

Transcript of Interview #10 (30/03/25)

Interviewer: Hi. My name is Jodie, as you know from my email, a master's student at the University of Sydney's School of Architecture, Design, and Planning. I'm the responsible researcher for the study and will be conducting this interview. Thank you for agreeing to participate.

Please note that you can withdraw from this interview at any time, even after it's finished. If you withdraw, your responses will be removed from the research study For this interview. I'm going to be asking you some questions about what you think of the boundaries of Western Sydney when shown on a map and what makes it different from the rest of Sydney.

There are no right or wrong answers. Before I ask you the questions. I've sent you an email with a map called Map 1. This map is for you to look at and think about the key question, where is Western Sydney? Please feel free to draw lines, arrows, images, write comments, or mark anything on this map, to show where you think Western Sydney starts and ends.

You can draw on Map 1 at any time before this interview ends, and I'll let you know when we're reaching that point. You can make as many changes as you'd like. Okay, I'm going to start asking you the interview questions now.

Interviewee: Um hm.

In whatever way you like, tell me a little bit about yourself, and where in Sydney you live.

Interviewee: Hmm. I am from Revesby. I grew up in Bankstown almost most of my life, up until about 21, and then I moved out, and then came back into Sydney, back to Western Sydney, or that's what I call Western Sydney. I work in entertainment, and I've had a history in working in biomedicine and lab work.

Interviewer: What are the first four words that come to your mind when you read or hear Western Sydney?

Interviewee: First four words?

Interviewer: Um hm.

Interviewee: Hmm, hmm. Any four words, right? I guess the first thing that came to mind was like 'food'.

Interviewer: Okay

Interviewee: And then, second, was like, I guess, 'home' was the other one. Third would be, I guess, 'Westie', if that counts because but like that directly relates to the name, and then four would be..uh for some reason, I guess, far. But it's yeah.

Interviewer: Please elaborate on your choice of these words.

Interviewee: I guess, for me, Western Sydney is, as far as food goes, is like the heart of food in Sydney. You kind of get better variety out West than you do closer to, like better variety, like when I say better variety, I mean, like you get better of the variety of food that you'll find in the CBD.

Interviewer: What types of food?

Interviewee: We're talking, like, between Middle Eastern, Asian cuisine. You can also get, like, that's across most Asian cuisines like south-eastern, eastern, and southern and, I guess, like Middle Eastern food, too, and even like going towards being like affordability to in terms of food is important and like, although you have to travel a bit further away between food, like it is more it's, it's, closer to its cultural inheritance from where it came from.

Interviewer: Um and so your next one was 'home'. Tell me a little bit more about that.

Interviewee: I guess, growing up from Western Sydney, like, like, what I call myself from Western Sydney, like being born in Bankstown, and kind of like having all my friends from our area, which is like Bankstown, Merrylands, Parramatta, like Penrith friends, even friends with like Mount Druitt, St Marys, St Clair, Blacktown, like all those, like my friends. Also, like Cabramatta and Liverpool, obviously. And yeah, like, so all my friends around there, my family lives in Western Sydney, like Fairfield as well as Cabra [Cabramatta], Bankstown.

Interviewer: Tell me a little bit about your choice of 'Westie' as a term.

Interviewee: I think 'Westie' to me, is more a concept of a person and how they are rather than it is place. If you're calling someone a 'Westie', it doesn't always necessarily mean that they are from the West as well, or they currently live there, so like you can live elsewhere but you could have grown up in Western Sydney.

It's also closer to like knowing what it's like and almost growing up with an underdog mentality, I guess. Simply because you're like the Western Sydney is depicted in media so strongly as being of less oral (?)

Interviewer: What does it mean to you to be a 'Westie'? And what makes someone a 'Westie' in your eyes.

Interviewee: For me being a 'Westie', I guess, in employment, always feels like a chip on my shoulder, having like to be like, "oh, yeah, I am from Western Sydney", but also being proud that I am from Western Sydney. But also anytime that I do say it. You can like see, like different approach, like different ways, that people will approach you afterwards, learning that where you're from like, you notice it more and more as you get older. But

like, it's like, obviously like a little bit of a bias but obviously those from Western Sydney know that it's actually quite safe and wonderful -

Interviewer: How do people usually treat you when they tell you that you're from Western Sydney?

Interviewee: Just like more aware that I'm not like sheltered. I guess, they're more aware that I've had more experiences than they like I they think that they may might have and they assume that I've more or less more like, capable of doing things myself than relying on services of other people, I guess.

Interviewer: Is that your, your self-perception, or what you think others think of you?

Interviewee: I guess it's a combination of both of like me asking people, and also like my perception of myself too.

Interviewer: What stops people from being a 'Westie' - like what are the criteria, if any, is it a state of mind, or is it like a set of check boxes that you have to tick off before someone is called a 'Westie'.

