Abstract
In this article, the authors make a distinction between urban uprisings of earlier eras and the upheaval that has unfolded in the streets of America since the murders of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd by police officers in Louisville, Kentucky and Minneapolis, Minnesota. The authors wonder whether or not there is a correlation between these multiethnic/racial uprisings and non-Black residents’ commitment to eradicating racism, especially when it comes to tackling problems that disproportionately impact African Americans.

Keywords Uprisings · Multiethnic · Multiracial · Police brutality · Racism

Introduction
No period in the past 50 years or so has more resembled the tumult that engulfed many of America’s major cities in the 1960s, than the past several years. From Baltimore, Maryland to Louisville, Kentucky to Minneapolis, Minnesota to Los Angeles, California, communities have erupted in response to a police officer’s killing of someone Black. Whether or not these recent developments will pique the curiosity of scholars and intellectuals, as was the case during the 1960s when writings about urban upheaval...
were all the rage, remains to be seen (Feagin and Hahn, 1973; Downes, 1970; Gurr, 1970; Janowitz, 1967). What is evident, however, is that these more recent uprisings are much more multiethnic/racial than those of the 1960s, the era of the rebellion (Feagin and Hahn, 1973; Downes, 1970). Ted Gurr approximated that Americans averaged 5400 man-days of participation in protests (meaning demonstrations and uprisings) per 100,000 population over the course of the decade (Gurr, 1970, 1989).

With the exception of cities such as Los Angeles and New York, both of which are known for their racial and ethnic diversity, none of the uprisings of the turbulent 1960s or later periods have comprised the rainbow of residents that have turned out in heavy numbers in recent months—some of them in unexpected and seemingly unlikely places. Historically, large-scale protests and uprisings have, in the main, consisted largely of those people who believe themselves directly impacted by the injustice at which they feel compelled to draw attention, by lashing out. Could this be changing? If so, such a dynamic should be enough to renew interest in a topic that once saturated the pages of academic journals ranging from history to urban politics to sociology to political economy.

To our knowledge, there have been no large-scale uprisings in this century that have not been in response to a shooting death of a Black person by a police officer. Hence, the reason why the issue of police use of extra-legal force has been perceived by many, as primarily, a Black problem. Although Whites and others are not impervious to police violence, research shows that Blacks are disproportionately more likely to be manhandled, choked to death, tased to death, shot to death, or killed by other means, by the police than are Whites or any other race of people (Butler, 2017). Again, hence, the perception among many that police violence against American citizens is something of a Black problem. To be clear, despite the fact that non-Blacks have, over the years, met

---

1 While many writers and intellectuals use the word riot (erroneously) to reference many of the protests that have transpired in the wake of the murders of Black people by white police officers, we use the words uprisings, revolts, and/or rebellions. Riots are large-scale acts of violence that are spontaneous and frivolous. They lack a political purpose and are without substance. Uprisings, revolts, and rebellions are large-scale acts of violence by people who lash out in response to an injustice. The insurrectionists have legitimate grievances that have long been ignored or unaddressed. Among the grievances are segregation in housing, a lack of access to adequate healthcare facilities, steady increases in joblessness, substandard public schools, and a corrupt criminal justice system, to name a few. The murder of a Black person by a police officer is the straw that breaks the camel’s back, so to speak. This final straw prompts people to lash out, sometimes violently, as a last resort. Oftentimes, they have sought redress through conventional channels, to no avail. Again, rebellion is the last resort.

2 Even when compared to the few uprisings that occurred in the 1980s, 1990s, and early 2000s, these more recent uprisings appear to be much more heterogeneous in their racial composition.

3 Although most blacks die by shooting, there have been instances of police officers tasing, choking, or beaten to death Black motorists and pedestrians.

4 The words Black and African American are used interchangeably throughout this work according to sound and context, as well as to avoid redundancy.

5 The lone exception is that of Seattle, Washington which saw tens of thousands of anti-globalization activists show up at Paramount Theater and Convention Center where the World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference was scheduled to be held in late November 1999 in order to protest the meeting. Called the Battle of Seattle, activists blocked traffic at major intersections, thus preventing delegates from getting to the conference, and police responded by firing tear gas, pepper spray, and eventually rubber bullets, to disperse the crowds and get delegates through. Protestors responded by destroying storefronts, setting dumpsters afire, and pushing them into intersections as well as slashing the tires of police cars. The demonstrations lasted from 28 November to 3 December 1999. Six hundred people were arrested; the chief of police Norm Stamper resigned amid vandalism that caused $20 million in damages.
an untimely death at the hands of the police on occasion, [most] non-Blacks, especially Whites, do not view police brutality as a problem that besets their community. This, again, may explain why, until recently, those who have historically revolted in response to the murder of African Americans by the police have largely, been Black.

