

Using Content Analysis to Discover Underlying Themes: Belle Isle State Park, Detroit, Michigan

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Abstract: Content Analysis as a research method has been successfully used in multiple fields to tap into the public conscience to identify trends of feeling and thinking. Early content analysis has been defined as only taking the meaning of the studied media that is agreed by everyone involved, but used in this sense invokes limitations that may not be present. If content analysis is used in the broader sense, which is what this research does, media content opens itself to interpretations contextual with background information. This research finds both diversity and adversity through the headlines of two Detroit-area newspapers. It uses content analysis to identify the public's sense of place, or cognizance, of a geographic area. Detroit, Michigan is a large US city that has experienced race riots, one of its earliest in 1943 originating at Belle Isle City Park, one of the largest island parks in the United States. High crime rates have become commonplace in Detroit, which has propelled the City to the top of many lists for negative reasons, i.e., most violent city, most murders in a US city, and one of the most segregated cities in the nation. In the past decade, city parks were closed and basic maintenance ceased, and Belle Isle City Park began attracting a volatile group of users. This study utilizes a content analysis of two newspapers: the Michigan Chronicle and the Detroit Free Press for the purpose of comparing the headlines to begin a study of the different target audiences.

Key-Words: **content analysis, sense of place, sentiment analysis, Detroit, Belle Isle, urban parks**

1 Introduction

At its simplest construct, an image is an individual's mind trying to process and make sense of enormous amounts of data into a manageable set of ideas [1]. A single event can shape the image of a place, for example, consider Tiananmen Square in Beijing, China and the lasting image of a single citizen standing fast in front of a line of tanks comes to mind [2]. Popular media, such as television, music, internet, journalism, and photographs [3, 4] also form images. Boland [5] points out the print media are especially geared toward attention-grabbing headlines to sell more of their product.

This research uses headlines from the Michigan Chronicle and Free Press to evaluate the public opinions and concerns of Belle Isle Park in Detroit, Michigan. This type of public document content

analysis is one method for exploring sense of place and community well-being. The Michigan Chronicle, a weekly publication with a circulation of 35,000 [6] is a broad, sheet publication that was started in 1936 under the name "Detroit Chronicle." Its target audience is the Detroit resident, and became known for its candid reporting on the violence against African-Americans, and local civil rights struggles of the 20th century. The Detroit Free Press, begun in 1831 as the Democratic Free Press, is a daily broadsheet publication with a circulation of about 234,000, with the majority of its subscribers being in the counties surrounding Detroit, also known as Metro Detroit.

2 Problem Formulation

This exploration concentrates on newspaper articles containing the phrase “Belle Isle,” and published between 2012 and 2014. Like many newspapers, the Michigan Chronicle and the Detroit Free Press print articles that reflects the mind-set of its customers, in order to maintain a healthy business of supplying a product desired by its subscribers [7] since they are in business of selling more newspapers. This study utilizes a content analysis of both newspapers for the purpose of comparing the headlines to begin a study of the sense of place between Detroit residents and Metro Detroit residents. The articles were then run through Semantria, a software program that analyses the sentiment of an article, as opposed to most software that analyses the writer’s skill [8]. These years were specifically selected because in 2012 the State of Michigan offered a proposal to assume management of the park to alleviate the financial strain the park was putting on Detroit’s financial burdens. The issue was contentious in the years 2012 and 2013, with the local newspapers covering the many sides of the State assuming management. This proposal was tossed around for months before it became apparent that the residents favored the idea while City government did not.

2.1 Methods

Per Krippendorff [9], the incapability to use direct observation is an invitation to apply content analysis. Krippendorff goes on to set the boundaries for the framework of content analysis:

- “A research question that the analyst seeks to answer by examining the body of text
- A context of the analyst’s choice within which to make sense of the body of text
- An analytical construct that operationalizes what the analyst knows about the context of the body of text
- Inferences that are intended to answer the research question, which constitute the basic accomplishment of the content analysis
- Validating evidence, which is the ultimate justification of the content analysis questions” [10].

