

1. Introduction

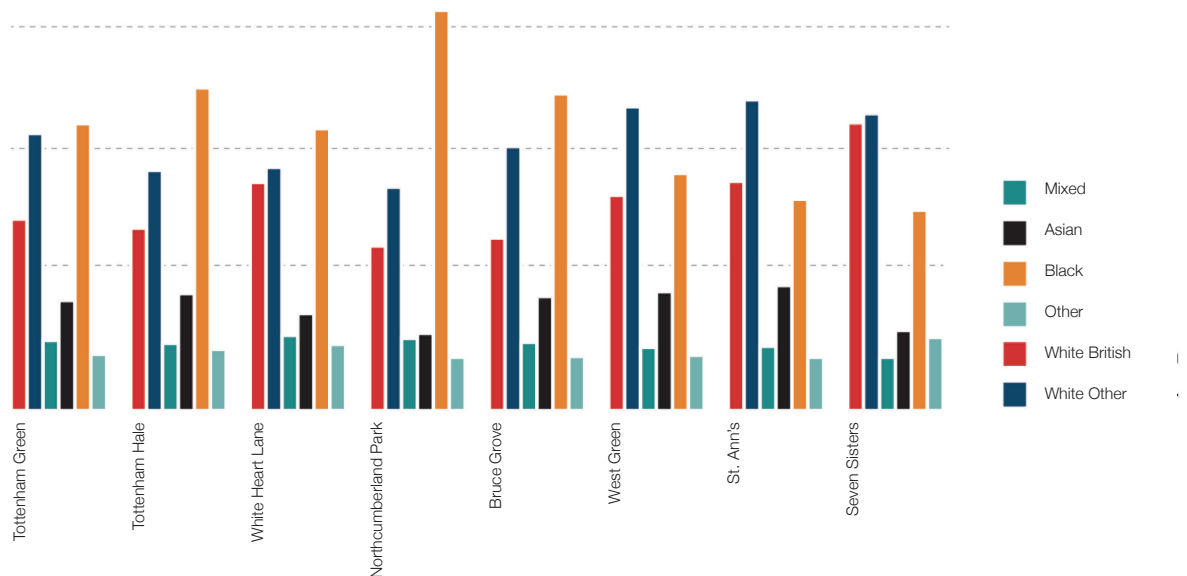
From Sydney to Amsterdam to Toronto to London, the term diversity pervades the discourse of urban policy makers and politicians. Increasingly, at the metropolitan and local level of urban governance, diversity is being reconceptualised as positive and as profitable. At first glance, this reconceptualisation of diversity (one embedded within the pursuit of urban growth and competition) might seem strangely akin to that of those leftist cultural critics and urban scholars who have valorised social, cultural and ethnic difference as an 'urban good'. But where these two conceptualisations fundamentally differ, is their attention (or lack thereof) to the discrimination and disadvantage that too often equate with difference. Whilst narratives about diversity proliferate, they are simultaneously being called into question for their depoliticising effects.

The differences in the values, attitudes, cultural perspective, beliefs, ethnic background, sexuality, skills, knowledge and life experiences of each individual in any group of people constitute the diversity of that group.

GLA, 2011

It is in this context that we come to Tottenham, a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural area under the jurisdiction of the London Borough of Haringey and a place where diversity is both a demographic fact and a political mantra. By taking the Haringey Council's discourse of diversity, contextualising and historicising it, we hope to make clearer what is at stake in the politics of diversity in Tottenham. Our critique intends not only to expose what is missing from the Haringey Council's discourse of

