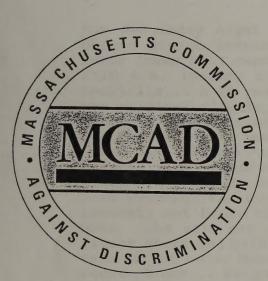


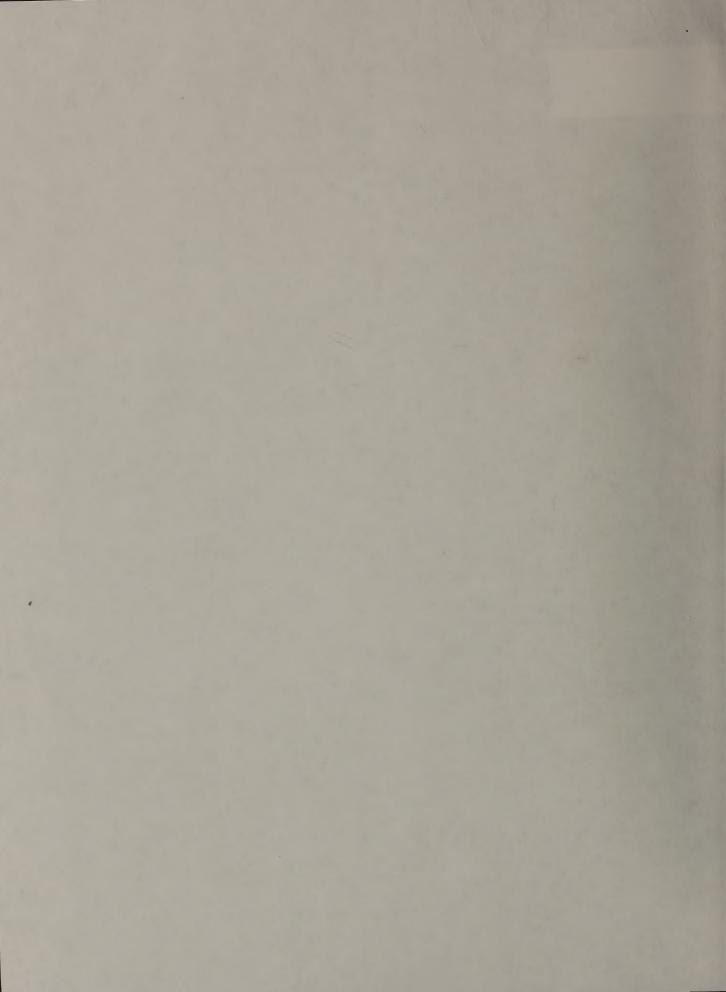
### ON CIVIL DISORDERS

Could it happen here?



Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination

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### REPORT ON CIVIL DISORDERS Could it happen here?

In the wake of the 'Rodney King Riots' in Los Angeles the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination commissioned a survey of Massachusetts cities and towns to determine the potential for similar civil disorders here in the Commonwealth. The results are sobering. Deprivation and inequality are turning some cities into urban funeral pyres that may burst into flames if lit by the slightest incendiary spark. Rising unemployment and layoffs only compound the problem.

It was only eight years ago that the City of Lawrence erupted into violence. What follows are some excerpts taken from the Boston Globe at the time of the Lawrence riots in 1984.

\* \* \*

LAWRENCE IGNORED WARNINGS the Boston Globe headlines reported on Sunday August 12, 1984. City officials had ignored three years of warning signs that led to rioting. There were many issues - police harassment, minority hiring, education and neighborhood services - that needed to be addressed.

