) provided an overview of Indians in the area: “These tribes had individual ways of life that rested on a common base, and the differences seemed to reflect mostly the varying geographic restrictions and possibilities in the areas where they lived” (pp. 36-37).

The Ottawa tribe was known as a trading tribe; specifically, they were fur traders. The tribe fished in the summer and hunted in the winter in addition to their harvesting of crops (Catton, 1984). In 1630 the tribe moved to Mackinac, Michigan. There was movement in and out of Mackinac for many years, and in 1701 much of the tribe left for two locations, Detroit and Saginaw Bay. An invitation from the French to move to Detroit was issued to two tribes, the Ottawa and Wyandot. The Ottawa soon became the dominant tribe in Detroit. In 1836, the Ottawa tribe ceded their land in Michigan in exchange for payment, “for a series of reserves, \$30,000 per year for 20 years, \$350,000 in cash, and payment of \$300,000 in debts” (Sultzman, 2008, p. 1). After this transaction the Ottawa tribe moved to Iowa and Kansas (Sultzman).

Considered the most powerful tribe in the Great Lakes, the Ojibwe were outstanding trappers, hunters, fishermen, and builders of canoes (Catton, 1984). Ojibwe often traveled south in Michigan to meet with the Ottawa to trade meat in exchange for vegetables which they were unable to grow because of the cold climate. Ojibwe lived in the northern portion of Lower Michigan (Catton, 1984). The Ojibwe were known for their power and influence throughout North America. In the 1400s, the Ojibwe and Potawatomi moved to the Mackinac Strait which separates what are now the Upper and Lower peninsulas of Michigan. In the 1500s, the Ojibwe moved to Lower Michigan while the Potawatomi moved to what is now Wisconsin. The Ojibwe controlled a vast area; in the 1700s this included Lower Michigan and southern Ontario. The British altered the tribe's name from Ojibwe to Chippewa. When the tribe ceded their land (Upper Michigan and northern Wisconsin) to the United States government in the mid-1800s, the tribe retained their right to fish and hunt in the area (Sultzman, 2008).

The Menominee tribe was relatively small, and many of the members became Roman Catholic. The tribe resided along the Menominee River which runs along Upper Michigan and northeast Wisconsin. The tribe hunted, fished, and gathered wild rice to support themselves. The Menominee were affected by the White settlement and logging industry, both of which resulted in a loss of their land, specifically a loss of 4.2 million acres in 1836 (Sultzman, 2008).

The Potawatomi tribe lived in Lower Michigan, but far enough north that they could not rely on agriculture due to the cold temperatures; hunting was their means of providing food. As land was sold, tribe members moved to northern Wisconsin and later to northern

Indiana and central Illinois. In these locations, tribe members were in a climate where they were able to grow crops (Redish, n.d.).

While the Native American population composed 100% of the population in 1500, this shrank to only 13% of the United States' population in 1790, which was the time of the first election in Detroit in the late eighteenth century. In Detroit, White non-Hispanic (70%) had become the majority group in 1790 followed by African American at 16% (Schaefer, 2002). The first election in Detroit (1792) occurred while under British control. Three representatives were elected and sent to Parliament of Upper Canada. The British controlled the Michigan area until 1796, which was 13 years after the signing of the Treaty of Paris ending the Revolutionary War. The first American election in Michigan occurred in 1799. One representative for all Michigan Territories was sent to the Territorial Assembly held in Ohio. In 1805, the territory of Michigan was established, with Detroit serving as the capital (The Legislative Service Bureau, 2006).

Native American land cession in Michigan.

Native Americans owned all the land in the territory until the 1795. Figure 3.1, titled the "Indian Land Cessions, 1795-1837" (Fuller, 1916, p. 1xiv) provides the location of land in Michigan that was ceded from the Indians as well as the time period in which the land transfer occurred. In 1795 the Wyandot, Ottawa, Ojibwe, and Potawatomi Indians relinquished the post of Detroit to the United States government; the location of the post and surrounding land to the south and northwest that was ceded is outlined in Figure 3.1.

The Treaty of Detroit resulted in a transfer of land ownership (southeast Michigan and northern Ohio) from the Ottawa, Ojibwe, Wyandot, and Potawatomi to the United States government (Fuller, 1916); see Figure 3.1, land area II. The Native Americans sided with the

British but were defeated in the War of 1812 and, as a result, the tribes were required to sell their land and were forced out of Michigan (Sultzman, 2008).

In the Treaty of Saginaw (1819), over six million acres of land including the prized hunting grounds of the Ojibwe (see Figure 3.1, land area III) were ceded (Fuller, 1916). More land was ceded from the Native Americans (Ottawa, Ojibwe, and Potawatomi) in the 1821 (Figure 3.1, land area IV) and 1833 Treaties of Chicago. Virtually all southern Michigan Territories south of Grand River were gained from the tribes in the 1821 Treaty. Land west of Lake Michigan, in what is now Wisconsin and Illinois, was transferred in the 1833 Treaty. The use of whiskey was standard trade used during treaties. “These treaties were known as the Whiskey Treaties because whiskey was given to get the Indians to sign” (Willard, 2006, p. 1).

Tribal intuitions weakened as the United States government acquired land from Native American tribes and forced relocation (Schaefer, 2002). The 1833 Treaty of Chicago resulted in a removal of the Potawatomi from their land and contributed to the Trail of Death. The Trail of Death described the lack of survival as tribes moved west through Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri, settling in present day Osawatomie, Kansas (Eicher & Eicher, 1999; Redish, n.d.).

In September 1838, over 850 Potawatomi Indian people were rounded up and marched at gunpoint from their Indian homeland. Many walked the 660-mile distance, which took two months. More than 40 died, mostly children, of typhoid fever and the stress of the forced removal. (Redish, n.d., p. 1)

The last large portion of land in Michigan still under Native American control, the northwestern section of the lower peninsula, was ceded by the Ottawa and Chippewa in 1836 (Figure 3.1, land area V).

Indians controlled nearly all the land in Michigan through the end of the 18th century. Numerous land cessions between 1795 and 1837, which have been previously described, resulted in drastic demographic change in Michigan. The United States government acquired nearly all land in Michigan during this time frame from the Native American (Fuller, 1916).

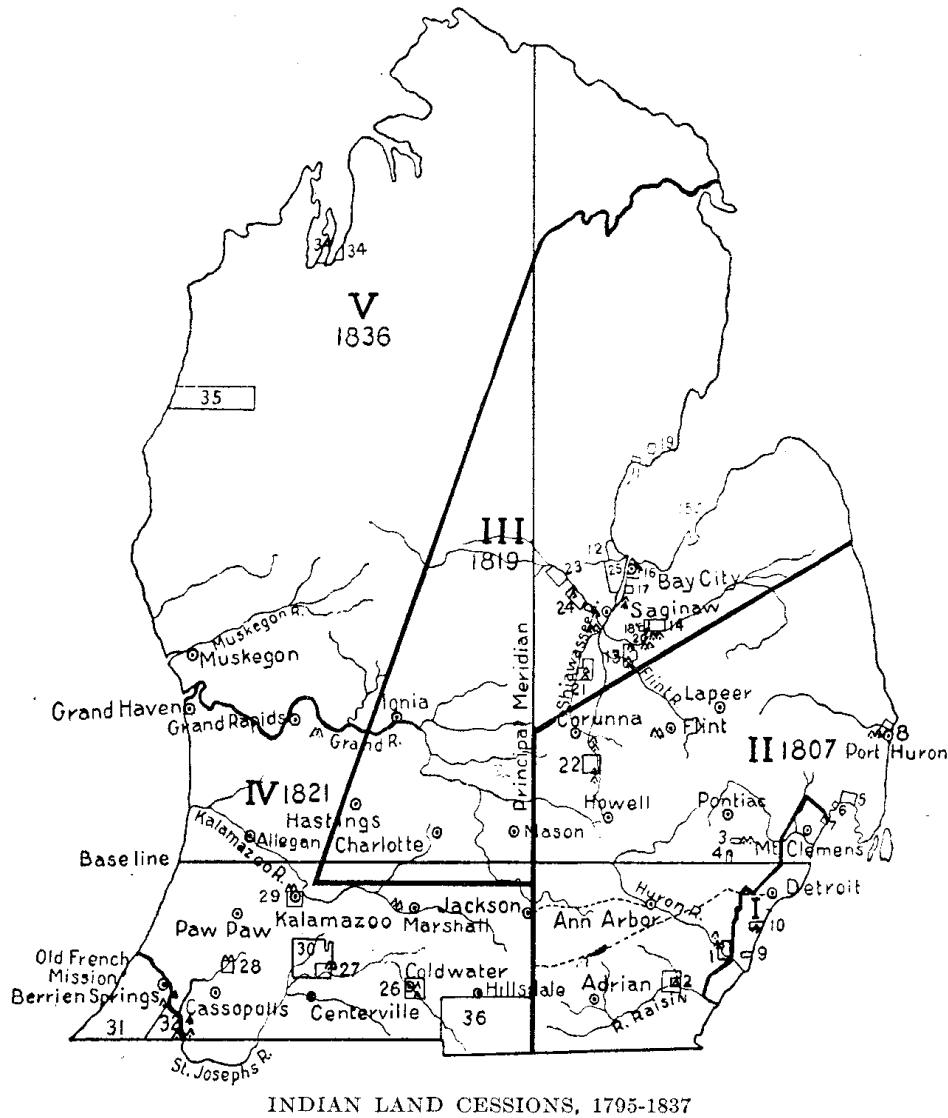


Figure 3.1. Native American land cessions

Land area I ceded (1795): from Wyandot, Ottawa, Ojibwe, and Potawatomi to the U.S.
 Land area II ceded (1807): from Wyandot, Ottawa, Chippewa, and Potawatomi to the U.S.
 Land area III ceded (1819): from Chippewa to the U.S.

Land area IV ceded (1821): from the Ottawa, Chippewa, and Potawatomi to the U.S.
Land area V ceded (1836): from Ottawa and Chippewa to U.S.

Map Source: Economic and Social beginnings of Michigan: A study of the settlement of the lower peninsula during the territorial period 1805-1837 (Fuller, 1916, p. 1xiv)

After buying land from the Native American, the United States government in turn sold unoccupied land at a rate of \$1.25 an acre; the land was appealing to White businessmen who were interested in harvesting lumber (Fuller, 1916). This land acquisition led to a booming lumber industry. As the forests were cut down, the amount of wild game in the area decreased, which restricted the Indians' ability to provide for themselves. Various treaties (previously described) initiated by the government as well as the settlement of Europeans forced Indians to move to reservations. By the early 1860s, few Indians still owned land outside of the Indian reservations. In the late 1800s, Michigan's economy was powered by the agriculture, mining, and lumber industries, which constituted a significant change from the Indians way of life (Eicher & Eicher, 1999).

During the time frame that the United States government acquired land from the Indians, several significant historical events occurred. In 1837 Michigan was admitted to the Union as a free state (Dunbar, 1935). The following year, the first State Board of Education was elected. The State Board of Education was established to provide "centralized management and supervision over higher education" (Dunbar, 1935, p. 391). In 1849 Michigan State Normal School, which is now Eastern Michigan University, was established in Ypsilanti, Michigan, as the first teacher-training school west of the Alleghenies (The Legislative Service Bureau, 2006). At its inception Michigan State Normal School was governed by the State Board of Education.

Societal/residential patterns of conflict and change.

Figure 3.2 provides a depiction of the cyclical nature of societal and residential change. The cycle is initiated by demographic change, which can occur within an area or a community. Demographic change leads to either integration or segregation. In cases where demographic change leads to segregation (conflict), individuals band together forming dissonant groups. Next, boundaries are created or become apparent as a result of the conflict and dissonant groups. For example, residential boundaries may form, establishing who lives where and why.

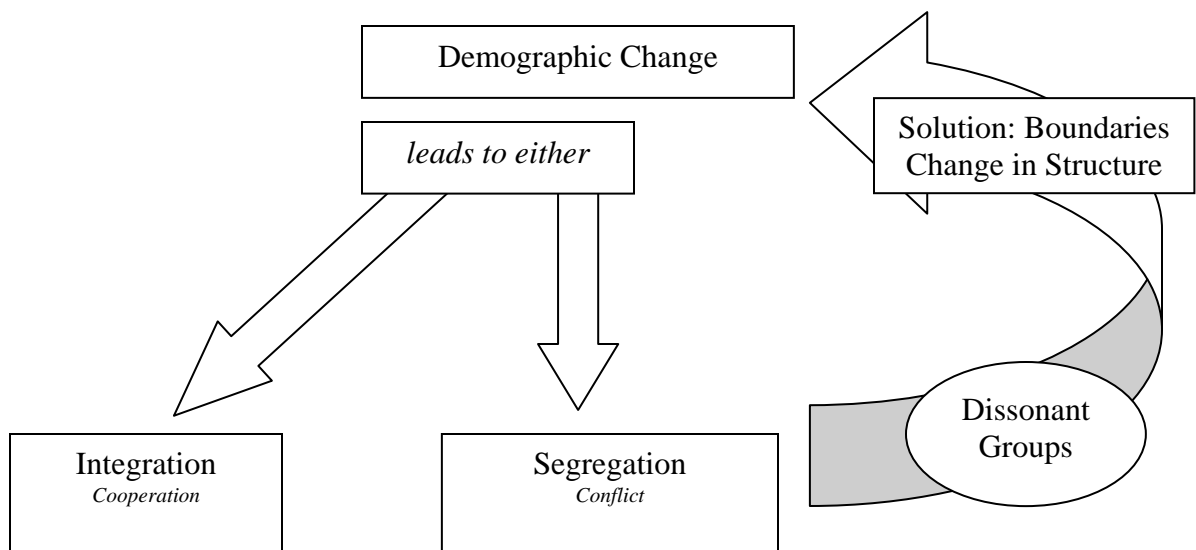


Figure 3.2. Societal/Residential patterns of conflict and change

This study provides a description of the demographic changes, dissonant groups, and boundaries which exist within southeast Michigan. Though the demographic change within southeast Michigan varied overtime, the outcome of the conflict has resulted in similar

patterns. There are examples of integration (cooperation) as well as examples of segregation (conflict) as a result of the demographic change in the area. The cycle depicted in Figure 3.2 can be applied to centuries of change that have occurred in southeast Michigan.

Protestants and Michigan

French Roman Catholics were the first settlers in Detroit (Wilson, 2008). In 1760, the entire population in what is now Michigan was Native Americans and French (Pilcher, 1878; Streeter, 1918). The territory of Michigan was established in 1804 and the following year General Hull was appointed Governor of Detroit and began his term of office when the city was in ashes. A fire had engulfed the town of Detroit in June 1805 and destroyed approximately 150 houses, leaving only one house standing. Judge Woodward, after whom Woodward Avenue is named, oversaw the plans for rebuilding the city of Detroit. In 1810 a Methodist Church was established in Detroit; this was the first Protestant religious group in Michigan (Pilcher, 1878).

One of the largest groups to migrate to Michigan were the Protestants of New England. Initially, Detroit and Mackinac Island were two locations where “Yankees” immigrated. The Protestants of New England became a dominant group which influenced all social institutions in Michigan. Beginning in the 1790s, Yankees began moving toward Michigan and at the turn of the century more and more Yankees moved to Michigan. Many Protestants of New England moved for the fertile farm land in Michigan. Initially, corn was the main crop grown by Yankees; later there was crop diversification (Wilson, 2008).

During the 1820 and 1830s there were approximately 8,000 Native Americans in Michigan, most belonging to the Ojibwe, Potawatomi, or Odawa tribe; in addition to Native Americans there were approximately 30,000 White settlers (Schwartz, 2008). Hillsdale,

Lenawee, and Washtenaw were all counties in southeast Michigan where Yankees settled in large numbers (Wilson, 2008). Groups of individuals from towns in New England chose to settle in a similar area when they migrated to Michigan: individuals from Massachusetts settled in Detroit and Kalamazoo; New Yorkers (often called “Yankee-Yorkers”) moved to Lenawee County; and Vermonters migrated to Kent, Macomb, Oakland, Washtenaw, and Wayne Counties (Wilson, 2008).

Preserving the New England Culture was important to Yankee-Yorkers who moved to Michigan. Yankee-Yorkers viewed themselves as superior to the Native Americans and French who resided in Michigan. Overall, Yankees preferred to interact with other Yankees instead of the French or Native American (Wilson, 2008). Yankee-Yorkers wanted to civilize the Native Americans as they viewed many of their practices as barbaric (i.e., to the Yankee-Yorkers Native Americans were drunks who were often violent.) The Yankee-Yorkers wanted the Native American population to replace fur trading with agricultural efforts (Schwartz, 2008).

There were distinct characteristics of the protestant religious groups in Michigan. Presbyterians and Episcopalians were often city dwellers who were educated, financially well off, conservative, and voted for Whig candidates. Congregationalists, like Presbyterians and Episcopalians, were often middle or upper class (Wilson, 2008). Presbyterians were one of the first Protestant denominations in Michigan. Catholics were also from the city but were often uneducated (illiterate) and poor. The Methodist Episcopalians consisted of poor individuals from rural areas. Baptists, Quakers, and Wesleyan Methodists were comprised of a middle class group from rural areas. Quakers, Baptists, Methodists, and Catholics often voted for Democratic candidates (Streeter, 1918).

Immigration in Southeast Michigan, 1850 to 1930

Jason Booza, a geographic information specialist with the Center for Urban Studies at Wayne State University, described the settlement of immigrants as follows: “Neighborhoods and factories began to organize around ethnic origin. The popular myth of American cities as melting pots is a fallacy. The more accurate picture of Detroit was a mosaic of cultural, linguistic, religious, national, and ethnic groups” (Booza, 2004, p. 2). Residential segregation in southeast Michigan is not a new phenomenon; it began as early as the 1850s with Eastern European immigrants.

Immigrants, most of whom were poor and from rural areas in Eastern Europe, moved to southeast Michigan beginning in the 1850s (Booza, 2004). Immigrants moved to Detroit by the masses since Detroit had job opportunities in the automotive industry that offered good wages. In the 1850s there was an influx of Irish immigrants to Detroit (Granzo, 2008). Dutch, French, German, Irish, and Polish immigrants settled in Detroit prior to the turn of the century (Booza, 2004). By 1900, Germans were the largest immigrant population in Detroit (Virtanen, 1977). At that time Polish, German, Canadian, and Irish immigrants continued to move to the city. In 1910, Russians moved into the Detroit area, and in the 1920 an increase in population was seen from the British and Hungarians (Granzo, 2008). By 1920 more than half of the population was foreign born, most of European origin.

Table 3.1

Immigrant Population in Detroit in the 1930s

Immigrants	Population
Polish	66,113
German	32,716
English	28,636
Italian	28,581
Scottish	23,546
Hungarian	11,162
Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, the Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Sweden, and Switzerland	smaller populations (>9,000)

(Virtanen, 1977).

As a result of the large immigrant population, ethnic social groups and community activities formed (Virtanen, 1977). Polish Hamtramck and Hungarian Delray (along Jefferson Avenue and south of Clark Street) are two examples of immigrant neighborhoods within Metro Detroit (Sugrue, 2005). During World War II, the United States' borders were closed to immigrants, which significantly decreased foreign immigration into Detroit (Booza, 2004).

Southern Migration and Industry, 1920 to 1960

Factories in Detroit employed many immigrants; however, the demand for labor exceeded the supply of immigrant workers (Booza, 2004). Beginning in the 1920s, southern African Americans moved to the Detroit area with the prospect of employment and a better life. Before the southern Black movement to Detroit, only 1.4% of the population in Detroit was Black. The Black population increased from 5,741 in 1910 to 120,000 by 1930, a large increase in a 20-year period (Virtanen, 1977). For many Blacks from the American south, Detroit was a place of opportunity to gain employment and earn a higher wage. In addition to individuals from the south, farm workers from surrounding states flocked to the area (Metzger & Booza, 2002).

Though automotive production was the primary industry in southeast Michigan, 40% of industrial jobs in the area were not tied to the automotive industry. In the early 20th century, Detroit's industrial economy included manufacturing airline parts, chemicals, food, furniture, garments, pharmaceuticals, stoves, and typewriters. There was also significant work in oil refineries, salt mines, and steel mills (Sugrue, 2005).

Until the Second World War, the service sector (including hotel, restaurant, and maintenance) was the main employer of Black workers. "Black auto workers before the 1940s were a blue-collar elite. Most found jobs with the recommendation of their churches or, in some cases, the Urban League" (Sugrue, 2005, p. 25). During World War II, the Ford Motor Company, specifically the River Rouge plant, employed many African American workers. Jobs that Blacks held within Ford included barbers, guards, mail clerks, messengers, porters, security guards, and messengers (Sugrue, 1999). Other automotive companies were less likely to employ non-White workers at this time (Sugrue, 2005). Large migration continued from southern states after World War II (Booza, 2004). Many Blacks and Appalachian Whites worked in the suburb of Pontiac, home to General Motors Fisher Body Factory (Perry, 2007).

After the Great Depression, the increase in jobs was dramatic; "almost overnight, Detroit had gone from one of the most depressed urban areas in the country to a boomtown, a magnet that attracted workers from all over the United States" (Sugrue, 2005, p. 19). During this time Detroit was a leader in economic transformation. This transformation was fueled by the area's industrial production. Manufacturing employment experienced a 40% surge between 1940-1947. The 1940s marked the industrial peak; auto production was booming, economic growth was widespread, and individuals residing in Detroit experienced financial

stability. In 1943 unemployment was at an all time low with only 4,000 unemployed individuals in the city (Sugrue, 2005).

World War II heavily impacted industrial production; automotive factories quickly shifted production from cars to wartime goods including military airplanes, equipment, and tanks. The war fueled the local economy with an increased demand for chemicals, steel, and industrial products which were produced in Detroit (Metzger & Booza, 2002). Black workers had increased opportunities in the automotive industry during World War II; however, they were confined to specific jobs in the auto industry such as custodial, maintenance, and assembly jobs. Automotive jobs that were restricted to White workers included sales positions, skilled trades, and a variety of union positions (Sugrue, 1999).

In post-war times the automotive industry employed a diverse cultural workforce, including many immigrants from Eastern Europe as well as individuals from southern states. After World War II, jobs in Detroit began to transition to the suburbs (Heron, 2005). The 1960s provided new employment opportunities, and Black workers had contact with the public including serving as clerks, tellers, and cashiers (Sugrue, 1999). Both the Fair Employment Practice Council Act (1955), which protected against discrimination based on race in the workplace, and the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibited segregation in public places and schools, enabled Black workers to gain employment in companies that were previously all White. Many Blacks were hired by the government and government contractors as a result. While blue-collar opportunities for Blacks increased, professional positions remained largely unattainable, although change was on the horizon. In the 1960s there were limited numbers of Black professionals in the state of Michigan; specifically there were “324 black physicians, 142 black lawyers, 201 black engineers, and 95 black college

teachers” (Sugrue, 1999, pp. 2, section X). Greater access to higher education was a factor which spurred the growth of Black professionals in Michigan in the second half of the twentieth century. Despite this increase in educational attainment, the segregated residential patterns in southeast Michigan remained constant (Sugrue, 1999).

The Residential Divide

The population in southeast Michigan originally grew because of the Eastern European immigration and migration from the American south. This section details the residential patterns in southeast Michigan, which can be classified as a residential divide. “Beginning in the 1920s—and certainly by the 1940s—class and race became more important than ethnicity as a guide to the city’s residential geography” (Sugrue, 2005, p. 22). The White elite of Detroit lived in neighborhoods such as Boston-Edison, Palmer Woods, and Rosedale Park. Automotive industry executives, bankers, doctors, and lawyers comprised the White elite. The next tier of White workers were engineers, accountants, and white-collar professionals who lived in brick homes in the Russell Woods, Chalmers Park, and the northwest and far northeast section of Detroit. Two tiers down from the White elite were blue-collar workers who lived in neighborhoods characterized by small bungalows. Blue-collar workers often lived in houses situated close to automotive factories and represented the majority of Whites from Detroit (Sugrue, 2005).

The Detroit Black population originally settled on the east side of Detroit. The Lower East Side, referred to as Paradise Valley, was home to the Detroit Black population. Residentially, Blacks were confined to Paradise Valley, which created an overcrowded sixty-square block section located between Gratiot and Grand Boulevard, with cross streets St. Antoine and Hastings. The residential area was constructed beginning in the 1860s and was

poorly maintained; rent was low as was the quality of the housing facilities. Other residential areas for Blacks included Hamtramck and pockets on the west side (Grand River and Tireman) and northwest of Detroit (Eight Mile and Wyoming).

In the late 1940s, construction on new homes began in Detroit. The housing market could not keep up with the population growth, an increase of over 220,000 residents between 1940 and 1950. Census data illustrates the Black population jumped from approximately 150,000 to 300,000 in this decade, with much of the growth resulting from migration from southern states. According to Sugrue (2005), “Of 545,000 housing units available in the Detroit areas in 1947, only 47,000 units were available to blacks” (p. 43). Between 1940 and 1950, approximately 186,000 new homes were constructed; of this only 1,500 were available to Black families. The result was Blacks continuing to live in substandard housing which was significantly overcrowded; often several Black families lived together under one roof (Sugrue, 2005).

Blacks were trapped in a cycle that perpetuated impoverishment, overpaying for rental properties, and having lower-paying jobs. The lack of disposable income hindered Blacks from buying houses. Another barrier to integration was that real estate agents and banking officers viewed selling to Blacks as a risk; as a result, few were willing to conduct business with Black individuals (Sugrue, 2005).

The Sojourner Truth housing project was one example of the segregation and tension which existed in residential southeast Michigan. Located on the northeast side of Detroit, the Sojourner Truth housing project was a highly protected White area in Detroit. In the 1940s Blacks desired to live in this area; however, the Whites in the area wanted the Sojourner Truth housing project to be White only. At the time the only housing project that Blacks

could live in was the Brewster Project on the east side of the city (Baulch & Zacharias, 1999, February 11). Posting signs in front of the Sojourner Truth housing projects was one way that Whites voiced their desires; one sign (see Figure 3.3) read “We want White tenants in our White community” (Siegel, 1942, p. 1).



Figure 3.3. Sojourner Truth Housing Project (Authur S. Siegel, Library of Congress’ Photographic Services/FSA-OWI Collection)

The conflict between races over the housing project resulted in the Sojourner Truth Riots. The housing complex, which was completed in December 1941, did not hold occupants immediately because of racial conflicts. Government officials planned to build a different housing project for Blacks but when a location could not be found, the Sojourner became open to Whites and Blacks. In February 1942, there were 1,200 White picketers,

some of whom were armed, in front of the Sojourner Truth housing project. In April 1942, Michigan State Troopers stood guard as the housing was integrated (Baulch & Zacharias, 1999, February 11).

Residential options for Blacks were limited, as “city officials, looking at the poor housing stock in Black neighborhoods, condemned many areas as blighted, and destroyed much exant housing to build highways, hospitals, housing projects, and a civic center complex, further limiting the housing options for blacks” (Sugrue, 2005, p. 36). Highways constructed in Detroit following World War II provided access to suburban areas. In the process of highway construction, many residents were displaced, and neighborhoods were demolished to build these roadways (Vergara, 1995).

The 1950s marked a turn in the housing market for Blacks, and significantly fewer Blacks were sequestered to substandard buildings. As more housing options became available to Blacks in Detroit, the Black population began a process of class division; families with more money moved to neighborhoods outside of the urban center (Sugrue, 2005). Higher status Black residents in Detroit separated themselves from lower status Blacks. Often this separation was seen residentially; the more elite group lived farther from the city center (Aldrich, 1975). After World War II, working class Black families made efforts to obtain housing outside of inner-city Detroit. Blacks who remained in inner-city Detroit had incomes 73% less than Black families who moved to suburban neighborhoods which had previously been White neighborhoods (Sugrue, 2005). West side Black residents differentiated themselves from Paradise Valley on the east side; they were more likely to be homeowners, 37% as compared to 10%, and the quality of housing was less likely to be substandard, 17% as compared to 60%. It was considered an achievement, a status symbol, to

move to Conant Gardens, which had ranch style houses located on the northeast side of Detroit. Conant Gardens resembled suburbia and had a 60% home ownership rate, much higher than other Black areas in Detroit. Elite Blacks were businessmen, lawyers, ministers, and teachers; these individuals were the most educated Blacks. The income gap between Black families in the inner-city and those families who moved to suburbs was evidence of the hardening of class divisions (Sugrue, 2005). The urban center consisted of poor areas with few jobs, whereas job opportunities were plentiful in the suburbs.

Conflicts that were Catalysts for White Flight

White flight is defined as “the net movement of white and middle class families from central cities to suburbs” (Clotfelter, 1976, p. 100). White flight began around World War II and resulted in a changing racial composition of the city and suburban neighborhoods. Whites moved out of Detroit to suburban areas to separate themselves from the Blacks in the city. White flight in Detroit was pervasive. Today the city of Detroit, which was once predominantly White, is almost exclusively Black (New Detroit Leadership Summit on Race, 2006).

Thomas Sugrue, author of *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*, shared in an interview that he discovered numerous and often violent examples of resistance to residential integration. In the interview, Sugrue stated that he “found more than 200 incidents of whites protesting, picketing, breaking windows, committing arson and attacking African Americans who were the first or second or third to move into what were formerly white neighborhoods” (Heron, 2005, p. 2). Many of these examples showed that Whites joined together in an effort to prevent Blacks from moving into all-White neighborhoods.

Dearborn is an example of a suburban city in southeast Michigan which rallied to keep Blacks out of the area. The efforts to remain a predominantly White city were led by the Mayor of Dearborn from 1942-1978, Orville Hubbard, who was regarded as one of the most outspoken segregationists. The city slogan, which was posted on city police cars, read “Keep Dearborn Clean,” which was widely interpreted as the city’s message to “Keep Dearborn White” (“Racism charges return to Dearborn,” 1997). As of the 2000 U.S. Census, Dearborn remained less than 2% Black, a stark contrast to Detroit, which is adjacent to Dearborn and is 82% Black. Though Blacks have not found Dearborn a welcoming area, many Arab immigrants have settled in Dearborn, the majority of whom are Muslim. International residential patterns in southeast Michigan will be addressed later in this section.

Between 1950 and 1960, the suburban population in Metro Detroit surpassed the population in the city of Detroit, a direct result of White flight (Metzger & Booza, 2002). The 1960s were filled with residential transition as White neighborhoods in Detroit became overwhelmingly Black in a short period of time. Many of the neighborhoods which transitioned from White to Black had previously resisted this change, often being vocal and physical regarding their opposition (Heron, 2005). Extensive White flight in southeast Michigan resulted in few interracial stable neighborhoods in southeast Michigan (Farley, Steeh, Krysan, Jackson, & Reeves, 1994). By the 1970s more than half of the Whites who had previously resided in Detroit had a home in the suburbs.

Ecological succession.

The Chicago School of Sociology termed the population replacement in neighborhoods as “ecological succession” (Aldrich, 1975, p. 327). Often racial change is associated with ecological succession (Aldrich). Ecological succession occurs when there is a

population shift, i.e. individuals move out of a neighborhood and a new group moves into the area. In southeast Michigan there has been evident ecological succession, as individuals moved out of Detroit into the surrounding suburbs. The ecological succession process has continued as some suburbs which were initially White suburbs have transformed into Black suburbs.

Succession generally begins with invasion along a fairly coherent line of expansion, and, once begun, the process is rarely if ever reversed. Turnover proceeds in a more or less orderly fashion, with housing “turning” on a block by block basis from the line of expansion into the invaded area. (Aldrich, 1975, p. 334)

The succession of neighborhoods and communities within southeast Michigan will be detailed in this section.

Ecological succession occurs with “an established group becoming upwardly mobile and searching elsewhere for accommodations more suited to their new status” (Aldrich, 1975, p. 331). Ecological succession also affects small businesses. These businesses change according to the identity of the population; personal-service businesses are dependent on the population’s preference. The demand for particular shops and services changes during ecological succession (Aldrich, 1975).

The process of ecological succession was evident in the outward patterns of residential movement from Detroit. Individuals moved out of the city to the near suburbs and then to outer suburbs. This trend was evident in Detroit; businesses and factories which were once located in the city have relocated to the surrounding suburbs. Often ecological succession has a negative impact on the business and industry of urban areas. In Detroit, the residential and small business succession occurred simultaneously. As neighborhoods shifted from White to Black, the pattern in local business ownership slowly changed from White to Black-owned. Detroit became the home to many Black business owners in the 1950s. In

1953, Detroit had the greatest number of Black business owners in the whole country (Sugrue, 2005). Black-owned businesses at that time included barber shops, clubs, funeral homes, restaurants, and various specialty shops (Sugrue, 1999).

As the city's population rapidly declined, businesses were left with a shrinking client base. The declining population affected commercial real estate, resulting in "a slowly increasing vacancy rate, creating a scene familiar to ghetto residents: broken storefront glass and boarded-up or burned-out business sites" (Aldrich, 1975, p. 340). The declining population and shift in business ownership within Detroit resulted in an increased number of empty stores, supporting the phenomenon of ecological succession.

Competition for specific residential areas was a motivating factor in succession. The competition for land use can often manifest itself in the form of conflict (Aldrich, 1975). Conflicts such as the 1967 Detroit Race Riots and educational bussing were closely tied to the ecological succession of Detroit.

Race riots and bussing.

Race riots, educational bussing, and their impact on public schools will be discussed in this section. In addition, an overview of court cases which examined the integration of public schools within southeast Michigan will be provided.

The race riots in Detroit and proposed bussing to integrate schools were two events that accelerated White flight. The 12th Street race riots in Detroit occurred in July 1967 and lasted for five days. During the riots, 43 individuals died, 7,200 people were arrested by the U.S. National Guard, and more than \$100 million in property damage occurred, including 2,000 burned buildings. The race riots were a significant factor that propelled White movement out of the city of Detroit to the suburbs (Perry, 2007). After the 1967 Detroit

Riots, the city of Detroit had considerable job loss: a decrease of 208,000 jobs, which was approximately one-third of all jobs in the city (Vergara, 1995).

The effects of White flight were evident in the public school system. The percentage of minority students in Detroit Public Schools (DPS) grew as Whites left the city (Clotfelter, 1976). DPS lost 74% of its White student population between 1967 and 1978 (Sugrue, 1999). In southeast Michigan, bussing students in an effort to integrate schools was highly controversial. There was much opposition to court-mandated bussing, and ultimately the bussing order accelerated White flight.

School segregation was not limited to Detroit. In 1969 the NAACP filed suit against Pontiac schools, citing deliberate segregation. Pontiac was a blue-collar industrial town which housed General Motors' Fisher Body and Pontiac auto assembly plants. Public schools in Pontiac were either predominantly Black (90%+) or predominantly White (90%+). The court found the Pontiac School System in violation of the 14th Amendment. In an effort to delay the court-mandated bussing, Pontiac appealed the decision. However, in 1971 Pontiac was ordered to desegregate. Transportation arrangements were made to integrate; however, conflict erupted. The busses which were going to be used to integrate the school system were blown up by the Ku Klux Klan (Zacharias, 1997). This is just one example of the violent opposition toward bussing within the Metro Detroit area.



Figure 3.4. “Pontiac firemen work to put out the flames in school bus after opponents of forced busing destroyed 10 buses and damaged three others with dynamite.” AP Photo. (Zacharias, 1997, p. 1)

The next significant court case regarding school segregation in Metro Detroit was *Milliken v. Bradley*, 418 U.S. 717 (1974). This case went to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1974. The case began in 1971 with Judge Stephen J. Roth presiding; he found that the Detroit School Board was deliberately segregating schools. To remedy the segregation, Judge Roth ordered cross-district bussing which was aimed at integrating the schools. The cross-district integration plan, which involved 53 school districts, would integrate urban schools with students living in the suburbs. “Roth’s remedial order was the broadest bussing plan ever imposed by a federal judge, and it ignited a firestorm of antibusing protests in the white suburbs” (Perry, 2007, p. 45). Many suburban families opposed the bussing which could take their children back to a Detroit school. Parents cited that their family’s move out of the city

to the suburbs enabled their children to attend a better school in the suburbs and avoid the dangers of the city (Perry, 2007).

On appeal, Judge DeMascio, who was Judge Roth's successor, affirmed the decision that there had been intentional school segregation. A bussing plan was instituted as well as a mandate to invest 70 million dollars to enhance the Detroit school system. In 1974, the U.S. Supreme Court reversed Judge Roth's decision that forced the integration of urban schools with students living in the suburbs; the cross-district integration plan was overturned. However, desegregation for Detroit city schools was ordered by the court. The Detroit-only plan was a ruling that influenced White flight (The Detroit News, 2004). More White families moved to suburbs to avoid bussing, and this population shift resulted in Detroit becoming the most segregated metropolitan area in the country. The social outcome of the bussing mandate was the opposite of what was intended; racial tension increased as did segregation and mistrust between Whites and Blacks (Perry, 2007). The residential movement affected Detroit; the city's poverty level increased and the median income level decreased contributing to an increased economic inequality (Massey & Eggers, 1990). In January 1976, school desegregation began in Detroit. More than 20,000 students were bussed to schools in an effort to desegregate (The Detroit News, 2004).



Figure 3.5. “Black and white children boarded buses in January 1976 as the desegregation of Detroit schools began” (The Detroit News, 2004, p. 1)

Detroit Mayor Coleman Young, who was in office from 1974 to 1993, described the magnitude of White and middle class flight as one of the largest movement patterns in the country, with more than one million residents leaving within a forty-year span (Vergara, 1995). The movement by Whites and middle class minorities from the city to the suburbs meant that the population remaining in Detroit was mainly lower class and working poor, with a high concentration of poverty (Massey & Eggers, 1990).

Residential Transition

The neighborhood transition that occurred as a result of White flight will be described in this section. The White elite who previously lived in the Arden Park, Boston-Edison, Palmer Woods, and Rosedale Park neighborhoods within Detroit moved from the city to the

suburbs, specifically to wealthier suburbs including Birmingham, Bloomfield Hills, and Grosse Pointe. As the White elite moved out of these neighborhoods, the Black professional elite moved into these large Detroit homes (Sugrue, 2005).

Northwest and northeast Detroit were the first areas to transition from White to Black neighborhoods. Three northwest neighborhoods, Bagley, Russell Woods, and Twelfth Street, became home to upper class Black families. The Twelfth Street neighborhood, previously a Jewish neighborhood, transitioned to an upper class Black neighborhood. Bagley, which is located between McNichols, Seven Mile Road, Livernois, and Wyoming, attracted middle class well-educated Black families. Black families who wanted to escape the poverty-ridden neighborhoods moved to separate themselves from poorer Black families on the east side of Detroit. This residential separation had a discernable employment pattern; the northwest neighborhoods were home to families who were regularly employed, while the east side was filled with unemployed individuals. Despite the residential separation and differential in employment status there remained a solid social connection between the groups (Sugrue, 2005).

Zenk, Schultz, Israel, James, Bao, and Wilson (2005) described the residential patterns in southeast Michigan:

This pattern of White flight and economic divestment was repeated during several decades across Detroit neighborhoods. Residential patterns of African Americans generally expanded outward in a stepwise progression from central and east central Detroit toward the northern city boundaries and eventually to Southfield, a suburb adjacent to northwest Detroit. (p. 664)

In the 1970s, Black families moved to suburban areas such as Ecorse, Highland Park, Inkster, Pontiac, River Rouge, and Royal Oak Township as there was increased suburban access for Black families. In order to better understand the suburban population in southeast

Michigan, a comparison of the 1970 Census population and the 2000 Census population for several suburban areas is below. Data show that suburban neighborhoods are more likely to be predominantly White or Black rather than integrated. Neighborhoods that are integrated do not remain this way for a significant period of time (Trowbridge, 2002, January 14).

Neighborhoods in Detroit and surrounding communities have distinct residential patterns. There are some areas which have historically been White and remain that way. Neighborhoods which were more than 95% White in 1970 and remained 95% White thirty years later include Clinton Township, Dearborn, Dearborn Heights, East Detroit (now Eastpointe), Ferndale, Garden City, Grosse Pointe, Lincoln Park, Livonia, Madison Heights, Roseville, Royal Oak, St. Clair Shores, Sterling Heights, Troy, and Warren. Nine of these suburban cities have less than a 2% Black population. Within Metro Detroit, there are six counties with 185 cities and townships, and over 115 of these areas are more than 95% White (Trowbridge, 2002, January 14; U.S. Census Bureau, 2000a).

Several neighborhoods in southeast Michigan had rapid ecological succession during this 30 year span (1970-2000); Oak Park, which had fewer than 1% Black residents in 1970, was 45.7% Black in 2000. Southfield's demographics are similar to Oak Park; with less than 1% in 1970, the Black population there grew to 54% in 2000. Highland Park, which was majority Black 56.8% in 1970, has become almost exclusively Black (93.1%) in 2000. Inkster, Pontiac, and River Rouge had gradual increases in their Black population; Inkster with 44.5% in 1970 increased to 67.3% Black in 2000, Pontiac moved from 26.7% in 1970 to 47.4% Black in 2000, and River Rouge increased from 31.9% Black in 1970 to 41.8% in 2000. Ecorse and Royal Oak Township's makeup remained relatively consistent. In both

1970 and 2000 the Black population in Ecorse was approximately 40%. Royal Oak Township continued to be a predominantly Black residential area with 67% in 1970 and 71.1% in 2000.

When defining an integrated neighborhood for southeast Michigan, one accepted definition is a neighborhood with more than 12% Black and less than 50% Black (Trowbridge, 2002, January 14). The Detroit metro area is approximately 24% Black. Using this definition and the 2000 Census data, Ecorse, Hamtramck, Romulus, and Ypsilanti are currently integrated suburbs where EMU draws students. In 2000 there were 74 integrated neighborhoods in Metro Detroit; however, few integrated areas remained integrated for more than ten years. Only 35 Metro Detroit neighborhoods had integrated status in both 1990 and 2000, which supports the notion of White flight. Reynolds Farley of the University of Michigan explained, “Few Metro Detroit neighborhoods gain a substantial number of blacks without sparking whites to leave. Neighborhoods may be racially mixed for a few years, but they rapidly become majority black” (Trowbridge, 2002, January 14, p. 2). Southeast Michigan cities which are majority Black according to the 2000 U.S. Census include Detroit, Southfield, Pontiac, Inkster, and Highland Park. Data show that these cities are home to nearly 9 out of every 10 Blacks in the Detroit area. A smaller numbers of Blacks reside in other suburban areas in southeast Michigan (Trowbridge, 2002, January 14).

A study titled *Metropolitan Development and Racial Change in American Metropolitan Areas*, which was funded by the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations, found that there was tremendous racial segregation within many American metropolitan areas, specifically Detroit (Orfield, 2006). Data were compiled from the U.S. Census between 1980-2000 to illustrate segregated (Figure 3.6) and integrated (Figure 3.7) neighborhoods in

southeast Michigan. These figures support Trowbridge (2002, January 14) and Farley et al.'s (1994) notion of few integrated neighborhoods in Metro Detroit.

Suburban southeast Michigan.

Boundaries have been formed that separate racial groups and economic classes from one another in southeast Michigan. Eight Mile Road, a well-known racial divider for the Detroit area, is known as the northern dividing line between Detroit and the suburban areas. Alter Road located in Detroit is another example of geographic separation between Blacks and Whites, dividing Detroit from the city of Grosse Pointe Park.

A 1992 study of the Detroit Area, titled *Stereotypes and Segregation: Neighborhoods in the Detroit Area*, found that residential integration only slightly increased with educational attainment. The study found that both Whites and Blacks desired to live in a neighborhood where their race was the majority. However, Blacks were more comfortable with a mixed neighborhood than Whites. In fact, Blacks preferred a mixed neighborhood over an all-Black neighborhood, whereas almost all Whites responded they would live in an all-White neighborhood (Farley et al., 1994).

Both Blacks and Whites live in suburban areas in southeast Michigan; however, many of the suburban areas are racially segregated communities (Vergara, 1995). As mentioned earlier, housing market discrimination contributes to the residential segregation in southeast Michigan (Sugrue, 2005). Discrimination from real estate staff and brokers contributed to the segregation pattern, which continues today (Farley et al., 1994). Discrimination in the housing market persists; a 2003-2005 study by the Detroit area National Fair Housing Alliance found that realtors suggest White neighborhoods to White clients and Black neighborhoods to Black clients (Fair Housing Center of Greater Grand Rapids, 2005, Winter). Residentially, southeast Michigan remains segregated; the workplace continues to

be the primary location where Blacks and Whites interact. The university campus (EMU) is another prime location for interaction between races.

More than 3 million individuals live within the suburbs of southeast Michigan. Vergara (1995) describes the job opportunities and industry in the suburbs of southeast Michigan as follows; “Beyond the residential enclaves lie the research and development outfits, corporate headquarters, financial centers, shopping malls, developers’ offices, the architectural and engineering firms that sustain this pleasant way of life” (p. 209). The majority of employment opportunities are in the suburbs in southeast Michigan.

Residential Southeast Michigan, 1990 to Present

The Detroit Metropolitan area had a 4.8% population loss between 1990-2000. Based on a population analysis between 2000-2003, southeast Michigan loses 27,000 residents per year. However, annually there is significant movement into the area by new international immigrants. With the addition of 18,000 internationals, the net annual residential loss in southeast Michigan is 9,000. According to the 2000 U.S. Census Bureau, large groups of individuals from Mexico, India, Canada, Germany, Japan, Iraq, Lebanon, and Albania have moved to southeast Michigan (Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, St. Clair, and Washtenaw Counties), many of whom are well-educated (SEMCOG, 2004). There is a notable difference in the socioeconomic status of immigrants coming to southeast Michigan present day and the Eastern European immigration in the early 1900s. Then, immigrants were characterized as rural poor, often with agricultural backgrounds, whereas today’s immigrants moving to southeast Michigan from Asia, the Middle East, and other countries in North America are often well educated individuals from middle and upper class backgrounds (Booza, 2004).

Immigrants, sometimes called internationals, reside in communities throughout southeast Michigan. There are some discernable residential patterns; for example, Dearborn has a significant Arab population with many immigrants from Iraq, Lebanon, and Yemen. Immigrants with lower socioeconomic status, from places such as Bangladeshi, Hmong, and Pakistani, tend to reside in Detroit and older suburbs such as Warren, Hamtramck, and Pontiac. Internationals in a higher income bracket, often Asian, Chinese, Japanese, and Indian, tend to live in suburban cities farther from Detroit, such as Troy, Bloomfield Hills, and Farmington Hills (Booza, 2004).

Counties within southeast Michigan (Oakland, Washtenaw, Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, and St. Clair) have different residential characteristics and educational levels. Oakland and Washtenaw Counties have a greater number of individuals with college degrees than other counties in southeast Michigan. Washtenaw County is home to two major public higher education institutions (Eastern Michigan University and University of Michigan). Many of the professors who work at these institutions live within Washtenaw County. Oakland County is an affluent area; between 1995-2000 the county experienced an influx of individuals with higher income levels greater than \$75,000 and experienced loss of population in lower income brackets. Livingston County is characterized as an area which is home to well educated individuals, many of whom hold professional positions. Macomb County is generally home to working class individuals, many of whom work in construction, production, or sales, and do not have a college degree. Monroe and St. Clair Counties have a minimal number of individuals with college degrees, though the overall population is characterized as middle to upper income (SEMCOG, 2004). The characteristics of Wayne County, home of Detroit, will be described in a following section.

Residential movement within southeast Michigan.

Figure 3.8 titled “Net Flow of Domestic Migration, Southeast Michigan, 1995-2000” used U.S. Census Bureau data to depict residential movement. The arrows within the figure are proportioned to represent the level of residential movement and positioned to illustrate the residential movement direction between 1995 and 2000 (SEMCOG, 2004). Residential movement within southeast Michigan can be described as an outward movement from Wayne and Oakland Counties to surrounding communities. The outward pattern of residential movement was a theme within all counties in southeast Michigan.

Wayne County, which contains the City of Detroit, had a population loss of 115,000 in the five-year period between 1995 and 2000 (SEMCOG, 2004). Wayne and Oakland Counties continue to have large numbers of residents leaving. Detroit, the largest city within Wayne County, lost 78,000 residents between 1995 and 2000. Detroit residents who moved out of the city had above-average income for the city of Detroit, meaning those residents with more money are leaving Detroit and individuals with lower income levels are remaining (SEMCOG, 2004). The population movement between counties within southeast Michigan indicates the desire of many individuals to remain in southeast Michigan. However, as the local economy declines and individuals are facing a depressed job market, some individuals find that their only opportunity for employment is outside of southeast Michigan (SEMCOG, 2004). The declining economy is a factor which contributes to the population movement beyond the boundaries of southeast Michigan. As of August 2009, the unemployment rates in several southeast Michigan areas were some of the highest rates nationwide. Data from the U.S. Department of Labor illustrate the high level of unemployment, “Of the 49 metropolitan areas with a Census 2000 population of 1 million or more, Detroit-Warren-Livonia, Mich.,

reported the highest unemployment rate in August, [2009]17.0 percent” (2009, October 4, p. 1). These data were further divided: “two divisions that comprise the Detroit-Warren-Livonia, Mich., metropolitan area registered the highest jobless rates: Detroit-Livonia-Dearborn, 18.2 percent, and Warren-Troy-Farmington Hills, 16.2 percent (United States Department of Labor, 2009, October 4, p. 1).

