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Youth Culture and Social Change

Making a Difference by Making a Noise

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From 1940s zoot-suiters and hepcats through 1950s rock ‘n‘rollers, beatniks and Teddy boys; 1960s surfers,rude boys, mods, hippies and bikers; 1970s skinheads, soul boys, rastas, glam rockers, funksters and punks; on to the heavy metal, hip-hop, casual, goth, rave and clubber styles of the 1980s, 90 s, noughties and beyond, distinctive blends of fashion and music have become a defining feature of the cultural landscape. The Subcultures Network series is international in scope and designed to explore the social and political implications of subcultural forms. Youth and subcultures will be located in their historical, socio-economic and cultural context; the motivations and meanings applied to the aesthetics, actions and manifestations of youth and subculture will be assessed. The objective is to facilitate a genuinely cross-disciplinary and transnational outlet for a burgeoning area of academic study.

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For the Network by the Network

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The steering committee that oversaw the AHRC project comprised: Jon Garland, Keith Gildart, Anna Gough-Yates, Paul Hodkinson, Sian Lincoln, Bill Osgerby, Lucy Robinson, John Street, Peter Webb and Matthew Worley.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction: Making a Difference by Making a Noise

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Youth Culture and Social Change maps out new ways to historicise two overlapping political responses to economic and social change: public unrest and popular culture. Throughout the 1980s young people took to the streets, whether in formal marches organised by trade unions, political groups like the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) or Reclaim the Night, or in spontaneous, collective outbursts of disorder. Wherever young people were present in forms of protest there, too, was music. The riots of the 1980s have their own soundtrack that has formed part of the collective memory of the decade. People rocked against racism, sexism, 'the bomb' and the fragmentation of working-class communities. The popular music charts recognised the voices of protest in singers like Pauline Black, Billy Bragg, Elvis Costello, Morrissey and Paul Weller, whose songs of resistance gained both commercial and critical success.

In this book we go further than documenting the sounds of dissent. We explore how music worked as a way of making a difference. The subcultures, networks, tribes and gangs that grew around popular music provided the structures, shapes and styles needed for resistance, resilience and in some cases conformity. The chapters capture the variety of ways that we can research music as a form of protest and as a 'community' that goes beyond interpretations of sound and lyric. The contributors to this volume show how music *mattered* to consumers, participants and protestors.

Of course there is nothing new about the notion that music can be read as a form of political protest and sonic commentary on social and economic conflict. After all, if we didn't have the folk music of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it would have been more difficult for us to uncover such cultural-political moments as the Chartist uprisings of the 1830s and 1840s, the miners' disputes in 1898, 1921, 1926, and the industrial conflicts of the interwar period. Music is a form of political memory both as a vehicle for preserving and popularising narratives of protest, and as a soundtrack to particular events, episodes and personal feelings.

This collection takes as its starting point a similar moment from recent history where protest and popular music self-consciously converged with the market forces of the entertainment industry. We use the 1980s as a pivot between the mid-twentieth century and today, a time when academic experts were emerging, ready, willing and able to try out their new ideas of subcultural resistance on each and every expression of youth discontent. The eighties certainly provided enough examples of street-level anger, fuelled by the intermingling of politics and culture, and expressed as spectacles of dissent and division. It was there in the battles between anti-racists and the far-right, and in the riots that broke out in 1981 in major British cities (and four years later in a number of smaller towns).

To do this, the book brings together a variety of accounts and methods in order to make sense of popular music related cultures from the 1950s to the present day. It moves through the urban conflicts of 1980–85 to see what they offer as a way of reading the riots of 2011 and recent concerns about 'on road', or gang culture. In the process, we hope to shed new light on the earlier period, and suggest some ways in which we might understand popular culture, rooted in the local, as a central historical driver for conflict, resistance and conformity. At the heart of these essays is the idea that although eruptions of street rioting might be the most spectacular expressions of youth disconnect, they are best understood in the longer context of slow resistance and everyday ways in which making a noise makes a difference to young people's lives.