"On Wednesday night a crowd of about 150 people took over Oxford Street between Haverhill and Lowell Streets in the lower Tower Hill section of the city between about 9 P.M. and 1:30 A.M. looting a barroom and hurling rocks and Molotov cocktails... A 19 year old woman who said she was involved in the original dispute said it began about 2 A.M. when someone tossed a rock through her children's bedroom window ... The Puerto Rican-born woman, who asked not to be named, said that later that day two Puerto Rican women were subjected to racial taunts from "Americans" while they were walking past Pettoruot's liquor store at Haverhill and Oxford Streets. That evening, the woman said three "American" men with a baseball bat broke the windshield of a car parked near her home. She said she approached three men who lived above the liquor store and said, 'If you have a beef with someone, don't take it out on my house.' She said they responded by throwing rocks at her... Neighborhood residents said the fight started with a dispute over a broken windshield and taunts directed at Puerto Rican residents by neighbors of French-Canadian descent."

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"Gaudette, a grandson of French-speaking Canadian immigrants, said, 'I'm not a prophet, but I think a lot of us saw it coming. And I'm at a loss to say when it will end.' ... On Oxford Street in Lawrence, shaken by two nights of rioting, the talk is of racial hatred, anger, and retribution. At City Hall, the talk is of curfews, a state of emergency, and plans to control violence. Behind the talk is a city in trouble... Unemployment in June, at 7.4 percent, was higher than any other city in the state, and even that rate was almost certainly underestimated, according to a spokeswoman for the DES. The City's poverty rate in 1980, 19.6 percent, was double the statewide rate."

"City Officials here ignored three years of warning signs that led to this past week's rioting between Hispanics and French-Canadians, according to federal Justice Department officials... Residents on Oxford street said yesterday that the riots were racially motivated. They said the tension between Puerto Ricans and those of the French-Canadian descent was behind the violence... Police and City officials said the first violence was started by opposing groups arguing over a broken car windshield on Oxford Street. Residents said yesterday that longstanding racial tension ignited as a result of that dispute."

\* \* \*

\* \* \*

If anything, many of the problems that led to rioting in Lawrence in 1984 have worsened. The unemployment rate at that time, which was then considered to be unacceptably high at 7.4 percent, is more than double that figure today.

This report is not intended to predict riots that <u>will</u> happen but is instead a warning of what <u>may</u> happen until we, as a society, address the underlying problems that have made so many cities tinderboxes of social unrest.

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This report, in the hopes of addressing the problems underlying social unrest, includes factors that are indicative of the causes of civil disorders. It is based in part on <u>The Report</u> on the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, commonly known as the Kerner Commission Report, which was published in March of 1968. Events of the past 25 years have shown that their findings on some of the causes of civil disorders that occurred then, are still relevant to predicting civil disorders today. The Kerner Commission noted that the basic causes of civil disorders included pervasive discrimination and segregation; black migration and white exodus; and the existence of ghettos. They noted that these factors alone did not cause the disorders, but that powerful ingredients - frustrated hopes, powerlessness, legitimization, incitement and encouragement of violence - helped to catalyze the mixture.

The factors that the Commission Against Discrimination specifically looked at in this report include: minority presence in a city or town; the continued concentration of minorities by a white exodus and minority in-migration; significant minority population and youth population; significant percent of minorities with incomes below those of whites and a high poverty level of minorities; high unemployment in the city/town and, in particular, the minority community; the minority representation in municipal employment, particularly in the police departments; the presence of minorities in public office and in policy-making positions; and the high incidence of civil rights/ Hate crimes. This information was reviewed with community members who were able to assess these factors for their cities and towns.

### I. Minority Presence.

The first factor examined in this report is where minorities live in Massachusetts. Sixteen cities and towns were chosen for review based on the fact that they have approximately ten or more percent minority residents. These communities are listed in Chart I. They include: Boston, Brockton, Cambridge, Chelsea, Framingham, Holyoke, Lawrence, Lowell, Lynn, Malden, New Bedford, Quincy, Revere, Somerville, Springfield, and Worcester. The information was obtained from the 1990 census, and indicates that the following communities have a significant <u>African-American population</u>: Boston, Brockton, Cambridge, Lynn, New Bedford, Somerville, Springfield, and Worcester. The following communities have a significant <u>Latino population</u>: Boston, Brockton, Chelsea, Framingham, Holyoke, Lawrence, Lowell, Lynn, Springfield, and Worcester. The following communities have a significant <u>Asian population</u>: Boston, Chelsea, Lowell, Malden, Quincy, Revere, and Worcester.

