

‘There will be burning and a-looting tonight’: The social and political correlates of law-breaking¹

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Abstract: In the aftermath of the August 2011 riots, politicians and commentators offered a range of explanations for the social unrest and wanton violence. Drawing on survey and focus-group data, this paper tests those explanations by analysing how socio-economic, normative and political factors shape contemporary attitudes towards law breaking in Britain. The paper finds that both economic deprivation and personal moral values help to explain attitudes toward illegal behaviour but citizens' mistrust of political leaders and their disengagement from public affairs are also an important factor. The findings suggest that politicians who want to provide moral leadership need to do so through their actions as well as their words.

The widespread rioting and opportunistic looting of 6-9 August 2011 shook Britain to the core. What apparently started as a community's protest over the police shooting of Mark Duggan in Tottenham, north London, swiftly degenerated into an orgy of wanton violence, theft and destruction that afflicted many parts of the capital and other cities. Politicians, the police, community leaders and citizens alike were left dazed, shocked and confused. It was as if no one could quite believe what had happened. The one question that everyone wanted answered was: 'why'? Why did these tragic events—which resulted in five deaths, scores of injuries and millions of pounds worth of damage—happen when and where they did? Why did these events happen at all?

Explanations for the riots were not slow in coming. Some were elaborate and sophisticated, others less so. To simplify matters somewhat, the various accounts can be grouped into three general types: socio-demographic explanations; normative or value-based explanations; and political explanations. The first of these, which emphasises socio-demographic factors, was most associated with those on the political left. Its proponents tended to argue that the riots were the result of prevailing economic conditions, specifically levels of relative deprivation and rising inequality, all exacerbated by the recent round of public-spending cuts initiated under the Coalition Government's deficit-reduction programme. The second type of explanation, more often put forward by those on the right, was that the riots were the consequence of moral decay, 'sick communities' or 'poor parenting', or what David Cameron called a 'broken society'. This account was essentially normative in that it drew on culturally-embedded values to explain the disturbances.

The third type of explanation emphasised the link between the riots and recent elite scandals. In essence, society's moral compass had been subtly shifted by what might be described as 'middle-class looting' by bankers and politicians in the 2008-09 financial crisis and 2009 expenses scandal, which made it more acceptable for everyone else to 'take' what they wanted, when they wanted it. A variant of this explanation linked the riots to a general mistrust of the police and other political actors—or what might be described as 'alienation' from the public realm. This category of explanation can be described as political in the sense that it focuses on citizens' attitudes toward state institutions and the consequences of politicians' policies, especially their failure to regulate their own and other elites' behaviour.

This paper analyses survey and focus-group data into order to test these three competing explanations. Our findings provide evidence of the importance of both

socio-economic and normative factors in shaping people's attitudes toward law-breaking. Interestingly, however, it is political factors that have the strongest impact on people's expressed willingness to engage in illegal activity; engagement with public affairs and confidence in politicians depress tolerance of law breaking. These results should be sobering for politicians. If those at the bottom of society are to refrain from engaging in violent disorder, more needs to be done to build public confidence in the integrity of those at the top of British government

Competing explanations of the riots

As already noted, the principal approaches to making sense of the August riots can be divided for the purposes of analysis into socio-economic, normative and political types of explanation. The typology is far from exhaustive; other explanations have drawn on factors as various as laxity on the part of the police, consumerism, social-media technology and family structure.² Yet the majority of the causal narratives put forward by leading politicians and commentators fall into one of these three general categories. It thus makes sense to examine each of them in a little more detail.

Socio-economic accounts. Scholars and governments have been aware of the link between economic conditions and social unrest since antiquity. But as Robert Ted Gurr's seminal book *Why Men Rebel* makes clear, the link is far from straightforward.³ According to Gurr, social unrest is most likely to occur when there is a pronounced discrepancy between expectations and reality, and such discrepancies tend to occur during those economic downturns that follow periods of sustained growth, when people have come to expect prosperity as a matter of routine. This basic model fits with the current situation in Britain, where many years of boom, going

back to the early 1990s, were followed by a period of bust following the 2008-09 financial crisis.

