

The Riot Roundtables

Race and the riots of August 2011

Runnymede: Intelligence for a Multi- ethnic Britain

Runnymede is the UK's leading independent thinktank on race equality and race relations. Through high-quality research and thought leadership, we:

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Foreword

Riots are not demonstrations. They are not organized, do not have a clear set of political demands, or spokespeople who might seek to explain the actions of the many who are caught up in the disorder that ensues. In this vacuum of explanation, many commentators have sought to make sense of last August's riots.

Immediately following the events of Saturday 4th August in Tottenham, we pointed to the classic features of the disturbances which appeared very similar to past events that have come to be understood as 'race riots': anger at police actions, breakdown in communication between police and policed, anger at patterns of discrimination, high levels of unemployment, and fear of further exclusion. However, 24 hours later we had to admit that the events had taken an unprecedented turn, both in terms of the scale of the riots, the number of people involved, and the multiple locations of disturbances.

Commentators were quick to dismiss racial injustice as a driver of these disturbances. The claim was that since the rioters were from a range of ethnic backgrounds, the riots were not racialised. Due to the breadth and range of locations, it was further suggested that there were no clear reasons for the riots beyond 'criminality, pure and simple'.

We felt that these explanations were at best incomplete. Instead of indulging in further speculation, we were keen to hear from people who were directly affected by the riots. As a race equality focused organization, we wanted to ask directly about how racial inequality and injustice may have featured in the riots. This was not to pre-suppose that these events were driven solely by poor race relations; indeed we would rather that this was not the case.

In order to discover how racial injustice may have featured in the riots of August 2011, we hosted a series of roundtables where people engaged in community work from black, white and Asian backgrounds reflected on the events, alongside a series of interviews of members of the general public in hair and beauty salons. Much discussion in the post-riots analysis has been focused on young people. In order to enable young people's voices to be foregrounded in our analysis, we supported three groups of young researchers in London and Birmingham who hosted discussions among their peers.

These discussions have highlighted the ways in which racial injustice acted as a driver for the riots, and crucially have reminded us about the issues which need to be tackled in order to minimise the risk of such devastating disturbances in the future. Misdiagnosis of the causes for the riots will inevitably lead to misdirected solutions being offered. The findings in this report suggest that unless we start to take concerted action to respond to the persistent racial inequalities in our society that in a period of financial austerity we are at risk of facing similar disturbances again in the near future.

Dr Rob Berkeley

Director
Runnymede
January 2012

1. Introduction

The civil unrest that took place across England's cities and towns in August 2011 was unprecedented; an experience not felt for at least a generation. Mark Duggan's death is widely seen to be the spark that ignited those furious days of destruction and the Independent Police Complaints Commission investigation into the circumstances surrounding his death continues. Five people are known to have been killed during the course of the civil disturbance. The impact of the lives lost and the families traumatised as the civil unrest spread across London and the rest of England will take some time to heal.

The level of destruction and looting on the streets of England was exceptional. The claims for loss and damage stand between £200-300 million in London alone. When the cost of police overtime and the drafting in of officer reinforcements are included, some reports indicate a total cost of more than £370 million. The streets that were so marked by devastation in August 2011 have largely been refurbished but many shop owners still await their insurance awards and some local business will sadly not reopen.

In the aftermath of the civil disturbance, there was quite rightly a condemnation of the violent and destructive activities but there was also a reluctance to understand why it had happened. The disturbances witnessed in Tottenham following the death of Mark Duggan bore a close resemblance to violent unrest that arose from injustices felt by the African Caribbean community in the 1980s. However, as the disturbances spread across London and further, the events unfolded into something less recognizable. In the absence of a full government inquiry, the Runnymede Trust was concerned that ethnic inequality and racial injustice, as potential factors in the civil unrest, were too quickly dismissed and marginalised from public discussions.

The Runnymede Riot Roundtables project brought together key local decision-makers, professionals, young people and members of the community to find out what happened during the riots and what can be done to prevent similar riots happening again. Most significantly the project aimed to find out if race played a role in the riots.

Roundtables were held in Birmingham, Bradford, Coventry, Croydon, Lewisham and Westminster; young people were trained to work as peer-to-peer researchers and the general public were interviewed in local community hubs.

This report aims to highlight the complex ways in which race and racial inequality played a role in the events of August 2011 and provides an alternative narrative for why the civil disturbances occurred. Without a doubt the disturbances emerged and developed from particular local contexts but there are discernible patterns; the disturbances in each of the areas we visited shared some characteristics. The research participants spoke of community tensions with the police; a general rebelliousness amongst 'disaffected' young people; and criminal opportunism. It appears that there was not one reason for the civil unrest but many. However, we heard of various examples of racial injustice and racial inequality and what emerged from the Riot Roundtables project is that racial injustice can be seen to be a significant factor in the civil unrest of 2011.

Report structure

This report is organised into four key chapters. Chapter Two, 'What happened?', includes a timeline of events; information on who was brought before the courts; and a discussion of the initial responses to the civil unrest. Chapter Three focuses on the reasons for the civil disturbances and is discussed in the light of respondents' reflections on race relations, racism and racial inequalities. Chapter Four explores the possible reasons why Bradford, a city that has in recent history experienced 'race riots', remained peaceful during those days in August 2011. The final chapter of this report includes our conclusions and the policy recommendations that have emerged from this project.

1.1. Methodology

The Riot Roundtables project was developed to inform the national public policy debate by bringing together community activists, researchers, representatives of civil society and local statutory agencies to find out what happened during the

civil disturbances and why. In particular, we sought to understand the role that race may have played in the reasons behind the civil unrest. To that end, the research questions for this project were: *what happened; why did it happen and was race a factor; and lastly how can we prevent similar riots from happening again?* The mainstay of the research was conducted from October to December 2011 with a supplementary roundtable taking place in January 2012.

Research methods

The research methods included: roundtable events, recruitment of young researchers, and interviews with the general public in community hub spaces. We conducted a series of five roundtables with 8-15 key decision-makers in each. The participants were identified using desk-based research and were selected for their expertise in understanding communities and neighbourhoods. The roundtable participants included local councillors, police officers, community activists, youth workers, academics, young people, public and voluntary sector workers.

The roundtables took place in Birmingham, Bradford, Coventry, Croydon and Lewisham. We also held a larger roundtable event (57 participants) in parliament at Westminster. The same questions were asked at each roundtable apart from Bradford (more details on the Bradford roundtable are included in Chapter Four). The roundtables were designed to enable a safe space for participants to be honest about their understanding of the riots and were held under Chatham House Rules to encourage a candid approach. The meetings were facilitated, recorded and transcribed by the Runnymede Trust.

As part of the project, young researchers (aged 11-15) were recruited and trained to carry out research within their peer group. The young researchers were recruited from three schools in London: Bethnal Green Technology College, Lilian Baylis, Woolwich Polytechnic School; and one school in Birmingham, Saint John Wall Catholic School. There were 18 young researchers in total, they were selected by their teachers and they came from a range of backgrounds. They were trained in three research methods; focus groups, semi-structured interviews and documentary photography. We worked with one teacher within each school who provided support to the young researchers throughout the project. The young researchers spoke to between 40-50 individuals and delivered their findings at the Westminster

roundtable and provided written reports.

We carried out interviews with the general public at hair and beauty venues in Croydon, Lewisham, Birmingham and Coventry. The salons were chosen as a site for the research to encourage open and honest conversations in spaces where participants felt comfortable. The venues were selected for their proximity to where civil disturbances were reported. We asked each participant the same research questions as outlined above. The interviews were recorded and photographed and have been compiled into an audio slideshow which is available on the Runnymede Trust website at: www.runnymedetrust.org

In partnership with our young researchers we spoke to approximately 200 individuals from a variety of backgrounds. The age of participants ranged from 11 - 65+ years old and the ethnic make-up was broadly white 37%, black 31%, Asian 22%, mixed 6%, and other 3%.

1.2 Research areas

We went to four areas where civil disturbances were recorded; Birmingham, Coventry, Croydon (London), Lewisham (London) and Bradford where there were no recorded disturbances. The areas were selected on the basis of their particular demographic profile (see Figures 1-3 for visual comparisons of the research areas) and also their particular history of community relations and civil disturbances. We felt these areas would provide us with points of comparison and contrast. We used desk-based research to compile information on each area and to build up our understanding of the communities.

Birmingham

Birmingham is considered to be Britain's second city and is one of the most ethnically diverse cities in the country. Birmingham City Council estimates that over half of the current population under 16 are ethnic minorities (Simpson, 2007) and 46% of children in Birmingham, Ladywood live in poverty (www.endchildpoverty.org.uk). The city also has the highest rate (2.7 people per 1,000 households) in need of accommodation (DCLG, 2011).

Handsworth, an inner city area of Birmingham, was devastated by two days of violent rioting in September 1985. The disturbances erupted along the Lozells Road, following the arrest of a black

man after a police stop and search. Again in 2005 riots occurred on two consecutive nights, Saturday 22 October and Sunday 23 October 2005, in the Lozells and Handsworth area of Birmingham. The riots in 2005 were seen to derive from racial tensions between black and Asian communities.

Bradford

Bradford's total population is 512,600 and since the 1950s migrants have come from Bangladesh, India and particularly Pakistan. Today the Asian Pakistani population makes up around 13% of the city's total population (ONS, 2011a). Bradford's textile industry has been in decline for many years and the city has suffered from de-industrialisation. Unemployment rates in some wards exceed 25% and one in three people of working age are out of work (Bradford Observatory, 2011). Bradford has some of the highest levels of social deprivation in the UK.

In 2001 racial violence broke out on the streets of Bradford following a protest march against the National Front. Mainly Asian youths fought white extremists and the police in the Asian suburb of Manningham, an area of sprawling and deprived terraced housing estates (Observer, 2001).

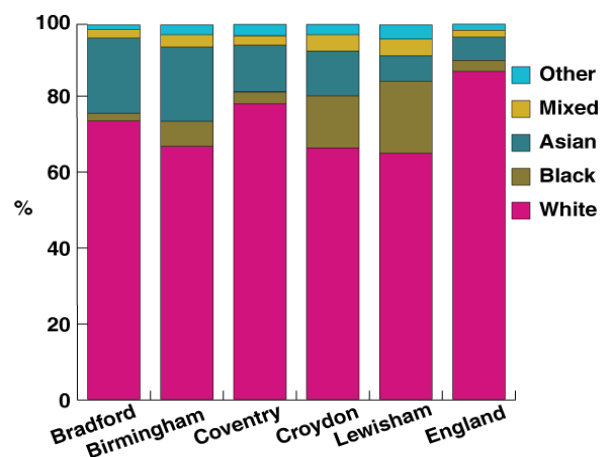
Coventry

Coventry is a city with a history of post-war renewal but by the mid 1980s it had lost a third of its manufacturing capacity as the big car plants closed. Just under a third of the workforce is employed in the public sector, and in the last few decades its private sector, once reliant on manufacturing, has managed to diversify (www.bbc.co.uk). Coventry is in the top 20 areas with the highest number of homeless people a rate of 1.4 people per 1,000 households in need of accommodation (DCLG, 2011). More than 100 languages are spoken in the city and the majority of residents are Christian, but there are sizeable Sikh, Muslim and Hindu populations. Coventry has often been promoted as a city actively engaged in promoting peace, reconciliation and tolerance.

