Violent Urban Disturbance in England 1980-81

R. Ball

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Roger Ball

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Faculty of Arts, Creative Industries and Education, University of West of England, Bristol

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Abstract

This study addresses violent urban disturbances which occurred in England in the early 1980s with particular reference to the Bristol 'riots' of April 1980 and the numerous disorders which followed in July 1981. Revisiting two concepts traditionally utilised to explain the spread of collective violence, namely 'diffusion' and 'contagion,' it argues that the latter offers a more useful model for understanding the above-mentioned events. Diffusion used in this context implies that such disturbances are independent of each other and occur randomly. It is associated with the concept of 'copycat riots', which were commonly invoked by the national media as a way of explaining the spread of urban disturbances in July 1981. Contagion by contrast holds that urban disturbances are related to one another and involve a variety of communication processes and rational collective decision-making. This implies that such events can only be fully understood if they are studied in terms of their local dynamics.

Providing the first comprehensive macro-historical analysis of the disturbances of July 1981, this thesis utilises a range of quantitative techniques to argue that the temporal and spatial spread of the unrest exhibited patterns of contagion. These mini-waves of disorder located in several conurbations were precipitated by major disturbances in inner-city multi-ethnic areas. This contradicts more conventional explanations which credit the national media as the sole driver of riotous behaviour.

The thesis then proceeds to offer a micro analysis of disturbances in Bristol in April 1980, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Exploiting previously unexplored primary sources and recently collected oral histories from

participants, it establishes detailed narratives of three related disturbances in the city. The anatomy of the individual incidents and local contagious effects are examined using spatial mapping, social network and ethnographic analyses. The results suggest that previously ignored educational, sub-cultural and ethnographic intra- and inter-community linkages were important factors in the spread of the disorders in Bristol.

The case studies of the Bristol disorders are then used to illuminate our understanding of the processes at work during the July 1981 disturbances. It is argued that the latter events were essentially characterised by anti-police and anti-racist collective violence, which marked a momentary recomposition of working-class youth across ethnic divides.

<u>Acknowledgements</u>

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Summary

The 1980-81 period in England studied in this thesis was marked by numerous violent urban disturbances labelled as 'riots' in the media. Ostensibly beginning with a major disorder in St. Paul's in Bristol in April 1980, the following year saw a serious outbreak of collective violence in Brixton in April, several other incidents in London in the spring and culminated in the most widespread and numerous series of 'riots' in the 20th Century in July.

The media, government and other commentators presented a number of different explanations for these events. These ranged from what we might categorise as mainstream approaches which utilized such categorical frameworks as 'Race and Disorder', 'Law and Order' 'Social Deprivation' and 'Alienation and Powerlessness' to the less widely known critical theories which emphasised 'class' and 'race' (or a fusion of both) as analytical tools (these are all discussed in more detail in Section 1.5).

Amongst the mainstream theories, existing concepts such as 'race riot' and the 'Black mob' along with new terms such as 'copycat riots' entered popular usage in the period. The employment in the media of the first two terms effectively racialised the incidents whilst the latter was used particularly in the aftermath of the 'July riots' to 'explain' their widespread nature and crucially the significant involvement of White[1] people. Many of the theorists that used the critical concepts of 'class' and 'race' to

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[1] In this thesis the designation of 'White' and 'Black' people is marked by capitalisation. Definition of these problematic terms is discussed in Section 1.3.2.

analyse the events attempted to fit the 'riots' into these existing frameworks (or in some cases exclude them) regardless of their complexity. Despite the opposing viewpoints contained within these various mainstream and critical paradigms they were all characterised by a lack of substantive empirical research. Equally crucial was their common exclusion of the voices of those involved in the violence.

The approach of this thesis is quite different. Rather than speculating on the content of the events, and the motivations of the participants or attempting to fit the 'riots' into an existing critical paradigm, this work attempts to provide on both a macro and micro level, a detailed examination of the anatomy of these disturbances based on structured, in-depth and analytically-informed empirical research. This approach made it possible to dismiss some of the explanatory frameworks and provide supporting evidence for others.

The key research questions in this thesis were concerned with documenting the extent and number of the disturbances that occurred in the principal period of unrest in July 1981, the spatial and temporal patterns of the wave of disorders, and the ethnic composition of the 'crowds' involved. Questions related to the composition of the 'riotous' crowds, their motivations and the rationality of their actions are addressed by three micro-histories of disorders in Bristol in April 1980. Evidence concerning the connections between these 'riotous' locales, mechanisms for communication and responses that were generated, combined with the country-wide macro analysis was used to challenge the concept of independent and random 'copycat riots' spurred purely by the homogenous spread of information by the mass media.

1.2   Research outline

This thesis examines violent urban disturbances that occurred in England in 1980-81. A number of commentators in the 1960s and 70s had predicted outbreaks of 'racial' unrest in Britain based on the model of the 1960s U.S. 'riots' that predominantly involved 'Black' populations in urban 'ghettos'. However, the disturbances of 1980-81 in England were a surprise for many as they involved both multi-ethnic crowds in the inner cities and, significantly, widespread unrest in mainly White outlying areas. The majority of those arrested in July and August 1981 were White[2] which confounded explanations solely based on the effects of institutional and societal racism. Instead most of the 'White riots' were written off as merely the criminal activities of 'hooligans' or denigrated as 'copycat riots'.

The voices of 'rioters' were sadly lacking in most secondary sources studied, consequently central to the research project was the use of oral histories from participants in Bristol, which aided in understanding the precipitating factors for the unrest in the city, the nature of the disturbances and the connections between the subject areas. Similarly, although numerous secondary sources purported to explain *'why the riots had happened'*, there were few examples of detailed analysis of the anatomy of disturbances[3] and only two that seriously considered the point of view of

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[2] Home Office, *The Outcome of Arrests during the Serious Incidents of Public Disorder in July and August 1981* (London: Home Office, 1982).

[3] The only detailed examinations are of St. Paul's in April 1980, Harris Joshua, Tina Wallace and Heather Booth, *To Ride the Storm: The 1980 Bristol 'Riot' and the State* (London: Heinemann, 1983), Brixton in April 1981, L. G. Scarman, *The Scarman Report.* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986), Toxteth, J. P. Bowrey, 'The 1981 Urban Riots in England,' (PhD level qualification, University College London, 2005), and Moss Side, B. A. Hytner, *Report of the Moss Side Enquiry Panel to the*

the participants[4]. Typically, the principal sources of evidence in the exceptions were provided from court or police records. Although a few authors and police spokesmen drew reference to the organisational forms and communication channels of the *'rioters'*[5] there were no detailed analyses of the social networks that were in operation during the unrest.

The research strategy adopted here involves a detailed study of a cluster of urban

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Leader of the Greater Manchester Council (Manchester: Greater Manchester Council, 1981) in July 1981.

[4] These were Reicher's study of St. Paul's in April 1980 S. Reicher, 'The St. Paul's Riot: An Explanation of the Limits of Crowd Action in Terms of a Social Identity Model,' in *Dialogues and Debates in Social Psychology*, ed. J. Murphy, Vol. 14 (Hove: Erbaum, 1984) and Field and Southgates's analysis of Handsworth in July 1981, Simon Field and Peter Southgate, *Public Disorder: A Review of Research and a Study in One Inner City Area* (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1982).

[5] For example Tumber noted the communication channels for 'riot' in 1981 were the 'youth grapevine' or the 'bush telegraph' H. Tumber, *Television and the Riots: A Report for the Broadcasting Research Unit of the British Film Institute* (London: British Film Institute, 1982), p.46; Ashton referred to 'spontaneous intelligence networks' quoted from E. E. Cashmore, *No Future: Youth and Society* (London: Heinemann, 1984), p.84; another source stated 'the Police thought the youth grapevine was by far the most effective media for communicating a message, which burst out simultaneously in all parts of the country. It was throughout the entire week their only promising insight', Wolfie Smith and others, 'Like a Summer with a Thousand Julys…and Other Seasons...,' (1982), http://www.revoltagainstplenty.com/index.php/recent/34-archivelocal/37-like-a-summer-with-a-thousand-julys, p.5 and Murdock stated 'Youth in the inner city are not disorganised, they are simply organised in a different way, built around informal networks and unofficial leisure milieux' G. Murdock, 'Reporting the Riots: Images and Impact,' in *Scarman and After: Essays Reflecting on Lord Scarman's Report, the Riots and their Aftermath*, ed. J. Benyon (Oxford: Pergamon, 1984), p.85.

'riots' in Bristol in April 1980 to aid in the analysis of the origin and spread of a much larger and unprecedented countrywide rash of disturbances in July 1981. Of particular interest are the characteristics and patterns that emerged in the outbreaks and diffusion of the Bristol 'riots' and the similarities to the more widespread and serious events of the following year. The research is divided into two phases, the first considering the July 'riots' in 1981 (a macro history) and the second a cluster of disorders in Bristol in April 1980 (micro histories). The results of the research are presented in reverse order as it was judged that the macro history of the July 1981 disturbances would be informed by the micro histories of the Bristol disturbances of 1980.

The first phase of research aimed at a comprehensive investigation of the urban disturbances that spanned England in July 1981. A thorough collection of data from the existing primary sources demonstrated that the number and extent of the July disturbances had been significantly underestimated by previous studies. Various quantitative methods were employed to analyse this intense period of unrest with the objective of determining the characteristics of the spatial and temporal diffusion of disorders and the ethnic composition of the 'crowds' involved. The results demonstrated that city-based mini-waves of disturbances were generated by serious precipitating incidents in multi-ethnic inner city areas. These heterogeneous clusters of disorders were followed by a more homogenous nationwide contagion that spread the disturbances countrywide.

The second phase of research was focussed on establishing *micro* histories of three disorders that occurred in Bristol in April 1980. The aim was to uncover the precipitating factors that led to the unrest, the social relationships that connected the

events and the processes by which the disturbances spread. The emphasis in this investigation was on the previously under-researched perceptions of participants in the disorders and relied principally (though not exclusively) upon new primary sources and oral history testimony. The results demonstrated that a serious precipitating incident (the St. Paul's 'riot') involving multi-ethnic crowds led to further, though less serious, disturbances in two outlying mainly White areas. The primary target of the collective violence in all three areas was the police. This was predicated by the oral history respondents on a history of discriminatory policing behaviours both at street level and by area. It was demonstrated that the spread of the disturbances in Bristol was at least partially connected to sub-culturally and ethically derived social networks that were operating in the period.

Using the Bristol micro-histories as a case study helped explain the form of the mini-waves of unrest that occurred in several major cities in July 1981. The evidence pointed towards the operation of a fusion of sub-cultural and ethnic social networks in disseminating news of 'riots' to outlying areas and formulating responses. To a certain extent, these social networks overcame ethnic and spatial divisions and led to a momentary recomposition of a section of working-class urban youth who engaged in collective violence aimed at the police.

1.3   Definitions

1.3.1   Collective violence

Denoting *collective violence* is problematic as the very form of the *signifiers* represents historically derived bias and what is *signified* is of course dependent on the position of the observer. By way of example, in this thesis the following words have

been used to denote collective violence: *riot*, *disorder*, *disturbance*, *unrest, incident* and *event*. In general only the first of these terms has been enclosed by apostrophes (despite similar issues with the second and third terms in the group) as the author felt it was the most contentious of the collection. However, all of the terms have been used interchangeably in this work and should be considered as such by the reader.

In general, other descriptive but politically loaded terms such as *violent protest*, *uprising*, *rebellion*, *revolt*, *insurgency* and *insurrection* have been avoided in order to avert unnecessary confusion, to ease the worries of more conservative readers and to avoid shallow dismissals of the findings. The use of the more traditional terms such as *'riot'*, *disorder* or *disturbance* to delineate collective violence does not, however, imply that the events of 1980-81 should be characterised as chaos, irrational, apolitical and ahistorical or merely the actions of criminals, purely through usage of the terms. Neither does it exclude the period from characterisation by the more contentious terms listed above[6].

1.3.2   'Race' and ethnicity

The period under study (the early 1980s) arguably marked the transition in academia from the use of term 'race' to delineate groups (as in 'race relations') to *ethnicity* (as in 'ethnic minorities')[7]. Fundamental to this change was the growing realisation of the

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[6] As was pointed out to the author by a mischievous local historian, a 'mob' of less than a thousand people stormed the Bastille in Paris in 1789. If they had failed in their actions, would they have been labelled as unsuccessful *'revolutionaries'* or merely *'rioters"*?

[7] The term 'ethnicity' first appeared in dictionaries in 1972. T. H. Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives* (London: Pluto, 1993), p.4.

absence of scientific validity for the former term and thus its problematic associations. One author summarised the content of the UNESCO statements of the 1950s that laid claims of 'races' having a scientific basis to rest:

> 'There are no 'races' in the biological sense of their being distinct and discrete biological groups, distinguished by phenotypical (physical) or genotypical (genetic) characteristics and organised in some hierarchical fashion. This is not to deny the fact that there are phenotypical and genetic variations between human beings. Rather, the claim is that there is no scientific basis for both systematically categorising the human population by such phenotypical and genetic factors and for attributing these supposedly biological groups with fixed cultural attitudes'[8]

However, as was noted by many writers, removing scientific validity did not necessarily eradicate the concept of 'race' as a cultural construct. This was famously summed up by Colette Guillaumin who stated 'race does not exist but it does kill people'[9]. Despite this problematic, the new concept of *ethnicity* was embraced on the basis that it rejected the formal link with the pseudo-scientific paradigm of 'race'[10]

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[8] R. Miles, 'Racism and Nationalism in Britain,' in *'Race' in Britain: Continuity and Change*, ed. C. Husband (London: Hutchinson, 1982), p.280. In this thesis references to *'race'* have been enclosed by apostrophes. This does not of course deny 'race' as a social construct, but this author's scientific background precludes any confusion surrounding its scientific validity, hence the apostrophes.

[9] C. Guillaumin, 'The Changing Face of 'Race',' in *Racism*, eds. M. Bulmer and J. Solomos (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p.362.

[10] Miles and Brown argued that even retaining labels such as 'race relations' as analytic categories effectively reproduced the dubious concept of 'race'. R. Miles and M. Brown, *Racism*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2003), p.91.

and turned instead towards more flexible and workable cultural definitions of 'difference'[11]. The idea of difference is important, for rather than defining essentialist (and hierarchical) properties of groups as the concept 'race' had claimed, ethnicity was considered to be an aspect of the relationship between human groups. Thus:

> 'for ethnicity to come about…groups must have a minimum of contact between them, and they must entertain ideas of each other as being culturally different from themselves. If these conditions are not fulfilled, there is no ethnicity'[12]

The accent on relationship rather than essentialism led to a nuanced understanding of ethnicity that stressed dynamic social processes, which were subject to historical, religious, economic and political contexts[13]. It was also recognised that changes in these relationships could be gradual or accelerate rapidly from apparently static situations into historical discontinuities dependent on these contexts[14]. As such, ethnicity became an all-encompassing term that could operate at various levels of social magnification (macro, meso or micro)[15] and could aid in understanding groups as varied as 'urban ethnic minorities', 'indigenous peoples', 'proto-nations', 'ethnic

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[11] The flexibility inherent within the term allowed some to argue that 'race' was a particular subset of 'ethnicity' concerned with 'ethnic ideologies'. S. Fenton, *Ethnicity: Racism, Class and Culture* (London: Macmillan Press, 1999), p.68.

[12] Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives*, p.12.

[13] Fenton, *Ethnicity: Racism, Class and Culture*, pp.10-11 and pp.21-27.

[14] Ibid. p.59.

[15] Ibid. pp.13-17.

groups in plural societies' and 'post-slavery minorities'[16].

In the context of this thesis, the former group is of most relevance, though it is important to note that despite the (invalid) common interchangeability and sometimes coded use of 'ethnic-minority' as 'racial grouping', there is still has to be relationship with *something* for the term to have meaning. This 'something' cannot be simply defined as 'Britishness' or 'British ethnicity' (as some might suppose). Instead it has to be recognised that nation-states are actually riven with ethnicities, which questions the concept of the unified *ethnic-majority*. Even under the sway of the essentialist racial theories of the nineteenth century in Britain, membership of the *'Caucasoid race'* did not infer either equality at the supposed pinnacle of the racial hierarchy or unification under the banner of 'White British'. Instead, a whole series of eugenic sub-levels related to ethnicity and social class were in play predicated on the existing economic and political relations[17].

Modern assumptions of a 'shared culture' of 'Britishness or Englishness' are arguably a social construct but it is questionable how operational or successful this concept was or is in practice. Consciousness of divisions by social class, which were clearly present in the oral histories in Bristol, undermine this assumption and were

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[16] Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives*, pp.14-15. This does not, however, imply that 'ethnicity' or 'ethnic groups' are easily defined or bounded. Criticisms of 'groupism', that is 'the tendency to take discrete, bounded groups as basic constituents of social life, chief protagonists of social conflicts, and fundamental units of social analysis' undermines fixed boundaries to ethnic collectivities in any case. C. Gilligan, 'Race and Ethnicity,' in *Routledge Handbook of Ethnic Conflict*, eds. K. Cordell and S. Woolf (London: Routledge, 2011), p.85.

[17] Fenton, *Ethnicity: Racism, Class and Culture*, p.83.

particularly relevant to the research in this thesis. What was certainly prevalent in the sub-cultural groupings that were investigated was a rejection of such strict unifications suggesting a majority ethnic-identity, which to a certain extent was why such groupings could be open to both 'White' and 'Black' youth. Of far more importance is the recognition that the relationship between ethnicities is a process of cross-fertilisation whereby *both groups end up somewhere else*. As demonstrated by the following chapters, the idea of one-way assimilation of second-generation 'Black youth' into 'British culture' may have been the fanciful plan of the post-war social engineers, but the outcomes were somewhat different for some 'Black' and 'White' youth.

In general, simplistic and limited signifiers of ethnicity such as *'Black'*, *'Non-White'*, *'White'*, *'Mixed-race'* *'Asian'* and *'Afro-Caribbean'* have been employed in various places in this thesis. These problematic terms are hard to define; however, the following delineations have been assumed in this work and follow to some extent the categorisations in play in the early 1980s:

'Black': refers to '*people of colour'* or *'non-Whites'* regardless of their ethnic origins.

'Asian': refers to people of 'South Asian' ethnic origins (principally from the nations of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka).

'Afro-Caribbean'[18]: refers to people of ethnic origins in that part of the African Diaspora that was originally situated in the islands of the Caribbean.

'Mixed-race': refers in this case to people with one parent defined as *'White'* and the other as *'Black'*.

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[18] This term, common in the 1980s has since been replaced by *'African-Caribbean'*.

'White': refers extremely loosely (and contentiously) to people of *'European origins'*.

1.3.3   'Race riot'?

Politicians and journalists deployed the term *'race riot'* in 1980-81 either to affirm or deny its validity as a description of the disturbances of the period[19]. It is a particularly contentious phrase, which in 1980-81 summoned up images of rampaging mobs of 'Blacks' out to kill or injure 'Whites'. However, to understand its realities in Britain it has to be placed in historical context.

Several secondary sources delineate two versions of collective racial violence in the twentieth century in the U.K. and U.S.[20] located before and after the Second World War. The first, designated as *inter-racial communal violence*, is commonly associated with the concept of 'race riot'. Panayi defined this unrest as:

> 'an attack by a large number, hundreds or even thousands, of members of
> a dominant group upon members of a minority who have been singled out
> for attack specifically because they belong to that particular minority in a

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[19] See for example the *Daily Star* (03-04-1980), *Western Daily Press* (03-04-1980) and *Sunday Express* (06-04-1980).

[20] See Joshua, Wallace and Booth, *To Ride the Storm: The 1980 Bristol 'Riot' and the State*, pp.35-55, James N. Upton, *Urban Riots in the 20th Century: A Social History* (Lima: Wyndham Hall Press, 1984), Chapter 1 and Field and Southgate, *Public Disorder: A Review of Research and a Study in One Inner City Area*, p.34.

time when that 'racial' group usually faces more widespread animosity'[21]

Under this definition 'race riots' are marked by offensive violence by the dominant group and in some cases defensive reactions by the subordinate minority. In general, the police have taken a backseat role in such events, either tacitly allowing the violence to proceed or intervening to 'keep the peace'. This was certainly the experience in the 'race riots' in the U.K in the first half of the twentieth century[22].

The second historical category was described as 'Black revolt' or 'commodity riots'[23], the latter term being a reference to a change in emphasis from attacks on civilians to attacks on property. This form of racial disorder was marked by violence unleashed by ethnic minority communities on agents of the state and property, but not directed at civilians from the majority ethnic community. Despite popular confusion around the term 'race riot'[24], the second form of unrest, the 'commodity riot' was considered by

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[21] P. Panayi, 'Anti-Immigrant Violence in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Britain,' in *Racial Violence in Britain in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, ed. P. Panayi, Revised ed. (London: Leicester University Press, 1996), p.4.

[22] Examples include (in the U.K.) Cardiff (1911), Glasgow, Hull, Liverpool, Newport, Cardiff, Barry (1919), Hull (1920-21), Newport, Salford (1922) Liverpool (1948), Nottingham, Notting Hill (1958) and Dudley (1962). References from Ibid. pp.12-13 and Joshua, Wallace and Booth, *To Ride the Storm: The 1980 Bristol 'Riot' and the State*, pp.20-35.

[23] The former designation is from Ibid. p.35 and the latter from Upton, *Urban Riots in the 20th Century: A Social History*, Chapter 1.

[24] For example, the entry for 'race riot' in Wikipedia states 'a race riot or racial riot is an outbreak of violent civil disorder (i.e. a riot) in which race is a key factor' and goes on to note 'In the late 1960s the term Race Riots came to describe riots involving large numbers of members of racial minority groups' http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Race_riot.

the secondary sources (and by this writer) to *not* be adequately defined by this particular label.

Drawing such distinctions is important as utilisation of the term 'race riot' without qualification in 1980-81 created significant confusion that led to the racialisation of events or conversely suppressed 'racism' as a causal factor. This lack of clarity not only misrepresented the content of the unrest of the period[25] but also provided a closed and ahistorical explanation through the popular signification of the term. This of course does not rule out racism as being a major or even dominant factor in the precipitation of unrest, but the confusing term 'race riot' is not considered to be a useful description of the events in the period of 1980-81.

1.4   Violent Urban disturbance in England 1980-81

1.4.1   The 'Bristol Riots' of April 1980

The violent disturbance in the St. Paul's area of Bristol on April 2nd 1980 is commonly regarded as iconic, in that it heralded the beginning of a decade or more of unrest in English cities. It is also central to the modern history of Bristol, marking a moment where issues of institutional and popular racism were forced into the media spotlight by the immediacy of the event, obliging national and local government bodies to search for explanations. Consequently, the 'St. Paul's Riot' as it was defined

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[25] Field in a Home Office sponsored report stated 'there are two senses in which the British riots were not 'race riots': they did not involve collective violence between whites and blacks as such (the uniforms worn by the whites being more important than the colour of their skin), and both blacks and whites were involved in the disorder'. Field and Southgate, *Public Disorder: A Review of Research and a Study in One Inner City Area*, p.34.

by the local media[26] or 'The Bristol Riot' as the national newspapers labelled it[27], now occupies a racialised place in the popular memory signifying 'race riot' or 'Black uprising'.

The day before the 25th anniversary of the St. Paul's 'riot' in 2005 the main local newspaper in Bristol ran a double page spread entitled *'The night a riot rocked a nation'*. The article included eyewitness statements and comments by a 'community leader', a councillor, a press photographer, 'a resident' and 'the policeman'. The last, Superintendent Tim Lee, was a 'beat' constable during the 1980 St. Paul's disorders, and later became Deputy District Commander of the Avon and Somerset Constabulary. Lee provided an interesting insight into events that occurred in the succeeding days after the St. Paul's 'riot', when he stated in the article:

> 'Before the riots, St. Pauls had never been regarded as a particular trouble spot and there was a genuine disbelief among officers that it was happening. What few people know is that for the following nights we had more problems in **Southmead** than we did in St. Paul's because of copycat attacks'[28]

The recognition by the Avon and Somerset Constabulary of the grave character of the subsequent events in the mainly White outlying north Bristol estate of Southmead echoes that made in their Annual Report for 1980. In this document the St. Paul's and Southmead disturbances are the only events of that nature which are recorded for the

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[26] *Western Daily Press* 05-04-1980.

[27] *Times* 03-04-1980 p.1.

[28] *Bristol Evening Post* 01-04-2005.

year, the latter incident being described thus:

'On the 3rd and 4th April 1980 there were serious incidents of public disorder in the Southmead area of Bristol when gangs of youths numbering some two hundred smashed several large shop windows and stoned police officers who attended at the scene'[29]

Yet, in contrast to the massive local and national media coverage of the St. Paul's 'riot', the subsequent disorders in Southmead were barely reported in the local press and largely ignored by wider media outlets. Despite being considered serious incidents by the police authorities the events in Southmead were denigrated to the status of 'copycat attacks'. Subsequent research undertaken for this thesis has uncovered an even more neglected incident in the south Bristol estate of Knowle West that occurred in the immediate aftermath of St. Paul's. Bristol's 'other riots' thus passed unnoticed and, more significantly, unheeded into obscurity for nearly thirty years.

1.4.2 England 1981

For many contemporary commentators in the media and politics the St. Paul's 'riot' of 1980 was variously characterised as either an 'un-British' aberration or merely a one-day oddity of purely local significance. After the initial media furore, there were no major public inquiries launched and little policy response from central government[30]. However, this complacency was shattered in April 1981 when the south London district of Brixton erupted into four days of collective violence that left 415 policemen

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[29] Avon and Somerset Constabulary, *Annual Report of the Chief Constable* (Bristol, 1980), p.40.

[30] Joshua, Wallace and Booth, *To Ride the Storm: The 1980 Bristol 'Riot' and the State*, p.208.

injured, 122 police vehicles damaged or destroyed and 145 buildings damaged, 28 by fire[31]. The longevity and intensity of this event eclipsed the 'Bristol Riot' of the previous year, shocked the government and led to a public inquiry headed by the High Court Judge Lord Scarman. The weeks following the Brixton 'riots' were marked by sporadic outbreaks of disorder in varying locations[32], which culminated in two ostensibly unrelated incidents, at opposite ends of the country at the beginning of July. These particular events marked the key precipitating factors in many of the numerous disorders to follow, namely policing and racist attacks.

On Friday 3rd July in Toxteth[33], Liverpool the arrest of a Black man for a minor offence led to a street confrontation with police that developed into another major

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[31] The disorders in Brixton lasted between Friday 10th and Monday 13th April 1981. At the time the damage to property was estimated at £10 million, 282 people were arrested during the disturbances and several thousand police were deployed to suppress the incidents. L.G. Scarman, *The Scarman Report*, pp.37-72.

[32] For example the serious disturbances in Ealing Common and Finsbury Park in London (April 1981), Coventry (May 1981) and Thornton Heath, London (June 1981). Ron Ramdin, *The Making of the Black Working Class in Britain* (Aldershot: Gower, 1987), p.506 and Joshua, Wallace and Booth, *To Ride the Storm: The 1980 Bristol 'Riot' and the State*, pp.192-5.

[33] In this thesis the more commonly used 'Toxteth' is used to designate the area locally known by its postal district as 'Liverpool 8'. As one resident stated in a recent article 'Even the riots themselves have two names: as with the names 'Londonderry' and 'Derry', you declare yourself. 'People say 'Toxteth riots' or 'Liverpool 8 uprising' depending on their politics,' says Michael. The label locating 'Toxteth' rather than 'Liverpool 8' was that of the national media at the time, he says, because of a sign on Princes Avenue, opposite a drive-in bank and what was the Rialto furniture store, both famously targeted and gutted by fire in 1981'. See http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2011/jul/03/toxteth-liverpool-riot-30-years?intcmp=239

disorder[34]. The same evening in Southall, London, skinheads who had travelled to the area to see some 'Oi' bands[35] engaged in vandalism and attacks on Asian residents and their shops prior to the gig. This led to a violent confrontation between local Asian youth, the skinhead protagonists and police, which left sixty-one police officers injured and the venue in flames[36]. The Toxteth incident erupted over the weekend into arguably one of the most serious urban disorders Britain had seen in the twentieth century. Over the four days of rioting (3rd-6th July), 355 policemen were injured, 244 arrests were made (90% of which were Whites), 150 buildings were burnt down and CS gas canisters were fired as projectile weapons to disperse crowds for the first time on mainland Britain[37].

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[34] Ian Hernon, *Riot!: Civil Insurrection from Peterloo to the Present Day* (London: Pluto, 2006), p.201.

[35] 'Oi' was a sub-genre fusion of punk and skinhead music that came to prominence in 1980 and had some associations with far-right and racist groups.

[36] 'Notes and Documents,' *Race & Class* 23, no. 2-3 (1981/1982), pp.225. Southall became a significant battleground in the late 1970s between the National Front a fascist and racist organisation, anti-fascist groups (including the Southall Youth Movement) and the police. The latter were regarded by much of the community in Southall as racist collaborators with the fascists particularly after the violence they unleashed on a large anti-racist demonstration on 23rd April 1979 leading to numerous arrests, injuries and the unsolved death of the schoolteacher Blair Peach probably at the hands of the Special Patrol Group. Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain* (London: Pluto Press, 1984), p.397, Ramdin, *The Making of the Black Working Class in Britain*, p.502, *Kala Tara: A History of the Asian Youth Movements in Britain,* Film, directed by A. Ramamurthy (Lancashire: University of Central Lancashire, 2007) and *A Town Under Siege,* Film, directed by C. Prescod (London: Institute of Race Relations, 2008).

[37] Twenty-five canisters were fired as projectile weapons into crowds and several people were seriously injured. *Notes and Documents*, p.226 and Hernon, *Riot!: Civil Insurrection from Peterloo to the Present Day*, pp.201-6.

The following week (6th-13th July) was to see the unrest spread across England, beginning in Moss Side Manchester with three days of violence which commenced on the 6th and included a massed attack by more than a thousand rioters on the local police station the following night[38]. Over the following days and particularly over the weekend of 10th-13th July Cities such as London, Wolverhampton, Birmingham, Nottingham, Derby, Leicester, Halifax and Leeds were struck by numerous disturbances in various locations. In addition, many towns experienced unrest including those in the Home Counties such as Luton, High Wycombe, Bedford and Maidstone. In all, over the months of July and August 1981 in twenty-five of forty or so police force areas in England and Wales, nearly four thousand people were arrested in relation to the disorders, with approximately two-thirds being described as 'White'[39].

1.5   The search for explanations

The following section is a review of the explanations for the unrest of 1980-81 that were on offer from the media, government, extra-parliamentary political groupings and academia. Although this thesis is not specifically concerned with analysing the accounts provided by these bodies, it is useful to understand how they were framed. This influenced the representation of the unrest in many of the primary sources employed in the research. Restrictions of space limit this section to a categorised précis of the explanatory frameworks that were on offer in the period.

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[38] Hytner, *Report of the Moss Side Enquiry Panel to the Leader of the Greater Manchester Council*, pp.38-40.

[39] Home Office, *The Outcome of Arrests during the Serious Incidents of Public Disorder in July and August 1981*.

The aftermath of serious 'riots' and particularly waves of violent disturbances typically generate problematic responses related to the search and selection of causes in order to 'explain' events[40]. This activity is often predicated on the outcome of explanations, and usually involves apportioning 'blame' or finding the 'guilty' party. Thus causal logic effectively goes into reverse; the outcome (blame) determines the chosen explanation, which is related back to the event. This process was prevalent in the period of the 1980-81 disturbances from public statements of politicians and the media, through to sociologists and historians who appropriated histories into wider grand narratives. The lack of comprehensive data concerning the unrest at the time suggests that many commentators weren't really sure *'what had happened'* in 1980-81. However, this crucial fact did not hold back the search for explanations for *'why it had happened'*, the apportioning of blame and the generation of institutional policy.

Essentially, the explanatory frameworks that were in play in 1980-81 could be divided into those in the 'mainstream' with considerable public exposure through the mass media and those confined to academia and relatively small circulation media (such as left wing and radical Black newspapers, pamphlets and journals). In general the former group dominated a 'terrain of debate' that enclosed 'conservative' and 'liberal' explanations[41] predicated on idea that modern liberal democracies are structurally

[40] M. Keith, *Race, Riots and Policing: Lore and Disorder in a Multi-Racist Society* (London: University College London Press, 1993), pp.72-83.

[41] The division of explanatory frameworks for disorder into conflictual and non-conflictual theories and conservative, liberal and radical interpretations was proposed by several authors including S. Taylor, 'The Scarman Report and Explanations of the Riots,' in *Scarman and After: Essays Reflecting on Lord Scarman's Report, the Riots and their Aftermath*, ed. J. Benyon (Oxford: Pergamon, 1984), Upton,

non-conflictual, stable or self-stabilising, with urban disorder being understood as the result of deviancy, irrationality or bad management. In contrast the latter group of *conflictual* theories, which were excluded from the 'mainstream terrain of debate', argued that modern democracies were inherently unstable due to 'race' and/or class divisions predicated on historically defined economic exploitation and unequal power relations.

In the mainstream, there were essentially four non-conflictual frameworks in operation in 1980-81[42]. These were not entirely specific to the period and had appeared in various forms in relation to unrest in the past, particularly in the U.S. in the 1960s. The 'conservative' explanatory frameworks comprised the '*Race and Disorder*' and '*Law and Order*' discourses. The former proposed that Britain was an essentially stable country, which had experienced urban disorder as a result of the presence of immigrant groups. The unrest was thus solely a product of the attributes of these groups acting as an 'other'. The latter framework denied the disorders were 'protests' with social or political contexts, instead characterising them ahistorically as purely criminal and irrational behaviours. The *'Social Deprivation'* and '*Alienation*

Urban Riots in the 20th Century: A Social History, K. B. Hadjor, 'Race, Riots and Clouds of Ideological Smoke,' *Race & Class* 38, no. 4 (1997), R. Hasan, 'Riots and Urban Unrest in Britain in the 1980s and 1990s: A Critique of Dominant Explanations,' in *Class Struggle and Social Welfare*, eds. M. Lavalette and G. Mooney (London: Routledge, 2000) and J. Benyon and J. Solomos, eds., *The Roots of Urban Unrest* (Oxford: Pergamon, 1987).

[42] Solomos categorised four explanatory frameworks operating in this sphere in 1980-81, J. Solomos, *Black Youth, Racism and the State: The Politics of Ideology and Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), Chapter 6 and J. Solomos, *Race and Racism in Contemporary Britain* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989), Chapter 6.

and Powerlessness' frameworks generally fell into the 'liberal' categorisation, as they were concerned with distribution of resources and political management. The former predicated the 'riots' on the long-term economic decline of the inner cities and focused on causal factors such as unemployment, inadequate housing and education. The latter highlighted the social disorganisation of sub-ordinate groups as a key factor in alienating them from the political process and thus creating the conditions for more desperate forms of action such as collective violence.

The conflictual explanatory frameworks can be divided into those that characterised unrest as a limited form of 'struggle' by economically marginalized sections of the proletariat (classical Marxist), those that emphasised autonomous sectoral struggle of the 'racially' subordinate (autonomous Marxist) and those that emphasised resistance to the generalised alienation of capitalist society (Situationists and Anarchists). Divisions between these explanations were not always distinct and there were several attempts to synthesise the various approaches. Table 1 displays the relevant explanatory frameworks categorised by ideological paradigm, exposure and political perspective.

	Category		
Ideological Paradigm	Non-conflictual		Conflictual
Exposure	Mainstream		Non-mainstream
Political Perspective	'Conservative'	'Liberal'	'Radical'
Explanatory Framework	Race and Disorder Law and Order	Social Deprivation Alienation and Powerlessness	Classical Marxist Autonomous Marxist Situationist and Anarchist

Table 1: Matrix showing explanatory frameworks for disorder in England in 1980-81 categorised by exposure, ruling paradigm and political perspective

Each of these different explanatory frameworks from dissimilar political persuasions emphasised and downplayed different aspects of the disorders to support their positions. For example, those explanations based on the primacy of 'race', such as the mainstream *'Race and Disorder'* framework highlighted that many of the disorders originated in inner city multi-ethnic areas and were thus the inevitable product of the *'alien'* presence of New Commonwealth immigrants and their offspring[43]. The *'Alienation and Powerless'* explanations were often coded in terms of 'race' by assuming that the 'social disorganisation' of inner city communities was a product of historical, cultural and generational weaknesses in the 'West Indian' family and an associated collapse in community and local political leadership. From the opposite end of the political spectrum, autonomist Marxists argued that Black youth were a *vanguard* in the disturbances, which were predicated on societal and institutional racism operating in tandem with class oppression[44].

Other mainstream explanatory frameworks such as *'Law and Order'* and *'Social*

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[43] Views such as this were propagated in Parliament and the media by figures such as Enoch Powell who elucidated his vision of 'race war' with a statement from an unnamed 'fellow citizen': 'what the riots in England are all about basically is that the immigrant areas are not static pools…but expanding entities. Therefore it follows that as they expand house by house, street by street, area by area, so the indigenous population must retreat house by house etc. at the same rate…As they continue to multiply and as we can't retreat further there must be conflict'. Historic Hansard, 'Civil Disturbances,' *House of Commons Parliamentary Debates 16 July 1981* 8 cc1397-503 (1981), p.1413.

[44] These included groups associated with the journals *'Race Today'*, *'Race & Class'* and *'The Black Liberator'*; E. Smith, 'Conflicting Narratives of Black Youth Rebellion in Modern Britain,' *Ethnicity and Race in a Changing World: A Review Journal* (2008), as well as publications of various branches of the Asian Youth Movement; A. Ramamurthy, 'The Politics of Britain's Asian Youth Movements,' *Race & Class* 48, no. 2 (2006).

Deprivation' ignored 'race' (and racism) altogether and emphasised the multi-ethnic nature of the unrest. The former framework denied institutional racism as a cause and instead focused on the supposed irrational, imitative[45] and criminal behaviours of the young led by *'outside agitators'*[46]. Political opponents to the ruling Conservative Party drove the latter explanations in order emphasise the social effects of government policies in the inner cities which were regarded as generalised and not 'race' specific. From the 'conflictual' group of explanatory frameworks much of the Marxist left concentrated on the multi-ethnic nature of the revolts in order to subsume 'racial' aspects into the concept of 'generalised class struggle'[47].

Other more controversial approaches from the Situationists and Anarchists focused on 'proletarian alienation'[48] and emphasised the creation in the 1970s of a deviant 'impossible class' in the inner cities. This sub-proletarian stratum refused capitalist work, subverted the Keynesian economic strategy of welfarism and survived through an illegal 'unofficial subterranean economy'[49]. For these commentators the repressive

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[45] Proponents of the *'Law and Order'* framework popularised the idea of *'copycat riots'* in order to explain the wide and rapid spread of the disturbances. See for example R. Clutterbuck, 'Terrorism and Urban Violence,' *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science* (1982) and E. Moonman, 'Copy-Cat Hooligans,' *Contemporary Affairs Briefing* 1, no. 9 (1981).

[46] See Solomos, *Race and Racism in Contemporary Britain*, Chapter 6 and Solomos, *Black Youth, Racism and the State: The Politics of Ideology and Policy*, pp.182-6.

[47] See for example the views of the Communist Party of Great Britain in Smith, *Conflicting Narratives of Black Youth Rebellion in Modern Britain* and the Socialist Workers Party in C. Harman, 'The Summer of 1981: A Post-Riot Analysis,' *International Socialism,* Autumn 1981.

[48] Smith and others, *Like a Summer with a Thousand Julys…and Other Seasons…*

[49] *We Want to RIOT, Not to WORK: The 1981 Brixton Uprisings* (London: Riot not to work collective, 1982), pp.30-38.

activities of the police in the inner cities during this period was a result of the need for the state to suppress these damaging behaviours. The resulting explosion of rioting, looting and arson in 1981 represented both an assertion of 'human superiority over commodities' and the search for a 'life worth living'[50].

Post-modernist approaches in rejecting the Marxist meta-narrative concerning 'class' emphasised the diversity of motives of participants, the fragmentary nature of the events and argued for the importance of *meaning* rather than objective fact. Others argued that the ideological 'position of the observer' determined what the various commentators saw and emphasised when studying the unrest[51]. One theorist even denied that 'unified' wave of disturbances had actually occurred, suggesting that many of the 'riots' were figments of a media self-signification spirals and ideological bias[52]. Other researchers influenced by post-modernist axioms in rejecting the grand narratives of 'race' and 'class' turned to new discourses such as gender[53] and racialisation[54] to explain the disorders.

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[50] G. Debord, 'The Decline and Fall of the Spectacle-Commodity Economy,' in *Situationist International Anthology*, ed. K. Knabb (Berkeley, CA: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1981), pp.153-60.

[51] See Smith, *Conflicting Narratives of Black Youth Rebellion in Modern Britain*, pp.25-26 and H. K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp.25-27.

[52] Keith, *Race, Riots and Policing: Lore and Disorder in a Multi-Racist Society*, pp.61-71.

[53] See B. Campbell, *Goliath: Britain's Dangerous Places* (London: Methuen, 1993) and S. Burlet and H. Reid, 'A Gendered Uprising: Political Representation and Minority Ethnic Communities,' *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 21, no. 2 (1998).

[54] See M. Rowe, *The Racialisation of Disorder in Twentieth Century Britain* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998).

The mainstream explanations, trapped as they were within a 'terrain of debate' dominated by the hegemonic contingencies concerning the role of the state, the nation and the political process, were also hamstrung by political contingencies of government and opposition. The lesser known conflictual theories of the left and the Black radicals had little public exposure and were consumed with arguments about the historical contexts of the revolts and the issue of subsuming of 'race' into the mater category of 'class'. The post-modernists merely appeared to want to disaggregate the July wave of disorders and leave a pile of localised fragments behind, whilst the *taboo* theories of the ultra-left championed 'riot' as a tool for undermining capitalism utilised by a new sub-proletarian grouping.

Significantly these ideological struggles to 'own' the disturbances of 1980-81 were often based upon little empirical evidence or knowledge of the temporal and spatial nature of the unrest and rarely involved the views of participants. Whilst many wanted to *explain* the unrest, *what had actually happened* was far from clear and few commentators had much evidence or testimony to back up their theories. In fact, the only disorders that were comprehensively documented in 1981 were those that occurred in Brixton (April) and Moss Side (July) amongst literally hundreds of disorders that summer[55].

1.6   The research: questions, strategy and structure

1.6.1   'Macro' analysis

Having briefly reviewed the principal disorders of 1980-81 and contemporary

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[55] The Brixton events were documented in Scarman, *The Scarman Report* and Moss Side in Hytner, *Report of the Moss Side Enquiry Panel to the Leader of the Greater Manchester Council*.

explanations for these events, in the following section the central research questions derived from this study, are outlined. Preliminary examination of the principal secondary sources concerning the unrest of the summer of 1981 showed that the majority of the then known disturbances were merely quoted in lists of 'riots' and were significantly under-researched. Little information was available on these disturbances outside of specific major incidents and it was certainly clear that very little detailed research had been carried out beyond reports in national media sources.

As a result of these deficiencies and the preliminary investigations into the 'Bristol Riots' of 1980, which showed that certain disorders were highlighted (St. Paul's) whilst others (Southmead and Knowle West) were almost completely ignored, it was suspected that the 1981 'riot' lists were far from comprehensive. Thus, the first research task involved evaluating in detail the content of the July wave of unrest in 1981. In addition, none of the secondary sources made a thorough study of the severity or spatial and temporal characteristics of the July wave as a whole. Similarly, local clusters of 'riots' that appeared in many major cities were only studied in any detail in two locations, London and Liverpool[56]. Consequently, the second major area of investigation was focused on determining these characteristics for individual *daily* incidents. These could then be grouped as a series of contiguous disorders in a particular neighbourhood, as a tranche of incidents in different locations in a city or combined for analysis of the countrywide 'wave' of disturbances.

It was recognised from the outset of the research that the very scale of the wave of

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[56] The disorders of July 1981 in London were studied in Keith, *Race, Riots and Policing: Lore and Disorder in a Multi-Racist Society* and in Liverpool by Bowrey, *The 1981 Urban Riots in England*.

disturbances in July 1981 and the time-scale of the project precluded comprehensive detailed analysis of significant numbers of incidents beyond that of the evidence in the principal primary sources (local newspapers). Consequently, the research into the July wave was not focused on detailing individual serious incidents of unrest but targeted at gathering as much information on as many daily events as possible within the designated period. This quantitative emphasis was informed by significantly under-researched questions in the secondary sources. Its brief was to examine the apparent simultaneous nature of the uprisings in different districts of cities, the rate at which events unfolded and replicated themselves and the ethnic composition of the 'rioting crowds'.

1.6.2   'Micro' history

The limitations in detail inherent in the *macro* analysis of the numerous disorders in the July wave of 1981 meant that certain important questions could not be successfully investigated by such a study. These included:

- The simultaneous nature of the uprisings in different districts of cities with apparently different ethnic compositions, histories and demographics.

- The organisational forms shown by the participants both prior and during disorders.

- The social and sub-cultural networks that were in operation both prior to and within disturbances, which helped to create the 'disorderly crowds'.

- The form and content of communication processes that allowed knowledge of 'riots' to spread and be responded to.

- Why the participants were there and what their perceptions of the historical factors and precipitating incidents that led to the disorders were.

In order to investigate these aspects of the anatomy of individual disorders and the relationship between contiguous disturbances in 1980-81 a different research strategy was required.

Preliminary investigations into the nature and configuration of the disturbances spread over four to five days in April 1980 in Bristol suggested that they shared several salient features with the patterns of disorders in cities in July 1981. In Bristol, a well-publicised major disturbance in an inner city area of mixed ethnicity (St. Paul's) led to a series of further incidents of lesser magnitude in outlying mainly White estates over the succeeding days (Southmead, Knowle West). This pattern accorded with the findings in the existing secondary sources concerning the temporal and spatial arrangement of disturbances in London and Liverpool in July 1981[57]. Consequently, the Bristol events were considered to provide three useful case studies that allowed investigation into the questions that could not be effectively approached in the overview of the July wave.

It was recognised from the outset of the research effort that regional and local variations in the pre-history of disturbances and demographics could compromise this strategy. However, certain features of the 1981 disturbances suggested that these effects were moderated to some extent. First, the temporal and spatial homogeneity of mass electronic communication meant that the whole country was simultaneously exposed to information about the outbreak of major 'riots'. Second, the large number of disturbances that occurred in July 1981 implied that the unrest was not an

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[57] See Keith, *Race, Riots and Policing: Lore and Disorder in a Multi-Racist Society* and Bowrey, *The 1981 Urban Riots in England*.

aberration. Third, the wide geographic spread of locales affected by 'riots' in England suggested that *despite* regional and local variations a significant number of counties and cities saw similar patterns of disorder. Lastly, the majority of July incidents were concentrated over six days a similar time period to the temporal pattern of the Bristol disorders. These features as a whole were felt to be sufficient to allay problems of 'causality-correlation' and over-generalisation.

1.7   Objectives: approaches and content

In the following section the approaches and content of this thesis are discussed with an eye to what was and what was not objectively intended. As explained previously, the macro-study of the wave of disturbances in July 1981 was not planned to be a definitive history of specific disorders but to function as a comprehensive overview of the countrywide unrest. The data gathering exercise was thus essential both to remedy the significant gaps in the historical record and to allow future macro and micro histories to be constructed. The principal aim of the quantitative analysis of this data was to study temporal and spatial patterns in the diffusion of the disturbances.

The micro-histories of the 'Bristol Riots' of April 1980 performed several functions. As *historical writings* they provided a comprehensive and up to date account of the St. Paul's disturbance of April 2nd 1980 based on hitherto un-researched primary sources. They also rescued the disturbances of Southmead and Knowle West from obscurity by placing these events into the historical record. As individual *analytical studies* they offered detailed examinations of the anatomy of disorders including previously under-researched aspects of urban disturbance such as the importance of social and sub-cultural networks, looting, negotiation with the authorities, travellers to

riots and the motives and feelings of participants. From the perspective of the *spread of disturbances*, they provided studies of communication channels, social links between areas and demographic features of locales, which helped explain both characteristics of the Bristol incidents and provided evidence for the patterns found in the analysis of the wave of disorders in July 1981.

Neither of these two phases of research and analysis was primarily aimed at validating or refuting a preconceived ideological position or the various explanatory frameworks for disorder briefly reviewed in Section 1.5. Instead the two methodological approaches were informed by theory and quantitative methods concerned with the anatomy of riots and the diffusion of disturbances. Thus the principal review of theory in this thesis is concerned with these particular considerations rather than an extended debate about which theoretical explanations were 'correct'. This of course does not mean that such inferences cannot be made or that certain explanations for the 'English' disorders of 1980-81 cannot be wholly or partially dismissed as a result of the evidence and analytical conclusions in this thesis.

1.8   Outline of thesis structure

In the following section the structure of this thesis is outlined by a brief description of the content and direction of each chapter.

Chapter 2 entitled *'The disorderly 'crowd' and the diffusion of disturbances'* is essentially a review of the historical, sociological and psychological approaches to collective violence and the spread of unrest. The first section, concerning the 'disorderly crowd', provides various theoretical tools for the micro-histories studying

the anatomy of the 'Bristol Riots' in 1980. The second section, relating to the diffusion of disturbances, contributes quantitative methods for analysing the spatial and temporal spread of unrest, some of which are employed in the macro analysis of the July 1981 unrest. **Chapter 3**, *'Sources and Methodology'* outlines the primary and secondary sources and methodological approaches employed in the research activities.

Chapters 4-7 present the findings of the research into the urban disorders in England in 1980-81. **Chapter 4**, *'Violent Urban Disturbance in England July 1981'* provides a macro historical analysis of the July 1981 countrywide wave of unrest. This incorporates a quantitative and cartographical study of the spatial and temporal characteristics of this wave and the ethnic composition of the 'crowds' involved. **Chapter 5**, *'Bristol 1980: St. Paul's, Southmead and Knowle West'* is dedicated to a quantitative and qualitative examination of the demography and features of the three disparate areas of Bristol which experienced unrest in April 1980. This chapter provides contextual information for the micro histories of the disturbances that follow. **Chapter 6**, *'What Happened in the 'Bristol Riots'?'* comprises comprehensive accounts of the disturbances in St. Paul's, Southmead and Knowle West areas of Bristol in the first week of April 1980. **Chapter 7**, *'The 'Bristol Riots': An Analysis'* compares and contrasts the various incidents in Bristol and provides quantitative and qualitative analyses of under-researched features of the disturbances such as the importance of sub-cultural and social networks, negotiation, looting, travellers and the meanings of the events for the participants. Finally, **Chapter 8**, *'Conclusions'* draws together the findings of the two phases of research, presents some conclusions and suggests further research activity and analysis.

2.0 The disorderly 'crowd' and the diffusion of disturbances

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is dedicated to a review of psychological, sociological and historical theories concerned with crowd composition, behaviour and the spread of collective violence. The principal aim of this chapter is to outline the theoretical approaches of the various disciplines and to chart their development in the context of the prevailing historical conditions and discourses. This historical approach was undertaken, as it was clear from an examination of the theoretical advances in this area that the associated bursts of research activity were often linked with governmental responses to cycles of serious disorders in various nations. As such they were influenced by the need to understand how these 'riots' came to happen, the anatomies and behaviours of the 'crowds' involved and how they diffused into 'waves' of disorders. These requirements were indirectly linked with state-level efforts to improve the methods for the control and suppression of collective violence of this form.

The objective of this chapter is to consider the theoretical tools (both qualitative and quantitative) that were employed in the analysis of the anatomy of disorders in Bristol in 1980 and the spread of disturbances in 1980-81. As such, the emphasis is on the explanation and historical development of these particular approaches rather than a comprehensive review of all the theoretical paradigms concerning collective violence.

The chapter is split into two parts, the first considering theories of 'disorderly crowd' behaviour and the second contemporary work on the spread of violent disturbances. Over the last decade the apparent division between the two approaches has reduced as

contemporary social scientists have attempted to integrate them. Despite this commendable research, the overall history of the theoretical developments suggests a general separation in activity and focus between the two fields of study and this frames the structure of the chapter.

2.2   The disorderly 'crowd'

2.2.1   Introduction

The following section is concerned with charting the development of theories concerning crowd composition and behaviour in the context of urban disorder. The trend of this development can be loosely characterised as moving through a series of discrete phases that were influenced both by theoretical advances in the various concerned disciplines (psychology, history, sociology) and the impact of contemporary historical events (such as the urban disorders in the United States in the 1960s, the urban disturbances in the United Kingdom and France of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century and the apparent reappearance of 'food riots' in the 1990s in the developing world). Each series of disorders in the U.S., U.K. and France created both academic interest in crowd behaviour, governmental requirements for research and crucially funds for these activities. Consequently the study of 'crowds' and their relationship to disorder has in the main been a succession of immediate academic responses to contemporary events with all the restrictions of limited time and resources. These studies have of course been moulded by the ideological positions of the theorists and the dominant discourses in play in each particular era. More specifically they were also affected to a greater or lesser extent by the immediate political exigencies of the periods of disturbance in which they were written.

The first phase of the theoretical developments can be charted from the ahistorical and non-contextual psychological theories of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries through to the post-war British Marxist historians who emphasised the concept of agency in their analysis of the composition of the 'crowd', its motives and targets. The second phase, which was primarily instigated by the extensive urban uprisings in major U.S. cities during the 1960s, produced a plethora of research evidence and theoretical advances. This phase was marked by both a realisation of the complexity involved in crowd behaviour and the tentative introduction of situational and contextual factors to the analysis. The third phase, stimulated by the urban 'riots' of the 1980s in the U.K., produced a smaller volume of material but marked a decisive theoretical turn towards combining structural, contextual and situational influences on crowds and disorder. This tendency was also affected by post-modernist theoretical developments, which criticised teleological meta-narratives and quantitative analyses as well as leading to the introduction of new discourses such as (sub) culture, gender, ethnicity and locale to the expanding 'models of disorder'. These particularly became apparent in the recent analyses of the 1991-2 and 2001 disorders in the U.K. and the *banlieue* 'riots' in France of 2005-2007.

2.2.2   Early theories of the 'crowd'

The work of Gustave Le Bon is the common starting point for 'modern' theories of crowd behaviour and his influential work *'The Crowd: a study of the popular mind'* published in 1895 begins with a revelatory statement exposing some of the ideological bases in his approach to crowd theory:

'The following work is devoted to an account of the characteristics of

crowds. The whole of the common characteristics with which heredity endows the individuals of a race constitute the genius of the race. When, however, a certain number of these individuals are gathered together in a crowd for purposes of action, observation proves that, from the mere fact of their being assembled, there result certain new psychological characteristics, which are added to the racial characteristics and differ from them at times to a very considerable degree.' [58]

This opening statement was informed by notions of biological determinism inherent within 'race' theory and also by pre-Freudian theories of the unconscious[59]. Le Bon's approach to the disorderly 'crowd' was premised upon the supposed base and irrational behaviours of the lower classes that he understood to be 'easily led'[60]. The theory proposed that a set of processes were underway within 'crowds', without the awareness of the participants, where 'their conscious personalities automatically disappear to be replaced by a sinister, uncivilised and potentially barbaric 'collective

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[58] Preface to G. Le Bon, *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind*, (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1895).

[59] Le Bon published two works previous to his study of crowds, *The Civilisation of Arabs* (1884) and *The Psychology of Peoples* (1894), which explicitly referred to eugenic theory. It should be noted that Freud's later work *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1922) was written as a critical response to Le Bon's work.

[60] It comes as no surprise that many commentators have argued that Adolf Hitler was inspired by Le Bon's work on the 'crowd'. Mein Kampf has distinct references to the mass propaganda techniques proposed by Le Bon in '*The Crowd: a study of the popular mind'*. Other adherents of the Le Bonian approach included Benito Mussolini, Joseph Goebbels and Edward Bernays, the latter a proponent and instigator of mass psychological manipulation in the media and advertising. S. Reicher and J. Potter, 'Psychological Theory as Intergroup Perspective: A Comparative Analysis of 'Scientific' and 'Lay' Accounts of Crowd Events,' *Human Relations* 38, no. 2 (1985), p.168.

mind''[61]. Fundamental to this conjecture was the idea that placing the individual in the scenario of the 'crowd' allowed de-individuation to occur; effectively the loss of personal responsibility through the anonymity of the collective experience. Once this process was in effect, Le Bon believed that the subjects were less able to resist the 'power of suggestion' and were consequently capable of unsavoury actions that they would not normally have undertaken. Finally and perhaps most contentiously, he argued that these effects were 'contagious' in that they could be passed via the emotive atmosphere of the 'crowd' to 'uninfected' individuals.

Le Bon's theoretical legacy was to be grasped by the founder of social psychology as a scientific discipline, the American academic Floyd Allport. Allport's 1924 work *'Social Psychology'*[62] followed Le Bon's theoretical trajectory by employing idea of 'social facilitation'. This stressed the importance of the emotive atmosphere of the 'crowd' in creating a progressive spiral, which had:

> 'the gradual effect of overriding customary processes of self-restraint on anti-social behaviour and paving the way for a biologically universal 'reflex of struggle' to emerge, marked by the destruction of anything preventing the attainment of basic human needs'[63].

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[61] D. Waddington and M. King, 'The Disorderly Crowd: From Classical Psychological Reductionism to Socio-Contextual Theory–The Impact on Public Order Policing Strategies,' *Howard Journal of Criminal Justice* 44, no. 5 (2005), p.491.

[62] F. H. Allport, *Social Psychology* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1924).

[63] Waddington and King, *The Disorderly Crowd: From Classical Psychological Reductionism to Socio-Contextual Theory–The Impact on Public Order Policing Strategies,* pp.491-2.

The connections between the two theories are explicit in their view of the collectively induced collapse of 'civilised' values and their reduction of human behaviour to a core of savagery. However, as we shall later see in more detail, this was challenged by the crowd psychologist Steven Reicher who argued in the 1980s:

> 'While these two approaches are diametrically opposed to each other, the one proposing that individuality is extinguished in the crowd [Le Bon] and the other that it is accentuated [Allport], they are nonetheless united in one crucial premise. Both suggest that the only mechanism capable of directly planned or rational behaviour is a **sovereign individual identity**'[64]

Reicher followed the argument of each theory through to their essentialist conclusions with Le Bon's 'group mind' approach leading to the 'primitive racial unconscious' and Allport's 'social facilitation' and consequent 'extreme individualism' effectively limiting participation in disorder to certain personality types.

The thread of the Le Bonian legacy continued into the pre-war period albeit mutated into the 'frustration-aggression' hypothesis of Dollard et al.[65]. These theoreticians postulated that crowd disorder was a 'collective emotional outburst of psychic energy', which occurred when a group were denied access to a defined objective or were subject to relative deprivation compared to other groups. These theories of the disorderly crowd were all rooted in the discipline of psychology; the next significant

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[64] Reicher, *The St. Paul's Riot: An Explanation of the Limits of Crowd Action in Terms of a Social Identity Model*, p.188.

[65] J. Dollard and others, *Frustration and Aggression.* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1939).

developments were to be found amongst historians and specifically the British Marxist School of the post-war period.

2.2.3   The 'Marxists' and the 'crowd'

Up until World War II, Marxist historiography had, in general, been dominated with deterministic structural analyses of modes of production and their effect on super-structural political forms and ideology[66]. There had been less concern with the actions of Marx's historical agents the bourgeoisie and more significantly *the proletariat*. The British Marxist historians in the post-war period took a more radical turn which emphasised the actions of the proletariat in making history. George Rudé, who was

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[66] This was probably as result of teleological interpretations of Marx's major work *'Capital: A Critique of Political Economy'*. It has been suggested that *'Capital'* contained logical imperatives that effected a provisional 'closed' cycle of argument in the sense that it was an attempt at an objective analysis of capitalism without reference to the subjective effects of class struggle and consequent crises, see for example F. C. Shortall, *The Incomplete Marx* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1994). It has been established that Marx planned a series of distinct sections in *'Capital'* including volumes concerning 'the wage', 'the state', 'the world market' and 'crises' as noted in Ernest Mandel's introduction to K. Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy* (London: Penguin Classics, 1990), pp.27-28. It has been postulated that the fact that these sections were unwritten or unfinished has left the structure-agency tension within Marx's theory significantly tipped towards the former. Writers such A. Negri, *Marx Beyond Marx: Lessons on the Gründrisse* (New York: Autonomedia, 1989) have proposed that an informed clue to Marx's intentions is given by the plans for *'Capital'* outlined in the *'Gründrisse'* (notebooks) of 1857-61, which significantly only became available in the Soviet Union in 1939 and in Western Europe more than a century after their writing. See K. Marx, *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy* (London: Penguin Classics, 1993).

influenced by the Annales School[67] and was a student of the eminent French historian Georges Lefebvre (who originally coined the term 'history from below'), led the charge with his ground-breaking work *'The Crowd in History'*[68] (published in 1964), Rudé critiqued Le Bon's theories as well as crude 'liberal' and 'conservative' historical descriptions of the 'crowd' as the 'people' or the 'mob' respectively, which he argued 'reduce the crowd to a disembodied abstraction'. Instead Rudé posed a series of challenging questions for the researcher in determining the size, class composition and leadership of the historical 'crowd', its motives, aims and underlying ideas and its actions, targets and the historical significance of the event. Unlike the crowd psychologists of the pre-war era, Rudé did not ignore the relationship between the 'crowd' and the 'authorities', particularly in relation to 'trigger' events, the role of mediators and the context of previous encounters between the protagonists. Crucially, Rudé also noted the existence of dynamic divergences between the political context and 'trigger' of a disturbance and the agendas of the disorderly 'crowd'[69].

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[67] The Annales School of History originated in France in the 1920s. Its writers moved from contemporary historical studies of politics, diplomacy and war towards long view (*longue durée*), inter-disciplinary analyses of society, economy and culture. This 'turn', although still firmly rooted in the French Marxist tradition of structuralism, opened up new vistas and techniques of historical study including 'micro-history' and 'cultural history' that were directly connected to the *'histoire des mentalités'* ('history of attitudes' or 'history of world-views') championed by the Annales School.

[68] G. Rudé, *The Crowd in History: A Study of Popular Disturbances in France and England, 1730-1848* (London: Serif, 1995).

[69] This phenomenon was recognised by the historian Peter Linebaugh (a protégé of the British Marxist School) in his analysis of the ostensibly 'anti-Catholic Gordon Riots' of 1780. Linebaugh argued that the precipitating events for the disorders may have been politically inspired anti-Catholic protests but once the disturbances were underway new agendas *within* the 'crowds' appeared which had a different

Rudé's methodological advance that emphasised the anatomy, motive and action of a crowd within a disturbance scenario that included other contending forces, rather than its abstraction into an amorphous or irrational 'beast' was still fettered by the structuralist leanings of classical Marxism[70]. These constraints were mirrored in subsequent works by Marxists from the 'British School', including Eric Hobsbawm, whose work on 'social banditry' and his later collaborative work with Rudé, a social history of the Captain Swing 'riots'[71] made similar connections between the possible repertoires of crowd action and the class composition and specific mode of production in place in the period of the disturbance.

A related problem, which particularly came to the fore in Marxist analysis of the urban disorders of 1980-81 in England, concerned Marx and Engel's definition of the 'underclass' or 'lumpen proletariat'. Hobsbawm argued in his studies of the 'criminal poor' that they could not play a key role in social movements because they were

political, economic and social targets; P. Linebaugh, *The London Hanged: Crime and Civil Society in the Eighteenth Century*, 2nd ed. (London: Verso, 2003), pp.333-370.

[70] By way of example, Rudé maintained a clear (but questionable) distinction between two types of 'crowd'; the *'pre-industrial'* (engaged in food riots, machine breaking, effigies and incendiarism) and the *'industrial'* (involved in strikes, mass meetings and demonstrations). He argued that the former consisted of peasants or lower orders led by 'captains' with backward looking beliefs in customary right, natural justice and a nostalgia for 'past utopias'. In contrast, the latter crowds were made up of industrial workers with well-defined, rational and forward-looking objectives. Rudé, *The Crowd in History: A Study of Popular Disturbances in France and England, 1730-1848*.

[71] E. J. Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels, Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1959) and E. J. Hobsbawm and G. Rudé, *Captain Swing* (Harmondsworth: Penguin University Books, 1973).

marginal to production *and the proletariat* and consequently they could not achieve the consciousness of the proletariat. As the Marxist theorist Stuart Hall noted, the orthodox reading of the 'lumpen proletariat' suggested that 'though the life and values of the 'dangerous classes' represent an inversion of the bourgeois world, they remain ultimately enclosed by it – confined by it and in the end parasitic upon it'[72]. This sweeping classical interpretation effectively ruled out the 'disorderly crowd' principally composed of the marginalized underclass, from *meaningful* progressive action[73].

A more fundamental critique of classical Marxist thought was to spring from the British School through the works of Edward Thompson, particularly his influential work *'The Making of the English Working Class'*[74] originally published in 1963. In the context of this thesis the importance of this book is not in its historical content as such, which was ground-breaking, but instead in marking Thompson's shift of the Marxian master category from the *mode of production* (structure) to *class struggle* (agency). In the process he also posed a new definition of class that was not bound as tightly to the base-superstructure paradigm. Thompson's model of class was a dynamic social relation between groups of people[75] rather than a 'double relation

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[72] Hall added this is why there 'cannot by definition be a 'Marxist theory of crime'' in S. Hall and others, *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State and Law and Order* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1978), pp.363-4.

[73] This constraint on the composition of 'legitimate' crowds is reminiscent of the 'riff-raff' theory of disorder discussed later in this chapter in Section 2.2.4.

[74] E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1988).

[75] Thompson stated 'By class I understand a historical phenomenon, unifying a number of disparate and seemingly unconnected events, both in the raw material of experience and in consciousness. I

between groups of people and things, the means of production'[76] as had been suggested by classical interpretations of Marx. As a consequence of liberating 'class' from the fetters of strict economic determinism, Thompson was able to propose that the working class had an active role in its own 'making' and that this process was directly linked to class-consciousness.

The importance of this realignment of the understanding of class as a *social relation* rather than a relation to the mode of production provides a connection to social protest. For Thompson such activities were potentially a pole of class re-composition and through the praxis of their agents, class-consciousness could be engendered. An extension of this argument to the 'disorderly crowd' reopens this particular arena, under particular conditions, as a site of *meaningful* social protest within the Marxist schema. Thompson exhibited an aspect of this argument in his important contribution to 'crowd theory' in his 1971 work *'The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century'*[77]. This paper, which was principally concerned with the analysis of food 'riots' in the period, proposed the existence of a customary 'moral economy', which legitimised, informed and guided the actions of 'riotous mobs'. Within this framework of legitimate action, 'crowds' moved up the supply chain from market to

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emphasize that this is an historical phenomenon. I do not see class as a 'structure', nor even as a category, but as something which in fact happens (and can be shown to have happened) in human relationships' from R. Harrison, 'Marxism as Nineteenth-Century Critique and Twentieth-Century Ideology,' *History* 66, no. 217 (1981), p.211.

[76] R. Johnson, 'Edward Thompson, Eugene Genovese, and Socialist-Humanist History,' *History Workshop Journal* 6, no. 1 (1978), p.91.

[77] E. P. Thompson, 'The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century,' *Past & Present* 50, no. 1 (1971).

mill to landowner using threat and violence if necessary to enforce price control and fair distribution of food. Thompson argued the fact that these, sometimes complex, processes were present in such 'riots', was not always explicit in the sources particularly if the historian disregarded the action as merely 'criminal'.

The impact of the British Marxist School's re-orientations in the approaches to historical research and analysis were extremely influential in generating new lines of and sites of enquiry. Quantitative and qualitative analyses of historical waves of contentious 'disorders' began to appear in the 1970s, effectively opening up a new sub-field within studies concerned with social movements and protest, championed by sociologists and historians such as Tilly, Charlesworth, and Bohstedt[78]. The British Marxist historians and their protégés work on the 'disorderly crowd' began to be referenced in relation to contemporaneous disorders[79], the most influential of which in

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[78] Examples of works in this branch of study in this period are C. Tilly, L. Tilly and R. H. Tilly, *The Rebellious Century, 1830-1930* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), C. Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (London: McGraw-Hill, 1978), C. Tilly and S. H. Palmer, 'Popular Contention in Great Britain, 1758–1834,' *History: Reviews of New Books* 24, no. 3 (1996), A. Charlesworth, *Social Protest in a Rural Society: The Spatial Diffusion of the Captain Swing Disturbances of 1830–1831* Historical Geography Research Series 1 (Norwich: Geo Abstracts, University of East Anglia, 1979) and J. Bohstedt, *Riots and Community Politics in England and Wales 1790-1810* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983).

[79] Tilly for example contributed to the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders research group dedicated to *'Historical and Comparative Perspectives'*, which was set up in the wake of the 1967 urban disorders in Newark and Detroit National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence. Task Force on Historical and Comparative Perspectives, T. R. Gurr and H. D. Graham, *Violence in America: Historical & Comparative Perspectives* (New York: New American Library, 1969).

developments in 'crowd' theory were the urban uprisings of the mid to late 1960s in the United States.

2.2.4   The impact of the U.S. disorders of the 1960s

The six days of 'rioting' in Harlem, New York in 1964 arguably marked the beginning of the most serious period of unrest in U.S. cities in the twentieth century. August of 1965 saw even more intense rioting in the Watts area of Los Angeles on the West Coast, which drew attention to urban disorder as a *national* problem. As the decade wore on the frequency and intensity of unrest in mainly Black urban areas increased, with National Guard and military intervention becoming common. After the Newark (New York) 'riots' of mid-July 1967, and whilst areas of Detroit were still burning from further serious disorders, President Lyndon B. Johnson, appointed the 'National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders' (led by the Governor of Illinois, Otto Kerner, Jr.)[80], to investigate the causes and prevention of violent urban disturbances. Johnson essentially asked for answers to three basic questions about the 'riots', 'what happened, why did it happen and what could be done to prevent it from happening again?' The intervention of the Federal Government and the scale of the investigation stimulated and greatly expanded the existing research and theoretical effort in American Universities concerned with the anatomy and dynamics of the 'disorderly 'crowd'[81].

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[80] Hence the more commonly known name *'The Kerner Commission'*.

[81] The 'Kerner Commission' probably ranks as the largest and most comprehensive qualitative and quantitative investigation into urban disorder in world history, involving at its peak hundreds of researchers, advisors and witnesses as well as interviews with over a 1,200 residents of selected 'riotous' districts.

The vast amount of new data on urban disorder that became available through the research provided a basis for testing and critiquing existing approaches to crowd behaviour. The most coherent and current theory available for the 60s researchers was that of Neil Smelser, a structural-functionalist[82] sociologist whose work on collective violence and crowd behaviour had expanded the somewhat limited approaches of earlier theorists[83]. Smelser created a series of six determining categories for collective disorder to occur; structural conduciveness, structural strain, the growth and spread of generalised hostile belief, precipitating factors, mobilisation of participants for action and social control. The first two categories related to the structural *context* at the time of the disorder, that is a group or institution that could be blamed for a grievance, no mechanism for the redress of that grievance and an awareness of this fact which created 'strain' amongst the potential participants. The third category related to the *mechanism* for transfer of this knowledge between the participants. The final three categories are *situational* in that they relate to the actual disorder itself, the 'trigger' event, the assembly of the 'disorderly' and the form of action taken by the authorities for suppression of the disorder. By systematising his theory of 'collective disorder', Smelser rejected the closed approaches of Le Bon and Allport that negated historical, structural, contextual and to a certain extent situational analyses in favour of naturalistic psychological explanations.

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[82] The structural-functionalist current of sociological thought, which was particularly prominent in the 1940s-50s in the U.S., viewed society as a coherent whole (a 'body' essentially) where norms, customs, traditions and institutions (the 'organs' of the 'body') functioned to provide cohesion and stability.

[83] N. J. Smelser, *Theory of Collective Behavior* (New York: Free Press, 1962).

However, it was argued that Smelser's approach:

> 'was predicated on the belief that public disorder is an anomalous and irrational activity, involving 'deviant groups' – that is, criminals, the poorly socialised and those sections of society experiencing some form of unsettling transition (for example, adolescents, the unemployed or recent migrants)' [84]

This allusion to collective violence being the province of the societal 'deviant' is commonly known as 'riff-raff' theory and has a long historic precedent[85]. In fact, Rudé's ground-breaking emphasis on studying the *composition* of crowds in the French Revolution was initially a direct investigative response to similar contemporary explanations for 'riot'.

> 'thus he sought to show that those who took to the streets were ordinary, sober citizens, not half-crazed animals, not criminals. They were individuals who took part in protest for very sensible reasons - an increase in the price of bread, a decrease in their wages - not bought by some political demagogue, not creating disorder to carry out theft, plunder and

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[84] Waddington and King, *The Disorderly Crowd: From Classical Psychological Reductionism to Socio-Contextual Theory – The Impact on Public Order Policing Strategies*, pp.493-5.

[85] The explanation of disorder as being the product of 'deviant' or 'criminal' elements was a common explanation for 'riot' in the nineteenth century and appears to have an ahistorical attraction for most authorities dealing with violent dissent, hence its unsurprising reappearance within the 'explanatory frameworks' of the media, politicians and police during the 1980s urban disorders in the U.K.

revenge killings'[86]

It was this reading of Smelser's theory, that an essentially stable, self-regulated and integrated society was under threat from disorderly 'deviant groups' that was to first come under examination in the light of the evidence generated by the researchers into the 1960s U.S. disturbances. A commendable and interesting facet of the investigations carried out by the Kerner Commission appointees were the attempts to collect data on the opinions and backgrounds of both participants and non-participants in the disorders in their localities. This information was to have significant impact on the understanding of crowd behaviour, the pre-conceptions about the make-up of the 'crowds' and the explanations for the waves of disorders. A crucial section of the Kerner Report[87] concerned the profile of the 'average rioter', which showed that 'he' 'was economically on a par with the average non-rioter, was comparatively better educated, politically more active, and invariably a lifelong resident of the city'[88]. This was a stunning riposte to the 'riff-raff' theory and also to those who had suggested that the recent pattern of migration of Black workers to Northern U.S. cities had created a transient group unable to 'adjust to the stress and complexity of urban

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[86] A. Charlesworth, 'George Rudé and the Anatomy of the Crowd,' *Labour History Review* 55, no. 3 (1990), p.27.

[87] O. Kerner et al, *The Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders* (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1968), pp.73-77. This survey, carried out by Dr. Nathan Caplan and Jeffery Paige of the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan, was based on 1,200 interviews in 20 cities, detailed interviewing of residents in Detroit and Newark and arrest statistics. Other studies included R. M. Fogelson and R. B. Hill, 'Who Riots? A Study of Participation in the 1960's Riots,' *Supplemental Studies for the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders* (1968).

[88] Waddington and King, *The Disorderly Crowd: From Classical Psychological Reductionism to Socio-Contextual Theory–The Impact on Public Order Policing Strategies*, p.493.

living'[89].

The revelatory findings of the Kerner Commission led to further studies, which explicitly investigated the politicisation of 'rioters', the effects of 'racial isolation' and the views of the 'rioters'[90]. The latter investigations opened up a new vista, which had been seriously lacking in much of the existing 'crowd' theory; that of the role of the state in the form of the police and institutional racism as primary historical *and* immediate precipitating factors of disorder[91]. This revelation was to strike Smelser's theory from a different angle in that the only category he directly attributed to the police was that of 'social control', effectively the response to a gathering or active disorder. The fact that the forces of the state might act historically in a 'structurally conducive' manner, might as a result *generate* 'structural strain' and as the Kerner Report and subsequent studies showed were often a 'precipitating factor' in disturbances, attacked the structural-functionalist assumptions of a stable state serving an integrated society[92]. The question that came to the fore concerned the identity of

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[89] Upton, *Urban Riots in the 20th Century: A Social History*, Chapter 4.

[90] See for example J. M. Paige, 'Political Orientation and Riot Participation,' *American Sociological Review* 36, no. 5 (1971) on 'politicisation', E. Ransford, 'Isolation, Powerlessness, and Violence: A Study of Attitudes and Participation in the Watts Riot,' *American Journal of Sociology* 73, no. 5 (1968) on the effects of 'racial isolation' and J. R. Feagin and P. B. Sheatsley, 'Ghetto Resident Appraisals of a Riot,' *Public Opinion Quarterly* 32, no. 3 (1968), J. R. Feagin and H. Hahn, 'Riot-Precipitating Police Practices: Attitudes in Urban Ghettos,' *Phylon* 31, no. 2 (2nd Qtr., 1970) and V. Jeffries, R. H. Turner and R. T. Morris, 'The Public Perception of the Watts Riot as Social Protest,' *American Sociological Review* 36, no. 3 (1971) on the views of participants and non-participants in the disorders.

[91] Kerner, *The Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders*, pp.80-83 & 157-161.

[92] Ibid. pp.68-70 and A. D. Perez, K. M. Berg and D. Myers, 'Police and Riots, 1967-1969,' *Journal of Black Studies* 34, no. 2 (2003).

the 'deviant group' that were threatening social stability; was it the 'rioters' or the police?

Another aspect of Smelser's approach that came under scrutiny concerned the link with Le Bon's implicit assumption of irrationality in crowd behaviour, despite the historic, contextual or situational circumstances. From the structural-functionalist perspective, which it must be stated, appears to be derived from the viewpoint of a supposed *rational* and benign authority, the activities of 'disorderly mobs' are *inherently* irrational. Within this paradigm, the forces of the state are considered to be at best victims of and at worst merely unintended instigators of this irrationality. Many academic researchers into crowd behaviour had themselves participated or been eyewitnesses to collective violence in the student protests of the 1960s[93]. Their own experiences and consequent analyses led many to attack Smelser's assumptions, with critics turning this theory upside down and asking if this *inherent irrationality* extended to the *state*[94]. Others argued that the disorderly crowd of the 1960s urban

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[93] The vicinity of protest would of course have been accentuated if you were an academic, postgraduate researcher or student in a U.S. University in this period. This fact and its impact on the criticisms of 'traditional' theories of crowd behaviour was noted by McPhail when he stated 'from their ranks (students) emerged both participant and non-participant observers of the crowd. Some of those observers were outraged by the discrepancies between what they saw and heard taking place around them and the common sense/social science stereotypes of crowd participants and behaviours. No small number of ideological and conceptual challenges were hurled against the stereotypical traditional wisdoms, and a sizable amount of research was launched to examine systematically some of the pertinent claims and counterclaims'. C. McPhail, *The Myth of the Madding Crowd.* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1991), p.xxii.

[94] See for example E. Currie and J. H. Skolnick, 'A Critical Note on Conceptions of Collective Behavior,' *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 391, no. 1 (1970).

'riots' had rational motives, demands and cognitive skills[95]. It is no surprise that structural-functionalist theory which was principally developed and championed in the 1940s-50s, a perceived period of *consensus* politics (this is of course contentious), would come under severe scrutiny in a period (1960s-70s) of actual *dissensus* marked by political and social conflict[96].

As Smelser's systemised theory of 'riot' behaviour began to crumble under multiple assaults a deeper problem emerged concerning the concept of the 'crowd' and offshoots such as the 'average riot participant'. The first signs of this appeared as researchers began to delve into the detailed anatomy of specific disorders in the 1960s. The inherent complexity of disturbances exposed by the research initially led to further critiques of Le Bonian approaches, which ascribed pathological totalities to crowd behaviour. Instead the crowd, it was argued, should be considered as a 'social system', which was not inherently different to other forms of human collectivity[97].

Smelser's response to this criticism is given in the same journal; N. J. Smelser, 'Two Critics in Search of a Bias: A Response to Currie and Skolnick,' *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 391, no. 1 (1970).

[95] See for example R. A. Berk, 'A Gaming Approach to Crowd Behavior,' *American Sociological Review* 39, no. 3 (Jun., 1974).

[96] It would be difficult to argue that the actions of the state were seen as benign and rational by the vast *majority* of the U.S. population in the period of the Vietnam War, the Civil Rights movement, Black Power, student protests, the counter-culture etc.

[97] See for example the work of C. J. Couch, 'Collective Behavior: An Examination of some Stereotypes,' *Social Problems* 15, no. 3 (1968) and M. J. A. Stark and others, 'Some Empirical Patterns in a Riot Process,' *American Sociological Review* 39, no. 6 (1974). These views were countered by Eisinger who argued there were qualitative differences between 'crowd' disorders and political protests

Almost simultaneously other researchers argued for the primacy of the ideological effect, effectively the politicisation of 'crowds' as a common motivation for action, in response to the rejection of structural drivers for the disorders[98]. A contradiction between these approaches began to emerge as the researchers in the former group began to question the concept of the 'crowd' as single homogenous entity and by implication as acting with *common* ideological goals. It was argued that this problem had been present in the opposing approaches of Le Bon with his psychological homogenisation and his critics such as Rudé with their homogenisation of ideological belief in the disorderly crowd[99]. Essentially the question turned on whether ideological belief was the primary or even sole driver for crowd behaviour or that other complex processes were underway once a group had been mobilised. This

in P. K. Eisinger, 'The Conditions of Protest Behavior in American Cities,' *American Political Science Review* 67, no. 1 (1973).

[98] This was a product of studies that dismissed structural factors such as absolute deprivation as being relevant to 'riot' propensity. For example, Spilerman found little correlation between local conditions or structural factors on the likelihood of urban 'riot' in U.S. cities. Instead the only correlation was with the size of the Black population in each city. He thus attributed 'riot' propensity to ideological effects. S. Spilerman, 'The Causes of Racial Disturbances: A Comparison of Alternative Explanations,' *American Sociological Review* 35, no. 4 (1970). This position was followed up with further studies including J. R. Feagin and H. Hahn, *Ghetto Revolts: The Politics of Violence in American Cities.* (New York: Macmillan, 1973) and R. M. Fogelson, G. Black and M. Lipsky, 'Review Symposium,' *American Political Science Review* 63, no. 4 (1969) that explicitly stated that the disorders were a result of the politicisation of Black 'ghettos'.

[99] Waddington notes this contradiction in P. A. J. Waddington, *Liberty and Order: Public Order Policing in a Capital City.* (London: University College London Press, 1994) in stating that rioting 'may have emergent properties of social organisation, but there is no reason to suppose that the organisation arises from a common motivation'.

effectively left the path open for the rejuvenation of somewhat discredited behaviourist approaches to the 'crowd'.

Several variants of frustration-aggression theories[100] reappeared at this point, some of which verged on the fanciful in citing primary causal factors such as 'hot weather' for the mobilisation of the 'disorderly crowd'[101]. Others who were sceptical of the 'common motivation' approach to crowd behaviour focussed on combinations of economic and psychological motivations, most notably with the 'rioting for fun and profit' slant that modelled the individual 'rioter' as Adam Smith's rational 'homo-economicus'[102]. Other academic writers attempted to tip the balance back from the emphasis on ideology and political belief in crowd disorders by arguing that these ideas should not be generally applied to disturbances because of the existence of 'issueless riots'[103]. Out of this theoretical confusion generated by the unrest in the late 60s in the U.S. an innovative new approach arose which attempted to escape the problems of homogeneity in the 'common motive' discourse.

2.2.5   'Emergent Norm' theory and the English 'riots' of 1980-81

The turn towards ideological belief as a driver of 'riot' had a direct connection with

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[100] The most influential was T. R. Gurr, *Why Men Rebel.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970). Gurr used the concept of 'relative deprivation' to counter research evidence that 'absolute deprivation' had not been statistically significant as a causal factor in the urban disturbances of the 1960s.

[101] L. Berkowitz, 'Frustrations, Comparisons, and Other Sources of Emotion Arousal as Contributors to Social Unrest,' *Journal of Social Issues* 28, no. 1 (1972).

[102] E. C. Banfield, *The Unheavenly City.* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1968).

[103] G. T. Marx, 'Issueless Riots,' *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 391, no. 1 (1970).

'convergence' theory of disorder, which suggested that rather than the 'crowd' causing people to act in an unusual way (as in Le Bon's 'mass hysteria'*), people who wanted to act in a certain way came together to form crowds*. 'Emergent-norm' theory in contrast to this unresolved dichotomy recognised that although at the outset 'crowds' contained people with various motives and interests, in the process of group action certain novel but collectively *accepted* modes of behaviour could emerge based on the actions of prominent individuals. Turner and Killian, the original proponents of this approach[104], stressed the dynamic nature of this process, which overcame the thorny problem of homogeneity of 'belief' but did not wholly dispense with the potential effects of ideology on the participants.

The next significant advances in emergent-norm theory were to occur in the U.K, ironically in the very location of the disturbance that was to mark the beginning of the 'riotous' decade of the 1980s. Steven Reicher, then an academic 'crowd' theorist at Bristol University, collected much of his research evidence in the immediate aftermath of the St. Paul's disturbance of April 2nd 1980. Crucially this consisted of formal and informal interviews with *participants* and *onlookers* recorded within three days of the disturbance. Reicher used this evidence to expose some of the inadequacies of the deluge of theory that had appeared from the U.S. in the 1960s and 70s and to propose a development to the emergent-norm theory of Turner and Killian[105]. Reicher argued that the evidence he had gathered supported a 'social

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[104] L. M. Killian and R. H. Turner, *Collective Behavior* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1972).

[105] Reicher, *The St. Paul's Riot: An Explanation of the Limits of Crowd Action in Terms of a Social Identity Model*.

identity' approach[106], proposing that the St. Paul's 'crowd' was a social group that adopted a common social identification. In the novel experience of the crowd disturbance Reicher suggested that such a group would 'construct an appropriate situational identity' limited by its overall social identification. Thus the limits to the behaviour of the crowd were important in that they gave clues as to that social identification. Reicher was thus arguing that it is *what the crowd doesn't do* that becomes important in understanding its nature as a collective entity. These limiting behaviours were part of a dynamic process of defining the 'norms' of the crowd in an extraordinary situation.

Reicher also noted that actions by individuals would only be widely adopted by the 'crowd' (i.e. become norms) if the individuals who undertook them were regarded as 'in-group' (that is identified as part of the collectivity) and the actions were consistent with the 'in-group's' social identification. These constraints on behaviour were introduced by Reicher to counter a potential weakness he located in the 'emergent-norm' theory relating to 'outside agitators'. Reicher argued that within Turner and Killian's paradigm, the undefined 'prominent individuals' could:

> 'because crowd members are mindless…persuade them to do anything.
>
> They are especially vulnerable to unscrupulous individuals who want to

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[106] This theoretical model was proposed originally in H. Tajfel, 'Social Identity and Intergroup Behaviour,' *Social Science Information* 13, no. 2 (1974), H. Tajfel, 'Social Categorization, Social Identity and Social Comparison,' *Differentiation between Social Groups* 61 (1978) and J. C. Turner, 'Towards a Cognitive Redefinition of the Social Group,' in *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations*, ed. H. Tajfel, Vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

use crowds to foment disorder…The bad leading the mad'[107].

Having dealt with this potential theoretical pitfall, Reicher then turned towards the problem of 'common motivation' by arguing that his oral evidence from the St. Paul's 'riot' supported the view that the shared social identity encapsulated a series of shared assumptions including:

> i) they unanimously considered themselves exploited and impoverished by the government and financial institutions and perceived themselves the victims of regular Police discrimination; (ii) they suffered constant humiliation due to their dependency on the welfare system; (iii) they were resentful of local retailers who were taking advantage of low local rental costs but whose goods were not affordable to the community; and (iv) they felt that they had lost the capacity to exert any control over community matters.[108]

These assumptions guided the 'Crowd's' selection of acceptable targets and directed the violence but, it must be added, as part of a crowd learning process with 'deviant' in-group actions being condemned and the protestations of 'out-group' interlopers being ignored or rejected. Finally, Reicher (at a later date) took issue with the ahistorical nature of much of 'crowd theory' by introducing the concept of collective memory, which he argued:

> 'can sometimes go back well beyond the experience or even the lifetime

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[107] Quoted from Waddington and King, *The Disorderly Crowd: From Classical Psychological Reductionism to Socio-Contextual Theory–The Impact on Public Order Policing Strategies*, p.493.

[108] Quoted from Ibid. p.496.

of any individual member. Crowds will 'remember' their supposed mistreatment at the hands of another group many years ago and they will retain a suspicion and hostility to all members of the other group, irrespective of whether they individually have done anything to offend'[109]

Reicher's 'social identification' theory of crowd behaviour married together dynamic and interactive crowd processes with historical and experientially derived beliefs. Effectively this overcame the problem of situational and contextual absences in many of the contradictory and bifurcated theoretical approaches that emerged from the U.S. in the 1960s.

Reicher's innovations were further systematised in the mid-1980s by a group of academics at Sheffield City Polytechnic who developed a general theoretical approach to the study of disturbances, named the 'flashpoint model of public disorder'[110]. Inspired by the American researchers in the 1960s, who dealt with the connection between micro and macro effects by prioritising the 'relationship between a precipitating incident and a 'reservoir' of grievances'[111], the Sheffield team hoped to overcome the fragmentation of contemporary approaches. These included the sociologists with their structural factors, politicians with cultural explanations and the socio-psychologists (such as Reicher) with their examinations of the anatomy of 'riot'. The method involved an integrated examination of a particular disturbance

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[109] Quoted from Ibid. p.497.

[110] D. Waddington, K. Jones and C. Critcher, 'Flashpoints of Public Disorder,' in *The Crowd in Contemporary Britain*, eds. G. Gaskell and R. Benewick (London: Sage Publications, 1987).

[111] D. Waddington, *Contemporary Issues in Public Disorder: A Comparative and Historical Approach* (London: Routledge, 1992), p.13.

from six perspectives: structural, political/ideological, cultural, contextual, situational and interactional. The trend of these categories moves from the macro to the micro, with the situational and interactional related directly to the 'trigger' and escalation of a disturbance. The 'flashpoint model' was generated out of the analysis of case studies of disorder in the early 1980s including demonstrations, industrial picketing and community disorders.

2.2.6   Post-modernism and the 'disorderly crowd'

The first signs of the post-modernist impact upon concepts of the 'disorderly crowd' were to be found in the work of the academic Michael Keith who studied disorders in London in 1981[112]. Keith's major insight, revolved around the notion of 'symbolic locations' that were both central to some of the communities that 'rioted' as well as being the sites of precipitating or 'trigger' incidents. Essentially Keith offered historical and cultural descriptions of these locations in an attempt to contextualise disorders and understand the divergent *meanings* they had for both the resident populace and the police. This was an explicit move away from generalised structural considerations such as social class or deprivation as drivers of disturbances and towards the protagonists understanding of spaces of contention ('turf', 'no go areas' etc.).

The spatial thread initiated by Keith was developed by a subsequent analyst of urban disorder, Max Farrar, who studied disorders in the Chapeltown (1975, 1981) and

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[112] Keith, *Race, Riots and Policing: Lore and Disorder in a Multi-Racist Society.*

Harehills (1981, 2001) areas of Leeds in England[113]. Farrar marked the post-modernist 'turn' by stating:

> 'The sociology I am trying to apply here is one which is concerned with the **emotional dimensions of everyday life** as with the material dimensions, and seeks to focus simultaneously on the **meanings** held by participants in these events and on their underlying structures'[114]

Farrar succinctly marks the division of the subjective (emotional) and objective (material) perspectives and the move toward internal meanings (the participants in the communities) as against the external (officialdom, academic researchers etc.). The emphasis on 'everyday life' was popularised by the French neo-Marxist philosopher Henri Lefebvre who the author cited as a major influence on his approach. Using Lefebvres's conceptual framework of the 'production of social space'[115], Farrar immediately drew a distinction between the officially designated boundaries of the Harehills district of Leeds, those understood by the residents of the area (local

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[113] See M. Farrar, 'Riot and Revolution: The Politics of an Inner City,' *Revolutionary Socialism, the Journal of Big Flame,* Winter 1981-82, M. Farrar, 'Northern 'Race Riots' of the Summer of 2001 – were they Riots, were they Racial? A Case-Study of the Events in Harehills, Leeds' (Paper presented at British Sociological Association 'Race' forum seminar, City University, London, 2002) and M. Farrar, 'Violent Urban protest–identities, Ethics and Islamism,' in *Ethnicities and Values in a Changing World*, ed. G. Bhattacharyya (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2009).

[114] The author of this thesis added the emphases in bold. Farrar, *Northern 'Race Riots' of the Summer of 2001 – were they Riots, were they Racial? A Case-Study of the Events in Harehills, Leeds*, p.9.

[115] This aspect of Lefebvre's theory and its relationship to racialisation and urban disorder in the U.S. is discussed in E. J. McCann, 'Race, Protest, and Public Space: Contextualizing Lefebvre in the U.S. City,' *Antipode* 31, no. 2 (1999).

knowledge) and the ethnic representation of the space in the wider city[116]. Farrar's division between the signifiers and the signified in the form of 'territory' and 'space of representation' is important in understanding the *meaning* of locales from the various contending perspectives.

The general rejection of the essentialisms of class and race inherent in post-modernist analysis led to a reassessment of these master categories in the study of the 'crowd' and urban disorder. This approach effectively reinvigorated the term *'racialisation'* which referred to the processes by which minority ethnic groups were defined and represented to the wider populace[117]. By way of example, in his study of 'Harehills' in Leeds, Farrar recognised both the external spatial racialisation of the area and the

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[116] For example Farrar notes 'that 'Harehills' (the inverted commas signify the space as locally understood, rather than the electoral ward) stands for the low-income British Asians of Leeds' or to put it more succinctly 'Harehills' = 'Asian' in Farrar, *Northern 'Race Riots' of the Summer of 2001 – were they Riots, were they Racial? A Case-Study of the Events in Harehills, Leeds*, p.10. This critique of official spatial designations was also elucidated by Jeremy Brent in his study of the Southmead area of Bristol in J. Brent, *Searching for Community: Representation, Power and Action on an Urban Estate.* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2009).

[117] Miles gives a useful definition of racialisation in stating that it refers to 'those instances where social relations between people have been structured by the signification of human biological characteristics in such a way as to define and construct differentiated social collectivities' quoted from Farrar, *Northern 'Race Riots' of the Summer of 2001 – were they Riots, were they Racial? A Case-Study of the Events in Harehills, Leeds*, p.12. Rowe provides the most comprehensive analysis of this concept in his studies of urban disorder in 1985 in London; Rowe, *The Racialisation of Disorder in Twentieth Century Britain*.

rejection of this process by the 'racialised'[118]. Farrar's evidence suggested this rejection exhibited itself in several forms during and after the disturbances of 2001. Initially it was present in the perceptions of local people, who protested at the site of the precipitating incident and later in the statements of 'rioters' who resisted attempts by the police to turn the disorder into a 'race' issue[119]. However, the effect of racialisation from the 'outside' was to draw the 'racialised' into this very framework of representation. So despite the fact that many were (violently) rejecting this categorisation, other Asians travelled to support the 'rioters' because 'Harehills' represented *'Asian-ness'* in Leeds and this had to be defended[120]. This apparent contradiction is important, as it explains why participants in the disorders of 1980-81 often rejected the term 'race riot' or denied the primacy of ethnicity as an explanation whilst simultaneously accepting that racialisation was operating within the disturbances. Racialisation is thus not just a one-way process of representation from the outside, but is a dynamic relationship between the labellers and the labelled. Participants in disorders may want to be treated equally and may reject their categorisation but often remain trapped within its paradigms in how they understand

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[118] Farrar claimed that the Asian 'rioters' of the district 'mobilise themselves as 'men who are being treated unfairly by the police who racialise them as Asians and thus as easy targets' in Farrar, *Northern 'Race Riots' of the Summer of 2001 – were they Riots, were they Racial? A Case-Study of the Events in Harehills, Leeds*, p.13.

[119] The trigger incident was the 'routine' stopping of Asian man in his vehicle in 'Harehills' by the police, which led to his violent arrest and incapacitation using CS gas. Bystanders intervened to remonstrate with the police and subsequently a large delegation went to the police station to seek his release. Farrar quoted one participant who argued 'The police are trying to turn this into a race issue but it's not. It's about police intimidation' Ibid. pp.11-12.

[120] Ibid. p.11.

themselves and mobilise.

The move from the rejected master category of 'race' to the representation inherent in the concept of racialisation marks the transition from objective *fact* to subjective *meaning* engendered in post-modernist interventions. A similar post-modern tack could have been taken with the meaning and representation of social 'class', effectively unhooking it from its Marxian materialist basis. However, such approaches seem to have been few and far between; instead the master category of 'class' appears to have entered the silence of a post-modernist limbo. There was, however, a critique unleashed on the concept of the 'crowd' by several writers. In his attack on collective behaviour theory, Keith rejected quantitatively derived concepts such as the 'average rioter' and suggested that 'the crowd, although a recurrent analytical theme of history, is not necessarily a valid object of analysis'. Keith stressed that the homogeneity of the concept of the 'crowd' both denied the 'complexity of individual intentions and purposes' in disorders and allowed 'the rationality of the collective' to be 'kidnapped by social science and the personal project reclassified as **natural** response'[121].

Hussain and Bagguley launched a similar critique in their study of the Bradford 'riot' of 2001[122], where they contested the exaggerated emphasis in 'emergent norm' theory on the ability of a 'crowd' to transform its collective identity[123] and the concept of a cohesive 'common purpose'. Instead they argued that despite the relative ethnic

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[121] Keith's original emphasis is shown in bold. Keith, *Race, Riots and Policing: Lore and Disorder in a Multi-Racist Society*, pp.79-81.

[122] Y. Hussain and P. Bagguley, 'Bradford Riot of 2001: The Diversity of Action,' in *Rioting in the UK and France: A Comparative Analysis*, eds. D. Waddington and M. King (Devon: Willan, 2009).

[123] See Section 2.2.5 of this chapter.

homogeneity of the participants in Bradford[124], there was a *diversity of actions* within the 'crowd'. These included spectating, jeering, attacking the police and looting as well as those who were trying to act as intermediaries negotiating between the 'rioters' and the police (the 'restrainers') and those who were intervening to prevent violence, helping residents who had been caught up in the arson attacks and escorting journalists out of the area (the 'helpers'). The authors argued that the spectacle of violent acts, apparently of intense interest to the public, police and media, obscured a repertoire of deeds, which represented a 'variety of behaviours with quite different meanings and motivations'. Of particular interest was their recognition that participants could take on multiple and apparently contradictory roles at different times within in a single disorder[125].

2.2.7 Sub-culture and social networks

The post-modernist rejection of theories of collective behaviour in favour of individual-level 'diversity of action' and the associated disaggregation of the 'crowd' left some uncomfortable silences. Some researchers in response turned to sub-culture, ethnography and network theory in an effort to understand the composition of disorderly crowds.

Several writers influenced by the works of the theorists of youth sub-culture and

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[124] Of those arrested in the Bradford disturbances 88% were of South Asian descent. Ibid. p.76.

[125] Hussain and Bagguely give three examples of participants who were imprisoned for their activities in the disorders in 2001 but had either assisted the police, protected White owned properties or attempted to restrain others from using violence. Ibid. p.79.

deviance of the previous decade[126] studied the relationships between Black and White youth who participated in the disturbances in England in 1980-81. Cashmore's 1984 study of youth subcultures[127] (particularly Skinheads, Rastafarians and Punks) was derived from oral histories and focussed on the riots of the early 80s as a defining moment. Cashmore claimed that 'young people stopped fighting each other because of their colour and fought for themselves. The process had a unifying effect on them and brought them together in a common effort'. Cashmore went onto argue that these groups were able to overcome sub-cultural divisions in these extraordinary moments and to an extent the meshing of these groups that occurred in the disorders was carried over into the aftermath. The recognition that many of the 'crowds' of young people in the 'riots' of 1980-81 were composed of Black and White youths united either by cross-ethnic sub-cultures or by associations between sub-cultures[128] spurred further research efforts examining these links.

Simon Jones, a researcher in the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies[129] in Birmingham produced an interesting participant-observation ethnographic study of the relationships between Black and White youth through the medium of reggae

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[126] The most influential works were S. Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The creation of the Mods and Rockers.* (Routledge, 2002), originally published in 1972, S. Hall and T. Jefferson, *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain.* (Birmingham: University of Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, 1975) and D. Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (London: Routledge, 2008), originally published in 1979.

[127] Cashmore, *No Future: Youth and Society*.

[128] For example the former related to Punk, Rude boy and Ska subcultures, the latter to the relationship between Rastafarians and Punks.

[129] This was arguably the birthplace of the study of youth sub-cultures in Britain.

music[130]. Jones critiqued Hebdige's earlier view of 'the phantom history of race relations played out on the stylistic surfaces of post-war youth subcultures' by arguing that these relations had a 'substantive and not just 'phantom' history, one that is rooted in concrete experience and interaction'[131]. Jones insistence on the concrete relations between youth sub-cultures was, he argued, exhibited by the White appropriation of Black culture in the inner cities. This took various forms including speech (patois), music (reggae) and sub-culture (Rastafarianism). The meshing of ethnic groups through cultural media also led to intra-ethnic sexual and eventually family relationships further cementing the bonds between youths and wider sections of their respective communities.