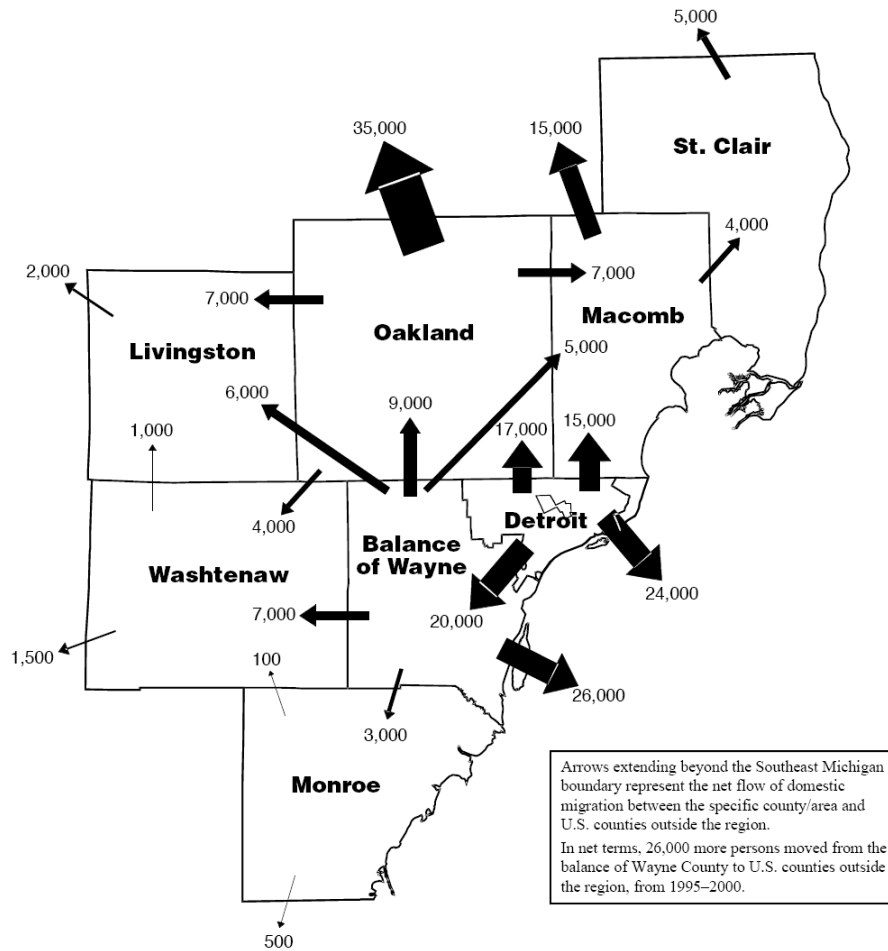


Figure 3.8. Net flow of domestic migration southeast Michigan, 1995-2000

Source: 2000 Migration DVD (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000b)

Urban Southeast Michigan: Detroit

In order to understand southeast Michigan, it is important to examine the urban center, Detroit. This section provides an overview of Detroit's population, residential segregation, poverty level, educational attainment, and crime statistics. Also, business characteristics within Detroit are described and compared to businesses found in suburban area.

Table 3.2 provides an overview of the Detroit population between 1820-2000; population figures were gathered from the U.S. Census. The table provides the population, percentage growth or decline, and Black and White population in the city. The city of Detroit experienced a population growth through the 1950s. The 1960s marked the beginning of the population decline, which continues today. The population of Detroit in 2000, according to the Census, was approximately 50% of the population of Detroit in 1950. In 2000, there were 951,270 residents, which is less than the population of Detroit in 1920. A combination of economic disinvestment in the urban center and suburban development contributed to the changing landscape in southeast Michigan.

In the second half of the 20th century there was a rapid growth in Detroit's Black population. The increase in the Black population began in the 1950s, with the migration from southern states. The racial shift in the city of Detroit is detailed in Table 3.1. Initially a predominantly White city, Detroit is now predominantly Black. The White population in Detroit has decreased by over 80% since 1930, while the Black population has increased by nearly the same percentage. According to the 2000 Census, Detroit was 81.6% Black and 12.3% White. As the White population in Detroit has diminished, the White population in the surrounding suburbs has grown.

Table 3.2.
Detroit's Population, 1820-2000

Year	Total Population	Growth in Total Population	Black Population	Percent Black	White Population	Percent White
1820	1,444	54%	67	4.7%	*	*
1830	2,222	410%	126	5.7%	*	*
1840	9,102	231%	193	2.1%	*	*
1850	21,019	217%	587	2.8%	*	*
1860	45,619	174%	1,402	3.1%	*	*
1870	79,577	146%	2,235	2.8%	*	*
1880	116,340	177%	2,821	2.4%	*	*
1890	205,876	139%	3,431	1.7%	*	*
1900	285,704	39%	4,111	1.4%	*	*
1910	465,766	63%	5,741	1.2%	*	*
1920	993,675	113%	40,838	4.1%	*	*
1930	1,568,662	58%	120,066	7.7%	1,440,141	92.3%
1940	1,623,452	4%	149,119	9.2%	1,472,662	90.8%
1950	1,849,568	14%	300,506	16.2%	1,545,847	83.6%
1960	1,670,144	(-10%)	482,229	28.9%	1,182,970	70.8%
1970	1,511,484	(-9%)	660,428	44.5%	838,877	56%
1980	1,203,368	(-20%)	758,468	64.3%	420,529	35.7%
1990	1,027,974	(-15%)	778,456	77.8%	221,932	22.2%
2000	951,270	(-8%)	775,772	81.6%	116,599	12.3%

*Unable to locate this information
(Farley & Mullin, 2007)

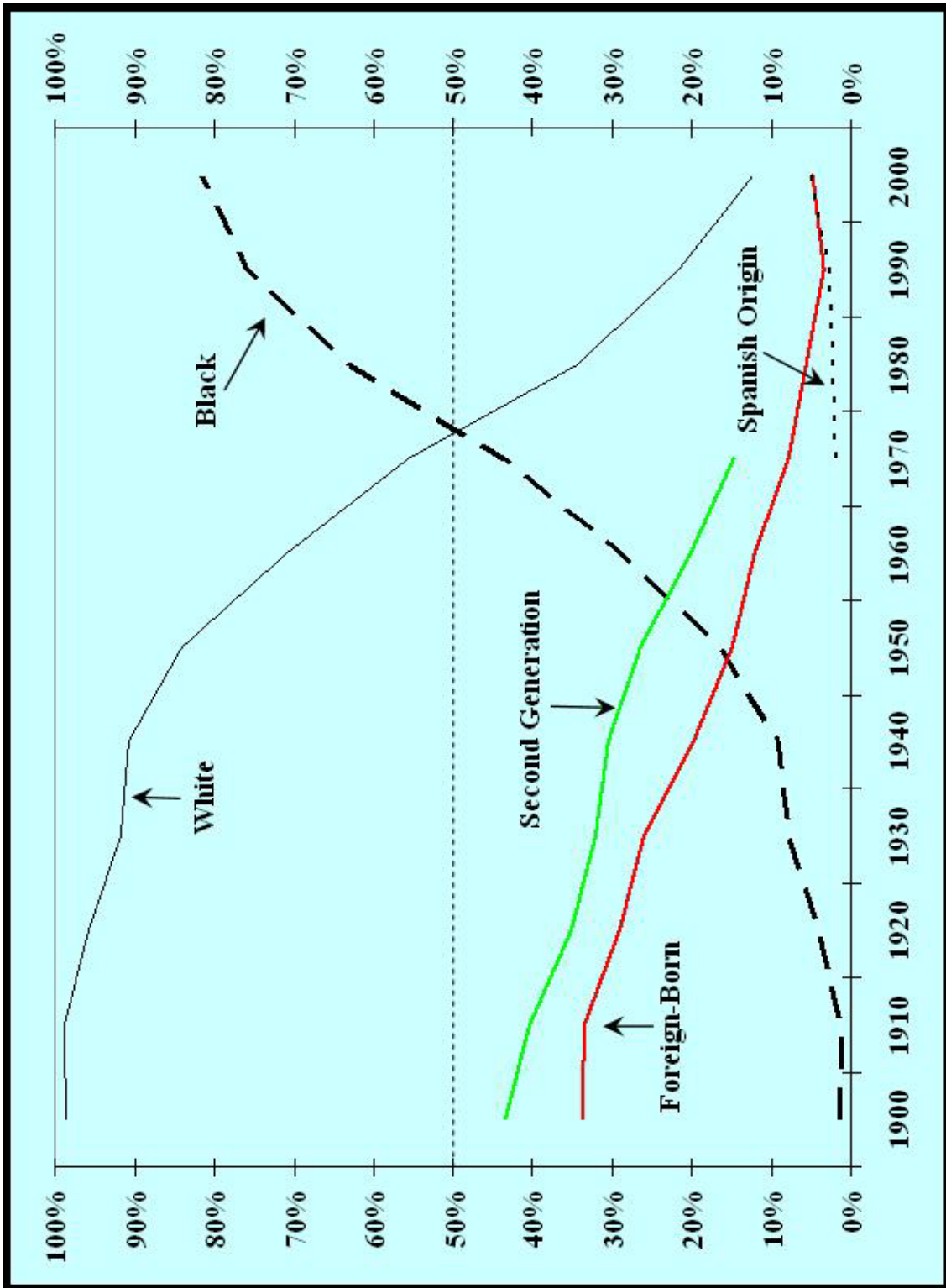


Figure 3.9. Detroit census trends: Population trends and racial composition

(Farley & Mullin, 2007)

Figure 3.9 shows the population trends in Detroit during the 20th century. This figure provides a graphic illustration of the 1900-2000 population figures listed in the Table 3.1. Eastern European immigration in the early 1900s is identified as “Foreign-Born” on the graph. The present-day foreign immigration rate in Detroit has declined from the influx in the early 1900s. The “second generation” label refers to individuals living in Detroit who are the second generation in their family living in the city. The decline in second generation can be tied to suburbanization, specifically the White and middle class flight. Families who once lived in the Detroit now reside in the surrounding suburbs. In 2000, the second generation Detroit population was composed of predominantly Black families.

Between 1970 and 1980, the racial majority in Detroit switched from White to Black majority. Coleman Young was elected the first Black mayor of Detroit in 1974, at a time when Whites were leaving the city. While the Black population has steadily increased during the 20th century in Detroit, the White population has steadily decreased. According to Sugrue (2005), this resulted in an “intractable racial segregation in housing, segregation that led to the uneven distribution of power and resources in metropolitan areas, leaving some places behind while others thrived” (p. xviii). The privilege and poverty gap in southeast Michigan continues to widen, as the suburbs are thriving in comparison to the urban center of Detroit, which has a high level of poverty.

United States Census figures show that in 2000, Detroit ranked number one in large metropolitan areas for residential segregation. Ten years earlier, in 1990, Detroit was the second most segregated metropolitan area in the United States behind Gary/Hammond, Indiana. The Census measures segregation by an index of dissimilarity:

The index of dissimilarity was developed to measure the degree of special separation between social groups and is easily applied to measure segregation between income

classes. The index measures the extent to which the rich and poor are evenly distributed with respect to each other. (Massey & Eggers, 1990, p. 1160)

The index of dissimilarity is a common indicator of racial segregation measuring whether the population in a particular neighborhood is representative of the overall population in a larger area (Trowbridge, 2002, January 14). Detroit's index of dissimilarity for Black/White segregation based on Census figures was 0.874 in 1980 and 1990, and 0.846 in 2000, with zero (0) representing complete integration and one (1.0) representing complete segregation. Despite the index declining slightly to 0.846 in 2000, the national rank rose to number one, indicating that Detroit has the highest level of segregation in the country (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005). Other Michigan cities with high levels of residential segregation include Saginaw/Bay City/Midland, Flint, Muskegon, and Benton Harbor (Sugrue, 1999).

Detroit economics.

The city of Detroit is 140 square miles; in the 1990s more than 10% of the land was vacant (Vergara, 1995). Despite efforts to revitalize the city of Detroit, large sections of the city remain in a depressed state (Scammon, 1981). Detroit, a city which had tremendous economic power the first half of the 20th century, has become a poor area with minimal economic capital (Vergara, 1995). The once booming automotive industry in Detroit is now a faint memory. In 1907 there were 30 assembly plants in the city; in 1995 only two remained in Detroit (Vergara, 1995). Many of the automotive plants moved to the suburbs, which tend to isolate urban minorities from these jobs (Massey & Eggers, 1990). The decline of the automotive industry continues; this year (2009) marked the bankruptcy of GM and Chrysler. The federal government has intervened and provided federal bankruptcy protection to both GM and Chrysler (Rutenberg & Vlastic, 2009, May 1).

Fisher Body 21, which is now an abandoned building, is shown in Figure 3.10. The plant closed in the early 1990s. Prior to its closing, the plant was the producer of the bodies for Cadillacs (Kohrman, 2008).



Figure 3.10. Fisher Body 21, Detroit, Michigan

(Catherine W. Barber)

Abandoned buildings are a symbol of Detroit's economic and social difficulties. "In Detroit, grass, reeds, and even trees growing on a building's roof indicate by their height and density how long the building has been abandoned... Words have faded on the billboards; the marquees of darkened theaters are blank" (Vergara, 1995, p. 215). Neighborhoods in Detroit have experienced a visible decline. Abandoned houses, excessive trash, graffiti-marred buildings, weed-filled areas, overgrown sidewalks and yards, vacant lots, and boarded up

store fronts are all characteristics of economically depressed areas in Detroit (Ostara Publications, 1999b; Vergara, 1995).



Figure 3.11. Building with graffiti in front of Fisher Body 21, Detroit, Michigan

(Catherine W. Barber)

As Detroit continued to hemorrhage jobs, population, and tax dollars (a process that had begun in the 1950s), city services deteriorated, schools suffered, and neighborhood residents joined in the litany of complaints about inadequate police protection, irregular trash pickup, lack of snowplowing in the winter, and infrequent bus service. (Sugrue, 2005, p. xvii)

Socially, the city of Detroit is in distress and has been for quite some time. The combination of low income, high poverty, high fertility, and high crime contribute to the deteriorating quality of life (Ostara Publications, 1999b). More than a third of Detroit residents live below the national poverty line. The 1990 census showed that a significant proportion of the population, 38% of Blacks and 8% of Whites, in Detroit were below the poverty line (Farley

et al., 1994). In 2007, 14% of population of the state of Michigan were below the poverty line, whereas 33.8% of the population in Detroit were below the poverty line (City-Data.com, 2009).

In 1990, 25% of Detroit residents were on welfare. “Ghettos ... remain unique in their social and physical isolation from the nation's mainstream. Discarded and dangerous places, they are rarely visited by outsiders” (Vergara, 1995, p. 2). Poverty and crime have become hallmarks of the city (Vergara, 1995).

Poverty is pervasive in Detroit. In 2006, according to the federal Census Bureau, median household income in the city was \$29,500. This figure is nearly \$20,000 less than the median household income nationwide. Per capita income for the city was only \$14,700 in 2006. Such a low income cannot support a mortgage, a family's basic food and transportation needs, childcare costs and other expenses. As a result, thousands of families turn to emergency government assistance and charity (Porter & Spencer, 2008, June 23, p. 1).

Media coverage intensifies a tension between urban and suburban areas. The local news regularly reports on the crime and poverty in the area, specifically in Detroit, often illuminating Detroit's homicide rate, which is seven times greater than the state and national average. The annual homicide rate per 100,000 residents shifted from 6 to 42 individuals between 1950-2000 (Ostara Publications, 1999a). Researchers have found that there is a strong correlation between the crime rate (especially robbery and homicide) and the unemployment rate in Detroit (Martin, 2007).

Residents of Detroit have few retail options, such as grocery stores and large chain stores, which are commonplace in suburban American. This negatively impacts residents as “...large stores can be neighborhood health resources providing generally better availability and selection, higher quality, and lower cost of food compared with smaller food stores” (Zenk et al., 2005, p. 660). Suburban neighborhoods, both Black and White, have greater

access to supermarkets than urban Detroit neighborhoods (Zenk et al., 2005). Other prevalent businesses which have more of a negative than positive impact include check cashing stores, party stores which sell beer, liquor, and cigarettes, and pawn shops (Sugrue, 2005). Non-traditional financial institutions including check cashers, pawnshops, and payday lenders are more prevalent in low income communities. In Detroit there are on average 2.5 nontraditional financial business for every 10,000 households (Social Compact Inc., 2007).

There are portions of Detroit that have been revitalized. The revitalized area of the city attracts suburban residents for large scale events including professional sports, theater, and annual events at the Cobo Center (e.g., North American International Auto Show, Detroit Boat show). Due to the prohibitive cost of professional sports, venues such as Comerica Park, Joe Louis Arena, and Ford Field attract more suburban than urban families despite being located within the urban center, Detroit. The downtown theater district, which houses the Fox, State, Gem, and Century Theaters, also attracts many suburban residents, i.e. visitors to the city. Thus, many urban residents who live within close proximity to the revitalized areas within Detroit do not have the financial means to take advantage of these cultural, entertainment, and social opportunities. The casinos, another revitalized area in Detroit, attract a mix of urban and suburban patrons.

A 2006 study conducted by Wayne State University for the Detroit Metro Convention and Visitors Bureau titled *Reality v. Perceptions: 2006 Analysis of Crime and Safety in Downtown Detroit* found that the crime in the downtown visitors' area differs from the crime in Detroit outside of the visitors' area. The visitors' area included "Comerica Park, Ford Field, the Theater District, including the Fox, State, Gem, and Century theaters, Cobo Center, Joe Louis Arena, numerous restaurants and several major employers, including General

Motors and Compuware” (Booza, 2007, p. 3). The study found that in the Detroit visitors area, property crime was the most prevalent (75%) and violent crimes were less prevalent (25%). The downtown visitor area had more crime which did not involve interpersonal contact, which was in contrast to the non-visitors areas in Detroit which had a higher level of violent crimes as illuminated by Detroit’s homicide rate (Booza, 2007).

Current Residential and Educational Segregation in Southeast Michigan

Expert testimony from the University of Michigan’s affirmative action lawsuit, *Gratz et al. v. Bollinger et al.*, described the racial interaction in communities in the state of Michigan.

Most Michigan residents live in neighborhoods that are not diverse racially or ethnically. There are few places where children of different racial backgrounds play together. Blacks and whites seldom talk across the fence. They rarely meet causally on the streets... They do not often attend each other's birthday parties or belong to the same social clubs and churches or attend town meetings together. As children, they seldom belong to the same neighborhood sports teams. They rarely swim in the same pools. As teenagers, they rarely hang out together in malls or go on camping trips together or date... Whites and non-whites are usually not part of each other's daily routines or witnesses to each other's life-changing events. Those routines and events occur in separate worlds. However diverse the United States has become in aggregate, the daily events and experiences that make up most Americans' lives take place in strikingly homogeneous settings. (Sugrue, 1999, Section VIII, paragraph 2)

This description is an accurate representation of southeast Michigan communities, which are the feeder areas for Eastern Michigan University. Thus, most students coming to EMU have experienced minimal racial interaction due to the composition of their schools and neighborhoods.

The Midwest has been documented as one of the most segregated areas in the United States (Fair Housing Center of Greater Grand Rapids, 2005, Winter). Sugrue stated that “Residential segregation is the linchpin of racial division and separation. By segregation, I mean the separation of groups into neighborhoods dominated by members of a single racial

or ethnic group” (Sugrue, 1999, Section VIII, paragraph 3). As discussed throughout this chapter, there is a high level of Black-White residential segregation in southeast Michigan and has been for centuries.

Research shows that areas with colleges, universities, or military bases tend to have higher levels of residential integration than the norm (Gurin, Lehman, & Lewis, 2004). This finding is evident (based on census figures) in communities such as Ann Arbor (University of Michigan) and Ypsilanti (Eastern Michigan University). Farley et al. (1994) found that birth cohort and educational attainment are two factors which influence racial attitudes. Younger generations had more liberal attitudes about residential integration, and increased educational attainment was associated with more liberal attitudes of integration (Farley et al., 1994).

Sugrue (1999) explained the level of racial interaction among youth in Michigan:

Whites, particularly youth, are unlikely to have any sustained or serious contact with African Americans, Hispanics, or Native Americans. Many African Americans are unlikely to have any sustained contact with Whites outside of their workplaces, with the exception of authority figures such as teachers, shopkeepers, and police officers. (Sugrue, 1999, Section V, paragraph 2).

In Michigan, there is a concentrated minority population in Detroit; nearly 75% of all Blacks live in the Detroit area, creating a relatively homogenous residential population. Many residential areas surrounding Detroit and throughout the state have small minority populations. The greatest racial separation is seen at the neighborhood level; even in communities where there is racial diversity, less integration is seen in neighborhoods (Sugrue, 2005).

Sugrue (1999) stated that “In the midst of our increasingly heterogeneous society are islands of homogeneity” (Section V, p. 1). This perspective is a reality today in the United States, Michigan, and southeast Michigan, which is the primary EMU student feeder area.

The homogeneity is seen in urban, suburban, and rural areas. Detroit, the urban center, is predominantly Black, many suburban areas are either predominantly Black or predominantly White, and rural southeast Michigan is predominantly White. Nationally the residential trend is for Blacks to live in urban areas, a shift which began in the 1940s. Prior to that time, Blacks lived in rural areas and in the south. Current census data indicate that there is a growth nationally in the Black population and a shrinking White population. Despite the growth in minority populations, there remains a significant residential division; minorities tend to live in communities with other minorities (Sugrue, 1999). Taking all of this into consideration, I will conclude with an examination of the educational system in southeast Michigan.

Educational system.

In the Michigan K-12 educational system, schools are seldom racially diverse. This trend is not just a Michigan phenomenon; segregation is also evident at the national level. The degree of Black and White segregation in the Michigan educational system stands out as hyper-segregated ranking in the top four states in the country, along with New York, Illinois, and New Jersey, for school segregation. In Michigan nearly 80% of Black students attend public schools that have majority minority populations. Reynolds Farley, a demographer at the University of Michigan, found that there has been minimal improvement in the level of segregation in the school systems since the *Brown v. Board of Education* 347 U.S. 483 (1954) decision (Sugrue, 1999).

A study conducted using enrollment data from K-12 school districts located in Macomb, Oakland, and Wayne Counties showed that there was a stark split in enrollment by race. This study conducted in 1994-1995 assessed the racial composition of 83 school

districts and examined the racial split of Black and White students. There were nearly 350,000 students enrolled in districts that had a Black population in the district between 0-5%. Of the 350,000 students, less than 5,000 of them were Black. The study illustrated that there were very few districts which had a racial compositions of 5.1%-75% Black. However, there were numerous students enrolled in school districts with 75.1-100% Black student enrollment. More than 150,000 Black students were enrolled in school districts where the racial composition was between 75.1% and 100% Black. Fewer than 5,000 White students were enrolled in these same school districts (Michigan League for Human Services, 1997).

Table 3.3

Racial composition of 83 school districts in southeast Michigan

	White Population	Black Population
Districts which were predominantly White, Black population (0-5%)	Nearly 350,000	Less than 5,000
Integrated districts (5.1%-75% Black)	Few schools	Few schools
Districts which were predominantly Black, (75.1% -100% Black)	Less than 5,000	Nearly 150,000

(Michigan League for Human Services, 1997)

This study illustrated the segregated nature of Michigan public schools; there were few integrated schools and numerous predominantly White or predominantly Black schools.

In the study of the racial composition of the 83 Detroit area school districts, it was evident that dramatic segregation existed. Black students were most likely to enroll in three school districts, Detroit, Highland Park, and Inkster; these school districts enrolled 82% of the Black student population. Most White students attended a school district which had a minimal Black population; 60 of the 83 school districts had a Black population of less than 3%. There were large Asian student populations in Bloomfield Hills, Troy, Novi, and West

Bloomfield. The most representative school districts of the overall population in southeast Michigan were Mount Clemens and Romulus (Sugrue, 1999). These data support Sugrue's claim that children growing up in southeast Michigan do not have the same cultural experience; their experience is shaped by their neighborhood and neighborhood school. Sugrue (1999) states "Whites do not live near minorities, and they do not attend school together. Residential and educational distance fosters misconceptions and mistrust...The high degree of separation by race reinforces and hardens perceptions of racial differences" (Section IV). The combinations of segregation, both residential and educational, are factors that create the culture of southeast Michigan.

Chapter 4: Results

Rural Culture in Southeast Michigan

Rural communities which are described include Adrian, Blissfield, Hartland, Ida, Tecumseh, and Sumpter Township. In this section, the cultural categories that are explicated include demographics; tasks/jobs; income; family structure; education; physical environment, safety, and security; ideology; activities, entertainment, and rituals; school; extracurricular activities; and college search process.

Demographics.

Rural demographics are organized by the concepts of (a) ethnicity and (b) population. Students who grew up in rural communities in southeast Michigan described their hometowns as small homogeneous communities which were predominantly White. Each of the rural communities had populations smaller than the total student population at Eastern Michigan University.

Three students whom I interviewed were from communities in Lenawee County including the City of Adrian, which is 84.47% White; Blissfield Township, which is 95.85% White; and the City of Tecumseh, is 95.85% White. One student was from Ida, (98.48% White) located in Monroe County, one student was from Sumpter Township, (84.68% White) located in Wayne County, and one student was from Hartland, (97.94% White) located in Livingston County (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000a). Details about these six students and their hometowns are listed in the following table.

Table 4.1

Interviewee Details

Student	Hometown	Ethnicity	Gender	Family	High School
Christina	Adrian	White	Female	Remarried (mother & step-father)	Adrian
Katie	Hartland	White	Female	Married	Hartland
Marc	Sumpter Township	African American	Male	Married	Belleville
Michael	Blissfield	White	Male	Married	Blissfield
Ray	Tecumseh	Hispanic	Male	Single parent (mother)	Tecumseh
Tim	Ida	White	Male	Married	Ida

Note: Marc, a resident in a rural community (Sumpter Township) went to school at Belleville High School, located in Belleville which is predominantly White suburb. Before moving to Sumter Township, Marc lived in Southfield, a predominantly African American community. His suburban experiences are shared in the suburban section.

Table 4.2

Population of Rural Communities in Southeast Michigan

City	Population
Adrian	21,574
Blissfield	3,323
Hartland	10,996
Ida	4,949
Sumpter Township	11,856
Tecumseh	8,574

(U.S. Census Bureau, 2000a)

Table 4.3

Ethnicity of Communities in Southeast Michigan by Percentage

	White	African American	Native American	Asian	Pacific Islander	Other races	Two or more races	Hispanic or Latino of any race
Adrian	84.47	3.52	0.62	0.83	0.02	7.72	2.83	16.99
Blissfield	95.85	0.19	0.63	0.69	0.01	1.49	1.14	4.40
Hartland	97.94	0.27	0.30	0.37	0.25	0.25	0.86	1.11
Ida	98.48	0.14	0.16	0.20	0.00	0.51	0.51	1.25
Sumpter Township	84.68	12.33	0.52	0.18	0.00	0.50	1.79	1.78
Tecumseh	95.85	0.19	0.63	0.69	0.01	1.49	1.14	4.40

(U.S. Census Bureau, 2000a)



Figure 4.1. Rural communities in southeast Michigan

To illustrate, Tim, a White male, described his hometown of Ida as very small, with a population of approximately 1,500 people. Ray, a Hispanic male from Tecumseh, Michigan, shared that his hometown was “not very diverse. It was more representative of Caucasian individuals. There were a few Hispanics in the neighborhood, a few Asian Americans, but no African Americans.”

Tasks and jobs.

Tasks are what a group of people learn over a period of time to survive. Tasks and jobs in rural southeast Michigan consist of the following concepts: (a) agriculture, (b) small

business, (c) automotive industry, and (d) other factory jobs.

In rural communities in southeast Michigan, working on a farm, at a small business in town, or commuting to an automotive plant were the work norms. I found that some community members worked on the farm and also held a job in town. Other rural families were not dependent on farmland for their livelihood; instead they were dependent on the automotive industry, which was prevalent in southeast Michigan.

Farmland is in plain sight as one travels throughout rural communities in southeast Michigan. Christina from Adrian shared that there are dairy, corn, and cucumber farms in her community. Ray described the working characteristics of individuals in Tecumseh:

Most of us are hardworking people. We are the type of people - we're more of service industry sides. Where you tell us to do something and we'll get it done...A lot of people if they started out as their families are farmers they continue to be farmers. Or their parents are like automotive technicians, that's what they continue to do. Usually if they don't continue their education they stay with what their family knows.

Ray recalled his mother working in the agriculture industry in Tecumseh:

My mom, when I was in elementary school she was working two jobs. She would have to go work in the fields where the men would usually like go pick tomatoes and stuff. She worked with the flowers and stuff. So she did that in the morning. And then she'd go work at a nursing home in the evening. My grandmother was there to watch me in the morning and then get me to go to school in the afternoon for kindergarten.

I discovered that many work norms are transmitted from generation to generation in rural areas. Agriculture, service industries, small businesses, and the automotive industry remain prevalent in small towns throughout southeast Michigan.

Michael from Blissfield described the working culture in his community, stating:

It's primarily I would say agriculturally based...a lot of the people I went to school with their parents were, farmers of some type... in the village, since it's a small town there's a lot of like self-employment. My dad's self-employed. And, there's only one person in town that repairs lawnmowers. There's a lawnmower shop. There's one grocery store. There's a couple gas stations...There's a family doctor. There's a hardware store. And they're all family owned so, there's not competition.

In addition to farming, there was factory work in Blissfield. It was commonplace for individuals to graduate from Blissfield High School and then get a factory job, often at Blissfield Manufacturing, a plant that makes oil coolers for heavy machinery.

From his childhood, Michael recalled that farmers in Blissfield grew tomatoes and sugar beets. The tomato and sugar beet industry permeated the community, including the high school where the mascot was the Sugar Boys (currently the mascot is the “Royals”). Farmers grew tomatoes for several national brands; however, the canning plants were closed as the companies began to rely on crops from Mexico. Currently, farms in Blissfield focus on cash crops including corn, beans, and wheat. Michael described the prosperous nature of the farming community:

The farmers outside of town are primarily middle class and maybe even upper class because their farms I would say in large part have been passed down through generations. So when, you know grandpa so-and-so dies and leaves you the farm, you just inherited say 600 acres and you didn't have to pay any upfront costs to get started farming. You have all the equipment already. You have all the land. You don't have any costs to you. And you're just making money off the crops.

Michael attended secondary school with some students who knew they were going to farm after high school because they would inherit the family business. During the summers

Michael worked on a farm. He described his daily work:

Take the horses out in the pasture and bring them in the barn and feed them. And take them back out and clean their stalls. We baled hay. We baled straw. Gave the horses shots, gave them oral medicine. Wash them. Get them ready for shows. I mean pretty much anything that had to be done...And, you know maintenance. So take the truck out. And go fix this fence. Take the tractor and go do this. Spread the manure.

The work norms in Ida were similar to Blissfield. Tim shared, “Over 40 percent are in some way connected to agriculture, whether it is directly or indirectly. Agriculture is the main occupation of most, especially fathers... I'd say you get a lot of teachers... a lot of

small business owners.” Tim worked at a greenhouse and shared that many students have summer jobs working for hay farmers; their job was to bail hay in the summer. Tim from Ida shared that “You get a lot of people who are very content to be in Ida and not really move on.”

Table 4.4

Tasks in Rural Communities in Southeast Michigan

Tasks
Farming
Factory work
Small businesses
Automotive

Farming, factory work, and small businesses are the tasks learned by community members who live in communities in rural southeast Michigan.



Figure 4.2. Drakeland Farms, Jonesville, Michigan (Catherine W. Barber)

The photos in Figure 4.2 depict Drakeland Farms, a large dairy farm in Jonesville, Michigan. Jonesville is located 60 miles southwest of Ypsilanti and is demographically similar to the other rural communities discussed in this section.

Income.

The median household income for rural communities which were studied ranged from \$32,405 (Adrian) to \$75,908 (Hartland).

Table 4.5

Median Household Income in Rural Communities in Southeast Michigan

Community	Median Household Income
Adrian	\$32,405
Blissfield	\$39,438
Hartland	\$75,908
Ida	\$57,106
Sumpter Township	\$48,680
Tecumseh	\$46,106

(U.S. Census Bureau, 2000a)

Family structure.

Students from rural communities were often one of many siblings in a family. Also, it was common to have extended family living in the same rural town or a rural town close by. While there was a mix of dual-parent homes, remarried parents, and single-parent homes, it was evident that there was a family member who was available to provide support. All but one student interviewed lived with a male father figure in the home.

Christina from Adrian shared that she had a younger brother and sister. Her mom's side of the family was from Jackson and step-father's family was from Adrian. Katie, from Hartland, also came from a large family. She lived with her mother and father as well as her older brother and sister and younger brother.

Michael from Blissfield, whose father was self-employed, recalled starting his first job of mowing grass at the age of 14. Michael stated, "My dad would drive me out. Drop me off. Come back. Pick me up. And, you know I'd spend a few hours and just mow the grass."

Coming from a single parent family, Ray shared that his siblings took on additional roles within the household. "It seemed like my brother was like dad figure and my sister was

the mom figure...So they were able to watch, take us places if they needed to.” Ray was the youngest in the family. Ray recalled, “...my grandmother was there just to help my mom when she needed it.” Ray’s extended family lived nearby, within the town of Tecumseh and close by in Adrian.

Education.

As a college student, Tim found that his level of education was the exception; the highest level of education achieved by the majority of other farm workers was a high school diploma. The students from Ida who choose to go on to college generally go to Monroe Community College. He explained, “I was probably one of the 20 that actually went to college that wasn’t Monroe Community College.” Generally, most parents from Ida did not attend college. Ray from Tecumseh shared a similar perception of the education level which existed among community members in his hometown; college was not the norm. He shared how individuals often worked in factories and did not pursue education beyond high school:

It’s like they already decided or maybe not even had a high school education where they just decide, “Okay, I’m good. I’m just going to work here for the rest of my life.” Like my brother, since he’s always worked in factories. He’s always had that ideal, that I don’t need anything more of an education. I’ll just work, work, work.

Table 4.6

<i>Educational Attainment in Rural Communities in Southeast Michigan</i>	
Community	% with bachelors, graduate, or professional degree
Adrian	20.1
Blissfield	19.0
Hartland	33.3
Ida	13.6
Tecumseh	21.2

(U.S. Census Bureau, 2000a)

In terms of higher education, rural communities in southeast Michigan were generally lower than the national average of 24.4% for number of individuals with bachelor's, graduate, or professional degrees.

Physical environment, safety, and security.

Concepts which are addressed in this section include the (a) landscape of rural southeast Michigan, (b) violent crimes, and (c) property crimes. Large plots of land, few restaurants and stores, and wooded areas are all common characteristics of rural southeast Michigan. Michael, a White male from Blissfield, described his hometown environment saying, "it wouldn't be uncommon ...if you lived on a farm to have your house maybe sitting on a couple acres and then surrounded by fields. And then, you know there'd be woods and trees." Marc, an African American male from Sumpter Township, explained his hometown has open space, dirt roads, and sod farms around. "In Sumpter Township you need at least one acre to build a house." Marc described Sumpter as the last place in Wayne County to have a horse. (Wayne County is largely urban and encompasses the city of Detroit.) The commute to a store or fast food restaurant takes about 30 minutes from Sumpter Township.

Themes that emerged when studying rural communities in southeast Michigan included a small-town feel and a feeling of safety within the community. Many rural communities have a family feel within the hometown and a sense of connectedness. Christina shared, "Well one thing about growing up there is everybody knows you and you can't get away with anything." Katie from Hartland echoed this sentiment: "You knew everybody. You'd go to the grocery store, you'd see people... I couldn't do anything without people knowing, so it always taught me to be accountable." Ray shared that "in Lenawee County,

it's if you grow up in that town almost everybody knows a little about you." He explained the impact that the small community had on him as a child,

I remember when I grew up... if you did something wrong...you knew you were in trouble because they would eventually, you know, tell your parent what had happened... So it was almost like you'd get – you'd get in trouble from that parent. And then when you get home you'd get in trouble from your own parent.

The smaller community enabled individuals to know one another and share what was happening in the town, which included the behavior of children.

A feeling of safety, which can be described as trust in others, was described by several students living in rural communities in southeast Michigan. The perception of most students from rural communities was that there was minimal crime in their hometown. Tim described the community of Ida as:

The type of place where you could leave your front door unlocked and nobody would [enter] - for two weeks even if you went on vacation. It feels very safe...you never, ever feel any threat to your life or your safety at any time. I mean you could walk down the streets of Ida at two o'clock in the morning and you wouldn't think twice about anything.

Ray from Tecumseh had a similar notion of safety in his hometown sharing that Tecumseh was "the type of city people talk about you can leave your doors unlocked." Data on violent crimes and property crimes from the Federal Bureau of Investigation provide empirical data to support rural students' feeling of safety in their hometowns.

Table 4.7

Rural Cities in Southeast Michigan and Violent Crime

City	Population	Violent crime	Violent crimes per 100,000 residents	Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter	Forcible rape	Robbery	Aggravated assault
Adrian	21,241	96	452	2	31	13	50
Tecumseh	8,724	8	92	0	3	0	5

Note: rural areas such as Ida and Blissfield are not classified as cities, thus data is not available on the FBI website.

Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation (2009)

Table 4.8

Rural Cities in Southeast Michigan and Property Crime

City	Population	Property crime	Property crimes per 100,000	Burglary	Larceny-theft	Motor vehicle theft	Arson ¹
Adrian	21,241	776	3,653	149	601	26	3
Tecumseh	8,724	89	1,020	10	75	4	0

¹ The FBI does not publish arson data unless it receives data from either the agency or the state for all 12 months of the calendar year.

Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation (2009)

Ideology.

Regarding political and cultural ideology, (a) conservative and (b) connectedness emerged as concepts for rural southeast Michigan. Conservative was a descriptor that several students used when describing their hometown in rural southeast Michigan. Tim described Ida as:

Very conservative, very black-and-white, meaning there is no gray in between. It's right or wrong. There is almost no room for debate, either. It is either this way or it is this way. It is never an in-between area. And this is just something that I started to notice when I was in high school.

Tim elaborated on his observation of the conservative nature of individuals in his hometown, sharing that people are set in their beliefs, generally Republican, and traditionalist. He stated "I would say it's a pretty racist town...very anti-gay or lesbian." As a teacher in an Ida school, Tim observed that students are socialized by their parents: "You just kind of say what you've been taught." Katie from Hartland also found her hometown to be conservative, specifically the high school administration. She shared that the "theater department wanted to put on *Damn Yankees* and he [the principal] would have nothing of it just because it had the word *damn* in it." Further, Katie shared her perspective on the conservative nature in Hartland,

I think the older generations in Hartland aren't very accepting of liberal views, and I think the kids grow up with liberal views and so it's very separated. So the town is run conservatively, but a lot of the mindset is kids that are liberal and jump out of Hartland and go into liberal communities and adjust just fine.

Tim had a similar observation explaining that he perceived there was generational (grandparents and parents) racism which existed among many individuals in his hometown. The stories shared by students solidify that rural communities in southeast Michigan have similar values and often a conservative mindset.

Table 4.9

Ideology in Rural Communities in Southeast Michigan

Ideology
Conservative
Connectedness

Language.

The language of rural communities in southeast Michigan can be described as “country.” While standard or proper English is used in some rural communities, other communities’ language is heavily influenced by work on the farm.

Activities, entertainment, and rituals.

Activities, entertainment, and rituals in rural southeast Michigan for kids consist of the following concepts: (a) cruising, (b) attending church, (c) hunting, (d) outdoor social activities, and (e) social events at friends’ homes. Students from rural communities in southeast Michigan shared what they did for entertainment, including various recreational activities and rituals that existed in their hometown. Christina’s hometown of Adrian was considered to be a big town since there is a mall and a movie theater; many surrounding rural communities do not have these forms of entertainment. Katie, a White female from Hartland, Michigan, described her hometown saying, “Hartland is a small – we didn’t have a cinema or a sit-down restaurant, and a lot of things, and so it was a very community-based place.”

Hunting, a recreational activity for many men in rural communities in southeast Michigan, is also considered a ritual. For many families, the hunting season was a bonding time for the men in the family. The desire to hunt varied from person to person; what was more often focused on was the social time that the men spend in the cabin. For many

individuals, the socialization in the cabin or the woods included the consumption of alcoholic beverages.

Katie from Hartland shared, “A lot of people would be gone from school because they’d all be out with their uncles and dads.” Tim from Ida described the magnitude of hunting:

Five out of every ten male students in Ida is a hunter, whether it is bow and arrow or firearm. And I have students now who will miss a week, week and a half, of school, will just write a note, “I’m going hunting,” and they’ll be gone. Very, very big culture in Ida is hunting.

Michael from Blissfield described a similar perception of the impact of hunting season:

You could always tell when the first day of deer season was because there’d be a couple empty seats in class...They have a thing in the newspaper where people send in pictures of the deer that they’ve shot, holding the deer head up. And they put this whole section in the newspaper of all these people from the area and the deer.

While hunting is a ritual which many males take part in, females often participated in a dress shopping ritual. Christina recalled one school related ritual: “We always had to drive an hour to go get a prom dress.” Further she explains that when going to prom the group “ended up having to usually drive an hour to go to dinner ...because there are not really any fancy restaurants in Adrian.”

Students from an array of rural communities shared their experiences growing up in southeast Michigan, specifically how they spent time outside of the classroom while living in the community. As high schoolers living in a rural community, cruising around town in a car or driving to a neighboring city for entertainment was popular. In rural areas in southeast Michigan the popular vehicles are trucks from one of the “Big Three” (General Motors, Ford, or Chrysler). Michael from Blissfield shared that many males in his hometown were

Really into trucks. And they would do them all up and they’d put big tires on them and big engines in them and a loud exhaust pipes and the whole thing. And they

would cruise from McDonalds, which was on the east side of town— Like that's the very village limit—To the car wash which is almost the village limit on the west side. And they would just go back and forth down 223 all night long.

Since rural communities in southeast Michigan lack public transportation, students either had a car or would carpool with friends or family.

Growing up, Christina shared that she and friends “hung at each other’s houses because there weren’t public locations for us to hang out. I didn’t live in a subdivision. I lived in a big acre lot.” She explained that they had “ten acres of woods. It used to be hunting grounds. But as kids, it was fun to just romp around.”

Social time in rural communities often involved time outside, such as backyard parties or bonfires. In Adrian, Christina shared that each holiday season her family cuts down their own Christmas tree. Katie from Hartland described the Christmas tree burning parties which occur after the holidays. “It’s like a big bonfire in the winter in January, and everyone comes and brings over their dried Christmas trees... We go sledding down the hill to the bonfire, and then burn a giant Christmas tree.”

There are winter activities and summer activities. In the summer, Katie from Hartland spent time at the lake; “our activity is waterskiing because of the lake in Hartland.” In the summers she spent time on the boat, tubing, and at friends’ houses on the lake. Christina also spent time at the lake, sharing that one of her summer rituals was attending pig roasts. Christina said that her family had a house on the lake and that a friend of the family, who was a farmer, always had “a great big pig roast at their house in the summer time.” Tim from Ida also spent social time outside; he shared, “My group of friends, we usually played a lot of video games and hung out, kind of tried to cause trouble by just going swimming in the pond or something like that.” His friends played outdoors, even in the winter.

Church activities are also a large part of the rural community. Michael recalled his time spent with summer time church softball leagues. He explained that weekends in Blissfield were filled with garage sales and church. Michael stated that driving through Blissfield:

You would be able to tell if it was a Saturday or a Sunday just by looking. Because on Saturdays there's, people going to garage sales, and on Sundays there's people going to church. And, you would drive down the street and there wouldn't be anybody out and about at, eleven or twelve o'clock on a Sunday. But then when you hit one of the churches the blocks around the churches and the parking lots would just be full with cars.

Christina, like Michael, believed that religion was a large part of the culture. Catholicism was the norm in Christina's hometown of Adrian. "It just happened that...[out of] eight valedictorians from my high school class, six of us had gone to the same middle school and seven of us went to the same church."

Table 4.10

Activities, Entertainment, and Rituals in Rural Communities in Southeast Michigan

Activities, entertainment, and rituals

Cruising – trucks from Big Three

Church & church activities – softball team

Hunting

Outside activities – lake, waterskiing, bonfires, backyard parties

Socializing at houses, less available public locations

Schools in rural southeast Michigan.

Concepts of rural schools which are addressed in this section include (a) ethnicity, (b) eligibility of free and reduced price lunch, and (c) size/number of schools. Rural communities in southeast are small, often with only one high school within the community. Schools, like the residential areas, were described as homogeneous, and generally White.

Table 4.11

Ethnicity and Free and Reduced Price Lunch Eligibility for Rural High Schools in Southeast Michigan, by Percentage

	White	African American	American Indian /Alaskan	Asian	Hispanic	Free and reduced-price lunch eligible
Adrian High School	71.0	6.7	0.4	1.0	19.6	41.7
Blissfield High School	94.8	0.0	0.0	0.2	4.1	19.7
Hartland High School	97.1	1.2	0.1	0.7	1.1	7.1
Ida High School	97.4	1.4	0.0	0.2	1.1	12.7
Tecumseh High School	96.4	0.1	0.4	0.6	2.0	9.2

(Note: Belleville High School is included in the predominantly White suburban community section)

Source: CCD Public school data 2006-2007 school year (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009)

Christina, a White female from Adrian, shared her experience growing up in a small town: “There wasn’t much diversity at my high school...As far as racial diversity, the extent of that was pretty much that we had a lot of Hispanics because people came in as migrant workers.” Similar to Christina’s experience, Tim, a White male from Ida, explained that the student population in Ida schools was very White. “In the past six years, there have probably been at most eight Black students, period. You do get a handful of Latino and Latina students.” Michael, who grew up in Blissfield, shared a similar experience. Michael pointed

out there was only one school to attend in Blissfield. The school was predominantly White; however, there were children of Hispanic migrant workers who went to the school for part of the year. The migrant worker children “would go to school for four or five months out of the year while their parents were here working in the fields.”

Extracurricular activities in school.

Extracurricular activities including athletics were an important aspect of schools in many rural communities. Concepts include (a) theater events, (b) school activities, (c) athletic events, and (d) parental involvement. Katie, who grew up in Hartland, described the impact of the school on the community: “It’s usually the big things in the high school that kind of run – it’s the school that runs the town pretty much. So when the play’s happening, everyone goes to the play.” Adrian High School has a new performing arts center.

Athletic teams were popular among students in rural high schools; one student explained that sports and extracurricular activities were highly valued in her school. Christina described a high level of parental involvement in schools and specifically athletics. Friday night football games were packed; her grandparents even had season tickets to the Adrian High School football games. Christina, a soccer player, recalled that there was enough parental support to run a concession stand at the soccer stadium. In Ida, Tim also observed active participation from parents; he shared that parents were “knowledgeable about what was going on at Ida High School and with the sports teams. They’re definitely involved.” Ray from Tecumseh had a similar experience: “We’d always have good attendance when it came to sporting events...because it’s a small town. And you just try and support the community.” Students from rural communities shared a common experience which was a high level of parental involvement at the school and with extracurricular activities.

Table 4.12

Schools in Rural Southeast Michigan and Extracurricular Activities

Extracurricular activities
Community members attend school theater events or Friday night school activities
Students and families valued athletics and extracurricular activities
High level of parental involvement

In addition to interviewing students from rural communities, I visited their high schools. In rural communities there is a small pay-to-play charge for athletics (less than the cost in suburban schools). At Ida High School the charge is \$45 per sport; however, in some districts there is no charge to play. Sports in most rural schools include football, baseball, basketball, bowling, cheerleading, cross country, equestrian, golf, gymnastics, soccer, softball, swimming, tennis, track and field, volleyball, and wrestling. Hartland High School offers an extensive array of sports including tennis, figure skating, ice hockey, skiing, snowboarding, and lacrosse (Hartland Consolidated Schools, 2010b). Athletic teams at rural schools play teams from rural communities and smaller suburban communities. Ida is a member of the Lenawee County Athletic Association competing against students from other rural communities including Blissfield, Dundee, Erie-Mason, Hudson, and Onsted (Michigan High School Athletic Association [MHSAA], 2010). Adrian, which is a larger rural school, competes in a division of the Southeastern Conference. The division is comprised of Adrian (1,053 students), Chelsea (928), Dexter (1,167), Lincoln (1,508), Tecumseh (886), and Ypsilanti (1,155).

Athletics are an important aspect of rural communities. The resources devoted to facilities vary by community. At Adrian High School there are more than 30 sports, and the school boasts a “*State-of-the-art* fitness room ... [for] all athletes developing strength and

life-long fitness habits” (Adrian Public Schools, 2010, p. 1). Similarly, in Tecumseh High School the facilities for physical education classes, marching band, track, soccer, lacrosse, and football teams are described as “state of the art” (see Figure 4.3) (Tecumseh Public Schools, 2009, p. 1).



Figure 4.3. Tecumseh High School football stadium (Tecumseh Public Schools, 2009)

Hartland High School’s facilities, including an indoor swimming pool and gymnasium, are also newer and in excellent condition.



Figure 4.4. Hartland High School gymnasium and pool (Hartland Consolidated Schools, 2010a)

By contrast, the picture of the Ida High School football stadium is an example of a rural athletic program with fewer resources. The football stadium and high school gymnasium are older facilities, far from the state-of-the art description used for the Adrian and Tecumseh athletic facilities.



Figure 4.5. Ida High School football stadium (Catherine W. Barber)

On the day I visited Ida High School, there was a baton twirling competition underway in the high school gymnasium. Students from surrounding (mainly rural) communities were participating in a day-long competition (see Figure 4.6).



Figure 4.6. Ida High School gymnasium (Catherine W. Barber)

However, athletics are not the only extracurricular activities at rural schools in southeast Michigan. Musicals, choir, and band are all popular activities at rural high schools. At Ida High School, several display cases were devoted to advertising upcoming theatrical events as well as choir performances.



Figure 4.7. Ida High School band and choir display (Catherine W. Barber)

After high school, many students went through a college search process, and the six students I interviewed all enrolled in Eastern Michigan University.

College search process.

The variables of the college search process for rural students are (a) amount of assistance and (b) source of assistance with the college search process. Several students shared their experiences with the college search process. When Ray applied to college, his family did not have previous experience with the college search process. He remembered the search process, stating:

I didn't know what to do first. We have counselors at Tecumseh. Which, you know I mean that's – they're there to help as much as they can...I just remember my mom had called my counselor and said, "You know my son needs help. We don't know what we're doing going to college. Can you help him?"

Tim described his high school English class at Ida as a huge help with the college application process. The teacher:

Took a week just to teach us how to write an application. We used the U of M applications. She went through with us, made us do it absolutely perfect. And then we just Xeroxed and she said, "Okay, this is the University of Michigan's. But you have all the information right in front of you so you can use this for any application. You just have to copy it down and make sure you write legibly." That was of great benefit, I thought because she walked us through line by line and said – 'cause it was our junior year, and she said, "You're going need to start doing this." That helped a lot.

Christina described her college application process, sharing that she took care of everything on her own. She stated:

I had wanted my parents to be more involved with the whole finding-a-college thing. But it kind of came across as either they didn't really care to help or they didn't really know how to help or they were too busy to help. I didn't go on any college visits. I picked colleges out based on...just things that I heard from people...I didn't get to go see them so I didn't have that going for me.

Rural communities in southeast Michigan have many commonalities in terms of culture. The communities described are homogeneous; both the residential areas and schools

were predominantly White. These homogeneous communities are often conservative. Rural communities in southeast Michigan have similar tasks and work norms including farming, factory work, and small businesses. In addition, the small-town atmosphere within these communities creates a feeling of safety and connectedness among residents.

Table 4.13 summarizes the categories, concepts, and dimensions discussed.

