

# Detroit

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**RUIN AND RENEWAL**

**MELVIN GUPTON  
DEBBIE SELLNOW-RICHMOND  
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# Discourse of Renewal

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- Alternative to Image Repair theories (Coombs, 2004, 2014; Benoit, 1995, 2014)
- Rhetorical stance in relation to post crisis conditions (Seeger & Ulmer, 2002; Ulmer, Seeger, & Sellnow, 2007; Seeger, & Padgett, 2010).
- Atypical response
- Five features
  - 1). Prospective (as opposed to retrospective)
  - 2). Provisional (value centered, natural rather than strategic)
  - 3). Leadership (providing positive narrative)
  - 4). Opportunity (learning, change)
  - 5). Self Organizing (grassroots)

1950-1960

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**THE TOP**

## 1950S

In the 1950s Detroit was a center of growth and innovation.

The population reached a high point of 1.85 million, making it America's fourth largest city.

Among highest rate of home ownership in the country.



## 1950s

Most of these people were employed in one of the city's 296,000 manufacturing jobs.

The Big Three of the automotive industry, General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler, all built cars in Detroit. And the demand for cars seemed endless.



## 1950s

58 million new cars were produced and sold during the 1950s, mostly by the Big Three and mostly in Detroit.

Given the population of the United States at the end of the decade – 179,323,175 – that is close to one new vehicle for every three living people.



# 1950S

Pretty much everything seemed to be going well for the city.

Sports teams

Education system

The Arts

**RESULTS**

- Baltimore 24
- Green Bay 14
- Los Angeles 7
- Baltimore 27
- Los Angeles 35
- San Francisco 35
- Philadelphia 18
- San Francisco 30
- Chicago Bears 27
- Green Bay 6
- Cleveland 7
- Chicago Bears 14
- San Francisco 27

at Ford U. Loan 4  
at Jackson Field  
at 250, 11 September 1957  
at Detroit Field

# DETROIT LIONS

## 1957

### World's Champions

#### NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE

**CHAMPIONS  
GAME**

**DETROIT  
CLEVELAND**

Sunday, Dec. 29  
Briggs Stadium  
Detroit, Mich



**FRONT ROW:** (Left to Right) - Assistant Coach Bob Nashbaum, Yaki Lary, Harkey Sewell, Jack Christiansen, Carl Karlivack, Jim Doran, General Manager, Captain Joe Schmidt, Bobby Layne, Tom Tracy, Gene Green, Jim David, David Middleton, Howard Cassidy, Assistant Coach John (Red) Schan.

**MIDDLE ROW:** (Left to Right) - General Manager W. Nicholas Korfewy, Head Coach George W. Wilson, Stan Campbell, Terry Han, John Henry Jones, Tobias Rote, Steve Junker, John Goody, Jerry Pury, Charles Ann, Leon Han, Bob Long, Ray Krouse, Assistant Coach Gerald (Buster) Rans, Equipment Manager Roy Macklem, Publicity Director E. M. (Bud) Erickson.

**BACK ROW:** (Left to Right) - Team Physician Dr. Richard A. Thompson, Trainer Millard Kelley, Jerry Reichow, Gary Lowe, Frank Gotski, Ken Smith, Sam Martin, Bob Miller, Lou Cookman, Roger Zalkoff, Darryl McCord, Gil Miller, Donnie Dittie, Assistant Coach Aldo Forte, Box Office Manager Maurio Schabot.

## 1950S

One early indication of decline came in 1958, with the closure of 3,500,000 square foot Packard Motor Car Co. factory.



## 1950S

Though long abandoned, the factory still stands today. It stands as an example of post industrial decay and is an example of ruin porn and decay tourism.



## 1950s

Detroit also saw significant demographic changes during this period.

Between 1950 and 1960 the city's African American population nearly doubled.

Many African Americans relocated from the south for higher paying factory jobs.



1967

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**THE UPRISING  
RACE / CLASS RIOTS**

## The Uprising

The impetus for the Detroit riots was a police raid on a 12<sup>th</sup> street Printing shop, the location of a Blind Pig celebrating the return of two Vietnam soldiers.

When the police raided the party they found not the expected 15-20 partyers, but 83.

Long simmering animosity between the white police and black community.



## The Uprising

That Sunday morning 12<sup>th</sup> street erupted into chaos.

