

# “HOW DOES A CITY RADICALLY CHANGE?”

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“Racecraft originates not in nature but in human action and imagination. It can exist in no other way.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> KAREN E. FIELDS & BARBARA J. FIELDS, RACECRAFT: THE SOUL OF INEQUALITY IN AMERICAN LIFE 15 (2012).

I. INTRODUCTION TO RACECRAFT AND THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION WORKING GROUP—MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

My mind is on Minneapolis, Minnesota, and the hundreds of other cities in which Black lives rose up in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in rebellion against racism, economic injustice, and police violence. Millions stood up. Minneapolis sparked a global protest in 2020 in the wake of the police murder of George Floyd on May 25, 2020.<sup>2</sup> It has been three full years since that public lynching when policeman Derek Chauvin squeezed the life out of Mr. Floyd with a knee on his neck for eight minutes and forty-six seconds.<sup>3</sup> In the context of the uprisings that followed in the aftermath of the Floyd rebellion, the questions remain: “Why Minneapolis?” and “How does a city—in the vortex of the demands for justice—radically change?” The term radical goes to the heart of the questions raised in this Article and to the root causes of social injustice in Minneapolis. The Minneapolis Truth and Reconciliation Working Group was called into existence to confront the complicated issues around race, violence, inequality, and whether authorizing a Truth and Reconciliation (“T & R”) process was the path to justice.<sup>4</sup> The Working Group would contend with building a difficult and complicated road in order to reach a series of recommendations on whether to move forward with a T & R Commission in Minneapolis.

A. *Conceptual and Historical Underpinnings*

Much needs to be made visible about the desirability of a T & R process in Minneapolis. The question of whether a Truth & Reconciliation Commission would be able to catalyze change was a key concern of the

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<sup>2</sup> The Floyd protests were local, national and international with more than 20 million people marching for Black Lives Matter. See Evan Hill et al., *How George Floyd Was Killed in Police Custody*, N.Y. TIMES (May 31, 2020) <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/31/us/george-floyd-investigation.html> [<https://perma.cc/6VRN-UFZW>].

<sup>3</sup> Nicholas Bogel-Burroughs, *8 Minutes, 46 Seconds Became a Symbol in George Floyd's Death. The Exact Time Is Less Clear*, N.Y. TIMES (June 18, 2020), <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/18/us/george-floyd-timing.html> [<https://perma.cc/ZF8A-DP8K>].

<sup>4</sup> The Minneapolis City Council approved the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Working Group on October 14, 2020. See generally Angelika Schlunck, *Truth and Reconciliation Commissions*, 4 ISLA J. INT'L & COMPAR. L., 415 (1998).

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Working Group. The record of other efforts had been mixed. Then there was the challenging racial history of the city of Minneapolis: the historical underpinnings of police murder, white supremacy, and antiblackness in Minneapolis are core to the structure of the city and state.<sup>5</sup> Could these deeply rooted issues be addressed by such a Commission? This is the North. This is the city in the cold Upper Midwest touted for its liberalness. The question of how Minneapolis resides in this “liberalness,” professes it, and yet has some of the worst racial disparities in the nation is a serious matter.<sup>6</sup> The Working Group knew the disjuncture between word and deed needed to be critically unpacked. Before the murder of George Floyd, a good deal was hidden below the surface about Minneapolis—“The City of Lakes”—and racial inequalities. Even before the Floyd uprising, serious questions loomed about structural racism and the ugly racial disparities that characterized the City.<sup>7</sup> The question was, how does a city radically change when structural transformation demands moving outside the liberal comfort zone? This story of the Minneapolis T & R Working Group is a window into some of the transformation that must occur and must be confronted for radical change to happen. Indeed, there is a deeper story to be told, requiring real truth telling. I began stitching together that story as a member of the T & R Working Group. The process kicked into gear in October 2020. On October 14, 2020, the Minneapolis City Council unanimously adopted a resolution calling for the exploration of a truth and reconciliation process through the creation of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> See generally WILLIAM GREEN, *A PECULIAR IMBALANCE: THE FALL AND RISE OF RACIAL INEQUALITY IN MINNESOTA* (2007).

