

Police, Press and Politics: Institutional Responses to Riots in Bradford 2001 and Manchester 2011

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Abstract

This article considers the immediate responses of mainstream national and local newspapers to incidents of large-scale urban unrest in English cities, specifically news media representations of the 2001 Bradford riot and 2011 Manchester riot. With a decade between these two events, an examination of media discourses reveals little alteration in reports of riots. This is despite significant political and technological change in the UK. In 2001, the scapegoats were young Asian males and in 2011 'feral' youth. One commonality is the 'mindlessness' of events, with the media presenting little justification for the actions of the rioters. Why is urban disorder presented as mindless and criminal by the media? Hegemonic values offer an explanation for this process. Comparative analysis reveals that whilst the two sets of offenders were treated differently by the criminal justice system, with punishment being harsher for those involved in the 2001 riot, little has changed in media narratives, indicating that who is in political power has little impact on media reports.

Introduction

The events of summer 2011 in the UK provoked much debate within sociology and criminology (Bauman 2011, Gorringer and Rosie 2011, Jefferson 2011, Moxon 2011). This paper will compare and contrast the Bradford 'riot' of 7 July 2001 and the urban unrest in Greater Manchester on 9 August 2011. In particular, the focus is media representations of these two events and how and why urban disorder is presented as mindless and criminal. The main agents involved in this process are the Government and police, who actively label and define 'criminal' behaviour and the media who have some influence on how this behaviour is understood by the public. Arguably "*the culture and institutions of social control were as much part of the deviant or criminal phenomena as those who committed crime*" (Hall et al 2013: xii). These institutions are concerned with the perpetuation of hegemonic values which serve the needs of the powerful.

This article interrogates whether 'in the moment', or immediate media representations of disorder have changed in the decade between the two riots. Just as 'Policing the Crisis' (Hall et al 2013) was not primarily about why individuals become muggers or how to control mugging, the main focus here is not on why people were rioting (as this only tells part of the story) but more importantly how English society reacted to the riots. Having said this it is useful to give some background information on both disturbances to put them in context. In the case of Bradford, race was an important factor. This was just months before the attack on the World Trade Center, which resulted in increasingly divergent and antagonistic global media reports of the Muslim population (Spalek 2002, Abbas 2007). Racism was also a

catalyst for the urban unrest in August 2011 due to the shooting dead of a young man, Mark Duggan of African-Caribbean descent by police in London. The Metropolitan Police's poor response to requests from the local community for answers regarding this, led to looting of local shops in Tottenham, London (Solomos 2011). A failure of the Metropolitan police to mobilise enough officers in a timely fashion to the situation in Tottenham led to rioting in other parts of London and the following day across 22 boroughs including Manchester (Travis 2011). The Muslim extremist folk devil played no part in the events of 9 August 2011 in Greater Manchester; rather media reports scapegoated 'feral' youth. This article explains the role of the police and politicians as primary definers (Hall et al 2013) of criminal behavior and the media as secondary definers (Mason 2009, Hall et al 2013) of events. A comparative analysis facilitates an answer to the question of how urban disorder media narratives/representations may have altered in the decade between the two events.

The Creation of News Reports: Primary and Secondary Definers

Often the media report on events outside the audience's first-hand experience, therefore can be a key source of information and possibly influence. Journalists tend to write stories which they consider to be newsworthy, based on what they think will be of interest to their audience such as extraordinary events. According to Hall et al (2013) there are three aspects to the social production of news. These are i) the bureaucratic organization of media which creates types/categories of news stories, ii) the structure of news values which gives order or ranking of stories and iii) the construction of the story itself by the media so that it is comprehensible to the audience. The third aspect is important as *"an event only 'makes sense' if it can be located within a range of known social and cultural identifications"* (Hall et al 2013: 57). Making an event intelligible to the reader is a social process and assumes some sort of consensus within society. This consensus is based on the notion that we all have the same maps of meaning from which we make sense of the world around us. Language is an obvious part of the consensus, but having common cultural values is also important. *"This view denies any major structural discrepancies between the different groups, or between the very different maps of meaning in society. This 'consensual' viewpoint has important political consequences [...] It carries the assumption that we all have roughly the same interests in the society, and that we all have an equal share of the power in society"* (Hall et al 2013: 58 emphasis in the original).

For Hall et al (2013) the focus is not on media ownership (which tends to be concentrated in the hands of a few powerful corporations) but on the way news is produced to serve the interests of the powerful, thus upholding the hegemony. Whilst journalistic values of objectivity, impartiality and balance exist, it is often the case that the media tend to rely on the opinion of authority figures or experts, such as politicians when reporting on political matters, or the police when covering crime related stories. These experts become the 'primary definers' of news; they help establish what the 'problem' actually is and how it will be framed. They play an active rather than passive role. However, *"the cohesiveness and uniformity of primary definers has been over-estimated, ignoring the tensions and competing discourses between them"* (Mason 2009: 195). The media are secondary rather than primary definers of news as they do not decide what the 'problem' is, but do reproduce the views of powerful experts. Therefore, the media play a key part in the labelling process (Marsh and Melville 2011). Mason (2009) takes the Gramscian view that the press legitimate the existing social order, which maintains the dominant ideology. Hegemony may be challenged and subject to change so *"consent must be constantly won and re-won"* (Fiske 1991: 291). Journalists act as mediators between experts and the 'structured ignorance' (Hall

et al 2103) of the general public. Of course, the media also practice selectivity, so not all experts who are consulted will be included in a news story. This selectivity allows the media to transform their version of events to suit their readership.

