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Reclaiming the everyday: the situational dynamics of the 2011 London Riots

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ABSTRACT
This paper examines the situational dynamics of the 2011 London Riots. The empirical contribution is to challenge the dominant explanation of the riots as an outbreak of 'criminal opportunism'. I use the Metropolitan Police record of all riot-related crimes in London to test several hypotheses and show that this 'criminal opportunism' theory cannot account for the riots' spatial patterning. This opens space for alternative explanatory mechanisms. I then use video footage and testimonies of events on the ground to examine the interactions which made up the London Riots. These suggest that the riots were, in part, a way for people to stake a claim to the public spaces in which they lived, to *reclaim the everyday*. Theoretically, this builds on Randall Collins's 'micro-situational' approach to violence but extends it by embedding historical and structural factors into that micro-perspective. Specifically, the emotional dynamics of these riot interactions cannot be understood without acknowledging participants' pre-existing expectations of the police and of the everyday places of the riot.

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The riots of 2011 were one of the events which defined Recession-era Britain. The unrest began in Tottenham, north London, on 6 August when a demonstration outside Tottenham Police Station about the killing of Mark Duggan (an unarmed, black man) by armed police escalated into a riot. The next four nights saw 15,000 people take to the streets as violent unrest spread to towns and cities across the country. Five people lost their lives, hundreds of police officers were injured and £250 million worth of damage was done to shops and businesses in London alone (Riots Communities & Victims Panel, 2012). The events in London were one of the largest waves of rioting in recent British history. Given the scale of events, the extensive police investigation, and the ubiquity of mobile phone use during them, they offer the possibility of undertaking a significant sociological case study exploiting a mass of quantitative and qualitative data. I use these resources to make two key arguments. First, I challenge the dominant explanation of the riots as an outcome of 'criminal opportunism', finding instead that they were a complex and heterogeneous phenomenon, in which people staked claims to the public spaces in which they lived. Second, I argue that these events demonstrate a need to find ways to embed historical and structural forces into a micro-level, interactionist framework. Specifically, the emotional dynamics of these riot interactions cannot be understood without acknowledging participants' pre-existing expectations of the police and of the everyday places of the riot.

For many commentators, the distinguishing feature of the London Riots was the widespread looting (Valluvan, Kapoor, & Kalra, 2013). Left wing columnist Zoe Williams described the events as 'shopping

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riots' (2011) and Prime Minister David Cameron went further, claiming that they were 'criminality, pure and simple' (2011). This focus on looting has dominated popular debates on the riots, and it has also shaped academic and policy responses. Indeed, most mainstream sociological approaches to the unrest have been grounded in consumerism or entrepreneurship (Bauman, 2011; Briggs, 2012; Harvey, 2013; Moxon, 2011; Treadwell, Briggs, Winlow, & Hall, 2013; Zizek, 2011). However, there have been critical voices, looking instead at 'grievance, lack of opportunity, shared identity and empowerment' (Stott & Reicher, 2011, p. 1370) or the chance to 'give the police a boshing' (BBC, 2012a, p. 49, 45). This divide between the 'criminal opportunism' perspective and its critics quickly became, and remains, the central debate about the London Riots.

Curiously, most of the quantitative work on the London Riots has sidestepped this debate entirely. Researchers have used the Metropolitan Police's extensive arrest data to look at issues like the geographic diffusion of rioting (Davies, Fry, Wilson, & Bishop, 2013), the pattern of areas targeted (Baudains, Braithwaite, & Johnson, 2013) and whether harsher riot sentences worked as a deterrent (Bell, Jaitman, & Machin, 2014). But they have all either accepted the criminal opportunism perspective or ignored the issue altogether. A partial exception is Kawalerowicz and Biggs's (2015) work examining rioters' home neighbourhoods, which resurrects the language of economic grievance and demonstrates the importance of attitudes towards the police in predicting riot participation. However, it remains an ecological analysis which leaves the issue of individuals' motives and behaviours to one side.

Most of the empirical studies looking at criminal opportunism have instead been qualitative, and thus far, they have produced contradictory findings. On one side, Treadwell et al. (2013) concluded, on the basis of ethnographic work, that the riots were the result of an 'objectless dissatisfaction' and the 'opportunity to do some free shopping' (p. 1). On the other side, Lewis et al.'s (2012) larger set of retrospective interviews revealed a broad variety of motives: from entrepreneurship to consumerism to the explicitly political. More recently Newburn, Cooper, Deacon, and Diski (2015) used those interviews to argue that our obsession with looting has caused us to neglect the riots' complex and violent nature.

My contribution to this debate is to use a quantitative data-set (the Metropolitan Police Service [MPS] record of all riot-related crimes) to test several hypotheses derived from the criminal opportunism perspective. This tests a macro-level theory about what caused the riots against micro-level data on the actual behaviours that made up those riots. By showing that this theory cannot account for the riots' spatial patterning, I open up space for alternative explanatory mechanisms. I then try to supply such a mechanism using video footage of the riots to suggest that the emotional energy of the riots came from people staking a claim to the public spaces in which they lived. These riots were an opportunity to own these places and act with impunity, even if only for a few hours. This is not intended to be a 'master variable' which explains rioting in general. As will be shown below, these riots were complex and heterogeneous and the challenge should be to build up a range of different explanatory mechanisms. My argument is rather that the importance of criminal opportunism has been grossly overstated while the importance of reclaiming the everyday has been generally overlooked.

In what follows, I begin by reviewing the sociological literature on riots and demonstrating a need to link micro-sociology of riots to broader contextual factors (connecting the micro with the macro). I then introduce the quantitative data and the video archives used in this research. The quantitative data-set is then used to demonstrate some key weaknesses in the criminal opportunism perspective. I then use video footage and testimonies of events on the ground to examine the interactions which made up the riots and I argue that these suggest the importance of 'reclaiming the everyday'. I then conclude by considering how the London Riots, as a case study, informs our wider sociological understanding of riots.

The importance of expectations

Although there is a rich and varied history of sociological research into riots and crowd violence (see Bagguley & Hussain, 2008; Borch, 2013; Clover, 2016 for summaries), the most distinctive recent

contribution has been the interactionist approach. Building on work by Collins (2008), researchers have turned their attention to the emotional dynamics which emerge out of interactions between perpetrators, victims and law enforcement (Gross, 2016; Ketchley, 2014; Nassauer, 2016; Weenink, 2014). This turn towards the actual interactions, behaviours and situations which make up a riot echoes an earlier call made by McPhail to focus on the processes within a riot and not to treat it only as an outcome to be explained by prior circumstances (1994). But Collins's distinctive contribution is a sophisticated theorisation of the process through which a riot comes about: the emergence of a 'moral holiday', a free zone in time and space which marks the breakdown of social control and constitutes the riot situation (2008).

Collins grounds his account in Goffman and Durkheim's 'micro-sociology', arguing that, when in a crowd, people become entrained in mutual interaction. As we react to each others' body language and explicit actions we generate emotional energy and a sense of solidarity. This creates a powerful feeling of collective effervescence which combines with open public defiance to create and sustain the 'moral holiday' (Collins, 2008). Although persuasive, this account runs into internal and external problems. Externally, it seems to render riots more-or-less contingent, preventing us from linking them to structural factors such as ethnic tension (Olzak, Shanahan, & McEneaney, 1996), hostility to the police (Perez, Kimberly, & Myers, 2003), austerity policies (Ponticelli & Voth, 2011) or socio-economic disadvantage (Kawalerowicz & Biggs, 2015). Internally, Collins is unable to explain which norms break down during a 'moral holiday' and which remain. He admits that 'moral holidays tend to specialise in particular kinds of violations' (2008, p. 243) but is unable to explain why, for example, sexual violence normally remains prohibited while looting is often legitimised.

