Participant 27 - Female, 22, Newham

Part 2:

Interviewer: Um so this is part two. [Interivewee: mhm] Um can we start by talking about what you’ve put in box one, where you felt most socially connected. Thank you.

Interviewee: I put down East London. Just ‘cause I mean it wasn’t a specific area in East London. I say it as just in general. ‘Cause I feel like that’s where… most of my friends and most of my family are… are here. And I feel like I- there’s always been something that’s trying to make me come out of that. Like whether it be like school or… having a baby and stuff. But I feel like here is where I’ve always felt most at ease. Like not… not like as if I don’t have anyone around here. I feel like East London is definitely one of like the only places where I could say where… like, you know, I feel comfortable- I couldn’t really get lost or… you know, there’d most likely be somebody for me. At least one day of the week. But I feel like anywhere outside of that I don’t feel that way. Like I mean I have friends outside of East London but I mean being in that area I don’t feel as comfortable as I do. I just- do you know what it is, I mean it’s like I said before with like the going out with friends and stuff, I don’t really like having to travel and… go very far and know that I’m, you know, like an hour away from home or forty-five minutes away. I like just knowing I’m like ten minutes away or- I- I like knowing that if I was to leave, ‘casue I don’t like being out for very long, I know it’s a short journey home. So I feel like anywhere outside of that is just like… one it’s just gonna take me long, two I just probably didn’t even want to be there in the first place, and three I don’t really have like any memories outside of East London, I don’t feel like. ‘Cause me and my mum, like she- we didn’t really go on holidays much, so I couldn’t say like… any countries I had fond memories of being in, any countries and stuff. We didn’t really go anywhere outside of London. I feel like East London was where we was mostly… was w- yeah, where we was mostly at for most of the time. That’s probably why I’d definitely say that’s where I feel most like connected and like comfortable and stuff.

Interviewer: Mm. Um when you said that this- East no- East London part was where you- I’m trying to reflect back what you said earlier that um school and your child- you mentioned your son and school. [Interviewee: yeah] Did you say that these were not there, so you didn’t have the responsibility and you could just do that you wanted? Or- I don’t know if I understood it correctly.

Interviewee: No I mean like those were the only two situations I could think of that were trying to bring me away from East London. So like my mum sent me to school in Essex. And I don’t- I mean I- I still have some friends from there but it’s literally like… I remember that just being such a hassle. Like just being that far away from home and my mum was quite strict so she wanted me home at a certain time and sometimes it’s impossible to get home from Essex in forty-five minutes. Like sometimes it’s just- it’s not gonna happen. So I- I don’t remember like ever leaving East London and having like the bestest of memories. Like even… like my having a baby and stuff, like me and his dad had like a- not a very good… experience together. I don’t really know what to call it. Like it was a very difficult time so… that was another situation where I could think of being outside East- of East London brought me nothing but aggravation. Not saying- not my son being the aggravation but the… person I decided to have him with being the aggravation. ‘Cause he comes with me wherever I am anyway so if I’m in East London, he’s in East London. But his um… his- his dad for instance is… caused me nothing but grief. So I definitely think like being in East London has just been a kind of like safe haven kind of thing.

Interviewer: Mm. How does that make you feel, being in that environment of East London?

Interviewee: I mean in a way it’s like- it’s alright ‘cause, you know, if that’s where you feel comfortable, that’s where you feel comfortable. I feel like I could do so much better than East London. I feel like I could broaden my horizons. If I just learnt how to be… more open towards things, I could probably move somewhere new and feel just as good. Feel like East London doesn’t have to be it for me.

Interviewer: Mm. Seems like East London is a place where you feel socially connected because your friends are here, um… your school is not there, um… you feel like it’s close to you, you can come back, you can go back and forth easily, [interviewee: yeah] um… yeah. [Interviewee: mhm] Is there anything else you want to say?

Interviewee: Uh no.

Interviewer: Okay. Um can we move on to the next [interviewee: mhm] one. Can we start by talking about what you put-

Interviewee: I think I kind of said a little bit in- when we was talking about where I feel most comfortable, ‘cause th- the other one was literally South London was where I felt most isolated. ‘Cause once I had like my son and stuff, I was straight up there. Like… like before he was born, I was straight up there. Like- I think maybe like… two months into me being pregnant, and… there’s like nobody up there for me. And I literally felt like that was a way for… his dad- my son’s dad to make me f… feel like I only had him, kind of thing. ‘Cause he had all his family out there and all his friends up there and… that’s where he grew up. But it had no c- connection for me. So I always had to travel like an hour and a half to see people. And then I could never be really bothered to do that anyway so it kind of just ended up ha- waiting for people to come and see me and then them thinking, you know, it is a two-way street. Like you- I come to see you and you come to see me so then it being long for everybody and then I just end up kind of just being just me and my son. So I do remember that just being a place where… I felt most isolated.

