

From Chaos to Clarity: How the Lessons Learned After the Detroit Riot of 1967 Can Impact Effective Leadership Today

Dr. Rita Fields
Assistant Professor of Management, School of Business
Madonna University
Livonia, Michigan, USA

“There are cities that get by on their good looks, offer climate and scenery, views of mountains or oceans, rockbound or with palm trees, and there are cities like Detroit that have to work for a living...” – Elmore Leonard

Abstract

The city of Detroit, Michigan has some level of distinction due to its current challenges with its public school system, recovery from bankruptcy and the stain of an ex-mayor who was convicted of corruption charges. Perhaps less well known is the fact that Detroit has had a rich and complex history with struggle and social unrest, culminating famously during July of 1967 in a bloody riot. The city was arguably as close to its destruction as it has ever been. Still, amazingly, the city faced the crisis head on and slowly rebounded from its devastating impact. History is said to repeat itself when humans don't digest its lessons, and if this is indeed true then a careful examination of the past is not only prudent but critical. This article offers an overview of the history of the city of Detroit and the aforementioned riot. In addition, there is a focus on three organizations born of the devastation that still remain in some form nearly 50 years later. These organizations were pivotal in the repair of the damage to the city's image and both the physical and psychosocial safety of its residents in the immediate years following the riot. Specifically, they spearheaded community dialogue, economic development, and enhanced sensitivity to race relations. Future leaders, not only in Detroit but also in other urban cities, may glean valuable lessons from this pivotal event in order to learn how to become effective leaders when faced with crisis.

Keywords: chaos, clarity, leadership, leadership in crisis, Detroit, Focus:Hope

Introduction

To say that the city of Detroit is an enigma is an understatement at best. Arguably, there are no other American cities that can boast a similar level of complexity. Detroit is paradoxical – both innovative and stagnant in many ways. Detroit has two distinct perspectives; that of the ‘outsider’ and that of the ‘insider’.

In the eyes of many ‘outsiders’, Detroit is simply a city in despair. Detroit is indeed the birthplace of the manufacturing industry and Motown. It also continues to suffer from widespread racial segregation. Despite boasting tremendous cultural diversity

with enclaves of African American, Hispanic, Polish, Middle Eastern and Jewish communities, the city has been marked by pervasive and widespread poverty within its residency base (Nelson, 2012). Unaddressed racial tensions have also been identified as some of the underlying reasons for a sort of polarizing of regional resources (Sugrue, 1996).

The city of Detroit has a history of political scandal. Some of the meetings of the local City Council have been described as a breeding ground for histrionic and criminal behavior (Neavling, 2012). Most recently, past mayor Kwame Kilpatrick was sentenced to 28 years in prison for charges ranging from racketeering to tax evasion (Laing, 2014).

Detroit possesses a dubious distinction of being one of the most segregated major cities (Kaffer, 2009; Trowbridge, 2002; U.S. Census Bureau, 2014), one of the most violent cities (Hunter, 2010), suffering from chronic unemployment (Martin, 2009) and surviving two major riots that ended in significant bloodshed (Fine, 2007). Detroit has had some of the highest high school dropout rates in the entire country. Within the past decade, it is estimated that only 25% of high school students completed their education and graduated (Fields, 2008). The educational system within the city of Detroit has been problematic for decades. In present day Detroit, the rapidly dwindling population has resulted in enrollment dropping in an equally quickly manner. Not surprisingly, this has resulted in the closing of many schools in densely populated areas in order to conserve resources while serving as many children as possible. This strategy has been criticized in light of accusations of serious fiscal mismanagement ranging from egregious misconduct by administrators to “phantom” billing practices (Mrozowski, 2009).

The media has also played a significant role in public perception of the city to ‘outsiders’. The gamut of fodder for national review has ranged from reviews of the practice of Devil’s Night (Gray, 2009)¹, to the numerous criminal activities and allegations against former mayors (Gray, 2007; Holson, 2009; Huffstutter, 2008; Williams, 2010; Laing, 2014). The city has been described as being, “apocalyptic” (Mustafa, 2014). The economic base has eroded significantly and consistently. The average price of a home in the city of Detroit in 2014 is \$7,500 and the unemployment rate is 29% (Clement, 2014). Based on census data, the median household income was \$28,357 in 2010 (United States Census Bureau, 2014) and has decreased to \$26,955 as of 2012 (United States Census Bureau, 2014). This is even more compelling when the same sources report that the median income within the State of Michigan has slightly increased in the same period of time from \$48,432 in 2010 to \$48,471 in 2012. In 2010, the Census Bureau reported that the percentage of individuals below the poverty level within the city was 34.5% and in a mere two years it increased to 38.1%. Comparatively, the percentage of individuals across the state of Michigan below the poverty level is 16.3% (United States Census Bureau, 2014).

¹ The phrase “Devil’s Night” is a term to describe a former local practice of arsons throughout the city on the day before Halloween.

The 'insider's' view of Detroit includes the aforementioned elements but it is also richly layered in additional complexities, such as the fact that Detroit also boasts a thriving youth demographic, a significant appreciation and recognition for artistic expression, richly diverse cultural options and a booming entrepreneurial movement. There are many 'treasures' in the city of Detroit that never fail to surprise and delight both newcomers and residents alike. There is energy in the city that is contagious and inspires fierce loyalty as evidenced in the notable presence of the old English "D" on vehicles and clothing alike.

Despite this positive momentum, at the time of this writing, the recent event that is most compelling about the city of Detroit is the fact that it was the largest U.S. city ever to file bankruptcy in June of 2013 (Lichterman & Woodall, 2013; Matthews, 2013). It has been assessed that the city owes more than \$18 billion to over 100,000 creditors and that more than \$18 million in property taxes were unpaid in 2012 (Islam, 2013). The majority of the debt is the pensions of decades of city workers (Laing, 2014 & Steyn, 2014)). The bankruptcy immediately made both national and international news, similarly to the media surrounding the judicial proceedings of the city's former mayor a mere year prior. For many, the bankruptcy marked the end of an era; some even argued that it was the end of the proverbial American dream. On the day that the bankruptcy was announced, Michael Moore tweeted, "Detroit (1701-2013). Don't cry for us America. You're next." (Moore, 2014). Many assume that the bankruptcy signals the final death knell after a decades-long decline of available resources that are the consequences of both a severely depressed economy and gentrification. There are others who argue that the bankruptcy allows for the city to regroup and re-evaluate its resources and strategies to become a stronger version of what it once was.

Regardless of one's stance on whether the bankruptcy is a curse or a blessing, it is merely the most recent distinction in what has been more than 300 years of a unique history - at times rendering the city both famous and infamous. This is not the first time that the city of Detroit has been in the center of a crisis. The city's motto - "we hope for better days; it shall rise from its ashes" - refers to one of the first unfortunate events, when the entire city was destroyed by fire in 1805 (Gavrilovich & McGraw, 2000). Overwhelming racial tension resulting from the lack of segregation and the presence of equal opportunity for jobs within the automotive industry is identified as the cause of a bloody race riot in 1943 (Sugrue, 2009).

Another prominent event that could have very easily eradicated the city of Detroit was a riot that occurred over a total of seven days during the summer of 1967. A review of this event and the subsequent efforts to rebuild the city after suffering from significant structural and psychosocial damage is worthy of a closer look. The 1967 riot resulted in consequences that were far-reaching and distinguish Detroit from other major cities within the country.

