A social identity model of riot diffusion: from injustice to empowerment in the 2011 London riots

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Abstract

Previous research has shown that riots spread across multiple locations, but has not explained underlying psychological processes. We examined rioting in three locations during the August 2011 disorders in England to test a social identity model of riot diffusion. We triangulated multiple sources to construct a narrative of events; and we analysed interviews with 68 participants to examine experiences. In line with the model, we found evidence for two pathways of influence: "cognitive" and "strategic". For some participants, previous rioting was highly self-relevant, and shared identity was the basis of their subsequent involvement. For others, previous rioting was empowering because it demonstrated the vulnerability of a common enemy (the police). In each location, interaction dynamics mediated the link between initial perceptions and collective action. The utility of this social identity approach is that it is able to account for both the boundaries and the sequence of urban riot diffusion.

Key words: Riots, social identity, social influence, contagion, collective empowerment, collective action

Introduction

Urban riots can have significant economic and political impacts on a society, as well as profound psychological impacts on those that experience them. They can also be significant for what we can learn from them about fundamental psychological processes of social influence and group relations. Riots have been the focus of considerable research in recent years (Drury & Reicher, 2020). However the research has focussed predominantly on what happens within single events. And yet urban riots characteristically come in waves, with an initial event followed by further riots

in different locations. The issue of riot diffusion, and the processes which determine which locations do and do not participate in secondary rioting, has been largely neglected. It is this issue that forms the focus of our paper.

Beyond psychology, many authors have noted that riots often occur in temporal and spatial clusters (e.g., Bohstedt & Williams, 1988; Bonnasse-Gahot et al., 2018; Charlesworth, 1983). This clustering has been taken to indicate so-called "contagion" or interdependence – that is, that riots in one location influence the occurrence of riots in other locations (e.g., National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, 1968). Such interdependence has been demonstrated statistically (Baudains, Braithwaite, & Johnson, 2012; Baudains, Johnson, & Braithwaite, 2013a; Midlarsky, 1978; Pitcher, Hamblin, & Miller, 1978), and has been shown to be among the most important predictors of when and where riots occur, over and above important factors such as deprivation (Aidt, Leon, & Satchell, 2017; Myers, 2010). Research across a variety of riot waves has indicated that the influence of one riot on further rioting is increased by the intensity of the initial riot, is weakened by geographical distance, and decays over time (Myers, 1998).

Yet, to note the phenomenon of interdependence is not to explain the *social psychological process* underlying it. In this paper, we test the idea that the pattern of riot diffusion[i] across locations is explicable in terms of shared social identities and collective empowerment.

We examined aspects of the English riots of 2011 to understand the social psychology of the diffusion process. These riots began in Tottenham in North London and spread to many other locations. Our study combined two forms of analysis. First, we triangulated archive evidence from multiple sources to determine the timing and nature of collective behaviours as well as the demographics of participants. Second, we thematically analysed in-depth interviews with rioters gathered shortly after the events to determine participants' self-definitions and experiences. Through comparing three locations with significant variability in the timing of rioting, we address

both the impact of the Tottenham riot on subsequent events and why the events spread in a particular sequence – something which previous models are unable to explain.

Patterns of collective behaviour in the 2011 English riots

The English riots of August 2011 began in Tottenham, two days after the fatal shooting by police of a local mixed-heritage man, Mark Duggan. Over the next 24 hours, rioting spread to other areas of London, and the next day to many other cities in England. The events lasted five days and involved an estimated 20,000 people, with more than 4,000 arrests, and costs of up to £500 million (Riots, Communities and Victims Panel, 2011). Altogether, there were over 100 riot events in 89 different locations across 54 Local Authority Districts. Interdependence was assumed in the press coverage, which referred to "copycat" behaviour (e.g., Pilkington, 2011) and "contagion" (e.g., Slutkin, 2011).

Some have argued that the behaviour of rioters overwhelmingly reflected a "consumerist" ideology – evidenced in the looting of fashionable training shoes, for example (Treadwell, Briggs, Winlow, & Hall, 2013). However, the largest interview study (N = 270) carried out among rioters (*Guardian*/LSE 2011; Newburn et al., 2018), as well as surveys prior to the events (Kawalerowicz & Biggs, 2015), suggest that anti-police sentiment was a key driver. Most of Newburn et al.'s (2018) interviewees reported police discrimination, often based on racism, and many felt alienated from authority more broadly. Deprivation was also a predictor of participation (Kawalerowicz & Biggs, 2015; Lightowlers, 2015). Moreover, targets of looting and property damage often reflected anti-corporate attitudes (Ball & Drury, 2012) or desire to control familiar space (Tiratelli, 2017).

Despite the large number of peer-reviewed journal articles published on the 2011 English riots – over 140 at the last count – only a handful have addressed the question of diffusion (e.g., Baudains, Braithwaite, & Johnson, 2013b; Davies, Fry, Wilson, & Bishop, 2013). These provide some evidence of interdependence. Thus Baudains et al. (2012) used crime data to show that the probability of a riot occurring in one London district in August 2011 was positively associated

with the number of events occurring in the surrounding areas the previous day. Drawing on crime data and the *Guardian*/LSE (2011) interview data-set, Stott et al. (2018; Ball et al., 2019) found evidence that at least some of the spatial spread in North London was explicable in terms of the same people moving between different events.

But the diffusion of riots is not simply across adjoining areas involving a single population. Spread often occurs across non-adjoining areas and involves different populations. For example, arrest data suggest there was little travelling by riot participants across the Thames river (Baudains et al., 2013b), which indicates that diffusion of rioting from North to South London reflected psychological influence between people and events. Before outlining our approach to explaining such diffusion, we review how the question of underlying psychological process in riot diffusion has previously been addressed in the literature.

Explanations for the diffusion of rioting

Broadly, three types of explanation for the diffusion of rioting have been proposed, sometimes in combination: contagion, rational choice, and communication. "Contagion" explanations are the earliest, reflecting the recognition among researchers of other disciplines of the need for a social psychological level explanation to account for observed patterns (e.g., Rudé, 1964). Contagion has been proposed to operate alongside other primitive psychological processes such as disinhibition and imitation (e.g., Midlarsky, 1978, and Pitcher et al., 1978, who cite social psychologists Wheeler & Caggiula, 1966) and social learning (Bandura, 1977).

Contemporary accounts of riot diffusion often retain the nomenclature of "contagion" (e.g., Baudains et al., 2012, 2013b; Myers, 1998, 2000, 2010), but authors stipulate that they do not mean the mindless, uncritical influence posited by Le Bon (1895). Thus, drawing on Oberschall's (1989) cost-benefits analysis of the spread of sit-in protests, Myers re-defines contagion as "a rational form of inter-actor influence in which potential actors observe and evaluate the outcomes of others' behaviours and then make a decision for themselves about whether or not to adopt the

behaviour" (Myers & Przybysz, 2010, p. 64). Baudains et al. (2013a) apply this "rational actor" approach to the 2011 riots, suggesting that bystanders at a riot calculate that risks of apprehension are lower than normal and so engage in similar offences nearby; in addition, people elsewhere who share the same grievances as rioters are "inspired" (by social media coverage and news of the riots) to act in the same way to address their own grievances.

