

Unequal geographies of education in the London Borough of Enfield: A Mixed Methods Approach

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Abstract

Government and research councils often call for the raising of disadvantaged secondary school students' aspirations to alleviate educational and socio-economic inequalities in the UK. This paper addresses the geographical element characterising the intersectional nexus regarding inequality and educational aspirations, manifested at the local scale. Research in the field has predominantly adopted either quantitative or qualitative approaches, thereby somewhat overlooking the benefits of mixed methods investigations. Drawing on Bourdieusian concepts, namely: capital, habitus and field, as theoretical tools, this paper examines the unequal geographies of education in the London Borough of Enfield by adopting a mixed methods approach involving: secondary statistical analysis, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Framing the paper is a comparative context, involving sixth form students from three secondary schools geographically located in the western, central and eastern parts of the borough. In contrast to much political and societal rhetoric, the findings reveal students' similarly 'high' educational aspirations across all three schools, even in deprived areas. This mixed methods approach adds nuance when investigating the significance of geographical place in mediating such aspirations. The findings have significant policy implications, suggesting efforts should be shifted toward implementing aspiration *realisation* strategies, while simultaneously customising interventions to the place-specific context, to be most effective.

Keywords: Inequality; geographies of education; mixed methods; aspirations; Enfield

Introduction

The Social Market Foundation (2016) identifies growing national scale geographical inequality in UK educational performance since the 1970s. Education policy is increasingly regarded by the likes of the Social Mobility Commission as the "key to social mobility drive" (BBC News, 2016). Research councils and government officials frequently cite raising disadvantaged secondary school pupils' aspirations as a fundamental solution to alleviating educational and socio-economic inequalities (Department for Education (DfE), 2014; Economic and Social Research Council, 2012).

An issue faced by policy makers is how to navigate the intersectional nexus encapsulating the geographical dimension embedded within inequality and educational aspirations to

higher education (HE). The Joseph Rowntree Foundation ((JRF), 2011: 8) argues that educational aspirations are “strongly influenced by place”. Despite this emphasis upon an inherently geographical concept of ‘place’, much research has failed to adopt a geographical lens when exploring this area, thereby overlooking the significance of place at the local micro-scale.

Previous research studies including, Sammons et al. (2016) and Baker et al. (2014), have aligned themselves with a quantitative paradigm. Meanwhile others such as, Johnston et al. (2009) have solely adopted qualitative techniques. While somewhat effective, such research studies have their respective methodological disadvantages; a qualitative approach can be highly subjective and difficult to scale up with high confidence levels, whereas quantitative often overlooks the significance of individuals’ thoughts and feelings attached to their personal experiences, which in turn, shape their aspirations. Despite these downfalls, the effectiveness of mixed methods studies in offsetting the respective methodological disadvantages is often overlooked. As such, this paper aims to develop a more holistic understanding of the area by employing both quantitative and qualitative data to add nuance to the research.

Enfield’s high level of overall and educational inequality (8th borough in London for both), coupled by the east-west spatial manifestation of inequality, constitute the rationale for location choice (Runnymede Trust, 2011). This mixed methods paper will explore the unequal geographies of education (Figure 1), at the micro- and meso-scales, within the London Borough of Enfield.

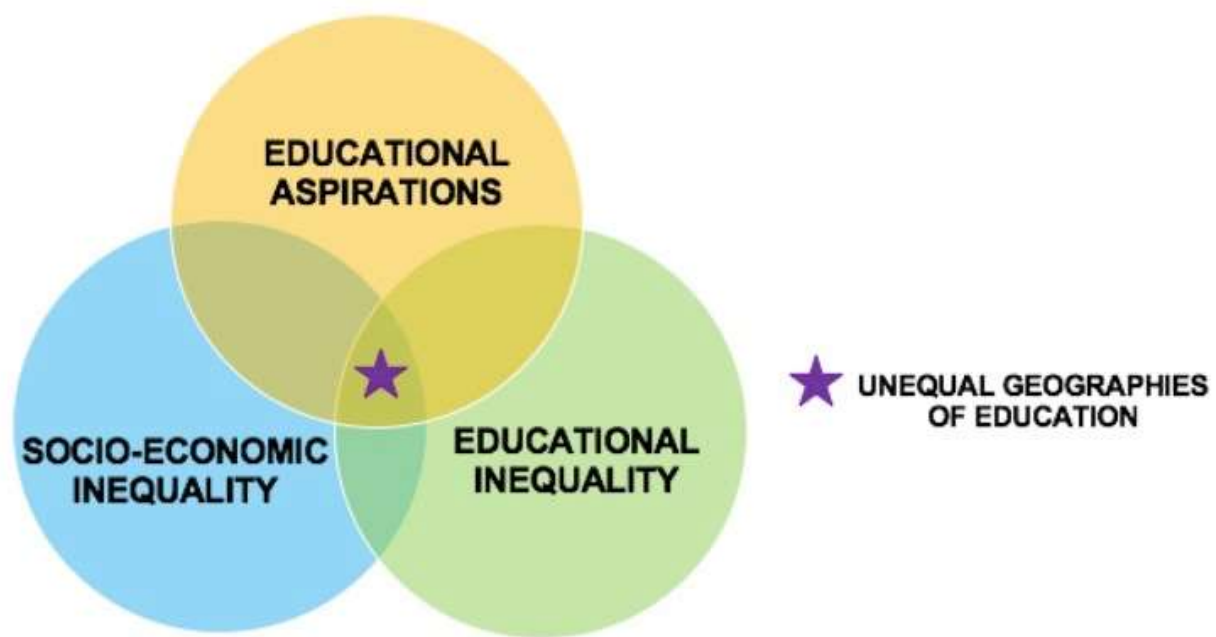


Figure 1: Schematic diagram depicting this paper’s conceptual framework.

This paper aims to critique pre-conceived ideas, entrenched in political and societal rhetoric, surrounding young people’s educational aspirations. This research revolves around the following questions, culminating in the final mixed methods specific research question:

1. How does socio-economic inequality in Enfield influence higher education progression rates?
2. How, and why, is educational inequality spatially configured in Enfield?
3. What are the main factors shaping educational aspirations?
4. To what extent do educational aspirations converge with socio-economic inequality and educational inequality in Enfield, and why?

Bourdieuian theory

Bourdieu and Passeron's reproduction theory (1977), and its direct application to HE (1979), presents an insightful exploration into young people's experiences, actions and psychological dispositions. The theory's three principal concepts: capital, habitus and field, encapsulate the notion of power dynamics between socio-economic classes with respect to space (Bourdieu, 1977; 1984; 1991). Recognising these concepts' interlinkages, while capitalising upon their "conceptual looseness" during application to my empirical research, is critical in providing a more nuanced approach to the unequal geographies of education (Reay, 2004: 441). Bourdieu's later work alongside Loïc Wacquant (1992) is of particular importance, given the emphasis upon the significance of a field's spatial dimension, when framing the manifestation of power dynamics amongst individuals exercising their agency to access capital. Despite frequent application of Bourdieu's theory within educational studies (Hayton and Bengry-Howell, 2016; Reay, 2005), its prevalence is much rarer within geographical literature. Applying Bourdieusian concepts as theoretical tools will constitute a backdrop to facilitate investigation into inequality and educational aspirations from a geographical perspective.

Policy and research studies

Recent UK government initiatives have sought to implement strategies raising high-achieving disadvantaged students' HE aspirations, given concerns over 'low aspirations' (Thornton et al., 2014). The JRF's valuable definition highlights how aspiration is "what an individual hopes will happen in the future" (JRF, 2012: 6). While appreciating that 'aspirations' is a subjective concept, relative to the individual, this paper nevertheless applies the JRF's definition within the context of Year 12 pupils' hopes to progress to HE after sixth form. National reports released by social policy research charities such as, the JRF (2012), call for greater research exploring the influence of aspirations upon students' decisions to progress to 'post-compulsory' education. Directly responding to this research call, the educational stage targeted by this research is post-compulsory HE. Given much research (Berrington et al., 2016; Rampino & Taylor, 2013) has already investigated the significance of gender and ethnicity in shaping educational aspirations, this paper instead shifts the focus to an under-utilised geographical lens.

Notwithstanding previous research studies' (Baker et al., 2014; Johnson et al., 2009) success, Holloway and Jöns (2012) assert that a mixed methods approach is critical for research into educational aspirations and attainment, especially within a comparative context. This paper's comparative research, framed by East, Central and West Enfield, takes this recommendation into account, while also somewhat drawing on the mixed methods methodology adopted by Strand and Winston's (2008) research into Years 7 and 9 inner-city school pupils' educational aspirations. Yet, these scholars' research required

modification for my research, given their use of focus group interviews can result in a limitation regarding peer influence at this young participant age. Moreover, my research upwardly shifts the participants' age range to Year 12, in line with students' more concentrated focus upon aspiring to destinations post-sixth form at this stage in their educational career.

