CONDITIONS OF PEACE

Dublin (ROI) • Donegal (ROI), 16/03/2020
Eugene McElroy (62)
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Transcription: Tanja Jurić

Dorone: Eugene, is that OK for record this conversation?
Eugene: Yeah, I don't think there's any problem, I'll try not to say anything too controversial
Noa: Please do, please do.

D: Ok, so, because this is a project that kinda crosses different countries and your interview is gonna be used as part of a database first for an artist to use as in an artwork and also for research, we just need you to state your name and say that you agree for this recording to take place.
E: My name is Eugene McElroy and I agree to this recording.

D: Thank you very much, Eugene. So, how about we just start straight away. Perhaps you can tell us a bit about your age, your education.
E: Yeah, well, I was born in 1958 which will leave me 62 years in October. I'm born in Letterkenny in County Donegal, went to school, primary school and secondary school and also to third level college here in Letterkenny. So, I did Leaving Cert and then I did a Level 5, we call Level 5 Certificate in Industrial Engineering which is you probably are familiar with, it's more about time and motion and methods study and ways of working. So, that was my education and then went over to the health service which was unrelated to the qualification. I did a further course a number years later, it'd be a Level 6 National Diploma in Healthcare Management and there was a lot of continuous education in terms of in-house courses and seminars and training so that's... that's it if that's suffice?

D: That's great. And you said that you did work in the HSE as part of it?
E: I worked in the HSE for 41 years, I retired in October 2018. I initially started, believe it or not, on a building site, working, building a hospital and from that I was laboring and I ended up going into office administration work. I then did the usual interviews and was made permanent and then I had several promotions to the, through the management system and when I retired, I had, my last post was I was business manager for disability services in County Donegal. I also had for a number of years a dual responsibility in that I was business manager for mental health services within County Donegal as well.

D: That's very interesting.
E: So, that would have covered the total annual financial outlay in respect of the services, when I left was about 43 million Euro per year and there was a staff whole time equivalent of about 560 staff.

D: Wow. And you were managing them?
E: Yeah, well, I was part of a team, I was responsible for the financial, all financial aspects and supporting all the senior management in terms of their day to day delivery of services. I also

did some cross-border EU funded projects over the years as well, mainly in the field of disabilities.

D: That's really interesting.
N: Cross-border with who?
E: There were cross-border EU funded initiatives, you know, Interregs fundings, we would have been part of…

N: Yeah, but with which countries?
E: Sorry?

N: With which countries?
E: Sorry, we worked with mainly Northern Ireland because of our close proximity to the border. We, we did cross-border funded projects in terms of development, developing services for people with disabilities.

D: Excellent. And, so, you mentioned you live in Donegal and were you born in Donegal?
E: I live in Letterkenny, Donegal, it's approximately 20 km from, say Strabane in Northern Ireland and 30 km from Derry or Londonderry as people call it.

D: And were you born there?
E: Born here yes, born in Letterkenny, born at home and… Yeah, lived, but I was for three years, I worked in the head office of the local health authority which was in Manorhamilton in County Leitrim. Again, very very close to the border as well, so I've spent my whole life living in this area.

D: Yeah, wonderful. And did your, so, your family is also from there, just to be clear.
E: Yeah. My, well, yeah, originally like my dad would have been born in County Monaghan and my mother in County Mayo and they both met in Letterkenny. My dad moved to Letterkenny in 1934 as a child and then my mother came to Letterkenny in 1951 to work and they married and had their children here in Letterkenny.

D: Ok. So, you mentioned that you are retired now.
E: I am retired now for about 16 months.

D: Are you enjoying it?
E: I'm loving the freedom, I don't have to think as much as I used to, it's great.

D: And what would you say is your living standard and perspective today? I mean, has it gone up or down relating to your parents and grandparents?
E: Oh, well, very much. Like anybody of my generation, I was born in the late '50s so, my parents, my father was the sole breadwinner, he had eight children, my mother worked at home. Nowadays, I find that, I have three children of my own and the standard of living, the accommodation, the house that I was able to build and provide for my family is significantly above what, say my parents were able to and that they came from my… The generational change between

what my parents experienced and what I experience is significantly different you know, we have so many modern conveniences. I was able to earn, my earning potential was significantly above people like my father who was a very gifted craftsman and electrician, he could fix anything but, you know, so the change between what my parents were able to earn and the services, what they were able to provide compared to nowadays is significantly different.

N: And how do you regard the prospects of your children?
E: Well, I'm hopeful that sort of, that the benefits that I have seen will continue for them. In terms of future just given the day of your only, or the crisis facing the whole world, it will be interesting to see, but my children adhere standards of education that I didn't simply because, when I was doing my Leaving Cert for example only people that were quite well off could afford to send their children to university so even if you had the ability it wouldn't always guarantee that you would get there. Thankfully, well, two of my children went to university and my third child is currently in a third level local college as well, so they've all had an opportunity that perhaps not all of us would have had, you know been able to avail us through financial circumstances as much as anything.

D: Ok. So, what would be then the main difficulty you encounter today?
E: Well, I suppose to me, it's very much just the current world climate, you know, the succession of recessions. Then you have the, particularly now at the moment, this worldwide health scare as a big challenge for us all. You know, I had looked forward to a nice, quiet, easy retirement. All of a sudden, I'm told, well, you're 60+, now you're at risk of catching this and getting that, you know, so. I say that flippantly I'm not overly worried but I can see that there is a very, you know, we as a country and we as a world are facing a big challenge at the moment. And, hopefully with time and clinical experience and expertise and development of vaccines it will be dealt with. But other than that, my life is not bad, I have no great complains.

N: And how do you see… you working in the, so long in the health system, how do you see the preparedness of the health system to this kind of…
E: Well, you know, I have to be defensive, not defensive here but I think the health care system in Ireland is, it's a good system, it faces challenges as well like every other health care system. And, you know, I think people suddenly realized now what the effort that people on the ground who work at as they say the coal face of service provision, they work hard, they face an awful lot of significant challenges but we're all dependent on the wisdom of our governments and our health departments to ensure that, you know, that we are taking the correct direction, not only in cases like this current crisis but just in day-to-day service provision. Health as, health as a major major topic and it's always in the limelight here in Ireland anyway, because people's expectations and people's awareness of their entitlements have changed significantly. Years ago, you were glad just to get a bed or to see a doctor. Nowadays, we have expectations of where we want a world-class, we want the best of everything regardless of what it costs or availability, so that's a challenge for people delivering health care.