Table 4.13

Rural Southeast Michigan: Categories, Variables/Concepts, and Dimensions

Categories for rural southeast Michigan	Variables/Concepts	Dimensions
Demographics	(a) Skin color (b) Size	Homogeneous – White Small
Tasks/jobs	(a) Agriculture (b) Small business (c) Auto industry (d) Factory job	Jobs that may not require a college education
Income	(a) Varies widely from 32,405 (Adrian) to 75,908 (Hartland)	
Family structure	(a) Mix of dual parent homes, remarried parents, and single parent homes	
Education	(a) Education	Mix of high school and college
Physical environment, safety, and security	(a) Violent crime (b) Property crime	Low level of crime Sense of safety
Ideology	(a) Conservative (b) Connectedness (c) Trust in others	Homogeneous, similar frame of reference
Activities, entertainment, and rituals	(a) Cruising (b) Church (c) Hunting (d) Outside activities (e) Socialization	
School	(a) Skin color (b) Eligibility for free and reduced price lunch (c) Size	Homogeneous – White Small
Extracurricular activities	(a) Theater (b) School activities (c) Athletic activities (d) Parental involvement	High level of community and parental involvement
College search process	(a) Amount of support (b) Source of support	Support from school

Urban Culture in Southeast Michigan

The major urban center in southeast Michigan is Detroit. Eastern Michigan University is located approximately 35 miles southwest of the city of Detroit. I interviewed eight students who grew up in Detroit and attended Eastern Michigan University. These students attended different high schools including Cass, King, Mackenzie, and University of Detroit Jesuit.

Unexpectedly, the students who were interviewed for this study all grew up on the west side of Detroit. At each interview I asked students who self-identified as living on the west side of Detroit if they could put me in contact with another student they knew from the east side of Detroit. Each time, the west side Detroit student was unable to identify an EMU student from the east side. During my study, I engaged in a conversation with a Detroit Public School teacher who teaches on the east side. I shared that I had been unable to identify a student from the east side of Detroit to interview for my study. This teacher stated that the reason I was unable to identify a student from the east side was that most east side students do not make it to college, and many do not make it through high school. During the member checking process, Bruce, who attended high school in Detroit, said that students from the east side of Detroit who made it to college were not enrolled for a long period, often for only one semester.

Students from Detroit who attended high schools on the west side of the city were interviewed; their experiences growing up in the city are highlighted. In this section, the cultural categories that are explicated include demographics; tasks/jobs; income; family structure; education; physical environment, safety, and security; ideology; activities, entertainment, and rituals; school; extracurricular activities; and college search process.

Demographics.

In this section, I describe the urban center of southeast Michigan, which is the city of Detroit. Urban demographics are organized by of the concepts of (a) ethnicity and (b) population. As of the 2000 census the population of Detroit was 951,270. The city is predominantly African American, nearly 82%. I interviewed eight students who grew up in Detroit; details about these students are provided in Table 4.15.

Table 4.14

Ethnicity in Detroit by percentage

	White	African American	Native American	Asian	Pacific Islander	Other races	Two or more races	Hispanic or Latino of any race
Detroit	12.3	81.6	0.03	1.0	2.5	2.5	2.3	5.0

(U.S. Census Bureau, 2000a)

Table 4.15

Interviewee Information

Student	Hometown	Ethnicity	Gender	Family	High School
Bruce	Detroit	African American	Male	Single parent (mother), at times lived with mother in the grandmother's home	U of D
Cleophis	Detroit	African American	Male	Single parent (mother)	Mackenzie
Dwayne	Detroit	African American	Male	Aunt/grandparents (mother passed away and estranged from father)	Cass
Eric	Detroit	African American	Male	Single parent (mother)	Cass
James	Detroit	African American	Male	Two parents - married	Cass
Jessica	Detroit	African American	Female	Widow (mother), father passed away during high school	Cass
Kayla	Detroit	African American	Female	Two parents - married	Charter school in Dearborn
Tamara	Detroit	African American	Female	Single parent (mother)	King

James, an African American from Detroit, said of his neighborhood, “When I was in Detroit my neighborhood didn’t consist of anybody but African American, every single block; there was no diversity.” Tamara, an African American from Detroit, had a similar description:

My neighborhood, I have lived in the same house for 25 years or so, and my neighborhood is not diverse at all. And my neighbors have all looked like me, with the exception of one, and that family is now gone...they were mixed.

According to the 2000 Census, 81.6% of the City of Detroit population was African American (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000a). Since the racial composition of the city of Detroit is

predominantly African American, the experience of interacting with only African Americans was common.

Tasks/jobs.

Concepts discussed in this section include (a) employment levels and (b) poverty as indicated in Table 4.16. The city of Detroit has large areas which are economically depressed. As a result, the small tax base has a negative effect on residential areas and the school system.

Tamara described the economic status of her neighborhood. “In the beginning, it was kind of middle class. It’s no longer middle class; it’s definitely a lower poverty area.” Kayla, an African American female from Detroit, shared a similar perception of her neighborhood, stating, “Generally northwest Detroit is not a safe place. There are drug addicts hanging around the corner, drug dealers on the streets...”

Often students from Detroit described drug houses in their neighborhood. James shared that he lived in an apartment complex his entire life. Close to his apartment complex, “on the corner, the second house, which it was a big red house and that was the drug house, and it still is.” James explained the unwritten rule regarding the drug house:

But we just knew, everybody knew, and nobody would snitch because that was – it’s like an unwritten rule, you really don’t snitch on those people because if you mess with them you can guarantee that they’re going mess with you.

Tamara described her neighborhood on the west side of Detroit,

There’s a lot of crime in my area. There are also a lot of drugs in my area. There – just like on my block alone, like I believe that maybe I am the only one on the block who has a college degree.

In her description of drug houses in Detroit she shared:

Growing up on the West Side where I’m from, there is one house, unfortunately most people from Detroit would probably tell you that there is at least one house either on

the corner or even in the middle somewhere on the block that is a mandate that is basically a drug house.



Figure 4.8 Abandoned home in Detroit (Catherine W. Barber)

Cleophis described his interaction with the drug houses in his neighborhood as a young child:

Crack-houses... I like washed dishes for them, and cut their grass, and shoveled their snow for like \$100.00. Like a little kid does that they were, you know, "Hey, little man." My mother used to hate it, because she thought they were kind of – the whole recruiting thing. So, at that time...you could catch me at the crack-house washing dishes, I was, you know, around 10 years old, or 7 years old, to make some money. I'd cut the grass, or I'd shovel the snow, or whatever they needed me to do. I'd go the store for them, buy them food, and stuff like that.

Students from an array of Detroit neighborhoods shared that it was common to have a drug house in the neighborhood and that there was a general knowledge of the location of the drug house.

Work norms for urban residents included having multiple low-paying jobs or jobs without benefits. Tamara said, “In Detroit, one of the things that I’m seeing now is that a lot of the full-time jobs are just not there. I see more part-time jobs being available.”

Bruce shared that parents in Detroit often worked factory jobs, in the local hospital, at the U.S. Post Office, and in hair salons which are common in the city. Tamara said that in the health industry she sees Detroit residents working in lower level positions, adding, “They’re not like nurses or anything like that, they’re like techs.”

The jobs that urban residents hold affect the economic status of the residential area. Cleophis explained that most of the families in his neighborhood were poor. “Everybody was kind of in the same economic position. You had a few families where a mother or a father was in the auto industry, and they were like the rich family.” Cleophis described the minimal economic resources in his family:

We spent some time on the welfare, and then sometimes she [his mother] was able to maintain a job, when at times the salary comparison, or what it took, it was often more beneficial for her not to work, than for her to try to work. She tried going to college at one particular time. But she just couldn’t muster up the support, you know, to support me and my sister while she was doing it.

Cleophis shared that his family lacked financial resources in elementary school. “I had two pairs of jeans and two t-shirts, and I kind of wore that throughout the year. And a kid finally – and so the kids started saying stuff about it, or what have you, and teasing me about it.”

Tamara shared similar thoughts regarding employment in Detroit. She described the population on her block as “barely making it.” Further she stated, “On my block alone, no

one's working. I know one of my neighbors, she relies on funding that you get from the Family Independent Agency.” Later in the interview, Tamara remembered that she had one neighbor on the corner of her block who worked. Tamara said “other than that, nobody really works, ...drives fancy cars, or has a lot of money in the bank for retirement.”

Temporary agencies are one means used by citizens to find a job; Tamara shared

I have a couple other friends who are in the area who ...go from temporary agency to agency and just really, truly trying to make ends meet. Well, I feel like people want to work, but there aren't any jobs for them, per se. Now I don't want to say there aren't any jobs, because I feel like there are a lot of jobs that people aren't qualified for, and I think that's some of the issue.

Drug dealing was one identified job in Detroit; Tamara stated

I know the drug dealers because I grew up with them, and I always have the conversation, “Well, why are you doing this?” “Because I can't get a job, I can't do nothing' else.” And I say, “Well, what have you done to get yourself to the next level?” “Well, I tried college, and I let it go.” “Why'd you let it go?” “Because I didn't want to take this, and I didn't want to take that, and it was taking too long.” So some of the people who I know who still do that type of thing, it's still, number one in their life and over half of them are in jail now cause you always get caught at some point. You always get caught!

Tamara indicated that some people who are dealing drugs in Detroit had attended college for a period of time and made the choice to deal drugs because the collegiate process took too long. Further, she identified that the outcome for many of the drug dealers was the penal system (i.e., jail).

Table 4.16

Tasks in Detroit

Tasks
Unemployment – Welfare, Family Independent Agency
Drug dealing
Hourly wage positions – often without benefits
Factory jobs

Income.

The median household income for Detroit was \$29,526, which was the lowest median income of communities studied in southeast Michigan.

Family structure.

There are arrays of family structures in Detroit including single parent, remarried with step-families, extended family serving in a parenting role, widowed, and dual parent. Single-parent homes were more prevalent than homes which had both parents. In Detroit, teen pregnancy was common.

In single-parent homes it was more common for mothers to raise children. Eric, Tamara, Bruce, and James all commented on being raised by their mothers. Eric said

I was raised by a single mom, my parents formally divorced when I was seven and that was because my dad was marrying my stepmother. On my dad's side I have a half-sister and a step-brother in addition to a step-mother, and then on my mom's side I have an older brother.

Kayla shared that she and her sister were raised by their mother. Bruce commented that he, his sister, and his brother were raised by their mother and that at times they lived in their grandmother's Detroit home. James shared details of his family situation, saying, "My father – '85-'86 was his year. He had three children by three different ladies. I was in the middle." James, who grew up in Detroit, was raised by his mother.

Parenting at a young age is common in Detroit; many teens were having children.

James shared:

A lot of my friends are like, "You know I've got this one baby mama over here and this baby mama over here." And I'm like, "How you taking care of these kids when you don't even work? You don't even work. I come home, you don't even work."

James described teen parenting and the age difference stating: “It’s like not even a big age gap. You have mothers who are maybe 13 years older than their child or not more than 17.”

Teen pregnancy is one factor which affects the education level of residents in the city.

A lot of parents ...they didn’t have a college education. A lot of them stopped somewhere in high school. It might have been – I can’t really say, but maybe some did finish high school, and some stopped at like 11th or 10th grade because they ended up having kids or conditions weren’t conducive enough for them to still stay in school.

In Detroit, it is fairly common for extended family members to have a role in raising children. Family members often stepped in when a parent was deceased. Dwayne was raised by his aunt and grandparents; his mother died when he was 14 and he is no longer in contact with his father.

Two students interviewed, Kayla and James, both grew up with both parents in the home. James had one brother and five sisters. In addition, a cousin lived in James’ family’s home. James’ aunt (his mother’s sister) passed away, and his mom took on the parenting role.

Education.

Next, I discuss the educational level of residents in Detroit. Bruce, like James, shared that few parents in Detroit had a college education.

Table 4.17

Educational Attainment in Detroit, Michigan

Community	% with bachelor’s, graduate, or professional degree
Detroit	11.0

(U.S. Census Bureau, 2000a)

Census data support Bruce’s and James’s sentiments that few residents in Detroit have a college degree. While the national average is 24.4% for individuals holding a bachelor’s,

graduate, or professional degree, only 11.0% of Detroit residents hold such a degree.

Previously James described that high school pregnancy had a negative impact on high school completion. Activities used for survival in the city, including drug dealing, are not dependent on educational level.

Physical environment, safety, and security.

Attributes of the physical environment will be addressed including (a) violent crimes and (b) property crimes in Detroit. Statistics from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, which are presented in Table 4.18 and 4.19, illustrate the high level of violent crime in the city of Detroit. When interviewed, students from Detroit often commented about the crime in their hometown neighborhood.

Kayla described the physical environment of Detroit, stating that there are “lots of houses which are burned down yet no one cleaned up the rubble. Northwest Detroit doesn’t look like a place where you want to live. The neighborhood is predominantly African American.” Abandoned, condemned, or foreclosed houses and business are a norm seen throughout the city. James commented on the economic difference he sees between Detroit and the surrounding suburbs; specifically he described the difference between the east side of Detroit and the suburb of Grosse Pointe (see Figure 4.9).

...you can literally kind of cross the street on some areas...and see a big difference. On one side you can just see like this nice extravagant area and then you get over here and it is like literally walking into a war zone...it’s interesting to see such a dramatic change in the environment and it’s not even two steps away...

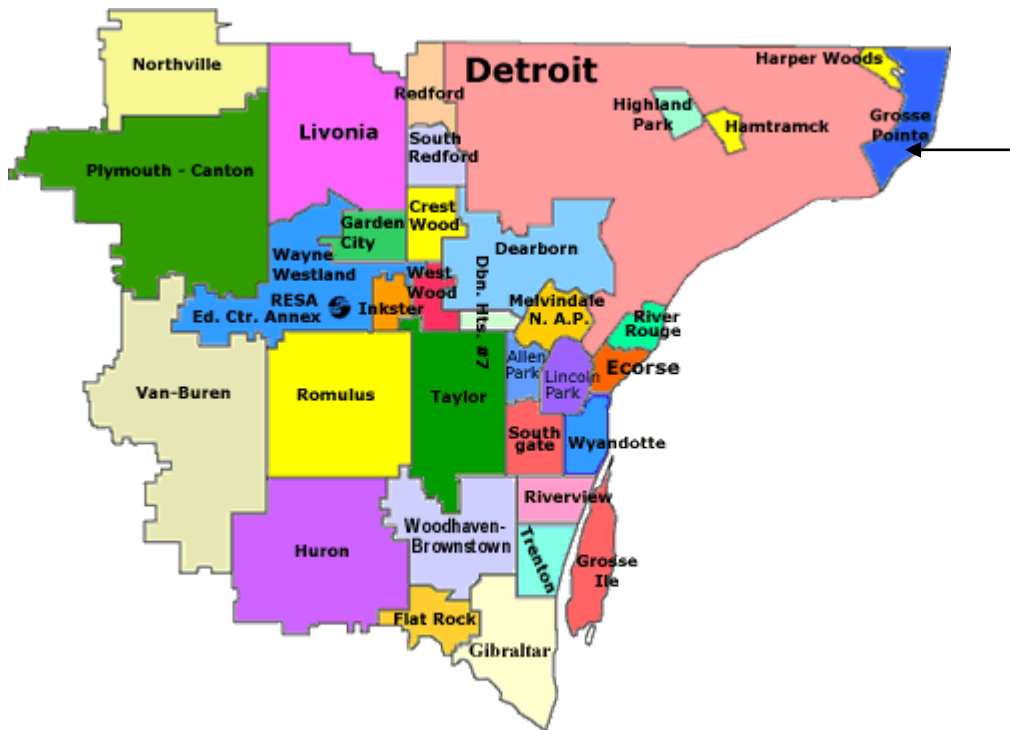


Figure 4.9. Map of southeast Michigan

James shared that in his neighborhood, “We would hear gunshots like almost every other night and, you know, those guys riding around, that was like a normal thing.” As a result of the continuous violent activity, James shared that:

anytime we hear sirens in the middle of the night you really didn’t jump, you really didn’t move unless it was like extremely close because we had got so attuned, I’m sure most people can tell you that, you get so attuned to hearing like police sirens that it becomes so normal that you just continue to sleep, you don’t even move.

Bruce, who grew up in Detroit, stated, “If you’re in Detroit or Flint, there’s shootings, all that stuff going on all the time. So they’re used to seeing that sort of violence.” Like Bruce, James grew up in Detroit. James shared his memories of watching the morning news in Detroit,

As far as the overall city, I watch the news every morning...[and] there’s a murder somehow, someway, or some attempted murder...sometimes on the west but the majority of time...on the east side of Detroit.

Bruce and James were in agreement about the high volume of violence in Detroit. Crime statistics, both violent and property crimes, illustrate the high level of criminal activity within Detroit city limits.

Table 4.18

Detroit and Violent Crime

City	Population	Violent crime	Violent crimes per 100,000	Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter	Forcible rape	Robbery	Aggravated assault
Detroit	905,783	17,428	1,924	306	330	6,115	10,677

Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation (2009)

Table 4.19

Detroit and Property Crime

City	Population	Property crime	Property crimes per 100,000	Burglary	Larceny-theft	Motor vehicle theft	Arson
Detroit	905,783	53,095	5,862	17,818	18,836	16,441	691

Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation (2009)

The importance of having street sense while living in the city was emphasized by several students interviewed. Bruce described street sense as:

Ability to survive in harsh conditions. I mean, living in the city of Detroit, from what I've seen since high school until now, is all about survival. And with the tough economic times and parents not involved in kids' lives, kids are on the streets. And they're on the busses. They're in food establishments causing trouble because they don't have anybody telling them, "Don't do this. Don't do that."

Bruce, who grew up in and out of Detroit, had to learn about street sense when he moved back to Detroit. Bruce moved into his grandmother's house before the start of high school. He described the feeling of being an outsider, having not grown up in Detroit. Since the neighborhood kids knew one another and were used to each other, Bruce found it challenging to fit into the group. He vividly described his entrance into the neighborhood, "I got beat up like I swear the first month I lived there, by a kid that was shorter than me and younger than me, but he had a little more street sense than I did." Gradually Bruce learned to fit in to the activities of the neighborhood, explaining:

Yeah, we probably did some stuff we shouldn't have done where we were hanging out on the street corners at night when we were supposed to be in or we're talking about other people or starting fights. But those are things you do to kind of fit in to the area, especially if you didn't grow up there.

Bruce reflected on the impact of moving to Detroit:

It taught me a lesson about just how to fit in with the people down in the city, that you almost kind of have to change how you are to fit in there, or they'll tell all their friends, "Oh yeah, he's such and such. And watch out for him."

Overall Bruce shared that it took time to earn the trust of others in the neighborhood.

James also commented on the concept of street sense:

My mother growing up, I mean, she tells me a lot. She was never into the drug thing or anything like that but she's got street knowledge, along with my brother ... and I do too. I just know who does what, how it gets done, who to look out for.

Street sense was described by students as an important means of navigating activities in the city.

Ideology.

In the following section, the ideology of residents of Detroit is described; specifically, the concepts of (a) mistrust and (b) street sense are used. Tamara described her family's perception of non-African Americans, saying "There are some people on my mother's side of the family, who are anti-Caucasian people, and I don't know why, and I'm not like that." Eric shared that his mother's side of the family was raised in the U.S. South in the 1950s during racial segregation. He said that they lived in

Arkansas, a little small town, and that again is at the height of the Civil Rights Movement and everything was separated and certain ideas were had about certain races and certain cultures and a lot of that I guess was used to attempt to inform me about how other people were supposed to be... I didn't have any other real perceptions except for that.

Interacting with only African Americans was the norm for many students from Detroit.

Further, the lack of interaction with other races fostered a sense of mistrust (Sugrue, 1999).

Table 4.20

Ideology in Detroit

Ideology
Mistrust
Democratic
Street sense

Language.

The language of Detroit can be described as hip hop or street talk. Bruce described the language of Detroit as "urban slang" which he characterized as a mixture of words that one finds in rap songs intermixed with cursing. He explained that speech in the city is loud and boisterous even when speakers are in close proximity to others. In Bruce's experience,

every other word in the city of Detroit is a curse word. Bruce explained that normal conversation in Detroit sounds like individuals are “yelling down the block.” The language in Detroit can be described as broken English but at a slow cadence, in comparison to the faster cadence found in many other large U.S. cities.

Bruce shared that on the east side of Detroit, “There is a lot of broken English and the formulation of sentences aren’t clear or correct. East side residents are less educated, which is a hindrance.” In addition, Bruce shared that he often observed parents cursing when they were standing on their front lawns and children following in similar speech patterns. “You know,” and “You don’t know me” are two phrases used often in the city. “You don’t know me,” is often uttered to White individuals traveling through neighborhoods in Detroit. In addition to cursing at White individuals, a similar level of vocal hatred is directed toward police officers of any race.

Activities, entertainment, and rituals.

Activities, entertainment, and rituals in Detroit for kids consist of the following concepts (a) family picnics, (b) socializing on Belle Isle, (c) pick-up sports games, (d) block parties, and (e) church activities. Neighborhood sports, specifically pick-up games, were a common activity for youth in the city. James shared that he played football in the large field in front of his apartment complex:

I played football a lot, every day regardless of the weather. It could be extremely cold or extremely hot, that was a neighborhood activity that everybody participated in. Sometimes the ladies would be out there and cheer us and sometimes they’d want to play.

Bruce, like James, recalled playing sports,

We always played touch or tackle football in the summer. It was a tradition. I think a lot of people across the city of Detroit find an open field, get a group of guys out there, and start playing tackle football.

Students were more likely to be involved in neighborhood activities such as pick-up football than organized activities. The financial cost of involvement in organized activities or lessons may be prohibitive for Detroit students, so there are few organized activities available to children in Detroit.

When asked about relaxing and socializing (social patterns), students from Detroit shared they often spent time at a family members' home, attended family picnics, and socialized on Belle Isle or at a block party in the neighborhood. Belle Isle was a popular location for picnics, family reunions, and socialization. Going to Belle Isle was a ritual for many Detroit residents. Beginning at a young age children go to Belle Isle to play. Tamara recalled, "One of the main reasons I used to love it [Belle Isle] growing up is because of the giant slide." In high school, specifically on Friday nights, Tamara would park her car at Belle Isle and watch the cars go by. She said that her attraction to Belle Isle was due to boys and high school friends. "You would just sit there...you might see somebody from your class, and he might come over, and he might bring his friends." Kayla recalled that Belle Isle was where everyone went on high school senior skip day in for a picnic. Much like the other students, Bruce had fond memories of Belle Isle. He recalled:

Barbequing on Belle Isle. I mean, I remember going through high school; we would just go – because the thing was to do in Detroit, go on Belle Isle. Everybody gets in the car and drives around Belle Isle. See who was out there, and try to be seen, basically. And that tradition that was massed throughout the city that was fostered through each generation basically.

Socializing on Belle Isle was a popular activity for students from Detroit. Students described activities for individuals of all ages: children play on the giant slide, teens drive around Belle Isle and interact with others their age, and families gather for reunions.

Another ritual described by Detroit residents was attending church, which was identified as a significant support network for the community. Tamara attended a church located on the corner of her block. She described her church as “predominantly African-American. Right now, to date, I have one member of my church who I believe she’s biracial.” Tamara is highly connected to the church; she said, “I’ve gone to the same church my entire life...I call everyone cousin and that type of thing. I feel like it’s definitely a community.” Kayla also described spending extensive time at the church growing up. Kayla’s church was located on the east side of Detroit and her grandmother was the minister. At the church Kayla was on the dance team; she explained, “I danced for the church from the age of 9 until age 17. I attended church on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. On Friday night there was a night service, Saturday there was dance practices, and Sunday there was a church service and sometimes I would dance.” Churches, a formal cultural transmitter in the city, provided activities for children as illustrated in the previous description.



Figure 4.10. Church in Detroit with doors chained together until the weekly service

(Catherine W. Barber)

There are a large number of churches in Detroit. In a one-mile radius, I passed more than ten churches. The churches ranged from small churches, like the one pictured above, which for security reasons chained the doors locked until the weekly services, to large elaborate churches.

Table 4.21

Activities, entertainment, and rituals in Detroit

Activities, entertainment, and rituals

- Family picnics, family reunions
 - Socializing at Belle Isle – cruising at Belle Isle
 - Pick-up games – impromptu sports
 - Block parties
 - Church & church activities – choir and dance groups
-

Schools in Detroit.

In terms of education within the city, the concepts of (a) ethnicity, (b) eligibility for free and reduced price lunch, (c) size and (d) graduation rate are described in this section.

Urban high schools in southeast Michigan, specifically public high schools in Detroit, have a student population that is predominantly Black. Like most areas in southeast Michigan, the student population in the school system is similar to the demographics in the surrounding residential area.

Throughout this process, I began to realize that there is a taxonomy of Detroit High Schools, specifically within the public school system. After numerous conversations, I discovered there are neighborhood high schools and elite high schools. Cass Technical, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Renaissance are the elite application-based high schools, which admit students from throughout the city and serve as a college preparatory schools. I found that students attending Eastern Michigan University, who grew up in Detroit, were (a) more likely to live on the west side of Detroit than the east side and (b) more likely to attend an “elite” high school – Cass, King, or Renaissance – than a neighborhood high school.

Table 4.22

Diversity in Urban High Schools in Southeast Michigan

High School	% White
Cass Technical High School - Detroit, Michigan	1.8
Martin Luther King Jr. High School - Detroit, Michigan	0.5
Mackenzie High School - Detroit, Michigan	0.3
Renaissance High School - Detroit, Michigan	1.6

(National Center for Education Statistics, 2009)

The financial struggles of the Detroit Public Schools (DPS) system are well known throughout southeast Michigan. Students from high schools in Detroit recalled that there were often challenges to buy books for classes; at times the semester was almost over before there were enough books to distribute. School closings were common throughout the city. James shared his perspective of the economic situation in the city, saying, “Schools and

everything were closing dramatically, there's no recreation for the kids. So they...are left in the street because they don't go to school because their schools closed down."

In 2008 there were 33 public high schools in Detroit. Cass, King, and Renaissance were highlighted on the DPS website for their college preparatory programs (Detroit Public Schools, 2008). Admission to the three elite DPS high schools is based on participated in the Examination High Schools process which occurs in the eighth grade. A few of the criteria for admission are "a minimum Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.0, no Student Code of Conduct infractions, at least a 96% attendance rate from the last 8th grade report card marking, Norm Reference Test Scores (TerraNova, MAT 7 &, CAT, etc.), MEAP Scores, and an admission test" (Detroit Public Schools, 2009a, 2009b, p. 1).

Table 4.23

Ethnicity and Free and Reduced Price Lunch Eligibility for Urban High Schools in Southeast Michigan, by Percentage

	White	African American	American Indian /Alaskan	Asian	Hispanic	Free and reduced-price lunch eligible
Cass High School Detroit, Michigan	1.8	95.0	0.1	1.2	1.8	44.6
King High School Detroit, Michigan	0.5	99.0	0.1	0.3	0.1	47.1
Mackenzie High School Detroit, Michigan	0.3	99.1	0.3	0.1	0.2	69.0
Renaissance High School Detroit, Michigan	1.6	97.4	0.6	0.1	0.3	30.1
University of Detroit Jesuit High School and Academy Detroit, Michigan	*	*	*	*	*	*

Note: University of Detroit Jesuit is a private school and statistics were not available.
 Source: CCD Public school data 2006-2007 school year
 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009)

Eric, an African American male from Detroit, described his perception of the difference between the three elite high schools in Detroit and the DPS neighborhood schools:

...[You have] the kids who were sent to the better schools where it was always kind of drilled into them that you are the special ones and really have the chance to be something. And you would get the kids that came from the neighborhood schools that weren't so great who were kind of treated like throwaways or like you are below average and you weren't good enough.

Eight students from Detroit participated in formal interviews. Five of these students attended one of the three elite Detroit Public Schools, one attended a neighborhood school in Detroit, one attended a private school in Detroit, and one attended a charter school in Dearborn.



Figure 4.11. Mumford High School (neighborhood school) Detroit, Michigan (Catherine W. Barber)

Mumford High School pictured above is an example of a neighborhood school. As previously mentioned, Eric's perception was that students who attended neighborhood schools were treated as throwaways. Mumford High School's facilities are run down and correspond to the notion of being second class; overall the building is in a state of disrepair. Bruce, who served as an informant and tour guide throughout the city, agreed that Mumford's facilities are poor, but claimed there are much worse examples of subpar Detroit Public School high school facilities throughout the city.

A report issued by EMU Institutional Research and Information Management identified the Top 100 Feeder High Schools for EMU freshman. In 2008, 70 students from the elite Detroit high schools enrolled at EMU as freshman. Cass Technical High School was

ranked 4th with 35 students, Martin Luther King, Jr. High School was 9th with 29 students, and Renaissance High School was 61st with 9 students. In addition, there were 14 neighborhood schools from DPS, two charter schools, and two private schools within the top 100 feeder high schools for Eastern Michigan University (EMU Institutional Research and Information Management, 2009). These data indicate that the city of Detroit is an important recruitment area for EMU.

Jessica, an African American female, attended Cass Technical High School in Detroit; she explains that Cass “is kind of considered to be a big deal in Detroit; it is one of the top high schools in Detroit. You have to take a test to get in.” She said of the dress norms at the school, “We didn’t have uniforms; people liked to walk around in designer clothes and designer shoes to show off what they have.”

James also attended Cass Technical High School, and he explained the emphasis on academics from his family, saying “growing up in Detroit and going to school it was very, very pushed upon family-wise that you must go to school, that you must do well.” James had five siblings; he shared that:

The rest of my family went to the neighborhood high schools and I was the only one that did not. So with that I guess they kind of called me the one. Because they knew that I was going to be the one that would get past what the family kind of expected.



Figure 4.12. Cass Technical High School (Catherine W. Barber)

Cass Technical High School pictured above is a state-of-the-art facility and is in stark comparison to neighborhood schools in Detroit. The school building and athletic facilities are in excellent condition.

Cleophis, an African American male from Detroit, attended Mackenzie High School. He describes the school as “predominantly Black, I think we had one White student.” Cleophis decided to attend Mackenzie High School because of the football coach, who was “kind of a surrogate father to me.” Cleophis admitted that he intentionally failed the admissions test to the three elite high schools in Detroit because he wanted to play football for the Mackenzie coach; if he had been admitted to one of the three elite, his mother would have forced him to attend school there.

Bruce, an African American male, grew up in and out of Detroit. During his high school years in Detroit he attended a private high school, University of Detroit Jesuit High School and Academy. Bruce's high school was predominantly Caucasian. At the school there was a mixture of African American and Caucasian, as well as a small percent of Hispanic and Asian. The White students who attended the high school located in Detroit often did not live in the city; instead they were from the surrounding and often wealthier suburbs (Grosse Pointe, Royal Oak, Ferndale, Huntington Woods, Harper Woods, West Bloomfield, etc.).



Figure 4.13. University of Detroit Jesuit High School and Academy (Catherine W. Barber)
University of Detroit Jesuit High School and Academy pictured above is located near Seven Mile in Detroit. The residential neighborhood surrounding and adjacent to the school is elite in comparison to the majority of homes in Detroit. The school has a private security company

which patrols on school property, specifically providing surveillance in the parking lot. In addition, there is a wrought iron fence which separates school property from the city.

Kayla lived in Detroit but attended a high school in Dearborn because her mom did not like the Detroit Public School system. Further, she explained that until high school, she mainly attended the same DHS schools as her younger brother and he was often removed from school for disciplinary reasons. In high school, Kayla said “I attended a charter school which was 15 to 20 minutes away from my house.”

Detroit Public Schools is the 11th largest school district in the country. The dropout rate for students in Detroit Public Schools is 78.3% or the inverse, there is a 21.7% graduation rate at DPS. The dropout rate of 78.3% was calculated based on the number of students who begin in the 9th grade compared with the number of those individuals who finished their 12th grade year and graduated with a high school diploma (Toppo, 2006, June 20). Often a more optimistic graduation rate is published which states that Detroit Public Schools have a 66.8% graduation rate. The 66.8% graduation rate for the Class of 2006 was the figure reported through The Michigan Department of Education. A different method is used for this graduation rate calculation; that is, the number of students who begin their *senior* year compared with the number of those seniors who graduate the same year. Thus, the more optimistic number was calculated by focusing solely on the senior year, whereas the more dismal figure accounts for all four years of high school (Bouffard, 2008, April 1).

The elite high schools have a much higher graduation rate than the average DPS graduation rate. In 2006, Cass Technical High School had a 95.7% graduation rate (Calloway, 2009, January 29a), King High School had a 87.7% graduation rate (Calloway, 2009, January 29b), and Renaissance High School had a graduation rate of 94.3% (Calloway,

2009, January 29c). The elite high schools in Detroit average a more than 20% higher graduation rate than the DPS district average.

University of Detroit Jesuit High School (U of D), a private school, has even more impressive graduation statistics. The academic focus of the school was illustrated in the college attendance figure which boasts that upon graduation, between 98-100% of graduates attend college (University of Detroit Jesuit High School, 2009). In any case, EMU is attracting Detroit students who have academically outperformed their peers.

Extracurricular activities.

Extracurricular activities, specifically athletics, were an important aspect in many urban schools. Although several students commented they were involved in sports, there was not a sense of parental involvement, which was common in rural communities. There was no mention of private lessons or private sports clubs in Detroit; athletics was tied specifically to the high school.

In addition to interviewing students from Detroit schools I visited schools in Detroit. There are 34 practice fields for Detroit Public School athletic teams. Of the 34 fields, 13 are not owned or operated by DPS (Detroit Public Schools, 2004).

The update to date football fields in Detroit Public Schools were evident. A district-wide renovation occurred approximately three years ago. An Eastern alumnus who is currently a graduate student at EMU and grew up in Detroit accompanied me to the schools throughout the city. He explained that the update to football facilities meant that there were no more rusted goal posts. At Cass Tech there is a new facility where students play softball; previously there was no facility and students played softball on Belle Isle.



Figure 4.14. King High School softball field

While football and track facilities were more up to date, gyms were often multipurpose, often with three or four sports (volleyball, wrestling, basketball) sharing the same gym.

Detroit Public Schools they do not operate on a pay to play concept, a concept that is prevalent among suburban school athletic teams. There is no additional charge to participate in athletics. However, teams do fundraise in order to have more (name brand) athletic gear and uniforms (Detroit Public Schools, 2004).

The athletic league for Detroit Public Schools is divided into four divisions. In each division there are approximately six Detroit high schools. Thus, students in Detroit compete exclusively against other Detroit High School athletes. With the exception of tournaments, Detroit students are playing against teams that have a similar demographic. Detroit Public Schools offer 11 sports, including cheerleading, cross country, golf, swimming, tennis, track and field, baseball, softball, basketball, football, and volleyball (Detroit Public Schools, 2004).

College search process.

Next, I will discuss what the students from Detroit shared of their experiences with the college search process. The variables of the college search process are (a) amount of assistance and (b) source of assistance with the college search process. Students cited family and high school resources as tools which they used when navigating the college search process. Some students indicated that they had minimal support and experienced difficulty navigating the financial aid process. Bruce, who attended a private school in Detroit, explained that his mother attended college and was very influential during the college search process. His high school also “fostered college education. I think everybody who’s ever graduated from U of D has gone on to do some form of college, whether it be Ivy League, public, private, community, that sort of thing.” Dwayne recalled that his grandfather provided guidance as he applied to college. His grandfather told Dwayne to “pick two schools that you would like to attend, one being out of state and one being in state, so I picked Howard and Eastern.” Dwayne shared that he was accepted to Howard but due to financial circumstances he enrolled in Eastern: “it was more affordable and I liked the program so it was a good, good thing my grandfather did that.” Tamara said that her mother attended college on an ROTC scholarship and that she “would read over my essays for me, but I worked a little bit with – we had a college prep center.” Tamara found the college prep center at her high school to be a useful resource.

Jessica had difficulty navigating the financial aid process. Her plans to attend college immediately after high school changed because of her challenges. Jessica planned to attend another state institution, but “the financial aid award that they gave me in the beginning, I don’t know what happened, I think it was because I was trying to decide whether I wanted to

go to Michigan State or Eastern and it just ended up basically all the financial aid that they gave me they took it back.” After this experience Jessica worked a full-time job for a year and began classes at Eastern the following summer term. She said, “I had to reapply to get my financial aid back from Eastern and that worked out so here I am.” Several students from Detroit explained that for many urban students, there is pressure to be the first one in the family to attend college. In some families, parents have an intense desire for their child to attend college; however, the student does not always share this desire.

The city of Detroit, which is the urban center of southeast Michigan, has many distinct characteristics. Detroit was described as homogeneous, as both the residential areas and schools were predominantly Black. Residents in Detroit have minimal economic resources. The financial struggles are evident within the community as evidenced by the high levels of unemployment and poverty within the city. The scarcity of resources is a factor that contributes to drug dealing and crime, both of which are tasks used for survival in the city.

Table 4.24

Urban Southeast Michigan: Categories, Variables/Concepts, and Dimensions

<i>Categories for Detroit</i>	<i>Variables/Concepts</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>
Demographics	(a) Size (b) Skin color	Large Homogeneous – Black
Tasks/jobs	(a) Employment levels (b) Poverty	Abandoned, condemned, or foreclosed houses and businesses Drug dealing Multiple low paying jobs Jobs without benefits
Income	(a) Government assistance (b) Below average	
Family structure	(a) Single parent homes (b) Extended family helping	
Education	(a) Education	Few individuals have college degrees
Physical environment, safety, and security	(a) Violent crime (b) Property crime	High level of crime
Ideology	(a) Mistrust (b) Street sense	
Activities, entertainment, and rituals	(a) Picnics (b) Socializing at Belle Isle (c) Pick-up sports (d) Block parties (e) Church activities	
School	(a) Eligibility for free and reduced price lunch (b) Skin color (c) Size (d) Graduation rate	Limited financial resources Low socioeconomic status Homogeneous – Black Large school district
Extracurricular activities	(a) Sports teams at school	
College Search Process	(a) Amount of support (b) Source of support	Guidance school Guidance family members

Suburban Culture in Southeast Michigan

The suburban communities in southeast Michigan described in this section include Ann Arbor Township, Brighton, Canton, Flat Rock, Oak Park, Plymouth, Southfield, and Ypsilanti Township. In this section, the cultural categories that are explicated include demographics; tasks/jobs; income; family structure; education; physical environment, safety, and security; ideology; activities, entertainment, and rituals; school; extracurricular activities; and college search process.

My exploration of suburban communities in southeast Michigan is intended as preliminary research, which provides only a broad overview of communities. This overview does not capture the complexity of these suburban communities. The suburban communities are a very intricate social system; each community is distinct and has an individual, yet interrelated, history. While this study examined an array of communities including rural, urban, and suburban, I found that the complexity of the suburban communities merit their own in-depth analysis and provide an opportunity for future research. I discovered that the suburban communities are often very loosely coupled communities, which are sometimes in the midst of rapid demographic changes (generally from predominantly White, to integrated, to predominantly African American).

Suburban communities developed in southeast Michigan as the population in Detroit grew. Often families with more financial resources moved away from the city into the suburbs. Suburbs in southeast Michigan vary in their demographic characteristics; for example, there are integrated suburban communities, predominantly White suburbs, and predominantly African American suburbs.

Table 4.25

Ethnicity of Suburban Communities in Southeast Michigan by Percentage

	White	African American	Native American	Asian	Pacific Islander	Other	Two or more races	Hispanic or Latino of any race
Ann Arbor Township	81.21	2.25	0.17	13.58	0.06	0.85	1.89	2.22
Brighton	96.61	0.34	0.42	1.31	0.00	0.39	0.93	1.48
Canton	83.87	4.54	0.29	8.73	0.02	0.64	1.91	2.34
Flat Rock	95.32	1.43	0.49	0.47	0.00	0.64	1.65	2.70
Oak Park	46.95	45.95	0.17	2.18	0.02	0.60	4.13	1.28
Plymouth	96.42	0.57	0.35	1.05	0.07	0.30	1.24	1.31
Southfield	38.83	54.22	0.20	3.09	0.03	0.64	2.99	1.19
Ypsilanti Township	67.51	25.47	0.49	2.01	0.03	1.20	3.30	2.80

(U.S. Census Bureau, 2000a)

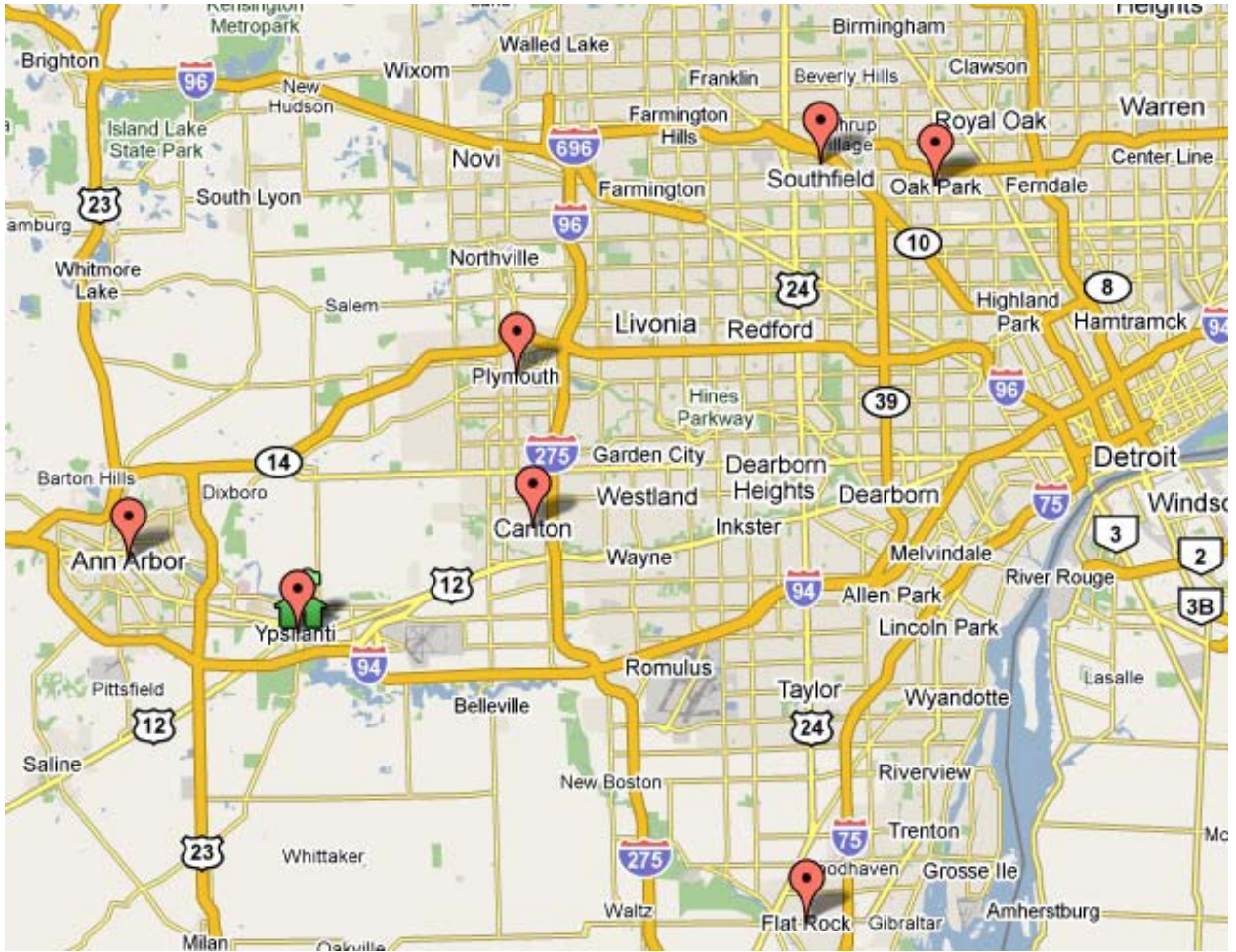


Figure 4.15. Suburban communities in southeast Michigan

These communities are further categorized as an integrated suburb, predominantly White suburb, or predominantly African American suburb. The culture in each of these suburban categories is explored. This section provides examples of the suburban spectrum which was previously diagrammed. In the following section, each suburban category (White, predominantly African American, and integrated suburban) will be explored.

Table 4.26

Interviewee Details

Student	Hometown	Suburban characteristic	Ethnicity	Gender	Family	High School
Cindy	Oak Park	Predominantly African American	African American	Female	Married	Southfield
Elizabeth	Canton	Predominantly White	White	Female		Canton (Plymouth, Canton, Salem)
Elsa	Plymouth	Predominantly White	White	Female		Plymouth (Plymouth, Canton, Salem)
Jennifer	Brighton	Predominantly White	White	Female	Mother & lesbian partner	Brighton
Luke	Ann Arbor Township	Integrated	White	Male	Married	Huron
Reid	Flat Rock	Predominantly White	African American	Female		Flat Rock
Sarah	Ypsilanti Township	Integrated	White	Female	Married	Lincoln

During the data analysis phase I divided the suburban results into three categories: integrated suburb, predominantly White suburb, and predominantly African American suburb. This approach presents the findings categorically, which results in fewer examples in each of the suburban categories than the urban and rural category.

Integrated suburban communities

Demographics.

Integrated suburban demographics are organized by the concepts of (a) ethnicity and (b) size. Luke, a White male, lived in Ann Arbor Township during high school. He described Ann Arbor as an upper middle class community which had a noticeable cultural diversity

within the community. According to the 2000 Census, the largest group represented in Ann Arbor were White 75%, Asian 12%, and African American 9% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000a).

Luke explained that he lived in the *Township* of Ann Arbor, “In terms of the dividing lines, it was really who lives in the City as compared to who lived in like the Township. So it [Ann Arbor Township] was a much cheaper part of town to buy houses in.”

Townships are a common form of municipality in Michigan. According to the Michigan Township Association (2009), “Townships are required to perform assessment administration, tax collection and elections administration” (p. 1). One of the main differences between a township and a city is that cities are required to have certain public services including water, sewer, parks and recreation, and fire and police protection. Townships are not required to offer these services, though some do. Townships can opt to use county services rather than have their own. This option allows townships to have lower operating costs and, in turn, townships can charge less in taxes (Michigan Townships Association, 2009).

Ann Arbor Township is north of the City of Ann Arbor. In 2000, the population of the Township was 4,720, equivalent to 4% of the population of the City of Ann Arbor, which was 114,024 according to the 2000 Census. The Township is 17.7 square miles, smaller than the City of Ann Arbor at 27.7 square miles (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000a). Students living in Ann Arbor, both the City and Township, attend high school together. Though Luke lived in the Township, he attended school and socialized in the City of Ann Arbor. Luke’s only references to the Township were in regard to the location of his house and his awareness of the socioeconomic disparity between the two locales, specifically referencing that real estate

was less expensive in the Township. From this point forward, “Ann Arbor” is used to describe Luke’s experiences.

Ypsilanti, Michigan, home of Eastern Michigan University, borders the City of Ann Arbor. Both Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti are located in Washtenaw County. In 2000 the population of Ypsilanti Township was 49,182, which was more than twice the population of Ypsilanti City, which was 22,362. Unlike the size differential of Ann Arbor City and Township, the Township of Ypsilanti is 31.8 square miles and the City of Ypsilanti is much smaller, at 4.5 square miles (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000a). The Township borders the City of Ypsilanti on the west, south, and east sides.

Sarah, a White female, grew up in Ypsilanti Township, and, much like Luke, described her hometown as a “very multicultural city.” According to the 2000 Census, the racial makeup of Ypsilanti Township was 68% White, 25% African American, and 3% Hispanic (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000a).

Further, Sarah explained her perspective of a portion of the African American population living in Ypsilanti Township:

The stereotypes of African-Americans on TV are like poor and they live in the ghetto. Whereas in my neighborhood, like at my school, the wealthier people were the African Americans because there’s a lot of people who moved from Detroit and had made money and then bought these quarter of a million dollar homes. So they were like wearing the top of the name brands, and so like a lot of times it was the African American students were some of the wealthier students at school.

Sarah did not live in a house in these subdivisions; she grew up in a trailer park located in the Township. Sarah described the housing options and socioeconomic levels in Ypsilanti Township:

There’s about four or five trailer parks in our school district, and three are like the older ones from the 1970s. So you knew if someone lived in Rawsonville Woods or Van Buren Estates that they weren’t as wealthy as other students, because those were

like the metal trailer parks. And then there was two like the newer trailer parks, Swan Creek and Presidential Estates, and where I grew up is Presidential Estates. And those were like the double-wide trailers that had the nice plastic siding. And then there was the subdivisions, so to a certain extent that's kind of where you could figure out your social classes. So like if you lived in the tin can trailer parks then that's like low-level, and if you lived in the double-wide trailer parks that's middle, and then if you lived in the subdivisions most people assumed that you were wealthy.

Sarah's description of the residential areas in Ypsilanti Township illustrated the variety of socioeconomic levels which existed within her hometown.

Ann Arbor Township and Ypsilanti Township are both examples of integrated suburbs in southeast Michigan. While a diverse population is a commonality among these suburbs, the industry and socioeconomic levels vary widely both between and within these areas. These descriptions suggest that integrated suburban communities in southeast Michigan have varied characteristics.

Table 4.27

Ethnicity of Suburban Communities in Southeast Michigan by Percentage

	White	African American	Native American	Asian	Pacific Islander	Other	Two or more races	Hispanic or Latino of any race
Ann Arbor Township	81.21	2.25	0.17	13.58	0.06	0.85	1.89	2.22
Ypsilanti Township	67.51	25.47	0.49	2.01	0.03	1.20	3.30	2.80

(U.S. Census Bureau, 2000a)

Table 4.28

Interviewee Details

Student	Hometown	Suburban characteristic	Ethnicity	Gender	Family	High School
Luke	Ann Arbor Township	Integrated	White	Male	Married	Huron
Sarah	Ypsilanti Township	Integrated	White	Female	Married	Lincoln

Tasks/jobs.

In this section, I describe the tasks and jobs in integrated suburban communities. Tasks/jobs in integrated suburban southeast Michigan consists of the following concepts of both (a) white-collar jobs and (b) blue-collar jobs. Luke, a student from Ann Arbor whose father was a minister and mother worked in the public school system in Flat Rock, described his socioeconomic status in comparison to other students in Ann Arbor, “I was kind of at the bottom of the totem pole on the sort of socioeconomic level.” His socioeconomic status was less than other families living in Ann Arbor despite both parents being employed full-time. Luke did not see a large dependence on the automotive industry in his hometown. He stated that Ann Arbor was filled with white collar workers, adding, “I don’t remember any factory workers that lived in Ann Arbor that I went to school with.” Luke recalled, “Many of my friends’ parents worked at Pfizer [a pharmaceutical company], which is no more. Parents worked at the University [of Michigan]... I had several kids from my middle school, at least two friends, whose parents worked for the bus system.”

Unlike the business professional work culture that Luke described in Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti Township was described by Sarah as “very much working class.” Sarah noted that many families in Ypsilanti Township worked in the automotive industry, whereas Luke saw few families dependent on the automotive industry. Sarah explained that instead of attending college, many parents went from high school to a job in an automotive plant.

