# REMOVAL OR RENEWAL: BLACK STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS MEDIA COVERAGE OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND RENEWAL IN DETROIT

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# ABSTRACT

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The press and broader media industries in Detroit are instrumental in shaping narratives about proposed development and renewal strategies. As many stakeholders speculate on Detroit's comeback and private capital pours into select parts of the city, its most vulnerable residents continue to struggle in areas ranging from housing to education to employment. These residents, still chiefly Black and poor, remain on the margins of Detroit's spotty progress. Discourses around development and renewal continue to be shaped by political and corporate agents, community members, and the press. Currently, the sum of coverage pertaining to urban development and renewal is generally mixed and nuanced; nevertheless, mainstream media have not strayed from framing private development in the city as a markedly positive enterprise, even as some of this investment has facilitated further harm to the most socioeconomically vulnerable. This research focuses on the perspectives held by individuals a part of, or at least closely connected to, those vulnerable communities by centering Black, Detroit residents. The central inquires of this research hope to uncover what media sources Black Detroiters use to acquire news about urban development and renewal and their perceptions of that coverage. To address these questions, a quantitative survey was administered to Black undergraduate students listed as residents of Detroit at a large, Midwestern university. Findings show that students relied largely on traditional media for news about urban development and renewal in Detroit and demonstrated high perceptions of media bias. Students' trust in media differed significantly by income.

This thesis is dedicated to my mother, father, and the countless other Black Detroiters who show me every day what radical love looks like.

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# INTRODUCTION

The city of Detroit was—and remains—an essential figure and location in the history of the United States. In the early twentieth century, Detroit emerged as a center of industry and crystallized its position in the sociopolitical and economic fabric of the nation. The city powered transport and manufacturing industries for the nation during world conflict, which prompted the city's "arsenal of democracy" label. At its pinnacle, Detroit swelled into the nation's fourth-largest metropolis and boasted a population of nearly 2 million residents. From the 1950s onward, however, the city experienced disastrous decline, marked by widespread population loss, fleeing industries, economic and spatial inequality, racial turbulence, and urban decay. This elongated downturn ultimately lead the city of Detroit to file for Chapter 9 bankruptcy protection, making it the largest municipal bankruptcy in the nation's history (Halcom, Shea, Gautz, Pinho, & Walsh, 2013). The filing signaled the city's failure to remedy lingering economic and political woes accumulated throughout the mid-twentieth century, all of which had worsened considerably in the previous decade. News media, much before the bankruptcy filing, have long comprehended the importance of Detroit and its influence on popular understandings of urbanity and culture. Correspondingly, news media at all levels (local, state, national, international) dedicated content to the exploration of Detroit's social, political, and economic woes, especially in the last decade.

## Situating Detroit's Decline

The gradual collapse of the automotive industry and its concomitant effects on the nation's economy (Vlasic & Bunkley, 2008), job scarcity, and the rapid exodus of white, middle-class residents (Harris, 2009), blight, industrial decline, and urban decay (*Time* NewsFeed, n.d.), city abandonment and ineffectual municipal governance (Seelye, 2011; *Time* NewsFeed, 2011),

as well as political wrongdoing and fiscal mismanagement (Davey & Walsh, 2013), were all covered en route to Detroit's decline. Media organizations such as *Time* featured stories on Detroit accompanied by stylized images of abandoned industrial plants, derelict warehouses, vacant schools, and dilapidated homes. Photographers throughout the nation and world flocked to the city to capture its "terrible beauty," releasing photographic volumes and titles such as "The Ruins of Detroit," and "Lost Detroit: Stories Behind the Motor City's Majestic Ruins." The imagery produced and disseminated within these various media contexts often capitalized on processes of urban decline in Detroit and unequivocally came to represent Detroit in the popular, societal psyche (Gansky, 2014). Furthermore, such images were seldom placed in the larger context that precipitated them: Detroit's population decreased from 951,270 in 2000 to 713,777 in 2010—a decline of 25 percent over the decade (U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.), which depleted the city's tax base, disrupted local economies, and strained its ability to provide basic service functions to residents (J. M. Thomas, 2013).

In his letter authorizing Detroit's filing for Chapter 9 bankruptcy protection, Michigan Governor Rick Snyder described the event as "a low point" and the result of "60 years of decline in the city" (Snyder, 2013). Much scholarship supports Snyder's assertion and locates patterns of decline as early as the 1950s. In 1952, Detroit reached its peak population at 1.85 million people. By the end of the decade, however, Detroit had lost nearly ten percent of its population (Darden & Hill, 1987). The city would lose "nearly half a million people" over the next 20 years "while surrounding suburban counties gained over a million new residents" (Darden & Hill, 1987, p. 19). The relocation of industry, accompanied by decentralization, suburbanization, and residential segregation, facilitated the devastation of the central city and resulted in the concentrated development of the surrounding metropolitan area (Darden & Hill, 1987). A

diminishing tax base fostered widespread educational disparities. Capital shifted out of central Detroit vis-à-vis disinvestment in automotive industries and bolstered unemployment in the central city (J. M. Thomas, 2013). As predominantly White—and later, increasingly Black—middle-class residents relocated to suburban areas, the financially strapped Black population within the central city encountered a waning housing market (Fine, 1989). Federal policies that encouraged suburban home ownership among White residents, simultaneously disenfranchised prospective Black home-buyers and devalued Black communities. These forces, aided by residential segregation, created stark differences between property values in the metropolitan area and central city (Darden & Hill, 1987). As assessed property values diminished within the central city and grew in the larger metropolitan area, issues of blight escalated in Detroit. The city turned its focus to eliminating blight by "adopting programs of urban renewal, neighborhood conservation, and code enforcement" (Fine, 1989, p. 60); however, close reading of earlier urban renewal and blight removal programs implemented by the city government revealed intentions to dislocate impoverished Black communities and create retail and service industries that would attract suburban, White, middle-class residents back to the city (Darden & Hill, 1987). Some development initiatives, those surrounding the site at Gratiot Avenue serve as an example, failed to effectively relocate displaced communities and provide them with sufficient housing alternatives (J. M. Thomas, 2013). Working-class White communities, specifically Italians, Germans, and other European ethnic groups, moved to the metropolitan area (Woodford, Silvey, & Drown, 1979), while low-income Black residents were forced to reckon with a decaying city center. By the early 1960s, nearly a dozen urban renewal projects unraveled in Detroit, some of which were delayed or stalled due to a lack of funding (Fine, 1989). From the late 1960s onward, efforts of urban development and renewal in Detroit skewed toward the midtown area and

broader central business district and frequently involved the placation of corporate elite interests to stimulate trickle-down patterns of growth (Darden & Hill, 1987). Today, similar patterns characterize current approaches to development and renewal in Detroit. The city has adopted a new label, the "comeback city," which the news media has legitimized and popularized.

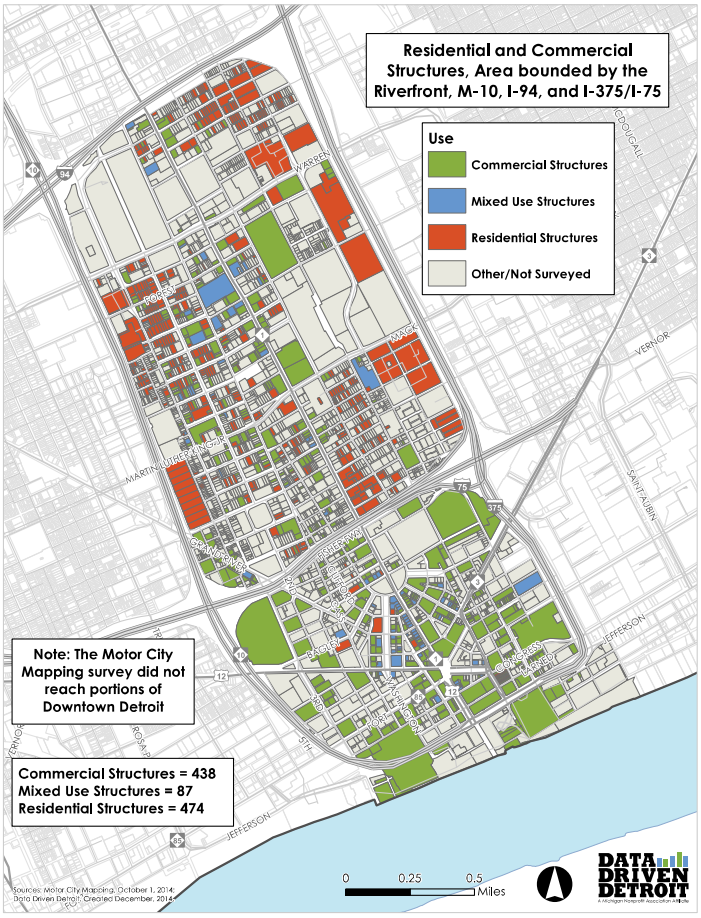
**The Making and Unmaking of the 'Comeback City'**

Two months before the bankruptcy filing, the Detroit Metro Convention and Visitors Bureau (DMCVB) launched a $1 million advertising and marketing campaign to redefine Detroit as the "comeback city" (Welch, 2013)—a moniker it hoped would attract private development and consumerism back to sections of the city. Even before the campaign launched, a parallel, oppositional narrative spawned, challenging Detroit's preeminent "decline" frame. In early March 2013, the *New York Times* reported on a "private boom amidst Detroit's public blight" (Davey, 2013). Mere months into the city's bankruptcy, news media—local, state, national, and international—transitioned from solely negative press toward more mixed, neutral, and positive press in the city (Reese, Eckert, Sands, & Vojnovic, 2017). For example, in September 2013, when the *Detroit Free Press* released an in-depth, analytical article detailing how the city "went broke" (Bomey & Gallagher, 2013), the *Detroit News* covered a press conference two days later where then-Vice President Joe Biden lauded a "miraculous recovery" in Detroit (Ferretti & Shepardson, 2013). A year later, as Detroit neared its exit from bankruptcy, *CNN Money* named Detroit one of the "most innovative cities in America" (Eugenios, Hargreaves, & Rawlins, 2014). In 2015, the media coverage became markedly more positive. In May 2015, Governor Snyder released a video on the state of Michigan website (www.michigan.gov) titled "Find out why Detroit is 'America's Comeback City,'" which highlighted development in the midtown and downtown areas. Similarly, many media organizations turned their attention toward the city's

private sector growth as evidence of change. In September 2015, the *Detroit Free Press* published a long-form article detailing the "accomplishments" and investment in downtown Detroit by billionaire Quicken Loans owner Dan Gilbert (Gallagher, 2015a). That same month, Lear Corporation and Amazon announced moves to downtown Detroit to kickstart the city's tech industries—deals Gilbert helped facilitate (Gallagher, 2015b). The *Detroit News* reported that "at least 110 development deals, including an estimated 32 restaurants and bars, were unveiled in 'greater downtown' throughout 2016…" (Aguilar, 2017). The up-and-coming eyewear retailer Warby Parker and athletic apparel companies Nike and Under Armour all opened stores downtown in recent years. Hollywood actor Mark Wahlberg debuted a new downtown Detroit location for his burger chain Wahlburgers to wide acclaim (Kurlyandchik, 2016). A considerable amount of residential and commercial development has occurred in the central business district. Figure 1 illustrates the residential and commercial structures in midtown and downtown. One of the larger commercial developments involved a decision by the Detroit Pistons to leave the Palace of Auburn Hills to join the Detroit Red Wings in the Ilitch-owned Little Caesar's Arena for the 2017-2018 season (Manzullo, Gallagher, & Guillen, 2016). The board of governors representing the National Basketball Association unanimously approved the move (Beard, 2017). Controversy continues to surround the construction of the arena, as modifications to accommodate both major sports teams are slated to be funded by public, taxpayer money (Solis, 2017).

These developments, along with the unveiling of the QLINE streetcar service between New Center and downtown—a distance of 3.3 miles—in May 2017, have left many, namely poor, Black Detroit residents, to wonder who the beneficiaries of this uneven development are. The *New York Times* published an article titled "In Detroit's 2-Speed Recovery, Downtown

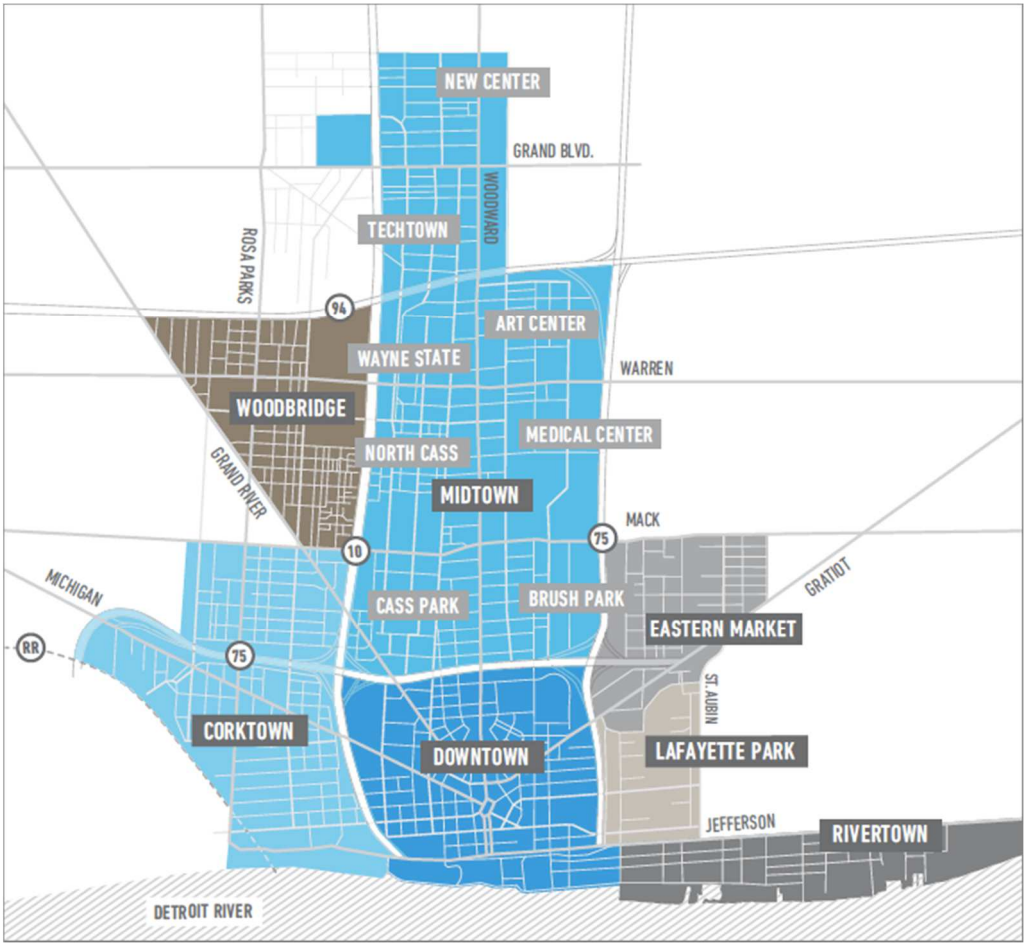
Roars and Neighborhoods Sputter," which focused on the structural differences between the midtown-downtown areas and the city's core (Applebome, 2016). Many organizations and initiatives throughout the city explicitly concentrate on fostering development in the midtown, downtown, and metropolitan areas while expressing little regard for the most distressed sections of Detroit. On its website, the DMCVB—which coined the city's "comeback city" label—specifies that its mission is to "market and sell the Detroit metropolitan region to businesses and leisure visitors in order to maximize economic impact" (Detroit Metro Convention & Visitors Bureau, n.d.).




Source: Data Driven Detroit

**Figure 1.** Residential and commercial structures in greater downtown Detroit

Furthermore, the website lists and promotes five destination districts for visitors, all of which exist outside of the city's devastated core: Downtown Detroit (DD), Dearborn/Wayne (DW), Oakland (O), Macomb (M), and Great Novi (GN). Many employers including Wayne State University, Henry Ford Health Systems, Quicken Loans, and DTE Energy partner, or once partnered, with entities like Midtown Detroit and the Downtown Detroit Partnership to incentivize employees to relocate to the midtown and downtown areas. Such partnerships have aided in attracting new residents to what some are now calling the "7.2," a shorthand for the 7.2 square miles encompassing greater downtown Detroit (see Figure 2).



