



Special Topic: Place Exploration

How are queer spaces in Dublin used, experienced and understood: A case study of Dance to the Underground in Fibber Magee's.

Third Year Special Topic Research Project

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Abstract

This research explores how the queer community use, experience and understand queer spaces in Dublin by providing a case study of Dance to the Underground - a queer alternative drag show that is hosted monthly in the basement of Fibber Magee's. Seven semi-structured interviews were conducted along with the analysis of visual imagery to provide an overview of how the queer community negotiate this space. The key findings emphasised the need for queer space in the city as they provide the queer community with a sense of belonging, community and safety in a non-judgemental and accepting space. The space acts as a third place for the respondents in this research as the space encourages the expression and performance of alternative and queer identities, highlighting the importance of queer spaces in the city.

Chapter One: Introduction

“When you are in a place that everybody is queer then you don’t have to hide anything. You feel like you belong. You feel part of something. We are human beings. We want to belong. We want to share things. All the time. We need that. We need this connection.”

- Respondent G 2023

LGBTQ+ rights have come a long way which has led many people to believe that there is a new ‘homonormativity’ in western society (Hartless 2019). 77% of queer individuals in Ireland say that prejudice and intolerance has dropped in the country in the last five years (FRA 2020a:2). Browne (2007:77) found that some people believe that in western cities like Dublin, queer people can ‘be themselves’ in every aspect of social life. Recent milestones such as the legalisation of same-sex marriage, the passing of the Gender Recognition Act and the appointment of Ireland’s first openly gay Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, may contribute to this belief (McDermott 2022). However, there remains issues within Irish society in relation to acceptance of queerness.

59% of queer Irish people avoid holding hands with their same-sex partner, 38% feel discriminated against in at least one area of life, 37% have been harassed and 31% avoid certain locations for fear of being assaulted (FRA 2020a:2). Many queer people still feel the need to “conceal their identity to avoid discrimination, hate, or even violence” (FRA 2020b:7). In recent times, homophobic and transphobic assaults have been occurring regularly, such as the heart-breaking murders of Aidan Moffit and Michael Snee in Sligo (Linehan 2022). Thus, the need for queer spaces is still important and necessary, not only as safe and inclusive spaces for people to express queer identities, but also as spaces where people can socialise with like-minded individuals (Browne 2007). This research focuses on the importance of queer spaces.

The term queer “is a complex and often contested term” (Taylor 2013:194). In the context of this research, it is used to describe multiple sexual and gender identities such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, pansexual, genderqueer, intersex etc. For Taylor (2013:195), “queer becomes a resistant identity, in that it resists normalising and privileging certain identity criteria and enforcing rigid identity categories.”

In Dublin, there are a limited number of queer spaces. One individual interviewed by the Irish Independent suggests that “the lack of gay spaces has young people going into The George, where there’s people aged 18-60. That’s too broad” (Donohoe 2022). Thus, there is a need for more queer spaces in Dublin to allow for diversity in music, culture, interests and demographics. Research into queer spaces is important. Data on LGBTQ+ rights has been increasingly called for as it “provides policymakers and legislators with much needed evidence on progress made” (FRA 2020b:7), thus it can act as a catalyst for positive change. My research aims to show the importance of queer space in Dublin and research like this may someday aid in the expansion of queer space in the city. My research aims to give an understanding of how queer spaces are used, experienced and understood in Dublin by using the case study of Dance to the Underground, a monthly alternative queer event and drag show in Fibber Magees. Dance to the Underground caters towards a specific group of queer individuals who are interested in alternative music and subcultures – meaning it is the only place like it in the city (Fartukh 2022a). The research will examine how a sense of place is developed at the venue. It will also examine if people feel a sense of belonging here, if they feel they can express themselves and their identity and if they feel there is a community. The central themes for this research are place, third place, queer spaces, alternative music spaces, identity and community. The research used a qualitative approach and used visual methods and interviewing to gather the data.

This chapter provides an introduction to the importance of queer space and the importance of research into queer space. The next section will set the scene by describing Dance to the

Underground in more depth. Chapter two provides a review of the literature that is relevant to the themes of this research project. Chapter three provides an overview of the methodological approach of this research. Chapter four provides an analysis of the findings that arose from this research and compares them to the literature from chapter two. Chapter five will conclude the project by analysing the key findings and providing potential areas for future research.

1.1 Setting the Scene

Dance to the Underground is a self-titled “punk rock drag show” which occurs once a month in the basement of Fibber Magee’s in Dublin city (Fartukh 2022a). Fibber Magee’s is situated on Parnell Street, just off the top of O’Connell Street. It opened in 1979 and has since served as a bar for fans of alternative, rock and metal music. It is open seven days a week, with live bands playing every Thursday to Saturday. Throughout the week, there are events on in the basement such as live bands, DJ sets and, central to this research, Dance to the Underground (Fibber Magees n.d.).



Image One (Fartukh 2022b) - “If I wanna go to see drag, I wanna have my socks blown off” (Respondent B 2023).

Dance to the Underground began in November 2021. The space hosts a large range of artists such as drag queens, drag kings, live bands and 'kink performers'. Every month multiple performers take the stage – from well-established drag performers to drag artists who are new to the scene. There are 'open-calls' which give these new performers an opportunity to perform at the event. Many of these open-call artists perform their debut shows at Dance to the Underground. This space gives everyone a chance at performing on stage and thus involves the eventgoers in the performances. After the performances from the artists, the resident DJ's spin alternative, punk, rock and goth music until the end of the night. There are often photography exhibits and stalls selling handmade goods such as jewellery and clothing (Fartukh 2022a; Fartukh 2023a).

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This research examines the concept of place exploration in sociology by using a case study of Dance to the Underground – a monthly queer drag show and event in Fibber Magee’s in Dublin. The research aims to explore how Dance to the Underground is used, experienced and understood by the queer community. This chapter will provide an overview of the literature, theories and case studies from the existing sociological material relating to this topic. First, the literature review will provide an overview on the fundamentals of place followed by an overview of Oldenburg’s (1989) concept of ‘third place’. The remainder of the literature review will look at four themes relating to this research – queer spaces, alternative music space, identity and community. These themes all relate to the multi-layered concept of place exploration and will help to expand the reader’s understanding of place in sociology. This chapter will provide a framework which will be used to analyse the findings of the research in chapter four.

2.2 Place

Space is a term used to describe area, volume, dimensions and shape. Space, as a concept, may be of interest to mathematicians and engineers, however; space has little significance in sociology. Sociology instead is interested in the idea of place. For Gieryn (2000:465), “place is space filled up by people, practices, objects and representations”. Thus; places are spaces which are imbedded with meaning. They are interpreted, imagined, understood and felt by people. Place is so important because it forms the basis of our everyday lives. Everything that we do and have ever done is emplaced; thus, “place is everywhere” (Cresswell 2015:17) and every piece of sociological research involves place (Gieryn 2000).

For Gieryn (2000:464-465), place has three features. First, place has a geographic location – a place could be a room, a street, a city, a country etc; thus, emplacement occurs in a wide range. Second, places have material form – they contain things and are worked by people. Third, places are invested with meaning and value – the ability of people to identify, represent and interpret places is what makes them places and not spaces. These meanings are flexible for different people and groups. People imbed their own meanings and understandings into their interpretation of places; thus, places are endlessly made. They are constantly created and recreated, and their meanings can change over time.

People can turn spaces into places through the process of ‘place-making’. Benson and Jackson (2012:794) refer to this as “doing” or “performing” place. Place-making shapes and constructs a place through practices such as imagination, decoration, planning and personalisation. People can create a sense of belonging through place-making as they are transforming a space into a lived place (Benson and Jackson 2012). For Cresswell (2015:17-18), the goal of place-making “is to make the space say something about you”. By personalising a space, it can become a ‘meaningful location’. Glaeser (1998:10) argues, “people plan to make a space their everyday habitat” and try to decorate and organise their homes in a way in which they feel comfortable inhabiting. The atmosphere and appearance of a space can transform it into a place for people. Place-making creates a sense of familiarity for people where they can feel “settled in” (Glaeser 1998:10). The familiarity and comfort that people associate with a ‘made’ place can create a sense of attachment for them.

For Inglis (2009), place attachment can be important for a person’s identity, sense of belonging and for the creation and retention of memories. He found that “for Irish people, after family, identity with the place is almost as significant as any other identity” (Inglis 2009:6). Emotional bonds between people can create a sense of community and belonging which can result in place attachment. Glaeser (1998:7) argues identity is constructed in interaction with other people,

but also in interaction with the places in which a person lives and interacts. People may also become attached to a place because of the memories associated with it. According to Gieryn (2000:481), “we associate places with the fulfilling, terrifying, traumatic, triumphant, secret events that happened to us personally there”; thus, attaching ourselves to the place. Hence, queer spaces can act as a unique place in which members of the queer community can share experiences and feelings with other queer people (Hartless 2019).

For Cresswell (2015:26), “place is also a way of seeing, knowing, and understanding the world”. He argues that, through place, we can understand connections between people, see the meanings and experiences of others and to think of “an area of the world as a rich and complicated interplay of people and the environment” (Cresswell 2015:26). However, he also argues that seeing the world through a lens of place can lead to exclusion and boundaries. According to Lamont and Molnár (2002), places can maintain boundaries – both physical and symbolic. Symbolic boundaries can structure social interaction by categorizing and separating people into different groups based on social and collective identities. “Place is seen as a major social indicator, of culture, class, nationality, urbanity and so forth” (Inglis 2009:3); thus, people often interpret and categorize people based on place. Hence, symbolic boundaries can also generate feelings of similarity within groups. For members of the queer community, these feelings of similarity stem from sexuality, gender identity, performance of queer identities and the shared experiences that members have from being a member of the community. Queer identities and places have historically been divided by boundaries – whether that be physical boundaries which divide queer spaces from heteronormative spaces, or symbolic boundaries which categorize queer people (Browne 2007).

2.3 Third Place

Oldenburg (1989) argues that people must balance their time between their 'first place' which is the home, their 'second place' which is work and their 'third places'. He refers to third places as 'great good places' which provide people with a space separate from the home and work where they can socialise and build relationships. These places could be 'cafés, coffee shops, bookstores, bars, hair salons, and other hangouts.' For Oldenburg and Brissett (1982:269) "they are places where people gather primarily to enjoy each other's company." They argue that third places are not simply just public places or regular businesses where the central purpose is business or profit. The difference is that third places have "lively conversation", "suspension of the usual and typical" and "joy of association" (Oldenburg and Brisset 1982:269). A third place "is a public setting accessible to its inhabitants and appropriated by them as their own" (Oldenburg and Brisset 1982:270). Third spaces are centred around "pure sociability" (Oldenburg and Brisset 1982:272).

Third places are important because "just as home and work play important roles in life satisfaction, third places help fulfill the need for social interaction, a universal human need and key to living a healthy and satisfying life" (Campbell 2017:157). Therefore, communities can develop around third places. In a third place where people feel comfortable and they feel like they belong, they can express "their unique sense of individuality" with other like-minded individuals (Oldenburg and Brissett 1982:271). According to Campbell (2017:169) "to help create environments that welcome strangers and regulars alike, it is important that new visitors feel comfortable and inconspicuous." Therefore, the appearance and atmosphere of the space can help to create a third place for people.

For Oldenburg and Brisset (1982:269), "the tavern, or bar, is without doubt the dominant third place in our society." Bars can provide a unique space which enables socialising, conversation

and self-expression in a welcoming environment. Therefore, queer bars can provide a third place for members of the queer community as they can socialise with like-minded people and express aspects of their identity that they may not be able to express at home or work. This research aims to discover if Dance to the Underground acts as a third place for people or if it is seen as a 'regular business'.

2.4 Queer Spaces

Queer spaces, like Dance to the Underground, are places in which members of the queer community can meet, socialise and share experiences with those who share similar sexualities and identities. They provide a "space without heterosexual surveillance" (Cattan and Vanolo 2014:1159). According to Brown et al. (2007:4), "imaginative, representational and figurative spaces become related to material effects that make a difference to people's lives." For members of the queer community, queer spaces can make a difference in their lives by providing them with a place to explore, express and perform their queer identities amongst like-minded individuals. Thus, queer spaces can provide "some respite from the pressures of heterosexist society" (Browne et al. 2007:6).

Historically, queer spaces were secretive places which were hidden from heteronormative spaces because being queer was often criminalised or disapproved of; thus, members of the queer community were often stigmatized and marginalised (Lamont and Molnár, 2002). Queer spaces were created to allow members of the community to express and perform their sexuality, identity and gender. They provided queer people with the opportunity to freely perform their sexuality and gender identity and acted as spaces where "social and sexual encounters with other queers can feel safer" (Klopp, 2007:23). However, queer spaces are not homogenous. Some have "undergone meaningful transitions in recent years" (Hartless, 2019:1037) and have expanded and diversified. Some queer spaces in western capitalist urban landscapes have

become more central in cities. Some spaces have diversified in music, taste and the people who visit them. This can be seen at Dance to the Underground which has created a diverse space for queer people who like alternative music and sub-cultures.

Queer spaces can be private or public. This research will focus on queer bars and clubs. In a study of queer bars and clubs in Paris and Turin, Cattani and Vanolo (2014:1158) found that queer bars and clubs are constituted by “emergent and contingent agglomerations of emotions, expectations, and desires, all of which play a role in the everyday life of many gays and lesbians”. Queer bars can provide freedom of expression to queer people, without the constraints of heteronormative social rules. They allow for “the experimentation of alternative temporary night-time identities that are different from those based on daytime professional, economic, and cultural statuses” (Cattani and Vanolo 2014:1159).

Members of the queer community have many reasons for attending queer spaces. In an analysis of pride events in Dublin and Brighton, Browne (2007:66) argues that pride events “create a temporary LGBTQ public and a visible presence of sexual otherness” which involves “expressing otherwise ‘hidden’ or repressed identities”. 23% of participants in Dublin said that being able to show affection and express themselves in a way that is not possible in their everyday lives was a reason for attending pride events (Browne 2007:76). Thus, pride events can act as a platform for the expression of identity and feeling of belonging. Other reasons given for attending pride events in the study were to meet and socialise with like-minded individuals, for fun and celebration and to make a political statement.

However, Browne (2007:77) also found that some queer people believe that there isn’t a need to wait for ‘gay times’ to ‘be yourself’. Hartless (2019:1038) discusses how “as society becomes more accepting, many members of the queer community no longer feel forced to choose between hiding in the closet or joining a queer enclave”. Some believe that queer spaces

divide the queer community and frame queer people as bounded, homogenous and separate. They argue that people in heterosexual spaces are less likely to view queer people as undesirable and that heteronormative and queer spaces are becoming less distinct and more fluid. Kolb and Betsky (2017:88) similarly argue that “pervasive technology” like gay dating apps are leading to the closure of physical queer spaces such as bars, clubs and parades and rendering them as “unnecessary”. They argue that queer dating apps can create “pop-up” or “micro-sites” which allow queer people to meet through the internet. However, many members of the queer community still value queer spaces as places to express their identity, meet other queer people and to feel a sense of belonging. Hartless (2019:1037) argues that queer spaces are still important as they are “vital sites of resistance”.

2.5 Alternative Music Spaces

For Leyshon et al. (1995:429), alternative music spaces are sites of cultural resistance where audiences “assert their distinction from a hegemonic mainstream musical culture.” During the 1970s, the punk scene began to emerge in English cities like Manchester and London. This style of alternative music “sought to subvert through spectacle and excessive sound” (Leyshon et al. 1995:430). Song lyrics were political and anti-establishment. Local scenes and subcultures were developed around punk music as people resonated with the meaning behind the music. For Ray and Dowd (2010:187), “we treat meaning as shared significance that occurs when music points to something beyond itself, representing some aspect of social life”. Music resonates with people and can help them to explain their feelings, experiences or understandings. Music therefore “signals and helps constitute the identity of individuals and collectivities” (Ray and Dowd 2010:189). Thus, alternative music can be part of a wider cultural identity for people or “a way of life with its own beliefs, conventions, norms and rituals” (Cohen 1991 cited in Hudson 2006:627).

Hudson (2006:628) argues that spaces built around music can lead to the “construction of unique place-based socio-musical identity”. The consumption and production of music can be an important influence in shaping identity, in the process of place-making and in developing place attachment (Hudson 2006:633). Therefore, for Roy and Dowd (2010) music is an activity. It is performed, experienced and lived. Music and music-based identities and subcultures are performed in alternative spaces. Subcultures develop around areas such as music, politics and physical style and appearance. Bennett (1999) argues that the term ‘subculture’ implies coherent or fixed identities and norms; however, for him, subcultures or ‘neo-tribes’ are fluid and constantly being constructed and re-constructed. He argues that the “relationship between musical taste and visual image is much less rigidly defined than was once thought” (Bennett 1999:613). While certain subcultures such as punk or goth may have a certain visual image attached to them in terms of clothing, makeup and appearance, this is not a rigid rule in alternative space.