Groups of looters, protestors, and observers took control of the street.

Police obeyed a no shoot order, instead erecting barricades around the area.

Rioters were allowed out of the area, but not back in.



## The Uprising

The National Guard assembled north of 12<sup>th</sup> street.

The National Guard did not have a no shoot order.

They would spend 155,000 rounds of ammunition over the next 5 days.

Undeterred by the presence of the National Guard, the rioters continued to spread.



## The Uprising

U.S. Paratroopers under the command of Army Lt. General Throckmorton landed at Detroit Fairgrounds Monday afternoon.

Throckmorton ordered the national guardsmen to unload their weapons, and fire only on an officer's command.



## The Uprising

President Johnson went on television at midnight to explain his decision to send U.S. troops into Detroit.

He blamed Michigan's then governor Romney for failing to bring the situation under control.



## The Uprising

By Tuesday the looting had been reduced, but snipers had begun shooting at police, firefighters, guardsmen and soldiers.

There were forty nine sniper attacks Tuesday morning.

Arson was also rampant throughout the city.



## The Uprising

The presence of 17,000 men from the army and the National Guard eventually brought the city back under control.

Forty-three people died during the course of the riot, and the damages to property were substantial.

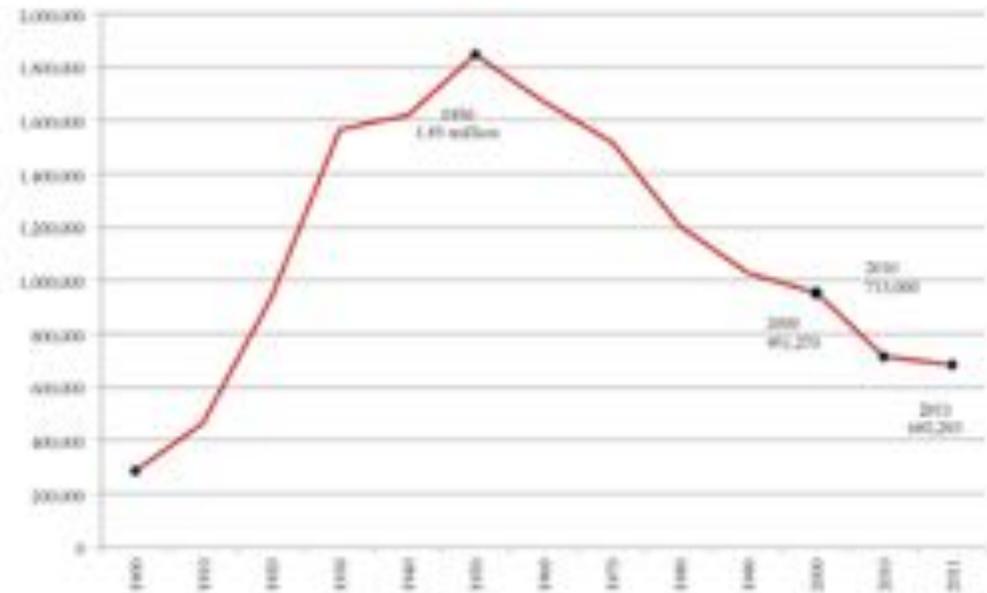


## “White Flight”

After the 1967 riots, White residents fled in droves.

“White flight” affected municipal infrastructures, tax bases and jobs in Detroit.

Detroit's population



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Historical Census of Communities (HCC) (1950-1990), U.S. Census Bureau

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, White House Community Center for Urban Studies