A criticism of the rational-actor approach is that it is based on the concept of "self-interest" but either fails to elaborate on what it means by the "self" or defines the self narrowly as the individual rational maximizer, *homo economicus*. Thus, while Baudains et al.'s (2013a) approach has the advantage of appearing to map onto two distinctive behavioural patterns in the 2011 English riots – confronting police and looting retail outlets – its disadvantages are under-specification and individualism. It does not explain where grievances come from or how they are seen as "the same" across different individuals and groups.

Communication and interaction is a third kind of explanation for the spread of riots, suggested by both historians (e.g., Bohstedt & Williams, 1988; Charlesworth 1983; Hobsbawm & Rudé, 1969; Rudé, 1964) and sociologists (e.g., National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, 1968; Myers, 2000; 2010; Singer, 1970). In these accounts, communication is said to be a way that people can make judgements about beneficial outcomes (Myers, 2010).

However, communication can also be understood as a way of *constructing* rather than simply sharing knowledge. Thus theories of collective behaviour and social movements suggest that discussion and interaction among participants can create a collective identity (e.g., Melucci, 1989) or a common frame (Benford & Snow, 2000; Gamson, 1992), enabling coordinated action. We can perhaps look to those social movement theories that elaborate on the nature of this communication process for concepts to help us understand how riot events spread. One such is emergent norm theory (Turner & Killian, 1957), which suggests that collective sense-making in

novel events occurs through interpersonal milling. Similarly, Klandermans (1992) emphasizes the role of face-to-face discussion and argument in meaning construction.

But in such discussions, which constructions prevail? Why are some people persuaded more than others? Emergent norm theory suggests that influential "keynoters" ultimately determine which norm under discussion is actually adopted. But what makes a keynoter (Reicher, 1984)? Similarly, while "interaction" may often be necessary to meaning construction as Klandermans (1992) proposes, more needs to be said.

Both the rational-actor approach and explanations in terms of communication restore meaning to rioting. But, in a similar way to the irrationalist "contagion" that they otherwise supersede, they fail to explain why some people are more influential than (and some are more influenced by) others in a riot (Reicher, 1984). Consequently, they fail to explain why some people and not others join in with the rioting (Milgram & Toch, 1969).

We argue that two types of innovation are needed to develop a social psychological model of riot diffusion. First, we need to place an explicit analysis of self or identity at the centre of the model. Examining people's self-definitions will enable us to locate riot participants' collective grievances, how they appraise riot events, which "others" they regard as self-relevant (and hence attend to) in a particular context, and their definitions of possible and appropriate conduct in response to riot events. While a number of approaches to collective behaviour and social movements foreground the role of identity (e.g., Gamson, 1992; Melucci, 1989), we suggest below that the social identity approach provides the most detailed and comprehensive set of concepts for understanding processes of spread.

Second, it is necessary to think differently about research method. Existing explanations for diffusion in terms of both mindless "contagion" and rational choice are essentially speculative, because the statistical methods used to test for interdependence do not examine rioters' perceptions, decisions, judgements and so on. What is needed is a methodological approach that

both details the contours of riot events *and* explores participant experiences in depth. Before we describe the methodological approach we adopted, we situate our analysis theoretically.

Social identity processes in rioting and diffusion

The *social identity approach*, which comprises social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and self-categorization theory (SCT; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987) offers a theoretical framework for understanding a number of fundamental aspects of behaviour in riots. SCT suggests that shared social identity makes collective behaviour possible, since it provides shared definitions of situations and common norms for acting within those situations (see Reicher, Spears, & Haslam, 2010). Thus, the limits of behaviour in riots (targets, geographical boundaries, and who joins in within a location) have been shown to be explicable in terms of the definition of social identity shared by participants (Reicher, 1984). Moreover, as well as being "cognitively" determined (i.e., based on identity definition and conformity to group norms), behaviour in a rioting crowd can also be "strategic" (i.e., expressing identity in a way normally prevented by the outgroup) (Klein, Spears, & Reicher, 2007; Reicher, Spears, & Postmes, 1995). The transition from a peaceful crowd event to a riot has been explained in terms of a clash of social-identity based definitions of legitimacy plus shifts in collective power from police to crowd (Reicher 1996; Stott & Drury, 2000).

While the social identity approach has arguably transformed the social psychology of riots in the last 30 years, in common with other approaches, the emphasis so far has mostly been on discrete events. Recent analysis of some of the 2011 English riots make a prima facie case for extending the approach to the question of diffusion between riot events. Stott et al. (2018) found that, in initial rioting in Tottenham, collective action based on a shared antagonism to the police both revealed and created police vulnerability. This empowered participants, and was associated with a change in group norms from confronting police to collective looting in adjacent districts of Haringey. Ball et al. (2019) showed that rioting in Enfield was a result of participants converging

to deliberately create conflict as a social identity-based expression of power. As important as these advances have been, they largely address how *the same people* behaved across different events. Consequently, they do not provide an explanation of spread to different locations where *different people* are involved. Yet they do provide some of the concepts needed to develop a new model of riot diffusion.

Based on the foregoing, a *social identity model of riot diffusion* suggests two pathways of influence. First, there is a "*cognitive*" pathway in which influence is a function of knowing who "we" are and hence inferring what "we" should do (Reicher, 1984; Turner et al., 1987). Shared social identity with those involved in anti-police rioting elsewhere thus provides a normative inclination to do the same. What is more, shared social identity with others locally provides a sense of empowerment for such ingroup-normative action via an enhanced expectation that others will share the same perspective as oneself (Drury & Reicher, 2009) and hence support one in confronting the police. Thus anti-police rioting in location #1 will increase support for anti-police rioting in location #2 in relation to the number of people in location #2 who perceive their community to share a common social identity with those in location #1. Understanding this "cognitive" pathway requires specification of the shared social identities in the relevant locations.

Second, there is a *"strategic"* pathway. This involves not a shared ingroup identity but rather the perceived vulnerability of a shared outgroup (in this case the police). This vulnerability enables action that would normally be repressed by that outgroup. This process applies both to the spread from area to area and to the secondary convergence of participants *within* an area where police are seen to be weakened. In addition, in this context of reversed power-relations, rioting is liable to take new forms and have different targets than in the initial rioting as new opportunities arise to act in ways considered legitimate by rioters but which are impeded by police in everyday life (Stott et al., 2018).

In this way, the model explains not only *where* spread occurs (i.e., to those places where there is a critical mass of people who share social identity with those in the original riot location and to those places where there is a critical mass of people who share a common enemy), it also suggests the *sequence* (i.e., that cognitive influence occurs before strategic influence because the latter requires the accumulation of evidence of police disempowerment) -- something the other explanations of riot diffusion are unable to do.

In both forms of influence, interaction and communication processes with self-relevant others confirm expectations of support (Stott et al., 2018; cf. Klandermans, 1992; Myers, 2010). However, *within* events there will also be cognitive influence via assumptions of local consensus (who "we" are locally). The relation between the two pathways is illustrated in Figure 1.