Yet the deteriorating state of the British economy cannot account for why there was rioting in Hackney but not in Richmond. If the economy was solely to blame, the unrest would have been even more widespread. This is where other factors come into play, in particular localised social and geographic variations in economic conditions. To revert to Gurr's analysis, it is *relative* not absolute deprivation that drives serious discontent. After all, the rioters were not looting food stores out of desperation. With famine once more rearing its head in Africa, it is clear that the British rioters were comparatively well-fed and prosperous by global and historical standards. However, many of the rioters were from areas that were poor by UK standards.⁴ This suggests that it was inequality that was the most important socio-economic driver for the disturbances. Indeed, the geography of deprivation may help to explain why the riots happened where they did. A map produced by the *Guardian* newspaper in the wake of the unrest clearly demonstrated a link between the location of relative economic deprivation and the sites of the worst disturbances.⁵

There are other reasons to think that relative deprivation played a part in fuelling the riots. It is well-known that inequality in the UK has risen precipitously in recent years. In the wake of the riots, voices from across the political spectrum pointed to wealth differentials as a possible cause of the disturbances, including Conservative mayor of London Boris Johnson, deputy leader of the Liberal Democrats Simon Hughes, and Labour leader Ed Miliband.⁶ References to rising inequality, however, raise the question of why the riots took place when they did, since inequality had long been increasing. Moreover, in the summer of 2011 the economy was beginning to grow, albeit haltingly, and there was hope that the worst of

the economic downturn was past. It is in this context that a socio-demographic account of the riots needs to factor in the implications of recent policy decisions, namely the spending cuts that were introduced in the March 2011 Budget and which by August were beginning to bite.

Economists Tim Horton and Howard Reed estimate that the combined effect of the Coalition Government's changes to taxation, the benefits regime and public spending have had a highly regressive effect, hitting the poor much harder than the rich. According to their calculations, households with incomes in the bottom decile have suffered a loss equivalent to 38 cent of their net income, whereas those in the top decile have lost only 5 per cent.⁷ In other words, there has been a sudden jump in relative deprivation since May 2010, driven by the poor losing proportionately more of their income than the rich. Moreover, there is an added geographic dimension to the sudden jump. Looking just at London, we can use government figures together with those from the *Guardian's* database of documented disturbances to compare the mean reduction in local authority funding in areas that experienced riots and those that did not. In the 19 local authorities spared disturbances, the average reduction in 'revenue spending power' was 4.02 per cent, with cuts in central-government funding to blame. In the 14 boroughs affected by riots, there was a similar reduction of 6.18 per cent.⁸ Cuts to youth services in particular have been cited as factors which contributed to the disturbances by leaving many young people with nothing to do, nowhere to go, and a sense that their needs were being neglected.⁹

Normative accounts. When Prime Minister David Cameron returned from his holiday in Tuscany to deal with the aftermath of the riots, he promptly placed the blame on 'sick' communities.¹⁰ His diagnosis, like other values-based accounts of the causes of the riots, resonated among the public at large. Despite their popularity, such

accounts are unable to explain why the riots occurred precisely when they did. They may, however, provide insight into the geographic distribution of the riots since areas heavily involved in the disturbances were associated with high levels of welfare-dependence, large numbers of ethnic-minority residents—especially blacks—and allegedly distinct cultures. Indeed, the propensity to engage in violent disturbances of the kind observed in August has been linked to various attributes of the communities in the areas affected, including large numbers of single-parent homes and a lack of positive male role models, ‘poor parenting’ and the failure to inculcate children with law-abiding values, a sense of entitlement to state support and value systems that are generally at odds with those of the mainstream.

Family structures and moral guidance from parents seem to have featured most prominently in the normative arguments. A YouGov poll carried out in the week of the disturbances found that more people blamed the riots on ‘poor parenting’ than any other cause.¹¹ Meanwhile, welfare dependency and a sense of entitlement have been criticised by many on the right, including the Prime Minister, for encouraging a mindset in which it was okay to loot goods from shops.¹² Finally, racialised and frankly racist accounts of the violence have also surfaced in both overt and veiled forms. Historian David Starkey, for instance, caused outrage when on 12 August he suggested on BBC’s *Newsnight* that aspects of black culture were to blame for the riots.¹³

Political accounts. The final major type of explanation that emerged in the post-riot discourse related to perceived faults with the political system. Interestingly, political causes of the violence were cited across the ideological spectrum, and there appears to be a grudging consensus among the political elites that they were due a meal of humble pie for their own poor conduct in recent years.