Some of the historical comparisons have already been made for us. The riots and public disorder of 2011 emerged in the wake of student protests against tuition fees and cuts to the Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA), a means-tested payment that went directly to students who attended further education colleges. The EMA was designed to encourage working-class students to stay on at school by alleviating the financial burden of delaying full-time work. It also worked as an incentive to punctuality and attendance. The state seemed to be retreating from its responsibility to ensure young people's education, yet becoming more interventionist in disrupting aspects of youth culture and the perceived threat of gang activity. In 2011, Mark Duggan was shot and killed by the police in Tottenham. Accusations of Duggan's gang association were used to justify his death. To some sections of the population deaths at the hands of the police severed what little trust existed between the police and the policed, particularly those subjected to everyday acts of surveillance and harassment – young people, in particular from the Black and minority ethnic communities. The same state that did not care about working-class education could seemingly sanction death at the hands of the police. The spate of rioting that followed was immediately understood through the lens and the memories of the riots under Thatcherism. Spurred by the release of official records from the period, some uncanny resonances (Royal Weddings, the Falklands War, cuts to welfare spending, the miners' strike) and a racialised discussion of security and immigration, these recent riots replayed (and rebooted) those of the 1980s.[1]

Studies of gang culture in the post-war period opened up new modes of understanding the political potential of delinquent behaviour. Historically, gangs solicited fear of young people's collective identification with place and local networks; identification which often trumped deference to authority, the aspirations of the workday week and traditional forms of working-class respectability.[2] Notable examples of such studies included work on the teddy boys of the 1950s, mods of the 1960s, and skinheads in the 1970s. Contemporary 'moral panics' around 'on road' gang culture have also been interpreted through these models of resistance and the criminalisation of young people in public.[3] If we understand what happened in the 1950s and 1980s, and how it was responded to at the time, then perhaps we will be able to unpick the work that the past does for us in the present. Importantly for this collection, it allows us to rework the role of popular culture in everyday resistance and public acts of unrest in the 1980s through to and beyond 2011.

British cities have well established traditions of unrest and rioting. But from the end of the Second World War until 1980 there were few notable uprisings (as distinct from those in the six counties of Northern Ireland). The attacks on minorities in Nottingham and Notting Hill in 1958 led to violence and prosecutions, but large-scale disruptions did not reappear until the economic and social problems of the 1970s. The violence that marred the Notting Hill Carnival in 1976 was seen as an aberration by carnival organisers, the police and the press. Discussions around unrest and challenges to the infrastructure were largely focussed on trade union activities through the 1970s, but delinquent youth, inflected by issues of race, gender and class, increasingly came to feature on the political agenda.

The post-war generation came to be defined by their refusal to reap the rewards of the post-war settlement in simple terms. Instead they took new popular cultural spaces like cinemas, clubs and concert halls, and used them to build new collective identities. For example, young girls' sexuality and romantic desires worked against the faultlines of the prescriptive literature they read. They were being sold the dream of the happy-ever-after ending, but in the process they became aware of themselves as sexual agents. It was apparent that young people did not necessarily want to do as they were told and sought to make a difference by making a noise.

The series of riots in the 1980s can be seen as an extension of these trends, and as a way of mapping longer-term cultural networks of resistance across the latter half of the twentieth century and into the present day. Popular culture – its words, sounds, spaces and identities – offered young people a form of political expression. It was not 'mere entertainment', nor was it consumerist propaganda; it was a means of articulating and resolving the contradictions of advanced capitalism.

Against a background of tightening immigration policy, the visible growth of the far-right and everyday experiences of police harassment, riotous disorder became a racialised and localised practice in Thatcher's Britain. When violent unrest broke out in the St Paul's district in Bristol in April 1980 it was originally understood as an aberration. Historians have tended to endorse this reading of events and have failed to put the riots in their historical context. In fact, academic and critical histories of the 1980s, that question the dominant narrative, are yet to be written. Social scientists have sought to measure the levels of social and economic deprivation that are assumed to justify riots, largely focussing on explaining how riots happen (and by implication how can we stop them happening)).[4] Historians of the late twentieth century have not really engaged with the wider question: What do riots mean within a continuum of resistance and resilience? Rather than seeing riots as the special moment, the explosive 'game changer', this collection situates rioting and public resistance in local cultures and networks.

