Saman Nasir

SLSP2690: Racism, ethnicity, migration and decolonial studies.

Module Convenor: Dr Ipek Demir

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This essay will be interrogating the relationship between culture and riots, using the case studies of the 2001 Northern town riots and the 2011 England riots. In uncovering the intersection of culture with riots, this essay will unpick the argument of culture and crime in general, which has often been characterised through racialised terms, but also has class dimensions. Firstly, to determine whether there is a relationship between culture and riots, the contextual background of each riot will be constructed; with their wider socio-economic and political systems. In doing so, the role of culture will be centralised within riots, alongside the argument of cultural difference and post-analysis narratives of culture. Whilst concluding the relationship between culture and riots, this essay will seek to establish what type of relationship this is; whether it is one of correlation or causation.

Before delving into the case studies of both the 2001 and 2011 riots, the contextual background of riots must be considered, alongside wider sociological understandings of crime. Historically, riots are not a modern phenomenon, they have existed in most societies and have represented a certain public disturbance, which is rooted in crime. Riots, according to Akram can be understood "as a form of political protest in response to structural inequality" (2014, p.376), both the 2001 Northern town riots and 2011 England riots exemplify a particular interest of protest, as well as resistance. To contextually analyse riots, some academics have used theoretical frameworks to understand the motivations and significance of crime and deviance; for example, Young's 'chaos of rewards' (2007), Gilroy's 'cultural racism' and ethnic absolutism (1993; 2013) and other wider debates on the workings of crime, class status and structural inequalities. Riots, being a type of crime, follow the theoretical framework of crime and deviance; they represent a violent outbreak and deviance from mainstream society. This can mean crime can be understood by a means that is not produced by culture, but climatically engaged with the systems of culture, as crime itself is perceived as a subculture. Subsequently, the relationship between culture and riots is preordained by the positioning of crime as a subculture; this subculture can be a representation of political protest and resistance. The deviators who take part in crime are characterised as risky groups, and

consequently become ‘othered’, the conceptualisation of the rioters will be interrogated later to understand their motivations and how they become labelled.

Strengthening the context of riots, the following sections will seek to scrutinize the role of culture and crime, specifically through the case of riots, by understanding culture through its class, racial and societal systems. To begin with, culture will be scrutinized through its manifestation in social class, alongside Young’s (2007) theory of the ‘chaos of reward’, structural inequalities and ideas of deprivation. Whilst structural inequalities seem to be central to riots, the “symbolic order of these inequalities” is crucial in completely determining the actions and motivations of both the riots and rioters (Sutterlüty, 2014, p.41). The language of the symbolic order of structural inequalities resonates with the workings of class, ideas of symbolic capital and the distributions of wealth, which will be theorised alongside each riot. The context of class will be unpacked with its association to riots and the role it plays in creating a culture of relative deprivation, which becomes a means for political protest and resistance. Young’s framework of the ‘chaos of reward’, rationalises structural inequalities which are produced through the unequal distribution of wealth in modern societies (2007). This analysis can exemplify the type of culture created in the working class, as a consequence of structural inequalities. Rioters are primarily characterised as being from working classes; Young draws upon his concept of ‘liberal othering’ as creating the poor as an underclass, in which their “crime and deviance is the focus of the othering” (2007, p.6). With crime being negotiated through class terms, riots can therefore be associated with the culture of working classes, yet this does not mean crime is solely engaged by them. Following Merton’s theory on crime and deviance, Young concludes that “crime occurs where there is cultural inclusion and structural exclusion” (1991, p.394). Thus, the understanding of structural inequality through cultural inclusion can form networks between culture and riots. Cultural inclusion within modern society situates itself through the growing mass media, popular culture and technology which makes such goals universally accessible, despite them not being attainable (Young, 1999, p.395). A culture of inclusion mediated by modern systems can thereby create relative deprivation, feelings of resentment and inequalities. Ultimately, the theorisation of a culture of exclusion can be used to discover and establish the relationship between culture and riots.