They are text in the sense that they are meant to be read, interpreted, and understood by somebody. The pursuit of answers to research questions also ground

content analysis empirically. Thus, in content analysis, research questions have the following characteristics: they are believed to be answerable by examinations of a body of texts, they delineate a set of possible (hypothetical) answers which analysts select, they concern currently inaccessible phenomena, and they allow for validation, -at least in principle-by acknowledging another way to observe or substantiate the occurrence of the inferred phenomena [11, 12]. This research follows these concepts, in that the attitudes of the Michigan Chronicle and the Free Press are accessible and they create headlines grounded in community beliefs for their subscribers. It has a foundation in assuming that headlines mirror the impressions and sentiment of the target audience of both newspapers [13].

With this in mind, the Michigan State University library, which has a substantial collection of articles from current and historic newspapers, was used. A filter was set to return articles containing the phrase “Belle Isle” with a publish date between 2012 through 2014. For this study, only articles that contained “Belle Isle” in the headline were used. The Michigan Chronicle returned 30 headlines, of which all were used. The Free Press returned 160, and a random sample of 55 (approximately 40%) were used.

The years 2012-2014 were selected to ensure content in the Detroit area media, which represents the era with negotiations initiated by the State of Michigan toward the City of Detroit to assume management of Belle Isle Park under a multiyear lease. Communications were contentious at times, involving distrustful conjectures and fear of losing the largest city-run island park in the United States to State government. The search engines from the Michigan Newspaper Selections collection in the Michigan State University library were used to collect data from regional broadsheets representing the City of Detroit and its surrounding areas. The Free Press circulation averages 130,000 paid subscribers across metro Detroit, loosely defined as Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb counties [14]. The articles pertaining to the “Belle Isle” headlines were divided into five categories:

- Crime: includes mention of police, police action, or crime reports
- Events: articles that include a date and time, or revolves around a particular, and appears in paper clustered around the same time period.

- People, Places, Things: obituaries, letters to the editor, social/academic groups
- Political: the State of Michigan assuming management of Belle Isle from the City of Detroit, Detroit’s Bankruptcy, or political figures (e.g., mayor, city council)
- Self-Image: uses phrases such as “We are / I am...,” or articles written with the voice of Detroit or Metro-Detroit residents

The headlines from the 2012-2014 articles containing “Belle Isle” in the Michigan Chronicle and the Detroit Free Press are summarized in the following section by year and accompanying sentiment in parenthesis following the headline (‘+’ has a positive sentiment, ‘0’ has a neutral sentiment, and ‘-’ refers to a negative sentiment).