Crime as News and Scapegoats

Crime is socially constructed and what constitutes a criminal act may change dependent on the era and context in which it occurs. Crime tends to be behaviour which crosses the boundaries of consensus and the law plays an important role in what constitutes a crime (Hall et al 2013). Violent crime tends to be (over) reported in the media and deemed the most newsworthy. Urban crimes such as rioting are considered newsworthy not only because they are violent, but also because cities are viewed as a symbol of civilisation and centres of capital wealth. *“The ‘state of the city’ is, in a sense, the ‘tide-mark’ of civilisation”* (Hall et al 2013 144).

The process of identifying a folk devil (first popularised by Cohen (1972)) who carries the blame for all society’s ills is not a new occurrence. Anomalous groups are those who diverge from the hegemonic identity of white, middle class, middle aged and usually male. Unsurprisingly the antithesis of this (the black unemployed youth) is habitually constructed as deviant. One of the inconveniences of a postmodern society which celebrates difference and diversity is that difference is heightened and more conspicuous (Young 1999) potentially creating more folk devils. Paradoxically the proliferation of media also means *“folk devils themselves are less marginalized than they once were* (McRobbie and Thornton 1995: 559).

Media representations of the urban unrest in Bradford focus on the folk devil of young Asian male, namely the Muslim extremist, scapegoated for being criminally blameworthy and socially problematic due to failure to ‘integrate’ (Massey and Singh-Tatla 2012). Since 9/11, it is no longer ‘Pakis’ with different cultural practices who are the problem, but Muslims living by different and separate values (Kundnani 2007). In Bradford, the majority of the rioters were male and fitted comfortably with the image of the ‘gang’ member. As Alexander (2004) states: *‘reports up to, during and after the riots weave a picture of angry young men, alienated from society and their own communities, entangled in a life of crime and violence’* (2004: 531).

In Manchester, ‘feral’ youth is identified as the folk devil. This label is not peculiar to Manchester. *“In the less reputable parts of the British media rising rates of youth unemployment are attributed variously to laziness, lack of application and other personal failings”* (McDowell 2012: 573). This combined with concerns around anti-social behaviour and provision within the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act to punish such behaviour (typically associated with working class teenagers) scapegoated young people for all the ills of society. Historically, youth is a category represented with negative overtones (Furlong and Cartmel 1997). However, there is a paradoxical nature to cultural constructions of youth too, as Pain (2001) argues that young people can be simultaneously dangerous and vulnerable. Similarly, Males (1999) asserts that youths are a group society is afraid of and afraid for. In addition, young people have had the discouraging experience of attracting the label ‘anti-social’ (Goldsmith 2008). *“Three decades ago in an earlier crisis Stuart Hall and his colleagues (1978) documented the rise of ‘the mugger’ as the quintessential hate figure for the media. Today the more generic replacement is a ‘feral youth’”* (McDowell 2012: 573).

Typical Media Riot Discourse

The main commonality in both media discourses around ‘riots’ (and indeed the majority of riots) is that they are presented as irrational, mindless acts of violence. News rarely represents urban disorder as legitimate, rational, political protest. However, Waddington et al (1989) make two important points. Firstly, collective behaviour does not have to be rational or irrational but may in fact be both. Secondly, the social context of acts are significant; riots do not tend to occur without reason. *‘The model of a flashpoint combines reference to the antecedent conditions (the ‘tinder’) with a highlighting of interpersonal interaction (the ‘spark’)’* (Waddington et al 1989: 2). The ‘tinder’ is identifiable by observing the social and cultural conditions present in the UK.

For the 2001 Bradford riot the ‘tinder’ included conditions such as inadequate resources, social grievances and lack of political representation for the local Asian community (Benyon and Solomos, 1987). The ‘spark’ (Waddington et al 1989) was a protest against forthcoming marches planned by extreme anti-immigration organizations and right-wing anti-Muslim groups the National Front (NF) and British National Party (BNP) (Macey 2002, Bagguley and Hussain 2003, Kundnani 2007).

There did not seem to be any obvious spark for the 2011 riots in Greater Manchester. This suggests unrest was ‘copycat’ behaviour (Wain and Joyce 2012) emulating rioting elsewhere in the country. Lea and Young (1982) argue it is the violence of the police, which sparks riots. The riots started in London where the shooting of Mark Duggan by the police provided a spark, but those rioting in Manchester were not necessarily protesting about this (Massey 2012). In terms of tinder Lamy (2012) argues the 2011 riots were a result of successive governments’ failure to deal with the social revolution (1960s) and economic revolution (1980s) resulting in increased individualisation and devastation of the social fabric. Other explanations for the 2011 urban unrest, riots or ‘disorder events’ (Home Office 2011) include consumer culture (Bauman 2011, Moxon 2011, Winlow and Hall 2012), economic inequalities (Grover 2011) and timid policing (Gorringer and Rosie 2011). Having said this, the response by institutions (such as the state and media) rather than the causes of unrest are the main focus of this paper.

In essence, urban unrest becomes politicised and abstracted from the local context. Following the 2011 riots political rubric described culprits of urban violence as the ‘feral underclass’ (Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State Ken Clarke) and ‘feral criminal underclass’ (Mayor of London Boris Johnson). Prime Minister David Cameron claimed that ‘parts of society frankly are sick’. Here we can see ‘right-thinking’ people or moral entrepreneurs operating the moral barricades (Cohen 1972, Critcher 2003). These politicians act as primary definers (Hall et al 2013) of the riots by illustrating how far removed from ‘civil’ and ‘right’ behaviour rioters have become. It is not in fact the act, which is deviant but society’s response to it. Hall et al (2013) argue crime and deviance are social constructs and any behavior challenging normative ideas about social order is classified as deviant. The British media has played a role in constructing a new underclass in recent years (Hayward and Yar 2006) yet this explanation is too simplistic as not all rioters were poor and not all poor populations are violent (Lamy 2012). However, Lea and Young’s (1982) liberal thesis argues riots are in fact, a revolt of the underclass: *‘the riots are not seen as acts of unbridled and uncivilized selfishness and criminal mindedness but as a collective demonstration of despair’* (Lea and Young 1982:6).