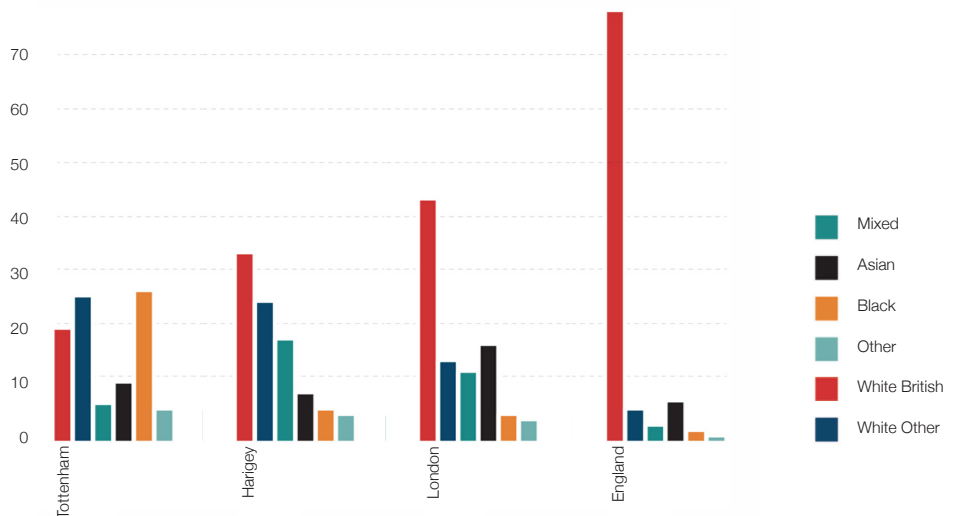
diversity (debate about racism, discrimination, disadvantage and inequality) but also how this serves to reproduce and deepen inequalities. We conclude by proposing an intervention: a political movement that re-centres social inequality as the key problematic in the politics of diversity in Tottenham and demands a new discourse of diversity that promotes rather than deflects attention away from structural change.



1.1 | Population by ethnicity in Tottenham's eight wards
(2011 Census)

2. Diversity as a Fact

When Tottenham Member of Parliament, David Lammy, was growing up in Tottenham in the 1970's it was, as he recalls it, a place with just "four big communities: an Afro-Caribbean community, a White 'cockney' community, an Irish community and a newly arrived Greek and Turkish Cypriot community" (Lammy, 2011). The Tottenham of Lammy's childhood is no more. Over the last four decades, immigration and asylum have transformed both the scope and composition of ethnic pluralism in Tottenham. The arrival of Asian immigrants in the 1980's, Kurdish and Somali refugees in the 1990's and Eastern European immigrants in the 2000's – among many others – means that when David Lammy calls Tottenham 'the most diverse constituency in the world' it is not just rhetorical flourish. Not only is the proportion of White British residents in Tottenham considerably small (32%, compared to 45% for London and 80% for England) so too is the number of groups that make up difference, and the plurality within and across these ethnic divides in terms of language, culture, religion, spectacularly large. Given the scope of ethnic and cultural pluralism in Tottenham, it is not surprising that as a local referent the term diversity is imbued with a strong ethnic and cultural meaning.



2.1 | Population by ethnicity in Tottenham, London and England
(2011 Census)

3. Diversity as Positive and Profitable

Tottenham's diversity is regularly referenced by Haringey's councillors and council officials and invariably rendered as 'tremendous', not just in scope but also in character. In the pages of Haringey People (the council's glossy bi-monthly magazine), diversity is represented as something that gives Tottenham 'vibrancy', 'richness', 'culture' and 'colour'. Diversity, so the story goes, is something that Tottenham should be proud of and a reason for the rest of London to be proud of Tottenham. Likewise, when Tottenham's 'diverse ethnic profile', 'diverse population', 'diverse cultural wealth', 'diverse communities', 'diverse heritage' and 'diverse character' are given mention in documents like Haringey's Local Plan (2013) and the Tottenham Strategic Regeneration Framework (2014), these multifarious diversities are always presented positively as things that make Tottenham a "great place to live".

Ever since Richard Florida's work on the 'creative city' began to promulgate diverse and tolerant places as profitable, the notion that diversity can attract visitors and investment and support diverse economies has been institutionalised in many cities, including London. The fact that London's rise as a world centre for financial, creative and cultural industries has been dependent on a highly mobile multi-ethnic immigrant workforce has not been lost on officials at the London level of governance,

There is great diversity [in Tottenham], but it has yet to be harnessed as an authentic selling point.