The London Borough of Enfield - place context

Despite many recent scholars focussing on socio-economic inequality at the national and international scales, it is nonetheless critical to investigate this phenomenon at the equally significant micro- and meso-scale local neighbourhood context (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009; Dorling, 2014; Marmot, 2004). In 2011, Enfield, the most northerly London borough, ranked 8th in London for both overall inequality and educational inequality, framed by a stark east-west spatiality (Runnymede Trust, 2011; 2016).

The 2015 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) reveals how three wards in the borough rank in the top 10% of most deprived English wards, all of which are located in East Enfield. Health inequalities are also significant, with an 8.8-year and 10-year life expectancy gap for men and women respectively, between East and West Enfield (Watts et al., 2011). Meanwhile, 32.8% of under-16s in Enfield lived in child poverty in 2011, equating to the sixth highest figure in London and tenth highest in England (Enfield Council, 2014). The London Borough of Enfield is therefore a highly suitable research study site, given this socio-economic context within which to analyse the unequal geographies of education across the borough.

Methods

Research sites

Three state comprehensive, mixed secondary schools located in the London Borough of Enfield represented the research sites for primary data collection, herein referred to as: Southgate, Edmonton County and Nightingale. These schools were selected given their locations in the west, central and east of the borough respectively (Figure 2), therefore facilitating a focus on the spatial dimension of geographies across Enfield.

Location of the three Enfield secondary schools involved in the research

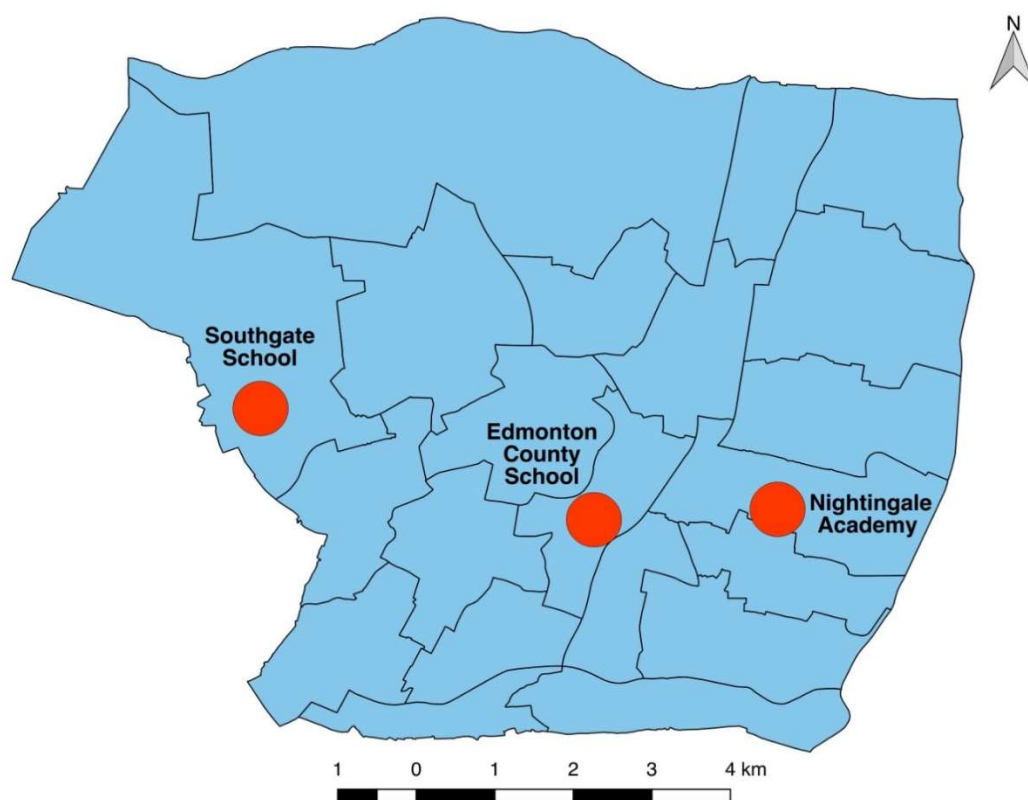


Figure 2: Map depicting the location of the three secondary schools within the London Borough of Enfield that participated in this research. Source: author. Boundary data: Contains National Statistics data © Crown copyright and database right [2017]. Contains OS data © Crown copyright [and database right] (2017).

Data Sources

Secondary data was sourced from open-access websites (Table 1).

Dataset type	Dataset name	Time-period	Source
Educational inequality	Average A-Level point score per exam entry	2011-2015	Department for Education
	5 A*-C GCSEs including English and Mathematics	2011-2015	
	Participation of Local Areas (POLAR)	2005-06 & 2010-11	Higher Education Funding Council for England
	Young Participation Rates to HE		
	KS5 HE progression by school	2016	Department for Education
	Russell Group progression by school		
	Life expectancy	2005-2013	
	Unemployment rate		

Socio-economic inequality	Crime rate	2009-2013	Greater London Authority's London Ward Well-Being Scores
	Percentage of children residing in an out-of-work household		
	House price average	1995-2015	
	Indices of Deprivation (ID), including the IMD	2015	Department for Communities and Local Government

Table 1: All secondary datasets used in this research.

Mixed methods procedures

This research adopted a fixed, convergent parallel design, framed by the philosophical assumption of pragmatism (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Quantitative and qualitative data were collected concurrently, with equal importance allocated to both. Analysis of the two data types remained separated, although data was merged during interpretation. The final outcome constituted triangulated and merged research findings (Figure 3).

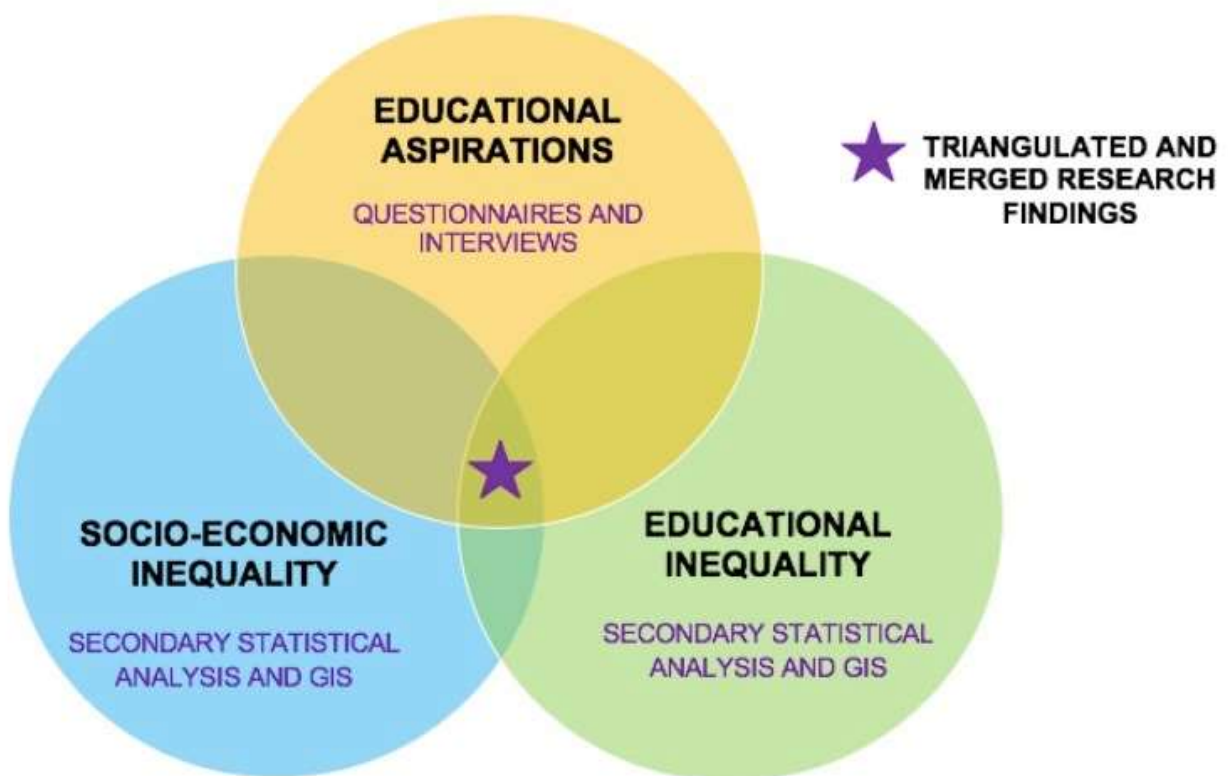


Figure 3: Schematic diagram of the research with associated methodology.