Public Perceptions of Law Enforcement

When it comes to the police, Whites generally view law-enforcement favorably as an agency on whom they can call and depend in times of need. By comparison, African Americans’ experience with the police has been vastly different. While a considerable majority of Whites view the police favorably, Blacks, in the main, and irrespective of social economic status, view the police unfavorably at worst and skeptically at best. In no public opinion poll, either historically or contemporarily, that we have consulted over the years, has the police been rated positively by significant numbers of Black respondents. In fact, Blacks are more likely to view police officers as foes than friends. Said crudely, many Blacks see the police as little more than a necessary evil.

The Cato Institute reported that Blacks’ opinions toward the police have worsened over time. When asked in 1970 to share their opinions about the police, only 43% of Blacks viewed the police favorably. In 2016, that number decreased to 40% (Cato Institute, 2016). By contrast, in 1970, nearly 70% of Whites had a favorable opinion of the police, a number that has, for the most part remained constant over the last 40 years or so (Cato Institute, 2016). Black peoples’ reality could not be more different than that of Whites.

Many Blacks are so leery of the police that they are reticent about calling on them in times of duress for fear that a police presence may escalate the situation. Worse yet, there is also the concern of being victimized twice, once by the initial perpetrator and again by the police officer whom the caller had hoped would come to the rescue. For example, several years ago, a woman in Ferguson, Missouri called the police to report that her boyfriend was assaulting her. By the time police officers were dispatched to the scene the boyfriend was gone. Poking around the house, the officers determined that the boyfriend lived there, and the woman admitted that he was not on the home’s “occupancy permit.” The woman was arrested for “permit violation” and whisked off to jail (United States Department of Justice, 2015). Many within the African American community believe that had the woman been White the matter would have been handled differently. In other words, police brutality of residents, has for the most part, been perceived as a Black problem, one with which most Whites have not had to preoccupy themselves.

Since the murders of Breonna Taylor in Louisville, Kentucky and George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota in 2020, however, we have witnessed a level of concern on the part of others that had not previously been displayed, at least, not publicly. Never before have we witnessed such large-scale acts of outrage on the part of Whites and others, but especially Whites, in response to the killing of Blacks by police officers.

Significance of Research

Research such as this could very well give rise to a set of questions that compels scholars to change the way in which uprisings in America are viewed and therefore
studied. Among the more interesting questions are: What motivates non-Blacks, but especially Whites to rise up in support of African Americans when the issue is one with which they typically have not had to concern themselves? Are multiracial/ethnic revolts a harbinger of things to come? Will these multiracial/ethnic activists parlay their efforts into a governing coalition that brings about a more equitable share of America’s bounty for non-Whites, specifically and poor people, generally? Depending on what these multiracial/ethnic uprisings yield in places like Portland, Oregon, can we expect them to be a frequent and permanent feature of the American body politic? In other words, will these multiracial/ethnic uprisings serve as a check and balance apparatus at both the local, state, and national level? If Thomas Jefferson was right when he said that the American people have a right to overthrow a government and begin anew when it starts to behave antithetical to the peoples’ interests, and it is believed, as some theorists have argued, that uprisings are sometimes a prelude to revolution, then these are just a few questions that merit serious consideration. For students of urban politics, especially, the study of these more recent uprisings cannot be contextualized adequately without placing them alongside those of earlier eras.

**Methodology**

Several Internet searches of various websites, with the help of google and yahoo.com, were conducted by the authors in an attempt to identify what many consider some of the country’s major or in the words of some, America’s worst uprisings. In an effort to keep things manageable, the search was limited to a 60-year time frame beginning with what newly elected President John F. Kennedy called the “dawning of a new frontier” to the year 2020. Also, again, because the 1960s was the most tumultuous decade of the modern era where urban upheaval is concern, the year 1960 served as our starting point, which just happened to coincide with the election of JFK as president. The search, conducted independently by each author, produced several lists, many of which, overlapped in content. Again, this study is limited to only those uprisings that unfolded during the period of investigation (1960 to 2020) referenced above. Furthermore, excluding the hundreds of cities that erupted in the wake of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in April of 1968, most of the sites we tapped into listed the following cities and communities: Harlem (New York) in 1964; Watts (California) in 1965, Newark (New Jersey) and Detroit (Michigan) in 1967; Los Angeles in 1992; Seattle, Washington in 1999 and Cincinnati (Ohio) in 2001.