The MPs expenses scandal of 2009 has been referred to by a number of prominent political figures and commentators as a shameful episode that did little to instil in the British public a sense of right and wrong, and which appeared to condone selfishness and a culture of ‘taking’ from society. Those who expressed this point of view in the aftermath of the riots included Labour leader Ed Miliband, former Conservative leader Ian Duncan Smith, and the influential right-wing commentator Peter Osborne.¹⁴ Politicians were not alone in being blamed for setting a bad example to others in society. Other types of ‘middle-class looting’ were also identified, including bankers’ bonuses and tax evasion by the rich.

A variant of the political explanation tapped into political disengagement and mistrust of state institutions. In a recent study of citizens’ attitudes towards democracy, Pippa Norris found that mistrust of state institutions was higher in Britain and had fallen furthest in recent years than in any other country in Europe.¹⁵ Politicians are generally the focus of public disapprobation in Britain but other actors, including the police, are sometimes the target of intense, localised distrust. For example, a history of institutionalised racism within London’s Metropolitan Police Service, combined with well-documented racial, age and gender profiling by police on the beat, has led to a widespread perception in many of the areas affected by the August riots (for example, Tottenham, Hackney and Brixton) that the police systematically harass and victimise young black men. These long-standing histories of racialised confrontation with police and police brutality may well have been instrumental in stoking the flames—literally and metaphorically.¹⁶

Analytic approach

Politicians and political pundits have a tendency to focus on their preferred explanation to the exclusion of all others, but social scientists will recognise that the various explanations offered for the riots are likely to be located at different points in the ‘funnel of causality’. In essence, there is a logic of causal ordering behind any social phenomenon, with older long-term factors necessarily coming before recent short-term factors. In terms of explaining the causes of the riots, the most proximal explanatory factors are undoubtedly the political scandals and perceptions of political institutions; further back in the funnel are norms and values (which tend to be inculcated in a person’s formative years), and furthest back are demographic characteristics such as socio-economic status, gender and ethnicity. It therefore makes sense to assess these different factors in combination, beginning with those that are most distal—the demographic factors—and gradually moving forward in the funnel. This is the approach we adopt here.

Testing these alternative explanations is methodologically challenging, however. The rioters’ own explanations of their actions do not always tell the whole story, as many are likely to lack the cognitive skills needed to offer satisfactory causal accounts of the root causes of their values and behaviours. They are, after all, only human. Just as voting behaviour is rarely examined with reference to people’s own stated reasons for their choices, so the appropriate approach to assessing the competing explanations of the rioters’ actions requires an indirect approach. Moreover, the rioters themselves represent a minute fraction of the entire population, and it would be difficult to capture a representative sample of those who took part in the disturbances through conventional survey techniques. Even then, participants may be reluctant to discuss their motives or take part in a survey. The traditional social

science approach to analysing the causes of people's behaviour are thus less than promising in addressing the causes of the recent riots.

We can gain purchase on this question, however, by using survey data on citizens' general propensity to break the law. Clearly, not all those who were prepared to break the law were involved in the August riots, but it can be safely assumed that a willingness to violate the law was a necessary condition for involvement. Sections of the general population that are prepared to violate the law may therefore constitute a pool of potential recruits from which potential rioters could be drawn. Whether members of this pool actually took part in the events was likely to be a matter of circumstance and location, their perceptions of the risk of taking part, the social networks in which they were embedded, as well as other personal values and attributes that we are not in a position to assess here. What we are able to do is to sketch a portrait of that portion of the population which might potentially, under the right circumstances, be mobilised to engage in acts of mass illegality.¹⁷

We do so by drawing on two source of evidence: qualitative evidence from a series of focus groups carried out in 2009 and 2010 as part of a broader project investigating popular understandings of the ethical behaviour of politicians in Britain; and quantitative evidence from a multi-wave panel survey conducted between 2008 and 2010 as part of the British Co-operative Campaign Analysis Project (BCCAP).¹⁸ Evidence from both sources will be employed in the present analysis to gain insight into the competing explanations that have been advanced to account for the riots.