In fact these internal and external problems are two sides of the same coin. The fundamental issue is that it is not clear how Collins's theory can incorporate social and historical context. His theory is based on a particular view of human biology (which has received criticism from some, e.g. Felson, 2009) and the emotions which emerge within interactions. Although this level of abstraction has obvious advantages, he does not offer a theoretical model of how contextual factors manifest themselves in the riot situation. The 2011 London Riots bring this gap into focus because the emotional dynamics which shaped the riot situation cannot be understood as purely internal to the situation.

An opportunity to extend Collins's theory can be found in the fact that interactions involve emotions. Some 'primary emotions' such as fear and surprise can be explained in terms of our common biology (Armon-Jones, 1986). However, bodily sensations need to be interpreted (Thoits, 1989). Moreover, in riots, 'secondary emotions' like pride, indignation or solidarity will be significant. This pushes us towards a weak form of emotional constructivism, which acknowledges biological impulses, but argues that on their own they explain very little. We therefore need to tie emotions to our moral and empirical *expectations* (Hochschild, 1979; Harré, 1986; Jasper, 1998). This opens up a broad route through which we can reconnect situations with their wider context.

The 2011 London Riots reveal two significant points of connection: participants' expectations (i) of the police and (ii) of the everyday places of the riot. First, rioters' emotional background is one of the most important features in the riot situation, and central to that background is their relationship with the police. This has been shown to be a central concern of rioters (Kawalerowicz & Biggs, 2015; Lewis et al., 2012), but it is clear from footage of the riots that only a small number of rioters ever physically attacked the police. This animosity instead shaped the emotional high that rioters got from taking possession of streets that were normally so carefully policed. Looking specifically at stop and search as an interactional routine allows us to see how a history of interactions can be linked to the specific riot events through the notion of expectations. When police officers stop and search someone in an 'unfairly targeted […] aggressive and discourteous manner' (Lewis et al., 2012, p. 4), they exploit their position of power to violate the 'face' he or she is presenting, ignoring the positive social value that person is claiming for themself (Goffman, 1967). These adversarial encounters then have lasting effects (Bradford, 2015), as people come to expect negative interactions in which they feel powerless and persecuted. A history of negative interactions thus provided a specific set of expectations which were briefly transcended in the 'moral holiday' of the riots. A BlackBerry Messenger message reported

in the *Guardian* (9 August 2011, p. 7) makes this connection explicit: 'Police have taken the piss for too long and to be honest I don't know why it's taken so long for us to make this happen'.

The second point of connection is place. The riots happened in specific places and the emotional significance of these places was central to their situational dynamics. Place here has three elements: location, locale and sense of place (Agnew, 1987). People targeted places located near them, with a certain material context (often large high streets), and, most importantly, which had specific personal and emotional resonances (Baudains et al., 2013). Sociological research has shown how different spaces can become associated with different meanings (Alexander, 2011; Cassidy, 2014); but, also, how places shape the identity ascribed to people (Saperstein & Penner, 2010) or the identities they themselves construct (Zhao, 1998). In the case of the London Riots, both sides of this dialectic are significant. People chose to riot in places which already had specific meanings attached to them and, simultaneously, redefined those places as the free zones of the riot. Those places were associated with specific expectations which derived from people's normal roles within them as consumers or commuters. Part of what made a riot situation so dramatic for participants is the sudden reversal of those expectations. Without acknowledging those expectations, we cannot hope to make sense of the interactions and behaviours which made up the 2011 London Riots.

I am not the first to suggest the importance of these factors. For example, in the U.K., Keith (1993) and Gilroy (2002) characterised the Brixton Riots of 1981 as a community reacting to defend itself and its territory from an external invasion (the MPS's Operation Swamp 81). However, there have been very few attempts to systematically link these factors to micro-situational accounts. One notable and powerful theorisation of this is the 'flashpoint model of disorder' (Waddington, 1989, 2010; Waddington, Jobard, & King, 2009). Waddington describes the flashpoint which causes the riot as a dramatic break in the pattern of interaction, which occurs in a defined situation shaped by contextual, cultural, political/ideological and structural factors. These higher level factors shape the way that interactions are interpreted, the meanings ascribed to them and the signals given off by participants (Waddington, 1989). His focus on 'meanings' as the connection between different levels of analysis is vulnerable to criticism because it suggests that micro-level actions cannot shape higher level ones and so ignores the fact that the interpretation given by certain individuals (e.g. a police chief) matters more than any would-be rioter's (Bagguley & Hussain, 2008). Nevertheless, it is a fruitful starting point for analysis. However, adding *expectations* as another point of connection has two notable advantages. First, it draws attention to the sudden carnivalesque reversal of roles, norms and possibilities that happens in a riot. And second, it emphasises the centrality of emotions to the riot situation.

This theoretical perspective has several methodological implications. Most straightforwardly it erodes the distinction between micro and macro (Crossley, 2010). It thus invites us to use micro-sociological data to test macro-level theories and, conversely, to develop contextual explanations from micro-sociological inquiry (e.g. Berk & Aldrich, 1972; Dynes & Quarantelli, 1968; Quarantelli & Dynes, 1970; Rosenfeld, 1997). This often requires the adoption of mixed methods. However, this need not imply any kind of philosophical incoherence (Crossley & Edwards, 2016). A mixture of methods may in fact be required to uncover the actual processes and mechanisms which underlie confrontational situations (McAdam, Tarrow, & Tilly, 2008). But, whichever methods are used, micro-sociological research can be easily fitted into the pragmatist research cycle (Reichertz, 2013) of abduction of theories, deduction of hypotheses and inductive testing (recent examples of these various stages include Collins, 2012; Gross, 2016; Nassauer, 2015, 2016; Orsini, 2015; Stevens, Biggs, Dixon, Tinker, & Manthorpe, 2013; Weenink, 2014).

Data and methods

In answering the question 'what shaped the patterns of interaction during the London Riots?' I draw on two very different data-sets. The first is a record of all arrests made by the MPS for riot-related offences. Of the 3,914 arrests made in London, the overwhelming majority came after the events, as 500 officers trawled through 20,000 h of CCTV footage (Home Affairs Committee, 2012). This means

that measurements for timing and location of crimes are exceptionally good. I exclude those who were arrested for an offence committed after the riots (mostly handling stolen goods), and omit arrests where no offence type or crime location was recorded, leaving us with 2089 instances. (See Appendix 1 for summary statistics.) There seems to be little pattern to the missing data on location or type of crime and so this should not be particularly troubling. Although it is tempting to use this data to describe the types of behaviour which happened during the riot, senior MPS figures[1] leading the investigation said (in private conversations) that they deliberately focused on documenting and charging people with crimes which they felt would have the greatest chance of conviction. This seriously distorts the type of behaviours that were recorded: for example, there are no crimes of rioting recorded by the MPS at all. The proportions of types of behaviour quoted in several other studies (e.g. Newburn et al., 2015) must therefore be treated with serious scepticism. However, there is no reason to suppose that it would also have distorted the location of events, and so it is those that I focus on.

