London is a remarkably diverse city: 36.6% of the population was born outside of the United Kingdom, 44.3% of children have a first language other than English, and 41.8% identify as Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME), the British term used to denote people of color. This diversity also extends to quality of life—across the city, there are huge socioeconomic and health disparities.

On a city level, it is clear that there is a huge effort in London to make resources accessible to all. Transport for London (TfL), the governmental organization responsible for all public transport in London (including Underground and Overground trains, buses, and, as of January 2016, the entire suburban rail network), is constantly expanding in order to allow for greater access to Greater London for those living outside of the city and in the suburbs. Within inner London boroughs, however, where housing prices are skyrocketing, there are large pockets of neighborhoods where access to transportation resources are still low in order to address these issues of inequality within a large metropolitan city, it is essential to identify the ways in which demographics relate to access.

Tower Hamlets is a borough in inner London with a wide spectrum of resources and needs. The borough encompasses much of the East End, a traditionally poor area with a large immigrant community, Canary Wharf, home to most of London’s tallest buildings and business headquarters, and the Tower of London, the City of London, the economic heart of Greater London. Richmond-upon-Thames, on the other hand, is a borough in Outer London with a largely homogenous population. The borough is home to many of London’s largest parks and is, in many ways, a suburb of London.

This project seeks to explore the spatial relationship between demographics, quality of life, and access to vital resources by first comparing access indicators in the London borough with the lowest quality of life, Tower Hamlets, with the borough with the highest quality of life, Richmond-upon-Thames. Within Tower Hamlets, further analysis is done to determine whether there is clustering of resources away from poor residential areas. Rather than attempting to explore all possible resources in order to understand access, I focused on grocery stores and public transportation, two important resources that can serve as proxy indicators for access in London.

Of the 263,003 residents of Tower Hamlets, 185,676 or 70.6% of residents live within the 500 meter train station buffer, while in Richmond, only 29.1% of the 185,927 population live within the transport buffer. However, when access to a car is factored in, it is likely that Richmond has higher access to transportation.

In Tower Hamlets, only 139,602 or 53.1% of residents live within an easy walk of a grocery store. In Richmond-upon-Thames, where the majority of residents have cars, 180,136 or 96.9% of residents live within an easy drive of a grocery store, with only 5,851 residents living outside of the easy-driving buffer. My final analysis of resource distribution in Tower Hamlets revealed that the areas with the largest number of train stations and grocery stores were overwhelmingly the LSOAs surrounding the most popular tourist and business destinations in the borough. Around Christ Church, Spitalfields and the Tower of London and St. Katharine Docks, there are dozens of stations and groceries, and on the Isle of Dogs, the only LSOAs with significant numbers of resources fall in the area directly surrounding One Canada Square and the other business centers on Canary Wharf. My cluster and outlier analysis found a significant cluster of grocery stores and train stations in the west side of the borough, spanning from the Tower of London up to Spitalfields.