Croydon

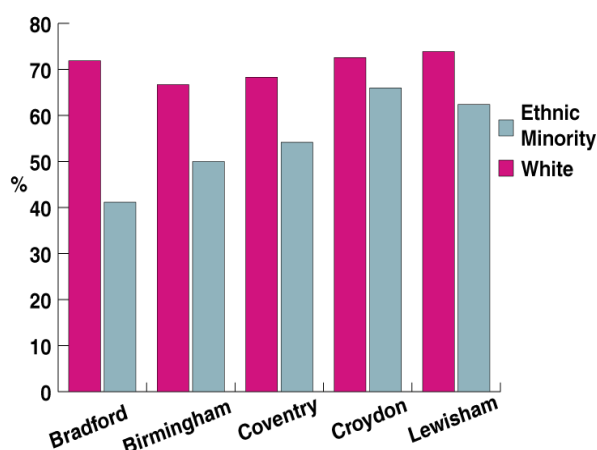
Croydon is a major suburban town in London and is the largest London borough by population. Croydon is a highly diverse borough, having both deprived and wealthy areas. Borough-wide figures mask real pockets of deprivation as wards in Croydon are ranked as being in the top 10% most deprived in the UK (London Borough of Croydon,

Figure 1. Percentage of population by broad ethnic group (2009)



Source: Population Estimates by Ethnic Group Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Figure 2. Employment Rate Population Aged 16 to 64



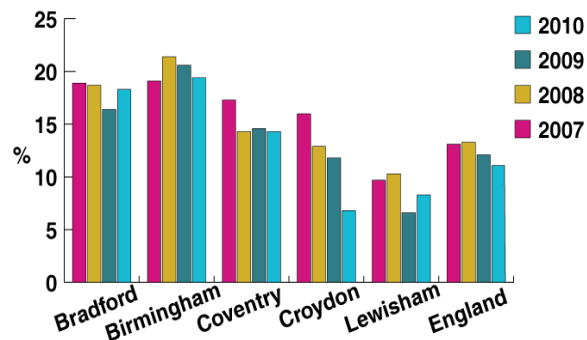
Source: Annual Population Survey (APS), through Nomis, Office for National Statistics (ONS)

2011). Minority ethnic groups make up 36% of the population, residents who are black or black British form the largest group at 13% and South Asian are the next largest at 11.3%. The more diverse wards are often more deprived with higher levels of economic inactivity and associated problems such as poor health. Over one in seven of Croydon's population is in the 10-19 age groups, more than any other borough in the capital (London Borough of Croydon, 2008). In the period between 1998 and 2008 Croydon lost 10,500 private sector jobs and it is estimated that there will be 2000 job losses within Croydon's public sector workforce by 2014/15 (Mesken, K., Tochtermann, L. & Wilcox, Z., 2011).

Lewisham

Lewisham is home to over 250,000 residents from a range of diverse communities. Currently there are over 130 languages spoken by different communities across the borough. Children and young people make up 25% of the population and the local population is forecast to rise to over 290,000 over the next twenty years. Most employment is in the public sector – with the Council as the largest employer in the borough. Other public sector partners (Lewisham Hospital, Goldsmiths College, Lewisham College, NHS Lewisham and the Metropolitan Police) employ a further 6,500. With the exception of a few large retail businesses and some medium sized office supply businesses, the private sector economy comprises mainly small and medium enterprises in the traditional supply and retail sectors (www.lewishamstrategicpartnership.org.uk). In May 2011, TUC ranked Lewisham as number two in the top ten employment blackspots in London where 25 Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) claimants were chasing every vacancy (TUC, 2011).

Figure 3. Population aged 16-64 with no qualifications



Source: Annual Population Survey (APS), through Nomis, Office for National Statistics (ONS)

2. What happened?

2.1. Timeline

Thursday, 4 August

18:15 - Tottenham

Mark Duggan, 29, is stopped in a silver Toyota Estima people carrier minicab in Ferry Lane, close to Tottenham Hale tube station, by officers from the Metropolitan Police Service's Operation Trident, Specialist Crime Directorate 11 and Specialist Firearms Command (CO19), to carry out an arrest.

Mark Duggan is shot by an officer of the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) CO19 specialist firearms command.

Mark Duggan is killed by a single gunshot to the chest, his right bicep is wounded, and a bullet, later identified as police issue, is found lodged in a police officer's radio.

22.49 - Tottenham

The Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) issues a statement about Duggan's death. They report that an officer has been shot and taken to hospital. This original statement makes no reference to the Duggan shooting but a subsequent statement from the IPCC said: 'having reviewed the information the IPCC received and gave out during the very early hours of the unfolding incident, before any documentation had been received, it seems possible that we may have verbally led journalists to believe that shots were exchanged'.

DAY ONE – Saturday, 6 August

17:00 - Tottenham

Family and friends of Mark Duggan march from Broadwater Farm to Tottenham Police Station to demand information surrounding his death.

17:15 - Tottenham Police Station

The police refuse to speak to the demonstrators, saying it was a matter for the IPCC.

19:00 - Tottenham Police Station

A Chief Inspector talks to the demonstrators but they demand a more senior officer.

As they wait, the crowd grows to around 200-300 people.

20:15 - Tottenham

Mark Duggan's family give up and go home.

20:20 - Tottenham Police Station

Riot officers from the Territorial Support Group and police on horseback are deployed to disperse the crowds but come under attack from bottles, fireworks and other missiles.

20:30 - Tottenham Police Station

A 16 year old girl steps forward to demand answers from the police and is pushed back by police armed with riot shields and batons.

21.45 - Tottenham

A red London double-decker bus is set alight and there are reports of shops being looted.

23:00 - Tottenham

Rioters walk freely down Tottenham High Street carrying looted goods.

00:35 - Tottenham

Looters attacked shelves, tills and storage areas of the following stores: O2, JD Sports, Boots, Currys, Argos, PC World, Comet. CarpetRight and the local Post Office are set alight.

02:30 - Wood Green

Rioting and looting spreads to Wood Green.

The police are absent.

05:00 - Tottenham

Shops are still being looted in Tottenham Hale Retail Park. Tottenham Magistrates' Court and adjacent probation service office are smouldering wrecks.

DAY TWO - Sunday, 7 August

Civil disturbances take place in Wood Green, Enfield, Ponders End, Islington, Oxford Circus and Brixton.

Morning - Lewisham

In the morning I just had this strong feeling that we were going to have a problem. Maybe I heard the news about Brixton. I did send a message trying to organise a strategy group meeting to discuss what was happening and what we can do in Lewisham. I had one or two apologies saying it's not in Lewisham and we don't want to raise tensions. One of the apologies was from the police station saying they wouldn't be able to attend (Lewisham roundtable)

Evening - Lewisham

On Sunday night, I knew things were happening in north London, and Sunday night I was with my sister who was 19 at the time. She got a BB message saying everyone meet at the DLR in Lewisham tomorrow. She didn't understand what it was, it was like a broadcast. I was sitting with her thinking how are they going to riot in Lewisham, it has the biggest police station in Europe, there is no way that's going to happen. I thought it was just silliness... (Lewisham roundtable)

DAY THREE - Monday, 8 August

Civil disturbances take place in Hackney, Waltham Forest, Stratford, Chingford Mount, Camden, Chalk Farm, Peckham, East Ham, Woolwich, Lewisham, Bromley, Croydon, Brixton, Clapham, Ealing, and Bethnal Green. Disturbances spread outside of London to Nottingham, Birmingham, Bristol and Liverpool.

16:30 - Croydon

I saw one of those texts that was sent around saying be in Clapham Junction at a particular time (Croydon roundtable)

17:00 - Lewisham

The first reports of unrest in Lewisham, eyewitnesses claiming properties and buildings such as the Lewisham town hall had been shut early due to the threat of violence.

A friend of mine was outside Lewisham hospital waiting for an appointment and she overheard couple of young lads saying "yeah... I've just come from Lewisham and I'm going to Catford and after Catford I'm

going to Croydon" (Lewisham roundtable)

18:45 - Lewisham

Riots broke out in Lewisham town centre, three businesses were attacked – McDonalds, Dirty South Bar and Halfords.

Cars and wheely bins were set alight in Albion Way.

They didn't even want Lewisham, they planned to go to Catford. They headed to Lewisham and went straight up Courthill Road, there was about 100 young people running up the road, they had it planned all day but the police didn't (Lewisham roundtable)

Early evening – Birmingham

Groups of people, largely masked and hooded, began smashing the windows of high-end shops around the Bullring in the city centre including the Orange store, Austin Reed and Jessops.

BlackBerry messages were circulating in Birmingham.

On the Monday my son started to text me about the messages that he was getting on his BlackBerry messenger and told me to stay out of the city centre and to go home... (Birmingham roundtable)

West Midlands Police draft in extra officers during the afternoon amid concerns that the city would be targeted by youths.

19:00 - Croydon

Rioting and looting breaks out in Croydon town centre and along the London Road thoroughfare.

All of my young people knew what was going to happen on the second day but the government, police, whoever didn't catch on with how the second day was going to actually explode (Croydon roundtable)

They just let loose on the London Road and unfortunately for hours and hours there were no police (Croydon roundtable)

20.23 - Croydon

Croydon Guardian reports that streets

are in complete lockdown with youth confronting police on every junction along London Road.

We were about one to ten. If we had done something we would have been massacred, we would have been seriously hurt. All we could do was hold the line. It was very scary (Police representative, Croydon roundtable)

21:00 - Croydon

Rioters clash with police. Businesses and cars were set on fire on London Road.

House of Reeves furniture store established in 1867 is destroyed by fire.

Fire-fighters came under attack.

Residents are trapped in flats above burning shops.

It would appear that there was some looting later on, a second wave if you can describe it in that way but in that first part, it was just about destruction, it was simply about that and most of the shops that were damaged were not really raided (Croydon roundtable)

21:15 - Croydon

Trevor Ellis, 26, from Brixton Hill is found with bullet wounds in a car in South Croydon and later dies in hospital. This was the first fatality of the riots. Two others were arrested at the scene for handling stolen goods.

22:30 - Croydon

Widespread looting in Croydon – 300-400 people involved. Purley Way retail park experienced widespread looting. The Co-Operative supermarket in New Addington (five miles from Croydon town centre) was set on fire.

23:30 - Ealing

Richard Mannington Bowes, 68, is attacked by a group whilst he attempts to extinguish a fire. He sustains serious head injuries which render him unconscious on the ground; he later dies from his injuries.

23:45 - Birmingham

A police station in Holyhead Road is on fire.

Police cars also come under attack in the street.

00.15 - Coventry

Jubilee Crescent in Radford was targeted, with windows smashed at the PDSA, BGBet.com and the Murco petrol station. Sin City beauty salon was ram-raided.

DAY FOUR – Tuesday, 9 August

New disturbances take place in West Brompton, Wolverhampton, Leicester, Manchester, Salford, Rochdale, Oldham, Gloucester, Greenwich and Chatham.

During the day - Small heath (Birmingham)

We spoke to young people and we were discouraging them from going into the city. I'm sure that some of them did go. There was a real excitement and people wanted to see what was going on (Birmingham roundtable)

15:00 - Trouble spreads to West Bromwich and Wolverhampton

16:00 - Coventry

Some stores closed early in City Arcade. Police sealed off Central Six shopping centre as a precaution.

17:00 - Birmingham

There are clashes between police and young rioters outside the Bullring. Shop windows of stores along the High Street, including Marks & Spencer are smashed *When I got into Corporation Street, I saw, Asians, whites, blacks tearing down the place, one of the stores that I saw torn down I was glad... no I'm serious (Birmingham roundtable)*

19:10 - Birmingham

A car is set alight in Albert Street, Birmingham City Centre.

Police clash with groups in Moor Street and Dale End.

21:00 - Birmingham

A van is set alight in Bordesley Street and a food outlet is ransacked. Richer Sounds on Suffolk Street, Queensway is targeted by looters.

20:30 - Coventry

In the Daventry Road area of Cheylesmore, a van was set alight and a petrol bomb thrown at police.

*There was some disorder where a petrol bomb was thrown at a van in Cheylesmore, outside a parade of shops, the really early intervention of the Duty Inspector at the time who had the foresight to ensure that all the officers driving Panda Cars were dressed in riot gear with jackets over the top and had the helmets with shields in the back of the Panda cars. So instead of having to think oh, there is a fire bomb threat, we have to go back, within the space of minutes fifteen people had been arrested. It just took the heat right out of it and that was the worst incident **(Police representative, Coventry roundtable)***

West Midlands Police used Twitter as part of their riot prevention tactics.

DAY FIVE - Wednesday, 10 August**01:15 - Birmingham**

Haroon Jahan, 21 and brothers Shahzad Ali, 30, and Abdul Musavir, 31 are killed in a hit-and-run incident while attempting to protect their neighbourhood from rioters and looters.

16:00 – Birmingham

Shops in the Bullring and Great Western Arcade, and House of Fraser close as a precautionary measure.

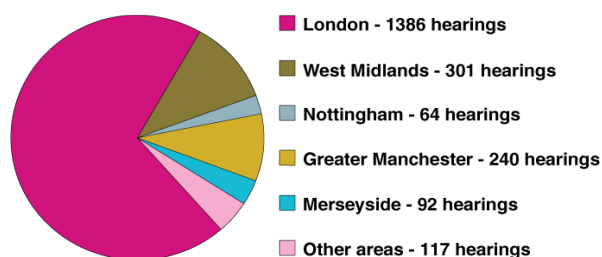
This timeline has been compiled using information from the Runnymede Trust Riot Roundtables, the Home Affairs Committee (HAC, 2011), Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC, 2011), Independent Police Complaints Commission (www.ipcc.gov.uk), NatCen (2011), The Riots Programme (Slovo, 2011), and Riots Community and Victims Panel (2011). All times are approximations.

