INTERVIEW M14-SG2: MEGHAN CHARD

Interviewer: Dr Barry Hazley
Interviewee: Meghan Chard
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Transcriber: Naomi Wells

Textual Note: Annotations and observations appear in square brackets (e.g. [pauses], [laughs]). Partial, interrupted or unfinished utterances are denoted by a dash. False starts, filler words and non-lexical utterances (e.g. 'um', 'hmm') are not generally transcribed. Time codes appear at ten-minute intervals in square brackets in bold type.

BH: Okay, great, okay that's us off. Okay Meghan, so I'm just going to begin really by a very general question just to get us going. Could you tell me a wee tiny bit about why the project interested you and why you agreed to take part?

MC: I think it's, I find, I find that the premise of how it's affecting second-generation migrants really interesting because I feel like, when I was growing up, I've grown up between Manchester and Ireland really, and obviously you hear all the encounters of your parents and, you know, their childhood and what they went through and things like that, so you have a real connection to that sort of, to that, to the sort of the Troubles and their journey that they had through that time and, but at the same time obviously I've grown up in England and so, for most part that is, and so therefore I feel that I'm very, very torn in who I am, I'm very torn in what my, what my nationality is, so I feel like, I feel like in my heart I'm Irish, but then at the same time I feel very much mixed, I feel Irish in my heart, but then really in my, in my probably mentality, not mentality, in my sort of [pauses] behaviour, my thoughts, I don't know, I feel like, very British, you know, I very much follow sort of British etiquette and things like that and, so I just find it interesting how [pauses], how sort of my generation has been affected by my parents being from Ireland and, you know, how I'd have been different if we'd stayed in Ireland or, you know, I just find it all very interesting.

BH: Great, fantastic, that's a really in-depth answer to start off with. Actually one of the questions that I was going to ask you later, but I'll ask you now because you've basically already struck upon it, have you ever felt a tension between, on the one hand, your identification with things Irish and your Irish identity and, on the other side, your socialisation within English and/or British culture? Has there ever been a tension between those?

MC: Yeah, constantly, constant, constant tension, to be honest, because I feel like I am Irish, cos I'm not English, but then Britain has been my home and looked after me, and all my friends down here, you know, my friends, my husband, his family, they're all English and I do, I feel constantly torn, and then when I go back to Ireland, it's different. In Northern Ireland I go back to and I see a lot of similarities in our personalities and our jokes and the

craic and things like that, and I see, I feel I have a lot of connection there, cos I still have quite a lot of friends from Northern Ireland. It's funny that when I go back to, I've got a few friends in and I've got a family in Southern Ireland as well, I feel like it is different, in fact, I feel like Northern Ireland has a very unique set of characteristics, which are quite similar to the Scots almost, kind of almost like, a Celt sort of personality trait almost, which is different I feel from the Republic of Ireland, but yeah, I just do, sorry, I feel like I'm waffling probably here–

BH: Not at all, no.

MC: I do feel, I do feel, yeah, a constant, a constant sort of tension because I'm never fully Irish and I'm never fully English, I'm neither really, so it's, it's, it's, it's actua-, it's, when I, you know, if I am writing down on a, every sort of, every document you write down you have to put your nationality on, just for ease sake I put British, but I don't feel, but I know that in my heart I'm not British, but then I don't, I can't really write Irish because I've got an English accent and I've lived in England like, most of my life and, yeah, it's, it's little things like that, and people ask me like, where are you from and I'm like, ooh, I'm like, an Irish Mancunian, I can never say Manchester and I can never just say Ireland either, so yeah, like, it's a constant, constant sort of tension in, yeah, in my head really.

BH: Yeah, that, some people sometimes get round it that way, don't they, instead of making reference to England or Britain it's their city which is their, sort of the basis of their Englishness, as in, you know, I'm Irish Mancunian or I'm London Irish or–

MC: Yeah, yeah.

BH: It's somehow more, feels easier maybe than saying, you know, I'm English Irish, which doesn't really seem to work in the same way.

MC: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, very true.

BH: When did you become aware of that tension? Do you recall when you became conscious of it?

MC: Yeah, well, I mean, so I think we moved, so mum and dad sort of, so, so I don't know if mum's already told you, but we kind, so they lived in the Bahamas for a couple of years, obviously they moved from Ireland, they moved to Manchester.

BH: She did, yeah.

MC: Yeah, so basically mum had us all, we were all born in Ireland, but so, how can I explain, so I was born in Ireland and then we moved back to the Bahamas and we were there for like, the final six months and then we moved to Manchester because the Troubles were still happening, so then I spent my primary school years in Manchester and then we moved, me, my mum, dad and my brother moved to Ireland for four years, whilst my sisters were at university, so then I moved to Ireland for my secondary school years basically, and that's when I really sort of noticed, cos I, people, you know, I was like, the English person at school

and very much like, being an English, having an English accent and going into an Irish Catholic school where there's still a lot of the tension, you know, it's very much like, you're English, you're this, you're that, and I was like, no, I'm Irish cos I was born there and my family is Irish, but I just have an English accent, and I think it was then that I first really kind of was torn like, who am I, am I Irish, am I English, I don't really know, and then I think if I'd stayed in Ireland and that was it, then I probably, then I would have said that I was Irish, but then I don't know, I obviously don't know if I would have felt a little bit Mancunian as well, but we moved back when I was fifteen and so I've been, and I've been back in England since then, so I feel that probably ever since then, I feel like I'm not just, even though I'm kind of, I'm living in England and I've now got an English accent, I feel like I'm not just British, I am Irish, you know, that's where kind of the conflict lies really.

BH: Sure, so, I mean, you've basically lived in quite a few different places then. You were born in Ireland–

MC: Yeah.

BH: And then did you, you went to Bahamas, were you schooled in the Bahamas for a while?

MC: No, I was just a baby, no–

BH: Just a baby, right.

MC: I was just a baby, I don't remember it, yeah.

BH: And then you said, did you move then to Manchester or move back to Ireland?

MC: No, Manchester, yeah, Manchester then.

BH: And did you go to school in Manchester there?

MC: Yeah, yeah.

BH: Up to what age was that?

MC: Till eleven.

BH: Up to eleven, and then you moved to Northern Ireland, is that right?

MC: Mm hmm, mm hmm, yeah.

BH: And then you were, how many years were you then at school in, up until you were fifteen?

MC: Yeah, so that's four years basically.

BH: Four years, and then to Manchester and you finished school in Manchester, is that right?

MC: Yeah, yeah.

BH: Right, wow, so that's basically backwards and forwards between an English school and a Northern Irish school.

MC: Yeah, hence the tension.

BH: Yeah [laughs].

MC: Who am I? [laughs]

BH: I can really understand that. I have quite a few friends who are second-generation background who live over here, but their, you know, their parents came from kind of west of Ireland and they were completely schooled in Manchester, so they never actually grew up at all in Ireland, though they would go back there on holidays and so on, but, and they talk about this tension, but in fact, you have completely lived the tension, you've actually been schooled in both places.