<sup>6</sup> *The ‘Minnesota Paradox’: Why the State Has One of the Largest Racial Disparities*, WCCO CBS NEWS MINN. (June 23, 2020, 10:46 PM), <https://www.cbsnews.com/minnesota/news/the-minnesota-paradox-why-the-land-of-10000-lakes-has-one-of-the-largest-racial-disparities/> [<https://perma.cc/6ZVC-VYPE>].

<sup>7</sup> See Randy Furst, *Beyond the Great Recession*, STAR TRIB., Mar. 23, 2011, at 1A, available at LEXIS, News Library, <Beyond the Great Recession> File (explaining that, for the past decade, increasing attention has been given to the Minnesota racial disparities in every arena from housing to education and that these disparities are repeatedly referred to as some of worst in the nation).

<sup>8</sup> The Working Group would research, discuss, and make recommendations about the possibility of a Beyond the Great Recession.docx T & R Commission in the City of Minneapolis. Joy Marsh Stephens, *Update from Truth and Reconciliation Workgroup (RCA-2021-00767)*, MINNEAPOLIS LEGIS. INFO. MGMT. SYS. (June 30, 2021), <https://lims.minneapolismn.gov/RCA/8236> [<https://perma.cc/3SVX-A5P3>] (choose “Truth and Reconciliation Workgroup Presentation” under attachments) [hereinafter *Truth and Reconciliation Workgroup*].

## II. CONSTITUTING THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION WORKING GROUP

By November 18, 2020, I was formally invited by Vice City Council Chair Andrea Jenkins to join the T & R Working Group. Our work would begin in January 2021. The group of fifteen members represented a cross section of American Indian (the preferred nomenclature for the Indigenous representatives on the committee) and Black/African (the preferred nomenclature for Black or African descendants) community members, scholars, historians, and leaders. The George Floyd uprising was the main catalyst for moving the idea of a T & R process forward. Nonetheless, the settler colonial reality of the state and the city required the work group to examine the historical realities as well. The experiences of American Indian and Black/African descendants anchored the process.<sup>9</sup> The charge of the T & R Working Group was to consider what it would take for a T & R process to occur in Minneapolis. The several months long effort superseded the idea that process would take about five meetings. This seriously underestimated the complexity of the process the Working Group was embarking on. By June of 2021, the Working Group's work was presented in a set of recommendations to the Minneapolis City Council. The Working Group's recommendation was that the city proceed with establishing a formal T & R Commission. The underpinnings of the Working Group's process and recommendations are discussed in this Article.

While far from simple, the Minneapolis T & R Working Group grappled with the policies, politics, and practices which shape the social realities of Black/African descendants and American Indians in the City of Minneapolis. The imperative of the T & R Working Group initiative should be understood in the context of the racial/class/settler colonial history of Minnesota and Minneapolis. Of course, the looming shadow over our work was the police murder of George Floyd: murdered by cop Derek Chauvin on May 25, 2020.<sup>10</sup> The meta question the Working Group grappled with was, "why and how must T & R be articulated in Minneapolis?" The complexities of establishing a Commission were an ongoing discussion of the Working

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<sup>9</sup> Both American Indian and African/Black descendants would be the groups represented. These populations have faced deeply rooted structural racism, settler colonialism, land expropriation, and genocide in the State of Minnesota and City of Minneapolis.

<sup>10</sup> See Bogel-Burroughs, *supra* note 1.

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Group. The Group knew that better understanding the historical and structural underpinnings of what had transpired in the city and state regarding Black/African descendants and was central to its decisionmaking. We needed a deeper analysis of the history of race in Minnesota and the city of Minneapolis. Our questions could not be fully addressed until we got a critical sense of our mutual and distinct histories and the legacies and realities in play.