N: And what do you think…
E: You know, you have so many pressure groups now, like, you have advocates for older persons, advocates for people with disabilities, advocates for mental health and really, they're

all fighting for a share of the one cake and that, that gives rise to issues. I could talk too much maybe on health care, that there are other issues in relation to how it should be seamless for the patient, the patient should not have to worry if it's a primary care or a tertiary care or a secondary care system that they're in. All the patient wants is treatment and to get better. The politics and the pathways and the roots should not be of an issue to patients but unfortunately it is.

N: And, and why do you think there is this change in perception that, you know, 50 years ago people were happy to get the…
E: It's simply information modern technology, you know, from television to papers to internet. Nowadays, you know, as soon as somebody gets sick the first thing they're doing is they're reading, they're researching, they're googling, they're doing all of that. If you're an unwell person and you know there's a treatment out there you will want it regardless of where it is or its availability or its cost, you want to get better, your loved ones want to get better. Years ago, people didn't have that exposure to the knowledge regarding, you know, current best practice or developments, so they settled, they were happy to get treatment to start with and then they hoped it worked. Nowadays there is an expectation, you know that everything can be cured and people will want the best.

N: And do you think there is a change in relation to the way that the citizens or the expectations that the citizens have from the state?
E: Very much so. Like, you will hear now people saying, it is my right, I have a right, people are very well aware of their rights and entitlements under the Constitution, their rights and entitlements under various international agreements, you know people are very well informed in relation to what they are entitled to. Whether it can be delivered I think it's the other issue, you know, we would all like to be that no matter who you are or what you are if you have a medical issue it can and will be resolved to, you know, to satisfaction of the patient. Unfortunately, that isn't always the scope. You know, some treatments are very, very expensive, some treatments aren't available here you know, but people will always want, they will want to be treated and they will want the best treatment. I think it's a lot of things in life, we no longer accept what's presented to us, you know, whether it be in any aspect of your life, you know, we demand, we expect more than we did years ago.

N: So, now we go back to the questionnaire.
E: Yeah, sorry, sorry.

N: No, we were asking the question.
D: No, this is really interesting. We really appreciate you telling us all this. Don't feel for a second that you're talking too much or anything. Thank you, like, we really want to know these things.
E: Ok.

D: Ok, so back to the questionnaire. Which group of people would you most count on? So, let's say family or neighbors, peers, colleagues, friends et cetera.
E: Initially, I would count on family first of all then secondly, I would count on friends and colleagues that I would work with over the years. I suppose I having worked 40 years I built up

strong relationships with people and I would say that immediate family because family will always stand up and help but I also have a network of people that, particularly in healthcare that if I have any issues I can go to them. If people come to me and ask me questions because of my previous experience, I can go to my former colleagues and seek advice for myself and for others.

D: Sure, yeah.
E: So, yeah, so that would be the two in particular, immediate family and then friends and colleagues that I have a lifetime with.

D: Do you represent, sorry, do you represent and are you represented in your country and where you're living now?
E: No, no, no, I don't... In terms of we're all represented by our local politicians and party structures and all of that sort of thing, is that what you mean? I feel, I feel that I'm represented, I feel that if I have issues and that can be can be resolved, I know where to go to be it to state services or to public representatives.

D: Are there groups which you are engaged with?
E: At the moment, I would still have an association with a number of voluntary providers. When I was working as I said, it was mainly disability, the area of disability services and mental health services for the last 15 years or so. So, for example, now I'm the director of a charity that we provide mental health service courses here in Donegal and then I would also do some volunteering work with another voluntary group as well.

D: Wow, yeah. And are you politically engaged?
E: No, no, I'm very much, I have to be honest, I'm very much what they would call apolitical. I don't have strong preferences for any particular group.

D: That's fine. Should we go to the questions?
N: Yeah.
D: Ok.

N: This was just the intro, just to know a little bit of the background about yourself and now we will ask you more questions of opinion let's say.
E: Yeah, yeah.

D: Ok, so the first question, here we go. What does the word peace mean for you?
E: Peace?

D: Yeah.
E: Basically, I think peace is the absence of fear. You know, peace to me means that I am not aware of anything that might be a threat or a danger, I'm not afraid, if you put it into, say, political context here in Donegal during the Troubles and that when the paramilitary organizations were active, you were fearful of what could happen because innocent people as well as participants could be hurt, could destabilize the whole country, so to me peace is that

absence of fear. It's the, you know, the ability to enjoy life without having to worry about the actions of other people.

D: Ok, so let's expand on that. So, you mentioned the time of the Troubles and now we see, now there is no apparent troubles but do you think there is peace there?
E: If there are degrees of peace it is significantly improved now compared to say from 1969 right up until 1994. There is also, there is always the threat of the paramilitary organizations that refuse to engage or refuse to accept the peace process. I think there's a greater degree of peace and the peace as like freedom, for example, now years ago when we were, when I was younger and that, when we travelled into Northern Ireland you were aware, you had concerns, you didn't go at night through areas you didn't go to, all of that sort of thing. Nowadays, we're very much more comfortable in terms of crossing the border, going to places and that. So, it's the absence of that constant awareness that something could go wrong, does that make sense?

D: Absolutely, yeah.
E: So, I don't think we'll ever have the utopia if we're, you know, there will be total peace, I don't think that exists anywhere but I do, I do think that we live in, what I would class to be a peaceful society now.

D: And what is the sound of war and what is the sound of peace?
E: The sound of war to me apart from the… Well, it would be the sound of crying, the sound of grief, that's because that's what war does, it creates grief, it creates sadness, that's futile but that's the sound that I hear. The sound of peace to me would be people laughing, people happy, you know, an absence of bombs and deaths and that so that's the way I would see it.

D: Ok.
E: Does that answer the question?

D: Yeah, absolutely.
E: Ok.

D: Is peace a relation with oneself or is it between people or states?
E: It's all three really, I suppose, you know. You know, if I sit down sometimes, I think the things I should have done, things I could have done better, things I regret I did. You got to resolve that internally so, you know, if you're at peace with yourself I think it's, you know, if you're at peace with yourself you can be at peace with others. So, then you have, you know, the peace in the wider community that you live in, then you have the international element of that peace between nations, you know governments and that. So, but I very much do believe that we probably don't often ask ourselves are we at peace with ourselves. We should think of it more about, perhaps, maybe I'm just getting older, getting a bit more reflective on things.

D: I think it's a really interesting concept, peace with oneself and I think a few people have said that as well in our interviews.
E: Good, cause there's hope for us all if a few people think that.

D: Yeah, at least the people that we chose to speak to.
E: Ok, great.