Alternative music spaces inter-connect with queer spaces as they are both forms of alternative space. According to Taylor (2013:194), “for both the heterosexual and queer subject, subcultural participation and stylistic modes of cultural production and consumption, including popular music, are critical mechanisms aiding in the construction and expression of identity.” As discussed above, music can have significant meaning in people’s lives. For queer people, music can aid in the construction of their queer identity. Alternative music such as punk, emo, goth and rock music often have political undertones to the lyrics, some of them critiquing establishments which have oppressed the queer community. Thus, queer people often get involved in alternative spaces and subcultures where queer identities, experiences and politics can be expressed, often through appearance and style (Taylor 2013:194). Queer alternative music spaces are not “mere spin-offs” of heteronormative alternative music spaces as they “manifest as assemblies of reconstituted cultural form and dissident political identities that

bespeak the multiple fronts of queer resistance” (Taylor 2013:200). Examples of queer alternative music subcultures include ‘dykecore’ which employed the aesthetics of punk, feminism and queerness. The counter-cultural group embraces multiple genres of alternative music and “constituted via networks of bands, performers, fans, activists, film-makers, zine-makers, writers and clubs that drew on punk’s do-it-yourself ethos” (Taylor 2013:200). Other examples include the riot grrrl movement which provided refuge to queer women from homophobic punk scenes. Some authors have also suggested that the “the post-punk youth subculture of emo has morphed into a queer entity” (Taylor 2013:200). Thus, queerness and alternativeness have inter-connections.

2.6 Identity

Identity is a sociological concept which does not have a “single, overarching definition” (Lawler 2008:1). For Lawler, identity is socially produced through memory, stories and interpersonal interactions. Telling stories allows us to “make sense of the world, of our relationship to that world and of the relationship between ourselves and others” (Lawler 2008:12). Thus, forming one’s identity is a social process because our stories always incorporate the lives of others into them meaning others impact our identity formation. Identity can be something that is shared or unique. We share common identities with others – such as nationality, sexuality or class. However, no two people have the same lives and experiences. We experience these common identities differently creating our own uniqueness which forms our individual identity (Lawler 2008:2-5). Lawler (2008:19) argues that social structures may impact our identity but do not create them.

For Stryker (1980), an individual's sense of self and their identity influences society through their actions which creates groups and networks. Similarly, society influences the development of an individual's identity. Thus, one’s identity is created in and reflects on society. A person’s

identity is developed in a complex and differentiated society, therefore, their identity is complex and differentiated. One could argue that a person has as many identities as they have positions or roles in the social world and that different aspects of a person's identity emerges in certain contexts. The self can be said to be organised into different parts, or identities. For example, a parent, a work colleague or a friend. In each situation, the individual is still the same person, however their expression of identity will vary depending on the social and environmental context of a situation or the role they are playing (Stets and Burke 2003).

Goffman (1959:10-16) also discusses the different roles we play when expressing our identities. He argues that we socially construct our identity through our everyday interactions with others. He uses a dramaturgical metaphor to argue that we present ourselves to others as if we were actors performing roles on a stage. We perform different aspects of our identity depending on the audience we are amongst and the place and context we are within. These performances occur on the 'front-stage' where one's 'personal front', such as gender, race, appearance and gestures, can all function to tell the audience aspects of the performer's identity. Davies (2015:113-114) found that people can express their sexuality and/or gender identity through their performance of identity. Their actions, clothing, appearance, language and voice are all aspects of their 'personal front' which can express their queer identity.

Butler (1993) suggests that queer identities are fluid and constantly being created and recreated in an ongoing process. She argues "it is hardly descriptive of the complex dynamic exchanges of lesbian and gay relationships to presume that homosexual identifications "mirror or replicate one another" (Butler 1993:239). In other words, queer identity formation and expression differs from person to person depending on contexts such as social class, geographic location or culture. In a study of gay identity formation during adolescence, Flowers and Buston (2001:61) found that "for the participants, gay identity brought with it both severe costs (wrought by homophobia and heterosexism) and significant benefits (a sense of wholeness and integrity)".

The process of 'coming out' can be a drastically different experience for different people. For Flowers and Buston (2001:62) "coming out is an on-going process" which evolves "as new social contexts" emerge. They found that many gay men migrate to cities where they can explore their sexual identity in queer spaces. Thus, linking to the importance of designated queer space in the formation of queer identities.

Within queer spaces, members of the queer community can express identities and perform roles which they may not be able to express and perform outside of these spaces. At Dance to the Underground, drag queens and kings are central to the space. The art of drag expresses "different kinds of theoretical and political consciousness" (Rupp et al. 2010:277) which resists gender structure, gender stereotypes and heteronormativity. Drag performances "evoke a range of sexual identities" (Rupp et al. 2010:277) which critique the binary gender system and parody the performative nature of gender. The identities of drag queens and kings are layered – they consist of multiple aspects such as gender, sex and sexuality. Rupp et al. (2010:290) found that drag allows people to perform "a place between man and woman" and allowed those who perform drag to express and assert their desire to perform other aspects outside of their expected gender roles and norms in heteronormative space. Drag creates new possibilities for the expression of identity and can "create solidarity among queer audience members" (Rupp et al. 2010:290).

2.7 Community

Community is fluid term which, like identity, has no single overarching definition. For Cohen (2001:12) a community is "when members of a group of people (a) have something in common with each other, which (b) distinguishes them in a significant way from the members of other putative groups." Communities can be located in and constructed around a physical place, such as a bar, a church, a neighbourhood or a town, where residents or visitors strongly identify with

that place (Delanty 2003). However, according to Holt (2011:857), “there are many examples where people's sense of community is imagined as a shared bond rather than demonstrated by geography, co-presence or shared action.” For example, Dance to the Underground is a place in which people may create a sense of community through strongly identifying with it but the queer community is a shared bond between queer people that is not constricted to a single geographic location. Thus, for Holt (2011:857) community refers to “a group of people that has a shared characteristic” such as “where people live, shared languages, identities, mutual values or beliefs and collective practices.”

According to Delanty (2003:188) communities are “an open-ended system of communication about belonging.” For Delanty, communities are constructed through social interactions and communications which create a sense of belonging for the members of that community. In a study of social interactions in markets in Britain, Watson (2009) found that small interactions such as a smile or a nod create a sense of embodied and shared space. She referred to these interactions as ‘rubbing along’. These brief interactions made people feel a sense of belonging and familiarity in the markets; thus, the communication and interaction created the sense of community here. Similarly, Firth et al. (2011:557) argue that communities are “socially constructed through people sharing and interacting with a common purpose.”

For Firth et al. (2011:557) strong communities are built by people who are “engaged, participate and feel capable of working through problems, supported by strong social networks.” They argue that community construction and performance involve social capital. “Social capital is a concept used to refer to the social structures, institutions and shared values making up communities” (Firth et al. 2011:557). Social capital explains the way in which people may or may not connect in a variety of contexts; thus, social capital is linked to social cohesion, democracy and sustainability. When a person is a member of a community, they possess social capital as their social networks have value – they can provide status,

trustworthiness and connection. Social capital can be bonding (strong ties between people), bridging (looser ties between people) and linking (connection between unlike people in similar situations). However, social capital is not equally available to everyone, as with other forms of capital (Firth et al. 2001:557-558).

For Cohen (2001), community implies both similarity and difference, which is akin to Lamont and Molnár's (2002) argument that places can maintain physical and symbolic boundaries. Thus, communities can provide a sense of unity for people, but in having a community with certain characteristics, there may also exist another community or group with different or opposing characteristics. This is not always negative as a "boundary encapsulates the identity of the community and, like the identity of an individual, is called into being by the exigencies of social interaction" (Cohen 2001:12). In other words, similarities bring people together as a community through their social interactions and thus, a boundary is created which defines and identifies that community.

In a research study carried out on gay men in Sydney, Holt (2011:858) found that "the concept of gay community has played a central role in the Australian response to HIV/AIDS." He found that during the peak of the AIDS crisis gay men felt a strong sense of solidarity with each other and the response to the crisis was to promote safe sex within the community. However, in his research he found that gay men reported that that concept of a united and hegemonic gay community is an idea of the past. They still attended gay spaces and venues but Holt (2011:857) found that the "concept of 'personal communities' may better reflect the ways in which gay men engage with each other and their social networks." He also questioned whether his use of the word 'community' encourage people "to think of small, village-like arrangements of people who all know and support each other" (Holt 2011:865) and that gay men did feel a sense of belonging and involvement with other gay men but didn't feel they were part of 'the' unified gay community. Thus, he found through his research that gay men felt they were a part of a

smaller 'personal' gay community, rather than one singular homogenous one as then men in the study emphasised the importance of gay networks and gay venues.

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of the central themes which relate to this topic and analysed their importance in relation to this case study of Dance to the Underground. This understanding of place exploration and the arguments and findings from the literature will be used as a framework to analyse and interpret the findings from this case study. The literature has emphasised the importance of place-making and place attachment in people's lives. It is important for members of the queer community to have places where they feel a sense of belonging. The literature review focused on the significance of queer and alternative music spaces as Dance to the Underground combines these two types of space. These types of spaces allow people to express and perform their identity around a community of like-minded individuals. Chapter four will explore these themes in relation to the findings of this research.

Chapter Three: Research Methods

3.1 Research Question

How are queer spaces in Dublin used, experienced and understood: A case study of Dance to the Underground in Fibber Magee's.

- How is Dance to the Underground viewed and understood by the people who attend?
- Does Dance to the Underground provide a sense of belonging to those who attend?
- Does Dance to the Underground act as a 'third place' for members of the queer community?
- Does Dance to the Underground enable the expression of queer identities and if so, how does it enable this?
- Do people feel a sense of community at Dance to the Underground and how is this negotiated and understood?
- Does Dance to the Underground allow for the development and maintenance of social connections?
- Does Dance to the Underground provide a place for the development of alternative communities?

The themes for this research are place, third place, queer spaces, alternative music spaces, identity and community. The research used a qualitative approach in order to gather data which would encapsulate how members of the queer community experience and understand queer spaces. A case study approach was used to focus on one queer space.

3.2 The Qualitative Approach

The qualitative approach is a framework of research methods which focuses on how people experience and understand their social world. Qualitative research does not aim to quantify data or come up with a concrete answer to a hypothesis, therefore the studies are open-ended

to allow the researcher to discover the perspectives, experiences, feelings and understandings of the people at the heart of their research. The research methods used in a qualitative approach involve gathering information on people's opinions, meanings and perceptions. Qualitative research aims to interpret parts of people's lived experience to build a picture of their social reality (Holliday 2013:5-6).

The qualitative approach is most associated with the constructivist paradigm rather than the positivist paradigm. Holliday (2013:5) defines a paradigm as being "a whole way of thinking" about reality. The positivist paradigm assumes that there is one concrete and objective version of reality, whereas the constructivist paradigm assumes there are multiple subjective versions of how people experience and construct their realities (Marvasti 2004:5). Qualitative research follows a constructivist paradigm as the research aims to encapsulate the different versions of reality that different people experience. This is relevant to the queer community because being queer is a drastically different experience depending on a person's intersectional characteristics – such as their social class, gender, culture, where they live, the people in their lives or the laws and policies in the country they live in. Thus, the experience of being queer is not an objective single-definition experience and the lived reality of being queer is different for every queer person (Flowers and Buston 2001).

In qualitative research, the researcher must strive to be as objective as they can possibly be while still acknowledging their own subjectivities. The aim of the research is to present experiences of people's lives exactly how they experience it, not how one interprets or hypothesises how they experience it. There is no definitive answer like there would be in research with a positivist paradigm (Marvasti 2004:6-7; Holliday 2004:5). An advantage of qualitative research is that it recognises subjectivity, therefore allowing the researcher to incorporate their own subjectivities into the research in an attempt to be as objective as possible. Qualitative research allows for deeper understandings of people's experiences to be

investigated. While quantitative data shows us statistics about a certain concept, for example the percentage of unemployment in an area, qualitative data allows us to explore how people experience unemployment and what factors may contribute to unemployment in an area. Qualitative methods allow for these aspects of social life to be investigated within the social and historical framework in which it is produced (Marvasti 2004).

This research requires a qualitative approach because it aims to discover insights into the experiences and understandings of the queer community in Dublin city regarding queer spaces. Qualitative methods, such as interviews, observation and imagery, are required to complete this research as quantitative methods, such as surveys, would not provide the in depth understanding of place, identity and community in these spaces (Marvasti 2004). Qualitative methods offer an understanding of the lived experiences of individual members of the queer community; thus, the findings of this research do not represent all members of the queer community nor does it represent all of the people who attend Dance to the Underground. This research recognises that there is not one lived queer reality and the experience of being queer is different for every queer person and this case study aims to present the social reality of this small sample.

3.2.1 The Case Study Approach

Qualitative research aims to present an analysis of how people experience and understand their lived reality. Thus, case studies are often used to examine the intricacies, complexities, feelings, experiences and opinions of a particular group of people, a place, a setting or a phenomenon. For Bryman (2004:48), “the basic case study entails the detailed and intensive analysis of a single case”. Case studies explore individuals within a group, place or setting; therefore, they are not generalizable to the entire population of that group or setting (Bryman 2004:51). They are historically and socially specific to a particular context. However, case

studies are useful as they allow the researcher to gain insight into the lived experiences of individuals as well as allowing them to explore key social process (such as community and identity) and how they play out in certain contexts. Thus, a case study is “a single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries” (Merriam 2002:178).

Using a case study approach allows the researcher to provide more context into the lives of the people they are researching. Case studies provide the lived experience that cannot be conveyed in statistics and other quantitative data; thus, they help to provide information on how certain processes and concepts work in ‘a real-life situation’ (Kane and O’Reilly-De Brun 2001:215). Although case studies cannot be used to generalise entire groups or places, their findings can be used as a comparative analysis to other case studies which are similar in nature. This can aid researchers in establishing similarities between case studies and can determine if places, settings or groups in different locations are constructed or reconstructed similarly (Bryman 2004).

3.2.2 Interviewing

“One of the most elementary forms of data collection is an interview which involves asking people questions and receiving answers from them” (Marvasti 2004:17). The questions asked are ‘open-ended questions’ meaning that they provide an opportunity for the interviewee to freely provide their own thoughts and opinions – in other words, the questions are not leading or don’t suggest a certain answer (O’Leary 2004:162). Qualitative research involves the gathering of rich and detailed data which will sufficiently describe, emplace and articulate a person’s lived experience; thus, ‘in-depth interviews’ are used in order to delve into the persons ‘deeper self’ or trying to see the world from their point of view. For Marvasti (2004:21), in-depth interviewing is “beneficial to the subject and the researcher”. The researcher gains knowledge of the worldview, feelings, opinions and interpretations of the people that they

interviewing, and the interviewee is provided with an opportunity for their voice and story to be heard. Thus, an interview is a conversation with a purpose.

For O’Leary (2004:167), an interview should consist of an introduction to the person, expression of appreciation, small talk, an introduction to the research, an explanation of how the data will be gathered and used and an explanation of ethics, confidentiality and the right to decline a question or stop the interview at any time. For the purpose of this research, semi-structured interviews were used. In semi-structured interviews, some general questions are prepared beforehand, but are open-ended in nature to allow for the fluidity of the conversation. This means that the interviewee has the freedom to focus more time on questions and topics that resonate with them the most and they can also highlight topics that they believe to be relevant to the research (Wengraf 2001). Marvasti (2004:26-27) specifically discusses the interviewing of members of the queer community. He discusses how interviews involving queer people are conducted for the purpose of developing a deeper understanding of their lives and lifestyles. He also notes the importance of rapport, especially when interacting with individuals who may have had negative experiences involving homophobia or transphobia.

For this research, I carried out seven in-depth, face-to-face interviews using questions that focused on the person’s background, when they came out as queer, how they feel about queer spaces in Dublin and how they feel about Dance to the Underground in particular. Each interview was approximately one hour in length. I recorded them using the audio recorder on my phone and then transferred them onto my computer to a password encrypted file. I conducted the interviews in a variety of locations such as my home, university campuses and public spaces such as cafés and bars – including some conducted in Fibber Magees. I found participants through connections that I had made from attending Dance to the Underground. I also contacted some people through Instagram and through a Discord group chat which

consisted of individuals who regularly attend the event. To uphold anonymity, I assigned a letter to each respondent in lieu of their names.

