The London Riots 2011:

Analyzing framing processes of the London riots

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This case study objective attempts to advance the understanding of the 2011 London riots by examining the diagnostic framing perspectives during the period the riots occurred. These diagnostic framing perspectives will be assessed through content analysis of articles on the London riots in five bestselling London newspapers. The diagnostic framing perspective used is inspired by Snow e.a., and is a framing variable assessed in previous research on for instance the 2005 French riots (Snow et al. 1988; Snow et al. 2007). My research based upon this previous research, supports the importance of frame variation of the London riots, and I will discuss the importance of the diagnostic framing process for the analysis of the London riots. Moreover, I will discuss the possible consequences of diagnostic framing for the prognostic and motivational frames designed to address and cope with the London riots in its aftermath.

Diagnostic framing is the first step within frame analysis in which a problem is identified and possible blame factors are assigned. The second step is called prognostic framing which is aiming at solutions and ways of assessing the problem, where after the third frame is called motivational framing in which people or institutions take actions to cope with the problem (Snow et al. 1986).

The framing concept, or in particular diagnostic framing, central to this research, was reintroduced by David Snow et al., in their article assessing the 2005 French riots in 2007. According to Snow et al., there was an absence of frame variation within framing processes in formerly conducted research on framing perspectives on social movements and political communication (Gamson et al. 1982, Snow et al. 1986: Entman 1993).[1]

Recent research on the 2011 London riots has primarily focused on the influence of social media on the scale of the riots and the vast spread of the riots across London and

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[1] Entman, Robert M. "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm". *Journal of Communication* 43.4. 51- 58, 1993; Snow et al. "Frame Alignment Processes, Micro-mobilization, and Movement Participation". *American Sociological Review* 51.4. 464-481, 1986.

England (Briggs et al. 2012).[2] However, no research has been conducted as to examine how the content of articles written in newspapers during the London riots diagnostically framed the riots.

In this case study, I will conduct a comparative analysis of how different diagnostic frames of the 2011 London riots in five newspapers in London over a period between August 6 and August 10 were apparent. First, there will be an overview on the riots, followed by a discussion of the article of Snow et al., regarding the framing of the 2005 French riots. I will examine their article in order to point to relevant framing perspectives and theoretical frames on which I will base my research. I will use the article's way of processing data regarding diagnostic framing in diagrams, focusing on diagnostic framing to get more understanding on the framing processes of the London riots.

The 2011 London Riots

In the summer of 2011, between August 6 and 10, people took to the streets in several London cities and towns across England. Violence started after a peaceful march in Tottenham in reaction to the killing of Mark Duggan by a police officer on August 4. The initially peaceful march was held from Broadwater Farm to the Tottenham police station, organized by the acquainted and relatives of Duggan to demand justice. About 120 people marched from the Broadwater Farm to the Tottenham Police Station where a group of about 300 people demanded for a senior local police officer to speak and take responsibility for the police shooting. The gathered crowd stayed in front of the police station because of dissatisfaction with the officers available at the time. Violence erupted after the police attacked a juvenile who provoked the police by shouting and throwing dirt. Clashes with the police followed, and violence included the destruction of vehicles, houses and local businesses. In the days after the violent episode in Tottenham, several other parts of London witnessed disturbances, and violence spread to Hackney, Brixton, Chingford, Peckham, Enfield, Battersea, Croydon, Ealing, East Ham, and Oxford Circus. From August 8 until August 10, Birmingham, Bristol, Liverpool, and Manchester, also witnessed violence similar to other previously mentioned areas.[3]

According to a report of BBC news on August 15, approximately 3,100 people were arrested, of whom more than 1,000 have been charged. A total of 3,443 violations across

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[2] *The English Riots of 2011: A Summer of Discontent.* Daniel Briggs eds. London: Waterside Press, 2012.
[3] The description of events is a summary made after reading all the material regarding the London riots in news articles and academic articles.

London were linked to the disorder. Estimated property damage rose to a sum of £200 million. [4] Apart from the damage figures the riots have generated ongoing debate within the political, social and academic arenas regarding the causes and context in which the riots could have happened.

In the light of the 2005 French riots, the disturbances received national and international attention in media reports. As Snow et al. point out as well: "[…] attention went well beyond descriptive reportage to consideration of questions about causes and solutions" (Snow et al. 2007:386). This immediate call for causes and solutions was also strongly apparent in the British newspapers and media. The questions regarding the riots in both France and Great Britain seem to revolve around the question: What causes this sort of violence? All in all, a lot of the discussion in newspaper media revolves around this framing of the riots, in particular to what can be called diagnostic and prognostic framing of a social movement. This research will focus primarily on the initial newspaper responses during the riots, and how diagnostic framing becomes apparent in those articles.

Theoretical and Analytical Frameworks

Snow et al., conducted research using framing perspectives derived from Erving Goffman and conceptualizes framing as: "[…] rooted in the symbolic interactionist principle that meanings do not automatically attach themselves to the objects, events or experiences we encounter", but are intermediated through reporting about such objects or events (387). In other words, framing is not naturally attached to the problem of event itself but socially constructed through for instance media. The importance of context surrounding objects, events or experiences is thus important for how they are interpreted. This idea of framing influenced by contextual factors complex the meaning of the events and experiences. The role of newspaper media in this perspective can influence how an event is perceived, how context is justified or not, and how information is brought across to the public. These subjective representations decide or outline what is important and what is not, what is "[…] in-frame and out-of-frame" (Ibid.). The importance of this frame variation when it comes to riots is that the reflection can become transformative or unjustified, due to misrelating different actors within the riots. The determinants and their projection in newspaper articles determine what is done in relation to for instance riots, and define the riots as problematic and define the riot within a social movement.

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[4] "England's week of riots". BBC News. 15 August 2011.

Frame variation has been characterized by Snow and Benford in 1988 in terms of framing tasks; diagnostic, prognostic and motivational. Diagnostic framing entails the diagnoses of an event as being a problem causing a need for change, with the dimension of blame attached to it. Prognostic framing focuses on the possible solution of the problem diagnosed, often accompanied by a tactic or plan that has to be carried out. Motivational framing brings forward the motivation or ideas triggering engaging and correcting the problematic activities. These different framing tasks are often in dispute with each other and subject of political, cultural and social opinion.

