

Third of looters were 'from deprived areas'

March 2 2012

Nearly a third of UK looters punished for taking part in the Manchester and Salford riots came from areas with high levels of social deprivation, an academic has found.

Carly Lightowlers from The University of Manchester said there was evidence of a 'clear association' between poverty levels and the likelihood of being involved in the [riots](#).

The proportion of residents involved in the riots was almost five times as high in more deprived areas than in less deprived areas.

The findings came from a study of data compiled by the Manchester Evening News of the first 110 rioters to be sentenced for their parts in the disorder last August.

Ms Lightowlers, of the Cathie Marsh Centre for [Census](#) and Survey Research, examined the information for a research paper.

She plotted details of 81 rioters sentenced since August whose home addresses were made publicly available by the courts.

These were viewed against an official poverty 'score' for the area in which they lived – called the indices of multiple deprivation.

The study found that not a single rioter came from the richest 10% of areas Greater Manchester.

In contrast, 26 of those sentenced (just under a third of the study) came from the poorest 10 %.

Ms Lightowlers said: “It is important to avoid relying solely on simplistic explanations for the riots based on individual rational choice, as the association with deprivation seen in this study suggests there may be other socio-structural processes at play which should not be ignored.

“This does not excuse the behaviour of any individual, they committed a crime and need to be brought to account for that.

“But we are looking forward at how we prevent this happening again and there does seem to be a potentially marginalised group who have not got a massive stake in mainstream society or politics.

“After all, if you haven't got a lot to lose, it might seem like less of a risk to join in with rioting and looting.”

The study found that around half of those sentenced came from Manchester and a quarter from Salford, with the remainder from the other boroughs in Greater Manchester.

Provided by University of Manchester

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