TABLE 1

Respondent	Age	Sexuality	Gender Identity	Pronouns	Attendance of Dance to the Underground
A	21	Gay	Transgender Man	He/Him	Twice
B	19	Lesbian	Transgender Woman	She/Her	Regularly
C	22	Queer	Unlabelled	He/They	Almost All (As a Photographer)
D	19	Bisexual	Non-Binary	They/Them	Four Times
E	19	Bisexual	Cisgender Man	He/Him	Regularly
F	19	Bisexual	Cisgender Woman	She/Her	Regularly
G	35	Gay	Queer	He/She/They	All (As a DJ/Promoter)

3.2.3 Visual Methods

Visual methods involve the use of visual data to make or add to a sociological analysis. Visual data can have many forms such as photographs, videos and artwork; however, photographs will be solely used for the purpose of this research. Social scientists use these forms of data to analyse a research question when they feel that words alone are not efficient enough to convey the findings of the research. The use of visual data offers “a range of alternative, diverse and creative possibilities” within the research (Prosser and Loxley 2008: 3). Visual data to accompany the textual analysis can encourage the reader to engage in deeper reflection by enhancing the sensory experience. Images can aid and improve a person’s understanding of the research by allowing them to visualise what the researcher is explaining. Thus, the images used in sociological research must be put into context and captioned for them to convey the relevant information to back up the findings. Without captions, context and analysis, an image can be

interpreted in different ways by different people. Thus, it is vital to contextualise the visual data that one uses in their research (Becker 1995). For this research I used images taken by Al Fartukh, one of the in-house photographers at Dance to the Underground. I sourced these images from the Instagram page for Dance to the Underground and from Al Fartukh's website. The images helped to contextualise the interview data and provide visual context to the findings.

3.3 Analysis of Data

At the beginning of this research project, I read literature around the topic of place to gather a general understanding. Once I understood what place was as a sociological concept, I began to brainstorm for ideas. This is when I decided that Dance to the Underground represented such a place and that I would like to conduct my research on it. I began to read about third place, queer spaces, alternative music spaces, identity and community to gather an understanding of these concepts. Then, I wrote my literature review based on these readings and case studies.

Next, I began to collect my data. I contacted people through social media, and I organised seven interviews. I also got permission from the photographer to use their images. Once I collected this, I began to sort the data through thematic coding where I colour coded relevant parts of the interview transcripts and sorted them by theme. I then analysed the coded data by using the literature, case studies and statistics in order to see what was consistent or inconsistent with the current literature and where my data fit in with the current literature. The findings were then written up by theme, as consistent with the literature review. The following figure, which is adapted from Bryman (2004: 269) provides an outline of the steps taken in this research project.

FIGURE 1

An outline of the steps taken in this qualitative research project

Initial readings surrounding the topic of inquiry (PLACE EXPLORATION)



Developing an idea, research question, hypothesis. Formation of general research question and initial theoretical framework (this includes theories, literature surrounding the area of inquiry etc.)



Collection of relevant data – surveys, interviewing, participant observation, photographic representation, documentary analysis, literature review etc.



Interpretation of data / analysis of data



Conceptual and theoretical framework



Tighter specification of the research question



Write up findings/conclusions

(Figure adapted from Bryman 2004: 269)

3.4 Ethics

Throughout this research, ethics were prioritised, and all decisions were made in an ethical manner. For the research, I familiarised myself with the ethical guidelines for the National University of Maynooth (n.d) and the Sociological Association of Ireland (n.d). The Maynooth University (n.d.) ethics policy outlines the importance of informed consent. A researcher must ensure that the participant fully understands what they are consenting to before they begin any collection of data. This is vital as it is extremely unethical to involve somebody in something they have not consented to. They must be made aware of the topics the research will be covering so that they can make an informed decision on whether they would like to participate. The participant must be made aware that they have the right to withdraw at any time. This is important as it ensures the participant does not feel obliged remain involved in the study if they become uncomfortable. To ensure informed consent in my research, I explained my research to the participants beforehand and answered any questions that they had. I made sure they knew they could stop the interview at any time or refuse to answer any questions they did not want to. Then, I asked them to sign a consent form to confirm I had their informed consent.

The Sociological Association of Ireland (n.d.) outline the importance of ensuring anonymity, privacy and confidentiality of those who participate in sociological research. Researchers have a duty to ensure that participants data remains confidential which includes ensuring the data is stored securely. Guarantees of anonymity must be upheld in order to protect the participants. Care must be taken to ensure that the participants are not identifiable from the research as this can have an effect on their relationships, careers or their quality of life. To ensure anonymity, I removed all participants names, referring to them as respondents A through G. I also redacted any names mentioned in the interviews, to ensure the anonymity of the people mentioned. After I recorded the interviews on my phone, I transferred them to a password protected file on my laptop.

3.5 Issues of Positionality

One of the benefits of qualitative research is that it considers the researchers subjectivities and biases. Although this research has strived to be as objective as possible, it is important to acknowledge my potential biases and subjectivities. Subjectivity in the analysis and interpretation of data is inevitable; thus, it is important to highlight these (Marvasti 2004). For this research there are issues with positionality due to the fact that I regularly attend both Fibber Magee's and Dance to the Underground and have friends who also regularly attend. I acknowledge here that I already have my own opinions, feelings and experiences towards the venue and the space. However, as I regularly attend this space, my previous experiences are helpful as I know what the space looks like and have an understanding of how the space is used and interpreted by others. I also benefitted from attending the space regularly as I was able to use the connections that I have made to gather my interview sample.

Chapter Four: Findings and Analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will explore the findings of this research by discussing, comparing and contrasting them to the literature from chapter two and examining how the findings from this case study fit in with the rest of the existing sociological literature. The findings are represented thematically in the same sequence as the literature review in chapter two. The research found that the respondents felt a strong sense of place at Dance to the Underground, although they each negotiated and understood this in numerous different ways. For some respondents, Dance to the Underground represents a third place which enables social interactions and self-expression. The respondents demonstrated that queer spaces and alternative music spaces are vital for their sense of belonging and well-being. The research also found that a strong sense community has developed around Dance to the Underground making this space an important place in people's lives.

4.2 Place

This research found that a sense of place is present at Dance to the Underground. For Gieryn (2000:464-465), place has three features. First, place has a geographic location – for this case study, this is the basement of Fibber Magee's. Some respondents felt that this location itself was significant to their understanding of Dance to the Underground.

The downstairs area of Fibbers is what, like, makes it (Respondent C 2023).

The place, the basement of Fibbers, I think is very underground. You know, it's very rock'n'roll. Everybody said, 'oh my God, this place is fantastic'. (Respondent G 2023).

Dance to the Underground. The underground scene. Even about Fibbers being in the underground, you know (Respondent G 2023).

These respondents felt that there is significance to the fact that Dance to the Underground is situated in a literal underground location, as it adds to the alternative and punk atmosphere which attracts alternative queer people to the venue. The idea of an event being ‘underground’ means it is not mainstream or well-known and the respondents valued the uniqueness that the location added to the event. Other respondents commented on the unique nature of this space as a positive addition to their negotiation of the space.

It's a really individual space. It felt like a really unique space. Like somewhere new that I hadn't experienced before (Respondent D 2023).

Dance to the Underground is brilliant. There is so much going on there. They value creativity in all sorts of ways. In, like, the music, performance, the small businesses and even just the way people express themselves. It's amazing. We really don't have another venue like that (Respondent C 2023).

The second feature of place for Gieryn (2000) is material form – places contain things and are worked by people. Dance to the Underground contains photo exhibits, market stalls, drag performances and an endless amount of creativity and expression by the people who created and who attend the event.

We've had a few times – a photo exhibition. So, then we don't have markets but I always try to have someone there to sell their thing (Respondent G 2023).

I love drag. It's a lot of fun and it's just like... it doesn't matter that they're doing the performance, everyone sings along (Respondent F 2023).

As Respondent G and Respondent F have stated above, the material form of the event is worked by the people who run and attend it. Dance to the Underground occurs once a month, and although the venue is the same the other 27 to 30 days of the month, the place is not the same, which leads into Gieryn's (2000) third feature of place which is that they are invested with meaning and value. The ability of people to identify, represent and interpret places is what makes them places and not spaces. People imbed their own meanings and understandings into

their interpretation of place. In this case study, the respondents demonstrated this in a number of ways.

I always say, I am not going to change 300 people that are there. Maybe one or two and that's for me, you know. Change a little bit of your life and have a good time here. This is it (Respondent G 2023).

With Dance to the Underground and everything, everyone is really nice. Everyone is really positive with each other. I think it's because we actually have more of a community there than they would in the cis bars (Respondent A 2023).

It's in a league of its own, the freedom of expression that everyone has (Respondent D 2023).

The respondents above have all given examples of aspects of Dance to the Underground which provide meaning to them. For Respondent G, having a good time and the potential of changing aspects of your life for the better brings meaning to them. The potential that this space has to introduce people to alternative music and subcultures, drag, the queer scene or to meet like-minded individuals provides them with a sense of meaning. Respondent A comments that the sense of community feels stronger for him at Dance to the Underground than at 'the cis bars' referring to heteronormative spaces which are populated mostly by cisgender people, meaning people who identify with the gender they were assigned at birth. For Respondent D and A, freedom of expression and community are sources of meaning in this space, which will be discussed further later in this chapter.

For Benson and Jackson (2012:794), people create and construct places through the process of 'place-making'. They do this by "doing" or "performing" place through practices such as imagination, decoration and planning. Respondent G is involved in the planning and promoting of Dance to the Underground and for this they make posters which are used to advertise the event on social media, in bars and on the streets.

Everything punk, 70s and you know play with a little bit of colours. At the beginning, again because we didn't have any material, so I was getting pictures from the 70's, from the punk scene, you know. I think the first one was... actually the first one was with the logo I did with this girl, with this Catwoman from the 70s. And the first poster was a nice picture of me and my boyfriend giving a little smack in Dublin. I had a mohawk. He had the piercings, and it was kind of nice. Nice poster. The second poster was a transsexual from the 70s. What's her name again? Oh... I forgot her name. But it was photo because I think she was the first transsexual singing in a punk band, you know. So, I used this photo. And then, when I started having photographers doing photos at the party, I was checking for wow that can be a picture. So, I started using photos of the people who were coming there. So, I think, from May, I started using pictures from the photographers (Respondent G 2023).

The posters encapsulate the ethos of the event through images, such as the queerness of the transgender singer and the images of queer people kissing. The posters promote the place as a queer space and also as a space for punk, goth and alternative music with the images of Catwoman and the transgender punk singer.



Image Two (Dance to the Underground 2021) - Catwoman Poster.

The posters also use images of the partygoers themselves. They are included in the marketing and promoting of the place as the people who attend are the ones who work the space and turn it into place through the process of place making. The posters are a form of place-making as they market the queerness and alternativeness of this place to the public. People can create a sense of belonging through place-making as they are transforming a space into a lived place (Benson and Jackson 2012).

You feel like you belong in a place. You feel like ‘oh my God, I’m being seen. I could be doing anything here and everybody is like yay!’ It’s fantastic. It’s a really good feeling (Respondent G 2023).

Even though it’s monthly, it’s still something that people look forward to and it’s the only place that I see some of the people that go there (Respondent C 2023).

We all are in the same boat there (Respondent A 2023).

The respondents have expressed feelings of belonging or familiarity. For Glaeser (1998:10) this can make people feel “settled in” and can create a sense of place attachment for people. The respondents display a sense of place attachment. This attachment can be important for a person’s identity and for the creation of memories and emotional bonds with others.



Image Three (Fartukh 2022c) - “We love to party but it’s amazing to go to a place that you feel connected. You feel you belong” (Respondent G 2023).

According to Lamont and Molnár (2002), places can maintain boundaries – both physical and symbolic. Dance to the Underground is physically separate from the upstairs area of Fibber Magee's, but there are also symbolic boundaries in place. Symbolic boundaries can structure social interaction by categorizing and separating people into different groups based on social and collective identities. In the case of Dance to the Underground, this categorization is people from the alternative and queer scene; thus, this boundary can also generate feelings of similarity within the group.

We give words to the complex versions of ourselves in order to easier explain it to other people but that's not always necessary because when people are united by a shared idea, like Dance to the Underground, of alternativeness and stuff like that, those little boxes don't really matter anymore (Respondent D 2023).

Here Respondent D is discussing how they feel that being 'united by a shared idea' creates a mutual understanding and feeling of similarity within the group at Dance to the Underground and that people who go there may feel they do not need to explain or justify their identity to the other people who are there. Thus, the boundary that makes Dance to the Underground different to heteronormative spaces can create unity within the people who attend and some of the respondents felt that Dance to the Underground provides a unique space which is different to other queer spaces as it catered to alternative music and subcultures.

It was probably the first time I ever witnesses an event that had my kind of music playing as well. Like, another reason why I didn't go to clubs for so long was because I was like I don't like pop music. I'm bored of this. And they would play it non-stop, so it was nice to see something that was like very alternative being played. I was like wow (Respondent C 2023).

It's like a mixture of LGBT and punks and emos and the alt community, like that kind of mixture (Respondent F 2023).

Dance to the Underground feels like, kind of one of the only spaces that really cater toward both queer people and the alternative scene. But even more so one that embraces transness as part of queerness (Respondent D 2023).

Respondent D explains here that they feel Dance to the Underground embrace's transness as a part of queerness and that other queer spaces feel like there is more of a boundary within the

space or the community itself. Other respondents also brought up this point, which will be discussed in more depth later in this chapter under section 4.7 on community.

4.3 Third Place

This research found that Dance to the Underground acts as a third place for people. For Oldenburg (1989), a third space is a ‘great good place’ which provides people with a space separate from the home and work where they can socialise and build relationships. Some of the respondents in this research demonstrated that Dance to the Underground provided this place for them.

I live with my roommates, but we’re all sectioned off and we’re all pretty introverted, so I’d say it’s [Dance to the Underground] my third place (Respondent B 2023).

I work IT so it’s boring as fuck. You know, there’s no sense of purpose for me there. A lot of people love it but it’s not my thing. I do it because it pays my rent, you know. But there in the Dance to the Underground, I feel purpose. I feel, wow, I am doing something that I really love (Respondent G 2023).

The respondents here demonstrate that Dance to the Underground acts as a third place for them. Third places, like Dance to the Underground, can give people a sense of purpose and belonging that they may not be getting at work or at home. For Campbell (2017:157), it is vital to have these spaces as they “help fulfill the need for social interaction, a universal human need and key to living a healthy and satisfying life”, as demonstrated here by Respondent A.

You’d still feel othered everywhere else so having that like break, that breather, at least once a month can be really important for your mental health and for your social life as well (Respondent A 2023).

For him, queer third places provide a ‘breather’ from the pressures of everyday life including pressures in the home and at work. Queer people need these spaces to socialise with other queer people in an environment that is safe and accepting, which will be discussed further in section 4.5 on queer spaces. Some of the respondents commented that the COVID-19 lockdowns prevented them from accessing queer third spaces.

I didn't really go to many queer spaces or clubs before that mainly because of the lockdown stuff (Respondent C 2023).

And then lockdown came. It was the only time in my life that I stayed home, you know, locked home, cause I'm a very party person. I was always going out (Respondent G 2023).

Thus, the lockdowns cut people off from their third places which meant they didn't have the balance between home, work and third place which Oldenburg (1989) believes is so important.

Here, Respondent A discusses his experience of barriers to third place.

It was really jarring that there was a space like that and I didn't get to experience it because I had locked myself in for so many years because of my dysphoria (Respondent A 2023).

The term dysphoria here refers to 'gender dysphoria' which is defined as "a distressed state arising from conflict between a person's gender identity and the sex the person has or was identified as having at birth" (Merriam Webster 2023). Respondent A locked himself in for many years due to distress from his gender dysphoria and he felt relieved to finally experience Dance to the Underground as a third place after he got his gender affirming surgery.

The first time I went, as well, I was talking to people and I was showing them my top surgery scars and I was following up with one of the friends that I'd made there and he has now booked his top surgery with the exact same doctor and the exact same hotels and everything (Respondent A 2023).