Contextualising the riots: British society, culture and politics 2001-2011

This section of the paper outlines significant shifts in British society in the decade between the two riots. The aim is to establish whether changes in government had any impact on media reports of riots. Politically the Coalition Government replaced the New Labour Government (who came into power in 1997) in 2010. The Coalition aimed to restructure the public sector within five years via austerity with profound retrenchment and cuts to public spending aiming to clear the national debt and reduce the role of the state (Taylor-Goody 2011). The introduction of welfare to work/workfare critics have argued, is tantamount to slave labour and the ideology behind workfare seems to be around indolence and a lack of motivation, rather than a paucity of real employment opportunities for young people, further stigmatising the unemployed (Jordan 2013). Those who are young and unemployed face double demonisation.

In terms of policy and legislation, there are two noteworthy changes to regulations. These are the introduction of the Anti-social Behaviour Act in 2003 and an increase in police stop and search powers. Some have argued the Anti-social Behaviour Act has simply criminalised many youth behaviours such as rowdiness, creating noise, being a nuisance, street drinking and vandalism (Squires 2008, Goldson and Muncie 2008).

With reference to the media, the Leveson Inquiry brought into question the morality of the institution. The inquiry began in 2012 aiming to investigate firstly the role of the media and secondly the role of the police into the 2011 phone-hacking scandal. The first part of the inquiry examined the ethics and culture of the press along with their relations with the police, the public and politicians. The inquiry is ongoing, as the second part of the inquiry regarding the police is pending at the time of writing. No doubt, the outcome of the Hillsborough Inquiry in April 2016, which ruled police had unlawfully killed football fans, does not create a positive image of the police and may have an impact. The main recommendations were the press should continue to be self-regulated and a new body should devise a new code of conduct to ensure the public would feel confident complaints taken seriously (Leveson 2012). Whilst self-regulation of the media has been criticised it also allows British media independence from state intervention, thereby providing a balance between freedom and regulation (Brock 2014). One major change in terms of a more democratic media has been the introduction of social media and social networks such as Facebook and Twitter. Though some have argued the role of Facebook in the Arab Spring was, overstated (Reardon 2012) it is credible to say such types of social media have the potential to bring like-minded people together and to fuel social movements. Other online communication sites such as YouTube have the potential to provide alternative accounts of events to those presented in the mass media.

Methods

“Although the classic methods of ethnography are participant observation, listening and interviewing, any approach that assists the journey towards a detailed empirical knowledge of a particular ‘social world’ can be ethnographic: wading through mounds of newspapers (primary materials for the ‘social world’ of social reaction); reading masses of secondary material in the form of books, articles and commentaries” (Hall et al 2013: xi). This paper examines how media representations of riot have changed over the ten-year period between events, using thematic content analysis. In particular, whether a change in government has had an impact is key. The analysis draws on critical discourse analysis (Fairclough 2010)

and in particular language used to construct ‘folk devils’ (Cohen 1972) and ‘scapegoat’ (Young 1999) particular groups. Why the media and Government create scapegoats is a pertinent question, but arguably how this occurs is also gainful. It is unlikely journalists set out, or intend to demonise certain groups. Arguably the Government is looking for a ‘blameworthy’ group to detract attention from themselves, whilst the media are looking to create ‘newsworthy’ stories by focusing on extreme incidences (such as a nine year old boy looting in 2011) leading readers down a particular path to assume this is ‘typical’ behaviour. Such themes and discourses ‘frame’ events in a particular way (Scheufele 1999). Discourse has three basic characteristics; it is related to the institutional context (in this case the media) in which it occurs, it has an impact on our identity and understanding of reality and finally it operates in an exclusionary way (Cricher 2003). Whilst the classic notion of a discourse analysis is not deployed, qualitative content analysis does identify culturally and socially located narratives. This paper builds on previous research (Massey and Singh-Tatla 2012) on media representations of the Bradford riot.

Analysis of broadsheet, tabloid and online news sites was undertaken. The sample comprised articles gathered in the two-day period after each riot. The intention was not to look at longitudinal accounts of events, but rather to examine the ‘in the moment’ immediate reports of each instance or urban unrest. As Young (2009) comments “*what is disproportionate is the reaction to its immediate manifestation. It is proportional to the anxiety, not to the actual event*” (2009: 14). This two-day window after each event meant the data was more manageable and comparable. In addition, it allows an observation of immediate reaction to events highlighting ‘knee jerk’, reactions the Government. In total twenty news articles were analysed with ten reporting on the Bradford riot published between the 8th and 10th of July 2001 and ten on the Manchester riot published between the 9th and 11th of August 2011. A full list of newspaper articles utilized is available in the bibliography. The data was drawn from a newspaper database (Lexis Nexis) and news websites. Only regular news articles written by journalists were selected (rather than editorials, letters or op-eds) to strengthen the validity for comparative analysis. The national newspapers analysed constitute 86% of UK national daily newspaper circulation. Local newspapers were included for both riots with one report from the Manchester Evening News and one from the Bradford Telegraph and Argus. News media is not a monolithic entity, therefore, a reasonably wide selection of news reports was utilised to allow for ample analysis of the ideological and political gamut of British media. In addition, news media reproduces the hegemony (Hall 1980) and does little to challenge this or dismantle stereotypes. “*News practices are inscribed by relations of power (and therefore the power to represent) with degrees of power in the hands of different groups within and outside the industry*” (Poole 2002: 52-3). Those outside the industry include global business and commerce, political parties and powerful lobbies (Poole 2002).