Source: Data Driven Detroit

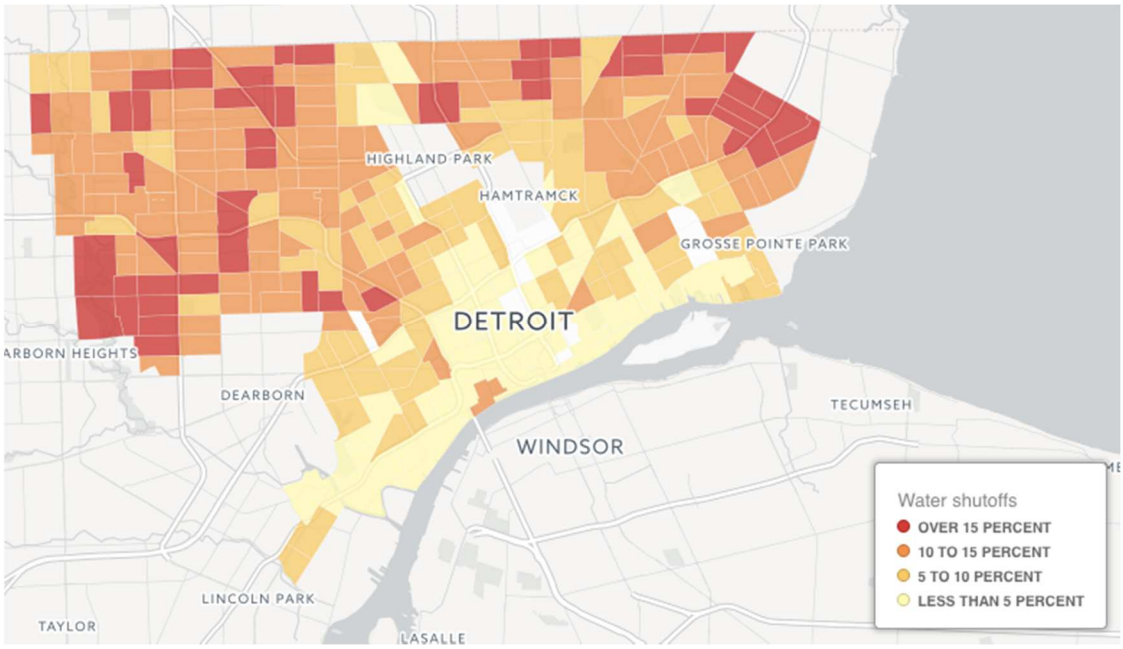
**Figure 2.** Map of greater downtown Detroit (7.2 square miles)

According to a joint report by the Hudson-Weber Foundation and various development-oriented organizations, more than half (53%) of the participants in the Live Midtown and Live Downtown residential incentive programs formerly resided in Metro Detroit, 27 percent were native Detroit city residents, 7 percent were from other areas in Michigan, and 13 percent came from a different state. The report also found that white residents account for more of the population in greater downtown Detroit (21%) than in the entire city (11%), and that residents in greater downtown tend to be younger, wealthier, and more educated (Hudson-Weber Foundation, n.d.). Darden and Hill (1987) suggest that efforts to revitalize the greater downtown area have historically been aimed at targeting the "young urban professional" who directly contrasts with the working class resident of the city center (Darden & Hill, 1987, p. 45). These figures certainly suggest the existence of two distinct Detroits— one predominantly Black, marked by resource scarcity and underdevelopment; another White, characterized by opportunity and corporate infrastructure. The former reflects the outcomes of stringent racial animus methodized through White suburban flight and regional, residential segregation, as well as governmental mismanagement and industrial decline (Darden & Hill, 1987; Sugrue, 2014; J. M. Thomas, 2013). The latter demonstrates a longstanding pattern in Detroit of concentrating both public and private capital into the midtown, downtown, and riverfront areas to optimize economic impact in those select areas. Darden and Hill (1987) summarize this point eloquently:

> Planning for the Detroit riverfront isn't new; it actually began in the 1940s. A salient feature of the city's 1951 master plan was a 3.5 mile park promenade and riverfront drive running east from the downtown civic center, past Belle Isle—the idyllic island park designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, the landscape architect who created New York's Central Park—all the way to the Grosse Pointes. But the riverfront ranked below other municipal development priorities during the 1950s and 60s, including the civic center complex (Cobo Hall, the Veterans Memorial Building. Ford Auditorium, and the City-County Building), the Lafayette and Elmwood Park residential developments, and construction in the New Center area of midtown. But as New York, San Diego, Portland, Seattle, San Francisco, St. Louis, Baltimore, and Boston rediscovered the magnetic power of their

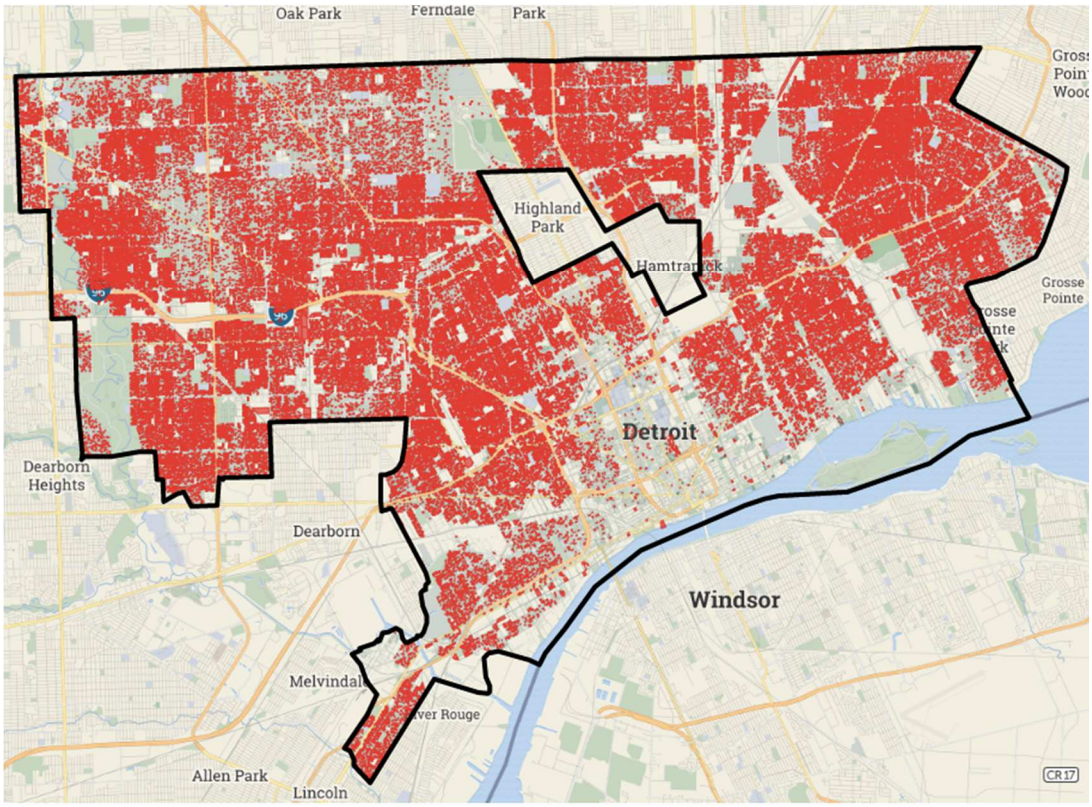
> waterfronts during the 1970s, the attention of Detroit's development establishment naturally turned in that direction too. (p. 45)

Despite attempts to cultivate growth in Detroit by restoring its greater downtown area, some researchers suggest that narratives of progress may be premature and misguided. Reese, Eckert, Sands, and Vojnovic (2017) found that data from several key measures (population, poverty, economic landscape, etc.) indicate that Detroit is still in decline and sparse instances of progress tend to be distributed unevenly toward downtown. According to the study, both the city center and midtown areas saw declines in population and median income and experienced increases in the poverty rate between 2010 and 2014. Contrarily, the downtown (central business district) area saw population gain, an increase in median income, and a decrease in the poverty rate during the same time period (Reese et al., 2017). Plainly put, "these incremental flickers of life, though, do nothing to address the city's core problem: disinvestment and abandonment propelled by corporate decisions framed and aided by government policies, from housing to free trade, with an overlay of stubbornly persistent racism" (Martelle, 2012, p. 234). At the community level, such conclusions are more apparent. Since 2014, an annual average of nearly 28,000 households have had their water shut off, almost all of which exist outside the area specified in Figure 2. Most water shutoffs have occurred in the city proper as opposed to greater downtown and the broader metropolitan suburbs. Figure 3 shows the percentage of water shutoffs in Detroit by neighborhood in 2016 and demonstrates the clear disparity between the central city and greater downtown Detroit. A similar pattern emerges when exploring tax foreclosures throughout the city. Figure 4 highlights the foreclosed properties that were auctioned in Detroit since 2002.



Source: Detroit Water and Sewage Department

**Figure 3.** Percentages of water shutoffs by neighborhood 2016



Source: Loveland Technologies

**Figure 4.** Properties auctioned due to tax foreclosures 2002-2015

This uneven development has failed to cultivate growth in Detroit writ large, and in turn, has driven more residents from the central city to the suburbs. Darden and Thomas (2013) conclude that upwardly mobile, middle-class Black residents have consistently moved to inner-ring suburbs—though still highly segregated—throughout the metropolitan area. This further exacerbates issues within the city, which weigh disproportionately on Detroit's poorer, Black communities. Moreover, media have been instrumental in framing discourses around both Detroit's decline and development. A breath of scholarship on urban development and renewal has revealed that economic interests of corporate and political elites have historically outweighed substantive efforts to create viable solutions for impoverished communities, which are disproportionately occupied by Black residents (Darden & Hill, 1987; Darden & Thomas, 2013; Fine, 1989; J. M. Thomas, 2013). Legacies of past urban development efforts extend into present approaches toward revitalization in Detroit and have heightened disparities between most communities and the greater downtown area. Black residents in Detroit account for 82 percent of the population. Nearly 40 percent of the population is in poverty, and only 13.5 percent of residents 25 years or older have obtained a bachelor's degree or higher (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2015)—all of which signal the lasting outcomes of White suburban flight, residential segregation and industrial decline, as well as failure to stimulate growth in the most distressed sections of the city (Darden & Thomas, 2013). Media organizations and platforms, then, have a profound responsibility to inform the public of proposed development and renewal strategies, as well as facilitating community engagement in political and democratic processes to bring about change to the entire city. Furthermore, the role of media in holding elites accountable is paramount, especially in a political context where marginalized communities are immensely vulnerable to corporate and political wrongdoing (Serrin & Serrin, 2002). Given these factors,

the author sought to explore the individuals within those marginalized communities to learn what sources of media they used most to acquire information about urban development and renewal.

**Scope, Purposes, Goals of Research**

Efforts of urban development and renewal set forth by city, state, and federal governments are central to the histories of postwar industrial cities and metropolises in the United States. As suburbanization, primarily abetted by federal policies, began to facilitate population loss, economic decline, corporate decentralization, and disinvestment within industrial city centers, cities like Pittsburgh, Dayton, and Detroit were forced to synthesize development and renewal strategies to alleviate mounting urban decay. Detroit—once a beacon of industry in the nation—has come to epitomize the worst of these issues, as the city has experienced over six decades of decline. The rapid exodus of predominantly white, middle-class residents to metropolitan suburbs and the correlated relocation of industries, residential and regional segregation, and consistent government mismanagement devastated Detroit's urban core. After 1952, when the city's population peaked at 1.85 million, considerable attempts at urban development and renewal were made to revitalize infrastructure, combat impending decay and blight, and lure private capital back to the city. These efforts, however, often came at the expense of Detroit's most vulnerable communities—increasingly Black and poor—so much so that the Detroit Urban League came to refer to urban renewal and slum clearance as "negro removal" (Sugrue, 2014). The press and broader media industries in Detroit were instrumental in shaping narratives about proposed development and renewal strategies. The mainstream press (local, state, and national newspaper publications serving predominantly White consumers) generally covered proposals from business perspectives, occasionally focusing on how city actions might affect Black communities in distress. Black residents largely relied on Black-

owned media to stay informed about development projects and their potential consequences, and often used such platforms as vehicles to forge intra-community dialogue, call out governmental and media biases on decisions about renewal, and fashion forms of protest (Darden & Hill, 1987).

Today, as many stakeholders speculate on Detroit's comeback and private capital pours into select parts of the city, its most vulnerable residents continue to struggle in areas ranging from housing to education to employment. These residents, still chiefly Black and poor, remain on the margins of Detroit's spotty progress. Discourses around development and renewal continue to be shaped by political and corporate agents, community members, and particularly the press. The contemporary media landscape, however, is markedly different from that of several decades ago. Media consolidation and changes in industry business models condensed Detroit's mainstream press into two, competing and several smaller weeklies. With regard to mainstream local press, this present research places a focus on the Detroit Free Press and Detroit News respectively. Despite years of decline, both town news publications maintain the largest newsgathering operations in the state of Michigan. The Black press, most notably the *Michigan Chronicle*, survived most of the twentieth century, but has diminished significantly as digital journalism and media proliferation became more prominent. Historically, the mainstream media, in addition to having an estranged relationship with Black communities in Detroit, was often culpable in rationalizing urban renewal initiatives that displaced and harmed Black residents (Rhomberg, 2012). Currently, the sum of coverage pertaining to urban development and renewal is generally mixed and nuanced; nevertheless, mainstream media have not strayed from framing private development in the city as a markedly positive enterprise, even as some of this investment has facilitated further harm to the most socioeconomically vulnerable.

This research focuses on the perspectives held by individuals who are part of, or at least closely connected to, those vulnerable communities by centering Black Detroit residents. Put simply, the central inquires of this research hope to uncover what sources of media Black Detroiters access to acquire news about urban development and renewal and what are their perceptions of that coverage. To address these questions, a quantitative survey was administered to Black undergraduate students listed as residents of Detroit at a large, Midwestern university. This university is the largest (by student enrollment) in the state where Detroit is located. The survey asked students questions about their sources of media and usage trends for acquiring information about Detroit, their trust in various types of media to report news accurately, and their perceptions of media bias. A younger, student-oriented population was targeted for several reasons: (1) this population was convenient in terms of its spatial proximity and accessibility to the researcher; (2) college-age (18-25) students are generally characterized by their participation in a broader media landscape and are influenced by a wider diversity of media choices; (3) the Black press, which was utilized by older, Black residents, does not presently exist in the same capacity for younger Detroiters (see Chapter 2 for broader discussion); and (4) this population is uniquely positioned to shape the future of Detroit and will be most temporally affected by the decisions made by city officials.

This research is significant because it positions the media as arbiters of urban development and renewal discourses in Detroit and seeks to understand how populations historically marginalized in, and by, decisions about renewal engage with the coverage media organizations produce. There is an array of scholarship that examines the complex histories of development and renewal projects in Detroit and their effects on Black communities. This literature, however, generally excludes substantive discussion of how media shape and

disseminate news about development to residents, and how that coverage is received, namely by the most vulnerable and most impacted. Accordingly, this research contributes to the existing body of literature by identifying what sources socioeconomically vulnerable communities in Detroit—principally Black and poor—use to acquire news coverage about urban development and renewal, as well as their trust in the accuracy of and perceptions of bias within that news coverage. Such research will yield essential theoretical and practical implications. More clearly, better understanding the population in focus can cultivate tangible impacts on media practitioners and organizations in Detroit—which consistently ranks as one of the top 15 news markets in the country (Nielsen, 2016). Investigating young, Detroit-native students' attitudes and media usage trends can (a) reveal opportunities to develop more inclusive, race- and class-conscious reporting in media coverage dedicated to public affairs in Detroit; (b) lead to a more informed citizenry, thereby facilitating greater political participation and responsible democracy at the policy level; and (c) demonstrate insights into how young citizens work within an evolving media landscape to engage issues pertinent to their communities. Moreover, this research might serve as a guidepost for stakeholders and media practitioners in other post-industrial cities with sizable Black populations to evaluate their coverage of urban development and renewal with respect to Black communities. Furthermore, this study utilizes and extends the theoretical frameworks of media framing and media hegemony. By approaching both theories with analyses of race and class, the author seeks to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how both are employed within a politicized, racialized civil society.

Following this introductory section, Chapter 2 provides context on the interplay of race and media in Detroit, focusing chiefly on the history of racial and class antagonisms between Black residents and mainstream media organizations in the city. The chapter also discusses Black

publications in Detroit and their role in advocating for social and political change for Detroit's Black communities. This chapter necessarily discusses the media landscape accessible to Black, Detroit residents throughout the twentieth century and contextualizes the logic underpinning many of the researcher's inquiries. To reiterate, the prevailing question is this: now that the Black press has waned, what media are younger Black Detroiters using to stay informed about their communities? Chapter 3 provides a review of relevant literature and examines the conceptual and theoretical frameworks foundational to the study. Chapter 4 focuses on the research methodology used to conduct the primary research of this thesis. All the materials used are enclosed in the appendix. Finally, Chapter 5 details the results of the study, provides analyses of the data, and discusses implications and limitations, and offers pathways for future research.