Socialising in a space like this allowed Respondent A to talk about his experience with his gender affirming surgery which he refers to as 'top surgery' as it is a surgery performed on the chest or the 'top' half of the body. Socialising in a third space allows these conversations to happen as the people within the space are able to express "their unique sense of individuality" freely with other like-minded individuals (Oldenburg and Brissett 1982:271). Respondent D also demonstrates feeling like they are able to engage in self-expression.

In existing in the open world, there are things that I do hide... There are certain parts of me that I might try to leave at home when I'm going into other spaces,

whereas when I come to Dance to the Underground, I feel like I can let that out a bit (Respondent D 2023).

Dance to the Underground provides a space that allows queer people to express parts of themselves that they may otherwise hide, which can make spaces like this a third place for these people.



Image Four (Fartukh 2023b) - “It’s the second family we didn’t have at home because at home you’d be something more boring or whatever, but at the parties everybody was happy” (Respondent G 2023).

Belonging in a third place can feel like belonging in a ‘second family’ that is outside of the home and work. Queer spaces and alternative music spaces, like Dance to the Underground, can provide this for members of the queer community. For Oldenburg and Brissett (1982:269) third places are different to regular business as their central focus is not business or profit but instead is “lively conversation”, “suspension of the usual and typical” and “joy of association”. Respondent G was involved in the establishment of Dance to the Underground as a space and he discusses how money and business are not their motivators.

It's [Dance to the Underground] like kinda, you know, a second job but you're not getting paid for it... You know, if it was for money than I wouldn't be able to pay my rent. It doesn't make any profit. But, like the idea to be there and to have people around and, again, to play the music that we like in a queer space, you know (Respondent G 2023).

This is what differentiates Dance to the Underground as a third place and not simply a regular business. Respondent G, as an organiser of the event, set up the space as a place to listen to the music they like in a queer space. The purpose of the place is 'pure sociability' (Oldenburg and Brissett 1982), self-expression, belonging and community. Respondent G is using their free time to run this event because the place means so much to them and, as this research has shown, has become so meaningful to many of the people who attend. Dance to the Underground has created an environment that welcomes "strangers and regulars alike" (Campbell 2017:169) through its welcoming, friendly and inclusive atmosphere.

4.4 Queer Spaces

The respondents in this research demonstrated that queer spaces are important to them. As discussed in chapter two, some people argue that there is no need to wait for 'gay times' or queer spaces to 'be yourself' Browne (2007:77). Hartless (2019:1038) discusses how "as society becomes more accepting, many members of the LGBTQ+ community no longer feel forced to choose between hiding in the closet or joining a queer enclave". The respondents in this study did not feel this way. They believed that queer spaces are still vital.

They are important to my survival. You do go insane if you don't have anything. Everyone else can just walk into bars and feel safe enough to just do whatever they want (Respondent A 2023).

If I went to a straight pub or club... I guess it feels weird being the only queer person in the room a lot of the times. I can't relate to anybody there so it feels like it's easier for someone to, like, bully me and nobody would speak out about it (Respondent B 2023).

When I went to the first nightclub in Brazil then I was like wow, so that's what being gay is. You know so that's very liberating. It's very liberating (Respondent G 2023).

The respondents here discuss the importance of being around other queer people or in some form of queer space, whether that be for their identity, inclusion, belonging or safety. For Respondent A, queer spaces feel important for his survival and for Respondent G queer spaces were a site of liberation, emphasising the need for queer space in their lives. Thus, the argument that queer people don't need to go to queer space to be accepted is not consistent with this case study. Browne et al. (2007:6) argue that queer spaces can provide "some respite from the pressures of heterosexist society". Generally, the respondents in this study demonstrated that queer spaces provide this respite for them.

Without queer spaces and, you know bars that are actually catered towards us and everything else, you'd still feel othered everywhere else. So, having that little break, that breather, at least once a month can be really important for your mental health and for your social life as well (Respondent A 2023).

It wasn't a queer space you know. You always feel, you know, you are in someone's house. Not yours (Respondent G 2023).

For Respondent G, the feeling of being in a heteronormative space feels like being in somebody's house, but not your own. In this sense, the feeling of entering a queer space could feel like being at your own house in a familiar and comfortable environment, rather than someone else's. Queer spaces can also act as spaces where "social and sexual encounters with other queers can feel safer" (Klopp, 2007:23) and the respondents in this case study demonstrated that they felt safer in queer space than in heteronormative space.

Queer spaces are made so queer people can have, like a safe space. Literally (Respondent C 2023).

That's the only place you can be yourself, dance, do your thing, talk to everybody but in a sense that nobody is going to hurt you because everybody is kind of the same, you know (Respondent G 2023).

If I go to a straight club, I'm always afraid that I'm going to get misgendered and also, what is it, the rate of violence towards trans women especially is extremely high. So, yeah, they'll outwardly go 'oh yeah, you're accepted here' until they like hit you with an axe (Respondent B 2023).

In a case study on queer bars in Paris and Turin, Cattani and Valolo (2014) found that these spaces can allow for freedom of expression for those in the queer community. The respondents in this research felt that queer spaces in general and specifically Dance to the Underground provide a space in which they can express their queer identity through fashion, makeup, performance and social interaction.

I don't do extremely well with too many people and at Pride Parade there is a shit ton of people. But when I was, like, walking away from it, I got to see how everyone was dressed and how everyone was acting. And I liked that because you're just observing (Respondent F 2023).

For me, it was very important. Very important to always be out and meeting different people. You know, listen to music, express myself, dance, wear different clothes. Cause you feel like you can. And when you feel like you can, that's expressing different areas in your life. If you feel you can be yourself, you're gonna love better, you're gonna eat better, you're gonna be understood better. You know, that's what I think (Respondent G 2023).



Image Five (Fartukh 2022c) - Queer spaces facilitate the performance and expression of identity.

The freedom to freely express oneself provides people with a sense of belonging and understanding, which is important for the queer community as queer people have historically been excluded and misunderstood and often continue to be. Being able to express oneself in a queer space can be important for people to realise that they are queer, for their journey of self-discovery and self-acceptance and for feeling like they belong.

I was in online spaces because that's basically the only thing we had here. It was LGBTQ pages and stuff like that and through that and their information, I was able to actually piece something together for the first time in my life (Respondent A 2023).

The world's straight. You know the culture is straight. The movies are straight. You know, everything is straight. So, you feel, even though you know yourself, you feel, am I right here? Not even on the basis of right or wrong, because you know you are right because of the way you feel. But you feel am I allowed to be the way I am? (Respondent G 2023).

These quotes are consistent with Hartless's (2019:1037) argument that queer spaces are "vital sites of resistance" as they can provide a space in which queer people can 'piece together' their identity and feel like they belong in a world where 'everything is straight'. They act as sites of resistance to the heterosexual norms and values that define many modern societies.

4.5 Alternative Music Spaces

Queer spaces are a form of alternative space; thus, alternative music spaces and queer spaces share common characteristics as they both attract creativity, diversity and alternativeness. This research found that alternative music is important for many of the respondents, and they valued that Dance to the Underground provides a space that is queer and centred around alternative music.

A lot of the time alternative spaces are queer spaces because queer people tend to gravitate towards the alternative lifestyle because we are alternative. It's our basis (Respondent A 2023).

For Leyshon et al. (1995:429), alternative music spaces are sites of cultural resistance where audiences “assert their distinction from a hegemonic mainstream musical culture.” Some of the respondents in this research demonstrated that they preferred the music at Dance to the Underground over the ‘hegemonic mainstream’ pop culture in some other queer spaces in Dublin.

It’s not like the standard pop music stuff. It’s better music to listen to for a long time (Respondent B 2023).

That’s another reason I’m not a huge fan of [a well-known queer bar in Dublin]. It’s because the music is all pop music, but I grew up with my dad who brought me up on rock and metal (Respondent F 2023).

Another reason why I didn’t go to clubs for so long was because I was like I don’t like pop music (Respondent C 2023).

For Ray and Dowd (2010:187), “we treat meaning as shared significance that occurs when music points to something beyond itself, representing some aspect of social life.” Thus, music can aid in identity development and for some can develop into “a way of life with its own beliefs, conventions, norms and rituals” (Cohen 1991 cited in Hudson 2006:627).

Music, for me, is always a big thing because I am a very musical person. I can’t, you know, go a day without listening to an album or talking about music (Respondent G 2023).

I love music. It’s a lived lifestyle (Respondent G 2023).

If somebody is listening to punk music where it’s like this, this and this is wrong with the government, this is what we should do philosophically, this is how we should all live our lives. Then it’s also up for debate. We can fucking talk about that shit. Then we’ve got a conversation (Respondent E 2023).

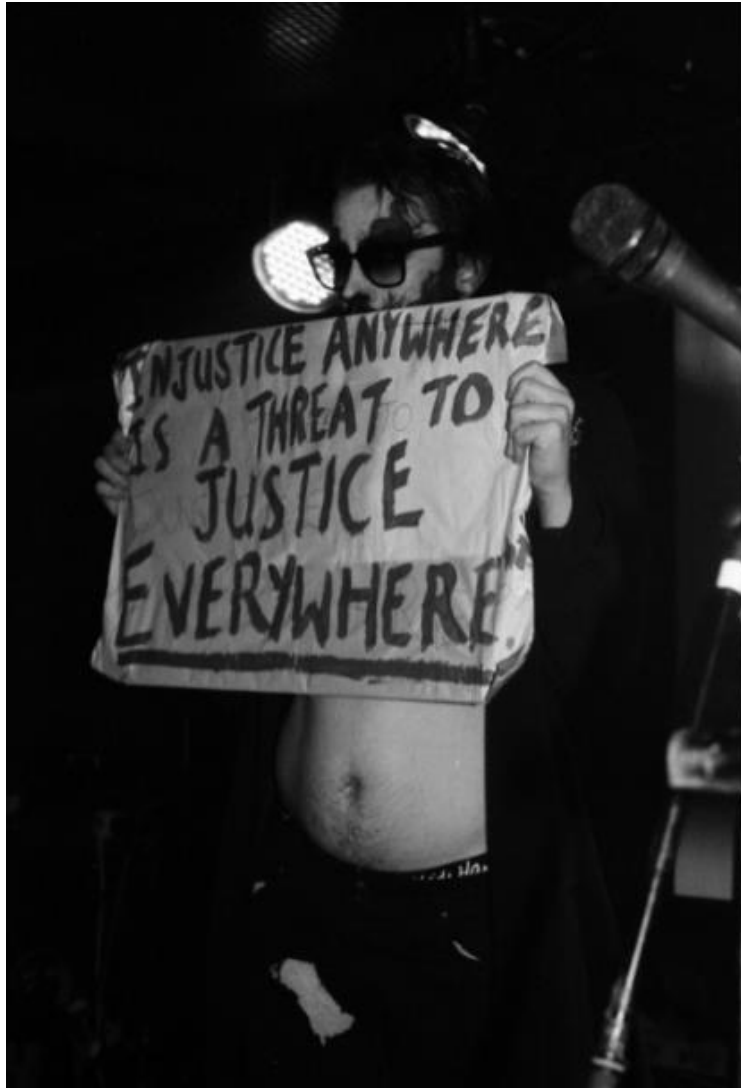


Image Six (Fartukh 2022c) - A performer at Dance to the Underground holding up a sign about injustice. Alternative music spaces can facilitate conversation about politics and wider issues.

For these respondents, alternative music is a lifestyle. Music can be a topic of conversation about wider issues such as philosophy and politics. Music and subcultures can be spoken about as a shared identity. In this sense, music at Dance to the Underground is an ‘activity’, as Roy and Dowd (2010) argue. The alternative music here creates conversation, debate, a sense of attachment, a sense of belonging and performance and which are all activities centred around the music.

Alternative music is a huge part of place-making and place attachment at Dance to the Underground which is consistent with Hudson's (2006:628) argument that spaces built around music can lead to the "construction of unique place-based socio-musical identity". Respondent G refers to queer alternative music spaces as being like 'heaven' showing the immense importance of these places in their life.

When you go to a punk place and it's full of queer people, you think oh my God, I am in heaven, if there is a heaven (Respondent G 2023).

Clothing, appearance and style are closely associated with alternative subcultures. Goth, punk and metal fashion is something that alternative people may share as a common expression of identity. Bennett (1999) argues that, although style can be important, it is not rigid and concrete. It is a fluid concept and a wide variety of style, taste and appearances can be seen at alternative spaces, including Dance to the Underground. The topic of clothing and style will be discussed more in section 4.6 on identity.

Taylor (2013) discusses how queer and alternative music spaces often overlap. For her, queer alternative music spaces are not "mere spin-offs" of heteronormative alternative music spaces as they "manifest as assemblies of reconstituted cultural form and dissident political identities that bespeak the multiple fronts of queer resistance" (Taylor 2013:200).

I think a huge demographic of the alternative community is queer and a bunch of people that have contributed to the alternative zeitgeist have been queer themselves. Yeah, I think it's very much entwined in modern culture anyway so having a space that expresses that is really great (Respondent D 2023).

We started going out on the punk scene, so everybody is more open with like kissing boys, kissing girls. Like people don't give a shit. Nobody was asking you are you a boy or a girl, you know. You're here to have a good time (Respondent G 2023).

Fibbers would be more for alternative people. There are a lot of gays there as well but for Dance to the Underground, the gays, they go gayer (Respondent G 2023).

This last quote in particular highlights the need for a combined queer and alternative music space. Respondent G says that queer people go to Fibbers as an alternative music space but they ‘go gayer’ at Dance to the Underground, meaning they express their queerness more here in a queer space rather than a non-queer space. It is important for them to be in a space where the music they like is playing. Dance to the Underground provides a space where alternative queer people can come together as a community to share their music tastes with each other.

The alternative community in Dublin is not the biggest in the world because we don't live in a big major country. So, wanting a sense of community and wanting to go out and to be able to dance to the songs that you listen to in the kitchen, and you feel silly dancing to them by yourself (Respondent D 2023).

I love the feeling of being there, playing some punk from the 70's and you see a drag queen, a goth person, a punk, someone weird, someone more shy, a very drunk person, someone screaming. I love it, you know, cause I wouldn't see everybody together. I would maybe see the punk in a punk scene, the drag queen at the drag queen scene, the goth in the goth scene. But there, everybody is together. And I love it. You know, everybody loves each other so it's so fun (Respondent G 2023).

The space also provides a place in which alternative drag performers can perform to punk, metal and goth music in an underground, alternative space. The alternative nature of the space embraces difference, creativity and uniqueness which makes the regulars, and the performers feel a sense of inclusion and belonging. For Respondent G, Dance to the Underground allows the alternative members of the queer community embrace this aspect of their identity.

Dance to the Underground is not a pretty girls place. Drop your fucking wig. You know, it's not a pretty girls place. Drop your wig. There's no problem, you know. Just do your thing. If you fall, fall. Own it. It is not a place to be like oh my God they've fallen. No. Do your thing. That's the fun, everybody loves it. It's an underground place. No body is expecting there... (Respondent G 2023).



Image Seven (Fartukh 2022b) - Alternative drag performers at Dance to the Underground.

4.6 Identity

This respondents in this research demonstrated that Dance to the Underground provided a space for the expression of queer and alternative identities. For Watson (2009) forming one's identity is a social process. We share common identities, like sexuality, but everyone experiences them differently which creates our own unique identity. In this case study, the respondents all have a shared identity of being queer; however, their experience of discovering their sexual and gender identity is unique to them, as well as their experience of 'coming out'.

I remember being very angry at the time because nobody else has to go through this (Respondent A 2023).

I think sixteen year old me was a little bit worried about like one or two groups of people but the rest of it was just like 'hey look at me. I'm part of a community. I belong to something' (Respondent E 2023).

You feel free in doing it because it's your nature of course, but even though you feel free to do it, to say 'I'm gay. I'm proud' is a process A long process (Respondent G 2023).

Respondent G's experience here is consistent with Butler (1993) and Flowers and Buston (2001) who argue that queer identity formation and coming out is an on-going process. For

Stryker (1980), a person has as many identities as they have positions or roles in society and that these different aspects emerge in different contexts. A prominent theme across all the interviews was the feeling that one could express and perform certain aspects of their gender and sexuality at Dance to the Underground in a way they couldn't in other spaces, especially through their physical appearance.

We are able to be as alternative as we want. So, when I get there it feels really comforting that other people can go in, essentially bondage-wear to the club and they can feel that comfortable to be there, so I then feel that comfortable (Respondent A 2023).

I feel like I can go there in a skirt or a dress or something. I usually don't, I usually just go in jeans and chains and stuff but it feels like if I wanted to I definitely could (Respondent B 2023).

I saw how people were literally having, you know proper goth makeup or something and I was like woah, I could do whatever here. So, it was nice (Respondent C 2023).

