

Detroit Is Us

A qualitative study of community action and DIY spirit in
Detroit's hidden neighbourhoods after state bankruptcy

Revised thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy

Meghan Doyle

Goldsmiths, University of London

Department of Social, Therapeutic and Community Studies

December 2024 RESUBMISSION

Acknowledgements

This research is the culmination of nearly a decade of collaboration with residents of the Detroit neighbourhoods of North Corktown and Southwest. It builds on my community development practice over the past two decades in the US and UK working with urban neighbourhoods in transition in which I have sought to facilitate residents to have greater influence in shaping their own futures and the places in which they live.

I would like to thank Goldsmiths for the opportunity to progress this work within an environment that encourages reflexive learning between theory and practice, and my supervisors, Adam Dinham and Kalbir Shukra, who have supported me on this journey. Thank you to my parents Pam and Tim Doyle who instilled in me unwavering values of social justice and compassion. Significant gratitude to my partner Steve King and sister Caitlin Doyle whose editorial support and critical eye have been immensely helpful in this process.

This research and the considerable work that it entailed is dedicated to the following three most influential and inspirational groups and individuals, without whom none of this would have been possible.

It is dedicated to the people of Detroit; those that weathered the storm, that fought for their communities, that worked tirelessly to build and reimagine a fairer, socially-just city. It is particularly for those 36 residents who shared their time, insights and love for their neighbourhoods to create a rich resource of stories of lived experience of Detroit at this critical time.

It is dedicated to the late David Graeber, who passed away in 2020 while I was undertaking this research, and whose radical questioning of the status quo through his writing and practice inspired my interest in demonstrating that another world is possible.

Finally, it is dedicated to my 6-year old daughter Rhea and 8-year old niece Saoirse who show me every day that our world is what you make it, and through their love, empathy and care for their community, that we can be the change we wish to see in the world.

Declaration of originality

I hereby declare that this submission is my own original work and that, to the best of my knowledge, it contains no material previously published by another person nor material submitted for the award of a degree by a higher education institution, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

Meghan Doyle

December 2024

Abstract

This thesis explores the ways in which active residents in Detroit's hidden neighbourhoods are reimagining urban futures at a local level in response to global crises as the City exhibits the ideal preconditions for hope and change. This is examined through the individual and collective efforts of Detroit's residents in developing a movement to redress the effects of global, social and financial inequality in the first quarter of the 21st century.

The research is positioned within a framework of social and environmental justice, community development studies and futures-focused anthropology, while also drawing on political, economic and critical urban studies. It draws on theories from David Graeber, Sarah Safransky, Adrian Pabst, Cornel West, Marjorie Mayo and Thomas Sugrue as a basis for examining contemporary forms of community development practice taking place in Detroit. I argue that Detroit as a city in flux, still reeling from industrial decline, racial segregation, political apathy, a strained social contract and the Global Financial Crisis, provides profound insights and valuable learning for other cities around the world experiencing similar economic and social instability, as well as land use and resource challenges. The research exposes the risks of undemocratic, discriminatory and top-down policies aimed at bolstering a faltering neoliberal capitalist system, and illustrates alternative solutions being created and tested by residents to rebuild the social fabric of the city from the ground up, based on social justice, altruism, reciprocity, hope and a DIY spirit.

The research covers a period of eight years, between 2014 and 2022. It uses qualitative, participatory and ethnographic research methods to provide a counter-narrative to binary mainstream media portrayals of Detroit as either ghost town or Renaissance city. Instead, it offers the perspective of residents themselves, including stories of their lived experience as a contribution to reimagining urban neighbourhoods in the changing socio-economic and political landscape of the 21st century.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	2
Declaration of originality	3
Abstract	4
Introduction	6
Introduction	7
Chapter Outline	13
Chapter 1: Literature Review	16
Introduction	17
The Politics of Growth and Debt.....	19
Voice and Influence.....	36
Vehicles of Social Change	47
Utopian Visions	60
DIY Is the Spirit of Detroit.....	68
Chapter 2: Methodology	79
Positionality Statement.....	80
Research Overview.....	90
Research Methods	97
Research Framework.....	108
Chapter 3: Past (Denounce).....	113
A Brief History of Detroit.....	114
Foundations of Detroit.....	142
Chapter 4: Present (Kindle).....	197
Introduction	198
A Narrative of Two Detroits	199
Detroit Never Left.....	236
Chapter 5: Walking Ethnographies	242
<i>Southwest Detroit</i>	244
<i>North Corktown</i>	283
Thematic Analysis	356
Chapter 6: Future (Imagine)	366
Inventing the Future	367
Conclusion	391
References.....	398
Appendix A: Catalogue of Images, Graphs and Tables	428
Appendix B: Key Dates in Detroit's History	433
Appendix C: Full Interview Questionnaire	437
Appendix D: Profiles, Perceptions and Motivations of Participants	439

Introduction

Introduction

This research explores the ways in which active residents in Detroit's hidden neighbourhoods are reimagining urban futures at a local level, based on social justice, community development and mutual aid, in response to unfolding global crises. It responds to the urgent question posed by contemporary anthropologists, 'is another world possible?' as an alternative to the dominant neoliberal capitalist order driven by self-interest, exacerbating existing social and economic inequalities around the globe (Graeber, 2014) (Pink & Salazar, 2017). It hypothesises that Detroit could be one such place where alternative ways of life are being tested through the collective efforts of an emerging social movement based on the City's longstanding DIY spirit and the values of altruism, reciprocity and equity.

These hypotheses are examined through the determination and community action of Detroit residents to address the effects of global, social and financial inequality illustrated through pockets of hope across the City¹. Through a review of relevant, multidisciplinary literature, primarily focused on community development and futures-focused anthropology, as well as an examination of the history of the City of Detroit, the project first seeks to understand the context and influential factors that have shaped the contemporary context for Detroit and its marginalised neighbourhoods, before turning to a more in-depth exploration of the stories of Detroit residents involved in community action in the City through 30 interviews and nine walking tours. The research is underpinned by the principles of Participatory Action Research and draws on the anthropological tradition and contemporary uses of ethnography to illustrate the stories of people and place as a snapshot of a critical time in Detroit's history as it considers its future role for its own residents and on the world stage, ten years after filing for the largest-ever municipal bankruptcy in the United States.

¹ The 'City' is intentionally capitalised throughout in recognition of Detroit's near-anthropomorphic status in this thesis.

The City of Detroit is a microcosm of the neoliberal, capitalist project with all the inequalities that brings, described as ‘the most representatively American place on the planet’ (Herron, 2007). Its single-industry economic model – like so many other post-industrial cities in the Rust Belt of the US – allowed it to reach great heights through rewards and opportunities of local labour and the economic bubble on which it floated, only to come crashing down, taking with it its economy, employment and infrastructure. With unquestioning inevitability, capitalism was allowed – and even encouraged – by the City’s founders and industrialists to continue as the engine of perpetual growth in Detroit, exploiting its natural resources and citizens, eroding their health, democracy, education and economic security, while reaping the commercial profits. Compounding the unimpeded economic growth of capitalism, Detroit’s urban development followed, with urban planners expanding the City exponentially within a short time period in response to the population surge drawn by employment prospects in the automotive industry. This was done with seemingly no consideration for a future in which the economic bubble may burst or the population may shrink, both of which we have seen to dramatic effect in Detroit over the past 50 years. A real-life manifestation of Frank Popper’s description: ‘the American way is to do nothing until it’s too late’ (Young, 2010).

Since the City’s heyday in the first half of the 20th century, Detroit has fallen from the lofty heights of the marbled Opera House and Michigan Theater built in the 1920s, and of the 1950s when Detroit had the highest level of homeownership among African Americans in the United States at 92% (Sugrue, 2014, p. 40). The Detroit of the first quarter of the 21st century paints a different picture. Unemployment among African American residents is 1.5 times that of White residents, 67% of subprime mortgages – one of the drivers that led to the Financial Crisis – went to African Americans in 2007, and there are more than ninety foreclosed properties per square mile in the city (Sugrue, 2014).

Furthermore, policies and practices that have proven to be undemocratic and discriminatory – such as the emergency manager law, freeway expansion through historic

Black neighbourhoods, water shutoffs, tax foreclosures and siting high-polluting factories in residential neighbourhoods – have systematically eroded the rights, privileges and quality of life of many Detroit residents over decades. This adverse impact has been most notable among communities of colour and residents living in the neglected and underserved neighbourhoods in stark contrast to Downtown and Midtown Detroit, where, by contrast, private investment has turned them into one of *Lonely Planet's* 'Top 10 Global Destinations' in 2018 (*Visit Detroit*, 2018). These unseen neighbourhoods have been described by residents as being 'like a third world country' (Angelyn, 2018) and 'forgotten' (Fairchild, 2019). Here the binary cities concept has been played out within a single city. Imagery of a 'Renaissance city' of billionaire businessmen, young, White hipsters, and luxury goods proudly made in Detroit contrasts with the ruin porn and ghost-town imagery of neighbourhoods forgotten. This is the narrative of the 'two Detroits' described by so many residents during interviews.

Detroit remains a city of immense cultural and historical significance. It was a formative centre of the Civil Rights Movement, Black Radicalism and associated concepts of 'Do for Self' and Black self-determination. It was the home of Motown Records which created the soundtrack for a generation fighting for their place within the American Dream. It was the City that gave birth to the assembly line, the minimum wage and the middle class in the US, fractiously also giving rise to labour unions and contemporary workers' rights. It is a city of grit, of hustle, of toil, of hard work, of self-sufficiency, based on a population of immigrant workers, many of whom came to the City from the southern United States of the Jim Crow era, and from Ireland, Poland, and later Iraq, escaping war, famine and poverty, many with nothing but aspirations for a better life. It is a place where previously, the Indigenous People of the Ottawa, Huron, Ojibwe and Potawatomi Nations found the terrain rough, winters challenging, and where one's very survival required ingenuity and resourcefulness. This 'DIY' spirit, as described repeatedly during the interviews, has remained 'the essence' of what it means to be a Detroiter and of continuing to survive in a city where not only the

natural landscape is challenging, but where now the depleted infrastructure and public services are inaccessible to many residents in peripheral neighbourhoods. It is here where, when tested, many residents refused to wait for a metaphorical knight in shining armour to come to their rescue. Instead, they have taken their futures into their own hands to create reimagined neighbourhoods, centred on values of community, inclusion, sustainability and equity, in contrast to the dominant neoliberal capitalist order that plundered the City and left it in tatters at the start of the 21st century.

In contemporary Detroit, defiant community responses are being mobilised to combat the localised effects of global crises. It has become a test bed of activity where self-identified community organisers, political activists, anarchists and active residents work together and in parallel to explore different versions of the future for their neighbourhoods, based on self-determination, self-sufficiency, mutual aid and community, reshaping the social contract between citizen and state. With its declining industry, shrinking population, depleted infrastructure and public services, the City is often portrayed as abandoned, a ghost town, an embarrassing blight to the realisation of the American Dream. However, against this very backdrop, the research tells a different story. It is a narrative in which 'Detroit never left' (Carter-Alvizo, 2019b). Instead, the people have remained active in creatively and resourcefully determining the course of their own futures, guided by values of social justice and equity, making use of the neglected vacant land, pooling resources to support neighbours to remain in their homes and mobilising campaigns against discriminatory and undemocratic policies. While the world turned its eyes to the allure of the 'comeback city' of Downtown Detroit with its billions of dollars of private investment, residents in marginalised neighbourhoods were busy testing new ways of life, while also struggling to survive in a challenging city. At this critical juncture in Detroit's history, it exhibits the ideal preconditions of hope to create alternative futures of simultaneous potentiality and uncertainty in the future (Jansen & Kleist, p. 379).

The discipline of futures-focused anthropology asserts that another world is possible by showcasing pockets where ways of living already exist that may offer an alternative to the dominant hegemony. Through this research, we see such examples happening in the North Corktown and Southwest neighbourhoods of Detroit, demonstrated through urban gardening, practices of community banking, creative uses of vacant land and leadership in inclusive development.

Research fieldwork undertaken between 2019 and 2020 illustrated pockets of hope through the individual and collective action of residents to shape the present and determine the future of their neighbourhoods, with many motivated by being part of a social movement to reimagine a fairer world. Through resident-led walking ethnographies, a collection of stories and photographs, detailing the multiplicity of experiences, motivations and aspirations as a snapshot of the experience of living in Detroit at this critical moment in its trajectory, as it navigates its way through the aftermath of the City's bankruptcy and responds to the effects of global crises. These walking ethnographies, complemented by interviews with active residents, community activists and organisers, triangulate the literature review and historical research on the City, offering an account of how policy, resource and development decisions have impacted on the lives of Detroiters, as well as a counter-narrative of where local solutions have been devised in the absence of infrastructure and involvement from government.

An examination of current political and cultural life in the United States has demonstrated that policies are being devised and decisions made regarding investment, development and land use that take little account of the voices of its citizens, particularly those in furthest proximity from the dominant 'White hetero-patriarchy' (Strolovitch, Wong, & Proctor, 2017). The fieldwork and literature review provided a multitude of examples to substantiate this, including the disproportionate impact on African American residents of the policies of water shutoffs, tax foreclosures on homes, unelected appointments of emergency city managers and the siting of high-polluting factories in residential neighbourhoods.

Through the mobilisation of large-scale efforts, such as the Black Lives Matter and water justice movements, and their extraordinary reach through social media, injustice resulting from globalisation, environmental racism and structural inequality is being increasingly exposed to the public. Localised examples in the Detroit area have highlighted these impacts regionally. These include the Michigan Civil Rights Commission's report (MCRC, 2017) on systemic racism in the Flint water crisis and the civil rights coalition that filed a class action lawsuit against water shutoffs in Detroit (ACLU Michigan, 2020b). These examples demonstrate how a lack of understanding of the impact of top-down policies on residents' lived experiences perpetuate and exacerbate systemic inequality over time.

Therefore, as a socially conscious community practitioner, I believe I have a responsibility through my research and practice to contribute to redressing this imbalance, including creating opportunities for residents to share their stories, so that the public, fellow practitioners and policymakers may have a greater understanding of the lived experience of others to inform better policy and outcomes for residents of Detroit and other cities. This research contributes to the growing body of literature (Anastacio, et al., 2000) (Fairey, 2018) (Gilchrist & Morris, 2011) (Vergara-Perucich, 2021) by providing a platform to amplify the diverse voices of Detroit residents living through significant change at this critical moment in time, resulting from the inequalities and social division of the dominant neoliberal capitalist order and the global crises that have emerged from it. Together, this body of literature builds a case for policymakers on the value of residents' voices playing a key role in shaping decision-making on policy and resource allocation that will ultimately have a direct impact on their lives.

In the chapters that follow, the study sets out to answer the research questions of whether another world is possible and if so, to what extent are the hidden neighbourhoods of Detroit an ideal testbed of innovation and creativity in reinventing alternative urban futures through an emerging social movement, based on self-determination, social justice and a reimagination of the social contract.

Chapter Outline

Chapter 1: Literature Review

The order of this chapter provides a narrative: first, setting the global economic context; then examining citizen voice within current US social structures; finally focusing on approaches to community-led social change.

Politics of Growth and Debt. The first section examines how the neoliberal ideas of self-interest and growth that underpin the capitalist system have been challenged by academics, practitioners and activists since the 2008 Financial Crisis.

Voice and Influence. The second section examines the role of voice and influence within Western political and social structures – structures the literature suggests are becoming increasingly unequal and divided.

Vehicles of Social Change. The third section examines different theories of how communities of varying types (place, identity, interest) have come together to affect social change within the current financial and political context.

Concept of Utopia: Through the literature review, I discovered the contemporary anthropological writings on utopia and its relationship to ethnography in illustrating that other worlds are possible, which inspired the structure of the thesis.

DIY Is the Spirit of Detroit. This section explores concepts and perceptions of ‘Do It Yourself’ or ‘DIY’ and its relationship to Detroit as part of a long-term social movement to create a fairer, more inclusive city.

Chapter 2: Methodology

Research Overview. This outlines the mainly qualitative methods used, which were selected to build a rich data set and narrative of the experience of engaged residents, consisting of 30 semi-structured interviews and nine resident-led walking ethnographies in two identified neighbourhoods in Detroit.

Research Framework. This research builds on contemporary concepts of rethinking community participation and community activism (Alinsky, 1971), as well as futures-focused anthropology. It considers not just that ‘another world is possible’, but that viable alternatives are being tested towards a more liveable world, as explored through my fieldwork.

Chapter 3: PAST (Denounce)

Who Decides the City? I argue that sharing residents’ stories contributes to exposing the ways in which neoliberalisation and corporate interests have undermined citizens’ rights to the city and social contract, while showcasing that there is and can be a better world.

Chapter 4: PRESENT (Kindle)

A Narrative of Two Detroits. A two Detroits narrative has resulted in separate and unequal growth in the City, manifesting itself along racial lines, with the ‘binary cities’ concept being played out within Detroit’s borders, illustrating the complexities obscured by this didactic model. The research presenting an opportunity ‘to unmask the often neglected part of global capitalism’s presence’ (Marr, 2016).

Detroit Never Left. I argue that ‘the actions of Detroit’s residents have continued to empower neighbourhoods to survive, build, thrive and innovate, challenging the myth of Detroit as a ghost town or blank-slate City waiting to be rewritten after the decline of the auto industry and bankruptcy.

Chapter 5: Walking Ethnographies

This chapter provides a narrative and visual account of two neighbourhoods in Detroit, North Corktown and Southwest, through the perspectives of nine residents who led the tours and selected the photographs to be included in the local ethnographies. The technique builds on the rich tradition of ethnography within the discipline of anthropology and its contemporary use by a wider range of multi-disciplinary scholars.

Chapter 6: FUTURE (Imagine)

Underpinned by the disciplines of community development and futures-focused anthropology, I argue that Detroit's hidden neighbourhoods offer a glimpse of what alternative futures might be possible by modelling new forms of life that its participants wish to see in the world, fighting domination and constructing alternatives.

Conclusion

I argue that an emerging movement taking shape in Detroit's hidden neighbourhoods in response to the neoliberal capitalist order, offering a glimpse into possible alternative futures. I call for greater collaboration with residents to reshape policy informed by their lived experience and argue for an emerging action research agenda to learn from alternative ways of life being tested through community-led solutions in Detroit.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

Introduction

This research examines the extent to which people involved in community activism in Detroit's hidden neighbourhoods are creating a new movement to reimagine neighbourhoods in response to the systemic economic and social inequality of the capitalist system. This chapter contextualises this question within relevant literature from community development and futures-focused anthropology, while also drawing on the fields of economics, urban studies, sociology and political science. Theories and critiques drawn from the literature have been used to test the research question and sharpen its focus, as well as to identify how this study might provide a unique contribution to the field.

The order of these sections provides a narrative: first, setting the global economic context; then examining citizen voice within current US social structures; finally focusing on approaches to community-led social change.

The first section examines the neoliberal ideas of self-interest and growth, which underpin the capitalist system (Graeber, 2013) and have been challenged by academics, practitioners and activists, particularly since the 2008 Financial Crisis (Graeber, 2014) (Pabst, 2010). Anthropologists and economists, such as David Graeber (2004) (2014) and Michael Hudson (2003), whose writings have provided a critique of the Western neoliberal capitalist system, found that the crisis and its consequences further exposed capitalism's structural inequality and its effects on our cities and communities. Many theorists have explored alternatives to the neoliberal capitalist model, including new approaches to urban planning, based on lived experience (Marr, 2016), and smart decline (Maheshwari, 2013), as well as alternative system of measurements, based on wellbeing (Sen, 1985). This study of contemporary community activism in Detroit presents a unique opportunity to explore the ways in which some of these theoretical concepts are being interpreted and applied at a neighbourhood scale, based on community activism and a revised social contract of mutual reciprocity.

The second section examines the role of voice and influence within Western political and social structures and the relationship to the current context in Detroit. Increasing numbers of citizens feel unrepresented by their government (Hochschild, 2016), laying the foundation for emerging populist movements around the world (Judis, 2016). This disenfranchisement has been exacerbated by a regression in civic life (Pabst, 2010), decline in equality of access to the 'American Dream' and reduction in social capital (Putnam, 2015), particularly for Black Americans (Kubrin & Squires, 2005) (Sugrue, 2014) (West, 2017). It is against this crisis of faith in the system that an alternative momentum appears to be taking shape in Detroit, one in which active communities, predominantly Black and on lower incomes, are rebuilding social capital and placing value on local knowledge to design bespoke solutions. A movement shaped by the values and language of Black Radicalism, built on self-determination and 'Do for Self' (Andrews, 2021a). This concept has been explored through interviews with community activists in Detroit and is discussed in subsequent chapters.

The third section examines different theories of how communities of varying types have come together to affect social change within the current financial and political context. It explores differences between concepts of community development (Craig, 2011), community organising (Alinsky, 1971), community education (Freire, 1996), Black Radicalism (Andrews, 2021a) and self-determination (Boyd, 2018) to understand the current activity taking place in Detroit. It explores emerging collaborative practices between 'local expert' citizens and professional experts, as well as a challenge to remake participation. Finally, it explores local responses to global events in the form of new social movements (Eyerman, 1984) and examines how this may relate to an emerging community-led movement in Detroit, one that is engaged in reimagining alternative futures to the dominant capitalist order.

The Politics of Growth and Debt

Detroit was perhaps the nation's most prominent casualty of the deregulation of financial services and the lax oversight of Wall Street investment practices that began in the 1990s (Sugrue, 2014, p. Preface xx).

While the research is focused on present-day Detroit, it also explores to what extent an emerging movement of community activism has developed in response to structural inequalities in US society, and the two major financial events that brought this into sharp focus: The Global Financial Crisis of 2008 and Detroit's bankruptcy five years later. The responses of economists and anthropologists to these events have been crucial to defining the research question, as well as considering what may come next.

History and context. Sociologist Lauren Langman (2013) theorised that when an economic crisis impacts living standards, it undermines the legitimacy of the prevailing economic and political system. The Global Financial Crisis has been a catalyst for many academics, like Langman (2013), to question the neoliberal assumptions underpinning the capitalist model, as well as for community activists to test alternative approaches, as explored through the Detroit research.

The Financial Crisis exposed further cracks in the implicit agreements and embedded structures of Western capitalist society (Graeber, 2014) (Pabst, 2010), the effects of which have reared their head throughout history at points of financial crisis and precarious social order. This includes the stock market crash in 1929 and Great Depression of the 1930s, the Great Recession that followed the Financial Crisis of 2008, and the global recession forecast by the World Bank in direct response to the Coronavirus pandemic (The World Bank, 2020). Graeber (2014) and Pabst (2010) both argued that Western culture shifted from reciprocal societies to societies governed by a more abstract and commercial sets of values; and that by quantifying transactions in these terms, 'one does not need to calculate the human

effects; one only needs to calculate principle, balances, penalties and rates of interest' (Graeber, 2014, p. 13). Graeber argued that the 17th century Enlightenment concept of self-interest has continued to be the hallmark of modern capitalism and its banking system., predicated on the idea that human beings as driven by self-interest and therefore could not be trusted to treat others fairly of their own accord. Therefore, Graeber (2014) concluded, the only way to have a just society was for all citizens to adhere to a set of laws determined by the state: a social contract.

For nearly a century, while the auto industry was in an economic bubble, Detroit traded on concepts of self-interest and perpetual growth. An economic bubble was defined by economist Paul Krugman as 'a situation in which asset prices appear to be based on implausible or inconsistent views about the future' (Krugman, 2013). Instead of leaving their futures to be determined by the markets, residents working within pockets of community activism in Detroit are shaping a new future, determined by a different set of values. In response to what I have seen through my fieldwork, I argue that in parts of Detroit, we are witnessing the arrival of a new era – a post-neoliberal return to models of mutual aid and social relations in response to a multitude of economic, public health and social crises. In many neighbourhoods experiencing increasing need, people have set up food banks, community gardens and homeless shelters, and are mobilising against foreclosures and water shutoffs.

Sociologist Lauren Langman (2013) argued that a cause of the 2008 Financial Crisis was the rapid rise in housing valuations following changes to banking regulations and an explosion of subprime mortgage lending (Langman, p. 511). When the bubble burst, the housing market crashed, taking the US economy with it. Government investment rescued the banks, but – according to Langman (2013) and Graeber (2014) – ordinary people lost jobs, homes and livelihoods.

With high levels of homeownership in the City, foreclosures hit Detroit especially hard. Detroit's predominantly Black neighbourhoods had historically high homeownership

levels of 92% in the late 1950s (Sugrue, 2014, p. 40). High levels of homeownership were sustained as Detroit's economy declined, much of this enabled by subprime-mortgage lending. Approximately 67% of all subprime loans in Detroit went to African Americans in 2007, and when the crisis hit a year later, many homeowners lost their homes through foreclosure. By 2011, there were more than ninety foreclosed properties per square mile in Detroit, contributing to a decline in the City's population of 25% in the decade to 2010. By 2013, between 21 and 40 of the city's 139 square miles were empty (Sugrue, p. Preface xv).

Global meets local. Both Pabst (2010) and Graeber (2014) have described how liberal concepts of self-interest, freedom to enjoy personal property, and a social contract have had a profound effect on the modern banking system and the development of capitalism. Although views of exactly what capitalism means may differ, it is widely understood as 'a system that requires constant, endless growth' (Graeber, 2014, p. 346). Financial growth, under the banner of the free market, Graeber argued had a tendency to benefit the rich, the creditors, corporations and developers, at the expense of the lower income citizens and poorer nations of the world (Graeber, 2013). Kehinde Andrews (2021b) argued that central to this dynamic is the myth of the risk-taking entrepreneur to justify the 'staggering inequality' capitalism produces. For Andrews (2021b), this myth was rooted in colonial logic and Enlightenment ideals of progress, with the 'rational, individual White man' ploughing the way for capitalist progress, while ignoring the critical role of other states in enabling his success (Andrews, p. 110).

Detroit has not been the only city to experience the sharp end of the capitalist project. Critiquing the New York City financial crisis of the mid-1970s, Graeber (2013) argued that one could see the 'real paradigm' of the neoliberal experiment. Like Detroit in 2013, 1970s New York was driven to 'technical bankruptcy', prompting creditors to form the 'Municipal Assistance Corporation' (Graeber, 2013, p. 6), independent of the city government and unaccountable to voters, with the authority to take action to balance the budget, while cutting city services and offering tax breaks to businesses and developers, similar to Michigan's

emergency manager law four decades later. Graeber described of New York in the aftermath:

Gone first of all was any pretence that city government existed equally for all its citizens. Rather, the city was a product to be marketed... As the city center was rebuilt as a glittering advertisement for itself, the poor were to be pushed out of sight of potential tourists and investors (Graeber, 2013, p. 6).

The above quotation from David Graeber (2013) is reminiscent of how several Detroit residents described their current experience of investment in the Downtown area of the City versus the neighbourhoods, the so-called 'two Detroits' narrative.

Graeber (2014) argued that, since the dawn of capitalism, success has been measured in terms of market growth and profit. The widely accepted 5% annual rate of interest by which a business is expected to grow to remain viable has been applied to nations through their Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Within the context of capitalism, this impersonal mechanism has compelled people to evaluate everything in terms of potential for profit. Graeber argued that profit has come to be considered the only objective metric for the health of the community (Graeber, 2014, p. 346).

This neoliberal focus on growth has been a driver of globalisation, defined by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as 'an increasingly free flow of ideas, people, goods, services, and capital [which] leads to the integration of economies and societies' (IMF, 2006). Economists and sociologists have written extensively on the effects of globalisation. While it brought increased supply of consumer products and a rise in average per capita incomes (IMF, 2008), the IMF also recognised its significant contribution to a rise in income inequality and unemployment in most regions of the world (IMF, 2008). Graeber argued that neoliberalism has been seen as the dominant ideological force in the world, and 'an attempt by the United States, as the world's sole remaining superpower, to extend its own social and

economic model to the rest of the world' (Graeber, 2013, p. 2), in turn giving rise to globalisation. He claimed that 'proponents of neoliberalism never talk about the big picture. It is in the nature of the global market that there are winners and losers, they say' (Graeber, 2013, p. 15). Adrian Pabst (2010) argued that the global economy – promoted by governments and corporations – has become increasingly disconnected from localities, communities and families, often finding themselves the losers in this dynamic.

According to political economist Ha-Joon Chang (2011), the myth that 'what is good for business is good for the national economy' has been used to legitimise globalisation. Aptly for this research, he illustrated this through the story of the Detroit-based multinational corporation, General Motors (GM).

GM built its fortune in the first half of the 20th century. During WWII, GM built cars and arms for the government and, by the end of the war, was the biggest company in the US, with such considerable influence that its then-CEO was appointed US Defence Secretary in 1953. After a half century of poor decision-making, GM went bankrupt in 2009. The US government, however, maintained that 'what was good for GM was good for the US', and bailed it out with \$57.6 billion of taxpayers' money. While this decision may indeed have been best for GM and its shareholders, Chang argued it has not been in the best interest of the wider US economy, nor the thousands of Detroit workers who lost their jobs (Chang, 2011).

Chang (2011) challenged the claim that the US has the highest standard of living in the world, a claim often used to argue for the superiority of the free-market system. He argued that the US has by far the most unequal distribution of income of any rich country. US workers have less job security, weaker welfare infrastructure, lower wages, longer hours and poorer conditions than workers in Europe. Chang (2011) concluded that the higher purchasing power of the average US citizen was only attained through the poverty and insecurity of fellow citizens.

Globalisation has often been cited by the IMF, economists and anthropologists as a key driver for the rise in inequality between developed and developing countries. In places like Detroit, Cleveland, Cincinnati and other 'Rust Belt'² cities, we appear to be seeing a similar rise in inequality between poorer urban centres and their wealthy suburbs. Both Thomas Sugrue (2014) and Robert Putnam (2015) have observed this divergence occurring along racial lines, due to the demographics of city and suburbs. With an estimated rise in the global urban population of 2.5 billion in the next 30 years (Clos, 2014), it is likely that this discrepancy will become even more stark.

Pabst (2010) claimed that although the Global Financial Crisis demonstrated the imbalance of power between global finance and local economies, little has changed as a result. The US gave nine trillion dollars in subsidy to rescue banks, however, Pabst (2010) argued that this has not improved lending to local businesses or households, nor has it instigated job creation or addressed mass unemployment. Instead, this subsidy has propped up a system that privatises gains and nationalises losses, like in Chang's (2011) example. Detroit serves as an example of this, with auto companies like GM subsidised by the taxpayer, at a time when unemployment rose to 24.9% (Sugrue, p. Preface xv). Pabst (2010) called for a 're-localization of the global economy' to incentivise social investment in communities, thereby rebalancing social value and commercial profit.

Economist Michael Hudson (2003) and anthropologist David Graeber (2014) identified President Nixon's decision to end the international gold standard in 1971 as having created a massive transfer of wealth from poor to rich countries. 'US Treasury IOUs are being built into the world's monetary base [even though] they will not be repaid' (Hudson, 2003), a phenomenon described by Hudson as 'debt imperialism'. Hudson (2003) and Graeber (2014) saw the IMF's role to ensure that the strict code of 'debt imperialism' was

² 'Rust Belt' cities are defined as 'that part of the US comprising of the states of the Midwest and Northeast, characterized as an area marked by diminishing population, aging factories, decreasing production as of steel and automobiles, etc' (Collins Dictionary, 2020a).

upheld and that loans from creditors, like the US, were not defaulted on by poorer countries. Both argued that these poorer countries, suffocating under a mountain of debt, were forced to sign up to social and economic policies in the best interest of their creditors, rather than of their citizens.

According to Graeber (2014), national debt was regarded within the capitalist ideology as 'a promise of continual future improvement made by government to people' (Graeber, p. 358). This view was first expressed during the French Revolution, with opposing views suggesting that such debt risked the destruction of civilisation by economic collapse – a view that Pabst (2010) and others argued we are seeing today. I argue that many of Detroit's creditors and politicians acted for decades on this same assumption of continual growth. They racked up debt, without any apparent expectation that it would have to be repaid. When, in 2013, the federal government sent the bailiffs to Detroit to collect this \$18 billion of unpaid debt, it was the taxpayers, auto workers and state employees that were expected to foot the bill. In Graeber's terms, the bill for the debt (or promise) that everyone assumed would never have to be paid was suddenly handed to the Detroit taxpayer. Following Graeber (2014) and Hudson's (2003) line of argument, I argue that the City of Detroit has been treated effectively, within the terms of debt imperialism, as a developing country by its own state and federal government. The bankruptcy package, formulated by a State Governor and an unelected Emergency Financial Manager, prioritised creditors and included stringent consequences for Detroit's citizens, including reductions in pensions, City assets and public funding.

As a result of these circumstances, the social-contract model has been tested in Detroit. The model of receiving services in return for paying taxes has been challenged as fewer and fewer residents in Detroit can afford to pay taxes, leading to the question of whether the commodification of basic services that the tax system undermines the human rights of those residents unable to pay. Economist John F. McDonald (2014a) argued that significant drops in employment, property values and population have resulted in a 39%

decline in City revenues, due to a dwindling tax base (McDonald J. F., 2014a). While Thomas Sugrue (2014) argued the increase in Detroit residents unable to pay their taxes has a clear and direct link to the structural inequality inherent in the contemporary financial system.

Graeber (2014) argued that, in many ways, the use of the social contract was an attempt to sidestep class war after World War II, when, in return for social benefits, including unions, public education and the opportunity for social mobility, the working classes tacitly agreed not to revolt. While their wages would not rise, workers were invited to 'buy a piece of capitalism' (Graeber, p. 376), contributing to the economy by boosting profits to banks and investors. This was epitomised by conservative policies encouraging home ownership and mortgage refinancing schemes in the 1980s and 1990s, now cited by many as drivers of the Financial Crisis. However, Graeber (2014) claimed that the Keynesian settlement, as seen after World War II, was offered only to a small proportion of the world's population, namely a handful of communities in the more affluent Western world. He argued that almost all popular movements since WWII could be attributed to demands for inclusion in this arrangement. But 'It would appear that capitalism, as a system, simply cannot extend such a deal to everyone' (Graeber, 2014, p. 375). This led to what he termed a 'crisis of inclusion' from the late 1970s, in which the previously accepted socio-economic order began to break down, a process we appear to still be experiencing today.

Thomas Sugrue (2014) localised this argument within the terms of Detroit's decline, observing:

Detroit's post-war urban crisis emerged as a consequence of two of the most important, interrelated and unresolved problems in American history: that capitalism generates economic inequality, and that African Americans have disproportionately borne the impact of that inequality (Sugrue, p. 5).

From a perspective of Racial Capitalism and its roots in colonialism, Kehinde Andrews (2021b) argued that the United States has become the centre of modern colonial power (Andrews, p. xiv). He claimed that after World War II, the great European powers waned, and the United States 'inherited its birth right as the leader of the new age', with major US-based institutions, such as the World Bank, IMF and United Nations, managing globalisation and 'maintaining the logic of the empire under the guise of development' (Andrews, p. xiv). This pattern has been repeated into the present-day, through Western corporations amassing great riches through exploiting the resources and labour of former colonies, now technically free countries (Andrews, p. 91). This has enabled the capitalist system to continue to generate significant wealth for the former colonial powers and perpetuate global inequality (Andrews, pp. 89, 91). Andrews gave the example of US-based tyre company, Firestone, which made such sizeable profits extracting rubber from Liberia in 1951. Even after taxes were paid to the Liberian government, it still generated three times the total income of the country (Andrews, p. 94). There is a clear similarity here with the City of Detroit. The Big Three automotive companies have amassed significant profits and received billions in taxpayers' dollars in the form of government investment at the time of the Financial Crisis, while the average Detroit citizen was living a precarious existence of financial and food insecurity, at risk of losing their home, their job and their pension.

In the 25th anniversary edition of his seminal book, *Race Matters* (West, 2017), Cornel West reflected on the deep-rooted 'empire matters' inherent in America. Kehinde Andrews (2021b) claimed that the contemporary American Empire is 'simply the latest, most efficient way of delivering Western imperialism' (Andrews, p. 110), maintaining global White supremacy and colonial domination, while maintaining a 'delusional fantasy' that it freed itself from the tyranny of British colonialism and now is on a mission to do the same for the rest of the world (Andrews, p. xiv). West (2017) argued that, like all empires, the American Empire has shown no accountability to its victims, where the 'scope of American callousness

and indifference to poor and vulnerable people here and abroad is too vast to ignore' (West, p. xvii).

With a significant-majority Black population in Detroit experiencing widespread social and economic inequalities, following half a century of declining industry, systematic disinvestment in the neighbourhoods and public services, tax breaks for the wealthy, and undemocratic austerity measures following municipal bankruptcy, the components of an unsympathetic Racial Capitalism ring true. Here, not only are citizens being treated as an indebted developing country within the terms of debt imperialism, but we are also witnessing the rise and fall, and, with the redevelopment of the Downtown, the rise again of Racial Capitalism in the City. This echoes the earlier manifestation of Racial Capitalism seen in Detroit in the last century when African American workers migrating from the South during the Jim Crow era were exploited to enable the Big Three auto companies and the City itself to rake in profits and expand their power, often at the expense of the people of Detroit.

A contemporary wave of capitalists in Detroit has been seizing the opportunities to benefit from the low cost of real estate and City-sponsored tax breaks and incentives for developers and investors. This so-called 'renaissance' of certain parts of Detroit once again perpetuates the inherently unequal system borne out of Racial Capitalism (Andrews, 2021b) (Robinson, 2021), debt imperialism (Hudson, 2002) and the callousness of the American Empire towards poor and vulnerable people (West, 2017). Top-down, likely well-intentioned policies, such as the Mayor's Strategic Neighbourhoods Fund, ultimately play monarch by choosing which Detroit neighbourhoods are worthy of investment – and in some cases, survival – and which are not. I argue that these act as a display of power and apparent indifference that follows the long tradition of the empires. Similar displays can be traced back through the actions of the early settlers in the Straits (as Detroit was previously known) in the early 18th century towards the Indigenous Americans already inhabiting the area, as well as through to the land grabs of the 1960s and 1970s in predominantly Black neighbourhoods to make way for the freeway expansion to the mainly White suburbs. This can be seen in the

present-day redevelopment of the Downtown area, which is becoming increasingly unaffordable to the majority of residents living in its surrounding neighbourhoods, many of whom find themselves in negative equity, with some caught in a vicious cycle in which they are unable to leave. It is a city, where, according to P.E. Moskowitz, 'Detroit's rebirth has been built on the backs of people who were too poor to leave' (2018, p. 95).

Impact on cities and communities. Political scientist Stephen Marr (2016) argued that 'peripheral' cities, such as Detroit, were central to understanding the changing face of urbanism around the world (Marr, p. 5). Shining a spotlight on an emerging movement of social change in Detroit provides an alternative narrative about the health and success of Western cities after the Financial Crisis.

The literature review demonstrated that the success of cities was still predominantly assessed on commercial, rather than wellbeing, measures. These success measures tended to be based on growth, focusing on finance, innovation and, most commonly, population. By contrast, a 'shrinking city' (Virginia Tech) is one that 'has experienced prolonged, severe population and job loss, resulting in a place where the urban footprint far exceeds the needs of its current and future populations', which by inference, suggests a failing city. This description is often associated with Detroit and other rust belt cities with diminishing industries and reducing populations.

As early as the 1920s, sociologists of the Chicago School focused on a 'theory of urban development, describing neighbourhood change as a life cycle ending with inevitable decline' (Lang, 2000). This view of the neighbourhood life cycle continues to influence urban studies policy and practice. The idea of 'shrinking cities' emerged in the 1970s and 1980s as sociologists and urban planners investigated urban sprawl and post-war migration to the suburbs. The concept came to prominence with the touring *Shrinking Cities Exhibit* in 2007 and 2008, showcasing four case studies, including Detroit.

One of the pioneering academics on land use, Frank Popper (1987) offered an insightful perspective on how America's laissez-faire approach to shrinking cities compared with the rest of the world:

I think the American way is to do nothing until it's too late, then throw everything at it and improvise and hope everything works. And somehow, insofar as the country's still here, it has worked. But the European or the Japanese way would involve much more thought, much more foresight, much more central planning, and much less improvising. They would implement a more, shall we say, sustained effort. The American way is different. Europeans have wondered for years and years why cities like Detroit or Cleveland are left to rot on the vine. There's a lot of this French hauteur when they ask, "How'd you let this happen?" (Young, 2010).

Spurred on by Popper (1987), Sugrue (2014) and others, a new generation of researchers and practitioners have been developing fresh responses to these emerging challenges, reimagining the possibilities this can bring to the future of cities like Detroit. Doctoral students Aksel Olsen (2013) and Tanvi Maheshwari (2013) from the University of California Berkeley, have challenged conventional views of the natural life cycle and inevitable decline of cities, encouraging planners, academics and politicians to take a more strategic and proactive approach to reimagining our changing urban world.

Olsen (2013) argued that by grouping together cities experiencing shrinkage, we fail to analyse the unique factors of each city and understand the opportunities available to each in considering their own destiny. Olsen questioned the inevitability of the life cycle theory, arguing that a city with a rapidly growing economy may choose to shrink deliberately to create a higher quality of life for a smaller population. Others may simply be passing through a transitional phase. Olsen highlighted the example of Pittsburgh, which, while experiencing a population in decline, was transforming itself into an entertainment economy,

outperforming other cities in many respects, including with an unemployment rate well below the national average (Olsen, 2013).

Maheshwari (2013) supported Olsen's argument that the conventional definition of shrinking cities did not provide the nuance to identify practical solutions. She argued for contextual analysis and a more qualitative methodology. Proposing an 'uncoupling of prosperity from ever increasing growth', Maheshwari (2013) urged cities to plan for 'smart decline'. Both Olsen (2013) and Maheshwari (2013) have made strong cases for why shrinkage was not always negative, and how, in some instances, it can be a powerful tool for a city to take control of its future. Maheshwari (2013) ended her critique with a timeless quote from Aristotle: 'a great city should not be confounded with a populous one'. I argue that through case studies of communities in Detroit, we are witnessing residents taking such control of their own neighbourhoods challenging the inevitability of the life cycle theory.

Although still relatively sparse, a handful of theorists have offered person-centred alternatives to measuring success in our cities and communities, ranging from those exploring assessments of individual wellbeing (Sen, 1995) (Nussbaum, 1990) to rethinking applicable indices of progress from the perspective of race (West, 2017). Economist Amartya Sen's 'capability approach' (Sen, 1995) focused on the value of human acts in themselves, such as participation in community life, while Martha Nussbaum advocated for an 'evaluation by which functioning can be assessed for their contribution to the good human life' (Nussbaum, 1990). Philosopher and political activist Cornel West (2017) argued that American society has lost sight of the real index of progress, instead driven by neoliberalism 'to focus more on access to middle-class status and making that more diverse' as opposed to attacking poverty and racism. West argued that the real index of progress is ensuring that even those living in poverty have access to quality education – not simply ensuring more kids attend Harvard, Yale, and Princeton (Reese, 2017).

Where are we going? Graeber (2014) argued that capitalism was never intended to last: 'It's impossible to maintain an engine of perpetual growth forever on a finite planet'

(Graeber, p. 382). He claimed that the world had begun to see the grip of debt imperialism weaken, including a systematic boycott of the IMF by several South Asian countries in 2000 and Argentina making the unprecedented move of defaulting on their loan in 2002. Graeber (2014) also pointed to the emerging anti-globalisation movement, highlighting the perceived inequality and injustice of the IMF's policies in forcing poorer countries to pay the world's debt.

Stephen Marr (2016) argued that 'marginal' cities such as Detroit reveal 'the inequality, polarisation and limitations of neoliberal capitalism otherwise obscured by the glare of world cities' lights' (Marr, p. 17). He challenged the binary concept of 'world cities' as those with the strategic resources to compete in a global market against those that are excluded from it. Rather than measuring them by their failure, Marr (2016) argued for a critical assessment of how marginal cities actually work, reminiscent of the calls for a less didactic and more nuanced approach to understanding cities and communities (Maheshwari, 2013) (Olsen, 2013) (Sen, 1995) (West, 2017). In the case of Detroit, the challenge was to move beyond 'a tired fascination with stories of ruin porn... in order to examine what actually happens in Detroit's borders' (Marr, p. 8). This study responds to Marr's call to action.

The problems of a binary approach were echoed in the literature review from a critical race perspective. In their writing, Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic (2017) challenged the concept of the 'Black-White binary', the idea that the dominant framework used to consider problems of race reflected an unstated binary paradigm (Delgado & Stefancic, p. 77). As in the case of the binary cities concept, as challenged by Marr (2016), the idea of the Black-White binary in Critical Race Theory can lead to a dangerously oversimplified analysis, presenting progress as a linear progression, as well as hiding the experience of those communities that do not neatly fit into this artificial dichotomy (Delgado & Stefancic, p. 80). The Black-White binary, Delgado and Stefancic argued, has often masked the reality of the history of minorities in the United States in which while one group may be gaining ground, another is often losing it (Delgado & Stefancic, p. 80). For example,

at the same time as the abolishment of slavery, following the US Civil War of 1861-65, Congress passed the Indian Appropriation Act, and not long after, the Dawes Act, resulting in a loss of almost two-thirds of Indigenous American land and 'relinquishing independence to Indian nations' (Delgado & Stefancic, p. 80).

This questions the interpretation of power dynamics as expressed through a Black-White binary, based on an assumed inherent zero-sum approach. According to political scientist James H. Read (2012), a zero-sum approach to power can be explained as 'one agent's gain entailing by definition an equivalent loss for another or others'. Read (2012) argued that, while not yet fully developed, some political scientists, such as Franco Crespì and Anthony Giddens, have begun to challenge the zero-sum approach to power, introducing concepts of inner power and reconciling human agency within social structures, respectively (Read, p. 17). Read argued for more well-articulated view of a 'variable-sum' approach in which both mutual gains and mutual losses of power are possible (Read, p. 5). In relation to Detroit, this could be extended to challenge conventionally held binary narratives of a zero-sum approach to power, such as through differing perceptions of the impact of 'White flight' on the City, challenging the often-held White suburban perception of a resultant socio-economic vacuum to instead also appreciate the space created for an emergence of Black power and community leadership as expressed during the interviews (Givens, 2018).

Reflecting on dynamics of race and power within the US socio-political system provided another lens from which to unmask the reality for many minority communities in the US and understand how it pertains to the current context in Detroit. For example, Kehinde Andrews (2021b) argued that while the Thirteenth Amendment of the US Constitution abolished slavery in 1843, after emancipation, African Americans were far more likely to be arrested and imprisoned, with 'slavery therefore maintained within the prison system' (Andrews, 2021b, p. xv). Even today, among African American boys born in 2001, one in every three is expected to spend time in prison. This expanding system of incarceration was

described by activist Angela Davis as the 'prison industrial complex' in another example of private companies increasingly profiting from a system of Racial Capitalism with almost two million people incarcerated in the US, of which 70% are people of colour (Davis, 1998). Within a Detroit context, Miles (2021) described the impact of this disproportionate incarceration rate among African Americans who accounted for 49% of the state's prison population, but only 14% of the state population.

Echoing Graeber's (2014) crisis of inclusion argument, Marr (2016) argued that marginal cities 'unmask an often neglected part of global capitalism's present' and their presence 'disputes narratives of inexorable progress and of urban lifestyles that are available to fewer and fewer people' (Marr, p. 9), felt most acutely in the US by communities of colour (Andrews, 2021b) (Miles, 2021). Cities across the US have been subjected to the economic effects of globalisation, the collapse of industry, rising crime rates and shrinking populations, with Detroit as a microcosm, described as 'the most representatively American place on the planet' (Herron, 2007). Likening the abandonment in Detroit to a zombie film, Marr (2016) suggested that, while this was once something to fear, this imagery is now compelling and powerful, as it represents 'an unease with contemporary urbanisation's status quo' (Marr, p. 17).

Pabst (2010) speculated that we are now living in world where it is nearly impossible to imagine an alternative to the capitalist-democratic system. The current system co-opts both liberal ideals of perpetual progress and Marxist ideas of history as successive cycles of accumulation. Following the Financial Crisis, Pabst (2010) argued that the most pressing problem should not be how to restore the broken market, but 'to enable people to nurture and grow the human, social bonds of reciprocity and mutuality' (Pabst, p. 67), including a more critical understanding of embedded structures of race and power (Andrews, 2021b) (Read, 2012). For Pabst (2010), recent events marked the beginning of a shift towards an economy of mutual exchange, collaboration and common purpose. Graeber argued that we had previously 'hit the wall of our collective imagination' (Graeber, 2014, p. 382), but

speculated whether the Financial Crisis may have provided the ideal opportunity for a collective reimagining of an alternative future beyond the capitalist model. While Cornel West expressed that this moment, which he described as ‘one of the darkest moments in American history’, may provide the ideal opportunity to challenge the dominant order through ‘courageous truth-telling and exemplary action by individuals and communities (West, 2017, p. xv).

In the emerging movement in Detroit, I argue that through the stories and actions of individuals and communities, we are seeing a reimagining of alternative futures beyond the strained capitalist model, one based on exemplary action and courageous truth-telling. Through the research, Detroit residents explored a range of questions through the interviews and walking tours, providing in-depth responses from a range of diverse perspectives. In the pockets of hope and community action in Detroit, are we seeing a renegotiation of the social contract away from residents passively receiving services in return for taxes? Are we witnessing a shift towards a proactive citizen-led system of reciprocity and mutual aid? Have the 2008 Financial Crisis and Detroit’s bankruptcy in 2013 provided the ideal opportunity to challenge the role of neoliberal capitalism within a post-industrial city? Is this acting as a catalyst for citizens of Detroit to rethink the type of society they want to live in, and in turn, the social agreements that make this possible? These questions are explored through the fieldwork in conversation with 36 active residents, through responses shaped by a diverse set of perspectives and experiences from across the City at this critical juncture in its history.

The one thing we can be confident of is that history is not over, and that wherever the most exciting new ideas of the next century come from, it will almost certainly be from somewhere we don’t expect (Graeber, 2014, p. 384).

A central question of this research is... ***Could this place be Detroit?***

Voice and Influence

According to many academics across a range of disciplines, the first two decades of the 21st century have witnessed a seismic shift in Western democratic and social structures (Judis, 2016) (Putnam, 2015) (Sugrue, 2014). This shift has been both a contributor to, and a result of, a number of significant events, including the expansion of globalisation, the impact of the Financial Crisis, the global Coronavirus pandemic and the recent rise of populist politics. It is against this backdrop of scepticism that a new, constructive social movement in Detroit may be gaining momentum.

The American Dream of equality of opportunity and of upward social mobility for all, has very deep roots in the nation's psyche (Putnam, 2015). This inherent belief has led many Americans to believe that 'if we can't make it on our own, it's our own fault' (Putnam, 2015, p. 33). For the half century after WWII, Putnam (2015) argued, based on longitudinal national surveys, that around three-quarters of Americans believed that hard work would obtain upward mobility for their children. He argued, however, that events of the 21st century have undermined this, with surveys revealing a 'creeping pessimism' among Americans (Putnam, 2015, p. 34), demonstrated by a 23% drop between 2001 and 2012 in those who believe the American Dream still persists (Putnam, 2015, p. 289). Putnam (2015) claimed that in the last fifty years, the power of race, class and gender has substantially reconfigured how life chances are shaped in America (Putnam, 2015, p. 2). He argued that today, social class presented the most significant barrier to opportunity and denied growing numbers of children the benefits promised by the American Dream, arguing that this inequality increasingly now operates through education.

It has been anticipated by the Brookings Institute and the World Bank (The World Bank, 2021) that, as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic, the world will witness an even greater discrepancy in educational outcomes, particularly among low- and middle-income countries, low-income households and marginalised communities. A report, entitled, *The State of the Global Education Crisis: A Path to Recovery* (Unesco, Unicef and World Bank,

2021), projected that we would see a generational loss of \$17 trillion in lifetime earnings, or about 14 percent of today's global GDP for children and young people under 25 in 2020 and 2021 (The World Bank, 2021). The World Bank (2021) highlighted that, despite this, less than 3% of governments' stimulus packages had been allocated to education, calling for governments to allocate 'much more funding' for immediate learning recovery. During this same period, there had been ten-fold growth to \$8.8 trillion in the assets held by the US Federal Reserve as a result of a policy of quantitative easing to stimulate economic growth (Federal Reserve, 2022), a clear message of the priorities and values of our near-ubiquitous neoliberal, capitalist system.

This pattern of successive governments prioritising economics over education was raised repeatedly within a Detroit context both through the literature review and residents interviews. 'Detroit's biggest challenge is public education', Sugrue suggested (2014, p. Preface xxvi). This, he believed, was the consequence of decades of segregation and a lack of investment in public education, particularly in poorer areas of the City, creating multiple barriers for many Detroiters around economic security. In 2009, the year after the Financial Crisis, only 38% of young people in Detroit had graduated on time and, in the decade to 2013, Detroit closed 150 public schools, most of them in 2009 (Sugrue, pp. Preface xvii, xxvi).

Robert Sampson's (2012) studies indicated that neighbourhoods in America were deeply unequal, and that this inequality has had powerful effects on residents. Within the context of Detroit, Thomas Sugrue (2014) argued that it was 'hard to be optimistic about the revitalization of Detroit' neighbourhoods when most of the investment was focused on attracting businesses and building new sports stadiums Downtown (Sugrue, p. Preface xxv). Sugrue did however recognise the growing role of non-profits pushing for change in neighbourhoods, discussed in more detail in the section exploring public policy and philanthropy, 'A Brief History of Detroit'.

Sociologists Gregory Squires and Charis Kubrin (2005) argued that the interdependence of place, race and privilege had given rise to an 'inequitable opportunity structure confronting many residents of urban America today' (Kubrin & Squires, p. 48), further undermining the American Dream. They argued that urban development contributed significantly to this structural inequality through sprawl, a dominant feature of post-WWII metropolitan development. Squires and Kubrin (2005) argued that sprawl had enabled wealthier residents to move to the suburbs, leaving city centres with declining populations and increased concentrations of poverty, structured along racial lines, as seen with the freeway expansion in Detroit in the 1960s and 1970s. This racial divergence was particularly pernicious in Midwestern industrial communities like Detroit, where levels of segregation were already historically significant. According to the US Census (Quick facts, 2019a), today, the City of Detroit has an 83% Black population, while the state of Michigan's population is 79.6% White.

More than half a century since the freeways' construction, the recent 'Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act' has been brought in, under President Joe Biden in 2022, with \$1 billion made available under the 'Reconnecting Communities' programme to 'remedy the racial inequities in U.S. highway design' (Epstein & Wingrove, 2021). Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer identified Detroit's I-375 freeway and the I-75/I-375 interchange as two of the first freeway demolition projects as a priority for the City, stating 'We also have to take a closer look at the unjust legacy of so many of our freeways... that were built decades ago by demolishing Black neighborhoods, splitting up key economic areas, and decreasing connectivity between families, communities, and small businesses' (DeVito, 2021).

Citing national statistics, Squires and Kubrin (2005) argued that this racial discrepancy spanned a range of economic and geographical trends. For over 25 years, Black and Latinx median family income had been approximately 60% that of White families (United States Census Bureau, 1999), even when educational attainment was equivalent (Kubrin & Squires, pp. 50-51). This inequality had persisted both between neighbourhoods

and within them. In 2000, poor Black and Latinx people were far more likely than poor Whites to live in poor neighbourhoods (Jargowski, p. 10), and, in 1990, a typical Black household income was \$27,808, compared with \$45,486 for White households in the *same* neighbourhood (Kubrin & Squires, p. 50). They also found that 70% of White families owned their homes, compared with 50% of Black families nationally (Kubrin & Squires, 2005).

Squires and Kubrin (2005) found that access to financial services also varied greatly by neighbourhood. A two-tiered marketplace had emerged, with commercial banks concentrated in suburban areas, and cheque-cashers and payday lenders, in city-centre neighbourhoods. They argued that this increased the cost of housing and finance in poorer neighbourhoods (Kubrin & Squires, p. 55), adversely affecting non-White households. The United Nations (2016) concluded that in the United States, 'people of African descent were more likely than other people with similar borrower characteristics to be victims of predatory lending' (United Nations, 2016, p. 14), a factor identified in analysis of subprime mortgage lending as one of the contributors to the Financial Crisis.

Through a lens of Racial Capitalism, Cedric Robinson (2021) argued that capitalism has been shaped and influenced by social, cultural, political and historical forces, including the dynamics of race, gender and class struggles for freedom in the modern era. Robinson conceived a race-based structure for capitalism, where 'race was the ordering principle', 'its economy of justice, commerce and power' (Robinson, p. ii).

Anthropologist David Graeber (2014) argued that one of the key principles of the structure of capitalism was that it could not extend the same benefits to all, leading to a crisis of inclusion for those groups, communities or populations who were marginalised particularly from the 1970s onwards (Graeber, p. 375). Robinson also believed that capitalism created an 'increasingly unequal character of development' (Robinson, p. 26), but he argued that this was not unique to this century, rather it could be traced back in European history to the end of feudalism and the expansion of capitalism and its world system. Kehinde Andrews (2021a) shared this view of capitalism as an advanced form of the Western imperialist

project, in which the colonies were being ‘purposefully underdeveloped’ in order to maintain control by European powers (Andrews, 2021a, p. 186). While Graeber (2014) spoke more broadly of excluded groups as neglected members of the global economy, Robinson identified ‘racialism’ as one of the predominant forces in European civilization through capitalism used to distinguish, and in turn structure, a system that awarded the privileged classes with the further accumulation of power and wealth through domination and exploitation of a socially constructed other, dictated along racial lines (Robinson, pp. 21, 26).

Andrews (2021a) focused on Malcolm X’s concept of ‘Blackness’, which he described as not simply being about colour, but ‘a commitment to a liberatory politics that our colour ties us into’ (Andrews, p. 154). He (Andrews, 2021a) argued that the concept of Blackness rejected the politics of civil rights that attempted to gain access to a system that oppresses Black people, looking instead to eradicate the existing system and in its place to build a new one based on a ‘completely different’ set of principles (Andrews, p. 154). In community development terms, this could be argued as oppositional rather than integrationist.

Andrews (2021a) pointed to the many successes of Black Lives Matter in its spread across the globe, as it connected local, national and international movements, and through social media, shared the perspectives of the activists, rather than the mainstream media’s portrayal. Andrews (2021a) argued that the challenge for the Black Lives Matter movement – or, as he qualified, any movement born in the West – was to build meaningful connections and tackle head-on these challenges and contradictions that exist beyond the borders of the nation state, again challenging the oversimplification of a binary analysis. In the context of this research, Malcolm X’s concept of Blackness and Kehinde Andrews’ (2021a) discussion of the Black Lives Matter movement present an alternative perspective on reimagining society and wider civilization on a global scale, as part of a collective mobilisation of local and national networks, aimed at creating a unified force to eradicate the existing system and build an entirely new one, based on unity, freedom and self-determination (Andrews, pp. 9, 154). This echoes the sentiment from some resident-participants that their local actions in

Detroit are contributing to a larger global movement aspiring to create a fairer, more socially just society.

Key thinkers from the Black Radical and Radical Feminist movements, and later from Critical Race Theory (CRT), have sought to challenge assumptions of universalism and objective truth to expose the largely invisible collection of patterns and habits that make up the patriarchy and other forms of domination (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 5), and instead explore the context and dynamics at play. Delgado and Stefancic (2017) argued that the structural racism inherent in the institutions of the United States has meant that 'by every social indicator, racism continues to blight the lives of people of color' (Delgado & Stefancic, p. 12). Delgado and Stefancic (2017) pointed to a recent United Nations report, based on a combined index of social wellbeing, showing that if African Americans in the US were categorised as a nation, they would make up the 27th ranked nation in the world and the Latinx community would rank 23rd (Delgado & Stefancic, p. 13). The United Nations concluded in late 2016 that 'a systemic ideology of racism ensuring the domination of one group over another continues to impact negatively on the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of African Americans today' (United Nations, 2016, p. 4). The report concluded that there remained a 'persistent gap' in almost all human development indicators between African Americans and the rest of the United States population, which 'reflects the level of structural and institutional discrimination' creating barriers for people of African descent to fully exercise their human rights (United Nations, 2016, p. 18). This is in stark contrast with rhetoric of the United States, cited by Putnam (2000), as a place where every citizen can aspire to achieve the American Dream.

Putnam (2015) argued that growing class segregation between neighbourhoods meant that rich and poor Americans live in increasingly separate worlds, resulting in less awareness of each other's experience and the growing opportunity gap. Political analyst John B. Judis (2016) argued that segregation has increased US political divisions and contributed to the rise of right-wing populist movements which tend to scapegoat other

ethnicities, nationalities and religions (Judis, 2016, p. 157). This view was seconded by African American Studies Professor Jennifer Hochschild (2016), who analysed the responses of social scientists after the 2016 Trump presidential election victory, and identified an emerging narrative with themes of dominance and rejection of the Other, nationalism, anger at elites and economic insecurity (Hochschild, 2016, p. 7). American and gender-studies academics Strolovitch, Wong and Proctor (2017) applied intersectional analysis to the 2016 US election results to better understand the structural factors that contributed to this picture. They concluded that the past three decades have reinforced a system of racialised and gendered power and oppression and that one's proximity to the benefits of the White heteropatriarchy was politically consequential (Strolovitch, Wong, & Proctor, p. 354 and 360). Putnam (2015) pointed to the uneven distribution of the means of influence, such as money, and argued that when class differences in political engagement become more acute, the system becomes less representative, which, in turn, reinforced the political alienation of the less powerful and less affluent. Putnam (2000) identified a decline of trust in American institutions since the 1960s which has gone hand in hand with a decline in civic engagement and political involvement, highlighting that by 1992, 75% of Americans reported that 'the breakdown of community' and 'selfishness' were serious or extremely serious problems in America (Putnam, 2000, p. 25).

Given the growing mistrust of the political and economic establishment, Judis (2016) suggested that it was unsurprising that populism has been on the rise in the US and Europe, particularly following the 2008 Financial Crisis. According to Judis, populism often acts as a warning sign of impending political crisis, an indicator that people see established political norms as being at odds with their own hopes, fears and concerns (Judis, p. 17). Judis (2016) claimed that when dramatic economic or societal change such as the Financial Crisis calls America's place in the world into question, voters give voice to these concerns. This, Judis (2016) argued explained Trump's 2016 victory. Cornel West (2017) offered a different perspective, based on a long history of American imperialism, predatory capitalism and

racism in America. He described Trump not as 'alien' to American history, but instead as 'American as apple pie', borne out of its current spiritual bankruptcy, driven by greed and narcissism, and by a political system beholden to big money, big military, big corporations and 'big scapegoating of vulnerable peoples of color' (West, p. xviii). West argued that rather than an anomaly, Trump's presidency was part of a continuing history of the American Empire in meltdown, including a reluctance to substantively confront race matters (West, 2017). West argued that, like all empires, America has been unaccountable to its victims in the US and across the globe, thereby leaving in its wake a massive spiritual blackout (West, pp. xv, xvii).

The Role of Capital. Social Capital Theory, which came to prominence in the 1960s, provides a useful framework for analyzing the situation in Detroit. It could help to understand how the City arrived at its present state, as well as suggest what may happen if it remains on its current trajectory. One of its originators, Pierre Bourdieu (1983) argued that it was 'impossible to account for the structure and functioning of the social world unless one reintroduces capital in all its forms and not solely in the one form recognised by economic theory' (Bourdieu, p. 183). Bourdieu identified the social as one of three fundamental 'guises' of capital, alongside economic and cultural. Through social capital, he suggested, a network of relationships is 'enacted and so maintained and reinforced, through exchanges' (Bourdieu, p. 190). The volume of an individual's social capital depended on the size of their network, with the network size providing a 'multiplier effect' on that capital.

There is a substantial body of literature dedicated to how these networks of social capital contribute to inequality. Nan Lin (2000) argued that because each society distributes opportunities unequally between social groups, these groups fail to 'uniformly acquire' or 'receive expected returns' from social capital (Lin, p. 786). In the US, these groupings tended to be based on race, gender or religion. Lin (2000) identified two phenomena contributing to this. Firstly, the tendency for individuals to predominantly interact with others with similar standings perpetuated the poverty of resources and social capital of those individuals with

inferior socio-economic standings (Lin, p. 787). Secondly, individuals in lower socio-economic groupings relied more heavily on local family and kin ties, which were generally homogeneous in their resources. As a result, Lin (2000) argued, such groups tended to have a more restricted variety of information and influence than those in resource-rich networks. However, when disadvantaged social groups managed to make ties beyond their neighbourhood or across ethnic boundaries, they generated better returns for their members (Lin, p. 793). This idea has been explored through interviews with Detroit activists to better understand the networks and resources they draw from, as well as whether there are any that they deem to be inaccessible or beneficial. While there was some evidence to suggest that inequality in social capital may exist across racial and ethnic groups, Lin believed that research in this area was still insufficient, arguing that no studies had directly examined the effects of social capital on status attainment for Blacks or other minority ethnic groups in the US (Lin, p. 790).

Conversely, social scientist and economist Richard Florida (2003) challenged the social-capital perspective of social networks as key to growing a city, rejecting it as a view from the past and arguing that people 'rarely wished for the kind of community connectedness that Putnam spoke about' (Florida, 2003, p. 6), with most people not wanting it to create an obstacle to their individual aspirations. Florida's (2003) Creative Capital Theory painted a different picture to Putnam (2000) or Lin (2000). Citing several studies of regional growth, Florida argued there was a clear connection between an area's human capital and its economic success. Florida claimed that economic growth would best occur in places that attract highly educated, creative people – his so-called 'Creative Class'. Appealing to the motivations of this class was, for him, the key to establishing regional economic growth (Florida, 2003). Investors have pointed to the gentrification of Corktown, Detroit's oldest neighbourhood, and the conversion of long-abandoned Downtown skyscrapers into lofts as evidence of Florida's theory in action. Sugrue (2014), however,

called this the 'neoliberalization of the city'; a faith that espouses that market-based solutions are more rational and efficient than democratic processes (Sugrue, p. Preface xxiv).

The literature review found critics of Florida's Creative Capital Theory in its practical application. Economist Edward Glaeser (2004) agreed that people are the driving force in economic development, but questioned Florida's assertion that regions should attract 'bohemian types who like funky, socially free areas with cool Downtowns and lots of density' (Glaeser, 2004). Writer Frank Bures (2012) believed Florida had his causation backwards, arguing that 'Florida was just describing the hipsterization of wealthy cities and concluding that this was causing those cities to be wealthy [. . .] That's a little like saying that the high number of hot dog vendors in New York City is what's causing the presence of so many investment bankers. So, if you want banking, just sell hot dogs' (Bures, 2012).

The factors of race, education and affluence were largely absent from Florida's (2003) theory. Thomas Sugrue (2014) raised concerns about the influence of Florida's ideas within a Detroit context, highlighting a factor that goes unremarked in Florida's theory: that 'most of the new residents are White' (Sugrue, p. Preface xxiii). What, then, within Florida's theory, should be the role of the existing 83% majority Black population (United States Census Bureau, 2019a) in determining the future of City? Florida's theory does not address this important question. Florida's philosophy also appears to sidestep consideration of different cities' distinct qualities, such as in Detroit where Black self-determination has been the 'bedrock of the institutions' giving it its 'distinct reputation' since the 1960s (Boyd, p. 8).

Florida's theory also focused on the high degree of formal education of the Creative Class (Florida, 2003, p. 8), a challenging position considering the educational barriers and associated inequality of opportunities in places like Detroit, as identified by Putnam (2015) and Sugrue (2014). Florida argued that 'creative centers are succeeding largely because creative people want to live there' with more than 35% of their workforce as members of the Creative Class (Florida, 2003, p. 9). This highlighted further gaps in Creative Capital Theory, including inherent assumptions about the level of agency an individual may have regarding

their residential location or occupation, without acknowledging the critical determining factors of affluence, education, race or class. Similarly, for those areas that Florida (2003) referred to as 'working class enclaves', of which Detroit could be included, he did not elaborate on the significant factors of income and affluence in a person's – or by extension – a region's ability to establish or reinvent themselves/itself. Squires and Kubrin (2005) argued that while it has long been held that individuals and households make voluntary choices in selecting communities and moving to areas, these 'choices are made in a context shaped by a range of policy decisions and private practices over which most individuals have little control' (Kubrin & Squires, p. 56). They suggested that these practices often have exclusionary implications, such as financial capacity and other structural challenges, which limit opportunity of choice for low-income and many ethnic minority households.

Florida's (2003) theory appeared to imply, therefore, that the solution to building and sustaining economic growth must come from highly educated and, by inference, affluent people from outside the area. This puts the theory at odds with what the fieldwork found to be unfolding in neighbourhoods in Detroit in which a growing community movement, led by existing local residents, is developing effective solutions for and by themselves, not reliant on affluent, highly educated people to rescue them and their failing economies.

More than a decade on, even 'urban optimist' Florida (2017) recognised the negative impacts of capitalist opportunism on places like Detroit, which he now describes as 'a large sea of disadvantage and despair surround[ing] a small island of urban revival in the city's center' (Florida, 2017, p. 141). 'Like capitalism itself', he argued that cities are now 'paradoxical and contradictory' due to a host of new urban challenges, acting as 'great engines of innovation', while creating 'zones of gaping inequality' (Florida, 2017, p. 4). The literature provides considerable evidence that a change in approach is needed if we are to break free from the cycle of perpetual growth giving rise to increasing inequalities. The next section explores options towards achieving this social change within our challenging contemporary context.

Vehicles of Social Change

The Global Financial Crisis, and the social movements that gained momentum in its wake, provide a unique opportunity to re-examine the concept of community in the current context, and its relationship to the future of community activism in the US and elsewhere. This literature review has provided a useful foundation from which to build, challenge and deconstruct established concepts in relation to a potential emerging social movement in Detroit.

Throughout the study, the term 'community' has been used openly to explore the type of groups involved in local activism in Detroit, as well as residents' own perceptions and definitions of group and place identity. Through the literature review, much has been written about the 'varying and contested meanings of the notion of community' (Mayo M. , 2000, p. 36). Gary Craig (2011) and Marjorie Mayo (2000) set out three different types in their writings; 'geographical or shared locality community' (Craig, p. 7), 'common identity or shared interest community' (Mayo M. , p. 2) and 'issue-based communities' (Craig, p. 9).

Mayo (2000) observed that traditional communities were often presented as 'tightly knit, characterised by shared values of solidarity and mutuality', based on narratives of a golden past (Mayo M. , p. 39). This was an important consideration for the Detroit-based study, where a romanticised idea of a pre-bankruptcy, auto-industry heyday may prejudice both researcher and participants. This highlighted the importance of critical, self-reflective analysis in the methodology selected for the study.

Mayo argued that the identity of localities was 'neither fixed nor politically neutral' (Mayo M. , 2000, p. 41), but rather constantly shifting, full of contradictions and complexities. Social scientist and geographer Doreen Massey (1994) argued that place does not have one essential identity, but rather its identity was 'formed out of social interrelations' including both local and wider interrelations and conflicts (Massey, 1994, p. 115)

Current practice in community development emerged from the 1960s, with the fundamental aim 'to ensure that greater political power lies with local communities' (Craig, pp. 280-281). Craig described contrasting viewpoints between those who believed community development challenged the origins of deprivation and those who viewed it as a 'delivery agent of government policy' (Craig, p. 5). This gave rise to an influential body of writing produced in the 1970s known as structural analysis of the decline of inner-city areas. This analysis highlighted the 'industrial disinvestment and the rundown of public services as the major reason for poverty and deprivation in these areas' (Craig, p. 6) and argued that without understanding the structural causes, community development at a neighbourhood level could never be effective. Mae Shaw and Ian Martin (2000) argued that the reductionist nature of structuralist critique held many community workers back from anticipating the changes to come.

In the past decade, leading academics, including Marjorie Mayo (2000), Adam Dinham (2005), Gary Craig (2011), Suzy Croft and Peter Beresford (2011), David Morris and Alison Gilchrist (2011), have critiqued the often-uneasy relationship between social policy and community-development practice. Craig (2011) argued that too often, national and international community-development programmes have failed to give communities the opportunity to develop; allowing 'top-down' policy prescriptions to take precedence over 'bottom-up' community analyses' (Craig, p. 11). Adam Dinham (2005) pointed to the UK's New Deal for Communities (NDC) programme as a prime example of this, and through this study, identified a crucial tension between the radical language of empowerment-participation and the consensual politics of delivery. Craig (2011) also perceived a significant risk of community development being used by policymakers as a seemingly easy strategy to manage the increasing shortfall in public service provision. He claimed that policymakers could potentially see this as an opportunity to invite communities 'to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps' by giving them responsibility for service delivery, but without the power to determine the landscape (Craig, p. 18).

Craig (2011) and Dinham's (2005) analyses provide an interesting framework for research in Detroit. In the void left after the bankruptcy filing, rather than awaiting an invitation from policymakers, many residents have taken the lead in designing bespoke solutions to local issues, resulting from global events. Articles, such as *The New York Times*' 'Detroit: The Most Exciting City in America?' (Larson, 2017), suggested that, due to lack of regulations, funding restrictions and local-government interference, resident groups in Detroit had found the autonomy to design local solutions. Through the fieldwork, activists' perceptions of their autonomy and ability to implement a local agenda have been examined and analysed. However, following Craig's argument (2011), there is a risk that policymakers in the City could come to see this action as a replacement for properly funding public services; view shared by some in the philanthropy sector in response to the new approach being implemented as part of the 'Grand Bargain' in post-bankruptcy Detroit (Chambers, 2014).

The concept of 'community capacity building' was also examined, defined as 'developing the capacity and skills of a community in such a way that it is better able to identify and help meet its needs and to participate more fully in society' (The Charity Commission, 2000, p. 2). Craig (2011) acknowledged an overlap between the concept of 'community capacity building' and 'community development', but argued that the former was not a neutral concept, as expressed through the actions of recent governments implementing social policy. He argued a 'deficit approach' was implicit in community capacity building, assuming a need for external intervention in the absence of communities having the tools to affect change themselves (Craig, 2011). The related concept of the 'deficient client' appeared in the writing of Mae Shaw and Ian Martin (2000), describing that community development initiatives 'would transform the deficient and passive client into the active citizen' (Martin & Shaw, p. 402). This again assumed a deficiency in the citizen, rather than acknowledging that there exists both an unequal power balance and a failure of institutions to engage with communities (Craig, p. 280).

Practitioners and academics have identified similar tensions in community participation, highlighting the often unequal power dynamic between communities and institutions. Suzy Croft and Peter Beresford (2011) argued that participation can redistribute power and create opportunities for influence, but can also allow those in power to give a false impression of handing it over. They claimed that ‘real’ participation is dependent on whether its ‘initiator’ was concerned with holding onto or sharing power (Beresford & Croft, 2011, p. 163). Robin Eversole (2012) too explored the role of power within participation. Eversole (2012) argued that participatory initiatives typically ‘seat people’s participation firmly within “projects” or “programmes” managed and funded by professionals in organizations [who are] cast as the initiators, the developers, the agents of change’ (Eversole, p. 30). They challenged practitioners to address unequal power dynamics and remake multi-directional participation. Eversole (2012) argued that, until recently, communities have not been viewed as having knowledge, only energy and opinions, however that ‘community-based knowledge’ was slowly becoming more valued in development practice. Eversole argued that community members were uniquely placed to understand the particular constraints and possibilities of their given landscape, and to propose solutions that are appropriate and sustainable (Eversole, p. 33) – solutions such as those in created in the Detroit neighbourhoods and illustrated through this research.

Two UK studies on participation have contributed to informing the selected methodology for the Detroit study: *RSA Connected Communities* (2011) and *Reflecting Realities* (2000). Building on these, the Detroit fieldwork contributes to a growing body of literature on residents’ experiences of community involvement and area-based regeneration. These points are addressed in the methodology chapter.

Through the *RSA Connected Communities* programme, David Morris and Alison Gilchrist (2011) examined the UK conservative government’s Big Society agenda as a tool for public service reform, with its aim of ‘introducing new powers to communities to create and deliver local solutions’ (Cabinet Office, 2010). They observed that:

Our communities are facing one of the greatest tests of their resilience in recent memory... a financial crisis of unprecedented proportion is threatening their stability and landing disproportionately on those least equipped to withstand its impact [...] But where does government's emphasis on the sector's potential leave community members who, while dependent on public services, feel ill-prepared to take them on themselves? (Gilchrist & Morris, pp. 5-6)

Gilchrist and Morris (2011) argued that while this bottom-up approach recognised a crucial role for residents, it showed how public-service reform risked leaving behind some of the most vulnerable in society. In Detroit, while many of the most vulnerable find themselves without basic services, a number of residents have stepped in to deliver support services in the absence of statutory provision. An insight into many of their motivations and experiences has been explored through interviews with Detroit-based community activists in the research. The risk, however, as described by Gilchrist and Morris (2011), remains that people most in need may be left without access to the basic services they require as they may lack the means to provide this within their own communities in a neoliberal American context in which there is little societal safety net.

The *Reflecting Realities* study explored participants' experiences of area-based regeneration. Like the Detroit research, the aim was 'to facilitate the emergence of communities' own stories' (Anastacio, 2000, p. 4), stories notably absent from their literature review of projects in developed countries, which instead focused on impact and spend. Like the structuralist critique of the 1970s, Anastacio et al. (2000) recognised that if small area-based programmes are to be effective, they cannot be segregated from national policy or an understanding of the impact of wider societal structures on communities. Given a key aim of the research is to better understand the impact of global crises and national and regional policy on communities, these studies add further weight to the rationale for studying community activism in Detroit within the current political and economic context.

Two other studies from South America, both working within a framework of Participatory Action Research and published in the *Community Development Journal*, contributed to the framework for the Detroit study. In his study of the Los Arenales informal settlement in Antofagasta, Chile, Francisco Vergara-Perucich (2021) examined how its residents organised themselves to fight for their right to the city, guided by a collective visualisation of an imagined future. While Tiffany Fairey's (2018) study of TAFOS used participatory photography to enable residents to tell their own stories of life in Peru during the internal conflicts.

Vergara-Perucich (2021) described how residents from Los Arenales led a community-organising initiative to claim their right to the city, while imagining how their settlement could become an exemplary neighbourhood, contributing to a long tradition of studies on informal settlements in Chile, in which 'residents formulate strategies to support their livelihoods' (p. 451). Community leaders invited scholars to assist in the process, particularly in the design of learning modules to increase residents' capabilities on cooperativism, human rights, power, leadership and the right to the city, drawing on Freire's (1996) concept of critical consciousness and sharing principles of collaboration Reform by Design practices used after Hurricane Sandy (Ovink, 2014).

Vergara-Perucich (2021) built on Henri Lefebvre's 1970 book, *The Urban Revolution*, with the aim of 'unleashing urban society from the profit-oriented rule of capitalism' (p. 453), through an intellectual exercise of using imagination to design a possible future, called 'concrete utopias', as they were 'grounded in reality'. Although published four decades earlier, this was reminiscent of the calls for radical change by Graeber (2004), and a rethink of our capitalistic urban practices, and right to the city by Harvey (2012) and Fursova (2016), the approach presented by Lefebvre in 1970 set out a revolutionary strategy with the aim of promoting changes that 'go beyond the limits imposed by the blind fields of capitalism' and toward 'a possible world yet to come' (Vergara-Perucich, 2021, p. 455).

This *Los Arenales* study shares several similarities with the Detroit study, primarily in its efforts to understand the power of residents to reimagine an alternative future for their neighbourhood beyond the current capitalist order. In practical terms, the residents of Los Arenales designed their own 'concrete utopia' in the form of a master plan to illustrate to themselves and the authorities how they wished to live in the future as part of an imagined exploration of what is possible (Vergara-Perucich, p. 465). Through a similar creative process identified through my Detroit research, the North Corktown Neighborhood Association designed a sustainable development plan in which the residents themselves set out their priorities and aspirations for a reimagined future for their neighbourhood (North Corktown Neighborhood Association).

The second study by Tiffany Fairey (2018) focused on a pioneering participatory photography project in Peru, 'Los Talleres de Fotografia Social' (TAFOS), examining its long-term impact as a tool for community development. This study explored how the TAFOS project provided 270 Peruvian community photographers with cameras during the country's internal conflict between 1986 and 1998, recognising the 'empowerment narrative' that participatory photography enabled (Fairey, p. 619). Reflecting on the value of the TAFOS project, Fairey highlighted:

One of the ways to create a new social order in a fragmented country is for the people to re-build their image, their face, their words... (Statement from TAFOS project) (Fairey, 2018, p. 621).

Fairey (2018) discussed how participants of the TAFOS project had described the experience of being encouraged to observe, explore and question, instigating 'a critical engagement with the world' (Fairey, p. 627), once again, sharing a relationship with Freire's (1996) concept of critical consciousness. One participant of the TAFOS project described how he found himself 'looking around more, noticing things he had previously just walked by'

(Fairey, p. 627). While *TAFOS* was a far more in-depth, long-term study than my own Detroit research, my study bears some resemblance in aspects of the methodology used, such as through the use of participatory photography techniques as part of the walking tours led by residents. Following the Detroit walking tours, three residents subsequently wrote to me to express how the experience encouraged them to look differently at their own neighbourhoods, with others speaking during the interviews about the desire to create a counter-narrative to the media-obsessed ghost town version of Detroit.

The concept of critical consciousness was developed Brazilian educationalist Paulo Freire in the 1970s as 'a process by which the individual, through dialogue, can develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world' (Freire, 1996). Margaret Ledwith (2016) argued that no theorist has had as much influence on the field of community development through collective learning 'leading to a greater sense of self and the determination to change things, not just for our own personal benefit, but for the good of everyone' (Ledwith, p. 9).

Developed around the same time, American community activist Saul Alinsky promoted a version of community organising that, according to Marjorie Mayo (2005), also continued to have a significant impact today. Alinsky (1971) was 'concerned with how to create mass organizations to seize power and give it away to the people' (Alinsky, p. 3). To create revolution, an effective organiser must work within the system, first recognising the world as it is (Alinsky, p. 12), then developing indigenous leadership to build coalitions of people's organisations in neighbourhoods (Mayo M. , 2005, p. 103). Viewed at the time as highly confrontational, fifty years on, Mayo (2005) claimed that there has been growing interest in the UK and US for Alinsky's style of community organising, due to the failure of other responses to deal with a growth in inequalities (Mayo M. , 2005, p. 105).

Like earlier critiques of the use of community development within a policy context, Adam Dinham (2007) argued that Freireian 'conscientization' too can be 'fatally compromised' when misused within a political landscape. Examples included political

insistence on pre-determined objectives, despite a claim of local people being 'in the driving seat' (SEU, 2001). Marjorie Mayo (2005) also pointed to the challenges of practically applying Freire's approach, particularly to the power imbalances between educator/intellectual and learner/local person, an issue that Freire himself reflected on later in life. Mayo (2005) concluded that social-movement activists should become their own experts, sharing their learning and experiences with other activists, building networks of solidarity and working towards an alternative future together. Through interviews with advocates, activists and involved residents in Detroit, this study has explored whether their activity reflects Alinsky's more radical version of community organising, the Freireian educator-led concept of conscientization – or something altogether different.

According to prominent theorist Manuel Castells, social movements 'challenge the values and institutions of society outside of established institutional channels', making them effective 'levers of social change' (Castells & Mukul, p. 97). Castells (2014) described how people assert their autonomy through social movements, describing 'autonomy' as the 'capacity of people, either individually or collectively, to organize their lives in terms of their projects, desires, and needs without having to submit to whatever rules are established by institutions' (Castells & Mukul, p. 93). Castells (2014) argued that social movements begin when there is a dramatic moment, when trust is lost, and people no longer believe in the established institutions.

New Social Movement (NSM) theorist Ron Eyerman (1984) described new social movements as 'social processes in which new identities are formed and alternative ways of life "tested"' (Eyerman, p. 78). Sociologists and community-development practitioners have written extensively on new social movements and the impact they have had on contemporary life. Robert Putnam (2000) claimed that through the social activism of the 1960s, 'it is virtually impossible to overstate the impact of these social movements on the lives of most American communities and most American citizens' (Putnam, p. 152). These perspectives are critical to understanding how new social movements in the 21st century

have come about and how they may differ from what has come before. Literature on new social movements provided a useful framework for analysing an emerging social movement in Detroit, spurred on by its 'DIY spirit' (Dakoske, 2020), both in how it may be similar to what has come before and how it may be unique.

Putnam (2000) described how social movements create social capital, pointing to the act of collective protest as creating enduring bonds of solidarity. However, he expressed concern at a perceived reduction in social capital and civic engagement, stating that 'precisely because social capital is essential for social movements, its erosion could shroud their prospects for the future' (Putnam, p. 153). By contrast, Marjorie Mayo (2005) claimed that the 21st century had witnessed widespread public recognition of the significance of social movements, stating 'the world will never be the same again' as a result of mobilisations to transform global agendas (Mayo M. , 2005, p. 1). She cited the emergence of organised resistance to capitalist globalisation in the US, Venezuela, South Korea and India, with the World Development Movement confirming protests in twenty-three countries involving millions of people. Mayo (2005) described anti-globalisation as a populist movement, providing a critical analysis of capitalist globalisation, while directly linking the local with the global. Detroit residents' perceptions of local responses to global factors has been explored in the study, as well as how their actions and testing of new ways of life are acting as a counter-narrative to the dominant world order as part of a growing social movement in the City.

Mayo (2005) described two approaches to the study of social movements. Rational-actor theory, developed in North America, explained people's participation in movements in terms of the pursuit of their own self-interest, aligned to neoliberal assumptions. A theory criticised by Mayo (2005) for failing to take account of the complexity of human motivations in its preoccupation with the 'how' rather than the 'why'. New Social Movement (NSM) theory, rather, was developed to understand how socio-economic and political forces motivated the emergence of the movements of the 1960s and 1970s (Mayo M. , 2005, p.

61). Developed in Europe, it focuses on new social movements as precursors to social transformation, often posed in libertarian terms (Mayo M. , 2005, p. 7 & 53). NSM theorists suggested that new movements were more concerned with issues of identity, ideology, culture and social integration than with traditional class issues of production and distribution of 'old' social movements (Mayo M. , 2005, p. 62). Like other related binary concepts in this study, Mayo argued that this opposing view of 'old' versus 'new' social movements is now generally recognised as problematic within a contemporary global context, where labour, class and shared approaches permeate new movements, dominated by an 'increasingly polarised scenario of growing poverty and deprivation' (Mayo M. , 2000, p. 5).

Sociologist Lauren Langman (2013) has examined how the new movements of the early 21st century have built on the NSM theory of social transformation, against a backdrop of the effects of neoliberal globalisation (Langman, p. 510). The Global Financial Crisis acted as a 'moral shock', creating a catalyst for the creation of social movements (Langman, p. 514), which brought together adversely affected communities. He argued that economic conditions combined with collective emotions, compelled people to create networks where 'alternative understandings and visions can be negotiated and collective struggles work towards change' (Langman, p. 512). As described by some research participants, this growing social movement in Detroit, aimed at reimagining a fairer and more inclusive future, appears to be an example of what Langman described (2013),

Langman (2013) was critical of NSM theory as not sufficiently considering the role of utopian thought in these movements, which were centred on social justice and a new social contract. The Occupy and Arab Spring movements asked the world to rethink the importance of utopian visions, seeking 'to change the very nature of the society in the long term by challenging meanings and values and changing identity in the future' (Langman, p. 516). Contemporary new social movements that aim to unify their utopian visions across geographical boundaries have expanded their reach through advances in mobile communication networks (Castells & Mukul, 2014). Manuel Castells (2014) described the

distinct role of new technologies in ‘organizing and amplifying these movements’ (Castells & Mukul, p. 96), presenting interesting new dimensions in communication, allowing for greater and more inclusive engagement in contemporary social movements, explored further through interviews with Detroit activists and engaged residents.

Some urban practitioners and planners are engaging in a fresh approach to delivering local solutions, contributing to what UN Habitat’s Executive Director, Joan Clos called ‘a new urban agenda’ (Clos, 2014). Triggered by a catalogue of environmental, financial and social events in the 21st century, many researchers and practitioners are challenging the establishment on how our cities are governed, financial institutions regulated, and environmental defences allocated. Alongside the Financial Crisis, the past decade had witnessed several significant natural disasters – including Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, Hurricane Sandy in North America and the Caribbean, and the combined forces of hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria in the same region – leading to thousands of fatalities, billions of dollars of damage, plus livelihoods and national economies devastated beyond repair.

Through the literature review, I have identified two trends in emerging ways in which practitioners, community leaders and other stakeholders are responding to contemporary, structural challenges within our urban centres: collaboration and a new adaptability.

Collaboration. Through the literature review and interviews, I have observed the growing emergence of new initiatives that promote cooperative involvement with a wide cross-section of contributors, including residents, designers, policymakers, academics and practitioners, creating bespoke, sustainable solutions drawing on local and professional expertise. An example of this is the ‘Reform by Design’ initiative implemented in New York in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy. Co-founder Henk Ovink described the approach as ‘a large and inspired coalition of stakeholders joining forces with the ambition to set a new standard for resilient development’ (Ovink, 2014).

Similarly, Squires and Kubrin (2005) described a similar approach where traditionally conflicting parties have formed coalitions to tackle structural issues, such as poverty and segregation, through advocating for policy change. They cited an example in Wisconsin where local developers, lenders, anti-poverty groups, affordable-housing advocates and civil-rights organisations had come together to secure a state land-use planning law to provide financial incentives to increase the supply of affordable housing (Kubrin & Squires, p. 62).

Adaptability. Rather than aiming to rebuild cities in their former glory, pioneering leaders and stakeholders are designing new versions of cities that are responsive to the fast pace of change of our global society and adaptable to the emerging economic and environmental challenges to be faced in the long-term. An example of this has been demonstrated in Bogota, Columbia's capital and the fastest growing major city in Latin America. Here, Ricardo Montezuma (2005) described how two recent mayors, Mockus (1995-1997) and Penalosa (1998-2000) have transformed Bogota through promoting a culture of citizenship and significant investment in large-scale infrastructure projects. Both mayors focused on transforming the mindset and behaviour of Bogota's citizens to engage differently with their changing urban environment, inviting them to 'imagine a different city [...] a city that seems utopian' (Montezuma, 2005), recalling Vergara-Perucich's (2021) concrete utopia study in Chile. Mockus' 'Formar Ciudad' Plan (translated as 'Educate the City') addressed the culture of citizenship, social progress and institutional legitimacy, while Penalosa's 'Por la Bogota que Queremos' plan (translated as 'For the Bogota We Want') challenged the traditional city model, encouraging residents to see the city on a human scale, once again, appearing to adopt Freire's (1996) idea of conscientization in a contemporary context. These emerging approaches provide interesting lessons for cities like Detroit that also find themselves at a critical juncture in considering the type of societies we want to see in the aftermath of the global crises of the first quarter of the 21st century.

Utopian Visions

In the literature review, I discovered contemporary writings in anthropology on the concept of 'utopia' (Graeber, 2004) (Maskens & Blanes, 2016) (Sargsyan & Kurtovic, 2019) and its relationship to the method of ethnography in developing mutuality and illustrating other possible worlds. This presented useful insights and a way of framing the Detroit research, while also building on other references to utopia through the literature review, including its role in new social movements (Langman, 2013) and in case studies of visualising possible alternative urban futures (Vergara-Perucich, 2021).

In 1516, author Thomas More created the concept of 'utopia', writing a book of the same name. The book's account of the fictitious island of 'utopia' was the 'perfect society', an 'ideal' (eu-) and 'non-existent' (ou-) 'place' (-topos) (Maskens & Blanes, 2016, p. 128), thought by many academics to be based on More's fascination with the contemporary discovery of the Americas. Maskens and Blanes (2016) argued that while these discoveries sparked wild and creative imaginings about the marvels of the world (now viewed as problematic in their bias from a contemporary anthropological perspective), they also encouraged a desire to understand alterity, a form of empathy (Maskens & Blanes, p. 129). Maskens and Blanes argued that ethnography was based on empathy and connection, principles central to the disciplinary ethics of anthropology, while recognising the challenge that it would always be based on intersubjective relations (2016, p. 130). Maskens and Blanes (2016, p. 132) perceived there to be a striking connection between ethnography and utopia, as both shared a space of commonality and a process of separation that was in itself, generative. The writing of both ethnography and utopia were also imaginative and concrete, as well as shaped by historically informed experience (Maskens & Blanes, pp. 127, 132). This discovery in the literature review struck me as very pertinent to my methodological approach to creatively reimagine the future of urban neighbourhoods with residents through the process of ethnography.

Maskens and Blanes (2016) described how More explored connections between the old and new worlds, continuities between real and imagined places, while proposing other ways of being, living and existing (Maskens & Blanes, p. 133). Through this, they argued that the utopian genre was profoundly political in essence with More's goal to 'destabilize his audience, to push into action, to engage with multiple realities, to refuse political fatalism, to encourage the reader to take destiny into his or her hands' (Maskens & Blanes, p. 134). They argued the genre of utopia should be considered as a call to action, an exercise of 'decentering oneself in the world because other humans live differently and we can learn from them' (Maskens & Blanes, p. 134); a central component of the Detroit research.

The recurrent question in radical anthropology, 'what if another world is possible?', explored by a range of contemporary thinkers (Graeber, 2014) (Maskens & Blanes, 2016) (Pink & Salazar, 2017) (Sargsyan & Kurtovic, 2019) illustrates a refusal to accept apathy and a commitment to imagine possible alternative worlds. This question has been of particular relevance to scholars during significant global and international crises, when dominant structures are called into question. This included the Global Financial Crisis (Graeber, 2014), the effects of post-socialism in Eastern Europe (Sargsyan & Kurtovic, 2019), and most recently, the acute inequalities exposed by the Covid-19 pandemic (Blundell, 2020). Kurtovic and Sargsyan (2019) argued that against a backdrop of neoliberal governance and right-leaning movements in Europe and the US, the question has become even more urgent of 'whether new, less exclusionary and more liveable worlds can be produced out of the wreckages of our political present' (Sargsyan & Kurtovic, p. 2). They suggested that much of the activism expressed today was less tied to ideological programmes as it has been through past movements, and more focused on 'responding to crises and building new modes of sociality and new forms of togetherness' (Sargsyan & Kurtovic, 2019, p. 9). In these contexts, Maskens and Blanes (2016) argued that 'the utopian spirit could be considered as a medium for the emergence, appearance, spouting and eruption of potential changes and transformations' (Maskens & Blanes, p. 134).

During the research, the concept of 'utopia' was specifically spoken about by one self-identified 'community builder' and 'advocate' (Givens, 2018), describing her version of Detroit as a Black utopia in America.

If you've read anything from Zora Neale Hurston, and she speaks of 'Edenville'. Detroit was my 'Edenville'. If you saw *Black Panther* [the film], Detroit was my "Wakanda" growing up. We did not want. We did not want for self, for pride, for opportunity, for excellence, for effort; any of those things (Givens, 2018).

Givens described a Detroit into which she was born, growing up surrounded by 'so many examples of Black excellence in the City of Detroit', where Black Detroiters had 'been able to assume leadership and assume power in our own selves' (Givens, 2018). Givens described a version of a Black utopia in America. A Detroit where the Nation of Islam was born, where Martin Luther King practised the march on Washington, where Black Mayor, Coleman Young contracted with Black business owners; a place where 'Black power further flourished' in a city that 'really was focused on Black self-determination and Black pride' (Givens, 2018).

