

# Erykah N. Benson

## Sociology Ph.D. Candidate, M.A.

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## Education

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### University of Michigan, Ann Arbor - Ann Arbor, MI

Ph.D. Sociology, *in progress*  
M.A. Sociology, May 2024  
*Preliminary Exam: Social Demography (Pass)*  
Advisor: Dr. Erin Cech

**Dissertation:** Between Productivity and Imagination: Black Entrepreneurs' Sensemaking of Digital Technologies for Work

- Erin Cech (Chair), Associate Professor of Sociology, University of Michigan
- Paige Sweet, Associate Professor of Sociology, University of Michigan
- Apryl Williams, Associate Professor of Media & Communications, University of Michigan
- Karyn Lacy, Associate Professor of Sociology, University of Michigan
- Corey Fields, Associate Professor of Sociology, Georgetown University

### Michigan State University - East Lansing, MI

B.A. Interdisciplinary Social Sciences (*Honors Distinction*), 2021

## Research Areas

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Predatory Inclusion; Digital Studies; Entrepreneurship; Platform Labor; Work and Identity; Survey and Interview Methods

## Publications, \*denotes graduate students at time of publication

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### Articles

#### 2024

Hudgins, K.\*, **Benson, E.\***, Carr, S.\*, Simington, J.\*, Walker, Z., Cruz, J., Hutchings, V., Lewis, E., Ostfeld, M. C., & Young, A. Crafting Democratic Futures: Understanding Political Conditions and Racialized Attitudes Toward Black Reparations. *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences*, 10(3), 49–67. <https://doi.org/10.7758/RSF.2024.10.3.03>

### Peer-Reviewed Proceedings

#### 2026

Williams, A., Brathwaite, K., Banks, J.\*, **Benson, E.\***, Monier, M.\*, Sayler, J.\*, Paredes, G.\*. (2025). "Needs Translation: Advocating for Marginalized Communities in Tech Design", ([Proceedings of the Hawaii International System Sciences Conference](#))

### Invited Comments & Op-Eds

#### 2024

Hudgins, K.\*., **Benson, E.\*.**, Ostfeld, M., Hutchings, V. (2024). "Detroit reparations task force now has until 2025 to make its report, but going slow with this challenging work may not be a bad thing." [10.64628/AAI.mack3qfcx](https://doi.org/10.64628/AAI.mack3qfcx)

### Policy Briefs

#### 2025

**Benson, E.\* & Lundy, L.\*** (2025). "From Aisles to Doorsteps." [Issue Brief](#). Center for Racial

	Justice and Poverty Solutions.
<b>2023</b>	<b>Benson, E.*</b> & Simington, J.* "Forty Acres and a Mule? How Flint residents believe the government should repay Black Americans." <a href="#">Issue Brief</a> . Center for Racial Justice.
<b>2023</b>	<b>Benson, E.*</b> & Simington, J.* "Collective Remembrance and Detroiters' Views Toward Racial Inequity." <a href="#">Issue Brief</a> . Center for Racial Justice.
<b>2022</b>	<b>Benson, E.*</b> & Simington, J.* "The Electoral Impact of Racial Reckoning: The Effect of Reparations Policy on Voter Engagement in Detroit." <a href="#">Issue Brief</a> . Center for Racial Justice.
<b>2022</b>	Wileden, L. & <b>Benson, E.*</b> "The Economic Well-Being of Detroit Residents Two Years Into the COVID-19 Pandemic." <a href="#">Issue Brief</a> . Detroit Metro Area Communities Study.

## **Fellowships, Grants, and Awards, \$241K Fellowship Funding**

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### *External Fellowships*

<b>2023 - 2027</b>	National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship, DGE-2241144
<b>2021 - 2023</b>	Population Studies Research Traineeship, National Institutes of Child and Human Development, 5T32HD007339-37