This data-set was used in two ways: first, to map the locations of riot events and analyse their spatial patterns; second, to compare the profiles of areas targeted with those left untouched. The riot incidents are located by postcode, which cover on average 15 properties giving considerable spatial precision in urban areas. Even though the arrest data are bound to be incomplete, there is little reason to believe, given the ubiquity of CCTV in London, that areas could have been affected without recording a single crime. We can therefore be fairly confident that it covers the full geographical spread of the rioting.

The second data-set consists of over 15 h of video footage and various testimonies of events on the ground. The ubiquity of mobile phones means that there are an unprecedented number of videos which show how events played out at ground level. Even though many were taken down for fear of incriminating participants, a great number remain on YouTube: 12.5 h of amateur footage were analysed in total (all urls listed in Appendix 2 and, where relevant, links have been added as endnotes). This sample was found through keyword searches for '2011 riots' and '2011 London riots' and then by following related video links. Most of the footage comes from Tottenham, Croydon, Clapham Junction and Hackney but it also covers Walworth, Peckham, Woolwich and Ilford. This covers all of the areas affected by the riots and a large geographic spread of London from north to south; it provides an overview of the interactions which made up the London Riots. The YouTube footage was then compared against the narratives in three BBC documentaries which include extra footage and testimonies from rioters and the police (BBC, 2012a, b, c). It was also triangulated against the testimonies of on-duty officers collected for an MPS report (2012), of senior officers to the Home Affairs Select Committee (2012), and of other bystanders (2012; Ealing Council, 2012; Kinghan, 2011; Riots Communities & Victims Panel, 2011). I also include some examples from semi-structured interviews I conducted with three people who took part in rioting in Clapham Junction. Initial contact was made with one of them through personal connections and the others reached through snowball sampling; however, I did not pursue further interviews because of problems of recall bias.

I approached these qualitative sources in a grounded way (Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1990), coding each of the videos and testimonies for the different interactions (who did what to whom) and emotional dynamics they depict. When the quality of the recording was high enough those dynamics can be read directly from people's facial expressions, if not sounds provided a guide to emotions, and, as a last resort, emotions were sometimes inferred from behaviours and body language (Klusemann, 2009; Nassauer, 2016). This grounded approach revealed four recurrent patterns of interaction. Following an abductive logic (Peirce, 1974, vol. 5, p. 189), I argue that those patterns are best explained by the idea that rioters were 'reclaiming the everyday'. The prevalence of these four patterns of interaction across all the available footage, together with provisional testing of my explanation, indicates that it is fairly robust.

Any attempt to reconstruct interactional dynamics whether through interviews (Gross, 2016; Orsini, 2015), archives (Matt, 2011; Weenink, 2014), videos (Nassauer, 2015), or a mixture of sources (Petersen, 2002) runs into two problems. One is whether emotions can in fact be reliably reconstructed from those sources. This is always a difficult task, but one for which video footage is particularly well suited, for three reasons. First, everyday life is built on our ability to read emotions from body language,

behaviours and sounds, an ability which video evidence directly taps into (Collins, 2015). Second, videos of the sort used in this paper are public and very easily available, which allows for alternative readings to be conducted with much greater ease than interviews or archives. Third, footage showing the events in real time gives us a promising starting point when recreating emotional dynamics compared to retrospective interviews or memoirs (Knoblauch, Schnettler, Raab, & Soeffner, 2012).

The other problem is whether the sources in question give a representative sample of the interactions you are interested in. For riots, there are two reasons why videos can be particularly useful in this regard. First, they provide multiple perspectives on the various events which make up a riot, a range which could not be captured ethnographically. And although the coverage provided by these videos is not systematic, in my case the comments and titles attached to them range from extremely positive to accusatory, and this should reassure readers that the fact of filming and uploading videos does not bias them beyond repair. Second, as others have shown (Ketchley, 2014; Stott & Reicher, 2011), the enormous amount of audio-visual data publicly available online opens up opportunities for sociological research into sporadic and unpredictable events which are difficult to access in more traditional ways.

Nevertheless, the problems of reconstruction and representativeness are serious ones. It is, therefore, extremely important to triangulate video evidence against other sources. And, although I have made extensive use of reports and testimonies, one limitation is that I could not get access to interviews conducted nearer the time. When the transcripts from large projects like *Reading the Riots* (Lewis et al., 2012) are made publicly available, they will be a major resource for those studying the London Riots. However, the level of detail and corroboration provided by the videos and various testimonies ultimately persuaded me that this is a valid way of reconstructing the riots' situational dynamics.

Challenging the criminal opportunism perspective

The 'criminal opportunism' perspective is best represented by Treadwell et al.'s (2013) ethnographic research during and immediately after the riots. They argue that a feeling of general dissatisfaction, without any guiding political message, left people with 'nowhere to take their anger and resentment but the shops' (p. 3). Although they give a stimulating account of this socio-political backdrop they assume that, once assembled, people's behaviour was largely driven by criminal opportunism. They document people making thousands of pounds profit and purposefully looking for high value, branded goods (p. 12). It is important to note that the mere fact that looting took place does not mean that riots were simply criminal opportunism. Although some may have looted opportunistically, others were acting on desperate need (Sky News, 2011) or simply to keep the party going (27 per cent of premises targeted sold food and alcohol). But Treadwell et al. clearly suggest that the situations and interactions which made up the riots were grounded in criminal opportunism. Therefore, if we accept their theory we would expect the riots to exhibit certain patterns of behaviour. I will look qualitatively at the interactions themselves in the next section but here want to focus on the spatial patterns predicted by the criminal opportunism perspective.

There are two dimensions to this spatial patterning, both of which can be examined quantitatively. The first concerns the distribution of the riot events themselves. The criminal opportunism perspective implies each riot should spread out across space as rioters looked for new shops to loot. More precisely, we would expect the average geographic spread of each riot to increase after the first night as the riots evolved from a protest at the killing of Mark Duggan to an 'opportunity to do some free shopping' (Treadwell et al., 2013, p. 1). There are two mechanisms which could generate this pattern. First, rioters generally assembled in central locations such as train stations and spread out from there. If motivated by criminal opportunism, people would presumably move further afield looking for new shops to loot. Second, there were reports of organised gangs targeting specific shops before moving on to high value targets in different parts of the borough. Both these mechanisms lead to the first hypothesis:

H1: The riots should spread out further across space as rioters looked for new shops to loot.

The second dimension concerns the locations targeted by rioters. McPhail and Wohlstein (1983) distinguish between three mechanisms behind the choice of targets during a riot: familiarity, attractiveness and retaliation (attacking specific groups, often police or ethnic minorities). Of these three, 'attractiveness' is the most obvious companion of the criminal opportunism perspective, but it needs to be extended in two ways. First, the initial riots in Tottenham began outside the police station and spread out from there, whereas on subsequent nights people gathered with the specific purpose of rioting and looting. Therefore, rioters' location choice should become *more* strategic after the first night. Second, we would expect opportunistic criminals to take advantage of the unique circumstances to target unusual areas, from which it is normally difficult to steal. We therefore have two hypotheses:

H2a: After the first night, the areas targeted should become more attractive

H2b: After the first night, the areas targeted should become more unusual.