To interrogate the relationship between culture and riots, the association of culture will now be investigated through concepts of cultural difference and racialised understandings of culture. Initially, when culture is located within riot discourse, it is primarily understood as the culture acquired by the rioters, but culture can also be understood as a response to wider society. This essay will attempt to scrutinize the reasonings behind such cultures. In both the 2001 Northern town riots and 2011 English riots, there is an imminent discussion of culture, and more significantly ‘cultural difference’, which marks the symbolic structuring of ‘cultural racism’ in society; with the arguments of the legitimacy of national identity for non-white beings (Alexander, 2004, p.542;

Gilroy et al, 2019). Hence, when such riots and disturbances involve ethnic minorities, with unstable national identities, the idea of national belonging reproduces through the language of cultural racism, which extends itself to understandings of crime, which will be analysed later. Therefore, the relationship between culture and riots, when concerning minority, migrant and 'othered' groups becomes indisputably intimate. When "violence is rationalised as something external to British culture", those with unsteady British national identity, like ethnic minorities, are burdened with the accountability of blame (Hirschler, 2012, p.75). Cultural racism has become structurally institutionalised, which then means it transgresses into systematic understandings of racism, evidently, these workings of racism have followed post-riot analysis, government responses and in conviction patterns. In the case of the 2001 and the 2011 riots, the question of culture is something that is predominantly immersed by the rioters, so the relationship between culture and riots that has been constructed by public and media discourses can be interpreted as one of causation.

With the assistance of cultural racism, crime has fundamentally become characterised in racial terms; the absolute sense of culture which works alongside ethnic absolutism has as a consequence marginally othered ethnic minorities and their habitual cultures (Gilroy, 1993). Ethnic absolutism within the British society works through what Gilroy calls 'cultural insiderism' whereby an "absolute sense of difference" is constructed (Gilroy, 1993, pp.3 and 6). Ethnic absolutism works in a way that migrant settlers and 'others' are seen as an 'illegitimate intrusion' that is 'intoxicating' British society, which was previously "peaceful as it was ethnically undifferentiated" (Gilroy, 1993, p.7; Hirschler, 2012, p.70). As a result of ethnic absolutism, culture becomes organised by racial or ethnic precepts, and this has certainly extended to perceptions on crime. Stuart Hall's theorisation of the Black 'muggers' which interrogated the black identity as inevitably being linked to a criminal master status theoretically illustrates racialised perceptions of crime (2013). The racialisation of crime is a mechanism that correlates culture with crime, in this case being riots, by designating crime and certain criminal behaviours to a culture.

As the context of riots has now been investigated, alongside theoretical understandings of culture, class, race and crime, this essay will now focus on the case studies of the 2001 Northern town riots and 2011 England riots.

In attempting to scrutinize the 2001 Northern town riots, this essay seeks to interrogate the 'race riots' by delving into the contextual background of the disturbances, with their eco-political roots, then the positioning of culture. The relationship between culture and the 2001 riots will be explored through its manifestations; in the form of cultural differences, the culture of the Asian-Muslim rioters; the culture of wider society and lastly the culture created post-riot. The 2001 Northern town riots of Bradford, Burnley and Oldham were disturbances of racialised tensions between the Asian-

Muslim community and White community. The disturbances of the summer in 2001 were self-evidently of racial premises which Kundani has concluded was "the violence of communities fragmented by colour lines" (2001, no pagination). These 'race riots' were inherently composed of the 'mobilizations of neo-fascists' (Bagguley and Hussain, 2008, p.2).

When looking at the motivations of the riot, the wider economic context acts as a determinant, with the textile industries in northern towns being central to this. The textile industry served a globalising operation which was the "common thread binding the white and Asian working class" but, the repercussions of its 'collapse' meant that "economic forces...sabotaged ethnic integration" (Kundani, 2001, no pagination; Lea, 2013, p.192). The consequential collapse meant the White and South-Asian communities were forced to 'turn inwards' into itself, which traces socio-economic patterns of these communities vivid 'self-segregation' (Kundani, 2001; Ouseley, 2001). The economic disadvantages, alongside the discriminatory housing policies lead to segregation in housing, meaning that the "geography of the Northern towns became a chessboard of mutually exclusive areas", this continued in other aspects of social life, like education, thus reproducing generations of culturally segregated White and Asian communities (Kundani, 2001, no pagination). The institutional workings of cultural racism then localised themselves, as the community segregation was understood as the 'self-segregation' of Asian communities, which Kundani has concluded created a self-fulfilling prophecy (2001). Thus, the engrained economic strains existed long before the riots, but they are ever present within the context of the riots, serving as an eco-political backdrop to the disturbances and acting as an active motive by legitimising the reproductions of structural inequality.