Further, it can be argued that the economic impact of such a significant event has caused a ripple effect in the culture of the city of Detroit and that the reverberations have influenced subsequent consumption and growth patterns. In *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*, author Doug C. North (1990) eloquently described the importance of culture on institutional economics in the following quote:

History matters. It matters not just because we can learn from the past, but because of a society's institutions. Today's and tomorrow's choices are shaped by the past. And the past can only be made intelligible as a story of institutional evolution. Integrating institutions into economic theory and economic history is an essential step in improving that theory and history. (p. vii)

This theory supports the assertion that an event nearly 50 years ago not only impacts the future, but also that thoughtful consideration of the event can potentially offer solutions that may work today. Therefore, the current reality of the city of Detroit's bankruptcy cannot truly assert its independence--it is born of the past seeds that were sown that created this potential future. One of these seeds was planted in the aftermath of the 1967 riot.

One of the most disturbing realizations is that the current state of Detroit is in many ways quite similar to the Detroit of 1967. The majority of the city's residents are still African American. There is still a marked contrast between the availability of services and housing between the inner city and the surrounding suburbs. There is a sense of futility regarding the political processes and those within the leadership ranks have, at times, demonstrated moments of contention and disjointedness. The educational system remains incredibly challenged and tainted by corruption. In a recent report it was identified that a third of the structures in the city of Detroit need to be demolished and/or significantly rehabbed and that it would take nearly \$850 million to achieve this goal (Data Driven Detroit, 2014). The city that offers capacity for 1.8 million people now holds a mere 700,000 residents (Davey, 2014) and the population dropped by 3% between 2010 and 2013 (United States Census Bureau, 2014). It is estimated that 60% of children in Detroit are living in poverty (Matthews, 2013). The past does not seem that far behind the city of Detroit.

In *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Post-War Detroit*, author and historian Thomas Sugrue (1996) remarked:

the rehabilitation of Detroit . . . will require a more vigorous attempt to grapple with the enduring effects of the postwar transformation of the city, and creative responses, piece by piece, to the interconnected forces of race, residence, discrimination, and industrial decline, the consequences of a troubled and still unresolved past. (p. 11)

Sugrue's suggestion that "creative responses" be deployed to address the socioeconomic status of Detroit is compelling. This supports the need to consider all of

the forces that can affect the development of such a complex city. One may wonder how a city that seemingly thrived under the masterful direction of automobile pioneer Henry Ford and gave birth to the musical legacy of Motown can fall to such depths. This chapter will review the history of the city of Detroit - specifically focusing on the riot of 1967 and its aftermath – and offer perspective on how lessons learned after the riot of 1967 can potentially aid efforts to restore balance to the city in its current state of bankruptcy.

The History of the City of Detroit

The city of Detroit is 138 square miles in land area and is the largest city in the state of Michigan (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). It is the only location where Canada is technically south of the United States. Its unique location made it highly desirable for settlers. A French military officer from Montreal, Canada named Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac founded the city of Detroit in 1701 (Junior Worldmark Encyclopedia of World Cities, 2000). Its original name was Fort Pontchartrain du Detroit.

Henry Ford initiated the influx of the manufacturing era when he created the Model T and based the headquarters for Ford Motor Company in Detroit. Shortly thereafter, General Motors also established its headquarters in Detroit, which led to Detroit being defined as:

... America's showcase city. The auto industry rule[d]--and the money flow[ed] almost unabated. New construction, modern schools and modern approaches to city life left the national news media spellbound (Gavrilovich & McGraw, 2000, p. 45).

This period of growth resulted in two historic firsts within the city of Detroit; the first mile of concrete was laid in the city in the early 1900s and the ultimately the first highway would be developed as well (Junior Worldmark Encyclopedia of World Cities, 2000).

At the same time that Detroit was becoming an economic powerhouse, the cultural foundation began to flourish as well. Famed artist Diego Rivera created beautiful murals in tribute to Henry Ford in the early 1930s and they were showcased within the Detroit Institute of Arts, which is still regarded as one of the finest art museums in the country. It can be argued that the present day intense loyalty that Detroiters have for their sports teams originated with a deep-seated love for Joe Louis when he earned the title of Heavyweight Champion of the World on June 22, 1938. This victory not only shined a spotlight on Detroit, it also was a source of pride for African Americans in what could be described as a challenging time in race relations in this country.

Detroit has been one of the most segregated cities in the country for many years (Kaffer, 2009; Trowbridge, 2002). Its predominant population is African American. Despite this fact, it is not accurate to assume that Detroit has always embraced its African

American population. The truth is somewhat complicated. Detroit has the distinction of having being a “stop” on the Underground Railroad, which was the escape route for many African Americans who desired to escape the brutal slavery practices prevalent in the South (The Underground Railroad Living Museum, 2014). Ironically, the ‘promised land’ that many sought out was highly influenced by slave masters who had so much prestige and influence that major streets within the city of Detroit were named after them, such as General John R. Williams, Joseph Campau and George McDougall (Eyes on Fire, 2007).

Still, Detroit represented the possibility of freedom that simply did not exist in the South. Consequently, African Americans who were both slaves and free desired to live in the city of Detroit. Between 1840 and 1850, the African Americans population nearly tripled from 193 to 587 (J. Williams, 2009). The population continued to grow to the point that they began to rival the majority Caucasian population. By the early 1940s there were just under a quarter of a million African Americans in Detroit (Baulch & Zacharias, 1999). Largely restricted in where they could live due to segregation and discrimination in housing practices, the majority of them settled into an enclave known as Black Bottom. The living conditions within the housing units in Black Bottom were deplorable. Tenets were forced to sleep in “‘hot sheet’ boardinghouses, where beds turned over every eight hours as one shift set out for work and the last returned home” (Sugrue, 2009, p. 66).

Despite the strained living conditions, Black Bottom became known as a thriving and culturally rich community. African Americans began to conduct business with each other in increasing numbers and the circulation of funds fostered success. This is no small task considering the fact that African Americans represented only 4.1% of the population (Granzo, 2012). In his book, *Detroit: The Black Bottom Community* (2009), Jeremy Williams offers the following description of the community at that time:

By 1920, blacks owned 350 businesses in Detroit, including a movie theater, the only African-American pawn shop in the United States, a co-op grocery, and a bank. The community included 17 physicians, 22 lawyers, 22 barbershops, 13 dentists, 123 cartage agencies, 11 tailors, 10 restaurants, 10 real estate dealers, 8 grocers, 6 drugstores, 5 undertakers, 4 employment offices, a few service stations, and a candy-maker (p. 17).

By the early 1940s Detroit had become a thriving metropolis. Between the sustained economic advantage provided by advancement of the automotive industry and the manufacturing ‘business’ provided by World War II, there were enough employment opportunities for nearly anyone who desired them. While there were opportunities for blacks to work alongside whites, the environments were racially charged. Detroit was not immune to the prevailing social tensions that permeated the country. African Americans were able to gain employment but housing opportunities remained much more limited for them than for their Caucasian counterparts. Many African Americans had to live in housing that did not provide indoor plumbing while paying rent at a rate of two to three times that of comparable housing for Caucasians (Baulch & Zacharias, 1999). Ultimately, the tension between reached a boiling point and overflowed on June 3, 1943

when Caucasians in many plants decided to launch a strike to protest the fact that they had to work in a non-segregated environment (Gavrilovich & McGraw, 2000, p. 47). A mere three weeks later on June 20th 1943 a riot began on the Belle Isle Bridge².

