

Police Incidents the Tipping Point for Riots?

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What is a riot?

- “A violent disturbance of the peace by a crowd” – Oxford English Dictionary.
- “A riot is a form of civil disorder characterized often by what is thought of as disorganized groups lashing out in a violent public disturbance against authority, property or people. While individuals may attempt to lead or control a riot, riots are thought to be typically "chaotic and exhibit herd behaviour” – Wikipedia.



- “Where 12 or more persons who are present together use or threaten unlawful violence for a common purpose and the conduct of them (taken together) is such as would cause a person of reasonable firmness present at the scene to fear for his personal safety, each of the persons using unlawful violence for the common purpose is guilty of riot” - S.8 Public Order Act 1986.

Public protests are legitimate until they become unlawful!



- The police are often sighted as a cause of riots.
- Guardian/LSE social research into the August 2011 riots in the UK listed policing as the second biggest cause after poverty. Government policy and unemployment featured as 3rd and 4th. The shooting of Mark Duggan was 5th.

So policing can't escape that lightly!!



The Rioters View

1. Poverty
2. Policing
3. Government policy
4. Unemployment
5. The shooting of Mark Duggan
6. Social media
7. Media coverage
8. Greed
9. Inequality
10. Boredom
11. Criminality
12. Moral decline
13. Racial tensions
14. Poor parenting
15. Gangs



The Public View

1. Criminality
1. Poor parenting
2. Moral decline
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- Do police incidents on their own result in riots or are they a spark igniting what is already there?
- What is it about the police that makes them a major cause?
- Are the reasons the same in other countries?
- Mark Duggan – UK 2011 / Alexandros Grigoropoulos – Greece 2008



- Where the police are seen as a major cause this is often related to the treatment of the public by the police.
- Excessive use of force / racism / unfair treatment etc. but without a timely and acceptable explanation.
- “Police caused London riots by ignoring Duggan family, says government crime adviser” Shaun Bailey.



- The police are charged with stopping riots, is there a conflict where they are seen as a major cause?



- A community engaged approach
- Before, during and after
- Communication and dialogue essential.

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Thank You

**Surjeet Manku QPM
Chief Superintendent West Midlands Police**