

PHILIP

The Open University is a bit like yourself maybe in that it has multiple identities across the different nations of the UK and Ireland. So I just wanted somebody who works and lives in different parts of the UK, how do you see yourself?

PATRICK

I mean for me it sits really easy for me. I'm Irish and Northern Irish. Northern Ireland is part of the UK so that means there's a part of me that's British.

PHILIP

So in terms of multiple identities are you quite happy to be both Irish and Northern Irish?

PATRICK

Absolutely.

PHILIP

And would you say that equally here in Northern Ireland or in Dublin or in England?

PATRICK

I remember being in London, I've lived in London for a long time and seeing someone like Ian Paisley on the news. And friends of mine, well-educated friends, saying can you turn that Irish guy off? And you'd say well clearly you're not familiar with the entire raison d'être of Dr Paisley's work is that he is not Irish and no part of him is.

PHILIP

Why do you think Northern Ireland is so poorly understood in England?

PATRICK

I think it's kind of forgotten. You know if you look at the Brexit debate, the amount of times that you heard, well we're a proud island nation, but they don't include Northern Ireland so that's quite weird. And even silly things like if you look at the bumper stickers for cars that are recently you know about to change, it's GB. So it's not GB and NI. So I find it weird when people talk about the United Kingdom because it doesn't seem like a very united place and it never really has.

PHILIP

Yeah.

PHILIP

There was, I think, a well quoted poll before the Brexit debate that's saying even if the cost of Brexit was Scottish independence and reunification of Ireland, would English voters still be up for it? And the answer was yes, they were, which shows how that sort of fractured nature of the UK is still changing and moving as well. And even in terms of different forms of nationality. Apparently England won the World Cup in 1966.

PATRICK

I'd never heard that.

PHILIP

Wasn't mentioned.

PATRICK

No.

PHILIP

If you see the footage of it, they're all flying Union Jacks right, Union flags. Yet if you look at since about Euro 96 we're obviously filming in the midst of the Euros it's, the flag is St George. English nationalism or the perception of that is different.

PATRICK

I think what is really good is that for a generation of English people seeing a young black England football team taking the knee and that flag of St George actually being waved supporting them, I think that's a sea change. And I think that if you look at English nationalism, English nationalism is, is unique within the Union because Scottish nationalism has a purpose, which is to break up the Union. Northern Ireland nationalism has a purpose, which is to break up that Union. If you look at Welsh nationalism, they also want to break up the Union. English nationalism is much more tied up in the Empire than other nationalisms within the UK.

PHILIP

You are making a programme about Northern Ireland being 100 years old. Northern Ireland has changed an awful lot in the last few years, is identity in place fixed?

PATRICK

I don't think it is. You know I think, you know I think when it comes to identity and place, I think if you look at Northern Ireland you would have a lot more people who would say they're nationalists, who would also say a part of them is Northern Irish. That's a change and by definition that also means that they're British and I think that there are more Unionists that realise because they're living on the island of Ireland that there is a part of them that is an Irish Unionist. So I can see the ties of identity being loosened a little bit here.

PHILIP

So UK is always changing, the only thing that is constant is change?

PATRICK

Yeah, I think the UK is changing.

So what looked like a very small reform at the time, a very modest and perhaps unambitious reform, to just remove the hereditary peers, actually fundamentally changed the institution. But to many people on the outside it still looks the same.