There was some variation in content and rank order. A few lists ranked rebellions according to the level of havoc wreaked, meaning destruction left in their wake, while others were ranked according to the amount of damage, in terms of dollars. For reasons that are unclear, there were a few lists that failed to mention the uprisings in Philadelphia (1964), Rochester, NY (1964), Cleveland (1966), Miami (1980), and Seattle, Washington, but on the whole, each of the cities mentioned above appeared on, at least, one or two of the lists that the authors consulted. We included Philadelphia, Rochester, Cleveland and Seattle, for we define a “major” uprising as upheaval that meets, at least, 3 out of the 5 criteria: (a) any upheaval that lasted more than two full days, (b) havoc that resulted in damages of $500,000 or more, (c) violence resulting in injuries totaling 500 or more people, (d) upheaval that culminates in the arrest of 500 or
more people, and (e) a disorder that prompts elected officials to bring to bear the full force of the city and or states’ law enforcement. In other words, was either the National Guard or units of the US Armed Forces called upon to restore order or were officials comfortable relying solely on that city’s police department? In some cases, elected officials summoned both local and state law enforcement agencies to the scene. As Table 1 illustrates, some of the uprisings met all five criteria, but none of them failed to meet the requisite three.

Once the lists were compiled, the authors did a thorough search of the literature for the purpose of identifying books and journal articles that would give us a good sense of the goings-on in the cities at the time of the revolts. In other words, although we had, over the years, read about the upheaval in each and every one of those cities over the course of our academic careers, we had hoped to refamiliarize ourselves with these events as well as gain greater insight into the factors that gave rise to these rebellions, not to mention, get a better sense of the demographics of the insurrectionists.

To ensure that we covered all of our bases, we also consulted news articles published in various newspapers, although largely the major newspapers—the *Los Angeles Times*, the *New York Times*, *The Star-Ledger* (Newark), the *Detroit Free Press*, the *Miami Herald*, the *Seattle Times*, the *Plain Dealer* (Cleveland), the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, and *The Enquirer* (Cincinnati)—in the cities where those rebellions occurred. We focused on news articles of the period but did not summarily dismiss retrospective pieces

---

**Table 1** Summary of uprisings

| Year | City                | Duration    | Damages    | Arrests | Injured | Response                  |
|------|---------------------|-------------|------------|---------|---------|---------------------------|
| 1964 | Philadelphia, PA    | Aug 23–30   | $3.2 mil   | 774     | 341     | Philadelphia Police       |
|      | Rochester, NY       | July 24–26  | $2.0 mil   | 800–900 | 350     | National Guard            |
|      | Harlem, NY          | July 16–22  | $1.0 mil   | 465     | 118     | NYPD                      |
| 1965 | Los Angeles, CA     | Aug 11–16   | $40 mil    | 3438    | 1032    | National Guard and US Military |
| 1966 | Cleveland, OH       | July 18–23  | $1.2 mil   | 275     | 1000    | National Guard            |
| 1967 | Detroit, MI         | July 23–28  | $32 mil    | 7200    | 1189    | National Guard            |
|      | Newark, NJ          | July 12–17  | $10 mil    | 1465    | 750     | National Guard            |
| 1980 | Miami, FL           | May 17–20   | $100 mil   | 787     | 370     | National Guard            |
| 1992 | Los Angeles, CA     | April 29–May 4 | $800 mil+ | 12,000 | 4000    | National Guard and US Military |
| 1999 | Seattle, WA         | Nov 30–Dec 4 | $20 mil    | 500+    | –       | National Guard and US Military |
| 2001 | Cincinnati, OH      | April 14–19 | $3.6 mil   | 800     | 65      | State Highway Patrol      |
written years later by those who did not actually cover the event. We believed that perusing the writings of reporters and journalists who actually covered these events would be of tremendous value. Our assumptions proved correct.

Findings

A close examination of what many (and we) consider to be the country’s major or worst uprisings since 1960 reveals some interesting findings. As we have already pointed out, these major uprisings were not confined to one particular region of the country, as they sprouted up as far north as upstate New York to as far south as Florida and as far west as California and the pacific northwest (see Table 1). Beginning with the northeast region of the country, we find that the revolts that erupted in Harlem and Rochester, NY, Philadelphia, PA, and Newark, NJ were all sparked by an encounter between a police officer and an African American pedestrian or motorist that spiraled out of control, resulting in injury or death of the civilian.