### III. RACECRAFT IN MINNEAPOLIS AND THE STATE OF MINNESOTA

Historian Barbara Fields and sociologist Karen Fields contend that racecraft is a social practice.<sup>11</sup> Racecraft takes for granted the objective reality of race.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, the frame is an important lens for conceptualizing what the Working Group embarked upon in the multi-month T & R determination process in Minneapolis. The multiple interrogations we engaged in around what meanings and history we brought were ongoing. There was no blank slate, and we had to contend with our own positionalities. We grew to understand that, as Fields and Fields argue, it is in the constant making and remaking of racecraft that it persists.<sup>13</sup> The constant making and remaking of race and racism underpins the Minneapolis reality. It is a sturdy way to think about the Minneapolis T & R Working Group’s analytical work. It is in the recognition and naming of white racism in a professedly liberal city and state that expresses the constitutive nature of racecraft in Minneapolis. What was not so well understood by the working group was how deeply rooted and slippery the process would be. Bringing together the distinct and overlapping terrains of Indigenous and African descendant complexities taught us much, but it was challenging. The strategic question of which recommendations and how the process would unfold were answered in a series of hard conversations that we had as group members. Without a unified strategic vision, it was not surprising that the slippery mechanisms of recommending the way forward would be challenging terrain. That vision had to be forged.

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<sup>11</sup> See FIELDS & FIELDS, *supra* note 1, at 25.

<sup>12</sup> *Id.*

<sup>13</sup> See generally *Id.*

## IV. WHO GETS TO TELL THE STORY?

Race, racism, racecraft, and racial contestation have always been at the center of Minneapolis's political order.<sup>14</sup> They are embedded in the history of white settlerism, white supremacy, capitalism, and antiblackness in Minnesota and city of Minneapolis.<sup>15</sup> On this terrain, a T & R Commission would have to be built if the Group agreed to recommend it. The racial/colonial history, moreover, was simultaneously embedded in the economic reality of a state and city, rooted in the logic of capitalism. The city was organized with a racial capitalist social order where Black labor too often had been paid wages below white labor and faced high unemployment and persistent precarity, if able to get work at all.<sup>16</sup> This historic wage gap persists into the twenty-first century.<sup>17</sup>

Nonetheless, the looming question of who got to tell this story circled the Working Group continuously. How the story would be told and the social/historical dynamics were key. While the recommendation document ultimately crafted a language that had rarely been publicly expressed, there was no straightforward political strategy of how transformational justice would be realized if and when a Minneapolis Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established. Moreover, the Working Group was composed of American Indian and Black/African representatives with complicated

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<sup>14</sup> Greg. Rosalsky, *Minneapolis Ranks Near the Bottom for Racial Equality*, NPR: PLANET MONEY (June 2, 2020, 6:30 AM), <https://www.npr.org/sections/money/2020/06/02/867195676/minneapolis-ranks-near-the-bottom-for-racial-equality#:~:text=Here%20is%20a%20snapshot%3A,nearby%20Milwaukee%2C%20Wisconsin%20is%20worse> [<https://perma.cc/EF3N-KXH2>].

<sup>15</sup> Minneapolis and the state of Minnesota are rarely framed as capitalist. Private property and the pursuit of profit are the fundamental economic dynamics of the city and state. Of course, appropriating American Indian land remains a great source of wealth for the white owning classes. While not formally a slave state, Minnesota drew upon the wealth created by enslaved Africans for unjust enrichment. *See generally* CHRISTOPHER P. LEHMAN, *SLAVERY'S REACH: SOUTHERN SLAVEHOLDERS IN THE NORTH STAR STATE* (2019).

<sup>16</sup> *See* MANNING MARABLE, *HOW CAPITALISM UNDERDEVELOPED BLACK AMERICA* 34 (1st ed. 1983).

<sup>17</sup> Lisa C. McKay, *How the Racial Wealth Gap Has Evolved—and Why it Persists*, FED. RSRV. BANK OF MINNEAPOLIS (Oct. 3, 2022), <https://www.minneapolisfed.org/article/2022/how-the-racial-wealth-gap-has-evolved-and-why-it-persists> [<https://perma.cc/NWW2-8VWV>].

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understandings of our undertaking.<sup>18</sup> This naming, however, did not come easily.<sup>19</sup> In fact, the naming issue was a core one for the committee. The contestation around “name” opened up a plethora of exchanges regarding the complications of Black and Indigenous identities. Yet, quite intertwined with this issue of name was the issue of history.