In the case of the French riots, Snow et al., mostly engaged with diagnostic and prognostic framing in French newspapers (388). As I hinted in the introduction, my research focusing on the British newspapers during the riots will center on diagnostic framing. In the articles I will analyze, prognostic and motivational framing are not (yet) expressed or only within the diagnostic frame to justify the objected cause or to justify the blaming of a group, person or situation. In my opinion, timeframe is strongly influencing the way of framing apparent in the media. In the short period of time in which the violence erupted, there is almost no sign of any prognostic or motivational framing in the British newspapers I will discuss later. Moreover, diagnostic framing in itself can be seen as the most important step within frame analysis as it is needed for the prognostic and motivational framing to take place. Without a diagnostic frame or analyzing such a frame, the prognostic and motivational frames seem ungrounded. Therefore, I do think diagnostic framing is the most important frame variation as it likely determines future prognostic and motivational frames. The frame variation with all three steps pointed out by Snow et al., can, in my opinion, only be discerned when research is conducted over a more stretched period of time.

The importance of diagnostic framing in newspapers concerning the London riots can be shown by Snow et al., when they refer to research from Gamson and Wolfsfield regarding the "transactional" aspect between a social movement or event and the media (Ibid.). The 'transactionality' of an event referred to in the newspaper media is influenced by time, and determines the frame variation apparent in the articles and is reflected back on the event. The intersection Snow et al., debate for within their research on the French riots, is on the intersection of social movements and the newspaper media, to examine frame variation among different actors. In this research the 'transactionality' is only apparent on a smaller scale by examining the intersection of diagnostic framing and the event of the London riots.

Snow et al., point out in their analytical objective the importance of ideology in relation to political processes and action. This might be even more important within the

analysis of British newspapers know for their outspoken political attachments. These political preferences, influence the framing apparent in the article, however cannot be proven based on the diagnostic framing analysis I conduct here. Nevertheless, it is also impossible to leave out any political affiliation, as I will discuss later in the discussion section.

As a second theoretical concern of influence, Snow et al., address the contextual circumstances and trends surrounding the riots. Correlation of unemployment, migration and poverty with riots was important during the French riots of 2005. This contextual analysis of the riots will be incorporated in the categories or groups I will cluster, only as a possible cause or blame factor addressed in an article. As will show later, the London riots is not as much framed on structural causes, because of the shorter time period researched. This shows the intersection of time and context.

The third consideration is the relation of people to the event. Snow et al., focus on different countries and their opinion on the riots connected to political and economical interest of the country in France and their diagnosis of blaming the state or the individuals in the riots. As this research only focuses on national newspapers, this consideration will be left out. The blaming perspectives will be analyzed in the newspaper articles. As Snow et al., state: "[…] state actors will be more likely to blame the riots on affected group, such as immigrants and youth, and less likely to see themselves or their policies as responsible" (390). I will incorporate this in the blaming analysis, by considering who is blaming who in the articles. The role of the government and social media in this case can be seen as a relationship to the event.

The fourth theoretical consideration centers on time, in which Snow et al., do account for the fact that framing is influenced by the course of the riots. However, they still argue for the appearance of both diagnostic and prognostic framing in the initial responses from the media. They argue for the prognostic framing to be initially short term and centered on long term solutions. I will only focus on the articles published during the riots, which show almost no prognostic framing, except for one newspaper article.

The central question in this research will be:

How are the London riots diagnostically framed in five British newspapers from the 6th of August until the 10th of August?

To answer this question I will first outline my methods and analytical tools, followed by the results of the research, a discussion of the results and a conclusive answer.

Methods

The results presented in table 1 are derived from a content analysis of British newspapers articles from five bestselling papers over a period of four days: 6 August 2011 up to and including 10 August 2011. This is the period in which the riots took place and subsided. I chose newspaper articles because of the open access still available after more than a year has passed since the London riots. Other social media, for instance Twitter, Facebook and blogs were altered in the aftermath of the London riots, and therefore lost their usability regarding initial diagnostic framing. Table 1 shows the newspapers and their orientation and number of diagnostic framings. I chose these particular newspapers because of their wide readership and orientation to different groups of people to give a more inclusive analysis. I used LexisNexis as search engine, and searched on 'London riots'. The total of coded framings is 243, derived from approximately 100 articles written and published during the time frame mentioned above.

Table 1: British newspapers, political position, orientation and number of articles

Newspaper	Political position	Orientation	Number of frames	Number of articles
The Times	Right	Middle/Upper class	39	12
The Guardian	Left	Middle/Upper class	81	23
The Daily Telegraph	Right	Middle class	35	11
The Sun	Left/Right	Lower/Middle class	59	34
Daily Mirror	Left	Lower/Middle class	29	20
Total			243	100

Each source/ article was coded for a number of diagnostic framing elements divided over two main categories: non- structural or structural diagnostic framing of causes and the operator of the diagnostic framing of blame i.e. who is speaking. It is possible for one article to articulate

different speakers and therefore more than one diagnostic frame can be apparent in one article. Apart from the number of articles, the diagnostic frames are coded to incorporate all diagnostic frames.

Possible diagnostic frames are divided into categories to retrieve data from the articles. Snow et al., also used different categories on separate levels to analyze the French riots. In order to examine the London riots, I have altered the categories and I will focus on the non-structural and structural diagnostic framing. Moreover, Snow et al., do not account for their categories in theoretical argumentation, which I will do for my categories. Each of the categories can be assessed on three levels. I will first give the frame apparent in the articles as words, for instance 'looter' can be subscribed to the category underclass. As a second layer I will assess the theory surrounding these words, for instance the social background associated with a 'looter'. This second level also displays the person or group expressing this diagnostic framing. In the third and final level, I will discuss the academic and sometimes philosophical patterns ascribed to framing the riots under underclass.

Non-structural diagnostic framing:

'Underclass': Underclass is defined by words such as 'looters', 'mindlessness', 'immigrant losers', 'lowlifes' and 'criminals'.

According to David Cameron this category of people is to blame for the devastation and criminal injustice of the London riots. This diagnostic framing of the identity of the 'criminals', profiled possible 'offenders' as outside of society in a one-dimensional perspective. This single explanation as a policy racializes the crowd or mob as 'other' and 'non-British', confining the 'radical' to one particular social background. This frame or diagnosis is mostly done by every layer of society when it comes to the first days of the riots. One media example is seen in the national broadcast of historian David Starkey on the BBC, in assessing that the young white working class has become black, and Jamaican intrusion in England caused this.