I feel like, if anything, it gives me an opportunity to express myself more than I usually allow myself to (Respondent D 2023).

Dance to the Underground is the only place that I would ever wear a dress or a skirt out in public (Respondent E 2023).

If you wanna wear like a baggy jumper and baggy jeans, go for it. But if you wanna walk around in fucking lingerie, also go for it (Respondent F 2023).

A lot of girls, they feel free in wearing like a bra or you know, the boys as well. Everybody. They feel free to do it. To really dress up and put on a lot of very exaggerated makeup (Respondent G 2023).

Every respondent spoke about being able to express aspects of their identity that they couldn't in other spaces as it was an expression of their sexuality and gender identity. This is consistent with Davies (2015:113-114) finding that queer people express their identity through performance – their actions, clothing, appearance and language. For Goffman (1959), this is an example of social construction of identity through our social interactions and performance. We perform different aspects of identity depending on who we are amongst and the place we are in. As the above quotes show, Dance to the Underground allows people to express queer identity performance amongst other queer people.



Image Eight (Fartukh 2022b) - Makeup and clothing as self-expression.

The queer community is about being open minded. Like, they're less judgemental. Just like, I don't care who you identify as, just be open minded (Respondent C 2023).

Dance to the Underground provides a space where queer people can express their identity in an open minded and non-judgemental space. The space facilitates the expression of a multitude of identities, one such example being drag. For Rupp et al (2010:277), drag performances “evoke a range of sexual identities” which critique the binary gender system and parody the performative nature of gender. The respondents in this research felt positively about the drag performances at Dance to the Underground.

I love watching the drag and it's a great show (Respondent E 2023).

It's so unique. I really don't know of any other alternative drag night. I would say the drag is a big factor for people (Respondent D 2023).

Something unique about Dance to the Underground is that during each drag show, they allow their ‘open-call’ performers to perform. This when people who want to get into the drag scene or want to perform can contact the promoters and perform on stage. This is an incredible opportunity for those trying to get into the drag scene, as explained here by Respondent D.

I think drag is probably something I'd say a lot of queer kids would love to get into, but it does feel a little bit intimidating because the drag queens that you do see have been working on it for years and they're really experienced. So, it doesn't feel like there's an easy way in, and I feel like Dance to the Underground is a perfect way into that scene. There's so many people that have come from open-calls and are now frequent performers (Respondent D 2023).



Image Nine (Fartukh 2023) - Interactions between the audience and the performers can create a sense of solidarity (Rupp et al. 2011:290).

These open-call shows provide an opportunity for people to perform drag in front of an audience, which can be significant for identity formation. For Rupp et al. (2010:290), drag creates new possibilities for the expression of identity and can “create solidarity among queer audience members.”

It's great to see folk, you know getting on up and they're being supported by everybody.... It's a good way of focusing on people (Respondent E 2023).

It doesn't matter that they're doing the performance, everyone sings along (Respondent F 2023).

It's always fun, like just being at the front row and being part of a larger crowd doing that (Respondent B 2023).

The people there are very generous with the performers, with us DJ's cause they're screaming. They're, you know... sometimes, the performers might miss something but they're still cheering like yeah you can do this girl! You got it! (Respondent G 2023).

Hence, the drag performances at Dance to the Underground create solidarity amongst the audience members as they all sing together and become involved. The 'generous' audience can also be a source of support and aid in the identity formation of the performers themselves. The open-calls especially can create solidarity as the people performing may have friends in the audience or be familiar to the regulars, which will be discussed further in the next section on community.

4.7 Community

This research found that there is a strong sense of community at Dance to the Underground. A community is "when members of a group of people (a) have something in common with each other, which (b) distinguishes them in a significant way from the members of other putative groups" (Cohen 2011:12). This research found that a community has developed around Dance to the Underground as a space for alternative members of the queer community. Most of the respondents emphasised the sense of community at Dance to the Underground as a reason why they enjoy the space and feel comfortable there.

Everyone has a contribution to what makes Dance to the Underground. The partygoers, the performers, me as a photographer, [names redacted] as DJs or other DJs as well. So, community is really what makes it because if people don't go then there is no Dance to the Underground (Respondent C 2023).

The I think it is the sense of community. The fact that it's a ton of fucking people and it feels like most of whom, but realistically it's probably just a goof chunk of whom, that I already know and I know that I like (Respondent E 2023).

I think it's more what the queer community provide to Dance to the Underground, if you know what I mean. Because I always say, we are a party, but I always want to create a sense of community there... I would say that this party wouldn't be the same if they weren't here in this exact moment in time (Respondent G 2023).

These respondents feel that everyone who goes contributes to the space and that the community would not be the same if it weren't for the people who attend and contribute to and belong to that community.



Image Ten (Fartukh 2023c) - “Community is really what makes it because if people don’t go then there is no Dance to the Underground” (Respondent C 2023).

For Holt (2011) communities consist of individuals who have a shared bond or a shared identity. For the respondents in this study, being around other members of the queer community who have had shared experiences creates a sense of community.

I always make at least a few friends. I always get someone's name on Instagram because, again, I feel a kinship with the people around me. I will never shy away from someone who starts talking to me because I know that so many people in this room... we have so many shared experiences (Respondent D 2023).

When I'm there, I'm able to be around my own community. Even if it's really small and it might only happen once a month, it still helps because I actually get to talk to people who are like me and see me as me (Respondent A 2023).

For the most part, anybody who is going to a space like that, who is queer, anybody who is alt... again for the most part because of course there are exceptions... they're gonna be somebody who went through bullshit with other people being assholes to them so they're not gonna wanna repeat that cycle (Respondent E 2023).

Here the respondents feel that being able to talk about and relate to having a shared identity and shared experiences creates a feeling of belonging. For Delanty (2003:188) communities are “an open-ended system of communication about belonging” and communities are constructed through communication.

Now I notice there, every time someone goes, they bring more friends and then this friend that came will bring another one. So, it's you know, it's growing that way (Respondent G 2023).

The community is doing... it's doing their job; you know what I mean. It's getting together. It's helping each other. I put the poster there and say 'oh guys. Next party.' Everybody is sharing and, you know I feel flattered. Oh my God. This is crazy. Everybody is sending messages saying I'm going to invite my friends. It's amazing (Respondent G 2023).

Here Respondent G discusses how the communication between the people who attend, amongst each other and with the promoters is causing the event to grow and is expanding the community.

For Delanty (2003), the construction of community through social interaction creates a sense of belonging for the members of that community. The respondents in this research demonstrated that they feel the freedom to talk to other people in the space creates a sense of community for them.

I went to my first Dance to the Underground, and I spent the majority of the time in the smoking room talking to everyone. So, I didn't really get to see the show but I got to talk to like a ton of people which was really nice (Respondent F 2023).

I would still go if I didn't know anybody because that's my entire point. It's to go there to meet people. But it is certainly nice to know that even if I don't meet anyone, I'll have people there that I know that I can talk to (Respondent B 2023).

I went there completely on my own. I didn't bring anyone with me, and I was waiting at the door, and someone instantly just started chatting with me. Everyone was super friendly. It was insane how, like tight the community was (Respondent C 2023).

For Firth et al. (2011:557) “social capital is a concept used to refer to the social structures, institutions and shared values making up communities.” Social capital can be bonding (strong ties between people) or bridging (looser ties between people). This research found that both forms of social capital were present at Dance to the Underground as people explained how they had made friends but also had gained a sense of familiarity or bridging social ties with the other regulars. Watson (2009) refers to this as ‘rubbing along’. ‘Rubbing along’ involves brief interactions with others such as a smile, a nod or recognition, that make people feel a sense of belonging and community within a space.

Oftentimes because I'm like with my camera and I'd be taking pictures of the drag queens and some people see me behind the stage and they'd start talking to me and be like 'oh you're the photographer' and blah blah blah because I', almost there every month. So, people kind of know me there (Respondent C 2023).

I have definitely identified regulars when I've gone before. So, yeah, I think it's pretty tight knit (Respondent D 2023).

I know the bartenders. The bartenders know my drink. I know the bouncers. I know the regulars. I know the owner and I know the paramedics. None of which is from like needing the paramedics, I just drink and then talk to everyone (Respondent F 2023).

The respondents here find that there is a sense of bridging social bonds and familiarity in the space. This sense of ‘rubbing along’ with other regulars creates a feeling of community in the space. Stronger bonds are also made at Dance to the Underground. Some of the respondents

discussed being part of a group chat on Discord (a widely used instant messaging app). The group chat was created by Respondent E.

I think the chat itself was my idea. I just set up a random fucking Discord server one day and got the bare bones of each channel out and then just started walking around to random people being like 'yo, what's your Discord? You look cool. Do you wanna join?' (Respondent E 2023).

All of us, well not all but most of us, met through Dance to the Underground in one roundabout way or another (Respondent E 2023).

The group chat consists of alternative, mainly queer individuals, most of whom were added into the group at Dance to the Underground. The group chat has around 100 members and is split into different servers each discussing different topics such as gigs, music, creating plans to meet up with each other, advice and even for selling second hand clothes and other objects.

In general, people just discuss either music or if there are any meetups so it's a great space to kind of like see what's going on (Respondent C 2023).

There are a lot of queer people in that group chat and I'm happy about that because I have some people on my side (Respondent B 2023).

There will be people meeting up before Dance to the Underground and they'll be like 'okay we're in Fibbers, come meet us.' And I'll be like 'cool, I'll go see some people before we go downstairs (Respondent F 2023).

If you're looking for resource for, I don't know, getting patches or learning how to sew or embroider or heat seal or whatever it may be. You know, just basic fucking punk life skills, then you've got all of these people who've been doing it for at least a couple of years and a couple of baby punks as well who can learn and it's just a really cool way of just sharing knowledge (Respondent E 2023).

This group chat has allowed people to meet and get to know each other and as a result, they know arrange to meet before Dance to the Underground so they can go in together. They also meet outside of the event to go to gigs or to talk about music and interests with like-minded individuals. Another resource that Dance to the Underground provides is an area for small market stalls where locals and regulars can sell products and art that they make. They also display photo exhibitions of images taken by the resident photographers, in order to promote

their photography. Some of the respondents felt that these stalls act as a social space and add to the sense of community.

We've had a few times, a photo exhibition. So, then we don't have markets, but I try to always have someone there to sell their thing (Respondent G 2023).

With local people selling their stuff, they sell it for a reasonable price and it's also like giving back to the community (Respondent F 2023).

The amount of people that actually, like check things out or buy things. It's a brilliant, just like social space as well (Respondent C 2023).



Image Eleven (Fartukh 2022b) - Market stalls at Dance to the Underground.

The respondents in this research demonstrated that there is a strong community that has been built at Dance to the Underground because the space caters for members of the queer community who are interested in alternative music and subcultures. The venue also values creativity, self-expression and inclusion which made the respondents feel like they belong. Some of the respondents demonstrated that they felt Dance to the Underground which caters to a specific group within the queer community. Cohen (2001:12) discusses boundaries in communities and argues that the “boundary encapsulates the identity of the community.” The

boundary between Dance to the Underground and other spaces is what makes it special for the people who regularly attend as it differentiates that place from other spaces and even other queer spaces. The venue is not a 'local pub'; thus, it is significant to have such a strong sense of community there.

Holt (2011:858) found that the concept of a gay community can be highly important in people's lives, and he uses the example of the solidarity between queer people during the AIDS crisis of the 1980's. But he also discusses how he found that, while queer people still attend queer spaces and venues, some feel they belong to a 'personal community' rather than an overall homogenous queer community. Some of the respondents in this study demonstrated similar feelings. Some respondents resonated with Dance to the Underground as a queer space as they felt it catered more towards transgender and non-binary people.

I don't think Dance to the Underground just appeals to trans people. There's definitely cisgender gay couples there. But I just think it welcomes the diversity and the fluidity of sexuality and gender. It's less focused on labels (Respondent D 2023).

It was really good that we went to Dance to the Underground first because that was more of a trans scene (Respondent A 2023).

These respondents valued Dance to the Underground as they felt it catered towards their gender identity and created a space where transgender and non-binary people can socialise, belong and feel comfortable in a community.

The respondents also mentioned how they felt other queer spaces in the city have felt they were more catered towards cisgender gay men or lesbians, specifically white people.

I've experienced a lot of transphobia in [a well known queer bar in Dublin]. It does kind of feel like a gay male space. It's not like they're going to turn someone away at the door but it's like the conversations that I've had with cis gay men and their, kind of, dismissal. It feels like they're still in a kind of, older queer mindset, I suppose of who's acceptable (Respondent D 2023).

There's been sort of... I don't know... a reputation with gay bars. Especially in Dublin, where they will accept cis white gays and even just bridal parties of

straight women, but when it comes to trans people, even just trying to get in the door they will turn you away or if you're in there they will treat you as... well as a trans male they would treat me as a butch lesbian (Respondent A 2023).

Their idea of gay is white, cis, gay men and that's about it. And yeah sure, white cis queer men can usually go into straight pubs and be fine. Except when it comes to, like, gender-queer people or people of colour, or stuff like that, it's harder to justify saying 'oh you can just go in wherever'. No because people are going to be mean to you (Respondent B 2023).

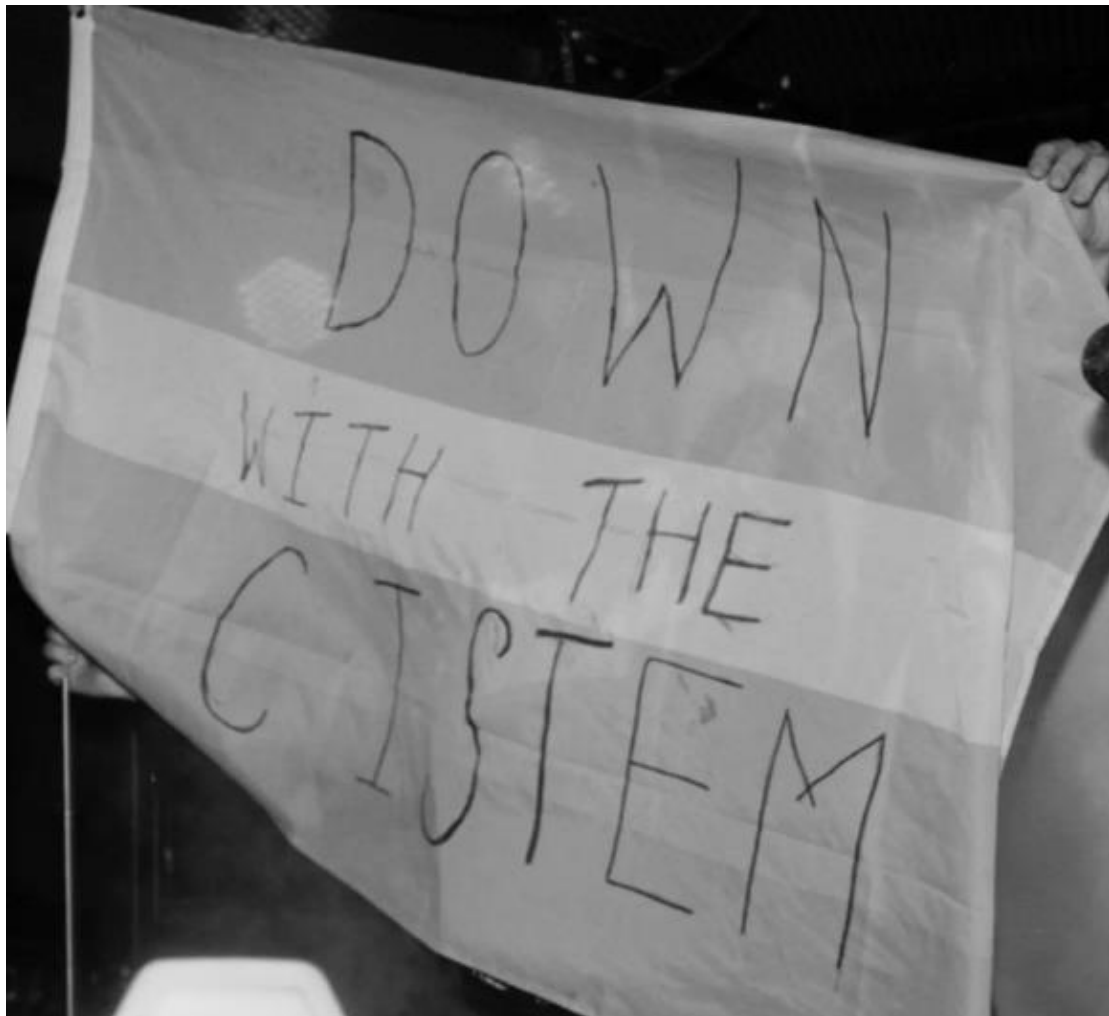


Image Twelve (Fartukh 2022d) - A trans flag being displayed at a performance at Dance to the Underground. Instead of it reading 'Down with the System', it reads 'Down with the Cistem' referring to the cisgender norms in society.