Jones also claimed that 'Black forms of counter-school cultures played a hegemonic role and acted as paradigms of resistance for young whites', which were often subsequently transmitted to borstals, custodial units, residential homes and detention centres. Jones argued that the experience of mass unemployment amongst the young in the early 1980s had a symbiotic relationship with low paid work and the rejection of work discipline and wage labour in general. The growing post-school dole queues unified inner city Black and White youth and generated survival strategies including active participation in communities through cultural and leisure institutions as well as 'hustling', DIY culture, drug dealing, self-help, mutual aid, cooperation and reciprocity. This Jones argued was affecting a counter-narrative to the mythologized 'good old days' of White working class community. Jones concluded his study by

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[130] S. Jones, *Black Culture, White Youth: The Reggae Tradition from JA to UK.* (Oxford: Macmillan Education, 1988).

[131] Ibid. pp.xxiv-xxv.

stating that the 'riots' of 1980-85 were as a result of 'a long history of mis-policing of inner city and working-class areas'. He noted the celebratory nature of the 'uprisings', their 'signifying power...amongst the young' and that the 'combativity of Black youth in inner cities provided an impetus to White youth living in areas of negligible Black settlement' [132].

Although ethnographic studies in urban areas became more common in the late 1980s and after[133], few were fortunate enough to be placed in communities prior to subsequent disorders. One of the exceptions was the work of Marwan Mohammed[134] in the banlieue[135] Hautes-Noues of Villiers-sur-Marne, a town on the outskirts of Paris. Mohammed carried out an ethnographic study of the role of families in the formation of youth gangs between 2001 and 2007 and was present during the outbreaks of 'riots' in the district during the 'hot' autumn of France in 2005[136].

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[132] Ibid. p.214-5.

[133] A good example is the work of Les Back in two areas of London between 1985 and 1989 in L. Back, *New Ethnicities and Urban Culture: Racisms and Multiculture in Young Lives.* (London: University College London Press, 1996).

[134] M. Mohammed, 'Youth Gangs, Riots and the Politicisation Process,' in *Rioting in the UK and France: A Comparative Analysis*, eds. D. Waddington, M. King and F. Jobard (Devon: Willan, 2009).

[135] A banlieue is 'a widely used term designating an urbanised area on the outskirts of a large town. Literally, banlieue means 'banned location'; in the Middle Ages, such areas were under the control of the main town and did not enjoy the rights and freedoms enjoyed by corresponding local authorities in other towns'. D. Waddington, M. King and F. Jobard, eds., *Rioting in the UK and France: A Comparative Analysis.* (Devon: Willan, 2009), p.xix.

[136] The disorders of October and November 2005, sparked by the deaths of two youths of African descent after a chase by police, spread to 280 cities, involved the torching of 10,000 vehicles, damage to 250 public buildings and the arrest of 5,200 people. Over two hundred police and fire fighters were

Mohammed's close connection to the youth gangs of the area (he personally interviewed over eighty members or former members of seven different gangs) allowed him to analyse their role within the 'community' both during and prior to the disorders. Mohammed noted during the disorders the ability of gangs to communicate between towns and organise combined operations as well as the effect of their superior experience and local knowledge[137] in their battles with the police.

Central to Mohammed's paper was the recognition that the gangs operated in two arenas:

> 'conventional political activity, such as public demonstrations, calls for national press release, work for the weakening of a local public opinion…
> [and] a more unconventional resort to violence and/or intimidation'[138]

The relations of force between the gangs and the authorities were predicated on the respective threat and fear of violent disorder in the district. As a result negotiations between the representatives of the gangs and the civic authorities and the granting of significant concessions to the community were a feature of this relationship. Mohammed remarked:

> 'Violence and disruption, or the common belief by local politicians that

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injured and the overall damage was in the region of €200 million. A state of emergency was declared during the disturbances by the French government. Ibid. p.4-5.

[137] Mohammed noted the involvement of non-gang members of the community*:* 'and it should be said that there were no shortage of residents prepared to hide fugitives from the police'. Mohammed, *Youth Gangs, Riots and the Politicisation Process*, p.163.

[138] Ibid. p.171.

social breakdown is always a possibility, can induce **politicisation** of rioters, or possible rioters, however young they may be. Such politicisation must be understood here as part of a process of being incorporated as a political actor by local elites – even if that process appears to be confined to acts of patronage stimulated by the fear and pressure brought to bear by the local youths'[139]

These relations of force and apparent patronage[140] are important in understanding the conditions for mobilisation of 'rioters' and the range of behaviours both conventional and violent that made up their repertoire of actions. Mohammed's work concretely exposes the crucial dichotomy between the apparent spontaneity of 'disorders' and formal political 'protest', which had vexed many sociologists and historians. Depending on the political situation, the 'riotous' gangs could exercise either type of apparently contradictory activity in order to gain concessions from local elites and this was recognised and accepted by many in their own communities.

The importance of these sub-cultural and ethnographic studies was that rather than approaching the disturbances of 1980-81 in England and 2005 in France from a post-riot retrospective and *distant* analyses of arrest figures or the like in order to gauge

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[139] Ibid. p.168.

[140] These twenty-first century interactions are eerily reminiscent of the power relations within market towns in the eighteenth century in England. See for example Thompson, *The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century*, Bohstedt, *Riots and Community Politics in England and Wales 1790-1810* and J. Bohstedt and D. E. Williams, 'The Diffusion of Riots: The Patterns of 1766, 1795, and 1801 in Devonshire,' *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 19, no. 1 (1988).

crowd composition and behaviours[141] the researchers engaged with some of the eventual participants for significant periods *prior* to the outbreaks. They were able to organically describe and contextualise the sub-cultural social networks that were in play during the disorders from their own perspective as participant-observers and from the oral histories they had obtained. This gave their work a greater depth than either the efforts of crowd theorists or their post-modern critics who were generally separated from social realities prior to urban unrest.

2.3   The diffusion of disturbances

2.3.1   Introduction

The following section reviews theories concerning the spatial and temporal spread of disorders. The theoretical developments are charted chronologically, with an eye to prevailing political and historical conditions that influenced the studies. Essentially two threads of research can be traced in the twentieth century, the first was generated by developments in the sciences and mathematics and became rooted in the academic discipline of sociology, the second was a later but overlapping development in the historical analysis of waves of disorder. In the late twentieth century these threads began to intertwine as the techniques of mathematical modelling derived by social scientists began to be applied to historical episodes of protest and disorder. The constraints that simplistic mathematical modelling had on later usage of the concept within the realm of sociology are discussed. Of particular importance was the development of definitions of the concepts of *diffusion* and *contagion*, which become more complex as both historians and sociologists delved into the historical data.

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[141] As for example attempted in Keith, *Race, Riots and Policing: Lore and Disorder in a Multi-Racist Society*, Parts Two and Three. It is also pertinent to note that the majority of Keith's fieldwork was undertaken with the police rather than residents of the communities he studied.

2.3.2   Origins of 'diffusion' theory

Diffusion, as a scientific phenomenon, first emerged in the early nineteenth century in the studies of thermo-dynamic and chemical processes. Crucial within the mathematical modelling of these phenomena[142] was the recognition of diffusion being a *random* but *time-dependent* process. The use of the concept in other academic disciplines followed soon after the scientific discoveries[143] and first made its appearance in the theory of 'crowds' in the works of the French social psychologist Tardé. Tardé argued that social systems were effectively psychological relations between individuals rather than encompassed by wider and more popular concepts such as 'society'. The key elements of Tardé's analysis, which were influenced by contemporary developments in Chemistry, were the ideas of imitation and innovation. These micro relationships were the essential mechanisms of Tardé's concept of the 'group mind' and acted as explanations of 'herd-like' behaviours observed and popularised by earlier writers such as Charles Mackay[144].

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[142] The concept was mathematically modelled by Fourier (1822), Fick (1855), Einstein (1905) and Smoluchowski (1906).

[143] For example in the Nineteenth century works of German academics, the geographer Ratzel and the ethnologist Frobenius. Ratzel effectively pioneered the idea of diffusion of cultural forms in his studies of the influence of German communities in the United States whilst Frobenius's studies of African tribal cultures led him to describe their spread as a result of diffusion or invasion.

[144] Mackay authored the influential text *'Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds'* (first published in 1841) which reported on the 'mass hysteria' surrounding historical events and movements such as the 'South Sea Bubble', apocalyptic millenarian prophesies and the repression of witches. C. Mackay, *Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds.* (Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 1995).

In parallel to the work of these early geographers, anthropologists and sociologists; mathematicians began to expand their use of quantitative models of diffusion from the sciences into other disciplines. The first of these innovators was the French mathematician Louis Bachelier, who in 1900 applied the mathematics of diffusion to model the changes in stock market prices and in so doing founded the sub-discipline of financial mathematics. This development opened the way for the application of diffusion mathematics into other research arenas.

The first sociologist to use the mathematics of diffusion in an applied manner was Earl Pemberton in 1936 in his analysis of the spread of 'cultural' innovations[145]. Pemberton's study and that of Louis Bachelier was to influence the seminal work of Everett Rogers whose book *'The Diffusion of Innovation'* was first published in 1962[146]. Rogers used extensive case studies to validate a systematic model of the spread within social systems of innovations, which he defined as 'an idea, practice, or object that is perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption'. Rogers emphasised the temporal aspects of this process (for example the changing rate of adoption of innovations) and isolated the form and extent of the communication channels within a defined social system as being an essential factor in the outcome.

Central to the quantitative theory of Rogers is the 'S' curve, which describes the cumulative adoption of innovation over time, the derivative of which, is a measure of

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[145] These included the use of postage stamps, limitations on municipal taxes and school reforms within the United States and elsewhere in H. E. Pemberton, 'The Curve of Culture Diffusion Rate,' *American Sociological Review* 1, no. 4 (1936).

[146] E. M. Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations.* (New York: Free Press, 1995).

the rate of change of adoption over time. The latter function generates the distinctive 'bell curve' shown in Figure 1[147]. The importance of this simple mathematical model is that essentially it is the basis for most studies of diffusion that were undertaken in the wake of Rogers's work, albeit in more complex and sophisticated forms.
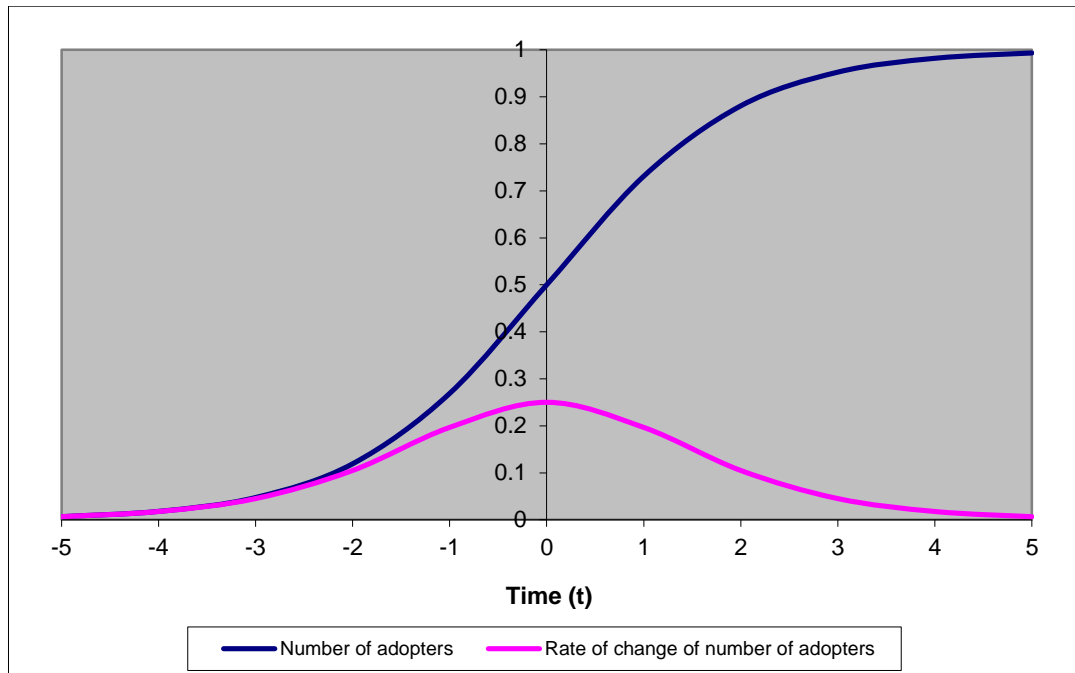
Figure 1: The logistic function and its derivative

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[147] The 'S' curve is essentially a logistic curve, a subset of the sigmoid group. In its simplest form it is

described by the equation $P(t) = \dfrac{1}{1 + e^{-t}}$ where the number of adoptions at time t is $P(t)$. The

derivative of this curve shows that the rate of change of adoption of innovation follows the relationship

$\dfrac{d}{dt}P(t) = P(t)(1 - P(t))$. This equation shows that rate of change of adoption $\dfrac{d}{dt}P(t)$ is related to

the product of the number of adoptions at time t, and the number of remaining non-adopters $P(t) - 1$.

Consequently at the beginning of the process the rate of change of adoption grows exponentially, at the

mid-point the number of non-adopters becomes less than those who have adopted, so the rate of change

is momentarily linear before beginning to decrease exponentially until there are no potential adopters

remaining at the end point.

2.3.3 'Diffusion' and the Historians

As Rogers was publishing his influential work on the diffusion of innovations a significant new line of enquiry was being opened up in the discipline of history. George Rudé's studies of disorderly crowds in Britain and France in the 18th and 19th centuries involved tracking clusters of disturbances such as food riots, rural disorders and episodes of machine breaking[148]. The novel aspect of Rudé's approach was his use of maps displaying the temporal and spatial spread of disturbances. These unsophisticated visual aids suggested that some kind of contagious effect was in play, which was spreading the virus of 'riot' along communication routes such as roads and canals whilst being magnified by collective gatherings[149]. Rudé's temporal and spatial cartographic approach to disorders and protests encouraged other historians to track waves of disturbances in a similar fashion. The historical geographer Andrew Charlesworth carried out studies of the temporal and spatial dynamics of the spread of Swing 'riots' in 1830-31 in Southern England using more comprehensive research and map detail than Rudé and Hobsbawm[150]. The maps displayed day-by-day paths of disorder and delineated towns, major and minor roads as well as geographic features such as high ground that might inhibit movement. Charlesworth recognised the

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[148] Rudé provides visual descriptions of the French corn riots of 1775, food riots in England in 1766, Luddite Riots of 1811-1816, food riots in the Beauce, France 1792, the 'Captain Swing' rural uprisings of 1830-31 in Southern England, the 'Rebecca' riots in Wales in 1839 and 1842-43 and the industrial disturbances known as the 'Plug-Plot' riots in Northern England in 1842. Rudé, *The Crowd in History: A Study of Popular Disturbances in France and England, 1730-1848*.

[149] See for example his later collaborative work with Eric Hobsbawm which contains further visual descriptions of the spread of disturbances in 1830-31 in Hobsbawm and Rudé, *Captain Swing*.

[150] Charlesworth, *Social Protest in a Rural Society: The Spatial Diffusion of the Captain Swing Disturbances of 1830–1831*.

importance of modes and channels of communication in the spread of the 'Swing' disorders. He demonstrated that 'word of mouth', regular collective gatherings such as market days in rural areas and the rate of diffusion of news of disturbances along major highways by carriage were important mechanisms in the contagious effect.

Charlesworth also argued in agreement with another contemporary champion of cartographical approaches, John Bohstedt, that 'often all we can know about the mode of communication of rioting must be inferred from maps charting the spread of disturbances'[151]. Charlesworth's latter paper was authored during the urban disturbances in England of 1981 and he made specific reference to these events in stating:

> 'the copycat model is invoked too glibly in societies such as ours where media coverage of the first occurrences of riot is extensive, almost simultaneous, and predominantly visual'[152]

Charlesworth challenged the concept of 'copycat riots' by arguing that impact of modern rates of communication and forms of media on the diffusion of disorders was not a justification for simplification into ahistorical and crude psychological theories of 'imitation'. Instead Charlesworth proposed that cartographical studies of historical events when the modes and rates of communication were significantly *different* were key to understanding the effects of the modern media on the diffusion of disturbances.

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[151] A. Charlesworth, 'The Spatial Diffusion of Rural Protest: An Historical and Comparative Perspective of Rural Riots in Nineteenth-Century Britain,' *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 1 (1983), p.251.

[152] Ibid. p.251.

The American historian John Bohstedt employed similar cartographic techniques to analyse other episodes of disorder in Britain though with significant expansions and emphases. For example, the cartographical aspects of Bohstedt's joint study with Dale Williams of the diffusion of food riots in Devon in the eighteenth century[153] were enhanced by the addition of features such as the relative size of towns, whether they had markets and mills and included socio-economic sub-regional boundaries. Of particular interest were the authors' inclusions of previous episodes of 'riot' on the same chart rather than creating a series of discrete maps covering each episode. This allowed them to consider whether the diffusion of disorder in one particular episode was influenced by previous waves of disorder sometimes separated by decades. Effectively this crudely tested whether collective memories of the successes (and failures) of previous disorderly protest that may have given rise to traditions or 'cultures of riot' were playing a part in the propensity for towns to mobilise. Another important innovation in their approach was to consider 'silences' in the data by examining the geography and attributes of the towns that failed to 'riot'.

Integral to Bohstedt and Williams' description of 'riotous' towns were some interesting observations that the food 'rioters' created their own ad hoc means of organisation and communication, that formal occupational groups (militia volunteers, sailors, weavers etc.) were involved as collectivities and maintained informal

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[153] Bohstedt studied waves of food riots in 1766, 1795 and 1801. Although published in journal form in 1988, Bohstedt originally presented this paper at a conference in 1982. Bohstedt and Williams, *The Diffusion of Riots: The Patterns of 1766, 1795, and 1801 in Devonshire*. His subsequent book collated many of his previous studies; Bohstedt, *Riots and Community Politics in England and Wales 1790-1810*.

networks often through their institutional linkages. The authors argued that 'hardship, outrage and riot 'news' did not create crowds out of floating individuals, rather these factors were most likely to bring about riots by galvanising networks of people **already used to cooperating'**[154]. Bohstedt and Williams concluded with a revealing quote about the possibility of success or failure of contagious processes:

> 'Some seeds of riot fell on rock - where there was no medium of supportive networks - and so withered away. And some of the seeds fell among thorns - where they were choked by prudent charity from the gentry. And some of the seeds fell on fertile soil, and grew-supported by the community networks - and yielded a great harvest of protest in times of dearth' [155]

This important statement recognised that the existence of appropriate social networks, traditions of protest and inhibiting actions by local elites provided the contextual basis for the outbreak and spread of disturbances. Conditions could vary between locales and the conjunction of these contextual factors could increase (or inhibit) the propensity for collective violence.

2.3.4   Modelling the U.S. disorders of the 1960s

Charlesworth's and Rudé's ground breaking move towards spatial and temporal cartographical analyses and Bohstedt's emphasis on the combination of this with 'thick' description, were useful tools in attempts to understand diffusion and

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[154] Bohstedt and Williams, *The Diffusion of Riots: The Patterns of 1766, 1795, and 1801 in Devonshire*, p.21.

[155] Ibid. p.24.

contagion of rural disorder. However a problem remained as to whether it was possible to quantitatively assess the relative *importance* of these various factors. In order to understand the subsequent developments in theory and methodology of diffusion of disturbances within historical studies we have to step back to the urban disorders of the 1960s in the United States.

As has been stated previously in this chapter, the most comprehensive and detailed study of the U.S. disorders of the 1960s was the report of the Kerner Commission published in 1968. Despite its limitations there was recognition in this document of diffusion effects. In a section aptly named *'Patterns of Disorder'*, the authors noted:

> 'In 1967, disorders occurred with increasing frequency as summer approached and tapered off as it waned. More than 60 per cent of the 164 disorders occurred in July alone'[156]

The recognition of a generalised wave of 'riots' that grew, peaked and declined across the nation in 1967 was further deconstructed in the report to reveal temporal and spatial clustering effects of disturbances around major riots in Newark and Detroit.

Seymour Spilerman was the first academic to attempt systematic mathematical modelling of the diffusion of disorders of the 1960s[157]. Using a generalised Poisson distribution, Spilerman attempted to match selected variations of this model with actual distributions of disturbances in the U.S. between 1961 and 1968. The standard Poisson distribution assumes that the probability of an event occurring is unchanging

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[156] Kerner, *The Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders*, p.66.

[157] Spilerman, *The Causes of Racial Disturbances: A Comparison of Alternative Explanations*.

over time, is identical for each potential event and crucially that events themselves are independent[158]. Spilerman's model is compared to the observed data in Figure 2.
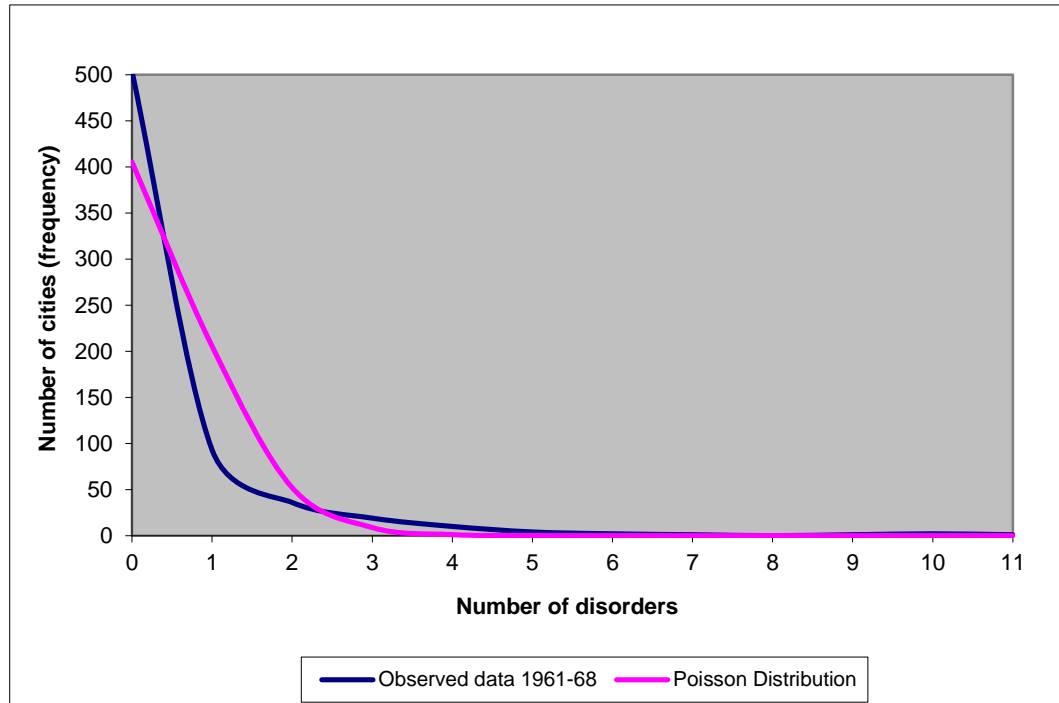
Figure 2: Comparison of observed number of cities experiencing disorders for the U.S. (1961-68) compared to a basic Poisson distribution

Spilerman found that the calculated distributions failed to fit the historical data in the basic model and hypothesised that this was due to the assumptions in the Poisson relationship. These included the supposition of equal disorder-proneness of cities as a constant over time and the independence of each disorder, effectively the assumption

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[158] 'Independence of events' can be simply understood by considering the tossing of two coins one after the other. The probability of throwing a head or a tail is the same for each throw (50%), this probability is unchanging temporally (laws of physics) and the outcome of the first coin toss does not affect the outcome of the second toss (independence). The 'Poisson distribution' is given by $P_k(t) = \dfrac{(\lambda t)^k e^{-\lambda t}}{k!}$ where λ is the rate of outbreaks of disorder, t is the time interval and k is the number of disorders.

that the occurrence of a disorder in a city does not affect the likelihood of another within that city or in any other city.

Spilerman investigated the effect of these constraints by modifying his model and came to the conclusion that:

'an assumption of heterogeneity in community disorder-proneness, which derives from underlying differences among cities, is necessary to explain the distribution of disturbances'[159]

Spilerman rejected ideas of temporal and spatial contagion[160] (which affect the dependency of events) and followed up his focus on the underlying differences between cities by testing a series of structural variables including 'weak social integration', 'alienation from the political system' and 'relative deprivation'. None of these appeared to correlate with the data and so in rejecting the relevance of structural factors he concluded;

'I would argue that although different communities are not equally prone to racial disturbance, the susceptibility of an individual Negro to participating in a disorder does not depend upon the structural characteristics of the community in which he resides. As for the community propensity, it is an aggregate of the individual values-the larger the Negro population, the greater the likelihood of a disorder. Little

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[159] Ibid. p.645.

[160] Several contemporary authors who based their criticisms on studies of Spilerman's data contested his rejection of geographic contagion. For example see A. Mazur, 'The Causes of Black Riots,' *American Sociological Review* 37, no. 4 (1972).

else appears to matter.'[161]

Despite Spilerman's rather glib conclusion his mathematical efforts opened the way for a series of more sophisticated attempts to model the distribution of U.S. disturbances in the 1960s.

Researchers began to focus on how 'riot' participants gained and transferred knowledge about disturbances. Singer's interviews with nearly five hundred persons arrested during the Detroit riot of 1967[162] was aimed at isolating the form and extent of media from which information was gathered about disorders, the content of those 'messages' and their impact on the receiver. Singer found, unsurprisingly, plenty of evidence that rapid 'word of mouth' communication networks were in action within the 'riotous' communities in U.S. cities (the intra-urban) but also that television and radio played an important role in the transfer of disorder knowledge between cities (the inter-urban).

In addition Singer made two other salient observations, firstly, that knowledge of previous 'riots' in other cities *did* have a reinforcing affect upon the participants and secondly that communities that were already 'primed' for or engaged in disorder only required specific information (such as time and location) rather than emotive messages to begin the final stage of engagement. The importance of Singer's research is that it debunked the idea that television images allied with passive consumers alone

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[161] Spilerman, *The Causes of Racial Disturbances: A Comparison of Alternative Explanations*, p.645.

[162] B. D. Singer, 'Mass Media and Communication Processes in the Detroit Riot of 1967,' *Public Opinion Quarterly* 34, no. 2 (1970).

spread disturbances, typically the central pillar of 'copycat' theories. Mass electronic media did serve a function on an inter-urban level in spreading information but that once that message was exposed to primed communities it passed from the passive relationship between broadcast and viewer to the *active realm of the social network*.

Developments in the mathematical modelling of diffusion of disturbances were restricted in the mid-70s, mainly due to the decline of U.S. governmental funding in response to the urban disorders of the mid to late 60s. Of the remaining quantitative studies, the changing political situation of the mid 70s refocused government-academic funding, directing it towards the analysis of aeroplane hijackings, coup d'états, revolutions and other forms of *formal* political violence[163]. Although 'riots' had been subsumed into the frameworks of protest and political violence by some researchers[164], specific studies were few and far between. This situation began to change with the advent of easy access to both mainframe and personal computers in Universities for mathematical modelling[165].

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[163] See for example A. S. Banks and R. B. Textor, 'A Cross-Polity Survey,' (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1971), R. L. Hamblin, R. B. Jacobsen and J. L. L. Miller, *A Mathematical Theory of Social Change.* (New York: Wiley, 1973), D. L. Huff and J. M. Lutz, 'The Contagion of Political Unrest in Independent Black Africa,' *Economic Geography* 50, no. 4 (1974) and R. P. Y. Li and W. R. Thompson, 'The 'Coup Contagion' Hypothesis,' *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 19, no. 1 (1975).

[164] This is particularly prescient in the influential early works of Charles Tilly such as C. Tilly, 'Revolutions and Collective Violence,' in *Handbook of Political Science (Macro-political Theory)*, eds. F. Greenstein and N. Polsby, Vol. 3 (Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1975) and Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution*.

[165] The first successfully mass marketed personal computer (the Commodore PET) was introduced in 1977, though other variants had been in use in Universities prior to this.

Two key papers from the American mid-west (both originally presented in 1976) marked the resurgence of interest in the temporal and spatial spread of U.S. urban riots in the 1960s. The first, authored by Midlarsky[166], examined the period of numerous and intense riots of 1966-67, using the numbers of arrests as the key variable and a lognormal distribution as the mathematical model[167]. Midlarsky's choice of this function was an explicit attempt to deal with the problems of severe positive skew and over-dispersion demonstrated in previous analyses of the distribution of disorders[168]. Figure 3 shows the relationship between the observed data and the lognormally distributed prediction for the disorders in the U.S. for the period 1966-67[169]. The positive skew and over-dispersion effects in the real data are palpable despite the extreme flexibility of the lognormal distribution[170].

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[166] M. I. Midlarsky, 'Analyzing Diffusion and Contagion Effects: The Urban Disorders of the 1960s,' *American Political Science Review* 72, no. 3 (1978).

[167] The lognormal distribution is based upon the normal (or Gaussian) distribution except that the logarithm of the variable is normally distributed rather than the variable itself.

[168] Skewness is effectively a measure of asymmetry of data compared to symmetric distributions. Positive skew denotes that the bulk of the data lies to the left of the mean of a symmetric distribution and negative skew to the right. Over-dispersion describes when distributions of data show a greater variance than would be expected for a given mathematical distribution.

[169] The data is derived from Table 1 in Ibid. p.999.

[170] Midlarsky stated that the lognormal distribution 'is also the distribution with the highest degree of skewness and leptokursis of the frequency distributions normally considered and therefore is most capable of modeling extreme over-dispersion phenomena'. Ibid. pp.997-998.
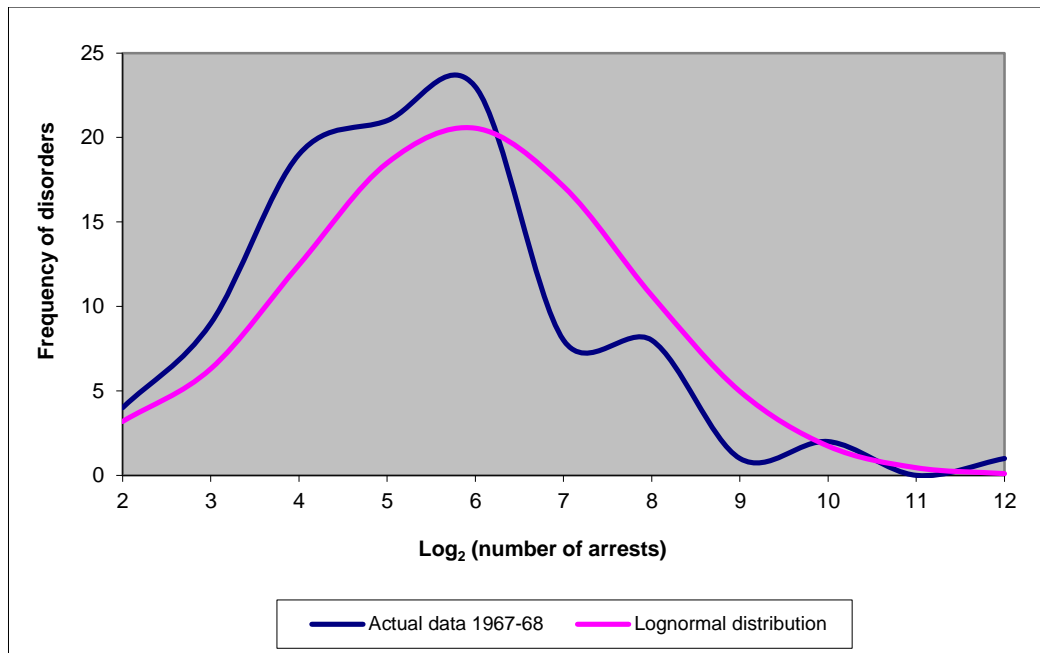
Figure 3: Comparison of observed data and lognormally predicted distribution for the number of arrests in U.S. disorders 1966-67

Midlarsky's response to these quantitative deviations was to suggest that more than one process was underway which in combination distorted the real data away from the lognormal model. His solution was to study the patterns of disorder in 1966-67 over time, which demonstrated a similar positive skew effect particularly in the period of the massive 'riots' in Newark and Detroit in July 1967. This is schematically represented using Rogers's logistic function for diffusion in Figure 4.

Figure 4 demonstrates that the rate of adoption in the observed data is increased in the early part of the 'S' curve and lessened in the latter part.

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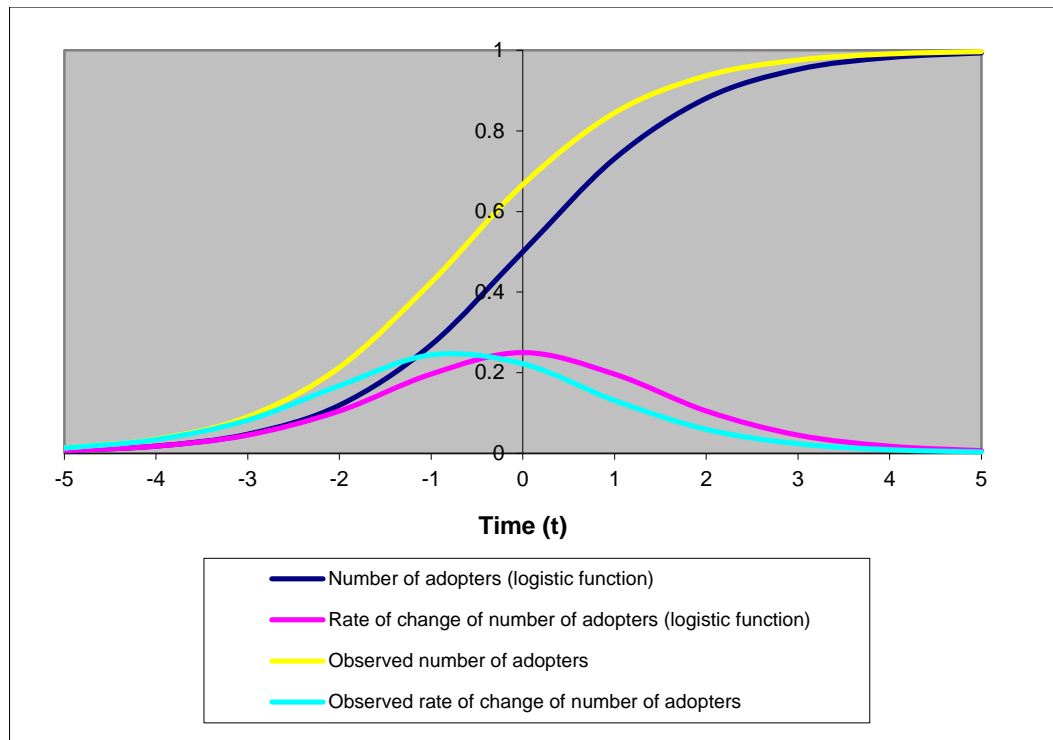
Figure 4: Schematic representation of positive skew (contagious) effects using the logistic function to model adoption by diffusion

Midlarsky explained this phenomenon by stating that the precipitating incidents for disorders:

'were assumed **independent** from each other. That is, each precipitating incident leading to a disorder, such as an encounter between Black residents and the Police or shopkeepers on the street in the local community, is independent of all of the others. This is a diffusion process in which each incident results in a consequence similar to other disorders, but each of them began **independently** of the other. However, the lesser applicability of this model to the intervening period in 1967 (in particular, the clustering effect [around the massive disorders in Newark and Detroit]...), indicates that this assumption was **violated**, and that a different process operated here. This latter period may be termed

contagious, in which separate incidents are not required to spark a disturbance, but a **common process** may have operated to generate the disorders.'[171]

Midlarsky attributed this violation of the independence of events within classical diffusion theory to 'hierarchical contagion'; effectively a second process which he tested and stated was as a result of 'the dependence of small cities upon the behaviour of large ones, and the accelerated occurrence of disorders in small cities when larger ones are experiencing disturbances.' These observations led Midlarsky to redefine the concepts of *diffusion*;

'the cumulative impact of a set of statistically independent events. The modal response to the independent precipitating events may be the same (a disorder), but the individual initiations are mutually independent.'

And *contagion*;

'the spread of a particular type of behaviour through time and space as the result of a prototype or model performing the behaviour and either facilitating that behaviour in the observer or reducing the observer's inhibitions against performing that same behaviour' [172]

Midlarsky's statistical separation and definition of these two processes, was an important advance and led to his observation that the latter process was 'more

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[171] The author of this thesis added the emphasis in bold. Ibid. pp.1002-1003.

[172] Ibid. p.1005.

susceptible to social-psychological investigation' than the former.

The second influential paper of the mid 70s, authored by Pitcher et al.[173] noted the limitations of Rogers's mathematics of diffusion in earlier studies of political violence[174]. The authors argued in the classical model of diffusion of innovation the communicators (admen and salesmen) had already adopted and were aware of the cost-benefit relationship of that adoption whereas in the diffusion of disorder this process was less clear. They also rejected the assumption in the earlier theory that adopters and potential adopters were in *direct* communication. Studies of disorders also showed that, unlike the classical theory, which assumed adoption could only occur once for each population unit, multiple adoptions (disorders) succeeding each other could occur. Finally in line with Midlarsky's findings they noted the asymmetry of distributions of disorder and located this in the failure of the classical assumption that the rate of adoption is constant. Instead they argued that the rate of adoption changed over time creating the asymmetric features.

The authors used a mathematical model employing differential equations[175] to study

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[173] B. L. Pitcher, R. L. Hamblin and J. L. L. Miller, 'The Diffusion of Collective Violence,' *American Sociological Review* 43, no. 1 (1978).

[174] See note 163.

[175] The differential equation that Pitcher et al employed was $V = V_0 e^{\left(c/q\right)} e^{\left(-c/q\right)e^{-qt}}$, where V is the cumulative number of violent events up to time t, V_0 is the initial number of violent incidents (t=0), q is the rate at which units are inhibited from adopting violent acts and c is the rate at which they are instigated to imitate violent acts. Optimisation programs that altered the variables relating to instigation and inhibition of adoption of violent acts were then employed until a best fit between the model and the data set was achieved

the temporal diffusion of violence but with some interesting changes in emphasis from the classical model of diffusion of innovation. Rather than assuming an *independent* process of adoption, they proposed a model that took into account:

> 'social contagion wherein the units are **instigated** and **inhibited** by the information they receive through time about one another's behaviour and its consequences. Hence, the modifier collective here implies a population of units separated in time and space and influencing one another as they act together on the basis of second-hand information and without hierarchical leadership'[176]

Pitcher et al, thus rejected the purely random processes of the classical diffusion theory. They explicitly recognised in their mathematical model contagious communication processes between actors and crucially that these actions could both increase and decrease the likelihood of adoption of collective violence. Using a series of varied data sets[177], including civil disorders, the authors were able to test their mathematical model against real incidents[178].

The results of the analysis showed that of all the various types of incidents, the civil disorders in the U.S. in 1966, and as Midlarsky had demonstrated, particularly in 1967 were the least easy to model. The authors put this failure of the model down to the massive and severe Newark disorder of July 1967, which they claimed received

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[176] The emphasis of the author of this thesis is in bold. Ibid. p.24.

[177] These included anti-Semitic vandalism, air hijacking attempts, guerrilla warfare, coups, the rural disturbances of 'Captain Swing' and the civil disorders in the U.S in 1966-67.

[178] See Table 1 in Ibid. p.28.

intensive media coverage. They went on to state:

> 'This greater than usual media coverage evidently produced a discontinuity, a jump in the instigation process. Over one-half of the 83 disorders in 1967 occurred in the two-week period immediately following the Newark coverage.'[179]

The problem of fitting the U.S. civil disorders to the model extended to the case studies of riots in general, whether in 1960s or the 1830s. The results suggested that a significant reinforcement of contagion was occurring which was not solely attributable to the effect of mass electronic media.

The importance of the work of Midlarsky and Pitcher et al was their joint rejection of Spilerman's claims that contagious effects were not present in the disorders in the 1960s, their general critique of the base assumptions of the classical models of diffusion and their efforts to include such effects in their new mathematical models. The reversal of Spilerman's closure led to further more sophisticated attempts to analyse cycles of 'riots', which appeared to be the most difficult forms of collective violence to mathematically model.

In Govea and West's study of 'riot contagion' in Latin America between 1949 and 1963[180], the authors argued that the lack of previous research into dynamic processual effects in the diffusion of disorders was a product of simplistic approaches that

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[179] Ibid. p.31.

[180] R. M. Govea and G. T. West, 'Riot Contagion in Latin America, 1949-1963,' *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 25, no. 2 (1981).

attempted to directly link attribute variables (such as the size of the Black population or relative deprivation) with the magnitude of the collective violence that was unleashed. For Govea and West this approach effectively ignored temporal relationships and reinforcement effects that may have occurred during the process of diffusion. Instead they postulated a more complex alternative model based upon a series of stages that included the preconditions for violence as well as the processes within the actual cycle of violence itself. Each stage of the progression was influenced by intervening variables, which altered according to the phase of the process that had been reached. The two models, the traditional and an alternative proposed by the authors are reproduced in Figure 5.

Traditional conception of political violence

Alternative model of political violence
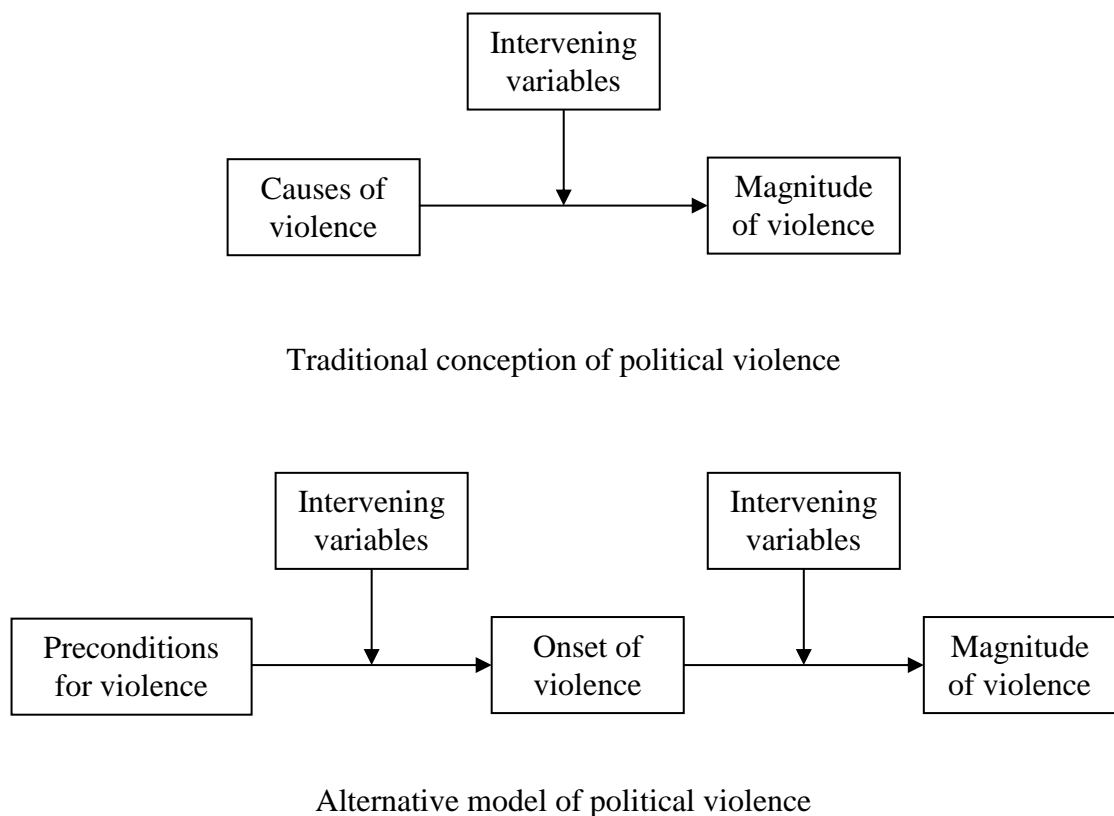
Figure 5: Govea and West's traditional and alternative models of political violence

This proposal was important as it made a distinction between structural influences,

which affected the preconditions for disorder, precipitating events and influences which affected the possibility of the onset of violence and the dynamic process of disorder itself which was affected by other variables (such as state responses, communication channels etc.). The authors argued that the separation of stages resolved the empirically problematic linkage of structural and other such attributes with the magnitude of disorder, effectively rendering them indirectly related.

In order to test their hypothesis, the authors employed a standard Poisson distribution (as a control) representing independence of events and a positively skewed 'contagious Poisson distribution' in an attempt to take account of dependent variables[181] where reinforcement (or inhibition) effects altered the probability of adoption during the process. Using a quantitative measure of deviation of the observed data from the two models[182] allowed the researchers to gauge the degree of contagious effects that were in play in any cycle of disorders.

The authors studied both long cycles (over several years) and individual cycles of

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[181] The nature of dependent variables can be simply understood by considering the tossing of two coins one after the other (see note 158 for a similar example for independent variables). The probability of throwing a head or a tail is the same for each throw (50%), but dependency could be introduced by setting a rule that the second coin is only tossed if the first throw produces a head. The probability of throwing a head and then a tail would thus be altered from 50% for the presence of independent variables to 25% for the dependent scenario.

[182] Govea and West used Li and Thompson's earlier comparative work in Li and Thompson, *The 'Coup Contagion' Hypothesis* to derive a new quotient the *'Extent of Contagion'* which measured the deviation of the 'real' data from the two Poisson models. Govea and West, *Riot Contagion in Latin America, 1949-1963*, p.356.

disorder (over weeks and months) for individual Latin American countries[183] using the various models and came to the conclusion that several nations experienced contagious effects but there were significant differences in the form of these reinforcement phenomena. The authors defined the category of 'chronic contagion', which was observed over the longer cycles of disorder and which deviated from the standard Poisson distribution but matched the *contagious* version. In contrast, 'acute contagion' was related to intense periods of unrest over short cycles of disorder and deviated from even the 'contagious Poisson distribution'. This led the authors to a new definition of contagion that included 'spontaneity', and which was 'the unplanned spread of a particular type of behaviour as the result of one actor's performing the behaviour and facilitating that behaviour in the observer'[184] rather than a planned instrumental response, which they regarded as a separate category.

The work of Midlarsky and Pitcher et al in the 1970s and Govea and West in the early 80s exposed contagious processes in the spread of disorders and developed measurements of these effects. In so doing the researchers noted a deeper complexity in the differentiation of independent (diffusion) and dependent (contagious) events. Further advances were to follow in the late 1980s and 1990s that sought to model these effects in detail *within* the temporal process of the spread of disturbances rather than as external comparisons.

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[183] The authors studied long cycle disorders in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Uruguay and Venezuela and short cycles in Ecuador, Venezuela and Brazil. Ibid. pp.358-363.

[184] Ibid. p.366.

2.3.5 'Event history' analysis

'Event history' analysis of disorders first appeared in the late 1980s as a result of the emphasis on the *rate of occurrence of collective events* by researchers of collective protest such as Tilly and as a by-product of the mathematics developed within bio-statistics and industrial engineering[185]. The advantages of event history analyses of cycles of protest or disorder were in the *temporal* modelling of a *process* rather than treating the cycle as a series or distribution of discrete events. As had been noted by several researchers[186], one of the problems with standard diffusion models was the assumption of spatial and temporal *homogeneity*. Strang and Tuma who pioneered the integration of temporal and spatial *heterogeneity* into event-history diffusion models defined these terms:

> '**Spatial homogeneity** means that all members of the population have the same chance of affecting and being affected by each other. **Temporal homogeneity** means that the potential influence of prior adoption events does not vary with the length of time since their occurrence. These assumptions make the mathematics of diffusion relatively tractable. But they also render diffusion analyses uninformed by, and uninformative about, the social structure of the population under study'[187]

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[185] For Tilly's ground breaking work on collective protest see note 78. A useful summary of event history analysis in this period is to be found in S. Olzak, 'Analysis of Events in the Study of Collective Action,' *Annual Review of Sociology* 15 (1989), pp.136-7.

[186] See the criticisms of Midlarsky and Pitcher et al in Section 2.3.4.

[187] D. Strang and N. B. Tuma, 'Spatial and Temporal Heterogeneity in Diffusion,' *American Journal of Sociology* 99, no. 3 (1993), p.615.

In contrast to the top-down (macro) fitting of statistical distributions to 'real' data sets and the classic assumption of homogeneity, Strang and Tuma returned to the micro-level in proposing 'individual-level models of diffusion that allow heterogeneity both within the population and over time'. Effectively the micro level spatial and temporal relationships between initiating events and potential events (based upon 'real' event history data) are set up and the model is allowed to run its course. The simplest models represented classical diffusion functions with assumptions of independence and homogeneity. In stages, more complexity (such as temporal and spatial heterogeneous variables) was then added. Statistical measures of the fit of the model to the 'real' data are taken after the addition of each assumption or variable in order to gauge the 'success' of the additions and to guide the researcher in deciding on the next modification of the variables.

One of the first researchers to directly apply event-history models containing spatial and temporal heterogeneity to cycles of disorder was Daniel Myers who returned to the analysis of the disturbances of the U.S. in the 1960s. Myers recognised that the problems that Spilerman, Midlarsky and Pitcher et al. faced in modelling diffusion and contagion of disorders were down to the inflexibility and inadequacy of the top-down classical mathematical models they employed[188]. Myers re-examined Spilerman's data on the U.S. riots in the 1960s utilising event-history micro-relationships and introduced three new variables to the model.

The first, a spatial contagion variable, tested the hypothesis that 'riots in one city

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[188] D. Myers, 'Racial Rioting in the 1960s: An Event History Analysis of Local Conditions,' *American Sociological Review* 62, no. 1 (1997), p.95.

increase the likelihood of rioting in other cities and that other riots are more likely in cities closest to where the original rioting occurred'[189]. Myers also recognised that the impact of the mass electronic media of the 1960s may have had a national effect on diffusion of disorder. The second variable thus reflected the influence of the number of riots that occurred nationally in the previous week regardless of their location. Lastly, he included the square of this variable to model the decreasing (and possibly inhibiting) effect of numerous riots.

These progressively complex models showed significantly better fits to the observed data than the relatively crude efforts of the previous researchers. In contrast to Spilerman's original conclusions that there were no contagious effects, Myers stated: 'local conditions did indeed contribute to the occurrence of racial rioting in the 1960s' and he went on to add;

> 'once a riot broke out, that event increased the likelihood that other riots would break out elsewhere in the near future-particularly in cities geographically close to the original riot. These results are robust across a variety of models'[190]

The use of event history modelling thus provided strong evidence for both national and regional contagion effects that had been hinted at by the earlier findings of Midlarsky and Pitcher et al.

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[189] Ibid. p.97.

[190] Ibid. p.108.

In a succeeding paper[191] Myers enhanced his models to both overcome limitations in the classical mathematics of diffusion and to take account of additional relevant variables. The constraint of single adoptions inherent in Rogers's original model of diffusion of innovation was remedied by allowing actors to adopt repeatedly. Myers also added the decay of contagious influence over time, the seasonal effects of the weather[192] and a measure of the intensity of riots on the basis that this would be a marker of the quantity of media coverage and thus infectiousness.

These enhancements further improved the fit of the model to the observed data set and exposed additional underlying complexities in the pattern of disturbance. Myers stated that the analysis 'demonstrates that diffusion occurred both through spatially homogenous and spatially heterogeneous processes and was characterised by a series of waves within waves'[193]. This interesting observation recognised that the overall temporal distribution of disorders was actually partly composed of brief mini-cycles of diffusion. So whilst the national picture of diffusion might appear to be spatially *homogenous* due to the effects and extent of the mass media, it actually also contained simultaneous *heterogeneity* in the form of mini-cycles of diffusion which were regional or even city-based and thus subject to local conditions of instigation and inhibition. This important observation led Myers to follow several new avenues of

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[191] D. Myers, 'Collective Violence and Heterogeneous Diffusion Processes: U.S. Racial Rioting from 1964-1971,' University of Notre Dame, http://www.nd.edu/~dmyers/cbsm/vol1/myers1.pdf..

[192] Myers argued 'seasonal variations in adoption rates are apparent within the racial rioting of the 1960s. Quite simply, rioting is an outdoor activity and is far less comfortable for participants in the winter months. Each year we expect to observe a lull in rioting during the winter and a peak during the summer'. Ibid. p.8.

[193] Ibid. p.22.

research.

The first path that Myers followed was concerned with the 'local' as a result of the detection of mini-cycles of disturbance centred on major cities in the U.S. in the 1960s. Using similar spatially and temporally heterogeneous event-history models Myers investigated a series of questions related to the contagious effect of riot extent and intensity, the relationship of larger cities to nearby smaller neighbours and the asymmetry of media communications between them[194]. Myers demonstrated that severe riots certainly had a greater contagious effect than the less intense incidents although this influence decayed rapidly, such that after one week or so the impact was negligible. He also argued that:

> '...there are always substantially more riots in big cities than in small ones, but this difference wanes over time because riots in the big cities are propelling additional riots in small cities, but the riots in small cities are being ignored by the big cities'[195]

Myers attributed this phenomenon to the unequal infrastructure of media communications and resources where large cities with TV stations defined their 'local' events as having greater newsworthiness than that at the geographical periphery and broadcast this information outwards to smaller population centres. This asymmetry in the communication of information about disturbances, he argued,

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[194] D. Myers, 'The Diffusion of Collective Violence: Infectiousness, Susceptibility, and Mass Media Networks,' *American Journal of Sociology* 106, no. 1 (2000).

[195] Ibid. p.200.

created a 'further exaggeration of the influence of riots in large, media rich cities'[196].

The second avenue Myers investigated was related to his findings of simultaneous spatial homogeneity and heterogeneity in the diffusion of disturbance. In an earlier paper, Myers made a revealing statement:

> 'Because spatially homogenous diffusion is dependent upon the technology of mass media, the relative importance of spatially homogenous and heterogeneous diffusion should be expected to **vary based on the historical epoch of the collective violence wave in question**. Specifically, as one studies collective violence waves in times prior to radio and television, national-level diffusion should be a much weaker force relative to distance-dependent diffusion'[197]

Myers thus argued that the relative influence of the homogenous and heterogeneous aspects of spatial diffusion of disorders would vary according to the prevalent mechanisms for communication of information in that particular historical era. For Myers, modern mass electronic communication (television and radio) encouraged national-level *homogeneity* in the spread of disturbances as it had little time delay (a few hours, at most) and was spatially generalised in that the consumers received

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[196] Myers investigated the effects of media selection of information about riots in national and local newspapers showing that there were significant differences between the two categories in terms of coverage in D. Myers and B. S. Caniglia, 'All the Rioting that's Fit to Print: Selection Effects in National Newspaper Coverage of Civil Disorders, 1968-1969,' *American Sociological Review* 69, no. 4 (2004).

[197] Myers, *Collective Violence and Heterogeneous Diffusion Processes: U.S. Racial Rioting from 1964-1971*, p.23.

similar information throughout the country. In contrast, spatial *heterogeneity* of diffusion was more prevalent when news of disorders travelled by word of mouth along physical communication routes creating delays in action and differences in exposure to the information.

The impact of 'event-history' methodology reveals the extent to which the development of the mathematics of diffusion and contagion had progressed over a century. In its early stages human beings were effectively treated as 'molecules' lacking any agency and driven purely by unchanging and independent probabilities. By the end of the century the unconscious 'adopters' were being more realistically considered as 'actors', that is, communicating participants whose agency created *dependent* events and *heterogeneous* effects in the diffusion of disorders. Myers's summarised this succinctly in his definition of 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. Our study, then, is oriented simply to viewing outbreaks of collective behaviour as flowing from the decisions of rational actors situated within social networks of influence, rather than as series of spontaneous, disconnected and independent events.'[198]

Event-history mathematics not only took account of the effects of diffusion and

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[198] D. Myers and J. Przybysz, 'The Diffusion of Contentious Gatherings in the Captain Swing Uprising,' in *Captain Swing Reconsidered: Forty Years of Rural History from Below*, eds. S. Poole and A. Spicer, Vol. 32 Southern History Society, (2010), p.3.

contagion but in its latter developments allowed testing of structural factors within a more realistic framework than had been available to the researchers of the 1960s and 70s. In this sense it offered a holistic solution to the problem of integrating the various factors that generated the preconditions for collective violence as well as opening the way for the incorporation of the 'disorderly crowds' into the repertoires of action in social movements[199].

2.4   Discussion

This review of the history of developments in the parallel sub-disciplines of theories of the 'disorderly crowd' and the diffusion of disturbances outlines a series of qualitative observations and quantitative tools that are employed in subsequent chapters.

From the perspective of the 'crowd' the insights of the British Marxist school of history concerning the role of the authorities, the composition of the crowds, the existence of diverse and dynamic agendas and the understanding of 'riot' as protest were significant observations. The U.S. sociologists recognised the importance of both structural and situational contexts in understanding disorders. Reicher's use of emergent-norm theory to identify dynamic collective identities generating common motivations but limited by in-group and out-group status represented a more

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[199] See for example the work of P. E. Oliver, 'Bringing the Crowd Back in: The Nonorganizational Elements of Social Movements,' *Research in Social Movements, Conflict and Change* 11, (1989), P. E. Oliver and D. Myers, 'Diffusion Models of Cycles of Protest as a Theory of Social Movements' (Paper presented at Congress of the International Sociological Association, Montreal, 1998) and T. P. Moran and J. Auyero, 'The Dynamics of Collective Violence: Dissecting Food Riots in Contemporary Argentina,' *Social Forces* 85, no. 3 (2007).

sophisticated situational analysis of crowd behaviour. The Post-Modernists contributed notions of symbolic locations, public space and diversities of motive and action within disorders. Neo-Marxist anti-essentialists offered the concepts of ethnicity and racialisation (rather than 'race') to the mix. Finally the participant-observation driven ethnographic studies added richer descriptions of the sub-cultural and ethnic social networks in play in the early 1980s. All of these approaches are utilised in the analysis of 'crowds' in the unrest in England in 1980-81.

The subsequent analysis of the spread of disorders utilises elements of the cartographical techniques and observations pioneered by the historians of unrest Rudé, Charlesworth and Bohstedt. The quantitative study of diffusion generated by Rogers and developed by the sociologists investigating the U.S. disturbances of the 1960s is used to analyse the wave of unrest in England in July 1981. In particular, the concepts of independence (diffusion) and dependence (contagion) of events described by the earlier studies are examined both quantitatively and qualitatively. Although event-history mathematics is not utilised in this thesis, the insights of Myers and others concerning heterogeneous and homogenous, spatial and temporal characteristics of disturbance waves and mini-waves are employed in the subsequent analyses.

3.0 Sources and Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The principal objective of this chapter is to outline the historical sources and methodological approaches that were employed to generate and analyse the research evidence in this thesis. The chapter is divided into two sections; the first is a review of the primary and secondary sources relevant to the micro history of the Bristol disorders in April 1980 and the macro-study of the country-wide July wave in 1981. The second section outlines the various methodological approaches including quantitative analysis, cartography, oral history, social network analysis and ethnography.

Given the nature of urban 'riot', the principal challenge in this thesis was to find robust evidence for both the micro and macro analyses of disturbances. The explosive, rapidly transient and 'criminal' nature of collective violence creates significant problems in obtaining useful evidence for the writing of history. 'Riots' are unpredictable events even within the midst of a general wave of unrest or when a media driven moral panic is in operation that is forecasting outbreaks of disorder. When they do happen they are generally spasmodic, hurried events that can last a few hours or appear staccato-like over a few days. Even if a researcher is located near a particular incident, it is rare that they will be present in the early phases of an outbreak, particularly during the precipitating event or the initial mobilisations. This is also the case for the majority of participants (and journalists) who usually arrive sometime after this has occurred. Consequently, determining how the disorder was 'triggered' is a particular problem for researchers as rumour and post-riot justification

often overwhelm the original eyewitness accounts (if they are available). Similarly, the agenda of the 'riotous crowd' is dynamic, may be unrelated to the original precipitating incident and as the disturbance develops in terms of numbers of participants and intensity, can become, depending on the context, by degree unified, fragmentary or incoherent[200]. Other researchers have argued that 'riots' contain a repertoire of definable activities (such as 'rioters' and 'looters') as well as unconnected participants who travel to disturbances[201]. This problem is compounded by the observation that a single participant can undertake different and sometimes contradictory roles within a particular disturbance ranging from counter-rioter activities, peace-making, negotiating as well as carrying out violent actions and damage to property[202].

'Riots' have both spatial and social *'insides'* and *'outsides'*, which also hinder the gathering and objectivity of eyewitness accounts[203]. Physically, a disorder may delineate a 'no go' area for some eyewitnesses as well as researchers, journalists or photographers. This inevitably places them on the *outside*, typically behind police lines or in the presence of spectators and counter-rioters. As has been noted by several analysts this spatial positioning of the camera alters perceptions and modifies the

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[200] Peter Linebaugh for example noted that the agenda of the crowds in the 'Gordon Riots' in London in 1780 appeared to diversify after the initial anti-Catholic protest marches in Linebaugh, *The London Hanged: Crime and Civil Society in the Eighteenth Century*, pp.333-370.

[201] Keith, *Race, Riots and Policing: Lore and Disorder in a Multi-Racist Society*, pp.114-8.

[202] Hussain and Bagguley, *Bradford Riot of 2001: The Diversity of Action*, p.79.

[203] Reicher discusses 'insider and outsider' perceptions of disorder in Reicher and Potter, *Psychological Theory as Intergroup Perspective: A Comparative Analysis of 'Scientific' and 'Lay' Accounts of Crowd Events*.

understanding of a disorder[204]. Similarly, being spatially on the *inside* of a 'riot' does not entail being part of that event or save the observer, particularly photographers, camera people or reporters from being (violently) excluded. Being part of a 'riot' is not just a matter of *location* it involves being socially included, an active *insider*.

These difficulties are enhanced by the inherent criminality of disorder that makes anonymity, loyalty and denial necessary attributes of the 'rioter' who wants to escape incarceration. Typically those that are arrested are seldom a representative sample of the participants[205] and despite the claims of the authorities are rarely 'ringleaders' (if

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[204] Murdock in G. Murdock, 'Disorderly Images: Television's Presentation of Crime and Policing,' *Crime, Justice, and the Mass Media* (Papers Presented to the 14th Cropwood Round-Table Conference, December 1981) argued that television 'news' programmes covering urban disorders are necessarily *'closed'* because of their inherent time constraints. There are several reasons for this; camera crews arrive after a 'riot' has started so invariably miss the precipitating event and thus their coverage shows police trying to contain the situation at its height. This invisibility of 'trigger' incidents and underlying causes tends to produce an image that reinforces irrationality and hooliganism. Thus the disturbance appears as merely a problem of 'public order'. Camera crews (and photographers) also tend to shoot from behind police lines, as this is where the media feels safest which Murdock argued created a 'law and order' view of events by default in Murdock, *Reporting the Riots: Images and Impact*, pp.79-80. Tumber pointed out that there was significant understanding amongst senior ranks in the police force of the propaganda value of television during unrest, particularly the need to position the viewpoint of the camera to present the perspective of the police on the front line in Tumber, *Television and the Riots: A Report for the Broadcasting Research Unit of the British Film Institute*, p.20.

[205] Several researchers have pointed out that the number of arrests is often unrelated to the severity of 'riot', neither do they necessarily represent a cross section of the participants. See C. Peach, 'A Geographical Perspective on the 1981 Urban Riots,' *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 9, no. 3 (1986), pp.397-8, P. Cooper, 'Competing Explanations of the Merseyside Riots of 1981,' *British Journal of Criminology* 25, no. 1 (1985), p.63 and M. Keith, ''Something Happened': The Problems of Explaining

such a category exists). In addition the complexity, legal severity of 'riot' and its popular (and historical) association with unfortunate 'scapegoats' makes the courtroom a place where facts and motives are harder to ascertain than for many other forms of offence. Outside of the courtroom, the need for 'riot' participants to retain anonymity in order to escape arrest and prosecution necessarily limits publicly available testimony particularly in the immediate aftermath. All of these facets of 'riot' make finding quality primary sources of evidence from the 'inside' difficult. Whilst the novelty and shock value of the disturbances of 1980-81 did generate a large number of primary sources, these were mostly from 'outsider' perspectives, partisan and of limited value. The more robust information was much harder to obtain.

The approach adopted was first, to study the events of July 1981 from a quantitative macro perspective and second, to carry out a comparative case study using a micro history of the 'riots' in Bristol in April 1980. These two different lines of enquiry required different methodological strategies. Data for the macro study was generated by a countrywide survey of local newspapers, specific arrest statistics and utilised relevant secondary sources. It also entailed mass quantitative analysis for the categorisation of disturbance severity and the analysis of local and national trends within the data. In addition cartographic software was deployed for the production of maps.

The micro study employed various primary sources including hitherto restricted

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the 1980 and 1981 Riots in British Cities,' in *Race & Racism: Essays in Social Geography*, ed. P. Jackson (London: Allen & Unwin, 1987),. p.97.

police documents, publicly available police, local government and public inquiry reports, local and national newspapers, television footage, photographs, minutes from Crown Court cases, community newspapers and crucially oral history testimonies from participants in disturbances in three different locales in Bristol. Available secondary sources were limited to one book and the few academic papers of relevance. Tabular formats were employed to display the quantitative data that provided demographic background analysis of the various locales that experienced disturbances. Maps were constructed to delineate the neighbourhoods under study and oral history testimonies from residents and participants in the disturbances were then added to develop the analysis of the different areas.

The narratives of three disturbances in Bristol were generated from primary and secondary sources with an emphasis on those facets of the events that had been under-researched or ignored in previous accounts. In two of the three disturbances studied wholly new historical narratives were created from the oral history evidence and the few existing primary sources (local and community newspapers). Cartographical techniques were used to both locate the extent of the disturbances in each locale and in one case to map out in detail the various movements of the police and crowds during the unrest. The subsequent examination of the under-researched aspects of the three disorders used quantitative analysis, social network theory and ethnography to illuminate the evidence.

In the following sections, the primary and secondary sources and the various methodological approaches are examined in more detail. Where relevant the origins of the source data, the choice of the methodological approaches and the limitations of

these sources and methods are outlined and explained.

3.2   Sources

3.2.1   Secondary Sources

It is pertinent to begin the analysis of the evidential bases that underpin this thesis by considering the secondary sources concerning violent urban disturbance in England in 1980-81 that were available during the research activity. This section is divided into those secondary sources that related to the disorders in Bristol in April 1980 and those that were concerned with the larger numbers of disturbances that transpired countrywide in 1981. Attention is drawn to the form, content and limitations of the data that was used to construct these secondary sources. In addition, omissions in the evidential base and phases or locations of 'riots' that were under researched or ignored are highlighted.

3.2.1.1   Bristol 1980

The April 1980 disturbances in Bristol produced only one dedicated book *'To Ride the Storm: The 1980 Bristol 'Riot' and the State'*[206] published in 1983 and authored by academic researchers Harris Joshua, Tina Wallace and Heather Booth. The strength of the account of the events in St. Paul's on April 2nd 1980 delivered by the authors' lies in its detailed and logical analysis of the available official reports, court statements and police testimony and the contradictions therein. However, there are obvious omissions in the evidence they gathered and selected for analysis. The irony of this is lost on the authors' when they state in their critique of local government investigations of the 'Bristol Riot':

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[206] Joshua, Wallace and Booth, *To Ride the Storm: The 1980 Bristol 'Riot' and the State*

'It must be stressed that at no stage in these local negotiations were either the community in St. Paul's or participants in the violent confrontation involved. Thus the perspectives that were 'squeezed out' were not, as it were, the 'demands of the rioters' but the very perspectives evolved within the state' [207]

Yet the authors followed the same policy by failing to put the actual perspectives of the participants forward rather than their own assessment based on at best the testimony of defendants or community *representatives* from St Paul's.

Tellingly, the most extensively researched section of *'To Ride the Storm'* is that dealing with the 1981 Crown Court trial in Bristol for the serious charge of 'riotous assembly'[208] in which sixteen persons were retrospectively selected from more than a hundred defendants who were originally indicted for less serious offences connected to the April 2nd disturbances. Part of the remit of the prosecution in this trial and a fundamental foundation for the case was to prove that the disturbance in St. Paul's constituted a 'riot' in law[209]. As a result there were significant pressures to

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[207] Ibid. p.139.

[208] Ibid. Chapter 5.

[209] Joshua and Wallace quote the legal precedent of Field vs. Receiver of Metropolitan police (1907) which states that; 'In order to constitute a riot five elements are necessary - (1) a number of persons not less than three: (2) a common purpose: (3) execution or inception of that common purpose: (4) an intent on the part of the number of persons to help one another, by force if necessary, against any person who may oppose them in the execution of common purpose: (5) force or violence, not merely used in and about the common purpose, but displayed in such a manner as to alarm at least one person of reasonable firmness and courage'. Ibid. pp.143-44.

substantiate this assertion by moulding the circumstantial and specific evidence provided by the police witnesses both temporally and spatially[210]. The consequent contradictions in this evidence relating to the timing of particular incidents during the disturbances was compounded by claims by one of the defence barristers that key documents such as the log of radio and telephone calls to the police had not been made available to them[211]. The evidence provided in these cases, with all the problems inherent in the environment of the court in which defendants are potentially facing long terms in gaol, is about the closest the authors' got to actual testimony from the *participants*.

The only other available secondary source of note, Steven Reicher's paper *'The St. Paul's riot: An explanation of the limits of crowd action in terms of a social identity model'*[212] (published in 1984) approached the disturbance of 2nd April from a different

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[210] Joshua and Wallace note that secondary features of the legal definition of 'riot' were that it had to be a continuous activity undertaken by a definable crowd, rather than a series of incidents interspersed by 'lulls' and carried out by a series of disparate groups or individuals. Consequently they argue that the prosecution aimed to compress the 'action' into a specific time period and present the 'crowd' as acting as a unit. Ibid. pp.145-48.

[211] See for example the comments by the barrister S. Kadri at the Crown Court Trial on 16th March 1981 in Bristol Council For Racial Equality, *Notes on the St. Paul's 'Riot' Crown Court Trial* (Bristol Record Office 43129 Box 105 1981). Documents such as this have since become available for this research and shed new light upon the construction of the narrative of the St. Paul's disturbance.

[212] Reicher, *The St. Paul's Riot: An Explanation of the Limits of Crowd Action in Terms of a Social Identity Model*. Reicher also published two later papers which used evidence from the St. Paul's disturbance Reicher and Potter, *Psychological Theory as Intergroup Perspective: A Comparative Analysis of 'Scientific' and 'Lay' Accounts of Crowd Events* and J. Potter and S. Reicher, 'Discourses of

sub-disciplinary angle, that of crowd theory. Reicher, then an academic at Bristol University, collected much of his research evidence in the immediate aftermath of the St. Paul's disturbance. Crucially this consisted of formal and informal interviews with *participants* and *onlookers* recorded within three days of the disturbance.

As far as providing evidence for the research activity in this thesis, Reicher's paper contains a key section that provides a detailed chronological list of the main events of the April 2nd disturbance in St. Paul's. Incidents were only included in this narrative if two or more sources recorded the event independently. Reicher's account consequently differs from those presented in *'To Ride the Storm'* as it contains evidence from both the perspective of the police, bystanders and crucially *the crowd*. The comparison of these versions provides a useful perspective on the relative viewpoints and helps expose the ideological sub-texts of the differing narratives.

Further limitations are, however, apparent in the phases of the St. Paul's disturbance that were analysed by both secondary sources. The authors focused almost entirely on the early phases of the 'riot', which involved the police raid that apparently precipitated the incident, the subsequent periods of collective violence that were interspersed with 'lulls' in the action and finally the withdrawal of the Avon and Somerset Constabulary from the neighbourhood. The later period of 'looting' that occurred once the police force had left the area is almost completely ignored, as was the police operation to retake the area. In contrast to this detailed though limited account of the disturbance in St. Paul's there were *no* secondary sources which even

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Community and Conflict: The Organization of Social Categories in Accounts of a 'Riot',' *British Journal of Social Psychology* 26, no. 1 (1987).

mentioned the subsequent disorders in the districts of Southmead and Knowle West, which are analysed in detail in this thesis.

3.2.1.2   England 1981

The numerous disorders that occurred the following year in England produced a plethora of secondary sources ranging from academic papers to whole books. However, the majority of secondary sources either concentrate on specific major disturbances such as those in Brixton, London (April 1981), Southall, London (July 1981), Toxteth, Liverpool (July 1981) and Moss Side, Manchester (July 1981) or merely quote lists of the numerous other incidents without adding significant local detail to them. In general the content of these 'riot' lists was originally derived from national newspapers with all the restrictions inherent in the reporting of countrywide events from a 'top down' perspective. These limitations included a lack of eyewitness reports by journalists, a paucity of detail in the narratives they produced and the physical distance from the incidents themselves.

It was argued in particular secondary sources that significant numbers of the July disturbances went unreported in the national media and others have been exaggerated or misrepresented[213]. As far as this author is aware, no systematic countrywide search of local media sources was undertaken to substantiate the various 'lists' of riots that were generated in these secondary sources or to provide more detail about the

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[213] For example Keith demonstrates that the July 1981 London 'riot lists' published in State reports (Home Office, The Metropolitan police and Greater London Council) and other secondary sources all disagree to a greater or lesser extent in Keith, *Race, Riots and Policing: Lore and Disorder in a Multi-Racist Society*, pp.52-68 and p.257.

incidents that appeared on those lists. Despite these significant limitations a number of secondary sources, which contained roll calls of 'riots' that occurred in 1981 were selected as the starting point for the quantitative analysis of the July disorders undertaken in Chapter 4.0[214].

Some of the more accomplished research undertaken in the secondary sources used arrest statistics in an attempt to determine the demography of selected 'crowds' in the 1981 disturbances[215]. The main source for this data was the Home Office Statistical Bulletin for the *'serious incidents of public disorder in July and August 1981'* published more than a year after the unrest[216]. This summary document was compiled from special returns provided by twenty five police forces with clusters of data included on the basis that 'in the opinion of the Police forces concerned' they were 'more serious incidents of public disorder than would normally be expected in the area'[217]. Although useful from national or regional perspectives this data was restricted at the local level due to its summary form. The detail required for microanalyses of individual and local clusters of disturbances was contained in the original reports from each constabulary from which it was compiled. However, it

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[214] These secondary sources are listed in full in Chapter 4.0 note 275.

[215] Examples include Cooper, *Competing Explanations of the Merseyside Riots of 1981*, Peach, *A Geographical Perspective on the 1981 Urban Riots* and Keith, *Race, Riots and Policing: Lore and Disorder in a Multi-Racist Society*.

[216] Home Office, *The Outcome of Arrests during the Serious Incidents of Public Disorder in July and August 1981*.

[217] Ibid. Notes 1 and 2.

appears, apart from three exceptions[218], that no attempt was made by researchers to obtain the breakdown of these statistics by police force region, which according to the summary document were available in 1982[219].

Oral history is a useful source for compiling richer descriptions of events, particularly incidents of collective violence. However, amongst the plethora of competing explanations in the coincident worlds of the media, the state and academia in 1981, the voices that were silent were those of the 'rioters'. There were a few exceptions and attention was focused on these *insider* testimonies to compare and contrast them with the new oral sources derived during the research in this thesis[220].

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[218] Research based on the original arrest data from regional Constabularies was only undertaken in two of the 25 force areas; for Merseyside in Bowrey, *The 1981 Urban Riots in England* and Cooper, *Competing Explanations of the Merseyside Riots of 1981* and for the Metropolitan police force area (London) in Keith, *Race, Riots and Policing: Lore and Disorder in a Multi-Racist Society*.

[219] Home Office, *The Outcome of Arrests during the Serious Incidents of Public Disorder in July and August 1981*, Note 5 explains that the twenty five local Constabulary reports that made up the summary report were available on request from the Home Office Statistical Unit in 1982. However, despite extensive archival searches by this author (over a considerable period) this data does not now seem to be available.

[220] The exceptions that contained insider testimony include Tumber, *Television and the Riots: A Report for the Broadcasting Research Unit of the British Film Institute*, Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't no Black in the Union Jack: The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* (London: Hutchinson, 1987), D. Waddington, ''The Summer of '81 Revisited: An Analysis of Sheffield's Haymarket Fracas',' in *Studies in Communication*, eds. A. Cashdan and M. Jordin (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987), J. Clare, 'Eyewitness in Brixton,' in *Scarman and After: Essays Reflecting on Lord Scarman's Report, the Riots and their Aftermath*, ed. J. Benyon (Oxford: Pergamon, 1984), M. Nally, 'Eyewitness in Moss Side,' in *Scarman and After: Essays Reflecting on Lord Scarman's Report, the Riots and their Aftermath*, ed. J. Benyon (Oxford: Pergamon, 1984) and G. Greaves, 'Eyewitness in Brixton,' in *Scarman and After: Essays*

3.2.2 Primary Sources

This review of the primary sources used to generate the research evidence in this thesis is once again divided into the micro study of the disturbances in Bristol in 1980 and the macro study of the unrest in England in1981. The emphasis of this section is on two important aspects of the use of these primary sources. The first is an outline of the collation and development of the sources for the various methodological approaches undertaken during the research activity. The second identifies which of these primary sources were hitherto unavailable, were ignored or were completely new in comparison with the evidential base in the available secondary sources.

3.2.2.1 Bristol 1980

The original project for the collation of primary sources for the disturbances in Bristol in 1980 was based upon the preliminary cataloguing by the author of a new collection of material that was deposited in the Bristol Record Office in 2007[221]. This collection came from the Bristol office of the Commission for Racial Equality (BCRE), later reorganised as the Bristol Race Equality Council (BREC)[222]. The BCRE/BREC

Reflecting on Lord Scarman's Report, the Riots and their Aftermath, ed. J. Benyon (Oxford: Pergamon, 1984).

[221] This collection is now fully catalogued and available at the Bristol Record Office under the general reference number BRO 43129.

[222] The national CRE body was formed in 1976 as consequence of the Race Relations Act of that year, replacing the Race Relations Board and the Community Relations Commission. The Bristol office of the CRE opened in 1976. In 1990 the national body of the CRE began funding a more dispersed network of Race Equality Councils (REC) to carry out local racial equality work, eventually supporting more than eighty of these bodies in England, Scotland and Wales. In Bristol the CRE office was renamed as the Bristol Race Equality Council (BREC), though maintaining the same premises and

collection comprised a large amount of material assembled over thirty years[223]; of general relevance were an extensive collection of local and national newspaper cuttings and considerable amounts of statistical information concerning inner city areas of Bristol such as St. Paul's. Crucially the collection also contained a series of files specifically concerned with the disturbance in St. Paul's in April 1980[224]. These latter files held some important primary sources including numerous collected local and national newspaper cuttings concerning the disturbance and its aftermath, a BCRE report of court proceedings in 1981 concerning those charged with riotous assembly, minutes and a press release from the St. Paul's United Defence Committee[225], various local unofficial inquiry reports and community newsletters and several photographic contact sheets of images taken in the aftermath of the disturbance.

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office structure. On October 1st 2007 the new Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) was created after the introduction of the Equality Act 2006. This new body took over the responsibilities of the Commission for Racial Equality, Disability Rights Commission and Equal Opportunities Commission. As a consequence the existing BREC office was closed and its papers deposited in the Bristol Record Office (BRO).

[223] The collection prior to cataloguing consisted of 93 boxes and 50 freestanding files of material. The preliminary cataloguing created 338 entries. Full details of the cataloguing exercise are contained within an (unpublished) MA project dissertation by the author R. Ball, 'Bristol Records Office: Bristol Commission for Racial Equality (BCRE) and Bristol Race Equality Council (BREC) Collection' (MA History, University of West of England, 2008).

[224] These particular files are referenced in the Bristol Record Office as *'St. Paul's and other uprisings'* BRO 43219 Boxes 105-107.

[225] This organisation was set up in the aftermath of the April 1980 disturbance in St. Paul's in order to organise the defence of those arrested during and after the incident and to represent the views of the community with regard to calls for local and national inquiries.

This material was used to facilitate the methodological approaches chosen for analysis of the St. Paul's disturbance of 1980. These included oral history, social network and quantitative analyses, which are discussed in more detail in later sections of this chapter. To assist these approaches, a prosopographical exercise was undertaken which involved gathering simple biographical information on selected individuals who were (alleged) participants or eyewitnesses in the disturbance from the primary sources in the BREC/BCRE collection. This information was collected in a separate database and processed for later use in the specific analytical methods. Figure 1 illustrates the structure of this approach.

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│  Bristol Record Office │
│     BCRE/BREC          │
│     collection         │
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    │  Preliminary  │
    │  cataloguing  │
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  ┌────────────────────┐
  │ Selection of relevant│
  │   primary sources    │
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  │     Database of      │
  │ biographical information│
  └──┬───────┬────────┬──┘
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│Quantitative││ Social ││Oral history│
│ methods   ││ network││respondents │
│           ││analysis││            │
└─────────┘└────────┘└──────────┘
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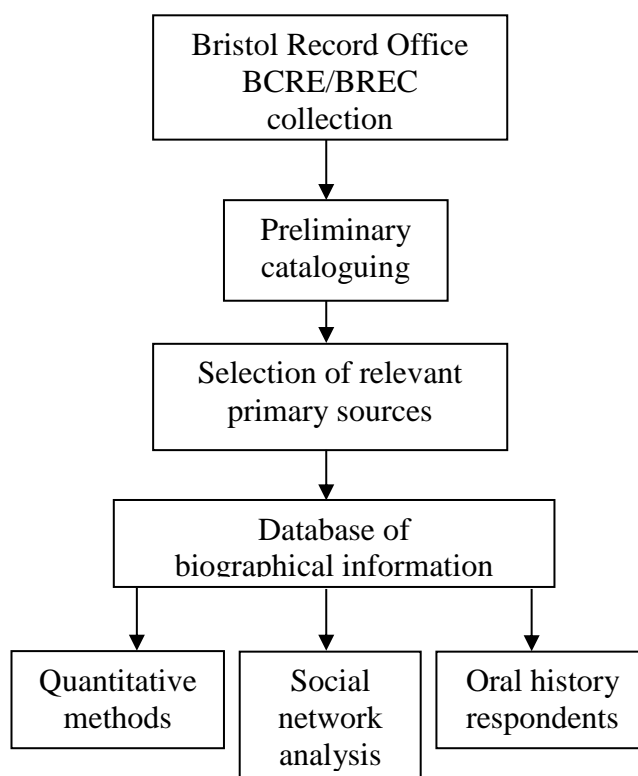
Figure 6: Flow chart showing the approach for the extraction of data from the BREC/BCRE collection in the Bristol Record Office

Biographical information was collected from the specified sources under a series of fields in the database, which are explained in Table 2.

Prosopographical Category	Explanation
Name Ref. No.	In order to ensure the anonymity of the person this field contained a reference number only[226]
Sex	Male (M) or Female (F)
Age	In years (at the time of the disturbance)
Ethnicity	White (W), Afro-Caribbean (AC), Asian (A), Other (O)
Address: Street	Street name (at the time of the disturbance)
Address: District	District of Bristol or town (at the time of the disturbance)
Occupation	At the time of the disturbance, either stated in court record or from other sources
Status	Either defendant (in court case) or stated eyewitness to specific events
Charge	Defined by court case
Court outcome	Result of court case or hearing
Notes	Specific details from sources
Network link 1: Familial[227]	Denotes a familial linkage to another person in the sample
Network link 2: Sub-cultural	Denotes membership of a youth subculture (stated in the field)
Network link 3: Spatial	Denotes a spatial linkage within specific events to another person in the sample.
Ref.	Specific reference to primary source
BRO Ref. No	Bristol Record Office formal reference number for primary source

Table 2: Categories for the collection of prosopographical data for participants in the disturbances in Bristol in 1980.

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[226] The Data Protection Act 2000 states the term *'research purposes',* which is defined as statistical or historical research activity. This category allows exemption from some of the requirements of the act. Of particular relevance is where 'the results of any research or any resulting statistics become anonymised and the relevant conditions apply, the data become exempt from data subject access rights, provided the data are processed only for research purposes', Public Record Office*, Data Protection Act 1998 - A Guide for Records Managers and Archivists,* (2000). As far as the potential use of biographical data for the selection of oral history respondents, the author had already considered issues concerning the anonymity of interviewees as the subject matter of violent urban disturbances necessarily concerns criminal actions, which may or may not have been brought to justice. Consequently, all oral history respondents would be offered the choice of anonymity in the final published documents. For this reason the selection of potential oral history respondents from bibliographical data gathered in this assignment necessitated anonymity at this stage in order to provide the choice of anonymity in oral history interviews at a later date.

[227] This and the subsequent two categories are explained in more detail in Section 3.3.4 of this chapter.

In all, data was collected on forty-eight alleged participants and eyewitnesses to the St. Paul's disturbance (2nd April 1980) using primary sources in the BREC/BCRE collection. A similar approach was employed using a smaller number of other primary sources to collect data on eleven alleged participants in the Southmead disturbances in Bristol (3rd-4th April 1980). No such data was available for the Knowle West incident in the city (4th-5th April 1980).

A number of Avon and Somerset Constabulary reports and press releases were employed to analyse the Bristol disturbances, all of which were in the public domain. However a file entitled *'Papers relating to the disturbances in St Paul's'* containing hitherto unseen primary sources was held under restriction in the Bristol Record Office until 2056 on the basis that it contained sensitive personal data which contravened the Data Protection Act 1998[228]. Permission to view this item or receive information from it had to be obtained from Avon and Somerset Constabulary. The author received this permission in 2010 on the grounds that personal information therein would not be published.

The file contained several vital sources of previously unseen information, including the operational briefing for the police raid that precipitated the disorders in St. Paul's on April 2nd 1980 and a comprehensive log of police radio traffic and emergency calls during the events. These significantly aided both the construction of the narrative of events and crucially the timing of numerous incidents, which had bedevilled the

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[228] This file remains restricted until this date. Bristol Record Office 42794 POL/LG/1/9.

narrative in the secondary sources[229].

Essential *visual* primary sources included television footage and photographs of the disturbance in St. Paul's on April 2nd 1980. Although one secondary source employed recordings of television and radio programmes concerning the disorder[230], the author of this thesis was able to obtain the *full* footage recorded by BBC and HTV cameramen during the event[231]. The majority of this material comprised rushes taken from the moment the cameramen arrived at the scene in the late afternoon. These contained hitherto unseen footage of several phases of the St. Paul's 'riot' and included thirteen interviews with residents of the area both during and after the events. Using the existing primary and secondary sources, the author was able to construct a full temporal and spatial listing of the incidents shown in the television footage both for use in the construction of a narrative of the events in this thesis as well as for future use in the relevant archives. A copy of this document is included in Appendix 10.1. Finally, two important sets of photographs were obtained by the author, which documented incidents after the withdrawal of the Avon and Somerset

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[229] Joshua, Wallace and Booth, who were not party to this information, laid great emphasis on the temporal discrepancies between the account of the events given by the Chief Constable of Avon and Somerset Constabulary and the statements and evidence given by police officers during the 'riotous assembly' trial in Bristol in 1981; Joshua, Wallace and Booth, *To Ride the Storm: The 1980 Bristol 'Riot' and the State*, Chapter 2.

[230] Reicher, *The St. Paul's Riot: An Explanation of the Limits of Crowd Action in Terms of a Social Identity Model*, p.190.

[231] Approximately 80 minutes of this material in DVD format was retrieved from the archives of the BBC News West Library in Bristol as part of a project launched by the M-shed Museum of Bristol in 2010; *BBC & HTV: St. Paul's riot. 1980*. Television, (Bristol: BBC News West Library). The author wishes to thank local historian John Penny for his assistance in this task.

Constabulary from St. Paul's on April 2nd 1980 and the aftermath of the looting and arson on the following day[232].

3.2.2.2   England 1981

The quantitative analysis of the disorders in England in 1981 that is undertaken in Chapter 4.0 was based upon data from a combination of secondary and primary sources. As explained in Section 3.2.1.2, a selection of 'riot lists' derived from relevant secondary sources was used to compile a preliminary roll call of disorders to be investigated by use of the primary sources, principally local newspapers. The first phase of investigation of the local newspapers was used to expand the 'riot lists' by adding new locations of disorder that had been discovered during the process. This 'snowballing' approach led to several expansions of the lists until all the new primary sources had been investigated and no new locations were found. The data was then processed for use in the quantitative and cartographical phases of the research. Figure 7 describes the full data gathering process.

The dependence of this data collection process upon information obtained from local newspapers in contrast (as was noted in Section 3.2.1.2) to the existing secondary sources that relied almost entirely on reports in national newspapers generates a question concerning research validity. Fundamentally, this turns on whether national media outlets (in this case major newspapers) are more likely to carry an accurate

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[232] The first set of (hitherto unseen) photographs was digitised from the original negatives supplied by the photographer himself, the authors thanks go to Mike Leggett; M. Leggett, Photographic Negatives, (1980). The second set taken by John Penny the day after the 'riot' is available in the Bristol Record Office. J. Penny, *Presentation Slides about the St Paul's Riots 1980.* (Bristol: Bristol Record Office 43565/2/1, 1980).

story about a civil disorder than a local news source.
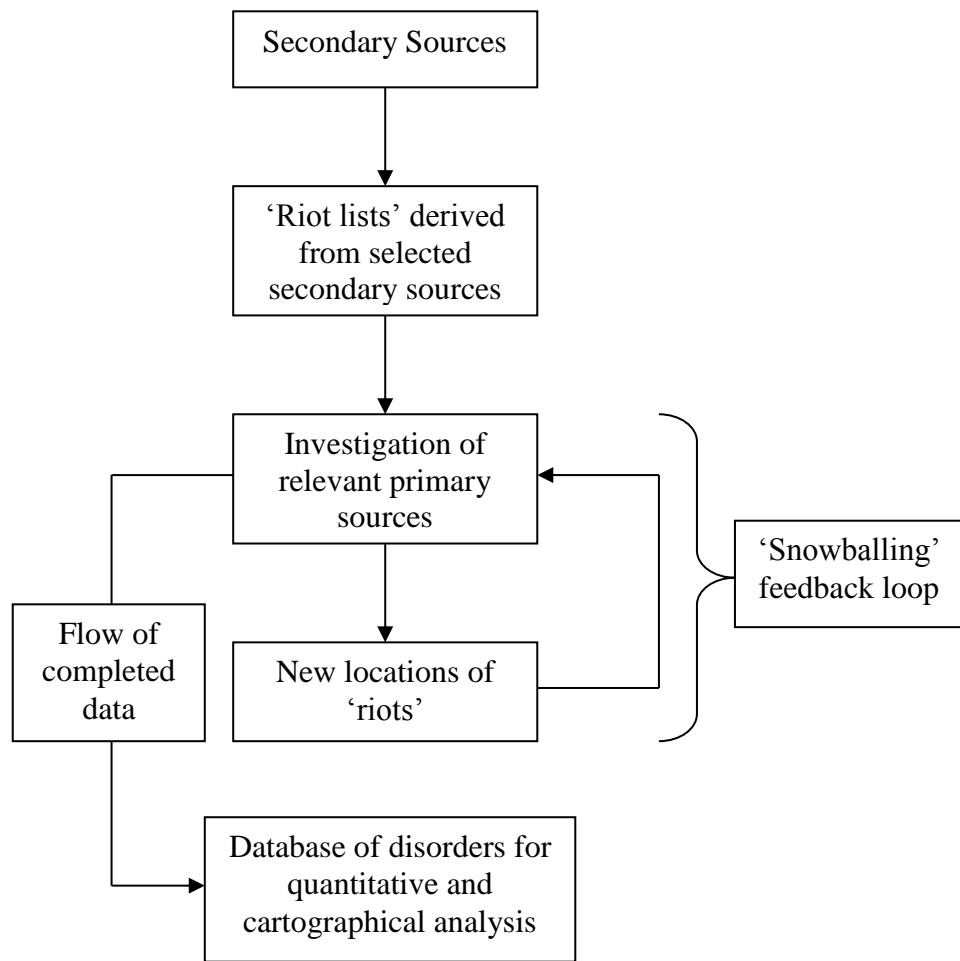
Figure 7: Flow chart showing the process for gathering data on disorders in England in July 1981 from the primary and secondary sources

Comprehensive studies in the U.S. that considered the discrepancy between the reporting of civil disorders in national news outlets and local press sources have demonstrated that the former rarely achieved sixty per cent coverage of events in the latter group[233]. This was due to a combination of effects, including a propensity for the national media outlets to report disorders that were large, intense, of significant

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[233] See the quantitative analysis of reporting of disorders in the 1960s in Myers and Caniglia, *All the Rioting that's Fit to Print: Selection Effects in National Newspaper Coverage of Civil Disorders, 1968-1969*.

duration and relatively close to the outlet[234]. Some effects of political bias and discrimination through discounting collective disorders (particularly with respect to the activities of high school students and the 'young') were also shown to be in operation.

In contrast (and unsurprisingly) local press sources were less likely to report disorders some distance away from the outlet. Typically, information about severe, distant disorders in local newspapers was derived from national news sources. This hierarchical relationship of distribution of information and the underreporting of less severe, distant events by major news outlets suggested that the correct research approach was to begin the data collection process with the national newspapers, using this information to delineate which of the (numerous) local newspapers should be subsequently studied. The considerable number of additional disorders that were discovered during the research activity as a result of the 'snowballing feedback loop' in the primary sources (shown in Figure 7) demonstrated both the validity of this approach and explained the deficiency of information concerning less severe and relatively distant disorders in the existing secondary sources.

Another factor of importance in the data collection process concerned the effect of media self-signification spirals. Keith claimed in his analysis of the July 1981

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[234] Myers and Caniglia demonstrated that if the civil disorder was in the home city of a national news outlet in the U.S. then the likelihood of it being reported was almost unaffected by its severity. However, when reporting incidents 500 miles away, the probability of coverage of a disorder of *moderate* severity had fallen to approximately 70% and a *mild* event to 45% of that for a severe occurrence. This downward trend in probability of coverage of disorders of lesser severity against distance from the national outlet was maintained at greater distances. Ibid. Figure 3.

disorders in London that a media-driven 'moral panic' was in operation in early July 1981, which created 'streets that were like stage sets for disorder', anticipation within the Metropolitan police and self-fulfilling local rumours that 'trouble was coming'[235]. The supposition of the existence of this self-signification spiral led Keith to belittle the actual content of some of the disorders that were trumpeted by the press as 'riots' in London[236]. In contrast, the U.S. researchers argued that such 'attention cycles' in the national media actually led to 'overreporting at the beginning and end of a protest cycle and underreporting in the middle'. This 'event density effect' the authors claimed 'may partially offset the attention cycles phenomenon'[237].

At the level of local newspaper sources, Keith's argument may still hold, in that such sources would have been in the sway of a national newspaper-led attention cycle due to the hierarchical nature of information distribution between the national and local media. This may have led to spurious and exaggerated reports concerning local disorders or the highlighting of incidents that were normally 'routine'[238]. Three

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[235] Keith, *Race, Riots and Policing: Lore and Disorder in a Multi-Racist Society*, p.70-71.

[236] Keith's 'shaggy dog riots' which all appear on the Home Office list include those in West Ham (10-11th July 1981), Croydon (10th July 1981), Walthamstow (11th July 1981) and Penge (11th July 1981). Ibid. p.61-68 and App.1.

[237] Myers and Caniglia, *All the Rioting that's Fit to Print: Selection Effects in National Newspaper Coverage of Civil Disorders, 1968-1969*, pp.538-9.

[238] Unsworth like Keith argued that a form of 'moral panic' was in operation in the media in July 1981 where 'as many Police Chiefs agreed, what the press described as 'riots' were, for them, routine disturbances'. Interestingly, Unsworth inverted this statement by arguing that *'routine'* was not as a sign of stability but in fact a permanent state of '*low-intensity war*'. Unsworth claimed that the disturbances, which punctuated this *'routine'*, were caused by 'provocative policing, insecurity and increasing resistance in the black communities, and traditions of resistance in white working class

methods were used in the data collection process using local newspaper sources to allay this problem. The first involved a clinical collection of categories of information[239] concerning a disorder leading to a quantitative measure of disturbance intensity relative to the wave of unrest as a whole. This completely ignored the subjective aspects of reporting in the local newspapers (such as explicit headlines or prominent photographs). The second entailed, where possible, the cross referencing of local press outlets in a particular area, rather than relying on a single source. This was particularly useful in towns and smaller cities where both daily and weekly local newspapers were available. In these locations the temporal effects of media attention cycles could be gauged. The third research method necessitated searching the local press for similar though less explicit stories a few weeks before and after the riotous period of early July 1981 to gauge the severity and rarity of disorders in that particular area. This gave a subjective measure of the impact on the local press of the national media attention cycle. Finally, this author's observation should be noted, that mono-ethnic (White) disorders outside of mixed-ethnicity areas in the inner cities were often *ignored* or *underreported* by the media whether local or national in 1980-81.

3.3   Methodology

3.3.1   Quantitative analysis

Various quantitative analyses were undertaken during the research activity and are presented in the following chapters of this thesis. In the following section these techniques are categorised and reviewed.

youth exacerbated by steeply and disproportionately rising unemployment, together with the concentration of these conditions in the inner cities', C. Unsworth, 'The Riots of 1981: Popular Violence and the Politics of Law and Order,' *Journal of Law and Society* (1982), p.71.

[239] These categories are detailed in Chapter 4.0 Section 4.3.2.

3.3.1.1 Bristol 1980

Essentially two phases of quantitative analysis were undertaken in the examination of the disorders in Bristol in April 1980. The first was concerned with the demographic background of the principal neighbourhoods experiencing unrest in the wards of St. Paul and Southmead[240]. This analysis relied upon statistical information distilled from local government reports that provided data on population, ethnicity, socio-economic grouping, residential property tenure, transience, overcrowding, unemployment, car ownership and 'social stress indicators'[241]. This information was rationalised in the local government reports into 'workplace zones', which lay between the Small Area Statistics (SAS) units provided by the 1981 census (from which the data was derived) and the larger electoral ward. This effectively broke the relevant electoral wards down into four neighbourhoods with populations of several thousand.

This level of detail was deemed sufficient to overcome some of the issues encountered by other researchers who had studied the conditions in inner cities prior to the 1981 unrest. Typically these academics had significant problems in using statistical data as it was of too large a sample size (such as ward, shire and metropolitan counties) to be

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[240] Although the minor disturbance in Knowle West is studied in this thesis, the emphasis is on the demographics of the areas that experienced more serious confrontations.

[241] These were collections of factors (such as measures of unemployment, one parent families, social service referrals, electricity disconnections, lack of car ownership, overcrowding of households, statutory supervision orders and households with a new Commonwealth or Pakistan born head) that showed correlation. Avon County Council, *Social Stress in Avon, 1981: A Preliminary Analysis.* (Bristol: Avon County Council, 1983).

able to delineate specific social conditions in the 'riotous' urban neighbourhoods[242].

For the research in this thesis, where possible, multiple local government sources

were compared in the analysis in order to isolate local variations in the statistical data.

Care was also taken in the delineation of neighbourhoods, districts and wards within

the survey data as it was recognised that the geographic definition of communities

engaged in disorder was subject to both dubious popular perception and post-riot

political contingencies. Statistical information at the neighbourhood level was

compared to inner city, city and countywide results for comparative purposes.

The second phase of quantitative analysis concerned the actual disorders in St. Paul's

and Southmead in April 1980. Samples of participants in the disorders in the two

locales were selected from the prosopographical data (see Section 3.2.1.1) in order to

construct histograms to investigate their place of residence, gender, age and offence

type (where applicable). Unfortunately, details of the ethnicity of defendants were

unavailable for large enough samples of participants to facilitate such an analysis.

Finally, a comprehensive quantitative analysis of the properties that were damaged,

looted or burned in St. Paul's during the period of four hours in which the police were

absent from the community was also undertaken. This was achieved by cross-

referencing primary sources[243] in order to construct a list of those properties that were

affected or unaffected by the 'riot'.

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[242] See for example the work of C. Hamnett, 'The Conditions in England's Inner Cities on the Eve of
the 1981 Riots,' *Area* 15, no. 1 (1983) and Peach, *A Geographical Perspective on the 1981 Urban
Riots*.

[243] These sources included business street directories, telephone books, street maps, police documents,
photographic and video sources, local newspapers and oral history testimony.

3.3.1.2 England 1981

The quantitative analyses of urban disorders in England in 1981 were solely aimed at investigating the numerous countrywide disturbances in July of that year. As was explained previously (see Section 3.2.2.2) a database of these incidents was constructed from the secondary and primary sources. This collection of information included details of the location, date, observed crowd ethnicity and severity of each daily disturbance. From this information it was possible to construct tables of data and graphs that examined the temporal characteristics of the wave of unrest from the perspective of the whole country, individual conurbations as well as single locales. These temporal distributions were analysed, for comparative purposes, using some of the probability models (such as Lognormal, Poisson and Logistic functions) employed in previous research concerned with the diffusion of disturbances[244]. In addition, a comprehensive survey of those disorders where the primary sources had delineated the ethnicity of the 'rioting crowds' was also undertaken.

As a result of this approach, which was significantly skewed toward a quantitative study, there were significant inherent limitations concerning the qualitative content of the disturbances. Quantitative analysis of waves of disorder has the effect of delineating incidents purely by numerical measures of severity or by temporal and spatial attributes. Essentially this obscures the complex anatomy of 'riots', including precipitating events, diverse 'crowd' motives and actions as well as outcomes. These important limitations were understood at the outset of the research activity and were considered to be acceptable within the context of the time and resource constraints.