The theoretical background assessing this kind of framing or categorizing can be seen in the argument of Geoffrey Pearson. He points to the pre-riot sentiments of moral panic within Britain: " [G]angs, shootings, stabbings, family dysfunction, lack of community cohesion, and the hovering background ambience of 'gansta rap' music.[5] Pearson shows how diagnostic frames often point towards the 'lost generation' of youths, since the Victorian age.

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[5] Geoffrey Pearson. "Everything changes, Nothing moves: The Longue Durée of Social Anxieties about Youth Crime. *The English Riots of 2011: A Summer of Discontent.* Daniel Briggs eds. London: Waterside Press, 2012.

Moral decay is in almost every crisis pushed forward as a cause and caused by some sort of generational gap. Pearson points to the example of Starkey and many others through history that all judged foreignness and troublesome youths as connected with one another: "[T]he Americanization of the Teds in the 1950s or the Hollywood inspired delinquents of the inter-war years, the street Arabs and English Hottentots of the 1840s, or the late Victorian inspiration of giving hooligans an Irish name".[6]

In "Riots in Retrospective: Immigration and the Crisis of the 'Other'", Steven Hirschler connects this moral collapse as put forward by Pearson, with immigration laws and 'othering' of the London riots.[7] "The 'alien' offender and the reinforcing of Britishness become apparent in the political and media coverage of the London riots according to Hirschler. This can be shown with the example given above from Starkey in assessing 'savagery' or youth crime with qualities brought to Britain by 'blacks' or 'non-British' foreigners.

'Anarchism': Anarchism as a word itself is often used as a diagnostic frame, combined with interviewed residents and the rioters themselves. Sentences as 'fuck the police' or 'the police sucks' are often seen in the newspaper with a middle class or lower class readership. The London School of Economics (LSE) in corporation with The Guardian reports on the focus on police; "[…] many of those involved said they felt like they were participating in explicitly anti-police riots". "Policing" can be seen as the most significant cause of the riots, so concluded the survey.[8] The shooting on 4 August 2011 of Mark Duggan during arrest was planned by The Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) as part of Operation Trident. This operation investigates crime within Afro-Caribbean community.[9]

Axel Klein addresses the issue of policing as a causal factor in the outbreak of riots: "What we can learn from the 2011 riots is that tactical errors by police officers on the ground become amplified against structural policing deficits, and can be a fuse for social unrest, even revolution".[10] Klein argues how questions and uncertainty about the functions of the police

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[6] Pearson. "Everything changes, Nothing moves: The Longue Durée of Social Anxieties about Youth Crime. 2012, 61.

[7] Steven Hirschler. "Riots in Retrospective: Immigration and the Crisis of the 'Other'". *The English Riots of 2011: A Summer of Discontent.* Daniel Briggs eds. London: Waterside Press, 2012.

[8] Lewis, P., Newburn, T., Taylor, M., Ball, J. "Rioters say anger with police fuelled summer unrest". *The Guardian;* 5 Dec. 2011. London.

[9] "Tottenham in flames as protesters riot". *The Guardian* (London). 6 Aug. 2011. Retrieved 6 Aug. 2011, by Wikipedia.

[10] Axel Klein. "More Police, Less Safety?: Policing as a Causal Factor in the Outbreak of Riots and Public Disturbances". *The English Riots of 2011: A Summer of Discontent.* Daniel Briggs eds. London: Waterside Press, 2012.

causes for trust relations between the police and the population to erode. Especially in Tottenham, where the riots started, the relation between the police and in particular the black community are nonexistent or merely tense.

Moreover, throughout history, youth of whatever background and police seem to collapse more easily because of generational miscommunication and misrepresentation of the youth through politics.[11] Residents and bystanders mostly claim a state of anarchism was possible due to a lack of police enforcement on the ground, or police not preventing mobs from stealing and vandalizing. This diagnostic frame is connected to the subject of blame, whereby the state is represented by the police, as seen in the results in table 2. The other side however, is that the riots were partly enabled by the police, whom, in their observing methods, often did not intervene due to the number of rioters, as will be shown in the discussion of the results.

'Social Mania': Reports state that BlackBerry Messenger (BBM) service was used by looters to organize and that rumors of Mark Duggan's killing on social media sites may have incited disturbances.[12]

Nevertheless, BBM was also used by the police. Social media does create more connectivity among individuals and gives the possibility to organize on a bigger scale.[13] According to James Ball and Symeon Brown, BBM was the way of communicating during the riots. Specifically BBM was handy for networking. Many rioters owned a Blackberry and with its BBM services, messages are received immediately, making it quick without possible access from the public.[14] Other social media disputed for its role before and during the riots is Twitter.

Theoretically, Stephanie Alice Baker connects these new or relatively new media with

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[11] Axel Klein. "More Police, Less Safety?: Policing as a Causal Factor in the Outbreak of Riots and Public Disturbances". 2012, 141.

[12] Paul Lewis. "London riots – live blog". *The Guardian;* 8 Aug. 2011; Josh Halliday. "London riots: how BlackBerry Messenger played a key role". *The Guardian;* 8 Aug. 2011; Josh Halliday. "London riots: BlackBerry to help police probe Messenger looting 'role'". *The Guardian;* 8 Aug. 2011.

[13] Jurgenson, N. "When atoms meet bits: social media, the mobile web and augmented revolution". *Future Internet* 4: 83–91. 2012.

[14] Ball, J, Brown, S. "Why BlackBerry Messenger was rioters' communication method of choice". London: *The Guardian;* 7 Dec. 2011. Retrieved 28 Mar. 2012 by Wikipedia.

a moral panic about the role these technological devices can play in stimulating the violence.[15] This moral panic is the same as discussed in the category of underclass, in which people believe society as a whole is collapsing. Baker argues how debates about the role of new social media in the London riots focus solely on the negative implications due to the moral panic caused by the riots. The mobilization and communication possibilities are exaggerated and seen as hostile to society. Moreover, 'copycat' behavior is often mentioned in the newspaper articles, inspired by the social media such as Twitter and Facebook.

Overall, these non-structural diagnostic frames seem to revolve around the issue of moral panic in the first reactions to the London riots. A general disbelief in the violence occurring in the first days of the riots makes people afraid of society itself, and the malfunctioning of its legislators, portrayed by the police. Moreover, it is debatable if these non-structural frames are really non-structural as is argued by the different academics in light of historical developments, which will be addressed in the discussion of the research material later on.

Different from the non-structural framing, structural framing is not as obviously invisible in the text by simple words. Except for the category of race riots, the other two categories need explanation within the articles, whereby most of the time an academic is introduced.