# RACE, MEDIA, AND DEVELOPMENT IN DETROIT

## Detroit's Black Press

> There is no question that try as they might…White media generally, reflect a White attitude. So, we need an independent voice to tell the story of what is happening to Black America, through the eyes of Black America…we need some voice that can speak to the needs of Black people, that can speak to the morale of Black people, that can speak to the pride of Black people—because we don't have that today.
>
> —Detroit Mayor Coleman Young (*Jet Magazine*, 1987, p. 40)

In an issue published July 13, 1987, *Jet Magazine* featured a brief article titled "Black Press Is Vital, Says Detroit Mayor Young." The article reported on then-Mayor Coleman Young's remarks at a "luncheon of more than 100 representatives of the National Newspaper Publishers' Association (NNPA) convention in Detroit" (*Jet Magazine*, 1987, p. 40). In his address, Young reflected on a "resurgence of racism," the failure of mainstream (White) media to adequately tackle Black issues, and the consequential importance of the Black press. Here, Young asserted that mainstream news generally maintains an axiology and orientation toward Whiteness and fails not only in engaging the Black experience, but also aids in the plunder of Black peoples and communities. At the time of his commentary, the Black press had significantly diminished, both in Detroit and nationally, due to a number of factors. The Depression era stifled many Black newspapers and prompted their collapse (R. W. Thomas, 1992). Media consolidation and market restructuring, exemplified by media owners such as Frank Gannett and the Knight family, strained independent, smaller papers (Rhomberg, 2012). Additionally, a series of race rebellions erupted in various urban centers throughout the mid- to late-1960s as a response to issues including police violence, unemployment, substandard housing, and inadequate educational institutions. In 1967, President Lyndon B. Johnson

convened the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (better known as the Kerner Commission) to investigate the underlying causes of the urban uprisings. The fundamental conclusion of the commission—conveyed in a now notorious report in 1968—maintained that anti-black racism was creating "two societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal" (Kerner Commission, 1968). One of the many recommendations offered by the commission suggested that media organizations "integrate Negroes and Negro activities into all aspects of coverage and content" and "recruit more Negroes into journalism and broadcasting" (Kerner Commission, 1968, p. 210). As a response, major mainstream dailies began gradually hiring and recruiting Black journalists held in high regard by Black communities, which negatively impacted readership and circulation trends of Black newspapers (Dates & Barlow, 1990; Zook, 2008). Accordingly, Black newspapers struggled to secure advertising revenues and maintain reliable means of distribution within a changing media landscape (Nieman Reports, 2003; Thomas, 1992). In 1987, only two Black weeklies serving Detroiters—the *Michigan Chronicle* and the *Michigan Citizen*—remained. The *Michigan Citizen*, originally called the *Citizen*, was founded in 1978 by community activists Charles and Teresa Kelly in their home in Benton Harbor, Michigan. Created to "hold public officials and institutions accountable," the paper developed a considerable readership and was distributed at "more than two dozen locations" throughout Detroit. According to the Bentley Historical Library at the University of Michigan, the paper "began as a 12-page tabloid with an original circulation of 3,000 papers distributed in the Benton Harbor area," and eventually evolved into a "16-page broadsheet newspaper with a statewide circulation of 56,000 copies" (Bentley Historical Library, n.d.). The *Michigan Citizen* established a branch in Highland Park, Michigan—a predominantly Black incorporated city within Detroit—in 1985. The paper became the official publication of the city of Highland Park

and published weekly, even after Charles Kelly—its co-founder and publisher—died in 2006. From its inception, the *Michigan Citizen* served Black communities, covering a range of pertinent topics from electoral politics to community and grassroots organizations to the state legislature. In Detroit, the paper was particularly active in discourses on property foreclosures and equitable housing, city governance, and the promotion of Black-owned businesses (Bentley Historical Library, n.d.). The publication abruptly ended its print operations in December 2014 after nearly 40 years of service (Bentley Historical Library, n.d.; *Detroit Free Press*, 2014), and has struggled to sustain a consistent digital presence in recent years. The *Citizen* is but one publication that reflects the diminishment of the Black press in Detroit. By the late-twentieth century, it was nearly nonexistent, which was striking considering its robust history in the city. Thomas (1992) recounted the history of Detroit's Black press and its impact on Michigan:

> The black press in Detroit had nineteenth-century roots, as did the older black churches and lodges. The *Western Excelsior*, the first black newspaper in Detroit, began operation on March 28, 1848. The *Plain Dealer* was established on May 19, 1883, and for a while was the major black newspaper in Detroit. Frederick Douglass once wrote for the paper. This paper ran for eleven years and was one of the first newspapers in the Midwest to realize the great significance of typesetting machines; it became the second newspaper in Michigan to purchase such machinery. Most of the Detroit black newspapers were weeklies and rarely lasted longer than fifteen years. These included: The *Detroit Owl* (1926-30), the *Guardian* (1932-34), the *Detroit People's News* (1930-36), the *Michigan World* and the *Detroit World* (1931-32), the *Detroit Independent* (1921-32), and the *Paradise Valley News* (1937). Unlike most black papers, which collapsed during the Great Depression, the *Detroit Tribune* was established during this period and served the black community until January 1966. (p. 187)

The *Michigan Chronicle* is generally understood as Detroit's foremost Black publication and has been an integral part of Detroit's cultural and political history since its founding. The paper was established in April 1936 by John Sengstacke, the nephew of *Chicago Defender* founder Robert Sengstacke Abott. To initiate the paper, Sengstacke sent the *Defender's* executive editor Lucius Harper to Detroit with "$135 in capital," a "one-way bus ticket", and instructions to lay the groundwork for a sister paper (*Michigan Chronicle*, 2010). During the

1920s and 1930s, the Black press accumulated widespread significance among Black communities across the nation and catalyzed the migration of southern Black residents to northern cities. Three publications stood apart in regard to circulation and reach: the *Chicago Defender*, the P*ittsburgh Courier*, and the *Baltimore Afro-American* (*Michigan Chronicle*, 2010). As Detroit developed into a manufacturing center during the early twentieth century, southern Black workers migrated to the city for job opportunities in the automobile factories and industrial plants. The Detroit Historical Society says that the Black population in Detroit grew from 41,000 to 120,000 during the 1920s, most of whom settled in the famous Paradise Valley residential area (Detroit Historical Society, n.d.). The *Defender* and *Courier*—based in the industrial cities of Chicago and Pittsburgh respectively—expanded their reach by forming competing editions in Detroit to serve the increasing Black population. In time, Black Detroiters demanded more local coverage, which prompted the creation of the *Michigan Chronicle*, initially the *Detroit Chronicle* (*Michigan Chronicle*, 2010). While the Detroit edition of the *Defender*, managed by Russ Cowans, led other local papers in circulation numbers, Sengstacke knew that creating a local, independent paper would generate more income. Accordingly, Sengstacke asked Harper to return to Chicago to continue working for the *Defender* and tapped Louis E. Martin to spearhead the *Chronicle* as its first editor. According to Sengstacke, the first issue was "5,000 (given away) copies, using newsboys to handle distribution," and the "one-room office at 1727 St. Antoine was next to one of the most important and richest gamblers and numbers kings in Detroit" (Sengstacke, 1986). The location would be pivotal to the *Chronicle's* entry into the heart of Detroit's vibrant Black population. From the outset, the paper emerged as a community-oriented enterprise. In a *Chronicle* article, Martin discussed his approaches to building a staff for the paper. He recalled, "Harper (then the executive editor of the *Defender*) had not stayed long

enough to build a staff. I had to lean on Russ Cowans, who had been for years the *Defender's* Detroit correspondent, and any literate person who happened to be in the neighborhood on Tuesday, the deadline day," (Martin, 1986). The initial writers and "assistant editors" of the *Chronicle* were local, respected leaders in Detroit, which enabled the paper to develop loyal readership. The editorial tone of the paper, thereby, embraced and reflected the sentiment of Detroit's Black radical sphere. In fact, Martin, who was also a labor union activist, remarked that "the most fundamental operation which assured the growth of *The Chronicle* centered around the labor movement" (Martin, 1986). Martin added, "Fresh out of college with no experience, I was shocked to learn how tough a break Black workers got in the foundries of the auto plants and how insecure men felt about jobs in the factories" (Martin, 1986). Racial discrimination across job markets in Detroit was widespread during the 1930s and specifically affected Detroit's Black population. Put differently, Thomas J. Sugrue wrote, "…By all objective measures, white Detroiters citywide enjoyed preferential treatment at hiring gates, in personnel offices, in union halls, and in promotions to better positions" (Sugrue, 2014, p. 92). According to Martin, Black workers in the factories could be fired for the most trivial reasons. The *Detroit Tribune*, a Black publication that predated and coexisted with the *Chronicle*, also worked to build consciousness among Detroit's Black communities, but differed ideologically. Unlike the *Chronicle*, the *Tribune* advocated pro-industry and pro-Black capitalism for much of its existence. The paper developed "within the unique institutional history of a Black community heavily indebted to and dependent upon industrialists such as Henry Ford," whereas the *Chronicle* "had the advantage of riding into town on the crest of the wave of industrial unionism" (R. W. Thomas, 1992, p. 188). The *Tribune* focused primarily on promoting Black businesses and encouraging Black residents to support those businesses. The paper staunchly argued that Black patronage of Black-owned

businesses would facilitate the expansion of Black enterprise and enable business owners to hire more Black workers. The *Chronicle* engaged an emergent radical sphere that, while enlightened, in part, by the efforts of the *Tribune*, was beginning to diverge from "its heavy dependency upon the Republican party, the industrial elites, and lack capitalism, to the Democratic party and industrial unionism" (Thomas, 1992, p.191). While the two papers differed ideologically, both consistently covered pertinent issues affecting Black communities and were indispensable in the fight against racial inequity in Detroit. The *Tribune* galvanized Black residents to vote and participate in electoral processes, created extensive directories of Black entrepreneurs and businesses, and cultivated awareness around the systematic oppression of Black peoples, domestically and abroad (R. W. Thomas, 1992). The *Michigan Chronicle* reflected the voice of Detroit's radical Black resistance. Most notably, the *Chronicle* encouraged Black residents to partake in militant struggle in the face of White racism and violent terror brought forth by the uprisings of 1943. By 1944, circulation of the *Chronicle* reached 25,000, an increase of 10,000 copies from the start of the decade (*Michigan Chronicle*, 2010). That same year, Longworth Quinn—who graduated from Hampton University with Sengstacke—transferred from the *Defender* to the *Chronicle* to serve as the paper's publisher. A proponent of Black business, Quinn broadened the publication's coverage of the business and professional sector within the Black community. While Martin maintained the *Chronicle's* position as a voice in the labor movement, Quinn forged relationships with professional organizations such as the Booker T. Washington Businessman's Association (*Michigan Chronicle*, 2010). By the 1950s, the *Chronicle* emerged as the leading Black newspaper in Detroit, and the *Tribune* ceased publication in 1966 (*Michigan Chronicle*, 2010; R. W. Thomas, 1992). For the next several decades, the *Chronicle* continued to serve Detroit's Black residents and often acted as an

alternative to the city's major daily newspapers—the *Detroit Free Press* and *The Detroit News*. Today, the *Chronicle* remains active; however, circulation has decreased significantly over the past decade—from 26,674 in 2006 to 22,231 in 2016 (Pew Research Center, 2017).

**Detroit's Mainstream Media**

The *Detroit Free Press* and *The Detroit News* have storied histories in Detroit, and both truly developed alongside the city itself. Operating for more than a century, both have occupied various positions on issues facing Black communities, especially during times of severe racial turbulence and violence. The *Free Press*, which began as the *Democratic Free Press and Michigan Intelligencer*, first appeared on May 5, 1831, to "serve the needs of some who would be leaders in the growth of the city and state—and to serve the needs of a political party" (Angelo, 1981, p. 24). According to Angelo (1981), the *Free Press* started as a political megaphone for the Democratic Party. The first issue "was little more than a political sheet, filled with bits and pieces of information about the world beyond but mostly with fervent opinion about the prospects of the Democratic Party" (Angelo, 1981, p. 24). *The News*, originally the *Evening News*, was founded by James E. Scripps in August 1873. The paper began as an evening paper, offsetting three morning newspapers in Detroit and competing directly with a fourth, relatively weak, evening paper (Lutz, 1973). Detroit was the ideal market for the kind of paper Scripps attempted to build, as he perceived "Detroit as a workingman's town aching for an inexpensive paper that could play an important role in shaping the city's future," (Lutz, 1973, p. 5). Scripps was, indeed, correct. *The News* grew rapidly, especially during the late-nineteenth century, and became one of the city's leading publications. Lutz (1973) argued that the rapid growth in Detroit from the early to mid-twentieth century could be, in part, attributed to *The News*. The paper "would participate in that change to such an extent that a hundred years after its

founding, it could be safely said that Detroit would not be the city it is had there been no *Detroit News*" (p. 16). The *Free Press* and *The News* were instrumental is cultivating an informed public sphere as Detroit exploded into a center of industry in the nation. As southern Black migrants began moving to Detroit to seek job opportunities in the automobile industry, problems of racism and inequality swelled, affecting every facet of everyday living — from housing to education to employment. During their initial years, both the *Free Press* and *The News* explicitly reflected the biases and racial animus commonly held by many White citizens. One of the early, defining editors of the *Free Press*, Wilbur Fisk Storey, was noted for his racist views of Black peoples, admonishment of Abraham Lincoln, and rigid disdain for abolitionists (Angelo, 1981). That political axis and editorial tone remained consistent in the *Free Press* for decades after Storey's tenure as editor. In an article published in the 1860s, the *Free Press* reported on "the elopement of 'a white girl with a negro' and their subsequent arrest." The *Free Press* reporter described the woman as a person "who disgraced her sex and common decency by consenting to become the wife of a black, ugly looking, disgusting negro" (Angelo, 1981, p. 86). *The News*, in its early years, shared similar sentiments toward Black peoples. In February 1876, the *News* published an article about a Black man who allegedly fired gunshots at a White woman for refusing his advances. Although the paper did not run any sufficient evidence to corroborate the story, it labeled the suspect a murderer before the alleged victim was pronounced dead. The *News* described the suspect as having a "prominent nose" and "peculiar, dark, unpleasant eyes." The *News* ended the article with a tone of enthusiasm: "The excitement here is intense, and if Parks should be found near here, his chances for a lynching are good" (*The Evening News*, 1876). During the twentieth century, as Detroit's Black population grew exponentially, White violence and racial strife engulfed the city, culminating most prominently in race rebellions in 1943 and

1967. Both were manifestations of decades of White supremacy and racism maintained through gratuitous racial violence, residential segregation and housing inequities, job discrimination, and over-policing of Black communities (Darden & Hill, 1987; Darden & Thomas, 2013; Fine, 1989; Sugrue, 2014; J. M. Thomas, 2013). Leading up to the uprising of 1943, White residents protested, violently in some cases, the construction of the Sojourner Truth Housing Project, which was created to house Black wartime workers. Many White residents living near the public housing project complained that moving Black people into the area would signify "utter ruin for many people who had mortgaged their homes to the FHA" and would "jeopardize the safety of many of our White girls" (Darden & Hill, 1987, p. 115). The *Free Press* drew attention to such prejudices and called for a "harmonious agreement over the issue" between Black and White residents (Angelo, 1981, p. 187). In June 1943, White workers at the Packard automobile manufacturing plant organized a strike to challenge the efforts of the United Auto Workers at "mixing white and black workers" (Angelo, 1981, p. 186). The *Free Press*, while espousing conservative and biased views on race relations in the past, shifted its position to one of advocacy on this matter. In an editorial on June 3, 1943, the *Free Press* wrote:

> The discrimination against Negroes, for instance, challenges the sincerity of our beliefs in Christianity and in Jefferson's declaration that all men are created equal. We talk about world leadership. Yet in barring Asiatics from the Country, and in discriminating against 13 million Americans because of their color, and other millions because they were born in the Old World, we proclaim a double standard of justice, a different set of rules for men of different races and colors. (p. 186)