The aim was to look at pressing rather than long term media narratives. This makes the reports on two events more easily comparable, however, it is important to remember at this stage very few facts were available and the underlying causes of events emerged over time. Manchester and Bradford are the two cities under investigation as both are deindustrialised and at least a quarter of both cities’ populations consist of BME groups (ONS 2013). Given previous media analysis of the Bradford riot (Massey and Singh-Tatla 2012) when the Manchester riot occurred it presented an opportunity to carry out comparative analysis. Much of the academic debate on the 2011 riots focused on the causes of it (Bauman 2011, Gorringer and Rosie 2011, Grover 2011, Moxon 2011). Wain and Joyce (2012) carried out a comparative analysis of the Manchester riots in 1981 and 2001, but this also focused on the

causes of the disorder and made recommendations for future policing of riots. All of this indicates a paucity of comparative analysis of media representation of riots. We will now turn to the findings in order to establish whether the decade between the two events (which involved a change in government and the development of social media) made an impact on media representations of riots.

Findings: Bradford Media Reports

Primary analysis of newspapers revealed five recurring themes or issues in the texts. These were mindless violence, racism, policing, the 'localness' of rioters and the British National Party/National Front. Adjectives used to describe rioters included 'mobs', 'common criminals bent on destruction', 'gang members', 'racist thugs', 'yobs', 'thugs' 'youths' and 'gangs'. Events are represented as 'mindless violence and reckless destruction', 'pure thuggery' and 'savagery'. Bystander accounts in the Guardian newspaper included comments about 'mindless people' and 'mindless idiots' with 'no justification' for damaging property and innocent people. Politicians were quoted as condemning the riot as 'simple thuggery' (Tony Blair then Prime Minister quoted in The Daily Mirror 10/07/01) and 'wanton violence' (David Blunkett then Home Secretary quoted in The Independent 09/07/01). Here we can see primary definers (Hall et al 2013) of events, making a judgment on those who have crossed moral boundaries (Cohen 1972).

Racism and racial tension in the city were issues recognised by many newspaper reports. In particular poor race relations between the Asian population and the police. One resident interviewed by the Daily Mirror states 'the young lads have only seen Asians being arrested and they've reacted'. The same article describes a racist attack on one white man by around twelve Asian men. Another white man with 'England' tattooed on his back was also beaten to the ground according to a further article in the Daily Mirror 08/07/01. The Sun newspaper reports similarly how 'a dozen Asian attackers surrounded their white victim'. It is interesting to note newspaper reports omit accounts where the attackers are white and Asians are victims. It seems neither group is blameless; it is difficult to ascertain which group (white or Asian youths) are the worst offenders. Four reports portray whites as the attackers, three state that Asians were the attackers and two newspapers apportion equal blame to both groups. It seems multiculturalism in Bradford is far from unproblematic. Numerous media accounts, (which have many mutualities with official reports), counter pose 'social cohesion' to the supposed separatism of multiculturalism, as well as to the reality of segregation (Massey and Singh Tatla 2012). However, the BBC report these were not classic race riots but rather 'socially deprived youths wanting a "bit of fun"' (BBC 10/07/01). Whilst race is still an issue here the concern seems to be about violent behaviour in general, rather than something attributed to any ethnic group in particular.

Islamophobia is evident in one headline in the Daily Telegraph stating 'Muslim Parents and Mosques are to Blame'. Parents of Pakistanis (who are predominantly Muslim) are heavily criticised for not 'taking control' of their children and mosques are described as 'training grounds for the Taliban'. In addition, the Guardian describes Muslims as a 'separate community' who have not integrated as the Hindu, Bangladeshi and Sikh communities have. The news reports do not provide evidence of or scrutinise sources of segregation, but present it as an over-simplified 'explanation' for the riots, insinuating it is the Asian and Muslim population who are to blame (Bagguley and Hussain 2003). The data analysed indicated the tabloid press had a tendency to show blanket hostility toward those actively involved in the disturbance by demonising them, while using selective and concise information about

events. The discourse here is that Muslims are the threat; the media presents them stereotypically as potential terrorists. Discourses suggest anyone associated with Islam has potential affiliation to extremist groups and therefore a 'would-be bomber' (Poole 2002). Unfortunately, "*failing to make a distinction between Islam and Islamists has negative implications for all Muslims because it implies that the problem resides in the religion and in the people who follow it, rather than in alternative factors*" (Poole 2002: 9).

The policing of the Bradford riots was criticised both for being too heavy-handed and not harsh enough. In particular, there were concerns about the thirty-six arrests of which twenty-three were Asian and thirteen white, seemingly biased against the Asian population despite rioters being both white and Asian. This is attributed to the long history of poor race relations between the Asian community in Bradford and the police. One article describes the police presence as 'too small and underprepared' (Independent 09/07/01). Indeed, police themselves admitted they were almost overwhelmed in a Daily Telegraph report. The Bradford Telegraph and Argus gives an account of riot police instructed to 'hold their line' during clashes between police and Asian youths. According to the account it is actually an Asian elder who succeeded in dispersing the group of Asians by speaking to them in the early hours of the morning. Whilst the police faced criticism there is no narrative around them being a potential threat as a racist institution; instead, hegemony perpetuates the narrative of the white ruling elite.

Half the newspapers mentioned the rioters were not necessarily local residents. Given the local community suffered significant damage this would make sense and contradict the representation of rioters as 'mindless'. Despite this, one newspaper reported rioters as 'destroying their own community', yet the same source also reported five local arrests. This is quite low considering there were thirty-six arrests in total. One local Bradford resident interviewed by the Observer newspaper stated 'there are just a handful of people from Bradford involved.' However, another argues the violence was not caused by outsiders (The Observer 09/07/01). Ultimately, it is in the interests of the media to portray the rioters as local, because the act of damaging their own community is more mindless.