These experiences and understandings are consistent with Holt's (2011) findings that some queer people feel they belong more in 'personal communities' like the one that has developed at Dance to the Underground, rather than just any queer space. It was important to them that

Dance to the Underground catered towards transgender people, non-binary people, gender-queer people and queer people of colour as they felt a stronger sense of belonging with this community as opposed to the queer community as a whole.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

Place is so important because it forms the basis of our everyday lives. Everything that we do and ever have done is emplaced; thus, “place is everywhere” (Cresswell 2015:17) and every piece of sociological research involves place (Gieryn 2000). This particular piece of research has demonstrated the importance of place in people’s lives, specifically for members of the queer community. This research aimed to explore how queer spaces in Dublin are used, focusing on a case study of Dance to the Underground in Fibber Magee’s. To explore this topic, qualitative methods were used. Seven respondents were interviewed and images from an in-house photographer were used to provide visual context to the interview data. The overall theme of this research was place exploration but within this, five other themes emerged – third place, queer spaces, alternative music spaces, identity and community. All of these themes connect back to place exploration in some form.

The research illustrated the importance of place for members of the queer community. Dance to the Underground is viewed and understood as a place where queer people feel they can express and perform their sexuality and gender identity and socialise with like-minded individuals in a safe and welcoming space. The respondents felt it was significant that Dance to the Underground was a queer space and an alternative music space, as these are both important parts of their identity that they wish to express. Dance to the Underground acts as a third place as it provides the queer community with a space outside of the home and work in which they can socialise and express their identity.

The importance of queer space was established by this case study. The respondents felt that queer spaces were still vital for the queer community and that the argument that queer spaces are not needed in the post-modern western world is not applicable to their lived experiences (Browne 2007). They felt safer, happier and more included in designated queer spaces over

heteronormative spaces. Transgender and non-binary respondents in particular felt that Dance to the Underground was a vital space as it embraced transness as a part of queerness, which is consistent with Holt's (2011) findings that queer people don't always feel like they fit in with the overarching queer community. These respondents felt that other queer spaces in the city were catered towards cisgender queer people, emphasising the continued need for diverse queer spaces in the city.

The research found that there was an extremely strong sense of community at Dance to the Underground. Queer spaces allow queer people to socialise and interact with people who understand and relate to their lived experiences. Although the experience of being queer is different for every person, it is valuable for people to have a community of people they can relate to. The respondents in this research emphasised the importance of feeling a sense of belonging as this facilitated conversation. The shared identities of being queer and into alternative music and subcultures facilitated interactions from 'rubbing along' (Watson 2009) to stronger bonds like friendships. The Discord group chat is a significant example of the type of community that has developed here as over 100 people, mostly regulars at Dance to the Underground, have come together to build a community – inside and outside of the event.

The performance and expression of identity was another important factor for place attachment at Dance to the Underground. For some respondents, the drag shows felt like a communal activity where everybody joined in either singing or dancing or interacting with the drag artists. The open-call performances give beginner drag artists a chance to perform on a stage, which can be hugely significant for identity formation (Rupp et al. 2011). Every respondent commented on the importance of being able to dress however they wanted. Respondent G commented how the gays 'go gayer' at Dance to the Underground as they are encouraged by others to express themselves in ways they may not be able to in other spaces.

Again, this research has emphasised that queer spaces are vital for members of the queer community. This research fits in with the existing sociological research as it too recognises the importance of queer space. Further research could explore the need for queer alternative music spaces as Taylor (2013) has begun to explore, but she too acknowledges the gap in the literature in this area. Further research on this topic could also explore race and gender as themes because, although they emerged in the data, they were beyond the scope of this research. Some respondents in this research felt that gender identities, such as being transgender or non-binary, are not as readily accepted by heterosexuals and queer people alike. These prospects for research could add to the collection of literature, case studies and data which shows the need for queer space in queer people's lives and research like this may one day contribute to positive changes for queer spaces in the city.

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Appendix A – Consent Form for Interviews

Participant Identification Number:

<p style="text-align: center;">CONSENT FORM</p> <p style="text-align: center;">How are LGBTQ+ spaces used, experienced and understood: A case study of 'Dance to the Underground'</p>

Name of Researcher: Tara Egan

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated _____ for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

☐

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to refuse to answer any questions and to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

☐

3. I understand that my name will not appear in the final project.

☐

4. I agree to take part in the above study.

☐

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

Researcher

Date

Signature

Appendix B – Consent Form for Images

Consent Form

Thank you for agreeing to allow images to be taken as part of my assignment for my Special Topic Project at Maynooth University. My research is designed to explore how queer spaces in Dublin are used, experienced and understood. I have decided to focus on ‘Dance to the Underground’ as a case study.

If you have any questions about the research, you may contact me at tara.egan.2020@mumail.ie.

“I have read the description above and consent to the images.”

Signed _____

Date _____

Appendix C - Transcript of Interview (Respondent G – 12 April 2023)

Interviewer: Why don't we start by telling me about you and where you grew up?

Respondent G: Yeah, I'm from Brazil. Sao Paulo. Sao Paulo is like a megalopolis. It's very big. 12 million people. Yeah. So, I grew up there. I'm 36 – gonna turn 36 years old this June. So I grew up there, yeah. As you can, you know have a picture, it's a very diverse place. So you know its... Brazil is a very diverse place but Sao Paulo is huge. It has people from different communities. There's black people, there are Asians, there are so many. So I was... how do you say it? Lucky. You know, growing up in this kind of place because you have so many people to see that they are different. Different, you know, point of view, different taste, different places to go. So, that was kind of my background there. Seeing all the diversity that I could get. You know.

Interviewer: And when did you end up coming to Ireland?

Respondent G: It was like ten years ago. I came here in 2013. Like, eh, there's a lot of Brazilians that are coming here because it's very easy to get Visa and study English.

Interviewer: Oh, really?

Respondent G: Yeah, very easy. Well, it was like ten years ago [shared laughter]. Now I'm not sure. Yeah. Anymore. But then I came here, as many people do, just to study six months and come back and then life happened [shared laughter]. You know. So that was a little bit more. A little bit more. When you see, you know... Dublin is amazing, you know, as a foreigner I can say that cause it's very accepting. You know, Irish people. But the city as well because there's so many, you know, different nationalities nowadays. Very different than twenty years ago of course. And there's so many different people around so you feel kind of you know, an outsider together with the outsiders as a foreigner, you know. So that's, you know, it's kinda, you know, even the people that I met before – the people living here before the foreigners. Cause I came here, only six months then I'm going to go travel back to Brazil and they said please go because if you stay longer, you're gonna be trapped [shared laughter] like everybody else, you know. But, you know, in a good way. You know, in a good way.

Interviewer: So, would you go back to Brazil often?

Respondent G: I do maybe every year. But, because of COVID, of course, you know everything was a mess. So, I went last... it was last November.

Interviewer: Oh, nice.

Respondent G: I was there last November. But then there was like a big... there was, the last time I was there before that was like three years so.

Interviewer: Okay, cause of COVID, yeah?

Respondent G: Exactly. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: So, when did you realise you were queer then?

Respondent G: That's the thing, you know, I would say when you start... You know, well you always know when you're different. You know what I mean like as a kid... I always knew I was different than the other boys. You know, different than the other girls even. Just different, you know. Even different from my family. You have this feeling, you know, but you don't know how to name it because you don't know anything, you know. But it's interesting, when you're starting going out as a, you know, at like twelve and seeing with different eyes, you start seeing people. And you're starting to maybe, you know, okay, you know, I connect more with this, I connect more with that and I remember, you know... There's a lot of gay people in Sao Paulo [unintelligible] but they're very open. Even back then in the 90's, you know. And then I remember the gay people that I was seeing was when I was a kid – my mother had a lot of friends. Gay friends. I was very comfortable with them. Much more comfortable than the straight men. Cause they sit, you know, the social, you know, the way they are behaving was very different. I always found the straight men much more aggressive.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent G: And the look, for me, was like... woah no no, I don't like that. And the queer people, the gay, you know, they're more open and talkative and then I was like wow, that's a kind of nice thing, you know. So, I would say, when I understood that I was queer, I was like you know, a gay boy would be thirteen years old, twelve years old. And in the same moment, I started to listen to music, reading a lot. And then you see there's much more from outside than where you live. I said, oh my God, I feel like this, but a lot of people feel like this in different places in the world, you know. And then I read more and get, you know, books that, you know, there are two boys that love each other and then wow, those things are happening

somewhere or happened in the past. So, I think from that moment... thirteen, twelve years old, then I was like okay now I understand why I'm different. But of course, it's a long process. But I think from that moment I was like okay, so I have a little, you know, clue what's going on [laughs]. Why it's so different that I feel.

Interviewer: Would you label yourself? And if so, what would you label yourself as?

Respondent G: Now. Now I would say I's inside of the queer spectrum, but I am a gay man. A gay man.

Interviewer: Okay yeah, so that's what you would identify as?

Respondent G: I identify as a gay man, exactly.

Interviewer: So, when you did come out then, was it in Brazil?

Respondent G: Brazil, yeah.

Interviewer: And did you find... you were saying that you felt like you had support around you. So, was it difficult for you to come out?

Respondent G: Yeah, support in the sense that I have connections. Like I see people. I could see people. I could see queerness cause of the gay people. So, I think you feel less... less fear, you know what I mean, when you see... Because I imagine, for example, some of my friends from Ireland. From very small towns and they grew up gay. They were terrified because they don't see anybody, you know. In Brazil, even though I was terrified, it was like, okay there is life. People are being gay and being you know, but like when I was being out it was for friends. For family, it took a long time. But friends, it was always, okay you know, it was very open with my friends. We started going out on the punk scene, so everybody is more open with like kissing boys, kissing girls. Like people didn't give a shit. Nobody was asking you are you a boy or a girl, you know, you're here to have a good time. So, this moment was easier to come out, but in a way that... It's interesting to think myself now. Cause it wasn't in like a oh I'm gay and that I know what I'm doing. You know, it was just, I'm, you know, I'm kissing boys, I'm kissing girls and for the fun of it because I feel free doing this. But I was never saying I am gay, you know, or that's my identity because I didn't know what I was.

Interviewer: Yeah, okay. Okay.

Respondent G: So, you feel free in doing it because it's your nature of course. But even though you feel free to do it, to say I'm gay, I'm proud is a process. A long process. It's a long process.

Interviewer: Would you stay you still feel like it's ongoing for you?

Respondent G: I think so, because we go through so much oppression. So much oppression from every side. You know, television, pop culture, church, family. Everybody is oppressing you, saying, you know, it's wrong. You know, the world's heterosexual. The world's straight. You know the culture is straight. The movies are straight. You know, everything is straight. So, you feel, even though you know yourself, you feel, am I right here? Not even on the basis of right or wrong, because you know you are right because of the way you feel. But you feel am I allowed to be the way I am? You know. So, I think it's a big process. It's definitely much more comfortable now with my life of course, but it is a big process. I think it never ends because the damage [unintelligible].

Interviewer: And so, what was your first experience going to like a queer space then?

Respondent G: That's... yeah, a proper queer space I think was when I was about sixteen years old. Seventeen years old. Cause it was like a nightclub. You know, I got in a nightclub. But then again, it was like electronic music, pop music, that I wasn't a fan of. But I was like okay, to meet queer people, I have to go to a place that I don't like the music. I have to do this. You know.

Interviewer: And was that in Brazil?

Respondent G: In Brazil. In Brazil, yeah. And I was like, I'm always going to the punk scene and the rock'n'roll, but I couldn't find a lot of queer people. I found people who were maybe bisexual, giving a kiss, you know but not really like I am queer and not the men, you know. So, when I went to the first nightclub in Brazil and then I was like wow, so that's what being gay is. You know. So, that's very liberating. It's very liberating. Especially, like, when you're talking about seventeen years old and your hormones are crazy. You know, and again, background of Brazil and you know, sex, sexuality is talked about all the time. [unintelligible]. I have seen some things. So, it was like was wow. So that's... it is what it is. You know, and people are more open. But again, with this as well you can see... I always remember how lonely it is in the same because, you know, everybody that was there, that's the only place that they can be themselves. The nightclub, you know, so I could see there were all happy but when they were leaving, they were not holding hands, or they were just going.

Interviewer: Right, okay.

Respondent G: So, I couldn't notice, even from the first day. Well, now I know, you know, from experience, but for the first day it was like that's the only place you can be yourself, dance, do your thing, talk to everybody but in a sense that nobody is going to hurt you because everybody is kinda the same, you know.

Interviewer: So, at that time would there have been a lot of queer bars and clubs in Brazil?

Respondent G: A lot, yeah, yeah, yeah. But again, everything focusing in like pop music or electronic music because it was always like this. I think, when I was around maybe twenty years old, I found a place. It was rock'n'roll and punk and gay. That blew my mind. That totally blew my mind. I was like fuck, that's what I was looking for for so long, you know. So, then I went and I could meet people that, you know, were sharing the same ideas as mine because I know, we're all queer but like our tastes make a difference in the way you are talking to other queer people. So, for example, I am punk myself, so when you go to a punk place and it's full of queer people, you think oh my God, I am in heaven, if there is a heaven, you know. So, I think, I was around nineteen/twenty when I found the place in Sao Paulo as well. Yeah, there was all rock'n'roll or punk and all queer. Then I was like wow, that's my place. So, I was going there every week. Every week I was there. Yeah.

Interviewer: So, what was your first experience of queer space in Dublin then?

Respondent G: Yeah, in Ireland. I think, like a lot of people it was The George [laughs]. Yeah, The George, cause they're here, maybe they saw it in the first months. They are amazing. They are very good. You know, I think they have to be here in the, you know, they have been here for years. But again, I don't like to sound, like picky, but the music for me is always a big thing because I am a very musical person. I can't, you know, go a day without listening to an album or talking about music. So, going to The George was nice to meet queer people, to see the community and how they are doing here, but the music for me was a nightmare [shared laughter]. Nightmare, I couldn't stand it. I couldn't stand it. And then, that's the thing, when I was going to The George, to try to meet someone to kiss, it was always like this – oh my God, to have to kiss someone, I have to listen to bad music. And if I go to Fibbers, that was my first pub in Ireland when I came here, I'm not going to kiss anybody because it's only straight people, you know. But saying that, I kissed a few guys there [shared laughter]. Yeah, yeah, but it wasn't a queer space open, you know. You always feel, you know, you are in someone's house, not yours. If you know what I mean. You know?

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Respondent G: So then, my first experience in queer space was The George, but I was going there in the, you know, last case [laughs].

Interviewer: So, when did you start going to Fibbers?

Respondent G: That was my first pub. First pub ever. When I came here, I had a friend living here, back then, and then she said I know a bar, I've just been there and when you arrive, I'm gonna bring you there because you have to go. And then, this friend, when I arrived here she was busy or whatever and then I went by myself and then it was like fuck. I was like, you know, mesmerised like oh my God, I love this place because it was very much like the places I was going in Brazil, you know. But of course, you know, different vibe and different people. But I was totally in love. Totally in love because I just arrived in this city and I found my place. But, of course, I always found this very straight. But I'm, you know, I was used to it because all the places I was going were very straight people. Nothing against, but you know what I mean, it's nice to have a, you know, someone to connect, you know. Even someone to kiss, someone to love, you know, to do something.

Interviewer: And so, when did you meet your partner then?

Respondent G: My partner, we met... it was in the beginning of the lockdown. Yeah, it was 2020, right? 2020, yeah. Three years. We matched on Tinder because as me as well, he's goth. He not listening to much pop music. So, he going only to straight places here but not going to queer places here. You know, very rare. So, we matched on Tinder and then the moment we said okay lets meet, the lockdown came. So, we couldn't meet.

Interviewer: Yeah, of course.

Respondent G: So, then we were talking, you know, for three months. Only talking. Then, when I think the first time they opened space for, you know, people to meet in the parks, then we met. It was like in May 2020. Yeah, gonna turn three years. And then since then, we are together. Yeah, and then music again, was the big, you know, connection there because you say, oh my God, there's another gay, another queer person that shares the same ideas, the same music, environment, even the same bands. It's nice, you know, it's very nice because you can share those things.