Mayor of London's Office, 2012

who venerate diversity as one of the city's best assets (Raco et. al, 2014). Since 2012, a similar narrative has emerged in Tottenham. Following the 2011 riots (that began in Tottenham and spread to other parts of London and the UK), the Mayor of London established an independent taskforce to give the Haringey Council advice about how Tottenham might be 'regenerated'. Suggesting that the key to "attracting investment" was solving Tottenham's "image problem", the Mayor's taskforce recommended that the Haringey Council take advantage of Tottenham's "great diversity" that had not yet been "harnessed as an authentic selling point" (Mayor of London's Office, 2012). Unsurprisingly, the Haringey Council's 2015 report, Tottenham's Future, calls for Tottenham's "multi-cultural, multi-ethnic" population to "be promoted to create a positive reputation for the place". The taskforce also recommended that Tottenham's "wide range of migrant communities" and "their keen entrepreneurial spirit" be used to foster a "retail-led regeneration" and that migrant's "relationships from their home countries" should be utilised to attract "inward investment" from abroad (Mayor of London's Office, 2012). Correspondingly, the Tottenham Strategic Regeneration Framework (2014, p.15) includes a Made in Tottenham programme designed to extol "the cultural strength and entrepreneurial spirit of the neighbourhood".

3.1 | 'Haringey People' Magazine Covers
(Haringey Council, 2014-15)



4. Tottenham: Just or Just Diverse?

Beyond the three tenants of diversity as fact, as positive and as profitable, the Haringey Council's discourse of diversity encompasses little political direction. And although 'diversity talk' acknowledges the presence of ethnic pluralism in Tottenham, it does not comprise a political stance about the structural inequalities experienced by ethnic minorities. As one of our respondents put it: 'the language of racial equality and social justice has gone' (Dave, 2015). Given that, as of 2011, Haringey has held the title of "second most ethnically unequal area in England" this is a striking omission (Finney and Lympelopoplou, 2014). Ethnic pluralism in Tottenham may have changed considerably over the last four decades but ethnic inequality has remained stubbornly in place. In fact, Haringey is more ethnically unequal today than it was in 2001.

The inequality between the western half of Haringey (an area that has a majority White British population) and Tottenham (an area where ethnic minorities are in the majority) provides an effective spatial proxy for the borough's ethnic inequality.

The statistics tell the same story. In Haringey the percentage of people (aged 25 and over) who are unemployed is 5% for white British, 10% for ethnic minorities and 17% for Black (up from 14% in 2001). The percentage of people living in overcrowded housing (with an occupancy rating of -1 or less) is 18% for white British, 35% for ethnic minorities, 37% for Black and 38% for White (other). These statistics, combined with the 63% increase (between

November 2013-2014) in race and religious hate crime, paint a picture of institutionalised ethnic inequality in Haringey (Gilroy, 2013, p.554). "Immigrants are ready made workers" one respondent told us, "but the shame about it is that they are the ones who get paid less" (Stylianou, 2015).

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C. Stylianou, Chairman of the Race and Equality Council, 2015



4.1 | Measures of deprivation by ethnicity
(2011 Census)

The use of diversity as a policy agenda at London's metropolitan scale has been critiqued for minimising concerns about marginalisation (Arapoglou, 2012; Raco et al., 2014; Syrett and Sepulveda, 2012). The self-congratulatory depiction of London as a city of diversity ignores the harsh reality that London's economy increasingly depends on a racialised division of labour (Leslie and Cartungal, 2012). As Jones (2014, p.167) argues, "celebrating diversity" without "considering the power relations [that] lie behind [and result from] it" creates the perception "that 'diversity' is banal, unproblematic and shared". This legitimises practices of 'governing' diversity that focus more on legal compliance than the kind of radical reforms needed to address more structural forms of inequality. This is also true in Tottenham, where the reconceptualisation of diversity as positive and profitable (something to accept and embrace) has served to side-line issues of racism, discrimination and ethnic inequality. Let us explain:

Firstly, by continuing to 'celebrate' diversity (and ethnic pluralism by extension) while rolling-back policies and programmes regarding racial equality the Haringey Council has not seemed to have gone back on its earlier commitments, while doing exactly that. Although diversity invokes the sentiment of 'we are all different', it does not signify a commitment to equality. Beyond their 'Public Sector Equality Duty' (as per the 2010 Equalities Act) to prevent discrimination based on age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, sex, race, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, and sexual orientation, the Haringey Council has no public commitment to reducing ethnic inequality, let alone strategic policies toward that goal. If anything, the Haringey Council is politically retreating from it – evidenced by their decision to stop providing funding to the Haringey Race and Equality Council (an independent body that advocates people who have been, or have perceived to have been, subject to discrimination). Writing in 1992 after having their annual grant cut for the first time, the chairman of the Haringey Race and Equality suggested that funding cuts "raise the pertinent question of the political will to eliminate racial discrimination". The same can be said today. This lack of political will is, however, obscured by the Haringey Council's discourse of diversity that is saturated with positive interpretations of ethnic and cultural pluralism as a social and economic good.

Secondly, by speaking increasingly often about diversity and increasingly less about the intersection between ethnicity and inequality, the Haringey Council has rendered ethnic pluralism as unproblematic, something that can be 'managed' by bureaucrats and technocrats. As one respondent described it, it has become the domain of "faceless bureaucrats", "people who have absolutely no experience of Haringey, let alone experience of a borough with over 65% non-white British population" (Stylianou, 2015). Also, according to Ballard (2015): "Tottenham has a glorious diverse heritage, which I doubt Haringey council has the remotest understanding of. They pay somebody to write that stuff". This bureaucratic approach to 'governing' ethnic pluralism (a combination of 'equality impact assessments', community consultations and 'hate crime helplines') moves the highly contentious (and highly localised) politics of race out of the public sphere and into the Council office. This shift, in turn, pushes aside historic inequalities in power and status in favour of 'one-size-fits-all' solutions.

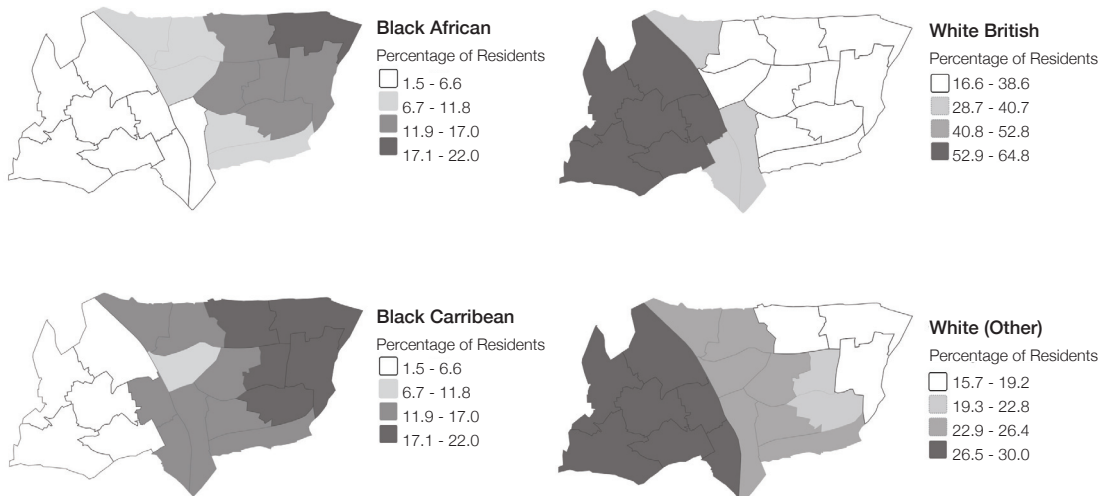
Thirdly, ignoring the intersection between ethnicity and inequality helps to legitimise market solutions to inequality. When the Haringey Council speaks of inequality they tend to frame it as a spatial divide of a wealthier east and a poorer west, ignoring the reality of the situation: that people in the west of Haringey are predominantly white and middle class and the east is predominantly working class people from ethnic minority backgrounds. This decoupling of ethnicity from inequality makes what is fundamentally a political and structural problem seem like one that can be solved by simply connecting deprived areas to investment. This is the perception that underpins the Haringey Council's strategy for addressing deprivation and inequality (a private sector-led regeneration focused on property development and large retail businesses). However genuine the hope that "by the age of twenty, a child born in Tottenham today will have a quality of life and access to the same level of opportunity that is at least equal to the best in London" (Tottenham Strategic Regeneration