Sarah described the development of Ypsilanti Township, stating the area was a “farm community originally, so I think it’s just now in the past 15 years becoming more suburban.” Growing up, Sarah recalled the agricultural industry in the area and shared, “When I started

out I can remember like [in] kindergarten it was cornfields on either side of the bus almost the whole way there. You know houses on the main roads but they have a lot of land.” Sarah explained that a portion of Ypsilanti Township was driven by the agriculture industry, “I actually knew some people’s parents who were actually farmers.”

Gradually Ypsilanti Township transformed from cornfields to subdivisions. Sarah said, “My high school literally was in the middle of a cornfield. And now it’s surrounded by quarter of a million dollar [house] subdivisions.” Sarah described the development of Ypsilanti Township while she was growing up:

And then towards the end of school, towards the end of my years, like high school years, the new kids, their parents went to school because their parents were buying the quarter of a million dollar homes or more – like moving to the subdivisions. And their parents had gone to college and their parents were like executives at these plants or they were – I had a couple of doctors. But we didn’t have a lot of affluent jobs; I don’t remember a lot of doctors, I don’t remember a lot of lawyers. I feel like most of them from what I recall were very much working class. A lot of plant, and then a good handful of my friends’ parents were teachers or worked for schools in the area.

Income.

The median household income for Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti Township was similar. It should be noted that the median household income in Ann Arbor is affected because of the large number of graduate students (without full-time jobs) living in the community.

Table 4.29

Median Household Income in Integrated Suburban Communities in Southeast Michigan

Community	Median Household Income
Ann Arbor	\$46,299
Ypsilanti Township	\$46,460

(U.S. Census Bureau, 2000a)

Family structure.

Both Luke and Sarah grew up in a home with both parents present. Sarah had a little sister.

Education.

Concepts that I address in this section are (a) education and (b) economics. The educational attainment in integrated suburban communities varied, ranging from 30% to 70% with a college degree.

Table 4.30

Educational Attainment in Integrated Suburban Communities in Southeast Michigan

Community	% with Bachelor's, graduate, or professional degree
Ann Arbor	69.3
Ypsilanti Township	27.0

(U.S. Census Bureau, 2000a)

While the median incomes for Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti Township appear similar, the median income in Ann Arbor is lower due to the large number of graduate and professional degree seeking students attending University of Michigan, which accounts for the large difference in degree attainment Ann Arbor with 69.3% and Ypsilanti Township with 27.0%

Physical environment, safety, and security.

In this section, concepts that are addressed include (a) violent crimes and (b) property crimes. The number of violent crimes in Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor are similar. When comparing statistics based on 100,000 residents, Ypsilanti's violent crime rate is more than four times larger, meaning that Ypsilanti has more violent crimes per person.

Table 4.31

Integrated Suburban Communities in Southeast Michigan and Violent Crime

City	Population	Violent crime	Violent crimes per 100,000	Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter	Forcible rape	Robbery	Aggravated assault
Ann Arbor (city)	115,148	295	256	0	32	66	197
Ypsilanti (city)	21,766	285	1,309	3	13	74	195

Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation (2009)

Table 4.32

Integrated Suburban Communities in Southeast Michigan and Property Crime

City	Population	Property crime	Property crimes per 100,000	Burglary	Larceny-theft	Motor vehicle theft	Arson ¹
Ann Arbor	115,148	3,212	2,789	622	2,353	146	13
Ypsilanti	21,766	1,024	4,704	278	649	97	6

¹ The FBI does not publish arson data unless it receives data from either the agency or the state for all 12 months of the calendar year.

Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation (2009)

Ideology.

The ideology of integrated suburban areas in southeast Michigan, specifically the concept of multiculturalism, is explored in this section. Luke, from Ann Arbor, was interested in interacting with diverse others. He reasoned that in a global economy it is important to “learn to work with people who are not like you.” Students from integrated suburban communities claimed that there was racial and ethnic diversity in their high schools, and they had the opportunity to interact with diverse others often.

Multiculturalism was a component of the educational experience for students from integrated suburbs. For example, Luke talked about the multicultural day of celebration at his high school, which featured an array of cultural performances. Enthusiastically, Luke said

We had a multicultural day every year, where we did nothing but go to like a six-hour assembly and it was all the different student organizations that would put on something. It was really cool...And there was a lot of creativity that came out of that. That was pretty cool.

Interacting with diverse others was part of the educational experience for students at integrated suburban schools.

Table 4.33

Ideology in Integrated Suburban Areas in Southeast Michigan

Ideology
Multiculturalism
Liberal

Activities, entertainment, and rituals.

Activities, entertainment, and rituals in integrated suburban communities for kids consist of the following concepts: (a) golf, (b) laser tag, (c) socializing in downtown Ann Arbor, and (d) socializing at a friend’s house. Luke commented on the social norms in Ann Arbor, stating, “There is that kind of elite part of the whole complex in there. And I never

really felt a part of that as much just because I moved here when I was like nine or ten.”

When Luke moved to the Ann Arbor area he discovered that he did not participate in the same recreational activities as the other boys in the community. He explained, “I learned to play golf because my friends played golf. And they always asked, ‘Hey, Luke, you want to go to the golf course?’”

Students from integrated suburban areas cited an array of locations where they socialized in or around their hometown. Luke shared that there was a lot to do in Ann Arbor; though he lived in Ann Arbor Township, he socialized mainly in the City of Ann Arbor. Luke described the social culture in Ann Arbor, saying, “You know again the downtown stores have replaced the mall. The laser tag replaces bowling kind of. Laser tag was really big.” In Ann Arbor near University of Michigan, Luke would hang out at the Japanese Tea shop or Pinball Pete’s, which was the local arcade. Luke described his friends, saying:

I’d say my main group of friends was theater kids and choir kids. And yeah, there was a lot of – there was also a lot of ethnic mixed – ethnicity of people. A lot of Asian kids and everything...When everyone’s comfortable with all cultures in a society, it wasn’t at all weird or anything.

When referring to ethnic diversity, Asian was most often mentioned as the other ethnic group which Luke socialized with in Ann Arbor.

Sarah, who grew up in Ypsilanti Township, a community that borders Ann Arbor, shared that she socialized with peers in her neighborhood or had a parent drive her to a friend’s house. When she was at home, Sarah often talked on the telephone or played on the Internet. Sarah explained that “Once you got a car you would drive to Ann Arbor, and you just thought you were so cool to walk all over Ann Arbor.” As a high school student, Sarah recalled trying to blend with the University of Michigan students when she visited Ann

Arbor. Both Luke and Sarah recalled socializing in high school in Ann Arbor near the University of Michigan.

Table 4.34

*Activities, Entertainment, and Rituals in Integrated Suburban Communities
in Southeast Michigan*

Activities, entertainment, and rituals
Golf
Laser tag
Socializing in downtown Ann Arbor
Socializing at houses

Schools in integrated suburbs in southeast Michigan.

Concepts of integrated suburban schools which are addressed in this section include (a) ethnicity of students and (b) eligibility for free and reduced price lunch. In integrated suburbs such as Ann Arbor Township and Ypsilanti Township there was diversity within both the residential areas and schools. Luke lived in Ann Arbor Township, which was 81.2% White; his school, Huron High School, located in Ann Arbor, was 58.0% White. Sarah lived in Ypsilanti Township, which was 67.5% White; Lincoln High School, where Sarah attended, was 63.8% White. Luke from Ann Arbor Township and Sarah from Ypsilanti Township both grew up in integrated residential areas and experienced integration at their high school.

Table 4.35

Ethnicity and Free and Reduced Price Lunch Eligibility for Integrated Suburban High Schools in Southeast Michigan, by Percentage

	White	African American	American Indian /Alaskan	Asian	Hispanic	Free and reduced-price lunch eligible
Huron High School Ann Arbor , Michigan	58.0	18.8	0.2	17.4	3.9	11.4
Lincoln High School Ypsilanti Township, Michigan	63.8	31.7	0.4	1.8	2.3	26.2

Source: CCD Public school data 2006-2007 school year
(National Center for Education Statistics, 2009)

Luke commented about the diversity of his high school. Students from the north and southeast parts of Ann Arbor attended his high school.

My high school was like 50 percent White. And then every possible, you know I think we had 13 percent Asian. Probably 10 percent Indian. We had a lot of Arab. A lot of African Americans. A real good mixture of people. My middle school was minority White. Most were not White.

Huron High School is a diverse school. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, Huron High School was 58% White, 17% Asian, 19% Black, 4% Hispanic, and 0.2% Native American. Of the student population, 11.4% were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009).

Sarah, like Luke, went to school with a diverse group of students. Lincoln High School was 64% White, 32% Black, 2% Hispanic, and 2% Asian. Of the student population, 26% were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009). A much greater percentage of students were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch at Sarah's high school in Ypsilanti (26%), than at Luke's high school (11%) in the neighboring City of Ann Arbor. Despite being neighboring communities there are major differences in socioeconomic status among these integrated suburban communities.

Sarah, like Luke, experienced diversity in both her neighborhood and school system in Ypsilanti Township. Reflecting on her experience, Sarah noted:

I feel like I wasn't really sheltered from anything growing up. Like a lot of people will come to college and they're like, "Oh, this is the first time I've met a Black person," or "This is the first time I have seen a gay person."

Sarah experienced a level of diversity in her hometown that most students in southeast Michigan do not experience prior to college. Both Sarah and Luke are in the minority among EMU freshman in terms of their exposure to diversity prior to college. Annually, many

students from both Huron High School (Luke's school) and Lincoln High School (Sarah's school) enroll in EMU. Huron High School in Ann Arbor ranked 2nd on the top 100 feeder high schools for EMU freshman; in 2008 there were 57 graduates from Huron who enrolled in EMU. Lincoln High School ranked 23rd on the top 100 feeder high schools, with 16 freshman enrolling at EMU in 2008 (EMU Institutional Research and Information Management, 2009).

Extracurricular activities.

Extracurricular activities were an important aspect of integrated suburban schools. Activities described here include (a) music programs, (b) private lessons (music and photography), and (c) sports. Luke's school was recognized as one of the top seven music programs in the country. Luke shared that it was common for students to have private lessons to refine their skills. He explained, "I would say probably more than half of the top band students are taking private lessons. I knew a lot of kids who are in photography or something and had a private tutor of photography."

In addition to interviewing students from integrated suburban high schools, I visited Huron, Pioneer, and Ypsilanti High Schools. The Huron High School athletic program has 34 athletic teams. The athletic opportunities are plentiful, including men's, women's, and co-ed sports, 9th grade, Junior Varsity, and Varsity teams. There are numerous practice fields and on-site athletic facilities.



Figure 4.16. Huron High Tennis Complex (Catherine W. Barber)



Figure 4.17. Huron High School track and football stadium (Catherine W. Barber)

In addition to traditional sports such as football, basketball, baseball, soccer, golf, tennis, swimming, track and field, and cheerleading, there are teams are organized for field

hockey, equestrian, athletic training, crew, synchronized swimming, ice hockey, figure skating lacrosse, bowling, and water polo.



Figure 4.18. Crew (Ann Arbor Public Schools, 2010c)

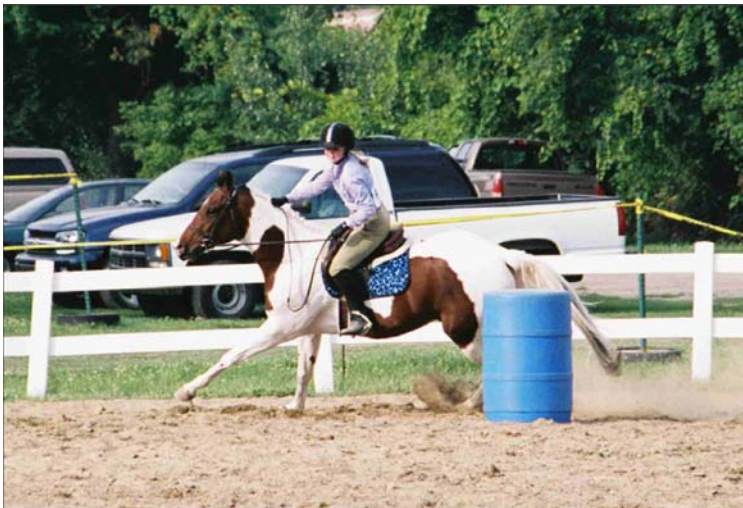


Figure 4.19. Equestrian (Ann Arbor Public Schools, 2010b)

It is clear that athletics is a large focus at the high school with 34 sports offered at Huron High school. There is tremendous parental support as evident by the Booster Club, which is a registered charitable organization designed to raise funds for the athletic program (Ann Arbor Public Schools, 2010a).

College search process.

The variables/concepts of the college search process I investigated are (a) amount of assistance and (b) source of assistance with the college search process. For some students, the college application process was challenging because of a lack of familiarity with it. Sarah from Ypsilanti Township suggested that majority of parents in her community had not gone to college, or if they did attend college they worked after high school graduation and returned college later in life. She explained, “A lot of the people, I knew their parents didn’t go to college immediately out of high school. Because I think a lot of people I went to high school with, their parents couldn’t afford college.”

Sarah did not have anyone in her family to look to for advice with the collegiate search process, as her family had no previous exposure to the collegiate process. Sarah said “My parents had no clue about how to get me into college or how to pay for it, and they haven’t paid a penny for it either, so I take care of school by myself.” Sarah explained that students from her community had an array of experiences related to collegiate education. For some there was the pressure to be the first to attend college, and other students had no support to attend college. Sarah stated, “I knew a good handful of people that their parents just kind of left it [college] up to them and didn’t really talk about it.” Despite having parents who did not attend college, Sarah was a determined student with a desire to attend college. She shared:

I just always pushed myself to do really, really well in school. I knew I had to do extracurricular and so – and no one taught me how to get in this college, really. I don’t remember ever really being told. I know like get good grades and everything, but I got good grades. But I applied for college all by myself, like no one – my parents didn’t watch over me or tell me where to apply.

Though Sarah did not have support from her family when she applied to college, she had an internal drive. Some academically capable students lack family support and do not have the same level of motivation that Sarah exemplified. Sarah shared a story of another student from her high school who did not have support or motivation with the collegiate application process.

He lived in one of those trailer parks I was talking about, the lower-level trailer parks. And he comes from a single-parent home and he had to work all the way through high school in order to pay for the car that he drove to school. And I was like, “You know that if you apply for FAFSA, because of this, because of the fact that you work, you come from a single-parent home, and you don’t make a lot, and like your mom doesn’t make a lot of money, you will get more money than anyone to go to college.” And I kind of showed him like, “This is where you put it in, so all you have to do is ask for your mom’s W2 and you just put that in here.” He had no support; like his mom didn’t tell him anything about going to college. I think she worked at like Ford or something like that. But like I helped him through that process – he actually realized he had potential to go to a university instead of like just going to Washtenaw [Community College] like everyone else.

Despite living in neighboring communities which had the commonality of diversity in the residential areas and in the school system, the cultures of Ypsilanti Township and Ann Arbor Township were dramatically different. The working norms and economic resources varied widely between these two suburban communities. In Ann Arbor it was much more common for parents to have a college education (69%) than in Ypsilanti Township (27%). It became clear that parents’ education had a direct impact on their type of work; blue collar workers (Ypsilanti Township) were more likely to have less education than white collar workers (Ann Arbor).

Table 4.36

Integrated suburbs in Southeast Michigan: Categories, Variables/Concepts, and Dimensions

<i>Categories for Integrated suburbs</i>	<i>Variables/Concepts</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>
Demographics	(a) Ethnicity (b) Size	Heterogeneous
Tasks/jobs	(a) White collar jobs (b) Blue collar jobs	Minister Teacher Pharmaceutical company Bus system
Income	(a) Near U.S. median household income	
Family structure	(a) Two parent homes for both participants interviewed	
Education	(a) Education (b) Economics	High levels of education, through a large range
Physical environment, safety, and security	(a) Violent crime (b) Property crime	
Ideology	(a) Multiculturalism	
Activities, entertainment, and rituals	(a) Golf (b) Laser tag (c) Socializing in downtown Ann Arbor (d) Socializing at a friend's house	
School	(a) Ethnicity (b) Eligibility of free and reduced price lunch	Heterogeneous Private lessons – music, photography
Extracurricular activities	(a) Music program (b) Private lessons (music and photography) (c) Athletics	
College Search Process	(a) Amount of support (b) Source of support	Guidance school Guidance family members

Predominantly White suburban communities

Demographics.

Predominantly White suburban communities demographics are conceptualized by the concepts of (a) ethnicity and (b) size. Many students coming to EMU have grown up in predominantly White suburban communities in southeast Michigan. I interviewed students from Brighton, Flat Rock, Plymouth, and Canton, who described their experiences living in a predominantly White residential community. These suburbs are described as generally populated by families who are middle class or above.

Table 4.37

Population of Predominantly White Suburban Communities in Southeast Michigan

City	Population
Brighton	6,701
Flat Rock	8,488
Plymouth	9,022
Canton	76,366

(U.S. Census Bureau, 2000a)

Jennifer, a White student from Brighton, Michigan, described her hometown as “generally Caucasian and not culturally diverse.” Brighton, located in Livingston County, was 97% White, 1% Asian, and 0.3% African American (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000a). Jennifer shared that Brighton had many middle class families; however, she felt that upper-class individuals were taking over the city, stating “money is flowing over to Brighton.” Jennifer claimed that Brighton has become one of the more prosperous areas in southeast Michigan, saying, “There are a lot of new neighborhoods going in where the houses are kind of huge.” Generally families in Brighton “seemed to be well off – wealthy enough to support a whole family,” Jennifer said.

Much like Jennifer’s community of Brighton, Elsa’s hometown of Plymouth was homogeneous and predominantly White. Elsa, a White female, described her community, stating, “Well my neighborhood was actually pretty – it’s pretty much all White people. It [Plymouth] actually borders Livonia. Livonia’s a very White city. So my neighborhood was actually not very diverse.” She explained, “I mostly just was around White families.” As of the 2000 Census, Plymouth, Michigan, which is located in Wayne County, was 96.4% White, 0.6% Black, 1% Asian, and 1% Hispanic (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000a).

Elizabeth, a White female who grew up in Canton, Michigan, described her community as “mostly White.” As of the 2000 Census, Canton, which is located in Wayne County, was 84% White, 5% Black, and 9% Asian (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000a).

Table 4.38

Interviewee Details

Student	Hometown	Suburban characteristic	Ethnicity	Gender	Family	High School
Elizabeth	Canton	Predominantly White	White	Female		Canton (Plymouth, Canton, Salem)
Elsa	Plymouth	Predominantly White	White	Female		Plymouth (Plymouth, Canton, Salem)
Jennifer	Brighton	Predominantly White	White	Female	Mother & lesbian partner	Brighton
Reid	Flat Rock	Predominantly White	African American	Female		Flat Rock

Tasks/jobs.

Next, I describe the tasks and jobs in predominantly White suburban communities.

Tasks consist of the following concepts: (a) automotive industry, (b) work in the school

system, and (c) white-collar jobs. Students from predominantly White suburban communities described the work tasks in the community and their dependency on the automotive industry. Elizabeth from Canton noted that many parents in her community were tied to the automotive industry. However, Elizabeth explained that rarely would a parent from Canton be an assembly line worker at an automotive plant, but it was common for parents to be engineers for the automotive companies. In comparison, Luke's mother worked as a teacher in Flat Rock (Luke and his family lived in Ann Arbor Township) and he recalled that his mother primarily taught children of factory workers. Luke identified Flat Rock as an area with a "definite dependence on that Big Three mentality." Reid, who lived in Flat Rock and whose father was a state police officer, commented on the auto industry in the area, "The Ford plant ruled and dominated down there for a long time." Reid also shared that many individuals in Flat Rock worked in the local school system, saying, "I felt like a lot of the wives worked with the school system in some sort of way; lunch, bus, secretary, teacher. A lot of the women worked with the schools. And if they didn't work, they volunteered with the schools."

Elsa, from Plymouth, noted that there were a variety of industries represented but recalled mainly professional workers in Plymouth. Elsa's father worked for a computer programming company. When describing the economics of the community, Elsa said, "I guess it depended on what neighborhood. [In] the bigger neighborhoods you would probably see like the doctors and the lawyers. Some students had parents that were teachers. And like business. People that owned businesses or worked through businesses." Overall, it was more prevalent for students who had grown up in White suburban neighborhoods in southeast Michigan to make reference to white-collar jobs which require a college education in their

communities. Engineering and teaching are two examples of tasks which require a college degree.

Table 4.39

Tasks in Predominantly White Suburban Communities in Southeast Michigan

Tasks
Automotive
Education – school system
White collar jobs

Income.

The median household income for predominantly White suburban communities studied in southeast Michigan ranged from 44,084 (Flat Rock) to 72,495 (Canton).

Table 4.40

Median Household Income in Predominantly White Suburban Communities in Southeast Michigan

Community	Median Household Income
Brighton	\$47,897
Canton	\$72,495
Flat Rock	\$44,084
Plymouth	\$51,535

(U.S. Census Bureau, 2000a)

Family structure.

Elizabeth, Elsa, and Reid lived in homes with married parents. All three women had siblings in the home. It was common for families in predominantly White suburban communities to be married with children.

Jennifer also lived with two adult figures in the home; in Jennifer’s situation, both adults were female. Jennifer shared that she grew up with her mom and her aunt in Brighton. Later, Jennifer revealed that who she referred to as her aunt was her mom’s lesbian partner. Jennifer also shared that she has a sister, who she explained is her half sister. While not described with this sample, there is also a portion of single parent/divorced families in predominantly White suburban areas.

Education.

In White suburban communities such as Brighton, Canton, and Plymouth, there was a greater percentage of individuals with bachelor’s, graduate, or professional degrees than the national average of 24.4% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000a). Flat Rock had a lower percentage of individuals with a college degree. With the Ford Plant in Flat Rock there was the availability of good paying jobs with a high school diploma.

Table 4.41

Educational Attainment in Predominantly White Suburban Communities in Southeast Michigan

Community	% with Bachelor’s, graduate, or professional degree
Brighton	31.0
Canton	39.4
Flat Rock	12.0
Plymouth	40.7

(U.S. Census Bureau, 2000a)

Physical environment, safety, and security.

Concepts which are addressed in this section include (a) the landscape of suburban southeast Michigan, (b) violent crimes, and (c) property crimes. Elizabeth explained that her community of Canton felt like a safe place. Data on violent and property crimes in Canton

and other predominantly White suburban areas are below; the data support Elizabeth's feeling of safety in her hometown community. Elizabeth's description of the socioeconomic status of residents living in Canton was similar to Jennifer's description of Brighton. Elizabeth described Canton as "homey, friendly, and highly populated." She stated that the area has lots of shops and is a bit on the wealthier side, not rich but the homes were pretty big.

Table 4.42

Cities in Southeast Michigan and Violent Crime

City	Population	Violent crime	Violent crimes per 100,000	Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter	Forcible rape	Robbery	Aggravated assault
Brighton	7,237	25	345	0	7	3	15
Canton	84,506	120	142	0	14	27	79
Flat Rock	9,016	27	299	0	2	2	23
Plymouth	8,622	6	70	0	1	2	3

(Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2009)

Table 4.43

Predominantly White Suburban Areas in Southeast Michigan and Property Crime

City	Population	Property crime	Property crimes per 100,000	Burglary	Larceny-theft	Motor vehicle theft	Arson ¹
Brighton	7,237	210	2,902	22	175	13	0
Canton Township	84,506	1,546	1,829	256	1,167	123	11
Flat Rock	9,016	193	2,141	55	125	13	1
Plymouth	8,622	147	1,705	22	111	14	3

¹ The FBI does not publish arson data unless it receives data from either the agency or the state for all 12 months of the calendar year.

(Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2009)

One student interviewed who lived in a predominantly White suburban community was a minority in the community. Reid, an African American female who grew up in Flat Rock, Michigan, described her hometown as “more suburban than rural, but still small town where everybody knows your business.” Flat Rock is a suburb located downriver, approximately 25 miles southeast from Ypsilanti. Reid’s experience was different than the previously mentioned students who were White living in a predominantly White suburb; Reid’s experience was as a minority living in a predominantly White suburb. Reid explained that her family was “one of four or so Black families in Flat Rock...I think most of us would be considered like, the middle-class.”

Students from Brighton, Canton, Plymouth, and Flat Rock described their experiences growing up in homogeneous residential communities. As discussed earlier, Census demographic information illustrated the homogeneous nature (predominantly White) of these four communities: Brighton 97% White, Flat Rock 95% White, Plymouth 96% White, and Canton 84% White. There appears to be great similarity in the socioeconomic status of individuals living in White suburban communities as compared to the varied socioeconomic levels described in the integrated suburban section.

Ideology.

Within the ideology of predominantly White suburban areas in southeast Michigan, seeking high quality education for children is particularly evident. Elizabeth attended Plymouth-Canton Educational Park for high school. She explained that her parents chose Canton for the school system, specifically to avoid the Willow Run school district. (Previously, her parents lived in Ypsilanti and were zoned for Willow Run.)

Language.

The language of predominantly White suburban communities can be described as proper English. The sophistication of language increases in communities where there are higher levels of educational attainment i.e., college degrees. A common element of the language of predominantly White suburbs is emphasizing the distinction between the Detroit metropolitan area and the city of Detroit. It is not uncommon for individuals to clarify this geography of Metro Detroit versus “Detroit City.” (This distinction is also seen in predominantly African American suburbs; e.g., a woman from Oak Park who adamantly pointed out the differences between her suburban community and the city of Detroit.)

Activities, entertainment, and rituals.

Activities, entertainment, and rituals in predominantly White suburbs in southeast Michigan for kids consist of the following concepts: (a) bike riding in the neighborhood, (b) socializing in the downtown suburban area, (c) going to Detroit for professional sports games or theater events, (d) vacationing up north in Michigan, and (e) church activities. Students from White suburban neighborhoods described their recreation activities which included socializing in their neighborhood or at local establishments. Reid recalled socializing in her neighborhood in Flat Rock. She commented, “I had some really good friends...we used to hang out all the time, and go ripping and running up and down the streets, and riding your bikes, and riding from one subdivision to McDonalds, and whatnot.”

Elsa, who grew up in Plymouth, described socializing in downtown Plymouth. Elsa shared:

People hang out in downtown Plymouth because there are always things going on there. There are a lot of nice restaurants there. We have a park and there are musicians that come and play. There’s a coffee shop. When I was in high school that

was like the popular place for a lot of the high schoolers to hang out was the coffee shop. The Bean it was called.

Elizabeth, like Elsa, socialized with friends at the local coffee shop. Elizabeth shared that in high school she “socialized with friends at friends’ houses or sometimes they would go to the Panera [a local coffee shop] in downtown Plymouth.” As a high school student, Elizabeth went with her friends to various events in Detroit. Popular events included shows at the Fox Theater, Red Wings hockey games, and Tigers baseball games. Specific events brought her group of friends to Detroit; they did not go to the city to socialize. She exclaimed, “We would never hang out in Detroit, even driving through you see people on the streets that do not look friendly. Detroit has a bad rap; you hear stuff on the news.”

In addition to socializing in and around town, students from White suburban communities described an array of vacations. For students from wealthier suburban communities, summer vacations were the norm. Median household income is described in the previous table. Students from Plymouth and Canton described their vacations. Elizabeth from Canton recalled going camping, traveling up north in Michigan to a cabin, or vacationing in Florida. Elsa from Plymouth shared,

On my dad’s side we have a family cottage near Cadillac [Michigan]. So we’d go there in the summers. Sometimes in the winter...It’s [cabin] like on the west side of the state. It’s like an hour south of Traverse City I want to say. They have had that cottage since I was like two or three. So like my whole life I’ve been going up there.

It was a norm for families from wealthier suburban communities to use their disposable income for trips or to have a cottage, which was a second home. Vacations were not the norm in suburban communities that had less economic resources.

Students growing up in predominantly White suburbs in southeast Michigan socialized in an array of venues. Many students mentioned interacting with friends in their

neighborhood or at a friend's house. Also, students went to local establishments such as coffee shops. Detroit was a destination location (e.g., sporting events or theater) for many suburban students, but one they approached with caution.

Attending church was another activity mentioned often by students from predominantly White suburbs. Religion was part of the culture of several students' home communities. Going to church was described as a weekly ritual. Elizabeth grew up in a Catholic family and suggested that Catholicism was the dominant religion in her community. She recalled that "lots of people attended church. Both next door neighbors went to the same Catholic church as my family." Elsa from Plymouth had a similar experience. She went with her family to church on Sundays. Elsa also saw the Catholic church as dominant in the area, but remarked that also there were many Protestant churches in her community.

Schools in predominantly White suburbs in southeast Michigan.

Concepts of predominantly White suburban schools, which are addressed in this section, include (a) ethnicity of students and (b) percentage of student eligible for free or reduced priced lunch. Students from predominantly White suburban communities described their secondary school experience during the interview process. Some students commented that their school experience was more diverse than what they experienced in their neighborhood, while other students shared that their school experience mirrored the lack of diversity or homogeneous nature of their residential community.

Table 4.44

*Ethnicity and Free and Reduced Price Lunch Eligibility for Predominantly White Suburban High Schools
in Southeast Michigan, by Percentage*

	White	African American	American Indian /Alaskan	Asian	Hispanic	Free and reduced-price lunch eligible
Brighton High School	96.1	0.1	1.2	1.2	1.4	6.3
Canton High School	83.3	5.6	0.5	9.0	1.6	7.0
Flat Rock Community High School	92.4	4.9	0.5	1.1	0.9	29.3
Plymouth High School	77.8	7.7	0.7	11.5	2.3	7.2

Source: CCD Public school data 2006-2007 school year (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009)

Students who experienced greater diversity in their school system than in their neighborhood shared their experiences. Like Sarah and Luke who lived in integrated suburban communities (Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor, respectively), these students from predominantly White suburban communities experienced diversity at their high schools. Despite living in a predominantly White neighborhood in Plymouth, Elsa experienced diversity at school, specifically in high school. She reflected on her early schooling, stating, “Actually growing up as a young child I guess I didn’t get that diversity until later.” She shared, “As I went through school comparing it from elementary school to high school I would say it got more and more diverse as I went.” Elsa attended Plymouth High School located in the Plymouth-Canton Educational Park. The educational park consisted of three high schools for students from Plymouth, Canton, and Salem (another neighboring community):

It’s actually one of the most diverse schools in Michigan if not in the country. Because I think it’s like 60 or 70 percent Caucasian. But there are a really high percentage of Indian and Asian people. And it’s even higher now I think than when I was there. And I noticed a lot of the students are Indian or Asian or whatever. And then there’s a pretty – there’s at least 10 percent African American too, I think. Or it’s not like you don’t see African American kids.

Plymouth High School is a diverse school; however Elsa’s perception of the White student population was skewed. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (2009), Plymouth High School was 78% White, 12% Asian, 8% Black, and 0.7% Indian. Of the student population, 7.2% were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009). Elizabeth, like Elsa, attended school in the Plymouth-Canton Educational Park. Elizabeth attended Canton High School. Canton High School was 83% White, 9% Asian, 6% Black, and 0.5% Indian. Of the student population at Canton High School, 7% were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (National Center for Education

Statistics, 2009). Elizabeth, who lived in Canton her whole life, shared that her family had moved to Canton for the school system, specifically to avoid the Willow Run school district which draws students from Ypsilanti Township, the residential areas north of Interstate 94 which is more diverse racially. Students attending schools in Canton generally come from a higher socioeconomic status than students in Ypsilanti Township, as illustrated by the percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (7.0% vs. 26.2%, Canton High School vs. Lincoln High School).

Though some students experienced diversity in their secondary school prior to EMU, other students were educated in school systems which were homogeneous, similar to their homogeneous neighborhoods. Jennifer from Brighton shared that her school was predominantly White. “Brighton – like when I went to high school there, it’s just pretty much just Caucasian across the board.” Jennifer described the lack of diversity, saying, “I mean, if we did have [minorities], it was like one or two Asian students, maybe one African-American student. It was really pretty much predominantly Caucasian.” Reflecting on her educational experience, Jennifer commented, “I just never really thought about the fact –that it wasn’t diverse.” According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, Brighton High School was 96% White, 1% Asian, 1% Hispanic, 1% Indian, and 0.1% Black. Of the student population at Brighton High School, just 6% were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009).

Reid, who attended school in Flat Rock, recalled the lack of diversity at her school and in her neighborhood, both of which were predominantly White. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, Flat Rock Community High School was 92% White, 5% Black, 1% Asian, and 1% Hispanic. Of the student population 29% were eligible

for free or reduced-price lunch (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009). Reid shared, “often I was the only Black person in class.” Reid recalled her experience in elementary school stating:

First [grade] through fifth [grade] I got teased from time to time, more so in the younger grades; probably about through the third grade. And then, a little bit through – up until the sixth. And then, there was one person in particular who used to always say, like, very derogatory type things... But, basically, I stopped getting teased probably around the seventh grade – sixth or seventh grade. The teasing was that it was all racial-based, you know, derogatory “tar-baby” type names.

Attending a predominantly White school and living in a White community was challenging at times for Reid, as illustrated by the teasing she experienced at school.

Extracurricular activities.

Extracurricular activities including athletics were an important aspect of schools in many Predominantly White suburban communities. Activities discussed in this section include (a) music/theater/choir events, (b) school activities, (c) athletic events, and (d) parental involvement.

Being involved in extracurricular activities was the norm at predominantly White suburban high schools. Jennifer from Brighton was involved in a mentoring program as well as on the technical crew which did behind-the-scenes work for the school plays and musicals. Elsa from Plymouth was involved in theater and choir. Elsa also shared that her high school had an array of clubs related to diversity; she explained that her high school was more diverse than her neighborhood.

And one of the big things that at my school there’s a lot of different diversity clubs. Like there was the Asian American club. There was the African American club. There were all these different types of clubs. And you’d see those on college campuses, but they were at high school. And they would have diversity shows and things like that.

Though Elsa was not involved in sports, she explained that athletics were popular at her high school. Reid from Flat Rock shared she was on the cheerleading squad and also involved in an array of high school activities.

Students from predominantly White suburban high schools were in general agreement that there was a high level of parental support for students' activities. Elsa shared that at her high school parents came to sporting events as well as theater or choir performances. She explained,

There is a lot of parent involvement. Cause that's how they get money to do these things and have a lot of booster clubs for choir, theater, sports. The sports ... get a lot of money. And I think it [has] a lot to do with the parents. Fundraising and supporting their kids. So there's a high level of parent involvement.

Table 4.45

*Schools in Predominantly White Suburban Communities in Southeast Michigan
and Extracurricular Activities*

Extracurricular activities
Musicals, theater, choir
Students and families supported athletics and extracurricular activities
After school clubs – diversity clubs, mentoring programs, etc.

In addition to interviewing students from predominantly White suburban schools, I visited the Plymouth, Canton, and Salem High School campus. Much of the 305-acre campus is composed of athletic fields. At Plymouth, Canton, Salem Educational Park there is a Varsity stadium as well as a Junior Varsity stadium (Public School Review, 2010).



Figure 4.20. Plymouth-Canton Educational Park Varsity Stadium (Catherine W. Barber)



Figure 4.21. Plymouth-Canton Educational Park Junior Varsity Stadium (Catherine W. Barber)

On the campus there are two swimming pools, soccer fields, baseball and softball fields, and numerous gym facilities. The swimming and diving facility includes state-of-the-art timing system for competition. It was also the norm for the school district to own and operate athletic facilities at suburban schools, based on my observations.



Figure 4.22. Salem High School swimming pool (Catherine W. Barber)

Athletics at Plymouth Canton are organized using a “pay to participate plan.” During the 2009-2010 academic year it cost \$180 to play one sport and an additional \$100 for a second sport (Plymouth-Canton Community Schools, 2009). In predominantly White Suburban schools, a pay to play concept was the norm. Most athletic competition was against teams which were composed of a similar demographic.

Sports include wrestling, softball, baseball, volleyball, soccer, track and field, tennis, swimming, gymnastics, golf, cross country, bowling, basketball, lacrosse, ice hockey, football, and cheerleading. Athletic award banners were hung in the school entryway illustrating the importance of the athletic program at Salem High School (see Figure 4.23).



Figure 4.23. Salem High School athletic trophy hallway (Catherine W. Barber)

In addition to sports teams there are more than 50 extracurricular activities available to students at Plymouth/Canton/Salem. In Salem High School, a large wall was devoted to recognize theater students, upcoming musicals, and the thespian troupe (see Figure 4.24).



Figure 4.24. Salem High School theater program bulletin board (Catherine W. Barber)

College search process.

The variables/concepts of the college search process described in this section are (a) amount of assistance and (b) source of assistance with the college search process. In several predominantly White suburban communities, the step after high school was to further one's education. In communities where parents had attended college, the norm was to encourage their children to attend college. Jennifer from Canton shared that most students at her school had post-high school plans which included some type of college, either community college or a four-year institution. Others students chose technical schools or the military. Elsa, who grew up Plymouth, shared that the norm in her community was to attend college. Jennifer from Brighton shared that she felt it was "mostly expected" to attend college, stating, "it's ... assumed that their children are going to go to college, just because if their parents went, they probably want their kids to go."

Elsa from Plymouth came from a family familiar with the college process. She had five siblings and most of them attended college. Though Elsa applied to college on her own, her parents took care of the financial paperwork. Elsa shared that her parents encouraged her to go to school: “They definitely wanted me to go to college because they both went to college too.”

Jennifer from Brighton shared that neither of the women who raised her went to college.

They didn’t say much because neither of them went to college, so they were kind of like, “Well, whatever you want to do.” So I kind of did all the hunting and whatever. And I kind of relied on my sister, because she went to college, too.

Jennifer found that her sister who had experience with college processes was helpful in providing guidance as she navigated the collegiate admissions process. She relied on her half sister when filling out her Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

I tried to get my mom to help me, because it’s mostly my mom like who it’s [FAFSA] based off of, but she didn’t really know what was going on either, so she just – when we both had to fill out our parts, we went to my sister, who’s done it before. So she kind of helped us out. It’s still kind of confusing; it’s just so much stuff to fill out. But yeah, in the beginning I really didn’t know what I was doing. I just went to my sister.

The predominantly White suburban communities described included Brighton, Flat Rock, Plymouth, and Canton. The demographics of residential communities were a commonality; however some of these communities had schools which were integrated, while other communities had predominantly White schools. The working norms and economic resources had some notable similarities; often ties to the automotive industry were in the form of White collar jobs. Despite these similarities, there are variations within and between predominantly White suburban communities such as whether parents had a college education, ranging from 12% in Flat Rock to 40.7% in Plymouth. In addition, the median

household income ranged from \$44,084 in Flat Rock to \$72,495 in Canton (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000a). In conclusion, predominantly White suburban communities in southeast Michigan have a variety of characteristics as illustrated by these students' experiences.

Table 4.46

Predominantly White Suburban Communities in Southeast Michigan:

Categories, Variables/Concepts, and Dimensions

<i>Categories for predominantly White suburbs</i>	<i>Variables/Concepts</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>
Demographics	(a) Ethnicity (b) Size	Homogeneous - White
Tasks/jobs	(a) Automotive (b) Education – school system (c) White collar jobs	Engineer for automotive company Computer programming Jobs which require a college degree
Income	(a) Median Household income ranged from Flat Rock 44,000 to Canton 72,000	
Family structure	(a) Married (b) Lesbian couple	
Education	(a) Education	Varied levels of higher education
Physical environment, safety, and security	(a) Violent crime (b) Property crime	
Ideology	(a) Seeking high quality education/school district	
Activities, entertainment, and rituals	(a) Bike riding in neighborhood (b) Socializing in downtown suburban area (c) Detroit for professional sports/theater (d) Vacationing up north in Michigan (e) Church activities	Only enter Detroit for cultural/sporting events Predominantly Catholic
School	(a) Ethnicity (b) Eligibility of free and reduced price lunch	Homogeneous
Extracurricular activities	(a) Music/theater/choir (b) Athletics (c) Clubs	Pay to play
College search process	(a) Amount of support (b) Source of support	Guidance from school counselors Guidance from family members

Predominantly African American suburban communities

Communities described in this section include Oak Park and Southfield. These two suburban communities have higher percentages of African American residents than the average in the Detroit metro area, which is approximately 24% Black (Trowbridge, 2002, January 14). As mentioned previously, African American families with more financial resources made efforts to move from Detroit to suburban areas (Sugrue, 2005). Oak Park and Southfield, both of which are suburban communities that border Detroit, are discussed next. Oak Park's demographics indicate that the city has integrated residential area and a predominantly African American school system. Southfield is an example of a predominantly African American residential community and school system.

Demographics.

Predominantly African American suburban demographics are organized by the concepts (a) ethnicity and (b) size. Cindy, an African American female who lived in Oak Park, shared that her family moved from Detroit to Oak Park when she was two years old. The move was from an apartment in Detroit to a house in Oak Park. Cindy adamantly proclaimed that Oak Park was a quiet neighborhood in contrast to her perception of Detroit. Oak Park was originally a Jewish settlement and borders Detroit, north of 8 Mile, on the west side of the city. Located in Oakland County, Oak Park's population was 47% White and 46% Black according to the 2000 Census. Southfield, like Oak Park, was originally a Jewish settlement (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000a).

Table 4.47

Population of Predominantly African American Suburban Communities

in Southeast Michigan

City	Population
Oak Park	29,793
Southfield	78,293

(U.S. Census Bureau, 2000a)

Marc, an African American male, lived in Southfield from the age of 3 until 12. Southfield, located in Oakland County, borders Detroit on the north side. Luke explained that Southfield was a community populated by many young African American families who had moved out of the City of Detroit. According to the 2000 Census, the population of Southfield was 39% White and 54% Black (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000a). Between 1990 and 2000, the White population in Southfield decreased by 27% (U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000a). As discussed in Chapter Two, suburban neighborhoods are more likely to be predominantly White or Black rather than integrated. Southfield is an example of a city which was once integrated but did not remain this way for a significant period of time (Trowbridge, 2002, January 14).

Luke shared that he witnessed firsthand the White flight in Southfield. In Luke's words, "the change was noticeable; gradually there was more loud music and fancy cars" as the African American population increased. Luke recalled traveling back to Southfield after moving to Sumpter Township. He shared that "my neighborhood in Southfield resembled more of the city [Detroit] than the suburb that my family left." What Luke once considered a suburban area had transformed into an urban environment, in his assessment.

Tasks/jobs.

Next, I describe the tasks and jobs of predominantly African American suburban communities. Tasks/jobs consists of the following concepts: (a) service industries – social work, credit union, (b) automotive industry, and (c) factory jobs.

Cindy from Oak Park shared that both her parents were employed. Her mother worked at the local credit union and her father, like many other workers in the area, was employed by Chrysler, one of the Big Three automakers. Cindy recalled the long hours her father worked at the plant, often 12-hour days.

Income.

Table 4.48

Median Household Income in Predominantly African American Suburban Communities in Southeast Michigan

Community	Median Household Income
Oak Park	\$29,793
Southfield	\$52,468

(U.S. Census Bureau, 2000a)

Family structure.

Cindy’s parents were married. Cindy’s grandparents moved from Alabama to Detroit in the 1950s. Her mom who was born in the 1960s was raised in Detroit. Cindy has extended family throughout southeast Michigan, with relatives in Southfield and Detroit.

Education.

Educational level for the communities of Oak Park and Southfield are addressed in this section. Both the communities of Oak Park and Southfield had above the 24.4% national average for individuals with Bachelor’s, graduate, or professional degrees.

In 1996, Luke’s family moved from Southfield to Sumpter Township, a rural community located in Wayne County. Luke’s parents were middle class, his mother a social worker and probation officer, and his father an engineer. Both positions are examples of tasks which require a college degree.

Table 4.49

Educational Attainment in Predominantly African American Suburban Communities in Southeast Michigan

Community	% with Bachelor’s, graduate, or professional degree
Oak Park	27.2
Southfield	36.7

(U.S. Census Bureau, 2000a)

Physical environment, safety, and security.

Concepts that are addressed include the (a) physical environment, (b) violent crimes, and (c) property crimes. Cindy described Oak Park as “middle class living where parents had decent jobs, well kept homes with green grass, and nice American cars parked out front.”

Table 4.50

Predominantly African American Suburbs and Violent Crime

City	Population	Violent crime	Violent crimes per 100,000	Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter	Forcible rape	Robbery	Aggravated assault
Oak Park	30,509	167	547	0	10	62	95
Southfield	75,024	507	676	0	28	149	330

Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation (2009)

Table 4.51

Predominantly African American Suburbs and Property Crime

City	Population	Property crime	Property crimes per 100,000	Burglary	Larceny-theft	Motor vehicle theft	Arson
Oak Park	30,509	1,087		330	534	223	12
Southfield	75,024	3,063		660	1,859	549	11

Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation (2009)

Ideology.

In this section the ideology of predominantly African American suburban areas in southeast Michigan, specifically the concept of social mobility, is explored. Cindy described Oak Park as a quiet neighborhood, a contrast to her perception of Detroit. In her mind Oak Park was middle class living where parents had decent jobs and had well kept homes, green grass, and nice American cars parked out front. Marc, an African American student at EMU, lived in Southfield from the age of 3 until 12. According to Marc, Southfield is a city which attracts many young African American families who moved out of Detroit.

Activities, entertainment, and rituals.

Activities, entertainment, and rituals in predominantly African American suburban communities in southeast Michigan for kids consist of the following concepts: (a) going to Detroit to socialize, (b) socializing on Belle Isle, and (c) church. Cindy from Oak Park was the only suburban student to share that she went to Detroit to socialize. Other students were drawn to Detroit solely for specific events (e.g., theater or professional sports). Cindy said, "Once I turned 18 I went to Detroit to socialize." Cindy often met up with friends at downtown Detroit venues including Envy Nightclub, Bleu Room Experience, and Pizza Papalisan. Cindy also recalled socializing on Belle Isle, located in Detroit, in the summer months. Cindy shared, "Belle Isle was where I went to see the guys of course, friends had cars and we would ride around the island, then we would stand outside the car to look at the boys." Cindy had social patterns (i.e., Belle Isle or Detroit night clubs) that were more similar to students from the urban area of Detroit than to students from other suburban areas.

Cindy was actively involved in her church. Though Cindy lived in Oak Park she attended church in Detroit. Cindy and her family attend Tried Stone Baptist Church in

Detroit, which was the church that her grandparents chose and where her mother attended her whole life. Church was another example of Cindy traveling to Detroit for activities.

Schools in predominantly African American suburban communities.

The concepts of schools in predominantly African American suburban communities that I address in this section are (a) ethnicity of students and (b) eligibility for free or reduced priced lunch. The predominantly African American suburban communities of Southfield and Oak Park had school systems which were almost exclusively African American. Thus, students attended schools where the student population was homogeneous. Students experienced more diversity in their neighborhood than in their school (a population which was exclusively African American).

The changing nature of the population in Southfield, from a predominantly White community to an integrated community to a predominantly African American community, was evident in the student demographics of the Southfield public high schools. Luke moved at the age of 12 from Southfield to Sumpter Township and attended Belleville High School (a predominantly White suburban school). Cindy lived in Oak Park and attended Southfield High School, located in the neighboring community of Southfield. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, 2005-2006 school year, Southfield High School was 95% Black, 3% White, 1% Asian, and 1% Hispanic. Of the student population, 32% were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. There are two high schools in Southfield; the other high school is Southfield-Lathrup High School, which was 91% Black, 6% White, and 1% Asian. Of the student population 23% were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009).

Since Cindy lived in Oak Park, a description of Oak Park High School is provided to give a more detailed view of the community. Oak Park had a sizable population of both White and Black residents, 47% White and 46% Black; however, the student population at the high school was almost exclusively African American (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000a). According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, 2005-2006 school year, Oak Park High School was 94% Black, 5% White, and 1% Asian. Of the student population, 25% were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009).

Table 4.52

Ethnicity and Free and Reduced Price Lunch Eligibility for Predominantly African American Suburban High Schools in Southeast Michigan, by Percentage

	White	African American	American Indian /Alaskan	Asian	Hispanic	Free and reduced-price lunch eligible
Oak Park High School	4.7	94.3	0.2	0.7	0.1	25.4
Southfield High School	2.9	95.0	0.1	0.7	0.4	32.4
Southfield-Lathrup High School	6.0	91.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	23.0

Source: CCD Public school data 2006-2007 school year
(National Center for Education Statistics, 2009)

The commonality within these residential communities was the demographics of the schools. Schools were almost exclusively African American, whereas there was more diversity in the residential areas.

Extracurricular activities.

Extracurricular activities such as athletics were an important aspect of schools in predominantly African American suburban communities. Concepts including (a) athletic events and (b) parental involvement are described in this section. Cindy shared that watching high school football was one of the popular activities in her school. She explained that there was a rivalry between Oak Park and Southfield High schools and this was evident as attendance was higher at the rivalry games. Cindy said that parents often came out to watch sports competitions, especially football.

College search process.

The variables/concepts of the college search process of students from predominantly African American suburbs are (a) amount of assistance and (b) source of assistance with the college search process. Both of Marc's parents attended college and encouraged him to further his education after high school. His parents explained that college provided more options when it was time to secure a job. Cindy did not elaborate on the college search process during the interview.

Table 4.53

Predominantly African American Suburbs in Southeast Michigan:

Categories, Variables/Concepts, and Dimensions

<i>Categories for predominantly African American suburbs</i>	<i>Variables/Concepts</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>
Demographics	(a) Ethnicity (b) Size	
Tasks/jobs	(a) Service industry (b) Automotive (c) Factory jobs	Credit union Working on the auto line
Income	(a) Ranges from 29,793 (Oak Park) to 52,468 (Southfield)	
Family structure	(a) * limited information Cindy's parents were married	
Education	(a) Degree attainment	Some jobs required a college degree Above national average for % with college degree
Physical environment, safety, and security	(a) Violent crime (b) Property crime	
Ideology	(a) Social mobility beyond Detroit	
Activities, entertainment, and rituals	(a) Going to Detroit to socialize (b) Socializing at Belle Isle (c) Church	
School	(a) Ethnicity (b) Free and reduced price lunch	Homogeneous - Black
Extracurricular activities	(a) Athletics	
College search process	(a) Amount of support (b) Source of support	Guidance family members

Suburban Spectrum

There is a suburban spectrum in terms of demographics in residential areas and schools, ranging from integrated communities to homogeneous communities. It should be noted that in some communities, the demographics in residential areas differed from the demographics in the schools. In other communities, the demographics in the schools mirrored the demographics in the residential areas.

Students attending high schools located in suburban areas throughout southeast Michigan had varied experiences. Suburban high schools are more likely than urban or rural schools to have diversity within the high school. However, there are examples of students living in suburban areas who attended high schools which were almost exclusively one race (Black or White). Students attending suburban high schools in southeast Michigan have varied economic resources, as indicated by the percentage of students who qualified for free or reduced-price lunch ranging from 6.3% at Brighton High School to 32.4% at Southfield High School.