The exact cause of the riot is widely disputed. The stories range from a mother and a child being thrown from the bridge (J. Williams, 2009) to a fight between African Americans and Caucasians (Eyes on Fire, 2007) to the sexual assault of a Caucasian woman (Baulch & Zacharias, 1999; Poremba, 1999). While the cause is not exactly clear, the riot was brutal and is regarded as a race riot where Caucasians and African Americans openly and savagely attacked each other and looted local establishments (J. Williams, 2009). The violence migrated from the bridge to the Black Bottom and Paradise Valley areas of the city, which were the centers of African American life at that time. The brutality was so extreme that when the violence began to spill over into the second day, Governor Harry Kelly declared martial law and requested the assistance of the U.S. Army (Fine, 2007; Locke, 1969; Sugrue, 1996). The brutality utilized by the military was significant and had devastating consequences, as evidenced by a statement made by Brigadier General William Guther, who said that, “Detroit’s nearly all-white force of 3,400 officers had been very harsh and brutal. They have treated the Negroes terribly [and] have gone altogether too far” (Gavrilovich & McGraw, 2000, p. 48). Ultimately, the riot lasted for three days, caused 34 fatalities, nearly 600 injured and between 1,300 and 1,800 arrests (J. Williams, 2009; Locke, 1969). Shockingly, the excessive force of both local police and the military caused more than 50% of the fatalities (Sugrue, 1996). The race riot of Detroit was not a unique occurrence in the nation at that time. There were close to 240 race riots in the same timeframe throughout the United States but the Detroit riot was considered the most violent of them all (Takaki, 2008).

The 1943 riot resulted in an even deeper gulf between the races within the city of Detroit. Caucasians began to leave relocate to homes further from the city while African Americans remain contained within the same substandard living conditions they had inhabited before the riot. There was significant unrest within the community and racial relations seemed strained beyond repair (J. Williams, 2009). Edward Jeffries was the mayor of Detroit at that time and he received pressure to offer resolution of some sort so that the city could begin to move forward. He invited several local business leaders to a meeting to brainstorm on potential solutions. Consequently, The Detroit Plan was developed.

The Detroit Plan was a “slum clearance” strategy specifically designed to eradicate the “blight issue” in the city. The plan proposed the elimination of “20 square city blocks [in Detroit]” (J. Williams, 2009, p. 10). Described as “urban renewal”, the plan detailed the construction of major freeways that would allow for commuting between the city and the steadily growing outlying suburbs, the development of a city park and the revitalization of an area in midtown Detroit (J. Williams, 2009). In order to make

² Belle Isle is a small island in between Michigan and Canada.

adequate space for such massive construction, the plan also required that the area where the crux of the construction would be focused – Black Bottom and Paradise Valley – be bulldozed to the ground. The demolition began almost immediately after The Detroit Plan was approved. The center of community for African Americans within the city of Detroit was obliterated. The Detroit Plan did not recognize the tremendous damage to this segment of the community, nor did it accommodate for new construction to accommodate for those who were outplaced as a result of The Detroit Plan. Thomas Sugrue described the area formerly known as Black Bottom as a “no man’s land of deterioration and abandonment” (Sugrue, 1996, p. 47). Historian Jeremy Williams (2009) detailed the destruction further in the following excerpt:

Statistics show that by 1950, 423 residences, 109 businesses, 22 manufacturing plants, and 93 vacant lots had been condemned for the first three-mile stretch of the Lodge Freeway, from Jefferson Avenue to Pallister Street. A concrete wall divided white from black . . . By 1958, the Lodge Freeway had gobbled up 2,222 buildings. Demolition continued with approximately 2,800 more buildings to make way for the Edsel Ford Expressway. (pp. 119-120)

Not surprisingly, the “urban renewal” that The Detroit Plan promised was not received as such within the African American community. The development of a sense of vitality and even some level of prosperity that African Americans were able to create in those areas despite the squalid living conditions was intrinsically tied to the self-efficacy of these individuals. The leadership response to the riot of 1943 was truly a double-edged sword. The construction of the major freeways absolutely contributed to further fostering economic development and residential expansion outside of the city of Detroit into the surrounding suburban areas. The investment into both a beautiful city park and more retail opportunities within the center of the Detroit spurred increased business opportunities.

However, the price tag to such development was vastly more than what was estimated in The Detroit Plan. There was an invaluable cost to the collective consciousness of African Americans, who were not only largely excluded from reaping the benefits of such advancement, they ‘paid’ for it through the loss of their community as they had come to know it. The most vulnerable segment of the population was left more disenfranchised than they had been before the riot. Instead of encouraging healing for all residents, the leadership response to the riot of 1943 resulted in institutionalized division and exacerbated the lack of economic parity. During times of crisis it is imperative to develop and implement strategies that result in the community collectively healing and experiencing revitalization together (Ulmer, Sellnow, & Seeger, 2007). One can argue that it is fair to assert that the response at that time was short sighted and not encompassing the needs of all of the constituents of the city of Detroit. As George Santayana observed, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it” (Santayana, 1905). Detroit would have the opportunity to redeem itself nearly a quarter of a century later.

A Decade of Change: 1960 -1969

The Constitution asserts that the United States of America was founded on principles of “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” (United States Constitution, 2003). Such idealistic values are some of the things that set the country apart from any other. The United States of America is often a symbol of freedom and presumably devoid of oppression for those who live in areas of the world where oppression is far too often the norm as opposed to the exception. The aforementioned values also speak to expectations from its citizens with regards to how they should be treated and effectively incorporated into what has been described as a ‘melting pot’. Consequently, the truth that many groups of individuals have not felt embraced within the United States is a paradox that has existed since the writing of the Constitution. Since the founding of our country there have been efforts to not only force the government to recognize that all groups of people were not treated equally, but to ensure the inclusion of all in the equity that the Constitution refers to. Beginning with the rights of Native Americans and continuing to the rights of various cultures and women, the injustices against those groups who have been defined as “minorities” have been innumerable and were largely not regarded as significant. These issues would come to a head during the revolutionary period of 1960.

When President John F. Kennedy challenged the country to “ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country” (1961), it seemed as though this ignited a period of intense reflection on the current state of affairs within the United States from a sociological perspective. There were numerous expressions of indignation regarding the treatment of African Americans and women in particular. The informal discussions rapidly escalated into formal protests against unequal treatment. Boycotts, sit-ins, organized expressions of injustices and marches began to occur with more frequently in an attempt to demand equity and the eradication of civil rights injustices for individuals who were treated as second class citizens. A little known fact is that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. first came to Detroit to speak before went to Washington and spoke to his desire for all children to, “one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character” (1968).

In addition to the civil rights struggles within the United States there was also the divisive element of the United States’ participation in the Vietnam War. There were numerous expressions of both support and protest of our involvement. General trust for government was at a low that it had not experienced before. Juxtapose these occurrences with the Apollo 11 successfully landing on the moon. Something previously inconceivable brought the country together to marvel at the United States’ ability to develop technology that could literally take us out of this world. Yet there remained significant turmoil within the population. The civil unrest began to weave its way into popular cultural as well. Many books and music documented and examined the struggle for equal rights and an emphasis on love for all mankind. Musical expression included

contributions from Marvin Gaye, Bob Dylan, The Rolling Stones, Joni Mitchell, Joan Baez and even the Beatles.

As time went on, the relatively calm expressions of protest began to escalate to more violent expressions of indignation. Towards the latter half of the decade, riots began to occur in cities around the country. Some of the more notable ones occurred in Newark, Watts, and Detroit. The Detroit riot of 1967 has the infamous distinction of being “one of the most brutal riots in American history” (Sugrue, 1996, p. 259).