2.2 Who was arrested?

The police operations relating to the disorder are still on-going and there are new cases being brought before the courts for events relating to the disorder on a regular basis. The following section provides information on those brought before the courts for offences relating to the public disorder of 6th to 9th August 2011.

Geographic breakdown

Of the 2,710 people who had appeared before the courts by midday on 1st February 2012, proceedings were held in the following areas:

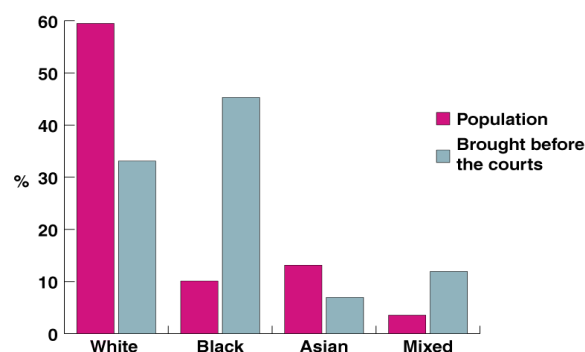


Source: MOJ 2012

Ethnicity

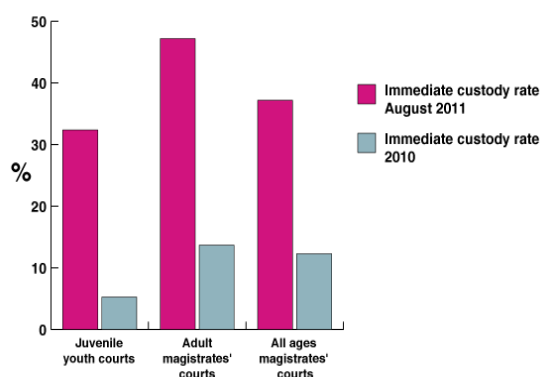
The proportions of the population involved in the civil disturbances vary significantly by area. In some areas the ethnicity breakdowns partially reflects the resident population in that area. In other areas the proportions of those brought before the courts who were white was significantly lower and those who were from a Black or mixed Black background was significantly higher than the proportion in the resident population. In all but one area, the proportion of those brought before the courts who were Asian is lower than the proportion from Asian backgrounds in the resident population.

London - Ethnicity of those brought before the court compared to regional population



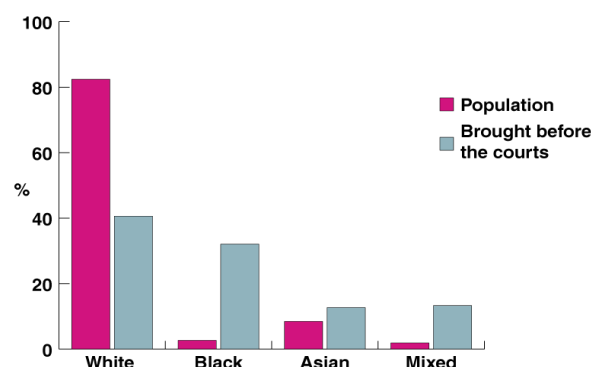
Source: MOJ 2012

Custody rate 2010 v 2011



Source: MOJ 2012

West Midlands - Ethnicity of those brought before the court compared to regional population



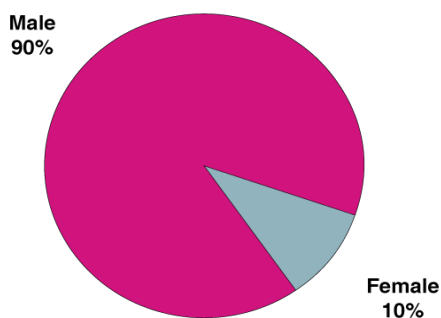
Source: MOJ 2012

Previous convictions

As of 12 October 2011 the criminal background of those brought before the courts:

- 76% held a previous caution or conviction
- 40% had committed more than 5 previous offences
- 26% has committed more than 10 previous offences
- 26% had been in prison before
- 24% had no previous cautions or convictions

Gender breakdown



Source: MOJ 2012

Socio-economic indicators

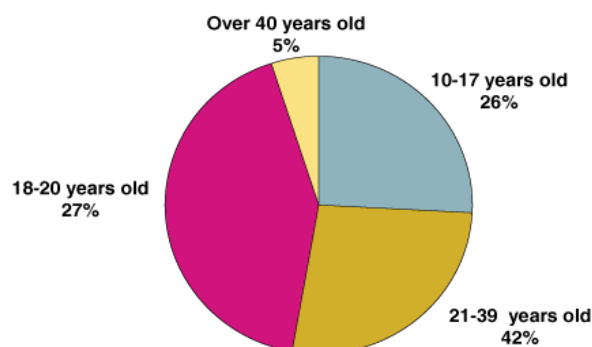
The socio-economic status of individuals who have been brought before the court up to midday on 28th September 2011.

- 35% of adults were claiming an out of work benefit at the time of the disorder compared to 12% of the working age population in England in February 2011
- 45% of all offenders who were sentenced for an indictable offence in 2010 were claiming benefits
- 42% of young people who appeared before the courts for the disorder were in receipt of Free School Meals compared to 16% of all pupils in maintained secondary schools

Youth and education

Young people appearing before the courts came disproportionately from areas with high levels of deprivation as defined by the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Indices 2010. 64% of 10-17 year olds for whom matched data were available lived in one of the 20% most deprived areas whilst only 3% lived in one of the 20% least deprived areas (MOJ, 2011).

Age of those brought before the courts:



Source: MOJ 2011

- 11 is the age of the youngest known person to be punished for taking part in the riots
- 66% of young people (10-17 year olds) were classified as having some form of special educational need compared to 21% of all pupils in maintained secondary schools
- 36% of young people were identified as having at least one fixed period exclusion from school during 2009/10 compared to 6% of all Year 11 pupils

2.3 The initial responses

We discussed the research question ‘*what happened?*’ in detail during our roundtables and we heard of incidents and events in local areas that we have included in the timeline of events in section 2.1. The roundtable participants, individuals at the hair and beauty salons and the young researchers also commented on the initial responses from the police, the government, the media and the community; and we felt that these comments added to the understanding of events. The participants’ observations are discussed in following five sections.

The police

Following the shooting of Mark Duggan in Tottenham on 4 August 2011, the Metropolitan Police Service called the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPPC) at 7.20 pm to inform them of the death. The IPPC automatically investigates all fatal shootings by police officers and the investigation into the events surrounding Mark Duggan’s death is due to report in April 2012. The roundtable participants overwhelmingly stated that the Metropolitan Police and the IPPC had failed in their handling of the death of Mark Duggan and in their dealings with Mark Duggan’s family.

The peaceful demonstration led by the Duggan family on 6 August escalated into civil unrest that spread across London and England in the following days. Police officers encountered violent situations, were often outnumbered and sometimes were not present at all (HAC, 2011). On Saturday 6 August there were 3000 uniformed police on duty, this rose to 16,000 on Tuesday 9 August when the disorder was finally quelled in London (HAC, 2011).

The public had concerns around how quickly the police responded to the disorder and 63% thought initially there were too few police at the scenes of the disorder (HMIC, 2011). The riot roundtable participants echoed the views of the wider public. Several participants were astonished that the police were unprepared given the information that circulated through their own networks prior to the events. Participants questioned whether in some instances the police deliberately stood back and had their own ‘silent protest’. One young person said:

We wondered why are they just standing there. . . Why aren't they arresting people?
(Young researcher)

The roundtable participants felt that the absence of the police and the images of police officers standing back may have encouraged more people to take advantage of the situation and possibly contributed to the spread of the civil unrest across England. A police representative at the Coventry roundtable said:

I think that one of the reasons that sparked those opportunists into action was that they could see that there were no sanctions

The police representative went on to give examples of alternative approaches and said:

In Cheylsmore, somebody threw a petrol bomb and fifteen people got arrested within twenty minutes and very little happened after that
(Police representative, Coventry roundtable)

Over 2,000 arrests were made across England and more than a 1000 people were charged within the first week (HMIC, 2011). The Metropolitan Police Service continues to comb CCTV footage and investigate the serious disorder that affected London under Operation Withern.

The government

As the country was coming to terms with the horrific scenes of destruction and the politicians returned from their summer sojourns, there was a rush to condemn the riots as well as any offers of an explanation. The condemnation from members of the government was often delivered alongside epithets such as “feral underclass”, “broken Britain” and “sick” society. The unwillingness to inquire into what had gone so wrong in our society left a vacuum that was filled with self-theorizing based on existing political agendas rather than evidence. The conclusion from government sources was that the civil disturbances were ‘pure criminality’. On the 15 August David Cameron made a speech stating:

what we know for sure is that in large parts of the country this was just pure criminality
(Cameron, 2011a)

The response by leading politicians and the general condemnation of the riots as criminality was seen by participants of the Riot Roundtables project as woefully lacking. During a discussion at the Westminster roundtable, one participant said:

I just want to address this issue that some people said, well clearly its criminals that are out there rioting because so many of them had

criminal records but that's not actually a very intelligent way of looking at things because we've got to ask why they had criminal records (Westminster roundtable)

Another stated:

Because even if the police and crazy people like David Cameron, even if they determine that it's pure criminality that was at play there and nothing else, my common sense says that even criminality has a context. And therefore it's important for us to understand what took place in Tottenham and why that might have given the green light for other people elsewhere with their own reasons to take to the streets (Westminster roundtable)

Gangs were on the political agenda before August 2011 and the government was quick to point to gangs as the prime suspects following the civil disturbance that August. David Cameron said during a speech to parliament 'At the heart of all the violence sits the issue of the street gangs' (Cameron, 2011b). On 8 November 2011, the Home Secretary, Theresa May, even went as far to say 'It is obvious that gangs were involved' (HAC, 2011). The Home Office first released details claiming that as many as 28% of those arrested in London were gang members, that was later downgraded to 19% in London and 13% nationally.

The government's focus on gangs, absent fathers and the gang culture were subliminally inflected with elements of a racialised discourse (Brotherton and Hallsworth, 2011; John, 2011). One of the young researchers for the Riot Roundtables project explained how this link is made, he said:

Now the overwhelming opinion from our research was that not every black person is in a gang but every gang has a black person (Young researcher)

A 'gang' can refer to both black and white youth but it is not a race neutral term. The young researcher's comment above reflects the findings of a Runnymede Trust study that illustrates how young black criminality is more often associated with 'gang membership' that draws on stereotyped images of gangs in America (Sveinsson, 2008).

The riot roundtable participants were not convinced that gangs were significantly involved in the riots. One participant said, 'Cameron's gang response is inadequate'. Gang members were

present at the riots, as the Metropolitan Police figures show, but to what extent they participated in the riots as gangs is uncertain. The roundtable discussions offered an alternative narrative of how gangs were involved. When we spoke to youth workers that had experience of working with gang members they stated that the orchestration of the looting was more to do with organised crime than gang crime. One participant said:

On David Cameron's comments about gangs, that it was all gangs, gangs, gangs . . . I know a lot of my boys who are in gangs don't drive big white vans. Many of them don't even have driving licences (Croydon roundtable)

Another participant said:

It wasn't gangs it was organised crime (Croydon roundtable)

For many participants in London the absence of gang rivalry was a clear example that gang members were not operating as gangs during the riots and one young person in Lewisham said:

I do know people from different gangs but there wasn't an enemy zone out there (Lewisham roundtable)

And others said:

Just to reiterate that point that about those areas that have historically had a bit of animosity between each other but during the riots they worked together so it's interesting to see how the rules being down for a time and how people interacted just for a little while (Westminster roundtable)

I don't think you can say it was a gang led thing for a text to be sent out early in the afternoon saying 'put down your beef, your rival people, its on, we're going to deal with this tonight' (Croydon roundtable)

In light of the evidence brought to the Home Affairs Committee, the Committee has called for the Home Secretary to clarify what the Home Office means by the term 'affiliated to a gang' and also for an agreed definition of 'gang' in this context (HAC, 2011). As identified in a series of Runnymede Trust reports gang identification is not an exact science and police forces do not use one consistent definition of a gang (Alexander, 2008; Brotherton & Hallsworth, 2011). The 'rush to label 'the gang

problem' and to devise a range of interventions on this basis is in danger of creating the very circumstances it seeks to challenge' (Alexander, 2008:16).