### *Internal Funding and Awards*

<b>2025</b>	Rackham Student Research Grant (\$3,000)
<b>2025</b>	Population Studies Center Research Support Fund, University of Michigan (\$750) <i>Hawaii International System Sciences Conference</i>
<b>2025</b>	SAMI Conference Travel Grant (Office of Academic and Multicultural Affairs), University of Michigan (\$577) <i>Hawaii International System Sciences Conference</i>
<b>2025</b>	Rackham Professional Development Grant, University of Michigan (\$400) <i>Hawaii International System Science Conference</i>
<b>2025</b>	Rackham Conference Travel Award, University of Michigan (\$1,150) <i>Hawaii International System Science Conference</i>
<b>2025</b>	Sweetland Graduate Fellows Seminar, University of Michigan (\$1,000, Declined)
<b>2025</b>	Population Studies Center Traineeship Travel Award, University of Michigan (\$750), <i>Population Association of America 2025 Conference</i>
<b>2025</b>	Rackham Conference Travel Award, University of Michigan (\$900) <i>Population Association of America 2025 Conference</i>
<b>2025</b>	NCID Anti-Racism Grant, "Love Unseen: Measuring Young Adults' Self-Perceptions and Attitudes Regarding Desirability in Dating Contexts", Principal Investigator: Mel Monier, Team Members: Jasmine Banks, Janae Sayler, Erykah Benson (\$5,000)
<b>2024</b>	Rackham Conference Travel Award, University of Michigan (\$900) <i>Population Association of America 2024 Conference</i>
<b>2024</b>	Population Studies Center Traineeship Travel Award, University of Michigan (\$750) <i>Population Association of America 2024 Conference</i>
<b>2023</b>	NCID Anti-Racism Grant, University of Michigan (\$5,000)
<b>2023</b>	Rackham Graduate Student Research Grant, University of Michigan (\$1,500)
<b>2022</b>	Clifford C. Clogg Scholarship, University of Michigan - Ann Arbor (\$2,800)
<b>2022</b>	Population Studies Center Conference Travel Award, University of Michigan (\$400), <i>Association of Public Policy and Management 2022 Conference</i>
<b>2022</b>	Rackham Conference Travel Award, University of Michigan - Ann Arbor (\$900) <i>Association of Public Policy and Management 2022 Conference</i>

### *Additional Honors*

<b>2024</b>	Graduate Student Mentorship Award, University of Michigan Department of Sociology
<b>2023</b>	Ford Foundation Predoctoral Fellowship, Honorable Mention

## Papers in Preparation

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- **Benson, E.\***. (2025) "Crafting Our Own Narrative: Making Sense of Disposable Racial Politics and Unpaid Labor in the Digital Economy", *under review*
- Monier, M.\*, Banks, J.\*, Sayler, J.\* **Benson, E.\***, Brathwaite, K., Williams, A. (2025). "It's giving fast food: Black Women's Perceptions of Dating App Platforms and Algorithms", *under review*
- **Benson, E.\***. & Lundy, L\*. "More than an Appetite for Convenience: Usage Patterns of Grocery Delivery Services in Detroit, Michigan", *under review*
- Banks, J.\* **Benson, E.\***, Halegoua, G., Abrons, E., Williams, A., Bui, M., Hui-Hui, T. "Reparative AI: A socio-technical approach toward recognizing, redressing, and repairing AI harms", *draft available*
- Wallace, G., **Benson, E.\***, Coates, R., Erving, C. "Gaps and Opportunities in the New Technologies of Work"

## Select Research Experience

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<b>2024 - Present</b>	Research Assistant, <i>The Bodies, Identities, Intimacies, and Technologies (BIIT) Lab</i> The University of Michigan - Ann Arbor, LSA Digital Studies Institute <i>Dr. Apryl Williams</i>
<b>2024 - Present</b>	Research Assistant, <i>Reparative Artificial Intelligence (AI)</i> The University of Michigan - Ann Arbor, LSA Humanities Collaboratory <i>Drs. Germaine Halegoua, Matthew Bui, Apryl Williams, Ellie Abrons, Tung-Hui Hu</i>
<b>2022 - 2024</b>	Research Fellow, <i>Center for Racial Justice</i> The University of Michigan - Ann Arbor, Ford School of Public Policy <i>Dr. Mara Cecilia Ostfeld</i>

## Teaching Experience

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*University of Michigan - Ann Arbor, MI*

<b>2024</b>	Guest Lecturer, PUBPOL475: Race, Place, and Inequality, Dr. Mo Torres
<b>2024</b>	Guest Lecturer, Detroit Students Establishing Educational Dreams (S.E.E.D.) Program
<b>2024-5</b>	Graduate Principal Investigator, SOC 394: Sociology Undergraduate Research Opportunity

*Wayne State University - Detroit, MI*

<b>2021</b>	Graduate Teaching Assistant, ENG 1010: Basic Writing, Dr. Thomas Trimble (Section Faculty)
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*Michigan State University - East Lansing*

<b>2021</b>	Undergraduate Teaching Assistant, SOC 100: Introduction to Sociology, <i>Dr. Eric Beasley</i>
<b>2020</b>	Undergraduate Teaching Assistant, SOC 161: International Development & Change, <i>Dr. Benjamin Marley</i>

## Pedagogical Training

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<b>2025</b>	Finding a Job at Teaching-focused Institutions Workshop, American Sociological Association 2025 Meeting, August 9, 2025, Hyatt Regency Chicago, IL
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## Invited Presentations, \*denotes graduate students

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*Formal Academic Presentations*

<b>2026</b>	Williams, A., Brathwaite, K., Banks, J.* <b>Benson, E.*</b> , Monier, M.*, Sayler, J., Paredes, G. "Needs Translation: Advocating for Marginalized Communities in Tech Design". Invited Panelist and Paper Presenter. Selected from abstracts. Hawaii International Conference on Systems Sciences 59th Annual
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Meeting. January 6-9, 2026. Lahaina, Hawaii.