The Detroit Riot of 1967

The two decades between the riot of 1943 and the riot of 1967 gave birth to a transformation occurred within the city of Detroit in regards to public perception. The city went from being a site of a horrific riot that was born of the ugliness of racism to being referred to as a “model city” for race relations between Caucasians and African Americans (Fine, 2007). Detroit was the richest per capital city in the United States of America during the 1960s (Matthews, 2013). The 1960s were a time of intense focus to position Detroit as a progressive city by the local government. The ability to do this successfully resulted in the city receiving funds from the federal government and also to be lauded for its commitment to resolve racial discord within its community. The general public, who also regarded Detroit as being a pre-eminent leader in race relations, also embraced this effort. Widick (1989) expressed this as being indicative of “Victorian optimism” and remarked that, “nowhere [else] in the nation were there more illusions about the influence of society and significant social progress than with the national press singling out Detroit’s way as the future of America” (p. 11). There was so much belief in the utopic perception of Detroit that the mayor and the governor were so confident of Detroit’s position as a healed city that they heavily petitioned for Detroit to be the host city of the Olympics in 1963 (Fine, 2007). The prevalence of such strong perceptions was one of the main reasons that people were so shocked when the riot occurred. It was nearly unfathomable by not only residents but also the better part of the country that such a thing could happen in Detroit.

The riot of 1967 began on Sunday, July 23rd. The incident that sparked the riot was an arrest at a “blind pig” located on 12th Street. The term “blind pig” described establishments that offered alcohol for purchase after 2 a.m. At this time, selling alcohol after 2 a.m. was illegal so blind pigs regularly drew the attention of law enforcement. Blind pigs drew both individuals who simply wanted to release the stress of the previous week in addition to those who were purveyors of more salacious forms of stress release (Fine, 2007). This dichotomy resulted in many African Americans feeling that blind pigs were more harmful than positive elements of the community (Locke, 1969). Not only did blind pigs contribute to the plethora of negative perceptions that existed about African Americans, they negatively impacted the businesses that held legitimate liquor licenses by robbing them of sales. Further, blind pigs attracted a lot of attention from law enforcement, which is exactly what happened in the wee hours of the morning on July 23, 1967.

The blind pig on 12th Street was not a stranger to law enforcement; so much so that in the previous year it had been raided nine times (Fine, 2007). Consequently, when a complaint was called into the precinct, it was a fairly routine run for officers. The evening of the 23rd had been a particularly busy one and officers decided to arrest all of the individuals present. The officers needed to call for backup to transport everyone. As people were loaded into the wagons to be delivered to the precinct for processing, a crowd of neighborhood residents began to gather outside of the blind pig. The crowd became especially boisterous and began to hurl insults and bottles at some of the officers (Fine, 2007; Locke, 1969). There are some accounts that indicate that this occurred because the officers were treating the detainees with excessive force (Fine, 2007). The continually growing crowd became angrier and, ultimately, became the germinating element that began the riot.

The timing of the start of the riot was unfortunate. In 1967, staffing for the local police department was largely dependent on trends in activity. The arrests at the blind pig occurred after 2 a.m. and this was, “the time of the lowest incidence of crime in Detroit . . . [and] Sunday was normally the day off for the Mounted Bureau, the department’s third crowd-control unit” (Fine, 2007, p. 164). This timing resulted in the availability of only 193 officers available to cover the riot in its earliest hours, when the violence began to exponentially escalate and extensive looting and arsons began to spread across the city (Gavrilovich & McGraw, 2000). The local law enforcement began to realize that they were significantly under resourced and attempted to engage support from both State of Michigan and Michigan National Guard officers. Ironically, timing was again not a friend to the city of Detroit. The majority of the officers within the Michigan National Guard were unavailable due to out of state training (Fine, 2007).

The lack of available law enforcement may have led to an assumption of a lack of concern on their part by the early rioters and that the activities were of little importance. The atmosphere during this time was described as akin to, “a carnival atmosphere [with] a giddy sense of release from the oppression of routine, white-dominated life in the ghetto” (Fine, 2007, p. 165). The activity continued steadily and expanded quickly, canvassing much of the east side of the city. By the end of the first day it was clear to local and state government that the city was in crisis, with more than 1,000 arrests and over 300 fires (Fine, 2007; Johnson, 2008; Locke, 1969). The governor at the time – George Romney (father of Mitt Romney) declared that the city of Detroit was in a state of emergency. He also instituted a curfew within the city limits in an attempt to stem the tide of destruction. The curfew was specific in nature, as documented by historian Sydney Fine (2007):

The executive order accompanying the governor’s proclamation forbade anyone other than law enforcement to carry firearms, ammunition, explosives, or inflammable materials; closed all places of amusement and all places selling or dispensing alcoholic beverages; forbade the assemblage of more than five persons; and stipulated a 9:00 p.m. to 5:30 a.m. curfew . . . (p. 188)

The second day of the riot was as devastating as the first, and began to garner national attention. Mayor Jerome Cavanaugh and Governor Romney collaborated and made the decision to request assistance from the federal government, as the curfew had largely been ignored and resources to quell the uprising were challenged to say the least. It is reported that initially, President Johnson was concerned about whether dispatching federal troops to Detroit was appropriate considering the fact that the ‘enemies’ were American citizens (Fine, 2007). He requested several public readings of proclamations that attempted to appeal to residents to suspend all rioting activity (Fine, 2007). Ultimately, he complied with the request and dispatched 5,000 federal troops to the city of Detroit to assist with ending the riot (Locke, 1969).

The release of the troops was a welcome gesture for many residents and business owners within the city. Many entities closed their doors in order to reduce potential damage and/or attempt to spare workers from potential danger. Hospitals, however, were unable to close. One in particular, Henry Ford Hospital, was located in the center of city. It was utilized as a command post for both local and federal officers. This meant that the location was a refuge for both those who were ‘waging battle’ against the rioters and those who were victims of the battle. The hospital was utilized as a location to regroup, strategize, receive assistance as needed and obtain nourishment for law enforcement. The hospital recorded in its newsletter for that year that several hundreds of members of law enforcement benefited from the services offered by the hospital (Henry Ford Hospital, 1967). Due to its pivotal role in the turmoil, the staff at the facility had a front row seat to the carnage that was the consequence of the riot. Unlike other employees in the area, most healthcare workers were not allowed the option of simply staying home to avoid the turmoil. Nurse Dorothy Deremo (1992) of Henry Ford Hospital commented on what it was like to work in those conditions in the following excerpt:

We all worked 15 to 18 hours per day, because there were no other people that could get in for about a week. We would work double shifts and then come back to the dorm and sleep, work double shifts again. There was really a need.

The need was reinforced on a daily basis as the riot continued. Many functions of the city ceased in operation. Most schools cancelled classes. Airline traffic was even affected by all inbound flights being delayed initially and ultimately cancelled. Law enforcement attempted to stave off the selling of contraband weapons and alcohol but were largely unsuccessful. The waves of gunfire, looting and arson continued with seemingly no end. Mayor Cavanaugh remarked infamously that during this time Detroit, “looked like Berlin in 1945” (Fine, 2007, p. 194).

The second day would be when the majority of riot-related arrests were made; more than 3,000 ultimately (Fine, 2007). The first murder victim was also recorded as dying that day; a Caucasian property owner shot and killed a Caucasian male looter. Day three of the riot marked the transition of riot activity from the east side of the side to the

west side. Day four of the riot is infamous because of the shootings in the Algiers Motel.³ Officers killed three unarmed African American men and injured several others during a particularly brutal incident event that has never fully been explained or remedied with regards to justice in the eyes of many (Fine, 2007; Johnson, 2008; Locke, 1969). This singular event would become one of the signature occurrences of the deadly riot and it would make headlines around the world (Sugrue, 2009).