MC: Yeah.

BH: So did you say there that when you were in the Bahamas your mum at one point didn't go back to Northern Ireland because the Troubles was still going on?

MC: Yeah, they, I think, I think, I think that you can only live in the Bahamas if you're not like, a national for more than seven years or something like that, and there wasn't really much, there wasn't really much secondary school sort of education there, so when my older sister was getting like, she was kind of, I think she was ten, so she was kind of in the next year or so going to go to secondary school, so I think for that reason they knew they had to go, and I think they still sort of, I guess that was the late eighties, that was '87, '88, so I think the Troubles were still quite, still going on there and so they just, yeah, they decided to go back to Manchester really, where they both, I guess probably where they felt safe, they both met there and got quite a strong Irish community there and stuff like that, so.

BH: And was that the way they told the story? Did they talk about the Troubles quite a bit?

MC: Yeah.

BH: Did they say, for example, that they didn't want to go back because of that?

MC: Yeah, yeah.

BH: How did they talk to you about the conflict in Northern Ireland?

MC: They'd tell me all their stories really, you know, they're very, they were very passionate about it and, you know, you know, the experiences they've told us, you know, quite shocking and, you know, they were like, they felt they were second-class citizens, you know, and they used to talk fondly that, they used to say that, you know, before the **[00:10:00]** Troubles all kicked off Protestants and Catholics actually got on really well and you could go into different pubs in different sort of towns, in Belfast and it, you know, there would be no trouble at all, but then all of a sudden, you know, you couldn't and, you know, I think, yeah, it's, it's, they always, they talked, they've always talked fondly of Ireland, they love Ireland like, you know, my mum always wants like, wan-, still always wants to go back, but yeah, I think, I think, you know, they were quite traumatic times for them.

BH: Sure, did they talk about why they left in the first place? Did they, I mean, presumably, you said that they met there in Manchester. They didn't travel over together, did they, they came separately.

MC: No, yeah, they came separately, I think for a better life, I think, especially for my mum, my mum was the only one who went to school past sort of, you know, went onto education past fourteen, so I think, I think there's a massive influx of Irish people into Manchester and Liverpool in those areas so, so like, teacher training and things like that, so I think that was kind of, I think that was more for sort of opportunities, probably.

BH: Yeah, what about your dad then?

MC: I don't know actually, but I guess, yeah, I guess like, a, you know, I guess opportunities and just yeah, probably to get away from all, the Troubles. I mean, my dad's house was burned down. He was living in Protestant area and they had like, a cross put on their door and then they had to evacuate sort of thing, and then they came back and everything had been burned and pooed on and completely defiled, and so, I think, yeah, I think they wanted to like, yeah, I think probably move on to like, a better, better sort of life and situation really, and political sort of stability.

BH: Did your dad migrate over on his own or did his whole family go?

MC: No, just him, again, for teacher training, again.

BH: Ah right, so he stayed on at school at school as well then?

MC: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

BH: Yeah, right, yeah, there does seem to be quite a lot of people who moved over who specifically went into teaching, seemed to be quite, quite a big draw.

MC: Mmm.

BH: What about your own schooling then? Did you enjoy school?

MC: Do you know I didn't really enjoy school in Ireland, to be honest. I don't, I didn't really, I only enjoyed my last year, I didn't really enjoy it, but I guess, I guess, I don't know, but I really enjoyed my primary school, I loved that, do you know what, I've really enjoyed all my schooling in England.

BH: Is that right, yeah?

MC: Yeah, yeah, I did, I really enjoyed all my schooling in England, found, and I don't know is this because out of the certain years that I was in Ireland, maybe those years if I'd had them in England I would have had a different experience, but I found the children much nicer, much more welcoming actually, which is actually–

BH: Is that right?

MC: Yeah, I did, I found the kids, and my brother felt very much the same actually, he had quite a hard time with it and maybe that's because we were from England and they don't, they weren't, people weren't as welcoming or as open, but, no, you know, we had friends and things, but a lot of sort of, a lot of, yeah, a lot of bitchiness and a lot of, yeah, there was a bit of that, so.

BH: And which school, which school did you go to in Northern Ireland? What part were you in?

MC: I went to an all-girls', went to Tyrone.

BH: Oh yeah.

MC: We lived in Tyrone, I went to, I don't know if you know Donaghmore, it's like a convent grammar school.

BH: I know it very well actually, yeah.

MC: Do you?

BH: Yeah, I do. I'm actually from–

MC: And my brother I went to S-, no, go on, go on, go on.

BH: No, go on ahead, go on ahead.

MC: No, but where are you from? [laughs]

BH: From Cookstown.

MC: Oh are you?

BH: Which is quite close to Donaghmore.

MC: Yeah, I used to go to the Glenavon.

BH: Yeah, yeah, yeah, you would get people from Donaghmore going to the Glenavon or the other thing we had was Clubland.

MC: Yes, Clubland, yeah, I've been there, that's so funny!

BH: Yeah [laughs], what were you saying there about your brother, he went to a different school?

MC: He went to St Patrick's, he went to St Patrick's Academy.

BH: In Dungannon?

MC: In Dungannon, yeah.

BH: Yeah, and he didn't enjoy it either?

MC: No, I think the boys were actually worse to him than they were like, than people were to me. I think he was older, he was fifteen as well, so I think, you know, they were way less welcoming to a fifteen-year-old than, you know, testosterone and the, they've, the, you've established your friendships then really a bit more, haven't you, so I think it, I think it was a lot more, I think it was a lot tougher for him.

BH: Yeah, I can well believe that, you know, I can imagine it being difficult to try and integrate yourself at that age into an all-boys', you know, Catholic school at that time, you know, I can imagine it was difficult. So what school did you go to then in Manchester, whenever you came back?

MC: Do you know St Monica's and Holy Cross?

BH: I don't know St Monica's now, I only know a few.

MC: So I went to St Monica's just for one year, just for my GCSEs cos I had to do, I had to basically redo all my GCSEs in one year, but that was the school that, that was the local Catholic school, that was the school that like, all my siblings had been to, and then all my primary school friends were there, so I literally slotted, I literally went back in there and slotted right in and, yeah, I loved it and then I went, I was only there for one year and then I went to Holy Cross College in Bury.

BH: Oh yeah, I've heard of that one, yes, that's quite a travel out then, is it? Were you living in the centre of Manchester?

MC: No, no, from Prestwich it wasn't far, no.

BH: Ah right, okay, right, okay, and was that to stay on to do A-levels then?

MC: Yeah, yeah.

BH: So what did you study?

MC: Chemistry, biology and performing arts I took for A-level.

BH: Wow, and did you, was the plan then to go onto university after that or was there something else in mind?

MC: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, university.

BH: Where did you go then, to university after that?

MC: I went to King's College in London.

BH: Oh right, so you moved south then.