2013-2014

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**THE BANKRUPTCY**

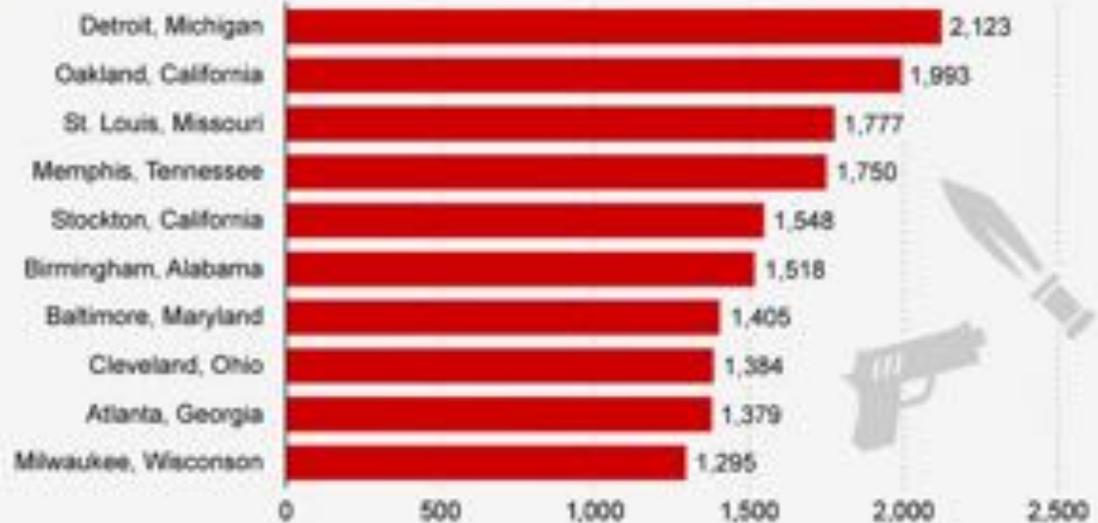
## The Bankruptcy

In 2013, Detroit had declined from its peak of 1.85 million people in the 1950s to 700,000 people in 2013.

Detroit also had the highest percentage of people living below the poverty line among all 71 U.S. cities ranked by the U.S. Census board.

### Detroit is America's Most Dangerous City

The violent crime rate per 100,000 residents in U.S. cities in 2013



## The Bankruptcy

Detroit's charismatic mayor, Kwame Kilpatrick had been convicted of 24 federal felony counts, including mail fraud, wire fraud, and racketeering.



## KWAME KILPATRICK

### GUILTY: 24 COUNTS

1 racketeering conspiracy, 5 extortion,  
1 bribery, 11 mail/wire fraud,  
5 filing false tax return,  
1 tax evasion

### NOT GUILTY: 3 COUNTS

1 extortion, 2 mail/wire fraud

### NO VERDICT: 3 COUNTS

2 extortion, 1 bribery

**SENTENCED: 28 YEARS**

## The Bankruptcy

Detroit was regularly compared to a third world country.

Boston Mayor Menino said he would blow up Detroit and start over.

Post industrial decay and crime began to define the city's image.

Many parts of the city were left vacant.



## The Bankruptcy

On March 1, 2013, Michigan Governor Rick Snyder placed the city under the state's direct financial control in an effort to stave off bankruptcy.

On July 28 2013 the City of Detroit filed the largest municipal bankruptcy in U.S. history.



## Bankruptcy by the numbers

With over 1000 creditors, 78,000 blighted buildings, the city of Detroit was insolvent. Its debt was estimated at \$18B and 40% of city revenue went to cover legacy costs.

This impaired the city's ability to provide general services to city residents.



## Bankruptcy

Among the city's major debt claimants were pensioners.

Because the bankruptcy filing impaired pension payments, many tried to find the bankruptcy unconstitutional under Article IX of the Michigan Constitution.



## The Bankruptcy

Desperate to identify, the city's creditors and emergency managers looked towards the Detroit Institute of Art.

In the city's heyday, wealthy automotive tycoons had donated a rich collection of art to the institute.

Selling the art (\$3 - \$5 billion) would go a long way toward satisfying creditors.



## The Bankruptcy

In response to the threat to the Institute's art collection, state and private donors raised over a billion dollars in support.

The money went towards pensions, and the art was spared.

This event has since come to be known as "the grand bargain."