The riot appeared to equally be the result of depressed economic conditions, as it was the result of racial unrest. Those on the lowest rung on the socioeconomic ladder were indeed overwhelmingly African American, but the riot was an ‘opportunity’ for lower rung Caucasians as well. In fact, it is estimated that less than 10% of the African American population at the time were involved in the riot (Widick, 1989). Locke (1969) went as far as to describe the riot as “one of the most integrated events in recent history” (p. 17). This fact was documented by local newspaper *The Detroit News*, whose extensive photographic coverage of the devastation of the riot resulted in its earning a Pulitzer Prize in 1968. S. E. Smith (1999) in her work *Dancing in the Street: Motown and the Cultural Politics of Detroit* recorded a riot observer as commenting that the riot of 1967 was, in fact, about “the propertied against the non-propertied” (p. 186). The single characteristic that many rioters had in common was the fact that they were opportunistic. There are descriptions of activities ranging from children being sent to looted stores with ‘shopping lists’ for items needed in the home, to others being given the sole directive of identifying and destroying records of debt (Fine, 2007). Many looters expressed feeling that once a store had been looted its contents were available for public consumption. There was even evidence of groups of Caucasian individuals from as many as four different states participating in the looting and theft of merchandise (Widick, 1989).

The riot ended on July 30th, after a total of 7 days of destruction. The federal troops left once it became clear that the riot was over. *The Detroit Free Press* recorded that managing the riot required a total of “4,400 Detroit police, 8,000 national guardsmen, 4,700 federal troops and 360 state police” (Gavrilovich & McGraw, 2000, p. 519). August 6th, 1967 was declared a day of mourning for the city of Detroit by Governor Romney.

The riot of 1967 was financially devastating to the city of Detroit. A review of the damages helps to support the claim by Hubert G. Locke – city administrator – that the riot was, “the worst civil disorder of any American city in the 20th century” (Locke, 1969, p. 23). The official death toll is still widely disputed but it was officially recorded as a total of 43. There were tens of thousands of individuals wounded (Fine, 2007; Gavrilovich & McGraw, 2000; Johnson, 2008; Locke, 1969). Hundreds of rounds of ammunition had been fired by the massive 17,000 member strong combined law enforcement entity comprised of individuals from the local municipal police department, the state of Michigan trooper force, the Michigan National Guard and the United States (Fine, 2007).

³ Ultimately, all officers were cleared of murder charges except for one.

An examination of the arrest patterns of the riot also yields compelling information. There were a total of 7,000 people arrested during the entire riot with teenagers comprising more than 10% of that number (Fine, 2007). Overwhelmingly, the race of those who were arrested was African American. This is ironic considering the fact that while Caucasians were only 12% of those individuals arrested, they were responsible for “35 percent of the assault and battery charges, 31 percent of the concealed weapons charges, 27 percent of the arson charges, and 26 percent of the felonious assault charges” (Fine, 2007, p. 342).

There were also extensive environmental repercussions from the riot. Due to the fact that it occurred in the midst of the summer, there were consequences that would not have been as extreme had the riot occurred at a different time of the year. Many routine city services were suspended during the riot. This included garbage collection. The accumulation of normal trash was greatly enhanced by debris created in the dousing of water on the hundreds of fires and the lack of electricity that resulted from damaged power lines. There was spoiled food everywhere and the conditions drew massive amounts of flies and rodents. It is estimated that more than four tons of rat poison was disseminated throughout the most devastated areas (Fine, 2007).

It is difficult to assess the true financial impact of the riot because it is hard to assess how much money was lost in wages for those who were unable or unafraid to go to work. It is equally difficult to assess the loss of profit for the organizations that closed their doors to the public during the riot. It is estimated that over 2500 structures were destroyed in some way during the riot, and of that figure nearly half of the fires were set via basic incendiary devices. The Michigan Insurance Bureau calculated that insured losses totaled \$84 million, uninsured losses totaled \$55 million, costs incurred by the local government involvement cost \$11.5 million and the federal government’s involvement cost \$2.5 million. This adds up to \$153 million 1967 dollars. This amount would be \$1.8 billion in 2014 dollars (CPI Inflation Index, 2014).

The impact of the Detroit riot of 1967 was indeed significant and has had residual effects to the present day; especially with regards to public perception. It did not help matters that Detroit is the only city its size in the United States that has been federally occupied twice; once during the riot of 1943 and again during the riot of 1967 (Fine, 2007). After the riot of 1967, Caucasians and African Americans were unified in their anger about the destruction of their once beautiful city and the deeper racial divide that was the consequence of such violence. Many African Americans felt even more trapped in their neighborhoods. Caucasians who had the ability to move away from the city did so in droves. The riot marked a nearly 40-year migration away from the city and into underdeveloped surrounding suburbs, seeking a ‘safer’ environment. Known as “white flight”, the phenomenon was exacerbated by the illegal and discriminatory practices of the Federal Housing Administration, which all but eliminated loans within the city limits and increased the approvals of loans in suburban areas (Oliver & Shapiro, 2006; Sugrue,

1996). The city of Detroit became increasingly black and while they were no longer limited to living in confined areas of the city, many still experienced subpar living conditions and exorbitant rental fees. The impact of the post-riot reality in the city of Detroit was not only damaging from a sociological aspect, but also economically. Economic investment within the city of Detroit was considered highly risky. Many corporations scaled back on hiring within the city and subsequently, there were less jobs and opportunities for those who had been left behind. The decline in available work opportunities led to a reduced tax base, which in turn left less funding for city services.

The psychological damage of the riot was equally (and, arguably) more extensive. The deep-seated distrust for local government that had been ignited after the riot of 1943 was fully ablaze after the riot of 1967. The majority of the public officials in the city of Detroit at that time were Caucasian. Ironically, the African American community also expressed distrust for African American leaders also, assuming that their allegiance was not to the residents of the city of Detroit but more to the public officials. There is a photo of then U.S. Congressman John Conyers standing atop a vehicle with a bullhorn attempting to quell the fury expressed by rioters. He was joined by then Detroit Public School superintendent Arthur Johnson. Both men were African American and experienced bottles being hurled at them in response to their pleas for order. The lack of identification with even African American leaders who were viewed as part of the 'establishment' was not unique to Detroit. It occurred in the other riots around the country as well. Famed African American leader Dick Gregory was shot in the leg while trying to calm an angry mob in an earlier riot (Fine, 2007).

Some of the anger expressed by the African American community was the result of a 'witch hunt' to identify the cause of the riot. There were accusations that instead of the riot being a social phenomenon born of frustration and extreme disparity, it was the brainchild of a few individuals. There was quite a bit of effort aimed towards proving whether the riot was the result of a conspiracy of a small group of residents. This theory was never proven to be true despite the fact that several residents were detained, questioned and placed under surveillance (Fine, 2007). There were also discussions regarding whether the riot was simply a failure of leadership to acknowledge that the city of Detroit had not been the racial utopia that it had been purported to be. This failure was attributed to both Caucasian and African American leadership (Farley, Couper, & Krysan, 2007; Fine, 2007; Sugrue, 2007). There were debates over how the riot was addressed from an administrative perspective. The concerns covered the gamut from inquiries on how few officers were available to the use of militaristic force against U.S. Citizens (the majority of whom were African American) to how detainees were processed and treated while in custody. The conversations were intense and slowly developed into expressions of concern and petitions for solutions.

Regardless of the impetus for the riot, it was clear and imperative that the city rebound from its state of crisis. In order to effectively do this, both healing and growth needed to occur. The city needed to rebuild in every way imaginable. As a consequence

to the rapidly dwindling tax base, this would mean that the surrounding suburbs would need to collaborate. The aftermath of the Detroit riot of 1967 is noted as being the impetus for a push towards regional collaboration between suburbs and the urban core and that the collaboration was key to ongoing success for the city (Alberti, 2012).