### V. RACECRAFT IN MINNESOTA: HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND WHITENESS AS PROPERTY

Cheryl Harris’s critically important scholarship on whiteness as property is a vital point of departure for understanding racecraft in Minneapolis.<sup>20</sup> Racecraft is interwoven in an articulation of whiteness as property. Whiteness as property ensures the making and remaking of white racial power in local spaces and in general. Harris makes it quite clear that property interest in whiteness is one that has been recognized in modern legal theory: “the valorization of whiteness as treasured property in a society structured on racial caste.”<sup>21</sup> Harris further notes the set of assumptions, privileges, and the benefits that accompany the status of being white have become a valuable asset that whites sought to protect, and that those who passed sought to attain.<sup>22</sup>

This is the unarticulated reality of whiteness that shapes Minnesota liberalism: the set of assumptions, privileges, and benefits that accompany the

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<sup>18</sup> The naming situation was complicated because these populations vary in their naming practices. It took many conversations to resolve how the populations would be named. For the Working group it was agreed that Black/African and American Indian best captured how these populations would be referenced in the discussion.

<sup>19</sup> The issue of name is filled with difficulty when trying to encapsulate a historical trajectory. Issues around who is a descendant of enslaved Africans and the multiple articulations of Indigenous peoples makes it a fraught affair. Who gets to name is certainly a conversation held on a number of occasions by the Working Group.

<sup>20</sup> See generally Cheryl I. Harris, *Whiteness as Property*, 106 HARV. L. REV. 1707 (1993).

<sup>21</sup> *Id.* at 1713; see also *id.* at 1714 (quoting Frances L. Ansley, *Stirring the Ashes: Race, Class and the Future of Civil Rights Scholarship*, 74 CORNELL L. REV. 993, 1024 n.129 (1989)) (“By ‘white supremacy’ I do not mean to allude only to the self-conscious racism of white supremacist hate groups. I refer instead to a political, economic, and cultural system in which whites overwhelmingly control power and material resources, conscious and unconscious ideas of white superiority entitlement are widespread, and relations of white dominance and non-white subordination are daily reenacted across a broad array of institutions and social settings.”).

<sup>22</sup> *Id.* at 1713.

status of being white. Indeed, Minnesota set the racial contours of racial structure from its inception as a state in 1858.<sup>23</sup>

A. *White Settlerism, Whiteness as Property, and Genocide*

In *Slavery's Reach*, Lehman places Minnesota in its correct political economic context:

A slaveholding financier provided much of the capital behind the fur trade in southern and central Minnesota. Military officers, federal appointees, commuting businessmen, small farmers, banks and insurance companies, hotelkeepers, and land speculators all brought connections to slaveholders' wealth into Minnesota Territory.<sup>24</sup>

Consequently, ideologies of inferiority and superiority would be embedded in Minnesota social practices, if not always in law.<sup>25</sup>

While her focus is on the Dakota people, scholar and activist Waziyatawin provides a way to think about Black and Indigenous lives in Minnesota as interlinked. Minnesota is the land of the Dakota and other Native American nations. This brings the white settler colony, indigenous removal, and the theft of indigenous lands in deep relationship with the stolen labor of enslaved Africans—racism cohering both. She asked this question when the state celebrated its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary:

What does it mean that Minnesota's citizens advocated, supported, and perpetrated genocidal policies so they could obtain Dakota homeland? What does it mean that Dakota extermination and forced removal (as well as Ho-Chunk removal) were the price of Minnesota statehood? And, what does it mean in the twenty-first century when Minnesotans celebrate the establishment of the state, despite its shameful historical legacy and the harmful consequences to whole nations of Indigenous Peoples?<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> See generally *A GOOD TIME FOR THE TRUTH: RACE IN MINNESOTA* (Sun Yang Shin ed., 2016).

<sup>24</sup> LEHMAN, *supra* note 15, at 1.