Framework, 2014) may be, attempting to address inequality without recognising ethnicity as a driver of inequality is, as one respondent put it, “merely lip service” (Dave, 2015). While refusing to frame inequality in ethnic terms, the Haringey Council has concurrently recruited diversity into its strategy for ‘tackling’ inequality. The notion that diversity is ‘good for growth’ has the perverse effect of making it seem that growth is good for all of the (diverse) public. This means that the well-worn notion that ‘there is no alternative’ and that ‘regeneration’ is common sense is further entrenched.

Through their discourse of diversity, the Haringey Council is promoting both investment and ethnic pluralism while ignoring and obscuring the racialised disadvantage that is part and parcel of capitalist system (Arapoglou, 2012, p.227). Taking Wendy Brown’s (2006, p.15) definition of depoliticisation as the “removal of a political phenomenon from comprehension of its historical emergence and from a recognition of the powers that produce and contour it” we can conclusively say that the Haringey Council’s discourse has served to depoliticise diversity, with the effect of legitimising bureaucratic and market solutions to inequality that reproduce, not challenge, the status quo.



4.2 | Percentage of population born in England
(2011 Census)



4.3 | Percentage of population by ethnicity
(2011 Census)

5. Explanations?

Contrast Boris Johnson's promotion of the 'world in one city' and David Cameron's calls to 'curb immigration' and 'call time on equality impact assessments' and it becomes clear that urban approaches to diversity (and ethnic diversity in particular) do not map neatly onto the diversity politics of the nation state. As Lentin (2012, p.1271), astutely points out, the retreat from multiculturalist discourse is not always a critique of the "highly criticisable multiculturalist policies, but of lived multiculturalism per se; that is of the racial/ethnic/cultural diversity of post-immigration societies". Although such an argument can be made about politics at the national scale, it seems implausible that the Haringey Council does not genuinely value 'multi-culture'. Historically, the Haringey Council (and other Labour-led London boroughs) pursued an overtly equality orientated multiculturalism.

Beginning in the late 1960s, the Haringey Council established a strong, and well-publicised, commitment to reducing the inequality, exclusion and disadvantage experienced by ethnic minorities. They acted on this commitment by increasing the representation of ethnic minorities among their workforce; deploying 'race equality officers' in all of their departments; running educational programmes focused on anti-racism and cultural awareness; and establishing a translation service to ensure that constituents who could not speak English still had equal access to Council-run services. During the 1970s, they made a concerted effort to increase equality of access to housing. Afraid that discretionary racism on the part of white housing officers was forcing ethnic minorities into 'inferior' quality estates (especially Broadwater Farm in Northumberland Park), they increased the number of ethnic minority employees in their housing department (Jeffers and Hoggett, 1995, p.327).

Even when a commitment to multiculturalism deteriorated at the level of UK politics under Margaret Thatcher, who deliberately fuelled fears that the UK was being "swamped by people with a different culture" (Thatcher, 1978 cited in Kundnani, 1988, p.6), the Haringey Council continued working to 'eliminate racism' and 'make racial justice a reality' through 'affirmative action policies' aimed at "redressing the balance of historical, racial, social and economic disadvantage experienced by Black and Minority ethnic people" (Haringey Council Strategy on Racial Equality, 1984). Against this historic backdrop, and the fact the borough has been Labour run since 1972, it is dubious to suggest that the Haringey Council simply 'do not care' about racial equality.