MC: Yeah, and I must say that, you know, one of the things I'm really grateful for, for parents is, you know, they kind of didn't have a lot of money as we were growing up, you know, they'd four kids and, but the thing is it always pushed us so much to like, to just try with our education and that they sort of, they had that sort of, that was their mentality that, you know, to kind of improve yourself and, you know, sort of give yourself a better lifestyle, just to really work hard and focus on your like, studies, and so I do, I do really appreciate that from them, and I do feel like that's very much a, I mean, they may have been a bit strict [laughs] sometimes, but I do feel like that was almost like a, I do feel that's a kind of, sort of a, a quality of like, an, I don't know, a Northern Irish parent I think, I don't know.

BH: You think that their sort of, this desire to work hard and to build a better life, was a, it was a Northern Irish kind of trait?

MC: Yeah, yeah.

BH: Yeah, yeah, where do you think they got that from?

MC: I think because they were like, second-class citizens and I think, I think it's from that.

BH: Yeah, was that something that your mum would have talked about, being a second-class citizen and the need to work hard?

MC: Yeah, yeah, absolutely.

BH: What about your parents' life in England then? I know they spent time in the Bahamas, but did they like England?

MC: I think my dad did, my dad does, I don't think my dad would move back now, but mum has a very much nostalgic sort of feeling towards Ireland and so no matter what, England

will never be enough for her, even though she's lived there more, she's lived in England more her whole life and, you know, she, England will never be home to her, which is sad, and, but at the same time she's been restricted I guess, initially by the Troubles, she couldn't go back, and then as we sort of integrated into British life we didn't really want to go back and she tried taking us back, but we just wanted to go back to England, to be honest.

BH: Sure, yeah.

MC: And so she came back again and I think, yeah, I think, I don't know, I don't, I think she's enjoyed, I think she likes it in some ways, but I feel like she's fought, I feel like in her head she'd happily stay here, not out of choice, which is sad really.

BH: Yeah, yeah, you know the way you said when she was living in Northern Ireland, or growing up in Northern Ireland, it was a common perception that Catholics were, you know, second-class citizens, that they faced discrimination and so on. How did she feel about English society? Was English society better in that respect or did she still, was there a sense that England was discriminatory as well, or was that quite different?

MC: Well, I think they've made a few comments, you know, things like, you know, there used to be signs on shop doors saying no dogs, no Irishmen sort of thing, so they made a few comments about that, but I don't, apart from that I've never heard them say they've experienced anything [pauses], experienced any discrimination in England for being Irish, I've, I've never heard them say that.

BH: Yeah, did they have, who were their friendship groups whenever they were living in England? Did they have English friends, for example?

MC: [pauses] No, Irish, you know, all Irish really.

BH: Is that right? Is that both your parents or more your mum?

MC: My mum now has English friends, but has still got a lot of Irish, new Irish friends, but I'd say mainly it was due to church and through Irish, it would be all really Irish connections **[00:20:00]** living in England really, maybe a handful of English friends, but even the English friends would be second-generation Irish.

BH: Is that right, yeah?

MC: Yeah [laughs].

BH: Presumably some of that had to do with involvement with the Irish community in Britain and things like that?

MC: Yeah, I think so and the schools, and I guess they were usually Catholic and usually around like, the church, I suppose.

BH: Yeah, were the–?

MC: Cos Manchester, yeah.

BH: No, go on ahead, sorry.

MC: I was going to say, cos obviously Manchester's obviously got quite a big Irish community anyway, so I think, I think like, in Prestwich, you know, there's a lot of, in all the primary schools, in all the Catholic schools, you know, a lot of them are Irish, you know, or second-generation Irish, you know, so it's not hard to bump into, it's not hard to make friends with Irish people there or second-generation Irish people, because around north Manchester it's full of them, you know.

BH: Sure, were you, did your parents bring you into contact a lot with that Irish community in Manchester? Was your friendship groups, in other words, formed within that space as well or were your friendship groups more associated with your school and with your kind of peer group and so on?

MC: Yeah, more my school, but, I mean, she did send me to Irish dancing and playing the accordion and tin whistle [laughs].

BH: Yeah [laughs].

MC: So I did all those things, in England.

BH: And was that through like, a local Irish centre?

MC: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

BH: Things like that, yeah.

MC: Yeah.

BH: You talk about the Irish community in Manchester. I'm wondering here about distinctions between sort of Northerners and Southerners like, did your parents make a distinction between the two and did they say, you know, that there were differences between Southern people and Northern people?

MC: No.

BH: No.

MC: No.

BH: No, did you perceive that at all, in your experience?

MC: Yeah, I just, yeah, I have perceived it myself as I've been older, you know, when I'm an adult.

BH: Yeah, and what was that connected, what was that connected with or how would you explain that?

MC: Just sort of encounters in meetings with people [pauses]. If they were Nor-, if I bumped into someone who was Northern Irish I would have almost like, a much more of an instant connection, and almost like, a, more in common I guess.

BH: Yeah, talk a bit more about the time you spent in Northern Ireland. For example, do you still go back now to Tyrone or anywhere else?

MC: I'd like to, I used to go back sort of once a year up until [pauses], up until probably twenty-three, I used to go back, and then I had my friend, you know, my friend got married, so I went back for her wedding, but, you know, I'm just, yeah, busy now. I have, no, I have been back to, I've been back to Belfast a few times, cos we've got cousins there and stuff like that, so we'd, yeah, I'd go to Belfast probably once a year, yeah, I do, yeah, I go back once a year to sort of Ireland, and I, like, and then I've got one of my best friends, actually her family live in Kinsale down in County Cork, so we go there as well sort of once a year or so, but that's more for like, a holiday, sort of.

BH: For holidays, yeah.

MC: Yeah, rather than sort of just to touch base.

BH: Whenever you moved to London to go to King's College, did you move down? Presumably you moved down there for term time anyway, yeah?

MC: Yeah.

BH: Yeah.

MC: Yeah, yeah.

BH: Did you like, frequent any of the Irish centres in London or did you make, did you seek out basically, you know, the London Irish community whenever you were living down there or was it more about people that you were going to lectures with and staying in halls with and that kind of thing?

MC: Yeah, yeah, it was more people who I was like, in halls and lectures with.

BH: Sure, yeah, were there any other Irish or Northern Irish people on your course or in any of your halls or anything?

MC: Yeah, there was a guy, a Northern Irish guy in my halls.

BH: And did you speak much to him or have much contact with him?

MC: Yeah, I'd speak to him, yeah, I mean, we weren't friends, you know, we wouldn't, weren't friends or anything, but we'd like, we'd have a good chat and you could tell we made a connection because we were both from Northern Ireland sort of thing.

BH: Sure, during that period like, did you continue to follow, you know, Irish politics on TV and in the media and things like that? Was it something that you kind of had an interest in over that period, in what was happening politically in Northern Ireland?

MC: What, when I was at university?