In this atmosphere few politicians dared to articulate a link between the riots and any wider social inequalities. In a speech on the 15 August 2011, the Labour Opposition leader, Ed Miliband, argued that: 'Both culture and deprivation matter. To explain is not to excuse. But to refuse to explain is to condemn to repeat' (Miliband, 2011).

Although no formal government inquiry into the riots has taken place, three pieces of research were carried out on behalf of the government. The Independent Communities and Victims panel was established by the Coalition government and the Panel will report jointly to the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and Leader of the Official Opposition in 2012. Since August 2011, the Ministry of Justice, Home Office and the National Centre for Social Research have all published reports into what went on during the civil disturbances and who was involved.

The media

The mainstream media coverage of the civil disturbances was extensive. The rapid flow of information through social media networks and in particular BlackBerry Messenger (BBM) appears to have contributed to the spread of the riots across England (Guardian, 2012). The roundtable participants commented that the mainstream media, however, were to some extent biased in their representation of the disturbances and those involved. One participant stated that as Mark Duggan was a mixed-raced man that all the subsequent reporting of his death was racialized:

There is politics out there... when a black child is killed, it's a black child, when the Muslim brother was killed, unfortunately, it was a Muslim brother, it gives it connotations, instead of just a young man by itself. Once it's defined as Muslim it activates the whole community again which causes tensions (Birmingham roundtable)

The media reporting of the civil disturbances had reverberations on BME communities across England. In Birmingham, community organisations made significant efforts to work with each other in the aftermath of the deaths of the three Asian men. They also felt a need to work with the media to ensure that tensions between communities were not intensified.

The roundtable participants commented that although the rioters were from various backgrounds the media focused on black culture specifically and the media's choice of spokespeople was significant. One participant said: 'You had people on TV who were ex-gang members and I thought where did they pluck you from?' (Lewisham roundtable). Participants raised David Starkey's appearance on Newsnight (12/08/2011) as a clear example of media figures demonising black culture and in particular Jamaican culture. One participant asked, 'Whose narrative is privileged through the media?' (Westminster roundtable) and another participant said: 'How can David Starkey get away with that Newsnight interview and who did we demonise there? Black culture' (Westminster roundtable). Literature has demonstrated how essentialist assertions around black culture has replaced overtly racist ideologies as the dominant discourse on race and crime (Sveinsson, 2008) and furthermore, the paradigm of cultural difference is often coded along biological race lines (Gilroy, 2004). Comments from the young researchers on the media representation of the riots included:

Why did only the black community get blamed? The media only showed the black community but it wasn't just black boys... It is not fair that the black community always gets linked with crime (Young researcher)

A few described the rioters as mainly black boys. The media and the government began to persecute most young people particularly the black youths (Young researcher)

In times like this people look for scapegoats and whether it is the government, immigrants or the underclass of our country... we need someone to blame (Young researcher)

Roundtable participants commented that the events in Tottenham following the shooting of Mark Duggan were reminiscent of the Broadwater Farm riots of 1985 but as the riots spread the media coverage shifted away from issues around race and the police and focused on the looting and criminal aspects of the disturbances. The language of the media was described as typifying a process of othering that galvanized the divide between "us", the law abiding public and "them", the criminal looters (John, 2011). There was a general belief amongst roundtable participants that the politicians and the media were complicit in stoking the fires of moral panic.

The roundtable participants were unsurprisingly keen to speak about the negative aspects of the media reporting but not all media outlets responded in the same way. The Guardian was at the forefront of media reporting of the civil disturbances and in partnership with LSE, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and Open Society Foundations, the newspaper undertook a full-scale study of the riots, interviewing over 200 individuals that took part in the riots. Similarly, after the initial wave of reporting, more sophisticated analyses featured in documentaries on Channel 4 and the BBC.

The community

Communities responded to the civil disturbances across England in a variety of ways and social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, was used to organise street clean ups. There was also widespread condemnation of the level of looting that took place. One roundtable participant said simply, 'It was criminality' and provisional data shows that 50% of all offences committed during the riots involved some form of acquisitive crime (HMIC, 2011). Undeniably, there was an opportunity for people to go out and get "free stuff" but opportunity, however, is a necessary condition for any specific crime to be committed (Lilly et al, 2001) and it would seem for many, including our young researchers, that there was a sense that for a 'few nights the rules were down, people didn't feel like they had to follow rules' (Young researcher).

Other young researchers commented:

I think it started off with a purpose in London but then people saw other people around the country doing it and it escalated...
(Young researcher)

I think they just wanted to steal stuff...
(Young researcher)

Also there were young people involved and kids had nothing better to do, it was in the middle of the six week holiday (Young researcher)

There was a belief amongst the students that the riots were mainly conducted by opportunists, the occasion was there and so people took to the streets to get what they could
(Young researcher)

Not only were the rules down but there was a sense that the behaviour during those days in August wouldn't bear any consequences.

Roundtable participants provided examples of people that they knew or worked with that were swept along with the tide and described the incidents they witnessed as unreal:

I work with a young person and she got involved. She was in the South London Press holding a Wii on a bike. She's a straight A student. There was no reason to be out there but her perception was she needed to go out with everyone. She was mortified
(Lewisham roundtable)

The aspect of looting during the riots was unprecedented and many have given their thoughts to why it occurred on such a scale. Zygmunt Bauman contextualised the looting by explaining that it was a product of the growth of social inequality where groups of young people feel left out of 'consumer culture' (Bauman, 2011) and this sentiment was echoed throughout our roundtables. Furthermore, research has shown that in countries where inequalities in income and wealth are low and material goods are not advertised as 'essentials', crime rates tend to be lower (Sveinsson, 2012). Roundtable participants explained that many of us are integrated into society and our local communities through consumption as opposed to work or family commitments. One academic we spoke to in Lewisham said:

There seems to be some really significant shift taking place in terms of young masculinities. Because there is no work goods become so much more significant as a way of young men feeling like they have some value
(Lewisham roundtable)

This sense of hyper-consumerism is not just felt by young people, and roundtable participants spoke of being just as susceptible to the capitalist and consumerist values of the British society. One participant said:

We're all complicit in a culture that is mad about material goods. We're all complicit in this massive capitalist notion. I do disapprove with the way global capitalism has marketed itself but I just don't think we should demonise these young people as though they are utterly different from the rest of us
(Westminster roundtable)

Some participants at the roundtables stated that the death of Mark Duggan was hijacked as an opportunity for others to vent their frustration. One participant said:

What happened was a family in Tottenham went on a peaceful demonstration – I sat on the committee that organised the demonstration – and some hijacked that demonstration and then made it their own issue (Croydon)

In the absence of a full government inquiry, Runnymede, as well as other organisations and local areas, wanted to find out more about the

particular circumstances which gave rise to these events. Local councils and various communities responded by coordinating their own inquiry into the riots. See Appendix 1 for details of inquiries and responses that we have identified over the course of our research. We do not doubt there are many more to add to the list and it is very likely there will be many more inquiries and investigations to come.

Chapter summary

- The timeline highlights the diverse and multiple events taking place across England during those five days in August 2011.
- MOJ figures show that those brought before the courts were disproportionately:
 - young people from areas with high levels of deprivation;
 - people claiming an out-of-work benefit at the time of the disorder;
 - from the black ethnic group; and
 - more likely to hold a previous caution or conviction.
- Roundtable participants felt that the absence of the police in some areas; and the images of police officers standing back during the civil disturbances, may have contributed to the spread of the civil disturbances across England.
- Participants were not convinced that gangs were significantly involved in the riots nor did they feel the government responded appropriately by labelling the disorders as 'pure criminality'.
- The roundtable participants and the young researchers commented that the mainstream media were, to some extent, racially biased in their representation of the disturbances and those involved.
- Many participants were shocked at the extent of the looting. Some explained this occurred because many of us are integrated into society through consumption as opposed to work or family commitments.
- In the absence of a full government inquiry many community groups, organisations and local authorities responded to the civil disturbances by coordinating their own inquiries.

3. Why?

In the previous chapter we highlighted the multitude of events that took place across England during those five days in August and discussed the roundtable participants' views of the initial responses to the civil unrest. This chapter focuses on the main responses to the question 'why did the riots happen and was race a factor?'

In the course of our research we heard many voices and possible explanations as to why the civil disturbances erupted. We held roundtables in four cities across England and we invited representatives from various sections of the community. The discussions were, therefore, diverse and wide ranging. We have identified the key themes from the roundtables, the young researchers' reports and the interviews at hair and beauty salons. The following five sections discuss these themes using other sources of research and literature to further contextualise the research participants' responses.

3.1 Criminal injustices

Since Sir Robert Peel founded the Metropolitan police force in 1829, the UK has operated with the recognition that the British Police Service can only act with the consent of the policed. There is a delicate line that the police force must tread to ensure that it receives cooperation and trust from the community. The relationship between black and minority ethnic (BME) communities and the police has been at times troubled and agitated to say the least. As one roundtable participant commented:

the history of policing in Britain is policing by consent, unfortunately for many communities that consent is not there, because they feel they have been put into this category of deviants, they feel targeted and unfairly treated through that process (Croydon roundtable)

The MacPherson Report (1999), which stated that the police investigation of the murder of Stephen Lawrence was marred by incompetence and institutional racism, emerged as a discussion point during our roundtables. Participants recognised that there have been positive developments in terms of the recruitment of BME police officers. However, participants felt that stop and search, deaths in custody and injustices in the criminal justice system continue to undermine the relationship between the police service and BME

people. One of the young researchers commented:

The breakdown of the relationship between the police and the community was also a theme that was brought up several times. This might coincide with the idea of racism in the police... (Young researcher)

Another young researcher said:

Police are the biggest gang... they abuse their power and this is why there is a barrier between the police and the youth (Young researcher)

Death at the hands of the police

When we asked about the role of race in the civil disturbance in August 2011, participants at all roundtables referred to the death of Mark Duggan and the miscommunication around his death as the 'trigger' or 'catalyst' for the riots. Here are just a few of the roundtable participants' comments in reference to the death of Mark Duggan:

the killing of Mark Duggan, historically that's nothing new for the community (Coventry roundtable)

so obviously a lot of people are out there thinking come on, again? (Lewisham roundtable)

Then there is of course the issue of the death in custody, over 400 of them in the last couple of decades. The fact is that there was a man killed by the police, another statistic to add to that list, and the way that the police responded to that (Westminster roundtable)

We went out and talked to people in the square and had a community meeting. For all of the African Caribbeans, particularly the young men that we spoke to, it was clear that the riots were about Mark Duggan (Coventry roundtable)

Birmingham has a history of disorders, we had a particular disorder again in 2005 where a young male [Isaiah Young-Sam] lost his life. Till this date, nobody has been held to account in the criminal justice system. So that remains sore even six years after the event (Police representative, Birmingham roundtable)

One participant from Lewisham explained how the death of Mark Duggan, a man in north London, could have such an impact on the African Caribbean community in Lewisham and

further afield. He described an almost cumulative response and said:

There has never been a point in my life where someone getting killed in North London has an affect on me here. We are separated by boroughs. We are separated by the river... I think more... the issue was something happened south of the river in Brixton. Then it's almost this idea that the death of the guy in north London was more of a catalyst (Lewisham roundtable)

A police representative at the Birmingham roundtable stated:

The first group of people that we saw in Birmingham on the Monday evening were predominantly a group of young male and female black and mixed-raced, African Caribbean people... It does cause me to reflect, was their presence in the early stages because of a deep grievance they felt around Mark Duggan (Birmingham roundtable)

Roundtable participants made references to Smiley Culture, Cynthia Jarrett, Roger Sylvester and Joy Gardner, who were all members of the African Caribbean community that died in suspicious circumstances at the hands of the police. The death of Mark Duggan appeared to trigger a deep and real memory of historical injustices and grievances that BME communities have had with the police and the criminal justice system.