A more plausible explanation relates to the transformation of the UK's reformist, social-democratic Keynesian Welfare State. The UK has, since the late 1970s, been transformed by a process of neoliberalisation that has reduced the role of government to protecting the conditions under which "profitable competition can be pursued" (Hall, 2011, p.707). According to this logic, services that local authorities once provided (such as libraries, parks, youth centres, community centres, cultural centres and housing) should be handed over to the market. To enable this, local authorities have been deliberately cut down to size. Their spending power (i.e. funds from the UK government combined with revenue raised from council tax) has been reduced to such a level that it is near impossible for them not to privatise (or simply abolish) some of their frontline services. Facing the prospect of making £70 million worth of budget cuts over the coming years, the leader of the Council, Councillor Kober has said, "my job is to work to ensure that we come up with the least worst options" (Corporate Plan, 2015-18, p.4). It is this context that the Haringey Council has turned diversity as a means to promote Tottenham to attract investment; attempting to 'capitalise on' its constituency's diversity in the hope that it will benefit those diverse constituents.

6. Intervention

If the Haringey Council's current discourse of diversity is depoliticised, and obscures and exacerbates issues of racism, discrimination and ethnic inequality, then we call for a change in discourse. But herein lies the paradox: How does one portend to turn issues that have been rendered unproblematic back into issues of active political debate? The 2011 Tottenham riots are testament to how political protests are so often labelled and dismissed as disobedience and social breakdown – delegitimising any attempt to render an issue political. It is, therefore, essential to look at some specific examples of how the Tottenham riots were addressed to fully understand the challenge of repoliticisation.

The event that initiated the riots in Tottenham in 2011 was the killing of Mark Duggan (a young Afro-Caribbean man) by the police and the insensitive treatment of his family and protestors in the days following his death. Although Mark Duggan's death occurred against the background of institutionalised ethnic inequality and despite Tottenham being an "area uniquely saturated with histories of conflict between the community and the police" (Gilroy, 2013, p.553), many politicians portrayed the riots that followed it as "meaningless violence" and essentially a lustful desire stemming from the culture of consumption (Slater, 2015, p.4). David Cameron's government framed these disturbances as a consequence of 'family breakdown,' which he sums up "in three key words: dissolution, dysfunction, and 'dad-lessness'" (Slater, 2015, p.10). Wallace examines how the media fell into the temptation of framing the riots as 'nihilistic' and as 'social meltdown'. The media further pit the rioters against the everyday resident and extolled the 'community' and vilified the contention. This narrative further confused who and what the rioters were targeting and further condemned them. These methods "remind [...] us of the overt and banal strategies of control that cities breed to manage contention" (Wallace, 2014, p.11). Although the riots did impact some small businesses and private residences, much of this resulted from attacks on nearby larger commercial projects rather than being directly targeted (Wallace, 2014, p.14).

In a sense, the Tottenham riots are an example of a claim to equality in a post-political age – an example of what Rancière calls the 'part of those with no part'. That is, "a group of people who insist that they be taken into account not as subordinates with a limited (or no) part to play in society but as equals" (Davidson and Iveson 2014, p.6). However, as is too often the case, the riots were carefully managed through discourse as 'criminal' not political. This de-legitimation process even manifested itself with the Tottenham Police who, during the riots, 'seemed intent on protecting the police station, leaving everything north of it free for the rioters to loot or destroy' (Scott, 2015). Stafford Scott continues to note that many people in Tottenham believe the police were playing politics in this action to stage-manage the riots into a random act of disobedience and essentially an unsystematic act of violence and breakdown with no links to racism or institutionalised ethnic inequality. Therefore, in this case, the 'part of those with no part' was not able to make their demands clear and claim their equality.

The question we are faced with, then, is under what conditions will a protest not be co-opted into the stage-managed status-quo? What kind of protest would force the Haringey Council to re-render diversity political? Unfortunately, part of the paradox in staging a successful political dissensus is that one will not know what will work until the act itself has worked. There is no universal formula for staging this type of police-order-challenging protest and the circumstances will change depending on the context of the site.



6.1 | Tottenham High Road during the 2011 riots
(CC BY-NC 2.0; Nico Hogg)





7. Just Diverse: A Political Movement

We propose not a mere resistance or reaction to the police order, but an urban political movement (Swyngedouw) that, following Rancière, continuously verifies itself and re-establishes itself as legitimate. “Rancière’s approach to politics suggests that equality demands are not pre-given, but rather they emerge from practice and are made political in their verification through practice” (Davidson and Iveson, p.9).