BH: Yeah, or just in general, even up to now, you know, was it something that you follow?

MC: Yeah, yeah, it does, I do have an interest in it and I don't, you know, I mean, mum would literally, mum and dad would literally watch the six o'clock Irish news everyday like, they still do, they're so funny, they watch that everyday, but I wouldn't obviously watch that, but if a news article came up about Northern Ireland then I'd be, it'd sort of flag up and I'd be particularly interested in it and I'd read it, so yeah, it would be of particular interest to me.

BH: Sure, and when you were saying your parents there, whenever they watch the Irish news, is that like, the BBC Ulster coverage or is it the RTÉ Southern coverage?

MC: Ulster, it was BBC Ulster coverage.

BH: BBC Ulster coverage, right.

MC: Yeah.

BH: So it sounds like they've kind of followed the Troubles as it's evolved over all these, over these years then?

MC: Yeah, yeah.

BH: Yeah, were they or were you ever interested in political activism in England like, were you, they ever involved in any political groups, for example, in England, connected with the Troubles?

MC: No.

BH: No, it's just I know some people, some second-generation people became involved in things like the Troops Out movement or the, you know, the Irish in Britain Representation Group, some of those kind of things.

MC: Yeah, no, nothing like that.

BH: Were you aware of those groups?

MC: No, no, I wasn't, no, no.

BH: What about, what did your parents talk to you about in relation to the Troubles? Was it something that they, you mentioned that they told you stories and things like that, did they tell you about the history of the conflict and things like that?

MC: Yeah, yeah [pauses], yeah, they would, they would do.

BH: Yeah, and was that, why do you think they, they told you about it?

MC: Well, it's difficult, it's difficult as well because, you know, when I was in, when I was in Ireland and I was at school there, in history we basically learnt about the history of Ireland. I didn't really learn about any other history [laughs].

BH: Any other history [laughs].

MC: I'm not actually joking, honestly I, like, chat to my husband, he's like, so you didn't learn anything else about like, World War Two, and I was like, nope, just like, the flax seeds and growing linen and like, the, you know, William of Orange and the Famine and, you know, honestly that's all I learnt in four years of Irish history, isn't that funny.

BH: Yeah, yeah, I can well believe that, so in other words you didn't really need your parents to give you a run-down on Irish history–

MC: Yeah.

BH: Because you were getting it anyway basically, in your classes.

MC: Yeah, but my mum, yeah, but my mum, my mum, you know, she's very passionate, they're very passionate about like, Irish history and sort of the hardship that the Irish have endured from the British.

BH: Sure, yeah.

MC: So no, she would, they'd make that quite clear.

BH: Would you and your mum have the same interpretation of Irish history?

MC: Yeah, I think so, yeah.

BH: Yeah, you think so, yeah. How do then, cos when you mentioned earlier about the tension between those two sides of your identity, the English or British part and the Irish part, when you read Irish history that way, and it's about how Britain has oppressed Irish people or created hardships, does that make it more difficult to align or reconcile those two parts of your identity?

MC: Yeah, I feel like, a bit sort of ignited and a bit sort of, yeah, real pro-Ireland and sort of, you know, against, against the British, definitely.

BH: Yeah, and when that happens then what do you do with the British side of yourself?

MC: Yeah, I'm definitely sort of more Irish, I mean, yeah [pauses], I think [pauses], yeah, I align myself more with the Irish.

BH: Yeah, what about wider–?

MC: I, yeah.

BH: Sorry, go on, say what you were going to say, what were you going to say?

MC: I don't know, I feel like I've kind of aligned myself more [pauses], I'd say I'd align, I'd say like, my sort of, so if you split my sort of identity I'd say I'd be more aligned with Irish, if England, if England are playing Ireland in rugby, my husband's a massive England rugby fan and I'll support Ireland like, one hundred per cent, more, you know, if they were playing each other, and then obviously I'd support England **[00:30:00]** against Wales or Italy or France or whatever, so that, that sort of, I think, is an indicator of where sort of my loyalty lies, but yeah, I feel like, oh I don't know, I feel like, the older I get though and the more, the more England is sort of providing for me, and the less I go to Ireland, I then do feel like I'm kind of going back to, you know, feeling more British.

BH: Sure, yeah, you've children yourself, yeah?

MC: Yeah, I've got one, well, yeah, one [indecipherable].

BH: And do you talk to them about Irishness and Britishness?

MC: No, not yet, I will, she's only two.

BH: Ah right, she's only two [laughs], too young for that yet.

MC: She is, she is smart for her, she is smart for her age, but, you know [laughs].

BH: [laughs] Yeah, it's a wee bit too advanced.

MC: Yeah [laughs].

BH: Yeah, do you think, as opposed to just Irishness, would you say that the Troubles in particular had an impact on your sense of identity?

MC: In what way? In the fact that I feel more aligned with, sort of more sort of aligned with being Irish because I feel sort of passionate that I want to sort of stick up for the Irish, is that kind of what you mean, or do you mean–?

BH: I just mean I suppose the Troubles was quite a political event, with quite a specific kind of history and obviously, I mean, you actually lived in Ireland during that period, you were going to school at that time. I suppose what I mean is, has your sense of politics or your sense of what it means to be Irish, or even British, been affected specifically by the Troubles, as opposed to simply having a connection with–

MC: Yeah, a hundred per cent, yeah, yeah, yeah.

BH: You know, the south of the island, if you get me?

MC: Yeah, no, a hundred per cent, I think you feel like you have, yeah, I feel like you're just more, it's almost like a badge of honour and you've got to keep, you know, yeah, it makes you more proud to be Irish because of the Troubles and the hardship they've been through, I think.

BH: What about wider politics in Britain? Were you interested in sort of British politics?

MC: As I get older now I am, yeah.

BH: Yeah.

MC: As I get older.

BH: And who, would you vote for any particular party or parties?

MC: Well, much to my parents' dismay, yeah.

BH: Yeah?

MC: Yeah, but, I mean, you know, it's difficult, isn't it, it's [pauses], yeah, I voted for a very different, I voted for basically the opposite party that my parents vote for basically.

BH: I'll have a guess and say that you voted for Conservative.

MC: [laughs] Yeah, but, I mean [laughs], I mean, I would vote Lib Dem, to be honest with you, but I just think it's a wasted vote because they're not going to get in, and I didn't want Jeremy Corbyn to get in, so, oh anyway, we won't go there.

BH: Well, that's really interesting actually because knowing quite a few second-generation people, it's very often that they have strong Labour sympathies, they've, quite a few of them who are actually members of the Labour Party, and one of the sort of the ideas that I always had was that that tendency to kind of vote that way was linked to their kind of, you know, their Irish Catholic background, which very often, you know, prevents them forming sort of sympathies for, you know, Conservative parties who they see as linked to sort of unionism and things like that.

MC: Yeah.

BH: How did you come to really, to identify with the Conservative Party?

MC: Because I think where I live now, I live in Surrey now, and I think–

BH: Ah right, okay, yeah.