A year after the Bristol disturbances in 1980, three days of serious disorder broke out in Brixton. The television cameras were there to record it all and relay it into the nation's homes. The July that followed saw violent battles between skinheads and members of the local Asian community break out in Southall. Later the same day, some areas of Liverpool 8 took to the streets; the next day Moss Side in Manchester saw rioting. Press coverage often imposed simplistic models of rioting as racialised, misreading the complexities of local identities in the process. Despite the familiar press images of Black rioters on these streets, rioters arrested in Manchester, for example, were predominantly White. By the next week riots were reported in Handsworth, Birmingham, Sheffield, Nottingham, Hull, Slough, Leeds, Bradford, Leicester, Derby, High Wycombe and Cirencester. The riots that followed certainly involved issues of race, but they were also responses to material conditions, of unemployment in a context of economic downturn and the disproportionate burden this placed on the lives of young Black men and women in particular areas.

On 15 July 1981, Brixton again erupted. 176 police officers raided eleven houses in Railton Road. This location had its own long-established history as a place where a whole variety of activists, community organisers and subcultural tribes had their bases side by side. No evidence of the suspected illegal drinking or petrol bombs was ever found. Eventually, the Metropolitan Police had to pay out £8,500 in compensation for the damage caused during the raids.[5]

In September 1985, riots broke out in the Lozells Road area of Handsworth. Some public unrest broke out in 1982, but on a far reduced scale. A shift in police tactics saw a crackdown in Handsworth in Birmingham; 150 police officers raided the Acapulco Cafe, leading to seven arrests. Other disturbances, explained at the time as 'copycat' riots, took place in Moseley, Wolverhampton, Coventry and St Pauls.[6] At 7 a.m. on 28 September, the police shot Mrs Dorothy 'Cherry' Groce in the spine whilst raiding her home in Brixton looking for her son. By 6 pm that evening violent disorder had broken out in Brixton lasting for 8 hours. 724 crimes were reported, including the fire bombing of a local police station. Two days later, rioting again broke out in Liverpool 8 when four Black men were denied bail in court. A further wave erupted on 6 October, precipitated this time by the death of a mother during a police search for her son. Mrs Cynthia Jarrett, whose son Floyd Jarret, a local community worker, was stopped and arrested under suspicion of driving a stolen car, collapsed during the search. Family and police accounts of the death differed. The inquest found her death to be accidental. News spread fast and riots once more broke out.[7] During riots on the Broadwater Farm Estate, Tottenham, 20 members of the public and 223 police were injured and Police Constable Keith Blakelock was stabbed to death. The news media carried images of the slash marks in his uniform, showing each spot where he had been repeatedly knifed by numerous individuals. Questions were raised over the style of policing as the list of trigger events emerged. Tension grew in Nottingham and Plymouth. This was not just a response to increased police activity but also to the background of slow-burning fuses – unemployment, immigration, press representation and far-right activity. The riots may have been primarily about race in the way they were seen and experienced, but ethnicity intersected with class, ideas of community and understandings of place.

Like the riots of the 1980s, the riots in 2011 can be seen as acts of memorialisation and calls for justice against the police. On 4 March 2011, Mark Duggan, who lived on the Broadwater Farm Estate, was shot and killed by police after they stopped a taxi in which he was the passenger. A police officer was shot but survived. Although the police claimed that Duggan had fired a gun on the police first, there was also evidence that

Duggan was unarmed when he was shot. On the 15 March, Britain's first home-grown breakthrough rapper Smiley Culture, who had produced novelty crossover records like 'Police Officer', stabbed himself to death in extraordinary conditions during a police search of his home. The episode not only raised the spectre of deaths involving the police, but his music provided an ironic soundtrack over the next few months as unrest grew. On 26 March 2011 a march organised by the Trades Union Congress (TUC) against austerity cuts brought together student activism, grass roots resistance and heavy police tactics to ferment a perfect storm. Over 200 people were arrested in the disorder that followed.