Before moving on to the tests of these hypotheses, I want to answer the suggestion that these spatial patterns might be caused by the police containing rioters within certain areas or 'allowing' certain places to be attacked while protecting others. Ultimately, both these suggestions overstate the power of the police on ground. As Sir Hugh Orde (President of the Association of Chief Police Officers) and Tim Godwin (Deputy Commissioner of the MPS) both admitted to the Home Affairs committee (2012, Ev16 and Ev17), the shortage of police officers made it almost impossible to secure the riots' boundaries or respond decisively (this impotence is abundantly clear in the footage).[2]

The spread of rioting

In order to operationalise the first hypothesis, I group individual crimes by borough. This leaves us with a 'riot' in each borough, composed of a set of crimes. For example, on the third night there was a 'riot' in Wandsworth (a borough in south-west London) consisting of 114 crimes. This has the advantage of being an a priori classification and, moreover, each riot within London was entirely contained within borough borders. I then use two instruments to measure the geographical spread of each riot: the standard distance to the centroid (the square root of the average of the squared deviations from the mean coordinates), and the median distance to the centroid (Cressie, 1993). I also calculated the mean distance from each crime to its nearest neighbour, which shows how clustered the crimes were (O'Sullivan & Unwin, 2003). Although these are simple measures, they have the virtues of clarity and ease of interpretation and are more than sufficient to reveal the striking heterogeneity in the spatial patterns of different riots across London.

Table 1 presents the average spread of the different riots by night and shows that they did not spread further or become less clustered over time. This undermines the claim that, after the first night, the riots became dominated by highly mobile gangs of looters. However, these averages disguise the real finding: the riots' heterogeneity (Table 2). Riots in different places took on radically different spatial patterns. For example, the median distance to the centroid ranges from 47 m (Hackney) to 3732 m (Bromley), with a standard deviation of 828 m. Figure 1 shows the location of riot crimes in four different boroughs at the same resolution. The riots in Wandsworth are significantly more clustered than any of the other three, largely contained within two streets. This variety is not explained by the

Table 1. Geographic spread of rioting by night.

Night	*N*	Standard distance to centroid (m)	Median distance to centroid (m)	Mean nearest neighbour distance (m)
Night 1	91	1551	1575	46.51
Night 2	228	1429	886	85.01
Night 3	1465	1479	741	46.57
Night 4	45	1209	765	90.86

Notes: Standard distance and mean nearest neighbour distance were calculated for each riot (e.g. Haringey Night 1) and then averaged by Night (with each riot weighted by total number of crimes committed within it). Median distance was calculated by grouping all distances from crime to respective centroid by night. Only boroughs with more than 15 crimes were included.

Table 2. Geographic spread of rioting by borough.

Night	Borough	*N*	Standard distance to centroid (m)	Median distance to centroid (m)	Mean nearest neighbour distance (m)
Night 1	Haringey	91	1551	1575	46.51
Night 2	Croydon	30	1299	748	131.10
	Enfield	99	1684	1059	110.20
	Lambeth	62	1073	706	37.87
	Waltham Forest	37	1451	623	59.25
Night 3	Barking & Dagenham	35	1513	467	111.90
	Barnet	27	4003	3047	123.70
	Bromley	61	4859	3732	50.13
	Camden	85	748	500	6.10
	Croydon	207	1617	1067	28.24
	Ealing	95	1437	1293	94.32
	Greenwich	147	1465	705	34.45
	Hackney	138	516	47	22.55
	Kensington & Chelsea	27	1754	989	36.40
	Lambeth	34	1817	1652	69.80
	Lewisham	98	1803	838	46.19
	Merton	45	450	201	0
	Newham	83	1385	741	53.43
	Redbridge	43	2305	1190	86.78
	Southwark	123	1238	1088	24.22
	Tower Hamlets	42	1191	672	52.95
	Wandsworth	114	771	96	32.68
Night 4	Newham	26	1425	812	156.60

Notes: All boroughs with more than 25 crimes.

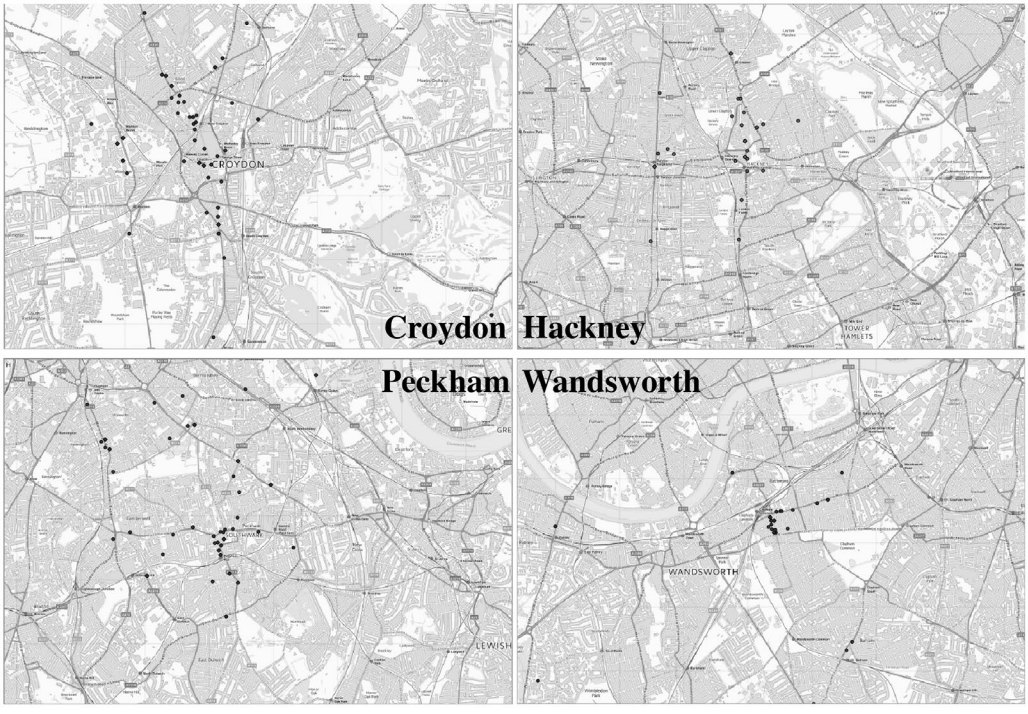

Figure 1. Riot crimes in four London boroughs. Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right (2014).

number of events in each riot or their duration. In the face of this diversity, it is difficult to sustain any single explanatory narrative and certainly not one which predicts an increase in the area covered by each riot after the first night.

In order to fully explain the heterogeneity in spatial patterns, we will no doubt need to look at a variety of mechanisms. But it is clear that 'criminal opportunism' cannot account for the spatial extent of the 2011 London Riots. As a case study this also throws up an interesting challenge: to explain how a riot can sustain itself in a confined space for several hours. Collins's (2008) argument that looting is the primary 'crowd sustainer' during riots implies that rioters need new shops to loot and that, once an area has been burnt out, it will be difficult for the riot to continue. Clapham Junction is an instructive counterexample because that riot sustained itself over several hours in two short sections of road. This is something which will be returned to below.