Leading in Crisis

As anyone who has ever attempted to lead individuals is fully aware, effective leadership is a challenging endeavor. First and foremost, a leader must be able to inspire trust in those who follow him or her. Peter Drucker (2005) offers the following perspective:

[A] requirement of effective leadership is to earn trust. Otherwise, there won't be any followers--and the only definition of a leader is someone who has followers. To trust a leader, it is not necessary to like him. Nor is it necessary to agree with him. Trust is the conviction that leader means what he says. It is a belief in something very old-fashioned, called "integrity." A leader's actions and a leader's professed beliefs must be congruent, or at least compatible. Effective leadership--and again this is very old wisdom--is not based on being clever; it is based primarily on being consistent. (p. 271)

Drucker's quote expresses the need for followers to connect with leaders in a meaningful way. This is further complicated by the fact that an individual's ego rarely allows for trust without context. This perspective of leadership is both simple and complex at the same time, but understanding this delicate dynamic is critical when attempting to lead in crisis. In order to earn trust leaders must be tested and consistent. Simply attempting to "throw spaghetti to the wall to see if it sticks" does not apply in such scenarios. Leaders must commit to developing chains of communication that allow for an exchange and refining of ideas over a period of time. Small gains that are leading toward success are more important than massive goals that are not attainable. Leaders need to be able to demonstrate that they can be trusted and they also need to inspire others to follow their vision. McKee et al. (2008) expresses this in the following quote:

The best leaders move people. They engage people's hearts and minds and help direct people's energy, individually and collectively, toward a desired end. And resonant leaders create a climate that is ripe with enthusiasm, hope, mutual support, and commitment. In other words, they lead with emotional and social intelligence and create resonant climates that can, and do, and support both leaders and followers as both groups engage in the hard work of achieving goals and bringing about change. (p. 212)

Senge (2006) offered another noteworthy addition to the qualifications of individuals who attempt to lead in crisis. He asserts that leaders need to not only "[possess] knowledge, leaders need to be aware of the power of mental models... [they] determine not only how we can make sense of the world, but how we can take action" (p. 164). The concept of the strength of mental models is particularly acute during times of crisis, when the collective wisdom of the group may be more compelling than that of an

individual viewpoint. Senge further explains that collective wisdom can be converted into shared vision. There was never a greater need for shared vision than in the aftermath of the riot of 1967. In 2006 Senge wrote *The Fifth Discipline*, where he elaborated on the importance of shared vision:

A shared vision is not an idea. It is not even an important idea, such as freedom. It is, rather, a force in people's hearts, a force of impressive power. It may be inspired by an idea, but once it goes out further--if it is compelling enough to acquire the support of more than one person--then it is no longer an abstraction. It is palpable. People begin to see it as if it exists. Few, if any, forces in human affairs are as powerful as shared vision. (p. 192)

The research validates the claim the leadership is deceptively difficult in what can be considered "normal" times, so it stands to reason that it is even more challenging during turbulent times. It is easy to be the captain on a ship that is sailing on smooth waters, but a true leader can guide through stormy weather. As Peter Drucker (2005) beautifully expressed, the best leaders are "painfully aware that they are not in control of the universe" (p. 269).

A crisis exacerbates the lack of stability within a given scenario at the very least and creates instability at the worst. It is for this reason that it is critical for leaders to attempt to establish a foundation upon which to rebuild. The processes through which leaders are charged to garner support and trust of their constituents is both an art and a science. Several thought leaders within the realm of crisis leadership have agreed that there are at least three stages in any crisis. Those stages include what happens before the event, what happens during the event itself and what happens after the event (Ulmer et al., 2007).

The 'pre-crisis stage' refers to the ability of leadership to accurately predict the possibility of crisis and anticipate potential remedies to the subsequent damage that would occur (Ulmer et al., 2007). Due to the rose colored glasses that many local government officials seemingly wore, the possibility of civil unrest did not appear to be a plausible risk to consider at that time. One would imagine that even in such an idealized scenario, however, officials should have at least been aware of the possibility due to the riots occurring in the other parts of the country at the time. Major cities with majority populations of African Americans were experiencing great turmoil as the indignation caused by a lack of civil rights became insurmountable. Detroit was no exception. Both the riot of 1943 and the riot of 1967 were the consequences of years of oppression and rage within the community, similarly the sister cities that experienced riots. Ironically, there had been evidence of rioting in other cities around the country before the 1943 riot in Detroit as well, so had leadership been thoughtful of the external social conditions before the 1943 riot they may have been better prepared before the 1967 riot. Thomas Sugrue, in *Sweet Land of Liberty* (2009), wrote:

Urban riots were part of the black insurgency of the 1960s--an insurgency that trapped deep roots of discontent but also manifested the particular political and

cultural sensibilities of the era. They grew from simmering discontent at the continued subordination of African Americans. The urban riots were, above all, about turf and control. (p. 350).

Regardless of what some may have imagined in their minds about Detroit being a 'model' city for race relations, it wasn't. Race has always mattered in Detroit.

The 1967 riot was not a surprise to many in the African American population in the city of Detroit. Sydney Fine (2007) remarked:

... although 53 percent of African American Detroit respondents in one survey indicated that they had been surprised by the riot, residents of the disturbance areas stated in interviews that they had been hearing before July 23, 1967, that Detroit was "long overdue" for a riot and that it would be next. (p. 161)

Historian Thomas Sugrue agreed with this sentiment, expressing that the resentment had been simmering for decades and yet found a new fuse within the youth of the time, who also experienced economic hardship and hadn't lived long enough to become used to disparate treatment. It would be determined that 10% of the arrests were of youths (Sugrue, 2009). Arthur Johnson was the deputy superintendent of Detroit Public Schools at the time of the riot of 1967. In his autobiography, he made the following point:

In many respects, the riot was both shocking and predictable. Predictable because the causes of the riot were the same issues that the black community has wanted addressed for a long time: persistent police brutality and harassment; housing segregation and overcrowding, exacerbated by urban renewal targeting black neighborhoods; job discrimination, unemployment and poverty. (p. 107)

The biggest failure in the pre-crisis stage of the riot of 1967 was the failure to see the city for what it really was – a place with hurting people who were oppressed and angry for several decades prior at least. The reality was that Detroit had a deep history in both institutionalized and socialized racism and that it was ripe for a second riot to occur. The inability to acknowledge this was a lost opportunity to connect authentically with the residents of the city and potentially stave off the future devastation.

The second identified stage in crisis management is the actual event of the crisis (Ulmer et al., 2007). As detailed previously, the initial response to the riot was one of surprise – and, subsequently – this lack of preparedness aided the initial disturbance into exponentially developing in a rapid fashion. Some may argue that the response of engaging federal military may have been premature and yet others may feel that it may have taken too long to engage external support. Regardless of one's position on the level of appropriateness of the response once the riot began, it is important to note that all steps taken during a crisis matter. Leadership must still occur within crisis. Not only do leaders need to be effective in attempting to contain the crisis they must also attempt to reduce the likelihood of further destruction as much as possible.