## Renewal

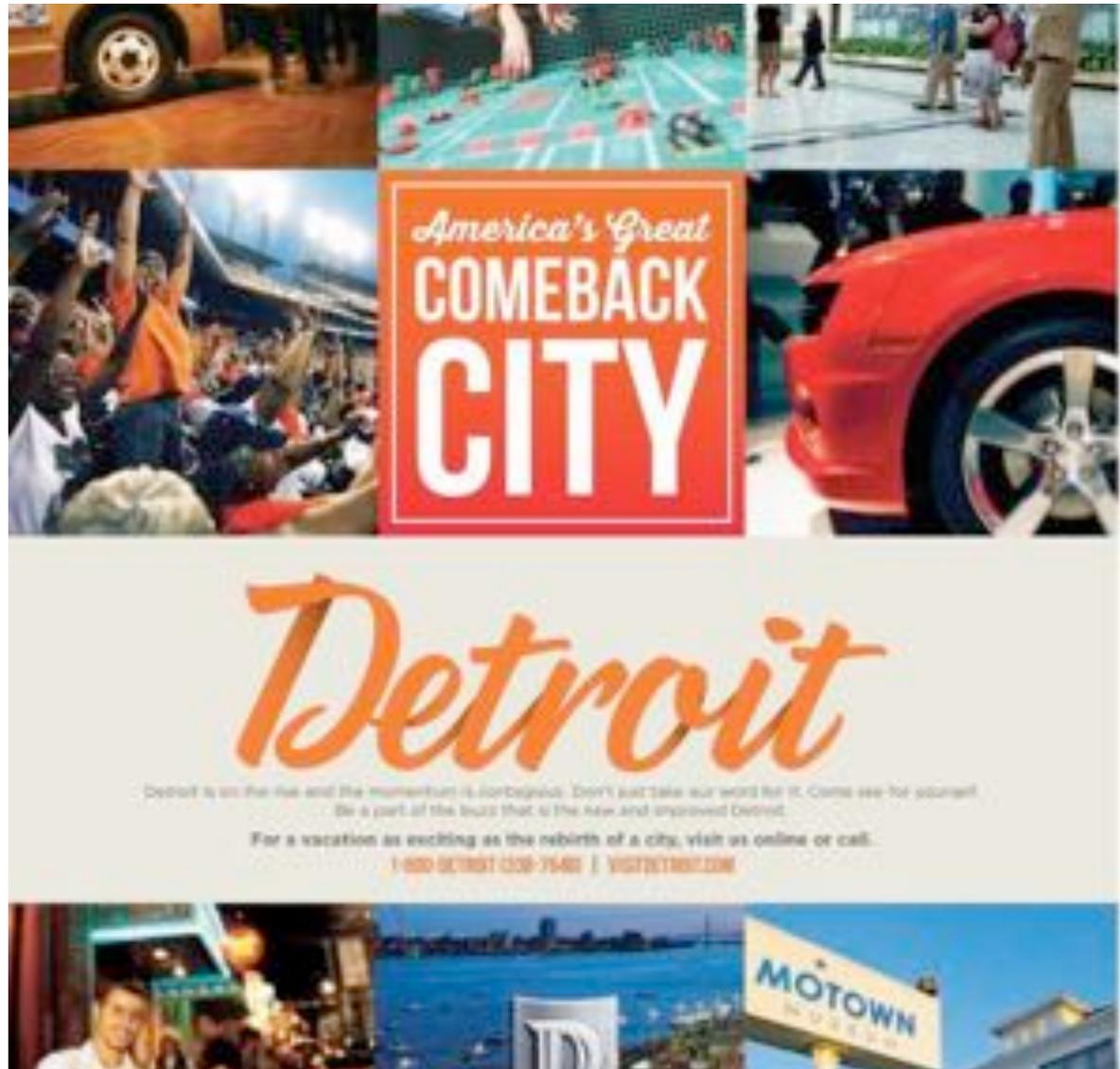
While the public rhetoric despaired about the future of Detroit post-bankruptcy, within the city, people were much more optimistic.



## Renewal

In the post crisis condition, a rhetorical stance of renewal generally has the following factors:

- 1). Prospective
- 2). Value centered
- 3). Leadership
- 4). Opportunity
- 5). Self Organizing / Provisional



## Urban Renewal

Mayor Mike Duggan, appreciating the many challenges ahead of him and the \$1.7 B granted for city services in the coming decade observed:

“This is what I signed up for...We’ve got to rebuild a water system and a bus system..and a financial system. It’s all going to be a challenge, but I think we’ve put together an excellent team and I think the plan of adjustment gives us the tools to have a chance to succeed.”



## Renewal: Leadership

In 2013 a group of 28 prominent Detroit businesses and organizations ran an advertisement, in which they proclaimed their faith in the indomitable spirit of the city.

The collective worth of these groups was 250 billion dollars, which they promised to keep invested in the future of Detroit.



## Discourse of Renewal

Bankruptcy Judge Steven Rhodes approved the city's plan of adjustment to exit bankruptcy on Nov. 7, 2014.