Statistical evidence

Turning first to the survey data, the principal dependent variable to be employed in order to test the competing socio-demographic, normative and political explanations is

based on the following survey question, which was asked of respondents in the April/May 2010 wave of the BCCAP study: respondents were presented with the statement: 'People should obey the law, even if it goes against what they think is right'. They were then asked whether they 'strongly agree', 'tend to agree', 'neither agree nor disagree', 'tend to disagree', 'strongly disagree', or 'don't know'. The overall distribution of responses to this question is presented in Table 1.

--Table 1 about here --

Those who disagreed strongly or tended to disagree with this statement can be identified as the group most prepared to break the law. Of the 118 respondents (12.7 per cent of the total sample) who responded in this way, 51 per cent were male (*versus* 47.7 per cent in the sample as a whole), 30.7 per cent were under 35 years of age (as against 28.8 per cent in the entire sample), 17.2 per cent were from an ethnic-minority background (11.9 per cent of the whole sample), and 12.3 per cent lived in households with annual incomes under £10,000 (10.6 per cent of the sample). It is difficult to come to meaningful conclusions on the basis of these statistics, however, as many of these characteristics overlap.

In order to gain greater purchase on the most important causal factors behind attitudes to the law, it is necessary to examine the different characteristics of survey respondents through multivariate statistical analysis. Such a procedure allows us to ascertain which personal attributes are the principal drivers of people's attitudes whilst taking into account all other attributes. For example, if people who express a willingness to break the law tend to be both young and poor, we can use multivariate

analysis to determine whether it is youth or poverty that has the greatest impact on their attitudes, and how much impact each of these factors independently has.

Our analysis starts at the most distal end of the funnel of causality, and we begin by examining the role of long-established demographic attributes, which are likely to condition subsequent values, attitudes and behaviours, but which could well also have an independent causal effect on citizens' propensity to break the law. The dependent variable in the statistical model, the thing that is being explained, is a five-point scale constructed on the basis of the responses displayed in Table 1, where a higher score can be interpreted as a greater propensity to break the law.

We include age, gender and income in our model, together with employment status, education and ethnicity. As can be seen from the results presented in the second column in Table 2, income is the only variable that reaches conventional levels of statistical significance (in bold). Those with annual incomes under £10,000 are significantly more willing to say they are prepared to break the law than those with an income between £20,000 and £29,999, and once we control for income, no other variable is statistically significant—neither age, gender nor ethnicity. This is not to deny that the age, gender and ethnic profile of the rioters was distinctive compared with the rest of society, just that poverty appears to be the most important determinant of people's willingness to commit illegal acts. In other words, the evidence suggests that it is *because* the young, male members of ethnic-minority groups tend to be poorer than other members of society that they are more willing to break the law.

-- Table 2 about here --

The next step in the analysis is to move down the funnel of causality and assess the importance of people's values on their attitudes to the law whilst continuing to control for demographic factors.¹⁹ As with any survey-based method, analysts are constrained by the questions asked. We have chosen religiosity as a marker of adherence to traditional belief systems and two other indicators of personal ethical predispositions. Our indicator of religiosity is derived from a survey question that asks respondents 'Would you say that your religion provides some guidance in your day-to-day living quite a bit of guidance or a great deal of guidance in your day-to-day life?'. As one of the available responses was 'not religious', it was possible to use answers to this question to construct a four-point scale of religiosity, where a higher number is associated with a greater degree of stated guidance from religion. The two measures of ethical predispositions are designed to tap tolerance of morally dubious but common actions, including 'telling a lie if it is your interest' and 'avoiding a fare on public transport'. In each case, respondents were asked to place themselves on a 0-10 scale where 10 represented the view that the action in question 'can always be justified', and 0 reflected the conviction that the action 'can never be justified'. In each case, a higher score is associated with a greater willingness to condone the acts.