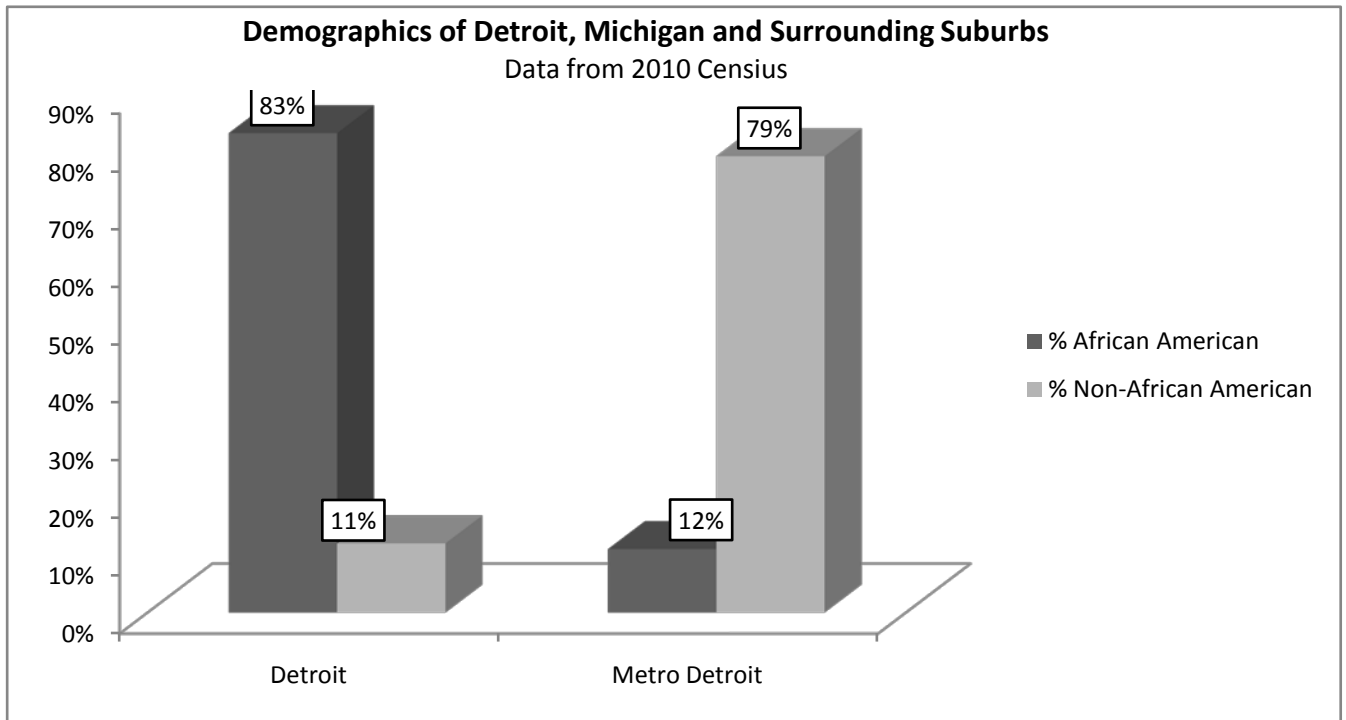


Figure 1. Graphical representation of African American composition between Detroit and surrounding Metro Detroit

Table 1. Table form to accompany Figure 1. Data from U.S. census 2010

Demographics	Population	African-American Population	% African-American	Caucasian Population	% Caucasian
City of Detroit	713,777	590,294	83%	75,660	11%
Metro Detroit (not including Detroit)	3,150,147	382,888	12%	2,503,102	79%

Table 2. Demographics of the Michigan Chronicle and the Detroit Free Press

Media	Geography of Subscribers	Approximate Circulation Numbers, both subscribers and online visitors
Michigan Chronicle	City of Detroit	35,000
Detroit Free Press	Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb Counties	234,000

2.2 Definition of Content Analysis

Content analysis has a long history in nursing [15], as well as in communication, journalism, sociology, psychology, business [16], internet retail, and advertising [17]. Content analysis has been used successfully in political analyses of foreign propaganda, psychotherapeutic assessments, in ethnographic research, in computer text analysis. Bakhtyar, et al [18] constructed an innovative approach to quality housing by using content analysis. Welch [19] describes content analysis as a way to get the story when there are no eyewitnesses.

A content analysis can be qualitative or quantitative, and inductive or deductive. Inductive reasoning uses examples to reach conclusions about something when few, if any, previous studies exist, while deductive reasoning uses logic or reasoning to form conclusions about something, usually in an effort to test previous theories in different situations [20]. Content analysis begins as a quantifiable method of research, as this research is easily replicable: the phrase “Belle Isle” must appear in either the text or the headline. If using content analysis in the quantifiable sense, the analysis then leads to comparing the metadata of an article, e.g., the number of words per article, the presence or absence of an accompanying photograph, pixels, shapes, media, and perhaps notable quotes [21, 22].

This is a mixed methods study, using an inductive method across both quantitative and qualitative methods [23]. This is a longitudinal study utilizing a stratified sample, and is easily replicable, as the sole criteria for inclusion is that the phrase “Belle Isle” must appear in either the headline or photo captions with a publication date between 2012-2014. This accounts for the quantitative method used, and leads to results that are valid and reliable.

A qualitative content analysis collects the previously noted information, and extends the implication further through the use of gathering the meaning and feeling of an article in a qualitative sense. Stone, Dunphy, Smith, & Ogilvie [24] noted that content analysis as a “research technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying specified characteristics within a text.” Krippendorff [25] states that comprehending the meanings behind the text is the reason that researchers engage in content analysis rather than in some other kind of investigative method. He maintains that content analyst must acknowledge that all texts are produced and read by others and are expected to be significant to them, not just to the analyst.