Following from the socio-economic roots of the riots, the motivations of the 2001 riots can be recognised as rooted in working class economic struggles, specifically with the failure of the textile industry, which has fostered generations of structural inequality in northern England towns. Here, the class make-up of the rioters, predominantly being from working classes, follows traditional understandings of class and crime by supporting Young's theory of the 'chaos of reward' which as a consequence creates a criminal subculture; the rioting can be described as a form of resistance to such structural inequalities (2007). The structural housing inequalities in Bradford meant that only 2 percent of Bradford's council housing was allocated to Asians, thus meaning they were forced to seek out the safety within their own community, with cheap property prices acting as a further incentive for them to buy houses in these poor areas which encouraged a "white flight" endorsed by the local state (Kundani, 2001). Such prejudicial housing policies show the coherent whiteness of class that is entrenched before the riots; which acts as a mediator in creating racialised structural inequalities and culture of resentment amongst the Asian Muslims. Here, the way class identity is performed by Asian Muslims is understood as the way the 'chaos of reward' is amplified by the "chaos of identity" (Young, 2007, p.206). Though class has been interlinked with

ideas of deviance and has also been central in the 2001 Northern town riots, academic discussions didn't pay much attention to the role of this. Pilkington concluded how the consequential analysis of the riots focused on the importance of community cohesion, whilst downplaying 'inequality,…economic factors and institutional racism' (2008, p.3).

Discourses have primarily understood the 2001 riots as racialised riots, and the racial tensions can be analysed as the undeniable Whiteness of British national identity through the confrontation between "ineluctable Asian-ness and a coherent white English/Britishness" (Alexander, 2004, p.538)., The narrative of 'race riots' emphasises cultural differences between British-Asians and White Brits through the discourse of national identity. Alongside this, the mobilization of neo-fascist parties like the British National Party (BNP) and far right National Front (NF), ultimately highlight the extremes of national identity and nationalistic ideologies (Bagguley and Hussain, 2008). The positioning of national identity within post-riot discourses is another mechanism of associating culture with crime. The Asian Muslim rioters were ultimately criminalised by media discourses, but Bagguley and Hussain have concluded how selective media reporting left out the threatened NF march (2008, p.60). Such selective and biased media reporting, which is widely normalised in the media, reproduces tendencies to racialise crime.

In attempting to understand the riots, cultural differences and the context of culture, many discourses have concluded how culture has pervasively acted as a catalyst that caused the riots to occur. However, the relationship between culture and riots has often been constructed in a tendentious way; with culture being individualised by the rioters, as a characteristic that is inevitably internalised by their own identity, which in the case of the 2001 Northern town riots, is the Asian-Muslim culture. The culture ingrained by Asian-Muslims through their ethnic identity is understood to be the source of their rioting. Alexander conveys the very nature of these Asian-Muslim identities, concluding how they are 'expected to renounce their culture to become citizens', but are unable to renounce their ethnicity, through their 'mode of being' (2004, p.541). Therefore, the post-riot analysis which uses the justification of cultural differences, like the example of language, is dysfunctional because it stems from the whiteness of national identity (Gilroy, 2013). British culture cannot accommodate to the culture of 'others', the inherent whiteness of British culture built through nationalistic practises means their belonging and citizenship becomes impossible when nationality is aligned to race (Gilroy, 2013). Ultimately, "British society…refuse[s] to accept their 'Britishness", yet makes them prove their belonging by assimilating to British culture, adopting the English language; and post 9/11, following and learning British values (Mythen et al, 2009, p.746). The active "cultural othering of the immigrant population", acts as a tool which systematically makes them more receptive to a deviant label (Young, 2003, p.455). The Asian-Muslim rioters thus became characterised as risky populations through the characterisation of what Alexander calls the new 'Asian folk devil' (2000, cited in Alexander, 2004, p.532). Much like Hall's

theorisation of the Black 'mugger' (2013), the formulation of Alexander's 'Asian folk devil' (2000) illustrates how the Asian's criminality becomes the "central expression of their alien status" (cited in Alexander, 2004, p.532; Gilroy, 2013, p.108). Hence, this reinforces the systems of ethnic absolutism by assimilating crime with certain cultures and races (Gilroy, 1993).