Attractive targets

In order to test the second set of hypotheses, that the rioters would target attractive (H2a) and unusual (H2b) areas, I mapped each riot crime onto two spatial geographies: one small (Lower Layer Super Output Areas, LSOAs) and one large (Middle Super Output Areas, MSOAs). These are both standard spatial units for government data in the U.K. In London, there are 4835 LSOAs covering on average 0.325 km^2, within 983 MSOAs which average 1.60 km^2. Although greater spatial precision is desirable, participants seemed to discuss where to riot in fairly general terms, often mentioning whole boroughs (BBC, 2012a; Metropolitan Police Service, 2012). Therefore, I examine both geographic scales. Mapping each recorded crime onto an area allowed me to compare areas with rioting to areas without. The 'attractiveness' of an area is measured using the Total Retail Floor Space statistic from the Valuation Office Agency's *Commercial and Industrial Floorspace and Rateable Value Statistics* series for 2011. As a test of robustness, all analyses were repeated using this data on the Number of Retail Properties, and the results remain the same. I measured how 'unusual' a site for crime each area was using MPS data for total retail crime in the four months leading up to August 2011 (mostly theft from shops but also robbery from business premises and burglaries in other buildings). I also include transport links (the number of tube and train stops) and the number of riot events in adjacent areas as control variables. This results in two data-sets with a well-balanced panel structure with four observations (Nights 1 to 4) per unit (each LSOA/MSOA). As I am interested in time-invariant factors, I have used random effects models. I look at the likelihood of a riot happening in an area using logit models, and the intensity of rioting (the number riot crimes per area) using negative binomial models (Rabe-Hesketh & Skrondal, 2008).

My results provide no support for the 'criminal opportunism' perspective. Table 3 shows that the association between 'attractiveness' and rioting is only significant at the LSOA level. The effect is however extremely small and the probability of a riot increases from 1.0 per cent for areas with less than 500 m^2 retail space, to 1.1 per cent for areas at the mean (3430 m^2); even areas with 100,000 m^2 have only a 4.4 per cent chance of rioting (probabilities calculated for Night 3 with all other variables set to 0).

Most importantly and directly contrary to hypothesis 2a, this association does not change over the four nights while the main effect becomes non-significant. The four negative binomial models in Table 4 tell the same story: more attractive areas saw somewhat more intense rioting, but there was no change over time. The results also contradict hypothesis 2b, showing that areas with high levels of routine retail crime were in fact more likely to see riots and that those riots were more intense. This makes it difficult to sustain the idea that rioters carefully and deliberately chose areas which facilitated high profit looting.

One possible counterargument is that, irrespective of how attractive the area was, people specifically targeted high value shops like Footlocker (a sports and footwear retailer) (Treadwell et al., 2013) and Currys (an electrical retailer)[3]. The Home Office data on the victims of the riots (obtained under Freedom of Information) gives limited support for this idea. Only half of all crimes

Table 3. Likelihood of rioting by commerciality and unusualness.

	LSOA	LSOA	MSOA	MSOA
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Night 2	3.54***	3.10***	3.83***	3.65***
Night 3	12.63***	11.24***	13.04***	12.83***
Night 4	4.62***	4.23***	6.12***	6.34***
Retail floor space (1000 m^2)	1.01***	1.01	1	1
Retail floor space × night 2		1.01		1
Retail floor space × night 3		1.01		1
Retail floor space × night 4		1.01		1
Retail crime	1.02***	1.02*	1.01*	1.01
Retail crime × night 2		1		1
Retail crime × night 3		1		1
Retail crime × night 4		1		1
Transport links	1.48*	1.48*	1.21	1.21
Rioting nearby	1.08***	1.08***	1.05***	1.05***
Constant	0.00***	0.00***	0.00***	0.00***
Observations	19,340	19,340	3932	3932
Areas	4835	4835	983	983
AIC	3315	3325	1919	1930

Notes: Logit models estimated using generalised least squares with random effects and conventional standard errors. Coefficients shown as Odds Ratios.
Reference category = Night 1.
*$p < 0.05$; ***$p < 0.001$.

Table 4. Intensity of rioting by commerciality and unusualness.

	LSOA	LSOA	MSOA	MSOA
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Night 2	3.48***	3.02***	3.55***	3.43***
Night 3	10.76***	11.10***	11.03***	11.15***
Night 4	3.94***	3.70***	4.64***	5.14***
Retail floor space (1000 m^2)	1.01**	1.01	1.01**	1.01
Retail floor space × night 2		1.02		1
Retail floor space × night 3		1		1
Retail floor space × night 4		1.01		1
Retail crime	1.02***	1.03*	1	1
Retail crime × night 2		0.99		1
Retail crime × night 3		1		1
Retail crime × night 4		0.99		1
Transport links	1.42*	1.37	0.99	0.99
Rioting nearby	1.05***	1.06***	1.03***	1.03***
Constant	0.00***	0.01***	0.01***	0.01***
Observations	19,340	19,340	3932	3932
Areas	4835	4835	983	983
AIC	5177	5177	3528	3537

Notes: Negative binomial models estimated using generalised least squares with random effects and conventional standard errors. Coefficients shown as Incidence Rate Ratios.
Reference category = Night 1.
*$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$; ***$p < 0.001$.

targeted commercial premises and this fluctuates without trend across the four days.[4] Although the proportion of commercial targets that are obviously 'high value' (clothing stores, electrical stores, and jewellers) increases after the first night, they account for only 27 per cent of the commercial premises targeted overall, the same percentage as sold food and alcohol. Whilst I do not want to discount the evidence that some high value shops may have been targeted opportunistically, 'criminal opportunism' clearly cannot account for the full range of riot targets.

In fact even in the act of looting, there is little evidence that people were acting as opportunistic criminals. Looting instead seems to be a public and collective act of defiance and celebration. This is clearest in moments when people paraded their stolen goods in front of the crowds, sharing out

packets of stolen cigarettes, even throwing bundles of clothes out of a shop for everyone else.[5] One of those I spoke to described walking round the Debenhams in Clapham Junction filling a shopping trolley which he then abandoned at the door when he realised 'I ain't gonna wear none of this shit'. Footage also shows the joyous destruction of shops while high value electronic goods lie smashed on the streets.[6] Tellingly, at one point someone can be heard saying: 'What have you got?' 'Don't even know!'[7] Indeed Reverend Perkin of Clapham Junction's St Marks Church described the riots as 'a very, very hyped up, intense celebration that, 'we can do this and we can get away with it" (2011).

The spatial patterns revealed by this data-set therefore contradict both hypotheses derived from the 'criminal opportunism' perspective. These results do not mean that no rioters were motivated by criminal opportunism, but they do suggest that its importance has been overstated and that it can explain very little of the actual interactions which made up the riots. In fact, the rioting that engulfed London seems to be too heterogeneous to be explained by any one theory, and I do not wish to replace criminal opportunism with another single explanatory factor. We do, however, need new mechanisms and explanations which we can add to our account. And to do this, I turn to a more directly situational analysis based on footage of the riots themselves.

Reclaiming the everyday

Having demonstrated the deficiencies of the 'criminal opportunism' approach, my original contribution is to introduce a factor which has been generally overlooked in academic and popular accounts of the 2011 London Riots: reclaiming the everyday. The video footage consulted suggests that the London Riots were a way for people to take possession of the public spaces in which they lived, an opportunity to reclaim these ordinary places. I am not suggesting that this was an explicit political project (although for some rioters it might have been), but rather that, for many rioters, the emotional energy of the situation came from the sudden thrill of being in control of these familiar places. (A similar, though more muted, sense of excitement can be seen when snowfall shuts down normally busy city streets.[8]) The importance of this dynamic is revealed in four themes which recur time after time in the available footage: (i) the importance of familiarity, (ii) the physical occupation of public spaces, (iii) the delimitation of the 'riot space' and (iv) the failure of standard police public order tactics.