The resulting model, which now includes demographic attributes and respondents' values, is presented in the third column of Table 2. Of the three normative-factor variables, only expressed tolerance for fare-dodging (shown in bold) is statistically significant; religiosity and tolerance for lying do not come close to reaching conventional levels of statistical significance in this model. These results suggest that values do play some role in conditioning criminal behaviour, but only values closely related to law abidance. Interestingly, once we control for values, none of the demographic variables is significant. This suggests, as predicted by the 'funnel'

approach to thinking about causality, that economic deprivation shapes values, which in turn shape people's willingness to break the law. By no means does this imply that economic factors are not important; it simply indicates that the effect is indirect, in that it is mediated by respondents' values.

The third stage in the quantitative analysis is to move even further down the funnel of causality and add political variables to the model. These variables include indicators of political engagement and political trust, including frequency of newspaper readership (which we use as a measure of respondents' knowledge of public affairs) and expressed trust in government ministers and MPs. The last two indicators were measured by responses to a question that asked respondents to rate the different categories of elites on a 0-10 scale according to whether they were 'completely honest and trustworthy' (a high score) or 'not at all honest and trustworthy' (a low score)

As can be seen from the model displayed in the fourth column of Table 4, political variables are strong determinants of people's attitudes to obeying the law. Personal ethics in the form of tolerating fare-dodging remains significant, but people who are regular newspaper readers are significantly more likely to agree that the law should be obeyed, and the same is true for those with high levels of trust in government ministers (the relevant coefficients are both in bold). Trust in MPs is not statistically significant in this model and does not affect expressed attitudes to the law, but that could well be due to the generally low regard in which MPs have been held since the 2009 expenses scandal.²⁰

The magnitude of the (standardised) coefficients in Table 2 provides a ready means of comparing the impact of the different variables in these models. If we discount the non-significant variables, those that are not in bold, it is clear that in the

final model political factors play a stronger role than either demographic or normative factors. In other words, people's dispositions toward state institutions weigh more heavily in shaping their propensity to obey the law than their belief systems and personal values. This finding has obvious implications for the question of how best to respond to the riots. If people's willingness to abide by the law is compromised by their jaundiced view of state institutions and their mistrust of political elites, an effective response will have to address political engagement in general and perceived breaches of public trust by those in power in particular.

Focus-group evidence

The importance of political factors in explaining people's attitudes to the law is reinforced by qualitative evidence, which sheds further light on how they view political elites and how this affects their thinking. Our qualitative data are drawn from a series of focus groups conducted by the authors in 2009 and 2010 in different parts of the country. The focus groups were designed to probe people's understanding of political ethics and their reaction to unethical behaviour by politicians.

On the one hand there was widespread and not altogether unsurprising support for the notion that elites should be made to comply with the law like everybody else:

We all have standards we agree to. We agree you should not lie, hide anything, use public money for yourself... that goes all the way through politics, it's just a matter of enforcing it.... It's a question of enforcing the same standards for everybody. (Woman, Hackney)

If I fail to pay my taxes, I would be punished for it. Elected politicians should not be treated differently. (Man, Colchester)

There are times when the majority of the public think the law is wrong. But generally the law is the law, and all are expected to follow it [including politicians], or we'd have anarchy. (Man, Egham)

On the other hand, it was apparent that many participants in the groups believed that politicians were not complying with rules that others would be expected to comply with. The following comments illustrate this view well:

It's the judges and the politicians, there's so much collusion or rivalry. The politicians are so far above the people, they have their own rules. Politics have run wild. There's no system, because governments govern themselves.
(Woman, Hackney)

Westminster is less transparent [than the United States], and when there is a scandal, it's just another case of a politician breaking the rules, and nothing seems to be done. (Man, Colchester)

They [politicians] are supposed to show people respect... [they abide by a] different sets of rules. We'd get imprisoned for acting like that and they don't get punished for anything. (Woman, Bradford)

Some participants also discussed the implications of politicians' transgressions in terms of the example they set to other citizens:

I would agree with that, because the actual material loss and damage that the [expenses] scandal had, the amount of money that goes through the hands of government, it was not enormous. It was more the principle that the elected officials that were supposedly abiding by the law, were subverting them for their benefit, undermining your own trust in politicians. It made you question why the public would be expected to pay taxes, and be punished for tax evasion or similar deeds. (Man, Egham)