Givens described an alternative version of Detroit's history – and its possible future – from the mainstream or dominant narrative. A narrative that I have come to realise through the research that I have been all too quick to accept unquestioningly in my education and upbringing in the metropolitan Detroit area. Givens observed, 'I would say that Detroit – I mean, for better or for worse – I think that there are aspects of its history that people don't see' (Givens, 2018). In the conventional narrative, there are a number of key markers used to describe significant moments in Detroit's history, including the Detroit riots (or rebellion) of 1967 and the 'White flight' often described as having ensued thereafter. These two inter-related events relay a story in which the concept of race was at the core and where a city that had never managed to address structural racism exposed its deep-rooted cracks. This version of the narrative implies that the Detroit riots occurred when a predominantly Black

population of the City rose up to express anger at the dominant system, and as a result of significant unrest, large numbers of White residents moved to the suburbs, contributing to a largely abandoned city. However, Givens' interview conveyed a different narrative, one that presented benefits of this demographic redistribution of Detroit, while not wanting to 'wash over the suffering' of pockets of concentrated poverty, while giving rise to an alternative possible future (Givens, 2018). While she did not use the term herself, Givens' account appeared to provide an example of an apparently successful version of 'community nationalism' at play in parts of Detroit at that moment in time, a form of Black Nationalism, as described by Kehinde Andrews (2021a), that seeks Black self-determination within existing social and political arrangements (Andrews, pp. 7, 8). As quoted by Andrews (2021a), Malcolm X's 1963 speech, 'Ballot or the Bullet', is particularly apt here, in which he explained that the 'philosophy of Black Nationalism means we should operate and control the economy of our community' (2021a, p. 9).

Givens (2018) recounted:

You know Henry Ford's \$2 a day experiment worked. It brought people far and wide. Detroit housed the largest and most far-reaching Black middle class than any city in the nation. And even though Detroiters lived in segregated communities within Detroit, Black power began being built soon after. In the 1960s, before the rebellion, you had all this emerging Black power that was taking place in Detroit. And some of the police violence was a reaction to that. It was a reaction to challenges to the police. The mayor at the time was actually trying to create a fairer and more equitable Detroit in response to a lot of the leadership that was there.

I think that, you know, the story of Detroit is always told in the reverse. We talk about White flight. And it's like, "Oh, White people left because of the riots, they just couldn't stand Detroit and when Detroit went down...", and I don't think White people understand that White people left Black people mansions, White people left Black people in whole beautiful brick-home neighborhoods to raise their children in. And the

Black people who stayed didn't miss the White people who left. It's not like they were saying, "Oh, please come back". It was okay. It was like, "Okay, now we have our mayor. Now we have our city council. Now we have our school board. Now we have all of these people and we have been able to assume leadership and assume power in our own selves" and people absolutely loved that (Givens, 2018).

Givens shared her perspective that the challenge now for Detroit is that as White people are moving back, 'Black people are having to figure out how to still be relevant and still have power in the wake of more diversity' (Givens, 2018). In Givens' vision of an alternative future that interweaves her narratives of a past and present with her hopes and values, she projects 'that in a just society, you *should* have more diversity and the diversity should come in terms that don't disempower any other people' (Givens, 2018), challenging the zero-sum approach to power (Read, 2012). She described this as the challenge Detroit is facing, which she 'hope[s] that we will meet', where people understand that they are welcome in Detroit, but also where 'we respect the people who are native to Detroit' and who feel a great sense of pride in their City (Givens, 2018). Givens' (2018) account illustrates how, through ethnography and creating space for people to share stories with one another, we can learn about others' experience, perspectives and visions for the future, as well as challenge our own preconceptions and assumptions.

Ghassan Hage (2012) argued that, through the study of anthropology, we try to understand others' ways of living, being or existing, and through critical reflection, 'constantly expos[ing] us to the possibility of being other than what we are' (Hage, pp. 6-7). Maskens and Blanes (2016) built on this to argue that, the utopian assumption that another world is possible finds 'concrete grounding' in the anthropological idea that 'other worlds do in fact exist' (2016, p. 135). Borrowing from the discipline of anthropology for this multi-disciplinary research has contributed to building an awareness and consideration that other worlds are possible, while providing an insight into these through the use of ethnography.

I believe that in a world experiencing increasing fragmentation and inequality, ethnography presents an opportunity to share possible worlds that may look and feel very different to one's own experience. Kurtovic and Sargsyan (2019) and Maskens and Blanes (2016) used ethnographic case studies to demonstrate the potential this practice can offer in building mutuality, empathy, reflection, experimentation and creativity in considering alternative futures, while asserting the value of people's lived experience (Sargsyan & Kurtovic, p. 5). Maskens and Blanes (2016) viewed ethnography as a 'mutualizing utopia' that opens up a space of interaction with a possibility of plural understandings that is ultimately generative, as opposed to a fixed, singular or normative imperfect present (Maskens & Blanes, p. 138). Graeber (2004) presented a call to action for an anarchist anthropology to explore viable alternative futures through intellectual practice and direct democratic processes. This he described as having two aspects, 'one ethnographic, one utopian, suspended in a constant dialogue' (Graeber, 2004, p. 12). This research, and the structure it takes, responds to this call to action by Graeber.

Through the literature review, another related concept arose, that of 'the commons' or 'commoning', of particular relevance within the discipline of community development and the emerging water justice movement (Clark, 2019). This concept struck me as theoretically related to that of utopia, with both sharing a relationship with the values and methodology of the research project. According to the International Association for the Study of the Commons (IASC, 2021), this concept of 'the commons' originally came from medieval Europe in the way that communities managed land. Through the literature review, it was often used within contemporary community development scholarship to refer to a 'broad set of resources, natural and cultural, that are shared by many people' (IASC, 2021). This was addressed in the water justice movement through campaigners, such as the People's Water Board Coalition, who state as their mission, '...waters is a commons that should be held in the public trust free of privatization' (People's Water Board Coalition, 2021). A desire to be

part of the commons and references to 'commons park' were raised during interviews with four residents (Emery, 2020) (Klein, 2020) (McDowell, 2019) (Talley, 2019a).

The commonality shared by the two concepts of utopia and the commons was reflected throughout the literature review, interviews and walking tours with residents. Utopia was derived from a fictitious but aspirational concept, whereas the commons was derived from an actual, historical understanding of shared, communal space. While their definitions and origins differ, both uphold an ideal of a space – fictitious or real – where the common good prevails. Understood from the context of a futures-focused anthropology, imbued with radical politics and driven by a desire to create less exclusionary, more liveable worlds (Sargsyan & Kurtovic, p. 2), I argue first, that the notion of the commons could be a practical dimension of the utopian ideal, and second, that new social movements are creating viable alternatives that uphold the public interest in the commons. Through the research, two relevant examples emerged. In the North Corktown neighbourhood, residents persuaded the city council to gift them an abandoned lot, which they have since turned into the aptly named Commons Park, managed by the community and freely accessible to all. In grassroots community development in neighbourhoods across the City, non-profit Brilliant Detroit has collaborated with residents to build networks of community support and resilience by creating neighbourhood hubs from empty homes, run by the community for the community. Both examples demonstrate through grassroots, local action at a neighbourhood-level, that utopia, in the form of a commons or shared space for public good, can and is being realised in pockets of Detroit. In Figures 1 and 2 below, taken from the fieldwork, showcase community-led shared spaces being realised for the benefit of Detroit residents.



Figures 1 and 2. Left: Photograph of Commons Park, North Corktown, 27 Nov 2019. Right: Springwells House, Brilliant Detroit, Southwest Detroit, 9 March 2020.

Reflecting on the research, I have identified a resonance between the genre of utopia, the use of ethnography and the aims of many of the Detroit residents in reimagining an alternative future for their neighborhood and City. It is on this basis that I decided to organise the main body of the thesis into the critical utopian structure (Loty, 2011) of Past ('Denounce'), Present ('Kindle') and Future ('Imagine'). Like More, the choice to frame the research within this structure is intentionally political in essence, as it seeks 1) to denounce the dominant capitalist hegemony of systemic inequality and oppressive structures of Detroit's past; 2) to share stories that allow a glimpse into other ways of living as an alternative to the dominant hegemony, and finally; 3) to explore the potential for reimagining alternative futures for Detroit and its hidden neighbourhoods, based on the hopes and visions of local residents and activists. Building on the work of Chari and Donner (2010), Kurtovic and Sargsyan (2019) and others, this research aims to amplify the 'world-making efforts' and 'life-affirming potentialities' of Detroit residents and activists in ways that demonstrate creativity, accountability and solidarity (Sargsyan & Kurtovic, p. 13). It sets out to fulfill Graeber's (2004, p. 12) objective, as well as a commitment to participants, to showcase the viable alternative worlds already being tested in pockets of Detroit so that they may provide learning on a larger, more critical scale.

DIY Is the Spirit of Detroit

‘DIY is the spirit of Detroit that has always existed’ (Dakoske, 2020).

The concept of ‘Do-It-Yourself’, or the abbreviation ‘DIY’, is most commonly understood as ‘the activity of making or repairing things yourself’ (*Collins Dictionary*, 2021). However in Detroit and other cities with diminished resources and infrastructures, the term ‘DIY’ has come to be known as an alternative for ‘self-provisioning’ in which residents coordinate land use and maintain public spaces, alongside other activities conventionally considered the statutory duties of the local authority (Kinder, 2016, p. 24). Against a backdrop of the Global Financial Crisis in 2008, Kimberley Kinder (2016) astutely quoted from urban studies scholar Ananya Roy that in the contemporary neoliberal climate, ‘the rich have state help [and] the poor have self help’ (Kinder, p. 23). Kinder (2016) argued that evidence of this situation was ‘palpable’ in Detroit where private auto companies and young, White entrepreneurs received bailouts and subsidies, while the City of Detroit and its majority African American population saw significant cuts to public services. ‘In this context of inequitable aid’, Kinder wrote, ‘Detroit emerged as the quintessential do-it-yourself city’ (Kinder, p. 24). Resident activism in this context showed the resilience of communities and revealed the ‘precarious conditions of everyday life’ (Kinder, pp. 25, 24).

While decades of population loss reduced the City’s tax base, Kinder (2016) argued that service cuts were not inevitable, but rather revealed ‘a scarcity of politically viable alternative responses to economic instability and social inequality’ (Kinder, p. 25). One need only look at the approach other cities have taken to similarly challenging circumstances where the leaders of those cities demonstrated bold visions and resourcefulness in reimagining their cities’ potentials. One such example discovered during the literature review was the city of Youngstown in the neighbouring state of Ohio. In 2010, inspirationally and controversially, Youngstown’s mayor, Jay Williams, created a new master plan for the city

that responded to its significant population loss, not by trying to recreate what it once had, but by proposing a new, innovative vision (Gallagher, 2010, pp. 15-19). The plan reduced and concentrated the residential zones and associated services to meet current population demands, while opening up large sections of the city for recreation and urban agriculture. While this approach may not be replicable in other cities experiencing similar challenges, it provides an insight into the potential for thinking in a more nuanced and locally-specific manner, as championed by contemporary scholars challenging the inevitable life cycle theory of cities (Maheshwari, 2013) (Olsen, 2013).

Self-provisioning is not a new concept. There is a long history in the US, particularly during socio-economic crises, expressed through volunteerism, urban gardening and mutual aid. Examples have included volunteer fire brigades common until the late nineteenth century (Kinder, p. 25) and upsurges in urban gardening during wartimes and the Depression (Gallagher, p. 42 and 43). Gallagher stated that given the importance of urban gardening to Detroit's future, it was ironic that some of the earliest examples of urban agriculture actually took place in Detroit (Gallagher, p. 42). This included Pingree potato patches established in 1894 during a recession, which quickly spread to twenty other cities. Gallagher (2010) described how community gardening had upsurged again during World War I, the Great Depression and World War II, when 42% of America's vegetables were grown in communities' Victory Gardens (Gallagher, p. 44).

The drive for urban gardening and other forms of self-sufficiency then diminished in most areas until the 1970s, when, once again, 'self-provisioning resurfaced with a vengeance' (Kinder, 2016, p. 26). The motivations for this new revival were similar to the past – economic decline, large-scale unemployment in industrial areas and an increase in vacant land – bolstered this time by a backlash against corporate America (Gallagher, 2010, p. 45). Gallagher (2010) asserted that 'many people turned to community gardening to assert some control over their lives' (Gallagher, p. 45).

Kinder argued that 'impoverished communities of color in segregated neighborhoods were the first to revive older practices of self-provisioning in response to municipal breakdowns' (2016, p. 26). This builds on the concept of 'Do for Self' expressed through Black Radicalism as key to self-determination. Kinder (2016) pointed to examples in other cities, where residents exchanged food, clothing and childcare, as well as organised neighbourhood clean-ups and community safety walks to counter municipal neglect and disinvestment. 'Self-provisioning became more widespread as household vulnerability expanded' (Kinder, p. 26), Kinder argued, growing the informal economy, particularly in the 'chronically underserved' neighbourhoods of America.

It has been documented that whenever Black aspirations are denied and when social and political prohibitions block them from enjoying their full civic and human rights, in the words of Booker T. Washington, Marcus Garvey, and Elijah Muhammad, they begin to "do for self" (Boyd, 2018, p. 157).

In the UK, this drive towards self-provisioning, set against a desire to curb public spending, became a political mission of the Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition government during 2010 to 2015. Branded as 'The Big Society', Prime Minister David Cameron decreed:

The Big Society is about a huge culture change where people, in their everyday lives, in their homes, in their neighbourhoods, in their workplace, don't always turn to officials, local authorities or central government for answers to the problems they face, but instead feel both free and powerful enough to help themselves and their own communities... (UK Coalition Government, 2010).

Researchers Gilchrist and Morris (2011), who led on the RSA *Connected Communities* study, argued that this approach risked leaving behind some of society's most

vulnerable and put the onus on communities to fill gaps left by central and local governments. The following year, The British Academy published a report (Power, 2012), in which Public Policy Professor Anne Power argued that contrary to the promise of the 'Big Society', the state has 'a key role in providing the framework for action and ensuring fairness on behalf of all its citizens', and that 'there is no way that the state can withdraw from its overarching responsibilities, or that private interests, at whatever level, can adequately fill those roles, particularly in poor communities' (Power, p. 58). By 2017, even David Cameron himself conceded that 'Some legitimate criticisms could be made of his Big Society agenda' (Cooney, 2017). The lessons from the UK's Big Society agenda provide a relevant knowledge base for cities, such as Detroit, where public spending cuts threaten service delivery to the most underserved communities, giving rise to questions of the state's role during times of economic crises in ensuring basic services are delivered.

Scholars Gary Craig (2011) and Adam Dinham (2007) have critiqued the often-uneasy relationship between community-development practice and social policy, as exemplified by the Big Society debate. Analyses of Craig (2011) and Dinham (2007) provided an interesting framework to consider self-provisioning, or DIY activity, in the neighbourhoods of Detroit. Here, it can be argued that residents have pre-emptively stepped in to deliver services in areas where the municipal infrastructure had broken down, rather than awaiting an invitation from policymakers. However, if one follows Craig's (2011) argument, there is a risk that policymakers in the City may regard resident action as a replacement for properly funded public services. Self-provisioning and community activism can and do provide a range of positive benefits, including community building, mutuality and sense of belonging; however, as Kinder (2016) argued, 'self-provisioning, whatever the benefits, is no panacea' to decades of disinvestment in communities and infrastructure (Kinder, p. 29).

Kinder (2016) cited examples of non-profit organisations, community activists and police officers who encouraged residents in lower income, predominantly African American

and Latinx neighbourhoods, to organise clean-up days, safety patrols and community school buses. She pointed to the city of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, in which community-led self-provisioning was essential in organising disaster recovery in low-income areas, as the government prioritised the rebuilding of business centres and high-end condominiums in more affluent areas (Kinder, p. 27). These examples illustrated a growing narrative of what Kinder called an 'evolving division of labor' in which more affluent residents and businesses received services through 'market-based governing', while vulnerable residents were left to self-provision instead (Kinder, p. 27). However, Kinder (2016) acknowledged that for some residents, self-provisioning was not 'an act of desperation' in which they had no other options available, but rather that for some 'lucky residents', self-provisioning was a choice that came with 'countercultural cache' and 'White privilege'. By contrast, for the majority of Detroit residents, Kinder argued that self-provisioning was 'a way to buttress collapsing markets', 'reinforce the capitalist status quo' and ultimately to 'live in a functional city' (Kinder, p. 28).

The views expressed by Detroit residents during interviews shared some similarities with Kinder's arguments (2016), as well as some differences. Further detail of the data analysis from interviews can be found in Appendix D. The majority of participants recognised the 'DIY spirit' inherent in Detroit residents, which was described as arising out of a necessity to function in a city beset by challenges. A small number of residents spoke of their acts of volunteerism or community activism as a means of testing out new ways of living and reimagining a future beyond the market-based economy.

During the research, resident-participants were asked to respond to the question, *'Does the term "DIY" in relation to culture, movement or as a description mean anything to you within the context of Detroit/the activity that you are involved with? Please explain'*. Of the fifteen participants who responded to the question about the term 'DIY', the majority confirmed that it had a positive connotation for them (66.6%, or 10 of 15), while two felt it did not resonate, a further two were indifferent and one held a strong negative association with it

(Burack, 2018). Five residents described their interpretation of 'DIY' as it related to Detroit as a 'spirit' or 'essence' of the City (Patel, 2019) (Eggleton, 2019) (Dakoske, 2020) (Cheek, 2020). While another five residents spoke of the relationship between Detroit's history as a poor, blue-collar city³, diminished city resources and the 'DIY spirit' (Cheek, 2020) (DeSantis, 2020) (Emery, 2020) (McCallum, 2020) (Patel, 2019). One lifelong resident described the driving force of the DIY spirit as owing to Detroit's long history of poverty and disinvestment, giving rise to 'the old adage that "Necessity is the Mother of Invention"', describing how that "'spirit" was etched into having to constantly invent – and reinvent – ways of problem solving' (McCallum, 2020). Another resident spoke of the 'Detroit DIY spirit' coming from a 'sense that the government is disinterested in or actively antagonistic toward neighbourhoods and poorer communities', and rather than 'navigate a system more onerous than helpful, citizens come up with creative, self-funded solutions to their problems' (Patel, 2019). Echoing this sentiment of DIY as a response to community problem-solving in the absence of government support, another lifelong Detroit resident explained, 'We Detroiters hear "DIY" to describe us in general – that we are scrappy, resilient, tenacious, and when times are bad, we figure out our own solutions especially when government can't/won't help' (DeSantis, 2020). One North Corktown resident (Cheek, 2020) described how Detroit's long history of a 'DIY ethos that 'built ships, stoves and cars' has continued to drive revitalisation during Detroit's decline.

Even as the City melted down and the government became less functional, neighbours, activists, and community leaders stepped up to save their blocks or help out their neighbours. Over time, those efforts combined into broader grassroots efforts to impact larger areas, or proactive efforts to rebuild and create community-led amenities like the parks in North Corktown, for example (Cheek, 2020).

³ 'Blue-collar' is defined as workers that work in industry, doing physical work, rather than in offices (Collins Dictionary, 2022)

One resident explained the prevalence of DIY as a response to a lack of city infrastructure, which they perceived as taking on a different expression in recent years. They explained that to them, DIY was ‘descriptive of what many people in Detroit were doing over the last decade, because the resources of the City were so limited that people had to do some things either individually or on an extremely local initiative to make anything happen’ (Emery, 2020). They explained how this occurred in ‘particular sections of the City that were especially abandoned, like North Corktown’, describing the DIY spirit as akin to ‘the American “wild-west” spirit of taking the law into your own hands when the law was so far away that the benefits of being part of a “commons” were limited’ (Emery, 2020).

Three residents related the concept of DIY to a prevailing sentiment among ‘the majority of Detroit residents’ to ‘make it happen’ (Emery, 2020) (Kaherl, 2019) (McDowell, 2018). One resident spoke about a ‘DIY mentality’ (McDowell, 2018), marking a difference between people from Detroit and other cities.

I feel like most people might look at their community or living situation and think “I wish we had this, wouldn’t this be cool, we are missing this...”. But the majority of Detroit residents wouldn’t just say that and end there. They would actually make it happen. It could be creating a business, or planning an event, or being involved in local politics and community organisations (McDowell, 2018).

One resident, who has founded several successful community initiatives in Detroit explained, ‘Most of everything that I have done either personally or professionally has roots in DIY’, acknowledging the reality of the operational context in which ‘there were no funds from the City that we could tap into’ (Kaherl, 2019). Echoing another resident’s description of the ‘American wild-west spirit’ (Emery, 2020), Kaherl (2019) explained, ‘We never asked permission. We just made it happen’ (Kaherl, 2019). This ‘make it happen’ approach and ability to trial new ideas has given rise to several Detroit initiatives explored during the

research that continue to build from strength to strength. These include Detroit Soup, which has now expanded to several other countries as part of a Global Soup initiative, headed up by Kaherl (2019), as well as Ponyride, which supported 44 Detroit-based artists and social enterprises to grow and develop (Ponyride, 2016).

‘Hustle’ or ‘side hustle’ were terms that arose during the interviews and were associated with the concept of DIY in Detroit (Carter-Alvizo, 2019a) (Eggleton, 2019). The term ‘hustle’ frequently appears in conversation with Detroiters, as well as on clothing, in advertising and other language and imagery associated with Detroit, such as the ‘Detroit Hustles Harder’ clothing label (Detroit Hustles Harder, 2021). The connotations are generally positive with the definition of ‘hustle’ described by one resident as, ‘despite having jobs we may love, we all still do something on the side’ (Carter-Alvizo, 2019a). One lifelong resident explained, ‘In truth, DIY is a big deal in Detroit. In many ways, this is at the grassroots level with side hustle efforts which are really strong’ (Eggleton, 2019). Another lifelong Detroit resident described what they perceived to be a movement in Detroit underpinned by DIY:

Detroiters are the DIY movement of hustle. Not always as a financial necessity, but more so from the pride that comes with culturally knowing that Detroit Hustles Harder. We’re the City of mobility, and that itself is a movement. We don’t know how not to move. Move on, move in, move out, but most importantly move around. We like exploring the possibilities and that itself is what distinguishes Detroit from anywhere else in the world (Carter-Alvizo, 2019a).

Three residents (20% of respondents) spoke about DIY in relation to a ‘movement’ (Carter-Alvizo, 2019a) (Cheek, 2020) (DeSantis, 2020). While providing different descriptions of what the movement entailed, all three described a resilience, tenacity and drive to make things happen, predominantly focused on lifelong or legacy Detroiters.

DIY is a contemporary term that describes what we already know about ourselves, that we are scrappy, resilient, used to being marginalised and fighting back with our own solutions. Most often collectively, as neighbours, as part of a movement. Some of us identify with the term, some don't. But we all recognize ourselves in what the term implies... collective self-sufficiency (DeSantis, 2020).

Some residents also described how the DIY movement had more recently been associated with 'New Detroit', 'privilege' or a 'young', 'White', 'artist' community newly moving into the City. Some expressed a feeling that some newer residents were co-opting the mantle of 'DIY' as a brand new movement, despite their view that the DIY spirit had been a part of Detroit's history for decades. While three residents (20%) spoke of the term DIY as being co-opted by or as a descriptor of this new group of residents, the majority of respondents (66.6%) associated it with 'Old Detroit' and the City's established communities. One former Detroit resident actively chose not to use the term 'DIY' due to what they perceived as its current connotations:

I don't use the word 'DIY' when talking about Detroit activity, probably because I associate the word 'DIY' with popular culture, and the 'now', and a certain aspect of privilege. I feel that 'DIY' doesn't encompass the deep history of Detroit, which is incredibly rich and challenging. I do talk about the people of Detroit as having a 'can-do' spirit, though. By that I mean, when resources and social support are lacking, people find creative and practical ways to get their needs met. There is a tremendous resourcefulness that comes from a place of necessity (Burack, 2018).

Two residents described the dual use of the term 'DIY' for both newcomers and legacy Detroiters (Cheek, 2020) (DeSantis, 2020).

It [DIY] is often used to describe the generation of young people, mostly Caucasian, who began moving into Detroit a few years ago, and creating a lot of different not-for-profit and for-profit enterprises. This has been greeted with mixed reviews by legacy Detroiters – some appreciation for their energy on the one hand, but some resentment that the Mayor's administration seems to be catering to them, and that they haven't always respected the history of the City, or the existing organisations that were struggling to keep the neighborhoods afloat in the really bad years (DeSantis, 2020).

I find it interesting that the DIY movement was adopted (or co-opted) by the White artist community that has been particularly active in the City during the last 15 years because of our affordable and authentic reputation. But to me, it represents a cross-cultural work ethic to just get things done that is woven into the entire history of the City and region (Cheek, 2020).

While there may not be consensus on the definition of DIY in relation to community action in Detroit or whether it accurately encapsulates a social movement in the City, the concept of an active 'DIY spirit' in Detroit resonated with the majority of residents involved in the research. The majority recognised that while the 'DIY spirit' may have come to define them as Detroiters in their 'essence', their 'hustle' and their 'culture', for many, particularly lifelong Detroiters, it has been borne out of the understanding that 'no one will take care of us but ourselves' (DeSantis, 2020). A desire to reimagine an alternative future for Detroit was cited as a motivation inspiring a significant proportion of active residents, drawing on the DIY spirit of 'necessity as the mother of invention' (Burack, 2018) (McCallum, 2020). This is where the utopian vision of a hybrid Detroit has potential, one based on the values of Old Detroit, while capturing the energy of New Detroit, one that builds on the City's history, with unbridled dreams of a possible future, based on values of equity, mutuality and innovation. In this thesis' recurrent intention to challenge binary perceptions of the City, there is not one

definition of the DIY spirit in Detroit; there are many and they are multi-faceted. As the residents' stories illustrated throughout the research, there is not one singular past, one present, nor one future for Detroit. There are many and they are interconnecting, exponential and generative, as residents weave their stories, hopes and dreams together and watch them unfold collectively.

Chapter 2: Methodology

Positionality Statement

My relationship to the City of Detroit, the subject of my research, is a personal and multi-faceted one. I was born in metro Detroit and lived in one of its suburbs throughout my childhood and into my teenage years. Having moved to the UK for university, I visited Detroit twice a year, often working on community arts and youth projects in the summertime. This included working on a community theatre project in the mid-1990s in the predominantly Latinx neighbourhood of Southwest Detroit, one of the two neighbourhoods that has been a focus of my research, twenty-five years later.

I am a White, middle-class woman of European descent, who has spent the first third of my life in the US and second two-thirds in the UK, where I continue to live and work. I am a community development practitioner with over twenty five years of experience in London, Glasgow and Detroit. I am currently a senior manager, heading up a large-scale community regeneration programme for a London-based housing association. I have predominantly worked on area-based regeneration initiatives, working closely with residents and community partners to design, deliver and evaluate the impact of bespoke local community investment programmes. These tended to be part of a multi-disciplinary approach to physical, social and economic regeneration on a neighbourhood-level in areas that score highly on the Indices of Multiple Deprivation and experiencing significant change.

I am educated to master's degree level, having completed a Master of Arts in Art History and Social Anthropology, followed by a Master of Philosophy in Community Arts Practice and Evaluation, from the University of St. Andrews and Glasgow School of Art, respectively. I completed my previous higher-educational studies over twenty years ago and have been working within the fields of youth work, community development and social housing since that time, with no intention of returning to academia, until I was inspired through my practice to pursue this PhD with Goldsmiths.

The majority of my early childhood education from the age of three was at a small, private school for gifted children in a suburb of Detroit, called the Roeper School. My sister and I were both on 50% scholarships, one of the benefits awarded to the school's faculty, of which our mother was one, drawn to the school as a young teacher by its vision and values. The school was unique in its ethos and mission. It was established by a German couple who escaped from Europe during the holocaust and were determined to establish a school in the US, based on the values of pacifism, social justice, equality and mutual respect. Their vision was to educate the next generation of leaders and global citizens on the teachings of Martin Luther King Jr, Mahatma Gandhi, Rosa Parks and others in an effort to contribute to shaping a society based on love and tolerance, rather than a return to war, hate, competition and individualism.

I was raised by parents who have spent their lives strongly guided by these values, instilling in me and my sister from a very early age that we are part of this world and not the centre of it. My parents were part of the baby boomer generation, born in the late '40s and coming of age in the '60s, actively involved in the civil rights, women's rights and anti-Vietnam social movements. Through the actions and values of my parents, their friends and my teachers, I was inspired from childhood to believe that we all have a voice and the power to affect change in our world, particularly where we observe or encounter social injustice or inequality. There is no question in my mind that this foundation has inspired my passion to work with communities, leading me to the field of community development and to this research.

Since I was young, I have recognised how fortunate I was to have had a solid foundation, a clear values-base, access to opportunities and a strong sense of self. It was not until my 20s, working in youth work and community development, that I became increasingly self-aware of this as both a privilege and a key motivation for the work that I do. I have come to realise that I am drawn to community development through my desire to help build a strong, loving and respectful foundation for communities as a springboard to shape

their own futures on their terms. I have used my experience, skills and networks as a facilitator to build confidence and empower people to have the tools to be agents of change in their own lives.

I am an identical twin and believe this to be a significant and defining part of my identity, informing my outlook, motivations and how I perceive myself. As a result, I believe myself to have a relational identity, shaped by the relationships with those around me, but also a perception of the world as a shared experience between people.

My family's relationship with Detroit goes back four generations, as my grandparents, great grandparents and great-great grandparents emigrated from Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, drawn to its job prospects in the auto industry. My parents grew up in Detroit, both part of large Catholic families with a strong sense of family and work ethic. My parents were the first generation of their families to be considered middle class and moved to the suburbs of Detroit once married in 1969. Their parents were first-, second- and third-generation immigrants from England, Poland, Ireland, France and Germany, with my maternal grandmother immigrating the most recently to Detroit in the mid-1940s, following her marriage to my American grandfather in London during World War II. My grandmother spoke of the opulence of Detroit when she first arrived in the 1940s, with the iconic train station, her first point of entry into the City, rivalling New York's Grand Central Station in its architectural merits and grand stature, writing in letters back to family in London that 'the streets of Detroit really are paved with gold'. Having been fortunate enough to be on the first public tour of the newly renovated Train Station by Ford in June 2024, I felt deeply moved to see it as my grandmother would have experienced it, after 40 years of dereliction.

I feel a close connection to the City of Detroit through my family heritage. Three of my four grandparents worked in jobs connected to Detroit's auto industry, with my maternal grandfather working on the Chrysler assembly line, my paternal grandfather having a small fleet of trucks providing oil to gas stations and his wife, my grandmother, doing the bookkeeping for their family business. Supported by only a minimum-wage income from the

assembly line, my maternal grandparents were able to take advantage of the benefits of Henry Ford's advances in Detroit society, supporting a family of seven on the one salary. Also despite their lower-middle-class status, my paternal grandparents too were able to afford to own their own home, regularly buy a new model car, travel and contribute towards all three of their children attending art school, a luxury that their own parents could not have afforded. My parents were the first generation of their families to attend and graduate from university.

Years later, in 1972, my mother's childhood home in Detroit was demolished to make way for a new expressway to be built, part of what would now be subject to a compulsory purchase order for the land. However, then, residents were not consulted, nor did they have a say on the amount given. My grandparents were paid for the land value only and not for the value of the six-bedroom family home that stood on the land, as the state decided that its worth had been diminished in light of their own demolition plans for the surrounding area. This was a common occurrence between the 1960s and 1970s in Detroit and other cities in the US, where freeway expansion resulted in neighbourhood decimation as part of a popular urban planning strategy at the time, believed to expand the parameters of the City and encourage suburban living. This is now believed to have led to the destruction of several established Detroit neighbourhoods, many predominantly African American, as well as created physical barriers in the form of freeway ramps and roads, further isolating communities and increasing the challenges of inner-city living. Historian Herb Boyd (2018) described how the construction of the I-75, M-10 and I-94 freeways 'came with the force of destructive tornadoes to black neighborhoods', citing how by 1958, the building of one freeway alone, the M-10, had levelled more than two thousand homes and other buildings (Boyd, 2018, p. 168). One of the neighbourhoods studied in this research, North Corktown, was severed by the freeway expansion programme during this time, the lasting effects were repeatedly raised during resident interviews and are discussed in the thesis.

This history has given me a personal insight, albeit through the collective lens of my family over generations, of the experience of living in Detroit in the first three-quarters of the twentieth century, before I was born in 1977. As a metro Detroit native myself, born and raised in a suburb twenty minutes from Downtown, I have grown up with a rich history of the City, but always with the sense that the Detroit I have known has been in the shadows of what my parents, and particularly my grandparents, experienced in its heyday. The iconic architecture that remains standing in the City, such as the Fisher Theater, Guardian Building and Detroit Opera House, are reminders of the opulence and grandeur of the City as it once was, in the decades before my birth.

In more recent years, working in areas experiencing urban renewal, it has been interesting to reflect on the experience of living in a city so tied to its past and a sense of mourning for what has been lost, rather than hope for something new. The derelict auto plants littering Detroit – so many of which, at the time of writing, had not been renovated, demolished or bought for reuse – are a stark reminder of a dark thread in the City's narrative of hanging onto a past in the desperate hope that the great capitalist era of Henry Ford would have a resurgence. The hope that these plants would once again be the central hubs of activity, economy, employment and community they once were. It is the stark contrast to this bleak imagery that makes these pockets of community-led energy and activism in many of Detroit's hidden neighbourhoods so compelling and inspiring, and a key driver for the research. Neighbourhoods where well-kept pocket parks arising from vacant lots and newly constructed tiny homes for formerly homeless citizens bring a new sense of the possible for a reimagined Detroit.

By the time of the City's 2013 bankruptcy, my interest in the alternative story of Detroit was already gathering pace. While working in regeneration in Southeast London, I would often read articles about the forgotten Detroit of abandoned buildings and disinvestment. I wondered about the people, curious why their stories were not being shared and questioning how a population of 670,000 could be side-lined for ghost town images of

dereliction and destruction? Where were all the people, and where were their stories? Through the literature review, I have come to identify with ‘affirmative anthropology’ (Sargsyan & Kurtovic, 2019) a refusal to turn people’s lived experience into voyeurism. Instead, through this research, I felt compelled to facilitate a platform for people to share their own stories of what is actually taking place within Detroit’s borders (Marr, 2016).

Two events were defining triggers for my decision to undertake this research. The first was a visit to a family friend’s home in Chicago in early 2013. That friend was Dave Jordano, a native Detroit photographer and a contemporary of my father’s, both having studied photography at Detroit’s Center for Creative Studies in the 1960s. Dave had recently completed a series of photographs of Detroit. The locations of the images repeated those of photographs he had taken around 30 years earlier. These photographs went on to be published in a photography book, entitled *Detroit Unbroken Down* (Jordano, 2015). In his first series from the 1980s, the photos were of buildings only. The revisit was part of a project to return to the same locations, but this time, to show the people living there. These images were arresting. The experience of seeing them – and particularly doing so outside of Detroit – resonated with me. Although I did not know then how it might inspire me, I came away with a sense that I would return to it.

The second event was reading an article written by Lyke Thompson, the Director of the Center for Urban Studies at Detroit’s Wayne State University in *The Detroit Free Press* newspaper in the spring of 2013. Written during the bankruptcy crisis, it documented the disconnect between the ailing city and its increasingly affluent suburbs with many suburban residents having little or no understanding or empathy for the plight of many Detroiters. With the imprint of Dave Jordano’s photographs still fixed in my memory, this article felt like a call to action as a metro Detroit native working in community development overseas to find a way to help residents tell their own versions of the Detroit story and aspirations for its future. This motivation came to form the basis of my PhD.

Having spent my childhood in metro Detroit, strongly rooted in a family history in the City and with a solid educational foundation, I had previously believed that I had a fairly thorough knowledge of the City's history, its civil and economic landscape, and the many factors that have shaped it into what it is today. However, through my reading and interviews with a diverse spectrum of residents, I have come to recognise that my knowledge of the City's history is limited and biased by my social, environmental and personal characteristics.

I now believe that much of my knowledge of the City's history is centred on a neoliberal capitalist narrative, based on the central pillar of Downtown, with limited knowledge of the predominantly African American and Latinx residential neighbourhoods surrounding it. My research has encouraged me to critically reflect on this relatively singular narrative of the City's social, economic and racial history. This has included a challenge to my pre-conceived ideas of the 'race riots' of the 1940s and 1960s and an appreciation of an alternative narrative of these events as 'rebellions', as many interviewees had described, as a fight for inclusion. Through my reading and interviews, the interpretation of 'White flight' after the 'riots' or 'rebellions' as one of the major drivers for disinvestment and neglect of many inner-city neighbourhoods has also been called into question, growing into an understanding of alternative narratives of the same events, including some positive consequences of so-called 'White flight' as perceived by some residents as creating a space for African American community leadership in those neighbourhoods.

My own experience as a community development practitioner informs my perspective, as well as my motivation for exploring this area of qualitative research. Through my research, I have begun to increasingly reflect on the role of the practitioner and the need [or not] for it as a facilitator for truly organic, grassroots community development activity. My reading on Paolo Freire (1996) and Saul Alinsky (1971) has embedded a firm sense of the importance of the community educator or organiser to act as a catalyst to empower communities to act, recognise what is possible, and affect change within their own lives and neighbourhoods. In my professional life, I have worked on numerous initiatives where paid

staff or external consultants have been brought in to develop community strategies, design programmes and measure their effectiveness. From my perspective, the more effective ones have involved residents from the outset in shaping these agendas, however in my experience, it has predominantly been the 'professionals' leading the process, rather than true collaboration or more radical, genuinely resident-led approaches.

My research on community action in Detroit's marginalised neighbourhoods has led me to ask a new set of questions in relation to my role as a community development practitioner, particularly in relation to the credibility of existing models. In examples like Detroit's North Corktown neighbourhood, where the activism has come from within the community with no paid community development practitioner brought in to act as facilitator, are we seeing more sustainable, bespoke local community development practice taking shape that is truly democratic in nature? What can the discipline of community development learn from examples such as this? If, as practitioners, we genuinely believe that the fundamental aim of contemporary community development practice is 'to ensure that greater political power lies with local communities' (Craig, 2011, pp. 280-281), then shouldn't we adopt the critical learning from recent social movements more thoroughly and intentionally into our practice? I believe this learning has the potential to create a fundamental shift in the discipline of community development, with practitioners acting as a conduit between central and local government and the communities being given the space to create bespoke local solutions to global issues. It has the potential to help to re-shape public policy towards a fairer redistribution of resources as we as a society reflect on the values of the globalised world in which we live, in the aftermath of the Financial Crisis.

I believe that the practice of community development itself is not objective. It is political and progressive. The discipline is based on a commitment to social justice and addressing structural inequality. Therefore, as both a practitioner and researcher of community development practice, I am aware of how this colours the filter through which the world is seen by those in the field. The choice of methodologies for my research, including

critical ethnography and visual narratives, demonstrates my viewpoint that, as the researcher, it is not my role to provide one singular and objective truth of someone else's lived experience. Rather, through sharing a series of resident-told stories and resident-curated images, there is a political agenda in action, challenging the status quo of societal structures and providing an opportunity for the production of knowledge to have, as Habermas (1975) described, 'emancipatory intent' for those involved in it (Howell Major & Savin-Badin, 2013, p. 200).

The identified neighbourhoods on which my research has focused are predominantly African American and Latinx in demographics and also have a high prevalence of socio-economic challenges. I am aware from my reading and conversations with local people that many neighbourhood residents are fed up with outsiders parachuting in to study, observe, photograph and trespass in their communities, contributing to a negative depiction of their City through the eyes of others.

With these factors in mind, I have reflected on myself as a researcher and the connotations that brings, alongside being a former metro Detroit resident, middle-class academic, White woman and community development practitioner. Throughout the research, I have attempted to put myself into the shoes of a hypothetical participant and consider how I may be perceived through this lens. My methodology was selected to attempt to remove barriers between myself and the participants and to present myself as accessible and attentive, genuinely interested in actively listening, sharing and learning from their stories, and assisting them to create a platform for others to listen and take note.

Within the scoping phase, I used the opportunity to contact potential participants by email and engage in a dialogue before inviting them to participate in an interview. During this time, I introduced myself and the work I was involved with in London, explained the context of my research in Detroit, while building trust and rapport based on a shared interest in community development work and a passion for our home City of Detroit. In practice, this rapport proved useful for creating a more relaxed atmosphere for the interview in which my

interest and motivations were open and apparent. This rapport with several of the participants continued after the fieldwork, with many independently making contact to share their experiences, and those of their neighbourhoods, during the Coronavirus pandemic, and to enquire about the impact on London communities. This has led to interesting reflections on the relationship and impacts of the Coronavirus pandemic on community development work in urban settings, which, while touched on briefly in this thesis, is immense in scale and could provide an interesting subject matter for its own postgraduate study.

Since beginning this study, I have received words of caution from several professionals and academics in community development, both inside and outside of Detroit, about the potential challenges of how I may be perceived as a White, female academic from overseas within predominantly African American and Latinx neighbourhoods. Many highlighted the potential barriers this could create, impacting on my ability to engage with the relevant communities. Having completed my fieldwork, I do not believe this presented a significant barrier to my engagement with participants in meaningful interviews and walking tours. Nevertheless, I remained cognisant of this throughout the research, continuously engaging in reflexive practice throughout the fieldwork, data analysis and writing-up processes.

Research Overview

Research strategy. Having considered the purpose of the study and the nature of the research questions, I adopted a mixed methodological approach, using mainly qualitative methods. The rationale for this approach is based on a reflection of my values, the intended outcome of the research and identified in collaboration with the resident-participants. The approach has been driven by the desire to contribute to the emerging literature of residents' experiences of urban change and regeneration, and for these narratives to inform the public policy context for reimagining urban neighbourhoods in the 21st century.

On this basis, I selected a strategy that incorporated semi-structured interviews and ethnographic techniques. I believe this has provided me with the best tools to create a qualitative visual account of the experience of residents living in Detroit's hidden neighbourhoods at this critical time. It enabled me to produce a rich dataset of residents' views on key themes, such as reimagining community, motivation for involvement, collective action, voice and influence, representation, change and decline, relationship between the City and its neighbourhoods, as well as the direct impact of the economic decline on their everyday lives.

This mixed approach provided methodological triangulation through the use of interviews, ethnographic observation and case-study research, to assist in ensuring validity of data (Seale, 2012). The multi-disciplinary literature review provided an overview of the background, context and relevant thinking and allowed me to review the history of relevant social, economic and urban policy that has shaped Detroit, including exploring alternative narratives and community responses to local, national and global events. The 30 semi-structured interviews with active residents and community leaders provided me with insights into local strategies on the ground. While the nine resident-led walking ethnographies elicited stories from participants' own lived experience, a deeper understanding of their motivations for involvement, and their relationship to collective action and wider social movements. By

facilitating walking ethnographies in two neighbourhoods, it was possible to consider the similarities and differences in community responses to global crises, disinvestment and development, and the range of factors that gave rise to these.

The rationale for the use of semi-structured interviews along with walking ethnographies was to gather perspectives from a larger sample size of active Detroit residents involved in community development activity across the City, while providing an in-depth account of two specific neighbourhoods in relation to the everyday experiences of people and place. Like the structure of the thesis itself starting from the macrocosm of the global economy, then drilling down into the microcosm of the City of Detroit, these two complementary methods acted to build a picture of the perspectives and experiences of active residents across Detroit, identifying common themes, before providing a deeper dive into the hyper-local context of the two identified neighbourhoods through ethnography.

The study has predominantly followed a narrative approach, as its key objective was to share the stories of people actively involved in community action in Detroit's hidden neighbourhoods and understand their motivations, aims and aspirations. This informed the decision to use in-depth interviews to hear from residents' first-hand experience through asking open questions about their involvement, observations and perceptions. This narrative approach also drove the decision to draw together stories from a smaller cohort of residents through walking ethnographies to provide in-depth accounts of their experience as we travelled through their neighbourhoods.

The data was analysed to identify trends and individual stories that contribute to an emerging narrative of new social movements in Detroit aimed at addressing the effects of global systemic inequality at a local level. The walking ethnographies provided a local narrative on change in the City and its neighbourhoods, from the perspective of involved residents, whose voices have so often been silent in academic literature. The interviews and ethnographies shared a multitude of narratives from Detroiters actively involved in their

communities, illustrating the pasts and presents that they experience in relation to local and global events, while imagining their many and varied possible futures for their own neighbourhoods and for the City of Detroit.

Research design. Using the research to provide a platform to amplify the voices and strengthen the influence of residents of Detroit's hidden neighbourhoods was a key objective of this study, and as such, the guiding value of social justice in the research was of critical importance in both its methodology and intended outcomes. This built on the literature of other recent US- and UK-based studies that have woven social justice into their methodologies across the key relevant disciplines of community development (Anastacio, 2000) (Fairey, 2018) (Gilchrist & Morris, 2011) (Shaw, Howard, & Lopez Franco, 2020) and anthropology (Jansen & Kleist, 2016) (Maskens & Blanes, 2016). By involving active residents in shaping the study, I set out to create an understanding of the particular socio-political phenomenon and associated community development practices from the perspective of marginalised communities in Detroit.

Two UK studies on participation were of particular relevance to the Detroit study and have informed its methodology: *RSA Connected Communities* (2011) and *Reflecting Realities* (2000), both of which were discussed in detail in the literature review and referenced throughout the thesis. The *Reflecting Realities* study aimed 'to facilitate the emergence of communities' own stories' (Anastacio, 2000, p. 4). While the *RSA Connected Communities* study (2011) explored resident participation in the aftermath of the Financial Crisis and analysed the results using a structuralist framework (Gilchrist & Morris, 2011).

The emerging field of futures-focused anthropology also provided a significant conceptual framework and methodology that this study has drawn from. This included the catalogue of ethnographies that David Graeber (2004) (2014), Nauja Kleist and Stef Jansen (2016), Maite Maskens and Ruy Blanes (2016), and Larisa Kurtovic and Nelli Sargsyan (2019) drew from their own fieldwork and a network of their peers, all of which shared the

stories of how people in communities around the world have lived, survived and anticipated their possible futures. Like the practice of community development, futures-focused anthropology is intentionally political in nature, with the values of social justice and democracy at its core.

The Detroit study has followed in the rich tradition of contemporary community development practice, building on the fundamental aim 'to ensure that greater political power lies with local communities' (Craig, 2011, pp. 280-281). It contributes to a growing pool of literature documenting the experience of active residents within the identified neighbourhoods, providing a record of this particular point in time, in politics, economics and social movement theory within a Detroit context.

The study incorporated visual ethnographic techniques as a method of both presenting a snapshot of Detroit's hidden neighbourhoods at this time, as well as to critically reflect on place from the perspective of a sample of its involved residents. This approach has built on the use of detailed observation and a critical sense of place, as used by anthropologists and sociologists, to develop an understanding of place and community. This approach has been shaped over the years, most notably by sociologist Doreen Massey (1994), and more recently by Suzanne Hall (2015), Emma Jackson (2020) and Alex Rhys-Taylor (2018), through their use of ethnography in contemporary urban settings.

The use of visual research, in the form of gathering and analysing photographs of the two identified neighbourhoods, follows in the ethnographic tradition of anthropologists, Bronislaw Malinowski (1922), Margaret Mead (1959) and Clifford Geertz (1977), and more recently that of sociologist, Howard S. Becker (2007) and multidisciplinary ethnographer, Sarah Pink (2021). Subverting the traditional approach of the researcher as arbitrator of what to photograph, as the researcher, I have instead asked the resident tour guide to direct the photographs and curate an ethnography of their neighbourhood through their choice of photographs and stories, informed by what is important to them. Through a collaborative

process of curation, narration and conversation, I have set out to facilitate residents' voices through the imagery and commentary. This model builds on Les Back's call for a more progressive approach of using the sensory to become attentive to 'the doing of social life' and the 'social texture of life' (Back & Puwar, 2012, p. 11).

Walking was employed as a 'methodological tool' (Bates & Rhys-Taylor, 2018a, p. 2) in the research. This was a relatively new method identified within the literature as emerging in its current, yet developing, form at the beginning of the 21st century. This builds on sociologists Margarethe Kusenbach's idea of the 'go-along' or 'walk-along' (Kusenbach, 2003), as well as Jon Anderson's idea of 'talking whilst walking' (Anderson, 2004), enabling research interviews to be informed by not just the lives of participants, but the landscapes in which they live. This relationship between people and place was particularly fundamental to this research and therefore this method was of particular relevance.

In *Walking Through Social Research*, Charlotte Bates and Alex Rhys-Taylor (2018b), together with fellow contemporary sociologists and artists, explored the use of walking methods in social sciences. In the introductory chapter, 'Finding our feet', they described two key strands of writing on the subject of walking methods: one as a means of meditative practice to reveal something beyond the immediacy of everyday life, and the other, an examination of the everyday pedestrian practices of others. My selected methodology of walking interviews enabled me to conduct research on the move by sharing conversations with participants informed by the place we were moving through – in this case, their home neighbourhood – at their pace and guided by their direction. This builds on the argument by Charlotte Bates in 'Desire lines: Walking in Woolwich' (Bates, 2018, p. 62), 'There is something about walking together that brings to life our relationships with place'.

This experience allowed me as the researcher to gain an insight into the everyday experience of the resident-participants as they walked through their neighbourhoods, informed by where they choose to walk, where they avoid, how they engage with their

streets, buildings and landmarks around them, as well as the differences and similarities of experiences between individuals within the same neighbourhood and between the two neighbourhoods. As a researcher, moving through the spaces with each of the resident-participants provided me with an opportunity to reflect on the environment around us in a way that was generative, creative and multi-layered, as I viewed and heard an array of experiences and observations that overlapped, contrasted and multiplied, depending on the storyteller. Some of the residents too expressed their surprise at how the walking tours had encouraged them to think differently about aspects of their everyday environment, such as Jeff Klein (2020) pondering questions of ownership of community assets that he had not previously considered, and Danielle Shields' (2020) spontaneous reimagining of a possible future of a vacant industrial lot behind her apartment building as a bustling beer garden.

Bates and Rhys-Taylor (2018a) argued that this type of activity can facilitate an 'ethnographic "being there", through which we can observe issues unfolding at street-level, if only for a short while' (Bates & Rhys-Taylor, p. 4). For example, in the walking tour with Will McDowell (2019), we encountered four pheasants soaring majestically over an urban garden in a scene that instantly transported me to dawn break in a rural countryside. Will described this as a common sight in the quiet urban prairie environment of North Corktown, an experience I never would have imagined as I read about this inner-city neighbourhood, located approximately two miles from downtown Detroit. With similarities to the discussion of 'utopia', and building on the arguments of Bates and Rhys-Taylor (2018b), I was keen to explore how the ethnographic process of walking could uncover new places as part of an iterative process with the resident tour guides, offering different perspectives and fresh questions.

Three chapters in *Walking Through Social Research* (2018b) discussed the use of walking methods to explore the relationships between people, city, transition and place as lived and imagined (Bates & Rhys-Taylor, 2018b). In the chapter by Helena Holgersson (2018), she writes about ten years of walk-alongs in Gothenburg, Sweden, with people who

had lived under 'very different circumstances' in the city. This bears considerable relationship to the Detroit study, particularly in Holgersson's (2018) description of people's fascination with time during the walks, as they spoke about the past and future simultaneously in relation to place. She explored questions of interest to me that I too have examined in the Detroit research, such as, 'What did the daily passing of the empty lot where the paint factory once stood mean to Jani, who used to work there as a young man...?' (Holgersson, p. 71). She explored the concept by Pepper Glass (Glass, 2016) that people with a personal history in an area see 'ghosts', closed cafes, shops, schools, demolished houses, in their everyday lives, signifiers of the once-was. Holgersson (2018, p. 79) described how these same 'ghosts' were in turn being used by some marketers as a 'charming ingredient' in the redeveloped areas as a form of 'future-oriented nostalgia', which she described as a form of storytelling that intertwined a curated sense of the past with a carefully considered vision for the future.

Like myself, Holgersson (2018) too described herself as driven by inclusive urban politics, with the aim of her studies to listen to the voices of all those who live their lives in the city, not just those whose images were included in the shiny vision documents (2018, p. 71). The Detroit research contributes to this literature by exploring similar themes of people, place and memory from the perspectives of residents as they share their stories while walking and talking as we move through their neighbourhoods, reflecting on the overlapping experience and vision of pasts, presents and futures.

Research Methods

History and context. The historical review that I undertook of Detroit's socio-economic history is set out in chapter three, 'Past (Denounce)'. This revealed the City's rich and varied history of industry, infrastructure, housing and social policy, and the dynamics of race and class. This element of the research has highlighted systemic social and economic inequality, found predominantly in the hidden neighbourhoods of Detroit, which has formed a rich contextual framework for the study.

Literature Review. I undertook a multi-disciplinary literature review, consisting of texts drawn mainly from the fields of community development and anthropology, as well as from sociology, urban studies, social geography and economics. This review has helped to hone my research questions, identify where the research builds on existing frameworks and areas of challenge, as well as where it may contribute to emerging discourses and bodies of literature. It has provided me with an understanding of where this study may provide a unique contribution to the intersecting fields of community development and futures-focused anthropology, as well as to new social movement theory within a contemporary urban context.

Scoping phase. To determine which neighbourhood initiatives would provide the richest focus of study, I initially contacted 18 projects. This provided an opportunity to engage with these initiatives in person to determine their suitability for the research project, develop rapport with community leaders and active residents, and sound out their potential interest in the study. I also spent time in each of the neighbourhoods selected for the initial shortlist to observe their character, visually map local community assets and amenities, and explore their similarities and differences to other shortlisted neighbourhoods. During this time, I met with urban studies and community development professors from the City's Wayne State University with a current and rigorous knowledge of neighbourhood revitalisation in Detroit to gain their input and insight on my research strategy.

This scoping phase took place during the latter part of the literature review, enabling me to be time-efficient in making the transition into fieldwork. This approach proved beneficial for keeping abreast of the fast pace of change within the City of Detroit, so that the research remained relevant throughout the various stages of the process. It also enabled me to critically reflect on the literature while beginning my fieldwork, examining the tensions and similarities between the two and exploring those in real time through residents interviews.

The method for building and maintaining this knowledge base of Detroit initiatives, given my base in the UK, was done by subscribing to mailing lists for Detroit publications and blogs, such as The Hub, ProsperUS Detroit and Curbed Detroit, and keeping up to date with their content. These publications often cited initiatives that I followed up as leads and through social media. This approach yielded a rich array of neighbourhood-based initiatives, which I would not have otherwise encountered through academic literature or more mainstream press. Examples included the Georgia Street Community Collective, The Empowerment Plan, Cass Social Services' Tiny Homes Project, Rudy's Sock Drive, Eastside Community Network, Street Outreach Court and The Brown Bag Movement, most of which I subsequently visited, and in all cases, interviewed their founders.

Qualitative interviews. I carried out 30 semi-structured qualitative interviews and nine walking ethnographies with active residents. These interviews explored their perceptions of collective action and social movements within Detroit's neighbourhoods, as well as perceived links between national and global events and trends with their own local experience. The data was collated and analysed, and discussed through the thesis.

The sample size of 30 was selected for three main reasons. It was consistent with other relevant social science research identified in the literature, including *Reflecting Realities'* sample size of 30 to 50 semi-structured interviews (Anastacio, p. 7). It aligned with guidance written by social science 'expert voices' (Baker, 2012) in the field, including Adler and Adler's advice of a sampling size of between 12 to 60 and Ragin's suggestion of 50 for a

PhD thesis (Baker, p. 34). Given the timeframe of the project and the resources available as an individual researcher, I decided that this sample size was realistic, achievable and provided a significant range of perspectives. I believed that the given sample size enabled the research to reach data saturation from which to draw analytical generalisations. The sample size was continually monitored as trends in findings emerged through the research. This followed the guidance of Daniel Miller (Baker, p. 31), who advised that as a researcher, you will sense the point at which you have encountered the level of repetition to have the confidence to make analytical generalisations.

I used a semi-structured questionnaire, which included a series of open questions. These were aimed at understanding:

- people's motivations for getting involved in community initiatives in Detroit
- what they intended to achieve
- whether they perceived any links between their local action and city/state/national/international events, affairs or movements
- how they perceived themselves (i.e. activist, educator, facilitator)
- how they perceived the relationship between their local activity and the wider city
- what their vision was for their neighbourhood and for Detroit
- what they thought was unique about Detroit and what was the message they would like to share with the outside world, based on their experience.

These questionnaires were carried out as face-to-face interviews lasting approximately one hour, generally taking place at the site of the project in which they were involved, or another public location within their neighbourhood or the wider Detroit area. The full questionnaire is attached as Appendix C. The use of interviews established a rich, qualitative set of results, analysis of which is provided in Appendix D.

Residents' Stories. From the initial 30 interviews, all resident-participants were asked whether they were interested in being involved in more in-depth walking tours of their

neighbourhood. A shortlist of nine residents was selected to establish a diverse profile of participants in the two identified neighbourhoods of North Corktown and Southwest Detroit. I asked the resident 'tour guides' to lead me on a tour of their neighbourhood, showing me what was of meaning and significance to them about the place.

During the tours, I asked a series of open questions with the aim of finding out more about their individual circumstances, their relationship to the City, how the economic situation had affected them and their families, what led them to get involved in local revitalisation efforts, and what their aspirations were for the future of their neighbourhoods and their City. These questions and their responses formed part of the conversation during the tours, with the majority of the conversation led by the resident, describing their neighbourhood and leading the conversation on the subjects that mattered to them. These interviews were written up as individual stories to document the experience of a sample of residents living in Detroit's more marginalised neighbourhoods at that time. Narrative analysis of the stories contributed to a greater understanding of the diversity of residents' lived experiences, as well as identifying commonalities or themes that emerged, written up in the 'Thematic Analysis' section.

Ethnographic Techniques. In conjunction with residents' stories, I employed ethnographic techniques to provide a highly descriptive account of the two identified neighbourhoods. I was the principal researcher undertaking the ethnography through observation, and involved the nine residents to build collaborative ethnographies with me. The aim was to provide the reader with a greater understanding and visualisation of the environment and experience of the people living and working within Detroit's neighbourhoods as a snapshot at this moment in the City's evolution.

I sought participants' consent to visually and audibly document their neighbourhood as they saw it. Each participant decided for themselves what their contribution would be, based on what they felt most important to show and record. This provided a fuller exploration

of life in the neighbourhoods of Detroit from the perspectives of the residents, including an opportunity to hear the voices of residents, rather than solely my own as the outside researcher.

I used a smartphone to photograph the points of interest that I was directed to by residents during the walking tours. I used a Dictaphone to record their commentary throughout the tours, including their explanations of why they had chosen the particular route, descriptions of the meaning or significance of the points of interest they had chosen to share, and other stories about their neighbourhood that they chose to relay. On the informed consent form, participants were asked for their consent for their image, selected photographs and/or voice to be used in the publication of research. These images formed an integral part of the Detroit neighbourhood ethnography.

Data collection. The method of data collection included recording interviews with participants with a Dictaphone and transcribing these as full transcripts. The conversations that took place during the interviews and walking tours were recorded in full with participants' consent.

Data analysis. A summary of the data and detailed analysis from the interviews is provided in Appendix D. The collected data was analysed to identify significant trends or variances and to build a narrative of how people involved in community action perceived themselves and to what extent they felt their actions were creating a new, constructive momentum to reimagine community in response to the systemic economic and social inequality in Detroit's neighbourhoods.

Word search analysis. Having transcribed the interviews and walking ethnographies in full, I analysed the language used by participants, identifying terms used for self-identification, trends in responses, commonalities and divergences in themes. This was carried out as a word-search function of the various transcripts under themes related to identified areas of questioning, such as 'motivation and vision' and 'city and capitalism'.

Using an Excel spreadsheet, I was then able to record the number of instances that a particular word or phrase was used by participants to build a picture of commonalities, differences and trends in people's perceptions and experiences in relation to each theme. This proved to be a useful technique for analysing responses from an intersectional perspective, such as exploring and understanding whether there may be certain trends in responses based on a relationship between, for example, the duration of time spent resident in the City, motivation for involvement, gender, ethnicity or age. The analysis is presented in Appendix D.

The idea for analysing responses intersectionally was derived from two main sources. Primarily, this was sparked by my own observations of the multi-faceted components of identity in relation to the concepts of 'New Detroit' and 'Old Detroit' that seemed to encapsulate aspects of identity that related to race, place of residence, age, duration of time spent in Detroit, and nature of involvement activity. I was interested to discover whether these intersecting components of self-identification on the part of the resident-participants may present trends in relation to their motivations or perceptions of themselves in relation to community action. Secondly, literature sources, such as Strolovitch, Wong and Proctor (2017) had inspired me to consider an intersectional analysis of the research findings, based on their research on the relationship between intersectionality, civic engagement, and the 2016 US election results among American citizens.

Selection of participants and sampling techniques. The participants were recruited via three main methods. Two of these recruitment techniques involved a third party who was well-established within the identified neighbourhoods and already in a position of trust with the local communities identified for the research. These methods included:

- 1) Contacting community leaders and initiative-founders through a cold calling approach, mainly via email, based on research during the scoping phase

- 2) Receiving referrals of involved residents from community organisations and initiatives with whom I had made initial contact
- 3) Receiving a smaller volume of referrals through contacts with professors and researchers at Wayne State University in Detroit who were involved in research projects in the identified neighbourhoods

Participants were active residents from the two identified neighbourhoods, as well as individuals involved in community initiatives across Detroit's neighbourhoods, outside of the Downtown area. The initiatives were predominantly projects founded by Detroit residents and individuals drawn to the City's potential and opportunity, funded in the main by crowdfunding and other independent sources, rather than city, state or corporate funding. The initial intention was that most interviews would be with Detroit residents who themselves had established or were volunteering on these projects (approximately 75%), alongside a small proportion (approximately 25%) with individuals who were not initially from the City of Detroit but had since moved there to establish and deliver community initiatives.

The rationale for this was that from my reading of the literature review, as well as dialogue with community organisations during the scoping phase, I had assumed that the majority of involved residents would so-called 'lifelong Detroiters' or those that had newly moved to Detroit, post-bankruptcy, drawn to the opportunity and innovation of a city in flux. I was mainly interested in the role and involvement of longer-term Detroit residents who had 'weathered the storm' of the decline and bankruptcy of the City, experimenting with grassroots solutions. The smaller proportion of 'newcomers' to Detroit were of interest to understand their motivations and perceptions of identity and involvement, as well as to compare and contrast their responses with those of the more established Detroiters to identify any similarities or differences. As the researcher, I did not have access to this information on whether participants fit into one of these two categories before the interview.

As such, it was not until specific questions were asked during the interview itself that it became clear whether the interviewee fit into one of these two categories. Therefore, although this assumed proportional split was an intention at the start of the process, the actual split was not known until after the interviews had been analysed.

In the final analysis (provided in full in Appendix D), while the highest proportion of resident-participants had lived in the city since birth, self-identified by many as 'lifelong Detroiters' at 36.1% (13 of 36), there was a higher proportion than anticipated of newer residents that had moved to Detroit during and/or since the bankruptcy filing at 25% (9 of 36). There was also a third cohort that I had not considered, those residents who had lived in Detroit since before the bankruptcy filing, but had not been residents of the City for their entire lives. This third group amounted to 19.5% of resident-participants, incorporating 13.9% (5 of 36) who had been residents for between 10-20 years and 5.6% (2 of 36) who had lived in Detroit for more than 20 years. This information was not provided for 7 of 36 participants. On reflection, I recognise that in my own anticipations of the likely proportional breakdown of participants, I held a binary view of residents' migration to Detroit essentially as a dichotomy of residents as lifelong versus newcomer, rather than appreciating a multiplicity and spectrum. This has acted as a useful reminder as a researcher and practitioner to challenge my own assumptions as part of a theme running throughout the research of not assuming a binary narrative for the City, but appreciating the nuance and diversity of experiences and perspectives.

Selection of Neighbourhoods. For the resident ethnographies, I focused on two Detroit neighbourhoods, based outside of the Midtown and Downtown areas and with significant local community action taking place. The selection of the two neighbourhoods was determined based on the following criteria deemed to be accurate at the start of the research:

- That they were not in receipt of significant private investment and continued to experience depressed socio-economic outcomes
- That community activity was majority-funded by charitable donations, rather than top-down government-funded programmes
- That one had some obvious private investment in development (North Corktown), while the other did not (Southwest Detroit)
- That there was a track record of community action for at least 2+ years

An important reason for focusing on neighbourhoods outside of the Downtown and Midtown areas was that these peripheral neighbourhoods were hardest hit by the economic downturn of the City, while also demonstrating grassroots innovation. The Downtown and Midtown areas (comprising 7.6 square miles of the City's 139-mile footprint) had benefitted from significant private investment and were generally characterised by a migration of new White residents, attracted to a thriving arts scene, inexpensive property and programmes established to draw in young, talented, creative people (Sugrue, 2014, p. xxiii), Florida's so-called 'Creative Class' (Florida, 2003).

The neighbourhoods outside of the Midtown and Downtown areas, however, had not received the same level of investment and showed little evidence of benefits flowing in their direction from the centre. Sociologist Thomas J. Sugrue (2014) argued that 'it is hard to be optimistic about the revitalization of Detroit from the vantage point of most of the city's neighborhoods' (Sugrue, p. xxv). Racial segregation, poverty, deteriorating infrastructure, and a lack of access to good quality employment, housing and education remained significant challenges for the majority of Detroit's neighbourhoods in contrast to the perceived gentrification of the Downtown area (Sugrue, pp. xvii, xxv)

The two identified Detroit neighbourhoods for the research included Southwest Detroit and North Corktown. These were selected from a shortlist of neighbourhoods, which included Jefferson East, Brightmoor, Grandmont Rosedale, Elmwood Park and City Airport. The process of selection was carried out through desktop research of community-led initiatives, as well as through interviews with community leaders, professionals working on the ground and other researchers working in the City with established relationships with community networks.

Working with third-party organisations. I made use of well-established third-party organisations in the identified neighbourhoods, providing access to participants and mitigating some risks. This approach improved the likelihood of residents agreement to be involved, having been introduced by an individual already known and trusted in the community. This approach formed part of my approved methodology by the Ethical Committee at Goldsmiths College, University of London in February 2018. In practice, this was primarily used with three third-party organisations, including Matrix Theatre Company in Southwest Detroit, Brilliant Detroit, and Wayne State University, who made introductions or suggested individuals to contact, resulting in five residents who participated in the interviews. Personal contacts established through my former school in the metro Detroit area, the Roeper School, included a former teacher and classmate who made introductions to two Detroit residents who were later interviewed. Those introductions made through the third-party organisations and personal contacts established a further network of introductions, whereby participants with one or two degrees of personal separation from me as the researcher, took it upon themselves to reach out to others in their networks with a potential interest in the research, inviting them to participate in an interview. This network approach resulted in a further six participants agreeing to be interviewed.

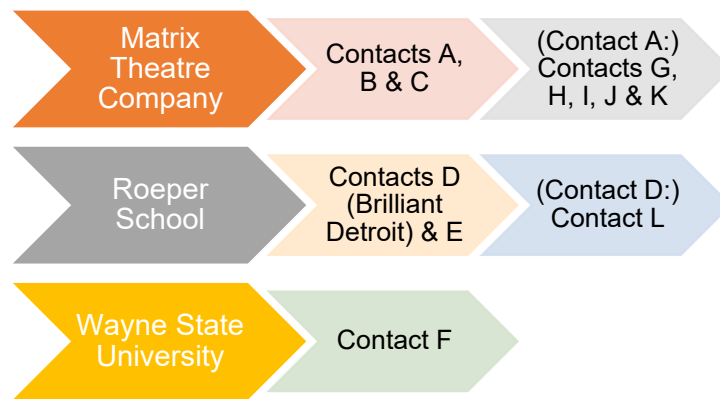


Figure 3: Diagram of contacts made through third-party referrals.

By accessing potential participants through a third party, this helped to mitigate potential risks to me as the researcher and to potential participants, as many of the residents would be known to the neighbourhood initiatives and research teams and, therefore, individuals with possible aggressive or harmful behaviours may already be known and risks managed accordingly.

Managing risk. I devised a full risk assessment for use in this study, which was approved by Goldsmiths' Ethics Committee before commencing my fieldwork in 2018. I incorporated input from trusted professors, on-the-ground professionals and community leaders who were already familiar with the identified neighbourhoods to ensure that I had considered relevant risks. Having worked in challenging neighbourhoods as a community development professional for the past twenty five years, I was very familiar with many of the risks that I would need to consider; however, as my previous work has mainly been based in the UK, the knowledge and input of Detroit-based community leaders and professionals was invaluable in ensuring I devised a robust and relevant risk assessment.

Research Framework

Through the literature review, I identified the relevant research framework, based on key concepts drawn from the reading, which then underpinned this study. These were discussed in considerable detail in the literature-review chapter. In summary, these included, but were not limited to:

- Community Development
- Futures-Focused Anthropology
- Social Justice
- Structuralism
- Participation
- Community Organising
- Urban Studies
- New Social Movement Theory
- Black Radicalism
- Critical Race Theory
- Participatory Action Research

This research builds on a structuralist approach to understanding community development approaches in contemporary Detroit as the City responds to emerging global crises. As established through the desktop research of Detroit's socio-economic history, the research was set against a backdrop of systemic inequality, most acutely impacting the City's hidden neighbourhoods. It employed what Gary Craig described as 'bottom-up community analyses' (Craig, 2011, p. 11) to provide a description of the experiences of involved residents in two identified Detroit neighbourhoods.

With a majority-83% Black population in Detroit (United States Census Bureau, 2019a), the concept of race and its relationship with power, privilege, influence, affluence and notions of identity featured heavily in the literature and resident interviews. With a deep-rooted history of Black Radicalism in the City, concepts of Black self-determination and 'Do for Self', as shaped by Malcolm X and Marcus Garvey, have played a formative role in establishing a DIY culture in Detroit that continues to this day (Boyd, 2018, pp. 157, 182).

As described at the start of this chapter, a key ethical consideration for my research was social justice as a cross-cutting theme both in methodology and intended outcomes. Social-science researchers Denzin and Lincoln (2011) described social-justice research as '...studies that attend to iniquities and equality, barriers and access, poverty and privilege, individual rights and the collective good, and their implications for suffering (Denzin & Lincoln, p. 358).'

The research builds on contemporary concepts of rethinking community participation and, particularly, the role of power within it. This includes Robin Eversole's (2012) ideas of remaking multi-directional participation and placing greater value on 'community-based knowledge', recognising community members as best placed to 'propose solutions that are appropriate and sustainable (Eversole, p. 33). Through its exploration of contemporary collective action in Detroit, the research builds on the concept of community activism, as promoted by American community activist Saul Alinsky (1971), and supports Marjorie Mayo's (2005, p. 105) view of community activism as uniquely able to deal with the growth in inequalities

Of particular relevance to this study are the contemporary perspectives of New Social Movement Theory (NSM) in response to social inequality and global financial events. Through the research, we are seeing 'alternative ways of life "tested"' (Eyerman, 1984, p. 78), as well as the experience of social transformation, against a backdrop of the effects of neoliberal globalisation (Langman, 2013, p. 510).

The research contributes to emerging literature that is challenging contemporary Western neoliberal capitalist hegemony in the aftermath of the Global Financial Crisis and Coronavirus pandemic. This includes the writing of anthropologist David Graeber (2014) who proposed that all popular movements since World War II can be attributed to a crisis of inclusion for marginalised communities to be given a fair deal. The Detroit study aligns with this perspective, as it examines community action and a new social movement taking shape in Detroit as a locally driven and proactive response to systemic social and economic inequality and a fight for fairness for all. It also considers the experience of Detroit as a majority-Black city and the relationship between race, inclusion and the colonial structures still embedded in the neoliberal capitalist system.

Still an emerging area, a handful of academics and entrepreneurs are trialling new person-centred alternatives to measuring success of place and human wellbeing in contrast to capitalist models of income and population growth (Dinham, 2007) (Nussbaum, 1990) (Sen, 1985) (United Nations, a). On a local level, through the research, I have identified new Detroit-based social-enterprise initiatives, such as The Empowerment Plan (2019b) and Rebel Nell (2021b), that are using social-impact metrics to measure their performance. These perspectives are of relevance to exploring whether there is a new collective movement in Detroit that is redefining the success of a post-industrial city, based on mutual reciprocity, community wellbeing and sustainability.

I have employed techniques of Participatory Action Research (PAR) in aspects of my research. This includes using co-curation with residents to shape the narrative of the walking ethnographies and develop future strategies for the City. Bradbury and Reason (2008) described Participatory Action Research as research that:

[...] Seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to

people, and more generally the flourishing of individual persons and their communities (Reason & Bradbury, 2008, p. 2).

My choice to use PAR techniques derived from a desire to challenge the traditional 'extractive imperial model of social research', associated with a colonial interest in communities as 'others' to be studied (Kindon, 2007). Instead, my choice of participatory research methods, including resident-led neighbourhood walking tours, form part of an effort to create a more collaborative form of social research with active residents shaping the narrative and the change they wish it to affect. Building on the work of PAR advocates, such as Sara Kindon, Rachel Pain and Mike Kesby (Kindon, 2007), who believe in the 'radical potential' of PAR to repoliticise participation, I believe that through such methods as those used in this Detroit study, PAR has the potential to challenge the hierarchical political and social dynamics between communities and established institutions, such as the higher education sector. Kindon et al (2007) also argued that through PAR, bringing greater attention to space and scale, 'the local is understood as intimately connected to the global, regional, national, household and personal' (Kindon, p. 3).

In this study, there is a significant focus on the structural and systemic relationships between global events and the local lived experience of residents at a neighbourhood level. Through the methodology of semi-structured interviews and walking tours, resident-participants were invited to engage in a dialogue to reflect on 'wider structures and processes of inequality to affect change' (Kindon, p. 3), based on their own local experience and perceptions of relationships to global events, as well as imagine alternative futures.

The emerging field of futures-focused anthropology or 'futures anthropology' (Pink & Salazar, 2017) provided a useful framework for positioning how ethnography could be used as a means of sharing the diverse stories of how others live in the world, while at the same time, exploring their role in reimagining possible futures. Building a futures-focused

anthropology framework, the research has been able to contribute to the narrative, not just that 'another world is possible' (Graeber, 2004, p. 10), but that there may already be those creating viable alternatives towards a more 'less exclusionary, more liveable world' (Sargsyan & Kurtovic, 2019, p. 2), as seen in some of the examples examined through the Detroit research. Examples that will be expanded on in the 'Present' chapter.

Chapter 3: Past (Denounce)

A Brief History of Detroit

Like many native Detroiters, I am immensely proud of the City's cultural and industrial heritage and the international contributions it has made to the arts, technology and invention. My grandfather worked on Henry Ford's assembly lines as part of the drive that made Detroit the fourth-largest city in the US by the 1950s. During this time, the City was affectionately called the 'Paris of the Midwest' and, for several decades, citizens enjoyed unprecedented wealth and growth, due to the manufacturing boom.

Alongside its economic achievements, Detroit's cultural and political history has made significant global contributions to music, industry, union activism, the Civil Rights and Black Radical movements, as well as the synergies between them. Detroit, from the late 1950s through the 1970s, was a hotbed of activism. Key founders of the Civil Rights Movement were from Detroit – or recognising its important role – moved to the City to progress the cause. It has a rich history of progressive movements and community organising which challenged oppressive forces from government, police, industry and corporate America. Examples of Detroit's contributions across the arenas of political movements, arts and culture, housing and workplace rights are discussed throughout this section. These community responses have taken a variety of forms depending on the emergent crisis of that era. These include community organising to affect social change, union organising to create fair and inclusive workplaces, protest and activism to highlight injustice, uprisings in the form of rebellion and riots, often arising from a state of desperation. 'Do for Self' or DIY approaches to self-determinism and grassroots community-building have played a significant role in tackling national or global issues within a local Detroit context.

Major political influencers in the US were drawn to Detroit. Following her pivotal role in the 1955 overturning of racial segregation on public transport in Montgomery, Alabama, Rosa Parks came to Detroit to work for State Representative John Conyers Jr. to continue the fight against the Jim Crow laws (Boyd, 2018, p. 196). Dr Martin Luther King Jr. regularly visited to deliver speeches, lead marches and attend the funerals of Black Detroiters killed

during clashes with the predominantly White police force (Boyd, 2018). On 23 June 1963, King led the Walk to Freedom March down Woodward Avenue, the main highway running through metro Detroit, in which 125,000 people gathered, including the influential Black leader, the Rev. C. L. Franklin, the father of Motown icon, Aretha Franklin. The march and speech were a dress rehearsal for King's landmark gathering in Washington D.C., two months later. King spoke directly to the people of Detroit in a show of unity, 'I have a dream this afternoon that one day right here in Detroit, Negroes will be able to buy a house or rent a house anywhere that their money will carry them, they will be able to get a job...' (Boyd, p. 194). As a child, human rights activist Malcolm X moved with his family to Lansing, Michigan – two hours from Detroit – following racist threats made in their former home city of Milwaukee. In the 1960s, Wayne State University was a 'rallying point for the nascent Black nationalist movement', according to Herb Boyd, author of *Black Detroit: A People's History of Self Determination* (Boyd, 2018, p. 7), including the great minds of Malcolm X and preeminent scholars of African and African American history and culture. Between 1968 and 1974, Wayne State University helped develop key political organisations of the Black Radical movements, which went on to gain national and international influence, as the 'bedrock of the institutions that have given Detroit such a distinct reputation' (Boyd, p. 8).

Similarly, powerful cultural and spiritual leaders either arose from or were drawn to this great city. From the 1930s, Detroit was central to the formation of the Nation of Islam, founded by W. D. Fard and handed on to Elijah Muhammad (Boyd, 2018). Muhammad established Temple No. 1 in the predominantly Black neighbourhood of Detroit's Black Bottom, alongside the University of Islam, before going on to open others across the country (Boyd, pp. 134-137). Wilfred Little, Malcolm X's older brother, served for many years as a leader of Temple No. 1, before passing away in 1998 (*The New York Times*, 1998). According to Boyd (2018), the Nation of Islam in Detroit played an important role in solidifying the foundation of Black Nationalism, providing what he called a 'springwell of social and political thought' that would go on to manifest in organisations across the country

(Boyd, p. 137). Boyd (2018) argued that not only are these contributions critical to Detroit's own history, but that many of them have been integral overall to the 'evolution of Black America' (Boyd, p. 8).

In the field of technology too, Detroit has long been a leader on the world stage. The automotive industry had been integral to the Detroit economy since the establishment of the Ford Motor Company in 1903. Henry Ford was born in the Springwells neighbourhood of Southwest Detroit and built his first engine on a kitchen table at his home on Bagley Street, one of the main arteries running through the neighbourhood (Ford Motor Company, 2020). While over time the industry brought many benefits to Detroit, including significant employment, its legacy provides a more complicated story. A huge wave of immigration took place, peaking in the 1940s, as people were drawn to the opportunities and perceived freedom in Detroit and, particularly for many Black citizens, away from the restrictive Jim Crow laws of the South. However, life in Detroit at the time certainly was not without its challenges. The massive population boom, combined with insufficient housing supply and racist housing policy, 'overburdened the city's housing stock' (Boyd, p. 139), contributing to long-term housing challenges, some of which continue to persist today.

According to Boyd (2018), 'Black labor has been indispensable to Detroit's growth', particularly in the factories and auto plants 'where black sweat and toil would become inseparably connected to production' (Boyd, pp. 9-10). The relationship between the auto industry, Black auto workers, and the unions in Detroit has been critical in the development of non-discriminatory workplace practices across the country since the 1960s. Boyd (2018) cited the influence of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers as having had a 'lasting effect on the workplace' despite its short existence (Boyd, p. 10). The Trade Union Leadership Council (TULC) was founded in 1963 to address the 'ineffectiveness of the UAW's Fair Practices Department' and grievances levied by Black auto workers about exclusion from the skilled trades (Boyd, p. 176). After a tumultuous initial relationship between the United Auto Workers (UAW) union and many Black auto workers, influential

individuals like Black political activist and Chrysler assembly line worker James Boggs worked from within the UAW Local 7 to help create a 'platform for various forms of working-class black activism' (Boyd, 2018, p. 147). Boyd described this as the 'convergence of organized labor and the burgeoning Civil Rights Movement' that took shape from the 1940s.

UAW Local 600 was actively involved in operating the picket lines and raising funds for the Sojourner Truth protests in February 1942, putting pressure on local government to reinstate their commitment to a public housing project in Detroit for Black residents, named after the abolitionist and women's rights advocate (Boyd, pp. 140-141). A crowd of 1,200 White picketers, attempting to prevent occupancy by Black tenants, set a cross alight, a riot ensued, and more than one hundred people were arrested. Following an investigation, the National Housing Agency made the decision to establish a programme for Black occupancy at the Sojourner Truth homes. The mayor deployed more than 1,000 police officers and 1,600 National Guard troops to protect families moving in (Boyd, pp. 140-141).

Detroit's history of rebellions or riots – described in different terms depending on the speaker's own perceptions – has continued to have a considerable impact on the City. One of the earliest rebellions was 'The Blackburn Affair' in the early 1830s, when Detroit was 'a city in flux' and where White residents were troubled by a new wave of arrivals from the South, predominantly Black people seeking freedom from slavery (Boyd, p. 28). In 1831, Thornton and Lucie Blackburn arrived in Detroit, having escaped slavery in Kentucky, and were invited to stay at the home of a Black businessman, James Slaughter. They settled into life in Detroit, however in 1833, Slaughter turned them over to the authorities and they were arrested as fugitive slaves. Historian Herb Boyd (2018) provided an account of a supportive Black community filling the courtroom, who, 'no longer content to sit passively by and allow the wheels of justice to creak along', took events into their own hands, implementing a plan to sneak the Thorntons out of prison and support them to flee to Canada (Boyd, pp. 30-31). Boyd (2018) described how community anger soon grew into a full-scale rebellion on 11 July 1833, with the mayor writing to the Secretary of War with an urgent request for US troops to

restore the peace. The Secretary of War, however, took a heavy-handed approach and declared martial law, with a heavy deployment of troops and local militia. This resulted in a large number of Black residents fleeing to Canada, where slavery had been abolished (Boyd, p. 32). With the landmark case of the Blackburns being freed by the court and a decision that they would not be extradited to the US, Canada was seen as a 'protective home' for previously enslaved Black Americans. As described by resident Alondra Carter-Alvizo (2019b) during our Southwest neighbourhood tour, for many Detroiters, the Detroit River and the riverfront view of Canada continues to act as a symbol of freedom.

In the early 20th century, increasing numbers of Black residents moved to the North for employment opportunities arising from the booming industries. In 1919, Ford Motor Company took the policy decision to hire Black workers, with manufacturers Packard and Dodge later following suit. Boyd (2018) argued that while this saw some gains for Black Americans suffering from high levels of unemployment, this was against the backdrop of racial disturbances with so much Black blood spilled during the rebellions of 1919 in particular, that it was called the 'Red Summer' (Boyd, p. 108).

A physical divide was created in Detroit in 1941, in the form of a two-metre wall that separated Black residents from White residents, running for several blocks along Eight Mile Road, south of which Black residents were designated to live (Kowalski, 2019). To secure federal funding for a new White development in what was considered a 'hazardous' Black neighbourhood, a developer received approval from the Federal Housing Administration to create this barrier between the Black and White neighbourhoods. This was part of a policy from the Federal Housing Administration that included 'redlined maps and discrimination against people of color' (Kowalski, 2019). The wall was known locally as Eight Mile Wall or Birwood Wall, named after the streets along which it ran. Boyd (2018) shared stories of the early Black families who moved north of the Eight Mile Wall – including his own – recounting one of his neighbours, McArthur Binion, who stated simply, 'We broke the color line in our neighborhood in 1952' (Boyd, p. 160) – with 'line' a likely reference to the wall

itself. In small acts of rebellion, Boyd (2018) recounted children in the neighbourhood challenging each other to walk on the wall. Much of the wall still exists today, although many younger residents who have grown up post-segregation do not know its origins.

In 2010, sections of the wall were painted by Detroit artist Chazz Miller with local volunteers depicting civil rights icons and colourful houses, which Miller described as 'symbolizing the reason the wall was built: because they didn't want colored people in the neighborhood' (Kowalski, 2019). Increasing attention has been given to the wall in recent years as an opportunity to learn lessons from its history, including publication of a book, *Detroit's Birwood Wall: Hatred and Healing in the West Eight Mile Community* (Van Dusen, 2019) and adding it to the National Register of Historic Places (Kowalski, 2019).



Figures 4 and 5: Left: children stand in front of Eight Mile Wall (photo credit: Library of Congress), right: young people walk through Alfonso Wells Memorial Park in front of the Birwood Wall (photo credit: Todd McInturf, *Detroit News*) (Kowalski, 2019).

1943 witnessed the first of Detroit's two large-scale rebellions resulting from the racial tensions in the City. Boyd (2018) described how the event began with over 100,000 Detroiters crowding on to Belle Isle on a very hot summer's day. A young Black man assembled a group of friends seeking revenge against a previous attack by a group of White people. This triggered fights across Belle Isle, which 'spread like wildfire' into the City. After two days of rebellions, 34 people were killed, 25 of them African American, including 17 at the hands of police, which the police described as 'justifiable homicides' as the individuals were looting stores. 2,000 people were arrested, mainly Black (Boyd, p. 153). The mayor established a committee to assess what happened, but it did not consider issues of racism,

housing or employment. It concluded that White people were culpable only for retaliating against Black attacks and that the police had been 'exemplary', laying nearly the full blame with Black Detroiters for the events (Boyd, p. 153). With the resulting devastation, incarcerations and deaths, the acute racial tensions in the City could no longer be ignored.

In 1967, the second large-scale rebellion began on 23 July, with an even greater lasting impact on the City. Boyd (2018) described how events began when an after-hours club was raided by police during a celebration for two Vietnam veterans who had returned home. Eighty people were arrested, and a group of angry residents gathered and began to throw objects at the police. It was reported that someone smashed the window of a clothing store, sparking widespread looting, with the exception of stores marked 'SOUL' by African American proprietors. During the five-day rebellion, 43 people were killed, 473 injured, 7,200 arrested, 2,500 stores vandalised or burned down, 400 families made homeless, and 412 buildings had to be demolished – a visual reminder still evident today in some of the neighbourhoods where the rebellion took place. The total damages cost between \$40 and 80 billion in 1967 valuations (Boyd, p. 208).

Political and cultural events, such as the rebellion of 1967, have had a significant role in shaping art in the City. Detroit has a long, tight-knit relationship with music, finding emancipation and solidarity in the challenges of life, love and the human condition. To quote Cornel West (2017), 'The greatest tradition of moral and spiritual fortitude in the American Empire is the Black musical tradition', setting 'the standard for the Black freedom struggle' (West, p. xx)⁴.

Motown Records, the most popular Black-owned and operated record label in the US (Twohig, 2018), was the creation of Detroit-based songwriter-turned-record-producer, Berry Gordy Jr., combining his love of music with an ardent entrepreneurial drive (Boyd, p. 180). Boyd (2018) described the music of Motown Records during the late 1950s through the early

⁴ Excerpt from *A New Introduction for the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Edition*, p. xv to xxv from *Race Matters* by Cornel West (2017). Boston: Beacon Press.

1970s as 'the soundtrack of a generation' (Boyd, p. 183). In partnership with singer Smokey Robinson in 1958, Gordy released their first song, '*Got a Job*', which secured the finances necessary to form his own company. The song spoke to many of Detroit's working class citizens who were struggling to hold on to jobs in the midst of economic decline (Boyd, p. 181). In the true spirit of self-determination, Boyd (2018) claimed that Gordy took the advice of Smokey Robinson of 'why work for the man, when you can be the man?' and set up his own record label in 1960 (Boyd, p. 182). Boyd (2018) described how the assembly lines provided the inspiration for Gordy's production procedure, with songs rolling off 'like a brand new Cadillac' (Boyd, p. 183). On the inspiration for the name, Gordy wrote:

Because of its thriving car industry, Detroit had long been known as the 'Motor City'. In tribute to what I had always felt was the down-home quality of warm, soulful country-hearted people I grew up around, I used 'town' in place of 'city'. A contraction of 'Motor City' gave me the perfect name – Motown.

Excerpt from Berry Gordy Jr., *To Be Loved* (New York: Warner Books, 1994, pg. 114) (Boyd, p. 182).

Suzanne Smith (2000) documented the interweaving relationships between Motown Records, Detroit politics and the Civil Rights Movement in *Dancing in the Street: Motown and the Cultural Politics of Detroit*. Smith (2000) highlighted how these elements came together on 16 February 1968, on what Mayor Cavanagh proclaimed 'Aretha Franklin Day', a city-wide celebration of Black life, honouring 'Queen of Soul' Franklin's status as a national cultural phenomenon (Smith S. E., p. 209). According to Smith (2000), the 1968 'cultural extravaganza' was part of an effort to promote Mayor Cavanagh and other city officials' vision of what they called 'New Detroit', following the 'turbulent summer' of the 1967 rebellion. Smith (2000) referred to this 'New Detroit' as 'capable of recognizing the talents and hopes of Black Detroit, which Aretha Franklin so powerfully represented' (Smith S. E.,

2000). Martin Luther King Jr. made a surprise visit to the City as part of the celebrations and presented Franklin with an award. Smith (2000) argued that this event demonstrated how, by the late 1960s, Black culture had gained 'tangible political clout', with King's presence at the event symbolising the 'rising power' of cultural figures such as Franklin in the freedom struggle. Smith described how Franklin's rendition of 'Respect' acted as the 'crown jewel' of the event, an anthem expressing the spirit of the civil rights agenda (Smith S. E., p. 212).

Benjamin Twohig (2018) situated the development and success of the Motown label within wider contemporary social and political events, centring around 1968. That year, less than two months after his appearance in Detroit, Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated. At this same time, Black people were being drafted at 'alarming rates' to the Vietnam conflict and the Black Power Movement was developing. Twohig (2018) claimed that in response to these developments, Motown Records shifted its focus from 'music sanctioned by a white audience' to increased political advocacy and 'socially-relevant soul music' (Twohig, pp. 1, 2). Twohig pointed to relevant examples including '*Love Child*' by the Supremes in 1968 about the plight of unmarried teenage mothers as 'the first socially conscious song produced by Motown' (Twohig, p. 2), soon followed by '*Message from a Black Man*' by The Temptations about the experiences of living in the inner-cities, and '*War*' by Edwin Starr in 1970, a protest song against the Vietnam War. Marvin Gaye's 1971 album, '*What's Going On*', became one of the best-selling albums in the history of Motown, and according to Boyd (2018), laid the groundwork for future Black artists. Twohig (2018) claimed that Gaye's education in the process of making '*What's Going On*' 'mirrors the revolution of Black consciousness in the spirit of 1968', with the album's demand for change marking the 'confluence of sacrifices of Black people at the time and the revolutions taking place musically and socially' (Twohig, p. 5). With its symbiotic relationship between Black consciousness and the moral and spiritual fortitude of the Black musical tradition, as described by West (2017), '*What's Going On*' provides a lasting reminder of the cultural

contribution that Motown Records, shaped by the history of Detroit, has made and continues to make to this day.

Sharing a guiding value of self-determination and the DIY spirit, urban farming is another area where Detroit has made a significant contribution on the world stage, arising as self-sufficient responses to social and economic challenges endured by urban residents. Detroit has been a pioneer in the urban-farming and food justice movements for over a century, turning to it as a means of self-sufficiency in times of crises. According to Detroit historian John Gallagher (2010), some of the earliest examples of urban agriculture took place in Detroit (Gallagher, p. 42). This included the creation of Pingree Potato Patches, by Mayor Hazen Pingree, that, in its first year alone, gave 1,000 unemployed Detroiters and their families 'something useful to do', with the operation generating four times as much money as it cost to set up. By 1895, Gallagher (2010) noted that twenty other US cities had created their own urban gardens.

This was echoed time and again in Detroit and across the US in times of crisis, with urban gardening rearing its head with the 'Plant for Freedom' campaign during World War I, a food growing initiative supported by companies including Goodrich Tire Company during the Great Depression, and as Victory Gardens during World War II, producing 42% of America's vegetables during the war (Gallagher, p. 44). Gallagher claimed that the current era of urban gardening began in the 1970s as an 'amalgam of new and old concerns', including a precarious economy, loss of industrial jobs and the 'abandonment of cities', resulting in significant numbers of vacant lots in dozens of 'proud cities nationwide' (Gallagher, p. 45). In Detroit, long-time civil rights and union activist Grace Lee Boggs began a local food movement around 1990 with friends, calling themselves 'Gardening Angels'. And in 1997, the Capuchins, Roman Catholic order of friars, planted Earthworks Urban Farm next to their established soup kitchen, a 1.5-acre certified organic farm. With its mission 'to build a just, beautiful food system through education, inspiration, and community development' (The Capuchin Soup Kitchen, 2022), Earthworks Urban Farm is cited by

Gallagher as an ‘exceptional example of urban farming’ an ‘a national model of non-profit urban farming’ (Gallagher, p. 50).



Figures 6-9: Top row, left: Cadillac Urban Gardens (Sept 2019), right: Earthworks Urban Farm (May 2015). Bottom row, left: MIUFI agrihood (Dec 2016), right: Georgia Street Community Garden (May 2015).

Today with over 244 community gardens, 46 school gardens and 517 family gardens registered with the Detroit Garden Resource Network, urban gardening produces in excess of 330,000 pounds of food in Detroit (Gallagher, p. 51). The above photographs show four such community gardens in Detroit that I visited during my fieldwork between 2015 and 2020, including smaller-scale resident-led gardens, such as Georgia Street Community Garden and Cadillac Urban Gardens, as well as Earthworks Urban Farm, and the Michigan Urban Farming Initiative (MIUFI), describing itself as ‘America’s first sustainable agrihood’.

A City in Bankruptcy

Since the establishment of Pingree Potato Farms in the late nineteenth century, the City of Detroit has experienced waves of economic boom and bust, fluctuating between

great wealth in the heyday of the auto industry a century ago to significant decline over the last fifty years. Its population today is one third of its size in the 1950s (Gallagher, 2010). Its economic base had collapsed, producing unprecedented unemployment and poverty (Sugrue, 2014). In July 2013, city officials filed for municipal bankruptcy under Chapter 9, owing \$18 billion to its creditors. In December 2013, the federal courts formally declared Detroit bankrupt, making it the largest bankrupt city in US history. After an intensive period of financial negotiations with its creditors and a 16-month legal case, on 7 November 2014, Judge Steven Rhodes officially approved the debt adjustment plan, closing the case on Detroit's state of bankruptcy (Dolan, 2014).

Since long before the current bankruptcy situation, global media has been fascinated with the story of Detroit's decline, bombarding the public with articles and programmes that portray Detroit as a ghost town and churning out images of 'ruin porn' Detroit (Marr, 2016). These have presented an image to the wider world of a Detroit without people; a city full of abandoned buildings, overgrown lots and vacant manufacturing plants where industry once thrived. We rarely see its citizens, nor hear their stories of incredible resilience and innovation in the face of adversity. The narrative reinforced by international media has been of a city beyond repair, caused by poor financial management and corruption, an auto industry unable to compete and a failing infrastructure undermined by a shrinking population and depleted tax base. While these factors may be accurate to varying degrees, this narrative fails to represent the continuing vitality of Detroit; its people, who although diminished in number, continue to provide the life blood of the City.