Quantitative methods

Statistical tests and Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

Quantitative data analysis comprised: univariate and multivariate analysis, and GIS techniques (Table 2). A bivariate Kruskal-Wallis and post-hoc Bonferroni test was undertaken for the questionnaires. Statistical analysis employed Excel and SPSS. Mapping used Quantum GIS (QGIS) and GeoDa to visualise educational attainment and socio-economic data.

Dataset type	Dataset name	Statistical test and/or GIS technique
Educational inequality	Average A-Level point score per exam entry	Graduated symbol map with located points representing educational attainment, layered on top of ward base layer.
	5 A*-C GCSEs including English and Mathematics	
	Participation of Local Areas (POLAR)	Base polygon layer for GIS map.
	Young Participation Rates to HE	Multiple regression model.
	KS5 HE progression by school	N/A – descriptive statistic in joint display table.
	Russell Group progression by school	
Socio-economic inequality	Life expectancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Univariate Global Moran's I ○ Local Indicators of Spatial Association (LISA) ○ Multiple regression model
	Unemployment rate	
	Crime rate	
	Percentage of children residing in an out-of-work household	
	House price average	
	Indices of Deprivation (ID), including the IMD	Base polygon layer for GIS map.

Table 2: All statistical tests and/or GIS mapping techniques, and their corresponding secondary datasets, used in this research.

Questionnaires

Online Survey Monkey questionnaires were distributed amongst the three schools' Year 12 students (Appendix A). Table 3 outlines the schools' response rates. Questionnaires recorded the factors determining the students' aspirations, coupled by their attitudes towards influences from their community environments. Most questions constituted a quantitative Likert scale format. The factor structure of Strand and Winston's (2008) questionnaire constituted the foundation for the key concepts explored in this study's questionnaire.

School	Total number of Year 12 students	Total number of responses	Response rate	Margin of error
Nightingale Academy	35	29	82.9%	8%
Edmonton County School	117	53	45.3%	10%
Southgate School	170	86	50.6%	7%

Table 3: The three schools' survey response rates and accompanying margin of errors.

Qualitative method

24 semi-structured interviews were conducted, divided equally amongst the three schools (Appendix B), with the aim of exploring individuals' thoughts and feelings concerning the factors shaping their educational aspirations at the micro-scale. Interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes and were predicated upon a generalised interview schedule (Appendix C). Selected Year 12 participants were identified as Able, Gifted & Talented (AG&T). This sub-group was selected as a sampling criteria, since it represented a control group across the three schools, ensuring all interviewees were of a similar academic ability.

Undertaking a thematic analysis, facilitated by MAXQDA software, revealed the "patterns of meaning in informant [sic] accounts of experience" (McLeod, 2011: 145-7). Drawing on Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach, I adopted a framework tool (Tables 4 and 5) as a "matrix based method for ordering and synthesising data" (Ritchie et al., 2003: 219).

Major Theme	Organising Themes	First-Order Theme Clusters
Self (individual)	Prestige	Success; self-importance; future career
	Finances	Financial concerns; financial commitment
	Uncertainty and confusion	Lack of awareness; lack of cultural and social capital
	Comfortability/Independence/ Importance of family	University 'experience'; geography of HE choice; cultural influences

Table 4: Framework for the major theme: self (individual), presenting the themes and first-order theme clusters.

Major Theme	Organising Themes	First-Order Theme Clusters
Spatial networks	Significant other	Family; friends; school alumna
	Social capital	Current access; hypothetical situation
	Norm to progress to university	Family; cultural capital; societal influences

Table 5: Framework tool for the major theme: spatial networks, presenting the themes and first-order theme clusters.

Ethics

This research was reviewed and approved by the Geography Department's Ethics Review Committee at the University of Cambridge.

Limitations

A caveat to this research was that students could, in theory, attend any Enfield sixth form regardless of distance. In reality, however, this was typically not the case, especially given the conscious decision to select three non-selective, non-denominational schools.

I acknowledged the limitation of using secondary socio-economic and educational inequality datasets from different years, however I had to comply with the timescale of national

sources' data collection. Generating averages for the datasets, wherever possible, alleviated this limitation by calculating a composite figure incorporating multiple years of data, thereby accounting for broader trends over a longer time scale.

Results and Discussion

Socio-economic inequality

Analysing Enfield's socio-economic inequality is critical to gain a more nuanced understanding of the meso-scale context underlying students' HE participation rates. Generating a multiple linear regression model determines whether there is a statistically significant relationship between young participation rate (YPR) to HE (dependent variable) and the socio-economic independent variables, derived from the Greater London Ward Well-Being Scores, previously referred to in Table 1. Rather than simply identifying a correlation between two or more variables, a regression model further evaluates whether there is a direct causation between variables.

Employing a stepwise method demonstrates how only two of the five independent socio-economic variables statistically significantly determine YPR to HE, namely: % CRUH and house prices (Table 6). When combined, these two independent variables account for 88.9% of the variation in the dependent variable.

Model	R Square	Adjusted R Square	R Square Change	F Change	Sig. F Change
1 ^a	0.874	0.867	0.874	131.763	0.000
2 ^b	0.900	0.889	0.026	4.739	0.043

Table 6: Results of the model summary from running the multiple regression model.
Data: Greater London Authority, 2015.

Analysing the standardised coefficients for Model 2 reveals the statistically significant relationships of each respective socio-economic variable with YPR to HE (Table 7). The negative coefficient for % CRUH, a deprivation measure, indicates that an increasing % CRUH contributes to a declining YPR to HE across Enfield wards. Conversely, the positive coefficient for house prices, a privilege indicator, reveals how YPR to HE increases with rising house prices.

Variable	Standardised Coefficients Beta	Significance
(Constant)	N/A	0.000
% CRUH	-0.704	0.000
House Prices	0.282	0.043

Table 7: Results of the coefficients table from running the multiple regression model.
Data: Greater London Authority, 2015.

Causal relationship between % CRUH and YPR to HE

The first statistically significant variable, % CRUH, hints to the JRF's (2008: 4) finding that "family background is the most important predictor of academic success". Drawing on the

Bourdieuian concept of economic capital, manifested by family income and wealth, illuminates the power of household finances in mediating students' concerns over HE costs (Bourdieu, 1984). Coupling increased marketisation of HE since 2002 is a rising fear of debt amongst certain applicants, exacerbated by a 553% tuition fee increase from 2002-2015 and abolition of maintenance grants in 2016 (Callender & Mason, 2017). Ultimately, such transitions are often disproportionately detrimental for students from low-income households, and therefore likely to discourage HE progression, with students consequently resorting to taking out larger loans to finance their studies. Nonetheless, a growing perception of loans as a financial risk for those lacking substantial (inter-generational) economic capital, frequently deters HE progression (Weale, 2016).

Causal relationship between house prices and YPR to HE

The second statistically significant variable embedded in a causal relationship with YPR to HE namely, house prices, warrants attention. Rather than house prices themselves directly impacting upon HE progression, one can instead analyse house prices as a proxy of socio-economic status (SES) for a given Enfield ward. Such proxy facilitates the transitioning of conversation away from 'poverty' towards 'access to capital' (Ware, 2017).

House prices can be regarded as a proxy of SES given their mutual premise constituting three forms of capital: material, human and social. Bourdieu's cultural capital and habitus concepts are also significant due to such notions' strong links with SES (DfE, 2017). While cultural capital of family and peer networks represents a framing mechanism justifying students' decisions to progress to HE, habitus instead explains the cultivation of aspirations, and the shaping of opportunities which are typically shared by groups of individuals attending similar forms of institution (Hart, 2016). Such Bourdieuian concepts will be discussed further, in relation to educational aspirations. Further, research identifies a link between SES and HE progression, revealing how only 19% of students from the lowest SES group progress to HE, compared to 56% of those from the highest SES group (Crawford, 2014).

Educational inequality

The following maps visually convey a clear east-west pattern for educational inequality and deprivation, although exceptions exist. High surrounding deprivation does not simply translate to lower educational attainment, suggesting the relationships are multi-faceted. Key findings are reported below.