It is paramount to note that whereas the riots came from a pressurised moment of community outrage, our intervention would be an organised movement. It would be called ‘Just Diverse’ and

Rancière’s approach to politics suggests that equality demands are not pre-given, but rather they emerge from practice and are made political in their verification through practice

Davidson & Iveson, 2014, p.9

membership would be open to anyone willing to work against ethnic inequality. This intervention, however, should not be understood as a return to radical identity politics. To use Rancière’s terms, the ‘part of those with no part’, in this case would be embodied by anyone willing to speak out publicly against ethnic inequality in Tottenham and Haringey, not simply one ethnic community. Erik Swyngedouw recently defined

the political, in a lecture at Kings College, as “the radical heterogeneity that cuts through the social” and he urged for the demos to be re-established as heterogeneous. It is then a radical heterogeneous group of people that we insist on – one that disagrees with ethnic inequality in the community and that is therefore willing to stage their disagreement. In their heterogeneity it would be much more difficult for them to be co-opted into the police order as radical identity politics was in the past.

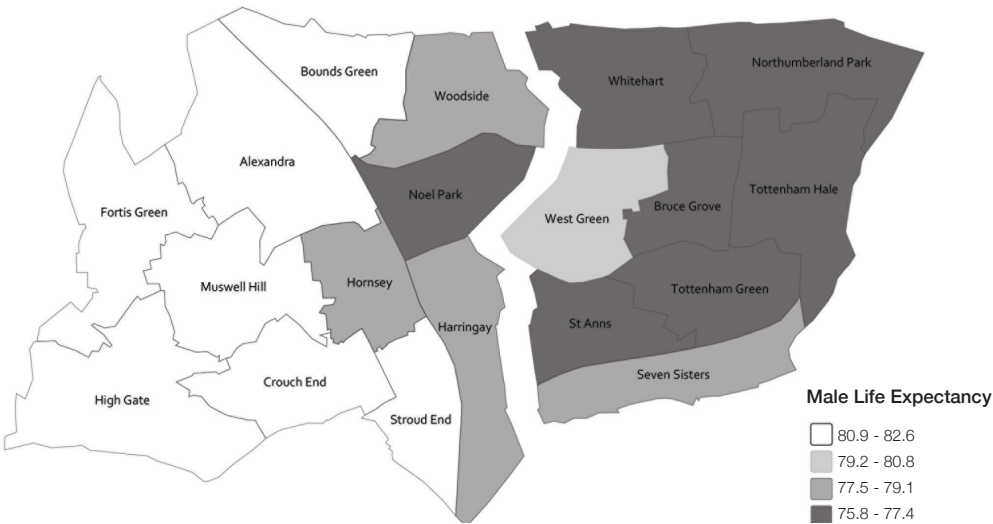
This movement would start with a three types of action directed towards a specific aspect of inequality in the borough that is characterised by race, life expectancy. These actions are examples centred on life expectancy but by no means represent the only action taken by the movement.

The first and main action was inspired from an interview with Ketan Dave, an equality officer at the Race and Equality Council. He said, while pointing out on a map, “there is a bus, the 41 bus that goes from here to here and when you get off on this side, life expectancy is 7 years lower. People talk about it, [...], the Local Authority, they will all talk about it saying “this is disgraceful” but it is just lip service!” Steve Ballard also noted, “there is that diversity of wealth and poverty in Tottenham, there just is. But that doesn’t mean that the wealthy in Haringey should just ignore what’s going on in the East in Tottenham”. These concerns of a socio-economic and racialised divide between the two halves of the borough were brought to our attention from members of the local community themselves. This first action will take the form of a protest on the 41-bus by the members of ‘Just Diverse’.

Conceptually, the protest will occur on the bus for two main reasons. First, we see a protest in a public place as an act in which the demos or ‘the part of those with no part’ enter into a process of repoliticisation. This is because where there is currently no part in wider Haringey and specifically Tottenham’s discourse to legitimately talk about ethnic inequality, these protestors would be verifying and claiming their equality by staging it, by bringing it into the public sphere in an organised and direct way. Whereas the current neoliberal government and discourse presuppose equality, this protest would bring to light the reality of the situation. By utilising a physical manifestation of ethnic inequality, the demos would be asserting their claim to the political and to the city. Everyone, and especially the demos, should have an equal say in politics and an equal claim to the city – but through discourse manipulation these arguments have been rendered illegitimate.