Following the narrative of cultural difference, the use of the English language by ethnic minorities is stressed as an engagement to authenticate the belonging to British national identity. When analysing the 2001 riots, official discourses such as the Denham report (2001) have fixated on "the issue of language proficiency– or lack of it" (Alexander, 2004, p.539) as an explanatory factor in the weakening or lack of community cohesion by the Pakistani and Bangladeshi minorities. This argument of language as a premise for the Bradford minorities 'self-segregation' essentially embellishes engrained understandings of national identity, and the indisputable question of legitimacy to 'authentic national membership' for racialised minorities (Gilroy, 2013, p.46; Ouseley, 2001, p.3).

Alongside racialised cultural differences, post-riot discourses have centralised religious differences as a stimulant for the riots, segregating the Pakistani and Bangladeshi South-Asian minorities, for their Muslim faith. Thus portraying how the culture of religious minorities, in this case being Islam, interconnects with the understandings of riots. The significantly higher conviction rates of the Asian rioters, compared to White rioters demonstrates what Allen has conceptualised as 'community sentencing' of Muslim communities after 9/11, which subsequentially has criminalised these groups through a 'law and order' framework (2003, p.9). So, the penalties of the Asian-Muslims can be determined as the intensifying 'demonization', victimisation' and 'blame culture' of the Muslims (Alexander, 2004, p.542; Allen, 2003, p.9; Mythen et al, 2009). Consequently, this reveals the role of Islamophobia within the context of the riots, but it also positioned itself in post-riot discourses; for example, Walter Chamberlain (2001) categorised the Muslim Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups from the more "successfully assimilated" Indians (cited in Alexander, 2004, p.531). The segregation within the South Asian community exemplifies how the intersectionality of religious and ethnic identities perform for different experiences of identity. Other discourses also highlighted the role of a supposed religious culture which obstructed the 'community cohesion' of minority groups, yet this fails to explain the reasonings for White-rioters who may not have a religious culture; comprehensively the argument of religious culture is another way to problematize the identities of the rioters and attach crime to minority groups.

When understanding the relationship between culture and riots, riots can be understood as consequently creating or impacting culture through relevant disturbances. The culture created post-riot, can be analysed from Hussain and Bagguley's findings of British Pakistani Muslims experiences after 7/7, with the 'funny looks' and intensification of hostility and Islamophobia (2013,

p. 28). The structuring of racism manifested through post-riot analysis and the prejudicial and racial conviction rates, illustrates how riots have a consequential effect on culture, like how the culture of ethnic minorities comes to be perceived, in doing so, culture renders the reasonings of crime through race.

To bring the analysis of the 2001 Northern town riots case study to a close, there is unquestionably a relationship between culture and riots. This relationship established by media discourses and the wider public has an inclination to see the relationship between culture and riots as one of causation, though this can be argued to an extent, culture cannot be exclusively condemned as a characteristic by the rioters. Despite the rioters participating in cultures, there is a reasoning for their participation which commonly is a response to the milieu around them, in the case of the 2001 Northern town riots, it is socio-economic collapse of the textile industries which produced generations of structural and racial inequality.

This section will seek to examine the 2011 England riots, and understand its relationship with and to culture, by firstly establishing the wider socio-political context through the argument of a growing culture of consumption. With the background knowledge, a framework can be created to explore the organisation of culture within the 2011 riots, alongside the intersections of cultural difference, class and race. As well as this, there will be a discussion regarding policing and its positioning within the riots. The 2011 England riots, were a sequence of disturbances that took place between 6 and 11 August, starting in various boroughs in London and then extending across other cities in England, such as Birmingham, Manchester, Bristol, Liverpool, etc. One of the first 'trigger' moments of the England riots, was the shooting of Mark Duggan, by the Metropolitan police in Tottenham on 4 August (Briggs, p.28). The riots consequently created a 'big' political outbreak, with politicians and the wider public confused; knowing the riot, but not the rioters (Roberts et al, 2011, p.1).