Structural diagnostic framing:

'Race riots': The riots in Tottenham were blamed on disturbed relations between the police force and the black community.[16] It can also be argued that police strategies of Stop and Search especially among black youngsters raised resentment against the police. The University of Nottingham researched on race relations in Britain, and claims that they have deteriorated since the riots and that prejudice towards ethnic minorities is on the rise, due to groups as the English Defence League and the British National Party whom were said "to be exploiting the situation".[17] An incident in Birmingham, which killed three Asian men by an

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[15] Stephanie Alice Baker. "Policing the Riots: New Social Media as Recruitment, Resistance, and Surveillance". *The English Riots of 2011: A Summer of Discontent.* Daniel Briggs eds. London: Waterside Press, 2012.

[16] Jackson, P. "London riots: Tensions behind unrest revealed". BBC 7 Aug. 2011; Seymour, R. "Over 1,000 Arrested in U.K. as Anger over Inequality, Racism Boils Over into Insurrection". *DemocracyNow.com*. 10 Aug. 2011.

[17] Williams, D., Kisiel, R., Camber, R. "Right-wing extremists hijacking the vigilante patrols protecting against looters, warn police". *Daily Mail*; 11 Aug. 2011. London.

Afro-Caribbean driver, raised racial tensions between Afro-Caribbeans and Asians in Birmingham.[18] **"**Black culture" and its effects were discussed by historian David Starkey in *Newsnight* on the BBC, in which Starkey claimed the influence of black gangster and rap culture on youths of all races. He claimed "the recent riots happened because too many young white people had now become black".[19] However, he was not the only one who remarked on the high numbers of 'black' rioters compared to the demographics.[20] The Ministry of Justice provided demographic data during the riots in a report in February 2012. The statistics are showing the people charged of participation in riots up to 1 February 2012. The report shows that 41 percent of people brought before court identified as the White group, 39 percent from a Black ethnic group, 12 percent from Mixed ethnic group, 6 percent the Asian ethnic group, and 2 percent the Other ethnic group.[21]

As mentioned with the non-structural diagnostic frame of underclass regarding youth violence, a more structural frame focuses on the imbedded cultural differences within the population caused by immigration. Different from the non-structural frame, the structural diagnostic frame does account for historical context.

This historical determinism often implies the decay of British society from decolonization onwards. Where the non-structural framing focuses on current sentiment against youth, gangs and 'black scum', the structural framing places this sentiment in a multicultural problem. Multiculturalism as a term is a strongly contested concept in Great Britain and over the past 2 years seen as a failing of integration of ethnic minority groups.

==Class situation'==: The class situation is not so much put forward by the papers themselves, but mostly pushed forward by the academics and specialists in the articles. However, very few articles incorporated any sort of knowledge from specialists. Academics that do focus on the socio-economic factors mostly focus on unemployment and spending cuts by the government.

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[18] Wilson, A.N. "Legacy of a society that believes in nothing". *Daily Mail;* 13 Aug. 2011 London. Retrieved 13 Aug. 2011, by Wikipedia; Kerrins, S. "Sir Ian Botham: bring in corporal punishment and ban reality TV to save today's youth". *The Telegraph;* 24 Sep. 2011 London.

[19] "'The whites have become black' says David Starkey". BBC. 12 August 2011.

[20] "A reckoning - The black community wrestles with the causes of the riots". *The Economist*. 3 Sep. 2011.

[21] "Statistical bulletin on the public disorder of 6th-9th August 2011 full report". Ministry of Justice. Feb. 2012. PDF Web. URL: http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/statistics/criminal-justice-stats/august-public-disorder-stats-bulletin-230212.pdf.

Often mentioned is the social exclusion and inequality imbedded in society. Secretary Theresa May argued in a House of Commons debate on the riots that they were symptoms of dissatisfaction with social conditions, such as unemployment, illiteracy, and drug abuse.[22] Sarah Birch and Nicholas Allen's study focuses on three general types of causes: "Socio-demographic explanations; normative or value-based explanations; and political explanations".[23] They show in their article that economic deprivation and personal moral values could explain attitudes towards illegal behavior. Moreover, people's mistrust of political leaders and their disengagement are important factors. Society's inability to incorporate all layers of society in a unity state is problematic.

'Neo-liberal order': The last category is by far the most theoretical and academic frame that became apparent in this research. The academics in the newspapers agree with Winlow and Hall, and also argue the disengagement from politics due to the neoliberal order. The generation of rioters are of a post-political age, proclaimed by neoliberals as Fukuyama as the 'end of history', where consumer culture defines cultural and personal.[24] According to Ulrich Beck this post-political is a "second age of modernity"[and] is a magical password that is meant to open the doors to new conceptual landscapes. The whole world of nation sovereignty is fading away– including the 'container theory of society' on which most of the sociology of the first age of modernity is based upon".[25] That is why the rioters had no coherent political means to articulate their dissatisfaction caused by the marginalization and injustice. According to Hall, it is because of this missing of a coherent symbolism, which was destroyed by neoliberal and liberal-postmodernist changes since the 1980s, the rioters had only the shops to go to.[26] Zygmunt Baumann subscribes to this idea, and states that social inequality

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[22] "BBC – Democracy Live – In full: MPs debate England riots". BBC News. 11 Aug. 2011.

[23] Birch, S., Allen, N. *There will be burning and a-looting tonight: The social and political correlates of law-breaking.* 2011.
URL:http://www.essex.ac.uk/government/ethicsandintegrity/Birch%20Allen%20There%20will%20be%20burning%20and%20looting%2018%20Aug.pdf

[24] Fukuyama, F. (1992) *The End of History and the Last Man.* Harper Perennial: 1 Feb. 1993.; Hall, S., Winlow, S. Ancrum, C. *Criminal Identities and Consumer Culture: Crime, exclusion and the new culture of narcissism.* London: Willan/Routledge, 2008.

[25] Beck, U. "The cosmopolitan perspective: sociology of the second age of modernity" *The British Journal of Sociology.* 51. 1. Mar. 2000. 79–105.

[26] Hall, S. 'Consumer Culture and the Meaning of the Urban Riots in England', in Hall, S and Winlow, S. *New Directions in Criminological Theory*. London: Willan/Routledge. 2012.

through consumerism ("go back to normal becomes go back shopping") is a minefield, and rioters are defective and disqualified consumers.[27]

These structural diagnostic frames have a somewhat deterministic view of the riots within a development towards another social-cultural, economic and political society. Together with the non-structural diagnostic frames are these the categories I will use to analyze the newspaper articles of 5 newspapers for the period between 4 August and 10 August 2011.