### II. Minority In-migration and White Exodus.

The next factor that was examined was the percentage increase and decrease in municipal population, and the percentage increase or decrease in the minority population between 1980 and 1990.

The information on Chart I notes the census information which indicates that there was an increase in the minority population in all sixteen communities, while at the same time a decrease in the white population. The Chart also shows the percent of young people between the ages of 15 and 24 for each city in the survey. The summary chart notes those cities with this youth population, if it is 20% or greater.

### III. Systemic Discrimination.

The Commission reviewed the most recent data on the percentage of people below the poverty level. According to the 1990 census, fifteen of the sixteen communities reviewed indicate that the percentage of minorities below the poverty level is between two and four times the rate for non-minorities. Those with a significantly greater proportion of poverty are noted in Chart 2.

We examined the unemployment rates for the cites and towns with respect to white and minority residents to see if they follow the national trend which indicates that minorities bear a much greater burden of unemployment than whites as noted in Chart 2.

### IV. Minority Lack of Power.

After looking at the unequal share of unemployment and poverty for the communities in this survey, the Commission then looked at who was employed by the municipal government. In most cases the municipal government was the largest employer in the community. In Chart 3 we have compared the minority presence in a community to the numbers of minorities employed by the municipality, and in all but four of the cities and towns, minorities were found to be significantly under-represented.

A survey of the presence of minorities in the police departments was conducted, we found that the percent of minorities was low. If the police department minority percentage was less than half the percent of the minorities in a city or town, then we noted it. The lack of minorities in the police department is indicative of the larger problem of minorities in the work force. It is also a clear statement to the minority community of where the visible power is, and it reconfirms the impression of white power, white racism and repression. Eleven of the cities did not meet the minimum test factor.

Communities that had little or no minority participation in elected offices were also noted.

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### V. Hate Crimes.

Tension between minority groups manifests itself in violence in the form of hate crimes. These hate crimes are a problem in and of themselves, but can also be a catalyst when added to the other factors that the Kerner Commission cited in the causes of civil disorders.

We surveyed the documentation of hate crimes in each of the cities, and found that nine of the sixteen communities had high levels of reported hate crimes.

### VI Conclusion.

A review of the Kerner Commission factors shows that the potential for riots and civil unrest is highest in Chelsea, Lawrence, Lowell, and Holyoke. Some of the factors that contribute to a breakdown in order are present in Boston, Brockton, Worcester, Lynn, and Springfield. Unless we take steps now, social disaster almost certainly awaits us.