Whilst the 2011 English riots, similarly to the 2001 Northern town riots, have racial tones flowing through them, they have popularly been contextualised as riots of consumer culture, with Moxon concluding how the riots were reflective of "a society that is becoming increasingly consumerist in its orientation" (2011, p.183). Highstreet shops were robbed and damaged, which has been understood as the 'looting' practises of the rioters. The outbreak was not the rebellion against consumerism, rather it was an 'attempt to join in', and the mundane consumerist tendencies exemplify this wider argument of consumerism (Bauman, 2012, p.12). The looting and consumer behaviours were not sporadic, rather it was making a statement in relation to consumer products, and their symbolic value, which will be unpicked later. Whilst consumer culture is central to the riots, they have not simply caused the riots in an unquestionable way, to understand them; the

context of wider society, which has inherently produced and nurtured consumer culture through neo-liberal ideology has to be considered (Akram, 2014; Moxon, 2011).

In unpicking the 2011 riots, the argument of consumerism has to be contextualised with wider practices that mediate consumerist society, such as the symbolic reasonings for this consumerism, which lie within structural inequalities and structural exclusion. The rioters had material motives, but their symbolic motivations also lie within the context of wider socio-economic roots, like the resentment of relative deprivation, structural inequality, and frustration of their systematic injustice within the context of a neo-liberal society. Bauman (2011) has highlighted the riots which were reflective of the "growing social inequality, where young people felt left out of 'consumer culture' (cited in Solomos, p.11). The framework of Young's (1999) 'cultural inclusion and structural exclusion' can exemplify the motivations of the rioters; as "despite their obvious economic marginalization, they remain incorporated into the competitive individualist culture" (Treadwell et al, 2013, p.14). The idea of structural exclusion is illustrated in LSE's 'Reading the Riots' with 86% of rioters feeling that poverty was an important factor that caused the riots (Roberts et al, 2011, p.11). The role of "neo-liberalism's marginalizing processes" has structurally encouraged the widening of the gap between the poor and rich, and thus, by its very nature, it creates a culture of resentment (Treadwell et al, 2013, p. 12). So, consumerism can be seen as a means to express the symbolic motivations of structural inequality, with the rioters having nowhere of taking their built up "anger and resentment" to the shops (Treadwell et al, 2013, p.3). Using the framework of symbolic motivations and structural inequality, it is evident how the workings of society can reproduce a sub-culture of frustration, in this case being the riots which perform as an engagement in political protest to represent their frustration.

Post-riot reports, like the Home Office's, associated the rioters with their socio-economic status, especially with their educational status, and found that the young rioters were 'more likely to be from deprived areas, have special educational needs and lower educational attainment' (Berman, 2011, p.4). This informs us on how the systematic workings of inclusion and exclusion are reproduced within the structures of society which regenerate such symbolic patterns. On a wider social level, the workings of symbolic exclusion work cohesively with the 'chaos of reward' that is ubiquitous in modern societies (Young, 2007). Thus, modern British society can be interrogated as producing and mediating a culture that allows structural inequalities and the symbolic order of these inequalities to exist.

Although consumer culture was a pinnacle argument for the 2011 England riots, the role of race has to be interrogated, with the coherent racialised understandings of crime and culture, derived from theories of national identity, cultural racism and ethnic absolutism. Muri and Neal (2011) are critical of the positioning of race in post-riot discourses, with race simultaneously being centralised,