The importance of familiarity

The fact that these were familiar, everyday places can also be seen in almost all of the available footage. In Croydon, rioters played a constant game of cat-and-mouse with the police, using their knowledge of the streets to avoid confrontations wherever possible (Metropolitan Police Service, 2012). A scene from Hackney shows a man arguing that these are 'my own streets' before telling the police to 'go home!'[9]. Thus, where the rioters chose to go was driven by familiarity, but where the rioters did not go is also illustrative. I asked one of my interviewees why he thought rioters made no effort to challenge the fragile police line at the end of the Northcote Road (a shopping street full of high-end retail stores directly adjoining the main site of the riots in Clapham Junction). He looked at me as if I was mad before explaining that the Northcote Road was a totally different world to Clapham Junction proper. Those up-market, boutique stores catered to a different demographic and, consequentially, it is experienced as a radically different space, despite being a continuation of the same street. The rioters were staking a claim to the places in which *they* lived.

Although these places were familiar, they were not spaces over which people normally exercised control. These high streets were busy thoroughfares with police patrols (and associated stop-and-searches), chain stores and traffic. Therefore when rioting broke out, it gave people an opportunity to take possession of areas in which they were normally mere passersby or passive consumers. The thrill of taking control of these familiar places is mentioned time after time in the interviews I and others have conducted. As one young man put it: 'we had total control of the precinct […] It was ours for a day' (Lewis et al., 2012, p. 20).

The physical occupation of public spaces

The second theme that suggests the importance of reclaiming everyday places is the fact that for many rioters the emotional energy came not from their own actions but simply from physically occupying their streets. This is most obvious in the carnivalesque actions of the crowd of bystanders, a group who are often forgotten in analyses of riots despite their critical importance to the situational dynamics (Collins, 2008). Indeed it is surprising that, even in the edited and carefully shot footage that was uploaded to YouTube, there is a lot of downtime.[10] Reading against the grain, we might infer that the riots were far less action-packed and intense than people often suppose.

Almost all the footage shows groups of bystanders standing around, drinking and smoking. This crowd dynamic is manifest in a scene where a large crowd leans against the railings on the corner of Peckham Rye and Peckham High Street, cheering on those few rioters brave enough to directly confront the police or smash windows.[11] In Clapham Junction, we see rioters physically taking possession of the streets, sitting down in the middle of the usually busy road, drinking, smoking and hanging out.[12] There were similar scenes in Peckham as people stood around in the middle of the road, with more aggressive members of the crowd kicking out at passing cars provoking laughter from others.[13] These bystanders are united not by the 'madding crowd' or their own actions but an emotional energy grounded in pre-existing emotional investments in and expectations about these places (this is something that may hold true for bystanders in other riots as well, see McPhail & Wohlstein, 1983). This also suggests an explanation of how the riot in Clapham Junction could sustain itself for so long in such a confined space. The thrill of being in control of that normally busy high street could have been generated, not through endless looting, but by the simple fact of taking physical possession of the streets.

The delimitation of the riot space

As well as physically occupying these familiar places, rioters also exerted spatial agency by defining and delimiting the free zone of the riots (Sewell, 2001). This is clearest in the interactions between rioters and the police. Although angry, it is rare to see rioters make a concerted effort to challenge the fragmented police line. Instead people improvised barricades to physically demarcate the space of the riot, symbolising their control of the area. Footage from Tottenham shows police cars and bins being set alight for just this purpose[14] and this quickly became an established part of the repertoire of rioting (Metropolitan Police Service, 2012). Meanwhile rioters peacock in front of the police line, taunting them and provoking them to break rank and challenge the rioters' control of those spaces. This is a very different dynamic to that implied by descriptions of rioters as opportunistic criminals or violent thugs. The focus here was on places, not people.

Criminal damage produced the most emotive visual and sonic symbols of the riot territory. All the available footage shows the powerful response that fire and smashed windows evokes from the assembled crowd.[15] In Hackney graffiti played a similar role, with quickly scrawled tags saying 'Fuck Cameroon [*sic*]' and 'Fuck Feds' marking out the rioters' territory.[16] Sounds are also important for characterising places (Schwarz, 2015). Especially in the short run, the sounds of breaking glass, shouting and sirens were a key part of what marked out the space of the riot.[17] Although all riots rely on visual and sonic symbols to claim spaces, what is significant here is that there is also an underlying pattern to where was targeted. Participants exerted their energy in claiming specific, familiar places and, once they had claimed a particular place, they held onto it.[18]

The failure of police tactics

Another recurrent theme in the footage (and MPS reports) is the failure of the MPS's standard public order tactic. The *running line* (ACPO, 2004) can be seen time after time in the available footage.[19] It involves charging forward roughly 30 yards as a unit before stopping to regroup, aiming to break up and disperse the crowd (ACPO, 2004). Crucially, it focuses on persons and bodies, even listing as an

aim 'To reduce crowd-generated excitement and momentum' (ACPO, 2004; p. 76). This approach derives in part from ideas of the 'madding crowd', and prioritises disrupting the bodily density of the crowd (explicitly in the 2010 edition, p. 88). However, it does nothing to challenge the rioters' control over space, and this goes a long way to explain its ineffectiveness. YouTube videos show rioters running away from the police charge, but then laughing and shouting as the police stop and back off to regroup.[20] Even though the dense crowd might be broken up by the charge, if the fundamental emotional energy is derived from controlling the space, then until this is challenged the riot will continue.

That this failure was due to the importance of place, not simply inadequate police numbers, is revealed through a contrast to the highly successful tactic used by police in Sutton (an area in south London). Here a potential riot was defused by police marching slowly down Sutton High Street, batons raised; physically taking possession of the street and demonstrating their control of it (Metropolitan Police Service, 2012; Home Affairs Committee, 2012, Ev17). This chimes with Newburn's (2016) suggestion that interactional factors primarily explain why riots did not break out in Leeds and Bristol. It is also worth noting that when other police forces tried to act pre-emptively, because they were targeting bodies, they were wholly ineffective. The escalation of events in Tottenham has been attributed to pre-emptive police deployment (Stott & Reicher, 2011), while in Clapham Junction the police were in the end only able to react to crowds when and where they assembled (Metropolitan Police Service, 2012). By laying claim to the place of the riot, Sutton Police were able to defuse the emotional energy that came from reclaiming the everyday. And without this it was impossible for rioters to create and sustain the moral holiday.

Discussion

The prevalence of these four themes (familiarity, the physical occupation of places, the delimitation of the riot space, and the failure of police tactics) across all the available footage demonstrates that the specific places in which the riots happened shaped their situational dynamics. The thrill of reclaiming these everyday places was a central part of the London Riots, and something which has been largely ignored thus far. The most obvious implication of this theory is that rioters would tend to target areas they were familiar with. Fortunately this can be tested, because the MPS data-set used above includes rioters' home addresses. We therefore know that 50% of those arrested lived within 2.5 km of where they rioted. A more sophisticated analysis of this same data by Baudains et al. (2013) uses a random utility model to analyse rioters' choice of where to riot. They show that rioters were more likely to target areas close to their homes, on the same side of the Thames, and which contained a secondary school (an important consideration given the relatively young ages of many rioters). More subtle support comes from the fact that the effects of familiarity were greater for young rioters who we can assume had smaller 'awareness spaces'. Although their paper is extremely insightful, I want to challenge their interpretation of these findings. They motivate their study in the language of Crime Pattern Theory (Brantingham & Brantingham, 1993; Cohen & Felson, 1979), which argues that criminals are likely to commit offences in areas which they know. This preserves criminal opportunism as rioters' underlying motivation. However, given the lack of quantitative or qualitative support for the criminal opportunism perspective in general, I believe that we need to reassess the significance of this finding. Rather than simply stealing from places they knew, the riots could have been a way for people to reclaim those familiar places. For example, one rioter I spoke said the reason he went down to the Clapham Junction was because 'it was my ends innit' (*ends* is English slang for your home neighbourhood).