Each of the revolts mentioned above occurred in neighborhoods and/or communities that were either majority or overwhelmingly African American. In Philadelphia, for example, the North Philadelphia area in which the upheaval unfolded was home to 400,000 of the 600,000 Blacks who lived in the city (Maurantonio, 2012; “FBI Probes Riot Origin”, 1964; Lintz, 1964). Remarkably only two died during that 3-day revolt that resulted in $3.2 million in damages (Clark, 1964; “1000 Rioters Loot in N. Phila”, 1964). Between Philadelphia, Newark and Rochester, Rochester was the smallest with just 32,000 residents, yet between 2000 and 3000 participated in the upheaval. None of the four rebellions lasted fewer than 3 days in duration with Harlem and Newark lasting 7 and 6 days, respectively (Flamm, 2016; Shapiro and Sullivan, 1964). The overwhelming majority of insurrectionists were Black. Damages ranged from $2 million in Rochester to $10 million in Newark (Mumford, 2007; Linder, 1967). With the exception of Rochester where 128 of the 893 arrested were White, there is no evidence that suggests the revolts in Philadelphia, Harlem, or Newark were multiracial in nature.

The Midwest cities of Detroit, Cleveland and Cincinnati are three of the region’s largest cities, and with sizeable African American populations, ranging from a third to nearly 40% in Cleveland. In 1967, Detroit experienced one of the worst revolts of the century resulting in $40 to $45 million in damages, far exceeding that of Newark, New Jersey (Fine, 2007). The Detroit revolt erupted in the Virginia Park area of the city whose inhabitants were all Black with the exception of the Whites who drove in to run the businesses on 12th street (Thompson, 2004). Nearly 60,000 Black residents were crammed into an area that was no more than 460 acres (Fine, 2007). The 6-day upheaval from 23 to 28 July left 43 dead in its wake (Robenalt, 2008; Hersey, 1998). Until the Los Angeles uprising of 1992, the Detroit rebellion was considered the twentieth century’s worst insurrection (Darden and Thomas, 2013). Although many lists did not include the uprising that occurred in the city of Cleveland, more specifically the area known as Hough, it met the authors’ threshold in that it lasted more than 2 days, totaling 6 days in all and resulting in $1–2 million in damages (Moore, 2003; “Police Arrest 60”, 1966; “Shooting Ends Hough Calm,” 1966). Hundreds of people involved themselves in the
insurrection, prompting the governor to call out the National Guard ("Woman killed in Hough Violence," 1966). An examination of Cleveland and Detroit uprisings shows evidence of little to no White involvement.

Turning to the city of Cincinnati, the plight of inner-city Blacks was, at the time, arguably as dire, if not more so, than in any other midwestern and northern city in the USA. Yet, in the midst of intense poverty, joblessness, severe residential segregation, and a lack of access to the levers of power, young Black Cincinnatians especially, had, over the years, demonstrated a tremendous amount of tolerance (Upton, Jeffries & McDaniels-Wilson, 2007). From 1995 to 2001, fifteen African American males, all under the age of 40, were killed by members of the Cincinnati Police Department. No Whites of any age were killed by members of the city’s police department during that span. It was not until 19-year-old Timothy Thomas, the fifteenth African American male killed, did Black residents take to the streets. The upheaval, which was nearly all-Black, lasted 6 days, from 9 to 14 April, resulting in $13.7 million in damages ("Cincinnati riots cost $13.7 million", 2001).

On the west coast, Los Angeles is the only city that has experienced two uprisings that appears on everyone’s list of the country’s worst uprisings, one in 1965 in the Watts area and in 1992 in South Central Los Angeles, with the flashpoint being Florence and Normandie (see Table 1). The uprisings occurred in the all-Black community of Watts in 1965 and the overwhelmingly (but not all) Black area of South Central in 1992, each lasting nearly a week. Relations between Blacks and the LAPD were strained at best for as long as anyone could remember. According to Historian Gerald Horne between 1962 and 1965, members of the LAPD shot 65 African Americans, resulting in only one verdict against the LAPD (Horne, 1995). In response, there were hundreds of demonstrations that were either ignored or yielded few results. Hence, no one was surprised when residents erupted.

