Introduction

> One Day, to everyone's astonishment, someone drops a match in the powder keg and everything blows up. Before the dust has settled or the blood congealed, editorials, speeches, and civil rights commissions are loud in the land, demanding to know what happened. What happened is that the Negroes wanted to be treated like [humans].
>
> James Baldwin, 1960

Between 1963 and 1972 America experienced over 750 urban revolts. Upwards of 525 cities were affected, including nearly every one with a black population over 50,000. The two largest waves of uprisings came during the summer of 1967 and during Holy Week in 1968 following the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. In these two years alone, 125 people were killed, nearly 7,000 were injured, approximately 45,000 arrests were made, and property damage topped $127 million or approximately $900 million in 2017 dollars. And this does not take into account a large wave of prison revolts and racially oriented unrest at the nation's high schools. Considered collectively and with the advantage of hindsight, these revolts constituted a "Great Uprising," a term neither contemporary pundits and social scientists nor historians have employed. Like the Great War and the Great Depression, the Great Uprising was one of the central developments of modern American history.[1]

[1] Legally, "riots" were defined in many states as involving at least thirty participants and personal injury and/or property damage. Data comes from: Gregg Lee Carter, "In the Narrows of the 1960s U.S. Black Rioting," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 30 (March 1986): 115–127; Gregg Lee Carter, "Explaining the Severity of the 1960s Black Rioting," PhD dissertation, Columbia University, 1983; Lemberg Center for the Study of Violence, *Riot*

While estimates of the number of people who were impacted by the revolts vary widely, in the least the Great Uprising affected millions of Americans, from those who took to the streets and whose businesses were looted or burned to the ground, to those who responded to the unrest, either directly or indirectly. As contemporaries, from Martin Luther King Jr. to H. Rap Brown, observed, and as most historians have agreed, the Great Uprising demonstrated the inadequacies or shortcomings of the civil rights movement, waking up the nation to the fact that the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 did not signify the fulfillment of the black freedom struggle. In recognition of these shortcomings, King, SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee), and others reoriented their efforts in an attempt to speak to and for those who had participated in the revolts. The Great Uprising challenged the primacy of nonviolence as a means to overcoming racial inequality and boosted the fortunes of both the Black Power movement and the New Right. Moreover, the revolts provided cover or additional justification for a variety of repressive measures, from the expansion of COINTELPRO (Counter Intelligence Program) to the enactment of gun control, all of which helped lay the groundwork for the war on crime and the rise of the carceral state. Just as significantly, the uprisings demonstrated, for those who continued to believe otherwise, that race was not a Southern problem but rather one that knew no regional bounds.

Given the abundance of scholarship on the civil rights movement one would think that the urban revolts of the 1960s would have attracted considerable attention. After all, historians of the civil rights years have pushed the boundaries of the movement back in time, expanded the field of subjects well beyond national figures and organizations, incorporated women into their narratives, produced a startling array of community studies, explored the intersection of the black freedom struggle and the Cold War, and grappled with the role of armed self-defense in the nonviolent movement. Nonetheless, the Great Uprising has achieved far less

Data Review (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University, 1968); Jane Baskin, Ralph G. Lewis, Joyce Hartweg Mannis, and Lester W. McCullough Jr., *The Long Hot Summer? An Analysis of Summer Disorders, 1967–71* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University, Lemberg Center for the Study of Violence, 1972); House Select Committee on Crime, *Report: Reform of Our Correctional Systems, June 26, 1973* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1973); Charles E. Billings, "Black Activists and the Schools," *The High School Journal*, 54:2 (November 1970): 96–107; Gael Graham, *Young Activists: American High School Students in the Age Protest* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois Press, 2006). Walter Rucker and James Nathaniel Upton, eds., *Encyclopedia of American Race Riots*, 2 vols. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2006).

attention than the "heroic stage" of the civil rights movement and/or the student/youth rebellions of the latter half of the 1960s. Illustratively, Taylor Branch's exhaustive three volume work on the civil rights years ends with Martin Luther King Jr.'s death, thus providing only minimal discussion of the major wave of rebellions that followed. And narratives of the 1960s continue to privilege protests at Columbia and Chicago in 1968 over those catalyzed by King's assassination.[2]