Through this chapter, I demonstrate that since the inception of the City in 1701, residents of Detroit have persevered in the face of adversity and united as a collective force to challenge discrimination and inequality presented by the dominant capitalist order. Throughout Detroit's history, there have been multiple examples of community responses to local and national crises, showing innovation, resilience and creativity through self-determination and mobilised grassroots solutions. As discussed, these examples extend

from the early days of urban farming through the civil rebellions of 1943 and 1967 to Detroit's prominent role in the development of the Civil Rights Movement and Black Nationalism from the 1960s. With the increasing effects of globalisation, including the Financial Crisis and Coronavirus pandemic, I argue that while we are in many ways seeing a continuation of Detroit's long history of community action and self-determination, advances in technology and increased access to information are enabling greater mobilisation, understanding of the relationships between global crises and local impacts, as well as connectedness with wider social movements.

Current Situation in Detroit. At the start of this research project, of the 50 largest US cities, Detroit was ranked highest for unemployment, at 23% (United States Bureau of Labor). It was \$18 billion in debt (*The New York Times*, 2013). It was estimated that 25% of the City's businesses did not pay their water bills (Boyle R. , 2014). The household median income was \$26,325, nearly half the Michigan state average, and 39.3% of its residents lived below the poverty level (United States Census Bureau, n.d.). Its population had reduced by two-thirds in sixty years, and of its 688,701 residents (United States Census Bureau, n.d.), approximately half did not pay taxes (MacDonald & Wilkinson, 2013).

Detroit's population has continued to shrink since the 1950s, and on similar scales, so have the populations of other US cities, including Pittsburgh, Cleveland, St Louis and Buffalo, 'yet those other cities don't convey this same emptiness and feeling of abandonment' (Gallagher, 2010, p. 21).

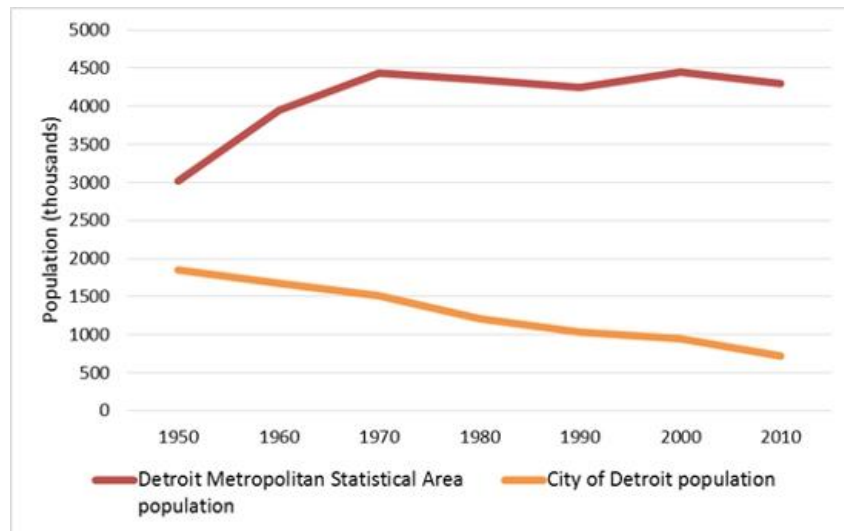


Figure 10: Population of Detroit 1950-2010 (McDonald J. F., 2014b).

Note: Metropolitan Statistical Area in 1950 defined as Wayne, Macomb and Oakland Counties. Monroe and St. Clair Counties are added for 1960, Lapeer County is added for 1970 and later years.

Detroit has suffered from a lack of investment in its infrastructure and basic services that other US citizens likely take for granted. At the time of the bankruptcy filing in July 2013, 40% of streetlights were not working in the City (Guerriero, 2013); police took an average of 58 minutes to respond to emergency call-outs, against a national average of 11 minutes (Bialik, 2013); and the City had lost one-third of its fire service (Neavling, 2013). This has been the result of a combination of compounding factors over many decades, including a significantly reduced tax base, high unemployment and soaring house foreclosures; 45% reduction in revenue sharing from the State of Michigan (Boyle R. , 2014); and systematic poor financial management by city officials.

With minimal funding for basic services, a handful of wealthy business leaders have stepped in to provide targeted investment. Most notable in the current landscape have been Dan Gilbert and Mike Ilitch, both Detroit businessmen whose influence in the City has been significant. These individuals follow in a long tradition of capitalists, as described by Cedric Robinson (2021), as ‘an opportunistic strata, wilfully adaptive to the new conditions and possibilities of the times’ (Robinson, p. 19). Robinson (2021) argued that since the Middle

Ages, capitalists have embedded themselves in the business of the state ‘determining the direction of investment, establishing political security for such investments, encouraging certain commercial networks and relations while discouraging others’ (Robinson, pp. 19, 20). I argue that this tradition has been replicated again in contemporary Detroit.

Dan Gilbert was Founder and Chairman of Quicken Loans, Inc., the nation’s second-largest mortgage lender, and Rock Ventures, LLC, the umbrella entity for his real-estate portfolio. Since 2010, Gilbert had invested \$1.3 billion in 60 commercial properties in Downtown Detroit and employed 11,000 staff (Quicken Loans). Mike Ilitch was the Chairman of Ilitch Holdings, Inc., which owned a considerable number of businesses in the Downtown area. Ilitch was the founder of Little Caesars Pizza, owned the Detroit Red Wings NHL hockey team and Detroit Tigers MLB baseball team, and was Chairman of Olympia Entertainment, covering several of the largest entertainment venues in the Downtown area. Like Henry Ford, these two businessmen-turned-philanthropists have invested corporate finances in improving self-selecting parts of the City, and in return, have become key stakeholders in shaping its future, in line with Robinson’s (2021) description of the long tradition of capitalists (Robinson, p. 19).

The vast bulk of their investment has been concentrated in the area called Greater Downtown⁵, the main business and entertainment district of the City, where these businesses have their headquarters. Greater Downtown has seen unparalleled improvements through corporate investment in an incredibly short time span. For example, between 2010 and 2012, \$2 billion was spent on real-estate development in this small geographical area (detroitsevenpointtwo.com), mainly through private investment. At the time of writing, construction was being completed on the M1-Rail project, with Dan Gilbert of Quicken Loans, Inc. as its Vice Chairman. The project cost was estimated at \$140 million, of

⁵ ‘Greater Downtown’ is an area of 7.2 square miles of Detroit, which includes the neighbourhoods of Downtown, Midtown, New Center, Woodbridge, Eastern Market, Lafayette Park, Rivertown and Corktown (detroitsevenpointtwo.com).

which \$35 million was funded through federal funds and the vast majority through private investment (detroitsevenpointtwo.com). This project was due to cover a small 3-mile stretch within the Greater Downtown area and not extend into the surrounding neighbourhoods, thus creating limited benefit for residents living outside of this heavily-invested-in area. This project was cited by multiple residents during the research as a symbol of the inequity of investment between the Downtown and neighbourhoods.

This progress in Greater Downtown, particularly the speed with which it has been delivered, has been impressive. However, Greater Downtown only equates to a seven square-mile radius out of a City of 139 square miles. It becomes immediately apparent if you travel a few hundred yards in either direction of Greater Downtown that the surrounding neighbourhoods have not seen the benefits of this investment. At the time of writing, only two blocks away, the majority of streetlights still did not work. Large swathes of overgrown land sat empty where family houses used to stand. Small convenience stores that once served the community had been boarded up and scrawled with graffiti. This was the reality for the majority of Detroit's hidden neighbourhoods. They did not feel different as a result of the bankruptcy ruling in November 2014, nor the massive injection of private investment into the Greater Downtown area. At that time, the majority had not received any new investment. These neighbourhoods did not give the impression that they were a part of the forward planning for the City and its brighter future, as has been seen in abundance in Greater Downtown⁶.

The 'Greater Downtown' area represents only 5% of the footprint of the City, yet has benefitted from \$2 billion in real estate development in a period of just two years (detroitsevenpointtwo.com). Why has Greater Downtown, representing only 5% of the total 139 square miles of Detroit, received such a significant majority of the City's regeneration

⁶ 'Greater Downtown' includes the neighbourhoods of Downtown, Midtown, New Center, Woodbridge, Eastern Market, Lafayette Park, Rivertown and Corktown, listed as 35, 36, 9, 24, 18, 14, 25 and 34 in the above map.

investment? Detroit is in the very early days of finding answers to this question, and as such, this study was particularly timely. As the momentum begins to shift for post-bankruptcy Detroit, this has been a critical time for its residents to engage in meaningful dialogue with city officials and business leaders on the future of *their* City, and to develop a strategy for regeneration that considers the collective needs of the neighbourhoods, as well as the City's business district.

Appendix B provides a summary of key events and community responses to crises drawn together from my research to provide a contextual framework to understand the history, development and trajectory that has shaped the economic, social and cultural identities of Detroit.

Structure and Policy Developments in the City

Contemporary public policy context in Detroit. Between 2008 and 2020, the timeframe examined in this research, significant changes took place in city-wide public policy that set the context for the study. Most notably, in the period surrounding the municipal bankruptcy filing in 2013, the City restructured much of its political, governmental and administrative systems in response to the challenges it faced. Four such changes have included: the adoption of a new City Charter (2012), a new district management system and electoral districts (2012), creation of a new City Council (2014), and the election of a new Mayor (2014). The US Census Bureau also conducted its decennial census of the population living in Detroit in 2010, and again in 2020, which resulted in contentious findings that the City had continued to sustain population loss. These results have an impact on the allocation of federal and state funding to the City, and were in the process of legal challenge by the Mayor at the time of writing.

The **Detroit City Charter** has a long history in the City, with seven charters ratified between 1802 and the current 2012 document (City of Detroit, 2012). The Charter is

described by civic education non-profit organisation, Citizen Manual Detroit, as being like the City's constitution, establishing the 'city's local government, outlining its responsibilities as well as the rights of all local citizens – all Detroiters' (Citizen Manual a). The current City Charter was adopted in 2012 by public vote in an exercise described as 'citizens using their democratic right to shape how local government will serve us in Detroit' (Citizen Manual b). The Charter sets out the expectations and requirements of elected and appointed officials, including the City Council and the executive branch of Mayor, structures and systems determining zoning and ordinance, public programmes, services and works, and budgets. It effectively works as a social contract, with the public voting to adopt a city charter that sets out the guaranteed rights of Detroit's citizens (Citizen Manual b).

In 2018, a nine-member Detroit Charter Revision Commission was elected, with a mandate to 'reshape the way the City of Detroit's government operates' (Aguilar, 2021b). After holding 200 formal and informal community meetings and conversations over three years, the Commission devised 'Proposal P', advocating for more than 100 changes to address the significant imbalances that they observed across the City. Analysis of the draft revised charter was undertaken by the Citizens Research Council of Michigan (CRC), who claimed that 'the revised charter represents a major break with the past in its scope and breadth of changes' (Aguilar, 2021b). While Mayor Mike Duggan's administration argued that the proposed changes would bankrupt Detroit's government, the CRC said that it was too soon to determine the real cost of the proposed measures. The CRC's president, Eric Lupher, explained of the City Commission, 'this was a body of people, at least the majority of them, who felt that there are two Detroit's. Downtown, Midtown – certain parts are doing well. But the neighborhoods, the general population, aren't enjoying the prosperity' (Aguilar, 2021b). This echoed the 'two Detroit's' narrative articulated throughout the interviews with residents, as well as the literature review.

The key proposed changes to the Charter were significant. They included creating 120 newly elected positions in City government to increase resident involvement,

establishing a moratorium on water shut offs, reducing public transport fares for low-income residents, an overhaul of affordable housing provision based on Detroiters' actual incomes, and creating a task force to examine reparations and African American justice. Much of this appeared to align with the key concerns raised by residents during the interviews. It also proposed to dilute the 'strong mayor' form of government that exists in Detroit and significantly change the funding and requirements of the City's police force. The revised charter was due to go to the public to vote in the primary elections in August 2021. However, in May that year, the Wayne County Circuit Court ruled that the charter revision question could not be placed on the ballot, as it did not have approval from the governor (CRC).

Detroit City Council Districts was first constituted as a legislative body in 1824, and until 1974, was called the 'Common Council'. Originally, the Council was elected by the City's constituents by city wards, also referred to as 'single-member districts'. In 1918, City Council voted for all members to be elected 'at large' rather than by district. This reduced representation by geography, a given the scale and ethnic diversity of Detroit. Nearly a century on, in 2009, voters passed a referendum to elect the Council by districts with the new district maps drawn in 2012 (Barrett, 2023). This was formally adopted with the overhaul of the City Charter, which established a return to a geographical basis for electing Council members, with seven to be elected by district and two at-large (City of Detroit, 2012). The Charter decreed that district wards would be created of near-equal population and would be 'practicable, contiguous, compact' (City of Detroit, p. 27). As mandated by the 2012 City Charter, City Council must adopt new district boundaries every decade, with the next iteration of redistricted maps to be established for the 2025 Council elections.

The process of redistricting has been perceived by many as challenging for many reasons. Local news outlet, *Bridge Detroit*, argued that the 10.5% reduction in City population confirmed by the 2020 US Census Bureau provided a key challenge to redistricting, with some districts hit harder by the decline than others. This included District 4 which saw an almost 20% reduction in population in the ten years to 2020 (Barrett, 2024).

Bridge Detroit claimed that some residents felt that the ‘public had been provided with little or no information about the proposed changes’ and demanded greater public participation in the redistricting process in order to deliver genuine representation. Through research undertaken at the time, it appeared the opportunities for public input into plans for redistricting were reasonably limited, given the significant impact of the potential change for residents. Available options included completing an online form, attending one of a handful of informal meetings during January 2024, or emailing a City Council representative directly. Seemingly through logistics alone, if a resident were digitally excluded or unavailable during that particular month, their opportunity to input would have been limited.

Some residents raised concerns about neighbourhood block clubs being separated through redistricting, potentially undermining strategic planning efforts that had been built over many years. Sheri Burton, President of the Midwest Civic Council of Block Clubs, was quoted in *Bridge Detroit* as saying, ‘You build your little circle and that becomes a village in your survival... Residents across Detroit were concerned that changing districts would affect efforts to improve services and build relationships with city officials’ (Barrett, 2024). While her own Westside neighbourhood achieved a redistricting outcome that was preferred by the majority of residents, others did not see a favourable result. ‘My heart bleeds for neighborhoods that will see changes’, Burton said (Barrett, 2024). One such neighbourhood was Hope Village, which will move from District 2 to District 5, which includes Midtown and Downtown. Jeffrey Jones, Executive Director of Hope Village Revitalization, expressed his worry that this change will mean ‘competing for attention against much wealthier communities’ (Barrett, 2024).

The new City Council districts will be implemented for the municipal elections in 2025, and time will tell if residents’ concerns about the impact of these changes come to fruition.

A new **City Council** was sworn into office in 2022, serving a four-year term. Mary Sheffield of District 5 was elected as Council President, alongside eight other Council members, six others elected by district and two at-large. The new Council begins its term

fresh off the back of several scandals involving former Council members in recent years. This included two standing Council members, Andre Spivey and Gabe Leland, alongside four City of Detroit personnel, pleading guilty to crimes, forcing them to step down, leaving two Council seats vacant. Two former Council members had their homes raided in 2021, as part of an FBI corruption probe, however neither individual was ultimately charged with any wrongdoing. These events were not isolated, but rather, formed part of a history of scandal and corruption that has plagued Detroit politics for decades. This set a challenging backdrop for the new City Council at a time of low public trust and significant change for the City, including redistricting both at Council and Congressional levels. It has also acted as a catalyst for Council President Mary Sheffield and other officials who have campaigned on a platform of affecting change in Detroit to work towards holding the City to account and cleaning up politics. It was on this basis that Mary Sheffield announced her intention to run for Detroit City Mayor in 2025 (Afana, 2023), with the ambitious priorities of reparations for Black Detroiters victimised by urban renewal and reimbursing Detroiters who have overpaid in property taxes.

2013 saw the **Election of a New Mayor** of Detroit, Mike Duggan, who took up office in January 2014 as the 75th mayor of Detroit (City of Detroit, 2024d). At the time of writing, Duggan was serving his third four-year term, which began in 2021. Duggan was the first mayor elected in Detroit following the City's bankruptcy filing in 2013, and its subsequent release from emergency management established by the State Governor. Mayor Duggan's 2013 election was seen as a surprise by many, having won by twenty percentage points despite launching an unplanned write-in ballot campaign, and critically, not having previous political experience, instead with a background as a County prosecutor and running Detroit Medical Center (Dovere, 2017). Many journalists and activists have pointed to Duggan's race as a challenging factor in his role as Mayor of Detroit (Dovere, 2017), (Elrick, 2023), (Smith M. , 2021), (Zorach, 2021), described as 'the first white mayor in decades in a city where nearly 80% of the residents are Black' (Smith M. , 2021).

According to the City of Detroit website, ‘when [Duggan was] first elected, Detroit was in the midst of bankruptcy and could not deliver the most basic services due to broken processes and a lost tax base’ (City of Detroit, 2024d). The City claimed that:

Under Mayor Duggan’s leadership so far, 35,000 of the vacant homes (of 40,000 abandoned homes) have been removed or renovated, City services are reliable, and the City’s strong financial stewardship has brought the City’s credit rating to within one notch of investment grade.

The City also highlighted the Mayor’s success in ‘landing major employers’ including Stellantis’ new Jeep assembly-plant, GM’s Factory Zero, Ford’s Michigan Central Campus and a new 4 million square foot Amazon fulfilment centre, all contributing to ‘drive down Detroit’s unemployment rate to its lowest level (4.8%) in recorded history’ (City of Detroit, 2024d). In a *Financial Times* article, Mayor Duggan claimed that when he started in office, ‘the problems Detroit was facing were just Detroit – no other city was talking about bankruptcy or streetlights. Today, the challenges that we’re dealing with, every other city has’ (Smith M. , 2021). In an article published in *Politico* magazine, journalist Edward-Isaac Dove (2017) described that ‘the low expectations of a beaten down city and massive room for improvement’ have certainly helped Duggan to win a third mayoral term, as well as his focus on getting the basics right, such as reinstating miles of broken streetlights, in a move described by Dove as ‘both rudimentary and revolutionary’.

While many journalists, political commentators and city officials have highlighted positive outcomes achieved during Duggan’s administration (Dove, 2017) (Smith M. , 2021), (Waldmeir, 2018), my media review uncovered a similar proportion of articles from a more critical perspective (Elrick, 2023), (Wimbley, 2021) (Zorach, 2021). Some critics of Duggan have expressed that his support for tax breaks for corporations and billionaire-developers has been at the expense of struggling taxpayers. In an article published in the *Detroit Free Press* following a State of the City address, journalist M.L. Elrick (2023) argued that the mayor defended the billionaires instead of reassuring Detroiters he would ‘make

sure the fat cats keep their word' (Elrick, 2023). In the article, Elrick pointed to examples including the 'land swap' between the City and Moroun family company, \$80 million in tax incentives offered to the Ilitch family and \$60 million tax break for Dan Gilbert's Hudson Block project, the latter which received significant public backlash once details were released through the media (Elrick, 2023). And while journalist Dovere (2017) highlighted some of the Duggan administration's successes in office, he also argued a similar stance about the mayor's affiliation with corporations and billionaires, claiming that 'corporate barons like Quicken Loans founder Dan Gilbert were engaged and encouraged [by the Duggan administration], despite complaints from some that they were taking advantage of a city too ready to roll over for him' (Dovere, 2017). In another article, journalist Nat M. Zorach (2021) took his critique of the mayor a step further, making the connection between the advantaged position of developers in the City and the history of colonialism, arguing that:

Mike Duggan's legacy was built out of the ashes of the city's bankruptcy...

This meant he, like all the colonial developers who descended upon the city to pick up the pieces of the 2008 housing market collapse, was left with a "blank slate".

Eliminating costly debt meant he could build something from scratch, scent-marking on every street corner and borrowing against the future to build his own idea of progress – every white man's colonial dream (Zorach, 2021).

This viewpoint echoes earlier arguments from the literature chapter, including Racial Capitalism and expressions of a callous American Empire (Andrews, 2021b) (Robinson, 2021) (West, 2017), as well as the concept of debt imperialism (Graeber, 2014) (Hudson, 2003), while placing them within the context of the local government structures in the City of Detroit.

In another public critique of the Detroit mayor, a social media campaign was launched, challenging author Alice Randall's plan to name Mayor Duggan as a Saint of

historic Detroit neighbourhood, Black Bottom, alongside the publication of her novel about the area. The Black Bottom neighbourhood was demolished in the 1950s to make way for the construction of the new I-375 expressway, displacing thousands of Black Detroiters. At the time, City leaders and developers called it 'urban renewal', while many Black Detroiters referred to it as 'negro removal'. The social media campaign argued that Mayor Duggan was more interested in corporate interests than the suffering of many Black Detroiters. It referred to Duggan as the 'saint of corporate welfare' and expressed the view that 'too many BLACK Detroiters have suffered under this man's watch' alongside a photo of Mayor Duggan (Wimbley, 2021).

Nicole Small, Chair of the Detroit Charter Commission, expressed in the *Fox2 Detroit* article:

I think that his [Duggan's] behavior now and even prior to becoming mayor are more reflective of those that gentrified and participated in the decision to have negro removal when you displace Black families.

Let him come to your city and shut off water to more than 2,000 people's homes, let him come to your city and displace Black business-owners (Wimbley, 2021).

This echoed Zorach's (2021) critical views of mayor's perceived affiliation with corporate interests, in which he argued that while the Duggan administration is 'getting stuff done', 'the city is being run by a guy who seems to have a pretty deep aversion to the democratic process and a pretty deep affinity for dark corporate money suggesting that they are deeply conflicting priorities in the question For Whomst [sic] We Are Building a New Detroit' (Zorach, 2021). Related concepts are explored further in the section, 'Who Decides the City?'.

Even the most critical articles generally contained at least one reference to a positive achievement made by Duggan during his-post bankruptcy administration, even if the journalists were critical of his allegiances or his methodology (Dovere, 2017), (Smith M. ,

2021), (Zorach, 2021). Set against a backdrop of low public trust caused by systemic corruption and incompetence over decades, journalist Dove (2017) described of Duggan, 'there's no mystique to what he's doing, or why people seem to want four more years of him' as 'a big part of whatever success he's had is just showing up, after decades when so many of his predecessors didn't'.

However, even if, for the first time in years, 'government [in Detroit] is working', the 'politics remain complicated' (Dove, 2017). Dove (2017) claimed that when asked, aspiring White politicians often went silent about Duggan, viewing public praise for him as too risky, and stating that while he had done a considerable amount for the nearly eight square miles downtown, they did not want to risk votes in the other 131 miles. Dove (2017) argued that despite some successes, Mayor Duggan was far from running a functional city. He argued that it was still segregated, still had a long way to go in garnering public opinion and was still failing to provide many basic services – and, like Sugrue and Putnam – pointed to the City's 'abysmal' public school system as one of the most significant concerns (Dove, 2017). Duggan himself, in a *New York Times* article after he won his third term, admitted that 'Detroit remains a work in progress' (Smith M. , 2021).

The next Detroit mayoral election will be next year in 2025 and will see a new mayor elected. Mayor Duggan recently announced that he will instead be running for Governor in the 2026 election (Afana D. , 2024). With the recent changes to City Council and Congressional districts, the contentious City Charter Commission and the ten-year milestone from the City being released from controversial emergency management, the public's decision at the next mayoral election will be a significant marker in the desired direction of travel for the City of Detroit.

Alongside changes within the public policy and political landscape, another significant change in Detroit since the bankruptcy filing has been the role of **Foundations** in supporting the viability and operations of the City. This has represented, what many have expressed, as a 'new kind of philanthropy' than has previously been seen (*Philanthropy News Digest*,

2014), encouraging foundations to ‘think outside the box’ (Chambers, 2014) in the case of Detroit.

Prior to 2013, foundations had been an important part of the City’s community development landscape, based on a more ‘traditional’ version of philanthropy (*Philanthropy News Digest*, 2014), focusing on specific social issues or smaller geographical areas with smaller levels of investment. Short-term, localised initiatives were a prime example of this approach. An example of this was the Detroit Neighborhood Fund Initiative (DNF), which aimed to ensure near-east side neighbourhoods benefitted from plans to develop the east waterfront before regional economic downturn brought this to a standstill (CFSEM). However, the bankruptcy filing saw a significant change to philanthropy in Detroit, in scale, breadth and collaboration, spearheaded by a new approach from foundations through their role in the ‘grand bargain’.

In response to Detroit’s bankruptcy, 12 foundations pledged a total of \$366 million as part of the ‘grand bargain’, along with \$350 million from the State of Michigan and a commitment by the Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA) to raise a further \$100 million. The purpose of the grand bargain was to bolster the municipal pension system and prevent the DIA collection being sold to pay off City debts. In an article in the *Philanthropy News Digest*, it was stated that the foundations’ commitment to the grand bargain and to large-scale revitalization projects in Detroit ‘represent a new kind of philanthropy – one that sees foundations and non-profits taking on riskier and more assertive roles in a variety of roles and situations’ (*Philanthropy News Digest*, 2014). Kresge Foundation President, Rip Rapson, expressed:

When a community is faced with these difficulties – the financial collapse, the foreclosure crisis, disintegration in City Hall, combined with the auto industry collapse – it [raises] the question... whether philanthropy is prepared to step out in a slightly more assertive way and be helpful (*Philanthropy News Digest*, 2014).

According to multiple news sources, such as *The Detroit News* (Chambers, 2014) and *Philanthropy News Digest* (2014), foundations were giving differently in Detroit, which changed the landscape of giving among major players, such as the Kresge Foundation and Ford Foundation (Chambers, 2014). According to Lawrence T. McGill, Vice President of the Foundation Center that tracks and analyses data on philanthropy activity globally, 'the scope of the Detroit giving is unmatched', 'it's close to unprecedented in terms of the foundations trying to solve the solvency issues' (*Philanthropy News Digest*). McGill expressed that the \$330 million given by foundations towards Detroit's grand bargain, caused his 'eyes to pop out' when compared to the \$550 million that was given nationally by foundations during the 5-year financial crisis between 2008 and 2012' (*Philanthropy News Digest*, 2014). McGill explained what he perceived as the unique factor, the 'symbolic aspect of the [DIA] museum being threatened', which he described as galvanising foundations to collaborate on the grand bargain offer, explaining that 'it wasn't just a response to a city in trouble' (Chambers, 2014).

Mariam Nolan, President of the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan, one of the contributing foundations and earliest collaborators on the grand bargain, explained the two options considered to address the City's debts (Chambers, 2014). One involved up to ten years of litigation and the other, 'a mediated settlement to allow the city to move forward', comprising of the grand bargain (Chambers, 2014). The main foundations to contribute to the settlement were the Ford Foundation, Kresge Foundation, WK Kellogg Foundation, John S and James L Knight Foundation, William Davidson Foundation and the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan. Sue Mosey, President of Midtown Detroit Inc, a non-profit community development organisation, expressed that 'foundations and non-profits have always played a key role in Detroit's economic revival, yet the new roles being taken on by foundations have moved the bankruptcy along to allow Detroit to start its newest chapter' (Chambers, 2014).

While there has been much support and praise for the role of foundations in helping lift Detroit out of bankruptcy, there has also been some criticism, with some in the philanthropy sector expressing concern about foundations as ‘civic saviours’, with philanthropy or the non-profit sector providing long-term subsidy for the work of government. To this end, Darren Walker, President of Ford Foundation (Chambers, 2014), explained his Foundation’s rationale for support to help get Detroit ‘back on the starting block’, citing that while lessons can be learned from Detroit, it does not set a precedent for bailing out other cities. While Tonya Allen, President of the Skillman Foundation, expressed her concern, arguing that currently in Detroit, ‘the nonprofit sector is subsidising government work’, which she argued could be justified on occasion but cannot be sustained in the long run, as the sector would lose its important role for developing innovation, making connections and taking risks. Darren Walker expressed of the situation in Detroit:

It would be hubris to call philanthropy a savior here. We are partners with the City and public and private sector to help build... We have to get out of our narrow boxes. Bold problems require bold actions. They require us to extend ourselves in a way we normally don’t (Chambers, 2014).

These points echo arguments presented in earlier sections of the thesis and will be discussed in subsequent chapters through analysis of interviews and walking tours with residents. One such argument relates to the tension expressed through self-provisioning in the US (Kinder, 2016) and the Big Society agenda in the UK (Gilchrist & Morris, 2011), seen by some as subsidising the work of local government in ensuring the basic services were provided and the social contract met. This shares similarities with the critique of foundations in post-bankruptcy Detroit and potentially setting a precedent for other cities experiencing economic challenges. However, it is also an example of where, through rethinking the role of philanthropy, stakeholders have demonstrated a fresh approach based on adaptability and collaboration in response to the new urban crisis (Clos, 2014).

Foundations of Detroit

Like much of the history the Western world and its imperial legacy, Detroit's story since its inception in 1701, was largely borne out of a desire for economic growth and colonial expansion, achieved in a large part through the exploitation of the area's natural resources. The story of Detroit can be interpreted as a formative imperialist narrative in the early days of capitalism, which has contributed to shaping the structures and values of our contemporary dominant Western hegemony. From the region's early days as a French settlement seeking to harness the potential of the profitable trans-Atlantic fur trade, structural inequality was present. This system predominantly maximised the riches of the 'free white residents', while enslaving much of the Indigenous American⁷ and African American populations for labour 'that greased the wheels of trade' (Miles, 2017, p. 15). Historian Tiya Miles (2017) described this as 'a contest between European empires dedicated to a modern capitalist ideology and longing to control the natural resources of North America' in their drive for profits' (Miles, pp. 15, 8).

The role of water

The area of the Great Lakes, surrounding the City now known as Detroit, was abundant in natural resources, centred around the free flowing of water of the Detroit River, tributaries and lakes for which the area got its name. Since the beginning of its history, water has always been the life blood of Detroit, as well as a focal point of its many power struggles, with those in control of the water supply holding the power to the region. For many years, Indigenous People⁸, including the Ottawa, Huron, Ojibwe and Potawatomi, lived off the land surrounding what was known in the 1600s by its Anishabe place name,

⁷ 'Indigenous American' has been selected as a term currently used in the United States, where 'Native American has been widely used but is falling out of favor with some groups, and the terms American Indian or Indigenous American are preferred by many Native people' (National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian, 2022)

⁸ 'Indigenous People' has been selected as an inclusive term that refers to those peoples with pre-existing sovereignty who were living together as a community prior to contact with settler populations, most often – though not exclusively – Europeans. Retrieved from UCLA Resources on Native American and Indigenous Affairs (UCLA, 2020)

'Bkejwanong' (Miles, p. 3), later named 'Detroit' or 'strait', a French word meaning a narrow channel that joins two bodies of water. Miles (2017) described that in the late 17th century, local people were a 'motley crew' of Indigenous Americans, French Canadians, British and Africans. Most of Detroit's early residents arrived at the Strait as free individuals, but a significant number were then held as slaves (Miles, p. 5). Miles argued that in the story of Detroit, 'Native Americans, African Americans and European Americans were differently positioned on this quest' (Miles, p. 6).

In 1701, Officer Antoine Laumet de La Mothe, Sieur de Cadillac, established a settlement on this location to expand the French Empire, 'dreaming of the personal riches he would accrue' from the fur trade (Miles, p. 7). White French settlers quickly moved in, recreating the culture, architecture and customs of their home country. Miles (2017) described how these settlers established 'ribbon farms', vertical homesteads that opened out to the river at one end and to orchards and forests at the other. Ribbon farms continued to be in public consciousness, having been raised during the fieldwork in a Southwest Detroit walking tour (Shields, 2020). This was an arrangement whereby everyone – or in those days, all White French men – could enjoy the benefits of this water-rich land, flowing from the 'magical liquid highway' of the Detroit River (Miles, p. 10). Miles (2017) argued that free White residents of early Detroit were 'fiercely resourceful' in 'plundering the natural resources in order to profit beyond their own needs' (Miles, p. 12). Miles (2017) argued that De La Mothe, or 'Cadillac' as he is often known, knew the industrial and imperial strength of the fort's position in the new world, stating, 'From his strategic strait, he [Cadillac] hoped to control one of the most powerful resources in the development of human civilization: water' (Miles, 2017).

I argue that this can be seen as the start of the battle for water in Detroit which continues today. Environmental justice scholar Cristy Clark (2019) described that 'the act of claiming the right to water is often an act of resistance to capitalism's process of accumulation by dispossession' (Clark, p. 80). The beginning of a shift from water as a

commons, an abundant natural resource for all, to water as commodity, as Clark (2019) described, was the 'next logical frontier in capitalism's insatiable need to grow' (Clark, p. 94). Clark's (2019) position builds on arguments by advocates of the global water justice movement that water plays an integral role in a 'key strategic battle in the fight for a different vision of society' built on an alternative way of relating to each other and to the environment, and that by extension, an 'instrumental tool for the pursuit of an alternative vision of society' (Clark, p. 94). In this narrative of Detroit, water carries powerful symbolism, first as a commons, abundantly available to all, and second, as freedom. As echoed in the interviews and walking ethnographies with Detroit residents during research, water has been, and continues to be a powerful, emotive and significant issue for people of the City of Detroit.

The right to land

The question of land has been an equally fervent topic during the interviews with Detroit residents and in the literature review, often described in relation to property rights, housing policy and self-determination, in a continuous interweaving of narratives of a past, present and future city. Miles (2017) argued that 'Detroit was born out of the forced captivity of indigenous and African people and the taking of land occupied by Native people' (Miles, p. 2). In her book, *The Dawn of Detroit: A Chronicle of Slavery and Freedom in the City of the Straits*, Miles (2017) poetically described:

The burn that Detroiters feel – that the nation uncomfortably intuits as it looks upon the beleaguered city as a symbol of progress and of defeat – traces back through distant time, to the global desire to make lands into resources, the drive to turn people into things, the quest for imperial dominance, and the tolerance for ill-gotten gain... Deep histories flow beneath present inequalities, silent as freshwater streams (Miles, p. 1).

As with all cities, Detroit's present and its future are inextricably linked to the story of its past. It is a past built on inspirational accounts of enterprise, innovation and the realisation of the American Dream, as well as harrowing stories of slavery, colonialism and segregation. As a researcher, interested in residents' creative reimaginings of the future of their City, it was critical to understand the history and foundation that has made Detroit what it is today, and learn from the often marginalised voices of the people who shaped it.

Through the writings of Herb Boyd (2018), Sara Safransky (2018), P.E. Moskowitz (2018) and Thomas Sugrue (2014), it has been argued that throughout the history of Detroit, property relations have been 'thoroughly saturated in racism' through colonialism, slavery and segregation practices (Safransky, pp. 502-3). Safransky (2018) argued that this has been played out within a broader context of racial and cultural politics of land and property in the United States and by a nation that has continued to perpetuate White property privilege (Safransky, p. 500).

Historian Herb Boyd (2018) argued that property issues went beyond the politics of land to the treatment of human beings. According to Boyd (2018), Detroit's treatment of people as property, in the form of slavery, dates back to 1736, when the first reference to 'Black slaves' was made. When the French conducted the first census in 1750, 33 of Detroit's 483 inhabitants were enslaved people, both Indigenous American and African American, in just 33 years, this increased to 179 enslaved people, and by the next census, enslaved people accounted for 5% of the total population (Boyd, pp. 17, 18, 21). As slavery was abolished following the US Civil War, Congress established privileged White land ownership into law through the Indian Appropriation Act and Dawes Act, resulting in a loss of the majority of Indigenous American land (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 80). In the case of Detroit, Safransky (2018) argued that this precarious relationship between people and property continued to manifest itself into the 20th century through the American Dream that celebrated homeownership, as the city with the second-highest homeownership in the

country, and now in the 21st century, stands 'as an exemplar for housing precarity and urban land crisis' (Safransky, p. 500).

Within the context of Black Radicalism, the question of land was central to the struggle for self-determination. Safransky (2018) pointed to Malcolm X's famous 1963 'Message to the Grassroots' speech in Detroit, which argued that 'land is the basis of freedom, justice and equality' (Safransky, pp. 504-5). Safransky (2018) linked this back to the 1967 Detroit uprising and argued that far from being an isolated event, similar rebellions occurred across major city in the United States with a sizeable Black population, with 329 major rebellions taking places across 257 different cities between 1964 and 1967 (Safransky, p. 502). In the 1967 rebellion in Detroit, Ahmad Rahman (2008) argued that rather than direct violence at civilians, rioters – or activists – directed their actions towards property as 'the most visible symbols of capitalism and racism' that embodied the unequal power relations in the City (Rahman, p. 184). Similar actions have been demonstrated through later movements, such as annual May Day protests staged by Occupy and other anti-capitalist activists targeting corporations and property in London, New York and other cities across the globe (*The Guardian*, 2001) (Devereux, 2012). Safransky (2018) argued that such events were part of a developing land justice movement being fought to develop alternative ways of thinking and being in relationship to land.

While conducting her own fieldwork in Detroit between 2010 to 2012 to understand stakeholders' claims to 'abandoned land' in the City, Safransky (2018) observed five majority-Black cities in Michigan with emergency managers (Safransky, p. 506). Safransky noted that once Detroit too fell into emergency management in 2013, this resulted in over half of African Americans in Michigan 'essentially having their voting rights nullified' (2018, p. 506), with unelected emergency managers taking control of their cities. Safransky (2018) described the strength of feeling in public meetings about what she called the 'state takeover' in which people carried memories of unfinished historic struggles to claim space and citizenship being relived through present policies. This echoed Tiya Miles (2017)

argument that ‘the odds have been against some Detroiters since the dawn of the city’s founding’ (Miles, pp. 13-14).

These arguments coalesce around a relationship between race, land and the crisis of inclusion resulting from the dominant capitalist order. Miles (2017) and Safransky’s (2018) arguments showed a clear similarity with Thomas Sugrue’s (2014) viewpoint that Detroit’s urban crisis emerged as a consequence of two of the most important, interrelated and unresolved problems in American history: that capitalism generates economic inequality and that African Americans have disproportionately borne the impact of that inequality (2014, p. 5). On the related concept of Racial Capitalism, Cedric Robinson (2021) and, more recently, Kehinde Andrews (2021b), argued that the power dynamics of race was in-built within capitalism. Andrews wrote, ‘Racism is not the glue that holds the system together, but the material of which it is comprised’ (2021b, p. xv). Through the lens of Racial Capitalism (Andrews, 2021b) (Robinson, 2021) and Critical Race Theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017), it can be argued that Detroit’s history appears to lay bare a system of embedded structural racism from the City’s inception that has privileged the position of the White, culture-enforcing, land-owning classes – and during the 17th and 18th centuries, slave-owning as well – at the expense of the local Black and Indigenous populations. Populations, who, as a result of being stolen away from their homes or being stripped of their land, culture and heritage, had been positioned as an essential part of the labour force which enabled the powerful to amass even greater wealth at their expense. While in *How to Kill a City* (2018), P.E. Moskowitz was writing about contemporary Detroit, his argument could equally be applied to the early days of the city, when he argued that ‘Detroit’s rebirth has been built on the backs of people who were too poor to leave’ (2018, p. 95).

Cedric Robinson (2021) argued that since as early as the 12th century, ‘slave labor as a critical basis of production would continue without any significant interruption until the twentieth century’ (Robinson, p. 11). This, Robinson (2021) argued, was based on a tendency of European – and later Western – civilization, through capitalism, to construct

social orders into racial ones, based on differentiating and exaggerating differences (Robinson, p. 26) for the 'further accumulation of power and wealth' of the privileged classes (Robinson, p. 21). In capitalism's insatiable hunger for growth, slavery has been revealed as the most egregious manifestation of capitalism's values of profits over people, whereby people themselves were turned into profits. Within an urban context, this thesis explores the central question of who actually decides the city as it relates to ongoing contemporary philosophical interrogations of rights and privileges, and ultimately, in the game of capitalism, whose interests win out?

A review of literature on Detroit's history paints a picture of a place that has, since its inception, faced a struggle between an abundance of natural resources, challenging conditions, competing interests and a resulting divergence in economic and social equality. As Miles (2017) described of the so-called 'River People' who lived on the 'Coast of the Strait', 'spaces of merger shaped by conflict are difficult places to reside and at the same time, are home' (Miles, p. 5). I conjecture that there is a link between this early description of the drive of the Indigenous people of Detroit with the concept of 'DIY' described by residents as being 'deeply engrained in Detroit's culture' (Cheek, 2020) and 'the spirit of Detroit that has always existed' (Dakoske, 2020). One can imagine in the wild territory of Detroit's forests and abundant waters, amidst what Miles (2017) described as the struggles for 'red, black and white American freedoms in the late 18th and early 19th centuries' (2017, p. 6), the seeds of the DIY spirit taking shape, 'with that spirit etched into having to constantly invent – and reinvent new and innovative ways of problem solving' (McCallum, 2020) two centuries later.

Through the literature review (Kinder, 2016) and resident interviews (Cheek, 2020) (DeSantis, 2020) (Emery, 2020) (McCallum, 2020) (Patel, 2019), people spoke of the DIY spirit as the need for self-sufficiency in response to contemporary Detroit's industrial decline, coupled with its history of poverty and disinvestment within a neoliberal context. The self-determination and sufficiency that Kimberly Kinder (2016) described as being necessary to

deal with the 'precarious conditions of everyday life' in contemporary Detroit could be extended to a multitude of residents' experiences at different points throughout Detroit's history over four centuries. Historian Herb Boyd (2018) observed as common practice across Black communities in Detroit:

It has been documented that whenever Black aspirations are denied and when social and political prohibitions block them from enjoying their full civil and human rights, in the words of Booker T. Washington, Marcus Garvey, and Elijah Muhammad, they begin to 'do for self' (Boyd, p. 157).

Boyd described the 'Do for Self' philosophy, originating in part by Nation of Islam founder Elijah Muhammad and adopted by the Reverend Albert Cleage in his vision for the fight for Black self-determination. In this 1968 speech, Cleage reframed the concept of 'Do for Self' as a call to action for Black militants, through self-determination, to transform the Black ghetto into a Black community (Boyd, p. 137).

During one of the walking ethnographies of Southwest Detroit, Alondra Carter-Alvizo (2019b) described a 'DIY movement of hustle' from within the Latinx community as an integral part of self-determined community building. Carter-Alvizo (2019b) described this characteristic within the Latinx community as part of the 'immigrant story' of Southwest Detroit, in which people came to the United States with nothing but the clothes on their back and built a new life. Carter-Alvizo (2019b) argued that what was unique to the Latinx communities of Southwest Detroit was that they supported one another financially to start businesses and buy homes, rather than relying on multinational banks, seeing this support as part of a process of enabling the whole community to be strengthened.

In *City and Psyche: An Exploration into the Archetype of City*, Paul F. Jones (2003) imagined the city as a psychological, as well as physical and cultural phenomenon, describing that 'the city can be imagined to house the communal soul' (Jones P. F., p. 7). In

the case of Detroit, I argue that while the DIY spirit may have been further embedded into Detroit's collective psyche during the City's challenging last century, it has its origins in a long history of self-sufficiency, resilience and creative land use, dating back over four centuries to the Indigenous Americans, early settlers and immigrants drawn to the area's natural abundance, while threatened by the harsh winter climate and rugged terrain. I argue that these experiences, relationships and collective activity over time – 'the social and political life of the city' (Jones P. F., p. 7) – have all contributed to a 'communal soul' of Detroit with self-sufficiency, innovation, resilience and community at its core. Through the research, I have come to find that it is not a new movement of DIY in 21st century Detroit, but a foundational spirit of self-sufficiency engrained in the City that runs as a thread through its history, acting as a tool of survival during the challenges of the present, and contributing to a vision for a reimagined future.

Who Decides the City?

This section explores the relationship of geography, race and economic status to decision-making and influence in the City of Detroit. It considers environmental justice, urban planning, infrastructure investment and systems of governance that have perpetuated a cycle of racial inequality and disenfranchisement in many urban centres across the US, with a particular focus on how these factors have coalesced in the Detroit. It explores the concept of the right to the city and how processes of neoliberalisation have undermined aspects of civil society. In this section, I examine how neoliberal systems that prioritise corporate interests over human wellbeing have disproportionately impacted low-income neighbourhoods in the City of Detroit. I conclude by considering the role of community development practice in responding to these emerging challenges and shining a light on the critical value of residents' lived experience in informing policy and resource decisions.

According to contemporary practitioners, the field of community development 'espouses egalitarian values and is concerned with enhancing democracy through greater participation' (Shaw M. , 2011). However, as Julia Fursova (2016) argued, autonomy within community development has suffered at the hands of neoliberal austerity measures and co-optation. Fursova (2016) argued that, due to being immersed in the discourse of neoliberal capitalism, community development and the wider non-profit sector have been 'pro-hegemonic', conforming to processes of gentrification and privatisation that have excluded marginalised community members (Fursova, p. 2 and 4). Drawing on Gramsci and Freire, Julia Fursova (2016), Peter Mayo (1999) and Mae Shaw (2011) have argued for the adoption of a reflexive approach to 'address the tensions inherent in community development' (Shaw M. , 2011), and ultimately contribute to more effective practice for the benefit of marginalised communities.

Julia Fursova (2016) described two commonly understood and distinct approaches within community development practice. The integrationist approach, which she described as attempting to work *with* the state through established channels, and the oppositional

approach mobilising *against* the dominant forces of the state. Fursova (2016) argued that the two approaches were not mutually exclusive in response to current events, given the complexity of the world we live in (Fursova, p. 5).

Considered through this lens, the research found numerous examples of community initiatives from the Detroit research that have adopted integrationist and oppositional approaches with differing outcomes and efficacy. Examples of a more integrationist nature have included neighbourhoods in receipt of the Mayor's Strategic Neighborhood Fund (The Neighborhoods, a) and initiatives receiving funds from the City and developers, such as The Empowerment Plan (2019a) and Ponyride (2016). In many ways, these are viewed as some of Detroit's most successful examples of recent community development initiatives, as they have achieved their goals within a short period of time, gained attention at home and abroad, and won awards from the City. These examples have built on Marjorie Mayo's description of community development, as being located 'tactically inside and strategically outside the system' (Mayo P. , 1999, p. 6). They have effectively built bridges with officials and networks from inside the system to affect positive change for the common good, including for marginalised groups outside of the system. One such example was the North Corktown Neighborhood Association (North Corktown Neighborhood Association, b). Having accepted that development was inevitable in their centrally located neighbourhood, they chose that rather than fight against the City and developers, the Association used bridging social capital to work with city planners to determine the shape of the impending development.

By contrast, an oppositional approach can often take significantly longer to develop than an integrationist one and face more challenges in delivering tangible change in the short term. However, there are key examples, such as the Civil Rights and Women's Liberation Movements, which, through sustained focus and significant mobilisation, have achieved far-reaching social impact sustained over several decades. More localised expressions can take the form of local-action groups mobilised to challenge housing development or petitions against withdrawal of community assets. Local examples in Detroit

included the Brother Nature urban farm (Brother Nature Produce) making use of vacant land to test new models of self-sufficient, independent living, and the Coalition for Property Tax Justice (2023) that fighting for a radical overhaul of policy on housing, taxes and compensation for residents.

Fursova (2016) argued that it was naïve to presuppose that all community development projects aim to destabilise hegemonic structures, just as it was to assume that community development practice was politically neutral (Fursova, p. 10). When set within a Western urban development context, built on liberal values of property rights (Fursova, p. 10) and driven by capitalist expectations of perpetual growth (Graeber, 2014), one can see how community development activity was founded on a political agenda that continues to exist today, whether or not all practitioners are self-aware of their role within it.

Adopting a reflexive approach to my own work, I have considered how my own role as an employee of a large a housing association, acting as development partner for a local authority on a large-scale urban regeneration project, may have both perpetuated and challenged embedded neoliberal structures and a Western obsession with continual growth. Driven by values of social justice, equity and inclusion, I was drawn to the regeneration project as I believed that it offered a unique, albeit predominantly integrationist, approach to community development as it sought to regenerate the 2,750-home neighbourhood over a 20-plus year period, prioritising community cohesion, inclusion and participation. The housing association in question, with its roots in 1960s housing advocacy, was proud of its innovative social-enterprise model of using surplus generated through the sale of private homes to fund the development of new social housing, at a time when many other housing associations had halted their social housing development programmes due to the UK conservative government's reduction in funding. While the project's objectives prioritise achieving public good, they are still integrationist in approach, as they work within established structures and neoliberal values, rather than in opposition to them. I recognise that I have been working within a neoliberal system that assumed a necessary process of

change through regeneration, at times, expecting often-marginalised, low-income residents to accept this change as inevitable, while also presenting financial incentives to individuals in exchange for their cooperation. This raises questions around who has the right to the city and how this relates to factors of proximity to power, resources and established networks in decision-making. Following the research, this will continue to be an important aspect of my self-reflective practice going forward.

Within an urban studies context, David Harvey (1989) argued from a Marxist position that the right to the city was fundamentally about 1) the right to the use of the surplus value that is redistributed in the city and, by extension, 2) the decision to determine what kind of city was created through the use of this surplus value. From my own example above, a literal manifestation of this is in the housing association's decision to use profits from property sales to fund the development of social housing as key to its mission and social purpose. Fursova (2016) built on Harvey's (2012) view that 'the whole neoliberal restructuring of the urban' amounts to 'privatization of control over the surplus', arguing that this was the central stage for political and class struggle (Fursova, p. 6). While in contemporary Detroit, this can be seen in some of the City's decision-making priorities, which have allocated tax breaks and public funding to corporations. According to P.E. Moskowitz (2018), examples of this have included \$175million in tax breaks to Marathon Petroleum to expand their oil refinery in one of the nation's most polluted neighbourhoods in return for only 15 local jobs, and Detroit City Council paying 60% of the costs or \$261.5million towards a hockey arena, funds that could have otherwise gone to public schools, while the developers, kept all of the profits (Moskowitz P. E., p. 97).

This trend of corporate players determining the use of city surplus value to shape the city was seen throughout the research. Many of these Detroit examples centred on low-income neighbourhoods, often those with a majority-African American or Latinx population, disproportionately impacted by environmental and urban policy decisions apparently enacted with minimal input from the people who would be directly affected in an expression of a

denied right to the city (Harvey, 2012). This included neighbourhoods in Southwest Detroit, such as the 48217 and Delray neighbourhoods, which studies have shown to have experienced poorer health and educational engagement outcomes than their suburban counterparts (Mohai, Kweon, Lee, & Ard, 2011). Other historic examples, including Detroit's former Black Bottom neighbourhood that shared similar features of economic status and majority population of people of colour, were also found to have disproportionately borne the brunt of urban-planning decisions. This included the highway expansion of the 1960s and 1970s that severed many neighbourhoods from local amenities and employment opportunities. In some cases, displacing entire communities and eroding cultural heritage to make way for the expansion of capitalism and growth of the suburbs for the benefit of those people who could afford to move there. Researchers and advocates involved in the Environmental Justice Movement have established that, throughout the United States, low-income communities and communities of colour have carried the greatest burdens of air and water degradation, as illustrated through these Detroit examples, such as the Delray and 48217 neighbourhoods cited above. Many academics and campaigners have argued that this has resulted in increased rates of diseases, such as asthma, and lead poisoning in those populations (Lubitow & Faber, 2011) (Mohai D. P., 2016) (NAACP, 2017).

According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA):
'Environmental justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies' (USEPA). The Environmental Justice Movement in the United States gained momentum in the 1980s, sparked by a dispute over toxic waste dumping near a predominantly African American neighbourhood in North Carolina (USEPA). Both Lehtinin (2009) and the USEPA drew links with the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, sounding the alarm for individuals, primarily of colour, about the public health dangers for their families, their communities and themselves (USEPA).

USEPA's website provided a timeline of milestones in the history of the environmental justice movement, beginning in 1968 with the Memphis Sanitation Strike, instigated by Reverend Martin Luther King Jr (USEPA). This was believed by the USEPA to be 'the first time African Americans mobilized a national, broad-based group to oppose environmental injustice' (USEPA). There was, however, a notable absence of milestones documented between 2016 and 2021, corresponding to the US presidency of Donald Trump, who exited the Paris Climate Change Agreement as one of his first official acts (Daley, 2020). A 2020 report by the Environmental Law & Policy Center (ELPC) reported that under Trump's leadership, 'shrinking funds, plummeting staff levels and declining enforcement metrics' led to a 'corresponding rise in significant non-compliance with the Clean Water Act' (Environmental Law and Policy Center), as evidenced by the graph below.



Figure 11: Shows the reduction in federal funding to states for point source water pollution control. Examples of point source pollution include factories, refineries, steel mills, coal power plants, petrochemical facilities and other industrial plants.

A local manifestation of these national and regional environmental policies was highlighted through a content analysis of media reports. This uncovered stories published by several local and international news agencies featuring the impacts of environmental issues on the residents of Detroit, particularly in the Southwest area. Article headlines from local and international news agencies included:

‘The blackest city in the US is facing an environmental justice nightmare’
(Costley, 2020)

‘Struggling to breathe in 48217, Michigan’s most toxic ZIP code’
(Neavling, 2020)

‘The dirtiest square mile in Michigan’ (Allnutt, 2020)

Dr Paul Mohai, of the University of Michigan’s Center for Sustainable Systems, has written extensively on the ‘disproportionate environmental burdens and their impacts on low income and people of color communities’ in Detroit, Flint and other urban centres (University of Michigan, b). Flint is a city in the state of Michigan, close to Detroit, also with an African American-majority population, where 38.8% of residents live in poverty, according to the US Census Bureau (United States Census Bureau, 2019b). Mohai provided testimony for the Hearing of the Civil Rights Commission in September 2016 in response to the Flint Water Crisis. There, Mohai (2016) drew on Robert D. Bullard’s definition of ‘environmental racism’ as ‘any policy, practice, or directive that differentially affects or disadvantages (whether intended or unintended) individuals, groups, or communities based on race or color’ (Bullard, 1993-94: 1037). In his testimony, Mohai (2016) provided three examples of studies, including in the Detroit area, where ‘race was the best predictor of which areas in the US contain hazardous waste facilities and which do not, even when controlling for income, property values, and the amount of hazardous wastes generated’ (Mohai D. P., 2016, p. 4). Mohai (2016) argued that many researchers believed that communities of colour were targeted for sites of hazardous waste, polluting industrial facilities and other unwanted land uses because they often lacked the resources and political influence to challenge these decisions and so were seen as the ‘paths of least resistance by industry and government’ (Mohai D. P., 2016, p. 5).

In one such case in 2017, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) worked with the Clean Air Task Force to investigate the disproportionate

health impacts on African American communities from gas and oil facilities, culminating in the report, *Fumes Across the Fence-Line* (NAACP, 2017). According to studies undertaken by the University of Michigan's School of Public Health, people living and working in Detroit were exposed to elevated levels of outdoor air pollutants. This had resulted in approximately 690 deaths, 1,800 hospitalizations or emergency department visits, and hundreds of thousands of lost workdays and school absences, at an estimated cost of \$6.9 billion (in 2010 dollars) (University of Michigan, a).

At the time of writing, the Detroit neighbourhood of 48217, referred to in the press as 'the dirtiest square mile in Michigan' (Allnutt, 2020), contained within it more than three dozen polluting facilities, including one of the nation's largest oil refineries, a steel mill and coal-fired power plants, while also being home to approximately 7,000 residents (Neavling, 2020). A similar perception was echoed in interviews with Detroit residents, including one 48217 resident who stated, 'We are told that because we live right by Marathon Oil, we live in one of the most polluted areas in the state' (Sharp, 2020). Another resident observed, 'I think that for people living in the Southwest [which includes 48217], a disservice has been done to them in their water quality, their environment quality... Nobody's being held accountable for that' (Talley, 2019a). This position provided an environmental justice perspective that shared similarities with economists and anthropologists, such as Thomas Sugrue (2014) and Robert Putnam (2000), who have argued that the long-term effects of capitalism and globalisation have resulted in racial inequalities between poorer urban centres and their wealthy suburbs.



Figures 12 and 13: Views along the same river in Detroit. Left: looking towards the Ambassador Bridge and Canada (March 2020), right: looking towards Zug Island from the Delray neighbourhood (November 2017).

Located nearby to 48217 sits Detroit's contentious Zug Island. Its billowing smokestacks and projecting flames stand tall at the intersection of the Rouge and Detroit rivers. According to the Detroit Historical Society, Zug Island is a 334-acre private industrial site that has been home to blast furnaces for steel production since 1902 and is one of only a handful of locations in the United States that produce coke, an ingredient used in the creation of steel. Referred to as the 'Great Lakes Works', the mills were previously owned by United States Steel (Detroit Historical Society). One Southwest resident described Zug Island during her tour:

And so, this is where Southwest really meets the world. Because you got Zug Island there, which is all the pollution and the environmental racism and all the shit that we hate about the City, and you feel these big ass piles, you know, that are all covered in tar and more tar and all this shit. That's why our kids have asthma, yeah, and it's tragic, and it fucking sucks. And that's Zug Island.

Yeah. It's dangerous. You spend too long too close to it, you get cancer. Well, literally that's where people work, because that's where we're paying.

Like you look at it, and you see the way the sky looks over there. And then there, that's Canada in all its glory. Ah, man (Carter-Alvizo, 2019a).

Mohai (2011) and colleagues' research into the effects of air pollution on school-aged children concluded that there were racial disparities in health and educational outcomes across the US, and in Michigan, these were disproportionately located in places with high levels of industrial air pollution. It found that 'substantial majorities' of African American students (82%), Latinx students (62%), and students enrolled in the free school lunch programme (62%), as compared to 44% of White students, attended schools in the 10% most polluted areas of the state (Mohai, Kweon, Lee, & Ard, 2011). It found that schools located in areas with the highest pollution levels also had the lowest attendance rates (a potential indicator of poor health), as well as the highest proportions of students failing to meet the state's testing standards (Mohai, Kweon, Lee, & Ard, 2011).

Even without the impact of unequal environmental policy, Detroit's public school system has been cited by academics and residents alike as a key factor in perpetuating generational inequality in the City. Robert Putnam (2015) argued that inequality in the US increasingly operated through education, denying growing numbers of children the promise of the American Dream (Putnam, p. 2). This is demonstrated in sobering terms in Detroit, where only 38% of young people graduated on time and where, in the decade to 2013, 150 public schools were closed, most of them in 2009, one year after the Financial Crisis (Sugrue, pp. Preface xvii, xxvi). In his analysis of the decline of Detroit, Sugrue (2014) described this as the result of decades of segregation and a lack of investment in public education, particularly in poorer areas, which left a legacy of multiple barriers for many Detroiters to achieving economic security. Put simply, Sugrue argued that 'perhaps Detroit's biggest challenge is public education' (Sugrue, p. Preface xxvi).

During interviews, education was the second-most common issue raised, with 58.3% of residents (21 of 36) citing education as a critical issue for residents in Detroit, as seen in the bar chart below.

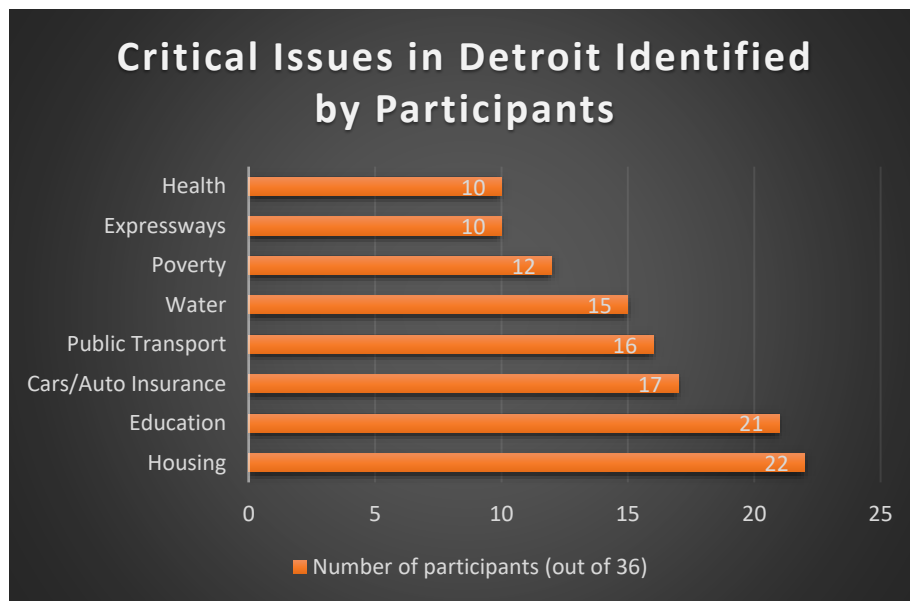


Figure 14: Bar chart depicting critical issues in Detroit, identified by participants.

During interviews and walking tours, 55% of residents (20 of 36) talked about the challenges of the Detroit public school system, including a lack of investment, large numbers of recent school closures and poor student-to-teacher ratios. One resident observed, ‘where it’s really hurting still in terms of services is public schools. The education is horrendous’ (Fairchild, 2019). Another stated simply, ‘Our schools are kind of fucked up because there’s a lot of kids and not a lot of teachers’ (Carter-Alvizo, 2019b).

An analysis of the contrast between 2020 educational attainment levels in Detroit and its suburbs was stark. Comparing Wayne County, in which Detroit is located, to Oakland County, the home of many of the more affluent the suburbs, showed nearly twice as many suburban residents achieving educational outcomes than those in the inner-city (Towncharts, Figure 5, Oakland County, 2020). According to 2020 Michigan educational data, 47% of Oakland County suburban residents had a bachelor’s degree in 2020, compared with 24% of residents of Wayne County (Towncharts, Figure 2, Oakland County, 2020). Only 5.1% of Oakland County residents held less than a high-school education, while 11.9% of Wayne County residents held the same (Towncharts, Figure 5, Oakland County, 2020). A similar trend was seen in a breakdown by race in Wayne County, where 29% of the

White population had a bachelor's degree or higher, compared with 14% of the African American population and 12.9% of the Latinx population (Towncharts, Figure 12, Wayne County, 2020). In statistical terms, this illustrated a significant variance in educational outcomes when analysed by race, with twice as many White residents achieving educational outcomes compared to their Black or Latinx counterparts.

Showcasing the myriad of experiences of Detroiters in an effort to present the diversity – and not the binary – perspectives of the City, one resident expressed a very different narrative about the Detroit education system, one of community pride and the often-untold stories of 'Black excellence in the City of Detroit' (Givens, 2018). Citing three educational establishments – Cass Tech and Renaissance high schools and Wayne State University – this Detroit resident and self-identified community advocate expressed a different sentiment:

I think that Detroit has some excellent schools that are public schools that educate Black children, and we should not be afraid to point that out. When my daughter graduated from Renaissance High School, Renaissance produced more AP [Advanced Placement] English scholars than any school in the world. Most people have no idea.

You have Cass Tech and you have Renaissance – where all the kids were Black and academically excellent – which routinely were graduating top of the line students to go to major colleges and universities and compete on equal footing. Wayne State University, right here in Detroit, was the pathway to the Black middle-class (Givens, 2018).

While positive examples such as these high schools were an important part of the complex narrative of education in Detroit, the concern around school closures was prevalent throughout the resident interviews. A key theme from several resident interviews was of the

City placing higher value on commercial interests than the education of its children. Multiple stories were shared of well-known Detroit investor-developers purchasing land, such as Mike Ilitch, Matty Moroun and Dennis Kefallinos, the consequences of which were perceived by some to have contributed to school closures, as well as a perception of taxpayer funds for public schools being redirected into commercial interests, such as the development of the new Little Caesars Arena.

It's just been the cycle of speculation, disinvestment, Matty Maroon, the Ilitches, Dennis Kefallinos – the DPS [Detroit Public Schools] sold him the old Ben Franklin School up in the front part of the neighborhood – and it's just sitting, rotting. It's scandalous (Cheek, 2020).

There's no way we should be letting them [the City] close 20 schools or 42 schools (McCallum, 2020).

Those kids – people who moved in are transplantees – and want like a Downtown type of experience. They're Detroiters nonetheless, so it's just a different type of Detroit. I don't want to, like, classify them or whatever, but I don't think a lot of them think about what it took or what it's taking to give them this environment. So, the number of schools that are not getting funding, so that they can have a beach in the middle of the park during the summer. Whatever that cost is, they're not thinking about that. Like, how many teachers are not getting paid or schools not getting fixed, so you can have this amenity or have yoga in the park, right? So, I think that myopia doesn't help that neighborhood [Midtown/Downtown] connect with other neighborhoods (Patel, 2019)

Meanwhile, as a perceived 'cycle of speculation and disinvestment' (Cheek, 2020) continued with investor-developers buying up land at cheap rates, many residents living in Detroit's underserved neighbourhoods may have lacked the time, capacity or connections to

challenge these decisions, according to some resident interviews. One lifetime resident explained how the challenges of everyday survival in the City of Detroit meant that often residents' energy was spent on day-to-day endurance, rather than challenging decisions not in their individual or community's best interest (McCallum, 2020). He described the particular challenges of survival in Detroit, comparing it to another state, one which he visited often:

Everybody that I met in North Carolina was just amazed at stuff that typically we have to endure here in the City [of Detroit]. So, it's like when you do it down there, it was like, 'Wow. Look at that. Wow. That's amazing.' And I'm like, 'Nah, man, this is something that it's like everyday survival in the City of Detroit.' Like, 'Y'all don't have those problems here?' 'Nah, man. Nah.' So it was like really, really easy down there, you know.

So, it's like there's just this hustle about the City that, you know, if we could translate that hustle into how, you know, people relate to the politics and just the overall condition of the City, we'd be so much further along (McCallum, 2020).

A recurring message in interviews was that poor-quality education was a significant driver for families with children to move out of Detroit if they had the means to do so. This was expressed by 2 residents interviewed, both of whom identified as White, in the 20s-30s age bracket, and having grown up in the suburbs of Detroit. One stated simply: 'Anyone that can leave to give their kid a better education, will leave... That's just the way it is. And that's the way it's always going to be until that changes' (McDowell, 2018). Another resident explicitly linked education with the dynamics and history of race in Detroit:

There are a lot of people who are being left behind. And my biggest concern? All these young people who are coming in and moving in now, what are you going to do when your kids are old enough to go to school? What happens? Is it White flight all over again? Are we all going to leave 'cuz your kids can't go to the schools here? Or

are we actually going to demand somebody stand up and change the public education system in the City? Outside of transportation, I think actually public education is *the* biggest issue facing the City because nothing's sustainable. We can't raise our kids here (George, 2018).

Money talks

During interviews, residents also raised a significant concern about the value placed on commercial interests at the expense of neighbourhood identity and the preservation of local services. The names of well-known Detroit businesspeople, described as 'developers', 'investors', 'speculators', among more derogatory terms, were referred to by 44.4% of participants (16 of 36) during the interviews. Having analysed the responses by age, ethnicity, gender, duration of residency in Detroit, as well as an intersectional analysis by multiple demographic factors together, perceptions of significant impact by commercial interests on place and communities was held almost equally among all of the participants. References included Quicken Loans CEO Dan Gilbert, who was referenced by one-quarter of all residents interviewed (9 of 36); followed by Mike Ilitch, owner of Little Caesars Pizza, MotorCity Casino and Detroit Red Wings Hockey Team, by 11.1% (4 of 36) of respondents; then Matty Moroun or the Moroun family, owner of the Ambassador Bridge and until recently, the empty Detroit Central Train Station, by 8.3% (3 of 36) of residents interviewed.



Figures 15-19: Top left: Downtown Detroit (Dec 2018), top right: Campus Martius 'beach' (May 2015), bottom left: vacant land in North Corktown (March 2020), bottom centre: sidewalk in Southwest (March 2020), bottom right: homes in North Corktown (March 2020).

Nearly half of the residents interviewed (44%) felt a strong sense that corporate interests governed decision-making processes in Detroit and that this was not new for the City. Much of Detroit's history has been analogous with corporate interests since the early 20th century when Henry Ford and the auto industry attracted significant migration, drove population growth and expanded development in the city. Residents, journalists and academics (Gayle, 2019) (Littman, 2015) (Sugrue, 2014) have cited the economic challenges of Detroit – and predominantly other manufacturing-led cities – as being too reliant on a single industry to drive the economy, with all the risks that entails to maintain a strong and sustainable economy. Detroit business journal, *dbusiness*, described in 2015, that even in 'distressed times', following the Financial Crisis, the state of Michigan remained heavily reliant on the auto industry, including 18% of all state employment (Littman, 2015). One resident described Detroit's relationship with the corporate sector as:

We're a one-horse town. A one-industry town. Even now with Quicken Loans and pizza – Ilitch – and the casinos and the auto industry, I feel like we're still very dependent on a few industries.

... in Detroit, a lot of the decisions weren't at the City table. They were made at the corporate table. So that's why there was such a level of apathy. Because it didn't matter who you were. The decision was made at the Big Three offices [referring to auto industry corporate giants] (Gayle, 2019).

Quicken Loans CEO Dan Gilbert drew strong opinions from one quarter of participants interviewed. Descriptions of Gilbert and his involvement with the City ranged from some positive, expressing the benefits he and his corporation have brought, to some negative, including a perception of Gilbert as one of the privileged White billionaires buying up the City and driving up prices. 'I think that Quicken Loans has been able to provide some opportunities, jobs, job training, internships, community activities that otherwise never happened' (Kaherl, 2019). Another resident described the improvements they have seen as, 'We see that a lot with Ford, with GM, with Quicken Loans. There was a time where you weren't such great neighbors and now, you're trying to be better neighbors, and that's beautiful' (Carter-Alvizo, 2019b). While others took a more cynical view of how Gilbert and the City made decisions on which neighbourhoods were prioritised for investment and who was granted the purchasing power to affect outcomes in the City.

There's basically a concerted effort in the City to focus on these neighborhoods that are the younger, hipper, whatever, 'Gilbert-cool', as we call it (Patel, 2019).

I think people maybe, probably, mostly associate New Detroit with Dan Gilbert and a lot of the development dollars that are going Downtown. I think it's interesting, a lot of the stores on Woodward [main street] are actually subsidised. They're not actually making enough money to stay in that area, but because we're really committed to

having this development here in the City around it, that's just kind of what's happening. It seems like a stark contrast of like who can afford it or who it was made for and so that's, I think, kind of the distinction (Shields, 2019).

So the rebellion, the riots – whatever you want to call 1967, '68 – we just had the fiftieth anniversary. And – what has changed? Fifty years! You still see White billionaires buying up all of Detroit. The Ilitch family and Dan Gilbert (Boyle A. , 2020).

Content analysis of press articles demonstrated contrasting views of Dan Gilbert in the media. Tim Alberta of *The Atlantic's* described how Gilbert was seen by some as 'the savior of Detroit' (Alberta, 2014) in contrast to Mark Binelli's opinion piece in *The New York Times*, titled, 'Detroit, The Billionaire's Playground', in which he described Gilbert as an 'unelected oligarch' (Binelli, 2013). According to *The Atlantic*, Gilbert's total investment in Detroit was \$1.5 billion at the time of the article, compared to the City's annual municipal budget for 2013 of \$1.12 billion (Alberta, 2014). Gilbert had funded a private security firm and surveillance system to supplement the underfunded Detroit Police Department and the QLine transport system, as well as continued to lead the City's Blight Task Force, all services that would have typically been publicly funded. Some participants acknowledged that some of these benefits would not otherwise have been realised given the state of Detroit's depleted public purse. While others found the relationship troubling, particularly in relation to questions of democratic governance and conflicts of interest, echoing Harvey's question of who holds the right to the city (Harvey, 2012). According to Alberta's (2014) article, Gilbert described himself as merely 'filling the void' created by years of fiscal mismanagement and political corruption and that he was just doing for Detroit what the City could not do for itself, a point which Alberta argued may be at the expense of giving him 'unprecedented, unelected power over Michigan's largest metropolis' (Alberta, 2014). Alberta reflected on the decades of race and class tensions between Detroit and the suburbs and described people in Detroit as being sceptical about anyone – 'much less a white man from

Southfield [Detroit suburb] – monopolizing the city’s Downtown’ (Alberta, 2014). Journalist and writer Mark Binelli described his view that Detroiters had already ceded power to ‘an unelected oligarchy [naming Gilbert and Ilitch], whose members might, no matter how ostensibly well-intentioned, possess questionable ideas about urban renewal’ (Binelli, 2013), based on their own self-interest.

When analysing resident-interviewees’ perceptions of investors, it appeared that proximity to Gilbert’s investment was a factor, even when other factors of intersectional analysis were considered. This created some interesting narratives and perspectives from different vantage points, recalling Strolovitch’s analysis by proximity to power (Strolovitch, Wong, & Proctor, 2017). Two North Corktown residents of differing ages, both identifying as White, male and with similar durations spent living in their neighbourhood (both less than 5 years), provided different descriptions of described Gilbert’s investment in Downtown and the people it attracts.

One resident described of their own personal experience in relation to Gilbert’s efforts:

I moved Downtown, and this was when they literally paid me to live Downtown. There was a ‘live-Downtown incentive’. They gave me \$2,500 a year to just have an apartment Downtown. It was an organisation that was kind of funded by Quicken Loans. They were just trying to get people to move Downtown. So, I guess, when I got here, the whole Dan Gilbert’s mantra was, like, ‘I’m just trying to do a big bang where I’m putting everything together at once and I’m going to bring the jobs, I’m going to get people down here and just see how it happens’ (McDowell, 2019).

In reference to the concept of ‘New Detroit’, often cynically associated with Gilbert, another resident described their observation of some younger newcomers to the City, not speaking in reference to the individual or description provided above:

I don't have a problem – as long as you're not doing harm. Coming down here, as an eager beaver White kid in your twenties, and you got a great job at Quicken Loans, and you're living in that \$2,500 space Downtown, and just going out drinking all the time. If you're not hurting the Black neighborhoods or the community or the City, you're contributing to the tax base, you're spending money at local businesses. These are all good things (Cheek, 2020).

Of the 11.1% of participants who spoke about Mike Ilitch, 3 of 4 were residents of North Corktown, while the fourth resident worked on its boundary. This was not surprising, as, while the Ilitch family own land across much of the City of Detroit, they also own the MotorCity Casino, situated on the edge of the North Corktown neighbourhood, which looms large over this otherwise near-exclusively residential area.

The Moroun family was discussed by three participants (8.3%), with two from the North Corktown neighbourhood and one from the Southwest neighbourhood. This was unsurprising as the iconic landmarks owned by the Moroun family, the Train Station and Ambassador Bridge, are in the middle of the two neighbourhoods. In the Southwest neighbourhood, a participant described the significant impact felt by residents and local businesses as a result of increasing ownership by the Moroun family through their Ambassador Bridge operation and subsequent loss of housing and other local amenities (Nethercott, 2020). According to this resident, there was a narrative held by many in the neighbourhood that the Moroun family had been able to buy up – or even take – land from the neighbouring mainly-Latinx Mexicantown neighbourhood, almost unfettered by the City or other constraints. It is important to note that this neighborhood has a rich Mexican cultural heritage and has been home to predominantly Mexican and Latinx communities in the Southwest side of Detroit since the 1920s (The Neighborhoods, b).

Describing this 'land grab' of the Bridge operation, the resident and self-identified community organiser observed, recalling tensions to the right to the city:

So, all of that [housing] got taken out, because this is what happens in late capitalism is someone – whoever has the money – can buy it up and do whatever they want with it, regardless of what the community wants... (Nethercott, 2020).

The 'Bridge' just takes the land. [It] owns like 96 pieces of property in this district alone... When we first moved here [1980s] and Mexicantown was still doing festivals [pointing to lots], this was an empty lot here, house, house, house, house and a church, and a few houses there. And so, the Bridge was trying to get them all. And so Mexicantown [Development Corporation] was trying to buy everything to keep the Bridge from buying this whole thing. And, of course, they got into this bidding war. So, they were able to secure this piece of property [Mexicantown cultural center] to keep the Bridge from coming any further (Nethercott, 2020).

As well as questions of due process around land purchase, this also raised questions over the contentious relationship of cultural heritage and race with the changing identity of a place in flux. Implicit in the Southwest resident's description was an interplay between the cultural identity of the Mexicantown area, embodied in the Mexicantown Development Corporation, and the commercial appetite of the Moroun family. The perception that the predominantly Mexican and Latinx community ultimately lost out to the private interests of the Ambassador Bridge exemplify a narrative in which capitalism reigns supreme. When considered within a local context of the loss of land and amenities associated with Mexican cultural heritage and a national backdrop of the anti-immigration rhetoric of the Trump administration, the motivations for an increase in community organising since 2016, particularly among interviewees self-identifying as from the Latinx community of Southwest Detroit, can be better understood.

One resident interviewed (McDowell, 2019) spoke in contrast of positive experiences of smaller investment from a local developer in the North Corktown neighbourhood. O'Connor Realty, was described as being owned by the Cooley family (a local developer and entrepreneurial family), who were attributed by some residents as having kickstarted the transformation of Corktown (Dakoske, 2020) (Koth, 2020), including establishing Slow's BBQ restaurant, regarded by many as a local institution. In their early involvement, the Cooley family was said to have 'flipped' a house in the North Corktown neighbourhood and, with the profits, gave a large donation to the North Corktown Neighborhood Association, who used it to set up a zero-interest loan programme of up to \$5,000 for residents' home improvements (McDowell, 2019).

This exemplifies one of the critical challenges for Detroit in determining its future at this moment in time. For a city still rebuilding after municipal bankruptcy a decade ago, will its future be determined by the commercial interests of a small handful of wealthy, White businessmen – as in the early days of Henry Ford at the turn of the last century – or by diverse communities quietly developing their own local neighbourhood solutions, based on their lived experience, increasing social capital and community wealth-building? This question is investigated in the Detroit Never Left section later in the thesis, illustrating how local initiatives are challenging conventional capitalist models that value profits over people, as well as finding innovative ways to more directly engage, challenge, collaborate and influence commercial entities to achieve greater community benefits.

What's in a name?

The importance of neighbourhood identity and ownership was brought into sharp focus with the realisation during the research that at least two neighbourhoods in Detroit did not have a name. One-quarter (9 of 36) of residents interviewed described their neighbourhood as either 'forgotten' or 'neglected'. Nowhere was that more acute than in the interviews with two residents (5.6%) who lived in neighbourhoods without a name. One resident described her neighbourhood, by simply saying, 'There is no name to it. Mmm. Isn't

that something?’ (Fairchild, 2019). The Southwest Detroit neighbourhood of ‘48217’, as it is locally known, was cited by another resident as also not having a name. ‘It’s a forgotten neighbourhood. We don’t get attention paid to us, unless it’s involving Marathon [oil refinery] ...’ (Sharp, 2020).

A name is a signifier of a thing. Something of value, worth remembering. Namelessness entrenches a position of being ‘forgotten’, ‘neglected’, like no one knows you exist. Reflecting on the value of resident-led placemaking, one resident concluded, ‘When you don’t own it, you don’t love it, you don’t treat it with respect’ (Gayle, 2019). A name gives a sense of identity. Especially if you have been involved in deciding it.

Describing his North Corktown neighbourhood, another resident said:

When they [the Ilitches] were talking about their whole, like, redistricting and being a part of the community [in relation to MotorCity Casino], I just remembered they had this big map and everyone would go to their website to see like their big plan, because everyone was so excited. And the map had Downtown, Midtown, Woodbridge, and Corktown. And then there was this slice that they just never – they didn’t include – like, it didn’t even have a name to them [in reference to North Corktown] (McDowell, 2019).

As with many urban centres in the US that sprung up in response to unprecedented industrial growth, Detroit has had an interesting relationship with place-naming. One journalist conjectured since Detroit was ‘essentially built in 15 short years... from the announcement of the five dollar-day by Henry Ford in 1914 to the onset of the Great Depression in 1929’, many neighbourhoods did not develop organically and were ‘ill-defined’ (Jackman, 2017). Some neighbourhoods adopted the name of a local landmark, such as a major intersection or local high school. Examples of this identified during the research included ‘Livernois & 6 Mile’, an intersection of two major roads, recently rebranded as

'Live6' (Live6 Alliance), and 'City Airport', an Eastside neighbourhood with few remaining residential homes that includes Coleman A. Young International Airport.

Estate agents and developers have also played a key role in rebranding neighbourhoods to attract investment or buyers, often neglecting the place's historical or cultural heritage. An internet search of Detroit neighbourhood names resulted in several articles from local newspapers, describing the power of branding in creating seemingly new neighbourhoods by introducing aspirational names with no historical relationship to the existing place. Several of these articles related to the two case-study neighbourhoods of Southwest and North Corktown and their surrounding areas.

In one article entitled 'Welcome to "Springwells Village" – a Southwest Detroit neighborhood most of its own residents have never heard of' (DeVito, 2015), journalist Lee DeVito interviewed numerous residents and activists about the rebranding of the Southwest neighbourhood of 'Springwells Village'. Members of Enclave, which was described as an 'ad-hoc committee that supports development without displacement' (DeVito, 2015), identified a cultural, as well as physical displacement, which tied into rebranding of place. Enclave member Antonio Cosme argued, 'I think what we're seeing in Detroit is, I would call it a neo-colonial moment, honestly' in post-bankruptcy Detroit (DeVito, 2015). Cosme argued that:

In Detroit, where the most marginal communities are — where the most water shutoffs have been happening, where the most people are getting kicked out of their houses — they're getting divested in. The other neighborhoods that they [Detroit Future City think-tank] want people to move in to — they rebrand it (DeVito, 2015).

In the same article, DeVito (2015) described how developers have attempted to 'cash in' on the Corktown neighbourhood's recent success, citing another article in *Model D Media* (Galbraith, 2014), in which one commentator joked that 'the [Corktown] brand was such a hit

that eventually every neighborhood in Detroit would one day be defined by its relationship to Corktown' (Galbraith, 2014):

My neighborhood will be Northeast Corktown. Dearborn will be Extreme West Corktown. Seven Mile and Gratiot will be New Corktown Heights. In 2025, the City of Detroit will be renamed (excuse me, 'rebranded') Corktownville and Phil Cooley [well-established Corktown developer] will be elected mayor for life on the slogan 'Every neighborhood has a Corktown.' The unicorns will begin arriving shortly thereafter (Galbraith, 2014).

Articles in regional online and print newspapers, *The Detroit Free Press*, *Metro Times* and *Model D Media*, illustrated contentious and contrasting perspectives on newly branded neighbourhoods. For example, the newly rebranded 'West Corktown' was part of the long-established Core City neighbourhood, adjacent to North Corktown. In the *Model D Media* article, Galbraith (2014) described how part of the Core City neighbourhood had been rebranded by property developers, Lynne and Mike Savino, in what had started off as a joke. The couple purchased a near-century old bank in the neighbourhood and adapted it into their home and loft-style building. The couple found themselves 'constantly telling friends that they were moving just west of Corktown', saying, 'It just grew from there' (Galbraith, 2014). Lynne Savino shared her perspective that, 'Corktown is getting packed and expensive. This really is just the next natural direction, hopefully, for things to go' (Galbraith, 2014).

On the other side of the debate, *Detroit Free Press* journalist Rochelle Riley (2015), interviewed Cornetta Lane, a lifelong resident of the same neighbourhood. Lane described being stunned to hear of efforts to turn part of her neighbourhood of Core City into West Corktown, stating, 'I couldn't believe someone would change the name of my neighborhood to benefit themselves' (Riley, 2015).

I know that a lot of people when they come to the area think of Detroit as a blank slate and it's not. Detroit is a place that has gaps and holes, and it's up to us to build bridges. So renaming a neighborhood even if it is a joke doesn't help with developing a neighborhood (Riley, 2015).

This led Riley to reflect:

The real story here isn't a clash over neighbourhood names. The clash between old and new... comes as the city experiences the growing pains necessary to build a new Detroit. It's about the rush to claim Detroit, to be part of it, to be part of the resurgence (Riley, 2015).

This theme of a 'rush to be part of Detroit's resurgence' came through time and again in the resident interviews and walking tours. 63.9% of research participants (23 of 36) across all demographic categories cited a desire to be 'part of the solution' or 'reimagine the future of Detroit' as key motivating factors of their community activity. This sample provided an insight into the wider experience of the City as a coalescence of differing perspectives, agendas and values coming together, leading to debate, disagreement and contention in the 'rush to claim Detroit'. Riley (2015) concluded with a conciliatory and hopeful position: 'The good news is this: There's room for everybody. We can honor the history and create new history'.

In another Detroit newspaper, *Metro Times*, journalist Michael Jackman (2017) argued that the 'forces of marketing', as he described it, have 'engulfed and consumed' much of the City, 'much like a white blood cell devours an undesirable microbe'. Highlighting one of the case-study neighbourhoods from my research, Jackman claimed, 'But the most impressive feat is the way Corktown has metastasized into a larger "North Corktown," right

where the downmarket Briggs neighborhood was. Watch out “Core City” – you’re next!’ (Jackman, 2017).

In contrast to Jackman’s (2017) suggestion that naming of North Corktown was a marketing exercise, during interviews, 3 of 9 North Corktown residents described renaming their neighbourhood ‘North Corktown’ in 2006 as an intentional community act to ‘regain some of the history... and reconnect [to Corktown]’ (Klein, 2020). According to the history page of the North Corktown Neighborhood Association’s website, ‘North Corktown is part of the original borders of Corktown’ (North Corktown Neighborhood Association, a), in contrast to Jackman’s suggestion of a co-optation (Jackman, 2017). The website described how the I-75 freeway was constructed through the middle of the neighbourhood, ‘dividing it in two halves’ (North Corktown Neighborhood Association, a). Through a consultation exercise with local residents by the Neighborhood Association, ‘North Corktown’ was selected to bring the area back into one neighbourhood and reclaim its historic roots.

All three residents who spoke about the naming of North Corktown discussed different names that had been used over the years to identify the same neighbourhood. All three made reference to ‘Briggs’ or ‘Briggs Stadium’ as a name that was used on maps in reference to the former local baseball stadium, and still used by some. One resident described the mix of attachments by residents to a variety of names, explaining that some people say, “Please don’t change it to North Corktown”, while others ‘described it as both Briggs and North Corktown’ simultaneously (Gayle, 2019). Another resident offered her opinion that ‘Briggs was kind of an unofficial name’, stating, ‘I don’t think any of the neighbours ever called it Briggs. It’s still on some maps. I just think they needed to name it something and it was called Briggs Stadium. I’ve never heard of anyone be like, “It’s Briggs!”’ (McDowell, 2019). The same resident also described the response of some, particularly older residents to the North Corktown name, explaining it as ‘curmudgeonly like, “North Corktown? No, it’s Corktown!”’ (McDowell, 2019).

As an experienced community development practitioner, I am aware of the contentions that often exist around different perspectives of place name and boundaries. How a person identifies with their neighbourhood is often dependent on their length of residence, the pace of change, knowledge of local history, as well as local networks and associations one holds. Much has been written on the contentions of place-identity and placemaking in contemporary urban settings. The complexities that exist in Detroit are not unique in this respect, sharing similarities with other industrial cities that quickly sprung up at the start of the last century. One such article by *Bloomberg CityLab* was uncovered during the research, aptly titled, 'The awkward art of neighborhood naming', in which journalist Dena Levitz (2012) argued that 'It's not just about where a neighborhood's located on a map. Debate about names of places has taken on a life of its own'. For example, in the ten-year *Making Connections* study (Coulton, 2010) by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Coulton et al (2010) started from the position that neighbourhoods are not merely territories, but 'social constructions named and bounded differently by different individuals' (Burton, Price-Spratlen, and Spencer 1997; Lee, Oropesa, and Kanan 1994) (Coulton, p. Foreword v). During the study, residents were asked to draw a map of their neighbourhood, as well as identify its name (if it had one) to understand the variety of ways in which residents 'perceived their neighbourhood, space and identity' (Coulton, p. 9). The neighbourhood names provided by residents varied considerably across sites, with only 25.37% of respondents offering the official neighbourhood name (Coulton, p. 9), similar to the experience during the North Corktown interviews.

In my experience of working on the regeneration project in Southeast London, I have observed first-hand the contentions that arise from place-naming. Built in the 1960s and early 1970s, the Aylesbury Estate was constructed in response to an increasing need for social housing in the middle of what had been called the 'Walworth' neighbourhood. The place was named after the idyllic, albeit contrastingly different, Hertfordshire countryside town of Aylesbury, with each concrete residential apartment block named after local villages,

such as Wendover and Ravenstone. Like the original design of the estate itself, the naming of the blocks was built on utopian elitist ideals of what was considered to be in the best interests of its lower-income residents. The current two-decade estate regeneration project is focused on prioritising the needs of existing council tenants, while also opening up the place to new residents. This change in the local landscape has created a moment for residents and local stakeholders to reflect on the identity of the neighbourhood, from the qualities held in high regard, such as ‘strong sense of belonging’, to the challenges of persistent issues regarding the physical environment. Many of the highly involved residents, who tended to be older council tenants living on the estate since it was built, were reluctant to retain the word ‘Estate’, and for some, even the name ‘Aylesbury’. They felt that these conjured up negative perceptions associated with run-down, unsafe council estates, so long associated with the neighbourhood and reinforced through the media. Several residents preferred a return to the neighbourhood’s historic name ‘Walworth’, the name still used for the surrounding streets where Victorian terraced housing remains largely intact. This is similar to the desire of many North Corktown residents of wanting to reconnect with the historic Corktown neighbourhood decades after it was physically divided by the freeway expansion programme. It will be interesting to watch how the place name of the ‘Aylesbury Estate’ may develop in the near future, as new homes for sale and market-rent are built and branding agencies brought in to market these new properties to a likely younger, more affluent audience, continuing the debate of the right to the city, including determining its identity.

Building on the literature (Coulton, 2010) (Levitz, 2012) (Riley, 2015), as well as my own experience, understanding place identity, name and boundaries formed part of the methodology employed for Detroit neighbourhoods study. Each participant was asked at the start of the interview or walking tour to describe their neighbourhood’s location and boundaries. This contextualised the interview by demarcating what each individual viewed as inside and outside of their neighbourhood, the perceived boundaries, and the name – or in two cases, the lack thereof – that they ascribed to their neighbourhood. In North Corktown

and Southwest case studies, residents had differing ways of describing their neighbourhood. In North Corktown, 88.9% of residents interviewed (8 of 9) described near-identical geographical boundaries, with the major surrounding roads of Trumbull, Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King Jr and I-75 freeway as the geographical perimeter boundaries. Only one North Corktown resident (Koth, 2020) described her neighbourhood differently from the others, as 'Corktown', and led us on a tour of both sides of the I-75 divide, although she lived in the area that the North Corktown Neighborhood Association (North Corktown Neighborhood Association, c) defined within their boundaries. For Southwest, the neighborhood's boundaries varied greatly with each individual's description. Some described the area as the entire of the Southwest section of the City, while others identified smaller neighbourhoods within it. In some instances, they included both sides of another intersecting freeway, the I-375.

On the critical concept of what constitutes a neighbourhood, multiple and interweaving questions arose from the literature, interviews and walking tours that shaped the research. These ranged from questions of what forms the boundaries and identity of a neighbourhood, to who has the right to inform a neighbourhood's future, whether informing development plans or policy determinations on local investment or disinvestment.

How come them and not us?

A central question throughout the literature, interviews and press articles was who ultimately decides which neighbourhoods should survive to have a future and which should be 'left to wither on the vine?' (Popper & Popper, 1987). In Detroit, in an expression of one such response to this question, the Office of the Mayor developed the 'Strategic Neighborhood Fund' programme (SNF) in which ten neighbourhoods were prioritised for \$162 million from 'philanthropic contributions and public subsidies' (The Neighborhoods, a). According to the aforementioned study by Coulton et al (2010), the SNF program based its funding criteria on a neighbourhood's 'likelihood to quickly benefit from localized investment as measured by their population densities, the presence of a central commercial corridor,

strong local leadership, and proximity to public assets' (Branche-Wilson & Wileden, 2020). Four residents (11.1%) talked about the SNF programme during the interviews. For some self-identified lifelong Detroiters, the SNF exemplified the City's ruling on this question of 'Who ultimately decides the City?', with observations such as:

You've heard about the Strategic Neighborhood Fund, right? That's the "How come them and not us?" (DeSantis, 2020).

The City has decided to invest in 10 strategic neighborhoods and that can create battle lines between neighborhoods that have been picked, and those that have not (Givens, 2018).

One resident expressed a power dynamic inherent in the City's decision to prioritise funding for the ten SNF neighbourhoods at the expense of the others:

The City has identified the neighborhoods that they want to develop. The City's goal is that all corporations and foundations that want to support Detroit will support the 10 neighborhoods they've identified exclusively. The City does not want anybody developing new housing or new businesses or investing real money in any of the other neighborhoods because then, those neighborhoods will compete with the neighborhoods that the City wants to see develop (Givens, 2018).

While not specifically referring to SNF by name, another lifelong resident from one of the neighbourhoods without a name described their vision for greater equity of investment across neighbourhoods, 'I would like to see emphasis put on residents in *all* communities, not just chosen ones [by the City]. I would like to see neighborhoods growing – *all* of the neighborhoods – again, not just the chosen ones' (Sharp, 2020). They also described their perception of how investment was awarded, 'Teachers have the favorite students. So, go

back to that. I think the City has their favorite communities that they want to focus on and that's where the money's going' (Sharp, 2020).

However, a study undertaken by the University of Michigan (Branche-Wilson & Wileden, 2020) found that residents in SNF-funded neighbourhoods were no more likely to feel that they had influence than those without the Fund. While the study found increased feelings of safety and neighbourhood growth among some SNF-funded neighbourhoods, only one quarter of residents strongly agreed that they had a say in affecting change in their neighbourhoods, with almost no difference in opinion amongst residents in neighbourhoods in receipt of SNF funding and those that were not (Branche-Wilson & Wileden, 2020). While resident influence may not have been one of the Mayor's identified intended outcomes of the SNF programme, there is a clear rationale for why the lack of perceived influence by residents may have a detrimental impact on the long-term sustainability of any improvements brought about through the SNF, ultimately undermining its efficacy. This builds on Gary Craig's argument that too often policymakers invite communities to 'pull themselves up by their bootstraps', without giving them the power to actually determine the landscape (Craig, 2011, p. 18). I would argue that Craig's (2011) argument rings true through the findings from the SNF study, where investment has not led to a greater sense of influence among residents (Branche-Wilson & Wileden). In the case of the SNF, this may have stemmed from the perception, as expressed by at least four of the long-time Detroiters interviewed, that even the initial selection of the priority neighbourhoods did not seek input from residents. It was instead the result of top-down decision-making – as in much of Detroit's long history – predominantly by White men over what was in the best interest of the 83% Black population of Detroit and its neighbourhoods (United States Census Bureau, 2019a).

Seizure of control

The narrative of a top-down, autocratic dynamic of power was perpetuated by the appointment of an unelected emergency manager to the City of Detroit by the state of Michigan's White, male Republican governor, Rick Snyder, following the City's bankruptcy filing in 2013. This was deemed to be legal under the 2011 state legislative act known as 'Public Act 4', which set out controls by the state to 'safeguard and assure the fiscal accountability' of local government (Michigan Legislature, 2011). Multiple sources (Michigan State University Extension, 2012) (Trenkner, 2012) argued that the expanded powers of an emergency manager had been contentious since inception. Yet, at one stage in 2012, the public purse in six areas in Michigan were under the control of emergency managers, including Detroit, Flint and Pontiac, along with three school districts (Oosting, 2012). Like the allocation of the Strategic Neighbourhood Fund, the appointment of unelected emergency managers across the state has continued a trajectory of power residing with a perceived small elite making decisions on behalf of the citizenry, impacting their quality of life and further eroding their own sense of agency and influence, particularly among communities of colour (MCRC, 2017).