Overall, the work norms and socioeconomic status in suburban communities varied widely. The automotive industry, a dominant industry in southeast Michigan, was examined. Ties to the automotive industry varied by community, specifically by the socioeconomic status of communities. Communities where the norm was to have education beyond high school were likely to have upper level jobs (e.g., engineering or management positions) in the automotive industry. Jobs on the automotive assembly line (blue collar jobs) were the norm in communities where individuals went directly from high school to the factory; these individuals did not attend college.

Table 4.54

Tasks in Suburban Communities in Southeast Michigan

Tasks in Predominantly White Suburbs	Tasks in Integrated Suburbs	Tasks in Predominantly African American Suburbs
Full time employment – variety of industries represented	Full time employment – variety of industries represented	Full time employment – variety of industries represented
White collar jobs – college educated (i.e., engineer for automotive company, computer programming)	White collar jobs – college educated (i.e., employed by university, pharmaceutical company)	White collar jobs – college educated (i.e., engineer for automotive company)
Working class (i.e., working in the automotive factory or automotive line)	Working class (i.e., bus system, automotive industry)	Working class (i.e., working in the automotive factory or automotive line)
Variety – working or volunteering in school system, lawyers, doctors, business owners	Farming – a few suburbs are surrounded by farmland	Variety – social worker, probation officer

The education level of parents in suburban communities in southeast Michigan varied widely. Nationally, 24.4% of community members hold a Bachelor’s, graduate, or professional degree. Flat Rock, with 12.0% of community members with such a degree, was the only suburban community studied in southeast Michigan that was below the national average. The remaining communities were above the 24.4% national average, ranging from 27.0% in Ypsilanti Township to 69.3% in Ann Arbor (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000a). While most of the suburban communities studied had greater than the national average for degree attainment, the stories shared by students illuminated that some students were first generation, and they did not have a parent who had earned a degree. It became evident that parents’ education had a direct impact on their type of work; blue collar workers were more likely to have less education than white collar workers.

Students' experiences applying to college varied among suburban communities. The commonality in this sample of course was that all students went through the collegiate search process and matriculated to Eastern Michigan University. Community norms such as parents' educational level were one factor that influenced students' application experience. Some students came from families with parents who had college educations and were able to provide guidance; however, other students had no immediate family members who were familiar with the process.

In conclusion, suburban communities in southeast Michigan have varied characteristics. There were more similarities to highlight among community groups when describing the urban communities or rural communities in southeast Michigan. Unlike rural and urban contexts, suburban community characteristics are more wide-ranging. For example, the demographic characteristics of these communities range from predominantly African American to predominantly White. In some suburban communities there, the norm was a high school education, and in other communities, many parents had college degrees. Financial resources within and between communities also varied, as evidenced by the percentage of students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. Southfield was an example of a less affluent community; 32.4% of Southfield High School students were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch in comparison to the community of Brighton, where only 6.3% of students at Brighton High School were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009).

Table 4.55

Schools in Suburban Southeast Michigan and Extracurricular Activities

Extracurricular activities in Predominantly White Suburbs	Extracurricular Activities in Integrated Suburbs	Extracurricular activities in Predominantly African American Suburbs
Majority of schools are predominantly White; a few school had higher levels of diversity than neighborhoods which were almost exclusively White.	Examples of diversity in the neighborhood and the school	Schools almost exclusively Black School more homogeneous than neighborhood
School clubs and athletic teams	Theater, Choir, Music	
	Private lessons (music, photography) Multicultural day at school	

Table 4.56

Activities, Entertainment, and Rituals in Suburban Communities in Southeast Michigan

Activities, entertainment, and rituals in Predominantly White Suburbs	Activities, entertainment, and rituals in Integrated Suburbs	Activities, entertainment, and rituals in Predominantly African American Suburbs
Golfing, riding bikes in the neighborhood	Golfing, Laser tag	
Shopping or socializing at local establishments – coffee shop, listening to music in the downtown area	Shopping or socializing at stores close to the university, coffee shop	
Detroit: Attending professional sporting events – travel to Detroit for specific activities	Detroit: Attending professional sporting events – travel to Detroit for specific activities	Detroit: socialize at local establishments, ranging from pizza venues to night clubs
Vacationing – traveling up north in Michigan or out of state. Camping. (varies by socioeconomic status)	Vacationing – traveling up north in Michigan or out of state (varies by socioeconomic status)	Socializing at Belle Isle
Church	Church	Church – may attend church in Detroit

In the following section, I discuss the surprise and sensemaking process that students experienced as they transition from their home community to the EMU campus. For some students, attending EMU is the first experience they have meeting students who are different from themselves.

Organizational Entry: Students’ Surprise and Adaptation

Students’ matriculation process to EMU is described in this section. In the interview process, students shared their experiences as undergraduate students at EMU. Specifically, students shared their experiences transitioning from their hometown community to the university environment, which was their organizational entry to the university. Data gathered

for this study illustrate that during students' organizational entry to the university, many students experienced surprises (Louis, 1980a). Louis (1980b) defined a surprise as an unexpected experience or event which does not resonate with one's previous experience. Surprises were differences students experienced from their hometown community to the EMU campus. Surprises were not limited to a particular student demographic; instead, students coming from an array of communities (urban, suburban, and rural) all experienced surprises during their organizational entry. The differentiating element for students from urban, suburban, and rural was the subject of the surprises. Content of surprises varied, and students shared that they experienced surprises in areas such as community size; student demographics in the classroom and on campus; ideology; activities, entertainment, and rituals; language; and physical environment, safety, and security.

I have analyzed the surprise data and then I took a further step to illustrate that students reacted in different ways when they encountered surprises. A future researcher can look in depth at adaptation to surprises, specifically which surprises resulted in retention and which resulted in institutional exit. I found that adaptation ranged from segregation (recreating one's hometown culture) to integration (interacting with diverse others). A combination of students' experiences in their hometown community, anticipation of their collegiate experiences, and their experiences at EMU all contributed to students' surprise and adaptation once on the campus. Some students are able to make immediate sense of their surprise; for other students, it may take more time. Therefore, the processing of surprises is an ongoing cycle. Some students are unable to make sense of their new experience, which can result in a continual state of dissonance.

Rural Students: Organizational Entry and Surprise and Adaptation

Students from Adrian, Blissfield, Ida, Tecumseh, and Sumpter Township shared their experiences with the organizational entry process at Eastern Michigan University. In this section, (a) residential surprises and (b) academic surprises for rural students are explored. Academic surprises are surprises which occur around the academic aspect of the institution, such as in the classroom. Residential surprises are surprises which occur within the collegiate environment, specifically in the residential setting, college dorms, and so on. The residential component in the collegiate aspect is students' experiences on the campus instead of their hometown community. Following these descriptions, I will discuss students' adaptation to both (a) residential and (b) academic surprises.

Residential surprise.

Within residential surprises the following categories are explored: (a) demographics; (b) physical environment, (c) safety and security; (d) ideology; (e) activities, entertainment, and rituals; and (f) language.

Demographic: Surprise.

Rural demographics are organized by the concepts of (a) community size and (b) ethnicity.

Community size: Surprise.

Students from rural communities in southeast Michigan come from hometowns that are not highly populated. Each of the rural communities described in this study has a population which was less than the student population at EMU. The following table compares the population in rural communities to undergraduate student population at EMU.

Table 4.57

Population of Rural Communities in Southeast Michigan vs. EMU Enrollment

City	Population	Institution	Enrollment
Adrian	21,574	Eastern Michigan University	22,638
Blissfield	3,323		
Hartland	10,996		
Ida	4,949		
Tecumseh	8,574		

(EMU Institutional Research and Information Management, 2008b; U.S. Census Bureau, 2000a)

The transition from a rural area in southeast Michigan to the EMU campus can be overwhelming. Eastern may feel like a big city compared to a rural hometown community. Christina shared that the campus environment was overwhelming, a 180-degree change from her hometown. For Christina, the change was going from being a big fish in a small pond (hometown) to a small fish in a big pond (EMU).

Christina described the details of her transition to the campus environment, specifically her initial overwhelming experience of walking from the School of Education, Porter Hall, to an administrative building, Pierce Hall.

I ended up sitting down and crying on a bench because I could not figure out how to get there because the school [EMU] felt so big. Adrian I can draw a map in my head still of how to get from the couple of places that I went on a regular basis. The church, the school, home and my grandma's house.

Initially, Christina experienced a cultural surprise as evidenced by the overwhelming feeling she felt because of the size of the campus in comparison to her hometown. Walking from the School of Education to Pierce Hall takes less than 10 minutes.

When moving into his residence hall, Michael noted that the environment was more diverse than his hometown community. Michael, a rural student, discovered that he had

similarities to other students who had a rural background, what he described as “small town Michigan background.” Michael, from Blissfield, explained the impact of being around individuals like himself in the residence hall his freshman year.

One of the things I think that kind of prevented or didn’t allow me to have the culture shock was my roommate was from East Lansing and had moved to Brighton before he came to Eastern. And the guys like on the floor around me who I, you know got to be friends with did look like me. They were kind of from the same background... they all kind of had this, “I’m from small town Michigan” background.

Michael experienced a cultural match in the residence hall because of the connection with other students who had a “small town Michigan” background.

Ethnicity: Surprise.

For students who grew up in a homogeneous rural environment, EMU was often their first experience with students different from themselves. Students from rural communities compared their hometown experience to their EMU experience.

Table 4.58

Diversity in High Schools in Rural Communities in Southeast Michigan vs. EMU

Undergraduate Student Population

High School	% White	Undergraduate student population	% White
Adrian High School - Adrian, Michigan	70.5	EMU	66.2
Blissfield High School - Blissfield, Michigan	95.9		
Hartland High School - Hartland, Michigan	97.1		
Ida High School - Ida, Michigan	98.2		
Tecumseh High School - Tecumseh, Michigan	97.2		

(EMU Institutional Research and Information Management, 2008a; National Center for Education Statistics, 2009).

For example, Christina from Adrian grew up in a White neighborhood and attended Adrian High School, which was predominantly White. She described the difference between her hometown and her experience at EMU, saying, “Coming to Eastern there’s – Eastern’s

definitely much more colorful than anything I was familiar with. Like I said, the extent of cultural diversity in my high school was that we had quite a few Hispanics.” Once on the campus, Christina shared that she “had to become more comfortable around a variety of people being at Eastern.” Christina’s surprise on the EMU campus was interacting with diverse others, an experience which she had not faced in her hometown.

Physical environment, safety, and security: Surprise.

Safety is another area where students from rural communities experienced a surprise on-campus. Several students from rural communities whom I interviewed indicated that they had a feeling of safety in their home community. For some of these students they noted they had a greater feeling of safety in their hometown community than at EMU or Ypsilanti. Sarah from Hartland described her home community, stating, “It was a very welcoming – I felt always safe, and I felt [safe] no matter where I was.”

Initially, Christina went to a public institution in a rural area in west Michigan. Later, she transferred to EMU. Safety was one reason that Christina did not initially enroll in EMU.

She explained:

My parents were worried about me coming to Eastern. My step-dad ...he was a police officer. He’s doing something different in law enforcement now. So he was aware of crime and stuff like that. And so when I actually left – when I was getting ready to graduate from high school and looking at where I was going to go to school, I hadn’t applied to Eastern because my step-dad was, you know worried about me going there. “No, we don’t want you in Ypsilanti.”

Christina, like Sarah, felt safe in her home community. The feeling of safety did not carry over to the EMU campus.

Crime statistics provide context to students’ feelings regarding safety on the campus and in the surrounding area (Ypsilanti). In Adrian, Michigan, which is Christina’s hometown, there is less violent crime than in the city of Ypsilanti. While the EMU campus has few

violent crimes per se, the perception of safety on the campus is shaped by students' perceptions of the surrounding community. See Tables 4.85 and 4.86 for details.

Table 4.65

Rural Cities in Southeast Michigan and Violent Crime

City	Population	Violent crime	Violent crimes per 100,000	Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter	Forcible rape	Robbery	Aggravated assault
Adrian	21,241	96	452	2	31	13	50
Blissfield	3,202	1	31	0	0	0	1
Tecumseh	8,724	8	92	0	3	0	5

Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation (2009)

Table 4.60

Eastern Michigan University and Ypsilanti and Violent Crime

University	Student enrollment	Violent crime	Violent crimes per 100,000	Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter	Forcible rape	Robbery	Aggravated assault
Eastern Michigan University	22,837	8	35	0	2	4	2
Ypsilanti	21,766	285	1,309	3	13	74	195

Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation (2009)

Ray from Tecumseh came from a town where keeping doors unlocked was the norm. “I would say it’s [Tecumseh] the type of city people talk about [where] you can leave your doors unlocked. You can leave your screen door open at night.” Ray and Tim both lived in the EMU residence halls and experienced a surprise when they learned about the importance of locking one’s room door and taking safety precautions once at college.

For his freshman year, Tim selected his roommate, and he chose to room with another student from Ida. Tim reflected on this decision, stating:

I will say that’s kind of where the whole safety of Ida thing kind of probably came in is that we were content with one another and we didn’t really need to branch out and we didn’t need to take risks in that type of sense.

Ideology: Surprise.

Several students noted ideological differences between their rural hometown community and the EMU campus; in these examples they shared that EMU was a more open environment than the homogeneous nature of their hometown community. Students experienced surprises as they transitioned from a conservative rural community to a more “liberal” college community where students held an array of viewpoints. Christina explained that Eastern was “more diverse” and “liberal” than her hometown of Adrian. Ray and Tim, both from conservative rural communities, shared that their on-campus residential experience was different than their conservative upbringing.

Tim said that his sophomore year he lived with an “African American who also happened to be a homosexual.” Tim commented that he was immediately “confronted with diversity” when he moved in with his sophomore year roommate. Ray (freshman year) and Tim (sophomore year) experienced a surprise living on-campus with a gay roommate. Ray from Tecumseh stated,

...My roommate...his sexual orientation was different from mine. And he was homosexual. So that was – it was something he never directly told me. But there was, you know I knew something was going on between him and his friend that he always had over. So I was always – it was one of those things I didn't know about a lot, you know growing up in a small town you really don't have that. So it was kind of a culture shock.

Tim described his hometown of Ida as “very anti-gay/lesbian.” Ray explained his experience in his home community of Tecumseh, “So I was always – it was one of those things [different sexual orientations] I didn't know about a lot, you know growing up in a small town you really don't have that. So it was kind of a culture shock.” Though such differences exist in rural communities, the social norm was not to talk about homosexuality. For Ray and Tim, college was their first notable experience knowing someone with a different sexual orientation. Living with an individual with a different sexual orientation is an example of a surprise which undergraduates may experience. It became apparent from Ray's and Tim's descriptions that they were not exposed to different sexual orientations in their hometowns.

Katie from Hartland explained the ideological difference between Hartland and the EMU campus,

Most of the people running the town of Hartland are conservative, and I feel like a lot of people at Eastern are encouraging you to be open minded – encouraging you to express what you want to express for you in the individuality, whereas a lot of the older people in Hartland like the cookie cutter – like, “You're going to be just like us.”

When asked to explain what “just like us” means in Hartland, Michigan, Katie stated, “Conservative. Stay at home. Work at home.” Katie described what she perceived to be the stifling nature of the community, specifically that individuals had opinions but did not express them. Katie shared that the reason that individuals kept their opinions to themselves was because, “expressing them did them no good because it [Hartland] was run by everyone with the same mentality.”

At EMU, Katie found a surprise that was positive in nature, specifically that “you’re allowed to express your opinions, so the student culture is very, I don’t know, different. You can go to different places and see different things.” Like Katie, Tim found that going to EMU gave him a greater opportunity to develop his own values. Having been socialized in the culture of Ida, he shared,

I mean, even though I didn’t really fall in line with a lot of traditional Ida beliefs, I definitely didn’t have any of my own, either. And being exposed to the culture here at Eastern and actually I mean, pretty much thrown into it when I came here, I kind of signed up for it.

Tim shared that at EMU he was exposed to numerous sets of beliefs, whereas in his hometown community of Ida individuals in the community shared the same beliefs.

At Eastern...I’m always meeting new people and I’m always being exposed to new ideas. That is a huge, huge difference. I think another big difference is just the general ideas that people have, the general perspectives. There’s so many different perspectives, and I know that goes along with culture a lot of times, but everybody’s much more free to discussion and ideas and everything, and Ida is just so narrow-minded.

Students from rural communities shared an array of ideological surprises (i.e., sexual orientation differences) during the matriculation process.

Activities, entertainment, and rituals: Surprise.

For Christina, her residential surprise at EMU was a positive experience. As a transfer student, she expressed that she felt more comfortable at EMU than at her previous institution, stating, “I ended up coming back to this side of the state from [her previous institution] actually because where I was seemed too different from what I was used to.”

Culturally, Christina felt more at ease; she delineated:

Well, I think because Eastern – the students tend to be students who are paying for college themselves a lot. They choose to do things for fun that are more similar to the things that I am used to doing for fun. You know you don’t have kids here going to

cocktail parties on a Friday night. You know. A group of girls will go rent a movie or go to the mall.

At her previous institution, Christina's surprise related to social patterns between her and other students which made Christina feel like an outsider. She shared, "I was used to hanging out at Tim Horton's or renting a movie or doing, you know things that you can do in a small town."

Marc experienced a residential surprise on the EMU campus. He said of his experience, "I would have thought it would be easier to make African American friends." Making African American friends was challenging for Marc. Marc, an African American male himself, who lived in Southfield (a predominantly African American suburb) until the age of 12 and then moved to Sumpter Township (a rural community), stated that he experienced culture shock on the EMU campus. Using organizational terms, Marc was experiencing a "cultural surprise" triggered by his interactions with students at EMU (Louis, 1980b).

One interaction that Marc recalled occurred outside of the Eastern Eateries, a popular hangout for students. On that day, African American students were passing out party fliers. Marc was surprised that these invitations were handed to the African American students walking in front of him and behind him but never to him. The cultural exclusion that Marc experienced was perplexing for him since he too was an African American student.

Marc's example of being excluded from the party was about being from a different culture. This example illustrates that there are cultural differences which exist within a race. Even though Marc is African American and was interested in making African American friends, he came from a different culture. From age 12 until college, Marc lived in a rural community, and the culture in this community was much different from the community of

urban Detroit. Marc's example illustrates that all African American students do not have the same experiences at EMU, and there are cultural differences which exist within a race.

Language: Surprise.

Language is one aspect of culture that results in surprises for students once on campus. Students are socialized into the culture of their hometown; specifically, learning language which is acceptable in the hometown.

Even though both Tim and Marc were both from rural communities, Tim being from Ida and Marc from Sumpter Township, there was a racial difference between the two students. Tim, a White male, shared the cultural differences he encountered while living with Marc, who is African American.

But my sophomore year, when I moved in with Marc and immediately I was confronted with diversity, that was an interesting experience because you kind of have to – despite my beliefs being one way – I was never a racist person, like I said. But sometimes you just say things that you don't really mean, kind of a slang way of saying things.

Differences in language resulted in surprises for rural students as they interacted with diverse others.

Adaptation

After encountering a surprise, students react, and this adaptation or outcome process takes the form of either (a) movement towards integration or (b) movement toward segregation. Student interest is one factor which leads to integration on the campus. Students who have an interest in learning from diverse others are more likely to exhibit behaviors which reflect integration. Individuals with an interest in interacting with diverse others were more likely to look at previous boundaries as permeable, thus individuals were more willing to work across boundaries, whereas those who do not have an interest in interacting with

diverse others create boundaries and are more likely to segregate. Students who exhibited segregation behaviors socialized with a homogenous group which often resulted in the recreation of the existing social system of southeast Michigan. For these students boundaries were clear, non-permeable, and were based on race and culture. Segregation or recreating hometown culture is one way to react to conflict that individuals experience on the campus.

Segregation as an outcome of a surprise can be described as a survival tactic which occurs when students set boundaries. Ease and comfort were descriptors used by students to explain why they segregated instead of interacting with diverse others. Interest is the concept which leads to integration on the campus. Students who have an interest in learning from diverse others are more likely to exhibit behaviors which reflect integration, whereas those who do not have an interest in interacting with diverse others create boundaries and are more likely to segregate. While segregation can be described as “easy,” integration has some “challenging” elements as students experience differences.

It should be noted that not all students had noticeable adaptations to their surprises; therefore, there are some surprises previously described that do not have an adaptation component. In the previous section I described surprises. Surprises are “what” students experienced. In this section I describe students’ adaptation to their surprises, which is “how” students responded to the surprise.

Demographics: Adaptation to surprises

Rural students described their adaptation as they transitioned to a more diverse environment.

Christina shared her adaptation as she transitioned from the rural community of Adrian, stating, “Eastern felt humongous. I cried the first time I was on Eastern’s campus.

And now when I think about the places that I was trying to get from [Porter Hall to Pierce Hall], it makes me laugh.” For Christina the shock diminished as she became accustomed to the size of the campus environment, which initially felt “humongous.” Size was one factor which affected students’ transition from a rural hometown community to EMU.

Since Michael found commonalities with his roommate and other students who had a “small town Michigan background” it made it easier for him to reconcile cultural surprises which he encountered with students from Detroit and other non-rural communities. In essence the similarities he found with other rural or small town Michigan students were a buffer which allowed him to make sense of other surprises he encountered living in the residence halls.

Part of Michael’s adaptation was beginning to develop a relationship to the other students who lived on the hall from Detroit and other non-rural communities. Michael shared,

So there were other people who I got to be friends with over time, but ...[on] day one my roommate wasn’t from Detroit or Flint. He was from Brighton...that was something I think that kind of limited the culture shock.

Gradually, Michael was able to transition and interact with individuals who did not look like him.

The transition from Adrian to EMU campus was difficult for Christina. She shared her adaptation to a more diverse ethnic environment,

I still kind of have a hard time – because I think – I’m trying not to sound like a horrible person...I’m scared of African Americans...Because I’ve never been around them. And you hear things about girls beating up girls and men hurting girls and all sorts of stuff.

After growing up in a homogeneous community, essentially spending 18 years surrounded by individuals who looked like herself, Christina discovered that EMU was much more diverse than her previous experience.

Christina experienced a surprise going from her hometown community to EMU as illustrated by her emotional adaptation when around students different from herself, specifically African Americans. For Christina, the level of cultural diversity she experienced at EMU as compared to her hometown experience made was difficult for her; she explained that she continues to be “scared of African Americans.”

“Insiders” as a support for processing surprises.

Several students described a particular individual who provided an “insider’s perspective” when they encountered surprises. This individual was their *entry person* or *safety person*, someone who helped them understand cultural difference. The entry person provided an insider’s perspective (Louis, 1980b).

Tim, a White student from Ida, reflected on his experiences living with Marc, an African American student from Sumpter Township in a residence hall. Tim explained, “I had Marc, who was kind of my buffer where I could go to him and learn from him and feel comfortable in different situations and around different types of people.” He continued,

And [in] a sense, I kind of credit Eastern for that because... I would have never had it [experience interacting with someone different]...I definitely wouldn’t have been as well-rounded as I am because of that experience. It’s just opened my eyes to a complete different culture. And it changes your perspective in a lot of ways. I really benefited from that. But it was definitely interesting, I can say that.

For Tim, Marc served as an insider, a buffer person, who helped Tim process the surprise of interacting with diverse others.

Christina, like Tim, was able to identify a specific individual, an insider, from a different culture who assisted her in making progress to become more comfortable with the diverse student population. Christina recalled her first experience getting to know an African American,

So actually the first one [African American student] that I got to know more than just sitting in the same classroom was Jamie. And so she was kind of, you know oh she's alright. So mostly the housing [student] staff people were the first African Americans that I was able to be comfortable around.

Despite Christina's positive interactions with Jamie, an individual from a different culture, she continued to have trepidations interacting with Black students. Christina shared, "And this is my third year here. So I'm getting better. But I don't know. Big Black guys still kind of scare me." Christina's experience is an example of a adaptation that has both positive and challenging elements. While she benefited from an insider's perspective, specifically her interaction with Jamie, an African American female who was in her class and a member of the housing staff, the processing of the surprise is an ongoing challenge for Christina as evident by her continued fear of African American males.

Most students from rural communities in southeast Michigan have had limited interaction with individuals from non-rural areas prior to college. Often, EMU was the first time students from different communities interacted with one another. The limited interaction with individuals different from themselves results in a surprise and adaptation process once on the EMU campus. Surprises impact students in different ways. Some students are able to adapt, and others are unable or unwilling to adapt to different cultures resulting in segregation. Adaptations vary by student; for example, some students may enact their own culture on the campus. For some students they process surprises quickly, and for others this can be a lengthy process.

Physical environment, safety, and security: Adaptation to surprises.

Part of Christina's adaptation was being more proactive with her safety measures; she shared, "I carry mace. Pepper spray. You know stuff that my step-dad got from the police store." Christina explained that on her previous college campus located in a rural area in Michigan that she would walk alone on the campus. At EMU Christina was diligent about using the walking escort program, saying, "I'm definitely I think more aware of needing to be safe." Christina's feelings regarding safety, or the lack of safety at EMU and in the Ypsilanti community, were similar to her family's thoughts. In her hometown and previous college campus, Christina did not take safety precautions such as carrying pepper spray and having a walking escort.

Tim from Ida, like Christina, shared that adaptation involved being more proactive with safety measures at EMU than to his hometown. Tim shared,

I will say that I became much more aware of my safety, meaning like when I'm walking alone. You take different precautions. You make sure your car doors are locked. You make sure your room's locked at all times, those types of things. I became much more aware of my safety when I came here.

Locking doors was a change for Tim, who described how community members would keep the doors to their homes unlocked on a regular basis. Coming from their rural community to EMU, Christina, Ray, and Tim all experienced cultural mismatches in terms of safety.

Initially (freshman year) Tim lived with a roommate from Ida, pairing with a student from a similar town was because it was comfortable for Tim; he explained it was the "safe" decision. Reflecting on his experience, Tim shared that it was "a disservice to both [of us] because we didn't do a whole lot." Part of Tim's adaptation was to branch out his sophomore year and not live with a student from his hometown. Sophomore year, Tim roomed with Marc (an African American student) who was from Sumpter Township.

Ideology: Adaptation to surprises.

Students from rural communities shared how they reacted to ideological differences they experienced on the EMU campus. Ray shared how he reacted to his roommate who had a different sexual orientation,

...I also just thought about it as he's an individual just like me. I need to respect him. As long as he respects me I can respect him the same way. And we've never had a problem. Like I would say he's probably one of my best roommates I ever had throughout my entire time in college.

Tim also lived with a roommate (sophomore year) who was homosexual and explained that he learned a lot from the experience. Tim shared

That was actually one of the best thing for me was to live with an African American who also happened to be a homosexual because I learned a lot about both cultures just by having conversations with him. And [in] a sense, I kind of credit Eastern.

For Tim, the result was learning about two cultures, (a) African American and (b) homosexual, which were different from what he experienced in his hometown. Through dialogue with his roommate, he became more culturally aware. The end result was overwhelmingly positive, as he shared that his African American gay roommate is now his best friend.

Entering a more diverse and liberal community was a positive experience for Tim. He shared,

And that [diverse culture] was a great experience for me. So it's just – I mean, it's different in almost every way just from the feel I get from being in each place. Ida, it's a small town...So that was refreshing for me....As conservative and as bland as Ida is, Eastern is equally diverse and I would say exciting. But I mean, I loved my experience at Eastern because it was so culturally diverse. And like I said, it really opened my eyes up to a whole new perspective because Ida is so conservative.

Katie, like Tim, had a positive experience transitioning to EMU, which is a community that is not as conservative as her hometown. Katie shared that she was able to

quickly adapt to a more open community at Eastern, saying, “I don’t remember having a hardship coming to Eastern. I came to Eastern and it felt like home right away.”

Experiencing a community more open to diverse opinions was a welcome difference for Katie.

Katie and Tim both experienced a positive surprise at EMU because they found the collegiate environment more accepting of different cultures and perspectives as compared to their homogeneous hometown community. Katie and Tim both identified elements within the EMU community that were comfortable, either more comfortable than their hometown or previous higher education institution. The stories shared by students of a greater level of comfort on the campus were examples of positive surprises.

Activities, entertainment, and rituals: Adaptation to surprises.

Rural students, who experienced cultural surprises in the category of activities, entertainment, and rituals, shared their adaptations. Christina found that at EMU she had more socioeconomic similarities to students on the campus than at her previous institution. The similarities around activities, such as watching movies or socializing at local restaurants, put Christina at ease, whereas she felt out of place at activities such as cocktail parties, a common activity at her previous institution. Transferring to EMU was part of Christina’s adaptation when she encountered surprises at her previous institution.

After not being passed an invitation to an upcoming party, Marc reflected on this experience. Marc said of the experience, “I identify with Caucasians more based on the culture, and I feel like the African Americans on the EMU campus come from the city [Detroit]. Since the city was not my frame of reference I had difficulty relating.” Reflecting on his experience, Marc stated that he dressed more like White students and this may have

contributed to his difficulty socially. Marc explained that he “grew up in a majority Caucasian existence as opposed to the city.” Despite Marc’s initial desire to make African American friends, he quickly discovered that he was viewed as an outsider, e.g., not invited to particular social events.

Language: Adaptation to surprises.

Tim (a White student) who was living with Marc (an African American student) shared,

So I had to become much more mindful of my speech in a lot of different ways. I had to become much more sensitive to his [Marc’s] culture. And, really, I had to learn about his culture...I learned a lot ... just by having conversations with him.

Tim’s example of being mindful of his speech, specifically the slang, is an example of a language surprise. Tim’s adaptation involved language modification, specifically his awareness that the language which was acceptable in his hometown was not language used in his roommate’s hometown. Tim was able to recognize a need to modify his language and had an evident interest in learning about Marc’s culture.

Not all students are cognizant that their language is different or a mismatch from other students. At times students do not modify their language, and the language differences result in conflict.

Schools: Academic surprises.

In this section, I discuss the surprises and adaptations of rural students in the classroom. The concepts of (a) ethnicity and (b) space and proximity in the classroom are addressed in this section. Similar to the comments about diversity in residential settings, Michael shared that the diversity in an EMU classroom was more than he was accustomed to:

I wasn’t uncomfortable with that. I wasn’t really like, “Oh my gosh, I’ve never seen, you know a Black person or a Hispanic person or Asian person.” Because I had. It

just was not – you know I didn't go to class with people who didn't look like me. So when I came here and went and took my, you know entry level English class and looked across the room and there were, you know six or seven Black students, that was new to me. I wasn't really shocked by it necessarily. But it wasn't what I was used to.

Michael experienced a noticeable difference in the diversity in the classroom once at EMU.

Tim also shared an example of surprise from his academic experience.

I also would see it a lot in my classrooms, and sometimes it would be because teachers would point it out and they'd be like, "Okay. Let's look at where everybody's sitting," and it'd seem all African American students would cluster together and all White students would sit to the other side...But I will say that – and I don't know if it was because of the classes I was taking or just the professors in general, I will say that a lot of times when stuff like that would happen, professors would point it out and try to kind of combat against that and they would encourage us to branch out and learn from one another.

Tim's example illustrates how students' culture can influence space and proximity in the classroom. Often, students enact their hometown culture, sitting near individuals like themselves.

Schools: Academic adaptation to surprises.

Students coming from homogenous schools reacted to the diverse academic environment in a variety of ways. Michael's experience in his hometown environment was much less diverse than at EMU. In his words "it [diversity in the classroom] wasn't what I was used to."

Michael grew up in a homogeneous neighborhood in Blissfield and attended an almost exclusively White high school. However, he embraced this surprise and sought ways to understand his new environment. As such, Michael's transition to EMU was relatively smooth.

In Tim's example, he explained that an insider (professor) attempted to help students understand their new diverse academic environment illuminating the noticeable segregation

(seating pattern) in the classroom. For many students the surprise that they are experiencing at EMU is a diverse academic environment, one which is more diverse than their hometown experience. There were minimal examples of the outcome of being in a more diverse academic environment.

Summary of surprise and adaptation for rural students.

The process of surprise and adaptation for rural students is complex and individualized. For example, Marc from Sumpter Township had an interest in making African American friends on the EMU campus. Previously I discussed Marc's surprise at being excluded when party invitations were handed out in front of the Eateries. Despite Marc's interest in making African American friends, students in front of the Eateries did not have a similar interest in interacting with individuals whom they perceived as different from themselves. Thus, students may have an interest in integrating with others but are faced with challenges when other students do not share this same interest. The African American group Marc encountered in front of the Eateries exhibited segregation behavior, excluding Marc from their social group. In this case the individuals in front of the Eateries were recreating their hometown culture, the culture of Detroit. Marc was not from this hometown and was thus excluded from their social activities.

Ray and Tim both experienced a surprise when assigned to live with a gay roommate in the residence hall. Ray shared his adaptation to the surprise, stating, "He's an individual just like me. I need to respect him." Reflecting on his residential experience, Ray shared that his gay roommate was one of the best roommates he had while at college. Tim's adaptation was also positive, explaining that his gay roommate is now his best friend. Ray and Tim both grew up in rural communities where being gay was not social acceptable or discussed within

their hometown. While Ray and Tim were able to react in a positive manner and interact with their roommate whose sexual orientation was different than their own, differing sexual orientation is an area of surprise which some students have difficulty making sense of and at times results in a request to change rooms.

Several students from rural communities described EMU as an environment open to diverse views. This characteristic, openness to diverse views, was in contrast to the experience they had in their hometown community. Students who described EMU as an environment which was open to a plethora of views, a characteristic which made them feel more comfortable, were students who exhibited qualities of integration into the diverse EMU environment. Katie from Hartland felt that she was able to express her opinions freely on the campus; she shared that she was unable to do this in her hometown. Tim, from Ida, commented on the benefit of being exposed to new ideas and different perspectives, describing EMU as exciting. "...I loved my experience at Eastern because it was so culturally diverse. And I like I said, it really opened my eyes up to a whole new perspective because Ida is so conservative." Both Katie and Tim were able to integrate into the diverse EMU community.

Christina described her efforts to become more comfortable with diverse others which she found challenging after growing up in Adrian, a relatively homogeneous community. While Christina noted she had positive interactions with one African American student who was on the housing staff, she also indicated that she continues to be scared of African Americans, specifically African American men. Her response, being scared, was what prompted Christina's behavior to be cautious and sometimes avoid diverse others.

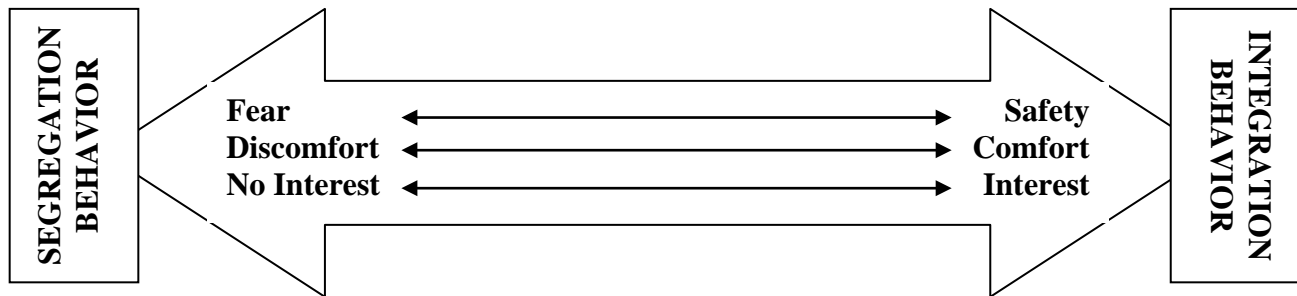
Michael from Blissfield interacted with others who he described as having a “small town Michigan background” in his residence hall. Michael’s response was to associate with individuals of a similar background. Gradually Michael adjusted to the diverse environment in the residence hall. Michael’s example illustrates how a student can move along a continuum of behaviors (from segregation to integration); in this example Michael moved from associating with a homogenous group toward interaction with diverse others. For Michael he had an adjustment period, transitioning from a homogeneous community to a more diverse community. Tim, from Ida, recalled the segregation that he experienced in the classroom. Just as Michael described student segregation in the residence hall, Tim experienced a similar phenomenon in the classroom. Further, Tim shared how a professor pointed out the segregation, i.e., how African American students would cluster together and White students would cluster together in different areas of the classroom. Tim explained that segregation behavior of students was in plain view in the classroom.

Table 4.67 summarizes the main concepts related to surprise and adaptation for rural students.

Table 4.61

Organizational Entry: Rural Students (Residential and Academic Surprises)

Category of Surprise	Concepts
Demographics	(a) Community size (b) Ethnicity
Physical environment, safety, and security	(a) More crime than hometown community
Ideology	(a) Opportunity to develop own values (b) EMU more diverse and liberal
Activities, entertainment, and rituals	(a) Exclusion based on hometown culture
Language	(a) Different than hometown
Schools: Academic	(a) Ethnicity- classroom make up more diverse than previous experience (b) Space and proximity



Segregation
 More crime in Ypsilanti
 “Small town Michigan”
 “Scared of African Americans”

Integration
 Interest in less conservative ideas
 Branched out Sophomore year
 More comfortable with different sexual orientations

Figure 4.25 Rural student segregation and integration behavior

Urban Students: Organizational Entry and Surprise and Adaptation

As urban students transitioned from their home communities to the EMU campus, they experienced an array of surprises. Using Louis’ (1980b) model of surprise, a surprise occurs when students’ anticipation of the collegiate experience differs from their experience at the university. After living in a homogeneous hometown environment, urban students

often shared that they encountered surprises on the campus; many of these surprises occurred as students interacted with individuals who were from different hometown communities.

Seven students from Detroit shared their experiences with the organizational entry process at EMU in the interviews I conducted. In this section, (a) residential surprises and (b) academic surprises for urban students are explored. Further, behavioral responses, specifically the students' adaptation to these surprises, are described.

Residential surprise.

Surprise categories that are explored among urban students include (a) demographics; (b) income; (c) education; (d) physical environment, safety, and security; (e) ideology; and (f) activities, entertainment, and rituals.

Demographics: Surprise.

In this section, the concept of ethnicity is described. Many students coming to Eastern Michigan University from urban areas have grown up in homogeneous communities (majority African American), and EMU is their first experience interacting with diverse others.

Students from Detroit shared their experiences as they transitioned from their hometown to EMU. After growing up in a homogeneous community, many urban students experienced surprises interacting with diverse others in the collegiate setting. Table 4.68 illustrates the difference in diversity between Detroit's urban high schools and the Eastern Michigan University student body.

Table 4.62

Diversity in Urban High Schools in Southeast Michigan

vs. EMU Undergraduate Student Population

High school student population	% White	Undergraduate student population	% White
Cass High School - Detroit, Michigan	1.8	EMU	66.2
King High School - Detroit, Michigan	0.5		
Mackenzie High School - Detroit, Michigan	0.3		
Renaissance High School - Detroit, Michigan	1.6		

(EMU Institutional Research and Information Management, 2008a; National Center for Education Statistics, 2009)

Eric, an African American man, grew up in Detroit in a nearly all African American community. Eric shared, “Coming where I came from, I basically grew up around all African American people. I had never really been exposed up close to people of different persuasions, ethnically, religious-wise or anything else.” With limited interaction with non-African Americans, Eric shared that his perceptions of others were shaped by stories his family shared with him, as well as by the media. Eric explained, “The most exposure I had to other people was through television, books, and magazines, but I had never had friends of different races or anything.” Despite having grown up in a homogeneous environment, Eric had an interest in learning about others; “I was really curious about trying to learn more about people who were different than me to try to come to realistic conceptions of what they were like versus the fictitious ones that were fed to me through media.”

Eric’s cultural transition was one of uncertainty; he didn’t know what it would be like to interact with individuals different from him. He anticipated encountering a change as he transitioned to the university, and said, “I didn’t know in what way I would do that or how it would come about but I just really looked at it as an opportunity to get to know people who were different than myself.”

James, like Eric, had an interest in “learning outside of where [he] came from.” James shared that once on the campus he was excited as he encountered different people, explaining that he “took a step back and just looked around” wondering where other students were from. James’ actions represent his desire to engage in a diverse campus community.

Other students experienced cultural surprises (related to interacting with diverse others) *prior* to their collegiate experience. Thus, these students had cognitively processed a surprise. For these students, their surprise was not tied to their collegiate experience but often impacted how they experienced diverse others at Eastern.

For example, Tamara from Detroit shared that the people in her home neighborhood, school, and church were nearly all African American, while in middle and high school she had diverse interactions because of her participation in a student organization called Future Homemakers of America. Tamara shared, “In the student organization that I was in, I was the minority, the true minority and I liked it, because I had the opportunity to have friends who didn’t look like my friends at school.” As a high school student Tamara had opportunities to travel to represent her student organization. She compared and contrasted her experiences at her Detroit high school with her student organization experience which included traveling to competitions and interacting with diverse others:

So it was kind of like a double life type thing, but it wasn’t kind of like a double life. I experienced my – I really experienced diversity through that organization that was offered, through DPS [Detroit Public Schools], but I didn’t experience in DPS in regards to my peers and my students.

One high school competition required travel to the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, a largely rural part of the state. Tamara recalled the experience:

... I was the only African American individual; I think they said, in the town at that time. There were people who were trying to take pictures of me because they had

never seen an African American person. And one guy was like, “Can I touch your skin,” and I was like, “Oh, that’s different.”

Tamara shared that it would be normal for students from Detroit to interact only with other African Americans since neighborhoods and the school system were almost exclusively African American. Extracurricular activities were one of the only ways that students could interact with diverse others. Tamara shared,

If you weren’t a part of those organizations, you were really limited, unless you were like on the basketball team, unless you were like an athlete who traveled, who was a part of like travel teams, or when we did tournaments... you would have to compete against those at other schools, primarily, predominantly White schools.

Bruce had a different experience than Tamara. He attended a private high school in Detroit which was more diverse than the public schools in the city. He realized that for many students at Eastern Michigan University, the campus cultural environment was different from their previous experience, stating “I have to look at [the fact that] not everybody grew up in a mixed background like I did.” Bruce explained that many EMU students experience a cultural surprise because they do not have a realistic conception of the difference they will experience coming from a homogeneous hometown to EMU, specifically that they will encounter students with “all types of beliefs.” Bruce shared that he wished he had the opportunity to meet with incoming students and explain the cultural difference they would experience. Bruce explained that would tell future students,

Listen, you’re going to a public university. These are some of the shocks that you’re going to encounter when you get here. There are going to be a lot of people there [at EMU]. You might even room with someone who is not like you or you’re not used to.

On-campus residence halls are a common context in which students encountered demographic surprises. At Eastern Michigan University students from urban communities, specifically Detroit, were more likely to live on-campus than students from rural or suburban

communities. It should be noted that students who live on-campus experience surprises in two venues, both in the classroom and in the residence halls; academic surprises are discussed in a future section. While commuters may experience diversity in the classroom, most do not experience the diversity in their living environment (neighborhood). During the interview process, on-campus residents shared more demographic surprises than their commuter counterparts.

Living in the residence hall in close proximity to or with diverse others was often described as challenging by urban students. One change that many students experience living on campus is having a roommate or suitemate from a different hometown. Tamara from Detroit shared that she lived with another student from Detroit, but had suitemates from a different hometown community her freshman year. Sharing a bathroom was one of the biggest challenges that Tamara's roommate, who was African American, had with their White suitemates. Tamara shared that her roommate often complained that the "White girls shed their hair all the time, and they don't ever clean up their hair."

While students like Eric are interested in interacting with diverse others, the process can be challenging. Eric, an African American student from Detroit, was paired with a White roommate his freshman year. He began his cultural transition in early September when he moved out of his family's Detroit home into a residence hall on campus. His relationship with his roommate was strained, as both students were from homogeneous environments, Eric from a predominantly Black neighborhood and his roommate from a predominantly White neighborhood. Eric shared, "From what I understood he was from a small town and hadn't that much exposure to Black people or people outside of his own culture." The

cultural surprises between Eric and his roommate were rooted in stereotypes. Eric recalled his experience with his roommate, saying:

But basically the big thing that I guess was the problem was he assumed that because I was a Black male from an urban area that I was supposed to carry myself in a certain way and I think it threw him off course when I did not. Like the fact that I was able to speak well and use my voice properly and formulate a sentence articulately and I didn't wear sagging clothes and I didn't really use slang and terms and things like that.

Coming from a rural hometown, Eric's roommate had not interacted with diverse others prior to college. His surprise was rooming with an African American student who did not match the urban stereotypes.

Tasks/jobs: Surprise.

Working in a factory is a norm in southeast Michigan, specifically working in an automotive factory. James' family was no different, and his father worked in an automotive plant in the area. James's surprise occurred when he found out that following in his father's footsteps in terms of a job was not acceptable to his family. During the interview, James recalled that in his family there was a notable degree of pressure to attend college:

I remember at one point where I almost decided that I wanted to kind of come in his [James' father's] footsteps to kind of work there and he was like, "No, go to college. You're going to school." You know? Because with the factory jobs it's a lot of money and it's easy to get complacent and everything because of the amount of money that you make.

Like many parents in southeast Michigan, James' father was a factory worker and wanted his son to experience a work environment that was superior to factory life. For James, he experienced a surprise when his idea of following in his father's footsteps was not acceptable to his family; instead, James' family expected him to attend college.

Income: Surprise.

In this section, I discuss the impact of limited finances and family financial support. Students from urban communities shared that their families stressed that they wanted a better life for them. Despite this desire, Bruce shared that finances were a factor that often impacted a family's ability to provide a better life. He explained:

Some parents do or kind of have this – they wanted them to have a better life than they had growing up. But somewhere along the way, with the way the economy's going or what have you, some parents looked at, okay, well; I can only take you so far. You're going to have to see yourself through the rest of the way.

With parents unable to pay for college tuition, students from urban communities were challenged to finance their collegiate education. Financing, specifically lack of family financial support, was one factor which was tied to why students stopped out of school.

Education: Surprise.

Often urban students commented that they were a first generation college student. Parents and grandparents from urban communities in southeast Michigan shared with their student that college was the gateway to prosperity and social mobility. However, these family members had no personal experience with higher education, or cultural capital to help in making decisions about college applications, admission, or financial aid. For many urban students, a college education was seen as a means to a better life. While family members saw college as an opportunity, some students had a different emotional adaptation, specifically a sense of pressure to be the first family member to attend college.

Dwayne, a first year student from Detroit who graduated from Martin Luther King, Jr. High School, described the pressure he felt from others regarding college. Often Dwayne's family members gave him advice on how to live his life or what he should work towards, inserting what profession that they thought he should pursue:

You have people like, asking what are you going to do in your future and stuff and I had my granddad who wanted me to be a doctor, and I had other people wanted me to go into business, and then other people wanted me to be a lawyer and stuff like that, so you get everybody's additional comments all the time, whether it be a family function, and they pull you aside and start talking to you.

James, like Dwayne, grew up in Detroit and experienced pressure to be the first in his family to attend college. James shared what it was like growing up in a family where family members had not attended college, "So the push was for somebody to [attend college] and I'm the first, first generation." This unexpected pressure from family members was a surprise for James.

Physical environment, safety, and security: Surprise.

Unlike many students from rural communities who indicated they had a greater feeling of safety in their home community, students from urban areas did not indicate that they felt less safe on the EMU campus or Ypsilanti community than in their hometown. Urban students were more likely to comment on drug houses, police sirens, or shootings in their hometown rather than a feeling of safety. Safety was discussed in a different manner by urban students; many reported feeling safer at Eastern than in their home community. Statistics from Federal Bureau of Investigation on crime indicate that Detroit has a higher rate of crime than Eastern Michigan University and Ypsilanti.

Table 4.63

Detroit and Ypsilanti and Property Crime

City	Population	Property crime	Property crimes per 100,000	Burglary	Larceny-theft	Motor vehicle theft	Arson
Detroit	905,783	53,095	5,862	17,818	18,836	16,441	691
Ypsilanti	21,766	1,024	4,704	278	649	97	6

(Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2009)

Table 4.64

Eastern Michigan University and Property Crime, 2008

University	Student enrollment	Property crime	Property crimes per 100,000	Burglary	Larceny-theft	Motor vehicle theft	Arson
Eastern Michigan University	22,837	243	1064	45	194	4	0

(Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2009)

Table 4.65

Detroit and Ypsilanti and Violent Crime

City	Population	Violent crime	Violent crimes per 100,000	Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter	Forcible rape	Robbery	Aggravated assault
Detroit	905,783	17,428	1,924	306	330	6,115	10,677
Ypsilanti	21,766	285	1,309	3	13	74	195

(Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2009)

Table 4.66

Eastern Michigan University and Violent Crime

University	Student enrollment	Violent crime	Violent crimes per 100,000	Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter	Forcible rape	Robbery	Aggravated assault
Eastern Michigan University	22,837	8	35	0	2	4	2

(Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2009)

James described the behavior or adaptation to police sirens in his hometown of Detroit as compared to EMU,

I'm sure most people can tell you that, you get so attuned to hearing like police ...sirens [in Detroit] that it becomes so normal that you just continue to sleep, you don't even move because most people hear it at least when you hear sirens you instantly get up. Not in Detroit. If I was to go home [in Detroit] right now and hear sirens I would probably instantly get up because I've gotten attuned to this environment [EMU] and I still have a part knowledge of where I'm from but this is where I am the most. So naturally I would probably try to get up and see what's going on whereas everybody else would probably be like, "That's really nothing."

James's comments indicated that Detroit, the urban hometown of many EMU students, has more violence than what is seen in Ypsilanti and on the Eastern Michigan campus. Urban students may feel safer on the campus than in their hometown, which is in stark contrast to the comments shared by many rural and suburban students.

Ideology: Surprise.

Mistrust was a significant component of the ideology of Detroit that emerged from the student interviews. This element was evident in Cleophis' description of his interaction with others on the campus. Cleophis, a male student from Detroit, described his initial challenge interacting with diverse others. Cleophis grew up in Detroit and shared that there was one White family who lived on his residential block. He vividly recalled his negative experiences, which resulted in a fight with the White male who lived on his block. Cleophis' perception of Whites was shaped by this interaction; his past experience was an input which influenced his interaction once on the campus. For Cleophis, he experienced a surprise as the racial makeup of the student body was much different than his hometown experience.

Activities, entertainment, and rituals: Surprise.

While college students from all communities engaged in similar activities, such as playing video games in the residence hall, James experienced a surprise freshman year about

activities in the residence hall. James lived in Putnam Hall his freshman year, on a floor which had a racial mix of students. Some of James' White floor-mates shared with him that they had not met an African American before college. James was a social student who often walked the hall to see if anyone wanted to play video games. He discovered that some students were surprised that he made an effort to interact with everyone (regardless of race) on the hall. James described a conversation that he had with a White student who lived on his hall. The White student shared his hesitation interacting with James (and diverse others in general), stating, "I would keep a distance from you because of experience and what I was taught is that everybody that is Black/African American was angry and evil." James' example illustrates that despite students having a commonality such as an interest in video games, some students are hesitant to interact with diverse others.

