M05: DAVID ANDERSON INTERVIEW SUMMARY

Interviewee: David Anderson
Interviewer: Dr Barry Hazley
Interview summarisers: Dr Jack Crangle and Prof Liam Harte
The interview was recorded as a single audio file with no section breaks

M05: David Anderson	**Start time: 00:00**	**Finish time: 01:38:07**	**Duration: 01:38:07**	**Brief description of content:**
00:00–09:59	Born in Newry, Co. Down in 1970, the second of three children. His father was an RUC policeman who rose to the rank of superintendent and his mother was a housewife. Recalls the family moving around NI a lot during his childhood. He had attended five different schools by the time they eventually settled in Waringstown, Co. Down. Football was his 'big passion' and he played for various school and amateur teams. Attended Presbyterian church from a young age, but was uneasy with its 'fire and brimstone' teachings. Recalls the unrelieved boredom of Sundays in 1980s NI.			
10:00–19:59	Admits to having no definite career aspirations when young. Depicts upbringing in the 'little Prod village' of Waringstown as 'pretty humdrum' and religiously segregated, with 'very limited' interaction with Catholics, which was 'very sad'. Recalls his early childhood in Bessbrook as the Troubles erupted and being forced to leave the town due to his father's job. States that the conflict 'completely shaped' his childhood, describing the 'abnormal normality' of his upbringing. Advised to lie about his father's profession and recalls security precautions his father took to avoid being targeted. Admits that the conflict bred a 'them and us' mentality: 'I'm ashamed to admit this that […] if it was someone, a republican or IRA was killed you'd be like yaay, you know, one of them bastards gone'.			
20:00–29:59	Recalls his father having to police a 'tinderbox situation' in Derry during the 1981 hunger strikes. Suggests NI people of his generation have 'sectarian DNA' which profoundly shapes their outlook and is 'the biggest tragedy'. Discusses his strong interest in history and criticises the sectarian partisanship in NI that denies people access to 'the full picture of Irish history'. Characterises his family as moderate unionists and underlines his father's vehement opposition to the Orange Order and radical loyalism: 'we understand them for the rabble rousers that they are'. Remembers the 'highly politicised' reception of the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement and how unionist protests encouraged 'rabble rousing', but says he was never tempted to become involved. Reveals his keen interested in GB politics from an early age.			
30:00–39:59	Notes that his parents instilled liberal values and rejected sectarian tribalism. Describes the gulf between expectation and reality revealed by his move to Liverpool to study in 1988, which disabused him of any illusions that he was joining his 'kindred spirits' in 'the motherland'. Claims that most English people 'don't give a toss' about NI and regard Ulster Protestants as 'nutcases'. Contends that there is a NI Irish identity that is distinct from British and Irish nationalities. Regrets that the pronounced partitionism of the 1980s, whereby NI and the ROI resembled 'two people […] standing with their backs to each other', deprived him of geographical and cultural knowledge of the ROI. Discusses his move to Liverpool and how the killing of two British Army corporals in Belfast in March 1988 underscored his decision to leave NI.			

40:00–49:59	Says that having an aunt and uncle in Liverpool eased his transition and lessened his homesickness, although his mother felt bereft, especially since his brother left for London at the same time. Recalls the excitement of starting university and meeting people from across the UK. Regards his move as defining in retrospect: 'my course then diverged and there was no coming back'. Enjoyed the freedom of 'being able to leave behind the baggage of your religion and not being defined by your religion', but became aware of the effects of class prejudice on interpersonal relations in England. Notes the irony of his meeting and marrying a Catholic, while observing the very different meanings that religious labels have in England: 'the way I reasoned at the time was it's alright, she's a Catholic cos her mum's French, so that's okay'. Recalls that there was 'quite a wee community' of NI students at Liverpool during his time there.
50:00–59:59	Reports experiencing no hostility or discrimination, even after IRA bombs in Warrington and Manchester in the 1990s. Recalls frequenting Irish bars in England, something he had never done in NI. Discusses dealing with Irish stereotypes and having his accent mocked. Notes that most English people he met neither understood nor wanted to understand the situation in NI. Praises the culture of mutual respect and acceptance among his student peers, but criticises Troops Out movement and socialists who appropriated the NI conflict without understanding it fully. Says that he has always visited NI regularly, for both work and leisure, and remains close to his family there. Remains attuned to political developments in NI, but has never joined any political organisation.
01:00:00–01:09:59	Discusses development of his career in sports journalism, including first post with the *Chester Chronicle* and working for the Press Association. Recalls pleasure he derived from the five years he spent covering matches involving NI football team. Voices his pride in his origins and his wish to portray NI 'in the best possible light'. Discusses settling in Frodsham, which has become 'the second home for me that I love'. Notes the difference it makes to his parents that his wife is an English Catholic: 'I know that would be a complete different scenario if we tried to move to Northern Ireland and bring our kids up there'. Regards his children as categorically English and voices his aversion to 'the plastic Paddy thing', whereby 'the children of the first generation are almost more Irish than the parents'.
01:10:00–01:19:59	Welcomes the changes engendered by the peace process and Belfast's growing prosperity and popularity as a tourist destination. Claims that moving to GB and travelling the world has broadened his perspective and given him a more balanced view of NI, which includes an awareness of how generational change presents an opportunity for entrenched prejudice to be 'bred out of people'. Believes that his migration freed him from constraints and enabled him to forge his own path: 'it was liberating to move to Britain and to be not defined by your religion, to be allowed to make friends with whoever you wanted'.
01:20:00–01:29:59	Recalls his sense of affinity with Scottish people when growing up in NI, which he attributes to the migrant links between the two countries. This co-existed with 'an anti-English sentiment […] which persists to this day', particularly in relation to sport, where 'the Celtic chip on the shoulder means you do take particular delight in seeing England' lose. Credits migration with facilitating his adventurous personality. Laments ongoing brain drain from NI, but acknowledges the personal benefits of his own move. Says that migration has altered his sense of national identity, enabling him to delight in all-Ireland sporting achievements, yet he still ponders the predicament of NI Protestants in GB, wondering where they belong.
01:30:00–01:38:07	Reiterates his view that there is a distinctive NI identity, one component of which is a reliance on dark humour as 'a coping mechanism' in the face of 'tragedy or

	bleakness'. Mentions the contrasting perceptions of his accent in NI and GB, explaining that he is sometimes 'accused' of being English in NI and mistaken for Scottish in England. Revisits the 'classic question' of belonging and offers a closing encapsulation of his relationship to his heritage: 'I suppose generally I like to think because my dad's from Coleraine and my mum's from Rathfriland, I like to claim the whole of Northern Ireland. […] I like to feel as if I'm sort of like, an unofficial representative for Northern Irish Tourist Board'.