### October 10, 1992

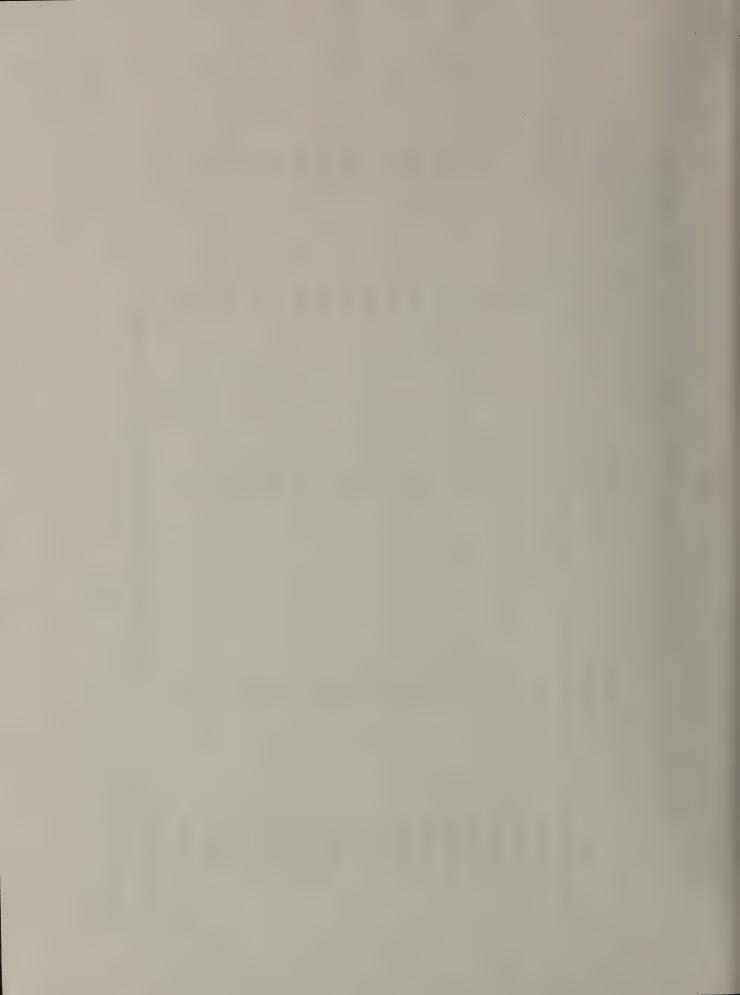
POPULATION CHANGES 1980 and 1990 & PERCENTAGE OF YOUTH

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% of City Youth Age 15 - 24	22.8	16	23.8	23	17.7	20.6	11 23.6	20	15.6	14.7	15.8	14.8	14.5	20.8	20	20.2
Minority % Increase	+5	+127	+9.3	+24	+8.1	+19.5	+31.4	+17	+14.4	+8.7	+4.3	+7.4	+7.7	+10.9	+11.3	+9.2
% of White Decrease	8	-14.8	Ŷ	-13.4	ъ.	-16.6	-16.7	-5.3	-8.2	-7.1	-0.58	-6.6	-5.2	-9.1	-7.1	-2.7
Minority Population %	37	21	29	42	15	36	50.5	24	21.2	12.2	12	9.3	9.1	15.7	37.3	17.2
City:	Boston	Brockton*	Cambridge	Chelsea	Framingham	Holyoke	Lawrence	Lowell	Lynn	Malden	New Bedford*	Quincy	Revere	Somerville	Springfield	Worcester

\* These cities have a large Cape Verdean population which the U.S. Census does not count as a seperate category.

Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census



<u>Chart 2</u>

## PERCENTAGE BELOW POVERTY LEVEL BY RACE

All Race Black Hispanic	32	36	16	45	14	61	47	45	41	11	52	24	14	15	53	48
Black	22	23	14	38	11	36	34	31	33	9	32	33	28	16	25	26
11 Race	15	12	2	23	4	23	26	15	14	9	15	S	6	8	18	12
city A	Boston	Brockton	Cambridge	Chelsea	Framingham	Holyoke	Lawrence	Lowell	Lynn	Malden	N. Bedford	Qunicy	Revere	Somerville	Springfield	Worcester

# UNEMPLOYMENT BY RACE

Hispanic	13	13	7	20	13	27	8	H		11			10	13	19	22
ce Black		16	6	20	4	12	24	22	19	6	22	10	13	14	14	17
All Race	8	6	S	12	9	10	15	11	6	œ	12	7	œ	9	6	ø