MC: I don't, I feel like the, I don't know, I just feel [pauses], I probably live in quite a Tory place, to be honest, I think I'm influenced by my environment and my like, my husband's a Tory, well, he votes Tory, well, I think deep down he's a Lib Dem, but I think again, it was just the, it's the leaders, to be honest with you, it's the leaders, it's not necessarily, I think we're kind of more in line with kind of conven-, the sort of traditional views of the Tories, but I think, and we're probably the Lib Dems really, to be honest, but I think just the leaders that have been available up until now, they've not been great, and they've been sort of, you know, the best of a bad bunch for us, but I do think it's probably the environment that I live in, cos I reckon I was probably more Labour and it has, do you know what, I was probably more heavily influenced by my parents when I was living with them in Manchester, which is very Labour anyway, and probably influenced by my environment there when I was younger, whereas living down south now I'm more [pauses], yeah, I am more influenced by my environment here, to be honest.

BH: Okay, so living in Surrey–

MC: And I'm al-, I'm also a business owner, so I feel like, with Tory that sort of, they're very much about sort of business and the economy and things like that, you know, so I think that's probably why.

BH: Sure, I can see that there if you're a business owner you might be slightly worried about Jeremy Corbyn. So living in Surrey then, which, as you say, is quite a Tory place, is it difficult to express, you know, a Catholic Irish identity in that context?

MC: No, no.

BH: No, it's not, no?

MC: No.

BH: Do you, do your friends, for example, and the people you know in Surrey, are they aware of your background?

MC: Yeah.

BH: They are, yeah.

MC: Yeah, again, I make it quite known, I feel like it's part of who I am, my identity, it's quite important to me, I mean, I had, you know, I found it quite hard to change my name, you know, when I got married, you know, as well because I felt like my surname was a real part

of my identity. It sort of straight away showed people that I was Irish, whereas now I've got like, an English name and that was quite hard for me because I'm just like an average English person now.

BH: [laughs] An average English person now [laughs], so I take it from that, you said, your husband's family, are they completely English or is there any Irish connection there at all?

MC: They're pretty much, yeah, I think a few generations, I think there is a bit of Irish there, but they're not, they're pretty much English.

BH: Pretty much English.

MC: Yeah, the, the, yeah.

BH: And do they ever talk about the Troubles or Irishness?

MC: [pauses] They themselves would, they, they've only talked about it because it's come up in conversation when we've met with the parents, so it's always come up, it'd always come up with my parents, and I've brought it up as well when I'm feeling a bit sort of, kind of, I'm ignited and I'm like, you know, feeling really passionate and trying to, you know, promote Irishness and then we'll talk about it then and I, you know, I'll explain to them all about like, all the hardships they went through and stuff like that, so, but they wouldn't really have sort of brought it up otherwise.

BH: Yeah, do you think they are indifferent to it or do you think they dislike aspects of the history of the Troubles?

MC: [pauses] No, I don't think they're indifferent, I think [pauses], I think, I don't think they know, I don't think they know the hardships of the Ir-, I think the way media has portrayed it, I don't think they necessarily, they, so without me explaining it to them I don't think would necessarily know the sort of the degree of the Troubles and what happened. I think they know that, they know sort of the Troubles happening, there's bombs, you know, IRA, you know, planting bombs, you know, bombs in England and lots of soldiers were sort of deported, not deported, what's the word, deplored, can't remember, anyway, they've been sort of, lots of soldiers were deployed, that's the word I'm looking for, deployed into Northern Ireland and, but yeah, I don't think they really [pauses], yeah, I, obviously, I think they probably, they kind of see the top surface of it all, I think.

BH: Sure, what about your husband then? Do you talk to your husband about Northern Ireland, you know, you growing up there and also your parents' experiences?

MC: Yeah, yeah.

BH: And what does he say about it?

MC: Yeah, he's very supportive and sort of, yeah, he's supportive and listens and, you know, yeah, he's, he's on, on, onside, you know [laughs].

BH: Yeah, were you still in Manchester at the time when the 1996 bomb went off in the Arndale?

MC: Yes, I was in Manchester then, yeah.

BH: You were, yeah, do you have any memories of that event?

MC: Yeah, I do actually. So my mum, we were in our house and mum goes Jesus, that's a bomb [laughs], and **[00:40:00]** we were like, mum, how can you even tell it's a bomb, and she was like, I know the sound of a bomb and, yeah, it was a bomb.

BH: Yeah.

MC: Yeah, no, I remember that.

BH: Do you remember any kind of like, reaction after, anything like that?

MC: I think I was a bit confused by it all, to be honest, because I didn't really under-, yeah, I don't really understand why the IRA were bombing England sort of thing, I didn't really, it was a bit confusing because, I don't know, I don't know if I should say this, but I felt like the IRA in my family were like, yes, I know they're a terrorist group, so that's, now I look back and I know that was terrorism, but it, obviously they were polit-, it was a political thing and they played a really important role in sort of trying to resolve the Troubles really, and helping the Catholics, but obviously they did some horrendous stuff which you just can't, you know, justify, but I guess, I was only a child, but in my head from what I'd heard I kind of thought the IRA were meant to be good, and then they bombed Manchester, so yeah, it was a bit kind of confusing.

BH: Yeah, so that sounds like that's another kind of–

MC: Conflict.

BH: Another conflict or tension, yeah.

MC: And then the Omagh bombing as well, when did that happen, did that happen just a bit later, I might have been in Ireland then.

BH: Yeah, it was–

MC: Remember the Omagh bombing with all those kids, when was that?

BH: That was, that was actually after the peace process, wasn't it, started.

MC: Was it about two thousand and something?

BH: Yeah.

MC: Was that two thousand?

BH: Yeah, it was two thou-, it was after 1998 anyway, yeah, and it was a dissident group that did that.

MC: Yeah, it was [pauses], I kind of feel like, until the peace process the IRA sort of played their role in trying to get it, trying to get the peace process in order I suppose, and get their message heard, and then I guess after the process process it just basically, as you say, dissident groups who, you hear, I mean, even a couple of years ago there were still some bombs going off and things like that weren't there, by these like, groups claiming to be from the IRA.

BH: Yeah, the, every so often, I mean, like, even just last year or the year before, I mean, there have been deaths.

MC: Have there?

BH: Yeah, I mean, there's Lyra McKee was the really kind of famous one recently, who's a Northern Irish journalist, and there was a riot in, think it was the Creggan estate in Derry and basically she got shot by a dissident republican group and, yeah, there was a massive scandal around it and so on and, but yeah, every so often there's, you know, there'll be a–

MC: Is there, still like, really?

BH: Yeah, yeah, I mean, it's not supported by the wider, you know, republican movement and it's not supported by, you know, in Derry that time the Catholic community, you know, weren't behind, you know, they weren't behind this kind of thing, but yeah, yeah, there's still people who maintain that the struggle isn't over kind of thing, like.