Content analysis has been defined by some to only take the meaning that is agreed by everyone involved [26]. Use in this sense limits invokes limitations that may not be present if content analysis is used in a broader sense, which is what this research does because it hopes to find diversity and perhaps adversity. Content analysis builds knowledge construction through collaborative learning [27], and is useful for recognizing meanings that other methods may overlook. Content analysis is text as written by someone for someone else to read, with meaning for both the initiator and the receiver.

The qualitative section takes those records gathered from the quantitative methods, and per a coding method, assigns them to one of five categories before being submitted to a sentiment analysis. Semantria software then searches for specific words, and tags each headline as positive, neutral, or negative, depending on the words used, a sample of which are listed below:

“Positive” words:

- Beautiful
- Flowering
- Freedom
- Inspiring
- Love
- Revitalization

“Neutral” words:

- Automotive
- Baseball
- Chevrolet
- Concert
- Museum
- River

“Negative” words

- Abandoned
- Apathy
- Attacks
- Emergency
- Turmoil
- Unacceptable

This research uses content analysis as a reliable technique when direct observations are not possible as long as one considers the lens with which one will use before the content analysis can be started. Hough, in *Out of place: Restoring identity to the regional landscape* [28], addresses this idea, and demonstrates this differentiation between four groups of students, each representing the lens of environmentalists, engineers, designers, and biologists in drawing the flow of a river. The environmentalists were concerned with accuracy involving the river’s ecosystems. The designers, however, focused on drawing an attractive representation. Same river, yet different perspectives. Neither is “more right” than the others, they are just different from each other.

2.3 Content Analysis as a Respected Research Method

Content analysis is a flexible and non-invasive tool that can shed insight when it is not possible to observe or interview a group of people. Krippendorff, 2013, states that recognizing meanings

is the reason that researchers engage in content rather than in some other kind of investigative method.” Content analysis researchers recognize six questions that must be addressed in every content analysis:

1. Which data are analyzed?
2. How are they defined?
3. What is the population from which they are drawn?
4. What is the context relative to which the data are analyzed?
5. What are the boundaries of the analysis?
6. What is the target of the inferences? [29]

Nor, Razak, & Aziz [30] recounted an interpretation of their research regarding student interactions with their lecturer. They noted the results pertaining to the total number of postings revealed that students dominated the discussion, not the lecturer; a finding that showed that this online forum was somewhat student-centered. The analyzed data was based on two topics posted in the forum, which are Unit of Analysis and Speech Act Theory. The outcome of content analysis must highly respect the reliability coefficient [31]. Similarly, content analyst must acknowledge that all texts are produced and read by others and are expected to be significant to them, not just to the analyst [32]. The crucial distinction between text and what other research methods take as their starting point is that a text means something to someone, it is produced by someone to have meanings for someone else, and these meanings therefore must not be ignored and must not violate why the text exists in the first place [33].

Meanings and content address something other than the given texts [34]. Probably the most distinctive feature of communications is that they inform their recipients, invoke feelings, or cause behavioral changes. Text can inform their readers about events at distant locations, about objects that no longer exist, about ideas in other people’s minds, about available actions—just as symbols represent things in their absence and stories walk their listeners through imagined worlds.

2.4 Criteria for this Research

It would be easier and more effective for residents to be interviewed, but that is not always possible, as people tend to forget how they felt toward different

community events. It is also possible that the residents in question have moved out of the area, or perhaps are no longer living. By looking at the headlines of articles containing the text “Belle Isle” this research adds another layer to the analysis of public perception.

The relationship between, the editors/writers and the subscribers, mirrors the relationship of producers (i.e., editors, journalists) and consumers (i.e. newspaper subscribers) in the field of advertising and marketing. In this sense, newspapers are often concerned with increasing the number of paid advertisements, while simultaneously increasing their customer base. In addition to using articles, other print media used are quotes, interviews, announcements, obituaries, and letters to the editor. This provides depth to this research, and ensures that different voices are heard: newspapers editors, journalists with weekly columns, “beat” journalism, sports celebrities, local politicians, state politicians, police, and the “ordinary” citizen.