Thousands of residents took part in both uprisings, with people descending upon each location from other parts of the city. While the Watts uprising was nearly all Black, the South-Central revolt was more heterogeneous with Latinos and members of other ethnic groups participating as well as a smattering of Whites. The insurrectionists left $40 million in damages in their wake in 1965 and between $800 mil-$1 billion in 1992 (Upton and Jeffries, 2010; Hunt, 1996; Sears and McConahay, 1973). At the time, the Los Angeles rebellion of 1992 was perhaps the most multiracial uprising in the country’s history, with African Americans, Latinos, and Whites scattered about.

The Miami uprising of 1980 occurred mainly in the Liberty City area of Miami, a largely Black area, but with some Latino residents (Oglesby, 1980). The revolt, which was touched off by the killing of a Black insurance salesman by police officers, was also multiracial/ethnic in that both Blacks and Latinos participated, but very few Whites (Porter and Dunn, 1984). The Miami upheaval was the first major revolt since the 1960s. Eighteen people died in the 4-day melee and between $80 and $100 million in damages were incurred (Griffin, 2020; Hiaasen, 1980). Still, a close examination of the 1992 insurrection in LA and Miami reveals that both pale in comparison to the rainbow of people that is reflected in the uprising in Portland, Oregon.

The only uprising that comprised as many Whites, if not more, in a single revolt than Portland, was the World Trade Organization demonstrations that occurred in Seattle in 1999, but those demonstrations were pretty much racially homogeneous, with the overwhelming majority of activists being White (Young and Brunner, 2003; Tizon,
As impressive as the Seattle uprising was, among the tens of thousands of people who reportedly participated in the near week-long protests known as the Battle in Seattle, relatively very few of them were Black or other people of color (Jones, 2004; Thomas, 2000). Finally, given the sheer volume of people who participated in the upheaval, some estimating between 30,000 to 50,000 thousand activists, it is surprising that damages totaled only $20 million (Jones, 2004; Young and Brunner, 2003; Tizon, 1999).

Portland, of All Places

In Portland, significantly more Whites than Blacks can be seen on the streets protesting on a nightly basis, along with members of the Latinx, Native American, and Asian American communities. Interestingly, Portland, located in the state of Oregon, in the Pacific Northwest, has the smallest Black population of any major city in America. Specifically, Portland’s racial composition is 77.1% White, 5.8% Black, 1% percent American Indian, 8.1% Asian, and 9.7% Latino (U.S. Census, 2010).

The city of Portland is famous for many things, but large-scale revolt is not one of them. Portland, the county seat of Multnomah County, lies at the northern end of the fertile Willamette Valley. It is known for its mild climate and breathtaking scenery in addition to its proximity to both the Pacific Ocean and the Cascade Range. The mountains of the Coast Range rise 20 mi. west of the city. Approximately 50 mi. to the east stands the picturesque snow-capped Mount Hood. As an inland port city, Portland is a major commercial distribution and shipping center for the Pacific Northwest (Burke and Jeffries, 2016). A large number of its residents are employed in industries such as textiles, food and timber processing, paper production, chemicals, and aluminum product manufacturing. What is more, due to the commitment on the part of its citizens as well as city and state officials to community engagement, statewide environmental preservation, and slow-growth urbanism, both residents, academics and policy-makers in this newly hip, post-modern "Portlandia" have crafted a proud and self-laudatory image of the city as a national model for urban revitalization and sustainability (Burke and Jeffries, 2016).

For those who live in other parts of the country, the news of residents rebelling in Portland came as a surprise. Witnessing the plethora of insurrectionists of color is something to which folks in other parts of the state, let alone the country were not accustomed. It needs to be made clear that the various members of minority groups are not sprinkled throughout the large and boisterous crowds in Portland, rather they are in sizeable numbers, with some carrying signs and placards of solidarity such as “Black Lives Matter” and “No Justice, No Peace,” etc. However, even in cities that have, unlike Portland, sizable Black populations, like New York and LA, White participation in these uprisings is, again, impressive. Not since the modern civil rights movement and the anti-Vietnam war movements, have we seen this kind of multiracial upheaval, but this is the first time we have witnessed this level of multiracial outpouring of support for Blacks on the matter of police murder of African Americans—this is unprecedented.

Remarkably, it is not only a matter of who has shown up at these protests, but the sites of some of these protests. In other words, protests are typically associated with large cities like those mentioned above, but a close look at the goings-on over the past
The late Rodney King was an African American man in his 20s who led police officers on a high-speed chase in Los Angeles, California in 1991. When the police finally caught up to him, they administered a beating that resulted in broken bones, nerve damage, and psychological trauma. The ordeal was filmed by a nearby resident who had just recently been given a video recorder as a gift. George Holliday, the videographer, and Caucasian gentleman stood on the balcony of his apartment and filmed several minutes of the brutal encounter, which saw the officers taking turns violently striking King with their nightsticks as he lay on the ground. Holliday sold the tape to a television station, resulting in the savage beating being shown worldwide.