-----Insert Figure 1 about here-----

Current study

The present study examines the diffusion of rioting from Tottenham, North London, to three locations in South London: Brixton, Croydon and Clapham (see Figure 2). Our rationale for the choice of locations is four-fold. First, all three locations saw rioting in the days following the initial incidents in Haringey borough, but evidence strongly suggests that diffusion into South London was to people and communities not involved in preceding riots in North London (Baudains et al., 2013b). Second, while nine London boroughs south of the Thames saw rioting in August 2011, those at Brixton, Croydon and Clapham were the largest (on measures such as number of disorder-related crimes); indeed, the Croydon riot was the biggest in London. Third, there was significant variability in the timing of the rioting in these locations, which requires explanation: Brixton occurred the day after Tottenham and was the first location in South London to riot; Croydon and Clapham happened the day after Brixton. Fourth, these were London riot events for which we had access to relatively large numbers of interview transcripts.

---Insert Figure 2 about here---

Our dataset is divided into two parts: a large corpus of interviews with rioters, which we use to analyse experiences; and a comprehensive archive of videos, police statistics, local authority reports, social media data and news reports, which we triangulate to create detailed narratives of what took place, when and who took part.

We examine the usefulness of the social identity model outlined above by investigating the following: participants' shared attitudes and identities (i.e., their content, boundaries, and relations with other groups) and the extent to which they saw events and people in Tottenham as self-relevant; any expectations that others in their local area would riot; experiences of empowerment in relation to the police and what this meant for their own action; and the nature of any interaction among participants in each location immediately prior to rioting.

Methods

Data

We gathered data from as many sources as possible to construct a triangulated account of each riot – listed in Table 1 (for full details of sources, see Supporting Information 2-4). Disorder-related arrestee[ii] and crime data for each of the locations was provided by the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS). This dataset comprised details of home location, gender, age, and ethnicity for 607 arrestees, along with locations, dates, times and types of recorded crimes.

----Insert Table 1 here----

We had access to the *Guardian*/LSE (2011) *Reading the Riots* (*RtR*) interview dataset that was gathered in the months immediately after the events in 2011. A team of interviewers used local contacts to recruit people involved in the riots, the majority of whom had not at that point been arrested. Interviews were semi-structured; each interviewee was asked how they first heard about the riots, how they became involved, how they communicated, and what they did. Each interview lasted on average approximately 45 minutes. We made use of 68 unique transcripts.[iii] Based on their responses, we judged eight interviewees to be witnesses rather than participants. Of

those remaining, 19 were present at Brixton (10 of who were also at Clapham and/or Croydon), 13 were present at Croydon (two of which were also present at Clapham), and 28 were present at Clapham only.

Analytic Procedure

Triangulation. Three types of information were used to substantiate the veracity of the timing, location, and content of a particular incident: post-event accounts by participants and eye-witnesses; real-time media recorded during the events; and physical evidence of the actions of the crowd. For each location, a timeline of incidents was constructed in a spreadsheet from the collection, collation and cross-referencing of discrete pieces of evidence (see Supporting Information 1). A narrative account was constructed from each timeline. The triangulated data and the crime statistics were used to produce demographic and other comparisons of the three riots.

Thematic analysis. We carried out theoretically-driven thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) of the *RtR* interview transcripts. This took place through several stages. First, there was an exploratory phase in which one of the team read all transcripts, while three other team members read a sample, noting issues that seemed to be of importance to interviewees. In a team meeting, we identified commonalities and differences of interest across the three riots in: participants' perceptions of the previous riots (especially Tottenham), their self-definitions, expectations of relevant-others' participation, interaction with others, and perceptions of the police. Second, one team member developed a coding scheme based on the model and structured by themes around *shared social identity* (anti-police attitudes and identities; "stop and search" experiences; anti-government feelings; anger and injustice at the killing of Mark Duggan, and Black identity), *empowerment* (empowered by police vulnerability; normal power relations reversed and police are afraid; expecting others to participate), and *interaction* (consensualization via communication). These themes were used to analyse two thirds of the transcripts and provide commentary. Third, four other team members analysed the remaining transcripts using the same coding scheme, which

enabled the reliability of the scheme to be checked. Finally, all coded extracts were tabulated for ease of comparison across interviewees and themes.

Ethical issues and data availability

We collected no primary data for the study, and so the research did not require us to go through our universities' ethical review committees. For the crime data, a data-sharing agreement with the MPS required that no personal data of arrestees was included in the information we were given. For the *RtR* dataset, the *Guardian*/ LSE researchers carried out the interviews on condition of participant anonymity. We fully redacted every interview transcript to remove any information that could make interviewees identifiable. The full interview corpus is available via the UK Data-Service (UKDS reference 853792). For other data used in the study, Supporting Information 2-4 provide a complete list of publicly available sources.

<center>**Analysis**</center>

Triangulated accounts of events

Here we present summary triangulated narratives of incidents in the three locations. For the full timeline of events, displaying their temporal relation, see Supporting Information 1.

    Brixton. The Brixton riot began on the evening of Sunday 7th August, the day after the rioting in Tottenham. There were police fears about potential confrontation at Splash, an annual one-day music festival celebrating African-Caribbean culture attended by thousands of people, which took place in the afternoon. Police resources were therefore deployed into Brixton. Splash was scheduled to finish at 7.00pm. At 6.30pm three police officers were injured while intervening in an altercation with youths. Police support units (PSUs)[iv] were then deployed to the area to support local officers. Several people tweeted that a "mini-riot" occurred at this time, followed by reports of police in "riot gear" 15 minutes later, with police cars and "riot vans" arriving on the hour. By 9.30pm, police described the town centre as "fine", but between 10.00 and 11.30pm, up to 200 people began attacking police near a local housing estate. Small groups also attacked and damaged

local shops in an apparent attempt to provoke the police to respond. After a series of confrontations, police were forced to retreat. Shortly after this, the focus of the crowd shifted from the police to the town centre. Participants targeted high-street properties, and there was extensive looting and some arson of high-end shops. The behaviour of the crowd appeared to be coordinated, with rioters helping each other to take goods. Police reinforcements arrived hours after the start of the rioting, which began to peter out from about 2.00am. The full triangulated account of the Brixton events can be found in Supporting Information 2.

Croydon. The Croydon riot began on Monday 8th August, the day after the Brixton events (see timeline in Supporting Information 1). Large numbers of people started gathering in the centre of Croydon from around 4.00pm. Despite police reassurances, several outlets closed early that afternoon. At about 6.30pm, large-scale disorder broke out north of Croydon town centre, with police officers coming under attack. There were also attacks on shops apparently in order to draw police in. As events escalated, police concentrated on protecting the main shopping centre, leaving the main thoroughfares to the north and south and nearby retail parks undefended. Crowds looted a number of retail properties, particularly high-end shops. At the same time, a large number of rioters attacked police and continued to try to get into the main shopping centre. Parallel with these events, from about 8.00pm onwards rioting broke out in other districts across Croydon borough, particularly New Addington, Thornton Heath, and Norbury (see Figure 2). Across the borough, rioting began to die down at midnight, with police control restored at 4.00am on Tuesday. The full triangulated account of events in Croydon can be found in Supporting Information 3.

Clapham. The Clapham riot occurred the day after the Brixton riot and at around the same time as the Croydon riot (see timeline, Supporting Information 1). At approximately 7.30pm, around 60 youths began attacking police on the Winstanley housing estate, one of the more deprived districts in the borough, which was adjacent to the main shopping centre. By about 8.10pm, police could no longer withstand these sustained attacks and withdrew. This seems to be

the point where the disorder escalated, spreading to the main thoroughfares and shopping centres where other people had already converged. From 8.30pm onwards, people began breaking into shops. Police withdrew for over an hour. Much of the looting occurred in this period. The disturbances escalated in a continuing pattern of attacks and withdrawals between police and rioters. Just before midnight, police reinforcements enabled them to begin to regain control. The full triangulated account of the Clapham events can be found in Supporting Information 4.