A further implication is that we would expect to see a focus on themes of power and celebration in the testimonies of rioters. In order to fully explore this we would need to analyse the original transcripts of interviews conducted nearer the time if and when they are made public. However, in the excerpts which are currently available, there are some indications that these themes were fairly common. A significant number highlight the importance of power, specifically the ability to take revenge for perceived injustices (Sky News [2011] also reported people targeting shops which had turned down job

applications in the past). Respondents in the Riots, Communities and Victims Panel Interim Report said: 'They're [the police] just the biggest gang on the block – but they weren't that day', 'They never listen to us – they did that day' and that 'This was is our chance to make history' (2011, p. 59–60). Similarly respondents to the NatCen study said that 'It was a chance. They wanted to show police what they could do' (Morrell, Scott, McNeish, & Webster, 2011, p. 32). There were also many accounts of the riots' celebratory side: 'People were cheering, like. It was like a party, sitting on the roofs of cars opening cans' (Morrell et al., 2011, p. 35), 'So many youths, so many policemen, so many people I recognised, laughing, having fun, literally joking' (Morrell et al., 2011, p. 35), 'it's like everyone is on one, it's just like a party today, you got to join in!' (Treadwell et al., 2013, p. 9), 'they was breaking into shops and they was literally smashing things up, they was just trashing it for the sake of trashing it, not for any financial gain or anything' (Newburn et al., 2015, p. 13) and 'This is the most exciting two nights of my life' (Riots Communities & Victims Panel, 2011, p. 59).

However, I do not want to suggest that this is the only dynamic at play. As is clear from the spatial patterns I documented and from the video footage, the riots were heterogenous and complex, composed of many different sorts of actions and interactions. The NatCen study provides a useful typology of riot behaviour which ranges from non-involvement to watching, protesting, violence and finally looting (Morrell et al., 2011, p. 25). Within these the video archives reveal further variation: watching can include cheering crowds or more nervous voyeurs; protesting can be implicit or explicit, physical or verbal; violence can be directed against civilians, police or property; and looting can be organised and opportunistic or impromptu and celebratory. The implication that there is a simple linear relationship between motivation for participation and the type of behaviour exhibited must be resisted (Akram, 2014; Turner & Killian, 1957). But, as a typology, this helpfully captures the complexity and heterogeneity of the riots, thus confirming what we know from other studies (Bagguley & Hussain, 2008; McPhail & Wohlstein, 1983; Newburn et al., 2015). 'Reclaiming the everyday' is therefore a dynamic which should be added to a range of different explanatory mechanisms, it is not on its own a sufficient account of the full range of riot behaviours. Nevertheless, the four themes identified in the video footage are sufficiently commonplace to be worthy of serious critical attention. In particular, footage of people hanging out and 'occupying the streets' occurs in almost every video and accounts for a significant proportion of the total time filmed. Given that this behaviour can be most plausibly explained as reflecting people's excitement at reclaiming the everyday places in which they live, it should be seen as a vitally important dynamic.

Conclusion

The situational approach to rioting forces us to focus on the actual interactions, situations, and behaviours that make up a riot. In the case of the 2011 London Riots, this allows us to develop testable hypotheses from the dominant criminal opportunism perspective. Having demonstrated that these hypotheses are in fact contradicted by the riots' spatial patterns, I returned to footage of the events in search of alternative explanations. They showed that, for many people, the riots were an opportunity to reclaim the everyday places in which they lived. Recognising the importance of this dynamic allows us to draw a few tentative conclusions about the 2011 London Riots.

First, it challenges the existing emphasis on looting. I am not suggesting that this played no role in the riots. In fact, one of my interviewees saw 'professionals' empty the stock room at the back of an electrical store before driving off in an unmarked van. Others have documented the high profits made by looters (Treadwell et al., 2013) and that some openly admitted to being motivated by the chance to steal (Lewis et al., 2012). But this narrow focus on looting has distorted our understanding of the London Riots in three ways. First, a significant amount of criminal activity was non-acquisitive and, once we include bystanders, it is clear that any explanation based solely on criminal opportunism will be inadequate. Second, by isolating acquisitive crime we ignore the violence which enabled and characterised it (see the terrified police testimonies in BBC, 2012c; Newburn et al., 2015). Third, by interpreting looting instrumentally we ignore its expressive qualities. And this matters if we want

to understand the meanings these actions had for participants and so develop fuller theories which account for a wider range of riot behaviours.

Second, after shifting focus towards 'reclaiming the everyday', the London Riots actually fit much more closely with the prevailing interpretation of looting as ritualistic, impromptu and celebratory (Collins, 2008; Dynes & Quarantelli, 1968; Quarantelli & Dynes, 1970). This contradicts the suggestions of some commentators (Winlow & Hall, 2012; Zizek, 2011) and it invites us to ask new and different questions about the riots. Instead of asking what the family backgrounds of the rioters were (the Mayor of London Office's approach) or why they have embraced a consumerist ideology, we should instead focus on why these familiar places had such emotional resonance. It could be because of a history of marginalisation and alienation (Akram, 2014), more recent threats of gentrification (Valluvan, 2011), or an amoral 'sense of entitlement' (Prime Minister David Cameron). Answering these questions will require significant empirical attention in the future but, for now, it is worth noting that structural economic and political factors are likely to be much more important than many commentators have wanted to admit. Instead of casting moral judgements on the 'feral underclass' (as claimed by Justice Secretary Ken Clarke), we need to recognise that they came from deprived and disorganised areas with a history of police animosity (Kawalerowicz & Biggs, 2015). This may have been the uncomfortable truth that David Cameron wanted to avoid coming out of a public inquiry, but it is something we need to acknowledge if we are to more fully understand and explain the 2011 London Riots.

Third, it complicates another often-mentioned dynamic: animosity towards the police. Rioters in London were more likely to come from areas which already had poor relationships with the police (Kawalerowicz & Biggs, 2015). Frustration at people's everyday treatment by the police (particularly stop-and-search) was also mentioned by almost all the rioters interviewed by Lewis et al. (2012) and even in various videos[21]. However, there is only limited evidence that it structured people's actual behaviour during the riots. The police themselves reported 'venomous' violence and 'unprecedented […] level of hatred towards the police' (BBC, 2012c) and police property became a target for rioters' rage (Metropolitan Police Service, 2012; p. 45). There was, however, significant variation in interactions between rioters and police: from extreme violence in Tottenham and Hackney, to avoiding the police in Croydon (Metropolitan Police Service, 2012). Moreover, almost all the available footage shows that only a small minority of rioters ever actively attacked the police. Therefore, animosity towards the police is not, on its own, an adequate explanation of the pattern of interactions. It should rather be seen as (i) a 'trigger' in that the initial unrest began with a protest outside Tottenham Police Station, and (ii) one of the background conditions which shaped people's estrangement from public spaces and the thrill they got from taking control of them.