Residential adaptation to surprises.

Since most students from urban communities in southeast Michigan have had limited interaction with individuals from non-urban areas prior to college, the organizational entry process that is matriculating to the collegiate environment results in an array of surprises (ranging from residential to academic surprises.) Based on students' stories, it is evident that adaptations to diverse others, specifically the adaptation process, varies by student. While some students enacted their own culture, other students had an interest in learning about different cultures. Based on students' experiences, there appears to be a transition period or a maturation period which exists as students are learning to interact with diverse others.

Through my interviews, I found that students who were from the same hometown, having experienced a similar residential and educational environment, sometimes had differing levels of interest in interacting with diverse others. The level of interest in

interacting with diverse others was a factor which influenced students' adaptation to surprises in the collegiate setting.

Several students from urban communities indicated they had an increased comfort with diverse others because of their experience at Eastern Michigan University. Attending EMU was often the first experience these African American students had with individuals who were different than themselves (particularly White students), since they grew up in mainly homogeneous African American communities such as Detroit. Having positive interactions with diverse others may not happen initially or instantaneously on the campus. There was often a transition period, and following the transition period, some students formed positive relations with diverse others while other students did not.

Demographics: Adaptation to surprises.

For Eric from Detroit, his negative experience came before his positive experiences with students different from himself. Prior to coming to EMU Eric shared, "I have never had friends of different races or anything." Eric, who had grown up around all African Americans in Detroit, had an initial negative experience with his freshman year roommate. He described his negative experience stating,

At first I had a negative experience with the first White person I came in contact with and it was my roommate and he turned out to be actually be racist and that left a bad taste in my mouth for a while and he reinforced sort of what, the typical things that my family tried to feed me based on their experiences and based on how they were brought up.

Eric's adaptation was that his desire to learn (interest) about diverse others outweighed his initial negative experiences as well as his family's experience, which occurred during racial segregation in the South. Slightly discouraged, Eric was still interested

in learning about others different from him. He believed that the best way he could understand others' experiences was to ask them questions.

I believe in asking questions that you know even if they may be inappropriate or I guess wrong things to say. I ask because I don't want to assume something. Versus, you know, just not knowing. I'd rather ask you and have you say that makes me feel a little bit weird or something like that versus me assuming that I know the answer when I very well probably don't.

While Eric had an initial negative experience, he was still interested in interacting with diverse others.

With a bit of persistence, Eric eventually learned about diverse others and had a positive experience. In his sophomore year, Eric had a more positive experience interacting with his White roommate. Eric's example shows the cyclical nature of the surprise and reacting to surprises. Recalling his experience, Eric shared,

For one thing my best friend at Eastern is a White male, who I met my Sophomore year because we were roommates and so he basically helped me buck the trend on everything I thought I knew about White people or any other person really, and becoming friends with him and other people has taught me to not take people for who you think they are at face value.

Eric's willingness to learn and understand others' experiences was a significant transition and developmental experience. During his time at EMU, Eric experienced a considerable cultural and racial transition, which had both positive and negative elements. His example indicates that students may experience challenges or difficult situations with diverse others prior to having positive experiences. Much like the rural students' example of having an insider to provide a perspective, Eric also had a particular individual (sophomore year roommate), an insider, with whom he had positive interaction.

Cleophis from Detroit shared his experience living on-campus and having White suitemates.

... Initially, our suite-mates...the first couple of days were kind of difficult I think. For the most part, we would be cordial. But, I think great issues can come up in the smallest places, and that little, 15-foot bathroom that you share, we had – we used to have issues about what was, hygienic, you know, and what was culturally acceptable...

The challenge Cleophis experienced was a difference in opinion regarding acceptable behavior in the bathroom. Cleophis shared that he and his roommate as well as their suitemates changed behavior in the bathroom as each side learned what was socially acceptable to the individuals on the other side of the suite. This compromise resulted in a positive experience, Cleophis shared,

And so, it kind of worked out. And eventually, we became really good friends. Matter of fact, Christmas they gave us some Eastern t-shirts, and they hung them on our bunk-beds, and they said, “From the guys next door.” We became friends. It wasn’t any issue thereafter, we really were able to get along without a problem.

Both Eric and Cleophis shared examples of how they were able to overcome challenges, which resulted in positive experiences with individuals who were different than themselves. Their examples illustrate the cyclical nature of surprise and adaptation to surprises; while there were challenges initially, changes in their behavioral response eventually resulted in a positive outcome.

Interest in interacting with diverse others is an input which explains why students from the same hometown and cultural background can have different adaptations to a similar surprise. Kayla from Detroit explained why she thought individuals experienced culture shock once at EMU, stating, “I think some people have a hard time accepting people because they are closed minded about things and can’t accept change.”

Eric was interested in learning from diverse others; he viewed college as a social opportunity to get to know others, saying “...wow, I guess [college is] a chance to meet people who are different or you know experience people who are different.”

Eric's interest in learning about diverse others represented his desire to integrate into a diverse community and embrace the cultural differences he encountered while at EMU.

James, like Eric, had a desire to interact with diverse others as reflected in his comment that he wanted to know where others were from and learn more about them. James reflected on his experience and explained that his adaptation to diverse others was not the norm, sharing:

I have met people, who have literally cried apparently like this intense shock, like, "Oh, my God, I can't believe it," because they were never exposed to either another race, some people have never been exposed to somebody being gay, some people have never been exposed to somebody like just some disclosed that they'd been raped, anything like that, that's a shock to them because they didn't experience these things.

James' description illustrates that some students experience dissonance because of the surprise, specifically when they are exposed to different events which are in contrast to what they experienced in their home community.

Based on Tamara's high school opportunities, Tamara did not have difficulty interacting with diverse others on the EMU campus. For Tamara, she had processed through a surprise during her travels with her high school student organization to Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Having had the opportunity to travel and interact with students from different hometowns, Tamara shared,

I feel like it put me a step above everyone, because it was like, okay, a lot of the culture shock that people are going through now [at EMU], I experienced it at 16 years old when I traveled to the Upper Peninsula.

While Tamara was able to adapt to her new environment (EMU), she shared that interacting with diverse others was difficult for many of her peers from Detroit, stating that students who were not part of a traveling sports team or a student organization that traveled to compete against other schools were unlikely to interact with individuals who looked different from themselves. Further she explained that Detroit Public Schools are in an athletic league which

is composed solely of schools from Detroit; thus there are few opportunities for DPS students to interact with diverse others prior to college.

Bruce, like Tamara, did not have difficulty interacting with diverse others at EMU because of his high school experience. Bruce interacted with diverse others at his private high school in Detroit, whereas Tamara had interactions based on her travels with her high school organization.

Living with diverse others can be challenging; Tamara shared how bothered her roommate was by hair shedding in the bathroom, from their White suitemates. Though Tamara's perspective was that the hair shedding was not that serious of an issue, it really bothered her roommate. Tamara was less bothered by this bathroom issue, saying, "Okay, well honestly, our [Black] hair sheds, too. It doesn't shed as much, but our hair sheds, too. I don't make that big of a deal of it, like it's not that serious." In this example Tamara's roommate had a negative adaptation to the surprise she experienced with her White suitemates.

Tamara shared that some of her friends vocalized issues greater than hair shedding in regard to living with diverse others. Some of Tamara's friends discussed that they were not interested in living with individuals not like themselves, "It was like I always heard from my female friends, like, 'I don't want a White girl as a roommate.'" The example of Tamara's friends illustrates a lack of interest interacting with diverse others, which is in contrast to the examples shared by Eric and James, two male students from Detroit who were interested in interacting with diverse others.

One important input was Eric's interest in getting to know diverse others. Despite this interest, Eric was challenged with a White roommate who did not have an interest in

integrating with diverse others. Eric's level of interest in learning about diverse others was much greater than his roommate's level of interest. Eric and his roommate lived together on-campus for about a month until the roommate moved out, presumably at least in part due to their cultural differences. One means of reacting to a surprise is removing oneself from a situation; in this example, Eric and his roommate had different methods of reacting to a demographic surprise.

Tasks/jobs: Adaptation to surprises.

Taking his family's directive to attend college was how James reacted to his family's comments that it was important to have a job that did not involve working in a factory. James, who was one of seven children, was the only one to attend college. Their collegiate expectation was an element that factored into James' adaptation.

Activities, entertainment, and rituals: Adaptation to surprises.

James recalled his adaptation to his floormate's statement that he was taught to keep his distance from African Americans because they were "angry and evil." James shared, "And I looked and I said – I didn't get mad but it surprised me that was how he was taught and that's how he was raised."

One of James's cultural inputs was his interest in interacting with diverse others; he was a social student who interacted with floormates regardless of race or hometown. In his reflection, James realized that not all students shared this attribute. In fact, he learned that some students went out of their way to *avoid* interaction with those different from themselves. The White student with whom James interacted was challenged to compare what he was taught in his hometown to his experience on the campus, specifically his interactions with James, his African American floormate.

Income: Adaptation to surprises.

One outcome tied to limited finances and family financial support is stopping out of school. At the beginning of each winter term, students at EMU who have past due balances are not permitted to register for the term and therefore are unable to continue at the university. When students are not registered for classes (as a result of the inability to pay for tuition) housing officials must ask these students to move out of the residence halls. As a housing staff member, informing students that they must move out of the halls is one of my job duties. To live in a campus residence hall, it is required to be a registered student.

Education: Adaptation to surprises.

Urban students shared their experiences as they related to being a first generation college student. This experience often includes a component of managing the feeling of pressure to be the first generation or fulfill family members' dreams of a college education. For Dwayne, the constant advice from family members and friends was difficult to process. Dwayne described that family members' and friends' ideas were an added weight on his shoulders, and he felt a pressure to meet their expectations. However, in his adaptation to the surprise he shared, "...I think they all did that because my mama was gone, so like they was trying to fill that void that is right there." (Dwayne's mother passed away when he was a young child.) During his first year on-campus, Dwayne came to the conclusion that he needed to do what would make him happy, and focus less on pleasing others:

Coming to college, was kind of a like a breath of fresh air...I don't really miss home like that and I don't get homesick too much...I just need to get out somewhere and be Dwayne, instead of be bothered with everyone putting additional weight on me.

Dwayne had experiences at EMU, such as living on campus, that provided separation from family members. Through experiences such as this, Dwayne eventually felt free from the pressure of friends and family members.

Physical environment, safety, and security: Adaptation to surprises.

James' adaptation regarding safety, specifically hearing police sirens, indicated that he has an awareness that there is a marked difference between hometown behavior [Detroit] and campus behavior. On-campus at Eastern, students react to police sirens, whereas in Detroit the frequency of sirens results in little response from residents.

Ideology: Adaptation to surprises.

Mistrust is a prevalent part of the ideology in Detroit. This frame of reference affected Cleophis, specifically his interactions and how he processed these interactions with others (White students in particular) at EMU. Interacting with individuals with a different skin color was challenging for him. Cleophis explained,

I had this attitude toward White students. And then, reading a lot of Malcolm X, and reading a lot about history at that time, trying to figure out who I was as a Black student, you know. Because you're trying to figure out, you know, I'm better than what I see every day in the city. So, you know, when you start reading, you come to school with a certain perspective.

Reflecting on his EMU experience, Cleophis shared that "it was difficult at first" because he had not known many White people growing up. Due to the cultural surprise of encountering diverse others on the campus, Cleophis' adaptation was to enact his hometown culture at Eastern. Cleophis shared,

From a culture shock perspective, I mean, for a long time I just didn't really say a whole lot to a whole lot of people. Minus the people that I was – that I knew in my immediate circle, some of the guys on the football team.

Cleophis also shared that he continued to socialize with his friends from Detroit who also attended EMU.

Recreating Hometown Cultures: A Case Study of Student Interaction

As described above, one form of adaptation to a surprise is to recreate one's hometown culture. Students recreate the culture of southeast Michigan at the Eastern Eateries on the EMU campus. In this section, I describe a specific case study (i.e., the Eastern Eateries) and provide examples of how the activity and interaction are an example of the recreation of southeast Michigan. At the heart of the interaction at the Eastern Eateries is the recreation of urban culture. The recreation of Detroit culture is in plain sight on the EMU campus. Just as Detroit, is center of southeast Michigan, the recreation of urban culture is at the center of the Eastern Eateries. In this section, I describe the interaction between urban, rural, and suburban at the Eastern Eateries which is connected to a first-year residential complex. The interaction among students of different hometown communities has parallels to how individuals from different communities in southeast Michigan interact with one another.

Eastern Eateries.

Upon coming out, a car with large wheels and extraordinarily loud music was screeching his tires. It was noticed by all, but was passed over in silence... We entered Putnam Hall through the Eastern Eateries in which students are seen hanging around and eating. It should be noted that there was a section to our right where only African-Americans were that seemed unwelcoming to any "others" in terms of sitting or having something to eat. It was noticeably the loudest section of the Eateries and students were sitting on tables and standing around in large groups with frequent cuss words being heard, so much so that we had to exit in order for [tour guide] Tim to explain the meal plan options. (Sutton, 2008, p. 10)

This vivid description of behavior and cultural elements was recorded by a Master's student who observed a campus tour for a class assignment during the Winter 2008 term. The description provides details of observable cultural elements in and around the Eastern Eateries on the EMU campus. Sutton (2008) described the dynamics of the tour group as it left the Recreation and Intramural Sports Building (Rec/IM) and walked toward the first year

residential area. Though Sutton's observation occurred inside the Eateries during the cold winter, a similar dynamic exists outside of the Eateries during the warmer months. A comparable noise level and language (curse words) exists out front of the Eateries on warmer days. In this section I describe and analyze this cultural phenomenon.

In order to understand the student culture which exists at the Eastern Eateries, I provide a description of the location which will give context for the patterns of student behavior and interaction. The Eastern Eateries, a food-court style eating venue owned by University's Dining Services, is fondly referred to by students as *the Eateries*. The Eateries are connected to the First Year Center (FYC), a residential area composed of four residential buildings including Walton, Putnam, Phelps, and Sellers Halls, which houses over 1,000 freshmen. For students, the Eateries' function is twofold; it serves as a dining venue as well as a social destination. Out in front of the Eateries is an open space which students use to gather. The feeling out front is similar to gathering on a front porch or stoop, according to students who socialize there. It should be noted that while the term "student" is used, there are often non-student guests, similar in age, who socialize with the students at this location. While the Eateries location is directly in front of four residential buildings, there is a combination of off-campus students and non-students interacting with the residential students.

Outside of the Eateries, students socialize throughout the large cement area directly in front of the Eateries and the adjoining residential buildings. The large paved area out front of the Eateries has several giant cement planters, which are large enough to hold several full size trees. Students are often seen sitting or leaning against the ledge of these planters. One planter is east of the Eateries' main entrance, and the other is to the west. In between the two

planters is a large pedestrian walkway which leads to the entrance of the Eateries. The main entrance of the Eateries is an enclosed glass tunnel which connects to the dining room. Once inside, you proceed on a walkway through the dining area which leads to the various food court style shops. Residential students can also enter the Eateries from inside the FYC through a side door directly connected to the residential corridor. This enables students to enter the dining facility from their residence hall without going outside, a way to avoid the cold in the winter months. Figure 4.26 is an aerial photograph of the Eateries that illustrates these details.

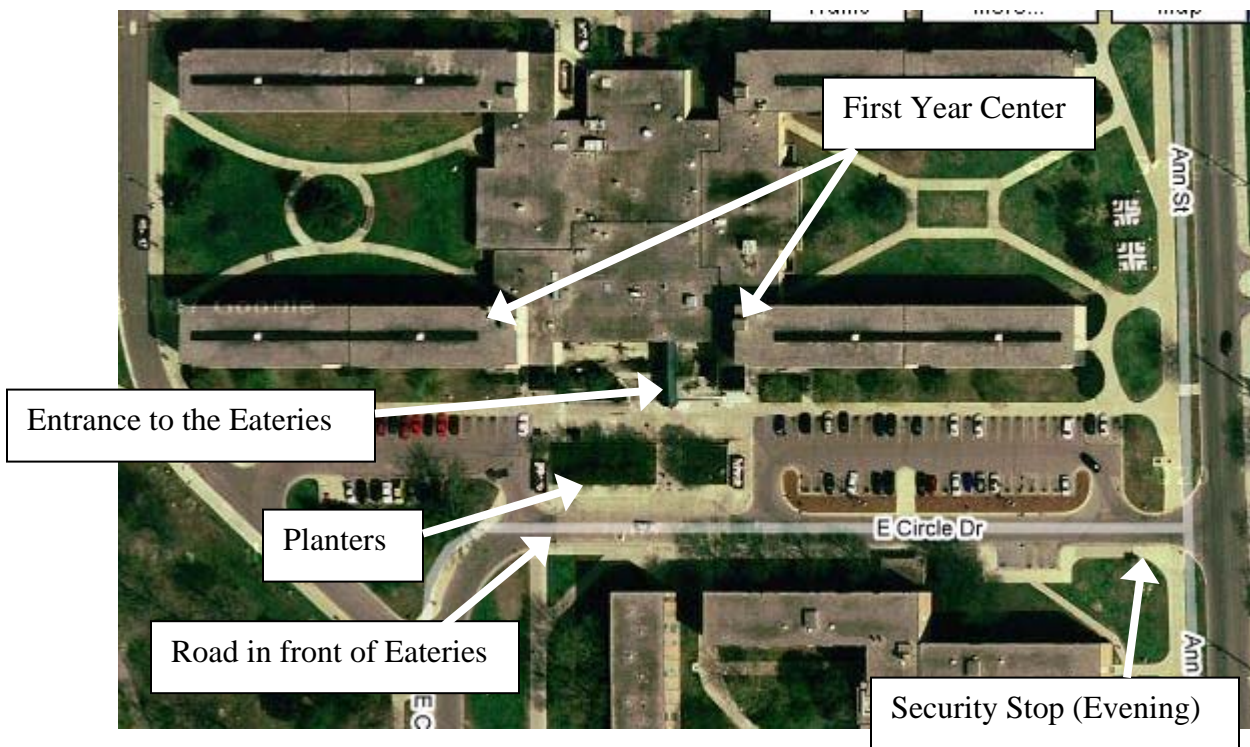


Figure 4.26. Eastern Eateries and First Year Center on the EMU Campus

Satellite photograph courtesy of Google Maps

In the late evening hours the access to drive the residential loop in front of the Eateries is restricted. There is a small security booth southeast of the First Year Center and the Eateries which is staffed. The staff member's job is to restrict driving access in front of the Eateries in the late evening hours. The restricted driving access is designed to reduce the number of non-residential students in the area as well as the noise level in front of the residential buildings. Despite efforts to reduce noise there is still a noticeable level as students continue to congregate along the planters and interact until the early morning hours.

Ann Street is directly east of the Eateries and the First Year Center. A convenience store and gas station, called the Campus Corner, is located on Ann Street a few blocks north of the Eateries and First Year Center. The close proximity between the Campus Corner and the Eateries is a volatile combination. Students and many non-students go to the Campus Corner to buy cigarettes and alcohol and often return to the Eateries to socialize. The late night traffic and activity between the Campus Corner and the Eateries results in verbal arguments and physical fights which often occur in front of the Eateries. Some of the fights disperse naturally, and others require EMU Police intervention.

Campus tour.

When students and parents walk on a campus tour guided by the Admission staff, the tour group is led through the Eateries on the way to view the housing showroom in the first-year residential area. For new students it becomes evident early on, during the campus tour or orientation week prior to the start of classes, that the Eastern Eateries is a destination where many students go to *see and be seen*.

Numerous African American students have described an instantaneous feeling of being at home when they approached the Eateries on the tour. The students provided a vivid

description of walking down the hill as they approached the Eateries and seeing individuals much like themselves socializing outside of the Eateries. Seeing a group of African American students socializing on a college campus resulted in a feeling that they, too, could fit into the EMU community.

In addition to the formal interviews described, several students who shared their observation of the Eateries are not previously named in the results section. Each student who provided a description of their experience was assigned a pseudonym. Much of this section was based on anthropological observation, and many of these students' descriptions were gathered through informal conversations or informal group gatherings rather than a formal interview.

One female student from Detroit, Jani, felt at home from observing activity outside of the Eateries; however, she explained that she felt tricked when she got in the classroom. Jani described that while there was a large group of African American students together outside of the Eateries, once in the classroom she felt like a minority as there were only a few African American students in her class. This was an academic surprise for her. Jani recalled the transition she experienced coming to EMU having grown up in the Detroit environment where she was surrounded by other African American students. Jani explained that she felt a significant African American presence in front of the Eateries, close to a residential facility, but did not find the same feeling in the classroom. For Jani, she experienced a surprise in the classroom, as the student demographics in the classroom differed from what she experienced outside of the Eateries. Jani had difficulty making sense of her academic surprise, stating that she felt "tricked." While Jani had observed the activity in front of the Eateries prior to school, she was unaware of the student make-up in the classroom. Next, empirical data are presented

which support Jani's feelings of a greater African American community in or near residential facilities as compared to the classroom.

From the Eateries to the classroom.

In an effort to explain why Jani felt connected outside of the Eateries but did not have a similar experience in the classroom, I offer some empirical data. A larger percentage of students who are Black live on campus; in 2009, 29.3% of undergraduate Black students had a housing contract. In comparison, there were smaller percentages of other ethnic groups who chose to live on campus (Asian – 19%, Hispanic – 11.8%, and White – 13.7%). This indicated that on-campus housing was more attractive for Black students than students of other races.

A comparison of the housing contract percentage and student body percentage by ethnicity is offered in Table 4.74. An interesting contrast emerged when comparing housing contract and student body percentage by ethnicity. The number of Black students in housing is disproportionately high. While 36.3% of the on-campus population was Black, 20.6% of the undergraduate student body was Black. By contrast, White students made up 65.1% of the undergraduate student body, yet composed 53.7% of the residential population. These data provide clarification why Jani (or other Black students) could have felt connected in front of the Eateries but not in the classroom.

Table 4.67

A Comparison of Housing Contract and Undergraduate Student Body Percentage by Ethnicity 2009-2010

	% of students with a Housing Contract	% Undergraduate Student Body	% Difference = housing contract % – student body %
Asian	2.9	2.6	+ 0.3
Black	36.3	20.6	+ 15.7
Hispanic	1.8	2.5	-0.7
Native American	0.7	0.7	0.0
Not Specified	4.4	6.7	- 2.3
Pacific Islander	0.1	N/A	N/A
Non-Resident Alien	N/A	1.9	N/A
White	53.7	65.1	- 11.4
Total	100	100	

Patterns of social interaction.

Next I offer a detailed description of interaction and behavior at the Eastern Eateries to further explore the student culture. By examining the patterns of interaction and behavior inside and outside of the Eateries, a portion of the undergraduate culture at EMU can be described.

The social aspect of the Eateries occurs both inside the dining facility as well as out front. There is not a sense of urgency in the pace of interaction at the Eateries; instead the atmosphere provides a break from the hustle and bustle seen going in and out of academic buildings. Rodney, a Black male student from Southfield, who completed his undergraduate degree at EMU and is working on a graduate degree, explained that he believes that some students hang out in front of the Eateries instead of going to class. Rodney shared that an “urban mentality” exists among the students socializing at the Eateries. He defines an urban mentality as a “hang-out mentality,” which involves missing class and not focusing on academics.

In addition to the freshmen who “hang out” at the Eateries, an identifiable group of athletes frequent the Eateries, composed of many freshman football and basketball players as evidenced by their varsity sweatshirts. Cleophis, who was from Detroit and on the football team, explained:

When I was a freshman, I played football that first semester. Plus, with a lot of time here, our football team would center on the Eateries, which is like the African-American hot-spot. [I] basically liked to hangout, and I spent a lot of my time there.

When asked, “Do you think a lot of athletes hangout at the Eateries?” Cleophis responded,

Yeah. Yeah, most definitely. A lot of athletes, especially the football players and such. It seemed to be the common social place. I think that, you know, you look for people to be around at certain times of the day, but the Eateries are just the place to be.

Though students from an array of hometowns socialize in front of the Eateries, there is a prominent group of students from Detroit, representing the re-creation of Detroit culture on the EMU campus. Many of these students knew each other prior to college, attending the same high school or middle school. One Black female explained that other Black students socializing in front of the Eateries automatically assumed she was from Detroit because she was Black. Their assumption was incorrect as this student grew up in Ann Arbor, and though she has lots of extended family in Detroit, her experience in Ann Arbor, a suburban neighborhood, was different from her relatives’ in Detroit.

Throughout my observations I noticed a significant male presence in front of the Eateries. Cat-calling, whistling, and arguments were commonplace. Some female students described the Eateries environment as a place where one is often the subject of unwanted attention. One female student stated that she could not walk into the building to get food or leave from class without unsolicited comments or obscene statements. For some women, it is unwanted attention from males, and for others the attention is desired or sought out. To avoid

the interaction, some female students explained that they chose to walk the perimeter, an indirect route to the building instead of walking through the group of males who gather along the large cement planters in front of the Eateries. Generally, the communication pattern in front of the Eateries is initiated by males and directed to females, with most of the cat calls directed at females. A female student described the unspoken understanding which exists among students in front of the Eateries stating that if you want a man to talk to you, you walk through the center area of the Eateries which is in between the planters. Thus, from her statement, it was inferred that the perimeter was a space where one could minimize unwanted attention from others. The attention from males is a surprise for some females as they enter the Eateries or first-year residential buildings. Walking the perimeter to avoid comments is an example of an adaptation, just as a cognizant choice to engage in interaction with the cat-calling is a example of a adaptation.

A policed town square.

There is a high level of interaction and activity in front of the Eateries. Favor swapping is an activity that occurs outside of the Eateries. As you walk by the Eateries you may hear individuals (non-students or upper class students) who do not have a meal plan suggesting to the student with a meal plan to buy them some food. At times the activity around the Eateries requires police action. EMU Police respond to an array of complaints ranging from excessive noise to physical fights. The atmosphere in front of the Eateries could be described as a town square with an active police patrol. Bruce, who attended a private school in Detroit, shared, “I never hung out in front of the Eateries. Well, I did. Okay. Let me rephrase. I did initially, but it wasn’t – once the crowds started to come, that’s when I took

off, because I didn't want no part of it." Bruce's adaptation was to separate himself from the activity in front of the Eateries.

A purposeful means of standing out while blending in is how one staff member perceived the student behavior at the Eateries. He shared that students want to stand out among their peers or others socializing at the Eateries but want to blend in when the Police are doing rounds or investigating. The behavior of some students in front of the Eateries is a balance of personal showmanship while blending in to be inconspicuous. This is seen as students have their hood up and collars up which at times prevents staff or police from getting a clear description.

Generally White students hang out in smaller groups and Black students are often in larger groups when socializing in front of the Eateries, both examples of segregation. Black students are more likely than White students to hang out around the planters in front of the Eateries. Most White students stand along the perimeter, just outside the residential doors, as opposed to the heart of the Eateries action which is in between the planters. Many of the White students who hang outside of the Eateries are smokers. Jake, a White male student from Trenton, Michigan, described that as a smoker living in the FYC he stuck to the edge and did not go into the middle of the planters area. Since the Eateries and First Year Center are non-smoking facilities, the smokers are relegated to the outside. Based on my observations there is a *live and let live* understanding between these two groups; the unspoken pact is that the White smokers will not get harassed or bothered by the Black students outside of the Eateries if they mind their own business. The smokers and the students who socialize in front of the Eateries share a space yet rarely interact or converse. A similar understanding of co-existence was seen between cell phone users and students who

socialized in front of the Eateries. Many students come outside of the first year complex to talk on their cell phone, a practice established out of necessity as there is poor cell phone reception in the building due to cinder block walls. Students on cell phones are left alone provided they are engaging in a phone conversation not related to the activity occurring outside of the Eateries. The Eateries is a space which is owned by the students, a place where they can be themselves and connect with other students. Those *in the culture* own the space; Black students and students from Detroit are central to the Eateries culture, and White students are on the margin.

There are two picnic tables positioned outside of the Eateries which are mainly used by White students. The tables are positioned just east of Eateries entrance, very close to the building and a distance from the large planters. While the cement area between the planters is a social area of choice for Black students, the outside tables and the perimeter are the socialization area more often occupied by White students. Students have learned to co-exist; they make sense of the diverse environment by socializing with a familiar group and not integrating with diverse others.

After observing the human interaction in front of the Eateries, I dialogued with several students to gather their perception of the activity. Students who were not from Detroit were more likely to comment on the activity in front of the Eateries with concern, as they were not part of the community interacting. Jennifer from Brighton shared her perceptions of the Eateries, which provide insight into her adaptation:

There's a lot of people always milling around and always hanging out, especially at odd hours, which we – like my roommates and my friends and I always thought that was kind of odd. But we kind of just came and went and we didn't really hang out over there. I mean, we weren't really scared of the people that kind of hung out there, but we were always cautious, I guess, because you never know.

One student shared that there was a significant amount of yelling, raised voices, and back-and-forth communication. Elizabeth from Canton recalled socializing with friends in Sellers Hall her freshman year and noticing yelling and loud noise at night. Another student who had a similar view that yelling was commonplace in front of the Eateries stated she was unsure if the yelling was because there was a threat or if it was just a preferred communication style. For some students and parents, the loud voices and interaction in front of and inside the Eateries makes them uncomfortable or uneasy. I am informed of this feeling of uneasiness as parents and students meet with me in my administrative role, specifically through suggestions such as banning all activity in front of the Eateries or eliminating all noise in front of the First Year Center. For some suburban students, the high level of noise and activity is a surprise. The student who wondered if it was a preferred communication style made sense of the noise through her perception that noise level was a cultural difference.

While some students were concerned about the activity in front of the Eateries, others were not. Tim from Ida shared that the activity in front of the Eateries never bothered or affected him. Reflecting on the social patterns in front of the Eateries, Tim shared,

It seemed like it's the first week of school there was a pretty large contingent of African American students who kind of hang outside the First Year Center there. But it never really – other than noticing that they were there, it never really bothered me or affected me.

While many urban students recalled socializing inside or in front of the Eateries, students from other communities had other locations where they socialized. Michael from Blissfield recalled socializing inside the residence hall, “We’d go down to the little kitchenette on our floor. Or we’d be in the main lounge. I don’t really remember us like going outside to hang out really. So it was more indoors.” Though perceptions of the activity

in front of the Eateries varied, there was a general agreement that the location was a gathering spot for African American students.

Inside of the Eateries: Surprise and adaptation.

Previously I described one of the main social hubs at the Eateries, which are the planters out front of the building. Next, I describe the interaction inside the Eateries. The dining area to the right when entering through the main entrance as well as the first large table to the left of the dining facility closest to the cash register are the two major social hubs inside of the Eateries. When examining the social hubs and the student dynamic there is an evident racial divide. Using the main entrance as the point of access, the dining section to the right consists of a smaller section of tables and booths, and to the left of the walkway there is a larger dining area. The small dining area to the right is composed of majority Black students, whereas the left side of the dining area is more racially integrated. There are some tables where Black and White students sit together; however, the majority of tables are segregated by race.

Bruce, an African American male who attended a private school in Detroit and interacted with diverse others prior to college, described the surprise he encountered at the Eateries. Bruce stated:

I was really surprised about the Eateries. I mean, I've grown up in different multicultural areas. My mom always stressed getting to know people of other cultures, understanding that. That's why my best friend is Chinese. But when I first walked into the Eateries, I was shocked....I was like, okay. Why are there so many people that look like me on this side of the room, and then why is everybody else sitting on the other side of the room. There's noisy on this side of the room, but it's so quiet and peaceful, you could have a real conversation. And listen to the person talking back to you without somebody talking over you.

Bruce was used to a more integrated environment and was surprised to see that students were divided by race inside the Eateries. For Bruce he had to make sense of the social interaction

inside of the Eateries, which was much different than what he had experienced in high school. While there are higher levels of racial integration in other dining venues on campus such as at the Commons, the Eateries is a location where there is less integration.

Amy, a White female student from Howell, Michigan, who was a fifth-year senior, described her perception of the Eateries. Amy recalled a conversation that she had with her freshman roommate where her roommate explained that the Eateries were the most segregated place on campus. Having not encountered integration in her hometown in southeast Michigan and having virtually no interaction with non-White individuals prior to college, the apparent racial segregation in the Eateries did not seem abnormal for Amy. She shared that she did not even notice the racial divide which was evident to her roommate; for Amy, the social pattern inside the Eateries was a non-surprise. The norm for Amy was racial separation, a characteristic which she experienced in her hometown and again on the EMU campus inside of the Eateries.

For Tim from Ida, the racial divide inside the Eateries was evident. He explained,

I would go into the Eateries and it'd seem like all the White people sat on [one] side of the walkway and all the Black people sat on the other side. That was extremely evident to me, especially after I pointed it out to somebody and then we started talking about it.

Ray, a student from Tecumseh, shared that his friends dialogued about the racial divide in the Eateries,

And also even like they [Ray's friends] talk about the split of the Eateries. How it's like there's the African American side and then the White side. I've never even realized that as a freshman. I never saw that because I just would like – I always just saw, “Okay there's a table. I'm sitting there and I'm eating.” And it's not like you go sit on one side someone's going say something to you.

While Amy, Tim, and Ray observed the same phenomena, their surprise and adaptation regarding the divide between races in the Eateries differed. Factors such as interest in

interacting with diverse others and previous experience are inputs which influence how a student makes sense of his or her experience.

Step shows and probate shows outside of the eateries.

In the early fall and late spring, several historically Black fraternities and sororities perform step shows or probate shows in front of the Eateries. On college campuses step shows are often performed by National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) groups, often performing the dance in unison. The show is a rhythmic dance which combines the sound of footsteps, stomps, hand claps, chanting, and singing (Fine, 1991). NPHC is the international governing body of the nine historically African American fraternities and sororities. Eight of the nine NPHC organizations have active chapters at EMU.

It is common for members of NPHC groups to socialize in front of the Eateries even though most of the student members are upperclassmen. Oftentimes members of an NPHC group wear their Greek jackets which are often solid color jackets with large Greek letters. Each organization has its own colors; thus there is a visual separation of which group one belongs to the fraternity/sorority (Greek) apparel is an evident demarcation between first-year students and upper-class Black students who socialize in front of the Eateries. First-year students are rarely members of an NPHC organization, joining later in their college career. The step show and probate show give underclassmen exposure to the Greek community; this exposure is a form of recruitment. The students in the Greek organization represent students who have made sense of the university environment and made connections with other students through the Greek organization. For underclassmen who watch the step show or see Greeks socializing outside of the Eateries, a message is that those who continue at the university have the opportunity to connect with others and join a Greek organization.

One student explained that the first step show occurs in front of the Eateries within the first week of school. Generally the gathering occurs in the evening. Though people begin to meet while it is light outside, the show happens once it becomes dark. The step show takes place on the walkway, a large cement area in front of the Eateries. Spectators watch the show, with many individuals standing on top of the cement ledge of the planters in an effort to see the show. The show is loud enough for everyone around to hear. Since it is warm outside and the residence halls do not have air conditioning, many students have their windows open. When students hear noise outside of their hall, many look out of their windows and decide to come to the Eateries to get a closer view of the step show. Thus many on-campus students who live close to the Eateries observe the show. One student explained that if you do not get there early, you can't see the show, as there are often several hundred students gathered to watch. The shows also draw members of the Black community together including members of NPHC fraternities and sororities, as well as Greek alumni and Greeks from local colleges.

Recreation of hometown cultures.

Next, I discuss the recreation of hometown cultures. The urban culture, specifically the culture of Detroit, can be closely compared to the activity in front of the Eateries. EMU students have compared the socialization which occurs to at the Eateries to a block party and to Belle Isle, a park in Detroit. The urban culture on the EMU campus is more visible due to the choice of a public and central location for socializing.

Recreation of a block party.

Several students explained that the socializing in front of the Eateries is much like a block party, which lasts the whole first month of school (September - October). One of the

students that I interviewed described a Detroit block party as a combination of people hanging out, sitting on the curb or porch while playing music and socializing. While there is food served at block parties in Detroit, the student explained that at EMU our block party has the Eateries. Generally students gather at the Eateries for fun; a student explained that it is a good place to go when you have nothing better to do with your time. Some students spend hours a day socializing at the Eateries and other students come and go, stopping by for lunch or to pass a few minutes before or after class.

Belle Isle.

The culture of Detroit as exemplified on Belle Isle is reproduced on the campus, specifically in and around the Eastern Eateries. “Belle Isle” is the nickname given to the Eateries by the students. Belle Isle, an island park in Detroit is surrounded by the Detroit River. Belle Isle is 40 miles northeast from the EMU campus. Due to the proximity of the park to the residential areas of Detroit, many Detroit residents gather on Belle Isle. It is a popular spot for picnics, barbeques, and family reunions. Students described Belle Isle as a hang out spot as well as a place to drive around and show off one’s vehicle. In recent years, Belle Isle has become a crime-dense area.

The Eateries has parallels to Belle Isle; thus for some EMU students the Eateries is their own Belle Isle on the EMU campus, a place to relax and socialize. Three Black females who were friends discussed their impression of EMU’s Belle Isle with me. Two of the females were from Detroit, and the other was from a suburban area in southeast Michigan. The three females explained that gathering in front of the Eateries reminds them of home, socializing with friends, having fun, laughing, and talking. However, the females indicated that they were cognizant that some individuals who socialized outside of the Eateries were

“up to little good, just hanging around.” Rodney, an African American student from Southfield, shared that he believes that students who are intertwined in the EMU “Belle Isle” may be focused more on the social instead of the academic component of college.

The Eateries, like Belle Isle, is a place where informal car shows occur. Individuals circle in their cars slowly, which enables them to *see and be seen*. The road which runs in front of the Eateries winds around three other residence halls, creating a residential loop. One student explained that the Eateries car show was part of the Eateries culture, sharing that it does not matter if one’s car is nice or interesting. Individuals interested in continuously driving the residential loop do so regardless of their vehicle. Music is a major element in the “car show.” Stereos are turned up, enabling individuals around the block to hear the music. Though you may not be able to tell which song is blaring, you can always hear the bass. Car speed in front of the Eateries varies, ranging from pulling off and smoking tires to driving at a pace slow enough that you could walk briskly and keep up with the car.

As male students drive slowly by the Eateries (rarely do female students drive by), they are able to get a good look at others congregating in front of the Eateries on and around the large cement planters. Rodney explained that the drive-bys enable the individuals in the car to see who is out there, looking to see if there is someone they know or someone they want to know. The routine of male students driving by the Eateries is comparable to a mating ritual, just as a peacock fans his feathers to gain attention. Cars and music are how individuals gain attention as they drive by the Eateries. One student explained that the bass is so loud in passing cars that one cannot help but pay attention.

Several students described how the activity at the Eateries was similar to their hometown experience. Bruce from Detroit explained, “I can remember just looking at

everybody as I'm standing there [in front of the Eateries], just talking to people – people who looked like me was like, 'Man, it seems like, you know, I'm in Detroit all over again.'”

Bruce's description was an example of how the recreation of hometown culture exists on the EMU campus.

Tamara from Detroit shared her perception of the recreation of her hometown culture on the campus,

That's [the Eateries] mini-Belle Isle. All they need to do is just shut down the street and – it is their world. That's all they need to do is shut down that little strip right there, and that is Belle Isle; it is. Like people are hanging around; they're hanging out; and it's not necessarily they're doing anything bad, it's just people just coming to watch.

Tamara shared that for many Detroit students, the Eateries was a recreation of their social experience in their hometown, specifically at Belle Isle. Cindy from Oak Park shared thoughts similar to Tamara's regarding the parallels between the Eateries and Belle Isle. When Cindy lived on campus her freshman year, she recalled that EMU Belle Isle was the place where one could look at the girls or look at the guys. As a freshman, Cindy saw other students hanging out and meeting people in front of the Eateries. Cindy recalled socializing at the Eateries, describing it as fun. Many students from urban areas described the Eateries as an environment which mirrored Belle Isle; this location provides the comforts of their hometown of Detroit. Students who had grown up spending social time on Belle Isle felt a connection to the Eateries because the environment at the Eateries had similarities to their hometown social experience.

Based on numerous visits to the Eateries over the course of several years, I can confidently conclude that there is an “Eateries student culture,” which occurs outside of the Eateries during the warmer months and inside the dining hall during the colder months. The socialization patterns at the Eateries are distinct. Boundaries exist, which influence who

interacts with whom. After much observation of students at the Eateries, I have determined that there are noticeable groups and divisions between groups.

School: Academic surprises.

Just as students experienced significant surprises in residential and social settings, urban students found discrepancies between their classroom experiences in high school and college. Academic surprises for urban students consist of the concepts of (a) interacting with students of a different ethnicity and (b) technology. During new student orientation at Eastern Michigan University, university officials share with students that there is an academic transition from high school to college. Insights from Tamara and Dwayne, both from Detroit, about their academic transitions are discussed in this section.

Tamara shared that her high school was not as diverse as EMU “in terms of like being exposed to Caucasian students as my classmates.” For many African American students from Detroit, the academic setting at EMU may be their first time being in a classroom with a large number of White students. Similarly, the classroom experience at EMU could be the first time that students from a rural or suburban area have been in a classroom with a notable African American student population.

Urban students’ surprises were not limited to diversity in the classroom. Dwayne expressed that he experienced an academic transition at EMU, describing his transition to college as an academic shock. Dwayne believed his academic shock was intensified because he came from a community where he had minimal exposure to technology at school and in his home.

When I was in Detroit you know, we didn’t have like computer access, to where they send the homework over the computer. Like we always get our homework in hand so like I was expecting teachers to hand out homework.

At EMU, Dwayne found that a portion of his classes were technology-based. The academic expectation was to retrieve assignments and readings from the internet and post completed work on-line. Such use of technology was not part of the pedagogy in his high school education. Having an on-line component to a class was a new and unfamiliar experience for Dwayne. He quickly learned that technology was an integral aspect of university courses, and shared “Well, my English Lit class [at EMU] was just sending stuff over the internet, and I’m thinking we [were] going to get hard copies of it.” Dwayne learned that the internet was used in place of receiving paper copies. During his first semester in college Dwayne was expected to be proficient in using eCompanion, an on-line course shell for academic classes. The process of using eCompanion was confusing for Dwayne; he describes the system, stating, “That just messed me up.”

School: Academic adaptation to surprises.

In his second semester, Dwayne shared that he was “use[d] to the eCompanion now because I got like three classes right now that use eCompanion...I know how to do it now, but then [first semester] ...I didn’t know what to do.” Dwayne’s adjustment to the technological requirements for academics was stressful. “I’m trying to get these grades...I don’t want to, you know, just fail out of school.” When Dwayne did not receive eCompanion assistance from the professor, he turned to fellow classmates. Dwayne was searching for an insider to process the surprise, specifically an individual who could provide support and knowledge during his academic transition.

I’m trying to find out stuff and this teacher [is] not even helping me, so it was kind of a stress. I was asking other people who had e-Companion, like other students, and they was (sic) telling me how to do it because the teacher didn’t know what to do.

Dwayne's example illustrates an academic transition to the university, and his adaptations to the academic surprise he encountered at EMU. Further, it exemplifies how community norms such as having computer access in the home (or at all) affects students' learning experiences.

Summary of surprise and adaptations for urban students.

The experiences of urban students transitioning into Eastern Michigan University were nuanced and complex. Eric, from Detroit, came to Eastern and was interested in learning from diverse others, essentially integrating into the diverse EMU community. Eric said, "I just really looked at it as an opportunity to get to know people who were different than myself." However, he faced challenges when his White roommate did not share his interest in interacting with diverse others. According to Eric, the negative roommate experience left a "bad taste in [his] mouth." While Eric's initial negative experience was a setback, he continued to have an interest in integrating with diverse others. During his sophomore year, Eric was paired with a new White roommate who shared his interest in interacting with diverse others. This roommate taught Eric about many cultural differences, enabling Eric to move beyond his perception of White individuals which, prior to college, was shaped solely by "television, books, and magazines." Eric reflected on his interaction with his roommate, stating, "He basically helped me buck the trend on everything I thought I knew about White people or any other person, really, and becoming friends with him and other people it has taught me to not take people ... at face value." Though initially faced with challenges of integrating with diverse others and experiencing significant dissonance, his persistence resulted in successful organizational socialization. Eric's example shows how students have numerous surprises which can result in movement in both directions along the integration and segregation continuum.

James, like Eric, had an interest in interacting with diverse others. James recalled walking along his floor in the residence hall to find other students who wanted to play video games. James' interaction with others on the hall, regardless of race, illustrated his ability to integrate into the diverse EMU environment. James' comfort level interacting with diverse others was greater than some of his floormates, as evident by the floormate who shared the norm taught in his hometown. James recalled the floormate shared that he was taught that "everybody that is Black/African American was angry and evil." James' comfort interacting with diverse others and integrating into the diverse EMU community served as a model for floormates.

Tamara, from Detroit, shared that she had African American friends who commented to her that they did not want to have a White roommate. This was a clear example of lack of interest integrating with diverse others. After experiencing a homogeneous high school and neighborhood, Tamara's friends were not comfortable integrating with White students on the EMU campus. Annually, the housing department has requests from both White and Black students who submit a housing contract and specify they are not comfortable rooming with an individual of a different race. The lack of exposure to individuals of diverse backgrounds prior to college is a factor which impacts students' comfort level integrating with diverse others. When students are assigned a roommate, the housing department does not segregate students based on a request to be with a student of the same race (R. Figura, personal communication, January 15, 2009).

Cleophis, an African American student from Detroit, shared his negative interaction with a White neighbor prior to college. This interaction in his hometown influenced Cleophis' initial segregation behavior once on campus. Cleophis explained his negative

demeanor as he transitioned to the university environment, stating, “I had this attitude toward White students...” Cleophis’ segregation behavior was evident as he chose to socialize only with friends from Detroit and some of the players on the football team.

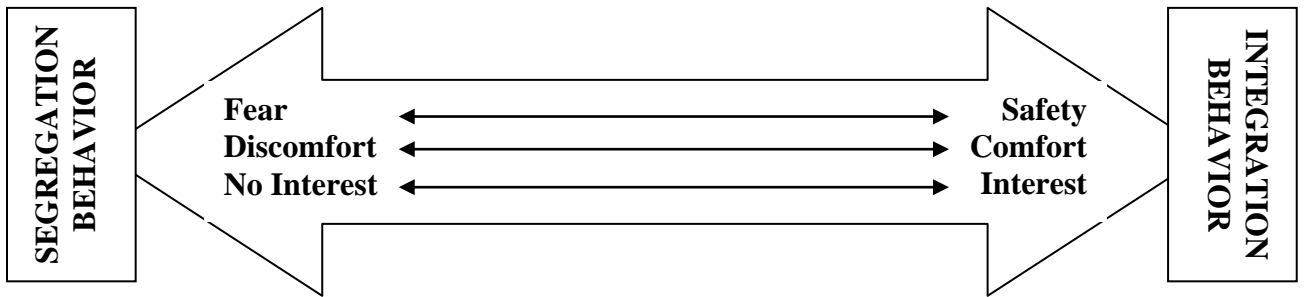
Living in the residence hall, Cleophis and his White suitemates were in conflict because of different social norms, specifically socially acceptable behavior when sharing a bathroom. Initially, the suitemates did not socialize, and Cleophis experienced a level of dissonance because of the conflict. Later in the academic year the suitemates found a way to compromise; the positive step from segregation towards integration was evident as Cleophis shared, “...eventually, we became really good friends. Matter of fact, Christmas they gave us some Eastern t-shirts, and they hung them on our bunk-beds, and they said, ‘From the guys next door.’ So, we became friends...” Despite Cleophis’ negative interaction with a White neighbor in his hometown, over time he became comfortable with diverse others on the campus. Cleophis was able to develop a positive relationship with his White suitemates; in his words they “became friends,” illustrating integration.

Overall, surprise and adaptation to surprises for urban students was an individualized process. Although there are similarities among these stories of transition from urban hometowns to Eastern Michigan University, the varied combinations of inputs (e.g., interests, insiders) and contexts (e.g., residence halls, classrooms, social events) create numerous ways in which students react to a surprising or challenging situation.

Table 4.68

Organizational Entry: Urban Students

Category of Surprise	Concepts
Demographics	(a) Ethnicity
Income	(a) Family does not have the financial ability to pay for college
Education	(a) First generation college students
Physical environment, safety, and security	(a) Less crime than hometown, a feeling of greater safety
Ideology	(a) Mistrust – recreate hometown culture
Activities, entertainment rituals	(a) College activities, interacting with diverse others
School: Academic	(a) Ethnicity- classroom make up more diverse than previous experience (b) Technology (c) Residential setting



Segregation
 Felt at home at Eateries
 Attitude toward “White” individuals
 Want to room with another Black student
 Mistrust
 Conflict

Integration
 Desire to learn about diverse others
 Others fearful – White floormate was taught that African Americans were “angry and evil”
 Gradually became friends with White suitemates

Figure 4.27 Urban student segregation and integration behavior

Suburban Students: Organizational Entry and Surprise and Adaptation

Students from suburban communities in southeast Michigan shared their experiences with the organizational entry process at EMU. In this section, (a) residential surprises and (b) academic surprises for suburban students are explored. Further, behavioral responses, specifically the students' adaptation, are described.

Many students coming to EMU have grown up in suburban communities in southeast Michigan. Suburban communities vary from homogeneous (either a predominantly White or predominantly Black neighborhood) to integrated. Many students from homogeneous (White or Black) suburban communities acknowledged that attending Eastern Michigan University was their first experience interacting with diverse others, whereas students from integrated suburban communities often indicated they had experiences with diverse other prior to their EMU experience.

Through my research, I found that the category of "suburban" students actually consisted of students from three distinct types of hometown communities: integrated communities, predominantly White communities, and predominantly African American communities. In this section, I organized my findings along these three subcategories of suburban communities in southeast Michigan.

Integrated suburban communities.

Residential surprise.

Demographic: Surprise.

Students from integrated suburban communities were less likely (than all other communities) to comment on demographic surprises related to a diverse campus

environment. This being said, the diversity on campus still differed from students' experience in their integrated hometown residential communities.

First generation: Surprise.

Sarah from Ypsilanti Township shared part of her experience being a first generation college student, meaning that neither of her parents attended college. Sarah commented that her family viewed college as an opportunity for her to have a better life. Sarah stated:

I knew since kindergarten that I was going to college because my dad told me I was. My dad told me that I had to do better than my mom and him, because neither of them had went to college and that I had to make more money than them. And so he told – I don't know if he told me or if I came up with this myself, but when I was little I told everyone I wanted to be a lawyer, and I'm not quite sure if it was my decision or his decision, but I was going to be a lawyer. But he picked that up and that's what he told people, even when I was six; "Oh, she's going to be a lawyer."