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[244] These analytical methods are explained in more detail in Chapter 2.0 Section 2.3.4.

3.3.2   Cartography

Extensive studies of primary and secondary sources demonstrated a significant lack of cartographical analyses of disorders whether at the level of individual incidents or for waves of disturbances. Although some secondary sources used local maps to delineate neighbourhoods where disorders had occurred in 1980-81 they were merely *passive* visual aids for positioning symbolic locations described in the text[245]. The wave of disorders that struck England in July 1981 were, as far as the author is aware, only mapped in two obscure publications, neither of which were comprehensive or detailed[246]. These limited maps suffered from a lack of temporal considerations as well as failing to demarcate the severity of the disorders they displayed. The following section briefly outlines the extensive use of cartography in this thesis to both illuminate the anatomy of the 'riots' in Bristol in 1980 and to study the spatial and temporal features of the wave of disorders in England in July 1981.

3.3.2.1   Bristol 1980

Maps were employed in several ways to delineate both the neighbourhoods that experienced 'riots' in Bristol in 1980 and the spatial anatomy of the disturbances. In

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[245] For example, Joshua, Wallace and Booth used street scale maps to delineate the 'St. Paul's neighbourhood' in Bristol and a three dimensional schematic (with errors) to mark two symbolic locations in that area in 1980; Joshua, Wallace and Booth, *To Ride the Storm: The 1980 Bristol 'Riot' and the State*, pp.66-67. Keith in his studies of the 'riots' in London in 1981 employed three street scale schematic maps of Notting Hill, Stoke Newington and Brixton to mark symbolic locations in Keith, *Race, Riots and Policing: Lore and Disorder in a Multi-Racist Society*, Chapter 7.

[246] These two publications were a small circulation pamphlet, Smith and others, *Like a Summer with a Thousand Julys…and Other Seasons..* and the PhD thesis Bowrey, *The 1981 Urban Riots in England*.

the analysis of the demography of the districts of Southmead and St. Paul's, ward level maps were utilized to mark specific areas that the research showed to be *commonly* and statistically understood as significant neighbourhoods. This was an important definition, as determining where the 'Southmead estate' or the 'St. Paul's neighbourhood' actually were, was problematic[247]. A combination of local knowledge derived from the author's experience[248] and oral history testimony combined with existing maps and statistical delineations were used to achieve these spatial definitions.

In the creation of the three historical narratives for the disorders in St. Paul's, Southmead and Knowle West in 1980, street level maps showing the extent of the disorders were variously employed to mark symbolic sites (such as 'front lines', cafés, public houses and green spaces), the 'hangouts' of youth gangs, premises that were damaged by looting and arson, as well as the temporally defined movements of police formations and their vehicles. The complexity of these micro histories of disorder required visual aids that were *active*, in the sense that they showed more than just streets or boundaries, in order to more fully understand the dynamics of these events.

3.3.2.2   England 1981

The database of information concerning the numerous disorders in England in July 1981 that was compiled as part of the research activity was used in combination with

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[247] These issues are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.0 Section 5.2.

[248] The author was a resident of St. Paul's in Bristol in the 1980s.

proprietary cartographic software[249] to create nineteen countrywide maps, each covering a specific day in July 1981 that experienced at least one disorder. These maps display the severity of a disorder (as determined in the research database) by the relative size of the map marker. Using this approach it was possible to construct a comprehensive spatial and temporal *visual* account of the July disorders that both presented the diffusion of multiple disturbances on a daily basis and demonstrated the growth, peak and decline characteristics of individual incidents.

3.3.3   Oral History

As has been discussed previously, the voices of the participants in the urban disorders in England in 1980-81 were generally ignored in most of the existing primary and secondary sources. In contrast, oral history testimony became central to the micro-history of the disorders in Bristol in 1980 presented in this thesis. This evidence allowed the generation of richer background descriptions of the various locales under study and aided the construction of the comprehensive narrative of the St. Paul's disturbance. Oral history was crucial in the creation of *wholly new* narratives for the hitherto hidden histories of disorders in the Southmead and Knowle West districts of Bristol. In the following section, the methodology for locating oral history respondents, ethical considerations, the approach to the interviews and the resulting testimonies are reviewed.

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[249] As the July 1981 disorder database was created using *Microsoft Excel* spreadsheets, the *Excel 2000* accessory *Microsoft Map* was employed to process the data into a cartographical format. This was achieved by positioning more than 130 locations of disorder on the U.K. map contained within the software database using the relevant postal district designations. These location markers were then more accurately aligned using the public domain software *Google Earth*.

As noted in Section 3.1 of this chapter, the serious criminal nature of collective violence such as urban 'riots' presents particular problems for locating oral history respondents. The remit of the research plan for this project was to concentrate on locating those who had directly participated in disturbances as 'rioters', 'looters' or as 'travellers' to disturbances rather than those who had been non-participating eye-witnesses or who had acted as community spokespeople at the time of the disorders. This approach was undertaken on the basis that being a *non-participant* affects the subject's perspective of events as well as making it easier for them to speak. Taking the view that 'crowds' within disturbances have a diversity of motives and actions, suggested that finding those who were *acting* rather than being merely *spectators* or *self-appointed spokespeople* within these groups was vital to investigating the anatomy of a disorder. It was precisely these respondents that were the most difficult to locate.

Many oral history studies, which have at their heart physical and ideological separations[250] between the *researchers* and the *researched*, typically have to be initiated by adverts in relevant locations, local newspapers or appeals through local radio[251]. However, the author's own experience of the outcome of institutionally-led searches related to finding participants in 'riots' was not positive[252]. Typically the oral

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[250] These separations are often related to existing ethnic and class divisions.

[251] See for example the advice provided in R. Perks, *Oral History: Talking about the Past*, 2nd ed., Vol. 94 (London: The Historical Association, 1995).

[252] The author was briefly involved in two such oral history projects in London in 2008 and Bristol in 2009 whilst undertaking research for this thesis. The former was launched by the Museum of London to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the 1981 Brixton 'riot' (see

respondents that contacted the projects through these public channels were non-participant eyewitnesses, self-appointed spokespeople or policemen, firemen and local government officials[253]. 'Rioters' appeared to be non-existent in most of these studies, which begged the question as to the veracity and completeness of the narratives that were created during these exercises. The reasons for the absence of such participants from such projects became explicit during this author's research activity. These included issues concerning criminality (and anonymity) that could affect the current social status of a potential respondent, suspicion concerning the motives of researchers and a general distrust and dislike of academic and similar institutions.

In order to overcome these problems, a different approach for locating oral history respondents who participated in the disorders in Bristol in 1980 was employed. This involved combining the prosopograhical data derived from archival research (see Section 3.2.2.1) and the author's contacts amongst veterans of the sub-cultural milieus of the late 1970s and early 80s[254]. Initial interviews were used to locate other respondents through the existing social networks and to expand the list of potential respondents. This 'snowballing' activity essentially involved retracing the social links between sub-cultural groupings of the early 1980s, some of which still existed over

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http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/Get-involved/Collaborative-projects/Brixton-Riots/) the latter by the Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery for a similar anniversary concerning the 1980 St. Paul's disorder.

[253] See for example the Museum of London project at http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/Get-involved/Collaborative-projects/Brixton-Riots/.

[254] These were principally from the late 70s Bristol Punk scene (which the author joined in the early 1980s), though subsequently 'survivors' of the Skinhead, Rastafarian and Ska milieus also participated in the interviews.

thirty years later. Several props were particularly useful in facilitating this process. Some of the initial respondents were completely unaware that they featured in the principal secondary source dealing with the St. Paul's disorder; *'To Ride the Storm: the Bristol Riot and the State'*[255]. Copies of this work were obtained by the author and distributed to the initial interviewees who passed the book onto others who appeared in the text. This stimulated discussion[256] and eventually led to further interviews with new respondents. The previously unseen TV footage of the St. Paul's disturbance that was obtained by the author from the BBC archive (see Section 3.2.2.1) was used in a similar manner to encourage participants to provide testimony.

As noted previously, most participants in the Bristol disorders of April 1980 were reluctant to engage in oral interviews because of fears about personal security and significant distrust and disdain for academic institutions. The worries about anonymity were overcome by reassurance that all interviews would be recorded, transcribed and then passed to the respondent for checking, editing and withdrawal if necessary. All interviewees were given the option of complete anonymity (crucially this also extended to the academy) whereby the author was the only person with knowledge of their real identities[257]. This and other aspects of the interview and the testimony were provided prior to the meeting in an information sheet and the respondents were asked to sign a consent form (see Appendix 10.2).

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[255] Joshua, Wallace and Booth, *To Ride the Storm: The 1980 Bristol 'Riot' and the State*.

[256] The initial responses of the respondents were excitement that they featured in a book followed by anger that they had been written about without their permission and without a 'say' in the matter.

[257] This was agreed with the University of West of England Ethics Committee. The committee decided that assumed names were deemed acceptable means of locating the oral history testimony and that the author would retain the sole access to the real identities of the respondents.

The respondents' distrust of academic institutions was overcome in two ways. Firstly, the author pointed out that without their testimony the historical record would contain only the views of *outsiders*, such as policemen, journalists and academics and that this was an opportunity to capture the views of *'rioters'*. Secondly, the social network approach to obtaining respondents enabled an *insider's* level of trust to be developed between the researcher and the researched, based upon the personal contacts of the author. This eventually led to a reunion of some of the 'riot' veterans. A small number of respondents turned down the offer of interviews on the basis that they were unhappy about recalling the events, distrusted the protection of their identity that was offered or were unwilling to engage with University researchers.

Other groups of respondents such as ex-police officers from the Avon and Somerset Constabulary were located from a close study of the participants in the raid that precipitated the St. Paul's disturbance and the use of personal contacts[258]. During the research into looting during the St. Paul's disturbance several recorded and unrecorded interviews were obtained from shopkeepers still resident in the area. In some cases impromptu street level interviews were undertaken after chance meetings

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[258] These were derived from the restricted documents in the Bristol Record Office, particularly Avon and Somerset Constabulary, *Log of Events: Riots St Pauls Area Bristol* (Bristol Record Office POL/LG/1/9, 1980) and Avon and Somerset Constabulary, *Avon and Somerset Constabulary: Operational Order: Black and White Cafe, 27 Grosvenor Rd., St. Paul's: 26th March 1980* (Bristol Record Office POL/LG/1/9, 1980). One ex-police officer attended a seminar on the riots given by the author at the University of West of England Regional History Centre (24-03-2010) and offered his testimony; another gave an unrecorded interview during discussion over access to the restricted documents in the Bristol Record Office.

with respondents on the agreement that they wouldn't be recorded, although the author was allowed to take notes. Finally, two eyewitnesses to the disorders in St. Paul's and Southmead spoke about their experiences at a public history event and later gave interviews to the author[259].

The problems of locating relevant respondents were seemingly compounded by the length of time (approximately thirty years) since the events under study. This potentially presented significant difficulties for the respondents in merely recalling the 'correct' incidents let alone providing useful accounts. However, it soon became apparent that for most respondents the three disturbances in Bristol in April 1980 (St. Paul's, Southmead and Knowle West) were very significant events in their memories and they had little difficulty in recounting narratives. Despite this advantage various devices were used to aid their recall. These included providing maps, photographs and TV footage to the respondents and asking them to provide details of locales and depicted incidents. This process not only helped the respondents construct more accurate accounts but also provided useful geographic and situational information for the historical analysis of the Bristol 'riots'.

As has been pointed out by several analysts of oral history, a strict separation and assumptions of objective equality between interviewer and interviewee are somewhat of an illusion[260]. These observations helped placate a perceived problem concerning the approach of the interviewer in the meetings with the respondents during this

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[259] This oral history event was entitled *'Insurrectionary Bristol: 1980'*, part of the Bristol Radical History Week of 2006. See http://www.brh.org.uk/brhw2006/insurbris1980.html (03-11-2006).

[260] See for example (Portelli 1981) and (Figlio 1988).

research activity. From the perspective of undertaking objective research using oral history as a primary source, the interview is envisaged as a *formal* process, with the interviewer taking an unemotional and 'neutral' position. However, it was understood from the outset that this supposed *objective* stance could have unintended consequences, particularly in *alienating* the respondent. As a result there was a requirement for the interviewer to balance a professional stance with informal engagé. Consequently, in some cases, questions and responses were couched in informal language understood by both the interviewer and the respondent. This approach helped overcome the implicit divisions present in supposedly 'neutral' formal interviews.

The primary aim of the analysis of the oral history material was to supplement the narrative of the better documented incidents, such as the St. Paul's disorder of 1980 as well as uncovering the hidden histories of the subsequent unrest in Southmead and Knowle West. The secondary objective of the interviews was to obtain testimony that provided 'thick description' of the areas under study, the nature of policing and to study the sub-cultural and ethnographic linkages between locales and groups in the city. Subjects were encouraged to verbally and physically map their home locales and the wider city with details such as sites of youth gangs, sub-cultural gathering points and symbolic locations with reference to their past feelings of threat or sanctuary.

For the historical narratives, the data obtained from the respondents was cross-referenced with the available primary sources as well as with other oral history material. However, more subjective parts of the accounts, which related to personal feelings about the incidents and other aspects of the areas in which the respondents

had been brought up, were not ignored. Where relevant these were included to provide an understanding of the desires, fears and impact of the 'riots' on the respondents over thirty years later.

Excerpts of oral history testimony in this thesis have been reproduced from the original transcripts of interviews with respondents. In general although they may have been edited for reasons of space, they have not been corrected or altered to remove grammatical errors, obscenities or in an attempt to standardise dialects. The former category is regarded by the author as irrelevant and the latter two are considered to be valid ways of speaking and emphasising meanings. Where gaps in the dialogue or edits in the testimonies are present they are marked by three dots (e.g. …). Sections of text marked in parentheses in the excerpts represent non-linguistic audible sounds (e.g. [laughs]) or descriptions of linguistic style (e.g. [fakes a posh accent]).

3.3.4 Social Network Analysis

Social network analysis is essentially a study of the relationships between individuals, groups or organisations rather than a quantitative study of shared attributes. For example, a sample of prosopograhical data concerning the disturbances of 2nd April 1980 in St. Paul's could be analysed from the perspective of attributes such as age, ethnicity, gender or occupation. However, this would not necessarily capture the more complex social relationships between those involved in the actual incidents themselves or facilitate an understanding of the structures inherent in these social networks. Social network analysis is a method for trying to both map these networks and analyse them to understand their form and content.

Although there are potentially numerous forms of social networks, the following categories of network relationship were the most relevant to this study of urban disturbance[261]:

- **Communication relations:** this is where linkages between agents are effectively conduits for information.

- **Instrumental relations:** agents are related to one another in an effort to obtain goods, services or information.

- **Sentiment relations:** agents are linked together by emotional relations such as affection, admiration or even hostility.

- **Kinship or descent relations:** these can be simply considered as familial networks.

Typically social network analysis is carried out by observation, interviewing the participants or having them complete standard questionnaires[262], though it is possible to carry out network analysis from archival data[263]. Examples of such archival approaches include deriving social networks from studies of journals, newspapers or court records[264] or of archival studies of political organisations[265]. The limited sample

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[261] David Knoke, *Network Analysis.* (London: Sage, 1982), pp.15-16.

[262] Ronald S. Burt, *Applied Network Analysis: A Methodological Introduction* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1983), pp.79-81.

[263] Stanley Wasserman, *Social Network Analysis: Methods and Applications* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp.50-51.

[264] Ronald S. Burt and Nan Lin, 'Network Time Series from Archival Records,' *Sociological Methodology* 8 (1977).

of data studied here lent itself to a basic analysis of the social networks operating between individuals who participated in the disturbance in St. Paul's on 2nd April 1980.

During the process of collecting biographical information on participants (see Table 2), three relational links were studied:

- **Familial:** Kinship relations between actors were noted.
- **Sub-cultural:** Where sources verified that the actors were members of a sub-cultural grouping and knew each other.
- **Spatial:** A link between actors was recorded if it was stated in court proceedings, oral history testimony or eyewitness accounts that two or more participants were acting together in the disturbance.

These three categories were chosen on the basis that they were important in understanding the composition of the 'crowd' in St. Paul's and could be substantiated by the primary sources. The first two categories pertained to existing social networks prior to the disturbance whilst the third was a dynamic relationship generated during the event itself. The collected data was then entered into input files for the social network analysis software PAJEK[266]. This platform was used to construct a visual

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[265] Naomi Rosenthal and others, 'Social Movements and Network Analysis: A Case Study of Nineteenth-Century Women's Reform in New York State,' *American Journal of Sociology* 90, no. 5 (Mar., 1985).

[266] The public domain social network analysis software PAJEK (v.1.01) is available from the University of Ljubljana at http://vlado.fmf.uni-lj.si/pub/networks/book/. Its use is explained in V.

representation of the interlocking social networks and to carry out quantitative analysis of the roles of key actors. Although this method employed only a small sample of the 'crowd' this was considered significant enough to demonstrate the connections between actors and groups.

3.3.5   Ethnography

The ethnography in this thesis was not pre-planned but came about as a result of the prosopographical sampling and the analysis of the initial oral history testimony from respondents from the three areas of Bristol that experienced disturbances in April 1980. It became clear from the examination of this data that symbiotic social networks, relevant to the composition of the 'crowds', were operating in the disorders in Bristol. These networks came in several forms, those linked to youth subcultures and locales as well as another relating to ethnic connections between second-generation mixed-race youth who were dispersed in various locations (including the areas under study) around the city. These arrangements of social linkages were sometimes coincident where mixed-race youth were members of both groups. Of particular interest was the pan-Bristol nature of these associations, which appeared to socially connect distant areas of the city with each other as well as linking their members with symbolic locations in inner city St. Paul's.

As a result of these observations, additional oral history interviews were sought out to provide further evidence for the existence of these networks and questions for the interviewees were directed towards their ethnographic investigation. These questions

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Batagelj, W. de Nooy and A. Mrvar, *Exploratory Social Network Analysis with Pajek*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

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were designed to encourage the respondents to provide *verbal* psycho-geographic[267] maps of their social movements and to outline the social connections that facilitated these travels. Responses to these questions provided confirmation of the symbolic gathering points of these social networks and the groups that interacted with them. This in turn provided evidence for the conduits for information exchange concerning disorders that had already occurred as well as mechanisms for planning future disturbances. It also aided the analysis of 'crowd' composition within disorders and the motives of 'travellers' to these incidents.

This approach was distinctive in that it worked through *existing* relationships derived from the social networks generated from youth sub-cultures and ethnic links in the late 1970s and early 80s. Essentially the research activity involved tracing the remnants of the social connections between members of these groups to obtain their perceptions of the origins and composition of the 'disorderly crowds' that shook Bristol over thirty years ago.

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[267] Psycho-geography was a term popularised by the Situationist International in the 1950s and was described by their leading theoretician Guy Debord as 'the study of the precise laws and specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organized or not, on the emotions and behaviour of individuals' G. Debord, 'Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography,' in *Situationist International Anthology*, ed. K. Knabb (Berkeley, CA: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1981), p.5. This definition is not strictly related to the usage of this method in this thesis. Psycho-geography in this case relates to what members of a network (such as a youth subculture) regard as the important social locations to be present at (such as 'hangouts', public houses, cafés etc.) and which areas of the city they would choose to socialise in. Thus, psycho-geography relates less to the formal geography of the urban environment and more to the desires and customs of social groups who are moving within it.

4.0 Violent Urban Disturbance in England: July 1981

''Copycat riots'? Some cats – and some claws!'[268]

4.1   Introduction

The month of July 1981 saw one of the most widespread and intense periods of urban disturbance in England in the twentieth century. A series of portentous disturbances in St. Paul's Bristol (April 1980), Brixton (April 1981) and other disparate disturbances (April–June 1981)[269] preceded the July events. However the number and ferocity of the wave of 'riots' unleashed over that month was unprecedented in post-war mainland Britain.

Studies of the secondary sources pertaining to the July events demonstrated that there was a significant lack of narrative detail, statistical analysis and pictorial representations[270]. A large body of work exists which attempted to both explain the causes of the wave of 'riots' and provide responses through policy initiatives, some of it based upon analyses of the better-documented major incidents or a single summary

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[268] Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain*, p.399.

[269] For example the serious disturbances in Ealing Common and Finsbury Park in London (April 1981), Coventry (May 1981) and Thornton Heath (June 1981).

[270] The significant exceptions to this are Bowrey, *The 1981 Urban Riots in England*, who provides a simplistic map of urban disturbances in 1981 and a basic statistical analysis of the Toxteth event; Keith, *Race, Riots and Policing: Lore and Disorder in a Multi-Racist Society*, who provides maps and quantitative analysis of the July 1981 incidents in London; and Cooper, *Competing Explanations of the Merseyside Riots of 1981*, who undertakes a quantitative analysis of the Toxteth 'riot' using similar data for arrests as Bowrey.

of nationwide arrests in July/August 1981[271]. However an extensive survey of this literature demonstrated that the vital questions concerning the extent, content and nature of a large number of the July 1981 disturbances had not been effectively answered in the local detail required to facilitate the successful development of causal explanations.

As a result of these shortcomings, there was a need to go beyond 'riot' lists both to expand their limited scope, allow quantitative analysis of the numerous July events and thus to understand the characteristics of the spread of disorders. The key questions to be addressed in the quantitative analysis of the July disturbances concern randomness, dependency and patterns in the distribution of disturbances. All of these categories relate to the concept of 'copycat riots' where the homogenous dissemination of information about disorders via the mass media assumes that all locales are subjected equally to the same influences. Consequently, if locales with a propensity to 'riot' were truly independent of each other, a fairly random spread both temporally and spatially of outbreaks of disorder would be expected. However, if these locales were not independent of each other either through communication, physical contact and/or one event increasing (or decreasing) the likelihood of another occurring; temporally and spatially quantifiable patterns local to cities or even country-wide would be expected.

These two paradigms mark the independent, random and homogenous *diffusion* processes connected to the 'copycat' effect and dependent, dynamic and

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[271] Home Office, *The Outcome of Arrests during the Serious Incidents of Public Disorder in July and August 1981*.

heterogeneous *contagion* linked to conscious communication and action. In order to determine the veracity of these two paradigms some of the quantitative techniques outlined in Chapter 2.0 Section 2.3 are employed to analyse the July 1981 data. This allowed an assessment of whether part or all of the July 1981 events fell into either category.

4.2   Objectives

The principal objectives of this phase of research into primary sources were to gather from local newspapers selected information concerning the July 1981 disturbances, to collate this data into a manageable form and finally to undertake some quantitative analysis in order to provide pictorial information in the form of maps and numerical data for further statistical investigation. Local newspapers were selected as the primary sources for analysis, as it appeared from examination of the secondary sources that no systematic countrywide survey of this particular media had been previously undertaken.

The purpose of the subsequent quantitative analysis of the results of the investigation of the primary sources was to address several pressing questions. From a global perspective, some of the secondary sources reviewed in this thesis laid claim to the concept of a countrywide 'wave' of disturbances in July 1981 without actually quantifying the temporal form of this supposed wave or attempting any further analysis or explanation. In addition, from a more local view, only two of these sources provided evidence concerning the distribution of disturbances within the environs of a

city[272] and neither author attempted a quantitative analysis of the temporal distribution of these incidents.

In contrast the quantitative investigation presented here provides hitherto unseen numerical, graphical and cartographical information from the perspective of the whole of England as well as from key cities affected by the disturbances. The aim of the collection of this data was to document and examine the form and frequency of disturbances in relation to their severity from both a countrywide and urban perspective. The relationship between local and global phenomena was important in investigating the presence of *diffusion* and *contagion* within the nationwide 'wave' of disturbances.

A second area of quantitative enquiry concerned the relationship of the ethnic make-up of the 'crowd' with respect to the severity of a particular disturbance. This study was undertaken in the light of quantitative research carried out by Keith into the July 1981 disorders in London[273]. Keith's conclusions emphasised different motives and behaviours between ethnic groups in the incidents he studied. Information gathered from the primary sources in this research activity and the subsequent quantitative analysis was aimed at reassessing this proposition but from the perspective of all the

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[272] Bowrey supplies data from the Merseyside Constabulary on 'minor' incidents of public disorder between 6th and 13th July 1981 in the city and environs of Liverpool in Bowrey, *The 1981 Urban Riots in England*, p.44 and Keith gives information regarding the spatial distribution of disturbances in London in July 1981, Keith, *Race, Riots and Policing: Lore and Disorder in a Multi-Racist Society*, pp.55-56.

[273] M. Keith, 'The 1981 Riots in London,' (DPhil, University of Oxford, 1986), and Keith, *Race, Riots and Policing: Lore and Disorder in a Multi-Racist Society*.

countrywide disturbances rather than the limited locality of the capital city.

4.3   Methodology

4.3.1   Data Collection Process

In order to isolate the local newspapers in the archives[274] relevant to the research a series of thirteen secondary sources containing 'riot' lists or textual references were studied[275]. From these sources a preliminary list of sixty-nine 'riot' locations and approximate start and end dates was created for the month of July 1981. This list informed the initial choices of local newspapers selected for investigation. These sources were studied primarily for the information they provided concerning the disturbances in their particular region, but data was also gathered on a general basis for the countrywide events.   This process produced multiple items of data for individual incidents allowing cross-referencing later in the investigation.

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[274] The majority of the research was carried out at the British Library Newspaper Archive at the Colindale facility (London), the Central Reference Library (Bristol) and *The Times* Archive (online) via University of West of England St. Matthias Library.

[275]   The thirteen secondary sources studied were Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain*, Ramdin, *The Making of the Black Working Class in Britain*, Smith and others, *Like a Summer with a Thousand Julys…and Other Seasons..*, Benyon and Solomos, *The Roots of Urban Unrest*, Rowe, *The Racialisation of Disorder in Twentieth Century Britain*, Joshua, Wallace and Booth, *To Ride the Storm: The 1980 Bristol 'Riot' and the State*, Martin Kettle and Lucy Hodges, *Uprising!: The Police, the People and the Riots in Britain's Cities* (London: Pan Books, 1982), Farrar, *Northern 'Race Riots' of the Summer of 2001 – were they Riots, were they Racial? A Case-Study of the Events in Harehills, Leeds*, 'Www.channel4.com/history/U/untold/programs/riot/timeline,' (2009), Keith, *Race, Riots and Policing: Lore and Disorder in a Multi-Racist Society*, Hernon, *Riot!: Civil Insurrection from Peterloo to the Present Day*, Hytner, *Report of the Moss Side Enquiry Panel to the Leader of the Greater Manchester Council* and Bowrey, *The 1981 Urban Riots in England*.

The preliminary exploration of the selected primary sources both removed spurious disturbances and through a process of 'snowballing'[276] significantly expanded the original list of July 'riots'. As a result of following this approach several further phases of data collection were undertaken with the aim of investigating new locations of disturbances. The completion of these iterative collection phases was followed by a rationalisation of the data set into discrete daily events. This allowed a disturbance associated with a particular locale to be analysed as a continuum of connected daily incidents rather than a bland location reference associated with a single day or undefined period of days as was the case in the majority of the original secondary sources. This process of deconstruction was aimed at gaining some understanding of the temporal dynamic of a particular disturbance (typically its trigger, growth and decline phases), its relationship to other incidents in a locale and to the national picture.

4.3.2 Basis for the Selection of Data

For the initial phase of information gathering from the primary sources a series of categories were defined. These were based on similar exercises undertaken by other researchers concerned with violent disturbances[277] but were modified to suit the conditions and content of the July 1981 disorders. The categories are described and

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[276] This procedure involved recording new disturbances that were discovered in the primary sources and then following up with a study of local newspapers specific to those locations.

[277] The following sources were studied Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution*, App.4, Myers, *The Diffusion of Collective Violence: Infectiousness, Susceptibility, and Mass Media Networks*, pp.203-4 and Myers, *Collective Violence and Heterogeneous Diffusion Processes: U.S. Racial Rioting from 1964-1971*, p.11 and App.B.

explained in Table 3 below.

Category	Description
District/Town	A disturbance locale whether city centre, city district, or satellite town. This was an attempt to escape the crude definitions in national newspapers of disturbances being situated in cities or towns, without reference to the actual locations.
Date (Begin/End)	The beginning and end dates of a contiguous set of disturbances in a particular location. The data under this category was later sub-divided into daily events
Time (Begin/End)	The beginning and end time of a daily disturbance. This category was aimed at providing data concerning the duration of a particular disturbance as well as information useful to the correlation of different forms of incident (e.g. the separation of day time and night time violence).
Rioters (Number)	An estimate of the number of active participants in a disturbance. This was assumed to be useful in gauging riot severity.
Rioters (Ethnicity)	An analysis of the ethnic make-up of the crowd. The primary source definitions were adhered to, e.g. White or Black. Where the crowd was specified as 'Asian' or 'Afro-Caribbean' this was noted.
Arrests (Number)	The number of (daily) arrests noted by the primary source. A potential marker of riot intensity.
Arrests (Ethnicity)	In the few cases where this was stated the ethnic breakdown was recorded using the crude definitions of the primary source.
Injuries (Police)	The number of police injuries as a result of the disturbance (and where stated, 'minor' or 'serious'). This category was considered to be another potential gauge of riot severity.
Injuries (Other)	Numbers of injured civilians and/or rioters. Counting of the injuries to participants in disturbances is notoriously difficult however, as most go unreported or are logged under different causes in hospitals in order for the participant to avoid apprehension by the police.
Primary Source/Date	Acronym denoting newspaper title and reference date.
Notes	Other information from the primary source thought useful to the research (e.g. use of petrol bombs, damage to police vehicles etc.).

Table 3: Categories for the collection of information about disturbances from the primary sources

During the process of collecting the data, several further categories of information were defined, particularly those relating to the measurement of riot severity. These are described below in Table 4. After the sub-division of the data into daily periods, various categories of information associated with each incident and described above

were cross-referenced to provide a level of empirical solidity. Where data was considered to be lacking, further efforts were made to isolate relevant primary sources.

Category	Description	Explanation
PD	Properties damaged or destroyed	This denoted the presence of property damage and where known the number of properties damaged.
PB	Use of petrol bombs	Forms of use or discovery of petrol bombs in the locale of the disturbance
A	Arson	Evidence of arson in a disturbance and/or number of vehicles or buildings damaged or destroyed.
L	Looting	Evidence of looting.
PC	Police commitment	The numbers of police officers committed to a particular disturbance
PV	Police vehicles damaged or destroyed	The presence and/or number of police vehicles damaged or destroyed
PS	Police station attacked	Significant attack during a disturbance on a police station or other property (in addition note was made of attacks on fire stations or ambulance stations).
DUR	Duration	Where the information was available the duration of a particular disturbance was either calculated or stated from the primary source (in hours).

Table 4: Additional categories for the collection of information concerning disturbances from the primary sources

4.3.3   Disturbance Severity Analysis

Using the collated daily data defined by the categories described in Section 3.2 it was possible to generate a measure of disturbance severity. This was achieved by expanding and modifying a quantitative system employed by Keith[278]. The numerical ranges of the data collected for all of the incidents of daily disturbance derived from the primary and secondary sources for each particular category were studied. The

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[278] Keith, *Race, Riots and Policing: Lore and Disorder in a Multi-Racist Society*, pp.109-114, which was in turn derived from J. T. Wanderer, 'An Index of Riot Severity and some Correlates,' *American Journal of Sociology* 74, no. 5 (1969).

arithmetic mean, median and mode of all the disturbance data were calculated and used to define a series of five intervals within a series of six final categories. These categories, their intervals and respective disturbance severity scores are described in Table 5.

Category	Disturbance Severity Score (DSS)				
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Duration (Hours)	<1	1 to <2	2 to <4	4 to <8	≥8
Rioters (Number)	< 50	50 to <100	100 to <300	300 to <700	≥700
Police injuries (Number)	< 5	5 to <10	10 to <20	20 to <50	≥50
Properties damaged (Number/arson)	< 10	10 to <30	>30	Buildings burned (minor)	Buildings burned (major)
Attacks on police property	Police vehicles damaged (minor)	Police vehicles damaged (major)	Police vehicles burned (minor)	Police vehicles burned (major)	Police station attacked
Use of petrol bombs	Found at scene of disturbance	Used against property	Used against police (minor)	Used against police (major)	Used against police (massive)

Table 5: Categories and intervals for calculation of disturbance severity scores

A closer examination of Table 5 reveals that the category intervals are not in a linear relationship[279]. Instead they were weighted so that the capability of a disturbance to achieve a high severity rating was increasingly difficult. This was considered necessary in order to clearly and conservatively delineate the more common minor or major disturbance from the major or exceptional 'riot'. It was hoped that this approach would also counteract tendencies in the local and national media to erroneously exaggerate the importance of some disturbances over others.

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[279] For example the 'Rioters (Number)' categories have variables which double in each of the ascending intervals (e.g. 50, 100, 200, 400).

It should be noted that several of the initial categories defined in Section 3.2 were either combined for simplicity or not employed in this particular disturbance severity analysis. Particularly ferocious 'riots' often produce lower numbers of arrests than incidences of large scale looting. For these reasons this category 'Arrests' was ignored in this particular analysis. Similarly the numbers of police committed ('PC') to a disturbance may, of course, impede its ferocity, so basing a riot intensity study on this category was deemed questionable. Finally the presence of looting ('L') is also problematic, as again Keith points out[280]. Taking goods from damaged shops may be considered an almost benign activity compared to actually smashing the windows, arson or a pitched battle with police, which are more commonly associated with 'riot'. For this reason, 'looting' as an activity was excluded from the disturbance severity analysis.

The final phase of the process of defining disturbance severity was to score each of the daily incidents for the various categories shown in Table 5. Where information was not available, no score was entered. This approach was undertaken because a lack of useful data did not necessarily indicate a low disturbance severity rating for a particular category. The Disturbance Severity Scores (DSS) were then averaged to derive the Disturbance Severity Quotient (DSQ) an overall measure of event severity. Averaging of severity scores was only undertaken where at least three values were available. The averaging process was thus aimed at a conservative smoothing of the disturbance severity scores over a series of categories where data was available in the primary sources. In the case where a disturbance had less than three severity scores available, a subjective but conservative judgement was made. As a general rule such

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[280] Keith, *Race, Riots and Policing: Lore and Disorder in a Multi-Racist Society*, p.110.

incidents only achieved a ranking of 1 (minor disturbance) or ≤ 2 (major disturbance) marking the absence of a diversity of information. In this manner, daily events that lacked source data but had one or two high scores would not be weighted upwards. Conversely, incidents that lacked data and had low scores would not be entirely lost either.

The DSQ data was then used to subjectively rank the severity of a particular disturbance within the context of the primary source data of July 1981. This is shown in Table 6:

	DSQ Range				
	1	**>1 to 2**	**>2 to 3**	**>3 to 4**	**>4 to 5**
Disturbance Severity	Minor Disturbance	Major Disturbance	Riot	Major Riot	Exceptional Riot

Table 6: Subjective definition of disturbance severity based upon DSQ ranges

Examination of Table 6 shows that the DSQ range of 'greater than 2 to 3' defines the boundary between less serious incidents of public disorder (minor and major disturbances) and the more serious conditions of *'riot'*. On this basis and referring to Table 5, for a particular daily incident to be defined as a 'riot' within the DSQ range it would be expected at a minimum to have at least three available disturbance severity scores and to exhibit some or all of the following characteristics:

- A longevity of two or more hours
- One hundred or more active participants
- Ten or more police injuries
- Widespread property damage

- Numerous police vehicles damaged (including by fire)

- The use of petrol bombs against the police

4.4 Review and Discussion of Results

4.4.1 Daily Incident Data Set

The primary source data consisted of 90 media publications the vast majority of which were local newspapers. A full listing of these sources, including those that yielded no relevant information[281], is provided in Appendix 10.3. Following the process described in Section 3.0 these primary sources were combined with the original secondary sources to yield 200 cross-referenced daily incidents distributed throughout the month of July 1981 and spread over 128 locations in England[282]. The criteria for inclusion in this data set was that a particular disorder should at least attain the level of 'minor disturbance' as defined in Table 6. The daily incidents are listed in chronological order, with their respective disturbance severity scores (DSS) and quotients (DSQ), in Appendix 10.4. Incidents that failed to achieve this rating or where no evidence could be found despite their appearance in the secondary sources are listed in Appendix 10.5.

Table 7 gives the percentage breakdown of the daily incident data set according to

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[281] The primary sources that yielded 'negative' results are included as they tend to discount locations of disturbances cited by the secondary sources. This is possibly evidence of the phenomenon of 'shaggy dog riots' discussed by Keith as moral panics in the media. Ibid. pp.61-68. Other possibilities include a lack of data or suppression of news of disturbances by police authorities in tandem with the local media.

[282] Only one location fell outside the geographic boundaries of England. The disturbances in Dundee on 11th and 12th July were included despite failing the strict remit of this thesis.

disturbance severity. Examination of this data shows that the vast majority of the disturbances in July 1981 fell into the category of minor or major disturbances, with less than 20% being classed at the 'riot' severity levels. This suggests that either the conservatism inherent in the non-linear severity analysis provided a damping effect (as intended) and/or that the July 1981 disturbances were actually characterised by a minority of serious incidents of public disorder within a sea of less severe events. Although this form of analysis escapes limitations inherent in the 'riot lists' cited in many secondary sources by providing an index of severity, greater detail inherent in spatial and temporal examinations of the data is required to gain a better understanding of the anatomy of the July 1981 events.

Disturbance Severity	DSQ	No. of Daily Disturbances	Percentage of Total
Minor Disturbance	1	96	48.0
Major Disturbance	>1 to 2	68	34.0
Riot	>2 to 3	25	12.5
Major Riot	>3 to 4	9	4.5
Exceptional Riot	>4 to 5	2	1.0
Total	-	200	100

Table 7: Breakdown of disturbances by severity in England July 1981

4.4.2 Cartographical Analysis

An important phase of the quantitative analysis involved geographic and temporal mapping of daily disturbance data derived from the primary sources. Extensive searches of both primary and secondary sources provided only scant examples of cartography being undertaken for the July 1981 events and none were found that illustrated countrywide disturbances on a daily basis.

In this study a series of U.K. maps were created charting both the geographical and temporal location of the 200 daily disturbances, as well as their severity. Each daily incident had a map marker assigned to it whose size was relative to the Disturbance Severity Quotient for that event. The full set of maps produced by this cartographical study covering 19 days between July 3rd and 28th 1981 are presented in Appendix 10.6.

Examination of these maps suggested that temporal sub-divisions could be discerned. The opening phase of the disturbances was considered to lie between Friday 3rd and Monday 6th July (Maps 1 to 4). Only two disturbance locations, Toxteth (Liverpool) and Southall (London) were present and there were no subsidiary incidents. Both of these sets of disturbances were severe, falling into the higher categories of 'riot' ($2 < DSQ \leq 3$), 'major riot' ($3 < DSQ \leq 4$) or 'exceptional riot' ($4 < DSQ \leq 5$). Significantly both locations experienced an incident on the first day of the July wave of disturbances. Whilst the Southall 'riot' only lasted one evening, the Toxteth disturbances displayed considerable longevity, developing in severity over the weekend.

The Toxteth 'riots' of 3rd to 7th July displayed a pattern that was a reoccurring feature of many examples in this study. After the initial 'trigger' incident involving a small crowd on Friday 3rd July[283] and consequent sporadic attacks on police lasting

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[283] Hernon (along with many other sources) states that the 'trigger' incident was the attempted (and eventually unsuccessful) arrest by the police of a motorcyclist in the heart of Toxteth. Significantly the disturbance was escalated by members of the public intervening to stop the rider being seized by the police who claimed that he had stolen the motorbike he was riding in Hernon, *Riot!: Civil Insurrection*

approximately two hours[284], the disturbances grew rapidly in severity over the succeeding days as shown in Table 8. A pattern of 'trigger' (July 3rd), growth to a peak (July 4th – 5th) and decline (July 6th – 7th) is clearly shown in the life cycle of this disturbance.

	July 1981: Day/Date				
	Friday 3rd	Saturday 4th	Sunday 5th	Monday 6th	Tuesday 7th
DSQ Rating	1.8	4.0	4.3	2.8	2.0
Disturbance Descriptor	Major Disturbance	Major Riot	Exceptional Riot	Riot	Major Disturbance

Table 8: The Toxteth disturbances of 3rd – 7th July 1981 by severity

The second phase of the July events lasted from Tuesday 7th to Thursday 9th. The maps (5 to 7) for this particular period show several interesting new developments and can be considered as representing a local 'growth' phase, characterised by clumps of minor disturbances in cities generated by preceding major events. At the very moment where the Toxteth incident was in decline, severe disturbances broke out in the district of Moss Side in the neighbouring city of Manchester over the mid-week period. In tandem with this serious event are the first appearances of minor incidents in the environs of Liverpool. On Tuesday 7th July there were minor disturbances in the city centre and in Kirkby a suburb to the North East of the city, followed on Wednesday 8th by further more serious violence in Kirkby and in Netherly in the South East. By this stage the inner city area of Toxteth itself was relatively quiet. On the succeeding night (Thursday 9th July), nine disparate areas of Merseyside,

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from Peterloo to the Present Day, p.201. The *Times* (06-07-1981) states that the initial crowd involved '40 black youths'.

[284] *Times* (06-07-1981).

including the city centre, experienced minor or major disturbances (Kirkby, Bootle, Halewood, Leasowe, Speke, Thornton, Tuebrook and Wallasey). Similar phenomena appeared at the peak of the Moss Side event in Manchester, with incidents in Clayton, Gorton, Rusholme and Salford on Wednesday 8th. In the capital a serious disturbance in Wood Green (North London) on Tuesday 7th July was followed on Thursday 9th by more minor incidents in Balham, Battersea, Dalston, Deptford, Fulham, Lewisham, Notting Hill, Stoke Newington, Tooting and Woolwich[285].

The 'clusters' of less serious disturbances in the environs of the cities of Liverpool, Manchester and London demonstrate the contagious effect of the more serious 'riots' in Toxteth, Moss Side and Wood Green respectively. It is interesting to note that no 'national effect' was in play at this stage. Disturbances are confined to the major conurbations already mentioned and there is little evidence of the contagion affecting England as a whole.

However, from this point on, as shown in maps 8 and 9 covering 10th - 11th July, the wave of incidents multiplies at an escalating rate, rising to a peak on the Saturday night, when 73 locales, spread over much of England, experienced disturbances of varying severity. Although new concentrations of disturbance appear during this phase in major cities and conurbations, for example the West Midlands (Birmingham and Wolverhampton), East Midlands (Nottingham, Leicester, Derby) and the

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[285] Keith noted that 'In the days following Southall, there was a gradual build-up of tension within the Stoke Newington area and an expectation of 'trouble', particularly in the wake of the mid-week disturbances in Wood Green less than two miles from Dalston Junction station along Green Lane' in Keith, *Race, Riots and Policing: Lore and Disorder in a Multi-Racist Society*, p.150.

Yorkshire cities (Leeds, Bradford, Hull, Halifax, Huddersfield), there is also a dissemination of incidents to more isolated large towns. Significant incidents, sometimes with a longevity of several days, occur in numerous and diverse places such as High Wycombe (Buckinghamshire), Luton and Bedford (Bedfordshire), Portsmouth, Slough (Berkshire), Gloucester, Chester (Cheshire) and Darwen, Fleetwood, Blackpool, Blackburn and Preston in Lancashire. This pattern implies that although the local contagion effect confined to the major conurbations was operating, a newer diffusion phenomenon was functioning and significantly expanding the number and spread of incidents as a result.

The fourth stage of the wave of July events, lasting from Sunday 12th to Monday 13th (Maps 10 to 11) can be characterised as the 'decline phase'. Although serious incidents occurred over this period (notably in Leicester, Leeds and Derby), the number of disturbances as a whole fell rapidly. One obvious characteristic that connected both the peak and decline phases of the July disturbances was the weekend period (Friday 10th – Sunday 12th). Although there were 12 incidents on the night of Monday 13th July, all but one (Derby) was of minor or major disturbance severity and there were no recorded events on Tuesday 14th. This suggests that the expanded leisure time afforded by the weekend and its consequences in effecting social groupings in public spaces may have had an impact on both the growth and eventual decline of the overall wave of incidents.

Growth and the subsequent decline of waves of disturbances have been noted in

several other historical studies of disorder[286]. Quantitative studies of racial rioting in the United States in the 1960s cited various factors as being potentially important in understanding the decline in cycles of incidents[287]. 'Exhaustion or ceiling effects' are generated by intense periods of serious disorder and are usually the result of a combination of the literal physical cost involved, as well as due to negative reactions in the communities local to the disturbances. This quasi-cost-benefit analysis leads to 'saturation effects' that cause cessation of open hostility to the authorities, sometimes temporarily, in locales that have sustained prolonged periods of unrest. Also of importance is the repression unleashed by the state as a result of the disorder. Although this activity can have a dual nature, that is exacerbating conflicts as well as suppressing them, the latter effect including the physical danger to the participants combined with large numbers of arrests can act as a significant inhibitor of both the continuation of specific disturbances and the wider diffusion of disorder.

In July 1981 there were significant differences in the tactics and levels of violence applied by the police to disturbances in different regions. These ranged from static, defensive responses to disorders early in the month, through to pre-emptive concentrations of police in areas believed to be susceptible to the disturbance contagion over the weekend of 10th – 12th July[288]. Escalation and modification of

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[286] For example the Swing Riots of the 1830s in Hobsbawm and Rudé, *Captain Swing* or the rioting in major cities in the United States in the 1960s in Myers, *Racial Rioting in the 1960S: An Event History Analysis of Local Conditions*.

[287] Myers, *Collective Violence and Heterogeneous Diffusion Processes: U.S. Racial Rioting from 1964-1971*, pp.23-24.

[288] Several primary sources celebrate the 'swamping' of town centres with police over that weekend as being successful in fending off potential disorders or reducing their severity. Examples include Reading

tactics, particularly in Manchester over 7th – 9th July, were a direct result of the injuries sustained by police and their perception of 'defeat' during their deployment to the neighbouring city of Liverpool in the preceding Toxteth disorders[289]. There is evidence to support the view that these aggressive policing tactics[290], previously unseen in mainland Britain (though long-used in Northern Ireland), were a significant factor in the suppression of further disorders in Moss Side and Greater Manchester. This temporal and regional variation in the adoption of repressive tactics adds potential explanations as well as significant heterogeneity to the decline in the July wave of disturbances.

The final segment of the July disturbances, which will be denoted as the 'death phase', covers 14th July to 28th July (Maps 12 to 19). This period is marked by very few, disparate and sporadic incidents often interspersed with several days where no disturbances were recorded. The only major disorders of any note occur in Brixton (Wednesday 15th), Southall (Wednesday 15th and Thursday 16th), Keswick (Saturday 25th) and Toxteth (Sunday 26th – Tuesday 28th). All of these incidents have significant differences both in initiation, participants and content. They are interesting in their persistence and apparent disconnection from the overall form of the July wave. They

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(*Reading Chronicle* 17-07-1981), Bristol (*Western Daily Press* 13-07-1981), Harlow (*Harlow Gazette* 17-07-1981), Bedford (*Bedford Record* 14-07-1981), Romford (*Romford Recorder* 13-07-1981) and Hereford (*Worcester Evening News* 20-07-1981).

[289] Hytner, *Report of the Moss Side Enquiry Panel to the Leader of the Greater Manchester Council*, App. 4B p.4.

[290] These tactics included the use of mobile police units, 'snatch squads' to target 'ring leaders' and most controversially the use of semi-armoured police vehicles as high speed battering rams to break up crowds. Ibid. Section 39.1 and Appendix 4B Sections 9-16.

also demonstrate some of the complex characteristics of disturbances within it.

The Brixton event was a violent but short-lived, localised response to an aggressive police operation[291]. It demonstrated the continuing conflicts between the authorities and Black communities situated in contentious locales in the wake of the events in the first two weeks of July 1981. The earlier and profound Southall disturbance of 3rd July was initiated by the aggressive invasion of the area by skinheads, some with fascist affiliations, leading to a violent collective response by the community both to the invaders and the police who appeared to be protecting them. As a result 'the Asian youth had made clear that Southall was a 'no-go' area for fascists'[292] and it is no surprise that the disturbances in that area later in the month are associated by Keith with racial violence[293]. In contrast the incident in Keswick on Saturday 25th was connected to a scooter rally where several hundred 'mods' attacked police using

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[291] This serious incident (DSQ=3.0) was triggered by a coordinated series of raids by the Metropolitan police on 11 houses in Railton Road on the pretext of hunting for petrol bomb stores. This particular locale was the so-called 'frontline' or as designated by Keith a 'centre of resistance', a place where 'resentment of power relations was transformed into resistance of power relations'. The raids involved over 100 police officers, found no petrol bombs and resulted in the residences being severely damaged. They were regarded by both residents and most interestingly some police officers as an attempt to 'avenge the defeats of the riots earlier in the year'. As such this particular disturbance is unusual as it is the result of a premeditated, offensive operation by the police rather than the more common case of a crowd response to 'routine' (though questionable) policing, which appears to be behind many other 'trigger' incidents in July 1981. Keith, *Race, Riots and Policing: Lore and Disorder in a Multi-Racist Society*, pp.131-32 & 159-62.

[292] *Notes and Documents*, p.226.

[293] Keith, *Race, Riots and Policing: Lore and Disorder in a Multi-Racist Society*, p.112.

petrol bombs and weapons, burned a mobile theatre and looted the 'Tea Gardens'[294].

This incident falls into the supposed category of 'juvenile delinquency' more

associated with youth violence on Bank Holidays in seaside towns. However, the

Keswick disturbance clearly had a more vicious edge, possibly stimulated by the

disorders earlier in the month.

Finally and perhaps aptly, Toxteth exploded into three days of serious rioting at the

end of the month, in some ways confounding the concept of the 'death phase' of the

July wave of riots. If this phase is supposed to a represent a reduction in number,

longevity and severity of disturbances, then Toxteth in late July clearly contradicts the

latter two categories. This particular tranche of disturbances in Liverpool 8 were

considered by many commentators to be the most ferocious of the summer in

Merseyside[295]. The intensity of the violence of the 'rioters' was matched and

exceeded by the application of new aggressive policing tactics. This led to serious

injuries amongst the 'rioters', including the first death of the July 1981 events when a

disabled man David Moore was run down by a police van.

These four examples, which mark the 'death phase' of the July disturbances,

exemplify a deeper complexity within the events as a whole, something which basic

quantitative analysis is not necessarily well suited to explore. The difference in their

content is important; Brixton as a *defensive* reaction to police incursions into a site of

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[294] Keswick Reminder (31-07-1981).

[295] Several sources note the vicious nature of the combat including Bowrey, *The 1981 Urban Riots in England*, p.45, and Hernon, *Riot!: Civil Insurrection from Peterloo to the Present Day*, pp.207-209. *The Times* (30-07-1981) quoted the Chief Constable of Merseyside, Kenneth Oxford as saying 'there had been more petrol bombs than on any previous night'.

contention, marking the historical collapse in relations between the inner city Afro-Caribbean communities and the police; Southall as a violent collective response to *racist attacks* and formal intervention by organised racist groups; Keswick as *'delinquent'* action by a White crowd centred around a youth sub-culture and Toxteth as a durable and ferocious *anti-police riot* fusing a Black and White crowd into a formidable force requiring severe measures by the state to suppress it. These complexities, although arguably linked, imply that merely ranking disturbances according to severity and quantifying them spatially and temporally as an overall wave of incidents will illuminate only certain facets of the July 1981 unrest.

Another question that relates to the concept of the 'death' of the July disturbances and to the cartographical and tabular arrangement of the primary source data concerns the end point of the wave. There is a certainly a level of superficiality in claiming an end to the cycle with the Toxteth incidents of July 26th – 28th. Several references quote further outbreaks of disorder in the days following the events in Liverpool 8 that fall outside the remit of this particular analysis[296]. This issue relates to a problematic understanding of the July disturbances, that is, envisaging them as a clearly defined

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[296] For example Hernon states 'Further 'copycat' riots broke out the day after David Moore's death marked an end to the Toxteth disorder. The Moss Side district of Manchester was shattered by a mob which attacked police, smashed windows and looted shops. Hundreds of mainly black youths went on the rampage in Brixton, Southall, Reading, Hull and Preston'. Ibid. p.209. In addition, the Chief Constable of Merseyside was quoted in *The Times* (30-07-1981) as using a disturbance in Maghull (16 km north of Liverpool) that occurred during the late July Toxteth disorders as evidence that 'copycat' events would continue regardless of the suppression of the major incidents.

wave of disorder in an otherwise sea of calm[297]. Tarrow in his seminal analysis of collective protest proposed a different view, stating:

'when we reconstruct cycles of protest from both public records and private memories, the peaks that leave indelible impressions in public consciousness are really only the high ground of broader swells of mobilization that rise and fall from the doldrums of compliance to waves of mobilization more gradually than popular memory recognizes'[298]

This insight was noted and applied by some of the more astute writers when commenting on the July 1981 disturbances. For example Unsworth states:

'[the 'riots'] were not sudden explosions of violence within normally peaceful and harmonious communities, but a temporary cluster of upsurges punctuating a chronic reality of tension and aggression in the inner city. They may be seen as a sudden dramatic escalation of **the routine conflict with the Police**, vandalism, property theft and racial violence which characterised these areas **before the riots and has**

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[297] Problems of finding 'start and end points' have bedevilled other historical analyses of waves of disorder. A discussion of this issue with respect to another disturbance wave is found in Griffin's paper on the Swing Riots of the early 1830s; C. J. Griffin, 'Swing, Swing Redivivus, Or Something After Swing? on the Death Throes of a Protest Movement, December 1830–December 1833,' *International Review of Social History* 54 (2009).

[298] Mark Traugott, *Repertoires and Cycles of Collective Action.* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), p.96.

returned to routine but heightened levels since' [299]

This perspective places the July wave of disorder in a 'choppy sea' of routine low-level disturbance, consequently making the task of finding the end (or the start) of such a cycle a difficult if not impossible project. Effectively there may be no defined point of termination (or initiation). Instead the disturbance wave should be seen as a fluctuation of much higher frequency and severity level within a continuum of unrest. An examination of the overall picture of violent urban disorder in 1981 supports this view in revealing that there were several serious disturbances in the months preceding July and a number after.

Two additional factors may have had an impact on the reporting of disturbances and thus skewed the results of this survey with respect to locating the chimerical 'end point'. The shock value of the disturbances of the first two weeks of July 1981 initially led to intensive reporting in the media. In the weeks that followed there was the inevitable loss of newsworthiness particularly for the more numerous but less serious disturbances, as their very number led to media indifference. These saturation effects, may have both exaggerated the significance of incidents early in the wave but also dampened reporting of events after the peak on Saturday 11th July[300]. Allied with this phenomenon was pressure from the police and local authorities to suppress information both internally in their organisations and externally in the media. This was essentially driven by concerns about the supposed media driven 'copycat' effect

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[299] This author's emphasis in italics. Unsworth, *The Riots of 1981: Popular Violence and the Politics of Law and Order*, p.71.

[300] In addition to this effect, a huge news item dominated the media several weeks after the peak of 11th July. This was the Royal Wedding of Charles and Diana on Wednesday 29th July 1981.

in generating more disturbances. As a result of these two trends and due to the reliance of this study on primary sources derived from the media, the form of the July cycle of disturbances, especially the decline and 'end' phases, may be significantly distorted.

In concluding this cartographical study of the July 1981 disturbances, some general observations can be made regarding their overall severity and spatial location. Certain regions of mainland Britain appear to be completely free of disorder; these include the South West (comprising Cornwall, Devon, Dorset and Somerset), Wales, East Anglia (including Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire), Scotland (apart from Dundee) and barring some minor disturbances in Newcastle and Sunderland, the North East (including Northumberland, Tyne and Wear, Cleveland, Durham and Cumbria). The apparent lack of significant unrest in these regions could be partly due to a paucity of reports in the secondary sources that were studied. However, it is fairly certain that if serious disturbances had occurred in these regions they would have been covered in the national media. It can therefore be argued that if there were unreported incidents in these areas of the country they would not have been of major significance.

The question thus arises as to why there were few or no disturbances in these particular regions. Interestingly, some politicians and commentators used this point, in combination with historical comparisons of previous periods of economic depression, to scotch arguments proposing structural factors such as unemployment and/or deprivation as being the drivers of unrest. They essentially posed a dual question that if poverty, driven by rapid economic decline inevitably leads to disorder why was

there little urban violence of the 1980s form in the 1930s?[301] Also, why in 1981 did

areas of the country severely affected by unemployment such as Scotland, Wales and

the North East fail to 'riot'?   Several explanations have been offered for this

conundrum. Unsworth proposed that a particular combination of local structural and

social factors had to be in place for such unusual events to occur:

> 'it would be necessary to look to the unevenness not only of
> unemployment rates, but of racial mix, Police practices and local social
> environmental conditions to account for the geographical distribution and
> differential character of the disturbances'[302]

This perspective may explain the differentiation in the evidence provided by the

cartographical analysis. Examination of the full set of maps shows that major

conurbations lying roughly on a line from the south east to the north west (London,

Leicester, Nottingham, Derby, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool and Leeds)

experienced serious disorders and those in the South West, Wales, East Anglia, North

East and Scotland did not. The cities lying on or close to the London – Liverpool line

all experienced rapid and severe unemployment between 1979 and 1981, they all

contained significant inner city communities with mixed ethnicity and many had long

standing issues concerning the policing of those locales. In contrast the cities lying

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[301] This historical argument was criticised by several commentators including Unsworth who pointed

out that although perhaps the context and form of unrest of the 1930s was different to the 1980s, it was

incorrect to suggest that there had been no disorder in that period. He cited the counter-examples of

violent clashes with police associated with the unemployment marches and anti-fascist demonstrations

of the 1930s to refute this position. Ibid. Note 34, p.83.

[302] Ibid. p.72.

outside of this axis may have had high unemployment but significantly had smaller and in some cases no ethnically mixed communities[303]. This scenario points towards ethnically mixed inner city areas as *vanguards* in the July wave, providing the incentive for other areas in the environs of the city with mainly White populations to engage in the disorder[304].

The cartographical analysis provides useful information in understanding the spatial

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[303] Statistics from the 2001 census showed 'Minority ethnic groups were more likely to live in England than in Scotland or Wales. In England, they made up 9 per cent of the total population compared with only 2 per cent in both Scotland and Wales...The minority ethnic populations were concentrated in the large urban centres. Nearly half (48 per cent) of the total minority ethnic population lived in the London region, where they comprised 29 per cent of all residents. After London, the region with the next biggest share of the minority ethnic population was the West Midlands (with 13 per cent of the minority ethnic population), followed by the North West (8 per cent), the South East (7 per cent), and Yorkshire and the Humber (7 per cent). The English region with the smallest proportion of the minority ethnic population was the North East where minority ethnic groups made up less than 2 per cent of the region's population'. A. White, *Social Focus in Brief: Ethnicity 2002* (London: Office for National Statistics, 2002), p.7.

[304] From a somewhat different perspective, Ennis argued that the specific cultural history and identity of the north east of England was a factor in that region's apparent lack of response to the 1981 disturbances. Ennis postulated that the region's peripheral relationship to the 'rest of the country' in both geographic and socio-economic terms creates a 'simultaneous membership in two communities – one regional, the other national'. This dichotomy, he argued, generated an ideological adherence to the nineteenth-century values of the 'English imperial system', which in turn explains the stability of the region in 1981 so championed in the local press. Regionally specific cultural arguments such as this may also help to explain the relative calm in Scotland and Wales in 1981, though the detailed local research required to fully substantiate this proposition lies beyond the remit of this thesis. F. Ennis, 'Time, Person and Place in the North-East of England,' (Ph.D thesis, Durham, 1987).

and temporal nature of the overall wave of disturbances. It has exposed the various phases of trigger, growth and decline of both individual events and more crudely in the overall wave of incidents. The problems of defining the start and end points of this wave have been addressed and the mapping of the July incidents generated questions concerning the uneven geographic spread of disturbances. However, one facet that certainly requires more qualitative and quantitative treatment concerns the relationship between local 'clusters' of disturbances situated in major cities and the overall wave of disorder in July 1981. This aspect, highlighted by the cartographical analysis, will be addressed in greater detail in the next section.

4.4.3   Quantitative Analysis of Local and National Characteristics

4.4.3.1   The National Perspective

To initiate the study of the relationship between disturbances located in and around major cities and the nationwide wave it is worthwhile to begin with a consideration of the macro perspective in more detail. Figure 8 displays the complete daily disturbance data set for England (presented in Appendix 10.4) as a histogram stratified according to incident severity for the month of July 1981.
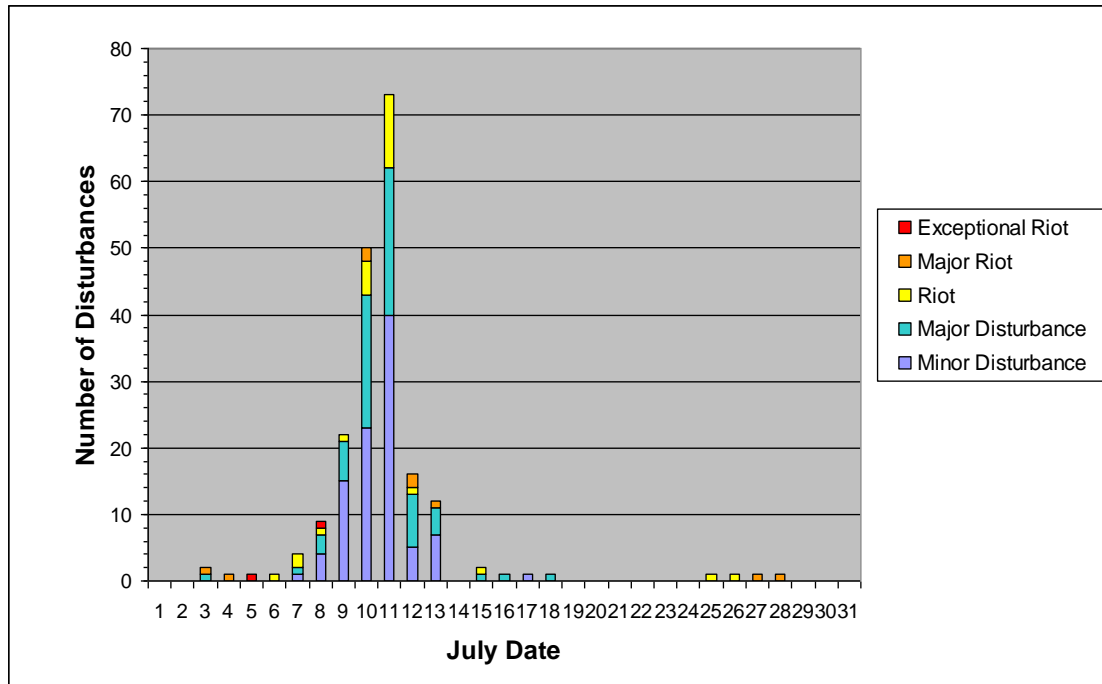
Figure 8: Histogram of frequency and severity of disturbances for England July 1981

This figure clearly exposes the temporal form of the wave of disturbances, showing a distribution of incidents clustered around a peak on 11th July 1981.

Other more subtle features are also apparent which are displayed in Table 9. This summarises the frequency of riot or greater severity level events as a percentage of all the incidents for the phases outlined in Section 4.2.

Phase within wave	Opening	Growth	Peak	Decline	Death	Overall
July date range	3rd-6th	7th-9th	10th-11th	12th-13th	14th-28th	3rd-28th
Number of events of severity ≥ 'riot'	4	5	18	4	5	**36**
Total number of events in phase	5	35	123	28	9	**200**
% of events of severity ≥ 'riot'	80.0	14.3	14.6	14.3	55.6	**18.0**

Table 9: Breakdown of overall disturbance wave into phases to analyse frequency of disturbances at the incident severity level of 'riot' or greater

Examination of this data demonstrates that the opening phase (3rd-6th July) is dominated by serious incidents (in Southall, London and Toxteth, Liverpool) of the level of 'riot' or greater (DSQ>2). Although the serious incidents remain stable as a percentage of the whole during the growth, peak and decline phases it is clear that rapid growth and decline occurs in the frequency of the less serious disturbances over this period. This evidence points towards the severity of the initial events as being a factor in the trigger of the overall wave. In the 'death' phase (14th-28th July), the serious incidents again dominate showing their reoccurring persistence (particularly in Toxteth).

In order to analyse this national wave of disturbances more systematically, the cumulative count of disturbances was compared to the predictions of the *logistic function* (or more commonly known as the 'S' curve)[305]. This mathematical relationship effectively models the diffusion of disturbances assuming that each event is independent and that the spread of incidents is a random process. The closeness of fit gives an indication of the influence of contagious processes within the overall diffusion wave. Midlarsky argued that a good 'fit' of the real data to the logistic function suggests that precipitating incidents for disturbances were not directly influenced by other events although the responses might be similar[306].

For example, if 'riots' were planned as a result of imitative behaviours or if the

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[305] For a fuller description of this diffusion equation see Chapter 2.0 Section 2.3.2 note 147.

[306] See for example the work of Midlarsky in comparing 'real' data from the disturbances in the U.S. in 1966-67 with the logistic function in order to isolate contagious processes within the diffusion wave. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.0 Section 2.3.4.

chances of them happening were lessened by the impact of other events then they would not necessarily be independent and the 'fit' would suffer as a result. Thus less correlation between the curves would suggest that *contagious* processes involving inter-dependence of events might be in operation.

Figure 9 shows the relationships between the cumulative numbers of disturbances by day in July 1981 in England (blue curve) and the prediction of the logistic function (black curve). The derivative of the logistic function (green curve) predicts the number of disturbances per day through the period and is compared to the actual daily disturbance data (red curve)[307].
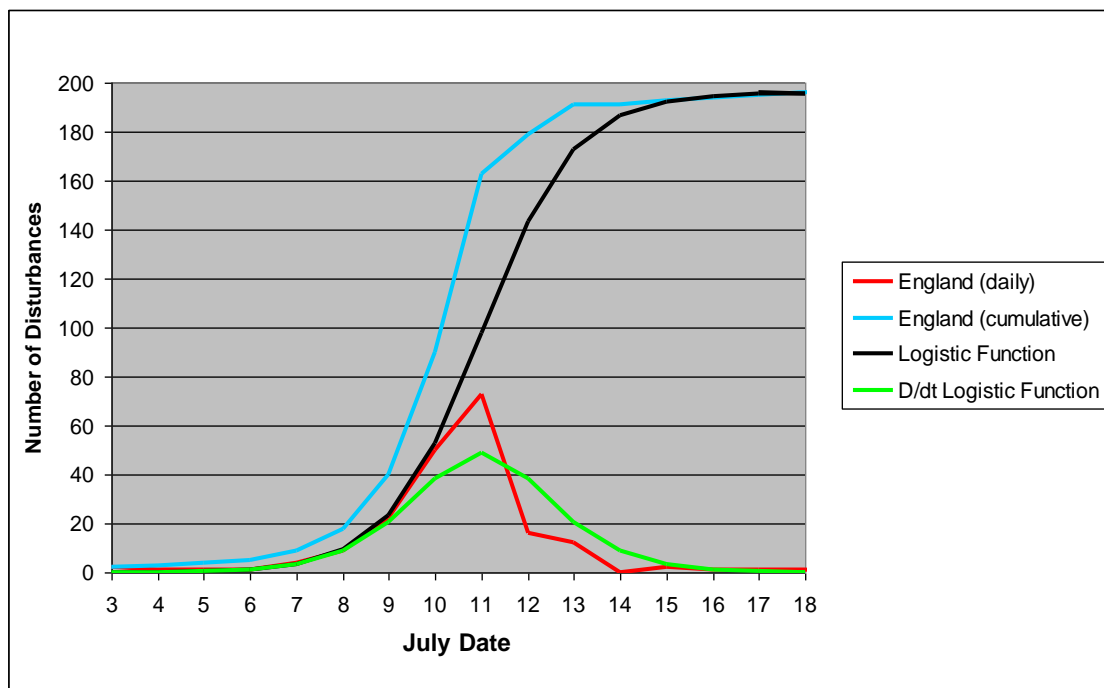
Figure 9: Comparison of 'real' disturbance data from 3rd –18th July 1981 in England with the logistic curve and its derivative.

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[307] The predictive logistic function curves were centred on the day of the peak number of disturbances (11th July). This represents the point of maximum gradient (rate of change) of the logistic function and consequently the peak of the derivative of this curve.

The results of this comparison show that the peak of the actual daily event data had almost 50% more disturbances (73) than predicted by the derivative of the logistic function (49). Although the two daily disturbance curves are similar between the 3rd and 9th July, the real number of disorders increases rapidly over the weekend of Friday (10th July) and Saturday (11th July) in comparison to the prediction. This observation is borne out by the deviations between the curve for the cumulative distribution of real events and the logistic function. The skew of the real data to the left suggests that a significant contagious effect was in play between 3rd-11th July, which created dependency between events and thus encouraged further disorders to occur. Closer examination of the difference between the two cumulative curves suggests that the deviation increases non-linearly over the first part of the weekend of 9th-10th July. In order to examine these discontinuities in more detail the first differential (d/dt) of real daily disturbance data set was compared with the equivalent second differential (d/dt^2) of the logistic function. This is effectively a comparison between the two rates of change of daily disturbances and is shown in Figure 10.

A flat line in Figure 10 represents a situation where the number of daily disturbances is constant, an inclined straight line depicts a linear increase in the number of daily disturbances and an inclined curve shows a non-linear increasing rate of change in these incidents. Descending lines represent the same characteristics but with declining rates of change. Several features are apparent in Figure 10, notably the instigation of the diffusion process after 6th July initially matching the mathematical model. However, the real dataset shows significant non-linear increases in daily disturbances after 9th July and a comparatively rapid reduction in the number of daily events after 11th July (unlike the logistic function).
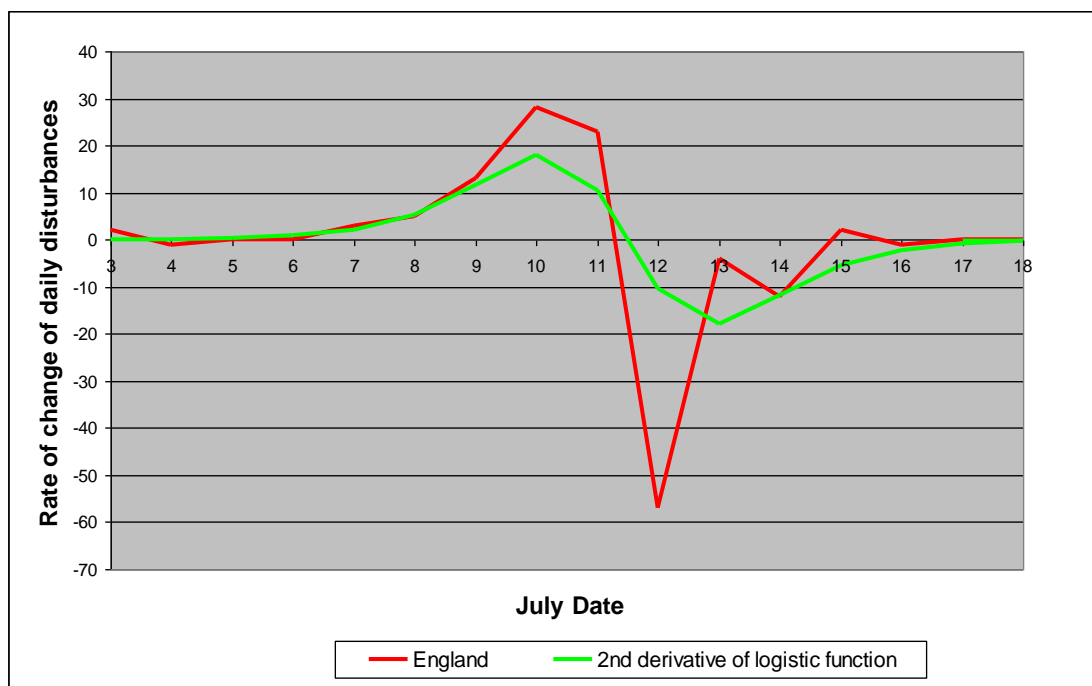
Figure 10: Comparison of the rates of change of daily disturbances for the real data for England July 3rd-18th and that predicted by the second differential of the logistic function

The characteristics of the real dataset in Figure 9 and Figure 10 indicate the presence of contagious processes, which were particularly prevalent over the weekend of 10th-11th July, acting in parallel with the pure diffusion effects. The noticeable skew in the actual data over this period may be partly as a result of the effect of the 'weekend' in enhancing the likelihood of the occurrence of disorders though it is difficult to quantify this effect without a larger data set spread over a longer time period[308]. In order to augment this overall perspective of the July 1981 disturbances it is worth turning towards the local characteristics of the spread of disturbances within cities and conurbations that were most affected by unrest.

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[308] Several researchers alluded to the possible relationship between extended leisure time and the propensity for disorders to breakout. See for example C. McPhail, 'Civil Disorder Participation: A Critical Examination of Recent Research,' *American Sociological Review* 36, no. 6 (1971), p.1070.

4.4.3.2 The City-Conurbation Perspective

In order to study the effect of disturbance frequency and severity from the local perspective of cities and conurbations, four areas that experienced significant unrest in July 1981 (Merseyside, Manchester, London and the West Midlands) were targeted for analysis. Figures 11-14 illustrate the temporal patterns of disturbances for these four locations. The similarities between them are striking. Despite the difference in the quantity of events in each case, all show a similar temporal distribution, namely a growth, peak and decline phase. All of these 'mini-waves' of incidents are preceded by serious disorders (Toxteth in Merseyside, Moss Side in Manchester, Southall and Wood Green in London and Handsworth in the West Midlands).
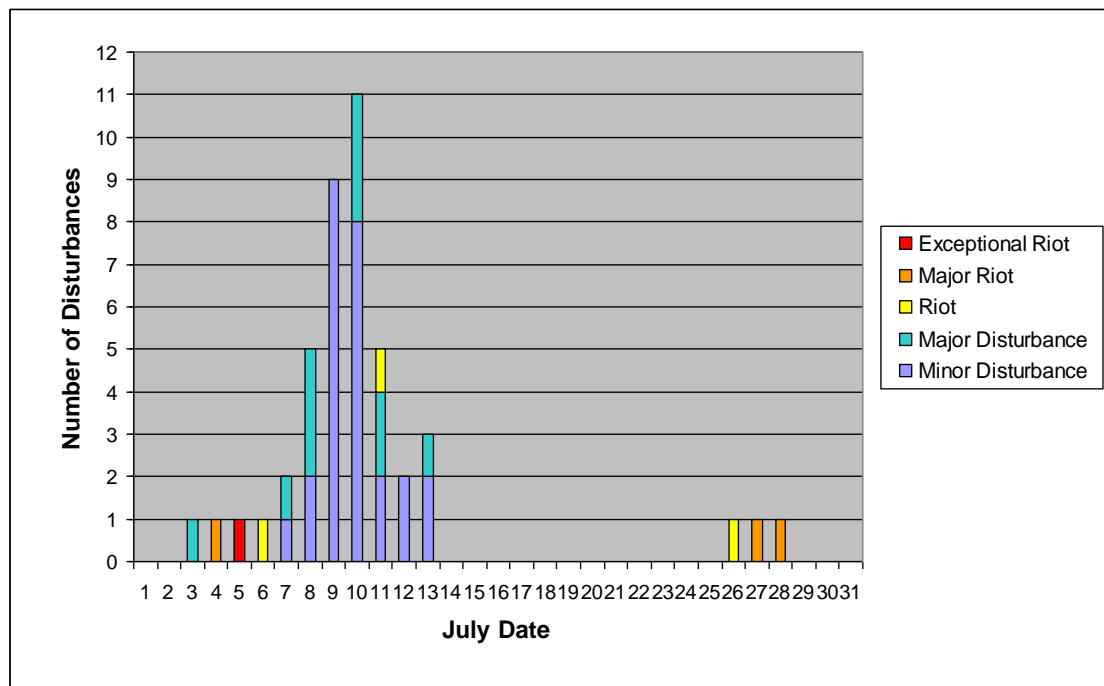
Figure 11: Histogram of frequency and severity of disorders for Merseyside July 1981
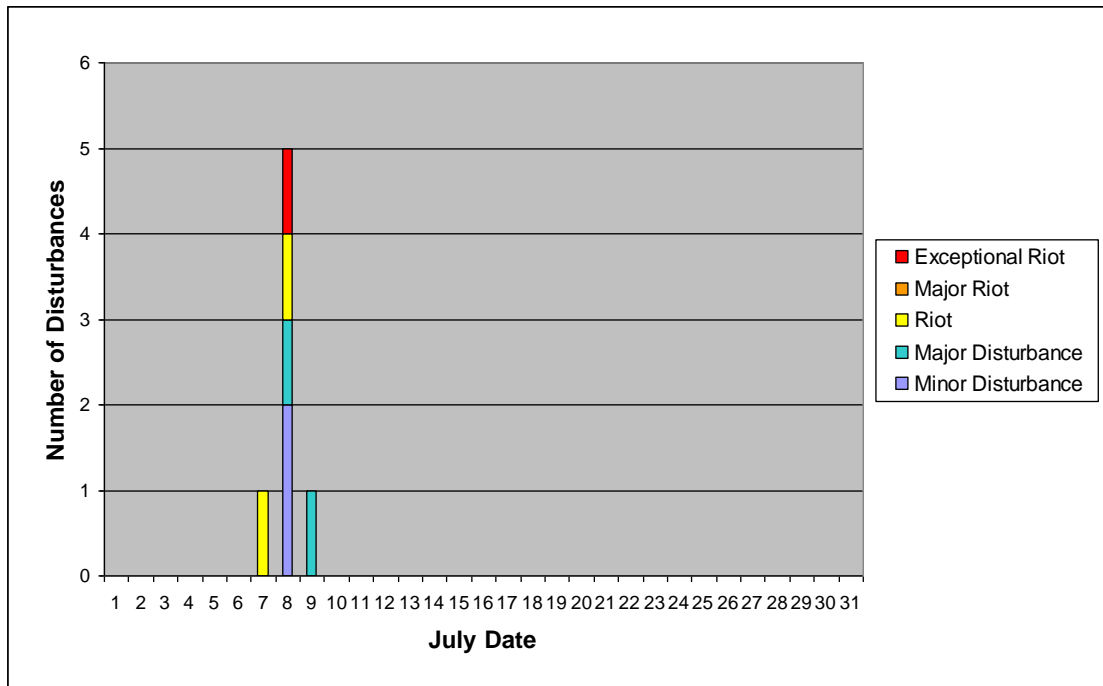
Figure 12: Histogram of frequency and severity of disorders for Manchester July 1981
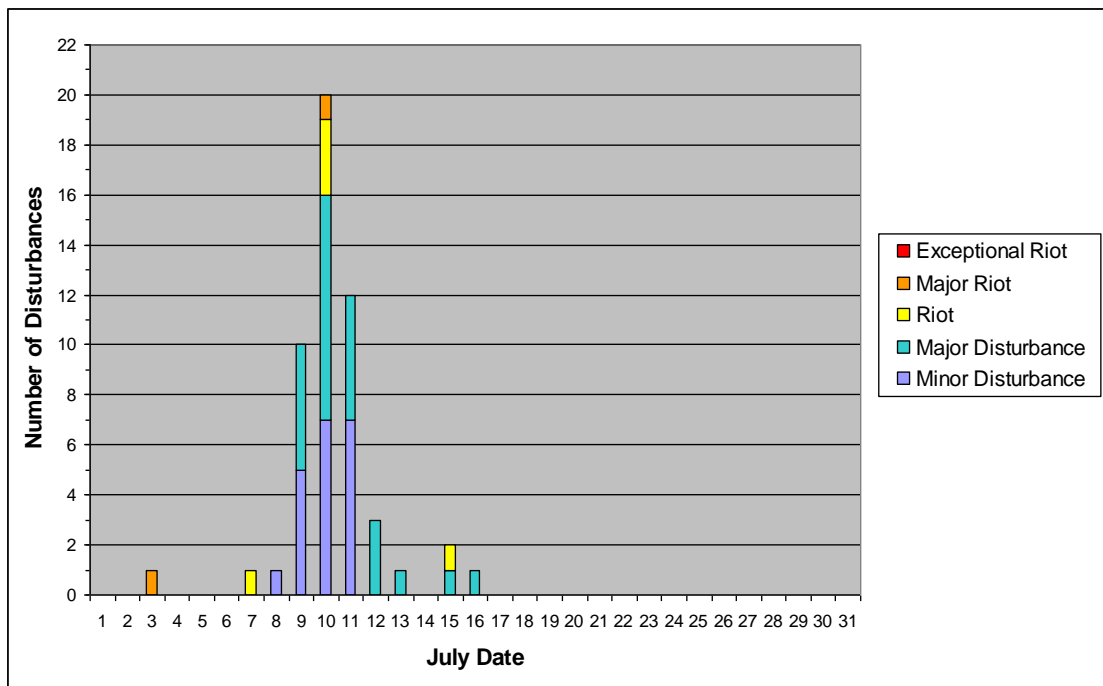
Figure 13: Histogram of frequency and severity of disorders for London July 1981
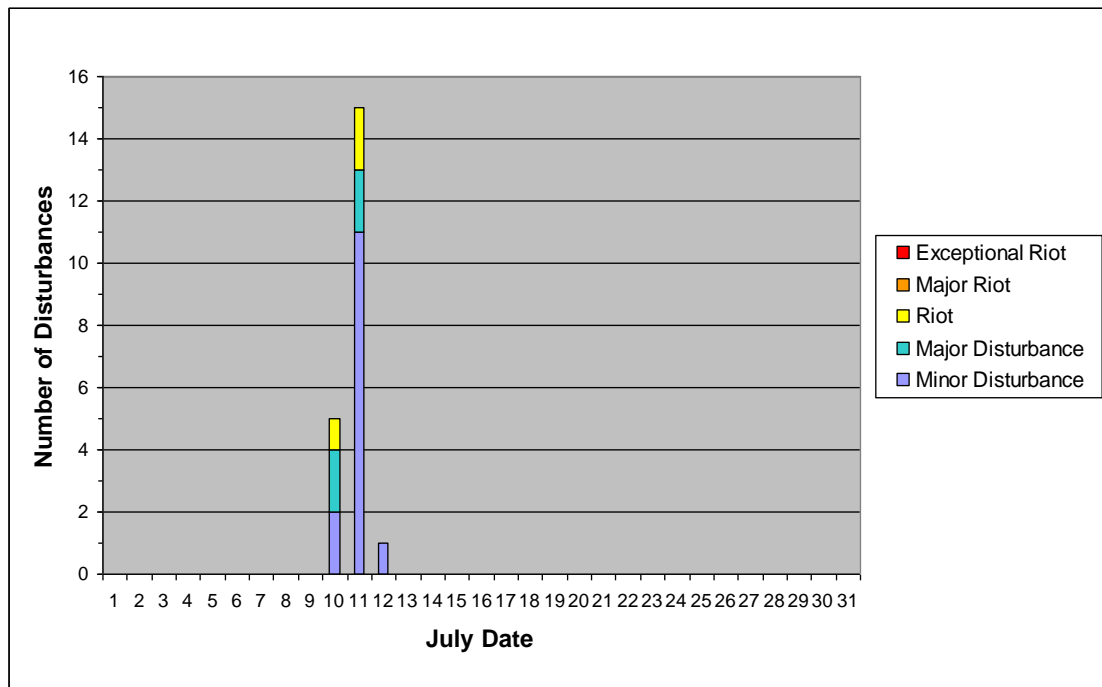
Figure 14: Histogram of frequency and severity of disorders for West Midlands (Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Coventry) July 1981

In each case the major disorders are followed by a rapid growth in more minor disturbances. The main temporal differences lie in the location of the peaks of disturbance frequency, Manchester on Wednesday 8th July, Merseyside and London on Friday 10th July and the West Midlands on Saturday 11th July. These features imply that, although each location had a similarity in the rate of diffusion of disturbances in its environs, a local relationship was also operating, possibly driven by the timing and scale of the initiating disturbances. The similarity in the temporal form of each city-based mini-wave of disturbances in Figures 11-14 is also mirrored when they are compared to the profile of the overall countrywide wave of disturbances presented in Figure 8. This relationship is explored in Figure 15, which compares the Merseyside, Manchester, London and West Midlands mini-waves with the overall distribution of July incidents.
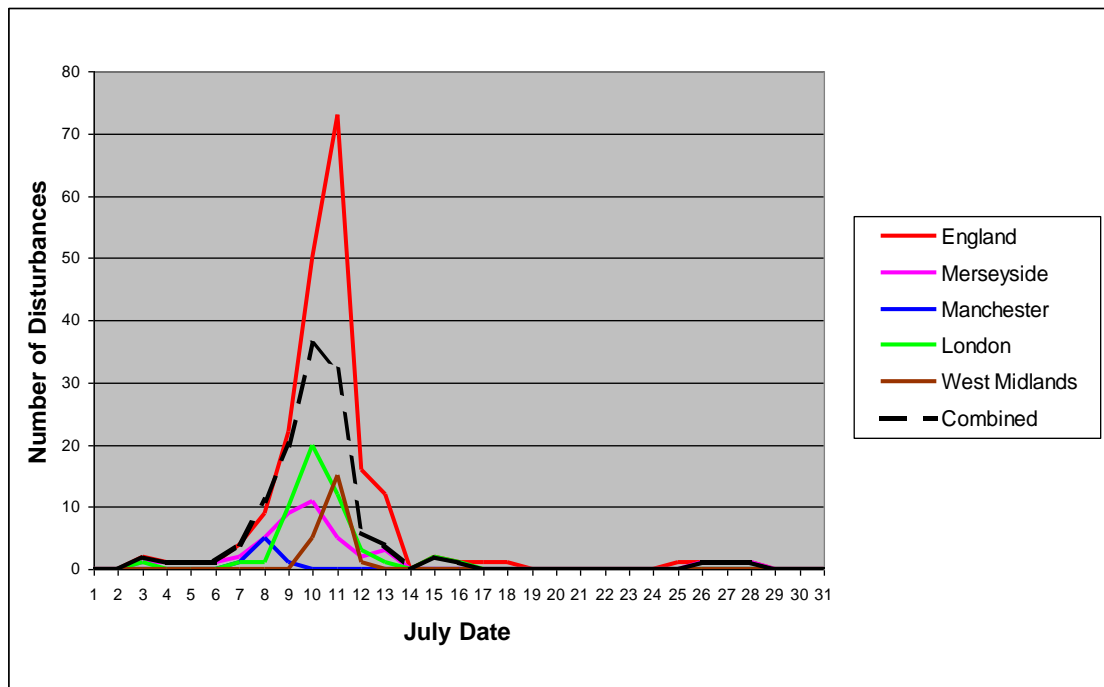
Figure 15: Comparison of frequency of disturbances in England, Merseyside, Manchester, London and the West Midlands in July 1981

Each city-based mini-wave of disturbances has a distinct similarity to the form of the overall wave of disorder in England, with only slight differences in phase. The fact that the overall wave is partly composed of these smaller city based waves is shown in Figure 15 by the 'combined' curve (shown dotted), which is the sum of the frequency curves for the four locales. This curve, which closely models the overall frequency distribution for England in general and more specifically for the period 3rd – 9th July, suggests that disturbances were confined to these city locales over the 'opening' and 'growth' phases as postulated in Section 4.4.2. After this point, the curves diverge to some extent suggesting a greater geographical spread of disturbance over the 'peak' and 'decline' phases (10th –13th July). This is borne out by the more spatially fragmented nature of incidents over this period, in particular the diffusion of disorder to more isolated towns.

The relationship between the city based mini-waves of disturbance and the complete data for England brings to mind two mathematical phenomena that may illuminate aspects of this conjunction. The decomposition of periodic functions (in this case the wave of disturbances for England) into the sum of more simple oscillating functions (the city based mini-waves) is a method undertaken in Fourier analysis. In this process the particular forms of the constituent functions (their magnitude, phase and frequency) are superposed to generate a wave of differing form, scale and wavelength. Applying the analogy of Fourier analysis suggests that an investigation of the characteristics of the overall function and its constituent wavelets is relevant. These features are estimated and compared in Table 10[309]:

Location of disturbance wave	Magnitude (peak number of disturbances) [incidents]	Wavelength[310] (distribution of disturbance wave) [days]	Phase Shift (from peak of overall curve) [± days]
Merseyside	11	8	-1
Manchester	5	3	-3
London	20	6	-1
West Midlands	15	3	0
Combined	36	8	-1
England	73	8	0

Table 10: Features of mini and macro waves of disturbances

These negative phase shifts confirm the previous observations that the peaks of the

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[309] Disturbance waves were considered to start and end with at least one incident in evidence. In addition an unchanging number of disturbances was considered to be a 'background' effect representing stasis and was thus ignored.

[310] This is not strictly a 'wavelength' as such. For a periodic function it would represent a half wave. However, it remains a useful measure of the longevity of a particular cycle of disturbance.

Liverpool, London and Manchester disturbance waves fell before the overall zenith on Saturday 11th July. The data also demonstrates the longevity of the Merseyside and London series. An analysis such as this, whilst producing useful quantitative descriptions of sub-sets of disturbance in relation to the overall set, leads towards a qualitative description of patterns of disturbance in July 1981, as fractals.

A fractal is 'rough or fragmented geometric shape that can be split into parts, each of which is (at least approximately) a reduced-size copy of the whole'[311]. The property of self-similarity at varying levels of scale, an important attribute of the fractal, can be observed in the relationship between the mini-waves of disturbance situated in cities and the overall wave of incidents countrywide. Each mini-wave displays features in its form (initiation, growth, peak and death) that mirror the overall wave albeit at a greater level of magnification[312]. This suggests that effect of contagion in generating waves of disturbances in the landscape of the city and its environs are either replicated in some manner at the national level or at least simulated by the superposition of the constituent mini-waves. These two possibilities, one pointing to city-based *local contagion* as a driver, the other to *nation-wide contagion*, may have been in operation simultaneously.

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[311] B. B. Mandelbrot, *The Fractal Geometry of Nature.* (New York: W.H. Freeman, 1982).

[312] Potentially a third level of fractal scale may exist between the local wave of disturbances and the temporal form of individual serious disturbances. Examination of Table 8, which describes the severity (and to a certain extent the numbers of participants) in the Toxteth disturbances of July 3rd – 7th, shows similar growth, peak and decline characteristics as in the distribution over time of the collected disturbances in Merseyside given in Figure 11.

4.4.4 Crowd Ethnicity and Disturbance Severity

As discussed in Section 4.2, Keith proposed in his analysis of the July 1981 disturbances in London that incident severity was linked to the particular ethnicity of the participants. The data set for the whole of England presented in Appendix 10.4 contained 52 daily incidents where the ethnicity of the crowd was alluded to in the primary sources. This was considered to be a large enough sample to allow statistical analysis[313]. The entries in the primary sources ranged from specific designations such as 'Asian' or 'Afro-Caribbean' to the vague description of 'mainly White' or 'Black'. In the absence of clear delineation in many of the examples and for the sake of simplicity it was decided to break depictions of the crowd ethnicity into three groups, White (W), Non-White (NW) and Mixed (M)[314]. In the few cases where 'mainly or mostly' had been used as a descriptor, the crowd was designated as being of that group, so for example 'mainly Black' was taken as a 'Non-White' crowd.

Keith's crowd ethnicity-disturbance severity hypothesis was expanded and tested for the whole of England in July 1981 by linking the three crowd designations to the DSQ rating. The results of this filtering exercise are tabulated in Appendix 10.7. The arithmetic mean of the DSQ ratings for each crowd ethnicity designation (White,

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[313] These 52 daily disturbances made up approximately 26% of the total number of recorded daily incidents.

[314] The definition of 'Mixed' refers to a crowd where the participants of different ethnic backgrounds were actively collaborating at best and tacitly supporting each other at worst. The small minority of disturbances where significant racial violence between groups was noted in the primary sources as central to the incident were assumed not to constitute the situation of a 'Mixed' crowd and were either excluded from this particular study (e.g. Reading 10-07-81) or designated as 'White' or 'Non-White' (e.g. Southall 03-07-81) accordingly.

Non-White and Mixed) were calculated, as well as a further calculation combining Mixed and Non-White crowds, that is, crowds that contained some or all Non-White participants. The results of this analysis are given in Table 11 and compared to the mean DSQ ratings for all 52 of the incidents that constituted the crowd ethnicity subset as well as the overall 200 daily disturbances that comprised the overall set.

Examination of Table 11 shows that, for the given sample of daily disturbances, the difference in incident severity between the 'White' crowd (2.00) and the 'Non-White' crowd (1.99) is small, with the 'Mixed' crowd (2.71) being significantly higher than either.

Crowd Ethnicity Designation	Frequency of Disturbances	Mean of DSQ Ratings	Disturbance Severity Designation
White	12	2.00	Major Disturbance
Non-White	13	1.99	Major Disturbance
Mixed	27	2.71	Riot
Non-White & Mixed	40	2.48	Riot
Crowd Ethnicity Subset	52	2.37	Riot
Overall Set	200	1.65	Major Disturbance

Table 11: Summary of the analysis of the relationship between crowd ethnicity and disturbance severity

However, when the 'Mixed' and 'Non-White' crowds are combined, to represent the dichotomy between the exclusively 'White' crowd and the participation of 'Non-Whites' in disturbances, there is a marked difference in event severity. The involvement of Non-Whites in a 'crowd' appears to be linked to more serious public disorders. This is in keeping with Keith's work, which although more detailed,

involved a smaller sample of disturbances specifically from London in July 1981[315].

A comparison of the mean DSQ ratings between the subset of disturbances with crowd ethnicity designations (2.37) and the overall set of events (1.65) also shows a significant divergence. This suggests that the incidents that had references in the primary sources concerning crowd ethnicity tended to fall into the more serious categories of 'riot'. This is unsurprising, as these more serious events generally had more numerous citations in the media and thus more chance of having the 'rioting' crowds ethnically defined[316].

Another aspect of Keith's study of the representation of the July 1981 disturbances in London involves a criticism of the concept of the 'multi-racial crowd'. He argues that 'The notion that in 1981 Black and White regularly fought a united battle on the

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[315] Keith carried out a regression analysis on the ethnic breakdown of arrests for a sample of 11 locations of disturbance in London in July 1981. He investigated the relationship between the ethnic breakdown of overall arrest figures and riot severity as well as more specifically the distribution of charges concerning 'violence against the person' by ethnicity. Keith, *Race, Riots and Policing: Lore and Disorder in a Multi-Racist Society*, pp.109-115.

[316] It should be noted that many newspaper articles made a point of citing the multi-racial nature of the rioters in the July 1981 disturbances in a transparent (and crude) attempt to scotch the idea that the cause of the disorder was racism and turn instead towards the mere question of criminality. Conversely, the rioting 'White crowd' is less often defined, either because it is taken as read or because without the existence of the 'Black other' in the crowd the question of 'racial composition' is deemed irrelevant. These effects may have skewed the results presented here towards a greater prevalence of 'Mixed crowds'. Massive exaggerations of the presence of 'Non-Whites' in the populations of British cities and towns have also been noted in studies examining the perceptions of native residents. M. Lewis, *Asylum: Understanding Public Attitudes.* (London: Institute for Public Policy Research, 2005).

streets…becomes virtually untenable in the light of the analysis'[317]. Instead he suggests that the 'multi-racial crowd' could be crudely divided into two groups, the 'Black crowd', which is generally engaged with initiating and developing violent confrontations with police, and the 'White crowd' which is more focussed on peripheral looting often at a later time or date (in a disturbance spread over a few days). Keith continues this approach by proposing that a second division in the multi-racial crowd can be drawn between 'locals' (by implication members of the Black community in the vicinity of the disturbance) and 'travellers', those (by implication Whites) who make their way to the disturbance primarily for the potentiality of acquiring commodities by looting[318].

These positions can be tested to some degree by considering the change in description of the ethnicity of the crowd within the primary sources as a significant disturbance develops over a few days. Table 12 cites eleven serious disturbances over the first two weeks of July 1981. For an event to be included in this table there were three criteria required for selection:

- Some evidence concerning the ethnicity of the crowd in the primary sources
- A longevity of two or more days
- A DSQ rating of greater than 2.0 (i.e. the event achieved the severity status of 'riot' or greater) at some point in its duration.

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[317] Keith, *Race, Riots and Policing: Lore and Disorder in a Multi-Racist Society*, p.116.

[318] Ibid. p.117.

Disturbance Location: District (City)	July 1981: Day/Date										
	Fri 3rd	Sat 4th	Sun 5th	Mon 6th	Tue 7th	Wed 8th	Thu 9th	Fri 10th	Sat 11th	Sun 12th	Mon 13th
Toxteth (Liverpool)	NW [1.8]	M [4.0]	M [4.3]	W [2.8]							
Moss Side (Manchester)					NW [2.3]	M [4.2]	M [2.0]				
Dalston (London)							M [1.0]	NW [3.0]			
Hyson Green (Nottingham)								M [3.2]	M [3.0]		
Brixton (London)								M [3.5]	NW [2.0]	M [2.0]	
Handsworth (Birmingham)								M [3.0]	? [2.5]	? [1.0]	
City Centre (Luton)								M [2.7]	M [2.7]		
Chapeltown & Harehills (Leeds)									? [2.8]	M [3.5]	
City Centre (High Wycombe)									M [3.0]	M [2.8]	
Highfields (Leicester)									? [2.0]	M [3.2]	? [2.0]
Normanton & Pear Tree (Derby)									W [2.3]	NW [1.5]	? [3.3]

Table 12: Relationship between changing crowd ethnicity and development of incident severity for eleven selected locales in July 1981[319]

In two out of the 11 selected locations (Toxteth and Moss Side) a 'Non-White' crowd appears to be clearly involved in the initiation of the disturbance sequence. The crowd is then defined over the succeeding days as being 'Mixed' and in the case of Toxteth appears to develop into a mainly 'White' contingent. The only clear exceptions to this are the series of disturbances in the adjacent Normanton and Pear Tree districts of Derby where at the initiation a 'White' crowd is cited as being involved and on the

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[319] Disturbance Severity Quotients for each daily disturbance are given in parentheses. A question mark signifies a lack of description of the crowd ethnicity in the primary sources.

succeeding day a 'Non-White crowd'.

Although Table 12 provides some evidence to support Keith's proposition that the 'Black crowd', with its supposed fixation with violent confrontation with the police, was a disturbance initiator in some instances, it is clear that at the peak of the disorders in all the locations (excepting Dalston) the crowd is described as 'Mixed'. Keith's argument that the crowd did not share a unified type of activity (i.e. the Black contingent were 'local' and more committed to violent confrontation with the police, whereas the 'White' groups were generally 'travellers' and more interested in looting) may still hold as the bland description of group of 'rioters' as ethnically 'Mixed' does not specify the content of their activity as such. However, it is clear from some of the more ferocious encounters (in particular in Toxteth[320]) that a predominantly 'White' crowd developed over the duration of the disturbances and was involved directly in extremely serious violence against the police. Very few of the primary sources cite that there was a division between the activities of the 'Black' and 'White' contingents of the 'Mixed' crowd, which at best provides no useful evidence for Keith's assertions and at worst may contradict them.

For example, in some disturbances the primary sources state that there was clear cooperation between ethnic groups *within the crowd*[321]. In addition, a detailed study

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[320] Hernon notes that at the peak of the Toxteth riots on Sunday 5th July 1981 'By now **most of the rioters appeared to be white**. Racial tensions within the community's youth were forgotten. The police were the common enemy' (this author's emphasis in bold) in Hernon, *Riot!: Civil Insurrection from Peterloo to the Present Day*, p.204.

[321] For example the *High Wycombe Observer* (17th July 1981) notes that on the evening of Sunday 12th July 1981 a crowd of 200 'Skinheads, Asians and West Indians' attacked 30 police officers in the town.

by Cooper of the Toxteth and wider Merseyside disturbances of July 1981 compared the ethnic breakdown of arrests in the disorders to the ethnic mix of the locations and concluded that 'It was a Toxteth riot, and **not** a "Black" Toxteth one'[322]. Keith may have retorted that such an analysis is too crude to ascertain potential divisions in motive and action between ethnic groups, but clearly the evidence in the primary sources points towards some modes of collaborative behaviour (whether tacit or active) in the July 1981 disturbances. Assuming that there were differences in behaviour between the various ethnic groupings, the real difficulty still lies in judging the actual objectives and content of these activities within 'rioting' crowds using the limited lens of a quantitative analysis.

Another possibility, which Keith appears to fail to recognise, is that the disturbance itself as an extraordinary event may provide the scenario for collaboration between ethnic groups that were hitherto divorced from common action. Although perhaps only fleeting, these moments of cooperation may explain why both the numbers of participants, their ethnic mix and the severity of an incident appear to increase after the initial trigger of the disturbance, which may have been originally instigated by a mono-ethnic 'Non-White' crowd as Keith suggests.