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

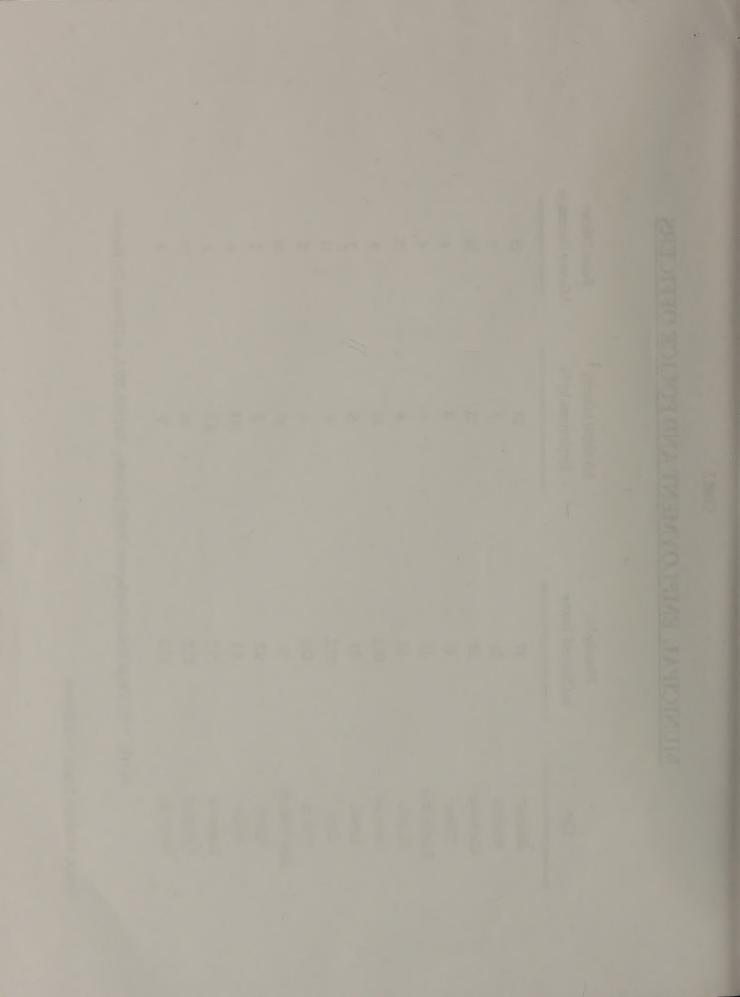


MUNICIPAL EMPLOYMENT AND POLICE OFFICERS

Police Officers Minority Percentage	25 6 17 8 17 8 11 20 8 8 8	
Municipal Minority Employment by %	24 9 9 15 9 15 9 15 9 15 9 15 9 15 9 15 9	
Minority % in Cities and Towns	37 21 29 42 15 36 50.5 50.5 24 24 21.2 12.2 12.2 12.2 9.3 9.3 9.1 17.2	
City:	Boston* Brockton Cambridge Chelsea Framingham Holyoke Lawrence Lawrence Lowell Lymn Malden New Bedford* Quincy Revere Somerville Springfield Worcester	

NOTE: \* The City of Boston Employment Profile Excluding the BHA, BRA, and Boston City Hospital.

Source: Municipal Employment Reports



# FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO CIVIL UNREST

White Flight	& Minority Population		Boston X	Brockton X	Cambridge X	Chelsea X	Framingham X	Holyoke X	Lawrence X	Lowell X	Lynn X	Malden X	New Bedford X	Quincy X	Revere X	Somerville X	Springfield X	Worcester X
	ty High % High on of Minor				X	X		X	X	X						×	X	X
	High Minority	Unemployment	X X	Х		Х		Х	Х	Х	Х		Х	×	Х		Х	Х
High %	Below Poverty		X	Х		Х		Х	Х	Х	Х		Х		Х		Х	Х
Low % Of	Minority Workforce	Participation		Х		X	Х	X	Х	X	Х	Х		Х	Х	X		
LOW %	Minority Police	Officers		X		Х	Х	Х	Х	Х		Х		Х	Х	Х		x
	High % Minority	Students	x	Х	Х	X	Х	Х	Х	Х	Х	Х	Х			Х	Х	×
Low % of	Minority Elected	officials		x		×	X		x	×	Х			X	×	X	Х	×
High	Incidence Of Hate	Crimes	x	Х		X		Х	Х	Х	Х		Х	Х	×	х		Х