The emergency manager legislation has been used prolifically in Michigan, with 20 emergency managers appointed in the state in the past 25 years (Davey, 2014a). This legislation has been repeatedly challenged by citizen action groups. In 2012, the Emergency Financial Manager Law, under Public Act 4, was temporarily overturned through the actions of the Citizens for Fiscal Responsibility (Michigan State University Extension, 2012, p. 1). However, this was short-lived and later that year, Public Act 436 was quickly 'pushed through' by Republican-controlled Legislature in a third attempt by the state to retain the emergency manager legislation (*Detroit News*, 2014).

In Detroit, Governor Snyder appointed as Emergency Manager, Kevyn Orr, a lawyer with Jones Day law firm (Jones Day). Orr held the Detroit Emergency Manager post from 14 March 2013 until he stood down on 11 December 2014 (*PBS*, 2014), facing public backlash

from elected officials and residents from the start (*Detroit News*, 2014). Orr was granted sweeping powers to remake the City's financial plan, change labour contracts and sell City assets, with many of his decisions overruling those of elected officials (Davey, 2014a) (Saigol, 2013). *Detroit News* opined that 'The law [Public Act 436] was controversial because it seemingly went against voters' will. But claimed that it was essential in establishing a route from bankruptcy for Detroit, as well as for enabling future rescues of troubled communities' (*Detroit News*, 2014). Newspapers reported anger from residents, including descriptions that 'fundamentally, this is unconstitutional' and a perception that was 'an undemocratic seizure of power' (Davey, 2014a). The City Council and elected mayor at the time, Dave Bing, did not support the Governor's decision to appoint the unelected Emergency Manager, making an '11th hour plea' to Governor Snyder two days before he announced the appointment, which was ignored (Yacino, 2013). As observed by *The New York Times*, the role of race and party-affiliation have been particularly poignant in this case, where 'In Detroit, a mostly black city led mainly by Democrats, the intervention by the state, mostly white and led by Republicans, has been viewed by some as a needless and undemocratic seizure of control' (Yacino, 2013).

The Detroit Free Press reported that Orr's law firm, Jones Day, collected nearly \$54 million for its work with the City, with management of the bankruptcy reported to have cost Detroit \$165 million (Guillen, 2017). Negotiations to reach a bankruptcy deal were challenging as Kevyn Orr worked with creditors, the City and other stakeholders to develop a plan that would address the city's \$18 billion debt (Dolan, 2014), while ensuring basic City services could be delivered. Two central contentions were the sale of the artwork contained in the publicly owned Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA) and proposals to reduce pension contributions to retired automotive and City workers. The DIA artwork had been valued by Christie's auction house at between \$454 to 867 million, with creditors allegedly pushing for the sale of the artwork to repay their bills, while charitable foundations argued for the retention of assets, including the DIA artwork, as essential to Detroit's future (Snively &

Helms, 2014). Controversially, ultimately thousands of retired City workers were subjected to 4.5% pension cuts, an end to cost of living increases and reduced insurance coverage in order to address a \$1.88 billion pension funding gap for the City (Stempel, 2016).

A critical component of the bankruptcy plan came to be known as the 'grand bargain' (Detroit Historical Society). The key elements included \$816 million in donations from multiple foundations, DIA donors and the state of Michigan, which were consolidated into the Foundation for Detroit's Future. The funds were to be paid out over a twenty-year period to the General Retirement System and the Police and Fire System to support retiree pension cuts. According to the Detroit Historical Society, with the bargain in place, Detroit City retirees voted to accept the pension cuts, and the DIA was allowed to become an independent institution, owned by a charitable trust, forever protecting its masterpieces from being considered City-owned assets (Detroit Historical Society). Finally, 17 months after filing the largest municipal bankruptcy in US history, Judge Steven Rhodes approved Detroit's bankruptcy-exit plan on 10 December 2014.

While Detroit exited bankruptcy a decade ago, the effects of the deal on public sentiment, as well as the financial impacts to individuals, have continued to be felt within the City. Retired Detroit City workers appealed against the decision to cut their pensions in state court in September 2015, and again in federal court in October 2016. The federal appeals court rejected the case, concluding that 'the harm to the city and its dependants so outweighs the harm to these appellants that granting their requested relief and unravelling the plan would be impractical, imprudent, and therefore inequitable' (Stempel, 2016). In a further development, in 2017, Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan threatened a lawsuit against Kevyn Orr's law firm for withholding information used to predict the City's future pension payments, which may have resulted in an estimated \$491 million shortfall in anticipated pension payments (Guillen, 2017).

At the same time, in the nearby Michigan city of Flint, two Republican Governors, John Engler and the same aforementioned Governor, Rick Snyder, have been responsible

for two periods of state oversight between 2002-2004 and 2011-2018 (Goodin-Smith, 2018). Four consecutive emergency managers presided over a range of city directives, most controversially, the decision to move the city's water source to the Flint River as a cost-saving measure. This was believed to have resulted in 12 deaths and at least 87 people sickened in 2014-2015 (Hersher, 2018). Nine city and state officials were criminally charged for their role in the Flint water crisis, including emergency managers Gerald Ambrose and Darnell Earley, who both faced counts of misconduct in office, as well as former Governor Rick Snyder, who was charged with two counts of wilful neglect (Booker, 2021).

Following several legal challenges and resident protests, as well as the criminal ruling in the controversial Flint water crisis, the emergency manager programme in Michigan was finally brought to a close. In June 2018, Michigan Treasurer Nick Khouri announced a historic milestone: for the first time in 18 years, Michigan school districts and cities were operating without a single emergency manager (Oosting, 2018). It was reported by news and financial outlets (Colomer, 2018) (Fonger, 2020) (Oosting, 2018) that while this concentrated period of state-imposed emergency management was perceived by some as enabling Detroit's financial turnaround, it had also played a key role in enabling the Flint water crisis to happen and in taking power away from citizens.

The Michigan Civil Rights Commission (MCRC) recognised the negative impact of the emergency manager legislation on the lives of citizens in their hearings and investigation of the Flint Water Crisis (MCRC, 2017). The Commission found that 'systemic racism repeatedly led to disparate racial outcomes as exemplified by the Flint water crisis' (MCRC, p. iii). The MCRC report referenced the testimony of Dr Mohai, who called the emergency manager law 'possibly the single most important violation of the principle of procedural justice in the case of the Flint Water Crisis' (MCRC, p. 100), in which the Environmental Protection Agency 'requires that people have an opportunity to participate in decisions about activities that may affect their environment and/or health' (MCRC, p. 100). The report

identified the racial disparity of the emergency manager law, concluding that ‘if you live in Michigan, there is a 10% chance you have lived under emergency management since 2009. But, if you are a Black Michigander, the odds are 50/50’ (MCRC, 2017, p. 109). The MCRC concluded that the emergency manager law was too often applied in circumstances where communities were already segregated by race, wealth and opportunity, and where the primary objective of the emergency manager ran contrary to the long-term interests of the people living there, which in turn, may erect additional barriers to narrowing the racial gap (MCRC, p. 111). ‘Investing to build a better future is not part of an emergency manager’s job, but it should be’ (MCRC, p. 111), concluded the Commission. The MCRC concluded that numerous residents believed that they were no longer heard when an emergency manager was in place (MCRC, 2017, p. 113).

The research identified multiple examples where financial interests had been prioritised over citizens’ health and safety, demonstrated through the decision-making on access to resources, such as clean drinking water. This was a fundamental issue at the centre of the Flint water crisis, as well as evidenced in the decision to shut off the water supply for 20,000 residents in underserved neighbourhoods in Detroit (ACLU Michigan). Given Michigan’s location, surrounded on three sides by the Great Lakes, which account for one-fifth of the world’s supply of surface fresh water (Pure Michigan), it seems unimaginable that two of its largest cities, Detroit and Flint, should experience a water crisis simultaneously. One lifelong Detroiter said simply, ‘There’s no reason for water to cost the way that it costs. And we’re next to the largest source of fresh water in the world’ (McCallum, 2020). When interviewed, another long-time Detroit resident asked, ‘That was the big mystery for me is like, “how could there be water, water everywhere and none in Detroit?”’ (Nethercott, 2020).

Yet, despite the region’s abundance of water in both Detroit and Flint in 2014, decisions by elected and unelected city officials resulted in the termination of a clean water supply to thousands of residents in the two cities. The ACLU of Michigan found that the

Detroit Water and Sewerage Department 'commenced the largest residential water shutoff in U.S. history and terminated water service to over 20,000 Detroit residents for lack of payment, without regard to residents' health needs or ability to pay' (ACLU Michigan). Like the Flint water crisis, the 2014 water shutoffs in Detroit were not an isolated incident. By October 2018, the number had increased to 112,000 Detroit households who had their water disconnected for failure to pay bills, sometimes for relatively small amounts (ACLU Michigan, 2020b). Between 2014 and 2020, a coalition of civil-rights law organisations (including the ACLU) attempted, without success, to persuade the City to abandon the policy of water shutoffs. These actions included advocacy, attempted collaboration with the City, a class-action lawsuit and, ultimately, a petition filed with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services to require the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department to declare a public health emergency caused by terminating water service to thousands of Detroit residents (ACLU Michigan) (ACLU Michigan, 2020a).

Among the residents interviewed, 41.7% (15 of 36) cited water as one of the most significant issues for Detroiters.

I don't know if you see the news of what's going on here, but school systems – they barely have books – no running water. It's almost like I feel like I'm describing a third-world country, but, really, it's in my own backyard (Angelyn, 2018)

So there's been a big push lately to stop the water shutoffs. Especially while we're selling water to Nestlé for a dollar a year and poisoning the people of Flint (Fairchild, 2019).

You shouldn't have to go through all this, right? You shouldn't have all these outside forces try to strip you of all of your resources and take education and shut off water and, like, we can go down the whole list. You shouldn't have to be that resilient, but sometimes things get hard (Suarez, 2020).

Four residents interviewed (11% of participants) described their perception of how the City was going a step further and using the failure to pay water bills as an excuse to evict people from their homes. The practice of foreclosing on homes in Detroit for failure to pay back-taxes and utilities, including water bills, was described by residents as ‘abusive’ and ‘predatory’ (Nethercott, 2020) towards particular communities, including African Americans, and stating simply, ‘it has to stop’ (Talley, 2019a).

As the MCRC (2017) found with the Flint water crisis, an investigation by the NAACP Legal Defense Fund found in Detroit that there were ‘dramatic racial disparities in water shutoffs, as they are far more likely to occur in majority-Black neighborhoods than in neighborhoods where Blacks are less than 50% of the population’ (ACLU Michigan). In July 2020, the coalition filed a class-action lawsuit in federal court to make water affordable and to permanently end water shutoffs for Detroit residents (ACLU Michigan, 2020b). The coalition argued that the policy exposed thousands of Black Detroit residents to disease and racial discrimination that rendered affected households defenceless against infection, especially during a pandemic (ACLU Michigan, 2020b). Governor Gretchen Whitmer signed a time-limited executive order to temporarily halt water shutoffs in an attempt to reduce the spread of the Coronavirus. However, according to the ACLU (2020b), there were no immediate plans to terminate the practice altogether, with Mayor Duggan stating that the policy would resume when the immediate threat of the pandemic was lifted. A spokesperson for the coalition, lawyer Alice B. Jennings, argued,

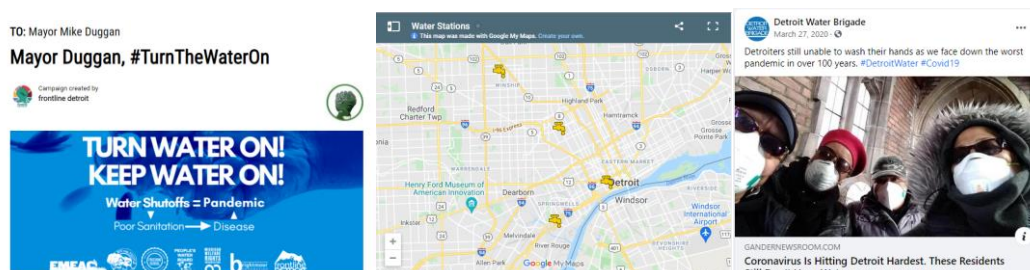
People cannot live without water, families can’t function without it, and communities cannot be safe if they don’t have water before, during and when the pandemic ends. Every leader in Michigan has a moral responsibility to make sure families have access to water (ACLU Michigan, 2020b).

In recent years, there has been a social movement building around the human right to water in response to its increasing privatisation in many places around the world, resulting in unaffordable supply and widespread water shutoffs. In academia, an emerging field of literature focused on the right to water and its relationship to a process of commoning has developed, with a special issue of the *Community Development Journal* in 2019, Volume 54 (Issue 1) concentrating on this subject (Clark, 2019) (McDonald, 2019). In one essay, legal geographer Cristy Clark (2019) described what she saw as the social impact of the commodification of water leading to the erosion of community in places like Soweto, South Africa, as well as specifically citing Detroit, Michigan. Clark (2019) argued that in Detroit, despite the outcry from UN Rapporteurs on the human right to water and housing, disconnections were commonplace following the City's 2013 bankruptcy (Clark, p. 86). Community organisations and campaign groups, such as the Detroit Water Brigade and People's Water Board Coalition, argued for a constitutionally implied human right to water (Clark, p. 94) in response to what they cited as a 'deepening crisis of water access and affordability' (People's Water Board Coalition, 2021) of which they claim that '40% of Detroit is about to have their water shut off' (Detroit Water Brigade, 2021).

In Michigan, water is part of a shared commons that is held in the public trust for the benefit of all people. That means water must not be commodified or privatized for profit; it must be available to all people regardless of income; and it must be protected from pollution (People's Water Board Coalition, 2021).

Detroit community organisations, like the People's Water Board Coalition (2020) and Detroit Water Brigade (2021), have been campaigning against water shutoffs and for universal access to safe, affordable and clean water. They have highlighted the plight of thousands of affected Detroiters, citing the particular public health concerns during the Coronavirus pandemic. These organisations have mobilised support, shared stories, started petitions and lobbied politicians to stop the shutoffs. We the People of Detroit (2021)

coordinated efforts to distribute donated water through establishing Water Drop Stations in the worst-affected neighbourhoods and coordinated charitable donations to assist with the payment of water bills. The following images provide examples of community action by Detroit community organisations to address these shutoffs.



Figures 20, 21, 22: Left: #Turn the Water On petition to Mayor Duggan (People's Water Board Coalition, 2020), centre: Water Drop Locations map (We the People of Detroit, 2021) and right: Detroit Water Brigade Facebook page (Detroit Water Brigade, 2020).

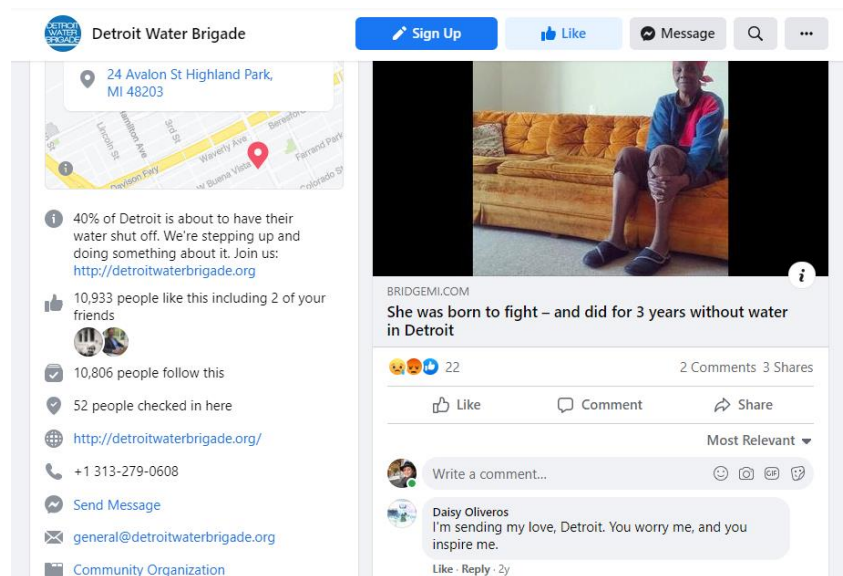
In December 2020, Mayor Duggan announced that the moratorium on shutoffs would be extended until 2022, with plans under consideration to end it permanently (Ferretti & Rahal, 2020). With the public health crisis of the pandemic bringing into sharp focus the issue of access to safe and affordable water, the efforts of activist groups have been cited in multiple articles as playing a key role in affecting this temporary policy change (Lakhani, 2020) (Ferretti & Rahal, 2020). But the moratorium on shutoffs remains only a temporary arrangement in response to the pandemic, as part of the city's COVID-19 Water Restart Plan and the federal CARES Act (Ferretti & Rahal, 2020). At the time of writing, a permanent solution had not yet been addressed.

Many activists and residents have questioned why it took a global pandemic for policymakers to suspend water shutoffs. 'The United States has been facing a water affordability crisis for years. Detroit's plan to halt water shutoffs is long overdue. It should not have taken the Coronavirus epidemic', argued Mary Grant, director of the Food and Water Watch campaign (Lakhani, 2020). Sylvia Orduño, an organiser with the Michigan Welfare Rights Organization, argued 'Still, they [politicians] fell short of saying water and sanitation

are human rights. They are stopping short of declaring people will have water and sanitation services, regardless. It will always be contingent on something' (Ferretti & Rahal, 2020).

Through the literature review, it was apparent that the hope shared by many activists and advocates that water accessibility can be realised as a basic human right (Newman E. , 2021) formed part of a global water justice movement that aims to defend the water commons and fight against the global neoliberal agenda of commodification (Blue Planet Project, 2021). Building on David Harvey's (2012) argument of water as the next frontier for capitalism's insatiable growth through accumulation by dispossession, Cristy Clark (2019) took this one step further. Clark (2019) argued that the global water justice movement is engaged in a 'key strategic battle in the fight for a different vision of society' built on a different way of relating to each other and to the environment, and that, by extension, the human right to water as an 'instrumental tool for the pursuit of an alternative vision of society' (Clark, p. 94). Through the efforts of campaigning groups, such as the People's Water Board Coalition (2020) and We the People of Detroit (2021), we are seeing Detroit residents, activists and advocates using water as a 'potent rallying point for the development of a new political order' (Clark, p. 94), pushing for an alternative vision for Detroit which promotes human rights over corporate interests.

Below is a social media post, illustrating Detroit's complicated relationship between water and activism.



'I'm sending my love, Detroit. You worry me, and you inspire me' (excerpt from Detroit Water Brigade Facebook page, cited below).

Figure 23: Screenshot of Detroit Water Brigade Facebook page (Detroit Water Brigade, 2020).

Providing an insight into how these philosophical challenges have been experienced in the harsh reality of people's everyday lives in Detroit, two resident-interviewees shared stories of their neighbours during the water crisis.

And that's really a shitty story... They had a water pipe break one winter, about five years ago. It generated a \$18,000 water bill. And I think they've just been paying it off. And so, you know, what frustrates me about that is a friend of mine and I worked for five years to get an open flowing, like, one-inch water pipe shut off at the road at this industrial complex over at Mt. Elliot. And it literally took five years of calling and putting reports in, before they came out, dug up the street and shut the water off. So, it was millions of gallons going down the drain as little old ladies are having their water shut off. So, this is the two Detroits. And it's interesting that with this

Corona[virus] thing, they finally have pressured the powers that be to turn the water back on for all these folks (Cheek, 2020).

The policy of water shutoffs and the emergency manager law both demonstrate a neoliberal focus on the bottom line, which has been challenged by the MCRC, the ACLU and sociologists (ACLU Michigan, 2017) (Fasenfast, 2019) (MCRC, 2017) as being at odds with the best interests and civil rights of residents where the legislation has been applied. Sociologist David Fasenfast (2019) argued that austerity measures applied by emergency managers predominantly preserved the financial interests of lenders and bond holders, and privatised public assets, as opposed to seeking a social solution for communities (Fasenfast, p. 36). Fasenfast (2019) pointed to the use of emergency managers within cities in Michigan to impose neoliberal policies upon communities who were already suffering from the effects of the existing neoliberal capitalist system (Fasenfast, p. 35). Within this model, he argued, communities were encouraged to take on increasing debt and to adopt financial mechanisms with little understanding of how they work, leaving them even more vulnerable to structural and systemic decline (Fasenfast, p. 35).

Building on the literature of sociologists, anthropologists and economists (Fasenfast, 2019) (Graeber, 2014) (Hudson, 2003), I argue that many of Detroit's creditors and politicians acted for decades on the assumption that the City would continue to be the capitalist engine of perpetual growth. When, in 2013, the federal government sent bailiffs to collect \$18 billion of unpaid debt, it was taxpayers, auto workers, state employees and future generations who had to foot the bill. In Graeber's (2014) terms, the bill for the debt (or promise) that everyone assumed would never have to be paid was suddenly handed to the Detroit taxpayer, while corporate interests continued to be met.

Graeber (2014) and Hudson (2003) argued that the concept of debt imperialism on an international stage was to ensure that the strict code was upheld and that loans between

creditors, like the US, were not defaulted on by poorer countries. Both argued that poorer countries, often suffocating under a mountain of unrepayable debt were forced to sign up to policies in the best interest of their creditors. Within the terms of debt imperialism, I argue that Detroit and other cities under the jurisdiction of an unelected decision-making body have been effectively treated as developing countries by their own state and federal governments. The bankruptcy packages these citizens have been forced to accept may balance the books in the short term by prioritising creditors' interests, but do little to address the systemic inequalities that exist in these urban areas. These inequalities have been disproportionately experienced by already-vulnerable communities, in this case, Detroit's Black and Latinx citizens.

The MCRC's finding that a key failing in the Flint water crisis was that residents' voices were not heard (MCRC, 2017, p. 113) added further weight to the urgency of growing the body of literature on the value of residents telling stories of their own experience (Anastacio, 2000) (Dinham, 2007) (Gilchrist & Morris, 2011). This was a central theme in this research as I argue for the value of public policy being informed by residents' lived experience. It is only through hearing residents' stories that practitioners, policymakers and researchers can begin to understand the collective impacts that environmental policy and investment decisions make to the lives of citizens and particularly to marginalised communities, within a changing urban environment, subject to the increasing challenges of globalization and a crisis of inclusion.

Set against a US landscape of political division and increasing inequalities, further exacerbated by the Coronavirus pandemic, it is increasingly important for practitioners in the field to reflect on actions that can be taken to ensure that all citizens, regardless of where they live, can have equal access to the services, opportunities and rights afforded through the social contract. A critical role of this research, following in the footsteps of studies by Anastacio (2000), Dinham (2005), Fairey (2018) and Gilchrist (2011), is to argue for a renewed approach to urban planning and policy making, shaped by the lived experience of

citizens where they are actively driving the development of a new social contract. I believe a key purpose for practitioners and researchers within the discipline of community development is to ensure residents' stories are heard by those in the positions to influence the allocation of resources, urban planning and policy decisions, which this research is striving to do. Much like the emergence of contemporary community development practice in the 1960s and the influential writing on structural analysis that followed, as a discipline, we again find ourselves at a critical juncture half a century later as we reflect on the changing urban world in which we practice. Driven by the central tenet of social justice, I believe there is a call to action within community development practice that urgently requires a thoughtful and compassionate contemporary response. We have a pivotal role to play in using our unique position as community development practitioners, building on established relationships with communities, policymakers, developers and other key stakeholders, to facilitate opportunities for residents to share their own stories to inform how we collaboratively plan, resource and manage our cities in this brave new world, shaped by recent global crises.

Echoing this call to actively listen to community voices, one resident described her aspiration for Detroit:

The change I would like to see is the collective power of people inside of neighborhoods to influence political decision-making, and to be recognised by everybody as having value. And the way I see doing that is to increase the organisation of neighbors, increase their organising voice, and connecting that voice to actual voting power, so that we're being heard (Givens, 2018).

Chapter 4: Present (Kindle)

Introduction

This chapter examines the present circumstances in Detroit in the first quarter of the 21st century. It explores the diverse and multi-faceted experiences of residents living in the City at a time of change and uncertainty in the future. It reflects on the narrative of ‘two Detroits’ that emerged from the literature and resident interviews. This has manifested as ‘separate and unequal growth’ taking place in the City, as described in the recent report on *The State of Economic Equity in Detroit* (Detroit Future City, 2021). Throughout the chapter, I explore the urban studies concepts of binary cities and the shrinking city in relation to the specific circumstances and resident experiences of Detroit, ultimately challenging this didactic perspective and instead providing an insight into the multiplicity of experiences of what ‘actually happens within the city’s borders’ (Marr, 2016).

Using ethnographic techniques within a framework of futures-focused anthropology and Participatory Action Research (PAR), this chapter provides a visual and narrative account of two Detroit neighbourhoods, North Corktown and Southwest, from the perspective of nine active residents, and offers an insight into potential reimagined futures. It challenges the depiction often presented through mainstream media of Detroit as a deserted city. Instead it illustrates that, throughout this challenging time in the City’s history, its people never left – but rather, many remained to rebuild its neighbourhoods from the ground-up through an alternative lens of social justice what is possible, as an antidote to the greed, inequality and exploitation inflicted on the City over decades by the dominant neoliberal capitalist order.

A Narrative of Two Detroits

There's absolutely a difference of who has the right to the resources and what it translates into. You hear this narrative of two Detroits, right? (McCallum, 2020)

Throughout the literature review, press review and interviews with active residents, frequent references to two contrasting versions of contemporary Detroit came to the surface. This included statements such as:

'So this is the two Detroits' (Cheek, 2020).

'Old Detroit, New Detroit' (dbusiness, 2014).

'People are not being taken care of by government in the second Detroit' (McCallum, 2020).

'I think we are creating a new Detroit' (George, 2018).

'This artist girl did this poem, New Detroit, and it became a thing, and it still is. New Detroit vs. Old Detroit' (Cheek, 2020).

Since the bankruptcy filing, Detroit has been spoken about in polarising terms. During the interviews with residents, 'New Detroit' was described in relation to a comeback city or Renaissance city. Figure 24 below depicts the full range of the words associated with 'New Detroit' and the frequency with which they appeared during the resident interviews.

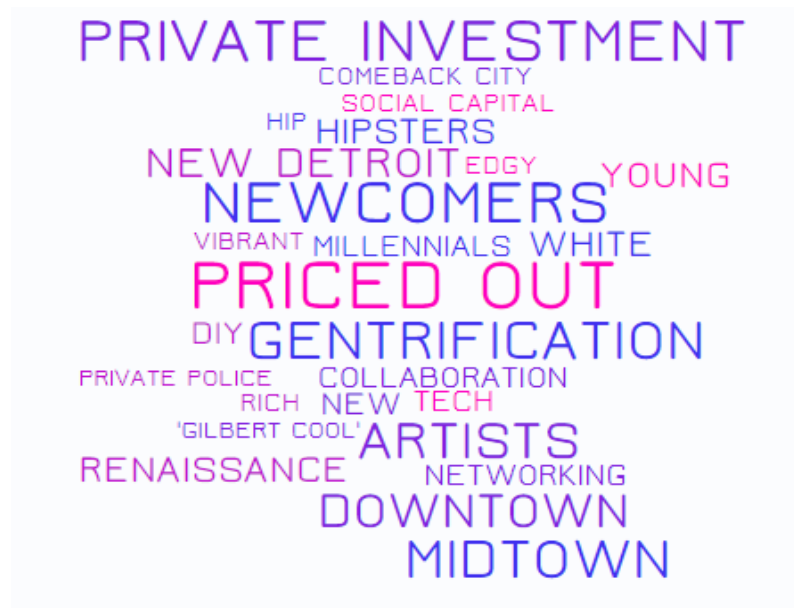


Figure 24: Word cloud associated with 'New Detroit' from resident interviews.

By contrast, 'Old Detroit' was described by residents during interviews as being about lifelong Detroiters, established neighbourhoods, and people that weathered the storm. Figure 25 below illustrates the words associated with 'Old Detroit' and their frequency as they appeared during the interviews.



Figure 25: Word cloud associated with 'Old Detroit' from resident interviews.

These contrasting terms used by resident-participants suggested a binary-cities construct built into the language used about Detroit, based on an implied difference or otherness categorised by the 'Old' and 'New' descriptors. It assumes the same didactic, as described by Stephen Marr (2016) about the binary cities concept, of those with the resources to complete and those excluded from it, or simply put, progress versus statis. While a recent study by Detroit Future City (2021) showed that the opportunities and security afforded to residents in neighbourhoods receiving investment and those that are not were vastly different, the majority of resident-participants described their experience of a convergence of characteristics of 'New Detroit' and 'Old Detroit' taking shape within the same space. This includes older Black resident-activists and young White newcomers living as neighbours in North Corktown and working together to shape a sustainable neighbourhood development plan, as well as urban farmers building on Detroit's history of community gardening to test potential alternative futures for the City.

From the literature review, I discovered that the use of the term 'New Detroit' was not unique to the 21st century, but rather a name that had previously been used to rebrand the City after a particularly challenging period in its history. In 1968, Mayor Cavanagh promoted his vision for 'New Detroit', following the 'turbulent summer' of the 1967 rebellions. Historian Suzanne Smith (2000) described this version of 'New Detroit' as 'capable of recognizing the talents and hopes of Black Detroit', launched with a citywide celebration of Black cultural life, named by Mayor Cavanagh as 'Aretha Franklin Day' to honour the native Detroit 'Queen of Soul' (Smith S. E., 2000). It is interesting to reflect on the aim of the 1968 vision of 'New Detroit' constructed by a White mayor to promote Black culture, inviting in prominent Black icons including Martin Luther King Jr., following the civil unrest the previous year. The 'New Detroit' term fell away soon after this event with no further references made in the literature review or referenced during resident interviews for the period between the late 1960s and 2000s. The present-day use of the term 'New Detroit' is predominantly now used to describe activity associated with a younger, predominantly White cohort of newcomers to the City, as

well as associated private investment and references to gentrification, as illustrated in the 'New Detroit' word cloud in Figure 24.

There was a recurring narrative that arose on the concept of 'two Detroits' simultaneously existing, both within the same City. Research suggested two different meanings when this term was used during interviews and through the literature review. I have analysed these findings and interpreted that the key distinction was that one was based on demographics and the second was place-based. The first construct of 'two Detroits' incorporated the concepts of 'Old Detroit' and 'New Detroit'. 'Old Detroit' was one of working-class, predominantly Black, Latinx and immigrant populations of lifelong Detroiters. On the other hand, 'New Detroit' was associated with the influx of new restaurants, maker/designers and generally a younger, White population of newer residents. Some residents interviewed spoke positively about their contribution to a 'New Detroit' (George, 2018), while others offered the term, and their relationship to it, somewhat apologetically, suggesting how they were working to move away from an association with New Detroit (Shields, 2019). This concept of 'two Detroits' was not solely based on location, but also identity. Some spoke of their own identity as being associated with New Detroit, despite the neighbourhoods in which they were based sitting outside of the investment areas typically associated with that description. This gave rise to the question, to what extent is one's ability to determine where one sits on this axis dependent on one's proximity to power and wealth?, a question that continues to be explored throughout the thesis.

I don't think Detroit will ever be what it was, nor do I think it should be. I think we are creating like a New Detroit (George, 2018).

So, we kind of joked, because that is what people would call New Detroit and Old Detroit. And so, I think prior, without really realising it, we were maybe more part of New Detroit than we wanted to be (Shields, 2019),

The second concept of 'two Detroits' overlaps with one above, but revealed a dichotomy between 'New Detroit', the so-called '7.2' (Moskowitz P. E., 2018, p. 91), referring to the 7.2 square miles of investment within the wider 139 square mile City of Detroit, and the 'Old Detroit' as the surrounding neighbourhoods, frequently spoken about as 'neglected' or 'hidden' during resident interviews. Within the terms of gentrification, P.E. Moskowitz (2018) described 'the '7.2' as providing 'for the rich, mostly White newcomers to the City and their allies in business...'. The remaining 134.8 square miles, he described, as for those people 'who cannot afford to stay within the 7.2', where 'the city is literally going to seed around them' (Moskowitz P. E., p. 91). One resident described his perception of the two Detroits as:

So, you get these [areas] where you can go one street over and it's a whole different story, you know, so that's where the narrative of two Detroits comes from (McCallum, 2020).

While 'New Detroit' has a private security force financed by developer Dan Gilbert, and an average response rate of ninety seconds, in Old Detroit, by contrast, police response times can take up to an hour (McCallum, 2020) (Moskowitz P. E., 2018, p. 94). During interviews, some lifelong Detroit residents (Sharp, 2020) (Talley, 2019a) spoke of being made to feel that they did not belong in the 'New Detroit' of Downtown, either through how they felt others have treated them or through inaccessible pricing of parking and entertainment that they did not feel was accessible to all Detroiters.

Sometimes, Downtown, you walk – I have run into people who have treated me like I didn't belong down there (Talley, 2019a)

If I want to go Downtown and enjoy something, I'm going to go because I refuse to be left out. I mean, I am not going to be left out because it's my City (Sharp, 2020).

While there may be two different concepts of ‘two Detroits’ – that of a ‘place-based’ distinction in the case of the 7.2 versus 134.8 square miles of the City, and a ‘demographic-based’ distinction, based mainly on race, class and longevity of residence in Detroit – they share at least one key factor. That is proximity to privilege, power and wealth. In both definitions, the term ‘Old Detroit’ shares a commonality of being associated with lower income, older, predominantly Black and Latinx populations in areas of disinvestment, while ‘New Detroit’ is more frequently associated with wealthier, younger, predominantly White populations in areas that attract private investment and development.

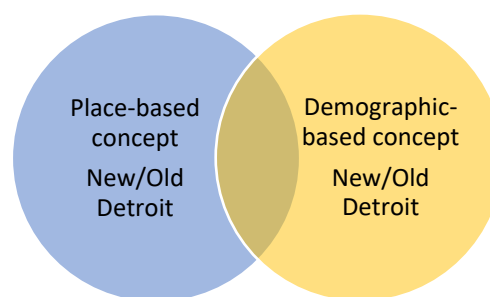


Figure 26: Venn diagram showing relationship of two concepts of ‘New Detroit’ and ‘Old Detroit’.

The ‘two Detroits’ narrative that arose in resident interviews also emerged in the literature, which argued that a history of unequal investment and policy decisions in the City had contributed to the ‘raging two Detroits debate’ (*Bridge Detroit*, 2021). In *How to Kill a City*, P.E. Moskowitz (2018) described a similar phenomenon taking place in neighbourhoods and cities across the US, including New York, Detroit, New Orleans and San Francisco. Moskowitz (2018) described his own experience of growing up in the West Village of New York, and seeing it turn from the neighbourhood once lauded by urbanist Jane Jacobs in 1961 for its ability to foster equality and inclusion, to a segregated neighbourhood of ‘two worlds living on top of each other’, that of the ‘gentrifiers’ and of the ‘residents there before us’ (Moskowitz P. E., 2018, p. 3). This, Moskowitz (2018) argued, was the result of turning our cities into capital-producing machines, with city governments addicted to that capital to function. He argued that ‘gentrification is the inevitable result of a political system focused more on the creation and expansion of business opportunity than on

the wellbeing of its citizens' (Moskowitz P. E., p. 5). Gentrification was not an accident, but 'a system that places the needs of capital (both in terms of city budget and in terms of real estate profit) above the needs of people' (Moskowitz P. E., p. 9). He argued that gentrification cannot happen without deeply rooted inequality, which in the US, has resulted from decades of racist housing policy (Moskowitz P. E., p. 9). Moskowitz (2018) argued that gentrification was the most transformative urban phenomenon of the last half century and yet, it was nearly always spoken about on the level of the minutiae (Moskowitz P. E., p. 8), rather than as a far-reaching consequence of systemic inequality.

Moskowitz (2018) built on Phillip Clay's stages of gentrification to include a precursor stage, or 'Stage 0', in which a municipality opens itself up to gentrification through zoning, tax breaks and branding power. He described how in New Orleans, Stage 0 was Hurricane Katrina, in which the city used the opportunity presented by the storm's destruction of poor and African American neighbourhoods to attract White people and investment (Moskowitz P. E., p. 6). In Detroit, Moskowitz cited Stage 0 as the City's bankruptcy, which he argued 'enabled it [the City] to find other ways to profit in the wake of declining industry' (Moskowitz P. E., p. 7). In both instances, the cities were already experiencing significant economic challenges and inequality before their crises; however, Moskowitz (2018) argued that these governments used the events as catalysts to market their ailing cities for corporate investment, while adopting policies more favourable to the accumulation of capital at the expense of poorer citizens (Moskowitz P. E., pp. 7, 10).

The similarity between the experience in New Orleans and Detroit was echoed during two resident interviews. In one, a resident expressed: 'The hurricane destroyed New Orleans. Capitalism destroyed Detroit' (Emery, 2020). This resident had explored the possibility of moving to New Orleans from Detroit after the hurricane, recognising some commonalities between the two cities, and was motivated by a desire to be part of the effort to transform a place after a major event or disaster (Emery, 2020). Another interviewee had been a New Orleans resident for many years and chose to come to Detroit post-bankruptcy

to help create a more accessible and socially-just city during the window of innovation and creativity (Cosma, 2019).

Moskowitz (2018) aimed to expose the powerful interests that mould our cities, so that as citizens, we can begin to reshape them in our own design, acting against the sense of inevitability of the neoliberal capitalist future of urban America. The *Detroit Is Us* research builds on this aim within a specific context of marginalised neighbourhoods in post-bankruptcy Detroit by identifying the forces at play, sharing residents' lived experiences of the impact of these policies, and using case studies to illustrate a variety of alternatives to provide a counter-narrative to the assumptions of inevitability of the current dominant order.

Policy-making in Detroit has contributed towards the 'raging two Detroits debate' (Aguilar, 2021a), fuelled by a decade of growth that has been 'separate and unequal', according to a study commissioned by Detroit Future City (2021): *The State of Economic Equity in Detroit*. The study's aim was to understand the impact of policies that create dangerous imbalances among racial and ethnic groups (Aguilar, 2021a). As argued by Moskowitz (2018), a range of policy decisions, such as tax breaks to corporations, Downtown housing developments deemed unaffordable to many existing residents, mass tax foreclosures, and a lack of investment in poorer neighbourhoods, have all contributed to this experience of two Detroits. Non-profit think tank, Detroit Future City (2024), has a mission to create a more equitable and sustainable future for Detroit, but recognised the need to first understand current inequities and use this to inform solutions and track progress moving forward (Detroit Future City, p. 16).

A deep dive of the internet provided multiple articles on this subject covering the period from Detroit's bankruptcy until late 2022. The photograph below from the aptly named article in *The Guardian*, 'The two Detroits: a city both collapsing and gentrifying at the same time', also by Moskowitz (2015), illustrates this narrative with a house in a state of disrepair sitting alongside a vacant lot in the foreground, flanked by GM's headquarters, the Renaissance Center, gleaming bright, in the background.



Figure 27: Separated by as little as a city block ... a boarded-up house in Brush Park with Downtown Detroit behind it. Photograph: Rebecca Cook/Reuters/Corbis.

The Detroit Future City report (2021) concluded that the ‘separate and unequal growth’ in the City has often manifested itself along racial lines, with a growing gap between White and African American and Hispanic residents (Detroit Future City, p. 30). Data showed Black and Latinx residents were still dealing with the consequences of past policies, as well as current practices that perpetuated long-standing imbalances (*Bridge Detroit*, 2021). For example, between 2010 and 2019, median income increased by 60% for White Detroiters compared to 8% for African American Detroiters, while the unemployment rate for African Americans was 1.5 times that of White residents (Detroit Future City, pp. 13, 33). The baseline data presented by the Detroit Future City (2021) report provided a quantitative analysis of two very different experiences within a single city depending on one’s proximity to power and wealth.

This was illustrated through one interviewee’s account:

This one lady who, unfortunately, is the symbol that some people matter less in the city. She owns her home; she maintains lots across the street from her home. She has helped raise all the children in the neighborhood. She’s in her 80s. Every year, she holds a fundraiser to support police officers and gives community awards to people who have done good things. She is part of her resident outreach corps, so she comes out and educates the community. She’s at just about every meeting that

you can go to. You could not do more than Willie Mae Gaskins has done in her 80s to support the community.

If somebody breaks into her house, the police probably won't show up on time. If there's a fire in the house next to her, the fire department's going to be slow. There's a lot across the street from her where the water main has been broken and running and flooding the street, and nobody responds to it. And there are houses all up and down her street that are vacant and open and nobody's tearing them down. In addition to living in this house and taking care of it, she also pays property taxes on her home. Her property taxes are probably equivalent to the property taxes of people who live in communities like mine. The difference between Willie Mae Gaskins and me is not that she's paying less, it's that she matters less, because we have allowed some people to matter less than others in the City of Detroit (Givens, 2018).

The investment of corporations and non-profits into the so-called '7.2' at the expense of the neglected neighbourhoods, further bolstered by policy decisions by the City, appear to have further exacerbated this narrative of two Detroits. According to Moskowitz (2018), this has led to a 'new economic segregation funded by corporations and non-profits' (Moskowitz P. E., p. 96), recalling Moskowitz's previous argument that 'Detroit's rebirth has been built on the backs of people who were too poor to leave' (2018, p. 95).

In contrast to media portrayals and resident conversations about the 'two Detroits', seven interviewees (19%) also described examples where the two have successfully come together. This included instances of cooperation between 'millennials open to collaboration and networking' (George, 2018) and 'lifelong Detroiters using our own insight and knowledge' (DeSantis, 2020), so that together, they can create and implement more effective local solutions, drawing on their respective strengths and networks for the benefit of their neighbourhoods.

The neighbourhood of North Corktown presented an interesting case study of this in action. Seven of the nine North Corktown residents interviewed had been involved in the Neighborhood Association. Their demographic make-up was unusual, as it was markedly different to conventional descriptions of neighbourhood associations, such as that provided by Putnam (2000) as generally consisting of older, White residents. In North Corktown, 43% were lifelong residents or those who had lived in the neighbourhood for more than two decades, while 57% had moved into the neighbourhood in the past ten years. 29% were Black women and 71% White men. The majority of members, at 71%, were in their 40s/50s, while one was in their 20s/30s and one over 60 years old. While not entirely representative of wider Detroit demographics (United States Census Bureau, 2019c), the demographics of the North Corktown Neighborhood Association showed a reasonably representative cross-section of the neighbourhood (City Data, 2017) representing a fairly even split of lifelong and newer residents, as well as a spectrum of ages ethnic backgrounds.

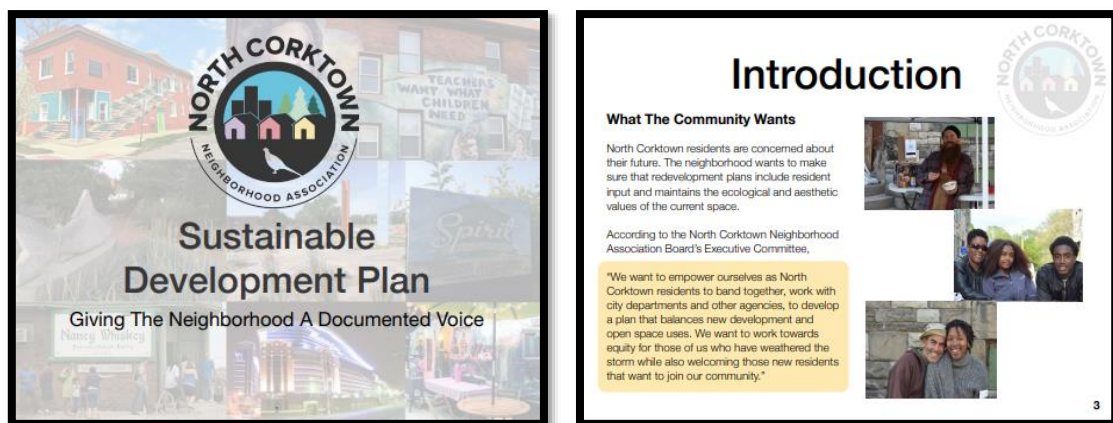
In interviews with past and present members of the Neighborhood Association, three of seven made references to the benefits of both the historic knowledge and established social connections of the long-term residents, as well as the networking, confidence and technological skills of the younger generation moving into the area. One example was highlighted by the Association president (Talley, 2019b). She led the Association to engage the community in identifying local priorities, working together to map the vision for future development in their neighbourhood. This ultimately took the form of the successful Sustainable Development Plan (North Corktown Neighborhood Association, b). Talley (2019b) described the skills of the youngest member of the Association, who worked with her to produce their plan in a format that would be accessible to the developers and the City, drawing on his skills as a tech-industry professional.

The former Association president (Emery, 2020) described the combined assets of himself, the current president, and the youngest member, as a representative collective of individuals, which crossed the boundaries of 'New' and 'Old' Detroit. He described himself as

being retired, with having more time to devote to the community, plus the experience of a lifelong career in community development (Emery, 2020). He described the current president as a long-time resident, good at engaging with neighbours, and knowledgeable about community issues and aspirations. The youngest member, he described as being adept at working with organisations, drawing on his professional experience and confidence in networking and relationship-building with the Land Bank, City and developers (Emery, 2020).

The Neighborhood Association was formed to coordinate neighbours of North Corktown around common concerns. They have engaged bonding capital to create a united identity and common set of goals, while using bridging capital to share a multitude of skills and draw on both local community contacts and wider professional networks to raise their profile and amplify their voice to affect change (Briggs, 1998) (Putnam, 2000).

In the research, the North Corktown Sustainable Development Plan (North Corktown Neighborhood Association, b) was cited as an exemplary initiative by two interviewees from outside of the North Corktown neighbourhood and appeared to be fast becoming a model that other Detroit neighbourhood groups were seeking to replicate. Within the neighbourhood itself, five of the nine North Corktown residents interviewed described how the City's planning department had engaged with the Association, most notably, directing prospective developers to meet with the Association before submitting planning proposals for new developments in the neighbourhood. Seven of nine North Corktown resident-interviewees described the value of the plan in establishing an important relationship with Ford Motor Company. Written just before Ford announced its intention to buy the Train Station, the plan led to the planning department directing Ford to involve the Neighborhood Association in their proposals, including the shaping of a local Community Benefits Agreement, which had the potential to provide significant and long-lasting benefits to the neighbourhood.



Figures 28 and 29: Cover and introduction from North Corktown Neighborhood Association's Sustainable Development Plan (North Corktown Neighborhood Association, b).

Below is an excerpt from the North Corktown Sustainable Development Plan:

We want to empower ourselves as North Corktown residents to band together, work with city departments and other agencies, to develop a plan that balances new development and open space uses. We want to work towards equity for those of us who have weathered the storm while also welcoming those new residents that want to join our community (North Corktown Neighborhood Association, b, p. 3).

This approach was reminiscent of an emerging practice of inspired collaboration known as 'Reform by Design' (Ovink, 2014), identified in the literature review. This approach had been implemented in New York in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy with the premise to create bespoke, sustainable solutions that drew on local and professional expertise. Co-founder Henk Ovink described the approach as 'a large and inspired coalition of stakeholders joining forces with the ambition to set a new standard for resilient development' (Ovink, 2014). While responding to the consequences of capitalism, rather than natural disaster, the North Corktown Neighborhood Association employed comparable principles to Reform by Design with a similar aim of 'resilient development' in their neighbourhood, although none of those interviewed made specific reference to the New York initiative.

In another example of creating shared solutions, a resident involved in a Detroit initiative gaining international publicity, The Empowerment Plan, reflected, 'I don't think Detroit will ever be what it was, nor do I think it should be. We are creating a new Detroit. It's a very contagious energy... There's just this shared sense of why we're all doing what we're doing' (George, 2018). Some newer Detroit initiatives that intentionally brought together elements often associated with both 'New' and 'Old' Detroit to find shared solutions for a more equitable city, such as The Empowerment Plan (2019a), Detroit Soup (Build Institute, 2024) and the North Corktown Sustainable Development Plan (North Corktown Neighborhood Association, b), could be perceived as themselves challenging binary concepts held about Detroit and other marginal cities.

This premise builds on the work of political scientist Stephen Marr (2016), who challenged binary concepts of world cities as either those with the resources to compete in a global market or those excluded from it. He argued that Detroit and other 'peripheral' cities were central to understanding the changing face of urbanism around the world (Marr, p. 5). Marr (2016) called for a critical understanding of how marginal cities actually work, rather than measuring them by their failure. In the case of Detroit, Marr argued that the challenge was to move beyond 'a tired fascination with stories of ruin porn... in order to examine what actually happens in Detroit's borders' (Marr, p. 8). This research has responded to this call to action by sharing stories from Detroit residents to understand their lived experiences and appreciate the many contradictions, overlaps and nuances through their own words, rather than a binary view of world cities versus peripheral cities against which Marr (2016) argued.

Interviewed residents described an 'either/or' narrative of Detroit's representation in the press, perpetuating the binary viewpoint of the City as a '*Lonely Planet* Top Destination for 2018' (*Visit Detroit*, 2018) or as an abandoned ghost town, rather than appreciating the nuance that may lie in between. By contrast, in residents' own words, they described a more complex interweaving of both negative and positive aspects of gentrification, diversity, development and in some instances, a coming together of new and old versions of Detroit,

with many residents' own perceptions of their City occupying more of a multiplicity of identities at the same time, as opposed to a singular binary identity. This builds on one of the aims of this research to provide a more nuanced portrait of Detroit's diversity in all its many facets.

This binary portrayal of Detroit through the media was echoed in the results returned from a simple *Google* search of the phrase, 'Detroit map'. These results reinforced the idea of an external perception of the City in further binary terms of 'bad', 'dangerous' or 'rich'.

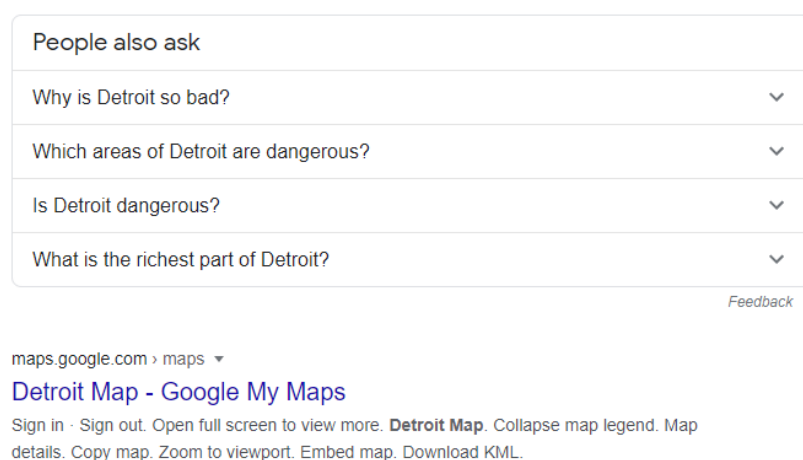


Figure 30: Screenshot of *Google* search return for 'Detroit map', suggesting commonly asked, related questions, retrieved 5 February 2021.

By contrast to prolific media-led, often binary portrayals of the City, residents own stories of urban change and regeneration in Detroit and other cities grappling with the effects of global events remains a relatively sparse, yet growing, area of literature. This research aims to contribute to a changing narrative of urban experience in the 21st century from the perspective of people directly involved and impacted by it. UK studies, such as *Reflecting Realities* (Anastacio, et al., 2000) and *Connected Communities* (Gilchrist & Morris, 2011), and South American studies, such as *TAFOS* (Fairey, 2018) and *Los Arenales* (Vergara-Perucich, 2021), have aimed to 'to facilitate the emergence of communities' own stories' (Anastacio, 2000, p. 4), narratives which scholars such as Anastacio (2000) and Dinham (2007) have found to be absent from their own literature reviews of projects in developed

countries, which have instead focused on impact and spend, a position echoed by my own literature review.

The experiences of people living in 'marginal' cities like Detroit (Marr, 2016) are becoming more visible through the increased exposure from growing social movements, such as Black Lives Matter and the Water Justice Movement (MCRC, 2017), together with advances in communications technology and social media. Significant global events during the past quarter century, including the Financial Crisis and Coronavirus pandemic (Oxfam, 2022), have highlighted the stark inequalities in wealth, opportunity and health (Blundell, 2020), with residents of marginalised cities most adversely impacted due to structural biases in society rooted predominantly in race and class. Research that amplifies residents' voices and lived experiences provides an insight for policy makers, investors and urban planners to understand the impact that their decisions and investments can make on individuals, communities and our cities. This builds on studies carried out in the UK by Adam Dinham (2005) on the New Deal for Communities programme, and by Alison Gilchrist and David Morris (2011) on the UK government's Big Society agenda. Both studies highlighted the benefits of an approach that enabled residents' voices to inform policy or, as described by Gary Craig, 'bottom-up community analyses' (Craig, 2011, p. 11).

Shining a spotlight on the experience of a sample of 36 residents of Detroit's neighbourhoods has provided an opportunity to 'unmask an often neglected part of global capitalism's presence' and 'dispute narratives of inexorable progress and of urban lifestyles that are available to fewer and fewer people' (Marr, 2016, p. 9). The 'narrative of the two Detroits' demonstrates the structural inequalities of the capitalist system within one 139 square-mile City. Detroit showcases the best of capitalism: the introduction of the minimum wage, growth of the Black middle class and record homeownership. This is set alongside the worst of capitalism: decline of the auto industry, foreclosure crisis, water shutoffs and the largest municipal bankruptcy in US history. In the case of Detroit, I argue that we see the truth of Graeber's statement:

It would appear that capitalism, as a system, simply cannot extend such a deal to everyone (Graeber, 2014, p. 375).

This is America.

Don't catch you slippin' now.

Look at how I'm livin' now.

We just want the money (yeah)...

(Lyrics from '*This is America*' by hip hop artist Childish Gambino⁹ (Glover, 2018)).

A crisis of inclusion

This 'crisis of inclusion', as Graeber described it, is the human consequence of capitalism's engine of perpetual growth and insatiable appetite for profits over people. The 'Tale of Two Cities' that we are seeing played out in Detroit is, in many ways, a microcosm of the experience of marginalised communities, and particularly communities of colour, in cities all across America and other parts of the world. The manifestation of this crisis has been further exacerbated by the compounding effects of two significant global crisis within less than two decades at the start of the 21st century, the Financial Crisis and the Coronavirus pandemic. The literature found that the 2008 Financial Crisis had created a catalyst for anthropologists and economists, such as David Graeber (2014) and Adrian Pabst (2010), to further challenge the structural inequality capitalism has generated in our cities and its relationship to the contemporary financial system (Sugrue, 2014).

Political economist Ha-Joon Chang (2011) examined the structural inequality of capitalism through the global standards of living. He challenged the claim that the US has

⁹ 'This is America' is a song written and performed by Childish Gambino, hip hop stage name of Donald Glover, 2018, copyright RCA Records; <https://open.spotify.com/album/7arx9qPJexCsDz67El4qvk>

the highest standard of living in the world, instead arguing that it had by far the most unequal distribution of income of any rich country. US workers had less job security, weaker welfare infrastructure, lower wages, longer hours and poorer conditions than in Europe, concluding that the higher purchasing power of the average US citizen was only attained through the poverty and insecurity of fellow citizens. Chang's (2011) conclusion is supported by the lived experience of US citizens documented through the Detroit research, data that has been triangulated against graphs from the OECD depicting the reality of income inequality in the United States (OECDb, 2017). According to the OECD, the US was one of the worst-performing countries across the 37 OECD countries for both poverty gap and income inequality indicators, based on the most recent 2017 income and population figures available. These showed the US ranking 36th out of 37 on the poverty gap indicator and 34th on income inequality (OECDa, 2017) (OECDb, 2017).

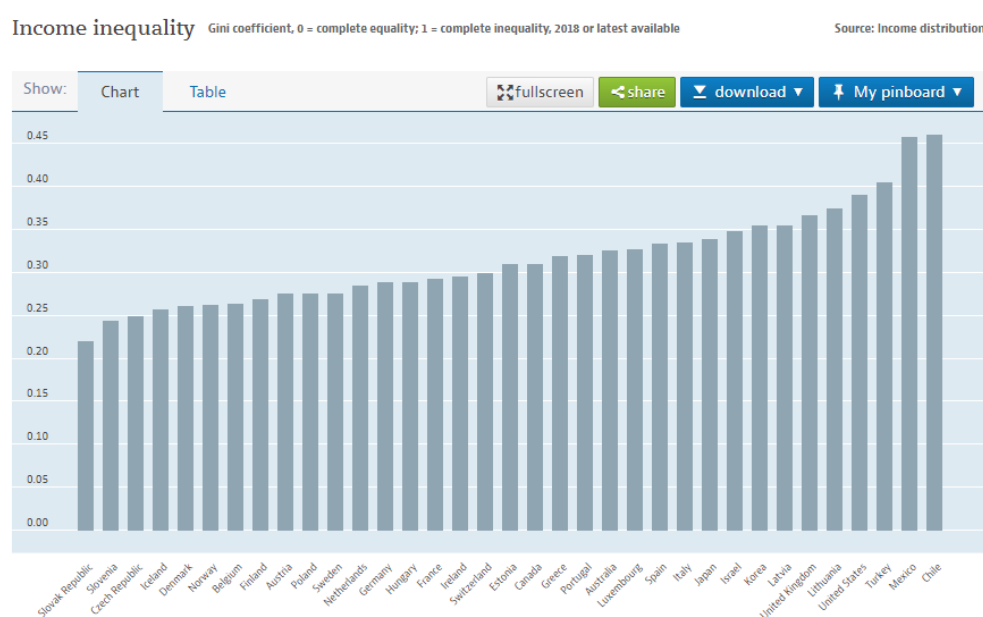


Figure 31: Income inequality graph for 37 OECD countries (OECDb, 2017), US as 34th¹⁰.

¹⁰ **Definition of income inequality:** Income is defined as household disposable income in a particular year. It consists of earnings, self-employment and capital income and public cash transfers; income taxes and social security contributions paid by households are deducted. The income of the household is attributed to each of its members, with an adjustment to reflect differences in needs for households of different sizes. Income inequality among individuals is measured here by five indicators. The Gini coefficient is based on the comparison of cumulative proportions of the population against cumulative proportions of income they receive, and it ranges between 0 in the case of perfect equality and 1 in the case of perfect inequality (OECDc, n.d.).

Drilling down further, cities across the US have been subjected to the economic effects of globalisation, the collapse of industry, rising crime rates and shrinking populations, with Detroit described as 'the most representatively American place on the planet' (Herron, 2007). This position was echoed during interviews with lifelong Detroit residents:

The quality of life in Detroit sucks (McCallum, 2020).

The struggle is really real. Cuz you don't hear about it. You can hear how people are really having a difficult time just trying to make ends meet, rent, water, all these things are steady going up. But people's pay increase is still the same (Leali, 2019).

The Detroit context. The table below provides statistical analysis to complement the narrative on the two Detroit's concept. This data illustrates the statistical variance between the two case study neighbourhoods of North Corktown and Southwest, the neighbourhood of Corktown that sits between them and is a site of considerable development investment, as well as the City as a whole and one of its most affluent suburbs, Bloomfield Hills.

Figure 32: Socio-economic and diversity statistics by neighbourhood

Detroit Neighbourhood Comparison Demographics					
Income and Housing	North Corktown	Southwest	Corktown	City of Detroit	Bloomfield Hills (suburb)
Median household income	\$16,800 ¹¹	\$25,200 ¹²	\$34,200 ¹³	\$30,000 ¹⁴	\$169,300
Unemployment rate	8% ¹⁵	9.9% ¹⁶	5.9% ¹⁷	14.9% ¹⁸	2.5%
Households	833 ¹⁹	4,804 ²⁰	461 ²¹	256,985 ²²	1,296
Food stamps (% households)	49% ²³	47% ²⁴	31% ²⁵	42% ²⁶	<0.1% ²⁷

Ethnic Diversity	North Corktown ²⁸	Southwest ²⁹	Corktown ³⁰	City of Detroit ³¹	Bloomfield Hills (suburb) ³²
African American	71.5%	11%	34.3%	77.8%	1.1%
White	20.5%	17.3%	41.3%	12.2%	85.2%
Latinx	5.2%	69.9%	21.9%	7.5%	1%
Mixed	0.6%	1.4%	2.5%	3.8%	7.5%
Asian	1.5%	0.2%	0%	1.6%	5.1%
Other	0.7%	0.2%	0%	10.5%	0.1%

Education (level attained)	North Corktown ³³	Southwest ³⁴	Corktown ³⁵	City of Detroit ³⁶	Bloomfield Hills (suburb) ³⁷
Graduate/prof degree	3.3%	2.1%	24.6%	5.5%	42.2%
Bachelors degree	12.6%	5.9%	20.8%	8.3%	31.7%
Some college/assoc degree	25.7%	14.6%	16%	32.7%	14.2%
High school diploma	38.5%	28%	21.4%	32.5%	8.1%
No high school diploma	19.7%	45.9%	17.2%	21%	3.9%

¹¹ Briggs, Detroit household income (Statistical Atlas, o)

¹² Southwest Detroit household income (Statistical Atlas, f)

¹³ Corktown, Detroit household income (Statistical Atlas, p)

¹⁴ Quick Facts, Detroit City, Michigan (US Census Bureau, n.d.)

¹⁵ Briggs, Detroit employment status (Statistical Atlas, w)

¹⁶ Southwest Detroit employment status (Statistical Atlas, x)

¹⁷ Corktown, Detroit employment status (Statistical Atlas, y)

¹⁸ Mayor's Office, City of Detroit website (Detroit, n.d.), (14.9% based on Feb 2021 data for consistency with other employment data)

¹⁹ Briggs, Detroit population (Statistical Atlas, k)

²⁰ Southwest Detroit population (Statistical Atlas, b)

²¹ Corktown, Detroit population (Statistical Atlas, z)

²² Detroit, Michigan population (Statistical Atlas, d)

²³ Briggs, Detroit food stamps (Statistical Atlas, q)

²⁴ Southwest Detroit food stamps (Statistical Atlas, i)

²⁵ Corktown, Detroit food stamps (Statistical Atlas, s)

²⁶ Detroit, Michigan food stamps (Statistical Atlas, r)

²⁷ Bloomfield Hills, Michigan food stamps (Statistical Atlas, z1)

²⁸ Briggs, Detroit race and ethnicity (Statistical Atlas, l)

²⁹ Southwest Detroit race and ethnicity (Statistical Atlas, e)

³⁰ Corktown, Detroit race and ethnicity (Statistical Atlas, n)

³¹ Quick Facts, Detroit City, Michigan (US Census Bureau, n.d.)

³² Bloomfield Hills, Michigan race and ethnicity (Statistical Atlas, z2)

³³ Briggs, Detroit educational attainment (Statistical Atlas, t)

³⁴ Southwest Detroit educational attainment (Statistical Atlas, z3)

³⁵ Corktown, Detroit educational attainment (Statistical Atlas, v)

³⁶ Detroit, Michigan educational attainment (Statistical Atlas, u)

³⁷ Bloomfield Hills, Michigan educational attainment (Statistical Atlas, z4)

The data was drawn predominantly from the Statistical Atlas website (2018), which cited its sources as the US Census 2010 and the American Community Survey 2012-16 (Statistical Atlas, 2018). While more recent data was available for the City of Detroit and on a district level through other sources, I chose to use the Statistical Atlas website as it provided data on a neighbourhood level from which a consistent data set could be analysed across the five identified areas.

The rationale for selecting these three neighbourhoods, alongside the City of Detroit and the suburb of Bloomfield Hills, was to provide a comparison of the similarities and variances between them on the basis of income, diversity and education, and the wide range of discrepancies across one metropolitan area. The three Detroit neighbourhoods of North Corktown, Corktown and Southwest are all located within two miles of each other³⁸ and are contiguous. North Corktown and Southwest Detroit have been identified as the two selected neighbourhoods for this study, while Corktown is a neighbourhood of interest for the purpose of comparison. This interest in Corktown is due to its proximity to the two identified neighbourhoods, its differences in terms of demographics and investment, but also in its unique relationship with neighbouring North Corktown, as the two had previously been one neighbourhood before the I-375 and I-75 freeways were built in the mid-twentieth century (North Corktown Neighborhood Association, a). All three neighbourhoods are located within the southern quadrant of the City of Detroit, therefore the city-wide statistics are of interest to understand how the neighbourhoods compare to the wider City in which they are located. The rationale for including the Detroit suburb of Bloomfield Hills was to illustrate the significant discrepancies between the City's marginalised neighbourhoods and the more affluent suburbs of Metro Detroit (the area incorporating the City of Detroit and its suburbs), further illustrating the two Detroit's narrative. The relationship between Detroit's neighbourhoods and its suburbs was discussed in several sections of the literature review (Florida, 2017), (Sugrue, 2014), as well by residents during walking tours and interviews

³⁸ Distance based on google maps walking distances between hospitality landmarks in each of the three neighbourhoods, from Nancy Whiskey's in North Corktown to Slows BBQ in Corktown (0.5 miles) and from Slows BBQ in Corktown to La Gloria Bakery on Bagley Ave in Southwest Detroit (0.8 miles)

(Cheek, 2020), (Givens, 2018), (Klein, 2020), (McDowell, 2019), and therefore its inclusion was relevant for the purpose of statistical analysis and comparison.

The table above illustrates statistically significant variances across a range of indicators when analysed by the variable of location. This is particularly significant when one compares the data from the two identified neighbourhoods for the study against the suburb of Bloomfield Hills, such as in the case of household median income and education. However, there are also instances of significant variances for some indicators between the neighbourhoods, such as levels of higher education. As previously discussed, education, in terms of quality, access and attainment, was a prominent theme to emerge from the research, including the literature review and resident interviews. The results of this statistical analysis adds further evidence to Thomas Sugrue's argument that 'Detroit's biggest challenge is public education' (Sugrue, 2014, p. Preface xxvi) and resident Erika George's challenging conjecture about the City's future, 'Are we all going to leave 'cuz our kids can't go to the schools here?' (George, 2018).

The largest discrepancies in relation to education were found at the two ends of the attainment level spectrum; percentages of the population with a Graduate or professional level degree (Master's level or higher) and those without a high school diploma. In the City of Detroit, 5.5%³⁹ of people held a Graduate or professional level degree, less than half the US national average of 11.5%⁴⁰. The two identified neighborhoods of North Corktown and Southwest Detroit were below the Detroit average at 2.1%⁴¹ and 3.3%⁴² respectively, whereas their neighbouring Corktown was significantly higher at 24.6%⁴³, more than twice the national average. While in the nearby Metro Detroit suburb of Bloomfield Hills, 42.2%⁴⁴ of

³⁹ Detroit, Michigan educational attainment (Statistical Atlas, u)

⁴⁰ United States educational attainment (Statistical Atlas, n.d.)

⁴¹ Briggs, Detroit educational attainment (Statistical Atlas, t)

⁴² Southwest Detroit educational attainment (Statistical Atlas, z3)

⁴³ Corktown, Detroit educational attainment (Statistical Atlas, v)

⁴⁴ Bloomfield Hills, Michigan educational attainment (Statistical Atlas, z4)

residents held a higher level degree, more than seven times that of the City of Detroit and twenty times that of the neighbourhood of Southwest Detroit.

At the other end of the educational spectrum, 21%⁴⁵ of Detroiters did not have a high school diploma, compared to a US national average of 13%⁴⁶. In North Corktown and Corktown, the percentages were slightly lower than the Detroit average at 19.7%⁴⁷ and 17.2%⁴⁸ respectively, whereas in Southwest Detroit, 45.9%⁴⁹ of residents did not hold a high school diploma, more than double the Detroit average and nearly four times the national average. In the suburb of Bloomfield Hills, this figure was 3.9%⁵⁰, less than one third of the national average. There are several reasons why these significant discrepancies may exist, including the socio-economic differences that may give rise to residents of some neighbourhoods being better able to access good quality education than others. For example, when one considers the correlation of household median incomes and education levels in North Corktown versus Bloomfield Hills. North Corktown's median household income was \$16,800⁵¹ with 2.1%⁵² holding a Graduate level degree, compared with the affluent suburb of Bloomfield Hills with median incomes multiplied ten times to \$169,300 and 42.2%⁵³ of the population holding a higher level diploma. These clear discrepancies and apparent correlations lay bare the real-life experience of many Americans, building on the premise that 'inequality increasingly operates through education' (Putnam, 2015).

This significant socio-economic divergence across neighbourhoods was particularly stark when analysing the variances between recipients of state welfare nutrition assistance programmes, also known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or food stamp programme, administered by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) (IOM and NRC, 2013). The original food stamp programme was established to address the needs of

⁴⁵ Detroit, Michigan educational attainment (Statistical Atlas, u)

⁴⁶ United States educational attainment (Statistical Atlas, n.d.)

⁴⁷ Briggs, Detroit educational attainment (Statistical Atlas, t)

⁴⁸ Corktown, Detroit educational attainment (Statistical Atlas, v)

⁴⁹ Detroit, Michigan educational attainment (Statistical Atlas, u)

⁵⁰ Bloomfield Hills, Michigan educational attainment (Statistical Atlas, z4)

⁵¹ Briggs, Detroit household income (Statistical Atlas, o)

⁵² Briggs, Detroit educational attainment (Statistical Atlas, t)

⁵³ Bloomfield Hills, Michigan educational attainment (Statistical Atlas, z4)

low income households following the Great Depression. Eligibility for the SNAP programme was based on a calculation against the federal poverty threshold and is consistent across the United States and is therefore a useful indicator in analysing poverty levels across geographical areas. The national average of the population of the US in receipt of food stamps was 13% at the time of the research⁵⁴, compared with 42%⁵⁵ of the Detroit population, over three times the national average. In the identified neighbourhoods of North Corktown and Southwest Detroit, this was higher than the City average at 49%⁵⁶ and 47%⁵⁷ respectively, compared with neighbouring Corktown at 31%⁵⁸, more than 10% under the City average. These figures were in stark contrast to the small fraction of the Bloomfield Hills population in receipt of food stamps at less than 0.1%⁵⁹.

Meanwhile the unemployment rate nationally at the time of the study was 4.7% (United States Bureau of Labor, n.d.), compared with 11.9% in Detroit (United States Census Bureau, 2019c). In the Downtown area, which has received a significant amount of investment, the unemployment rate was three times less than the Detroit average and less than the national average at 3.4%. While in Corktown, while it was nearly half of the Detroit rate, it was still above the national average at 5.9% (Statistical Atlas, y). In the identified neighbourhoods of Southwest Detroit and North Corktown, their unemployment rates were also well above the national average at 9.9% (Statistical Atlas, x) and 8% (Statistical Atlas, w) respectively, however still markedly less than the unemployment rate for the City of Detroit.

Finally, the the second table down in Figure 32 illustrates the the multitude of ethnic diversity across the City of Detroit with particular communities more concentrated in certain geographical neighbourhoods, while also demonstrating the overall African-American

⁵⁴ United States, food stamps (Statistical Atlas, j)

⁵⁵ Detroit, Michigan, food stamps (Statistical Atlas, r)

⁵⁶ Briggs, Detroit, food stamps (Statistical Atlas, q)

⁵⁷ Southwest Detroit, food stamps (Statistical Atlas, i)

⁵⁸ Corktown, Detroit, food stamps (Statistical Atlas, s)

⁵⁹ Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, food stamps (Statistical Atlas, z1)

majority population. For example, the City of Detroit ranged between 77.8%⁶⁰ and 83% African American population at the time of the study and only 12.2%⁶¹ White. North Corktown had a similar demographic at 71.5%⁶² African American population, whereas neighbouring Corktown and Southwest Detroit had significantly lower African American populations at 34.3%⁶³ and 11%⁶⁴ respectively. Bloomfield Hills had a 1.1% African American population, compared to 85.2% White⁶⁵. Southwest Detroit had a majority Latinx or Hispanic population of 69.9%⁶⁶. Neighbouring Corktown had a Latinx population of 21.9%⁶⁷, compared to 7.5%⁶⁸ in Detroit, 5.2%⁶⁹ in North Corktown and 1%⁷⁰ in Bloomfield Hills. These differences in the ethnic mix and cultural heritage of the neighbourhoods has given rise to variations in their local customs and values, as well as visible signifiers in the public realm, use of space and types of businesses in operation.

On the world stage. Social activism, through advances in social media, has brought greater attention to the increasing inequalities exacerbated by the Financial Crisis in 2008 and Coronavirus pandemic starting in 2020. During the early days of the Occupy Wall Street Movement in 2011, protestors succeeded in embedding the ‘We are the 99 percent’ slogan into cultural and political consciousness, which became ‘a national shorthand for the income disparity’ (Stelter, 2011), referring to the 99% of Americans that ‘are getting nothing’, while the 1% of the wealthiest Americans with a disproportionate share of wealth is ‘getting everything’ (We are the 99 percent, 2013). According to their tumblr blog, the group claims:

We are the 99 percent. We are getting kicked out of our homes. We are forced to choose between groceries and rent. We are denied quality medical care. We are suffering from environmental pollution. We are working long hours for little pay and

⁶⁰ Detroit, Michigan, race and ethnicity (Statistical Atlas, m)

⁶¹ Ibid

⁶² Briggs, Detroit, race and ethnicity (Statistical Atlas, l)

⁶³ Corktown, Detroit, race and ethnicity (Statistical Atlas, n)

⁶⁴ Southwest Detroit, race and ethnicity (Statistical Atlas, e)

⁶⁵ Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, race and ethnicity (Statistical Atlas, z2)

⁶⁶ Southwest Detroit, race and ethnicity (Statistical Atlas, e)

⁶⁷ Corktown, Detroit, race and ethnicity (Statistical Atlas, n)

⁶⁸ Detroit, Michigan, race and ethnicity (Statistical Atlas, m)

⁶⁹ Briggs, Detroit, race and ethnicity (Statistical Atlas, l)

⁷⁰ Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, race and ethnicity (Statistical Atlas, z2)

no rights, if we're working at all. We are getting nothing while the other 1 percent is getting everything. We are the 99 percent (We are the 99 percent, 2013).

This is effectively the narrative of the two Detroits being played out on a national level with two vastly different sets of experiences, depending on one's proximity to wealth and power.

The effects of globalisation and a financial system that rewards those with existing wealth and assets at the expense of everyone else has led to a significant 'wealth gap' (Newman & Woodcock). Scholars Newman and Woodcock illustrated this through the contrast between Amazon founder and owner, Jeff Bezos, who they claim has a personal net worth of £140billion, and an Amazon warehouse worker, paid £10 per hour, who would have to work for work eight million years to accumulate the same wealth (Newman & Woodcock). In one of the most high-profile expressions of this stark discrepancy, during this research and while the Coronavirus pandemic raged on across the globe, 'a handful of billionaires spent 2021 blasting into space' (Williams, 2021). Amazon's Jeff Bezos, CEO of Tesla Elon Musk, and Richard Branson, founder of the Virgin conglomerate, all launched missions into space at considerable financial and environmental cost (Williams, 2021), leading to Oxfam International's global head of Inequality Campaign, Deepak Xavier, to state that, 'We've now reached stratospheric inequality. Billionaires burning into space, away from a world of pandemic, climate change and starvation... This is human folly, not human achievement'. According to a briefing from Oxfam International, *Inequality Kills* (Oxfam, 2022), published ahead of the World Economic Forum in January 2022:

The world's ten richest men more than doubled their fortunes from \$700 billion to \$1.5 trillion – at a rate of \$15,000 per second or \$1.3 billion a day – during the first two years of a pandemic that has seen the incomes of 99 percent of humanity fall and over 160 million more people forced into poverty (Oxfam International, 2022).

‘Inequality at such pace and scale is happening by choice, not chance’, argued Oxfam International’s Executive Director, Gabriela Bucher (Oxfam International, 2022). Bucher believed that the cause was not a shortage of money, as that ‘lie’ died when governments pumped \$16 trillion into the economy to respond to the pandemic. Rather, she offered a glimmer of hope for a reimagined future, encouraging governments to listen to the call to action from contemporary social movements fighting for change.

There is only a shortage of courage and imagination needed to break free from the failed, deadly straitjacket of extreme neoliberalism. Governments would be wise to listen to the movements – the young climate strikers, Black Lives Matter activists, #NiUnaMenos feminists, Indian farmers and others – who are demanding justice and equality (Oxfam International, 2022).

Two such examples of governments choosing to pump money into the economy have been met with opposition and have been argued by some as having further intensified and exacerbated social inequalities in the response to the 2008 and 2020 global crises. The Financial Crisis in 2008 saw central banks across the globe choosing to enact unconventional monetary policies, including Quantitative Easing (QE) to ‘prevent a repeat of the mistakes made during the Great Depression’, the result of which was an unprecedented expansion in the monetary base in the US and other economies (Karras, 2013, p. 1). The Federal Reserve decided to once again reinstate QE in response to the Coronavirus pandemic in what was described as ‘the biggest and broadest monetary-stimulus campaign in modern history’ (Anstey, 2022). The policy of QE has remained contentious among economists, social scientists and politicians as to its efficacy in stabilising the markets and the economy, and its distributional effects leading – or not – to increased social and economic inequalities.

According to the Brookings Institute (2015), a 'widely heard criticism' of the US Federal Reserve's policy of QE has been that it increased inequality by pushing up the value of stocks, bonds and other assets 'already in the hands of the wealthy'. Chair of the Federal Reserve, Benjamin Bernanke (2015) took a somewhat different stance, arguing that while monetary policy may have contributed to some degree to inequality, these effects were 'modest' and 'transient', with limited long-term effects on what he described as 'real' outcomes, such as incomes and wealth. The long-term, deep-rooted 'widening inequality' that we were seeing across the globe, Bernanke (2015) described as stemming from deep structural changes in our economy due to globalisation, technological progress, demographic trends and labour market changes. Throughout the literature review, globalisation was often cited by the IMF, economists and anthropologists as a key driver for the rise in inequality between developed and developing countries.

The Coronavirus pandemic significantly exacerbated existing inequalities in income, health and housing. The IMF highlighted the 'adverse impact on low-income households' as 'particularly acute', with many households already in a 'precarious position' from the years leading up to the Coronavirus crisis, including the 2008 Financial Crisis (Blundell, 2020). The IMF concluded that 'the specific nature of the economic shock associated with the Coronavirus pandemic has interacted with many old and deep inequalities' (Blundell, 2020). The IMF highlighted sharp differences in death rates from Covid-19, based on deep rooted inequalities, including those on lower incomes more likely to have underlying health issues increasing their vulnerability to the disease and, noting that in a UK context, some ethnic minority groups having far higher death rates than the White British population (Blundell, 2020).

In the same year, the UK Parliamentary Network (2020), working with the World Bank and IMF, produced a report entitled *Just Transitions*, which stated:

We are looking at the first global rise in poverty this century, a curse that may now befall anywhere between 80 and 400 million people. Some countries have now

experienced ten times fewer hours worked than after the Great Financial Crisis.

Africa may lose almost half of all jobs (Parliamentary Network, p. 15).

In his call to action, the report's editor, Liam Byrne MP, argued that a collaboration between governments, multi-lateral institutions and financial institutions, and implementation of a 'New Social Contract' were fundamental to 'reversing the new surge tide of poverty' and delivering on social justice, inclusion and equity in the 'wreckage of the crisis' (Parliamentary Network, p. 18). The report argued that the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals remained the best framework for global action (United Nations, b).

With the aim of inspiring stakeholders to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the UN created the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Acceleration Actions online database (United Nations, a). Intended to 'build back better', it was presented as a tool to 'build resilience and bring inclusive recovery in the context of new realities post Coronavirus pandemic, so that the global economy, planet and people we serve could emerge stronger together from the crisis' (United Nations, a). In its introduction, the UN Secretary-General emphasised that the 'creativity of the response must match the unique nature of the crisis' (United Nations, a). This echoed the references to the role of creativity that 27.8% of interviewees from the Detroit research highlighted as fundamental to creating the change that they wanted to see in their neighbourhoods.

In contrast to the conventional and abstract neoliberal measures of growth and income, the SDG Framework provided a new international set of metrics focused on wellbeing and the experience of citizens, which could be drawn down to measure the health of cities. The SDG Framework and Acceleration Actions reframed these metrics within the context of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which encouraged a diverse cross-section of contributors to propose locally tailored, collaborative solutions to global issues.

Examples such as this Framework offer more creative approaches to reimagining a different kind of future, based on metrics for social justice and equity.

In 2014, late anthropologist and co-founder of the Occupy Movement, David Graeber conjectured that perhaps we had ‘hit the wall of our collective imagination’ (Graeber, 2014, p. 382). Yet he also asked whether the Financial Crisis may have presented the ideal opportunity for a collective reimagining of an alternative future. Since that time, the Coronavirus pandemic has swept across the globe, and while Graeber passed away in September 2020, I argue that the pandemic too provided a moment for a collective reflection, as well as a multiplier effect combined with the Financial Crisis in its urgency, to reimagine what might be possible for the future of our world. A quotation from a 2019 article in the *Financial Times* succinctly expresses this viewpoint that I share with Graeber (2014):

This certainly is a moment. But what does – and should – that moment mean? The answer needs to start with the acknowledgment of the fact that something has gone very wrong (Wolf, 2019).

This outlook illustrates a different perspective than the one offered by American political scientist Robert Putnam (2000) at the start of the millennium. Less than a decade before the Financial Crisis, he wrote, ‘the bonds of our communities have withered, and we are right to fear that this transformation has very real costs’ (Putnam, 2000). Arguing in 2000 that, to rebuild social capital, America needed a ‘galvanising crisis’ like ‘war or depression or natural disaster’, reflecting that ‘for better or worse’, ‘America at the dawn of the new century faces no such galvanising crisis’ (Putnam, 2000, p. 402). As I write in 2024, the world is in a very different place from the start of the century and these ‘galvanising crises’ to which Putnam (2000) referred, are in abundance – but have they been galvanising?

Following the Financial Crisis, political scientist, Adrian Pabst (2010) speculated that we were now living in world where it was nearly impossible to imagine an alternative to the

capitalist-democratic system. Pabst (2010), however, perceived that recent events had marked the beginning of a shift away from consumerist, paternalistic models towards an economy of mutual exchange where people assist each other towards a shared purpose. Ten years after he wrote these words, the global experience of the Coronavirus pandemic has seemingly shifted this further towards a reality in some parts of the world. In the UK, mutual aid groups sprung up virtually overnight, local authorities and community organisations quickly adapted their operations to deliver emergency responses, and large-scale community volunteering activity increased, in some cases on an unprecedented scale, with ten million UK adults volunteering in their community during the Coronavirus crisis (Jones R. , 2020). While countries such as the UK may have experienced the Financial Crisis and Coronavirus pandemic as the sort of galvanising crises of which Putnam (2000) had spoken, with the exception of small pockets observed in Detroit through fieldwork, the research found that this was not the case on a broader scale in the US.

Community leaders, such as Annika Goss, Chief Executive of Detroit Future City and co-author of their 2021 report (Detroit Future City, 2021), speculated whether this was a moment for a total rethink of the values and driving force in the United States.

We are in a rare moment of change in the United States. A moment not dissimilar from the American Revolution, the Civil War, or the Civil Rights Movement. The summer of 2020, when a pandemic that left 500,000 Americans dead, race and economics became the agent of change for this country. We will never be the same. What do we do now? (Detroit Future City, p. 5).

With global inequality laid bare following decades of capitalism and globalisation reigning supreme, are we now seeing the sparks of a revolutionary movement triggered by the Financial Crisis and Coronavirus pandemic as the ‘galvanising crises’ of the 21st century? Could responses of collective action of community mutual aid groups, cross-sector

collaborations and large-scale volunteering be the social change we need to strengthen communities and rebuild the social capital that Putnam (2000) described? Drawing on the literature and Detroit interviews, this 'galvanising crisis' (Putnam, 2000) may provide the space to reimagine an alternative future (Graeber, 2014) to our current capitalist-driven system, using the window of opportunity to influence the way that Detroit and other cities adversely impacted by structural inequalities, move forward, guided by the values of social justice and equity.

Reflecting back on Putnam's description of previous galvanising crises, such as World War II 'fostering social solidarity' (Putnam, 2000, p. 271), one would presume that the global Coronavirus pandemic may have provided similar results of an increase in volunteerism, altruism and a strengthened sense of the common good (Putnam, 2000, p. 132). However, the reality of a contemporary America with its significant social divisions, stark rises in inequality, and opposing political viewpoints reinforced by the echo chambers of social media, have all contributed to shaping a very different response in America in the 21st century. Michigan Republican representative Peter Meijer stated that the US is in an 'unprecedented environment with an unprecedented degree of fear, of divisiveness and hatred' (*BBC News*, 2021a).

A stark reminder of the hotbed of political and social unrest in the US at this moment in time arose while writing up my thesis. On 6 January 2021, an unprecedented attack on Capitol Hill by a group of Trump supporters took place, incited by President Donald Trump to 'stop the steal' in an attempt to overturn the election results (*BBC News*, 2021b). This led to the insurrection of Capitol Hill, killing six people. The following year, a US congressional panel unanimously made four criminal referrals to the US Justice Department against Trump for his role in the event, the first time in American history that Congress had taken such action against a former president. A *Reuters/Ipsos* opinion poll in mid-November 2020 found that 68% of Republicans were concerned that the election was rigged, while a similar poll after the 2016 US presidential election found 52% of Democrats believed that Hillary

Clinton's defeat to Trump was legitimate (*Reuters World News*, 2020). The results of these polls illustrate a picture of increasing distrust among factions in America.

Academics (Strolovitch, Wong, & Proctor, 2017) and media outlets (Morrison, 2021) pinpointed race as an important factor for understanding the social and political context of the United States at this moment in time. The study by Strolovitch, Wong and Proctor identified that one's proximity to the benefits of that White heteropatriarchy was politically consequential (2017, pp. 354, 360). Content analysis of news outlets and social media identified race as an important lens through which to analyse the political context and treatment of citizens, particularly in relation to the 6 January 2021 Capitol attack. *The Associated Press (AP)* ran an article entitled, 'Race double standard clear in rioters' Capitol insurrection' (Morrison, 2021), in which they compared the response of law enforcement to protestors at the Black Lives Matters protests in the summer of 2020. The 'key difference', *The AP* described, was race (Morrison, 2021), describing that the response to these two events 'represents one of the plainest displays of a racial double standard in both modern and recent history (Morrison, 2021). This could also be described in a similar narrative to the two Detroit's, but this time pertaining to 'two Americas' being experienced by its people, amplified along racial lines.

During interviews, two statements expressed by Detroit residents articulated their views of how current political events have impacted on the lives of Americans and raised questions about an uneasiness of the version of America in which they now found themselves living. Speaking in early March 2020, one North Corktown interviewee observed:

Look at this Trump revolution and look at the body count we're going to have and we are having. I mean we're locking kids in fucking concentration camps. I'm sorry, how did this turn into the America that I live in? (Cheek, 2020).

In October 2018, another interviewee observed:

There's no point in history where Americans ever took care of all of its people. So, I think we need to figure out how to make America *become* great. Even beyond America – because that's so nationalistic – how to create a fair and just real world. And so, some of the things that we test out here [in Detroit], I would love it if we could create something that helps move the envelope just a little bit (Givens, 2018).

Political analyst John B. Judis (2016) wrote that within a context of growing mistrust of the political and economic establishment, it was unsurprising that we have seen populist movements growing in the US and Europe, ultimately ushering in leaders like Donald Trump. Judis (2016) argued that populism acts as a warning sign of political crises, an indicator that people see established political norms as being at odds with their own hopes, fears and concerns (Judis, p. 17). When dramatic economic or societal change occurs, such as the Financial Crisis, it calls America's place in the world into question, voters become responsive to this, giving voice to these concerns.

Putnam (2000) argued that growing class segregation between neighbourhoods meant that rich and poor Americans lived in increasingly separate worlds, resulting in less understanding of each other's experience and less recognition of the growing opportunity gap. Judis (2016) argued that segregation had increased US political divisions and contributed to the rise of right-wing populist movements that tended to scapegoat other ethnicities, nationalities and religions (Judis, p. 157). This view was seconded by African American Studies Professor Jennifer Hochschild (2016), who analysed the responses of social scientists after the 2016 Trump election victory, identifying an emerging narrative with themes of dominance and rejection of the other, nationalism, anger at elites and economic insecurity (Hochschild, p. 7).

During the Detroit research interviews that took place between 2018 and 2020, 25% of participants (9 of 36) expressed that they had seen an increase in community activity

since the 2016 US presidential election, with six specifically citing Trump's rhetoric during his campaign as a motivation for their own activism.

So right now, like since 2016, we know everybody's into politics now, right?... Yeah, it was definitely the election of Donald Trump, even his campaign. Even before he got elected, like the rhetoric, what he was talking about in his campaign, right? Talking about Mexicans and immigrants and those types of things and like that got people kind of woken up to what was going on (Suarez, 2020).

I would say though – and especially in Southwest Detroit – I think the level of people engaging in policy issues, I feel like, has increased since 2016. And especially, actually since Rashida Tlaib [US Congresswoman] was sent to DC as our congressperson, I think that that has made people engage in politics as a way to forward these things in a new way (Bagley, 2019).

So, I think people are starting to – they've had enough – and they're really going to start letting their governments know that. So hopefully – there's a bunch of reasons, but people just don't go to demonstrations and march. But now it's like their income has been affected. They know people that have lost their homes. It's just building up to a point (Willerer, 2020).

Following a pattern of heightened political divisions, many news outlets, as well as some politicians and residents, expressed viewpoints that the US government's handling of the Coronavirus pandemic further entrenched these divides. Far from being a 'galvanising crisis', some news outlets, politicians and residents regarded the US government's handling of the Coronavirus pandemic as divisive and political. In a seemingly prescient observation

during an interview in early March 2020 at the start of the pandemic, before its scale was clear, one Detroit resident observed:

In this country, and in the City, there's this critical mass of 'we are so sick of this bullshit'. With Trump, it's obvious what's happening. They're going to really regret not having a national healthcare system when this plague spreads (Willerer, 2020).

In *CNN*'s article, 'America's response to the Coronavirus pandemic is the most American thing ever' (Andrew, 2020), it described the response as a 'symptom of American individualism, a national value that prizes personal freedoms, limited government and free will over all else' (Andrew, 2020). In the article (Andrew, 2020), Ann Keller, an associate professor of pandemic responses, argued 'now even the pandemic is refracted through an ideological lens', further entrenching the positions of an already politically divided nation.

We're not seeing Americans pull together in the way we thought they would, like the sacrifices made in World War II. People saw it as part of being an American, and people found meaning in those individual sacrifices. I think it's striking that we're not seeing that [Quote from Ann Keller] (Andrew, 2020).

The article cited past events where a divided America rallied around a common cause and overcame political divides, such as the September 11, 2001 terror attacks that saw President George W. Bush's popularity soar from the low 50s to 90%, or in the 1930s after the Great Depression, when Americans 'largely accepted sweeping changes for the communal good' (Andrew, 2020). However, it argued, in the US, 'The Coronavirus isn't being viewed in the same way' (Andrew, 2020). Building on an increasing distrust of the 'generalised other' (Putnam, 2000, p. 138), the article argued that 'making sacrifices to help a stranger may be a hard sell for some' (Andrew, 2020). But it ended with a rallying and hopeful call to action:

But to beat this crisis, we may need to balance individual liberties with collective sacrifice. That doesn't come naturally to us, but we can do it. We've done it before (Andrew, 2020).

While these expressions of American individualism and self-interest in the face of global crises in the first quarter of the 21st century may make for depressing reading, there remains hope for an alternative version of America, as demonstrated through the pockets of hope in neighbourhoods of Detroit identified through the research. The next section shares many of these inspiring stories of residents, actively involved in shaping the possible alternative futures for urban America in a defiant act of reprioritising people over profits and social justice over capitalism. The next section 'Detroit Never Left', with its visual and narrative accounts of residents actively reimagining the neighbourhoods of North Corktown and Southwest, provides an insight into this 'prophetic fightback' (West, 2017) creating the possibility of other worlds shaped by communal bonds, altruism and empathy, with global crises as a galvanising catalyst to collectively rebuild a better, more socially-just future for all.

Detroit Never Left

We always knew Detroit was going to come back. It never left, right? Never went anywhere. The people stayed through the recession; the people stayed through the downfalls of the City. And so, for me, I was more so curious on what happens after... (Carter-Alvizo, 2019a).

This section offers an insight into the lived experience of nine Detroit residents, providing a snapshot of the North Corktown and Southwest neighbourhoods in the first quarter of the 21st century, through visual and narrative ethnographies. It contributes to the growing body of community development and anthropology literature (Anastacio, 2000) (Fairey, 2018) (Gilchrist & Morris, 2011) sharing residents' stories to improve our understanding of how policy decisions and resource distribution directly affect people's lives in our cities. With a predominant focus on community development and futures-focused anthropology, this study also considers the research questions within the wider multidisciplinary context that includes urban studies and economics.

The methodology draws on anthropological traditions of ethnography that have recently been reimagined within contemporary urban contexts by sociologists (Hall, 2015) (Jackson, 2020) (Rhys-Taylor, 2018). It builds on sociologist Alex Rhys-Taylor's (2018a) idea of talking and walking with participants to enable research to be informed by the landscapes in which it takes place. It also draws on the reimagined use of visual ethnography by contemporary anthropologists that have documented people's everyday lived experience and its connection to place. Relevant examples that include the use of participatory photography have recently been published in the Italian online journal, *Visual Ethnography* (Visual Ethnography), and in studies such as Gloria Giacomelli's research in Northern Tuscany, '*Homes: things and senses*' (Giacomelli, 2020). Through the analyses of

photographs and transcripts from semi-structured walking interviews with residents, this ethnography offers a window into the experience, environment and community activity of residents living through a period of significant change in Detroit. This builds on the arguments presented in the earlier 'Who Decides the City?' and 'Narrative of Two Detroits' sections.

As identified in the literature review, the voice of residents is noticeably absent from most academic writing on regeneration, urban studies and economics. The Financial Crisis and Coronavirus pandemic have shone a spotlight on the growing levels of inequality that our current Western capitalist system has contributed to and reinforced over many decades. This provides a unique opportunity to take a pause and reflect on the significant impact of the crises on people's quality of life through their own stories. Social movements, including Black Lives Matter and Occupy Wall Street, have responded to these growing social, racial and economic inequalities by raising societal awareness through protests, rallies and social media. In Detroit, recent studies (Mohai, Kweon, Lee, & Ard, 2011), reports (NAACP, 2017), hearings (MCRC, 2017) and lawsuits (ACLU Michigan, 2020b) have exposed how policy decisions that prioritise profits over people have resulted in deaths and serious illnesses from lack of access to safe, clean water and proximity to polluting facilities, particularly in communities of colour and in neighbourhoods not favoured for development investment. The MCRC's finding that a key failing in the Flint Water Crisis was that residents' voices were not heard (MCRC, 2017, p. 113) adds further weight to the urgency of academic research and literature to amplify the voices of affected citizens to inform better public policy (Anastacio, 2000) (Dinham, 2007) (Fairey, 2018) (Gilchrist & Morris, 2011).