Stop and search

Runnymede Trust research has shown that the proportion of stop and searches leading to arrest, let alone conviction, is incredibly small (Rollock, 2009; Sveinsson, 2012). Observers, including academics, civil liberty organisations and other professionals working with the community, have all questioned the usefulness of stop and search as a method of crime reduction (StopWatch, 2011). Academics have critiqued the use of stop and search in the Brixton riots 1981, noting that the police activity only led to increased tensions with the local community (Rollock, 2009).

A recent study, which interviewed people directly involved in the riots, found that 73% of those interviewed had been stopped and searched in the last 12 months (The Guardian, 2012). It is a mistake to draw overly simplistic causal links to the riots; however, the Riot Roundtable participants and the young researchers involved repeatedly cited the police's use of stop and search as a significant factor in the outbreak of the riots. One participant said:

I think the level of stop and search is tantamount to harassment and that needs to be addressed (Croydon roundtable)

In each area we visited, roundtable participants provided examples of the police's use of stop and search that reinforced its link to the civil disturbances. A youth worker provided a worrying example of how young people in Lewisham experience stop and search. He explained:

I've talked to young people about stop and search. They've said when they ask for the badge number they've been told to go to the police station. But they know when they turn up at the police station no one's going to give them anything. One of our young people was stopped and searched with a youth worker there and the youth worker said can I have your badge number, can I have your name and the police station you're from. He said, 'I'll give you my name, my name is PC'. People are asking the police to give them a slip and they are saying, 'I ain't got one on me...' (Lewisham roundtable)

Government data on race and the criminal justice system shows that if you are black you are seven times more likely to be stopped and searched than if you are white (MOJ, 2010). Increases in stop and search are evident for Asian groups, most notably under the Terrorism Act legislation employed in the wake of the London bombings (Rollock, 2009). In Birmingham a participant stated: 'The Terrorism Act is being used to attack minority young people, South Asian young people predominantly' (Birmingham roundtable). Counter-terrorism legislation such as Schedule 7 has been linked to widespread feelings of persecution and harassment among Muslims, yet less than 1% of Schedule 7 stops result in an arrest (StopWatch, 2011) and not one arrest for terrorism-related offences (Sveinsson, 2012). It is important to acknowledge that the feelings of harassment, frustration, and anger in relation to stop and search are not the domain of BME young men alone. One participant at the Westminster roundtable said:

one cannot separate the stop and search event that ended in Duggan being shot and killed by the police from the experience of black communities up and down the land over several decades, or from the experience of white working class communities at the hands of that same police and other institutions of state (Westminster roundtable)

Another participant noted:

that history of oppression we've been talking about has been taken on board by groups of largely white youths in London who haven't been overly, and disproportionately, subjected to those things. So there is a very strong feeling that came from young people involved in the riots, irrespective of their race, that the police are an oppressive group and there are issues around stop and search (Westminster Roundtable)

During the same roundtable discussion, another participant felt he could understand how members of the white community could also take on these feelings of oppression and said:

As a privileged white man in 1975 I understood police racism against young black men and sometimes young women because people like Gus John and others had been systematically exposing it... I'm sure that white kids are getting picked on and Asian kids are getting picked on by the police unfairly in many circumstances (Westminster roundtable)

The above statements provide a possible explanation for how the level of oppression felt mainly by BME young men in relation to stop and search can be experienced by other ethnic groups and can become a defining narrative for young men's relationship with the police.

In January 2012 the Metropolitan Police Service announced a new approach to stop and search to increase public confidence and trust in the police tactic. As part of the new approach, Section 60 of the Public Order and Criminal Justice act 1994 will now be used in a more intelligence-led and targeted way. The approach aims to reduce the number of Section 60 authorisations whilst ensuring that more arrests arise from searches. The announcement followed a review of stop and search and was approved by Commissioner Bernard Hogan-Howe (www.met.police.uk).

3.2 Race relations

In the rush to condemn the riots, political and media elites were quick to conclude that these riots 'were not about race' (Cameron, 2011a) and nor were they 'race riots'. Although it has been widely claimed that the 2011 disturbances were not 'race riots' dominated by one ethnic group (Sveinsson, 2012) or clashes between ethnic communities, it is important to investigate the role race relations played in the riots of 2011.

The events surrounding the death of Mark Duggan clearly echoed similarities to the outbreaks of civil unrest in the 1980s. The government inquiries following the riots of the 1980s explored the role race and race inequalities played in those disturbances. There has been no official government inquiry into the 2011 riots; instead the current government's preference has been to focus forensically on the criminal and acquisitive nature of the events. When we spoke to participants of the Riot Roundtables project, many stated that race was a factor in the disturbances. One participant said:

We need to be careful about dismissing race from this as a possible cause altogether. There does not need to be hostility, physical or otherwise, between black people and white people for there to be a race cause within these last set of riots. Not everybody rioted for the same reason obviously and rioters were not some homogenous group belonging to the same club, singing from the same song sheet all across the country (Westminster roundtable)

Precarious community relations

Civil disturbances between ethnic communities are not new to Birmingham. Handsworth, an inner city area of Birmingham, was devastated by two days of violent rioting in September 1985 and the riots in 2005 were seen to derive from racial tensions between black and Asian communities.

In January 2011, the Runnymede report 'Passing the Baton' (Gill & Sveinsson, 2011), revealed that young people were of the opinion that the civil disturbances could happen again. We went back to Birmingham in November 2011 for the Birmingham roundtable and spoke to community leaders, activists, academics and youth workers. One participant said:

We have good relations here in our communities, the Asian community and the Caribbean community. For several years the Asian community, the Afro-Caribbean community, and the white community around Winson Green have worked together and it has been a peaceful area (Birmingham roundtable)

Another participant however responded:

I take the issue about the relationship between the various communities. For me I would like to define it as precarious as opposed to good because too many people in the city council do not address the issues enough. You know years ago we used to fight together, now we don't

even march together (Birmingham roundtable)

A member of the public we interviewed said:

I heard rumours that it was going to turn into a [race riot] and that was my worry then, I was like oh my God we're going to get race riots like we did not long ago... It wouldn't surprise me if something like this happened again in the future (Birmingham)

These contradictions reveal an element of hypersensitivity around the relationship between black and Asian communities in Birmingham. Certain members of the community highlighted how they worked together to dampen down any further disturbances, whereas others were more inclined to discuss the divisions in the community. There appeared to be an anxiety in stating that there were tensions for fear of driving a further wedge between the communities.

On 10 August 2011, in Winson Green, Birmingham, three men – Haroon Jahan, 21 and brothers Shahzad Ali, 30, and Abdul Musavir, 31 were killed in a hit-and-run incident while attempting to protect their neighbourhood. It was widely reported at the time that the driver of the car was a black man. After pleas from the father of the two brothers that died, no further violence ensued in retaliation. However, abusive messages and emails did circulate following their deaths. As a Birmingham roundtable participant recounted:

[Referring to the message] For every one person that they kill, we're going to kill someone from their community... (Birmingham roundtable)

Another participant stated:

There was incitement to hatred between the Asian and African Caribbean communities (Birmingham roundtable)

It is difficult to know from our Birmingham roundtable whether the hit-and-run incident was racially motivated, but what we can see is that there were very real fears that the tensions between black and Asian communities could have escalated into further physical conflict. This, to some extent, reveals the fragility of inter-ethnic relations in Birmingham.

Underlying racial tensions

The participants at the Lewisham roundtable expressed concerns that the riots had unearthed long-term racial tensions that had perhaps been

'swept under the carpet' but were able to come to the fore in the aftermath of the riots. They were particularly fearful in Lewisham that the looters and criminals involved were perceived by the wider community to be solely black young men. In the days following the disturbances, the roundtable participants reported that white members of the community and members of the English Defence League attempted to defend businesses from looters. One participant in Lewisham said:

I went to school with a few of the guys who were up in Lee pretending to be vigilantes. Saying they were going to get all the black guys, all these black looters, we were in the same class and they were posting it on Facebook and I was looking at them and thinking, We go for a drink in the pub and you're not saying that to me on a Saturday (Lewisham roundtable)

Participants at the roundtables were reluctant to apportion blame to any particular community or ethnic group, but they spoke of how the black community can become a scapegoat for these disturbances. One participant in Croydon said 'society likes to find someone to blame and young black men are the easiest target'. A number of the participants were eager to point out that a multitude of people from different ethnic backgrounds were involved:

All the communities were rioting in Croydon, even on YouTube now you can still see the videos and you can see all the communities on the street, it was quite a mixed group (Croydon roundtable)

What we do know about previous 'race riots' in the 1980s and 2000s is that they too were ethnically mixed. Lord Scarman wrote of the 1981 Brixton riot: 'White people, as well as black people, helped to make and distribute petrol bombs on Saturday' (Scarman, 2001:126) but that there were still racial elements to that disorder. The Scarman report went on to stress the importance of tackling racial disadvantage and racial discrimination to prevent further outbursts.

Community cohesion

The government inquiry into the 'race riots' of 2001 in Oldham, Burnley and Bradford found that ethnic communities were essentially living 'parallel lives' and the physical and cultural segregation engendered the conditions for the riots (Cantle, 2001). The concept of community cohesion, a term generally used to describe a state of tolerance between people from different backgrounds, emerged from the official government response.

Coventry is home to institutions that are known for promoting community cohesion. The roundtable participants in Coventry generally felt that community relations were stronger there than in neighbouring cities such as Birmingham or cities with similar demographics such as Bradford. Participants discussed the 'cohesiveness' of the community and linked good community relations to the relatively low level of civil disturbances in August 2011. However, some participants in the group, particularly those that worked with minority ethnic communities, cautioned against complacency and one participant stated:

I think it's interesting that we talk about the community, I mean our community organisation and the West Indian Centre we're not part of this community partnership and we never heard anything from the police... we're not really involved in these discussions and I would question the assumption that it didn't happen in Coventry because we've got peace and reconciliation work going on, people are still struggling (Coventry roundtable)

Another participant noted

I think when cohesion as a policy approach came about as a result of people living segregated lives. It attempted to bring people together. Britain was in a boom but now things have changed... youth unemployment, the financial crisis, the euro is close to collapsing (Coventry roundtable)

We can perhaps see from the participants in Coventry that community cohesion can in part address the issues of inter-racial tensions. However, it may still fail to tackle challenges of racial inequality when communities are under stress from external forces such as growing scarcity in resources or greater competition in the job market. It is likely to be more than coincidental that inter-racial tensions and civil unrest increase during periods of economic downturn, and where economic inequalities between groups is on the rise (White, 2011).

3.3 Precarious lives

Unemployment, particularly for BME groups, was cited during the roundtables as possible explanation for the civil disturbances. London and the West Midlands, where the majority of the riot roundtables took place, feature in the top three areas with the highest unemployment rates in the country (ONS, 2011b). In this economic downturn,

unemployment for black and minority ethnic people is at an all time high (Wood et al, 2009). Roundtable participants repeatedly attributed the rising unemployment rates to the feelings of despair and hopelessness that potentially led to the riots. One participant said:

So there are issues around deprivation and the population, for example, unemployment in Croydon. The fact is half of the unemployed population are from BME communities (Croydon roundtable)

The 'precariat' is a term that refers to people with little or no job security or prospect of employment (Brotherton & Hallsworth, 2011). The composition of this group is often young urban residents from minority ethnic groups, the working-class and the downwardly mobile. One participant speaking of the level of insecurity felt in employment said:

When there is a whole atmosphere of cuts, people are very jittery because people think that it could be me next... People who work in the voluntary sector think that they are not going to get their grant... people who work for private firms think they are not going to get their contracts from public bodies. Lots of people in Lewisham actually work in public employment in other parts of London. We have a very high proportion of people looking at the future and thinking it is going to be a bit precarious (Lewisham roundtable)

It is a well established fact that there are ethnic penalties in employment. When subjected to CV testing, private sector employers showed a discrimination rate of 35% in the private sector compared to 4% for the public sector (Wood et al, 2009). In Birmingham a participant stated:

I was talking to a colleague of mine and he was saying the recession is having an even more significant impact on black people because they didn't give us jobs before the recession. If you look at the percentage of employment by ethnicity, you will see that there is a real lack of opportunities for certain ethnic groups. I think the question is, with a growing proportion of young people in this city being of ethnicity, what opportunities are there for them? Not only for young but the people who are already disadvantaged because of perceptions that people have around their culture, and, or their heritage (Birmingham roundtable)

While many commentators have pointed to the cuts as a potential cause of the riots, participants also spoke of how the loss of public sector jobs impacts

on ethnic minorities as they are overrepresented in that sector.