D: In the current political situation what do you consider as a main split and polarization in regards to power?
E: Well, in the context of Ireland the big issue here is just that we have a political stalemate, just happens that, you know, your survey or your project had come at a very interesting time here in Ireland, where basically if you look at the last elections there, we had three predominant parties coming out, almost the same percentage. So, you have two of those, you have two of those parties which are go back to the War of Independence in the post uprising here in Ireland where Fine Gael and Fianna Fàil were formed and for the last 100 years and never the twain shall meet. All of a sudden then you have a third force, Sinn Féin coming from very political and military background into the mix, so, I mean, you know, as a nation we're, we're facing a very very uncertain time in terms of how we, you know, how a government can be formed. So, the political stalemate is gonna be very interesting in the next couple of months and I don't know how it's going to pan out. I do see rise of the Sinn Féin party, OK I personally would not be 100% happy with it because I still think they haven't shared all of their, should we say past, in terms of their, the way they would use military force maybe, I don't believe in military force at all, so, whereas with two other parties that seem to dislike each other, they're well distanced by a 100 years from any paramilitary or military activity which I think sits well with me.

N: And do you think that this new situation is a result of some kind of a social splitting in society?
E: Oh, absolutely, I think the Sinn Féin thought is based particularly on a reaction to what is believed to be, you know, the incompetence of the other two parties over successful sets of governments, so, I mean, it's a social uprising. I think a lot of people voted by way of an objection to the other two parties rather than support for Sinn Féin. So, I think if you had an election in a year's time again, perhaps the image, the level of support of it got would not be there because again there's legacy issues that have, that are still haunting Sinn Féin plus the fact that I don't think that they have the expertise or they haven't come forward with a, what do you call it, not a portfolio, a...
N: Manifesto.
E: Their plan, yeah. You know, that, that stands up to scrutiny so I don't think they have the expertise that they're talking about.

N: What is more interesting for me is what is the social split that caused people to rise up and protest, what I think...
E: Well, again there's a, here, there's often perceived that Fianna Fàil and Fine Gael are parties that favor the more wealthy. Like, if you look at the significant social issues in Ireland at the moment are the housing, health, education and the poor people that, you know, poor relative to what is perceived to be, a lot of people in Ireland they say — well, look, we're denied access to housing, we're denied access to healthcare, if you can pay for it, you'll get it, so I think that's the social split that I see. There's economic factors, the three main ones being education, health and surely housing.

N: And do you think that will have an impact on the peace situation?
E: Well, again, you know, behind all of this too is this this whole notion of the 32 County Ireland you know, and then the North, north of Ireland coming back in and again Sinn Féin, that would be significant in Sinn Féin's agenda as well. Now, personally, I don't think that's thought through either because from my limited knowledge the cost, the basic cost of supporting Northern Ireland in this current form would not be sustainable by the Irish people, the Irish government and Britain itself feels that there's a drain on it. So, you know, but again, if people that are influenced by previous paramilitary history get into power and that's what they want and they don't get it by fair means, you know, we don't know what to expect.

N: And how do you think Brexit impacted the whole situation?
E: Brexit has really thrown us batter into the situation in the North of Ireland, because apart from anything, the North of Ireland voted to remain. Of all the European countries affected by Brexit Ireland has, you know, has been more significantly impacted than anybody else because of this whole need for border controls and that wasn't thought through. To be honest with you, I don't really understand it but I know what's, it's a major major impact whereby, is there a virtual border, is there a real border, are we go back to being stopped going 20 miles up the road to visit people, you know, that area, I couldn't give a definitive opinion on because it's still confusing me.

N: There are two borders, one is the border between Ireland and Northern Ireland and then the one that Johnson invented now between Northern Ireland and Britain because the…
E: Yeah, the wet one, the one in the middle of the ocean is gonna to be an interesting one. You see, I do remember the practical side of us going across the border and all that it involved and the time and the effort and the smuggling and all that sort of carry on so, we can do without all of that, we want life to be simple.

N: What was, can you tell us a little bit more about that time and what was so traumatic about it? Except the violence but the border itself, the position.
E: The border itself was very disruptive, it brought… Like, if we were planning, if we were planning to go anywhere in Northern Ireland first thing you thought about was I wonder what the cue at the border is gonna be like, I wonder, you know, you had the economic side of it, the customs, so you do different custom regimes so, you know, you were stopped and your car was searched by customs officials then when the Troubles started you were, there was a military present and you were stopped and searched by soldiers and army and policemen carrying guns and stuff like that. Just as a wee aside one of my earliest memories, would be about August, we went on the bus, travelled into Derry or Strabane with my mother and you went in wearing a t-shirt and a pair of trousers and you come back out wearing a jumper, a coat, two pairs of trousers because clothes were lot cheaper in the North but she went in to get you your school clothes and you put them all on, you had to wore them hoping that the customs wouldn't notice that you… So, you know, smuggling food like butter was a big thing years ago, smuggling stuff and then out and all of that and but apart from that it was the, it was, you know, you allowed every journey, you allowed the extra time for the uncertainty. You had the two currencies, you had all sorts of practical implications. Even at the moment now, you know, if you go into the bank here in, or any bank and you ask for Sterling, they'll ask you is it for Northern Ireland or is it for the UK.

N: Really?
E: That's interesting one.

D: Why is that?
E: Because in England they won't take Northern Ireland Sterling.

N: Really?
E: Yeah.

N: So, what people from Northern Ireland do? They have to change currency when they're going to the…
E: Yeah, well, say for example, if I want to go into Northern Ireland to buy and I want to get Sterling in my bank they'll ask me, you know, do you want Northern Ireland or English. You know, in Northern Ireland they will take both by the way, they will take the Bank of England Sterling and they will take the Northern Ireland but in England they won't take the Northern Ireland Sterling.

N: So, what if somebody in Northern Ireland gets paid in Northern Irish Sterling, he has to go and change it if he wants to go to the…
E: Yeah, for cash purposes yeah. Yeah, if somebody in Northern Ireland, if somebody in Omagh or Strabane or somewhere was going to England they always have to make sure if they're carrying cash that it's Bank of England Sterling, not Northern Ireland Sterling.

N: Oh no, I'm gonna need the both.
E: Yeah, it's crazy.

D: I didn't know that, that's news, wow.
E: Oh, did you not know that?
Dorone and **N:** No.

N: I mean that's bizarre, not only that they have their own currency, they have two currencies at least.
E: But I think, I do believe now and I'm not a 100 percent sure is just that not everywhere in England will take Bank of Scotland either. You know, there's little anomalies still out there. You see, most people nowadays, you do your transactions by card and all of that but if you're actually carrying cold hard cash, you have to check what note's there.