**2025** Halegoua, G., Abrons, E., Bui, M., **Benson, E.**, "Harness: Reparative AI + Futures". Invited Panelist. Digital Studies Institute, Digital IDEAS Summer Institute. June 26, 2025. Ann Arbor, MI.

**2025** **Benson, E.** "Delivering Change to the Motor City? Usage Patterns and Affective Experiences of Online Grocery and Meal Delivery in Detroit", Michigan. April 10 - 13, 2025. Poster Presentation. Selected from abstracts. Population Association of America. Washington, D.C.

**2025** Mel, M.\*, Banks, J.\*., Sayler, J.\*., **Benson, E.\***, Brathwaite, K., Williams, A., "It's giving fast food: Black women's perceptions of Dating App Platforms and Algorithms," Black Graduate Research Studies Conference. March 22, 2025. Ann Arbor, MI.

**2024** Easter, M., **Benson, E.**, Piazza, G., Davis, J., Hooker, J. [Making It: Per\\$pectives on the Business of Creativity](#). Invited Panelist. Ross Impact Studio. December 5, 2024. Jeff T. Blau Hall. University of Michigan - Ann Arbor, MI.

**2024** **Benson, E.** "Driving Change in the Motor City? Usage Patterns and Affective Experiences in Online Grocery and Meal Delivery in the City of Detroit, MI". September 26 - 27, 2024. Oral Presentation. Selected from abstracts. Detroit Food Policy Council, Marygrove College. Detroit, MI..

**2024** **Benson, E.** "Black Creatives in the Platform Gig Economy". April 17 - 20, 2024. Poster Presentation. Selected from abstracts. Population Association of America. Columbus, OH.

**2024** **Benson, E.** "Catharsis, Community, and Craft: How Black Creatives Make Meaning of Online Community-building in the Platform Economy". April 2, 2024. Oral Presentation. Invited Talk. 2024 NCID Anti-Racism Graduate Research Showcase. Ann Arbor, MI. [Public Link](#).

**2024** **Benson, E.** "Catharsis, Community, and Craft: How Black Creatives Make Meaning of Online Community-building in the Platform Economy". March 23, 2024. Oral Presentation. Selected from abstracts. Black Graduate Student Association Research Symposium. Ann Arbor, MI.

**2023** Hudgins, K., **Benson, E.**, Simington, J. "Crafting Democratic Futures: Understanding Political Conditions and Racialized Attitudes towards Black Reparations in the US". April 21, 2023. Invited Oral Presentation. Russell Sage Foundation. New York, NY.

**2022** **Benson, E.** "Entrepreneurship and Perceived Economic Uncertainty in Detroit during COVID-19". November 17 - 19, 2022. Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management Fall Research. Conference. Oral Presentation. Selected from abstracts. Washington, D.C.

#### Invited Talks

**2024** "Get the Voter 411." MountUp! For Social Justice Series. Mount Pleasant Missionary Baptist Church. Podcast Invited Speaker. October 17, 2024. Detroit, MI

**2024** "Technology, Food Access, and Reparation: Why Public Attitudes Matter". Detroit Promise Program. August 21, 2024. University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, MI.

**2024** "Voting in the Michigan Primaries". MountUp! For Social Justice Series. Mount Pleasant Missionary Baptist Church. Organizer & Presenter. February 26, 2024. Detroit, MI.

**2021** "Building Financial Knowledge and Equity Across Generations." MountUp! For Social Justice Series. Mount Pleasant Missionary Baptist Church. Organizer & Presenter. April 19, 2021. Detroit, MI.

**2021** "Suffer Not the Children: Education and Equity in COVID-19." MountUp! For Social Justice Series. Mount Pleasant Missionary Baptist Church. Organizer & Presenter. March 26, 2021. Detroit, MI.

**2021** "Biden Administration's 100-Day Plan and Black America." MountUp! For Social Justice Series. Mount Pleasant Missionary Baptist Church. Organizer & Presenter. February 22, 2021. Detroit, MI.