On 6 August, a group of family members and friends of Mark Duggan and local community residents marched to Tottenham Police station to bear witness to police brutality and to demand answers to questions about the death. By the end of the day disorder had erupted not only in Tottenham, but also in Wood Green, Enfield, Hackney, Waltham Forest and Brixton. Within a week most of London was affected and riots were being reported in Liverpool, Birmingham, Nottingham, Manchester Bristol, Leeds and Huddersfield. Although events calmed down in London, other areas of the country were still experiencing riots, including Birmingham, Gloucester, Nottingham and Liverpool.[8] It is estimated that between 13 and 15 thousand people engaged in rioting or looting in four days of August 2011. The disorder has been measured as costing £50 million to police; £43.5 million to clean up; £80 million in lost business and £300 million in damage.[9] Almost 2000 individual offenders were officially identified as the cause; 462 were found guilty and 315 were sentenced. The majority of prosecutions were for burglary, violent disorder and theft.[10]

The 2011 riots were met immediately with comparisons to the unrest of the 1980s. Memories of the 1980s helped communities, commentators, politicians and the press to make sense of the events of that August. Partly this is to do with the role of popular culture, as both a form of historical work (recalling/analysing the past) and as a form of political activity in the present, as both a rallying cry and an affective community. The two periods of rioting became a measure of what had changed since the spring and summer of 1981. The stories and memories of both periods wove together in the wake of Margaret Thatcher's death and a new royal wedding. It seemed as though we were re-enacting, or re-imagining the 1980s in the second decade of the millennium. *The Guardian* and the London School of Economics (LSE) collaborated on a research project on the events of 2011, *Reading the Riots*. It noted that 'both [periods of unrest] took place while a Conservative Prime Minister grappled with the effects of global economic down turn and rising unemployment'.[11]

The death of Smiley Culture coincided with the anniversary of the death of Groce 26 years after she sustained her original injuries. From a politician's perspective, the riots of 2011 were measured against the riots in the earlier decade to criticise the present and revise the past. Paul Gilroy pointed out at the time that quantifiable indicators of inequality were worse in 2011 than they had been in the 1980s. In terms of day-to-day experiences of being stopped-and-searched by the police on the street, of disproportionate levels of unemployment, and of school exclusion, figures were all higher in 2011. And yet the comparisons between the two periods often positioned the past as explicable, if not justifiable, but not the present. We ended up in the surprising position of commentators pretty much representing the 1980s as 'good riots' and 2011 as 'bad riots'. As Evan Smith pointed out in his article 'Once as History, Twice as Farce', the comparisons with the riots of 1981 largely focused on the extent to which rioting could be 'justifiable'.[12]

So, for example, Kenneth Clarke MP was interviewed by ITV news to comment on the 2011 riots. Clarke had served as a cabinet minister throughout the 1980s. He told ITV, 'I remember riots 30 years ago, but these were very widespread, very serious and the sheer casual criminality troubles me. You know, it was almost instantly; people were responding on their BlackBerry or mobile and turning out just to loot what they wanted. There was absolutely no undertone of anything except … criminal people, just away, going out to repeat crimes they had already been convicted of in the past. Quite outside the values of the ordinary, decent people in this country'.[13] The riots in 2011 were set up both as larger in scale and less justifiable, motivated by greed and spread like a virus through social networking technology.[14] In comparison the eighties were regarded as less about shopping and technology, and more about response to social context.

In this volume, we are less concerned with whether the contexts are (or are not) materially equivalent, but, rather, how the experiences, memories and legacies of youth are conveyed, organised and acted upon. This is why we focus first on the way riots are communicated, but also on how music informs identities and how gangs create an institutional form for action. Rather than seeing riots as moments of unrest or the result of a spectacular tipping point, this collection examines the networks, communities, shared interests and mediating role played by music and social media. Riots might be the most exciting press stories of a period, but they were just one part of an ongoing continuum of resistance and resilience that helped communities stick together, and pick up the pieces once the riot vans and news reporters had gone.

A historical view of the 'everyday' and the 'spectacular' underpins this volume. Our aim is not to explain the riots. Instead, we are asking how people are enabled to make a difference and make sense of their lives. For example, how do the emotional lives of young girls feed into the possibility of powerful political action? We want to bypass the fixation on riots as the measurement of young people's discontent, and instead connect the exceptional and the unexceptional back into everyday cultural networks and expressions. The following chapters include contributions that explore how riots occur but, as significant we feel, are the contributions that shed light on the everyday; that is, towards an understanding of young peoples' experiences as a driver and response to social change. Looking at events over a longer period allows us to reveal the processes, experiences and actions that order and shape the creation of spectacular moments from the mundane.