Media views on right-wing extreme groups instigating the riots are mixed. 'No provocation offered last Saturday justified the orgy of violence and destruction that followed. There was no Fascist march' (The Daily Mirror 10/07/01). Here, The Mirror neglects to acknowledge the widely publicised *threat* of such a march, and the gatherings of racist groups in the city (Massey and Singh Tatla 2012). Overall most newspapers assigned some blame to the neo-fascist presence. Bagguley and Hussain (2003) argue right-wing groups are denounced to some extent, nevertheless there are other deeper-rooted problems as right wing groups have been in existence for several decades and riots have rarely broken out in the past. Clearly, extreme right-wing groups acted as a spark for the Bradford riot, however, other issues including multiculturalism, ('reverse') racism, unemployment, and (self) segregation cannot be ignored (Massey and Singh Tatla 2012). Primary definers or 'experts' then labelled the urban unrest as 'wanton' and morally wrong. Consequentially media reports portray the Muslim population, rather than right wing extremists, as the identified threat. The mass media presented this group as mindless, violent and holding radical Islamic views. The solution lies with the Asian community to integrating into existing British society.

Findings: Greater Manchester Media Reports

Primary analysis revealed four dominant themes or discourses. These were jobs/out of control youth, mindless violence, police struggling to cope and vengeful punishment of the

rioters. This headline from the Daily Mail sums up the way youth is represented in many of the media reports: ‘Child looters’ rampage: How rioters as young as nine pillaged Manchester City Centre’. In fact whilst a large number of rioters were under the age of 21 the majority of them (53 per cent) were aged 22 and above as illustrated in Table One below.

Age in years	Percentage of Manchester rioters
18-21	43%
22-25	17%
26-34	20%
35+	20%

Table One: Age of Manchester rioters (adapted from Clarke 2012)

Other sources describe young people as ‘feral’ and words such as ‘rampage’ and ‘prowled’ highlight the alleged wildness and animalistic behaviour of those involved in the disorder. It is interesting to note the implication is of having a mindless mob mentality, yet Le Bon (1952) argues crowds have ‘collective mind’. Research conducted after the riots by the Guardian and LSE (2011) found that rioters in Manchester (and London) described themselves as ‘one big gang’ during the urban unrest.

The disorder in Manchester involved looting and it seems youths did not fear punishment with one stating in the Daily Mail ‘the prisons are overcrowded – what are they going to do, give me an ASBO? I’ll live with that’. A number of media reports used quotes from Assistant Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police, Gary Shewan who described events as ‘Wanton acts of violence and criminality’ in The Guardian. In the same report, Shewan added ‘these are pure and simple criminals running wild tonight [...] they have nothing to protest against. There has been no spark’. A bystander interviewed by the Manchester Evening news agreed: ‘nothing in Manchester has happened to provoke this behaviour’. Interestingly it seems that whilst the crowds of rioters were violent no one was actually injured. Also, the official statistics for recorded crime in Greater Manchester indicate that only 13 per cent of crime came under the category of ‘violence against the person’ with the majority of crime categorised as acquisitive or criminal damage (Home Office 2011). Here we can see youths stereotypically portrayed as violent and mindless, yet the ‘facts’ tell a different story in terms of actual injuries and instances of violent crime.

The low numbers of police officers present at the Greater Manchester riots as reported by the media was because Greater Manchester Police (GMP) had sent reinforcements to London in order to deal with disturbances in the capital. Inadequate policing of initial urban unrest in London may be due to rioting being unexpected, or insufficient numbers of officers being available. The fact that then Prime Minister David Cameron, Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg, Mayor of London Boris Johnson, Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne and Home Secretary Theresa May were all away from London on holiday cannot have helped matters. Whilst Sir Hugh Orde (President of the Association of Chief Police Officers) claimed the return of senior ministers from holiday was ‘irrelevant’ (Newburn 2011) the crisis was controlled more effectively once senior politicians returned. Meaningfully reports of the disorder in London had focused on police failing to control rioters, resulting in those involved in subsequent copycat riots (Wain and Joyce 2012) expecting little police intervention. One BBC news headline said ‘Police ‘overwhelmed’ by riots in Manchester and Salford’. Police were criticised by a local Labour MP Graham Stringer who thought the Chief Constable of GMP had ‘a lot to answer for.’ It is interesting to note the blame

apportioned to the police here for events. Other descriptions of events use language such as ‘struggling’ and ‘overwhelmed’ to describe the police as they were outnumbered by ‘gangs’ of rioters. Arguably, the sheer numbers in attendance at the riots provoked anxiety (Tuan 1979). Crowds are even more threatening when they are organized (Rude 1981) in this instance by new social media. There is evidence Blackberry Messenger (BBM) helped to muster crowds (Ball and Lewis 2011, Baker 2011).

The notion of harsh punishment for involvement in urban disorder is clear in a quotation from Assistant Chief Constable Terry Sweeney who said in the Daily Mirror ‘we will not allow such mindless criminal damage and wanton violence to go unpunished and we will arrest and prosecute anyone found to be involved in looting or acts of criminal damage’. A discourse around justice was also prevalent with the emphasis on the number of arrests made and continuous targeting of offenders. The actual number of arrests made varies from one media source to another with the Mail Online reporting 113 arrests, the Manchester Evening News announcing 47 arrests with more to follow (a figure corroborated by The Guardian). Home Office data (2011) indicates that in Greater Manchester 581 recorded crimes occurred with 326 arrests made evidencing an arrest rate of 56% rather contradicting the zealous promises made by police in the media. It was not solely teenage youths who were at risk of prosecution according to the Mail Online a police source said “we have information that children of primary school age were out on the streets. Charges of neglect could be brought against any parent if their young children are found on the streets in the midst of a civil disturbance”. As the riots occurred during school summer holidays, it is not truancy which is an issue, but rather poor supervision or parenting. Here we can see blame being placed on parents rather than their offspring. A solution to the problem is also emerging in the form of retribution, justice and harsh punishment. The Government and police act as primary definers (Hall et al 2103) as they label the riots as mindless criminal damage and wanton violence. The media as secondary definers (Hall et al 2103) reproduce this view using adjectives such as ‘feral’, wild and violent. Having crossed the moral boundary the solution for these deviants is punishment, the harsher the better.