The cooperative nature of this event is corroborated by the *Reading Evening Post* (13-07-1981). Similarly, in Luton on Saturday 11th July 1981 the crowd was clearly designated as a collaborative group of 'Blacks, Whites and Asians' by the *Luton News* (16th July 1981). Finally after a disturbance in Rugby, on Saturday 11th July 1981, 'a delegation of Punks, Skinheads and Blacks' visited the offices of the local newspaper, the *Rugby Advertiser*, to protest about an article (from the *Rugby Advertiser* 10th July 1981), which suggested that racial tension between the youth was causing the riots' (*Rugby Advertiser* 17th July 1981).

[322] Cooper, *Competing Explanations of the Merseyside Riots of 1981*, p.65-66.

4.5   Discussion

In overview, this analysis of the July 1981 disturbances in England using hitherto untapped primary sources has provided a wealth of new data concerning the number, severity and spatial and temporal extent of these extraordinary events. Through the process of deconstruction of the data into discrete daily incidents, mapping, quantitative analysis and ethnographic study of the participating crowds, significant characteristics of the disturbances at various scales have been revealed. This has allowed some existing theories to be tested and new ideas to be proposed concerning the initiation, spread and decline of the July incidents.

Examination of the overall daily disturbance data set for July 1981 demonstrated that the majority of the incidents were of minimal severity. In addition, the overall expansion of the 'riot lists' generated in the original secondary sources by this phase of research was, in general, limited to the addition of numerous lesser incidents. This was no great revelation in that the primary sources studied allowed greater local definition. New incidents would thus tend to be of minor severity or they would have been reported in greater numbers and detail in the national media and consequently would have more likely to feature in the secondary sources. Despite the lesser importance of these newly reported disturbances their very existence shows that the countrywide impact of the more serious incidents was significantly greater than previously imagined. An additional benefit provided by the comprehensive investigation into the primary sources was the significant enhancement of the historical information pertinent to the disorders that were already recorded in the secondary sources.

The cartographical and quantitative analyses revealed similarities in the character of disturbances at three levels of magnification, the particular, the local and the global. Using disturbance severity analysis, specific serious incidents demonstrated a similar pattern over a period of a few days. Beginning on the first day with an initial 'trigger' event, they involved relatively few participants with fairly low levels of violence and property damage. During the 'growth' phase on the second day they typically escalated to a major conflagration involving larger numbers of rioters, increased use of weapons such as the petrol bomb, greater police injuries and significant property damage. Finally the 'death' phase was reached and the disturbance generally petered out to a minor incident.

At the local level of a city or conurbation a major disorder was often followed by a series of more minor and disparate disturbances over subsequent days. The form of these mini-waves was also characterised by initiation, growth, peak and decline phases. The distribution of these mini-waves in the wake of more serious singular disturbance series located in inner city locales provided evidence of local contagion and opened up the requirement for more research into the effects of regional media, the nature and effect of policing tactics and the actuality and mechanisms of physical communication between participants prior to and during the disorders[323].

From a global viewpoint, analysis of all the disturbances countrywide showed a similar pattern of initiation, growth, peak and decline to the local waves, though it

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[323] These latter effects are investigated in the case studies of the 'Bristol Riots' of April 1980 in Chapters 5.0, 6.0 and 7.0.

was prescient to note that the city-based mini-waves in general preceded the peak of the overall curve. This suggested that the national distribution was initially a superposition of these mini-waves and later a cumulative effect of this and another *mode of contagion* linked to a national effect.

A *fractal* analogy was drawn to describe the self-similarity of disturbances at the three levels of magnification, the serious particular disturbance, the resulting city based mini-wave of incidents and the overall national characteristic. This demonstrated that in order to understand phenomena such as contagion from a national perspective the best approach was to begin with studies of the association between particular serious disturbances and resulting local mini-waves of incidents. Examining this spatial heterogeneity offered better appreciation of the construction of the apparently homogenous wave of national disturbances[324].

An examination of what failed to happen in the July 1981 disorders was also undertaken. Regions of the country that had an absence of significant incidents were studied and tentative explanations based upon the need for specific conjunctions of structural factors to induce disorder or the restraining effects of local cultural factors were offered. Associated questions concerning the ethnic make-up of cities and districts where disturbances *did occur* were also considered. A broad ethnographic study of the participants in major disturbances was undertaken, despite the limitations in detail in the primary sources. This suggested that although non-White and Mixed crowds were in general the initiators of major incidents, significant participation by Whites occurred in some of the most violent clashes with the police. This provided

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[324] These effects are studied in relation to the 'Bristol riots' in Chapter 7.0 Sections 7.2.3 and 7.2.4.

counter-evidence to claims, based on a study confined to London, that the July 1981

disorders were characterised by 'Black violence' and 'White looting'.

5.0 Bristol 1980: St. Paul's, Southmead, Knowle West

I honour you with a glimpse into my life
And betray you with the subject of my need

I strip you of the disadvantages we share
And leave clothed the appearance of your privileged past

I listen to the constructed syllables of sound
And hear my own inadequate reply

I face in conflict the difference of our lives
And in conflict recognise defeat

I will in dignity defend my place
And cast the stone that ripples, outward and not in [325]

5.1   Introduction

The aim of the chapter as a whole is to present a solid quantitative and qualitative base for the subsequent micro-histories of the disturbances in Bristol in April 1980. This chapter is thus essentially dedicated to a distillation of statistical data and oral histories concerning the St. Paul's and Southmead districts, which experienced the most serious disorders. Testimonies from residents of the third area under study, Knowle West that underwent a near 'riot' in April 1980, are analysed to enhance the studies of youth-subculture and policing.

The quantitative data presented in this chapter is used to investigate the specific social and economic conditions within the two principal areas of study. Essentially, similarities and differences between these areas and the rest of the city provide

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[325] A poem entitled 'The Committee' by Kathleen Horseman in Southmead Writers' Workshop, *A Southmead Festival of Word : Writings from the 1986 Southmead Festival and the Southmead Writers' Workshop.* (Bristol: Bristol Broadsides, 1986).

information concerning the propensity for these locales to experience collective disorder and the form and content of particular disturbances. As was discussed in the previous chapter, if a series of disturbances were truly independent, unconscious and random events, then we might expect to see no correlation in socio-economic conditions between 'riotous' areas. However, it would be naïve to assume that a similarity in quantitative socio-economic data between areas directly correlates with 'riot' propensity. Other more subjective evidence concerning the effect of these conditions on the populace is required to further substantiate this 'propensity'. This additional evidence is delivered by the oral histories of 'rioters' which generate richer descriptions of life within the areas under study and expose the relationships between the subjects and police.

However, the objective in this chapter is not merely to examine the empirical data in an attempt to characterise the locales. Instead, the section is prefaced with a critique of the available primary sources providing demographic information about the two areas from a post-riot perspective. An examination of the rationales of the various contending political factions that produced the data assists in understanding the context for some confusions and distortions in the evidence presented. It also provides some insights into the different sub-texts in the primary sources and the focus on particular areas of the city and the lack of attention to others.

In the second part of this chapter, the relevant data for the principal subject areas is studied and various comparisons are made using data relating to structural aspects such as housing, unemployment and education. The locales are also measured against the background data for the whole city of Bristol and its environs. These comparisons

whilst not providing explanations as such, do offer a degree of social mapping, that is, top-level views of the nature of the locales in relation to the whole city. Whilst similarities between the subject areas may provide grist to the mill of structural explanations for 'riot', what perhaps is of more interest are the geographic and demographic differences between them.

The third part of this chapter is based upon the testimony of the oral history respondents who were interviewed by the author as part of the research activity. The aim of this section is to provide richer descriptions of the subject areas to enhance the demographic and background data provided by reports and surveys. The oral histories from 'insiders' both corroborate and challenge this information, which was on the whole generated by 'outsiders' to the communities under study.

5.2   Review of the Primary Sources

The majority of the information analysed here is derived from local government reports commissioned by either Bristol City Council or Avon County Council[326] the two governing bodies operating ostensibly in tandem in the region in the 1980s. These reports had various *raisons d'etre* and consequent geographic and social foci determined either by the prevailing political relationship between local and central government or by the exigencies created after urban disorders in the city. In addition, in the aftermath of the St. Paul's disturbance of 1980 a subsidiary parliamentary body

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[326] Avon was formed from the City and County of Bristol and parts of Gloucestershire and Somerset by the Local Government Act 1972, and came into being on April 1, 1974. It was dissolved into four unitary authorities including the City and Council of Bristol as a result of the Local Government Act 1992 and the Avon (Structural Change) Order 1995 on April 1, 1996.

concerned with 'race relations and immigration', part of the overall Home Affairs Sub-Committee, tasked local government in Bristol to provide data for their inquiry concerning that particular locale[327].

General reports covering Bristol and its environs such as *'Social Stress in Avon 1981'*[328] and *'Poverty in Bristol'*[329] were commissioned from within local government but angled at securing central government funds for inner city areas or 'deprived' districts[330]. More specific studies aimed at particular districts of the city, such as the *'Southmead Report'*[331] were the product of local government working parties and were concerned with providing evidence for domestic allocation of resources. Two unofficial reports were also produced in the aftermath of the St. Paul's disorder both sanctioned by trade unions and both as a response to the failure of central government to launch a full public enquiry into the incident. These were the Bristol Teachers

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[327] *Minutes of evidence taken before the Home-affairs Sub-committee on Race Relations and Immigration (22nd May 1980).* (Bristol Record Office 42974/1, 1980), Vol. 1 Part A.

[328] Avon County Council, *Social Stress in Avon, 1981: A Preliminary Analysis*.

[329] Bristol City Council. Planning Department, *Poverty in Bristol: Final Report*. (Bristol City Council, 1985).

[330] For example, the Bristol City Council report *'Poverty in Bristol'* refers directly to the 1977 White Paper *'Policy for the Inner cities'* which gave 'preferential treatment to areas with certain 'inner city' problems' and complains that 'Bristol has on a number of occasions applied for designated status but without success'. Ibid. p.4.

[331] Bristol City Council. Planning Department, *Southmead Report: Report of the Southmead Working Group.* (Bristol City Council, 1983).

Association report *'After the Fire'*[332] and *'Slumbering Volcano?'*[333], a document summarising the findings of a public enquiry facilitated by the Bristol TUC between November 1980 and February 1981.

5.2.1 Spatial definition of the 'St. Paul's neighbourhood'

The April 1980 disturbance and the national publicity it generated clearly highlighted 'St. Paul's' as a location of concern for local government, the Trade Unions and the wider left. However, the question of what was being spatially referred to was problematic and affected the way statistical and cartographical data was collected and presented by local government. 'St. Paul's neighbourhood', is locally defined as a relatively small cluster of streets bounded by Newfoundland Road (M32), Ashley Road and Stokes Croft lying within a much larger electoral ward with the same name prior to 1982[334] (see Figure 16). The confusion or conflation of these two distinct geographic areas, the *neighbourhood* and the *ward* (sharing the same name), particularly after 1980 is revealing. The wider ward of St. Paul also included the districts of Ashley Down, Baptist Mills, Montpelier, St Andrews and St Werburghs, but despite its renaming to *Ashley* in April 1982, the whole area remained colloquially labelled as St. Paul's in Bristol.

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[332] Equal Opportunities Sub-Committee, Bristol Teachers Association (NUT) commissioned by the Avon Division of the NUT, *After the Fire: A Report on Education in St. Paul's Bristol and Multi-Ethnic Education in Avon.* (1980).

[333] D. Bateman and R. Press, *Slumbering Volcano? - Report of an Enquiry into the Origins of the Eruption in St. Paul's Bristol on 2nd April 198.* (Bristol T.U.C., 1980).

[334] This ward appears in the 1971 and 1981 censuses as 'St. Paul' Avon County Planning Department, *Avon 1981 Census Populations (Preliminary Counts) Including 1971 Comparison.* (Bristol: Avon County Planning Department, 1981).
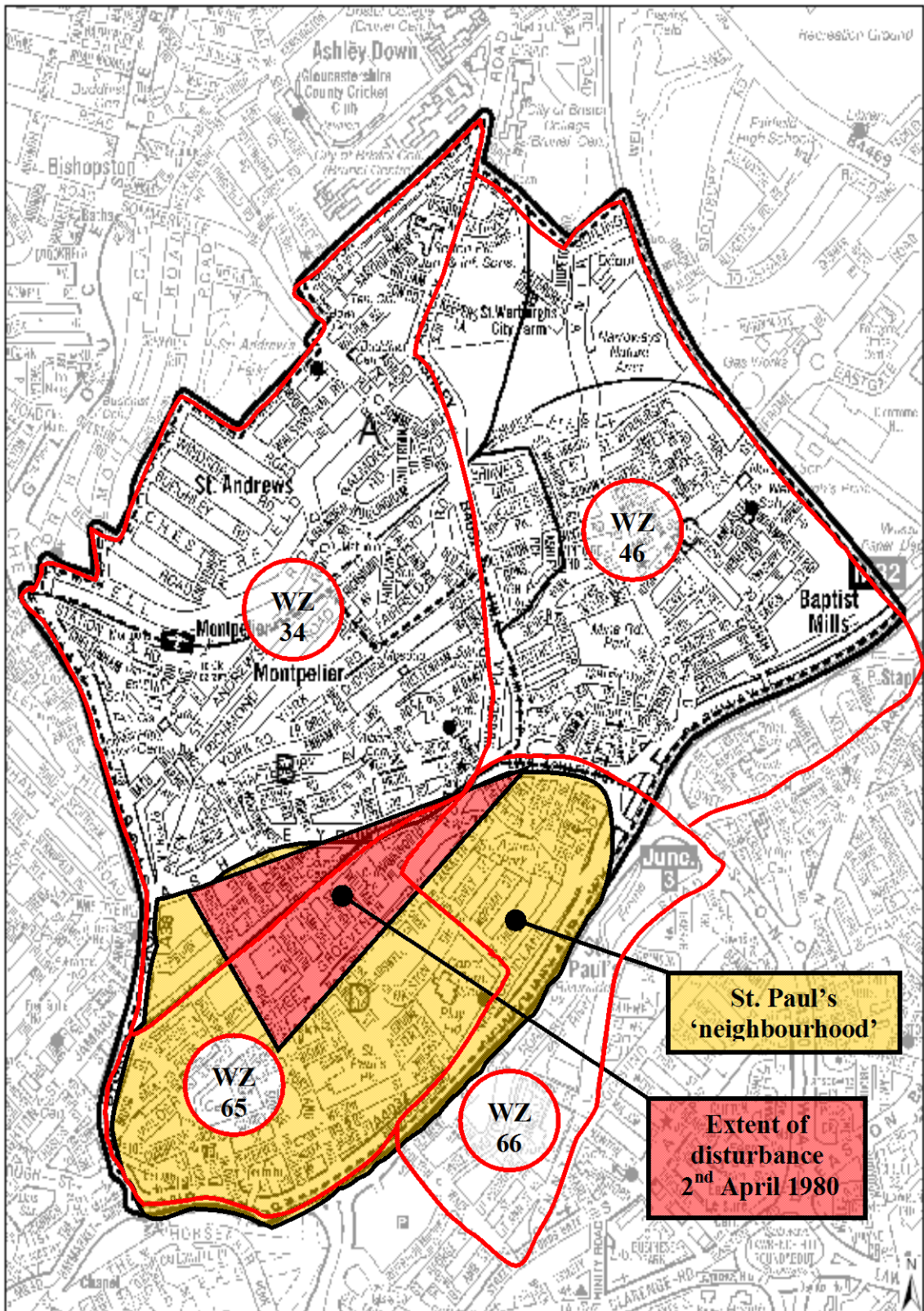
Figure 16: Ashley ward (originally St. Paul) showing 'St. Paul's neighbourhood', extent of disturbance 2nd April 1980 and workplace zones

After 1982 this dubious conflation appears to be a conscious strategy in the local

government reports. 'St. Paul's neighbourhood' is vastly inflated in importance in its representation in maps of the city in these documents. Not only is it magnified to the size of other much larger districts of the city such as Easton or Clifton, but it also claims the largest chapter in one of the dossiers on poverty[335]. The authors of this document erroneously stated that it included the three other districts of Montpelier, St. Werburgh's and St. Agnes, thereby inflating its population several times to 10,000.

Similar demographic and geographic confusions are to be found in the unofficial post-riot reports by the National Union of Teachers (NUT) and the Bristol TUC. The authors of the former, whilst stating 'it is difficult to define the area precisely', go on to delineate the St. Paul's neighbourhood claiming a similarly exaggerated population[336]. In contrast in the TUC report the authors recognise the potential confusions by stating:

> 'following the events of April 2nd 1980, the media reports and comments and the evidence to the House of Commons Select Committee repeatedly referred to the St. Paul's area of Bristol without offering a guide to the area involved'.

However, they also proceeded to delineate a much larger cartographic area including the St. Paul's neighbourhood, St Werburgh's, Montpelier, Easton and Upper Easton

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[335] The authors clearly use the term 'St. Paul's area' to expand its boundaries in Bristol City Council. Planning Department, *Poverty in Bristol: Final Report*, pp.12-13.

[336] Equal Opportunities Sub-Committee, Bristol Teachers Association (NUT) commissioned by the Avon Division of the NUT, *After the Fire: A Report on Education in St. Paul's Bristol and Multi-Ethnic Education in Avon*, p.6.

on the basis that 'the conditions and problems of Easton are no different'[337].

These virtual cartographical and statistical expansions of the St. Paul's neighbourhood in official and unofficial reports, particularly after the 1980 disturbance, had a connection with municipally derived strategies for wider resource generation and allocation for the city. The political actors consciously attempted to exploit the effects of the massive media coverage of the April 1980 disturbance and the sudden interest of central government in Bristol after years of indifference. Interestingly the concentration on and symbolic use of St. Paul's mirrors a series of post-riot effects in the local and national media as well as in the popular psyche of Bristolians. St. Paul's, in actuality a relatively small neighbourhood, came to occupy an expanded geographic and mythic space far beyond its realities in the 1980s[338].

5.2.2 Spatial definition of 'Southmead estate'

Although it appears there was no obvious reaction in terms of information gathering by either central or local government in the immediate aftermath of the Southmead disturbances of April 1980, it was considered useful to apply the same spatial examination to contemporary reports covering this locale. Southmead (see Figure 17) features in both of the citywide and countywide local government reports on 'poverty' and 'social stress' in the early 1980s, as well as being the subject of a specific report

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[337] Bateman and Press, *Slumbering Volcano? - Report of an Enquiry into the Origins of the Eruption in St. Paul's Bristol on 2nd April 1980*, p.4.

[338] Dresser notes the dubious conflation of the ward and the neighbourhood by stating 'for White residents outside the inner city, 'St Paul's' was a euphemism for a supposedly 'Black' area of 'vice and shame'. Madge Dresser and Peter Fleming, *Bristol: Ethnic Minorities and the City, 1000-2001* (Chichester: Phillimore, 2007), p.159.

in 1983. Southmead is cartographically defined differently in each survey , appearing as a single entity based on the 1981 ward boundary , subdivided into four 'workplace zones' and arbitrarily as 'Southmead Estate' with no clear explanation of how this was determined . The basis for the delineation of 'Southmead' as a statistical unit of study is important, as it lies adjacent to areas of significantly greater affluence such as Westbury-on-Trym and Henleaze.

The merging of such areas can have a serious impact on the statistical results of any survey and more crucially act as a politically motivated mechanism for hiding relative deprivation[339]. However, with the municipal Labour Party in power in both Avon and Bristol Councils by 1981 and in a political climate marked by a raging battle between local and central government over their fiscal relationship, it suited municipal surveys to delineate areas of deprivation. 'Southmead' thus appears boldly on the 'poverty map'[340] of 1981 as one of the 20% of Bristol areas to 'suffer a multiplicity of problems' despite the fact that it lay outside the boundary of the politically pertinent 'inner city' areas of Bristol.

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[339] One oral history respondent made reference to this particular issue within the context of political 'gerrymandering' of ward boundaries in North Bristol in the 1970s.

[340] Bristol City Council. Planning Department, *Poverty in Bristol: Final Report*, Fig.5.
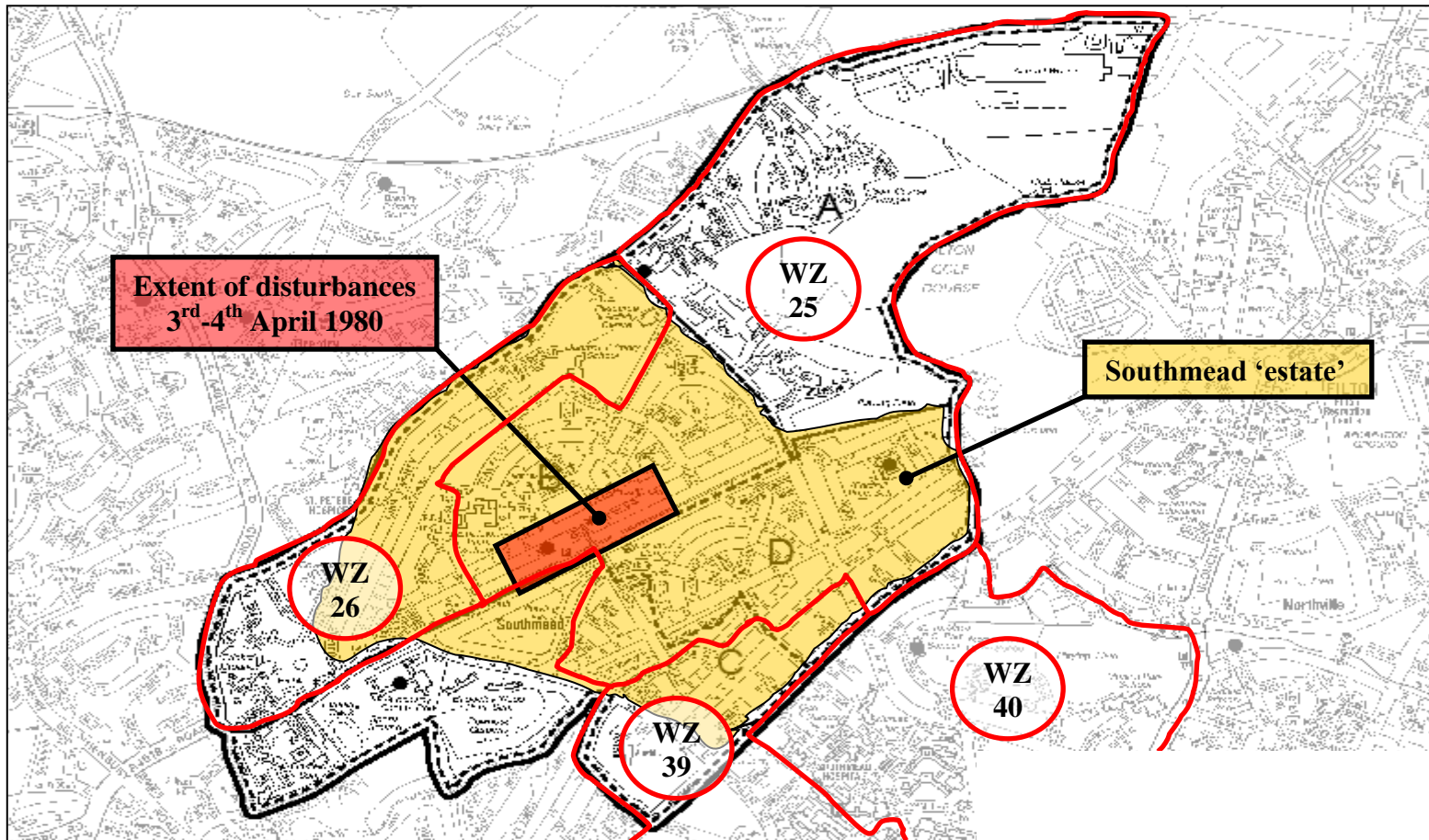
Figure 17: Southmead ward showing the 'Southmead estate', extent of disturbances 3rd-4th April 1980 and workplace zones

Labels within figure:
- Extent of disturbances 3rd-4th April 1980
- WZ 25
- Southmead 'estate'
- WZ 26
- WZ 40
- WZ 39

5.2.3 Comparison of coverage in local government reports

A more illuminating facet of the *'Poverty in Bristol'* document is the reportage accorded to Southmead in comparison to St. Paul's. Of the six areas dealt with in the text[341], Southmead is covered in the least detail whilst St. Paul's comes out on top with more than three times as much information provided to the reader. The content is also revealing, with the St. Paul's section counter posing problems of racial discrimination, unemployment and lack of community facilities with positive efforts by 'City and County Councils, other public agencies, local community, interest groups and many individuals' in trying to overcome them, all backed up with pictures of the diversity of housing styles in the area and 'the Georgian elegance of Portland Square'[342].

In contrast the sparse section on Southmead employs phrases such as 'bleak', 'poor design', 'a tough and unpopular image' and 'no strong tradition of local community leadership' fronted by a bland photograph of an empty expanse of green space captioned with the repeated 'bleak appearance'[343]. Although it is important to exercise caution in attempting to read sub-texts within such documents, tentative narratives can be drawn for each of the locales from the perspective of local government. St. Paul's as a dynamic local community combining with a pro-active municipal authority in a united struggle against adversity; Southmead as bleak, leaderless, trapped by a history of unpopularity and where the City Council 'hopes' rather than acts. The thread of this

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[341] The areas were, in order, St. Paul's, Totterdown, Knowle, Southmead, Hartcliffe/Withywood and Easton. Ibid. pp.12-18.

[342] Ibid. p.12.

[343] Ibid. p.16.

municipal narrative is continued in the Bristol City Council *'Southmead Report'* of 1983 which again returns to the question of improvement of the area stating:

> 'The lack of significant local authority assistance or guidance in community development over the years may well have contributed to many of the problems now faced. Necessary improvements have not been done, partly because of the "it's not worth it" argument borne of vandalism, but the real problem is likely to have stemmed from a lack of community involvement in the first instance. Over the years this attitude has resulted in the present situation where there is very little local community action or leadership'[344]

This blatant attempt to abrogate municipal responsibility by blaming the Southmead 'community' for its problems appears to be a recurrent theme in these reports, as is the reference to its 'favourable North Bristol location, adjoining some of the most sought after suburban residential areas in the City' however 'Southmead by design and reputation retains an air of isolation'. This statement explains to the residents of Southmead that, as they were not living *in the inner city* they should be content and if not then they have isolated themselves[345]. This strangely ahistorical position, which carries no reference to structural factors or class relations, effectively summarises the political standpoint of the document.

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[344] From the *'Foreword: A Summary Assessment'* of Bristol City Council. Planning Department, *Southmead Report: Report of the Southmead Working Group*.

[345] The report was clearly not written for the Southmead 'community' but this of course begs the question as to any involvement they might have had in its production.

To what degree these two contrasting narratives were formed by responses to the disorders of 1980 is debatable, though it certainly appears the City Council were reacting quite differently to each of the areas under study in this thesis. St. Paul's had clearly become politically contentious for local government in the aftermath of the disorder. Not only had the 'Bristol riot' exposed a series of issues concerning racism, inadequate provision of resources in housing, education and community facilities but the area itself had been artificially expanded in importance for various tactical and political reasons. This in turn affected the collection and dissemination of statistical and other forms of data. In contrast, the Southmead area, despite having simultaneous 'riots of its own' in 1980 was at best of lower priority and at worst ignored by local government. When scant attention was drawn to it, the 'community' was blamed for the estate's 'problems' furthering the isolation of the residents from municipal political processes

5.3   Analysis of primary sources: reports and inquiries

In the following section the available quantitative and qualitative data from the various reports previously reviewed will be presented and analysed for the St. Paul's and Southmead areas in the early 1980s. As has already been discussed, the variable definition of these locales will be addressed by stating, where possible, the parameters of the statistical data. The sources of this data are also stated for comparative purposes. In addition, where they are available, relative comparisons with the overall picture for the city of Bristol and the County of Avon are provided. The data is filtered into various groupings, derived from the categories defined in the sources.

5.3.1 Population

Table 13 provides information on the overall population and the various spatial definitions of the areas under investigation. The numbers in parentheses refer the designations of 'workplace zones' employed in the report *'Social Stress in Avon 1981'*[346]. The 'workplace zone' as a quantitative unit lies between the smaller census areas and the larger electoral Ward classification. This rationalisation does have an impact upon both the definition of areas and the resultant statistical data.

Locality	Pop.	Definition of Area	Source	Date
'St. Paul's'	~10,000	St. Paul's Neighbourhood	'After the Fire'	1980
	~10,000	St. Paul's, Montpelier, St. Werburgh's & St. Agnes	'Poverty in Bristol'	1981
	1,073	St. Agnes-Newfoundland Rd. (66)	'Social Stress in Avon'	1981
	1,008	City-Portland Sq.-Stokes Croft (65)		
	4,316	Montpelier-City Rd.-St. Andrews Pk. (34)		
	3,701	Mina Rd. Area (46)		
	10,098	Areas (34-46-65-66) combined		
'Southmead'	~11,000	Southmead Ward	'Poverty in Bristol'	1981
	7,755	Southmead-Wigton Cres.-Pen Park (25)	'Social Stress in Avon'	1981
	3,121	Southmead-Ambleside Ave-Greystoke (26)		
	4,783	Southmead-Southmead Rd. Area (39)		
	1,924	Southmead-Hospital Area (40)		
	17,583	Southmead Ward: Areas (25-26-39-40) combined		

Table 13: Population statistics for 'St. Paul's' and 'Southmead' in the 1980-81 period

For example the St. Paul's 'neighbourhood' defined in Figure 16 is located amongst three workplace zones (shaded in Table 13) comprising 'St. Agnes-Newfoundland

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[346] These areas were originally defined in 1971 in order to rationalise the Small Area Statistics (SAS) information from the census data of that year and are based upon analyses of *'journey to work'* and other unidentified *'physical and community characteristics'*. These classifications were retained for the collation of the 1981 census information upon which this later report is based. Avon County Council, *Social Stress in Avon, 1981: A Preliminary Analysis*, Section 3 c).

Road' (66), 'City-Portland Sq.-Stokes Croft' (65)[347] and 'Montpelier-City Road-St. Andrews Pk.' (34) with a total population of 6,397. Similarly the Southmead 'estate' area shown in Figure 17 is defined by two workplace zones (shaded in Table 13) namely 'Southmead-Wigton Cres.-Pen Park' (25) and 'Southmead-Ambleside Ave-Greystoke' (26) with a combined population of 10,876. The wide variation in the population dependent on spatial definition of the 'neighbourhoods' may create distortions in the statistical data.

Cursory examination of the combined population totals in Table 13 suggests that the spatial and statistical expansion of the 'St. Paul's neighbourhood' (noticeable in several of the reports) is achieved by the amalgamation of all four workplaces zones (34-46-65-66) into one entity. Whereas in Southmead, it appears that only two of the four workplace zones (25 and 26) have been combined. This spatial delineation conforms to the definition of 'Southmead Estate' in the later *'Southmead Report'*[348]. If these questionable definitions are assumed then both designated areas had similar populations of around 10-11,000 persons. However it is questionable that St. Paul's 'neighbourhood' could be quantitatively or qualitatively merged with the adjacent, though distinct districts of St. Andrew's Park, Montpelier or St. Werburgh's. Thus, despite the politically motivated conflation of the 'St. Paul's neighbourhood' with the wider ward and the expanded perception of the district amongst many Bristolians, it

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[347] This area is actually combined in the report with workplace zone (64) 'City-Old Market-Bond Street'. This other zone has been ignored in this analysis as it is not considered to lie in the St. Paul's 'neighbourhood' and only has a population of 183 according to the document. Ibid. Section 3 c) and Table 5.

[348] See the map definition in the final section of, Bristol City Council. Planning Department, *Southmead Report: Report of the Southmead Working Group*.

had a considerably smaller population than the 'Southmead estate' area.

5.3.2 Ethnicity

Table 14 examines the percentages of the workplace zone population who were born in New Commonwealth countries[349] (NC) or Pakistan (Pak.) and the fraction that lived in a household where the head was born in these designated countries.

Locality	% of Pop. Born in NC & Pak.	% of Pop. NC & Pak. Head of Households	Definition of Area	Source	Date
'St. Paul's'	26.9	48.8	St. Agnes-Newfoundland Rd. (66)	'Social Stress in Avon'	1981
	16.1	28.7	City-Portland Sq.-Stokes Croft (65)		
	19.5	34.6	Montpelier-City Rd-St. Andrews Pk. (34)		
	18.0	33.2	Mina Rd. Area (46)		
	19.4	**35.0**	Areas (34-46-65-66) combined		
'Southmead'	1.8	3.6	Southmead-Wigton Cres.-Pen Park (25)		
	1.7	2.4	Southmead-Ambleside Ave-Greystoke (26)		
	1.0	1.7	Southmead-Southmead Rd. Area (39)		
	1.8	1.5	Southmead-Hospital Area (40)		
	1.6	**2.6**	Southmead Ward: Areas (25-26-39-40) combined		
'Inner City Bristol'	**5.8**	**9.5**			
'Bristol'	**2.5**	**4.0**			
'County of Avon'	**1.7**	**2.4**			

Table 14: Percentage of 1981 'St. Paul's' and 'Southmead' population born in New Commonwealth countries (NC) or Pakistan (Pak.) and percentage of population where the head of household was born in a New Commonwealth county or Pakistan.

Despite popular perceptions that 'St. Paul's' was a majority 'Black' or 'immigrant' area, in 1981 only one fifth of the residents were actually immigrants and New Commonwealth or Pakistani immigrants headed about a third of households. The latter group would have, of course, also included mixed marriages and their offspring.

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[349] The New Commonwealth refers to former British colonies in the West Indies, Asia and Africa and was central to the debates about immigration in the 1960s and 70s. Effectively it is coding for 'Black' immigrants to the UK.

The highest concentration of these groups lay in the St. Agnes-Newfoundland Road (66) workplace zone, which included the symbolic 'front-line' of Grosvenor Road, the location of the Black and White café and a complex of local authority housing. Popular perception of 'St. Paul's' may have been mistaken with respect to the size of the immigrant population in the district but comparison of this data for 'inner city Bristol' suggests that these groups were concentrated in this area. In contrast, 'Southmead' is clearly a majority 'White' area, with figures below that of 'Bristol' as a whole. The greater part of the few 'non-White' households in the area were located in the 'Southmead estate' locations (25-26).

5.3.3 Socio-economic groupings

Several of the reports examined provide percentage breakdowns of households according to the socio-economic group of the household 'head'. The definitions of social class by occupation utilised in these documents are based on rationalisations of the 'Socio-economic Group' (SEG) classifications in the 1981 census[350]. Table 15 displays this data for 'St. Paul's' and 'Southmead' in 1981.

Comparisons between 'Southmead estate' (25-26) locality and the 'St. Paul's 'neighbourhood' (34, 65-66) show increased numbers of households headed by skilled workers in the former. This is probably an effect of the proximity of major

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[350] Explanation of this rationalisation of the SEG's is given in Bristol City Council. Planning Department, *Poverty in Bristol: Final Report*, App.4. The SEG categories were changed in the 2001 Census to National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC) after a report commissioned in 1994 by the ESRC Office For National Statistics, 'Continuity Issues: SC, SEG and NS-SEC,' http://www.ons.gov.uk/about-statistics/classifications/current/ns-sec/continuity-issues/index.html (accessed March, 2010).

aerospace industry employers, notably British Aerospace and Rolls Royce in Filton and the nearby chemical industries of Avonmouth. Both areas also have significantly higher percentages of semi and unskilled workers compared to the city of Bristol. This is particularly true in the St. Agnes-Newfoundland Road (66) 'workplace zone' in the 'St. Paul's' area where almost half the heads of household were semi or unskilled workers. The overall picture suggests both study areas had higher than average concentrations of the grouped unskilled, semi and skilled workers in comparison to the more 'middle-class' professional and managerial occupations. 'St. Paul's', however, clearly suffered from a deficiency of recognised skilled workers.

Locality	% Households (Head)						Definition of Area	Source	Date
	Semi or Unskilled	Skilled Manual	Employer & Managerial	Junior Non-Manual	Professional	Unclassified [351]			
'St. Paul's'	45.8	18.9	8.1	5.4	0.0	21.8	St. Agnes-Newfoundland Rd. (66)	'Social Stress in Avon'	1981
	22.9	18.7	6.2	12.5	2.1	37.6	City-Portland Sq.-Stokes Croft (65)		
	32.4	19.2	4.8	19.8	4.2	19.6	Montpelier-City Rd.-St. Andrews Pk. (34)		
	25.5	22.6	3.5	16.3	2.8	29.3	Mina Rd. Area (46)		
'Southmead'	26.7	21.1	6.0	8.8	5.2	32.2	Southmead-Wigton Cres.-Pen Park (25)		
	20.6	30.9	1.9	14.0	0.9	31.7	Southmead-Ambleside Ave.-Greystoke (26)		
	16.2	18.8	5.9	25.3	4.3	29.5	Southmead-Southmead Rd. Area (39)		
	13.3	21.3	6.6	23.9	4.0	30.9	Southmead-Hospital Area (40)		
'Inner City Bristol'	**18.0**	**21.3**	**9.1**	**22.0**	**5.4**	**24.2**			
'Bristol'	**18.2**	**25.6**	**9.5**	**18.7**	**4.5**	**23.5**			
'County of Avon'	**15.4**	**25.3**	**13.4**	**19.1**	**5.6**	**21.2**			

Table 15: Socio-economic groups based on of head of household for 'St. Paul's' and 'Southmead' in 1981.

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[351] This category applies to 'those heads of households who have never worked, or described themselves as housewives or students or whose occupation was not given, or members of the armed forces'. Bristol City Council. Planning Department, *Poverty in Bristol: Final Report*, App.4.

5.3.4 Housing

Table 16 provides information as to the status of house tenure in the two districts. The most explicit difference between the two areas was the high concentration of owner occupied and local authority housing in the 'Southmead' area as a whole, with a tiny proportion of privately rented accommodation. In the 'Southmead estate' area (shaded in Table 16) three quarters of the residences were local authority housing[352]. In comparison 'St. Paul's' had a more even mix of owner occupied, rented and local authority housing more in line with the distribution for 'Bristol' as a whole. The connection between the higher levels of rented accommodation and the ethnic diversity of the area is an historical relationship. Prior to the first post-war arrivals of migrants (particularly from the Caribbean) the 'St. Paul's' district was already 'a reception area for Polish, Hungarian, Cypriot and Irish families' and 'the last great reservoir of rented accommodation in the city'[353].

In the 1950s and 60s, faced with discrimination by landlords in much of the rest of Bristol and the need for at least a year of residence in the city prior to be eligibility for the long council housing waiting lists, recently arrived 'New Commonwealth' migrants headed for the traditional 'reception area' of St. Paul's. The transient nature of certain fractions of the population St. Paul's was still reflected by the mix of housing tenures in the 1970s and 80s. This mobility kept the area culturally and

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[352] The tenants 'right to buy' local authority housing was introduced by the incoming Conservative government of 1979. This skewed the statistics towards owner-occupiers who had recently bought their property. By 1983 16% of these properties had been purchased by tenants in the 'Southmead estate' zone (25-26). Bristol City Council. Planning Department, *Southmead Report: Report of the Southmead Working Group*, Section 2.1.4.

[353] Dresser and Fleming, *Bristol: Ethnic Minorities and the City, 1000-2001*, p.159-60.

demographically 'open' to a significant extent confounding certain populist ideas of the closed environment of the supposed 'ghetto'.

Locality	% Owner Occupied	% Local Authority	% Housing Association	% Private Rented	Definition of Area	Source	Date
'St. Paul's'	43	27	13	17	St. Paul's, Montpelier, St. Werburgh's & St. Agnes	'Poverty in Bristol'	1981
	48.8	37.7	6.7	6.2	St. Agnes-Newfoundland Rd. (66)	'Social Stress in Avon'	1981
	9.6	45.9	26.4	18.1	City-Portland Sq.-Stokes Croft (65)		
	36.2	23.7	16.4	23.7	Montpelier-City Rd.-St. Andrews Pk. (34)		
	60.3	22.5	5.1	11.8	Mina Rd. Area (46)		
	43.7	**27.0**	**12.2**	**16.9**	Areas (34-46-65-66) combined		
'Southmead'	23	73	2	1	Southmead Ward	'Poverty in Bristol'	1981
	24.2	71.3	1.6	2.8	Southmead-Wigton Cres.-Pen Park (25)	'Social Stress in Avon'	1981
	20.6	76.7	1.4	1.3	Southmead-Ambleside Ave-Greystoke (26)		
	47.2	49.1	0.3	3.5	Southmead-Southmead Rd. Area (39)		
	67.1	28.1	0.3	4.5	Southmead-Hospital Area (40)		
	34.5	**61.5**	**1.1**	**2.9**	Southmead Ward: Areas (25-26-39-40) combined		
'Inner City Bristol'	**52.9**	**18.3**	**4.0**	**24.8**			
'Bristol'	**54.5**	**31.6**	**2.6**	**11.1**			
'County of Avon'	**62.9**	**25.2**	**2.1**	**9.5**			

Table 16: Details of residential property tenure for 'St. Paul's' and 'Southmead' in 1981

5.3.5 Transience

Some measure of the transient nature of populations can be obtained by a study of those people who have changed address in the previous year. Table 17 provides this information derived from the 1981 Census for the two study areas. Consideration of the workplace zones of 'St. Paul's' in comparison to 'inner city Bristol' and the 'city of Bristol' demonstrates that there were significant transient populations in the St. Agnes-Newfoundland Road (66) and Montpelier-City Rd-St. Andrews Pk. (34) localities. The high levels of owner-occupiers in the St. Werburgh's district (Mina

Road Area (46))[354] may have contributed to its relative stability but it is clear there was considerable movement in the locale as a whole. In contrast, the 'Southmead Ward' area had less than half of this fraction of its population 'on the move' in 1981. These results are revealing and support the previous proposition that the 'St. Paul's' area, for at least some sections of the population, was undergoing a significant turnover of residents compared to the more spatially isolated, static population of 'Southmead'.

Locality	% Persons with changed address in the previous year	Definition of Area	Source	Date
'St. Paul's'	22.5	St. Agnes-Newfoundland Rd. (66)	'Social Stress in Avon'	1981
	12.7	City-Portland Sq.-Stokes Croft (65)		
	20.8	Montpelier-City Rd-St. Andrews Pk. (34)		
	11.3	Mina Rd. Area (46)		
	16.7	Areas (34-46-65-66) combined		
'Southmead'	8.9	Southmead-Wigton Cres.-Pen Park (25)		
	11.9	Southmead-Ambleside Ave.-Greystoke (26)		
	7.1	Southmead-Southmead Rd. Area (39)		
	6.0	Southmead-Hospital Area (40)		
	8.6	Southmead Ward: Areas (25-26-39-40) comb.		
'Inner City Bristol'	**14.4**			
'Bristol'	**9.7**			
'County of Avon'	**9.2**			

Table 17: Percentage of persons in 'St. Paul's' and 'Southmead' who changed their address in the previous year

5.3.6 Overcrowding

Table 18 provides a measure of room occupancy with 'overcrowding' considered to be a density of greater than one person per bedroom[355]. Additionally, data on household size is presented as a similar marker. The statistics show that significant overcrowding was prevalent in all the workplace zones of 'St. Paul's' in 1981,

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[354] See Table 16.

[355] Bristol City Council. Planning Department, *Poverty in Bristol: Final Report*, App. 1.

particularly the St. Agnes-Newfoundland Road (66) locale. This was probably the

residue of a historical trait of this 'reception area' for migrants that became

particularly acute in the 1960s. The problem eased as a degree of spatial mobility

became possible in the 1970s with the realisation of the 5-6 year wait for local

authority housing or, for some, the capability to purchase property outside the

immediate area due to the accumulation of wealth from the 'full' employment

conditions of the period[356].

Locality	% Households >1 person per room	% Households >5 persons	Definition of Area	Source	Date
'St. Paul's'	6.7	-	St. Paul's, Montpelier, St. Werburgh's & St. Agnes	'Poverty in Bristol'	1981
	12.1	14.6	St. Agnes-Newfoundland Rd. (66)	'Social Stress in Avon'	1981
	5.2	11.2	City-Portland Sq.-Stokes Croft (65)		
	6.1	12.8	Montpelier-City Rd.-St. Andrews Pk. (34)		
	6.6	12.9	Mina Rd. Area (46)		
'Southmead'	7.1	-	Southmead Ward	'Poverty in Bristol'	1981
	8.1	20.4	Southmead-Wigton Cres.-Pen Park (25)	'Social Stress in Avon'	1981
	4.6	16.5	Southmead-Ambleside Ave-Greystoke (26)		
	2.7	10.1	Southmead-Southmead Rd. Area (39)		
	0.7	5.5	Southmead-Hospital Area (40)		
'Inner City Bristol'	2.9	7.7			
'Bristol'	2.8	10.1			
'County of Avon'	2.2	10.1			

Table 18: Variables measuring overcrowding and large households in 'St. Paul's' and 'Southmead' in 1981

Intriguingly, the overcrowding in St. Paul's is mirrored in the 'Southmead estate'

zones (25-26) despite the fact these housing projects were originally planned to

overcome this problem. These zones of the 'Southmead' ward are also striking in that

they have unusually large household sizes compared to the wider city. One important

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[356] Dresser and Fleming, *Bristol: Ethnic Minorities and the City, 1000-2001*, p.161-63.

effect of this level of overcrowding which was relevant to both locales under study was appreciated by Jerry Brent a youth worker in Southmead when he stated:

'[The crowded home] is an important consideration in the public life of the area – for example, young people who do not have space at home have to socialise more on the streets and in [youth] clubs' .

Thus the 'St. Paul's neighbourhood' and the 'Southmead estate' areas both suffered from significant overcrowding which would have had an impact on the prevalence for youths to access other external spaces for socialising.

5.3.7   Unemployment

Unemployment was a key political indicator of the early 1980s, as the economic slump of the period appeared to be descending into a fully-fledged depression. Consequently it was often cited as the main structural factor for the urban unrest of the time. Table 19 categorises unemployment data into three groupings, the overall figure, those without work for more than one year (marking long term unemployment) and the subset of those under the age of 25 (marking youth unemployment).

The general and long-term unemployment rates in the 'St. Paul's neighbourhood' area were approximately three times as high as those in the wider city, whereas the 'Southmead estate' zones were only marginally above the average. This variation does suggest that ethnic minorities were suffering the combined effects of the recession and discrimination in employment throughout the age range. What is striking are the two massive rates of unemployment amongst the young in the St. Agnes-Newfoundland Road (66) area of the 'St. Paul's neighbourhood' (89.6%) and

the Southmead-Ambleside Ave-Greystoke (26) zone of the 'Southmead estate' area (84.6%). These are strikingly high rates of unemployment and although potentially affected by statistical variations due to sample size or other effects, still reflect the stress that the young people of the specific locales were undergoing due to the prevailing economic conditions. Almost everyone in the peer groups of the under twenty-five's in these specific areas in 1980-81 was without a full-time job and it appeared that these prospects were not going to improve for the foreseeable future.

Locality	% Unemployed	% Unemployed >1 year	% Unemployed Aged <25	Definition of Area	Source	Date
'St. Paul's'	25.6	-	-	St. Paul's, Montpelier, St. Werburgh's & St. Agnes	'Poverty in Bristol'	1981
	32.1	13.8	89.6	St. Agnes-Newfoundland Rd. (66)	'Social Stress in Avon'	1981
	31.4	9.2	29.4	City-Portland Sq.-Stokes Croft (65)		
	38.2	21.0	67.6	Montpelier-City Rd.-St. Andrews Pk. (34)		
	19.2	7.8	56.3	Mina Rd. Area (46)		
				Areas (34-46-65-66) combined		
'Southmead'	12.4	-	-	Southmead Ward[357]	'The Southmead Report'	1981
	15.4	-	-	Southmead Ward	'Poverty in Bristol'	1981
	15.7	4.7	38.1	Southmead-Wigton Cres.-Pen Park (25)	'Social Stress in Avon'	1981
	15.9	2.9	84.5	Southmead-Ambleside Ave.-Greystoke (26)		
	9.5	4.3	27.3	Southmead-Southmead Rd. Area (39)		
	9.2	2.3	23.1	Southmead-Hospital Area (40)		
				Southmead Ward: Areas (25-26-39-40) combined		
'Inner City Bristol'	15.3	4.9	31.3			
'Bristol'	11.2	3.2	26.6			
'County of Avon'	8.8	2.4	23.4			

Table 19: Unemployment rates (general, long term and young persons) for 'St. Paul's' and 'Southmead' in 1981

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[357] It is noted in this report that the Southmead Ward 'includes more affluent areas outside the estate' and 'the refined figure for the estate alone will be much higher'. Bristol City Council. Planning Department, *Southmead Report: Report of the Southmead Working Group*, Section 3.4.3.

5.3.8   Mobility and isolation

The geographic locations in relation to Bristol city centre of the 'St. Paul's' and 'Southmead' districts are quite different. The former is a few minutes walk from Broadmead, the main shopping area of the city centre in the early 1980s and the main bus route hub. In contrast, Southmead lies approximately six kilometres north of the city and off the main bus routes. The spatial isolation of the latter estate from the cultural and commercial core of Bristol is thus far more pronounced. Table 20 provides data on the percentage of households that were without a car in 1981 in the two locales under study.

Locality	% Households without a car	Definition of Area	Source	Date
'St. Paul's'	62.5	St. Paul's, Montpelier, St. Werburgh's & St. Agnes	'Poverty in Bristol'	1981
	64.4	St. Agnes-Newfoundland Rd. (66)	'Social Stress in Avon'	1981
	73.0	City-Portland Sq.-Stokes Croft (65)		
	63.5	Montpelier-City Rd.-St. Andrews Pk. (34)		
	57.1	Mina Rd. Area (46)		
'Southmead'	46.5	Southmead Ward	'Poverty in Bristol'	1981
	46.7	Southmead-Wigton Cres.-Pen Park (25)	'Social Stress in Avon'	1981
	44.3	Southmead-Ambleside Ave-Greystoke (26)		
	42.3	Southmead-Southmead Rd. Area (39)		
	34.4	Southmead-Hospital Area (40)		
'Inner City Bristol'	**48.6**			
'Bristol'	**40.6**			
'County of Avon'	**32.8**			

Table 20: Percentage of households without a car in 'St. Paul's' and 'Southmead' in 1981

Car usage was understood in two of the surveys as being a measure of the 'possession of consumer goods' and on the assumption that 'most people want to…drive around in cars'[358]. In this study, however, it will be taken as a measure of mobility, particularly in the context of outlying areas such as 'Southmead' where the car was

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[358] Bristol City Council. Planning Department, *Poverty in Bristol: Final Report*, p.4.

more of a necessity due to the proximity of the area from the city centre and crucially the lack of an integrated transport system in Bristol[359].

Unsurprisingly, the inner city area of 'St. Paul's' had lower levels of car ownership per household than 'Southmead' probably due to a combination of lack of surplus wealth in the populace and no inherent necessity for a vehicle because of its location. 'Southmead' did however have higher than average lack of access to cars per household compared to the rest of the city of 'Bristol' despite the intrinsic necessity for ease of mobility considering its peripheral setting. This piece of evidence emphasises the relative isolation of the non-car owning populace of the locale.

5.3.9 Education

Schooling in Bristol was the responsibility of the Conservative led Avon County Council rather than the Labour controlled Bristol City Council in 1980. There was a marked difference in this provision between 'St. Paul's' and 'Southmead'. The 'Southmead estate' area had four primary schools and two secondary schools (Pen Park Girls and Greenway Boys) all situated in the immediate environs[360]. In contrast, 'St. Paul's', despite having primary schools in the locality, had no non-selective secondary school. Consequently teenagers from 'St. Paul's' in 1980 were 'bussed' to nine or more different schools spread amongst three of the five designated education

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[359] Bristol was (and still is) regarded as a public transport black spot with no metro or light rail system, an expensive bus system and consequently a high level of car ownership.

[360] Bristol City Council. Planning Department, *Southmead Report: Report of the Southmead Working Group*, Section 2.3.1.

areas of the city[361]. Restrictions on educational opportunity in the area were compounded by the presence of the only two selective Grammar schools in Avon in the Northern Central Area of the educational authority[362].

In the aftermath of the disturbances of 1980, residents of 'St. Paul's' drew attention to what they called the 'unofficial bussing policy'. They complained about the 'wide dispersal of secondary school pupils' both in terms of the financial costs that entailed for them and the 'separation from many of the child's friends in a school that might only have a few ethnic minority children' making 'the transition from primary to secondary education even more difficult than usual'[363]. Two of the group of schools chosen for 'bussing' the inner city youth of 'St. Paul's' to, were the relatively small Southmead secondary schools Pen Park Girls and Greenway Boys[364], more than four miles from their home neighbourhoods. This is reflected in the high percentage of so-called 'Commonwealth immigrant children' (14.8%) in Pen Park Girls School in

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[361] These were the Northern, Eastern and North Central Areas; Avon County Council, *County of Avon Education Department. Multi-cultural Education Centre. Avon Schools at which members of Staff of Multi-cultural Education Centre are teaching- April 1980.* (Bristol Record Office 42974/2 Vol.1 Part B, 1980). See also *A Long Way from Home,* DVD, directed by C. Thomas (Bristol: WEA Second Chance Group, 1981).

[362] These were Cotham and Fairfield Grammar schools. Fairfield was the closest school to the neighbourhood of 'St. Paul's'. Bateman and Press, *Slumbering Volcano? - Report of an Enquiry into the Origins of the Eruption in St. Paul's Bristol on 2nd April 1980*, p.21.

[363] Ibid. p.21 and Thomas, *A Long Way from Home*.

[364] Pen Park Girls School had a roll of 657 and Greenway Boys 536 in 1979-80 placing them in the smallest group of secondary schools in Avon. The majority had over 1,000 pupils. Avon County Council, *County of Avon Education Department. Multi-cultural Education Centre. Avon Schools at which members of Staff of Multi-cultural Education Centre are teaching- April 1980.*

1980, despite the fact that the local catchment area probably had less than 3% of its population of similar origin[365]. Greenway Boys School although having less than 5% of its roll from this group also exhibited the effects of the 'bussing' strategy.

The falling school rolls of the late 1970s are a clue to the rationale behind Avon County Council's questionable policy of displacing large numbers of 'St. Paul's' youth to far away schools such as Greenway Boys in Southmead[366]. Rather than addressing the problem of the lack of a non-selective secondary school in the 'St. Paul's' area, the local authority attempted to protect its budget by displacing the inner city youth to distant peripheral schools and particularly those with falling numbers that were under the threat of closure. The teenagers of 'St. Paul's' were thus victims of a fiscally orientated and arguably discriminatory local education strategy.

5.3.10 Social facilities

It is worth turning now to compare the social facilities that were available in each area in 1980, particularly for the young. For the 'St. Paul's' locality, the independent NUT report and the TUC enquiry findings both note the lack of green or open spaces and play areas in the immediate vicinity (there was only the 'picturesque but small St.

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[365] Table 14 and Avon County Council, *County of Avon Education Department. Multi-cultural Education Centre. Avon Schools at which members of Staff of Multi-cultural Education Centre are teaching- April 1980.*

[366] According to *'The Southmead Report'* of 1983, Greenway Boys School was marked for closure due to 'the decline in school age population' and 'the poor reputation the school has gained'. Greenway Boys School was eventually closed in 1985. Bristol City Council. Planning Department, *Southmead Report: Report of the Southmead Working Group*, Section 2.3.3-4.

Agnes Park')[367]. The existing adventure playground had been closed down and 'only after significant pressure was brought to bear by playground leaders and members of the community was another site made available'[368]. No local authority funded community centre existed and neither was there a dedicated sports facility.

Consequently the majority of the social facilities that were present were actually the result of the self-activity of individuals and collectives within the 'community'. These included the 'Empire Sports Club' based in a disused church next to the M32, the youth programmes at the 'Dockland Settlement' on City Road and the film, drama and arts centre the 'Inkworks' on Hepburn Road In the light of the origin of the events in April 1980, it was noted that 'there is no restaurant in the area although there are two cafés: the Black and White in Grosvenor Rd. and the Shady Grove in Ashley Rd.'[369]. This inventory of facilities that were open to the youth of 'St. Paul's' suggests a long period of disinterest and lack of investment by local authorities. This stimulated an autonomous response from the residents of the area in utilising the bricolage of available buildings and self-generated collective resources for their own needs[370].

'Southmead' in contrast to the arguably self-made, inner city 'immigrant reception

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[367] Bateman and Press, *Slumbering Volcano? - Report of an Enquiry into the Origins of the Eruption in St. Paul's Bristol on 2nd April 1980*, p.7 and Equal Opportunities Sub-Committee, Bristol Teachers Association (NUT) commissioned by the Avon Division of the NUT, *After the Fire: A Report on Education in St. Paul's Bristol and Multi-Ethnic Education in Avon*, p.6-9.

[368] Ibid. p.8.

[369] Ibid. p.6.

[370] These included premises for semi-legal 'blues' clubs and parties, which were popular in the area.

area' of 'St. Paul's' had entirely different origins in a diluted version of the ideas of romantic socialists such as Ebenezer Howard and the 'garden cities' movement of the late nineteenth century[371]. Howard's vision was of the fusion of aesthetically pleasing and durable homes situated in environmentally appealing surroundings with a multiplicity of social amenities and opportunities for nearby non-alienated work. This dream was spoiled by the fiscal squeeze of the pre-war depression and the urgent need for post-war housing provision.

However, some random elements of the utopian vision were retained in the large pre and post-war developments in Southmead[372], the peripheral location in relation to the city, the spatial separation of housing and large (but featureless) green spaces plus forced temperance by lack of facilities[373]. The paucity of social amenities in the post-war environment in Southmead and other similar estates was not just limited to a shortage of public houses. There was a lack of shops, churches, community centres

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[371] See Stephen E. Hunt, *Yesterday's Tomorrow: Bristol's Garden Suburb.* (Bristol: Bristol Radical History Group, 2009).

[372] 1,659 houses were built south of Greystoke Avenue before WWII (the 'pre-war estate') and 1,027 immediately after (the 'post-war estate'). *Evening Post* 22-07-1949.

[373] Hunt notes 'The reluctance to provide public houses in garden suburbs was based upon links between alcohol and poverty in studies by reforming social thinkers such as Henry Mayhew, Charles Booth and Seebohm Rowntree as much as a puritanical distaste for pleasure…. regardless of objections to alcohol consumption, public houses were (and obviously remain!) cherished public spaces and the lack of them on moral grounds was a thin excuse for the failure to provide social spaces'. Ibid. pp.19-20. There was considerable excitement in the local newspaper (and it must be suspected amongst residents!) when the new 'local', *'The Standard of England'* was opened in Southmead in 1954, nearly 20 years after the first phase of house construction. See Bristol Central Reference Library *'Spotlighting Bristol's New Communities'* 72.4 *Evening Post* 1954.

and sports facilities for an extended period[374]. Organised groups in the post-war Southmead 'community' applied significant pressure to the local authorities to obtain and speed up the process of developing this social infrastructure[375].

Despite these self-organised lobby groups, by 1980, the facilities for young people had only extended to a Youth Centre[376], a run-down adventure playground and two Scout Huts[377]. There were no dedicated sports amenities or swimming pools nor other attractions such as cinemas or restaurants on the estate[378]. Furthermore only three public houses, often the domain and centre of informal community for young adults, served an immediate population of 11,000.

5.3.11 Measures of 'social stress'

The final set of 'official' statistics examined in this review contains the problematic measure of 'social stress', defined as 'significant combinations of social, economic and physical conditions likely to seriously affect personal well-being'[379]. All of the

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[374] The 'Southmead estate' was granted a Congregational church, church hall, Sunday school, buildings for a boys club and a 'Community Hut' in 1949. *Evening Post* 22-07-1949. Other facilities followed five years later in 1954. See Bristol Central Reference Library *'Spotlighting Bristol's New Communities'* 72.4 *Evening Post* 1954.

[375] Bristol Central Reference Library *'Spotlighting Bristol's New Communities'* 72.4 *Evening Post* 22-07-1949.

[376] This was opened in 1962. J. Truman and J. Brent, *Alive and Kicking!: The Life and Times of Southmead Youth Centre.* (Bristol: Redcliffe Press, 1995), p.12.

[377] Bristol City Council. Planning Department, *Southmead Report: Report of the Southmead Working Group*, Section 2.5.

[378] This was still the case later in the 1980s. *Evening Post* 04-12-1987.

[379] Avon County Council, *Social Stress in Avon, 1981: A Preliminary Analysis*.

previously studied statistics can be argued to have been mere categorisations of data whereas the overall 'social stress indicator' was generated from a combination of 'factors'. It effectively linked various measures of unemployment, one parent families, social service referrals, electricity disconnections, lack of car ownership, overcrowding of households, statutory supervision orders and households with a new Commonwealth or Pakistan born head[380].

Table 21 shows the 'Social Stress Indicator' and ranking of each workplace zone for 'St. Paul's' and 'Southmead' in comparison with the other 196 zones surveyed in the County of Avon in 1981.

Locality	Social Stress Indicator	Ranking out of 196 zones in Avon	Definition of Area	Source	Date
'St. Paul's'	5.155	1	St. Agnes-Newfoundland Rd. (66)	'Social Stress in Avon'	1981
	4.974	2	City-Portland Sq.-Stokes Croft (65)		
	4.529	3	Montpelier-City Rd-St. Andrews Pk. (34)		
	2.437	6	Mina Rd. Area (46)		
'Southmead'	1.990	8	Southmead-Wigton Cres.-Pen Park (25)		
	1.666	14	Southmead-Ambleside Ave-Greystoke (26)		
	0.869	39	Southmead-Southmead Rd. Area (39)		
	-0.172	80	Southmead-Hospital Area (40)		

Table 21: 'Social Stress Indicators' and rankings for the 'St. Paul's' and 'Southmead' workplace zones compared to all 196 zones in the County of Avon in 1981

The results are striking in that all four of the 'St. Paul's' zones lie in the top six areas for 'social stress' in the county. The 'Southmead estate' areas (25-26) are hardly better off, coming in at 8th and 14th in the overall rankings. Clearly from a 'social

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[380] The linking of various factors related to social deprivation with *ethnicity* may explain why the four workplace zones in the 'St. Paul's locality' appear in the top six rankings of 'social stress' in the county of Avon. Ibid. Section 4e).

deprivation' perspective the 'St. Paul's neighbourhood' and the 'Southmead estate' were significantly disadvantaged locales within already under-privileged areas.

5.3.12 Policing and police-community relations

None of the local authority reports studied provide any empirical data concerning details of policing or crime for the areas under study. In an attempt to find information concerning 'St. Paul's' or 'Southmead' the Chief Constable's report for the Avon and Somerset police in 1980[381] was reviewed. Of particular interest in this report were the subjective accounts of the disorders in the two locations under study and the focus of the Chief Constable's opening address. Both of the disturbances in St. Paul's and Southmead in April 1980 are prominent incidents in the 'General Police Duties' section of the report and are, interestingly, given equal amounts of text and narrative weight as being 'serious' disorders. However, in the foreword in the same document there is no mention of 'Southmead' whilst nearly half of Chief Constable's considerable account of the 'state of policing in Avon & Somerset' is dedicated to the St. Paul's disturbance, its causes, the resulting 'organisational lessons' and repeated references to police relations with 'ethnic minorities'. In a paradoxical remark he states:

> 'Much - probably too much – has been written about St. Pauls particularly as to the alleged cause(s) of this sad – and untypical – incident. My own view has been that the trouble arose from an unfortunate and unusual combination of circumstances which are unlikely to re-occur'[382]

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[381] Avon and Somerset Constabulary, *Annual Report of the Chief Constable*. (Bristol, 1980).

[382] Ibid. p.1.

The paradox of course is not only did the 'St. Paul's' incident and its effects dominate his extensive foreword, but later in the same document, prominence is given to another supposedly 'untypical' incident (Southmead). The Chief Constable completely fails to acknowledge this in his opening address. This is an interesting marker of the relation between the police and the public domain in 1980. Clearly the police took both disorders seriously on an operational level but when addressing the 'public' the Chief Constable focussed on the governmental and media circus surrounding the 'St. Paul's' event. There were no obvious policy responses to the second of his 'untypical incidents' of that year in 'Southmead'.

The question of policing did feature in the Home Office Sub-Committee inquiry when it met in Bristol on May 22nd 1980 to 'investigate' the disturbance in 'St. Paul's'[383]. Although this limited inquiry had been boycotted by the formal organisation probably closest to the actual participants in the disturbance the *'St. Paul's United Defence Committee'*[384] there was still an opportunity to interview other Community 'leaders' and crucially the representatives of the Avon and Somerset Constabulary. The main thrust of the questioning of the police witnesses was centred on the extremely low representation of 'ethnic minorities' in the local force, their relations with the schools in the area and their policy in dealing with illegal drinking clubs, the smoking of cannabis and street prostitution. Very little questioning was angled at the issue of

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[383] Home Office, *Minutes of evidence taken before the Home-affairs Sub-committee on Race Relations and Immigration (22nd May 1980)*. (Bristol Record Office 42974/1, 1980), Vol. 1 Part A.

[384] This organisation, set up in the immediate aftermath of the disturbance, organised a vote in a public meeting, which by a majority supported the boycott. St. Paul's United Defence Committee, *Press Release 14th May 1980*. (Bristol Record Office 43129, 1980), Box 105: P ST PA B1 and St. Paul's United Defence Committee, *Resolution*. (Bristol Record Office 43129, 1980), Box 105: P ST PA B1.

actual street relations between the police and residents in St. Paul's (particularly ethnic minorities) apart from revealing testimony from a 'beat' police constable who stated:

> 'St. Paul's itself is a very much extroverted community in so much as when a response call is made and an officer goes he does not find himself talking to the person who might be responsible or to the person who is making the allegation. **He finds himself talking to the entire street**…Unfortunately there is not enough time to tell the entire street what they are doing; so therefore, the entire street gets the idea that there is either harassment or Police brutality...'[385]

Whether the 'street' was correct in its assessment of the actual situation or not, this testimony illuminates the reality of policing where an active 'community' response was in operation. It appears the 'street' in St. Paul's was questioning police activities, making judgements about them and in some cases intervening.

The tentative questioning of police witnesses' in the Home Office inquiry was matched by the cautious responses in the 'unofficial' TUC report. After significant analyses of structural issues such as housing, employment and education the shortest section of the document is concerned with 'Community Relations'[386], despite the authors noting:

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[385] This author's emphasis in bold. Ibid. p.33.

[386] Bateman and Press, *Slumbering Volcano? - Report of an Enquiry into the Origins of the Eruption in St. Paul's Bristol on 2nd April 1980*, Chap. 6.

'It was understandable from the nature of the Enquiry that we should receive a considerable amount of evidence concerning relations between the Police and the community'.

They went on to state:

'We were told of instances of harassment by the Police, that they react more harshly in the enquiry area than to a similar situation elsewhere, and more harshly to a situation involving ethnic minority persons than to a similar one involving whites. The complaints came not only from those who had sustained the alleged harassment and over-reaction, but also from elected representatives, community leaders and others, both **black and white**.'[387]

This unofficial inquiry did not appear to have had participants in the disturbance giving testimony. Despite this, it appears that there were so many complaints made by witnesses from various ethnic groups (both 'Black and White') that the organisers stated that they 'had neither the time nor the facilities…to investigate individual complaints, but the volume of these was so great and their incidence so widespread as to constitute a prima facie case'.

In retrospect, the 'St. Paul's' disturbance and the subsequent inquiry generated some, albeit unofficial, criticisms of policing. In contrast, 'Southmead' in the wake of its 'riot' received no 'official' or 'unofficial' enquiry, no apparent interest from either local or central government and hardly any exposure in the media. Only one local

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[387] This author's emphasis in bold. Ibid. p.24.

authority document refers to the issue of policing in relation to the area, the *'Southmead Report'* of 1983 and its findings are, to say the least, controversial. In a section labelled *'Police and Probation'*[388] the report states that 'there seems to have been a general quietening down in Southmead of late' which is perhaps a reference to the serious disorders of 1980 and 1981[389]. The anonymous authors of the report coldly state the reason for this 'happy turn of events' was young people's 'fashion for glue sniffing rather than vandalism'. They go on to argue 'but this does not fully explain the turn about from an era when Southmead created much of its present reputation'. Once again the approach is noticeable, 'Southmead' is of its own making, the authors are just (uncaring) observers and the local authority takes no responsibility for the situation.

To give some credit to the authors of the 'Southmead Report' for at least listening to some residents of the area they do add that:

> 'However, there have been complaints from young people of heavy handed policing at night and of actual harassment. This, it is claimed, stems from Southmead's reputation – if there is a disturbance or crime in the wider area Southmead residents are prime suspects and groups of

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[388] Bristol City Council. Planning Department, *Southmead Report: Report of the Southmead Working Group*, Section 3.3.

[389] Serious disorders in 'Southmead' in 1981 are noted in the Chief Constable's report of that year. Avon and Somerset Constabulary, *Annual Report of the Chief Constable*. (Bristol, 1981), p.36.

youths in particular are picked on'[390]

The authors question these claims but note that 'it does indicate an under-current of unrest and conflict which efforts should be made to overcome' and suggest that an improvement of the 'affluence of the estate through reduced unemployment' is the solution. However, they conclude by stating that 'the practicality of making progress is limited'. 'Southmead' was thus an ahistorical product of itself and seemingly a lost cause as far as the local authorities are concerned, an apparently reoccurring theme in this review of post-riot 'official sources'.

5.4   Analysis of the primary sources: oral history

Following this quantitative groundwork, some qualitative and more subjective detail will be accessed to both 'thicken' these somewhat one-dimensional narratives as well as to offer challenges or substantiations. In the following section, excerpts from oral history interviews with respondents who were present in the 1980s in both study areas will be employed to 'flesh out' some of the potential inferences of the earlier review.

5.4.1   Ethnicity, unemployment and 'branding'

The main demographic difference demonstrated by the reviewed and somewhat selective statistics of 1981 were the much larger proportion of 'ethnic minorities' resident in the 'St. Paul's' area. However, both 'St. Paul's' and 'Southmead' had notable similarities in social class composition by head of household occupation and both areas were suffering the effects of a high degree of overall unemployment

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[390] Bristol City Council. Planning Department, *Southmead Report: Report of the Southmead Working Group*, Section 3.3.3.

prevalent in the British economy in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The greatest jobless levels were amongst young adults and as has been observed, they were often concentrated in specific localities within the wards. The impact this had upon the aspirations of younger school-leavers are recounted by a respondent from the 'Southmead estate' area:

> 'You know, if you had lived in Southmead and I told you earlier on, if you weren't in sort of class, the top class, you were basically just there to make up the numbers and we were told that my, when I went to…erm… my Careers I was told how to fill in the … UB40. That was it'[391]

This feeling of 'making up the numbers', effectively being written off by the careers advisor at school and discrimination in employment opportunities due to association with a particular locality is backed up by the respondent more forcefully later in the interview:

> 'You know, we were told at school that if you had a BS10 postcode, from Southmead you ain't going to get an interview for a job. So what prospects did you have? You know, you come from Southmead and you were openly discriminated against'[392]

The problem of association with a particular locality especially when making job applications was a reoccurring theme in both of the areas under study. One White

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[391] A UB40 was the form you completed to obtain Unemployment Benefit. Oral History File J_12-02-2010_Main_edit (0:00:47). Another respondent from Southmead who attended Greenway Boys school also recounted this experience: Oral History File N_05-03-2010_edit (0:28:20).

[392] Oral History File J_12-02-2010_Main_edit (0:02:31).

respondent claimed he had lost jobs because he lived in 'St. Paul's'[393] and evidence of similar discrimination by locality was given as testimony in the post-riot TUC inquiry:

> 'Discrimination can take place even before an interview on the basis of a name or an address. It was made clear to us, for example, that the image of the Enquiry area [the wider 'St. Paul's' ward] itself is a disadvantage in job-seeking. The view was held that if certain localities appeared on job application from this militated against the possibility of black or white job applicants even getting an interview.'

The authors go on to quote a statement from Avon County Council's principal careers advisor representing the mediators between employers and prospective job applicants:

> '…employers still query names. When a Career's Officer or a Careers assistant makes an appointment for a young person to go for an interview there will still be comments back from employers if the name sounds as if it might be West Indian or if indeed it is an applicant from St. Paul's or St. Werburghs area that could indicate they might be from an ethnic minority group'[394]

A common response of job applicants to such discrimination by locality is recounted by another respondent from 'Southmead':

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[393] Oral History File G_09-10-2009 (0:16:14).

[394] Bateman and Press, *Slumbering Volcano? - Report of an Enquiry into the Origins of the Eruption in St. Paul's Bristol on 2nd April 1980*, p.17.

'If you applied to get a job, then you wouldn't put down BS10, which was the Southmead postcode. You knew that it would define you as being of Southmead and it would go against you because we all knew that Southmead had a bad name…if you had to put a postal contact you would put WOT on it, not Southmead…just to kind of up the chances of you getting that job'[395]

Similar strategies were applied in several other areas of Bristol where perceived (or actual) discrimination in applying for jobs was taking place. Approaches such as this became part of the 'underground' knowledge of the unemployed in dealing with problems of the reputation of their home neighbourhoods with potential employers. The tactic of 'disguise' was particularly prevalent in 'St. Paul's'[396] and neighbouring areas where members of ethnic minorities often faced the double-bind of prejudice extended to both their location and their sometime 'un-English' looking names.

For many respondents, feelings of being discriminated against had a deeper reality than just problems of employment. This was demonstrated when one respondent referred to how people from 'Southmead estate' were perceived and treated:

'Southmead was always a council estate and everyone was shit and you were gonna be treated like shit and that's it and all about it, you had no

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[395] WOT refers to the affluent nearby area of Westbury-on-Trym. Oral History File H_18-02-2010 (0:15:24).

[396] The author himself when resident in the 'St. Paul's' area in the 1980s was well aware that referring to this locality in making job applications was 'suicide'. Instead he gave his resident address as being in the adjacent area of Montpelier.

prospects to go anywhere…'[397]

These deep-rooted prejudices about certain localities were not just confined to employers and in hindsight cannot be simply put down to particular economic cycles or moments of negative media representation. The effects of this 'branding' appear to have stayed with the residents and their home areas for life, as was recounted by a respondent who lived in Southmead in the 1970 and 80s:

'The image of Southmead was massively bad and we all knew it and that continued into my adult life. In the 90s, I moved down to Easton[398]…and I would meet people, educated people, University educated…but even these so-called educated middle class people…they would if the subject of Southmead came up to do with anything…it would be like 'Ohhh Southmead' [imitates the sound of an ape] it was like a total put down as if Southmead was full of Neanderthals and I would always say 'Well I am of Southmead' and that would FUCKING shut them up. So even these…educated people they still had this opinion of Southmead being kind of like full of idiots…it was just put down by people who should have known better. They had such a shit opinion about Southmead, which still continues to this day. I'm defensive of this all the time. So that whole image of White council estate working class people was happening as a child…continued into my teenage [life]…continued into my adult life…The language changed but the attitude of, as I said educated people, it stayed the same….I don't get why they have this undeveloped attitude

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[397] Oral History File J_12-02-2010_Main_edit (0:05:57).

[398] An inner city area in the east of Bristol.

and opinion of the people who are living out on places like Southmead. It's just ignorant; they don't know what they are talking about. I don't know how it's come about, I'm puzzled by that one…No doubt it's fed by media, talk by politicians…but it's always been the same.'[399]

This incisive statement, which reveals both anger and bewilderment at being the victim of discrimination based upon the fusion of locality and social class, was a reoccurring characteristic of all the interviews undertaken with respondents from 'Southmead'. The feeling that 'branding' had significant, almost lifetime, longevity even when the respondent had moved away from Southmead[400] was a source of significant resentment. These feelings are certainly reminiscent of the experiences of historical and physical entrapment by ethnicity and locale that have been recorded amongst the ethnic minorities of 'St. Paul's'[401].

5.4.2 Isolation and exclusion

The experiences for many of the young people of both 'St. Paul's' and 'Southmead' also differed in several ways. The spatial isolation of 'Southmead' and the fact that most of the required amenities such as the schools were within the estate compounded

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[399] Oral History File H_18-02-2010 (0:30:07).

[400] Another respondent angrily claimed that even the most famous person from Southmead, the England Rugby International and British Lion, Andy Ripley, denied he was from the area instead stating that he was from the nearby Westbury-on-Trym, Oral History File J_12-02-2010_Main_edit (0:24:40). Ripley formerly a pupil at Greenway Comprehensive School in Southmead died on June 17th 2010. None of his obituaries mention his connection with Southmead.

[401] For example in F. Dennis, *Behind the Frontlines* (London: Gollancz, 1988), Chap.7 and Ken Pryce, *Endless Pressure: A Study of West Indian Life-Styles in Bristol*, 2nd ed. (Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1986).

the sense of separation from the 'outside'. The lack of car ownership enhanced this effect with one respondent from Southmead remarking that:

> 'You need to understand what Southmead was….as in this estate which was isolated, that was a big thing. It was a Council estate of low-income families out on the edge of the city. Because, it was low income, people had vehicles but a lot of people did not have vehicles. So the only way out of Southmead was by bus and…buses going out of Southmead, it wasn't like one each twenty minutes or anything like that. You'd be waiting ages on bus stops just to get in and out of Southmead. And little things like that have an effect….it accentuates the isolation of the place…'[402]

This physical isolation was often compounded by exclusionary responses when Southmead residents, especially the young, attempted to socialise in areas surrounding their estate. According to the respondents these reactions had two forms, inter-communal violence or expulsion, dependant on whether the area was deemed as a *'rival'* estate or a *'middle-class area'* respectively. Fights in public houses between 'locals' and the Southmead interlopers were fairly common in nearby districts, particularly Filton and Patchway. The consequent need for communal self-defence was part of being a *'Meader'* as is recalled by one respondent:

> 'When you did go outside of Southmead, you stuck with fellow Southmead kids and you would kind of defend a fellow Southmead kid. If we went to a pub in Henleaze or Clifton or any place outside of Southmead and if any Southmead kid got into a fight in a pub in any of

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[402] Oral History File H_18-02-2010 (0:21:59).

these places, then anyone who was with him who was also out of Southmead would join in and fight with them. So it was a unifying thing just being of Southmead. Which wasn't a bad thing because we didn't have anything else.'[403]

In contrast, the 'middle-class' area of Westbury-on-Trym presented different problems for the visiting *'Meaders'* related to exclusion and the attention of the police:

'We used to go to Westbury a lot…to wind them up…cos we were from a council estate, they're from a well to do area… …and we used to go to the Post Office tavern and they'd all be in there going 'What, what, what, what, what' [fakes a posh accent] We would always get chucked out for swearing. Go to the Mouse…chucked out for swearing…Foresters Arms… chucked out for being from Southmead. But you'd go there every time to wind em' up. Because they were like just like, they hated people from the council estate. So you'd go there just to wind the fuckers up… We never got nicked actually, we never got…cos we always went before the old…the blue light come down the road. Cos then you left to go to another pub.'[404]

These exclusionary responses to travellers from Southmead and their aggressive reactions not only cemented identities based upon home locale but also heightened the sense of isolation of the residents of the estate. In contrast, for many of the youth of

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[403] Oral History File H_18-02-2010 (0:12:40).

[404] Oral History File J_12-02-2010_Main_edit (0:16:41).

St. Paul's there was no choice but to leave their neighbourhoods on a daily basis.

5.4.3 Education, displacement and racism

The 'bussing' strategy instigated (and enforced) by Avon County Council meant that many of the teenage youth of 'St. Paul's' had to leave their surroundings and travel to distant places for schooling, with all the potential trauma that entailed. This created effectively a dual identity, living in one environment and displacement amongst other, sometimes, majority White 'communities' during term time. It appears that at the sole Boys secondary school in Southmead, Greenway, an influx of displaced inner city youth began in the 1979-80 school year. Several respondents note this change in the demographic of the school. One (mixed-race) respondent resident in Southmead and a pupil at the school in the late 1970s, recalled:

> 'At Greenway…even though it [Southmead] is a 99% White area, we had probably about 20% Black Africans and Asians so it was a real mix. Even though it was a White area Black and Asian kids were bussed in and there were kids from St. Paul's and from some other areas as well there, you see. So it was a real hodge podge of cultures really. But where we actually lived in Southmead there weren't that many Black or Asian families.'[405]

A change in the ethnic make-up of the Southmead Youth Club in the late 70s and early 80s was also noted by several youth workers[406], suggesting that at least some of the new 'inner city' pupils were beginning to socialise 'after hours' with resident

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[405] Oral History File N_05-03-2010_edit (0:0:57).

[406] Truman and Brent, *Alive and Kicking!: The Life and Times of Southmead Youth Centre*, p.56-57 and Brent, *Searching for Community: Representation, Power and Action on an Urban Estate*, p.157-58.

youth. However, for the displaced, especially those who were noticeably from ethnic minority backgrounds, the school year of 1979 was particularly difficult period in which to arrive. The same respondent recalled:

> 'It was '76 I went to Greenway. It weren't until 79-80 when coming back from the summer holidays and all of a sudden they were calling you 'Paki'…all that sort of stuff. To me that was the beginning of all the fascist stuff, the racist stuff really and you'd look down at the colour laces on the Doctor Martens to see whether they were British Movement, National Front or League of St. George. National Front sellers tried to sell…there was always an undercurrent of racism 'cos you were growing up in a White area but it wasn't organised [until then]…'[407]

Fights in 'Southmead' between 'organised racists' and groups wholly or partly made up of various ethnic minority members became the norm for a period. This state of affairs created the necessity for 'ganging up' for protection which often centred on youth sub-cultures.

5.4.4 Gangs and youth sub-cultures

Many respondents made reference to their membership of youth sub-cultures in the late 70s and early 80s. These groupings were intimately related to gangs and the problems of racism. One respondent explained the ethnic divisions in 'Southmead' and the responses to this through the medium of the various sub-cultures and gangs:

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[407] My additions in parentheses. The three organisations mentioned were fascist parties or groups of the period. Doctor Martens were boots associated with skinhead sub-culture. Oral History File N_05-03-2010_edit (0:2:45).

'I was a bit of rude boy, which is Ska and Ska is a fusion of music, that's what we were into…In 'Southmead' we were always called the 'straights', there was Black mates, some White mates, Asian mates and we were into our own sort of stuff. And then you had like your fascists and then you had the Black kids who wanted to stay with Black kids and Asian kids who wanted to stay with Asian kids and that was it. But this is all in a very White area. So it was kind of chaotic stuff…The last two years [of his schooling] it was fighting every single week. It was predominantly with the racists, the fascists.'[408]

The effect of this violence spread to 'Southmead Youth Centre' where a youth worker with perhaps less 'insider' knowledge of the gang divisions and their relations to organised racism and fascism commented:

'In the early 1980s, there were a large group of black teenagers on the estate. The number of blacks built up and there was a racist backlash by the young whites. There were major fights just before the youth club closed for the summer in August: when it reopened in September there

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[408] Oral History File N_05-03-2010_edit (0:04:25). Dresser notes similar experiences and the potentially serious impact on educational opportunity that these violent incidents could have, when interviewing a mixed race respondent brought up in the predominantly White and more 'middle-class' area of Clifton Wood area in Bristol. 'his school life was characterised by, a 'lot of fighting, always getting into fights – always because of race'. Such problems led many Caribbean children being classified as educationally sub-normal'. Dresser and Fleming, *Bristol: Ethnic Minorities and the City, 1000-2001*, p.171.

were no black people at all'[409]

The divisions at the youth centre were eventually remedied and by 1983 the considerable presence of both Black and White youth spawned the influential Black DJ from 'Southmead', Krissy Kriss, who recounted his first performance:

'I first picked up the mic in 1983, it was because of the 'man dem' I used to step with – Wallace, Claudio and Rookie, we all had the same sort of flavours, it was kind of organic you know, there was no rhyme or reason to it and we kind of formed our own thing down at Southmead Youth Club; we called ourselves 'Crazy 17'. We did our first jam at Southmead Youth Club, it was 'no alcohol' youth kind of thing. It was crazy because people came from all over Bristol, people who normally went to the Dug Out[410] and other places came over to Southmead to party. Bristol was very special in this way maybe because of the size of the city; you would just get to know people just from seeing them at parties regularly'[411].

This testimony not only demonstrates the importance of youth sub-cultures and their music in generating rhizomic links between distant communities of different ethnic make-up but also it shows the development of these relationships in spite of the inter-

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[409] Truman and Brent, *Alive and Kicking!: The Life and Times of Southmead Youth Centre*, p.57.

[410] The *'Dug Out'* club was an important hub for the mixing of various sub-cultures and ethnicities in the early 1980s and provided an explicit link between young people from inner city areas such as 'St. Paul's' and other outlying estates such as 'Southmead' Dresser and Fleming, *Bristol: Ethnic Minorities and the City, 1000-2001*, p.174.

[411] C. Burton and G. Thompson, *Art & Sound of the Bristol Underground*. (Bristol: Tangent Books, 2009), p.80.

communal violence of 1979-80. The 'double-edged sword' of youth sub-culture is exposed here, initially an expression of divisions in 'Southmead' but eventually in a later form, to some extent, breaking the relative isolation of the estate. This process was at least partially initiated by the, albeit traumatic, influx of youth from inner city areas such as 'St. Paul's' into Greenway and Pen Park schools in the late 70s.

5.4.5 Transience

The relative geographic isolation and physical effort in getting in and out of 'Southmead' had other effects, which were reflected in the lower levels of transience of the population. A respondent noted:

> 'Southmead was unto itself…its got a lot of old families…they go back a long time…quite big established families and a lot of the kids, a lot of the families would stay in Southmead. They would have families and kids themselves but stay in Southmead. It seemed that not many people moved away. They just stayed close-knit in the community'[412]

In contrast, the 'St. Paul's' ward despite its popular and media representation as a closed 'ghetto'[413] had a much more transient population, derived from its location near the city centre and its post-war status as an 'immigrant reception area'. These historical and structural factors allied with the attractions of the diversity of culture drew many 'outsiders', as is recounted by a White respondent:

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[412] Oral History File H_18-02-2010 (0:10:21).

[413] The view of St. Paul's as a *ghetto* using the U.S. model was thoroughly debunked in A. H. Richmond and others, *Migration and Race Relations in an English City: A Study in Bristol.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp.80-81.

'I moved to St. Pauls when I was sixteen…and that was for the 24 hours drinking. The very good music. The cultural identity. And the smoke... So that was quite…adventurous. All the family thought I was mad. But they thought that anyway…'[414]

'St. Paul's' in 1980 had established 'immigrant' communities including Polish and Irish peoples, more recent migrants such as Asian and Afro-Caribbean peoples as well as a dynamic population of native interlopers. This fact, reflected in the statistical evidence that the 'New Commonwealth' population was actually in the minority, created a far more diverse demographic than was often presented in the media of the 1980s. Another respondent linked this diversity with the creation of space for culturally dissident groups:

'Most of the punks back then used to drink in a place called 'The Crown'… But in St. Paul's we used to drink in the Inkerman[415], cos it was an Irish pub then. Black people went in there but it was more of an Irish pub cos there was still, in the late 70s and early 80s, there was a huge Irish contingent in St. Paul's and…cos it was the 'No Blacks, No Irish, No Dogs'. And that was the only place they could really live, I spose…that was sort of like a hub really'[416]

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414 Oral History File G_09-10-2009 (0:03:12).

415 *'The Crown'* pub was in the St. Jude's area across the M32 motorway from 'St. Paul's'. *'The Inkerman'* was on the 'frontline' (Grosvenor Road) in the St. Paul's neighbourhood almost directly opposite the *'Black and White'* café, the flashpoint of the April 1980 disturbance.

416 Oral History File L_15-02-2010_Main (0:03:46).

Other new residents in 'St. Paul's' were the product of the placement teenagers from the Social Services 'care' system or from young offenders institutions. A White respondent recounted his experience of living in a 'multi-racial' hostel for young people in 'St. Paul's' in 1980:

'I was like in a hostel at the time. I think I was only sixteen or something. I didn't have anywhere else to stay. It was called the 'Multi-racial Youth Hostel'… it was young people. I don't think anyone was over the age of 18 or 19 in there. Black and White… It was all right living down there. I fell out with my parents and end up in care. I was in the care system for few years…It was quite a good experience really, it was right in the thick of [it]…it was good down there. Being a punk in St. Paul's wasn't a bad thing. There was like an affinity between Blacks and punks. They got on well with us and we got on well with them. The Black community down there like…there was never any problems with that sort of side of things. Went to all the Blues[417] in St. Paul's, 'Ajax', 'Manley's'…the 'Dockland Settlement'. It was a good buzz down there in those days. A really good buzz. And like between Blacks and Whites there wasn't a lot of racial tension. We didn't have any trouble.'[418]

A Black respondent, arrested as a juvenile in the back of a stolen car in his home town

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[417] 'Blues' were regular house parties held in basements that developed into semi-permanent but 'unofficial' clubs in the 1970s. Dresser notes 'For Black and White Bristolians the blues offered a raw undiluted inroad into Black Bristol'. Dresser and Fleming, *Bristol: Ethnic Minorities and the City, 1000-2001*, p.166-67.

[418] Oral History File A_20-03-2010 (0:01:47).

of Sheffield in the late 70s, recounted his route to the 'St. Paul's neighbourhood':

'I ended up off the street, I was supposed to be in my father's house [in Sheffield], off the street into a police station, into Shirecliffe [young offenders institution], Court, Shirecliffe, Court, I never seen my house again, right. And then [moved to] Bristol. And I never saw an appropriate adult or anything. So that's how I see this country, I don't know about justice. I always say to myself, so where was my Dad then? I didn't even see my Dad. I just went to the police cells and then to an institution, backwards and forwards all the time waiting for court dates and then to Bristol and more trouble with the police. That was my transition into adult [hood]…to tell the truth it is only when I look back on it I think... fucking hell'[419]

St. Paul's thus had a significant number of displaced teenagers both Black and White without direct family support having to cope with adulthood in a 'new' environment.

5.4.6 Overcrowding and social space

As has already been stated, in both study areas, overcrowding of households, tended to increase the street presence amongst the young and placed pressures on the limited social facilities for this age group. However, this structural consideration does not fully explain the 'street culture' of the youth of these locales in 1980. After the disturbances in April in Southmead a local newspaper published an article entitled *Riot Youths 'ignore our bid to help'* in which a Conservative Councillor who ran a local community centre complained that 'there was encouragement and financial help

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[419] Oral History File E_14-10-2010 (0:38:07).

waiting for the youngsters. But bored teenagers ignored the chance to spend their time usefully'[420].

None of the respondents from Southmead who were interviewed in the research for this thesis were actively involved in youth clubs in the area. They gave differing reasons for this, ranging from the fear of violence, the need to create their own entertainment, to the proliferation of 'rules':

'I knew a lot of the kids going to Southmead Youth Club but I was somebody who would hang about the shops instead of going up to the Youth Club…Southmead youth club was a tough youth club, you'd get fighting it seemed a lot…but it was just kids basically and kids fight a lot. It's not just like kind of nice and playing Ping-Pong. Kids would thieve. They would just be kind of acting anti-socially actually. We didn't know anything else. It was just kind of like living. It was kind of being naughty was fun. Do you know what I mean? Cos like being of low income we didn't have cash to spend on going out or anything. To spend on flagons of Natch. So being naughty was just kind of entertainment. Depending on the age, at a young age kids would do 'knockout ginger' and 'hedge hopping'. Just kind of jumping into people's hedges and being chased off by people. It was that kind of stuff as well as vandalism. Vandalism was obviously mindless, but I don't think we knew anything else…it was just a laugh. It was just kind of entertainment to us'.[421]

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[420] *Western Daily Press* (07-04-1980).

[421] Oral History File H_18-02-2010 (0:06:43). *'Natch'* is a brand of cider.

Another respondent specifically referenced the youth club in relation to the build-up of tension in the area before the 'riots' of 1980:

'So it was all this which built up to the kind of...well what's the fucking point? What's the point? And it was just this, this, the build-up, the tension over the years and over the years, over the years...and you go to the Club and you can't do this and you can't do that. Rules for this, rules for that, can't do that. It was just a powder keg waiting to happen for years'[422]

Shelia Welsh carried out participant-observation with a group of teenagers in Bethnal Green in London's East End and in her writing touches on some of the themes brought up by the respondents:

'From the kids' point of view the attractions of the street are manifold and manifest. First and foremost the street means freedom; freedom from parental supervision, from the discipline of work or school and from the structured leisure of the youth club. The street means movement; movement of people, movement of traffic. It provides a familiar but ever changing background to "doing nothing". It suits the milling behaviour so characteristic of groups of teenagers. The street provides an almost unlimited potential for drama - acting out your own or watching that of

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[422] Oral History File J_12-02-2010 (0:02:31).

other people'[423]

The need for children and teenagers to find unmediated spaces without surveillance where they could 'do what they want' was central to the testimony of the Southmead respondents. Brent's studies of Southmead in the 1990s charted a history of the contestation between the youth and the authorities (principally the police) over such spaces particularly 'The Green' and the nearby Badocks Wood[424]. A 'girls gang' wrote in the youth club magazine in 1983 about their experiences in one such space:

> 'We all went down the cornfields for something to do and the coppers came down and disturbed us. They would not let us just go down there. We all went out of the way of the houses and everything. They said we were disturbing all the houses but we weren't really. We was camping there, we had a fire, it was alright. There was no trouble or nothing, and they had to come down and spoil it. They all got beat up. The car got smashed and everyone had to run for it, but everyone was alright afterwards. The coppers beat up a few boys though, pretty bad. But it was a bit tight seeing as we had nowhere to go. We went in the field to get out of everyone's way'[425]

The key point of these testimonies is that the removal of 'private' space at home by

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[423] S. Welsh, 'The Manufacture of Excitement in Police-Juvenile Encounters,' *British Journal of Criminology* 21, no. 3 (1981), p.259.

[424] The 'green' is located in Chapter 6.0, Brent, *Searching for Community: Representation, Power and Action on an Urban Estate*, pp.159-60.

[425] Truman and Brent, *Alive and Kicking!: The Life and Times of Southmead Youth Centre*, p.59.

structural overcrowding does not mean it can be successfully replaced by mediated and monitored spaces in youth clubs, adventure play grounds or other such amenities. The Conservative Councillor in Southmead who complained about the lack of usage of the youth centre by 'bored teenagers' had misunderstood the problem. The teenagers wanted to spend *their time*, in an *unmediated place*, doing what they thought was *useful to them*. Unfortunately, for the youth of Southmead trying to achieve this often involved having to literally *fight* the police for access to space.

5.4.7 Encounters with the police

One major similarity shared by the respondents from areas of 'St. Paul's', 'Southmead' and 'Knowle West', most of whom were teenagers in 1980, was their relationship with the police and their perceptions of how they were treated. In the following section are excerpts from different interviews where six respondents recount 'face to face' meetings on the street with the Avon and Somerset Constabulary in the early 1980s. Some of the excerpts are reproduced in length to allow some expression of the respondents' feelings about these interactions. The ethnicity and age of the interviewees and the locales in which these incidents occurred are purposely not initially stated.

Excerpt 1

Respondent (G): 'They were there earlier in the afternoon…provoking people…lot of provoking down that end…leaning out of police cars, when they were on patrol and that. Saying your mother's a whore, a Black whore.'

Interviewer: 'Was that normal on the streets?'

Respondent (G): 'Oh, that was normal, yeah'[426]

<u>**Excerpt 2**</u>

Interviewer: 'So was it, it was sort of normal, I mean you say you didn't get nicked often, but how normal was it for people to get stopped and searched?'

Respondent (J): 'Oh, it was…they're on about stop and search nowadays…fucking hell we got stopped and searched all the time… Honestly stop…you're walking up the road, stop, search. You know, Panda cars and then they [unclear] Panda cars, stop, search [unclear] stop, search, stop search you know.'

Interviewer: 'And what was their attitude, did they give you shit or what?

Respondent (J): 'Oh yeah. There, there was some of em… the older coppers right they were OK. They were OK. Young coppers were cunts. They really had like a problem with you, you know.'[427]

<u>**Excerpt 3**</u>

Respondent (N): 'Cos they were heavy handed…At least now they might try and talk to you. Then they hurt you. They weren't just sort of like 'Come on mate we want a word with you'. They physically got into your face. Half the time we would go back into school afterwards and say 'Do you know who was in it? Who was there?' The coppers would be arresting somebody for some minor thing and half the time it would be someone who was just driving or his car…people were just pulled over for ridiculous things. I didn't drive at the time, but when I did drive you were pulled over. This what we thought the norm was. It's not the pulling over, it's the way they did it. After I left School... '81 I left. A mate of mine had this 'socialist' T shirt on and we

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[426] Oral History File G_09-10-2009 (0:14:14).

[427] Oral History File J_12-02-2010_Main_edit (0:16:41).

went out for few beers and I saw him the following day at work and has face was all scraped up and I said 'What happened to you?' He said left the pub, walking home, vanload of coppers asked where he'd been, 'What you doing this time of night?'…'Pub'. They saw his [T shirt] and they started kicking his shirt up the street, then they sort of roughed him up and just arm round the back and used the wall as a grater on his face. This a little blond… he's only about five foot four…five. Of course you feel angry, you feel angry at this. But they do this in a group with the vans.'

Interviewer: 'If you was pulled over in a mixed group, would you get targeted more because you were mixed race?'

Respondent (N): 'You would get the nice nasty. You get the one who'd say 'We can have you for this, we can do this to you'. 'You what's your name' 'What's that again, didn't hear you' 'Say that again'. To wind you up, 'cos you knew, I'm not biting, I'm not going to give you the enjoyment of me. 'Cos I know it's back of head job, back of the van. And that's the way it was. They ruled the roost, they wanted to show who were the masters.'[428]

Excerpt 4

Respondent (L): 'The police were really, really, really…really bad then. You'd be walking down the street and they'd just pull you over…'What you doing, where you going, what you got in your pockets, what's this' And if you said 'get out of it' or 'piss off' or whatever you'd get a slap and a lot of that went on. And sort of being crusty punks we were always getting harassed and I think that's why we got on a lot with the Rastas and people like that, 'cos we were as harassed as they were.'

Interviewer: 'So was it normal practice for them to just give you shit?'

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[428] Oral History File N_05-03-2010_edit (0:20:37).

Respondent (L): 'Yeah, you just got shit all the time no matter where you go…There were racial tensions because a lot of Black people did get picked on by the authorities and they were like singled out, you know…I can remember being with the Half-breeds[429] and I can remember being pulled over and there'd be about three or four White punks and three or four Black punks and they'd always pick the Black punks. They would call them all sorts of names, sort of Black bastards and all of that…'[430]

Excerpt 5

Respondent (F): 'There might be a bit of jeering as a cop car went by but there was nothing serious going on and then they [the police] just started getting really heavy, coming over and taking people off, taking 'em round the back and giving them a bit of a slapping. And eventually getting to the point where they would take people in a car and drive 'em off and dump 'em and that happened a few times. Dump 'em miles away. Dump 'em up Dundry… A mate of mine [name deleted], he got dumped off in Weston-Super-Mare.[431] He got a taxi from Weston-Super-Mare back to the police station and walked in and said 'Oi mate, there's a taxi outside for you' and give them the copper's number. The taxi-driver wanted paying and there was all kinds of ructions going on…They were pretty rough and the reaction would normally be that if you saw a police car stop you'd leg it, 'cos you knew you were probably gonna to get a kicking or get taken off somewhere.'

Interviewer: 'Were they searching you, would they do stop and search or not?

Respondent (F): 'They were searching, yeah. They'd use any excuse. The usual one

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[429] This was self-named group of 'mixed race' youth connected to the Punk youth sub-culture.

[430] Oral History File L_15-02-2010_Main (0:15:47) and (0:25:55).

[431] Dundry village is approximately 6 km south of the city centre. The seaside town of Weston-super-mare is 25 km southwest of Bristol.

was 'Oh, a granny's just been mugged round the corner and somebody's done it fitting your description'. That was usually the one.'

Interviewer: 'You said you knew a few Black punks. So did you have any experiences where the police pulled you as a group?'

Respondent (F): 'Yeah, yeah definitely. I had one experience that just stands out…coming out of the Dug Out. Me [the respondent: White male], [name deleted: White male] who was from a well-to-do middle class family and [name deleted: Black male] who had dreadlocks. We were all seventeen, eighteen, quite young lads and we got pulled up by a police van and they got all three of us. And then they separated us off. So they took me [White male] and [name deleted: White male] to one way and [name deleted: Black male] to the other. And they started searching [name deleted: Black male] and then…

Interviewer: 'They did that 'cos he was Black?'

Respondent (F): 'Cos he was Black, definitely 'cos he was Black. Because afterwards they just said 'Who's yer nigger mate?' to us thinking we'd be as racist as them. But it was outrageous. So they give him a real searching. They just asked us what we were doing. They searched him. So it was blatant that it was a racist thing going on'

Interviewer: 'Did you see any other incidents like that?'

Respondent (F): 'Well the other thing was, I used to hang out with [name deleted: Black male] quite a lot and if we were out of town or in Clifton or somewhere around like that we'd always get stopped and he would be the one that got searched'[432]

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[432] Oral History File F_27-08-2010_Part_1 (0:10:43) and (0:16:20).

Excerpt 6

Interviewer: 'Before the 'riot' what was the relationship with the police then?'