This is not to argue that historians have ignored the urban revolts of the 1960s; rather it is to suggest that they deserve still more attention. Numerous fine studies of individual revolts exist, including examinations of those in Watts, Newark, and Detroit.[3] Scholars have written a handful of insightful comparative works and more specialized studies that focus on a broad range of questions from whether riots caused "white flight" to how they impacted local politics.[4] Recently, books have been published on the riots of the long hot summer of 1967 and the wave of unrest that took place following Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination in the spring of 1968.[5] They have also probed the uniqueness of revolts in the Midwest and considered the role played by black anti-rioters.[6] Central to

[2] Taylor Branch, *At Canaan's Edge: America in the King Years, 1965–68* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006). For examples of the Chicago protests, see Terry Anderson, *The Sixties*, 3rd edn. (New York: Pearson, 2007); Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope and Days of Rage*, rev. edn. (New York: Bantam, 1993).

[3] Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005); Kevin Mumford, *Newark: A History of Race, Rights, and Riots in America* (New York: New York University Press, 2007); Sidney Fine, *Violence in the Model City: The Cavanaugh Administration, Race Relations, and the Detroit Riot of 1967* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1989); Gerald Horne, *Fire This Time: The Watts Uprising and the 1960s* (New York: DeCapo Press, 1995).

[4] Max Herman, *Fighting in the Streets: Ethnic Succession and Urban Unrest in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Peter Lang, 2005); Janet L. Abu-Lughod, *Race, Space, and Riots in Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); William Frey, "Central City White Flight: Racial and Nonracial Causes," *American Sociological Review*, 44:3 (June 1979): 425–448; Leah Platt Boustan, "Was Postwar Suburbanization 'White Flight'? Evidence from the Black Migration," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 125 (February 2010): 417–443; Kyle Crowder and Scott J. South, "Spatial Dynamics of White Flight: The Effects of Local and Extra-Local Racial Conditions on Neighborhood Out-Migration," *American Sociological Review*, 73 (October 2008): 792–795. Alyssa Ribeiro, "'A Period of Turmoil': Pittsburgh's April 1968 Riots and Their Aftermath," *Journal of Urban History*, 39 (April 2012): 147–171.

[5] Clay Risen, *A Nation on Fire: America in the Wake of the King Assassination* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2009); Malcolm McLaughlin, *The Long, Hot Summer of 1967: Urban Rebellion in America* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

[6] Ashley Howard, "Prairie Fires: Urban Rebellions as Black Working Class Politics in Three Midwestern Cities," unpublished dissertation, University of Illinois, 2012; Amanda I.

many of these works has been a set of straightforward questions – essentially the same as those posed by President Johnson when he established the National Commission on Civil Disorders (Kerner Commission) in the immediate aftermath of the long hot summer of 1967: What happened? Why did it happen? And what could have been done to prevent them from happening? Or, from a historical perspective, what was or was not done?[7]

From the start, analysts fell into roughly two schools of thought. On one side stood those who argued that the disturbances were caused by "riot makers" or "agitators" (generally outside agitators) and that most of the rioters were composed of the "riff raff" of society who were "seeking the thrill and excitement occasioned by looting and burning." Rioters, in other words, were opportunists who looted and burned for "profit and fun."[8] On the other side were those like the Kerner Commission, which argued that the "disorders" grew out of conditions of life faced by blacks who lived in America's ghettos and that "white institutions [which had] created . . . maintain[ed] . . . and condone[d]" the ghettos in the first place. Unlike the first school of thought, the second one did not find that rioting was limited to the riffraff or evidence that the unrest was caused or planned by outside agitators. On the contrary, most revolts, this school asserted, were sparked by a single incident (real or rumored) involving the police.[9] While the bulk of scholarly works subsequently written by

Seligman, "'But Burn – No': The Rest of the Crowd in Three Civil Disorders in 1960s Chicago," *Journal of Urban History* 37 (March 2001): 230–255.

7 National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, New York Times edition* (New York: Alfred P. Knopf, 1968), p. 536 (henceforth cited as Kerner Commission, *Report*.)