Besides the categories I will also look at the speaker in the newspaper article, who is expressing the diagnostic frame. An article will be incorporated when it mentions the riots and when at least one diagnostic frame is mentioned.

Different sources expressing diagnostic frames:
- Media: International, national, BBC.
- British government: In office during the riots.
- British opposition: during the riots.
- Residents/participants: People living in the area/ Police, firemen, rioters, bystanders.
- Academia: Professors or doctors or specialists.
- Other: Mark Duggan's family or mostly letters to the editor.

The analysis of the newspaper articles took place in two steps. First, I have selected the articles in which the riots are discussed and a diagnostic frame is mentioned. Secondly, I have close read every one of the articles determining the number of diagnostic frames apparent and coding the frames in the non-structural or structural categories connected to the source expressing them.

The other apparent in the structural section of the diagram represents 2 diagnostic frames not fit in one of the categories as both instances refer to a religious doomsday apparent in the riots.

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[27] Baumann, Z. "The London Riots – On Consumerism coming Home to Roost". *Social Europe Journal.* URL: http://www.social-europe.eu/2011/08/the-london-riots-on-consumerism-coming-home-to-roost/.

Table 2: Diagnostic Framing by Various Newspapers in Great Britain and Sources

Diagnostic Framing

	Non-Structural					Structural		Total
	Underclass	Anarchism	Social Mania	Race Riots	Class Situation	Neo-Liberal Order	Other	
	(n= 61)	(n= 79)	(n= 34)	(n=14)	(n= 35)	(n= 20)	(n= 1)	(n= 243)
Total	25.1	32.5	14.0	5.8	14.4	8.2	0.4	100.0
Newspaper								
The Times	(9) 23.1	(15) 38.5	(2) 5.1	(1) 2.5	(9) 23.1	(3) 7.6	(1) 2.5	(39) 16.0
The Guardian	(6) 7.4	(32) 39.5	(16) 19.8	(6) 7.4	(10) 12.3	(11) 13.5		(81) 33.3
The Daily Telegraph	(15) 42.8	(6) 17.1	(6) 17.1	(1) 2.8	(5) 14.3	(2) 5.7		(35) 14.4
The Sun	(23) 39.0	(13) 22.0	(6) 10.1	(6) 10.1	(7) 11.9	(4) 6.8		(59) 24.3
Daily Mirror	(8) 27.6	(13) 44.8	(4) 13.8		(4) 13.8			(29) 11.9
Source								
Media	(26) 23.6	(37) 33.6	(22) 20.0	(7) 6.3	(13) 11.8	(5) 4.5		(110) 45.2
British Government	(11) 47.8	(4) 17.4	(2) 8.6	(2) 8.6	(1) 4.3	(2) 8.6	(1) 4.3	(23) 9.5
British Opposition		(1) 16.7		(1) 16.7	(4) 66.7			(6) 2.4
Residents/Participants	(21) 32.3	(29) 44.6	(4) 6.2	(2) 3.1	(4) 6.2	(5) 7.6		(65) 26.7
Academia	(1) 11.1		(1) 11.1		(3) 33.3	(4) 44.4		(9) 3.7
Other	(2) 6.6	(8) 26.7	(5) 16.7	(2) 6.6	(9) 30.0	(4) 13.3		(30) 12.3

Numbers between (...) are number of frames
Numbers with one decimal are percentages

The findings are represented in table 2., I chose to use the same descriptive table regarding diagnostic frames as Snow et al., used in their research. This table shows the results by newspaper, framing source and problem attribution.
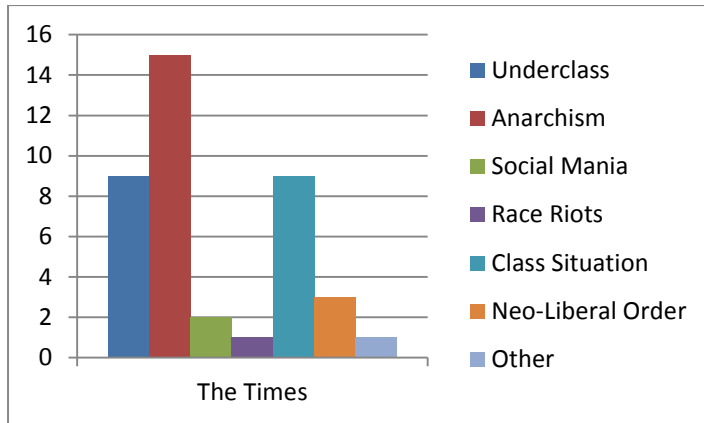

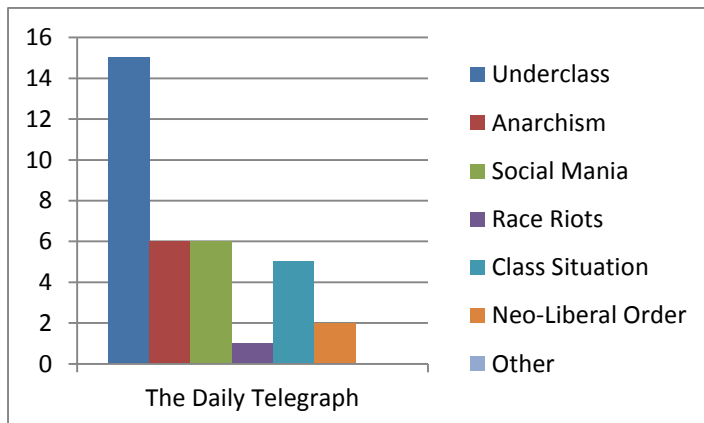Table 3: Diagnostic framing in The Times between 6 August 2011 and 10 August 2011