GCSE attainment - (Figure 4)

- Broad East-West spatial configuration
- GCSE attainment parallels deprivation spatial configuration, **but** there is an unclear *causality* as deprivation is multi-faceted

Average 5 A*-C GCSE % including English and Maths for secondary schools in the London Borough of Enfield (2011-2015)

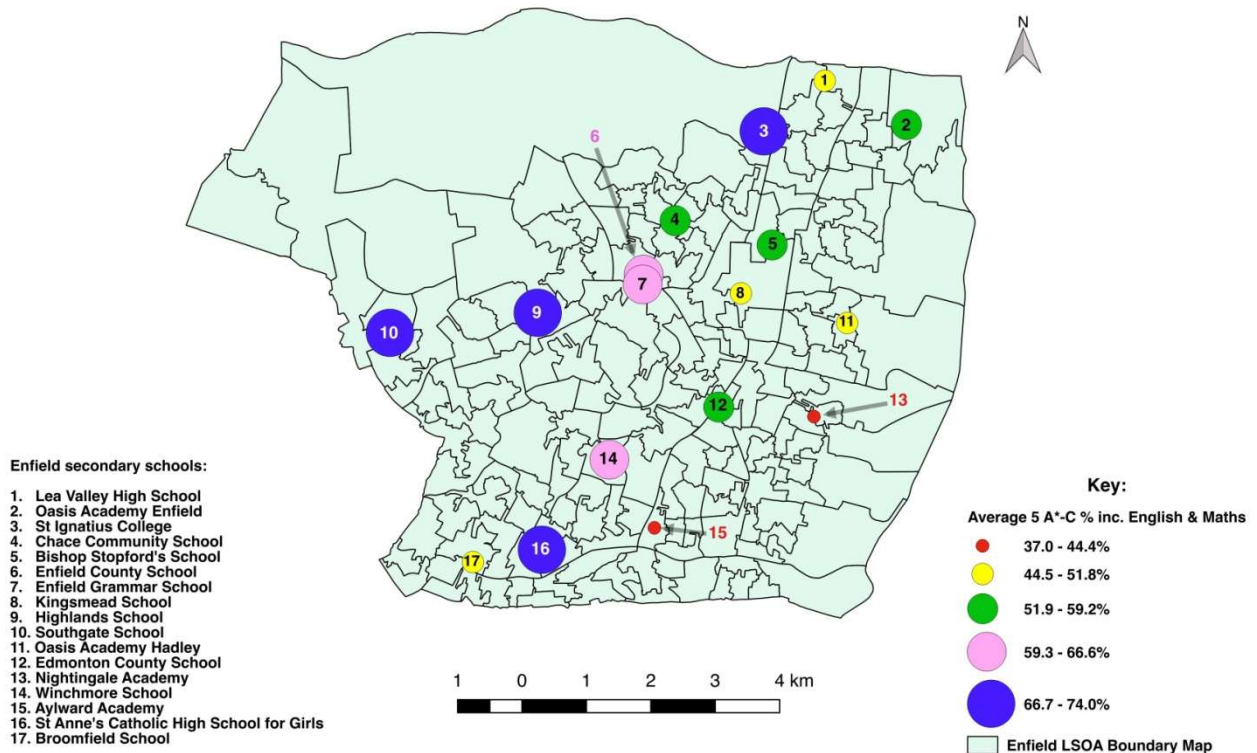


Figure 4: Map depicting all state, non-academically selective, comprehensive secondary schools in the London Borough of Enfield, with pupils sitting GCSE public examinations from 2011-2015. Source: author. Boundary data: Contains National Statistics data © Crown copyright and database right [2017]. Contains OS data © Crown copyright [and database right] (2017). GCSE data: DfE, 2011-2015.

A-Level attainment - (Figure 5)

- Similar spatial configuration to GCSE attainment
- Anomaly - lowest quintile school in South West Enfield (rather than expected East)
- Such an anomaly draws attention to external factors' influence, including, meso-scale socio-economic processes transcending Enfield's borough boundary, given the borough does not represent an isolated spatial vacuum

**Average A-Level point score per entry for secondary schools in the
London Borough of Enfield (2011-2015)**

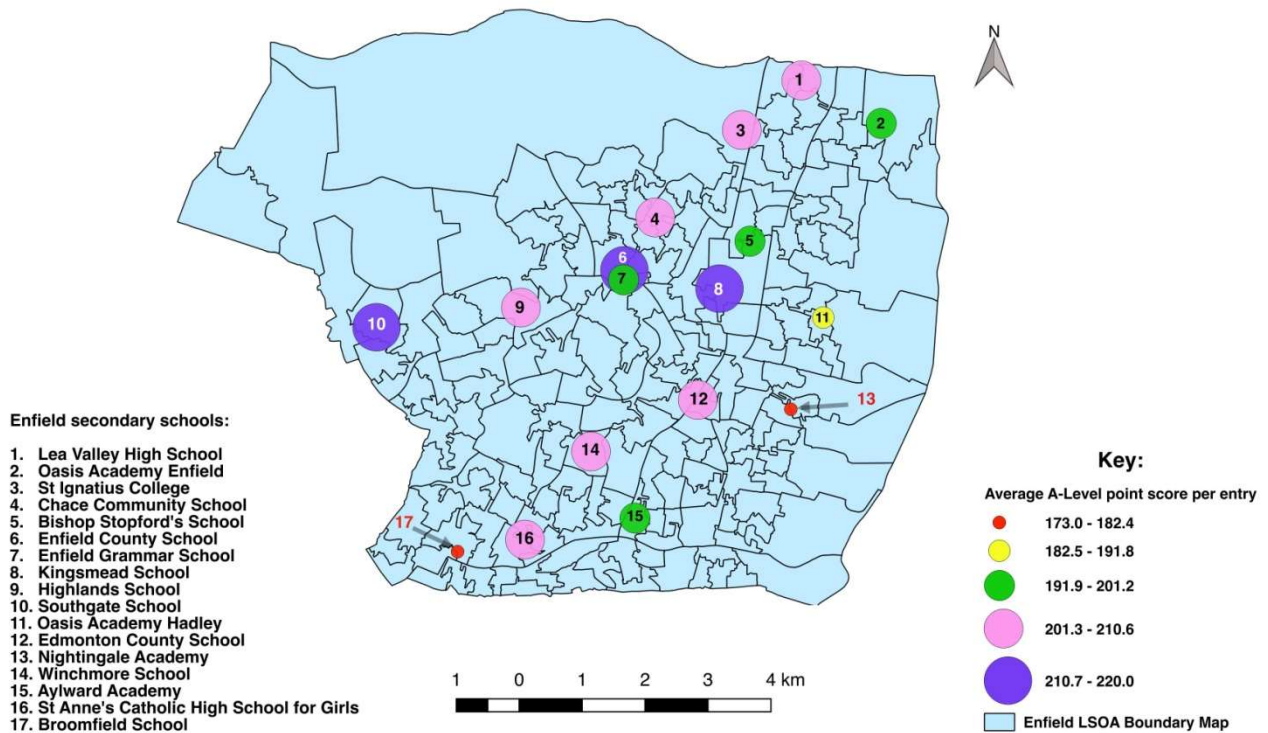


Figure 5: Map depicting all state, non-academically selective, comprehensive secondary schools in the London Borough of Enfield, with pupils sitting A-Level public examinations from 2011-2015. Source: author. Boundary data: Contains National Statistics data © Crown copyright and database right [2017]. Contains OS data © Crown copyright [and database right] (2017). A-Level data: DfE, 2011-2015.