3 Problem Solution

It does not appear that perceptions from the Michigan Chronicle and the Detroit Free Press are the same (Tables 3, 4, 5, 6). The 2012 headlines from the Michigan Chronicle were neutral, fluctuating between the neutral/positive boundary and the neutral/negative boundary. As with the 2012 Michigan Chronicle headlines, the 2012 headlines for the Free Press fluctuated between the neutral/positive boundary and the neutral/negative boundary. A shift toward the neutral/negative border occurred in Free Press 2013 headlines, rebounding in 2014 to the neutral/positive

The similarities between the Michigan Chronicle and Free Press headlines were related to sports, sporting events, community events, and concerts. The differences, however, were related to politics, current management and upkeep of Belle Isle and the proposed transfer of management from Detroit to the State of Michigan.

Table 3: 2012 Headlines (listed oldest to newest)

Detroit Free Press; 22 headlines	Michigan Chronicle; 6 headlines
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Castroneves is a fan of Belle Isle (+) • Belle Isle should prosper under state 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayor Bing, Suh, Penske welcome IndyCars to Belle Isle (+)

3.1 Perceptions from the Michigan Chronicle

The Michigan Chronicle is twice as likely to put a positive spin on its headlines as the Free Press. As shown by the yearly percentage of articles, the Michigan Chronicle was vocal in 2013 and 2014, which was the discussion phase of transferring the management of Belle Isle to the State of Michigan. Although the conversations were quarrelsome between Detroit’s mayor, the Detroit City Council, the State of Michigan and the public, the Michigan Chronicle’s headlines stayed optimistic. The reporting of the political side of managing Belle Isle were the two headlines that ranked as neutral in 2013. Less than 20% of the Michigan Chronicle’s headlines related to current politics of Belle Isle, with over 80% of the headlines reporting on sports and community events.

3.2 Perceptions from the Detroit Free Press

Likewise, the Free Press headlines are twice as likely to remain solidly neutral. The headlines in 2012 were mixed; though still remaining neutral, with a shift to positive sentiments in 2013 and 2014. Opinion shifted in 2013 toward the negative side of neutral, revealing opposition to the Detroit City Council by the general public. Overall, headlines covering the political affairs of Belle Isle accounted for almost 60% of the content, marked by citizens frustrated with the governmental wrangling that appeared to be occurring.

3.3. Sentiment Summary of Headlines from the Michigan Chronicle and the Detroit Free Press

The headlines from the 2012-2014 articles containing “Belle Isle” in the Michigan Chronicle and the Detroit Free Press are summarized in the following section by year and accompanying sentiment in parenthesis following the headline (‘+’ has a positive sentiment, ‘0’ has a neutral sentiment, and ‘-’ refers to a negative sentiment).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> management (+) • Belle Isle buzzing with Grand Prix preparation (+) • Posted notes: On the possibility of making Belle Isle part of the state parks system: (+) • Restore Belle Isle to natural beauty (+) • Belle Isle electronic sign plan withdrawn (0) • Suh is Belle Isle grand marshal (+) • Injured Iraq war vets to take lap on Belle Isle’s Grand Prix track (0) • Belle Isle’s best (+) • Fast facts: What: Chevrolet Detroit Belle Isle Grand Prix. (0) • Drew Sharp: Detroit’s determination shines during pothole problems at Belle Isle Grand Prix (0) • Before walk, organizers set wobble at Belle Isle (+) • Proposal’s 99-year lease of Belle Isle draws protests (0) • State would make fixing Belle Isle a priority (0) • Belle Isle track getting fixes, possible add-on (0) • A deal to invest millions in Belle Isle (0) • Detroiters challenge Bing on crime, blight and Belle Isle (-) • Posted notes: Reaction to Detroit’s City Council calling a plan to lease Belle Isle to the state dead in the water. (0) • There’s common ground to be found on Belle Isle (+) • Belle Isle deal back before council today (0) • Council: Belle Isle pledge has to be firm (0) • Doubleheader on Belle Isle (+) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayor Bing happy engines will roar again on Belle Isle (+) • Suburban-urban initiative holding picnic on Belle Isle (0) • Fears are faced as suburbanites and Detroit homeless, among others, picnic together on Belle Isle (0) • The time has come to revitalize Belle Isle (+) • Can Detroit afford to keep Belle Isle? (+)
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Table 4. 2013 Headlines (listed oldest to newest)	
Detroit Free Press; 25 headlines	Michigan Chronicle; 12 headlines
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City, Snyder nearing state park deal for Belle Isle (0) • Detroit council closer to vote on Belle Isle lease (+) • Belle Isle duals to have rolling starts: AUTO RACING (+) • Council to vote on Belle Isle lease Tuesday (-) • Meeting on Belle Isle deal gets heated (0) • Chance for a Belle Isle paradise, lost: Nancy Kaffer: Well, here it is. After months of debate, a deal to lease Belle Isle to the State of Michigan is 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belle Isle Advisory Committee appointments announced (+) • Seventh annual Belle Isle Conservatory benefit to be held Thursday, September 5 (+) • Summer fun for every one on BLISS Saturdays at Belle Isle (0) • Belle Isle in limbo as council demands answers (0) • Belle Isle proposal blown out of proportion (0) • 31st Annual Metro Detroit Youth Day July 17 at Belle Isle (+)