Interviewee: I think it's how they perceive themselves as much as they project themselves into the world. I think being in 'Westie' is a part of growing up within Western Sydney but also growing up with the understanding that you that you are from Western Sydney, and I don't know how to exactly put my finger on it, but like - sorry, can I get the question one more time?

Interviewer: Oh, no, no, this is just I was just asking you about like what makes someone a 'Westie' and what does not.

Interviewee: Oh, what makes people - oh, I think if someone's a Westie, then like -

Interviewer: Like if somebody said, "I'm a Westie", and then they say, and then you ask, "Where do you live?" And it's not from somewhere you consider Western Sydney? Are they still a Westie?

Interviewee: It depends on where it lands and how they grew up as well. But also at the same time, like, you can genuinely tell. If someone is more Western Sydney or not, it's in there.

Interviewer: How? How can you tell?

Interviewee: It's in like their attitude, like the manner they speak, and like.

Interviewer: In what way? Tell me more about this.

Interviewee: Like their experiences that they've had growing up

Interviewer: Hmm.

Interviewee: Like similar experiences or experiences that are similar in a way that you would only know is of Western Sydney, like -

Interviewer: What type of experiences?

Interviewee: Like things that are lesser than what is depicted as a Utopian society. I guess, so like things that are less than optimal, like, like people filtering petrol out of your car and like, but like, just like going through like experiencing once every now and then, or like but like that happens everywhere. It's just we're more likely to encounter it because, because of the population. Yeah.

Interviewer: So what do you think makes Western Sydney a distinct part of Sydney?

Interviewee: A what, sorry?

Interviewer: What makes Western Sydney a distinct part of Sydney?

Interviewee: Hmm, but yeah, but wait on the last part, too but like it also depends on like food and like, their openness to culture. So it's like a lot more than just like what's depicted but like, it's like, it's so much more. It's such a complex question.

Interviewer: Hmm.

Interviewee: Anyway. But yeah, hey, sorry - last question was?

Interviewer: What do you think makes Western Sydney a distinct part of Sydney?

Interviewee: I think it's important, important to have so many different cultural melting points in certain parts of the city, like knowing that Lidcombe is like a new Koreatown coming up, or like Bankstown, is like very Vietnamese, or Cabra [Cabramatta] is also very Vietnamese, or like Blacktown which is is very Filo [Filipino], and like knowing that there's like an upcoming like CBD in Parramatta is really nice, or is currently now a CBD in Parramatta or even like, like, yeah, yeah, like, Liverpool has a good, like, Middle Eastern influence, but also like a melting pot nowadays as well. Bankstown, obviously having, like a mixture of many. But like that's like general understanding of, mostly of like where people tend to go and like family knowing each other, I guess.

Interviewer: And so, what are your perceptions or associations of Western Sydney today?

Interviewee: Hm, perceptions of Western Sydney like today, or like growing up?

Interviewer: Today.

Interviewee: Okay, I'd say Western Sydney is a product of how it's been represented and treated throughout the last two decades.

Interviewer: And in your opinion, what is that?

Interviewee: I would say that it is a combination of inequality in funding, and also a device for media, to, a device for media as a scapegoat, to underlie, as a scapegoat to most problems, I guess.

Interviewer: Scape in what way, what examples?

Interviewee: Oh, for for example, like it's I guess, for specifically, I guess, Fox Media, it's very specifically created today in today's world, it is created to divides our own community against other communities, too, to help. How do I word this right? To help divide communities in order to propagate a, to propagate what they want. I guess, in the in the sense of like creating any kind of outrage in order to distract or to, like, swing votes in whatever way they need.

Interviewer: How do you think, media, if any, influence has affected the general, like general residents of Sydney's view of Western Sydney versus how you've lived in it?

Interviewee: I think the media is depicted very poorly, comparatively for instance, like my friends who did have like any form of media growing up and knowing anything from about Bankstown is almost entirely from media, which is like dangerous and unfitting and kind of scary to go to versus growing up in which is just like, like 99% families growing up and everyone just trying to get along in this world. So like, I think, like the media does a poor job projecting Sydney to like Western Sydney to be really like substandard.

Interviewer: Why do you think they do that? Besides, from the pitting communities against each other? Oh, is that the point, is to pit? And then, when you say communities, what communities?

Interviewee: I guess, creating a better divide to create a narrative that is beneficial to each politician in the long term. Can be like media in the form of like subtle articles just to, like, enforcing a perspective on, like, a positive light on when they when they were doing something like actually terrible in the community, and like creating outrage on purpose to distract, I guess, from, I guess, misfunding and mismanagement of actual government funds. I believe.

It's not always. But it does happen. Yeah. And like, mostly like. But obviously, it's yeah intentional in the sense of like, it's it's almost classist in a way to subdivide the - it's like almost classist to keep funding towards one side and lower funding towards another side. Especially if you are more biased towards a community that you grew up around.