Education and employment

We know that only 6.8% of Black Caribbean students achieved the newly-adopted English Baccalaureate benchmark in their GCSE's in 2010 (Runnymede Trust, 2010) and that for every African Caribbean male undergraduate at a Russell Group University, there are three African Caribbean males aged 18-24 in prison (Sveinsson, 2012). During the roundtable discussions, education professionals spoke of institutional racism in the education system but also the difficulty BME young people may have in finding employment even when they have all the relevant qualifications. Participants discussed why succeeding generations of qualified black and minority ethnic people have found themselves surplus to the requirements of the labour market. One participant said:

Some children will get to Oxford and Cambridge and do their degree and some children will find themselves at the end of that without employment. Who will those 'some children' be? I'm going to raise the spectre of that word racism because we tend to run away from it (Westminster roundtable)

Following on from this point, one black young researcher said:

Well rather than angry we're more disappointed because from my view you grow up [thinking] hard work leads to success, education leads to success, whereas when you go out into the big bad world it doesn't. . . (Young researcher)

We are in a period where the number of unemployed young people is at a record high (TUC, 2012). A black young person at the Lewisham roundtable said, 'if I want to go and work in Kensington I have to have a certain accent and I have to dress a certain way. I have to change a lot of things about myself for me to fit into that society'. This quote exemplifies the difficulties and frustrations that many BME young people face when seeking employment. Our young researchers found that youth unemployment significantly contributed to the reasons why young people took part in the riots. One young researcher said quite simply:

We asked if a student had a job would they go to the riot or would they go to their job? And most students said they would go to their job. So due to the lack of jobs and activities more young people were involved in the riots (Young researcher)

Figures show that the number of 16 to 24 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET) was at a record high in 2011, and that it is from this group that offenders are most likely to be drawn (Sveinsson, 2012). The roundtable participants and our young researchers recounted feelings of anxiety and hopelessness in relation to youth unemployment levels and race discrimination in employment. There was a real sense that these issues contributed to the frustrations that erupted into the scenes of destruction that we witnessed across England.

3.4 Poverty in a period of austerity

The economic downturn and public sector cuts were recurring discussion points during the roundtables. These were often seen as contributing to growing tensions within communities. A Councillor at the Lewisham roundtable said the London Borough of Lewisham had worked to preserve its youth service amidst all the cuts and that the majority of redundancies in the council didn't take place until October 2011, after the riots occurred. However, other participants within the group felt for the last 18 months, the talk of cuts would have had an impact on how people were feeling, particularly young people.

Roundtable participants viewed changes in government policy that saw the end of the Future Jobs Fund, Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) and the rise in university student fees as affecting young people and above all young people from deprived communities. One of our young researchers reported that his peers felt:

The government is not fulfilling their duties as a state provider, particularly for those in a vulnerable position in society, the youth (Young researcher)

One participant in Westminster said:

I think shutting down of EMA and raising tuition fees is another way of shutting down some children's access but also their hopes and aspirations (Westminster roundtable)

Other young researchers reported:

The government does not care about young people; in fact they are closing down youth clubs and raising the university tuition fees (Young researcher)

The Tory government and their economic policies are damaging people (Young researcher)

A stake in community

Ministry of Justice figures show that those involved in the civil disturbances came disproportionately from areas with high levels of deprivation (MOJ, 2011). Roundtable participants went a step further and linked the high proportion of BME people to those deprived neighbourhoods across England. During the discussions around deprivation, participants explored how regeneration can often come in the form of exclusive and uneven development that can lead to certain members of the BME community feeling disconnected from their own cities. One participant said:

Birmingham City Council's policy is about commercialisation of the city. I always find it curious that they have the Irish quarter, the gay quarter, the good quarter. We don't find a Black quarter or an Afro-Caribbean or West Indies quarter in the city centre and I think that's some of the issue that young people feel marginalised and detached from society (Birmingham roundtable)

Large-scale regeneration projects can have dramatic and lasting effects on an area and its people and we know from research that:

people from ethnic minorities have not always benefited from the investment, or been fully engaged in the process, and that any trickle down effect has not significantly improved their life chances. Regeneration can also have a profound effect on the community as a whole, and on relationships between different ethnic groups. Following the disturbances in northern towns and cities in 2001, the Cantle report and others (Cantle, 2001; Clarke, 2001; Denham, 2001; Ritchie, 2001; CRE, 2001) pointed out that area-based initiatives had the potential to foster animosities among groups who felt they had lost out in the competition for limited regeneration funds (CRE, 2007:8)

In 2009, Runnymede published the report 'Why Do Assets Matter?' (Khan, 2009) that briefly explores various lines of thought on the relationship between owning assets and citizenship. The report also notes the need for more research and discussion around how having a stake in a community corresponds to the concept of community cohesion. The riot roundtable participants provided examples of a divide between those that had investments in their local communities and those that did not. The examples provided a possible

explanation as to why so many people were willing to be destructive towards businesses in their own community during the riots. An Asian business owner in Birmingham said:

People attacking the shops was wrong. If they have an issue with the police they have to fight the police. Why were they attacking innocent people, businesses? We haven't done anything to anybody so why attack the shop? (Birmingham)

A senior youth worker in Birmingham provided a possible answer and said:

Tensions are there from the 2005 [riots], when a lot of the black young youths said that we are destroying the area because we don't own anything, we don't see many black business or shops... They are saying, we're in this broader society but we're not getting this part of the pie... The deprivation in Birmingham is high and the youth population is one of the highest in Europe... (Birmingham roundtable)

One business owner in Croydon said:

I think I'm one of the only black guys that has owned a business in the area for over 20 years. I've seen major changes where more black people have moved in but less development in the sense of not many black owned businesses. I've seen the population totally turn over in the area but we don't own anything, we don't manage anything. There were promises of regeneration in the area but to be honest it has gotten worse... Then I've noticed that the few black businesses in the area are segregated to one part of Croydon (Croydon)

There are currently around 360,000 self-employed people from minority ethnic groups in the UK, representing nine per cent of the self-employed population; however, there is a wide variation between ethnic groups. Black Caribbean (4%) and black African (5%) people have lower self-employment rates than any other ethnic group (Runnymede Trust, 2011).

Segregated public spaces

Roundtable participants commented on how the commercialisation of urban cities, combined with the policing of those areas has changed the nature of public spaces. Anti-social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs), dispersal zones and gang injunctions were raised as having some bearing on the sense of alienation that some young people may feel in their own neighbourhoods. Furthermore, research has shown that the process of regulation of space

and social exclusion is often compounded by processes of racialisation (White, R. & Cunneen, C., 2006). One participant in Westminster said:

A lot of regeneration and investment in London is very retail led. It provides an awful play off between creating a right investment for the private sector to come in and it relies on substantial reconfiguring of populations (Westminster roundtable)

Other participants said:

people felt disengaged, as if the city centre is not really what they belong to. They are disconnected and feel like they are not really included in society because by being there, they are sort of criminalised anyway (Birmingham roundtable)

We've been applying ASBOs and a whole group of people in society have been demonised. I think that is what is coming home to roost now (Croydon roundtable)

It is often easy to forget that over two thirds of young people are concerned about being a victim of crime (Young NCB, 2010). One young researcher reported how vulnerable she personally felt during the civil disturbances in London and said that her peers were quite affected by the riots. Not only were they scared, upset and shocked by the violence during the riots, but in the aftermath they felt demonised by society.

3.5 Close to the edge?

The civil disturbances in 2011 were seen by the general public through the mediated lens that focused on the criminal nature of the disturbances rather than any possible political motivations. Roundtable participants offered varying opinions on whether the disturbances could be classed as rioting, protest, demonstration or even uprising. Although the participants acknowledged the extent of the criminal and acquisitive nature of these civil disturbances, many also held the view that these were not issueless riots. Participants noted that the political motivations were perhaps harder to identify as riots cannot be fully understood by the norms of political protest. What we do know is:

riots do not develop out of thin air. Certain conditions continue to exist in our society which must be condemned as vigorously as we condemn riots. But in the final analysis, a riot is the language of the unheard (Martin Luther King Jr, 1968)

Failing political institutions

The roundtable participants stated that the civil disturbances need to be examined in the context of global, national and local events. In the build up to August 2011, there were protests, strikes and public demonstrations of dissatisfaction with changes to public sector pensions, MPs expenses, the banking crisis, public spending cuts and changes to tuition fees. Participants felt that these 'quiet riots' (Solomos, 2011), were signs that we were closer to the edge than we knew at the time. One roundtable participant said:

One of the fundamental things that I can identify is that people feel they are not being listened to and therefore there is no point talking anymore, lets just go out there and destroy things. So if you look at what happened in Trafalgar Square during the student riots that's exactly what they were doing, trying to damage things. So I think there is a real problem of government operating in a way that it doesn't listen to the ordinary citizens of this country and if you believe that governments should therefore operate by coercion, by force, by threat, those sort of ways then we are moving in a very wrong direction and people will feel they are in a state of war and they will respond, because there seems to be an absence of peace in the community (Westminster roundtable)

There was a sense from all the riot roundtables and the young people's research that the civil disturbances were a violent outburst of building frustrations that our political and public institutions were unable to appropriately respond to in the lead up to the riots. One young researcher said:

In a sense, the riots were an expression of resentment directed to those in authority that were not listening to our voice, will they listen now? (Young researcher)

Another participant said:

This country is lamentable when it comes to engaging young people politically, this party and that gets some effervescence when we are near an election and then after that everyone goes back to sleep. It seems to me that the question is how do we engage young people and enable them to have conversations amongst themselves? (Westminster roundtable)

Young people under the age of 18 cannot vote and are therefore excluded from that specific democratic practice but roundtable participants also spoke of a wider political disenfranchisement

across all age groups. One participant said:

Society is now quite fragile, we don't have as many ways of expressing opinions. The UK is getting more and more unequal all the time and most of the ways that in the past people have organised have been smashed, the unions have been smashed so working-class people thirty years ago would have had some way of proactively expressing their dissatisfaction with inequality, with job losses and all that kind of thing (Coventry roundtable)

A recent study into ethnic minority voting behaviour (EMBES) found that although ethnic minorities were, on the whole, highly supportive of British democracy, there was worrying evidence that second-generation citizens of Black Caribbean heritage do not feel that the British political system has treated them fairly and as a group they are most likely to feel alienated from British political life (Heath & Khan, 2012). The EMBES study suggests that the alienation could be attributed to the perceived lack of redress for racial discrimination and race inequality by political parties (Heath & Khan, 2012). This sentiment was shared by many roundtable participants, with a participant in Birmingham stating:

One of the biggest problems we face, black

communities, is just how best to get justice without having to resort to violence and we have been told, as black communities, with the slow rate of equality, the way it's going, we will not begin to see it until 2150. That is not in our lifetime (Birmingham roundtable)

Research has shown that in times austerity there is a link between civil unrest and austerity programmes of the kind that the UK government is currently perusing (Taylor-Gooby, 2012). Participants highlighted a disconnect between those bearing the brunt of the public spending cuts and those in positions of power that appeared to be unaffected. Furthermore, some participants felt that government policies were purposefully undermining communities, and when peaceful demonstration had, in many instances, resulted in little or no change, the riots provided an opportunity for people to vent their frustration. Participants across all roundtables expressed that there had been a breakdown in the social contract between individuals and the government. Participants explained this in the context of growing race inequalities combined with the inability to influence government policies. Legitimacy is the acceptance of the government's authority - the civil disturbances of August 2011 appeared to be a very clear challenge to that authority.

Chapter summary

- Mark Duggan's death appeared to trigger a deep and real memory of historical injustices and grievances that BME communities have had with the police and the criminal justice system.
- Roundtable participants and the young researchers repeatedly cited the police's use of stop and search as a significant factor in the outbreak of the civil disturbances.
- Participants at the roundtables expressed concerns that the civil disturbances had unearthed racial tensions within communities which came to the fore in the aftermath of the riots.
- All those involved with the project were reluctant to apportion blame to any particular community or ethnic group, but spoke of how the black community can become a scapegoat for these civil disturbances.
- It would appear that all communities were vulnerable to increases in inter-racial tensions and civil unrest during periods of economic downturn, and where economic inequalities between groups are on the rise.
- There was a real sense from the roundtables that building frustrations with race discrimination, in terms of finding employment and the rising unemployment levels for BME people, contributed to the reasons why people may have been involved in the civil disturbances.