MC: Yeah.

BH: Yeah, that's quite interesting what you said there about sort of the conflict over the meaning of the, over the IRA. Did you or your parents ever encounter any hostility in England in response to, for example, the activities of the IRA or simply being Irish during the period of the Troubles?

MC: I don't know, to be honest, they probably did I'm sure, but I can't remember if they did or, you know.

BH: Yeah, it wasn't something that was prominent presumably, it wasn't–

MC: No.

BH: Yeah, did you have any other in your school at St Monica's?

MC: No.

BH: Was there any other Irish people there or people from Northern Irish background?

MC: Yeah, yeah, yeah, from Irish backgrounds, second generation.

BH: And did they, you know, did you ever talk amongst yourselves about the Troubles or was it just something that it was happening, but you never really made reference to it?

MC: [pauses] Mmm [pauses], to be honest, I think actually most of the people in my year'd have been third-generation Irish, to be honest.

BH: Sure, yeah.

MC: So, and then I think my other sister, my sisters had some friends who are like, second generation and, but they were, their parents were Southern Irish, so I don't think, no, I don't really think it was something we chatted about really.

BH: I mean, you were in quite a unique position I suppose because, I mean, you had been schooled in Tyrone during the Troubles, had been learning Irish history and then you moved to Manchester. Did you ever feel that you wanted to talk about that or were you happy to leave it behind?

MC: What, the Troubles in Ireland?

BH: Yeah, when you came to England at fifteen and went to a new school, did you want to leave that behind or was it something that you actually wanted to converse about with–?

MC: Yeah, def-, yeah, definitely, yeah, I wanted to converse about it.

BH: Yeah, but there wasn't anybody to, who really, did you talk to other people about it whenever you were at school?

MC: Yeah.

BH: Yeah?

MC: Yeah, yeah.

BH: And what was their, what kind of conversations did you have?

MC: [pauses] Well, I mean, one of my best friends, he's one of my best friends actually, but he's very much, he was a Tory, he's always been a Tory, even back then and he's quite, you know, it's quite unusual for a Mancunian and he's very political as well, and so we used to have, we had a few debates and a few sort of heated discussions, even about like, Northern Ireland, and he'd say no, you're British, cos he's very much British, he's very much like, a Brexiteer kind of guy [laughs], and I was like, I was like, no, I'm not British, I'm Northern Irish, and he was like, no, you're British, so we used to have like, an argument about it, and

then like, a couple of years later I remember getting my passport and being like, [indecipherable] sorry, shouldn't swear, I was like, it's Great Britain and Northern Ireland, but I'm not bloody, I'm not Great British, I'm Northern Irish, you know, I was actually right, but yeah, just things like that, you know, you know, I'd have a, I'd have like, a, yeah, discussions with him about it and stuff like that.

BH: Right, so it sounds like then you did have quite political discussions then with people at school and things like that, friends and things, about Northern Ireland?

MC: Yeah, and I still do now, to be honest.

BH: Where do you work at now? You're a small business, is that what you said?

MC: Yeah, so me and my husband we're both dentists and we own our own practice.

BH: I was, well, my next question was going to be like, do you talk to your colleagues and things about this kind of stuff, but presumably you don't have a huge staff?

MC: No, I wouldn't normally, no, it's not something I really talk about with them, to be honest, but if I had a patient who was Irish, then again I'd have connection with them already, you know, I could, you know, I always can, and my husband always uses it, he's always like, you know my wife's, my wife's Irish, so, he'll always drop the bomb about Mary McAleese and be like, you know, her auntie is Mary McAleese and, you know, he'll always try and get in there with the Irish connections [laughs]. I'm like, Si, stop embarrassing me.

BH: I don't know whether there is one around, presumably there is, is there an Irish community in Surrey like, is there an Irish centre or anything like that?

MC: I don't know, to be honest.

BH: I was going to ask like, have you had any contact with kind of like, the official Irish community down there or–?

MC: No.

BH: But I know they don't have centres everywhere, you know, so there's maybe not one in Surrey.

MC: Yeah, I don't know, I've never looked, to be honest.

BH: What about religion then? So for a lot of people, obviously growing up in Northern Ireland, going to church was pretty important. Is that something that's still important to you or is it something which has become less important over the course of your life?

MC: It's definitely become less important.

BH: Yeah.

MC: Yeah, I don't go to church anymore, I don't really believe in Catholicism anyway, I don't really believe in the church's teachings or the church's sort of rules, to be honest.

BH: When did you arrive at that kind of view?

MC: I think probably during university.

BH: Right, okay.

MC: I think, to be honest with you, that's, I think with, with, I know how important it was to my parents because of the fact that, you know, politically, you know, you're either a Catholic or Protestant really, and so therefore religion to them is really important, you know, because they were sort of, I guess, discriminated because of it, but, and I think they made us go every Sunday, religiously until like, literally, excuse the, you know, excuse the pun, but they made us go every Sunday and then obviously I went to university and then I was going to go a few times at uni, in the first year, but then I just couldn't be bothered and then that was it, I never went really anymore. I'd go when I'd come back at Christmas and Easter and stuff like that, when I was at my parents' house, but then I guess like, just over the years I just sort of lost faith really.

BH: Sure, is your husband religious? Is he interested in religion?

MC: No.

BH: No, presumably that means then when you, as your child gets older, will you send him or her **[00:50:00]** to church or is it something that just won't be important?

MC: I won't send her to church, no, but I have, I have christened her–

BH: Right, okay.

MC: Which is interesting, cos we don't really, we felt really a bit awkward, to be honest, getting her christened, felt a bit like, we felt a bit sort of like, frauds really.

BH: Sure, yeah.

MC: But at the same time for me it's more culture, it's more culturally important to me that she's sort of Catholic. He's not really bothered, he, so, and he'd like to get them christened because it, we like the Christian ethos, and for me I wouldn't want my children to be baptised in a, it's stupid really cos there's no reason for it, but I'd want my children to be baptised Catholic rather than–

BH: In an Anglican church?

MC: Yeah, which is so silly really cos actually the Anglican church is actually way nicer over here and fun and welcoming, whereas the Catholic is really like, monotonous and really kind

of like, historical and just really not, and really boring, but yeah, it's more a cultural thing I think. I couldn't do it to my parents, do you know what I mean.

BH: Yeah.

MC: And, yeah, I think I would try and, I don't know, I mean, I'm not, I wouldn't be opposed like, I wouldn't be opposed to sending her to a state, sort of like, non-Catholic school, but if there's a good Catholic school in the area then I'd be happy to send her there.

BH: Sure, presumably there's quite a lot of stiff competition for places in a lot of these schools as well?

MC: Yeah, so I might have to start going to church soon [laughs].

BH: Well, this is it, you'll have to pick it up for a few months beforehand.

MC: [laughs] I know, oh God, I know.

BH: Do you–?

MC: Isn't that silly that I'm like, even though I'm not even religious, I'd rather get her christened Catholic?