D: Unbelievable.
N: It's bizarre.
E: You should check it out for if it's true.

N: Yeah, we will, don't worry.
D: That's amazing.
N: That's amazing yes. And how do you feel the Troubles and all the, not only the violence of the Troubles but the whole situation, you know with the border before the Good Friday

Agreement, how do you see it still playing out today in people's memories and in people behavior today and decisions today?
E: Well, decisions today… I don't think it's very fresh, it's 25 years ago since the Good Friday Agreement but I mean, anybody, say, over 40 years of age that would, you know, have very vivid memories of what went on and, I mean, I know what all surprised me was that people coming from further down the south of Ireland, we used to be afraid to go into the North of Ireland during the Troubles. We grew up with it, you knew it was there, you were wary, you knew where to go, what areas to go to, where not to go, you know, that sort of thing but I still think people can be influenced by that in border counties in particular, like I would be, I think a lot of Donegal people are, people that live along the border areas are more aware of the sectarian element of Northern Ireland, in other words, you would know where there, like if you go to Derry for example, you immediately, anybody you talk to in Letterkenny could tell you well, you know, the Waterside, the Fountain area are Protestant areas, the Bogside and the city center's Catholic areas and that so, you always had that awareness of it and that came from, you know, the whole history of it and then when the Troubles were there like you would know that there were certain towns that you drove through even if the flags weren't up, you knew this was a Protestant area, this was a Protestant town, a Catholic town, you know, that sort of thing and there was an awareness of it.

N: And do you think they're most sensitive also the, to the fragility of peace and would they fight for peace if somebody threatens it?
E: That is an interesting concept, fighting, fighting for peace, I think…

N: I don't think only that they take guns but the…
E: Sorry?

N: I'm saying that I'm not thinking just, fighting for peace is not just about guns, it's about protest or…
E: Oh, yeah. Well, I think what it started off as, like if you look at the very early days of the Troubles by understanding of it was this, a lot of positions were taken up as defensive positions initially so, if I think in terms of defending rather than physical aggression and then and then, you know, military aggression and that, so, yeah, look, I'm not an expert on Northern Ireland but I do know that, you know, there are still a lot of divisions in there. I think, you know, at a higher level, people acknowledge that but they say for the greater good and for our worldwide reputation in the world we have to be seen to be, you know, compromising as we both, we all know by compromise, you know, nobody's happy with compromise because you don't get everything you want but you have to compromise. So, I think there's a soft link, I think the number of people that would support, say, a more physical element has to belittle significantly, they're more hardcore and I would have always doubt of their intentions anyway because as we know nowadays rather the so called paramilitaries and that are nothing other than tongues and, you know, they're in that for the money and that rather than the ideas of any political ideas but I think people do, people do, would still defend their right, you know, rather than, you know, for peace, people would defend their right to have peace I think, yeah, they would march for it, they would support it.

N: Yes, that's very important. So, shall we go to the next question?
D: Yes, OK, so the next question. Do you practice peace in your own surroundings and do you see yourself individually, collectively or socially responsible for bringing or maintaining peace?
E: Yeah, I suppose we're blessed that where we live, both where my house is, where my town is, where my county is, you know, there is, it's a peaceful place to live and I think it's, you know, it's community effort. I think the majority of people that I would have meet in my day-to-day business or out and about or whatever you know, they like the quality of life we have now, they like the freedom we have of choice and that and I think they would like to maintain that as well. So, you know, in terms of just social attitudes and day-to-day people that I meet, you know, people want the best for themselves and for their children and that and, you know, they go out of their way not to disturb that peace and to protect it. You know, there's a lot of things like community watch areas here and things like that, so you watch out for your neighbors, your neighbors watch out for you, we respect each other's property and that.

D: Are there or were there institutions that are responsible for bringing or maintaining peace?
N: Like the state, is the state responsible, is it civil society, is it religious organization? Maybe trade union.
E: Well, I think it's a combination of all of those. I mean, you know, it's very easy to say it's the government responsible let's say but the government are simply representatives of the people. So, I mean, the government are in charge with it but they're charged on behalf of the people. Religious groups, given the unique sort of issue here in Ireland because it was significantly based on sectarianism that the church is involved in dominations. The church men had to make an effort as well and they have to promote and in some respects police it as well but at the end of the day it's society, it's each individual is responsible for, for peace and it's up to us to vote for public representatives that will ensure that peace.

N: And do you think that the fact that at one point, Ireland will at least consider the welfare state it did and did this contribute?
E: Sorry, could, I didn't quite understand that.

N: Did the fact that Ireland was practicing a welfare state is, did this contribute to peace, to bringing peace?
E: Well, again just for clarification, as opposed to say a communist type, situation or something like that is so yes, welfare to be is about need or the care of oneself, one's family, one's community and all of that and I think, you know, as a welfare state we were there to promote the well-being of everybody and as part of that obviously peace, peace in terms of people's mental peace, physical welfare and peace was very important. We grew out of the, you know, the history of the state and the occupation and all of that, people wanted to move away from that, wanted to self-govern, be responsible for, for its every one of its citizens and to nurture and protect them.

N: Ok.
D: Is peace a result of one's personal or generational historical experience such as war, deprivation, injustice, social conflicts?
N: Well, to put it more concretely, you know, do you feel that you value peace more than for instance your children or younger generations who didn't experience the...?

E: I think we do because I, like, I would have lived through a, you know, being close to or in proximity to where there was conflict, armed conflict, there was hostility, there was death, there was all of that. You know, I think the other thing too is this that because the developments and then information and then technology of, you know, what we've learned about previous wars and this is due to education and all of that, that we have a greater perhaps appreciation. My children miss out on the element of… they would know through education and all of that about, you know, the horrors of wars and all of that but they wouldn't have seen, say, what I would have seen where, when you were, say, travelling into Northern Ireland that's to say you were stopped by soldiers carrying guns, there was bomb scares, there were, you know, murders and close to the border here are individuals that I knew were involved in the Troubles and that. They don't experience that, so, you know, they're once removed from it, so we would, my generation would have had more for want of a better word practical experience of conflict.