After the 1943 rebellion—which resulted in 34 deaths (25 Black people; nine White people) and 675 people injured (416 required hospitalization)—community officials and police representatives leveled much of the blame on Detroit's Black residents. The *Free Press* disputed the claims, directing ample criticism at Police Commissioner John Witherspoon (Angelo, 1981). The *Free Press* experienced an ideological shift during the 1940s that contrasted with its often-

inflammatory editorial voice of the nineteenth century. Over the next several decades, the paper emerged as the liberal counterpart to the conservative *News* (Rhomberg, 2012). Moreover, the *Free Press* was determined to have offered the most balanced coverage during the 1967 uprisings out of other major cities dealing with unrest (Fine, 1989). In addition to covering the act of the uprising, the *Free Press* reported on the factors leading to the rebellion. One reporter discussed at length the anti-Black bias held by many officers in the Detroit Police Department (DPD). During the uprising, a reporter overheard an officer remark, "Those Black son-of-a bitches. I'm going to get me a couple of them before this is over" (Fine, 1989, p. 196). *The News*, contrarily, was frequently criticized by civil rights leaders for its unapologetic indifference toward and outright collusion with the DPD. The *News* orchestrated a "Secret Witness" program that offered "rewards" for information leading to the "arrest and conviction of criminals" (Lutz, 1973, p. 144). Many Black residents accused *The News* of racism and boycotted the paper. WWJ-TV, the television station affiliate of *The News*, "presented a ninety-minute special on July 30 that portrayed the riot as 'a chaotic and irrational collection of fires, crimes and blind anger.' The same station ran pictures of the funerals of two law enforcement officers but none of the funerals of blacks slain in the riot" (Fine, 1989, p. 358). After the turbulence, the primary focus of *The News* was to restore "law and order," which implied more collaboration with police forces known to antagonize Black residents and communities (Lutz, 1973). *The News* also played a role in fostering conditions for the 1967 rebellion to take place. In 1945, the *News* ran a series of articles by James Sweinhart titled "What Detroit's Slums Cost Its Taxpayers," all of which advocated aggressively for "the adoption of zoning laws, redevelopment plans, and other concerted efforts to eliminate slums" (Darden & Hill, 1987, p. 156). Such arguments came amidst federal legislation—Title I of the Federal Housing Act of 1949—that supported slum

clearance. As applied in Detroit, however, programs aimed at slum clearance reduced the availability of adequate housing for low-income (disproportionately Black) residents, due to the prioritization of private interests over public needs. Stated more directly, Darden and Hill (1987) remarked:

> In part Detroit's urban renewal program aggravated the shortage of low-income housing because of flaws and conceptual contradictions in the legislation that actually passed as Title I of the Federal Housing Act of 1949. Quite simply, Title I's mechanism of clearing slums was contradictory: Clearance could only reduce the housing supply, and not all residents could be supplied with "decent, safe, and sanitary dwellings," for the legislation itself claimed that such did not exist in sufficient numbers. The language was sufficiently vague that cities could, within conformity of the law, tear down slums to build luxury housing, office buildings, and convention centers. (p. 158)

A decade later, *The News* sponsored a report designed by the Urban Land Institute (ULI) that recommended "inner-city slum clearance and replacement with market-rate rather than lower-income or public housing" (Rhomberg, 2012, p. 48-9). Although the ULI panel responsible for the report solely "included prominent business people and professionals from around the country, representing banking, realty, and transit firms," the *News* "gave extensive coverage to the ULI report and drilled its findings and recommendations into newspaper readers (Darden & Hill, 1987, p. 165-7). The report reinforced racial and class biases held by political and corporate leaders and strengthened the precedent of masquerading class terrorism and exclusionary, private development as "renewal." By the early 1960s, government-financed urban renewal and development programs took massive tolls on Black communities—most notably in the prominent Black Bottom neighborhood (Darden & Hill, 1987; Rhomberg, 2012). Thomas (2013) reported that by 1963, "Detroit had demolished or was scheduled to demolish 10,000 structures. This required displacing 43,096 people, 70 percent of them black" (p. 105). This is significant considering that in 1960, Black residents comprised only 30 percent of the total population in the city (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005). In 1958, the Gratiot and Lafayette Park redevelopment site, which displaced nearly 2,000 Black residents formerly living in Black

Bottom, resulted in "an impressive 22-story apartment building with rents far above the means of former residents" (Darden & Hill, 1987, p. 158).

*The News*' editorial voice during the early to mid-twentieth actively exacerbated racial and class disparities in housing, worsened relations between Black residents and police, and aided in implementing patterns of uneven development that specifically displaced poor, Black communities (Darden & Hill, 1987; Rhomberg, 2012). While the *Free Press* often occupied the more liberal position on racial issues, widespread exclusion of Black media professionals from the mainstream press persisted until the 1960s. Darden and Hill (1987) stated that in 1951, the "only blacks working for the major white newspapers were maintenance people, elevator operators, and doorkeepers" (p. 68). Two years later, the *Free Press*, in response to mounting pressure, was the first mainstream Detroit paper to hire a Black journalist. Other media industries were just as, if not more, inaccessible to Black Detroiters. In 1960, "none of Detroit's three big radio stations (WJR, WWJ, WXYZ) employed Blacks as disc jockeys or as technical or secretarial personnel" or as journalists (p. 69). Later in the decade, while many Black radio personalities began gaining acclaim in Detroit, Black-owned and operated stations were comparatively sparse in the broader media market. In 1956, Black dentists Dr. Wendell Cox and Dr. Haley Bell launched WCHB-AM 1440 in neighboring Inkster, which became popular among Detroit's Black communities and served as a launching pad for personalities such as Trudy Haynes, the nation's first Black television weather reporter (Edward, 2016). In 1964, William V. Banks purchased the radio station WGPR and gave Detroit its first Black-owned radio station. Banks, in 1975, established WGPR-TV, Detroit's first Black-owned television station. The station kickstarted the career of media icons such as R.J. Watkins, who worked on the widely successful dance show "The Scene" and founded WHPR Radio (*Michigan Chronicle*, 2014).

These Black-owned media functioned as platforms for Black Detroiters to participate in the community, promote Black business, engage in discourses about Black struggle, and further cultivate Detroit's rich Black culture.

Detroit's Black-owned and mainstream media, respectively, played important roles in Detroit's social and political history. The two, however, often took radically different approaches when engaging on issues of race and class. More specifically, both served divergent audiences when covering plans for urban renewal and development. Black residents relied largely on Black-owned media to stay informed about proposed renewal projects and their associated consequences, to engage in intra-community dialogue, and used these platforms as vehicles for protest and dissent. The mainstream media chiefly served suburban and metropolitan residents and periodically colluded with elite, corporate and political stakeholders to achieve outcomes harmful to vulnerable communities. As current narratives of renewal are manufactured and disseminated throughout the city, and as problems of racism and inequity persist, it is important to analyze contemporary discourses on development within their larger historical context. Detroit's major dailies—the *Free Press* and *The News*—are currently the leading newspapers in the city, with several weekly publications serving sizable readerships (e.g., *Crain's Detroit Business*, *Metro Times*, etc.). Given the papers' historical engagement with urban renewal and its frequently contentious relationship with Black communities, exploring how Black Detroiters interact with the two publications—and all media focused on public affairs in Detroit—is imperative in the present political context where Black residents continue to suffer from neoliberal leadership and policy (Pedroni, 2011). The next chapter examines how media utilize framing to shape discourse and ultimately sustain cultural and political hegemony.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

This study utilizes critical political economy theories of media to contextualize and better understand differences in media use, media trust, and perceptions of bias among Black students from Detroit. Detroit's urban development and renewal history is inextricably linked to discourses on race and class. Oftentimes, those competing discourses were diametrically opposed—those of the corporate and political elite juxtaposed with those of economically vulnerable communities (Darden & Hill, 1987; Darden & Thomas, 2013). Critical political economy theories of media examine the relationship between media ownership and media content (McManus, 1995). More specifically, critical political economy theories identify media concentration as a process by which cultural and political hegemony is maintained by outcompeting small media companies (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). In this context, the theoretical significance of political economy is apparent. Media organizations—interested in securing advertising revenues—could potentially report in ways that are favorable to elite interests. This presents a clear linkage to measures of media bias perception and trust, especially among Black media consumers. By focusing on Black students from Detroit as a target population and focusing on news coverage of issues of urban development, this research contributes to the theoretical understanding of political economy.

### Framing

Literature on framing has been written extensively for decades. A foundational text on framing research comes from Goffman (1974) in which he theorized that "frames" are schemata of interpretation that are employed to organize experiences, phenomena, and information. Put plainly, frames enable individuals to categorize and process information that is often varied and

complex. Due to its widespread utility, framing theory has been applied in a variety of disciplines and has been robustly contested and scrutinized.

The study of framing in the context of media has been rigorously developed and has demonstrated effects on the formation of public opinion, issue judgment, and attitudes toward media. In media-related research, framing involves emphasizing details of a given issue or event to influence the way that issue or event is perceived. Many scholars have studied the effect of framing within news media coverage, investigating how it affects the presentation and receipt of information. Gitlin (1980) argues that media frames function on three distinct levels: (a) selection (determining who or what is shown), (b) emphasis (determining how much who or what gets shown), and (c) exclusion (determining who or what does not get shown), all of which have been found to influence public opinion and cognitive processes of issue judgment. Duly, how an issue or event is framed can influence public opinion and have implications on policy. Media framing, then, becomes particularly important in political contexts where competing interests exist and media may reinforce dominant ideologies and relations of power. This thesis employs framing as a theoretical analytic to evaluate responses to frames of decline and development/renewal in Detroit. Through quantitative survey research involving a sample of Black students from Detroit, attitudes toward media coverage of the city's development are explored.

While framing research has been popularized in many disciplines, its theoretical tenets and definitions have been difficult to locate. Entman (1993) attempted to develop the theory more thoroughly, writing that framing "essentially involves *selection* and *salience*. To frame is to *select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral*

*evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation* for the item described (original emphasis, p. 52). Nelson, Oxley, and Clawson (1997) defined framing as "the process by which a communication source constructs and defines a social or political issues for its audience" (p. 221). In the construction of news frames, devices such as headlines, opening/closing paragraphs, and lead-outs are manipulated to emphasize or deemphasize certain points (de Vreese, 2004). Nelson and Kinder (1996) suggested that "framing is a ubiquitous feature of political discourse," and "because frames permeate public discussions of politics, they in effect teach ordinary citizens how to think about and understand complex social policy problems" (p. 1,058). If media frames perform such functions, then understanding the types of frames used is vital to illuminating the media's role in matters of civil and political discourse.

In addition to selectively foregrounding some content over others, media frames work to attribute responsibility or blame to social actors. Iyengar and Simon (1993) theorized that attributions of responsibility are divided into two dimensions: causal and treatment. The scholars posited that "causal responsibility focuses on the origin of the issue or problem, whereas treatment responsibility focuses on who or what has the power to either alleviate or to forestall alleviation of the issue" (p. 369). The two framing mechanisms that address causal responsibility include episodic framing and thematic framing. Episodic framing presents public issues through the lens of specific people or events (e.g., a house fire, an attempted murder, condemnation of property); contrarily, thematic framing "places public issues in some general or abstract context" (p. 369). This can include reports on "reductions in government welfare expenditures" or "changes in the nature of employment opportunities" (p. 369). Episodic framing characterizes much news content today as media convergence and new media technologies have heightened demand for more timely news. Thematic framing lends itself to more intensive coverage that

includes the broader context a given issue or event is embedded in. Iyengar (1990) found that in media frames of poverty, episodic frames that focus on the specific circumstances and choices tend to be prioritized rather than thematic frames that position poverty as a collective, social outcome. Attribution of responsibility is also closely related to the presentation of public issues. Scholars have identified two types of issue framing: general and specific. General issue frames offer broad-stroke interpretations of government activity and provide little information on policy, whereas specific issue frames highlight relationships between government activities, policy, and specific groups that may benefit from or be harmed by those decisions (Jacoby, 2000). Responses to general issue frames are typically determined by citizens' preexisting beliefs toward government. Responses to specific issue frames are informed by citizens' beliefs and attitudes towards the groups affected—whether positively or negatively—by the government action (Ulbrich, 2011). Thus, in the context of Detroit, an investigation into the types of frames used to make sense of its decline and subsequent development is important, as groups are differentially affected by the development actions implemented by municipal government. Even in political environments where competing frames exist (e.g., community activists' frames of urban renewal as market-driven and harmful to poor residents versus corporate and political elite frames of urban renewal as economic stimulus), relations of power often determine which frames emerge dominant and have the most impact on public opinion and discourse. //53-word sentence. I think that this section is getting pretty dense. But, then, it IS a thesis. Just don't forget your other ways of writing!// "Unequal resources may also permit one side to advertise its themes more frequently (and to a wider audience) and to enlist representatives and endorsers that can more credibly deliver its messages to the public," (Chong & Druckman, 2007, p. 102). Furthermore, when studying media frames in Detroit, analyses of race and class must be stressed.

Kendall (2011) stated that media often work to sustain the status quo, and that corporate and political stakeholders rely on mechanisms of framing to obscure class relations. This often involves the attribution of blame and responsibility to the shortcomings of individual persons (e.g., framing poverty as the result of personal choices), rather than placing foci on larger systems of economic oppression (Iyengar, 1990; Jacoby, 2000; Kendall, 2011). Black feminist scholar bell hooks discussed how disdain for poor and working class individuals is mobilized within media frames to conceal patterns of class domination. In hooks (2000), she writes:

> To be poor in the United States is to be always at risk, the object of scorn and shame. Without mass-based empathy for the poor, it is possible for ruling class groups to mask class terrorism and genocidal acts. Creating and maintain social conditions where individual of all ages suffer daily malnutrition and starvation is a form of class warfare that increasingly goes unnoticed in this society. When huge housing projects in urban cities are torn down and the folks who dwell therein are not relocated, no one raises questions or protests. Television and newspapers provide snippets of interviews with residents saying these structures should be torn down. Of course, the public does not hear these interviewees stress the need for new public housing that is sound and affordable. (p. 46)

In this passage, hooks presents the technical and ideological processes by which strategies of urban renewal that often produce class violences (e.g., the demolition of public housing) are framed within news media coverage. This commentary strikes a familiar chord when examined against the histories of development discourses in Detroit. As stated in the previous chapter, during the twentieth century, mainstream media organizations—most prominently *The Detroit News*—consistently framed "inner-city slums" as burdens to tax-paying residents, aggressively advocated for "clearance and replacement with market-rate rather than lower-income or public housing," and attributed blame to Detroit's Black and poor residents (Rhomberg, 2012, p. 48-9). Such coverage led to the implementation of renewal projects that ultimately displaced more than 30,000 poor residents. As messaging about development and renewal is diffused in contemporary Detroit, these histories of media framing must be examined to properly situate current frames. Furthermore, the racialized and classed locations of such

frames must be accounted for when evaluating attitudes toward media coverage of development and renewal in Detroit, while paying attention to relationships between media framing, political discourse, and power.

**Media Hegemony**

Tangentially related to media framing is the theory of media hegemony. As theories of media framing concern the selective, calculated presentation of information within news coverage, media hegemony examines how media institutions work to compound and reinforce dominant ideologies/relations of power. Antonio Gramsci formulated the theory of "hegemony," which denotes the diffusion and imposition of ideologies held by the ruling class (Gramsci, Hoare, & Nowell-Smith, 1971). Put simply, hegemony "means political leadership based on the consent of the led, a consent which is secured by the diffusion and popularization of the world view of the ruling class" (Bates, 1975). The idea of hegemony is situated within Marxist thought and addresses how the propagation of ideology extends the control of the ruling class over economic and cultural industries. Media hegemony, then, examines how media organizations and their corporate structures corroborate the ideological dominance of the ruling classes and exist as apparatuses for capitalistic state control (Bates, 1975). Many scholars, namely in the critical-cultural tradition, have theorized about the relationship between media and power. Murdock (1982) posited that the rise in media conglomerates and consolidation throughout the industry increases the media's power to shape social consciousness. Furthermore, most media institutions are structured to maximize profit and consequently sustain the status quo through cooperative relationships with corporations and elite stakeholders. Golding and Murdock (1991) summarized both points, stating:

> Corporations dominate the cultural landscape in two ways. Firstly, an increasing proportion of cultural production is directly accounted for by major conglomerates with interests in a range of sectors, from newspapers and magazines, to television, film, music, and theme parks. Secondly,

> corporations which are not directly involved in the cultural industries as producers, can exercise considerable control over the direction of cultural activity through their role as advertisers or sponsors. (p. 20)

In other words, media conglomeration can produce uniformity in the "formulae and formats" of media content and shift content "away from risk and innovation, and anchor it in common-sense rather than alternative viewpoints" (p. 20). It is important to note that the scholars locate *common sense* within the ideologies of and produced by the ruling class (e.g., capitalism, consumerism). Additionally, through the leveraging of corporate-financial influence, corporations can employ media institutions as proxies to accumulate greater political and cultural power. Cultural studies theorist Stuart Hall discussed these ideas at length, focusing on the function of the media in systems of sense- and meaning-making in the construction of social reality. Hall (1982) stated that contrary to early positivist and behaviorist research into media effects, media did not simply reflect social realities, but instead defined them in accordance to broader machinations of power and domination. He wrote:

> The media defined, not merely reproduced, 'reality.' Definitions of reality were sustained and produced through all those linguistic practices (in the broad sense) by means of which selective definitions of 'the real' were represented. But representation is a very different notion from that of reflection. It implies the active work of selecting and presenting, of structuring and shaping: not merely the transmitting of an already-existing meaning, but the more active labour of *making things mean*. It was a practice, a production, of meaning: what subsequently came to be defined as a 'signifying practice.' The media were signifying agents. (p. 64, original emphasis)

Thompson (1990) describes signification as "the general process by which the transmission of symbolic forms becomes increasingly mediated by the technical and institutional apparatuses of the media industries" (pp. 3-4). Such processes are important to interrogate, especially in locations like Detroit where articulations of space and place are consistently negotiated in the civil sphere by various social actors. Corporate influence, in the form of private investment and development, remains active in Detroit's media landscape and weighs heavily on

discourses concerning the vision of Detroit and its development. Recently, Bedrock Detroit, a real estate firm owned by Dan Gilbert, featured a window advertisement on a building under construction in downtown Detroit as part of its "See Detroit Like We Do" campaign (see Figure 5).