<sup>25</sup> See *id.*

<sup>26</sup> WAZIYATAWIN, *WHAT DOES JUSTICE LOOK LIKE? THE STRUGGLE FOR LIBERATION IN DAKOTA HOMELAND* 4 (Cathy Broberg ed., 1st ed. 2008).



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Given this, we can think about the whiteness as property and the capitalist dynamics of profit and land appropriation intertwined with racism in the state. This is the racecraft of the state. It is not a simple T & R terrain. Drawing once again from Lehman’s articulation of slavery’s reach, white supremacy envelops both Black/African Descendant and American Indian populations. He contends:

A pillar of the state’s foundation cannot be disconnected from unfree labor inculcated in white supremacist ideology: Alexander Ramsey, Minnesota’s first territorial governor (1849–1853), second state governor (1860–1863), and a US senator (1864–1875) was clear about his priorities. He said this of the Dakota people, “Our course then is plain. The Sioux Indians of Minnesota must be exterminated or driven forever beyond the borders of Minnesota.” Ramsey offered these remarks to a special session of the Minnesota legislature, September 9, 1862. Ideologies of inferiority and superiority would be embedded in Minnesota social practices if not always in law. Black Minnesotans have been in a continual struggle against systemic racism in the state.<sup>27</sup>

### B. *Into the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries*

The Minneapolis story continues to express the systemic racism of the state and the nation. As in the early years of statehood, the Minneapolis story continues to express the systemic racism of the state and the nation. This history is foundational for considering transformational justice and repair. While the Working Group correctly named poverty, racial exclusion, and white racism as the underpinnings of the current exclusions and dispossession, there was no simple resolution for what was to be done. The members of the group understood quite well that the issues were not just poverty and exclusion but who held power and wealth. The issues of Black and American Indian self-determination, political resistance, and power were placed at the center of our discussions.

Shifting the historical assessment into the twentieth and twenty-first century, by the mid-fifties Black/African descendants were in a full-scale struggle for freedom. A defining moment, of course, was the 1954 Supreme Court decision, *Brown v. Board of Education*, signaling the death knell of “separate but equal.” This catalyzed the Montgomery Bus Boycott and catapulted Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. into national prominence. It did not

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<sup>27</sup> LEHMAN, *supra* note 24.

dismantle the system of capitalist exploitation or the Black internal colony that Black radicals in Minneapolis, Detroit, L.A., Chicago and other major cities identified as the real structural underpinning of injustice.<sup>28</sup> It correctly identified Black/African descendants' relationship to the U.S. racial state and it did shift the script of Black resistance to Black Power.<sup>29</sup> Rather than the sociological frame of race relations, institutionalized racism (that black power advocates put at the center of their analysis) encapsulated the entire country as the point of struggle, North and South.<sup>30</sup>

Nonetheless, in "liberal" cities such as Minneapolis, the white populace could not or would not see the deeply rooted power of whiteness and the entanglement of this system with private wealth and class inequality: whiteness as property. These tentacles, of course, are expressed in all aspects of U.S. society. Its cultural roots are spread widely in the consciousness and expectations of the social order. The long arm of these racial tentacles reaches into the current period and expresses the context in which the police murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis occurred.

Housing is a significant context to think concretely the tentacles' reach. For example, in Minneapolis by the 1910s into 1950s blatant restrictive covenants in housing kept Black Minnesotans from living in certain white neighborhoods exemplifying the deep disparities (some of the worst in the U.S.) steeped in housing segregation.<sup>31</sup> Relatedly, there are the issues of unequal educational access and economic racism. Economic racism means high unemployment, low wages, and no work while being locked into concentrated poverty zones. These are the de facto segregation zones that are hyper surveilled and are heavily policed.<sup>32</sup> For too many African/Black descendants it is a world of economic thralldom (intense economic exploitation and exclusion). In one of these zones of containment and institutional racism, the 1997 Minneapolis uprising occurred.<sup>33</sup> Newark and

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<sup>28</sup> See generally THE NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMISSION ON CIVIL DISORDERS UNITED STATES, KERNER COMMISSION REPORT ON THE CAUSES, EVENTS, AND AFTERMATHS OF THE CIVIL DISORDERS OF 1967 (1968), [https://belonging.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/kerner\\_commission\\_full\\_report.pdf?file=1&force=1](https://belonging.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/kerner_commission_full_report.pdf?file=1&force=1) [<https://perma.cc/N48F-JAYD>].