One year later, the officers were brought to trial but acquitted of all charges, despite the visual evidence clearly showing the four LAPD officers as the aggressors. The city erupted not long after the verdict was announced.

several months has revealed varying levels of upheaval in small rural towns as well, where again, Whites make up the overwhelming majority of the population. The list of small locales includes Rocky Mountain, Virginia; Glenn Falls, New York; Garden City, Kansas; Hailey, Idaho; Kanab, Utah; Dubois, Wyoming; and Bethel, Ohio—the latter, long considered a backwater town with a White population of 97%. Whites have joined the fight in these hamlets, and in some instances led protests in these lily-white towns that have reputations for being either indifferent or downright hostile to Black concerns. Even in the small and overwhelmingly White city of Westerville, Ohio (a suburb of Columbus) where the first author resides and participated in two demonstrations, Whites have either led the charge and/or been heavily involved in both organizing and attending these protests. Support for Black Lives Matters has also crossed international boundaries. Although we have not witnessed any uprisings abroad in support of the goings-on in America per se, what we have seen are protests of support of varying sizes across continents. Such protests have occurred in places such as Ghana, Nigeria, England, France, South Korea, Germany, and South Africa, to name a few.

What Does It All Mean?

It means that for the first time since the savage beating of Rodney King by four Los Angeles police officers in 1991, which was caught on tape, the issue of police brutality is occupying a prominent place in American social and political discourse. The result: policing as a matter of public safety has for the first time in 30 years been placed under even greater scrutiny than was the case during the early 1990s or even the 1960s when militant groups like the Deacons for Defense and Justice, the Community Alert/Action Patrol, the Black Panther Party, and Us sprouted up in response to the manner in which police officers were running roughshod through Black communities both in urban and rural areas. To our knowledge, no such militant/radical groups have emerged recently in response to police brutality, sans the Not Fucking Around Coalition (NFAC), that formed a few years ago and whose presence is largely confined to the states of Texas and Louisiana.

What the murders of Taylor and Floyd have done has prompted many to become politically engaged. For example, it has been reported that voter registration among Democrats spiked in the wake of Floyd’s murder. Men and women in sports, on both the collegiate and professional levels have since spoken out on police brutality specifically and matters pertaining to racial inequality, generally. Players have boycotted games and worn t-shirts with the words “I can’t breathe” emblazoned across—a

---

6 The late Rodney King was an African American man in his 20s who led police officers on a high-speed chase in Los Angeles, California in 1991. When the police finally caught up to him, they administered a beating that resulted in broken bones, nerve damage, and psychological trauma. The ordeal was filmed by a nearby resident who had just recently been given a video recorder as a gift. George Holliday, the videographer, and Caucasian gentleman stood on the balcony of his apartment and filmed several minutes of the brutal encounter, which saw the officers taking turns violently striking King with their nightsticks as he lay on the ground. Holliday sold the tape to a television station, resulting in the savage beating being shown worldwide. One year later, the officers were brought to trial but acquitted of all charges, despite the visual evidence clearly showing the four LAPD officers as the aggressors. The city erupted not long after the verdict was announced.
reference to 43-year-old African American Eric Garner who was choked to death by an overzealous and perhaps racist police officer, not because he harmed anyone or committed some heinous crime, but because: (a) he was seen selling loose cigarettes on a New York City sidewalk and (b) because he was slow in complying with the officer’s directives to do this, that or the other. As the police officer continued to tighten his grip around Garner’s neck, Garner moaned repeatedly “I cannot breathe” until he expired. Women athletes led the charge in adorning the “I cannot breathe” t-shirts with the ladies of the University of Notre Dame’s basketball team wearing them during warm-up drills in a mid-December home game against the University of Michigan. According to a 2020 *New York Times* report, the phrase “I cannot breathe” has been used by more than seventy people who died in police custody. The phrase is now used in worldwide protest against police brutality in the USA for the purposes of drawing attention to the lack of accountability to which police officers are held, especially, when policing Black people.