It relates back to the moral standing of the person. They [politicians] should at least obey the rules... if nobody obeyed the rules, society would go wild. (Woman, Egham)

But when you are in politics, in that position, you should be above suspicion, in order to make a point, take the lead and give directions. (Man, Egham)

Many other people undoubtedly share the view that politicians ought to provide an example to others by obeying the law but do not always do so. This common understanding, that politicians are a class apart who abide by their own rules, was summed up well by one of the male respondents in Egham, Surrey:

'I think [the expenses scandal] is very serious, because it was a manifestation of the decline in morality of the level of representation, from which the

general public will then take their lead. The politician starts fiddling his expenses, and then the public starts fiddling his expenses, and the whole system of morality and direction becomes diluted.’

That the August 2011 riots were a direct consequence of immoral behaviour by politicians remains to be demonstrated, but the evidence presented here suggests that the link between political and personal morality is clear in the minds of many members of the British public.

Conclusion

Many explanations for the August 2011 riots were offered in the wake of the disturbances. Our analysis suggests some support for the pet theories of both the left and the right: that social and personal moral deprivation are both linked to law abidance. Our findings also suggest that any responses to the riots that further alienate some sections of society from the public realm, such as the removal of benefits, may only serve to compound the problem of public disorder rather than addressing it. But the really interesting finding concerns the role of political engagement and perceptions of politics in shaping people’s willingness to obey the law. Though it would be an over-simplification to say that lack of confidence in the political system caused the August 2011 riots in any straightforward way, the evidence presented here suggests that there is something about the functioning of the British political system and the behaviour of its political elites that draws a significant minority of people toward a moral stance that makes them potentially available for participation in acts of mass illegality. Any perceived ‘looting’ of state resources by those at the top appears

to have negative consequences for the health of the body politic. Insofar as politicians can take a moral lead, they need to do so by their deeds as well as their words.

Table 1: 'People should obey the law, even if it goes against what they think is right'

Responses	N	Percentage
Strongly agree	217	23.3%
Tend to agree	422	45.2%
Neither agree nor disagree	136	14.6%
Tend to disagree	92	9.9%
Strongly Disagree	26	2.8%
Don't know	40	4.3%
Total	933	100%

Table 2: Multivariate analysis of willingness to break the law

Variable	Demographics only	Demographics & values	Demographics, values & politics
Demographic factors			
Gender (male)	.024	.017	.006
Age under 35	.043	-.009	.006
Age over 55	-.046	-.015	.004
Income under £10,000	.098	.088	.059
Income £10,000-£19,999	.039	.028	-.033
Income £30,000-£39,999	.008	.009	-.012
Income over £40,000	-.021	-.030	-.057
Employed	.134	.051	.051
Graduate	.028	.010	.001
Ethnic minority	.193	.048	.034
Normative factors			
Religiosity		-.043	-.023
Tolerance of lying		.003	.028
Tolerance of fare-dodging		.170	.148
Political factors			
Newspaper readership			-.129
Trust in govt ministers			-.131
Trust in MPs			.037
N	626	541	514
Adj. R ²	.009	.028	.046

Notes: This table reports the results of Ordinary Least Squares regression models. In all cases the dependent variable is the five-point scale measuring willingness to break the law. The figures in the cells are standardised coefficients (betas). Coefficients that are in bold are statistically significant at the .05 level. The 35-55 age group serves as a baseline category with which the other age groups are compared. The £20,000-29,999 income bracket serves as a baseline category with which the other income groups are compared. Ethnic-minority status includes all categories other than ‘white british’. There were too few respondents in this category to break it down into sub-categories.

Notes

¹ This article is part of a wider project investigating popular understandings of the ethical behaviour of politicians in Britain. We gratefully acknowledge financial support from the ESRC (grant number RES-000-22-3459) and British Academy (grant number SG-52322). Further details about the project can be found online at: <http://www.essex.ac.uk/government/ethicsandintegrity/>.