When we brought these different chapters together a series of themes emerged across geographical and temporal case studies. The press and politicians' argument that riots were set off by external triggers or outside agitators did not fit a recognisable narrative. Instead, the research presented here uncovers the importance of specific local networks and experience. The story of how a riot 'kicked off' was rooted in the local experiences of a place, and so were the reactions to them in the aftermath. Whether we look to the post-war youth culture or riots in the 1980s or the more recent events of 2011, the importance of pre-existing conditions and pre-existing resilience helps us to put the riot back in its place as a way of making a difference by making a noise.

Rather than pinpointing the immediate cause of extreme moments of explosion, or discovering outside agitators, or copycat mindless crowds, instead we found grass-root networks: sound systems, school catchment areas, shared club and night-time spaces, stairwells, recreation parks, street corners and bedrooms. The popular culture that emerged – spoken, sung, listened to, broadcast or sent through social media – was central to these networks. The popular culture around riots and resistance is more than an illustration of 'what happened'. The songs, poems and tweets offer more than an insight into what life felt like before, during and after those explosive movements. The popular-cultural voice is a driver in community response to the world we live in. Music builds communities, makes sense of the world and finds ways of describing, articulating, and enacting change. Music is also how these events have been memorialised. Popular culture might give us conflicted and often contradictory messages, but that is exactly why it is central to understanding public unrest.

The moments of resistance described in this collection are themselves cultural acts, they have sounds, styles and audiences, just the like songs, poems and videos made about them. Milburn and Hardie's understanding of the riots as a form of 'noise' that disrupts and changes the context is a useful way to understand disorder as a part of popular culture, and popular culture as a form of disorder. Riots have a 'rhythm of resistance'. 'Those who were part of that rhythm [are] bound by weak ties, with the result that he rhythm was mobile, highly responsive and able to grow very quickly as new people adopted, and adapted the beat'.[15] Riots have a rhythm but they are part of longer, fragmented soundtrack to young people's lives.

Fittingly this collection emerged out of its own network: the Interdisciplinary Network for the Study of Subcultures, Popular Music and Social Change. This network is not just a collection of interdisciplinary researchers, but also of the communities in which we each root ourselves. A series of events was funded by an AHRC Network Grant from 2013 to 2015, the first of which took place in Bristol. This event, which triggered many of the contributions herein, recognised the city's place in the history of rioting and popular music over the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The symposium attempted to explore the experiences of living in British cities and growing up through an association with music subcultures or scenes. Bristol has a unique position in the history of British popular music, feeding into narratives of reggae, disco, punk, club culture and drum 'n' bass. But to start with Bristol also let us move from the local to the national. The associations between and across anxieties about public disorder, subcultural music and 'on road' associative culture all come together in the events and studies presented here. Popular culture, therefore, is not just a useful way into a political, social and economic context as academic evidence, nor is it simply a way of giving voices to the unheeded. As a structure, the network, institutions, knowledges and language of communities built around shared popular culture have been at the heart of what it feels like to make a difference by making a noise.