POLAR3 - progression to HE - (Figure 6)

- 5 quintiles in total - only 3, 4 & 5 present within Enfield, thus illustrating Enfield's relatively high HE progression compared to the national scale
- West Enfield predominantly features quintile 5, contrasting with East Enfield entirely composed of quintiles 3 & 4, thereby reinforcing the aforementioned East-West trend

**POLAR3 Quintile Map of Wards in the London Borough of Enfield
illustrating Higher Education progression during 2005-06 and 2010-11**

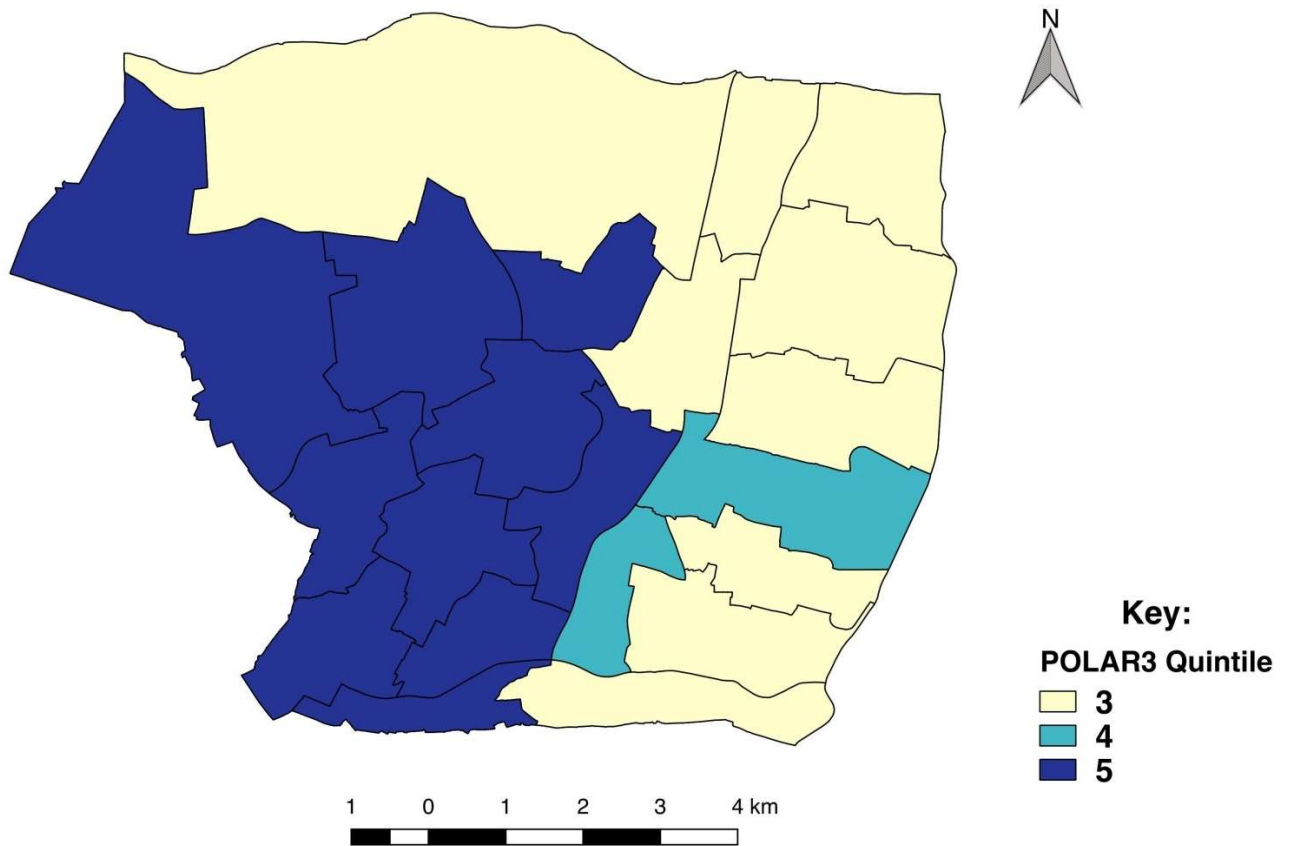


Figure 6: Map depicting the participation of local areas, version 3 (POLAR3). POLAR3 classifies wards into five quintiles, with reference to the proportion of the residing young population progressing to higher education. Source: author. Boundary data: Contains National Statistics data © Crown copyright and database right [2017]. Contains OS data © Crown copyright [and database right] (2017). POLAR3 data: HEFCE, 2005-06 & 2010-11.

A-Level and IMD - (Figure 7)

- IMD displays a similar East-West trend, where East Enfield features higher deprivation relative to West Enfield
- No direct, uniform correlation between spatial configuration of A-Level attainment and IMD; this suggests other factors' influence e.g. educational attainment selection process from GCSE to A-Level dismantling the 'A-Level attainment-proximal deprivation' correlation

Index of Multiple Deprivation (2015) and Average A-Level point score per entry (2011-2015)
for secondary schools in the London Borough of Enfield

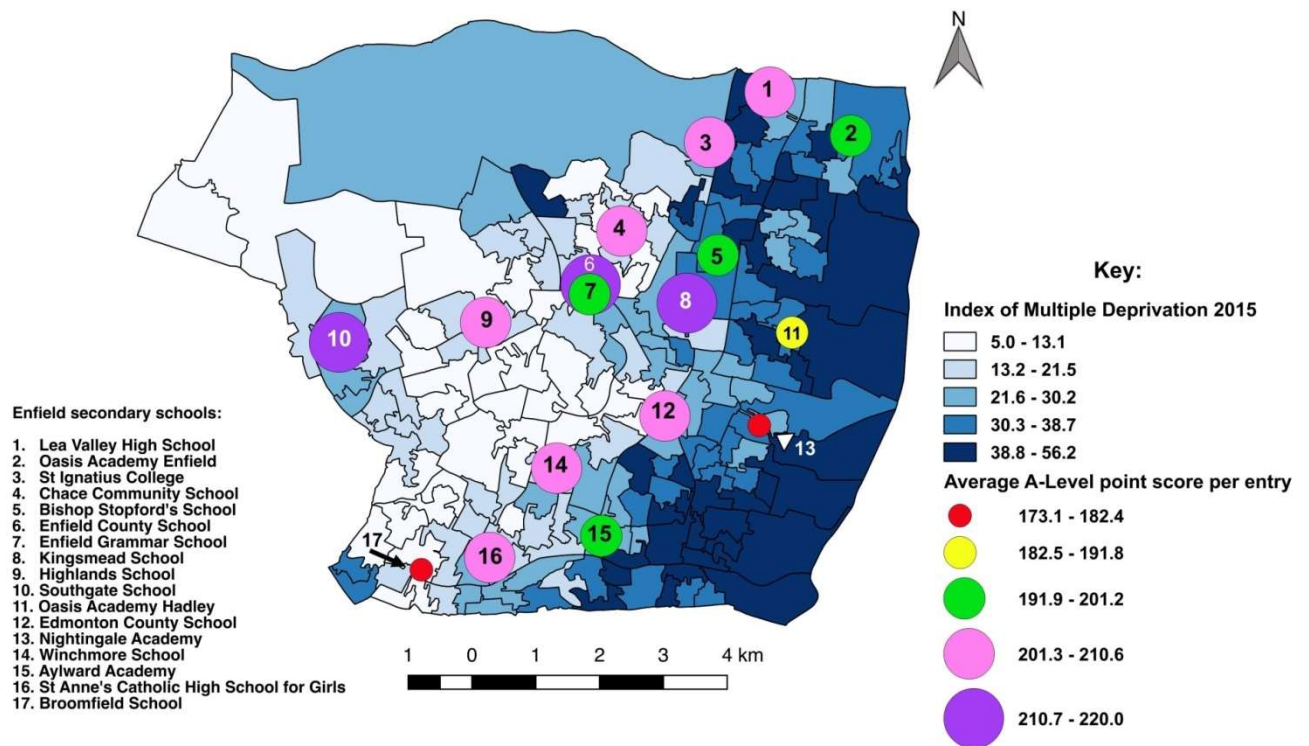


Figure 7: Map depicting all state, non-academically selective, comprehensive secondary schools in the London Borough of Enfield, with pupils sitting A-Level public examinations from 2011-2015, overlaid on top of an IMD (2015) base map. Source: author. Boundary data: Contains National Statistics data © Crown copyright and database right [2017]. Contains OS data © Crown copyright [and database right] (2017). IMD data: Department for Communities and Local Government, 2015; A-Level data: DfE, 2011-2015.

Education deprivation - (Figure 8)

- This cartogram applies a distortion technique, thereby highlighting the aforementioned stark east-west contrast, which presents itself as a recurrent theme
- Highest deprivation (in an educational sense) displayed by an 'expanded' east, contrasting with lowest scores indicated by a 'shrunk' west