Comparison of locations and events. It is useful to consider the demographics of the locations and participants. Brixton is one of the more deprived areas in London (Trimble, n.d.). Croydon is the 19th most deprived of the 32 London boroughs, and saw increased deprivation in the years immediately preceding the riots (Strategic Intelligence Unit, 2012). For all three riot locations, much of the rioting took place close to the poorest areas; and the home locations of arrestees indicate that many came from these districts (see Supporting Information 2 and 4).

Brixton is known for its Black history and identity (Grant, 2007). Lambeth borough, in which Brixton is situated, has the third highest Black fraction of population (25.9%) in London, and the highest of the three boroughs covered in the present analysis (Croydon borough 20.2%, Wandsworth borough 10.6%) (Office for National Statistics, 2012[v]). The majority of Brixton arrestees in August 2011 were Black (77%). This percentage falls to ~41% for Croydon and Clapham (see Table 2b).

A comparison of the average distances travelled from arrestee home location to crime location in Brixton indicate a median of 2.04km (see Table 2a), with few individuals travelling from further than 7.00km away. This median is lower than those recorded for disturbances in Croydon (2.99km) and Clapham (3.28km). In short, relative to the other riot locations, more Brixton rioters were "local" (cf. Davies et al., 2013).

---Insert Table 2a and 2b here---

The Brixton riot, like Tottenham on the first day (Stott et al., 2018), took the form of a "community" or anti-police riot, with four times the proportion of crimes of violence against the person (12%) – most of which were against police officers – than in Croydon (Home Office, 2011). Croydon was more akin to the "commodity riot" form, having the highest percentage of acquisitive crimes (75%) of the major disorders. The Clapham event was marked by a higher percentage of reported crimes involving criminal damage (33%) than the other two, typically a sign of expressive rather than acquisitive activity (MPS, 2012). Despite these differences, for each of the three riots, there were significant attacks on police prior to the outbreaks of looting.[vi] A final feature that distinguished the Brixton riot from each of Croydon and Clapham was that, in the latter locations more than the former, organised groups came in to loot systematically once the rioting had begun, including occasionally from other looters.

Analysis of participant experiences

The organization of themes in this section is structured to address the key dimensions of the social identity model of riot diffusion: identities, empowerment, and interaction. We present extracts that are representative of our themes and we indicate the number of instances in the category. (Low numbers should be treated with caution, however, and often reflect the fact that some people were not asked about certain issues, rather than strong evidence that these issues were not relevant to interviewees.) Where we found them, we also provide deviant case extracts.

Anti-police feelings and identities. The majority of participants in each of the three locations (72% total) expressed long-standing anti-police feelings or attitudes: *"I don't like the police officers... I just think they're racist... personally I think the police force is the biggest gang in the world"* (LON2110110827 [Clapham], lines 153-154).[vii] Indeed, this was the most prevalent theme of those we examined. Many interviewees suggested that these anti-police feelings were the motivation for the riots, particularly for the early stages. There was evidence indicating that interviewees in each location defined themselves *collectively* through these views of the police,

and hence the boundaries of their anti-police identity encompassed others in their local community. Indeed, references to "we" and "us", which are often markers of shared identity (e.g., Smith, Gavin, & Sharp, 2015), pervaded the accounts of antipathy to the police: *"we wanted to go and take it back out on the police"* (LON0810110814 [Clapham] lines 94-95).

In participants' accounts of the historical relationship of their group with the police, an important theme was ***"stop and search" as collective humiliation***. Thirty-three per cent[viii] described experiences of being subjected to "stop and search" or other forms of unfair police attention. A key feature of many of these accounts was that the experience was one of harassment and humiliation to them as a member of their community – of *"us"* – not just themselves as an individual:

Extract 1

Everyone wants to bust a policeman's head cos we been violated… Stop you for nothing, because you might live on that estate or you might hang round that estate… I just come out of my yard and I'm chillin', for you to come and stop me and and search me up. And violate me. Cos that's what it is, a violation, talking to me like I'm nothing

LON3010111910 (Brixton) lines 457-466

A second theme used to define identity that was common to the three locations (47% of participants) was ***anti-government feelings***, which were sometimes expressed alongside anti-police feelings. Many linked their opposition to the government (or the "the system") to a variety of experiences of structural disadvantage, including cuts to youth funding, increasing poverty, and other economic disadvantages affecting their community or reference group. This alienation was often presented as shared, and "we"-talk was again common in this context. This is illustrated in the following extract, where the experience (lack of job, inability to pay bills) is described as one of "pain", the shared nature of which also enabled coordinated action ("teamwork"):

Extract 2

P: That teamwork, that was the connection everyone had.

Int: Would you have that usually amongst other people?

P: Nope.

Int: What do you think was special then?

P: The fact that we all felt each other's pain. It was just that, that's just the highlight of it, the fact that we just felt one another's pain, and we all thought, rah [wow!], like it's time to do something about it.

[ ]

Int: When you say "us", who do you refer to?

P: Everyone that feels our pain. Everyone that can't get a job, people that can't pay their bills

LON2110110828 (Brixton) Lines 505-517, 470-472

Anger, injustice, and Black identity. For all three locations, there were interviewees who were angered by the killing of Mark Duggan by the police such that this injustice was their stated motivation to participate. We take these engaged responses as evidence that these participants saw people and events in Tottenham as highly self-relevant. However, there were also differences between the three locations in relation to this theme. Thus, there were more Brixton interviewees reporting this motivation (9; 47%) than in the case of Croydon (5; 38%) or Clapham (4; 14%). Brixton participants were also more likely than those from the other locations to attribute injustice and anger as a motivation to others locally.

Further, it wasn't just the quantity of comments on the self-relevance of Tottenham that distinguished Brixton interviewees from the others, it was also their quality. For a number of Brixton interviewees, the boundaries of a common identity appeared to extend in time as well as across space. As extract 3 illustrates, the shooting of Mark Duggan was seen as a historical continuation of previous deaths of Black people at the hands of the police – and thus participating in anti-police rioting in response was also historically part of the common identity:

Extract 3

I'm not one of them young youts [youths] who was looking for a kick, you get me? I was about when they done Cherry Groce,[ix] the other day they done Smiley Culture,[x] you understand? I was wanna one dem youts with the banners up in the eighties, about '86, '87. In Brixton out by the town hall, you get me, out…by the police station, so when I heard they killed the yout and what they killed him for….that was really my…res…that was what I responded to.

LON2510110108 (Brixton) lines 17-25

Some Brixton interviewees stated that the victim was similar to them or part of their social category. In the following extract, the participant defines himself as "part of the same community" as Mark Duggan. The victim and the killing were highly self-relevant; "it could have been me" or indeed any of his circle:

Extract 4

I would've been there because I see myself as part of that same community. That could've been anyone instead of Mark Duggan that day, that could've been me, that has been me, that has been my friends

LON1910110826 (Brixton) Lines 655-699

Thus, some Brixton interviewees (as in extract 3) referred to a "we" defined explicitly in terms of a Black identity connecting Tottenham with Brixton, while others (such as extract 4) were less explicit about its content but still referred to an identity shared across these locations.