Respondent (E): 'It was terrible you couldn't trust the police. As a youth personally at the time we didn't realise how…you look back and you think that was like the 'good old days' but there was some nasty things that went with it. As a Black man you knew where you stood when you talked to certain people. Police would stop you and call you a 'Black bastard' and they made you know how they felt. There was no hiding it, not like now where it is all subtle and every ting. And so now when I look back and… I didn't realise I was going to miss those days where at least you knew what you was dealing with'

Interviewer: 'What about 'stop and search' was that common?'

Respondent (E): 'I was stopped by the police for 'walking aggressively'. We got stopped by the police for trying to get to the cinema. Back then they treat we like crap. People was getting stopped like that all the time'

Interviewer: 'How much did they do it in St. Paul's, was it more dangerous outside of St. Paul's?'

Respondent (E): 'Back then just the journey between Easton and St. Paul's…there was a good possibility that you would be stopped. Anywhere outside…most definitely. It was on the cards, always on the cards…they would stitch you up, they would put something on you quite easily, you couldn't trust them. We weren't the only people who didn't trust the police, I don't think anyone did'[433]

These six recollections from the early 80s came from the oral history respondents

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[433] Easton and St. Paul's are adjacent districts of inner city Bristol. Oral History File E_14-10-2010 (0:26:26).

listed in Table 22.

Excerpt	Respondent	Home locale in Bristol in 1980	Youth Sub-culture	Age April 1980	Ethnicity
1	G	St. Paul's	-	30s	White
2	J	Southmead	Ska	17	White
3	N	Southmead	Ska [RudeBoy]	17	Mixed Race
4	L	St. Paul's	Punk	16	White
5	F	Knowle West	Punk	15	White
6	E	St. Paul's	Rastafarian[434]	16	Black

Table 22: Home locale, youth sub-culture, age and ethnicity of a sample of the oral history respondents quoted in excerpts concerning the relationship with the police in Bristol 1980

When these respondents were interviewed and bearing in mind the effect of a lapse of thirty years in their memories, these particular experiences were vivid and the anger still visible, particularly in the younger interviewees. Some claimed that certain unhappy memories of their interactions with the constabulary on the street in the early 1980s had stayed with them for the rest of their lives and had played a major role in forming their views of the police as adults. The overall corroboration of experiences is clear despite the fact that only two of the respondents knew each other and neither group had ever lived in the other areas under study.

Several points are of particular interest in the testimonies. There was an explicit recognition at the time amongst the White respondents of the specific and unequal

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[434] The classing of Rastafarianism as a 'youth sub-culture' rather than a 'religion' in this case is not intended to detract from the latter category. Instead it reflects the important influence it had upon Black youth in the late 1970s. Its very lack of a central orthodoxy and hierarchy was important in its adoption and mutation by wider sections of Black youth and in its subsequent influence on other sub-cultures such as Punk. See E. Cashmore, *Rastaman: The Rastafarian Movement in England.* (London: Counterpoint, 1983) and E. E. Cashmore, *The Rastafarians.* (London: Minority Rights Group, 1984).

treatment of Black youth by some police officers despite sharing similar ages, sub-culture or home locality (excerpts 4 and 5). It also appears that in some cases racist abuse from the predominantly White police officers was used to denigrate both Black *and White* subjects, thereby, in the eyes of some police officers 'relegating' Whites living in areas of mixed ethnicity to the status of Blacks (excerpt 1).

It is significant that all the respondents describe the behaviour of the police as being the 'norm' rather than just a single bad experience. The third respondent was particularly disturbed by recalling that in the 70s and 80s in Southmead he and his friends believed that such behaviours of the police force at the time were quite normal, that they were 'routine' and 'what the police did'. Whilst some respondents were clearly aware at the time that some of these behaviours were 'wrong', others appear to have been socialised through their childhood experiences to accept them as the 'norm'. The same respondent was visibly moved by recalling his need to show restraint in the face of (racist) abuse from police officers in order to avoid the inevitable consequences of detention or violence (excerpt 3). This still created an intense feeling of repressed anger thirty years later.

The fourth respondent (and several others who are not quoted here) argued that the 'good' relationship between predominantly Black (Rastafarians) and White (Punks) in St. Paul's was partly derived from the similarity of their treatment on the street by the police. Most of the White punk respondents agreed with this analysis and interestingly one added that he felt safer in St. Paul's than where he lived in Knowle West:

> 'I didn't really get any hassle from police in St. Paul's, it was more
>
> Knowle West 'cos they knew they could get away with it whereas I think

it was a cultural thing, a West Indian gets arrested they tend to make more of a fuss whereas a British person would just say OK, alright. I knew…the SUS stuff was going on and a lot of [Black] people were getting stopped and searched for marijuana. [But in St. Paul's] if a Black guy got held up by the police, then suddenly a crowd would form, whereas that wouldn't really happen in Knowle, you'd be on your own. That's why you would tend to leg it'[435]

The relative safety provided by the contested streets of St. Paul's was not of course mirrored outside of the area. Several respondents (excerpts 5 and 6) noted that being Black or consorting with Black punk and 'Rasta' friends made them a specific target for the police outside of St. Paul's, particularly in the wealthier areas of the city.

Despite the overall animosity to the police based on their individual or collective experiences the second respondent from Southmead compared the acceptable behaviour of the older police officers to that of the younger members of the force. This suggested that not *all* the police were behaving in the same manner and that some individual older officers had formed, albeit limited, relationships with the youths they were 'policing'[436].

Finally, the accounts suggest it was not necessarily *what* police officers did that was

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[435] Oral History File F_27-08-2010_Part_1 (0:15:23).

[436] This was backed up by another respondent who stated that certain individual older police officers who were taking the role of 'Community Policemen' were considered to be 'OK'. In several of the interviews these officers were even praised as being 'compassionate'. However, others complained that these officers were 'nice to them' because they were trying to get them to inform on others.

problematic, especially with routine policing activities; it was the *way* that they behaved in relation to the respondents that mattered most. Most of the respondents claimed that lying, violence, planting evidence and even kidnap were a fairly routine part of the policing of youths in multi-ethnic St. Paul's *and* the mainly White estates of Southmead and Knowle West. These claims were backed up by another more shocking testimony from a teenage Punk who attended the main male comprehensive school in Knowle West:

Respondent (K): 'To give an idea what policing was like in Knowle West at the time [laughs] and I'm not a crim…although I'm from Knowle West I'm not particularly criminally inclined or anything…so I was really shocked when we had our police Liaison officer or whatever he was, did a big speech in front of us all. In front of the teachers as well…'

Interviewer: 'So that was like assembly, was it?'

Respondent (K): 'Yeah, in assembly. I suppose I still had doubts that you know…I still didn't quite believe that all cops were assholes. Although you had to believe that 'cos you were a punk. I didn't really believe that, I thought maybe he's alright. But the thing that I remember is that he [the police liaison officer] said 'It's too much trouble to go through the hassle of arresting you lot [the assembled pupils]. What I'd do is take you down a back alley and beat the shit out of you'. And…[laughs]…even the teachers were shocked at it, 'cos I think they were expecting a different kind of speech…[laughs]. I remember at the time thinking 'fucking hell', I am really glad we've moved from Knowle West to Knowle Park and I'm out of this'[437]

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[437] Oral History File K_09-09-2010 (0:09:48).

The respondent added that this was one of the defining moments in his 'politicisation' as a teenager. He realised that the whole 'community' of pupils at Merrywood Boys were being treated as a *criminal totality* with minors and juveniles being openly threatened with illegal violence by a representative of the 'state'. This incident he argued changed his perception of the police and their behaviour in areas like Knowle West, something that stayed with him for the rest of his life.

5.4.8   The role of the police

Having assessed actual street encounters between the respondents and the police force in the period under study it is worth considering the respondents' views on how their neighbourhoods were policed and what role the police force were taking where they lived. The following passage is one respondent's perception of the policing of Southmead in the early 1980s:

Respondent (K): 'There wasn't any contact with the police. The police would just view us with disdain all the time'

Interviewer: 'What would you say about the word 'occupation' or an 'occupying force' as a definition of what was going on?'

Respondent (K): 'Yeah, I think the police's job at that time was to see that we was behaving. To see that we was not kind of being naughty basically. All people, not just kids. All people. Adults as well. That they was behaving themselves. And so that was the job of the police. To keep an eye on us. And it's fucking insulting isn't it? It's insulting that these people are being paid, that these people we've got nothing in common with, that have got nothing to do with Southmead. They don't know us and they don't like us, it seemed. They was coming in seeing that we was behaving. It's a

bit of an insult. So 'occupying'? Kind of, yeah. But not 'occupying'… almost kind of like jailing. Do you know what I mean? **Kind of warders in a jail**'[438]

This resident's bleak picture of the policing of Southmead estate throws up several important observations. Rather than feeling the presence of the police as an 'occupation' he instead characterises the relationship as being closer to incarceration with the 'jail' patrolled by 'warders' in Panda cars who no one knew and whose task was to watch the population as a *whole*, not just the 'criminals' or even the 'young'.

The role of the police in Southmead was questioned by several respondents who outlined a dichotomy between protecting the community from crime and controlling the whole population of the estate. For many the former role was defunct as the police were not part of the community and therefore were unable to successfully carry out this task. One respondent recalled the building of the nearby Southmead police station in the late 1970s and the 'community's' view on this:

Respondent (N): 'The police were the police, you didn't expect any kind of fairness'

Interviewer: 'That was a general feeling around where you lived?'

Respondent (N): 'Yeah, oh yeah. I mean it really felt when they built this police station on Southmead Road it was to monitor the 'Mead' as such...They said it was to support the community and all that sort of stuff.'

Interviewer: 'But that's not what people felt or not what some people felt?'

Respondent (N): 'The thing is if you grew up in Southmead you knew who all the scallys were, you knew who all the druggies were, you knew who all the thieves were,

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[438] Oral History File H_18-02-2010 (1:06:42).

you knew who the ones were who were likely to cause trouble in your neighbourhood, your direct neighbourhood. So like when your moped went missing you went round to someone's house and said 'give it back'. You call the police. What would happen? Nothing. You dealt with it yourself.'[439]

These readings of the observation and policing of the community of Southmead *as a totality* rather than being connected to solving crimes through interactive relationships and selective surveillance, interestingly correlates with the changes in policing policies for some inner city communities with ethnic minority populations in the late 1970s. In assessing the changes in Metropolitan police strategies in that period, one critic argued that:

> 'The extension of the containment policy under Sir David McNee's commissionership is important not for the local conflicts which resisted it but for the manner in which it marked a departure from a policing strategy based on the need to combat particular types of crime – burglary or 'mugging'. Instead the direction shifted towards area-based strategies which assume that any inhabitant of a high-crime district could be treated as a criminal'[440]

These significant policy changes were understood by some commentators as being the result of a shift from post-war consensus policing of a 'liberal-democratic' society

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[439] Oral History File N_05-03-2010_edit (0:07:05).

[440] McNee was the Commissioner of the Metropolitan police from 1977-82. Gilroy, *There Ain't no Black in the Union Jack : The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation*, p.98.

towards the more coercive strategies of an 'authoritarian democracy'[441]. This, it was argued, was a product of the industrial and political struggles of the 1970s, which led to the reorganisation, centralisation and closer working relationships of the various state security services, from the Constabulary to MI5. Another major influence on the tactics employed by the police forces was the experience of the conflict in Northern Ireland in that era[442]. It is interesting to note that most analyses of the move towards criminalizing whole communities concentrated on inner city areas of mixed ethnicity, which appeared to bear the brunt of the new style policing tactics in the mid to late 1970s. However, little research or writing was addressed to investigating the effects of these strategies on mainly White working class communities, which were often not in the inner city, but in many cases, were situated in large peripheral council estates. So the racialisation of crime and community (and its critiques) may have inadvertently concealed changes in policing of some White communities in the period.

To an extent, debating the degree to which more coercive and 'area-based' policing were applied to particular 'Black' and 'White' communities is missing the point. Instead, the fact that *there was a disparity in the way some areas were policed* in the 1970s and 80s is the more salient feature to be concerned with. Little work appears to have been undertaken to assess if there were differences in the policing strategies and tactics undertaken in say White working-class and nearby middle-class areas of a city. Certainly, the respondents quoted had a perception based on their experiences on the

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[441] See particularly Hall and others, *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State and Law and Order* and T. Bunyan, 'The Police Against the People,' *Race & Class* XXIII, no. 2/3 (1981/82).

[442] P. Gilroy, 'Police and Thieves,' in *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in 70's Britain*, ed. Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (London: Hutchinson, 1982), p.171.

street and where they lived that *there was a difference*. Understandably, such disparities have the potential for breeding resentment, which has a close relationship to feelings of 'branding' by class and locality discussed previously. If there was a combined class and ethnicity based policing 'apartheid' operating in Bristol in the period then it clearly would have had a part to play in the disturbances that exploded in 1980.

Another consequence of the introduction of 'area-based' policing strategies was the effect on the perception of police officers that were actually on the front line. It is clear that, for example, some police officers held racially prejudiced views at this time but what is not so obvious is the impact on them of the racialisation of criminality in the 1970s[443], which occurred in most police forces dealing with major urban areas. In contrast to the racial prejudice of some police officers against visible or perceived ethnic groups, the new institutional policy of targeting 'high-crime' areas allowed whole communities to be 'lumped together' regardless of their actual ethnic make-up. This meant that an area that was explicitly categorised (or implicitly coded) by police policy as 'Black' and problematic[444] in practice included everyone, whether Black, Asian or White. White residents of these locales were thus 'tainted' by the very fact that they lived in a designated 'Black area'. These residents were labelled by some police officers, in classic racist terminology, as being 'degenerate' because they lived

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[443] This is described in comprehensive detail in Hall and others, *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State and Law and Order*.

[444] A retired police officer who worked in Southmead and St. Paul's recalled in a discussion with the author that St. Paul's was colloquially known amongst police officers as 'the jungle', though he added 'you can say that but not me', a veiled reference to the more recent awareness of racism within the force.

in such areas and consorted with 'Black' people.

Similar, though perhaps less explicit, behaviours could also result through the institutional categorisation of particular White working class areas as 'problematic'. One of the oral history respondents from Southmead made it clear that he felt that the Constabulary showed 'disdain' for the 'Meaders' *as a whole* and pointed out that the police officers neither lived in the area nor were known to the residents. The attitudes of police officers to the resident population are of course vital in achieving any level of 'policing by consent' and it is arguable that the turn towards 'area-based' rather than 'crime-based' policing in the late 1970s actually encouraged the dissemination of reactionary views about particular communities that were already held by those officers. As was pointed out by the oral history respondents from Southmead, the 'branding' of their area of Bristol, was considered by them to be a general view in Bristol. Police officers, who on the whole were 'not of Southmead', would of course have been subjected to these 'outsider' opinions. It is quite likely that 'area-based' policing strategies gave these views greater credibility and allowed them to become more explicit amongst police officers on the 'front line'.

Another facet of the policing of their estate that was recalled by the Southmead respondents was the 'faceless' nature of the activity in the 1970s. The move from beat policing on foot in the 1950s and 60s to the vehicular patrols of the 1970s clearly had an impact upon the potential for interaction between the police and the policed. The very fact of the re-emergence of 'community policing', arguably as a response to the disorders of the 1980s, provides evidence that some police forces were trying to *re-establish an interaction*, which had been lost at some point in post-war history. It

should be noted, however, that the nostalgia for consensus policing which was prevalent was often based on mythologized constructions of the past.

Despite the problems of establishing if things had been different in the past, what was explicit in the testimonies of the Southmead and Knowle West respondents was the physical and psychological separation between the police and the policed in 1980. The situation appeared to have degenerated further in St. Paul's. Both respondents and police in this area were aware of a different kind of community response to 'routine' police activity, which sometimes involved collective interventions by 'crowds' in reaction to 'Stop and Search', arrests or raids.

6.0 What Happened in the 'Bristol Riots'?

'A policeman... threatened to arrest a youth
who replied defiantly 'Arrest my ras!'' ' [445]

6.1 Introduction

The following chapter is concerned with generating comprehensive narratives of the disturbances in Bristol in St. Paul's on April 2nd, Southmead on April 3rd-4th and Knowle West on 4th-5th April 1980. The three episodes of disorder present contradictory difficulties with regard to the analysis of primary and secondary historical sources. The St. Paul's disturbance became iconic in the popular memory for several reasons. Primarily it was perceived to be the first major outbreak of urban 'rioting' on mainland Britain for a considerable period of time, which was not directly instigated by formal political protest[446]. Although this view is considered to be incorrect by many authors, in that it ignored violent disturbances centred around raids on clubs and cafés frequented by ethnic minorities in the 1970s[447] as well as significant disorder at large public events such as the Notting Hill Carnival in 1975

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[445] The 'flashpoint' of the St. Paul's disturbance P. Stephenson, *Report of Bristol Disturbances: April 2nd, 1980.* (Bristol Record Office 43129, 1980), Box 105 P ST PA B1, p.2.

[446] Violence associated with pickets, marches and demonstrations had been a fairly regular feature of England in the 1970s, with industrial disputes (such as the Miner's strikes of 1972-74 and Grunwicks in 1977) and political protests against marches organised by fascist parties (notably in London in Red Lion Square 1974, Lewisham 1977 and Southall 1979). The unsolved deaths of demonstrators Kevin Gately (1974) and Blair Peach (1979) were a testament to the violence unleashed on these occasions.

[447] Notable examples in London include the police raids and consequent disturbances at the Mangrove café (1970) and the Metro Youth Club in Notting Hill (1971), the Swan Disco in Stockwell (1974), the Carib Club in Cricklewood (1974) and the Four Aces Club in Dalston (1975). Joshua, Wallace and Booth, *To Ride the Storm: The 1980 Bristol 'Riot' and the State*, pp.59-61.

and 1976[448], the wider perception was that the St. Paul's disturbance was 'something new'.

As a result of the intense media interest, the subsequent political debates in local and central government and the involvement of local and national bodies such as the Commission for Racial Equality, there is a considerable volume of both primary and secondary source material available for study. In contrast, the Southmead and Knowle West incidents received sparse attention in the local media, no national coverage and little or no interest from local government bodies. Consequently primary sources concerning these events are thin at best and secondary sources are virtually non-existent.

In this study of the St. Paul's disturbance of 2nd April 1980 newly available source material such as oral history interviews, photographs, television footage and hitherto restricted police documents have been gathered to supplement the existing primary and secondary sources. Furthermore, it was clear from a close reading of all the secondary sources that certain aspects of the disturbance had been under-researched or ignored[449]. Of particular interest were the existing social networks from which much of the 'crowd' was composed, the phase of the disturbance after the withdrawal of the police, the activities of participants during this time and the involvement of non-

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[448] Keith, *Race, Riots and Policing: Lore and Disorder in a Multi-Racist Society*, pp.123-4.

[449] Of particular use were the secondary sources that supplied detailed 'time-lines' concerning the raid on the '*Black and White*' café and the subsequent disturbances. These included Joshua, Wallace and Booth, *To Ride the Storm: The 1980 Bristol 'Riot' and the State*, pp.65-91, Reicher, *The St. Paul's Riot: An Explanation of the Limits of Crowd Action in Terms of a Social Identity Model*, pp.190-95 and 'Bristol Disturbances,' *Runnymede Trust Bulletin*, no. 120 (May 1980).

residents who travelled to the area to take part in the disorder. Consequently the research activity in this account of the St. Paul's disturbance of April 1980 was angled toward these under-researched areas and utilises a fusion of quantitative and qualitative analyses in an attempt to illuminate them.

The Southmead and Knowle West disturbances, which followed immediately after the St. Paul's incident, provided quite different difficulties with regard to research and the construction of a narrative. The lack of formal primary sources and the absence of any substantial written accounts propelled the researcher towards the construction of wholly new narratives for the incidents in these areas rather than the critique, modification and correction of existing accounts as in the case of St. Paul's. The description of the incidents presented here is essentially based upon an amalgamation of newly recorded oral history accounts with the sparse primary sources (mostly local newspapers). In the absence of significant detailed data from police and other authorities the narrative is clearly driven by the perceptions and memories of participants from Southmead and Knowle West. However, this in itself provides an interesting and valuable approach to constructing the narratives of 'riot'.

6.2   The St. Paul's disturbance: April 2nd 1980

6.2.1   Introduction

Michael Keith in his analysis of the urban disturbances in London in 1981[450] made the concept of 'symbolic locations' central to his study. These locations, in particular the

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[450] Keith, *Race, Riots and Policing: Lore and Disorder in a Multi-Racist Society*.

so-called 'frontlines'[451] he argued were sites of confrontation of between the authorities and the local community, being simultaneously perceived as potential 'no go' areas by the police and as places of sanctuary by many of the local residents. Within 'frontlines' lay specific clubs, cafés and pubs[452], which became symbolic in themselves partly through their reputation for social activities (parties, gigs or 'hang-outs') as well as being locations for obtaining soft drugs, which in the early 80s were typically cannabis resin or marijuana. They also gained a wider fame from the regular raids that were carried out by the police, sometimes resisted in varying degree by the customers and nearby local community.

In St. Paul's the 'frontline' was Grosvenor Road[453] (see Figure 18) running from the junction with the main thoroughfare, Ashley Road to Brighton Street. Within Grosvenor Road there were two main 'legal' symbolic locations, the *Inkerman* public house and on the opposite side of the road a few metres away the *Black and White* café. The latter premises had been raided several times by the Avon and Somerset police 'A' division[454] and its proprietor Bertram Wilkes had lost his licence to sell

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[451] Keith studies three such locations in detail; Railton Road, Brixton, Sandringham Road, Hackney and All Saints Road, Notting Hill. Ibid. Chapter 2.

[452] Keith cites *'shabeens'* (illegal drinking and gambling clubs) on Railton Road Brixton, *Johnston's café* and the *Lord Stanley* public house on Sandringham Road, Hackney and the *Mangrove Club* on All Saints Road, Notting Hill. Ibid. pp.35-39.

[453] Ken Pryce traced an earlier history of the Grosvenor Road *'frontline'* or *'frontier'* in his participant-observation study of St. Paul's from 1969-74. Pryce, *Endless Pressure: A Study of West Indian Life-Styles in Bristol*, pp.30-38.

[454] 'A' division policed central Bristol and had its headquarters at the city centre Bridewell police station approximately half a mile southwest from St. Paul's. Another half mile to the southeast was the newly opened (1979) Trinity Road police station.

alcohol in 1979. A few weeks before the raid in April 1980, a similar 'operation' had been carried out on the *'Shady Grove'* café[455] (a similar contentious site) on Ashley Road a few hundred yards from the 'frontline' (see Figure 18).

6.2.2 The 'trigger': Raid on the *Black and White* café: 2.40pm-4.30pm

On March 26th 1980 the Chief Superintendent of Avon and Somerset Constabulary authorised an operational order[456] for a 'raid' on the *Black and White* café with two explicit aims, *'to discover evidence of illegal sale, supply or offer to supply of intoxicating liquor. To seize such intoxicants and vessels containing same.'* and 'to discover evidence of illegal possession or use of controlled drugs and arrest those persons involved'. Interestingly it was noted in the operational order that the *Black and White* café was a licensed 'late night refreshment house' and that 'persons found on the premises NOT being in possession of intoxicants can state they are on the premises for a lawful purpose', something which would seem self-evident to most members of the public who fraternise cafés. The symbolic nature of the *Black and White* café is the sub-text to this operational order, as it was necessary to inform the policemen and women who were going to carry out the raid that not everyone in the

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[455] In a press conference following the 'raid' on the *'Black and White'* café in April 1980 a police spokesman stated that it had been raided once in the last twelve months; Avon and Somerset Constabulary, *Press Conference Following the Disturbances in St. Paul's: New Bridewell: 11.00am Thursday April 3rd 1980.* (Bristol Record Office POL/LG/1/9, 1980), p.10. The recent raid on the *'Shady Grove'* is referred to in Joshua, Wallace and Booth, *To Ride the Storm: The 1980 Bristol 'Riot' and the State*, p.65. It appears that the police had raided both premises several times over the preceding years.

[456] Avon and Somerset Constabulary, *Operational Order: Black and White Cafe, 27 Grosvenor Rd., St. Paul's: 26th March 1980.*

café was 'fair game'. Similarly in block capitals and underlined was the statement that 'BUT ONLY PERSONS FOUND IN POSSESSION OF DRINK WILL BE, (i) taken to a reporting officer and (ii) arrested if name and address not known or cannot be verified'. The weight given to these statements suggests that the Chief Superintendent was struggling with a problem of discipline and feared the punitive behaviour of his officers in dealing with a premises where according to the order 'cannabis is openly smoked' and whose supposedly numerous patrons were 'mainly West Indian men and white prostitutes'. The operational order is thus contradictory in that it sets the target up as a *'den of vice'* and an affront to the police (it was certainly well known by reputation in the Avon and Somerset Constabulary 'A' division) but then informs the participants in the 'raid' that they can't arrest everybody merely because they are present, even if they are 'West Indians and prostitutes'. It is certainly questionable that it was routine police practice (or even legally justified[457]) to arrest customers in a café who happened to have alcohol in their possession and refused to give their details after being, note, 'taken to a reporting officer'.

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[457] Defence lawyers at the 'riotous assembly' trial of 1981 pointed out that 'they (the police) had no legal right to document innocent people nor ask them to wait outside the café'. Joshua, Wallace and Booth, *To Ride the Storm: The 1980 Bristol 'Riot' and the State*, p.76.
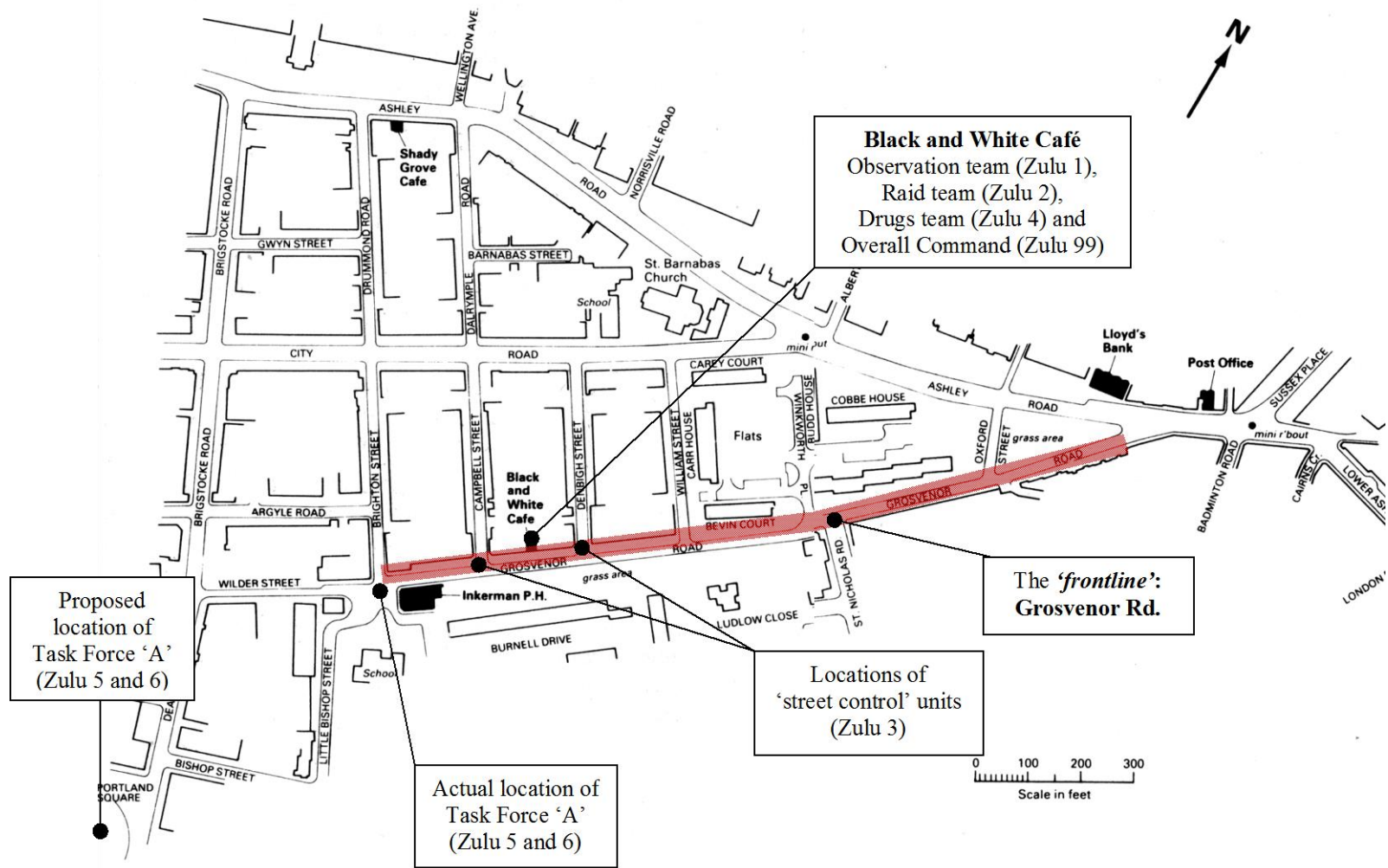
Figure 18: St. Paul's 'neighbourhood' 2nd April 1980: The 'raid' on the *Black and White* café[458]

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[458] The maps underlying Figures 18-21 are derived from Ibid. Figure 2 pp.66-67.

The evidently serious nature of the 'raid' was echoed in the operational order by the planning regarding manpower, vehicles and logistics. In all there were eight teams of police officers involved each with a specific role and designated call sign. These are listed in Table 23 and located on Figure 18.

Call Sign	No. Police Officers	Task	Location
Zulu 1	2	Observation of café (plain clothes)	*Black and White* café
Zulu 2	12	Raid team	*Black and White* café
Zulu 3	6	Street control	Grosvenor Rd. - Campbell St.- Denbigh St.
Zulu 4	8	Drugs team for raid (plain clothes)	*Black and White* café
Zulu 5	6	Task force back-up unit	Portland Square
Zulu 6	2	Dog handlers	Portland Square
Zulu 7	Unknown	C.I.D. 'scenes of crime' team	Unknown
Zulu 8	Unknown	Prisoner reception team	Trinity Rd. police station
Zulu 99	1	Overall command	*Black and White* café
Total	**37+**		

Table 23: Roster of police teams for the *Black and White* café raid, St. Paul's April 2nd 1980

In all more than *forty* police officers were planned to be involved in the operation, with thirty-seven at or in the vicinity of the café itself. How many officers were actually involved in the raid was particularly contentious in the days after the events of April 2nd 1980. In a press conference[459] the morning following the 'raid' and the disturbances, the Chief Constable of the Avon and Somerset police Brian Weigh, made several careful statements suggesting that only *twelve* officers had been directly involved in the 'raid' on the *Black and White* café, although he admitted (an unnamed) number were held 'in reserve'. The Chief Constable amended this statement in a report to the Secretary of State almost a month after the event stating;

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[459] Avon and Somerset Constabulary, *Press Conference Following the Disturbances in St. Paul's: New Bridewell: 11.00am Thursday April 3rd 1980*.

'20 officers from the division covering the St. Paul's area, including 2 of the local community constables, went, under the command of a superintendent, to the café. Of these officers, one sergeant and 6 men were members of the Drug Squad and, together with the officer in charge, were in plain clothes: the remainder were in uniform. A further 6 officers and an Inspector were in the road outside to control traffic and anyone who assembled. No difficulties were expected in the execution of the warrant, therefore the manpower involved was kept to a minimum so that the operation could be regarded as low key'[460]

The number of police officers directly involved in this 'low key' operation had thus more than doubled from *twelve* to *twenty-seven*. He went on to add that:

'Two dog handlers, with dogs trained to search for drugs, attended the briefing and were then deployed in reserve in the Portland Square area with instructions to remain away from the scene unless otherwise directed. They could not be seen by people near the Black and White café…'

Although Weigh makes the point that the 'dog handlers' could not be seen from the café he then mentions another 'reserve' of six officers that are not specifically located in his statement. Taking all these groups into account, there are now a total of at least *thirty-five* police officers present for the 'raid', more than tripling his original estimate

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[460] Secretary of State for the Home Department, *Serious Disturbances in St. Paul's, Bristol on 2 April 1980: A Memorandum Placed in the Library of the House of Commons by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Following the Report made to Him by the Chief Constable of the Avon and Somerset Constabulary.* (Bristol Record Office 43129, 1980), Box 105: P ST PA B1.

at the press conference and approaching the evidence provided by the operational order.

The '*Black and White*' was a small café, estimated to be approximately five metres square, the size of a front room[461]. When several[462] drug squad officers in plain clothes entered the café on the afternoon of 2nd April 1980 at approximately 2.40pm[463] to undergo their duty of 'observation', there were a number of customers and the proprietor Bertram Wilkes present. The exact figure is somewhat of a mystery, as again police evidence varied from twelve to thirty[464]. The most reasonable estimate seems to be about fifteen customers were present mostly young Black men, whom it was stated were peacefully 'playing dominoes, drinking soft drinks and chatting'[465]. After the Drug Squad officers had ordered some coffees and observed the customers

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[461] Joshua, Wallace and Booth, *To Ride the Storm: The 1980 Bristol 'Riot' and the State*, p.75.

[462] The number of plain-clothes policemen who entered the *'Black and White'* prior to the 'raid' proper varies in the accounts from being completely ignored in the Chief Constable's statement to the Secretary of State for the Home Department; Secretary of State for the Home Department, *Serious Disturbances in St. Paul's, Bristol on 2 April 1980: A Memorandum Placed in the Library of the House of Commons by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Following the Report made to Him by the Chief Constable of the Avon and Somerset Constabulary* to two, Reicher, *The St. Paul's Riot: An Explanation of the Limits of Crowd Action in Terms of a Social Identity Model*, p.190 or three, Stephenson, *Report of Bristol Disturbances: April 2nd, 1980*, p.1.

[463] The question of exact timing is problematic as police evidence varied considerably on this point. However, the most accurate timing appears to be from the evidence provided by Paul Stephenson of the Fieldwork and Liaison Division of the Commission for Racial Equality. Ibid. p.1.

[464] Joshua, Wallace and Booth, *To Ride the Storm: The 1980 Bristol 'Riot' and the State*, p.76.

[465] The estimate of numbers comes from Stephenson. The statement of the peaceful nature of the café at the time of the raid comes from the evidence of a policewoman present. Ibid. p.75.

for a few minutes, the 'raid' commenced with the arrival of at least twelve other uniformed and plain clothes police officers from the Zulu 2 and 4 teams. Again the exact numbers of police officers who actually entered the café at the initiation of the operation are unclear varying between twelve or fourteen in the accounts[466]. According to the plan in the operational briefing, the potential numbers could have been up to twenty if the Drug squad in plain clothes (Zulu 4, numbering eight officers) and the uniformed police team (Zulu 2, numbering 12 officers) are combined[467]. In either case it appears the customers were almost outnumbered by the 'raiders', with the small café filled with more than *thirty* customers and police officers in total.

After declaring the nature of the raid to the owner of the café, the police immediately arrested one man for drinking beer and after searching the customers (who were all found to be 'clean') ordered them (some were protesting 'at some of the remarks and heavy handed behaviour of the police'[468]) out of the premises onto the street outside. At this point, a few minutes after the start of the 'raid', Superintendent Arkell made a decision to call in his reserve, the 'A' division Task Force who it appears were not

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[466] The sources are Reicher, *The St. Paul's Riot: An Explanation of the Limits of Crowd Action in Terms of a Social Identity Model*, p.191, *Bristol Disturbances* and Stephenson, *Report of Bristol Disturbances: April 2nd, 1980*, p.1 respectively.

[467] Avon and Somerset Constabulary, *Operational Order: Black and White Cafe, 27 Grosvenor Rd., St. Paul's: 26th March 1980*, App. A.

[468] Stephenson, *Report of Bristol Disturbances: April 2nd, 1980*, p.1. Gladys Wilkes (the wife of the proprietor) an eyewitness to the events also stated that the police 'started pulling them (the customers) about and they did not give any reason whatsoever. I think the police over-reacted.' *Bristol Disturbances*.

located out of sight in Portland Square as planned in the operational briefing, but were actually in view of the café at the *Inkerman* public house less than 100 yards away (see Figure 18). They drove their van to the café and then proceeded to help search it for stolen property (without a warrant). Arkell's reason for calling the Task Force and their van to the café was to remove over a hundred crates of beer that the raid team had discovered on the premises.

Inside and directly outside the café there were now approximately thirty or more police officers[469] along with a crowd of customers and onlookers. The police removed the crates of beer from adjoining rooms of the premises to the café, then carried them through the crowd gathered outside, stacking them on the pavement. The crates were then loaded into the awaiting Task Force 'A' van. As this removal operation was taking place, the café proprietor Bertram Wilkes was arrested[470] for possession of drugs and sales of illegal alcohol and, significantly, handcuffed and held in the café. A second prisoner, the person who had been arrested for being in possession of alcohol, was held in a police vehicle outside the café for over half an hour in full view of the crowd, before being driven away for questioning[471].

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[469] This was corroborated by Gladys Wilkes who said that the raid involved *'about thirty'* police officers. Ibid..

[470] Joshua and Wallace note that 'this was quite unnecessary as he was known to the police and the community and there was little fear of his disappearing or using violence. He could have been summoned to appear at the police station rather than arrested and police awareness of this led every senior officer in court to deny ordering his arrest, and ordering him to be handcuffed'. Joshua, Wallace and Booth, *To Ride the Storm: The 1980 Bristol 'Riot' and the State*, pp.76-7.

[471] Ibid. pp.76.

Several key drivers for the disturbance that was to follow were now in place. The operation to remove the large amount of 'illegal' alcohol from the café in full view of and directly through a gathering crowd took over an hour[472] (between approximately 3.00pm and 4.30pm) and involved a significant number of police officers including the 'reserve'. During this time school children from the nearby Cabot School, who had just broken up for the end of the spring term, filtered directly past the scene, taking their exciting information into the wider community of St. Paul's[473]. More and more passers-by (it was approaching the rush hour) stopped to watch the police operation, some observed the events from their flats in Burnell Drive, which overlooked the '*Black and White*' and others, on nearby streets in St. Paul's, heard of the events and made their way down to Grosvenor Road.

It is worthwhile considering the perception of the gathering crowds on Grosvenor Road as they watched a large number of police officers in plain clothes or in uniform surrounding the *Black and White* café and systematically loading numerous crates of beer into their van. For many, the removal of Wilke's licence to sell alcohol the previous year due to police objections had been a clear case of racial

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[472] An Avon and Somerset police officer who was in the *Black and White* café during the raid stated that, in his opinion, the key error made during the operation concerned the decision to move the large amount of alcohol stored at the *'Black and White'* in full view of a crowd for over an hour, rather than rely on photographic evidence (notes from an unrecorded interview by the author March 2010).

[473] Reicher, *The St. Paul's Riot: An Explanation of the Limits of Crowd Action in Terms of a Social Identity Model*, p.191.

discrimination[474]. This particular raid now appeared to be outright robbery, an organised operation to deprive the 'community' of their beer 'for a party over Easter'[475]. As sections of the crowd around the café entrance became more vociferous in their attempts to stop the removal of the crates of beer, the decision was made to move the handcuffed Bertram Wilkes held inside the *'Black and White'* to Trinity Road police station. Sometime between 4.00 and 4.30pm, Wilkes was escorted through the crowd to a police vehicle and driven away, further agitating those gathered on Grosvenor Road. The stage was thus set for a confrontation.

6.2.3   The first phase of the disturbance: 4.30pm-5.45pm

The first phase of the disturbance was characterised by a series of simultaneous bouts of violence against the police in the streets in the direct vicinity of the *Black and White* café. These attacks were initiated by grouplets from the crowd originally watching the events at the café, often in reaction to the behaviour of the police and were interspersed by lulls in the action.

It is not explicitly clear why the vociferous crowd outside the '*Black and White*' became violent[476], but the exit from the café of four officers of the Drug Squad[477] in

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[474] See *Bristol Evening Post* 03-04-1980 and Ras Judah who recalled 'The fact that it [the Black and White café] had not received a licence to sell alcohol was seen as another indication of discrimination towards African-Caribbean people'. Statement to Karen Garvey of the Museum of Bristol 26-02-2009.

[475] Statement by Bertram Wilkes in *Bristol Evening Post* 03-04-1980.

[476] The narrative contained in most of the secondary and some primary sources refers to the ripping of the trousers of a Black youth as the 'trigger' for violence. However, the new research evidence suggests that this was a convenient story for many participants and commentators to avoid any connection with

plain clothes sometime after the removal of Wilkes appears to be the moment where the event began to escalate into serious disorder. One oral history respondent who was in the crowd outside the café recalled the moment in detail:

Respondent (E): 'And eventually the door [of the café] opened and that must be when they decided they were gonna start, they're ready now, they'd got everything bagged up and they gonna take it away. And they started coming out with the drinks or whatever, the goodies, the loot…'

Interviewer: 'Cos they were lifting all the beer out they found in the back weren't they…was there a van there they were loading it into?'

Respondent (E): 'Yeah, they was loading, they was loading, doing the chain thing walking out…and that's when how I remember it is eventually one of them came out and he had what would have been like a bread tray…and that had the weed man and everybody was just get kinda frenzied then. A frenzy when they seen the weed coming out, 'cos drinks is drinks, but weed is kind of another ting. An everybody kinda start pushing and it got kinda like a scrum…'

Interviewer: 'Yeah, and they were trying to get out of it?'

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the open removal of a small amount of soft drugs by the plainclothes officers, which probably was the precipitator.

[477] The Chief Constable of Avon and Somerset Constabulary stated that only two drug squad officers left the café in his report to the Secretary of State. Secretary of State for the Home Department, *Serious Disturbances in St. Paul's, Bristol on 2 April 1980: A Memorandum Placed in the Library of the House of Commons by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Following the Report made to Him by the Chief Constable of the Avon and Somerset Constabulary*, p.2. However, this report was undermined by the corroborative evidence given by four drug squad officers Joshua, Wallace and Booth, *To Ride the Storm: The 1980 Bristol 'Riot' and the State*, p.79.

Respondent (E): 'They were trying to get out but people now is prevented it. And at some point some guy walked out of there as well that someone in the crowd recognised as someone who had walked in there obviously in plainclothes to purchase weed. Just to obviously spot the ting and realised that he was a part of it and he was police…and they run him down man and give him some kicks man. I remember when he was running across the green, it was like a leopard chasing a gazelle or whatever and they just trip him up and give him some ras clat licks and kicks right there, know what I mean. That is what I recall'[478]

The plainclothes officers were attempting to return to their vehicle, which was parked nearby in Ludlow Close out of sight of the *Black and White* café. According to their statements, on leaving the café they walked through a crowd of two hundred or so people (mostly Black males), from which a smaller group of forty to sixty youths suddenly detached and began to chase them[479]. Witnesses in the crowd claimed that the drug squad officers had 'struck out calling the crowd "Black bastards" thus precipitating the ensuing chase[480]. This perhaps explains why other uniformed police officers in the immediate vicinity were *not attacked* at this time.

Unable to get to Ludlow Close due to their pursuit by a section of the 'crowd', the Drug Squad officers headed for Denbigh Street where an unmarked police car (a red Avenger) was parked (see Figure 19). In their attempt to reach this car they claimed

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[478] Oral History File E_09-14-2010 (0:05:40).

[479] The numbers involved in this group according to evidence given by other police officers varied from 12 to 40 to a 'large crowd'. Ibid. p.79.

[480] Reicher, *The St. Paul's Riot: An Explanation of the Limits of Crowd Action in Terms of a Social Identity Model*, p.191.

they were 'jostled, kicked, punched and subjected to verbal abuse'[481]. Only one of the four made it to the unmarked car in Denbigh Street, the others returning to the café. The chasing crowd began to stone the red Avenger, injuring one of the occupants (a woman police officer) and several other uniformed police who had arrived at the scene and were close to the vehicle. The drug squad officer managed to start the vehicle as another police vehicle at the City Road end of Denbigh Street arrived with its sirens wailing and lights flashing which distracted the crowd allowing them to escape[482]. The crowd that had attacked the unmarked police car then moved off onto City Road and headed for Campbell Street on the other side of the '*Black and White*'. Some members of this crowd, including several women, then engaged in verbal abuse and dispersed stone throwing with police officers and arriving police vehicles that had reacted to two earlier calls for assistance[483]. The violence resulted in several chases and arrests of 'suspects' by police officers, one of which led to a dog handler being knocked unconscious on Campbell Street at 4.47pm[484].

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[481] Joshua, Wallace and Booth, *To Ride the Storm: The 1980 Bristol 'Riot' and the State*, p.79.

[482] Ibid. p.81.

[483] In the police log of radio and telephone calls entitled *'Riots St Paul's Area Bristol'*, the first entry appears at 4.31pm when 'A' Division Control gives out the message 'Reference the raid black and white café Grosvenor Road – trouble brewing. Units despatched'. This is followed at 4.44pm by '10-9 Grosvenor Road', which translates as a 'call for assistance' at the café. From the timings of the calls it appears the trouble connected to the exit of the Drugs Squad officers from the café prompts the first message, the second is as a result of violence in the vicinity of the *Black and White* café. It is curious and unexplained why no messages are recorded for the duration of the raid at the *Black and White* café, which lasted from approximately 2.40pm to 4.30pm Avon and Somerset Constabulary, *Log of Events: Riots St Pauls Area Bristol*, p.1.

[484] A request for an ambulance was made by police officers at this time. Ibid. p.1.

As these events were unfolding on the nearby Denbigh Street, City Road and Campbell Street between 4.30pm and 4.45pm, outside the café on Grosvenor Road the remaining section of the crowd were still present though not apparently engaged in any violence. The police communications log shows that there was little serious activity until around 5.00pm when a police motorcyclist was knocked off his bike outside the café[485]. According to police witnesses inside the café, Superintendent Arkell had instructed them to stay on the premises with the door locked and the curtains closed[486]

Throughout this time the police had continued to load the 'illicit' crates of beer into the police van, and at approximately 5.00pm made off with their cargo only to come under renewed attack by members of the watching crowd. The police van was stopped outside the *Inkerman* pub, less than 100 yards from the '*Black and White*', overturned and the crowd liberated the beer[487] (see Figure 19). Several police officers fled the scene; some hid in the gardens of nearby houses and others sought refuge in the café as they too came under attack from missiles. At 5.05pm Inspector Allen made a 999 call using the café phone stating: 'I'm in the Black & White café it is approaching riot proportions – please get all available units to attend'[488].

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[485] A 999 call was made by a resident of the Council flats opposite the café at 5.02pm stating that the police motorcyclist had been injured. Ibid. p.1.

[486] Joshua, Wallace and Booth, *To Ride the Storm: The 1980 Bristol 'Riot' and the State*, p.82.

[487] Reicher, *The St. Paul's Riot: An Explanation of the Limits of Crowd Action in Terms of a Social Identity Model*, p.193 Section (c).

[488] Avon and Somerset Constabulary, *Log of Events: Riots St Pauls Area Bristol*, p.1.
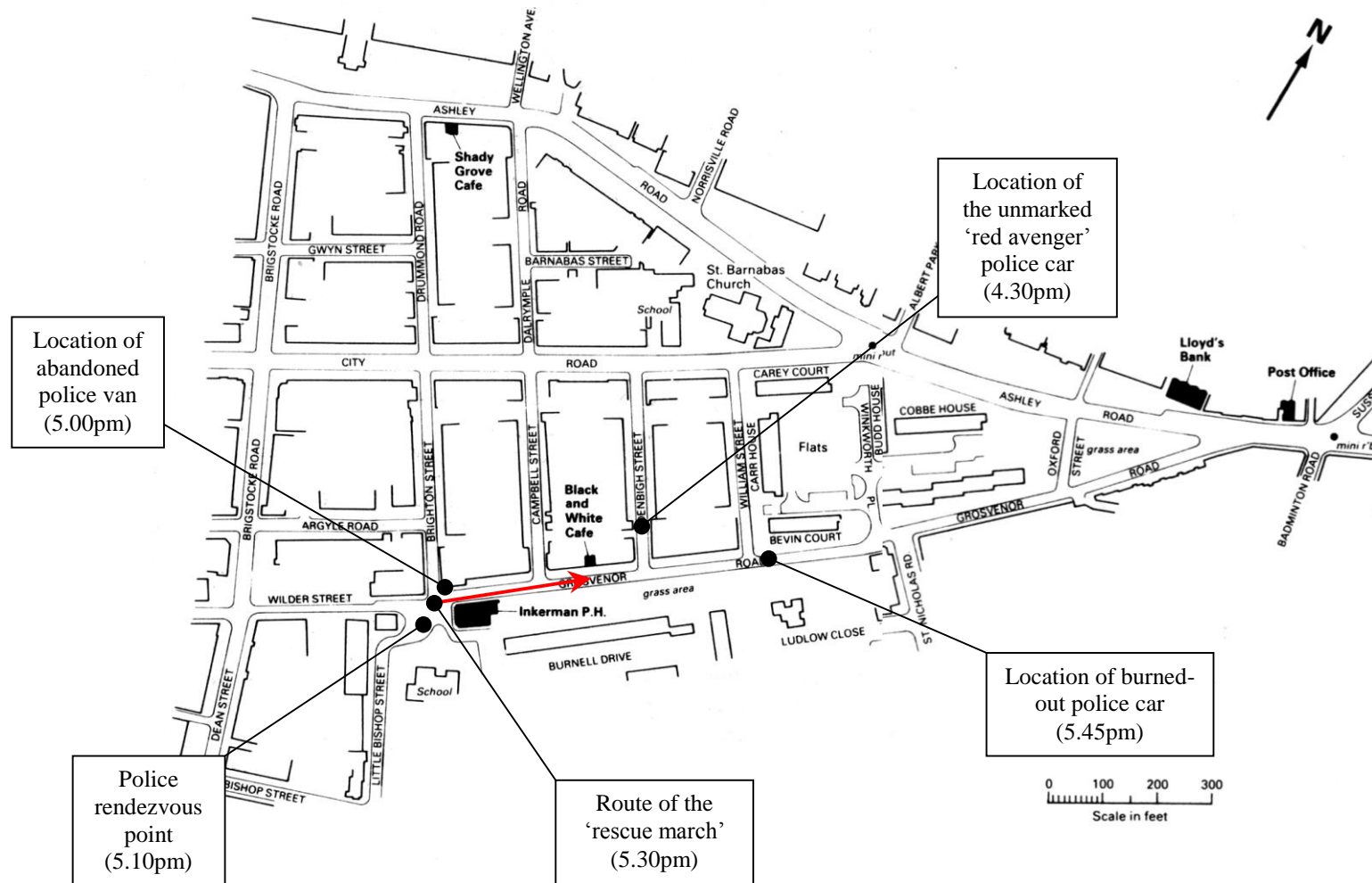
Figure 19: St. Paul's 'neighbourhood' April 2nd 1980: The first phase of the disturbance: 4.30pm-5.45pm

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At this point the crowd outside was alternately stoning the café and making forays to grab the remaining beer stacked inside. Two nearby police cars parked at the end of William Street were attacked by a section of the crowd and turned over. One of these vehicles was righted by some police officers who then used it to make their escape from the scene; the other was left behind and was eventually set on fire by a group of three or four Black and White youths[489] (see Figure 19).

By 5.10pm thirty to forty police officers had regrouped at the *Inkerman* public house and all mobile units, including a number of dog handlers, were being instructed to rendezvous there. At approximately 5.30pm the contingent of police officers under the command of a Superintendent marched five abreast in 'military' style down Grosvenor Road to 'relieve the siege' of the *Black and White* café (see Figure 19). According to witnesses some had truncheons drawn, others were carrying dustbin lids and milk crates to defend themselves from missiles and they were accompanied by at least eight dog handlers[490]. How successful this supposed 'rescue march' was is debatable, as several police witnesses claimed that it caused the renewal of stone throwing by a crowd of somewhere between 200 and 600 which was now in the vicinity. However, the evidence suggests that this crowd local to the café was partially

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[489] This is noted in Reicher, *The St. Paul's Riot: An Explanation of the Limits of Crowd Action in Terms of a Social Identity Model*, p.193 and there is a call for the fire brigade to attend at 5.24pm; Avon and Somerset Constabulary, *Log of Events: Riots St Pauls Area Bristol*, p.2.

[490] Reicher, *The St. Paul's Riot: An Explanation of the Limits of Crowd Action in Terms of a Social Identity Model*, p.193 and Joshua, Wallace and Booth, *To Ride the Storm: The 1980 Bristol 'Riot' and the State*, p.84.

dispersed or at least fell back after forays led by police dogs and handlers[491]. This allowed the police officers to both secure the *Black and White* café and the burning vehicle at the end of William Street. By 5.45pm there was a lull in the violence, prompting one senior officer at the scene to prematurely state that 'the trouble was over'[492]. Many sources note that by this stage of the disturbance the crowds of onlookers had grown rapidly prompting the Chief Constable, who claimed he had arrived on the scene at approximately 5.30pm[493], to state:

> 'There were now large numbers of people in the St. Paul's area. In addition to those who had been involved in the incidents of damage, the majority of residents were out of their homes watching, and there was a heavy volume of traffic and pedestrians making their way out of the City during the evening traffic peak period. Groups were forming and reforming at various locations in the neighbourhood, but there was no open violence…A large number of people of all ages were on a large

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[491] Reicher, *The St. Paul's Riot: An Explanation of the Limits of Crowd Action in Terms of a Social Identity Model*, p.193 Section (d) and Joshua, Wallace and Booth, *To Ride the Storm: The 1980 Bristol 'Riot' and the State*, pp.84-85.

[492] Ibid. p.85. This was also noted in the Chief Constable's report when he stated 'The senior officers present were satisfied that police manpower was sufficient and that once the (burned out) vehicle was removed despite the tension, the situation would quickly revert to normal'. Secretary of State for the Home Department, *Serious Disturbances in St. Paul's, Bristol on 2 April 1980: A Memorandum Placed in the Library of the House of Commons by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Following the Report made to Him by the Chief Constable of the Avon and Somerset Constabulary*, p.3.

[493] The police communications log states at 5.38pm that 'Mr. Weigh (Chief Constable) and Mr. Smith (Deputy Chief Constable) are attending in the general area'. Avon and Somerset Constabulary, *Log of Events: Riots St Pauls Area Bristol*, p.2.

grass area adjoining Grosvenor Rd., opposite the Black and White café, and though there was tension there was no open hostility, missiles were not being thrown at that stage'[494]

Despite the variation in estimates of the actual numbers of residents on the streets during this uneasy calm ranging from 'large numbers' to 'thousands'[495], the evidence suggests that the disturbance had attracted a large proportion of the local population as well as others routinely travelling through the area. By that stage the first reports of the disturbance were reaching the media and local reporters had either just arrived or were heading to the area, so little information had reached the wider populace of Bristol[496]. The crowd was thus in the main *of St. Paul's* and to varying degree had seen or had had related by eye-witnesses much of the action of the previous hour. What was patently clear to the onlookers and was later clearly stated by the Chief Constable when commenting on this initial phase of the disorder was:

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[494] Secretary of State for the Home Department, *Serious Disturbances in St. Paul's, Bristol on 2 April 1980: A Memorandum Placed in the Library of the House of Commons by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Following the Report made to Him by the Chief Constable of the Avon and Somerset Constabulary*, p.3.

[495] Ibid. p.3, Reicher, *The St. Paul's Riot: An Explanation of the Limits of Crowd Action in Terms of a Social Identity Model*, p.193 and Stephenson, *Report of Bristol Disturbances: April 2nd, 1980*, p.2.

[496] Police officers had reported to 'A' Division at 5.14pm 'For information 3 men at Ashley Rd. approaching with movie camera no doubt media are in the know'; Avon and Somerset Constabulary, *Log of Events: Riots St Pauls Area Bristol*, p.2. The disturbances in the vicinity of the *Black and White* café would not have been visible to these cameramen from anywhere on Ashley Road and from the timing it is quite likely that they would have arrived *after* the first phase of the violence. The lack of reporters, photographers or cameramen prior to 5.30pm explains the paucity of photographic or film images of the first phase of the disturbance.

'**The Police had been the sole target of the violence**. No attempt had been made to attack or interfere with any other people or property. The incidents had not extended beyond the locality of the Black and White café. At this stage, it seemed that the **reduced Police presence had eased the situation**. Apart from the contingent of Police near the burnt-out vehicle, **all other officers had been withdrawn** to the area near the Inkerman public house, where they were in a **less overt position**'[497]

The Chief Constable's retrospective account of the situation at this point in the disturbance was of course heavily influenced by the need to counter the internal and external criticisms he faced after the events of April 2nd 1980. However, he was clearly aware at this stage in the disturbance, that the sole targets of the crowd violence were police officers and their vehicles. He makes no reference to any other crimes committed by the crowd and he recognises that the potential 'flashpoint' that could initiate further trouble was the *mere visual presence of the police* in the vicinity of Grosvenor Road. Hence his orders to withdraw his officers to positions out of sight of the large crowds of onlookers. Crucially, the only large contingent of police officers (approximately thirty[498]) in full view of those gathered on Grosvenor Road were protecting the burning police car at the end of William Street.

The first hour or so of dispersed attacks on police officers and vehicles had exposed

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[497] Author's emphasis in bold. Secretary of State for the Home Department, *Serious Disturbances in St. Paul's, Bristol on 2 April 1980: A Memorandum Placed in the Library of the House of Commons by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Following the Report made to Him by the Chief Constable of the Avon and Somerset Constabulary*, p.3.

[498] Ibid. p.3.

serious confusions in the command and control process of 'A' division of the Avon and Somerset Constabulary. There had been uncertainty in who was actually in charge of the *Black and White* café 'operation' after the initiation of violence as several senior officers were present[499] but apparently out of radio communication with each other. This confusion in the chain of command was accentuated by the subsequent arrival of the heads of Avon and Somerset Constabulary, the Chief Constable and Deputy Chief Constable, who made their way down to St. Paul's as the serious nature of the situation became apparent. There was also a significant breakdown of communications between the police officers at the scene and 'A' division control at the central Bridewell police station.

More significantly, a study of the police communications log[500], shows a pattern of

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[499] Joshua and Wallace note this in summarising the testimony of several of the police officers present in the café, stating 'The woman police sergeant said she was instructed by the Superintendent (Arkell) to stay in the café with four police officers under her command, the male Inspector (Allen) said he had requested to be in charge, and neither of them were apparently aware that a Chief Inspector was in command, standing outside the café'. Joshua, Wallace and Booth, *To Ride the Storm: The 1980 Bristol 'Riot' and the State*, p.82.

[500] Calls for mobile units to attend the *Black and White* café were sent at 4.31pm by 'A' division control and then backed up by several 'calls for assistance' by police officers in the vicinity between 4.44pm and 4.51pm. Immediately after these at 4.56pm, an unattributed order for mobile units to withdraw from the area was given which in turn was followed by further calls for assistance at 5.00pm, a 999 call from a member of the public at 5.02pm and Inspector Allen's desperate call from the café at 5.05pm. The following twenty minutes is marked by a plethora of further requests for support from mobile units that came under attack as they entered the vicinity of Grosvenor Road and City Road Significantly an urgent request for 'shields and a wireless vehicle' is made at 5.18pm, alluding to the seriousness of the incident and problems with radio communications. In the midst of this chaos, at

contradictory orders being issued by senior officers on the ground and 'A' division control, interspersed by desperate calls for assistance as police vehicles and officers came under attack. The confusion for mobile units being alternately called to the scene, sent away and then recalled minutes later could only be imagined. In the city centre and particularly on the streets of St. Paul's police vehicles raced backwards and forwards, sirens wailing and lights flashing, exacerbating the unfolding drama and certainly helping to draw onlookers into the gathering crowds.

6.2.4 The second phase of the disturbance: 6.40pm-7.30pm

As the Wilkes family, friends and neighbours began to clear up the debris scattered around the *Black and White* café, the large crowds of onlookers that had gathered continued to grow as people returned from work. Basking in the late afternoon sunshine, the apparent calm was laced with tension and as one witness put it 'I didn't know what was going to happen next'[501]. The police certainly seemed unaware that the disturbance was far from over. Six police officers with barking dogs patrolled the grass areas in front of Burnell Drive, whilst the majority had withdrawn out of sight to the Inkerman public house. Hundreds of local residents milled about on Grosvenor

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5.26pm all mobile units are then ordered to rendezvous at the Inkerman public house (in preparation for the 'rescue march'). Finally, following several more confusing calls for help, at 5.40pm 'A' division control gave the ambiguous order for 'all police units not essential please remove yourselves from area of riot' to which one exasperated police officer replied 'most personnel are out of their vehicles'. Avon and Somerset Constabulary, *Log of Events: Riots St Pauls Area Bristol*, pp.1-3.

[501] Reicher, *The St. Paul's Riot: An Explanation of the Limits of Crowd Action in Terms of a Social Identity Model*, p.193.

Road watching the scene[502]. More than thirty officers that were 'protecting' the burning police vehicle at the end of William Street assisted the fire brigade in extinguishing the flames along with local children who helped unroll the hoses[503]. In other parts of St. Paul's police officers were deployed to 'strategic locations' or were engaged in clearing traffic on City Road.

Significantly, at approximately 6.00pm, attempts were begun to 'disperse' the crowds of onlookers at various locations both on and outside of the immediate 'frontline' of Grosvenor Road. These crowds were situated in multiple locations and were of considerable size by this stage[504]. How successful these clearing operations were is unclear, but the senior officers judged that further manpower was not required and the situation was considered by them to have been 'contained'[505]. At 6.08pm a mobile unit on Grosvenor Road requested information as to the arrangements for removal of damaged police vehicles and was informed that a breakdown vehicle was on route to William Street to recover the burnt out police car.

During the lull of more than an hour A division of Avon and Somerset Constabulary, still reeling from the earlier chaos, had regrouped and had managed to assemble reinforcements from seven different force areas both in the city and as far south as

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[502] TV cameramen from the BBC and HTV were present during the second phase of the disturbance. Their footage is used to corroborate many of the incidents that are related in this section. *BBC & HTV: St. Paul's riot.* Television. (Bristol: BBC News West Library, 1980). See Appendix 10.1 for full details. HTV (00:05:16)), (00:16:54) and (00:21:27) and Figure 10.8.2 in Appendix 10.8.

[503] See Figure 10.8.1 in Appendix 10.8 and Ibid. p.193.

[504] This is reflected in the TV footage *BBC & HTV: St. Paul's riot*.

[505] Avon and Somerset Constabulary, *Log of Events: Riots St Pauls Area Bristol*, p.3.

Somerset. Forty-seven of these officers had already been sent to St. Paul's and another twenty-one were on standby[506]. In addition the Assistant Chief Constable had assumed command in 'force control' at the Bridewell headquarters, whilst the Chief Constable and his Deputy remained at the scene. On the streets of St. Paul's there was along with the disparate but large crowds (now numbering a thousand or more[507]) a considerable number of local journalists, photographers and television cameramen, who had arrived during the hour-long cessation of violence.

The second 'trigger' event of the afternoon was marked by the entrance of the police recovery vehicle, which arrived at the junction of William Street and Grosvenor Road at 6.18pm pulling up near the burned police car and the assembled police officers. Three minutes after it arrived an order was given by the Assistant Chief Constable at 'force control' to all mobile units stating 'no one to approach scene unless

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[506] The deployed officers [numbers of personnel in parentheses] were from the following divisions, home police stations and force areas; B [8] (Broadbury Road, South Bristol), C [8] (Southmead, North Bristol), D [2] (Northavon and Kingswood), E [6] (Bath and Wansdyke), J [6] (Woodspring), Van unit [7] and TW unit [10]. Officers from the more distant F and G divisions in East [10] and West [11] Somerset were held in reserve, on standby. Ibid. p.4.

[507] Reicher estimates that 2,000 people were present Reicher, *The St. Paul's Riot: An Explanation of the Limits of Crowd Action in Terms of a Social Identity Model*, p.194, 'thousands' in Stephenson, *Report of Bristol Disturbances: April 2nd, 1980*, p.2, 'up to a thousand' in Joshua, Wallace and Booth, *To Ride the Storm: The 1980 Bristol 'Riot' and the State*, p.88, and the Chief Constable more than one group of 'several hundred', Secretary of State for the Home Department, *Serious Disturbances in St. Paul's, Bristol on 2 April 1980: A Memorandum Placed in the Library of the House of Commons by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Following the Report made to Him by the Chief Constable of the Avon and Somerset Constabulary*, p.4. The TV footage suggests that hundreds of (if not a thousand) local residents were watching the events unfold. *BBC & HTV: St. Paul's riot.*

requested'[508] suggesting that the situation was tense. The police mechanic who was connecting the burned car to the recovery vehicle was instructed by the Superintendent at the scene to do the job as quickly as possible. Despite the danger of towing the vehicle with the steering lock engaged 'an order came from elsewhere…and they were told to drive away immediately'[509]. The Superintendent ordered the large contingent of police officers, which were originally protecting the burned car, to form up around the recovery vehicle followed by a line of six dog handlers[510]. At 6.40pm the recovery vehicle, its towed cargo and the escorting officers moved off along Grosvenor Road and almost immediately came under attack from missiles thrown by 'black and white youths' in a nearby crowd on the green in front of Burnell Drive[511]. As a result the 'towing vehicle speeded up and slewed, hitting one of the dog handlers and knocking him over' before racing down Grosvenor Road and out of St. Paul's with the recovered 'car swinging all over the road'[512] (see Figure 20).

The injured dog handler and the rest of the escorting police officers were left facing a hail of missiles and retreated on foot towards the grassy area at the end of the

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[508] Avon and Somerset Constabulary, *Log of Events: Riots St Pauls Area Bristol*, p.4.

[509] Reicher, *The St. Paul's Riot: An Explanation of the Limits of Crowd Action in Terms of a Social Identity Model*, p.86.

[510] There were approximately 40 or so police officers clustered around the tow truck. *BBC & HTV: St. Paul's riot,* HTV (00:05:16), (00:16:54) and (00:21:27) and Figures 10.8.3-4 in Appendix 10.8.

[511] Stephenson, *Report of Bristol Disturbances: April 2nd, 1980*, p.2 and *BBC & HTV: St. Paul's riot*, HTV (00:16:54) and (00:21:27) and Figures 10.8.5-6 in Appendix 10.8.

[512] Joshua, Wallace and Booth, *To Ride the Storm: The 1980 Bristol 'Riot' and the State*, p.86.

'frontline' heading towards Ashley Road[513]. Almost simultaneously as violence erupted near William Street, the body of police officers that had been held out of sight near the *Inkerman* public house at the other end of the 'frontline' began to march up Grosvenor Road once again in 'military' formation. They also came under a 'fierce barrage of sticks, bottles and stones'[514] and were forced to retreat via the side streets onto City Road (see Figure 20). In less than five minutes the 'frontline' had been effectively cleared of police officers by the stone throwing crowds.

After the retreat of the majority of the police officers from Grosvenor Road, the loci of the disturbance now switched to the small green at the end of the 'frontline' and the nearby junction of City Road and Ashley Road (see Figure 20). This brought the action to the commercial centre of St. Paul's, which was filled with onlookers. Reicher states:

> 'As the first group of Police reached the grass area there was a pause. Then an old man walked up to a parked Panda car and kicked in its lights. There was a loud cheer and missiles were flung at the Police, who were exposed on all sides and after a while were so fiercely pressed that were

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[513] Secretary of State for the Home Department, *Serious Disturbances in St. Paul's, Bristol on 2 April 1980: A Memorandum Placed in the Library of the House of Commons by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Following the Report made to Him by the Chief Constable of the Avon and Somerset Constabulary*, p.4.

[514] Reicher, *The St. Paul's Riot: An Explanation of the Limits of Crowd Action in Terms of a Social Identity Model*, p.193. This event is also substantiated by a radio message at 6.40pm Avon and Somerset Constabulary, *Log of Events: Riots St Pauls Area Bristol*, p.5.

forced to fall back towards City Rd.'[515]

The retreating police officers were chased a crowd of Black and White men and women of all ages[516] who eventually gathered on the junction of City Road and Ashley Road.

Several minutes previously, at the same junction the police officers who were already present plus those who had been driven out of the 'frontline' formed a hasty cordon facing another crowd of 'two to four hundred youths'[517] who proceeded to shower the unprotected line with missiles forcing it to disperse. Thirty riot shields were then issued to 'A' division personnel and other officers and they formed up and at 6.50pm began to advance down City Road under 'bombardment from various missiles'[518].

Numerous calls for assistance and reinforcements had been issued on the police radio

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[515] Reicher, *The St. Paul's Riot: An Explanation of the Limits of Crowd Action in Terms of a Social Identity Model*, p.194 Section (g).

[516] Many of this group used the short cut of Winkworth Place to access Ashley Road-City Road This event is captured in the T.V. footage. *BBC & HTV: St. Paul's riot*, HTV (00:25:30) and Figure 10.8.7 in Appendix 10.8.

[517] Joshua, Wallace and Booth, *To Ride the Storm: The 1980 Bristol 'Riot' and the State*, p.86 Section 7 and Secretary of State for the Home Department, *Serious Disturbances in St. Paul's, Bristol on 2 April 1980: A Memorandum Placed in the Library of the House of Commons by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Following the Report made to Him by the Chief Constable of the Avon and Somerset Constabulary*, p.4.

[518] The Chief Constable also noted that missiles (bricks, slate, concrete and bottles) were being thrown at the flanks of the cordon from private residences and the overlooking flats. Avon and Somerset Constabulary, *Log of Events: Riots St Pauls Area Bristol*, p.5.

net by this stage and they attracted a number of nearby mobile units, who raced to the area. Three police vehicles arrived in St. Paul's (see Figure 20) and parked outside the Lloyds bank. A crowd stopped the police cars from moving and 'the occupants got out and fled'[519]. By 6.59pm all three abandoned vehicles had been stoned by the crowd and one turned over and set ablaze in the middle of Ashley Road[520].

Three hundred yards away on City Road, a thirty strong riot shield unit advanced under the command of a Superintendent, followed by another thirty or so unprotected officers[521]. They had orders to secure the junction of City Road and Ashley Road but as:

> 'the cordon reached William St…the barrage of missiles from front and side caused the cordon to waver and bend and being completely exposed to attack from William St., it was obliged to fall back'[522].

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[519] Reicher, *The St. Paul's Riot: An Explanation of the Limits of Crowd Action in Terms of a Social Identity Model*, p.194 Section (g).

[520] Avon and Somerset Constabulary, *Log of Events: Riots St Pauls Area Bristol*, p.5.

[521] See Figures 10.8.8-11 in Appendix 10.8.

[522] Secretary of State for the Home Department, *Serious Disturbances in St. Paul's, Bristol on 2 April 1980: A Memorandum Placed in the Library of the House of Commons by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Following the Report made to Him by the Chief Constable of the Avon and Somerset Constabulary*, p.4.
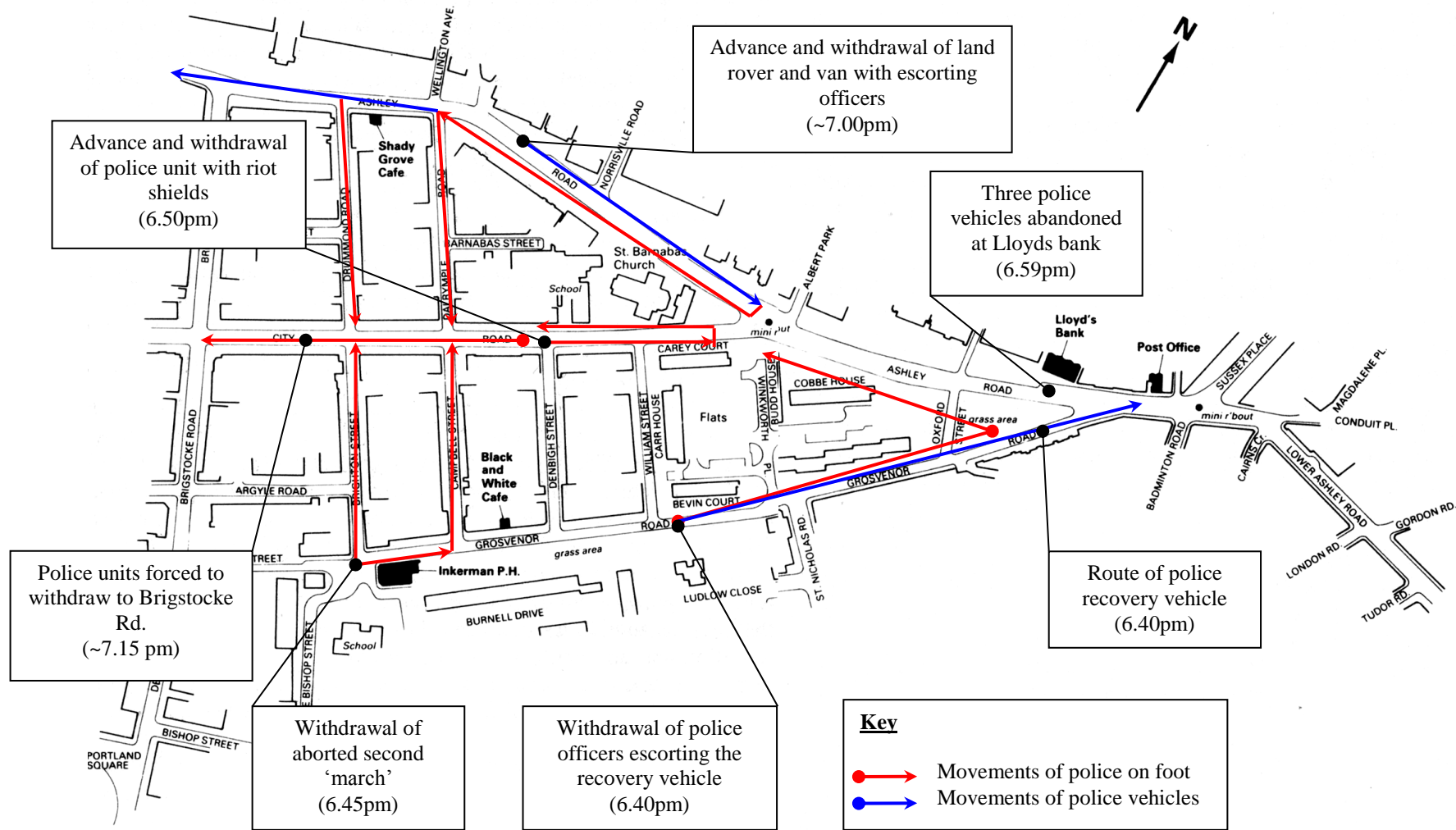
Figure 20: St. Paul's 'neighbourhood' April 2nd 1980: The second phase of the disturbance: 6.40pm-7.30pm

Advance and withdrawal of land rover and van with escorting officers (~7.00pm)

Advance and withdrawal of police unit with riot shields (6.50pm)

Three police vehicles abandoned at Lloyds bank (6.59pm)

Police units forced to withdraw to Brigstocke Rd. (~7.15 pm)

Route of police recovery vehicle (6.40pm)

Withdrawal of aborted second 'march' (6.45pm)

Withdrawal of police officers escorting the recovery vehicle (6.40pm)

Key

Movements of police on foot

Movements of police vehicles

As the police shield line collapsed and retreated back up City Road to Denbigh Street (see Figure 20), several police officers and journalists were injured by the missiles. At approximately 7.00pm, the commanding officer noticed a pall of smoke rising above the centre of St. Paul's and received a call that that the police cars outside Lloyds bank were on fire and that the bank was being broken into. Another Superintendent, though in plain clothes, had earlier made his way towards the Bank and noted that:

> 'this crowd was of some hundreds who were gathered in Ashley Rd. near its apex with Grosvenor Rd. and towards Sussex Place and quite separate from the crowd confronting the Police on City Road; again in the group there was an estimated hard core of some 200 obvious trouble makers'[523]

The Superintendent approached the crowd, remonstrated with them but was then physically attacked. He was protected by two 'West Indian ladies who were known to him' who pulled him back into Brooke Road from where he made his escape.

According to the Chief Constable the attacks on the bank and the nearby police vehicles spurred the Superintendent on City Road to order another attempt to get to the centre of St. Paul's. This time the advance was initiated from Ashley Road towards its junction with City Road (see Figure 20). Two vehicles led the charge, a Sherpa van filled with police officers with riot shields and a Land Rover with further reinforcements. Another group of police officers on foot formed up to follow the vehicles down Ashley Road. The two vehicles came under fierce missile attack as they reached the junction with City Road, both of the drivers were injured and they

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[523] Ibid. p.4.

were forced to turn round and return up Ashley Road[524]. Some of the occupants got out with riot shields and attempted to defend the vehicles; others without protection ran back up Ashley Road. The group of officers on foot who were following the vehicles got about 50 yards towards the junction under a hail of missiles before having to 'withdraw'. Those retreating up Ashley Road were 'met by another group of some 100 violent youths, predominantly Black, and again subjected to extreme violence'[525]. In response the escaping police officers ran down Drummond Road and

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[524] This incident is recorded by some of the few photographs that exist showing the 'rioters' actually in action. Shortly before being injured by a missile, *Bristol Evening Post* photographer Martin Chainey took some shots of the police Land Rover under attack by the crowd at the junction of City Road and Ashley Road See *Bristol Evening Post* 03-04-1980, p.3. These particular photographs were widely used in the national media (as there were so few action shots) and are interesting for several reasons. The original photos show a group of seven or eight Black men and women throwing missiles at the police Land Rover as it returns up Ashley Road watched by other onlookers from the crowd gathered at the junction. In the foreground a white Mini has pulled up at the junction clearly outside the line of fire of the stone throwers. The photos were cropped and then used by the *Daily Mail* and the *Sun* national newspapers (and the *Bristol Evening Post* though perhaps less deliberately) on their headline pages. The editing of the pictures was undertaken to create the impression that the group of 'rioters' were using the Mini as cover (the illogicality concerning what they were taking cover from is not of course explained) or to insinuate that they were attacking the civilian occupants. To cement this 'distortion by association' the photographs were respectively captioned 'Youths take cover behind a car during the battle. At least six civilians were hurt' and 'MOB RULE…a group of youths run through the trouble-torn streets'. *Daily Mail* and *Sun* 03-04-1980. The full version of the photo for comparative purposes is available in P. Hallet, *150 Years Policing of Bristol*. (Bristol: Avon & Somerset Constabulary, 1986). and a low quality version in Figure 10.8.15 in Appendix 10.8.

[525] Secretary of State for the Home Department, *Serious Disturbances in St. Paul's, Bristol on 2 April 1980: A Memorandum Placed in the Library of the House of Commons by the Secretary of State for the*

Dalrymple Road to re-join the main body of their colleagues on City Road.

By about 7.15pm, the vast majority of police officers were now congregated on City Road. They had withdrawn under attack from the 'frontline', had failed to reach or protect the bank in the centre of St. Paul's[526] and had been forced out of Ashley Road. After the collapse of the advance of the police with riot shields a dubious decision had been made to withdraw the shields from City Road altogether. Some of the unprotected police officers picked up dustbin lids despite being ordered earlier not to do this. The command structure appeared to be breaking down as different and contradictory orders were given by competing senior police officers. From their testimony many police officers 'had little idea who was in command or what was happening from now on'[527]. As the sun set, the final act of the most serious phase of the violence was played out on City Road as related by Reicher:

> 'As they (the Police cordon) retreated the crowd surged forward flinging missiles at them. Skips along the road provided ample ammunition. As the Police retreated some people came out of their houses joining in the attack, others came from side streets to stone the Police from behind. Outnumbered and outflanked the Police line disintegrated and they

Home Department, Following the Report made to Him by the Chief Constable of the Avon and Somerset Constabulary, p.5.

[526] The police communications log records that the Fire Brigade were present at the bank at 7.01pm and proceeded to extinguish the police car that was on fire at approximately 7.12pm. Although they requested cover from police whilst putting out the fire, this appears to have been ignored. The Fire Brigade then left the scene sometime shortly after 7.15pm. Avon and Somerset Constabulary, _Log of Events: Riots St Pauls Area Bristol_, pp.5-6.

[527] Joshua, Wallace and Booth, _To Ride the Storm: The 1980 Bristol 'Riot' and the State_, p.87.

retreated in disarray; some were chased up side streets'[528]

The stone-throwing crowd pursued the fleeing rabble of police officers, journalists and TV cameramen along City Road until they reached Brigstocke Road[529], arguably the symbolic boundary of the neighbourhood of St. Paul's (see Figure 20). The chasing crowd seemed satisfied with this and according to Reicher 'the crowd then moved apart and let the traffic back through and even helped direct it in order to ease congestion'[530]. City Road was left strewn with debris including several police helmets, which were piled up and set on fire by some of the participants[531].

After the humiliating retreat on City Road the Chief Constable stated that:

> 'Out of the 50-60 Police officers that had been engaged overall, 22 had been injured, 27 more had minor injuries, and 21 Police vehicles were severely damaged, of which six were burned and destroyed. 10 members

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[528] Reicher, *The St. Paul's Riot: An Explanation of the Limits of Crowd Action in Terms of a Social Identity Model*, p.194 Section (h) and Figures 10.8.12-13 in Appendix 10.8.

[529] Several police officers threw missiles at the pursuing crowd as they retreated in disarray. This final act of violence of this phase of the disturbance was famously captured in the T.V. footage. *BBC & HTV: St. Paul's riot*, BBC rushes 2 (00:00:25).

[530] Ibid. p.195 Section (i).

[531] 'That was after they [the police] had been chased down City Road which was quite hilarious…I was laughing my socks off...they were holding their hats and some of them lost them…there was few guys who gathered all the hats up and started a bonfire in the middle of the road…a big pile of hats and they lit 'em up right in the middle of City Road'. Oral History File A_20-03-2010 (0:13:15). This fire is also captured on the T.V. footage; *BBC & HTV: St. Paul's riot* HTV (00:27:03).

of the public had also been injured'[532]

Consequently at 7.18pm the Chief Constable made the controversial decision to withdraw all mobile police units from the area[533]. All reinforcements were directed to attend Trinity Road police station and an overall withdrawal of all police officers to 'reorganise' was ordered at 7.26pm[534]. Finally at 7.36pm at general order was despatched on the radio net: 'To all mobiles, under no conditions are any Police vehicles to go into the St. Paul's area'[535]. The Chief Constable later related the rationale for these decisions:

> 'The officers present were clearly overwhelmed. The decision was
> therefore taken to withdraw and regroup, to gather strength and to obtain
> sufficient reinforcement to ensure a speedy return to law and order with a
> minimum of bloodshed. It seemed that no useful purpose could have been
> served by the remainder of the Police officers staying in the area; and it
> was hoped that the removal of the Police – the object of the violence –

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[532] Secretary of State for the Home Department, *Serious Disturbances in St. Paul's, Bristol on 2 April 1980: A Memorandum Placed in the Library of the House of Commons by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Following the Report made to Him by the Chief Constable of the Avon and Somerset Constabulary*, p.5.

[533] Avon and Somerset Constabulary, *Log of Events: Riots St Pauls Area Bristol*, p.6.

[534] There is no record of the full withdrawal order in the police communications log but this is the stated time in the Chief Constable's report to the Secretary of State Secretary of State for the Home Department, *Serious Disturbances in St. Paul's, Bristol on 2 April 1980: A Memorandum Placed in the Library of the House of Commons by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Following the Report made to Him by the Chief Constable of the Avon and Somerset Constabulary*, p.5.

[535] Avon and Somerset Constabulary, *Log of Events: Riots St Pauls Area Bristol*, p.7.

would quieten the crowd and itself help the return to order'[536]

The majority of police officers were back at Trinity Road or Bridewell police stations by 7.35pm.

6.2.5 After the 'withdrawal' of the police: 7.30pm-12.00am

The official exit of the Avon and Somerset Constabulary from the St. Paul's area at 7.30pm meant that, barring the radio and telephone communications log[537], police sources concerned with this phase of the disorder are virtually non-existent or limited to post-disturbance reports. For several reasons (which are discussed in the next chapter), neither of the main secondary sources covers this period of the disturbance in any detail. Consequently, the evidential emphasis now focuses on members of the public who were eyewitnesses to the proceedings[538].

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[536] Secretary of State for the Home Department, *Serious Disturbances in St. Paul's, Bristol on 2 April 1980: A Memorandum Placed in the Library of the House of Commons by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Following the Report made to Him by the Chief Constable of the Avon and Somerset Constabulary*, p.5.

[537] This log contains details of the numerous 999 telephone calls to the emergency services and reports from the Avon Fire Brigade who attended several fires without police support during the four hours that the constabulary were absent from St. Paul's. As such it provides useful timings, information about locations of illegal activity and short qualitative descriptions of the actions of the crowd over this period. Avon and Somerset Constabulary, *Log of Events: Riots St Pauls Area Bristol*.

[538] Most of this section is derived from oral history testimonies collected by the author and other such sources (mainly from Reicher), newspaper reports based on interviews with eye-witnesses, photographic resources, a small amount of T.V. footage and a few written accounts in community newspapers.

After the last of the police units vacated the St. Paul's area at around 7.30pm, there was a cessation of the violence and the atmosphere changed as described by an eyewitness in the local community paper *Bristol Voice*:

> 'Wednesday evening developed into a kind of community carnival. City Rd. at sunset was quite unforgettable; the traffic had gone, two bonfires had been lit and seemingly hundreds of people had come out onto the street, to stand around talking, often to people they had never met before'[539]

These particular events were noted by many other sources including Stephenson's account, which stated: 'Youths lit a bonfire in the middle of City Rd. and danced, to which could be described as a joyous rebellion'[540]. At 7.45pm the first of a long series of 999 calls to the emergency services was received and the eyewitness stated:

> 'I have just driven through City Rd. where there is a large fire in the middle of the road with a crowd of 200 to 300 around it. Lloyds Bank Ashley Road has been extensively damaged and windows broken and outside are three Police vehicles one burnt out and two extensively damaged'[541]

This witness, who was not a resident of St. Paul's, had driven apparently unimpeded through the 'centre' of the disturbance a few minutes after the police had left. Ten minutes after this call a police mobile unit asked for permission to close City Road

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[539] *Bristol Voice*, no. 55 May (1980).

[540] Stephenson, *Report of Bristol Disturbances: April 2nd, 1980*, p.2.

[541] Avon and Somerset Constabulary, *Log of Events: Riots St Pauls Area Bristol*, p.7.

and other routes into St. Paul's to all vehicular traffic on the basis that 'all vehicles (civilian) using City Road are now being stoned and kicked'[542].

As the police attempted to cordon off the wider boundary of St. Paul's the locus of crowd activity began to switch from City Road to other locations. Outside the Inkerman public house a group of 'coloured youths' set fire to the A Division Task Force van, which had been abandoned after originally being involved in the raid on the *Black and White* café[543]. They then proceeded to turn over another civilian van on Wilder Street and it too was set alight. A few minutes later, just after 8.00pm, a resident made a 999 call stating 'many people breaking into a shop opposite the off licence in Brighton St.'[544]. This premises was a print shop directly opposite the

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[542] Ibid. p.7. The *Bristol Evening Post* also made serious play of one incident in which a civilian vehicle driving down Grosvenor Road had been stoned by members of the crowd (*Bristol Evening Post* 03-04-1980). In the aftermath of the disturbance the Chief Constable made a point of noting that five private vehicles had been damaged. However, this is a very low total considering the volume of missiles that were unleashed over the two periods of serious violence in multiple locations in St. Paul's and it should be compared to the 21 police vehicles that were damaged or completely destroyed. In addition, as is discussed later in this chapter, some vehicular traffic was entering the immediate area of the disturbance throughout the period after the police had completely withdrawn from St. Paul's. Despite all of these potential situations for criminal damage to vehicles, the number of 'civilian' cars and vans that required repair was negligible. Secretary of State for the Home Department, *Serious Disturbances in St. Paul's, Bristol on 2 April 1980: A Memorandum Placed in the Library of the House of Commons by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Following the Report made to Him by the Chief Constable of the Avon and Somerset Constabulary*, p.7.

[543] This is recorded in the police communications log; Avon and Somerset Constabulary, *Log of Events: Riots St Pauls Area Bristol*, p.8 and photographs taken at the scene (*Bristol Evening Post* 03-04-1980) and the following day; Penny, *Presentation Slides about the St Paul's Riots 1980*.

[544] Avon and Somerset Constabulary, *Log of Events: Riots St Pauls Area Bristol*, p.8.

Inkerman pub (see Figure 21). On the opposite corner of the Brighton Street and Grosvenor Road junction a commercial printing supplier and small warehouse were subsequently broken into and set on fire by 8.18pm[545] and an unmarked police car was overturned and set on fire[546]. However, far more attractive targets for looting, the Asian run off licence on the corner of Brighton Street and Argyle Road, and the newsagent and the Inkerman public house on the 'frontline', were left untouched. These events marked the beginning of a pattern of selective looting and arson that was to characterise this phase of the disturbance.

In the commercial centre of St. Paul's at the junction of Ashley Road, Sussex Place and Lower Ashley Road, the Lloyds bank had been the centre of the attention and the primary target of the crowd situated there. Several oral history respondents recalled the frustration of those who had by now broken into the premises:

> 'They got into the bank but they couldn't get into the money, so they just trashed it. I don't actually remember the moment it happened [the burning of the bank] but obviously there was a frustration going on there that they couldn't get into the safe'[547]

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[545] Again, this is recorded in photographs by Penny, *Presentation Slides about the St Paul's Riots 1980* and the log Avon and Somerset Constabulary, *Log of Events: Riots St Pauls Area Bristol*, p.9.

[546] A defendant stated in evidence in a subsequent court case that 'as he walked away from the car he saw some children trying to overturn it and he had returned to help them; some young girls had then set fire to the car'. Joshua, Wallace and Booth, *To Ride the Storm: The 1980 Bristol 'Riot' and the State*, p.164.

[547] Oral History File A_20-03-2010 (0:14:20).

By 8.26pm the bank had been set on fire[548]. Another respondent recalled the moment it went up in flames:

> 'The bank was quite interesting cos there was a collection, a large collection of people just on that end of the green in front of the bank. And people knew it was their own bank but they didn't get free loans or nothing. And you weren't going to rob it cos you couldn't break in. You could burn it. That's how it was done. And…a huge, huge clamour of goodness went up…when it went up…[laughs]'[549]

Whilst some of the crowd were inside the bank other groups began to break the windows and loot a bookmakers, the Post Office, a clothes shop and a car dealer[550] (see Figure 21). These businesses were adjacent to the bank and lay either side of the Criterion public house, which was open but left completely unmolested. All of these properties except the car dealers were later set on fire. The 'looters' then turned their attention to the row of shops on the opposite side of Ashley Road. Those targeted included a bicycle shop, a newsagent[551], and a general food store which lay between the only local chemist and the Prince of Wales public house (see Figure 21). In this case several sources note that both members of the crowd and onlookers mediated the selection of targets. An oral history respondent who took part in the looting recalled:

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[548] Avon and Somerset Constabulary, *Log of Events: Riots St Pauls Area Bristol*, p.10 and Figure 10.8.14 in Appendix 10.8.

[549] Oral History File G_09-10-2009 (0:12:18).

[550] These were all attacked at 8.13-14pm. Ibid. p.9. The clothes shop, *'Trident superstore'*, was in the converted *Metropole Cinema*.

[551] This was part of the 'Kiosks' chain of newsagents.

'Some of the older guys, probably sixty year old Black guys just standing in the doorways, there was a respect going on there that people didn't do it [looting]. The chemist was one of them. I don't know why, you'd of thought drugs and things like that would have been well lootable wouldn't you?… I never forgot that, it's quite clear in my memory that these older Black guys who obviously been around since probably the 'Windrush' years, standing in these doorways and nobody even tried to go past them. I thought that was pretty cool at the time.'[552]

Neither the chemist nor the pub were touched by the looters, however, simultaneously another group was attacking some less fortunate targets further down Grosvenor Road. At 8.19pm it was reported by a resident that the windows of a motorcycle shop on the corner of Grosvenor Road and St. Nicholas Road were being broken (see Figure 21). Within a few minutes a number of motorbikes were stolen[553], along with leather jackets and other goods. Between the motorbike dealer and the junction with Ashley Road was line of fifteen or more shops and businesses including a stationers, a grocer, an upholsterer and a dress fabric shop. Only one of these, the drapers, 'was singled out for exclusive attack' and the owner later stated:

'They picked on us because no one was living above…I kept on chasing

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[552] Oral History File A_20-03-2010 (0:15:23). Another respondent recalled that a group of older Rastafarians also intervened and protected the chemist from attack from younger looters. G_09-10-2009 (0:03:12). This was also noted by the local Anglican priest, Keith Kimber in the *Bristol Evening Post* (03-04-1980).

[553] Famously one motorbike was driven through a plate glass window by a looter. This may be a myth, but it was certainly a story that was relayed widely after the event and was recalled by the oral history respondents.

them away but whenever my back was turned more youngsters would be

in the shop. They tried to cause a fire but I put it out'[554]

The owner of the adjacent premises, a general store and off licence, who is still living

at the premises, remembered that her shop 'didn't even have a finger mark on the

window' after the 'riot'[555].

Whilst groups of looters went about their selective business on Grosvenor Road the

crowds estimated by one resident to be 500-700 strong[556] at the junction of Sussex

Place and Ashley Road proceeded to move down Lower Ashley Road towards the

M32 roundabout. Again there were several different businesses located on this

thoroughfare including a TV servicing shop, a builder's merchant, a dry cleaners, an

electrical goods retailer and hardware shop (see Figure 21). Between 8.35pm and

8.47pm looters targeted the premises containing electrical goods and the hardware

shop before rounding off their attacks at a record shop on Sussex Place, which they

attempted to set on fire at 8.58pm[557] (see Figure 21). The other premises were left

untouched. By 9.00pm most of the window smashing had ceased. The systematic

destruction of particular shop frontages had lasted an hour and had been carried out by

multiple groups of looters, in parallel, in three distinct locations in the

neighbourhood[558]. The looting did not come to an end at this point however, but

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[554] *Bristol Evening Post* (03-04-1980).

[555] Unrecorded interview with a shopkeeper (I).

[556] This estimate was from a 999 call received at 8.31pm. Ibid. p.11.

[557] Ibid. p.11-12.

[558] This assertion is backed by the various simultaneous 999 calls from the three different locations in
the police communications log as well as the oral testimony of several looters who were disappointed

began to involve a wider section of the community and continued in a far more bizarre manner.

The surreal feeling at the lack of a police response to the initial explosion of looting and arson was compounded as older men and women ventured on to the streets and began to wander into the damaged shops to collect the goods that had been ignored by the younger looters. Several eyewitnesses and oral history respondents endorsed this particular period of the disturbance with an air of wonder:

> 'There was women in there, in one of the supermarkets they were grabbing everything, babies milk and anything they could get their hands on, whatever you could carry'[559]

Another respondent recalled:

> 'The looting, which is quite a good one to endorse I think. Yesterday we were paying for this. Big African ladies carrying bags of rice. That was very uplifting. There wasn't too much booze being nicked. A little bit but that got stashed'[560]

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that they had not been at the right place at the right time to get some of the high value goods (such as the motorbikes for example).

[559] Oral History File A_20-03-2010 (0:16:25).

[560] Oral History File G_09-10-2009 (0:05:30).

Key
[D] = Damaged
[L] = Looting
[A] = Arson
(x.xxpm) = Time of event

Bank [L & A] (7.45pm & 8.26pm)
Post Office [L & A] (8.14pm)
Bookmakers [L & A] (8.13pm & 10.45pm)
Clothes shop [L] (unknown)
Furniture store [L] (unknown)
Drapers [L] (unknown)

Car dealer [D] (unknown)
Record shop [L] (8.58pm)

TV repair shop
[L] (unknown)

Hardware shop
[L] (8.19pm)

Dress fabric shop [L]
(unknown)

Motorbike dealer [L]
(8.19pm)

Bicycle shop [L] (8.19pm)
Newsagent [L] (8.14pm)
General store [L] (unknown)

Print shop [L] (8.09pm)
Commercial printing supplier [L & A] (unknown)
Print warehouse [A] (8.18pm)
Labour Exchange [D] (unknown)

0   100   200   300
Scale in feet

Shady Grove Cafe
St. Barnabas Church
School
Lloyd's Bank
Post Office
Black and White Cafe
Inkerman P.H.
Flats
Cobbe House
Budd House
Carr House
Carey Court
Bevin Court
Ludlow Close
grass area
mini r'but
mini r'bout

ASHLEY ROAD
WELLINGTON AVE.
BRIGSTOCKE ROAD
GWYN STREET
DRUMMOND ROAD
BARNABAS STREET
DALRYMPLE ROAD
CITY ROAD
CAMPBELL STREET
DENBIGH STREET
WILLIAM STREET
WINNWORTH PL.
ALBERT PARK
OXFORD STREET
GROSVENOR ROAD
ST. NICHOLAS RD.
BADMINTON ROAD
SUSSEX PLACE
CAIRNS CT.
MAGDALEN
CONDUIT PL.
LOWER ASHLEY ROAD
LONDON RD.
GORDON RD.
TUDOR RD.
ARGYLE ROAD
BRIGHTON STREET
WILDER STREET
BURNELL DRIVE
DEAN STREET
LITTLE BISHOP STREET
BISHOP STREET
PORTLAND SQUARE
School

Figure 21: St. Paul's 'neighbourhood' April 2nd 1980: After the withdrawal' of the police: Targets for looting and arson

This was corroborated by another testimony:

'And the good thing I will always remember was it wasn't just young people there were older people out there as well…This was on the night time when there was a lot of the looting going on…they went into a shop and they was pinching booze…and they looked round and there was a lot of older women in there filling up baskets of food and they were sort of like just helping themselves. And I just thought brilliant, absolutely brilliant'[561]

Even the local newspapers picked up on this odd aspect of the disturbance though with the need to racialise the activity:

'Among the looters were elderly Black women who snatched linen from shops and told men what to take'[562]

Another respondent who ventured out in the evening to go shopping for his two children's breakfast challenges the impression of 'snatching and grabbing' as necessarily associated with 'looting':

'I went up to the shops, there had been looting…being up with lots of other people around, the normal customers of the shop…to some extent the initial looting or taking had happened, the shop had been broken into. That was our little local supermarket… I remember going in there and the owners weren't there. People were just walking in and out. The windows

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[561] Oral History File L_15-02-2010 (0:11:15).

[562] *Western Daily Press* 03-04-1980.

were smashed and I got a packet of Sugar Puffs…Old ladies and my neighbours, the normal customers were in the shop…The booze and the fags had gone and what was left was the rest of the shop. People were in there just looking around, picking things up…some things that they needed because that was the local shop, but there was no one there to take the money… It was a nice community feel'[563]

The 'surreal normality' of shopping without money was closely linked by the oral history respondents to a deepened sense of 'community', as wary residents began to venture onto the streets to mingle with the crowds:

'Everyone was out chatting…it was like, you never had so many people chatting out on the street…what we were seeing on the media wasn't our experience of it…we were seeing it [on TV] and it was from the outside and it was all 'terribly dangerous and stuff'. We were to some extent getting on with our lives. Everyone was on their doorsteps…and the atmosphere was kind of like 'God this is exciting' and it didn't feel dangerous'[564]

The strange feel to the evening was enhanced by the apparent inability of the police to enforce the traffic cordon that some mobile units had earlier requested. A 999 caller had complained at 9.01pm 'with regards to road diversion signs at Cheltenham Rd. with Ashley Rd., the signs are inadequate and traffic is still going into Ashley Rd.'[565].

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[563] Oral History File D_01-07-2010_Part I (0:11:20) and (0:33:30).

[564] Oral History File D_01-07-2010_Part I (0:15:45).

[565] Ibid. p.12.

This statement suggests that the 'cordon' was actually unmanned, allowing many civilian vehicles to enter the area and literally drive through the 'riot'[566]. One oral history respondent remembered:

Respondent (C): 'We drove down Ashley Road while the 'riot' was on, there was a police car on fire…we drove past Lloyds bank and no body turned a hair, there was no sense of it being kind of [racial] …it was an anti-police riot. The idea that we could drive down…I didn't feel alarmed or anything. We drove through the middle of it'

Interviewer: 'Can you remember seeing a police cordon or anything like that?'

Respondent (C): 'Oh no, they'd gone by then'

Interviewer: 'Can you remember crowds at all?'

Respondent (C): 'There were sort of people milling about and we were quite struck by Black and White, it wasn't only White... It was such an astonishing sight'[567]

The failure of the police to stop traffic entering the area was noted at the time by participants in the disturbance and as a result some of them took matters into their own hands as was stated by one source:

'Gangs of youths formed human barriers across main roads in the area

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[566] The Chief Constable subsequently claimed that 'Seven mobile units, each with one Sergeant and three Constables, were deployed to form an outer ring around the area of violence to report movement and to act in the event of isolated incidents in the area'. However it is unclear when this deployment was carried out and whether it was also aimed at controlling traffic entering the area. Secretary of State for the Home Department, *Serious Disturbances in St. Paul's, Bristol on 2 April 1980: A Memorandum Placed in the Library of the House of Commons by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Following the Report made to Him by the Chief Constable of the Avon and Somerset Constabulary*, p.6.