8 California Governor's Commission on the Los Angeles Riot (McCone Commission), *Violence in the City – An End or a Beginning?* (Los Angeles: Governor's Commission on the Los Angeles Riot, 1965); Edward Banfield, *The UnHeavenly City: The Nature and Future of Our Urban Crisis* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1970); Edward Banfield, "Rioting Mainly for Fun and Profit," in *The Metropolitan Enigma*, ed. by James Q. Wilson (Cambridge: MA: Harvard University Press, 1968); Eugene Methvin, *The Riot Makers: The Technology of Social Demolition* (New York: Arlington House, 1970). For a good early review of this debate, see Abraham Miller, Louis Bolce, and Mark Halligan, "The New Urban Blacks" *Ethnicity*, 3 (1976): 338–367. For a more recent overview, see Heather Ann Thompson, "Urban Uprisings: Riots or Rebellions," in *The Columbia Guide to the 1960s*, ed. by David Farber and Beth Bailey (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001).

9 Kerner Commission, *Report*; National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, *Supplemental Studies, July 1968* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1968); David Sears, *The Politics of Violence* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1973); Benjamin Singer, *Black Rioters* (Lexington, MA: Heath, Lexington Books, 1970); Joseph Boskin, "The Revolt of the Urban Ghettos, 1964–67," *Annals of the American Academy of Political Science*, 382 (1969): 1–14.

social scientists supported the latter interpretation, no consensus emerged regarding why some cities experienced revolts while others did not and why some revolts were more severe than others.[10] Nor did a consensus emerge regarding the impact or legacy of the revolts. Some claimed that "disorders" resulted in the collapse of the New Deal or liberal coalition; others argued that the liberal coalition had been weak all along, especially when it came to racial matters; and still others contended that cities that experienced the revolts enjoyed a surge of black power, including the election of blacks to leadership positions.[11] A third variant or school of

[10] A good summary of the sociological literature can be found in: Rob Gillezeau, "Johnson's War on Poverty and the 1960s Riots: An Investigation into the Relationship between Community Action Agencies and the Riots," March 3, 2009, http://paa2009.princeton.edu/papers/91756 [accessed July 24, 2017]. Seymour Spilerman, "The Causes and Consequences of Racial Disturbances: A Comparison of Alternative Explanations," *American Sociological Review*, 35:4 (August 1970): 627–649; Seymour Spilerman, "Structural Characteristics of Cities and the Severity of Racial Disorders," *American Sociological Review* 41:5 (October 1976): 771–793. Ted R. Gurr, *Why Men Rebel* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970); Ted R. Gurr, "A Comparative Study of Civil Strife," in *Violence in America: Historical and Comparative Perspectives*, ed. by H. D. Davis and T. R. Gurr, vol. II (Washington, DC: GPO, 1969); Leonard Berkowitz, "The Study of Urban Violence: Some Implications of Laboratory Studies of Frustration and Aggression," *American Behavioral Scientist*, 2 (1968): 14–17; Jerome L. McElroy and Larry D. Singell, "Riot and Nonriot Cities: An Examination of Structural Contours," *Urban Affairs Quarterly*, 8 (March 1973): 281–302; R. C. Porter and J. H. Nagel, *Declining Inequality and Rising Expectations: Relative Deprivation and the Black Urban Riots* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1976); Susan Olzak, *The Dynamics of Ethnic Competition* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992); Donald J. Myers, "Racial Rioting in the 1960s: An Event Analysis of Local Conditions," *American Sociological Review*, 62 (February 1997): 94–112. Kenneth Kumer, ed., *The Ghetto Crisis of the 1960s: Causes and Consequences*, vol. 7 (New York: Garland Press, 1991).