Such talk of shared identity with Tottenham was much less evident in the Croydon and Clapham interviews. A further difference between the locations was found in the numbers explicitly saying that they were *not* motivated by injustice and anger at the killing in Tottenham. Only four Brixton interviewees (21%) said this, while six (46%) and 14 (50%) were the numbers for Croydon and Clapham respectively. Thus, there were more Croydon and Clapham interviewees

saying that their participation was *not* due to the killing than there were saying that they got involved because of the killing – the opposite of the pattern for Brixton interviewees.

Empowered in relation to police vulnerability. Particularly among interviewees who said they were not motivated by Duggan's killing, when describing how they got involved and some of their motivations there was a theme of police vulnerability which had implications for how people felt and what they could do. Some referred to taking advantage of that police vulnerability to go looting. Others used a language more similar to that of protest, referring to using the opportunity of reversed power-relations with police ("people gaining their power back") to express their grievances and assert their own power:

Extract 5

Oh yeah in Tottenham, yeah, but when the riots started in Clapham, and in various other places like the Croydon ones, like, I was involved, in that general area, aspects of this. And it weren't just about people or persons that died, it was about people gaining their power back and about feeling like they're not being heard by the government, so it's basically people showing the government that people have the power to do things.

LON1910110825 (Croydon) lines 19-26

Brixton interviewees referred to the police inability to prevent rioting in Tottenham; interviewees from Clapham and Croydon referred both to Tottenham and to police ineffectualness in the riots more generally. Some referred to the situation in explicitly collective terms: police were weak in the face of so many young people who shared the intention to riot. In the following extract, for example, there is a "we" that shifts from rival "postcode gangs"[xi] who are normally "against each other" to all those (young people) who defined themselves against the police who thereby had the capacity to "overpower" them:

Extract 6

it was just, it was just once the riots started in Tottenham and that's where they first started I think yeah, people my age and that they realised that if we're all united the police can't, they can't do a lot. Normally we're all out here against each other and everything like that, but just on them couple of days we all, everyone thought "yeah let's unite", no one had any trouble with anyone else or anything like that, and that's why people knew they could do it because they would overpower the police yeah.

LON0710110810 (Clapham) lines 149-155

Some expressed this empowerment in emotional terms, reflecting the exhilaration they felt during this reversal in the usual power-relations with authority: *it made me feel like wow like this can really happen* (LON11101110501 (Croydon CS13CR) line 126).

Interviewees who participated in the Clapham (12; 43%) and Croydon (5; 38%) riots were more likely than were Brixton participants (3; 16%) to refer to feeling empowered by police weakness at the earlier riot(s). Combined with the previous points, this suggests that, for many Croydon and Clapham rioters, what led them to take collective action was not so much identification with rioters in other locations – though there is nevertheless also some evidence of this (as in extract 6, for example) – but rather an understanding that a hated common outgroup was vulnerable.

Thus, the analysis so far suggests that a cognitive pathway of influence was relatively common among Brixton interviewees: the killing by police of a fellow ingroup member and the Tottenham riot in response to this shaped the norms for own behaviour. By contrast, the strategic pathway of influence was more common among Croydon and Clapham interviewees: the police outgroup was perceived to be weakened, and this made participants more able to express their anti-police antagonism as well as enact a variety of other desires and motivations.

Normal power-relations are being reversed and police are afraid. Some interviewees described initial encounters with police in what seemed to be the early stages of the events. In

these accounts, there was another empowerment theme: normal power-relations were being reversed and the police were scared. Extract 7 describes incidents following Splash in Brixton, where police were seen to be outnumbered, frightened, and under attack -- a novel experience compared to everyday relations with police:

Extract 7

Ah, the ratio was crazy, it would have been about 50-60 boys and about 10 police officers. They [the police] literally just ran straight back for their life. And I could see their faces and everything, they was talking saying "we need help, we need help, we need help" an' then you could see so many police cars about 10 minutes later coming round the corner and then they was just scaring them away. Like I've never seen police so scared before, it was like they had no control whatsoever like, even the police cars, the police vans, they was just throwing rocks at them.

LON051011082 (Brixton) lines 49-55

However, most of our interviewees stated that they arrived when the rioting had already begun. Indeed, there appeared to be a relationship between the initial relatively small incidents and the secondary convergence of many more people: the vulnerability of police was confirmed by social media and attracted further people to the rioting (both from the local area and from further away), many of them drawn by the prospect of looting rather than confronting police.

Expecting others to participate because of who they are. There was evidence that, for interviewees in each location, the rioting elsewhere created expectations that people in their own area would now take similar actions. In Brixton, this expectation was sometimes linked to shared knowledge and history. In the following, the expectation is presented as consensual ("everyone knew") and based on the fact that riots had happened previously in Brixton and because there was a street party that day:

Extract 8

Int: How did you know it was going to happen?

P: Because I got an inkling. I had it. The police had it. Everyone knew [ ]

Int: So because there'd been riots and was a street party, everyone is expecting it to kick off. Is that what you're saying?

P: That's exactly what I'm saying.

LON0510111302 (Brixton) lines 85-117

One reason that Brixton interviewees gave for expecting that others would participate was that such a "rebellion" against the police was widely seen as a legitimate response to the unjust killing:

Extract 9

Well from what I recall, the first thing I heard was that the police shot someone and after that broadcasts started happening on Blackberry saying that because of what the police is doing, it's like basically it's time to cause a rebellion basically init, like action has to be taken.

LON0211110206 (Brixton) lines 6-8

Therefore, implicit (and sometimes explicit) in a number of statements was a theme in which the interviewee "knew" that others locally would participate because of their identity or beliefs in relation to the killing.

Of those who took part in the Clapham and Croydon riots, more interviewees said it was the other riot events, after Tottenham, than said it was the Tottenham events specifically that created this expectation of widespread participation (9 vs 3 respectively). What is key here overall is that the expected participation of relevant others locally was for many interviewees the major factor in their own involvement. As Figure 1 illustrates, the influence of the previous events operates not only directly, but also indirectly, through these expectations about relevant others.

Consensualization via communication. There was a theme of consensus construction via communication in the interviews, although there was a degree of variation in the way participants said a shared view was reached. Some said they heard about the riots through the television, but

most referred to their networks as sources of information – both about what had already happened but also about what would happen next.

The Splash music event appeared to differentiate Brixton from the other South London riot locations in relation to communication and interaction, in two important ways. First, it brought people together on the streets. Second as a celebration of Black culture, it made salient the identity that some felt united Brixton with Tottenham. Seven of our interviewees attended Splash, and there is evidence in the transcripts that participants encountered others at Splash who not only shared the same anger as them about the shooting but also how they should react to it. A number therefore reported that attending Splash created or increased their expectations that a riot would happen in Brixton – as in the following extract where the interviewee states that he heard that "everyone" in Brixton would riot:

Extract 10

P: There was a series in Brixton called [Splash] Street party, and then after everyone heard about the Tottenham thing, there was this thing going round that everyone's going to do it in Brixton but I wasn't sure that I'd want to be that…

Int: Yeah

P: Sort of thing, so

Int: What thing was going round?