**2021** "Candid Convo on COVID-19". MountUp! For Social Justice Series. Mount Pleasant Missionary Baptist Church. Organizer & Presenter. January 21, 2021. Detroit, MI.

**2020** "Get the Voter 411!" MountUp! For Social Justice Series. Mount Pleasant Missionary Baptist Church. Organizer & Presenter. October 30, 2020. Detroit, MI.

## Select Invited Media Coverage

"Reparations program offers \$25,000 in housing support to Black metro Detroiters." [Detroit Free Press](#). October 2025.  
 "ASPIRE program bridges research and real-world impact." [Youth Policy Lab](#). August 2024.  
 "U-M report finds majority of Detroiters support some form of reparations." [CBS News Detroit](#). April 2023

## Academic and Professional Service

### Conference Organization and Administration

**2025** Conference Symposium Organizer. Black Graduate Student Association Graduate Research Symposium. "Illuminating Our Black Joy". March 20th - March 22nd. Ann Arbor, MI.  
**2023** Book Discussant. "The Love Jones Cohort: Single and Living Alone in the Black Middle Class: A Conversation with Dr. Kris Marsh". October 3, 2023. Ann Arbor, MI  
**2023 - 2024** Student Coordinator, Race & Racial Identities Workshop, U-M - Ann Arbor, MI

### Administrative and Collective Duties

**2025** Invited Reviewer, *American Sociological Review*  
**2022 - 2024** Graduate Student Recruitment Representative, U-M - Ann Arbor, MI

## Select Methodological Training

### University of Michigan

**2025** Qualitative Research Methods Practicum, Department of Sociology, Dr. Elizabeth Armstrong  
**2025** Digital Studies Institute, Digital IDEAS Summer Institute, Dr. Sarah Murray  
**2023** Quantitative Methods: Practicum, Department of Sociology, Dr. Robert Manduca  
**2022** Research Logics and Strategies of Sociology Research Inquiry, Dr. Erin Cech  
**2022** Race, Ethnicity, & Quantitative Methodology, ICPSR Summer Program, Dr. Kerem Ozan Kalkan & Dr. Jamil Scott  
**2022** R Statistical Computing Environment, ICPSR Summer Program, Dr. Kerem Ozan Kalkan  
**2022** Statistical Methods II, Dept. of Sociology (Stata Statistical Software), Dr. Mark Mizruchi  
**2021** Statistical Methods I, Dept. of Sociology (Stata Statistical Software), Dr. Rachel Best

### Additional Research Skills

Geographic Information Systems - ArcGIS Pro Version 3.3.2 (Spatial Mapping)  
 Dedoose and MAXQDA, Qualitative Data Analysis  
 Microsoft Excel  
 Survey design, implementation, and analysis  
 Focus group and individual in-depth interview

### Certifications

**2025** Digital Studies Institute, IDEAS Summer Institute  
**2024** Program for the Education and Evaluation of Responsible Research and Scholarship

### Undergraduate Research Mentorship

**2026** Gabe Paredes, University of Michigan, University of Michigan, Honors Thesis Program  
**2026** Madison Lynch, Michigan State University, Social Science Scholarship Program  
**2025** Aanya Panyadahundi, University of Michigan, Sociology Undergraduate Research Opportunity (SURO)  
**2025** Sanjana Sunilkumar, University of Michigan, Sociology Undergraduate Research Opportunity (SURO)  
**2025** Zihao Xu, University of Michigan, Sociology Undergraduate Research Opportunity (SURO)  
**2025** Halle Chen, University of Michigan, Sociology Undergraduate Research Opportunity (SURO)

<b>2024</b>	Maegan Davis, University of Michigan, Sociology Undergraduate Research Opportunity (SURO)
<b>2024</b>	Morgan Chambers, Spelman University, Applied Policy Internship and Research Experience Program
<b>2024</b>	Love Lundy, Spelman University, Public Policy, and International Affairs Program
<b>2023</b>	Lexi Turner, Spelman University, Applied Policy Internship and Research Experience Program

*Professional Memberships*

<b>2021</b>	American Sociological Association
<b>2021</b>	Association of Black Sociologists
<b>2021</b>	Population Association of America

*Academic Affiliations*

<b>2024</b>	Bodies, Identities, Intimacies, and Technologies (BIIT) Lab, Digital Studies Institute
<b>2022</b>	Center for Racial Justice, Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy
<b>2021</b>	University of Michigan Population Studies Center, Institute for Social Research
<b>2019</b>	Black Alumni Association, Michigan State University
<b>2019</b>	Social Science Scholars Alumni Association, Michigan State University