The last phase identified is the post-crisis phase (Ulmer et al., 2007). This may be the most important phase of the three. The goal at this point is to rebuild after the crisis. This is normally extensive work, and this was absolutely true after the riot of 1967. The process of rebuilding the city of Detroit took on a lot of meaning. There was both tangible damage and intangible damage that needed to be addressed both within the city and externally. The image of community and safety was obliterated for its residents. The external reputation of the city of Detroit absorbed a tremendous blow after the riot; particularly in light of the positive reputation it had held prior to the event. Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky (2009) remarked that the post-crisis stage is the most challenging because, “people put enormous pressure on you to respond to their anxieties with authoritative certainty, even if doing so means overselling what you know and discounting what you don’t” (p. 2). The post-crisis period after the riot of 1967 was in desperate need for leadership that was different from any efforts put forth previously. Most importantly, Detroit needed effective leadership that addressed the root cause of unrest and built from that point forward.

Evaluating effective leadership during crisis is somewhat elusive and subjective. In *7 Lessons for Leading in Crisis*, George (2009) said that a lack of adequate preparation about future outcomes and the inability to critically evaluate the consequences of actions and/or decisions made during a crisis will most assuredly lead to that crisis re-occurring in the future. He wrote that “like the weeds in your backyard, crises have roots with long tentacles that are buried deep underground. If you cut down the weeds without removing the whole root, they will surely grow back” (p. 47). This apt description applies not only to the 1967 riot but also hauntingly whispers from the post-crisis stage of the 1943 riot as well.

Leadership Efforts After The Riot of 1967

The post-crisis approach to the 1943 riot was a top-down approach. The local leaders met and devised a plan and the plan was implemented. There was not much involvement from residents within the city of Detroit and especially not from the African American population who were most directly impacted by the outcome of such significant decisions. One would imagine that after reviewing the less than ideal way that the riot of 1943 was handled that the city would be better prepared to address the fall out of the 1967 riot. Initially, it did not appear that this was true. The immediate response to the riot was one of horror, revulsion and blame. Appallingly, Mayor Cavanaugh is quoted as suggesting “more emphasis should be placed on making rural life more attractive to Negroes even if it requires a back-to-land movement” (S. E. Smith, 1999, p. 204). This type of response mirrored that of then U.S. Attorney General Frances Biddle after the riot of 1943, when he pushed for the formulation of the “slum clearance” plan.

After the riot of 1967, the community was more deeply damaged and much more negatively impacted than after the 1943 riot. Subsequently, a sense of futility and a lack of hope were prominent throughout the community. This was not aided by the

tremendous amount of pressure and negative media that the city received after the riot. Thankfully, the local administration made the decision to pull together groups of local leaders comprised of both Caucasians and African Americans to address the underlying reasons for the unrest. The local groups largely codified into three organizations with slightly different goals. The organizations were The New Detroit Committee, Detroit Renaissance and Focus:HOPE.

The New Detroit Committee was founded after Mayor Cavanaugh sent local leaders a letter that expressed, "urgency in strengthening the communication between the core city and its outlying districts and suburban neighbors" (Office of Mayor Cavanaugh, 1968). The New Detroit Committee made significant progress in the city through the work of four major subcommittees—employment and education, community redevelopment, community services and law and finance. The New Detroit Committee had 39 members, and considering the time period, was fairly diverse with nine African Americans and three women on the roster. Some of the more notable members included influential figures from many segments of the economy such as Damon Keith, who was a senior leader with the Michigan Civil Rights Commission, local labor leader Walter P. Reuther, auto executive Henry Ford II, JL Hudson CEO Joseph L. Hudson (who chaired the committee) and investor Max Fisher.

JL Hudson requested that committee members focus on the future as opposed to looking at past events and requested a focus on effective evaluation of projects that could revitalize the community in addition to securing capital for the completion of the projects (New Detroit, 1968). This approach proved to be successful. In its first 2 years of operation, The New Detroit Committee secured over \$10 million in capital to fund community revitalization projects. Equally impressive is the fact that the funds were distributed directly to leaders within the community. Depending on the project, small community groups could receive grants as high as a maximum of \$2 million (New Detroit, n.d.b, p. 7).

The efforts of The New Detroit Committee were so successful that two of the leaders formed Detroit Renaissance in 1970, which was to be comprised of leaders in both the local government and economic development at the time. Neither Mayor Cavanaugh nor Governor Romney were re-elected after the riot of 1967. Henry Ford II and Max Fisher (chair) invited the new mayor and governor (Roman Gibbs and William Milliken, respectively), local bank president Robert Surdam, Chrysler executive Virgil Boyd, and General Motors executive James Roche to join them (Detroit Renaissance, 1973). The goal of Detroit Renaissance was to zero in on rebuilding economic development in the city, specifically highlighting the downtown area. At a meeting of the Detroit Economic Club shortly after the formation of Detroit Renaissance Max Fisher acknowledged the momentum created by The New Detroit Committee and identifying its success at "[improving] the conditions and opportunities for the disadvantaged" while highlighting that the specific goal of Detroit Renaissance was to "pull all of Detroit's great economic assets together" (Fisher, 1971).

The pinnacle project of Detroit Renaissance was a \$500 million project to be located at the center of the downtown area. The project was to include convention space, a hotel, capacity for office space for businesses and potentially even residential real estate development. The project was named the Detroit Renaissance Center, and it was intended to be a symbol that always represented Detroit's rebirth after the riot of 1967 (Detroit Renaissance, 1973). The finished product utilized more than 400,000 cubic yards of concrete, 40,000 tons of structural steel, and two million square feet of glass (Rencen, n.d.). It had four towers, a hotel with 73 floors, boasted 5.5 million square feet of space and had its own ZIP code. The project additionally held the distinction of being the largest project that was privately funded at the time (Rencen, n.d.). It would eventually become a landmark icon of the city.

While the work of both The New Detroit Committee and Detroit Renaissance was meaningful and necessary in the work of re-building the city's economic base, more work was needed to restore the damaged 'soul' of the city. One of the projects that The New Detroit Committee funded within its first two years of inception was focused on that work and it was named Focus: HOPE.

Focus: HOPE focused in on the needs of the citizens of the city of Detroit. It was an ideal compliment to The New Detroit Committee and Detroit Renaissance. The organization was the brainchild of two members of the Archdiocese of Detroit – Fathers Jerome Fraser and William T. Cunningham along with parish member Eleanor Josaitis. Each of the individuals was committed to attempting to address the history of racial unrest within the city and the impact that it had on the residents. One of the major newspapers – The Michigan Chronicle – described Focus:HOPE as being “a unique, far-reaching educational program aimed at easing racial tensions and fostering a positive approach to community solidarity” (Pitcher, 1968).

The first major initiative of Focus: HOPE was to develop a program called Summer Hope '68. The goal of this program was to encourage the community to commit to a summer of peace on the first year anniversary of the riot. Another major goal of the organization was to coordinate and implement community dialogue sessions that allowed for local clergy to participate in conversations on parity for all residents of the city regardless of their race. This tactic of direct contact with residents was rather successful; more than 85,000 of the meetings occurred within the first year (Talbert, 1969). These conversations assisted the organization in identifying the most vital needs in the community at the time.

One of the most pervasive needs within the community after the riot was food. Focus:HOPE developed programs to distribute food to the area's most vulnerable citizens – women, children and seniors. Ultimately, the organization would go on to develop workforce-training programs, programs for high school completion, and offer assistance to individuals who had transportation challenges as well. Each of these basic needs

represented the true impact of years of racism and a riot that made life even worse for those who needed assistance the most. Focus:HOPE played as equally critical a role post-riot as those focused on economic development by addressing the needs of the people at the most basic of levels. The organization was committed to, “[taking] intelligent and practical steps to root out racism, poverty and injustice” (Focus: HOPE, 1968). This led to the development of the organization’s symbol – one African American hand and one Caucasian hand reaching toward each other under the word hope.