<sup>29</sup> See KWAME TURE & CHARLES V. HAMILTON, BLACK POWER: THE POLITICS OF LIBERATION IN AMERICA (Vintage Books 1992) (1967).

<sup>30</sup> *Id.*

<sup>31</sup> *Mapping Prejudice*, UNIV. OF MINN., <https://mappingprejudice.umn.edu/> [<https://perma.cc/YCJ6-Z9UE>] (last visited July 2, 2023).

<sup>32</sup> See DAVID V. TAYLOR, AFRICAN AMERICANS IN MINNESOTA (2002).

<sup>33</sup> Laura Yuen, *When Flames of Racial Strife Engulfed a Minneapolis Street*, MPR NEWS (July 19, 2017, 4:00 AM)

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Detroit exploded (as did scores of other cities with urban Black populations). It is notable that by 1967, this uprising happened in Minneapolis just as others were occurring in cities across the country.<sup>34</sup> The most consequential, of course, was in Detroit, Michigan.<sup>35</sup> It is quite true that in Minneapolis education, the economy, housing, and the polity had been key sites of racial exclusivity, giving preference to whites.<sup>36</sup> These inequalities were at the core of the 1967 Minneapolis rebellion.

Indeed, the causes of the 1967 rebellion were heavily material, racism was central as was economic marginalization.<sup>37</sup> Those in resistance understood that whiteness also has a cultural base that disperses and deploys white supremacy in consciousness, expectations, and status markers which are exceedingly difficult to dislodge.

### VI. HISTORY AND THE PRESENT: ESTABLISHING THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION WORKING GROUP

In the wake of the George Floyd police murder and the long history of racism in the state and city, the T & R Working group was established by the Minneapolis City Council. We brought a plethora of experiences to our charge. Connecting to our multiple histories and cultures was critical to moving the decisions. Each two-hour meeting of the Working Group began with a grounding/centering, then the work of the group began. There were, of course, differences in priorities, but we persisted in reaching agreement about the need for a Truth and Reconciliation Commission for Minneapolis. One area that was not fully interrogated was the gender dimension of a T & R process—gender in the context of racial dispossession. Though the precise relationship between race and class remains contested, the issues of justice are further complicated by gender and sexuality when catalyzing a T & R process. For example, the tradition of Black women’s economic exploitation—rooted in the expropriation of Black women’s productive and reproductive labor and the

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<https://www.mprnews.org/story/2017/07/19/minneapolis-plymouth-avenue-riots-anniversary> [<https://perma.cc/736Q-R8BM>].

<sup>34</sup> Lorraine Boissoneault, *Understanding Detroit’s 1967 Upheaval 50 Years Later*, SMITHSONIAN MAG. (July 26, 2017), <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/understanding-detroits-1967-upheaval-50-years-later-180964212/> [<https://perma.cc/NQT4-ECUW>].

<sup>35</sup> *Id.*

<sup>36</sup> See generally SPARKED: GEORGE FLOYD, RACISM, AND THE PROGRESSIVE ILLUSION (Walter R. Jacobs et al. eds., 2021).

<sup>37</sup> Yuen, *supra* note 33. Interviews conducted by MPR makes it quite clear that young Black people on the North side were fed up with economic inequality, racism, and police harassment in 1967.

precarious economic position of African descendant women—is a longstanding social logic in the city.<sup>38</sup> The poorest Black population in Minneapolis are households led by Black women, with about 45% living in poverty.<sup>39</sup> Indeed, poverty is heavily feminized in Minneapolis. Black women and their children are among the poorest of the poor in the city.<sup>40</sup> By the time of the Floyd uprising in 2020, the median Black family income was \$38,178 as compared to \$84,459 for white families in Minneapolis.<sup>41</sup> This is a dismal gap surpassed only by Milwaukee, Wisconsin.<sup>42</sup> The Black poverty rate in the Twin Cities was 25.4% as compared to a white poverty rate of 5.9% in 2020—again, nearly the highest gap in the nation.<sup>43</sup> The idea is that a T & R would open up dialogue and create context for addressing these issues.