P: That everyone was going to start a riot.

LON1110110817 (Brixton) lines 9-18

Croydon and Clapham participants were more dependent on phones and social media. In describing how consensus was constructed about the when and the where of the local riot, interviewees described receiving numerous, sometimes conflicting, messages. There was often doubt about the veracity of these messages, but shared pictures of people looting shops contributed to creating a perception of consensus in their networks about getting involved:

Extract 11

Everybody had picture up on their Blackberry, there were people with like eight boxes of trainers, with a big grin on their face, everybody got that. I don't know, it was weird, I don't know, I don't know how it's happened that's why everybody thought it wasn't real so seeing real pictures and people were doing it, it was like, everybody wanted to get involved

LON1210110401 (Clapham) Lines 45-49

Discussion

The rioting in three South London locations analysed here all took place in the two days following the initial outbreak in Tottenham. While there were a variety of targets, and looting became more prominent over time, anti-police sentiment was evident in much of the initial rioting and was a common theme across interviewees from all three locations, alongside broader sense of alienation from the government. These common anti-police and anti-government feelings were often given as a reason for participation. There is evidence that they enabled collective action, through providing a sense of "we-ness" and through defining common targets. While previous research has documented a general anti-police feeling and alienation among 2011 rioters (Newburn et al., 2018), the present analysis confirms this pattern specifically for Brixton, Croydon, and Clapham.

As concerns our social identity model of riot diffusion as laid out in the introduction, there is evidence to support the claim that shared identification with people in the original riot location (Tottenham) provided a "cognitive" pathway to influence. Relatively more Brixton interviewees (compared to those who were at Croydon and Clapham) saw events in Tottenham as relevant to themselves, based on a common historical relation to the police and sometimes in terms of common identification as Black. They were more likely than other interviewees to describe their sense of injustice and anger at the police killing of Mark Duggan in Tottenham, to cite this as a reason for involvement, and to expect other local people to feel the same sense of injustice. Relatively fewer Croydon and Clapham interviewees identified or explained their actions in this way, and more of

them were explicit that the killing of Mark Duggan was not the reason they got involved. Hence the influence of rioting in one location upon the actions of people in other locations varied as a function of shared social identity.

There was also evidence for the role of a "strategic" pathway to influence, whereby readiness to participate was based on the perceived vulnerability of a common enemy (i.e. the police) at the earlier riots, rather than on identification with people in the initial riot locations. Particularly for Croydon and Clapham interviewees rather than those from Brixton, own involvement and the expectation that others locally would participate derived from this perception. Further, as expected there was some evidence of a homologous process of empowerment *within* each event. At each location, the catalyst that transformed minor skirmishes into full-scale rioting was the actions of a relatively small group initiating conflict with police. Secondary convergence occurred after this power reversal. As we expected, in this context of reversed power relations, there were changes in the patterns of behaviour towards "protest" and looting. Overall, therefore, prior anti-police rioting created the basis for subsequent actions considered legitimate by the riot participants but which are impeded by the police in everyday life.

Interviewees from all three riots referred to their expectations that people in their networks and communities would participate in rioting. While not directly referring to support, these expectations of participation are consistent with expectations of co-action, given that so many interviewees defined themselves as against the police. The importance of these expectations of local others as a mediator of the effect of previous rioting on own intentions is demonstrated by the fact that most of the evidence of shared identity – in the form of "we"-talk, for example – was with these local networks.

While some of these expectations were based on interviewees' assumptions about the identity and attitudes of others locally (i.e., knowing who "we" are), some came from communication and interaction. In the case of Brixton, the Splash music festival brought together thousands of people

under the theme of Black /African-Caribbean culture, making salient an identity that linked Tottenham and Brixton. At this event, people not only spoke to others who shared the same sense of injustice as they did, they could also see that some of these others were ready to *act* on this injustice. Thus, interaction within the local ingroup appeared to strengthen understandings about both what was ingroup-normative as well as what was possible (Stott et al., 2018).

As well as explaining who joined in, the social identity model of riot diffusion suggests explanations for the "where" and "when". While a systematic comparison of riot vs non-riot locations is still required, the evidence presented here is consistent with the idea that rioting spread from Tottenham to a place where there was a critical mass of people who shared social identity with those in the initial riot location and to places where there was a critical mass of people who shared a common enemy. The evidence here is also consistent the claim of the model to be able to explain why riots happen in a particular temporal *sequence*. While it is likely that the street party acted as an "accelerator" of communication and consensus formation at Brixton, the other factor that helps explain why the Brixton riot happened the day before Croydon and Clapham is differential processes of social influence. Cognitive influence occurs relatively quickly because people "know" how they and others should act, based on self-definition. For the strategic pathway, however, accumulated evidence of the weakness of the common enemy is required. This was inferred from the growing number of riots that had occurred by Sunday night and therefore took more time.

Contributions to the literature

The contributions of this article to the literature on the social psychology of riots are three-fold. First, we provide the most detailed case studies to date of key events in the 2011 riots, which will be a resource for future researchers.

The second contribution is a new, meso-level explanation of riot diffusion that complements existing statistical analyses while avoiding the pitfalls of both irrationalism and narrow

rationalism. A full explanation of the spread of riots such as those in England in 2011 would include macro-level factors, such as why historically so many people are hostile to the police and alienated from the "system", why in certain locations police carry out high levels of searches of young Black men, the role of austerity in creating alienation, and so on. A meso-level explanation is also necessary, but explanations at this level have been inadequate until now. In contrast to contagion and rational choice approaches, our account shows that the identity of the source matters, for both initial spread and the sequence of events. Just as not everyone who heard about the initial rioting was influenced to do the same, so some sources are more self-relevant than others as a guide to what "we" should do.

It is true that some criminological research on the 2011 riots, using the rational choice approach, has previously argued that shared grievances were the basis of spread (Baudains et al., 2013a), which is similar to our claim that the theme of "injustice" linked Tottenham and Brixton. However, our analysis goes beyond this criminological analysis in important ways. Rather than relying largely on speculation, it has entailed an empirical investigation of experiences and motivations. The investigation suggested that identity (*who* suffered injustice?) operated as a prism for many participants' shared grievances – an identity which was racialized for some, reflecting a history of racialized police practices against Black people in London. In contrast to the instrumental subject implied by the rational choice approach, people in Brixton did not riot to address personal grievances, but rather to punish the police for a group-level wrong. Identity determines the content of "self-interest" and helps make sense of shared "injustice" motivations, which cost-benefit analysis cannot.

In agreement with previous research (Bohstedt & Williams, 1988; Myers, 2010; Singer, 1970), our analysis suggests that communication and interaction is important in the spread of riots. But again it matters who this communication is with. In the interview data we analysed, participants described speaking and listening to people in their own networks and communities. In addition,

while social movement theories are right to argue that shared action is constructed through discussion (e.g., Klandermans, 1992), to be persuasive the actions being suggested should be identity-congruent. This point was most obvious in the case of reports of interactions at Brixton Splash.