BH: Yeah, I suppose there's such a thing as, you know, cultural Catholicism, which is not necessarily believing in the, believing in God or even having a belief in the theological views, but identify with something like a Catholic culture, and maybe some attachment to the church is part of that, you know.

MC: Yeah, yeah.

BH: What about Manchester then? Do you return much to Manchester these days?

MC: I used to go back like, every month, but, you know, I don't go back as, a, I stopped really going back obviously since I had a baby because it's just such a long journey for a baby like, with a baby in the car, and I think the problem is mum and dad have, are like, split up and they sold the family house sort of four years ago now, yeah, four years ago and, to be honest, as soon as they sold that family house I think that's when I lost almost my connection with Manchester–

BH: Mmm, I can understand that, yeah.

MC: Because that was the base gone now, so they've all moved on, so when I go up to Manchester now I visit my mum in her new house, and that isn't home anymore, and so I've kind of, Surrey's my home now, whereas before I was living like, around London like, Manchester's still my home, but now really I think Surrey's my home like, you know, I've got my family home now and I've got my husband and my daughter, and my parents come and see me now really because I've got the space for them and, you know, it's, and they're

retired and I'm working and, you know, I think, yeah, I think, I don't really go up, I go up, last time I was up in Manchester was, I mean, obviously we've had lockdown now, but probably I was in Manchester last Oct-, last October.

BH: Last October, right, yeah.

MC: Yeah.

BH: Yeah, would you have any friends still living in the Manchester area like, school friends?

MC: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, I'm still in touch with them.

BH: What about connections then with like, the Irish community and things in Manchester? Would you ever, for example, go to an event in the Irish centre or anything like that?

MC: No.

BH: No, I know your mum's quite involved in the Irish centre.

MC: Yeah, she is, yeah.

BH: Yeah, what do you think the importance of that centre is to her by the way? Why do you think she retains kind of a connection to it?

MC: Because I think it's so important for her, I think she doesn't feel necessarily a connection with other English people and so this is her connection, this is her home from home sort of thing, and this is her sort of, yeah, it's her connection to Ireland where she can meet with people who've had a similar journey and experienced similar things in Ireland and moved over for similar reasons.

BH: Yeah, do you think would she ever move back to somewhere in Northern Ireland at any stage?

MC: I think she wants to, I don't think she will. You know, it's, I, like, you know, when she, when her and my dad split up, I honestly was like, mum, like, you've wanted to go back to Ireland for so long, I was like, this is your, this is a new start now, this is your opportunity to go back, you know, to Ireland, and she didn't go and it was surprising that because that was the one time to go, you know, you're starting afresh, but I guess now she's got grandkids here and that's the pull, you know.

BH: Yeah, that's something that people often say, you know, they say what becomes ultimately important is your connection to family members, so yeah, grandchildren would be something that would anchor her here I guess.

MC: Yeah.

BH: Yeah, what about yourself? Would you ever think of moving to Ireland?

MC: No.

BH: No.

MC: No.

BH: No, and would that be purely because it, you know, your husband and so on would have very little interest in that or is that you personally, you wouldn't have an interest in that?

MC: Both really, I think, I don't know, I think I really enjoy living near London. I love the cosmopolitan, I love the sort of, the energy, the busyness like, there's loads going on, all the art, the culture, the great restaurants and bars and I love all that and like, all the like, you know, it's like, London's like, such an international city and there's always like, even in dentistry-wise, you know, there's like, conferences and training courses and, you know, like, yeah, I think it's such a great city and I just don't think I'd ever want to, I just want to be kind of near it, but I can jump on a train here and I'm into London in twenty-five minutes.

BH: Sure, yeah.

MC: So I love that side of things.

BH: Something that I haven't asked you about is the Northern Ireland peace process, cos obviously when you were I suppose becoming an adult and going to university and kind of reaching that age, political, the political situation in Northern Ireland was changing, there was a peace process and so on. Do you have any memories of that? Was it something that interested you?

MC: Yeah, yeah, I do, yeah, I do remember it all happening. I just remember the feeling of like, how important it was in the household, you know, mum and dad sort of watching the news eagerly, you know, eagerly, we were in, I think we were in Manchester, but was it, when was it, was it, when was the peace process?

BH: Well, they signed the Good Friday Agreement–

MC: It was the Good Friday, yeah.

BH: Yeah, that was 1998, but I suppose the negotiations were kind of leading up to that maybe from about 1994, 1995, so I suppose most of that, the middle part of that decade, the 1990s I suppose was the origins of the peace process.

MC: Yeah, so I was quite young then, you know, I was sort of, from '87 obviously to '97, obviously that's from zero to ten, so I was quite young when all that was going on, but I do, I do remember it being a really important thing in our household, an important sort of matter.

BH: Why did your parents think it was so important? What where their views about it?

MC: I think it was just, yeah, I think, I think they were just really relieved and happy that there could be peace and harmony really I guess. They still had a lot of family living there–

BH: Yeah, sure, yeah.

MC: And like, they love it, they love Northern Ireland so much that they, you know, they don't want it to be sort of under strain and conflict.

BH: Sure, was that something that worried them, the fact that they did have family living back there, when this was all happening?

MC: Yeah, I think so.

BH: What about your dad then? You said your parents spit up at some point. Does he live in Manchester now or is he somewhere else?

MC: Yeah, he's still in Manchester.

BH: He's in Manchester, and does he retain connections with home to the same extent as your mum?

MC: No, not to the same extent I wouldn't say, but yeah, pretty strong.

BH: Yeah, and would he ever think of moving back?

MC: I don't think so. I mean, he has got, now he's got, he's got two brothers there now, but I wouldn't say, no, no, he wouldn't do, again, kids and grandkids are all in England, to be honest.

BH: Sure, yeah, cos yeah, it's something I haven't asked you, do you have brothers and sisters yourself?

MC: Yeah, I've got two sisters and a brother.

BH: Right, and do they all have children as well or are they–?

MC: Yeah, we all have children now, yeah, but my brother lives in Australia.

BH: Right. **[01:00:00]**

MC: He moved over there, and my sister, one of my sisters lives in Essex, I think she's volunteered herself for this as well.

BH: Yeah, I think she has, yeah.

MC: Yeah, and then my other sister lives in Manchester. There's only one child in Manchester, so it's a bit sort of, it's a bit an issue, to be honest, but–

BH: Sure, so the bulk of the grandchildren then are up, are in the southern part of England then?

MC: Yeah, cos my sister that lives in Manchester's got two boys and then there's three girls down here, at the moment.

BH: So I wonder would that ever prompt your mum or your dad to think of moving a bit further south or are they, are they anchored in Manchester?

MC: They almost, you know, it's so funny, they almost feel like, so it was always sort of Northern Ireland versus England sort of thing, and now it's almost Manchester versus the south of England.

BH: Isn't that interesting, yeah.