Source: Metro Times

**Figure 5.** Bedrock Detroit advertisement

The ad depicted a large crowd of young, predominantly White city-goers gathering in the street—a scene that is highly unlikely given that more than four in every five Detroit residents are Black. While Gilbert quickly withdrew the ad and offered an apology, the tenor of the messaging cannot be analyzed independent of its racialized and classed undertones. The problem with the ad is not its accuracy, but rather the implied violence that it suggests. It articulates a clear vision not of what Detroit currently is, but what many political and corporate elite stakeholders envision for the city and its future at the expense and exclusion of poor, Black residents. The messaging, keeping with Hall's framework, demonstrates the ability of corporate capital to infiltrate culture industries and define reality, namely one comprised almost exclusively of young, White residents. Pedroni (2011) attested to this power and charted changing frames in Detroit.

> There is an acute sense in which Detroit must locate its niche role not within a national economy, but rather in a new global framework, and to do so it must both capitalize on and develop its human capital as well as the way it is thought about in the global imaginary. Detroit's current signification as a dangerous city can be recast as a city for adult adventure in a 24-hour playground featuring casino gambling and music revelry. Its crumbling warehouses and industrial facilities can regain status as lofts and art spaces for twenty-first century 'creatives' and knowledge workers of the global economy. And its past automobile glory can be rebranded as the raw material for future corporate development centered on high-technology mobility research and development (which is especially ironic given the near complete lack of public transit infrastructure in the city).

Also, Detroit's major mainstream dailies—the *Free Press* and the *News*—are currently functioning within a joint operating agreement that has led to (its intent was to trigger increases in advertising revenues, but complications ensued and neither party foresaw the technological changes) reductions in budgets, editorial staff, and advertising revenues (Rhomberg, 2012; Walsh & Henderson, 2016). With pressures to provide sufficient coverage of public affairs with diminished resources, media organizations run the risk of falling into business-as-usual reporting, defaulting to elected officials and corporate leaders as sources. In this dynamic,

alternative viewpoints are marginalized. Stated differently, the result of such patterns is that political and corporate hegemony remains intact and the status quo is strengthened.

Accordingly, this thesis utilizes both media framing and media hegemony as theoretical analytics to make sense of the research findings presented in the next chapter. While each of the theories emerged in distinct social and political histories, this research highlights their relationships and combines them to situate Black students' engagement with Detroit's development discourse in a broader dialectic of power (see Figure 6). Detroit's politicized media landscape and the attendant dialogues about renewal and decline, respectively, create opportunities for both theoretical frameworks to be explored in unique ways. By centering populations that are historically marginalized and underrepresented in development discourses, this research not only offers insights into networked audiences, but asserts critical understandings of media power and civil discourse. By rendering such linkages visible, media frames can be explored in relation to the broader ideological and material consequences they produce.

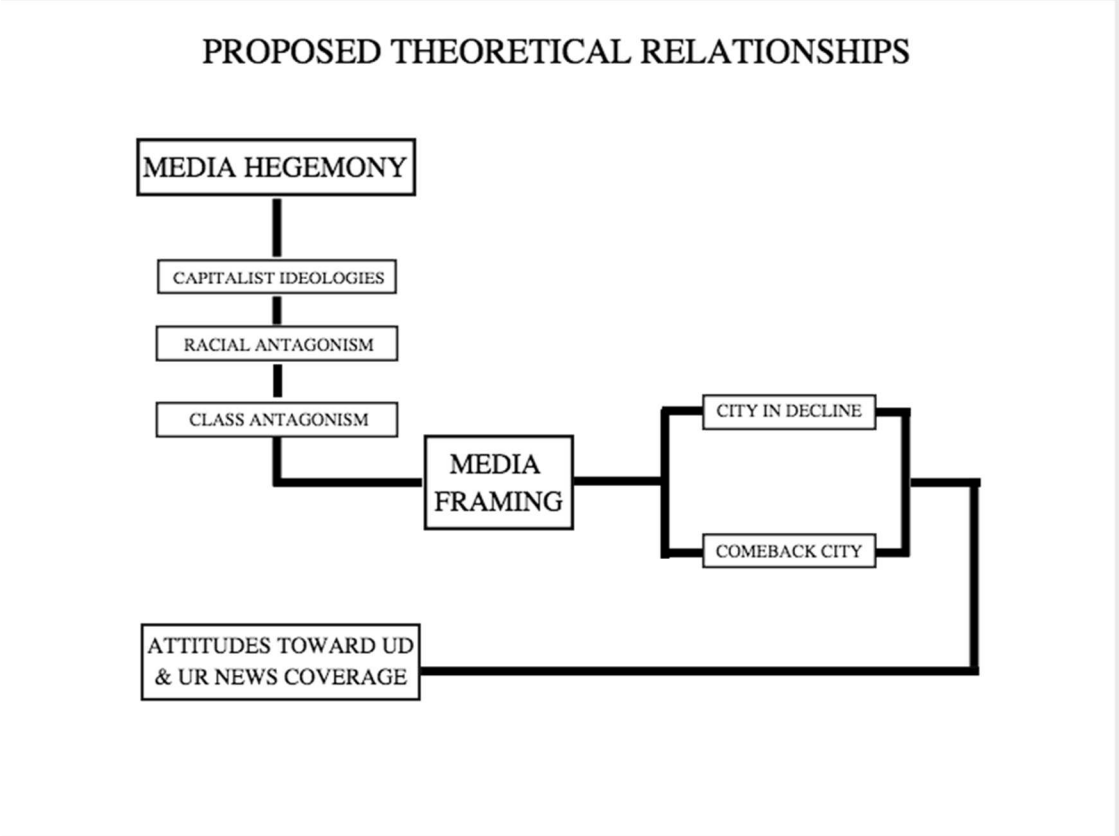



**Figure 6.** Proposed theoretical relationships

# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research focuses on the perspectives held by Detroit's most vulnerable communities, which are represented by Black Detroit residents. Put simply, the central inquires of this research hope to uncover what sources of media Black Detroiters use to acquire news about urban development and renewal and their perspectives of that coverage. Specifically, inquiries into the students' sources for news coverage about urban development and renewal, as well as their trust in the accuracy of and perceptions of bias within that news coverage, will be made. To achieve the research goals of this thesis, the author distributed a quantitative Internet survey to Black undergraduate students listed as residents of Detroit at a large Midwestern university.

Online (Internet) surveys are increasingly popular as effective research tools and have been extensively used because of their trans-disciplinary utility. Such surveys also have the potential to extend reach as barriers to successful completion (e.g., fatigue, issues of time and distance between the researcher and respondent, paper and writing materials, etc.) are greatly reduced or altogether eliminated.

While survey data collection has been employed by numerous researchers for centuries, the arrival of the Internet and communication technologies have enabled this staple methodology to be expanded in digital formats and environments (Vehovar & Manfreda, 2008). This method is relatively new compared to more traditional forms of survey research; therefore, this section highlights the usefulness of Internet survey research in the development of this research. Historically, technological development has always transformed survey research and the processes by which it is conducted. Beginning in the 1930s, major developments in sampling procedures and statistical techniques, the establishment of research organizations, and public demand for standardized information all contributed to the popularity and efficacy of survey

research. When telephones became widely adopted communication tools, researchers incorporated telephone interviewing and surveys into their methodological repertoire. Telephone surveys started in relative obscurity, used primarily in market research, but were quickly adopted by governmental and academic institutions (de Heer, de Leeuw, & van der Zouwen, 1999). Similarly, upon the advent of the computer, researchers began experimenting with computer-assisted surveys. Telephone surveys became more integrated with computer systems and word processing tools. Computer-assisted survey information collection (CASIC) describes the various modes of survey data collection and entry that are made possible through computer technologies. The methods scrutinized and refined during early computer-assisted survey research inform and served as precursors to the current advances in Internet survey research today (Vehovar & Manfreda, 2008).

Throughout this trajectory of survey research, certain issues within this methodology—irrespective of various technologies of administration—remain prevalent.

Survey nonresponse remains an issue for researchers. This is particularly prominent in Internet surveys where participants "can refuse participation altogether, terminate participation during the process, or answer questions selectively" (Vehovar & Manfreda, 2008, p. 183). Internet surveys have been found to have lower response rates than traditional surveys, but low response rates can be mitigated by providing incentives for respondents and following up with participants regularly.

Internet surveys, which are largely administered via email invitation, also generate concern regarding sampling error. Because Internet access is not ubiquitous, all respondents of a given population may or may not be represented in the sample. Further development, however, in the

realm of Internet survey research has produced strategies to overcome this problem (Vehovar & Manfreda, 2008).

For this research, an Internet survey was selected for several reasons. First, members of the target population are young college students, known to demonstrate high patterns of Internet use. A Pew Research Center poll found that 93 percent of young adults (18-29) use the Internet (Pew Research Center, 2012). Thus, respondents would likely be able to navigate the technical aspects of the survey. Second, Internet surveys provide an ease of transmission across various devices and save time and cost for the interviewer and respondent. Third, reliable scales used to measure variables of interest to the researcher were adopted and were best observed through survey data collection. The author determined that an Internet survey was the best method to observe students' media use, media trust, and perceptions of bias.

**Sample**

A database of Black undergraduate students at a Midwestern university was obtained from a senior administrator within an academic support unit. Students listed in the database self-identified as "Black/African-American" in information collected by the Office of the Registrar. Thereafter, the dataset was cleaned, sorted, and filtered by student name, address, and email. Respondents with permanent addresses in Detroit were considered for this study. Since the target population focused on all Black students listed as Detroit residents, no sampling procedure was utilized. The study concentrated on Black respondents because, historically, the mainstream media was often culpable in rationalizing urban renewal initiatives that displaced and harmed Black residents of Detroit. A student-oriented population was emphasized for several reasons: (1) this population was convenient in terms of its spatial proximity and accessibility to the researcher; (2) college-age (18-25) students are generally characterized by their participation in a

broader media landscape and are influenced by a wider diversity of media choices; (3) the Black press, which was utilized by older, Black residents, does not presently exist in the same capacity for younger Detroiters (as covered in Chapter 2); and (4) this population is uniquely positioned to shape the future of Detroit and will be most temporally affected by the decisions made by city officials. The target population was 736 students—69 percent women and 30 percent men respectively.

**Method**

A quantitative survey, modified from existing scales (see Ardèvol-Abreu and de Zúñiga (2016) for original) measuring media use for news, trust in media, and editorial media bias perceptions was developed via the research software Qualtrics. A description of the variables of interest and their respective scales appear later in the section. The survey was pilot tested by guiding faculty members. Upon successful pilot testing, the online survey was disseminated to students in the target population (N=736) through email for participation. For the purposes of measuring the variables of interest, online survey research was the most effective method to observe audience-oriented phenomena. While disadvantages of email and Internet surveys include low response rates and technical issues (Lavrakas, 2008), focusing on a specific student population helped to alleviate those risks. Furthermore, transmission of the survey was chiefly conducted through university-assigned email which allowed for a more systematic transfer of information. The survey was distributed to respondents December 1-12, 2016. 230 completed responses were obtained. Using calculations from the American Association of Public Opinion Research, a response rate of 31.3 percent was determined (American Association of Public Opinion Research, RR1, 2016). This response rate was considerable for an online-based survey (Punch, 2003). The total number of respondents were relatively disproportional in terms of

gender (75% women), but such skewness was anticipated given the gender breakdown of the target population. Still, women were overrepresented in the respondent group. This may be attributed to a couple of factors. First, women across racial/ethnic background outnumber men in enrollment at the collegiate level and tend to outperform men in terms of degrees conferred (Center for College Affordability and Productivity, 2012; National Center for Education Statistics, n.d.). Second, mass incarceration and systems of policing continue to be pervasive issues affecting Black communities. A 2014 study found that "black men in their prime working years, especially those without a high school diploma, are much more likely to be in jail than white men," as well as other groups by race and sex (Ingraham, 2014). As such, Black men are underrepresented in this research and at the collegiate level writ large. The overall demographic breakdown is reflected in Figure 7 and in the appendix (see Appendices A, B, and C).

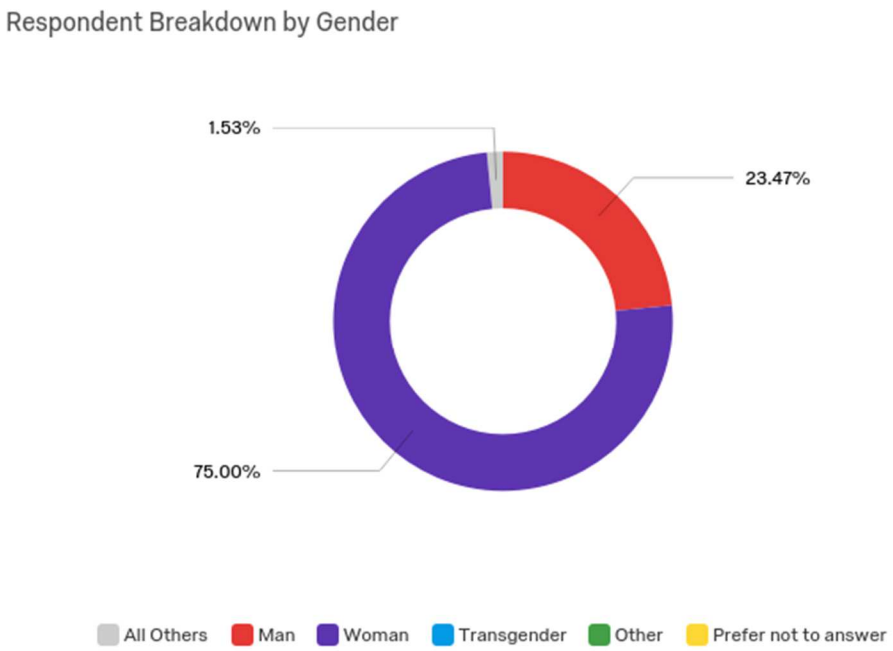



**Figure 7.** Respondent breakdown by gender

## Variables of Interest and Research Questions

### *Media Use*

Due to convergence and technological development, media consumers have taken a more active role in information-gathering and media-making processes (Straubhaar, LaRose, & Davenport, 2012). These changes have altered traditional configurations of news dissemination and have precipitated differences in how journalistic work is conducted (Deuze, 2007). Pointedly, social and alternative media are ways in which news information is shared and exchanged. Deuze (2007) discusses these changes within the media landscape and focuses particularly on how the proliferation of online and participatory journalism has shifted patterns of news consumption and production. The Internet—along with digitization and other advances in communication technologies—has facilitated greater citizen involvement in news, the personalization of news, and in turn, audience segmentation and polarization (Tewksbury & Rittenberg, 2012), especially among younger audiences. Pew Research reports that 62 percent of all U.S. adults get their news online, with Facebook serving as a primary location for news consumption and sharing (Gottfried & Shearer, 2016). Furthermore, a significant amount of discourse has concentrated on the rise in citizen journalism. While its definitions and origins are contested, citizen journalism has risen as an "ostensibly new genre of reporting" (Allan & Thorsen, 2009, p. 18). Citizen journalism is often conceptualized as oppositional to traditional forms of journalism and more aligned with populist ethics that resonate with young media users (Jenkins, 2016).