N: And how much do your children or their generation know about the Troubles or the War of Independence or the Second World War?
E: Unless they take a very very personal interest in it, they get a very generic version of it that they get in schools as part of their education. You know, I could go down the town now and point out people that I know that were, say, in paramilitary organizations and stuff, they wouldn't have that experience. You know, I could tell stories of people that left Letterkenny that went away and fought in the Second World War. My father's granduncle died serving in the First World War for the British Army and stuff like that. They're quite removed, it's you know, they're removed significantly from all of that, which, by the way I think is not a bad thing. They still see the horrors of international war on television, Iraq's and all of that but, you know, in terms of what happened in next door here they don't have the same sort of level of exposure that we did.

N: And do you think that makes them more complacent in terms of peace?
E: I don't know, that's a very good question actually. We're not a very political family, we don't tend to talk about the history of politics here in this country. We do, you know, it's more about contemporary conflict, internationally rather than what happened as they say just down the road here for the last 40 years. They don't see like, I mean, they don't see the scars of a, you know, buildings that had been blown up or roads that were closed or border post because that's all gone now. They wouldn't remember that for as we would, we being my generation.

N: We will come back to it but let's go to the next question in the meantime.
D: Do people volunteer to go to war or is it a personal choice?
E: It's both, like I imagine my granduncle went to the First World War, my belief on that, even in the Second World War was this, people, particularly in the First World War, they went because of naivety, they thought it was a great adventure, they did it simply maybe because they had nothing at home, they had no money, they got paid to be a soldier, that sort of stuff. But then again you do have the people that are passionate, that will go and will fight because they believe in a cause so it can be a combination of both and then you also have the third one where you're pressed in to go whether you want or not conscription. But, yeah, there are a lot of people that would have, very, very, either very defensive beliefs whereby they feel it's the

right thing to do or the people that are so simply go, you know, and the minority, they would go along just to see what it's all about for want of a better word.

D: And who is profiting from war?
E: That's interesting because it depends on your motivation for going to war. Some people are profiting, people are profiting because of their religious beliefs. People are profiting internationally simply because their warlords and they want to control and dominate people and they want to amass fortunes or they want to amass, you know, control of people.

D: And how does that affect the postwar politics?
E: Sorry, could you say that again please?

D: Yeah, sorry, how does that affect the postwar politics?
E: It's an interesting one, I haven't thought that one through really, I mean, you know, some countries, I suppose are, depends on the motivation again, they give you, have say, some of these more militant Islamic states and that, you know, postwar politics is, their ultimate aim is to control and direct be it globally or nationally or internationally. That's, I don't know other than that.

N: Would you call the Troubles a war?
E: Would I call, sorry, what?

N: The Troubles, would you consider it a war?
E: Well, I don't know what the definition of war is.

N: Doesn't matter the official definition, for you?
E: Say, for example the IRA and the paramilitaries would have considered themselves to be at war, yet it was guerrilla warfare as opposed to the more sort of, you know the international conflicts which are generally face to face. The other side would claim it was a conflict. At the end of the day I am not so sure it matters what you would call it, the sadness was that people died, innocent people died, lot of people died, you know, so I don't know if there's a, what a full definition of war is.

N: Well, one of the aspects of war is usually that after the war new elites grow out of the war. Do you think there was a change in elites after the Troubles?
E: I don't think so. Maybe, you know, in terms of a, it was a conflict rather than a war because, I mean, Irish attitudes had to change but British attitudes had to change significantly as well. I don't think anything elites grew out of it all, it was more a need for both parties to recognize tradition, you see what happened in the North is far as I'm concerned was, it started off as social injustice, things about Catholics being denied the right to vote and the right to housing because you couldn't vote unless you owned a property and all of that, sadly then it deteriorated into a sectarian conflict. Like, I mean, back, back 50 years ago you're working class Protestant and you're working class Catholic, neither the two of them had much but what happened was is the social injustice that the Catholics brought forward. Then became contaminated with sectarianism and that as well and... So, therefore, I don't think it, probably in my opinion it wasn't a war, it was a conflict.

N: And how do people in the area, in the region view, how did they view it then and how do they view it now the IRA is, you know, because, for us looking from outside the IRA were freedom fighters and here we encounter a different attitude to it. So, I'm wondering how did people think about them.
E: Well, I think, you know very naively, when the social injustices were highlighted and the Catholics went marching, demanding their rights and that, they were attacked and they were beaten down so the IRA were seen to be here comes these, as you say, these freedom fighters that are gonna fight for our rights and they were gonna defend us. Now, defending is one thing, going on the offensive then is another thing and how you go about that. They started targeting, you know, mainland Britain, they started targeting civilians and then it got sectarian where they were shooting Protestants and then in turn Protestants were shooting Catholics so, I think during the course of it some hardline Republicans would always state that, you know, that IRA where freedom fighters. Other people who initially thought they were our saviors began to realize, well now they're not good either because of some of the other things that they were involved in. So, I think some people, traditional Republicans will always hold the IRA up as their saviors, other more, I suppose reasonable people would say hang on here now, to set out on one mission and to confirm which change direction they're after you know, and we wouldn't be as, shall we say in praise or as proud of them as we had been initially. It was a very, very dirty conflict. There were a lot of innocent civilians, there was a lot of targeting of people on both sides now and I'm again, not only I'm apolitical, I'm, you know, I don't think because I'm one religion that the other religion was wrong or anything like it, I think there was a lot of wrong on both sides, there was a lot of innocents that were hurt and a lot of people died that shouldn't never have died.

N: Yeah, what I'm trying to understand is how much today is there discourse about what happened and what kind of discourse it is, you know, public discourse.
E: Well, a lot of it's influenced at the moment by where Sinn Féin are. You know, they're rising popularity because there seem to be the political, they are the political wing of the IRA. So, I mean, you have these entrenched, it's like a lot of things in life, you have, take the analogy of football, you have people that are die hard Manchester United fans and no matter how good or how bad they are, they'll always be a fan and I often see that in politics and you know, especially the politics of the North and the religious divide in that, that you know, there are people that will never change their opinions, there are people that will soften their opinions perhaps and then there are the few that would say, yeah we got it wrong in some cases, getting it wrong being, you know, some of the atrocities and some of the attacks and stuff should never have happened.

N: Well, some people say you know, that if you really exam and do to really detailed investigation of what happened and commemorate and so on then you actually prevent the next conflict and some people say exactly the opposite that this commemoration just inflame the conflict, kind of continue it in some way and you actually have to look into the future and just forget what happened.
E: Yeah, I can appreciate that because, you take for example, now people would say that, the one that's universally celebrated in Ireland is the 1916 Rising and yet people would say the likes of Pearse, MacDonagh and count of those, they were terrorists as well but it, you know, it was, what happened there was that they, their actions formed what is now Ireland but, I

mean, in today's, in today's society there are other ways of doing business and that is through, you know, through negotiation and that. So, yeah, I take your point, like I do sometimes, I see people here if you're out in a pub at night and that and I see young fellows jumping up and singing IRA songs, stuff like that, they weren't even born with the peace process… so there's no practical experience of it you know.