[11] On liberalism's collapse, see Allen Matusow, *The Unraveling of America: Jim Sleeper, Closest of Strangers: Liberalism and the Politics of Race in New York* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1991); Jonathan Rieder, *Canarsie: The Jews and Italians of Brooklyn Against Liberalism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987); Michael Flamm, *Law and Order: Street Crime, Civil Unrest, and the Crisis of Liberalism in the 1960s* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005); Thomas Edsall and Mary D. Edsall, *Chain Reaction: The Impact of Race, Rights, and Taxes on American Politics* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1992); Peter Kraska, "Militarizing Criminal Justice: Exploring the Possibilities," *Journal of Politics and Military Strategy*, 27 (Winter 1999): 205; Dennis Loo and Ruth-Ellen Grimes, "Polls, Politics, and Crime: The Law and Order Issue of the 1960s," *Western Criminology Review*, 5 (2004): 50–67. For those who question the strength of the liberal coalition prior to the revolts, see Thomas Sugrue, "Crabgrass-Roots Politics: Race, Rights, and the Reaction Against Liberalism in the Urban North, 1940–1964," *Journal of American History*, 82:2 (September, 1995): 551–578; Arnold Hirsch, *Making of the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940–1960* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis; Matthew Lassiter,*

thought cast the urban revolts as rational political developments, aimed at fostering deep structural and political change. This argument often built upon historical and theoretical studies of collective action, such as the works of Charles Tilly and George Rudy, and at times paralleled contemporary arguments made by black radicals, who celebrated the revolts, and by a cluster of social scientists and historians, some of whom briefly worked for the Kerner Commission and crafted an unpublished study entitled "The Harvest of American Racism."[12]

To an extent, both the Kerner Commission's findings and this third variant echoed James Baldwin's prescient observation that black Americans simply wanted to be "treated like men" and that the nation should not act befuddled when "everything blows up." "Northerners," Baldwin cautioned in 1960, should not "indulge" in the false belief "that because they fought on the right side during the Civil War, and won, they have earned the right merely to deplore what is going on in the South . . . and . . . ignore what is happening in Northern cities." Jim Crow resided on both sides of the Mason–Dixon line, Baldwin emphasized, and suggesting that prejudice and racial discrimination might be worse in the South than the North did not justify the perpetuation of inhuman

The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007); Kevin Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007); Robert O. Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005). On the Black Power surge, see Robert C. Smith, "The Changing Shape of Urban Black Politics, 1960–1970," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, 439 (1978): 16–28, reprinted in Kenneth Kusmer, ed., *The Ghetto Crisis*; Komozi Woodard, "Message from the Grassroots: The Black Power Experiment in Newark, New Jersey," in *Groundwork: Local Black Freedom Movements in America*, ed. by Jeanne Theoharis and Komozi Woodard (New York: New York University Press, 2005), p. 93; Komozi Woodard, *A Nation within a Nation: Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones) and Black Power Politics* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Heather Ann Thompson, *Whose Detroit? Politics, Labor, and Race in a Modern American City* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004). For a less sanguine view of the political impact of the revolts, see Ribeiro, "'A Period of Turmoil.'"

[12] Eric Hobsbawm and George Rude, *Captain Swing* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1975); Charles Tilly, "Speaking Your Mind Without Elections, Surveys, or Social Movements," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 47 (1983): 461–478; Charles Tilly, *The Politics of Collective Violence* (Cambridge University Press 2003). A good discussion of "The Harvest of Racism" can be found in McLaughlin, *The Long Hot Summer of 1967*. For this alternative view, see also David Boesel and Peter Rossi, eds., *Cities Under Siege: An Anatomy of the Ghetto Riots, 1964–1968* (New York: Basic Books, 1971); Manning Marable, *Race, Reform, and Rebellion: The Second Reconstruction and Beyond in Black America, 1946–2006*, 3rd edn. (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 2007).

conditions that so many of America's ghetto residents were compelled to endure. Nor, Baldwin warned, would the fact that things might be worse in the Deep South than in the North inure it from the risk of a great uprising. Indeed, in the spring of 1963, in the immediate aftermath of a riot in Birmingham, Alabama, Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy (RFK) got Baldwin to organize a special meeting at the Kennedy family's apartment at the Plaza Hotel. Presumably, RFK wanted to meet with Baldwin and other blacks outside the moderate mainstream so that he could better understand this violent turn of events. At the meeting, Kennedy sought to dismiss warnings that the Negro masses were on the verge of "kissing nonviolence goodbye." But as urban uprisings spread across the nation in the mid-1960s, Robert Kennedy came to recognize the truthfulness of Baldwin's warnings and the urgency of addressing their root cause.[13]