- Our young researchers found that youth unemployment and a lack of things for them to do contributed to the reasons why young people took part in the civil disturbances.
- Those that do not have a stake in their communities were perhaps more likely to be destructive towards the businesses in their own communities during the civil disturbances.
- There was a sense from all the riot roundtables and the young people's research that the civil disturbances were a result of political and public institutions failing to listen to the concerns of many in society.
- Participants across all roundtables expressed that there had been a breakdown in the social contract and explained this in the context of growing race inequalities combined with the inability to influence government policies.

4. The Bradford roundtable

The riot roundtables were organised in cities where civil disturbances in August 2011 were recorded; Birmingham, Coventry, Croydon (London) and Lewisham (London) and we also held a roundtable in Bradford where there were no recorded disturbances. We felt that speaking to members of the community in Bradford would provide us with points of comparison and contrast to help further understand why the civil disturbances broke out. The Bradford roundtable participants included youth workers, academics, voluntary and public sector workers.

The research questions we developed for the Bradford roundtables were: *what was the atmosphere in Bradford when the riots were taking place across England; what areas were you concerned about and to what extent was that influenced by the memories of the 2001 riots; and given the history of Bradford and the civil disturbances, what do you think prevented the riots from happening in Bradford?* It became apparent, however, quite early on in our discussions that these questions were not appropriate for our discussion. Therefore we adjusted our questions to enable participants to discuss why they felt there were no civil disturbances in Bradford in August 2011 by reflecting on the Bradford riots (2001) and the English Defence League proposed march in Bradford (2010). Below is a summary of the roundtable discussion.

The context

In July 2001 riots erupted in Bradford following riots in Oldham and Burnley. Mainly Asian youths fought white extremists and the police in the predominantly Asian suburb of Manningham, an area of sprawling and deprived terraced housing estates. The Cantle report (2001), the government's response to these riots, was primarily concerned with communities divided along racial, faith and cultural lines and a need for better community cohesion.

The Bradford roundtable participants felt that community relations were most seriously tested in the summer 2010 when the English Defence League (EDL) planned to march over the August bank holiday weekend. 10,000 Bradford residents signed a petition calling the police and government to ban the demonstration. Although the ban was authorised, the police and the Home Office had no authority to prevent the EDL from holding a static demonstration that was countered by anti-racist activists and local residents, through events organised around the city.

There was a collective anxiety and a collective response to the threat of potential civil disturbance in the summer of 2010. In the run up to the proposed EDL march, leaflets and cards were produced, petitions circulated and messages of peace were communicated to the community. Having weathered that particular storm the community felt a sense of relief that they were perhaps beginning to get things right in terms of inter-community relations.

4.1 What is working

As the 2011 riots broke out across England, Bradford roundtable participants felt that the community work prior to the summer of 2010 had stood them in good stead to counter any potential civil disturbances. The participants also said that there was no specific political spark to motivate people to riot. One participant explained that there is a small African Caribbean community in Bradford so the killing of Mark Duggan perhaps did not have the same resonance as it had elsewhere. He went on to say, 'my sense is that if that young man had been Asian or Muslim then things could have been very different'.

Some members of this group recounted their anxieties felt during those days in August and one was particularly concerned that if civil disturbances broke out it would further demonise Pakistani young men but also white working class young men. Other participants became more anxious when they saw disturbances in Salford and Manchester because of their relative proximity to Bradford but also the similarity of demographics in the deprived working class areas.

Community relations

In response to our questions participants acknowledged that racism and tensions between communities still exists in Bradford but raised concerns around the assumption that riots should have happened in Bradford.

Participants also spoke of the damage to communities and families following the 2001 riots. Local business and even mosques struggled to find affordable insurance premiums and people were shocked at the time with the harshness of the sentences handed out. The sentences not only had an emotional affect on the families but also a financial effect as it was often the male members of the family, the main bread winners, who were

sentenced. The devastation felt in Bradford after the riots in 2001 was still palpable for many in 2011. One participant said:

I was involved in one of those groups and it was looking at the implications on the family. In some cases the families themselves were shunned by their own community. Where there were single women in the families it was real hardship. People have come through that and it has sated any desire [for riots].

Since 2001 participants said there had been a significant improvement in multi-agency relationships and they spoke of increased communication across the community. The police, youth services and community organisations were all mobilised to work together in the lead up to the planned EDL march in 2010 and one participant said:

I think the petition against having the march was really helpful in getting people to talk about it. The conversations that it engendered were significant. The petition also reached quite a few sections of the community it wasn't just the inner-city.

Participants provided examples of good working relationships between and within different communities and reported that informal leadership, by men in their 20s-30s that had been involved in the previous riots, played a significant role in supporting community relationship building. Participants also spoke of the role of women in maintaining peace in Bradford and one participant said:

There has been a whole bunch of initiatives. There was this one about women creating trust and friendship and the women for peace. This all bore fruit. They have been also very good about gaining media attention. So you had white, Asian, Caribbean women in the media pictured together and that was very powerful. There was diversity working together for peace.

Post 2001 Bradford received more resources for community projects and one participant felt that those resources were, at first, not used strategically but over time there had been better coordination of those resources. Some of those resources came from the Prevent strategy which is the preventative strand of the Government's counter-terrorism strategy. Although research has shown that Prevent has had a deeply damaging impact on Muslim communities at the local level (Johnson, 2011) one roundtable participant spoke of more positive effects of the Prevent strategy stating that:

It has empowered sections of women

and young people from Pakistani/Muslim communities. A lot of money went into enabling women's voices to be heard. So there have been feisty young women who have come out of the Prevent agenda work.

The West Yorkshire police force had been challenged in 2001 but there was a general feeling from the Bradford roundtable that the police had responded to that challenge. Roundtable participants discussed the complete shift in Bradford towards neighbourhood policing. They felt that the police had recruited more community support workers, BME police officers and there was a commitment to reconnect with people and communities. Community organisations also worked with the police to build levels of trust at a local level.

4.2 Concerns for the future

Although participants provided many good examples and possible explanations for why the riots did not take place in Bradford participants were also aware that Bradford must not become complacent.

Young people's futures

Bradford is traditionally a working-class city but following the decline in the textile industry unemployment rates have risen. In the view of the roundtable participants, job opportunities for young low-skilled workers are scarce and young people in Bradford appeared to be staying on in education and training as long as possible. A youth worker at the Bradford roundtable also noted:

I think there was a lot of anger about student grants and they were angry about the loss of EMA and my perception was that they didn't feel cared for and that no body was bothered about them. That does not seem to have led to riots but I don't think it was absent. Perhaps there was a longer-term acceptance of the future being bleak in Bradford

Political participation

Political participation and representation at a local level is seen to be largely positive in terms of BME representation as there are a high number of Asian councillors representing the inner-city area. But participants also stated that parts of the community were under-represented. One participant said:

There are people from communities like Manningham saying that if you don't have the right background then you can't stand for election as a councillor. Not that they would particularly want to because the people that we were speaking to were really mistrustful of

positions of power

Another participant said:

There are specifics about Bradford. In the inner-city area there are 23 Asian Muslim councillors of whom 19 are from Kashmir. They are essentially playing clan politics. The clans are hierarchical and patriarchal, they exclude young people and they exclude women. For women it's not so bad because the Labour Party have said there needs to be a women quota.

Political engagement of young people is again on the one hand positive in Bradford and there have been a number of initiatives over the last few years to enable young people to have a voice but one participant said:

I think that the Bradford Keighley Youth Parliament (BKYP) only goes so far. I think some of these measures are more top down than they are bottom up in terms of reflecting young people's true voice. I suspect that there are a lot of disenchanted young people in Bradford. I have a lot of respect for BKYP but they are not representative of most young people. There were high levels of voting for the BKYP but in context it was 20/25% of the youth community so you have to bear that in mind. There are still a lot of different barriers.

4.3 Discussion

Given the history of the 2001 'race riot' in Bradford and also the particular demographics of the city we felt that Bradford would be an interesting case study to compare against the other cities that we visited that experienced disturbances in 2011. From our discussions, it would appear that these last set of civil disturbances were not a significant consideration for the Bradford community. One participant at the roundtable said, and others agreed, that the death of Mark Duggan did not engender feelings of anger and injustice to the extent that people in Bradford would be moved to riot. The participants felt that as Mark Duggan was a 'black' man, communities in Bradford did not feel such a connection with his death. Bradford's population is 74.7% white (see Figure 1 on page 5) and the next largest ethnic group is of Asian, Pakistan heritage – 13% (ONS, 2011a). The population of black people is particularly small in Bradford (2%) and is less than the average black population across England (2.9%).

We do not want to draw simplistic causal links to the reasons why the civil disturbances didn't occur in Bradford but what you can see here is way in which race may have played a role. It also perhaps provides more evidence to our findings from the

other roundtables that the death of Mark Duggan was a significant event for those in the black community.

We heard from participants at the Bradford roundtable further reasons for why there were no civil disturbances in Bradford and participants reflected on the 2001 riots and the damage that it had caused to all sections of the community. It is interesting to note that Birmingham also experienced riots in 2005, however participants in Bradford appeared to be deeply affected by the 2001 riots. The memory of the 2001 Bradford riots may have led people to think how damaging civil disturbances can be and therefore chose not to be involved.

Participants spoke of how community relationships have been strengthened since 2001 and we heard of many examples of good multi-agency partnerships. In particular participants spoke of the improvements in the relationship between the community and the police. The increase in community support workers and BME police officers had raised levels of trust in the police. Also it appeared that the police were more willing to trust the community and there had been a shift from harsher policing methods towards neighbourhood policing. According to the participants this shift meant that in August 2011 the West Yorkshire police intelligence was reliable and robust. Some roundtable participants had liaised with the police during those days in August but their worries were addressed and they had confidence in the police intelligence. Perhaps the change in policing, more than any other of the examples we heard, may have prevented riots from taking place in Bradford.

The roundtable participants did have a few anxieties for the future that mirrored the concerns we heard at other roundtables. They included youth employment, political participation and policing. Although participants spoke of the progressive steps the police have made in terms of working with the community some participants were particularly worried how the 2011 riots across England would change the nature of policing in Bradford. They hoped that the policing model in Bradford would be looked to as good practice by police forces across the country.

5. Conclusions and policy recommendations

This final chapter identifies the key conclusions that have emerged from our discussions around *'why did the riots happen and was race a factor?'*, and our reflections on why there were no civil disturbances in Bradford. Also included in this chapter are the policy recommendations that have been informed by our conclusions and the participants' responses to the research question *'how can we prevent similar riots from happening again?'* For a more extensive outline of participants' responses to this question, see Appendix 2.

Conclusions

There were a multitude of events that took place during those five days in August 2011 and people were motivated to be involved in the riots for a multitude of reasons. Our research indicates that the police's slowness to react to the civil disturbances may have contributed to the spread of the riots and the participants at the roundtables felt that the government's response displayed a real lack of understanding of the issues but also an unwillingness to further investigate why these incidences occurred.

One key finding from our research is that strained relationships between the police and the BME community was a significant factor in the outbreak of the riots. Participants felt that the death of Mark Duggan and the miscommunication with the Duggan family was a significant 'trigger' and this incident awakened memories of minority ethnic experiences of injustices in the criminal justice system. The profound sense of injustice felt in black communities and, perhaps to a lesser extent the Asian communities, appears to coalesce around the police service. Stop and search and the way it undermines trust between the police and the community appeared to be a significant factor in the motivation for many who took part in the civil disturbances. Minority ethnic people 'remain over-surveilled and underprotected within all stages of our criminal justice system' (Runnymede, 2011:33) and we heard of intense localised grievance directed at the police in many of the areas we went to.

Unlike previous 'race riots', conflict between ethnic groups did not appear to be the reason for the 2011 riots. However participants at the roundtables expressed concerns that this last set

of disturbances had unearthed racial tensions between communities which were able to come to the fore during and in the aftermath of the riots. It would appear that all the communities we visited were vulnerable to increases in inter-racial tensions and civil unrest during this period of economic downturn, and where economic inequalities between groups are on the rise. Furthermore, those groups that appeared to not have a stake in their communities, most notably African Caribbean people but also young disenfranchised people, were perhaps more likely to direct their anger towards their own neighbourhoods.