[567] Oral History File C_24_09_2010 (00:21:54).

stopping people driving into St. Paul's'[568]

Reicher drew reference to the limiting behaviours of the crowds when one of his oral history respondents recalled:

'Cars coming down City Rd., they were getting stuck because people were blocking the road. People just moved apart and people stood there directing the cars through. It seemed really strange, like you'd taken control of the streets'[569]

In addition to these attempts to control traffic, other participants, local to the area, were conscious of the potential danger of interlopers and opportunists from 'outside' entering the neighbourhood and decided to act:

Respondent (G): 'But we also stopped people coming in from outside…who we knew weren't from the area.'

Interviewer: 'What time was that then that you started to notice people? Did you notice people arriving from other places?'

Respondent (G): 'Yeah, it was on the news, the wireless and TV, and you started seeing people coming in, which wasn't unusual because it's quite an active little social place. But more so and we had to ask certain people why they were there. Which we did. And the ones we didn't agree with we fucked 'em off. Cos it was ours [laughs] and it was a good mixture of Blacks and [Whites] you know…' [570]

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[568] *Daily Telegraph* 03-04-1980.

[569] Reicher, *The St. Paul's Riot: An Explanation of the Limits of Crowd Action in Terms of a Social Identity Model*, p.197.

[570] Oral History File G_09-10-2009 (0:05:30).

As the crowds on the streets of St. Paul's became aware that the police had been absent for more than an hour and the threat of their imminent arrival lessened, the looting became less frantic, better organised and more of a collective activity. One local newspaper commented that 'Looters had formed human chains to grab televisions, cycles and clothing from shattered shops'[571] and a local resident recalled the looting of the bicycle shop:

> 'Cars were pulling up in Badminton Road… and it was like a chain taking bikes out of Overburys [the bicycle shop] into vans…[the shop owners] weren't on site, they don't live there or anything…bikes were going out the windows. That was older people, that was families…they got a van and they had brought it along specifically. That was local families thinking 'right here is an opportunity'…'[572]

The crowds were in effective control of the streets of the St. Paul's neighbourhood for several hours after the withdrawal of the police at 7.30pm. During this period Avon and Somerset Constabulary had been busy preparing to retake the area.

The priority was the organisation of reinforcements, which were obtained by redeploying divisional assets local to Avon and Somerset, calling in night duty personnel early, recalling others who had finished their shifts and filling the non-essential patrol and station duties with the Special Constabulary. In addition, the neighbouring forces of Devon and Cornwall, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire were

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[571] *Bristol Evening Post* 03-04-1980.

[572] Oral History File D_01-07-2010_Part I (0:13:00) and (0:32:10).

contacted in order to secure further reinforcements[573]. The Chief Constable later admitted that 'this build up of the necessary manpower was bound to take time although, both to the Police and to the public, it seemed agonisingly slow'[574]. The need for intelligence (other than the numerous 999 calls) on the situation in St. Paul's was vital to the operation and consequently plainclothes officers were sent into the area to obtain information[575].

Having gained the required intelligence the Chief Constable decided 'that the situation would be brought under control by forming Police cordons at various points, and then moving forward into the area under coordinated command'[576]. The officers in charge of the cordons were briefed at 9.30pm, whilst the gathering of the reinforcements and 'riot' control equipment were still underway. The operation to retake the St. Paul's area was launched sometime after 10.30pm and by 11.15pm the cordons of police with riot shields were formed up, the largest of which were on Sussex Place at the junction with Ashley Hill and on Lower Ashley Road near the M32 roundabout. As the second larger unit moved up Lower Ashley Road they 'found a large number of

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[573] Personnel from these force areas were enroute by 10.30-11.00pm. Avon and Somerset Constabulary, *Log of Events: Riots St Pauls Area Bristol*, p.15.

[574] Secretary of State for the Home Department, *Serious Disturbances in St. Paul's, Bristol on 2 April 1980: A Memorandum Placed in the Library of the House of Commons by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Following the Report made to Him by the Chief Constable of the Avon and Somerset Constabulary*, p.6.

[575] This also included the Chief Constable and a Chief Superintendent who 'returned to the St. Paul's area to assess, from a plain vehicle and in plain clothes, the requirements for manpower and the strategy to be followed'. Ibid. p.6.

[576] Ibid. p.6.

people milling about who were shouting and jeering at the officers' which they appear to have ignored.

As the first cordon reached the junction of Ashley Road and Grosvenor Road:

> 'the officer in charge found his manpower insufficient to move forward. Some of the crowd moved behind the cordon through side streets. A reserve consisting of one Inspector, one Sergeant and 10 Constables then arrived and the crowd quickly dispersed'[577]

With the arrival of the cordon moving up Sussex Place and other units the majority of the mass of people left the scene and 'the remaining violent elements in the crowd dispersed of their own accord'[578]. By midnight, the police force had apparently regained control of the area. In all more than six hundred police officers had been deployed to Avon and Somerset 'A' division in order to carry out the operation to pacify the St. Paul's neighbourhood[579].

Whilst all these plans were being put into operation, the Chief Constable made several other decisions that were not made public at the time or in his subsequent reports. Between 11.30pm and midnight, as the police cordons were finally securing the area, the police received several intelligence reports concerning 'armed' reinforcements being sent from other cities to aid the people of St. Paul's. The first arrived via a 999 call at 11.33pm and stated:

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[577] Ibid. p.6 and Figure 10.8.16 in Appendix 10.8.

[578] Ibid. p.7.

[579] Ibid. p.7.

'Asking advice about what to do, stated that the coloured people are saying they are going to get guns from Birmingham, Coventry and London and they will be here by 3am this morning'

An informant known only as the 'RASTA' contacted Trinity Road via a private line and at 11.46pm a Chief Inspector stated:

'We have received information…to say that there are coach loads of coloureds coming from Birmingham ARMED to kill policemen. Request motorways to be informed to stop and search coaches heading to Bristol M5'

This was backed up about ten minutes later by a call from the local newspaper the *Western Daily Press* who repeated this claim[580]. Although, perhaps laughable in retrospect, these reports were taken very seriously at the time. The neighbouring police forces of Gloucestershire and West Mercia were informed to intercept suspect vehicles coming from the West Midlands down the M5 motorway. Also an order was given at 12.22am for a firearms unit consisting of fifteen officers and a coordinator to be assembled at Bridewell police station[581]. It is unclear in the sources if any vehicles were successfully intercepted on the motorways or if the firearms unit was deployed

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[580] Avon and Somerset Constabulary, *Log of Events: Riots St Pauls Area Bristol*, p.16. Another report (p.19) was received at 03.38am in the Trinity police station Incident Room that stated 'Information has been received from…Wolverhampton that 25 plus taxis/vehicles have been commandeered by 100 plus coloureds and that are believed to be heading for Bristol. Please reinstate motorway stop checks'

[581] Ibid. p.16. The 'arming of officers' was denied by the Chief Constable in a press conference the day after the disturbance. Ibid. p.13.

in St. Paul's[582]. However the gravity of the events of 2nd April 1980 for Avon and Somerset Constabulary was certainly demonstrated by these particular responses.

The collective violence that was unleashed in St. Paul's was confined to April 2nd, failing to re-ignite over the subsequent days. This was probably a consequence of the intensive (and controversial) operations that Avon and Somerset Constabulary launched to both police the area[583] and to apprehend suspects[584]. However despite the apparent cessation of violence in St. Paul's, over the succeeding days new outbreaks of unrest appeared in two other areas of Bristol.

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[582] One source quoted a Black and White skinhead gang from St. Paul's as stating 'We heard other kids were coming to help us from Birmingham and London. But the police turned them back on the motorway'. *Socialist Worker* 12-04-1980 p.5.

[583] This involved approximately '80 police officers on patrol in St. Paul's with several hundred more ready to be called in at short notice'. *Bristol Disturbances*. The operation was planned to last from 4th - 9th April 1980 Avon and Somerset Constabulary, *Policing the St. Paul's Area, Bristol, 4th-9th April 198.* (Bristol Record Office POL/IO/7/8, 1980).

[584] The 'ten days of terror' (as one activist depicted the police activities in the aftermath of the 'riot') included house-to-house searches, dawn raids and detaining suspects from the street. *Bristol Disturbances* and Joshua, Wallace and Booth, *To Ride the Storm: The 1980 Bristol 'Riot' and the State*, pp.130, 148-9. Two sources claimed police had interviewed up to 1,500 people in the aftermath of the St. Paul's 'riot'; The *Guardian* 12-04-1980 and *Socialist Worker* 19-04-1980 p.4. The Chief Constable's Report for 1980 stated that of these 132 people had been arrested with 91 proceeded against. Avon and Somerset Constabulary, *Annual Report of the Chief Constable*. (Bristol: 1980), p.40.

6.3   The Southmead disturbances April 3rd-4th 1980

6.3.1   Southmead: Thursday 3rd April 1980

Thursday April 3rd 1980, the day after the 'Bristol Riot' in St. Paul's was, to the casual observer, a normal day for the residents of the Southmead in North Bristol. During the afternoon, police officers from the North Bristol 'C' division carried out their daily routine of Panda car patrols in and around the estate. However the apparent calm belied the fact that via the numerous media reports, the majority of the adult residents were fully aware of the previous day's events in St. Paul's. Other groups, especially some younger people, had received or were receiving first-hand accounts of the 'Bristol Riot' via their peers, friends or acquaintances from St. Paul's[585].

Similarly the impact of the previous night's violence and logistical chaos had both emotive and practical significance for the 'C' Division personnel. A number of police officers from the North Bristol division had been deployed to St. Paul's during the early evening violence[586], others had been brought in as reinforcements during the operation to 'retake' the area later that night and many had been recalled to the depleted Southmead police station to create a 'skeleton' crew in order to keep it

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[585] The actuality of this and the links between St. Paul's and Southmead are discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.0 Section 7.2.3.

[586] Some had simply driven into the violence after the numerous 10-9 'calls for assistance' during the afternoon and many others had been requested as reinforcements (see Section 6.2.4 note 506 and 6.2.5) including firearms officers. Avon and Somerset Constabulary, *Log of Events: Riots St Pauls Area Bristol*, p.16. It is unclear from the sources, though likely, that at least some of the 49 police officers that were injured were from 'C' Division. In addition others would have deployed to St. Paul's over the following days in the major policing operation that followed the disturbance. Avon and Somerset Constabulary, *Policing the St. Paul's Area, Bristol, 4th-9th April 1980*.

functioning[587]. Eyewitness accounts of the violence of the previous day were almost certainly circulating amongst 'C' division personnel as they carried out their routine tasks in the midst of the logistical shockwaves that were running through the force. Thus both the police and the policed were simultaneously alive to the extraordinary events that had occurred a few miles away in the centre of Bristol.

The apparent normality in the Southmead estate, with its dual undercurrents of rumour and rumour and high emotion, was punctured in the evening when small dispersed groups of youths of youths began to stone passing police vehicles as they drove along Greystoke Avenue adjacent Avenue adjacent to the symbolic gathering point for youth known locally as the 'Green'[588] (see 'Green'[588] (see Reproduced by permission of Geographers' A-Z Map Co. Ltd. ©Crown copyright and database rights 2014 Ordnance Survey 100017302

Figure 22). This relatively minor incident led to the call for back up police units, which entered the estate and congregated at the nearby Arneside shops close to Southmead Youth Centre.

An oral history respondent remembered:

'Police back up came in but the kids who had chucked the stones didn't fall away. They stayed to face out, to face this backup of police. I think

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[587] Southmead police station was not a minor outpost but in fact the headquarters of 'C' division of the Avon and Somerset Constabulary covering North Bristol, from the Severn Estuary to the inner city.

[588] In 1980 this particular area was at the junction with Arneside Road in front of the Southmead Youth Centre, part of the long flat expanse of green space that lies between the parallel Greystoke Avenues running through the centre of the Southmead estate. It was eventually developed into a car park for a supermarket as noted by Brent 'One area, 'the green' was used so often as a gathering place and centre of joy-riding and battles with the police, that in 1996 it was built on'. Brent, *Searching for Community : Representation, Power and Action on an Urban Estate*, p.2, 136.

the police were hesitant in kind of coming in. They came in but they didn't know what to do. They knew they had been attacked but they didn't know how to handle it…They came onto the estate in a load of vehicles, not getting out of the vehicles, well they'd get out but just stood outside next to these vehicles. They didn't go out to kind of face these kids or anything. They just met up in a bunch'[589]

The arrival of the police reinforcements attracted more youths creating a small crowd from which several began to stone the collected police and their vehicles. In response to the attacks the police officers called further reinforcements in vans. These units helped formed a 'wall' of vehicles in front of the shops at the junction of Arneside Road. The respondent continued:

'They kind of pitched up by these shops waiting to be stoned. They were just inviting it. Stones were getting chucked at them and the police weren't doing anything about it. They weren't attacking back, they were kind of just taking it'

The crowd was estimated by residents to be a hundred strong, mainly composed of youths and reportedly 'including skinheads and punk rockers'[590]. As the barrage of missiles continued several shop windows were broken, including a butcher and hairdressers but there were no attempts to loot any premises. At approximately 10.00pm the senior police officer made the decision that enough manpower had been assembled for them to take more aggressive action.

[589] Oral History File H_18-02-2010 (0:40:57).

[590] *Western Daily Press* 05-04-1980.
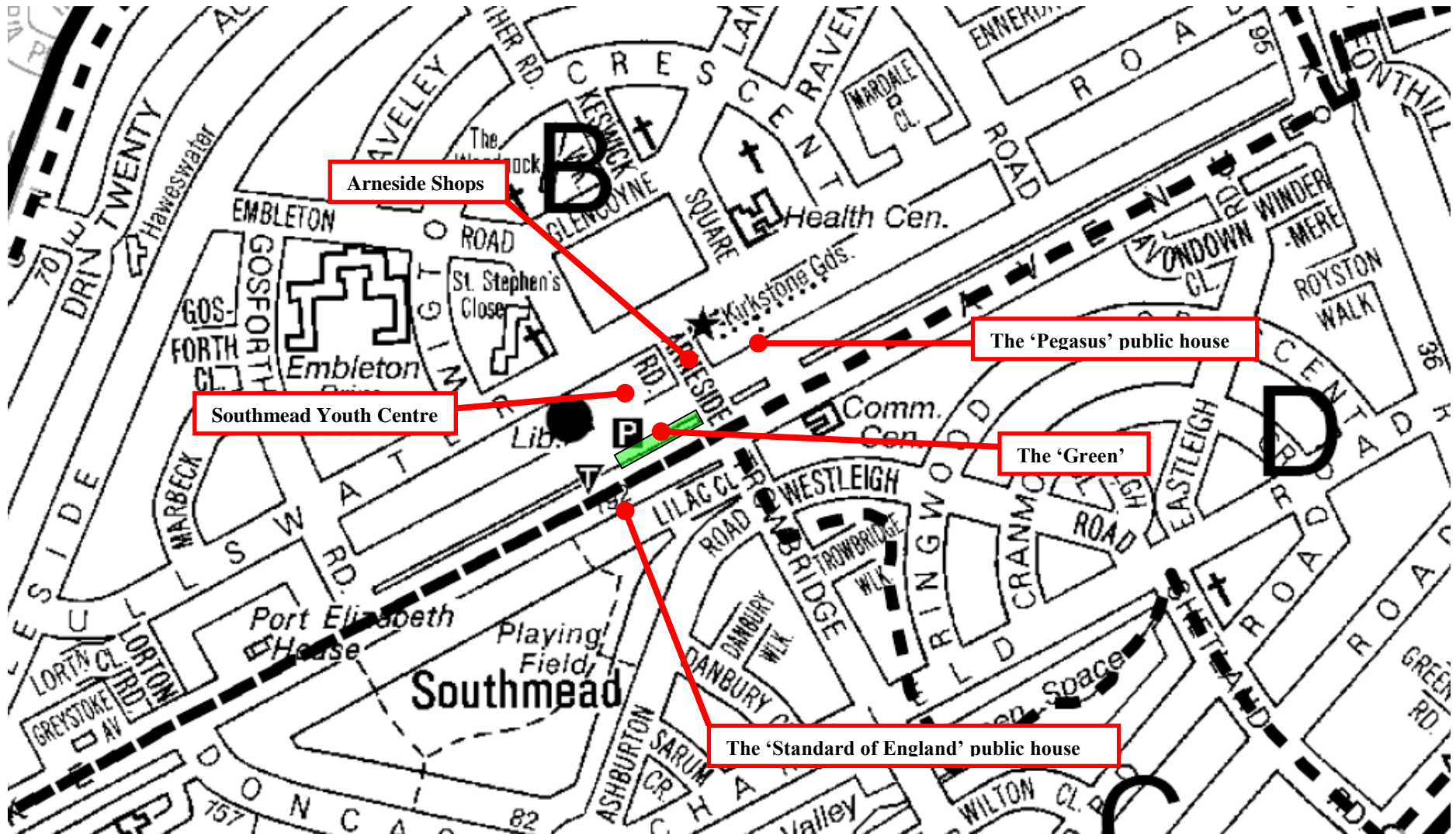
Arneside Shops

The 'Pegasus' public house

Southmead Youth Centre

The 'Green'

The 'Standard of England' public house

Figure 22: The centre of Southmead 'estate'

The police officers formed a line and along with police dogs began to advance across the 'Green' towards the crowd, who began to disperse across the estate. As the youths scattered, the police fanned out in groups in an attempt to make arrests, the majority of which were made outside the Standard of England public house opposite the 'Green'. In all twelve arrests were made, of which three were juveniles. Six of the adults were aged between 17 and 19 and lived in adjacent streets in the pre-war part of the Southmead estate south of Greystoke Avenue[591]. The remaining two adults who were detained were older (23 and 28 years) hailing from nearby Westbury-on-Trym and Southmead respectively. The arresting police officer a dog handler described the situation at the time of their arrest outside the public house:

> '[the police officer] said he tried to split the crowd into smaller, more manageable groups, but one group refused to move. It was a very volatile situation. The whole area was filled with people acting in a disorderly manner'[592]

The two older men were later cleared of using threatening words and behaviour and the latter was defended in court by a police officer who claimed 'that in the past…[the defendant] had on several occasions helped Police disperse groups of youths in the area who had become too boisterous'[593].

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[591] The seventh young adult (20) was a brother of one of those arrested. He was not detained at the scene but later at Southmead police station whilst making enquiries about his sibling. *Western Daily Press* 07-04-1980 and *Bristol Evening Post* 22-05-1980.

[592] *Bristol Evening Post* 22-05-1980.

[593] *Bristol Evening Post* 22-05-1980.

Some of the arrested youths and adults, none of whom were charged with assaulting police officers, complained bitterly that they had been harassed earlier in the evening and had been beaten by the police when they were detained[594]. A reporter working for a community paper who spoke to youths in Southmead over the succeeding days provided an explanation of why the disturbance on the 3rd of April had begun:

> 'The youth of Southmead generally agree that on Thursday night the Police appeared on the scene and over-reacted to them sitting on the Green (which is a place where they always meet). The kids responded by banding together and fighting back. Police were drafted in from all over Redland and Filton. The riot vans and the heavies[595] appeared and the violence escalated. They are also saying they will get together with the kids from St Pauls'[596]

By about 10.30pm and crucially before the local pubs had closed, the police had driven off the crowd of youths and had restored their control over the 'Green'. Despite the incidents outside the Standard of England public house they had managed to achieve this without having to negatively engage with a wider section of the community. To all intents and purposes the incident was over. However, Friday 4th April was to see a significant escalation of the violence.

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[594] This article was reproduced in the May issue of *Bristol Voice* from the original published in *Socialist Worker* (19-04-1980), p.4.

[595] This is probably a reference to 'C' division 'task force' units in vans. These units were modelled on the Special Patrol Groups (SPG) operating in Metropolitan police areas.

[596] *Bristol Voice.* no. 55, May (1980).

6.3.2   Southmead: Friday 4th April 1980

For the senior police officers of 'C' Division the heightened atmosphere after the nationally perceived 'defeat' of the police in St. Paul's and the subsequent disturbance in their own 'manor' on the Thursday night in Southmead put them under some pressure to react. It is unclear whether the orders for the policing of the Southmead estate on the day following the disorder on the 'Green' came from above or were derived locally. Either way, their normal policy of non-interactive vehicular patrols was altered on the afternoon and evening of the Friday and was more in line with the tactics of the 'post-riot' policing operation that was launched between 4th and 9th April in St. Paul's[597].   One oral history respondent out on the estate, recalled:

> 'The following day and the following evening it was noticeable that vans of police was just tucked away, dotted about Southmead…. up the little quiet bits of Southmead… sat in vans…hidden away in the shadows just waiting, on watch almost. Again it's like, you know, fuck 'em… 'cos they had no connection with Southmead. They was not of Southmead. They had obviously come in, were they expecting [trouble]?... Were they attempting to keep the peace by being hidden away in vans? They wasn't out walking about, they were still cut-off, they had no connection with us. Still that explicit division between local people and the police.'[598]

The change in policing routine on the Friday afternoon was immediately noticed by many of Southmead's residents, especially younger people who were traversing the

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[597] St. Paul's had been swamped with police officers over the days following the 'riot'. Avon and Somerset Constabulary, *Policing the St. Paul's Area, Bristol, 4th-9th April 1980*.

[598] Oral History File H_18-02-2010 (0:44:50).

estate. The feeling that the neighbourhood had been secretly 'occupied' and that they were under surveillance from the estranged police force heightened the tension. This was exacerbated by the apparent decision by the police force to carry out the operation without positive engagement with the community. There are no sources that suggest that there was consultation with 'community leaders' before or during the operation. In addition, it appears that the police may have closed the Southmead Youth Centre on the Thursday night, possibly as a result of the unrest. The Centre remained closed until at least the following week[599].

Two other important factors also influenced the events that were to follow that evening. These were the perceptions, particularly amongst the youth, of what had happened the previous night on the estate and what had happened in St. Paul's a couple of days earlier. The respondent referring to the events of the Thursday night stated:

Respondent (H): 'We had seen that we had attacked the police and it was a laugh…and it was seen as well that the police didn't actually do that much…There hadn't been any mass nicking. We had kind of got away with it. The following night it was like, OK we've done it once, the police was on the estate and we could do it again. And that [feeling] was quite wide, 'cos by then on that the second night, it was totally in the news about St. Paul's, absolutely in the news, big headlines in the Evening Post and so on… We knew what had gone on in St. Paul's, we knew the damage that had been caused, we knew the police had been beaten and backed out of

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[599] The Bristol City Councillor for Southmead stated that 'He would meet police as soon as possible and investigate the availability of the youth club, which has been closed since Thursday'. *Western Daily Press* 07-04-1980, p.2.

St. Paul's and we saw this as…well my lot of my age, which would have been 14 or 15…we'd saw that that was quite good. Do you know what I mean? It was quite…it was like fuck…making national headlines as well. We hadn't seen anything like that. It was totally new to us cos we were so young. The fact of seeing something so local, going up like that and a bank going up in flames, seeing all that kind of close by in town was quite amazing actually…'

Interviewer: 'Would you use the word 'inspirational'?'

Respondent (H): 'Absolutely, yeah, absolutely. It said something. It gave out a message. It wasn't a defined message, it was a vague message being sent out, it was kind of a 'beacon' lit up. It gave out this message of 'fighting back'. That the police can be beaten. That you can actually fight against the police and you can kick the police out. You can 'take the police' basically…it gave out a kind of message of hope actually, it gave a message of 'life' of positive 'life'…that if St. Paul's had something in common with Southmead and we knew it had, cos we had seen that these kids were exactly the same as us. We had this in common.'[600]

The confidence provided by their experience of the previous night's attack on the police and the perceived ineffectual response, combined with the news of the 'successful uprising' in St. Paul's that had both travelled by word of mouth and via the mass media[601] was a potent brew. Consequently larger numbers of youths[602] were

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[600] Oral History File H_18-02-2010 (0:46:25).

[601] This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.0 Section 7.2.3.

[602] Various estimates of the numbers of youths involved in at least the initial phases of the disturbances on Friday night are given in the sources. One oral history respondent recalled 'On the second night twice as many people and especially kids was up to it', Oral History File H_18-02-2010 (0:53:05) and newspapers reported that 'more than 200 youths' were involved, *Western Daily Press* (05-04-1980),

engaged in the disturbance on the Friday night and after nightfall they began to act.

The disturbance commenced at around 9.00pm with youths breaking the windows of some of the shops close to the Southmead Youth Centre. According to one account this was a tactic to draw the police units who were dispersed around the estate into a confrontation:

> 'As it was the police who were the targets, they first needed to be lured from out of the back streets and in to the open, so shop windows on Greystoke Avenue were duly smashed, causing the desired effect'[603]

For others in the crowd of youths merely smashing the windows and preparing for the inevitable confrontation with the police was seen as somewhat short-sighted. As far as they were concerned it was also an opportunity for looting as was recounted by an oral history respondent who was in the crowd:

> 'this mob come round…smashing the windows and kicking the windows in and that and this of course was like we'll have a little bit of this ourselves… this is like, this is an opportunity… oh what can I have out of the window. Cos, some of em right, they kicked the windows in and fuck off. Wrrrrong. It's like you kick the window in, the window falls in…look

'80 to 120 youths', *Bristol Evening Post* (27-04-1980) and '150 youths', *The Times* (11-04-1980). The annual report of the Avon and Somerset Constabulary stated 'gangs of youths numbering some two hundred' were engaged in the violence. Avon and Somerset Constabulary, *Annual Report of the Chief Constable*. (Bristol: 1980), p.40.

[603] J. Serpico, 'The Southmead Riots,' Bristol Radical History Group (Bristol, 2006) http://www.brh.org.uk/articles/southmead.html.

at this! Ahh, me mum's Christmas present! [laughs] You get all kinds of

shit. Me mum's going so why have I got two left shoes?'[604]

Whether tactical or opportunist the smashing of the shop windows had the effect of luring the police units to the centre of the estate, the site of the previous night's confrontation. Vanloads of police left their 'hiding places' and sped to the scene. Once again the police and their vehicles gathered as a big group close to the shops.

> 'Load of kids…hundreds of them it seemed, it was a lot of kids out on that
> night. The police got into one big bunch and they was basically a sitting
> duck. It was like a Cowboy film, with the wagons in one spot and all the
> Indians all about them on the outside. So then any kid could just pick up a
> stone and just lob it at some distance, you didn't have to go in close to the
> police…you could just lob a stone and the police would just duck and just
> get out of the way being hit…Hails of stones were being chucked at them.
> All kinds of kids of all ages was just lobbing stuff at the police and the
> police were just taking it'[605]

For the next hour or so the situation descended into a standoff with the police seemingly corralled and the crowds of youths facing them across the 'Green' intermittently stoning them. Between 10.00pm to 10.30pm people began to arrive from nearby houses and the two nearby pubs *'The Pegasus'* and *'The Standard of*

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604 Oral History File J_12-02-2010 (0:04:19).

605 Oral History File H_18-02-2010 (0:56:33).

England' which stood on opposite sides of Greystoke Avenue[606]. The gradual appearance of the wider community is remembered by one oral history respondent:

'All the people began coming out of the pubs and this was like blokes, older blokes. People was like coming up out of the estate, coming out of houses…to see what was going on, to watch this battle going on. Whole families, of all ages, old ladies, old men. It was like a kind of spectacle to watch. Nobody, oddly, was kind of going 'shocking'. No one was condemning the kids, there wasn't any of that. Nobody was saying 'you bloody get home' or stuff like that'[607]

At this stage of the evening some of the new arrivals to the disturbance began to take an active rather than a tacit role:

'It was at that point that a lot of these blokes [from the pubs] began advising the kids about what to do. Like to move about and to come in at one angle and lob stones at them [the police]…[whilst] a second bunch of kids get them on the opposite side and lob stones. So some of these blokes were kind of guiding and giving advice. They had a lot of suss actually…they could kind of plan it. They could tell these kids what to do, how to go about it. I took that in actually, 'cos I thought at the time, fuck, this wasn't just wild and mindless, it was kind of planning going into it'

As the attacks on the police intensified, one particular moment, which was

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[606] These public houses had rival clienteles, some of whom had a reputation for fighting each other on the 'Green'. It appears these divisions were overcome during the 'riots'.

[607] Oral History File H_18-02-2010 (0:54:40).

remembered vividly by the respondent, exposed the relationship between the apparently tacit crowds of observers and the police:

> 'Somebody chucked a block…it went high up into the sky and landed full onto the window of a police van…It just smashed it and that was quite a sight. All these people, all about just roared. A massive cheer went up. All the people who was watching. All the kids who were chucking stones they saw this and they thought 'yeah, fucking bullseye'… It must have shaken the police as well, it must have shaken them up. But that was quite illuminating to me because it kind of showed all of these local Southmead people, of all ages, not condemning this and actually thinking and saying out load 'yeah, that was a good one'. That was an amazing moment to see this kind of unified applause. It showed again this kind of unity and it showed we've actually got a lot in common all of us lot. It showed that none of us were supporting the police, of all ages. That nobody was disgusted by this. They was applauding it. It defined the position of the police to us as a community. It showed explicitly that the police was not of the community…that there was a division between us and that nobody gave much backing to the police'[608]

For more than an hour the police apparently failed to respond to the attacks being made on them. It is unclear whether this was due to operational policy or a lack of orders. As far as one respondent was concerned the inaction of the police was in fact a psychological consequence of the situation:

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[608] Oral History File H_18-02-2010 (0:59:28). This event is partly corroborated by a report of the breaking of a police van window during the disturbances in the *Bristol Evening Post* (21-05-1980).

'It showed as well that the police was a bit frightened. You could tell that.
They wasn't up for having a go back at these kids. They were intimidated
by the scale, by the amount of kids they were up against. The scale of the
people all about watching. The police would have seen that they was
isolated…they were the alien element in that community'[609]

According to police sources nineteen arrests were made on the Friday[610], though it
appears the majority were made towards the end of the disturbance that night.
According to a participant these were mainly peripheral to the main crowds as groups
began to drift away from the scene:

'There was a line of coppers who were on the outskirts without getting too
involved. I think what they done is contained it and I'll tell you what if
you moved out of the section and if you were out in the streets, three or
four of you…that's when they were gonna get you…pick you off…they
were never going to go into the main [crowds] were they? They're going
to pick people on the edges. They come in they take out people on the
edges, you know'[611]

This testimony supports the view that the police were either unwilling or unable to
make mass arrests amongst the hundreds of participants in the disturbance of Friday

[609] Oral History File H_18-02-2010 (1:10:49).

[610] This figure is derived from the thirty-one arrests that the police stated were made over the two days
of the disorders. Avon and Somerset Constabulary, *Annual Report of the Chief Constable*. (Bristol:
1980), p.40.

[611] Oral History File J_12-02-2010 (0:19:38).

4th April.

There was minimal coverage in the local press of the more serious events of the Friday night in Southmead. However during the clear up operation on the Saturday morning a resident discovered a crate containing seven Molotov cocktail firebombs hidden under a hedge in Ashburton Road, a few hundred yards from the scene of the violence. She alerted the police who mounted a surveillance operation on the location and eventually arrested five youths between the ages of 13 and 19. This particular story made the local and national press[612] and through its 'shock' value, dominated the few reports about the Friday disturbance. In so doing it effectively functioned as a mask, disguising the lack of detailed accounts of the actual nature of the disorder in the media[613].

6.4 Epilogue: Knowle West, the 'riot' that never was…

6.4.1 Introduction

Following the disturbances over the start of the Easter weekend in Southmead the Monday edition of the *Western Daily Press* carried an editorial entitled *'Lessons for the young'* which stated that 'HOOLIGANISM in Southmead and Knowle West

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[612] *Western Daily Press* (12-04-1980), *Bristol Evening Post* (27-04-1981) and *The Times* (11-04-1980).

[613] A similar emphasis was made of this relatively minor incident in the Chief Constable's Annual Report for 1980. Ibid. p.40. The response in Southmead was more humorous as one oral history respondent recalled 'I knew one of the kids who was arrested [name deleted]. He was quite embarrassed about it, by the fact that he was caught, I mean. He wasn't at all ashamed of his involvement as I remember him sporting a t-shirt the following week that had emblazoned upon it 'Southmead Urban Guerrilla'. In hindsight, I suspect that he was too young at the time to have gone out and got it printed himself and he must have had help from his parents. Which suggests that they weren't ashamed either...' Unpublished e-mail to the author 10-01-2011.

follows the riots in Bristol's St. Pauls'[614]. The only reference made in the rest of that edition of the newspaper as to what had actually occurred in Knowle West was a short article referring to some slogans daubed on three shops in the area[615]. However, clearly 'something had happened' over the weekend of 4th-6th April to spur the comment in the editorial. Further research in the local media, available police reports and similar primary sources failed to locate any reference to the mysterious event in the South Bristol neighbourhood. It is unclear whether this was a result of suppression of information by the Avon and Somerset Constabulary due to the fear of the contagion potentially sparking further disturbances in the wake of the St. Paul's disorder or merely that the 'hooliganism' was considered to be of minor importance. Either way the Knowle West 'incident' vanished into a deeper obscurity than even the underreported Southmead disturbances of April 1980.

Knowle West is a mainly White working class district approximately three kilometres south of the city centre. It had a high concentration of local authority housing in 1980 and was referenced in both of the major local government reports into 'poverty' in the early 1980s as being an area of significant deprivation[616]. The area certainly had a reputation of being 'tough' amongst most Bristolians and in some ways played the same demonised role in south Bristol as Southmead did in the north of the city. The vast majority of teenagers attended one of the two schools in the area Merrywood

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[614] *Western Daily Press* (07-04-1980). The reference to the plural 'riots' in St. Paul's is left unexplained, probably as a result of the editor's enthusiasm rather than a basis in fact.

[615] The slogans were painted on the shops in the early hours of Sunday April 6th and included 'Kill the Bill', 'Kill All Police' and 'Mental Mob', *Western Daily Press* (07-04-1980) p.2.

[616] Avon County Council, *Social Stress in Avon, 1981: A Preliminary Analysis* and Bristol City Council. Planning Department, *Poverty in Bristol: Final Report*.

boys and Merrywood girls[617]. This concentration of local pupils for schooling and the small numbers of 'New Commonwealth'[618] pupils mirrored to a certain extent the isolation of Southmead, though the area was both closer to the city-centre and more accessible than the latter district.

6.4.2   Knowle West: April 4th-5th 1980

In order to discover what 'happened' in Knowle West in the wake of the St. Paul's disturbance of April 1980 we must turn to oral histories from the participants. One particular respondent, a White teenage punk from Knowle West who had both links to St. Paul's and had travelled with his friends to the disturbance[619] on the Wednesday (2nd April) remembered the beginning of the Easter weekend (4th-5th April) in Knowle West:

> 'The word went round Knowle that we were all going to meet up and have a 'riot'…there must have been three hundred people, three hundred youths in Filwood Broadway, just hanging around, all tooled up, bottles, ready to go. And then when we arrived we think that somebody had got the word out to the Old Bill because there were just Old Bill everywhere. Like there

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[617] Both of these comprehensive schools had more than a thousand pupils in 1980. According to oral history respondents the only other option for schooling was 'if you were a Catholic' in which case you would attend the smaller St. Bernadette School three kilometres southeast of the centre of the Knowle West estate.

[618] Merrywood boys and girls schools had 5% or less pupils of 'New Commonwealth' origin. Avon County Council, *County of Avon Education Department. Multi-cultural Education Centre. Avon Schools at which members of Staff of Multi-cultural Education Centre are teaching- April 1980.*

[619] See Chapter 7.0 Section 7.2.5.

was probably, it seemed like there was two Old Bill to every one person and it just got quelled. A few bottles got thrown and they just marched on us and we all sort of dispersed, basically'[620]

The chosen meeting point for the 'riot' was again a symbolic location, 'The Green' at the top of Filwood Broadway, the main shopping street in the local area and close to the centre of the Knowle West estate, Melvin Square as shown in Figure 23. The respondent recalled the effect that the St. Paul's 'riot' had on the youth in the area:

'Everybody was like gee'd up about St. Paul's and the feeling was that the whole of Britain was gonna go…it was a few days after the St. Paul's riots 'cos that sort of, you know inspired a lot of people'[621]

He also provides an interesting insight into the organisational forms and mechanisms for the transfer of information between the youth of Knowle West prior to the incident:

Interviewer: 'How did you know about that then, how did you find out about what was going to happen then?'

Respondent (F): 'It was just word of mouth round the streets. Kiddies would just come around on their bikes. 'Cos we used to…when we were in Knowle West there used to be gangs of kids. 'Cos there was no youth club or nothing like that, well there was a youth club but it finished at nine o'clock or something. So what you used to do

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[620] The 'Old Bill' is a colloquial expression for the police. Oral History File F_27-08-2010_Part_2 (00:00:05).

[621] Oral History File F_27-08-2010_Part_2 (00:00:40).

was to hang out then and go and hang around by the chip shop. So there used to be a gang at **Jarman's**, a gang at **Novers Park**, there used to be a gang down by the **Inn's Court pub**. We all knew each other and we were all mates, it weren't gangs that was…you know…but where different people used to hang out…'

Interviewer: 'You knew each other from school?'

Respondent (F): 'We knew each other from school and just from the community basically, yeah. People would go round on bikes saying 'We're meeting at the thing, we're meeting at the thing'. It all went round and everybody sort of met there. It was a word of mouth thing really'

Interviewer: 'So they decided to meet in…'

Respondent (F): 'In Filwood Broadway at the top on the 'Green''[622]

It is interesting to note that the respondent explains that the gangs should not be understood as warring factions, but instead that 'We all knew each other and we were all mates'. The gangs were not defined by specific sub-cultural or similar allegiances but merely spatially located according to where young people lived and had attended junior school in the area[623]. The four youth gangs named by the respondent who participated in the disturbance, the 'Cosso Crew' (Cossington Road), the 'Jarman's Crew' (*Jarman's* off licence), the 'Inns of Court Crew' (*Inns of Court* public house) and the 'Novers Hill Crew' (Novers Park Drive) have their 'hangouts' marked by blue circles in Figure 23.

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[622] Oral History File F_27-08-2010_Part_2 (00:00:57).

[623] There were several junior schools in the area. The respondent added that those who had attended the single Catholic school had experienced more contact with other areas as it had a wider catchment area (including Hartcliffe, Knowle and Hengrove).

Reproduced by permission of Geographers' A-Z Map Co. Ltd. ©Crown copyright and database rights 2014 Ordnance Survey 100017302
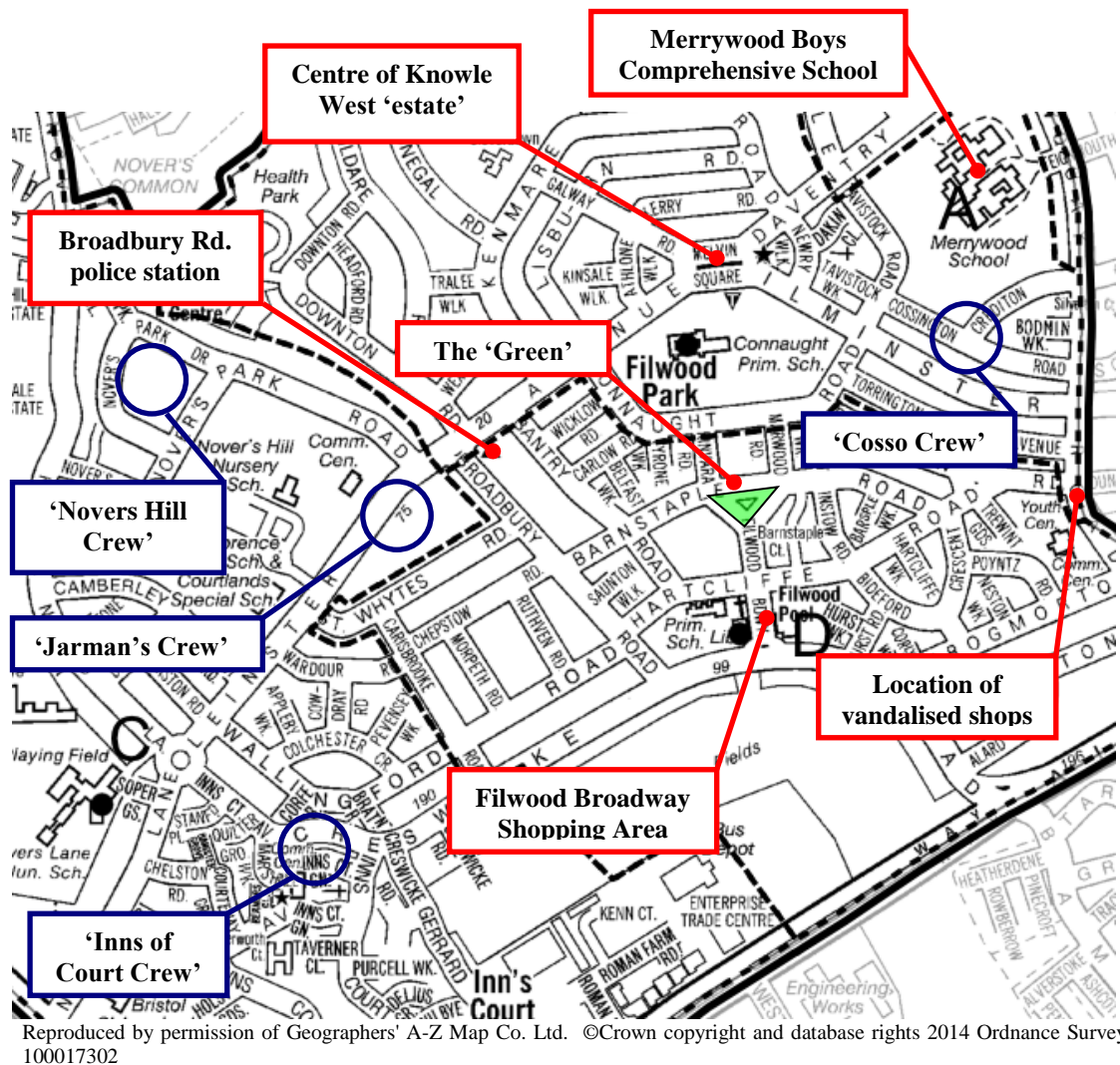
Figure 23: The centre of the Knowle West 'estate' and Filwood Broadway

Organisational forms above the local gang level had been part of the history of Knowle West youth in their inter-estate 'wars' with nearby rivals from Hartcliffe[624]. The respondent went on to explain:

> 'If there was trouble with Hartcliffe, we used to try and get a crew together and that what was going round. So people used to go around 'Right there's trouble, they're coming'…we'd try and get a crew together

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[624] Hartcliffe estate lies on the edge of the city of Bristol, approximately a mile south west of Knowle West.

and go down and see what was going on. And obviously the more you get together the more intimidating you are…'[625]

The same method for spreading news and gathering the youth gangs together was used to organise the 'riot' in Filwood Broadway, this time however rather than their nearby rivals, it was the police that were the target. The particular organisational form employed by the youth of Knowle West can be understood in the same manner as the *'firm'* in inter-fan football violence. That is, an organised collective made up of smaller gangs (or 'crews') with their own personal loyalties but sharing an overall allegiance, in this case to Knowle West (rather than a football club). This is clear when the respondent describes the composition of the crowd that arrived at the 'Green'.

Interviewer: 'What sort of ages were they?'

Respondent (F): 'Thirteen, fourteen, up to twenty, I guess, twenty, twenty-one.'

Interviewer: 'And the vast majority would have been White people then?'

Respondent (F): 'Yeah, ninety-five per cent 'cos of where it was…'

Interviewer: 'Was it kiddies just from Knowle West?'

Respondent (F): 'Yeah, just kiddies from Knowle West'

Interviewer: 'So the [names deleted from Hartcliffe] weren't there?' [laughs]

Respondent (F): 'No, no, no they were in Hartcliffe'

Interviewer: 'So they wouldn't have come over then?'

Respondent (F): '…if they had of come and it was against the Old Bill then probably they'd've been welcome. They probably would've been welcome…people used to

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[625] Oral History File F_27-08-2010_Part_2 (00:04:55).

keep to themselves basically. People used to stay in their own areas. There was more tension between Knowle West and Hartcliffe than there was between Knowle West and St. Paul's'[626]

Interestingly the respondent later added that one of the leaders of his gang (the 'Jarman's Crew') who was colloquially known as *'The General'* had attempted to contact rival gangs in nearby Hartcliffe prior to the planned 'riot' in order to solicit their support, but with little success. He speculates in his testimony that if their arch rivals from Hartcliffe had turned up to the planned 'riot' against the police then they would have been accepted for pragmatic reasons and the understanding that they were up against 'bigger' enemy shared by both groups of youths.

The hundreds of youths that did gather on the 'Green' were, according to the respondent, the biggest 'crew' he had ever seen and it brought out older residents in the neighbourhood:

Respondent (F): 'We all went up there [to Filwood Broadway], there were loads of people out as well, load of the locals were out on the street, and you know, some for, some against…'

Interviewer: 'So it got round the older people as well?'

Respondent (F): 'It got round the older people as well, what was gonna go on…'[627]

The youths were met by a massive pro-active police response, which in itself is a

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[626] Oral History File F_27-08-2010_Part_2 (00:02:42).

[627] Oral History File F_27-08-2010_Part_2 (00:01:52).

testament to the importance the Avon and Somerset Constabulary gave the potential of such incidents in the wake of the disturbances they had recently experienced. According to the respondent he had never seen so many police in Knowle West:

Interviewer: 'They [the police] were already there then?'

Respondent (F): 'They were already there. We arrived and they were in vans and then they got out...there must have been about twenty vans lined up. And each van was packed. So they knew what was going on and they were prepared'[628]

The Knowle West 'riot' was effectively 'snuffed out' before it could begin, as a result of advance intelligence and on the day by weight of police numbers. The event effectively remained unreported in the local media and obscured as 'hooliganism' or 'vandalism' where it was alluded to. The similarity to the form and content of the Southmead disturbances is, however, striking.

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[628] Oral History File F_27-08-2010_Part_2 (00:06:02).

7.0 The 'Bristol Riots': An Analysis

'Four Police constables were injured in a midnight battle with a crowd of 150 skinheads on Birmingham's Castle Vale estate on Friday. Chanting "Bristol, Bristol" the skinheads attacked the Police as they tried to arrest a youth'[629]

7.1 Introduction

The following chapter is devoted to a detailed analysis of selected aspects of the April 1980 'Bristol riots'. The chapter commences with a comparative examination of the three case studies, which considers the temporal and spatial nature of the disorders as well as the apparent motives of the participants during the events. This is followed by 'thick' descriptions of some aspects of the disorders, which were ignored by the secondary sources. In particular these focus on relations of force, negotiation and the desires of some of the participants, the sub-cultural links and social networks that helped create the crowds and the mechanisms for the transmission of information which facilitated the 'riot' contagion. Various concepts associated with 'riot' are also examined in relation to the events, specifically those concerned with under-researched categories of 'looters', 'agitators' and 'travellers'.

The quantitative data presented in the following chapter is used to substantiate various facets of the disturbances in Bristol in April 1980. Data on the characteristics (age, gender, subculture and ethnicity) of the oral history respondents is employed to demonstrate both their diversity and connectivity. Social network analysis is used to expose connections between ethnic groups and sub-cultures in St. Paul's in order to help explain the composition of the 'rioting' crowd(s). Samples of offenders in the disorders are utilised to show differences in the propensity of participants to travel to

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[629] *Western Daily Press* 07-04-1980.

rioting locales. Finally, a detailed analysis of properties targeted by 'rioters' in St. Paul's and a study of the age and gender of a sample of 'looters' are undertaken to investigate the composition and agency of the crowds during the disorder.

7.2   The anatomy of the 'Bristol Riots'

7.2.1   Comparisons

It is pertinent to begin with the differences between the disturbances in Bristol in April 1980 associated with the initiation, temporal pattern and longevity of the events. Although the specific 'flashpoint' of the St. Paul's disorder at the *Black and White* café is debatable it is clear that the raid initiated by 'A' division of the Avon and Somerset Constabulary had a key role in gathering the crowds of onlookers to the location and set the scene for the drama that was to follow. Despite the retrospective assertions by the Chief Constable that the raid was 'routine', a 'low key' operation and that the numbers of police officers involved was 'normal'[630] there is a serious contradiction implicit in these comments.

If the raid was a *routine affair*, then certain premises in St. Paul's would have been targeted a number of times previously for similar types of police operation[631]. This would suggest that launching surprise raids using large numbers of police officers was

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[630] Avon and Somerset Constabulary, *Press Conference Following the Disturbances in St. Paul's: New Bridewell: 11.00am Thursday April 3rd 1980*, p.1 and Secretary of State for the Home Department, *Serious Disturbances in St. Paul's, Bristol on 2 April 1980: A Memorandum Placed in the Library of the House of Commons by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Following the Report made to Him by the Chief Constable of the Avon and Somerset Constabulary*, p.1.

[631] There is some precedent for this view, which is noted in Chapter 6.0 Section 6.2.1.

actually part of day-to-day policing in St. Paul's, which was patently not the case in other parts of Bristol. The Chief Constable appears to have assumed that the residents should be happy with having their neighbourhood policed differently to other areas of the city. It also presupposes that they should get used to the normality of raids rather than become increasingly angered by them. Conversely, if the raid was *not routine* then the possibility of an unforeseen reaction was greater. In either case, it is clear that the possibility for reaction was present whether due to the expected or the unexpected. The evidence discussed in Chapter 6.0 Section 6.2.1 suggests that the former was the case and consequently the police did anticipate some form of reaction. This explains the deployment of significant numbers of personnel to the operation. What they clearly did not foresee was the magnitude and ferocity of that response.

The St. Paul's event can thus be characterised as a *defensive* reaction by a section of the community, 'triggered' by an infrequent incident (the 'raid') but nonetheless historically recognised police action. In contrast the Southmead and to some extent the Knowle West incidents were quite different in that the initial protagonists from these communities chose locations in which to launch *offensive* actions against the Constabulary. Although arguably, the locations of all three points of initiation were symbolic to both sides (the 'frontline' and the two 'Greens' respectively) the second two events were 'triggered' by some residents of the neighbourhoods rather than being due to specific police actions.

The St. Paul's 'riot', although of considerably greater magnitude and intensity than

the disorders in Southmead and Knowle West[632], was confined to the afternoon and evening of 2nd April 1980. The Southmead disturbances lasted at least two nights and increased in intensity before decaying to minor incidents[633]. Thus they exhibit the classical pattern of growth, peak and decline, which is analysed in greater detail as part of the analysis of the wave of July 1981 riots in Chapter 4.0 Section 4.4.2. The tentative nature of police tactics on the first night of the Southmead disturbances was cited by one oral history respondent as the reason why the confidence of the 'rioters' grew[634] and may explain the longevity of this particular series of disturbances. In contrast, the Knowle West incident was apparently 'nipped in the bud' by police action and lasted less than an hour. Arguably, the longevity of the St. Paul's disturbance was also impeded by the major policing operation that was launched in the area over the succeeding five days[635].

Having discussed some of the evident situational and temporal dissimilarities between the disturbances, it is worth considering the characteristics they shared. It is immediately apparent that in the case of all three incidents that physical violence to

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[632] Using the measure of riot intensity developed in Section 4.3.3 of Chapter 4.0 to categorise the three incidents would result in the following: St. Paul's April 2nd 1980: **Major Riot** (DSQ=3.3); Southmead April 3rd 1980: **Minor Disturbance** (DSQ=1.0); Southmead April 4th 1980: **Major Disturbance** (DSQ=1.8); Knowle West April 1980: **Minor Disturbance** (DSQ=1.0).

[633] There is some evidence that there were four days of disturbances in Southmead succeeding St. Paul's 'riot'. Two sources make this claim, a retrospective article in the *Bristol Evening Post* (22-05-1980) and the testimony of the Deputy District Commander for Avon and Somerset Constabulary also in the *Bristol Evening Post* (01-04-2005). The author has yet to substantiate these claims, but in any case the latter disturbances in the series were almost certainly of lower severity.

[634] See Chapter 6.0 Section 6.3.1 and 6.3.2.

[635] Avon and Somerset Constabulary, *Policing the St. Paul's Area, Bristol, 4th-9th April 1980*.

the person was almost entirely focussed on the police officers that were present. The only real exceptions to this were some reports of fire engines being stoned as they attempted to extinguish blazes in St. Paul's[636]. There were no corroborated reports of intra-crowd violence in any of the disorders and only isolated accounts of the crowds intentionally attacking firemen[637]. Of the ten civilians who were injured in the St. Paul's disturbance, Reicher stated:

> 'Apart from the Police who, without exception seem to have been targets of attack, the only victims of intentional violence were T.V. and other camera operators and photographers. This seems to have been simply a function of the fact that people in the crowd were afraid of the film being

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[636] According to the *Bristol Evening Post* (03-04-1980) three firemen sustained minor injuries, though the *Daily Mail* (03-4-1980) stated 'it was not clear whether they were hit by the missiles or hurt fire-fighting'. The *Sun* (03-04-1980) claimed firemen had been 'punched, kicked and stoned as they tackled the blazes', though this was not a verifiable quote or substantiated by any other sources. The police communications log has many messages relayed from Avon Fire Brigade, but none refer to any attacks directed at them. The Chief Constable in his comprehensive assessment of the injuries in his report to the Secretary of State for the Home Department makes no mention of any injuries to firemen, only minor damage to their vehicles; Secretary of State for the Home Department, *Serious Disturbances in St. Paul's, Bristol on 2 April 1980: A Memorandum Placed in the Library of the House of Commons by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Following the Report made to Him by the Chief Constable of the Avon and Somerset Constabulary*, p.7. One oral history respondent stated 'There was quite a large crowd of people on the Green by now and it had quite a carnival atmosphere! The fire engines tried to get in to extinguish the by now, several burning cars and bank building, but were chased off.... the bank was a small single storey building and posed no danger to other buildings. I'm pretty sure the engines were stoned, so they left' Unpublished e-mail to author 17-10-2010.

[637] The only reported incidents occurred in the St. Paul's disturbance where one or two civilian vehicles driving through the area were stoned. See Chapter 6.0 Section 6.2.5 note 542.

used by the Police…Apart from the photographers, all the civilians seem to have been hurt either by the Police or in the cross fire of stones between the Police and the crowd'[638]

In St. Paul's the intense violence that was unleashed during the latter stages of the second phase of the disturbance ceased the moment that the police withdrew from the perceived boundaries of the area. After this point there were no reports of violence against the person, only against property. In the Southmead and Knowle West incidents there were no reported civilian injures.

Another shared characteristic in all three case studies concerns the perception of a collective identity within the crowds who drove out or attacked the police. Reicher provides ample oral history evidence for this phenomenon in the case of the first example, which he defines to be 'a St. Paul's community member'[639]. In the case of Southmead the oral history respondents repeatedly stated that the police were not 'of the community' or not 'of Southmead'[640]. Certainly the apparent aim of the stone throwers and the crowds of onlookers who cheered them on during the Friday night disturbance was to eject the alien police presence from *their community*.

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[638] Reicher, *The St. Paul's Riot: An Explanation of the Limits of Crowd Action in Terms of a Social Identity Model*, p.195. The seizing and destruction of cameras from people taking photographs of the disturbance within the crowds was also recalled by on oral history respondent who stated 'Oh and there was a young kiddie that some of us knew who brought his brand new fucking couple o' hundred pound bloody camera out and started taking photographs. He was advised not to…and in the end it got taken out of his hand and danced on'. Oral History File G_09-10-2009 (0:12:18).

[639] Ibid. p.204.

[640] See particularly the comments by the oral history respondent (H) in Section 6.3.2.

7.2.2 Relations of force and negotiation: reality and desire

None of the secondary sources that examined the St. Paul's disturbance investigated whether formal or informal negotiations took place between the 'rioting' community and the Avon and Somerset Constabulary and if they did what the form and content of these 'meetings' was. This remains a particularly contentious subject in the history of urban disturbances in the 1980s[641]. It appears that there were two moments where individual senior police officers at the scene made attempts to intervene or parley within the crowds that were present. Some national and local newspapers ran stories, which attempted to demonstrate the futility of such actions, insinuating that the crowds were pathologically or irrationally violent. One example stated:

> 'One tall policeman in a white shirt with short sleeves walked through this crowd, telling everyone to move along, but then he got stones thrown at him. The rest of the Police formed up ranks to get him out'[642]

The Chief Constable also recounted in his report to the Government that a Superintendent in plain clothes had attempted to address a crowd in the area controlled by the 'rioters' and had been subsequently attacked[643]. The inclusion of

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[641] For example John Clare was the BBC's community affairs correspondent and was present in the Brixton 'riots' of April 1981. Clare mediated a negotiation between the two sides during the riot, which included facilitating an interview with the media and a parley with a masked representative of the 'rioters' during which their demands were articulated. Information about this incident was not made public at the time though it did feature in the later Scarman Report. Clare, *Eyewitness in Brixton*, p.51 and Scarman, *The Scarman Report*, p.58.

[642] The *Guardian* (03-04-1980).

[643] This is incident is explained in more detail in Chapter 6.0 Section 6.2.4.

these two instances in the media and state narratives is interesting as the function they appear to serve is to highlight the bravery of the police officers but more crucially to emphasise the futility of face to face negotiation.

After the Avon and Somerset Constabulary had withdrawn from the immediate area of St. Paul's at 7.30pm senior officers did begin to consult with some people whom they regarded as 'community leaders'. Around 8.30pm at Trinity Road police station contacts were sought by a Chief Inspector acting as community liaison officer with connections to the Bristol Commission for Racial Equality (BCRE). Three members of the executive council of the BCRE and two magistrates responded[644]. There is some evidence that these exchanges were not intended merely for negotiation but tactically in order to gain intelligence on the situation, as at this point in the disturbance the police were effectively 'blind' to what was happening in the area[645]. It is unclear what the content and outcome of these contacts was although the Chief Constable stated in the press conference on the following morning:

> 'I also ought to say that we did have the services of members of the local
> Community Relations Council, and leaders of the ethnic minorities to try
> and cool the thing down and damp it down. Unfortunately they didn't

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[644] Avon and Somerset Constabulary, *Avon and Somerset Constabulary Support Services Division Report (C.I. Lane) 'Community Relations'.* (Bristol Record Office POL/LG/1/9, 1980).

[645] This is supported by the Chief Constable's statements about the intelligence gathering operation he launched in St. Paul's during this time period. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.0 Section 6.2.5.

succeed'[646]

The most salient fact is that these contacts were made *after* the police had been driven out of the area rather than prior to the raid on the *Black and White* café or during the three or so hours of intermittent violence which preceded their humiliating withdrawal.

At this stage of the disturbance, the relations of force between the state and the revolting sections of the 'community' of St. Paul's were exposed to both sides. Certainly some of the 'rioters', who were effectively in control of the area, were aware of the potentialities of the situation, in particular the possible responses of the police on their inevitable return. One oral history respondent recalled:

> 'Yeah, now that was quite frightening. Cos you really did think they [the police] were gonna come in heavy and armed because…the area down there, only about half a square mile was involved as such…and cos [we'd] seen what they'd done in Ireland and other places of, shall we say, civil unrest.'[647]

Several respondents recounted a plan that was hatched by the 'rioters' after the police had withdrawn to spread the attacks on property to nearby major commercial centres:

> 'They planned to move later into the city centre to promote the cause

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[646] Avon and Somerset Constabulary, *Press Conference Following the Disturbances in St. Paul's: New Bridewell: 11.00am Thursday April 3rd 1980*, p.11.

[647] Oral History File G_09-10-2009 (0:16:14).

wider by attacking large corporations such as Debenhams and Lewis's'[648]

According to one respondent the threat of further destruction of property was used as a bargaining counter in some 'negotiations' that were initiated by the rioters with the police force via anonymous phone calls:

Respondent (G): 'There was a few meetings going on from concerned individuals, shall we say, and it was suggested that if they [the police] come in again heavy, then the whole of Broadmead would go up. I think that come from politicised Blacks, who were down there'

Interviewer: And how did they communicate that to the authorities?

Respondent (G): On the day, went through them. A few people went and talked. Which has got to be done, you know. Got to put yourself out a little bit. I think some people were phoning. But that was brilliant, absolutely brilliant, cos people were scared'[649]

Only one media source makes reference to these anonymous phone calls to the police in quoting a local resident (and reader of *Socialist Worker*):

'The whole thing [the 'riot'] would have spread. The only way it stopped was when the **punks** phoned Trinity Rd. Police Station and said: **'Unless you release Bertram [Wilkes] we'll spread the riot to the main**

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[648] Statement by Ras Judah to Karen Garvey of the Museum of Bristol 26-02-2009.

[649] Oral History File G_09-10-2009 (0:16:14). Broadmead was the main shopping area in central Bristol, less than half a mile from St. Paul's.

shopping centre'. Within minutes he was released'[650]

The proprietor of the *Black and White* café, Bertram Wilkes, who had been arrested during the police raid earlier in the afternoon, was released without charge (but on police bail) at 9.00pm, approximately an hour and a half after the withdrawal of the police from St. Paul's[651]. The Chief Inspector who was acting as community liaison officer made the following statement in his notes:

> 'At approximately 22.15 I went to the 'new garage' Lower Ashley Road to R.V. [rendezvous] with WILKES – owner of Black and White who had phoned offering to address crowd with a loud hailer. In spite of assistance of Rev. Keith Kimber, and waiting for nearly one hour I was unable to locate him'[652]

It is interesting that a senior police officer was willing to enter a 'riot' zone to consort with a suspect whose arrest earlier in the afternoon on a drugs charge arguably helped precipitate the disorder. Clearly, the police were desperate to find *anyone* in the community (despite their criminal and possibly iconic status in the disturbance) who

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[650] This author's emphasis in bold. *Socialist Worker* 12-04-1980 p.5.

[651] The time of his release is stated by one source: *Bristol Disturbances*. The Chief Constable stated in a press conference the day after the incidents that Wilkes had not been charged but was on police bail. Avon and Somerset Constabulary, *Press Conference Following the Disturbances in St. Paul's: New Bridewell: 11.00am Thursday April 3rd 1980*, p.12.

[652] The 'new garage' was situated half way along Lower Ashley Road close to the M32 roundabout. This was effectively within the area affected by the 'rioting' and looting. Avon and Somerset Constabulary, *Avon and Somerset Constabulary Support Services Division Report (C.I. Lane) 'Community Relations'.*

could defuse the violent situation after ineffectual results with members of the Community Relations Council. It is unclear if the 'early' release of Wilkes was down to threatening phone calls from anonymous 'rioters' or whether his subsequent role as a 'peacemaker' was part of that arrangement, but this evidence does point towards attempts by the police to negotiate with the 'crowds' that were in control of the streets in St. Paul's.

These passages are illuminating in that there is realisation amongst some of the St. Paul's 'rioters' of the precarious situation of 'dual power' for the community. There was also recognition that negotiation was necessary but that it had to be done from a position of strength, hence the threat of more widespread destruction. The very fact that these fairly sophisticated responses were developed amongst at least some of the 'rioters' points to a hidden history of spontaneous organisational forms in the disturbance. Some impromptu meetings were clearly taking place on the street and responses were being articulated and communicated to the local state in order to protect 'the community' from a perceived potential backlash.

It is, of course, possible that these memories derived from the oral history respondents and other sources merely reflected their desires at the time of the disturbance (or even afterwards)[653]. It is also unclear from any official sources whether these informal

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[653] In her analysis of oral testimony Passerini stated 'the raw material of oral history consists not just in factual statements but is pre-eminently an expression and representation of culture and therefore includes not only literal narrations but also the dimensions of memory, ideology and subconscious desire'. Karl Figlio, 'Oral History and the Unconscious,' *History Workshop Journal*, no. 26 (1988), p.128. The importance of not disregarding multiple corroborative but essentially false memories which exposed the collective desires of the respondents was also noted by Portelli in his interviews with aging

negotiations actually took place or that the authorities acceded to the threats. Similarly the multiple intelligence reports received by the Avon and Somerset Constabulary (some of which were from 'reliable' sources in St. Paul's) concerning the intervention of large numbers of armed outsiders travelling from Birmingham, Coventry and London[654] may have played a similar role to the threats of the 'rioters'. That is they confronted the police commanders in Bristol with the peril of a violent countrywide reaction if they unleashed severe repression during their operation to 'retake' St. Paul's. For reasons already discussed, it is extremely unlikely that senior police officers would have made information about these threats and potential negotiations public. Instead it had to appear (at least) as if their ignominious withdrawal and subsequent responses to the disturbance were on their own terms rather than being influenced by organised 'rioters' amongst the St. Paul's community.

7.2.3 'Copycat' and 'Contagion'

Several historical questions are thrown up by the near simultaneous disturbances of St. Paul's (2nd April), Southmead (3rd-4th April) and Knowle West (4th-5th April) in Bristol in 1980. These relate to whether the initial incident in St. Paul's influenced or even caused the latter episodes and if so, how did this occur? Certainly the temporal proximity of the series of these 'riots' begs the former question and in turn leads to the latter. However, considering the incidents from a spatial perspective appears to confound this link. The three areas in question are clearly not adjacent to each other or

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communist militants in Italy. A. Portelli, 'Uchronic Dreams: Working-Class Memory and Possible Worlds,' in *The Myths we Live by*, eds. R. Samuel and P. Thompson, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 1990), pp.143-60.

[654] See Chapter 6.0 Section 6.2.5.

even located in the same districts of Bristol. Southmead lies six kilometres north of the city centre, Knowle West more than three kilometres south and St. Paul's is the only area actually located in the 'inner city' approximately one kilometre to the northeast (see Figure 24). So in spatial terms the three neighbourhoods were very far apart.
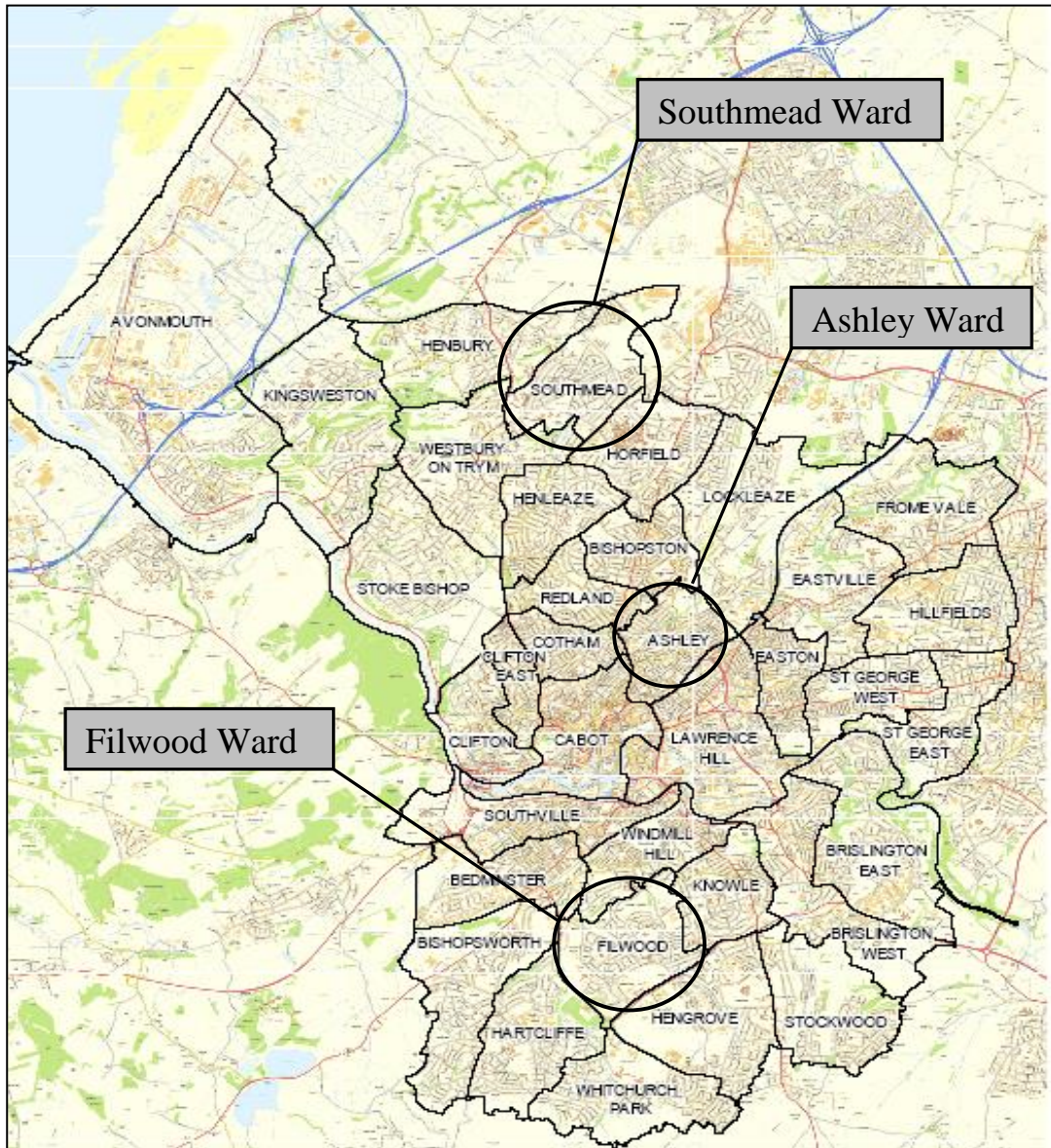
Figure 24: Location within the City of Bristol of the Southmead, Ashley (St. Paul's) and Filwood (Knowle West) electoral wards (Bristol City Council 2003)

The considerable geographic separation of the three disturbances in Bristol lends itself

towards a somewhat superficial understanding of the diffusion of disorders as being purely based upon the transmission of information through the mass media, specifically the television. In order to test this theory, all of the oral history respondents were asked how they first received information about the St. Paul's disturbance on April 2nd 1980. Table 24 gives the results of the survey:

Respondent	Home locale	Means of transmission of information	Participant in April 2nd 1980 St. Paul's disturbance?	Participant in a subsequent disturbance in April 1980?
A	St. Paul's	Eyewitness	Yes	No
G	St. Paul's	Eyewitness	Yes	No
D	St. Paul's	Eyewitness	Yes	No
L	St. Paul's	Eyewitness	Yes	No
E	St. Paul's	Eyewitness	Yes	No
C	St. Paul's	Eyewitness	No	No
I	St. Paul's	Eyewitness	No	No
B	St. Paul's	Eyewitness	No	No
H	Southmead	Word of mouth	No	Yes
J	Southmead	Word of mouth	No	Yes
N	Southmead	Television	No	No
F	Knowle West	Television	Yes	Yes
K	Knowle West	Word of mouth	No	No
M	Hartcliffe	Word of mouth	No	No

Table 24: Survey of oral history respondents with reference to initial source of information about the St. Paul's disturbance of April 2nd 1980

The survey is somewhat inconclusive in that information about the St. Paul's riot was derived from a mixture of situations, word of mouth and television news reports and did not bear a direct relation to participation in that or subsequent disturbances. It is clear a more detailed account of the particular circumstances in which the information was received and how this information affected the participants in areas outside of St. Paul's is required. The following excerpts are from three respondents from Southmead and a fourth from Knowle West who were asked about where and how they first received information about the St. Paul's 'riot':

Excerpt 1 (Southmead)

Respondent (J): Most…like me when I was young I didn't watch the news. The last thing I ever wanted to do was watch the news…all my news was [from] my mates at school…They used to ship a lot of pupils up from St. Paul's. So there was a lot of Afro-Caribbean's, a lot of Asian guys…That was happening just before the riots, because they were all involved in the riots in St. Paul's…

Interviewer: Was anybody bragging about being in St. Paul's?

Respondent (J): Yeah, course there was. Yeah, there was a guy…a big Black guy…he was there [in St. Paul's]…he was in my class. He come in [one] day strutting and telling us, what he was doing. He was telling us you know, he'd done this to the copper's car and he'd put this through this and he hit…hit a copper with this and that'[655]

Excerpt 2 (Southmead)

Respondent (N): I remember watching it on television, more than anything really with the St. Paul's riots…I remember thinking…there's a couple of guys…there was a guy called [name deleted] and I thought well he goes to our school. I think he was one of the ones…I thought there was a famous shot of him holding a paving slab over a coppers head and its just sort of stands out as a memory. I thought we know him and in school we were taking about it afterwards…he was a big Afro-Caribbean guy…

Interviewer: So you said that you had heard about the 'St. Paul's' riot from seeing someone on television. Was that right?

Respondent (N): He wasn't in school, the guy we saw on telly, he weren't in school.

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[655] Oral History File J_12-02-2010 (0:00:00), (0:07:36) and (0:08:54).

We wondered what happened to him. The thing is he was on telly. Me and me brother were going look at so and so…. He was year younger than us and he was a big bloke…he was a big lad, he was a tough boy…He would have handled himself…We didn't see him in school again.

Interviewer: Were there other kiddies who you can remember talking about it [the St. Paul's riot]?

Respondent (N): We talked, there was another lad we kind of recognised [on TV] and he said he was kind of down there. We heard he might have gone down for it…[656]

Excerpt 3 (Southmead)

'Now obviously via the Evening Post because I kept the cuttings of it, but I would not have been watching the television news…but it makes sense that in 1980 possibly, Black kids who lived in St. Paul's began going to school in Southmead and it was that connection. So the kids in St. Paul's would have witnessed St. Paul's kicking off and they would've went to school in Southmead and they would have gone to the youth club and obviously [there] was Black families in Southmead and they would've all been mixing with those same kids in St. Paul's and it would've been that connection'[657]

Excerpt 4 (Knowle West)

Interviewer: 'How did you first find out about the St. Paul's riot?'

Respondent (K): 'I was round my mate's house and his sister told us about it. She used to go down the 'Dug Out' and a mate of hers [name deleted: Black Male] told

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[656] Oral History File N_05-03-2010 (0:01:15).

[657] Oral History File H_18-02-2010 (0:00:00).

her about it and said 'get down there'... It was the start of the Easter holiday. It was a really really big deal [laughs]…You kind of felt…you'd gone from thinking we were the hardest area in Bristol and they'd kind of jumped ahead of us, which was a bit of a gutter 'cos we'd spent years fighting with Hartcliffe. It more or less like while our backs was turned someone else had jumped in front'

Interviewer: 'So it was bit of like fucking what's all that about?'

Respondent (K): 'Yeah, yeah…it was kind of a respect thing I suppose 'cos they'd had a pop at the cops…'

Interviewer: 'And also a bit of jealousy?'

Respondent (K): 'And also jealousy 'cos there we were being pushed around by the cops all night and they'd gone on and done it. A bit of a gutter really but a kind of respect for them in a way'

These four excerpts are interesting in that they expose a deeper context for the reception of information about the St. Paul's riot. The experiences of the first two respondents were far more intense than *just* hearing about the disturbance by 'word of mouth' or seeing it 'on television' as is blandly stated in Table 24. The first was confronted at school[658] (along with many other of his classmates) with an eyewitness account by an active participant[659]. The second saw several pupils from his school on television participating in the 'rioting' in St. Paul's. The impact of these experiences on the respondents should not be underestimated. The resulting transfer of

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[658] It is probable that this account of hearing the information in school happened a week or so after the St. Paul's 'riot' on Wednesday 2nd April. This was the last day of the spring term in 1980 and so the school would have reopened after the Easter holiday.

[659] The names of the participants have been withheld but the individuals concerned been verified by research to have been directly involved in the violence in St. Paul's.

information through the youth grapevines in the Southmead estate would have been more urgent, authentic and crucially had a greater shock value than merely impersonal news of a 'riot' in a distant (though infamous) area.

The third respondent, though not confronted in the same manner by direct oral or visual information, was fully aware of the connections between the two areas that were to a certain extent the product of local government policy. Avon County Council's controversial educational 'bussing strategy' that was discussed in Chapter 5.0 was mentioned by all three respondents as being central to forming social links between youths resident in St. Paul's and Southmead[660]. The fourth respondent from Knowle West heard about the event through his friends' connections with St. Paul's derived through the *'Dug Out'* club. The respondent emphasises the impact of the events, the (grudging) respect for the 'rioters' of St. Paul's in their attack on the police and feelings of jealousy that his area was being left behind or its reputation undone by their actions. Within his testimony is the feeling that battles with the rival estate of Hartcliffe were now passé in the new environment created by the St. Paul's 'riot' which demonstrated the police could be 'dealt with', something they had failed to do in Knowle West.

One of the key points to consider here is that although the *mechanisms* for transmission of information about disturbances are important in understanding 'contagious' effects, the *context* is doubly so. In 1981 a debate raged around whether

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[660] The dual social environments of young people, living in St. Paul's and going to school in Southmead as a result of the Avon County Council 'bussing' strategy is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.0 Section 5.3.9.

the national TV networks were responsible for spreading or even causing the 'riots' of that summer[661]. As a result some researchers demonstrated that most young people *did not watch* the television news[662], a proposition that has been partially substantiated by the analysis here. They also provided evidence that the 'the classroom, the street and the pub' were where detailed information about a forthcoming disturbance could be garnered. However what was not considered was that the reception of such information in the context of direct (or even indirect) social linkages magnifies its impact and urgency as appears to have done so in the case of Southmead. Also, as was noted by the final respondent from Knowle West, youth that were dealing with perceived or actual police harassment were *inspired* (and in some cases jealous) in their reactions to receiving the information. It effectively altered the

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[661] The debate was actually initiated at two important and highly publicised junctures. As the 1981 disturbances were peaking on 11th July, the media campaigner Mary Whitehouse sent telegrams to the BBC and ITN broadcasting organisations suggesting that they were responsible for the spread of the 'riots' (*Daily Mail* 14-07-81). In November 1981 the Scarman report was published and this made reference to the 'copycat' effect, causing the debate to be re-energised. The influence of the resulting discussions in the media led to the publication of several quasi-academic sources supporting the 'copycat' thesis, for example, Moonman, *Copy-Cat Hooligans* and Clutterbuck, *Terrorism and Urban Violence*. Neither of these efforts provided much empirical evidence for their suppositions and they relied heavily on perceived similarities between the English disturbances and those in Northern Ireland in 1981 as a result of the deaths of Republican hunger strikers. These sources suffered from a fundamental problem in confusing causality with correlation in their use of observations of 'riot' practice to support their case for the 'copycat effect'. It was quite possible that 'rioters' may have observed tactics and practices on television (and even employed them) but this did not explain *why they were rioting*.

[662] See the research in Tumber, *Television and the Riots: A Report for the Broadcasting Research Unit of the British Film Institute*.

'terrain' of what was possible, with inter-estate rivalry apparently being denigrated in the process.

Examination of these transfer mechanisms demonstrate that although the diffusion of information in the mass media (radio, television) is spatially and temporally *homogeneous* (i.e. the *same* information is received widely and almost instantaneously), this does not necessarily create *homogenous* responses. Once the information is available (by whatever means) it passes into *heterogeneous* social networks where the particular *contexts* are crucial and differing *responses* are formulated as a result.

7.2.4 Sub-cultural and familial youth networks and the composition of the 'crowd' in the April 1980 St. Paul's disturbance

It is useful to consider another set of social linkages between the study areas that both facilitated the dissemination of news of the 'riot' amongst participants, created the conditions for active participation in the St. Paul's rioting crowds and encouraged working class youth to 'travel' sometimes considerable distances to take part. These social connections between some of the St. Paul's youth and those of the distant Southmead and Knowle West areas were derived via youth sub-cultures. Of particular relevance are the Skinhead, Punk, Rastafarian and Ska (rude boy) sub-cultures, which were prevalent in the late 1970s and early 1980s in some or all of these areas.

Much has been written about the origins of and links between these cultural

movements[663], in particular the effect of Caribbean music forms on the early skinhead movement in the UK, the linkages between punk and reggae in the late 1970s and the fusion of styles and ethnicities in the Ska movement originating in the West Midlands in 1979. Their importance in this specific analysis is the part they played in bonding youth of different locales and ethnicities, both socially and ideologically, in and around the urban disturbances in Bristol in 1980.

Table 25 gives details of the home locale, youth sub-culture, ethnicity and participation of some of the oral history respondents in the 'Bristol riots' of April 1980. It is clear that the majority of the younger respondents were active in some of these youth subcultures and they feature prominently in many of their testimonies.

Essentially the social connections fostered by these sub-cultures in Bristol came in two distinct forms, spatial and intra-subculture. The first category relates to the ability of youth sub-cultures to overcome spatial divisions between areas and more crucially those relating to historic 'gang' rivalries between adjacent districts. Several respondents from Southmead and Knowle West drew attention to the, sometimes violent interactions between youth from their respective areas and neighbouring districts. Young people from Southmead were in some danger if they travelled to the nearby areas of Filton and Patchway[664]. Similarly youth from Knowle West were in permanent 'warfare' with the adjoining South Bristol areas of Hartcliffe and Withywood.

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[663] See for example Cashmore, *No Future: Youth and Society*, Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* and Jones, *Black Culture, White Youth: The Reggae Tradition from JA to UK*.

[664] This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.0 Section 5.4.2.

Respondent	Home locale	Youth Sub-culture	Age April 1980	Ethnicity	Active Riot Participant?[665]
A	St. Paul's	Punk	16	White	Yes
G	St. Paul's	-	30s	White	Yes
D	St. Paul's	-	27	White	No
L	St. Paul's	Punk	16	White	Yes
E	St. Paul's	Rastafarian[666]	16	Black	Yes
H	Southmead	Punk	15	White	No
J	Southmead	Ska	17	White	Yes
N	Southmead	Ska [Rude Boy]	17	Mixed Race	No
F	Knowle West	Punk	15	White	Yes
K	Knowle West	Punk	15	White	No
M	Hartcliffe	Punk	15	Mixed Race	No

Table 25: Home locale, youth sub-culture, age, ethnicity and riot participation of oral history respondents in Bristol in 1980

In contrast to this inter-neighbourhood warfare, youth sub-cultures allowed avenues of 'escape' into wider Bristol as well as offering new social environments to explore. Knowle West for example, had an historic connection with skinhead culture and it was these older 'original' skins that opened up new avenues both culturally and spatially for one respondent:

'By that time I was hanging around with a load of older blokes, who were

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[665] In this case the status of 'active riot participant' is defined by actively assisting and/or taking part in attacks upon the police and/or property rather than merely being an eye-witness or taking part in passive looting.

[666] The classing of Rastafarianism as a 'youth sub-culture' rather than a 'religion' in this case is not intended to detract from the latter category. Instead it reflects the important influence it had upon Black youth in the late 1970s. Its very lack of a central orthodoxy and hierarchy was important in its adoption and mutation by wider sections of Black youth and in its subsequent influence on other sub-cultures such as Punk. See Cashmore, *Rastaman: The Rastafarian Movement in England* and Cashmore, *The Rastafarians*.

like ex-skinheads, not fascist skinheads but like 'Black music White skinheads'. They were all from Knowle West…they were original skinheads, very anti-racist, they couldn't believe what the young skinheads were into. They were constantly going into town and almost getting into scraps with skinheads because they'd say 'well you're not fucking skinheads, skinheads is about Black music' and stuff like that…They were all very open-minded and not racist at all'[667]

Through his connections to this peer group of 'original skins' the respondent (a punk) and his friends from Knowle West were introduced to one of the most important meeting points for Black and White Bristolians in the early 1980s:

'[name deleted] knew a lot of Black kids in St. Paul's…and it was because of him and [name deleted] that we started going to the 'Dug Out'. Then I started to see some of the kiddies, a couple of Black kids from school, Black punks. And it was at that time when…from the London scene where it was a Punky-Rastafarian cross over and it was OK to be in each other's company. In London there was the Roxy scene where there was no punk music so everyone used to get into Black music. Before it became all middle-class and trendy, it was a proletarian thing to be into Black music, 'cos of the post-skinhead early punk kind of thing. So the 'Dug Out' was our ideal place. It was our equivalent.'[668]

The *'Dug Out'* club close to the city-centre became a popular haunt of those who

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[667] Oral History File K_09-09-2010 (00:02:22).

[668] Oral History File K_09-09-2010 (00:03:56).

couldn't get into 'straight' clubs because of racism, sub-cultural fashions (Punk, Skinhead, Ska, Rastafarian) or because they wanted a place where they could listen to 'their' music. The club acted as a hub for these sub-cultures allowing new relationships to be formed between youth of different ethnicities and locales. It also had a major part to play in the fusing of different musical influences into new styles, which formed a vibrant multi-ethnic 'underground' scene in the mid-eighties[669].

Meetings in the neutral space of the *'Dug Out'* not only connected youth from outlying working class estates with inner city St. Paul's but also allowed new contacts to be made with 'sussed' youths from nearby 'rival' areas.

> 'When you were like eleven or twelve in Knowle West the only political group, this shows how bad the Left were, was the NF [National Front], and you kind of thought 'they're quite cool like'. When I changed, which was when I was about thirteen, I went to this demo outside Knowle School when the NF were having a meeting there. And suddenly you saw all these cool kids from Hartcliffe and different areas. They were all there protesting. It was the height of the Anti-Nazi League and stuff. I didn't really see them again for ages…and then you saw all those sort of characters reappear at the 'Dug Out'. It had been very rare to mix with

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[669] This led to the 'Bristol sound' and its progenies *'Massive Attack'*, *'Tricky'* and *'Reprazent'* who became world famous in the 1990s. Members of *'Massive Attack'* developed out of the *'Wild Bunch'* who were regular DJ's at the *'Dug Out'* club in the early 80s. *'Tricky'* was well known to oral history respondents from Knowle West his home area. The origins and history of the 1980s Bristol music scene are sketched via the oral histories of the musicians, DJ's and graffiti artists of the period in Burton and Thompson, *Art & Sound of the Bristol Underground*.

that lot. There was group called the 'Red Mafia', they became later called the 'Hartcliffe Mafia'. It seems hard to believe now but at that time there were a few working class kids who were involved in sort of left wing things…You'd bump into all those sorts of people in the 'Dug Out'.[670]

The transient nature of St. Paul's population, particularly in terms of the large amount of rented accommodation, allied with its historic squatting scene dating back to the early seventies, allowed relatively easy movement from outlying estates to the inner city for unemployed or low-income youth. The main impediment to this movement, which had to be overcome by the mainly White 'outsiders', was the mythical status the neighbourhood had amongst many White Bristolians. One respondent from Knowle West recalled:

Respondent (K): 'St. Paul's was kind of like mythical. There was a lot of White racism. The classic line was 'It used to be a really nice area 'til they turned up'. So I never went down there then.'

Interviewer: 'So it was a bit scary as well then?'

Respondent (K): 'Yeah, yeah, it was prostitutes and it was like a world you just didn't…. Bristol's like a load of villages. If you were from Knowle West then you stayed in Knowle West.'

Interviewer: 'Did people tell stories…were women slagged off?'

Respondent (K): 'Yeah if you had a woman teacher you'd say she was from 'City Road' [St. Paul's], which basically meant she was a prostitute'

Interviewer: 'Did you know of any women who'd gone down there?'

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[670] Oral History File K_09-09-2010 (00:05:55).

Respondent (K): 'I remember when I first started chatting to my mate [name deleted] about it, he said his sister used to hang round there. I said 'that's really odd, isn't that dangerous for a White woman to go down there?'. But that sort of feeling didn't last very long as soon as I started going down the 'Dug Out', you suddenly realised it's not that bad'.[671]

By 1980 there was a significant punk scene resident in the area, comprising 'natives' and more recent 'interlopers'. This in turn brought more young visitors to the 'neutral zone' of St. Paul's, escaping from the area-based rivalries in the outlying estates and entering a friendlier sub-cultural milieu and (ironically) the safer streets of that neighbourhood. For many the initial contacts in St. Paul's were made in the *'Dug Out'* club. The same respondent recalled:

> 'The classic situation would be that you'd go up the 'Dug Out' get off with a girl and she'd be living in St. Paul's or on the periphery of St. Paul's. Then you'd go through it [St. Paul's] and you know you felt OK about it. It was an OK area and you'd suddenly realise all the bullshit was in the papers about 'No White people can go down there'. It was all a load of bullshit. I never had any trouble at all. Nothing at all really. At that time there was a definite kind of respect. It was OK to walk through and you'd see loads of other punk kids, all different sorts of people. I always found it a safe area really.'[672]

Another important reason to make contacts in St. Paul's, which was linked to these

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[671] Oral History File K_09-09-2010 (00:23:45).

[672] Oral History File K_09-09-2010 (00:28:20).

sub-cultural movements, was the need to purchase soft drugs particularly cannabis and marijuana. This drug scene, which was intimately connected to Grosvenor Road, the 'frontline', generated many visitors from outlying mainly White estates. For some the initial sub-cultural contacts led to them 'hanging out' in St. Paul's to buy drugs, thereby meeting local youth who had been influenced by Rastafarian ideas and making new friends. This was recounted by one White punk respondent from Knowle West:

Interviewer: 'How did you get your connections [in St. Paul's] with buying drugs?'

Respondent (F): 'Just through the punk scene really and just knowing where dealers lived because…there was a lot of punks living in St. Paul's because the housing was really cheap…I was still living at home with my parents at the time. They [the punks] all knew the guys there and they were all hanging out together…there was a little economy going on...'

Interviewer: 'This was like White punks living in St. Paul's?'

Respondent (F): 'Yeah like White punks living in St. Paul's knowing the Black guys and it was all quite relaxed and mellow really…between the guys on the street. It was the Old Bill that used to cause the problems, not just in St. Paul's but in Knowle West as well.'

Interviewer: 'So the connections come through the punk scene, people hanging out in town, getting to know people and then White punks who were living in St. Paul's…'

Respondent (F): 'Yeah and also a bit later then getting into sort of Reggae music as well 'cos you was hanging out with them guys and going to dances…there was Reggae, always a Blues going on'

Interviewer: 'Did you go to Blues then?'

Respondent (F): 'I went to a few Blues, yeah, Shady Grove and one in Mary Carpenter Place, Ajax …'

Interviewer: 'So it was sort of normal…it must have been fucking unusual, wasn't it…it must have been a bit weird?'

Respondent (F): 'Nah, the punks were kind of accepted because they lived in the area…it was kind of cool, obviously you used to get trouble sometimes from young kids but most of the older people… it was kind of cool at the Blues, they knew you, they let you in. Most of the punks were just going there for a late drink, so it was just like normal. You could have a smoke and it was relaxed and they played reggae music'[673]

St. Paul's was thus 'discovered' by many 'outsiders' through sub-cultural contacts and became an attractive place to hang out, as it provided safe spaces to party, drink after-hours and consume soft drugs. These initial fraternisations through buying drugs and absorbing the different culture also encouraged many to move to the area from the outskirts of the city.

The Bristol punk scene's symbolic *daytime* gathering point was outside the Virgin record shop in the Broadmead shopping centre[674], where contingents from many working class areas congregated in 1970-80. This new environment brought together not only supposed 'enemies' from rival areas of Bristol but also in the mix were

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[673] Oral History File F_27-08-2010_Part_1 (00:06:19).

[674] Evidence of the meeting points of the Bristol punk scene was supplied by respondents and is captured in images on the Bristol Archive Records website.

Black, Mixed Race and White punks from St. Paul's. One contingent remembered by many respondents was the self-named *'Half-breeds'*, a group of mixed-race punks who traversed the ethnic and fashion boundaries of several youth sub-cultures. Their social and spatial make-up was unusual and directly related to the experience of first generation immigrants to Bristol from the Caribbean in the 1950s and 60s.

As has been discussed previously St. Paul's was the initial arrival point for many of these immigrants and became an established community. Through the 1960s however, many Afro-Caribbean residents of the area had relationships with White Bristolians who they met through work or leisure. Often this entailed leaving St. Paul's to live in outlying mainly White working class estates where their mixed-race children were brought up. These relationships effectively created a mixed-race teenage diaspora in the late 1970s and though dispersed across the city these young people retained familial links to the 'original' Black community in St. Paul's.

The experience of being Black in the outlying estates with the prevalent racial prejudice of the 1970s allied with the feeling of being both 'different' and somewhat isolated, generated some interesting responses amongst these teenagers. Confrontations between rival groups from mainly White working class estates were often turned into points of fraternisation by Black youth, as was recounted by one mixed-race female respondent from Hartcliffe:

Respondent (M): 'If you were a girl there used to be 'girl's' fights. And the girls you could go down to Bedminster to have a fight and it happened when there would be a Fair…and you would go there to have a fight with all the girls from Knowle West. So the boys' fights would happen regularly of a weekend but the girls fights would be…'

Interviewer: 'Ritualised?'

Respondent (M): 'Yeah and you'd go to the fair to have the fight [laughs] And what would happen when you'd go to those fights was if you were Black or mixed-race you'd meet lots of other mixed-race people from those areas like Knowle West and Withywood that you wouldn't ever see before. So you never generally ended up having a fight. You ended up having a chat [both laugh] about who you knew, who you were related to…'

Interviewer: 'It was almost like a level of solidarity, 'cos it was unusual'

Respondent (M): 'Yeah, 'cos it was unusual to meet Black or mixed-race people from out on the out-skirts'[675]

The shared feelings and solidarity expressed between Black and mixed-race teenagers from different, often rival estates allowed groupings such as the *'Half-breeds'* to organically form in the late 1970s. The linkages between members of this particular group were a both a development and mirror of the movements that their parental generation had made in the 1960s. The resulting ethno-geographic map of Bristol from the perspective of a female mixed-race teenager in the late 1970s is recounted in detail by the same respondent:

Respondent (M): 'Everybody was into punk rock…and a lot of the people a little bit older than me were really really into that and there was a massive scene and the person that I remember the most was this bloke called [Black male: name deleted] and [Black male: name deleted] and they were really interesting 'cos although they were sort of from Hartcliffe and they drank at the Hartcliffe Inn they had a bit of a… pan

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[675] Oral History File M_05-10-2010_Part_1 (00:07:20).

South Bristol presence in that they knew people in Knowle, they knew people in Hartcliffe and they knew people in Withywood. If you knew people in all those places, then you would be more likely to know people in the next 'hamlet', if you like, Bedminster…'

Interviewer: 'The next village'

Respondent (M): 'Yeah, but from Bedminster it would always go over to Southmead'

Interviewer: 'Is that right?'

Respondent (M): 'Yeah, it was really strange. It was sort of Hartcliffe, Withywood, Southmead…It was clearly estates around the centre. So people on the outskirts. Those older boys would know people, the 'big' people from Southmead, Withywood and all the rest of it. They would know them. And they wouldn't really go into town as much, though some people would go into Broadmead on a Saturday afternoon and hang around outside Virgin but there was definitely that older crowd and they were all sort of linked around Withywood, Hartcliffe, Knowle, Knowle West. There were a core of people in Knowle West. Knowle West was always a bit more cosmopolitan than...'

Interviewer: 'Why was that then?'

Respondent (M): 'Because the people that were in Knowle West were connected to people that were more central and what I imagine is that there were…people from these estates Southmead, Hartcliffe, Withywood that were mixed race that were connected through that mixture. So you would know Black people because the connection would be that would be a Black fathers from St. Paul's or from the centre of town that would know White women in those satellite estates. And that's how the connection would be made….for me 'cos I'm mixed race obviously it would be made

through people who were mixed race and that's where the sort of 'Half-breed' thing comes in, because they would be 'Half-breed' people who collectively would have the sort of shared experience of having Black parents from the inner city [St. Paul's] but who had White parents from the out-skirts. So that's why those connections were round the outside…those connections and those mixed-race children are evidence of those connections between St. Paul's and those peripheral estates, aren't they? When you would meet other mixed-race people then you would be interested in them…Whatever was happening in St. Paul's would radiate via those relationships'

Interviewer: 'So it was more a network than most kids would have?'

Respondent (M): 'Yes, and jail also 'cos you would be in borstals and jails with other mixed race kids…whose mothers might live in satellite estates but those mothers might not know each other but the connection would be that the fathers would be sort of central.'

Interviewer: 'So it was kind of like St. Paul's radiating out into other areas and then the second generation people start to meet'

Respondent (M): 'Yeah, and you'd get an affiliation as well because you'd know other mixed race…for girls, I talked about the fact that you'd meet mixed-race girls when you'd go out fighting and you'd see other mixed-race people and you'd be like 'Oh, that's interesting, she's kind of mixed race' and she wouldn't want to have a fight with me because obviously we ain't gonna have a fight 'cos we'd know what it's like to be the only Black person around. So you are not gonna have a fight with each other. But I should imagine that for the boys it was the same sort of thing, you wouldn't necessarily want to go and have a fight. And there was a lot of fighting… through hooligans and going and fighting at the City ground and that's another way of knowing people from different estates and that kind of shared culture radiating

through conflict and at this time it would be football violence…I think that possibly a lot of the information about what was going on in St. Paul's radiated through those families and through jails and through that kind of thing really…'[676]

The respondent's analysis presents a rich description of the networks that were in play in connecting both mixed-race Afro-Caribbean youth in outlying estates, with each other as well as with the 'mother' district of inner city St. Paul's. Figure 25 gives a schematic representation of this ethnographic map based on the respondent's testimony. This map effectively outlines the historical conditions for the creation of second-generation groupings such as the *'Half-breeds'* and explains their 'pan-Bristol' nature. It is interesting to note in the respondent's account the meshing of the crucial ethnic/familial connections in the context of a youth sub-culture, in this case the Bristol Punk scene. The *'Half-breeds'* although connected by the deeper relationships of shared family ties and dual ethnic origin were also functioning in the wider youth sub-culture, which connected them with both White and Black youth. Their 'pan-Bristol' network often allowed them to overcome violent inter-area rivalries and importantly opened up opportunities for other members of their shared Punk sub-culture to meet and eventually move into St. Paul's.

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[676] Oral History File M_05-11-2010_Part_2 (00:00:38).
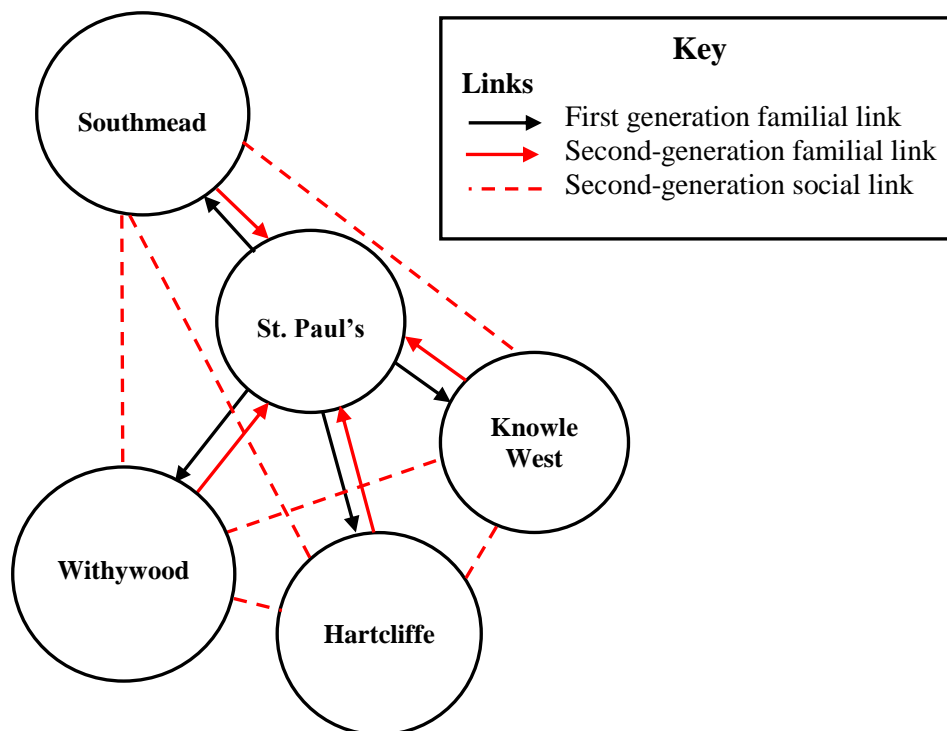
Figure 25: Schematic of ethno-geographic connections for first and second generation Afro-Caribbeans in Bristol

One White punk respondent remembered his personal connections to the *'Half-breeds'*:

Respondent (L): 'There was a huge contingent of punks down there [in St. Paul's]. There were always punks. We used to hang round in town outside Virgins, outside Paradise Garage and places like that and then we'd mosey up to St. Paul's because friends of ours lived there…'

Interviewer: 'So the Half-breeds…when I was in the punk scene it was quite unusual to see Mixed-race or Black kids being punks'

Respondent (L): 'There was a lot of Black kiddies who were punks…there was the White punks as well who lived nearby'

Interviewer: 'That's interesting, so there was proper crossover. Did people know

each other because of school or did they know each other just 'cos of being punks?'

Respondent (L): 'Both really, because all the people that lived in St. Paul's all went to school together and then people used to come in. I first met that lot [the Half-breeds] in early to mid '77…'[677]

The *'Half-breeds'* acted as one of the conduits between the city centre punk scene with its constituents from many different areas of the city and St. Paul's. These Black 'punks' also connected 'outsiders' with other cultural groupings in St. Paul's:

> 'We knew quite a lot of the Rastas, 'cos Punks and Rastas used to always know each other. We use to buy our blow [cannabis] off them. But also 'cos we used to know all the mixed-race punks, they grew up there so they were all old friends, they went to school, they knew each other, we liked the same music, we went to the same places…'[678]

Groupings such as the *'Half-breeds'* not only created bonds between the Black youth of St. Paul's and the city-wide Punk sub-culture prior to the 1980 disturbance but also were connected to symbolic locations such as the *Black and White* café on the 'frontline' which were central to that disorder. In order to substantiate these linkages an analysis of some of the participants in the 'rioting' crowds in St. Paul's was undertaken using a 'social networking' model. This network is displayed in Figure 26.