The different terms contemporaries and scholars used to describe the "collective violence" of the 1960s and early 1970s illustrated these different interpretations. Writes Thomas Sugrue: those who employed the term "'civil disorder'" or "disturbance" sought to occupy an "ostensibly neutral" stance and suggest that the nation had experienced only a temporary disruption of an otherwise tranquil state of affairs. "Riot," in contrast, emphasized the irrationality of the mobs' actions. "'Uprisings' was the least used but perhaps most accurate expression of discontent," adds Sugrue, "something with political content, but short of a full-fledged revolutionary act," while "'rebellion described a deliberate insurgency against an illegitimate regime, an act of political resistance with the intent of destabilizing or overturning the status quo." Indeed, Sugrue has probably done a better job of incorporating these various studies and views into a single synthetic than anyone else. In *Sweet Land of Liberty* he argued that the uprisings generally began with a police incident, targeted property, not people, though rarely if ever "white dominated institutions," such as schools, government buildings, churches, factories, or sports stadiums, and did not spread into white neighborhoods, white fears notwithstanding. Finally, Sugrue explains, officials failed to uncover persuasive evidence that radicals had organized the riots,

[13] James Baldwin, "Fifth Avenue, Uptown: A Letter From Harlem," in *Nobody Knows My Name: More Notes of a Native Son* (New York: Dial Press, 1961), p. 63, originally published in *Esquire* (July 1960); Taylor Branch, *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954–63* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989), pp. 809–813.

proclamations by politicians and pundits and widely held public sentiments notwithstanding.[14]

While this work will build on the insights of Sugrue and others, it adopts a different methodological approach and suggests several revisions to both the conventional and revisionist canons. Rather than focus on a single city or conduct statistical analysis on hundreds of riots, it examines revolts in three places: Cambridge and Baltimore in Maryland and York in Pennsylvania. These three cities were selected due to personal circumstances and because collectively and individually they offer keen insights into the Great Uprising. Although I was raised in California and went to graduate school in New York City, over twenty years ago I conducted and completed a history of the long civil rights movement in Cambridge, Maryland. Based upon this research, I was invited to participate in a remarkable collaborative investigation and commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of Baltimore's 1968 revolt sponsored by the University of Baltimore (UB). Meanwhile as part of my duties as a professor, both before and after my participation in the UB project, I oversaw several student research papers on York's revolt, the city where I teach, and subsequently conducted my own independent research on the same. Put somewhat differently, it made sense for me to build on my research strengths on the three cities that I knew best.[15]

At the same time, as I discovered while doing my research, especially when it comes to considering the geography, chronology, and typology of the Great Uprising, these three cities offered several overlapping advantages. As noted above, uprisings took place in over five hundred communities. Some of these places were big, like Baltimore, some small, like Cambridge, and many more in between, like York. Yet, too much of our understanding of the race revolts of the 1960s has been shaped by studies of Watts, Newark, and Detroit. In fact, the majority of revolts took place in cities with populations between 25,000 and 100,000 residents, not large cities. One of the dangers of skewing the geography of the urban race revolts of the 1960s is that it misleads us into believing that we only need to think about race as a problem associated with the nation's

[14] Thomas Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggles for Civil Rights in the North* (New York: Random House, 2008), pp. 325–327, 334.

[15] Peter B. Levy, *Civil War on Race Street: The Civil Rights Movement in Cambridge, Maryland* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2003); Baltimore '68: Riots and Rebirth, "Overview," http://archives.ubalt.edu/bsr/ [accessed October 7, 2016].