N: Well, maybe because of that they're singing it.
E: Hello.

D: Sorry, we're just gonna, thinking, processing everything you said Eugene. Ok, so, let's continue. You mentioned that your family had two people, your granduncle who fought in a war and who else was it? You said your granduncle and someone else fought or was it just him?
E: Oh no, it was my great-uncle.

D: Great-uncle, sorry.
E: He was killed in the First World War yeah.

D: And did he ever tell you about the war?
N: He was killed in the First World War.
D: Sorry, not to you but rather to someone else.
E: He was killed, he was killed in a… But no, what I gather was he went solely for the adventure, his friend was going and he went with him. And that was coming it off, yeah.

N: And did anybody else from your family participate in the war during the Troubles?
E: No, not in the Troubles, no, that was, I think another far out relation was a major in the British Army in the First World War but there's no stories there, he must have just served his time and that you know so, but my father's granduncle that I would know of because I was able to find, eventually find where his grave is and all of that because of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission websites and that, so did a little bit of history into it.

N: And why were you interested to find out about it?
E: It was more just to do with family history or family histories are quite scatchy. You know, my, like for example, some of my father's relatives, we went off to America and my mother had a load of uncles and aunts who from the day they left, they were never heard of again and that, you know it was just a generational thing so I was trying to do a little bit of family research on it but I would just be interested in, my father had a very much interest in World War One and World War Two so I've read a few books over the years and that. Just, just interested in how very ordinary people did extraordinary things when they did end up in war situations.

N: And are there many, you know, is there institutions here or private collection of testimonies connected to the Troubles, do people collect testimonies, I mean, like, not people in terms of personal collection but are there projects from civil society or from public institutions collecting testimonies about the Troubles?
E: Well, you know, I've seen stuff here in Letterkenny, like there was a doctor here in Letterkenny who was a TD in the first Dáil and then his son, his son wrote about, books on

Donegal people that had gone away to fight in the First World War. There was an initiative a number of years ago by a local politician to have a tower built in, somewhere in mainland, either French or Belgian to Irish people that had fought in the World War and that, you know so, it's mainly around museums and the odd person that has particular interest in it that may have written books and that, there's a, yeah.

N: Yeah, yeah, you were saying?
E: So, that's mainly it, yeah.

N: And about the Troubles?
E: No, I haven't really seen that much, you know, there's nothing that I can immediately think of believe it or not, I presume in Derry now, there may be stuff in Derry but not here in the south of the border. You would have...

D: Do you think...?
E: Sorry, go ahead.

D: No, no, you go Eugene, what did you want to say?
E: I was gonna say, like you know, there are say for example, there are the number of sites around Donegal, like there's a place outside of Ballybofey called Drumboe where some men were executed during the War of Independence, sorry, the Civil War and that and you know, Republicans would meet there annually to commemorate them and that. So, there's a memory of people from that area really and then you would have the odd, you would have the odd monument individual members of the Republican movement perhaps that were killed in the Troubles in the North and that.

D: Yeah, bit like the murals up in Belfast I suppose.
E: Absolutely yeah and yet you would have some monuments as well and that as well but what they did tend to do here in Donegal is this to use historical sites to commemorate, say, members of IRA that fought during the Troubles, the recent Troubles so they would be commemorated at more traditional Republican sites that go back to the Rising and to the Civil War.

N: That's interesting. So, they made some kind of a continuing.
E: ...there was three men executed, they were known as the Drumboe Martyrs but when they, when they have the annual ceremony there, they would read the roll of honor of, say, the people that were killed in the North during the more recent Troubles.

N: So, they make some historical continuum of the, of kind of wars of liberations.
E: Absolutely, yeah.

D: Do you think peace has advanced the society we live in?
E: Well, I think it has to, you know, peace, the absence of trouble makes it easier for people to get on with their daily lives and to get on with developing, you know like, if you're, if you're gone back to whatever saying about years ago, we had to plan and allow for the time and the

trouble and the inconvenience and all of that. If you have, for want of a better word, the lack of peace, you're putting resources and time into that, they could be better spent in terms of developing society.

D: Which is exactly tied to I suppose to our next question which says is peace related to distribution or redistribution of wealth or ownership of property?
E: Well, very definitely, I think. You know, if we have peace then we can focus all our efforts, you know, be that resources, be there your own physical efforts, be it planning whatever can be focused for, you know, the betterment of society, the betterment of all civic, of all individuals, you're not tying up resources in terms of defending peace.

D: And do you know any historical examples of it?
E: Well, I suppose if you look here at the border when there was Troubles you had, you know, you had a lot of resources going into protection of the border areas, you know you had a lot of guards and army that were tied up on judice along the border there that there's no need for anymore, they can be redeployed and put to better use. So, it's redistribution there of resources, in peace times as well you can, you know, you have, you don't, sorry, you have the freedom then to develop goods and services and stuff like that because you don't, you don't have to worry about the fallout from, say bomb attacks or disruption to goods and services to transport and all of that so, I mean the resources are better used.

N: And did you see any, because you were working in the health system, did you see any change in the health system as a result of the Good Friday Agreement?
E: Well, that's, I don't know there is, I don't think the jury is out on that one like, I look upon this thing, you know, there's a lot of talk about the, you know an all Ireland healthcare system and if you look at, say particularly the likes of Donegal whereby we have to go for specialist services either down to Galway or you go to Dublin or whatever, whereas 20 miles down the road you have Altnagelvin, now I do know they have developed, obviously they are developing now a number of EU funded cross-border projects there where people can go into Derry rather than having to travel to Dublin and Galway and even practical stuff like, I know the Treatment Purchase Fund that the HSE setup whereby, you know, if you're on a waiting list for x amount of time and that you can then secure services outside of the state which is generally Northern Ireland so you can go into the private hospitals in Derry and that. You get your services done there and the HSE will refund you the costs so there has been that cross-border developments in relation to healthcare. I don't think it's probably come as far as it could have been now but as long as they keep working at it. I mean, it's some practical things, people from Donegal shouldn't have to, you know, why travel a 150 miles down to Galway, Dublin when you can go 20 miles to get the service you need across the border.