The specific news media usage habits of young Black media consumers remain relatively underexplored in academic contexts. Previous scholarship illustrates that, historically, Black citizens have met mainstream media with skepticism because of consistent misrepresentation of

Black communities (Entman & Rojecki, 2000; Martindale, 1986). In turn, Black citizens sought out media sources geared toward Black audiences. This is exemplified in Detroit, where Black residents have historically shared a guarded, complex relationship with mainstream media organizations. The research presented in Chapter 2 is evidence of this relationship. Consequently, media use and consumption patterns for this demographic tend to be diverse and varied, even more so in contemporary Detroit. Vercellotti and Brewer (2006) found Black media consumers often turn to alternative and hyperlocal media to receive news pertinent to their communities, but still utilize mainstream media as a supplement. This was demonstrated by patronage of Black publications such as the *Michigan Chronicle* (which still prints weekly), and radio stations featuring Black news talk programming such as WCHB 1440-AM. Black Detroit residents engaged with mainstream media, especially as Black reporters and personalities migrated to mainstream media in the 1960s. Still, they viewed Black journalists within these spaces as "tools of the White press and as not being able to write balanced stories" (Redding, 2017, p. 146).

Younger media consumers now have access to a wider range of media sources and are further enabled by the Internet to engage politically with news and construct oppositional discourses. Given these factors, this study explores which media are frequented by Black students to acquire news about Detroit-related politics and public affairs. Accordingly, the first two research questions are:

> **RQ1:** What types of media (e.g., traditional, social) do students use for news about urban development and renewal?

Recent research indicates that "citizens who feel highly attached to their communities demonstrate much stronger ties to local news than those who do not feel attached" (Barthel, Holcomb, Mahone, & Mitchell, 2016, para. 4). Given the preeminence of hyperlocal news in keeping citizens informed about issues within their communities, I anticipate that students will demonstrate the greatest reliance on citizen journalism and alternative media for news about Detroit-related politics and public affairs.

> **H1:** Students will demonstrate the **greatest reliance** on social media news (e.g., Twitter, Facebook) for news about urban development and renewal.

*Media Bias*

In a recent Pew Research survey, nearly three-quarters (74%) of all U.S. adults said they believe that news organizations are biased (Mitchell, Gottfried, Barthel, & Shearer, 2016b). While concrete definitions of media bias have been difficult to capture, perceptions of media bias have been determined to affect news consumption behaviors (Ardèvol-Abreu & de Zúñiga, 2016; Gunther, 1992). Earlier scholarship on media bias perceptions has examined influences of strength of partisanship, political ideology, and media trust and distrust on individual perceptions of media bias (Ardèvol-Abreu & de Zúñiga, 2016; Eveland & Shah, 2003; Gunther, 1992; Morris, 2007; Niven, 2002) . Niven (2002) explored press coverage of media bias and found that the majority of allegations of bias were evoked by strong conservatives and charged against "liberal media" (p. 4). While much of the previous research on media bias has proposed linkages between partisanship and perceptions of media bias, it has not been the sole focus of bias research. Other scholars have discussed the influence of external forces on news content, asserting that the market-oriented structuration of media business models create opportunities for corporate capital to determine the coverage and axiology of news (McManus, 1995).

Accordingly, perceptions of media bias may be influenced by a real or imagined appeasement of elite interests within media coverage of public affairs issues, independent of partisanship. This notion becomes significant in a context such as Detroit, where political and corporate decisions may not—and historically did not— coincide with the needs of socioeconomically vulnerable communities. Roughly 40 percent of Detroit residents—who are largely Black— are in poverty. The second research question concerns this dialectic.

> **RQ2:** What effect, if any, does income have on students' perceptions of media bias in news coverage about urban development and renewal?

The potential for corporate influences on media content signifies opportunities for favorable coverage of elite interests (McManus, 1995). I anticipate that the target population will understand such power relations between corporate interests and media industries and demonstrate differing levels of media bias perception on the basis of income.

> **H2:** Income will produce significant differences in students' perceptions of media bias.
> .

*Media Trust*

Media trust, much like media bias, has been linked to political ideology and strength of partisanship (Gunther, 1992; Niven, 2002). Additionally, research has proposed relationships between trust in media and trust in government (Lee, 2010). Historically, Black communities have demonstrated lower levels of political trust than Whites (Mangum, 2011). As mentioned previously, Black peoples have also met mainstream media with skepticism due to misrepresentation, failure to report effectively on government wrongdoing, and an overall lack of coverage pertaining to issues pertinent to Black communities (Dates & Barlow, 1990). Responsively, the "Black press" not only signified an alternative to mainstream media, but existed as a monitoring mechanism to hold government *and* traditional media organizations

accountable (Jacobs, 2000). In Detroit, this was evidenced by publications such as the Detroit edition of the *Defender*, the *Detroit Tribune*, and *Michigan Chronicle*. As Black-owned media lost ground during the mid- to late twentieth century, Black audiences turned back to traditional and mainstream media who gradually employed Black journalists and producers held in high regard by Black communities (Dates & Barlow, 1990; Zook, 2008). Still, newsrooms remained predominantly White. Darden and Hill (1987) reported that in 1960, "none of Detroit's three big radio stations (WJR, WWJ, WXYZ) employed Blacks as disc jockeys or as technical or secretarial personnel" (p. 69). During the fifties and sixties, the major Detroit newspapers—all with predominantly almost exclusively White staffs—routinely dismissed or failed to accurately document Black residents' plights and claims of racial injustice (Darden & Thomas, 2013). Currently, Black citizens remain severely underrepresented in media organizations nationally and locally. White employment at the *Detroit Free Press*, with the city's largest newsgathering team, is 72 percent (ASNE, 2016) in a city where White residents make up just 11 percent of the population (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2015). Relatedly, a recent national Pew Research study revealed that "Whites, college graduates and those with higher incomes, are more likely than nonwhites to have spoken with or been interviewed by a local journalist" (Mahone, 2016). This fact is alarming when placed in conversation with the reality that a population of younger, wealthier, White professionals is rapidly increasing in sections of Detroit benefitting most from contemporary renewal and development strategies. In turn, their perspectives and interpretations of renewal in Detroit can potentially dominate oppositional discourses on city development and are best positioned to be prioritized in shaping policy. With such patterns, exploring young Black audiences' trust in media becomes critically important, especially on the basis of class and socioeconomic status. Appropriately, the third research question presented is:

**RQ3:** What effect, if any, does income have on students' trust in media to report accurate news about urban development and renewal in Detroit?

**H3:** Income will produce significant differences in student's trust in media to report accurate news about urban development.

**Scales**

The scales below were adapted from an existing survey (Ardèvol-Abreu & de Zúñiga, 2016) and modified to relate more directly to the goals of this study. **Social media news use.** Survey respondents were asked to indicate the rate (1 = Never to 10 = all the time) at which they utilize Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Pinterest, Instagram, Tumblr, Reddit, and LinkedIn to acquire news about urban development and renewal in Detroit. Two additional questions asked about respondents' use of social media to "stay informed about current events and public affairs in Detroit" and "get news about current events in Detroit from mainstream media" (10 items averaged scale, Cronbach's $\alpha = .7$, $M = 34.96$, $SD = 12.94$) The questions are:

- How often do you use Facebook to get news about urban development and renewal in Detroit?
- How often do you use Twitter to get news about urban development and renewal in Detroit?
- How often do you use Google+ to get news about urban development and renewal in Detroit?
- How often do you use Pinterest to get news about urban development and renewal in Detroit?
- How often do you use Instagram to get news about urban development and renewal in Detroit?
- How often do you use Tumblr to get news about urban development and renewal in Detroit?
- How often do you use Reddit to get news about urban development and renewal in Detroit?
- How often do you use LinkedIn to get news about urban development and renewal in Detroit?
- How often do you use social media to stay informed about current events and public affairs in Detroit?
- How often do you use social media to get news about current events in Detroit from mainstream media (e.g., CNN or ABC)?

**Citizen news use.** Survey respondents were asked to indicate the rate (1 = Never to 10 = all the time) at which they utilize "citizen journalism news sites" and "hyperlocal news sites" to acquire news about urban development and renewal in Detroit (Spearman-Brown $\rho = .70$, $M = 6.96$, $SD = 4.77$). The questions are:

- How often do you get news about urban development and renewal in Detroit from citizen journalism sites (e.g., CNN's iReport, Examiner.com)?
- How often do you get news about urban development and renewal in Detroit from hyperlocal news sites (e.g., Patch.com or other sites dedicated to news in your local community)?

**Traditional News Use.** Survey respondents were asked to indicate the rate (1 = Never to 10 = all the time) with which they use mainstream news media including "network television news (e.g., ABC, CBS, NBC)," "national newspapers (e.g., *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *USA Today*)," "cable television news (e.g., CNN, Fox News, MSNBC)," and "radio news media (e.g.,

NPR, radio talk shows)" to acquire news about urban development and renewal in Detroit (eight items averaged scale, Cronbach's $\alpha$ =.78,M = 31.25, SD = 13.46). The questions are:

- How often do you get news about urban development and renewal in Detroit from network television news (e.g., ABC, CBS, NBC)?
- How often do you get news about urban development and renewal in Detroit from national newspapers (e.g., *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *USA Today*)?
- How often do you get news about urban development and renewal in Detroit from cable news (e.g., CNN, Fox News, MSNBC)?
- How often do you get news about urban development and renewal in Detroit from radio news media (e.g., NPR, radio talk shows)?
- How often do you watch CNN?
- How often do you watch BBC America?
- How often do you watch MSNBC?
- How often do you watch Fox News?

**Editorial Media Bias Perception.** Survey respondents were asked to rate a series of statements regarding their perceptions of objectivity and fairness within media work. Each question asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement (1 = strongly disagree to 10 = strongly agree) with several statements. These include: "News companies choose stories based on what will attract the biggest audiences and development interests," "Production techniques can be used to influence a viewer's perception," and "The owner of a media company influences the content that is produced" (three items averaged scale, Cronbach's $\alpha$ = .83, M = 26.18, SD = 5.13). The statements are:

- News companies choose stories based on what will attract the biggest audiences and development interests.
- Production techniques can be used to influence a viewer's perception.
- The owner of a media company influences the content that is produced.

**Trust in Social and Citizen Media.** Survey respondents were asked to rate their level of trust (1 = Do not trust to 5 = Trust completely) in "news about urban development and renewal in Detroit reported by alternative media (e.g., blogs, citizen journalism)," and "news about urban development and renewal in Detroit reported by social media news sites" (Spearman-Brown $\rho$ = .67, M =9.72, SD = 3.67). The questions are:

- How much do you trust news about urban development and renewal in Detroit reported by alternative media (e.g., blogs, citizen journalism)?
- How much do you trust news about urban development and renewal in Detroit reported by social media news sites?

**Trust in Traditional Media.** Survey respondents were asked to rate their level of trust (1 = Do not trust to 10 = Trust completely) in "news about urban development and renewal in Detroit reported by mainstream media (e.g., newspapers, television news)," and "news about urban development and renewal in Detroit reported by news aggregators" (Spearman-Brown $\rho$ = .67, M = 9.2, SD = 3.86). The questions are:

- How much do you trust news about urban development and renewal in Detroit reported by news aggregators?
- How much do you trust news about urban development and renewal in Detroit reported by mainstream news media (e.g., newspapers, television news)?

# RESULTS, DISCUSSION, AND CONCLUSIONS

## Findings

The first hypothesis predicted that students would demonstrate the greatest reliance on citizen and hyperlocal media for news about urban development and renewal. Empirical support for **H1** was not found. Students demonstrated the highest reliance on traditional media for news about urban development and renewal (men: M = 3.86; women: M = 3.92). Table 1 also shows that students across gender and income categories demonstrated similar patterns of media use across media types. **H2** predicted that income would produce significant differences in perceptions of media bias among students. Empirical support for **H2** was not found. While students in the lower-income bracket demonstrated lower perceptions of media bias, the difference did not reach the borderline of significance ($t(191) = -1.94$, $p < 0.10$). The third and final hypothesis predicted that income would produce significant differences in students' expressions of media trust. Empirical support for **H3** was found. As shown in Table 3, students in the higher income bracket expressed greater trust in both the social ($t(191) = -.860$, $p < .01$) and traditional media ($t(187) = -1.446$, $p < .05$) levels.

**Table 1**. Media use by gender

| Media Use | Gender | | t | df |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Men | Women | | |
| Social media use | 3.46 | 3.47 | -.068 | 188 |
| Citizen media use | 3.42 | 3.30 | .335 | 191 |
| Traditional media use | 3.86 | 3.92 | -.198 | 190 |

**None of the values reached significance at p ≤ .001, .005, .01, .05, or .10**

**Table 2**. Media use by income

| Media Use | Income | | t | df |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Below 50k | Above 50k | | |
| Social media use | 3.50 | 3.43 | .408 | 188 |
| Citizen media use | 3.47 | 3.12 | .998 | 191 |
| Traditional media use | 3.80 | 4.10 | -1.152 | 189 |

**None of the values reached significance at p ≤ .001, .005, .01, .05, or .10**

**Table 3**. Perceptions of media bias and media trust by income

| Perceptions of Media Bias and Media Trust | Income | | t | df |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Below 50k | Above 50k | | |
| Perceptions of media bias | 8.62 | 8.92 | -1.137 | 191 |
| Trust in social and citizen media | 4.75 | 4.99* | -.860 | 191 |
| Trust in traditional media | 4.42 | 4.84** | -1.446 | 187 |

**Note: * = p ≤ .01, ** = p ≤ .05**

**Key Frequencies**

More than half (52%) of respondents indicated frequent engagement with social media to stay informed about current events and public affairs in Detroit. Thirty-eight percent of respondents indicated frequent engagement with social media specifically to engage content from mainstream media about current events in Detroit.

Half of respondents (50%) indicated little to no engagement with citizen journalism sites to acquire news about urban development and renewal in Detroit. Nearly two-thirds (65%) of respondents indicated little to no engagement with hyperlocal news sites for news about urban development and renewal, with about half specifying never engaging such sites at all.

Respondents' use of network television news for information about urban development and renewal in Detroit was distributed evenly with 36 percent indicating little to no engagement, a quarter indicating frequent engagement, and the rest clustering in the middle. Nearly two-thirds (65%) of respondents indicated little to no engagement with national newspapers for news about urban development and renewal in Detroit, with 41 percent specifying never reading such media at all. Only 7 percent of respondents reported reading national newspapers frequently for news about urban development and renewal in Detroit.

Respondents' use of cable television news for information about urban development and renewal in Detroit was distributed evenly with 37 percent indicating little to no engagement, 28 percent indicating frequent engagement, and the rest clustering in the middle.
Nearly half (47%) of respondents indicated little to no engagement with radio news media for news about urban development and renewal in Detroit.

## Discussion and Conclusions

To the author's knowledge, this research is the first to examine Black Detroit students' media usage patterns and attitudes toward media coverage of urban development and renewal in Detroit. This work expands the theoretical understanding of media use, media bias perception, and media use by foregrounding a subpopulation that remains severely understudied as unique media consumers within the academy. The results of this study both validate and depart from previous scholarship related to young adult media use, media bias perception, and media trust.

### *Media Use*

While most young adults (18-29) in the United States utilize online sources to acquire news, television—including both cable and network news— continues to be a primary source for older adult consumers (Mitchell, Gottfried, Barthel, & Shearer, 2016a). Students in this study demonstrated the greatest reliance on traditional media for news about urban development and renewal, which included television news. An explanation for this outcome is that students employ different forms of media for different purposes. Diddi and LaRose (2006) found that while college students primarily utilize Internet sources for news and entertainment, traditional media sources continue to be prevalent in their consumption behaviors. Additionally, York and Scholl (2015) found that young adults' patterns of media use are influenced by the media habits of their parents, particularly behaviors of newspaper reading and television viewing. Given the historical trajectory of media habits among older Black Detroiters (discussed in Chapter 2), such results are plausible. Furthermore, strength of partisanship has been linked to news consumption. A Pew Research poll determined that Democrats are more likely to frequent news organizations online (Dem: 55%; Rep: 43%) and demonstrate higher interests in national news (Dem: 49%;

Rep: 42 %), local news (Dem: 41%; Rep: 37%), and news specific to their communities (Dem: 35%; Rep: 31%). Nearly 70 percent of respondents in this study strongly identified with the Democratic party, and as such, are likely to exhibit similar behavior. Media hegemony offers an additional explanation regarding news use. Herman and Chomsky (1988) posited that large-scale media conglomeration creates high barriers of entry for alternative media to become competitive in media markets; thus, conventional media are able to dictate coverage in certain locales. As a result, traditional media organizations dominate media coverage related to urban development and renewal in Detroit. Because students were largely similar in race and educational attainment, the author anticipated their behaviors to be consistent throughout the group.