Table 4: Diagnostic framing in The Daily Telegraph between 6 August 2011 and 10 August 2011
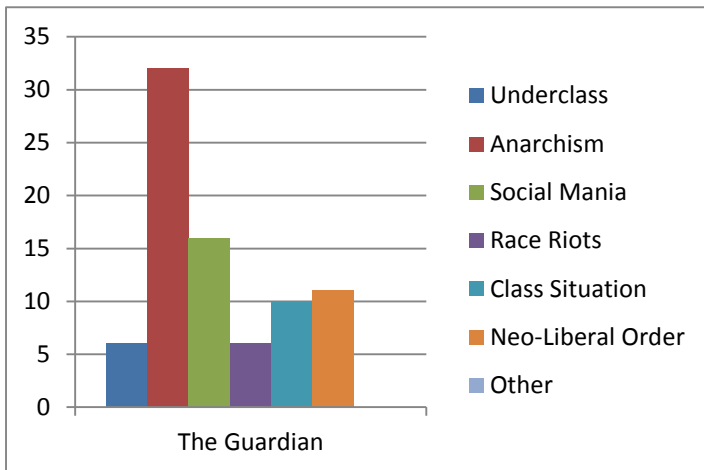
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Table 5: Diagnostic framing in The Guardian between 6 August 2011 and 10 August 2011
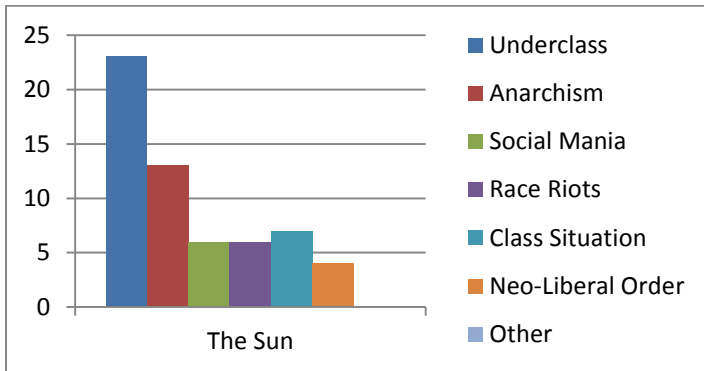

Table 6: Diagnostic framing in The Sun between 6 August 2011 and 10 August 2011
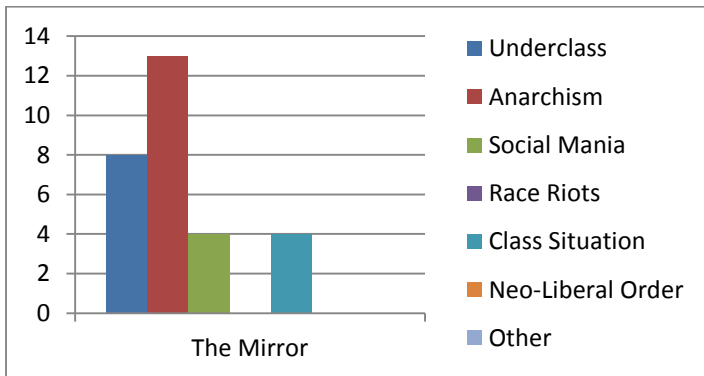

Table 7: Diagnostic framing in The Mirror between 6 August 2011 and 10 August 2011

Table 2 shows the total amount of frames per category, per source and per newspaper. Table 3 to 7 show the diagnostic framing apparent for each newspaper individually. Table 2 shows how most diagnostic framing falls under 'Underclass' and 'Anarchism' expressed by mostly residents and/or participants and by the media. This is also visible in tables 3 to 7, where The Mirror, The Guardian and The Times ascribe most causality or blame on the anarchy and the

absence of police making anarchy possible. The Daily Telegraph and The Sun are mostly focused on the 'Underclass' or the scum without cause. Results in all tables show that the 'Race Riots' as expressed by academia in independent research is not represented in the articles during the riots as a prevailing diagnostic frame. Moreover, table 2 shows that most academics in newspapers focus on the structural causes and indirect causal factors i.e. the neo-liberal order and a proclaimed difficult class situation due to inability of the government or government cuts. Table 2 also shows that government opposition has not or not yet made accusations about the cause or blame of the riots. The possible consequences or reason for these findings in table 1 to 7 will be discussed later.

Discussion

In order to assess the results in tables 1 to 7 in detail, it is important to give a more in-depth analysis of the articles used for this research. In order to do so, I will first discuss each newspaper individually, focusing on language, sources and overall impression of the articles per paper. Second, I will discuss the categories used in this research and compare the assumptions and research of academia per category with the statistics in table 2. It is also important to point to the content of the diagnostic framing assessed here.

If we look at the articles regarding the London riots published in The Times and the statistic data extracted from the articles apparent in table 2 and table 3, most diagnostic framing is attached to 'Underclass', 'Anarchism', and 'Class Situation'. The way in which these are expressed appears to be in a detached way from outside of the riots. Most sources and statements are made by police officials, experts and (ex) politicians with an opinion about how and what caused the London riots. When it comes to 'Underclass', The Times does not use harsh words, as will be discussed later in The Sun and The Daily Telegraph. Vandalizing youth, looting youth are often used. In an article published on August 10, Alan Dean from Liverpool expresses the voice prevailing throughout the articles in The Times: "It's just sheer, unadulterated mindless violence and theft".[28] 'Anarchism' is often connected to 'Class Situation'. In almost every article The Times refers to the absence of morals among the youth living in the areas with lower possibilities due to government cuts or other class issues, such as unemployment. Non-structural framing is often connected to structural framing of the rioters. The anarchism is also ascribed to the police intervention or the absence of intervention. Youths were able to rebel because of inefficient police intervention, and because

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[28] "Voices of Reason". *The Times.* London: Aug. 10, 2011. Retrieved on Dec. 24 by Lexis Nexis.

of the demoralized position of the police within the Tottingham areas. Again, class situation is indirectly attached to the London riots. The absence of moral values in the neighborhood combined with an overall disturbed relation with the local police and other structural difficulties attached to 'lower' class prevail throughout the articles published by The Times. The statistics attached to 'Anarchism' are thus often contextualized by the 'Class Situation' which is not visible in the statistics, but is recognized in the articles. The structure of the articles often starts with opinions of people and experts, mostly non-structural, which are later contextualized in a more structural frame.

The statistics from The Daily Telegraph show an absolute high under 'Underclass'. This can be explained by the readership of the newspaper which is mostly middle class and middle class entrepreneurs, who are often interviewed in the articles. Words like 'thugs', 'idiots', and 'hooligans' are used to describe the rioters, and the crumbling nation is to blame for that lost generation. Of all papers, The Daily Telegraph ascribes most non-structural diagnostic frames to 'Underclass' as visible in table 2. Moreover, the paper positions itself as the middle-class victim by blaming both 'Upper class Liberals' and 'Low lives' for the collapse of the nation.[29]

The Guardian shows the most diagnostic frames in the period between August 6 and August 10. Moreover, The Guardian is the only paper that does not focus on the 'Underclass' as much as the other newspapers. The reason can be found in the low amount of residents and/or participants quoted in the articles. Even more than is mentioned when I discussed The Times, The Guardian focuses on academics and experts for a first impression on the riots. The reason for the high data regarding 'Anarchism' can be found in the articles focusing on the neo-liberal order. Most of all papers, The Guardian focuses on how anarchism is caused by a new liberal order in which the new generation no longer feel attached to politics or government. Opportunism is often mentioned in line with a disobedience to law and order. When this is connected to an overall failure of police and firemen, The Guardian might even excuse the rioters for what they did.