Interviewer: Hmm, hmm! I guess growing up in what you call Western Sydney, what biases did you notice in the media that directly affected you?

Interviewee: I guess arts funding didn't really make its way to Western Sydney, which I think is a big deal, considering I work in the entertainment industry. Arts funding was

pretty much cut throughout most of Western Sydney for a very long time and in terms of like venues, and like music venues, they were pretty much non-existent -

Interviewer: Hmm.

Interviewee: During the 2000s, that in itself is wild because they left all the funding left, for, I guess, the northeastern side of Sydney, so that directly impacted like how I grew up around music.

Interviewer: Hmm. Before I ask you the last question of this section, did you have any other comments you would like to make?

Interviewee: No, I think I'm good.

Interviewer: How has your view of Western Sydney changed over time?

Interviewee: I guess, growing up as a teenager, I obviously saw that meeting people from outside the area, like the area and realising it, felt like everyone treated me more like differently, and like like in a weird, like scary way versus as an adult like everyone's kind of just like whatever like you're from where you're from.

Like, it's definitely softened like that kind of view has definitely softened, either, either because I'm an adult or because or because Western Sydney is somehow rehabilitating in in a way of like, it's not being used so much as a scapegoat, or simply because the media, like the main media is not being watched as much as well in younger population.

Interviewer: Would you say that your view of Western Sydney, the perceptions of how you were treated has changed, or your idea of what Western Sydney also has changed over time?

Interviewee: I think it's a combination of both. I think, as I get older, I think Western Sydney to me is a lot about food culture, and, like the importance of having each community be its own thing and, also understanding how important it is that I did come from Western Sydney. And how different it's made me in what kind of lens it's been able to give me to treat the world, so I think it's nice

Interviewer: And in what way, like what lens?

Interviewee: Just like the lens, that not everything is perfect in your world, and that you can come from a community that is, ah, not exactly looked after by government.

Interviewer: And so, oh, any other comments before I move to our mapping questions which you will need to show me Map 1?

Interviewee: No, you're good.

Interviewer: Okay. So if you could, please share your screen for Map 1. How would you show your personal boundaries of Western Sydney where it starts and ends today on this map

Interviewee: Today?

Interviewer: Yep, and then talk me through your process. Oh, and once you make your like, once you finalise your commentary in this interview, please send me a copy of this map.

Interviewee: Okay, means I've never drawn on this thing before. I think it's, hold. Okay, can you see this?

Interviewer: Uh huh

Interviewee: Okay, how do I?

Interviewer: Do you have an insert shapes?

Interviewee: Funny.

Interviewer: Hidden.

Interviewee: No, I think it's -

Interviewer: Format.

Interviewee: Doesn't want, I guess.

Interviewer: Oh, if not, you could even just take a screenshot like a snip thing and then draw on it or on page. Yeah, we're good

Interviewee: I'm just gonna do this one second. Okay, this is fun. Okay, cool. Alright. Okay. So drawing, where Western Sydney is from currently now today.

Interviewer: Where? Yeah, where it starts and ends in however, you want to show me

Interviewee: I guess it's pretty broad but I guess, like, huh, crazy. Yeah. I guess. Yeah, like, this area in this.

Interviewer: Walk me through this

Interviewee: Well it - the Western Sydney today is harder to define, but in my opinion, like it includes, like different cultural importances to Western Sydney. So like, in my opinion, like you have a good like melting pot of points. Um, Parramatta, obviously, because it's so central, Blacktown, because it has a nice community of like Filipino, and then you have, like a great community of Vietnamese, Cabramatta. You have a great general community of a great Middle Eastern community in Liverpool, same as Revesby. I think this down here is like a Lebanese community as well, and then Bankstown's got

obviously a melting pot of a lot more also. And, and, I think Auburn and Burwood, I guess in this area it's a south-eastern and mainland Asia.

Interviewer: Hmm.

Interviewee: I think it's a nice melting pot of Sydney having specific cultures to have their own -

Interviewer: Is that what you associate Western Sydney for you as like melting pot of cultures?

Interviewee: I think so. I think it's - I think that in itself is important, especially for Sydney, and like, I think it's the diversity of Western Sydney also helps like impact that but like, it's not just like diversity, it's a combination of diversity versus adversity. And also like, so it's diversity, adversity, and also like the mentality, like, like everything that like pressure cooks you into becoming a 'Westie', I guess.

Interviewer: So you associate being with a Westie with like adversity or -

Interviewee: Yeah, I guess so.

Interviewer: Hmm. Walk me through some of your exclusions. So you've got your eastern forefront, and then so why doesn't it go south, like you've got just like loops to St Clair, and then the base of the Blue Mountains.