Sarah's family's expectations regarding their desire for her to attend college were similar to the families of Bruce, Dwayne, and James (urban students). The drive to attend college was initiated by their families.

Activities, entertainment, rituals: Surprise.

Sarah from Ypsilanti Township explained that her social transition was more difficult than her academic transition. Reflecting on her experience living in the EMU residence halls, Sarah shared:

[The] only thing that I felt was kind of different was like living in the residence halls, like I'm a very quiet and simple person and a lot of the African-Americans were like running and yelling in the hallways, listening to their music really loud... That was the only kind of culture shock to me was their loud music; like I don't listen to music that loud but they like a lot of people listen to their music really loud in the residence hall.

Despite growing up in an integrated hometown (Ypsilanti Township), Sarah experienced a surprise living in the residence hall with diverse others. Sarah found that she did not have the same social norms, specifically related to noise (vocal level of conversation) and playing

music. Sarah's perceptions of the noise level from African American students in the residence hall had parallels to Bruce's description of language patterns of Detroiters, which he described as "yelling down the block" even when in close proximity to one another. Sarah did not experience this language pattern in her hometown neighborhood and was challenged to make sense of it living on campus at EMU.

Demographic: Adaptation to surprises.

Unlike many students from homogeneous communities who indicated that they had did not have exposure to diverse others prior to college, students from integrated suburban communities were notable in that they had prior experience interacting with diverse others. However, integrated suburban students' experience with diverse others was more likely to be in an academic setting (school) rather than in a residential setting (neighborhood).

First generation: Adaptation to surprises.

Sarah's adaptation was to heed her family's advice and attend college. The four students (Sarah, Bruce, Dwayne, and James) who shared that they attended college because of their family's desire for a better life were all from families in which the parents did not attend college. These families had identified college as a means to achieve a better life, and in some cases the families shared their desire for their student to attend college in such a way that the students felt a degree of pressure. The commonality among these students was they came from communities (such as Detroit and Ypsilanti Township) where college was not the norm and where many families had limited economic resources.

Activities, entertainment, rituals: Adaptation to surprises.

For Sarah the outcome of the surprise of increased noise in the hall and actions of diverse others was difficult and resulted in a level of frustration.

To me I'm like very conscientious of the people around me...I remember one time. It was like in the first week of school and I came [in] late because it was a friend's birthday party so I didn't get home 'till like 1:00 or 2:00. And I had a bag that made a noise because it had something in it and I was worried that I was waking up girls as I was walking down the hallway, and the next day girls are like screaming, yelling in the hallway, banging on the doors. I'm like why was I ever worried about the rustling of my bag as I was walking down the hallway?

Sarah's comments illustrate the negative feelings which were tied to the surprise (noise level) she encountered in the residence halls, as her actions were different than those of her fellow floormates.

Schools: Academic surprises.

Luke, a commuter from Ann Arbor who attended a diverse high school, shared his perception of the diversity at EMU, stating:

There's a lot of people from everywhere...there's just a real mix of people I think in every class you're going have somebody who's not White. Somebody who's not Protestant. Somebody who's not, you know from Ann Arbor. You're going have somebody who's not like you.

Schools: Adaptation to academic surprises.

Luke did not have difficulty processing the surprise interacting with diverse others on the campus. Luke was a commuter student. Reflecting on his experience interacting with diverse others (on campus and in the classroom), Luke shared:

I think that's so important. In, you know a global economy especially, you know. You've got everybody coming together. And so you need to learn to work with people who are not like you. And I'd say, you know maybe people from Ann Arbor don't need that as much as other people do.

Luke recognized that his experience in his hometown interacting with diverse others was not the norm in southeast Michigan. Many students from rural and urban communities attended homogeneous high schools and lived in homogeneous communities, thus had limited opportunities to interact with diverse others. While Luke looked at his academic experience

as an opportunity to prepare himself for the diverse working world, his view was not most students' first adaptation. Students from other residential communities were more timid or made efforts to separate themselves from diverse others instead of embracing the opportunity.

Table 4.69

Organizational Entry: Integrated Suburban Students

Category of Surprise	Concepts
Residential	(a) Ethnicity (b) First Generation
School: Academic	(a) Previous exposure to diverse others in the classroom

Predominantly White suburban communities.

Residential surprise.

Demographics: Surprise.

The surprise for Reid from Flat Rock was interacting with other African Americans on campus after having grown up in a predominantly White suburban community. Reid did not experience a surprise interacting with White students, but did experience a surprise interacting with African American students. Reid's experiences prior to EMU were different from those of African American students who had grown up in Detroit and had minimal exposure and interaction with White individuals.

Reflecting on her experience, Reid shared, "So, I think that actually the harder adjustment for me – like, for example, is even to this day, even as a graduate assistant at EMU, 33 years old, I still feel uncomfortable going to the Eateries." The Eastern Eateries was not part of Reid's social experience as an undergraduate or graduate student.

Reid from Flat Rock experienced the surprise of interacting with diverse others prior to EMU, as an African American student attending school in a community which was predominantly White. Reid did not experience a surprise interacting with White students on the campus; she explained, “Yeah, because I felt like I dealt with all of that, what, 10 years ago, when I was going through all of my elementary at Flat Rock, and whatnot.” Reid explained that being around White individuals in a social setting was what she experienced growing up, sharing, “That’s what I grew up with. I had become accustomed to being the only one [African American], and not really feeling odd about it.”

Reid, who married another African American student from EMU, explained that culturally there were differences between herself and her husband, who attended high school in Detroit. She shared, “Not only do you have the cultural differences between races, so then there’s the cultural difference within your own race. You know, the – what shade of Black are you? Where are you from?” Reid’s example illustrates that students, even within the same race, experience surprises when they are challenged to interact with individuals from different hometown communities once on the EMU campus.

Physical environment, safety, and security: Surprise.

Several students interviewed from predominantly White suburban communities indicated that feeling *less* safe was a surprise which they experienced once on campus and in the surrounding Ypsilanti community. Elizabeth from Canton shared her surprise, “You see bums outside of Jimmy John’s [a sandwich shop on the edge of campus]; you don’t see that in Canton.” Elizabeth shared that she would often walk fast or cross over to the other side of the street to avoid the homeless people as she walked from her off-campus apartment to the campus for her classes.

Like Elizabeth, Jennifer from Brighton shared that she had a feeling of safety in her hometown community.

I feel like I can just go out whenever, at any time I want in Brighton and do whatever, and not have to worry about really watching, being careful or anything. But whereas in Ypsi I wouldn’t – I would make sure I went out earlier in the day if I was going [to] go out somewhere, to the store or something. I don’t know, maybe that’s like a stereotype that it’s in my head, but that’s just how I feel.

Jennifer’s comments that she had a greater sense of safety in her hometown were similar to Elizabeth’s. Elsa from Plymouth had similar feelings. Elsa shared, “I guess I do admit that I am a little bit more on my guard when I am in Ypsilanti than when I’m in Plymouth-Canton.” Students from three White suburban communities – Brighton, Plymouth, and Canton – experienced surprises related to their feeling of safety in the Ypsilanti community, specifically feeling less safe in Ypsilanti than in their hometowns.

Table 4.70

Cities in Southeast Michigan and Violent Crime

City	Population	Violent crime	Violent crimes per 100,000	Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter	Forcible rape	Robbery	Aggravated assault
Brighton	7,237	25	345	0	7	3	15
Canton	84,506	120	142	0	14	27	79
Plymouth	8,622	6	70	0	1	2	3
Ypsilanti	21,766	285	1,309	3	13	74	195

Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation (2009)

Table 4.71

Cities in Southeast Michigan and Property Crime

City	Population	Property crime	Property crimes per 100,00	Burglary	Larceny- theft	Motor vehicle theft	Arson
Brighton	7,237	210	2,902	22	175	13	0
Canton	84,506	1,546	1,829	256	1,167	123	11
Plymouth	8,622	147	1,705	22	111	14	3
Ypsilanti	21,766	1,024	4,705	278	649	97	6

(Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2009)

Statistics from the Federal Bureau of Investigation confirm these students' perceptions, as Brighton, Canton, and Plymouth had fewer violent crimes and property crimes (per 100,000 individuals) than Ypsilanti. While the EMU campus has fewer crimes than what occurs in Ypsilanti, students' perceptions of the campus safety are shaped by the crimes that occur in Ypsilanti. Since crimes that occur contiguous to the campus are reported to students via "timely alerts" over e-mail, students have a heightened awareness of crimes in Ypsilanti.

Ideology: Surprise.

Jennifer from Brighton explained that Eastern Michigan University was much more diverse than her hometown. She shared how much she enjoyed the EMU community, explaining, "I don't have to feel as guarded about what I think...In Brighton you wouldn't voice your opinion because you may know it wouldn't be accepted." Jennifer was surprised at the diversity at the university, both culturally and in terms of sexual orientation. She shared, "On the EMU campus you see openly gay students, you wouldn't see this much in Brighton." Jennifer shared that it was a positive surprise transitioning from a conservative hometown community to a more accepting and liberal college community.

For Elsa, her social surprise was that students on Eastern's campus seemed less interested in appearance and material goods than her high school classmates. Elsa from Plymouth explained that she did not feel the pressure to compete (i.e., wear the best brand of clothing and makeup) on the EMU campus than she did in her hometown.

Demographics: Adaptation to surprises.

Reflecting on her experience interacting with other African Americans on campus having grown up in a predominantly White suburban area, Reid from Flat Rock shared:

Just because I did not grow up around predominant African Americans and I don't deny my race, or feel like, "Oh, I won't want to be around Black people." Like, I

don't feel like that at all. But I – but that is where I'm more aware of how different I am...in some cases, I wouldn't have been White enough, and in some places I wasn't Black enough.

In the case of the Eateries, Reid did not share the common bond of being from Detroit; culturally she was an outsider, despite being an African American. Reid was able to verbalize her adaptation, i.e., what it was like being an African American female on the EMU campus having been socialized in a White community,

I think there are some things that the Black...that I will never experience. It's sort of sad, but I'm okay with it. It would be cool not feel out of place at an ice-breaker, or maybe the experience of, going through the traditional black sorority, so I think I definitely missed-out on that...It's an experience that I still stand outside of. And sometimes that's sad. Sometimes not... They definitely get that experience, and I won't ever get that...I think there are few students in the African-American population at EMU who...there's a part of their development that they'll miss-out on, unless they try to branch-out.

Reid had a keen awareness of differences which existed within her race; she was often excluded or considered an outsider at traditional African American activities on the campus.

Reid from Flat Rock recalled the challenges of learning about her husband's experiences in Detroit. She shared that the two communities that they came from were very different, and each of them had assumptions about the other's community. She explained, "I would spout-off and say something totally naïve, and judgmental about" his hometown. Reid acknowledged the challenges she faced learning about the culture of Detroit, her husband's hometown.

Physical environment, safety, and security: Adaptation to surprises.

Elizabeth's behavior of walking quickly past or making efforts to avoid homeless individuals illustrated her adaptation. Overall, Elizabeth explained that she felt less safe in the Ypsilanti community than in her hometown of Canton.

Elsa's understanding of socioeconomics and crime level influenced her adaptation, and she shared that "Plymouth-Canton feels safer. There's – and I mean I know that there's more people that are from lower income backgrounds here [Ypsilanti]. I mean that doesn't mean that there's no crime in Plymouth Canton because there is."

Ideology: Adaptation to surprises.

Though Jennifer came from a predominantly White community which was characteristically conservative, she did not have difficulty processing the increased levels of diversity which she experienced on campus. This was due in part to Jennifer's upbringing. Jennifer initially shared with me that she grew up with her mother and her aunt in Brighton. Later, Jennifer revealed that the woman she referred to as her aunt was actually her mother's lesbian partner, but in Brighton she was taught that others were not accepting of such difference. Though Jennifer revealed the identity of her aunt in the interview, while living in Brighton she did not share with classmates that her mother had a lesbian partner. Jennifer explained:

I never really mentioned it to my friends because some of my friends I don't think [they] would be as accepting. And I didn't – I was worried that I didn't want them to look at me differently, or be like, "Oh, well, her parents have a lot of different friends, and I don't know about that." And I didn't want like my friends to tell their parents, because I do have some friends that if they told their parents, I think that they'd be like, "Well, maybe you shouldn't hang out with that person anymore."...I didn't really say anything... I kind of just kept it to myself. Plus ...my aunt always mentioned, "Well, if you say anything, you want to make sure that they're okay with it, because they may not be and they may not want to be your friend anymore."

Having grown up in a non-traditional family (with two female adult figures) shaped Jennifer prior to her collegiate experience. Coming into EMU, Jennifer stated "I knew going in, it was going to be different and I would need to get used to it. I went in with an optimistic attitude."

Jennifer's past experiences were a input that shaped how she made sense of her experience (that is, the surprises she encountered) at EMU.

Elsa realized that she felt more at ease on the Eastern Michigan University campus as a result:

I always felt pressured to look good when I went to high school because everybody looked so good. But here like people come to class like in sweatpants. You know they don't do their makeup...And it's kind of nice cause then you don't feel like you have to like compete with everybody to look good.

Less pressure to socially compete was a positive outcome of Elsa's EMU experience.

Schools: Academic surprises.

One academic surprise that Jennifer from Brighton experienced was an acceptance of multiple views in the classroom. Jennifer said of her academic experience at EMU, "And even like in classrooms, like you can say whatever, and professors say whatever, and it's – it makes the atmosphere more comfortable for learning or other stuff."

Schools: Academic adaptation to surprises.

For Jennifer, acceptance of multiple views in the classroom resulted in a positive learning environment, one where she felt more at ease. Making sense of this surprise she shared, "I don't have to feel so guarded as to what I feel or think...So I kind of just – I just like it. I mean, I never thought about it when I was in Brighton, but I definitely like it, how it is here more than it was in Brighton."

Table 4.78

Organizational Entry: Students from Predominantly White Suburban Communities

Category of Surprise	Concepts
Demographics	(a) Ethnicity
Ideology	(a) Less conservative
Physical environment, safety, and security	(a) More crime (Ypsilanti) than in hometown community
Academic: School	(a) Exposure to multiple ideas

Predominantly African American suburban communities.

Residential surprise.

Demographic: Surprise.

Cindy, an African American student from Oak Park, shared that she experienced a cultural surprise when she transitioned to EMU based on the racial composition of the student body. Cindy’s hometown community of Oak Park is a predominantly African American suburban community located in southeast Michigan. Cindy explained her cultural surprise, “I thought EMU was 50% Black and 50% White. I had never met anyone from a different country. I felt like EMU was much more Caucasian [when I arrived]; I had never seen so many Caucasian Americans. It was a culture shock.” For Cindy, she experienced a surprise when she realized that that the African American population on campus was much smaller than she had perceived.

Demographic: Adaptation to surprises.

Having grown up in a predominantly African American community, Cindy had to make sense of her new experience living in a more integrated setting. Cindy had difficulty making sense of her more diverse environment, and she shared that she traveled to her hometown often during her first year in school. Gradually, Cindy became more comfortable

in the EMU community. Now as a senior she only travels to her hometown if there is a special event.

Schools: Academic surprise.

Cindy grew up in Oak Park and attended Southfield High School, which was 95% African American (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009). Cindy experienced an academic surprise at EMU. She said of her academic experience, “I ended up being the only Black person in the entire class. This was a first. I had to get used to not seeing a familiar face.” For Cindy, her experience in the classroom at EMU was much different racially than her high school experience in Southfield. The shift in student makeup in the classroom was surprising. At Eastern Michigan University, Cindy experienced being the only African American in the classroom which was in stark contrast to her high school experience. Students who grew up in predominantly African American suburban areas and attended high schools in these suburban areas experienced a transition as they matriculate to EMU, which is more diverse than these neighborhoods and neighborhood schools.

Schools: Adaptation to academic surprises.

Cindy was challenged to make sense of her experience of being the only African American student in the classroom. The demographic change in the classroom from high school to college was difficult for Cindy to process. In high school, 95% of Cindy’s classmates were African American. For Cindy, she had to learn to cope with her feeling that there was not a “familiar face,” i.e., another African American, in the classroom. Although Cindy experienced being the only African American in the classroom, the diversity at EMU is such that many classes have a mixture of students where there is not only one African American student.

Table 4.73

Organizational Entry: Students from predominantly African American suburban communities

Category of Surprise	Concepts
Demographics	Ethnicity
School: Academic	Ethnicity - first experience being the only African American student in the classroom

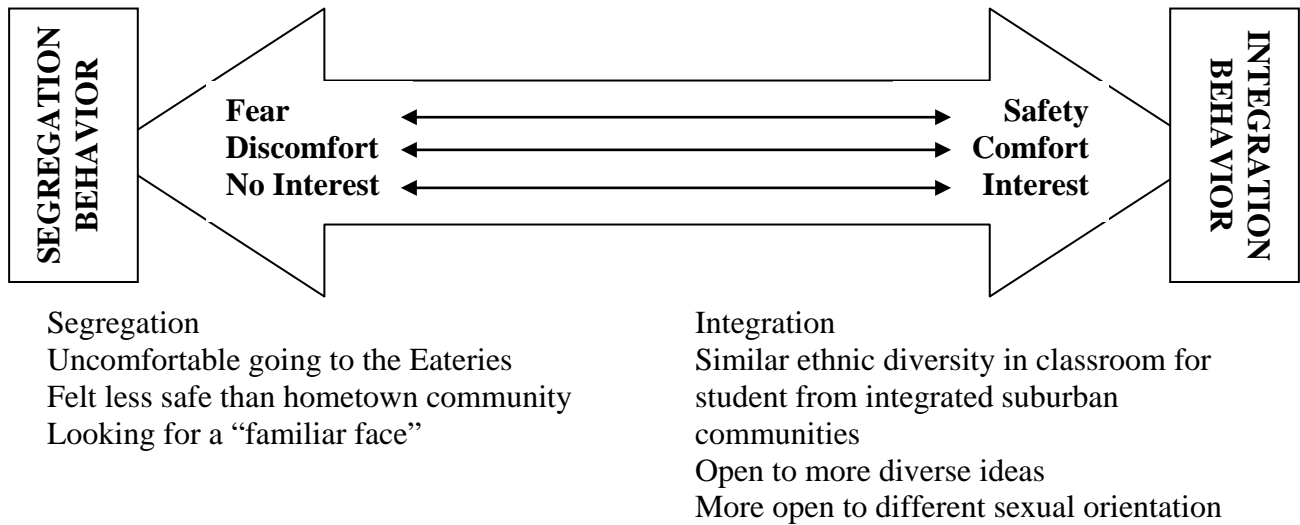


Figure 4.28 *Suburban student segregation and integration behavior*

Summary of surprise and adaptation for suburban students.

Luke, from Ann Arbor, was interested in interacting with diverse others, sharing that in a global economy it is important to “learn to work with people who are not like you.” Having grown up in Ann Arbor, Luke interacted with diverse others during middle and high school, and therefore it was a natural progression for him to interact with diverse others at EMU. Unlike students from homogeneous environments, Luke had previous experience interacting with diverse others.

Much like rural students Katie and Tim, Jennifer from Brighton found that Eastern Michigan University was more open to diverse ideas than her home community, sharing “I don’t have to feel as guarded about what I think [at EMU].…” Jennifer experienced a similar level of openness to multiple ideas in the classroom. Jennifer described her experience in the collegiate academic environment as an “atmosphere more comfortable for learning.” This newfound level of comfort in both the academic and social settings assisted Jennifer as she transitioned from her hometown of Brighton to EMU.

Reid, an African American student from Flat Rock, experienced a transition during her matriculation process at EMU. Having grown up in a predominantly White suburban community, Reid shared, “I had become accustomed to being the only one [African American], and not feeling odd about it.” Thus, Reid felt comfortable integrating with White students on the campus. However, Reid felt like an outsider at the Eastern Eateries explaining that since she did not grow up in a predominantly African American community. Reid did not share the common bond of being from Detroit and thus she felt uncomfortable at the Eastern Eateries. Reid’s prior experience, both in her secondary school and neighborhood, shaped her experience as she transitioned to the university. Despite being African American,

Reid was not part of the African American student community which socialized at the Eateries. The African American student population in front of the Eateries recreates the culture of Detroit, essentially segregating themselves from anyone not from an urban culture. Reid from Flat Rock found that she was unable to integrate with other African American students from Detroit who socialized at the Eateries, despite the fact that she is African American herself.

Cindy, an African American student from Oak Park, Michigan, experienced a cultural surprise when she transitioned to EMU. Cindy's high school was predominantly Black. At EMU Cindy experienced a stark contrast when she was the only Black student in a class. Prior to college, Cindy had minimal exposure to diverse others. The diverse EMU student population resulted in a surprise for Cindy.

Summary of interaction of urban, suburban, and rural students.

As I described above, several students had an interest in integrating with diverse others but experienced a clash when faced with students who did not share this same interest. Based on what students shared during the interviews, when a student experiences a conflict, which can be described as one person's desire to integrate and another person's desire to segregate, it appears that segregation becomes the more probable behavior. Students experienced dissonance as a result of the conflict.

Marc from Sumpter Township had difficulty making African American friends at EMU despite being Black himself. However, the group he tried to engage was mainly composed of African Americans from Detroit. Marc's experience illuminates how a desire to integrate can result in dissonance when faced with other students who do not share this desire.

Eric, from Detroit, had an interest in learning from diverse others but experienced a conflict when his first roommate did not share this interest. Eric described his feelings as a result of his roommate clash, "...that left a bad taste in my mouth for a while and he reinforced sort of what, the typical things that my family tried to feed me based on their experiences and based on how they were brought up." As Eric processed the conflict that he experienced with his roommate, he returned to the norms that were taught by his family members who had grown up during a period of more blatant segregation. Eric described the segregation his family members experienced,

...my mom's side of the family they were all raised 1950s down south and that is during racial segregation and things like that...Arkansas, a little small town, and that again is at the high of the Civil Rights Movement and everything was separated and you know certain ideas were had about certain races and certain cultures and a lot of that I guess was used to attempt to inform me about how other people were supposed to be.

Eric's example illustrates that there are many factors which influence students' collegiate experience (e.g., norms the student was taught by family members, what the student experiences on the campus, and well as personal characteristics which influence the individuals desire or lack of desire to integrate with diverse others).

Despite segregation being a dominant behavior, students who persisted (e.g., working to integrate after encountering a clash) often encountered students on the campus who were interested in integrating. For example, Eric's initial roommate was not interested in integrating with diverse others; however, Eric's sophomore year roommate did share this interest. As a result of this match, both students interested in interacting with diverse others, both students had a positive experience.

Cleophis, from Detroit, is an example of a student moving from segregation to integration during his time as an undergraduate student. Initially, Cleophis' segregation was

evident; he shared “I had this attitude toward White students...” and chose to socialize only with friends from Detroit, and some of the players on the EMU football team. Living in the residence halls, Cleophis was able to resolve the conflict he experienced with White suitemates. The progression from segregation to integration was evident as Cleophis became “good friends” with his White suitemates.

Chapter 5: Summary and Conclusions

In this chapter, I provide a summary of the research findings and discuss the theoretical and practical implications of this study. In addition, limitations and recommendations for future studies are discussed.

Purposes

The purposes of this study were to (a) explore undergraduate students' experiences as they transitioned to the university, (b) explore how the cultures of students' hometowns influenced student culture at the university, and (c) provide a conceptual model with analytical generalizability across higher education.

This study explored the cultures within southeast Michigan (i.e., how students have been shaped by their hometown community cultures) and how these cultures permeate the EMU campus. Specifically, this study examined organizational entry, examining students' experiences as they matriculated to the university.

Research Tradition

I employed an interpretive research tradition which is defined by assumptions of causality. The interpretive paradigm originated from the works of Edmund Husserl and Wilhelm Dilthey, both German philosophers (Dilthey, 1911/1977; Husserl, 1929/1969). Dilthey explained that meanings are all based on a set of assumptions that people share about the nature of how to interact, how human beings should relate to one another, and how they should not. Dilthey was the first to distinguish between the study of human sciences and natural sciences (Dilthey, 1911/1977).

According to the Chicago School of thought, the focus is rooted in social and interactional nature of reality, what can be described as human lived experiences. Social facts

make sense when they are studied in a social context. Further, human interactions occur in social space, and there is value in focusing on the geographic space because it provides a contextual element (Abbott, 1997). Thus, I decided that the most appropriate way to understand student culture was to examine students' experiences, as well as their actions and interactions, in the natural campus setting. For this ethnographic research project, I worked to move from description of student behavior to an explanation of student behavior.

Conceptual Framework

Culture and surprises/conflicts were the two key concepts in the conceptual framework for this study. The cultural environment on the Eastern Michigan University campus is composed of various cultural groups from southeast Michigan. This study examined the interaction or lack of interaction among the various cultures in southeast Michigan and how this translated to the student experience at EMU. This dissertation sought to better understand undergraduate students' experiences of transitioning from a hometown in southeast Michigan to the EMU campus. Figure 5.1 illustrates this concept as the college matriculation process.

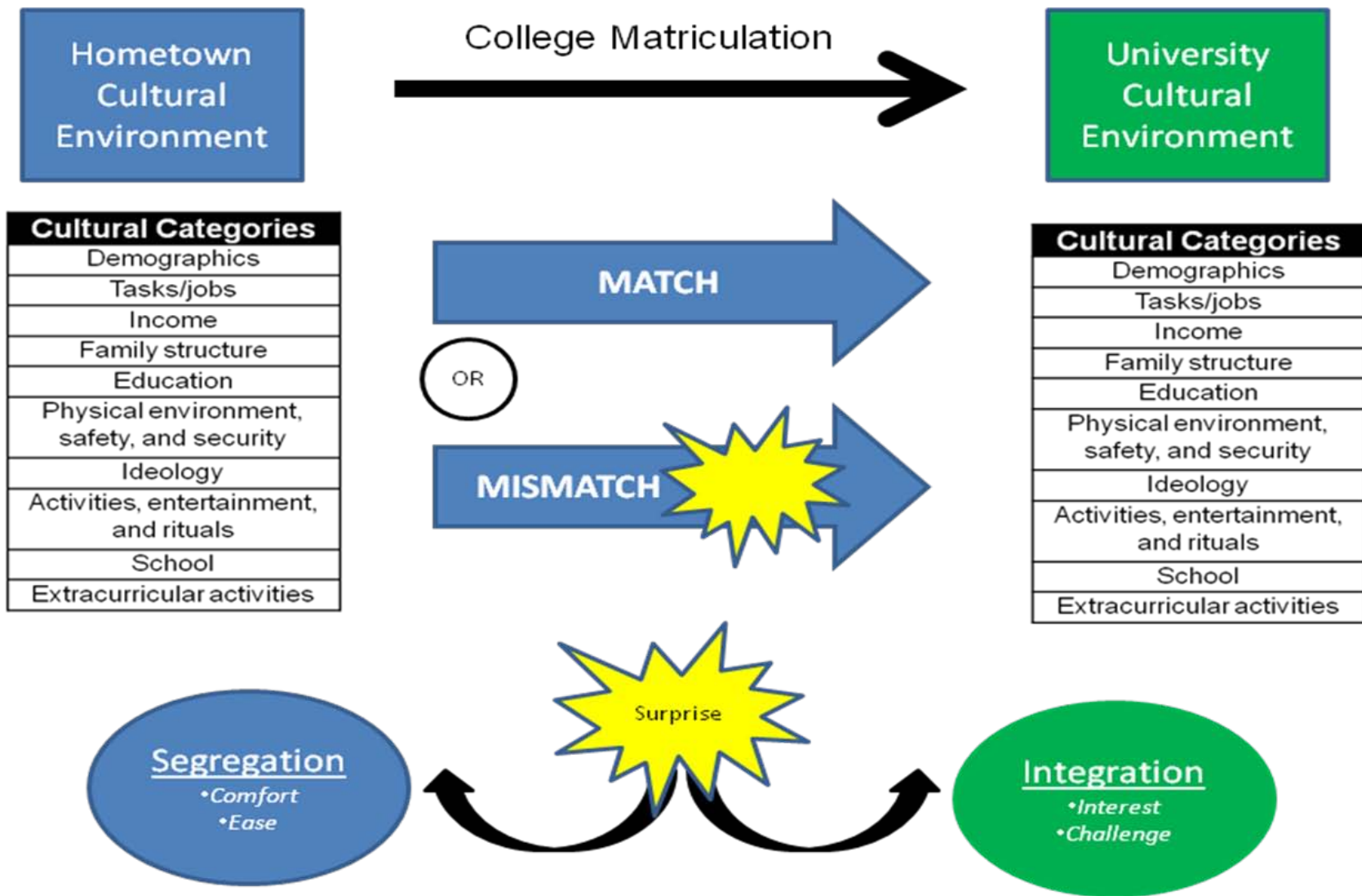


Figure 5.1. Conceptual Framework: Students' matriculation processes from hometown to institutional environment

Culture is a group phenomenon which is carried by individuals. A foundational aspect of this research is an understanding of the meanings that people carry in their heads, that is, their causal assumptions (Spindler, 1963). People behave based on the meanings they have, and the meanings they have are derived from their environment. Students come to campus with a lifetime of experience; most students attending EMU have lived in a particular area of southeast Michigan for 18 or more years. Communities in southeast Michigan teach different cultural norms and values; thus, when students convene on the EMU campus, there are an array of student cultures which are grounded in the values of their hometown communities.

The conflicts between groups of undergraduate students coming from different areas in southeast Michigan were examined in this study. Specifically, I identified mismatches between hometown cultural environment and institutional environment. Mismatches are an example of conflict; in my conceptual framework I used the term *surprise* to describe conflicts that students experienced during their matriculation process.

There are three approaches that can be used to manage conflicts; (a) privatize the conflict, (b) socialize the conflict, or (c) define the conflict (Schattschneider, 1975). The visibility of the conflict is determined by whether the conflict is privatized or socialized. Privatizing the conflict is an example of segregation, whereas socializing the conflict is an example of integration. To summarize, conflict occurs on the campus when a student's values and norms clash with other students' values and norms. In the college environment, students begin to realize (often for the first time) that their established norms and values differ from those of other students.

For my study, matriculation to the university served as the point of organizational entry for students. Utilizing Louis' concept of surprise, I examined how students dealt with

surprises and conflicts they encountered during the matriculation process (1980b). Prior to matriculating to the university, students anticipate what it will be like to be a college student. In the anticipation process, college students develop expectations about their college experience. Once on the campus, the students' "anticipations are tested against the reality of their" collegiate experience (Louis, 1980b, p. 231).

Adaptation is a continual process for students, which occurs when their collegiate experience is different from what they expected. Students' stories of their experiences at EMU as compared to their hometown experiences shed light on their organizational entry. Students' reactions further explain how students cope when they experience unmet expectations.

Research Questions

The exploratory research questions that were addressed included:

1. What are the cultural groups in southeast Michigan?
2. How did the cultural groups form?
3. What surprises and conflicts do students experience during organizational entry (i.e., matriculation to the institution)?
4. How do students react to these surprises and conflicts?

Site Selection

My interest in understanding the community and the student population that I serve influenced my decision to study Eastern Michigan University and southeast Michigan. Enhancing my cultural understanding of southeast Michigan has in turn enhanced my cultural understanding of the undergraduate students at EMU. I believe it is important to conduct research that provides faculty, staff, and administrators with information that can help them

better understand the student populations they serve. The decision to study the environment in which I am fully immersed was purposeful and pragmatic. Data collection was facilitated by my connection to and immersion within the EMU community.

Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis for the study was southeast Michigan.

Moral, Ethical, and Legal Issues

The Human Subjects Review process through Eastern Michigan University is designed to “safeguard the rights and welfare of all individuals involved as subjects in research” (EMU Board of Regents, 1978, p. 1). The process of the board review was completed, and approval from the board was obtained prior to data collection (Gall et al., 2005).

Accepted ethical practices in the field of sociology and anthropology were utilized, and this involved conducting research using informed consent and practices designed to minimize harm. The overarching approach of this ethnographic research was to respect the individual student and his or her experiences. I was intentional to avoid places where there was a reasonable expectation of privacy. Also, I worked to represent students’ points of view accurately.

Data Needed

In order to better understand undergraduate students’ experiences of transitioning from a hometown in southeast Michigan to the Eastern Michigan University campus, I needed data about students’ hometown communities, as well as data about their experiences at EMU. Observation and informal interviews were collected over a four-year period beginning in January 2006. I conducted an extensive document review of community

material for southeast Michigan, which included government documents, public school information, census, and crime statistics.

Specific data needed about hometown communities included demographics including racial composition of the community, tasks/jobs, median household income, family structure, educational level, crime statistics, ideology, and activities. In order to strengthen my understanding of the community culture, I sought to learn about the tasks, ideology, and activities in local high schools as well as in the communities generally.

The next pieces of required data were student behavior on the campus, i.e., observational data of students in their collegiate environment. I used an observational approach in order to understand the group-level phenomena, which comprise undergraduate student culture. Also, I needed data (which I collected via formal and informal interviews) from students about their personal experiences as they transitioned from their hometown community to the university, and information about how they made sense of that transition.

Research Instrumentation

I was the main research instrument for this study. As the research instrument, I observed humans and social systems; collected and reviewed documents, artifacts, newspapers, and visual materials; and conducted informal and formal interviews.

For this research project, I utilized sociological and anthropological lenses and engaged in anthropological field research methods. Staying true to this form of research, initially I could not provide specificity as to particular behaviors I would observe. Instead, my approach was to observe undergraduate student behavior in public on the EMU campus (Bateson, 1984).

Data Collection

Data collection took place throughout the campus, in an array of venues and during activities that students attended. Data were also collected throughout southeast Michigan, specifically from the communities which were major feeder areas for the university. I utilized multiple forms of data collection connected to anthropological field research methods, including in-depth observation, formal and informal interviews, field notes, and photographs. Informal conversations and formal interviews with students were utilized to obtain students' perspectives, their stories of growing up in a southeast Michigan community, and their experiences interacting with other cultures within southeast Michigan and on the EMU campus. I conducted 21 formal interviews. During interviews students shared information about their experiences growing up their hometown and their experiences at Eastern Michigan University as well as comparing their experiences at Eastern Michigan University to their experiences in their hometown. In addition, I conducted approximately 40 informal interviews with EMU students, alumni, and residents of southeast Michigan.

Data analyses

Data analysis was a three-step process. First I conducted a review of all transcripts and field notes, specifically examining empirical data which included pictures and maps. Second, I coded all data according to cultural categories for both hometown culture and institutional culture. Cultural categories which were used were: (a) demographics, (b) tasks/jobs, (c) income, (d) family structure, (e) education, (f) physical environment, safety, and security, (g) ideology, (h) activities, entertainment, and rituals, (i) schools, and (j) extracurricular activities. Data coding involved identifying events, situations, quotes, and environmental elements which illustrated a particular category (Merriam, 1998). I utilized

NVivo 8 qualitative data analysis software to organize my coding, field notes, and other documents (QSR International, 2008). Diagrams were created to depict relationships, sort data, and analyze information. Based on observations and interviews, I moved from a description of student behavior to an explanation of this behavior. The third and final step of the data analysis was developing conclusions.

Validity and Reliability

Validity, “generally defined as the trustworthiness of inferences drawn from data,” is the process ensuring that the findings are accurate, representing the socially constructed reality of the participants (LeCompte et al., 1992, p. 644). Cultural observation focused on students’ construction of reality; this study explored how students experience life within their hometown, focusing on the cultures within southeast Michigan which are embedded within students.

Validity in ethnographic research is achieved by extended observation, interviewing, and searching for disconfirming evidence (Merriam, 1998). For this research study, I continued sampling until I reached data saturation, and then I looked for disconfirming evidence.

Internal validity is maximized when research findings closely resemble reality (Merriam, 1998). Internal reliability is based on whether findings are accurate, and if the study can be replicated. In order to enhance reliability, I utilized a member checking process where three informants responded to my interpretation of the data and findings and provided feedback on how to create an accurate description of their hometowns and experiences (Jones et al., 2006).

External validity can be generalizable to other individuals, settings, or times (Gall et al., 2005). This research does not have external reliability, as the findings are not generalizable to a larger group. Southeast Michigan is a unique area with a comprehensive history. The culture of southeast Michigan cannot be generalized to other areas. However, the conceptual framework has analytic generalizability and can be applied to other university settings as a tool to explore students' matriculation processes (Yin, 1994).

Southeast Michigan and historical background.

The Native Americans were the first inhabitants in Michigan. In the early 1600s the Native Americans met the French in what is now referred to as Michigan (The Legislative Service Bureau, 2006). The initial population increase in Detroit was due to Eastern European immigration in the late 19th century and early 20th century. Following the Eastern European immigration, there was a migration from New England, followed by a migration from the American South. Many individuals from southern states moved to Detroit with hopes of employment with the auto industry and a better life. Southeast Michigan has a history of residential segregation which is still present today. The Detroit race riots (1967) and educational bussing (1969) were major events that manifested as conflicts which entrenched residential segregation in southeast Michigan.

Historically there has been class, racial, and cultural residential separation in Detroit. The separation intensified with White flight as individuals moved out of the city into the suburbs. Residential segregation is evident today, and this separation contributes to the segregated school systems within southeast Michigan. Many students growing up in southeast Michigan have minimal diverse interactions prior to college because of the composition in their neighborhoods and neighborhood schools.

Within these data lies an explanation of the surprises which students experience as they transition from their hometown community to the campus community. This study has confirmed that one of the most productive ways to understand culture is to explore the environment, specifically looking at the tasks that are organized around community rules. By examining the environment surrounding EMU, essentially southeast Michigan, this study was able to illuminate the student culture on the EMU campus. It became evident that students behave based on the meanings that they hold, and the meanings students have are based on their environment, specifically their hometown environment.

A critical component of understanding student culture is understanding students' hometowns; at EMU this means examining the urban, suburban, and rural communities in southeast Michigan. Students from southeast Michigan come to campus having lived in a community with one of these distinct residential characteristics: (a) predominantly Black, (b) racially integrated, or (c) predominantly White.

Census data indicate that the urban center of southeast Michigan, Detroit, is predominantly Black. While the urban center is predominantly Black, rural communities in southeast Michigan are predominantly White (Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG), 2007). Between the urban center and the rural communities lies what I call the *suburban spectrum*. After examining census data on southeast Michigan's suburbs, I have divided these suburbs into three subcategories which are (a) predominantly Black suburbs, (b) integrated suburbs, or (c) predominantly White suburbs.

I believe that it is important to understand the residential and educational makeup of communities, which are the feeder areas for the EMU undergraduate student body, as data

about these communities sheds light on some of the transitional issues that students encounter during the organizational entry process.

At EMU, students are no longer in a homogenous educational or residential environment. Though cultural homogeneity was the norm in many students' elementary and secondary schools as well as their neighborhoods, this is not the norm of the Eastern Michigan University campus. The transition from the K-12 system to the higher education system, specifically in southeast Michigan, can be a significant change. My research focused on the impact of the environment on student culture, which is rarely a focus for student affairs practice.

Environment.

The cultural environment, which for this study was southeast Michigan, consists of culture and tasks. There were ten cultural categories explicated in the research: (a) demographics; (b) tasks/jobs; (c) income; (d) family structure; (e) education; (f) physical environment, safety, and security; (g) ideology; (h) activities, entertainment, and rituals; (i) school; and (j) extracurricular activities.

After exploring communities in southeast Michigan, I found that there were five distinct cultural groups in southeast Michigan. These groups are (a) rural, (b) predominantly White suburban, (c) integrated suburban, (d) predominantly African American suburban, and (e) urban. Table 5.1 provides a listing of the five cultural groups in southeast Michigan and the hometown communities of students who were interviewed. The hometown communities are classified according to cultural groups in the table.

Table 5.1

Communities Studied in Southeast Michigan

Rural	Predominantly White Suburbs	Integrated Suburbs	Predominantly African American Suburbs	Urban
Adrian Blissfield Hartland Ida Sumpter Township Tecumseh	Brighton Flat Rock Plymouth Canton	Ann Arbor Ypsilanti Township	Oak Park Southfield	Detroit

Demographics (race/ethnicity) was one cultural category used to examine each of the cultural groups. Table 5.2 illustrates that the majority of hometown communities from which students come are demographically homogenous. Integrated suburban communities were the only heterogeneous community. Thus, most students experience a shift coming from a homogenous community to a university environment which is heterogeneous.

Table 5.2

Demographics in Southeast Michigan

Rural	Predominantly White Suburbs	Integrated Suburbs	Predominantly African American Suburbs	Urban
White Homogenous	White Homogenous	Mixed Heterogeneous	African American Homogenous	African American Homogenous

Tasks are the activities in which individuals are engaged, resources in the community, and what a cultural group learns over time for survival. Tasks for rural, urban, and suburban areas in southeast Michigan vary greatly. Table 5.3 details tasks by community type. This table shows the spectrum of tasks in which individuals are engaged in southeast Michigan, ranging from rural farming communities, suburban communities where parents have professional positions, and urban areas where unemployment and government assistance are the norm.

Table 5.3
Tasks/Jobs in Southeast Michigan

Rural	Predominantly White Suburbs	Integrated Suburbs	Predominantly African American Suburbs	Urban
Farming	Full time employment – variety of industries represented	Full time employment – variety of industries represented	Full time employment – variety of industries represented	Unemployment – Welfare, Family Independent Agency Drug dealing
Factory work	White collar jobs – college educated (i.e. engineer for automotive company, computer programming)	White collar jobs – college educated (i.e. – employed by university, pharmaceutical company)	White collar jobs – college educated (i.e. engineer for automotive company)	
Small businesses	Working class (i.e. working in the automotive factory or automotive line)	Working class (i.e. bus system, automotive industry)	Working class (i.e. working in the automotive factory or automotive line)	Hourly wage positions – often without benefits
Automotive	Variety – working or volunteering in school system, lawyers, doctors, business owners	Farming – a few suburbs are surrounded by farmland	Variety – social worker, probation officer	Factory jobs

Income was another cultural category used to examine hometown communities. Table 5.4 provides data from the 2000 Census on median household income in cities throughout southeast Michigan. Detroit has the lowest median household income of all communities studied.

Table 5.4

Income (Median Household Income) in Southeast Michigan

Rural	Predominantly White Suburbs	Integrated Suburbs	Predominantly African American Suburbs	Urban
Ranged from \$32,405 (Adrian) to \$75,908 (Hartland)	Ranged from \$44,000 (Flat Rock) to \$72,000 (Canton)	\$46,299 (Ann Arbor) less due to high number of graduate school student, \$46,460 (Ypsilanti Township)	Ranged from \$29,793 (Oak Park) to \$52,468 (Southfield)	\$29,526 (Detroit)

(U.S. Census Bureau, 2000a)

Family structure was also a cultural category used to examine hometown communities. There is a vast range of family structures across all five cultural groups including married, single parents, remarried parents, lesbian couples, and extended family members living in the home. During interviews, urban students described that teen parenthood was common in Detroit. Jennifer, from Brighton, shared how she grew up with a lesbian couple but lived under the auspices of living with her mother and aunt, as being gay in Brighton was not acceptable in her opinion.

Table 5.5

Family Structure in Southeast Michigan (Demographics of Family of Students Interviewed and Their Description of Their Communities)

Rural	Predominantly White Suburbs	Integrated Suburbs	Predominantly African American Suburbs	Urban
Mix of dual parent homes, remarried parents, and single parent homes	Married heterosexual couples, lesbian couple	*limited information both students had parents who were married	*limited information Cindy's parents were married	Single parent homes, extended family helping, teen parents

The education level of members of the community was another cultural category used to paint a picture of students' hometown communities. Table 5.6 outlines the educational levels of individuals throughout southeast Michigan. There was a dramatic range among communities. For example, in Detroit few individuals had college degrees, but in Ann Arbor, home of the University of Michigan, there was a high level of education among community members. The automotive industry, which is the main industry in southeast Michigan, historically offered many jobs that did not require a college degree. As the automotive industry has declined, unemployment within the region has risen.

Table 5.6

Education in Southeast Michigan

Rural	Predominantly White Suburbs	Integrated Suburbs	Predominantly African American Suburbs	Urban
Mix of high school and college	Varied levels of higher education	High levels of education (Ann Arbor & Ypsilanti), though a range including high school educated	Above the national average for % with a college degree	Few individuals have college degrees

Table 5.7 illustrates the cultural category of physical environment, safety, and security. FBI crime statistics were reviewed for each hometown community and compared to students' descriptions of their hometown communities.

Table 5.7

Physical Environment, Safety, and Security in Southeast Michigan

Rural	Predominantly White Suburbs	Integrated Suburbs	Predominantly African American Suburbs	Urban
Low level of crime, students reported a sense of safety	Students reported a greater sense of safety in home community than in Ypsilanti	Ypsilanti, home of EMU is an integrated suburb. For students from rural and predominantly White suburbs, Ypsilanti felt less safe than their home community		High level of crime, students reported violent crimes reported on the news daily

Ideology is an area which varied greatly by community. For this study, ideology was defined as a set of ideas that connects community members. Table 5.8 provides ideology as described by community members. There was an interesting ideological continuum, ranging from trust in others (rural) to mistrust (urban).

Table 5.8

Ideology in Southeast Michigan

Rural	Predominantly White Suburbs	Integrated Suburbs	Predominantly African American Suburbs	Urban
Conservative Connectedness Trust in others	Seeking high quality education/school district	Multiculturalism	Social mobility beyond Detroit	Mistrust Street sense

Activities, entertainment, and rituals were what community members did in their free time. Socialization was a common theme but location of social activities varied by community.

Table 5.9

Activities, Entertainment, and Rituals in Southeast Michigan

Rural	Predominantly White Suburbs	Integrated Suburbs	Predominantly African American Suburbs	Urban
Cruising Church Hunting Outside Activities Socialization	Bike riding in neighborhood Socializing in downtown suburban area Detroit for professional sports/theater Vacationing up North in Michigan Church activities	Golf Laser tag Socializing in downtown Ann Arbor Socializing at a friend's house	Going to Detroit to socialize Socializing at Belle Isle Church	Picnics Socializing at Belle Isle Pick-up sports Block parties Church activities

Table 5.10 provides a description of the demographics of schools for each of the cultural groups. Schools were more likely to be homogenous than heterogenous in southeast Michigan.

Table 5.10

Schools in Southeast Michigan

Rural	Predominantly White Suburbs	Integrated Suburbs	Predominantly African American Suburbs	Urban
White Homogenous	White Homogenous	Integrated Heterogeneous	African American Homogenous	African American Homogenous

Extracurricular activities were activities that students engaged in after school. These activities are highlighted in Table 5.11.

Table 5.11

Extracurricular Activities in Southeast Michigan

Rural	Predominantly White Suburbs	Integrated Suburbs	Predominantly African American Suburbs	Urban
Theater School activities Athletic activities Parental involvement	Music/theater/choir Athletics Clubs	Music program Private lessons (music and photography) Athletics	Athletics	Athletics – sports teams at schools

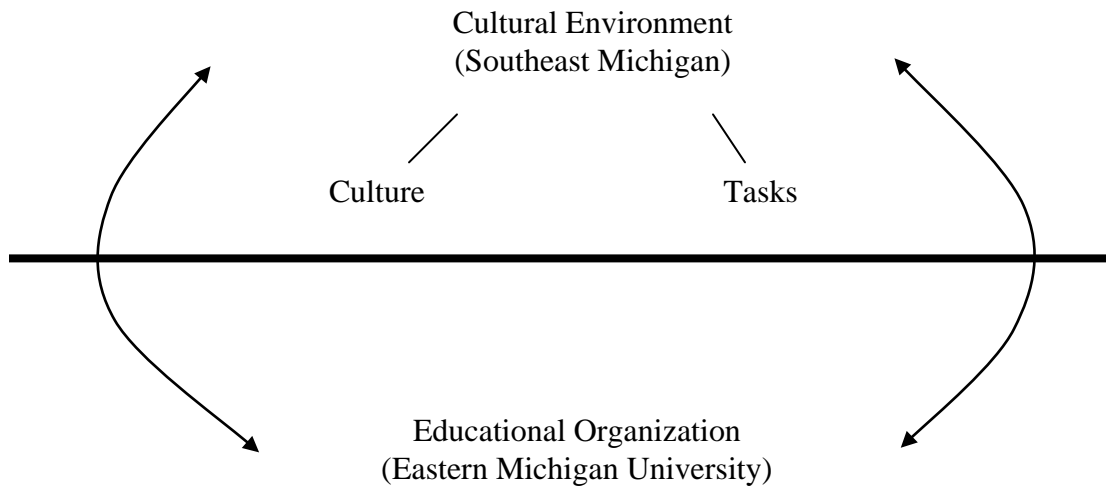


Figure 5.2. Environment and educational organization

I have found that there is a relationship between the community environment and the educational organization (EMU) as represented in Figure 5.2. Culture is transmitted to students

throughout their secondary school education. Schools transmit, teach, and socialize students into the culture. Prior to arriving at EMU, students have been socialized into their community culture.

Surprise and adaptation.

I discovered that students must make sense of the institutional environment when they matriculate to the university. Adaptation, which I define as how individuals construct reality and interpret situations, is a significant process for undergraduate students at the institution. Figure 5.3 illustrates the adaptation process for collegiate students.