MC: South of England's now England and Manchester's almost like, Ireland now.

BH: Sure, yeah.

MC: It's like the enemy cos it's taken two of the kids away.

BH: [laughs] Yeah, yeah, I think that's–

MC: It used to be, it used to be, you know, if it was an English murderer and an Irish murderer then the Irish murderer would be better, do you know, it was that kind of thing.

BH: Yeah, yeah.

MC: And now it's like, if there's a Mancunian murderer and a southern murderer, the Mancunian murderer is better.

BH: Southern one's worse, like [laughs].

MC: Yeah, exactly, so funny.

BH: And how do your siblings think about all this stuff, about Irishness and about the Troubles? Were they kind of personally invested in sort of the politics of the Troubles or was it something that kind of wasn't really on their radar?

MC: No, I think they all kind of feel the same really. I mean, obviously they would have had a different childhood experience to some extent because between me and my two older sisters there's eight and ten years difference, and so they would have lived in the Bahamas for longer, they also lived in Ireland for a few years before they moved to the Bahamas, so that would've been in the early eighties, and so their experience would be different, but I

think because we were all in the same household and, you know, all the family stories and family meals and all the sort of news watching and discussions we've had, you know, they all kind of feel the same really, and they also feel the same tension about being, you know, who are they, you know.

BH: Exactly, yeah, and you said that like, your brother, the one who went to Australia, he had an even more difficult experience at school in Northern Ireland than, than even you did.

MC: Yeah.

BH: Yeah, and is that something that would've shaped his identity as he was growing up?

MC: Yeah, I think so, yeah, I think he found, yeah, yeah, definitely.

BH: Yeah, so I'm just going to get towards sort of the last section of questions now, and these are kind of more general, open-ended kind of questions. So firstly, do you think the Troubles has had an impact on your life and if so in what way?

MC: [pauses] Has it had an impact on my life, yeah, I think so, I think, I think the impact it had on my parents translates to their kids, you know, their insecurities, their fears, you know, I think that passes on through generations, you know.

BH: Sure, do you think your insecurities and fears are identical to theirs or do you think that you have some slightly different ones from being second generation?

MC: I think I have slightly different ones because I feel like, I feel like, you know, my parents, culturally, they find it difficult to talk about their emotions in a sort of logical, clear, sort of calm way, you know, I think it's a very much an Irish thing, you know, you know, you can't really talk about your feelings so much, you kind of have to hold it in, you know, carry on, be strong sort of thing and, you know, or if they are feeling insecure about something they wouldn't say oh I'm feeling really worried about, you know, they wouldn't really be vocal about it, and so even though I think those insecurities have passed on to us, I feel like we are more vocal about it and we can, we can be more in control of our destiny and try and break that sort of cycle.

BH: Sure, right, yeah. What about that idea that you mentioned at the very start, that you were torn because of having kind of competing identifications with two identities or two cultures? Is that something which is kind of distinctive about second-generation anxieties, which is maybe different from being a first-generation migrant?

MC: [pauses] Sorry, can you repeat the question?

BH: Just following on from that idea that the anxieties and fears of your parents are to some extent transmitted to you and your siblings, the idea that maybe your anxieties are sometimes slightly different as well, and the example you gave was about the way you manage and express your emotions, for example. I was wondering if another difference related to that idea of being sort of torn between identities, in a sense almost having two

identities and having to try and switch between them to some extent. Is that something which is particular to a second-generation experience, I was wondering?

MC: I think it is, yeah, I think it is.

BH: Yeah, would your parents be aware of that particularity? Would they understand that kind of, that torn aspect that you referred to?

MC: I think they do, I think they do, sorry, I've got [laughs; interrupted by young child]. I think, yeah, I think, I don't know, I think, I think they may be sort of subconsciously aware of it, although I, I don't know, I don't know actually, but I think maybe they, I think they [interrupted by child shrieking], I think maybe, sorry [indecipherable], I, I don't know, I think actually they, I don't think, I think, I don't know what their words are, I think may-, I think they think we feel English, which I think saddens them.

BH: Is that right?

MC: Yeah, I think that.

BH: Yeah, cos I used to think it would be the other way round, they would have assumed that you're Irish, but you reckon they actually think that you're more English, yeah?

MC: Yeah, I do actually.

BH: Have you ever spoke to them about that, the way you described it to me at the start of the interview, about being torn? Have you ever talked about that to either of them?

MC: I probably have, I probably have, but I can't really remember like, a real distinct, I've spoken to my siblings about it, I probably have, I think I probably have, but nothing sort of distinct.

BH: Sure, in terms of what it means to be Irish and that Irish side of your identity, do you think your understanding of what Irishness means is different from your parents or do you think it's the same?

MC: I think it's the same.

BH: The same. If somebody were to ask you about what Irishness means or what it is to be Irish, what kind of things would you associate with it?

MC: I'd say like, the craic [laughs], a good craic, I'd say, ooh, don't know, about drinking, probably quite bad, I think going to church, I'm thinking of a chaotic home like, kids everywhere like, this, you know, just, I think of singing–

BH: Singing?

MC: And like, storytell-, singing and storytelling and, you know, that sort of thing.

BH: What would you say about your identity now? Would you say, would you talk about being English, about being Irish, or Northern Irish, or some combination of all of those?

MC: How do I feel about it now?

BH: Yeah, what would, how, if you were asked about, how would you describe your identity now?

MC: Yeah, I would, yeah, I'd struggle to answer it and I'd say I'm an Irish Mancunian, is what I would say, but I can't, I couldn't say, I couldn't just, I couldn't just say British and I couldn't just say Irish.

BH: Sure, yeah, so that sounds like quite a complex identity then.

MC: Yeah, confused [laughs].

BH: [laughs] What about the term Northern Irish then? What does, does that have a significance? **[01:10:00]**

MC: Yeah, because I do feel like my identity is Northern Irish, more than just Ireland.

BH: And what's distinctive about that particular designation then, Northern Irish?

MC: I think it's the hardship that Northern Ireland went through during the Troubles.

BH: Right, yeah. Now I think I have asked most of my questions, now is there anything else that you want to add? For example, is there anything which I haven't asked about, but which maybe you think's important and want to talk about?

MC: No, I think that's all, no.

BH: Yeah, listen, thanks very much again Meghan for agreeing to do this.

MC: No worries.

BH: I can hear from the background noise there that, that your hands are full [laughs], so I really do appreciate you taking your time out to do this.

MC: No problem.

BH: Yeah, great, I hope you have a good weekend.

MC: You too.

BH: And maybe I'll get speaking to your sister as well at some stage.

MC: Yeah [further interruption by young child], oh dear [laughs]. Thank you so much for your time.

BH: Not at all, not at all Meghan.

MC: Alright Barry.

BH: Alright, see you again now.

MC: Okay, have a good weekend, take care.

BH: Take care now, bye bye.

MC: Bye, bye.

BH: Bye bye.

INTERVIEW ENDS