Comparative Analysis of Bradford 2001 and Greater Manchester 2011

When comparing the two episodes of urban unrest there are some similarities in media representations. Despite being ten years apart it seems little has changed in terms of news reporting given the creation of ‘folk devils’ (Cohen 1972) was evident in both events, though it is noteworthy the two folk devils were different as will be discussed later. News reports of both events used identical adjectives for those involved. These include thugs, youths and gangs. The word victim(s) appears in media reports with reference to local businesses and people. The language authorities such as politicians and the police use both in 2001 and 2011 is almost identical. The phrase ‘wanton violence’ occurs repeatedly and there is mention of ‘simple thuggery’ and ‘simple criminals’. This suggests the thuggery was either mindless or straightforward; either way it does not require explanation according to the authorities. However, research conducted on the riots by the Guardian and LSE states *‘rioters identified a number of other motivating grievances, from the increase in tuition fees, to the closure of youth services and the scrapping of the education maintenance allowance. Many complained about perceived ‘social and economic injustices’* (Guardian and LSE 2011: 5).

With reference to race and ethnicity, data on those arrested (see table two) indicates the majority of those arrested in Greater Manchester were white in contrast to those arrested in Bradford who belonged to BME groups. Finally, parents face blame (in part) for both riots.

Ethnicity	Bradford (adapted from Bagguley and Hussain 2003)	Greater Manchester (adapted from Home Office 2011)
White	4%	77%
BME	96%	23%

Table Two: Ethnicity of those arrested for rioting

In the case of Bradford, parents have lost control of their offspring particularly Muslim parents. In Manchester, it is parents of children, rather than youths, whose parenting skills, are questionable as some of those involved in the urban disorder were of primary school age (under eleven years old).

One of the differences in the reports is the consequences for these parents, as those in Manchester face the threat of charges of neglect by GMP. There is no mention of punishment for parents in Bradford, though this could be because the rioters in Bradford are older. A much more punitive discourse exists around events in Manchester with a definite promise of harsh sentencing for those involved. As previously, mentioned one rioter in Manchester encountered by the Daily Mail did not feel threatened by an ASBO. GMP were keen to proclaim they would not allow mindless criminal damage to go unpunished and delivered their promise by holding 24 hour magistrate courts to process those arrested. One tentative finding here is the Coalition Government wanted to give the impression of handing out harsh punishments. Research indicates that harsh sentencing for rioters is common, as riot sentencing remarks by the judiciary are usually negative, regardless of the rioters' level of participation (Lowenstein 2016). In terms of sentencing, there was a 'new vindictiveness' (Jefferson 2011) towards those involved in the disorder, with harsh sentences being given. One twenty two year old male received two years and nine months imprisonment for burglary and twelve months apportioned to a twenty five year old male for handling stolen goods (Manchester Evening News 2011). These sentences may appear excessive, but in comparison to those given to the Bradford rioters which include a twenty one year old male facing four years and nine months for hurling two stones and a twenty two year old receiving eight and a half years for hurling a petrol bomb at police line (Allen 2003) they seem relatively lenient. These observations are only cursory as it is difficult to compare the two events, as the Bradford riot did not appear to involve looting.

In terms of the violence of the police (Lea and Young 1982) being a factor there is a history of poor race relations between police and local communities in both cities. However, it is difficult to blame violent policing in Manchester, as the police presence was so low. In addition, timid policing and low numbers of officers on the streets (Rosie and Gorringe 2011) during initial rioting in London led others in disenfranchised areas to believe they would not face punishment for rioting. Having said this, historically public/police relations have been dubitable. Jefferson (2011) argues the police who are often criticised for being too hard on rioters were, instead castigated for being too timid during the 2011 urban disorder. This approach was short lived though as after the unrest 450 detectives were deployed to hunt down offenders across England (Jefferson 2011), indicating a return to punitive measures. Police are framed as 'struggling to cope' in 2011 and feeling 'almost overwhelmed' in 2001. After the 2011 riots Sir Dennis O'Connor in a report to a Commons Home Affairs Select Committee recommended that police use tactics which allowed police

to advance and disrupt rioters, rather than more traditional ‘stand, hold, protect’ techniques typically used to police protests (Travis 2011).

Another similarity was the way the media constructed events as acts of criminality while emphasising the role of ‘gangs’ and the urban underclass (Solomos 2011). Those in Greater Manchester would arguably easily fit into the category of ‘angry young men’ (Alexander 2004) engaged in lawless violence activity and marginalised by society. However, it is noteworthy that whilst the word ‘gang’ did appear in media reports official statistics show that only five per cent of those arrested in Greater Manchester had any kind of gang affiliation (Home Office 2011). The term ‘gang’ is often misused (Ralphs et al 2009) and applied in a haphazard way to groups of youths whether they actually belong to a criminal gang or not.