*Perceptions of Media Bias and Trust in Media*

Recent research has proposed a relationship between income and general media use (Andrew Perrin, 2015); however, not much scholarship has examined the association between income and perceptions of media bias. Critical political economy theories of media often position media consumership as a class-based phenomenon (Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Kendall, 2011; McManus, 1995). Under that pretext, the author hypothesized that differences in income would affect students' perceptions of media bias. Evidence for that assertion was not supported by the data. Black students, regardless of gender and income, demonstrated high perceptions of media bias, specifically in the context of reporting on urban development and renewal. Triece (2017) concluded that coverage of urban renewal in Detroit utilizes a codified, "color-blind racism" that works to conceal "the continued racist symbolic and material construction of city spaces" (p. 252). The respondents, all of whom may be positioned as marginal and antithetical to "renewal," demonstrate an understanding of media as an ideological tool that is often wielded to reinforce dominant relations of power. News coverage of Detroit

often relied on “visual cues” and “racialized binaries associating blackness with degeneration and renewal with whiteness” (Triece, 2017, p. 257). The results regarding relationships between income and perceptions of media bias, the author argues, indicate that the respondents are aware of those racialized messages and possess strong perceptions of bias because of it. With regard to trust in media, it seems counterintuitive that respondents who demonstrated similar perceptions of media bias would have different attitudes toward trust in media. Nonetheless, when analyses of class are applied, such inconsistencies become clearer. Triece (2017) found that news media coverage of the decay/renewal dichotomy in Detroit largely presented the following frames: “urban decay through personal failure” and “city renewal through personal effort” (pp. 254-7). The former frame attributed blame to Detroit’s principally poor Black population for issues such as property foreclosures and blight, while ignoring the role of policy, racism and predatory practices in producing those outcomes. The latter frame highlighted the individual efforts of billionaire developers such as Dan Gilbert and Mike Ilitch and described the two—and others like them—as saviors and heroes in a deteriorating city consumed by savagery. Both frames are produced through interrelated racist and classist ideologies. Still, some Black residents, namely those of higher income, might welcome such discourses as they jockey for opportunities to benefit, even peripherally, from this kind of renewal. Put differently, respondents of higher income may have demonstrated greater trust in media to report accurately on urban development and renewal because of their specific class identities and access to the material benefits of renewal.

**Limitations**

This study faced several key limitations. First, time was a consistent impediment. While the response rate for the the survey is acceptable among scholars, additional time would have immensely benefited the design and orientation of the questions asked. As the author continues research on this thread, time will enable the present study to be strengthened. Secondly, in designing the survey, an additional item pertaining to income—specifically a question to record the number of members in each respondent's household—would have been useful in establishing a more statistically useful nominal-level variable. Such a question would have allowed the researcher to categorize respondents into two groups based on their relationship to the poverty threshhold (e.g., "above poverty threshhold," "below poverty threshhold") rather than focusing solely on household income (e.g., "above $50,000", "below $50,000). Categorizing respondents based on their relationship to the poverty threshhold may have produced more colorful, statistically significant results. Furthermore, students may be uncertain about their household income but might have more knowledge about their relationship to poverty. Future research will amend the survey and explore this line of inquiry further. Moreover, the author recognized that the scales do not thoroughly reflect the nuances in respondents' news consumptions. For instance, when asked about traditional media, students may believe MSNBC is biased, but not CNN. The survey does not capture the gray areas in that way. Additionally, in terms of news use, students may consume traditional media via social media, as well as conventional methods. The scales did not create room for nuance in this respect, either. Future research should strive to develop more comprehensive scales to reflect the gradations of media usage patterns and attitudinal measures. Finally, the vast majority of scholarship on media bias and trust in media

concentrates on political news (e.g., elections). While concentrating on a specific public affairs issue proved to be significant from both a practical and theorectical standpoint, the paucity of literature created distinct hindrances.

**Pathways to Future Research**

In the contniuation of research on this thread, future studies should refine the sample size, as well as explore qualitative methods. While this research investigates Black students' sources of news about urban development and renewal in Detroit and their attitudes toward such coverage, it does not explain the reasoning behind their media behaviors and attitudes. Accordingly, future studies might address this gap through qualitative interviewing and focus groups. Moreover, Detroit's development is blotchy and inconsistent. Therefore, there may also be differences in how Black residents are affected by development outcomes and, in turn, lead to varied responses to coverage about renewal. A key limitation of this study is that it does not reflect the variance within Black communities, and instead positions them as static. To address this, future research should categorize respondents by census tract (given meaningful data at this size can be obtained) to reveal distinctions that may exist at the community and neighborhood level. Based on theoretical assertions presented earlier (see Herman & Chomsky, 1988; McManus, 1995), there was reason to believe that income would produce significant differences in perceptions of media bias. Ashley, Poepsel, and Willis (2013) concluded that explosing students to knowledge about media ownership could cultivate perceptions of media bias and more critical responses to media. A future thread of research should explore Black Detroit students' knowledge about media ownership—particularly media based in Detroit—to see if it affects perceptions of bias and trust in media. Finally, this research centers on Black students from Detroit as audiences and engages their responses to coverage of urban development and

renewal in their city. The study does not address how the respondents might create and synthesize their own discourses about urban development and renewal, especially in digital environments. Future research might explore the complex relationship between Black students' participation in online communities and political engagement concerning issues of urban development and renewal. In other words, further studies might investigate how young Black residents of Detroit create complementary or oppositional discourses of urban development and renewal through new media (see Figure 8 for example).

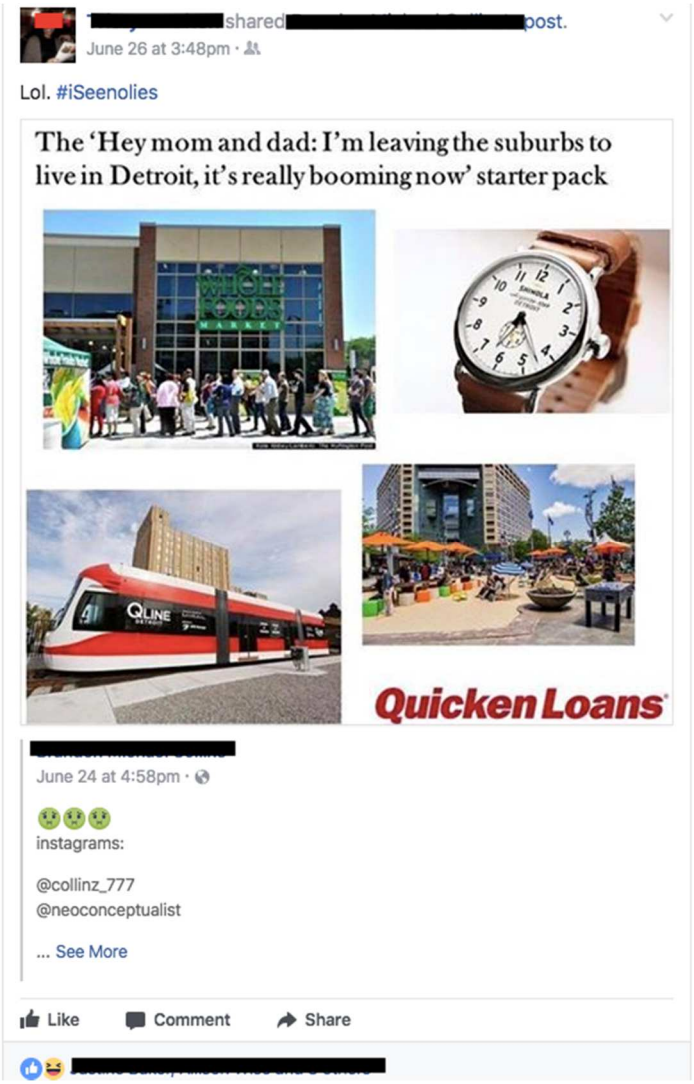



**Figure 8.** Facebook meme discussing contemporary framings of Detroit

Such research can illuminate the political agencies of young Black Detroiters and chart the cultural processes by which they use alternative forms of media to facilitate social change in their communities and synthesize holistic, Black-centered narratives of their own.

# APPENDIX

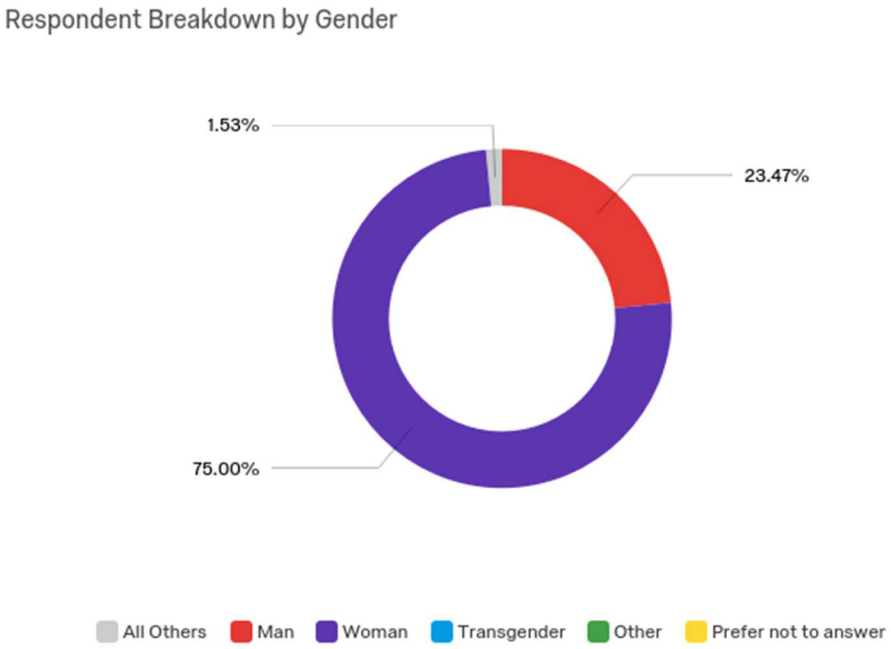



Figure A. Respondent breakdown by gender

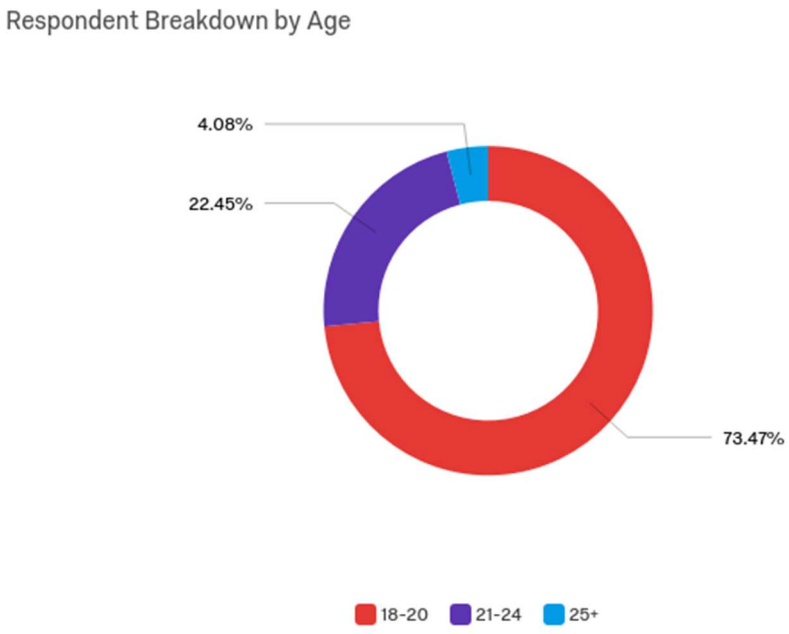



Figure B. Respondent breakdown by age

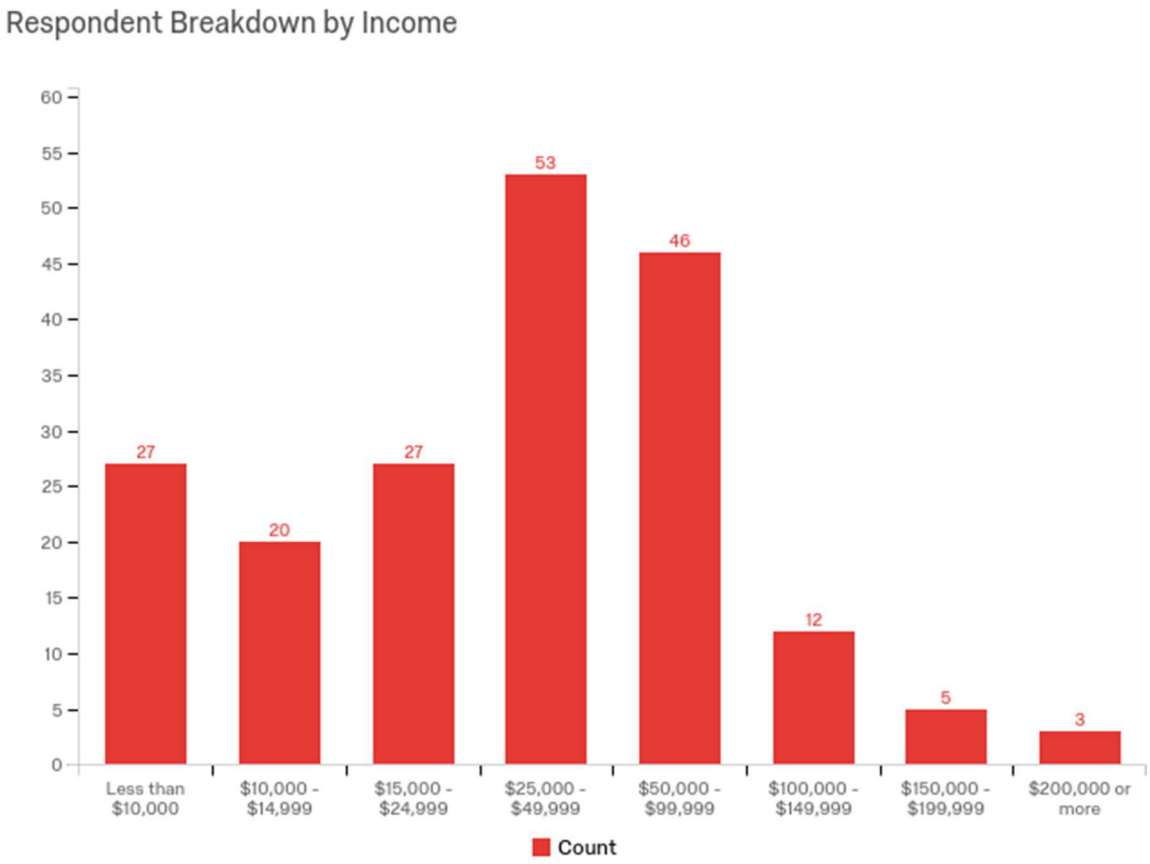



Figure C. Respondent breakdown by income

# SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Media Use, Trust, and Bias Perception Survey FS16-Thesis

Q58 INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT Project Title: Renewal or Removal: An analysis of Black Detroiters' media bias perception, media trust, and media use of news related to urban development and renewal in Detroit Investigator(s): Rashad Timmons Email Address: timmon18@msu.edu You are being asked to participate in a project conducted through Michigan State University. The University requires that you give your agreement to participate in this project. You must be 18 years or older to participate in this research study. The investigator will explain to you in detail the purpose of the project, the procedures to be used, and the potential benefits and possible risks of participation. You may ask any questions you may have to help you understand the project. A basic explanation of the project is written below. Please read this explanation and discuss with the researcher any questions you may have. You should keep a copy of this form for your records. 1. Nature and Purpose of the Project: You are being asked to participate in a research study on perceptions of media bias, media trust, and media use of news related to Detroit related politics and public affairs, namely urban development and renewal. 2. Explanation of Procedures: If you decide to participate in this research, you will be asked survey questions about your sources of news information on Detroit related politics and public affairs, your perceptions of bias and trust in that news, as well as general questions on political interest and knowledge. This takes about 10-15 minutes.
3. Discomfort and Risks: There are no known risks associated with this study. 4. Benefits: There are no direct benefits correlated with your participation in this research. Nonetheless, your participation will help produce a greater understanding of how young, Black, Detroit residents acquire news about politics and public affairs within the city, specifically urban development and renewal, as well as how that specific population engages with Detroit related news. This can reveal both practical and theoretical insights into the efficacy and reach of Detroit-based news media. 5. Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. In any report made public, your information will not be revealed so that you can be identified.
6. Refusal/Withdrawal: Refusal to participate in this study will have no effect on any future services you may be entitled to from the University or its corresponding units. Anyone who agrees to participate in this study is free to withdraw from the study at any time with no penalty. You understand also that it is not possible to identify all potential risks related to this procedure, and you believe that reasonable safeguards have been taken to minimize both the known and potential but unknown risks. Your continued cooperation with this research implies consent.