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[677] Oral History File L_15-02-2010 (00:05:40).

[678] Oral History File L_15-02-2010 (00:14:19).

Key

Links
1. Familial   2. Sub-cultural   3. Spatial
4. Spatial and Sub-cultural 5. Familial, Spatial and Sub-cultural

Groupings
⬤ (yellow) 'Black and White' café proprietors
⬤ (blue) Members of 'Punk' youth sub-culture
⬤ (green) Non-designated
⬤ (red) Members of the 'Half Breeds'

Designations
80/XX: Subject Reference Number
B = Black   W= White   M = Male   F = Female
[XX]: Subject's age (years) in April 1980 in parentheses
{XX}: Oral history respondent

Figure 26: Social network derived from a sample of participants in the St. Paul's 2nd April 1980 disturbance

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Figure 26 displays a social network analysis of a sample of eighteen persons involved in the disturbance of 2nd April 1980[679]. In the diagram, each vertex (circle) represents a 'riot' participant, indicated by a reference number (for reasons of anonymity). Essentially three types of connections between actors are shown. Familial ties are denoted by the value 1, sub-culturally derived acquaintances by 2 and a 3 marks spatial ties within the disturbance[680]. Members or affiliates of the *'Half-breeds'* grouping are designated by red circles, the proprietors of the *Black and White* café by yellow and those associated with 'Punk' youth sub-culture by blue. Green vertices represent non-designated actors.

Although a limited model, Figure 26 displays the complexity of the social networks amongst the crowds of 'rioters' but also crucially shows the importance of 'networking' groups such as the *'Half-breeds'* in traversing ethnic divisions through sub-cultural linkages. Four specific groupings can be isolated in this network that are differentiated by ethnicity, age and membership of sub-cultural or ethnically derived network. The first group is the family members of the *Black and White* café

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[679] The data for this sample was obtained from secondary sources, transcripts from court cases; Bristol Commission for Racial Equality, *Bristol Crown Courts Monday 26-1-81 to Friday 30-1-81*. (Bristol Record Office 43129, 1981) P ST. PA B1, newspaper reports Bristol Reference Library, *Bristol Riots: April 1980*. (Bristol: Bristol Reference Library, 1980), Vol. 3, and oral histories. The public domain social network analysis software PAJEK (v.1.01) was used to model and analyse the data. See V. Batagelj, W. de Nooy and A. Mrvar, *Exploratory Social Network Analysis with Pajek*.

[680] The three linkages familial (kinship relations), sub-cultural actors (members of the 'punk' youth subculture) and spatial (participants acting together in the disturbance) are defined in more detail in Section 3.3.4. The values 4 and 5 represent multiple links, spatial and sub-cultural (4) and familial, spatial and sub-cultural (5).

proprietors (yellow) who are connected to a second group of Black subjects who are in their 20s and 30s (green). This latter cluster of subjects operated together in the disturbance along with members of the *'Half-breeds'* (red) a pan-Bristol grouping of teenage second-generation mixed-race youth most of who were born or lived outside of St. Paul's. The *'Half-breeds'* were in turn closely linked to the Bristol Punk youth subculture of similar ages, some of whose members make up the fourth grouping in the model (blue). Quantitative analysis of the network demonstrated that certain actors played significant roles in acting as *brokers* in and between the various social groupings. The *liaison* role, that is 'a person who mediates between members of different groups but who does not belong to these groups'[681] was dominated by the subject 80/34. This person a member of the *'Half-breeds'* effectively connected the older non-designated Black subjects with members of the 'punk' sub-culture. Figure 26 thus demonstrates the social basis for the mixed ethnicity of sections of the 'crowds' who fought the police in St. Paul's.

7.2.5 'Travellers' and 'Outside Agitators'

One particular group of 'riot' participants that often generates derision both from the media, authorities and interestingly within communities where a disturbance has taken place are the *'travellers'*. These are non-residents of the subject area who have travelled some distance to take part in the action. Typically they are characterised as having no interest in the political or social relations that have generated the disturbance, act as opportunists by taking advantage of a situation of 'lawlessness' to profit from looting and are assumed to have no connections with the communities they are 'exploiting'. 'Post-riot' statements by members of communities affected by

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[681] V. Batagelj, W. de Nooy and A. Mrvar, *Exploratory Social Network Analysis with Pajek*, p.151.

'riot' often corroborate this view by blaming 'outsiders' for looting and arson[682]. Such assessments of 'travellers' act as useful distractions from the disturbing fact that the majority of the violence and destruction has often been carried out from *within the community*. This relationship has a close connection to the concept of the 'outside agitator', which is discussed in more detail later in this section.

So were there 'travellers' to the St. Paul's and Southmead disturbances in April 1980 and if so who were they and what was their rationale for taking part in the disorder? The first of these questions can be judged by an analysis of a sample of those arrested and charged during or immediately after the disturbance.

Figure 27 shows 'home locale' and 'nature of crime committed' for a sample of thirty-nine offenders (twenty-eight from the St. Paul's disturbance and eleven from the Southmead incident).

It is clear that about 30% of the St. Paul's sample lived more than a mile from the area, suggesting that there was a significant contingent of 'travellers' to the disturbance. Of these 'travellers' a higher proportion appear to have been involved in

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[682] See for example the comments of a local trader 'Half the damage done here was done by outsiders who jumped on the bandwagon after the riot started' *Western Daily Press* 05-04-1980 and 'The burning was instigated not by outsiders, **as commonly believed** (i.e. African-Caribbean people from London, Birmingham etc. or White people from other parts of the city), but by local Black rioters wishing to draw attention to their grievances' [this author's emphasis in bold] from a statement by Ras Judah to Karen Garvey of the Museum of Bristol 26-02-2009.

'looting' rather than attacks on the police[683]. However this does not preclude the fact that either group may have been involved in *both* activities signifying the limitation of the somewhat artificial division between 'looters' and 'rioters'. In contrast the sample of offenders from the Southmead disorders shows that the majority were from the 'estate' and there were *no* interlopers living more than a mile from the area.
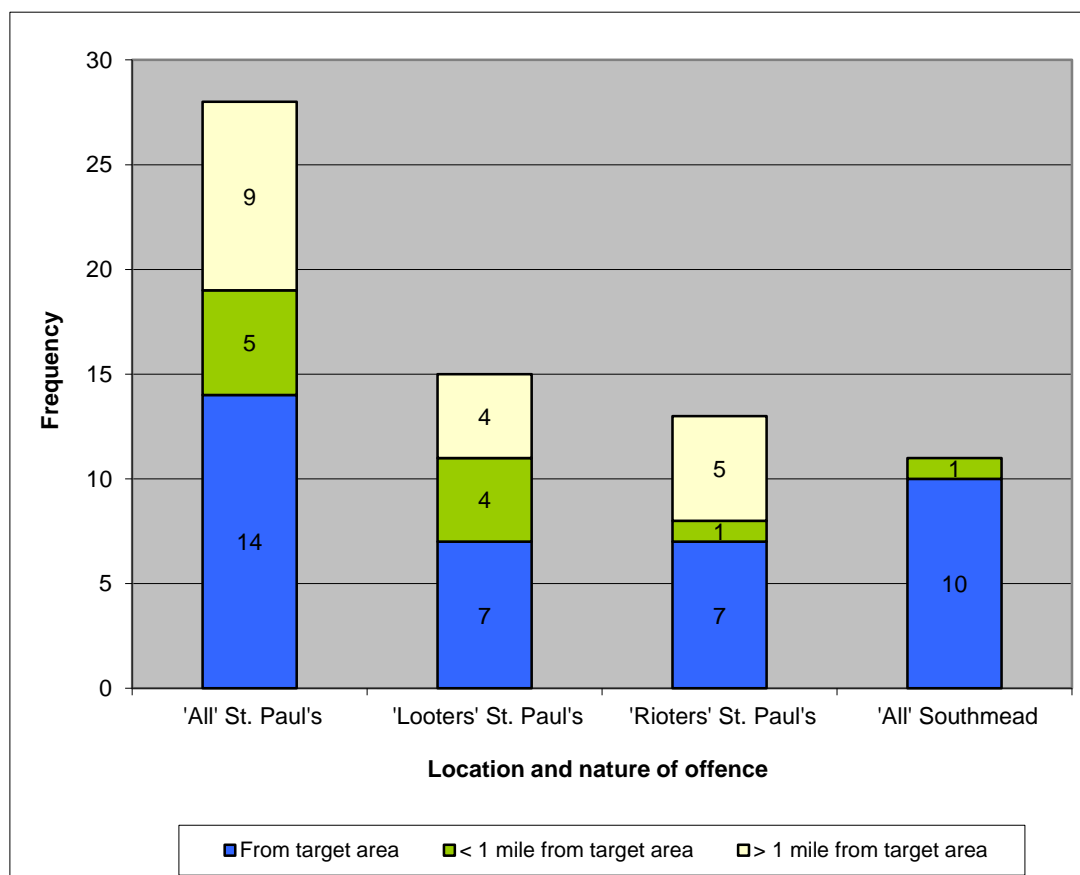
Figure 27: Residence of a sample of offenders from the St. Paul's and Southmead disturbances in Bristol in April 1980

The first impression is thus some support for the idea of 'opportunism' in the St. Paul's event and a characterisation of Southmead participants as being mainly local

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[683] This may be the result of the time it took for 'travellers' to hear about the St. Paul's 'riot' and get to the area. Many would have arrived after 7.30pm when the primary activity was 'looting' rather than 'rioting'.

residents. There is one significant drawback for this portrayal of the St. Paul's disorder. This concerns the 'mythical' status of this district as a 'No Go' area for Whites. The stereotyping of the area by the local media allied with 'fear of the other' referred to by many non-resident Bristolians was of major significance in the late 1970s. These fears were of course predicated by the assumption of everyday activity rather than the conditions of 'lawlessness' during a major civil disorder. Under such extraordinary circumstances it is hard to believe that many Bristolians would have made a journey across the city to enter a 'riot' torn area, which already had such a fearsome reputation. A richer description is thus required to gain a better understanding of the motivation of these 'travellers'.

A clue to at least some of these motivations lies with the oral history respondents who weren't resident in St. Paul's but attempted to get to the 'riot'. One such respondent a resident of Knowle West, some four kilometres from the area, outlined his and his friends' reaction to news of the St. Paul's 'riot' on the night of April 2nd 1980:

Respondent (F): 'I remember the night of the St. Paul's riot because I was in Broad Plain Youth Club in Knowle West and it come on the Nine O'clock News…so we seen it on the news…we thought fucking hell that's a bit weird, oh right great. So we all piled outside and got on the number ten bus and tried to get down to St. Paul's. But by the time we got there it was all cordoned off, so we ended up on Stokes Croft and there was like Old Bill everywhere. We hung around for a couple of hours…We couldn't get in or anywhere near it.'

Interviewer: 'Out of the people who were at Broad Plain who was it who went down?'

Respondent (F): 'It was a gang of us who were in the Club that night'

Interviewer: 'Had the people who went with you, had they been to St. Paul's before?'

Respondent (F): 'Yeah, quite a few of them, but a few of them hadn't as well, you know. But there was that thing I touched on before, everyone was into the Specials and Madness and there was this whole Two-Tone thing going on. So, you know, the sort of feeling in the Club as we were watching the news was like 'fair play' 'cos we wished we could get it together to do that to the cops who were fucking us over. So the idea was that we felt a kind of sympathy for the guys that were rioting. We wanted to get down there and help them out basically'

Interviewer: 'Did you hear about other people trying to go there or was that just a story that went round?'

Respondent (F): 'No, no, no, there was definitely other people who were trying to get there and there was a lot in the press I think a day or two after about basically blaming it on outsiders who had arrived from all over Bristol to get involved'[684]

The respondent had been a visitor to St. Paul's previous to this incident as a result of his connections with the Punk scene and he had made several acquaintances there. For him and some of his enlightened companions the fearful status of the area had been exploded by their recent sub-culturally derived experiences and friendships. According to the respondent, for the uninitiated Knowle West youth in the Club that night, peer group pressure plus the multi-racial nature and politics of the Ska movement and a need to get revenge on the police overcame any remaining fears they might have had. This provides a quite different understanding of the 'traveller' than

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[684] Oral History File F_15-02-2010 (00:17:56)

the shallow 'rioting for fun and profit' explanations provided by some analyses[685].
Instead, feelings of respect, sympathy and *solidarity* with the 'rioters' come through
this testimony and were the driving force for the respondent's attempted intervention.

The so-called *'outside agitator'* became an important feature of media and
governmental propaganda during the explosion of disturbances in July 1981. The
characterisation of sinister figures and organisations with subversive agendas entering
communities to 'stir up trouble' provided convenient explanations for both the
initiation and spread of disorder. The function of these phantom 'folk devils' was (and
remains) to distract attention away from the precipitating actions of the authorities[686]
and to remove agency from 'rioting' communities, instead portraying participants as
easily led and in some cases as naïve 'innocents'.

The day after the disturbances of April 1980 in St. Paul's the Chief Constable of Avon
and Somerset Constabulary was asked several times in a press conference if there had
been political interventions by left-wing activists prior to or during the disorder[687]. In
each case he stated there was no evidence for this, which to a certain extent warded
off media explanations based upon the concept of the 'outside agitator'. However,
when left-wing activists openly arrived in St. Paul's, some days *after* the event and

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[685] The seminal source for the 'rioting for fun and profit' theory is Banfield, *The Unheavenly City*.

[686] For example according to Reicher one local councillor in Bristol claimed in an interview
immediately after the St. Paul's 'riot' that 'people were phoning each other up before the trouble
started and busloads came down from Coventry and Birmingham with guns' Reicher, *The St. Paul's
Riot: An Explanation of the Limits of Crowd Action in Terms of a Social Identity Model* p.197.

[687] Avon and Somerset Constabulary, *Press Conference Following the Disturbances in St. Paul's: New
Bridewell: 11.00am Thursday April 3rd 1980*.

certainly 'tail ending' the disturbance, some sections of the national press saw an opportunity to re-launch the story[688]. A couple of weeks after the disturbance Tariq Ali was invited to speak at public meeting of the Campaign Against Racist Laws in central Bristol[689], not far from St. Paul's. Two days before the meeting the *Daily Mail* ran a feature entitled *'Agitators in Bristol'*[690], which made great play of the influx of 'hard left outside agitators' but calmed the public by portraying the 'Rastafarians' of St. Paul's as simply disinterested or merely bemused by the attention being given to them.

In actual fact St. Paul's did not require these 'outside' influences: it had amongst its residents a significant number of left-wing activists who were themselves surprised by the spontaneous 'uprising' of April 2nd 1980. They did however react retrospectively to the disturbances. One member of the Socialist Workers Party from St. Paul's recalled being asked to get 'involved' amongst the local Rastafarians by his local branch:

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[688] Reicher stated that 'a rumour was circulating in police ranks that Tariq Ali had been present on the day of the riots - in fact Tariq Ali had been there but arrived on the afternoon of the 3 April in order to report for the left-wing paper Socialist Challenge'. Reicher, *The St. Paul's Riot: An Explanation of the Limits of Crowd Action in Terms of a Social Identity Model*, p.197. Ali, a '60s revolutionary' and Trotskyite 'folk devil' was demonised by much of the British media and certainly served the function of being an 'outside agitator'. The 'intellectual leader' of the Socialist Workers Party, Tony Cliff also visited the city for a public meeting on 22nd April 1980 (*Socialist Worker* 19-04-1980, p.4).

[689] The meeting was held at Central Hall, Old Market Street. Avon and Somerset Constabulary, Poster: *Campaign Against Racist Laws Public Meeting (Friday 18th April 1980).* (Bristol Record Office POL/LG/1/9, 1980).

[690] *Daily Mail* 16-04-1980.

Respondent (G): 'Well when I was in the SWP I got seconded with the Rastafarians. Fucking lovely, just got stoned. Terribly stoned, had to get carried home, but they were well read and they had gone through the whole gamut of stuff…Garvey and everything. Knocked the spots off most of our comrades…quite easily…yeah'

Interviewer: 'So they knew their history then?'

Respondent (G): 'Oh shit did they, inside out bloke, it was embarrassing. Absolutely embarrassing. Yeah, I could keep up on the Irish history but they could do their Black history. Like fucking solid and thought out. [We] argued…lost…come out again…another look at that…yeah excellent. Really I was impressed by it…well [laughs] impressed by the smoke as well mind. It's a pity that happened but we had some fucking great times 'cos they got to know us…'[691]

The actual experience of the left-wing activists being engaged and out-argued by the 'subject' does not sit well with the media inspired model of the agitator 'folk-devil' and it was to be a year later before the concept re-emerged in the media with much greater intensity during the disorders of the spring and summer of 1981.

7.2.6 Looting, arson and the 'looters'

The looting and arson which was evident after the withdrawal of the police from St. Paul's on April 2nd was problematic for those commentators who wanted to characterise the Bristol disorders as 'uprisings' with formal political agendas or were proposing arguments for a static 'community identity' within the crowds[692]. The very

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[691] Oral History File G_09-10-2009 (00:32:31).

[692] For several reasons, none of the secondary sources cover this period of the disturbance in any detail. Joshua and Wallace base most of their analysis on police evidence, which was lacking in the latter episodes of the disturbance. In any case, these authors were presenting the St. Paul's disturbance in a

nature of such activities highlights divisions within the supposed and popular concept of a homogenous *'community'*. It is certainly simplistic to characterise members of a spatially defined 'community' as having unified economic or social interests. Brent in his study of Southmead in the 1990s[693] makes a significant critique of idealised concepts of 'community' that emphasise unity and stasis. Instead he recognises that divisions do exist, that these are dynamic relations and can be potentially exacerbated or overcome in extraordinary moments of 'assertion'. Brent stated:

> 'the first moments of community action are about assertion, not communication, a stage in establishing a position of power from which communication on a more equal footing is possible, challenging the power of authority while asserting their own authority to speak'

historical context of Black political struggles in Britain, so the apparent contradictions of this phase of the disorder were problematic and were probably ignored as a result; Joshua, Wallace and Booth, *To Ride the Storm : The 1980 Bristol 'Riot' and the State*. Reicher's study of crowd behaviour in the St. Paul's disturbance was centred on the collective identity of the crowd (as members of the 'St. Paul's community') and he had some significant eye-witness accounts of the latter period but stated: 'Given limitations of space, only a part of the data will be used. In particular, only the period before the police withdrew will be considered. For this reason the looting and arson attacks on various buildings will not be dealt with, since these occurred only after the police had left the area. This omission is not because the themes to be elaborated below do not apply, although there are differences between the two periods, but rather, due to the fact that the data is lengthy and detailed and adds little to the basic arguments'; Reicher, *The St. Paul's Riot: An Explanation of the Limits of Crowd Action in Terms of a Social Identity Model*, p.189. Despite these assertions, the more controversial aspects of the crowd behaviour in this period may have been problematic for Reicher's analysis.

[693] See especially Chapter 8 in Brent, *Searching for Community : Representation, Power and Action on an Urban Estate*.

In examining the looting and arson in St. Paul's it is important to recognise that although the violent ejection of the police can be characterised as an exclusionary and perhaps unified 'community' response, the latter stages of the disturbance were somewhat different. This phase instead reveals a moment of *internal struggle* within the 'community', exposing existing divisions and requiring negotiation and self-limiting behaviours concerning the use of force.

Examining 'riot' from the perspective of crowd composition, behaviour and motive is a difficult task for historians as the sources of evidence are usually lacking and has been discussed previously, many researchers are left with the sometimes dubious pickings from court records. However one obvious (though often ignored) source of information is the *physical evidence* left behind in the aftermath of destructive activities by the 'crowd'[694]. These 'primary' sources, typically damaged or destroyed buildings and property can provide a useful understanding of the actions and agenda of the 'rioters'. In addition, a post-structural emphasis on 'silences and omissions' leads us towards analysing which properties were *not* attacked or looted. Comparing these two types of physical evidence offers a potential path towards understanding the interactions between the participants and proprietors, conflicts within the crowd and finally the choices that were made by both 'sides'[695].

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[694] Reddy stated in his study of one hundred years of disorders in Rouen: 'the targets of these crowds thus glitter in the eye of history as signs of the labourer's conception of the nature of society'. Quoted from Reicher, *The St. Paul's Riot: An Explanation of the Limits of Crowd Action in Terms of a Social Identity Model*, p.203.

[695] There are a few examples of using quantitative analyses of damage to properties in 'riots' in order to gauge the motives of 'crowds'. These include R. A. Berk and H. E. Aldrich, 'Patterns of Vandalism during Civil Disorders as an Indicator of Selection of Targets,' *American Sociological Review* 37, no. 5

The first striking piece of evidence in examining the destruction of property on the night of April 2nd 1980 in St. Paul's was the fact that no private houses were the intentional targets of the 'rioters'. As was noted by Reicher[696], damage to property was almost exclusively aimed at the police, commercial or state buildings. This suggests that if intra-community conflict existed it was limited to these types of targets and was not concerned with the private 'home' as such. This first clue to the agenda of the crowd suggests that in the state of supposed 'lawlessness' created by the withdrawal of the Constabulary the destruction that was unleashed was not directed by disputes between members of the community on the basis of familial, criminal or sub-cultural relationships. On this basis the following analysis is limited to considering damage to commercial and state properties.

Table 26 shows the commercial and state properties within the immediate area of action by the crowds, grouped according to their location on the listed thoroughfares[697]. Properties that were damaged by looting and/or arson are marked by red fill. The final column, *'Order'* ranks the damaged properties according to the time

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(1972) and M. J. Rosenfeld, 'Celebration, Politics, Selective Looting and Riots: A Micro Level Study of the Bulls Riot of 1992 in Chicago,' *Social Problems,* 44 no. 4 (1997).

[696] Reicher, *The St. Paul's Riot: An Explanation of the Limits of Crowd Action in Terms of a Social Identity Model*, p.195.

[697] The table was constructed from a variety of sources including cross-referencing *Kelly's Bristol Directory*. (Kingston upon Thames: Kelly's Directories, 1973) and the *Yellow Pages: Bristol.* (Post Office Yellow Pages, 1980), television footage *BBC & HTV: St. Paul's riot.*, post-riot photographs, Penny, *Presentation Slides about the St Paul's Riots 1980* and Leggett, as well as 'local knowledge' (including recorded and unrecorded interviews with local shopkeepers).

at which they were attacked.

Type of Property	Location	Damaged	Looted	Arson[698]	Order
Electrical Equipment	Lower Ashley Rd.				
Mini Market	Lower Ashley Rd.				
Transport Office	Lower Ashley Rd.				
Hardware Shop	Lower Ashley Rd.	■	■		7
Builders Merchants	Lower Ashley Rd.				
Dry Cleaners	Lower Ashley Rd.				
Public House	Lower Ashley Rd.				
Record Shop	Sussex Place	■	■		10
Public House	Sussex Place				
Car Repair Shop	Ashley Rd.				
TV Repair Shop	Ashley Rd.	■	■		?
Butcher	Ashley Rd.				
Grocer/Bakers	Ashley Rd.				
Chemist	Ashley Rd.				
Bicycle Shop	Ashley Rd.	■	■		7
Newsagent	Ashley Rd.	■	■		4
Men's Clothes Shop	Ashley Rd.				
General Food Store	Ashley Rd.	■	■		?
Public House	Ashley Rd.				
Car Dealer	Ashley Rd.	■			?
Bookmaker	Ashley Rd.	■	■	■	3
Post Office	Ashley Rd.	■	■	■	4
Public House	Ashley Rd.				
Furnishing Store	Ashley Rd.	■	■	*	?
Drapers	Ashley Rd.	■	■	*	?
Clothes Shop	Ashley Rd.	■	■	*	?
Bank	Ashley Rd.	■		■	1
Florist	Grosvenor Rd.				
Upholsterer	Grosvenor Rd.				
Grocers & Off Licence	Grosvenor Rd.				
Dress Fabric Shop	Grosvenor Rd.	■	■	*	?
Stationers	Grosvenor Rd.				
Clothes Shop	Grosvenor Rd.				
Removals	Grosvenor Rd.				
Launderette	Grosvenor Rd.				
Hardware Shop	Grosvenor Rd.				
Motor Bike Shop	Grosvenor Rd.	■	■		7
Café	Grosvenor Rd.				
Public House	Grosvenor Rd.				
Newsagent	Grosvenor Rd.				
Printing Shop	Grosvenor Rd.	■			2
Commercial Stationers	Wilder St.	■		■	?
Warehouse	Brighton St.	■		■	6
Store & Off Licence	Brighton St.				
Labour Exchange	Little Bishop St.	■			?

Table 26: Damage to commercial and state properties during the disturbance in St. Paul's on the evening of April 2nd 1980

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[698] Properties marked with an asterisk denote attempted arson or accidental damage by fire.

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It is immediately clear that some level of target selection was underway during the looting phase, as although nineteen properties were attacked, twenty-six were not. Of the attacked properties, the majority (fourteen) were looted. The looted premises can be categorised as being likely to have cash (bank, bookmaker, post office), purveyors of high value consumer durables (tools, electrical goods, motorbikes, bicycles) or easy to carry taxed goods (alcohol, tobacco). The only exceptions to this were clothes and fabric shops. In Table 26 all the properties that are retrospectively considered to fall into these high-value categories are shown shaded in grey.

Of the properties that were *not* looted or damaged, thirteen fell into the high value categories including three pubs (cash), four general stores or newsagents (alcohol, tobacco), several other hardware shops (tools) and a chemist (drugs). Therefore *more than half* of the twenty-four high-value properties were left untouched despite the fact that the participants had four hours to loot at will.

The five properties intentionally damaged by fire (in order of being burned) were a bank, bookmaker, post office, printing warehouse and commercial stationers. Attempted arson was carried out against several other premises (marked with asterisks in Table 26). Certain targets clearly had a symbolic value for the 'rioters' particularly the bank, which was surrounded by crowds both during the initial phases of the violence directed against the police and later on when they had withdrawn. Several respondents drew attention to the collective audible 'joy' when it was set on fire[699]. In another interview an eyewitness added a political emphasis to the attack on this target:

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[699] See the comments by the eyewitness in Section 6.2.5 of Chapter 6.0.

'Similarly the burning of Lloyds Bank by the rioters was not an attack on the bank per se but an attack on a visible representation of an unfair system'[700]

Another such building ripe for arson was the multi-storey Labour Exchange on Little Bishop Street close to the 'frontline', which was attacked and damaged by missiles but according to one secondary source:

'They were held back by a Black ex-civil servant who had recently been employed at the local St Paul's Labour Exchange. He warned insurgents - within seconds of torching the building - that if they did so they only stood to lose their weekly giro.'[701]

Outside of these high profile, popular targets the remaining destruction was more problematic, in that it excited debate, involved limiting behaviours and negotiation.

This quantitative analysis demonstrates that selection of targets was underway within the 'looting' crowds[702]. Although clearly the decisions about which premises to rob were driven towards the high-value options, other processes were also in play that limited the extent of the looting in this property category. This limiting behaviour was

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[700] Statement by Ras Judah to Karen Garvey of the Museum of Bristol 26-02-2009.

[701] Smith and others, *Like a Summer with a Thousand Julys…and Other Seasons..*, p.21.

[702] Selective damage to property and looting has been noted in several historical studies including Linebaugh, *The London Hanged: Crime and Civil Society in the Eighteenth Century*, pp.333-370, Rosenfeld, *Celebration, Politics, Selective Looting and Riots: A Micro Level Study of the Bulls Riot of 1992 in Chicago* and D. Smith, 'Tonypandy 1910: Definitions of Community,' *Past & Present*, no. 87 (1980).

both derived from within the crowd and as a result of interactions with residents and shop owners (examples of which are given in Chapter 6.0 Section 6.2.5). Self-limiting behaviour included awareness amongst sections of the crowd that some high-value targets should not be looted, as they were considered to be part of the neighbourhood or of use to the community. Typically this involved shop-owners that were resident in the area for a considerable period of time and crucially were on good terms with the local population both Black and White. Local 'rioters' were also aware that certain commercial properties had people living above them, which had particular relevance for arson. Interactive limiting behaviours typically involved the looters being confronted by shop-owners who directed them away from their premises or where sections of the crowd intervened to prevent attacks being undertaken against particular properties that were considered important for the community[703]. One very revealing testimony relating many of these interactions was given by a female proprietor of an off-licence (in 1980) and who has lived in St. Paul's for more than 40 years:

Respondent (I): 'They didn't touch here and they didn't touch the chemist'

Interviewer: 'So why do you think that was then?'

Respondent (I): 'Well, I mean I was standing outside anyway and some of my husband's friends and that. And [local] people were saying 'Don't worry we'll look after your shop you know'. Outside people might try to you know break in and that. The local people protected it. It was very frightening because the police withdrew from the area. And the local people said 'You are alright you know''

Interviewer: 'You were kind of in the middle of it. How frightened did you feel?'

Respondent (I): 'I felt very frightened, very frightened…and next door the material

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[703] Examples of these limiting behaviours are given in the oral histories in Section 6.2.5 Chapter 6.0.

shop, you couldn't phone the police, you couldn't get through to them. And there were people taking bales of material from next door. It was very frightening…I think the chemist was fine because [name deleted] who owned the chemist…he was stood outside his shop and of course people, the medicine you know, there was the only one chemist in the area, so you know, so 'he said please don't touch my shop' and they didn't…I think it was where people weren't in the property. I never heard of anybody, shopkeepers or anything getting injured. I think it was where the shops were empty.'

Interviewer: 'In amongst these looters, apart from the outsiders, the people who were local who were something to do with it, would they have had that kind of knowledge? Would they have known for example whether people were living there or whether the owners were living there?'

Respondent (I): 'Yeah, there probably was. I mean if someone put a brick through the window and no lights come on, you would presume there was nobody there. I think that is what it was…'

Interviewer: 'I think [name deleted] shop down on Brighton Street wasn't touched either. I don't know whether you can remember?'

Respondent (I): 'Well they never touched his shop, because he was probably there and he's sort of the local shop, isn't he. He'd been around for years as well. They knew him from when he was on Grosvenor Road. He used to have a shop of Grosvenor Road. So he's been there from the year dot'

Interviewer: 'Whereas Fowlers [the motorcycle dealer] gets…'

Respondent (I): 'Well, Fowlers [laughs] Fowlers there was probably no one there and it was a bigger concern and there was no one there to stop them…'

Interviewer: 'It must have been quite frightening at the start but what is interesting is that a lot of people say well they were sort of scared to begin with but once they came

out on the streets they didn't feel particularly threatened themselves, this was people who live round here'

Respondent (I): 'Yeah, well I mean felt frightened because I had probably a lot more to lose you know. If you'd just come out of your house, there was you know, nobody was going to hurt you personally'

Interviewer: 'That's how people felt was it?'

Respondent (I): 'Yeah, yeah, I think it was more against the police and then of course it got out of hand and then people made it into a little profitable event didn't they?' [laughs]…

Interviewer: 'So apart from like the fact that somebody might have put a brick through the window…'

Respondent (I): 'Yeah, I personally didn't feel threatened. No.'

Interviewer: 'Would you say that's how most people felt?'

Respondent (I): 'Yeah, I think that's how most people felt'[704]

This account reveals many of the limiting behaviours of the 'looters'. Of particular interest is the implicit recognition that being *of the area* was important in protecting a small business. The owners were known by many of the crowd (which contained many of their customers and friends) and also they were usually living above these shops or were close by, so were present during the early evening looting phase However, larger concerns such as newsagents or motor-bike shops that were part of wider chains of stores did not lie in this category. They were considered 'fair game' by the looters, assuming that the shops were unoccupied and that no one lived above, which was often the case for such premises. The shop-owner respondent also explains

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[704] Oral History File I_20-08-2010 (00:28:11).

that her fears were not for her person but her commercial property and consequently that she 'had more to lose' than a normal resident. It appears the 'looters' approached this economic division in the community on the whole by 'face to face' negotiation rather than by force.

It is worth turning towards an analysis of who the 'looters' actually were. A sample of fifteen people arrested during or after the St. Paul's disturbance for offences including looting, theft and receiving stolen goods are analysed in Figure 28[705].
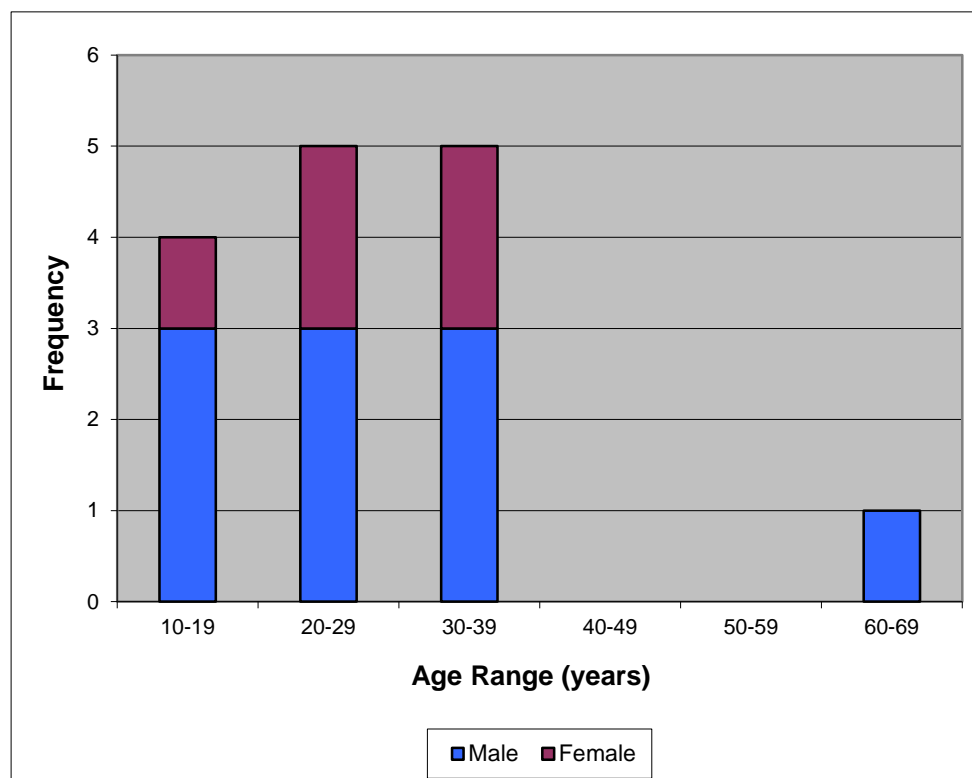
Figure 28: Histogram showing age range and gender of a sample of 'looters' in the St. Paul's disturbance

Although this is a relatively small sample it demonstrates that the 'looters' were far from being young and male. Instead there was participation across a considerable age

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[705] The data was obtained from newspaper articles reporting court cases including *Bristol Evening Post* 18-06-80 and *Western Daily Press* 17/18-06-80.

range and a third of the participants were women. Several eyewitnesses (including the following account) who observed the looting crowds corroborated these gender and age distributions:

Interviewer: 'If you were going to characterise the people who were doing the looting…were they young people or was it a mixture or was it people you recognised?'

Respondent (I): 'It was a mixture, it was a mixture, young people, young women, young men, women in their thirties and there was a lot of people from outside that I'd never seen before. So it was, yeah, it was a mixture'[706]

The analysis of the residence of offenders previously carried out in Section 7.2.5 (Figure 27) demonstrated that more than three-quarters of the sample of 'looters' lived within one mile of St. Paul's. So although there is certainly some evidence of 'outsider' intervention in this phase of the disturbance, it is important to recognise the function of a 'travelling looter' as an 'other' in deflecting attention from the more problematic 'looters' *within the community*.

7.2.7 'Joy', 'Liberty' and taboo

A couple of days after the serious disturbances in Handsworth, Birmingham in September 1985 a major national newspaper printed the following story under the headline *'SONG OF JOY BY RIOTERS'*:

'Whooping West Indians sang 'Oh, What A Beautiful Morning' as they

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[706] Oral History File I_20-08-2010 (00:30:24).

surveyed the riot wreckage yesterday. They laughed and drank while one

section of the community mourned the victims of the violence. And they

jeered and booed Police and firemen dealing with the burnt out cars

littering a stretch of road nick-named Mayhem Mile'[707]

This excerpt exposes one of the major taboo subjects both in the media and in many analyses of urban disturbances by commentators and academics. The feelings of 'joy' and 'euphoria', which litter the accounts of the participants in such incidents, are rarely discussed and usually completely overlooked. When the media does make reference to such feelings and resultant behaviours the accounts serve only one function, that of creating horror amongst their readers and branding the protagonists behaviour as evil or even subhuman. In the 1980s this media branding was closely linked to racialising the disorders[708] often through clumsy codifications such as that demonstrated in the above excerpt.

In terms of overlooking this aspect of 'revolts' the 'Bristol Riots' of April 1980 are no exception to this. Although one academic paper and a report drew attention to these facets of crowd behaviour[709], the local and national media ignored the subject

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[707] The *Sun* 11-09-1985.

[708] For a more detailed discussion of these processes see Rowe, *The Racialisation of Disorder in Twentieth Century Britain* and T. A. van Dijk, 'Race, Riots and the Press: An Analysis of Editorials in the British Press about the 1985 Disorders,' *International Communication Gazette,* 43 no.3 (1988). An analysis of the St. Paul's disturbance of 1980 and its representation in the press is given in Chapter 3 of Joshua, Wallace and Booth, *To Ride the Storm: The 1980 Bristol 'Riot' and the State*.

[709] See in particular Reicher, *The St. Paul's Riot: An Explanation of the Limits of Crowd Action in Terms of a Social Identity Model* and Stephenson, *Report of Bristol Disturbances: April 2nd, 1980*.

altogether. However the testimonies of participants confirmed that the experiences of joy and euphoria were central to their memories of the events. The following is a selection of the accounts from various sources:

St. Paul's April 2nd 1980

- 'It was good, very good – everyone felt great'

- 'It was like a carnival out there – everyone was having a great time'

- 'It was lovely, I felt free'

- 'Everyone was walking around, just nodding at each other and smiling – it was really great'

- 'People were so warm: they said 'glad to be with you brother' and put their arms round you'

- 'It wasn't like what the papers say. This absolute mad mob. Everyone was together. They were looking at each other the whole time. It was Black and White and all ages and that was fantastic'

- 'It was really joyful, that's what they [the media] all leave out, the 'joy''

- 'You were just grinning at everyone because everyone was from St. Paul's and you knew half the faces anyway. You saw your mates there, you know' [710]

Interviewer: 'So what was the feeling like? Were people chatting to each other?'

Respondent (A): 'It was sort of like a party atmosphere. Especially after the police

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[710] These eight excerpts from different respondents in the St. Paul's disturbance are from Reicher, *The St. Paul's Riot: An Explanation of the Limits of Crowd Action in Terms of a Social Identity Model*, p.201 and Reicher and Potter, *Psychological Theory as Intergroup Perspective: A Comparative Analysis of 'Scientific' and 'Lay' Accounts of Crowd Events*, p.183.

had gone. It was like a proper party atmosphere. Burning [police] helmets in the middle of the street. Everybody was like 'Yeahhhhhh, we beat them'. There was definitely a euphoria going on there. Definitely. Everybody was talking to each other…there was police cars going upside down and people running over with lit papers to blow them up. It was very different. I'd never experienced anything quite like that before…It definitely was a different night'[711]

Southmead April 4th 1980

'It's just fucking…it's just that sort of…all of a sudden you've had no power all your life and you've got some power haven't you, you know and you go shopping for nothing…It's like…if I had…if in them days they had a shopping trolley I'd have gone round on…yeah, I'll have some of that [laughs]…but the thing is, what it done was it empowered us…'[712]

'As a group of officers hid behind one of their vans for safety, a large brick arched through the air and landed full square on the windscreen window, shattering it with a loud crash. A roar went up from the crowd. Young and old, men and women. All applauding the damage caused. If the police were meant to be serving and protecting the community but that community was rejecting them, what then was their role? What were they really protecting? Who were they really serving? It was a brilliant moment. Revelatory. It was also at that very same moment that I realised and understood the power of riot. Riot as a weapon that we held and which the police were afraid of. Riot as a tool at our disposal. Riot as a fine expression of inarticulate rage.

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[711] Oral History File A_20-03-2010 (00:17:05).

[712] Oral History File J_20-03-2010 (00:19:38).

Riot for the hell of it and riot as a means to an end'[713]

These passages express a series of feelings and desires in the extraordinary experience of 'riot'. The intense feelings of joy were not merely immediate reactions after the disorders but were exhibited by oral history respondents more than thirty years *after* the events. None of these later respondents showed remorse or guilt for these feelings with the benefit of hindsight but instead spoke fondly of their memories of these moments. Another aspect that comes through the accounts is both the desire and realisation of togetherness, especially in relation to ethnicity in St. Paul's. Two respondents, one from St. Paul's and the other from Southmead, also emphasise the different ages and gender of the participants in the context of this 'togetherness'. This evidence points towards a desire to overcome these various divisions amongst many of the participants. These extraordinary incidents of collective 'revolt' appear to have realised these urges to some extent and it is no surprise that they are fondly remembered. Distinct parallels can be drawn here with the acceptable face of extraordinary collective behaviour that supposedly transcended barriers of class, age and gender; the 'Blitz Spirit', which marked a generation and was so championed by the British media. It is ironic that the 'war stories' told by some Black and White urban youth of the 1980s generation are more likely to be of the 'taboo' variety[714].

The last passage of the set is of particular interest as it leads us towards more profound articulations of these desires and experiences particularly with respect to the

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[713] Serpico, *The Southmead Riots*.

[714] The fondness and enthusiasm for such 'war stories' was noted by Nally in interviews with young 'rioters' after the disturbances of July 1981 in Moss Side (Manchester) and Toxteth (Liverpool). Nally, *Eyewitness in Moss Side*, pp.54-62.

ideas of 'freedom' and 'empowerment' mentioned in many of the testimonies. In a more revealing manner the same respondent attempted to convey his feelings about the epiphany he underwent during the Southmead 'riots':

Interviewer: 'Would you say it felt almost surreal?'

Respondent (H): 'No, no…no I wouldn't say that no…it was too vivid to have any kind of sense of that, it was too in the face, it was in the moment. Do you know what I mean? It was kind of life affirming actually. It was this stepping into something which none of us has touched upon in the past. This kind of like dimension almost of …a kind of liberty, of a kind of sense of liberation…of being able to step outside of and beyond what we'd got, do you know what I mean? Which was nothing, poverty… just to step beyond that and to touch upon something else, to touch upon something which was unspoken, that was kind of difficult to…almost impossible to define as in kind of to explain, but something almost kind of philosophical, that people would kind of talk about as to do with living and liberty and just escaping out of the life that you've got, that you've been handed and that you're stuck in…and seeing a way out of this…just glimpsing this sense of being able to do something else, a capability of attaining something…yeah, of touching liberty, basically freedom..'[715]

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[715] Oral History File H_18-02-2010 (01:19:30).

8.0 Conclusions

8.1 Introduction

In this concluding chapter the aim is to review and assess the findings of the research in relation to the relevant existing theory and secondary sources, to draw some conclusions and to propose further research activities. The chapter is divided into four sections. The first and second are respectively concerned with the results of the analysis of the *macro* (Chapter 4: England July 1981) and *micro* (Chapters 5-7: Bristol April 1980) histories of urban disturbances in England 1980-81. In the third section, *'Bridging the macro and the micro'*, selected aspects of the analysis of the micro-history are utilised to explain some of the characteristics of the macro study. The final section is devoted to considering the implications of these conclusions in determining paths for future research.

8.2 England: July 1981

8.2.1 Overall characteristics

The systematic and comprehensive collection of information from the primary sources concerning the urban disturbances in England in July 1981 significantly expanded the number of known locations of incidents in the period. The original list of 'riots' that was derived from combining data from thirteen secondary sources delineated eighty-nine different locations experiencing disorder in July 1981. The results of the research exposed a further thirty-nine locations that were previously unrecorded, expanding the original list by over forty per cent. Although the majority of these new locations underwent only relatively minor incidents, the overall list of daily disturbances was

expanded to two hundred events in one hundred and twenty eight different locales. As far as the author is aware, the dataset presented in Appendix 10.4 is the most complete listing of urban disorders in England in July 1981 currently in existence.

In addition to this, information concerning the temporal nature and measures of disturbance severity in the dataset also significantly extended the detail for each daily incident far beyond what had been originally available. The fact that the original roll call of 'riots' could be so significantly expanded in both senses demonstrated both the lack of comprehensive research in the past and the importance of the July wave as a whole. With the exception of significant events such as the 'Swing Riots' of 1830-31[716], this research has established that the unrest in July 1981 represents one of the most intense and widespread periods of disorder in modern British history.

Analysis of the overall disturbance dataset showed that the majority of incidents were spread over the week of 6th-13th July although some areas (such as Toxteth in Liverpool) had significant reoccurrences of unrest throughout the month. The bulk of disorders in the period were of minor or major disturbance level with only 18% falling into the higher severity levels of 'riot'. The majority of these serious events were experienced in inner city areas of major conurbations though serious disturbances

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[716] The 'Swing Riots' were first comprehensively researched in the late 1960s by Hobsbawm and Rudé who uncovered 1,475 incidents of collective violence including 'riot', machine-breaking and incendiarism between January 1830 and September 1832 in twenty-two counties of England Hobsbawm and Rudé, *Captain Swing*. A recent countrywide survey by the Family and Community Historical Research Society (FACHRS) expanded this 'riot list' to 3,283 incidents over the same period. M. Holland, *Swing Unmasked: The Agricultural Riots of 1830 to 1832 and their Wider Implications.* (Milton Keynes: FACHRS Publishing, 2005).

were also experienced in towns such as Chester, Luton, High Wycombe and Keswick. Cartographical analysis of the national picture established that the majority of serious events occurred in cities lying on or either side of a line running from London to Liverpool with Wales, Scotland, the far south-west, north-east and East Anglian areas of England being largely unaffected.

8.2.2   Temporal and spatial patterns

The temporal and spatial analysis of the dataset demonstrated a *fractal-like* pattern at three levels of magnification; the particular (severity of individual disorders spread over a few days), the local (clusters of disturbances within the boundaries of a city or conurbation) and the global (the overall wave at a national level). The pattern was represented by the following phases, a precipitating event (the 'trigger') followed by growth, peak, decline and 'death', which were repeated at all three levels of magnification. The decline of these various waves was probably due to a combination of exhaustion effects and police repression within individual locations that experienced disorder. These local declines, united with the depletion of virgin locations for likely outbreaks of disturbance (as proposed in the classical diffusion model), explained the overall decay in the numbers of further disorders.

Deconstruction of the overall wave, demonstrated that significant *mini-waves* of disorders occurred in the following cites and conurbations (in chronological order); Merseyside, Manchester, London, and the West Midlands with other cites such as Nottingham experiencing similar though more minor patterns. It was noted that these city-level mini-waves shared temporal and spatial characteristics. Typically a major disorder in a multi-ethnic inner city area (Toxteth-Liverpool, Moss Side-Manchester,

Southall and Wood Green-London, Handsworth-West Midlands) acted as a precipitating incident and led to a cluster of more minor disturbances in other disparate districts of that city. Examination of the peaks of these mini-waves demonstrated that they generally lagged a day or so behind the zenith of the overall wave (Saturday 11th July 1981). Superposition of these city-based mini-waves successfully generated the characteristic shape of the overall distribution of disturbances but did not fully account for the quantity of events or their peak on the 11th July. Consequently, a more sophisticated quantitative analysis was required to examine this feature. The overall wave of disturbances was compared to the classical model of diffusion (the logistic function)[717]. This demonstrated that *contagious* processes were underway that undermined the assumptions of independence between events in the classical model and were particularly prevalent over the weekend of 10th-11th July.

Combining the various characteristics of the distributions of disorders at the particular, local and global together generated a more nuanced temporal and spatial narrative for the July events than had previously been established. The outbreak of serious disorders in multi-ethnic inner city areas acted as precipitating events for *local contagious* mini-waves of lesser disturbances within each conurbation. These city-based mini-waves followed their own *heterogeneous* temporal and spatial paths over the succeeding days. The superposition of these events generated the characteristics of the overall wave prior to the weekend of 10th-11th July. Over that weekend, a more *homogenous* national contagious effect occurred which broadened the number and locations of disturbances to disparate towns outside of the major cities that were

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[717] The function is described in Chapter 2.0 Section 2.3.2.

undergoing disorder.

However, it appears that cities that had an *absence* of initiating incidents of serious disorders in multi-ethnic inner city locales also *failed* to develop mini-waves of disorder. This may help explain why large regions of the country did not experience significant unrest. The major cities in these regions simply did not have large multi-ethnic inner city areas primed for 'riot' and consequently, although other more disparate areas within those cities may have been ripe for disorder, the crucial precipitating incidents never transpired. However, some of these areas were briefly influenced by the *national* contagion hence the minor incidents in cities such as Newcastle, Sunderland, Hull and Southampton.

8.2.3   Ethnicity of 'crowds'

It is important to point out that the reference to multi-ethnic inner city areas does not necessarily imply that precipitating disorders in these locales were solely the province of 'Black crowds'. The analysis of the ethnic composition of 'crowds' in a sample of fifty-two daily disturbances in July showed that mixed ethnicity crowds made up more than half of these events. Also, these particular events were significantly more severe than the daily disorders involving either solely 'Black' or 'White' crowds[718].

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[718] It is not clear from the evidence concerning July 1981 why this was the case. However, in some cases multi-ethnic crowds represented the involvement of a wider cross section of the 'community' in a particular locale. This in itself generated larger crowds, which probably increased the confidence of the combatants. Another factor is the local recomposition of youth from different ethnic groups which may have spurred the whole crowd on to more aggressive actions against the common enemy, the police. The feelings of 'togetherness' which led to greater confidence during the St. Paul's disturbance of April 1980 are described in more detail in Section 7.2.7.

This did not exclude the possibility that the actions of mono-ethnic crowds were initiators of unrest. However, a temporal study of eleven serious disorders demonstrated that in only two locations (Toxteth, Liverpool and Moss Side, Manchester) were the initiating crowds 'Black' and in both of these areas the disorders rapidly developed into multi-ethnic affairs.

This evidence essentially refutes the idea that the July disorders were solely 'Black riots' or more superficially 'race riots' with connotations of intra-ethnic violence. However, this does not imply that racism was not an important factor in the initiation of incidents. Participating groups in disorders can have different motives and the quantitative study of the July 'wave' did not provide enough specific evidence to assess this aspect of the unrest in detail. It should also be pointed out that anger about institutional and societal racism is not solely the province of the directly oppressed subject as is assumed in many studies. Mixed ethnicity crowds may have been 'rioting' *together* for this very reason.

8.3   The 'Bristol Riots': April 1980

The disturbances in Bristol in April 1980 were treated as separate case studies in order to facilitate structural, contextual and situational comparisons. The aim of the analysis of the case study areas and the disorders they experienced was to try to understand the process for the spread of the disturbances, why they occurred in the areas they did and to assess various under-researched aspects of the incidents.

8.3.1   Demography

The detailed analysis of demography of the areas experiencing the principal disorders

(St. Paul's and Southmead) highlighted significant similarities and differences between the locales, which helped explain the form and content of the disorders. In summary, both areas were of similar sized populations, principally composed of lower working class socio-economic groupings, were experiencing very high levels of youth unemployment and household overcrowding, lacked social facilities and scored highly on the 'social stress' scale. However, the St. Paul's 'neighbourhood' had a large population of ethnic minorities compared to the Southmead 'estate', mixed forms of housing tenure and a considerably transient population. In contrast, the Southmead 'estate' was principally composed of local authority housing with a more static population. Whilst St. Paul's was in the inner city close to the heart of Bristol, Southmead was geographically isolated on the outskirts.

The analysis of oral history testimony from respondents from all three areas and other primary sources confirmed the perceived negative branding of each area by social class (all three) and ethnicity (St. Paul's). However, whereas St. Paul's was commonly racialised as a 'closed Black inner city ghetto', the actual experience of respondents was quite different. In fact it was one of the more cosmopolitan areas of Bristol, with a long history of being a reception area for immigrants (Irish, Polish, Afro-Caribbean, Asian), those in the 'care' and probation systems and others in search of cheap rented housing or squatting. A lively cultural scene attracted a transient population of young people in the 1970s connected to various (youth) sub-cultures such as Punk and Rastafarianism.

In contrast, Southmead and Knowle West were actually far more 'closed' districts by geography, ethnicity and reputation. Both areas were a distance from the city centre,

were constructed as self-contained estates and experienced relatively static mainly 'White' resident populations. Respondents from both areas highlighted violent inter-estate rivalries with neighbouring districts, which inhibited mobility and fraternisation. The negative 'branding' accorded to their neighbourhoods, which inhibited socialising in wealthier nearby areas, compounded these exclusionary aspects of their lives. Within their estates, struggles for control over social space between local youth and the authorities were common and brought them into contact with the police on a fairly regular basis.

8.3.2   Policing

The most striking similarities in the testimony of the oral history respondents from the three areas concerned their experience of encounters with the police in the late 70s and early 80s. In fact it was possible to interchange these accounts by location, with one exception, that of ethnicity. Almost all the White respondents experienced situations where 'Black' friends and acquaintances had been treated worse than they had in particular situations and crucially they were fully aware of this fact. In some cases the respondents cited the generalised maltreatment as a basis for solidarity between sub-cultures and ethnic groups.   Neither were these isolated incidents. Several respondents realised in retrospect that, at the time, they had accepted police maltreatment as the norm and had not known anything different. This pointed to a history of policing practice that appeared to be area based and in many cases racist and derogatory to certain youth sub-cultures.

When confronted with the question as to the role of the police in their home areas, the respondents emphasised the fact that their whole community was policed as a totality,

with little apparent differentiation between the known 'criminal' element and the rest of the residents. Police officers were variously seen as 'faceless outsiders', an alien presence, an occupying force or more significantly as 'warders in a jail'. They were certainly not consulted by much of the community when crimes were committed; instead methods of self-policing were commonplace. For some respondents this begged the question as to what use the police actually were for the community and several viewed them as merely 'agents of control' rather than 'public servants'. However, this was not understood as a general problem for all Bristolians, but was related to the specific areas in which they were resident. Awareness and resentment of the disparities in the policing of different neighbourhoods of the city was prevalent in the accounts.

Ironically, despite the negative myths about St. Paul's, several White respondents from Knowle West and Southmead regarded the inner city multi-ethnic area as a 'safer' area for youth than their own neighbourhoods. This inference was based upon on the propensity of 'Black' residents to collectively intervene in police activities on the street, something the Constabulary were fully aware of. The experiences of respondents point towards the model of the breakdown of consensus policing in the late 1970s and early 80s proposed by Lea and Young[719]. Comparisons of this model

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[719] Studies of breakdowns in police-community relations suggest that if a significant division arises between the two sides then the result is a loss of trust that can initiate a cycle of response and counter-response. Loss in trust leads to a reduction in the amount of intelligence information received by the police force from the community. This is in turn can result in a change in policy by the Constabulary towards more 'military-style' or operationally driven mass policing activity which can exacerbate the divide further and can create physical resistance by the community on the street as well as potentially 'no-go areas'. J. Lea and J. Young, 'The Riots in Britain in 1981: Urban Violence and Political

with the areas under study suggested that Southmead and Knowle West were at an earlier stage of the process, where although consensus had broken down, residents had not translated this into regular interventions in street policing activities. In contrast, in St. Paul's such confrontations were more commonplace and appeared to have moderated at least some of the *routine* activities of the constabulary on a day-to-day level. However, these relations of force may have led to over-policing of specific operations such as raids and other such irregular actions.

8.3.3   The April 1980 disorders

The temporal and spatial pattern of the disturbances in Bristol in the first week of April 1980 demonstrated a similarity with the characteristics of the city-level mini-waves of disturbances highlighted in the analysis of the July 1981. Essentially a serious disturbance in an inner city area of mixed ethnicity (St. Paul's) led to a number of less severe disorders in mainly 'White' outlying areas of the city. (Southmead, Knowle West).

The historical narratives of the St. Paul's, Southmead and Knowle West disorders of the first week of April 1980 presented in Chapter 6.0 represent the most comprehensive accounts available. They were reproduced in detail to both add to the historical record and to inform the subsequent analysis of the events in Chapter 7.0.

Marginalisation',' in *Policing the Riots*, eds. D. Cowell, T. Jones and J. Young (London: Junction Books, 1982), pp.10-13. This positive feedback loop was certainly in operation in some areas of mixed-ethnicity in the inner cities of major conurbations in the 1980s. However, it is unclear whether such a process was underway in some of the peripheral mainly White working class estates in Bristol. It appears from the evidence that the first phase of this cycle was in place in 1980 but the latter phases only partially developed some years after.

Comparing the three events demonstrated that there were significant difference in the scale, longevity, severity and the precipitating events that led to the incidents.

The St. Paul's 'riot' was essentially a one-day event involving a defensive reaction to an over-policed raid on a symbolic location. The violence sporadically escalated until large multi-ethnic crowds drove the police from the area. Following this, serious damage was inflicted by fire on several buildings and a number of properties were looted. In contrast, the Southmead and Knowle West incidents were initiated by the offensive actions of mainly White youths centred on symbolic locations of their choosing (the two 'Greens'). Whereas there was significant pre-planning involved in the Knowle West event, in the Southmead incidents this may have only been the case prior to the second night of 'rioting'[720], though older members of the community were clearly providing tactical direction for the younger 'rioters' on that occasion. Whilst the Knowle West disturbance was effectively suppressed before it could begin, in Southmead the disorder escalated into at least two nights of violence.

The similarities between the events in all three areas are manifold. In each location, the police were the principal target of the collective violence[721]. Damage to property was limited to police vehicles and commercial and state premises. There were no

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[720] Evidence of pre-planning before the second night of 'rioting' in Southmead refers to the cache of petrol bombs that was found after the incident and to the tactic of breaking windows to lure the police from their hiding places around the estate. See Chapter 6.0 Section 6.3.2.

[721] The only exceptions to this were the incidents involving the alleged stoning of a few private vehicles and firemen in the St. Paul's riot. See Chapter 7.0 Section 7.2.1.

attacks on resident's homes, hardly any recorded incidents of intra-crowd fighting[722] and no major incidents of violence against the person even when the police had withdrawn from St. Paul's. These limiting behaviours demonstrate that the initial agenda of the crowd in each incident was to attack the police and/or drive them out of an area. This may have been on the basis of fulfilling subsequent actions such as the freedom to loot (perhaps in Knowle West) but there is little evidence for this in the sources for the three incidents. The only apparent change in the agenda of the crowds happened in St. Paul's once the police had left and this entailed a bout of selective looting and street partying.

From the perspective of emerging collective *identities* within the 'crowds', the evidence suggests that in each area the participants defined themselves as being representative of their home district in some manner; whether as a 'firm' of youth 'crews' from Knowle West, the 'rioters' almost wholly derived from Southmead or the large multi-racial crowds in St. Paul's who, Reicher claimed, shared the identity of the 'St. Paul's community member'[723]. Although within the large crowds that were present at each event the actual number of participants who were actually attacking the police was limited to several hundred at most, crucially there was evidence in each

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[722] There was only one account of intra-crowd incidents during the Southmead unrest, this was a newspaper report (*Western Daily Press* 05-04-1980) that stated 'Last night police broke up fighting between more than 200 youths who clashed in Arneside Road. There were six arrests'. This appears to refer to the serious disturbance on the night of Friday 4th April, which went underreported compared to the events of Thursday 3rd April. There are no other corroborating sources for this unsubstantiated account of intra-crowd violence.

[723] Reicher, *The St. Paul's Riot: An Explanation of the Limits of Crowd Action in Terms of a Social Identity Model*, pp.202-5.

case that there was tacit and sometimes vocal support from large numbers of residents who watched the events unfold. In each case the disorderly crowds regarded the police as *outsiders* whose activities during the disorders exacerbated this division.

Many respondents questioned *whom* the police were actually protecting in the unrest, as it appeared their only task was to protect commercial properties. In any case, the evidence suggests that 'civilians' were not the targets of the 'rioters' and crucially this was clear to the majority of non-participants. Certainly these observations support the heavily criticised decision of the Chief Constable of Avon and Somerset Constabulary to withdraw from St. Paul's on the evening of April 2nd 1980. It appears that it was recognised by the Chief Constable that the 'breach of the peace' that was occurring in St. Paul's was the direct result of *their presence* in the area.

Assessments of under-researched aspects of the St. Paul's disturbance focussed on the latter phase of the event after the police had withdrawn from the neighbourhood. Unsuccessful attempts by senior police officers to negotiate with the 'crowds' were initiated at several points during the disturbances and more significantly with community representatives after they had withdrawn. However, certain 'rioters' may have undertaken more successful negotiations. There are several sources of evidence that suggest that the fear of police actions in retaking control of the area may have spurred some groups to relay messages to the police authorities. These contained threats to extend the targeted destruction outside of St. Paul's in order to deter violent police responses on their inevitable return or to obtain the release of certain high-profile prisoners. The veracity and outcome of these claims is unclear but they certainly represented the desires of some 'rioters'.

The detailed analysis of the targets of looting and arson in St. Paul's represents the first comprehensive study of this portion of the disturbance. The evidence demonstrated that there were three chronological phases to this activity; initial window smashing and arson of selected symbolic targets and commercial properties with the acquisition of easy to carry high-value goods, a period where crowds organised together using vehicles to move larger high-value items and a latter phase where older residents calmly and openly 'shopped without money' for lower value 'essentials'. Analysis of the damaged buildings and the oral history, demonstrated that *symbolic targets* clearly included the Bank and the Labour Exchange and possibly the Print warehouse, Post Office and the Bookmakers[724]. The commercial properties that were selected for looting were typified as being chain franchises with little connection to the area, containing high value goods, with no residents living above the premises and crucially no proprietors present to protect the property or negotiate with the looters. A sample of looters from the prosopograhical dataset and oral history testimony confirmed that this section of the crowds was of a wide age range and involved men and women who were mostly residents in or within one mile of St. Paul's. Despite the claims of some that the looters came from 'outside' the area, the evidence suggests that they were actually a fairly representative sample of the residents of St. Paul's and its environs.

Government and media inspired 'folk devils' such as 'travellers' and 'outside agitators' were also critically assessed in relation to the St. Paul's disturbance. The

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[724] However, it was unclear from the evidence precisely why these latter targets were selected for arson so early in the looting phase.

depiction of the 'traveller' as the selfish (and lonely) 'homo-economicus' of neo-liberal theory was counter-posed by the cosmopolitan, connected youths who travelled out of a sense of *solidarity* with their sub-culturally derived friends and acquaintances in St. Paul's. Similarly the early (and limited in 1980) media obsession with the 'outside agitator' was thoroughly debunked.

8.3.4   Communication and contagion

A key part of the analysis of the micro-histories of the 'Bristol Riots' concerned the mechanisms for transfer of information about the St. Paul's 'riot' to the distant and disparate areas of Southmead in the north of the city and Knowle West in the south. Essentially the research questions revolved around why areas such as these, with differing histories and demographics to St. Paul's, reacted to the precipitating disturbance, whilst others failed to do so. The evidence pointed towards several mechanisms for the transfer of information between widely separated locales both prior, during and after the precipitating disorder. These included peer-to-peer relationships through schools, sub-cultural and familial connections as well as the mass media. It was noted that the contagious effect of the information was dependent upon the context in which it was delivered as much as the content.

The evidence also indicated two phases of information consumption and exchange. The first, a one-way process via the mass electronic media was temporally and spatially *homogenous* within the bounds of Bristol. The second related to the assessment, transfer and exchange of this information through various informal social networks. The latter group generated differing responses based upon situational and contextual factors and thus generated *heterogeneous* outcomes that affected the

likelihood of outbreaks of further disorder. Simply stated, although most Bristolians knew about the St. Paul's 'riot' within a few hours of the outbreak of hostilities due to television and radio reports, this information then passed into *specific* pan-Bristol social networks that linked the subject areas as well as local networks in those neighbourhoods. These particular social networks were energised by news of the 'riot', encouraged travelling to St. Paul's to take part in the action and were also ripe for initiating a local response. Once this information had passed into belligerent local networks amongst youths in Southmead and Knowle West they resorted to their existing organisational forms to plan and launch collective violence against a shared enemy in their home neighbourhoods.

However, the dissemination of information between areas was not on an equal basis, there was a hierarchy of information flow in operation principally due to the location and demographics of the communities involved. Commonly held racist mythologies of St. Paul's as a 'closed and ghettoised' community in the 1980s were inverted by research from historical, structural and social perspectives. Instead the area sat at the centre of a web of radial and rhizomic social networks spreading across the city. These networks were generated between specific outlying working class estates and St. Paul's through the fusion of the relationships between second generation 'mixed race' teenagers and youth sub-cultures. These diffuse ethnic and sub-cultural networks spanning the city overcame the spatial separations between areas, rose above inter-estate rivalries and usurped the mythical status of St. Paul's as a 'no go' area for Whites. Symbolic locations such as clubs like the *'Dug Out'*, the various 'Blues' drinking-dens in St. Paul's and other sub-cultural gathering points acted as important nodes in this social web. The large multi-racial crowds in St. Paul's that defeated the

police were shown to not merely be due to the cosmopolitan nature of the area, but also to be derived from these sub-culturally and ethnically derived social networks.

During and after the St. Paul's 'riot' information radiated out through this web to outlying areas that were 'ripe for riot'. In 1980 this was principally a one-way flow of information, which precipitated disturbances in some of these neighbourhoods. However, the more 'closed', mainly White working class estates that 'rose', generally did so alone, attracted fewer 'travellers' and were apparently hamstrung by inter-estate rivalries. This may also provide a clue to why areas of similar demographics failed to 'rise' in the aftermath of the St. Paul's event.

Perhaps the most controversial aspect of these micro-histories of urban disorder concerns the respondents' memories of receiving information about the precipitating disturbance in St. Paul's and their attitudes as participants in the disorders. Several respondents recalled their inspirational feelings on hearing of the St. Paul's event and attempted to travel to the neighbourhood. Others felt jealousy that their home areas had failed to 'rise' (so far), showed grudging respect for the 'insurgents' in St. Paul's and recognised it as a 'game changing' moment that took priority over inter-estate rivalries. Either way, the potential for successful collective action against the common enemy, the police, was now firmly on the agenda.

During the disturbances themselves, respondents repeatedly stressed the feelings of togetherness, joy, freedom and 'community' and in the case of St. Paul's celebrated this with a bonfire party after they had driven the police out of the area. The taboo feelings in those extraordinary moments should not be underestimated. They

remained vivid in the minds of oral history respondents after more than thirty years demonstrating that the tumultuous April of 1980 in Bristol was both part of their 'halcyon days' and a significant marker in their *own* 'histories'.

8.4   Bridging the 'macro' and 'micro'

The micro-histories of the 'Bristol Riots' of April 1980 highlight several features that inform the findings of the 'macro' analysis of the wave of disturbances in July 1981. These lie at the level of individual incidents as well as across a city and concern the precipitation, characteristics and spread of disorders.

8.4.1   Crime and policing

Inner city areas (such as St. Paul's) had experienced a long-term decline in employment opportunities though the 1970s, which allied with racial discrimination in schooling and by employers[725], generated a young, mainly Black, proletarian sub-stratum that rejected low-paid unskilled jobs in the *formal* economy. Instead, the repertoire of survival strategies included working in the *informal* 'community' economy whilst illegally claiming welfare payments as well as dealing soft drugs and other forms of petty and street crime.

The structural economic crisis of the late 70s that was enhanced by Conservative Party policy in 1979-81, led to significant rises in youth unemployment, particularly in the inner cities[726]. This particularly affected Black and White school leavers in

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[725] Dresser and Fleming, *Bristol: Ethnic Minorities and the City, 1000-2001*, pp.170-171

[726] J. Hicks and G. Allen, *A Century of Change: Trends in UK Statistics since 1900.* (London: House of Commons Library, 1999) Research Paper 99/111, p.24.

1979-81. One respondent in Birmingham stated:

'Because of the dole, right, you've got a lot of Black and White youth going round together that would have probably, after school, split apart more easily and gone their separate ways…and the Whites would have gone up the ladders. But that's not happening now…as the number of unemployed increases, that question comes up less and less'[727]

This state of affairs effectively forced increasing numbers of youth to adopt the survival strategies of the sub-stratum[728], which inevitably brought many of them into contact with the police. As a result of the crisis-ridden period of the 1970s, the police authorities were moving away from consensus policing strategies towards more aggressive operational and area-based solutions to a perceived rising crime rate. The dialectical (and symbiotic) relationship between these two opposing forces deteriorated through the 70s with cultural attitudes hardening on both sides. As inner city multi-ethnic communities began to close off their day-to-day relationships with the police, the police in turn began to explicitly view whole neighbourhoods though the lenses of 'race' and social 'class'.

These changes in the approach and strategy of policing were not however purely limited to multi-ethnic inner city areas, they had been developing though the 70s and were also applied to outlying working class 'council' estates that were considered by the authorities to be historically problematic (such as Knowle West and Southmead in

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[727] Jones, *Black Culture, White Youth: The Reggae Tradition from JA to UK*, pp.208-9.

[728] Jones outlines some of the more constructive inner city survival strategies in Ibid. p.212.

Bristol[729]). In these 'estates' branded by reputation, criminals and the criminalized were intentionally (and sometimes unintentionally) aggregated into the resident population as a problematic whole, in a similar manner to the inner city areas, though without the emphasis on ethnicity. This approach combined with the move towards 'faceless' policing by vehicular patrol exacerbated the division between the police and the community[730]. The result was little cooperation between the residents and the constabulary, (ironically) less reporting of crimes[731] and less intelligence information for following up those that were. As remembered by the oral history respondents of Southmead and Knowle West, the police appeared to be fairly irrelevant in solving

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[729] It is no surprise that the two of the three main police stations that acted as headquarters for the policing of Bristol in the early 1980s (outside of the inner city) were built in Southmead ('C' Division HQ) and Knowle West ('B' Division HQ) in the 1970s; Avon and Somerset Constabulary, *The Police: A Brief History* (Bristol: Avon and Somerset Constabulary, 1980s), pp.20-21. After the St. Paul's 'riot' of 1980, the recently built Trinity Road police station (1979) tripled its personnel and effectively became a headquarters adjacent to the 'problem area' (unrecorded interview by the author with a police officer; 26th March 2010). This was confirmed by the Chief Constable who stated 'Police strength for the Trinity Road subdivision has rapidly been increased to the figure I had planned for four years time. The problem of policing a multi-racial community requires understanding coupled with reasonable firmness' *Bristol Evening Post* 23-05-1980. Some six months after the 'riot', the police authority also threatened to 'establish cop shops in St. Paul's' without consultation with the community; Joshua, Wallace and Booth, *To Ride the Storm: The 1980 Bristol 'Riot' and the State*, p.131.

[730] The physical separation of the constabulary from the neighbourhoods they police is traced back to the 1930s in J. R. Lambert and R. F. Jenkinson, *Crime, Police, and Race Relations: A Study in Birmingham*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), Chapter 6 and noted in B. Jackson, *Working Class Community*. (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972), p.124.

[731] It could also mean a reduction in the number of complaints against the police as significant sections of the community dispensed with this tactic which rarely achieved significant results. *Policing Against Black People*. (London: Institute of Race Relations, 1987).

crimes, instead they seemed to be merely trying to oversee or control neighbourhoods. The resulting stalemate may have presented an appearance of calm (recalled by the one respondent as the police behaving like 'warders in a jail'), but as in a real prison, a state of tranquillity does not represent an accurate picture of the real relations of force. The hidden breakdown in police-community relations in the outlying estates of Bristol and the apparent 'normality' of questionable street policing behaviours that the respondents remembered was not a stable or durable situation.

As far as the police forces were concerned, the barrier of distrust and silence that separated the police and community in many districts and which inhibited 'solving crimes', required new short-term solutions, particularly in inner city neighbourhoods that had been targeted (and racialised[732]) as 'high-crime areas'. These 'solutions' included the use of specialised units such as 'Task Forces'[733], raids and 'Swamp' operations[734], aggressive street policing tactics such as 'stop and search' and the use

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[732] The explicit use of racialised crime figures in London in 1976 marked the *formal* introduction of such area-ethnic based policing strategies; Hall and others, *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State and Law and Order*, pp.334-338 and Gilroy, *There Ain't no Black in the Union Jack: The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation*, pp.94-95.

[733] The *'heavies'* as the youth of Southmead named them (see Chapter 6.0 Section 6.3.1), were a Bristol based derivative of the Special Patrol Group (SPG) formed by the Metropolitan police in the 1960s. Hall and others, *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State and Law and Order*, pp.46-48.

[734] These were mass street-policing operations, pioneered in the mid-1970s and ostensibly aimed at stamping out street crime in targeted districts of inner cities. See B. Roberts, 'The Debate on 'Sus',' in *Black Youth in Crisis*, eds. E. Cashmore and B. Troyna (London: Allen & Unwin, 1982), pp.114-125 and *Policing Against Black People*. One such operation was a significant precipitator of the Brixton disorders of April 1981 and which Scarman called a 'serious mistake'; Scarman, *The Scarman Report*, p.110.

of the antiquated SUS law[735]. As the research demonstrated, these tactics particularly impacted on the young, whether innocent or guilty, and carried a racialised edge, which White youth became aware of from their encounters with the police in mixed ethnicity groups.

By 1980, in particular multi-ethnic inner city areas such as St. Paul's, the police-community relationship had deteriorated to the point where there was effectively a state of 'slow-riot' in operation, as residents *regularly* intervened in *routine* street policing, sometimes violently[736]. Although, these behaviours were initially attributed to a 'criminal' proletarian sub-stratum, it became clear that wider sections of these inner city communities were being drawn into these confrontations. This change in the relationship with the police, marked a historic move from the *verbal* 'demands for rights' attributed to first generation African-Caribbean immigrants when dealing with the police in the 1950s-60s[737], to second-generation youth *physically* demanding them in the early 1980s.

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[735] The targeting of multi-ethnic inner city areas with the SUS law derived from the 1824 Vagrancy Act is discussed in C. Demuth, *'Sus', a Report on the Vagrancy Act 1824.* (London: Runnymede Trust, 1978), pp.36-37.

[736] These behaviours were first officially noted by the Metropolitan police in 1976; Gilroy, *There Ain't no Black in the Union Jack : The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation*, pp.93-94.

[737] A senior police officer in Bristol in the 1960s complained that 'West Indians' in Bristol were 'gregarious by nature and prone to a very strong insistence for the smallest right to which they think they are entitled…many of them, who are obdurate and unintelligent, press their demands to the utmost limits'; Dresser and Fleming, *Bristol: Ethnic Minorities and the City, 1000-2001*, p.143. See also Lambert's study of crime and policing in Birmingham in the 1960s in Lambert and Jenkinson, *Crime, Police, and Race Relations: A Study in Birmingham*, Section 6.

By 1980 the conditions were thus in place for *generalised* violent confrontations between residents and police in certain mixed ethnicity inner city areas. These were as likely to arise as the result of fairly routine contestations of street policing as the more contentious mass policing measures such as 'Swamp'-type operations or raids focused on symbolic locations. The lack of situational focus on 'criminals' engendered by the latter activities[738] and failures to effectively consult with 'community leaders' who in some cases were withdrawing from such liaisons[739], exacerbated the potential for mass disorders.

The concentration on policing in this section is a direct result of the emphasis given to it in the testimonies of 'rioters' as a historical precipitator for disorder in 1980-81. Although, there may have been various other subsidiary causes for the unrest, the police exercised the legitimate use of force by the state on a day-to-day level and thus for many came to represent the 'state'. As Sivanandan pointed out:

> 'The Police are…a threat, a foreign force, an army of occupation – the
> thick end of the authoritarian wedge, and in themselves so authoritarian as
> to make no difference between wedge and state'[740]

It was unclear in many of the disturbances whether the police were targeted purely

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[738] The large number of people stopped and searched during police 'Swamp' type operations in targeted areas, compared to the extremely low arrest rates are discussed in Roberts, *The Debate on 'Sus'*, pp.117-8.

[739] For example, the collapse in formal police-community liaison in Brixton in 1979 is recounted in Scarman, *The Scarman Report*, pp.87-96.

[740] A. Sivanandan, *A Different Hunger: Writings on Black Resistance.* (London: Pluto Press, 1982), p.49.

because of an unhappy history surrounding policing issues or because they were (unfortunate) representatives of the wider 'state' or 'system'. For either reason (or both) they were the principal targets of the collective violence that was unleashed.

8.4.2 'Copycat' and 'Contagion'

St. Paul's, in this comparison, effectively represents the multi-ethnic, cosmopolitan and deprived inner city areas that were the first to 'riot' in their respective cities in July 1981 (Southall and Wood Green [London], Toxteth [Liverpool], Moss Side [Manchester], Handsworth [Birmingham], Highfields [Leicester], Hyson Green [Nottingham]). The research demonstrated that St. Paul's was far from being a closed 'Black ghetto' (by demography and culture) and in fact had significant links to other mainly White working-class estates, sometimes on the outskirts of the city. These links were a by-product of education and the fusion of ethnic and sub-cultural social networks that had been energised during the 1970s as the offspring of first generation immigrants came of age. This ethnographic observation would also have been representative of many major cities in England in the period that received a significant number of migrants from the 'New Commonwealth' in the 1950s and 60s. If similar ethnic and sub-cultural social networks existed in other major cities of the period[741], which is highly likely, then it may help explain which outlying, mainly White areas, responded to the serious precipitating disorders in the multi-ethnic inner cities.

Once serious disorders had broken out in multi-ethnic inner city areas in July 1981 the

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[741] Evidence of similar networks in Birmingham is supplied by Jones, *Black Culture, White Youth: The Reggae Tradition from JA to UK* and Cashmore, *No Future: Youth and Society* and discussed in Chapter 2.0 Section 2.2.7.

research showed that they generated clusters of disorders local to each city or conurbation. The case studies of the 'Bristol Riots' demonstrated that although the mass media carried the news of the St. Paul's disturbance into most homes in the city within a few hours, many of the subsequent participants in disorder that were interviewed either heard about it through social networks or knew some of the people who had actually taken part. Thus to a certain extent the context in which the information was received was as important as its actual content. Similarly, those who had direct connections to St. Paul's or who had actually travelled to the 'riot' were important conveyors of information to outlying estates. Once social networks on those estates that were primed for disorder received the information, it was transmitted by word of mouth leading to discussion and in one case (Knowle West) planning for a 'riot'.

In July 1981, the lead-time for a subsequent disturbance to occur within the bounds of a city after the initiation of violence in an inner city multi-ethnic area was rarely less than a day and sometimes several days but certainly no more than this. This delay, which was replicated in Southmead (one day) and Knowle West (two-three days) in Bristol in 1980, represented the time for information concerning the St. Paul's disturbance to reach and travel through social networks, be evaluated, discussed and acted upon. Essentially these phases correspond to the dissemination and 'planning, organising and targeting'[742] period prior to the outbreak of a disturbance in a spatially

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[742] Myers demonstrated that the time for news of a disturbance to travel and pass through these assessment and mobilisation phases was *at the very most a week* during the disorders of the 1960s in the U.S. Myers, *Collective Violence and Heterogeneous Diffusion Processes: U.S. Racial Rioting from 1964-1971*, p.9 note 3, and *at least a week* during the 'Swing Riots' of 1830-31, Myers and Przybysz, *The Diffusion of Contentious Gatherings in the Captain Swing Uprising*, p.80. The differences were of

distant area. The small cluster of disturbances in outlying areas of Bristol following the St. Paul's event was thus spatially and temporally similar to the mini-waves that appeared in Merseyside, Manchester, London and the West Midlands in the first week of July 1981. These heterogeneous patterns of disturbances in each city shared the *hierarchical contagion* of the Bristol events in 1980. The more serious precipitating incident in the inner city generated further disparate and less severe disturbances throughout the city. However, this was generally a one-way process, with the latter smaller though more numerous events failing to initiate major disturbances upstream of the information flow.

These observations lead to the conclusion that the heterogeneous diffusion of information through social networks that connected the inner city to outlying estates in Bristol was also in operation in the mini-waves of disturbances in some cities in July 1981. The form of the social networks that were operating in the cities in July 1981 and facilitated these disturbance patterns was beyond the research capability in this thesis. However, it would be surprising if they did not show some correspondence to the educational, familial, ethnic and sub-culturally derived networks revealed by the research into the 'Bristol riots' of April 1980.

These conclusions significantly challenge the social-psychological concept of the 'copycat riot' as an event intimately connected to collections of *individuals* receiving information about a prior disturbance through mass electronic media and then acting. If this was so, *homogenous* diffusion effects would be expected, as susceptible and

course related to the prevalence of electronic mass media, improved transportation and personal communications such as the telephone in the later period.

primed neighbourhoods (potential adopters), dispersed *across the country* reacted to news of major precipitating 'riots' in the mass media[743]. A faster reaction time to the information would be also be likely, as individuals required only an interaction with electronic media to begin the mobilisation phase. These spatial and temporal characteristics were clearly *not* experienced in most of the major cities that experienced clusters of disorders in the first week of July 1981 in England.

The 'copycat' phenomenon emphasises the *inability* of individual or collective receivers of information about a disturbance to analyse, critique and make *conscious* objective decisions about its content. Instead the recipients are seen as passive consumers of the information where their *unconscious* desires are the driver for their subsequent actions[744]. In contrast, the concept of 'contagion' understood here is defined by *conscious*, rational and evaluative decision-making based upon the *real* experiences and *actual* social relations within social networks that are giving and receiving the information[745]. The process that was in operation in Bristol in April 1980, which it has been demonstrated shows distinct similarities to the mini-waves that appeared in a number of cities in July 1981, clearly falls within the latter definition.

This observation leads to a question as to why the city-based contagious mini-waves

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[743] This may of course be an explanation for the *national contagion* that was isolated as a feature of the overall wave of disturbances in July 1981. This effect provided an explanation for a number of disparate towns that experienced unrest over the weekend of 10th-11th July and is discussed in Chapter 4.0 Section 4.4.3.2.

[744] See Moonman, *Copy-Cat Hooligans* and Clutterbuck, *Terrorism and Urban Violence*.

[745] See the definition for 'contagion' given by Myers in Chapter 2.0 Section 2.3.5 note 141.

occurred at all in April 1980 and July 1981. As the research into the Bristol events demonstrated, there were significant differences in ethnic composition, location and histories between the areas that acted as precipitators and those that reacted. On reflection and considering the obvious divisions generated by societal racism in this period, it seems extraordinary that mainly White outlying estates trapped as they were by intense inter-estate rivalries, would rise in response to news of 'riots' in negatively mythologized multi-ethnic inner city 'ghettos'. However, as the micro-histories have demonstrated, a web of primarily working class youth linked by a fusion of ethnic and sub-cultural social networks was in existence in 1980 (and 1981). Members of these youth networks shared a history of sub-ordinate class status, branding, 'social deprivation' and crucially police harassment. Amongst White members of these networks there was an awareness of the concrete reality of racism, through their experiences of the unequal treatment of Afro-Caribbean youth who they were acquainted with and the prevalence of racist views in their home neighbourhoods[746]. Racist myths concerning inner city 'Black ghettos' and 'no go' areas had been discredited by friendships with Black youth from these neighbourhoods. The respondents from outlying estates also came to regard these inner city areas as relatively 'safe' and as good places in which to socialise or even live.

When news travelled through these networks that these neighbourhoods had not only

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[746] In a section entitled *'Race traitors'* Jones pointed out in his ethnographic study in Birmingham in the period that many White youth (particularly women) from outlying mainly White estates experienced significant disapproval and harassment from their family and peers concerning their relationships with Black youth from the inner city areas. Jones stated 'The reactions of other whites to the respondents' cross-racial affiliations played a crucial role in shaping their development and outcome'. Jones, *Black Culture, White Youth: The Reggae Tradition from JA to UK*, pp.196-202.

'risen up' but also had soundly defeated the common enemy, the police, the effect was 'inspirational'. White youth wanted to participate, to experience the feelings that were related to them by their peers who were lucky enough to say 'I was there'. Acting as conduits to others in their home areas that were less well connected, they spread the excitement, explored the potentialities for combat, and in some cases, collectively *acted*.

8.4.3 Ethnicity and Class

E.P. Thompson stated, in his introduction to *'The Making of the English Working Class'*, that:

> 'class happens when some men, as a result of common experiences (inherited or shared), feel and articulate the identity of their interests between themselves, and as against other men whose interests are different from (and usually opposed to) theirs'[747]

This definition of 'class' as a social relation, which rejected competing concepts of 'class' as a structure or category, appears particularly apt for describing the unrest of 1980-81 in England. If societal and institutional racism in the 1950s and 60s were principal inhibitors for the integration of first generation immigrants to the U.K. into economic and political structures, then these factors also inhibited the re-composition of sections of the working class through shared action. For their second generation offspring the situation was somewhat different, though nonetheless difficult.

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[747] Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, pp.8-9.

Significant cultural and social integration did occur between some Black and White youth in the 1970s through the experience of shared schooling, locale and sub-culture. Despite the inequalities engendered by racism, sections of youth in particular locales were overcoming the explicit divisions that lay between them, despite their inability affect the causes and long-term outcomes of these rifts. This activity was essentially unnoticed or couched in the terms of 'successful integration' in the 1970s. During the events of 1980-81 the nature of this 'integration' became explicit at least for a historical moment, as both Black and White youth fought the police in the inner cities and White youth responded in the deprived outlying Keynesian estates.

This was not perhaps the 'assimilation' that was intended by social planners, but in fact it actually represented the real dialectic of integration, as essentially a two-way process between people. The 'shared experiences' and 'identity of interests' that Thompson spoke of were drivers for the creation of the sub-culturally and ethnically derived social networks that were important in spreading the contagion of 'riot' in 1980-81. This is not to propose that ethnicity was being subsumed into a master category of 'class' in the period. Ethnicity was always explicit[748] and racism ever present, however, rebellious sections of youth worked through these differences and divisions and ended up somewhere new. As Thompson noted 'Consciousness of class arises in the same way in different times and places, **but never in just the same way**'[749]. This was certainly true of the late 1970s and early 80s in England, where the

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[748] Tumber noted in his interviews with Black participants in the 1981 'riots' from London, Liverpool and Manchester that 'there was considerable anger at continually being labelled as 'immigrant' or 'ethnic minorities''. Tumber, *Television and the Riots: A Report for the Broadcasting Research Unit of the British Film Institute*, p.45.

[749] Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, p.9.

actual overcoming of explicit ethnically derived divisions produced new experiences and outcomes for both Black and White alike.

When the 'riots' finally arrived in the 1980s, as several commentators had predicted after studying the 'racial' unrest in the U.S. in the 1960s[750], the surprise was the massive involvement of White youth, which was quite unlike the U.S. experience. This confounded both the racists and the 'race relations' specialists alike and has been either ignored, talked away or crudely enclosed by classical Marxist theory ever since. The fact that multi-ethnic inner city areas were the loci for precipitating 'riots' in 1980-81 was used to mask the generalised unrest that occurred in many mainly White areas. Effectively the 'riots' were racialised by sections of the right and academia for their own political ends. It is no surprise that the some of the most oppressed (Black) sections of the working-class located in the inner cities were the first to explode onto the stage of history in 1980-81. What was unique was the large number of White youth that joined them. Together, by design or chance, they acted as a vanguard for numerous further disorders in mainly White areas. But this should not be a surprise, as Thompson theorised:

> '**Making**…is…an active process, which owes as much to agency as to conditioning. The working class did not arise like the sun at an appointed time. It was present at its own making'[751]

One 'rioter' from 1981 put it even more trenchantly:

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[750] See for example the article in *The Times* from 1967 quoted in Solomos, *Black Youth, Racism and the State: The Politics of Ideology and Policy*, p.175.

[751] Thompson's original emphasis in bold. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, p.8.

'It might have looked like we were in it for a laugh, but there was this incredible feeling. We weren't fighting each other; like we weren't fighting the pakis or the blackies, 'cause they were with us doing the rioting. We were all fighting something else'[752]

The explicit (though perhaps momentary) sectoral class recomposition that occurred amongst some youth in 1980-81 was the product of an active process underway in the 1970s. Its violent outcome was an historic phenomenon, which startled the police and shook the Tory Government[753].

8.5   Summary

This thesis has aimed to counter ideologically-driven and under-researched interpretations in many contemporary accounts of violent urban disturbance in the period. Rather than beginning with an ideological assumption and seeking evidence to support this position, the approach in this work follows a more scientific and systematic methodology. The research questions, framed by contradictions in the secondary sources, determined the scope and content of the data that was gathered. A critical study of existing analytical methods and the introduction of relevant new methodology allowed this data to be successfully evaluated. Conclusions about the form and content of the disturbances were drawn and this enabled ideological

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[752] Cashmore, *No Future: Youth and Society*, p.84.

[753] Prime Minister Thatcher stated (without qualification) that early July had been 'her ten most worrying days'; Farrar, *'Riot and revolution: The politics of an inner city'* and one of her advisers Patrick Cosgrove recalled: 'I remember her at the time, again and again, repeating, almost like a mantra 'Churchill in 1940, Churchill in 1940, Churchill in 1940''; A. Curtis, *The Living Dead Part 03: The Attic*. Television BBC (1995).

concepts to be exposed to empirical scrutiny. This approach aimed to steer a 'middle course' between uncritical empiricism and ideologically driven explanations which effectively put the 'cart before the horse'.

As a result of this work, it is now possible to outline the process of the urban disturbances in England in 1980-81. The effects of long-term industrial decline, mass-unemployment and institutional racism at all levels of society in the U.K. combined with the social, political and workplace struggles of the 1970s generated responses from both the state and sections of the working class. The former moved away from consensus policing strategies towards more militarised, repressive and crucially area-based policing strategies which became more explicitly linked to social class and ethnicity. The latter, particularly urban unemployed working class youth linked by locale and sub-culture, responded with a repertoire of legal and illegal, cultural and economic, survival strategies which inevitably brought them into conflict with the police.

For second generation Black youth in particular, these conflicts were exacerbated by societal and institutional racism which generated potential flashpoints in a number of multi-ethnic inner-city areas in England. When these serious outbreaks of disorder occurred they precipitated a series of smaller but more numerous eruptions in outlying mono-ethnic (White) working class estates local to that city. However, as was demonstrated by the quantitative and qualitative evidence in this thesis, these supposed independent and random 'copycat riots' ostensibly driven by the news media, were far from this. Instead, the fusing of inner-city and out-lying estate youth through ethnic, familial, subcultural and other linkages such as schooling generated a

variety of social-networks providing both context for the assessment of information about 'riots' and organisational forms for action. Consequently the picture that emerges is somewhat different to the pre-1960s 'race riot' where existing divisions within sectors of the working class were intensified. Instead, a recomposition of fractions of working class youth across ethnic and spatial divides before and explicitly during the disturbances redirected potentially internecine violence towards the state and specifically its representatives *on the street*, the police. E.P.Thompson's dynamic and relational understanding of class struggle appears to provide the best theoretical model for characterising the form and content of the 'riots' of 1980-81 in England.

8.6   Future Research and Analysis

In this concluding section potential avenues for further research and analysis are briefly reviewed. These relate to both micro histories and the analysis of the July 1981 disorders.

8.6.1   Event History Analysis

The statistical modelling techniques employed in Chapter 4 to analyse the database of disorders for July 1981 in England are relatively elementary. Although it was possible to demonstrate that various modes of contagion were in operation in the spread of disturbances, the techniques were not of sufficient sophistication to be able to determine a clear separation between them or to test their characteristics. More sophisticated statistical analysis is thus required in order to isolate the importance of spatial, temporal and other factors (such as the media) in the diffusion of disturbance locally and nationally. This could be achieved by using mathematical techniques such

as the event-history models described in Chapter 2.0 Section 2.3.5[754]. In addition, the acquisition and study of detailed, local statistical information dealing with arrests during the disorders will enhance both the quantitative and ethnographic analyses.

8.6.2 Micro-histories

In a review of the ground-breaking study of the English rural risings of 1830-31 *'Captain Swing'*, Richard Cobb made the famous remark 'And now to the study of Lower Hardres', which was reputedly the village where the disturbances originated[755]. Cobb was arguing that although Hobsbawm and Rudé provided a comprehensive overview (a macro study) of the wave of rural unrest, it was now the task of other researchers to generate micro-histories of localised mini-waves of disorders.

Essentially the same call is being made here. A more informed study of the wave of unrest in July 1981 requires a series of micro-histories at the level of detail accorded to the study of the 'Bristol Riots' presented in this thesis. Specifically, the city-based mini-waves of disorder that appeared in Liverpool, Manchester, London and the West Midlands necessitate investigation. Demographic research into the areas experiencing significant disturbances in 1980-81 is certainly possible. However, as the discovery of the hitherto hidden disturbances of Southmead and Knowle West in Bristol has demonstrated, oral history testimony from participants may prove vital to uncover the

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[754] For example the methods applied in Myers, *The Diffusion of Collective Violence: Infectiousness, Susceptibility, and Mass Media Networks*, J. Przybysz and D. Myers, *The Diffusion of Contentious Gatherings in the Captain Swing Uprising*, Myers, *Collective Violence and Heterogeneous Diffusion Processes: U.S. Racial Rioting from 1964-1971* and Myers, *Racial Rioting in the 1960S: An Event History Analysis of Local Conditions*.

[755] *Times Literary Supplement* 11-09-1969 and Hobsbawm and Rudé, *Captain Swing*.

more obscure locations of disorder and to analyse more fully the anatomy of the unrest.

9.0 Glossary, Sources and Bibliography

9.1 Glossary

Table 27 lists the acronyms used in this text.

Acronym	Description
A	Arson
ANL	Anti-Nazi League
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BCRE	Bristol Commission for Racial Equality
BREC	Bristol Race Equality Council
BRO	Bristol Record Office
CRE	Commission for Racial Equality
DSQ	Disturbance Severity Quotient
DSS	Disturbance Severity Score
DUR	Duration
EHRC	Equality and Human Rights Commission
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
FACHRS	Family and Community Historical Research Society
HTV	Harlech Television (serving Wales and the West of England)
L	Looting
M	'Mixed' crowd
NC	New Commonwealth
NF	National Front
NS-SEC	National Statistics – Socio-economic Classification
NUT	National Union of Teachers
NW	'Non-White' crowd
PB	Petrol Bombs Used
PC	Police Commitment
PD	Properties Damaged
PS	Police Station Attacked
PV	Police Vehicles Damaged
REC	Race Equality Council
SAS	Small Area Statistics
SEG	Socio-economic Group
SPG	Special Patrol Group
SUS	Suspected Person (under 1824 Vagrancy Act)
SWP	Socialist Workers Party
TUC	Trades Union Congress
UB40	Unemployment Benefit form 40
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UWE	University of West of England
W	'White' crowd

Table 27: Acronyms and explanations

9.2   Primary Sources

9.2.1   Reports, Press Conferences and Briefings

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[756] A full listing of newspaper sources used in the analysis of the July 1981 disorders (Chapter 4.0) is given in Appendix 10.3.

9.2.4   Audio Sources

9.2.4.1   Oral history files

Respondent	Date	File	Duration
A	20th Mar. 2010	A_20-03-2010.WMA	00:40:30
B	26th Feb. 2011	B_26-02-2011.WMA	01:47:13
C	24th Sep. 2010	C_24-09-2010.WMA	00:32:30
D	1st Jul. 2010	D_01-07-2010_Part_1.WMA	01:01:03
		D_01-07-2010_Part_2.WMA	00:13:04
E	14th Oct. 2010	E_14-10-2010.WMA	01:49:03
F	27th Aug. 2010	F_27_08_2010_Part_1.WMA	00:22:11
		F_27_08_2010_Part_2.WMA	00:06:27
G	9th Oct. 2009	G_09-10-2009.WMA	00:35:15
H	18th Feb. 2010	H_18-02-2010.WMA	01:29:01
I	20th Aug. 2010	I_20_08_2010.WMA	00:40:40
J	12th Feb. 2010	J_12-02-2010_Main.WMA	00:28:21
		J_12-02-2010_Part.WMA	00:00:36
K	9th Sep. 2010	K_09_09_2010.WMA	00:37:17
L	15th Feb. 2010	L_15-02-2010_Main.WMA	00:35:12
M	5th Nov. 2010	M_05_11_2010_Part_1.WMA	00:09:54
		M_05_11_2010_Part_2.WMA	00:30:29
N	5th Mar. 2010	N_05-03-2010_edit.WMA	00:34:21

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10.0 Appendices

10.1 Listing of BBC and HTV television footage of the St. Paul's disturbance of April 2nd 1980

TV Archive Material

Listing of film sequences: St. Paul's Riot (2nd-3rd April 1980)

Explanation of phases

Each excerpt of film is broken down into sequences, which are loosely linked to the phases of the St. Paul's disturbance. These phases, approximate timings and descriptions are as follows:

Wednesday April 2nd 1980

Phase 1:	4.30pm-5.45pm	Initiation of violence at the Black and White café on Grosvenor Road No TV crews present.
Interregnum:	5.45pm-6.40pm	Lull in the violence, TV crews arrive.
Phase 2:	6.40pm-7.30pm	Initiation of violence on Grosvenor Road as police vehicle is towed away. Violence spreads to Ashley Road and City Road Police 'withdraw'.
Phase 3:	7.30pm-11.30pm	Looting and arson, TV crews mostly absent from area.
Phase 4:	11.30pm	Police operation to retake the area commences.

Thursday April 3rd 1980

Next Day		Aftermath of the 'riot'

TV Footage

Each excerpt is given a time according to the DVD counter and the sequences described. Interviewees are designated in parentheses (#). Section 3 has some extra footage from Operation Delivery (1986).

1. **BBC National**

00:00:00	BBC news report (interview with Geoffrey Fowkes, interview with crowd)
00:02:33	BBC Feature three weeks after the 'riot' (various interviews, residents, blues, police interview, Black and White café and raid, interview Wilkes (?), interview Bunny Merrit (?), employment, dance company, interview Monique Courtier, interview Peter Courtier (?), political factions in St. Paul's (ANL), interview police, interview Bunny Merrit)
00:14:35	Ends

2. St. Paul's Riots HTV

00:00:00	Phase 2: City Road/Ashley Road Junction (Landrover), injured police, policeman throwing rocks at crowd, injured cameraman
00:02:06	Interview with crowd about raid (4)
00:02:44	Interview with female resident (1)
00:02:58	Phase 2: City Road/Ashley Road Junction
00:03:09	Burned police cars on Grosvenor Road
00:03:23	Phase 1: Police with dogs clearing crowd from Grosvenor Road
00:03:30	Police car on fire?
00:03:46	Warehouse on fire and van turned over on Wilder Street/Brighton Street
00:04:08	Lloyds bank and police cars on fire, Ashley Road
00:04:53	Interregnum: Police with dogs on Grosvenor Road
00:05:16	Interregnum: Crowds on Grosvenor Road, burned police car at end William Street, punks in crowd, police advance with dogs.
00:07:16	Interregnum: Police with milk crates on Grosvenor Road, plain clothes police with dogs, crowds on Grosvenor Road/Bevin Court,
00:08:51	Interregnum: Interview with female resident (2)
00:09:16	Interregnum: Interview with youth (3)
00:09:46	Photographer and damaged van
00:10:01	Interview with crowd about raid (5)
00:11:27	Shots of Black and White café, interview with crowd about raid (4)
00:12:39	Interview with female resident (1)
00:13:10	Shots of Black and White café, news report at scene
00:13:38	Phase 2: City Road, police advance without shields, Martin Chainey injured by missile, shield line under attack, blue Sherpa van on City Road, injured policemen
00:15:28	Damaged police vehicles on Wilder Street?, wrecked police vehicles leaving the scene
00:16:07	Interregnum: News report at the Black and White café (interrupted by youths)
00:16:39	Interregnum: Black and White café and youths
00:16:54	Interregnum: Tow truck at end of William Street, crowds on Grosvenor Road, kids with black power salutes, lines of police

	dogs, removal of police car, beginning of phase 2, police chased up Grosvenor Road
00:19:53	Interregnum: Interview with male on Grosvenor Road (6), police harassment, 'numberless' rioters, police violence, not over yet.
00:21:00	Police chased onto Ashley Road/City Road Junction up William Street
00:21:06	News report rushes on Grosvenor Road
00:21:27	Interregnum: Shots of police gathered at the Inkerman pub and crowds on Grosvenor Road, also Willam Street, tow truck, police dogs advance, removal of police car, Phase 2 begins, mixed gender crowd charges up William Street to get onto Ashley Road (no audio).
00:25:50	Phase 2: Police deploy riot shields from Blue Sherpa van on City Road, cameraman injured
00:26:22	Phase 2: Grosvenor Road, pall of smoke from bank area
00:26:34	Phase 2: City Road, police advance, massed crowds having pushed the police back.
00:27:03	Phase 3: Firemen extinguish blaze at the end of Brighton Street/Wilder Street, Lloyds bank and police cars burning on Ashley Road
00:28:13	Next day shots of Ashley Road post office, kiosks, news report on looting an arson, interview with resident about raid (7) and looting, interview with resident arrested by police (8), shots of food store, interview with resident about looting and violence (9), interview with residents (10), interview with shop owner (kiosks), post office, interview with resident (11), interview with resident about looting and tension with police (12), interview shop owner (13), Fowlers, interview with Fowlers owner about looting, news report, clear up (Nylons), Criterion, Bookmakers, Lloyds bank, Trident.
00:40:09	Ends

3. BBC rushes 1

00:00:00	Phase 4: Police riot shield units deployed from coaches (M32?) from Weymouth, marching riot shield units (no audio)
00:01:59	Phase 4: Inkerman, riot shield units, burned out police cars, shots of burned post office on Ashley Road
00:03:03	Phase 4: Police with riot shields, police car upside down, burned and looted shops with firemen, Lloyds bank, bakers.
00:05:47	Phase 4: Fire engines on St. Paul's roundabout, police with riot shields, looted shops, police vehicles being removed, Chief police officers, clear up (no audio)
00:08:01	Next day: looted shops, collection of burned out police vehicles (6), Ashley Road, groups of residents and police, post office, kiosks boarded up. Grosvenor Road, wrecked warehouse (Wilder Street?), (no audio)

00:10:05	Interregnum (?): Police outside Black and White café, police cars on Grosvenor Road, damaged police vehicles, police at the Inkerman, residents on Grosvenor Road
00:10:48	Next day: Police outside boarded up Lloyds bank, residents and police on Grosvenor Road, clearing up on Wilder Street, police on Ashley Road, looted shops
00:11:38	Phase 4: Police entering and leaving Bridewell to launch operation, numerous police vehicles organising to leave police station.
00:14:04	Phase 4: Looted utensils shop, electrical goods shop, Overbury's bike shop
00:14:45	Phase 4: Firemen extinguish blaze and burning vehicle.
00:14:50	Phase 4: Police with riot shields marching on Ashley Road
00:14:52	Phase 4: Police vehicles preparing for the operation.
00:15:09	Phase 4: Police with burned out police car on Ashley Road, looted electrical goods shop
00:15:27	Phase 2: Police on Grosvenor Road, police forming up on City Road
00:15:57	Next day: Police outside Lloyds Bank
00:16:26	Operation Delivery 1986
00:17:03	Operation Delivery 1986: Crowds and police line on Grosvenor Road, fighting on Grosvenor Road, riot police units on Grosvenor Road, police vans attacked on Grosvenor Road, rioting on Grosvenor Road, riot police on City Road under attack from missiles, crowd taunting riot police on City Road, police vans on City Road, riot police beating shields and advancing then charging, riot police running on Ashley Road, riot police on Stokes Croft
00:23:23	Ends

4. BBC rushes 2

00:00:00	Interregnum: Police on Grosvenor Road, clearing up outside the Black and White café, police car towed away.
00:00:25	Phase 2: Mass crowd charge on City Road, police, journalists etc. running away.
00:00:39	Ends

5. BBC rushes 3

00:00:00	Phase 2: Mass crowd charge on City Road, police, journalists etc. running away.
00:00:12	Ends

(R. Ball UWE 13-01-2011)

10.2 Oral History: Respondent Information

<u>**Information for Interviewees (January - May 2010)**</u>

Project: Violent Urban Disturbance in England 1980-81

Researcher: Roger Ball (PhD Post-Graduate Student)

Teaching Institution: History Dept., HLSS, University of West of England (UWE), Bristol.