Few positive reports of young people emerged in the initial media reports on events in Manchester, however, post-riot the report of the Riots Communities and Victims Panel acknowledges ‘More young people were involved in the clean-up operation than the riots themselves – however, media reports generally did not reflect this’ (Riots Communities and Victims Panel 2012). This report also highlights evidence provided to the Leveson Inquiry by the Youth Media Agency, which emphasised the persistently negative representations and discourses about young people in media reporting of the 2011 disturbances (Giner and Jones 2012). In reality young people are diverse and neither wholly law abiding nor totally criminal. Whilst in Bradford rioters were described as young (Macey 2002, Alexander 2004) and arguably out of control, there was little evidence of children being actively involved in the disturbances. The youngest age mentioned in reports on Bradford was fourteen. In Manchester some reports acknowledge ‘children as young as nine’, creating both anxiety around a loss of childhood innocence and increased dangerousness (Males 1999, Pain 2001) regarding minors. This discourse concerning ‘feral’ youth and the moral overtones accompanying it was absent in reports of incidents in Bradford. However, in both cases parents are blameworthy whether it be those of Muslims in Bradford or young children in Manchester. Members of the local community (whether they be parents or youths) are framed more frequently in these newspaper reports as ‘offenders’ rather than ‘victims’. Where the rioters came from, particularly whether they were local is one of the key issues in the reports on Bradford. There was an emphasis on the majority of those involved in events being outsiders. One explanation for this could be the Anti-Nazi league (ANL) meeting/rally that took place immediately before the riot. This attracted a high number of Asian attendees. In the reports on Manchester, there is no mention of the disturbances attracting individuals from other cities. A final difference in reporting of events in Greater Manchester was the inclusion of quotes and opinion from rioters. Meanwhile, not one of the reports from Bradford included any comment from those actually participating in the disturbances (Massey and Singh Tatla 2012).

Conclusion

This paper has provided an analysis of media discourses concerning urban disorder in Bradford in 2001 and Greater Manchester in 2011. The presence of young people is evident in both accounts, though arguably there is more concern around the alarmingly low age of those implicated in the Manchester disturbances than the ‘angry young men’ (Alexander 2004) embroiled in the Bradford ‘riot’. Also the ‘rioters’ are comparable in terms of their economic status, as all those involved were living in areas of multiple deprivation. The inclusion of the word ‘gang’ is apparent in media accounts of both

events. This overused word in the media is shorthand for large groups of predominantly young people and ‘gang’ has criminal connotations (Ralphs et al 2009). The main common media discourses were mindless violence, the demonisation of youth and a sense that the police felt overwhelmed. Those blamed or scapegoated (Young 1999) for the riot were predominantly Asian/Muslim youths in Bradford and feral youths in Manchester. The ‘problem’ here is unruly youth rather than police tactics or politicians failure to address widening inequalities in society. Indeed, in the case of the 2011 riots whilst the majority of senior ministers being on holiday at the time of the riots is mentioned, no blame is apportioned to them, nor are they held account for what seems to be irresponsible behavior. In London alone the cost of the riots was £300 million (Dodd 2011). Is there any other organization which would allow so many senior staff members to all take leave simultaneously, return to events costing millions and still expect to be employed? Why were the government not held to account for their actions? One answer is that as primary definers of crime they would obviously not draw attention to their immoral actions (as this would undermine their credibility and power) and with the assistance of the Press events are ‘framed’ in a particular way. *“The media thus help to reproduce and sustain the definitions of the situation which favour the powerful, not only by actively recruiting the powerful in the initial stages where topics are structured, but by favouring certain ways of setting up topics, and maintaining certain strategic areas of silence”* (Hall et al 2013: 67).

We can see that despite there being ten years and significant institutional change between these events not much has changed in terms of the way the media reports on urban unrest. There were some differences though as race did not seem to be a motivating factor in Manchester. Nor did the media report on where the rioters in Manchester had come from, whereas in Bradford there was an emphasis on outsiders causing the trouble. Whilst retribution and vengeful punishment was dominant in the 2011 reporting this is absent in 2001. However, the actual sentences handed out for offences in each city tell a different story. It would be enlightening to conduct more in-depth statistical research on the sentencing process of both riots.

The lack of obvious spark (Waddington et al 1989) makes it easier for primary definers of deviance (politicians and police) to present events as ‘mindless’. Technological changes have placed social media centre stage in the ten-year period between these two events, giving young people a voice on social network sites such as Twitter and Facebook. This may be why young people’s views were included in the 2011 discourse. However, in spite of the nominal provision of a voice for the ‘perpetrators’ of the Summer 2011 disturbances the descriptions and media representation of those involved in this and the earlier Bradford unrest are incredibly similar. The decade between the two riots was not a static period, with a change in national government, significant changes to legislation, an inquiry into the practices of the news reporters and a rise in social media. Notwithstanding these changes the narratives around the reporting of disorder remains stagnant.

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Manchester Evening News 10/08/11 More than 100 arrested as rioting youths go on rampage 'one of the worst days in Manchester's history'
http://menmedia.co.uk/manchestereveningnews/news/s/1455173_live-more-than-100-arrested-as-rioting-youths-go-on-rampage-one-of-the-worst-days-in-manchesters-history---videos-and-pictures accessed 26/03/12

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The Guardian 10/08/11 UK riots: disorder spreads to Manchester and West Midlands
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2011/aug/10/uk-riots-disorder-manchester-midlands> accessed 26/03/11

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Open Peer Review Comments

1. This article focuses on the coverage that was devoted by the national and local press to riots that occurred in Bradford in 2001 and Manchester 2011. Using moral panic theory as its framework of analysis, it evaluates the response of the selected media to these events. It also considers issues that may have caused these events to occur - although the focus of the article is response to rather than causes of these disorders.
2. The article is well-research and coherently argued throughout. The focus on localised media representation provides the work with originality and, overall, the arguments presented are consistently put forward within the selected conceptual framework. The conclusion (and in particular the last paragraph) is strongly argued. There clearly are other conceptual frameworks within which to evaluate riots (especially that of 'unruly politics') but the chosen model that focuses on response and the rationale of response is perfectly legitimate.
3. There are perhaps some areas where more detail / elaboration would be useful. The abstract refers to the intention to consider why a moral panic is deployed and by whom. Overall, the article does address this issue but I feel the timing and desired intention of 'launching' a moral panic might be more fully evaluated. Additionally, the point that is always made regarding media representation of events of this nature could be referred to - was the media reflecting as opposed to manipulating public fears about these events and those involved in them?