The articles in The Sun are much in line with the Daily Telegraph. Mayor difference between The Sun and the other newspapers is the use of a lot of graphic and disturbing photo's and YouTube videos. Aggressive outline and the use of red makes the paper look like

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[29] "The underclass is lashing out at a Britain that has turned its back; Ignored by Left and Right, the rioters were inevitable products of a crumbling nation". *The Daily Telegraph.* London: Aug. 9, 2011. Retrieved on Jan. 2 by Lexis Nexis.

a protest and aimed at angering its public. The Sun also by far makes the most use of victims, local residents and short, harsh statements regarding the rioters. The failure of police is mentioned but they are less blamed than in the other newspapers. Blame is put on the government and to the rioters themselves by showing the aggressive photos and the absence of leadership. First hand reactions are plenty and the focus is placed on the shock and horror people experience. Moreover, a lot of articles focused on the influence on the Olympic Games and celebrities living in the area.

Lastly, The Mirror showed the least articles on the diagnostic framing of the riots. Most framing showed 'Underclass' and 'Anarchism'. Of all newspapers, The Mirror used the least sources, and most data is derived from the opinion of journalists themselves. Almost all framing is seen on a non-structural basis. Of all papers, The Mirror added the less information on the London riots, by only commenting on the events and the chronological order, and less on actual causes or structural frames in society.

Policing

Most interesting during my research was the role of the police and the firemen during the riots. All newspapers had one frame in common, which was the inefficiency of the police and the firemen. More than expected it were the police that are blamed for the looting and unrest caused by the rioters. Most sources used in the five newspapers were from residents and bystanders or journalist reporting from the scene. In particular local residents, local entrepreneurs and bystanders, blame the police for letting the rioters create anarchy. This can also be seen in table 2, as 32.5 percent of all diagnostic framing is ascribed to 'Anarchism'. This high percentage is caused, not by what I expected, police force and provocation, but rather the absence of force and the lack of intervention. If we were to base a prognosis or a solution based on these research's statistics, police strategies have to be revised to prevent anarchy. However, the high statistics for 'Underclass' by most papers, may indicate a non-structural element during the riots, with no apparent cause or prevention. Mindlessness and the idiotic element attached to the rioters indicate that even if police would have intervened properly, rioting would still have taken place. If we then assess the structural elements 'Class Situation' and 'Neo-Liberal Order' as most mentioned in the articles, it is not so much the police in those categories or frames, but government and politics. To further discuss this, I will assess the categories in light of the found statistics.

The category 'Underclass' comprehends a lot of different words and expressions directed at the rioters or people involved. In order for a frame to be placed under this

category words such as 'mindless', 'idiot', and phrases containing these words and other to point to rebelling because of rebelling, were important. The moral decay as mentioned by Pearson before, was frequently apparent in the articles, however as a non-structural factor. Pearson suggests that moral panic is always visible when society is faced with disruptions.[30] Moral panic here refers to the society being afraid or frantic of the situation. Even though Snow et al., do not point to this factor explicitly regarding the French riots in 2005, their findings do show the possibility in the statistics.[31] As a non-structural factor moral decay is often mentioned in connection with mindless looting. In the newspaper articles this non-structural factor is sometimes connected to the structural factor of 'Class Situation', which points to government cuts and less possibilities for sections of society.

Besides the expected patterns as discussed above, articles also point to the role of gangs and gang member's involvement in the riots. 'Pure criminality' is mentioned in each of the newspapers at least one time, and some articles connect organized crime of gangsters to this, by claiming rivaling gangs stuck together during the riots. Simon Harding also addresses this in his research on the influence of street gangs on the participation of other to join the looting and rioting.[32] However, this is contested by the newspaper articles, in which almost all sources who frame the riots on the underclass also tell how young children were involved and mindless involvement was apparent on Twitter and Facebook.

The 'othering' as mentioned in the category 'Underclass' when referred to Hirschler, does not become clear as a motive in the newspaper articles. In the opposite, the residents and politicians and other sources often display a sense of shame about the mindless looters as part of the British society rather than placing the perpetrators outside of society. When moral decay is mentioned it is connected to the neighborhood where people come from, but still as part of society and society's problem.

The second non-structural framing 'Anarchism' has proven to be different than expected. Rather than the initial reading would assume, police did not provoke anarchy, but let anarchy happen. However, that does not take away the motive for rioters to rebel against the police, as became apparent in the articles. Especially The Sun and also articles from the other newspapers, featured witnesses or rioters screaming to rebel against the system or

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[30] Geoffrey Pearson. "Everything changes, Nothing moves: The Longue Durée of Social Anxieties about Youth Crime. *The English Riots of 2011: A Summer of Discontent.* Daniel Briggs eds. London: Waterside Press, 2012.
[31] Snow et al. "Framing the French Riots: A Comparative Study of Frame Variation". *Social Forces* 86.2. Oxford University Press: 2007, 400.
[32] Simon Harding. "Street Government: The Role of the Urban Street Gang in the London Riots". *The English Riots of 2011: A Summer of Discontent.* Daniel Briggs eds. London: Waterside Press, 2012.

authority. Klein has pointed out the importance of clear leadership and intervention of the police, which is claimed to be insufficient in almost every article reporting on the London riots. The categories 'Underclass' and 'Anarchy' have proven to be difficult categories when it comes to assessing if a diagnostic frame belonged to one or the other. For a frame to belong to 'Anarchy', words such as 'anarchy', 'lawless' and sentences including cursing at the police in particular, had to be uttered.

As the third non-structural factor, 'Social Mania' was less important than the other two. 'Social Mania' is often seen as reinforcing the problems rather than causing them. The BBM service from Blackberry and services such as Twitter and Facebook are mentioned as tools for organization. Often, this organizational function is used against the police for not successfully using those services themselves. Social media is regarded as a tool not jet mastered by the police and therefore enabling the rioters to gather at places unknown by the police. More interesting is the fact that mostly media blamed the 'Social Mania' and not the residents and/or participants themselves. It seems as though the services did not contribute for the rioters, but were difficult to handle for the forces unacquainted with the use of social media.