N: Exactly. And because you mentioned a few times this cross-border projects, how did they contribute and how did the joining the EU contribute to that?
E: Well, some of the projects that we were involved in was, it was sharing ideas and setting up, you know, setting up pilot service delivery things like we, all of the once I was involved in this where we set up a number of garden centers and these were for people with disabilities who had been trained in horticulture and they could learn new skills and they could, you

know, maybe even go out into sheltered employment and sell products and stuff like that. And this was what, what are the outcomes of that was is we got the funding to run them and set them up, eventually they had to become self-sustainable and they did but it was the sharing ideas and learning you know, we had some good ideas, there are counterparts in the North with some good ideas, we shared experiences you know and that's what we got out of it.

N: And do you think that there some relations were built that are now like really important in this or is it still tentative?
E: Yeah, absolutely, like I would have, unfortunately no longer but, like I would have kept in contact with the number of the colleagues cross-border and that and we were even at one stage, we were able to place people from, say Strabane, Lifford, I don't know if you're familiar with Lifford and Strabane, they're simply separated by the border, the river and the bridge and like, we were able to place people in services across there because we didn't have anything so, you know, similar on our side of the river and that, so individuals did benefit and contacts in terms of, one of my experiences would have been where in the case of disability sometimes we, I had to source very specialist residential placements and stuff like that that we didn't have in Ireland in the 26 counties and through contacts I would have made on the EU projects I was able to identify places that could provide it and then we could do service agreements with them and get services provided.

N: So, you think that the framework of the EU contributed to the peace, to the…
E: Yeah, that wouldn't have happened or wouldn't have happened if it easily hadn't not been for the EU framework and the fact that they provided Interreg funding whereby we could put in business proposals to secure funding and through that then you made the contacts. So, the legacy there after, after say the funding period ended that was the contacts we had made and the relationships we built up.

N: And did this project, the horticulture project succeed to become sustainable?
E: Yeah, there's a couple still in the North and we have one or two down here as well, yeah.

N: That's big achievement.
E: Yeah, well, small in terms of scale but big in terms of the achievement if you know what I mean.

N: Yeah.
D: Do you think Eugene a state can be run by a working-class person?
E: Wow, that is some question. You know, I don't see why not.

N: Good answer.
E: I really in some ways, I don't grasp the question as such because, I mean, the history would show that very significant changes worldwide were made by very ordinary people, you know… people who had the ability and the drive and the desire to change things.

N: No, because nowadays… Yes, now there is this kind of a, you know, idea that every time state goes into troubles then they make expert government or that only experts

can or that you can solve political problems with expertise.
E: No, I'm a great believer in the individual and the individual's ability and I don't, I don't consider academic qualifications to be the sign of intelligence at all and that's no disrespect to anybody but I mean, you know, you know the old Irish saying about common sense isn't so common, well, awful or not that's true too. You know, like I often think of, I dont know if you ever heard about general Giáp, North Vietnamese commander.

N: No.
E: Back in the... He started off as a farmer, no military training at all and he ended up commanding the North Korean forces that basically got the French out first in the 1950s and then the Americans out and he died there couple of years ago, lives a 103 but the bottom line was he had no military training, turned out to be one of the best military brains that ever was. So, I mean, you know there has been people like that it just rose up so, I think a working plan if the right working-class person came along, they could do whatever they want.

N: We have a few more questions, I hope you're not tired or if you want...
E: Here, OK, I just see Katey waved in the door at me, she's come up from Dublin so...

D: Oh, is she, say hi to her.
E: I'll catch up with her now, she's coming up for a couple of days but, yeah, I'm just gonna check something.

D: Ok.
E: My battery is still OK, yeah.

D: So, we'll continue a bit more.
E: Yeah.

D: What is solidarity for you? Is it practiced in your surroundings, is it a factor of production of peace?
E: Well, it is practiced in our surroundings because Irish culture you know, I believe in it anyway, I believe that if something goes wrong here my neighbors would help me, I would help my neighbors, communities, rally round, we bitching we give out about each other and we envy and all of that but when things get tough definitely people will rally and support each other for the common good you know, so I do believe in it.

N: Well, do you see it happening now with the Coronavirus?
E: Sorry, say it again please.

N: Do you see it happening now with the virus?
E: Yeah, well, apart from the odd but a panic buying but I do know that people now are starting to watch out for their neighbors, particularly the elderly and all of that. I, just to give you good example, I was at the doctor's last Wednesday morning and it's a big practice there might have been 40 patients there and for the half an hour that I was there nobody was coughing, there wasn't a cough because the people that had the coughs and the sniffles

stayed away cause that's what they were asked to do. It was the quietest waiting room I was ever in in my life. You know, I've seen, I've seen practical examples of it.

N: Yeah.
E: I was over there, the initial shock of what happened like, here on, say, for example Thursday town went mad, Friday it was busy, yesterday it was back to normal, people had copped on and said no, look, we need to think this through, think of ourselves but think of others as well.

D: That happened to us here too, I went shopping on Thursday and it was just mayhem. It was just, you know, a weekly shop and I really regret doing it.
E: I think everybody, everybody just had that knee-jerk reaction but yesterday or today now, even I know there's a lot of media stuff about pubs and that but I was downtown last night for a walk round and I could see there were people in pubs but there weren't crowds. For a Friday night and for the bank holiday weekend it was quiet, people were respectful of it.

D: How does wage labor bring you together with or separate you from other workers?
E: How does what?
D: Sorry.
N: How does wage labor, I mean not you personally but how do you see wage labor, you know, now, the question relates to the fact that now there is a lot of gig economy what is called, like zero hour contracts and how is that creating a conflict in society between those who have permanent jobs and those who have to work on zero hour contract?
E: I like, all my life I had a wage, I was lucky I always had a wage, I've never had to sign on for benefit, I've never had a zero hours contract, I can understand how it would create tensions because you know, I really don't have it, you suddenly realize that, you know, that people on zero hour contracts are exposed, you know, they're exposed to risks, they probably can't, you know, I'm not sure how it works in terms of their ability to gain mortgages, to get loans, finance, all of that sort of stuff. So, I mean, you know, it's the haves and haves-not again. If you're looking at the group of people who are... If you're on zero hour contract and you're looking at people who are waged, you see them as different. Yet, you know, they're not, they're workers, they happen to benefit from a better arrangement with their employers but I think it could be socially divisive, it has the potential to be.