NOTES

1. E. Smith, 'Once as history, twice as farce? The Spectre of the summer of '81 in discourses on the August 2011 riots', *Journal for Cultural Research*, 17(2) (2013), 124–43 (Smith 2013).
2. The work of the Birmingham University Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies was obviously integral to this. For an overview and context, see B. Osgerby, 'Subcultures, popular music and social change: Theories, issues and debates, in Subcultures Network (ed.), *Subcultures, Poplar Music and Social Change* (Cambridge, 2014), pp. 1–45 (Osgerby 2014).
3. S. Hallsworth, 'Gangland Britain? Realities, fantasies and industry', in Barry Goldson (ed), *Youth in Crisis? 'Gangs', Territory and Violence* (London, 2011), pp. 183–97 (Hallsworth 2011).
4. Notable exceptions could include J. Rex, 'The 1981 urban riots in Britain', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 6 (1982), 99–113 (Rex 1982).
5. *Hansard, House of Lords Debates*, 29 October 1981, vol. 424, cc1127–32 (Hansard 1981).
6. John Benyon and John Solomos, 'The simmering cities: Urban unrest during the Thatcher years', *Parliamentary Affairs*, 41 (3) (1988), 404 (Benyon and Solomos 1988).
7. Benyon and Solomos, 'The simmering cities', 406.
8. E. Smith, 'Once as history, twice as farce', *Guardian Shorts, Reading the Riots: Investigating England's Summer of Disorder*, 124–43 (London, 2011) (Smith 2011); D. Briggs, *The English Riots of 2011: A Summer of Discontent* (Sherfield-Upon-Lodden, 2012) (Briggs 2012).
9. Briggs, *The English Riots of 2011*, p. 10; T. Newburn, 'Reading the riots', *British Society of Criminology Newsletter*, 12 (2001).
10. Briggs, *The English Riots of 2011*, p. 14.
11. Guardian Shorts, *Reading the Riots.* T. Newburn, 'Reading the riots'.
12. Smith, 'Once as history, twice as farce', 124–43.
13. Kenneth Clarke, ITV News 15 September 2011, quoted in Briggs, *The English Riots of 2011*, pp. 11–12 (Clarke 2011).
14. S. Milne, *The Enemy Within: The Secret War Against the Miners* (London, 2004) (Milne 2004).
15. K. Milburn, 'The August riots, shock and the prohibition of thought', *Capital & Class*, 36 (3) (2012), 401–9 (Milburn 2012).

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PART 1

Riots

CHAPTER 2

Subcultures, Schools and Rituals: A Case Study of the 'Bristol Riots' (1980)

Roger Ball

The spring and summer of 1981 saw one of the most widespread and intense periods of violent urban disturbance in England in the twentieth century. Recent research has highlighted over 200 daily disorders of varying magnitude during the month of July 1981 alone.[1] These were spread over more than one hundred locations in England, most notably in the cities of Liverpool, London, Manchester, Nottingham, Leicester, Derby and the West Midlands. Outside of these conurbations, Home County towns such as High Wycombe, Luton and Bedford and many other locales experienced 'rioting' which had rarely been seen in the post-war era.[2] During the week of 6–13 July 1981 patterns of disturbance diffusion emerged suggesting that major 'riots' in inner city areas of mixed ethnicity precipitated numerous further disorders in other more ethnically homogenous districts of the conurbations, sometimes considerably distant from the initial 'flashpoints'.[3] The majority of contemporary commentators left these intriguing patterns of apparent contagion unexplained or blandly wrote them off as merely incidents of 'copycat rioting'.

One year before the tumultuous events of 1981 the St Pauls area of Bristol was rocked by an afternoon and evening of serious collective violence which led to the controversial and (in)famous withdrawal of the

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police force from the neighbourhood. The events of 2 April 1980 have since become iconic both in the media and popular memory and were perceived by many commentators to be the first major outbreak of urban 'rioting' on mainland Britain for several decades that was not directly instigated by formal political protest.[4] Although this view has been contested by some authors, in that it ignored violent disturbances centred around police raids on clubs and cafés frequented by ethnic minorities in the 1970s[5] as well as significant disorder at large public events such as the Notting Hill Carnival in 1975 and 1976, the wider perception was that the St Pauls disturbance was 'something new' to England.[6] The event thus became central to the modern history of Bristol and marked a moment where issues of institutional and popular racism were forced into the media spotlight, obliging national and local government bodies to search for explanations and generate policy responses. Consequently, the 'St Pauls Riot' as it was defined by the local media or 'The Bristol Riot' as the national newspapers labelled it, now occupies a racialised place in the popular memory signifying 'race riot' or 'Black uprising'.

On the eve of the 25th anniversary of the St Pauls 'riot' the *Bristol Evening Post* ran a double-page spread entitled 'The Night a Riot Rocked a Nation'.[7] The article included eyewitness statements and comments by a 'community leader', a councillor, a press photographer, 'a resident' and 'the policeman'. The latter, Superintendent Tim Lee the Deputy District Commander of the Avon and Somerset Constabulary in 2005, was a beat constable during the 1980 St Pauls disorders. In the article Lee provided an interesting insight by recalling some further disturbances that occurred in the succeeding days after the St Pauls event: 'What few people know is that for the following nights we had more problems in Southmead than we did in St Pauls because of copycat attacks.'