The walking ethnographies carried out for the *Detroit Is Us* research, also known as 'walk-alongs' (Kusenbach, 2003), took the form of a neighbourhood walking tour led by a resident, taking me as the researcher on a journey through local points of interest and meaning to them. Through this methodology, a visual depiction of the selected neighbourhoods was produced, incorporating 223 resident-directed photographs, with each

individual resident's stories and photographs gathered together as their own mini-ethnography of their neighbourhood.

Over two fieldwork trips to Detroit in November 2019 and March 2020, I conducted nine walking tours, six in the North Corktown neighbourhood and three in the Southwest neighbourhood. The two neighbourhoods are in close proximity to one another and to Downtown, which is approximately two miles equidistant from each neighbourhood. They are, in many ways, very different in character. Southwest Detroit covers a larger geographical area, incorporating a mix of business, residential, public amenities, parks and highways. North Corktown is much smaller and almost exclusively residential, with the noticeable exceptions of Nancy Whiskey's Bar, two urban farms, a handful of former commercial units and the MotorCity Casino looming, brightly lit, at the edge of the neighbourhood. Southwest Detroit is predominately Latinx in demographics⁷¹, with several visual cultural signifiers referenced during the tours (Carter-Alvizo, 2019b) (Nethercott, 2020). North Corktown has significantly less Latinx residents by contrast, with a fairly even split of Black and White residents⁷². Southwest Detroit was bustling with activity, cars, and people walking, shopping and going about their days, while North Corktown was generally very quiet – enough so that I could occasionally hear the faint hum of the freeway and the occasional pheasant call or wind rustling through the grass as I sat in one of the vacant-lots-turned-pocket-parks. Only the occasional person was observed in North Corktown, either walking down the middle of the streets (I was later told that this is often a preferred route, as streets are deemed safer than the broken, overgrown pavements) or getting into or out of their cars and front doors. The buildings in Southwest Detroit were quite densely packed, with both residential homes and parades of shops set along the main thoroughfare of Vernor Highway. North Corktown was unusually sparse for such a central inner-city neighbourhood. On some blocks, one home stood on every three lots, while on other blocks, all of the homes had been razed to the ground, leaving what looked like country fields, referred to by some

⁷¹ Southwest Detroit race and ethnicity (Statistical Atlas, e)

⁷² Briggs, Detroit race and ethnicity (Statistical Atlas, l)

residents as ‘the urban prairie’ (Talley, 2019b). This sparsity in North Corktown was a visually arresting sight, particularly with the Train Station, high-rise skyline and MotorCity Casino clearly visible in the background as reminders of the neighbourhood’s proximity to Downtown.



Figures 34-37: Top row: Photographs of Southwest Detroit, left: Bagley St, right: Vernor Hwy (March 2020). Bottom row: Photographs of North Corktown, left: Perry St (November 2019), right: Brother Nature Farm (March 2020).



Figures 38 and 39: Photos showing views of Michigan Central Train Station from different perspectives, left: from North Corktown, right: from Southwest (both March 2020).

While the two neighbourhoods varied greatly in density, both showed signs of a lack of investment and of disrepair, particularly among the residential buildings. This was also evident in the large abandoned industrial buildings in Southwest, as well as the smaller, now-empty, shop units in North Corktown.



Figures 40-43: Top: Photos of homes in disrepair. Left: North Corktown, right: Southwest. Bottom: Photos of empty commercial buildings. Left: North Corktown, right: Southwest (all March 2020).

The two neighbourhoods shared some qualities relating to minimal private or public investment and, at the time of my fieldwork, small-scale interest from commercial developers. And yet, both Southwest Detroit and North Corktown had strong community involvement in sustaining and building their neighbourhoods, referenced repeatedly during the interviews, following the City's municipal bankruptcy. While they shared some qualities, their responses to the Financial Crisis and approaches to sustaining and building themselves over time were, in many ways, very different. In both neighbourhoods, the themes of water,

land and housing were identified repeatedly by residents as being of great significance, but with some differences in how they manifested themselves within these hyper-local areas.

Through the use of the nine resident-led walking ethnographies, the following chapter sets out to achieve two objectives in relation to the research questions:

- 1) To provide a platform for residents living in the two Detroit neighbourhoods of Southwest and North Corktown to share their stories and perspectives at this moment in time as the City is in a state of flux, and,
- 2) To compare and contrast community-led responses to Detroit's current challenges and opportunities between the two neighbourhoods, with a particular focus on the key themes of water, land and housing, as well as themes identified during the walking tours.

Chapter 5: Walking Ethnographies



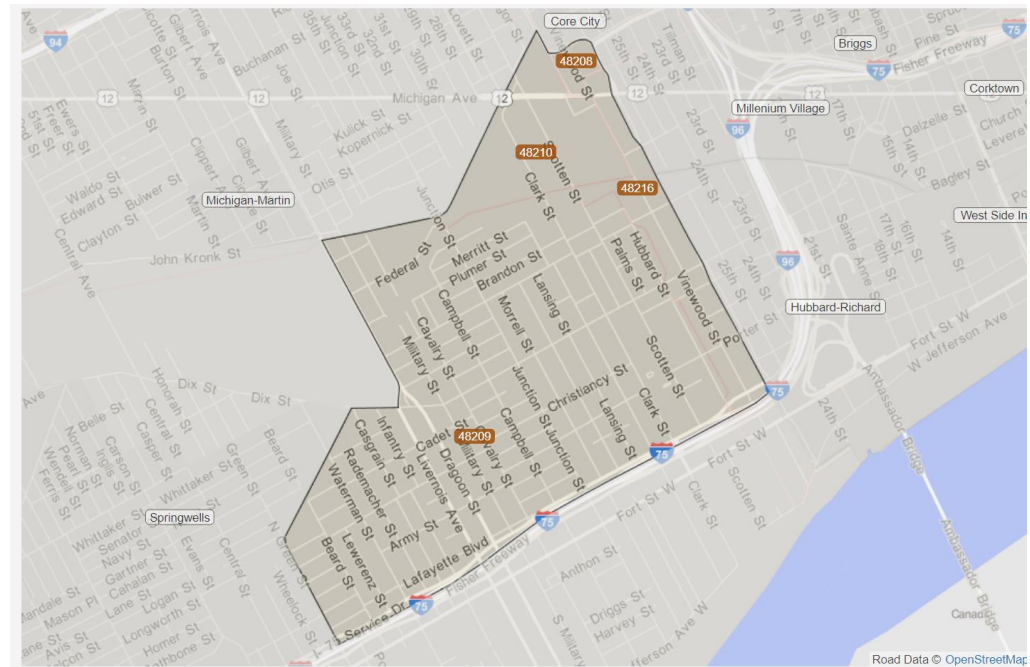
Figures 44-52: Photo compilation of nine resident tour guides in the neighbourhood locations of their choosing, taken in November 2019 and March 2020.

Southwest Detroit
Walking Ethnographies

November 2019 and March 2020

Southwest Neighbourhood Overview

Local Area Facts			
	Southwest	North Corktown	City of Detroit
Population	15,139 ⁷³	1,725 ⁷⁴	683,443 ⁷⁵
Population growth (since 2010)	-17.2% ⁷⁶	-5% ⁷⁷	-5% ⁷⁸
Area (sq miles)	c. 2 ⁷⁹	.0.59 ⁸⁰	139



Figures 53 and 54: Left: Local area facts. Right: Overview map of Southwest neighbourhood (Statistical Atlas, a)

⁷³ Population of Southwest Detroit (Statistical Atlas, b)

⁷⁴ Briggs, Detroit overview (Statistical Atlas, c)

⁷⁵ Detroit, Michigan population (Statistical Atlas, d)

⁷⁶ Southwest Detroit Neighborhoods Profile (Data Driven Detroit, 2013)

⁷⁷ Supplemental Existing Conditions and Observations (City of Detroit, n.d.)

⁷⁸ Ibid

⁷⁹ Approximate area of 'Statistical Atlas, a' map, based on Google Maps

⁸⁰ NCNA SD Task Force Plan 2018 (Heritage Works)

Description of Southwest Detroit Neighbourhood

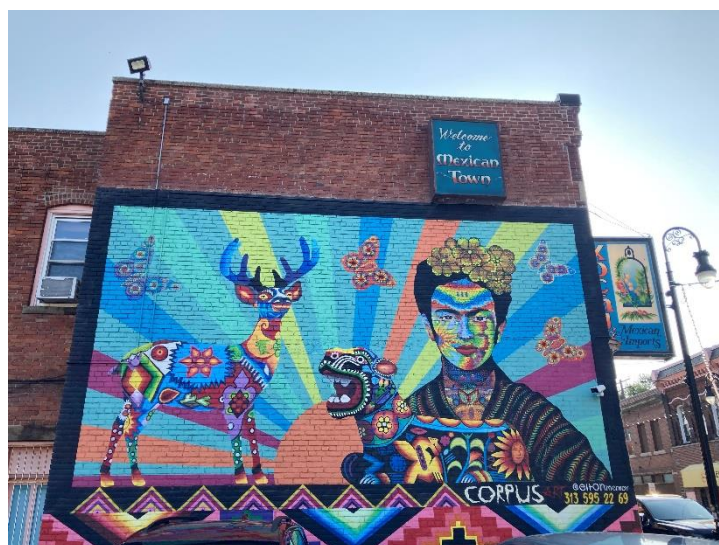


Figure 55: Photograph of mural with Frida Kahlo and alebrijes (spirit animals), Mexicantown (August 2023)

The neighbourhood of Southwest Detroit is located in the southern section of the southwest region of the City. Upon researching the neighbourhood and speaking to residents during the interviews, there were many different descriptions of its boundaries, geography and population size. In one map, created by Lovelands Detroit (2013), shown in Figure 56, Southwest Detroit, highlighted in yellow, appears as a relatively long, narrow obtuse triangle, stretching from southeast to northwest on a diagonal. Whereas in the same year, Data Driven Detroit (2013) and the Skillman Foundation created a map, shown in Figure 57, depicting the neighbourhood as part of a larger grouping of Southwest Detroit neighbourhoods, significantly larger in defined geography than the Lovelands map (2013). For the purpose of statistical analysis in this thesis as it pertains to the of 'Narrative of Two Detroit's' section, I decided to use the smaller geographical boundaries set out in an alternative map of Southwest provided by Statistical Atlas in Figure 54 (Statistical Atlas), as it provided a consistent dataset for the neighbourhood that could be used to compare and contrast with other relevant neighbourhoods. For the walking ethnographies, I did not stipulate or predetermine the neighbourhood boundaries, but rather encouraged residents who led the tours to describe their neighbourhood, as they saw and experienced it, including its boundaries. On each occasion, the residents of Southwest Detroit that I interviewed had

differing perceptions of where their neighbourhood started and ended, which roads, parks and amenities were within its borders, with some notable similarities of assets of shared local importance between all residents interviewed.

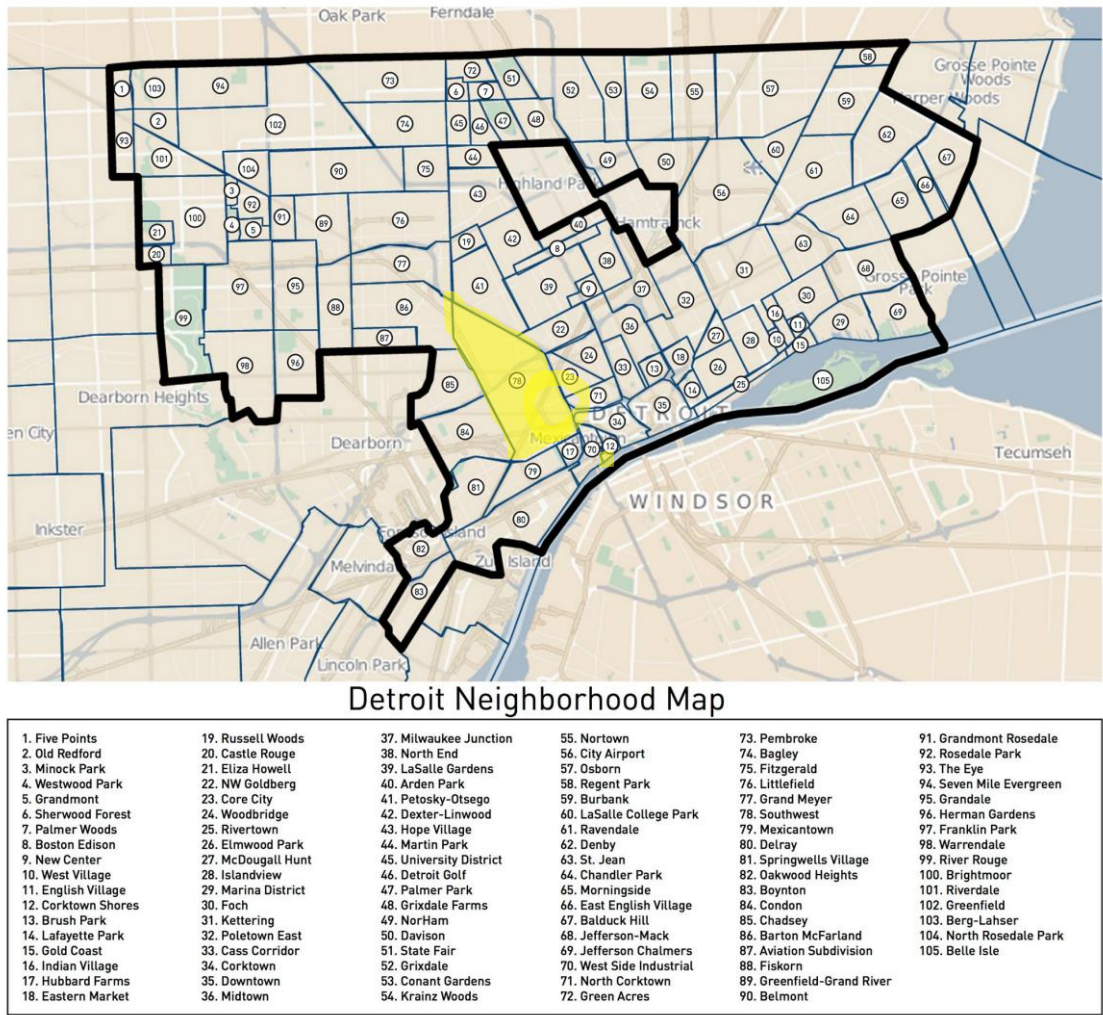


Figure 56: Lovelands Detroit neighborhood map, Southwest highlighted (Lovelands Detroit, 2013)



Figure 57: Inset map of Southwest Detroit neighbourhoods (Data Driven Detroit, 2013)

At the time of the research, the neighbourhood of Southwest Detroit was predominantly of Latinx or Hispanic heritage at 69.9% of the population, while 17.1% of the population was White and 11% African American⁸². Households in the neighbourhood were predominantly on low incomes with a median household income of \$25,200⁸³, lower than the Detroit median of \$30,000⁸⁴, and less than half of the national household income of \$55,300⁸⁵. 47%⁸⁶ of households were in receipt of food stamps, more than three times the national average of 13%⁸⁷.

Southwest Detroit has a well-established Mexican and Latin American cultural heritage. The neighbourhood of Mexicantown, which, depending on who you ask is either within the Southwest Detroit neighbourhood or immediately adjacent to it, alongside the rest of Southwest Detroit, provide a wealth of restaurants, bakeries, shops, bars and grocery stores that all form part of the culture of the place, as well as cater to its Latinx-majority population. Such local amenities include La Colmena (or Honeybee) Market, stocking predominantly Latin American products, La Gloria Bakery and La Michoacana Tortilla Factory, long-established local institutions, producing staple baked goods for the local community, and Mexican restaurants such as Mexican Village, which opened in 1957, Los Galanes and Taqueria Lupita, family-run establishments which have been in operation for over 30 years.

The area has a rich cultural tradition of Mexican mural-painting, which can be seen all across the Southwest Detroit, Mexicantown, Hubbard Farms, Hubbard Richard and Springwells areas that make up the wider 'Southwest Detroit neighborhoods' area (Data Driven Detroit, 2013). Tales of its cultural history were shared through the walking ethnographies from the presence of renown Mexican artists Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera in the neighbourhood during the 1930s when Diego was working on his commission for the

⁸² Southwest Detroit, race and ethnicity (Statistical Atlas, e)

⁸³ Southwest Detroit, household income (Statistical Atlas, f)

⁸⁴ Detroit, Michigan, household income (Statistical Atlas, g)

⁸⁵ United States, household income (Statistical Atlas, h)

⁸⁶ Southwest Detroit, food stamps (Statistical Atlas, i)

⁸⁷ United States, food stamps (Statistical Atlas, j)

Detroit Industry Murals (Nethercott, 2020), with this legacy living on through shared stories and imagery in local murals. In the small text in the bottom right hand corner of the mural below, there can be seen a tribute to Shaun Nethercott (2020), one of the residents who led a Southwest Detroit walking tour and a co-founder of the Matrix Theatre Company, demonstrating the power of local murals to celebrate and honour the legacy of community leaders. 'Murals' was a key theme to have emerged in the Southwest Detroit walking ethnographies with dozens of photos directed by residents as an important part of local storytelling of their neighbourhood.



Figure 58: Photograph of mural outside Matrix Theatre Company, Southwest Detroit (January 2024)

Southwest Detroit is in the 6th district within the City Council boundaries, which also includes Corktown and Midtown, described by the City of Detroit as 'one of Detroit's most diverse and culturally rich areas' and includes some of 'the City's oldest and most historic communities' (City of Detroit, 2024c). The City of Detroit's website sets out the top policy

priorities for District 6 as equitable development, transportation, housing, environmental justice, public safety, protecting and expanding rights (City of Detroit, 2024b).

Gabriela Santiago-Romero was elected as the Detroit City Council Member for District 6 in 2022 and considered to be the first Latinx LGBTQ+ woman to be elected in the state of Michigan (Library of Congress, 2022). She described herself as ‘an immigrant from Mexico, raised in Southwest Detroit and an active organizer in Michigan’ (Santiago-Romero). She was also the first Latina to ever chair a standing committee within Detroit City Council (City of Detroit, 2024b). Santiago-Romero expressed that Detroit had taught her that ‘with community, anything is possible’ (Santiago-Romero). In a statement that echoes the sentiment of two fellow Southwest Detroit residents interviewed (Carter-Alvizo, 2019a) (Suarez, 2020), Santiago-Romero expressed:

Our community is resilient and we always have each others’ backs. Whether it’s putting together backpack drives for the little ones starting school or coming together to support our neighbors that have lost their home to a fire or foreclosure, we show up for each other (Santiago-Romero).

Prior to Santiago-Romero, Raquel Castañeda-López was the City Council Member for District 6 for two terms from 2013, and when she stepped down in 2021, Santiago-Romero was subsequently elected. Castañeda-López too was a lifelong Southwest Detroiter and an advocate for social equity and environmental justice (Ferretti, 2021). Like Santiago-Romero, Castañeda-López described herself as growing up in poverty in Southwest Detroit and being the first in her family to go to college. Castañeda-López was part of a monumental shift in Detroit City Council history in 2013, when seven of nine Council members were elected by district for the first time in a century, under the changes adopted through the revised 2012 City Charter (Ferretti, 2021). This change to election by district saw an increase in diversity across City Council membership and greater representation between

Council Members and their constituents. As the first ever Latina elected to Detroit City Council, Castañeda-López's election to District 6 with its significant Latinx population was regarded by many as both symbolic of the power of the new City Charter and seismic in the potential for increased representation in local decision-making. In an article in *The Detroit News*, US Representative for Detroit, Rashida Tlaib, expressed, 'She [Castañeda-López] really changed how people were seen and how people were represented at the local level. She pushed to make sure that city government was inclusive of how diverse her district was' (Ferretti, 2021).

At the time of writing, Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib presided over the 13th congressional district between 2019 to 2023, which included the Southwest Detroit neighbourhood. Like Castañeda-López and Santiago-Romero, Tlaib was also raised in Southwest Detroit, proudly announcing in her nomination acceptance speech, 'This girl from southwest Detroit isn't going anywhere. I'm just getting started'. Like the two Detroit City Councilwomen, Tlaib was the first of her family to go to college (Sullivan, 2019). She was the first Palestinian American woman in Congress and one of the first two Muslim women to be elected to Congress, alongside Ilhan Omar of Minnesota (Stein, 2022). A cohort of progressive Democratic congresswomen, all women of colour, consisting of Rashida Tlaib, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Ilhan Omar and Ayanna Pressley, have come to be known colloquially on Capitol Hill as 'The Squad', named for their willingness to take on the Washington establishment. All four women, and their heritage, had been a focus of attention for former President Trump, who regularly questioned their credibility as Americans, including contentious calls for them to 'go back and help fix the totally broken and crime infested places from which they came' (Sullivan, 2019). Rhetoric such as this by Trump and other politicians at the time were illustrative of the divisive and racialised political landscape described by several Southwest Detroit residents during the interviews, cited as a key driver for increased political engagement and activism (Carter-Alvizo, 2019a) (Cheek, 2020) (Suarez, 2020).

All three of these formidable politicians from Southwest Detroit have been the first to achieve representation of their constituents while serving in political office. The backgrounds of all three women closely reflect the majority demographics of their constituencies, symbolic of the growing movement among the electorate of Detroit, pushing against the neoliberal capitalist, colonial dominant order that has long embedded a system of inequality in political access and opportunity.

A shift in the power of social and political capital in this corner of Detroit has also been evident in the support between these women to lift each other up and work collectively to build increased representation in political office. In contrast to the often cut-throat competitive nature of White male-dominated politics, these three women of colour from Southwest Detroit were connected through their support in encouraging each other to enter Detroit politics from other arenas, including social work, advocacy and social justice (Ferretti, 2021). Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib recruited Raquel Castañeda-López to run for City Council office, and in turn, Castañeda-López helped to recruit Gabriela Santiago-Romero for the 6th District seat (Ferretti, 2021), in an effort to increase representation and access to political decision-making from often-marginalised communities.

Following the 2020 US Census, the state of Michigan lost one of its fourteen congressional seats due to a reduction in population, which resulted in a redistribution of the remaining thirteen districts. Rashida Tlaib was elected to the new 12th district that includes some of Detroit and Dearborn, while Shri Thanedar (US House of Representatives) was elected in 2022 to the newly established 13th district that includes the majority of Wayne County and Detroit, including Southwest Detroit, both taking office in 2023.

The social and cultural infrastructure of Southwest Detroit is multi-faceted, with an active network of community organisers and Latinx cultural institutions. A key player in the cultural landscape, the Mexicantown Community Development Corporation (CDC) was established in 1989 by a group of Latinx community leaders, guided by the principle that ‘a strong ethnic identity equals a strong economy’ (Mexicantown CDC). Their mission was to

'train community residents in entrepreneurship to resume economic ownership of community businesses and empowerment of community residents that had been severed with the construction of the I-75 freeway in the early 1960s' (Mexicantown CDC). In 2007, the Mexicantown CDC secured \$17.5 million to develop a Welcome Center, Mercado buildings and outdoor plaza, and adjacent Plaza DelNorte building, bringing in approximately 4,000 visitors each month, and creating a Latinx cultural hub for social and economic revitalisation.

The organising spirit of Southwest Detroit is embodied in its strong network of community organisations. One such example raised during a walking tour (Nethercott, 2020) was the Congress for Communities (CoC), established in 2010. CoC was created in consultation with over 10,000 residents, young people and stakeholders and is 'the resident-led organizing and advocacy agency in Southwest Detroit that works to facilitate solutions around community challenges and support community growth' (CoC, b). They focus on issues of local importance, as discussed in this thesis, including addressing educational injustices for students of colour in Detroit (CoC, c) and the 'Building Sustainable Communities Coalition' to balance community concerns with development demand (CoC, a).

There are also a number of neighbourhood associations and block clubs within the Southwest Detroit neighbourhood, including Hubbard Farms Neighborhood Association, Hubbard Richard Resident Association, Scotten-Vernor Block Club and Southwest Grand Boulevard Block Club (City of Detroit, 2024a). Like the Neighborhood Association in nearby North Corktown, several of these residents' groups have also had success in challenging development interests and promoting quality of life for the community. One such achievement was by the Hubbard Richard Resident Association, who entered into a historical agreement with the Ambassador Bridge and City of Detroit in the form of a Community Benefits Agreement in October 2023. This followed a contentious period in which the Maroun family was perceived to be buying up significant proportions of land in the area surrounding the Ambassador Bridge for commercial interests, undermining the social and cultural interests of the neighbourhood, as discussed in detail during one of the walking

tours (Nethercott, 2020). The agreement confirmed that the Maroun family would donate ten properties to the neighbourhood, along with \$10,000 investment in refurbishment per property, build a new street and donate towards the construction of a new recreation centre. In exchange, the Resident Association agreed to the expansion of the Ambassador Bridge Plaza within identified limits, as well as the relocation of utilities, lighting and sidewalks (City of Detroit, 2023). The Resident Association, Mayor, Council Member and Chairman of the Ambassador Bridge all issued statements that they hoped that the agreement and improved relations between stakeholders provided a 'win-win-win' for all and a 'turning point' for the neighbourhood (City of Detroit, 2023).

This is one example of how the new Community Benefits Ordinance legislation, established in 2016 (City of Detroit, 2024e), has created new opportunities for local stakeholders to come together around an often-contentious issue, finding ways to balance community interests with commercial and economic growth. At the time of writing, this remained a relatively new area within development, but one of interest to monitor its progress in building neighbourhood collaborations and negotiating better outcomes for local communities.

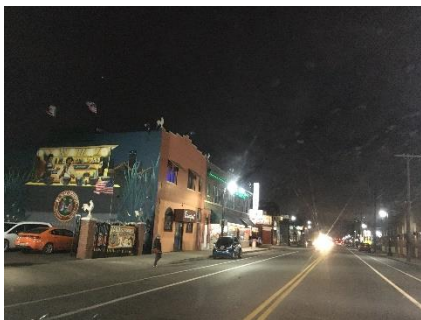
Alondra Carter-Alvizo – Southwest, 29 November 2019

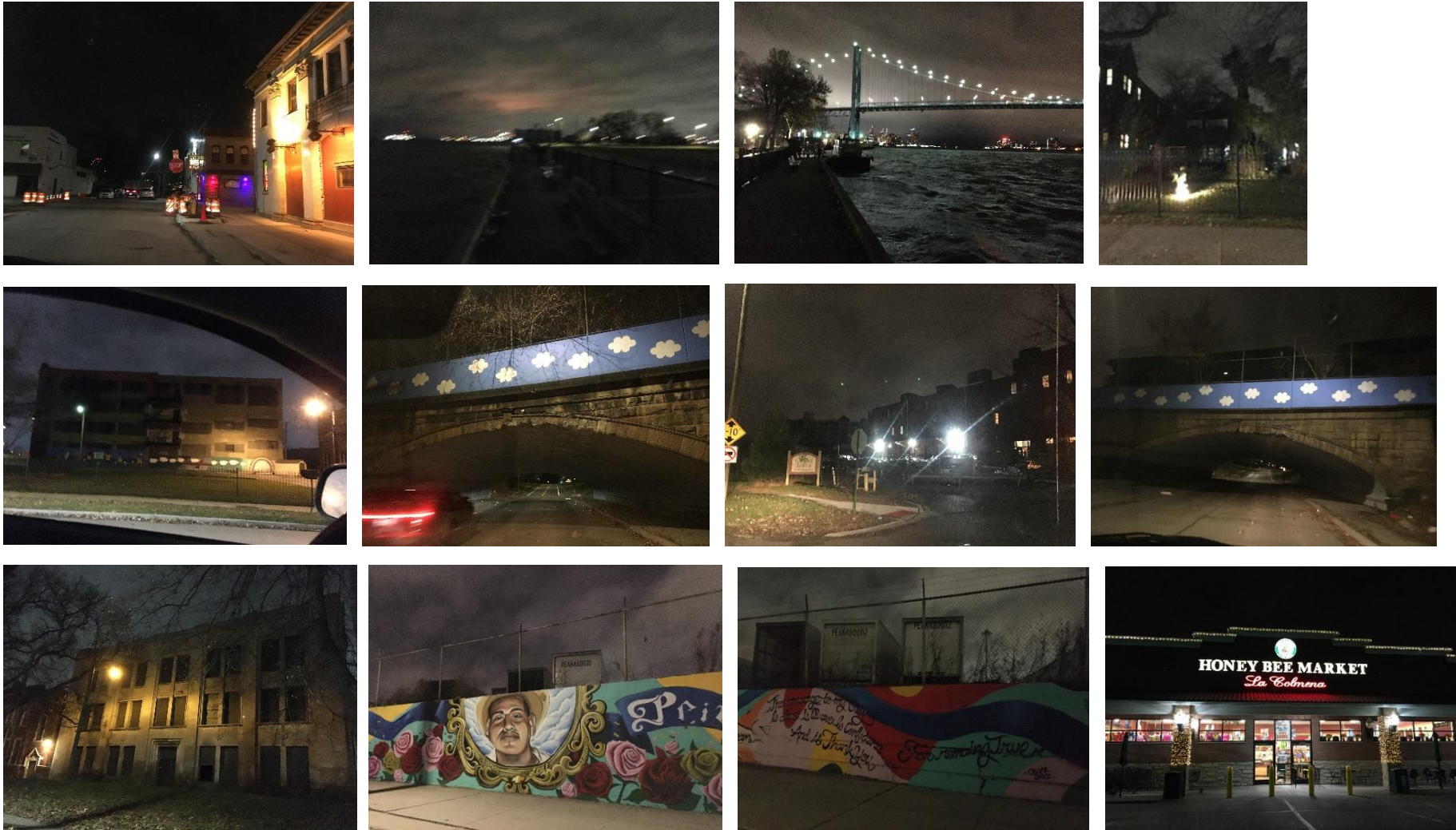
Ethnography 1



So, what's really cool about Southwest Detroit that I think is very different from all these other places is that Southwest Detroit really survived the crisis. Like, we prospered. And it was weird because what people didn't realise was that we were operating from this place of community.

And I think that's the difference. Most places are just that, you know, places. But Detroit is a people. That's what makes us different (Carter-Alvizo, 2019b).





Figures 59-83: Photographs directed by Alondra Carter-Alvizo during her tour of Southwest Detroit (November 2019).

Observations from Alondra Carter-Alvizo's Southwest tour. The tour took place on a cold evening in late November 2019, as dusk settled into nightfall. I met resident-tour guide, Alondra Carter-Alvizo, at the Mexicantown Bakery. Alondra was a lifelong Southwest Detroit resident and spoke with great pride about her neighbourhood. Alondra carefully planned our route and explained that she had always hoped someone would ask her for a tour of her beloved neighbourhood. It was the longest of the tours and covered nearly the full length of the neighbourhood. As it took place in the autumn, the days were shorter and the tour was carried out between afternoon and evening, showing a different perspective of the neighbourhood at night, as compared to the other Southwest walking tours.

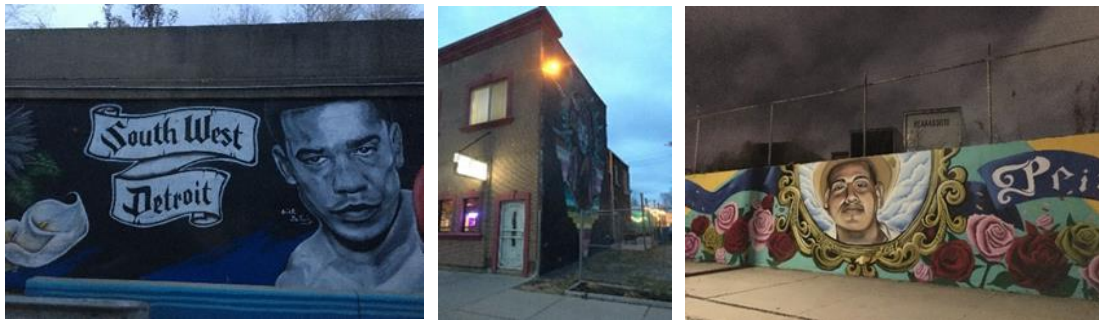
Alondra instructed 25 photographs to be taken during the tour (Figures 59-83 above), plus one I requested of her – with consent – at a place of her choosing in the neighbourhood. She asked for this one to be taken in front of the Mexicantown Bakery, a well-known area establishment, and from her description, a local institution. Of the 26 photographs taken during Alondra's tour, there were five themes that emerged: food, murals, community, business and the river.

Food. Food was a key theme for Alondra in the places she chose, as well as in her commentary. Alondra provided descriptions about the neighbourhood from her mother's and grandmother's home cooking to authentic versus inauthentic local Mexican restaurants and bakeries, to the local Latinx supermarket. Alondra was keen to ensure that the tour included an opportunity to experience authentic local cuisine, so planned into the route a trip to a local Mexican food purveyor to sit and enjoy an 'agua mineral preparada' (described as 'mineral water that has been prepared for you' (Carter-Alvizo, 2019b).



Figures 59-83 (extract): Photographs from Alondra's tour on the theme of food (November 2019).

Murals. Murals were another key theme of Alondra's tour, featuring in 9 of the 25 photographs she instructed. Alondra spoke of her personal connections with nearly all of the murals she identified, from knowing the artist from childhood to having been involved in its creation. Murals have great significance and a long history within Mexican culture and appear on buildings, overpasses and walls across Southwest Detroit, where there is a large population of Mexican and Latinx residents⁸⁸. The murals she chose to include commemorated places and people, such as one honouring the life of a young man who had passed away, as well as another celebrating the Southwest neighbourhood. Murals painted by local artists on the sides of locally owned restaurants and shops also celebrated aspects of Mexican culture, depicting symbolism and stories of Mexican heritage.



Figures 59-83 (extract): Photographs of murals from Alondra's tour (November 2019).

Community. Throughout the Southwest tour, Alondra spoke of the importance of family and community within Latinx culture. She described what she felt made Southwest Detroit different to other places as 'we're so community-driven' (Carter-Alvizo, 2019b), a quality she felt helped the neighbourhood weather the Financial Crisis when other neighbourhoods struggled.

They [other communities] didn't make it through the recession the way we did. When shit like that crashes, your everything-as-you-know-it crashes. But when you have an inner-knit community like this, you don't crash. You just struggle. And we've struggled

⁸⁸ Southwest Detroit race and ethnicity (Statistical Atlas, e)

our whole lives. For us, it's like "We're just going to figure it out, the way we always have" (Carter-Alvizo, 2019b).

Alondra described this quality as part of the 'immigrant story' of Southwest Detroit in which people came to the United States with nothing but the clothes on their back and built a new life. This resonated with Alondra's later description of what the term 'DIY' meant to her in relation to Detroit. She described Detroit as the 'City of mobility' and Detroiters as the 'DIY movement of hustle' who were interested in 'exploring the possibilities', a characteristic which she felt distinguished Detroit from anywhere else in the world (Carter-Alvizo, 2019b).

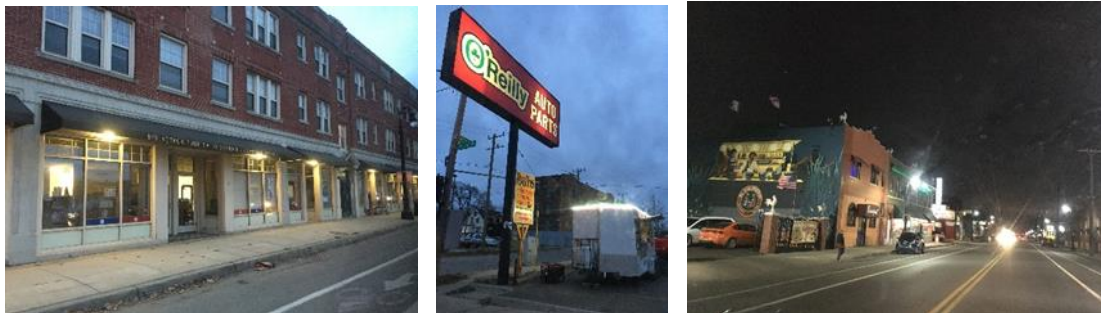
Business: Alondra's descriptions of Latinx notions of community in Southwest Detroit were intertwined with ideas of enterprise and the practicalities of doing business in the neighbourhood, which she felt set it apart from other Detroit areas. She described how the Latinx communities of Southwest Detroit survived the Financial Crisis and recession as they were not dependent on banks as others were, but rather on one another as part of one community. She spoke of local business-owners lending money to people within the community as opposed to multinational banks.

See, Latinos? We don't depend on banks. We depend on each other for loans. You don't need a bank. Why would you? For what? They try to take your house. Your neighbor's not going to try to take your house (Carter-Alvizo, 2019b).

This description of a community-based approach to lending, support and entrepreneurship within the Southwest Detroit Latinx community was reminiscent of the concept of 'community nationalism', as described by Malcolm X in his 1963 'Ballot or the Bullet' speech, as an 'economic philosophy' to 'own and operate and control the economy of our community' (Andrews, 2021a). It was a prime example within the Latinx community of what Kehinde Andrews (2021a) described as an aspect of Black capitalism, that of 'pooling

resources in order to have a slice of the American dream for Black communities’ (Andrews, p. 9). While the community that Alondra described was Latinx, similarities have been described in both the interviews and some of the literature of both Black and Latinx populations having experienced the residual effects of colonialism and racism inherent in the systems of finance, politics and social order of the United States. This has led to examples where both populations, under the more liberal term of ‘Blackness’, may have occasionally followed a path, as described by Andrews of ‘invoking community nationalism as part of a radical strategy of liberation’ (Andrews, 2021a, p. 9), such as through pooling resources to strengthen communities.

As part of the tour, Alondra identified businesses that have been a supportive part of the Southwest Detroit Latinx community, sharing personal accounts of where they have offered employment, support and artistic commissions to family and friends.



Figures 59-83 (extract): Photographs of supportive Southwest businesses from Alondra's tour (November 2019).

River. In the final part of the tour, Alondra chose to show me a view across the Detroit River from a ‘hidden gem’ location that, in my 45-year life to date as a part-time metro Detroit resident, I was not previously aware of. ‘This is my favorite part of this City, and a lot of people don’t know about this place’ (Carter-Alvizo, 2019b).

And so, this is where Southwest really meets the world. Because you got Zug Island there, which is all the pollution and the environmental racism and all the shit that we hate about the City, and you feel these big-ass piles, you know, that are all covered

in tar and more tar and all this shit. That's why our kids have asthma, yeah, and it's tragic, and it fucking sucks. And that's Zug Island. Like you look at it, and you see the way the sky looks over there. And that's Canada in all its glory. Ah, man. And then you look over, and you see it [the skyline]. And suddenly, everything feels okay here (Carter-Alvizo, 2019b).



Figures 59-83 (extract): View of the Ambassador Bridge to Canada from Alondra's 'hidden gem' location, Alondra's Southwest tour (November 2019).

Alondra's description of the view across the Detroit River and the peaceful solace that the skyline-view over the water evoked for her recalled the recurring theme of water that pervaded the Detroit research. Water has a long and important story to tell about Detroit. From the role of the Detroit River in stories of African American enslaved people escaping to Canada, to the lifeblood of the river and natural resources that it provided to the Indigenous People of the Bkejwanong, to its vital part in establishing Detroit as a key trading post of the New World and ultimately industrial centre of the capitalist order, to the City's contentious water shutoff policy and mobilising water justice movement. Through her choice to end the Southwest tour at this unique vantage point across the Detroit River, Alondra (2019b) symbolically drew together all of these interweaving threads of the importance and value of water to Detroit, while also showing me, from a very personal vantage point, how this place of reflection can help to gain perspective, while also act as a reminder of the many challenges of economic and environmental injustices that many in the City face every day.

Shaun Nethercott – Southwest, 10 March 2020

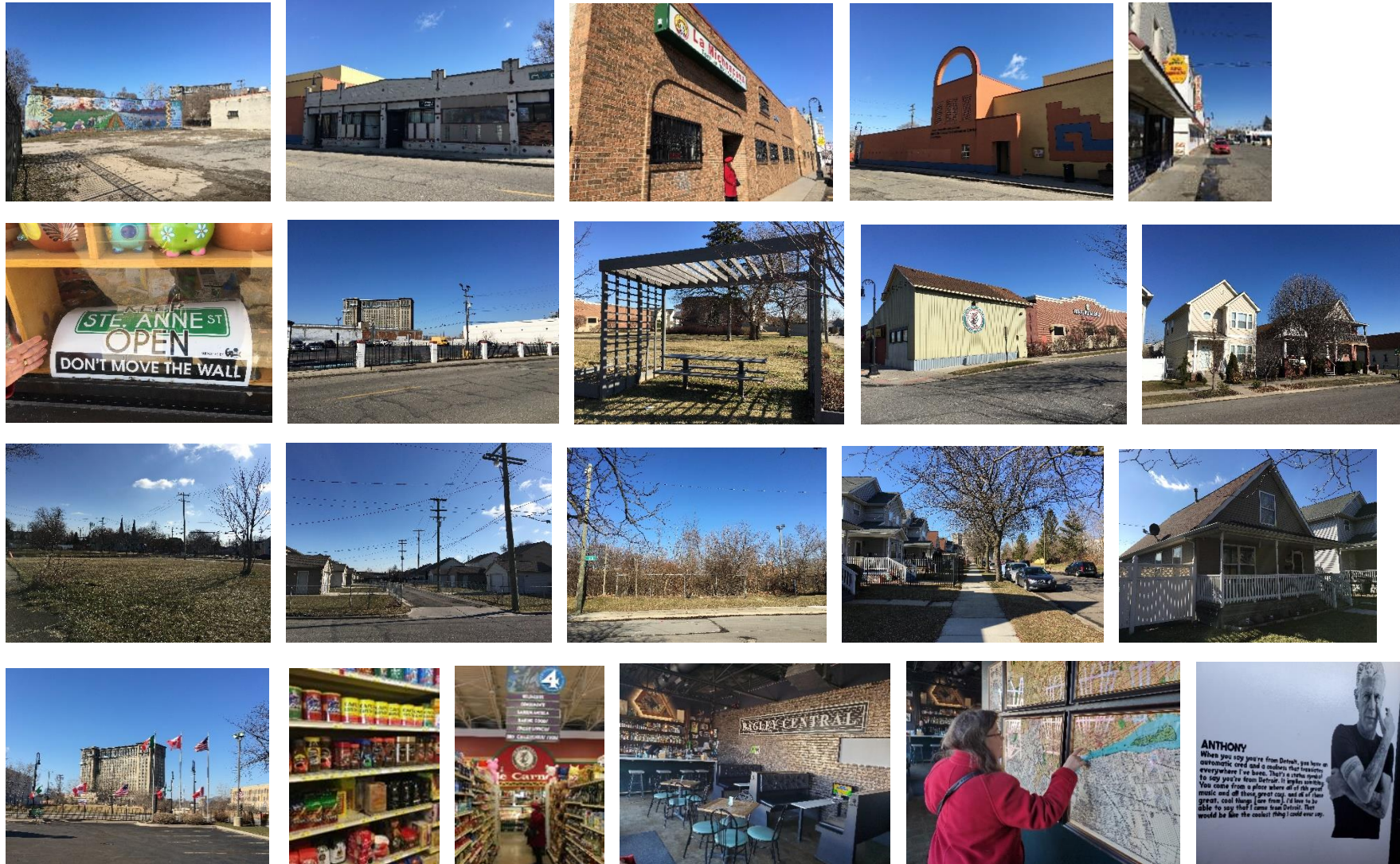
Ethnography 2



So, this is the conversation that the neighborhood is having, right? You can get your enchiladas and your kale now. You got craft beers and you've got Mexican beers, right? (Nethercott, 2020).



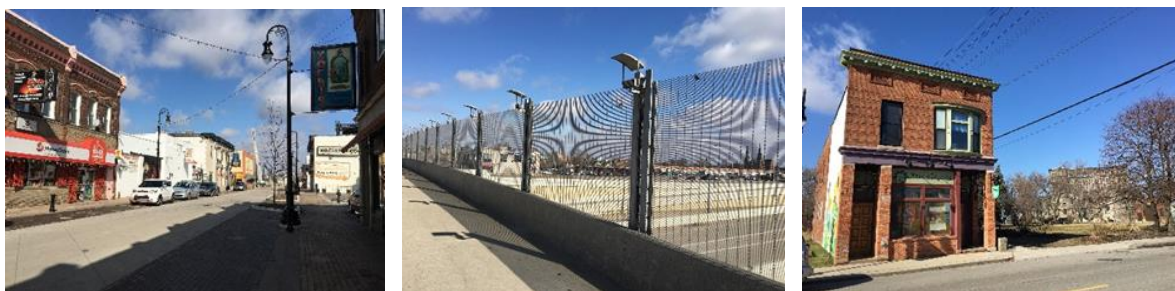




Figures 84-130: Photographs directed by Shaun Nethercott during her tour of Southwest Detroit (March 2020).

Observations from Shaun Nethercott's Southwest tour. I met Shaun on a bright and cold early spring day in March 2020 for our tour, outside of a taqueria in Mexicantown. Shaun has been a resident of Southwest Detroit for more than forty years. She spoke with pride about her neighbourhood and with passion about the issues she believes need to be fought for. The tour encompassed a smaller, concentrated area and in more detail than the previous tour, including the Mexicantown business district and extending into the Hubbard Farms neighbourhood.

Shaun selected a carefully considered route, which consisted of a walk down the main thoroughfare of Bagley Street, starting in Mexicantown, crossing the pedestrian bridge that passes over the I-75 freeway, and into the Hubbard Farms neighbourhood. This route took us past the iconic landmarks of the Ambassador Bridge, Ste. Anne's Basilica (Detroit's oldest church) and the first Latinx mural in the area. It also incorporated locally significant support and cultural agencies such as the Mexicantown Development Corporation, Southwest Solutions, the Michigan Welcome Center and Latino Cultural Center. It also included businesses of local importance, including historic ones, such as Detroit's first Mexican restaurant which Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera frequented during their brief residency in the City, as well as new arrivals, such as a new bar symbolising changes in the area. The guided tour took us past the Matrix Theatre Company building, founded by Shaun and her husband Wes in the 1980s (Matrix Theatre), now run by a successor she appointed over a decade ago. It was also the location where Shaun and I first met nearly a quarter century ago, when in 1997, I interned for a summer through the contact of a mutual acquaintance, who at that time ran a gallery in metro Detroit.



Figures 84-130 (extract): Photographs showing the business district at the start of the tour, pedestrian bridge and Matrix Theatre (March 2020).

Four common themes emerged from the Southwest Detroit walking tour with Shaun, food, bridge/freeway, murals and business.

Food. Like Alondra, food was a central theme in Shaun's tour of Southwest. Like Alondra, Shaun's choice of meeting location was food-related, a local independent taqueria. Shaun described other eating places in the area as either authentic or catering for tourists coming from outside the area. Many of the food-related locations that we passed, including restaurants and shops, Shaun described in terms of their relationship to local history and Latinx cultural heritage. This included Algo Especial, the first Mexican supermarket in Detroit, where Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera used to buy their groceries, and where the Mexicantown Development Corporation first began its operation upstairs.

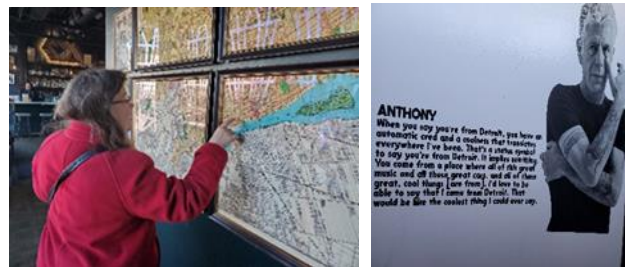
Business. The inter-relationship of food and business was a strong theme to emerge. The Honeybee Market (Mexican supermarket) formed part of the tour, as it did with Alondra; however, Shaun was keen for us to explore the inside of the market and to investigate and discuss the types of products on the shelves. This gave an interesting insight into the changing dynamic of a neighbourhood with a long and established cultural heritage and identity incorporating space for newcomers, where products catering for different communities could be sold side-by-side, while still under the roof of a Mexican supermarket.

The chosen end point of the tour was a newly opened bar on Bagley Street, called Bagley Central, which was described by Shaun as a 'Mexican punk bar' and which, the bartender informed us, had been there for about a year. Shaun was keen to show it to me as part of our discussion about 'what's the story of the neighborhood?' (Nethercott, 2020), following on from the discussion of diverse products sold at Honeybee Market. Shaun and the bartender, who was also a neighbourhood resident, spoke of the previous incarnation of the place, when it had a brief stint as a 'high-end vodka bar' run by local media outlet, *Hour Detroit*. They described their perception that it had a 'specific kind of product that they were selling', which did not seem to have widespread local appeal. By contrast, the bartender stated that the current business 'is not treated as an outsider, as everyone that works in the bar lives in the neighbourhood', explaining that their experience to date has been 'mostly positive' (Nethercott, 2020). He also described the Bagley Central bar as having 'Mexican heritage', rather than being overtly Mexican. Shaun asked if this distinction was related to being third generation as opposed to first generation Mexican, to which the bartender responded, 'I guess so' (Nethercott, 2020).

Alongside a historic Detroit map, which provided a significant talking point for us, as seen in Figures 84-130, Shaun was bemused by a poster with an image of celebrity chef and travel writer, Anthony Bourdain, about whom she quipped 'he's not from here!' (Nethercott, 2020). A quote under the poster title, 'Remaking Detroit', read: *'It's where all this great music, all these great cars, it's where these great things are from. I'd love to be able to say I came from there. That would be like the coolest thing I could ever say'*. The display of this image of a non-Detroiter quoting his perception about the 'coolness' of Detroit alongside a historic map of the City in a newly opened Mexican-heritage punk bar in the historic Latinx district felt profoundly indicative of a fundamental dialogue taking place about a City in flux, and how its evolving neighbourhoods explore central questions of how to negotiate change while honouring its history and cultural roots.



Figures 84-130 (extract): Photographs of the neighbourhood conversation taking place through food, Shaun's Southwest tour (March 2020).



Figures 84-130 (extract): Map and quote displayed in new Bagley Central bar (March 2020).

Murals. Like Alondra, Shaun also focused on murals, but with very different commentary. Rather than Alondra's personal stories about the individuals commemorated by the murals and involvement in them, Shaun's commentary focused on the cultural heritage of murals in the area and the role they played in the neighbourhood conversation taking place.

Describing the concept of 'looking through time' (Nethercott, 2020), Shaun identified 'one of the first Latino murals', which she described as having been painted in 1979 by local artist George Vargas and, in an 'amazing testament' to the artist, was still present 42 years later. Shaun explained that the mural had been restored some years ago, by another local artist, Vito Valdez, who was also responsible for several other murals in the Southwest neighbourhood. Shaun said that the mural referenced Mexican cultural history, while incorporating buildings from its surroundings on Bagley Street. Shaun explained that to her, the mural asked two questions, which remain relevant today, 'what is the future?' and 'what

is the energy that drives the community?’ (Nethercott, 2020). This recalled the concept of ‘historicity’ (Hirsch & Stewart, 2005) and of ideas of interweaving pasts, presents and futures, as considered by futures-focused anthropologists (Pink & Salazar, 2017), in which none are static and where one’s perceptions shape and reshape our pasts, presents and futures over time.



Figures 84-130 (extract): Photograph of George Vargas mural on Bagley Street (March 2020).

Later in the tour, Shaun recalled the story of another mural with a very different inception and community reception, painted by Detroit-based art collective, the Hygienic Dress League (Carlson, 2017). It was commissioned by *Hour Detroit* on the exterior wall of the now defunct high-end vodka bar, and was called ‘Our/Detroit’, a play on words by its patron. In Shaun’s distinctive storyteller manner from her many years in theatre, she exclaimed, ‘I’m going to tell you one other story which asks this whole question of who gets to choose what happens in a neighborhood, right?’ (Nethercott, 2020).

I told you that they brought in this high-end vodka place. And the first thing they did on this wall – which had been kind of an ugly white wall – is they commissioned a local art group called, The Hygienic Dress League, to come in and do this very modernist, kind of post-modern mural. They were, like, people in gas masks – and immediately people came and tagged it up and said, ‘Gentrifiers go home’, on the mural.

So, then they decided, 'Well okay. Once smacked, twice learned'. So, then they did a community art project, and they had the neighbourhood come in and choose what they wanted. And so, this is like a local artist and a local image – and in some ways, it is not as good as the other art was – but because it came out of a community process, you know, nobody ever tagged it. And actually, it led to a whole bunch of community conversations, which in a way, sometimes, bad can bring good (Nethercott, 2020).

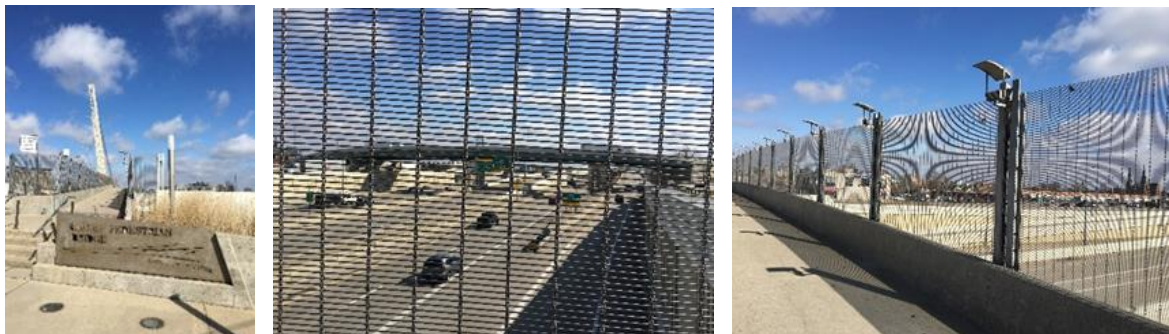


Figure 131: Photograph of similar mural in another location by The Hygienic Dress League (Carlson, 2017) and replacement mural (Baetens, 2019).

This story of the fate of a mural brought in by 'outsiders' versus one created as part of a community process continued the dialogue from the chapter, 'Who Decides the City?'. This sits alongside examples from North Corktown of the insensitive use of burnt wood as a featured material in new housing in a neighbourhood that suffered arson attacks over many years. It adds to the qualitative evidence that the process of involvement is critical in establishing value, credibility and longevity in regeneration and neighbourhood renewal activity. Shaun described the 'pretty intense community conversations' taking place at the time, which eventually led to the neighbourhoods of North Corktown and Hubbard-Richard (part of Southwest) getting organised, establishing community councils, prompted by the view that 'If we don't choose, somebody else is going to' (Nethercott, 2020).

Bridge/freeway. The Ambassador Bridge, Bagley Street pedestrian bridge and the freeway over which it runs featured as common themes in Shaun's tour. Referred to by Shaun as the 'freeway-ification of Detroit' in the 1960s, a development seen across much of

the United States at that time, it intersected established neighbourhoods, cutting off many from local amenities, and in some cases dividing neighbourhoods in two, such as with both Southwest Detroit and North Corktown/Corktown. Shaun described how for many years, she and countless others who walked to work or to the store found themselves having to walk a significant distance to the next available overpass. The accessible Bagley Street pedestrian bridge that now stands over the expressway was the result of neighbourhood organising that began more than twenty years ago, starting with petitions and planning committee meetings, before it was finally built around a decade ago. Shaun described it as ‘no ordinary bridge’, as it spans sixteen lanes of freeway traffic (Nethercott, 2020). Standing on it, I was very aware of the incredible volume of cars and sounds of freeway traffic underneath, a point which I was conscious of as I struggled to hear Shaun speak, but which she seemed accustomed to, barely raising her voice over the sound. Shaun described how even with the bridge in place, the freeway still created a psychological barrier for residents (Nethercott, 2020).



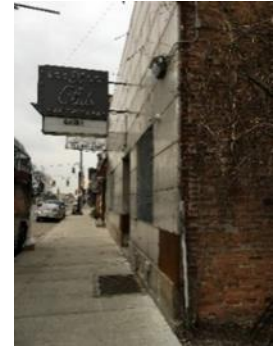
Figures 84-130 (extract): Photographs of and from the Bagley St pedestrian bridge (March 2020).

Danielle Shields – Southwest, 12 March 2020

Ethnography 3



Detroit is like a big city, but a small-town feel, and so just the work that you do here can have a lot of visibility and impact, which I think is really important. And so, I just wanted to really be a part of shaping that, and kind of seeing what could happen (Shields, 2020).





Figures 132-151: Photographs directed by Danielle Shields during her neighbourhood tour of Southwest Detroit (March 2020).

Observations from Danielle Shields' Southwest tour. I met Danielle early on a cold, overcast morning in March 2020. We met outside of the Grand Lofts building where she rents an apartment. Danielle was a relative newcomer to Southwest Detroit, having moved to the neighbourhood two years prior from Livonia, described by Danielle as 'a super, super, super White suburb in metro Detroit' (Shields, 2020). Danielle explained how despite Livonia being around twenty minutes away, she did not 'venture down here' [to Detroit] until she was a senior in high school, then later attended Wayne State University in Detroit, while continuing to live at home in Livonia. She then moved to her current neighbourhood of Southwest after college, when she took a job at a non-profit organisation. Danielle described her early feelings as, 'I really just fell in love with the fact that, like, the Southwest community stayed when nobody was here' (Shields, 2020), referring to the perception that, in other areas of Detroit, people left after the Financial Crisis. Danielle also said that the area 'still had some authenticity left', which she hoped would be preserved through what she described as a local 'shared vision' (Shields, 2020).

Her apartment building, Grand Lofts, was a large brick-constructed industrial structure that had been converted into apartments. She explained that the building used to be a factory, but was unsure of what it manufactured. I realised later that I had seen this building on a previous tour of Southwest Detroit with a lifelong neighbourhood resident the previous year. On my earlier tour, when speaking about the changing demographics of the neighbourhood, that resident pointed out the same building and shared their view that Grand Lofts is where many newcomers are now living, including where many 'hipsters live now' (Carter-Alvizo, 2019b). Danielle greeted me outside the gate of the car park with a reusable cup of hot coffee, bundled up for our tour on this cold Detroit morning. From her attire, she was immediately recognisable as someone who knows how to handle the harsh Michigan weather. She was young, smiling and enthusiastic at the prospect of showing me the neighbourhood that was still relatively new to her. Our walking tour took approximately an hour, traversing sidewalks alongside large roads with loud, speeding cars and trucks that

punctuated our conversation. The tour encompassed the main roads intersecting her neighbourhood. This included the wide, tree-lined and relatively quiet West Grand Boulevard, with its large houses, front porches and sizeable front lawns, a mix of homes, some impeccably maintained, and others in various states of disrepair, as well as the more highly trafficked Vernor Highway, with its commercial shopfronts, Clark Park and other public amenities, such as Bowen Public Library. During the tour, Danielle focused on three main themes of housing/homes, business and opportunity.

Danielle spoke with great affinity for her street of West Grand Boulevard, describing it as ‘really unique and important’ in Detroit’s history (Shields, 2020). She shared her recent discovery that her immediate neighbourhood, which at different points during the tour she identified as ‘Hubbard Farms’ and ‘Southwest’, had formed part of one of the City’s original ‘ribbon farms’. These were plots of land given to early settlers of Detroit, made up of long strips of land that connected farmland to the riverside which were allocated equitably to ensure everyone had access plentiful water. Looking down the long, straight length of West Grand Boulevard to the Detroit River in the distance, provided a glimpse into the literature I had read, illustrating how the early French, and later British, settlers began to structure the cityscape that would become Detroit (Miles, 2017).

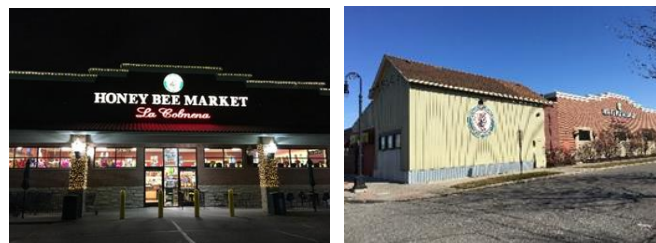
Housing/homes. Danielle exuded great excitement when pointing out the large family homes along West Grand Boulevard, observing, ‘I really love the houses on this street specifically’ (Shields, 2020). After a thoughtful silence, Danielle announced as if part-confessional, part-aspirational, ‘What I’m saying, it’s like if I could buy a house on this street, I totally would. I would plop myself right here’ (Shields, 2020). This statement was reminiscent of the tour in the same neighbourhood with lifelong resident Alondra Carter-Alvizo (2019b), who also included in her tour a stop in front of the house which for years she has aspired to call home. Both women, in their mid-twenties and residents of the same neighbourhood, but with different connections to it, had chosen to incorporate within their tours – either as part of an intentional choice or an unconscious draw to the place – a

specific location where they imaged their personal future in the neighbourhood. In both instances, it felt as though I caught a glimpse of their future visions of themselves in their neighbourhoods, *their* Detroit, each imbued with very different pasts, histories and ancestral experiences. For a rare, fleeting moment, I was invited into each woman's intimate daydreams of their own imagined futures.



Figures 132-151 (extract) and 59-83 (extract): Photographs of Southwest dream homes for Daneille (left) and Alondra (right), March 2020 and November 2019, respectively.

Business: Similar to both Shaun (Nethercott, 2020) and Alondra (Carter-Alvizo, 2019b), Danielle described local businesses as a key feature of the neighbourhood. Interestingly, Danielle spoke of several of the same businesses as Alondra and Shaun, highlighting the key role they played for residents: both supporting the functions of the neighbourhood and bolstering and sustaining the cultural identity of Southwest Detroit. For example, all three spoke with fondness of the Honeybee Market, which Danielle described as, 'Honeybee [Market] is where I grocery shop, so I'm there constantly' (Shields, 2020).



Figures 59-83 (extract) and 132-151 (extract): Photographs of Honeybee Market. Left: (November 2019). Right: (March 2020).

Also referenced during two of the three Southwest tours (Nethercott, 2020) (Shields, 2020) was the new neighbourhood bar, Bagley Central. Recognising their varied perspectives and connections to the neighbourhood, Shaun and Danielle expressed different perceptions of the bar, describing it in contrasting symbolic terms. During Shaun's tour, she specifically chose to present Bagley Central as a sign of 'the conversation the neighbourhood is having with itself' as it tries to answer the question of 'what is its future?' (Nethercott, 2020) by synthesising its historic past, changing cultural identity and shift in demographics.

During Danielle's tour, she spoke of the 'unique walkability' of her neighbourhood, where she can 'walk out and actually, like, go places where I live', which in the automobile-centric City of Detroit, was an unusual neighbourhood experience. While excited about her neighbourhood's walkability, Danielle said that she hadn't 'done enough of it, especially, like, going to the bar. That's the one thing I want to do, like, I just want to be able to walk to a bar...' (Shields, 2020). In contrast to Shaun, Danielle spoke about the new Bagley Central bar in aspirational terms, setting herself the goal of, 'The Bagley Central. Yes, so definitely I'm making it... I'm going to do it this year' (Shields, 2020). Between the two women, this represented a different connection to the same place – in the one instance, the new bar symbolised a neighbourhood in flux as it grapples with the question of what it is becoming. In the other, the bar symbolised the aspiration of a younger generation wishing to realise their vision for the type of neighbourhood they dreamed of living in.



Figures 84-130 (extract): Photograph of Bagley Central bar interior (March 2020).

Opportunity. Danielle spoke frequently throughout the tour of what had attracted her to the Southwest neighbourhood: its ‘authenticity’, ‘beautiful homes’ and, above all, the staying power of the Southwest community, even during times of crises (Shields, 2020). At the same time, Danielle spoke openly of her hopes for change in the area if she ‘holds out long enough’ (Shields, 2020). Danielle spoke of the opportunities that Detroit’s current circumstances provided, referencing both the perceived positive opportunities for change aligned to her aspirations for the area, as well as where opportunism had created some challenges for local residents.

I really think that everybody wants to help, and people are doing it just the best way that they know how. I definitely think what people keep calling Detroit is like an opportunity zone – really, there’s a culture of just being willing to take more risks and see what happens, and so I think that’s really unique. But I also think that just really as a community, people are just generally caring, and so almost a lot of things have kind of a social mission or something just driven around it because I think there’s been a lot of effort to kind of put it into the culture that we’re all responsible for this new development and making sure that we take everybody with us (Shields, 2020).

One example of this was Danielle’s own building. She stated that the development company that owned it had held onto it through the Financial Crisis. They continued to rent the apartments predominantly to artists at the cheapest rents and, in return, did not significantly invest in the maintenance. Danielle explained that while there were positive aspects to this arrangement, including people on lower or insecure incomes being able to rent studios on a month-to-month basis and being able to leave at short notice when circumstances changed, there were also negative aspects, such as very high resident turnover, meaning that a community could never really establish. Danielle described that ‘so many people have cycled in and out of this building’ (Shields, 2020), including four different upstairs and three downstairs neighbours in the two years she had lived there. Danielle

described the change in 'clientele' starting to move into the building and demanding more for their money, as well as the building being rent-controlled, meaning she will continue to pay the same rent until she moves out. In aspirational terms, she explained, 'If I can stick it out for like another two more years, this will be a really cool building, because they will want to attract residents, but I'll still hopefully be paying the same rent' (Shields, 2020).

During the walking tour, Danielle pointed out spaces where she envisioned new cultural life as the area changed. Around the back of her own building, in what appeared to be a disused industrial yard, we stopped while Danielle described her vision of reimagining the space as a beer garden. Danielle confidently confessed, 'Honestly, I'm hoping that if I hold out long enough that it will become like super trendy and hip or, like, stuff like that. And this can be like a beer garden one day and... [gesturing at empty lot within factory grounds as we pass]' (Shields, 2020).



Figures 132-151 (extract): Photographs of industrial building and yard, Southwest (March 2020).

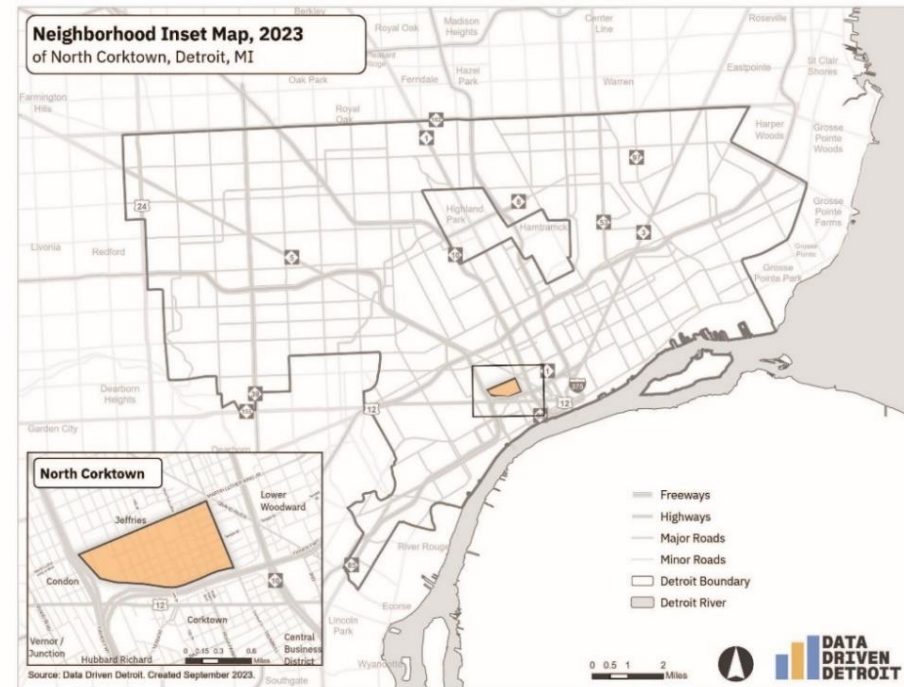
Examples such as this and the ribbon farms provided glimpses into Danielle's interaction with the environment of her neighbourhood, experiencing it in the present, connecting with its settler and industrial past, while projecting its potential reimagining into the future, as we moved through the space. This evoked futures-focused anthropologists Kleist and Jansen's idea that the future is not static, but rather is always in the making (Jansen & Kleist, 2016, p. 379).

North Corktown
Walking Ethnographies

November 2019 and March 2020

North Corktown Neighbourhood Overview

Local Area Facts			
	North Corktown	Southwest	City of Detroit
Population	1,725 ⁸⁹	15,139 ⁹⁰	639,111 ⁹¹
Population growth	-5% ⁹²	-17.2% ⁹³	-5% ⁹⁴
Area (sq miles)	0.59 ⁹⁵	2 ⁹⁶	139



Figures 152 and 153: Left: Local area facts. Right: North Corktown inset map (Data Driven Detroit, 2023).

⁸⁹ Briggs, Detroit population (Statistical Atlas, k)

⁹⁰ Southwest Detroit population (Statistical Atlas, b)

⁹¹ Quick Facts, Detroit City, Michigan (US Census Bureau, n.d.)

⁹² Supplemental Existing Conditions and Observations (City of Detroit, n.d.)

⁹³ Southwest Detroit Neighborhoods Profile (Data Driven Detroit, 2013)

⁹⁴ Supplemental Existing Conditions and Observations (City of Detroit, n.d.)

⁹⁵ NCNA SD Task Force Plan 2018 (Heritage Works)

⁹⁶ Approximate area of 'Statistical Atlas, a' map, based on *Google Maps*

Description of North Corktown Neighbourhood



Figure 154: Photograph looking into North Corktown from freeway entrance ramp (December 2016).

The neighbourhood of North Corktown is a predominantly residential area in the southeastern quadrant of the City of Detroit. It runs parallel to the north of historic Corktown, while sharing its western border with Southwest Detroit and eastern corner with Downtown. This is highlighted in yellow on the map below (Lovelands Detroit, 2013).



Figure 155: Detroit neighborhood map, North Corktown highlighted (Lovelands Detroit, 2013).

North Corktown has a population of 1,725 residents, made up of 833 households⁹⁷. Its relatively small population, compared to its physical size, has created a low density neighbourhood of mainly detached houses, with a small number of apartment buildings. It has a majority-African American population of 71.5%, alongside 20.5% White and 5.2% Latinx⁹⁸ residents. While marginally less than the African American population of the City of Detroit at 77.8%⁹⁹, North Corktown's African American population is considerably higher than that of the neighbouring historic Corktown at 34.3%¹⁰⁰. The neighbourhood's economic demographics fall below that of the City of Detroit and some of its neighbours. At \$16,800¹⁰¹, North Corktown has one of the lower median household incomes in the City, compared to the Detroit median of \$30,000¹⁰² and neighbouring Corktown median of \$34,200¹⁰³. It also has one of the higher percentages of residents eligible for food stamps at 49%¹⁰⁴, more than the City of Detroit at 42%¹⁰⁵, neighbouring Corktown at 31%¹⁰⁶ and similar to Southwest Detroit at 47%¹⁰⁷. While educationally, North Corktown has marginally higher attainment levels compared to the City of Detroit, with 19.7% of residents without a high school diploma and 12.6%¹⁰⁸ with a Bachelors degree, compared to 21% and 8.3%¹⁰⁹, respectively. In neighbouring Corktown, 24.6%¹¹⁰ of its residents hold a graduate or professional degree, compared to 3.3%¹¹¹ in North Corktown and 5.5%¹¹² across the City of Detroit.

North Corktown is often identified on maps of Detroit neighbourhoods as 'Briggs', referring to an historic name for the area, based on the location of the former Briggs baseball stadium. The name 'Briggs' was referenced on the Statistical Atlas website, the source for

⁹⁷ Briggs, Detroit population (Statistical Atlas, k)

⁹⁸ Briggs, Detroit race and ethnicity (Statistical Atlas, l)

⁹⁹ Detroit, Michigan race and ethnicity (Statistical Atlas, m)

¹⁰⁰ Corktown, Detroit race and ethnicity (Statistical Atlas, n)

¹⁰¹ Briggs, Detroit household income (Statistical Atlas, o)

¹⁰² Detroit, Michigan household income (Statistical Atlas, g)

¹⁰³ Corktown, Detroit household income (Statistical Atlas, p)

¹⁰⁴ Briggs, Detroit food stamps (Statistical Atlas, q)

¹⁰⁵ Detroit, Michigan food stamps (Statistical Atlas, r)

¹⁰⁶ Corktown, Detroit food stamps (Statistical Atlas, s)

¹⁰⁷ Southwest Detroit food stamps (Statistical Atlas, i)

¹⁰⁸ Briggs, Detroit educational attainment (Statistical Atlas, t)

¹⁰⁹ Detroit, Michigan educational attainment (Statistical Atlas, u)

¹¹⁰ Corktown, Detroit educational attainment (Statistical Atlas, v)

¹¹¹ Briggs, Detroit educational attainment (Statistical Atlas, t)

¹¹² Briggs, Detroit educational attainment (Statistical Atlas, t)

the data for the demographic tables in Figure 32. In 2018, local residents participated in consultation to rebrand the area as 'North Corktown'. This was chosen as it realigned the neighbourhood with its historic identity when it had been part of the wider Corktown neighbourhood prior to the freeway construction in the 1960s and 1970s. However, as cited during walking tours, some residents still referred to the area by 'Briggs' and even its historic 'Corktown' name.

After the construction of the freeways, the North Corktown neighbourhood was separated from the main business precinct and commuter thoroughfare of Michigan Avenue that runs directly into Downtown. This resulted in North Corktown becoming an almost-predominantly residential neighbourhood, with a few exceptions. At the time of writing, these included Nancy Whiskey's Bar and the Pink Flamingo food truck, two community anchors commonly-cited during resident walking tours, Hostel Detroit, accomodating travellers from around the world, the new and seemingly-contentious Liberty cannabis dispensary, based on resident feedback, a gas station, as well as a few small businesses operating intermittently out of people's homes and former retail units.

One of the most noticeable qualities of the neighbourhood is its vast swathes of vacant land, which has led some residents to call it an 'urban prairie' (Talley, 2019b), in stark contrast to the more dense and built-up neighbouring areas of Southwest Detroit, Corktown and Downtown. The local Neighborhood Association stated that, at the time of writing their Sustainable Development Plan in 2018, 72% of the land in North Corktown was vacant, and/or structure free, equivalent to 953 of the neighbourhood's 1,319 properties, with the Detroit Land Bank Authority owning approximately 440 of these (North Corktown Neighborhood Association, b, p. 3).

While many vacant plots of land remain empty, several have been repurposed as urban farms or community gardens, such as Brother Nature Farm and Hope Takes Root. These plots appeared as sprawling fields of growing crops and handmade structures, and housing farm vehicles, scenes more reminiscent of what one would expect in rural farming

communities, than two miles from the City's Downtown. Other vacant plots were redeveloped by local residents and community organisations into communal parks, such as Fish/Trout Park and Commons Park, as described by several residents during walking tours (Klein, 2020) (McDowell, 2019) (Talley, 2019b) with 'streetside gardening', as described by one resident (Klein, 2020), along grassy roadside medians. As with the painted murals in the Southwest Detroit neighbourhood, green space and community gardens were a significant visual signifier of the values of the North Corktown neighbourhood. A visual illustration of these values is demonstrated below in a series of photographs led by residents of North Corktown between November 2019 and March 2020.



Figures 156-162: Top row, far left and right: Photographs of streetside gardening (March 2020), second from left: Commons Park (March 2020), second from right: Brother Nature Farm (November 2019). Bottom row, left: vacant lots along Perry Street (March 2020), middle: Brother Nature Farm (March 2020), right: vacant lots with train station in the background (November 2019).

The neighbourhood's character could be described as an interweaving of its past history, present activism and future aspirations. During interviews, residents described the neighbourhood's history of political engagement and activism, with some older neighbours having been members of the Black Panther movement, and the relationship between Hostel Detroit and the radical Occupy movement shaping future aspirations for the neighbourhood

as a place testing alternative ways of living to build a fairer and more equitable future in this corner of Detroit (Cheek, 2020) (Klein, 2020).

Like Southwest Detroit and neighbouring historic Corktown, North Corktown sits within the boundaries of City Council's District 6 with Gabriela Santiago-Romero serving as the current City Council Member at the time of writing (City of Detroit). The City of Detroit's Neighborhoods website describes the neighbourhood of North Corktown as 'home to several public parks, colorful artwork and urban gardens, many of which was [sic] created by locals' (The Neighborhoods, c). At the time of writing, Rashida Tlaib, was the member of Congress for the district that incorporated the North Corktown neighbourhood. But, as described with North Corktown, following the redistricting of Michigan's congressional districts, Tlaib was elected to the neighbouring 12th District, and Shri Thanedar was elected to the newly established 13th District that includes North Corktown (US House of Representatives).

The neighbourhood had a very active Neighborhood Association at the time of the study, with several past and present members participating in research interviews and walking tours between 2018 and 2020. The Association's website calls North Corktown 'Detroit's best neighborhood', and says, 'This vibrant neighbourhood prioritizes public green space, public art access, legacy neighbor support and accessible housing' (North Corktown Neighborhood Association, b). In the few years during the study, the North Corktown Neighborhood Association delivered several significant pieces of work, described in more detail throughout the thesis. These included production of the North Corktown Sustainable Development Plan (North Corktown Neighborhood Association, b) and negotiating a Community Benefits Agreement with Ford Motor Company upon their purchase of the Train Station, building on the new legislation (City of Detroit, 2024e). By the time of writing, they had established the North Corktown Open Space Community Land Trust with a mission to 'protect green space for future generations', including preserving community-led pocket parks (NCNA). Their website also cited two further current priorities, the Home Repair Program and Equitable Housing Initiative (North Corktown Neighborhood Association, c).

Tricia Talley – North Corktown, 25 November 2019

Ethnography 4



I do this for the love of the neighbourhood.

This is our neighbourhood and we're going to take care of it (Talley, 2019a).



Figures 163-168: Photographs directed by Tricia Talley during neighbourhood tour of North Corktown (November 2019).

Observations from Tricia Talley's North Corktown tour. Tricia and I met on a late autumn afternoon in November 2019. The sky was blue with a spattering of light clouds and the sunset cast a pinkish hue on the North Corktown buildings. Tricia was a lifelong Detroit resident and moved to her current home at the Fountain Court cooperative in the North Corktown neighbourhood over twenty years ago. She described herself as 'probably related to just about everybody in Detroit, one way or another' due to her large family and established roots in Detroit for three or four generations (Talley, 2019b). At the time of the tour, Tricia was the president of the North Corktown Neighborhood Association and described herself as a 'community organiser' (Talley, 2019a). Although Tricia came across as rather modest, through conversations with other North Corktown residents, I came to understand that Tricia had been instrumental in establishing much of the strength and influence of the current Neighborhood Association, enabling it to act as a more representative voice of the community and playing a leading role in the North Corktown Sustainable Development Plan.

This was the first of the ethnographic tours that I undertook in North Corktown. Our tour of the neighbourhood lasted approximately sixty minutes, beginning and ending at the recently renovated Trumbull and Porter Hotel, just outside of North Corktown. The main themes that emerged from Tricia's tour were inclusive development, self-sufficiency, existing residents and hope.

Inclusive development. A key driver for Tricia as a community organiser has been a desire to create an inclusive neighbourhood, where everyone has influence in decision-making concerning the future of their area. Tricia explained:

I would like to see everyone represented, whether you're Black, White, Asian, Middle Eastern, and all economic groups. I don't want it [North Corktown] to just be for 100,000-dollar people that can afford 300,000-dollar houses. I would like to see all ages. Whether you're at the beginning of your career or the end of your career. That would be awesome (Talley, 2019).

For Tricia, one of the biggest concerns for the Neighborhood Association was 'people being priced out of the neighborhood' (Talley, 2019). Tricia had kept a watchful eye on property values and started to notice that before the building of the new Comerica Park stadium was announced, property values were rising quickly in Detroit, while they were falling in the suburbs. Tricia also described a noticeable change in the neighbourhood demographics from as early as 2008, when she observed that 'there were young, White people moving into the neighborhood' (Talley, 2019), which she described as surprising when Detroit was a majority Black city. Many of these new, younger residents, she described, as 'coming down from the UP [Upper Peninsula of MI], because they liked the seclusionedness', as the green lots in North Corktown reminded them of home (Talley, 2019a).

And they just started rolling in. And when they started rolling in, other people started rolling in. So it was pretty cool to see in 2008, when the country was on fire with the housing debacle, that in this little portion of North Corktown, or even this little portion of Detroit near Corktown, people were moving in and inquiring about how could they buy a house here (Talley, 2019a).

Observing increasing property values, change in demographics, and investment dollars going into adjacent Corktown, Tricia described how she and other Neighborhood Association members decided to work with the wider community to devise a sustainable development plan led by residents, recognising that it was only a matter of time before the developers started to move into North Corktown.



Figures 163-168 (extract): Photograph of North Corktown development in progress (November 2019).

I think one of the shared visions would be to have a say with how things are going to change in the neighborhood, which a lot of times, you don't have a say in at all.

[Some developers] They just come in and railroad, “I’m the developer. I’m going to get my money back and this is what you’re going to deal with” (Talley, 2019a).

In her earlier interview (Talley, 2019a), as well as during the tour (Talley, 2019), Tricia stressed the importance of creating a shared local vision that was collaborative and inclusive. To deliver this, Tricia ensured significant consultation took place with the community when producing the North Corktown Sustainable Development Plan (North Corktown Neighborhood Association, b). Tricia first canvassed the neighborhood to determine what neighbors wanted to see in terms of development, then held community meetings on the seven theme areas that emerged as priorities, a process which took a year and a half. Tricia described how they started with urban farms, as it was clear that local urban farmers were struggling to secure land, then moved on to housing, greening, arts and culture, among others. Tricia then collated the information from the community consultation meetings and drafted the North Corktown Sustainable Development Plan in 2019. Tricia believed it was important to create a Plan that was accessible to all, ‘where anyone could read it, whether you were a developer or if you were a resident’ (Talley, 2019a). She also wanted it to be produced in a format that could be easily shared without exclusive software,

which they had previously encountered with artists who had tried to help but were using formats that only other artists could use, rendering it inaccessible. Tricia believed an inclusive approach to development was possible, with progress already taking shape in the 'collaborative effort between the planning department, the Land Bank, the mayor's office, and the residents' (Talley, 2019). Tricia felt a change in mindset was necessary to enable this collaboration to happen – this had not always been easy to achieve.

I actually have people that when I've said, 'You should contact the planning department, invite them to one of your meetings', they've said, 'I don't want to go down there begging'. 'It's not begging.' And I had to explain that. I had to take a deep breath and explain 'you're not begging'. You're inviting someone who has the power to redesign your neighborhood down to — you're inviting them to express what you want to see and that doesn't happen often, especially in an urban city as large as Detroit. We're the biggest, Blackest city in the country. So, if you have the opportunity to get the ear of the planning department, do so (Talley, 2019a).

Tricia provided examples of where this approach has already delivered results in which the City's planning department has 'actually listened' (Talley, 2019a). This included an example when the City was planning to turn 12th Street into a two-way road from its current one-way system. The planning department had reached out to the Association, who called an emergency meeting at Nancy Whiskey's Bar. Tricia was able to get everyone that lived on the street along to the meeting, recognising that as she did not live on the street, she did not have the experience to inform the decision. Tricia explained how the 12th Street residents were able to convey why it was a 'bad idea' to make the street two-way, and as a result, the planning department halted their plans (Talley, 2019a). This example – and others that Tricia provided – demonstrated the value of building relationships between residents and the City to create a platform of listening, dialogue and collaboration, amplifying the voices of the community to enable better decision-making through their lived experience.

I think they can learn with what's going on in North Corktown and with the community involvement, getting the residents' voice. That was the big tagline for the sustainable development plan. It wasn't that I just wrote it out. This is based on information that we collected from residents. Even though we're moving pretty slow – I think the slow pace has allowed for that resident engagement to expand. Because I literally had a planner ask me, 'Do you think it's important to ask people what they want?' and I literally said, 'Hell, yeah. Ask. Please ask, because you don't want to make assumptions about what people need in their everyday life. And you're not there, you're not living it' (Talley, 2019a)

Existing residents. A theme that has echoed throughout the interviews and a particular focus during Tricia's tour was how to ensure existing Detroit residents – not just newcomers – are supported by the City and see the benefits of investment. Over 58% of those interviewed (21 of 36 participants), including Tricia, were concerned about 'existing residents' or 'lifelong Detroiters' being forgotten as money poured in to attract new residents and build housing that many existing residents could not afford. 'I don't think it should be that way' (Talley, 2019a), instead Tricia felt that neighborhoods should be built around the residents that were already there, which will then attract new residents. 'Don't build the neighborhood for residents that you're trying to attract. That doesn't work. It leaves everyone out' (Talley, 2019a). This was the basis on which the North Corktown Sustainable Development Plan was established, ensuring that existing residents shaped its principles. Tricia expressed the importance of ensuring that existing residents are not left behind:

I really want people who stayed and weathered the storm to benefit from everything that's coming to the City. 'You stayed and weathered the storm and paid your taxes'. 'You stayed and weather the storm and you have this house that you're working on.' 'You stayed and weathered the storm, and your children are still in the Detroit Public School system'. I want everyone who stayed and weathered the storm, no matter

what your economic background is, to benefit. I don't want anyone to feel like they've been left out or left behind. And Detroit is a big city (Talley, 2019a).

Self-sufficiency. Tricia identified her motivation for community organising in North Corktown as 'I do it for the love of the neighbourhood' (Talley, 2019a). She spoke with pride her many neighbours that maintain parks, mow empty lots and volunteer in local garden clubs, which she again described as 'working hard for the love of the neighbourhood' (Talley, 2019a)

Brother Nature's our largest urban farm in North Corktown. And I'm certain Greg [Greg Willerer, also interviewed] cuts quite a few of the lots that he's not farming in. And then we have Bill Cheek [also interviewed]. There's a beautiful lot right behind Fountain Court, off of 16 [th Street], where a school used to be, and I think he maintains that (Talley, 2019a).

Tricia also spoke of several other examples of neighbours taking on local volunteering and fundraising activity in the neighbourhood. This included Jeff Klein [also interviewed] who Tricia described as volunteering on the garden club and looking after Trout Park, as well as Bill Cheek, who was taking the initiative to fundraise to rebuild the Monumental Kitty sculpture. Tricia did not believe that there was resentment on the part of most North Corktown residents towards the City for neighbours having to take on these roles. Rather, she explained, 'I love it. This is our neighborhood and we're going to take care of it' (Talley, 2019a).



Figures 163-168 (extract): Photographs of parks maintained by residents. Left: Trout Park. Right: Commons Park (November 2019).

Hope. Tricia spoke of her desire for residents in other neighbourhoods to see what has been achieved in North Corktown and feel inspired to aspire for inclusive development and collaboration with the City. 'If I can write a sustainable development plan, then anyone can do it' (Talley, 2019a). She explained that her background was in healthcare and had not had any previous experience in the development sector. Through her work on the North Corktown Neighborhood Association, she expressed her aspiration for others, 'I'm hoping that we're like a beacon of hope for other areas in the City that feel like they've been forgotten. This could be an example for the whole City' (Talley, 2019a).

Will McDowell – North Corktown, 27 November 2019

Ethnography 5



I live in North Corktown. As of this calendar year, it has gotten a lot of publicity. But before that, it was pretty forgotten about, even though we're so close to Downtown. It's extremely diverse. You have people who have been here for three generations. There's people like me that have been moving in slowly. But mostly people that have been here forever. And it's White, Black, Hispanic. It's everybody, house by house, all mixed in. It's actually, in my opinion, one of the most diverse areas in the entire City (McDowell, 2019).



Figures 169-187: Photographs directed by Will McDowell on neighbourhood tour of North Corktown (November 2019).



Observations from Will McDowell's North Corktown tour. Will and I met on a very sunny morning in late November 2019. Will was a relative newcomer to the North Corktown neighbourhood, having moved to the area in 2014, five years before the interview. He grew up in the suburbs of metro Detroit, before attending university in Detroit and becoming acquainted with North Corktown through work he was doing with a local non-profit. Will was an active member of the North Corktown Neighbourhood Association and had been involved in numerous community development activities locally, many of which he incorporated into the walking tour, including the resident-created 'Commons Park' and 'pheasant mural', both of which he affectionately described as being 'my baby' (McDowell, 2019).

Throughout the interview, Will spoke with great pride of his neighbourhood and the work of the residents and Neighborhood Association in affecting positive change. The tour lasted approximately seventy-five minutes. It started outside Will's home and incorporated the main intersection of Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King Boulevard, as well as walking through the predominantly residential neighbourhood and visiting community parks. The main themes that Will focused on were opportunity in the form of resident-led solutions, streetscape and development.

Opportunity. Will spoke with great affection from the very beginning of the tour about the opportunity to create and add value within the City of Detroit, and specifically, to his neighbourhood of North Corktown. 'In Detroit, you are a big fish in little pond, essentially. The way they say it more often around here is, "in Detroit, the City is big enough to matter in the world, and it's small enough for you to matter in it". I think a lot of people can claim that, but I don't know how that could be more possible than in Detroit' (McDowell, 2019). Will was quick to state that people often described Detroit as a blank canvas, 'which is horrible', explaining 'that means you don't know the City that well. All the many things, people, businesses and events that have been here forever, that still have gone on despite the ups and downs' (McDowell, 2019). This was reminiscent of walking tours with Southwest residents Alondra Carter-Alvizo (2019b) and Danielle Shields (2020) who similarly

challenged outsider views of their neighbourhood, with Alondra stating simply and powerfully, 'Detroit never left' (Carter-Alvizo, 2019b). Will went on to describe that within the vast 139 square miles of Detroit, 'there's room'; room and opportunity to create, 'plus the people that are here, which is what makes it so great', meaning you can always 'add some more value' to the 'giant city' (McDowell, 2019).

Walking through the quiet, sparsely populated residential neighbourhood, complete with a sighting of four pheasants flying overhead and landing in a nearby and characteristically North Corktown well-maintained empty lot, it was easy to forget that we were walking through one of America's largest urban environments with the dense skyline of Downtown less than two miles in the distance.

Through interviews and walking tours, it was clear that the unique open space and low density of North Corktown were key characteristics that enabled residents of the neighbourhood to trial new, more sustainable ways of living, find a return to the commons and establish more equitable routes to development and affordable housing. During our tour, Will showed me examples of community-led solutions to creating shared, communal space, artwork that helped establish neighbourhood identity, and an urban farm that tested an approach to self-sufficient living. All of these examples were borne out of the ideas of residents of North Corktown, negotiated with developers and City Council departments and ultimately realised through the efforts of residents to implement and maintain over time.



Figures 169-187 (extract): Photographs of three resident-led pocket parks in North Corktown. Left: Trout Park. Centre: Commons Park. Right: Intersections Park (November 2019).



Figures 169-187 (extract): Photographs of resident initiatives in North Corktown. Left: Pink Flamingo. Centre: Brother Nature Farm. Right: Pheasant mural (November 2019).

Will led me to the intersection of two residential streets, where he stopped and stated, ‘This specific corner, I really like and helps to explain everything’ (McDowell, 2019). In a statement of confidence imbued with a sense of belonging and collective ownership, Will explained as he pointed to the two adjacent parks of Trout Park and Commons Park, ‘So we own this land, and we own the land over here’ (McDowell, 2019). As a practitioner, having worked in community development and regeneration for over two decades, I was struck by the uniqueness of the situation, in which residents were so well-organised, where land was available, and where the question of community ownership had not been undermined by the interests of commercial development. Commons Park, which Will was instrumental in creating, was a prime example of how, through careful planning, persistent determination, shrewd negotiation and sound community organising, the residents of North Corktown had been able to reinstate the commons on their doorstep.

Speaking of the aptly named Commons Park, Will proudly described how the project came to be, how it was implemented and the value that it had to him personally:

This is my Commons Park. I worked on this for two years straight. First, acquiring the land from the Detroit Land Bank and then raising some funds, which ... mostly, other neighborhood board members did. But I did all the planning of getting all the things built and getting the walkway designed, getting all the flowers – I did all the volunteer coordination, too. So, all those things are really important to me (McDowell, 2019).

Private development. At the other end of the opportunity spectrum, Will noted how private developers had begun to show signs of movement into the neighbourhood. Still standing on the same corner surveying the pocket parks, Will pointed to two examples of private development that had created some local ‘upset’ and ‘controversy’ in recent years (McDowell, 2019). One was a house built by architect Hurrtenne, next to Trout Park. During walking tours, other residents (Klein, 2020) (Koth, 2020) had also pointed out this house and two others by the same architect, which I was told had engendered a negative response from many residents, stemming from a view that the modern design was not in keeping with the rest of the neighbourhood. Will did not express a personal dislike for the design, but rather voiced what some neighbours had felt, stating ‘This is kind of what’s coming to the neighborhood right now, like this modern design. I would say, most of the neighborhood is upset’ (McDowell, 2019).

On the adjacent corner to Trout Park and across from Commons Park, Will pointed to a new condominium development currently under construction, an unusual sight among the low density, sparsely configured older housing, characteristic of the neighbourhood. Will described, ‘So, we have these modern designs coming in, and over here, they’re putting in eleven row houses, on, I want to say, like five plots of land or four plots of land’ (McDowell, 2019). Will explained that residents are ‘pretty upset’, about the new development. He described a local desire to align with the values that are important to North Corktown residents, stating, ‘There are very few things that we’re asking for. We want people to care about green space, and we want people to keep the density the same, like we don’t want it

to blow up' (McDowell, 2019). This, he described in contrast to areas like Brush Park [Downtown Detroit], where large apartment complexes are being built, which was 'great for a Downtown area', but not North Corktown. He expressed, 'we like our kind of different – we're like a neighborhood by Downtown as opposed to being Downtown-dense' (McDowell, 2019). In what I came to understand during the tour to be Will's optimistic outlook, he then expressed that 'on the flipside', the developer had been a 'good partner', 'really nice and easy to talk to', while providing donations for the community (McDowell, 2019).

Streetscape. Throughout the tour, Will used his own routes, including through grassy areas, on the roads, and sometimes on the pavement, a sign of someone who frequently walked the neighbourhood, knew the best routes and also – as I came to learn – which surfaces were best avoided. At one point on the tour, Will explained, 'I always walk in the street, which people always think is dangerous, but the sidewalks are, like, unwalkable' (McDowell, 2019).



Figures 169-187 (extract): Photograph of a broken and overground pavement in North Corktown (November 2019).

The more time I spent walking in North Corktown while on the tours, the more I came to realise that this was a common choice among residents to walk in the street, deemed by many to be the safer option than negotiating trip hazards. These pavements appeared so seemingly neglected that, in some areas, it was not immediately apparent that it was a pavement at all.

Jeff Klein – North Corktown, 6 March 2020

Ethnography 6



I think through urban ag [agriculture], pocket parks, community projects, I guess what I've come to learn is you kind of walk blindly and learn along the way and hope you're walking in the right direction – cuz I can't say I knew exactly what I was doing at that time, but it certainly led to, like, a real connection to this place and this neighborhood and this community in terms of just physical space (Klein, 2020).





Figures 189-208: Photographs directed by Jeff Klein during neighbourhood tour of North Corktown (March 2020).
 Figures 210-213: Photographs provided by Jeff Klein by email (April 2020).