- dead. (0)
- Bing could have forced Belle Isle lease deal (0)
- Will Belle Isle be there for next generation of children? (0)
- \$3 per car trip won't add up to fix Belle Isle (0)
- Belle Isle left languishing, and voters won't forget (0)
- Accept help for improving Belle Isle, or sell it back (+)
- Metallica inviting 30 big acts to Belle Isle (+)
- Belle Isle tradition: Aquarium's koi transferred to outdoor pond (0)
- A bold experiment at Belle Isle (+)
- Belle Isle gets a 2nd lap (0)
- Kanaan expects a grueling weekend of racing on Belle Isle (+)
- Orr wants jewel Belle Isle to be a state park (0)
- Napoleon, Duggan oppose Belle Isle lease (0)
- Wake up, Detroit: Belle Isle lease is a good deal (0)
- Council likely to reject Belle Isle lease, offer own (0)
- Detroiters split over how long to let state lease Belle Isle (0)
- The saviors of Belle Isle work while leaders fiddle (0)
- With board's OK of Belle Isle lease deal, state can get to work spiffing up park (0)
- State pledges pleasant Belle Isle changes (0)
- Belle Isle has that Mackinac Island potential, official says (+)
- Chevrolet Detroit Belle Isle Grand Prix Announces "Comerica Bank Free Prix Day" (+)
- Chevrolet Detroit Belle Isle Grand Prix revs up for summer classic (+)
- Comerica Bank Free Prix Day to return to Belle Isle May 31 (+)
- Nearly \$15,000 raised to improve Belle Isle Scott Fountain (+)
- Belle Isle Summer Saturdays (BLISS) kicks off and offers fun for all (+)
- Consumers from NSO Life Choices program paint mural at Belle Isle (+)

Table 5. 2014 Headlines (listed oldest to newest)

Detroit Free Press; 8 headlines	Michigan Chronicle; 12 headlines
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belle Isle is a diamond in the ruff (0) • Everything you know about Belle Isle's origins is a lie -- well, almost (0) • Snyder: 'Nothing unusual' about troopers at Belle Isle (0) • Fans get prelude to this weekend's Belle Isle Grand Prix with parade, ride-alongs (0) • Families race out for free day of fun at Belle Isle Grand Prix (+) • Belle Isle looks grand (+) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belle Isle event-reservation procedures, price structure will stay the same through 2014 (0) • Comerica Bank Free Prix Day returns to Chevrolet Detroit Belle Isle Grand Prix in 2014 (+) • Chevrolet Detroit Belle Isle Grand Prix revs up 'Start Your Summer Sweepstakes' (+) • DPS broadcasting students break news about Chevrolet Detroit Belle Isle Grand Prix (+) • World Class Racing to Continue on Belle Isle (+) • 26th Annual UNCF Walk for Education returns to

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|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New landscape for fireworks at Belle Isle? (0) • A 6-month report card on state-run Belle Isle (0) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belle Isle August 23 (0) • Belle Isle adds information booth and food concessionaires (0) • Free swim lessons offered on Belle Isle in July and August (+) • Belle Isle Aquarium Weathervane Design competition offers opportunity for creative Michiganders (+) • Belle Isle Park accepting concessionaire bids (0) • Recreation Passport required for Belle Isle vehicle entry in 2015 (0) |
|---|---|

Year	Detroit Free Press	Michigan Chronicle
2012	40%	21%
2013	45%	41%
2014	15%	38%