Contact details: E-mail: <u>roger2.ball@uwe.ac.uk</u>   Phone: 07895052268

Dear Interviewee,

You have been asked to provide an interview as part of the research for the above named project (a more detailed description of which is provided on the next page). You have been approached due to your direct involvement with a particular urban disturbance of the 1980-81 period. The primary aim of this research is to gather eyewitness accounts of the events and other information, which will allow an historical analysis of the disturbances.

The following points are important:

Anonymity

*You will **not** be asked to give your name or personal details, which may compromise your identity. If you do decide to provide a name then that will be securely held by the researcher and him alone. It will not be **not** be published or passed onto to any other persons (including the University of West of England) without your **consent**. If your testimony is to be published then your identity (and that of others) will be protected by assigning **agreed aliases**.*

The Interview

*The interview will be conducted **solely** by the researcher, no other parties will be present (unless you request them). With your agreement, the interview may be recorded electronically. You are free to withdraw from the interview at any time and have your testimony destroyed.*

After the Interview

If the interview is recorded, an electronic version of your testimony will be available to you upon request. All interview recordings and notes will be anonymously and securely stored by the University of West of England. With your consent the testimony you provide may be subsequently written up as part of a PhD thesis and may be used for academic articles and conference papers in the future. You will be able to independently access these materials upon publication.

Finally, as part of the ethical requirements of the University of West of England, the researcher is required to ask you to sign a consent form indicating your agreement to take part in this study as described here. You may sign this with the agreed alias.

Your participation in this project is greatly appreciated.

Thanks for your time and interest,

Roger Ball

Project Description

Violent Urban Disturbance in England 1980-81

The period 1980-81 was marked by some of the most serious and widespread urban rioting in England in the twentieth century. The riot in the St. Paul's district of Bristol in April 1980 is commonly recognised as being the start of the wave of unrest, which peaked in July 1981 when violent disturbances occurred in more than 85 cities and towns in England. The pattern of violent urban disturbance continued throughout the 1980's and became associated with the period.

Much of the previous academic research has been based upon secondary sources (newspapers, books etc.) and has failed to gather the first-hand experiences of the participants themselves. Consequently, histories of the disturbances have been written from the 'outside' and significant incidents seem to have been completely overlooked thus strengthening received explanations of the events.

One of the aims of this project is to gather first hand accounts of the disturbances from the participants themselves and to use this information to develop a more informed historical analysis of the events.

Of particular interest to this project are the following:

- The understanding of the events from the perspective of the participants.
- The simultaneous nature of the uprisings in different districts of cities and regions with apparently different ethnic compositions, histories and demographics.
- The speed at which events unfolded and replicated themselves.
- The organisational forms and social networks of the participants.

For case-study research of particular urban disturbances I have chosen the city of Bristol as being representative of the period.

As a vital part of the project will be concerned with collecting oral testimony of both witnesses and participants, I believe a sufficient period of time has passed to allay fears of prosecution. However, since it is more than 25 years ago, there is a pressing need to undertake this research whilst respondents are still available to provide first hand accounts of these events.

Hopefully, the results of the research will not only provide a useful history of the events, but also provide some explanations of the more complex aspects associated with the waves of urban disturbances. In the process I hope to make a significant contribution to the understanding of the causes and mechanisms of the urban rioting in the UK in the late twentieth century.

Consent form for Interviewees

Project: Violent Urban Disturbance in England 1980-81

Researcher: Roger Ball (Post-graduate), History Dept., HLSS, University of West of England (UWE), Bristol.

"I have read the separate information sheet provided by the researcher and agree to be interviewed for the project as outlined in that document. I give permission that my testimony be cited anonymously, according to the terms stated in the information sheet"

Interviewee: (print and sign name with date)

Researcher: (print and sign name with date)

10.3   Index of primary sources: July 1981

Newspaper	Siglum	July 1981 Date Referenced				Notes[757]
Accrington Observer	AO					no reports
Bedford Record	BR	14th	21st			
Berrow's Worcester Journal	BWJ					no reports
Birkenhead News	BN	15th				
Birmingham Evening Mail	BEM	11th				
Birmingham Post	BP	13th				
Blackpool Herald	BH					no reports
Bolton Evening News	BEN	11th	13th			
Bradford Telegraph and Argus	BTA	13th				
Brighton Evening Argus	BEA	11th	15th			
Bristol Evening Post	BEP	13th				
Bucks Examiner	BE	17th				
Bucks Herald	BH					no reports
Chatham Standard	CS					no reports
Chelmsford Weekly News	CWN					no reports
Cheshire Observer	CO	17th				
Cirencester Advertiser	CA					no reports
Coventry Evening Telegraph	CET	13th				
Croydon District News	CDN					no reports
Croydon Midweek Post	CMP					no reports
Daily Record	DR	13th	14th			
Darwen Advertiser	DA	15th				
Derby Evening Telegraph	DET	11th	13th	14th		
Dundee Evening Telegraph	DUET	13th				
Dunstable Evening Post	DEP	13th				
Dunstable Gazette	DG	16th				
Edinburgh Evening News	EEE					gen. reports
Evening Courier (Halifax)	HEC	9th	10th	13th	14th	
Evening Post (Reading)	REP	11th	13th			
Express & Star (Wolverhampton)	ESW	11th	13th			
Fleet News	FN	17th				
Gloucester Journal	GJ					no reports
Harlow Gazette	HG	17th				
Harlow Observer	HO					no reports
Harlow Star	HS					no reports
Hereford Evening News	HEN					gen. reports
Herts. Advertiser	HA					no reports
High Wycombe Observer	HWO	17th				
Hoylake and West Kirby News	HWKN	17th				
Huddersfield Daily Examiner	HDE	13th				
Hull Daily Mail	HDM	11th	13th			
Kent & Sussex Courier	KSC					no reports
Kent Messenger	KM					no reports
Keswick Reminder	KR	31st				
Knaresborough Post	KP	17th				
Lancashire Evening News	LEN	11th	13th			

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[757] Instances where the primary source yielded no data or only general reports are highlighted in grey.

Newspaper	Siglum	July 1981 Date Referenced											Notes[757]
Lancashire Evening Post	LEP	6th											
Lancashire Evening Telegraph	LET	4th	7th	8th	9th	11th							
Leamington Spa Courier	LSC	17th											
Leicester Mercury	LM	6th	8th	9th	10th	11th	13th	14th					
Liverpool Echo	LE	6th	7th	8th	9th	11th							
Luton News	LN	16th	23rd										
Maidstone Messenger	MM	17th											
Maidstone Times	MT												no reports
Manchester Evening News	MEN	6th	8th	9th									
Market Harborough Mail	MHM												no reports
Medway Times	MDT												no reports
Newcastle Evening Chronicle	NEC	6th	11th	13th	14th								
Nottingham Evening Post	NEP	11th	13th	14th									
Reading Chronicle	RC	17th											
Rochdale Observer	RO	15th											
Romford Recorder	RR	17th											
Rugby Advertiser	RA	17th											
Sheffield Chronicle	SC	17th											
Sheffield Morning Telegraph	SMT	11th	13th										
Shrewsbury Chronicle	SHC												no reports
Southern Evening Echo	SEE	13th											
Southport Visitor	SV												gen. reports
St. Helens Reporter	SHR	17th											
Staffordshire Weekly Sentinel	SWS												no reports
Stevenage Express	StE	15th											
Stockport Advertiser	SA	16th											
Stockport Express	SE	16th											
Sunderland Echo	SUE	11th	13th										
Sutton Coldfield News	SCN												no reports
Swindon Express and Echo	SWEE	17th											
The News (Portsmouth)	TNP	13th											
The Scotsman	TS												gen. reports
The Times	T	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	13th	14th	27th	29th	30th	
Walsall Observer	WO	17th											
Warrington Guardian	WG												gen. reports
West Lancashire Eve Gazette	WLEG	13th											
West Sussex Gazette	WSG												no reports
Western Daily Press	WDP	13th	14th	20th									
Widnes Weekly News	WWN												gen. reports
Wilts & Gloucester Standard	WGS	17th											
Windsor, Slough & Eton Express	WSEE	17th											
Wolverhampton Chronicle	WC												no reports
Worcester Evening News	WEN	13th											
Yorkshire Post	YP	6th	10th	11th	13th	14th							

10.4 Daily disturbance data set: July 1981

District/Town	City/Town	July 1981 Date	Disturbance Severity Score[758]						DSQ[759]	Disturbance Description[760]
			DUR	NR	PI	PD	AP	PB		
Toxteth	Liverpool	3	3	1	2		1		1.8	major
Southall	London	3	3	4	5	4	3	4	3.8	major riot
Toxteth	Liverpool	4	5	3	5		3	4	4.0	major riot
Toxteth	Liverpool	5	5	4	5	5	3	4	4.3	excep. riot
Toxteth	Liverpool	6	2	3		4	2	3	2.8	riot
Kirkby	Liverpool	7							1	minor
Toxteth	Liverpool	7		3					2	major
Wood Green	London	7		4	2	3			3	riot
Moss Side	Manchester	7	3	3	1	4	1	2	2.3	riot
City Centre	Liverpool	8							1	minor
Kirkby	Liverpool	8		3	2				2	major
Netherly	Liverpool	8							2	major
Wood Green	London	8							1	minor
Clayton	Manchester	8							1	minor
Gorton	Manchester	8						3	2	major
Moss Side	Manchester	8	4	5	3	4	5	4	4.2	excep. riot
Rusholme	Manchester	8							1	minor
Salford	Manchester	8		3			3	3	3	riot
Blacon	Chester	9		2		4		2	2.7	riot
Hull	Hull	9							1	minor
Bootle	Liverpool	9							1	minor
City Centre	Liverpool	9							1	minor
Halewood	Liverpool	9							1	minor
Kirkby	Liverpool	9							1	minor
Leasowe	Liverpool	9							1	minor
Speke	Liverpool	9							1	minor
Thornton	Liverpool	9							1	minor
Tuebrook	Liverpool	9							1	minor
Wallasey	Liverpool	9							1	minor
Balham	London	9							1	minor
Battersea	London	9						3	2	major
Dalston	London	9		3					1	minor
Deptford	London	9		3					2	major
Fulham	London	9							2	major
Lewisham	London	9							1	minor
Notting Hill	London	9							1	minor
Stoke Newington	London	9							1	minor

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[758] Acronyms represent Disturbance Severity Scores (DSS) for the following categories DUR = disturbance duration, NR = number of 'rioters', PI = police injuries, PD = property damage, AP = attacks on police vehicles and property, PB = usage of petrol bombs. Full details of the DSS ratings are given in Table 5.
[759] Disturbance Severity Quotient (DSQ), an overall rating for incident severity based upon the DSS. The process is explained in Chapter 4.0 Section 4.3.3.
[760] The disturbance description based on the DSQ and explained in Table 6.

District/Town	City/Town	July 1981 Date	Disturbance Severity Score[758]						DSQ[759]	Disturbance Description[760]
			DUR	NR	PI	PD	AP	PB		
Tooting	London	9							2	major
Woolwich	London	9		3	1	2			2	major
Moss Side	Manchester	9			2	2	2		2	major
Bedford	Bedford	10							1	minor
Chelmsley Wood	Birmingham	10							1	minor
Handsworth	Birmingham	10	5	4	1	3	2	3	3.0	riot
Smethwick	Birmingham	10			1	2			1	minor
Ramsbottom	Bolton	10		2					1	minor
Chester	Chester	10						1	1	minor
Darwen	East Lancashire	10			1	2			1.5	major
Hull	Hull	10		4	2				2	major
Cantrill farm	Liverpool	10		3					2	major
Ellesmere Port	Liverpool	10		3		1			2	major
Garston	Liverpool	10							1	minor
Halewood	Liverpool	10							1	minor
Huyton	Liverpool	10							1	minor
Kirkby	Liverpool	10							1	minor
Lewington	Liverpool	10							1	minor
Netherly	Liverpool	10							1	minor
Prescot	Liverpool	10							1	minor
Wallasey	Liverpool	10							1	minor
Acton	London	10	1			2			1	minor
Battersea	London	10		3		2		2	2.3	riot
Brixton	London	10	4	4	1	4	4	4	3.5	major riot
Chingford	London	10				1		1	2	major
Chiswick	London	10							1	minor
Clapham	London	10							2	major
Croydon	London	10							1	minor
Dalston	London	10	4	2	3			3	3.0	riot
Fulham	London	10						2	2	major
Hackney	London	10				3			2	major
Harlesden	London	10							1	minor
Hounslow	London	10				3			2	major
Lewisham	London	10							1	minor
Notting Hill	London	10							2	major
Southall	London	10	3			2			2	major
Southwark (Peckham)	London	10						1	1	minor
Stoke Newington	London	10				5			2	major
Streatham	London	10							1	minor
Walthamstow	London	10		4		1			2	major
West Ham	London	10	3	2		2	1	3	2.2	riot
City Centre	Luton	10		2	2	4			2.7	riot
Newcastle	Newcastle	10				2			2	major
Hyson Green	Nottingham	10	4	3	2	4		3	3.2	major riot
Preston	Preston	10		4	1				2	major
Town Centre	Reading	10		2		1			1.5	major
Town Centre	Rochdale	10		3					1	minor
Dixon Lane	Sheffield	10			1				1	minor
Chalvey	Slough	10	1	2	2	1		3	1.8	major
Town Centre	St. Helens	10		3	1	1			1.7	major
Stevenage	Stevenage	10	1	1					1	minor
Dunstall	Wolverhampton	10				2			2	major

District/Town	City/Town	July 1981 Date	Disturbance Severity Score[758]						DSQ[759]	Disturbance Description[760]
			DUR	NR	PI	PD	AP	PB		
City Centre	Wolverhampton	10				2			2	major
Bedford	Bedford	11	3	3		2			2	major
Balsall Heath	Birmingham	11					1		1	minor
Chelmsley Wood	Birmingham	11							1	minor
City Centre	Birmingham	11	3	4		2			3	riot
Dudley	Birmingham	11				1			1	minor
Handsworth	Birmingham	11	5	2		2		1	2.5	riot
Northfield	Birmingham	11		1		2			1	minor
Sandwell	Birmingham	11							1	minor
Smethwick	Birmingham	11				1			1	minor
Solihull	Birmingham	11							1	minor
Blackburn	Blackburn	11		4		3			2	major
Blackpool	Blackpool	11	4		1				2	major
Bradford	Bradford	11	3	1		3			2.3	riot
Bridgnorth	Bridgnorth	11							1	minor
Bedminster	Bristol	11		1		1			1	minor
Southmead, Lawrence Weston	Bristol	11							1	minor
Cirencester	Cirencester	11						3	1	minor
Coventry	Coventry	11				2			1	minor
Crewe	Crewe	11			1				1	minor
Derby	Derby	11		3	1	3			2.3	riot
Dundee	Dundee	11		2					1	minor
Dunstable	Dunstable	11	3						1	minor
Fleetwood	Fleetwood	11			1				1.5	major
City Centre	Gloucester	11		3		1			1.5	major
City Centre	Halifax	11	2	4	1	2			2.3	riot
High Wycombe	High Wycombe	11	3	2	2	3	5		3.0	riot
Huddersfield	Huddersfield	11		1	1	1			1.0	minor
Hull	Hull	11				1			1.5	major
Knaresborough	Knaresborough	11		2					1	minor
Leamington	Leamington	11		3	1	2			2.0	major
Chapletown & Harehills	Leeds	11		2	2	4		3	2.8	riot
Highfields	Leicester	11			2	3			2	major
Town Centre	Leighton Buzzard	11				1			1	minor
Town Centre	Leominster	11		1					1	minor
Birkenhead	Liverpool	11	4	2	1	1		4	2.4	riot
Kirkby	Liverpool	11				1			1	minor
Wallasey	Liverpool	11							1	minor
Battersea	London	11				1		3	2	major
Brixton	London	11							2	major
Croydon	London	11						1	1	minor
Forest Gate	London	11							1	minor
Golders Green	London	11							1	minor
Harlesden	London	11							1	minor
Notting Hill	London	11							2	major
Penge	London	11				4		2	1	minor
Sutton	London	11							1	minor
Walthamstow	London	11		4		1		1	2.0	major
West Ham	London	11							1	minor
Luton	Luton	11			2	3		3	2.7	riot

District/Town	City/Town	July 1981 Date	Disturbance Severity Score[758]						DSQ[759]	Disturbance Description[760]
			DUR	NR	PI	PD	AP	PB		
City Centre	Maidstone	11		3					1.5	major
Denton Park	Newcastle	11							1	minor
Beeston	Nottingham	11		1		1			1	minor
Bulwell	Nottingham	11					5		1.5	major
City Centre & Hyson Green	Nottingham	11	3	3		3			3.0	riot
Portsmouth	Portsmouth	11		4	2				2.5	riot
Town Centre	Rochdale	11		3		2			2	major
Cranham	Romford	11		1				2	1	minor
Rugby	Rugby	11	3			1	1		1.7	major
Shrewsbury	Shrewsbury	11				2			1	minor
City Centre	Southampton	11		2	1	2			1.7	major
Town Centre	St. Helens	11		1					1	minor
Stevenage	Stevenage	11	1	2					1	minor
Bramhall Park	Stockport	11		2	2				1.5	major
Stoke	Stoke	11							1.5	major
Seaham	Sunderland	11		3	1				1.5	major
Tunbridge Wells	Tunbridge Wells	11							1	minor
Town Centre	Walsall	11		2					1	minor
Wantage	Wantage	11	1	1		1			1	minor
Warrington	Warrington	11							1	minor
City Centre	Wolverhampton	11					5		2	major
Dunstall	Wolverhampton	11		3			5		2	major
Farndale	Wolverhampton	11							1	minor
Heathtown	Wolverhampton	11							1	minor
Handsworth	Birmingham	12							1	minor
Daubhill	Bolton	12		3				1	1.5	major
Avonmouth	Bristol	12		1		1	2		1.3	major
Normanton & Pear Tree	Derby	12		3					1.5	major
Dundee	Dundee	12		2			1	2	1.7	major
High Wycombe	High Wycombe	12	3	3	3	2		3	2.8	riot
Huddersfield	Huddersfield	12	4	3					2	major
Chapletown & Harehills	Leeds	12		4	3		3	4	3.5	major riot
Highfields	Leicester	12	3	4	2	3		4	3.2	major riot
Birkenhead	Liverpool	12							1	minor
Crosby	Liverpool	12							1	minor
Battersea	London	12			1				1.5	major
Brixton	London	12							2	major
Notting Hill	London	12	2		1			3	2.0	major
Clifton Estate	Nottingham	12							1	minor
Swindon	Swindon	12	1					1	1	minor
Aldershot	Aldershot	13		3		1			1	minor
Knowle West	Bristol	13		2					1	minor
Redfield	Bristol	13		1		1			1	minor
Normanton & Pear Tree	Derby	13		4	1		5	3	3.3	major riot
Huddersfield	Huddersfield	13			1				1	minor
Highfields	Leicester	13		3		1			2	major
Birkenhead	Liverpool	13							1	minor
Garston	Liverpool	13							1	minor

District/Town	City/Town	July 1981 Date	Disturbance Severity Score[758]						DSQ[759]	Disturbance Description[760]
			DUR	NR	PI	PD	AP	PB		
Norris Green	Liverpool	13		2		2			1.5	major
Battersea	London	13							2	major
Nottingham	Nottingham	13							1	minor
Offerton	Stockport	13				1		2	1.5	major
Brixton	London	15		3	2			4	3.0	riot
Southall	London	15							2	major
Southall	London	16							2	major
Bedminster, Knowle etc.	Bristol	17				1			1	minor
Swindon	Swindon	18		3					1.5	major
Keswick	Keswick	25		3	1	2		3	2.3	riot
Toxteth	Liverpool	26		2			3		3	riot
Toxteth	Liverpool	27			4		4	4	4.0	major riot
Toxteth	Liverpool	28		3	4		4	5	4.0	major riot

10.5 Incidents recorded without primary source evidence: July 1981

District/Town	City/Town	Reference
Edinburgh	Edinburgh	[761]
Chatham	London	[762]
Harlow	Harlow	
Market Harborough	Market Harborough	
Medway towns	London	
Southport	Southport	
Welsh mining valleys	N/A	
St. Albans	St. Albans	[763]
Worcester	Worcester	Birmingham Post (13-Jul-81)
Hitchin	Hitchin	Dunstable Evening Post (13-Jul-81)

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[761] Referenced in Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain*, p.399 and www.channel4.com/history/U/untold/programs/riot/timeline.

[762] Referenced in Smith and others, *Like a Summer with a Thousand Julys…and Other Seasons..*, pp.3, 43, 46 and 59.

[763] Referenced in Rowe, *The Racialisation of Disorder in Twentieth Century Britain*, p.3.

10.6 Mapping of the July 1981 disturbances in England
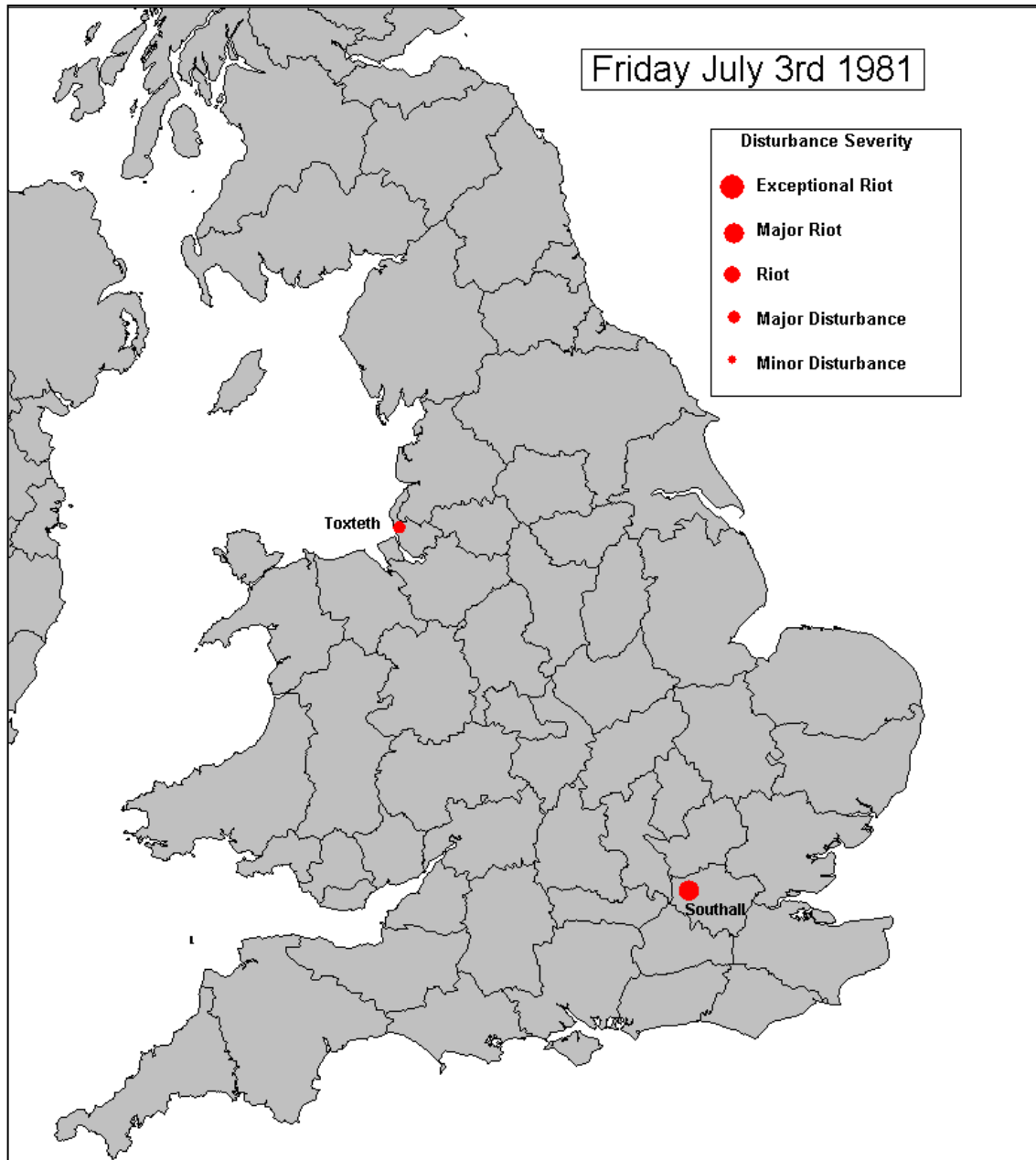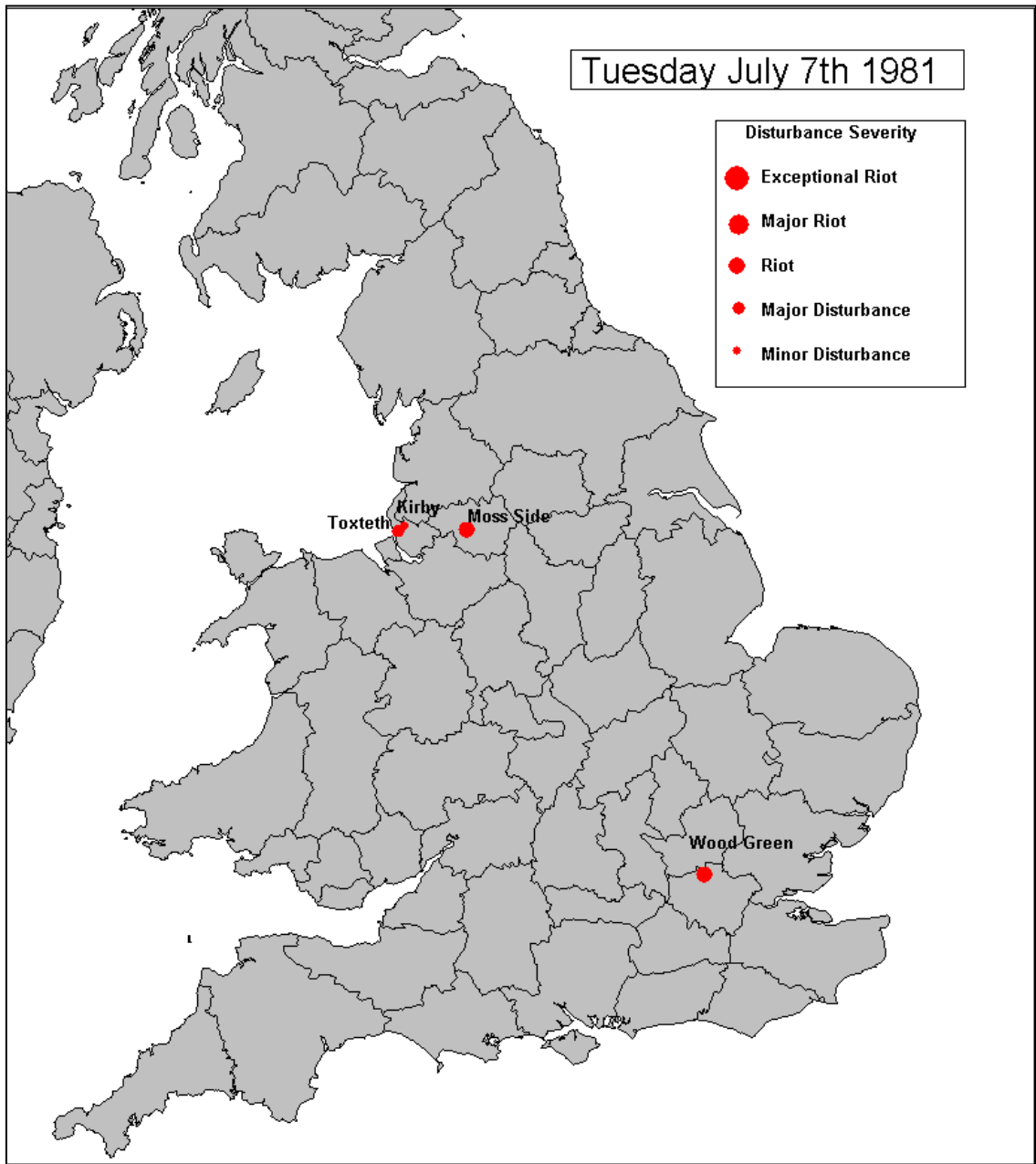

Map 1: Disturbances in England on Friday July 3rd 1981
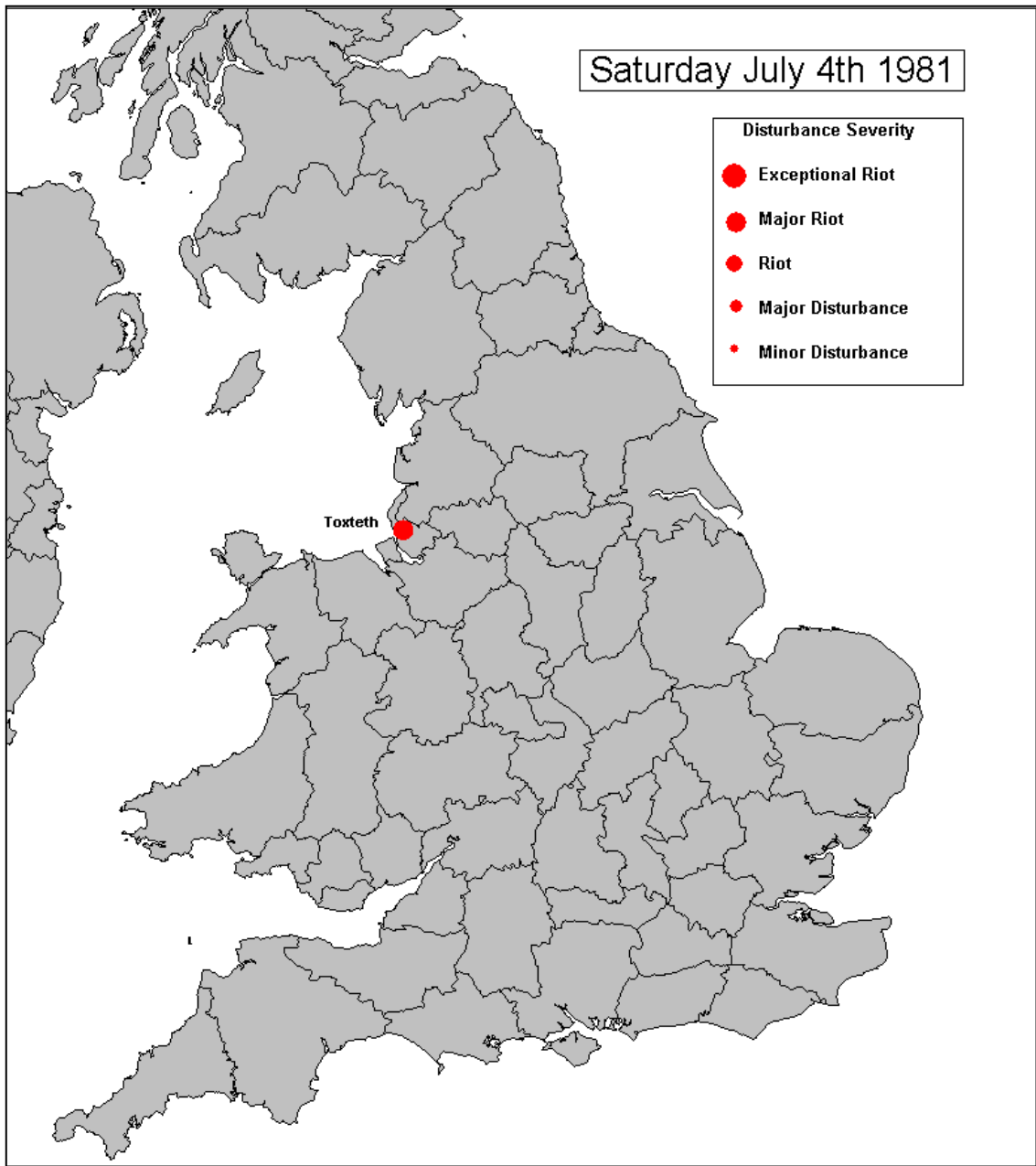
Map 2: Disturbances in England on Saturday July 4th 1981
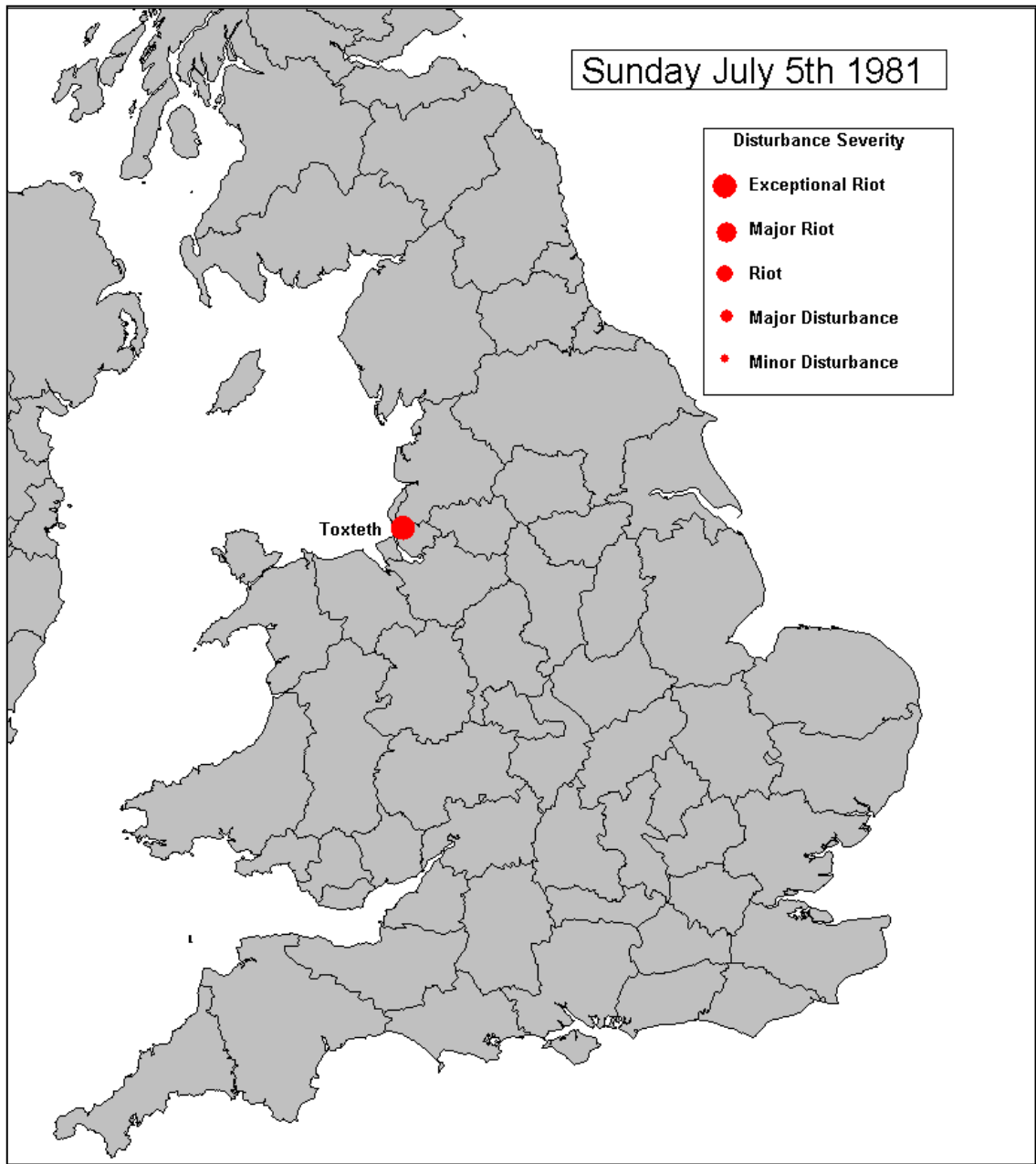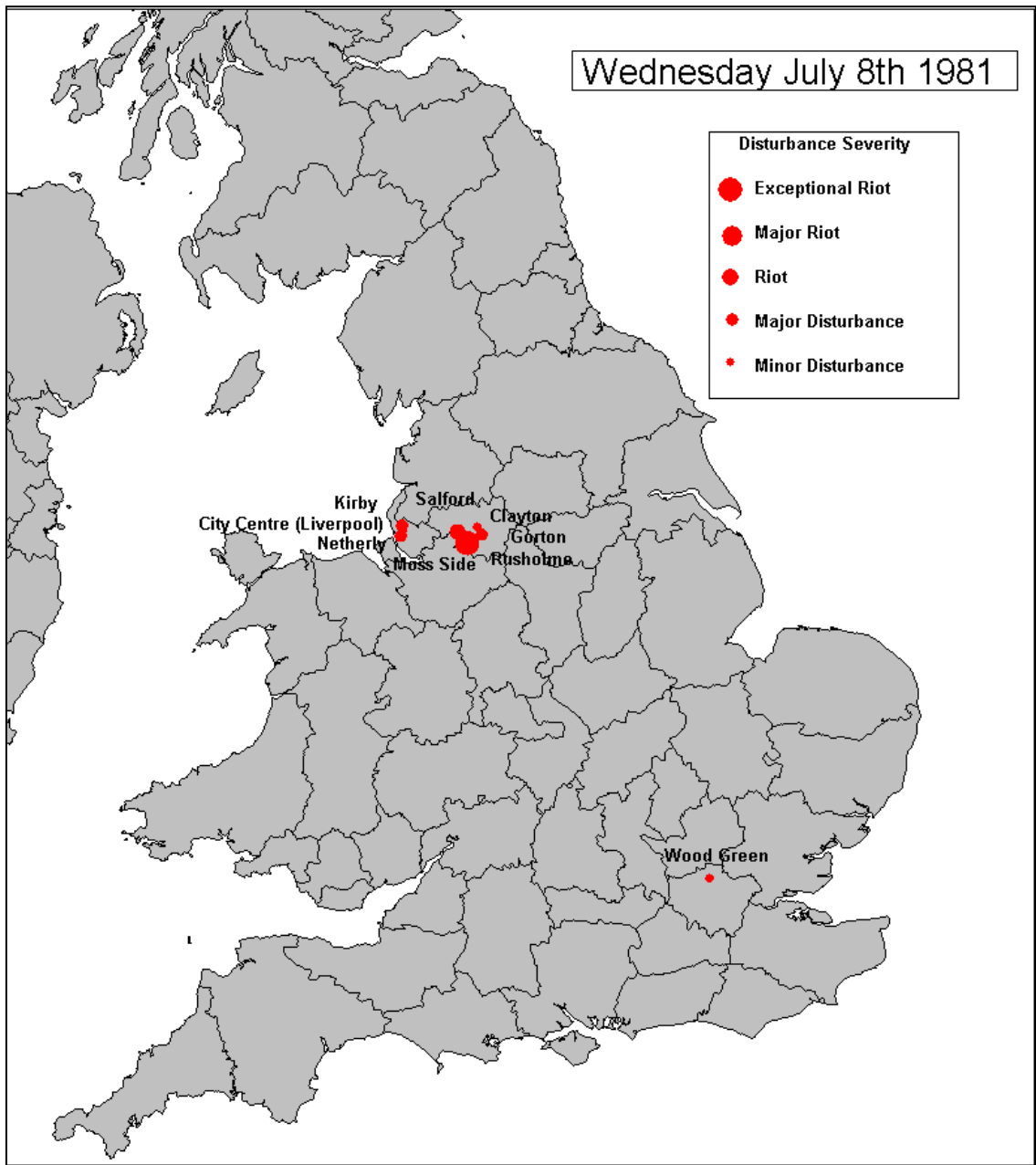
Map 3: Disturbances in England on Sunday July 5th 1981
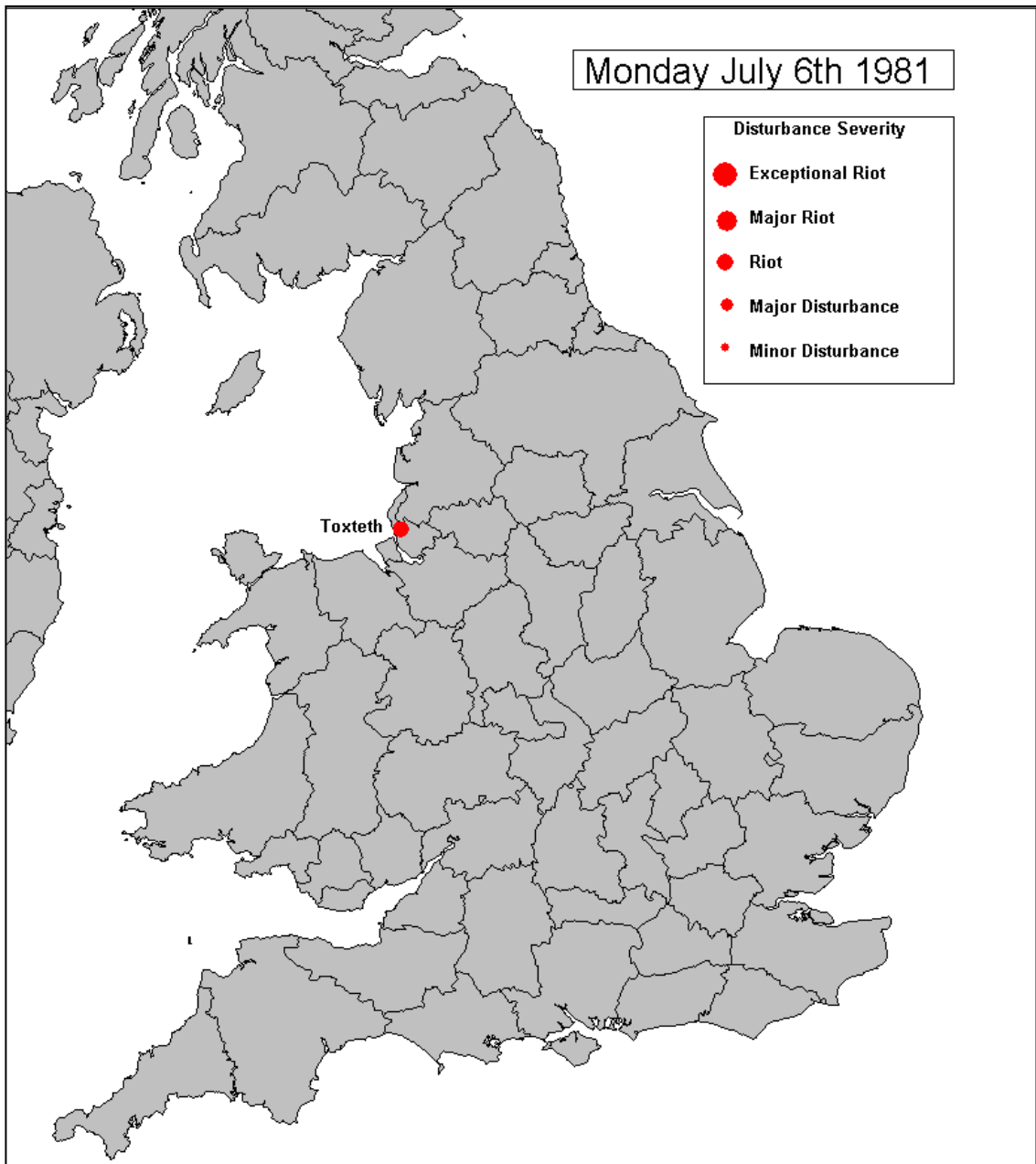
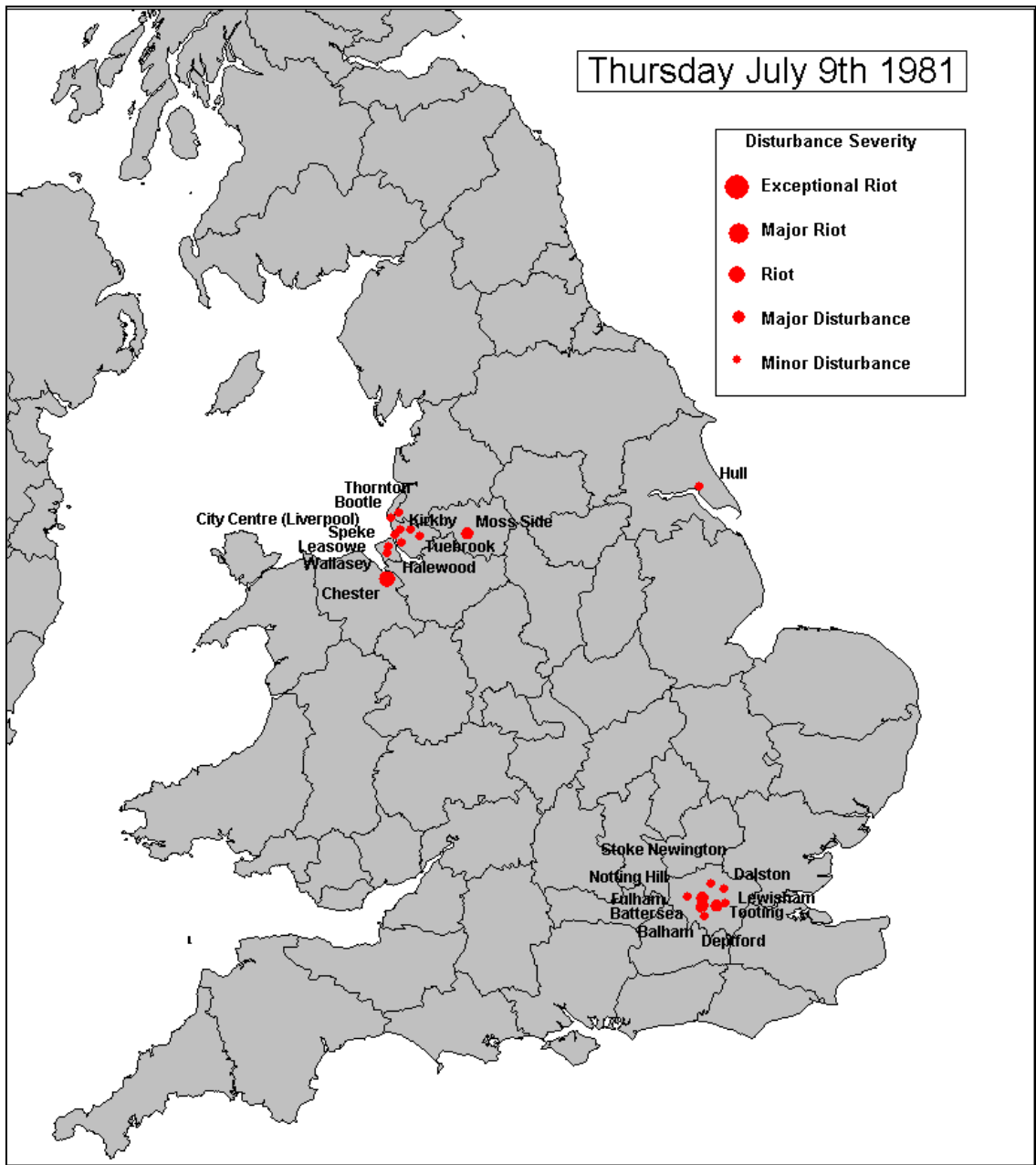Map 4: Disturbances in England on Monday July 6th 1981

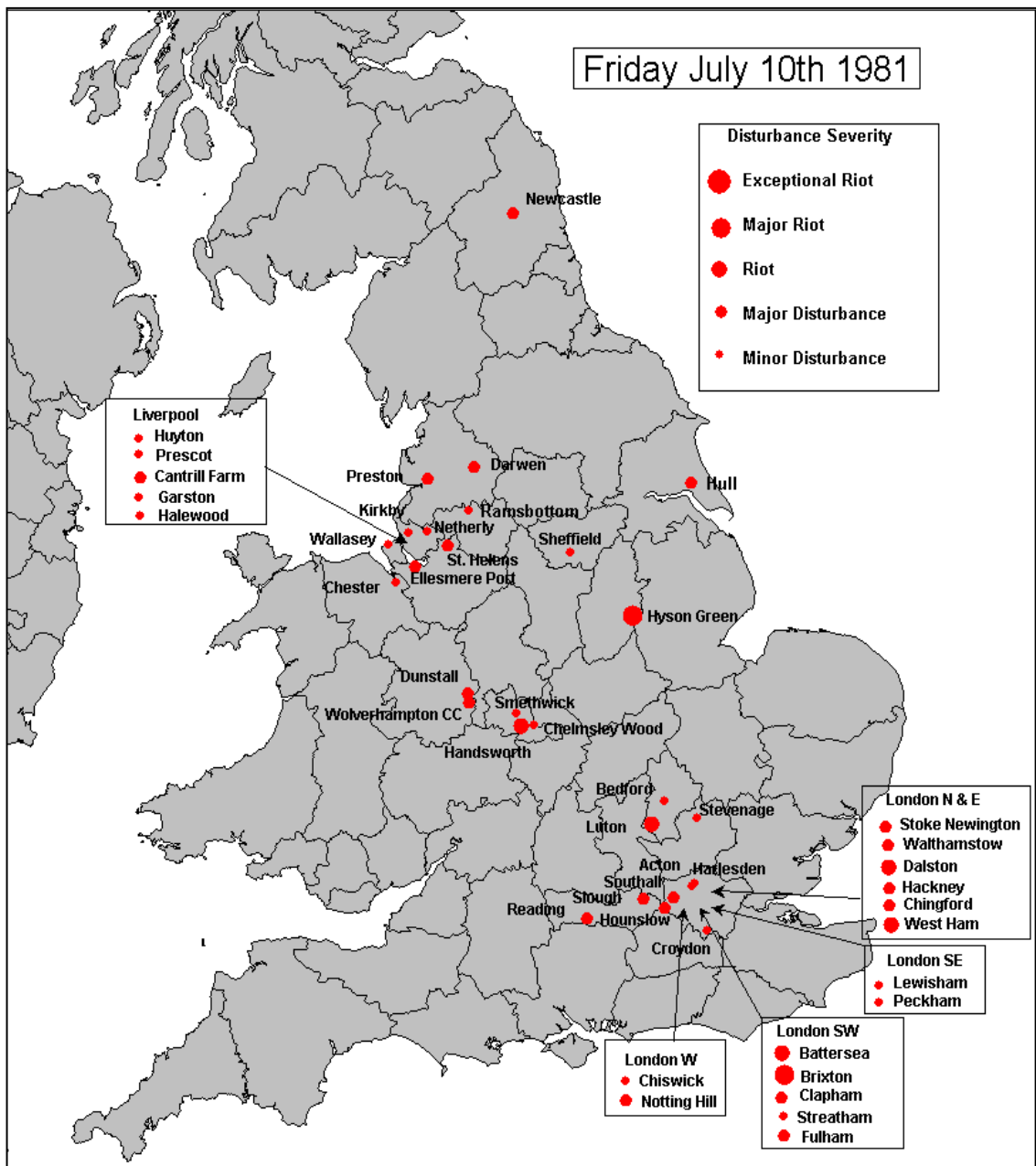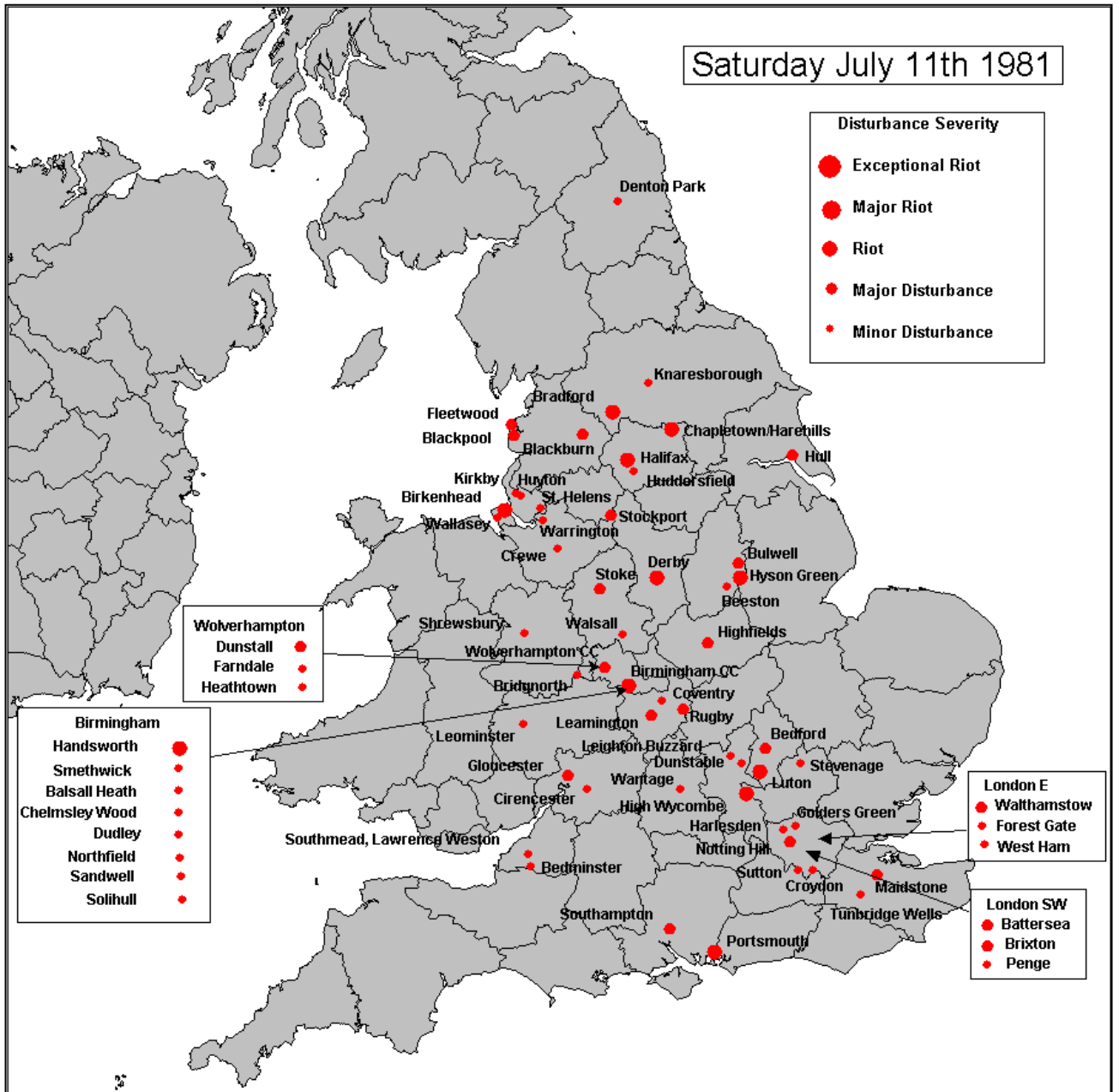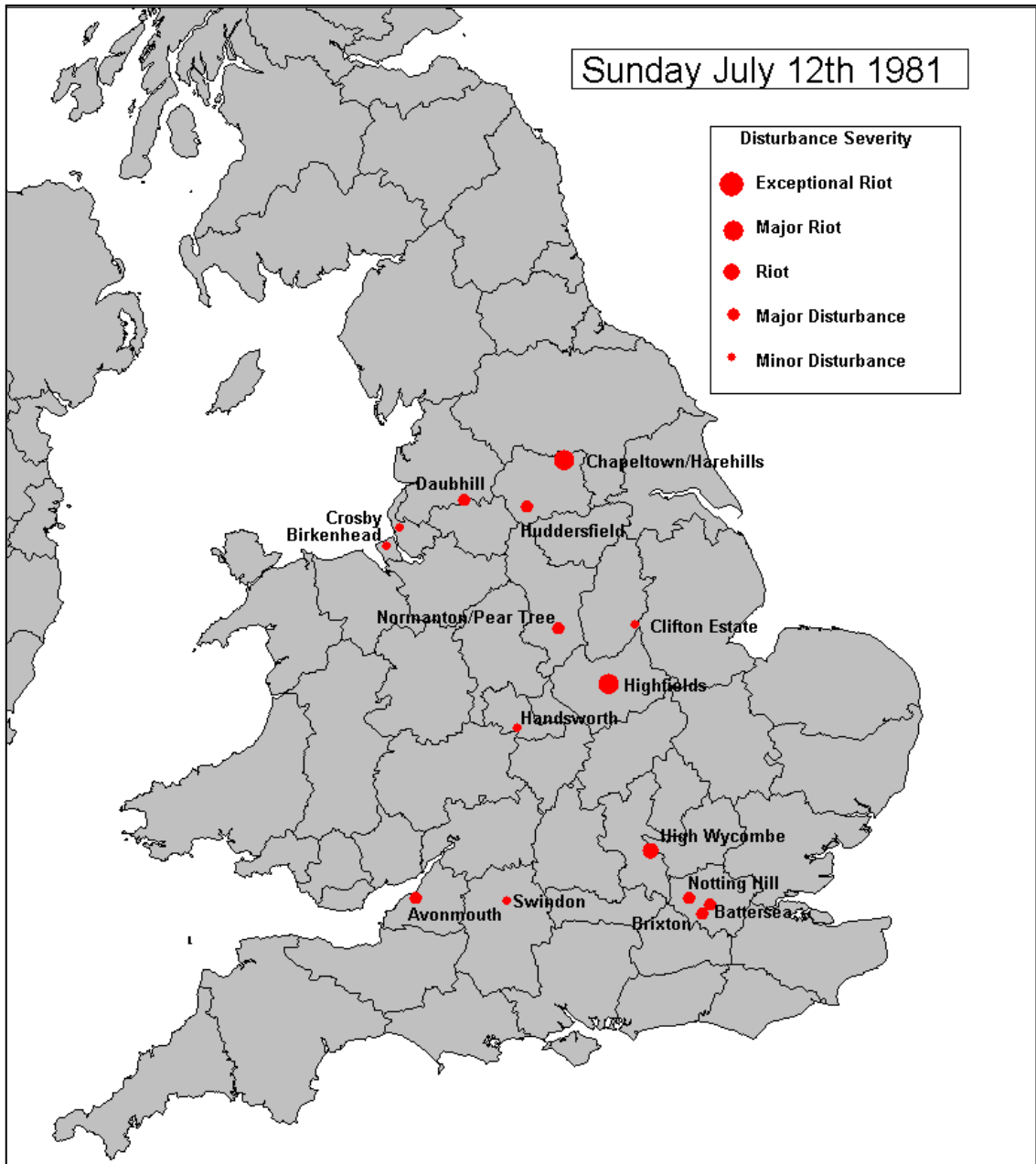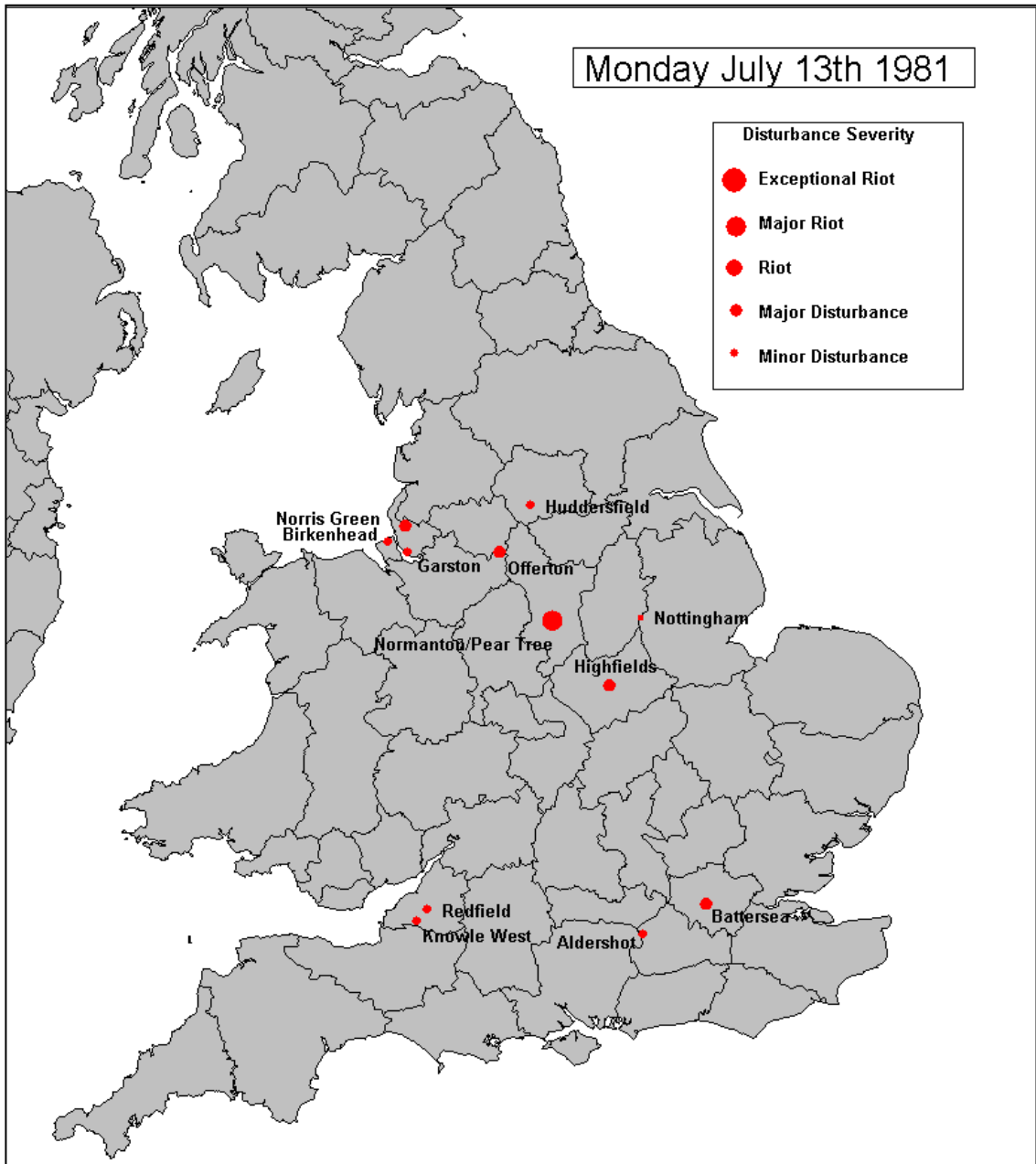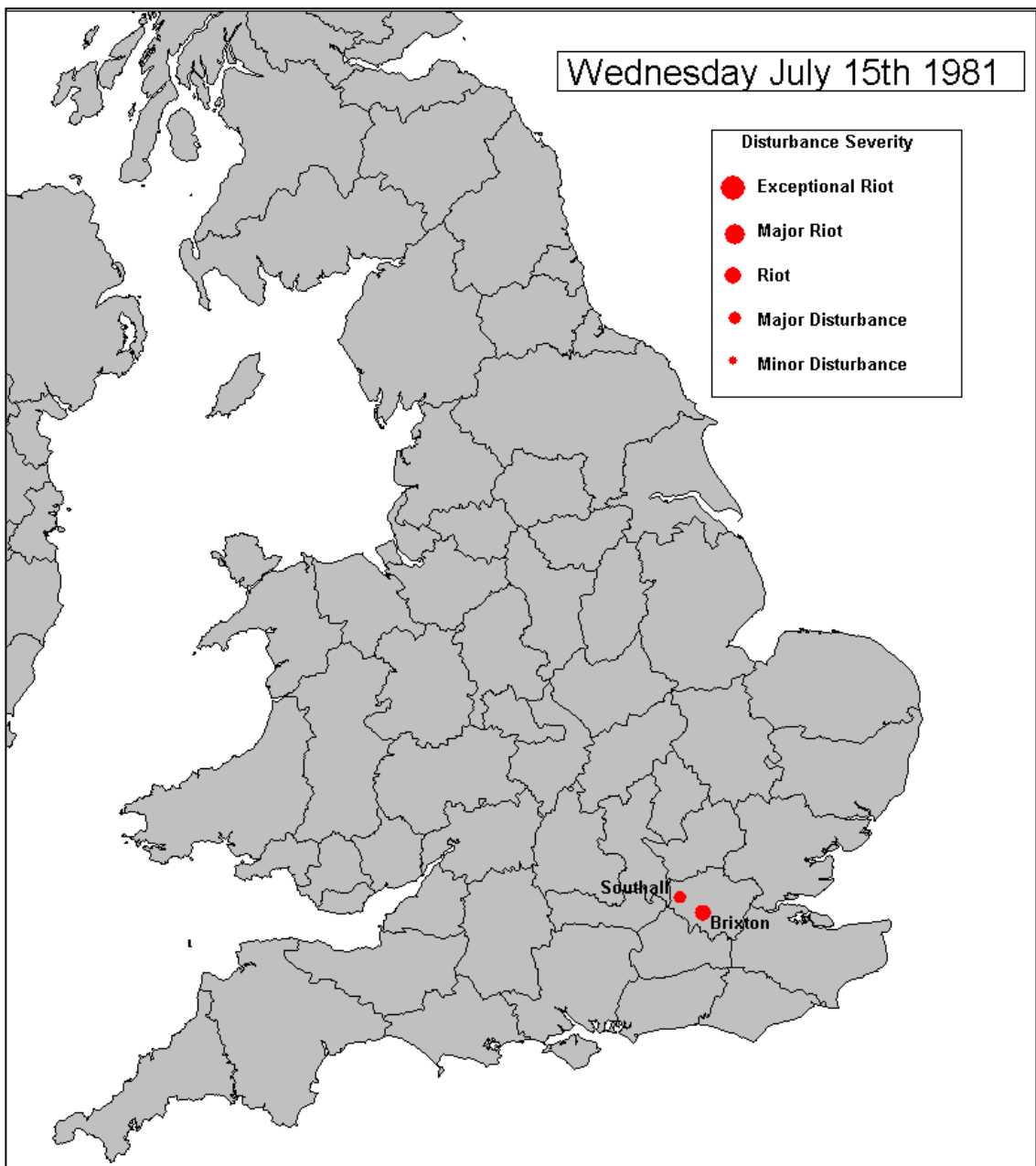Map 5: Disturbances in England on Tuesday July 7th 1981

Map 6: Disturbances in England on Wednesday July 8th 1981

Map 7: Disturbances in England on Thursday July 9th 1981

Map 8: Disturbances in England on Friday July 10th 1981

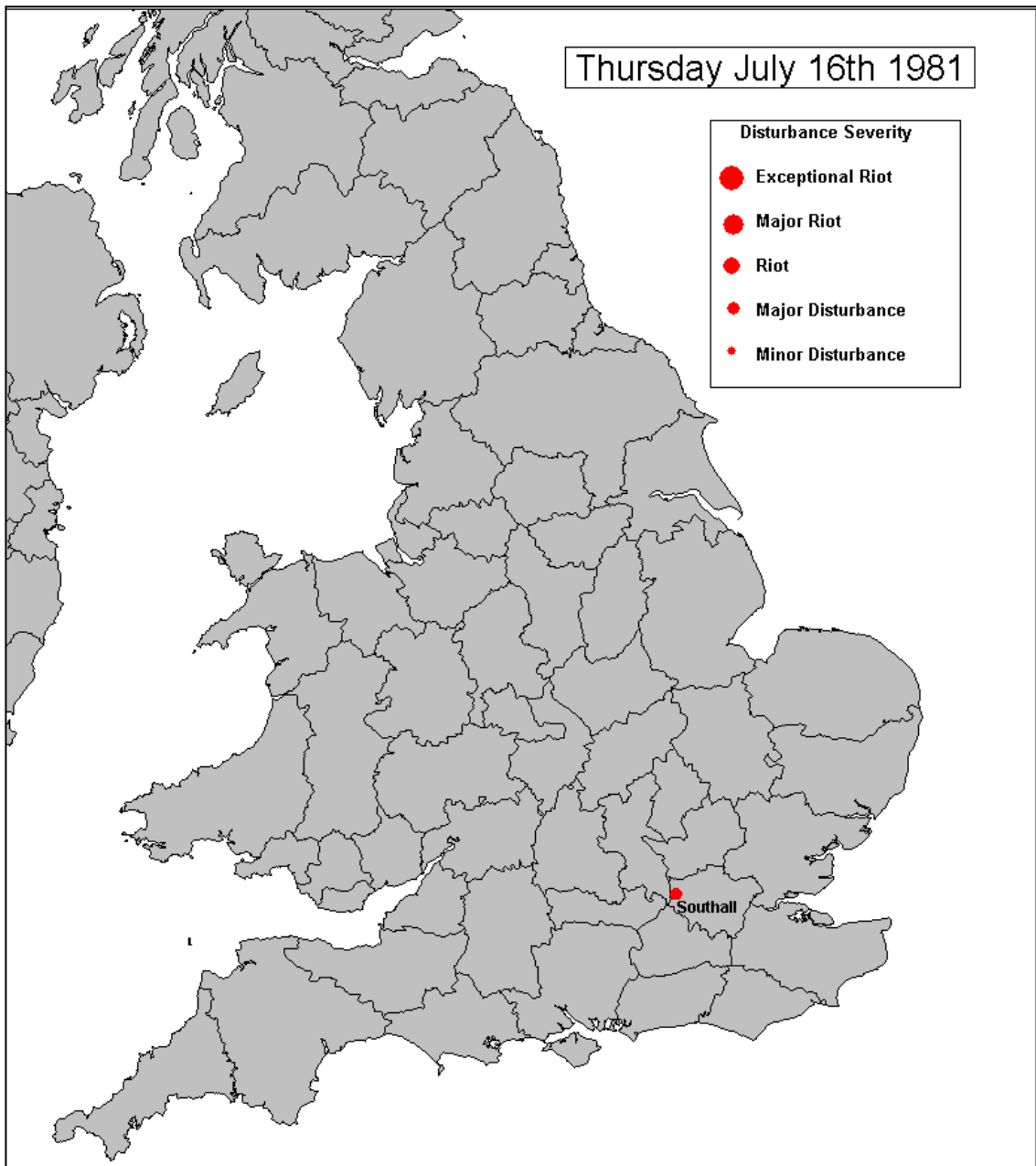Map 9: Disturbances in England on Saturday July 11th 1981

Map 10: Disturbances in England on Sunday July 12th 1981

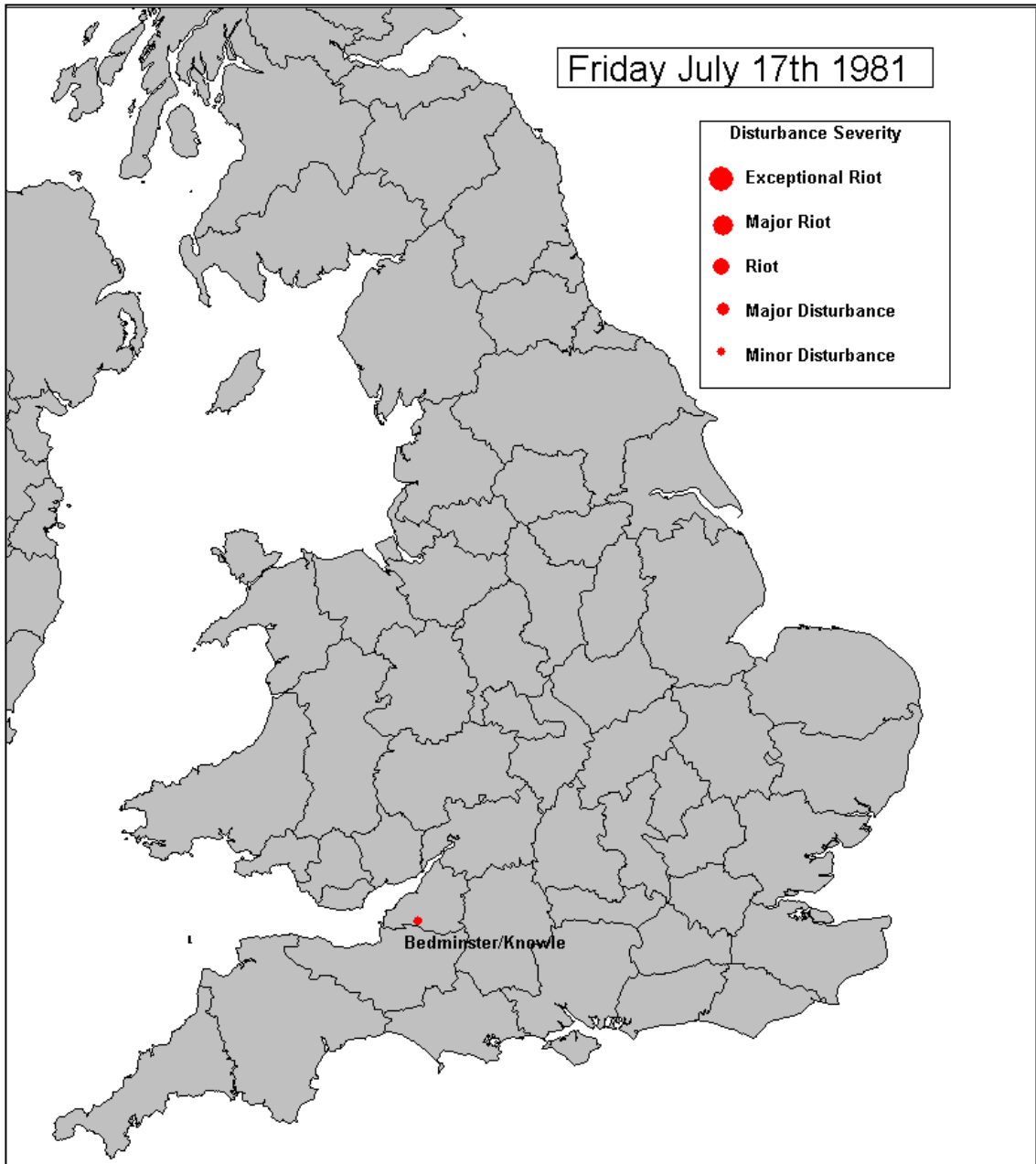Map 11: Disturbances in England on Monday July 13th 1981

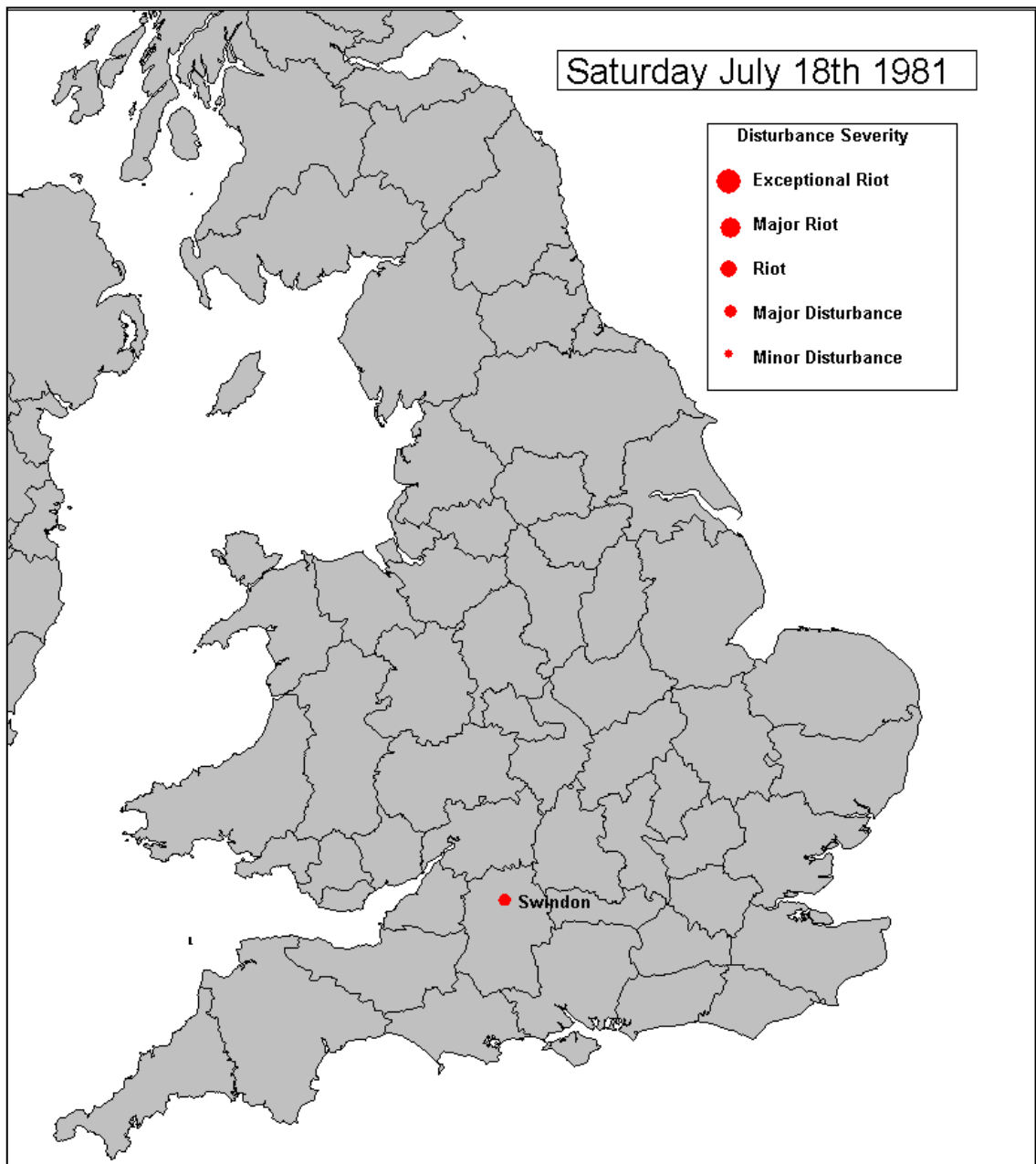Map 12: Disturbances in England on Wednesday July 15th 1981

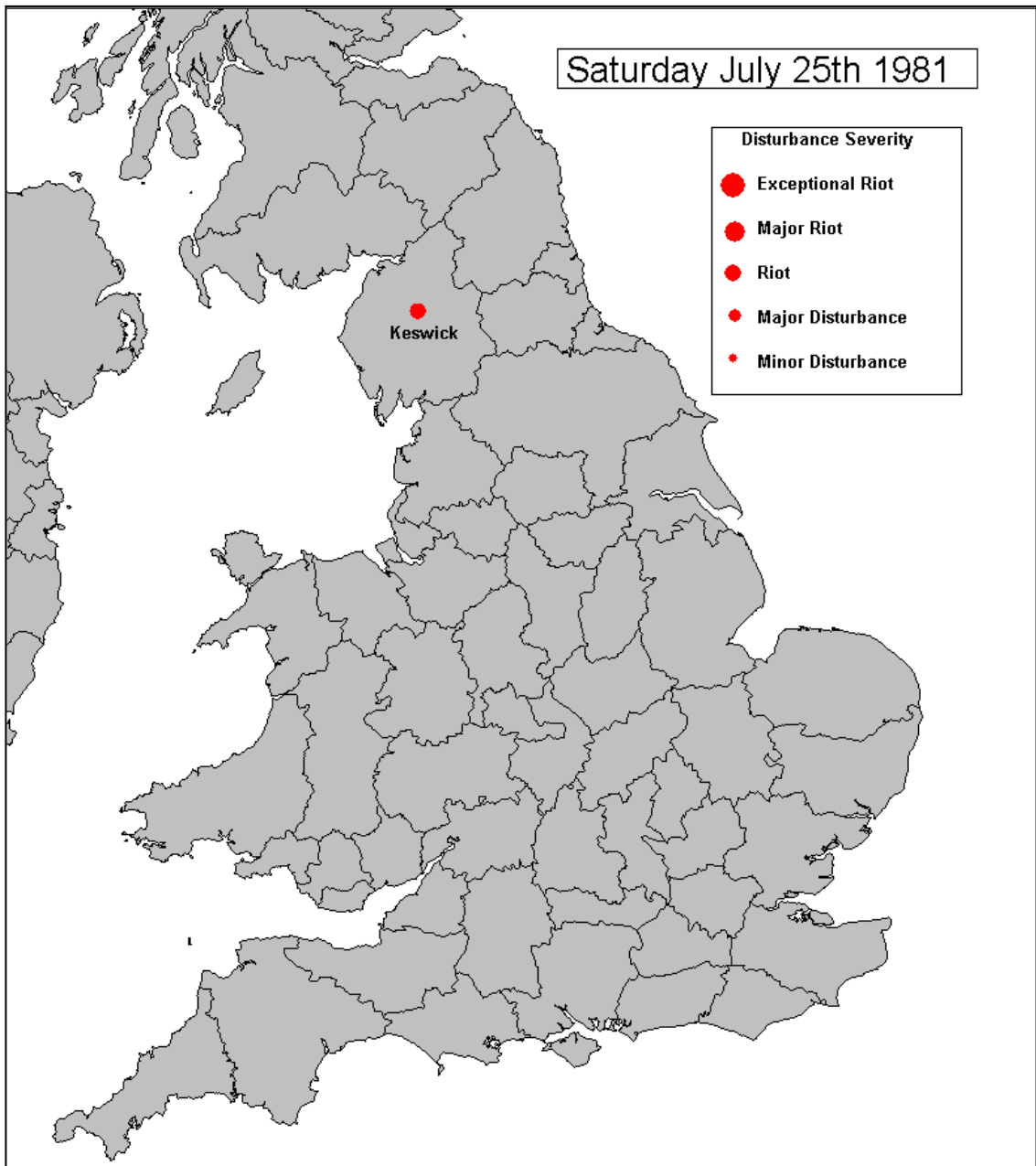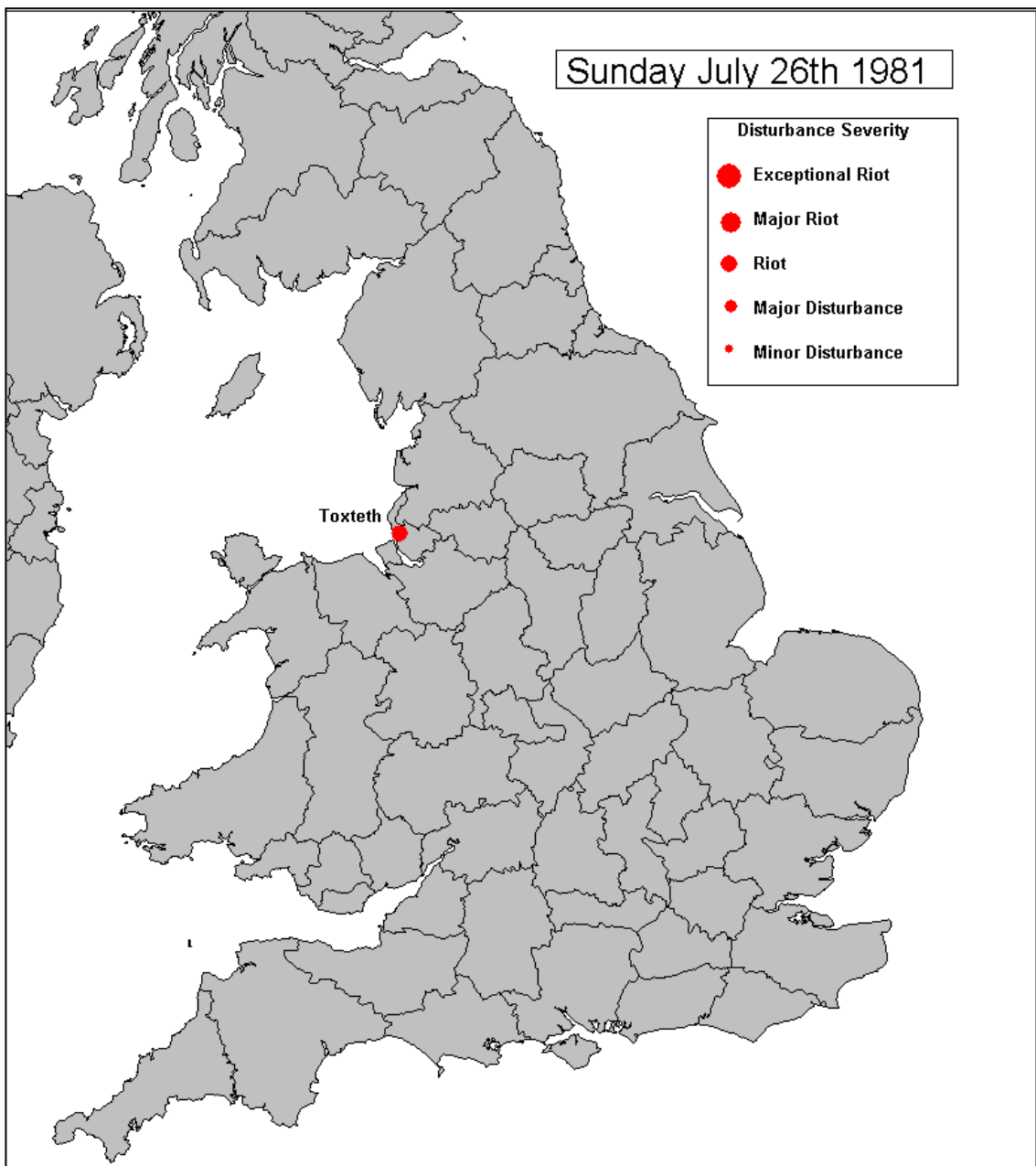Map 13: Disturbances in England on Thursday July 16th 1981

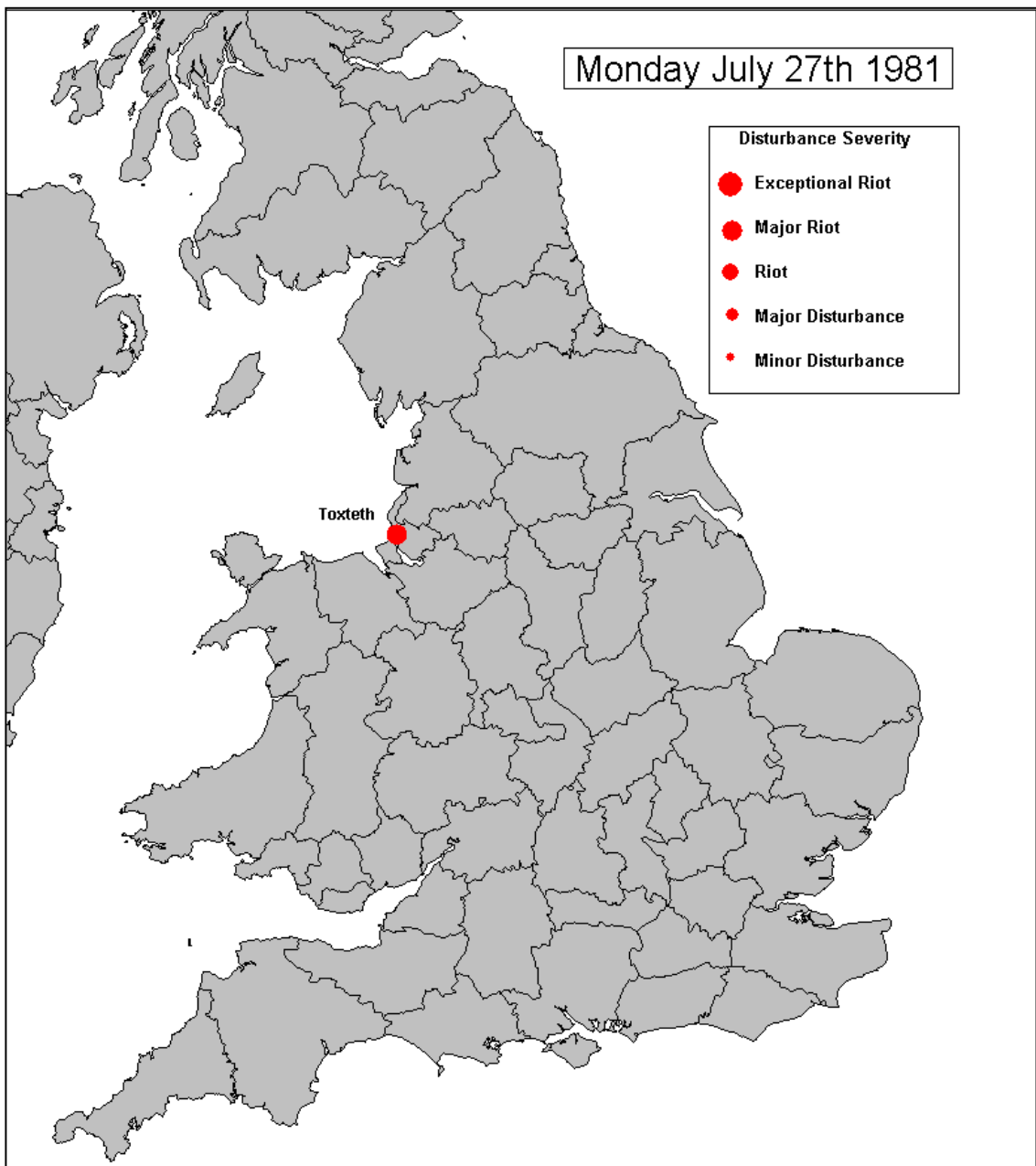Map 14: Disturbances in England on Friday July 17th 1981

Map 15: Disturbances in England on Saturday July 18th 1981
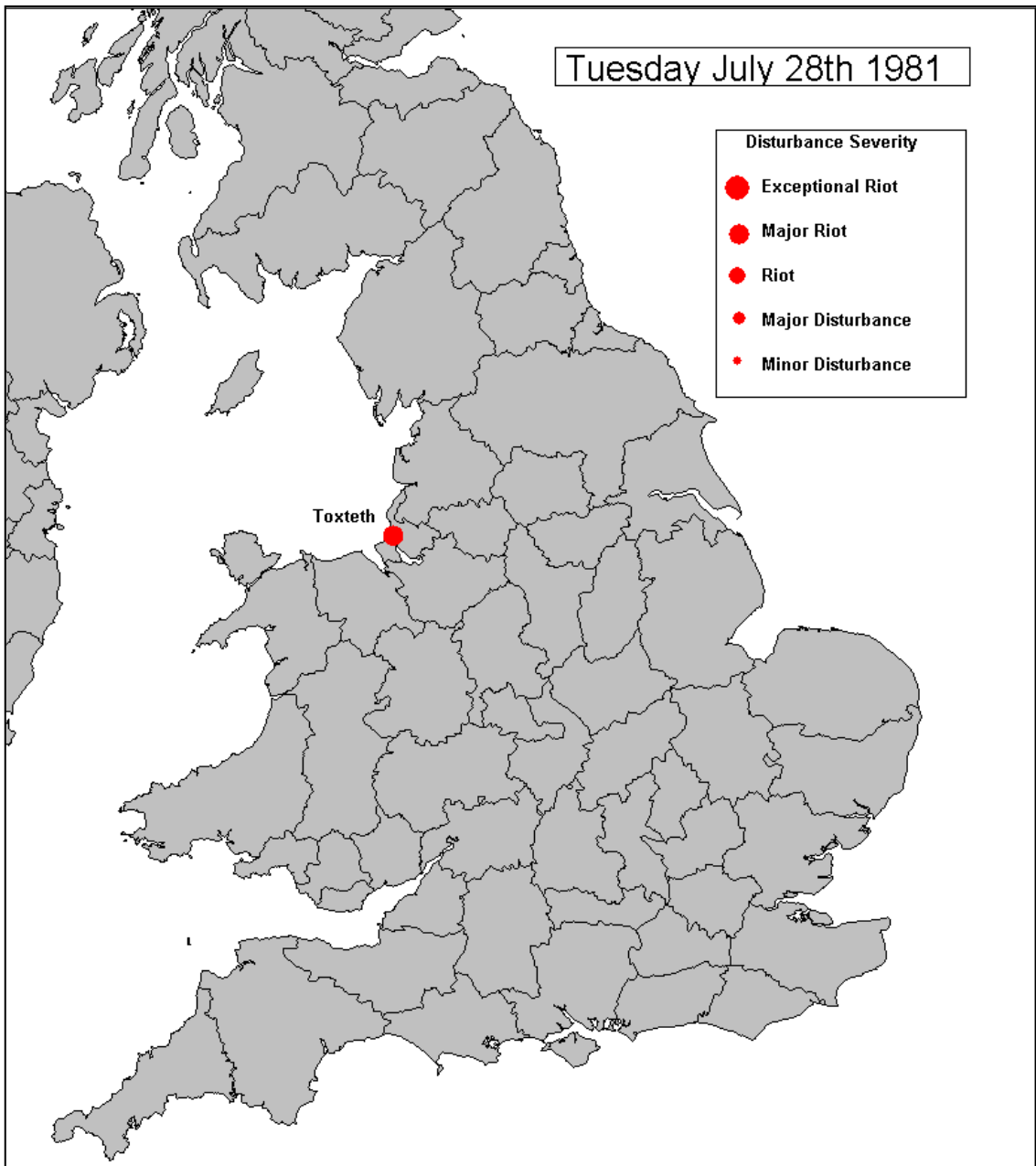
Map 16: Disturbances in England on Saturday July 25th 1981

Map 17: Disturbances in England on Sunday July 26th 1981

Map 18: Disturbances in England on Monday July 27th 1981

Map 19: Disturbances in England on Tuesday July 28th 1981

10.7 Sub-set of daily disturbance data: Crowd ethnicity: July 1981

District/Town	City/Town	July 1981 Date	Crowd Ethnicity	DSQ	Riot Severity
Toxteth	Liverpool	3	NW	1.8	major disturbance
Southall	London	3	NW	3.8	major riot
Toxteth	Liverpool	4	M	4.0	major riot
Toxteth	Liverpool	5	M	4.3	exceptional riot
Toxteth	Liverpool	6	W	2.8	riot
Wood Green	London	7	M	3.0	riot
Moss Side	Manchester	7	NW	2.3	riot
Moss Side	Manchester	8	M	4.2	exceptional riot
Dalston	London	9	M	1.0	minor disturbance
Deptford	London	9	NW	2.0	major disturbance
Woolwich	London	9	NW	2.0	major disturbance
Moss Side	Manchester	9	M	2.0	major disturbance
Handsworth	Birmingham	10	M	3.0	riot
Cantrill farm	Liverpool	10	W	2.0	major disturbance
Ellesmere Port	Liverpool	10	W	2.0	major disturbance
Brixton	London	10	M	3.5	major riot
Dalston	London	10	NW	3.0	riot
Hackney	London	10	M	2.0	major disturbance
Hounslow	London	10	W	2.0	major disturbance
Lewisham	London	10	NW	1.0	minor disturbance
Southall	London	10	M	2.0	major disturbance
Walthamstow	London	10	NW	2.0	major disturbance
West Ham	London	10	M	2.2	riot
City Centre	Luton	10	M	2.7	riot
Hyson Green	Nottingham	10	M	3.2	major riot
Preston	Preston	10	W	2.0	major disturbance
Chalvey	Slough	10	M	1.8	major disturbance
City Centre	Birmingham	11	M	3.0	riot
Blackpool	Blackpool	11	W	2.0	major disturbance
Derby	Derby	11	W	2.3	riot
City Centre	Gloucester	11	W	1.5	major disturbance
City Centre	Halifax	11	W	2.3	riot
City Centre	High Wycombe	11	M	3.0	riot
Brixton	London	11	NW	2.0	major disturbance
Forest Gate	London	11	W	1.0	minor disturbance
Penge	London	11	NW	1.0	minor disturbance
Walthamstow	London	11	NW	2.0	major disturbance
Luton	Luton	11	M	2.7	riot
City Centre/Hyson Green	Nottingham	11	M	3.0	riot
Portsmouth	Portsmouth	11	W	2.5	riot
Town Centre	Rochdale	11	M	2.0	major disturbance
Rugby	Rugby	11	M	1.7	major disturbance
City Centre	Southampton	11	W	1.7	major disturbance
Stoke	Stoke	11	M	1.5	major disturbance
Daubhill	Bolton	12	NW	1.5	major disturbance
Normanton/Pear Tree	Derby	12	NW	1.5	major disturbance
City Centre	High Wycombe	12	M	2.8	riot
Huddersfield	Huddersfield	12	M	2.0	major disturbance
Chapletown/Harehills	Leeds	12	M	3.5	major riot
Highfields	Leicester	12	M	3.2	major riot
Brixton	London	12	M	2.0	major disturbance
Toxteth	Liverpool	27	M	4.0	major riot

10.8 TV stills and photographs: St. Paul's 2nd April 1980

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Figure 10.8.1: Burned out police vehicle on Grosvenor Road-William Street (~6.00pm)

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Figure 10.8.2: Youth gives 'Black Power' salute on Grosvenor Road (~6.30pm)

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Figure 10.8.3: Police officers with dogs prepare to escort the tow truck Grosvenor Road (6.40pm)

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Figure 10.8.4: Police officers and dogs escorting the tow-truck on Grosvenor Road as a crowd looks on (6.40pm)

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Figure 10.8.5: Police tow truck leaves Grosvenor Road with escorting police officers (6.40pm)

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Figure 10.8.6: The second phase of violence begins on Grosvenor Road as police officers come under attack (6.40pm)

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Figure 10.8.7: Groups of men and women chase police officers onto Ashley Road (6.40pm)

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Figure 10.8.8: Senior police officers lead an advance down City Road (~6.45pm)

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Figure 10.8.9: Crowds occupying the City Road– Ashley Road junction (~6.50pm)

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Figure 10.8.10: Police with riot shields attempting to retake junction of City Road-Ashley Road (~6.50pm)

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Figure 10.8.11: Police riot shield unit under attack by crowd on City Road (6.50pm)

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Figure 10.8.12: Crowds chase the police out of St. Paul's along City Road (~7.15pm)

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Figure 10.8.13: Large crowd on City Road having chased the police back to Brigstock Road (~7.15pm)

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Figure 10.8.14: Lloyds Bank and police vehicles on fire on Ashley Road (>8.30pm)

Figure 10.8.15: Attack on police Land-rover on Ashley Road-City Road junction. The Mini is fore-grounded in the photograph. (7.00 pm)

Figure 10.8.16: Police units with riot shields retake the junction of Ashley Road, Lower Ashley Road and Sussex Place after the looting phase (~12.00 pm) [Photo: Mike Leggett]