Observations from Jeff Klein's North Corktown tour. The tour with Jeff Klein took place on a cold, early winter evening in March 2020. Jeff had been a resident of the neighbourhood for over twenty years, having moved into the area around 2000 with a few friends and peers involved in the urban agriculture movement. Jeff explained that many friends were testing out alternative ways of living in this corner of Detroit, seeing so much possibility, from vacant land to affordable homes, and in such close proximity to Downtown. He was now a landscape architect with a self-professed interest in citizen engagement, specialising in open spaces. The tour began – at Jeff's request – at his home, an early 20th-century timber-framed house that sat alone on one half of a city block, across from a renovated park. I later found out this was Nagel Park, which Jeff, through his role at the City's Parks Service, was involved in re-designing. Jeff's dining area and kitchen (the parts that I was invited to see) were thoughtfully decorated with what appeared to be period features, some historical objects and photographs, and well-kept house plants – a sign of someone with a passion and talent for gardening and agriculture. The historical objects and photographs on display gave the feeling of an interweaving relationship between Detroit's history, the house's history and Jeff's familial history.



Figures 188-209 (extract): Photograph of Jeff's dining room (March 2020).

During the tour, Jeff spoke of the neighbourhood changes he had observed over the past two decades, shared his views on communal land use versus private ownership, examples of urban agriculture and 'streetside gardening' (Jeff's adopted phrase) that he and

neighbours had been involved in, the hardships of volunteerism in the absence of infrastructure, and challenges of urban planning on a neighbourhood level. Jeff described the diversity and creativity of uses that developed organically within the North Corktown neighbourhood over time, given the scale of unadopted space and 'lawlessness', as he termed it (Klein, 2020). The main theme areas that arose during Jeff's walking tour were change over time, diversity and creativity of land use, and community versus commercial interests.

Change over time. Jeff described the neighbourhood when he first moved in twenty years ago as 'this great place' where people banded together, tried out new approaches and were bold in the alternative ways they chose to live in this relatively quiet, forgotten urban neighbourhood (Klein, 2020). He said that at that time, interest rates were very low, and he believed he needed to buy a house then, 'because people are going to start buying up Detroit. And this place is getting fun' (Klein, 2020). He described Detroit in 2000 as being like the 1970s art scene, with a vibrant music scene that 'birthed the White Stripes and all of that' (Klein, 2020). Conversely, he said, 'meanwhile, I don't know how many times I've been broken into, and had vehicles stolen' (Klein, 2020). Jeff described 'there's been a part of me that's been waiting for this [interest in the neighbourhood] to happen, because I want neighbours and you get tired of the grind, you know?' (Klein, 2020). In the ongoing push-and-pull narrative of development, Jeff described the paradox through the case of North Corktown, which was now starting to see a small influx of development, 'Now all of a sudden... seeing this transition, it really flipped. It's like "(sigh) Oh"' (Klein, 2020). He asked, perhaps rhetorically, 'So, how do you find the balance?', before answering himself pessimistically, 'I don't want to explore the answer, almost. I'm afraid it might just end in defeat', before giving out a rallying laugh (Klein, 2020).

Unlike Tricia Talley (2019) and Will McDowell (2019) who seemed to share a sense of optimism for residents' ability to influence plans for local development, Jeff occupied a more sceptical perspective. From conversations with the three, I identified two key points

that seemed to shape their differing outlooks. Firstly, Tricia (Talley, 2019b) and Will's (McDowell, 2019) positions on the North Corktown Neighborhood Association and their individual roles in drafting the North Corktown Sustainable Development Plan were likely to have produced and perpetuated an optimistic outlook, which would have been necessary to undertake this work on behalf of the community and maintain the belief that it was possible. While Jeff was positive in his descriptions of the work undertaken by Tricia Talley and others, he explained that he had already witnessed two previous neighbourhood associations fold since he moved into the area. Secondly, Jeff had been actively involved in volunteering to create, implement and maintain open spaces in the neighbourhood for over twenty years and displayed exhaustion at the scale of the task and expectations, particularly having seen a palpable shift towards commercial development in areas he had lovingly maintained all these years. Jeff explained that this experience, alongside a recent transition towards what he perceived as 'too much private ownership of land' that should be preserved for the community (Klein, 2020), were likely to be contributing factors in Jeff's differing perspective.

Jeff described how, before the freeway expansion in the 1960s and 1970s, North Corktown and Corktown had been two parts of the same neighbourhood. This expansion physically divided the two areas into separate neighbourhoods, with only an overpass to get from one side to the other, over a busy, fast-moving multi-laned road. Jeff explained that when he first moved in, the neighbourhood was still called 'Briggs' after the nearby former baseball stadium. Jeff described how 'there hasn't been much connection' between Corktown and North Corktown in the time he had lived there, each acting 'as their own neighbourhood' (Klein, 2020). By observation, the look and feel of the two areas was incredibly different. Corktown was a busy centre of restaurants, independent shops, the draw of the Train Station, considerable footfall and car traffic, including attracting people from the suburbs and further, with a straight view through to the skyscrapers of Downtown. North Corktown, just a stone's throw away across the I-75 freeway, was quiet, almost exclusively

residential, very green with well-maintained vacant lots and urban farms and, according to many of the residents I spoke with, virtually unknown to people outside the neighbourhood. Jeff explained how in 2006, the area was rebranded 'North Corktown', which he understood to be an effort to 'regain some of the history' and to reconnect the neighbourhood that 'had got very different' (Klein, 2020). It was almost as if, in this microcosm in the shadow of the iconic Train Station, the concept and experience of the 'two Detroits' was being played out side-by-side in one historically singular neighbourhood.



Figures 214, 215, 216: Photographs of Corktown. Left: Michigan Avenue shopfronts (September 2019). Centre: View down Michigan Avenue to Downtown (September 2019). Right: Michigan Central Station [Train Station] (December 2016).



Figure 217 and 218: Left: Pedestrian overpass linking Corktown and North Corktown (March 2020). Right: View over I-75 freeway dividing two parts of historic Corktown (November 2019).



Figures 219, 220, 221: Photographs of North Corktown. Left: Residential house. Middle: Vacant lot on Perry and Wabash streets. Right: Residential house on a historic red brick road (March 2020).

Jeff described how, during his time as a resident of North Corktown, much of the neighbourhood had remained the same, with the exception of the MotorCity Casino built on the neighbourhood's edge a few years earlier. He explained that there had only been one notable period of development in 2006, when Greater Corktown Development Corporation secured financing to build up to 30 new, affordable homes (not all of which were eventually built). Jeff pointed these out on the tour and spoke of the generally positive response from residents both in their design, which was sensitively in keeping with the existing buildings, and their level of affordability. Having described the neighbourhood as 'pretty much the same over the last twenty years', Jeff went on to explain the new pace of change within the neighbourhood, telling me, 'it's going to be a different place next time you come back' (Klein, 2020). Like all other North Corktown residents who led me on neighbourhood tours, Jeff took me to see the new townhouse development perpendicular to Fish Park (referred to by other residents as 'Trout Park'), which he created in 2012. Jeff also took us past three new houses designed by architect Christian Hurttienne to demonstrate the 'not-always-linear story' that architecture can tell you about a place (Klein, 2020).



Figures 188-209 (extract): Left: Photograph of Jeff's house, built early 20th century. Middle: Hurttienne-designed house. Right: New townhouse development (March 2020).

Jeff explained that some of his neighbours were not very happy with the design of the modern Hurttienne-designed homes – of which there appeared to be three in the neighbourhood, all built within the past five years – sharing that at public meetings residents expressed that they would rather have architecture 'that speaks to' what is already in the neighbourhood, citing the example of the houses built by the Corktown Development

Corporation in 2006. Jeff, on the other hand, expressed a more philosophical view, giving the buildings an almost anthropomorphic quality in asking how they interact with each other, with the neighbourhood, with the public realm. He asked my opinion, 'Are they oppressive or friendly and welcoming in their design?' (Klein, 2020). He expressed his preference for living in a 'neighbourhood full of weird-ass houses and have people walk around going, "Look at the architecture"', pointing to two vastly contrasting houses to illustrate his point, one that he said was built in the 1880s and the other, 'the orange stripey' modern house built by Hurtle Architects (Klein, 2020).

Jeff spoke of the emotional connections of architecture and how he felt this related to an individual's experience of their neighbourhood. He related the conversation to the North Corktown Sustainable Development Plan and his belief that this is in essence what is driving Tricia Talley and others to identify and preserve what was important within the neighbourhood during a period of flux and transition.

It's really about, like, these interactions you make throughout your life that can connect you with these things that make you, you know, sort of physically, emotionally tied to a neighbourhood. And it's in these periods where we're transitioning, I think, that we have to be the most sensitive to how we make those connections (Klein, 2020).

Diversity and creativity of land use. Throughout the tour, Jeff told a story of diversity and creativity of land use across the North Corktown neighbourhood. He described that, due to a lack of infrastructure and interest from the City in the neighbourhood, 'essentially, for years there was just a sort of the lawlessness of the area, but it was great', describing the many unexpected and contrasting land uses that came into being organically (Klein, 2020). Jeff recounted conversations in which people held views of North Corktown that 'nothing's happening there, or nobody lives there', unaware of the vast array of activity

within the neighbourhood (Klein, 2020). This recalled Marr's (2016) call to action to move beyond 'ruin porn' and understand what actually happens within Detroit's borders. In one surprising example, he pointed to a series of large vacant lots, revealing that the space had previously been home to a makeshift zoo, complete with pigs, ducks and geese. Jeff recounted, 'On Sundays, you would see people bring their kids here, like, after church, and people would stand here at the fence, and the animals would come over to and get fed. And so, it was a really fun thing to have' (Klein, 2020). Jeff then pointed to a large stretch of fencing on the other side of the street, explaining, 'this is part of the UAW's property [United Auto Workers union], I think. This was Hoffa's [Jimmy Hoffa¹¹³] UAW, by the way, and this was, like, his local. So, yeah, that's kind of something', referring to its historic significance, although explaining, 'I don't know that I've ever seen, like, any activity in there' (Klein, 2020).

Sharing examples of Jeff's own activity, the tour included two community parks that he had led on, Fish [Trout] Park and Intersections Park, the latter with Heritage Works (a representative of which was also interviewed for this research), as well as the stretch of median in front of his own house where he proudly did 'street-side gardening' (Klein, 2020). In each example, Jeff spoke of identifying an unclaimed space and creating something beautiful, meaningful and engaging. He described the concept of 'street-side gardening' as one of his contributions to the local urban agriculture movement, 'bringing gardens out of the backyard' as a 'soft form of protest' (Klein, 2020). He described how 'the daffodils, the garden, the landscape, you know, to me is a place that you can sort of protest what the environment of the City is giving you' (Klein, 2020).

Jeff spoke of the opportunities and challenges that can arise from this organic approach to community development. Through his own experience, Jeff shared his realisation that he had been 'kind of walking blindly and learning along the way', while

¹¹³ Jimmy Hoffa was 'one of America's foremost labor organizers' and president of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters from 1957 to 1971 (Detroit Historical Society, 2022a). Hoffa is a household name amongst Detroiters.

hoping he was 'walking in the right direction' (Klein, 2020). Jeff explained that this approach 'led to a real connection to this place and this neighbourhood and this community' through its physical space (Klein, 2020). Jeff was honest that he did not always get it right, taking on board that 'it was a huge learning lesson' along the way (Klein, 2020).

Jeff gave the example of Fish [Trout] Park, in which the Corktown Development Corporation supported him to design the park on a vacant lot, but acknowledged that at the time, there was not a lot of community engagement around it, so he 'did the best that [he] could for this little sliver' of land (Klein, 2020). He recounted how a young boy named John Jr, aged 9 or 10 years old, who lived next door to the lot used to drop designs into his mailbox of how he wanted the park to look. Jeff gave him a set of drafting tools at the time. He went on to proudly announce that John Jr is now a landscape designer. Jeff recalled that some years later, he was talking to John Jr, who told Jeff, "yeah, well, you know, when you guys built that thing [Fish Park], that was where we played baseball", and I was like, "Oh, shit" (Klein, 2020). Jeff recognised that while he was approaching the creation of Fish Park with the best intentions, through limited community engagement, he had unintentionally undermined one community use to make way for another. With hindsight, he acknowledged, 'you want to learn something like that as early as you can' (Klein, 2020). Through this example, Jeff explained, 'it speaks to what happens in a place while you're in that place and like speaks nothing to the volume of things that happen in that space over the course of time' (Klein, 2020).

Community versus commercial interests. Within the first ten minutes of our tour, Jeff began speaking about the challenges of the transition from residents maintaining the area themselves to private developers starting to show an interest. This was clearly an emotive subject for Jeff, as he returned to the subject on multiple occasions. The value of self-sufficiency was expressed in North Corktown through maintenance of vacant lots by Jeff and others, transforming abandoned lots into pocket parks for community use and experimenting with urban farming and social enterprises for community benefit. In North

Corktown, it was clear from resident interviews that self-sufficiency and the DIY spirit directed towards their neighbourhood was driven through a combination of love and self-determination for their community on the one hand, and a lack of City interest, on the other. Jeff described the neighbourhood being in the early stages of transition from a period of 'lawlessness' in which people could create, unincumbered, a neighbourhood for the people who lived there, to one of stricter rules and processes relating to development and less opportunity for 'citizen engagement' (Klein, 2020).



Figures 188-209 (extract): Photos of community activity led by Jeff. Left: Intersections Park. Middle: 'Street-side gardening'. Right: Fish [Trout] Park (March 2020).

Within North Corktown, the practice of 'self-provisioning' (Kinder, 2016) over the past twenty years appeared to share a relationship with the concept of 'community nationalism' (Andrews, 2021a, pp. 7-8). In the case of the diverse neighbourhoods of North Corktown and Southwest Detroit, I observed that self-determinism was an active driving force. It appeared that in the absence of engagement from the City, many local residents were proactively involved in managing their own neighbourhood akin to 'a nation within a nation' or in line with Malcolm X's call to action 'to operate and control the economy of our own community' (Andrews, 2021a, p. 9). This was evidenced through both the community-financing structures in Southwest Detroit, as described by Alondra Carter-Alvizo (2019b), and the model of self-provisioning, described by Jeff Klein in North Corktown (Klein, 2020). In Southwest, this focused on financial capital as a building block in creating community, while in North Corktown it focused on land as a community asset for building a neighbourhood.

Jeff spoke in contrast about some of the new developments coming into the area, two of which related to Fish [Trout] Park. One was a '300-thousand-dollar a-piece, eleven-unit' development that was under construction at the time and perpendicular to the park. Interestingly, all of the North Corktown residents also chose to include this development in their walking tours. Jeff pointed to a for-sale sign on a vacant lot down the road from the park, which he explained included an image of a new house on the lot, depicting it right next to Fish [Trout] Park. While inaccurate in its geographical depiction, the developer appeared to identify Fish Park as a saleable marketing tool for the new homes. This seemed to exploit the community-led initiative, especially when one considers the park was maintained by uncredited residents on a voluntary basis for years, who ironically, would most likely not be able to afford the new home next to their park. According to Jeff, there has been a shift away from unclaimed land that can be appropriated for community use towards developers purchasing the land and determining its use in line with their commercial interests. This had significantly reduced the residents' ability to exercise influence over land use.

I mean this is what's happening with community engagement, and what's happening with this neighborhood is sort of the inevitable. Stuff is going up. I mean, there's too much private ownership of land for the community to really say what they want in their neighborhood, unless you are able to leverage some stuff like some of these folks did in the past (Klein, 2020).

Having voluntarily maintained many of the neighbourhood lots and pocket parks for years, Jeff recently started a gardening club to 'share in the joy that you can get from maintaining spaces and share the legacy' (Klein, 2020). Alongside involving other residents, he also talked of trying to engage with the new developers to 'hopefully get these people on board', pointing to the new-build Fish Park-adjacent townhouses under construction and the

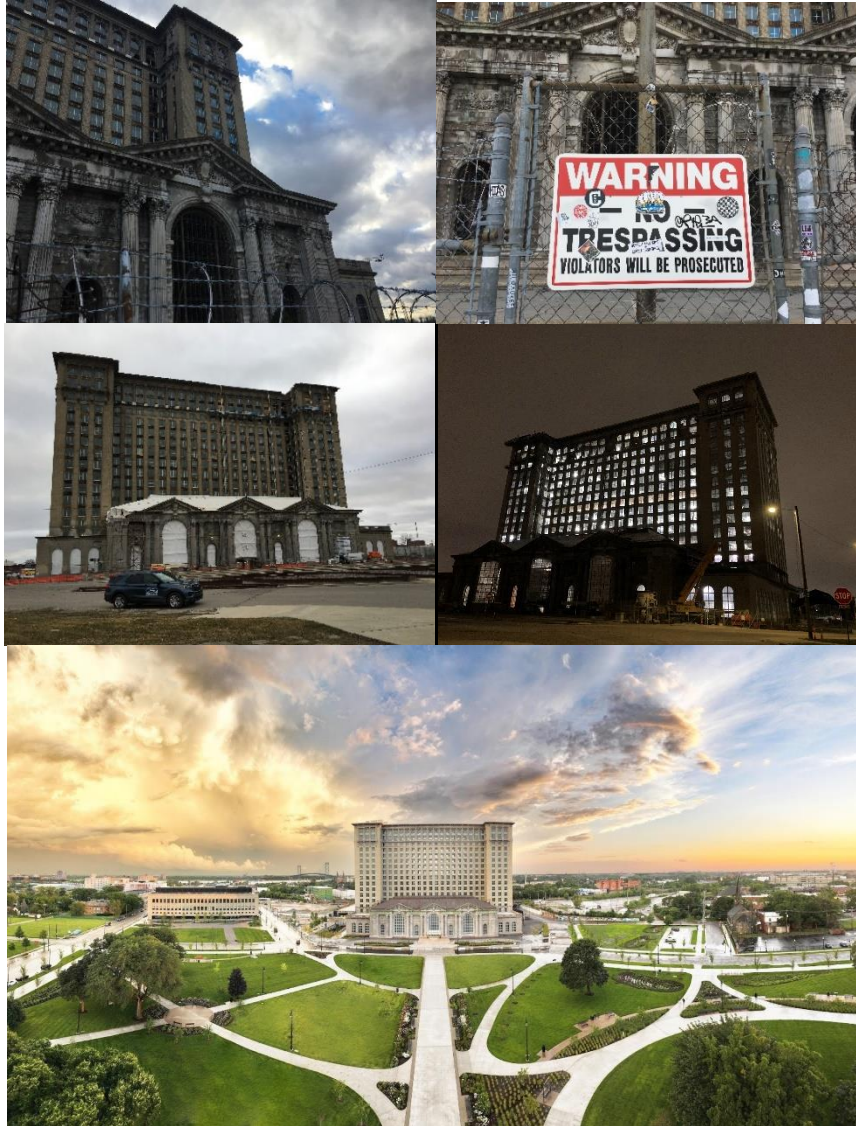
Hurtienne-designed house that had been built next to the Park two years before (Klein, 2020).

I mean, I think that there's just a whole story there about how this whole neighbourhood actually stitches back together, and, to a certain extent, I think that [the development narrative] tells the same story (Klein, 2020).

This statement from Jeff recounted a similar sentiment from Shaun Nethercott (2020) during her Southwest walking tour recognising the point in time when a neighbourhood in flux engages in a conversation with itself about who it is going to be in the future and what values are emerging – a conversation that equally pertains to the types of products being stocked on the shelves of Honeybee Market, as it does to the types of housing being built in an area.

Discussing Ford's recent purchase of the Michigan Central Train Station in 2018, Jeff returned to the persistent dilemma of finding balance between public space and private ownership within the City. Before its sale to Ford, the Train Station was known as a destination for urban explorers who would sneak into the abandoned building, generating countless photographs that contributed to the genre known as 'ruin porn' (De Silva, 2014). Jeff spoke of when he used to sneak into the building years ago, feeling that no one really owned it at the time, and now reflecting on whether 'it was sort of owned by everyone' (Klein, 2020). He recounted thinking of it as a City structure, and as such, there being 'almost an adversarial relationship' between the City and the people sneaking in, who felt the City was leaving the building to 'just sit there' (Klein, 2020). With echoes of Graeber's (2014) idea of a crisis of inclusion borne out of the capitalist order, Jeff reflected on the Train Station under Ford's new ownership:

We really see that place not as Ford's, necessarily. It's the juxtaposition, like, how do you maintain sort of that civic, common space that's for everybody in the shadow of a world that's not always for everybody, I guess? (Klein, 2020).



Figures 222-226: Photographs depicting evolution of ownership of Michigan Central Station.

Top row (left and right): While owned by Maroon family (Dec 2016). Middle row, left: Just after Ford's purchase, with Ford security van parked in front (March 2020). Right: Nearly two years after Ford's purchase, complete with new windows and lights for the first time in many years (Dec 2021). Bottom row: Station and Roosevelt Park, following renovations (March 2024) (Michigan Central, 2024).

Bill Cheek – North Corktown, 10 March 2020

Ethnography 7



I think that needs to be the purpose of the North Corktown Neighborhood Association. It's a waypoint for developers to come in and say, 'Okay, we see you've done all this work and you have all these plans, how can what we do fit within the scope of your plans and what the neighborhood wants?' (Cheek, 2020).





Figures 227-249: Photographs directed by Bill Cheek during neighbourhood tour of North Corktown (March 2020).

Observations from Bill Cheek's North Corktown tour. The tour with Bill Cheek took place on a chilly morning at the beginning of March 2020. It was in the early days of many people's awareness of the Coronavirus pandemic, with stories starting to break in North America and Europe of positive cases in the western hemisphere. It was also also my first experience of someone apologising for cold-like symptoms and assuring me it was just that – a common cold – an interaction which would become commonplace over the next two years, as the world adjusted to life in a pandemic.

Bill asked to meet me in front of his house, an older detached house with a large, well-maintained lot on either side. On the front of his house was a white-and-purple flag with an image of a unicorn, in honour of the name Bill gave the house, 'The Unicorn'. He explained that this came from it being 'one of the mythical \$500 unicorns' (Cheek, 2020). Not only did this refer to the mythical creature thought to bring happiness and hope, but also the 'near-mythical' stories recounted in the press about Detroit houses selling for \$500 as part of the rebirth of the City. Bill recounted how his house was, in fact, one of those unicorn stories. He bought the house from the nephew of a woman who had lived there from the time it was built in 1948 until she moved in with her nephew in 2010. Bill bought the house in 2012 for \$500, 'although it did come with \$3,000 in back taxes and water bills' (Cheek, 2020).

Throughout our nearly two-hour tour, Bill shared his knowledge of a deep-rooted history of the North Corktown neighbourhood, describing the effects of many years of racist housing policy and urban planning, and sharing his own personal experiences and those of his neighbours. While much of his commentary told of a bleak and challenging story of a neighbourhood left to 'melt down' and lifelong residents at risk of foreclosure, he also shared an optimistic view of North Corktown's role in reimagining the future for urban neighbourhoods (Cheek, 2020). This was a vision of equity and social justice delivered through community organising to achieve a common good. The key themes of Bill's tour focused on the history and dynamics of the neighbourhood, equitable development, and reimagining the future of our cities.

Neighbourhood history. From the tour's outset, Bill was keen to share examples of what he described as the North Corktown neighbourhood having 'melted down' as a result of 'our racist housing policy and highway policy' (Cheek, 2020). Bill described how, from the 1950s, these policies resulted in 'bifurcating all these communities' and effectively 'putting up an invisible forcefield around North Corktown', keeping people and developers away (Cheek, 2020). According to Bill, it was possible to see 'the whole dysfunctional story of Detroit played out here [in North Corktown], because it's one of the oldest neighbourhoods' (Cheek, 2020). For me as a researcher, this was one of the reasons I had been drawn to North Corktown and why I found myself increasingly intrigued by it the more I spoke with its residents. I, too, found the narratives and experiences of the North Corktown neighbourhood in many ways to express a microcosm of the past seventy years' of Detroit's history. Like Tricia's aspiration for North Corktown to offer 'a beacon of hope' (Talley, 2019a), Bill too saw the neighbourhood's potential to create a model for an alternative future of reimagined urban neighbourhoods.

Bill shared many stories of his neighbours, the majority of whom he described as 'lifelong Black Detroiters', who found themselves 'barely hanging on' or being forced out due to foreclosure (Cheek, 2020). Through sharing neighbours' stories, Bill provided an insight into the experience of people living in the North Corktown neighbourhood, affected by significant global crises in the first quarter of the 21st century, accounts that were not sufficiently represented in the literature review, nor through analysis of the many articles written about Detroit at this moment in time. These stories contribute to sharing the experience of what actually happens in the City and how people are actually living, rather than the mainstream accounts of Detroit that tend to be reported in the press (Marr, 2016). Some stories portrayed the invisibility that many residents spoke of, while others gave harrowing accounts of a tragic loss of life that can result when the social contract with the City breaks down. Bill spoke of 'this great old gal, Mrs Thompson', who has 'the only house

left on 17th [Street], south of Ash [Street] here' (Cheek, 2020). Bill described how 17th Street had lost seven or eight houses due to fire since he bought his house in 2012 (Cheek, 2020).

Bill spoke of another neighbour, 'Jim', who he described as 'an older Hispanic man who lives with his elderly brother' and 'has probably been in that house for eighty years' (Cheek, 2020). Bill described a couple of incidents in which 'gang members tried to burn down the house, because there were rumours they [Jim and his brother] tried to turn somebody in'. On another occasion, Bill explained that 'Jim' found a body dumped in their side yard, 'So, yeah, they've seen it all' (Cheek, 2020).

In another instance, Bill spoke of a tragic case of a man who called himself 'D', who 'had a life, and a wife, and a kid and a job', before 'he lost his job, started drinking, lost the family, and ended up homeless in Detroit' (Cheek, 2020). Bill described that 'D' was squatting in an abandoned house in North Corktown for a couple of years. During this time, they experienced some 'really bad winters' and Bill had helped him to buy kerosene to stay warm, and described how they would 'chit-chat' (Cheek, 2020). The house was bought by two developers as it 'cycled through the tax auction' and they kicked out 'D'. Unbeknownst to the developers, 'D' moved back into the house after they had closed it up. Tragically, 'D' ended up dying on the front porch, though no one was sure what from. 'And it's just sad, you know? A tragic end to this man who had a life and just fell on hard times, and there was just nothing there for him. So, you know, you kind of appreciate these stories, and I think you have to, being in Detroit' (Cheek, 2020).

Bill spoke of the loss of homes and community assets that North Corktown had endured over the years. Bill showed me vacant lots and photographs of the homes that had once stood there. He described a time, based on accounts from some of his older neighbours, when North Corktown had its own market, Western Market, as well as speakeasies and other businesses catering to the local community. He described the personalities, the politics and the activism of some of the older residents that had helped to shape the neighbourhood's character, such as 'Mrs Watkins', who he described as a Black

radical and former member of the Black Panther Party (Cheek, 2020). He spoke of the changes unfolding and those he believed are still likely to come through increased interest from developers, following Ford's purchase of the Train Station – a landmark so close Bill described being able to 'see it from my window' (Cheek, 2020).

Speaking with self-awareness of his own motivation for moving to the neighbourhood, Bill described himself 'as a White guy from the suburbs who grew up in the '60s and '70s in Oakland county' [suburbs of Detroit] and as someone who is 'always conscious of that privilege', which he described as 'defining my whole life' (Cheek, 2020). Bill described that he thought the likely reason he ended up moving to North Corktown was 'because of Obama and the reaction to Obama', marking a clear relationship and awareness of how his choices and actions directly related to the political moment. Bill described his experience growing up in the suburbs, where, 'you grow up with that casual racism and you're complicit in it to just get along with people' (Cheek, 2020):

On Obama's election, I got to tell you, I got a hell of an education. I looked at that moment as one of the most magnificent American moments we'll ever witness. And it was. And then to see half the country lose their minds just over their White privilege, to think that they saw a Black man rising to the pinnacle of success in America, literally the definition of the American dream; it was just devastating (Cheek, 2020).

Bill went on to describe how, as a result of his different political outlook from his colleagues, he was the victim of 'a terrible act of workplace hostility', which led to his decision to leave the suburbs 'instantly' and move to Detroit (Cheek, 2020). Recognising himself as a newcomer, Bill decided that his 'attitude coming to the City was, number one, do no harm. And number two, do some stuff for your neighbors. Try to be a member of the community' (Cheek, 2020). Through his involvement in the North Corktown Neighborhood Association, community organising and foreclosure-prevention work, it was evident that Bill

embodied these values through his actions. Bill spoke of other White newcomers to the City in recent years, including many young, White people, and the concept of 'New Detroit versus Old Detroit' (Cheek, 2020). Bill described how he felt the concept of 'New Detroit' was too dismissive of some of the newcomers who were contributing to the City in different ways. 'If you're not hurting the Black neighborhoods or the community or the City, if you're contributing to the tax base, you're spending money at local businesses. These are all good things', opining that 'as long as you are not being an asshole' and are contributing to the City, you have a right to be here (Cheek, 2020).

Equitable development. Like the other North Corktown residents interviewed, Bill too expressed his view that the interest in North Corktown has changed as a result of Ford's purchase of the Train Station. Bill described how it had started a 'panic' in North Corktown that he expressed as, 'Oh shit. Now everybody's coming' (Cheek, 2020). He explained how a few years prior, the City had undertaken market research and taken the position that 'there is not a lot of demand in North Corktown', a position that Bill and other members of the Neighborhood Association wholeheartedly rejected (Cheek, 2020) (McDowell, 2019) (Talley, 2019a). Bill described how, since he first came across the neighbourhood, he has 'intrinsically known' that 'this is solid gold real estate', which he believed was 'quite frankly, some of the most valuable real estate in the United States' (Cheek, 2020).

And so that has been my focus and drive is telling everybody in the neighbourhood, 'Developers are coming. Development's coming. Gentrification is coming. We need to get together and see if we can mitigate some of those negative consequences' (Cheek, 2020).

To Bill, the work that he and the Neighborhood Association were involved with in North Corktown was contributing to a larger movement to create fairer, more sustainable urban neighbourhoods across the globe. Bill shared a statement that he had written on his

wall a few weeks prior to our meeting that he believed had pertinence to my research, having read an early version of the abstract that I sent on his request. He described the statement as speaking ‘not only to the broader concept of what we’re doing in redeveloping urban neighbourhoods, but particularly what we’re doing here [in North Corktown]’: “ALL CITIES HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO ADDRESS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES OF OUR TIME: CLIMATE CHANGE, INCOME INEQUALITY, AND HOUSING AFFORDABILITY” (Cheek, 2020).

Throughout the tour, Bill shared ways that he had been trying to contribute to a more equitable and just future for North Corktown, including through his role on the Neighborhood Association, as well as individually as a local community organiser. He identified the purpose of the North Corktown Neighborhood Association as a ‘waypoint for developers’ to understand what the neighbourhood wants and to ‘fit within this scope’ (Cheek, 2020). Bill explained how friends working in development across Detroit expressed a view that North Corktown has ‘somewhat of a negative reputation among developers’. He believed this was based on being ‘known as kind of a neighborhood of activists, to an extent’, which he described as a combination of ‘hippy kids’ and ‘old radical folks’ who know what they want (Cheek, 2020). Despite their ‘somewhat negative’ reputation, Bill explained how their ability to organise and their clarity of purpose had enabled the Neighborhood Association to engage in meaningful discussions with Ford over their plans to redevelop the Train Station. Bill described a five-month process of negotiating a ‘trailblazing’ Community Benefits Agreement with Ford, that, among other benefits, would bring \$750,000 through a perpetual community fund in the area (Cheek, 2020). This was a pioneering result for the North Corktown Neighborhood Association at a time when the Community Benefits Ordinance process was just finding its feet within the America’s development sector.

The personal investment of Bill and many of his neighbours in contributing to the common good recalled concepts discussed in earlier chapters relating to community development, Black Radicalism and Detroit’s DIY spirit. In one instance, Bill described doing

foreclosure-prevention work door-to-door, during which he came across an older woman who had been a caregiver for the homeowner for many years before they died. Bill explained how the caregiver had 'just stayed and squatted', as the homeowner's family was not interested in the house, which had several thousand dollars of back-taxes owed. Bill and another neighbour 'just unilaterally went down and paid the taxes', describing how money was tight for him, too, but most importantly, 'we kept her in her house' (Cheek, 2020). This pooling of personal resources to pay back-taxes for a vulnerable resident demonstrates a relationship with Black Radical ideas of 'community nationalism' and microcosms of community-based economic support, similar to descriptions of Latinx communities in Southwest Detroit during the Financial Crisis (Carter-Alvizo, 2019b). This example demonstrates the North Corktown community prioritising and embodying the values of altruism and cooperation, while eschewing the neoliberal motivations of self-interest and profit.

In another story illustrating the tension between commercial development and the people being left behind through a crisis of inclusion, Bill expressed:

I think if you can capture these two houses [shown in photos below] , this is a conversation about equity. This is something that I've been trying to get people to focus on, is whatever we do here, we need to think about folks like this first. You know, these are people that are just barely hanging on. And if we can find a way – and one of the elements of this whole community benefits thinking that I've been trying to create some structure around – if we can get cash contributions from developers as part of the community benefits process that can go into façade improvements – you know, help people get a roof. A lot of this stuff's hard to navigate. But if we could create some kind of fund that we could lift people up with us, instead of just gentrifying them out, and maybe that can make the difference of them having a little more equity (Cheek, 2020).



Figures 227-249 (extract): Photographs of houses in disrepair, facing new private development (March 2020).

Reimagining urban neighbourhoods. The actions of the North Corktown residents and the language used during their walking tours demonstrated a collective belief and mission to create an alternative future for their neighbourhood and, in doing so, inspiring others to imagine what might be possible in their own neighbourhoods and cities. Through their impact to date, it was evident that these agents of change were making a positive contribution towards shaping a fairer, more inclusive urban neighbourhood in this corner of Detroit.

I've told a lot of people this and it's kind of my pie in the sky dream. We have an opportunity to create one of the greatest neighborhoods in America here. And I keep saying, 'Well, you know, if we're going to do this, why don't we just go for the brass ring, right?' And so that's my focus. I'm setting myself up for disappointment, to an extent. But I think that needs to be our goal, and it needs to be that we think about the least of us before we worry about the folks that have got it already, right? (Cheek, 2020).

Mike Dakoske – North Corktown, 10 March 2020

Ethnography 8



I moved in and the first night I was here, I started to look up North Corktown and I saw comments that were like, 'North Corktown is more like north hell.' And I was like, 'Whoa, what did I get into?' And it's been crickets ever since. So, it's been fantastic. It kind of made my life. It became my home (Dakoske, 2020).





Figures 250-269: Photographs directed by Mike Dakoske during neighbourhood tour of North Corktown (March 2020).

Observations from Mike Dakoske's North Corktown tour. I met Mike on a very windy afternoon in March 2020 in front of the Hostel Detroit building. Mike had been a Detroit resident for nearly 30 years and had lived in the North Corktown neighbourhood for the last nine years. Mike was softly spoken with a reflective demeanour, and spoke with great confidence, pride and humility about his neighbourhood and involvement in it. Mike was a proud resident of Spaulding Court, a housing development, which he informed me was built in 1902 by the contractor who built the sewer system in Detroit to house its workers. It was now owned by the not-for-profit Friends of Spaulding Court and run by a board of residents who all live within one mile of the building. Friends of Spaulding Court purchased the building for \$1,000 at auction in 2010, following a nuisance abatement claim by local residents (Sands, 2012). Mike was the first person to purchase a renovated unit there, the sale of which supported the refurbishment of subsequent units. Through our conversation, I came to learn that Spaulding Court was the centre of a wealth of community activity within this quiet neighbourhood, including hosting regular Detroit Soup (Build Institute, 2024) events, being a destination for film locations, such as an Eminem video and documentary film, *Generation Startup* (Generation Startup), and had recently become the focus of significant interest from real-estate speculators (Dakoske, 2020). During the tour, Mike shared stories of local history, its relationship to social action locally and globally, its unique character and the changes he predicted for the future. The main themes and priorities that Mike raised included the personality of the neighbourhood, its interconnectedness, and the pace of change.

Neighbourhood personality. Mike offered a vivid sense of the qualities and personality of the North Corktown neighbourhood, from both the very personal meanings it held for him to its symbiotic relationship with global social movements. Mike gave an account of what led him to move to the neighbourhood, following the death of his father. He responded to an advertisement in the unlikely source of online shopping website, Craigslist and, following a two to three hour conversation with the founder of Friends of Spaulding

Court where he came to understand what the not-for-profit was looking to do, said ‘I’ll take it’ (Dakoske, 2020).

In opposition to the social media post he read his first night living there, ‘North Corktown is more like north hell’, he described having experienced the exact opposite, ‘it kind of made my life. It became my home’ (Dakoske, 2020). On several occasions, Mike described the neighbourhood as being ‘like crickets’, which he fondly explained as being quiet and peaceful, and at one point he asked that we stop to appreciate the silence (Dakoske, 2020). About five years into living at Spaulding Court, money was tight, and Mike considered moving out. He relayed how his neighbours ‘kind of rejected my move’, which spurred him to bring in roommates to help financially, ‘at that point, it became my home’ (Dakoske, 2020).



Figures 250-269 (extract): Photograph of Spaulding Court (March 2020).

Mike described how the neighbourhood had reached a pivotal point around 2010 when three converging events took place, which cemented the socially conscious, caring, creative and activist-infused neighbourhood I recognised from other residents’ interviews. These were: the presence of the US Social Forum, the beginning of Hostel Detroit¹¹⁴, located behind Spaulding Court, and the arrival of new residents that Mike described as ‘a really quality-type of person’ that was ‘very smart, very unique, very caring and very well-intentioned’, with ‘lots of ideas’ (Dakoske, 2020). He spoke of a number of fascinations with

¹¹⁴ Hostel Detroit provides accommodation with the mission to ‘educate travelers about the past, present, and future of the city of Detroit ...and to foster creativity and global understanding of an often misunderstood city’ (Hostel Detroit).

North Corktown that drew people in from all over the world, bringing a range of ideas, sparking creativity, drawing interest, funding and volunteers into this small, quiet neighbourhood, on the edge of Downtown.

The US Social Forum coming to North Corktown in 2010 coincided with the purchase of Spaulding Court and a wider growing social movement calling for change, following the Financial Crisis. The Forum set up a 'tent city', with Spaulding Court as its hub. Mike described how 'everyone camped out for that summer' and how, at the same time, the people who went on to set up Hostel Detroit identified the building as their future base. The US Social Forum was established in 2001 to connect to a global movement aiming to 'hold back the neoliberal onslaught' with the driving vision that 'another world is possible' (US Social Forum, 2016). This vision echoed David Graeber's (2014) call to action and his founding role in the Occupy movement. Hostel Detroit, established in 2011, outlines its mission as a 'catalyst for educational and cultural exchange between Detroit and the global community'. The hostel was situated in the centre of the neighbourhood, behind Spaulding Court, and has attracted over 10,000 travellers from more than seventy countries to this corner of Detroit (Hostel Detroit). Mike explained of the City, 'Detroit's always been a destination for people. It's held a certain allure through the years' (Dakoske, 2020).

With thousands of global visitors coming through the Hostel, Mike described how even small, quirky neighbourhood attractions, such as the Monumental Kitty sculpture (Atlas Obscura, 2022), created by Jerome Ferretti, have ended up being photographed by tourists 'from all over the world' (Dakoske, 2020). Mike also identified Nancy Whiskey's Bar, which he described as 'the greatest corner bar in the world', and as somewhere that attracts people from as far afield as the suburbs, saying: even 'the people that don't come to Detroit, still come to Nancy Whiskey's' (Dakoske, 2020). Considering the bar was one of few non-residential amenities in this quiet neighbourhood, one could imagine it as a convergence point, drawing people in, and playing a role in shaping neighbourhood character.



Figures 270, 271, 272: Left: Hostel Detroit (Hostel Detroit). Middle: Monumental Kitty (Atlas Obscura). Right: Nancy Whiskey's Bar (November 2019).

Finally, the arrival of new residents between 2000 and 2010, brimming with ideas, compassion and a desire to help 'build things that people want' in the neighbourhood, had contributed greatly to the personality of the neighbourhood, according to Mike (Dakoske, 2020). Mike gave examples of this 'quality type of person', including Jeff Klein, Jon Koller, Amy Kaherl and Kristyn Koth, all of whom, with the exception of Jon Koller, were interviewed for this research. Mike described Jeff's work to get Monumental Kitty rebuilt, to create Fish [Trout] Park and to establish a local gardening club, Jon's establishment of the Friends of Spaulding Court, Amy's founding of Detroit Soup, and Kristyn's entrepreneurialism in establishing the Pink Flamingo food truck. All of these were young people at the time, and from interviews expressed motivations that seemingly aligned with the a vision for North Corktown that 'another world is possible' (US Social Forum, 2016, p. 1).



Figures 273, 274, 275: Left: Fish Park. Middle: Pink Flamingo (both March 2020). Right: Soup at Spaulding initiative (Facebook, 2018).

Interconnectedness. While Mike did not directly use the term 'interconnectedness', it was a concept I kept returning to later, when reflecting on our conversation. This concept was alluded to in the relationships and overlap between residents involved in community

activity in North Corktown, including many of the people I interviewed. It also related to an interconnectedness between what was taking place within North Corktown, its part in a loosely structured movement within Detroit, and its relationship to national and global movements coming to the forefront from 2010 onwards. Unlike the other themes discussed in this chapter, this concept of interconnectedness was primarily based on my own observations of the discussion with Mike Dakoske, as well as similar ideas that emerged in conversation with other resident-interviewees.

I came to appreciate how much the various individuals I had interviewed in North Corktown – and those referenced in the interviews – were working together either directly or in supporting similar causes. I have pondered how the interweaving facets of this neighbourhood's history and relationship with social justice has left an indelible mark on the quiet, unassuming North Corktown. For Mike, it seemed that the pivotal point around 2010 had been a defining moment in shaping the values of a neighbourhood in transition, at least in part as a response to the impact of the Financial Crisis two years earlier. It was at this juncture that through interconnected activity, activists came together to rethink what was possible in this corner of Detroit through the convergence of new initiatives, including the US Social Forum, Hostel Detroit, Detroit Soup and Friends of Spaulding Court.

What initially, during the early walking tours, appeared as separate contributions by apparently disparate local activists, started to take shape by these final two walking tours, revealing a collaboration of shared efforts resulting in a network that was more than the sum of its parts, described by some of the residents interviewed as a brewing social movement. This was the essence of strong social capital to create a momentum of change within a neighbourhood, leading to positive and tangible local impact. There were two key ingredients that residents identified as being found in Detroit that were instrumental in this movement taking shape: a 'hustle' mentality and collective spirit. This North Corktown case study demonstrated the essence of a favourite expression amongst Detroiters, 'Detroit hustles harder', defined by one Southwest resident as an 'industrious type of attitude', 'with people

out there, just making it happen' (Suarez, 2020). Another Southwest Detroiter, Alondra Carter-Alvizo spoke of Detroit's 'collective' spirit that, when paired with its ability to 'hustle harder', leads to greater impact and involvement, 'because everyone has a stake in it' (Carter-Alvizo, 2019a). In related examples, residents used their initiative and personal connections for community benefit. This included Mike securing food donations from local restaurants for the Soup at Spaulding initiative through his position as a chef, local artist 'Carl' establishing one of the early community gardens and renovating Mike's home at Spaulding Court, and Jeff Klein utilising local knowledge and his job at the Parks Service to ensure the redevelopment of Nagel Park met local needs. In other example, the Friends of Spaulding Court took part in a programme with the Build Institute, run by April Jones (interviewed for the research) to build a more sustainable model of Soup at Spaulding, founded as Detroit Soup by Amy Kaherl (interviewed) and now running Global Soup, which includes an initiative in London.

Conversations with Mike built on my reading from the literature review to understand from a real-life neighbourhood case study, the relationship between the national and global social movements, such as the US Social Forum's relationship to Occupy and Black Lives Matter, with the localised community action taking place in North Corktown. This reminded me of Jeff Klein's view that people outside of the neighbourhood may think, 'Well, nothing's happening there, or nobody lives there' (Klein, 2020), when in fact if you spend time in the area, you begin to see what is really taking place below the surface (Marr, 2016). Whether describing the tragedy of two fires in the neighbourhood in the past year or the positive relations between diverse residents, Mike explained, 'so that's just kind of what happens back here' (Dakoske, 2020), in recognition of a neighbourhood operating under-the-radar. Yet who would have thought that such a quiet, unassuming neighbourhood – unknown even to many Detroiters and less than two miles from Downtown – was a laboratory testing alternative ways of living with lessons to be learned by cities across the globe?

Pace of change. Mike spoke of a desire for a ‘very slow change’, welcoming that change was coming, but hoping that it could be organic. He contrasted this with the desires of many recent newcomers, whom he described as wanting ‘fast change’. Mike spoke of a sense of acceleration, with Ford’s recent purchase of the Train Station creating an ‘onslaught’, with the area now ‘on people’s radar’ and speculators ‘coming by the building [Spaulding Court] every day, asking us if it’s for sale’ (Dakoske, 2020).

Mike recounted experiences of sitting with his neighbours on the front stoops of Spaulding Court and people in cars pulling up and shouting, ‘Hey, who owns this? You want to sell it?’. Mike described the classic resident response as, ‘Get out of here!’, before laughing at the absurdity of the situation. Mike described how the City, too, was starting to treat the area differently, aware of the impending commercial interest, including repaving the road last year and starting to issue tickets to residents to take care of building issues that had been ignored for years. Some residents were even starting to address repairs and other issues in anticipation of this change, with Mike stating, ‘everyone’s putting on their best clothes [laughter], because change-is-a-coming’ (Dakoske, 2020).

Mike’s description of the ‘onslaught’ of speculators provided a personal perspective on media reports highlighting a significant increase of homes being purchased by developers in recent years, ‘especially heavily minority neighborhoods’ in Rust Belt cities like Detroit (*The Washington Post*, 2022). Research undertaken by *The Washington Post* in 2022 found that 19% of homes purchased in Detroit in 2021 were bought by investors, compared to an average of 11% in a ‘typical metro’ area, such as New York, or 7% in Chicago (*The Washington Post*). The research also found that 30% of home sales in majority-Black neighbourhoods were to investors, compared to 12% in other areas of Detroit (*The Washington Post*).

Mike gave an example of an observation, which for him, expressed the pace of change:

So, my first year here I saw one person go by on a bike. And my second summer there was 10 people on a bike. And then the next summer, there was 50 people on a bike. And then the next summer, a Slow Roll¹¹⁵ came by with 300 people. And now, it's just like women jogging with baby carriers and everything. I've watched it *chook chook chook*, ramp up (Dakoske, 2020).

Mike took me past the new so-called 'affordable' Oakland Housing development on the edge of the neighbourhood. He regarded it as the 'first of the new for me', explaining it as the first new housing he had seen built in his time in the neighbourhood, and 'quite a big deal' locally (Dakoske, 2020). Mike explained that it was technically affordable at \$300,000 per home, or at least 'affordable to someone' (Dakoske, 2020). Mike pointed out the pheasant mural, also highlighted by Tricia Talley (2019b) and Will McDowell (2019) on their tours. Unlike the other two who were full of exuberance for the mural, Mike said that while he really liked it, he had observed that there were a lot of 'older residents' that did not, with some feeling resentment for it, as they felt it represented the 'new Corktown', which they did not support (Dakoske, 2020), recalling previous discussions of the concept of 'New Detroit'.



Figure 276: The 'pheasant mural', North Corktown (November 2019).

¹¹⁵ According to its Facebook page, 'Slow Roll is far more than just a bike ride, in its 7th year, this unique 501c3 nonprofit brings together thousands of people from all over the region during 25 weekly bike rides a year to discover more about our city and each other' (Facebook).

Mike spoke with pride at having ‘a very strong community group’ in the the North Corktown Neighborhood Association, which he simply described as ‘wonderful’ (Dakoske, 2020). He explained his perception that the Association has been able to ‘shape some of the conversation’ and expressed that ‘it does have a voice’, while acknowledging that it was not perfect. He gave positive examples of how the Association had secured grants from housing developers and provided assistance to residents. Mike expressed some frustration at other examples of approval for commercial premises in the neighbourhood, against which the residents had little to no influence. The two examples Mike provided were the MotorCity Casino and Liberty cannabis dispensary. Like Jeff Klein (2020), Mike spoke about how pleased he was that the trees were almost tall enough to block his view of the casino, expressing ‘only two more years, then it [his view of it] will be gone. That is the hope!’ (Dakoske, 2020). Mike also spoke of the recent addition of Liberty cannabis dispensary on the edge of the neighbourhood, which the community tried unsuccessfully to prevent. Mike explained how, through zoning, this area was meant to be a ‘strong family neighbourhood’, suggesting that application for a cannabis dispensary managed to ‘slip through right at the end’ (Dakoske, 2020).

Mike chose to end the tour back at his clearly beloved Spaulding Court. He spoke with the greatest enthusiasm I had heard yet from him about plans to renovate the remaining units and enliven the whole courtyard area with activities and events, including more Soup events, music festivals and other opportunities to bring people together. As a finishing touch, Mike chose to have his photograph taken sitting on the stoop of his townhouse, complete with a contented smile expressing his deep love for his home and community.



Figures 250-269 (extract): Photograph of Mike sitting on a front stoop at Spaulding Court (March 2020).

Kristyn Koth – North Corktown, 11 March 2020

Ethnography 9



I think things have been done differently in Detroit from the get-go. I don't think it's an opportunity to do something different. I think it's always been something different (Koth, 2020).



Figures 277-305: Photographs directed by Kristyn Koth during neighbourhood tour of North Corktown (March 2020).



Observations from Kristyn Koth's Corktown tour. I met Kristyn on a bright afternoon in early March 2020 at a diner on the 'old Corktown' side of the I-75 freeway, as Kristyn referred to it. Kristyn moved to the Corktown neighbourhood – which she calls the two parts of 'old Corktown' and 'North Corktown' together – around 2000. Kristyn was a welder and mother of two girls. She explained to me that she was at a point of change in her life and looking for somewhere she could do her work and be able to support herself and her daughters. This was the motivation for moving to North Corktown and specifically to the house and workshop where they now live. It was clear throughout the tour that Kristyn knew the area and her neighbours, particularly the independent businesses, very well. There was a visible mutual respect for one another, what they were trying to achieve, and how their work contributed to a local, circular economy centred on the wider Corktown neighbourhood. During the tour, Kristyn demonstrated a particular interest in the themes of the history of places, what constitutes a neighbourhood, the hyper-local economy, including local reuse of materials, and finding creative ways to address the local food desert.

History of places. Kristyn was keen to show me the numerous local businesses and amenities that have had a long history in the wider Corktown area, mainly situated on the 'old Corktown' side of the I-75 freeway. She explained how 'some of the places that to me are important are the ones that have been here and have been developed-out through generations and also through people migrating here' (Koth, 2020). The first building that Kristyn took me to see was the large premises of the Gaelic League on Michigan Avenue, the main thoroughfare that runs through Corktown. Kristyn spoke of its connection to Irish immigrants who began moving to the neighbourhood after the Great Irish Potato Famine of the 1840s (Koth, 2020). The neighbourhood was named after County Cork in Ireland, and by the early 1850s, over half of its residents originated from Ireland (Detroit Historical Society, 2022). Kristyn spoke of these immigrants being 'some of the first people' to arrive in the area when it was being 'built-out as a place to live and find jobs' (Koth, 2020). She described how, even now, Irish culture still abounded in the neighbourhood and referenced a 'big St

Patrick's Day parade this Sunday that goes all along Michigan Avenue', an annual neighbourhood event attracting people from across Detroit and further afield (Koth, 2020). Kristyn spoke of the importance of places like the Gaelic League in remembering the area's history, while sustaining its identity and enabling local networks. Kristyn expressed, 'it's places like that that are important that you don't lose. Those are the things that I'm like, "If that goes, man, that's like a part of the puzzle piece missing out of the grandiose puzzle"' (Koth, 2020).



Figures 277-305 (extract): Left: Photograph of Gaelic League building. Right: Detroit Spring (March 2020).

It was not only the cultural amenities that Kristyn spoke of as being integral to the fabric of Corktown today and its history as Detroit's oldest neighbourhood. To Kristyn, independent businesses and industrial suppliers were also a key component of the neighbourhood. Kristyn spoke specifically of two local businesses, Detroit Spring and the former Firemen Bar, both of which had 'been there forever' (Koth, 2020). Kristyn took me to see Detroit Spring, a large brick industrial building on Michigan Avenue, sandwiched between recently renovated bright new restaurants, a visible sign of the significant 'rehab', as Kristyn termed it, that was taking place in 'old Corktown' (Koth, 2020). Detroit Spring made 'huge springs for trucks' and inside, you can see 'these great machines' (Koth, 2020). Kristyn described that Detroit Spring had 'been there for years' and, like the Gaelic League, she said, somewhat hopefully, 'it's part of the whole thing that some of this stuff doesn't change' (Koth, 2020). On the other hand, Kristyn referred to the Firemen Bar, which she

described as ‘one of those places that we’ve had here for so many years, then suddenly it’s gone’ (Koth, 2020). A local fireman had owned it and ‘everyone used to go there’, and as a result, everyone knew the fire department (Koth, 2020). Kristyn viewed the Firemen Bar as ‘part of that feeling that you get from getting to know people that do work in your area, besides live, that can help an area to be safe’ (Koth, 2020). Kristyn explained that the Firemen Bar had closed down after the fireman-owner had passed away, resulting in the personal connection between the fire department and community members being lost.

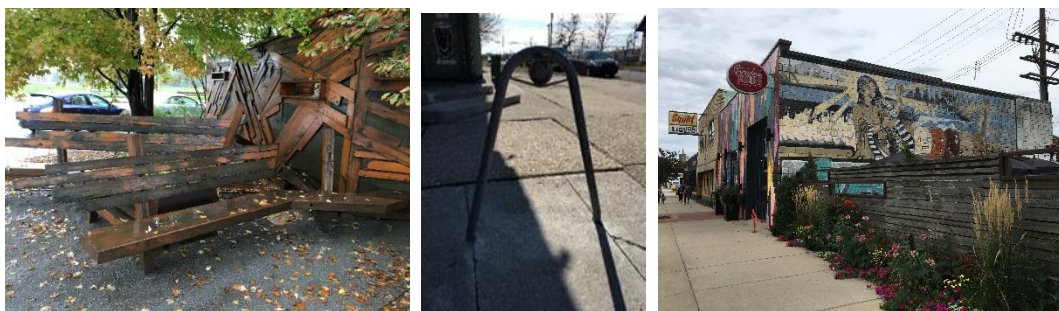


Figures 277-305 (extract): Photograph of Kristyn's workshop (March 2020).

As a continuation of Kristyn's interest in the history of places, she described how even her own building and workshop had a story to tell over generations. It previously had an industrial use, having been built by the Vernor family, who created and produced the iconic Detroit ginger ale, Vernor's. The daughter of the company founder had attempted to do an 'off-shoot' cola product from this building, although the business never took off. Instead, it was sold to a company that made rags for the automotive industry before changing hands again to an attorney who rented it out as a music studio. So, in a very Detroit narrative, the building had supported both the automotive and music industries, bookended on either side by two pioneering women, working to develop their own self-sustaining businesses and make it on their own.

What constitutes a neighbourhood? Unlike the other five North Corktown residents, Kristyn's tour incorporated both sides of the freeway: 'North Corktown' and 'old Corktown' (Koth, 2020). She explained how the 'whole area was originally all Corktown' until 'it got severed by the freeway', however this did not affect Kristyn's perception of what constituted her neighbourhood, which she felt strongly included 'for sure, the whole of Corktown' (Koth, 2020). Kristyn described how the businesses on the 'old Corktown' side were also vital as they supported her to 'stay in the area' and 'support myself' (Koth, 2020). Kristyn was undeterred by the physical divide of the freeway, stating, 'even though they might divide North Corktown, this [old Corktown] is where the people that provide me, you know, to be able to do my business. And there's a lot of places in here that I've helped, you know, somehow one way or another' (Koth, 2020). Kristyn's description of supporting one another builds on ideas discussed earlier of the North Corktown neighbourhood providing pockets of alternative economic models to the mainstream neoliberal capitalist model – in this instance, preferring systems of mutual aid and reciprocity within a hyper-local economy.

Hyper-local economy. In Kristyn's account of the fundamental role of local businesses, she took me to visit a number of businesses, mainly in 'old Corktown', where she had proudly provided metalworks as part of local commissions. Many of these were visibly on display as indicators of Kristyn's part within the fabric of the neighbourhood, acting both to beautify and to support some of the practical functions underpinning Corktown businesses.



Figures 277-305 (extract): Photographs of some of Kristyn's Corktown commissions. Left: (November 2019). Middle and right: (March 2020).

Kristyn spoke often on the tour about the use and reuse of materials within the local neighbourhood. In my own experience within the development and housing sector, this has come to be known as a 'circular economy', defined as:

A systemic approach to economic development designed to benefit businesses, society, and the environment. In contrast to the 'take-make-waste' linear model, a circular economy is regenerative by design and aims to gradually decouple growth from the consumption of finite resources (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017).

For Kristyn, however, this did not appear to be part of a theoretical framework or obligation placed on her by the City, but rather an intrinsic and fundamental part of a well-functioning hyper-local economy with micro-businesses supporting one another.

Throughout the conversation, examples continued to emerge of where Kristyn gave equipment to another small businessowner or where someone else had reached out to her, without expecting anything in return. As opposed to the intention of making a profit off of one another as part and parcel of 'consumerist, paternalist' model of capitalism (Pabst, 2010), Kristyn and other micro- and small-businessowners in Corktown and North Corktown seemed to be applying a system of mutual exchange, in which people assisted one another towards a shared purpose, based on reciprocity (Pabst, p. 67). Through a hyper-local economic model, these businesses were developing their own means of helping one another through the provision of free goods and services, while also reducing local waste of materials and equipment. Three specific examples were raised during Kristyn's tour. These included Kristyn giving her old trailer to 'Garden Greg', as she called him (Greg Willerer from Brother Nature Farm), to use as a chicken coop, a local artist donating her 'recycled doors' artwork to Kristyn for use at the Pink Flamingo seating area, and Kristyn's reference to a local developer donating a shipping container for her to use for her social enterprise (Koth, 2020). Other examples of this system of exchange came to light during walking tours and

interviews with other North Corktown residents. These included Greg Willerer giving his truck to Mike Dakoske, Mike using his position as chef at a local restaurant to access free food donations for the Detroit Soup initiative, and, as a skills swap, Tricia Talley taking photographs for Friends of Spaulding Court at community events.

Kristyn spoke humbly and with self-awareness of her motivation for the work that she does and the role she plays within her neighbourhood. 'I've been a caring person all my life, but I had really learned that from Detroit on how to not have your initiative be money-driven or personally driven, but to do it for the betterment of things. I had to learn that from the people of Detroit. So that's kind of the stuff that's taught me how to be, I don't know, a giver rather than a taker' (Koth, 2020).

Food. Kristyn spoke of her drivers for establishing the Pink Flamingo food truck, a distinctive silver Airstream trailer selling healthy and affordable food to the local community. When she moved into the area, people described it as a 'food desert'. 'Trust me, there was no grocery stores', Kristyn said definitively (Koth, 2020). Unlike in other cities, where you have 'mom and pop places' and grocery stores on every corner, in North Corktown, 'you wouldn't be able to find anything right in this area. And if you do, it's potato chips at the gas station or a hotdog that's been spinning on a wheel for a couple of years' (Koth, 2020).

Kristyn described how she was determined to use her creativity 'in coming up with a way that people can get food that's better for them. To bring something better to the area. Bottom line' (Koth, 2020). In line with her love of repurposing disused objects, she got hold of the old Airstream, and subsequently opened the Pink Flamingo, employing a local chef to offer healthy and affordable food and a 'little gathering area for everybody in the neighborhood' (Koth, 2020). Kristyn made use of dumped logs and recycled tractor tires to create outdoor seating and a play area, which she described as 'keeping with just nature and simple stuff' (Koth, 2020). The painted door art installations provided by a local artist became a feature of the space, with the phrase 'I am Detroit' painted on them. Kristyn expressed how well used the space has become, 'Man, I'm telling you, in the summer, the kids come, and

they jump from log to log and they love it. A parent can sit there and enjoy their food and not one worry because the children are right here' (Koth, 2020).



Figures 277-305 (extract): Left: Photographs of Pink Flamingo Airstream. Right: Artwork and seating area (March 2020).

Thematic Analysis

During the tours, resident guides spoke openly about issues of interest and relevance to them, both within their neighbourhoods and in the wider world. As we walked, passing by buildings, parks and vacant lots, fleeting sights of wildlife and intermittent sounds of near-silence and freeway traffic appeared to trigger particular memories and experiences for individuals, sparking stories that they chose to share with me as researcher, as part of their spontaneously curated and unique tour of their neighbourhood.

Twenty three different key themes emerged during conversation while on the walking tours with residents. Some echoed the key themes emerging from the literature review, such as land use, housing and water, while others were new themes locally specific to individual neighbourhoods, such as neighbourhood personality and pace of change. Residents discussed themes of personal importance, illustrated through stories of themselves and their neighbours coming together over common interests and concerns, spanning time from insights into the history of the neighbourhoods to aspirations for their reimagined futures.

Within the neighbourhood of Southwest Detroit, there was a higher prevalence of common themes raised by multiple residents, compared to North Corktown, where there was a broader range of themes raised individually by residents. Two themes were raised by multiple residents from across both neighbourhoods: food and opportunity.

Food: 'Food' was a common topic of interest, discussed by residents leading walking tours, as well as pertaining to places I was taken to see and experience in both neighbourhoods (Carter-Alvizo, 2019b) (Koth, 2020) (Nethercott, 2020) (Shields, 2020). Residents leading the Southwest walking tours were particularly interested in the role of food within their communities and neighbourhood. This included two of three residents choosing a food establishment as our meeting point and all three Southwest residents taking me to visit the Mexican supermarket, Honeybee, as an important asset, both functionally and culturally in the neighbourhood. Two residents took me into a food establishment to experience

‘authentic’ cuisine as they described it (Carter-Alvizo, 2019b) (Nethercott, 2020) with passionate discussions about the differences between authentic Mexican food, such as one’s grandmother’s home cooking, versus inauthentic Mexican food for outside visitors.

In both Southwest and North Corktown, restaurants and bars were used as talking points in describing the history of the neighbourhoods, while also how the place has and is transitioning over time, illustrating the demographic, cultural and socio-economic changes as they unfold. In Southwest, a visit to Honeybee Supermarket sparked a conversation about changes to food products stocked over time in response to changing demographics, while a discussion of the new Bagley Central Bar elicited stories of how the different businesses that had occupied that space over time reflected a changing clientele and their aspirations (Nethercott, 2020) (Shields, 2020). A vacant lot also acted as a catalyst for one younger, relative newcomer to Southwest who spoke with excitement as they daydreamed about the site perhaps one day becoming a lively beer garden (Shields, 2020).

In North Corktown, the former Firemen Bar was spoken about as a place that illustrated how the area had changed over time, as somewhere that had historically brought the community together and also encouraged people to get to know their local firefighters, but with its closure, this aspect of the community network had been lost (Koth, 2020). However, Nancy Whiskey’s Bar was spoken about by all North Corktown resident-participants with fondness and pride as somewhere that continues to bring different people from the neighbourhood together. Food as a convener of community was also discussed in relation to the Detroit Soup initiative at Spaulding Court (Dakoske, 2020) and the Pink Flamingo food truck (Dakoske, 2020) (Klein, 2020) (Koth, 2020) (McDowell, 2019). In contrast to the abundance of conversations about food and visits to food purveyors while on the Southwest tours, North Corktown tours elicited very different discussions of food. Here, the topic of North Corktown as a ‘food desert’ was discussed, including as a catalyst for why some of the resident-participants had come to the neighbourhood and become involved in urban farming (Klein, 2020) (Willerer, 2020) and establishing food initiatives (Koth, 2020).



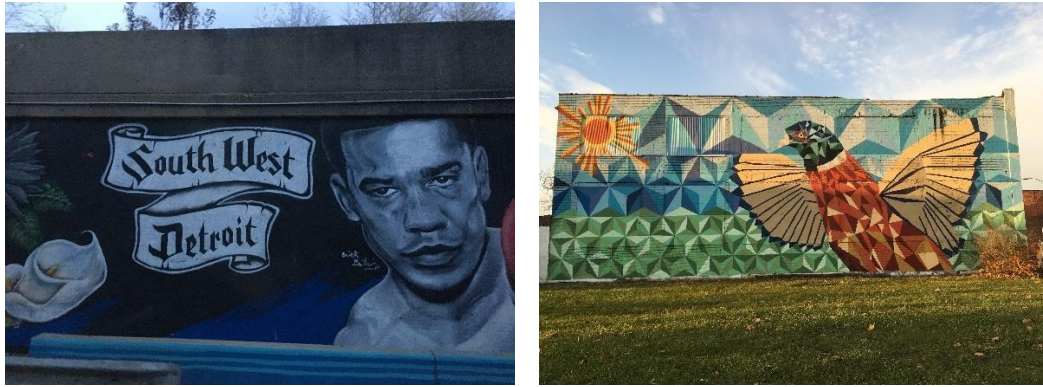
Figures 306-309: Top row, left: Fast food shop, Southwest. Right: Honeybee Market, Southwest (both November 2019). Bottom row, left: Nancy Whiskey's Bar, North Corktown (November 2019). Right: Brother Nature Farm, North Corktown (March 2020).

Opportunity: The theme of 'opportunity' arose in conversations with residents from both North Corktown and Southwest neighbourhoods on multiple occasions. It was a main point of discussion amongst two residents, one from each of the neighbourhoods, both younger residents who were relative newcomers to Detroit and both exhibiting passion and enthusiasm for being part of the positive change happening in the City (McDowell, 2019) (Shields, 2020). Each of them spoke about their respective neighbourhood with affection, and coincidentally, they had each had a prior connection to the place, having worked in the neighbourhood for non-profit organisations before moving there, cited by both as a driver for selecting that location. While there were some similarities in their motivations for moving to their respective neighbourhoods and involvement in community action, their descriptions of 'opportunity' as it pertained to their neighbourhoods, were fairly different. One spoke in positive terms about Detroit as 'an opportunity zone', demonstrating a culture of taking risks, but also demonstrating a shared sense of responsibility for making sure that in the face of change, 'we take everyone with us' (Shields, 2020). While the other spoke about recognising

the unique opportunity at this moment in time to come to Detroit and add value to the City and specifically to the neighbourhood of North Corktown, pointing to examples where they had helped to shape community-led solutions to local challenges of land use (McDowell, 2019).

Five other themes were raised by multiple residents: murals, business, pace of change, local sensitivity/awareness and inclusive/equitable development. However in all of these instances, they were unique to one of the two neighbourhoods.

Murals: The theme of ‘murals’ was discussed by two residents during the walking tours (Carter-Alvizo, 2019b) (Nethercott, 2020), both from the Southwest Neighbourhood where murals were prevalent. For one of the residents, murals were clearly of such meaning to them that they were represented in almost half of their photographs. Both residents spoke of the local significance of murals as part of the area’s rich Mexican cultural heritage and as important signifiers of this, similar to how the same two residents had described the role of food locally (Carter-Alvizo, 2019b) (Nethercott, 2020). While one resident focused much of their commentary on the personal stories behind the murals, including their own involvement in helping to create the murals, as well as how individuals had come to be commemorated (Carter-Alvizo, 2019b), the other resident’s commentary was mainly interested in the role that murals played in the neighbourhood conversation taking place about its shifting identity and culture in time and space (Nethercott, 2020). Murals did not arise as a significant theme of discussion amongst North Corktown residents, where there were evidently far fewer murals than in the Southwest neighbourhood. However, three residents choose to incorporate a visit to the pheasant mural in a prominent location that can be viewed from the expressway when you first enter North Corktown, and it was described with pride as giving a sense of identity to the neighbourhood. One of the residents selected it as the background to their portrait (Talley, 2019b).



Figures 310 and 311: Left: Southwest mural. Right: North Corktown mural (both November 2019).

Business: The theme of ‘business’ was discussed by all three Southwest residents during their walking tours, but was not raised as a significant theme by the North Corktown residents. Given the almost-exclusively residential identity of North Corktown with only a few operational businesses, this was not surprising. Despite the relative few businesses in North Corktown, references to those specific businesses came up frequently in conversation, particularly Nancy Whiskey’s, which was discussed by all North Corktown resident-participants with great fondness and pride. All three Southwest residents described local businesses as a key feature of the neighbourhood, showcasing and sustaining its cultural identity and supporting the key functions of the communities they served. They spoke of a unique interweaving of business and community within the predominantly Latinx neighbourhood (Carter-Alvizo, 2019b) (Nethercott, 2020) (Shields, 2020). One resident spoke of the important role of local business-owners acting as lender to members of the community, particularly after the Financial Crisis (Carter-Alvizo, 2019b), while another spoke of the interrelationship between food and business providing insights into the changing dynamics of the neighbourhood (Nethercott, 2020).

Local sensitivity/awareness: ‘Local sensitivity’ or ‘awareness’ in the choice of materials for new developments was raised by multiple residents from North Corktown during the walking tours. One resident (Klein, 2020) questioned the local appropriateness of

the materials used in some of the new homes designed by Christian Hurttienne Architects, observing:

If you look at the material on that [pointing to a new home], it's this new finish that's kind of big now, but it's like wood that's burnt. I've seen more houses burnt in this neighborhood in the last 20 years than I've ever seen. In fact, maybe I've seen all the houses I've seen burn, and I've seen some big fires in this neighbourhood. So, again, it's an interesting choice of material (Klein, 2020).

This reflection by a North Corktown resident in a neighbourhood where there have been many devastating house fires points to a perceived lack of awareness or sensitivity from developers to the experience of residents and the neighbourhood's history. During walking tours, four North Corktown guides spoke of witnessing or experiencing house fires (Cheek, 2020) (Dakoske, 2020) (Klein, 2020) (Koth, 2020), demonstrating their prevalence and significance for this community. This points back to one of the central research themes: the absence of residents' voices in the literature on regeneration and urban change. Without engaging in dialogue with established residents, developers risk making insensitive or even detrimental choices, including selection of materials, location and relationship with the existing landscape. The impact of this can create distrust and trigger emotional responses, as well as produce a range of avoidable counteractions, such as opposition to planning permission for future development, antagonism or even vandalism.

Through my professional experience as a youth and community worker in the late-1990s on the Gorbals Estate in Glasgow, Scotland, I witnessed a similar lack of awareness of residents' lived experience resulting in insensitive choices on the part of developers. Over time, this appeared to stoke antagonism between the existing population of Glasgow City Council tenants, and the more affluent, new homeowners coming into the area. Developers and the Council were keen to rebrand the much-maligned Gorbals Estate, symbolised in the

minds of many Britons through photographer Nick Hedges' black-and-white photos of the 'Gorbals slums' of the 1970s (Nick Hedges Photography), seen in Figure 312 below.



Figures 312 and 313: Left, 'Children playing in a patch of Gorbals wasteland 1970' (Nick Hedges Photography). Right: 'The Attendants' (Geograph).

Glasgow City Council incentivised public art within the development contract, resulting in several installations in the 'New Gorbals' neighbourhood. Artworks, such as 'The Attendants' (Figure 313), were suspended sculptural figures, hanging from the facades of the new tenement blocks. Several residents expressed their dislike of the sculptures, which some found too evocative of the instances of Gorbals residents who had committed suicide by jumping from the estate's iconic, large tower blocks. Like the architect Hurtienne's choice of a burnt wood material in modern North Corktown, the Gorbals developer's understanding of the lived experience of residents, knowledge of the area's history and opportunity for resident input could have dramatically changed the community response and resulted in more appropriate choices being made for that location.

This recalled North Corktown resident Jeff Klein's earlier example of how his own lack of local awareness and dialogue with neighbours, when as a newcomer, he created a new pocket park for the community, which had inadvertently resulted in the loss of a makeshift baseball pitch for local young people (Klein, 2020). Klein's reflection on the narrow knowledge of 'what happens in a place while you're in that place' and 'nothing to the volume of things that happen in that space over the course of time' (Klein, 2020), referring back to

Hirsch and Stewart's (2005) concept of 'historocity', of different, parallel versions of the past, present and future existing simultaneously and affecting the course on which each one runs.

Pace of change: Two residents, both from North Corktown (Dakoske, 2020) (Klein, 2020), spoke about the 'pace of change'/'change over time' in their neighbourhood as a significant theme. Long-time resident, Jeff Klein (2020) described the neighbourhood as 'pretty much the same over the last twenty years', expressing some frustration and exhaustion for the many years of the City's lack of interest in the area and burden placed on residents to maintain basic services. Then in a twist of fate suggesting a message of 'careful what you wish for', described how suddenly, there had been a swift transition, with the area soon becoming 'a very different place' (Klein, 2020). While Mike Dakoske (2020) described his desire for 'very slow' and 'organic' change. After a seemingly slow start to development, Dakoske too described a sudden sense of acceleration and an 'onslaught' of speculators, spurred on by Ford's purchase of the Train Station (Dakoske, 2020).

Visiting back 4 years later in June 2024, on a trip that coincided with the opening of the renovated Michigan Central Train Station, I found it fascinating to see the sense of prophecy being realised in North Corktown with new developments having been quickly erected in many of the sites that had previously stood as unclaimed vacant land, maintained by local residents, and now, based on the real estate promotional signage, were demanding upwards of \$300k in the very same locations where stories of homes being sold for \$500 once stood.



Figures 314-317: Top row: Corner of Harrison and Temple streets. Left: Empty lots with existing house (August 2018). Right: Two new houses and existing house (June 2024). Bottom row: Cochrane Street. Left: Empty lot from Google Streetview (August 2021). Right: Promotional signage for new development (June 2024).

Inclusive/equitable development: Two residents from North Corktown (Cheek, 2020) (Talley, 2019b) focused on what they perceived to be a significant theme of ‘inclusive’ or ‘equitable development’. This theme was not raised by residents during the Southwest tours, which may be explained by that neighbourhood’s higher density, as compared to the very low density of the North Corktown area. Both residents spoke of the importance of involving existing residents in influencing the future of their neighbourhood, a viewpoint that they have at times had to persuade City officials to understand. They both described how they have used their roles as community organisers and members of the Neighborhood Association to bring people together to create a local shared vision and direct potential developers to operate within this context. Accelerated by Ford’s purchase of the Train Station, they recognised that speculators and developers would suddenly be interested in their neighbourhood, which has since been realised, as the photographs in Figures 314-317 illustrate. One resident spoke of their drive to mobilise their neighbours to mitigate the negative consequences of commercial development (Cheek, 2020), while the other

acknowledged that their biggest concern was existing residents being priced out (Talley, 2019b). While speaking with passion about their mission to ensure that development in North Corktown was inclusive and equitable, both residents described how their local efforts were part of a larger contribution to a global movement to reimagine the future of urban neighbourhoods. This was expressed through statements such as 'I hope that North Corktown acts as a beacon of hope' for other neighbourhoods in realising inclusive development (Talley, 2019b), and 'the North Corktown neighbourhood is contributing to a larger movement to create fairer, more sustainable urban neighbourhoods across the globe' (Cheek, 2020).

By producing visual and narrative ethnographies of points of meaning with resident-participants of the North Corktown and Southwest neighbourhoods, I have created a snapshot of two Detroit neighbourhoods in transition in the first quarter of the 21st century. Through their stories and photographs, I have provided a platform for the voices of active residents living in hidden neighbourhoods in Detroit to be heard within the context of how their lived experience has been directly affected by policy, investment and infrastructure decisions made by those in power, as well as where they have been able to affect grassroots change themselves.

To be read in conjunction with the 'Who Decides the City?' section, this chapter contributes to the growing body of community development literature to better understand residents' own experiences as they live through, are affected by, and create local solutions that respond to the impact of significant global events within an urban neighbourhood context. These stories offer an opportunity for practitioners, policymakers and other stakeholders to consider our role in perpetuating and reinforcing the unequal power dynamics often found in devising and implementing policy and reflect on new ways in which we can collaborate with affected communities to shape a more effective and inclusive approach.

Chapter 6: Future (Imagine)

Inventing the Future

Detroit is a place where, at the grassroots, it's like people are inventing the future (Bagley, 2019).

Pockets of hope

The literature review unearthed a wealth of anthropological studies on the significant role of hope in imagining alternative futures (Hage, 2003) (Jansen & Kleist, 2016) (Miyazaki, 2004) (Miyazaki, 2006) (West, 2017). Stef Jansen and Nauja Kleist (2016) argued against the position they see in much of the relevant contemporary literature that 'the world is currently marked by such malaise, that there is a crisis of hope itself... often written against fatalistic convictions that there are no alternatives to the current order' (Jansen & Kleist, p. 378). They turned this on its head, instead asking, 'where should we turn to find hope in the world' and imploring scholars to be more attentive to pockets that exist. Jansen and Kleist (2016) argued that the very presence of hope was evidence of a resistance to conform to structural factors determining expected norms for our lives and dreams.

Jansen and Kleist (2016) pointed to a growing body of literature on activism, building on the concept of 'resistance as the locus of hope' (Jansen & Kleist, p. 378), which they described as being led by scholars who also position themselves as activists. From my own reading (Graeber, 2004) (Maskens & Blanes, 2016) (Pink & Salazar, 2017) (Sargsyan & Kurtovic, 2019), I have also seen that this includes anthropologists interested in the role of academic scholarship to explore alternative futures by asserting 'the value of people's lived experience and the ethnographic realities they encountered on the ground' (Sargsyan & Kurtovic, p. 5). Within the field of community development, Participatory Action Research (PAR) has also been used by scholars to highlight the lived experience of communities affected by poverty and intersecting inequalities as part of efforts to 'catalyze community activism' (Shaw, Howard, & Lopez Franco, 2020), sharing similarities with the approach of

self-identified activist-anthropologists. My Detroit research has built on this work by offering a new contribution that considers the role of hope and alternative futures from the perspective of resident-activists, with the hidden neighbourhoods of Detroit offering potential 'pockets of hope' as alternatives to the current dominant order.

'The future is not given and is always in the making' (Jansen & Kleist, p. 379). It is on this basis that we should be open to uncertainty as the pre-condition of hope (Cooper, 2015). Jansen and Kleist (2016) argued that 'for the articulation of any hopes for different futures to be possible, there must be a degree of uncertainty, an awareness of it and a willingness to act in it' (Jansen & Kleist, p. 379). They described this phenomenon as being characterised by simultaneous potentiality and uncertainty of the future. Anthropologists exploring engagements with the future from a spatio-temporal lens have argued that hope is a means of knowledge production over time (Miyazaki, 2006) and that the particular conditions in which people's hopes take shape, defined by Hirsh and Stewart (2005) as 'historocity', have a temporal relationship, constrained by social ideologies that make sense of the past, while simultaneously shaping our anticipation of the future. This recalls stories shared by residents Jeff Klein (2020) and Shaun Nethercott (2020) during their walking tours of an identified vacant lot and mural expressed as interweaving temporalities between their knowledge of the place's past, involvement in its present, and sense of anticipation, as well as uncertainty, about its future, all the while with a sense of self-awareness of how this relates to their own motivations, politics and desired outcomes.

Applying this lens of temporal reasoning, Jansen and Kleist (2016) argued that we should qualify the question, 'where should we turn to find hope in this world' (Hirsch & Stewart, 2005) to a spatio-temporal one, in which the *where* necessarily overlaps with the *when* (Jansen & Kleist, p. 380). My research responds to this question by drawing attention to two hidden neighbourhoods in Detroit at a pivotal juncture between the aftermath of a municipal bankruptcy, a contemporary global pandemic and its social and economic impacts, and a growing tide of social movements aimed at rebalancing social and political power,

while addressing increasing inequalities. Framed within David Graeber's (2014) radical idea of an alternative future and Hirokazu Miyazaki's (2006) concept of a symbiotic relationship between the where and the when, I argue that at this moment in time, in Detroit's neighbourhoods, we see the ideal preconditions, as described by Kleist and Jansen (2016), of both simultaneous potentiality and uncertainty of future to provide a glimpse of hope for what alternative futures might be possible for our urban neighbourhoods in the first half of the 21st century.

Cornel West (2017) offered a different perspective on the concept of hope within the context of 21st century America. Despite his 25th anniversary introduction to his influential book (West, 2017) stating, 'we live in one of the darkest moments in American history – a bleak time of spiritual blackout and imperial meltdown' (2017, p. xv), West still perceived the existence of hope, which he described as a 'prophetic fightback', promoting courageous truth telling and exemplary action by individuals and communities' (West, p. xv). West (2017) pointed to exemplary collective efforts of hope in the Movement for Black Lives, the 8 March 2017 women's mobilisation and the historic moment of Standing Rock (West, pp. xxii, xxiii). He argued that these three efforts made explicit connections between matters of race, gender, class, empire and earth – a marked difference from the more singularly focused movements of the 1960s and 1970s. For West, he preferred to 'be a hope', rather than to talk *about* hope. Enlivened by action and purpose, West (2017) described the act as:

Being a hope is being in motion, on the move with body on the line, mind set on freedom, soul full of courage, and heart shot full with love (West, p. xxiv).

Rather than focus on 'grand signs of hope', as described by West (2017), the Detroit research focuses on the small, local community acts of hope expressed through collective and individual efforts to contribute to a fairer, more inclusive and just world. These, I argue, illustrate pockets of hope taking shape in Detroit at this critical point in its future-making

activity. These pockets of hope have been demonstrated through the actions of the Street Outreach Court (Street Democracy) to create more sympathetic outcomes from the local justice system, and the Michigan Urban Farming Initiative (MIUFI, 2013b) to develop a healthier, accessible and sustainable food-secure neighbourhood. In both examples, these community organisations are delivering positive and transformational impact for marginalised communities, while challenging the systems and structures of the dominant order. In contemporary Detroit, alongside Street Outreach Court and MIUFI, there are a number of bold community organisations contributing to the ‘courageous truth telling’ that West (2017) proclaimed, including those sharing the truth about the tragedies and inequalities being suffered by lower-income communities and communities of colour at the hands of commercial big business and self-interested politicians. These include the Michigan Civil Rights Commission (MCRC, 2017), as well as those creating a platform to share stories of the tremendous impact created by local residents within their own communities, such as that of the inspirational Dotti Sharp and the ‘Power of One Dedicated Woman’ awards programme that she founded (Michigan Community Resources, 2021).

West (2017) claimed that within the American Empire, the greatest tradition of prophetic fightback was the Black freedom struggle, while the greatest tradition of moral and spiritual fortitude was the Black music tradition, based on radical love and freedom (West, p. xx). These two great traditions have taken centre stage in Detroit’s cultural history, both as the epicentre of Black American music with Tamla Motown Records from the 1960s, and its formative role in the development of Black Radicalism in America. Once again, Detroit, shaped by its unique history, could offer an insight into other forms of prophetic fightback acting as a community response to contemporary events unfolding on the world stage.

Ethnographies of the possible (Halse, 2013)

Several contemporary scholars (Graeber, 2014) (Hall, 2015) (Jackson, 2020) (Rhys-Taylor, 2018) working across anthropology and urban studies, have reinvigorated traditional ethnographic methods as a means of sharing the lived experience of communities, particularly highlighting those in urban areas affected by the ongoing effects of capitalism. Several contemporary, progressive anthropologists (Graeber, 2004) (Hage, 2003) (Maskens & Blanes, 2016) (Pink & Salazar, 2017) (Sargsyan & Kurtovic, 2019) have used ethnography as a means of illustrating potential alternative futures by showcasing pockets of alternative ways of living to the mainstream status quo. This has included the use of visual ethnography (Giacomelli, 2020) (Pink, 2021) (Reyes-Cortez, 2010). New forms of anthropology have emerged during the 21st century with the aim of positioning the discipline as both embodying the society one wishes to create (Graeber, 2004, p. 7), and calling for a renewed, open and futures-focused approach (Pink & Salazar, p. 3). In their manifesto on setting a new agenda for Anthropologies and Futures, Sarah Pink and Juan Francisco Salazar (2017) argued that the ethical, participatory principles and critical perspective inherent in anthropology has the potential to make a significant contribution in the making of alternative futures, by participating and intervening in the 'major world-making activities of our times' (Pink & Salazar, p. 3).

Pink and Salazar (2017) argued that an engaged futures-oriented anthropology should challenge the tradition of ethnography used to study the past and present and, instead, explore ethnography as a tool of studying futures. 'Anthropology's forte has always been disciplined hindsight' (Riner, 1987, p. 311). Peter Pels (2015) and others have argued that anthropologists have long neglected the future as an object of study as the result of an unfinished project of postcolonial reflexivity, with Pink and Salazar (2017) arguing that the ethical weight of the discipline's colonial past had limited its opportunity to explore the future (Pink & Salazar, p. 8). Pink and Salazar (2017) instead argued for the development of a more productive dialogue between ethnography and theory, in a collaborative,

interdisciplinary manner, with the aim of producing 'more adventurous approaches for making futures anthropology' (Pink & Salazar, p. 12), part of what this research aims to do. Tim Ingold (2014) argued that anthropology has extraordinary potential, 'energised by the tension between speculative inquiry into what life could be like, and a knowledge, rooted in practical experience, of what life is like for people of particular times and places' (Ingold, 2014, p. 393), an approach described by Halse as 'ethnographies of the possible' (Halse, 2013, p. 180).

In the field of community development, some scholars are using techniques similar to ethnography, drawing on Participatory Action Research. Howard, Lopez-Franco and Shaw (2020) argued that the use of storytelling and visual methodologies creates space for the construction of counter-narratives, while Julia Fursova (2016) argued that a more radical approach to community capacity building can be a powerful counter-hegemonic force for turning anger and desperation into collective action.

This echoes Graeber's call to action:

Proceed from the assumption that another world is possible. That institutions like the state, capitalism, racism, male dominance are not inevitable (Graeber, 2004, p. 10).

In 'Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology', Graeber (2004) argued that through ethnography, one observes what people do and attempts to understand the symbols, morals and logic that underlie their actions. The role of a radical intellectual, he argued, was 'to look at those that are creating viable alternatives, try to figure out what might be the larger implications of what they are (already) doing, and then offer those ideas back, not as prescriptions, but as contributions, possibilities – as gifts' (Graeber, 2004, p. 11). While exploring concepts of hope and future-making within an anthropological framework, Barbara Adam (2010) argued that within this context, the future has moved from 'the domain of fate into a realm of action potential', against a backdrop of simultaneous uncertainty and

potentiality (Adam, p. 365), as cited by Kleist and Jansen (2016). In times of rising inequality, resulting from decades of the compounding effects of capitalism, globalisation and economic and political crises, Kleist and Jansen (2016) argued that 'such crises are particularly interesting entry points for ethnographies of temporal reasoning' (Jansen & Kleist, p. 381). This reinforces the timeliness of this study as Detroit's communities respond and rebuild after bankruptcy, while negotiating the challenges of a global pandemic and the aftermath of the Financial Crisis.

Looking to the discipline of Critical Race Theory (CRT), critical or counter-storytelling has been used to 'describe the reality of Black and Brown lives' against a dominant White hegemony to deconstruct often discriminatory assumptions and offer a window into people's experiences that may be different to our own (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 49). Like the use of ethnographies in anthropology, storytelling in this context can dislodge firmly held narratives based on societally created constructs, as well as bridge gaps in people's multiplicity of experience and help to build empathy. According to Delgado and Stefancic (2017), 'the hope is that if we pay attention to the multiplicity of social life, perhaps our institutions and arrangements will better address the problems that plague us' (Delgado & Stefancic, p. 63). The work of the MCRC (2017) and studies by Dr Mohai (2011) are prime examples of where exposure of people's real-life experiences in the face of ill-considered decision-making are achieving significant positive results in affecting public policy outcomes and allocation of resources.

While the Detroit research encompasses the interdisciplinary fields of anthropology, community development, urban studies and economics, it builds on the position set out in the manifesto for a futures-focused anthropology, that 'as anthropologists, our stance is to never be the expert... instead we learn about and with other people's expertise, accredit this experience to them as collaborators in shared endeavours' (Pink & Salazar, p. 16). Kurtovic and Sargsyan (2019) argued for the importance of 'cultivating political imagination' and learning alongside and from our research participants (Sargsyan & Kurtovic, p. 13). In the

case of futures research, this means creating generative forms of not knowing with others – ‘anticipating the future on an everyday basis’, contingent on the relationships of different scales of global events and the actions of others (Pink & Salazar, pp. 16, 17).

A commonality shared by community development and futures-focused anthropology is that neither is neutral. Both are imbued with a progressive politics and values of social justice and inclusion – factors that, as researchers and practitioners, we must be aware of, sensitive to and critical of, as part of a commitment to reflexive practice to address the tensions and power dynamics inherent in the field (Howard, Lopez-Franco, & Shaw) (Shaw M. , 2011). Fursova (2016) argued that to consciously pursue counter-hegemonic efforts, practitioners must have an awareness of the process of neoliberalisation in relation to community development practice (Fursova, p. 4). Fursova (2016) argued that the non-profit sector, including community development, ‘is a site with the potential to articulate counter-hegemonic discourse alternative to neoliberalism’, highlighting cracks in consent in the dominant order (Fursova, pp. 2, 4). As considered in my positionality statement at the outset, as a researcher, I am self-aware of the intentions and values-driven foundation of the research. Its purposeful intention is to create a platform from which the voices of often-marginalised residents can share their diversity of lived experiences, while using ethnography as an insight into reimagined, alternative futures, as a counter-hegemonic force for a fairer and more equitable world, with the practical aim to help improve public policy.

This oppositional force, as described in the emerging literature on counter-narratives in community development (Fursova, 2016) (Howard, Lopez-Franco, & Shaw, 2020) and alternative futures in anthropology (Graeber, 2004) (Jansen & Kleist, 2016) (Pink & Salazar, 2017), was echoed as a common theme among respondents in the Detroit research. This has been articulated through individual and collective action, with some residents choosing to live their lives according to the vision that they wish to see in the world (Cheek, 2020) (Willerer, 2020), while others have established community initiatives that present alternatives to the mainstream order (Eggleton, 2019) (Talley, 2019a) (Sharp, 2020). Both examples

signify a different set of values to the dominant hegemony of neoliberal values that our Western society prioritises.

Testing Alternatives

Many of these self-identified activists, advocates and residents have embodied through action Gandhi's well-known inspirational quotation, 'Be the change you wish to see' (B'Hahn, 2001). Through the research, I have been exposed to initiatives founded by Detroit resident-activists and advocates that embody these alternative, counter-hegemonic values. Values of reciprocity, mutuality and common good are being realised through sustainable models of community development practice, creating alternative structures of a more equitable social contract.

One such example was The Power of One Dedicated Woman annual awards ceremony, founded by lifelong Detroit resident Dotti Sharp (2020). Since 2015, the ceremony has been 'honoring the unsung women changing Detroit's neighborhoods' (Michigan Community Resources, 2021). Dotti Sharp, in conjunction with local partners, Michigan Community Resources and Southwest Economic Solutions, created the awards to recognise the efforts of often-unheard women in their communities, promoting values of justice, reciprocity and empathy as a counter-narrative to the neoliberal values of high wages, societal status and influence. By recognising the achievements of these women and showcasing the impact of their work, The Power of One Dedicated Woman awards has elevated and recognised their efforts and the positive impact they are making within their neighbourhoods, while also inspiring other Detroit women to affect change within their own communities (Sharp, 2020).



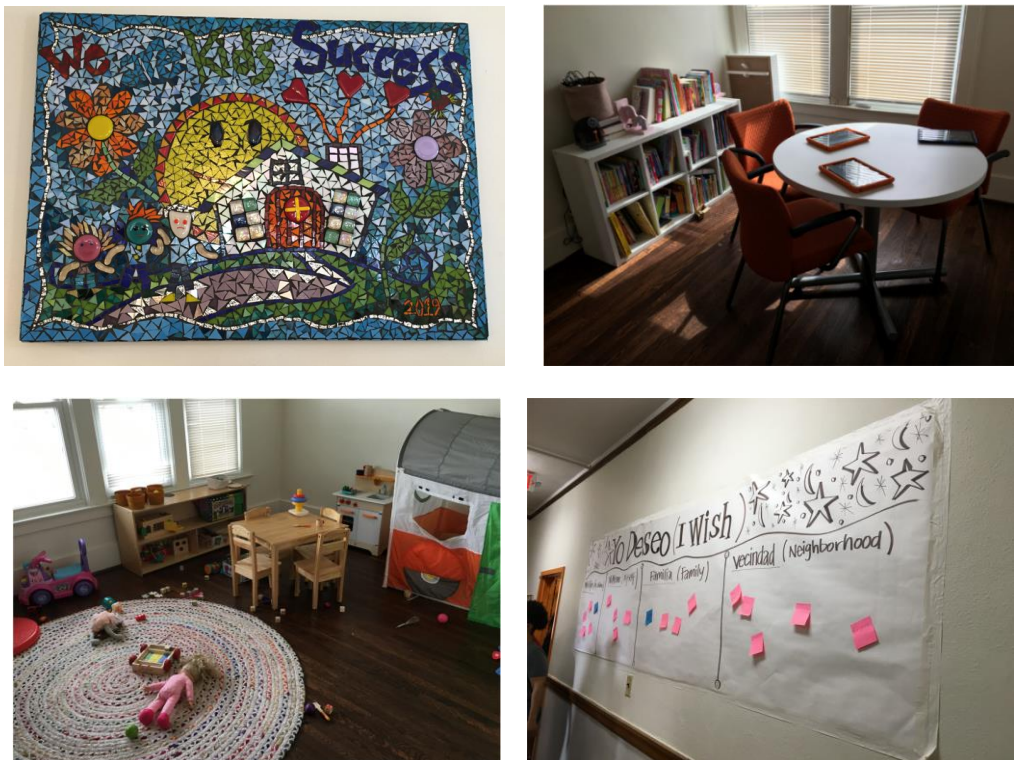
Figures 319 and 320: Left: Dotti Sharp (March 2020). Right: Screenshot from Michigan Community Resources website of The Power of One Dedicated Woman award recipients (2021).

Another such example was in the transformative work of the charity Brilliant Detroit (2021), established by another lifelong Detroit resident, Cindy Eggleton, in 2016. Brilliant Detroit described itself as a ‘Kid Success Movement for All’, driven by the values of ‘love, safety and growth’ (Brilliant Detroit, 2021), and shaped by the neighbourhoods in which they are based (Eggleton, 2019).

You know, so many times, what I hear people say about what’s happening with Brilliant [Detroit] is it’s returning the neighborhood. This is what’s missing. I recently had a resident say to me, ‘Cindy, I’ve lived in this neighborhood for 40 years. I raised my kids. It was my neighborhood, and then it wasn’t, and now it is.’ And so that’s sort of, I think, what people are longing for and connect with (Eggleton, 2019).