How Detroit’s Past Lessons Can Shape Its Future

There is a substantial difference between the effectiveness of the leadership efforts after the riot of 1943 and 1967. The Detroit Plan of 1943 was not inaccurate in its desire to regain economic footing; it simply was not complete in that it did not fully address what needed to be remedied after the riot. The leadership response in 1943 focused solely on economic development with virtually no regard for the impact that this would have on the residents of the city of Detroit. In fact, many of the residents were viewed as part of the problem and not invited to offer their perspective or voice their concerns. Instead of bringing the community together, it drove them further apart.

The leadership response after the riot of 1967 was multifaceted and arguably more effective. Economic development was a key component as well, but with more thoughtful consideration. The New Detroit Committee was deliberate about seeking input from the community on economic development projects. Subsequently, not only were the residents of the city encouraged to submit viable ideas, they were entrusted with the funds to manage the project themselves. There was recognition that most of the individuals who comprised the New Detroit Committee were unaware of what to do to best facilitate healing and regrowth for the city. This acknowledgement, backed by the powerful influence and support of individuals who were significant business leaders, proved to be the golden formula. Detroit Renaissance knew that the ability for Detroit to regain its reputation as a viable center for commerce and development was crucial. Developing the Renaissance Center was considered to be a hopeful gesture that would spur both loyalty and economic interest from potential investors. It remains one of the most iconic symbols of the city and has had occupancy by some of the areas most successful organizations, with the world headquarters of General Motors residing within the structure as of 2014. The fact that the project was privately funded was a bold sign of support for the potential of the city and it did indeed draw commerce and infusion of capital into the city.

Focus:HOPE proved that the rebuilding of a city also requires acknowledgement of chasms in the community. The city of Detroit has had a history of racism that has resulted in years of mistrust and an imbalance of opportunities for those of the lowest economic strata (which are overwhelmingly African American). It is important for this institutionalized discrimination and the subsequent psychosocial damage to be acknowledged and addressed in order for the community to heal and move forward. Both

of the riots showed us that attempting to ignore the significance of this could have dire consequences.

Focus:HOPE committed to having courageous conversations that led to their ability to discern some of the true needs of the residents and respond. Focus:HOPE recognized that the answers to many of the issues lay within the wisdom of the collective community. In order to truly conduct a root cause analysis, one must not be afraid of the potential answers it might find. The good, the bad and the ugly must be considered in order to properly devise effective solutions. Focus:HOPE also introduced the concept of the need to ‘triage’ ancillary issues (such as lack of transportation, day care or even food) as being a viable barrier for many citizens to find and sustain gainful employment. As evidenced in Maslow’s hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1997), in order to get to the top of the pyramid the most basic needs have to be secure. This led to Focus:HOPE being able to develop a reputation as a trusted leader, which we have learned is critical in leading through crisis.

The lessons learned after the riot of 1967 prove that the most effective leaders are not the source of the solutions; at best, they are conductors of a disparate orchestra of challenges and resources and the goal is to keep everyone on the same key. An effective leader in crisis is a person who understands that they are only as strong as the units within their community are and that where there is no trust there is no leadership. The leaders who emerged after the riot of 1967 seemed to understand this and still accepted the call to lead. McKee et al. (2008) identified these types of leaders as “resonant,” and described them as being fearless yet focused. Subsequently, they are capable of fostering great transformation.

Another important lesson to be learned in the aftermath of the riot of 1967 is the fact that as important as the community is, it cannot survive without an infusion of capital. Even the most thoughtful community program needs to be funded. The key to success after the riot was the joining of these two powerful forces within the city of Detroit. This level of focus on both investing in local business ventures and keeping an eye on being attractive to potential capital investors is a strategy that needs to continue in today’s Detroit.

It is important to note the fact that the leaders who emerged after the riot of 1967 came from diverse walks of life. Some of the traditional ‘lines’ that may have normally separated individuals seemed to erase for the sake of the larger goal of repairing the city. Some individuals lived in the city and some did not. Some were African American and some were Caucasian. The key is that they had the same vision of a future for a city that was at that time close to ruin. This level of intention must be replicated today. It can be argued that Detroit gave birth to all of the suburbs that surround it and the time has come to pay homage to that fact through support and empathy. Detroit needs to be a thriving urban center in order for its surrounding cities to survive. No man -or suburb- is an island.

Suburban leadership would be wise to be deliberate in identifying opportunities to assist Detroit in its journal for renewal.

Conclusion

The city of Detroit is considered by many to be in the midst of the most significant crisis of its existence. The reality is that not only is this not the first time that Detroit has experienced crisis, the city has rarely not rebounded from its woes. Some liken the current bankruptcy to be the boisterous winds of a tumultuous tornado of doom. At the center of every tornado, however, is a calm center. History has whispered its warnings from the past and also offered assurances that there is still a future. The future will most likely not look like anything that came before it in structure but its foundation can still be solid. Similar to the task of leaders after the riot of 1967, today's leaders have to rebuild in the wake of significant loss. In additionally similar fashion, there will need to be a deliberate and sustained collaboration between both industry and the community. The memory of the city retains the knowledge that in times of collective vision and commitment it soars.

Thankfully, there are signs of renewal with the city of Detroit. There are enclaves of creative artists who draw a demographic of young professionals who desire an interesting urban core for habitation. There are business incubators that are sponsored by corporate entities and seek out compelling business ideas from budding entrepreneurs. The city has become home to a flourishing 'pop up' business phenomenon, which allows businesses who perhaps have a great idea but not enough capital for dedicated retail space to creatively showcase their wares in a myriad of ways.

There have been significant financial contributions to Detroit's renewal as well. Two of the more recent contributors are JP Morgan Chase, which has pledged to invest \$100 million in the next five years (2014) and a \$400,000 grant from the Knight Foundation to increase the knowledge and development of community leaders (2014). There are grants and programs to support this unique type of entrepreneurship such as D:Hive and Resolve Detroit. Entrepreneurialism is what made Detroit into an economic powerhouse decades prior. Between Henry Ford's contribution and the thriving businesses that existed within the Black Bottom and Paradise Valley communities (despite significant economic impairment), Detroit's past has much to contribute in this area. Hence, continuing to support entrepreneurial endeavors is a nod to the city's rich past and an investment in its future.

There is a sort of vibrant murmuring in current Detroit that is different and yet familiar at the same time. The voices are not limited by age or race or economic status. The 'insiders' express love and protectiveness of their city, boasting of their heritage on t-shirts and through devoted and thoughtful blog entries. Even 'outsiders' have begun to notice to the pride and love and hidden beauty of Detroit. This is the basis for the chorus for the city's next act in one of the most intriguing plays of any American city.

As expressed previously, the key for today's leaders is to realize that they do not hold all of the answers within themselves. To be an effective leader in the city of Detroit in the wake of bankruptcy is to realize that many of the tools and resources have to emerge from the residents in concert with those who have access to resources. Like jazz, each of these components respects the contributions of the other and results in complex beauty. If the goal of leaders is to create a sustainable community and enrich the legacy of the city of Detroit then this is the only path.

Today's Detroit is not a place of desolate dreams of what used to be. It is resilient and thick-skinned. Weathered and proven in its ability to remain standing in the most precarious conditions. It is what poet Tupac Shakur (1999) referred to as a rose in the concrete, which he describes in the following poem:

Did you hear about the rose that grew from a crack
in the concrete
Proving nature's law is wrong it learned 2 walk
without having feet
Funny it seems, but by keeping its dreams,
it learned 2 breathe fresh air
Long live the rose that grew from concrete
when no one else even cared!

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