In addition to symbolic gestures such as the wearing of t-shirts with political messages, more importantly, serious discussions have been had that revolve around the following:

1) Defunding the police  
2) Redefining the concept of policing  
3) Abolishing police departments as they are presently constructed  
4) Conducting more invasive background checks with applicants in an affect to identify racial bias both implicit and explicit (hate group membership)  
5) Having applicants undergo extensive psychological testing  
6) Automatic termination of police officers who incur a certain number of citizen complaints and  
7) Mandatory jail sentences for officers who employ disproportionate use of force against motorists and pedestrians resulting in serious injury or death.

Not only are these issues being given the attention they deserve, but they have morphed into discussions about systemic racism—its origins and various iterations, and how it has adversely impacted the lives of generations of people. This has prompted sectors of the business community and financial world to get involve. Bank of America, for example, has funneled 1 billion dollars to minority communities; PayPal has created a 500-million-dollar fund to support Black communities; and Softbank, a Japanese conglomerate has pledged to start a 100-million-dollar fund to invest in companies led by minority entrepreneurs. In the meantime, Apple is creating an entrepreneurship camp for Black software ideas and Facebook pledges to double the number of Black and Latinx employees by 2023. Not to be undone, Pepsi has promised to increase the number of Black managers by 30%. While these concessions are a step in the right direction, they are not a substitute for long-lasting institutional change.

It should also be noted that behavior that was once socially acceptable or at least tolerated by many, is now being denounced. People who are caught on film spewing hateful or racist rhetoric and/or displaying bigoted behavior are suffering the consequences. For example, the White lady who gained national attention when she called the police on a Black male birdwatcher in New York’s Central Park last year, falsely claiming that she and her dog were being threatened by an African American man, not
only suffered public humiliation when the video taken by the African American gentleman went viral, but was fired from her well-paying job in the world of finance as well as evicted from her Manhattan apartment. Simply put, public displays of bigotry and racism are more costly than ever.

**Policy Implications**

Whether or not these uprisings, coupled with these ongoing discussions will lead to substantive changes in policing is to be determined. What is clear, however, is that not since the Rodney King ordeal has the time been riper for change. Large numbers of Americans are calling for change including elected officials at every level. Professionals in various industries have gotten onboard. Doctors, nurses, and other healthcare professionals have marched in throngs in New York City, Indianapolis, Indiana and Miami, Florida in support of Black Lives Matter. With incidents of extra-legal force on the part of police officers being captured on video, members of the upper-middle and upper-classes are no longer able to feign ignorance of the goings-on where the police and Blacks are concerned. Footage of some of the incidents are being shown around the world and in some of the most remote corners of the globe, thus creating a level of international exposure that had once been unfathomable.

If meaningful, substantive and long-lasting change is to occur, the outrage that has boiled over into revolts the past several months has to be channeled into a politics of solidarity. What is needed more than ever is a coalition that is reflective of the socio-economic demographics and circumstances out of which this outrage was birthed. Such a multiracial/ethnic coalition would leverage this moment by forcing those in power to be responsive to the needs of the people, especially those who have historically been marginalized and shut out of the political process.

**Conclusion**

These multiracial uprisings give us hope that there is a burgeoning consciousness that is enveloping a generation of people who view challenges, problems, and issues not as Black problems or Brown problems or LGBTQ problems or White problems but as problems that impact the human condition. In the words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”7 Having said that, are these multiracial/ethnic uprisings a sign of the times or something fleeting with little chance of sustainability? The goings-on in the city of Portland suggest the former, as protesters continue to brave the dangers of COVID-19 in order to have their voices heard, their demands for change clear and their disdain with police murder of Black people blatant—as they have protested the police murder of Blacks with courage and conviction for more than 100 consecutive days and nights.

If Portland is any indication of things to come, it would seem that there are those among us who no longer see the eradication of racism as a burden to bear by any one group. And what could be more encouraging than that. In a year when we have witnessed

---

7 See Dr. Martin L. King, Jr’s. (1963) A Letter from Birmingham Jail.
tragedy, disease, illness, and widespread death, images of people of all colors and orientations rising up against police murder of Black people leading to a different kind of health crisis, are not only promising and welcoming sights, but something that freedom loving people in America (and throughout the world) can build on in the months and years to come.