Interviewer: And how did that make you feel?

Interviewee: I mean at times it could get quite depressing. ‘Cause I was always trying to find ways to come back to East London. Like try and find like ways that I could get a flat to come back here and stuff, but it always didn’t seem to like work out. It took a very long time for it to work out for me. So yeah at times it could just seem quite… I dunno, like diminishing. Like I’d tired and then it just didn’t work out and I’d try again and it didn’t work out and I just always was stuck there.

Interviewer: Mm. And is that the same place that um… you drew the picture earlier, on the sofa?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Being on the sofa, watching telly and-

Interviewee: Yeah. [Interviewer: mm] Yeah I don’t remember like South London being like an overly joyful place for me. I mean I did make some friends like when I was in like a couple of the mother and baby units that I was in. But yeah that was pretty much as exciting as it got. And like sometimes we like put our kids togeth- um in bed together and stuff and then we’d like sit and watch TV and stuff and that would literally be as good as it got when I was up there.

Interviewer: Is that where it- you mean South London or-

Interviewee: Yeah, South Lon- like when I was in my mother and baby unit, sometimes we like- the girls would like put all their kids to bed and stuff and then we’d like just chill and watch TV together. But yeah. That was as like… communicative as it got for me.

Interviewer: Mm. And how did you feel when you had like the girls there with you and…

Interviewee: I mean that wasn’t so bad, ‘cause I felt like… sometimes I find it easier to be able to be around people that maybe I can relate to. So I felt like ‘cause I could relate to like quite a few of the people there… it wasn’t so difficult to be around them. ‘Cause it was like… you could all talk about like your situation and stuff. And just see it as a s- like a situation rather as it come across as a problem. I feel like if you’re not going through it, sometimes the other person just sees what you’re talking about as a bit of like a… a bore and like a drag as like… maybe to them it might seem like you’re getting on their nerves? I dunno. But if some- like when I would talk to them or they’d talk to me about their problems, it just seemed a lot easier for us ‘cause it was like… we just kind of… knew what was going on maybe, like we could give better advice, ‘cause we’d already been through it kind of thing. Yeah, I mean I suppose it’s always easier to speak to people that you can relate to. [Interviewer: mm] That you have things in- like- that you have things with common- common with.

Interviewer: So it sounds like you enjoyed the aspect of having a shared purpose. [Interviewee: yeah] Having something in common with those other ladies. [Interviewee: yeah] Because you could get advice from each other and understand each other and-

Interviewee: Yeah. Exactly.

Interviewer: Hmm. And how does that make you feel when… you had- you had people around you that makes you- that- that understand you?

Interviewee: It makes me feel a lot better, ‘cause then I feel like I’m not… crazy. And like certain situations that I have been through are genuinely not my fault and… it’s just nice to be able to… talk about like situations that, you know, the other girls have gone through with- with their own um kids’ dads and stuff and… just to maybe know that, you know, it’s not literally… just you in this situation. Like… there are… other people as well that are going through literally the exact same thing in the exact same building. Like it’d be funny as well ‘cause like, when me and his- my son’s dad were still together, like… at least once a week you could hear everybody having argument in there. So it- it was like oh okay, everyone’s arguing. It’s not a problem. Everybody does it. It’s not something that’s crazy. [Laughs]

Interviewer: Mm. And how did that make you feel?

Interviewee: Slightly better in a way, but then not that great ‘cause I knew ours was always the worst.

Interviewer: Mm. When you say yours’s was the worst, can you tell me more about that?

Interviewee: He was quite physical. So… yeah. That wasn’t always the funnest of times. [Interviewer: mm] And yeah like we’d obviously like talk about it sometimes as girls and stuff and the other girls didn’t seem to be going through that aspect. Like a couple of them had like really spiteful boyfriends that maybe like would try and make them feel bad about themselves but… more of like a verbal thing and- maybe the other one had like a boyfriend that was like staying out really late and not coming back but I just seemed to have the only one that was like this fucking psychopath. [Laughs] So yeah, that was quite… difficult I- South London is just a difficult time for- that whole period was just difficult for me. Definitely.

Interviewer: Mm. Is there anything else you wanted to say?

Interviewee: Uh, no.

Interviewer: Okay. Thank you.

Interviewee: No problem.