then being secondary or overlooked; following this account, Solomos observed how media and public discourses "shifted away from issues about race and policing to a wider set of social and cultural symbols" (2011, p.210). With the analysis of the riots, Muri and Neal argue that there was a process of 'deradicalisation' because of the ethnic makeup of the riots, having similar numbers of White and Black rioters; however, the ethnic build-up of rioters does not validate the context of race within the riots (2011, p.218; Berman, 2011). The 2011 England riots drew upon strong associations to the role of ethnic absolutism, particularly in the context of racialised understandings of crime and culture. The post-riot analysis of the England 2011 riots drew upon the 'invasive Black culture', Paul Routledge, in particular blamed the "pernicious culture of hatred around rap music" (Hirschler, 2012, p.70; Routledge, 2011, no pagination). Notably, David Starkey's Newsnight statement; "the whites have become blacks" depicts the workings of ethnic absolutism, despite having both Black and White rioters, the disturbances were constructed as something produced and cultured by Black groups (cited in, Hirschler, 2012, p.70). Consequentially, this propagates the tendency to align criminality with race and the culture of racialised beings.

The discussion regarding criminality, concentrated on the role of gang culture, specifically post-riot analysis which focused on gang culture as an explanation for the riots. This was a problematic argument as it was inherently narrated through the language of race and racism. David Cameron said, "gangs were at the heart of the protests and have been behind the coordinated attacks" (2011, cited in Roberts et al, 2011, p.21), but Newburn et al concluded how gangs had little involvement in the violence and looting (p.10). The attention on criminality and gang culture meant wider 'social or economic issues' were oversighted, as there was a "sense of surprise and incomprehension" of the causes of the riots (Muri and Neal, 2011; Solomos, 201, p.11). Overlooking wider society, along with social, economic and political issues is a practice in mainstream media discourses, when fuelling a moral panic, but as a consequence it influences the relationship between culture and riots.

This section will aim to discuss the role of policing within the 2011 London riots. One major issue to arise from the riots, was the matter of policing; with the first incident being the shooting of Mark Duggan, and the continual attacks in relation to the police and its institutions. The argument of policing has robust ties to both the riots and rioters, with 90% of the people arrested having previous contact with the police, thus exemplifying the relationship between policing and riots (Berman, 2014). Black groups are overrepresented in stop and search practises, though only making 11% of the total London population, 28% had been stopped and searched, such prejudicial and racist practices can create resentment, anger and hatred towards the police (Roberts et al, 2001, p.19). The shooting of Duggan was a stimulant to the disturbances, yet only 51% of the guardian interviewees felt that it was an important cause of the riot, in comparison to 75% of the rioters; this signifies the statistical difference between the opinions of rioters and the general public

(2001, Roberts et al, p.11). The motivations of the rioters can be analysed as the outbreak against a culture of policing, specifically police misconduct and accountability, which is supported by post-riot analysis that manifests wider social attitudes of the attention to police institutions of the Metropolitan Police within the riots.

To complete the inquiry on the 2011 England riots, there appears to be an overt relationship between culture and riots, which is recognised as a relationship of causation. A culture of resentment and frustration, which is mediated and produced by societies eco-political issues, has as a consequence caused the riots to occur. Primarily, growing consumerism and capitalist society played a vital role in provoking the riots to occur, but the relationship between rioters and the police institutions acted as an initial stimulus for the riots to begin.

To conclude this essay, the association between culture and riots has been scrutinized and there is undoubtedly a relationship between culture and riots. The relationship between culture and riots can positively be positioned as one of causation, the uncertainty arises when unpacking the reasonings behind the causation. Though post-riot and media discourses may identify the causation of riots as culture, there is a wider argument for this culture existing, which lies within the social, economic and political contexts of society. Fundamentally, society mediates culture and therefore has an active role in the way it is produced and performed. Hence, the relationship can be understood to be constructed differently through different perspectives; rioters may feel that wider society creates a culture for riots to exist, but riot discourses have concluded how riots are caused by culture, dominantly being the culture of rioters. When crime has been organised through racial terms, its subsequent relation to culture becomes racialised. This structuring of the racialisation of crime is a mechanism which aligns culture with riots, which consequently has an effect on the relationship between culture and riots. In both case studies, the riots are concerned with structural inequalities which act as a rationale behind the riots, being the reason for rioters' resistance, anger and frustration with structural systems within society. For this reason, riots symbolise a particular political protest and represent a subculture with their own particular values. Conclusively, the relationship between culture and riots is not as straightforward as discourses may suggest, as culture and riots are inextricably linked in the different stages, roots and causes of riots.

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