Participant 32 Interview – Male, 24, Tower Hamlets

Key:

**I: Interviewer**

R: Respondent

**I: We move on to the second part of the study.**

R: Yep, thank you. The second part, um… I couldn’t really think more outside, I mean, in terms of the connected and loneliness because, this area’s changed a lot. If this was like 6 years ago, I could say a lot of things, but everything is very changed, so when I talked about most socially connected space in my neighbourhood, I just feel like, there’s just like a local park down the road, I feel like that’s the best place to feel socially connected ‘cos… We have young, old, different races, different type of people there, that are playing together. Even if you don’t know them, and it’s a nice place to go, chill, have a drink, just relax, play games and… I feel like that’s the best place to be socially connected. I couldn’t really think, there was another school that used to be, it was like a… After school…? You know what I mean? Like club kinda thing, where people used to go and that was the best place to be connected… But it got broken down, because of all these new buildings, so now I feel like the only good place is that park. It’s that park down the road where everyone feels quite connected and I feel like, that’s the best place for people to have a social connection. Yeah, I think… That’s… I couldn’t really think of anything else.

**I: Sure, no that’s good. I think one example is good. So when you say that you felt socially connected in that park because there’s different people and so on, different races, different backgrounds etc. etc. Can you tell me more about that?**

R: So it’s… It’s more the fact that everyone there is very open to… You know communicating with people, which, one thing I like is communicating with random people. You know because you get to hear stories, you get to hear people’s experience, especially because I’ve been living here for like, 24 years. And now I see a lot of new faces, so when I go to the local parks and there’s like, new people, a lot of… I like football, so if they were playing, like, a little game of football, I would be like, I would join in. ‘Is it alright if I join? And everyone’s very accepting, everyone is very… they allow other people to communicate with each other, to play with each other, and they offer you like, they might have a picnic and be like ‘come join us’. I don’t even know them but I’d be like OK, cool. I’d join them, and you’d start speaking to them, and you get to meet a lot of new people, and like I said I’ve been living there for 24 years. I know majority of the people that’d been here that long, but now I see a lot of new faces, and that place is like the best place to go to be like ‘oh, where d’you live? Oh, you live in (unclear 0:56:12-0:56:13), OK, I live at No. 9 blah blah blah.’ It’s that communicating, and… I like networking with people so, I feel like that was the best place to have that connection with people. Yeah.

**I: So sounds like you like, as you said, networking and, you know, open space where you can… Meet people, do spontaneous things, you know.**

R: Yeah. The spontaneous thing is… Like, I’m very good at card games, whatever card game is, I’m very competitive. So when they like, invite me, I’ll tell them straight up that, you know, I’m very competitive, they may start laugh like ‘We love it, let’s go’, and then we will start playing, and then you just, you start meeting people ‘cos, living in this area, now’s kinda changed but it was predominantly like, Asians, so everyone that I knew was just Asians, and I was like, I’m not close-minded person, I would speak to anyone, but I never had the chance living here and I used to go to a school which was predominantly Asians, but growing up, especially in uni and work, it allowed me to meet all different races, all different people from different culture, now going to those parks, it’s easy for me to go speak to someone that’s Spanish, someone that’s… You know, from a different culture to me, because, when I started, when I grew up, I just felt it was easy to speak to someone that was a Bengali. But now I feel like it’s easier to speak to someone who’s not a Bengali, I feel like Bengali, when it’s their own people, they just judge you, ‘oh, why you coming into my space? I’m with my family.’ But when you go speak with another cultured group, or multicultured group, they’ll be like ‘Oh yeah, hi, I’m from this place.’ ‘I’m Bengali, I’ve never met people like you’. You know, it’s just something that’s very nice to continue to do. And… This is why I feel like, the local park was the very good place to social connect with all types of races, from people from different cultures and… Yeah, was just one of the best place that happened to this area, I think.

**I: Thank you.**

R: You’re welcome.

**I: Is there anything else you want to say about box 1?**

R: Er, I think I’ve mentioned everything. I think the… ‘Cos this local park is new, which I feel like is quite good, because before when this side, you know, restructuring the area, we didn’t have a place to go social connect, because before, before they started doing… everything, we had like a… Like a youth club to go to, but that got broken down, so for few years there was nothing until they introduced this local park in the area, so I think… The local park has been a very good addition to my neighbourhood.

**I: Thank you.**

R: You’re welcome.

**I: Should we start with box 2?**

R: Box 2, yeah. So, I said my estate building was the place that I felt most lonely. The reason I said that is… (unclear 0:59:19-0:59:20) you saw how it was, you go through a gate, so only the people in the area can access the building. This was new, this came in last year, so I’ve been here for twenty-four years. For twenty-three years of my life, I used to see everyone just crossing over, so I used to see a lot of different people, and we had like, tourist groups that used to come past my area, past my house, and I’d start speaking to them. For a long time. And… Ever since then they did this restructuring I feel like now we’re all caged in. And I feel like the people in my estate, they’re all like, either elderly, or… business workers that barely live in the house. So my whole area’s very empty now, very quiet, which I’m not used to because… Like, the building I live in, there’s a building next to it, and in this two buildings like, straight ahead, I dunno if you can see, but it’s basically different, other areas, and everyone used to come to my building to play games and, you know, hang out. And now no one can do that because only the people in the area have the access key. And you know, now I just feel like, when I come outside my house to, like, enjoy the fresh air, it’s just empty, just pure empty, quiet. You don’t see no one, you don’t hear anything, and it’s something that I’m not used to, and I feel like that makes it… A lonely space. Not just for me, I feel like for everyone that lives there, especially like children, cos they can’t go play with their friends because they can’t leave the area, cos they’re locked in and if they leave out, you need a key to enter. Yeah so, I just feel like because of how they gated up the area, I feel like it’s… the most lonely place in the neighbourhood.

**I: Sounds like what you’re saying is, it used to be quite open in the sense that there was no gate, people outside would come, play different games. But now it’s gated so now only people within the building can have access to it.**

R: Yeah. And people in the building like I said… All the youngsters are all over the place, and maybe a few in my building. So before, when I used to like come out, especially in summer time, I see a lot of like… Kids playing football, playing, like, tag, or whatever, playing water fights, and I was a kid back then as well, we used to do it, and I thought, ‘oh, now I got 2 younger siblings, they can’t even enjoy that’ because, where they gonna go? They got nowhere to go now, and I feel like the way they structured this area is very closed now? So it’s… like I mentioned, it’s only building people that can have access to that area, no one else can. If someone else from the outside comes in, and they don’t know anyone in the building, there’s a security that roams around, he’ll kick them out. And now I just feel, ‘oh, we’re very secured in one place’. I feel like, that’s very… especially during summer time, it’s a very lonely area. And so I’m barely here, I always move out to like, different areas, because there’s nothing here no more. It’s very quiet, so yeah. I just feel like my state building is the most lonely place in this whole neighbourhood, cos we’re the only ones that have this key, which was introduced, like I said, about a year ago. So yeah. I think that’s all.

**I: Is there anything else you want to say about box 2?**

R: I think that’s the main thing is, the way they changed the area has affected how people interact with each other, you know. I think that’s the main thing, yeah.

**I: So it’s not as conducive to interact right now?**

R: Yeah. Basically.

**I: Anything else?**

R: I think that’s it.

**I: Thank you very much.**

R: You’re welcome.