The third contribution of the present study is to the social identity approach. While the social psychology of riots has been transformed in the last 30 years by social identity concepts, the emphasis so far has mostly been on discrete events (e.g., Reicher, 1996; Stott & Drury, 2000; Stott et al., 2017). Here we have shown how this approach can be extended to the question of diffusion *between* events. Like the elaborated social identity model, our extension has collective empowerment at its heart. We are by no means the first to highlight the experience of empowerment among participants in the 2011 riots. Newburn et al. (2016) have previously shown that empowerment among those who were anti-police was prevalent and phenomenologically important. Stott et al. (2018; Ball et al., 2019) showed that experiences of empowerment among participants in Tottenham led some to travel to new locations to spread the rioting. However, what the present analysis has added is how empowerment is also a *"vicarious"* process that helps explain spread between events among people not previously involved: "we" gain the collective efficacy needed to participate in our local area when we see our common enemy weakened elsewhere.

Strengths, weaknesses, and caveats

The present study has a number of design strengths, including the quantity and quality of the dataset. A disadvantage of the interview corpus is that, because it was collected for another purpose than the present research, interviewees were not asked about topics of importance to us – in particular, identity and empowerment. However, an advantage is that the open format meant that there was considerable spontaneity in responses. Thus, a strength of the evidence is that interviewees' statements relating to our key constructs were unprompted.

A possible criticism is that participants might seek to portray themselves in a positive light. While clearly this will have been a motivation, it was notable how many of them were prepared to disclose involvement in activities that the interviewer might find morally objectionable. The guarantee of anonymity was another reason why we think most of the statements provided were authentic.

There were also features of the interview sample that should be acknowledged. Given that none of our sample was pro-police, we did not have a comparison group to systematically test our suggestion that only participants identifying as anti-police would be empowered by police vulnerability. Our sample was self-selecting. Of course we don't claim that the themes analysed here cover all forms of experience occurring during the 2011 English riots, but we do suggest that they help explain some key aspects of collective action in these events; therefore we would expect to find that other rioters would have had similar experiences to our interviewees.

Future work

There were additional factors to those analysed here that contributed to the diffusion of rioting across South London, including such things as the availability of transport into certain locations and not others. One theoretically interesting pathway of interdependence that should be examined more systematically in future research is actions by police and other authorities that attempt to respond to the riots but inadvertently increase the likelihood or scale of rioting in new locations (cf. Baudains et al., 2013a, 2013b). There was some evidence here that when police cleared the town centres of shoppers in Croydon and Clapham they inadvertently signalled to potential rioters the location where rioting would be taking place (cf. Ball et al., 2019). In addition, police control of space can have unforeseen consequences. In Croydon, static police cordons at the retail centres had the dual effects of conveying police inactivity and diverting rioters to other locations. Future work should therefore look specifically at the role of unintended consequences of police actions

in the spread of riots, in combination with testing the generality of the social identity model of diffusion, through examining other riots both in 2011 and in other waves.

The discourse and wider significance of interdependence

Myers and Przybysz (2010) and Baudains et al. (2013b) argue that the concept of "contagion" no longer refers to the mindless crowd psychology posited by Gustave Le Bon (1895). But if "contagion" is such a neutral concept, why do researchers in topics other than crowd violence prefer the term "diffusion" (see Myers, 1998, for example, on the literature on innovation)? The danger of the "contagion" concept is that what might be intended as simply another way of *describing* interdependence becomes reified into an *explanation* of that interdependence – one which pathologizes social processes.

Just as language matters, so interdependence itself matters. Unlike a single riot, a wave cannot be dismissed as a blip. The spread of riots tells us about deep societal problems. Historically, waves of riots have forced the authorities to make concessions, whether in the price of bread in eighteenth century France (Rudé, 1964, p. 29), in the United States following the 1960s ghetto riots (McAdam, 1982), or in 21st century France where *gilets jaunes* riots forced President Macron to scrap a fuel tax (Willsher, 2018).

Interdependence also matters for theory. The fundamental question is, how does social influence operate across riot events, since, unlike a social movement, there is no formal organization to coordinate normative action (Myers, 2010; Reicher, 1984)? Addressing this question means problematizing those speculative approaches that fail to explain why some people are more influential than others and why some people are influenced and not others. Understanding riot diffusion, we suggest, to a significant degree means understanding shared identity as both a limiting and an empowering mechanism of collective action across time and space.

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Table 1. Summary of extracts from sources for Brixton, Croydon and Clapham August 2011 riots

Location	Newspaper articles[†]	Official reports[†]	Academic journal articles & books[†]	Videos[†]	Blogposts[†]	Tweets	*Readng the Riots* interviews[†]	Field trips	Field interviews	Photos	Arrestees data
Brixton	13	13	11	39	10	296	23	1	1	46	129
Croydon	22	15	8	43	7	32	19	2	2	120	382
Clapham	32	11	8	68	1	11	41	2	0	83	96
Total	**67**	**39**	**27**	**150**	**18**	**339**	**83**	**4**	**4**	**249**	**607**

[†]Includes sources used across more than one location

Table 2a: Crime and arrestee data - Median distances from arrestee home to location of associated crime or disturbance assembly point

Disturbance Location	Distance: arrestee home (A) to crime (C) or assembly point (L)		
	Sample N	Median A-C (km)	Median A-L (km)
Brixton	124	2.04	2.55
Croydon	381	2.99	3.47
Croydon[1]	334	3.28	3.13
Clapham	90	3.28	3.65

1. Croydon dataset with crimes and arrestees removed for the peripheral disorders in Thornton Heath, Norbury, New Addington, Forestdale and Selsdon.

Table 2b: Arrestee data - age, gender and ethnicity

Disturbance Location	Age of arrestees						Gender of arrestees			Arrestee ethnicity (self reported)						
	Sample	Min Years	Max Years	Median Years	Mean Years	SD Years	Sample	Male	Female	Sample	Asian[1]	Black[2]	Mixed[3]	White[4]	Other[5]	None[6]
	N						N	%	%	N	%	%	%	%	%	%
Brixton	129	14	39	18	19.6	4.65	129	94	6	129	0.0	76.7	10.9	6.2	0.0	6.2
Croydon	382	12	50	19	22.0	7.70	382	85	15	382	8.4	41.6	7.9	38.5	2.6	1.0
Clapham	95	13	53	18	21.2	8.10	95	84	16	96	2.1	40.6	10.4	36.5	6.3	4.2

1. Includes MPS designations: A1 Indian, A2 Pakistani, A3 Bangladeshi and A9 Any other Asian background.

2. Includes MPS designations: B1 Caribbean, B2 African and B9 Any other black background.

3. Includes MPS designations: M1 White & Black Caribbean, M2 White & Black African, M3 White & Asian and M9 Any other mixed background.