Interviewer: So, alternative music is important to you then?

Respondent G: Very important. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Because I think, for me, it was always important, you know, since I was twelve and I was starting to look at things. So that came with me always, you know. Always with me. Now that I'm older it's not so much but it's always a lifestyle, you know even like the music itself. The music comes from a lot of, you know... there's a lot of people when you say oh do you like music? They say well yeah I like music. But no, I love music. It's a lived lifestyle cause I don't see myself doing it differently. So then, that is very important.

Interviewer: So, how and when did the idea for Dance to the Underground come to you?

Respondent G: Yeah. I started being a DJ in Sao Paulo when I was twenty/twenty-one and then I was playing in rock'n'roll clubs. Then when I came to Ireland, I was like okay I'm gonna try it, you know. But when I came here I couldn't speak a word of English.

Interviewer: Really?

Respondent G: At all. I couldn't say, you know, I couldn't see exits in airports. Nothing. And then I was like okay, I'm gonna try but first I have to learn to, you know, even say hey hello can I play here, you know. It took ages for me. Two years to feel confident, you know. Even three to feel okay confident. Then after this... Dublin is a very small city. Very small. So, then I was trying here, trying there. No. No. A lot of nos. A lot of nos. And then I remember one girl said listen I think you have to come up with your own party cause only if you're friends of a friend you're going to be invited to play somewhere. And then I was like yeah whatever, you know, and then life was happening, you know, nothing. It's okay I'm fine with that. Not gonna happen here being a DJ. That's fine. And then lockdown came. It was the only time in my life that I stayed home, you know, locked home, cause I'm a very party person. I was always going out. If not going out in Dublin, I was travelling outside. London – there's a lot of gay rock'n'roll places, goth places, punk places, Paris. So, then during the lockdown then I met my boyfriend. He was also a DJ in Brazil and I always thought how we could do something, you know, could do a party and I think then in November 2021, I saw an ad. October actually. 2021. I saw an ad on Fibbers website because after lockdown a lot of promoters they stopped doing parties, yeah. And then Fibbers was saying oh we need promoters and then I was like you know what I'm gonna try this again. You know, nothing to lose. Then I sent an e-mail to them. I had an idea of my party like this, like that, rock'n'roll and then some performers and the idea of it being punk and goth, you know, everything from 70's, 80's. Then, he sent a message answering like straight away. Okay when can you start? You know, wow, it was crazy.

Interviewer: Wow [laughs] yeah.

Respondent G: I said maybe in two months and then he goes like no maybe three weeks. The fuck? [shared laughter].

Interviewer: Oh my God.

Respondent G: And then I was like... then I called my boyfriend. I said listen we have three weeks to come together, right. And then I was like okay so, I don't want to only have a party, I want to have some performances because I love performance, you know. And then I was like telling my boyfriend, maybe I'm going to do a performance. You know, he was like it's three weeks to have to put the music together, do the promotion, you're not going to be able to do the performance as well. But then he was like you know what, let's find someone that could do it. Let's find some drag queens, you know, they are amazing performers. And they could only do rock'n'roll and punk songs. They don't have that here right, and in Sao Paulo we even have there. We have some drag queens performing only rock'n'roll and this kind of thing but I love it. And then, I started to find... I started texting the drag queens from here. I texted actually [name redacted], that's the one from [a well-known queer bar in Dublin] and then I asked do you have any, you know, alternative queens? Rock'n'roll queens? And then she put me in contact with two of them and then when I texted them they said okay, maybe, let's try it, you know. And I said listen, you know, I'm starting from the scratch. I know nobody and then I'm just gonna put my friends there and I don't have budget [shared laughter]. You know, I'm gonna charge five euro on the door because I don't... you know I want an okay price. And then from that day, we started promoting and everything. I called all my friends and then it was November in 2021, we had the first night there. I have to say it was a success because I think it was around fifty people. You know, I remember there, we made at the door ninety euro and I gave... there were three queens. I gave thirty each and said this is it [shared laughter]. Oh no, a hundred and ninety cause then I paid a hundred for the place.

Interviewer: Oh okay [shared laughter].

Respondent G: And my friends and my boyfriend and I, we didn't make a penny, but you know. And that was really cool because it was only my friends there, some people that got to know by the promotion and they were very impressed with, you know, the drag queens performing rock'n'roll cause like even the queens were telling me after, you know, even from the first night like I don't feel drag queen, I feel like a rockstar because people are cheering, you know, they go for it. So, yeah so, that was the start of the idea, and we did this November party and then we had planned another one for December but, then lockdown hit again. Then we were for another two months in lockdown and then we came back in February. And then, in those last two months not doing parties, but promoting. A lot of promotion. And social media takes a big part in this cause you're connecting a lot of people. So then, in February we had a much bigger turn out, you know, maybe a hundred people, you know, even like a hundred and fifty. I don't remember exactly, but it was a lot. For me it was like fuck there's a lot of people here, you know. And people were talking so that was very cool. Now I notice there, every time

someone goes, they bring more friends and then this friend that came will bring another one. So, it's, you know, it's growing that way.

Interviewer: Yeah. So kinda like a network?

Respondent G: Network yeah, but a big kind of like community, you know. Everybody knows each other so that's... it's really cool. Since I've been walking there, it feels like I'm at a house party. You know, because you know everybody, you know their name, you'll talk just a little bit. Oh, how are you doing? Ah not so well or I'm doing very good today. You know, so it's very cool. It's very cool.

Interviewer: Would you mix with the people who attend then?

Respondent G: Oh yeah, we talk a lot. We talk a lot there and, you know, when they need help, we talk on social media. We talk a lot there so that's very good.

Interviewer: And you were saying that you went to [drag queen – name redacted]. Were you friends with her? Did you become friends with her in [a well-known queer bar in Dublin]?

Respondent G: No, no because I knew she's the queen of Ireland besides [name redacted] of course, but then I was like I have to find some queens and I have no source so I went to the big source [shared laughter]. Yeah, you know, cause I didn't know her at all. Actually, I texted a lot of queens and a lot of them didn't answer [laughs] cause they're thinking who is this person, this crazy person. They have no budget, they asked me to do a punk drag show. What the fuck?

Interviewer: How did you feel then, at the very first one? What was it like seeing those people show up for your show?

Respondent G: Yeah, it was a great feeling because for me it was a big achievement cause like I came here wanting, you know, wanting to do this and that was the first time I was doing it. Plus, I was doing it with my boyfriend, you know, so it was a big thing, creating together, you know. And then with the queens as well it was amazing because I was doing something, you know, rock'n'roll/punk night but queer because we have this, you know, performance, playing with gender. And the queens, they are amazing. They are professional queens, you know, so they really know what they are doing. It was amazing to see everybody so happy and dancing and saying oh my God the music was amazing, the performance was amazing. The place, the basement of Fibbers, I think is very underground, you know, it's very rock'n'roll. Everybody said oh my God this place is fantastic. It was a lot of big, you know nice feedback.

Some people had came there for the first time and they said listen this place is gonna grow, believe me you're gonna have more people here. Like oh thank you, thank you so much. At the same time, you feel kinda hoping but, you know, you cannot count because working in events there's always this anxiety going on because, you know, if one day its lashing raining, half the people doesn't go. You know, you cannot count, you know, on everything. But I would say to everybody, the first hour of the event my anxiety levels are here [gestures hand up high]. After first hour, more relaxed [shared laughter].

Interviewer: So... what has changed at Dance to the Underground since you first started it compared to now? Or has it kind of stayed the same?

Respondent G: Yeah, I think what's changed is, you know, sometimes I notice it's much busier, you know, and then, for example, we always did parties on Mondays. Mondays and then Thursdays. When we have parties on Friday, it's kind of busy, but I have to say sometimes too busy, you know what I mean. It's jamming. It's too busy. So, I noticed this, when it's too busy. It is fun of course. It's amazing but people don't engage so much. When it was Monday, for example, you're not going out... well sometimes you are going out like it's Monday let's go out, but you're going for a party. You're going to Dance to the Underground on Monday. Friday, it's like let's go out. What's out is out. You know. So, I noticed, when you have kind of more dates on weekdays, the engagement is different. Yeah. Like more weekends, that we have now, there's different people coming and sometimes it's very busy and, you know, the engagement is not... they cannot have a conversation because it is too busy. Too hectic. So, that's the thing, the biggest difference would be, like, the dates.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent G: But the people, you know, I have to say the people there... there are people that have been coming since the first party. They don't miss one. So, that vibe kept going, you know. And that's what I was saying, the people there are very generous with the performers, with us DJ's cause they're screaming. They're, you know, sometimes, the performers might miss something but they're still cheering like yeah you can do this girl! You got it! So, this vibe is still the same since the first day that there wasn't so many people. Still now, like the January party was crazy. There was a lot of people. The vibe was the same. Same vibes. Pretty much a lot of the same people. There were more, you know, newcomers coming. But it kept. I think that the difference would be like the day of the week. Weekdays, like Monday, Thursday is different than a big Friday. Big Friday's like too crazy.

Interviewer: So, do you like to have a mix of weekends and weekdays? Or do you prefer the weekdays?

Respondent G: I like, that's the thing, I prefer the weekdays. But like, Fridays are good as well because you can reach more people. You know what I mean. It's beautiful to have, you know, only our, you know, our friends, let's say on Monday. But it's amazing as well when you get... I got a lot of people there at the last party saying I've never been at a drag show. That's the first time I've seen it and I love it. And I want this as well. I want to show people, listen that's drag and then they are amazing. They can be rock'n'roll. They can be punk. They can be anything, you know. Cause they think oh drag, drag means, you know pop music. I don't like it. They're saying this - the punks or the goths. But that's the thing, I was in between because like both days are amazing. Cause I was the same for the punk scene when I was going out. When you talk about anarchy or you're a punk or this kind of feminism. Only when people there understand that, it's easy. I want to talk to people outside that cause then they're gonna absorb something, you know. Like if you're a feminist and I'm a feminist, you'll talk about feminism. Happy days, you are all happy. If you are not a feminist, it may be explained to you what feminism is but it's different. There is a win/win there. So that's a big difference. Mondays I have everybody that I know and the message will be amazing as well but they know what the message is. Fridays, I have different people coming in and the message is gonna be stronger because sometimes it's the first time they are seeing that, if you know what I mean.

Interviewer: So, what was the inspiration for the name then?

Respondent G: That's funny because like I remember I was, like, trying to think about the name. The first one was... I love Iggy Pop. The singer. You know, I was like thinking, I was doing my brainstorming and then I was like, okay, Ugly Pop. I was thinking Ugly Pop because it's punk music that is popular but it's not that... you know, that's my mind working, right. It's popular but it's not so pretty because, you know, they are screaming and there is weird guitars. And I was like Ugly Pop and then it would be like Ugly Pop: Dance to the Underground. Literally to dance cause that's the idea. I'm gonna play here punk songs, goth songs, rock'n'roll but something that you can dance to. You're not gonna listen to, you know, Led Zeppelin here because you know, they're amazing, I love it, but you cannot dance to this. So, everything is fast and you can dance and you can shake. So, the idea was for it to be Ugly Pop: Dance to the Underground. But then I was talking to my boyfriend and then he was like I don't think Ugly Pop because people are gonna think this is a pop place, a pop party or something. And then he was like nobody will think about Iggy Pop, only you because you love Iggy Pop [shared laughter]. And then I was like you know what, I'm gonna just do Dance to the Underground, you know. Dance to the Underground – the underground scene. Even about Fibbers being in the underground, you know. Then I scratched there Ugly Pop and it became only Dance to the Underground.

Interviewer: When did you start doing the open calls for the drag?

Respondent G: Yeah, that's a good one. Open calls, we started in July, I think. July or August because when we started in November and then the two months break because of lockdown.

We were back and it was February. March was a big party and then April was another big one and then May. It started growing, growing, growing, growing. And then June, we had another party and then it was even sponsored by the Dublin Pride because I sent a project to them and they said oh brilliant. Then I put a band. I got like six drag queens. So, it was really cool. And then people were starting to talk about it, you know, and I started to get a lot of messages from baby queens or like people who want to perform and then I was like fuck, the thing is I want to grab everybody, but we don't have... we need a budget to pay everybody. But I do like as well to have people as well that never did, you know, to have the chance to do it. And then I was talking to the queens and then I said what would you guys think about having an open call here? And then I can, you know, just spread the idea that you can come. It has to be punk or goth and then you do your song and then you do your thing, you know. And they said yeah it could be fun and it could be open for more people to do it. And then the first open call, I think it was in August, if I'm not wrong. And then there were two people there who were always coming there since the first party. I was very happy. [name redacted] and [name redacted]. So [name redacted] is a drag king and [name redacted] is a drag queen. It was the first time they were performing and it was amazing. Like really amazing and they're still performing since then. So, that was a big change when I saw them performing and I thought, oh my God, open call has to be a thing because people come here and they have a little idea how it is, plus the audience is so generous. They're gonna feel amazing and that's the vibe. You know, I have to say, some places you drag queens, if the drag queens falls or their wig falls, people are like oh my God, you know, they're gonna be like this. But Dance to the Underground is not a pretty girls place. Drop your fucking wig [shared laughter].

Interviewer: [laughs] That's brilliant.

Respondent G: You know, it's not a pretty girls place. Drop your wig, There's no problem, you know. Just do your thing. If you fall, fall. Own it. It is not a place to be like oh my God they've fallen. No. Do your thing. That's the fun, everybody loves it. It's an underground place. No body is expecting there...

Interviewer: Glamour?

Respondent G: Yeah, glamour, Shakira. You know. So, the open call was amazing cause everybody came for the first and then people started sending messages saying oh I'd love to do it, love to do it. So, I did a kind of list from August last year, the whole year to December. So, it was amazing. A lot of people came. I did it as well because I never did performance before and I thought if everybody can then I can as well, right. So, the first performance there was an open call as well. So, it was really fun because a lot of people were saying this is something I've never done and I'm shitting myself but let's do it. You know.

Interviewer: So, how did that feel?

Respondent G: It feels very good because, you know, I always say, maybe try it. Maybe if you don't wanna do it, maybe think and try once, then say okay it's not for me. But try, you know, there's no harm in trying. It feels very good, because, like again, you feel... the audience is so generous. You don't feel they eyes like who's this person, who's coming here. There always like come, you know, come to us [person talking in background]. And then you feel like you belong to a place. You feel like oh my God, I'm being seen. I could be doing anything here and everybody is like yay! It's fantastic. It's a really good feeling.

Interviewer: Would you perform again?

Respondent G: I did. After this I did many times. Yeah. I did a few different spots in Dublin. I did there again. I was invited to do it in different parties here as well. So, it's really great. It's a great feeling, you know, great feeling.

Interviewer: And then, what gave you the idea to bring in the little stalls and the small businesses that you have selling there?

Respondent G: Yeah, yeah because in Dublin that I found very cool is that you have a lot of markets, you know like queer markets or, you know alternative markets. And I got to know a lot of people because I always go to the markets, you know. And then I was like, [unintelligible] it's a great idea to have a place, you know markets and as you know in Fibbers you have the main area and then this back area there and that's a very cool space. And you have the... the dressing room for the drag queens. Once I was walking there like oh my God here we could here use better this space, you know, because people were there chatting away but they were not dancing or anything. You know. And then I remember one of the girls, they were talking to me. They sent a message to me talking about their market and then I was like, you know what. Her name is [redacted]. She is amazing. They are always very amazing. They are always making some accessories and this kind of stuff. And then I was saying listen you do a lot of markets. Would you like to try to do something here? And they said okay I would love to and they came to do it once and then it was amazing and they said I've never sold so much.

Interviewer: Oh my God. Yeah.

Respondent G: It was amazing. Amazing. I said listen so let's do it cause you know, you help me, I help you, everybody's happy. So, from then I start trying to do it like every party we have. Sometimes we have there... we've had a few times a photo exhibition. So, then we don't have markets. But I try to always have someone there to sell their thing, you know.

Interviewer: So, back to the open call. Would you get a lot of messages from people?

Respondent G: A lot. A lot.

Interviewer: And how do you filter them? How do you decide who performs?

Respondent G: I always have a list, you know, trying to go chronologically. If you send a message today, you'll be the first on the list. And then I get the names for everybody, put them all on a list. It is a lot of work, you know. And then I have a kind of message saying listen, let's talk a bit about what you want, your performance. It has to be... that's the big thing, it has to be a punk or goth song.

Interviewer: Is that your only kind of rule?