References

“FBI Probes Riot Origin, Nabs Rockwell in N. Phila.” (1964). Philadelphia Daily News. 31 August, p.3.
“1000 Rioters Loot N. Phila Store; 14 Policemen Hurt.” (1964) Philadelphia Inquirer, p. 3.
Burke, L. N. N., & Jeffries, J. L. (2016). The Black Panthers in Portland: Empowering Albina and remaking a city. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
Butler, P. (2017). Choke hold: A renegade prosecutor’s radical thoughts on how to disrupt the system. New York: New Press.
Cato Institute/YouGov (2016) Criminal Justice Survey.
Clark, J. (1964). “Riot Caught City with Procedures Down.” Philadelphia Daily News, p.3.
Columbus (Ohio) Dispatch. 2001. Cincinnati riots cost $13.7 million, newspaper reports, 8 October: C5.
Darden, J. T., & Thomas, R. W. (2013). Detroit: Race riots, racial conflicts, and efforts to bridge the racial divide. Lansing: Michigan State University.
Downes, B. T. (1970). A critical re-examination of the social and political characteristics of riot cities. Social Science Quarterly, 51(December), 349–360.
Feagin, J., & Hahn, H. (1973). Ghetto revolts: The politics of violence in American cities. New York: Macmillan.
Fine, S. (2007). Violence in the Model City. Lansing: Michigan State University.
Flamm, M. W. (2016). In the heat of the summer: The New York riots of 1964 and the war on crime. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
Griffin, N. (2020). The year of dangerous days: Riots, refugees, and cocaine in Miami 1980. New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc.
Gurr, T. (1970). Why Men Rebel. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Gurr, T. (1989). Violence in America: The history of crime. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
Hersey, J. (1998). The Algiers Motel incident. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
Haasen, C. (1980). 18 Die in City Under Siege, Fire, Looting Toll is heavy. Miami Herald. 19 May, p. 1.
Horne, G. (1995). Fire this time: The Watts uprising and the 1960s. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia.
Hunt, D. (1996). Screening the Los Angeles ‘riots’. England: Cambridge University Press.
Janowtiz, M. (1967). The social control of escalated riots. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Jones, K. (2004). Who’s afraid of the WTO? England: Oxford University Press.
Linder, L. “(1967) Diary of a riot: The where, the how and little of the why.” Danville Register, p. 1, 5.
Lintz, J. S. (1964) “Civil destruction, not civil rights,” Philadelphia Inquirer, 30 August np.
Maurantonio, N. (2012). Standing by: Police paralysis, race, and the 1964 Philadelphia riot. Journalism History, 38(Summer), 110–121.
Moore, L. (2003). Carl B. Stokes and the rise of Black political power. Urbana Champaign: University of Illinois press.
Mumford, K. (2007). Newark: A history of race, rights, and riots in America. New York: New York University Press.
Oglesby, J. (1980). “Blacks can’t cure travesty with rioting.” Miami Herald. 19 May, p. 1.
“Police arrest 60 as violence explodes again in Hough.” (1966) The Plain Dealer. 20 July, p. 6.
Porter, B. D., & Dunn, M. (1984). The Miami riot of 1980. Lanham: Lexington Books.
Roberval, J. (2008). Ballots and bullets: Black power politics and urban guerrilla warfare in 1968. Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books.
Sears, D. O., & McConahay, J. B. (1973). The politics of violence: The new urban blacks and the Watts riot. Boston: Mass Houghton Mifflin.
Shapiro, F. C., & Sullivan, J. W. (1964). Race riots. New York: Crowell.
“Shooting ends Hough calm.” (1966) The plain dealer, p.1.
Thomas, J. (2000). *The Battle in Seattle: The story behind and beyond the WTO demonstrations*. Golden: Fulcrum Publishing.

Thompson, H. (2004). *Whose Detroit? Politics, labor, and race in a modern American city*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Tizon, A. (1999). “Monday, Nov. 29-Saturday, Dec. 4: WTO week.” Seattle Times. Archives.seattletimes.com. Accessed 19 Nov 2020.

U.S. Census 2010 of population and housing. Issued in 2012.

United States Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, “ (2015) Investigation of the Ferguson Police Department,” March 4, 2015.

Upton, J. N., & Jeffries, J. L. (2010). Comparing a major American city and its rebellions against itself Los Angeles of 1965 and 1992. *Journal of History and Social Sciences, 1*(December), 11–32.

Upton, J. N., Jeffries, J. L., & McDaniels-Wilson, C. (2007). The 2001 Cincinnati uprising. *International Journal of Africana Studies, 13*(Spring/Summer), 1–14.

“Woman Killed in Hough Violence.” (1966) The plain dealer, p. 1.

Young, B and J. Brunner. “ (2003) City to pay protestors $250,000 to Settle WTO Suit.” Seattle Times. 17 January 2003, archives.seattletimes.com. Accessed 19 Nov 2020.

**Publisher’s Note** Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.