² See, for example, ‘The competing arguments used to explain the riots’, *BBC News Online Magazine*, 11 August 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-14483149>.

³ Robert Ted Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970.

⁴ For details of those convicted, see the *Guardian* newspaper’s database of convictions at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/datablog/2011/aug/11/uk-riots-magistrates-court-list>.

⁵ This map can be found at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/datablog/interactive/2011/aug/10/poverty-riots-mapped>.

⁶ See, respectively: Dave Hill, ‘Boris Johnson says London riots “are not a simple issue”’, Dave Hill’s London Blog, *Guardian* website, 12 August 2011, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/davehillblog/2011/aug/12/boris-johnson-says-london-riots-not-a-simple-issue>; Simon Hughes, ‘Profits must no longer go to the few at the top’, *Guardian*, 13 August 2011, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/aug/14/profits-top-simon-hughes>; and ‘Riots: Miliband blames “me first” culture’, *BBC News Online*, 12 August 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/mobile/uk-politics-14503023>.

⁷ Tim Horton and Howard Reed, ‘The distributional impact of the 2010 Spending Review’, *Radical Statistics*, 103 (2010), 13-24, <http://www.radstats.org.uk/no103/HortonReed103.pdf>.

⁸ The data on spending cuts is taken from the Department for Communities and Local Government, “Revenue spending power” 2011-12 including NHS support for social care’, www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/xls/1796201.xls. The *Guardian*’s database can be found at: https://spreadsheets.google.com/spreadsheet/ccc?key=0AonYZs4MzIZbdDFMMmRS5WFvTnU3Q2EyaWfNMzIFX2c&hl=en_US#gid=0.

⁹ See, for example, Tracy McVeigh, ‘Hackney riots: “The message when youth clubs close is that no one cares”’, *Guardian*, 13 August 2011,

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2011/aug/13/hackney-riots-youth-clubs-closure>.

¹⁰ ‘England riots: Fightback under way, says PM’, *BBC News Online*, 11 August 2011,

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-14474393>.

¹¹ ““Poor parenting” to blame for riots, says exclusive poll’, *Channel 4 News*, 13

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¹² ‘England riots: Fightback under way, says PM’, *BBC News Online*, 11 August 2011,

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-14474393>.

¹³ David Barrett, ‘Historian Starkey in “racism” row over riot comments’, *Daily*

Telegraph, 14 August 2011,

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/crime/8700109/Historian-Starkey-in-racism-row-over-riot-comments.html>.

¹⁴ See, respectively: ‘Riots: Miliband blames “me first” culture’, *BBC News Online*,

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top as the bottom’, Peter Osborne’s Blog, *Daily Telegraph* website, 11 August, 2011,

<http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/peterosborne/100100708/the-moral-decay-of-our-society-is-as-bad-at-the-top-as-the-bottom>.

¹⁵ Pipp Norris, *Democratic Deficit: Critical Citizens Revisited*. Cambridge,

Cambridge University Press, 2011, pp. 70-76.

¹⁶ See, for example, Eather Edley, ‘London riots: “A generation who don’t respect

their parents or police”’, *Guardian*, 9 August 2011,

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2011/aug/09/london-riots-kids-parents-police?INTCMP=SRCH>.

¹⁷ It is worth noting that this category also includes people who would be unlikely to engage in looting and the random destruction of property, but who would be willing to take part in acts of civil disobedience on ideological grounds. The qualitative evidence we deploy to address our research question enables us to distinguish between these two groups, though our survey evidence does not allow us to make this distinction.

¹⁸ Details of both the project and the BCCAP can be found at www.essex.ac.uk/government/ethicsandintegrity.

¹⁹ In the second and third regression models reported here, the variables measuring people's values are taken from previous waves of the survey in order to avoid possible endogeneity and the problem that the dependent variable may be part consequence but also part cause of an independent variable.

²⁰ See Sarah Birch and Nicholas Allen, 'How Honest Do Politicians Need to Be?', *Political Quarterly* 81.1 (2010), 49-56; and Nicholas Allen and Sarah Birch, 'Political Conduct and Misconduct: Probing Public Opinion', *Parliamentary Affairs* 64.1 (2011), 61-81.