TABLE I.1 *Number of disorders by year, 1964–1971*[16]

Year	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971
Number	8	5	21	233	360	131	67	46

inner cities, those with large ghettos, often large enough to have their own name, like Watts and Harlem. Put somewhat differently, for years Americans mistakenly conceived of race as a "Southern problem" and believed that Jim Crow only resided south of the Mason–Dixon Line. The uprisings of the 1960s rudely awakened the nation to the speciousness of this belief. Yet, ironically, we have tended to replace this false paradigm with a new one, namely one that considers race primarily as a "problem" of our large cities and their inner city ghettos, when, in fact, racism is a national problem that transcends simple geographic categories. In other words, by examining Cambridge, Baltimore, and York, three cities that are regionally proximate yet demographically different, both in terms of their absolute size and the relative and absolute size of their black populations, we can transcend the narrow geographic confines of much of the existent scholarship.[17]

In addition, these three cases allow us to reconsider the chronology of the Great Uprising. Too often, historians cast Watts (1965) as the beginning of the "urban rebellions" and Newark and Detroit (1967) as its apex, with the post-King riots as an afterthought. This temporal narrowing of the Great Uprising is particularly apparent in secondary works which often ignore and/or downplay the uprisings that took place prior to 1965 or after Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated. As Table I.1 suggests, the uprisings peaked in 1968 and continued at a steady pace through the early 1970s; and this chart does not even include data on prison and high school revolts, both of which grew in number and frequency after 1967. Nor does this chart include data on revolts prior to 1964 because no reliable data on such risings exists. Yet, as we shall see, Cambridge experienced revolts as early as 1963 – so too did Birmingham, Alabama.

[16] Sources: Kerner Commission, Report; US Senate, Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations of the Committee on Government Operations, *Hearings: Riots, Civil and Criminal Disorders*, (Washington, DC: GPO, 1968); Riot Data Review, 2 (August 1968); Jane Baskin et al., *The Long Hot Summer?*

[17] One of the few works to look at rioting in a small or midsize community is Andrew Goodman and Thomas Sugrue, "Plainfield Burnings: Black Rebellion in the Suburban North," *Journal of Urban History*, 33 (May 2007): 568–601.

Beyond simply getting the years of the Great Uprising wrong, this truncation of the chronology of the Great Uprising may lead to another problematic assumption. Most simply, by placing the race revolts, chronologically speaking, after the "heroic stage" of the civil rights movement (roughly 1954 to 1965), contemporaries and many historians reinforced the notion that the struggle for racial equality can and should be broken into two distinct phases: a nonviolent, southern, and constructive phase, followed by a violent, northern, and destructive one. Recent works on the existence of armed self-defense alongside "nonviolent" movements in the south during the earlier phase of the movement, along with an increasing number of studies on battles against Jim Crow in the north, raise questions about this temporal configuration. Along the same lines, by ending their discussions of the civil rights years with King's assassination, too many studies reinforce the belief that the movement collapsed with an orgy of violence following King's death, which, as we shall see, was not the case.[18]

In addition, these three case studies allow us to refine our understanding of what took place and why. Regarding the former, Cambridge and York suggest that the Kerner Commission and many others have mischaracterized the wave of urban revolts of the 1960s as "commodity riots," ignoring the numerous instances of "community (interpersonal) riots." As most explicitly spelled out by Morris Janowitz, "commodity riots" involved attacks on property but not persons – looting and arson – while "communal riots" were characterized by interpersonal and interracial violence.[19] Cambridge's initial revolts, in 1963 and 1964, were clearly communal. Its better known "Brown riot," of 1967, consisted primarily of a large fire and hence appears to fit the definition of a commodity riot; yet, as we shall see it too was interpersonal in character. While Baltimore experienced a "typical" commodity riot, one with much looting and arson but few if any direct clashes between white and black residents, York experienced virtually no looting, a smattering of fires (arson), and a bevy of gunfire and assaults, including shots exchanged between black and white citizens and repeated incidences of attacks on persons and property,

[18] Charles Cobb, *This Nonviolent Stuff'll Get You Killed: How Guns Made the Civil Rights Movement Possible* (New York: Basic Books, 2014); Akinyele Omowale Umoja, *We Will Shoot Back: Armed Resistance in the Mississippi Freedom Movement*, repr. edn. (New York: New York University Press, 2014).

[19] Paul A. Gilje, *Rioting in America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996); Morris Janowitz, *Social Control of Escalated Riots* (Chicago: University of Chicago Center for Policy Studies, 1968).