Fourth, there are also subtle differences between the dynamics observed in 2011 and those in earlier British riots (although this difference should not be overstated, see Newburn, 2015). First, there is an important difference between defending your territory (Gilroy, 2002) and reclaiming something which you feel distanced from. There is a much more palpable sense in 1981 that this was a community who felt a concrete sense of ownership over the places in which they rioted (Keith, 1993). But, in 2011 there is instead the suggestion that people felt increasingly alienated from the places of the riot (Valluvan, 2011). People were *reclaiming* places in which they lived but which they did not normally control. Second, the fact that the 2011 riots were triggered by a protest at the killing of a mixed-race man invites comparisons with race riots in the U.S.A., Brixton 1981 and more recent race riots of the early 2000s. However, the ethnic diversity of rioters suggests that these events cannot be seen as 'race riots' in the same way (Home Office, 2011). While race may well have been a significant factor (especially in the epicentre in Tottenham), it does not seem to have structured the overall dynamics of the riots as much as in those earlier examples.

Fifth, it forces us to think again about the 'post-political city'. Research over the last 10 years has detailed various ways in which urban spaces and culture more broadly have been de-politicised (Crouch, 2004; Epstein & Iveson, 2009; Haughton, Gilchrist, & Swyngedouw, 2016; MacLeod & Jones, 2011; Rosanvallon, 2007; Winlow, Hall, Briggs, & Treadwell, 2015). This focus has been criticised from a variety of perspectives (Davidson & Iveson, 2015; Swyngedouw, 2014). And recently Millington (2016)

suggested that the 2011 London Riots yet again revealed the limits of de-politicisation. He argues that the 'wish-fulfilment, or 'truth', that might be found in a sportswear shop such as Foot Locker […] is still hope' and so constitutes a desire for change and a form of proto-political 'anticipatory consciousness' (p. 8). My focus on the importance of everyday places might therefore encourage us to see the riots as anticipating resistance to the ongoing enclosure of urban public spaces (Harvey, 2013; Hodkinson, 2012; Smith & Low, 2005). However, it is worth noting that if they do so, it is in a way that is very different to recent protests focused on place, such as Occupy, or Tahrir Square. Instead of occupying exceptional, political or symbolic places, the London Riots saw people take possession of the everyday places in which they lived. And, while I support Millington's critique of the criminal opportunism perspective, I am reluctant to put too much emphasis on the riots as anticipating an urban politics. Although there are some continuing echoes of 2011 (Millington, 2016; Peacock, 2014), more research is needed to see how widespread they are. And, meanwhile, the main effect of the riots has been, just as Gilroy (2013) predicted, a neoliberal, property-led regeneration scheme for Tottenham (Dillon & Fanning, 2015).

By uncovering this dynamic of 'reclaiming the everyday', I hope to provide those studying other riots with something new to look for in their data. I am unsure how widespread this dynamic is, but it certainly follows a pattern in contemporary protest more generally. It also forces us to acknowledge that riots occur against a broader social backdrop which shapes the riot's situational dynamics. Most obviously, people often riot in particular places and so carry into the situation a variety of expectations about them. Finding theoretically sophisticated ways of embedding contextual factors into a micro-sociological framework remains a real challenge for this sort of approach to violence and rioting. The notion of expectations is just one way in which this can be done. But in the case of riots, when normal and 'expected' patterns of interaction are so suddenly disrupted, it may prove to be an important one.

Notes

1. I had two separate conversations with two senior MPS figures over the phone during July 2015, each one lasting around 30 min. Introductions were obtained through a contact at the College of Policing and our discussion focussed on the practicalities of their investigation as a way to check the validity of the arrest data.
2. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=20ge7WsMBdI, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_LzWOSAT_DA, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y29t8033g9M.
3. https://www.abc.net.au/news/2011–08-09/uk-riots3a-videos-from-the-scene/2,831,314.
4. The data is grouped by calendar day which makes precise comparison of 'nights' difficult.
5. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aZWQoJtvaoU, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i5sqf10GSls.
6. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ed0QJJL9sYQ, https://www.abc.net.au/news/2011–08-09/uk-riots3a-videos-from-the-scene/2,831,314.
7. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ed0QJJL9sYQ.
8. My thanks to Randall Collins for this suggestion.
9. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yR6jv66btqg.
10. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_LzWOSAT_DA, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iRqWVVpeKP4.
11. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KZzUvDtmhaw.
12. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I-m3m74WRcc, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-lGj-8jbdW4, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_LzWOSAT_DA.
13. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JFsiTG5xKqs.
14. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rhMwmEm4sJU.
15. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3o9p3ydGq28.
16. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v-TVfVT8ydU (1:18).
17. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aCEOpDp3I-E&list=PL4AFF9DA6C0983969, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R-7O7eafQi8.
18. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rhMwmEm4sJU.
19. e.g. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bqg2nqZbVmE.
20. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i5sqf10GSls, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ed0QJJL9sYQ.
21. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FIoL1AntLCw, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-quSzQgZHSY.

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Appendix 1. Summary statistics.

	LSOA	MSOA
Observations	19,340	3932
Riot affected areas	415	338
Number of riot crimes	0.11 (1.46)	0.53 (3.98)
Retail floor space (1000 m^2)	3.43 (12.22)	18.57 (38.73)
Retail crime	4.82 (12.81)	23.72 (36.26)
Transport links	0.0089 (0.30)	0.44 (0.65)

Notes: Figures presented are means with standard errors in brackets.

Appendix 2. Sources of video footage used (by URL).

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k7H02HSip_c.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IpKBHiJT8kU.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rhMwmEm4sJU.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VFNkJRCNHAs.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5nedEE6UwYQ.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a_88xo2mAyA.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FIoL1AntLCw.
https://www.dailymotion.com/video/xkg02i_london-riots-2011-raw-footage-of-mobattacking-police_news.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oltjnl24iHQ.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i5sqf10GSls.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JFsiTG5xKqs.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KZzUvDtmhaw.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q3AgH96OQlc.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5DhY1uKq6r4.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R-7O7eafQi8.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1lztinN3-Hg.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=20ge7WsMBdI.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xwAAjM6opY0.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B4b8JmYk30M.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xw5hJ1pIVD4.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HPB1LQxMCoM.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MP-td3C55Yc.
https://www.youtube.com/user/markosilla/videos.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PGOaWsrk2BY.
https://www.youtube.com/user/balladanna/videos.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VVVDyf9X23U.
https://www.abc.net.au/news/2011-08-09/uk-riots3a-videos-from-the-scene/2831314.
https://www.rawcutarchive.com/archive.aspx?type=28&search=london%20riots.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ed0QJJL9sYQ.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yjZI1UH52rw.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=47SVLTJpvRg.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rFUtyVLABhQ.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aZWQoJtvaoU.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5FZydkH9XJg.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I-m3m74WRcc.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BpW7KR9-6Fk.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iRqWVVpeKP4.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-lGj-8jbdW4.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_LzWOSAT_DA.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hpWvrF2PpaU.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y29t8033g9 M.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w0BWhjf8t7U.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6AOHI–DsWw.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aCEOpDp3I-E&list=PL4AFF9DA6C0983969.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yR6jv66btqg.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aho-NXz7jqo.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BNeSpCs6mlM.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S5anqRmhaeY.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v-TVfVT8ydU.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bqg2nqZbVmE.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mOT_itNro20.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=039a3KPugcs.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rAKsYBq1f0U.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=61w1QH40mLU.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-quSzQgZHSY.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rXtjO74cQq0.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S7if6Fm3In8.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0dnp3dbiRf8&list=PLjRtdIAMnD8bbpA2dhQaiLe8jMKthMy9d.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vfwr9FJc9sg.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fGRBFwpuKv8.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3o9p3ydGq28.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XZoGDVOX32U.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R1-XlVJSQ24.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7r7VBSi_x_8.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KsTXagvMcHw.
https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/08/09/london-riots-2011-videos_n_922561.html.

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