The significance of the disturbances in the Southmead estate for the Avon and Somerset Police Constabulary was confirmed by the Chief Constable's report of that year which gave them equal coverage to the St Pauls incident and considered them to be 'serious'.[8] However, the Southmead 'riots' were barely reported in the local press, ignored by the national media and relegated to the status of 'copycat attacks' or 'hooliganism' where they were mentioned.[9] Following disturbances over the start of the Easter weekend in 1980 the Monday edition of the *Western Daily Press* carried an editorial entitled 'Lessons for the Young' which stated that 'HOOLIGANISM in Southmead and Knowle West Follows the Riots in Bristol's St Pauls'.[10] The only reference made in the rest of that edition of the newspaper as to what had actually occurred in Knowle West was a short article referring to some slogans daubed on three shops in the area.[11] However, clearly *something had happened* over the weekend of 4–6 April 1980 to spur the comment in the editorial. Further research in the local media, available police reports and similar primary sources failed to locate any reference to the mysterious event in the South Bristol neighbourhood. Bristol's 'other riots' thus passed largely unnoticed and, more significantly, *unheeded* into obscurity. In contrast the St Pauls disturbance reverberated around the nation's media, dominated debates in the Houses of Commons and Lords over the succeeding days and led to a visit by a parliamentary sub-committee.[12] In addition there were several official and unofficial reports, a public enquiry held by trade unions and eventually a number of books and academic papers, which studied the event.[13]

Demographics and Policing

In 1980 Southmead and Knowle West were almost exclusively White areas, the former 6 kilometres north of the city centre and the latter 3 kilometres south (Fig. 2.1). Both of these peripheral self-contained estates had high concentrations of local authority housing with relatively static populations. In contrast, St Pauls, located in the inner city, had a large proportion of ethnic minorities, mixed forms of housing tenure and a notably transient population. All three areas were of similar sized population, principally composed of lower working-class socio-economic groupings, were experiencing very high levels of youth unemployment, household overcrowding and lacked social facilities.[14]

Oral history testimony and other primary sources demonstrate the perceived negative branding of each area by social class (all three) and ethnicity (St Pauls).[15] However, whereas St Pauls was commonly racialised as a closed Black inner city 'ghetto', in fact it was one of the more cosmopolitan areas of Bristol, with a long history of being a reception area for immigrants (Irish, Polish, African-Caribbean, Asian), those in the 'care' and probation systems and others in search of cheap rented housing or squatting. A lively cultural scene attracted a transient population of young people in the 1970s connected to various (youth) subcultures such as Punk and Rastafarianism.[16]

In contrast, the outlying areas of Southmead and Knowle West were actually far more 'closed' by geography, ethnicity and reputation. Oral