Brilliant Detroit has established a values-based assessment framework for measuring its impact in each ‘kid success neighborhood’, based on metrics reflecting what is important to local communities. In its 2019 Report, Brilliant Detroit found that ‘families are already seeing improvements in 75% of our key measures of kid success!’ (Brilliant Detroit, 2019), based on locally defined metrics, as opposed to those imposed by external agencies. Brilliant Detroit works with residents in each neighbourhood to devise programmes that respond to hyper-local needs, while at the same time recognising their collective power across the City in contributing towards a reduction in the 60% of Detroit children living in poverty. In the

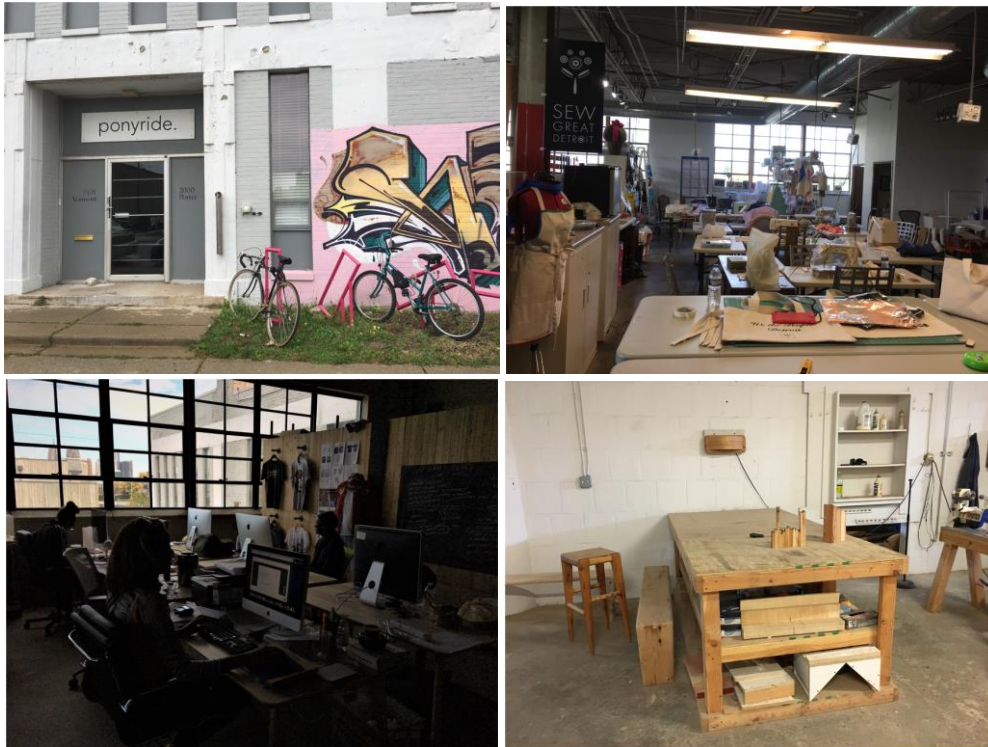
neighbourhoods where Brilliant Detroit has been invited to establish centres, it was ‘returning the neighborhoods’ to their rightful owners – the existing residents – shaped by new measures defined by those that actually live there and have a vested interest in the collective wellbeing of their community. This challenged conventional metrics of growth, profits and neoliberal obsession with economic and employment outputs, instead prioritising what actually matters within communities.



Figures 320-323: Photographs from visits to two Brilliant Detroit centres (9 and 12 March 2020).

Other Detroit initiatives, founded by residents and explored as part of the research, were challenging conventional boom-and-bust business models by adopting values-driven models of social enterprise. These operated on the principles of combining community development with business, promoted local employment, prioritised groups often marginalised from the labour market, and reinvested profits back into the community. Among the resident-founded initiatives studies, the majority were located within the City’s more hidden neighbourhoods, with several having been supported from the outset by Ponyride

(2016). Ponyride was a non-profit, small business incubator, founded in a 300,000 square foot re-activated building in the Corktown neighbourhood of Detroit, committed to facilitating the growth of artists, makers and entrepreneurs with a social mission, which will in turn ‘make our city a better place to live, work and prosper’ (Ponyride, p. 14).



Figures 324-327: Photographs of visit to Ponyride in Corktown location (10 October 2018).

Two such examples were Empowerment Plan (2019b) and Rebel Nell (2021b), both of which began with small workshop spaces within Ponyride, before expanding their operations (during the course of the research) into premises in the Islandview and Goldberg neighbourhoods, respectively. This achieved one of Ponyride’s main objectives to ‘encourage organizations with social missions to utilize and outgrow our space’ (Ponyride, p. 14). In 2019, Ponyride itself moved to a new location in the neighbourhood of Core City, adjacent to North Corktown, selling its Corktown building to a developer who intended to renovate the space for market rent (Aguilar, 2019).

Both Empowerment Plan and Rebel Nell shared on their website home pages the social impact that their businesses have made, promoting the societal benefits and their values-driven approach, while simultaneously challenging the conventional profit-and-loss conventionally favoured by businesses within the contemporary neoliberal Western paradigm.



Figure 328: Metrics of success presented by Empowerment Plan on website (Empowerment Plan, 2019b).

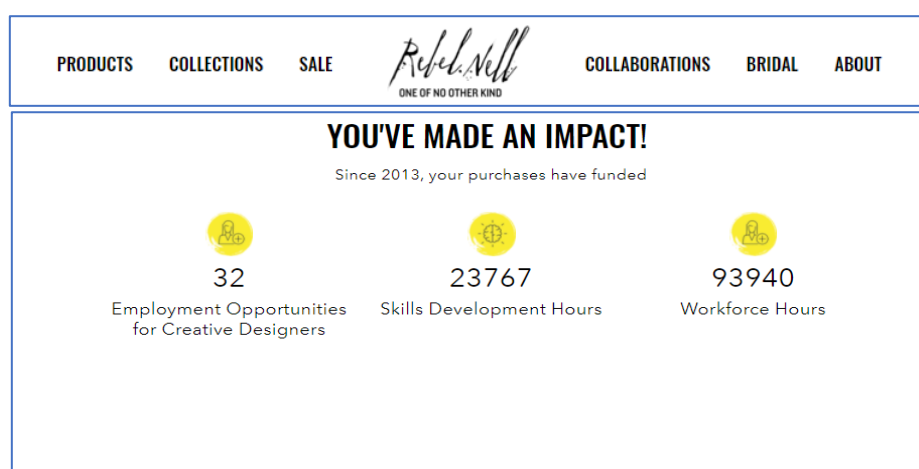


Figure 329: Metrics of success presented by Rebel Nell on website (Rebel Nell, 2021b).

The Empowerment Plan share their vision of change, hope and purpose on their website:

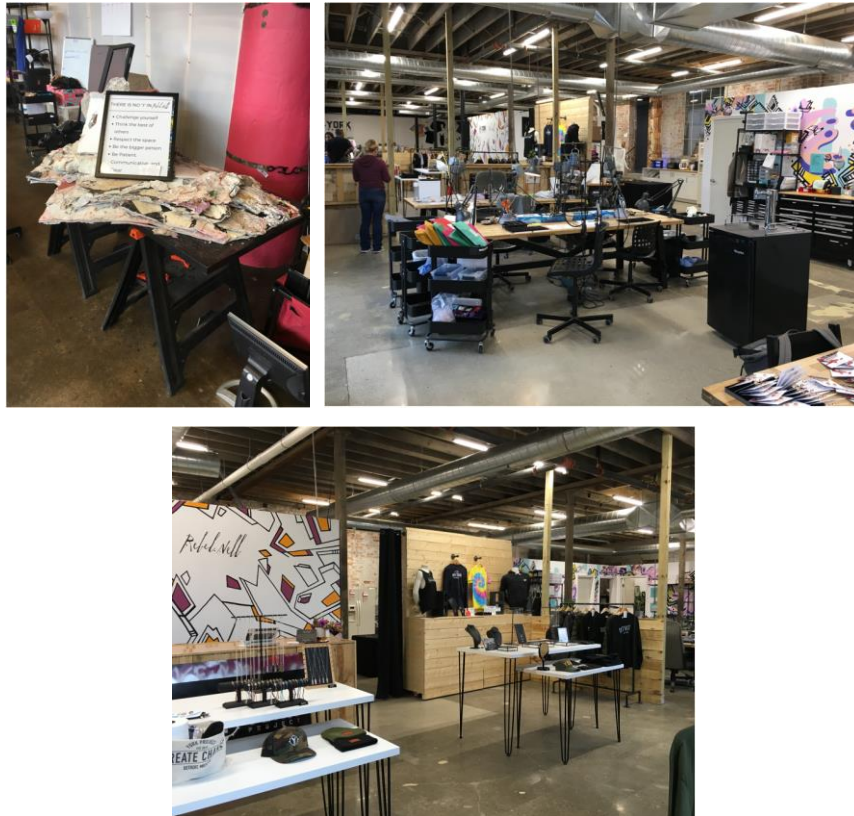
In the world we see, women, children and families living in poverty are no longer victims. Instead, they are the architects of their own future. They are educated. They are employed. And they are empowered (Empowerment Plan, 2019a).

Empowerment Plan's mission was to 'Break the cycle of homelessness through employment' (Empowerment Plan, 2019b), which they did by employing individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness on a two-year 'paid-to-learn' programme, while providing holistic support services 'to achieve financial independence and security'. Their key success – 'not one employee has fallen back into homelessness since we began' (Empowerment Plan, 2019c). Employees were recruited as seamsters to produce the innovative 'EMPWR' coat that can transform into a sleeping bag, a unique design invented by founder, Veronika Scott, as her final-year art school project in Detroit, after having had personal experience of homelessness (Empowerment Plan, 2019a).

Detroit-based social enterprise Rebel Nell was established in 2013 with 'the mission to provide employment, equitable opportunity, and wraparound support for women with barriers to employment' (Rebel Nell, 2021a). They worked with local partners to identify and employ women who have struggled to find employment, including ex-offenders, as creative designers, teaching them to produce unique jewellery from found layers of graffiti-paint in the City, while providing support services to build self-sufficiency.

Rebel Nell set out their vision for involved women in the future on their website:

We seek to embolden women, to embrace their infinite strength, and to define their own future (Rebel Nell, 2021a).



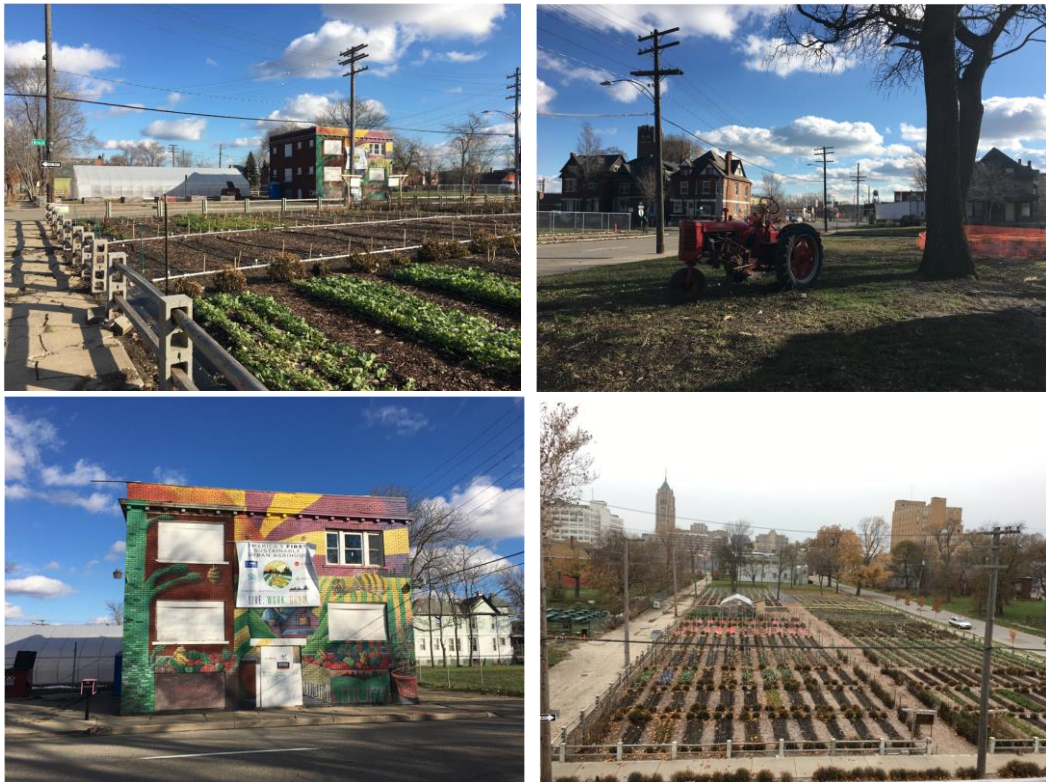
Figures 330, 331, 332: Photographs from Rebel Nell workshops. Top left: Ponyride (10 October 2018). Top right and bottom: Goldberg location (28 September 2019).

Through the Detroit neighbourhoods research, we have seen examples of residents choosing to live independently and self-sufficiently, often guided by a desire to contribute to a more socially equitable, environmentally sustainable planet, living by the values they wish to see in the world. While only one resident self-identified as an ‘anarchist’ (Willerer, 2020), this motivation shared commonality with the definition of ‘anarchism’ as presented by late anthropologist David Graeber, who stated, ‘as much as possible, one must oneself, in one’s relations with one’s friends and allies, embody the society one wishes to create’ (Graeber, 2004, p. 7). Of relevance, during the research interviews, three of the 36 respondents cited their motivation for community action as based on a desire to live independently or to create a unique way of living, while five cited their motivation as a desire to change the world.

Urban gardening is one such activity where many Detroit residents are testing alternative models of self-sufficiency and ways of living (Klein, 2020) (Willerer, 2020). Local historian John Gallagher (2010) described how a precarious economy, loss of industrial jobs, vacant land in urban centres with decreasing populations, and a backlash against corporate abuses has contributed to a rise in urban gardening since the 1970s (Gallagher, p. 45). While urban farming was delivering positive outcomes in Detroit, this remained on a relatively small scale, compared with other cities, such as Havana, Cuba, in which community gardens grew 300,000 tonnes of food a year, compared with 165 tonnes grown in Detroit – a city considered by American standards to have one of the most numerous and productive networks of community gardens (Gallagher, p. 46). With 40 of 139 square miles (29%) of Detroit land currently vacant, it was estimated that when added together, the land area of all Detroit community gardens amounted to approximately one square mile (Gallagher, pp. 29, 61). With such an abundance of vacant land and a local passion for urban farming, there seems to be significant potential to increase large-scale food-growing efforts to tackle the City's 'food desert' described frequently during the research. To turn this into a reality, this would require the coordination of a number of other factors, including long-term commitment from the City, solid legal backing and a high volume of resident volunteers.

As an organisation, the Michigan Urban Farming Initiative (MIUFI) attempted to take on this challenge on a neighbourhood-level in Detroit's North End, promoting itself as 'America's first sustainable urban agrihood'. Its 3-acre plot 'annually provides free, fresh produce to 2,000 residents within a 2-mile radius of the farm', with the support of 8,000 volunteers since its beginnings in 2012 (MIUFI, 2016). MIUFI's mission was 'to use urban agriculture as a platform to promote education, sustainability, and community in an effort to empower urban communities, solve many social problems facing Detroit, and potentially develop a broader model for redevelopment for other urban communities' (MIUFI, 2013b). I visited the urban farm twice during the research, in December 2016 and November 2017. On the second visit, a local volunteer showed me around the farm, beaming with immense

enthusiasm and pride for their initiative and its potential to inspire others to find local solutions to feed their neighbourhoods. As set out in their mission, the MIUFI initiative provided an inspiring example of an alternative urban future with equitable food security at its core, with lessons to be shared with other cities struggling with food insecurity.



Figures 333-336: Photographs from visits to MIUFI urban farm. Top right, top left and bottom left: (29 December 2016). Bottom right: (15 November 2017).

On an individual level, four of the 36 research participants identified themselves as urban farmers or community gardeners. In a prime example of an individual resident testing new ways of living as an alternative to capitalism, self-professed ‘urban farmer’, Greg Willerer (2020), along with his wife, Olivia Hubert, established Brother Nature Farm (Brother Nature Produce) in North Corktown in 2007. Having been a teacher for 15 years, Willerer decided that his ‘conscience could not do that anymore’, after becoming increasingly disillusioned with the education system’s fixation on testing and treatment of teachers like ‘fast food workers’ (Willerer, 2020). With a drive ‘to be green’ and find a way to live independently, Willerer and Hubert found their own solution in the form of their 1-acre urban

farm and residence in North Corktown. During an interview in March 2020 at the Brother Nature Farm, while Willerer and I harvested lettuce in one of their fields, he shared:

So, we have a solution right under our feet that can reverse that process in a few years. It could happen if a lot of people started organic farms on a mass, massive scale, it could happen in a few years. And I mean the biggest reason I think is just independence, you know? I'm an anarchist. I mean, I don't want to be under anyone's thumb, especially now.

So, we want to be independent and have our own unique way of living. And it's also one of those things, we enjoy the quality of our life when we're independent a lot more (Willerer, 2020).

As a business, Brother Nature Farm and associated name, Brother Nature Produce, has shared these motivations publicly as part of its business model. Front and centre on its website home page, Willerer and Hubert state:

We consider our farming operation to be more than just a way to make a living; it's a model for a new way of living. There is no reason other than self-replicating capitalism that keeps Detroit from becoming an almost 100% self reliant city! ...People need to see that it is possible to live another kind of life devoid [of] groveling to corporations in the form of tax breaks and taxpayer backed investments that fail to trickle the money back down to them. Already this 1 acre in the city has not only allowed us to quit our jobs but also buy 6 acres in the country as well as a 2nd house in the city (Brother Nature Produce).



Figures 337-340: Photographs from interview with Greg Willerer at Brother Nature Farm (10 March 2020).

I argue that hope is at the centre of these local initiatives aimed at creating an alternative version of Detroit, based on an equal and fair redistribution of resources and mutual reciprocity. Drawing on the writings of Kleist and Jansen (2016) and Hage (2003), I argue that the activism, as expressed by many Detroit residents involved in the research, is an act of resistance to the dominant neoliberal, capitalist hegemony, with the locus of hope as the driving force providing 'glimpses of radical political alternatives' (Jansen & Kleist, p. 378). A majority of the participants, 22 of 36 spoke of 'hope' in relation to their community work or activism. Discussions of hope were mostly based on an optimism for what was possible for Detroit, and, in some instances, related to individuals' motivations for their actions. Six resident-interviewees spoke of their hopes for a fairer and more inclusive City, with the current changes occurring in Detroit being done in the 'right way' (Cassevetes, 2018) that 'benefit the people that live here' (Blake, 2018) and that are 'for everyone' (Shields, 2019). This included an advisory for slow and thoughtful growth (Monroe, 2018), as

well as a desire that action in one neighbourhood could act as a 'beacon' to others that may have been forgotten (Talley, 2019a). Below is a summary account of some residents' expressions of hope, as described during interviews and walking tours:

Detroit's gone through endless transitions. But my hope is that as it changes, it changes in the right way (Cassevetes, 2018).

My biggest hope is that we're able to really make something that works for everyone (Shields, 2019).

I hope our growth is slow and cautious and thoughtful. Because I think that will be to the City's benefit, rather than quick and easy (Monroe, 2018).

Yeah, we're still here. We're always going to be here. I think it's the motto of the City of Detroit. We hope for better things (Knill, 2018).

Detroit gets slammed in the media all the time. So I think it would just be this message of hope. For the people that live here, that it's like a palpable joy in the revitalisation (Blake, 2018).

Two interviewees spoke of their frustration or disillusionment of talk of hope in Detroit, against a perception of continued inequalities and a priority for action. Both spoke about being more interested in taking action as opposed to engaging in rhetoric, which likely was related to their perceptions of the role of hope. This recalls, to an extent, Cornel West's (2017) viewpoint of preferring to 'be a hope' rather than the neoliberal fixation on talk of hope. That said, both individuals were actively involved in their own ways in shaping alternative futures in Detroit. Willerer (2020), following his self-identified anarchist principles to test out an independent way of living on his urban farm, and Kaherl, having established the now-international Detroit Soup model to build grassroots change in neighbourhoods.

People in Detroit are always talking about hope. My wife and I are sick of hope (Willerer, 2020).

I just hope – there's a lot of hope. I think it's a lot of false hope. I don't want to be a Debbie Downer about it, but I still can't buy groceries in my neighbourhood (Kaherl, 2019).

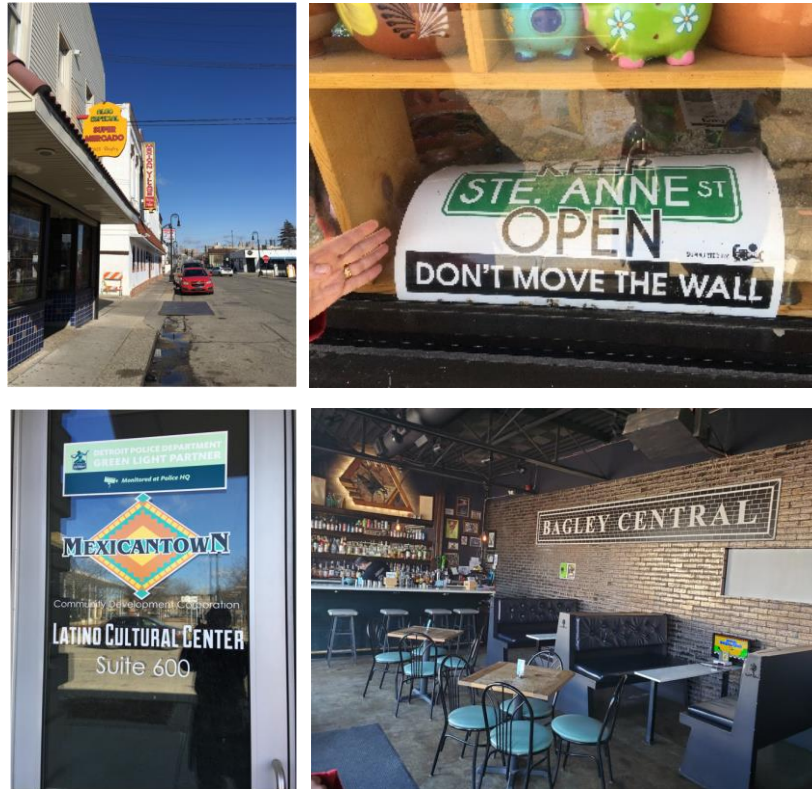
The latter statement from Kaherl (2019) is a reminder of the challenging act of survival in some areas of Detroit, and how – even for those individuals actively engaged in what could be described as 'hopeful' community activism – the sheer grind of living can be a barrier to optimism. Some interviewees spoke of the difficult experience of living in the City of Detroit and how hard it is for many just to get by. With food deserts, water shutoffs and high unemployment well-documented for the majority of Detroit residents, and where 60% of children live in poverty (Brilliant Detroit, 2019), it is understandable that 'everyday survival in the City of Detroit' (McCallum, 2020) can impact one's ability to have hope for a better future. Despite these challenges, the majority of residents interviewed (61.1%) still maintained a sense of hope when articulating their vision for the future of their City.

During interviews, ten of the 36 participants spoke about the 'future', mainly with optimism for what was possible for the City. Several residents spoke with pride about their own and their neighbours' roles in shaping and inventing that future. Some described this within the somewhat contested term of a 'New Detroit' – 'I don't think Detroit will ever be what it was, nor do I think it should be; I think we are creating a new Detroit' (George, 2018). While others shared a collective sense of residents coming together – 'I think that Detroit is a place where, at the grassroots, it's like, people are just inventing the future' (Bagley, 2019). Sharing this sense of the collective writing of Detroit's future, one self-identified 'organiser' and 'community educator' (Nethercott, 2020) described her perception of how its historical

past and continuous shaping of the present through cultural activity all give rise to, and reinforce, Detroit's future.

What has sustained Detroit over the years is that it actively sings, dances, prays, draws its identity and shares it publicly over and over and over, and that gives you the social capital to survive the challenges and create its future from (Nethercott, 2020).

This viewpoint articulated by Shaun Nethercott (2020) appears once again to share similarities with Hirsch and Stewart's concept of 'historicity' (Hirsch & Stewart, 2005) as inter-relationships between the social ideologies we use to make sense of the past and those anticipations we hold for the future. Like Nethercott (2020), Hirsch and Stewart (2005) believed that we have much to gain from exploring the 'ongoing social production of accounts of pasts and futures'. During her walking ethnography of Southwest, where Shaun (Nethercott, 2020) has been resident for nearly forty years, she shared a multiplicity of stories spanning and interweaving her version of the story of Detroit, articulating a fluidity of past, present and future. Within ten minutes and two city blocks, Shaun shared stories spanning decades. She pointed out where 'Frida [Kahlo] and Diego [Rivera] would come down to get their food' when they briefly lived in the City in 1932, as well as described the local history of when, in the 1940s, the area started organising itself as a commercial district around what is now known as 'Mexicantown'. She identified a sign in a window sparking a story about Shaun's own involvement in organising against the Ambassador Bridge's efforts to take over the land around the historic Ste. Anne's basilica, before we ventured in to explore a new bar recently opened by 'young, local guys', which she described as 'a sign of the changing times' (Nethercott, 2020).



Figures 84-130 (extract): Photographs from Southwest Detroit walking ethnography with Shaun Nethercott (March 2020).

This experience with Shaun (Nethercott, 2020) illustrates how the methodology of walking ethnographies enables the unique exploration of a place over time, drawing on stories, perceptions, landmarks and encounters with others to understand and analyse the relationship of pasts, presents and futures from different perspectives, both as a continuum and as multi-layered and diverse as part of a process of future-making. This related to the anthropological concept of contingency, described by Pink and Salazar (2017, p. 16), which detailed a constant interplay between a narration of what *has* happened and an anticipation and inability to know what *will* happen, with the past, present and future operating in a continuous loop. Kurtovic and Sargsyan referred to ethnographies as a ‘form of historical consciousness’ (Sargsyan & Kurtovic, 2019, p. 6), suggesting in this example, the particular ethnography being shaped by Shaun Nethercott (2020) could be considered as one individual’s historical consciousness of her Southwest Detroit neighbourhood, shaped by her own experience, encounters and hopes.

Through ethnography, one can see how others live, gain an insight into their perceptions and experience of that place, and share some understanding of others' narratives of past and present, as well as their anticipations and hopes for the future. Possible worlds, and even future worlds, are 'emergent from a particular way of imagining through contingent configurations of the present' (Pink & Salazar, p. 16). One of the aims of the Detroit neighbourhood ethnographies and interviews has been to present multiple narratives of people's experiences of their place and anticipations of its future, recognising the diversity of complementary and contrasting perspectives and perceptions, as a counter-narrative to the binary portrayals of Detroit in the mainstream media. Within the scope of futures-focused anthropology, rather than trying to predict one singular model for the future, futures-research looks to create generative forms of *not knowing* with others through imagination, design, intervention and anticipation of the future on an everyday basis (Pink & Salazar, p. 16). The decision to position these interviews and ethnographies alongside the literature review and historical account of Detroit was to contextualise the multiple narratives and position them within the various local and global events, highlighting their relationship to reimagined futures.

Conclusion

Conclusion

At its current crossroads, Detroit offers new insights into the creative reimagining of urban futures beyond the current dominant neoliberal capitalist order, as demonstrated by neighbourhood residents through the fieldwork. While the depleted infrastructure and limited access to basic services have created a challenging context for survival for many Detroit residents, associated factors including the availability of vacant land and a lack of government involvement have also enabled creativity, self-sufficiency and self-determination giving rise to new ways of living. This emergent space has created the opportunity to test alternative futures within the microcosm of Detroit, showcasing to other cities what might be possible, as residents, practitioners and policymakers in cities across the globe grapple with how to build equitable and resilient neighbourhoods in the face of emerging global crises and an increasingly unequal dominant world order that prioritises economic growth over community wellbeing.

The economic, industrial and cultural dynamics that have influenced Detroit's trajectory are unique in how they have coalesced and contributed to a city in flux. The City's relationship to the Civil Rights Movement and Black Radicalism, its proud history of Motown Records, and the technological advances and lifestyle created by the automotive industry, introduction of the minimum wage and rise of the Black middle class, have all shaped the unique past, present and possible futures of Detroit. While some factors may be unique to Detroit, there are also many common factors that it shares with other post-industrial cities around the globe. Its declining single-industry economy, shrinking population, waning tax base, political disenfranchisement, and growing disparity between communities can be seen in cities across the United States and beyond, the effects of a neoliberal capitalist order, guided by the values of growth, expansion and profit, and exacerbated by recent global crises, with few credible alternatives presented or considered.

The research has illustrated the detrimental impacts of the dominant hegemony through globalisation, the Financial Crisis and the crisis of inclusion that capitalism has

created for many marginalised people, particularly lower-income communities and communities of colour, as seen in Detroit through the stories of its residents. These impacts have been far-reaching in local communities, including the hidden neighbourhoods of North Corktown and Southwest Detroit, the main geographical focus of the research. It is here that the Detroit research can provide an insight for other cities experiencing parallel trajectories, learning from community responses to global crises, insights from residents' shared experiences and the creative solutions they have devised. This includes learning from policies that have resulted in suboptimal outcomes for marginalised communities, as well as further exacerbated existing inequalities, resulting in experiences such as the two Detroits narrative.

Through the interviews, walking tours and visits to local projects, I have observed examples of 'alternative ways of life' being tested (Eyerman, 1984), as self-identified community activists and anarchists experiment with what some have described as a new social movement taking shape in Detroit. While participants expressed a range of viewpoints on whether they would describe it as a movement, network or collective, the majority spoke of the community action taking place in Detroit as acting in opposition to the greed-driven neoliberal capitalist order that has for too long left the City 'to rot on the vine' (Young, 2010). Through the literature review and interviews, comparisons between the experiences in New Orleans and Detroit arose time and again. This ranged from the similar devastating effects on marginalised communities of natural and 'man-made' disasters to the seeming lack of investment and leadership from government and its perceived relationship to both being majority-African American cities. Put simply by one resident, 'The hurricane destroyed New Orleans. Capitalism destroyed Detroit' (Emery, 2020).

While opinions differ on whether there is a singular DIY social movement in Detroit, analysis from the interviews demonstrated that the majority of participants believe that DIY defines the spirit of Detroit and is a key driving force in what enables the City and its residents to survive, thrive and create within a challenging environment. Some participants

expressed the viewpoint that living in Detroit can be exceptionally difficult. Yet within this challenging context, many residents spoke of the importance of 'DIY' as it continues to act as the driving force of self-determination in the City of Detroit. Many participants also spoke with pride of the 'DIY' spirit of Detroiters as one of self-sufficiency, grit, hustle, creativity and resourcefulness that empowers residents and communities to use their own power of self-determination to create local solutions and imagine their own futures, rather than rely on those in power to determine this for them. Through the research, it was clear that the concept of 'DIY' in the context of community activism in Detroit was rooted in Black Radicalism and the principles of self-determination and 'Do for Self', as expressed by Marcus Garvey and Malcolm X, as well as a long and established tradition of self-provisioning, particularly among lower-income residents and during times of significant economic challenge.

The research illustrated examples of community responses to global crises and pockets of hope for reimagined futures across neighbourhoods in Detroit and set this within a historical context of community activism. This includes the urban farming movement in which individuals and community organisations are encouraging 'self-sufficiency during challenging times' as a 'backlash against corporate America' (Gallagher, pp. 44, 45) and an opportunity to demonstrate 'a model for a new way of living' (Brother Nature Produce). It also includes other community responses to the challenges of the Financial Crisis and the municipal bankruptcy that followed in Detroit, such as the practice of community banking or pooling resources for community benefit, which for some, has also been an act of defiance against the corporate banking system, similar to views expressed by some urban farmers interviewed.

The community activity taking place in North Corktown and Southwest provides a glimpse into a multiplicity of possible reimagined futures of urban neighbourhoods, built from community responses to global crises, offering alternative ways of living to the dominant order, based on people-centred values. The impact of which is being measured at a local

level through new metrics shaped by the residents and communities whose lives are directly affected, such as through the progressive work of Brilliant Detroit, The Empowerment Plan and Rebel Nell, and on a global scale, through the United Nations' ambitious Sustainable Development Goals. Whether defined as an emerging social movement or a collective of people with similar aims, the research has highlighted pockets of activity where active residents in two of Detroit's hidden neighbourhoods are reimagining their part of the City, based on fairness, equity, mutual aid and inclusion, while sharing this learning with other cities currently contemplating the possibility of a different future.

I have set out a platform to amplify the voices of people living in a city in flux, at a time of considerable change and challenge, impacted by global crises, often marginalised and absent from the academic literature and policy consultation that ultimately has a significant and lasting impact on their lives. The interviews and ethnographic techniques employed present a snapshot of the diversity of residents' lived experiences, shaped by the choices they have made in directing the walking tours, curating the photographs and in the stories and perspectives they have chosen to share. The range of stories from active residents living in Detroit's marginalised neighbourhoods presents a counter-narrative to the mainstream binary portrayal of Detroit as a 'Renaissance City' or a ghost town, instead depicting the alternative view that 'Detroit never left' (Carter-Alvizo, 2019b) by demonstrating what 'actually happens within the city's borders' (Marr, 2016).

Driven by social justice, I am determined for this collection of residents' voices to contribute to the small, but growing body of academic literature striving to expose the impact of policy decisions on the lives of real people. This body includes the relevant and important studies including the *Reflecting Realities* (Anastacio, 2000) and *Connecting Communities* (Gilchrist & Morris, 2011) studies in the UK, and *TAFOS* (Fairey, 2018) and *Los Arenales* (Vergara-Perucich, 2021) PAR studies in South America. Through these stories, we as practitioners and policymakers can learn from residents' experiences and involve them in creating better policy, while eschewing the mistakes of the past.

The research highlighted several examples of discriminatory and undemocratic policies and practices within the City of Detroit that have both exacerbated and perpetuated long-standing inequalities, often along racial and economic lines, where residents' voices have been noticeably absent. This includes the Flint water crisis, the emergency manager legislation, high-polluting facilities sited in residential neighbourhoods, as well as policies of water shutoffs and tax foreclosures for residents unable to afford to pay their bills. At their core, these policies share an embedded assertion that the City has the right to determine who has access to water, land, housing, investment and agency, a position increasingly challenged through bodies such as the American Civil Liberties Union (2020b), Michigan Civil Rights Commission (2017), NAACP (2017) and the People's Water Board Coalition (2020), as well as through community action, such as neighbours in North Corktown pooling resources to pay back-taxes to support residents to stay in their homes (Cheek, 2020). Through the research, I call on other practitioners to use their position to help amplify the voices of marginalised residents to inform better policy, as well as increase public understanding and appreciation of how others live at a time of increased social division and inequalities, particularly within the United States.

The current 'preconditions of hope' in Detroit and the symbiotic activity taking place to reimagine potential futures of urban neighbourhoods are likely to be both temporal and fleeting, based on a precarious and fluctuating set of economic, political and social circumstances. In the last year of the research, I have begun to observe some of these variables already changing in the City, such as increased property speculation and investment moving their way into previously forgotten neighbourhoods, such as North Corktown, following the 2018 purchase of the Train Station by Ford Motor Company. It is therefore important to reflect on the sustainability of these conditions to create the possibility for reimagined futures, as this 'canary in the coalmine moment' (Cosma, 2019) is unlikely to last very long, if in fact, the window has not already passed. As the current set of circumstances in Detroit are time-limited, and the associated opportunities to test and learn

from alternative ways of living of significant value for other cities, I argue that there is a case to be made for an emerging action research agenda (Kaur, 2021) focused in these neighbourhoods that simultaneously takes action to address local challenges, while undertaking research for wider dissemination and learning for other cities. In collaboration with the resident-participants, I am exploring next steps in how this may take shape to enable stories from the neighbourhoods to be shared to inform local policy change and to shift the narrative of urban regeneration away from one based on a neoliberal lifecycle model of inevitable decline, instead inspiring others to reimagine alternative futures based on people-centred values. Discussions are underway on a range of possibilities including publication of a book, a resident-led conference, an online platform for exchanging stories, support and advice amongst activist-peers and an international exchange of visits between residents in Detroit and London.

To come full circle, at the beginning, the research set out to question ‘is another world possible?’ as an alternative to the dominant neoliberal capitalist order, and if so, ‘could this place be Detroit?’. Over the past ten years, the research has uncovered examples of alternative ways of life being tested by residents in Detroit’s hidden neighbourhoods, as both a loose collective and emerging social movement, driven by the values of social justice, equity, inclusion and hope. This research has presented a counter-narrative to the mainstream portrayal of the City, offering instead the bold and diverse voices of residents living, surviving and creating in the City, challenging structural inequality and discriminatory policies, all the while, radically reimagining possible alternative futures both for Detroit, and as a beacon for other cities in flux, considering their own possible futures in this increasingly complex and precarious world.

References

- ACLU Michigan. (2017, February 23). *The controversy behind Michigan's emergency manager law and its role in the Flint water crisis*. Retrieved from ACLU Michigan: <https://www.aclumich.org/en/news/controversy-behind-michigans-emergency-manager-law-and-its-role-flint-water-crisis>
- ACLU Michigan. (2020a, January). *Civil rights coalition calls on Governor Whitmer to end Detroit water shutoffs crisis*. Retrieved March 2, 2021, from ACLU Michigan: <https://www.aclumich.org/en/press-releases/civil-rights-coalition-calls-governor-whitmer-end-detroit-water-shutoffs-crisis>
- ACLU Michigan. (2020b, July). *Civil rights coalition files class action lawsuit challenging Detroit water shutoff policy*. Retrieved March 2, 2021, from ACLU Michigan: <https://www.aclumich.org/en/press-releases/civil-rights-coalition-files-class-action-lawsuit-challenging-detroit-water-shutoff>
- ACLU Michigan. (n.d.). *Water shutoffs in Detroit*. Retrieved March 2, 2021, from ACLU Michigan: <https://www.aclumich.org/en/cases/water-shutoffs-detroit>
- Adam, B. (2010). History of the future: Paradoxes and challenges. *Rethinking History*, 14(3), 361-378.
- Afana, D. (2024, December 4). *Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan to run for Michigan governor as an independent in 2026 election*. Retrieved from Detroit Free Press: <https://eu.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/detroit/2024/12/04/detroit-mayor-mike-duggan-running-michigan-governor-independent/76234462007/>
- Afana, M. E. (2023, August 28). *Mary Sheffield for Detroit's future*. Retrieved from Detroit Free Press: eu.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/detroit/2023/08/28/detroit-council-president-mary-sheffield-launches-mayoral-bid/70703092007
- Aguilar, L. (2019, February 19). *Ponyride small business incubator sells Corktown building*. Retrieved September 24, 2021, from Detroit News: <https://eu.detroitnews.com/story/business/2019/02/19/ponyride-small-business-incubator-sells-corktown-building/2915785002/>
- Aguilar, L. (2021a, May 16). *Detroit's decade of growth has been separate and unequal, new study finds*. Retrieved July 26, 2021, from Bridge Detroit: https://www.bridgedetroit.com/detroits-decade-of-growth-has-been-separate-and-unequal-new-study-finds/?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=facebook
- Aguilar, L. (2021b, June 8). *Why the revision of Detroit's city charter is so contentious*. Retrieved from Bridge Detroit (Accessed 4 February 2024): <https://www.bridgedetroit.com/why-the-revision-of-detroits-city-charter-is-so-contentious/>
- Alberta, T. (2014, February 27). *Is Dan Gilbert Detroit's new superhero?* Retrieved February 26, 2021, from The Atlantic: <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2014/02/is-dan-gilbert-detroits-new-superhero/425742/>
- Alinsky, S. D. (1971). *Rules for radicals: A pragmatic primer for realistic radicals*. New York: Vintage Books.

- Allnutt, B. (2020, January 23). *The dirtiest square mile in Michigan: Exploring the past, present, and future of Zug Island, the heavily industrialized site on Detroit's border*. Retrieved January 28, 2021, from Curbed Detroit: <https://detroit.curbed.com/2020/1/23/21078486/zug-island-detroit-closing-river-rouge-pollution>
- Anastacio, J., Gidley, B., Hart, L., Keith, M., Mayo, M., & Kowarzik, U. (2000). *Reflecting Realities: Participants' perspectives on integrated communities and sustainable development*. Bristol: The Policy Press.
- Anderson, J. (2004). Talking whilst walking: A geographical archeology of knowledge. *Area*, 36(3), 254-261.
- Andrew, S. (2020, May 19). *America's response to the coronavirus is the most American thing*. Retrieved January 15, 2021, from CNN: <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/05/19/us/american-individualism-coronavirus-trnd/index.html>
- Andrews, K. (2021a). *Back to Black: Black radicalism for the 21st century*. London: Zed Books.
- Andrews, K. (2021b). *The new age of empire*. Dublin: Penguin Books.
- Angelyn. (2018, 9 October). Transcript of interview with Angelyn.
- Anstey, C. (2022, January 5). *Why quantitative tightening is on the Fed's agenda again*. Retrieved February 15, 2022, from Bloomberg: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-01-05/for-fed-taper-rates-then-quantitative-tightening-quicktake>
- Atlas Obscura. (2022). *Monumental Kitty: Detroit Michigan*. Retrieved February 17, 2022, from <https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/monumental-kitty>
- Back, L., & Puwar, N. (2012). A manifesto for live methods: provocations and capacities. *The Sociological Review* 60:S1, 6-17.
- Baetens, M. (2019, February 27). *Bagley Central neighborhood bar Detroit Hubbard Richard*. Retrieved December 7, 2021, from Detroit News: <https://eu.detroitnews.com/story/business/2019/02/27/bagley-central-neighborhood-bar-detroit-hubbard-richard/2996221002/>
- Bagley, A. (2019, September 9). Transcript of interview with Alice Bagley.
- Baker, S. E. (2012). *How many qualitative interviews are enough? Expert voices and early career reflections on sampling*. National Centre for Research Methods Review Paper.
- Barrett, M. (2023, November 17). *Detroit City Council districts are changing: see proposed maps*. Retrieved from Bridge Detroit: www.bridgedetroit.com/detroit-city-council-districts-are-changing-see-proposed-map/
- Barrett, M. (2024, February 7). *This week in the notebook*. Retrieved from Bridge Detroit: www.bridgedetroit.com/notebook-new-city-council-maps-approved-for-2025-elections/
- Bates, C. (2018). Desire lines: Walking through Woowich. In C. B.-T. (Eds), *Walking through social research* (pp. 54-69). Abingdon: Routledge.
- Bates, C., & Rhys-Taylor, A. (. (2018b). *Walking through social research* (1st Edition ed.). Abingdon, Oxfordshire: Routledge.

- Bates, C., & Rhys-Taylor, A. (2018a). Finding our feet. In C. Bates, A. (. Rhys-Taylor, & C. B. Rhys-Taylor (Ed.), *Walking through social research* (pp. 1-11). Abingdon, Oxfordshire: Routledge.
- BBC. (n.d.). *History: The Wall Street Crash and Depression*. Retrieved September 29, 2019, from <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/history/mwh/usa/walldepressionrev1.shtml>
- BBC News. (2021a). *BBC News: Trump impeachment: Republicans clash as Senate trial looms*. Retrieved January 15, 2021, from BBC News: <https://na01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.bbc.com%2Fnews%2Fworld-us-canada-55670526&data=04%7C01%7C%7C8e33c479d>
- BBC News. (2021b). *BBC: Capitol riots: Did Trump's words at rally incite violence*. Retrieved January 15, 2021, from <https://na01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.bbc.co.uk%2Fnews%2Fworld-us-canada-55640437&data=04%7C01%7C%7Cbd63c15bfa2f4f1>
- Becker, H. S. (2007). Visual sociology, documentary photography and photojournalism. In *Telling about society* (pp. 186-203). Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Beresford, P., & Croft, S. (2011). The politics of participation. In G. Craig, & M. (. Mayo, *The community development reader: History, themes and issues* (pp. 163-171). Bristol: The Policy Press, University of Bristol.
- Bernanke, B. (2015). *Monetary policy and inequality*. Retrieved February 15, 2022, from Brookings Institute: <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/ben-bernanke/2015/06/01/monetary-policy-and-inequality/>
- B'Hahn, C. (2001). Be the change you wish to see. *Reclaiming Children and Youth* 1(1), 1(1), 6-9.
- Bialik, C. (2013, August 2). *Detroit police response times no guide to effectiveness*. Retrieved September 22, 2019, from Wall Street Journal: <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424127887323997004578642250518125898>
- Binelli, M. (2013). *Detroit, the billionaire's playground*. Retrieved February 26, 2021, from New York Times: <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/08/opinion/detroit-sinks-with-belle-isle.html?>
- Blake, A. (2018, October 3). Transcript of interview with Anne Blake.
- Blue Planet Project. (2021). *Water justice for all*. Retrieved August 27, 2021, from Blue Planet Project: <http://blueplanetproject.net/waterjustice/home/about-wjfa/>
- Blundell, R. J. (2020, June). *IMF world economic outlook update*. Retrieved January 16, 2021, from IMF: <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/Issues/2020/06/24/WEUpdate>
- Booker, B. (2021, January 14). *Ex-Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder and 8 others criminally charged in Flint water crisis*. Retrieved March 2, 2021, from NPR (Flint): <https://www.npr.org/2021/01/14/956924155/ex-michigan-gov-rick-snyder-and-8-others-criminally-charged-in-flint-water-crisi>
- Bourdieu, P. (1983). The forms of capital. In R. K. (Ed.), *Soziale Ungleichheiten (Soziale Welt, Sonderheft 2)* (pp. 183-98). Goettingen: Otto Schartz & Co.
- Boyd, H. (2018). *Black Detroit: A people's history of self-determination (2nd ed.)* (Second Edition ed.). New York: Amistad.

- Boyle, A. (2020, March 9). Transcript of interview with April Boyle.
- Boyle, R. (2014). *Detroit: Empty city: A model of market failure and weak public planning* [Lecture 5 Nov 2014]. Cambridge: Cambridge University.
- Branche-Wilson, A., & Wileden, L. (2020, December). *Detroit's Strategic Neighborhood Fund: A baseline report of resident perceptions*. Retrieved February 3, 2022, from University of Michigan: <https://poverty.umich.edu/files/2020/12/PovertySolutions-StrategicNeighborhoodFund-PolicyReport-r6.pdf>
- Bridge Detroit. (2021, May 17). *Detroit's decade of growth has been separate and unequal, new study finds*. Retrieved July 16, 2021, from <https://www.bridgedetroit.com/detroits-decade-of-growth-has-been-separate-and-unequal-new-study-finds/>
- Briggs, X. d. (1998). Doing democracy up close: Culture, power and communications in community building. *Journal of Planning, Education and Research*, 18, 1-13.
- Brilliant Detroit. (2019). *Brilliant Detroit Annual Report 2019*. Retrieved September 22, 2021, from <https://brilliantdetroit.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Annual-Report-2019-Map-1.pdf>
- Brilliant Detroit. (2021). *Home*. Retrieved September 22, 2021, from <https://brilliantdetroit.org/>
- Brookings Institute. (2015). *Did the Fed's quantitative easing make inequality worse? [Symposium (1 June 2015)]*. Retrieved February 2022, 2022, from Brookings Institute: <https://www.brookings.edu/events/did-the-feds-quantitative-easing-make-inequality-worse/>
- Brother Nature Produce. (n.d.). *Brother Nature Produce, About*. Retrieved September 22, 2021, from <https://brothernatureproduce.com/about.html>
- Build Institute. (2024). *Detroit Soup*. Retrieved from Build Institute: <https://www.buildinstitute.org/fund/detroit-soup/>
- Burack, M. (2018, September 19). Transcript of interview with Mira Burack.
- Bures, F. (2012, June). *The fall of the creative class*. Retrieved from thirtytwo magazine: <http://thirtytwomag.com/2012/06/the-fall-of-thecreative-class/>
- Butler, S. (2021, November 5). *Gig-working in England and Wales more than doubles in five years*. Retrieved February 14, 2022, from The Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2021/nov/05/gig-working-in-england-and-wales-more-than-doubles-in-five-years>
- Cabinet Office. (2010, May 18). *Building the Big Society*. Retrieved from Cabinet Office: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/building-the-big-society>
- Carlson, D. (2017, November 27). *Detroit street art: 40 new discoveries*. Retrieved December 7, 2021, from Ilovedetroitmichigan.com: <https://www.ilovedetroitmichigan.com/detroit-graffiti-street-art/detroit-street-art-40-new-discoveries-summer-2017/>
- Carter-Alvizo, A. (2019a, September 13). Transcript of interview with Alondra Carter-Alvizo.
- Carter-Alvizo, A. (2019b, November 29). Transcript of walking tour with Alondra Carter-Alvizo.
- Cassevetes, C. (2018, October 5). Transcript of interview with Cathy Cassavetes (pseudonym).

- Castells, M., & Mukul, K. (2014). A conversation with Manuel Castells. *Berkeley Planning Journal*, 27 (1), 93-96.
- CFSEM. (n.d.). *Detroit Neighborhood Fund initiative*. Retrieved from Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan: <https://cfsem.org/initiative/detroit-neighborhood-fund/#:~:text=The%20Detroit%Neighborhood%20Fund%20was,Kellogg%20Foundation>
- Chambers, J. (2014, November 11). *Foundations think out of the box to aid Detroit*. Retrieved from The Detroit News: <https://eu.detroitnews.com/story/news/local/wayne-county/2014/11/11/detroitbankruptcyp philanthropykresgekelloggfordfoundation/18895417>
- Chang, H.-J. (2011). *23 Things they don't tell you about capitalism*. London: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Chari, S., & Donner, H. (2010). Ethnographies of activism: A critical introduction. *Cultural Dynamics*, 22(2), 75-85.
- Cheek, B. (2020, March). Transcript of walking tour with Bill Cheek.
- Christian Hurrtenne Architects. (n.d.). *Christian Hurrtenne Architects*. Retrieved April 18, 2021, from <http://www.cha-c.com/>
- Chrysler Corporation. (n.d.). *Our History*. Retrieved September 29, 2019, from <http://www.chrysler.com/en/this-is-chrysler/history/>
- Citizen Manual a. (n.d.). *Detroit City Charter* . Retrieved from Citizen Manual: citizenmanual.com/resources/foundational-laws/detroit-city-charter/
- Citizen Manual b. (n.d.). *How does local government in Detroit serve us* . Retrieved from Citizen Manual: citizenmanual.com/modules/how-does-local-government-in-Detroit-serve-us/
- City Data. (2017). *City Data*. Retrieved December 29, 2020, from <http://www.city-data.com/neighborhood/Corktown-Detroit-MI.html>
- City of Detroit. (2012, February 29). *Charter of the City of Detroit*. Retrieved from detroitmi.gov: https://detroitmi.gov/sites/detroitmi.localhost/files/2018-05/2_29_2012_CharterDocument_2_1_WITHOUT_COMMENTARY_1.pdf
- City of Detroit. (2012, January 1). *Charter of the City of Detroit*. Retrieved from detroitmi.gov: [chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://detroitmi.gov/sites/detroitmi.localhost/files/2018-05/2_29_2012_CharterDocument_2_1_WITHOUT_COMMENTARY_1.pdf](https://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://detroitmi.gov/sites/detroitmi.localhost/files/2018-05/2_29_2012_CharterDocument_2_1_WITHOUT_COMMENTARY_1.pdf)
- City of Detroit. (2023, October 29). *Ambassador Bridge, City of Detroit, and the Hubbard Richard Residents Association enter into Community Agreement*. Retrieved from City of Detroit/Mayor's Office: <https://detroitmi.gov/news/ambassador-bridge-city-detroit-and-hubbard-richard-residents-association-enter-community-agreement>
- City of Detroit. (2024a, May 6). *Department of Neighborhoods block club list*. Retrieved from City of Detroit: <https://detroitmi.gov/sites/detroitmi.localhost/files/2024-05/May%20Block%20Club%20List.pdf>
- City of Detroit. (2024b). *City Council, District 6*. Retrieved from City of Detroit: <https://detroitmi.gov/government/city-council/city-council-district-6>

- City of Detroit. (2024c). *District 6*. Retrieved from Department of Neighborhoods:
<https://detroitmi.gov/departments/departments-neighborhoods/district-6>
- City of Detroit. (2024d). *Mayor*. Retrieved from City of Detroit:
<https://detroitmi.gov/government/mayors-office/mayor>
- City of Detroit. (2024e). *Planning and Development Department/Community Benefits Ordinance*. Retrieved from City of Detroit: <https://detroitmi.gov/departments/planning-and-development-department/community-benefits-ordinance>
- City of Detroit. (n.d.). *Supplemental Existing Planning and Observations*. Retrieved from City of Detroit: <https://detroitmi.gov/sites/detroitmi.localhost/files/2021-02/Greater%20Corktown%20Existing%20Conditions%20Appendix.pdf>
- City of Detroit. (n.d.). *The Neighborhoods/Districts/District 6*. Retrieved from The Neighborhoods:
<https://www.theneighborhoods.org/districts/district-6>
- Clark, C. (2019). Water justice struggles as a process of commoning. *Community Development Journal*, 54(1), 80-99.
- Classic Motown. (n.d.). *The story of Motown Records*. Retrieved September 29, 2019, from <http://classic.motown.com/history/>
- Clos, J. (2014). Towards a new urban agenda. *Urban Age Governing Urban Futures*.
- Coalition for Property Tax Justice. (2023). *Home*. Retrieved from Coalition for Property Tax Justice: illegalforeclosures.org
- CoC. (a). *Anti-gentrification*. Retrieved from Congress of Communities:
<https://www.congressofcommunities.com/anti-gentrification>
- CoC. (b). *Home*. Retrieved from Congress of Communities:
<https://www.congressofcommunities.com/>
- CoC. (c). *Youth Council*. Retrieved from Congress of Communities:
<https://www.congressofcommunities.com/youth-council>
- Collins Dictionary. (2020a). *Definition of 'rust belt'*. Retrieved December 4, 2020, from Collins Dictionary: <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/rust-belt>
- Collins Dictionary. (2020b). *Definition of the US Midwest*. Retrieved December 20, 2020, from Collins Dictionary: <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/midwest>
- Collins Dictionary. (2021). *Definition of 'DIY'*. Retrieved September 28, 2021, from <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/diy>
- Collins Dictionary. (2022). *Definition of blue-collar*. Retrieved November 24, 2022, from <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/blue-collar#:~:text=adjective%20%5BADJECTIVE%20noun%5D,work%2C%20rather%20than%20in%20offices.>
- Colomer, N. (2018, August 28). *Michigan emergency manager program may not survive the mess it made in Flint*. Retrieved March 2, 2021, from The Bond Buyer:
<https://www.bondbuyer.com/news/flint-crisis-may-seal-fate-of-michigan-emergency-manager-law>

- Community Development Journal. (2021). *Volume 56, Number 3*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cooney, R. (2017, November 24). *David Cameron admits failings in his big society agenda*. Retrieved September 29, 2021, from Third Sector: <https://www.thirdsector.co.uk/david-cameron-admits-failings-big-society-agenda/policy-and-politics/article/1451160>
- Cooper, D. P. (2015). Ethnographies of uncertainty in Africa: An introduction. In E. C. Pratten (Ed.), *Ethnographies of Uncertainty in Africa* (pp. 1-16). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Cosma, D. (2019, October 18). Transcript of interview with Dessa Cosma.
- Costley, D. (2020). *The Blackest city in the US facing an environmental justice nightmare*. Retrieved January 28, 2021, from The Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/jan/09/the-blackest-city-in-the-is-us-facing-an-environmental-justice-nightmare>
- Coulton, C. J. (2010). *Finding place in making connections communities*. Baltimore: The Urban Institute.
- Craig, G. (2011). Community capacity-building: something old, something new...? In M. M. Gary Craig, *The Community Development Reader: History, themes and issues* (pp. 273-282). Bristol: The Policy Press.
- CRC. (n.d.). *The proposed new Detroit City Charter: Where are we now?* Retrieved from Citizens Research Council of Michigan (Accessed 8 March 2024): <https://crcmich.org/the-proposed-new-detroit-city-charter-where-are-we-now>
- Dakoske, M. (2020, March 10). Transcript of walking tour with Mike Dakoske.
- Daley, J. (2020). *U.S. exits Paris climate accord after Trump stalls global warming action for four years*. Retrieved February 5, 2021, from Scientific American: <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/u-s-exits-paris-climate-accord-after-trump-stalls-global-warming-action->
- Daniels, S. (2014, December 10). *Detroit to exit historic bankruptcy later Wednesday*. Retrieved September 22, 2019, from Reuters: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/12/10/usa-detroit-bankruptcy-idUSL1N0TU1CN20141210>
- Data Driven Detroit. (2013). *Southwest Detroit neighborhoods profile*. Retrieved from Data Driven Detroit: https://datadrivendetroit.org/files/SGN/SW_Detroit_Neighborhoods_Profile_2013_081913.pdf
- Data Driven Detroit. (2023). *Neighborhood inset map 2023 of North Corktown, MI*. Retrieved from products.datadrivendetroit.org: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1M3bKjajla54ADK136xPvmWPvSpq-E11r/view>
- Davey, M. (2014a, March 14). *Bankruptcy lawyer is named to manage an ailing Detroit*. Retrieved March 2, 2021, from The New York Times: <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/15/us/gov-rick-snyder-kevyn-orr-emergency-manager-detroit.html>
- Davey, M. (2014b, December 10). *Detroit is out of bankruptcy, but not out of the woods*. Retrieved September 29, 2019, from The New York Times: http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/11/us/detroit-bankruptcy-ending.html?_r=0

- Davis, A. (1998, September 10). *Masked racism: Reflections on the prison industrial complex*. Retrieved March 25, 2022, from Color Lines: <https://www.colorlines.com/articles/masked-racism-reflections-prison-industrial-complex>
- dbusiness. (2014, October 2). *Old Detroit, new Detroit*. Retrieved November 20, 2020, from dbusiness: <https://www.dbusiness.com/business-features/old-detroit-new-detroit/>
- De Silva, S. (2014, August 15). *Beyond ruin porn: What's behind our obsession with decay?* Retrieved April 24, 2019, from Arch Daily: <https://www.archdaily.com/537712/beyond-ruin-porn-what-s-behind-our-obsession-with-decay/>
- Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2017). *Critical Race Theory: An introduction* (Third Edition ed.). New York: New York University Press.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2011). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*. London: Sage Publications, Ltd.
- DeSantis, M. (2020, March 11). Transcript of interview with Maggie DeSantis.
- Detroit Future City. (2021, May). *The state of economic equity in Detroit*. Retrieved September 10, 2021, from Center for Michigan: https://centerformich.files.wordpress.com/2021/05/may_14_annual-report-detroit_future-city.pdf
- Detroit Future City. (2024). *Home*. Retrieved from Detroit Future City: <https://detroitfuturecity.com/>
- Detroit Historical Society. (2022a). *Encyclopedia of Detroit, Jimmy Hoffa*. Retrieved December 17, 2022, from Detroit Historical Society: <https://detroithistorical.org/learn/encyclopedia-of-detroit/hoffa-jimmy>
- Detroit Historical Society. (2022b). *Encyclopedia of Detroit: Corktown Historic District*. Retrieved February 18, 2022, from <https://detroithistorical.org/learn/encyclopedia-of-detroit/corktown-historic-district#:~:text=Corktown%20is%20the%20oldest%20existing,significant%20numbers%20and%20settling%20downtown.>
- Detroit Historical Society. (a). *Encyclopedia of Detroit: Zug Island*. Retrieved February 5, 2021, from Detroit Historical Society: <https://detroithistorical.org/learn/encyclopedia-of-detroit/zug-island>
- Detroit Historical Society. (b). *Encyclopedia of Detroit: Grand Bargain*. Retrieved March 2, 2021, from Detroit Historical Society: <https://detroithistorical.org/learn/encyclopedia-of-detroit/grand-bargain>
- Detroit Hustles Harder. (2021). *Detroit Hustles Harder, Home*. Retrieved September 29, 2021, from <https://detroithustlesharder.com/>
- Detroit News. (2014, November 11). *Kevyn Orr was the right man for Detroit*. Retrieved March 2, 2021, from Detroit News: <https://eu.detroitnews.com/story/opinion/editorials/2014/11/11/detroit-rises-kevyn-orr/18814737/>
- Detroit Water Brigade. (2020). *Detroit Water Brigade Facebook page post*. Retrieved August 27, 2021, from Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/waterbrigade/>

- Detroit Water Brigade. (2021). *Detroit Water Brigade Facebook page, about*. Retrieved August 27, 2021, from Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/waterbrigade/>
- Detroit, C. o. (n.d.). *Mayor's office*. Retrieved from City of Detroit: <https://detroitmi.gov/news/detroit-unemployment-rate-falls-42-april-lowest-33-years-numbers-have-been-tracked>
- detroitsevenpointtwo.com. (n.d.). *detroitsevenpointtwo.com*. Retrieved December 27, 2020, from <http://detroitsevenpointtwo.com/ie.html>
- Devereux, R. (2012, May 2). *Occupy May Day protests across US as activists and unions link up*. Retrieved from The Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/may/02/occupy-may-day-protests>
- DeVito, L. (2015, January 7). *Welcome to 'Springwells Village' - a Southwest neighbourhood most of its own residents have never heard of*. Retrieved February 5, 2021, from Metro Times: <https://www.metrotimes.com/detroit/welcome-to-springwells-village-a-southwest-detroit-neighborhood-most-of-its-own-residents-have-never-heard-of>
- DeVito, L. (2021, November 24). *Whitmer requests federal funds to fix the damn I-375, citing its racist legacy*. Retrieved May 20, 2022, from Metro Times: <https://www.metrotimes.com/news/whitmer-requests-federal-funds-to-fix-the-damn-i-375-citing-its-racist-legacy-28589159>
- Dinham, A. (2005). Empowered or overpowered?: The real experiences of participation in the New Deal for Communities. *Community Development Journal* 40 (3).
- Dinham, A. (2007). Raising expectations or dashing hopes?: Well-being and participation in disadvantaged areas. *Community Development Journal*, 42(2), 181-193.
- Dolan, M. (2014, November 7). *Judge approves Detroit's bankruptcy-exit plan*. Retrieved March 2, 2021, from Wall Street Journal: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/judge-approves-detroits-bankruptcy-exit-plan-1415383905>
- Dovere, E.-I. (2017, August 29). *How Detroit's Mayor became unbeatable*. Retrieved from Politico: <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2017/08/29/how-detroits-mayor-became-unbeatable-215548/>
- Eggleton, C. (2019, July 30). Transcript of interview with Cindy Eggleton.
- Ellen MacArthur Foundation. (2017). *The circular economy in detail*. Retrieved February 18, 2022, from <https://archive.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/explore/the-circular-economy-in-detail#:~:text=A%20circular%20economy%20is%20a,the%20consumption%20of%20finite%20resources>.
- Elrick, M. (2023, March 12). *Virtuoso Duggan hits a sour note praising billionaires instead of vowing to defend taxpayers*. Retrieved from Detroit Free Press: <https://eu.freep.com/story/news/columnists/ml-elrick/2023/03/12/detroit-mayor-mike-duggan-state-city-address/69994404007/>
- Emery, P. (2020, March 9). Transcript of interview with Paul Emery.
- Empowerment Plan. (2019a). *Empowerment Plan, about*. Retrieved September 22, 2021, from Empowerment Plan: <https://www.empowermentplan.org/about>

- Empowerment Plan. (2019b). *Empowerment Plan, home*. Retrieved September 22, 2021, from Empowerment Plan: <https://www.empowermentplan.org/>
- Empowerment Plan. (2019c). *Empowerment Plan, the program*. Retrieved September 22, 2021, from The Empowerment Plan: <https://www.empowermentplan.org/the-program>
- Environmental Law and Policy Center. (2020, April 20). *EPA Region 5 Clean Water Enforcement Declines: Trend Coincides with Increase in Significant Noncompliance*. Retrieved February 5, 2021, from https://elpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/ELPC-Region5Report_FINAL.pdf
- Environmental Law and Policy Center. (n.d.). *Region 5 clean water enforcement report*. Retrieved February 5, 2021, from <https://elpc.org/resources/region5/>
- Epstein, J., & Wingrove, J. (2021, November 8). *Buttigieg: Infrastructure bill to address racist highway design*. Retrieved May 20, 2022, from Detroit News: <https://eu.detroitnews.com/story/news/politics/2021/11/08/buttigieg-infrastructure-bill-address-racist-highway-design/6347782001/>
- Eversole, R. (2012). Remaking participation: Challenges for community development practice. *Community Development Journal*, 47(1), 29-41.
- Eyerman, R. (1984). Social movements and social theory. *Sociology*, 18 (1), 71-82.
- Facebook. (2018). *Soup at Spaulding Facebook page*. Retrieved February 17, 2022, from <https://www.facebook.com/events/180426202774796/?ref=newsfeed>
- Facebook. (n.d.). *Slow Roll Facebook page*. Retrieved February 17, 2022, from https://www.facebook.com/SlowRollDet/about/?ref=page_internal
- Fadel, L. (2021, January 9). *Now the world gets to see the difference: BLM protestors on the Capitol attack*. Retrieved January 15, 2021, from NPR: <https://www.npr.org/2021/01/09/955221274/now-the-world-gets-to-see-the-difference-blm-protesters-on-the-capitol-attack?t=1610726915234>
- Fairchild, R. F. (2019, October). Transcript of interview with Rev. Frances Fairchild (pseudonym).
- Fairey, T. (2018). These photos were my life: Understanding the impact of participatory photography projects. *Community Development Journal*, 53(4), 618-636.
- Fasenfast, D. (2019). A neoliberal response to an urban crisis: Emergency management in Flint, MI. *Critical Sociology*, 45(1), 33-47. Retrieved from <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0896920517718039>
- Federal Reserve. (2022). *Credit and liquidity programs and the balance sheet: Total assets of the Federal Reserve July 30, 2007 - Feb 9 2022*. Retrieved February 15, 2022, from Federal Reserve: https://www.federalreserve.gov/monetarypolicy/bst_recenttrends.htm
- Ferretti, C. (2021, April 20). *Raquel Castañeda-López won't seek third term on Detroit's council*. Retrieved from Detroit News: <https://eu.detroitnews.com/story/news/politics/2021/04/20/raquel-castaneda-lopez-wont-seek-third-term-detroits-council/7287003002/>
- Ferretti, C., & Rahal, S. (2020, December 8). *Detroit extends water shutoff moratorium through 2022*. Retrieved August 27, 2021, from Detroit News:

- <https://eu.detroitnews.com/story/news/local/detroit-city/2020/12/08/duggan-detroit-mayor-water-shutoffs/6489513002/>
- Florida, R. (2003). Cities and the creative class. *City and Community* 2(1), 3-19.
- Florida, R. (2012, May). *Detroit Rising*. Retrieved from Atlantic City Lab: <http://www.citylab.com/special-report/detroit-rising/>
- Florida, R. (2017). *The new urban Crisis: How cities are increasing inequality, deepening segregation, and failing the middle class - and what we can do about it*. New York: Basic Books.
- Fonger, R. (2020, April 29). *Near total authority of emergency managers impacted Flint water crisis, UM study says*. Retrieved March 2, 2021, from MLive [Flint]: <https://www.mlive.com/news/flint/2020/04/near-total-authority-of-emergency-managers-aided-flint-water-crisis-um-study-says.html>
- Ford Motor Company. (2020). *Henry Ford biography*. Retrieved February 3, 2022, from Ford Motor Company: <https://corporate.ford.com/articles/history/henry-ford-biography.html>
- Ford Motor Company. (2021). *Evolution of the assembly line*. Retrieved December 3, 2021, from Ford Motor Company: <http://www.ford.co.uk/experience-ford/Heritage/EvolutionOfMassProduction>
- Freire, P. (1996). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. London: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Fursova, J. (2016). The business of community development and the right to the city: reflections on the neoliberalization processes in urban community development. *Community Development Journal*, 1-17.
- Galbraith, M. (2014, June 24). 'West Corktown: Creating Detroit's newest neighborhood'. *Model D Media*. Retrieved February 5, 2021, from <https://www.modeldmedia.com/devnews/WestCorktownBegins.aspx>
- Gallagher, J. (2010). *Reimagining Detroit: Opportunities for redefining an American city*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.
- Gayle, R. (2019, September 27). Transcript of interview with Rhianna Gayle (pseudonym).
- Geertz, C. (1977). *The interpretation of cultures*. New York: Basic Books.
- General Motors. (n.d.). *History and heritage*. Retrieved September 29, 2019, from General Motors: <http://www.gm.com/company/historyAndHeritage/creation.html>
- Generation Startup. (n.d.). *Generation Startup the film*. Retrieved February 17, 2022, from <https://www.generationstartupthefilm.com/>
- Geograph. (n.d.). *The Attendants (photo credit Thomas Nugent)*. Retrieved April 9, 2021, from <https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/532141>
- George, E. (2018, October 9). Transcript of interview with Erika George.
- Giacomelli, G. (2020). Homes: things and senses. *Visual Ethnography*, 9(2), 201-210.
- Gilchrist, A., & Morris, D. F. (2011). *Communities connected: Inclusion, participation and common purpose*. London: RSA.

- Givens, D. (2018, October 2). Transcript of interview with Donna Givens.
- Glaeser, E. L. (2004). *Book Review of Richard Florida's the rise of the creative class*. Retrieved from Harvard University: <https://scholar.harvard.edu/glaeser/publications/book-review-richard-floridas-rise-creative-class>
- Glasgow Architecture. (n.d.). *Crown Street, Glasgow (Photo by Anthony O'Doibhailein)*. Retrieved April 9, 2021, from <https://www.glasgowarchitecture.co.uk/crown-street-gorbals>
- Glass, P. (2016). Using history to explain the present: the past as born ad performed. *Ethnography* 17 (1), 92-110.
- Glover, D. (2018). *This is America*. (Childish Gambino, Performer) mcDJ Recording, under license to RCA Records, a division of Sony Music Entertainment.
- Goodin-Smith, O. (2018, January 16). *Flint's history of emergency management and how it got to financial freedom*. Retrieved March 2, 2021, from MLive (Flint): https://www.mlive.com/news/flint/2018/01/city_of_the_state_flints_histo.html
- Google. (2022). *Maps/place/Grixdale+Detroit+MI+48234+USA*. Retrieved March 25, 2022, from <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Grixdale,+Detroit,+MI+48234,+USA/@42.4291321,-83.0844883,15z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m5!3m4!1s0x8824d1fd22bdc1f9:0xbdb8ef94b3d39bc0!8m2!3d42.4290968!4d-83.0777448>
- Graeber, D. (2004). *Fragments of an anarchist anthropology*. Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press.
- Graeber, D. (2013). *Neoliberalism: An extremely brief introduction*. Retrieved January 15, 2022, from <https://levimisli.files.wordpress.com/2013/10/dg-neoliberalism-bureaucracy.pdf>
- Graeber, D. (2014). *Debt: The first 5,000 years*. New York: Melville House Publishing.
- Green, D. G. (2017). *Civitas: Inclusive Capitalism: How we can make independence work for everyone*. Retrieved December 4, 2020, from <https://www.civitas.org.uk/content/files/inclusivecapitalismweb.pdf>
- Guerriero, M. (2013). *The number 40*. Retrieved September 22, 2019, from The New Yorker: <http://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/the-number-40>.
- Guillen, J. (2017, February 23). *Mayor Duggan: Kevyn Orr hid pension plan details; city may sue firm*. Retrieved March 2, 2021, from The Detroit Free Press: <https://eu.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/detroit/2017/02/23/duggan-orr-detroit-bankruptcy-finances/98302920/>
- Habermas, J. (1975). *Legitimation crisis*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Hage, G. (2003). *Against paranoid nationalism: Searching for hope in a shrinking society*. Annandale: Pluto Press and Merlin.
- Hage, G. (2012). Critical anthropological thought and the radical political imagery today. *Critique of Anthropology*, 32(3), 285-308.
- Hall, S. (2015). Super-diverse street: A 'trans-ethnography across migrant localities. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 38(1), 22-37.

- Halse, J. (2013). Ethnographies of the possible. In J. Halse, & T. O. W. Gunn (Ed.), *Design Anthropology: Theory and Practice* (pp. 180-97). London: Bloomsbury.
- Hanson, S. L. (October 2016). Trends in U.S. Voting Attitudes with a Consideration of Variation by Gender and Race/Ethnicity. *Open Journal of Political Science*, 6, 454-465.
- Harvey, D. (1989). *The urban experience*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Harvey, D. (2012). *Rebel cities: From the right to the city to the urban revolution*. New York City: Verso Books.
- Heritage Works. (n.d.). *NCNA SD Task Force Plan 2018*. Retrieved from Heritage Works: <https://www.heritageworks.org>
- Herron, J. (2007). Detroit: Disaster deferred, disaster in progress. *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 106 (104), 669.
- Hersher, R. (2018, February 5). *Lethal pneumonia outbreak caused by low chlorine in Flint water*. Retrieved March 2, 2021, from NPR (Flint): <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2018/02/05/582482024/lethal-pneumonia-outbreak-caused-by-low-chlorine-in-flint-water>
- Hirsch, E., & Stewart, C. (2005). Introduction: Ethnographies and historicity. *History and Anthoropology*, 16(3), 261-274.
- History Detroit. (2021). *Eras in Detroit history*. Retrieved September 21, 2021, from History Detroit: <http://www.historydetroit.com/>
- Hochschild, J. (2016). *What happened on November 8, and what happens next? A tour of social scientists' answers*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Holgerson, H. (2018). Keep walking: Notes on how to research urban pasts and futures. In C. B.-T. (Eds.), *Walking through social research* (pp. 71-85). Abingdon: Routledge.
- Hostel Detroit. (n.d.). *Hostel Detroit/about us*. Retrieved February 17, 2022, from <https://www.hosteldetroit.com/about-us/>
- House of Lords. (2021, July 16). '*Quantitative easing: a dangerous addiction?*' *Economic Affairs Committee, 1st Report of Session 2021–22*. Retrieved February 15, 2022, from <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/6725/documents/71894/default/#:~:text=W%20found%20that%20the%20available,consumer%20spending%20by%20asset%20holders>.
- Howard, J., Lopez-Franco, E., & Shaw, J. (2020). Editorial: Intersecting inequalities and prospects for community development. *Community Development Journal (Special Issue)*, 55(1), 1-6.
- Howell Major, C., & Savin-Badin, M. (2013). *Qualitative research: The essential guide to theory and practice*. New York: Routledge. Retrieved from Howell Major, C & Savin-Badin, M (2013). 'Qualitative Research: The Essential Guide to Theory and Practice'. Routledge, New York, pg. 200
- Hudson, M. (2002). Reconstructing the origins of interest-bearing debt and the logic of clean slates. In M. Hudson, & M. Van de Mierop, *Debt and Economic Renewal in the Ancient Near East* (pp. 7-58). Bethesda: CDL Press.

- Hudson, M. (2003). *Super imperialism: The origins and fundamentals of US world dominance*. London: Pluto Press.
- IASC. (2021). *About the commons*. Retrieved December 5, 2021, from <https://iasc-commons.org/about-commons/>
- IMF. (2006). *IMF, glossary home*. Retrieved June 2, 2017, from <https://www.imf.org/external/np/exr/glossary/showTerm.asp#91>
- IMF. (2008). *IMF, globalization, a brief overview*. Retrieved June 2, 2017, from <https://www.imf.org/external/np/exr/ib/2008/053008.htm>
- Ingold, T. (2014). That's enough about ethnography! *HAU, Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, 4(1).
- IOM and NRC. (2013). *Supplemental nutrition assistance program: Examining the evidence to define benefit adequacy*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. Retrieved from National Library of Medicine: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK206907/>
- Jackman, M. (2017, June 13). *Tracing fault lines in the latest map from the Department of Neighborhoods*. Retrieved February 5, 2021, from Metro Times: <https://www.metrotimes.com/the-scene/archives/2017/06/13/tracing-fault-lines-in-the-latest-map-from-the-department-of-neighborhoods>
- Jackson, E. (2020). Bowling together? Practices of belonging and becoming in a London ten-pin bowling league. *Sociology*, 54(3), 518-533.
- Jansen, S., & Kleist, N. (2016). Introduction: Hope over time - Crisis, immobility and future-making. *History and Anthropology*, 27(4), 373-392.
- Jargowski, P. (2003). *Stunning progress, hidden problems: the dramatic decline of concentrated poverty in the 1990s*. Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution.
- Jones Day. (n.d.). *Kevyn Orr profile*. Retrieved March 1, 2021, from Jones Day: <https://www.jonesday.com/en/lawyers/o/kevyn-orr?tab=overview>
- Jones, P. F. (2003). *City and psyche: An exploration into the archetype of the city*. Summerland: Pacifica Graduate Institute.
- Jones, R. (2020, May 26). *UK volunteering soars during coronavirus crisis*. Retrieved December 29, 2020, from The Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/may/26/uk-volunteering-coronavirus-crisis-community-lockdown>
- Jordano, D. (2015). *Detroit Unbroken Down*. New York: PowerHouse Books.
- Judis, J. B. (2016). *The populist explosion: How the great recession transformed American and European politics*. New York: Columbia Global Reports.
- Kaherl, A. (2019, July 24). Transcript of interview with Amy Kaherl.
- Karras, G. (2013). Assymetric effects of monetary policy with or without quantitative easing: Empirical evidence for the US. *The Journal of Economic Assymetries*, 10, 1-9.
- Kaur, K., Kaur, L., & Kaur, S. M. (2021, January). Action research in social science. *Indian Journal of Extension Education* 21 (1), 128-134.

- Kinder, K. (2016). *DIY Detroit: Making do in a city without services*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Kindon, S. P. (2007). *Participatory action research, approaches and methods: Connecting people, participation and place*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Klein, J. (2020, March 6). Transcript of walking tour with Jeff Klein.
- Knill, L. (2018, October 9). Transcript of interview with Matuaka Brown, Lauren Knill and Erika George.
- Koth, K. (2020, March 11). Transcript of walking tour with Kristyn Koth.
- Kowalski, K. (2019, July 10). *Wall built to separate whites, blacks in Detroit - an important story to tell*. Retrieved February 4, 2022, from Detroit News: <https://eu.detroitnews.com/story/news/local/detroit-city/2019/07/10/wall-built-separate-whites-blacks-detroit-an-important-story/1551503001/>
- Krugman, P. (2013, May 9). *Bernanke, blower of bubbles?* Retrieved January 29, 2018, from New York Times: http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/10/opinion/krugman-bernanke-blower-of-bubbles.html?_r=0
- Kubrin, C. E., & Squires, G. D. (2005). Privileged places: race, uneven development and the geography of opportunity in urban America. *Urban Studies*, 42 (1), pp. 47-68.
- Kusenbach, M. (2003). Street phenomenology: the go-along as an ethnographic research tool. *Ethnography*, 4(3), 455-485.
- Lakhani, N. (2020, March 12). *Our unequal earth: Detroit*. Retrieved August 27, 2021, from The Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/mar/12/detroit-water-shutoffs-unpaid-bills-coronavirus>
- Lang, R. E. (2000). Did neighborhood life-cycle theory cause urban decline? *Housing Policy Debate* 11 (1), 1-6.
- Langman, L. (2013). Occupy: a new new social movement. *Current Sociology* 6 (4), 510-524.
- Larson, R. (2017, November 20). *Detroit: The most exciting city in America?* Retrieved from New York Times: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/20/travel/detroit-michigan-downtown.html> (Retrieved 12 March 2018)
- Leali, T. M. (2019, September 27). Transcript of interview with Tenai M. Leali.
- Ledwith, M. (2016). *Community development in action: Putting Freire into practice*. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Legal & General. (2020). *Legal & General: 10 Guidelines for Inclusive Capitalism*. Retrieved December 29, 2020, from <https://brand.legalandgeneral.com/building-infrastructure/10-guidelines-for-inclusive-capitalism/>
- Legal & General Group. (2019). *Ten Guidelines for Inclusive Capitalism*. Retrieved December 4, 2020, from <https://www.legalandgeneralgroup.com/media-centre/blogs/ten-guidelines-for-inclusive-capitalism/>

- Lehtinen, A. (2009). The Environmental Justice Movement in the USA . In R. K. Thrift (Ed.), *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography* (pp. 535-539). Elsevier Ltd.
- Levitz, D. (2012, January 3). *The awkward art of neighborhood naming*. Retrieved February 19, 2021, from Bloomberg CityLab: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2012-01-03/the-awkward-art-of-neighborhood-naming>
- Library of Congress. (2022). *Web Archive: Gabriela Santiago-Romero for Detroit City Council District 6*. Retrieved from Library of Congress: <https://www.loc.gov/item/lcwaN0038868/>
- Lin, N. (2000). Inequality in social capital. *Contemporary Sociology*, Vol. 29 (6), pp.785-795.
- Littman, D. (2015, February 16). *State of the auto industry*. Retrieved February 26, 2021, from dbusiness: <https://www.dbusiness.com/business-features/state-of-the-auto-industry/>
- Live6 Alliance. (n.d.). *All things Live6*. Retrieved February 5, 2021, from Live6 Alliance: <https://live6detroit.org/#allthings>
- Loty, L. (2011). L'optimismecontre l'utopie. *Revue Eurpe*, 985, 85-94.
- Lovelands Detroit. (2013). *Lovelands Detroit neighborhoods map*. Retrieved from Detroitography: <https://detroitography.com/2013/08/19/lovelands-detroit-neighborhoods-map/>
- Lubitow, A., & Faber, D. (2011). Environmental justice and interventions to prevent environmental injustice in the United States. In J. Nriagu (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Environmental Health* (pp. 433-440). Elsevier Ltd.
- MacDonald, C., & Wilkinson, M. (2013, February 21). *Half of Detroit's property owners don't pay taxes*. Retrieved September 22, 2019, from Detroit News: <http://www.detroitnews.com/article/20130221/METRO01/302210375>
- Maheshwari, T. (2013, December 3). *The urban fringe*. Retrieved from Redefining shrinking cities: <http://ced.berkeley.edu/bpj/2013/12/redefining-shrinking-cities/>
- Malanga, S. (2004). The curse of the creative class. *City Journal*.
- Malinowski, B. (1922). *Argonauts of the Western Pacific: An Account of Native Enterprise and Adventure in the Archipelagoes of Melanesian New Guinea*. London: G. Routledge and Sons.
- Marr, S. (2016). Worlding and wilding: Lagos and Detroit as global cities. *Institute of Race Relations*, 57 (4), 3-21.
- Marsden, P. V. (1988). Homogeneity in Confiding Networks. *Social Networks* 10, pp. 57-76.
- Martin, I., & Shaw, M. (2000). Community work, citizenship and democracy: Re-making the connections. *Community Development Journal*, 35 (4), 401-413.
- Masjid Wali Muhammad. (2020). *About*. Retrieved February 3, 2022, from Historic Masjid Wali Muhammad: <https://www.historicmwm.com/about.html>
- Maskens, M., & Blanes, R. (2016). Introduction: Ethnography and the mutualizing utopia. In *Ethnography and the mutualizing utopia* (pp. 125-142).
- Massey, D. (1994). *Space, place and gender*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

- Matrix Theatre. (n.d.). *Matrix Theatre Company/Home*. Retrieved from Matrix Theatre Company: <https://www.matrixtheatre.org/>
- Mayo, M. (2000). *Cultures, communities and identities: Cultural strategies for participation and empowerment*. London: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Mayo, M. (2005). *Global citizens: Social movements and the challenges of globalization*. New York: Zed Books Ltd.
- Mayo, P. (1999). *Gramsci, Freire and adult education: Possibilities for transformative action*. New York City: Palgrave Macmillan.
- McCallum, K. (2020, May 25). Transcript of interview with Keith McCallum.
- McDonald, D. A. (2019). Finding common(s) ground in the fight for water remunicipalization. *Community Development Journal*, 54(1), 59-79.
- McDonald, J. F. (2014a, February 5). *A declining population and city revenues meant that Detroit's bankruptcy could not have been avoided*. Retrieved from LSE US Centre: <http://bit.ly/1cUoolf>
- McDonald, J. F. (2014b). *LSE blogs*. Retrieved September 22, 2019, from <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/usappblog/files/2014/02/McDonald-Fig-1.jpg>
- McDowell, W. (2018, October 29). Transcript of interview with Will McDowell.
- McDowell, W. (2019, November 27). Transcript of walking tour with Will McDowell.
- MCRC. (2017, February 17). *The Flint water crisis: Systemic Racism through the lens of Flint; Report of the Michigan Civil Rights Commission*. Retrieved March 2, 2021, from https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdcr/VFlintCrisisRep-F-Edited3-13-17_554317_7.pdf
- Mead, M. (1959). *People and places*. London: Bantam Pathfinder Editions.
- Mexicantown CDC. (n.d.). *Our story*. Retrieved from Mexicantown Community Development Corporation: <https://www.mexicantowncdc.org/about#:~:text=Its%20high%2Dquality%2C%20affordable%20retail,to%20economic%20and%20cultural%20growth>.
- Michigan Central. (2024, March 15). *Michigan Central announces first milestone for art program*. Retrieved from Michigan Central: <https://michigancentral.com/michigan-central-announces-first-milestone-for-art-program/>
- Michigan Community Resources. (2021). *The Power of One Dedicated Woman*. Retrieved September 22, 2021, from Michigan Community Resources: <https://mi-community.org/powerofone/>
- Michigan Legislature. (2011). *Michigan Legislature, Public Act 4 (2011)*. Retrieved March 1, 2021, from <https://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2011-2012/publicact/htm/2011-PA-0004.htm>
- Michigan Radio. (2013, November 29). *Detroit gets \$24 million grant to hire 150 firefighters*. Retrieved from <https://www.michiganradio.org/politics-government/2013-11-29/detroit-gets-24-million-grant-to-hire-150-firefighters>

- Michigan State University Extension. (2012). *The suspension of the emergency manager law and its implications: Frequently asked questions*. Retrieved March 1, 2021, from https://www.canr.msu.edu/center_for_local_government_finance_and_policy/uploads/files/MSUE-PA4Suspension_FAQ-9-7-12.pdf
- Miles, T. (2017). *The dawn of Detroit: A chronicle of slavery and freedom in the city of the straits*. New York: The New Press.
- Miles, T. (2021). 1759-1764 One Black boy: The Great Lakes and the Midwest. In K. N. Blain (Ed.), *Four hundred souls: A community history of African America 1619-2019* (pp. 126-129). London: The Bodley Head.
- MIUFI. (2013a). *Michigan Urban Farming Initiative*. Retrieved February 2, 2022, from <https://www.miufi.org/>
- MIUFI. (2013b). *Michigan Urban Farming Initiative, about*. Retrieved September 24, 2021, from <https://www.miufi.org/about>
- MIUFI. (2016). *America's first sustainable agrihood*. Retrieved September 24, 2021, from <https://www.miufi.org/america-s-first-urban-agrihood>
- Miyazaki, H. (2004). *The method of hope. Anthropology, philosophy, and Fijian knowledge*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Miyazaki, H. (2006). Economy of dreams: Hope in global capitalism and its critiques. *Cultural Anthropology*, 21(2), 147-172.
- Mohai, D. P. (2016). Testimonial of Dr. Paul Mohai, Michigan Civil Rights Commission hearings. Flint, Michigan: Michigan Civil Rights Commission.
- Mohai, P., Kweon, B.-S., Lee, S., & Ard, K. (2011). Air Pollution around schools is linked to poorer student health and academic performance. *Health Affairs, Volume 30*(No 5: Environmental Challenges for Health, <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hlthaff.2011.0077>). Retrieved from <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hlthaff.2011.0077>
- Monroe, N. E. (2018, October 10). Transcript of interview with Neil Emerson Monroe (pseudonym).
- Montezuma, R. (2005, May). The transformation of Bogota, Colombia, 1995-2000: Investing in citizenship and urban mobility. *Global Urban Development Magazine*, 1 (1). Retrieved from Global Urban Development Magazine, 1 (1): <http://www.globalurban.org/Issue1PIMag05/Montezuma%20article.htm>
- Morrison, A. (2021, January 7). *Race double standard clear in rioters' Capitol insurrection*. Retrieved January 15, 2021, from Associated Press: <https://apnews.com/article/congress-storming-black-lives-matter-22983dc91d16bf949efbb60cdda4495d>
- Moskowitz, P. (2015, February 5). *The two Detroits: A city both collapsing and gentrifying at the same time*. Retrieved September 10, 2021, from The Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2015/feb/05/detroit-city-collapsing-gentrifying>
- Moskowitz, P. E. (2018). *How to kill a city: Gentrification, inequality and the fight for the neighborhood*. New York: Bold Type Books.

- MSNBC. (2014, September 25). *Detroit city council votes to remove emergency manager*. Retrieved from MSNBC.com: <https://www.msnbc.com/msnbc/detroit-city-council-votes-remove-emergency-manager-msna421081>
- NAACP. (2017, November). *Fumes across the fence-line: The health impacts of air pollution from oil and gas facilities on African American communities*. Retrieved January 28, 2021, from NAACP.org: https://www.naacp.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Fumes-Across-the-Fence-Line_NAACP-and-CATF-Study.pdf
- National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian. (2022). *Teaching and Learning about Native Americans: Terminology*. Retrieved January 20, 2022, from <https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/faq/did-you-know>
- NCNA. (n.d.). *North Corktown community land trust*. Retrieved from North Corktown Neighborhood Association: <https://www.northcorktown.org/open-spaces-community-land-trust>
- Neavling, S. (2013, July 13). *Detroit arson a persistent problem as city services decline*. Retrieved September 22, 2019, from Huffington Post: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/07/15/detroit-arson_n_3591149.html
- Neavling, S. (2020, January 8). *Struggling to breathe in 48217, Michigan's most toxic ZIP code*. Retrieved January 28, 2021, from Metro Times: <https://www.metrotimes.com/detroit/struggling-to-breathe-in-48217-michigans-most-toxic-zip-code/Content?oid=23542211>
- Nethercott, S. (2020, March 10). Transcript of walking tour with Shaun Nethercott.
- New Detroit Organization. (2017). *Metropolitan Detroit race equity report*. Retrieved December 29, 2020, from NewDetroit.org: https://www.newdetroit.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/MetropolitanDetroit_RaceEquity_Report_NewDetroit.pdf
- Newman, E. (2021, January 11). *How coronavirus changed Detroit's water shutoff policy*. Retrieved August 27, 2021, from WDET: <https://wdet.org/posts/2021/01/11/90473-how-coronavirus-changed-detroits-water-shutoff-policy/>
- Newman, S., & Woodcock, J. (n.d.). *An illustrated guide to the wealth gap*. Retrieved February 14, 2022, from <https://connect.open.ac.uk/money-business-and-law/the-decade-the-rich-won>
- Nick Hedges Photography. (n.d.). *Slum housing and poverty*. Retrieved April 9, 2021, from <http://www.nickhedgesphotography.co.uk/photo-gallery/slum-housing-and-poverty/slum-clearance>
- North Corktown Neighborhood Association. (a). *North Corktown, history*. Retrieved February 19, 2021, from North Corktown Neighborhood Association: <http://www.northcorktown.com/history>
- North Corktown Neighborhood Association. (b). *Sustainable development plan*. Retrieved November 27, 2020, from North Corktown Neighborhood Association: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/56c2505db654f99dc44c3b90/t/5b9aa3a2aa4a998b0be21983/1536861097394/NCNA+North+Corktown+SD+Plan.pdf>
- North Corktown Neighborhood Association. (c). *Welcome to North Corktown*. Retrieved from North Corktown Neighborhood Association: <https://www.northcorktown.org/>

- North Corktown Neighborhood Association. (d). *North Corktown, Home*. Retrieved November 27, 2020, from North Corktown Neighborhood Association:
[/https://static1.squarespace.com/static/56c2505db654f99dc44c3b90/t/5b9aa3a2aa4a998b0be21983/1536861097394/NCNA+North+Corktown+SD+Plan.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/56c2505db654f99dc44c3b90/t/5b9aa3a2aa4a998b0be21983/1536861097394/NCNA+North+Corktown+SD+Plan.pdf)
- Nussbaum, M. (1990). Non-relative virtues: An Aristotelian approach. *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* (13).
- OECDa. (2017). *OECD: Poverty gap graph of 37 OECD countries*. Retrieved December 4, 2020, from <https://data.oecd.org/inequality/poverty-gap.htm#indicator-chart>
- OECDb. (2017). *OECD: Income inequality graph of 37 OECD countries*. Retrieved December 4, 2020, from <https://data.oecd.org/inequality/income-inequality.htm#indicator-chart>
- Olsen, A. K. (2013). Shrinking cities: Fuzzy concept or useful framework? *Berkeley Planning Journal*, 26.
- Oosting, J. (2012, November 11). *Michigan emergency manager law: What's next after Public Act 4 repeal?* Retrieved March 1, 2021, from MLive:
https://www.mlive.com/politics/2012/11/michigan_emergency_manager_law.html
- Oosting, J. (2018, June 27). *Michigan: No emergency managers for first time since '00* . Retrieved March 2, 2021, from Detroit News:
<https://eu.detroitnews.com/story/news/local/michigan/2018/06/27/michigan-no-emergency-managers-first-time-since-2000/737947002/>
- Ovink, H. (2014). Governing urban futures. *Urban Age: Governing urban futures conference* (p. 51). Delhi: Urban Age.
- Oxfam. (2022, January 17). *Briefing paper: Inequality kills: The unparalleled action needed to combat unprecedented inequality in the wake of COVID-19*. Retrieved February 14, 2022, from Oxfam Policy and Practice: <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/inequality-kills-the-unparalleled-action-needed-to-combat-unprecedented-inequal-621341/>
- Oxfam International. (2022, January 17). *Ten richest men double their fortunes in pandemic while incomes of 99 percent of humanity fall*. Retrieved February 14, 2022, from Oxfam International: <https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/ten-richest-men-double-their-fortunes-pandemic-while-incomes-99-percent-humanity>
- Pabst, A. (2010). The crisis of capitalist democracy. *Telos* 152 (Fall 2010), 152(Fall 2010), 44-67.
- Palackdharry, L. (2019, September 23). Transcript of interview with Libby Palackdharry.
- Parliamentary Network. (2020). *Just transitions: A roadmap to the century ahead*. Retrieved December 4, 2020, from <https://www.parlnet.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Just-Transitions-A-Roadmap-to-the-Century-Ahead.pdf>
- Patel, J. (2019, August 2). Transcript of interview with Jayesh Patel.
- PBS. (2014, December 12). *Emergency manager Kevyn Orr steps down as Detroit emerges from bankruptcy*. Retrieved March 2, 2021, from PBS News Hour:
<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/emergency-manager-kevyn-orr-steps-detroit-emerges-bankruptcy>

- Peck, J. (2005). Struggling with the creative class. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Volume 29.4, 740-770.
- Pels, P. (2015). Modern times: Seven steps toward an anthropology of the future. *Current Anthropology*, 56(6), 779-96.
- People's Water Board Coalition. (2020). *People's Water Board Coalition, take action*. Retrieved August 27, 2021, from https://sign.moveon.org/petitions/mayor-duggan-turnthewateron?fbclid=IwAR22TAjrSsqKrZ3AZudXRIZuyDgB8t0fd6OH_qeRqvHT1gn17mV7MoeQHvo
- People's Water Board Coalition. (2021). *People's Water Board Coalition, about us*. Retrieved August 27, 2021, from <https://www.peopleswaterboard.org/join-us/home/>
- Pettit, J., & White, S. (2004). Participatory Approaches and the Measurement of Human Well-Being. *UN University/World Institute for Development Economics Research (WIDER)*, 57.
- Philanthropy News Digest. (2014, November 17). *Grand bargain in Detroit exemplifies new kind of philanthropy*. Retrieved from Philanthropy News Digest: <https://philanthropynewsdigest.org/news/grand-bargain-in-detroit-exemplifies-new-kind-of-philanthropy>
- Pink, S. (2021). *Doing visual ethnography, 4th ed.* (Fourth Edition ed.). London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Pink, S., & Salazar, J. F. (2017). Anthropologies and futures: Setting the agenda. In A. Irving, S. Pink, J. F. Salazar, & J. (. Sjoberg, *Anthropologies and futures: Researching emerging and uncertain worlds* (pp. 3-22). London: Routledge.
- Ponyride. (2016). *Ponyride 2011-2016*. Detroit: Ponyride.
- Popper, D., & Popper, F. J. (1987). The Great Plains: from dust to dust. *Planning*.
- Power, A. (2012, August). *British Academy, New paradigms in public policy: The 'Big Society' and concentrated neighbourhood problems*. Retrieved September 29, 2021, from The British Academy: <https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/documents/261/Big-Society-concentrated-neighbourhood-problems.pdf>
- Pure Michigan. (n.d.). *Michigan's Great Lakes*. Retrieved March 2, 2021, from <https://www.michigan.org/great-lakes>
- Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*. New York: Simon and Schuster Paperbacks.
- Putnam, R. D. (2015). *Our kids: The American dream in crisis*. New York: Simon and Schuster Paperbacks.
- Quicken Loans. (n.d.). *Dan Gilbert biography*. Retrieved September 22, 2019, from Quicken Loans: <http://www.quickenloans.com/press-room/leadership-team-orig/dan-gilbert/>
- Rahman, A. (2008). Marching blind: The rise and fall of the Black Panther Party in Detroit. In Y. W. Lazerow (Ed.), *Liberated Territory* (pp. 181-231). Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Read, J. H. (2012). Is power zero-sum or variable-sum? Old arguments and new beginnings. *Journal of Political Power*, 5(1), 5-31.