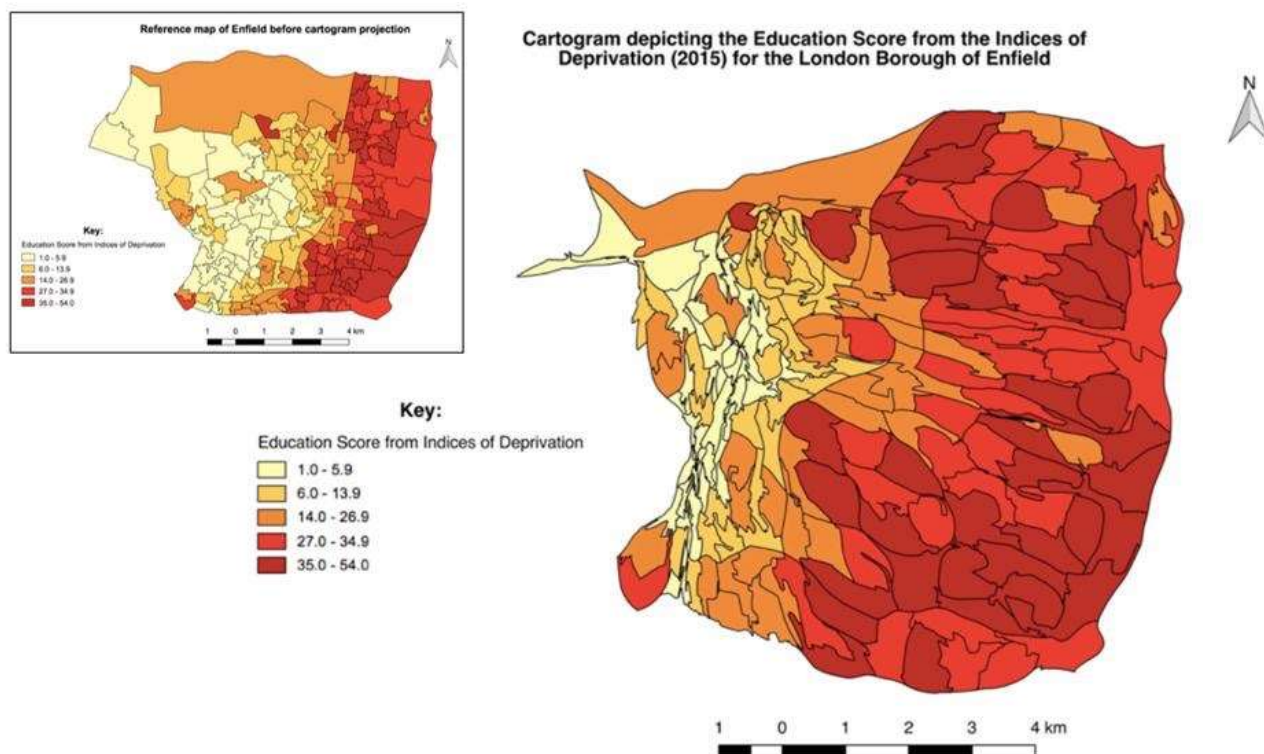


Figure 8: Cartogram depicting the Education Score from the Indices of Deprivation (2015) for the London Borough of Enfield. Source: author. Boundary data: Contains National Statistics data © Crown copyright and database right [2017]. Contains OS data © Crown copyright [and database right] (2017). Indices of Deprivation data: Department for Communities and Local Government, 2015.

Educational aspirations

The proliferating governmental view that aspirations incite a significant influence upon subsequent life outcomes has mediated extensive policy action and a growing interest concerning the factors shaping educational aspirations. Nonetheless, the extent to which aspiration-raising strategies are necessary is questionable, as this section examines.

Questionnaire factors

Undertaking a quantitative analysis explores the main factors shaping educational aspirations by focusing on the three Enfield schools' *whole* Year 12 cohort (questionnaire participants). Table 8 presents the statistically significant results derived from the Kruskal-Wallis and post-hoc Bonferroni tests.

Factor	Question number	Result
1. Importance of school's geographical location within Enfield	13	Edmonton County statistically significantly higher than Southgate
2. Importance family places on university progression	10	Edmonton County statistically significantly higher than Southgate
3. Importance of an inspirational figure	16 (part 5)	Edmonton County and Nightingale statistically significantly higher than Southgate

Table 8: Statistically significant results from multiple pairwise comparisons, derived from Kruskal-Wallis and post-hoc Bonferroni tests.

Factor (1) - above, warrants further attention (factors 2 and 3 were additionally analysed in an extended version of this paper). For factor (1), the importance that Edmonton County pupils placed upon their school's geographical location within Enfield was statistically significantly higher than those from Southgate (though similar to Nightingale).

The varying importance pupils placed upon their school's geographical location within Enfield resonates with previous research findings identifying the differing significance of place influencing educational aspirations (JRF, 2011). Previous findings, however, manifested themselves across the UK national scale between Glasgow, Nottingham and London (JRF, 2011). It is intriguing how the statistically significant different value that students give to place, in the context of educational aspirations, is still identifiable at the finer meso-scale context within a single London Borough. This highlights the power of scalar geographies, reinforcing the value of down-shifting the scale of previous research to this study's local context (DfE, 2017).

One could argue that Edmonton County students, in this instance, represent the antithesis to the 'neoliberal student' (Thompson, 2010). The neoliberal student resonates with the notions of individualism and an individual "who actively and purposefully crafts their identity to be worthy against" parameters of success constituting academic performance (Keddie, 2016: 109). Edmonton County pupils appear to recognise the significance of broader meso-scale structural factors, and thus hold aspirations which do not exhaustively focus upon meritocratic principles, nor individualism, in the context of HE progression (Duru-Bellat & Tenret, 2012). This may be a function of the relatively high deprivation levels characterising areas surrounding Edmonton County (and also Nightingale), as identified previously. Pupils are likely to have experienced greater deprivation than those in West Enfield, and may consequently be more aware of privilege arising from particular places, coupled by the constellation of relations, networks and capital which the concept of place encompasses (Massey, 2005). Nonetheless, caution must be taken to reiterate this paper's argument that deprivation does *not* appear to present a boundary to aspiration levels, nor restricts them to a confined realm. Rather, deprivation can be a significant shaper of the *realisation* of aspirations.

Merging of quantitative and qualitative findings

A joint display table (Table 9) is a **critical mixed methods technique**, increasingly employed by researchers adopting a convergent design, which effectively merges both quantitative and qualitative data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Please note that the survey results in Table 9 refer to students selecting the 'very' or 'somewhat' options.

Major topic	Qualitative results	Quantitative results	Mixed methods comparison
Deprivation	"Even though we grew up in the same area – Enfield – even though it seemed as deprived, he still made it." (Florence)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ IMD / ID (2015) → three wards in top 10% of most deprived English wards (Section 2.3) and Figures 9 & 10 ○ London Ward Well-Being Scores 	Convergence: Emphasis upon perceived neighbourhood deprivation corroborates with actual deprivation levels.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Survey Question 14: Importance of local community: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Southgate = 23.22% ▪ Edmonton County = 31.58% ▪ Nightingale = 47.05% 	
Finances	<p>“University is something I really want to do, so I haven’t let that [finances] put me off going.” (Natasha)</p> <p>“Its [finances] making me come out of the university thing towards apprenticeships.” (Julie)</p> <p>“It’ll be expensive...if I can’t find a job to pay the loan off, then it’s going to be a problem.” (Harry)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Survey Question 12: Likelihood of student debt putting off going to university: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Southgate = 32% ▪ Edmonton County = 40% ▪ Nightingale = 40% ○ Statistic: % of children in an unemployed household by ward: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cockfosters (Southgate) = 15% ▪ Bush Hill Park & Jubilee (Edmonton County) = 23.5% ▪ Jubilee (Nightingale) = 32% 	<p>Convergence:</p> <p>Students most concerned by student debt align with surrounding areas marked by highest proportion of children in unemployed residencies.</p>
Social capital	<p>“Fairly important...he told me how to get into which subjects...if it wasn’t for him, I would probably be a bit lost.” (Vincent)</p> <p>“Their [parents] advice is very important for progressing...they always want me to go for the better option.” (Florence)</p> <p>“Very important [consider school’s view] ...teachers help you choose what course you should choose at university.” (Michael)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Survey Question 15: Importance of support network: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Southgate = 75% ▪ Edmonton County = 83% ▪ Nightingale = 94% 	<p>Convergence:</p> <p>Interview findings reinforce survey results.</p>

Significant other	<p>“Not really – I feel like in this day and age, there’s a lot of people going to university...it’s become the norm.” (Natasha)</p> <p>“Makes me have this hope that I can make it as well, regardless of background...With hard work I see that I can still make it.” (Florence)</p> <p>“My Head of Year inspires me...I look up to her a lot!” (Edith)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Survey Question 11: Inspirational individual (Yes/No): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Southgate = 28.8% ▪ Edmonton County = 41% ▪ Nightingale = 41.2% ○ Statistic: YPR and POLAR by ward: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cockfosters (Southgate) = 62.7% (POLAR 5) ▪ Bush Hill Park & Jubilee (Edmonton County) = 45.4% (POLAR 4/5) ▪ Jubilee (Nightingale) = 37.8% (POLAR 4) 	<p>Convergence:</p> <p>Interview findings corroborate survey results. Greater importance of significant other correlates with lower POLAR neighbourhood rating.</p>
Family’s view	<p>“Quite important, but it’s subconscious.” (Sophie)</p> <p>“University is an opportunity they [parents] never had...best thing to do to become great in life.” (Simon)</p> <p>“Feel proud going university.” (Michael)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Survey Question 10: Importance family places on university? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Southgate = 81% ▪ Edmonton County = 92% ▪ Nightingale = 83% 	<p>Convergence:</p> <p>Interview findings reinforce survey results.</p>
School environment influences	<p>“They [friends] shouldn’t determine what university I go to...you’re doing it for yourself.” (Scott)</p> <p>“Friends are so important; if they have the same ambitions as you...you’ll be inspired by them.” (Caroline)</p> <p>“I wasn’t going to apply for Oxford, but she [teacher] told me that I can be one of the Oxford students.” (Sandra)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Survey Question 8: Greatest influence from school environment? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Southgate = Peers (53%) ▪ Edmonton County = Peers (51%) ▪ Nightingale = Teachers (60%) 	<p>Divergence:</p> <p>Peer influences were less important for Southgate interviewees than whole survey cohort.</p> <p>Convergence:</p> <p>Nightingale’s and Edmonton County’s interview findings corroborate survey results.</p>