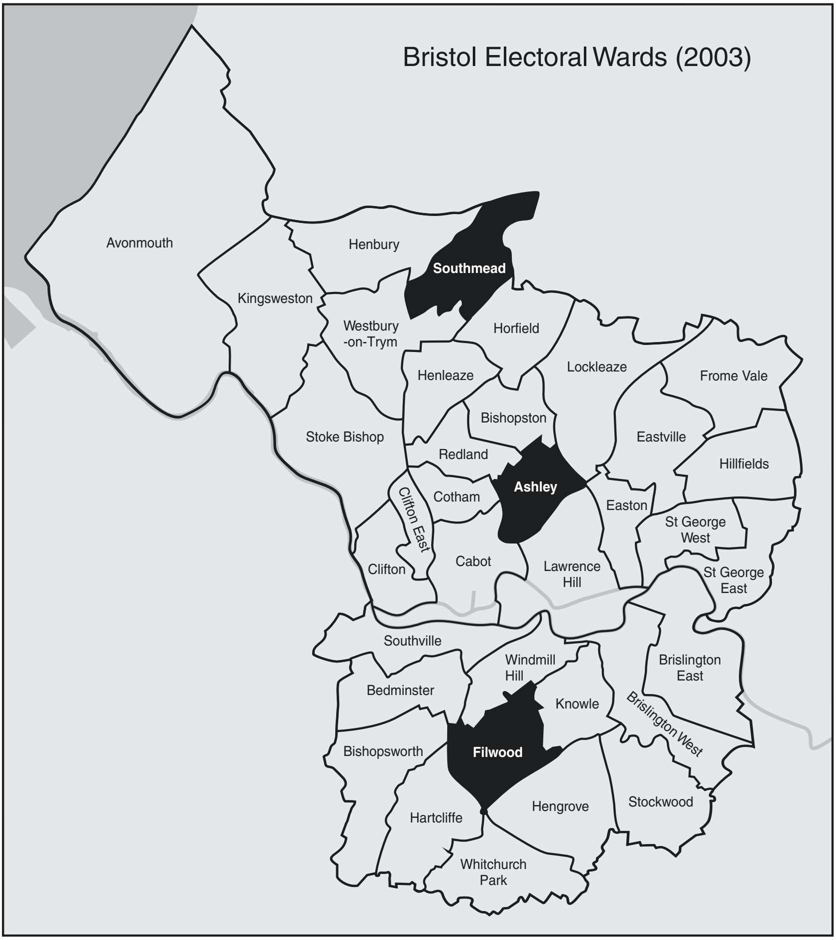
Bristol Electoral Wards (2003)
Avonmouth
Henbury
Southmead
Kingsweston
Westbury
-on-Trym
Horfield
Lockleaze
Frome Vale
Henleaze
Bishopston
Eastville
Stoke Bishop
Redland
Hillfields
Ashley
Cotham
Clifton East
Easton
St George
West
Cabot
Lawrence
Hill
Clifton
St George
East
Southville
Windmill
Hill
Brislington
East
Bedminster
Knowle
Brislington West
Filwood
Bishopsworth
Stockwood
Hengrove
Hartcliffe
Whitchurch
Park

Fig. 2.1 Location within the City of Bristol of the Southmead, Ashley (St. Pauls) and Filwood (Knowle West) electoral wards

histories highlighted violent inter-estate rivalries with neighbouring districts, which inhibited mobility and fraternisation. The negative 'branding' accorded to their neighbourhoods, which inhibited socialising in wealthier nearby areas, compounded these exclusionary aspects of life. Within their estates, struggles for control over social space between local youth and the authorities were common and brought young people into contact with the police on a fairly regular basis.[17]

The most striking similarities in oral history testimonies in the three areas concerned the encounters of young people with the police in the late 1970s and early 1980s. In fact it was possible to interchange these accounts by location, with one exception, that of ethnicity. Almost all the White respondents experienced situations where Black friends and acquaintances had been treated worse than they had in particular situations, and crucially they were fully aware of this fact. In some cases the respondents cited the generalised maltreatment as a basis for solidarity between subcultures and ethnic groups. Neither were these isolated incidents. Several respondents realised in retrospect that, at the time, they had accepted police maltreatment as the norm. This pointed to a history of policing practice that appeared to be area based and in many cases racist and derogatory to certain youth subcultures. Ironically, despite racist myths about St Pauls, several White respondents from Knowle West and Southmead regarded the inner city multiethnic area as a *safer* area for youth than their own neighbourhoods. This inference was based upon on the propensity of 'Black' residents to collectively intervene in police activities on the street, something the Avon & Somerset Constabulary were fully aware of. In St Pauls such confrontations were more commonplace than in the outlying estates of Southmead and Knowle West and may have led to over-policing of specific operations such as raids and other such irregular actions.

ACCOUNTS OF THE 'BRISTOL' RIOTS OF APRIL 1980

The following three sections summarise the disturbances in St Pauls, Southmead and Knowle West in April 1980.[18]

St Pauls: Wednesday 2 April 1980

On the afternoon of 2 April 1980, the 'frontline'[19] in St Pauls became the flashpoint for a serious disturbance when an operation involving more than 40 police officers was launched to discover evidence of the illegal sale of alcohol in the Black and White Café.[20]Having entered the premises and discovered several hundred crates of beer stored there, the Inspector in charge of the operation made the fateful decision to remove the items, a task which took more than an hour. During this time a large