## VII. CONCLUSION

The T & R Working Group agreed that structural racism is foundational to the systemic inequalities faced by Black/African and American Indian populations. It is key to understanding what needs to radically change in the City of Minneapolis. Issues also centered around land and space and the legitimacy of the city of Minneapolis on American Indian lands. These were challenging conversations.

The broader historical context for T & R in Minneapolis was the core frame for this Article. The history lays the foundation for understanding the possibility of constituting a T & R Commission in the wake of the 2020 murder of George Floyd and global uprising against police violence and for Black lives. Minneapolis protests were at the epicenter of the widespread resistance against police violence and deeply rooted structural racism. Minneapolis is a city in need of radical change. When the veneer is lifted the 2020 George Floyd uprising was the end point of a long history of racecraft, structural racism, and Black and Indigenous dispossession in the state. Given this, the T & R Working Group produced a series of recommendations to the Minneapolis City Council on June 30, 2021.

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<sup>38</sup> See BRITTANY M. LEWIS, *THE STATE OF BLACK WOMEN'S ECONOMICS IN MINNESOTA* 4–5 (2015), <https://conservancy.umn.edu/bitstream/handle/11299/179867/KNCBR%201407.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y> [ <https://perma.cc/QP9H-57C9>].

<sup>39</sup> *Id.* at 6.

<sup>40</sup> *See id.* at 8.

<sup>41</sup> Rosalsky, *supra* note 14.

<sup>42</sup> *Id.*

<sup>43</sup> *Id.*

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Here are the core visions produced by the T & R Working Group:

1. An equitable and measurably just society for upcoming generations.
2. Shared authority on [c]ity resource decision making for and by Black/African descendants and American Indian communities.
3. Substantial dedicated resources and support for the American Indian and Black/African descendant communities for mental health to address historical and persistent trauma.
4. Ongoing dismantling, disinvesting, and deconstruction of harmful institutional policies, practices, and procedures across [c]ity hiring, contracting, governing, and other operations.
5. Decolonizing the [c]ity’s history so that it is no longer divorces Minneapolis from the history of Minnesota, including deconstructing the narrative around the built environment. Minnesota learns and honors the history of these lands and waterways of both historic and contemporary Dakota and Anishinaabe first peoples.<sup>44</sup>

This Article examined the Minneapolis Truth and Reconciliation Working Group appointed by the city of Minneapolis Vice Councilperson Andrea Jenkins. The charge of the T & R Working Group was to consider what it would take for a Truth and Reconciliation process to occur in Minneapolis. The several months long study effort culminated in recommendations to the Minneapolis City Council on how the process should unfold. Thus, the decision to appoint a Working Group as precursor to a formal Truth & Reconciliation is critical to understanding the how and why of such a T & R effort. While far from simple, the Minneapolis T & R Working Group grappled with the policies, politics, and practices which shape the social realities of Black/African descendants and America Indians in Minneapolis. Critically, the imperative of T & R must be understood in the context of the

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<sup>44</sup> *Truth and Reconciliation Workgroup*, supra note 8.

fraught racial history of Minnesota, Minneapolis, and the uprisings which occurred in the wake of the George Floyd murder by police officer Derek Chauvin. The Working Group contended with the shift in city dynamics given the contemporary and historical realities of racism. The meta question was why and how must T & R be articulated in Minneapolis? And, most importantly, how does a city radically change? As Fania Davis articulates, “Healing interpersonal harm requires a commitment to transforming the context in which the injury occurs: the socio-historical conditions and institutions that are structured precisely to perpetuate harm.”<sup>45</sup> The Working Group recommended that Minneapolis move forward with a Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The recommendation was accepted by the City Council on June 30, 2021.

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<sup>45</sup> FANIA E. DAVIS, *THE LITTLE BOOK OF RACE AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE: BLACK LIVES, HEALING AND US SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION* 35 (Barbara Toews ed., 2019).