4. The term 'feral youths' is referred to - I think this term could usefully be defined in the context of those who participated in these events.
5. The point is made regarding Greater Manchester that the key issue was shortage of numbers. I am not sure it was - I feel the main issue (subsequently identified by Denis O'Connor) was that of rioters' tactics (ie 'flash mobbing') that made traditional police tactics against rioters redundant (ie they were designed to confront static crowds).
6. A few very minor points: the abstract refers to harsh punishment being a feature of events in 2001 - should this be 2011 ? Reference is made to the 2003 Anti-social Behaviour Act - would it not be better to refer to the 1998 Crime & Disorder Act that 'created' the ASBO ? Page 10 refers to parents losing control of parents - should this be 'children' ? The reference to Le Bon in the bibliography should be 1898 when the work was written ?
7. But overall, a useful addition to the literature that deals with contemporary urban disorders.

Peter Joyce
Manchester Metropolitan University

1. There are typographical errors here that need to be corrected before publication. In the first reference, for example, 'Moxom' should be 'Moxon'.
2. There are problems with grammar and syntax throughout the essay. I think the essay should be read through carefully and edited before being published.
3. The author acknowledges that events in London – particularly the killing of Mark Duggan – prefaced the looting and disturbances in Manchester in 2011. However, the author offers no explain of how and why these events in London led to events in Manchester.
4. The early sections assume that 'moral panic' is an appropriate analytical framework before it has been established as such. It would be best to be objective in the early sections and withhold any endorsement of moral panic theory until the theory has been described and assessed.
5. I believe the rioting in Salford had a slightly different character to the rioting in Manchester city centre. I believe this merits acknowledgement.
6. The author claims that 'Historically, youth is a category represented with negative overtones (Furlong and Cartmel 1997)'. This may be true, but youth sociologists tend to lean in the opposite direction. The entire history of youth sociology is inflected with

celebration and romanticisation. I think it would be useful to acknowledge that ‘young people’ are actually quite diverse, and while the political right’s demonization of ‘young people’ is a distortion of reality, it is a distortion quite similar to the liberal left’s celebration of ‘young people’ as being creative and politically progressive.

7. This discussion of youth begs the question: what proportion of rioters can be categorised as ‘young’? Didn’t adult men predominate?

8. “‘Ideologies of protest from Marxism to contemporary feminism and the simultaneous spread of systems of psychiatric, psychological, criminological, and sociological systems of “knowledge” have all produced “authorities” who claim to know better than the people themselves the reasons for acts of common or uncommon violence in everyday life.’” (Brass 1996: 1). This quote seems to have been dropped in at random. It needs to be contextualised. I also encourage the author to think of what’s missing here. Aren’t we, criminologists, holders of expert knowledge? Why should we assume that ‘the people’ are imbued with some natural ability to explain ‘common or uncommon violence in everyday life’?

9. The author identifies a number of conservative politicians who demonised rioters, and usefully reproduces some of their reductive rhetoric. However, the author also tends to assume that these stupid proclamations spurred a ‘moral panic’. Were ordinary people across the country genuinely thrust into a panic? Did they listen to Boris Johnson’s inane ramblings and the suddenly rise up to demand concerted political action to punish the evil-doers? The application of moral panic theory should be done carefully.

10. Generally, I think the section in which moral panic theory is described and applied needs to be firmed up.

11. The author mentions ‘feral youth’ and positions feral youth as a folk devil, but didn’t much of this discourse in fact demonise the parents of supposedly disorderly young people rather than the young people themselves?

12. The author claims that ‘Why the media and Government use moral panic is a pertinent question’, but no answer is offered. The ‘answer’ is to be found throughout the moral panic literature. The clearest exposition can be found in Hall et al’s *Policing the Crisis*.

13. One of the central planks of moral panic theory is the assumption that Britain possesses an essentially conservative moral order, and that the political class remain dedicated to defending moral boundaries. However, after 40 years of neoliberalism, can British society still be considered ‘conservative’? Isn’t liberalism the ruling ideology today? Haven’t politicians actively sort to liberalise and update the stuffy modern social order?

In conclusion –

I think the findings are interesting, but moral panic theory is deployed in a haphazard and unconvincing way. I think the literature review sections and the conclusion need to be firmed up.

Simon Winlow

Northumbria University

Author Amendment Synopsis

The framework for analysis has been changed from moral panic theory (which both reviewers found problematic) and more specifically uses Hall et al's (2013) primary and secondary definers of news outlined in 'Policing the Crisis' as a theoretical approach, to unpack and analyse media representations of both 'riots'.

The literature review section has changed quite significantly. Originally it had a section 'Moral Panic and Scapegoats' which has been replaced by 'Crime as news and Scapegoats' and an additional section: 'The Creation of News Reports: Primary and Secondary Definers' which outlines Hall et al's (2013) model of news production.

The article has been thoroughly proofread and edited to ensure any typos/spelling/grammatical errors have been corrected.

Whilst the article does mention Greater Manchester as an area (which includes Salford) the newspaper articles analysed only focused on events in the city centre of Manchester. Therefore urban unrest in Salford and how it may have differed in character to riots in the city centre are not deemed relevant to the argument presented here.

Page 3 - reference is made to the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act which was where the term 'anti-social behaviour' was first used before the introduction of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003. Also on page 3 an explanation of how events in London led to events in Manchester, which could be categorised as 'copycat' riots.

Page 8 – a table has been included with data on the age of Mancunian rioters which illustrates the majority were adults.

On page 11 a reference has been included to a change in police tactics identified by Dennis O'Connor post 2011. Also on page 11 it is acknowledged that young people are quite diverse and there is a discussion of their positive actions in the clean-up campaign post 2011 riot. It is also noted that parents as well as children were criticised/held responsible for the behaviour of those in both riots.