Q1 How often do you use Facebook to get news about urban development and renewal in Detroit?

| | 1 (1) | 2 (2) | 3 (3) | 4 (4) | 5 (5) | 6 (6) | 7 (7) | 8 (8) | 9 (9) | 10 (10) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Never:All the time (1) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

Q2 How often do you use Twitter to get news about urban development and renewal in Detroit?

| | 1 (1) | 2 (2) | 3 (3) | 4 (4) | 5 (5) | 6 (6) | 7 (7) | 8 (8) | 9 (9) | 10 (10) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Never:All the time (1) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

Q3 How often do you use Google+ to get news about urban development and renewal in Detroit?

| | 1 (1) | 2 (2) | 3 (3) | 4 (4) | 5 (5) | 6 (6) | 7 (7) | 8 (8) | 9 (9) | 10 (10) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Never:All the time (1) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

Q4 How often do you use Pinterest to get news about urban development and renewal in Detroit?

| | 1 (1) | 2 (2) | 3 (3) | 4 (4) | 5 (5) | 6 (6) | 7 (7) | 8 (8) | 9 (9) | 10 (10) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Never:All the time (1) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

Q5 How often do you use Instagram to get news about urban development and renewal in Detroit?

| | 1 (1) | 2 (2) | 3 (3) | 4 (4) | 5 (5) | 6 (6) | 7 (7) | 8 (8) | 9 (9) | 10 (10) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Never:All the time (1) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

Q6 How often do you use Tumblr to get news about urban development and renewal in Detroit?

| | 1 (1) | 2 (2) | 3 (3) | 4 (4) | 5 (5) | 6 (6) | 7 (7) | 8 (8) | 9 (9) | 10 (10) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Never:All the time (1) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

Q7 How often do you use Reddit to get news about urban development and renewal in Detroit?

| | 1 (1) | 2 (2) | 3 (3) | 4 (4) | 5 (5) | 6 (6) | 7 (7) | 8 (8) | 9 (9) | 10 (10) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Never:All the time (1) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

Q8 How often do you use LinkedIn to get news about urban development and renewal in Detroit?

| | 1 (1) | 2 (2) | 3 (3) | 4 (4) | 5 (5) | 6 (6) | 7 (7) | 8 (8) | 9 (9) | 10 (10) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Never:All the time (1) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

Q9 How often do you use social media to stay informed about current events and public affairs in Detroit?

| | 1 (1) | 2 (2) | 3 (3) | 4 (4) | 5 (5) | 6 (6) | 7 (7) | 8 (8) | 9 (9) | 10 (10) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Never:All the time (1) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

Q10 How often do you use social media to get news about current events in Detroit from mainstream media (e.g., CNN or ABC)?

| | 1 (1) | 2 (2) | 3 (3) | 4 (4) | 5 (5) | 6 (6) | 7 (7) | 8 (8) | 9 (9) | 10 (10) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Never:All the time (1) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

Q11 How often do you get news about urban development and renewal in Detroit from citizen journalism sites (e.g., CNN's iReport, Examiner.com)?

| | 1 (1) | 2 (2) | 3 (3) | 4 (4) | 5 (5) | 6 (6) | 7 (7) | 8 (8) | 9 (9) | 10 (10) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Never:All the time (1) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

Q12 How often do you get news about urban development and renewal in Detroit from hyperlocal news sites (e.g., Patch.com or other sites dedicated to news in your local community)?

| | 1 (1) | 2 (2) | 3 (3) | 4 (4) | 5 (5) | 6 (6) | 7 (7) | 8 (8) | 9 (9) | 10 (10) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Never:All the time (1) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

Q13 How often do you get news about urban development and renewal in Detroit from network television news (e.g., ABC, CBS, NBC)?

| | 1 (1) | 2 (2) | 3 (3) | 4 (4) | 5 (5) | 6 (6) | 7 (7) | 8 (8) | 9 (9) | 10 (10) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Never:All the time (1) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

Q14 How often do you get news about urban development and renewal in Detroit from national newspapers (e.g., New York Times, Washington Post, USA Today)?

| | 1 (1) | 2 (2) | 3 (3) | 4 (4) | 5 (5) | 6 (6) | 7 (7) | 8 (8) | 9 (9) | 10 (10) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Never:All the time (1) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

Q15 How often do you get news about urban development and renewal in Detroit from cable news (e.g., CNN, Fox News, MSNBC)?

| | 1 (1) | 2 (2) | 3 (3) | 4 (4) | 5 (5) | 6 (6) | 7 (7) | 8 (8) | 9 (9) | 10 (10) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Never:All the time (1) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

Q16 How often do you get news about urban development and renewal in Detroit from radio news media (e.g., NPR, radio talk shows)?

| | 1 (1) | 2 (2) | 3 (3) | 4 (4) | 5 (5) | 6 (6) | 7 (7) | 8 (8) | 9 (9) | 10 (10) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Never:All the time (1) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

Q17 How often do you watch CNN?

| | 1 (1) | 2 (2) | 3 (3) | 4 (4) | 5 (5) | 6 (6) | 7 (7) | 8 (8) | 9 (9) | 10 (10) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Never:All the time (1) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

Q18 How often do you watch BBC America?

| | 1 (1) | 2 (2) | 3 (3) | 4 (4) | 5 (5) | 6 (6) | 7 (7) | 8 (8) | 9 (9) | 10 (10) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Never:All the time (1) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

Q19 How often do you watch MSNBC?

| | 1 (1) | 2 (2) | 3 (3) | 4 (4) | 5 (5) | 6 (6) | 7 (7) | 8 (8) | 9 (9) | 10 (10) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Never:All the time (1) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

Q20 How often do you watch Fox News?

| | 1 (1) | 2 (2) | 3 (3) | 4 (4) | 5 (5) | 6 (6) | 7 (7) | 8 (8) | 9 (9) | 10 (10) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Never:All the time (1) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

Q21 News companies choose stories based on what will attract the biggest audiences and development interests.

| | 1 (1) | 2 (2) | 3 (3) | 4 (4) | 5 (5) | 6 (6) | 7 (7) | 8 (8) | 9 (9) | 10 (10) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly Disagree:Strongly Agree (1) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

Q22 Production techniques can be used to influence a viewer's perception.

| | 1 (1) | 2 (2) | 3 (3) | 4 (4) | 5 (5) | 6 (6) | 7 (7) | 8 (8) | 9 (9) | 10 (10) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly Disagree:Strongly Agree (1) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

Q23 The owner of a media company influences the content that is produced.

| | 1 (1) | 2 (2) | 3 (3) | 4 (4) | 5 (5) | 6 (6) | 7 (7) | 8 (8) | 9 (9) | 10 (10) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly Disagree:Strongly Agree (1) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

Q24 How much do you trust news about urban development and renewal in Detroit reported by alternative media (e.g., blogs, citizen journalism)?

| | 1 (1) | 2 (2) | 3 (3) | 4 (4) | 5 (5) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Do not trust:Trust completely (1) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

Q25 How much do you trust news about urban development and renewal in Detroit reported by social media news sites?

| | 1 (1) | 2 (2) | 3 (3) | 4 (4) | 5 (5) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Do not trust:Trust completely (1) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

Q27 How much do you trust news about urban development and renewal in Detroit reported by news aggregators?

| | 1 (1) | 2 (2) | 3 (3) | 4 (4) | 5 (5) | 6 (6) | 7 (7) | 8 (8) | 9 (9) | 10 (10) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Do not trust:Trust completely (1) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

Q28 How much do you trust news about urban development and renewal in Detroit reported by mainstream news media (e.g., newspapers, television news)?

| | 1 (1) | 2 (2) | 3 (3) | 4 (4) | 5 (5) | 6 (6) | 7 (7) | 8 (8) | 9 (9) | 10 (10) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Do not trust:Trust completely (1) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

Q29 How often do you talk about Detroit related politics or public affairs online and offline with a spouse or partner?

| | 1 (1) | 2 (2) | 3 (3) | 4 (4) | 5 (5) | 6 (6) | 7 (7) | 8 (8) | 9 (9) | 10 (10) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Never:All the time (1) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

Q30 How often do you talk about Detroit related politics or public affairs online and offline with family relatives?

| | 1 (1) | 2 (2) | 3 (3) | 4 (4) | 5 (5) | 6 (6) | 7 (7) | 8 (8) | 9 (9) | 10 (10) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Never:All the time (1) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

Q31 How often do you talk about Detroit related politics or public affairs online and offline with friends?

| | 1 (1) | 2 (2) | 3 (3) | 4 (4) | 5 (5) | 6 (6) | 7 (7) | 8 (8) | 9 (9) | 10 (10) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Never:All the time (1) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

Q32 How often do you talk about Detroit related politics or public affairs online and offline with acquaintances?

| | 1 (1) | 2 (2) | 3 (3) | 4 (4) | 5 (5) | 6 (6) | 7 (7) | 8 (8) | 9 (9) | 10 (10) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Never:All the time (1) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

Q33 How often do you talk about Detroit related politics or public affairs online and offline with strangers?

| | 1 (1) | 2 (2) | 3 (3) | 4 (4) | 5 (5) | 6 (6) | 7 (7) | 8 (8) | 9 (9) | 10 (10) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Never:All the time (1) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

Q34 How often do you talk about Detroit related politics or public affairs online and offline with neighbors you know well?

| | 1 (1) | 2 (2) | 3 (3) | 4 (4) | 5 (5) | 6 (6) | 7 (7) | 8 (8) | 9 (9) | 10 (10) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Never:All the time (1) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

Q35 How often do you talk about Detroit related politics or public affairs online and offline with neighbors you don't know well?

| | 1 (1) | 2 (2) | 3 (3) | 4 (4) | 5 (5) | 6 (6) | 7 (7) | 8 (8) | 9 (9) | 10 (10) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Never:All the time (1) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

Q36 How often do you talk about Detroit related politics or public affairs online and offline with co-workers you know well?

| | 1 (1) | 2 (2) | 3 (3) | 4 (4) | 5 (5) | 6 (6) | 7 (7) | 8 (8) | 9 (9) | 10 (10) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Never:All the time (1) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

Q37 How often do you talk about Detroit related politics or public affairs online and offline with co-workers you don't know well?

| | 1 (1) | 2 (2) | 3 (3) | 4 (4) | 5 (5) | 6 (6) | 7 (7) | 8 (8) | 9 (9) | 10 (10) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Never:All the time (1) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

Q38 About how many total people have you talked to face-to-face or over the phone about Detroit related politics or public affairs such as urban development and renewal?

Q39 About how many people would you say you have you talked to via the Internet, including e-mail, chat rooms, social networking sites and micro-blogging sites about Detroit related politics or public affairs, such as urban development and renewal?

Q40 I have a good understanding of the political issues facing Detroit.

| | 1 (1) | 2 (2) | 3 (3) | 4 (4) | 5 (5) | 6 (6) | 7 (7) | 8 (8) | 9 (9) | 10 (10) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly Disagree:Strongly Agree (1) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

Q41 I consider myself well-qualified to participate in politics.

| | 1 (1) | 2 (2) | 3 (3) | 4 (4) | 5 (5) | 6 (6) | 7 (7) | 8 (8) | 9 (9) | 10 (10) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly Disagree:Strongly Agree (1) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

Q42 How interested are you in information about urban development and renewal in Detroit?

| | 1 (1) | 2 (2) | 3 (3) | 4 (4) | 5 (5) | 6 (6) | 7 (7) | 8 (8) | 9 (9) | 10 (10) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Not at all:A great deal (1) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

Q43 How closely do you pay attention to information about urban development and renewal in Detroit?

| | 1 (1) | 2 (2) | 3 (3) | 4 (4) | 5 (5) | 6 (6) | 7 (7) | 8 (8) | 9 (9) | 10 (10) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Not at all:A great deal (1) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

Q44 What job or political office does Joe Biden currently hold?

Q45 How many years are there in one full term of office for a United States Senator?
- ❍ 2 (1)
- ❍ 4 (2)
- ❍ 6 (3)
- ❍ 8 (4)
- ❍ I don't know (5)

Q47 On which of the following does the United States federal government currently spend the least?
- ❍ foreign aid (1)
- ❍ Medicare (2)
- ❍ national defense (3)
- ❍ social security (4)
- ❍ I don't know (5)

Q60 Which organization's documents were released by Edward Snowden?
- ❍ FBI (1)
- ❍ NSA (2)
- ❍ IRS (3)
- ❍ CIA (4)
- ❍ I don't know (5)

Q50 Do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, or Republican?

| | 1 (1) | 2 (2) | 3 (3) | 4 (4) | 5 (5) | 6 (6) | 7 (7) | 8 (8) | 9 (9) | 10 (10) | 11 (11) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strong Republican (1):Strong Democrat (11) (1) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

Q51 Age
- ❍ 18-20 (1)
- ❍ 21-24 (2)
- ❍ 25+ (3)

Q53 Race or Ethnicity (Check all that apply)

- ❑ Black/ African-American (1)
- ❑ White or Caucasian (non-Hispanic) (2)
- ❑ Hispanic or Latino/a/x (3)
- ❑ Asian or Asian American (4)
- ❑ Native American/Indigenous (5)
- ❑ Other (6)

Q54 Gender

- ❍ Man (1)
- ❍ Woman (2)
- ❍ Transgender (3)
- ❍ Other (4) _____
- ❍ Prefer not to answer (5)

Q52 Last year, what was your family's total household income, before taxes?

- ❍ Less than $10,000 (1)
- ❍ $10,000 - $14,999 (2)
- ❍ $15,000 - $24,999 (3)
- ❍ $25,000 - $49,999 (4)
- ❍ $50,000 - $99,999 (5)
- ❍ $100,000 - $149,999 (6)
- ❍ $150,000 - $199,999 (7)
- ❍ $200,000 or more (8)

# IRB DOCUMENTS/MATERIALS

## INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

**Project Title:** Renewal or Removal: An analysis of Black Detroiters' media bias perception, media trust, and media use of news related to urban development and renewal in Detroit

**Investigator(s):** Rashad Timmons **Email Address:** timmon18@msu.edu

You are being asked to participate in a project conducted through Michigan State University. The University requires that you give your agreement to participate in this project.

**You must be 18 years or older to participate in this research study.**

The investigator will explain to you in detail the purpose of the project, the procedures to be used, and the potential benefits and possible risks of participation. You may ask any questions you may have to help you understand the project. A basic explanation of the project is written

below. Please read this explanation and discuss with the researcher any questions you may have. You should keep a copy of this form for your records.

1. **Nature and Purpose of the Project:** You are being asked to participate in a research study on perceptions of media bias, media trust, and media use of news related to Detroit related politics and public affairs, namely urban development and renewal.

2. **Explanation of Procedures:** If you decide to participate in this research, you will be asked survey questions about your sources of news information on Detroit related politics and public affairs, your perceptions of bias and trust in that news, as well as general questions on political interest and knowledge. This takes about 10-15 minutes.

3. **Discomfort and Risks:** There are no known risks associated with this study.

4. **Benefits:** There are no direct benefits correlated with your participation in this research. Nonetheless, your participation will help produce a greater understanding of how young, Black, Detroit residents acquire news about politics and public affairs within the city, specifically urban development and renewal, as well as how that specific population engages with Detroit related news. This can reveal both practical and theoretical insights into the efficacy and reach of Detroit-based news media.

5. **Confidentiality:** The records of this study will be kept private. In any report made public, your information will not be revealed so that you can be identified.

6. **Refusal/Withdrawal:** Refusal to participate in this study will have no effect on any future services you may be entitled to from the University or its corresponding units. Participation in this study is voluntary. Anyone who agrees to participate is free to refuse to answer any question and withdraw from the study at any time with no penalty.

*It is not possible to identify all potential risks related to this procedure; however, reasonable safeguards have been taken to minimize both the known and potential but unknown risks.*

**By completing this survey, voluntary consent is indicated.**

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