The four residents/participants claiming 'Social Mania' was to blame for the riots were several policemen and a fireman, who explained how demoralized they were due to BBC reports on the insignificance and failure of the public forces.

The structural categories have proven to be less significant during the riots between August 6 and August 10 2011. Least important according to the statistics is the category 'Race Riots'. The Guardian and The Sun both have some frames related to 'Race Riots'. However, they do differ in motive, as The Guardian mentions a possible relation between the police and the neighborhood of Tottingham as disturbed because of Stop and Search routines on African communities only. The Sun's readership has an ethnic motive that immigration and 'Blacks' destroy the town, expressed in some letters to the editor. As problematic as this last remark may be the number of frames is substantially less than I had expected. Compared to previous riots in the same area, almost everything was framed against an ethnic background.[33]

The categories 'Class Situation' and 'Neo-Liberal Order' are more frequently mentioned, especially by The Guardian and The Times. However, both these categories are often mentioned as side notes, in particular neo-liberalism. Class issues are often related to

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[33] Broadwater Farm riots, but also the Brixton riots.

government cutbacks, causing a decline in opportunities for people living in economically less stable neighborhoods. This cause is located as an indirect problem causing anarchy by multiple articles, but none actually focus on this point or try to give an in-depth analysis. The same is apparent with the 'Neo-Liberal Order'. The term itself is only mentioned once, but its symptoms, such as consumerism and materialism are mentioned as indirect reasons for the looting. Looting is connected with neo-liberalism and not rioting making them seem to be two different things throughout the articles. Throughout this research rioters are often connected to the trouble making and burning of things, such as shops and business, and looters as the people following after to see what is left for the taking.

Limitations

After discussing the data acquired from the newspaper articles during the riots, it is still problematic to say majority rules. The statistics show that the riots were caused by anarchy; however, this cannot be seen without the context of the other categories mentioned in the articles and by academia.

The same context was provided in the articles with the use of graphics and violent pictures to illustrate the articles. In this case I did not incorporate those pictures, but one might wonder if the impact of images is not even bigger when it comes to diagnostic framing than text itself.

Due to the direct response of many newspaper articles and journalists reporting from the scene most frames are expressed by the local residents or bystanders and journalists themselves. This results in an overlap between pointing to the cause of the riots and the blame giving to actors within the riots. This does not mean those results were not significant, but might explain how most papers and sources recognize the 'Underclass' and 'Anarchism' as most to blame or as non-structural cause. Moreover, it seems that the statistics do not reveal any political affiliation or particular public attached to the different articles. This can be problematic as the diagnostic frames are only fragments of a newspaper article and often do not show the overall tone or affiliation of an article, editor or newspaper. This makes the statistic material on its self incomplete, to point to the significance of diagnostic framing and possible consequences for the readership of a newspaper and the social opinion regarding the riots. In order to make statements regarding the riots, a repeat research is needed, interviewing the same sources represented in the statistics now, but a year later. Residents or bystanders blaming the police or the mindless youth might have a different opinion with the benefit of hindsight, than during the riots. This probably also explaines why the structural framing is not

much represented in table 2, as those require a more overall picture of society.

Contextual factors such as time and space were not assessed in this research and in order to conclude anything, I think time is of the essence. As I said before, if a journalist interviews an entrepreneur whose shop has just been burned and looted, the response will be different than a year later. Will that same entrepreneur still blame the police, or will the government be the problem? It still does not tell us why the rioters rebel against authority and against police.

Conclusion

The aim of this research has been to show the diagnostic framing apparent in the London riots of 2011 during the first days the riots occurred. Moreover, I wanted to show the importance of diagnostic framing as a whole when it comes to assessing these riots. As pointed out in the very first pages of this research, meaning does not attach itself to a conflict, it is socially constructed. Apart from the main question, I think this research has shown the non-structural foundation of diagnostic framing and the importance of assessing these frames before making any prognosis or taking any motivational action.

In order to conclude anything regarding the main question of this research it is important to note that this research was conducted more than a year after date. Before staring the statistical analysis, I have read multiple volumes by academia regarding the causes of the London Rios in 2011. This means I know more from hindsight than the newspaper articles could ever formulate during the riots. Apart from the context of time, I also have to account for the subjectivity of these findings as the analysis would probably turn out different for another researcher.

This case study still attempts to advance the understanding of the London riots of 2011 and the perspectives given by the media during the riots. The importance of diagnostic framing is to see how the riots were perceived in the first days, while taking place. How did society and actors of society react and what consequences do we attach to that? How are the London riots diagnostically framed in five British newspapers from the 6th of August until the 10th of August?

Based upon the research and statistics in this paper, the diagnostic frame of the London Riots is mostly non-structural. As seen in the data, most articles point towards the non-structural categories of 'Underclass', 'Anarchism', and 'Social Mania'. Of these three, 'Anarchy' has proven to be the most significant for both media as the residents and/or

participants of the riots. Only British opposition and academia point towards other categories. The British opposition blames the British government and the academia look at the riots in global perspective, to the 'Neo-Liberal Order'.

Even though the statistics prove in a way that failure of policy and lawlessness of rioters is the diagnostic cause or to blame for the riots, I think it is too easy to conclude as such. The fact that the other categories also prevailed in many articles proves it is more complicated.

In order to answer the main question, we can say that at the moment of the riots occurring, diagnostically speaking, anarchy was an enabler of the London riots. However, this is not enough to address and cope with the London riots or riots as a phenomenon. The structural categories addressed in this research need more attention as non-structural problems are not easy to asses, being temporarily. With this research I want to show that diagnostic framing can cause consequences for the prognostic and motivational frames designed to address and cope with the London riots, or any riot, in its aftermath. The perception of a riot initially, and on a more structural basis, is important to investigate, before claiming diagnostic frames are true. The variation in different frames, by different sources makes riots complex. The only conclusion Snow et al., give and which is also important to note here is: "[S]trong support for […] temporal variation in the character of framing".[34] This can be shown here as well, as academics with temporal distance and residents/participants on the scene have different frames, both true but different. It is therefore important to investigate all aspects and diagnostic frames before make prognostic or motivational frames regarding the riots.

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[34] Snow et al. "Framing the French Riots: A Comparative Study of Frame Variation". *Social Forces* 86.2. Oxford University Press: 2007, 408.

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