Aspirations vs. GCSE & A-Level attainment	<p>"I could get the grades if I work really hard. For Imperial and Manchester, it's A*A*A; I reckon I could get that." (Arthur)</p> <p>"I was an Enfield High Achiever...if I could do...that, then why not go for the top universities and try to get the top grades at A-Level." (Robert)</p> <p>"I particularly want to go to those Russell Group universities...if I want to do Medicine, I want to get a good education...so I...choose the best one." (Sandra)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ GCSE attainment (2011-2015): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Southgate = 68% ▪ Edmonton County = 53% ▪ Nightingale = 37% ▪ National = 58.04% ○ A-Level attainment (2011-2015): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Southgate = 220 ▪ Edmonton County = 203.4 ▪ Nightingale = 173 • National = 215.4 	<p>Divergence:</p> <p>Aspirations higher than school attainment for Nightingale and Edmonton County.</p> <p>Convergence:</p> <p>Aspirations align with attainment for Southgate.</p>
Aspirations vs. HE Progression	<p><i>Qualitative results in this cell are the same as the cell above for Aspirations vs. GCSE & A-Level attainment</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Survey Question 1: Importance of university progression: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Southgate = 85% ▪ Edmonton County = 91% ▪ Nightingale = 94% ○ Survey Question 2: Perceived likelihood of university progression: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Southgate = 85% ▪ Edmonton County = 84% ▪ Nightingale = 73% ○ HE Progression statistics (2016-2017): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Southgate: 67% (HE), 20% (Russell) ▪ Edmonton County: 63% (HE), 9.5% (Russell) 	<p>Divergence:</p> <p>Aspirations higher than HE progression for Nightingale.</p> <p>Aspirations higher than Russell Group progression for Nightingale and Edmonton County.</p> <p>Convergence:</p> <p>Aspirations align with HE progression for Southgate and Edmonton County.</p> <p>Aspirations align with Russell Group progression for Southgate.</p>

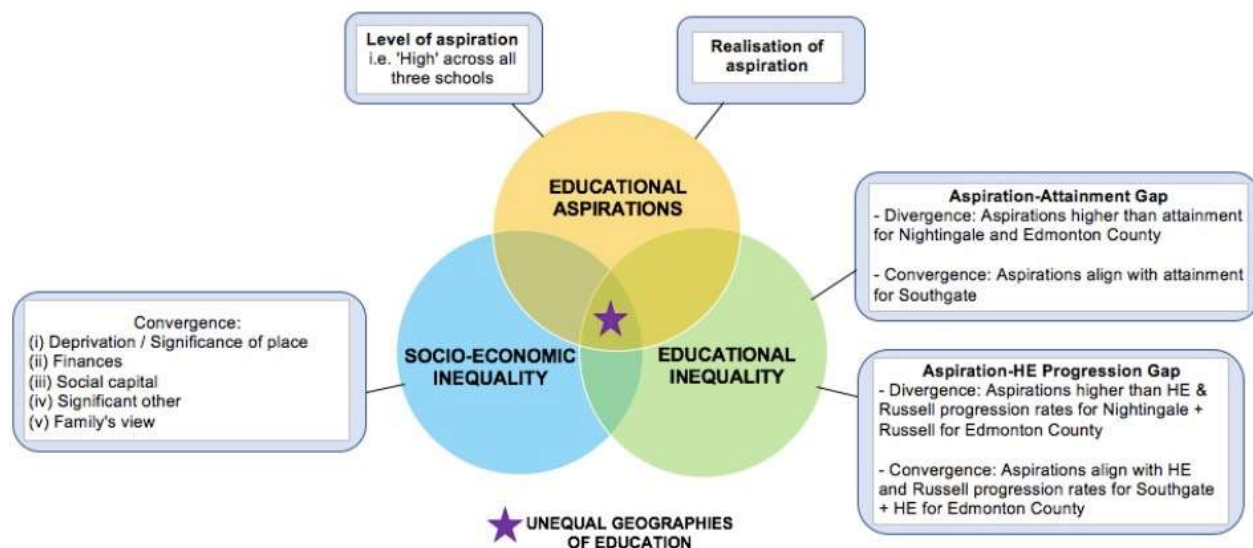
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nightingale: 25.5% (HE), Negligible (Russell) ▪ National: HE = 49.5%, Russell = 11.5% 	
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Table 9: Joint display of quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods meta-inferences of key concepts.

Refining the joint display findings clarifies the positioning of the mixed methods meta-inferences within the broader conceptual framework underpinning this research, as illustrated by Table 10.

Major topic	Mixed methods comparison	Framework grouping
Deprivation	Convergence	Socio-economic inequality
Finances		
Social capital		
Significant other		
Family's view		
School environment influences	Convergence Divergence: Peer influences were less important for Southgate interviewees than whole survey cohort.	Educational inequality
Aspirations vs. GCSE & A-Level attainment	Convergence Divergence: Aspirations higher than school attainment for Nightingale and Edmonton County.	
Aspirations vs. HE Progression	Convergence Divergence: Aspirations higher than HE progression for Nightingale. Aspirations higher than Russell Group progression for Nightingale and Edmonton County.	

Table 10: Distilled version of the joint display findings.



Interpretation

Overall, the qualitative and quantitative findings are more congruent than incongruent; Table 9 presents eight incidences of convergence compared to three divergence cases. Determining the extent of convergence between educational aspirations with socio-economic and educational inequality requires a delineation to be drawn between two components of educational aspirations, namely: (i) level of aspiration, and (ii) realisation of aspiration. Figure 9 presents this paper's updated conceptual framework, as originally presented in the introduction, arising from the merging stage.

Figure 9: Updated conceptual framework for this research.

Conclusion and Final Remarks

Conclusion

This mixed methods research study, undertaken within the comparative context of the London Borough of Enfield, has drawn upon three principal Bourdieusian concepts as theoretical tools, namely: capital, habitus and field, when investigating the unequal geographies of education. Employing a previously under-utilised geographical lens reveals the significance of place in mediating the trajectories of sixth formers' educational aspirations across the eastern, central and western areas of the borough.

The predominantly east-west spatial configuration of socio-economic inequality in Enfield is characterised by more deprived eastern areas contrasting with greater privilege in the west. Two statistically significant socio-economic inequality variables account for over 85% of the variation in Enfield HE progression rates: % CRUH and house prices, a proxy for SES.

Educational inequality again reveals an east-west spatial configuration, with typically higher attainment and HE progression rates, coupled by lower education deprivation levels in West Enfield, and *vice versa*. Notwithstanding, exceptions to this trend exist given multiple factors shaping *why* the spatial configuration of educational inequality is as such. Historical, spatially extrinsic and educational attainment selection factors all warrant attention. This paper's findings depart from previous literature by demonstrating how a direct correlation between A-Level attainment and deprivation does not occur in Enfield.

The survey findings identified three factors displaying statistically significant differences between the three schools:

- (i) importance of school's geographical location within Enfield
- (ii) importance that the student's family places on university progression
- (iii) importance of an inspirational figure

Factor (i) departs from previous national scale research by illustrating how this determinant is equally significant at the local scale. Across the three schools, these three factors were all more important for Edmonton County, while factor (iii) was also more important for Nightingale. Thematically analysing the interviews revealed a dual categorisation of the main factors shaping educational aspirations, revolving around: self (individual) and spatial networks.