- Reason, P., & Bradbury, H. (. (2008). *The Sage handbook of action research: Participatory inquiry and practice* (Second Edition ed.). London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Rebel Nell. (2021a). *About us, our Mission*. Retrieved September 22, 2021, from Rebel Nell: <https://www.rebelnell.com/pages/about-us#our-mission>
- Rebel Nell. (2021b). *Home*. Retrieved September 22, 2021, from Rebel Nell: <https://www.rebelnell.com/>
- Reese, H. (2017). *Cornel West: Neoliberalism has failed us*. Retrieved January 21, 2022, from <https://daily.jstor.org/daily-author/hope-reese/>
- Reuters World News. (2020). *Reuters: Half of Republicans say Biden won because of a 'rigged election: Reuters/Ipsos poll*. Retrieved January 2021, from <https://na01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.reuters.com%2Farticle%2Fuk-usa-election-poll%2Fhal>
- Reyes-Cortez, M. A. (2010). *Making memory in a megapolis: A photographic ethnography of the daily life of cemeteries in Mexico City [Doctoral thesis]* (PhD dissertation ed.). London: Goldsmiths, University of London.
- Rhys-Taylor, A. (2018). Westfield Stratford City: A walk through millennial urbanism. In C. a.-T. Bates, & C. B. Rhys-Taylor (Ed.), *Walking through social research* (pp. 104-127). Abingdon, Oxfordshire: Routledge.
- Riley, R. (2015, September 5). *Welcome to Core City, right here in Detroit*. Retrieved February 5, 2021, from Detroit Free Press: <https://eu.freep.com/story/news/columnists/rochelle-riley/2015/09/05/core-city-resident-fights-neighborhoods-identity/71707390/>
- Riner, R. D. (1987). Doing futures research anthropologically. *Futures*, 19(3), 311-28.
- Robinson, C. J. (2021). *Black Marxism: The making of the Black radical tradition (3rd ed.)* (Revised and Updated Third Edition ed.). Dublin: Penguin Books.
- Roosevelt Institute. (n.d.). *The New Deal*. Retrieved September 29, 2019, from <http://rooseveltinstitute.org/policy-and-ideasroosevelt-historyfdr/new-deal>
- Safransky, S. (2018). Land justice as a historical diagnostic: Thinking with Detroit. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, 108(2), 499-512.
- Saigol, L. (2013, July 19). *Emergency manager Orr prepared to be Detroit's 'most hated man'*. Retrieved March 2, 2021, from Financial Times: <https://www.ft.com/content/fa816308-f052-11e2-929c-00144feabdc0>
- Sampson, R. J. (2012). *Great American city: Chicago and the enduring neighborhood effect*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Sands, D. (2012, July 19). *Spaulding Court, historic North Corktown apartment complex, faces financial shortfall*. Retrieved February 17, 2022, from Huffington Post: https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/spaulding-court-historic-detroit-corktown_n_1684268
- Santiago-Romero, G. (n.d.). *About Gabriela*. Retrieved from Gabriela Santiago-Romero for Detroit City Council, District 6: <https://gabrielasantiagoromero.com/en/about>

- Sargsyan, N., & Kurtovic, L. (2019). After utopia: Leftist imaginaries and activist politics in the postsocialist world. *History and Anthropology*, 30(1), 1-19.
- Seale, C. (2012). Validity, reliability and the quality of research. In *Researching Society and Culture* (3rd ed.) (pp. 529-543). London: SAGE.
- Seenan, G. (2002, April 6). *Art thrives among the Gorbals tower blocks*. Retrieved April 9, 2021, from The Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2002/apr/06/regeneration.communities>
- Sen, A. (1985). *The standard of living [The Tanner lectures, Clare Hall, Cambridge]*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sen, A. (1995). Capability and well-being. *The quality of life: A study prepared for the World Institute for Development Economics Research (WIDER) of the United Nations University*, 30-53.
- SEU. (2001). *A new commitment to neighbourhood renewal: National strategy action plan*. London: HMSO.
- Sharp, D. (2020, March 6). Transcript of interview with Dotti Sharp.
- Shaw, J., Howard, J., & Lopez Franco, E. (2020). Building inclusive community activism and accountable relations through an intersecting inequalities approach. *Community Development Journal*, 55(1), 7-25.
- Shaw, M. (2011). Stuck in the middle? Community development, community engagement and the dangerous business of learning for democracy. *Community Development Journal* 46 (2), 46(Supp 2), 128-146.
- Shields, D. (2019, September 28). Transcript of interview with Danielle Shields.
- Shields, D. (2020, March 12). Transcript of walking tour with Danielle Shields.
- Smith, D. (2022, December 23). *January 6 panel accuses Trump of 'multi-part conspiracy' in final report*. Retrieved December 27, 2022, from The Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/dec/23/jan-6-panel-final-report-trump-capitol-attack>
- Smith, M. (2021, February 11). *Mayor Duggan wins a third term as Detroit's mayor*. Retrieved from The New York Times: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/02/us/elections/mike-duggan-detroit-mayor.html>
- Smith, S. E. (2000). *Dancing in the street: Motown and the cultural politics of Detroit* (Third printing ed.). Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Snavely, B., & Helms, M. (2014, October 2). *Orr says settlement with DIA averted costly legal fight*. Retrieved March 2, 2021, from The Detroit Free Press: <https://eu.freep.com/story/news/local/detroit-bankruptcy/2014/10/02/bankruptcy-preview-day/16562469/>
- Socialministeriet, D. (2002). *What is Good Institutional Care?* Ministry of Social Affairs, Denmark.
- Statistical Atlas. (2018). *Statistical Atlas, about*. Retrieved from Statistical Atlas of the United States: <https://statisticalatlas.com/about>

Statistical Atlas. (a). *Southwest Detroit overview*. Retrieved from Statistical Atlas:
<https://statisticalatlas.com/neighborhood/Michigan/Detroit/Southwest-Detroit/Overview>

Statistical Atlas. (b). *Population of Southwest Detroit*. Retrieved from Statistical Atlas: Population of Southwest Detroit,
 Michigan<https://statisticalatlas.com/neighborhood/Michigan/Detroit/Southwest-Detroit/Population>

Statistical Atlas. (c). *Briggs, Detroit overview*. Retrieved from Statistical Atlas:
<https://statisticalatlas.com/neighborhood/Michigan/Detroit/Briggs/Overview>

Statistical Atlas. (d). *Population of Detroit, Michigan*. Retrieved from Statistical Atlas:
<https://statisticalatlas.com/place/Michigan/Detroit/Population>

Statistical Atlas. (e). *Southwest Detroit, race and ethnicity*. Retrieved from Statistical Atlas:
<https://statisticalatlas.com/neighborhood/Michigan/Detroit/Southwest-Detroit/Race-and-Ethnicity>

Statistical Atlas. (f). *Southeast Detroit, household income*. Retrieved from Statistical Atlas: Statistical Atlas website: <https://statisticalatlas.com/neighborhood/Michigan/Detroit/Southwest-Detroit/Household-Income>

Statistical Atlas. (g). *Detroit, Michigan household income*. Retrieved from Statistical Atlas: Statistical Atlas website: <https://statisticalatlas.com/place/Michigan/Detroit/Household-Income>

Statistical Atlas. (h). *United States, household income*. Retrieved from Statistical Atlas:
<https://statisticalatlas.com/United-States/Household-Income>

Statistical Atlas. (i). *Southwest Detroit, food stamps*. Retrieved from Statistical Atlas:
<https://statisticalatlas.com/neighborhood/Michigan/Detroit/Southwest-Detroit/Food-Stamps>

Statistical Atlas. (j). *United States, food stamps*. Retrieved from Statistical Atlas:
<https://statisticalatlas.com/United-States/Food-Stamps>

Statistical Atlas. (k). *Briggs, Detroit population*. Retrieved from Statistical Atlas: Briggs, Detroit population, Statistical Atlas website;
<https://statisticalatlas.com/neighborhood/Michigan/Detroit/Briggs/Population>

Statistical Atlas. (l). *Briggs, Detroit, race and ethnicity*. Retrieved from Statistical Atlas:
<https://statisticalatlas.com/neighborhood/Michigan/Detroit/Briggs/Race-and-Ethnicity>

Statistical Atlas. (m). *Detroit, Michigan, race and ethnicity*. Retrieved from Statistical Atlas:
<https://statisticalatlas.com/place/Michigan/Detroit/Race-and-Ethnicity>

Statistical Atlas. (n). *Corktown, Detroit, race and ethnicity*. Retrieved from Statistical Atlas:
<https://statisticalatlas.com/neighborhood/Michigan/Detroit/Corktown/Race-and-Ethnicity>

Statistical Atlas. (o). *Briggs, Detroit, household income*. Retrieved from Statistical Atlas:
<https://statisticalatlas.com/neighborhood/Michigan/Detroit/Briggs/Household-Income>

Statistical Atlas. (p). *Corktown, Detroit, household income*. Retrieved from Statistical Atlas:
<https://statisticalatlas.com/neighborhood/Michigan/Detroit/Corktown/Household-Income>

- Statistical Atlas. (q). *Briggs, Detroit, food stamps*. Retrieved from Statistical Atlas:
<https://statisticalatlas.com/neighborhood/Michigan/Detroit/Corktown/Household-Income>
- Statistical Atlas. (r). *Detroit, Michigan, food stamps*. Retrieved from Statistical Atlas:
<https://statisticalatlas.com/neighborhood/Michigan/Detroit/Corktown/Household-Income>
- Statistical Atlas. (s). *Corktown, Detroit, food stamps*. Retrieved from Statistical Atlas:
<https://statisticalatlas.com/neighborhood/Michigan/Detroit/Corktown/Food-Stamps>
- Statistical Atlas. (t). *Briggs, Detroit, educational attainment*. Retrieved from Statistical Atlas:
<https://statisticalatlas.com/neighborhood/Michigan/Detroit/Briggs/Educational-Attainment>
- Statistical Atlas. (u). *Detroit, Michigan, educational attainment*. Retrieved from Statistical Atlas:
<https://statisticalatlas.com/place/Michigan/Detroit/Educational-Attainment>
- Statistical Atlas. (n.d.). *United States, educational attainment*. Retrieved from Statistical Atlas:
<https://statisticalatlas.com/United-States/Educational-Attainment>
- Statistical Atlas. (v). *Corktown, Detroit, educational attainment*. Retrieved from Statistical Atlas:
<https://statisticalatlas.com/neighborhood/Michigan/Detroit/Corktown/Educational-Attainment>
- Statistical Atlas. (w). *Briggs, Detroit, employment status*. Retrieved from Statistical Atlas:
<https://statisticalatlas.com/neighborhood/Michigan/Detroit/Briggs/Employment-Status>
- Statistical Atlas. (x). *Southwest, Detroit, employment status*. Retrieved from Statistical Atlas:
<https://statisticalatlas.com/neighborhood/Michigan/Detroit/Southwest-Detroit/Employment-Status>
- Statistical Atlas. (y). *Corktown, Detroit, employment status*. Retrieved from Statistical Atlas:
<https://statisticalatlas.com/neighborhood/Michigan/Detroit/Corktown/Employment-Status>
- Statistical Atlas. (z). *Corktown, Detroit, population*. Retrieved from Statistical Atlas:
<https://statisticalatlas.com/neighborhood/Michigan/Detroit/Corktown/Population>
- Statistical Atlas. (z1). *Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, food stamps*. Retrieved from Statistical Atlas:
<https://statisticalatlas.com/place/Michigan/Bloomfield-Hills/Food-Stamps>
- Statistical Atlas. (z2). *Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, race and ethnicity*. Retrieved from Statistical Atlas:
<https://statisticalatlas.com/place/Michigan/Bloomfield-Hills/Race-and-Ethnicity>
- Statistical Atlas. (z3). *Southwest, Detroit, educational attainment*. Retrieved from Statistical Atlas:
<https://statisticalatlas.com/neighborhood/Michigan/Detroit/Southwest-Detroit/Educational-Attainment>
- Statistical Atlas. (z4). *Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, educational attainment*. Retrieved from Statistical Atlas:
<https://statisticalatlas.com/place/Michigan/Bloomfield-Hills/Educational-Attainment>
- Stein, T. S. (2022, August 2). *Rashida Tlaib wins Democratic nomination in new 12th district*. Retrieved from Detroit Free Press:
<https://eu.freep.com/story/news/politics/elections/2022/08/02/tlaib-12-th-congressional-district-detroit/10200612002/>
- Stelter, B. (2011, November 30). *Camps are cleared, but '99 percent' still occupies the Lexicon*. Retrieved February 14, 2022, from The New York Times:

- <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/01/us/we-are-the-99-percent-joins-the-cultural-and-political-lexicon.html>
- Stempel, J. (2016, October 3). *Detroit defeats pensioners' appeal over bankruptcy cuts* . Retrieved March 2, 2021, from Reuters: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-detroit-bankruptcy-pensions-idUSKCN12322F>
- Street Democracy. (n.d.). *Street Outreach Court*. Retrieved February 2, 2022, from <https://www.streetdemocracy.org/socd>
- Strolovitch, D. Z., Wong, J. S., & Proctor, A. (2017). A possessive investment in white heteropatriarchy? The 2016 election and the politics of race, gender, and sexuality. *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 5 (2), 353-363.
- Suarez, D. (2020, May 26). Transcript of interview with Daniel Suarez (pseudonym).
- Sugrue, T. J. (2014). *The origins of the urban crisis: Race and inequality in postwar Detroit; with a new preface by the author*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Sullivan, K. (2019, July 15). *Here are the 4 congresswomen known as 'the squad' targeted by Trump's racist tweets*. Retrieved from CNN: <https://edition.cnn.com/2019/07/15/politics/who-are-the-squad/index.html>
- Talley, T. (2019a, September 27). Transcript of interview with Tricia Talley.
- Talley, T. (2019b, November 25). Transcript of walking tour with Tricia Talley.
- The Capuchin Soup Kitchen. (2022). *Earthworks urban farm*. Retrieved February 4, 2022, from CSK Detroit: <https://www.cskdetroit.org/earthworks/>
- The Charity Commission. (2000, November). *The promotion of community capacity building*. Retrieved from The Charity Commission: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/358882/rr5text.pdf
- The Detroit Free Press. (2013, August 17). *Weigh in on neighborhood map of Detroit*. Retrieved September 22, 2019, from The Detroit Free Press: <http://archive.freep.com/article/20130817/OPINION05/308170022/weigh-in-on-detroit-neighborhood-map>
- The Guardian. (2001, May 1). *The London May Day protests at a glance*. Retrieved from The Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/may/01/mayday.immigrationpolicy>
- The Henry Ford. (n.d.). *Ford Motor Company chronology*. Retrieved September 29, 2019, from The Henry Ford: <http://www.thehenryford.org/exhibits/fmc/chrono.asp>
- The Neighborhoods. (a). *The Neighborhoods, home*. Retrieved March 1, 2021, from <https://theneighborhoods.org/story/130m-investments-coming-seven-detroit-neighborhoods>
- The Neighborhoods. (b). *The Neighborhoods, Mexicantown*. Retrieved February 12, 2021, from <https://www.theneighborhoods.org/neighborhoods/mexicantown>
- The Neighborhoods. (c). *The Neighborhoods, North Corktown*. Retrieved from <https://www.theneighborhoods.org/neighborhoods/north-corktown>

- The New York Times. (1998, May 21). *Wilfred Little, 78, Brother of Malcolm X*. Retrieved February 3, 2022, from The New York Times: <https://www.nytimes.com/1998/05/21/us/wilfred-little-78-brother-of-malcolm-x.html>
- The New York Times. (2013, July 18). *Detroit's bankruptcy is the largest in the nation*. Retrieved September 29, 2019, from <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2013/07/18/us/detroit-bankruptcy-is-the-largest-in-nation.html?ref=us>,
- The Washington Post. (2022). *Investors bought a record share of homes in 2021. See where*. Retrieved March 25, 2022, from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/interactive/2022/housing-market-investors/>
- The World Bank. (2020). *Press release: COVID-19 to plunge global economy into worst recession since World War II*. Retrieved January 14, 2022, from <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/06/08/covid-19-to-plunge-global-economy-into-worst-recession-since-world-war-ii>
- The World Bank. (2021). *Learning losses from COVID-19 could cost this generation of students close to \$17 trillion in lifetime earnings*. Retrieved February 15, 2022, from <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2021/12/06/learning-losses-from-covid-19-could-cost-this-generation-of-students-close-to-17-trillion-in-lifetime-earnings>
- Towncharts, Figure 12, Oakland County. (2020). *Towncharts, Figure 12, Oakland County, Michigan Education Data*. Retrieved February 19, 2021, from <https://www.towncharts.com/Michigan/Education/Oakland-County-MI-Education-data.html#Figure12>
- Towncharts, Figure 12, Wayne County. (2020). *Wayne County, Michigan education data, Figure 12: Detailed education attainment breakout by race (age 25+)*. Retrieved February 19, 2021, from Towncharts: <https://www.towncharts.com/Michigan/Education/Wayne-County-MI-Education-data.html#Figure12>
- Towncharts, Figure 2, Oakland County. (2020). *Oakland County, Michigan education data, Figure 2: Oakland County, MI bachelors degree or better education*. Retrieved February 19, 2021, from Towncharts: <https://www.towncharts.com/Michigan/Education/Oakland-County-MI-Education-data.html#Figure2>
- Towncharts, Figure 5, Oakland County. (2020). *Oakland County, Michigan education data, Figure 5*. Retrieved February 19, 2021, from Towncharts: <https://www.towncharts.com/Michigan/Education/Oakland-County-MI-Education-data.html#Figure5>
- Towncharts, Figure 5, Wayne County. (2020). *Towncharts, Wayne County, Michigan Education Data, Figure 5*. Retrieved February 19, 2021, from <https://www.towncharts.com/Michigan/Education/Wayne-County-MI-Education-data.html#Figure5>
- Trenkner, T. (2012, April 23). *Emergency financial managers: Michigan's unwelcome savior*. Retrieved March 1 2021, from Governing.com: <https://www.governing.com/archive/gov-emergency-financial-managers-michigan-municipalities-unwelcome-savior.html#map>
- Twohig, B. (2018, December 16). *Marvin Gaye, Motown and Black power in What's Going On. 1968 Now: Revolution and revolt*. Retrieved January 21, 2022, from 19688691.me/wp-

content/uploads/2018/12/Benjamin-Twohig-Marvin-Gaye-Motown-and-Black-Power-Paper.pdf

UAW. (n.d.). *Who we are*. Retrieved February 3, 2022, from United Auto Workers: <https://uaw.org/about/>

UCLA. (2020). *Resources on Native American and Indigenous Affairs: Native American and Indigenous People's FAQs*. Retrieved January 20, 2022, from <https://equity.ucla.edu/know/resources-on-native-american-and-indigenous-affairs/native-american-and-indigenous-peoples-faqs/#term>

UK Coalition Government. (2010, July 19). *Big Society speech*. Retrieved September 29, 2021, from UK Government: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/big-society-speech>

umich.edu. (n.d.). *Brief 20th century history of Detroit*. Retrieved December 3, 2021, from University of Michigan: http://www.umich.edu/~ac213/student_projects06/neerhdo/

Unesco, Unicef and World Bank. (2021, December 3). *The state of the global education crisis: A path to recovery*. Retrieved February 15, 2022, from World Bank: https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/education/publication/the-state-of-the-global-education-crisis-a-path-to-recovery?cq_ck=1638565414093

United Nations. (2016). *Report of the working group of experts on people of African descent on its mission to the United States of America*. Retrieved from United Nations [United Nations Human Rights, Office of the High Commissioner]: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/wg-african-descent>

United Nations. (a). *SDG acceleration actions*. Retrieved December 11, 2020, from United Nations Sustainable Development: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgactions>

United Nations. (b). *The 17 goals*. Retrieved December 11, 2020, from United Nations Sustainable Development: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

United States Bureau of Labor. (n.d.). *US Bureau of Labor statistics*. Retrieved September 29, 2019, from US Bureau of Labor: <http://www.bls.gov/lau/lacilg10.htm>

United States Census Bureau. (1999). *Money income in the United States: 1998*. Retrieved from United States Census Bureau: <https://www2.census.gov/prod2/popscan/p60-206.pdf>

United States Census Bureau. (2019a). *Quick facts*. Retrieved December 4, 2020, from United States Census Bureau: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045216>

United States Census Bureau. (2019b). *Quick facts, Flint City Michigan*. Retrieved January 28, 2021, from United States Census Bureau: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/flintcitymichigan>

United States Census Bureau. (2019c). *Quick facts, Detroit City Michigan (1999)*. Retrieved December 29, 2020, from United States Census Bureau: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/detroitcitymichigan,MI/PST045219>

United States Census Bureau. (2024). *Quick Facts, Detroit City, Michigan*. Retrieved from United States Census Bureau: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/detroitcitymichigan/PST045223>

- United States Census Bureau. (n.d.). *Median household income 2009-2013 and persons below poverty level 2009-2013*. Retrieved September 29, 2019, from United States Census Bureau: <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/26/262200.html>
- University of Michigan. (a). *Research partnership between University of Michigan and community-based organizations releases plan for improving air quality and health in Detroit*. Retrieved January 28, 2021, from University of Michigan, School of Public Health: <https://sph.umich.edu/news/home-releases/caphe-060117.h>
- University of Michigan. (b). *University of Michigan faculty biography, Dr Paul Mohai*. Retrieved January 28, 2021, from University of Michigan Center for Sustainable Systems: <http://css.umich.edu/person/paul-mohai>
- US Census Bureau. (n.d.). *Quick Facts, Detroit City, Michigan*. Retrieved from US Census Bureau: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/detroitcitymichigan/PST045223>
- US House of Representatives. (n.d.). *Congressman Shri Thanedar, The 13th district of Michigan, about*. Retrieved from Thanedar, US House of Representatives: <https://thanedar.house.gov/about>
- US Social Forum. (2016, April 10). *USSF 3 evaluation and documentation 4.10.16*. Retrieved February 17, 2022, from US Social Forum: <https://www.ussocialforum.net/ussf3-eval-and-documentation.pdf>
- USEPA. (n.d.). *Environmental justice*. Retrieved January 29, 2021, from United States Environmental Protection Agency: <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice>
- Valentine, D. (2015). What happened to the future? *Anthropology Now*, 7(1), 110-20.
- Van Dusen, G. (2019). *Detroit's Birwood Wall: Hatred and healing in the West Eight Mile community*. Cheltenham: The History Press.
- Vergara-Perucich, F. (2021). Participatory action planning as transductive reasoning: Towards the right to the city in Los Arenales, Antofagasta, Chile. *Community Development Journal*, 56 (3), 56(3), 449-468.
- Virginia Tech. (n.d.). *Shrinking Cities Studio*. Retrieved September 18, 2017, from Virginia Tech: <http://shrinkingcities.ncr.vt.edu/index.html>
- Visit Detroit. (2018, January 16). *Lonely Planet top destination for 2018*. Retrieved November 27, 2020, from Visit Detroit: <https://visitdetroit.com/lonely-planet-names-detroit-a-top-destination-for-2018/#:~:text=Lonely%20Planet%20Names%20Detroit%20a%20Top%20Destination%20for%202018&text=Detroit%20is%20on%20a%20roll,selected%20for%20the%20prestigious%20list>
- Visit Detroit. (2019). *Visit Detroit*. Retrieved November 20, 2020, from <https://visitdetroit.com/corktown-detroit-hustle-grit/>
- Visual Ethnography. (n.d.). *VE Journal*. Retrieved April 18, 2021, from Visual Ethnography Journal: <http://www.vejjournal.org/index.php/vejjournal/index>

- Waldmeir, P. (2018, January 7). *Mayor Mike Duggan: How I am halting Detroit's decline*. Retrieved from Financial Times: <https://www.ft.com/content/735f82c2-e703-11e7-8b99-0191e45377ec>
- We are the 99 percent. (2013, October 14). Retrieved February 14, 2022, from We are the 99 percent tumblr: <https://wearethe99percent.tumblr.com/>
- We the People of Detroit. (2021). *We the people of Detroit, get help*. Retrieved August 27, 2021, from <https://www.wethepeopleofdetroit.com/get-help>
- West, C. (2017). *Race matters: 25th anniversary edition with a new introduction* (25th Anniversary ed.). Boston: Beacon Press.
- Willerer, G. (2020, March 10). Transcript of interview with Greg Willerer.
- Williams, O. A. (2021, December 21). *Billionaire space race Turns into a publicity disaster*. Retrieved February 14, 2022, from Forbes: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/oliverwilliams1/2021/12/21/billionaire-space-race-turns-into-a-publicity-disaster/?sh=5fdb7175e4d>
- Wimbley, R. (2021, March 6). *Community fumes after author names Duggan as Black Bottom saint in project to honor historic Detroit*. Retrieved from Fox 2 Detroit: <https://fox2detroit.com/news/community-fumes-after-author-names-duggan-a-black-bottom-saint-in-project-to-honor-historic-detroit>
- Wolf, M. (2019, December 3). *Why rigged capitalism is damaging liberal democracy*. Retrieved December 4, 2020, from Financial Times: <https://www.ft.com/content/4cf2d6ee-14f5-11ea-8d73-6303645ac406>
- World Health Organization. (2020, December 23). *A year without precedent: WHO's COVID-19 response*. Retrieved October 20, 2022, from World Health Organization: <https://www.who.int/news-room/spotlight/a-year-without-precedent-who-s-covid-19-response>
- Yacino, S. (2013, March 12). *Detroit asks for more time to avoid takeover*. Retrieved March 2, 2021, from The New York Times: <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/13/us/detroit-seeks-more-time-to-avoid-state-takeover.html>
- Young, G. (2010, April 14). *An interview with Frank Popper about shrinking cities, Buffalo Commons, and the future of Flint*. Retrieved from Flint Expatriates: <http://www.flintexpats.com/2010/05/interview-with-frank-popper-about.html>
- Zorach, N. M. (2021, November 1). *Mike Duggan's legacy of austerity, corporate power, and state violence*. Retrieved from The Handbuilt City: <https://handbuiltcity.org/2021/11/01/mike-duggans-legacy-of-austerity-corporate-power-and-state-violence>

Appendix A: Catalogue of Images, Graphs and Tables

Figures 1 and 2. 1: Photographs of Commons Park, North Corktown, 27 Nov 2019. 2: Springwells House, Brilliant Detroit, Southwest Detroit (9 March 2020) (pg. 67).

Figure 3: Diagram of contacts made through third-party referrals (pg. 107).

Figures 4 and 5: Left: Children stand in front of Eight Mile Wall (photo credit: Library of Congress). Right: Young people walk through Alfonso Wells Memorial Park in front of the Birwood Wall (photo credit: Todd McInturf, *Detroit News*) (Kowalski, 2019) (pg. 119).

Figures 6-9: Top row, left: Cadillac Urban Gardens (Sept 2019). Right: Earthworks Urban Farm (May 2015). Bottom row, left: MIUFI agrihood (Dec 2016). Right: Georgia Street Community Garden (May 2015) (pg. 124).

Figure 10: Population of Detroit 1950-2010 (McDonald J. F., 2014b) (pg. 127).

Figure 11: Shows the reduction in federal funding to states for point source water pollution control. Examples of point source pollution include factories, refineries, steel mills, coal power plants, petrochemical facilities, and other industrial plants (pg. 150).

Figures 12 and 13: Views along the same river in Detroit. Left: Looking left towards the Ambassador Bridge and Canada (March 2020). Right: Looking towards Zug Island from Delray neighbourhood (November 2017) (pg. 159).

Figure 14: Bar chart depicting critical issues in Detroit, identified by participants (pg. 161).

Figures 15-19: Top row, left: Downtown Detroit (December 2018). Middle: Sidewalk in Southwest, (March 2020. Right: Campus Martius 'beach' (May 2015). Bottom row, left: Vacant land in North Corktown (March 2020). Right: Homes in North Corktown (March 2020) (pg. 166).

Figures 20, 21, 22: Left: #Turn the Water On petition to Mayor Duggan (People's Water Board Coalition, 2020). Middle: Water Drop Locations map (We the People of Detroit, 2021). Right: Detroit Water Brigade Facebook page (Detroit Water Brigade, 2020) (pg. 191).

Figure 23: Screenshot of Detroit Water Brigade Facebook page (Detroit Water Brigade, 2020) (pg. 193).

Figure 24: Word cloud depicting frequency associated with 'New Detroit' from resident interviews (pg. 200).

Figure 25: Word cloud depicting frequency associated with 'Old Detroit' from resident interviews (pg. 200).

Figure 26: Venn diagram showing relationship of two concepts of 'New Detroit' and 'Old Detroit' (pg. 204).

Figure 27: Separated by as little as a city block ... a boarded-up house in Brush Park with Downtown Detroit behind it. Photograph: Rebecca Cook/Reuters/Corbis (pg. 207).

Figures 28 and 29: Cover and introduction from North Corktown Neighborhood Association's Sustainable Development Plan (North Corktown Neighborhood Association, b) (pg. 210).

Figure 30: Screenshot of *Google* search return for 'Detroit map', suggesting commonly asked, related questions, retrieved 5 February 2021 (pg. 213).

Figure 31: Income inequality graph for 37 OECD countries (OECD, 2017). US as 34th of 37 (pg. 216).

Figure 32: Table of socio-economic and diversity statistics by neighbourhood (pg. 218).

Figures 34-37: Top row: Photographs of Southwest Detroit. Left: Bagley St. Right: Vernor Hwy (March 2020). Bottom row: Photographs of North Corktown. Left: Perry St (Nov 2019). Right: Brother Nature Farm (March 2020) (pg. 239).

Figures 38 and 39: Photographs showing views of Michigan Central Train Station from different perspectives. Left: From North Corktown. Right: From Southwest (both March 2020) (pg. 239).

Figures 40-43: Top row: Photographs of homes in disrepair. Left: North Corktown. Right: Southwest. Bottom row: Photographs of empty commercial buildings. Left: North Corktown. Right: Southwest (March 2020) (pg. 240).

Figures 44-52: Photo compilation of nine resident tour guides in the neighbourhood locations of their choosing (November 2019 and March 2020) (pg. 243).

Figures 53 and 54: Left: Local area facts. Right: Overview map of Southwest neighbourhood (Statistical Atlas, a) (pg. 245).

Figure 55: Photograph of mural with Frida Kahlo and alebrijes, Mexicantown, August 2023 (pg. 246).

Figure 56: Lovelands Detroit neighbourhood map, North Corktown highlighted (Lovelands Detroit, 2013) (pg. 247).

Figure 57: Inset map of Southwest Detroit neighbourhoods (Data Driven Detroit, 2013) (pg. 247).

Figure 58: Photograph of mural outside of Matrix Theatre Company, Southwest Detroit, January 2024 (pg. 249).

Figures 59-83: Photographs directed by Alondra Carter-Alvizo during her tour of Southwest Detroit (November 2019) (pgs. 256, 257, 258, 259, 261, 262, 273, 279).

Figures 84-130: Photographs directed by Shaun Nethercott during her tour of Southwest Detroit (March 2020) (pgs. 264, 265, 266, 268, 270, 280, 389).

Figure 131: Photograph of similar mural in another location by The Hygienic Dress League (Carlson, 2017) and replacement mural (Baetens, 2019) (pg. 272).

Figures 132-151: Photographs directed by Danielle Shields during her tour of Southwest Detroit (March 2020) (pgs. 275, 276, 279, 282).

Figures 152 and 153: Left: Local area facts. Right: North Corktown inset map (Data Driven Detroit, 2023) (pg. 284).

Figure 154: Photograph looking into North Corktown from freeway entrance ramp, December 2016 (pg. 285).

Figure 155: Detroit neighbourhood map, North Corktown highlighted (Lovelands Detroit, 2013) (pg. 285).

Figures 156-162: Top row, far left and right: Photographs of streetside gardening (March 2020). Second from left: Commons Park (March 2020). Second from right: Brother Nature Farm (November 2019). Bottom row, left: Vacant lots along Perry Street (March 2020). Middle: Brother Nature Farm (March 2020). Right: Vacant lots with train station in the background (November 2019) (pg. 288).

Figures 163-168: Photographs directed by Tricia Talley during her tour of North Corktown (November 2019) (pgs. 291, 294, 298).

Figures 169-187: Photographs directed by Will McDowell on his tour of North Corktown (November 2019) (pgs. 300, 301, 304, 306).

Figures 188-209: Photographs directed by Jeff Klein during his tour of North Corktown (March 2020) (pgs. 308, 309, 310, 314, 318).

Figures 210-213: Photographs provided by Jeff Klein by email (April 2020) (pg. 309).

Figures 214, 215, 216: Photographs of Corktown. Left: Michigan Avenue shopfronts. Middle: View down Michigan Avenue to Downtown (both September 2019). Right: Michigan Central Station (December 2016) (pg. 313).

Figures 217 and 218: Left: Pedestrian overpass linking Corktown and North Corktown (March 2020). Right: View over I-75 freeway dividing two parts of historic Corktown (November 2019) (pg. 313).

Figures 219, 220, 221: Photographs of North Corktown. Left: Residential house. Middle: Vacant lot on Perry and Wabash streets. Right: Residential house on a historic red brick road (March 2020) (pg. 313).

Figures 222-26: Photographs depicting evolution of ownership of Michigan Central Station. Top row left and right: Period while owned by Maroon family (December 2016). Middle row. Left: After Ford's purchase, with Ford security van parked in front (March 2020). Right: Nearly two years after Ford's purchase, complete with new windows (December 2021). Bottom row: Station and Roosevelt Park, following renovations (March 2024) (Michigan Central, 2024) (pg. 321).

Figures 227-249: Photographs directed by Bill Cheek during his tour of North Corktown (March 2020) (pgs. 323, 324, 332).

Figures 250-269: Photographs directed by Mike Dakoske during his tour of North Corktown (March 2020) (pgs. 334, 335, 337, 345).

Figures 270, 272, 271: Left: Hostel Detroit (Hostel Detroit). Middle: Monumental Kitty (Atlas Obscura). Right: Nancy Whiskey's Bar (November 2019) (pg. 339).

Figures 273, 274, 275: Left: Trout Park. Middle: Pink Flamingo (both March 2020). Right: Soup at Spaulding Court (Facebook, 2018) (pg. 339).

Figure 276: The 'pheasant mural', North Corktown, November 2019 (pg. 373).

Figures 277-305: Photographs directed by Kristyn Koth during her tour of North Corktown (March 2020) (pgs. 347, 348, 350, 351, 352, 355).

Figures 309-308: Top row, left: Fast food shop, Southwest. Right: Honeybee Market, Southwest (both November 2019). Bottom row, left: Nancy Whiskey's Bar, North Corktown (November 2019). Right: Brother Nature Farm (March 2020) (pg. 385).

Figures 310 and 311: Left: Southwest mural. Right: North Corktown mural (both November 2019) (pg. 360).

Figures 312 and 313: Left: 'Children playing in a patch of Gorbals wasteland 1970', photograph by Nick Hedges (Nick Hedges Photography). Right: 'The Attendants' (Geograph) (pg. 362).

Figures 314-317: Top row: Corner of Harrison and Temple streets. Left: Empty lots with existing house (August 2018). Right: Two new houses and existing house (June 2024). Bottom row: Cochrane Street. Left: Empty lot from *Google* Streetview (August 2021). Right: Promotional signage for new development (June 2024) (pg. 364).

Figures 318 and 319: Left: Dotti Sharp (March 2020). Right: Screenshot from Michigan Community Resources website of The Power of One Dedicated Woman award recipients (2021) (pg. 376).

Figures 320-323: Photographs from visits to two Brilliant Detroit centres (9 and 12 March 2020) (pg. 377).

Figures 324-327: Photographs of visit to Ponyride in Corktown location (10 October 2018) (pg. 378).

Figure 328: Metrics of success presented by Empowerment Plan on website (Empowerment Plan, 2019b) (pg. 379).

Figure 329: Metrics of success presented by Rebel Nell on website (Rebel Nell, 2021b) (pg. 379).

Figures 330, 331, 332: Photographs from Rebel Nell workshops. Top row, left: At Ponyride location (10 October 2018). Top right and bottom: At Goldberg location (28 September 2019) (pg. 381).

Figures 333-336: Photographs from visits to MIUFI urban farm. Top right, top left and bottom left: (29 December 2016). Bottom right: (15 November 2017) (pg. 383).

Figures 337-340: Photographs from interview with Greg Willerer at Brother Nature Farm (10 March 2020) (pg. 385).

Figure 341: Pie chart depicting breakdown of individuals by interview type (pg. 439).

Figure 342: Bar chart depicting breakdown of participants by location of residence (pg. 440).

Figure 343: Bar chart depicting breakdown of duration of time spent by participants as residents of Detroit (pg. 441).

Figure 344: Pie chart depicting breakdown of age of participants (pg. 441).

Figure 345: Pie chart depicting self-identified gender breakdown of participants (pg. 442).

Figure 346: Pie chart depicting self-identified disability breakdown of participants (pg. 442).

Figure 347: Pie chart depicting self-identified ethnicity breakdown of participants (pg. 443).

Figure 348: Bar chart depicting comparison of unpaid and paid community development-related activity of participants (pg. 444).

Figure 349: Bar chart depicting self-identified definitions of multiple participants (pg. 445).

Figure 350: Word cloud of words used by respondents of how they define themselves in relation to their community activity (pg. 445).

Figure 351: Bar chart of self-identified motivations of participants (pg. 446).

Figure 352: Table summarising % and significance of responses for motivation of 'reimagining Detroit' analysed by duration of time participants have spent as residents in Detroit (pg. 447).

Figure 353: Table summarising % and significance of responses for motivation of 'helping others' analysed by duration of time participants have spent as residents in Detroit (pg. 448).

Figure 354: Table summarising % and significance of responses for motivation of 'improving representation' analysed by duration of time participants have spent as residents in Detroit (pg. 449).

Figure 355: Table summarising % and significance of responses for motivation of 'reimagining Detroit' analysed by age of respondent (pg. 450).

Figure 356: Table summarising % and significance of responses for motivation of 'helping others' analysed by age of respondents (pg. 451).

Figure 357: Table summarising % and significance of responses for motivation of 'improving representation' analysed by age of respondents (pg. 451).

Figure 358: Table summarising % and significance of responses for motivation of 'reimagining Detroit' analysed by ethnicity of respondents (pg. 453).

Figure 359: Table summarising % and significance of responses for motivation of 'helping others' analysed by ethnicity of respondents (pg. 453).

Figure 360: Table summarising % and significance of responses for motivation of 'improving representation' analysed by ethnicity of respondents (pg. 454).

Figure 361: Table summarising % and significance of responses for motivation of 'reimagining Detroit' analysed by gender of respondents (pg. 455).

Figure 362: Table summarising % and significance of responses for motivation of 'helping others' analysed by gender of respondents (pg. 455).

Figure 363: Table summarising % and significance of responses for motivation of 'improving representation' analysed by gender of respondents (pg. 456).

Appendix B: Key Dates in Detroit's History

- 1701: Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac established a settlement at the Detroit River called Fort Pontchartrain du Detroit, with the agreement of the French Court (History Detroit, 2021)
- King Louis of France provided \$300 to build a fort at the new settlement (History Detroit)
- 1745-1759: British troops battled the French and seized control of their posts east of the Detroit River settlement, leaving it a remaining significant stronghold for the French (History Detroit)
- 1760: British General Amherst captured Montreal and as stated in the Articles of Capitulation, all remaining French holdings, including Detroit, became the property of the British (History Detroit)
- 1760: Upon its capture, the British began to call the fort, 'Fort Detroit' (History Detroit)
- 1796: American troops battled the British to take control of Detroit (History Detroit)
- 1802: Detroit is incorporated into a town and holds its first election (History Detroit)
- 1805: A fire in Detroit destroyed all but one of the town's 300 buildings (History Detroit)
- 1805: Augustus B. Woodward devised a street plan for Detroit, with a main web of main roads radiating out from a central park called Campus Martius (History Detroit)
- 1833: The Blackburn Affair took place, when a group of residents supported two formerly enslaved Black people to escape to Canada (Boyd, 2018)
- 1850: Detroit's population reached 21,019, from 1,650 in 1810 (History Detroit)
- 1893: Pingree Potato Farms established by Mayor Pingree in response to severe economic depression (Gallagher, 2010)
- 1900: Detroit's population reached 285,704 (History Detroit)
- 1903: Henry Ford established the Ford Motor Company in Detroit and sells its first car (The Henry Ford)
- 1908: General Motors was founded in Detroit with the Buick Motor Company, before it acquired a further twenty automobile companies, including Oldsmobile and Cadillac (General Motors)
- 1910: Detroit became the ninth-largest city in the United States (umich.edu)
- 1913: Henry Ford designed the first moving assembly line, initially used to manufacture the Model T Ford at the Highland Park Plant, and became the benchmark for mass production around the world (Ford Motor Company, 2021)
- 1914: The Ford Motor Company introduced \$5 a day minimum wage (The Henry Ford)
- 1914-1918: World War I

- 1919: The Red Summer riots took place across the country, fuelled by inequality and racial tensions (Boyd, 2018)
- 1920: Chrysler established Chrysler Corporation in Detroit (Chrysler Corporation)
- 1920: Detroit's population increased to 993,678 (History Detroit)
- 1926: The Ford Motor Company introduced the 40-hour work week (The Henry Ford)
- 1929: Wall Street stock market crashed, leading to the Great Depression and by 1932, more than 13 million people were unemployed in the US (BBC), with Detroit seeing the highest unemployment rate of any US city at 50% (Roosevelt Institute)
- 1930s: Labour unions, including the union of the United Auto Workers (UAW), grew in strength, with the UAW first established in Detroit (UAW)
- 1933: President Franklin Roosevelt launched the national New Deal programme, a set of measures designed to alleviate the effects of the depression (Roosevelt Institute)
- 1934: Nation of Islam was established in Detroit by W. D. Fard and Elijah Muhammad (Masjid Wali Muhammad, 2020)
- 1939-1945: World War II
- 1942: Sojourner Truth rebellion over Black occupancy of new housing development of same name, with National Guard deployed to protect families moving in (Boyd, 2018)
- 1943: The first of the major Detroit Rebellions, which was also one of the worst riots in twentieth century America, resulting in 34 deaths, 675 serious injuries and 1,893 arrests (Sugrue, 2014)
- 1950: Detroit's population reached its height, at 1,849,568 (History Detroit)
- 1953: Detroit boasted the largest number of independently owned Black businesses of any city in the US (Boyd, 2018)
- 1959: Berry Gordy Jr established Motown Records in Detroit (originally called Tamla Motown) (Classic Motown)
- 1950s-1970s: Expansion of the freeway system in Detroit intended to increase ease of access to the suburbs (Boyd, 2018)
- 1960: Detroit's population began to decline and reached 1,670,144 (History Detroit)
- 1961-1971: 163 Motown singles reached the Top 20 pop charts, including 28 number-one hits (Classic Motown)
- 1963: Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. held Walk to Freedom March in Detroit, where he rehearsed his seminal 'I Have a Dream' speech (Boyd, 2018)
- 1963: Malcolm X gave his famous 'Message to the Grass Roots' speech in Detroit (Boyd, 2018)

- 1965: Malcolm X gave his final speech in Detroit on the same day that his house in New York was firebombed. One week later, Malcolm X was assassinated in New York (Boyd, 2018)
- 1967: The second of the major Detroit Rebellions, one of the most brutal rebellions in America's history. After 5 days of violence, it resulted in 43 deaths, 7,231 arrests and 2,509 buildings destroyed (Sugrue, 2014)
- 1968: Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in Memphis, triggering riots all over the country (Boyd, 2018)
- 1968 to 1974: Wayne State University in Detroit was a hotbed of activism, particularly in the development of Black nationalist movements (Boyd, 2018)
- 1970: Detroit's population continued to decline to 1,511,482 (History Detroit)
- 1972: Motown Records moved its headquarters from Detroit to Los Angeles (Classic Motown)
- 1980: Detroit's population was 1,203,339 (History Detroit)
- 1988: Berry Gordy Jr sold Motown Records to MCA and Boston Partners, ending its era as an independent company (Classic Motown)
- 1990: Detroit's population was 1,027,974 (History Detroit)
- 1991: Ford Motor Company's largest one-year loss ever, at \$2.3billion (The Henry Ford)
- 2000: Detroit's population fell below one million to 951,270 (History Detroit)
- 2013: Only one auto factory remained in Detroit, the Chrysler Jefferson North Plant (Sugrue, 2014)
- March 2013: Michigan Governor Rick Snyder devised Public Act 436, which gave power to a new Emergency Manager for Detroit to take control of all financial matters of the city (*Detroit News*, 2014)
- July 2013: Detroit filed for bankruptcy with a debt of \$18billion (*The New York Times*, 2013)
- July 2013: Governor Snyder appointed Emergency Manager Kevyn Orr (*Detroit News*, 2014)
- Nov 2013: Federal government awarded \$24million grant to recruit Detroit firefighters in response to increasing levels of arson in the city and diminishing fire service available to respond due to funding cuts (*Michigan Radio*, 2013)
- Dec 2013: US Bankruptcy Judge Steven Rhodes ruled that Detroit was legally entitled to pursue bankruptcy
- Jan 2014: Newly elected Mayor of Detroit, Mike Duggan, assumed office
- Sept 2014: Detroit City Council voted unanimously to remove the Emergency Manager and return control to the City Council and Mayor of Detroit (*MSNBC*, 2014)

- Dec 2014: Formal bankruptcy proceedings brought to a close in Detroit, after 17 months, the largest municipal bankruptcy in the US (Davey, 2014b)
- 2016: Official launch of Mayor's Strategic Neighbourhood Fund (first round), followed by second round in 2018 (Branche-Wilson & Wileden, 2020)
- Feb 2017: MCRC concluded investigation finding 'systemic racism that repeatedly led to disparate racial outcomes as exemplified by the Flint water crisis' (MCRC, 2017)
- October 2018: In 2014, Detroit's municipal water company began cutting off water to residents' homes who were unable to pay and, as of October 2018, 112,000 homes were without running water (ACLU Michigan, 2020b)
- Jan 2020: World Health Organisation declared the Coronavirus outbreak a 'public health emergency of international concern' (World Health Organization, 2020)
- 2020: Coalition of civil rights lawyers and organisations file a petition to the state to suspend water shutoffs by declaring a public health emergency (ACLU Michigan, 2020b)
- March 2020: Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer enacts executive order to temporarily suspend water shutoffs in response to Coronavirus (Lakhani, 2020)
- Dec 2020: Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan extended temporary suspension to residential water shutoffs until 2022 as part of the city's 'COVID-19 Water Restart Plan' and the federal CARES Act (Ferretti & Rahal, 2020)
- January 2021: Former Governor Rick Snyder and eight city and state officials were criminally charged for their role in the Flint water crisis (Booker, 2021)
- November 2021: Launch of 'Reconnecting Communities Programme', new initiative under the Biden administration to address racial inequalities in US highway design (Epstein & Wingrove, 2021). Governor Whitmer proposes plans to demolish I-375 and I-375/I-75 Interchange in Detroit (DeVito, 2021)

Appendix C: Full Interview Questionnaire

Interview Questions for Involved Residents and Community Leaders

1. Which neighbourhood do you live in?
2. How would you describe your neighbourhood?
3. How long have you lived in Detroit? Your particular neighbourhood?
4. Please could you describe the nature of the local activity you are involved in? What term/s would you use?
5. Where is this activity based and how long have you been involved?
6. What term would you use to describe yourself in relation to your local activity?
7. What is/was your motivation for getting involved?
8. What do you see – if any – as the impact of your involvement to date?
9. What would you like to see change as a result of your involvement?
10. How would you describe the geographical reach of your involvement – neighbourhood-based, Detroit-wide, state-wide, global?
11. Would you describe the activity you are involved in as independent in nature or part of any wider collective activity or movement?
12. Are you involved in any networks or groups involving other projects or residents' groups involved in community activity in Detroit?
13. Do you see any collective activity or movement in the Detroit and/or its neighbourhoods? If so, how would you describe it and what would you call it?
14. Where and how do you think it has been most effective?
15. Do you believe there are any common values driving community activity in Detroit?
16. Do you see any relationship between community activity in Detroit and elsewhere? If so, please describe.
17. Do you think there has been a change in the level or type of community action in Detroit in recent years? If so, what has been the trigger/tipping point leading to this change?
18. How would you describe the relationship between involved residents from the neighbourhoods and politicians/investors in the city?
19. How would you describe the allocation of public funding and/or private investment in neighbourhood revitalisation? In Detroit's revitalisation?
20. How would you describe the relationship between residents and politicians/officials in Detroit? Has this changed in recent years? Do you believe it is different in Detroit compared to elsewhere?
21. Do you think this has led to a change in how the city and its neighbourhoods are managed, basic services delivered, etc.? Has this changed what residents have come to expect from their city?
22. How would you describe the relationship between neighbours in your area? How would you compare this to elsewhere?

23. What do you believe is the role of involved residents and community leaders in shaping the future of the neighbourhoods? Detroit as a whole? Please describe.
24. What is your vision for your neighbourhood?
25. Do you think it is possible? What would it take to be achieved?
26. How would you describe the relationship between your neighbourhood and the wider City of Detroit?
27. How would you describe the pace of change in the neighbourhoods? In Detroit?
28. Do you believe that the priorities of you and your community/neighbourhood are appropriately represented in decision-making in the city?
29. What place/person/image/word best symbolises for you your neighbourhood at this moment in time? Detroit at this moment in time?
30. What does 'community' mean to you at this moment in time in Detroit?
31. What is your vision for the City of Detroit?
32. Do you think it is possible? What would it take to be achieved?
33. If it were up to you, how would its success be measured?
34. What, if anything – in your opinion – makes Detroit unique?
35. What – in your opinion – can other cities learn from Detroit?
36. How would you describe the circumstances that led Detroit to where it is now?
37. Are there any particular national or global events or shifts that you feel have had a direct impact on Detroit?
38. How would you describe Detroit before the Financial Crisis (2008) and bankruptcy filing (2013)?
39. How would you describe Detroit at this moment in time?
40. How would you describe Detroit's neighbourhoods at this moment in time?
41. If you had the opportunity to share one message about Detroit to people from outside, what would it be?

Additional question if there is time:

Are there any particular initiatives that you think are making a positive difference in the neighbourhoods that you feel I should know about? If so, which ones?

Appendix D: Profiles, Perceptions and Motivations of Participants

The fieldwork for this research consisted of 30 qualitative interviews and nine walking ethnographies with Detroit residents. The 30 qualitative interviews were conducted with a cross-section of active residents and paid community development practitioners from across the City of Detroit, while the nine walking ethnographies were led by residents from two selected neighbourhoods of North Corktown and Southwest Detroit. Five individuals participated in both the walking ethnography and qualitative interview. In total, 36 unique individuals, both present and past metro Detroit residents, were interviewed as part of this fieldwork.

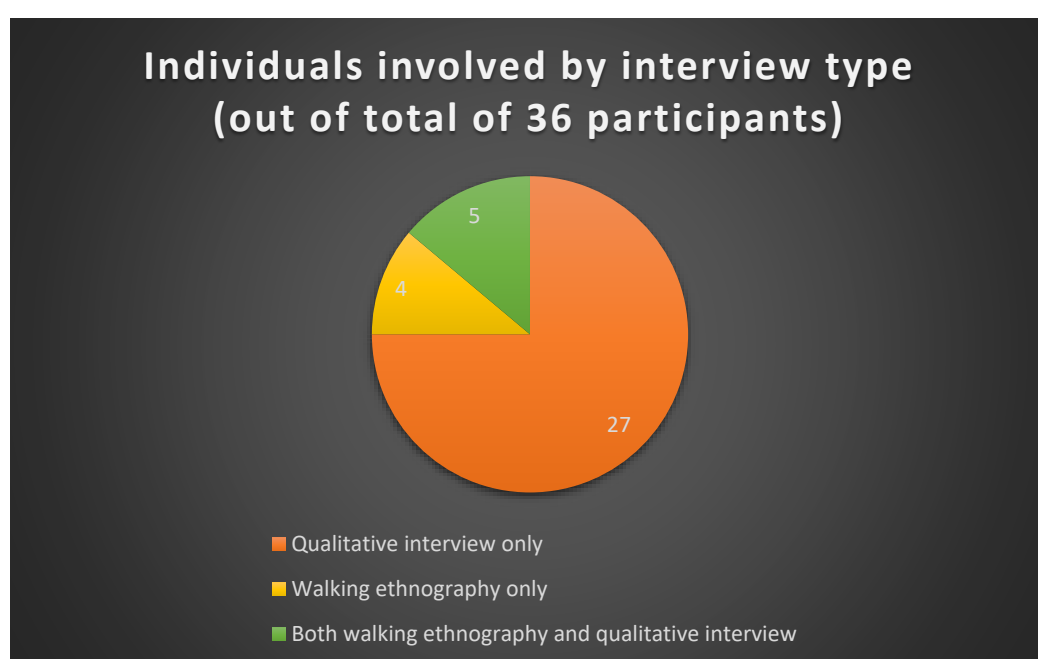


Figure 341: Pie chart depicting breakdown of individuals by interview type.

Demographic breakdown of participants. Of the 36 unique individuals who took part in the interviews, 75% were residents of Detroit at the time of the interviews, while 22.2% were either living in the suburbs of Detroit (also known as 'Metro Detroit', incorporating the City of Detroit and its suburbs) or had relocated to other states. This equates to 97.2% of the unique individuals, as information on the current residence of one participant was not known.

Of the participants who were Detroit residents, 25% (9 individuals) were from the North Corktown neighbourhood, 22.2% (8 individuals) were from the Southwest Detroit neighbourhood, 5.6% (2 individuals) were from neighbourhoods that did not have an identified name, and the remaining 22.2% (8 individuals) were from other Detroit neighbourhoods (including 2 from East English Village, 1 from Brightmoor, 1 from North End and 1 from New Center).

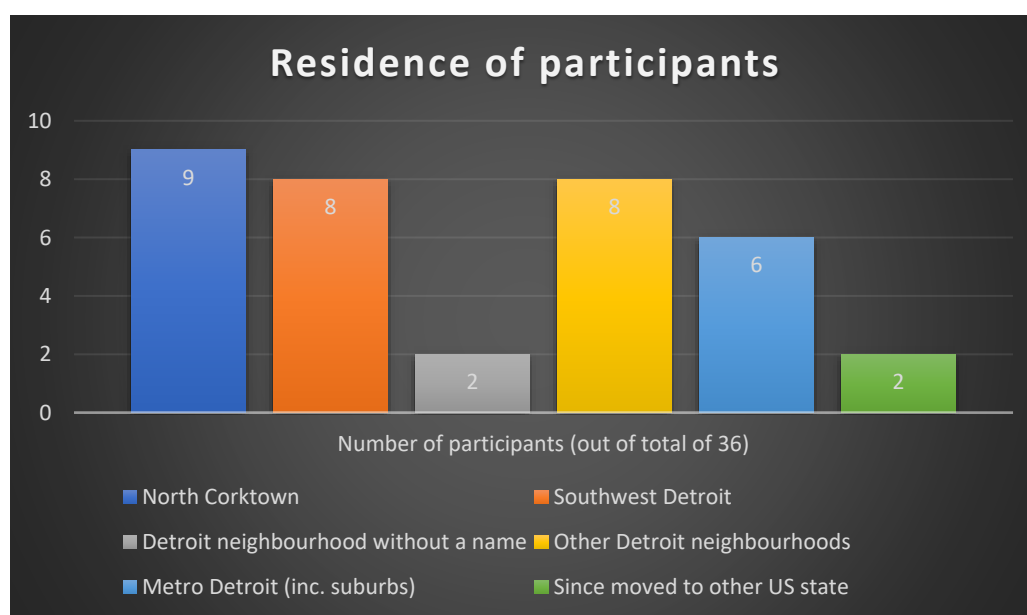


Figure 342: Bar chart depicting breakdown of participants by location of residence.

Of the participants who were not residents of Detroit at the time of the interviews, 16.7% lived in the suburbs of Detroit and worked in Detroit (six individuals), while 5.6% (two individuals) had recently moved to other states by the time of the interviews, but had previously lived and worked in Detroit.

The highest proportion of participants, 36.1% (13 individuals) of the 36 interviewed identified themselves as 'lifelong residents' or 'Detroiters' or confirmed that they had lived in the city since birth. This was followed by 16.7% (six individuals) who had been Detroit residents for 5-10 years and 13.9% (five individuals) who had been resident for between 10-20 years. Next, 8.3% (three individuals) had moved to Detroit in the last five years, while 5.6% (two individuals) confirmed that they had lived in Detroit for more than 20 years.

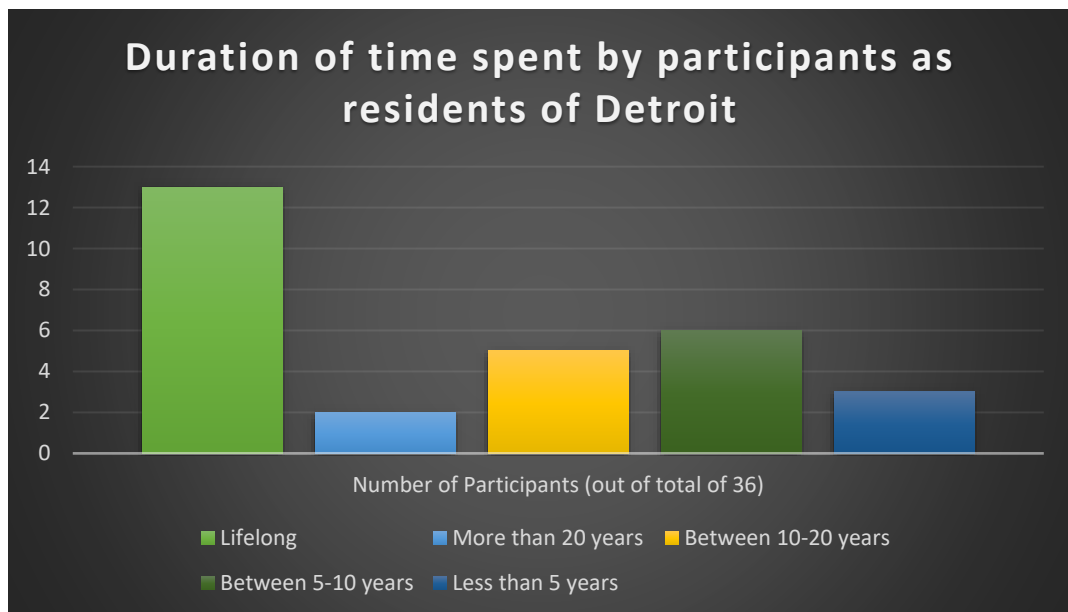


Figure 343: Bar chart depicting breakdown of duration of time spent by participants as residents of Detroit.

The age breakdown of the 36 participants consisted of 2.8% under the age of 21 (one individual), 36.1% aged between 21-39 (13 individuals), 44.4% aged between 40-59 (16 individuals) and 16.7% (six individuals) aged over 60. Monitoring information on age was confirmed for all participants, accounting for 100% of participants' ages.

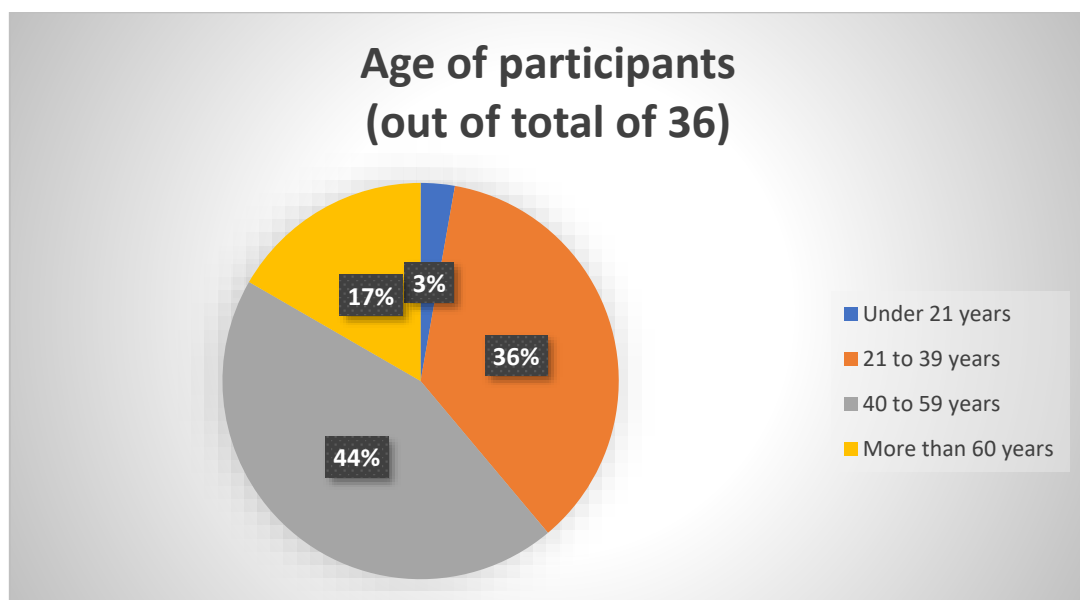


Figure 344: Pie chart depicting breakdown of age of participants.

The self-identified gender breakdown of participants was 30.6% male (11 individuals) and 69.4% female (25 individuals). All respondents identified as either 'male' or 'female' on the diversity monitoring form, with no participant selecting the option of 'other' or 'neither'.

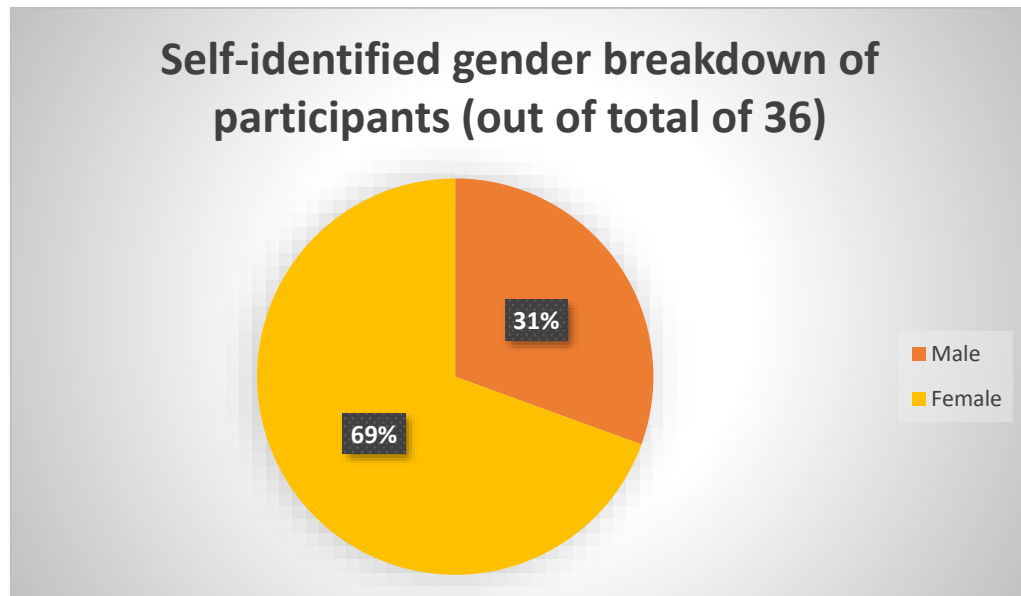


Figure 345: Pie chart depicting self-identified gender breakdown of participants.

Next, 5.6% (two individuals) of participants self-identified as having a disability, with the remaining 34 either confirming no disability or not providing a response.

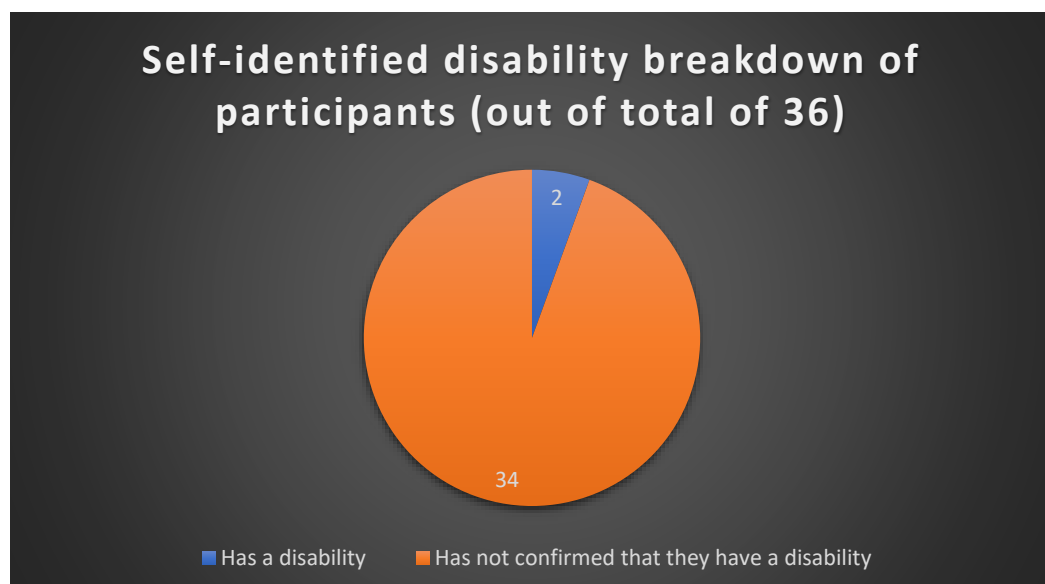


Figure 346: Pie chart depicting self-identified disability breakdown of participants.

The breakdown by participants' self-identified ethnicity consisted of 58.3% White (21 individuals), 25% Black or African American (9 individuals), 8.3% Latinx or Hispanic (three individuals), 5.6% Mixed ethnicity (two individuals) and 2.8% Asian (one individual). No participants self-identified as 'other' or provided any other ethnic description for themselves. Ethnicity information was gathered for all participants, accounting for self-identified ethnicity information from 100% of individuals.

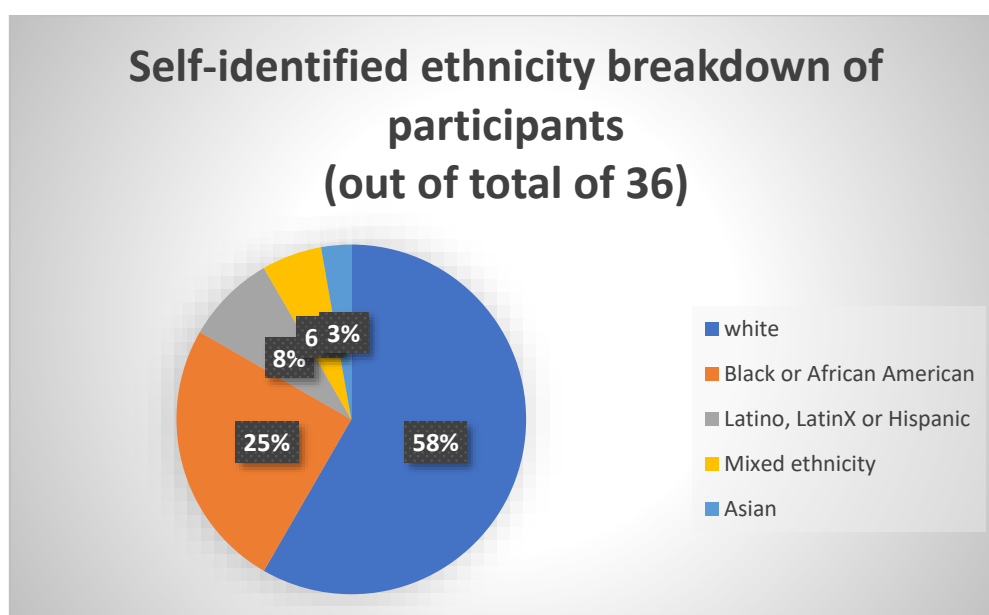


Figure 347: Pie chart depicting self-identified ethnicity breakdown of participants.

All participants that took part in the qualitative interviews and walking ethnographies had been involved in some form of community development-related activity in their own neighbourhoods and/or in the wider Detroit area. 47.2% of participants (17 individuals) were involved in unpaid community development-related activity in their own neighbourhoods, while 19.4% (seven individuals) were involved in unpaid community development-related activity in the wider Detroit area; 8.3% of participants (three individuals) were involved in some form of paid community development-related activity in their neighbourhood, while 63.9% (23 individuals) were involved in some form of paid community development-related activity in the wider Detroit area.

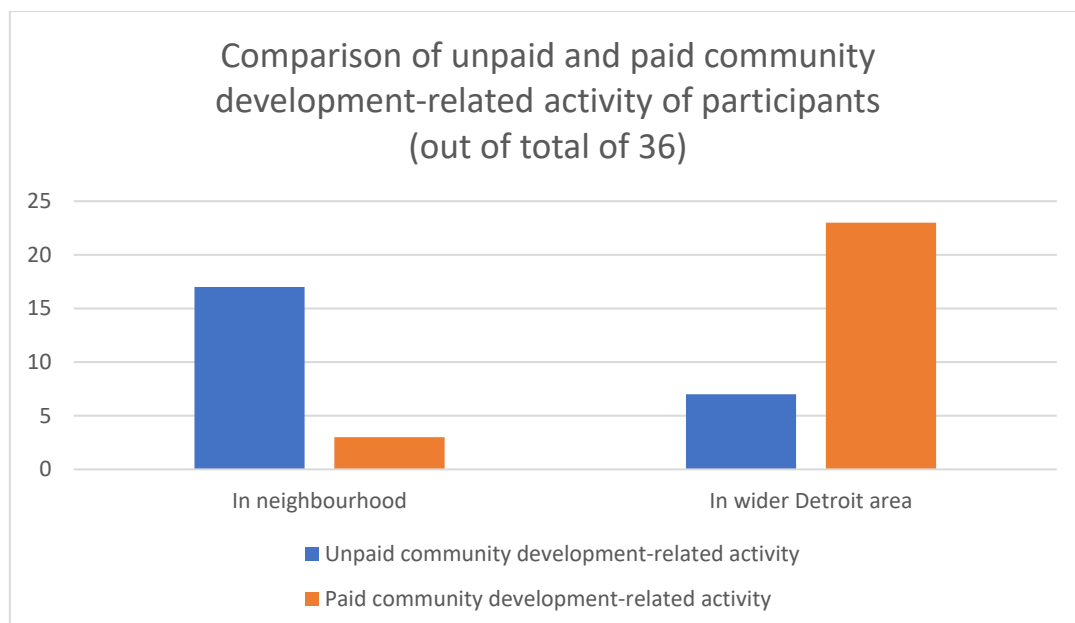


Figure 348: Bar chart depicting comparison of unpaid and paid community development-related activity of participants.

Participants were asked how they would describe or identify themselves in relation to the activity they were involved with in their community, neighbourhood or city. This was an open question and those individuals that chose to respond provided a range of answers, some of which were similar in description and, therefore, could be grouped by theme as part of the data analysis. Other responses were very specific to individuals and therefore shown in the table below as an individual response.

The highest proportion of participants, 30.6% (11 individuals) identified themselves by their job title, such as 'time bank coordinator'. This was followed by 22.2% (eight individuals) identifying themselves as belonging to their neighbourhood association, closely followed by 19.4% of participants (seven individuals) identifying themselves by the term 'organizer'. The next highest proportion was tied three ways, with 13.9% of participants (five individuals) identifying themselves as an 'involved/active resident', by the term 'founder' or 'co-founder' and as 'advocate'. The other identifying terms described by at least two respondents were 'urban farmer' or 'community gardener' (four individuals), 'activist' (three individuals), 'artist' (three individuals) and 'volunteer' (two individuals).

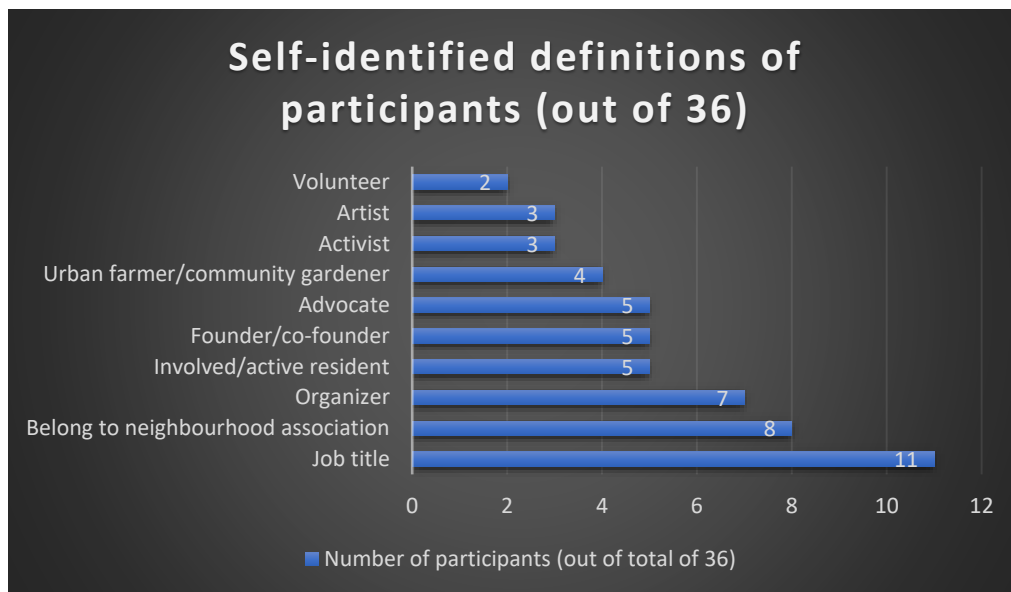


Figure 349: Bar chart depicting self-identified definitions of participants.

Other terms or descriptors individual participants used about themselves that only appeared once were: 'facilitator', 'community builder', 'community educator', 'neighbourhood busybody', 'part of the community', 'inventor', 'inspirer/prophet' and 'anarchist'.

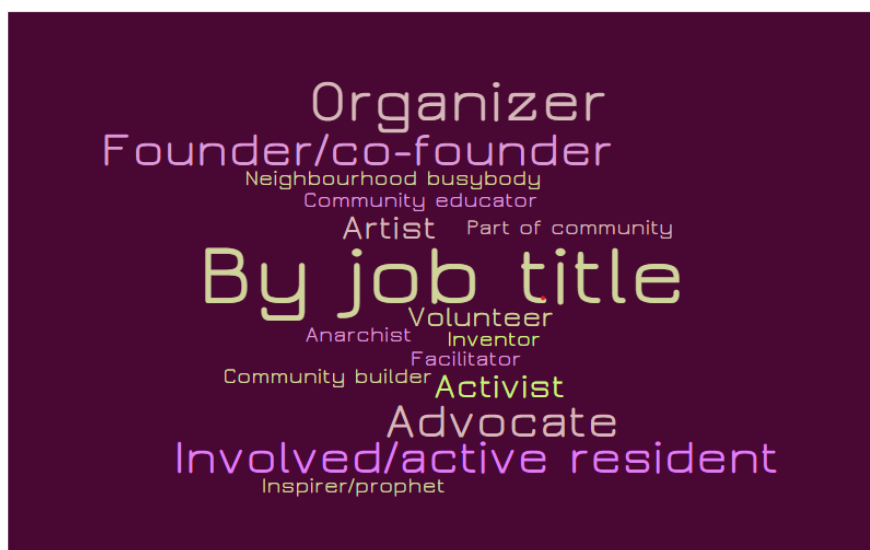


Figure 350: Word cloud of words used by respondents of how they define themselves in relation to their community activity.

Participants were asked an open question about what motivated them to get involved in this type of activity. Of the answers, there were a range of responses, the majority of

which were deemed similar enough to group by theme. The majority of participants provided multiple responses to this question.

By far, the highest proportion of participants, 88.9% (32 individuals) stated that their motivation was 'helping people'. This was followed by 69.4% of participants (25 individuals) motivated by a desire to 'reimagine what is possible in Detroit' and/or 'to be part of the solution' of 'what comes next'. Next, 30.6% of participants (11 individuals) were motivated by a desire to 'improve representation' or 'strengthen the voice' of Detroiters they felt were unheard or marginalised. Tied at 13.9% of participants (five individuals) were motivated by 'spirituality' and a desire to 'change the world'. Finally, 11.1% of participants (four individuals) were motivated by wanting a 'unique way of living' or 'independence' and 8.3% (three individuals) were motivated by 'meeting new people' or wanting a 'sense of belonging', 5.6% (two individuals) by 'personal' or 'career-oriented' motivations' and 2.8% (one individual) who described their motivation as 'being nosey'.

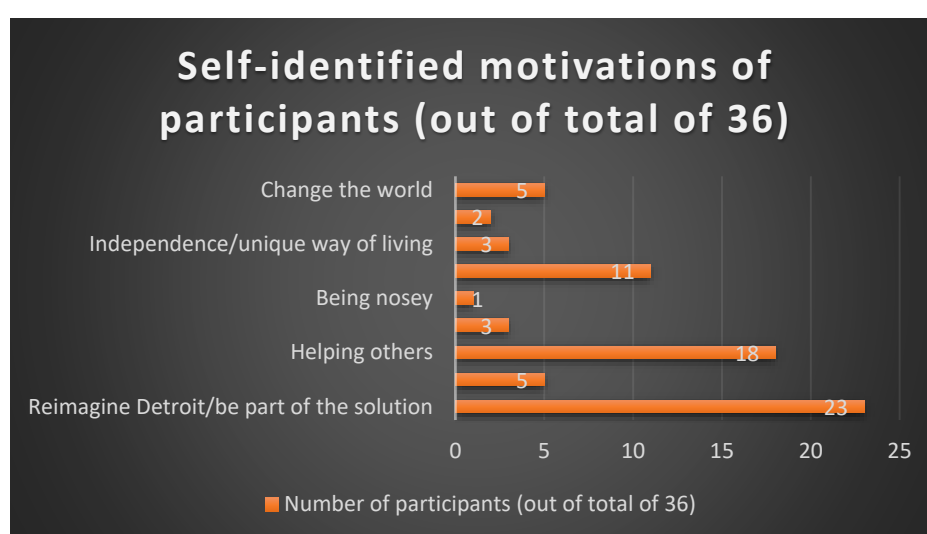


Figure 351: Bar chart of self-identified motivations of participants.

This amounts to a total of 71 responses from participants to the question of their motivations for getting involved in activism. With 36 unique individuals involved in the interviews, this means that on average, each participant expressed two different motivations.

To understand any trends in shared motivations, an intersectional analysis was undertaken of the highest-scoring results. This was compared against the overall demographics of the participants to ascertain whether there were any significant trends against the baseline position.

Analysis of Motivation by Duration of Residency in Detroit. When analysed against duration of residence in Detroit, the three highest-scoring responses on motivation of ‘reimagining Detroit’, ‘helping others’ and ‘improving representation’ yielded the following results in the tables below. The statistics highlighted in green indicate where there was more than +5% upward trend from the baseline demographic position. The statistics highlighted in red indicate where there was more than a +5% downward trend from the baseline demographic position.

Visible in the table below, participants who had lived in Detroit for 5-10 years were +5% more likely to be motivated by a desire to reimagine Detroit than the baseline demographic position. Whereas participants who had lived in Detroit for 10-20 years were -5% less likely to be motivated by this. In the case of all other participant groups by duration residence in Detroit, the results were within the 5% tolerance of the baseline; therefore, no assumption about this motivator as a driver, can be made.

Motivation: reimagining Detroit					
Total individuals citing this	23				
Duration of time participants spent resident in Detroit	No. citing	% of respondents citing this	% demographic of overall participants (baseline)		
Lifelong Detroiters	9	39.13%	13	36	36.11%
5-10 years	5	21.74%	6	36	16.67%
10-20 years	2	8.70%	5	36	13.89%
20+ years	2	8.70%	2	36	5.56%
Less than 5 years	2	8.70%	3	36	8.33%
Not Detroit residents	3	13.04%	6	36	16.67%

Figure 352: Table summarising % and significance of responses for motivation of ‘reimagining Detroit’ analysed by duration of participants’ residence in Detroit.

Analysing the motivation of ‘helping others’ against the same criteria of duration of residence in Detroit, the majority of participant groups were fairly similar to the baseline position; indicating they were no more or less likely to be motivated by this driver. The only group showing a trend outside of the tolerance was that of participants living in Detroit for - 10 years, where respondents were +5% more likely to be motivated by ‘helping others’.

Motivation: helping others					
Total individuals citing this	18				
Duration of time participants spent resident in Detroit	No. citing	% of respondents citing this	% demographic of overall participants		
Lifelong Detroiters	7	38.89%	13	36	36.11%
5-10 years	4	22.22%	6	36	16.67%
10-20 years	2	11.11%	5	36	13.89%
20+ years	1	5.56%	2	36	5.56%
Less than 5 years	1	5.56%	3	36	8.33%
Not Detroit residents	3	16.67%	6	36	16.67%

Figure 353: Table summarising % and significance of responses for motivation of ‘helping others’ analysed by duration of participants’ residence in Detroit.

The data began to show more significant results when analysing the criteria of residence duration in Detroit against the motivation of ‘improving representation’. In this case, lifelong Detroiters were significantly more likely to be motivated by this, by +36.62%. In the case of those individuals who had been resident in Detroit for 10-20 years, less than five years or who were not Detroit residents, there was a significant downward trend in all of these instances, with none of the respondents in these categories citing improving representation as a motivation for involvement.

Motivation: improving representation					
Total individuals citing this	11				
Duration of time participants spent resident in Detroit	No. citing	% of respondents citing this	% demographic of overall participants		
Lifelong Detroiters	8	72.73%	13	36	36.11%
5-10 years	2	18.18%	6	36	16.67%
10-20 years	0	0.00%	5	36	13.89%
20+ years	1	9.09%	2	36	5.56%
Less than 5 years	0	0.00%	3	36	8.33%
Not Detroit residents	0	0.00%	6	36	16.67%

Figure 354: Table summarising % and significance of responses for motivation of ‘improving representation’ analysed by duration of participants’ residence in Detroit.

In the case of the other five motivations provided by 56% of respondents (20 of 36), each had a total of between two and five individuals who cited these. As these were very small numbers of respondents, any analysis applied to them was heavily weighted, with for example, an upward or downward trend in one of two respondents appearing more significant than it actually was. Therefore, I have deemed that it was not of salient importance to share all data from these responses. There were, however, a few key trends that are worth drawing out where responses appeared to indicate results that may be of interest for further exploration.

Analysing the motivation to ‘change the world’ cited by five respondents, it is interesting to note that no lifelong Detroit-resident respondents cited this, against a baseline demographic of 36.11% of participants who were lifelong Detroiters. At the other end of the spectrum, no respondents who had been resident for less than five years cited this motivation, either. There were upward trends of +5% in the case of respondents in all other categories, with the exception of those not residents of Detroit, which was slightly under 5%.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the motivation to ‘meet new people’ was cited by respondents who had been resident in Detroit less than 5 years and those resident 5-10 years. The upward trends for the two categories were +58.34% and +16.66%, respectively.

However, as this motivation was only cited by three people, these statistics were not deemed significant.

The motivation of 'independence/unique way of living' was cited by respondents who had been resident in Detroit for less than five years or between 10-20 years, with the upward trends of +25% and +52.78%, respectively. No other groups cited this motivation. As this motivation again was only cited by three people, this data not deemed to be significant.

The final motivation cited by 5.6% of respondents (two of 36) was 'personal/career-oriented'. Two respondents cited this motivation, neither of which were Detroit residents. No individuals that were residents of Detroit cited this motivation.

Analysis of Motivation by Age. The same analysis was then carried out by the age of respondents against the different motivations cited. Analysis of the top three highest-scoring motivations cited are below.

Motivation: reimagining Detroit					
Total individuals citing this	23				
Age of respondents	No. citing	% of respondents citing this	% demographic of overall participants		
Under 21	0	0.00%	1	36	2.78%
20s/30s	7	30.43%	13	36	36.11%
40s/50s	11	47.83%	16	36	44.44%
60+	5	21.74%	6	36	16.67%

Figure 355: Table summarising % and significance of responses for motivation of 'reimagining Detroit' analysed by age of respondent.

At just above the 5% tolerance, there was a small downward trend in respondents in their 20s/30s as less likely to cite 'reimagining Detroit' as a motivation for their involvement, and a small upward trend in respondents over the age of 60.

Motivation: helping others					
Total individuals citing this	18				
Age of respondents	No. citing	% of respondents citing this	% demographic of overall participants		
Under 21	1	5.56%	1	36	2.78%
20s/30s	9	50.00%	13	36	36.11%
40s/50s	6	33.33%	16	36	44.44%
60+	2	11.11%	6	36	16.67%

Figure 356: Table summarising % and significance of responses for motivation of 'helping others' analysed by age of respondents.

At +13.89%, there was an upward trend in the 20s/30s age group being more likely to cite 'helping others' as a motivation for involvement, with a downward trend for respondents in their 40s/50s and those over 60 to cite this, at -11.11% and -5.56%, respectively.

Motivation: improving representation					
Total individuals citing this	11				
Age of respondents	No. citing	% of respondents citing this	% demographic of overall participants		
Under 21	0	0.00%	1	36	2.78%
20s/30s	3	27.27%	13	36	36.11%
40s/50s	6	54.55%	16	36	44.44%
60+	2	18.18%	6	36	16.67%

Figure 357: Table summarising % and significance of responses for motivation of 'improving representation' analysed by age of respondents.

For the motivation of 'improving representation', there was a similar relative size of trend for two age groups in two different directions, with -8.84% of 20s/30s less likely to be motivated by this and +10.11% of respondents in their 40s/50s more likely to be motivated by this.

As with the analysis by duration of residency, the remaining motivations cited by multiple respondents have been provided by between two and five individuals. Therefore,

due to the very small sample size, any trends were likely to yield much higher statistical variances, undermining their statistical significance.

When analysing the motivation of 'spirituality' by age, there was a downward trend of -16.11% among 20-30 year olds, whereas there was a +20.33% upward trend in those 60+. There was a total of five individuals who cited this motivation with one and two respondents from these respective age groups. It is also worth noting that two of the five individuals worked in church-based settings.

Interestingly, it was exactly the same breakdown by age for the motivations of 'spirituality' as for 'change the world', again with the same trends. Each motivation had five respondents cite these drivers and the breakdown for each was one 20s/30s, two 40s/50s and two 60+. Only one individual cited both motivations of 'spirituality' and 'change the world'.

For the motivation of 'meet new people', there were only three respondents who cited this. There was a considerable upward trend among 20s/30s and downward trend of 40s/50s and over 60 years old, at +30.56%, -11.1% -11.11%, respectively. No one under 21 or over 60 cited this as a motivation.

In the case of the motivation of 'independence/unique way of living', all three individuals who cited this were in the 40s/50s age group. No individuals from any other age group cited this motivation.

Similarly for the motivation of 'personal/career-oriented', there were only two respondents who cited this. While it was an incredibly small sample size, it may be of significance that when intersectional analysis was applied, the only two respondents citing this motivation were both in the 20s/30s age group and were not resident in Detroit.

Analysis of Motivation by Ethnicity. As with the other two sets of analysis provided, analysis by ethnicity of respondents against the top three highest-ranking motivations cited by participants is provided below.

Motivation: reimagining Detroit					
Total individuals citing this	23				
Ethnicity of respondents	No. citing	% of respondents citing this	% demographic of overall participants		
Black/African American	4	17.39%	9	36	25.00%
White	14	60.87%	21	36	58.33%
Latinx/Hispanic	2	8.70%	3	36	8.33%
Asian	1	4.35%	1	36	2.78%
Mixed	2	8.70%	2	36	5.56%
Other	0	0.00%	0	36	0.00%

Figure 358: Table summarising % and significance of responses for motivation of 'reimagining Detroit' analysed by ethnicity of respondents.

In the case of five out of six ethnic categories, respondents were similarly motivated by 'reimagining Detroit', with all aligning within 5% of the baseline position for this demographic. Those respondents identifying as Black/African American were the only ethnic category that showed a variance from the baseline position, with a downward trend of -7.61% for this particular motivation of 'reimagining Detroit'.

Motivation: helping others					
Total individuals citing this	18				
Ethnicity of respondents	No. citing	% of respondents citing this	% demographic of overall participants		
Black/African American	6	33.33%	9	36	25.00%
White	9	50.00%	21	36	58.33%
Latinx/Hispanic	2	11.11%	3	36	8.33%
Asian	1	5.56%	1	36	2.78%
Mixed	0	0.00%	2	36	5.56%
Other	0	0.00%	0	36	0.00%

Figure 359: Table summarising % and significance of responses for motivation of 'helping others' analysed by ethnicity of respondents.

For the motivation of 'helping others', there was greater variance from the baseline position across three of the six ethnic categories. For respondents identifying as Black/African American, there was an upward trend, with +8.33% of people in this category stating that they were more likely to be motivated by 'helping others'. This compares to downward trends for White respondents and Mixed respondents, at -8.33% and -5.56%, respectively.

Motivation: improving representation					
Total individuals citing this	11				
Ethnicity of respondents	No. citing	% of respondents citing this	% demographic of overall participants		
Black/African American	3	27.27%	9	36	25.00%
White	3	27.27%	21	36	58.33%
Latinx/Hispanic	3	27.27%	3	36	8.33%
Asian	0	0.00%	1	36	2.78%
Mixed	1	9.09%	2	36	5.56%
Other	0	0.00%	0	36	0.00%

Figure 360: Table summarising % and significance of responses for motivation of 'improving representation' analysed by ethnicity of respondents.

For the motivation of 'improving representation', four of the six ethnic categories aligned with the baseline position within a 5% tolerance, with two ethnic categories showing variances. Those respondents identifying as White showed a downward trend of -31.06% less likely to be motivated by 'improving representation', while there was an upward trend of +18.94% of respondents identifying as Latinx/Hispanic more likely to be motivated by this. It is worth noting that 100% (three of three) of all respondents identifying as Latinx/Hispanic stated that 'improving representation' was a motivation for their involvement in community activity.

Of the remaining motivations cited by at least two respondents, there is again this a very small sample size of between two and five participants out of 36. For the motivation of 'spirituality', only respondents from the Black/African American and White ethnic groups cited this motivation, with no respondents from any other ethnic groups citing this. Responses from White respondents roughly followed the baseline demographic, whereas there was a +15% upward trend in Black/African American respondents citing the motivation of 'spirituality' compared to the baseline.

For the remaining four motivations cited by at least two respondents, there was a seemingly salient trend to note. The motivations of 'change the world', 'meet new people',

‘independence/unique way of life’ and ‘personal/career-oriented’ were only cited by White respondents and not by respondents from any other ethnic group.

Notably, when applying intersectional analysis, the motivation of ‘personal/career-oriented’ illustrated that respondents who shared the common variables of being White, in their 20s/30s and not being resident in Detroit. Two is an incredibly small sample size, so no conclusions were drawn from this; however, the three shared factors are worth noting.

Analysis of Motivation by Gender. Analysis by gender of respondents against the top three highest ranking motivations cited by participants is provided below. As the diversity monitoring presented only two categories to which respondents provided affirmative responses, male and female, this has resulted in a 50/50 split in trends, meaning that where there may be an upward trend of a given value in one direction, one found a downward trend in equivalent value in the other direction.

Motivation: reimagining Detroit					
Total individuals citing this	23				
Gender of respondents	No. citing	% of respondents citing this	% demographic of overall participants		
Female	16	69.57%	25	36	69.44%
Male	7	30.43%	11	36	30.56%
Other	0	0.00%	0	36	0.00%

Figure 361: Table summarising % and significance of responses for motivation of ‘reimagining Detroit’ analysed by gender of respondents.

For the motivation of ‘reimagining Detroit’, all gender categories aligned with the baseline position within a less than 1% tolerance.

Motivation: Helping others					
Total individuals citing this	18				
Gender of respondents	No. citing	% of respondents citing this	% demographic of overall participants		
Female	14	77.78%	25	36	69.44%
Male	4	22.22%	11	36	30.56%
Other	0	0.00%	0	36	0.00%

Figure 362: Table summarising % and significance of responses for motivation of ‘helping others’ analysed by gender of respondents.

When analysed by gender, the motivation of ‘helping others’ showed an upward trend of +8.34% of respondents identifying as female as more likely to state this as a motivation.

Motivation: improving representation					
Total individuals citing this	11				
Gender of respondents	No. citing	% of respondents citing this	% demographic of overall participants		
Female	9	81.82%	25	36	69.44%
Male	2	18.18%	11	36	30.56%
Other	0	0.00%	0	36	0.00%

Figure 363: Table summarising % and significance of responses for motivation of ‘improving representation’ analysed by gender of respondents.

‘Improving representation’ saw a +12.38% upward trend among respondents identifying as female as more likely to be motivated by this.

Two motivations of ‘reimagining Detroit’ and ‘meet new people’ provided responses that aligned with the baseline position on gender, indicating these two cases that gender did not appear to be a determining factor. Alongside these two motivations where gender did not appear to influence the response, the remaining six motivations divided into three where there was a positive trend among self-identified females and three where there was a positive trend for self-identified males.

Among self-identified female respondents, they appeared more likely than male respondents to be motivated by ‘spirituality’ at +30.56%, ‘improving representation’ at +12.38% and ‘helping others’ at +8.34%. Among self-identified male respondents, they appeared more likely than female respondents to be motivated by ‘independence/unique way of life’ at +36.11%, ‘personal/career-oriented’ at +19.44% and ‘change the world’ at +9.44%.

It is worth noting that in the motivations of ‘spirituality’, ‘independence/unique way of life’, ‘personal/career-oriented’ and ‘change the world’, five or less respondents out of a total of 36 cited this as a motivation. Therefore, these results were not statistically significant.

However, in the case of two of the three motivations in which the response of self-identified female respondents is higher, 'improving representation' and 'helping others', 30.56% and 50% of all respondents confirmed this to be a motivating factor, demonstrating this to be a significant trend.