In August 2011, we witnessed people from all ethnic backgrounds taking part in the riots but that does not suggest that there was no dynamic of racial inequality at play. Building frustrations with race discrimination in terms of finding employment and rising unemployment levels for BME people possibly contributed to the reasons why people were involved in the civil disturbances. Our young researchers found that youth unemployment and a lack of activities for them to do were directly linked to the reasons why young people took part in the civil disturbances.

The ferocity of the criminal damage and the extent of the acquisitive nature of the civil disturbances in 2011 perhaps made it difficult to spot the political motivations behind these disturbances but many of the research participants felt the civil unrest exposed the symptoms of growing inequalities. In the lead up to August 2011 the 'quiet riots', protests and demonstrations were indications of smouldering tensions that would manifest itself on a larger scale. Growing levels of race inequality in conjunction with people living more precarious lives perhaps created those specific conditions where people felt able to ignore normative social rules.

In the wake of the riots, social researchers and other commentators linked various levels of social inequality across all races and ethnicities to the disturbances. As Danny Dorling explains, gross inequalities keep particular races as markers of disadvantage and although 'greater equality does not cure racism... [what it] does do is reduce the racism endemic within a society, and the crime committed and suffered by those who are part of that society' (Dorling, 2012:20).

At each of the roundtables we heard examples

of racial injustices reminiscent of the 1980s and this was directly linked to building frustrations that exploded into those violent scenes. Recognising the intensity of those feelings and the pervasive nature of institutional racism, race inequalities

and political disenfranchisement is intrinsic to understanding why the civil disturbances broke out in August 2011.

Policy recommendations

1. A greater government focus on ending racial injustice and inequality

- The government needs to be committed to tackling racial inequalities by developing and implementing a race equality strategy with a meaningful plan to address persistent inequality over time.
- In particular the government needs to comply with the statutory equality duty and consider the potential impact of proposed public spending cuts for their impact on race equality. Where an adverse impact is identified, the proposal should be reconsidered or ways to ameliorate impact should be made clear.

2. Build greater levels of trust and confidence between the police and BME communities

- Local police forces need to create more opportunities for meaningful contact with young people in non-threatening environments.
- The government should find alternatives to stop and search as a crime reduction method and reduce ethnic disproportionality in the use of those powers.
- The Independent Police Complaints Commission needs to build confidence in its activities amongst minority ethnic communities.

3. Create more opportunities for education, training and employment

- The process of economic recovery and return to growth must include strategies for jobs for young people from marginalised communities.
- The government should deliver effective, independent careers advice and guidance in order to give young people from minority ethnic communities access to a wider range of skills development opportunities, universities and the labour market.
- The government should ensure that policy attention is given to race equality in employment and ensure that legislation and practices to prevent discrimination in employment are applied and enforced.

4. Build thriving communities

- Local authorities need to ensure regeneration projects and the creation of public spaces foster interaction between communities rather than focus on the promotion of commercialisation activities.
- Where businesses propose new developments, local government must ensure that the business case promotes a sustainability agenda in a way that includes racial equality and good race relations.
- The government should ensure that all public authorities meet their equality duties by using their purchasing power and procurement to secure greater race equality in private sector employment.

5. Improve meaningful political participation

- Initiatives to improve political literacy and the engagement of young people from marginalised communities in decision-making would offer alternatives to civil unrest as a means of political expression.
- Elected officials and statutory agencies must show their accountability to all groups in society, with particular efforts made to reach young people, people with lower socio-economic status, and those from minority ethnic communities.

Appendix 1.

Inquiries into the civil disturbances

National

- Independent Riots Communities and Victims Panel - *Five days in August* interim report www.5daysinaugust.co.uk
- The Guardian - *Reading the Riots* www.guardian.co.uk/uk/interactive/2011/dec/14/reading-the-riots-investigating-england-s-summer-of-disorder-full-report
- Home Affairs Select Committee - *Policing Large Scale Disorder: Lessons from the disturbances of August 2011* www.statewatch.org/news/2011/dec/uk-hasc-public-order-august-riotsreprot.pdf
- NatCen - *The August riots in England: Understanding the involvement of young people* www.natcen.ac.uk/media/769712/the%20august%20riots%20in%20england%20web.pdf
- National Council for Voluntary Organisation - *After the riots; Evidence from the Voluntary and Community Sector on the causes of the 2011 riots and next steps for policy and practice* www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/sites/default/files/AftertheRiotsfinal.pdf

By local area

Barking

- Barking and Dagenham Council and Riots Communities and Victims Panel www.5daysinaugust.co.uk/PDF/downloads/Interim-Report-UK-Riots.pdf

Barnet

- Barnet Council and Riots Communities and Victims Panel www.5daysinaugust.co.uk/PDF/downloads/Interim-Report-UK-Riots.pdf

Birmingham

- University of Birmingham - *We Live Together and Can Stay Together: Muslim voices in the aftermath of the Birmingham riots* issuu.com/se1publications/docs/muslim_voices_birmingham_riots_-_chris_allen_2011
- Birmingham Council - *They Moved Like Fish* www.blackradley.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/TheyMovedLikeFishReport.pdf

Camden

- Camden Council and Riots Communities and Victims Panel www.5daysinaugust.co.uk/PDF/downloads/Interim-Report-UK-Riots.pdf

Croydon

- Local Independent Review Panel www.croydononline.org/lirp/

Ealing

- Ealing Riots Scrutiny Review Panel www.ealing.gov.uk/info/200660/scrutiny/845/ealing_riots_scrutiny_review_panel/1

Hackney

- Hackney CVS - *Hackney Disturbances Partnership Project* www.hcvs.org.uk/news/2011/hackney-disturbances-partnership-project/default.aspx
- Hackney Council and Riots Communities and Victims Panel www.5daysinaugust.co.uk/PDF/downloads/Interim-Report-UK-Riots.pdf
- Hackney Council Post-riot partnership work apps.hackney.gov.uk/servapps/newspr/NewsReleaseDetails.aspx?id=2277

Haringey

- Haringey Young People Empowered (HYPE) Consultation
hypeyouth.tumblr.com/
- The Community Panel
www.haringey.gov.uk/index/community_and_leisure/communitypanel.htm

Harrow

- Harrow Council and Riots Communities and Victims Panel
www.5daysinaugust.co.uk/PDF/downloads/Interim-Report-UK-Riots.pdf

Lambeth

- Lambeth Council and Riots Communities and Victims Panel
www.5daysinaugust.co.uk/PDF/downloads/Interim-Report-UK-Riots.pdf

Manchester

- Manchester Council and Riots Communities and Victims Panel
www.5daysinaugust.co.uk/PDF/downloads/Interim-Report-UK-Riots.pdf

Peckham

- Peckham Council and Riots Communities and Victims panel
www.5daysinaugust.co.uk/PDF/downloads/Interim-Report-UK-Riots.pdf

Salford

- Salford Council and Riots Communities and Victims Panel
www.5daysinaugust.co.uk/PDF/downloads/Interim-Report-UK-Riots.pdf

Sheffield

- Sheffield Council and Riots Communities and Victims Panel
www.5daysinaugust.co.uk/PDF/downloads/Interim-Report-UK-Riots.pdf

Southwark

- Southwark Community Conversations
www.southwark.gov.uk/news/article/502/hundreds_of_people_make_their_own_southwark_promise_to_improve_community

Tottenham

- North London's Citizen's Inquiry into the Tottenham Riots – *Citizens' inquiry into the Tottenham riots*
www.citizensuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Citizens-Inquiry-into-the-Tottenham-Riots-REPORT.pdf
- Tottenham Together
tottenhamtogether.wordpress.com
- Tower Hamlets - The Argument Room: Riots and Rumours of the Riots
www.towerhamletsarts.org.uk/?cid=45285

Westminster

- Westminster Riots Communities and Victims Panel
www.5daysinaugust.co.uk/PDF/downloads/Interim-Report-UK-Riots.pdf

Wolverhampton

- Wolverhampton Council Film - City's spirit after riots
www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/council/news/2012/february/100212b.htm

Woolwich

- World of Hope - *Woolwich Riot Inquiry Report*
www.worldofhope.org.uk/woolwich-riot-inquiry.html

Other reports, responses and events

- 'After the riots' organised by the Race Equality Foundation www.raceequalityfoundation.org.uk
- BBC Radio 1's Big conversation
www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/aboutthebbc/2011/09/bbc-radio-1s-big-conversation.shtml
- IPPR - *Exploring the relationship between riot areas and deprivation*
www.ippr.org/articles/56/7857/exploring-the-relationship-between-riot-areas-and-deprivation--an-ippr-analysis
- LG Insight – *Lessons from the riots report*
www.lgcomms.org.uk/asset/547/Lessons%20from%20the%20Riots%20Report%2030%2008%2011.pdf
- CVS - *Riots, Recession and Loneliness – 'State of the Nation'*
www.csv.org.uk/press/riots-recession-and-loneliness-%E2%80%93-%E2%80%98state-nation%E2%80%99-be-revealed
- The Riots Play (at The Tricycle and Bernie Grant Arts Centre)
www.tricycle.co.uk/home/about-the-tricycle-pages/about-us-tab-menu/archive/archived-theatre-production/the-riots/
- Inside Housing, the Chartered Institute of Housing and the National Housing Federation - *The Riot Report: How housing providers are building stronger communities*
www.insidehousing.co.uk/home/riot-report
- Young Advisors - *Riot Responses*
www.youngadvisors.org.uk/young-advisors-riot-responses

Appendix 2.

How do we stop similar riots happening again?

What the roundtable participants said...

Employment

I think that the government has to do something about youth unemployment. They need to give opportunities to young people. Employers want young people with experience but if they don't give them a chance then how can they get that experience **(Young researcher)**

Generate jobs for local people, take on young people and long-term unemployed people from local communities and train them up. It's not just about gaining skills but also social and economic capital **(Croydon roundtable)**

There is a mismatch between aspiration and reality for young people. There needs to be aspiration and better pathways. Apprenticeships – the way they are done doesn't help **(Westminster roundtable)**

Political engagement

Politicians must realise that in the next 15 - 20 - 30 years the African Caribbean population will be significantly higher. Politically we will have increasingly more weight **(Westminster roundtable)**

If what we've experienced in the last period means anything, it seems that in terms of going forward, we have to have much more of a concentration on political literacy so that the young people are able to engage with the realities that they face on a day to day basis. They need a language in which to have discussions and conversations amongst themselves. Also opportunities to shape an agenda which relates to how they collectively begin to plan and manage the future of this society **(Westminster roundtable)**

We need someone that represents us, who knows about what we need and what want. We can't have someone from an upper-class to represent us. They don't know what we need. We have the experience **(Young researcher)**

Give people a legitimate place where they can protest and take their grievances **(Coventry roundtable)**

The police

I feel that the police need to have a stronger bond with the community **(Young researcher)**

For the police and criminal justice system we need an end to racial profiling and stop and search tactics and we need a community led review of policing **(Birmingham roundtable)**

Community investment and relationships

One recommendation for government is, put back the money they've taken out from the voluntary sector **(Westminster roundtable)**

Before businesses are allowed to open they should be made to develop a corporate responsibility agenda in line with the percentage of the profits they expect to make from the local area **(Croydon roundtable)**

We need the community to take ownership; we can't leave it to the police or statutory organisation
(Lewisham roundtable)

We need to have personal relationships at every level between our young people, between our community leaders and between our public services so that we don't allow historic issues or current or emerging issues to remain within individual community groups **(Birmingham roundtable)**

Government needs family friendly policies like around work, promoting different types of working, flexible working structures to enable families to deal with their other responsibilities better. I think we cannot discount those things can help **(Croydon roundtable)**

Race inequality

For me it is equality and diversity work that we should be pushing. Where you've got lack of resources I would say the priority is equality **(Coventry roundtable)**

Having a means or mechanisms of genuinely trying to address the racial injustices that exist **(Lewisham roundtable)**

Targeting limited resources in the right place, we need to see that somebody cares and that the money is not just going to middle-class white people **(Coventry roundtable)**

We need racially fair political representation by politicians who genuinely represent community constituents **(Birmingham roundtable)**

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The Barrow Cadbury Trust is an independent, charitable foundation, committed to supporting vulnerable and marginalised people in society.

The Trust provides grants to grassroots voluntary and community groups working in deprived communities in the UK, with a focus on Birmingham and the Black Country. It also works with researchers, think tanks and government, often in partnership with other grant-makers, seeking to overcome the structural barriers to a more just and equal society.

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