“I am very encouraged about Detroit's future. Its balance sheet is fixed...It has a very enthusiastic and confident and competent mayor and a supportive city council and very strong and committed community leadership... the ingredients are there.”



## EXITING from BANKRUPTCY

**APPROVED**

- ▶ Shed \$7 billion of debt
- ▶ Spend \$1.7 billion on city services
- ▶ Monthly cuts of 4.5% for general retirees
- ▶ Bondholders take cuts

## Suspension of Dominant Beliefs

Detroit News columnist, Daniel Howes (May 2015) chronicled a change in perception.

“...the confluence of public and private money...is a sharply different story than the stock narrative tracing decades of decline and dysfunction...(it) is driving change as much as exploiting it...the trend is reversing....In the contemporary reality of the emerging Detroit, business, political and philanthropic interests are aligned in ways this town hasn't seen in a long time.”



## Renewal: Value Centered

Many new values began to surface that among the people of Detroit

“Detroit versus Everyone”

Community based  
Urban Gardening

The Arts: Community  
involvement,  
placemaking,  
ownership

A sense of Detroit as a  
community of makers



## Discourse of Renewal

Upon exiting bankruptcy on Dec. 10, 2014, Mayor Duggan was very optimistic.

“This is a good day for the city. It was a necessary day that we can start to put conversations about bankruptcy and emergency managers behind us....We’re going to start fresh tomorrow.”



## Discourse of Renewal

On December 9, 2014 Governor Snyder terminated Detroit's receivership. Emergency Financial Manager, Kevyn Orr reflects:

“It required great sacrifices from everyone. Political and corporate agendas had to be cast aside.... Through this whole process, Detroit has benefited from the collective minds and experience of some of the best.... Today, Detroit again rises to its rightful place among the giants — solvent, rejuvenated and ready to function as a city should.”



- “Bankruptcy has allowed Detroit to regain its footing”  
- Kevyn Orr

## Cooperation in city governance

Councilman James Tate praised the cooperative relationship he and his colleagues share with the new mayor as refreshing.

“This city has been beat down for quite some time, and unfortunately, we haven’t had enough people — especially in leadership — cheerleading...It’s one thing just to cheerlead, but it’s another thing to actually put those words into action, and that’s what you’re ...seeing from this mayor...”



## Renewal: Opportunity

Home prices and real estate costs are among lowest in the country.

Innovation zones, investment, and tech incubators.



## Urban Renewal

A new hockey stadium is expected to create 4,380 jobs and \$1.8 billion in new economic activity, according to Governor Snyder.

John Hahn, a spokesman for Olympia Development, said the Ilitch organization “has been committed to Detroit and the state for 31 years...”

“We have a tremendous opportunity through this large-scale project to create jobs, stimulate economic activity and have a positive and lasting impact on our community,” said Hahn.



## Renewal: Opportunity

Low properties costs have attracted new growth to the city.

Quicken Loans owner Dan Gilbert, for example, has purchased 60 properties in downtown Detroit and expanded his business throughout the city.



## Renewal: Opportunity

Economists projected that when the manufacturing industry that drove the growth Detroit in the 1950s disappeared, the city would go with it.

Instead new industry has come to the city, attracted by the opportunities the manufacturing industry left behind.



## Renewal and Communication

Detroit Regional news Hub.

PR for Detroit

DHive

Big Three: Imported from Detroit

Web Based Media

Networks of Groups



## Communication and Urban Renewal

Consistency of Message

Unified Leadership

Support Systems and  
Networks of Support

- Partnerships
- Hubs
- Coordination  
(Foundations,  
Businesses)
- Centers



## Renewal

Detroit is undergoing a metamorphosis, shedding its old identity in order to build something new.

Post-Post industrial

Grass Roots &  
Corporate



## Lessons about Renewal

Discourse of Renewal can come from many sources.

Symbolic Convergence processes

Identification processes

Requires suspension of dominant discourse and associated beliefs

Requires cooperation between traditionally competing interests

Has a significant role in urban renewal



## Detroit is not the first city to experience urban decay

Considering the lessons learned through other cities' renewal processes

E.g.,

- Saint Louis
- Philadelphia/
- Camden
- New Haven

Renewal for whom?

Renewing what?