Interviewee: I guess, for me, I think like rural Sydney - not rural, sorry - like rural Sydney when it hits the Blue Mountains it's just Greater New South Wales. So that's not exactly like I say rural but I mean, it's just Greater New South Wales and I think that's just too far to be really Sydney anymore.

Interviewer: Hmm, okay.

Interviewee: Penrith is, I'd say, like the edge of Sydney, almost in that regard um and then obviously looping St. Clair, because that is just like green land, sort of

Interviewer: Down south, so south of Casula. You don't consider those communities to be Western Sydney?

Interviewee: I guess Casula is on the cusp as well.

Interviewer: So what about Campbelltown?

Interviewee: I think Campbelltown is south-western Sydney, though.

Interviewer: Oh, so you consider it different from Western Sydney?

Interviewee: Yeah, I think so. But it. But it doesn't mean that they don't have a like. They don't have adversity and stuff as well. It's just I think you also don't find that people from Campbelltown will also call themselves Western Sydney.

But it's a hard line to really toe, and, like, they can be considered Western Sydney, but I'd call them south-western Sydney, simply because they have a different culture upbringing in that sense as well, because there isn't as many different cultural melting points going down south-western Sydney.

Interviewer: Okay. Good walk me through your northern boundaries. So you stopped before Quakers Hill.

Interviewee: Yep. In my defence, I would say that I have no real knowledge of Quakers Hill, so I believe that is a knowledge black hole for me. So, from my understanding, I actually don't know enough to put an input, I excluded them out of oh, I guess, without knowledge, that's all.

Interviewer: To tell me more about your eastern frontier past Bankstown but before Burwood. What, what logic drives you there?

Interviewee: I guess it comes with my upbringing as much as it is gentrification. So like. Obviously Burwood has been gentrified and, like the Western Sydney, and the adversity that you would normally get growing up in Western Sydney no longer applies in Burwood?

Interviewer: Hmm.

Interviewee: It's the same as how Marrickville used to be called Western Sydney, but it is so gentrified now that it is also, that also, like the same rule applies. It's, they get, they don't really, they wouldn't really go through the same adversities as they would now.

Interviewer: Before I move on and send you a second map. Was there anything else that you would like to talk through or comment

Interviewee: No, I'm good.

Interviewer: Now about to send you Map 2.

As prelude when you get it, Map 2 is exactly the same as Map 1 but it's just a satellite view of the land and patterns of urban settlement across metro Sydney. And after you have seen Map 2, does it affect anything about how you show in Western Sydney in Map 1?

Interviewee: Where did you send it?

Interviewer: Oh, it'd be through to your email.

Interviewee: Okay, got it. So I'm just looking at this one?

Interviewer: Yep, just looking at it.

Interviewee: And you ask me if it changes my opinions?

Interviewer: Yep.

Interviewee: I don't think so. I think it is still pretty much the same.

Interviewer: And so, just as a question back on your Map 1. Your - what logics did you use to create your boundaries so purely cultural was it? Did you use infrastructure or natural environments to help you shape that polygon?

Interviewee: Yep, it's a - it's a combination of infrastructure as well so also cultural influences.

Interviewer: What infrastructure did you use?

Interviewee: I guess the like public transport line growing up, and um just accessibility in traveling also, like, keeping Penrith and Parramatta for I guess Western Sydney University, as well

Interviewer: Hm, okay.

Interviewee: That also, but also, I guess, helped place Western Sydney as like as a point of reference. For instance, like Milperra, had a Western Sydney campus and also, I guess, at the time, and they still had a campus at Parramatta, and also in Penrith.

Interviewer: I mean, technically, there's a campus in Macarthur.

Interviewee: Yes, there is one in Campbelltown as well, whereas I would have considered it but I think it's still south-western Sydney, so I think it was under an umbrella.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: How would you consider – so do you consider south-western Sydney, to be a distinct separate entity from, from big capital 'w' Western Sydney?

Interviewee: I think so. South-western Sydney is only slightly different just in terms of space and urbanisation as well.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Urbanisation and, and, like respect of like infrastructure and also, I mean, yeah.

Interviewer: In terms of patterns or like development?

Interviewee: I guess, development. But also, I guess you know, I don't know how exactly you point my finger on this one. It's like, it's both like it's Western Sydney, but it's missing it's, I guess, it's missing, like, the, the cultural influences of all the others.

Interviewer: This is the actual end of the interview. So thank you for your - for participating and for your inputs any final comments before I close out

Interviewee: No, I think you're good.

Interviewer: It's all good. You can contact me at any time. If you have any questions or concerns about the study, you can withdraw at any time, even after or partially withdraw some of your responses. If you'd like.

My contact details are in the participant information statement that I gave you before this interview once again. Thank you for participating. Your insights are greatly appreciated.

Interviewee: Yeah, you're welcome.