Respondent G: Only rule. Yeah, yeah, yeah. If you say oh but that's Lady Gaga... Honey, I know but [shared laughter]. I know you love Lady Gaga [shared laughter]. You know, but no. Or, I don't know, very... more electronic kind of song, you know, even though it can be a little punk but can be borderline. Okay, listen, that's a place that we've never had before so I want to keep this, you know, rock'n'roll, punk, goth, more alternative. You know, from these areas. So, that's the only thing if you wanna come perform it's punk or goth. So, then I have to sometimes you know... this song is not... try to find a different one. But that would be the only thing. And then of course, their availability. If they can or they can't. Cause a lot of people from outside Dublin as well wanna come. I got a message from Greece.

Interviewer: Really? [shared laughter].

Respondent G: But again, we are open call. We don't make a lot of money. Almost nothing, you know. And then I remember this girl she was asking me oh how is the budget and the accommodation. Honey... we don't have that. We don't pay for the open call. You come, do your thing and this is it.

Interviewer: So, it's an opportunity to kind of just be involved?

Respondent G: Absolutely and again if you want to do something weird, something different, you know, especially if you never did. There's a lot of queens, they are baby queens. They've been doing it for six months, a year or they've had more time doing it but they never did punk and they want to try it. But you know, if you never did it I would be more oh yes come. Come and join us. It's a big step to send a message to someone and say listen I never did drag queen,

but I want to do it. It's a fucking big step. And of course, I'm going to talk nicely to everybody but for those people I'm going to encourage. Come. Come to us. You know.

Interviewer: And would they audition?

Respondent G: No, no, no.

Interviewer: You just see it on the night?

Respondent G: On the night. Absolutely.

Interviewer: That's so cool.

Respondent G: No. On the night. Just say they love Courtney Love. Hole. Courtney Love. Come over. Your show time is ten past ten. Be there. We're gonna call your name. Jump on the stage. Yeah, so this is it.

Interviewer: That's so cool. And then, the posters that you put on Instagram every month. Do you design them?

Respondent G: I design them. Yeah, yeah. They're myself. Yeah. Like I'm not a designer, you know, but I started doing them by myself. We confirmed the party with Fibbers. I had three weeks to do it. I thought fuck, I have to do a poster now [shared laughter]. And I had no idea cause I played with, you know, softwares and things but never the professional ones. So, it was like fuck I have to create something. You know, there is a big picture from the 70's that I love of Catwoman and I put the picture there, but I was like oh my God I can't use this picture, cause it's you know, like copyrighted shit. And then I went, you know what I'm just gonna put Dance to the Underground on her face and then I'll tear it a little bit, the picture, so I hope nobody's gonna sue me [laughs].

Interviewer: Yeah, okay and what would be your inspiration for the posters every month?

Respondent G: Everything punk, 70s and you know play with a little bit of colours. At the beginning, again because we didn't have any material, so I was getting pictures from the 70's, from the punk scene, you know. I think the first one was... actually the first one was with the logo I did with this girl, with this Catwoman from the 70s. And the first poster was a nice

picture of me and my boyfriend giving a little smack in Dublin. I had a mohawk. He had the piercings, and it was kind of nice. Nice poster. The second poster was a transexual from the 70s. What's her name again? Oh... I forgot her name. But it was photo because I think she was the first transexual singing in a punk band, you know. So, I used this photo. And then, when I started having photographers doing photos at the party, I was checking for wow that can be a picture. So, I started using photos of the people who were coming there. So, I think, from May, I started using pictures from the photographers. Those pictures would look amazing on the posters. For the goers to be on the poster, you know. And for Pride, I got pictures of a lot of queer people kissing together and then we had for the one year poster... it was the drag queen Devine that I love. You know, Devine holding a birthday cake. Then we had Bowie party and it was Bowie. But I always try to check as well if we have cool pictures of the goers cause I would love to have my picture there so everyone is allowed to have their picture there.

Interviewer: Wow that's really cool. Yeah. And so, you were talking about the photographers.

Respondent G: Yeah.

Interviewer: How did you meet them or how did they start working with you?

Respondent G: Yeah, it was the first party. One of my best friends, he is a photographer and then I was begging him, please do pictures [shared laughter]. But again, I'm not gonna pay cause I don't have any money, you know. Everything... let's do it together, you know, and then he did and it was amazing. Amazing pictures. Second night... the second time, it was like after two months. We had this break but I was doing a lot of promotion. So, [name redacted]... she is an amazing Irish photographer as well. She just came to me and said listen do you want me to do some photos at your party. So, I said please but then again, big problem with budget. She said no trouble, I want to do it. So, she did. She came and she took amazing pictures as well. So, every time we had someone that was a friend that wanted to do it. Then from, I think July, last July, our official photographer, their name is [redacted]. They came to me and said I'm finishing college in art and I love pictures. Can I do some pictures? So, I said of course come over. And then he sent the pictures to me. They were amazing. Amazing. Amazing vibes. Everything was analogue. You know, a lot of analogue pictures. And then from that day he was like listen I love your party, I've never felt so welcome in any place. I'm quite a shy person and bring the camera is amazing because I can take pictures and I can, you know, meet people he was saying. Can I come? I was like please you are more than welcome. So, I had him with us at every party and then some different friends are coming as well. One of my Brazilian friends as well. He's coming to do pictures for us. He's an amazing photographer. So, there is always someone that wants to do pictures. You know, always. You know what I do with them as well... after a while, we try to put some photo exhibition of their pictures there. For the first time, I think it was November, from the first one year party I did this from my friend... my friend that did the first party. So, there was a lot of pictures from throughout the year. Then in

December we did it with [name redacted] as well. There was a lot of pictures there. So, the photographers are coming. They love it, yeah.

Interviewer: And you mentioned a few times there that you don't really get much of a profit from it.

Respondent G: No. No because like I have to pay the place, you know. I have to pay the queens. [unintelligible]. They are my priority. I have to pay myself as well and pay, you know, the person that stays on the door. And give some money for my boyfriend because I'm kinda, you know, like I would be the manager, if you wish. Then I have to pay everybody, pay the place. I make some profit myself because I always charge five euro and then I think what do you buy with five euro? Not even a pint down there.

Interviewer: I know, yeah.

Respondent G: Not even a pint. So, that's a thing I have to change as well because like you know at the end of the day you need to make something as well because you don't feel your work's valuable. You know, you make a lot of things and with the pressure you feel like fuck what am I doing, you know. And plus, I work as well. Full-time. My boyfriend work's full time. So, it's like kinda, you know, a second job but you're not getting paid for it.

Interviewer: Yet you still do it, so the passion is obviously there.

Respondent G: Yeah of course. Exactly. That's the main thing. You know, if it was for money than I wouldn't be able to pay my rent. It doesn't make any profit. But, like the idea to be there and to have people around and, again, to play the music that we like in a queer space, you know. I love the feeling of being there, playing some punk from the 70's and you see a drag queen, a goth person, a punk, someone weird, someone more shy, a very drunk person, someone screaming. I love it, you know, cause I wouldn't see everybody together. I would maybe see the punk in a punk scene, the drag queen at the drag queen scene, the goth in the goth scene. But there, everybody is together. And I love it. You know, everybody loves each other so it's so fun.

Interviewer: Is there anywhere else in Dublin that you feel has that same mix or do you think it's a unique mix of people?

Respondent G: I don't know. I would say, like Fibbers has other parties there as well. All different people are going there. The alternative people, right. But I don't know, more of the

queer people coming to this party. I think its more there because if you go to The George, it would be more of the pop queens there. You know, they are more into pop music. Mother would be the same. Electronic music and things. Panti bar is more a bar. Fibbers would be more for alternative people. There are a lot of gays there as well but for Dance to the Underground, the gays, they go gayer. You know what I mean. I love leather and so does my boyfriend as well and we've noticed since we... we always go dressed up. And then, since the second party, we are going all dressed up. You know, my mohawk, everything, makeup. People are starting going as well. They feel free to do it. You know, a lot of girls they feel free in wearing like a bra or you know, the boys as well. Everybody. They feel free to do it. To really dress up and put on a lot of very exaggerated makeup.

Interviewer: Would you feel that same way?

Respondent G: Same way. You know, like, I'm kinda more cynical cause I feel like this anywhere [shared laughter]. You know, I would go in the same way to The George. And I will go sometimes and people are like what the fuck? Like I don't care. Cause I've passed this time, you know I'm 35 years old. But again, if I was 18 years old, I wouldn't. I'd feel more, you know. I'd want to dress up like this. I remember, even, one of the girls I met there and she was saying the first time I went to Dance to the Underground, I didn't have clothes to go to feel, you know what I mean. And then after she said oh my God I love these people; I love this fashion and then she started picking clothes there and here, in the charity shop. Now, she's a full on, you know, punk girl. So, then she felt like you know, I am free to express myself with my clothing, with my makeup, with everything and I don't feel that way anywhere. So that's amazing to hear. Amazing, you know.

Interviewer: And speaking of politics and punk and stuff like that... there were those Rock for Culture protests a while back. Were you involved with them?

Respondent G: No, I know them. It was like [name redacted] who was doing this. I know she is always at the party, but I was not involved at all. I was just supporting with the promotion and everything. I was not involved at all. But she was amazing doing these and putting people together and talking to the media. And then when she was asking me if she could bring one of the drag queens. I said absolutely, I'm gonna talk to the drag queens. [Name redacted] went to do the first one, it was here in O'Connell Street, and she was there to perform as well. But [name redacted] was the one. She was promoting everything

Interviewer: So, what do you want for the future of Dance to the Underground?

Respondent G: Yeah, that's a good one. As you know, we cancelled the party this month because we were feeling so overwhelmed.

Interviewer: I mean working full-time and doing this... it sounds like a lot.

Respondent G: Oh my God. Yeah. It is a lot because it's not a matter of okay it's once a month, we're gonna be there. There is a lot of preparation. There is a lot of people to talk to, to answer. There's a lot of stress, you know. But again, I love doing it. But again, we have our full-time work, personal life. So, this month we did a lot of other things as well. We did some different gigs. I did different gigs as well. So, then it was like oh my God we need a little break because otherwise we just gonna go crazy and then it's not fun. You know, it has to be fun. So, the idea is really to keep doing it. To really keep doing it. Again, to keep the people there but bring more people to show them. Listen, we are queer, we are punks, and we are here. You know what I mean and that's my idea, to keep this vibe, to have more open call people to come to do their thing the first time. It's lovely to see, you know six months ago when the two performers did the first open call. Now they are doing gigs around Ireland.

Interviewer: That's so cool. Yeah

Respondent: Everywhere, you know, Galway, Cork, Belfast, here. Like, during the week, I was doing a different party in a pub in the Liberties – All my Friends. I invited them there. So, they were saying like after performing at Dance to the Underground, I'm doing a lot of things. It's amazing.

Interviewer: I think it's amazing to be able to provide that for someone.

Respondent G: Exactly cause you know, I always say I am not going to change 300 people that are there. Maybe one or two and that's for me. You know, change a little bit of your life and have a good time here. This is it. You know, if you have a night and you're like oh my God I love this, you are not going to forget this. That is about, you know someone in the 80's said, you have to fight for your right to party [laughs] because it is a right and you have to fight for it. You know, and a lot of people say that's so shallow. No. Party is a big part of your existence. You have to because if you don't feel comfortable, if you don't party, what else are you gonna do. At least, I think like this [shared laughter].

Interviewer: So, do you feel you've made friends since you have begun Dance to the Underground?

Respondent G: Absolutely. Yeah, yeah, yeah. A lot of amazing people. Amazing people. Friends, I would say like friends are much more like people that you get to know, you know.

Friends is a more strong connection. A lot of people I get to know and we text each other, you know if they're not feeling well. My birthday was in June last year and I'm never going to forget. I was on the door selling the tickets and then I posted oh it will be my birthday today at the party. One guy came and just gave me a cake.

Interviewer: I remember that.

Respondent G: You remember that? Oh, I was about to cry. And then he gave me two cakes. He was like this cake you can share here and the other cake bring home. Oh my God!

Interviewer: That's so nice.

Respondent G: You know, it's just these little things. These little things. So, we met a lot of people. The people are just lovely. That's the most fabulous thing. Everybody is so lovely. A lot of people I get to meet after the party as well, going somewhere for a walk or things. So, there are amazing people there.

Interviewer: What do you think Dance to the Underground provides to the queer community?

Respondent G: I think, that's the thing, I think it's more what the queer community provide to Dance to the Underground. If you know what I mean. Because, I always say, we are a party but I always want to create a sense of community there, you know. Because we are a party. We love to party but it's amazing to go to a place that you feel connected. You feel you belong. And that a community... when people start going there, they really embrace the party. Of course, because they love the music, they love the punk, they love the goth, they love Fibbers as well of course. Everything matters. But that they feel comfortable with everybody there. So, I would say that this party wouldn't be the same if they weren't here in this exact moment in time. Especially, after lockdown everybody was so, you know, long at home. So, everything was, you know, conspiring to be a good night because everybody was so happy, everybody is so engaging. Like, social media is so engaging because people are talking about being queer and being open. So, it's a great time to have a place like this. But again, the community is doing... it's doing their job, you know what I mean. It's getting together. It's helping each other. I put the poster there and say oh guy's next party. Everybody is sharing and, you know, I feel flattered. Oh my God, this is crazy. Everybody is sending messages saying I'm going to invite my friends. It's amazing. So, I am not doing this myself with my boyfriend. It's cliché to say, but we are doing it all together because, you know, we all want to have a place. So, it's amazing to see, you know, everybody together. It's funny, sometimes when they're not going... when someone's not going, they'll text me – I'm not going today but I'll see you next time. Oh, thank you! It's that kind of relation. It's amazing, you know. I feel like when I'm there, everybody...

I know their name. Oh, hello how are you doing. So, it is a big community you know. So, that's very fun.

Interviewer: And if you could do it full-time, would you want to?

Respondent G: Absolutely. Absolutely because you feel like a sense of purpose. You know, I work IT so it's boring as fuck, you know. There's no sense of purpose for me there. A lot of people love it but it's not my thing. I do it because it pays my rent, you know. But there in the Dance to the Underground, I feel purpose. I feel, wow, I am doing something that I really love. My whole life, you know, going towards music and I have to say, my whole life clubbing. So, I know how to do a good party [laughs] because I've been to many parties. So, it's amazing to be there and to talk to people and to make sure everything is fine, and you know, I feel a sense of purpose there so that's... for me it's really good.

Interviewer: And do you feel like going to clubs and bars, like specifically gay clubs and bars, queer clubs and bars, is important to like realising you're queer and developing your sexuality and your gender identity?

Respondent G: For me it was. I don't know how it's going to be for this generation but for myself, I'm 35. For me it was big time because like you feel, as I said, it's the only place you feel you belong. I was the only queer boy, the only gay boy in my school. Not in school, bit in my class. And then if you are whatever, but when you are in a place that everybody is queer, then you don't have to hide anything. You feel like you belong. You feel part of something. We are human beings. We want to belong. We want to share things. All the time. We need that. We need this connection. You know, when you don't feel connected it's hard to keep living even. There's a lot of you... rates of suicide and this kind of shit because people feel they don't belong anywhere. If you don't belong, you don't have any value. If you don't have any value, then you feel you shouldn't be here. You know, so for me it was very important – clubbing, music. It's the second family we didn't have at home. Because at home you'd be something more boring or whatever, but at the parties everybody was happy. Even though, if you talk to my therapist [shared laughter], it's a place where there is a line. It's always happy so you have to be very careful in this place as well because then you think okay life is like this. Life is not – life is not a party; life is like this. A party is not going to be like this. A party has to keep being good or else people are going to leave. For me, it was very important. Very important to always be out and meeting different people, you know, listen to music, express myself, dance, wear different clothes cause you feel like you can. And when you feel like you can, that's expressing different areas in your life. If you feel you can be yourself, you're gonna love better, you're gonna eat better, you're gonna be understood better. You know, that's what I think.

Interviewer: So, I have kind of covered everything that I thought was important but if there is anything else you think that I have left out or anything, feel free to say.

Respondent G: That was perfect, yeah. But the thing is for me, it was very important that we have a space, you know, as alternative punk queers because like we didn't have before, you know. And it's very precious when you have a place that you go and you feel comfortable and you like the music and you like the people and you like the space. You feel kinda like wow I could stay here for so long and I don't feel like going home. A lot of people say to me I love it here, I feel like home because you know, when you feel like home, that's very comfortable. When you're comfortable, good things happen.

Interviewer: Okay, well thank you. I'll cut the audio here.