The mixed methods approach signals how educational aspirations converge with socio-economic inequality and educational inequality to a great extent, although a few divergence cases exist. A key finding is students' relatively similar 'high' educational aspirations across all three schools, reinforced by the interviewees *and* survey respondents. This constitutes a departure from previous policy concerned with students' 'low' aspirations (DfE, 2014; ESRC, 2012). Convergence can be attributed to the broadly similar aspirations amongst each school's interviewees and survey respondents, and the multiple capitals bridging the micro- and meso-scales. Conversely, divergence arises from the probable difficulty of aspiration realisation for certain students, typically in eastern areas, given the aspiration-attainment and aspiration-HE progression rate discrepancies.

Final Remarks

In uniquely foregrounding the unequal geographies of education against the place-specific context of the London Borough of Enfield, this research offers plentiful opportunity for further investigation. Caution needs to be taken, however, when translating the findings to other locations, given Enfield's place-specific characteristics significant to the unequal geographies of education such as, the east-west spatial configuration of inequality and its urban context in the UK's capital city. Other UK urban locations therefore warrant attention, while simultaneously considering the varying influence of the context-dependent nature of place upon educational aspirations.

This research concludes by proposing some policy recommendations to consider when alleviating educational and socio-economic inequality. Educational aspirations appear already sufficiently high across Enfield, even in deprived areas, and this may be applicable for other locations. If so, policy makers and government need to transition away from the misconceived idea of raising disadvantaged students' educational aspirations. Instead, efforts should be directed towards implementing aspiration *realisation* strategies for students lacking the opportunity to fulfil their potential, often stemming from unequal access to multiple capitals. Further, it is critical to recognise the role of place; this research reveals how factors shaping educational aspirations vary within a single London Borough. Future

policy should tailor interventions accordingly when considering the significance of geography. Schools will benefit from reducing 'raising aspirations' rhetoric, and instead focus more upon aspiration realisation for students. Finally, this paper's conceptual framework (Figure 10) aims to resolve the challenge concerning the navigation of the intersectional tripartite configuration constituting the unequal geographies of education phenomenon.

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Appendix

Appendix A - Survey Monkey sample questionnaire (intending to progress to HE)

1. How important is progressing to university/HE for you?

- ☐ Very important ☐ Somewhat important ☐ Neither important nor unimportant
☐ Not very important ☐ Not important at all

2. How likely do you consider yourself to progress to university/HE within the next 2 years or so?

- ☐ Very likely ☐ Somewhat likely ☐ Neither likely nor unlikely
☐ Not very likely ☐ Not likely at all

3. How important is progressing to a Russell Group or top 20 UK university to you?

- ☐ Very important ☐ Somewhat important ☐ Neither important nor unimportant
☐ Not very important ☐ Not important at all

4. How likely do you consider yourself to progress to a Russell Group or top 20 UK university within the next 2 years or so?

- ☐ Very likely ☐ Somewhat likely ☐ Neither likely nor unlikely
☐ Not very likely ☐ Not likely at all

5. How important is progressing to Oxford or Cambridge University (Oxbridge) to you?

- ☐ Very important ☐ Somewhat important ☐ Neither important nor unimportant
☐ Not very important ☐ Not important at all

6. How likely do you consider yourself to progress to Oxford or Cambridge University (Oxbridge) within the next 2 years or so?

- ☐ Very likely ☐ Somewhat likely ☐ Neither likely nor unlikely
☐ Not very likely ☐ Not likely at all

7. How aware would you consider yourself of the entry requirements for the course you are interested in at university/HE?

- ☐ Very aware ☐ Somewhat aware ☐ Neither aware nor unaware
☐ Not very aware ☐ Not aware at all

8. What has been the greatest influence from your school environment in shaping your aspirations to progress to university/HE? *Please tick one box only. If 'other', then specify.*

- ☐ Peers ☐ School ethos ☐ Teachers

9. Are you the first generation of your family who will attend university/HE?

☐ Yes ☐ No

10. In your opinion, how important does your family consider your progression to university/HE?

☐ Very important ☐ Somewhat important ☐ Neither important nor unimportant
☐ Not very important ☐ Not important at all

11. Is there a particular individual in your life who has inspired you to progress to university/HE? If yes, please specify their relationship to you and the reason why you were inspired.

12. How likely is student debt going to put you off from progressing to university /HE?

☐ Very likely ☐ Somewhat likely ☐ Neither likely nor unlikely
☐ Not very likely ☐ Not likely at all

13. How important do you consider your school's geographical location within the London Borough of Enfield in determining your progression to university /HE?

☐ Very important ☐ Somewhat important ☐ Neither important nor unimportant
☐ Not very important ☐ Not important at all

14. How important do you consider your local community within the London Borough of Enfield in determining your progression to university/HE?

☐ Very important ☐ Somewhat important ☐ Neither important nor unimportant
☐ Not very important ☐ Not important at all

15. How important do you believe your support network (i.e. family, school, friends) is in helping you on your journey to progress to university/HE? Please provide details as to why or why not this is the case.

☐ Very important ☐ Somewhat important ☐ Neither important nor unimportant
☐ Not very important ☐ Not important at all

16. How important are each of the following factors in determining why you want to progress to university/HE? (N.B. Options include: very important, somewhat important, neither important nor unimportant, not very important, not important at all)

- ☐ Future career
- ☐ My exam results
- ☐ My friends are also progressing to university/HE
- ☐ Home encouragement
- ☐ Inspirational figure
- ☐ Participation in university/HE open days or residential visits
- ☐ School encouragement

Name (pseudonym used for anonymity)	Gender	First generation to progress to HE?	School	School location in Enfield
Edith	F	Yes	Nightingale	East
Kylie	F	Yes	Nightingale	East
Harry	M	Yes	Nightingale	East
Toby	M	Yes	Nightingale	East
Michael	M	Yes	Nightingale	East
Martin	M	Yes	Nightingale	East
Susan	F	Yes	Nightingale	East
Sandra	F	Yes	Nightingale	East
Florence	F	Yes	Edmonton County	Central
Julie	F	Yes	Edmonton County	Central
Robert	M	No	Edmonton County	Central
Simon	M	Yes	Edmonton County	Central
Kirstie	F	No	Edmonton County	Central
Edward	M	Yes	Edmonton County	Central
Caroline	F	Yes	Edmonton County	Central
James	M	Yes	Edmonton County	Central
Charlotte	F	No	Southgate	West
Evelyn	F	No	Southgate	West
Natasha	F	No	Southgate	West
Sophie	F	Yes	Southgate	West
Vincent	M	No	Southgate	West
Andrew	M	Yes	Southgate	West
Scott	M	Yes	Southgate	West
Arthur	M	No	Southgate	West

Appendix C - Semi-structured interview schedule

Motivations for university progression

1. Can you tell me about your motivations for progressing to university/HE?

Awareness of entry requirements

2. How aware would you consider yourself of the entry requirements for the course you are interested in at university/HE?

- o How important do you believe it is to engage in activities like, work experience and extra reading, when preparing to progress to university/HE? Why?
- o If so, how have you gone about this?

Participation in outreach

3. Can you tell me about your participation in university/HE outreach activities, such as: open days, summer schools, Brilliant Club etc.?

- o If not, can you tell me about whether you have intentions to participate in such activities in the future? If so, why?

Outreach inspiration

4. How did you feel after participating in outreach activities? Can you tell me about your thoughts and views on university/HE after having participated in such activities?

- o How important do you consider this experience in terms of advice they provide on progression to university/HE?
- o If important, have you acted upon this? How?

Influence of school environment

5. Can you tell me about the view of your school on students' progression to university/HE?

- o How important do you consider this view for your own motivations to progress to university/HE?

6. How important do you consider your friends' views for your own motivations to progress to university/HE?

Family background

6. Have any of your family members progressed to university/HE in the past?

- o If so, can you tell me who they were?

7. Can you tell me about the view of your home/household/family on progression to university/HE?

- o How important do you consider this view for your own motivations to progress to university/HE?

8. Can you tell me about the opinion of your family on your progression to a university/HE institution which would require you living away from home?

- o In your opinion, how important is this view for your own decisions when choosing a university/HE institution?

Inspiration

9. Can you tell me about an inspirational person for you who has progressed to university/HE, such as: family members, teachers, previous pupils?

- o How important do you consider this individual for your own motivations to progress to university/HE?

Finances

[Vignette] Since 2012, the UK government raised the maximum tuition fee for universities in England to £9,000. Last year, government-funded grants were removed.

10. How important are these financial changes for you in terms of your decision to progress to university?

- o Thoughts on student debt?

11. How important are these financial changes for you when choosing the location of your university/HE institution of interest, and your decision to stay at home or move away?

Conclusion

11. Is there anything else you would like to say at all about your views on your progression to university/HE, which you feel is important, that I haven't mentioned?