It is important to note the example of Rosa Parks, as Rancière does. When she sat in the ‘white only’ section on a segregated bus she took part in something that, according to the police order of the time period, she had no part to play. In our current context the demos would be constituted by anyone, of any ethnicity, age group, gender, and class, who would be willing to protest publicly about ethnic inequality. They would take part in that which they have no part to play according to the wider police order – speaking out about ethnic inequality and as a result challenging the wider discourse of diversity. On a bus where most people keep to themselves, this message would subvert the depoliticised reality through the repoliticising of space and in which the demos would verify their stake to equality.

The second reason is because of the nature of the bus route itself. The 41 bus starts in Archway in Upper Islington but quickly moves into Haringey starting in Crouch End and ending in Tottenham Hale. As it goes along its route, it literally cuts across the borough from West to East. The critical point, that Ketan mentioned, is that as the bus transverses the borough, the life expectancy of the inhabitants drops by seven years. This statistic has everything to do with ethnicity, as the Western neighbourhoods of Haringey (Crouch End and Wood Green) are predominantly white and wealthy, whereas Tottenham in the East is ethnically diverse, with a black majority, and highly deprived. This constitutes an ethnicised gap that has not been validated or even mentioned by the Haringey Council. They have mentioned that the borough is divided but never specifically comment that it is a racial divide.



7.1 | Male life expectancy
(2011 Census)



7.2 | The route of the No. 41 bus

8. Outcomes

It is key to make a point here about scale. Some of the reforms that would make the greatest impact on ethnic inequalities – for example increasing the living wage, improving working conditions, strengthening welfare provisions, giving grant making powers to the Equalities and Human Rights Commission and strengthening Equalities legislation – are reforms that can only occur at a level above local government. But that is not to say that the Haringey Council cannot have influence beyond Haringey's borders.

The possibility for Haringey to collaborate with other London boroughs on issues like the living wage is real, as is their ability to influence Tottenham's MP David Lammy (this is not insignificant seeing as he will be standing for Mayor of London in 2015). It is also true that the restructuring of government in the UK has left London's boroughs with relative autonomy to develop policies on ethnicity. The idea that local authorities should find local responses to ethnic difference is problematic in the sense that it gives councils like Haringey responsibility for making changes that they do not have the power (or money) to make. But on the other hand, it does mean that the Haringey Council is not locked into the politics of the nation state and free to make statements and policies that are far less assimilationist than David Cameron might like.

With the institutionalisation of a new politics of diversity, there are many things the Haringey Council does have the capacity to do. They can find ways to promote racial equality, in spite of fiscal constraint. They can, perhaps, use the '106 clause' to demand that anti-racism messages take up 51% of the advertising space on new developments and find other ways to 'recruit' capitalism into their agenda on race. They can (despite budget cuts) allocate funding for racial equality programs and bodies such as the Haringey Racial Equality Council. They can also look for ways to deepen local democracy (for example, by establishing a jury to approve or reject equality impact assessments) and create spaces for dissensus and debate. Above all, they can name structural challenges for what they are even if they do not have the power to change them by themselves.

9. Conclusion

The way that diversity is discursively constructed has a powerful impact on urban policy, spaces and lives. What the term means and what it should mean for urban policy are contested political questions. But too often the politics of diversity is trampled by an economic agenda that renders diversity as positive, profitable and unproblematic. In this project we have held a mirror up to the status quo. We have challenged established discourses of diversity and questioned how, when adopted as policy, they might obscure and exacerbate issues of racism, discrimination, disadvantage and ethnic inequality.

Critiquing the narratives that shape our cities is an important task. Alongside critique, we need to imagine cities in which diversity is not only engulfed in economic logics but to propose economic logics that attend to diversity in system-challenging ways. These are not easy feats. But understanding how the politics of diversity plays out in places like Tottenham, and how it might play out differently, is a good place to start.

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