Table 6. Percentage of headlines containing “Belle Isle” per year

4 Conclusion

Detroit, Michigan is a large city that, like several other U.S. cities, has a history of rioting. Detroit has experienced a steady declining population starting as early as the 1950s. The declining population also means a decline in the tax base and ability of the government to raise funds to support its infrastructure. This includes transportation systems, security and law enforcement, and the city’s ability to maintain parks. The city was finally moved to file bankruptcy. High crime rates, budget cuts, and political squabbling have become commonplace in Detroit. Belle Isle City Park began attracting a volatile group of users during this time, as the Detroit Police suffered staff shortages and were unable to patrol Belle Isle. The average Detroit resident generally avoided Belle Isle State Park because of its noted violence.

2012-2014 is an important time in the history of Detroit as a pivot point for how the city will move towards the future. One of the more difficult things was for the city to relinquish control of the nationally known Belle Isle Park to state level management through a long term lease. The

transition was not without controversy. How the public press portrayed this critical transition for Belle Isle is one aspect of the community’s sense of place and well-being. The Free Press and the Michigan Chronicle share similarities in their reporting of current and notable issues and events of Belle Isle. Positive events included the Grand Prix, concerts, outdoor recreation and community activities. Political reporting exposes more differences than resemblances. Detroit voices differ from Metro Detroit voices in that the Free Press chose to use the headlines to play up the controversial side of a story, where the Chronicle preferred a more positive, or upbeat, spin. At first glance, this could be interpreted as a disagreement in public opinion. However, it is important to note that the sentiment evaluations of the headlines stayed strongly in the neutral ratings. Movement towards a positive or negative spin is evident, but slight.

The study of Belle Isle does provide a framework for starting to understand the story of Detroit and can provide a conversation point around which the community can gather. The 2012 period is early in the discussions of the transfer of Belle Isle to state management. A Free Press headline boasted

“There’s common ground to be found on Belle Isle,” while the Chronicle featured “fears are faced as suburbanites and Detroit homeless, among others, picnic together on Belle Isle.” The park, in a physical and metaphorical sense, created a common ground around which the community could come together and begin finding was to create their future.

In 2013, the controversy increased and became more political wrangling and less about what is best for the park and the community. The Free Press lamented with headlines including “deal gets heated,” “chance for Belle Isle Paradise lost,” and “will Belle Isle be there for next generation of children?” The Chronicle took a realistic, but different approach with headlines such as “Belle Isle in limbo as council demands answers,” and “Belle Isle proposal blown out of proportion.” Both papers represent the heated phase of a deliberation process, which is an important part of people coming together to find their common ground.

The decision to allow Belle Isle to move to state management did prevail in the end. The 2014 headlines speak to hopefulness in the future of Belle Isle, and by extension Detroit. The Free press called Belle Isle “a diamond in the ruff,” and the Chronicle boasted “free swim lessons, world class racing to continue, UNCF walk for education, and Aquarium weathervane design competition.”

Studying Belle Isle has been one way of studying and understanding Detroit and their sense of place. The locals are strongly attached to their park, as evidenced by the citizens’ willingness to let it go in order for the park to thrive. The three year study period reflects how many relationships start – phase one is hopeful and welcoming, phase two for beginning the norming process of really getting to know one another and working through differences, and finally phase three in coming to a new and deeper understanding of each other and common vision for the future. Differences will still occur, but now they are balanced with celebrations. In the end, this speaks to why it was important to look at two papers, with different audiences and different ways of articulating the issues of the day. By looking at both, a more comprehensive story of Belle Isle, Detroit and the community could be explored.

Future studies are needed to statistically show these similarities and differences, as this research demonstrates that different perceptions exist between the different populations. As early as 1946,

Janis pointed to the need for researchers to validate the results of content analyses of mass communications by relating research findings to audience perceptions and to behavioral effects. This definition requires that content analysts be able to validate their results as well, whether those results are used to predict something, to inform decisions, or to help conceptualize the realities of certain individuals or groups (Krippendorff, 2013). Oral histories and public graffiti are two types of media that future research will utilize to validate the findings from this content analysis based on the newspaper media. Future research additionally will consider differences in perceptions based on income, and gender.

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