4. Includes MPS designations: W1 British, W2 Irish and W9 Any other white background

5. Includes MPS designations: O1 Chinese and O9 Any other ethnic group.

6. Not stated.

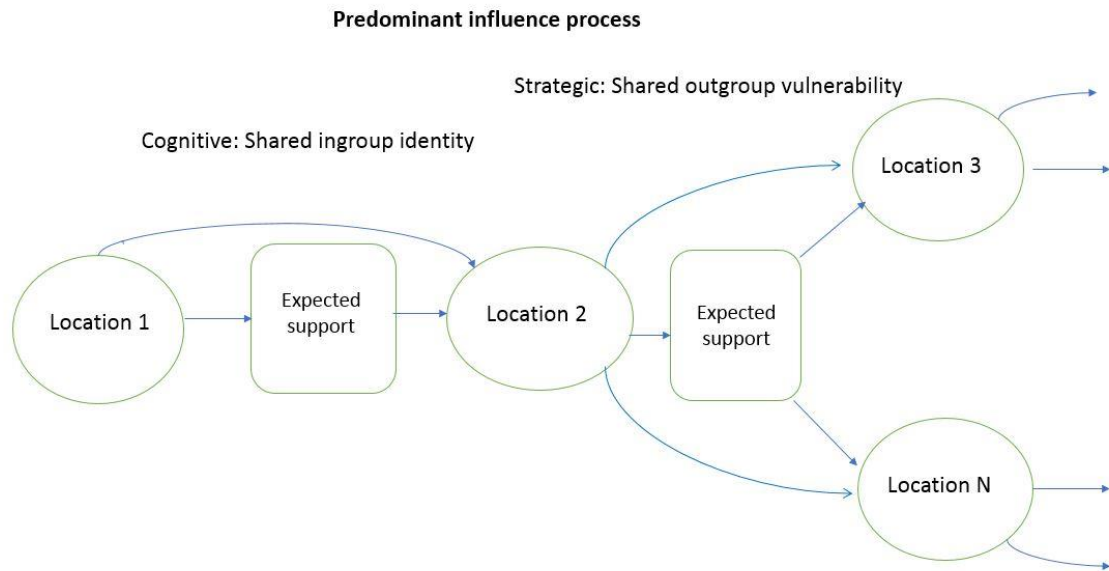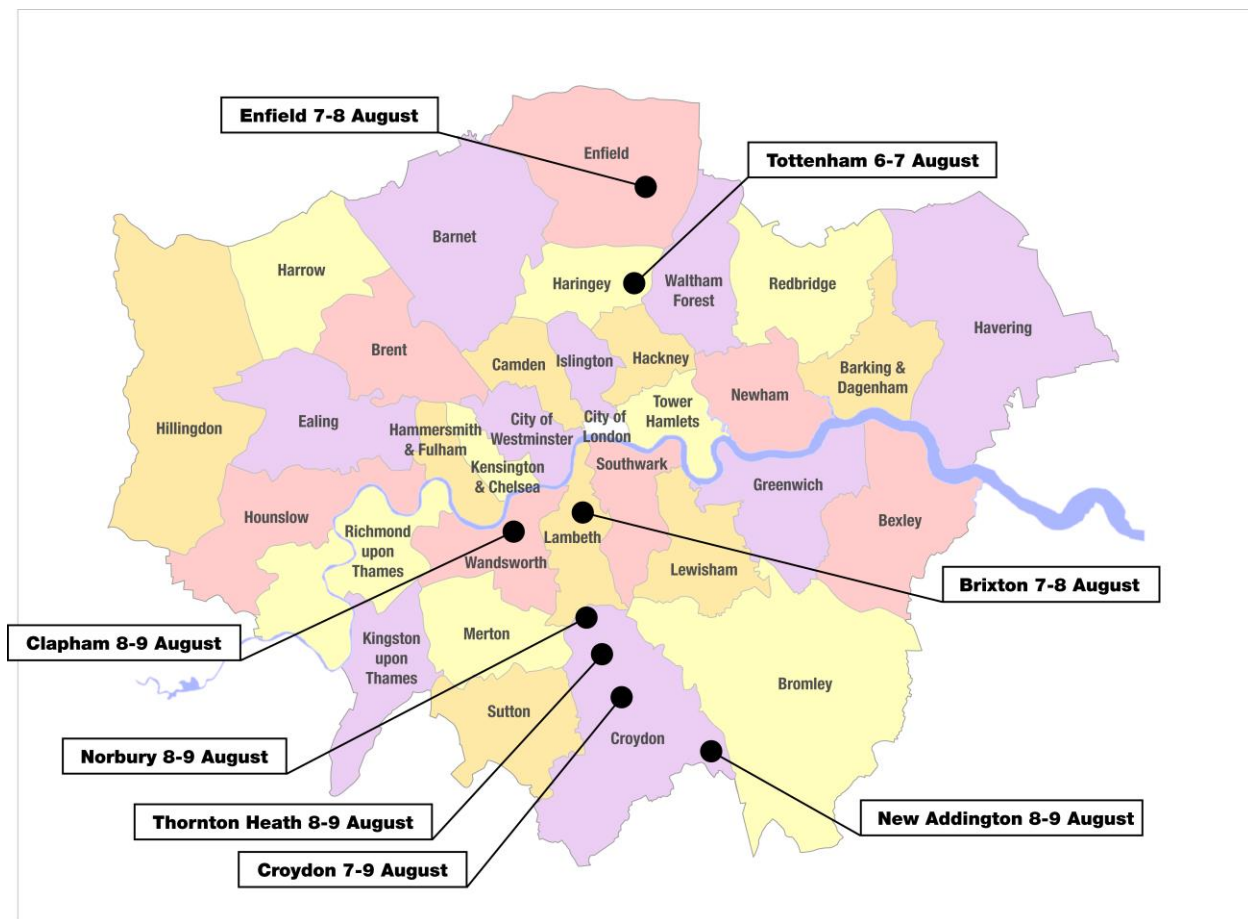**Figure 1**. Social Identity Model of Riot Diffusion

Figure 2. Locations of London riots 6-9th August 2011

[i] While Midlarsky (1978) distinguishes "diffusion" (defined as events having independent causes) and "contagion" (defined as interdependence), we follow the usage of Myers (1998, 2000, 2010) for whom "diffusion" simply means spread.

[ii] "Arrestee" here refers to people who were charged and summoned to court, cautioned, or had some other action taken which is considered to allow police to show a crime as being "cleared up" but does not necessarily mean that an individual was tried and convicted in a court for the offence.

[iii] Two of the interviews involved more than one person; we have counted each of these as one participant only because it was sometimes difficult to distinguish speakers.

[iv] A PSU is a mobile group of police officers who have undergone public order training. A typical PSU consists of three vans containing an inspector, three sergeants and 18 constables plus three drivers (College of Policing, 2018).

[v] Table Number KS201EW.

[vi] It is worth noting that violence against police is significantly underreported in crime statistics across all locations. For example, using the MPS crime data an analysis of disorder-related crimes committed during the Tottenham riot, 6-7 August 2011, (N = 146) shows that only eight crimes of violence (5.5 per cent of the sample) against police officers were recorded, yet it is also known that these events featured sustained collective violence against the police for eight hours (Stott et al., 2018).

[vii] For each extract, the long number refers to the number of the transcript in the *RtR* data-set.

[viii] This figure is likely to be an underestimate for this sample. For the *RtR* data-set as a whole (i.e., 270 interviewees), and based on a questionnaire administered at the end of the interview, Newburn et al. (2018) report that 73% stated that they had been subject to "stop and search" at least once in the previous year,

[ix] Dorothy "Cherry" Groce was a Black resident of Brixton shot in a bungled raid on her home when police were searching for her son; this was the precipitating incident for the 1985 Brixton riot.

[x] Smiley Culture was a British reggae artist who died in March 2011 during a police raid on his home.

[xi] "Postcode gangs" are territory-based affiliations among young people in London districts.