N: And like, when you were working in the health system did it move to outsourcing or to hiring more zero hour...?
E: Well, they were moving to outsourcing alright. Now, to be honest with you, we could go a different route and I can talk to you for a half a day on what was wrong with that because it wasn't economically viable for a start off. Yet, the worker didn't benefit from it because the agency companies were charging premiums, they were non say VAT, all of that sort of stuff, so the cost per hour was, it was actually probably dearer than direct provision but that was, that was a mechanism to stop the head count going up in the public service which is another issue, going back to the fundamental of it is if you're somebody that's guaranteed 40 hours a week and you're somebody that has zero hour contract it does cause division because you know, you're both doing the same labour but inequalities just between the gender thing, you know, to be male and a female both doing the same work should be paid the same and it, you

know and if they're not it creates the division. So, if you have somebody that's guaranteed 40 hours a week and then somebody that isn't it is gonna create division, it's the haves and haves-not again but plus it also leads to, you know it's not simply about the zero hours because the number of hours you work determines the amount of income you have, the number of weeks you work depends on your, can potentially impact your social welfare pension based on the number of stamps that you're paying. So, you know, it's not simply the actual hours themselves, it has the impact on your lifestyle going forward.

N: And do you, did you experience any conflict, like any tensions, I don't think it was conflict but like…
E: You know, you would always get this thing of, you know, you have, like I was permanent pensionable and some of my mates who worked in the private sector used to say to me, you know, public service employees were always castigated because of their permanency and the fact that they're guaranteed pension. Now, I do honestly remember some of my friends during the so-called Celtic Tiger laughing at my wage compared to what they could make out in the private sector. You know, why would you be stuck in a public sector job there, that wage when you can be out here. Ten years later they were going we wish we had your job because of the permanency and that so, it causes, yeah, the dynamics, it causes a dynamic.

N: Yeah, that's very interesting.
D: I think we touched on the next question.
N: Yeah, we can skip that.
D: So, I'm gonna skip that. How does European peace relate to internal immigration?
E: European?
D: Peace.
E: Peace.
D: Yeah.
N: I mean, how does the, how did the fact that the, you know, that the EU allows for internal immigration quite freely, how is that perceived in Europe? Did you, do you have, I mean like, immigration from the EU in your area and the…
E: Yeah, we would be quite multicultural you know and that. The reverse of that obviously is this, I have a brother who's lived and worked as a permanent contract in Spain, he's been in Spain for the last 15 or 18 years. He had the freedom of choice, he, well, was likely influenced by meeting a female but at the same time he wanted to work in a different country, nice climate, all of that sort of thing and he was able to freely move, it was very, very simple for him. Here, even in Letterkenny and that, you know, you will meet a lot of people from Europe and I suppose in terms of the Boom times and that we, you know, we've seen where the construction industry brought over an awful lot of people, say, from Poland and that, experts and, you know, excellent at what they did and all of that helped to the development here. You know there was a shortage of skilled labor and stuff like that, so, the ease at which moved definitely did help.

D: And how does peace relate to relations with countries in other continents and immigration from there?
E: Well…

N: Outside the EU.
E: Sorry?
N: Outside the EU.
E: Outside of the EU well there, you know again, I have no personal experience but like watching the news and all of that and you know, you can see what's happening internationally with the flow of migrants and that and I suppose you know, there's lot of, say, for example right-wing people now that are highlighting issues in a lot of European countries, you know, particularly in the end of likes of Sweden and places like that and saying, you know, France and all of that and saying this is what immigration does and they're picturing a particular image of it. So, I'm not quite sure other than, you know that opening of borders and that, I don't have any particular issue with it except that perhaps it needs to be done in a more, not a more controlled way but, you know, it needs to be more structured and organized shall we say from outside of the EU in

D: And this is a bit different, this question but let's see your take on this. How does peace relate to climate change?
N: It's very actual.
E: Sorry, I just missed that…
N: You know, we want to ask it because climate change is such a… on the agenda today.
E: Yeah. Well, I mean, I'm not so sure much of how peace affects it but I mean, at the end of the day, you know the world, the climate is changing and we've got to address it and we've got to look at it. Sorry, I'm just, I'm lost on that one altogether, I haven't made the correlation at all between, say peace and climate change.

D: That's OK, we'll move on to the last one. Would you consider peace building a political endeavor?
E: It's, I suppose, let me see, I'm trying to put a, I'm trying to, it should be a political endeavor, we all want peace. Politics is one of the main ways, like again, you know, in the utopian society we wouldn't need it to be a political endeavor but that's not the way the world is. So, there has to be a focus on peace, there always has to be and if politics is the way to ensure peace then yes, it should be.

D: And who do you think is the political subject that can carry it?
E: The people.

N: Excellent answer.
E: People and their representatives on the basis that they would see it through for them. So, we have to elect politicians and governments that are committed to peace.

N: And why do you think, related to that, if there is let's say dissatisfaction from the two main parties, why there is no real new parties forming, why did they go back to Sinn Féin?
E: Well, Ireland has complicated complex people, we know our history in some ways isn't a hundred years old, it's about 800 years old so it is. So, you know, what happened was a hundred years ago you had this breakthrough where we started to cut the ties with Britain, all of a sudden out of that then you had these two political parties we modelled through like

we did, like, I mean, society has changed a lot, people are more educated nowadays, people have more access to information and all of that so, I think this election will be one of the, you know, in terms of looking back historically it'll be the most significant say since the founding of the state and it is the time to change. The problem is, you know, Irish people, they grasp something very reluctant to change at times so they're....

N: So, they grabbed on to something...
E: You know, so, if your family voted Fianna Fáil and you voted Fianna Fáil you'll always do it and this is the legacy of it, it's very, very slowly changing but, I mean, substantially the country is still either mainly Fine Gael or Fianna Fáil and that's reflected in the fact that, you know, how many independents there are knocking about at the moment following the last election because people will grasp at little niche, political things but it'll take a while and to be honest with you I think what will happen next is that you'll see Fine Gael, Fianna Fáil and some sort of a, you know, rainbow coalition some of the independence, it'll not change significantly again. We're hard to change Irish people, we don't take change well.

D: That's wonderful Eugene, really appreciate your opinions, talking to us, this is a gold. a gold amount of information so we really really appreciate it.
E: I just hope so, I do tempt to ramble on a little bit.

N: Thank you for rambling on.
D: No, you don't ramble, I think you have a really significant information, especially for someone with your experience and growing up in Donegal.
N: We will do now a transcript of it and we will send it to you if you want to add or subtract something, we can always do this.
E: That's OK, that's no problem at all and I wish you well with your project, I think it's wonderful.

D: Thank you.
N: Can we ask you that if we have some other questions, we can call you again?
E: Yeah, why not, sure, yeah, that will be no bother at all.

N: Thank you very much.