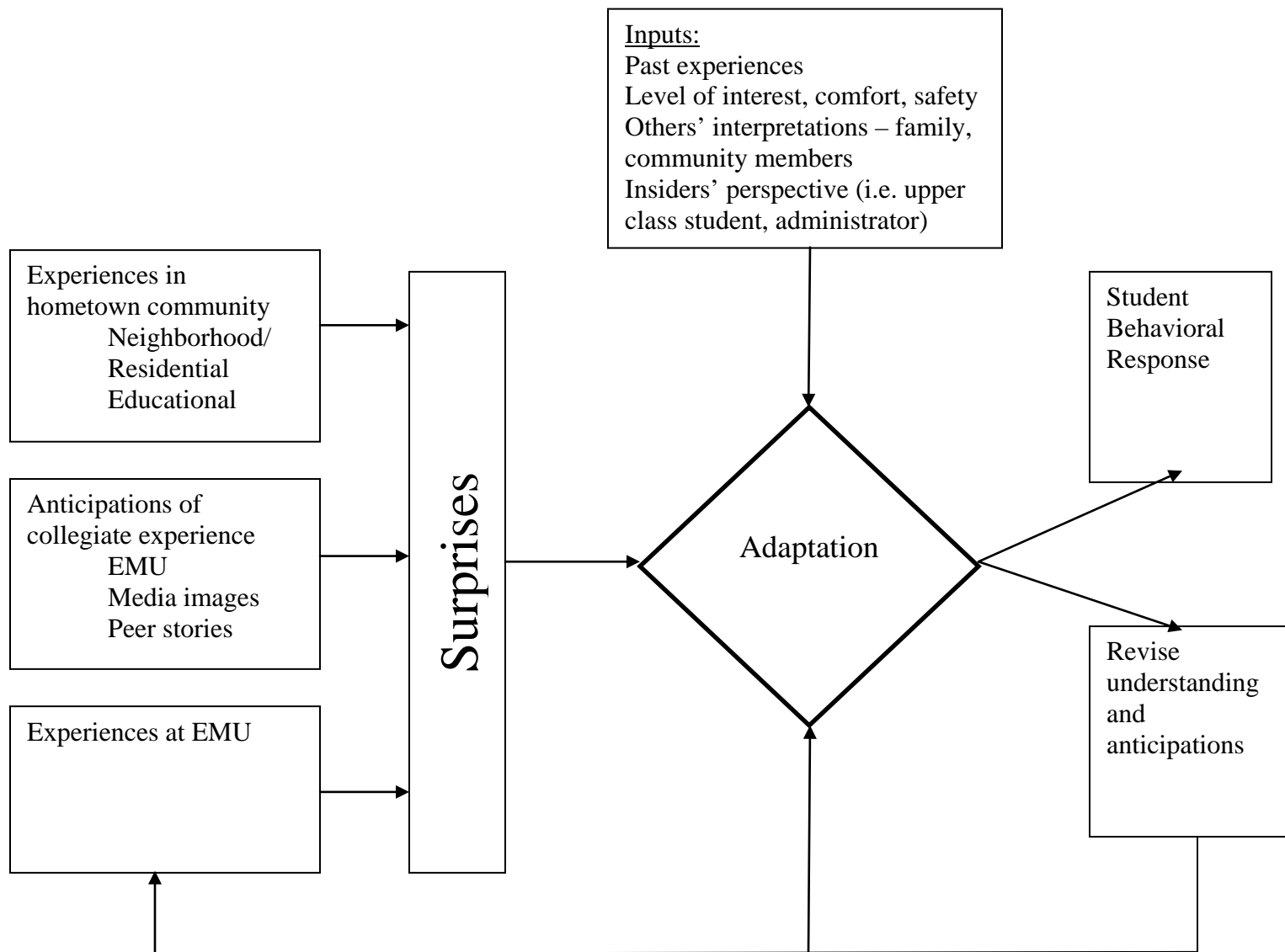


Figure 5.3. Organizational entry in a collegiate environment: The student adaptation process
Adapted from M. R. Louis, 1980, p. 337, Figure 1. Coping with Career Transitions

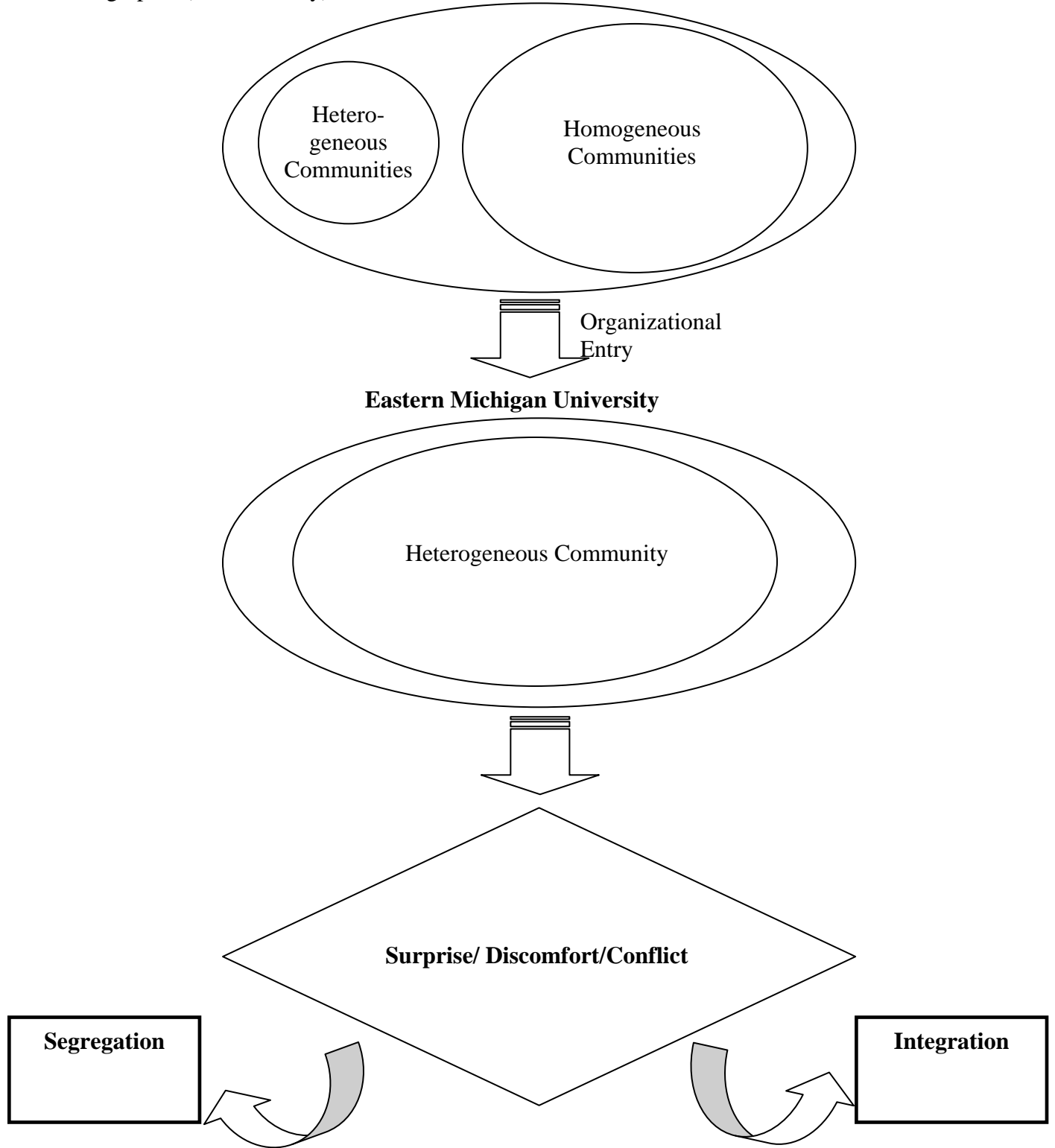
Since students come from different communities in southeast Michigan and have different experiences prior to their collegiate experience, they experience different surprises and react to these surprises in different ways. Figure 5.3 was adapted from a business model, which examined how individuals entering work environments experienced career transitions (Louis, 1980a).

Figure 5.3 illustrates that many factors influence students' adaptation process including hometown community experiences, anticipation of the collegiate experience, and actual experiences on the campus. The figure shows the cyclical nature of the adaptation process, meaning that as students experience new surprises and conflicts on the campus, they engage in a process of re-adaptation. In essence, the adaptation process is triggered by the surprises that students encounter once at college.

Figure 5.4 provides a visual representation of my findings for this study. Southeast Michigan, the primary feeder area for Eastern Michigan University undergraduate students, is composed of mainly homogenous communities. The majority of students come from homogeneous neighborhoods and schools, while a minority of students come from heterogeneous neighborhoods and schools.

Most students experience a significant change when they matriculate to the heterogeneous makeup of the undergraduate student body at EMU. This study, which examined students' organizational entry from a hometown in southeast Michigan to EMU, found that students experience surprises and conflicts once at the institution. As a result of the surprises, students adapted in one of two ways, behaviors that either resulted in integration with the campus community or segregation by hometown community.

Figure 5.4. Matriculation process:
Demographic (race/ethnicity)



To examine the hometown cultural environment, I used ten cultural categories including (a) demographics, (b) tasks/jobs, (c) income, (d) family structure, (e) education, (f) physical environment, safety, and security, (g) ideology, (h) activities, entertainment, and rituals, (i) schools, (j) extracurricular activities. After exploring these cultural categories in hometown communities, I used the same cultural categories to explore the institutional environment at Eastern Michigan University. Comparing hometown cultural environment to institutional cultural environment resulted in either a match or a mismatch; a mismatch was termed a “surprise” for students. Figure 5.5 illustrates these concepts. As students adapted to surprises, the result was either segregation-type behaviors or integration-type behaviors.

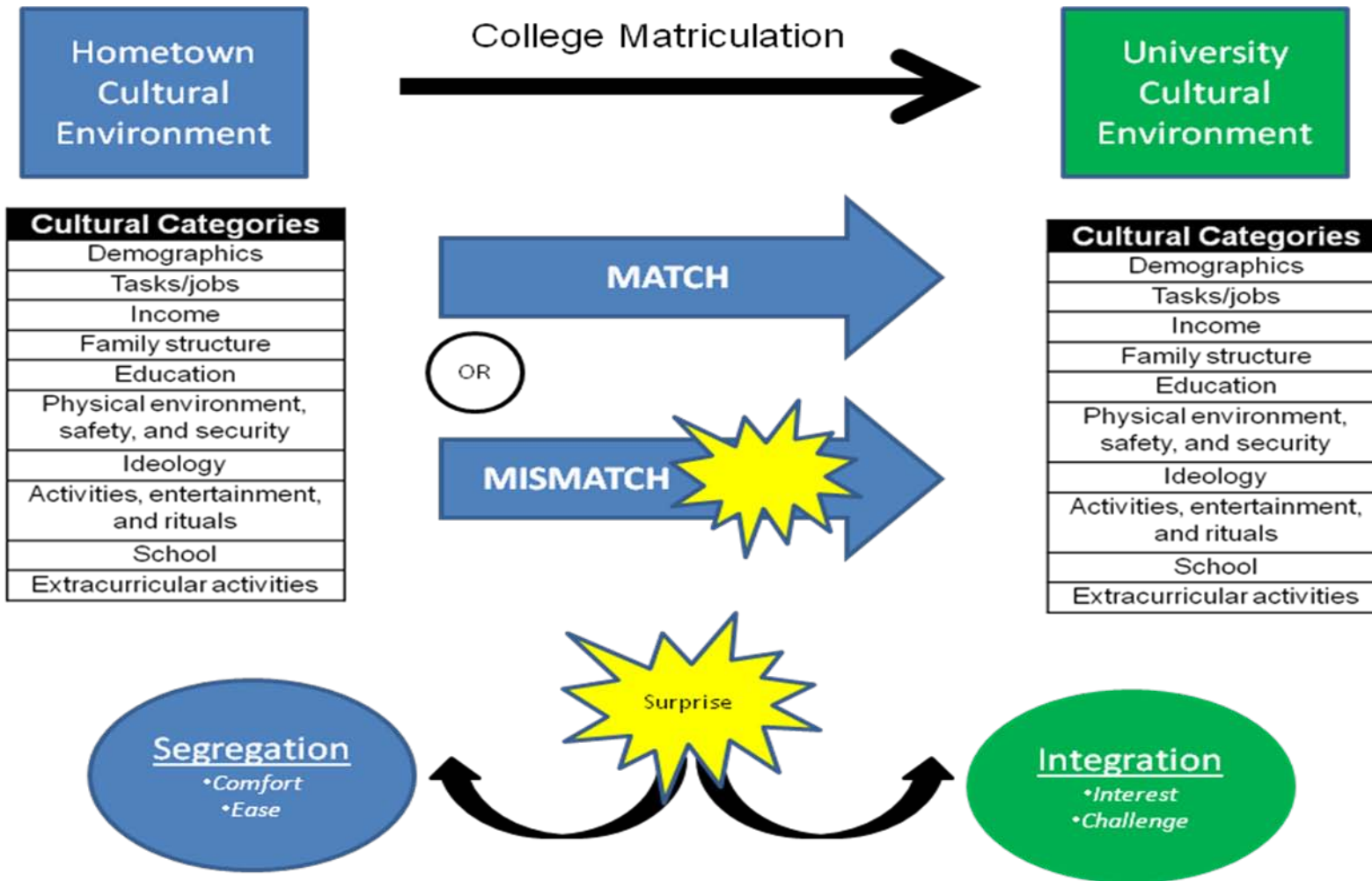


Figure 5.5. Hometown and university cultural environment

Cultural Categories: Match and Mismatch

Using the conceptual framework outlined above, I compared data for each cultural category between hometown cultural environment and institutional environment. Comparing the two settings, hometown to EMU, I identified areas where there were cultural matches and cultural mismatches. In this section, I highlight the main findings, including illustrative student quotes.

Demographics (race/ethnicity) was a cultural mismatch for many students. Students were coming from mainly homogeneous communities. Four out of five cultural groups were homogeneous. Coming onto the EMU campus, which is culturally diverse, was a demographic surprise for many students. Many Black students from Detroit shared that they had not known White students before, and many White students from rural communities stated that they had not know Black students before; EMU was more racially diverse than what rural and urban students were used to in their hometown. For example, Christina from Adrian described the difference between her hometown and her experience at EMU when she said, “Coming to Eastern there’s – Eastern’s definitely much more colorful than anything I was familiar with. Like I said, the extent of cultural diversity in my high school was that we had quite a few Hispanics.” While Christina, a rural student, had a surprise, Eric, an urban student, also experienced a surprise. Eric from Detroit explained, “The most exposure I had to other people was through television, books, and magazines but I had never had friends of different races or anything.”

Task/jobs varied by community, ranging from government assistance to farming to automotive. Tasks/jobs was a cultural category where there was a match among EMU

students as most held jobs during college to help finance their education. A conflict that many students faced involved their multiple responsibilities (e.g., having an outside job) competing with their ability to focus on their education. Factors such as family, children, and jobs were all identified by students as competitors with their education. In fact, some students shared they knew other students who sent money, including financial aid money, back home to support their family rather than using it for educational expenses including books, room and board, and so on.

Income was a cultural category that was a mismatch for students who came from communities or families with limited financial means. These students found that there were many expenses associated with attending college. The mismatch manifested in a number of ways, ranging from the inability to pay for books to the inability to pay for tuition as well as room and board. This mismatch is an issue which I observe personally each semester in my roles as an administrator in the housing department and an adjunct faculty member. Students who are enrolled but do not have money to buy books can go to classes but ultimately do not have the tools to succeed because of limited finances. As another example, students' inability to pay for tuition often results in termination of their on-campus housing accommodation. If students are not registered for classes (often as a result of the inability to pay for tuition), housing officials must ask them to move out of the residence halls since they are not students.

Bruce from Detroit shared that finances were a factor that often impacted a family's ability to provide a better life. He explained that many families from urban areas do not have the money to finance higher education for their child.

Some parents...they wanted them [their student] to have a better life than they had growing up. But somewhere along the way, with the way the economy's going or

what have you, some parents looked at, okay, well; I can only take you so far. You're going to have to see yourself through the rest of the way.

Financing, specifically lack of family financial support, was one factor which was tied to why students stopped out (or dropped out) of school and ultimately affected retention at the institution.

Family structure varied as did level of support from family members; for some students this was a match, and for other students a mismatch.

Education level among hometown communities ranged. Urban students often shared that members of their hometown community did not understand the college process. Throughout all cultural groups, there were examples of students who came from families who have a low level of familiarity with the college process.

The category of **physical environment, safety, and security** was a mismatch for rural students and students from predominantly White suburbs. These students explained they felt safer in their hometowns than at EMU or in Ypsilanti. Tim, Ray, and Christina, all from rural communities, described the mismatches they experienced. For example, Tim described the community of Ida as “The type of place where you could leave your front door unlocked and nobody would [enter] - for two weeks even if you went on vacation.” Similarly, Ray from Tecumseh stated his hometown was “the type of city people talk about [where] you can leave your doors unlocked.” Tim from Ida shared that he was more proactive with safety measures at EMU than his hometown, commenting, “You take different precautions. You make sure your car doors are locked. You make sure your room's locked at all times, those types of things. I became much more aware of my safety when I came here.”

Christina, a transfer student from Adrian, shared that safety was one reason that she did not initially enroll in EMU. Christina shared, “My parents were worried about me coming

to Eastern... when I was getting ready to graduate from high school and looking at where I was going to go to school, I hadn't applied to Eastern because my step-dad was, you know worried about me going there. 'No, we don't want you in Ypsilanti.'" Part of Christina's adaptation was being more proactive with her safety measures. She shared, "I carry mace. Pepper spray. You know stuff that my step-dad got from the police store."

Elsa, Elizabeth, and Jennifer, all females from predominantly White suburban communities, also indicated that they felt *less* safe on campus and in the surrounding Ypsilanti community. Elizabeth from Canton shared that she would often walk fast or cross over to the other side of the street to avoid the homeless people as she walked from her off-campus apartment to the campus for her classes. Jennifer from Brighton shared that that she felt less safe in Ypsilanti than in Brighton,

I feel like I can just go out whenever, at any time I want in Brighton and do whatever, and not have to worry about really watching, being careful or anything. But whereas in Ypsi I wouldn't – I would make sure I went out earlier in the day if I was going [to] go out somewhere, to the store or something. I don't know, maybe that's like a stereotype that it's in my head, but that's just how I feel.

Elsa from Plymouth had similar feelings. Elsa shared, "I guess I do admit that I am a little bit more on my guard when I am in Ypsilanti than when I'm in Plymouth-Canton." Safety was a mismatch that affected students from an array of hometown communities, with the notable exception of urban students.

Ideology in many rural and predominantly White suburban communities was conservative. In contrast, the campus community was more liberal than what these students experienced in their hometown. Despite the change from hometown to campus, some students adapted to this change in a positive manner. The change in ideology (from conservative to multiple points of view) was a match for these students. These students

commented that they appreciated attending college in a community that is more open to diverse ideas. For example, Katie from Hartland explained, “You’re allowed to express your opinions [at EMU], so the student culture is very, I don’t know, different. You can go to different places and see different things.” In addition, Tim from Ida shared, “At Eastern...I’m always meeting new people and I’m always being exposed to new ideas... There’s so many different perspectives...everybody’s much more free to discussion and ideas and everything, and Ida is just so narrow-minded.” Both students found a personal match, specifically the ability to move beyond the conservative ideology of their hometowns to a more liberal campus community.

Another example of a change in ideology from a hometown community to the campus community was regarding attitudes toward sexual orientation. Jennifer from Brighton shared she appreciated that different sexual orientations were seen across campus, an aspect that was hidden in her hometown. She shared, “On the EMU campus you see openly gay students, you wouldn’t see this much in Brighton.” Jennifer shared that it was a positive surprise transitioning from a conservative hometown community to a more accepting and liberal college community. Jennifer shared, “I don’t have to feel as guarded about what I think...In Brighton you wouldn’t voice your opinion because you may know it wouldn’t be accepted.”

Activities, entertainment, and rituals in hometown communities varied greatly. For urban students, the most popular activity in their hometown community was socializing on Belle Isle in Detroit. Many urban students experienced a match on the EMU campus, as the Eastern Eateries, which students refer to as “mini Belle Isle,” provided a similar socialization opportunity to their Belle Isle experience. While this is a cultural match for urban students,

mini Belle Isle was not a match for other cultural groups. For example, Reid, an African American female from Flat Rock, felt like an outsider at the Eastern Eateries because she did not grow up in a predominantly African American community, and was therefore excluded. Reflecting on her experience, Reid shared, “So, I think that actually the harder adjustment for me – like, for example, is even to this day, even as a graduate assistant at EMU, 33 years old, I still feel uncomfortable going to the Eateries.” Reid did not share the common bond of being from Detroit, and thus she felt uncomfortable at the Eastern Eateries.

Like Reid, Marc also experienced a mismatch in the cultural category of activities, entertainment, and rituals outside of the Eastern Eateries. One day, African American students were passing out party fliers and Marc was excluded from the activity because he was not from Detroit. Marc’s example of being excluded from the party was about being from a different culture, not growing up in Detroit. Reid and Marc’s examples illustrate the importance of students’ hometown cultural experiences, even over racial categories. Although Marc and Reid are both African American students, like the majority of urban students who socialized at the Eateries, they still felt excluded from the activities, entertainment, and rituals because they had not grown up in an urban community.

Christina, a transfer student from Adrian, experienced a cultural match at EMU in the category of activities, entertainment, and rituals. Christina found that at EMU she had more socioeconomic similarities to students on the campus than at her previous institution. The similarities around activities, such as watching movies or socializing at local restaurants, put Christina at ease, whereas she felt out of place at activities such as cocktail parties, a common activity at her previous institution.

School, specifically the difference in demographics (race/ethnicity) in the classroom from secondary school to the university environment, was a surprise for many students. Some students adapted to this difference well, and others described it as a cultural mismatch. For example, Michael from Blissfield shared, “When I came here and went and took my, entry level English class and looked across the room and there were, six or seven Black students, that was new to me. I wasn’t really shocked by it necessarily. But it wasn’t what I was used to.”

Jani from Detroit shared that she felt at home when she observed the socializing activity outside of the Eateries; however she felt “tricked” when she got in the classroom. Jani described that while there was a large group of African American students together outside of the Eateries, once in the classroom she felt like a minority as there were only a few African American students in her class. Cindy, from Oak Park, had a similar experience to Jani. Cindy shared her academic surprise, saying, “I ended up being the only Black person in the entire class. This was a first. I had to get used to not seeing a familiar face.”

Pathways to integration or segregation

There are three primary pathways in which a student may adapt to a surprise. Two pathways lead to (a) segregation and one pathway leads to (b) integration. The pathways are:

1. Segregation - situation where the student has no interest in interaction with diverse others and prefers recreation of hometown environment with like-minded individuals;
2. Segregation - student has strong interest in interaction with diverse others, but meets others who have no interest, resulting in no match;
3. Integration - situation where the student has strong interest in interaction with diverse others and meets other students who share in this interest, resulting in a match.

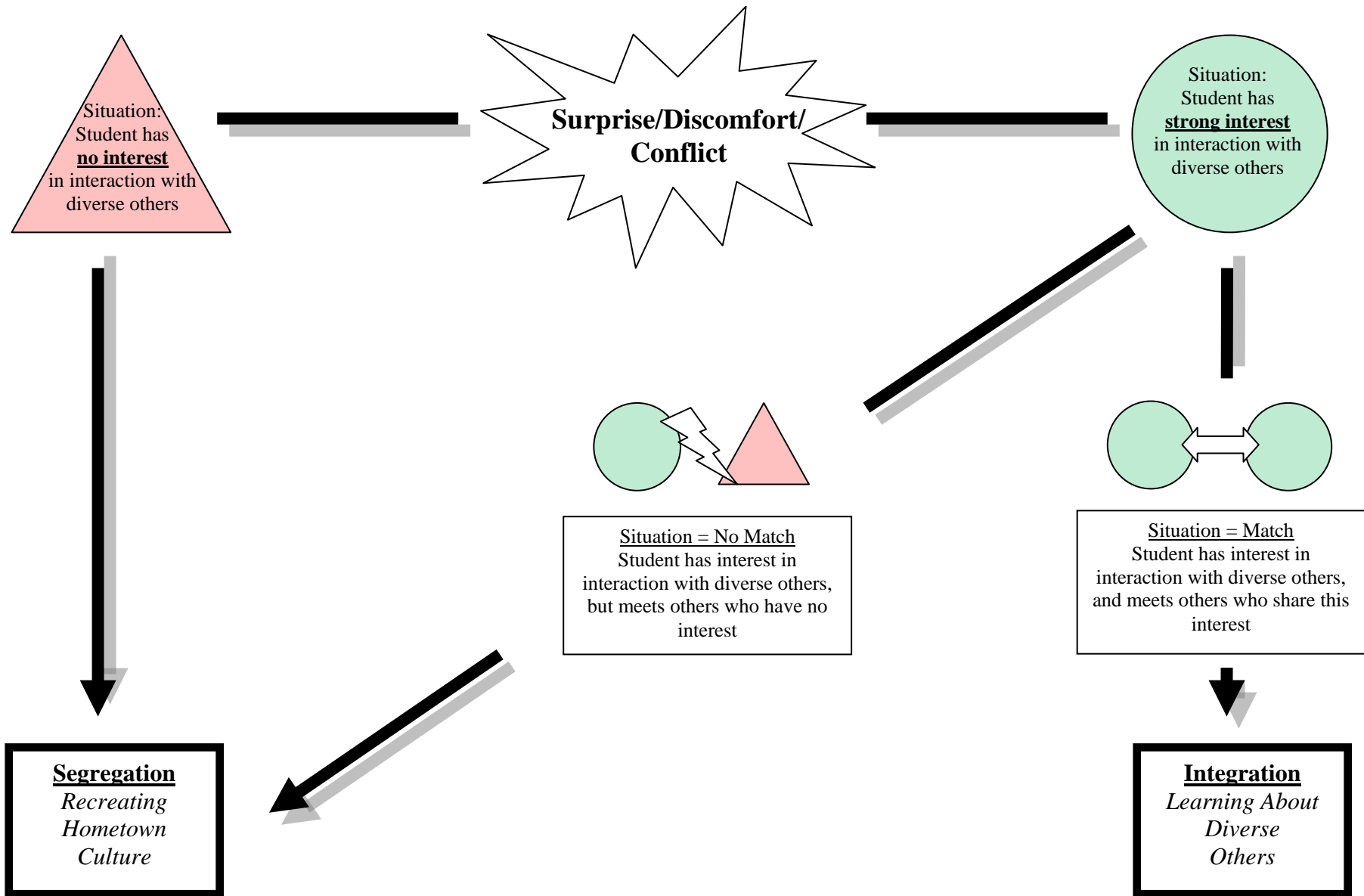


Figure 5.6. Pathways for adaptation to surprise

The adaptation process is an ongoing process, which is initiated by incongruencies between a student's hometown culture and the campus culture (i.e., conflict or surprises). In addition to the individual's interest in interacting with diverse others, other factors include safety or fear, as well as comfort or discomfort interacting with diverse others.

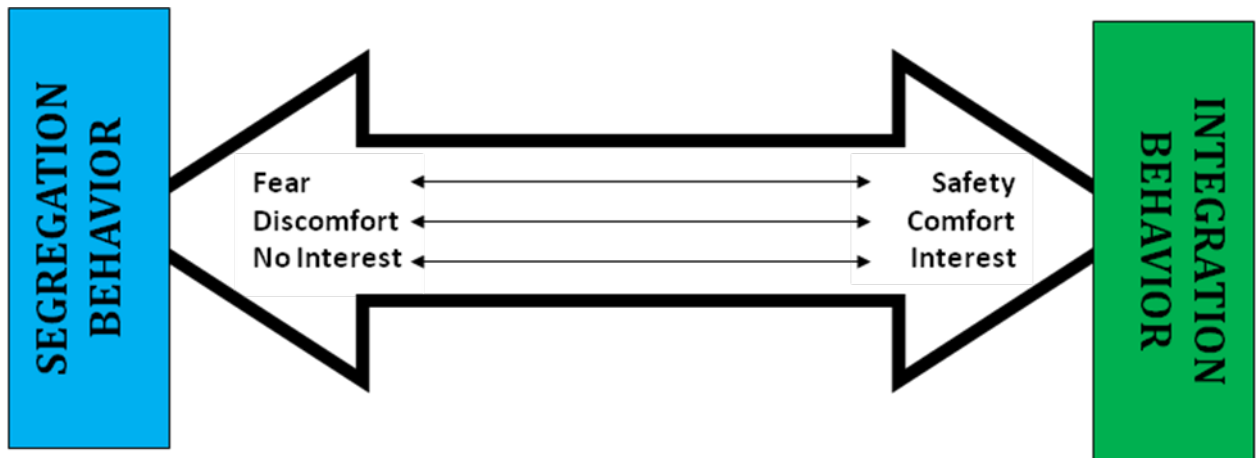


Figure 5.7. Segregation and integration behavior

Comfort is a factor that impacts segregation and integration behaviors. A lack of comfort in a new environment may lead an individual to segregate, recreating their hometown culture. However, a student who is comfortable interacting with diverse others may be more likely to move toward integration behaviors.

I found several examples of segregation behavior where there was no initial interest (or comfort) in interacting with diverse others. The data illustrated that students gradually became comfortable interacting with those different than themselves when they were in frequent contact (such as in a residence hall living situation).

I found that students process surprises, and how they react to a surprise ultimately results in segregation or integration behavior. If a goal at the institution is to have a diverse

community where students from different backgrounds interact (instead of recreating their hometown culture), the following elements must be addressed:

- 1) Students' interest in interacting with diverse others
- 2) Students' perception of safety on the campus and in the community
- 3) Students' comfort level of interacting with diverse others (as interacting with diverse others is a new experience for most students as they are coming from homogeneous communities).

In the following sections, I propose implications and recommendations for addressing these issues on campus.

Scholarly contribution of the dissertation

This study adds to the previous literature about student culture on college campus in several important ways. First, it expands our knowledge of student culture. My research found that the cultural groups that exist on the EMU campus are constituted by cultural groups derived from communities in southeast Michigan. Using the disciplines of sociology and anthropology to study student culture contributes to the existing higher education and student affairs literature.

The cultural analysis of the experiences of undergraduate students at Eastern Michigan University provides a foundation for conducting future cultural studies at the institution. Further, the conceptual framework used in this study has analytical generalizability and can be applied to other higher education institutions.

This anthropological study provided empirical data on the nature of the undergraduate student culture and organizational entry at Eastern Michigan University. The data collected in this study provided information about the student culture and how it is created on campus.

Using a cultural lens to explore the undergraduate student population enabled me to begin exploring the cultural variations in communities in southeast Michigan, which shape the undergraduate student population at EMU.

Implications

As an educational leader it is helpful to understand the matriculation process for students. This study provides administrators with a description of hometown cultural environment, the university cultural environment, students' organizational entry to the institution, and a framework for exploring how students bring their hometown experiences with them to college and how they make sense of their experiences once on campus. Based on what I have learned about the undergraduate student culture at EMU during the course of this study, I offer several recommendations to faculty, staff, and administrators.

Work to understand your students' hometown cultures.

At times, administrators state they are working with Eastern Michigan University undergraduate students or First Time In Any College (FTIAC) students. These labels, undergraduate or FTIAC, are institutional labels. In reality, these reference groups (FTIAC or undergraduate student) consist of very different groups of students who have been socialized in very different communities. Exploring the student population using a cultural lens provides another vantage point to understand the EMU undergraduate student population.

Students coming to EMU from communities in southeast Michigan have varied characteristics. Students are socialized in their hometown community by both formal and informal institutions. Growing up, students learn the language, norms, and values of their hometown community. Each person's value system is a result of his or her experience, that is, *it is learned*. The values that individuals hold differ from one society to another because of

different learning experiences. Spradley and McCurdy's (1990) work supports the notion that students are shaped by their hometown community culture prior to matriculation to the university. Understanding the various cultures in southeast Michigan gives educational leaders and administrators a holistic view of the undergraduate student population. A greater understanding of hometown cultures may help explain the transitions that students encounter.

Recognition of students' transition from their hometown to the EMU campus is beneficial for faculty, staff, and administrators. It is evident that many students coming to EMU have lived in homogenous communities and experienced both residential and educational separation from diverse others, which often leads to mutual suspicion and hostility (Sugrue, 1999). An awareness of the residential and educational circumstances of students prior to college allows administrators and faculty to have an awareness that students' hometown environment shapes the student culture on the campus.

EMU faculty, staff, and administrators often share celebratory facts, citing the racial diversity of the student body and highlighting achievements such as:

For the third straight year, *Diverse* magazine (formerly *Black Issues in Higher Education*) recognized EMU for its growing number of African-American students who earned undergraduate degrees. The national publication ranked EMU 74th (out of more than 300 colleges and universities) for the number of bachelor degrees bestowed upon African American students. (Eastern Michigan University, 2007, p. 2)

It is important to make note of and celebrate these diverse statistics; however, there is a significant transition which is rarely discussed: the transition to living and learning with individuals different than oneself. Students experience various cultures and people at EMU, an experience that is new for most students (of all races) coming from high schools in southeast Michigan. A recognition and validation of this transition would be appropriate, in addition to the current celebration of the diverse EMU student body.

Acknowledge personal subjectivities.

Based on this study, I believe there are some mismatches and conflicts that occur between the undergraduate students and university administrators, decision-makers, and policymakers at Eastern Michigan University. Students come from an array of communities and at times administrators self-impose their own community view when analyzing the student experience. Administrators may not have an understanding of the varied cultures that exist within the communities in southeast Michigan. Spradley and McCurdey (1990) identified an awareness of one's own values as an important trait for anthropologists, saying, "They identify rather than deny the influence of their own viewpoints" (p. 8). Administrators at the university are not trained in the same manner as an anthropologist, that is, specifically to identify personal subjectivities and how these subjectivities may influence the way one sees interaction at the university. Identifying personal subjectivities could assist administrators in identifying how their own lived experiences influence how they view the institution and the undergraduate student population. A heightened awareness of subjectivities could lead to a greater acknowledgement of reality at the institution.

Although the undergraduate student population at EMU comes largely from southeast Michigan, faculty and staff are often selected through a national search. Therefore faculty and staff may not have any background knowledge of the region or hometown communities of the students. Faculty and staff who work at EMU and have been raised in or lived in southeast Michigan for an extensive period are likely to be knowledgeable of some hometowns in southeast Michigan but not fully aware of the characteristics of rural, urban, and suburban hometowns because it is likely they also were also socialized in a homogeneous community.

The concept of naïve realism that results in a skewed view of the institution provides a theoretical explanation of why there are mismatches between groups of individuals at the university. Naïve realism exists when an individual defines

the real world of objects, events, and living creatures in pretty much the same way...The naïve realist assumes that love, snow, marriage, worship, animals, death, food, and hundreds of other things have essentially the same meaning to all human beings. (Spradley & McCurdy, 1990, p. 23)

Since it is uncommon for individuals to acknowledge their own ethnocentrism, administrators, faculty, staff, and students continue to view the institution through their own ethnocentric lenses (Spradley & McCurdy, 1990). At times, administrators view the institution using a lens that can be described as naïve realism (Spradley & McCurdy, 1990). A clearer view of reality would assist in making informed decisions at the institution such as where to invest budget dollars or how to address student conflicts. By identifying subjectivities in an effort to move beyond a naïve realist view of student culture, administrators would be able to identify the variations which exist within the undergraduate student culture at the institution.

Train student leaders to facilitate conversations.

New students at the university are oriented on the academic transition to college as professors and administrators explain that classes and examinations in college are different from what they experienced in high school. The academic transition to college is a regular topic of discussion in formal university programs such as orientation, but rarely is racial or cultural transition a topic of conversation. Data show that EMU is more diverse than most high schools and neighborhoods in southeast Michigan. In addition to the academic transition that students face, there are data to support the theory that students will face a significant *people transition* when they transition from southeast Michigan schools to EMU.

Student leaders are front line staff or support systems who can be trained on the surprise and adaptation process, specifically on how they can serve as a support for incoming students during their transition. Louis (1980b) shared that newcomers need a sounding board, an individual “with whom they could test their perceptions and interpretations” (p. 243). In the university setting, newcomers, or first year and transfer students, experience surprises and work to make sense of these surprises. Student leaders can provide a valuable insiders’ perspective to first year students during this transition period. Efforts should be made to explain to student leaders that they serve a critical role, providing an insider’s perspective to students who are transitioning to the institution. Though there is an array of student leaders on campus, orientation leaders, resident advisors, and first year mentors could be the student leaders who receive additional training about surprise and adaptation, essentially the transition that students may experience coming from their hometown to EMU.

Training on surprise and adaptation is also critical for individuals (staff or administrators) who select or hire these student leaders. Assembling a diverse group of student leaders, those from an array of hometowns in southeast Michigan (representing rural, suburban, and urban areas) will increase the likelihood that a new student will perceive the student leader as an individual who could provide an insider’s perspective. One element of the training should be equipping student leaders with strategies on how to process surprises with students. These strategies can help incoming students in their adaptation process.

The first step for student leaders would be to listen to the student’s experience (the surprise he/she encountered). By utilizing open-ended questions, the student leader can ask how the situation affected the student. (e.g., “What was your previous experience?” “What was it like at your high school?” “What was it like in your neighborhood or hometown?”)

Next, the student leader can transition the conversation to find out about the student's expectations coming to college or living in the residence halls. The student leader could have the student verbalize his or her expectations (e.g., "What did you expect in your collegiate experience?") or how the student anticipated his/her collegiate experiences (e.g., "How has your EMU experience differed from what you expected for your college experience?"). Helping students make sense of the surprise they encountered is an important role for student leaders and administrators.

Processing surprises with students is a critical step as students' behavioral responses are dependent on how they make sense of the surprise. Focusing on surprise and adaptation is an area where student leaders can make a positive impact. As new students encounter surprises, they make sense of them in an array of ways. For some students, their response to a surprise is to decide that the institution is too different from a previous experience and ultimately choose to stop out or transfer from the institution. Student leaders as well as staff and administrators can provide students an insider's perspective, which may help in their adaptation process. I quickly learned in my data collection process that the simple act of *inviting* a student to discuss the challenges of transitioning to a new cultural environment can result in deep reflection and meaningful conversations.

Design programs that support students' surprise and adaptation process.

A familiarity with the surprise and adaptation process is helpful for faculty, staff, and administrators (Louis, 1980b; Weick et al., 2005). As mentioned earlier in this chapter, there are extensive university resources allocated to helping students make the academic transition to college (orientation programs, first year mentor programs, bridge programs), but the *social*

cultural transition is rarely acknowledged. Faculty, staff, and administrators, much like the student leaders, can serve as a sounding board for students during their transitional process.

The ability to identify that students are experiencing a surprise or a sense of discomfort during their matriculation to the institution is the first step; the next is to develop programs which support students during the surprise and adaptation process. Faculty, staff, and administrators can identify the most common surprises that students experience and design programs which support these surprises. It is important to note that mismatches between hometown environment and the university vary by groups. Thus, it is important to identify the most common surprises for numerous groups, including rural, urban, and predominantly White suburban, predominantly Black suburban, and integrated suburban communities. Designing programs which address the mismatch between hometown culture and institutional culture is a strategic means of supporting students during their adaptation process.

Limitations

Like all studies, this research had some limitations. The data are restricted to Eastern Michigan University (EMU), a regional public institution located in Ypsilanti, Michigan. The data from this study are not generalizable to other areas or institutions, although the framework has analytic generalizability. A limitation related to the sample was that only certain communities were selected for the study, dependent on the students that volunteered for the interviews. Other communities may have differed from the communities selected. If other students had participated, there would be data about different communities in southeast Michigan. Despite this limitation, the study provided useful data that addressed a significant gap in the literature on environmental effects on institutions of higher education. The data

gathered in this study provided in-depth knowledge specific to EMU which highlighted the relationship between community characteristics and undergraduate students. A comparable study of another university would reveal the differences that give each educational institution a unique personality. The study would likely conjure some similarities in undergraduate college student behaviors and actions.

Another possible limitation of the study was my role of serving as the primary research instrument. I had to be conscious not to take cultural elements for granted and work to fully explore familiar and unfamiliar cultural elements. A further limitation of the study was the ambiguity of culture as a concept. To combat this ambiguity, I have attempted to clarify the concept of culture and how it applies to southeast Michigan and specifically Eastern Michigan University. After much research, I believe that culture is the theoretical framework which was most appropriate for this study (Wolcott, 2008).

Personal subjectivities were a notable limitation of the study. I took steps to manage my subjectivities, including exploring how the study affected me professionally and personally; however, the fact remains that coding is a subjective activity. In coding, I chose the category or categories that most stood out to me about each student's experience.

Despite these limitations, the study generated very useful data that provided insight into the organizational entry process of undergraduate students at Eastern Michigan. This study provides information to faculty, staff, and administrators about student culture on the EMU campus, which is shaped by the communities in southeast Michigan.

Recommendations for Future Studies

Higher education needs continued research into culture, which could range from student culture to institutional culture. This study examined the undergraduate student culture

at Eastern Michigan University, specifically examining the hometown cultural environment and comparing it to the institutional cultural environment. Several other areas of culture are worthy of future study. Recommendations for future research include additional cultural research within Eastern Michigan University as well as research at other colleges and universities.

Based on my dissertation research I believe that the next step in the research is to study the benefit of an “insider’s perspective” and determine how the institution can be strategic in supporting students during the surprise and adaptation process. One adaptation input is an “insider’s perspective,” which according to Louis is rarely utilized. Louis explained that “insiders can be a potentially rich source of assistance to transitioners in gaining understandings of their experiences and the organization” (Louis, 1980a, p. 338). An insider could assist students as they process through similarities or differences between their hometown experience and their EMU experience. Insiders are individuals in the organization who can “serve as sounding boards for reality testing during transition” (Louis, 1980a, p. 339).

The insider perspective in the collegiate setting could be an upper class student, perhaps an individual from the student’s hometown, who could serve as a sounding board for the new student transitioning to the collegiate environment. Resident advisors and orientation leaders are strategically positioned to provide an “insider’s perspective” to new students at the institution. Having students from an array of hometown cultures in these roles would increase the likelihood that a first-year student would contact an insider, someone whom the student views as having a similar experience to them. Resident advisors and orientation

leaders could provide new students with context or intuitional perspective which could help the student make sense of their surprise.

Another possible study of undergraduate student culture would be to explore the adaptation inputs that students may utilize in their adaptation process. Such a study could focus on the insider's perspective of dialoguing with a student who is working through the surprise and adaptation process. A comparison between the student's perspective of their adaptation and the insider's perspective would provide an interesting vantage point of the socialization process into the university.

This study identified the surprise and adaptation process as a significant process for undergraduate students. During the adaptation process students make sense of their environment in a number of ways including integrating into the EMU community, segregating, or recreating their hometown community. A further study could examine the specific adaptation outcome and how it impacts retention (i.e., how does integration or segregation impact degree attainment?): a study such as this, focusing on retention, would necessitate collecting interview data from students who did not remain at the institution.

While this study explored the undergraduate student culture that exists at EMU by identifying the culture in southeast Michigan and how hometown culture impacts student culture on the campus, a similar study could be an in-depth exploration of suburban culture as this study included only a general overview of suburban culture. A similar study could be conducted focusing on EMU students who are not from southeast Michigan. Such a study would provide a cultural assessment from another perspective; the experiences attending a regional institution of students who are from outside of the immediate region. This information could assist student affairs professionals who provide programs and services for

students staying on campus during the weekends. This information would also benefit admissions recruiters, financial aid, and orientation staff who work with students as they transition to the university. Likewise, a study could be completed with students on a different campus.

Another option for a future study would be to focus on the institutional culture instead of student culture, using cultural categories such as artifacts, symbols, values, norms, and rules. It would be beneficial to compare and contrast the student culture to the institutional culture. Results from such a study would identify areas where there are cultural matches as well as cultural mismatches between student culture and institutional culture. This study could be conducted at EMU or another higher education institution.

Students' stories of their experiences in their hometown communities and at EMU varied and, as a result, students' adaptation process varied. In order to provide services for the varied student population from southeast Michigan, we must identify mismatches that exist between home environment and institutional environment and work to provide support to students during the adaptation process. A future study could take these data one step further and identify supports for students during the surprise and adaptation period, specifically, identifying ways to support students during the surprise and adaptation process. This may include peer involvement/support. A future study could examine the university response to students' surprises, that is, identify supportive interventions that are in place or could be put in place to support students during their surprise and adaptation process.

While the research in this study focused on Eastern Michigan University, the conceptual framework and research methods utilized for this study can be utilized to conduct ethnographic research at other higher education institutions. Universities would benefit

greatly from conducting studies which examine the feeder areas for their institution.

Understanding the students being served, and the communities and values from which they come, enables administrators and faculty to be more intentional in their work and create opportunities to tailor services to the various student cultures. I recommend that my colleagues at other universities examine student culture on their campuses by studying their students' hometown communities. Studying students' hometown communities, and their cultural norms and values, provides a context of how students experience the collegiate environment.

In conclusion, my conversations with students about their hometowns and my excursions to see their home communities firsthand have been invaluable to my research on this topic and my daily work with students at EMU. I strongly believe that this process would prove beneficial to other educational leaders, at a variety of institutions, to better understand the needs, perspectives, and aspirations of the students they serve.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Protocol

An Ethnography of Student Culture at Eastern Michigan University Dissertation Study, Catherine Barber

Introduction to the Interview: Greet student as he/she arrives, introduce self, thank student for coming, put at ease and begin completion of consent form	
<p>Provide student a written description of the study and provide a copy of a consent form that you sign; collect the one that student signed.</p> <p>“I will introduce the study to you but before we begin there is a consent form that I would like to review with you and, if you are willing to participate, I need you to sign.”</p>	<p>Review the consent form and ensure he/she consents to both the participation and audio recording.</p> <p>Highlight:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ your role as the interviewer ✓ voluntary participation, they can refuse to answer or end interview at any time ✓ confidentiality ✓ opportunity for questions at the end ✓ how interview will be used and by whom – dissertation research
<p>Introduce the study verbally.</p>	<p>e.g., “Our purpose in meeting today is to learn about you & your experiences growing up in southeast Michigan and your experiences here at Eastern Michigan University. I am looking forward to hearing about your experiences in both settings.”</p>
<p>Provide an overview of the organization of the questions</p>	<p>This is an informal interview. I’ll ask you to about your experiences and what is important to you and I’ll use that to guide our conversation.</p>
<p>Turn on recorder: State “This is Carin Barber, today’s date, interviewing at Eastern Michigan University.” Do NOT state the students’ name.</p>	

Ways to Approach the Interview:	
Let's start with your experiences growing up in southeast Michigan. What was it like to live in southeast Michigan? To attend secondary school in southeast Michigan? What has stood out for you about these experiences?	<p>Possible Probes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell me about your neighborhood – what as it like? • Tell me about your friends or family. • Tell me about life outside of school – what is important to you? What experiences have you participated in?
I'm interested in how you experienced the transition from high school to college. Is the EMU community similar/different than your experience in your hometown?	
Our conversation so far has given me some context to understand your experiences growing up in southeast Michigan. Let's talk more about your experiences and focus on your experiences at Eastern Michigan University.	<p>Possible Probes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell me about your experiences in the classroom – what was it like? • Tell me about your experiences on the campus. • Tell me about your friends. • How do you spend your time when you are not in class? • Describe the experience? Give examples.
I'm interested in your perspective on how your experience growing up in southeast Michigan compares to your experiences as a student at Eastern Michigan University. Compare the two experiences.	<p>Possible Probes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similarities? • Differences?
Are there any other observations about EMU or your hometown community that you would like to share?	

Post-Interview Checklist: Recorder Turned OFF

- √ Thank student for participating.
- √ Answer any questions student has about study, etc.
- √ Give student a business card and tell them to contact you with any questions or additional information they think of relevant to the conversation today.

Appendix B: Informed Consent for Participation in Study

I volunteer to participate in a study, a dissertation project, which is conducted by a researcher from Eastern Michigan University. This dissertation study is being conducted by Catherine Barber, and supervised by Dr. James Barott. I understand that the project is designed to examine the undergraduate student culture at Eastern Michigan University. This study will examine the cultures within southeast Michigan and how these cultures permeate the campus.

1. My participation in this study is voluntary and I may withdraw or discontinue participation at any time without penalty.
2. Participation involves being interviewed by Catherine Barber, a researcher from Eastern Michigan University. Each individual interview will last approximately 60 minutes.
3. I understand that I will be asked questions about my experience as an undergraduate student and experiences in my hometown and that I have the right to decline to answer any question or to discontinue participation at any time.
4. Although I may not receive direct benefit from your participation, others may ultimately benefit from the knowledge obtained in this study.
5. I understand that participating in this study there is less than minimal risk. The less than minimal risk would not be over and above that ordinarily encountered in daily life as a student.
6. I voluntarily agree to be audio taped during each of the interviews. I understand that some of the audio files will be transcribed and that the audio file and the transcripts will be used exclusively for the purpose of this study. The audio and text files will be securely stored on the researcher's password-protected computer. Back-up copies will be burned to compact discs which will be stored in the researcher's home.
7. I understand that the researcher will not identify me by name in any reports or articles using information obtained from this interview. My confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure through the assignment of a pseudonym. A separate list matching participants' names with their pseudonym will be filed and secured in a file cabinet in the researcher's home. All information collected will remain confidential except as may be required by law.
8. This research protocol and informed consent document has been reviewed and approved by the Eastern Michigan University Human Subjects Review Committee for use from _____ to _____ (date). If you have questions about the approval process, please contact Dr. Deb de Laski-Smith (734.487.0042, Interim Dean of the Graduate School and Administrative Co-chair of UHSRC, human.subjects@emich.edu).
9. I understand that refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits.

10. I understand that my continued participation in the study is based on my willingness, and that significant new findings developed during the course of research may change my willingness to continue participation.
11. I understand that the researcher will not identify me by name in the dissertation or publications using information obtained from this interview. My confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure through this dissertation through the use of a pseudonym. The use of a pseudonym is designed to protect the confidentiality of the individual. All information collected will remain confidential except as may be required by law.
12. The results will be reported in this dissertation, and possibly in other presentations or professional publications. In any and all of these reports, pseudonyms will be used to protect the confidentiality of the individual. The intent is to give an accurate account of undergraduate student culture. Though pseudonyms will be used for the informants, the actual names of places, events, and actions will be used. There is some risk of recognition by future readers or audiences.
13. I have been given a copy of this consent form.
14. I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Please sign below if you are willing to participate in this study:

Participant's Signature

Date

Participant's Name (printed)

Please sign below if you are willing to be audio recorded. You may still participate if you do not want to be audio recorded:

Participant's Signature

Date

Should you have questions about this study, please contact

Carin Barber, Eastern Michigan University, chardman@emich.edu, 734-732-1405 or

Dr. James Barott, Eastern Michigan University, james.barott@emich.edu (734) 487-0255

Interviewer's Signature

Date

Appendix C: Human Subjects Institutional Review Board Approval

EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Education First

November 10, 2008

Catherine Barber
HDC Support Serv Housing
Lower Level DC1

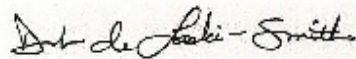
Dear Catherine Barber:

The Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Eastern Michigan University has reviewed and approved as exempt research your proposal titled, "An Ethnography of Undergraduate Student Culture at Eastern Michigan University." The IRB determined that the rights and welfare of the individual subjects involved in this research are carefully guarded. Additionally, the methods used to obtain informed consent are appropriate, and the individuals participating in your study are not at risk.

Exempt research does not require reporting of continuation one year after approval if the project continues. However, should the sample or procedures change as to have an impact on human subjects, then UHSRC should be notified by using the *Minor Modification to Research Protocol* or the *Request for Human Subjects Approval* form depending upon the scope of the changes (see the forms online).

On behalf of the Human Subjects Committee, I wish you success in conducting your research.

Sincerely,



Deb de Laski-Smith, Ph.D.
Interim Dean
Graduate School
Administrative Co-Chair
University Human Subjects Review Committee

Reference #: 081005

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